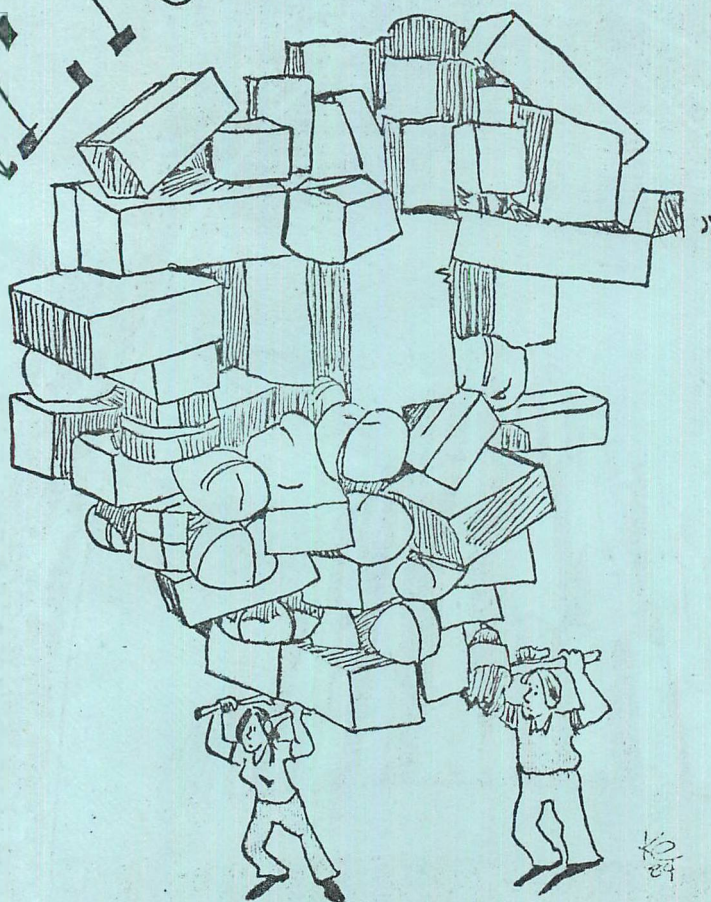


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# WERE MOVING



Do we have to keep doing it  
until we get it right?

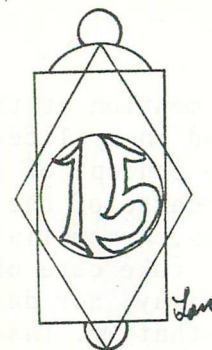
Effective July 1, 1984,  
Maia Cowan  
and  
Lan Iaskowski  
will have a new address:

55 Valley Way  
Bloomfield Hills, Michigan 48013  
(313) 642-5670



# Lan's Lantern

LAN'S LANTERN #15 is published and edited by George "Lan" Laskowski, 55 Valley Way, Bloomfield Hills, MI 48013 USA, with phone Number (313) 642-5670. This is Lantern Publication #1, and Lantern Publications is a division of LanShack Press Unlimited. This is copyright (c) August, 1984, by George J Laskowski Jr. All rights revert to the contributors upon publication. The opinions expressed are the contributor's, and may be the opinions of the editor; then again maybe not. LAN'S LANTERN is available for the usual, or \$1.50, plus 50¢ postage.



## ARTISTS

Sheryl Birkhead - 76  
Chris Cloutier - 14, 19  
Dover Books - 25  
Kurt Erichsen - 2  
Geoffrey Everts - 33  
Steve Fox - front cover, 22, 57  
Joan Hanke-Woods - 10  
David Heath - 53, 55, 60, 62, 75  
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Fred Jakobcic - back cover  
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Traditional White Space

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## DEDICATION

To Maia, of course;

and

To Mike Resnick, who makes reading fun, and morally uplifting;

and

To Lisa Lemans, who helped me more this year than she really knows.

## Why You Are Receiving This

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☒ If you haven't yet, please send something for the Norton issue (see page 77).

I mention at the end of my ConReports and Ramblings, that they cover most of what happened in my life this past year, but I did leave things out. One of those things was the concept of traditions, and the traditional things that I do.

Because of the Service Program with which I will be involved next school year, I told Mrs. Armoudlian, the coordinator of Giftorama Ticket Sales that I would not be able to take care of collecting the money from the students who sold tickets. As I walked away, her daughter said quietly, and in a dismayed tone, "But it's been a tradition that Mr. Laskowski collect the Giftorama money!"

