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May 1980



Some of my best friends wear costumes.

I've even been known to indulge occasionally. One ConFusion masquerade ball saw the appearance of that infamous tapestry shirt of mine. I had two offers to buy it, and one offer of alternate forms of payment.

I still have the shirt. Waiting for the highest offer.

Glicksohn certainly tends to appear in flowing, messianic regalia during the late hours of a con; Bowers has been known to swaddle his stick-thin body in a caftan for speechifying and comfort. Denise also: she definitely arranges herself in a more overtly sexual manner at a con than in mundane life. Suzi... well, dear Suzi was never noted for her subtlety. Ro -- I suspect -- has deliberately used that three-piece suit for shock value at a con, and certainly jeans, knee-high boots, and a shrieking velvet tuxedo top have some of the trappings of costuming. Sarah and Arlin both are designers, makers, and wearers of exotic apparel. Yeah, of the people I know, there are many examples of affectations of dress.

Yet I never get the feeling that they are hiding behind the fabric. Glicksohn in caftan is the same Mike that is being friendly earlier in the day (in his other bit of Glicksohnalia -- the leather hat). And without hat or caftan, that personality remains.

Bowers is still Bill, still the recluse hiding shyness behind insult and wit.

And so on...

There is a distinct difference between wearing clothing because it is comfortable or simply because it appeals to your personal aesthetic -- and submerging yourself in an artificial persona born of the attire.

[illegible]

A disclaimer.

This is not intended to be a fantastic revelation of interpersonal relationships. It's just some observations and my reactions to them. I'm not overly concerned with origins or ultimate destinations of trends. I could sit here and wax sophistries about the weakness of personalities that need the artificial prop of someone else's attitudes to allow them to function in a social situation. Or I could as easily take the Devil's Advocate position and argue that there's nothing wrong in this at all. There is -- after all -- a certain sense in arranging your trappings to allow you to feel good and safe and interact, to provide amusement and entertainment for those around you, to demonstrate what abilities you have for role-playing.

I don't say I believe any of those things.

I'm just pretending to be a notebook.

[illegible]

The group of us sat at the top of the stairs and watched people filing in and out, occasionally making remarks as necessary (and lest you come to the conclusion that this was an entirely sexist thing, please note that the group was evenly male and female, and that no one sex was singled out for commentary. It was sexist, but both male to female and female to male.)

One lady stood near us talking with her paramour. She wore spray-on (YES, FOLKS THE NEW SYNTHETIC MATERIAL: SPRAYON!) satin pants -- this would not have been worthy of comment in itself had she not been graced with a large ass and abundant thighs. She was not fat, mind you -- she can be rather attractive == but simply abundant.

"That a dime in her back pocket?" someone asked.

I pretended to lean forward in severe scrutiny. "Yeah. 1957."

That got one of the others to glance that way. "Minted in San Francisco, too." She shook her head.

...and later.



is just another uniform (right, Ro?). In fact, I recall using a form of that argument to explain -- way back in '69 -- to Denise's father why I wore my hair so long and why I had a beard -- beacuse it was the uniform of rock. In the same way a trekkie uniform demonstrates that you're a fan of that defunct series or a Chewbacca suit shows that you're a glutton for punishment and a prime candidate for Heat Prostration of the Year.

Hell, when on stage back in those budding rock star days, I wore stranger stuff myself. Still to be seen somewhere in my closet are such articles of apparel as a black and red satin cape, a tapestry-like shirt with long, trailing sleeves, a pair of silver satin pants, shoes with six-inch heels that Denise just recently discarded, a tunic top with silver threads running through it, and a battered old top hat that sits above the box of old Amazing/Fantastics I've never unpacked after moving. These are not my usual uniform (jeans and whatever shirt looks the most comfortable that day), but they were (they went well with the coiled snake bracelet) and performed a function. Along with the music and the lights and the barrage of sound, they worked. I certainly felt more extroverted when wearing such clothes. Those who have only seen me in normal situations or cons would not have recognized the screaming, leaping maniac as the Steve they know. Such exhibitions of idiocy also gave me nervous colitis, but that's another tale...

What bothers me is that wearing clothing like that can totally mask the person residing within. Yeah, I acted differently on stage, but during the breaks and after the gig -- despite the fact that I was still wearing the same fabrics -- I reverted to semi-normalcy. I person could talk to me and talk to me.

I've had a few conversations with the costume freaks running about at cons, and most of them seem to be on stage the entire time. Nor are they particularly inventive about their alter egos -- most are characters already given life in novel or movie. You have a difficult time penetrating the fog of those roles. I've had very little converse with the people they really are.

[illegible]

Standing with drink (coke and melted ice) in hand in the consuite. A fellow with purple hair, wax and warty nose, and mop-strand beard stumbles in carrying a spear tipped with a rubber arrowhead that looks like Caligula's prick after an all-night orgy.

"How're you doing?" Grinning helplessly. This is not a convincing outfit.

"I've been hunting since the third moon rose for the elusive grisnip." With a baritone growl to his tenor voice. He waggles the spear at me menacingly -- the arrowhead flips back and forth limply. "Have you seen one?"

"Not recently. How long'd it take you to put on that face?"

"What face?" His eyes narrow. This is either overdone facetitiousness, a ploy to remain in character, or a remarkably cogent statement of the philosophical observation that we can never perceive our own features without some artificial aid.

"The one you've got on. How long did it take to create?"

"Mortal, you are in danger of being impaled on the ceremonial spear of Melian the Hunter."

Ignoring the fact that the ceremonial spear would have trouble impaling shaving cream, I stand aside to let Melian pass. The Hunter snags a cup of beer -- he would probably call it mead -- then retreats from the suite once more, with a glare as he goes by. Melian the Hunter resumes his hunt for grisenips.

I resumed my hunt for more sensual game.

[illegible]



## A simple line drawing of a cat, likely a domestic cat, shown in a pouncing or walking pose. The cat is facing left, with its front legs extended forward and its hind legs pushing off. The tail is long and curved, pointing towards the right. The drawing is done in a sketchy, expressive style with visible lines.

There was a masquerade.

So I went. I watched. I saw a seemingly endless parade of Star Trek derivatives and various book characters -- the current onslaught of Princess Leia and Luke Skywalker clones had yet to march en masse onto the stages of cons. Some vague emotion pricked at the back of my consciousness, nagging and making me feel oddly uneasy about the parade of exotica -- some unvoiced annoyance. The stream of alien beings walk onto stage, perform some brief bit of monologue or demonstrate their character traits with assorted growls and grimaces, receive their applause with all the good grace of an IRS agent pocketing a check, and walk back into the wings. Very few of the costumes and performances were above the level of my grade school's production of "The Merchant of Venice." I still remember Robert DelVecchio's grimace as Shylock mentioned the pound of flesh...

An actor so talented that he makes you forget that he is an actor is most certainly brilliant. An actor that has become lost in his character and can't seem to find his way out needs help and sympathy.

[illegible]

We stared at them as they walked by. The two made their stumbling way past two trekkies and a robot on the stairs. When they'd gone from our sight, we turned back to each other, staring with that bemused, lifted-eyebrow gaze of amusement. As I laughed with a nasal exhalation, my companion mused: "Why is it that the worst-looking people wear the best costumes?"

[illegible]

4



And Lee Stevens...well, enough has been said about him, I suppose. I'm surprised he still hangs around me, sometimes. But ever since that incident with the whip he's been following me around like a puppydog, eager to please. I just keep asking for book reviews and hope that this will satisfy his animal cravings. And besides, feather dusters are much more fun.

Okay, folks, it's advertising time. Shortly after NASFIC I had an idea for doing an all fantasy issue. I even ran off flyers advertising same and asking for contributions. Well, all but a few of those flyers are still sitting in a pile under the desk. So, right here, in front of god and everbody, I'm asking for material. I've already got a simply lovely Jim Odbert cover which I can't use unless I do this issue, so send in your fantasies, sexual or otherwise, prose or poetry or artwork. Length should be no more than a couple of pages, preferably, and the deadline is when I get enough material. So put your imaginations to work and send me your fantasy. This may be the only time I'll ever print fiction in this fanzine. Thanks.

April 29, 1980

#### A CHILD'S DREAM

*As I listened one night  
the silence hummed hugely  
and my room began flying*

*I wanted to hide  
safe in my darkness  
outside of the frightening  
space of my hearing*

*but my legs seemed endless  
and my feet  
became islands,  
my knees made  
mountains*

*At last I arose  
and flew to a forest  
where I danced  
in new snow*

*and embracing the mountain  
I became dawn  
the wintercold  
dome  
of earth*

Steven Federle

Special News Flash: I just received a phone call from George RR Martin and he informs me that the Nebula results are as follows: Novel, "Fountains of Paradise" Clark; Novella, "Enemy Mine", Longyear; Novellette, "Sandkings", Martin, and Short Story, "GiAnts", Bryant. Congratulations everyone, and especially George.



in this issue is largely unsolicited, which makes it even more special to me. The covers were done by a long time friend, Earl House (you remember him from G#1...he did the thoroughly mystifying and intriguing woman on the cover) and even though I did ask for more artwork a long time ago, I really didn't expect it from him as he'd been going through a major life crisis at the time. Now he's bugging me to see them in print. I'll make a fan of him yet. And Steve...well, you all know how I feel about him. He really doesn't have to do a column for me...(I'm certain that the fact I've threatened him with divorce hasn't entered into it. The fact that I threatened to take the cats with me might have, though.) He really doesn't need to take the time away from his professional writing to do columns for my fanzine, but now that Glicksohn has named him as one of the two best he has an image to uphold, I guess. (I still want to get a T-shirt that says 'I've slept with one of the two best' but Steve tells me it's too tacky. Then again...) Now all I have to do is work on an article from Ro.

And then there's Bill Bowers. This one I really didn't expect. The last article he gave me he ended up taking back to use in *XENOLITH* because I'd taken so long about printing the damn thing. So, in the car on the way to or from Minicon, he handed me the second 'Not a Speech', asking if I thought I could handle it...with a straight face, he asked me. Even in front of Steve and Michelle. Ah, well, you know how those BNF's are. (egotistical bastard, grumble, grumble.)

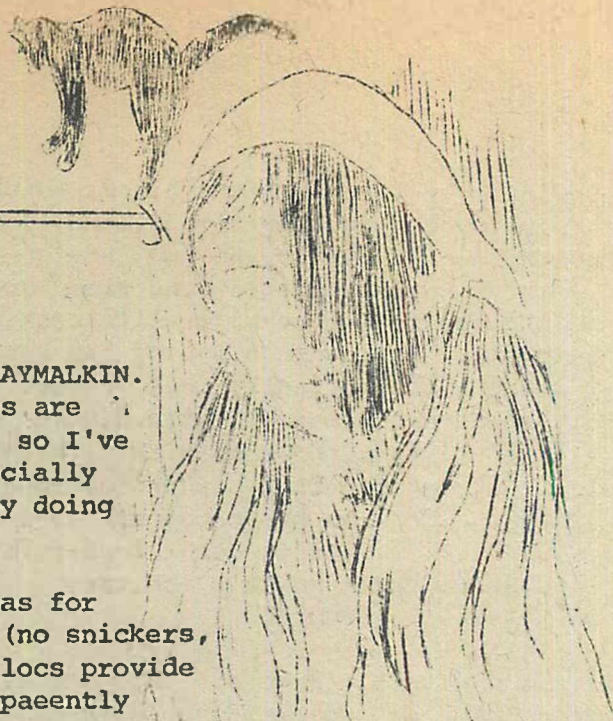
And George Martin...well, long about last Archon I jokingly mentioned that I'd like to print his Other Con speech, never really thinking that he'd agree to it. He told me he'd think about it, and I promptly put it out of my mind. Long about the weekend he was giving the speech I got this package in the mail with a note saying I could use it if I liked...and never being one to turn down a good article, I accepted. Gleefully, even. Though I still feel a bit guilty as I'm certain George can get real cash money for it if he wants to market it, but...I did express some concern because I seriously doubt that George would have given me the speech if we weren't such good friends. Someone once told me (a Canadian, I think, in a rare lucid moment) that if the article is good, and I like it, it doesn't matter what other people think, or why someone gives it to me, or something like that. So...that's why it's here.

Let's see now, the poetry. Since I couldn't fill in the white spaces with much artwork this issue, (or fill in the whitespaces around the artwork, maybe.) I decided to use poetry instead. After all, good poetry is artwork, and I think I have some top quality material this issue. Arthur Metzger (he's the one who wrote the review of *FAERIES* and didn't remember doing it) has started writing poetry again and has been coming up with some damn good, though admittedly strange, stuff and I'm proud to be the "first feminist fanzine" (to quote Art...well, what does he know.) to print his work. And though I don't know Billy Wolfenbarger, I have admired his work in *OUTWORLDS* and *XENOLITH* and it seemed like a very nice exchange for an issue. I have a large stack of poetry by Steven Federle that's just aching to be shared, so I know I'll be using at least one poem, and maybe more if there's room.

