

GRAYMALKIN

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getting familiar

I've just been reading G#5 and the date on it is April 29, 1980. *sigh* I really did plan on having this out long before December, 1981. That's over a year and a half between publication! No wonder I get complaints about continuity gaps!

Well, I really can't promise to do better in the future, because who knows what lies ahead? But I *can* promise to try. In the meantime, just so you folks out there don't think I've forgotten about you, I just want to say how important your feedback is to me, and how much I appreciate the artwork, poetry, and articles I've been receiving. "Oh, and don't forget the fanzines you've been

getting in trade" said my conscience. I *do* enjoy trading fanzines, but I am very negligent about writing locs (blush, blush), which is a terrible thing for a person who thrives on feedback to admit. I *am* pretty good about giving verbal locs, or hugs, or whatever to people who I run into at conventions, parties and the like, though Bowers still yells at me because I don't send him locs. (I *did*, however, send one to Dave Locke, which no doubt irritated the hell out of Bill.) Time is also a factor...I've been getting so many fanzines since I started pubbing that I don't always have time to even read them all (at least not right away) let alone loc them. So, the trade policy still stands, but forgive me if I don't respond.

I just noticed that in my last editorial I stated that mimeo should lend itself to a more regular schedule of publication. That must have been written while I was still optimistic about the AB Dick machine we have at work. I have never had so many problems with a fanzine, or with any mimeo work I've done. Fortunately, these problems have been solved with the arrival of Jackie Causgrove's Magic Mimeo Machine, and her willingness to ~~be suckered into letting me use it~~ avail both it and her time to local faneds. In fact, I'm anticipating her having to help me a lot more than she knows, because I haven't the faintest idea how to run her machine (though I expect I'll learn before we're through.) So, thanks in advance, Jackie, for all your help, and your electrostenciling and advice at all hours of the day and night. And for the illos you did for Dave's article, and for offering to do more. I'll try not to abuse the offer.

And while we're on the subject of thanking people...Steve has been wonderful. Not only does he proof read for me, he, along with Bill Bowers, set up the reducing program for my loccol (sounds like a diet) and does calligraphy, artwork, and graphics. He also puts up with my ever-changing moods while I'm working on this damn thing. I'm the first to admit that I am a true bitch to work with, especially when it's *my* project. I feel perfectly free to accept the help that he gives me, but am not very good about taking unwarranted, though well intentioned help or advice. I like to ask. However, the mysterious person who I am also likes for Steve to

be a mind reader when it comes to picking up other duties around the house. The poor guy can't win. But I love him, and couldn't/wouldn't want to do without him.

And, in case you didn't notice, we no longer have to borrow Bill's Selectric, thanks to a good deal we got from a good friend, who shall remain nameless. But let us not assume that because Bill's typer is not being used his presence is not felt...yes, folks, Bill's back with another one of his "not a speech"es to amaze and confuse you, or at least let you come to worship him...he is the "cult object of the midwest" c Ted White, after all.

And I really do have to thank George R.R. Martin for suggesting to Ken Keller that he let me use his Ambercon III speech. My only real requirement was to try to have it out before Ken's next issue of *TRUMPET* came out, and as of this date I'm still ahead of schedule. Oh, and thank you too, Ken. It's a fun speech.

Along about Halloween, I mentioned to Dave Locke that as long as he was out of work he might as well write some articles for me, since he never has time for such things when he's working. Well, not only did Dave give me the enclosed article, but a fantasy as well. And it's a good thing, cause Dave's busily at work on a new job and probably won't have time for such nonsense for a while. You'll have to wait for the Fantasy Issue to find out what secret lurks behind that straight mask Dave Locke wears. *

Some people might say that was a plug for the Fantasy Issue. Well, they might be right, though I don't need a lot more material. However, if you wish to have your secret fantasy revealed for all the world, or at least fandom, or 250 members of it, I am planning to work on this issue right after G#6 gets mailed out. I'm not setting a definite deadline, but if all goes well, it might be out for Minicon. So the sooner you get your fantasies in the better. Just in case I publish on schedule. In any event, the Fantasy Issue will be the next issue of Graymalkin to come out. Whenever that is...

And yes, Linda, I'm finally using the cover you so graciously made for me so long ago, and the bacover is by Mike Streff, a local artist who many of you will be familiar with. And there's the lovely drawing by Ray Capella, which I'm using to illustrate Billy Wolfenbarger's poem, *AZZ*. Many thanks to all of the interior artists, and Stephen for his headings. Once again we have a poem by Steven Federle..I have a large file of Steve's poetry, but I haven't had anything new from him. Are you still writing Steve???

Oh, yes. Then we come to the loccol. Many of you have written in with advice on how to cut down my page content without cutting down my word content. Well, this issue's loccol is the result. It is an experiment, so we'll see how well it works this time.

~~~~~

Lots of things have been going on since last issue...some of you may have noticed Steve and Ro doing the Cosmos and Chaos show at a couple of conventions. Well, the past year has seen one hell of a lot of juggling in our house and the Lutz-Nagey's. It's been a lot of fun, for the most, along with some headaches. It's difficult not to get involved in the act, especially when it's going on around you. Thus, Lin and I have been a part of the show in the form of "the lovely assistants Linda Darnell and Linda Darnell". Though in part I think their reason for using us is to assuage their consciences for monopolizing so much of our time with the juggling. But that's okay...I don't think I will ever be a juggler. Oh, I've *tried* juggling. I can even do a reasonable three ball cascade. But



I very quickly got bored with it. I proved to myself that I could juggle if I wanted to, but it didn't mean more than that.

Steve and Ro (and maybe Lin) like juggling. They like the competition, the thrill of performance, the ~~scary~~ scares of juggling dangerous objects. I think it's wonderful that they enjoy these things. I even enjoy watching them perform, and worrying about whether they'll get hurt, or bomb. Your basic maternal complex. But I don't care about the juggling. I care about *them*, and how the juggling effects our lives. Steve, at least, understands.

~~~~~

The above led me to thinking about the lack of direction I find in my own life. Oh, I talk alot about things I want to do, but that's all it is, mostly. Talk. I wish I knew what I would do if I was given the opportunity to fulfill my life anyway I wished.

I recently read an article about the trouble husbands often have when their wives decide to go back to school and make a career for themselves. These were basically families that were ready to accept the fact that wife and/or mother might want a career of her own, at least in theory. Most of the problems seemed to deal with changes in routine...getting used to not having dinner ready on time, or having to share housework, etc. Pretty basic stuff, really. Most of the women were expected to perform their daily routines along with taking classes, studying, working, whatever, though some cooperation did exist. Often, the women don't even question the fact that they are expected to do both...they just do it.

Another major problem is that the women find it difficult to decide what they want to do, and it's hard to turn your brain back on after years of doing very mundane things. I guess most of them at some point decided that they wanted to be wives and/or mothers, probably in high school when their male counterparts were deciding to be doctors and lawyers. Now they are asserting themselves and having to go through what should have been a highschool or college decision. They are also faced with the "you're too old to start a new career" syndrome. "If you wanted to be a doctor, why didn't you do it years ago instead of trying to get into med school at 35?" or the ever familiar "there are too many young people without jobs, or too many family men without jobs, or your children need a fulltime mother" or whatever. But despite all the difficulties, women are making things happen for themselves.

When I think of the possibility of starting a new career, or just going back to school, I get scared. I'm 28 years old and I really do want a child, which means sometime soon; but I also want to go to school, or at least do something different with my life. Of course, having a child would be *very* different, I suppose. Anyway, Steve is willing to accept most anything I want to do, so the decision is mine. I only hope I can motivate myself enough to do something about it.

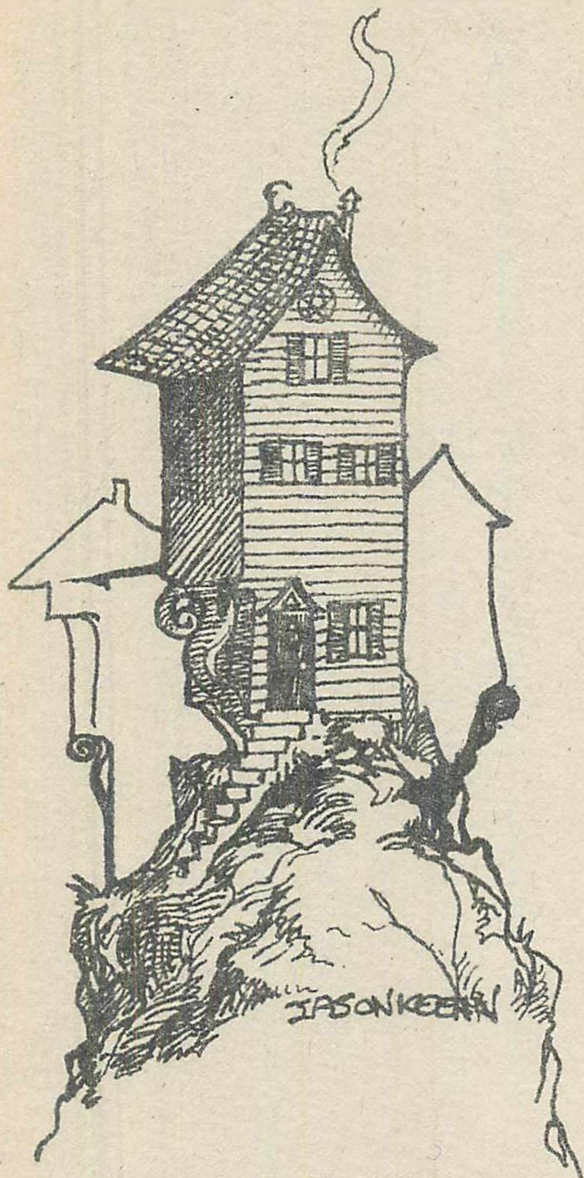
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And for a change of pace, an essay, of sorts on unwanted nightmares, or

## THINGS THAT GO HACK IN THE NIGHT

Thanks to the generosity of my friend, Frank Johnson, Steve and I recently attended the Cincinnati premier of HALLOWEEN II. (No, Cincy isn't that backward...it was sometime around Halloween, even.) I had seen part I on a friends VTR, and while I can't say I enjoyed the film, it was competent enough to make me sit through part II. I remember feeling nervous about driving home the night I saw the first film. I kept looking around





and jumping at shadows...something I'm certain would please John Carpenter to hear. However, once I got home I felt safe, comfortable, secure. It was only a movie, after all.

But Halloween II was different... whether it was because this was shown on a large screen instead of a t.v., or whether I was just more susceptible than usual.

This was a radio station promo, so most of the audience was non-paying. Also, most of them were drugged, drunk or otherwise mind altered. They were very rowdy and very obnoxious. But I whispered to Steve (who hadn't seen the first film) that if this one was half as scary, the crowd would soon settle down. And it didn't take long ...after the first fifteen minutes the howls in the audience were replaced by nervous titterings. (Sometimes it's nice to see loud mouths confronted by things that shut them up.) As the film went on there were actually screams from the audience.

Meanwhile, I was starting to feel more and more uncomfortable. I hadn't remembered the first film being quite as explicit in its butchery, and it just kept on getting worse...

Steve knew I was upset, and told me not to watch, but the e's something so compelling...

And if I could have gotten out of my seat without climbing over half a dozen other people I would have left. Instead I sat, gaze transfixed to the screen, my grip tightening on Steve's arm till I'm certain it must have hurt, muscles so tense that when I

finally tried to relax them it was almost impossible.

Afterwards, in the restroom, I kept seeing shadows, wondering who or what was in the next stall, around the corner, in the back seat of the car...Steve says he just detaches himself--analyzing as the film progresses. I can't seem to do that. I get much too involved. I am probably the type of person they like to make movies for.

I am not a "scardy cat". I love good horror films, scary rides, and ghost stories. I am not the type of person who's afraid to be alone at night, or out after dark. But this film made me nervous. I didn't want to be away from Steve at all. I couldn't seem to get that film out of my mind. I kept hearing "Mr. Sandman" and jumping at shadows. I didn't have nightmares, but everytime I'd close my eyes I would see Michael Meyers sticking a knife into someone or hear that song. I almost made Steve trade sides with me in bed so *he'd* be near the door (every woman for herself.) Even the next morning found me a bit jumpy.

I think what bothers me most about this type of film is that it isn't supernatural horror, really. There are people out there who go beserk.



Maybe they're not "evil incarnate" like Michael Meyers was in Halloween, but they can do as much physical and emotional damage.

It's not that I don't think films like this should be made...obviously people like them or they wouldn't keep flocking to the theaters. (Though this one doesn't seem to be doing too well at the boxoffice..thank heaven.) But I wonder at the mentality of viewers who constantly watch this type of film...Do they become so jaded that the constant butchery and horror becomes merely a joke? Admittedly, sometimes you *have* to laugh in order to keep from screaming, or getting ill. There is no subtlety to Halloween. *Nothing* is left to your imagination. I'm certain this is not uncommon to this genre, though Halloween is the first such horror film I've seen.

And what really angers me is that I let a film of this calibre take control of my emotions! Whatever happened to the imaginative horror film? Are monsters passe? Is *good acting*, and good, subtle direction a thing of the past? Even *ALIEN* relied heavily on misdirection, though it wasn't as gory as Halloween. Special effects are nice, but when that's all there is to a movie...