True, I had been doing this for 7 of the eight years I had been at Kingswood, and for many of the students I had been the only one doing so. Strange how traditions start--do something for two years in a row, and it suddenly becomes one. I thought this through, and when I did get my life straightened around (see my Ramblings for those details) I decided that I could keep that tradition, and informed Mrs. Armoudlian of that fact. She was pleased, because she didn't know who else might be able to do it.

In the dorm I have been doing the Birmingham Ride for 6 years, as long as I have been a Resident Faculty member at Kingswood School (my first two years here I worked in one of the Cranbrook dorms). The Ride is on Tuesdays and Thursdays, and for the first four years I drove on one of those days, and another person (who had been at the school for ages) did the other day. Bob retired, and I did both days for the last two years. When I mentioned that I might not be able to do it next year, one of the girls said, "But it's been a tradition that Mr. Laskowski do the Birmingham Ride!"

And it's been a tradition that I order the coffee and pick up the donuts from the kitchen every morning and bring them to the faculty room. Another it seems is that I am asked to do any early morning driving to the airport (like having to leave school at 5:30 or 6 AM to get to that airport on time). And I'm the first one in the faculty room in the morning; it's the tradition.

In thinking about all this now (sitting at the typer as I compose this), I suppose that I have been the center of more traditions than I thought. And now, with the Service Program at school, this too will become my traditional role.

What about my traditions in fandom? There are certain cons that I go to--CONCLAVE, CONFUSION, CHAMBANACON, MARCON, MINICON (though I had to miss it this year), MIDWESTCON, MIKECON, INCONJUNCTION, and a few others. My fanzine centers around SF, with an occasional theme issue. And when I do my conreports, I mention the GoHs, and a lot of the people I talk to, and the Ramblings chronicle my life outside of fandom. And Like most fans who edit zines, my fanzine has been traditionally late. (The only chronic exception to this is Marty Cantor, who, as editor of LASFAPA, always had the mailings out on time, and his fanzine, HOLIER THAN THOU, which is out on time, or \*gasp\* earlier than he says it will be.)

And the tradition of errors.

My typing leaves much to be desired, and I keep making typographical errors. And sometimes I make other errors, like forgetting to put in some neat stories about Mike Resnick in the article about him (I meant to include them--honest, but I had so much else to say that I forgot to put them in). Or forgetting to mention that John Brunner was the GoH at CONSTELLATION, and I had a brief conversation with him in the hucksters room. (Thank you, John, for the contributions to my fanzine, especially the Simak issue.) And not taking a close look at the fine lines of Steve Fox's (and others') artwork and letting the cheap printer do that work, and not the good ~~expensive~~ one.

Apologies to these people and to you, my readers, for those typos. I hope you enjoy this zine--all 78 pages of it.

Oh Yeah, and I'm the one who wrote the Resnick article. I forgot to put my name indicating that on the first page of the article. Like I said--a tradition of errors.