The reviews...Marcy Schimmel is a friend of Art's who works at the library, basically doing (ohmygosh, dare I admit it in the same issue as a GRRM speech? what the fuck.) plot summaries for the library review board. (They're the ones who determine whether a book gets an adult rating (remember the purple flower in the inside cover of *Guliver's Travels*?) The reviews she gave me were partially plot summary, but I edited that out, so if they're not quite as flowing as they should be you only have me to blame. I just happen to like Doris Lessing a lot and thought she should be brought to the attention of more fans.



# getting familiar



Alright, I admit it... I was wrong when I suggested cutting down on the locs in GRAYMALKIN. Better I should cut down on articles. Locs are what have made this a good (ahem) zine, or so I've been told, so why ruin a good thing. Especially when responding to the locs is what I enjoy doing the most.

I have a difficult time coming up with ideas for editorials. I usually need some stimulus (no snickers, please.) like in #3 to get me going. The locs provide a much needed sounding board for me and apparently for my readers as well, so PLEASE keep those cards and letters coming. I promise I'll do my best to print as many of the letters as possible, and the fact that I seem to be going mimeo will cut down on the expense a great deal, anyway. To quote the venerable Mr. Glicksohn "Some folks might think that 25 pages of locs were too many. Pshaw! They're the same philistines who probably think 13 straight hours of poker is excessive. The broad boundaries of fandom encompass little minds sometimes; ignore them, and reach for another quire or two of stencils!" (I'm not quite certain what that has to do with anything but it seems appropriate.)