Obviously, this is not meant to be a review. I haven't got the technical background for that. This is meant to be a gut reaction to a social symptom I don't like or understand.

~~~~~

Once again I've been rereading my editorial from #5, and one thing I have learned since then is not to use dated material, like my special news flash about the nebula results. I really *had* planned to get that issue out sooner...

Well, I guess that's about all for this ish...hope you enjoy what's inside and I hope to hear from a lot of you soon.

Denise



Caterwauling

by Stephen Leigh

Turtles look pathetic when dead.

That turtle was the first pet of mine to die -- at least the first to which I felt more than a

fleeting attachment.. I came out to the ammo box where I kept the several box turtles laboriously collected over the summer and found "Pirate" -- he had but one eye -- sitting very still in the center of the box, head extended, eye shut. The other inhabitants were clambering my way, to the pile of Japanese Beetles I'd plucked from my mother's roses for their morning snack. One of the larger males stepped directly on Pirate's head. There was no reaction. I knew Pirate was dead.

The knowledge changed my perception. I distinctly remember recoiling, moving my hands away from the box. I couldn't touch the corpse. Instead, I plucked a stem from the Dogwood and prodded the turtle. Nothing; the head lolled away, the blind socket staring at me.

I cursed -- probably "golly" or something equally innocuous; that was during the time when I knew God was listening raptly to every word I uttered -- and sat back for a few minutes. I began to reach in to pick up the dead animal, couldn't. I'd been handling it only the night before, but now I was unable to allow myself contact. It was tainted.

Finally, I pulled all the other turtles from the box, closed the lid, and went to the back fence. The fence overlooked a gully and a small copse of trees; the wall on which it was built was perhaps ten feet high. I opened the lid and, with a desperate half-swing, catapulted the body into the trees. I listened to it crash to earth.

I didn't go into that stand of trees for a month afterward. When I finally did venture in, I looked for the remains under the snarl of vines and dead leaves. I couldn't find Pirate's shell.

The afternoon I threw Pirate into the woods, I let the rest of the turtles go. My friends thought me crazy, since I had the largest and most varied collection of turtles in the neighborhood. Being the biggest and oldest child has its advantages: I gave them some wild tale -- full of altruistic rationalities -- about how animals shouldn't be penned up. If any of my friends detected the obvious hypocrisy in that (I still had the toads in the cellar window-well and the tadpoles in the bucket), they were judicious enough to be silent.

Many years later, in another woods, I stumbled upon the skeletal remnants of a box turtle. There wasn't much; the shell being an exoskeleton, the animal has few interior bones. At that time, I'd begun playing music. I gathered up the shell and bones, painted it in psychedelic colors; glued the shell closed with the bones inside, and used it once or twice on stage. It made a very mediocre maraca.

+++++

My reactions to death have always been varied and idiosyncratic. I tend to over-react in one direction or the other, either to be too flip or too morose.

Around the same time as Pirate, my great-grandfather died. I was dragged to the visitation, where various relatives trooped up to the coffin and dripped on the corpse. It's one of my more vivid memories -- heavily olfactory; to this day, sniffing flowers can bring back the cloying, overabundant sweetness of the funeral home. It's one of the many reasons Denise never receives cut flowers from me. To me, death is sweet.

Once, I stepped into the room where the body lay. I was at the far end of the room; the casket, overhung with bouquets, was in the other. I could just see grandpa's wizened head, pillow-propped. I stared at the profile. I probably stared too hard; his head started shivering, moving.

I fled.

I can still do that trick -- gaze at something until the eyes grow tired and imbue the object with motion. But it scared me then. That night, I thought I'd been blessed with a premonition. (I was going to be a priest at one time, too . . .) When I went to bed that night, I opened my window wide and pulled up the screen so that nothing was between me and the night darkness. I turned out all the lights. Then, very bravely, I waited for grandpa to show up.

All I got were mosquitos.

+++++

I don't really mean to be so consistently involved with death and dying in this column. It's just that two people have 'passed away' in the time since the last GRAYMALKIN, and both deaths had an effect on me. And since the column is nothing if not egocentric . . .

+++++

Tom, the drummer in the band, told me that his dog, Fletcher, had incurable arthritis in the hips, that within the next few months, Fletcher would become increasingly uncomfortable and clumsy, eventually finding that he'd be unable to walk. "Shit," I said. "You going to have him put to sleep?"

Tom didn't look at me but Fletcher. "No, I'm not putting him to sleep. I'm having him killed."

+++++

He was a small man, a head slightly too large for his body, a neck always too thin for his collars. He accentuated his shortness with a stooping, round-shouldered walk. The face was made specifically for caricature -- long, pinched, a bit hollow-cheeked, the nose prominent and hairy-nostriled, the mouth just a slash of lips, his short hair prematurely white. Not grey or blue-silver like an old woman's, but the stark white of bleached paper.

Mr. Massarella. John, to his fellow teachers. Rat, to his students. The nickname was affectionate -- he did bear a superficial resemblance to that rodent, but the similarities were all visual.

The name must set off errant vibrations in those that didn't know him; he had none of a rat's brutal cunning or mindless viciousness. He was quiet and incredibly gentle, the archetype of the English Professor, a bookish man with reading glasses perpetually dangling from the precipice of his nose; a desk littered with books and ungraded papers; the blackboard behind him layered with haphazardly-erased vestiges of earlier classes . . .

I first heard the news from a long-distance phone call. Odd, that; the news going from Cincinnati to California and back. "It's Nancy, Steve. I really don't know how to say this. It's John. Mr. Massarella. Steve's mom called to tell us. He died last night."

"Shit." I'm extremely eloquent when confronted with reality. "How'd it happen?"

"Heart attack. Happened on Christmas -- they took him to the hospital then. He never recovered."

It's trite, corny, and true that I sat there stunned. I thought about the fact that he'd never gotten to read the first novel, that now he'd never see the dedication I intended to give him in the second, that I hadn't gone to see him yet this school year as I usually did, that I hadn't remembered to send him a copy of the last story I'd published. He'd always asked, always been interested.

Shit. He'd tried teaching me the craft of words, and all I could do was curse.

Ro and Lin were down from Cleveland that weekend, a day or two before the Cincy New Years parties. The afternoon of the visitation, I tried to tell them why I had to go even though I've gone on record as being violently opposed to the idea of visitations, the 'laying-out' of the corpse. I told them that Mr. Massarella was one of the people primarily responsible for my thinking of becoming a writer, that he was one of the torch-passing teachers you encounter only once or twice in your schooling, the one you always look back on as the epitome of Teacher, the one whose words for some damned reason keep coming back and meaning more each time they do so.

I wasn't even that eloquent. I could only say the bare words, afraid to say more because I thought I might start crying. I'm a damned cowardly ass, I am. That was one of the more dishonest deeds I've done, not letting them see my emotions. A betrayal of John, who taught that until you understand frailty as well as strength, you don't understand humanity.

I went. I didn't last long. I went up to the casket, looked down at the husk of the man I remembered. He didn't look peaceful, he didn't look natural; he just looked dead. When my eyes began to make him shiver, I moved away. I stood in the room for awhile, trying to sort the mourners into their component groups: former and current students (too rare a commodity -- why didn't *all* his students feel the loss as I did?), other teachers, family. I signed the guest book and fingered the pipe in my pocket longingly. (I dislike smoking a pipe in public -- it looks pretentious. I smoke at home and when I'm nervous) Most of the family were huddled around a group of chairs in one corner, talking. Quietly, softly, one of them began to cry. The others hugged her, the infection of weeping spreading through their group. That did it for me.

I blinked once, very hard. Then I left.

I went home and juggled with Ro. Catharsis.

+++++

John died suddenly, unexpectedly. Lou didn't.

I didn't know Lou Tabakow well enough. He was always at the periphery of my fannish existence, a low growl of a voice like two rocks having an argument. Occasionally, we talked; never long, never very seriously, but pleasantly. He held opinions with the tenacity of a bull terrier, sometimes without the support of logic. He could be kind and exasperating and warm and contentious . . . But it's not my intention here to mold another tribute to him. Others have and will do that far better and with a larger experience of the man. Me, I would really have liked to have known him better.

I went to see Lou twice after his affliction confined him to the hospital and, later, a nursing home. He'd had a tracheotomy by that time, and he'd lost much weight. He was weak and frustrated. He couldn't talk, and was in constant pain. The first visit, I went in company with Denise and Frank and Ro. I felt uncomfortable, nervous, unsure of how to treat Lou -- in my mind, I knew that he was the same person I'd always known, yet . . . We talked to Phil, Lou's son, and I tried to include Lou in the conversation. He had a notepad by him. After a few minutes of desultory inanities, Lou picked up the pad and wrote in his nearly indecipherable scrawl: "You can't imagine the agony." I read, swallowed hard as the words started to blur, and passed the note to the others. Here is where, in all the scripted dramas, the heavy philosophy comes trudging in. Here the dialogue begins and the patient is made to realize the worth of his holding on, where he is shown that there's still much he can contribute.

No.

Here is where I mumbled and stuttered and gave voice to further inanities. My comfort for Lou was feeble and erratic. When we left, not much later, I was angry with myself for being so damned inept; I felt lousy because I could feel Lou's pain and couldn't do anything about it.

Denise and I sent him a card every week, but I didn't see him again for a while. Cards are a cheap substitute for time.

Rusty came down to see Lou. I went with Rusty to the nursing home. Again, Phil was there -- Phil had always been there. Again, I was uncomfortable in the presence of so much obvious pain. Again, I fumbled badly for words; groping, inarticulate. Rusty was excellent. I envied his seeming ease in the situation. We stayed for maybe an hour or more, alternately talking to Lou and Phil, reading the scribbles Lou would write.

I was glad when we finally left.

Lou died before I saw him again.

I probably don't deserve to miss him, but I do.

+++++

Denise came into the room and read the first few pages of the first draft of this. "Death again?" she asked.

Thinking I detected censure in her voice, I glanced up from the

typewriter. "That's not a good idea, huh?" (In the Canadian translation, that will be 'eh?')

She shrugged. "Noooo . . . It's just that you've talked about it before. Weren't you thinking of doing something else?"

"Not really. I mean, I started the thing about Mr. Massarella right after you told me to start working."

Another shrug. "OK." She started to walk away. "It's your column."

+++++

A survey ship captured an alien craft passing through our solar system just outside Saturn's orbit. In a sealed compartment in what seemed to be a deserted ship, the crew of the survey vessel found a living creature, a gelatinous, huge mass of slime with no visible means of locomotion and no features other than a large, toothy mouth. It was very hungry. The crew -- gingerly -- brought the creature back to the exobiologists at the Peking Zoo. There, a special compartment was built for the creature, approximating its atmosphere and gravity as well as could be done given the meager information gleaned from the derelict.

Despite the fears of the biologists, the creature thrived. It had to be hand-fed, since it lacked any way of moving food toward itself. Still, the creature did so well that one day it was noticed that the beast was bulging conspicuously, and not in a way that was thought to be due to over-eating. The bulge grew, day by day, with the press and scientists of the world eagerly awaiting results. The stories in the holocasts began referring to the creature as "Mother".

One momentous day, Mother did indeed give birth -- to a gooey clump of something pink and green. The handlers watched excitedly, but Mother did nothing to suckle her infant. All the medical help that could be given was to no avail. Slowly, the infant sickened. Mother would croon discordantly over the babe and nudge it with a stubby pseudopod, but Baby was visibly getting patches of raw umber and growing hard to the touch. One morning, it didn't move at all, becoming black and cold. The handlers removed the corpse as Mother wailed, a touching display of alien sadness that captured the heart of the world.

The very next day, the handlers found that a most disturbing event had occurred. When they entered the cage to feed Mother, the feeding poles passed right through her as if the creature weren't there at all, as if it were a projected hologram. The handlers were understandably puzzled and concerned. They could watch her moving slowly about the cage, yet any effort to touch Mother yielded nothing, as if she were an ambulatory vapor. The phenomenon was demonstrated for the exobiologists, none of whom could fathom a reason for the sudden etherealness of Mother.

The situation went on for over a week. Now there was reason for serious concern, for Mother was beginning to exhibit signs of malnutrition. Her moans and wailings were decidedly less strong, her movements were jerky and slow, and her color was paling. The handlers despaired, the biologists frowned.

So it was perhaps fortunate that one of the handlers, drowning his sorrows, was rather drunk the night he attempted to feed Mother.

Weaving, staggering, he entered the cage, squinting as he tried to decide which of the several images of Mother in his alcohol-soggy vision was the correct one. He chose at random, stumbled forward

and touched Mother!

This sobered him considerably. His surprise was heightened when he found that he was stroking what was apparently empty air two meters to the right of Mother. He could feel her flesh under his hands and, to one side, see her skin ripple under his caress. He tried feeding her: the food disappeared into the air while, to his left, Mother's body bulged as she ate. The truth came to him in a flash of belated insight. He smacked himself on the head, wondering how they could have been so stupid.

Obviously, the poor creature was beside herself with grief.

+++++

ABOVE BERKLEY

Past stone houses
along the dangerous road
we raced, top down
past the homes of the rich
laughing
we flew into the night
to the top

and when we stopped
the marchwind still filled my hair
and lifted my breath
high above the bright city
(its streets were like constellations
carelessly glittering
like diamonds
cast into black waters)

but walking past dark bulldozers
beyond the battered, red, warning sign
our laughter suddenly fell
startled by the silver presence
above the trees.

We climbed to the peak
as a halo encircled the full moon.

Silenced at last
we heard an almost-human cry

Nearly invisible, we saw them,
the plaintive, grazing deer.

--steven federle

Change is the one constant in my life.

Which is one reason why I have now, twice, pulled back things that I had given Denise to publish. It wasn't done out of spite; Denise is my friend and I not only understand some of the factors that come between her desire to publish, and her accomplishment of same -- I tolerate them...even though I never let things like that stop me...from publishing! And it's not because, as Mike so admirably pointed out, that I'm the world's most prompt publisher: I not only have an Earl Evers piece in my "files"...but also a collaboration between Bill & Dick Glass. (And I challenge anyone on Denise's list to date that reference. Anyone other than Dave Locke, that is...)

Not only did I finally find it advantageous to make carbons of everything I "write"--private and public--I learned long ago to "date" everything I write for publication: whether it's simply inclination, or a lack of professionalism, I simply do not construct pieces "timeless" for the ages. And while I rarely disown anything written, this is not to indicate total satisfaction with my work; sometimes the embarrassment is acute. When I do sit down at the typewriter--despite having fun with format and references--what comes out is generally valid...at that time. But times change and, in many cases, other things change in the interim between composition and publication. Drastically if often too mild a descriptive term.

The one solution would be to simply not publish a "dated" item at all; but that would require an order of discipline I choose not to apply to myself. Another would be to simply publish everything myself...but (even if that were economically creditable) I like being a part of *Graymalkin*. And so when, in the sum total of many factors, Denise procrastinates a bit too long with something I've "given" her, I simply pull it back, publish it in *Xenolith*, and promise to do something else for her when she gives me a(nother) definite deadline. Perhaps not the mathematical way to do things, but so far it seems to add up.

...that's probably the primary reason I don't write for many other fanzines: I like to not only have control over the basic appearance of my work...but when it will appear. All very selfish and egotistical, yes: but then, being a BNF, I am privileged to indulge my foibles...no matter how calculating they are.

The one Bowers-piece still outstanding (other than a scratchboard cover I did for Ben Solon in 1969) has me rather curious in that it already has by far the longest time-gap between writing and publication of anything I've done over the past several years. It was done in September of last year and, while I am occasionally tempted to pull it...and submit something else to *Energumen* 16...I probably won't at this stage. Of course, only I will know how well it "holds up" when it actually comes out...but I do find this rather curious behaviour from someone who published, and distributed coast-to-coast, one of my "speeches"...before I could even give it!

And that's the why of this being the fourth rather than the third "Speech A Not Is This". Just wait until next time, though; I feel this urge coming on, you see. Would you believe:

"Bill Bowers' First 'This Is Not A Speech' (Second Series)"?

Speaking, as we were, of strange alpha-numeric combinations...try this one on for size: October 25, 1981.

Obviously, now, it has been some time since the preceeding (plus three paragraphs) was written. In the meantime I've attended nine more conventions (with at least two more to go before this sees print), spent seven months on a job (that has become another-yet-the-same job) which averaged 6-day/58-hour weeks, published a fanzine or three, redefined a couple of relationships (and had one redefined for me), have probably drank more than Glicksohn and Haldeman combined (if not equal to my friends at the Drinking and Publishing Emporium) while remaining basically sober at conventions¹ (including another Worldcon), saw more movies while watching less television

¹ The key word here is "basically". That's what the deleted three paragraphs were about. But sooner or later... After all, the incident I chickened out of putting in the *Energumen* article, as well as one referenced therein...both appeared in print well before "it" did.

than I have in the last three or four years combined, suggested a Cincinnati three-way food-commune that lasted an entire afternoon, cried as Mike delivered the finest public vocalization of his life, have traversed every street in Findlay, Ohio, have fallen in lust with Veronica Hammel (but Elizabeth Ashley is still Number One), put my mark (if not my signature) on things that will be purchased by two to three hundred thousand people next year, found out that my green frog (the one with wings...and a black bow tie) is going to have a baby, did not receive a loc from either Steve or Denise on the Third "This Is Not A Speech" (but did find out that I was "the Cult Object of Midwestern fandom"), managed to spend one day at my own convention while attempting to explain to Rusty the "M"-factor, surprisingly avoided "leaving" the hotel Saturday night at a Worldcon, have seen more often and spent more time with people living a couple of hundred miles away than local friends (it's this thing I have about telephone answering devices, you see), missed a chance for free backstage passes when Marla said, "So who is Pat Benataur anyway...?", saw two previews of Raiders within five days... and liked it better the second time, spent a vast amount of the vast amount of money I made this summer taping Frank (Obligatory Mention) Johnson's record collection--then he refused to move. And on...and on. And on...including the important stuff, as well as this: ...all the while maintaining an emotional level rare for me--but "meeting" two neat new persons and reestablishing communication with two others...any one of which (except the obvious one) could upset the applecart if I'm not careful.