Love,

Lan



# THE 1984

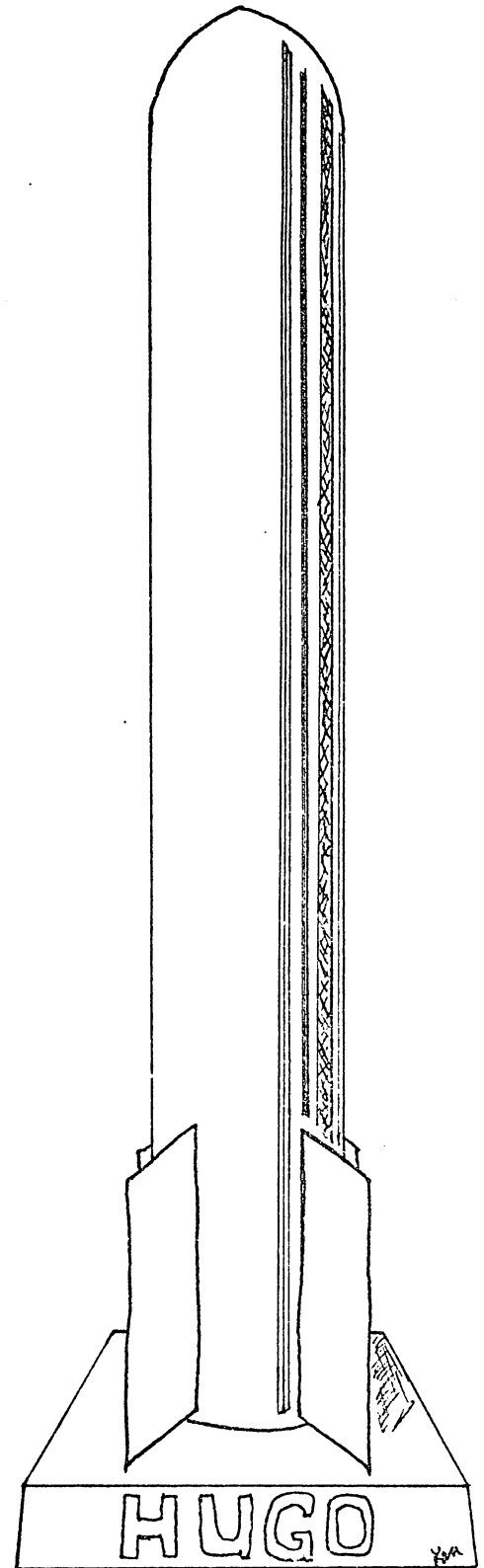
## HUGO AWARDS

Choices for this year's voting

by

LAN

Last year I put down my choices for the Hugo Awards for the four fiction categories, and the reasons why I made the selections I did. This year I am doing the same thing, but with more of the categories covered. I had hoped to have this out before the deadline of the voting, but with three issues of *Lan's Lantern* scheduled for production in 1984, I couldn't work up the energy to get this done any sooner (and I am hoping, at this time, to get this issue out by the end of July). Read and enjoy, and let's see how close I come to the actual voting this year.





## SHORT STORY

- "The Geometry of Narrative" by Hilbert Schenck  
"The Peacemaker" by Gardner Dozois  
"Servant of the People" by Frederik Pohl  
"Speech Sounds" by Octavia Butler  
"Wong's Lost and Found Emporium" by William F. Wu

"The Geometry of Narrative" is a complex plot of writer, viewer, and story intertwining into an interesting and unique narrative. We start in a class discussion of literature, which breaks out into an outer story, which in turn eventually weaves back into the first story. Trying to describe what happens here is almost as complicated as describing Heinlein's "All You Zombies...", which makes all sorts of sense when you read it. Likewise for Schenck's story; it's difficult to describe and sum up, but in reading it, everything makes sense. What Schenck has attempted is a moebius-strip type of story which works: what appears to be the story frame plays that role in one sense, but is also the internal story of the other one.

"The Peacemaker" is a strange sort of story in which a young boy is treated in a special way as a preparation to his sacrifice to the 'gods'. Apparently without explanation, the polar icecaps have melted, and there is a "marine transgression" along the coastlines. The boy, the young boy, feels somehow responsible, and his uncle Abner sacrifices him in an attempt to bring things under control.

I found this story only mildly interesting, and had totally forgot the plot until I began re-reading it. Indeed, I was very surprised to see it on the Hugo listing. There were many other stories, better written and with more interesting plots, than this that deserved a nomination.

Congressman O'Hare is running for re-election in Pohl's "Servant of the People", this time against a robot who has had a very successful career thus far. O'Hare wins, mainly through emotional appeal, but it was close.

Again I found this a surprise entry in the nominations. Pohl has set the story up as the robots being in the minority, as he had done with the blacks and the Martians in his story "The Day the Martians Landed". In the "Martian" story, Pohl has blacks telling ethnic jokes about Martians, as jokes had been told about them. Now that robots are "free", they run for public office and all that, just as blacks are doing now. It is an interesting parallel to the present society, but I didn't find the story all that interesting.

Butler's "Speech Sounds" deals with an "after-the-bomb" society, but in this case the bomb was a virus which induced stroke-like reactions. Some people dies from the bug, others survived, but with an impairment to the speech/language centers of the brain. Some could read but not speak; for others the reverse. Butler gives us a nice slice of the resulting society through the eyes of Valerie Rye. She is travelling to find the rest of

her family, meets with Obsidian, falls "in love" sort of, and loses him almost immediately, while trying to rescue some children.

Although almost too short, I got a good feel for what the society would be like from Butler's description. She handles the ideas well, and manages to pack a lot of information into the short space of the story, and also induces sympathy for Valerie and her situation.

The final nomination for the Short Story category is William Wu's "Wong's Lost and Found Emporium." This story once again is a new concept: consider a place which houses anything you've ever lost, or anything anybody has lost. The "Emporium" is not run by anybody, but the narrator of the story (never named) sort of takes care of the place, helping people find what they need. One of the aspects of the place is that a small light ap-

pears so to guide the narrator to whatever it is the person has lost; unfortunately the light does not appear for himself. Also, the shop door appears randomly in various places. The narrator eventually recovers his compassion which he has lost, with the help of another person whom he has helped.