I enjoy getting response. And ten months between issues is much too long a time to wait for a fannish fix. It's taken me a long time to get motivated enough to work on this issue. As I stated on a fanzine panel at Confusion, I don't like getting a fanzine all ready to go and not have enough money to publish. Bowers (bless his heart) convinced me that I should give mimeo a try, though at that time he was living in Cincinnati and had promised to help me with his mimeo. Now, however, he is living in the wilds of Marion, Indiana and only comes back to reality every other weekend, if there isn't a con. So, I'm being forced to use the AB Dick at work. Those of you who get my Mishap mailings are aware of its shortcomings, though the last run seemed to work at least adequately...it was readable. This is why I've decided to use very little artwork for this issue. I really don't know enough about a mimeo and electrostenciling et al to do justice to the artwork I currently have on hand and rather than butcher it through inexperience, I'll hold out for another issue. Hopefully, I'll now be able to keep a somewhat more regular schedule of publication. There are distinct advantages to mimeo over offset, or at least that's what everyone keeps telling me. Well, we'll just have to see what happens.

~~~~~

So...about this issue. One of the things I like about editing a fanzine is that I get to meet all sorts of interesting people, and read all sorts of nice letters, and view lots of lovely artwork, and articles and poetry. I often wonder if my friends hate me for bugging them for contributions, and sometimes am reluctant to do so because I am afraid of imposing on our friendship. Plus, people like Mike ask for subjects to write about and I can never think of anything original.

Anyway, when my friends do come through for me I am especially delighted. This is not to say that past contributors have not been friends...it's just that the material











Now I don't recall having said it exactly that bluntly--what I have said is that I have trouble dealing with more than a few people at a time; that I don't make friends (as opposed to acquaintances) easily; and that the (relatively) very few people I care for, I care for very, very much; and stuff like that--but since Taral's ability to delve into the published Bowers Canon for appropriate quotes is probably more refined than even my own, at the moment...I won't argue the attribution.

I will go so far as to say that virtually everything I write (whether it is latter "spoken", or not) these days...is written primarily to/for those that "matter" to me. But then, sometimes even I am ~~blatant~~ obvious enough for that to be evident.

(But Taral is wrong in at least one inferred assumption: When I publish, I publish strictly for myself...and my own sense of ego-gratification. Of course, what it means when I publish my own writings...or just what it means in that I'm not publishing this particular piece of writing...well, I'll leave that to others to rationalize...

(All together now...one, two, three: Let's Conjecture!)

Speaking of conjecture--I indulge, myself--let me tell you a story:

Once upon a time, I was somewhat confused to find that I was being actively "persued".

Two points: No one before that time had directly expressed an interest in me, before I had, in some manner, expressed an interest in them first.

And secondly, the person in question had known me for a substantial period of time (fannishly speaking) beforehand: Why then this sudden interest in "getting to know me better."?

I thought about it--I do think about such things occasionally. And the only thing that could possibly "fit" was the fact that I had just been Guest of Honor at a convention.

Obviously, I thought, suddenly I was "important" enough for her to be seen with.

And so I developed my essential cynicism to a higher degree of perfection, issued an "Official Red Herring" namebadge, and spent great amounts of ink in my fanzines of the day, constantly agonizing over whether people (Read: women) who spent time with me did so because I was "me"...or because of the "image".

(At certain points in my life...they were better off settling for the latter.)

Now, of course, I'll be the first to admit that, had I been attracted to her...there would have been no problem. Any method--schtick or genuine: as direct as "you're 'hot stuff!'"...or as subtle as jokes about home towns--used to initiate contact is valid. Of course, once contact has been established...the schticks should be used as a supplement to communication. Not in place of it.

(Pay attention, Bowers!)

A while back, a Friend chastised me, when I speculated on utilizing quotes from the Oxford Dictionary Thereof...to express things I was unable to put into words myself. Wrong, my friend said: Quotes are only valid if you discover them yourself in the course of your own reading.

O.k., I (re)discovered the following while reading "Dear Abby"<sup>3</sup>:

CONFIDENTIAL TO STEADY READER IN KANSAS CITY: *No one described "friendship" better than George Eliot: "Oh, the comfort, the inexpressible comfort, of feeling safe with a person, having neither to weigh thoughts nor measure words, but to pour them all out just as they are, chaff and grain together, knowing that a faithful hand will take and sift them, keep what is worth keeping, and then, with the breath of kindness, blow the rest away."*

<sup>3</sup> Don't be so damned uppity: You try spending weekdays in Marion, Indiana...and tell me what YOU end up reading!



Of course, I'm an expert on friendship...just ask my friends about the way I treat them.

On second thought, maybe you shouldn't.

It might ruin your conception of the person behind the "image".

Read any good science fiction lately?

At a Wondaycon (you will notice how careful I am being as regards to the time-elements of all these incidents...; well, I'm trying to be subtle!), Mike Glicksohn, GoH, was being-interviewed-instead-of-making-a-speech.

"Tell me, Mike," the interviewer said, "do Big Name Fans get laid more often at conventions than do other fans?"

Being in a somewhat (but not religiously) self-imposed celibate stage at that moment in fannish annuals, I nevertheless waited with some anticipation for the answer. I mean, I had heard all the stories of Sexually Promiscuous Midwestern Fandom, too...

"Not necessarily," said Mike, diplomatically.

"...but the opportunities are certainly greater."

"...Following all this, Bowers himself writes so personally what might well be the most interesting part of *Xenolity* 3 that it seems out of place in a zine with the distribution I think it has."

---earlier in Taral's review.

No, I'm not going into another lengthy series on the pratfalls of "fame"... imagined or real. (Though you might be better off if I did: I have that particular spiel better developed than this one... Practice, you know.)

Besides, we're all aware that I "use" the fame--even self-inflate it when it begins to sag--as much as I decry it. Quite frankly, though, it's a lot easier when people are still in awe of you, or even afraid of you.

After they get to know you, you see, they begin to talk back. \*sigh\*

So, if I'm not going to do that Sermonite, just what am I doing here?

...oh, nothing much.

~~Just filling in space between devils' prose~~

Someday I am going to write the article about how singularly appropriate I found it, when on the same day she was fitted for a diaphragm...afriend had her cat "fixed."

But not just yet.

Some people just don't have a sense of humor!

Semi-obligatory Quotation from The Uncollected Works of Bowers:

"And even though, right now, I say there will be no next time, I know that there will be. I will meet someone, and, no doubt the curtain will rise on the next scenario in the play of my life. And it will be new, and it will be good, and I will play my role again.

And I will be cynical and self-protective; and I will be gosh-wow and let myself go... I will do so because, even if I do go about it rather strangely, I am a living, functioning human being."

--*Xenolity* 7; pg. 62

Is that subtle enough, everyone?

I think Taral, and others, still are thinking of me as Bill Bowers, Faned. That's o.k.--that's where I was for a long time, and I've not doubt that I'll get back to it sooner or later; when or in what guise, I have no idea...but it'll be good!

But I conceptualize myself as a fannish writer these days. That may come as a mild shock to some: So what if I disguise my words as "speeches", and employ all the pretensions and gimmicks I used in my fanzines (would all the "quotes" correlate



with the "boxes" I used to frame everything in...humm??) I'm rather pleased with most of my output over the past two years--beginning, probably, with my "answer" to Harlan's ERA statement--and I feel certain that sooner or later someone will notice how brilliant I am, and start nominating me for the fan writing awards.

Even if I'm not on Glicksohn's top ten.

Any time now fellows...

Still, I suppose there are drawbacks to the way I do these things: People are beginning to assume that, even if they aren't privy to the esoterica, every bit and segment of these "writings" are religiously linked together, to form a unified whole...if only they knew who I was talking/writing about.

Not necessarily so.

Sometimes there is method to my intentional madness...

...but sometimes there is just the madness.

Dept. Of I'm Going To Get Killed For This, But That's Never Stopped Me Before:

A fannish couple has two cats.

Her cat, occasionally visible in a far doorway, shys away from everyone.

His cat, on the other hand, walks boldly up to you and says:

"Wanna fuck?"

Really.

(Have I ever lied to you? No...I mean you?)

We are all subject to change.

At one time I swore that I would never refer to Wayne MacDonald as "Taral".

I didn't like "assumed" names.

This, of course, has absolutely nothing to do with assumed modifications of behavior. But then, I haven't changed: I've always been this blatant. You've just began to notice.

Still, I don't know which is worse:

To be an assumption...

...or a satellite.

Ask them.

*There are times that I should not write, and do. There are times when I should have written, and didn't. I don't want to hurt, or embarrass in any way the people I care about. I do both; and I do both knowing what I am doing.*

---ibid; pg. 61

...and one of the times I should not be writing is very late at night, when I am very tired (yes, even Bill Bowers gets tired...sometimes), just before leaving for a convention.

But...most of my "speeches" were written under these circumstances, and just because this is not a speech...

Besides, other than being tired, I'm thoroughly happy--and its such a rarity for me to be able to write in this condition, that I couldn't resist.

And yes, I know the "rules" in writing as well as other areas of expression: the fact that I always bend (and occasionally shatter) the rules is not a practice born of perversity (though it is, sometimes), but of necessity. In other words, I'm aware that a "summary" is the accepted way to end an essay, no matter what side trips you take in getting to that point.

But summarizing when you're just at the beginning is a bit beyond even me.

Still, let's try it this way:

No, Taral, it's not that only my friends matter...even if I did say that.

It's been said that the seventies birthed the "me generation". Well, having experienced a decided case of arrested development in other areas of my life, I suppose it's only natural that I'm still there:



Only I matter (s).

And yet.

I never promise fairness (in my writing, in myself)--just ask my friends (and, yes, they *do* matter!)--but this much I do promise:

The one "truth" I know (to recycle the Sturgeon title one more time) is that...  
*WHEN YOU LOVE, WHEN YOU CARE...*

...you go with it.

All the way.

--Bill Bowers; 11:55 pm, 1 April, 1980

#### SUMMER DREAM

I saw the boy one day in summer,  
I was unaware of his presence until a sudden movement  
caught my eye through the trees.  
He was standing by the river,  
I was walking through the forest  
thinking, of nothing in particular.  
At first I noticed nothing strange,  
only a young boy standing by the water  
skipping stones.  
But then I saw him hurl  
a rock into the air, high up  
above the river.  
Before the rock began to fall  
back earthward it burst into flame,  
coming down and striking the river  
with a hiss of steam  
and a splash.  
I stared in disbelief  
sure that my own eyes had mislead me.  
But as I watched I saw the boy  
pick up another rock from the riverbank  
and throw it into the sky  
to burst into a ball of fire  
blue as gas stove flame,  
leaving a thin trail of smoke behind  
when it fell into the river.  
I wondered how he did it, this strange boy.  
Was it power or was it some kind of trick?  
Or would I wake soon  
lying by the riverbank  
to discover that I had been only dreaming.

Arthur Metzger  
March, One



## THE SINS OF THE REVIEWERS

--George R. R. Martin

This is the fourth time in my relatively short career that I've been the Guest of Honor at a regional SF convention. It is the second time I've been called down to Texas to do my Guest of Honoring -- that is, assuming that you count El Paso as part of Texas, which most of my Texas friends don't. I will make a confession. I like doing readings and panels and seeing articles about myself in program books and spotting my name in con listings. I like the chance to talk to the readers, to see my old friends and make new ones. I like making Howard Waldrop honor me; he's never had the proper respect in all the years I've known him, but as long as I get more of these gigs than he does, I'm safe. I like the travel, even if it is to Texas 50% of the time.

And I like making the speeches that are obligatory at such occasions as these. They present such golden opportunities. A podium. A captive audience. A license to say whatever is on my mind. I can bore you to tears by reading my mail, indoctrinate you with my political views, regale you with bloodthirsty and embarrassing anecdotes about my friends. Other writers do all of these things. Not me, though. A Guest of Honor speech can be used for a much more noble and uplifting purpose.

To get revenge.

My first two speeches, in El Paso and St. Louis, I used to take issue with the public statements of two other writers about the state of the art in the genre. They were both wrong, of course, and I ripped them to shreds. It was wonderful. A few months ago, in Biloxi, I turned my attention to editors. They had it coming too. That left me in somewhat a quandry about what to speak on here, of course. What could be more heinous than an editor?

Well, I had no problem figuring that out.

So today I'm going to talk about critics and reviewers.

It seems to me that reviewers have been having a rough time of it of late. Fred Pohl takes them on the latest *STARSHIP*, and ends by comparing them to morticians. Spider Robinson seems to be regularly besieged in the *ANALOG* letter column these days, defending the things he's said an issue or two previous. Gerald Jonas has come under fire for his *NEW YORK TIMES* reviews. Andrew J. Offutt likens criticisms to Rocky Mountain Spotted Fever ticks in *SCIENCE FICTION REVIEW*. The new *THRUST* features a savage and wonderful Michael Bishop lampoon, with Joanna Russ, Algis Budrys, and Spider Robinson its principal targets. The same issue includes an interview with David Gerrold, who says that most critics are incompetents who can't write themselves, which may come as news to Joanna Russ, Algis Budrys, Spider Robinson, and even Michael Bishop, who is no mean hand at criticism himself. In general, this really does seem to be Jump on the Critics Month.

The minute I noticed, I fetched out my hob-nailed boots.

Some writers tell me that they don't read their reviews. I lack their willpower and strength of character. Others claim they read them just for amusement, and pay



it all no mind. I lack their capacity for glib self-deception. I admit it: I am addicted to reviews and criticism. I read them, yes. I keep review files on all my books, regularly bug my publishers to send me the latest clippings, grin fatuously when I get a good review and brood when I get a bad one. Worse, I am a completist. Nothing bothers me more than the sneaking suspicion that somewhere out there in the wide world lurk reviews of my books that no one has ever bothered to send me. The fact that I am regularly discovering such notices inflames my obsession. Whenever we visit a fan friend, I immediately check out what fanzines they receive, if any, and leaf through the unfamiliar ones in search of stray reviews. Quite often I find them, too.

The passion extends beyond criticism of my own work. I also like to read criticism of other people's work. When I pick up a new issue of *ANALOG* or *F&SF*, the first thing I turn to is the book reviews. I've subscribed to every reviewzine I've ever heard of, even ones that were semi-literate. My addiction is very deep rooted. Sometimes I even mainline it by going to writer's conferences, so I can be ripped to pieces directly instead of at long distance. I've even written some criticism, shameful as that may be to admit.

In other words, I know whereof I speak. I love to talk about books. I gulp good criticism and snort up reviews.

And these days, in SF, I'm starving.

Never in the history of the genre have so many people been paying so much attention to these books and stories of ours. Fans and pros and academics, award committees, end of-the-year summarizers, reviewers and critics and analysts of a hundred different kinds. We are surrounded on all sides by semi-prozines and semi-semizines and academic journals and reviewzines and critical summaries and yearbooks and textbooks and guides and studies. The critics are swarming, breeding, and filling the earth. The quantity of criticism has never been so high in SF.

The quality is as low as it has ever been.

This is not to say that no decent critics are working the genre currently. Far from it. In *Algis Budrys* we have a columnist of the stature of Knight and Blish, and there are a number of other talented people also doing first-rate criticism and reviewing, although not as regularly as Budrys -- whose columns, by the way, cry out for reprinting in book form, so they can take their place on the shelf next to *IN SEARCH OF WONDER* and *THE ISSUE AT HAND*. Unfortunately, in this critical explosion there has been a great growth in the amount of bad criticism as well, so the decent work being done represents an increasingly smaller portion of the whole. I want to talk about some of that bad criticism, what I think it is that makes it bad, and the ways I think it needs to change.