Life goes on. ...in spite of fanzine publishing schedules!

And *Energumen 16* finally appeared. ...of course Mike neglected to append the date my contribution to that predestrian effort was written.

...as I have done with the initial episodes of this undertaking. Internal evidence indicates that it was written shortly before or after Inconsistent .55 at the end of March--but then my memory seems to have taken a 3 or 4 hour lapse somewhere along the line. (I really don't remember everything that's said or done around me... but in your case I'll make an exception!)

And things have, of course, changed so much...that I should probably chuck the opening and start afresh. But I won't, for three reasons:

- 1) I never throw anything away (even though I occasionally misplace things, including relationships);
- 2) I enjoyed it when I reread it earlier this evening (besides...the "cult" will be thrilled to have the entire canon); and,
- 3) ...well, I still have only three cats...but that number is about to become two Real Soon Now. I say that because #3 cat is either going to be a) picked up by the time this sees print; or, b) I'm going to give it a Greyhound bus ticket to Chicago; c) if neither of the above, I'm going to d) actually write the story of my three cats ...and graphically depict how they reflect the women who gave/loaned them to me.

I have no scruples; only excellent taste.

In the meantime I have to write something that's not unfairly esoteric for a Denise Parsley Leigh fanzine that will not only go to most of people I'm involved with (and Ted White), but which will also include a Dave Locke article.

Hmmm...that's heavy. Can you give me a night...or make that Wednesday...to think about it...

...as well as to replenish my supply of ellipses.

When I returned home I found that the storm that marked Octocon's finale had also unhooked one chain on the porch swing...and flung the swing up and over the railing, where it dangled. After viewing this sorry sight for a week while I debated whether to hook it back up...I finally acted, and unhooked the other chain for the first time since it was put up in August of 1978. (The one chain had been dislodged in several previous storms...but the one seemed well-rooted.) It seemed the thing to do.

(Now remains the building of enough initiative to get the swing off the porch and into the basement for the winter...before it gets ripped off. Eventually I'll get around to it; eventually I get around to most everything...)

...and now Denise is muttering something about, rather than some mythical and indeterminate future date...something about actually having this out for Chambacon.

In the meantime she does have a point in mentioning that not only does she have Ken's speech in hand, but also Dave's secondary contribution...and besides even Steve has his contribution written down. Now far be it from me to serve as the excuse if she doesn't make that deadline...but not so far as it might be if I don't get busy.

...for you see, it is not "that Wednesday"...but the Wednesday plus a couple of days following. I had good intentions...but that Wednesday I ended up, for the first time in recent memory (I've always been a night person; having a day job merely complicates rather than cures the tendency), I ended up collapsing into bed at the sinful hour of 9pm. True, this was 10/13's of the way through a 13-straight-day bout at work--but that shouldn't be an excuse: I've managed a few conventions ~~4/4/4 4/4 4/4/4/4/4~~ 1/3% nearly that long without fading, after all.

Still there it was, and here this remained...as the rest of what I had planned on writing dissolved around me.

Despite pretension otherwise, and contrary to what one who has religiously followed my writings of the past few years might believe, my life is really quite tame and uneventful. The incidents and examples I throw together in the course of my speeches/et al are generally (in actuality) separated by sometimes vast amounts of real-time. Even though my life has often seemed hectic and confused, I've generally found in retrospect that most things happened in a rather measured manner. (True, there was that episode in an Indianapolis parking lot...but generally...)

It is now precisely two weeks after the last actual date mentioned herewith.

And I'll be damned if I know *why* it is...perhaps it is the Season to be Silly, perhaps it's that all of the "chasing" I've done over the years has come to a head all at once, perhaps it's the fact that I've suddenly become incredibly good-looking (I looked in the mirror to check out that possibility), or perhaps it's merely a rash of coincidences (I don't believe in fate, despite evidence to the contrary)...

...but starting that Sunday, and continuing through this very afternoon, I have received a slightly incredible array of communications--via telephone and letters--from a remarkably high percentage of the women I'm actively interested in. A couple I've known for years, a couple I've only "met" within the past month, a couple somewhere in between...and a total surprise. (Hmmm...make that two.) ...one or two of which are responsible for some of the surprising number of grey hairs that I found on that look in the mirror.

Now as far as I know, I have recovered fairly quickly and have been at least coherent on all of the verbal contacts; furthermore, to the best of my memory, I have not slipped and referred to whomever I was talking to by someone else's name (or referenced incidents that I and someone else had experienced); and I have neither made nor asked for formal future commitments--all plans are tentative and all probabilities are still just possibilities. I have been persistent...but have known when to pause. I have been totally silly and deadly serious...sometimes with the same breathful of words.

I'm not complaining, you understand. It's just that all of this was so totally unexpected, you see... I find myself rather bemused to have my life turning out to be remarkably similar to a Bill Bowers "Speech"... ...that's all.

I recently saw *The French Lieutenant's Woman*. I enjoyed it. I think. It was the 40th theatrical movie I've seen in 1981...but out of that total, and the countless ones before, it...it stands out. I've seen good and bad movies; there have been the ones that I've enjoyed, the ones that have intellectually or emotionally intrigued me, the ones that bored or disgusted me. But never have I walked out of a theatre...after having sat stunned through the end-credits...in such a dazed, lost condition.

I admit it: I have no idea of why I say that it was an excellent film. You see, I can't even pretend to say that I understood it at all. To remedy that I have taken the drastic step of starting to read the novel, and plan on seeing it several more times. I am intrigued, by the film, by my own reactions, and by (ahem!) the concept that if there ever was to be a Bill Bowers Movie...

I think I'm beginning to see the problem in non-sequentiality...

Now then...

After being enticed into the after-banquet speeches at Conclave this year on a plastic excuse...I emerged to have Leah comment that John Varley had made a Bill Bowers speech (he read from a prepared typescript) and that Jon Stopa had written a Bill Bowers speech (it was segmented...and totally incomprehensible).

Now the fact that Leah didn't say anything about Joni's speech may be because a) it was witty; b) she knew Larry was going to use Joni's speech in the third issue of *Uncle Albert's Electric Talking Fanzine* (please contribute; Help Stamp Out Verbal Fan Fiction!); or, c) she simply doesn't want to blow her invitation to the next Wilcon.

Whatever... But the reason I mention Leah in Denise's fanzine has nothing to do with the fact that neither one has been confused for the other for years now...but because if I say too much more here I won't have anything left to write for Leah's *Imp 2*.

The sub-title of that particular self-serving, esoterically-explicit undertaking will be "Bill Bowers' Handy-Dandy Guide For Picking Up Women At Science Fiction Conventions (Verbally Illustrated)"...and it will be out for Confusion. No, not the "75% Confusion", nor "The Wet Spot Confusion"...but the Confusion-that-remains-to-be-named-in-a-manner-more-capricious-than-even-the-Air-Corps-and-their-silly-alpha-numeric-lack-of-a-system.

Be there. If you are my friend (at least for now) you'll come to my "speech" Friday Nite Live. And if you are a woman I've been involved with...afterwards ask Leah for a copy of her fanzine.

What, me Machiavellian?

Never.

Just trying to work my way through fandom, selling fanzines door-to-door.

I told Denise to save me four pages². She said "Fine...whatever." I said that I'm not sure what it's going to be about this time. She said, "Fine...whatever."

Denise is still cute, after all these years...but never putrid. Wrong, yes, in her estimation of my amount of flexibility in some relationships...but still one of my best (still-to-be-counted-on-less-than-the-fingers-of-one-hand) friends...even though she doesn't know me quite as well as she thinks she does. Still:

The following is in and around and beside and in spite of and because of everything else that has been happening in the past few weeks. This:

I've often wondered why it is that I rarely become involved with one who is:

a) not a fan;

b) closer to me than a hundred miles; and (this is the biggie),

c) someone who is roughly in my own age generation.

Now this: My own conception of my potentialities is all too often negative. Yet:

A while back, my best friend confided in someone that, despite all the breakthroughs, all the changes, all the "greening"...there was one thing that Bowers would never do; and was that he would never get involved with a married woman. She, being married, simply smiled and said: "I think he's changing..."

A while back...make that two weeks...I would have said that any combination of "a" and/or "b" and/or "c" was, in my case, totally impossible. All three at once was beyond the realm of speculation.

Steve and Denise were having a small Halloween party and I planned on attending. But when Denise called me that Saturday afternoon, I said I wouldn't be able to make it.

"Ah," said Denise, "you have a better offer..."

"Yes," I said, noncommitedly.

I have this problem, you see. When I think I'm being subtle, everybody knows. When I'm being totally-absolutely-without-inhibitions-blattently-obvious, well... Now then, you-of-Lunacon, you-of-Icon-two-years-ago, you-of-... all of you, please take notice:

When I talked to Denise the following afternoon, and we established that both her party and my alternative-offer had gone well...I cutely (in my own inimitable way) commented in closing:

²...he said, a third of the way down the 5th stencil. *sigh*

There's a contemporary saying that you may have heard that states: "What goes down comes around." This speech will address, in a roundabout way, the meaning of that anonymous quotation by discussing a set of seemingly random events and chance occurrences that have come together to form a distinct pattern, a distinct cycle in my life. Here, this weekend, at Ambercon, that cycle ends after *exactly* 25 years--that almost magical number that our culture revers with such great esteem.

Bill Rotsler coined a phrase for this kind of thing; he's called it, in his own life, "The Serendipity Syndrome." Bob Tucker has referred to this phenomenon as "Wheels Within Wheels." For centuries, mystics have called it predestination. You may have your own word for it as you have no doubt encountered this sort of thing in your own life from time to time, perhaps with a bit of puzzlement. Sure you have, think about it. Have you ever noticed how some things just seem inevitable, almost like you weren't really in control of things? You know it by that peculiar cord that is struck down deep within yourself when you look back at certain events in your life.

The realization that something was afoot came several months ago when, just on a whim, I picked up my Dover first edition of *SEVEN SCIENCE FICTION NOVELS BY H.G. WELLS* and began rereading an old favorite of mine from my early teenage years, *THE WAR OF THE WORLDS*. The book was one of my earliest sf discoveries and held a special place in my memory, despite my never having looked at it again in over a decade and a half until that moment. Merest chance (I suppose) dictated that selection as the book was laying out, in easy reach, after my having just rearranged my hardcover library. So, naturally, I picked it up. It wasn't too long before one of those special intuitive feelings--a responsive chord being struck--hit me squarely in my Sense of Wonder. Not quite a feeling of Deja Vu--somewhat similar, yet different. I couldn't quite explain it. Then a line of dialogue from the film *CLOSE ENCOUNTERS* spoken by the Dreyfuss character, Robert Neary, came to mind right out of nowhere: "This means something." Just *what* I didn't know, though somewhere I knew this was somehow important.

I certainly didn't connect it with Ambercon until awhile later when again one evening I was reading and happened to run across--again by the sheerest coincidence, (or was it?)--two closely related stories that would supply the key to my intuitive dilemma: Ed Bryant's *giANTS* and Howard Waldrop's *ALL ABOUT STRANGE MONSTERS FROM THE RECENT PAST*. Both stories have at their central core a fond reminiscence of a film--specifically, Warner Brothers above average thriller, *THEM!*, one of the first, if not *the* first of the giant insect movies of the sf film boom of the fifties; it's a dandy and sometimes convincing story about giant ants unleashed by man's venturing into the Atomic Age. It was obvious that this particular film meant something special to Ed and Howard. Reading those two stories suddenly made everything *click* into place and the key to this personal puzzle was now in plain sight. It did indeed mean something, that reunion with *THE WAR OF THE WORLDS*, for it showed me that I had a most

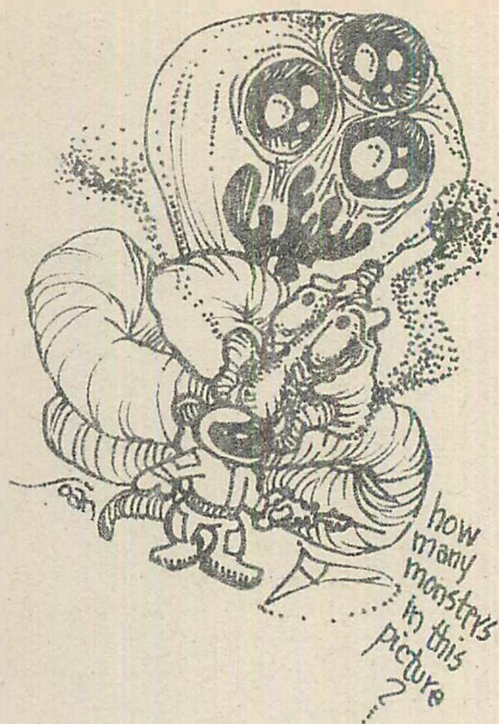
appropriate subject for this Fan Guest of Honor address, the *only* one that was relevant to this weekend. Thanks to Ed and Howard.

To begin at the beginning, the first step in my modest personal odyssey: the discovery of science fiction and, eventually, the fandom that supports it--perhaps not unlike a similar one you have taken by being here today. The time was 1953 when I received my first injection of the Sense of Wonder Drug, and like 99% of you here (1% of you being fake fans, I'm certain) I've been hooked ever since. It happened at a theatre called the Orpheum and the occasion was the newly released George Pal production of *WAR OF THE WORLDS*. I was a little over five years old at this first showing, so the injection was relatively painless, although the film did scare the bejeezus out of me. But I *loved* it. *Loved it*. It was *great*! I obviously took to this new experience like Bob Tucker takes to Beam's Choice.

Now it wasn't so much the initial viewing of this film that has made a lasting impression on me over the years, but an unusual set of side-effects which followed a few days after the screening. Not unlike my newly-found enemies, the Martians, I succumbed to a common earthly virus called the Red Measles. For about two weeks, off and on, I had a series of fever dream encounters with Martian war machines and tiny indians attacking me from the foot of the bedcovers, with only my toy soldiers, as I recall, to protect me. Now what the hell *indians* were doing in all this I can only now speculate. Apparently, in my own convoluted five-year old logic of things, the Red men of Earth had teamed up with the invaders from the red planet Mars to help the Red Measles defeat me--appropriate because in a time when it was thought that you were better off dead than Red, *Red* was clearly my enemy. Unlike the Martians, I eventually recovered, of course, but science fiction had left its mark on my psyche. It's right up here somewhere and looks like three little sixes. (tapping top of head).

Now I wonder just *how* coincidental it is that Ambercon's Pro Guest of Honor, George Martin, has just finished the final revisions of his new novel, *FEVRE DREAM*, considering the information that I've just related. Or, for that matter, that Ambercon's toastmaster, Ed Bryant, wrote his Nebula-winning *giANTS* just when he did. Coincidence? Wheels Within Wheels? Or something else...

The following years were a bonanza of involvement with cinematic science fiction for me; good or bad, I loved this form of sf, never knowing that its *true* form, books and magazines, even existed until much later on in early adolescence. For me, the silver screen was science fiction's canvas and I never got enough of it. In fact, I became quite a film fan, seeing movies by the hoursful with my mother at every movie house in town.



One summer evening my mother made the announcement that we were going to rejoin my father who had moved to southern California and had, it seemed, solved his drinking problem, the reason our family was not together. I don't honestly remember my reaction to this sudden announcement, but I *do* remember that we went out to celebrate by seeing the new sf film in town--a film called *FORBIDDEN PLANET*. If there was ever any doubt of my sincerity for sf, that film certainly put it to rest. I was overwhelmed, my emotions soaring--heady stuff for an eight-year old. I *vividly* remember that evening; it was filled with the scents and sounds of summer that Ray Bradbury has so eloquently written about. The sky was crystal clear and I remember sitting on the front porch of our second-story apartment looking up at the stars for hours after we came home. What had started three years earlier with the *WAR OF THE WORLDS* was reaffirmed that evening with the viewing of *FORBIDDEN PLANET*. Science fiction would *now* forever be a part of my life, although I couldn't really see that at that stage of my youth. But the pattern had been set irrevocably.

All of this I vividly remember now about Wichita, Kansas, 25 years to the year that it happened.

While living in southern California I eventually discovered literary science fiction by way of a love for super-hero comics, a pattern I share with George Martin, coincidentally. First came Wells, then Verne, then Andre Norton, and then the deluge. More books and films followed of all kinds of course, not to mention TV shows like *THE OUTER LIMITS* and my all-time favorite, *THE TWILIGHT ZONE*. Comics collecting led me to comics fandom and it was only a short hop over into the sf sub-culture from there. It came by way of a slick fan publication of that time published by a Texas fan named Tom Reamy. The fanzine was called *TRUMPET*...and it and its publisher was to significantly affect my life and involvement in sf fandom.

Shortly after moving back to the midwest in 1969, where I settled in Kansas City, Tom started a Worldcon bid for Dallas in '73 with a unique bidding publication called *THE DALLASCON BULLETIN*. It was like nothing that fandom had seen before and it ushered in a new style of Worldcon politicking, The Big Bid Approach. And Worldcon bidding has never been quite the same since. Although the Big "D" in '73 bid collapsed, from this unique inspirational source came the beginnings of Kansas City fandom, and Kansas City sf conventions. Little did Tom Reamy realize what he had spawned in 'ol Cowtown--that is, until random chance (or was it?) finally brought us together as friends at the 1973 D-Con in Dallas. And as they say, the rest is history. From those old *DALLASCON BULLETINS* sprang the KC Worldcon bid and the 34th World SF Convention, with Tom and I finally working together at last--all by the sheerest coincidence, of course.

Now isn't it *odd* that this convention has chosen to honor the memory and talent of Tom Reamy with a charitable fund to the Heart Association the very year that I am Fan Guest of Honor--all this without the slightest hint or suggestion from me at any time in the past. And isn't it odd that a series of financial set-backs which I suffered caused the delay of the newly revived *TRUMPET* under my editorship be post-poned until just before this convention?

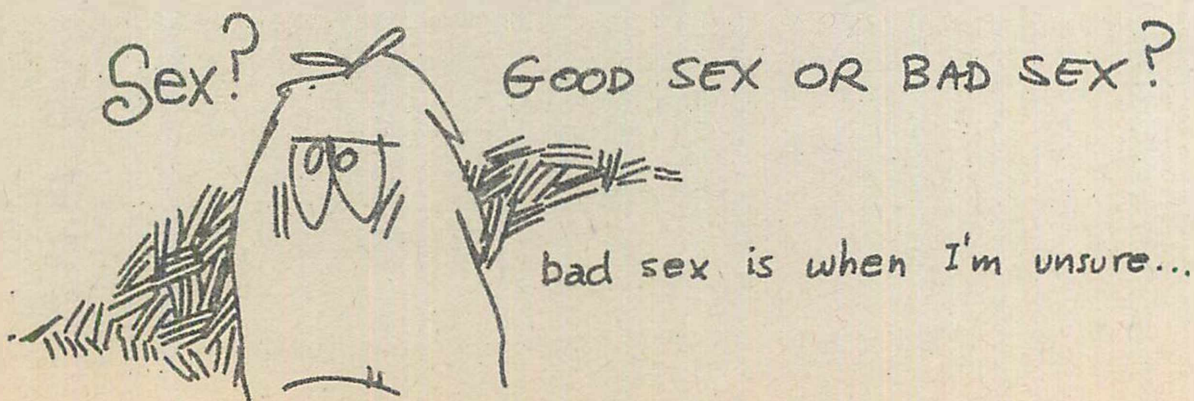
And consider this: after all that I've mentioned here, isn't it a bit strange that with Wichita just a mere four hours away from KC by car that *something* (no available funds, a busy work schedule, etc.) has always prevented me from attending an Ambercon, even after making mental commitment to do so...until this year, *exactly* 25 years to the year that I left Wichita. I suppose that it was absolutely necessary, in this sequence of oddly related events leading back to my personal science fiction headwaters, that the pattern *must* remain unbroken.

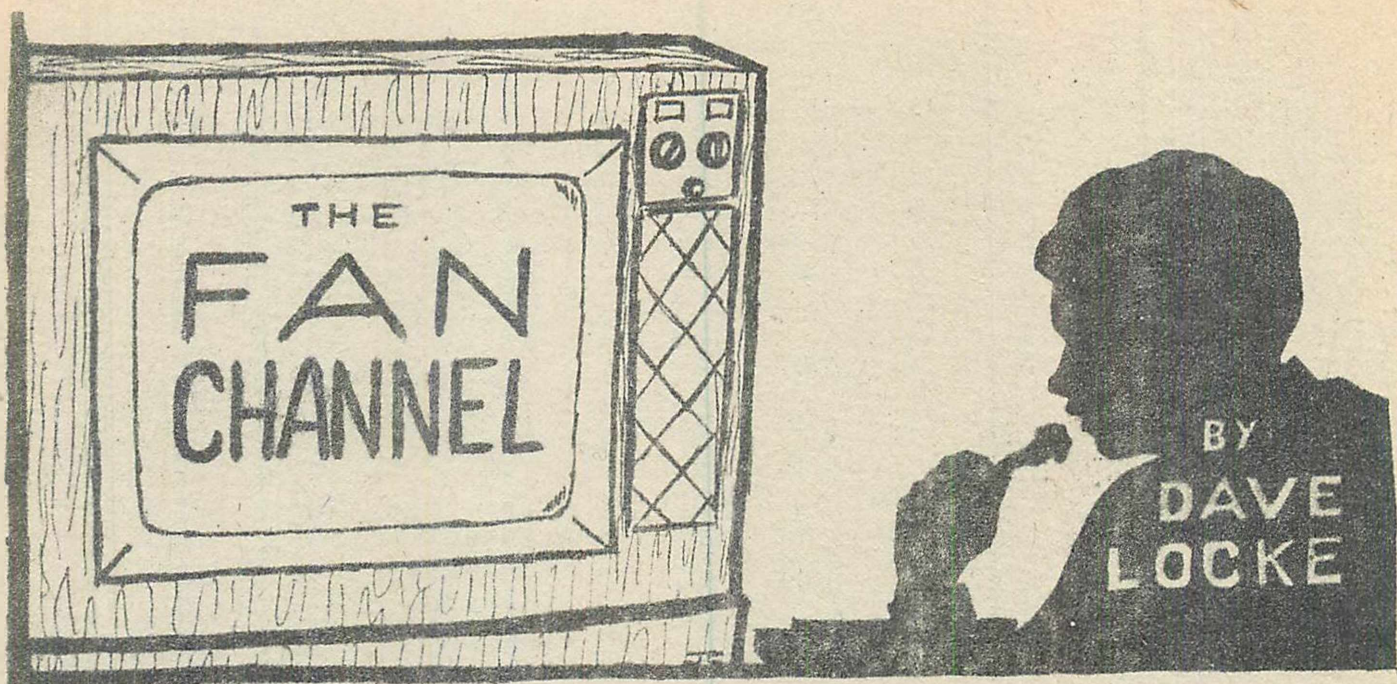