The concept, once understood, is one of those which should have been stumbled upon earlier, but wasn't. It's an obvious plotline: "I've lost my sense of humor. Where could it have gone?" --to Wong's Lost and Found Emporium.

This was not a difficult choice. Rereading the nominees was a help in prioritizing them. The first choice was Schenck's "The Geometry of Narrative". In second place I put Butler's "Speech Sounds". Third place is Wu's "Wong's Lost and Found Emporium". Because of the lack-luster quality of the other two nominees, I placed No Award in fourth position, with Pohl's "Servant of the People" and Dozois' "The Peacemaker" as fifth and sixth respectively. As I said earlier, there were some better stories which did not make the ballot (always, in my opinion, of course).

## NOVELETTE

- "Black Air" by Kim Stanley Robinson  
"Blood Music" by Greg Bear  
"The Monkey Treatment" by George R.R. Martin  
"The Sidon in the Mirror" by Connie Willis  
"Slow Birds" by Ian Watson

As with the Short Story category, there were some other novelettes that I thought were better written, and had better plots, than those nominated. Consider "The Leaves of October" by Don Sakers, or "The Final Report on the Lifeline Experiment" by Timothy Zahn, or "Knight of Shallows" by Rand B. Lee; each of them gave me something to remember, something to make the story stand out in my mind. But let's get on with the nominations at hand.

"Black Air" by Kim Stanley Robinson is not SF, and might be considered fantasy. It is literary; that is, it is well-written, and the imagery used is superb. Manuel Carlos Agadis Tetuan is taken on a ship of the Spanish Armada and during one of the battles is saved by St. Anne, and thereafter becomes her chosen one. There is no hint of this being an alternate earth story, nor a time-travel. It reads more like a historical novel/story which would delight and please both a history and English teacher (and Robinson, as I understand it, is an English teacher).

I was very surprised to see this on the ballot this year. For me, no matter how well-written a story is, it must have a sufficient element of SF or fantasy to qualify for a Hugo Award. This doesn't have a sufficient fantasy element for me (the religious element could be considered that aspect, but I don't think it is handled in such a way as to qualify as fantasy).

Within the field of SF there have been stories about cyborgs, cybernetic organisms whose organic parts have been joined to mechanical prosthetics. Tie this idea together with a consideration of the next evolutionary step for the human race, and you have the basis for Greg Bear's "Blood Music."

Vergil Ulam was a researcher for the Genetron Corporation, whose work involved medically applicable biochips--computer microcips which would work inside the human body as monitors and regulators. Ulam takes his research several steps further and injects himself with chips that are designed to learn and improve as they learned. His friend Edward Milligan tries to stop what has happened, but becomes infected himself, as does Milligan's wife. The rest of the world will soon follow



as the biochip, which is self replicating, is introduced into the water system. Thus ends the world as we knew it.

One of the first changes that occurred with Vergil in Bear's story was his weight loss, and a transformation of his pudgy figure into that of an athlete. Losing weight is a concern of a large number of people around the world, especially here in the US, and is also the subject of George R.R. Martin's "The Monkey Treatment."

Kenny Dorchester loved to eat, but hated being fat. Even worse, he hated diets--they never worked anyway. When he meets his friend Henry Maroney, he is very surprised to find that Maroney had lost all his fat. Ken eventually worms out of Maroney the address of an oriental doctor who can administer "the monkey treatment." The treatment consists of an invisible monkey attached to his back which eats the food before Ken can get it to his mouth. Not being able to eat, Ken does lose the weight he wanted, but can't get rid of the monkey, and is frustrated by not being able to taste the food he would like to eat.

Martin manages to inject a good deal of humor as well as sympathy for the character in this story. He is a good story-teller, and manages to touch his readers in a sensitive area--their weight.

The next nomination, Connie Willis' "The Sidon in the Mirror", is an involved story. I had not realized how detailed she had made her background until I re-read the story for this review and took notes. Willis is indeed a rising star in the field, and if she keeps writing tight, well-plotted and well-characterized stories as this one, she may overtake Ellison (though he does have a long track record to beat).

A "sidon" is a small, furry animal impossible to tame; it is calm one moment, violent the next. A "mirror" is a person whom can perfectly copy the actions of others. Ruby is a pianoboard player, a mirror, who is hired by Jewell, the owner of an "abbey" (a brothel) on the surface of a burned-out star which is being mined for hydrogen. Besides being a mirror, Ruby also has 8 fingers on each hand, which makes his pianoboard playing that much better, and being a mirror, he can only play things he has seen played before. The abbey is on the star particularly to satisfy the needs of the miners.