Before I lace up those hob-nailed boots, though, I ought to make a couple of disclaimers, and disassociate myself from some of the others who have been bloodying critics and reviewers recently.

I certainly don't agree that most reviewers are failed writers, even if you discount the successful writers who do reviews or criticism on the side. The best baseball players do not make the best managers. Creative and analytic talents do not always go hand in hand, but that is no reason to deny that purely analytic or critical talents exist.



I'm not interested in joining the fight between Spider and *his* critics as to whether reviews should be "objective" or "subjective". I suspect that they both have part of the truth. Taste, personal opinion, political and social philosophies, and the like all play legitimate roles in evaluating books, and it can't be denied that some of these criteria may be, at times, subjective. On the other hand, it's futile to argue that there are no objective standards. To name one obvious one, internal consistency is to my mind a good objective yardstick by which to judge a piece of fiction.

I don't even want to grind my axe against any particular style of reviewing, any critical theory or literary philosophy. A healthy genre has room for them all. Diversity is a blessing, whether we're talking about fiction or criticism. Oh, I won't say that the reviews I read don't piss me off. They do. Frequently. Spider has gotten my hackles up more than once. Joanna Russ and John Clute and Barry Malzberg annoy me regularly. Lester del Rey and Richard Delap used to provoke me to rage. But that's as it should be. From argument and from dialogue, something approximating truth sometimes emerges. I said that I enjoyed talking about books? Yes, and arguing about them too, and hearing others argue about them, if it's done with wit and style. Some day I'd love to see a slick, classy critical magazine that turned its attention to only two or three books per issue, but let a dozen talented and wildly diverse critics loose on each of them and stacked up their opinions side by side. Enlist Robinson and Russ and Clute and Malzberg and del Rey and Delap and Budrys, and Knight if he'd come out of retirement, and Bishop and the Panshins and Maddog Howard Waldrop, and some of the better fan critics and reviewers like Jeff Smith and Don Keller and Cy Chauvin and Mike Glyer, maybe even a few academics -- you'd have a hell of a magazine. Think of the *fights* they'd have! It would be marvelous.

If it were my magazine, however, they'd have to follow a few rules. Simple ones, really, but ones ignored by the vast majority of people writing SF criticism and reviews today. Which is why the critical field is in such dismal shape.

To begin with the most obvious, I think any critic or reviewer has a moral and ethical obligation to get the facts right.

That doesn't seem too much to ask, but it certainly seems to me too much for some people to do. I have 26 reviews currently filed away in my folder on *DYING OF THE LIGHT*. Of that number, fully a third contain errors of fact that could have been avoided by simple care. Now, the back cover blurb on the paperback also contains two errors, so I can't come down too heavily on the more minor distortions. Perhaps it wasn't even their fault. Perhaps all they read was the back cover blurb. In other cases, however -- am I seriously supposed to listen to the opinions of a reviewer who can't even be bothered to get the names of my characters right?

Like most writers, I may be hypersensitive to misstatements where my own work is concerned. Unfortunately, the mistakes I notice are by no means limited to my rather meagre output. There are days where I am simply appalled by the sloppiness of much of what passes for book reviews in our genre, particularly in the fan press, although the prozines are by no means innocent. One prozine in particular has a whole staff of reviewers who seemingly delight in handing out Hugos and Nebulas to writers who have never won either, and taking them away from those that have. Perhaps this is a conscious attempt to share the wealth. I think not. I think it's sheer stupid carelessness, and it annoys me considerably. Once upon a time I was a journalist, and I still teach journalism, and one of the points I stress to my students is that errors are inexcusable. They perpetuate themselves.



I think we have room for critics and reviewers of all shades of opinion. What we don't have room for is people who can't be bothered with simple factual accuracy. To be blunt, if a book reviewer shows a consistent pattern of error, distortion, and half-truth in review after review, he or she ought not to be published. Not even if they are entertaining. Not even by fanzines hard up for material. Not even if the errors are "trivial."

Nor is this the only sin of the current crop of critics and reviewers, although it is perhaps the most blatant. A second crime against nature and authors, which I would also stamp out ruthlessly if only someone (ah, dreams!) would give me the power, is plot summary.

The amount of plot summary that creeps into reviews and even critical articles in our field is astonishing, and disgusting. In some cases, the plot summary is all there is of the review, which is actually a 200-or 400-or 1000-word condensation of the story trying to pass itself off as a critical statement. In most cases the writers have the sense to insert a limp one-line evaluation at the end, or weave some adjectives into the summary so we at least know how they felt about all this foofarah they are summarizing for us. I suppose that minimal effort indicates that these people have their hearts in the right place. It does not mitigate the fact that their heads are still firmly down the toilet.

Let me make some distinctions here, briefly. Repeatedly I have used the terms *reviews* and *criticism*, *reviewers* or *critics*, and I've done so deliberately, although it would have been easier and more effective to use simply one term. It would not have been accurate, however; reviews and criticism are very different things. Precisely where those differences lie, especially in a genre like SF where even those who are critics in their heart of hearts must work in the reviewer's format, is a fit subject for a speech all by itself. For my purposes, I see the basic distinction as one of audience. A reviewer is or should be talking to people who have not read the book in question; more than anything else, book reviews function as buying guides. Critics are writing for people who have read the work under consideration, sharing insights, provoking thoughts, suggesting secondary meanings or possible interpretations with an audience whose basic familiarity with the book is assumed.

Neither critics nor reviewers have any business engaging in extended plot summary, and trying to shuck it off on us. I abhor plot summary, both as a writer who has been too often summarized, and as a review junkie who has read too many of the damn things.

Let me quote to you, briefly, from a thoroughly splendid book -- one which I recommend to all of you, without reservation -- called *THE WORLD ACCORDING TO GARP*. It's by John Irving, and it isn't SF, although it is more inventive and imaginative than the vast majority of novels in the genre that I've read recently. It is also a writer's book, a fiction about fiction, among other things, and I can't imagine a writer not finding it a delight. Garp, the protagonist, writes. At one point he writes a rather nasty novel. His editor, unsure of how the book will be received, gives it to the cleaning lady, who falls asleep when trying to read most books but always seems to know when one will be a runaway success. The editor waits nervously for her opinion. She hates the book, and this exchange follows:

"If you hated it, why'd you read it, Jillsy?" John Wolf asked her.

"Same reason I read anythin' for," Jillsy said. "To find out what happens."

John Wolf stared at her.



"Most books you *know* nothin's gonna happen," Jillsy said. "Lawd you know that. Other books," she said, "you know just *what's* gonna happen, so you don't have to read them, either. But *this* book," Jillsy said, "this book's so *sick* you *know* somethin's gonna happen, but you can't imagine *what*. You got to be sick yourself to imagine what happens in *this* book," Jillsy said.

"So you read it to find out?" John Wolf said.

"There surely ain't no other reason to read a book, is there?" Jillsy Sloper said.

When I read that passage, I whooped and laughed and grinned ear to ear, because John Irving and Jillsy Sloper had indeed put their fingers on it -- the reason why we read, the real fundamental reason that no one talks much about, the basic essence of *story*, which is the heart and soul of fiction, of literature. Other things may bring us back to books, may add to our enjoyment of them, and we may claim we read for the savor of the words, or to learn about human nature, or to broaden our personal horizons. All that, however, is like saying we eat because we enjoy the taste of food, because we are in the habit of eating regularly, because food gives us solace or distraction. That is true, but not the *real* truth of the matter. We eat to fuel our bodies. We read fiction to find out what *happens*.

With this simple truth in mind, it's easy to see why the sin of plot summary is so godawful, especially when the sinner is a reviewer, talking to an audience that has not read the book. Under the pretext of giving us a buying guide, these cretins as often as not actually deprive us of the simplest and most fundamental pleasure awaiting us in those books under discussion. They tell us what *happens*! They summarize the plot!

Oh, to be sure, reviewers have their code. With a few unspeakable exceptions, they take care not to tell us the endings. Spider Robinson goes so far as to break into ALL-CAP SPOILER WARNINGS whenever he is about to give away an ending, so that those who have not read the book will read no further into the review. Myself, whenever I see that capital letter barricade, I am immediately seized by an irresistible compulsion to plunge on and find out what lies beyond it, whether I've read the book or not, but that is probably just my human weakness, and not Spider's fault. Nor is it really germane to my point. This whole buisness of not giving away the endings strikes me as much ado about nothing, like a fellow who promises not to punch you in the nose and then smashes in all your teeth with a two-by-four. It conjures up a very strange, distorted picture of what a book is all about; the novel-as-surprise-party philosophy, wherein we can say anything we want as long as we don't reveal that everyone *ss* going to jump out from behind the furniture and shout, "Bco!" The sacrosanct protected ending becomes the end-all and be-all of the novel, its reason for being, and the rest of the novel is demoted to being so much gift wrapping.

Honestly, this is more than a little absurd. The ending of a piece of fiction should grow out of what has gone before; it needs to be logical and consistent and integral to the rest of the story. It may or may not be a surprise, but that's not crucial. It certainly should not be the *only* surprise, a bombshell tacked onto the end of a dreary and predictable narrative.

No, I *don't* want reviewers to give away my endings. I also don't want them to give away my middles. I would prefer it if they didn't blab quite so much about my beginnings. Let them summarize my prologues if they must summarize. People who want to know what happens should read the books, and sample first hand the pleasures of finding out.



Look, when I sit down and write a story, I'm trying to give my reader a vicarious experience. I organize things -- events and information and the like -- as carefully as I can, and one of my aims is to make the experience continually interesting, if I can. A reader should experience a book for the first time as an editor does, when a chunk of manuscript comes sliding out of its manila envelope. Ideally a reader is absorbed into a narrative, and lives events as the viewpoint character lives them, learns things as he learns them, and so on. Unfortunately, once our books get past that editor, the system conspires to deny readers that kind of pure reading experience. Instead we have helpful blurbs and reviewers' damned plot summaries coloring our responses and expectations before we've read past word one. So the reviewers make a fetish out of concealing the sun going nova on the last page. They still tell us that the ship crashes in the second chapter, that the guy who seemed so sincere early on turns out to be the villain in chapter four, that the protagonist is killed in chapter nine and cloned in chapter ten. Left to our own devices, we might have been astonished and delighted by some of these turns, and that is taken from us, for no real reason, and most of the time we don't even realize we've been robbed.

Do I exaggerate? Hardly. Some of the reviews of my novel, *DYING OF THE LIGHT*, brought the truth home to me painfully. My protagonist wanders into a situation that he does not understand for several chapters. The reader who has read the reviews understands all before hand. About a third of the way through the book, Dirk faces a difficult decision. The majority of reviewers revealed which way he went. Later on, in the last third, two major characters turn out to be not what they had seemed at first. The plot summarizers summarize that, too.

These are a writer's laments, but plot summaries also cheat the readers, as I've tried to outline. They even cheat the poor doomed souls who are addicted to reading reviews, like me. We are forced to read what is essentially the same review over and over again. Smith may have loved the book, and Jones may have hated it, but if they both devote most of their wordage to summarizing the plot, why bother reading them both?

Can you do book reviews sans plot summaries? My reply to that is unequivocal. Yes. It takes work, and skill, and insight, but it can be done, and such reviews are both more useful to the readers, and more fun to read for their own sake.

Critics, of course, sin less severely when they summarize, but still they sin. Mostly they waste time and space. Their readers have already read the book being criticized; they don't need a cold rehash, thank you. To be sure, it's legitimate to recap portions of the story so the readers won't have to be flipping back to the source every other sentence. It is also permissible to go through a plot with scalpel in hand to show that said plot makes no discernible sense, as Damon Knight so often did. But these are not full-fledged plot summaries of the sort I've been railing against.

If I were in charge of the universe, plot summaries would join factual errors on my list of high crimes against literature.

Lastly, before turning these reviewers and critics loose to rend and tear once more, I would impose on them a sense of decency and perspective, something that more and more seems to be lacking in our genre. I don't think it is because reviewers or critics are at heart indecent or vicious. I think we just get carried away, all of us sometimes. We need to step back and remember that what we are all doing here is talking about some books we've read, and that however much we might disagree, there



is still no place for personal attacks, for efforts to demean and destroy the writer instead of the work.

I admit to strong feelings on that. These are wild, chaotic times in science fiction, the best of times and the worst of times, and in such madness it is easy to let things get out of hand. I've seen personal animosity and professional envy disguise themselves as reviewing. I was even the victim of such once, and I can testify that it hurt. I've seen too many reviewers lose their way, and start to review a writer's advances or awards instead of the work. The issues -- the legitimate issues -- are whether the book is good or bad, and how good or how bad, and why, and how does it relate to the writer's other work and to the genre as a whole, and what kinds of issues does it raise or fail to raise, and is it a true book, an honest book. The issue is not whether it deserved a \$50,000 advance, or only \$5,000; not unless the contract is included as a prologue. But too many reviewers don't realize that. I've also seen too many critical debates turn vicious, and degenerate to name calling. Terms like "idiot" and "halfwit" and "untalented buffoon" are not standard critical jargon, believe it or not, and they ought not be allowed to worm their way into the lexicon. Demolish the books, demolish the arguments; not the writers and the critics, please.

My rules aren't really very strigent, I think. Get the facts right. Don't summarize the plots. Play fair. Too much to ask? Of course not. Will this speech make any difference? Of course not. The good reviewers didn't do this stuff anyway. The bad ones won't listen, or care, or recognize themselves. They'll go right on making errors and summarizing plots and ladelling on the invective. And I, hopeless fool that I am, will go on reading the reviews and giving my fiction over to their tender mercies and suffering in silent anguish, at least until I am asked to be a Guest of Honor somewhere else.

In the meantime, I can only appeal to you, the ultimate judges, the fans and readers. If you read a review or a critical piece wherein these sins are committed, sit yourself down and write a letter to the culprit, tell him the things I've said here, point out the errors of his ways.

If that fails, do me another favor.

Kill the sucker before he writes again.

*-delivered at OtherCon III, College Station, TX.  
29 September 1979*

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YEARS BLOW LIKE WIND

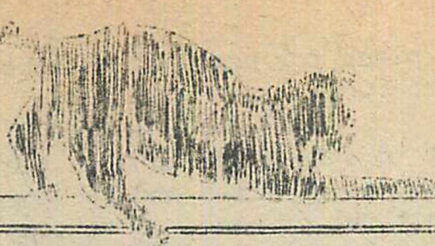
Dead planets drift into bleak gulfs  
and chasms of mystery --  
stellar drag groans in star-born  
wizardry.  
Black wind blows the years into no-time  
the infinite deeps drown time.  