Oh yes, one last bit of evidence for you, the jury: In Kansas City, on KCMO TV, Channel 5, beginning every Friday night at 10:30 p.m., they have what is called "Friday Fright Night", a triple-bill movie showing of horror and fantasy films, mostly godawful, til the wee hours of Saturday morning. When I spotted the listing in the *TV GUIDE* I stopped dead in my tracks. That now familiar feeling of a responsive chord being struck was present once again; for there, listed as the first feature on the Friday, May 23rd, Friday Fright Night (the last Friday, coincidentally, before Ambercon weekend) was, you guessed it *THE WAR OF THE WORLDS*--one final roadsign pointing me toward Wichita and this Ambercon weekend, one final coincidence in a very long line.

What goes down comes around.

The Serendipity Syndrome? Wheels Within Wheels? Predestination? Or something else entirely.

A final thought: Crazy old Charles Fort, that bibliophile of things that go bump in the night (whose books the sf field has mined for ideas: for years) once made the observation that we, the human race, are property. He never did elaborate or attempt to explain that comment, but it has occurred to me that perhaps he didn't mean that in any real malicious sense after all. Maybe we *don't* pull our own strings. Or maybe I'm stuffed full of wild blueberry muffins. I don't know at this point. Perhaps we are just bozos on the same bus. But, if indeed we are just that, let's check out the driver more closely; if he looks suspiciously like Rod Serling, watch out--because we may all be in for more side trips to The Twilight Zone...





The year is 1984. The setting is fandom.

While the world at large is not significantly more or less colorful than any earlier year of the decade, there are new wrinkles within the continuum of that wild child of Hugo Gernsback which used to be known as science fiction fandom and is now referred to simply, and to the point of near-imbecility, as "fandom." The advent of cable television has served to change the scope and flavor of the activity referred to as "fanac", as well as to lower the average fan intelligence by twenty IQ points.

Cable television made it possible for nearly every interest, group, clique, cause, persuasion, society, and assemblage to have their own special programming and for some, such as fandom, to have their own cable television channel. Thus did it come to pass that in 1983, due to unusual circumstances, The Fan Channel was created.

Those unusual circumstances are the reason why a fan named Mike Glicksohn came to be known as the father of 17th Fandom, somewhat to his dismay. The details are uninspiring, though somewhat interesting. After finally winning a fortune in Lotto Canada, the lottery which he entered so regularly that he at one time inquired into the possibility of payroll deduction, Mike was slick-talked into donating the entire fortune to finance The Fan Channel. This all took place at a dead dog party after Mike's 76th convention of 1983, and all that Mike remembers of the incident was that it seemed like a good idea at the time.

The Fan Channel, being a new type of fanac, drew the enthusiasm and participation of virtually all fans, thus creating the initial problem that half the time there was no one sufficiently uninvolved to stay home and watch it, except for Harry Warner, Jr. This changed quickly. It was the Nielson Survey which first disclosed the unexpected.

Mundanes were tuning in, and turning on. Or vice-versa.

It should have been expected, really, but in the first flush of enthusiasm all of fandom suffered from tunnel vision. No one thought to correlate two facts: 1. The Fan Channel was not a fanzine with restricted distribution, and 2. mundanes will watch anything.

The entire country and, thanks to satellites, much of the world, became littered with fringe-fans.

1984 was the year that fandom went public, in a manner of speaking. Also in a manner of showing. Fandom became Show & Tell to the world.

Let us look at this phenomenon and see if we can achieve some measure of familiarity and understanding of its basic nature and impact. To do this we will travel to Coprophagous, Nebraska to the home of Culbreth and Sarajevo Armerding, two typical middle age, middle class mid-Americans who, thanks to The Fan Channel, are part of the leading edge in the new wave of fringe-fans.

Cul has just come home from work where he earns \$1.25 per hour as a tenured union man, a twenty-year professional in the industry of meat-packing. Cul drives a fork truck. Sara has returned home with him, as she works in the same plant although she drives a fork truck in a different department and earns only \$.75 per hour. The Armerding's son, Pertwee, age 13, also rides home with them from his job as a crane-follower which pays \$.35 per hour. It is eight o'clock at night, they have each worked a twelve-hour shift, and Ronald Reagan is president.

It is Cul's turn to cook dinner. As he is inspired to occasional efforts at what he calls creative cookery, Cul leaves the TV dinners in the microwave for 45 seconds instead of the recommended 55 seconds. Cul, Sara, and Pert then take their trays to the living room, where they sit on folding chairs and eat their dinners on the cardboard box that the color TV came in. Utilizing family democracy they vote unanimously to watch The Fan Channel, and Pertwee turns on the set and tunes in to channel M-1973.

Instantly the 25-inch screen swells to brightness with the image of Stan Woolston signing off the air for *N3F THEATER*. This is followed by a promo for *BUCK COULSON'S ORIGINAL AMATEUR HOUR*, which strikes the Armerdings as being of potential interest and prompts them to make a mental note to tune that in when it premieres the following week. They watch closely as Buck, sporting black teeshirt and carrying a rifle disguised as a cane, shoots Ro Nagey in the foot after Ro fumbles while juggling three floppy disks and a bowl of lime jello. Ro crawls offstage while his partner, Steve Leigh, sweats as he continues the act solo by juggling a tennis racquet, four chess pieces, and a portable typewriter, as Coulson looks on with a phlegmatic expression.

A *FANEWS UPDATE* follows the promo spot. The features of Mike Glycer fill the screen, although the camera has been panned back some ten or twelve feet. Mike reads off the news headlines of the day: Midwestern cult object Bill Bowers sues Ted White for engaging the services of a deprogrammer; Barrel Vague McBoring floods fandom with a form letter castigating all "the beautiful people" and informing everyone of his latest name-change; Denise Parsley Leigh publishes the much awaited "sexual fantasy" issue of *GRAYMALKIN* and promptly gafiates upon learning that Jessica Amanda Salmonson considers it boring and unimaginative; Bill Cavin, President and General Manager of the Cincinnati Fantasy Group, is found flogged to death in his apartment just hours after his public announcement that he had signed a contract to return Midwestcon to the Cincinnati Holidome; membership for the forthcoming World Science Fiction Convention tops two million, and the ConCom announces they have just signed The Who to perform as a warmup act. Film and details on *THE ELEVEN O'CLOCK REPORT*, immediately following the 9:30 movie entitled *LASFS VERSUS THE SMOG MONSTER*.

The Armerdings watch as Mike turns to Jackie Causgrove for a quick look at the national fan map. Jackie, crayon in hand, stands on the other side of the lucite map and smiles at the camera and thus at the Armerdings who munch away on pressed turkey and wrinkled peas.

"Well, folks," Jackie announces, as she circles the Midwest with her crayon, "there's a low-pressure convention blurge sweeping from Ohio to

Wisconsin, causing a foggy condition at dead dog parties and a tendency toward mild confusion as to what city is holding a con on any given weekend. However, most of the confusion appears to be centered in Ann Arbor, where it belongs. Now, over here in the Pacific Northwest we have a report from a nameless source that it is raining and crying at the same time, while down *here*," she says, circling San Francisco, "things appear to be marching right along, while in the LArea it is rumored that a new insurgent group, LA's 18th if our statistics are correct, has been formed in a rain of protest against Bruce Pelz being the executive officer of the other 17 organizations. At the bottom of our map," she says, pointing to Southern Fandom, "officers of the SFG have formally announced official recognition of the rest of fandom and we forecast t at the cloud cover will be removed as soon as ambassadors are appointed." Jackie pauses, then draws an X through the eastern seaboard. "Absolutely nothing of interest occurred on the east coast today except for the usual thunderstorm and grumping in Falls Church. Now, on the world map, storms have continued to plague the United Kingdom in general and everyone except Joe Nicholas in particular, while in Australia there is a high pressure center surrounding the next Worldcon bid. Returning closer to home, things are tranquil and laid-back everywhere in Canada now that Taral is being deported to his home planet." Jackie waves her crayon and smiles. "Full details and all sorts of good rumors tonight on *THE ELEVEN O'CLOCK REPORT*, just before tonight's movie, *INVASION OF THE GIANT IGUANACON*. See you then."

The Armerdings begin working to pry the dessert from its compartment in each of their TV trays. On the screen, Rick Sneary is doing an advertisement for *FAMOUS FANWRITERS SCHOOL*. He is shown relaxing and reading a fanzine in an easy chair. Over the fireplace behind him are hung pictures of Willis, Bloch, Tucker, Shaw, and Berry, all of them smiling except for Tucker and Shaw who appear too inebriated. Rick lays the fanzine in his lap and grins at the Armerdings.

"Well, hello there, fans," he says, his words tumbling out in a true pitchman's cadence. "I want to talk to you about Famos Fanriters Skool. You know," he says, with a sincere expression, "you too can lern to rite like the masturs. Theres no nede to be disillooshunned with the quallity of yore fanac, wen our profeshionals can teeche you the secrits of sturling werdsmitthing *without you leeving yore fanden*." He pauses, then lifts the fanzine. "You could be published in this or eny uther top fanzeen, and half fanediters clambering for your goldon werds. All it takes is a littel talant and a dipplumma from Famos Fanriters Skool, thats' awl." Rick leans forward, showing a concerned expression. "Do you half that talant which can blossom with our curse? Why not find out? Hears awl you half to do. Just drop us a line, and in 75 to 100 werds tell us why you want to be a big name fanriter. One of our famos fanriters will grade your essay. If you pass, you are elejible to enrowl. If not, at lease one of us getts a laff. Fare enough? Okey, hears' that addres, and remembur, you two can be a famos fanriter." Rick goes back to reading the fanzine as the address appears on the screen. Just before the scene fades, Rick rises from the chair and hurls the zine into the fireplace.

The Armerdings munch their way through station identification ("This is channel M-1973, The Fan Channel, your FIAWOL station"), and then drink Kool-Aid as the screen fades on the station logo (a kitten in the clutches of a boa constrictor). The screen then brightens to grassy, rolling hillside as it might be seen by a deaf person hanging beneath a helicopter that's flying a slow line about two hundred feet in the air. Suddenly a person comes into view. He's walking. Our viewpoint swoops down at him as he moves in the direction we're going. We stop about twenty feet back, at ground level, and watch him walking away. Suddenly we swoop around him

in a perfect half circle, stopping again this time to see him walk toward us. As he gets almost on top of us, he



stops and we're looking up at his face. An announcer's voice tells us that this is *THE FURTHER JOURNEYS OF JOPHAN*, and we watch as Jophan mops his sweaty brow, and then moves on, leaving us with a nice view of the sky and the credits that come rolling up the screen.

"What's it about tonight?" Cul asks to no one in particular. Pertwee gets up and consults the cable listing guide, frowning with concentration as he riffles through the three-hundred pages in volume eight.

"Aw, we seen this one before. You know, it's where he goes to Louisville."

"I don't remember that," Cul says, draining his Kool-Aid.

"Maybe," Sara suggests, "you missed that one. It could have been when you worked that second job. Anyway, I remember it, too."

"Worth seeing again?"

"Well," Sara ponders, "I dunno. It was okay I guess. I remember Jophan joins the local science fiction group and is aghast to find them meeting Sundays at a room in the university library. And he really gets croggled when he finds them trading and selling and talking about science fiction. No drunken or stoned parties, no parties hardly at all, and most of them don't usually see each other except at the meetings. Jophan is fit to be tied."

"What does he do?" Cul asks, yawning.

"If you want to watch it, that would be giving it away."

"Give it away." Cul yawns again.

"Okay," Sara says, in a you-asked-for-it tone. "Jophan gradually introduces faanishness to the poor fans in Louisville. You know, he starts throwing parties, and maneuvering others into doing the same, and gradually introduces drinking, and oneshots, and snogging, and all the faanish stuff. At the end," she discloses, while glancing at the TV and the advertisement for Mother Joni's Jams and Jellies ("canned atop beautiful Wilmot Mountain by Poker Trolls"), "Jophan finally weans them away from science fiction and from meetings at the university library and then, his mission fulfilled, heads for Cincinnati after hearing a rumor that Midwestcon might return to the Holidome. In the epilog they show a notice on a university bulletin board. It announces the first meeting in the university library for all persons interested in discussing science fiction."

"Cute. Nice touch." Cul yawns again, then focusses his attention on a promo spot for tomorrow night's prime-time shows.

"Tomorrow, on *WKRP IN CINCINNATI*," the announcer intones with a modicum of excitement, "Frank Johnson and Chris Barkley have a falling out when Chris accuses Frank of making a racist remark. And stay tuned afterwards for *REAL PEOPLE* with hosts Taral, Bill Bridgett, Garth Danielson, Jessica Salmonson, and Charles Korbas. Be with them as they visit the ground-breaking ceremonies at the site for the Tucker Hotel; interview the last three fans at the Worldcon dead-dog party, and the doctor attending them; talk with a cryptologist who has spent years studying the fan-writing of Bill Bowers; and watch Ed Cox build a beer can tower to the moon in a single oneshot session."

"Whoopie," Cul exclaims, making a circling motion with his finger. Sara looks at him. "Do you want to watch the rerun of Jophan, or what?"

"Might as well, there's nothing else to do." Cul pauses. "Except," he adds, "acknowledging receipt of the last *FANTASY AMATEUR*. I'm number 348,827 on the FAPA waitlist now, I see, but the mailings are weekly and about fifty people drop every time Harry Warner does another *THE BEST OF THE WORST OF MARTIN*. I might get in before retirement."

"That's possible, I suppose," Sara says dubiously, "but Pertwee should make it into APA-70 before the decade is over. You know, that's the one where you have to be born in 1970 or later in order to join."

Cul frowns. "I wonder why they'd have both an APA-69 and an APA-70? Doesn't seem like there'd be much purpose in it, what with only one year's difference in age requirements."

"I don't know," Sara says. "Maybe it's got something to do with those rumors that the Moral Majority are infiltrating APA-69 and causing lots of feuding."

"Possibly."

On the screen, Jophan is standing at the entrance to the Louisville university library, gazing at all the science fiction books with a shocked expression on his face. As he sets down his backpack and signs the register, he announces himself to the group of fans standing nearby and staring at the propellor beanie on his head.

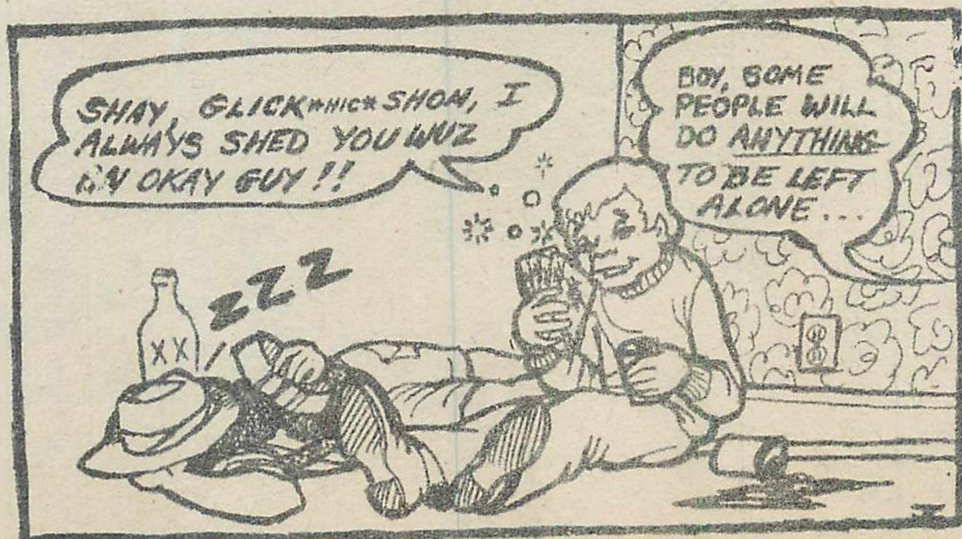
"I am Jophan," he broadcasts in a deep and resonant voice. "The fan's fan. The trufan's trufan."

"Pompous ass," Cul mutters, licking the dessert section of his TV dinner tray.

Let us now leave the Armerdings, and their home in Coprophagous, Nebraska. We will leave them to their second glass of Kool-Aid and their rerun of *THE JOURNEYS OF JOPHAN*. The year is 1984, the setting is fandom, and we have seen enough. For now.

But we might wish to return to their home and their time and their setting on the following night, to join them in watching the special presentation of *THE FAAN AWARD CEREMONIES*. The Armerdings plan to make popcorn for the occasion. We might want to be there.

But on the other hand, maybe not.





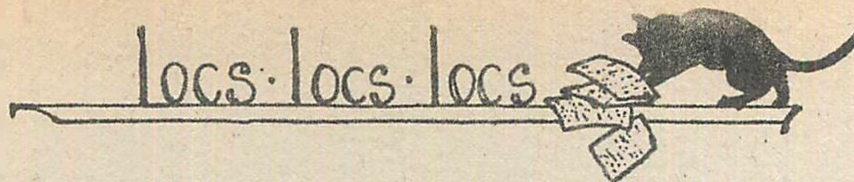
Azz - Billy Wolfenbarger

Shadows weave inside themselves
in the pit caverns of Azz,
mentioning themselves to the dry walls
and companioned echoes as they
contort the ebon air about them.
In Azz there are constant streets
contorted into labryntine mazes
leading into stale bread-shops,
opium demons,
hashish wizards,
wine rooms hinting of long-dead roses,
a funeral parlor undergoing heavy construction,
desert - opened courtyards
where phantom ladies keep watch
for the rising of a gold-goblin moon,
their hearts and eyes also straying
for their images in the sands,
as though they all expected to glimpse
someone returning, someone
who has not returned for so long
they hope against hope
the images are real,
at last returning.

Black River, languishing alone its way
runs behind the streets and
courtyards, eventually to gather strength
to become emersed into Ocean Enon.

A few madmen from time to time
trample the sand by the river,
impossibly.

Azz rests in the sleep of days
and the nights that are so strange,
existence prolonging it,
and I walk those vagrant streets,
I sing songs to the tumbling shadows,
I know they can hear me;
and pass slowly near the courtyards,
wondering if ladies will ever ~~see~~ me;
feeling the pull of moon coming on
I drink at Black River, watch
the poems in me flow to Ocean Enon.



Dave Locke, 4215 Romaine, #22, Cincinnati, OH 45209 - August 18, 1980:

Hi. Nice saying hello and hugging goodbye at Rivercon. Maybe next time circumstances will allow that we say something to each other during the gaping interim. I think the technical term is "conversation." Not, you understand, that I can't be satisfied just looking forward to saying hello and hugging goodbye at future conventions. I mean, sometimes convention attending doesn't allow the opportunity to do even one or both. Hello and goodbye are at least two parts of one's contact with another person, right? Got to start somewhere, don't you agree? There is a problem, however, in trying to maintain a relationship which consists of saying hello and hugging goodbye. I'm afraid I might forget your name. *((Insuring that this doesn't occur, please note that Dave is now another member of Cincinnati fandom.))*

Nice meeting Steve, also. We didn't talk, either, except to say that we enjoyed each other's fanwriting from afar, so to speak. Pleasant looking fellow. Smiles a lot, or has a creatively trimmed beard. Now that I've read his column in #5, next time we meet I can tell him about the fellow who coated himself with chunky peanut butter and went to a convention masquerade as a turd. That can be followed with the story of my creating a "Most Naked Lady" (but with costume) category for a Westercon masquerade because I figured that, after all, there might as well be a category for it, and then mention the perils of being a judge for that same masquerade. Of course, at that point we'll have to get off the topic of costumes and find something else to talk about, but to judge from Steve's column in #5 I expect that he'll be as ready as I will.

The woman on Earl House's cover for #5 is sadly in need of miracle surgery to correct an amazing disfigurement, which as I see it extends from tit to southern cheek. The cat with a squirrel's tail and Spock ears is well done, though...

You are asking people, fans even, to send you their fantasies, "sexual or otherwise," for publication in your next issue? You really throw caution to the winds with this fanpublishing interest of yours, don't you, Denise? Well, this could be interesting. Who knows what might turn up? Harry Warner might write in to divulge a secret yearning for joining a menage a trois and moving to Akron to write pornography in his retirement. Buck Coulson might reveal a long-time ambition to live in the Boxo Bus Building and write convention reports. Mike Glicksohn could confide a desire to settle down, raise seven kids, and join the local Moose Lodge. Bill Bridgett might yearn to take an M-14 and several clips of ammo to the nearest rooftop and begin potting away at people whose socks don't match. Taral couldn't write in with anything he hasn't already had in print elsewhere. Jessica, presumably having already fulfilled her sexual fantasies, might pass. *((Plug time, folks. I really am working on this mythical fantasy issue. I have a fair amount of material and after this issue of Graymalkin is out I would like to start putting the issue together. If any of you still wish to contribute please feel free to do so...and by the way, at least 75% of the fantasies coming in have been non-sexual...see? fandom does occasionally think of something other than sex.))*