Taber, one of the miners, has a violent streak, and Ruby is afraid that he is beginning to copy him, and thus become dangerous to Jewell, Pearl, Carnelian, and the other ladies of the abbey (all of whom have "jewel" names). Because of the high oxygen and hydrogen content of the atmosphere, sparkers and the like are outlawed on the surface. And Ruby accidentally kept a live spark-er when he landed (a lighter with the flint in it).

The story is one of discovery for Ruby and Pearl. As the past and present unravel, the two discover the strange relationship between them. It's a story that I enjoyed better the second time through; more details presented themselves on the re-reading, which marks it as a better story than average. The only quibble I have is that it takes place on the surface of a burned-out star, and the gravity would be horrendous. Even if it were a "small" star, the gravity would be greater than that of Jupiter. The other details, the story, and the style in which it is written, far outweigh this minor point.

Another nicely detailed story is the last nomination for the novelette category, "Slow Birds" by Ian Watson. In the future, some missiles that look like birds move slowly through the atmosphere, phasing in and out of earth's dimension of existence. If they explode while here, they fuse an area of land  $2\frac{1}{2}$  miles in radius into glass. Jason's brother, Daniel, rides one of the birds and disappears with it. Jason then becomes a prophet, "The Silent Prophet" or "The Rider of Slow Birds", preaching a philosophy of acceptance. Eventually Dan does come back, and has gained knowledge enough

to build weapons capable of stopping the slow birds.

I've left out a lot of detail here, but much of it works out how the English society (Watson is British, and thus has placed his story there) has adapted to the prospect of these birds' existence in their culture. In the long view, it's a story about the English adaptability to adversity; in the short run, it's an examination of the two brothers and their individual quests.

My choices for this category were easy. As winner I chose "Blood Music" by Greg Bear. The melding of two common ideas in SF with his own expertise in computers made it the best of the lot. A close second is "The Sidon in the Mirror" by Connie Willis. The minor scientific quibble knocked it out of extremely close competition with Bear's story, but even if covered sufficiently, I would have chosen "Blood Music" as number one. Third and fourth places kept shifting until I reread Martin's and Watson's stories. George Martin's "The Monkey Treatment" I put in third place, with "Slow Birds" in fourth. Martin is a good story-teller, and kept my interest more the second time through than did Watson's. Fifth is No Award, with the non-SF/fantasy "Black Air" by Kim Stanley Robinson in sixth place.

## NOVELLA

"Cascade Point" by Timothy Zahn

"Hardfought" by Greg Bear

"Hurricane Claude" by Hilbert Schenck

"In the Face of My Enemy" by Joseph H. Delaney

"Seeking" by David Palmer

This category was not too difficult for nominating this year, although *Locus* points out 22 or so being nominated for the "Locus Poll"; I found very few in the magazines worth a Hugo, and three of the five I nominated made the final ballot. I have bit of a quibble with only one of the other two.

Timothy Zahn proposes a new type of faster-than-light drive in his story "Cascade Point". Once the ship transfers into another space called Colloton, it rotates and back in real space the rotation translates into a linear distance. The point at which the transfer and rotation accors is called a cascade point, and thus the title. There are some side effects to passing through a cascade point: the major one is the appearance of duplicates of everyone passing through the point, forming an 'X' with the person at the junction of the 'X'. The images that appear show the person in different guises, which are the results of major decisions made in life. Sometimes there are gaps in the lines, indicating a very bad decision.

Tim also introduces something called ming metal, an important alloy used in my electronic devices, but which also affects the configuration of the ship when in Colloton, and has to be accounted for during a cascade point. This is important in the story.

Pall Durriken is the captain/owner of the *Aura Dancer*, a tramp starmer (one of Zahn's words which I think accurately describes the *Dancer's* function) taking on cargo and a few passengers for transport to various colonies. During this particular trip Dr. Hammerfield Lanton, a psychiatrist, and his patient, Rik Bradley, take passage so that Lanton can use the cascade images as part of Bradley's therapy. Because of the ming metal in one of Lanton's "tools", the *Dancer* is thrown off course and when it reaches its destination, there is no colony on the planet. The solution to the problem is not easy, and Tim handles it very well in the story.