The universe is a circle  
with consciousness inside.

*--Billy Wolfenbarger  
July 17th, 1979*

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# REVIEWS



Damn, but I thought you people would be getting tired of idiosyncratic and flighty reviews by now. Christ (or whatever deity happens to be in fashion this week), but I was hoping so. I'm really looking forward to being allowed to die in peace. But no...Denise pranced up to my apartment, unloaded a plethora of various and sundry (Various and Sundry, for those whose memories don't include Vaudevillian trivia, were once a comedy team that played at the Rialto here in Cincinnati and also on the normal circuit for awhile -- definitely a second-rate act, but they had their moments. The act broke up when Various became drunk one night -- at was in some flea-ridden theater in Richmond, VA; had it been here, I might have had the good fortune to see it. It certainly would have been more entertaining than their endless succession of old jokes -- and threw Sundry from the stage, breaking his collarbone. He left the act in a tiff. Well, actually an ambulance. Various tried to get others to join, but his reputation as a violent drunk preceeded him -- he was henceforth known as Nefarious Various. Sundry became a politician, leaving a legacy to Ohio of anti-liquor legislation known as the Sundry Liquor Laws. Yeah, I know...what has all this to do with a book review? Don't ask me, ask Denise. She's the one that lets me write this drivel.

Where was I?

Yes, a pile of books was set on my coffee table, right next to the old coke bottle I'd forgotten to put away from the party last week (I invited myself, but I didn't come -- I know when a party's gonna be boring) and leaning precariously against the too-full ash tray. It really wasn't my fault that what happened then happened -- they were, after all, *Denise's* butts in the ashtray, and if she begs off with the excuse that she hasn't smoked since December 4th and it's now almost May...well, she *knows* my house-cleaning habits. Anyway (oh yes, I forgot to mention way back there when it was relevant that I just *adore* Denise's butt, but that's not longer important...), anyway, the whole plethora, various and sundry and all, slid from coffee table to bowl of potato chip crumbs (also party remnants), tilting *that* bowl past equilibrium and sending the whole mess, books, cokebottle, butts, ashtray, and potato chiplets onto the sleeping cat. She woke up furious, claws out.

Later that night, I found one relatively unhurt book. Evidently the fates meant for this one to be read, since it was neither coked, clawed, chipped, or butted. It was:

*ISLANDS*, by Marta Randall. Pocket Books, 1980.

The title page gives a previous copyright of 1975, by which I assume it has been previously released in hardcover. However, I seem to have missed it until now.

I chastise myself.

Randall takes a not-too-original idea for a premise -- yeah, yeah, *all* ideas are old. Everyone in the world is immortal. But one. Not too unbelievably, this bothers the protagonist. The Treatments haven't worked for her, and in the world of eternal youth, she is considered a freak.

A fairly staid idea thus far. But what the lady *does* with that theme (exclamation point). Point One: Marta Randall can write. Point Two: Ms. Randall (sexist check: would I have written *Mr.* Randall? Maybe...) has an ability to handle sex with a



sense of reality. She neither emphasizes or ignores the subject. Because of this, her characters act realistically. The relations between the characters are important -- if everyone were youthful, how would that one aged one be treated? Point Three: *Tia*, the protagonist, is believable -- the book wouldn't work if Randall hadn't managed that feat. Yeah, that could be a corollary of point one, but who's counting?

The book is introspective -- the chapters, for the most part, alternate between present time and flashbacks. There is not much overt action. All the progressions take place internally. This is probably gonna bother the blood-and-guts school of readers (who sometimes seem to be sadly predominate in sf). But believe me, this is a Good Book. Read the damn thing.

Do not let it be fouled by chip dip.

There was very little dip (for the completists in the readership -- green onion, with a little garlic added: your breath most closely resembles a three-day-dead Italian, but the TASTE...) on one other book, and the dip was on the cover. It wiped off fairly readily. There was a tomato smear on the last page, and the coke had runneled down the spine just a bit, but it was readable. The blurb on the front was subtly altered by a bit of stubborn blue fingernail polish (I've yet to figure out just *who's*) to read: "In case you had begun to think that the language has yielded up all its treasures, read...and be assured."

That made me curious enough to go look up another copy just to see if the publishers weren't engaging in a bit of literary underselling of an unusual sort. They weren't -- trust publishers to have no sense of humor -- for it read: "...read *THE ENNEAD* and be reassured. -- WASHINGTON POST BOOK WORLD" That, ahh, reassured me for a moment, until I began thinking about it. Should I be reassured that my thinking was correct -- the language has yielded up all its treasures? Whichever way it was meant, that blurb needs an addendum.

So we have: *THE ENNEAD* by Jan Mark. Pocketbooks, 1978.

Not too up to date, are we? Well, there is value in hitting an occasional unread book of the older persuasion, for I would have been sorry to have missed this one. (Damn, not a killer review in sight this issue...DENISE, GIVE ME SOME BAD BOOKS!) *THE ENNEAD* (defined as "a group of nine" on its own little separate page) is a fine and entertaining read -- not your basic Heavy Literary but more of the Subtle Undercurrent. You have, not necessarily in any order: a delightfully odd society structure, a bumbling police force, an oblivious rich master, an ambitious but hopeless servant of the ORM, a resourceful, intelligent and strong-willed offworld woman, and a host of minor characters.

The book is unfair. It grabs you by being light and frivolous and much fun, then slowly heads in the direction of serious while you're not looking. By the time you realize, you no longer care.

Sneaky. Nasty.

Quibbles: it bogged me down a bit in the middle section -- the writing seemed to get a bit murky, though that may have been the residue of the coke stain. And there are too many characters in too small a space -- most never seem to get far enough beyond the caricature stage, and that hurts the final sections.

But don't believe me. Read it, and then tell me I'm full of crap. See if I care.

You'll never get invited to one of my parties.



SHIKASTA, by Doris Lessing, Knoph, 1979:

The first book in the trilogy with the overall title *CANOPUS IN ARGOS: ARCHIVES*, it is an account of Earth and her inhabitants since the time of the stone age, as seen by the benevolent Canopean Empire from another galaxy.

The novel has inspired such comments as "She (Lessing) has never been more preposterous, more difficult...or more worth reading" Kirkus; or "I disapprove of this novel, but that doesn't mean I didn't enjoy reading it" NYTBE; or "brilliantly conceived and executed...an essential purchase for fiction collections" Library Journal. This is the kind of story that Doris Lessing produces, holding up clearly and dispassionately our human failings and strengths, but yet not without compassion and a little humor. The author's style makes this somewhat difficult going at first, but after adjusting to it, the reader is in for an intense and absorbing journey. Whether the reader accepts the "premise" that benevolent, virtually immortal beings helped develop Earth through a cultural "lock" and "Substance-of-we-feeling" (SOWF), or not, Lessing carries it off well, making the book's format that of Canopean reports and excerpts from official "documents" (Earth and otherwise) used in a "training manual" for students of Canopean Imperial Government. The multi-viewpoint approach lets the reader see Shikasta from the view of a compassionate yet detached Canopean and from various Shikastans and Shammat agents, balancing "inside" and "outside" observations. *SHIKASTA* is a very emotional book written mostly in an unemotional style. Lessing's remarks about man are often stinging with truth, yet often kind and gentle, and in the midst of destruction, she still points out the beauty of a moon-lit pond, or a happy face. On the whole, this novel is draining but rewarding reading.

*THE MARRIAGES BETWEEN ZONES THREE, FOUR, AND FIVE*, by Doris Lessing, Knopf, 1980:

The second in Doris Lessing's trilogy, *MARRIAGES*...is a serious, thought provoking, and yet delightful fantasy.

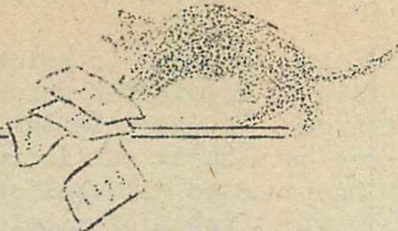
While author Lessing does return to one of her former themes: sexual politics, it is not the major theme of this novel, but rather its vehicle. Each zone, separated by plains or high mountains, represents another step toward the Canopeans, the virtually immortal beings who tutored Shikasta (Earth) in the first book, although the book's characters do not know this. Through this analogy, and the book is full of them, Lessing portrays man's striving for spiritual growth and unfoldment. Through the characters Al-Ith and Ben Ata, she shows the necessary give and take between higher and lower -- to the betterment of both -- and then the results of passing it all on to zones in each direction.

Turning from the form she used in *SHIKASTA*, that of "reports and excerpts from official documents" about present day Shikasta to a format of pure fantasy "narrated by the Chroniclers of Zone Three", Lessing makes *MARRIAGES*...less difficult reading, but no less involving or enjoyable a story. The characters and settings, while fantasy ones designed for analogy, are real and believable, drawing the reader close.

Although *MARRIAGES*...will attract readership because it is *SHIKASTA*'s worthy sequel, it is complete as a story in its own right, and can be enjoyed without reading the other.

Marcy Schimmel



locs locs locs 

Mike Glicksohn, 141 High Park Avenue, Toronto, Ontario M6P 2SP, June 28, 1979:

In an effort to be in the vanguard of those attempting to teach you how to edit a lettercolumn more tightly I shall endeavor to keep comments on the fourth GREIGHMARGIN to a minimum. (Anyone suggesting that my departure tomorrow morning for a nine week summer holiday has anything to do with this proposed brevity is a churl.) This will not be easy as your fanzine just naturally contains a plethora of meaty comment hooks for me but for the sanity of fanzine readers everywhere I'll do my best.

Damn good issue, Denise! [[Obviously, a lesson well learned. Probably too well. I just noticed the date on your loc and realized that Steve and I celebrated our fifth wedding anniversary while you were typing away. We probably had more fun.]]

Eric Lindsay, 6 Hillcrest Avenue, Faulconbridge NSW 2776, Austrailia, Sept. 26, 1979:

Thanks for Graymalkin 4, which arrived yesterday. Magnificent (I refer to the time taken for delivery of the June issue - can't have you getting too impressed with yourself as an editor).

I really like the hand drawn contents page; makes a zine look more personal than offset otherwise allows. Which is not to say that I would object to offset used as effectively as it is in Graymalkin (I must also commend Tanya for her mastery of the occult powers of the offset press - I could never get mine to run that well.) [[I'm sorry to say that Tanya didn't print that one...she has since sold her press. However, Marla Gold did work out a deal so that we could do some work for her boss in exchange for printing privledges. Since then Marla has quit her job and Bowers and I have had to seek other sources. He's gone to a quik print place and I'm trying mimeo...we'll see which works out best.]]

Stephen had a childhood. That seems vaguely unfair, for I don't recall having one. Logically enough it should be there, it must have existed, but only fragments of memory remain. I have a feeling that I must have enjoyed primary school (I got good marks there), but by the time I had been in high school for a few years it all seemed a pointless drag. I recall walking out of a chess club there, tired of the game. I don't actually recall playing any other game. I know I totally ignored organized sports, sticking my nose in a book whenever they occurred. Then it was time to find a job, and they were much alike, and equally silly, so I took the one that appeared to promise the maximum time off. You know, I don't think I played games until I found fandom. And the reason fandom does not pall is that it is ~~un~~un-organized. So what is Stephen proposing? He is bloody well proposing organising to the extent of having a set of rules! Fie on you, and your rules. And if you think I'll comment on the road to well...[[I myself have never been active in sports or other games. Being a product of parochial schools, we did not have gymnastics until highscool, and then very little. During gradeschool the boys had football, but we only had occasional exercise sessions, due to the Kennedy fitness proposals. This is one of the main faults I've found with the parochial schools. That and the lack of musical training...I still can't read music, tho that's partially my fault. I have also pretty much given up on D&D...while I thoroughly enjoyed our weekly excursions into Steve's dungeon for their socializing value, I found that I almost resented the committment required to remain active.]]



I'm glad that Bill Bowers has given up giving speeches...it means I don't have to worry about missing them. Mind you, since they get reprinted ((before he even gives them)) missing them probably doesn't matter much, except to me and Bill... and he will probably forgive me, even if I won't.

But Bill does raise a number of points, mostly unimportant, in his non-speech, and with the devotion to trivia for which I am so justly ignored, I've decided to mention the answers. I don't insist, mind you, that these are correct answers... but as the actor said about publicity, any answer is better than being ignored. For instant, what happened to Bill Mallardi. Obviously he fell in love with CB, since this gave him a wider range of people to be uninhibited with.

There is the matter of the CFG being composed of drones, and Bill being the *idea* man. All very well, but when are you going to produce your one idea?

Probably related to shutting Lou up - they obviously mean in the laundry, because they can't keep him quiet. He even talks in his sleep...or so Bill tells me.

I don't intend to listen to Bob Tucker tell tales of how he introduced people. The last time he intrc uced me to a beautiful stranger I was very inpressed by his kindness, and turned round to thank him, but he was already gone. How discrete of him, I thought, until I turned back to the beautiful stranger, only to find she had been taken away by Tucker.

Mike Glicksohn's letter mentions death, a topic I avoided in locs, and a topic I avoid thinking about. If I have to think about it, I tend to fall back on C.D. Doyle's contention that the human race will beat death. I keep hoping for that, but even if we do, I expect it will only be for the time serving conformists. I have no experience to go by. My grandparents and my father all died when I was too young to appreciate what it meant, before I was six years old. None of my friends have ever died; part of that comes from having predominantly young friends, part of it from spending the first 20 or so years of my life increasing my distance from the rest of the human race. There is a song, from Simon and Garfunkle called "I am a rock" that expresses my world fairly well. At least, my world until relatively recent times. Actually, I am wrong, for in the period in which I started to re-enter the human race, I did have one friend die, an old man named Pat Terry, who some older fans may remember. It wasn't unexpected, and I was 300 miles away at the time, so the loss was somehow made more remote. However, I don't really feel a sense of loss now, for my faulty memory blurs everything to a background, and does not let me relive most of the events of my life. I suppose that is a help, in a lot of situations. I certainly don't want to find out how I'll react, but can't help noting that most of my friends live far away (probably copyright Leah Zeldes or Lynn Parks), and thus there is little sense of immediacy in my communications with them. They are still, I hope, going to be the same people (even if they have new interests and changed appearance) a few years from now. There is no sense of time pressure in communicating. Maybe that is enough to distance a person somewhat from a death among fans.

Or maybe I'm just failing to overcome a hard won insensitiveness. [[I have very mixed emotions about death and cryonics. On one hand I can see the value of work like what Carolyn and Anna and the other cryonics people are doing, but am uncertain as to what actual benefit it might have. Where if the time and money were put into disease and/or health research we might find it unnecessary to develop life prolonging devices. And then there is the idea of overpopulation...what are we going to do with a race of potential immortals? MAYBE we'll start looking into space exploration and colonization if we're forced to, but we also might find other ways of eliminating ourselves, which might not be all that pleasant. I myself have no real



fear of the immediacy of death, particularly my own. I have no wish to die unnaturally or in the near future but feel that when my mind/body has reached its limit I will go somewhat willingly, if not regretfully. This is very easy to say at 26 when a long future seems to be stretching out before me, and if I were in poor health I might long for a method to sustain life until a cure could be found. But since it seems unlikely that such a method will be available in MY future, I don't intend to worry about it for now. That probably sounds very selfish and is not meant to be so. I am very much concerned with the future of my potential children, but don't feel that a constant pallor must always be hanging over us, like the Sword of Damocles. We shouldn't have to be concerned for our future every waking minute. Neither should we pass the buck, because if we're not concerned, no one else will be. Solution? I have none, which is why the cryonics people will go on doing as much research as their funds will allow and I will go about making the world better for myself and potential children in my own way.]]