Really enjoyed Steve's column. Amusing and perceptive observations done with the light touch and just a smidgeon of humble pie. For me this type of writing is one of the better things that an association with fandom has had to offer, though unfortunately it doesn't offer as much as I would idly faunch for. Usually I feel this way infrequently. Only when reading fanzines, actually. As a consequence, Steve's column is especially appreciated.

Okay, what's a "Hoorka?" I stumbled over this in the last line of Steve's column. Broke my sense of rhythm when I fell. Hope I also didn't wind up jamming a foot in my mouth, and that you don't tell me that "Hoorka" is the name of an alien species which Steve has written thirty stories about. *((A Hoorka is a Middle Eastern water pipe, quite similar to what we call a bong, though not always used for the same purposes...or is that hookah? Actually, it is the name of the Assassin's Guild which is the basis for Steve's novel. And if that's not right, you'll have to ask Steve.))*

There are, uh, glimpses of viewpoint and perception and direction in Bill Bowers' latest entry in the Speech Of The Day Contest, but it's rather like watching a streaker running behind a grove of closely planted trees. Actually, Bill provides a better analogy when he passes along that George Eliot quote which 'describes' friendship as feeling comfortable without having to weigh thoughts or measure words (I don't agree with good old "Dear Abby" that this is describing friendship, but as a comment upon a byproduct of friendship it is a jewel of a quote). It's a better analogy because the man who says "I conceptualize myself as a fannish writer these days" is using Eliot's words to define his fanwriting as "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." I think Bill's message in response to Taral (and "Bill Bowers' This Is Not A Response To Taral #101" might possibly have been a better title...) can simply be stated: "What I'm

doing is fanwriting, and it is fanwriting because it is what I am doing, and while granting that it has limited appeal you must grant that no one is forced to print or read it, and I'll continue doing it until it amuses me to do something else."

At least, I think that's Bill's message. I couldn't tell for sure after I blew the chaff away... Bill is gleefully blending causerie, a conversational style of writing, with a peek-a-boo approach to communication. The communication is directed to himself as much as it might be considered directed anywhere, certainly more so than most fanwriting, and though he has the capacity to convey a clearer picture he is also handicapped on just how clear that picture can be made. It's tough to describe a face seen in a mirror, either to yourself or to others, but I think Bill makes the task harder than necessary. As long as he's having fun with it (and isn't too serious about wanting an award)...



Timebinding. From page 7 of James Gunn's introduction to *THE ROAD TO SCIENCE FICTION #3*, referring to Heinlein's 1941 Denver Worldcon GoH speech: "He called his speech, as Wells had called his talk before the Royal Institution nearly four decades earlier, 'The Discovery of the Future.' Heinlein said that what had primarily attracted him to science fiction was a quality called 'time-binding', which he identified as a term invented by Alfred Korzybski to describe the fact that the human animal lives not only in the present but in the past and in the future. Most people, Heinlein said, live from day to day or plan ahead for a year or two. He went on to say: 'Science fiction fans differ from most of the rest of the race by thinking in terms of racial magnitudes--not even centuries but thousands of years...That is what science fiction consists of: trying to figure out from the past and from the present what the future may be.'"

Them's inspiring words. I even know a few science fiction fans who could be subpoenaed as evidence if someone doubted all this and took the case to court. Might also be able to round up enough of them to fill the first two rows of seats in the courtroom, though if the going gets tough I can always call Heinlein and press him for names.

Why does it give me a case of the giggles to envision Joe Fann, the propeller on his beanie spinning fitfully, his eyes on the stars, his mind thinking in terms of racial magnitudes spanning thousands of years? Why is this, Denise?

I think Bob Tucker explained time-binding, in his article in #4, in a more usable form. If pressed to massage it into dictionary format I would define time-binding as: visualising the perspective of time as it flows from the past into the present and future, carrying all things forward; unexpectedly encountering the subjective present, juxtaposing past and present so as to make one conscious of the perspective of time.

If that's not the clear definition you were looking for, you can hold a contest for best definition. Award prizes. Notify Heinlein that we're going to dick around with it a little. Maybe Alfred Korzybski, too, if he's still kicking around. ((Well, Dave, I think you've managed quite well...if I can follow that definition, I figure just about anybody can. Thank you.))

Lee Pelton, 4513 34th Avenue S., Minneapolis, MN, 55406 - January 29, 1981:

You said no snickers in your editorial, but can I smile with a touch of leer to it?

I have a similar problem when it comes to publishing. I wanted issue uno of *PRIVATE HEAT* to be out by the summer of 1980. So far, no issue. In fact I've decided to start over after typing almost 35 pages. I hope I'm a more frequent pubber than Ben Zuhl, but I'm beginning to wonder seriously about this. A little more settled home front would do wonders for my concentration, I'm sure.

On Stephen's article. Brother, do I empathize with him! I have a fairly strong aversion to costumes, and, to a lesser extent, costumeses. There was one particular individual at Confusion who was at the masquerade ball in a para-military uniform and a rubber alien beast mask who was perhaps the most obnoxious individual I have ever encountered at a con. For more details, ask me or Linda Ann Moss for the ugly truths. Come to think of it, the outfit was pretty ugly, too.

But my gripe seems to be similar to Stephen's. To wit; Who the HELL is in that outfit??? I can swear that a human being resides within, but so disguised that there is virtually no way of knowing whether I'll like the person or not because I have no idea who or what he/she is, at least in the fannish real world. As Stephen says, there are exceptions, and, like him, I wore some outrageous stuff on stage, but that was *business*, to a very large extent. (Although I *did* learn to appreciate the tight jeans. Some things have a certain value beyond dressing up.) Hell's bells, I never even dressed up for Halloween. I was in it for the candy. Mercenary cuss, I was, even as a child.

Such sympathy I feel, Stephen. I think I've had a few Melian's in my experience. But there is such a parallel between these "actors" and the cultists of *THE ROCKY HORROR PICTURE SHOW* that I wonder if this has been thought of. The theme of *ROCKY* is "Don't dream it, be it." Here in Mpls. and in many other cities across the country, every Saturday night 50, 100, or even more in the summer, fans of the flick

come dressed as Frank N. Furter, Magenta, Riff Raff, and other characters in hopes of living the movie through imitation. To these people and others like the masqueraders Stephen talks of, I fear they miss the message of the RHPS theme. To find how to be "it", one looks within, not without, at the covers of the book instead of the pages inside. I always felt, and do even more so now, that the people who costume it up and take on a persona to match are unsatisfied with either themselves or the way they live, or both. Admittedly this is simplistic, but it covers the gist of my thoughts. ((While I agree with what you (and Steve) are saying about people hiding behind their masks, I don't think that this is always the case, maybe hardly ever. Dressing up in costume can be lots of fun...the problem comes when you forget to take off the mask. You have to remember that many fans use cons/masquerades as a place to cut loose from restrictions normally imposed on them during the week. Escapism, granted, but understandable once in a while. And often the 'runners', or 'trekkies' or 'luke skywalkers' are young fan, living out fantasies. Now, I did not grow up in fandom, or even as an sf reader, but I recall similar "games" being played with my friends...I was Super Girl, or Penny (remember Sky King?) or someone from 'The Roaring Twenties' or 'Hawaiian Eye'...we acted out these roles at each others homes, or at school. We had no conventions to attend or we would have used them as a forum. The thing is, we outgrew them, for the most part. As do most fan. We are probably not seeing the same people in these same costumes year after year, con after con...they are probably just new fan taking ~~the~~ the place of those who have grown. And even though I often get irritated with all the costumed, I tend to look at them the same way I do a child who keeps getting in the way of adult conversation. The only problem is that you can't spank them and send them to their rooms. I, too, have had a run in with the guy in the 'military outfit'. Unfortunately, he is no kid. Hopefully he will eventually get bored with fandom, but I doubt it...where else but fandom can you run around acting like a maniac, in costume, assosting people, picking fights, and just generally be obnoxious and still get asked back again next year? That is one of the problems with masks...they render you anonymous to everyone, including the con committess.))

I skipped pages 8-12 because they were blank. Of course, they would be. Hoaxes don't write. I shall assume they were X-rated, written either by Bowers or Glicksohn. They have an affinity for X's, I'm told.

George RR Martin has a real point. I have found that when I do reviews of books, I'm never sure as to whether they have any value to anyone. It is such a subjective field of endeavor. What I like may be Lee Stevens anathema, and Joanna Russ' bain, and Spider Robinson's cup of tea, etc. I have been on the receiving end of some highly biased reviews of *RUNE*, unjustified mostly because the basis of complaint was that it was not Fred Haskell's *RUNE*, or an incarnation of Bowers' *OUTWORLDS*, or Xero, and on and on we go. It was as accurate as saying Edgar Rice Burroughs was a bad author because he didn't write Zelazny's *LORD OF LIGHT* or Niven's *RINGWORLD*. So much silliness I have never seen. But I'm sensitive. I admit it. I like to be liked, understood, appreciated. And what I produce for the public is usually something I wish to receive the same sort of accolades. I can agree to somebody saying something isn't to one's taste, but to attack it because it isn't something they would do is the height of arrogance and pettiness.

...there is a publication called *THE COMICS JOURNAL*. It is all the things George would want in a reviewzine. And the fights are tremendous. If you have wondered where Harlan Ellison is currently venting his ego, just check out the last 3 issues of this mag. His dealings with sf fandom were kid's play compared to his verbage in the Journal. It's volatility is almost directly a matter of the editors not following Martin's credoes. Because the facts are often mangled beyond recognition, the squabbles are some of the most childish name calling I've read since Charles Platt and Ted White had it out in *MAYA*. It is sad that I must read this journal to keep up with the latest scoops, but I liken it to mandatory homework, and I do this stuff instead of ignoring it, like I did in my old high school days, because I'm getting paid for it.

In your response to Jan Brown, I think I know why labels are used when a situation arises concerning human behavior, sexual, social, or what have you. Labels are used so that the labeler doesn't have to think about the personalities involved. Non-thinking is a way of life, you know. Fans and mundanes share this distressing trait. Being as guilty as the next Joe, I have tried to understand why I do it. For one thing, I get a feeling of superiority and of competence when I assess a situation with a label. It is usually a false sense, but it suffices until I can think about it. Often I hear somebody slap a label on a person and I play devil's advocate to them and often more truth comes out of that type of discussion than the usual response, the awful "knowledgeable nod with the arched eyebrows and the murmured "Hmmm...".

...The fears surrounding touching and understanding same are mine, too. As a male in fandom, it is often assumed that my motivations for such touching are carnal in nature. In passing, that is perhaps true, but a heartfelt hug is as good as satisfactory sex, in the proper circumstances. I have been given to understand, after quite a few conversations, that the problems of such physical proximity and touching can be even more misconstrued by men than males touching women in one way or another. I recall an apa conversation with a Southern fan who took the position that he never touched a woman unless it "counted". I wanted to scream at him, Every touch counts, it is just a matter of what that touch is trying to convey. Wouldn't it be nice if all fan had taken courses in body language communication. Better yet, if they had passed them? Those that have you can recognize. They are the ones with friends of both sexes hanging on to each arm, hugging and kissing, expressing joy at being in each others company.

((For some reason, this is starting to feel like an APA...probably because I've already discussed some of these points in apa form. I have found that people often make assumptions about my behaviour...even my closest friends, who, to quote Bowers, should know better. I am constantly the recipient of fatherly advice because it has been assumed that just because I am being affectionate, or phystoal, or whatever, with someone, or a group of someones, I must be sleeping with them. Remarkably, I have never received this type of advice (or the motherly equivalent) from my women friends. Probably because they are receiving similar advice from male friends, and know better. Granted, when you are as publically affectionate as I have been you leave yourself wide open to criticism. (By public I mean in fandom, of course...I have to at least feign monogamy in the presence of family and co-workers.) I have tended to make the assumption that fandom is less judgemental, more open-minded, than the mundane world. In many areas this is true, but sex doesn't seem to be one of them. Maybe because there were so few women in fandom up to the last decade or so...males didn't have to worry about how they acted at conventions, because the only women present were either married, or somehow inaccessible. (I know this is an oversimplification, and that this situation existed in all walks of life.) Or maybe conventions have become more people oriented and less science fiction oriented. Or maybe I should decide where I'm going with this...Anyway, most of the people I care about have learned to not make too many judgements about my behaviour (sometimes I've had to bash in a few heads) and I'm trying to offer the same courtesy. And that's basically what it's all about...courtesy as one person to another. And now Denise will step off her private soapbox and get on with the next letter.))

Jessica Amanda Salmonson, Box 5688, University Station, Seattle, WA 98105 - April 6, 80

The mimeo works nice in your hands. Since mimeo is supposed to be More Fannish than cruddy ol' offset, it is unlikely that anyone will complain about the change of format at all. However, I do miss the crispness of art and Steve's lettering. The lettering gave Graymalkin its unique appearance, and your ABDick doesn't quite get the lines across for some reason. However, the content, the words, is as good or better than ever, and you've by no means lost the one-of-a-kind feeling. I don't write so many LoCs anymore and consequently have gotten off a lot of fanzine mailing lists (not that I'm complaining--most of them were dreary things anyhow), but from what I've seen in the last year, #5 represents the best fanzine going. The rarely appearing *GENRE PLATT* is the only thing I can think of that compares, but I don't think it came out in the last 12 months. I have always been fond of *RUNE*, but the last one was just ugly and stupid (I used it to start a fire in the fireplace). Maybe you're just good--or maybe the competition has vanished. Or a combination of the two. ((If you're reading this, hopefully you will have noticed an improvement in the mimeo quality...this is due to the auspices of one Jackie Causgrove, and her wonderful Gestetner and electrostencil. I know at least two fans who hope that she and Dave Locke continue living in the Cincinnati area...even if I do have to wake up early on Sunday mornings so that Steve can play tennis with Dave.))

George's GOR speech must've gotten a few giggles as he went along; it's effective humor even without his timing and personal delivery. Howsover, I don't think there was much real information in among the hob-nailed boot attack of critics. Samuel R. Delaney at a recent NorWestCon talked about SF criticism at length...it was informative. But it was 100% devoid of humor. There should be happy mediums, you know? George by the way did a story for *AMAZONS II*, which will probably be one of the anthology's best entries. I am surely one grateful, happy anthologist.

It's always hard to comment on poetry; in fact, any effort to discuss a poem inevitably degenerates into utter drivel. Poems are to feel, not discuss. So it is probable that not too many people will mention them. But they are read. I enjoy feeling them. And you're quite right...they make good "replacements" for artwork--though both art and poems would be nicest.

A lively lettercol is hard to do when issues are far apart. Your lettercol is certainly one of the things that makes *GRAYMALKIN* so good. All the same, your editorial and articles were in fact more stimulating than your letter contributors. There was too much We're All Fans Together sort of talk and not enough substance of discussion such as made the old *GORBET* and *MYTHOLOGIES* intense letter-writing-and-responding experiences. Well over a dozen letterhacks represented, and none of them made me feel the desire for a conversation. Perhaps this is their failure, or perhaps it is the result of issues being far apart. Or, again, a combination. ((This indeed is a problem with having lots of time between issues...and this gap of a year and a half is particularly difficult to deal with. But I'm not certain what can be done to rectify this since I don't see much chance for more regularity or frequency of issues. And I also tend to receive very long letters and even though I edit them, I like to print a good portion just to show more of the writer's viewpoint. I really dislike lettercols where only blurbs are extracted...some continuity is lost. Though, I would probably do well to edit my loss more. Ah, well. Maybe someday.))

Steve's perspective on the funny costumes at conventions is a unique one. I have always been uncomfortable with the people who are so greatly into their convention costumes. Yet, I wear, in my daily life, all the time, haori--a kind of kimono, but short like a shirt--over baggy trousers (drawstrings made in Pakistan and India). I have, in fact, quite a collection of these haori, and also hapi jackets. This kind of clothing has no buttons, so I wear the obi to keep it all together; sometimes this is just a narrow cloth belt, sometimes it's a six or nine inch band around my waist, with a bow in back. Clearly, I dress strange. But it's part of my life, not

a barrier between you and me. The clothes I wear are me--nothing leather will you find (not even on my shoes) because I'm vegetarian--and the styles are in keeping with my interest in martial arts (I study *taido*, "the way of the centered sword"). I think the distinction between me and the oddly clad people at conventions is that my expression comes from the inside and manifests itself in a way that puts people more in contact with what I think and feel. Someone who notices there isn't a speck of leather upon me, or knows the Japanese character on the *hapi* means "happiness," whatever, they're getting closer to me, to who I am, to how I think. Everyone should be able to at least make an effort to communicate in subtle or overt ways of dress. But the costumes that are not part of an individual's whole life, these are anti-communication devices. They also happen to be extraordinarily tacky, not to mention, in what looks like 50% of the cases, sexist against women (the self-internalized sort of sexism--it's the women designing their own costumes, after all). All these things make me very uncomfortable around these masqueraders; and you'll note that damned few professionals in our field have much contact with this element of convention activity. It embarrasses many fans and professionals to see the kind of obnoxious news coverage SF conventions get. But what else is a reporter likely to see at a convention? Not the intellectual or professional aspect, hiding in private groups inside rooms. It is rather like the gay men's community being represented by "flaming queens," dressed up like Dolly Parton (in her earlier image) or Mae West (in her 70s). Previously this is all I've thought about: the tackiness, the embarrassment. Steve's sensitivity to the issue has put me in touch with this other aspect I've only been aware of sub-consciously, the anti-communication aspect of hiding oneself behind costumes rather than expressing oneself with a personal dress. The kind of D&D players who are always "in character" are doing the same thing, but the way. ((We recently attended Chamlancon, in Champaign, Ill. and were amused/appalled by the media coverage of the con. I'm certain most cons get some media coverage, but this was the first time I'd watched the results. We were big news in Champaign, shown immediately following the Thanksgiving Day Parade...some of the participants made the costumes in fandom look normal. The main coverage centered around the "buckster room", focusing on comics and lasers and glass blowing. No one bothered to find out the focus of the con, or sf in general. We were almost fooled into thinking we had an intelligent interview when the anchorman referred to us as an sf con. However, he clipped up later and referred to us as sci-fi lovers who had just landed from another planet. Very cutesy and very embarrassing...really. It's very difficult to be convincing when trying to explain to someone why you attend these conventions, especially when they are often business deductions for Stephen, with people constantly referring to us as a group of "weirdos from outer-space" and with the media only picking up on the trekies and Luke skywalkers et al. The only consolation is the knowledge that if the rest of the world knew what really went on at sf cons we would be barraged with many, many more people and fugheads than we could handle.))