Aside from the hard science involved, Zahn creates very believable characters. The second-in-command, Alana Keal, is a woman whose purpose in life seemed to be taking care of and nursing emotionally scarred men, nursing "broken wings" as Tim puts it. She becomes in-



volved with Bradley as he changes through his therapy sessions after passing through each cascade point. Fall himself, regretting some of his past decisions (all too painfully revealed at each cascade point) is a nurse of "broken wings", indeed his whole crew is a group of "misfits" who have been burned in some way, and have sought refuge in space away from other people. The interactions of the characters and the conflicts are all handled very well under Tim Zahn's deft typewriter.

Greg Bear's "Hardfought" is a complex story, one that takes careful reading, as Shawna McCarthy notes at the beginning of the story. The Senexi are a race of insect-like creatures whose rise to the stars has been a slow one. They are the oldest race in the galaxy, and fighting humans for planet-space, even though the climate and atmospheric demands are different. The human fighters are clones, raised from the genes of the best fighters of the past. The story is a slow, complex one and information is spread out, gradually revealed and put together by the reader. It was a nice intellectual exercise when I read it the first time, but I became rapidly bored the second time through.

"Hurricane Claude" by Hilbert Schenck is a straightforward problem-and-solution story, with few if any conflicts. Techoceanics is a new business, backed by some financial institutions which have yet to see a return on their investments. When Hurricane Claude appears, it's go-for-broke, and the group dissipates the hurricane with relative ease.

This is the story I had trouble with being on the ballot. It's a good interesting story, but there is very little conflict. The only real problem that occurred was the restraining order put out by a Judge on the recommendation of an ecology group, which was avoided by having the group take off before it could be served. There is no character development, and the guys which appear in the story are unnecessary except for a few jokes, and to show the prejudice of one of the other characters. The scientific passages are well done, as

are the descriptions of the storm as it develops--I guess you could say that the hurricane is the only character that's developed, and destroyed. The story is too simplistic, and Techoceanics wins too easily.

Joe Delany's "In the Face of My Enemy" however is a story that intertwines characterization and plot to a nice story. He takes a near immortal, Kah-Si-Omah (shortened to Casey), whose body was altered by super-alien to change and adapt and rejuvenate according to Casey's mental directives, and the standard plot of a company trying to keep secret that the planet they are developing has, or had a native population, and adds a little twist and comes up with a readable yarn, with action and discovery.

Kimberly Ryan, with the U.N. Ecological Survey team, arrived to determine whether or not the planet was fit for colonization, and she was immediately given the runaround, and shunted off with the dumb Indian Casey on a one-way trip in a sabotaged flyer. With Casey as her guide, Kim survives, and the two become very close. They discover the artifact that the company wants kept secret, and the actual reason behind the construct. Kim also finds out that Casey has been alive for thousands of years, but still the two of them find enough interest in each other for romance.

Joe Delaney burst on the SF scene a couple of years ago, and has been tantalizing readers of *Analog* during that time. This is one of his better stories, although I thought his "The New Untouchables" was better.

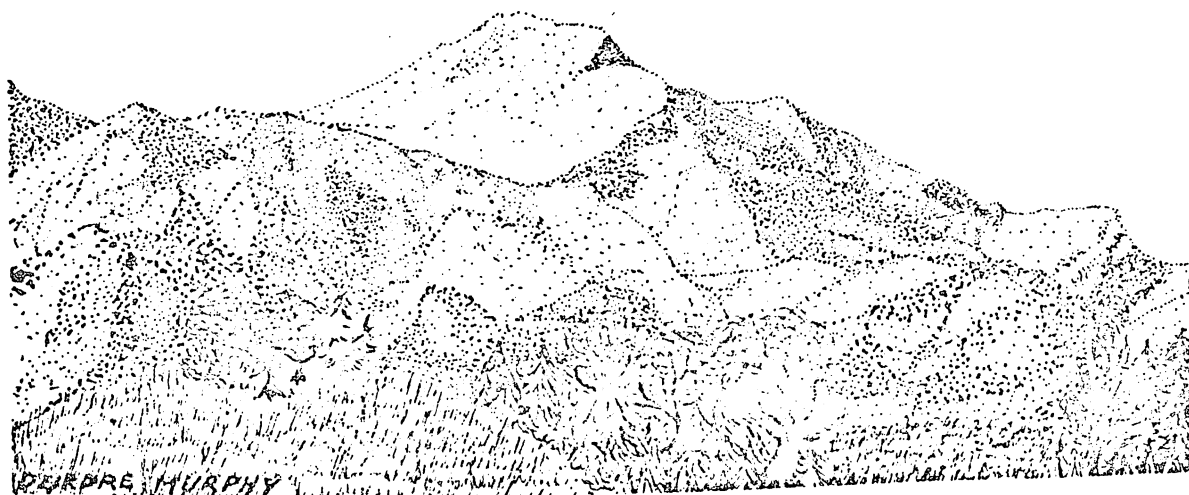
The last nomination is David Palmer's "Seeking", which is a sequel to "Emergence", which was nominated two years ago for the Hugo award. He has only had these two stories published, and has been working on a novel with these two novellas incorporated with three other sections. When I talked to him at CONSTELLATION last year, he said that the novel should be out this fall, much to the relief of David Brin, who thought that he might have to contend against Palmer's novel *Emergence*, as it is to be called. None of the other sections are to be published before the novel comes out.