Like Mike I don't think I've ever cared enough about anything to pick a fight to defend my ideals, and being a 140 pound weakling doesn't encourage me to change that. However, I suspect that if someone were to pester me for long enough, and cause me enough trouble, then I would fight. I can't imagine that happening in argument, for I'd just wander away, but I fear more and more that sometime or other some official body will tell me I have to do something I don't want to do, or tell me I can't do something I've decided to do, and when I ignore them, things would inevitably escalate. When it comes to doing things, I tend to be stubborn rather than sensible. I can foresee trouble with the council if I decide to build a house to my design, rather than in the dogbox style they require. And many years ago there was the problem of conscription, to which I would have reacted exceedingly violently, had I been picked by their bloody ballot. When I get sufficiently depressed, as I do every year or two, to consider that the whole world is agin me, I feel very ill equipped to deal with officialdom in my usual charming and troublemaking manner. I am more inclined to tell them to take a quick trip to hell. This can be predicted to cause problems, especially if the official is from the police, or some other organisation into discipline and other similar deviant behaviour. My reaction to this, when depressed, is likely to be that violence begets violence, and I've got guns and explosives too. Not very sensible.

Your response to Jodie Offutt's letter is just perfect. You were right in your editorial in saying that what you publish shows where you are (if I may use the modern vernacular). I had intended to write, somewhere in this letter, a little complaint that what I wanted in your zine was more of you, but you do come through from selection and reply. The bit that really hit home was of going to the Curry's for a fix of fans. I'm sitting here, many of these days, trying to work out my priorities. I really can't stand work, and just have to get away from the idiocies and time wasting of it, but while I long to travel and see my friends again, I also want a long term solution to the problem of work getting in the way. Since I haven't the sort of talent Steve has, I don't think I'm going to do it by writing, although I do think I could manage to gather a small amount of spending money by writing. As far as I can see, this means I have to get an independent income. I can't see myself winning a lottery, or the like (they keep telling me I'd have to buy a ticket first), so that means thinking a way to an income. Renting places seems the best idea (I've always wanted to be a slum land lord), and I even own this house here, designed to be split into two apartments. So I then need someplace to live, cheaply. I should, therefore, not fly overseas, but instead buy a block of land, and design and build an exceedingly cheap house on it. That is a real menace, for I want both, and they are just totally incompatible. As well, neither situation really includes any deep human relationships, one through brevity of contact, the other through isolation from groups. I can stand living that way, but don't think it exactly desirable.



On "latent hetetrosexuals", I recall being somewhat surprised about being propositioned by a certain male fan in the hallway of the Royal York, during Torcon, back in 1973. My first Worldcon, so I didn't know how to react, so I politely said I wasn't of that persuasion. That was unfair, because I just didn't know whether I was or wasn't, having had only a single childhood experience with another male. Social conditioning, of course. I've since become convinced that I'm not bisexual, but that is also based on damned little actual experience. Considering that I find it remarkably hard to care about women, no matter how beautiful, if I don't already enjoy their company as friends and in conversation, I'm probably still letting an enormous element of social conditioning enter into a decision that sexual relations with men are not for me. *[[One of the things that makes me sometimes uncomfortable in a bisexual relationship is not really knowing how to begin. There seem to be less rules, which is good, but it also makes for many faltering steps along the way. Consciously or not, I think we all play games at the onset of a relationship, and find myself not really knowing how to flirt with women. There is more fear of rejection, and more self-consciousness on my part, especially physically. And there is also the thought that all of the little tactics you've learned growing up about how to "get a man" will probably not work with a woman because she's probably been taught the same ploys and can see right through yours. This should all mean that bisexual relations should be more honest and healthy. Tain't necessarily so, but I'm working on it. I'm finally realizing that the most comfortable sexual relationships grow out of friendships that are solid enough to overlook the flaws and eliminate most of the role/game playing. Denise is finally growing up.]]*

I find myself tending to avoid re-reading works that induce melancholy, such as George RR Martin's "A Song For Lya". I find that I am sufficiently prone to depression that such a story can plunge me into a depression, rather than melancholy. Against that, I find it hard to be impressed by the "moronic good cheer" that George mentions. Maybe I should stop reading fiction (I gave up reading newspapers long ago)

Praise for me from Roger Reynolds? How strange. I certainly don't see how he could consider that I have an insatiable thirst, considering the moderation I show in pubs, bars and room parties, as you would well know...

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Barney Neufeld, 3357 Silsby Rd., Cleveland Heights, Ohio 44118, July 19, 1979:

Tje Bowers cover is nice. But, Graymalkin's tail should be inside the Circle. (Yes, I know it's supposed to be a giant "puffball of doom", but it's so much more fun to imagine it a Circle of Power.) Otherwise, the magic won't work right - and could be extremely dangerous. I'm surprised that a familiar of Graymalkin's obvious talent and quality would permit so potentially catastrophic an oversight to creep by. *[[Unfortunately, I don't do 'em, I just print 'em.]]*

The article on Lou was interesting. But, again, I'm surprised that Don Ford didn't mention the one sure-fire way of shutting Lou up for at least 3 seconds -- light his cigarette. Of course, residual hearing makes the gap sometimes difficult to detect, but it is there nonetheless.

I want to read Steve Federle's poems in the context of a father's death. I'm not sure if that's intended or if it is just my preoccupation with that general topic left over from last issue. It would fit the first poem easily, especially if the "speaker" is either an extremely perceptive 5-year-old or an adult reminiscing about their childhood reaction to "daddy's" death. (The second is the more likely since most 5-year-olds wouldn't understand the situation this well, and as adults we tend to greatly romanticize our childhoods.) The second one at first appears to contradict this view, seeming to describe a father viewing his new-born. But, its last lines clearly speak of the after-life, with the ancient images of death it references. The third poem, however, is most difficult to place. The couplet is reminiscent of Robert



Frost's famous two-line "Secret" -- and just as enigmatic. All in all, I liked these very much.

Stephen's article on gaming was utterly fascinating. I never got into games as a child. (My fantasies were quite content to be fulfilled on Mt. Olympus or adventuring with Dr. Dolittle.) I suspect in part because there weren't a lot of other kids to play with where I was young. When I finally did start gaming (in Junior High), Chess proved too subtle for me. But, Bridge. Now, there was (is) a game you could sink your teeth into. The power of thirteen little pieces of cardboard is absolute. You need a certain recklessness combined with a steady nerve and a careful arrogance to successfully play this game. Bridge is a cutthroat game (on any but the party level). I've seen more anger, frustration, and just plain nerve cross the Bridge table than any other situation in which I'm ordinarily involved. And Stephen is absolutely right. Little on earth is more serious than The Game (whatever game it is).

Bowers was right. "This is not a speech." ~~I'm not sure what it is~~ At any rate, I enjoyed reading it. But, I don't really know the people he's talking about (except Lou) even as legends; so about all I can do is say "Thanks Bill" for all these impressions.

One of my favorite people ever is Jodie Offutt. We rarely say more than "hello" in passing, but she is the one bright memory of the single (and utterly dismal) Chamban-acon I've attended. Her article here shows one of the reasons why. She's one highly perceptive lady. Her observations on "the business of fandom" and on those who keep us in business are right on the mark. It's about time they received the recognition they are due. (Perhaps at convention banquets the head table (at least) should give them a pop-top-can salute when they are introduced. Or committees could start awarding medallions signifying their membership in The Order Of The Twist-Off Cap.

Anger, guilt, shame, whatever one wishes to call it, Michael's reaction to the death of his mother is fairly typical (so I've been told) no matter what the specifics of the situation. I think I was lucky enough to escape this phase when my father died for two reasons. First, his death was a totally unexpected freak accident. Second, I learned of it at 3 am (after getting to bed at midnight), 6,000 miles away from where it happened. (He died while I was on Active Army Service in Germany. I couldn't really comprehend what the Night Duty Officer was telling me at the time, and after the 30 straight hours it took me to get home (12 of those in the air) I was really too numb to feel much of anything. By the time I could, it was too late for guilt.) I do think I'll have to stick around for Michael's wake, though.

I don't usually look at bacovers. Much too much a symbol of finality for me, especially when I'm really enjoying what comes before. But, Harry Warner reminded me to this time. I'm glad. Not only is it excellent (though it's been partially ruined by my clammy hands clutching too tightly as I was reading), but it is unusual. I've seen only one other picture of unicorns fighting. I know unicorns are the gentlest, most peaceful creatures in all the world. But, it is paradoxically these exact qualities which make the fiercest, most effective fighters. (Take a really close look at most of the martial arts. Behind the board-breaking, you often find a philosophy stressing inner peace and contentment. As with many things, our Western culture seems to have assimilated the form here while ignoring--or missing--the essence.) *[[Marla Gold seems to have a rare talent for catching the essence of a creature, particularly if the creature is a horse or close relation.]]*

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Arthur Hlavaty, 250 Coligni Avenue, New Rochelle, NY 10801:

I had to look up and see what I was talking about in that reference to Glicksohn's loc.. I was trying to say that spelling it "condomnation" was deliberate and shouldn't be changed in the interests of mere correctness. *[[This could get ridiculous, Arthur. I had to look up my comments to you and then look up your reference...]]*



Phil Wright, 91 Jameson Ave. Apt. #706, Toronto, Ontario m6k 2w9:

Once, ~~long, long ago in a galaxy far, far~~ in the fery dawn of time, when man was but a newcomer to this once great planet, there lived a strange and rare species. The flatulus, because of a rude diet composed mainly of haricot beans, had developed specialized internal organs. These could distend to enormous volumes to accomodate the large quantity of methene gas produced by this diet.

Due to low body mass and a high conversion rate of solid to gaseous matter the creature was generally lighter than air, and so was able to float 'twixt the surface and the clouds of it's native world. It could release some of it's gas supply, making a distinct and recognisable sound, and so sink earthwards. Merely converting some of it's volatile food stuffs to gas caused it to rise again. It moved on the eddies and currents of the wind, maneuvering by use of large webbed feet.

Unfortunately the rate of gas production was fairly slow, hence an animal, grazing in one of the great haricot groves that once covered large areas of this fair land, could not rise rapidly in order to escape a predator. This lack of mobility, not improved by the creature's immense bulk, made it extremely vulnerable. Like the chicken, the silly thing could not run quickly enough to get away, and so became one of the staple foods of early man.

Man first encountered the flatulus in an area known as France. The members of a french nomadic tribe were sitting round their camp fire, discussing liberty, equality and fraternity, when one of the creatures drifted over the hot flames. The resulting explosion was somewhat spectacular, and small pieces of cooked meat scattered over the startled tribesmen. They immediately started inventing gunpowder whilst munching on the scraps of seared flesh. A discussion then ensued concerning the genus of the odd creature. Some claimed it was a bird, because it flew. Others argued that it had the red meat of a land animal. Still others suggested it was a fish, using the air instead of water to swim. 'C'est un poisson', these people countered (being the only ones that were truly french). The argument between these latter two groups was never properly resolved, hence the saying: "One man's meat is another man's poisson'." The other group were not overly concerned, as they considered it fowl!

(The rogue too well is payed with good inventions. Tacky, very tacky.) *[[The only reason I printed that atrocious pun was to make everyone else suffer as much as I did whild reading it.]]*

Gregg T. Trend, 16594 Edinborough Rd., Detroit, MI 48219, March 3, 1980:

Re Steve's column in #3: Unconscious feelings of high anxiety about an emotional subject (a crisis situation) often produce the conscious response of joculariry. There are ethnic jokes, sexist jokes, and, now, death jokes.

Perhaps, death is merely transition. When someone you once loved dearly dies, the grief can become so overwhelming you cannot deal with it.

A woman I lived with for two years died because she found it an impossible task facing maturity and responsibility. I faced the inevitability of her dying; of her placing herself in a position where I, or her well-meaning friends, or somewhat distant family couldn't help anymore.

Thus I found myself responsible for identifying her body in the County Morgue almost ten years ago.



Later that year (1970) a close friend died because he felt overly guilty for the death of his step-daughter earlier that summer, from the complication of bacterial meningitis and a genetic blood-disease. (That was how she contracted the meningial infection after a bout with the "flu".) He ceased to be interested in living. He died from a kind of pneumonia.

Last year, a former lover died after fighting leukemia for over a year. She had just passed her 35th birthday. I was so perturbed over the fact of her dying that I could not visit her in the hospital and could offer condolences only over the phone to the man who was her husband at the time.

Sudden death or lingering dying are crisis situations I find I do not deal with very well, when it has been close to me. I cannot joke about it in the abstract. I think closeness, loving someone, brings a grieving and irreparable loss when they are irretrievably gone.

In the first two instances, I thought over and over: there must have been something I could have done to stop them. However, no matter how self-centered I sometimes am (a common attitude among artists), I realize that I am not Fate, I am not God. I had been only one factor in the lives of those two and I arrived rather late on the scene to have much of an effect. Of the third, my empathy was in conflict with other feelings I had toward her.

From an objective, empirical view (my own experience with them), suicides fall into two categories (plus a mix of these two): 1) Those who cannot cope in anyway with their problems in this physical existence we call "Life"; 2) and those who are so angry and frustrated by their anger that they choose suicide as a means of punishing those who were "supposed" to love them but somehow failed in this need, that is, to come up to expectations of the suicide.

If making one feel "guilty", that is, not being responsible enough to save these people from their own hand was part of their goal, they succeeded, but only temporarily. "They'll be sorry when I'm gone and love me more than in life," is a reason I've seen quoted in articles about the subject. The perplexing thing of it is, from my own experience, is that those who die really don't want help. They are devious in the extreme. They will put themselves in a position where those who could help are no where around. I've had ten years to think this over and feel now that I was foolish thinking I could prevent or intercede/interfere in their decisions.

I hope my going on at length with this subject isn't too depressing. At least, Steve doesn't seem to be too depressed by the subject (viz. his column.) *[[Fortunately I have never experienced death quite as close at hand as you have, and I hope that I never am put into a position where someone close to me is contemplating suicide. I think it would be a normal reaction to try to intercede and to feel guilt if your attempt failed. The fact that it is totally illogical has nothing to do with it. As an empathic being one cannot help but get involved. That's what scares me so much about this situation. You can become so involved that your own health/life suffers as well.]]*

The Bowers' "Not-a-Speech": The best I've actually heard was the one he delivered at Confusion 6 or 7. That actually got me to laugh aloud. And the structure of a Speech as an aural fanzine was clever, if not inspired. Who gets to print that one? *[[Bill has to print something in Xenolith!]]*