Andrew J. Offutt, The Funny Farm, Haldeman, KY 40329 - July 15, 1980:

G#5 had to be read, Denise. That marvelous oletime sf/fantasy magazine cover of Earl House's holds warmth in its stark black and white, because it is so much a part of the past of Our Genre. That's Good, Earl House. Wish I could get Rico and Vito to complete the contract on Rowena so I could have book covers by good artists such as House and Gary Kato and Bruce Conklin and others. All are beyond competent, a level not yet reached by Row-Gammit-sna.

G#5's centerpiece is of course G.RailRoad Martin's speech transcript about cri-ticks and "reviewers." His rhetorical question goes too long: "...am I seriously supposed to listen to the opinions of a reviewer" is sufficient, with a No answer. Martin's qualifying words are as unnecessary as "...reviewers." Of course not! (And always listen for the sound of grinding axes. It's a high, angry whine. And wonder why old books keep being "reviewed" when so many new ones need or deserve help or damnation because they are Bad.) Too often cri-ticks and "reviewers" suffer under the delusion that they are writers and that people want to read their prose. Peter S. Prescott of *NEWSWEEK*, for instance. Lee Stevens, for instance. His first paragraph in G#5 is bottomline inanity. About as interesting and as much fun as sunburn or asthma. It tapers off into the bastard combination of "neither--or" and the incredible "who sometimes seem to be sadly predominate in sf." I think the intention must have been to say "who seem, sadly, to be predominant" or "who, sadly, seem to predominate." Note that the writer quoted above avoided saying "...supposedly to seriously listen" because it ain't good grammar. Stevens tells us his subject predominates in a sad manner. Sort of like feeling badly, I think. It's done with the fingertips. ((All the credit for Lee Steven's grammatical errors should not go to him...after all, I am the editor of this sine. I admit I would not have caught the neither--or, but I should have caught the other. And Lee does all the inanity throughout the reviews because he is inane, and has been so for as long as I've known him. And the reason Lee appears occasionally is because I find him amusing sometimes, even if no one else does.))

Why reviews? Martin counts and seeks out his reviews. I receive few and don't seek to see them. In ten years I have seen two--no, three--intelligent reviews of my own work. One was negative, dammit; but intelligent, and continues useful. I too have been cheated by "reviews," and I don't mean only reviews of my own work. I mean, as Martin did, the ones that tip plot, plot-parts, even ending. Lord, the

blurbiest ruined Tim Powers's great-fun novel *THE DRAWING OF THE DARK*. Probably a part-time job, along with..."reviewing."

Some say it is a good way to practice writing and get into print. Sure. Squatting to dump on the sidewalk is guaranteed to gain attention, too. Come to think, it hurts far fewer people than 82.379% of "reviews." Sure it's a good way to break into print. Editors do not discriminate. Someone perpetrates a "review", no matter how asinine or incompetent or bigoted (try Russ or Wood or Carr for that) or plot-telegraphing--and someone is going to print it. Toc, the same things are "reviewed" over and over. "Reviews of such movies as *THE EMPIRE STRIKES BACK* or a new Clarke novel are silly in fanzines, on the grounds of complete superfluity and gratuitousness. In any given month one can read 10 "reviews" of any new book by anyone who advertised her/his advance in *LOCUS*--Christ but that's tacky!--or received an award last year.

No one seems to write that such a book as Powers's is marvelously entertaining...or that the writing in *URSHURAK* is execrable...or that the first chapter of *THE BLESSING PAPERS* is rather like wading in quicksandy mud...or that the new Brunner novel is brilliant, full of enough ideas to supply us all...and in gutter "English." (Why? Brunner's grammar is good; is he sneering at Ameddicans who don't hardly write good English or was his ms rewritten by a fifth grade dropout off the streets? Merely saying again and again that it is brilliant does not help anyone, including John Brunner.) Who dares say that the self-conscious, constant parentheses junk up *TALES OF NEVERYON*?

Reviews fill space for editors, promote or kill, and swell the egos of the perpetrators. Any other purpose is most difficult to fathom.

Steve Leigh shows me the linkage between people hiding behind costumes and physical masks or makeup and those who hide "shyness behind insult and wit." In both cases the masked one uses the schtick, gains recognition by it, and tends to lose restraint; to become callous and insensitive. Sometimes Rickles hurts. The "barbarian" at the con tried to make Steve feel bad. Bowers has tried to make me feel bad. Sometimes they try to hurt. Sometimes the wit is missing. Sometimes blood is drawn. Yet because it's "just her/his way" and so on, no one seems to call out the insulter on its cruelty. I work to avoid the company of someone who won't get out of an assumed role, or enjoys running verbal splinters under my mental/emotional/ego fingernails.

HEY, DENISE! The July (1980) *PSYCHOLOGY TODAY* contains a darned good article about the "promiscuous" woman (beginning with a long disclaimer of that most unfortunate word). The article comes from her new book *UNFINISHED BUSINESS: PRESSURE POINTS IN THE LIVES OF WOMEN*. The article taught me; I will buy the book, and wish that I could force ten or so women of my acquaintance, ranging from ages 25 to 65, to read it. Writer Maggie Scarf isn't talking about the woman who messes around some; balls a bit, selectively. The subject of her studies and interviews is the woman of any age who is *compelled* to bounce from male to male to male, using them as dildoes--just as the Don Juan or Casanova illness compels a man to bounce from female to female, using them as sentient masturbatory devices.

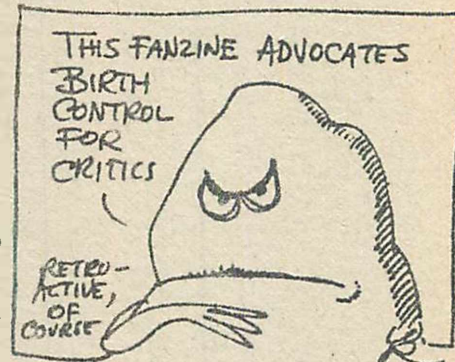
Scarf's article made me stop and stare at the way, thinking about several widows and divorcees I know, in and out of fandom. The "promiscuity" can be a means of Showing Dad, or Mom, or Self (to gain feeling of self-worth, particularly after a divorce), or the reverse" of "punishing" men or self--the latter through guilt: "That's bad and I did it so I'm bad." Never mind that you and I don't subscribe to that; we don't use such terms as "cheating" or "he/she betrayed me" either. Back to what I learned" MOST of the time it's a substitution for what Society Forbids: hugging. Fondling. More than likely this person would trade forty minutes or a night in bed with some stranger for five minutes of genuine hugging/cuddling/feeling of being Cared for and about. That is certainly not restricted to the sex opposite but seldom opposing mind! "Mommy didn't hug me enough," Andy unconsciously indicates, rubbing your velour/satin/velvet/hair/circe/brushed denim/nylon knit/kitten. Hence: rubbing. We have made it acceptable! ((Another good reason for more frequent publication. I'd reread my loss sooner and remember that I wanted to pick up a copy of Scarf's book. It sounds invaluable. It's amazing the guilt that society can inflict upon one..consider how lucky we are to be a part of a group that allows (usually) its members to express themselves relatively freely and openly. People may not approve of all your actions, but they don't shun you just because you're different...often you are applauded. Liked, even. Obviously, fandom isn't an ideal, but it does seem to come closer more often than most social groups.))

Buck Coulson, Route 3, Hartford City, IN 47348 - May 21, 1980:

Hmm. Most people just say "there are a lot of weirdos in fandom" and let it go at that; Steve got a whole column out of the observation. I think it should be studied by would-be fan columnists--how to be entertaining on an absolutely minimum of material

I'm the one who believes that only my friends matter (and not all of them, even.) Bill would like everyone to matter.

Good article from Martin. I'm indecent and vicious at heart, but I don't think I have the other reviewing flaws he mentions. Aside from not always reading all the



way through a work (and even so, I generally admit the fact by saying something like "I couldn't stomach this garbage beyond Chapter 2.") Major problem with reviewers is that they are people, and before you can trust one you have to read enough of his reviews - and the books reviewed - to find out whether he likes the same kind of books that you do. (And even then it's hard; I haven't found a reviewer I can fully trust since P. Schuyler Miller died. Except myself, of course.) That's why I seldom include outside reviews in YANDRO; the regular readers know my biases by now. Reading a fanzine with reviews by 8 or 10 different people makes it far too difficult (for me, anyway) to find out whether any of them ~~have~~ ~~dis~~ ~~agree~~ agree with what I want in a book. Plot summaries are useful only in those rare cases when the plot itself is hilariously bad. (One of my most enjoyable reading experiences came when I picked up an old WEIRD TALES in which O. A. Kline's TAM, SON OF THE TIGER was running as a serial. In those days, they always included a "synopsis of preceding installments" with their serials and I read the one for TAM and laughed hysterically for several minutes. But there aren't many books deserving that treatment being written now. The bad books now are just dull, rather than funny.)

The lettercolumn seems to be mostly about death. I thought about writing you an article about taxes to even things out, but decided the joke wasn't worth the effort.

Mike Glicksohn, 137 High Park Avenue, Toronto, Ontario, M6P, 2B3 - July 11, 1980:

I'm sitting here in an office in Beautiful British Columbia surrounded by gorgeous mountains and several inches of rain and feeling a little guilty about the fact that for several weeks I've failed to respond to GRAYMOUSER with my normal speedy, insightful and lengthy letter of comment. I'm sure that this has caused you to delay publication far beyond the originally scheduled publication date since, after all, what would an issue of CM be without a Glickloc? ~~(I'm sure of it)~~ Anyway, even though I haven't read your solid silver fanzine I shall endeavor to read it now, section by section, commenting in my usual fashion as I go. Oh, there will be one major difference: I'm staying on the farm my father lives on and the people here don't drink...so this loc will be sober, with all that that entails. I fully expect you to have to WAHF it but at least my conscience will be assuaged!

Steve, of course, impresses yet again, both with his calligraphy and design and with his wordsmithing. (And, dammit, he is one of the two best in fandom! He's also one of the five best and one of the ten best, if that'll make you happier.) There's little to say about his observations on costumes and how they relate to the security of the fannish psyche: I guess my insularity is showing in that I've never really met any of the obsessively singleminded types that Steve describes having conversations with but I don't doubt Steve is correct in most of his estimations. Personally, I wear my hair (which is my most obvious costume) the way I do because I have this bizarre belief that it is esthetically pleasing to me (what others think of it, therefore, is immaterial) and I wear my caftans because they are cool in crowded room parties and because I think I wear them well. The only costume I don in which I'm substantially different from my normal behavioural mode is my frilly white poker shirt and armbands: when those go on, it's goodbye fandom's Mister Nice Guy! (As for the people who wear revealing costumes that they shouldn't, I'm always caught between feeling sorry for the spectacle they are--apparently unknowingly--making of themselves and admiring the fact that they have come to terms with their bodies to such an extent that they can be comfortable despite being so far from the accepted standards of physical attractiveness. If the latter reason applies to some of the encostumed people Steve describes, then perhaps his view on that particular aspect of masquerading should be rethought.) *((I often find myself in a similar position.. I am very self-conscious of the way I look when I am just ten-or-so-pounds overweight. It would be very difficult to deal with obesity, and it takes more courage than I have to wear skimpy clothing in public when that overweight. I think what bothers me is that we let society dictate what is esthetically acceptable, to the point where we believe it ourselves, and laugh or feel sorry for the person who is different. I wish that I would allow myself to be less concerned with what the rest of the world thinks about me, instead of feeling awkward, or uncomfortable about how I act))*

Bill is wrong. Oh, not in his big points. After all, I'm on record probably many more times than he is as saying that I live my life first for myself and second for a small group of important friends and that's certainly not an unfamiliar philosophy among fans. But he's wrong in stating that he's not in my Top Ten. Nowadays he probably is. I just said as much in a loc to the most recent of his fashionably slim fanzines. Of course, he's always been good but only recently has he started to become prolific enough to attract the attention that his writing quality deserves. I certainly hope he devotes increasingly large amounts of time to fannish writing. It'll free so many attractive women for the rest of us to "initiate contact" with!

George's speech is exceptionally well written. (You may cut this part out of the letter and send it to him: I don't mind pandering to a completist.) *((I fully intend to hand deliver it when I see him next.))*

(As a non sequitur, do you know how they'd describe a weekend gathering of the SCA knights: Why, "sir-con", of course.)

Like Eric, I often have the feeling that I wasn't born and then grew up like most people but was created at about the age of fifteen with eight or nine discrete memories implanted to create in me the belief that I was like the rest of my peers. After fifteen I have enough memories to carry through the facade that I'm actually alive just like all the rest of you but before that my memory is almost a clean slate. (Did you know that in schools they use alcohol to erase the things kids write on



their desk tops? Verrrry interesting...) Of course, there are still days when I wake up with the definite impression that I have just been lifted from some vat of nutrients and my programming hasn't started yet, that being the only explanation for the fact that I have no memories whatsoever for a few hours!

If I were a gambling man I think I'd bet heavily on Eric Lindsay winning just about any fight--physical or ideological--that he cared enough to bother entering. He may be small in stature but that's one tough little character in every sense of the word. (He is also an entrepreneur of the first order and could, I suspect, solve both his problems as outlined here by moving over here and applying his considerable inventiveness to the problem of earning a living off the American system. If anyone could do it without overstepping the bounds of legality or morality it would be Eric.)

I've always heard that Wolverines were the epitome of animal savagery but to the best of my knowledge I've never seen one. If Marty wants a good second choice, though, I suggest he watch and listen carefully to a batch of Tasmanian Devils tearing into a pile of chicken heads. I doubt I've ever seen anything in the animal kingdom quite so offputting. Now in fandom...((Hey, Mike! I rather like you sober...))

Arthur D. Blavaty, 250 Coligni Ave. New Rochelle, NY 10801 - August 13, 1980:

Actually, there's a simple distinction between costumes & uniforms. A costume is something you want to wear; a uniform is something you have to wear. (That definition, of course, includes internal compulsions.) I'm comfortable enough with the awareness that what I wear isn't me that I can even wear a suit and tie (once a hated and oppressive uniform) and enjoy it. Of course, for me dressing like a normal person is a form of transvestism.

I agree with George RR Martin that plot summaries are usually boring an obtrusive, and a sign of reviewer laziness, as well. I do think, tho, that they can be useful in reviewing bad books. For one thing, they can be funny as hell when done skillfully (like Damon Knight's reviews of *KINSMEN OF THE DRAGON* and *THE BLIND SPOT*). Besides, if a reviewer says that the plotting is good, s/he can refer the reader to the book for examples; if s/he says the book is bad, the reader is presumably warned not to read the book, and so should have the examples presented. I would also say that a really bad book does not deserve the courtesy of not having its plot revealed. All this is very theoretical, as I have no idea of how to review books, although I pretend to do so every now and then. What I tend to do is write little essays which have some sort of tenuous connection with the book I am allegedly reviewing. Why I do this is a policy some publishers have, known as Free Review Copies. ((As far as a bad book not deserving to have its plot kept secret, who is to determine whether a book is bad? I know there have been many times when I've loved a book and the reviewers have panned it, and vice versa. Plot summaries belong in critiques, not reviews.))

On your answer to Laurie Mann: I would say that the cultural polarization of the sexes tends to make both "male" & "female" talk boring. I find discussion of most "he-man" topics (cars, guns) at least as boring as "femine" chit-chat. Add to that the common mundane assumption that it's in bad taste to discuss sex, politics, or religion (fuck a politician for Jesus), and you have the recipe for truly boring conversation. Actually, as I think about it, the basic tendency is to avoid, or at least tread very gingerly about, the 5 essentially mammalian elements of our life--sex excrement, dominance, territory, and death. I find it impossible to discuss any of these topics intelligently without violating the canons of "good taste."

I think whether Orthodox Judaism or Roman Catholicism is more oppressive is a matter of opinion. Orthodox Judaism treats women as unclean, but Catholicism treats them as evil and tempting, in reflection of St. Paul's feeling that women were deliberately causing the sexual lusts he hated and feared in himself. There are more rules for mundane behavior in Orthodox Judaism, but there is much more of a tradition of thinking for oneself. The Catholic priest is an intermediary between the worshipper and God, and you don't question him; the rabbi is merely someone who is supposed to be more knowledgeable about the scriptures and laws.

I'm not very bisexual. I'll fool around with another man in a group situation if that's what he wants, but male bodies don't turn me on. (I wouldn't want to be in a threesome or foursome with a man I didn't like, even if he promised to keep his hands off me.) I figure this lack of desire is at least partly cultural conditioning, and maybe I'll overcome it and maybe I won't, but it's not Terribly Important either way. As to being in a two-man threesome, I don't really feel limited or left out because I enjoy watching 2 people I care for give each other pleasure. ((I agree, its not terribly important whether you're bisexual or not; what I do feel is important is acceptance of other peoples lifestyles without trying to inflict our own.))

So Mike Glicksohn judges zines by the attractiveness of their editors? I feel better about him not liking DR.

Billy Wolfenbarger, 22681 Coburg Road, Harrisburg, Oregon 97446 - June 29, 1980:

I really like the woman on the front cover. How come I never get to meet any of them like that? Bacoover (also by Earl House) didn't strike me as attractively as the front, maybe because the subject matter wasn't as interesting, or something else, is something beyond my ability to answer. Though I do keep looking at it from time