Candidia Maria Smith-Foster, one of the *homo post hominem* who has survived the deadly virus war that has wiped out most life on the planet, is the heroine who is looking for other members of the small group of known survivors of the war. This section chronicles her travels, and disappointments, as she finds each person gone, left to travel to parts unknown. She does, however, encounter someone else who has survived--not one of the group who have been "set aside" and stimulated intellectually so to become the next race/leaders of mankind.

The story is written once again in the cryptic, short-hand phrasing that one usually finds in a diary. Once one catches on to the style, it flows very easily, and Palmer injects much humor and feeling into the narrative. Someone might wonder whether or not Palmer could write a real English sentence, but in this chapter of

Candy's life, the young man she meets and rescues, who in turn rescues her, launches into a long monologue which is written in perfect English. Yes, Palmer has a good, no, excellent command of the language. And I can't wait until *Emergence* is released this fall.

This was the category for which I had to reread all the stories before making my decision for voting. Three were vying for first position before then: "Cascade Point", "Hardfought", and "Seeking". It was the rereading that made the choice easy. In first place I





picked Tim Zahn's "Cascade Point". Second and third were Palmer's "Seeking" and Bear's "Hardfought" respectively. Fourth place went to Joe Delaney's "In the Face of My Enemy", and fifth to Schenck's "Hurricane Claude". No Award was last. I had considered placing the Schenck story after No Award, but it was a SF story, and it was good, if too simplistic; then again, sometimes life does work out easily like that.

## NOVEL

*Millenium* by John Varley

*Moreta, Dragonlady of Pern* by Anne McCaffrey

*The Robots of Dawn* by Isaac Asimov

*Startide Rising* by David Brin

*Tea with the Black Dragon* by R. A. MacAvoy

The nominations here, as last year, were a disappointment. Three, in my opinion, did not belong here at all --but I'll get to that.

*Millenium* is an expansion of John Varley's "Air Raid", and is eventually going to come out as a movie. When he was the GoH at CONCLAVE a couple of years ago, his speech consisted of the process by which his story eventually became a script, his journeys to hollywood and subsequent meetings with producers and such. It was all very funny.

The story deals with a future earth which is dying from pollution, but which has also mastered time-viewing and time travel. For this story, there is a built-in safety-valve against visiting the same time twice, so paradoxes are avoided. The future searches the past for disasters and rescues the people just before the "crash" hits, and substitutes manufactured "wimps" to be found. The real people, the healthy ones, are frozen, and kept for colonization as part of the master plan of saving the human race.

Louise Baltimore is the leader of a group that rescues a planeload of people before a mid-air collision, but a member of her group accidentally leaves behind one of the zap-guns, so she has to go back for it--after it's been picked up and sorted with the other debris from the crash. The novel alternates between her point of view and that of Bill Smith, the investigator of the airline crash. They do meet, and a romance develops between the two.

I had not read the short story, but very much enjoyed the novel, in spite of its rather wild ending. I think Varley was reaching a bit with the conclusion, but it was a fun read, and a fast-moving narrative. The chapter titles were all taken from various famous time-travel stories, or time-related subjects (like "As Time Goes By", the song from *Casablanca*).

*Moreta, Dragonlady of Pern* by Anne MacCaffrey is a novel based on a song written in one of the earlier-written books (which books come later in the series). An epidemic hits the various Weyrs on Pern, which turns out to be the flu, and Moreta delivers the vaccine by herself with Holth, a borrowed dragon, since her dragon to which she has a close mind-link is staying close to her eggs. Since the dragons can teleport through time as well as space, Moreta manages to get the vaccine delivered everywhere necessary (actually she does most, but not all, of the deliveries), but after the last one, is so tired that she doesn't have her mind set on the proper coordinates and is lost in "between", the "place" between one point and another during teleportation.