Interesting what a good job of writing a man (and great Fan) to whom time, in the philosophic sense, is of such importance can write such a coincidental piece about the curricular aspects of some events in fandom. It's always a pleasure to read a



Tucker essay, even a short one.

Jodie Offutt's essay was okay, tho not too original in its observations. Reads like something belonging in a program booklet *[[If Jodie's article belongs in a program booklet, then it was appropriate that it appeared in G#4, as it was a special Midwestcon issue. Something neat that happened at NASFIC as a direct result of that article...Larry Propp walked up to Jodie at the CFG suite and handcuffed a briefcase to her wrist with the letters S.M.O.F. emblazoned upon it. Unfortunately, I was without a camera when I finally came across Jodie. Anyone out there take a picture of that one?]]*

Linda Michaels drawings of cats are much appreciated. Steve's work has an interesting mystery about it: the landscape forms melding with the human-creature characters is an excellent approach, tho more thinking about light/dark contrasts would help. Mike Streff's work is Okay, tho he could stand more attention to anatomy. Even working in a comic-book style this can be important. Having seen Marla Gold's bacover as a full-color painting at Midwestcon in '79, the half-tone loses much of the original's charm and technique. Unless very contrasty, full-color paintings really reproduce well, especially on a matte offset stock.

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Laurie D. T. Mann, 381 East Second St. #1, Chillicothe, OH 45601, Jan. 24, 1980:

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"I am a firm believer that bisexuality is by far the sanest way to be..I am so heavily indoctrinated with male/female relationships that I have a difficult time merging from them into bisexual relationships." Me too. Though I'm not really attracted sexually to women, I do like looking at Renaissance painting or *PLAYBOYS*. I almost feel though that we might almost push ourselves into bisexual relationships without really being ready for it. I have a friend who tried to enter into bisexual relationships with other women and found them highly unsatisfactory. A few feminists practically imply that a woman cannot be liberated until she liberates herself sexually from men. I'm in strong disagreement with this undercurrent attitude. We must be free to choose our own lovers, whether we be totally hetero, totally gay, or bi. *[[I have absolutely no interest in liberating myself from men. I enjoy them too much, sexually and socially. However, I do think that women have to learn to be comfortable with each other, not necessarily sexually, in order to be supportive of each other. How many women do you know (myself included, sometimes) who are most comfortable socially with men? Maybe because there's less competition, or more game playing, or whatever. But much of the "socializing" I've seen among "mundane" women tends towards domesticity, or jobs, making babies and the like. Very little political talk, or "intellectual" gatherings. I have fallen into this pattern at times and am sometimes appalled at the drivel that masquarades for conversation at gatherings like baby showers and the like. I find myself avoiding them with a vengeance.]]*

I need to quibble with Arthur D. Hlavaty's line, "An Orthodox Jewish upbringing can be about as strict as a Catholic one..." Orthodox Judiasm has always seemed to be about the strictest religion a person can belong to. On top of the very ritualized services, there are the thousands of dietary and living day to day laws Orthodox Jews are supposed to live by, as listed in Dueteronomy and Numbers in the Old Testament. When Catholic women start taking ritualized baths once a month, and cannot sleep in the same bed as their husbands two weeks a month, maybe then I'll believe Catholic and Orthodox upbringingns are about the same. *[[I also don't believe that the upbringing is similar...even the orthodox catholics that I've known were still not as strict as the orthodox jewish families. However, I think Catholicism messed up more minds than Judiasm. Where the jewish laws may have had some validity at one time, most of the catholic regulations are/were whims of the papal monarchs.]]*



Arthur Metzger, 1171 Neeb Road, Cinti., OH 45238, June 25, 1979:

Gee, Steve, all the truly brilliant things I've done to confound and amaze you and you single out the silly elf. You didn't even mention that it was on the first expedition and we were all novices. And after all, I'm directly responsible for making Dorian a saint. Short and pudgy, am I? And everything else you said was so accurate.

Excellent letter column. It made the issue for me. #3 was obviously a well-received issue by everyone. I just can't understand why there are so many names I don't recognize.

Bowers' cover was lovely. I saw the original in my quick run through Midwestcon and wished I could have bid on it. The same goes for Steve's dragon on page #43.

As I've told you in person, I thought the review of FAERIES was excellent, and was quite surprised when I saw who wrote it -- no memory of it at all. Also love the illo on page #16, by the way.

Nothing much more to say about this issue, but I hope to see more Denise back in the next one. *[[Truthfully, I felt that there was more of me in #4 than there has been in any of the previous issues. I put in more hours on that issue and this one than on any others, and even though the editorials may be shorter, and there might not be a con report, or review, I feel more confident with my editorial abilities. Someday I would like to feel more confident in my writing abilities, or at least come up with original ideas that I can follow through with. ]]*

Carolyn "C.D." Doyle, 1949 N. Spencer, Indianapolis, IN 46218, Aug. 28, 1979:

I love the cover, and told Bill so the minute I saw it. (Then I wondered why he kept telling me to look at the ToC to see who the artist was!) Steve's drawing of you for the editorial is very good -- would I be correct in assuming this is a Denise I don't see much of? *[[The drawing was taken from a picture of me with my contacts in, something I haven't done since Hippotocon in 1977, as a matter of fact. God, I didn't realize it'd been that long! Hopefully, I'll be able to wear them again because glasses are a pain in the neck.]]*

I really enjoyed the piece about Lou. Our friendship began in November 1977 when I wrote him as a "faceless" midwestcon attendee, and asked for a ride to Chambanacon. I've often wondered why he said yes!

Raul Garcia Capella, 217 W. Grand Avenue, Alhambra, CA 91801:

Thanks for reprinting the article on Lou Tabakow. As a fan who goes back to the late '40s, I'd of course heard of (and read letters by) the Legendary Lou. Then had the pleasure of meeting him at a LASFS meeting several months ago. Unfortunately, I didn't get a chance to talk to him as long as I'd have liked.

Though I abhor sitting down to most board games (they're good for demolishing a party in 1/4 time), found some very funny stuff in Stephen's article. Reminded me of Shelley Berman's classic line on Monopoly: "It's that surge or thrill you get when you know you've wiped out a friend."

Particularly enjoyed Tucker's "Time Binding" article, as well as Jodie Offutt's. Along with Salmonson's, the Offutts LOCs were standouts 'mid the others. Though I've never met him, Andy's one of my favorite people, and he more-or-less knows why. Wish there were more people like 'em out here.

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Joni Stopa, Box 177, Wilmot, Wisconsin 53192:

Reading Jodie's article about the real masters of fandom made me think. You know she's right! My daughter made her debut as a secret master at about age 8 by helping us ice down a bathtub at Midwestcon. When she was 9 or ten, at Noreascon she automatically iced down the tub in her room. This seemed rather foolish to us as we weren't going to have a party. Shortly thereafter some friends came to the door and wanted to know if we were planning to have a party. After I explained that we weren't, they said that they wanted to but the air conditioning wasn't working in their wing. The party supplies were brought to my daughter's bathtub. We had a fine party that night.

This makes me wonder if my daughter wasn't a bit "fey". Sensing the need for a fully iced tub when it was needed. It could be that the people who ice tubs really aren't smofs but conjurors, setting out the bait that attracts a party. *[[Joni, in case I didn't tell you in person, the donation was/is greatly appreciated.]]*

Jan Brown, 16711 Burt Road #302, Detroit, MI 48219, June 27, 1979:

You've managed to catch one of the most delightful essences in fandom, the deep affection expressed through a lively exchange of insults, the incredible closeness that is this outsider's impression of the CFG.

All the reminiscences and revelations about Lou Tabakow remind me of a winter night in 1976, shortly after I moved to this apartment *[[Lakewood]]*. A relationship that had been souring since spring had disintegrated once and for all, and I was feeling bitter, depressed and angry. Then the phone rang. Oh shit, I thought, just what I need, a wrong number or some twit collecting for a charity.

But on the other end of the line was a well-known raspy voice asking for me!

Lou was passing through Cleveland on his way home from visiting his son in Canada, and why didn't we go someplace for a drink? I was in a foul mood and only wanted to stay home and be miserable, crawl in a hole and hide and have no more to do with fans or fandom. Somewhere along the line, though, Lou must have taken to heart the salesman's motto that "the sale begins when the customer says no", because out we went. He had actually brought me a Christmas present, a calendar of sf art with lots of old Frank R. Paul covers and good stuff like that, and he lent me a book on Transactional Analysis (which I faithfully returned when I next saw him a year and a half later), and we talked for three or four hours, until I finally remembered that it was a weeknight and I really should get some sleep...And during my gaffiation, guess who kept sending me flyers for Midwestcon and Octocon?

Lou is special -- without him I might have forgotten there was such a thing as fandom

Umm, I seem to recall that I used to know a non-pejorative word for a woman who enjoys sex with many men. "Nymphomaniac" has connotations of compulsiveness, not enjoyment, and "whore" isn't accurate at all -- I've read that many prostitutes are actually lesbians or otherwise don't really enjoy sex. Unfortunately, I've forgotten the word I'm trying to think of, or even where I found it -- it may have been in *I WILL FEAR NO EVIL*. An aside observation is that there's a big, big difference between the woman who dislikes herself and has sex with a lot of men in order to "buy" acceptance, and the woman who loves herself and the men she shares herself with so much it spills over. *[[I keep wondering why we have such strong tendencies/needs to label ourselves and others. Why can't we just take each situation and each person on an individual basis instead of making generalities? Sorry...feeling*



somewhat maudlin right now. I like your observation...too bad more people don't see that difference.]]

It's a strange thing, but taking note of Mike's digression on house numbers, I just realized how many Neat People live at addresses with incredibly low numbers! Of the Neat People of my acquaintance, I can think of: no number at all, 6, 121, 141, 37, 47, 19, 423, 713, 250, 576, another 47 (seems like a very popular number), and 864.

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Marty Cantor, 5263 Riverton Avenue #1, N. Hollywood, CA 91601, July 29, 1979:

I notice that GRAYMALKIN has been having a discussion of violence, death, violence in Science Fiction novels etc. I also notice that there are a plentitude of cat illos in your zine. Cats and violence are not unrelated, you should know. Hmph. Cats (the so-called domesticated kind), wolverines, and humans share a trait that is rare in other parts of the animal kingdom - that trait being a love of inflicting pain. Physical pain. Most carnivorss go about getting their food with some sort of efficiency and dispatch, making their kills as rapidly as possible so that they can get down to the serious business of eating. This behaviour is found in the big cats (lions, etc.) Domestic (?) cats, though, have a sadistic streak in their natures, and they will drag out the killing process. There are some humans who enjoy torture. And wolverines are known to kill anything that they can kill - even when neither hungry nor endangered by that which they have just killed. (If you sometime want to look into hell, just go to some zoo and look at a wolverine that is looking into the crowd of humans - its eyes (especially if it is looking directly at you) will scare you to the very core of your being. I am an animal-lover type of person, but there are a few species for which I have little appreciation. I suppose that the only reason for the existance of cats is as incipient catburger. I am continually amazed at the wide-spread acceptance of cats within fandom. I guess that Mike Glicksohn and I are amongst the few fans sane enough to realize that cats are mostly worthless critters. Um - if I can ever afford to get out of this apartment and buy another house I will probably buy a wolf. I have known several people who have had pet wolves - wolves are intelligent, tractible, and friendly. And enough of this subject. [[Interesting, my dictionary gives another name for wolverine - glutton. Humm.]]

Let me compliment you on your lettercol. On the whole the letters were interesting - and there were many of them. Cutting Locs is always a chore if your are sending your zine to interesting people who write interesting letters. Naturally, one's lettercol grows and grows. (As does the expense.) I am one who loves long lettercols. If your feeling about lettercols is similar to mine you will probably find your lettercol growing to the limit of your finances. Incidentally, I do like your listing of the Loccers on the ToC - I have received a little static for doing same in HTT. To me, listing the Loccers on the Toc page has about it a sense of rightness. [[As I stated in the editorial, response is the main reason I do GRAYMALKIN and in some cases there has 'een as much as if not more content in the lettercol than else where in the zine. Besides, this way you dont have to thumb through the zine to find out if anyone you know has locced.]]

Whilst I do not wish to comment at length on the articles, I do want to say that I fully enjoyed LOU TABAKOW by Don Ford -- would that I could get such material for HTT. What I would like to do is to gently chide you for your misguided correction of Eric Lindsay's spelling. You must understand that words like 'colour' and 'honour' are not properly spelled unless they do have "u's" in the proper places. It is so many of us sloppy colonists who do not know how to spell. [[The only problem I'm having with British spellings is that on some words I can't tell if they're misspelled or just British spelling. Phil Wright and Eric both spelled organization with an 's' instead of a 'z'. I also noticed a couple other words I wasn't sure about. Oh,well.]



Mary Cowen, 801 S. 18th St. Columbus, OH 43205, November 10, 1979:

The entire #4 did wonderful things to me, but Steven Federle's poem stopped me cold. "If stars loom too large, is not my window too small?" Cold shivers of delight!

On the other hand, there's Steve's story on page 9. Awful, just awful. I loved it.

Bob Tucker's article gets to me every time I read it. I've had a lot of time binding in my own life -- my Favorite Fan Friend taught at the school I attended, though 2 years after I left (had I stayed I would have been in his class), and I think I even met him while visiting; and another friend's cousin married a good friend -- we were both at the wedding but didn't meet then. Seems like Fate kept throwing us together until we took the hint.

Anybody who's tempted to accuse fandom of being trivial should certainly read #4's letters column. Death, love, sex, anger. I was frequently inspired to stop and think about my own involvement with each. I've found that fandom has drastically changed the way I deal with and express my emotions. I've become much more physical of late, but I find myself shuddering with slight horror when I stop myself from touching someone because "they might not understand" the gesture. And I get nervous when a fan I've just met, usually a friend of friends, wants to hug and/or kiss me; does it really mean anything? Alas, I, too, am a product of a Catholic upbringing, of which I've mostly cured myself. But the effects remain, and I find myself feeling guilty about the silliest things. I'm perfectly happy to do whatever pleases me without asking anyone's permission, but I get awfully nervous if anyone notices that I behave, er, differently. Although at Octocon (the real one, 1979) we all got a good chuckle when Bob Lovell, he of the Fantastic Footrubs, commented, "Can you imagine going into work Monday and when someone asks what you did last weekend, telling them that a man wearing moose antlers sucked on your toes?" Yeah, might as well do what I want to, because nobody will believe me anyway. *[[I remember being in that jacuzzi at Octocon and having my feet attacked by a moose in Lovell clothing. I think that was the best jacuzzi party I've attended...and the fact that we were able to stay there till dawn or so made it even better. (Though I got waterlogged about 6:00.)]]*

Back to the real world...I enjoyed the reviews at the end of the zine, and even agreed with those of books I'd already read (and, I believe, yes I do, that Lee Stevens is not Steve Leigh, but then I've believed as many as six impossible things before breakfast). However, I can't quite figure out what a nude woman, no matter how beautifully drawn, has to do with ALIEN (antithesis?). That, too, was a good review, anyway. *[[Well, ahem, you see Steve thought that since ALIEN was an R rated movie, it deserved an R rated drawing. (You're allowed to show tits but no genitals). However, if it had been rated X it would have been obscene.]]*