to time, which I suppose is in itself a good justification for having it published in the first place. The lack of so many illos on inside pages is a pleasant change for me. I'm wondering if the other readers feel likewise; it'll be curious to find out.

Your editorial was just the right kind for me, several comments upon the intent and direction(s) of *GRAYMALKIN*, helping me discover what the zine is more about; a pleasing way/editorial for a newcomer to the readership. Anxious to see your fantasy issue. Coming out....Real Soon Now, but sooner than that, I hope. Fantasy is one of my very greatest joys.

Nico's poem by Steven Federle. "A Child's Dream" captures just the proper touch. What else have you written, Steven? Arthur Metzger's "Summer Dream" was enjoyed, but didn't carry that wondering essence as powerfully as Steven's gem. I still like "Years Blow Like Wind". Was pleased with the way you presented it. ((*Hope you like the way Stephen and I are presenting AZZ this time...I Love both poems.*))

I like the way Stephen Leigh writes a ConReport.

Bill Bowers makes a hit. I'm glad you published this.

George Martin's piece on reviewers I got a kick out of, largely because I enjoy his writing (tho only read a handful of stories, if that many), and because I found we have very similar opinions.

Eric Lindsay's comments upon death & distance flashed me back to December 1976 when I last saw Dale C. Donaldson alive, living with his wife Jane in Portland. In January 1977 I called to San Francisco, where Jane told me of the death of her husband. Dale was a great guy, one of those constant encouragers, and a writer of weird & horror stories worthy to be collected in a memorial volume. I know he was a great help to me, not only as a personal intelligence and a graceful down-homeness, but also as a writer & poet. Dale's death left me melancholy for quite a while. ((*The Cincinnati Fantasy Group has definitely felt the loss of Lou Fabakow, (as Steve mentions in Caterwauling.) and though enough has probably been said on the subject of death, this seemed like a good place to remember Lou.*))

Marty Cantor, 5263 Riverton Ave. #1, N. Hollywood, CA 91601 - June 18, 1980:

I will start my commenting where I commenced my reading - your lettercol. Dear me, but I do believe that you not only share my passion for lettercolumns, you also put out a lettercolumn that reminds me of my own in *HOLIER THAN THOU*. You use long sections of many letters, obviously doing little (although some) cutting of the LoCs. Be prepared to find yourself being berated for this practice. Yet it is a practice that I find does something that I (and I believe you) find important - it allows for much of the personality of the loccer to be expressed in the loccol. Not only do I feel that this is both interesting and important, I also maintain that it lends a certain air to the loccol that I find important. Communication, fannish communication, and feedback are important aspects of genzines - I do not believe that the truncated loccols of most genzines fulfill these important fannish considerations. And do not pay anyattention to Mike Glicksohn when he starts maundering about such nonsense as "tight lettercolumns." When Mike gets away from the only topic on which he is 100% correct (cats), ((*I'll let that remark pass, for now.*)) he starts maundering. After all, in HTM he started writing about pop-up vaginas, so no one knows about old Mike. (Sorry, Mike - I just couldn't resist.)

Mary (Maia) Cowan, 801 S. 18th Street, Columbus, OH 43206 - July 17, 1980:

I can agree with Steve's observations on costumes and the people who wear them, with one small quibble: If that really had been a 1957 dime, it would be silver, therefore quite valuable, therefore it would certainly be kept in a safer place than ~~in~~ a pants pocket! Is he sure it wasn't 1967? He should look a little closer next time.//I don't know how one would do a Hoorke costume, but it would be tempting, just to see the look on his face...

Bill Bowers is a wonderful person, and has made many and valuable contributions to fandom--but his speeches always sound like he's talking to himself. Maybe he is. (The same goes for his not-a-speeches).. Though, having made a couple public announcements, as it were, myself, I have to wonder about anyone who *volunteers*.

I seldom read book reviews with the intention of finding out whether I want to read the book; usually I already have, and I want to find out if the reviewer agrees with me. So I mostly agree with George Martin. Too many reviewers seem to decide in advance what they think of the book, and then read it to pick out supporting evidence. Or they're looking for one particular aspect of literature, and ignoring the fact that there's a story there somewhere! Or conversely, as he complains, they do a book report (nightmare memories of 6th grade English), not a review. Me, I depend on word of mouth, or previous experience with an author's works.

And hey, I have an idea: let's have everybody we know send Lee Stevens the worst book they've ever read, so he can write some killer reviews. I have a couple nominees.

Ah, Denise, you too have discovered the Truth that the only thing to do with a truly horrible pun is to pass it on to the next victim. I wonder about Phil sometimes; he seems like such a quiet, sweet gentleman, and suddenly he hits one with one of his atrocious jokes! Beneath that mild-mannered exterior lies the essence of true and admirable putridity. Ask him about fudgesicles sometime. Or watermelon...((*Okay, Phil, I'll, uh, bite. (I may regret that) What about fudgesicles and watermelons?*))

Strange how I find myself re-reading the logs, with their discussion on death, again very soon after the death of a relative, and after finally visiting my grandfather in the nursing home where he'll probably die. I find myself curiously unaffected by these situations while my other relatives are falling apart about it. Of course, I'd never been close to the great-uncle who died, and my grandfather has been deteriorating (and unbearable) for years; but everyone else seems obligated to weep and wail and gnash their teeth and regret that they weren't better offspring/whatever, while I just shrug and accept the death of someone old and sick as both inevitable and merciful. Is there something wrong with me, or are they being unreasonable? Though I can also think of several instances of the macabre humor others have mentioned. After my sister's friend died quite suddenly, she and his widow made silly remarks about "There's always a beautiful blonde widow" even while Kathy was trying to cope with coming home and finding her husband dead. The absurdity of the situation is as clear as the tragedy: as with every situation in life. ((I was thinking about what you said about your grandfather, and I'm going through a somewhat similar situation with my grandmother. She is someone who I have always been close to, though we have fought constantly since I was a child...she is one of those people who will tell you that your father's parents don't love you as much as she does because they don't spend as much money on you. And since I spent most of my childhood summers with my maternal grandparents, and because I could rarely win an argument with her (though that never stopped me from trying), I consequently have never felt very close to my paternal grandparents, even though they both live in the same town. Anyway, what this convoluted sentence was leading up to was that my grandmother tends toward real, clinical, paranoia, which has never been treated, but is constantly being dealt with by her family. She has gone from being one of the most loving people you'd ever want to meet to one of the most shrillish women I've ever encountered. The problem is that this can occur at any moment, of any given day, and, even though its symptoms have always been there, it seems to be worsening as she grows older. She is currently in a hospital, waiting for a biopsy to be taken to see if she will undergo chemotherapy for cancer. This is really not all that unusual, I know, but what's happening is that she has so alienated her family over the years that we, (or at least I,) are sometimes wondering if it wouldn't be better if she were dead. I think that I am the only one who has expressed this, at least publicly, but I think this has occurred to the others, especially the grandchildren. Myself and the older grandchildren have at least some memories of a loving grandmother, but the younger ones have known only her paranoia, and seen how it affects their parents. I love my grandmother, but I hate what she has become. I also hate it when I see small signs of this in my mother, and even a bit in myself...the highly emotional, mood varying person that I often am, often with no reason that I or anyone else can understand. Even though everyone else has mood changes, I've seen this so often in my grandmother, and what it can lead up to, that it scares me when I see it in myself. One of the few things Steve can say to calm me down is that I'm starting to sound like my grandmother, and it works when I say that to my mother. I think there is a constant fear in the recesses of our minds that as we grow older we might end up like grandma. One thing we have going for us is a family that fights us if we start to act that way, whereas with my grandmother no one really stands up to her. I think it's terrible to wish someone dead, and though I find it understandable, I hate the fact that I sometimes feel this way. And I only hope that someday my own children/grandchildren will not feel the same way about me.))

Carolyn "C.D." Doyle, 1949 N. Spencer, Indpls., IN 46218 - May 18, 1980:

Lot of bisexuality talk in this local. The 80's sees a large population of people who are not bisexual, but can be called neither homosexual or hetero. These people have had occasional experiences with the same sex, but do not find themselves attracted to them. More common than I dreamed is the fellow who, if his roommate plops into bed with him, will reciprocate, but have convenient amnesia the next morning, and probably never refer to it, though it may happen again. (There are homosexuals, too, who have occasionally been with the opposite sex, but don't find themselves attracted to them, and don't really want to talk about it.)

I remember saying a few years ago that I thought there could come a point in a close friendship when sex didn't matter--that, male or female, the need to become closer and express love for your friend would outweigh sexual attraction, based on looks, sex, etc. I think this is more often seen in same-sex relationships--a friendship with man-woman tends to become sexual before the emotional ties are too strong, just because of the nature of the beast.

But how it must feel--to be in bed with someone for the first time, and with every look, to be able to say to yourself "This is my friend--someone I love very much, who has been through a lot with me, and who I know so well and still feel so strongly about."

Terry Mats, 1131 White Ave., Kansas City, MO 64126 - August 8, 1980:

As I told you at Rivercon, I really enjoyed Graymalkin. I can tell Ken did too because he didn't want me to take it to work so I could type this letter. Sigh. I think we're going to be one of those couples who has to get two copies of everything we like.

I can't really agree with Steve that it's such a bad thing that those people hide behind their costumes--at least we know whom to avoid. (By the way, I heard that

the woman in the laced up pants approached Steve at Rivercon and now they're friends. Is this true?) ((No, the woman in the white satin pants with the 1967 dime in her pocket approached him, and now they're friends, though she gave him a deservedly hard time of it for a while...no pun intended.))

I do agree that we all wear costumes to some extent. I happen to be guilty of that myself. However, I think in most cases, our costumes are in some way an extension of part of our personalities (even if it's the part that's insecure) and reveal a lot about us just by showing how we would like others to see us.

However, the ones who dress up in sf costumes through the whole convention dress up as what they are NOT like--they dress up as some fantasy creation they think is much better than they are but that they can never be. In doing so they show a very poor image of themselves.

(Tell Steve I would never accuse him of being sexist in his comments about the women at Minicon. However, I do question his statement that there were an equal number of men and women. With Dotti Stefl as one of the women, that's hardly equal--she was more than a match for both Ro and Steve.)

I really don't have much to say about George's speech on critics and reviewers--it was close to perfect. Now if only they would read it--perhaps we should send a copy to every reviewer who commits these sins.

I'm glad Bill has reached the point where what he wants matters. One should write or publish so you enjoy what you're doing, not out of a sense of obligation or, even worse, because you feel your identity is tied to what you publish so closely that if you didn't publish you would be nothing.

However, I do get tired of people saying that they publish only for themselves and no one else matters. You can write for yourself--as long as you stick what you've written in a closet like Emily Dickinson. But the minute you publish, you're communicating, and the people you're trying to communicate with are important. You shouldn't cater to them certainly, but you should realize you are trying to get something about yourself across to some unseen readers and it's not totally their fault if they don't understand. ((Bravo!))

I'm glad Bill is communicating what he wants to rather than what he thinks others want to see. Those of us who are his friends and fans want to see what he wants to communicate. However, it is important to remember you are communicating.

I don't think I can have a friendship with anyone without some sort of physical relationship to go with it. I mean physical, rather than sexual. Sexual relationships can cause a lot of tension in friendships--some times they can make a friendship deeper, sometimes they can destroy it. Somehow I guess people haven't gotten the hang of sexual relationships on a friendly basis--me included. However, I don't think I could have a deep friendship with anyone, male or female, if there weren't some kind of physical--touching, hugging, etc.--communication involved. I still have problems overcoming inhibitions in this area--not so much heterosexual ones as fear of overstepping other people's boundaries. Hopefully, someday I won't even think about it. (Also, there is always the problem of people misinterpreting friendly touching as sexual. I wish we could all wear signs.)

You missed nothing by not having had physical education. It took me years to get over the abhorrence of physical activity and sports that p.e. instilled in me. Instead of giving me confidence it gave me a feeling of incompetence and humiliation. Instead of fitness, I got more insecure--and fatter. Finally on my own I began to discover things that I wanted to do--I wasn't good at them but out of class I didn't mind that. I still won't play the simplest most good-natured team sports, softball or frisbee, because of what p.e. taught me.

I really did try. I did my best. But what good was that when my p.e. teacher pitted me against the best fencer in the class (she had taken lessons out of school)--me being the worst in the class? Only one teacher I ever had (in college) ever took the time to teach me how to do something better. You missed nothing. If you couldn't do something right away they never would have helped you learn. You'd probably be in the same position you are now--except you'd hate the idea of sports. ((Something I've thought of recently was the fact that we constantly played softball at home as children. My father used to play in the minors (I think) and there was always a bag full of baseballs, softballs, and bats/gloves around the house. My brothers, cousins, and neighbors and I used to always play in the backyard. I was never very good, but I did enjoy it...probably because it was family oriented and no pressure. But I was never encouraged to play on a team, like my brothers were, so consequently I've always felt a reluctance to play with anyone other than close friends or family for fear of being laughed at. Now, I know I'm not that bad, I've seen lots of people play worse, but I don't think I could stand the ridicule, or the anticipated ridicule, if I failed. I did overcome this a bit with volleyball, basically because I played it in gym in highschool, and because Steve's family used to organize games around family gatherings. And I usually had a good time, though I still didn't play very well. But, perhaps if I played often enough I would be competent, at least. But, there again, it's the lack of willingness on my part to participate regularly. I'm really not all that interested in sports, whether through lack of ability or whatever. And I consider myself fortunate that I only have to deal with a sports-minded mate occasionally. I hate watching sports activities on television! Particularly football. Steve likes sports, but is not a fanatic, and rarely sits glued to the television watching games (except maybe tennis). I don't object to his watching them, but I hate to have them on when I'm working, (read that as housecleaning) and tend to make Steve take the t.v. into the spare bedroom when he wants to watch a big game so I don't have to listen to it.))

Avedon Carol, 4409 Woodfield Road, Kensington, MD 20795 - July 27, 1980:

Had quite a chuckle over Steve's observations--having just met a man who calls himself Yoda and finding myself speaking to "BananaBerger", among others. And all those people with swords, really makes life difficult. "Do you know Joe?" "Joe? What does he look like? Oh, you mean Pindaris!" Urk. Then, of course there are the people in the strange clothes that just will never work--if those things don't fit right, they not only look lousy, they *feel* horrible. Why do these people go to all that trouble? Just to make me sick, I bet.

Pretty enterprising of you to make off with George's speech like that. I can sympathize with his ire about stupid mistakes in reviews. I recently noticed a review of my sister's album in the local *UNICORN TIMES* (or the Uninformed Times, as we call it around here), in which they misspelled her name (left about three or four letters out) and mixed up the personnel. She did most of the art, music, and production herself, so the reviewer complained about the separatism of having it all done by women (what was she supposed to do, get a sex change between writing it and singing and playing it?). And anyway, it wasn't *all* done by women. All of this information was clearly stated in the press packet and on the album cover, but an amazing number of reviewers and critics can't read.

On the other hand, George is also right when he says that not all critics (of anything) are simply failed artists. You can see that a car isn't running without knowing how to fix it, like. Which is the same as it is with criticism--you don't have to be a good fiction writer to know how to read the stuff. And as to telegraphing the events in the story in plot summaries--well, I went back over my old SF review column in *FPS* and realized that the only times I had resorted to plot summarizing were when I had really hated the story, and I used the twists in the plot as examples of why the story was so bad (of course, in such situations, it was often the case that the author had telegraphed the "surprise" twist and ruined the story him/herself.). But I never seemed to do this when I had any respect for the story, or even for the author. I wonder how many other reviewers are operating from this perspective--as if the book/story isn't worth preserving for the reader. I know that when I really appreciated that little surprise twist in a story, I never revealed it in a review. (When I saw the promo for the movie of *THE SHINING*, I wondered if Kubrick or any of his PR people had appreciated the tension King built up throughout the story when he wrote the book--if you've seen the commercial, you already know the old man is gonna flip his cork before you get to the resort. Hell, in the book, you didn't know *anything* was gonna happen til three-quarters of the way thru, and you were *still* scared shitless).

Laurie Mann's letter made me stop and ask myself again whether I am straight, gay, or bi, and I suddenly realized that for the last several months I have been back in my asexual phase. It's not as much fun, but I at least get more work done this way.

Jan Brown, 1218 Washtenaw Court, Ann Arbor, MI 48104 - July 8, 1980:

Steve's column is one of the best and most perceptive he's written yet. There seems to be a fair amount of comment in the fan press these days about the "invasion" of cons by mediafens who run around in costumes, apparently interacting with no one, and then go home thinking they've been to an sf con.

I well remember that infamous tapestry shirt of Steve's--I couldn't keep my hands off it! (And I'm waiting for its reappearance--with those satin pants!)(I've bought him a pair of tights to wear with the shirt...if I can talk him into wearing them, he looks scrumptious!) (*faunch*)