Luke McGuff, 2217 N. Hoyne, Chicago, IL 60647, August 10, 1980:

Yesterday the zine arrived while I was involved with overcoming a burst of creative enthusiasm. Don't worry, the doctor says the scars will be almost invisible in a couple months. But the ironic thing is that I couldn't think of any comment hooks! That was strictly my fault, I assure you. So I read the zine again and found out the clues to the ancient mystery: Stephen Lee is Rex Oz, and it's actually George S. Howard who's the clever pseudonym. Other than that, I was struck by the imminent revolution in Cincinnati fandom. I mean, there's your reprinting of the Don Ford article, and then Bill Bowers' not-a-speech. So there is a tideswell, nu? Or perhaps just a group joke. Sometimes it's hard to tell with tight fannish groups. *[[The imminent revolution is a group joke. Sean Curry must be all of four years old, so by the time he's ready to take over we figure Lou will be well ready to retire as resident dictator. By then Sean will have had plenty of time to attend the Lou Tabakow School for Dictators and Other Non Sequiturs]]*



As you promised, the local was long and stimulating. There was a lot I'd like to comment on, but locking locs seems somehow redundant (like being a "faanish fanzine fan"). *[[Personally, I find the locs the most stimulating part of a fanzine and with GRAYMALKIN it usually amounts to half of the zine, so you're missing out on opportunities to put down Glicksohn, comment on mine and everyone else's sex life, ponder the mysteries of Scarecrow Rex Oz, and a plethora (Steve taught me a new word.) of other subjects. If the purpose of a fanzine (well, this one, at least) is to get response and maybe a bit of interaction between the readers, it hurts the gestalt of the zine when people fail to comment. So, I don't find it redundant to loc a loc.]]*

Well, one thing: Mike Glicksohn said that it's hard to make jokes about tragedy that's personal to one, but that isn't the case in my family. When my mother was sick a couple years ago, the ICU nurses would give us funny looks when we talked about investing in the company that makes all those plastic tubes they stick into sick people (Like IV, plasma, Levine tubes, oxygen, etc.). Our stock would have appreciated just from what they used on her.

I think humor in the face of tragedy is a kind of distancing device, that takes us a couple steps back from the overswelling of depression we would otherwise feel. Some might think it unfeeling, but I think of it as humbling. Even this event, that means the world to the people in it, still is kind of a joke. Um, that's about a thousand times more depressing than I meant it to be. One can't take necessary actions in such cases as mortal illness or death, and the humor relieves a little tension to make the action easier to take. That's what I meant.

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Linda Ann Moss, P.O. Box 203, Minneapolis, MN 55440, September 26, 1979:

The Bill Bowers piece is his usual excellent quality which as usual inspires little or no comment from me. Hey, I just had a thought...When you replace Lou with Sean I know a city north of you that just recently had its dictator abdicate (in favor of a colder climate) and he'd have even less work to do there. There wasn't any when I left which was just the way I happen to like things to be run. Not much in the way of fandom either but if you don't attend the non-meetings you'd never notice anyway. He could even probably do a better job of mayor also. Hm.

I personally am heterosexual by choice. I have thought about bi-sexuality and have come to the conclusion that being raised Roman Catholic has certainly done some strange things to how I view sex. I have been in triads, both of which were 2 women and one man, and at times I felt slightly uncomfortable but I suspect it was more "this is something new" uncomfortable feeling than my rejection of bi-sexuality or homosexuality. I have never been directly propositioned by another woman (contrary to what it looked like at Minicon) and have never found another woman who I found sexually attractive to me. I guess I am just too male oriented in my thinking and feeling. *[[There is nothing wrong with being heterosexual, but bisexuality definitely helps in 'triads'. If two of the three people are afraid to touch each other because they'll be thought 'queer' than it basically becomes two people making love to a third, which might be fine for the third party, but really limits the other two.]]*

I think my major complaint about the Catholic School System after 12 years of it was, OK these nuns and priests have found their calling in life and are happy, but what can they teach me about going out into the big wide world and living. What can a nun teach about family living and sexuality when all they have known for the last numerous years is a closed life style? Closed to the outside and what is happening. What does a nun or priest know about sexuality and marriage? No more than I could learn from books. My last few years in their system were one frustration after another as we tried to get the HS to prepare us properly for going out into the world and being better adults. They failed miserably as far as I am concerned and it took a few years to unlearn all the garbage I was fed by them.



I know I got a better education (slightly) than if I had gone to the local public HS but it sure wasn't as well rounded as it could have been. [[The Catholic HS I attended was apparently more liberal than others. Or it was in the process of changing from a very strict all girls school to one under the influences of the modern teaching methods that were currently in vogue. While I don't feel that segregation of males and females in HS is a normal, healthy atmosphere, I do know that I was less worried about competing for the guys and more worried about my grades because of it. I also was more comfortable around women, at least until I got out of school and was told that walking down the street arm and arm with a girl friend was "queer". Also, my school had a large percentage of lay teachers, so the nuns were not as strong an influence as they might have been. I was taught to question, but was told I was not allowed to question the pope when he talked of contraceptive matters, or when he said it was okay to be gay but you weren't allowed to practice. Some of the nuns I had were very receptive to talking about sex and other (at that time) important things and there was the time I went to bed with the priest who held our retreat (but that's another story, and not quite as bizarre as it sounds.) and, when in my sophomore year I went to confession and told the priest that I would no longer come to confession to say that I'd made love with Steve because I didn't feel it was sinful, he told me that I had a valid point. I never went to confession again. So, my catholic HS wasn't quite as stifling as it might have been. Most of my misinformation came from gradeschool, where the only thing we were taught about sex was that if we had a male teacher we could just walk out of the room if we started our period. And that the boys weren't allowed to tell us what was talked about when they were separated from us for "sex education". (Steve still won't tell me.) But, by what Mary Cowen tells me about the films they were shown in grade school, I guess I should be glad that the nuns didn't try to do more damage. Of course, if I'm a prime example of the type of person my HS produces, maybe everyone should start sending their kids to public highschoools.]]

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Mike Glicksohn, 141 High Park Avenue, Toronto, Ontario M6P 2S2, June 28, 1979:

As previously expressed, this fourth GM is a most readable fanzine indeed. Undoubtedly I am prejudiced in that it is by and about so many people who are very dear to me but the sheer volume of the responses in this issue shows that I'm not alone in finding crisp printing, your own sense of clean attractive layout and the advantages of Steve's calligraphy and artwork, it is not wonder that CLAYMARGARINE is one of the better-looking fanzines I've seen lately. This, of course, is in keeping with the fact that you are one of the best-looking fanzine editors I've seen lately. (That would not be a compliment if I'd restricted it to Cincinnati since in Cincinnati Quasimodo would be one of the best-looking faneds but I was referring to fandom in general.) [[Bowers will be terribly upset by that remark.]]

While I think Steve has a way to go yet in his actual artwork (although it is by no means poor and better than a great deal of what passes for art in fanzines nowadays) I admire his graphic sense and his calligraphy enormously. His Table of Contents is a delight and helps start the issue off in a most impressive fashion. And much as I hate to admit it, he draws excellent silhouettes of cats. I can only hope that he takes actual kittens, crunches them up even smaller and then traces the result! [[Actually, Anna and the other IABS people have been sending us bits and pieces of cats they've dissected and Steve's been learning cat anatomy from them. Then we've been saving the remaining parts for the MWC banquet this year. Yumm.]]

Tabakow and Ford must have been the Bowers and Glicksohn of the 50s: I still recall a few people being really surprised that Bill and I even talked to each other, let alone were close friends. You'd think fans would be able to use their broad mental horizons to distinguish between real animosity and fanzine schticks but it often isn't so. Come to think of it, now that Bill and I don't insult each other as much as we used to there really isn't a team to carry on this long-established fannish



tradition. I'd suggest that someone in Cincinnati undertake the task but the trouble is you need two people who are friends and that rules out the whole state of Ohio! *[[I don't know, Mike. I really hate to see you and Bowers break up the old team. It's like seeing Laurel and Hardy, Abbot and Costello, or Timmy and Lassie split. Please reconsider.]]*

Steve's article is once again the highlight of the issue, not only for the quality of the prose but for the insight into human nature that is wound throughout the entire piece. Goddamn that man is good! *[[Steve has occasionally amazed me with the way he can read people. He has often said that all he has to do is touch someone and can tell if all is right with them. I have never been able to hid anything from him, which is why we've always had an honest relationship. It's sometimes quite scary.]]*

I am, of course, somewhat of a games-oriented person myself although I don't expect you to have noticed that. I've enjoyed Risk quite often (although I prefer to start in Australia where everyone leaves you alone until it's too late to stop you) and expect that if I ever played a third game of D&D I'd be so irrevocably hooked on it that I'd have to abandon either sex, liquor or poker which is why I avoid the game completely! But I've not had much experience with many of the other board games. Beyond Monopoly, that is, which everyone plays as a child. In every game that I do play, though, I play as competitively as possible. This is different, by the way, from playing only to win. Winning is almost invariably more fun than losing but usually I don't mind too much if I win or lose (unless there's money involved which makes for an entirely different view of things) as long as I've tried my best and given my opponents a run for their victory.

One time I earned ten bucks as an impoverished out-of-work grad student by taking part in a psych experiment. Two of us were shown a simple game and told to get as many points as possible in a given time limit. It involved moving coloured pegs around a board and didn't take too long to figure out. I proceeded to win just about every round and easily had the larger point count. What never even occurred to me until it was pointed out by the person in charge of the test after I'd asked just what we had been doing was that if we had worked together as a team we would both have ended up with more points than either could get as a victor. The purpose of the test was to examine the competitive-vs-cooperative nature of humans and they certainly picked the right subject! *[[As is probably already evident, I have never been a very competitive person. Games are lots of fun, but when I see two people who are supposed to be in love with each other start tearing each other apart during a game of Risk I begin to wonder about the 'spirit-of-competition' (as opposed to the demon of cooperation, I suppose.). I'm not particularly competitive socially, either. Which is why I'm not usually jealous of Steve's relationships with others, and not much of a threat to other people's relationships. (At least I hope so.) It's also the reason I'm still working at the same non-competitive, low paying, unfulfilling job that I was nine years ago. So much for not being competitive.]]*

If Steve keeps up these short Feghoots of his a new word is going to pass into the fannish cant "Sleigh", pronounced "slay", meaning "to violate all standards of good taste in punning." People will remark of true groan-inducers, "that's so bad it'll Sleigh you." Boy, some people will stoop to any lengths for a small bit of immortality.

Bill's ~~affectionate~~ putdown of Lou is archetypical Bowers material: esoteric as all hell but lots of fun if you belong to his circle. It's also nice to see him broadening his targets for insult and innuendo after years of picking on me all the time.



Of course, he needs five or six replacements to get off the same number of good shots but that's the price you have to pay for using inferior materials. There's just one thing I don't really understand, though: am I to take it that Lou is supposed to talk a lot? I've never really noticed that, and I've known him for ten years. Of course, most of the time he's talked to me I've fallen asleep but even so...

I've never really known exactly what "timebinding" meant and I can't say I've got an exact picture of it even after reading Bob's article but at least I've got one eofan's view of it. I'd hate to think I have to be in fandom for a minimum of 23 years before I can timebind though! That's too many, meyer. (I always thought timebinding had to do with remembering and recreating the best of the past without losing sight of the future but I'm probably wrong. Maybe someone else will react to what Bob says and we might be able to come up with a clear definition.)

Jodie is very right about the oft-overlooked importance of those who devote so much of their time to ensuring that the social aspects of fandom run smoothly (which is only one of the reasons I always volunteer for beer, booze or ice runs) but I think she overdoes it a bit with the comparison to the so-called SMOFs. Sure there are fans who like to argue fan politics and convention organizing more than they enjoy relaxed partying but if there's any one fan who fits Jodie's dismal description even remotely I've never encountered him.

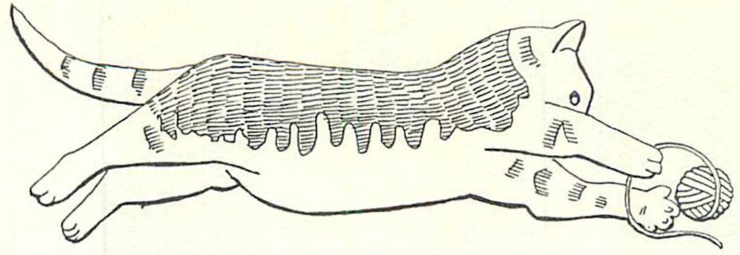
Hey! I'm not at all sure I like the way you're tying me in as an accomplice to this scheme of yours to pass off Lee Stevens and Steve Leigh as two different people. If I say nothing about these assertions of yours that I shared a room with Lee Stevens at IGGY then people will take that as tacit acceptance of your claim. Yet if I deny having so shared a room you'll turn around and accuse me of forgetting yet-anotherconvention' and fans being fans, they'll believe you! Either way I lose and is that any way to treat a person who by inspiration and by contribution is one of the mainstays of your fanzine? *[[You have my humble apologies, Michael. If Lee had told me that you wanted to keep that night at IGGY quiet I wouldn't have mentioned it.]]*

Odd that BEB should mention that famous unprinted GoH speech by Scarecrow since I asked the fan who managed to obtain it if I could get it for XENIUM only a few days ago at MWC. I was told that it had been sent to yet-another faned who seems equally unlikely to publish it and at this time no-one seems sure whether a copy is even extant. I sure hope so because Brian is correct that it was one of the finest speeches ever given at a con and I'd love to read it somewhere, sometime.

Although it obviously isn't a facot in Jodie's case I expect that one reason fans tend to be quite physical is that conventions provide most if not all of their opportunites for physical contact, whether sexual or otherwise. I know I live alone (by choice) and don't socialize too much (also by choice) and it doesn't bother me to admit that the great majority of my closest friends are fans and the great majority of the opportunities I have to express that affection occur at cons. So I tend to be pretty physical in convention situations hut it's generally a controlled and directed type of behaviour. I don't grab total strangers just because they happen to be fans and I'm feeling in a good mood. (I've occasionally been on the receiving end of such unwanted pseudo-affection, though, and I've never known how to handle it. When someone I don't evenknow approaches me and asks for a kiss -- or doesn't even ask but starts kissing me -- I usually go along with it. Even if it isn't any fun, I figure it won't hurt me and anyone that desperate for affection needs a break every now and then.)

This could easily have been twice as long. And I bet you, I, and ~~a thousand~~ ~~dozen~~ both the other GM readers are delighted it wasn't.





Scarecrow Rex Oz, Box 69, Barrington, IL 60010

This is (once more)  
winging its way  
Punctuated  
(so to speak)

a two page poc  
from the SRO.  
with cutting remarks  
it makes its point.

swl

Dear GRAYMALKIN:

Since you plan to cut some locs, I felt  
DPL might like it if I cut mine now  
This's how to do it, as you can see  
Slice diagonally; save the left half  
However, your editor may need  
some periods. Here you are:  
Now, O GRAYMALKIN,  
just why wouldn't you talk?  
the SCARECROW REX OZ

2

you and dear  
to help you out.  
from this card.  
and toss the right.  
(chuckle, chuckle)

.....  
we have a fresh complaint:  
I mean to your pen-pal  
when you met at Archon?

SCARECROW REX OZ

WAHFS

Roger "R2" Reynolds, Darrell Schweitzer, Ed Sunden, Chet Clingan, Gary Mattingly, Harry Andruschak