I suppose every male BNF who is at all successful with women wonders from time to time whether women want him or his reputation. It is quite possible that at least some of the qualities that make a person well-known in fandom also make him/her attractive to the desired sex--qualities like intelligence, creativity, caring. For my own part, even if I were more ambitious than I am, I don't think I'm cold-blooded enough to throw myself at men who don't attract me, simply because they're famous. ((I know that statement is true for me...I find that I am attracted to intelligent, creative and compassionate people and if that means that they tend to be popular with other people, it only means that we all have good taste.))

Another problem with bisexual relationships is that one might be attracted to different things in a woman than one is in a man. For my own part, I had a pretty good idea what turned me on in a guy, but not (although I'd suspected that somewhere out there was a woman who might attract me) what would turn me on in a woman. Then, one day--click! I was terrified. What would she think? (Turned out, much the same as I was thinking.) Since then, I've met only one other woman I *might* consider as a potential lover--but I've come to know myself a lot better.

The drivel that masquerades as conversation among women isn't nearly as irritating as what happens when sheltered women, homemakers etc. with little experience of the "real" world, try to discuss something intelligently. Maybe what is needed is less of a division between "men's" and "women's" worlds. Women, obviously, need to understand the world outside their homes. But men and women both need to realize that



there is nothing degrading about domesticity or babies. Whatever kind of mess men make of the world, babies will still get born and homes need to be kept. Whenever you make any *one* thing the besetting interest in your life, be it work, your home, fandom, whatever--you become a bore. Maybe that's why so many intelligent women are more comfortable around men--because they have more diversity in their lives.

Taral, 1812-415 Willowdale Ave., Willowdale, Ontario, M2N 5B4:

I have a personal grudge against people who, as Stephen describes, wear uniforms at cons or play at being Hans Solo. I have fancy dress of my own that I wear at cons; a green tunic and kilt. For me it is a means of self-expression. I'm comfortable in it. I like it. I get to express my determinedly individualistic ideal self-image and fulfil other complicated psychological needs like that. However, when there are hundreds of other fans dressed up at a con, that's not the way it looks. To your average neo or media fan I look just like another of his sort. To the more sophisticated I get looked down on as another Skywalker, Buck Rogers or Runner. Now, it takes nerve enough to dress up in a green skirt, but it's unfair that I also have to be embarrassed by resembling the lower orders of convention life. I'm not a brave man and resent the extra bravado demanded of me. Especially when no-one appreciates the added gall it takes to appear in costume when so many other people are in costume. Being *different* is easy in comparison.

Fandom has always had such a large percentage of toads in it that most fans seem to pay little attention to physical appearance. I find that your circle of friends are an interesting exception. Stephen's observation that it seems that the least appealing people wear the most attractive costumes is probably as true as any other aphorism, but it isn't one I'd expect a fan to make. It goes down in my files along with two or three other practically unique remarks as part of my evidence that certain corners of mid-west fandom are more appearance conscious than the rest of us toads.

I suppose if you are one of the Beautiful People it is aesthetically painful to share fandom with the Mike Glyers, Terry Hugheses and Joyce Scrivners of the world, but I always thought that fandom was one of the privileged refuges for such people. It was largely the Beautiful People in the mundane world that I escaped to fandom from. Now where will I escape to, I wonder, if they take over fandom?

(*Steve here--since it was my article that seemed to arouse your ire, it's appropriate that I respond...First, to clear up an inaccurate statement: it wasn't my observation that "the least appealing people wear the most attractive costumes."* That was the observation of the person with whom I was conversing. I chose to relate it because it was germane to the discussion; I make no claims about its veracity.

It's odd, Taral, but it seems to me that the circle of fans with whom I associate most often isn't what *anyone* could term uniformly "beautiful". Some of them might fit that term (maybe--but beauty is a subjective adjective; what's beautiful to me isn't always for Denise, or you, or Joe Phan); quite a few of them come nowhere close. We're speaking of purely physical comeliness, mind you--which has nothing to do with friendship or sexual attractiveness or much of anything *except* physical comeliness. If you feel that I choose my friends and lovers on the basis of appearance then either you haven't seen any of them, or your sampling was selected to reflect that bias. You should look again. I *do* like to see a modicum of personal hygiene in my friends, but beyond that I don't much care.

Toad-ism isn't an affliction of the body. (I think I'll avoid mentioning warts.) Some of the people you consider beautiful probably don't work at it--it's just something they have to live with. Looks aren't a symbol of mundanity any more than 'ugliness' implies fannishness.

Whatever the hell fannishness is.

As to costumes--see Gliksohn's or Jessioa's letter in this issue. I like what both of them say. What tends to bother me about some of the costumed hordes at the conventions is that those costumes function as a barrier between me and the people behind them. Nothing's wrong with indulging fantasies occasionally--believe me, I do my share of that. There's even a certain amount of health in that. It can release some of the emotions we need to let out before they fester. But to live an eternal fantasy...I tend to worry about that person's sanity and/or happiness.

To put it another way--I've talked to people of my acquaintance both in costume and out. Their dress doesn't affect their conversation; I'm still talking to the same people. When that isn't the case, I start to wonder why. I even try to do that without value judgements. It doesn't always work.

It doesn't always work for you, either, or you wouldn't refer to the Skywalkers, Runners and the rest as "the lower orders of convention life.")

Barney Neufeld, 2713 2nd. Ave. South #307, Minn. MN 55408 - November 12, 1980:

...I did not find Mr. Martin's offering nearly so informative or entertaining. His careless usage of the words "critic" and "reviewer" in the first half of this tirade is not only confusing, it is inexcusable. As he, himself, admits, the words are not synonymous. Yet, he uses them as interchangeably as if they were. And while he makes some good points about reviewing, he does himself no good service by this ambiguity.

Plot summaries? I think I know what he means by this, but I need to ask him just how much discussion of plot elements constitutes such summaries? It is at times necessary for a reviewer to treat plot elements to illustrate the point he is making.

(That point, of course, should never be to only describe the action.) But, I think that is a bit different from what he means.

Or has Mr. Martin forgotten that it is *also* the purpose of a reviewer to give his readers a vicarious experience? The experience may be only that of enjoying (or despising) a book they haven't yet read, but how else are readers to decide its worth to them. (And if you say by reading the book, that is fine and good. Can you afford to buy *every* book you see? I can't. If I do not have reviews to base a judgement on, the decision of what to read, when I have time and money to do so, becomes very difficult indeed.) It is up to the reviewer to shape that experience as skillfully and artistically as the writer does--without destroying the book in question. It is a talent which can be developed with proper foundation and guidance (both of which are somewhat lacking today). *((Personally, I rarely if ever read book reviews...I tend to stay with authors I like or books recommended to me by friends, or even, blush, blush, by reading cover blurbs (which lie like hell, sometimes) and finding something that sounds interesting. The fact that Steve occasionally gets review copies helps a bit...I couldn't afford to buy as many books as I read.))*

Mr. Martin is very right that vilification of an author does not belong in a competent review. (There is a difference between disliking and destroying.) The writer who must descend to such action is very shallow. For it is never the author that is the focus of a review. Rather, it is a single, highly-polished facet of that author which is studied. And *only* that should be the concern of the reviewer.

Dana Siegel, 1134 Charrington, Birmingham, MI 48010 - May 26, 1980:

Re Mike Glicksohn and death: I've always felt that one of the hardest things that people have to do is to come to grips with death as a reality rather than a concept. This is probably related to the fact that everyone wants to believe that he/she is immortal, and just "others" have to die. When someone close dies, it unfortunately makes it painfully obvious that *everyone* dies, and thus one's individual bid for immortality is probably also doomed to failure. Grief about someone's death is a natural process, but in our fouled-up society what causes the real problems is the guilt--not grief after the death of a loved one. Everyone is made to think that the person died because of something he/she either did or didn't do--it's definitely a no win situation. Death would be easier to deal with if everyone would overcome the outside pressure to feel guilt, and instead view death as an ongoing process. As long as one person remembers another, I don't really feel that person can be *dead*, she/he still lives within the other person. While I personally was unimpressed by Heinlein's *STRANGER IN A STRANGE LAND*, the way the book dealt with the process of death as an ongoing part of life really makes sense.

Frank Johnson, 536 Brookfield Drive, #206, Fairfield, OH 45014:

It's the day after Octocon. A news item clatters its way over WSKS's antiquated Associated Press wire machine:

"Senate majority leader Howard Baker says there will be 'a lot of juggling' in the Senate over Reagan's call for thirteen billion dollars in additional spending cuts this year."

My first thought: gotta call Steve.

"Just try to imagine," I giggle hurriedly into the phone during a Journey track of moderate length, "those old farts trying to pass clubs on the Senate floor." We talk for a couple of moments about the gleeful thought of certain Senators trying meat cleavers. And missing. "Hey, Steve--I have to go. My son's almost over. Oh, yeah. Before I go, when's Denise doing her fanzine?"

"I don't know for sure, but she's set a deadline of November first."

"Is that for everybody or just live-in contributors?"

"Everybody." One of those patented even-over-the-phone-you-can-see-Steve-Leigh-smile smiles reaches my ear. "She's putting it together November first."

The above conversation shows not only how long it takes Denise to put *GRAY-MALKIN* 6 together and in our hands, but also some of the enormous changes that have taken place since issue 5, some sixteen to eighteen months.

The Karamozov Brothers hit Cincinnati and enveloped Steve, Ro Lutz-Nagey and myself under the spell of tossing various objects back and forth while telling lousy jokes. And while shamefully exploiting the dime-in-the-back-pocket line from GM5 at Minicon.

I got through the roughest two nights of my career: December 3, 1979 and December 8, 1980. Being on the air those evenings really hurt. They were extremely draining - physically, but much more so emotionally.

Bill Bowers gets a job. I lose mine. After a pisspoor ~~summer~~ summer I get a new one with better hours. HURRAY! No more nighttime airshifts.

Steve gets *SLOW FALL TO DAWN* published. It's quite a fun book to read even tho it contains a certain Ric d'Mannberg, a character too unbelievable for even the wildest fiction. The book explains Steve's reference on page 7 of GM5, gives him a second band with which to play and reveals Denise to be an activist in SF fandom.

A whole lot of new Canadian people become drinking buddies, bad joke swappers, friendly Toronto tourguides, fellow poker players, group huggers and damn good friends. I lose a grandfather. We lose Lou Tabakov.

Denise continues to grow sexier, more gorgeous and more beautiful as a person.

Steve gets cuter and becomes a better juggler.

This is actually the second letter that I've put together in response to GM5. The earlier letter mentioned my fondness for Phil Wright, the London transplant who imported some awful word puns along with his unique charm. You know about word puns, don't you? Like the one about J.S. Bach who took his many sons out to dinner one evening. The waiter comes to the table to take their order, but one of the sons is in the can. Father Bach tells the waiter to go in to "see what the Bach in the boy's room will have." I digress. Sorry. I'll try not to let it happen again.

This fondness also extends to Nancy whom I met at Confusion. She has changed quite a bit from the extra shy, demure lady of earlier this year. But she still turns various shades of crimson at the sight of male buttocks. Those that don't belong to Phil I will assume.

--I was going to place astericks at each esoteric reference, but if Bowers can get away with it, why can't I--

The previous loc also mentioned Steve's love for the same kind of humor. And the time he called me at my old job to chastise me for saying over the air that the earling morning playing of "My Sharona" would be called the Knack of dawn. Actually, now I would say that the airing of a certain Foghat song at sunrise hours could be called "Slow Ride to Dawn." Ouch. ((Enough! I've let you carry this series of godawful puns far enough. So, for the sanity of myself and other readers, on to the next letter.))

Brian Earl Brown, 16711 Burt Road, #207, Detroit, MI 48219 - June 18, 1980:

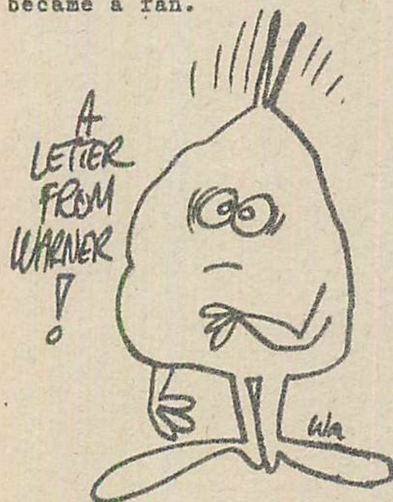
I opened GRAYMALKIN at random and chanced upon "the flesh of her monumental thighs oozed from between the laces of her pants like gouda cheese..." and read on. I attribute this knack to find the juiciest bits of a fanzine to reading Neicer's APA-69 mailings. Somehow, after Steve's ~~piece~~ essay the rest of GRAYMALKIN seemed staid and wholesome.

There's something surreal about a Bill Bowers speech (or nonspeech) in a non-Bill Bowers fanzine that persists on looking like a Bill Bowers speech. Did you make him stencil it for you? ((Of course.))

Laurie Mann mentions that she'd heard some few feminists claimed that women could not be liberated until they liberated themselves from men, a position she disagrees with. As well she should. One of the most active feminists I know seems to have a new, intense love affair with another man everytime she writes.

Falling in love frequently, according to an article I saw somewhere, in a newspaper, I think, may be drug induced. According to this article when people fall in love, or are in love, the brain releases some chemical that acts like an upper. The researcher theorized that people who frequently fall in love are unusually sensitive to that chemical. I wonder if this means that in another 10 years or so scientists will finally be able to synthesize a literal 'love potion'? The thought is frightening.

And the only thing more boring than "women's talk" --kids, school, etc., is "men's talk"--sports, cars and women. They have no imagination...Probably why I became a fan.



Harry Warner, Jr. 423 Summit Ave., Hagerstown, MD 21740
August 13, 1980:

I could never bring myself to don fancy dress at a con, and if someone forcibly put it on me I'm pretty sure it wouldn't cause me to feel myself exuding a new personality on a role-playing basis. So I found myself nodding my head in sage agreement with Stephen while I read his jeremiad at the excesses which he finds at cons nowadays. The only trouble was, after I'd finished the article, I didn't finish thinking about the topic and this caused me to realize something. I'm not sure I'm immune from this phenomenon, even though it manifests itself in a different form for me. I'm not really the person who writes all these locs. I never discuss in conversations certain topics I write about readily when commenting on a fanzine. I have a temper which has grown healthier with quicker reaction time over the years in contrast to most of the other mental and bodily functions but I almost never allow it to get onto paper mailed to fans. Sometimes when I find it hard to fill two pages in a loc on a rather small and non-controversial fanzine, I cheat by assuming a position or taking a stand that doesn't really

agree with my genuine inclinations, just so I'll have something to write about. There are other secret discrepancies between the real me and the loc me, too. So maybe I'm suffering from the same problem as the costume ball enthusiasts. If I am, I wonder how many other prolific loc writers can honestly claim to be their real selves when they comment on a fanzine, with no disguise of any kind? ((It's a rare person who can be true to her/himself all the time, and an even rarer one who admits that they aren't.))

The reviewing sin that George Martin emphasizes so much, revealing a story's plot, doesn't bother me as a rule. I almost never read a science fiction book or magazine as soon as it's published. Most of the reviews have appeared months or years before I get around to it. By then, I've forgotten what the review revealed on the


subconscious level to give me the illusion sometimes that I've already read this story I don't remember what will happen next but after each main event in the story I experience a deja vu sensation. Obviously, there is justification in the complaint against plot summary if the review appears just after the story has been published and if it will be read by many persons who are just about to read the review's topic. I've always felt that reviewers should have a gentlemen's agreement not to disclose a surprise ending or other important gimmick of a story until the story has been in print at least six months; maybe that restriction should also cover detailed plot summaries. But it's quite hard to review properly the kind of fiction whose main attraction is its course of events, without blowing at least part of the plot.

I have some ideas of my own about reviewing sins. One is the reviewer's failure to remember that what he's writing about isn't true but a pack of lies made up to entertain people. This situation leads to completely irrelevant complaints about the story's failure to cope with some real problem in today's world and many other difficulties. Another transgression of reviewers: temper-losing if the story isn't a supreme all-time classic. Not many stories will fall into that category, because of human frailties. Matter of fact, the alternative is frightful to contemplate. If almost every story were a magnificent masterpiece, instead of almost none of them, how could science fiction readers survive? We'd be irresistibly impelled to read almost everything published so we wouldn't miss one of the all-time great stories, and so much is being published that we'd have no time to work or eat or write locs.

I'm not sure a nun is automatically disqualified as a teacher of such things as family life and sex education because of her vows of celibacy. For one thing, many nuns became nuns only after sampling all the worldly things. For another thing, this assumption leads to doubts about how qualified a layperson should be to instruct such topics: should family life be taught only by individuals who have grown up in an unbroken home or are possessors of spouse and children at present? Can a divorcee be a good family life teacher? I'm tempted to ask how anyone who lacks a time machine could teach history.

Timebinding was popularized by Korzybski whose Science and Sanity was first introduced in science fiction by van Vogt and then taken up by many fans. The Eney Fencyclopedia defines it as "the ability to establish continuity beyond the individual life span by the use of permanent communications and multiple record." I think it also has been taken by many fans to mean primarily one's habit of considering the past and future implications of any current circumstance. ((Thanks for the further clarification...between you and Dave Looks we should have this well defined.))

Scarecrow Rex Oz, Box 69, Barrington, IL 60010:



DEAR GRAYMAULKIN: Have you ever considered an article on the use of GRAYMAULKIN as an anti-aircraft weapon? Now that the gov't has invisible planes, there might be a lot of interest and even some funding. I have already made a start (got him to o) on a small & very maneuverable black job (possibly a Dragon Fly or Knight Fighter) that spilled jet fuel all over my desk blotter. I plan to work my way up to Zeppelins as soon as you publish a bigger magazine, and Phil Farmer promises to send some over. (I would try crows, but there aren't any around her for obvious reasons.) (I would try felons, but every time I come to court somebody hits me with a tennis ball.) Please help.

SCARECROW REX OZ

PS: A cow has been complaining about Steve, but I have ~~quashed~~ quashed it. What are friends for?

R

WAHF: Janice Peshke, Ken Keller, Pat Cadigan, Vince Tuzzo, Paula Lieberman, Joanneke Woods, Eric Lindsay, and the Dead Dog.

THIS SPACE AVAILABLE