One would think that it would make an exciting story, but the way this is written, it isn't. There are long passages of conversation which lead nowhere. True, they apparently fill in lots of gaps about the earlier days of the Pern colony (settled from earth), and give a deeper understanding of the culture, but one has to have

read all the other books previously, I think, to appreciate this book. This may come as a shock to some people, but this is the first Dragonriderbook I have read, and based on this one, I really don't want to read any others. This one is slow and plodding, and too much of the action is described, rather than experienced. On the other hand, I did learn what this dragonriding business was all about, and why they do it, and the classes of dragons, and all that; it make more sense now to see what all the costumes mean and the fire-lizards, and all that, at conventions. Still, the book was boring, and should not have appeared on the Hugo ballot. (And now I've isolated all the Pern fans!)

Asimov's *The Robots of Dawn* is one that also should not be on the ballot (there go all the Asimov fans--will I survive the next con I attend?). It is slow, plodding, and badly written. The plot is good, and interesting, and if Asimov had a good editor to tell him to tighten up the writing, it would have been a better novel. The way it's written, it is boring.

Elijah Baley once again is summoned from Earth to deal with an apparently impossible murder, that of a robot, one of two humaniform robots. Assisting him is his friend, and the other humaniform robot, Daneel Olivaw, and Giskard Reventlov, another robot who looks like one. Through many long interviews and conversations, and second-hand descriptions of experiences (how could Asimov make sex that boring?), Lije does solve the roboticide. One of the subplots is that his success would not only determine his status when he returned to earth, but it would also determine the course earth would take in colonizing the planets (the other choice would be to send humaniform and regular robots out to prepare the planets first, rather than letting man do the exploring). Asimov also brings in a bit of "mythology" about robopsychology, referring to Susan Calvin and the short story, "Liar!" And, since it is now his intention to forge together all his novels into one large scope of history of humanity, he begins the rudiments (or at least the discussion) of psychohistory.

If this novel had been submitted by an unknown author, aside from the similarity to Asimov's works, (especially with the characters and all), it would have been rejected. I begin to wonder if the Good Doctor is trying to see how badly he can write before someone tells him to re-write. I wonder too if he has not written too much non-fiction, and that has spilled over into his fiction writing. Things are not experienced first-hand, but clinically diagnosed as they happened. Lije Baley was not frightened by the storm, but was aware that he was frightened by the storm. This is a style which is not really conducive to sympathy for the characters. I finished the book because the mystery element was sufficient enough to keep me guessing throughout, but it was an ordeal to slug through all the rhetoric.

*Startide Rising* by David Brin was a joy to read. It is a complex novel with a lot of characters, which I found at times confusing, but Brin provided a glossary of names which I referred to frequently. The book is a sequel to *Sundiver* which I have not yet read, but intend to very soon, and I trust there will be more.

In the galaxy there is a Library which the various races can tap for knowledge. It was put together by the Progenitors, a race no longer in existence. In the galactic society, there are Patron races and Client races. The Patron races are those that have the greatest access and have made the greatest use of the Library. These races "uplift" non- or semi-intelligent races into intelligence, and that race becomes a Client to its Patron. Humans have uplifted the dolphins and chimpanzees to intelligence, but humans themselves claim no Patron race. The other Patron races refuse to believe that humans have not been uplifted, and contend that the Patron race just refuses to reveal itself. This is all background to the



story, and is revealed several times in the novel, but from the viewpoint of different characters and races, and gives a stepping-stone as to how that person/race feels about the non-Patron status of the humans.

The plot is actually a simple one. The humans and their Clients (who are really equals) discover something about the Progenitors, and other races vie for the right to capture them to find out what they know. The earth ship *Streaker* is downed on a planet named Kithrup, and hastens to make repairs while the other alien races battle above the planet for their "salvage rights." Brin takes great care in plotting and character development. The scenes shift quickly, and action is constant. It's a great read and highly satisfying.

The final nomination (other than the ubiquitous No Award) is *Tea with the Black Dragon* by R. A. MacAvoy. Mayland Long is a man with an unusually large hand-span, and a penchant for things Chinese. He claims to have been a Black Dragon, who has turned into a man so he can find "the answer". Be that as it may, it has very little effect on the story, and could easily have been left out. Mayland helps Martha Macnamara solve the mysterious disappearance of her daughter, Elizabeth, who brought her mother out to the West coast to help her solve a serious problem. The "problem" turns out to be something with computer fraud, and before the story is over, two people are dead, and two injured.

I enjoyed the story very much, and I think that the book deserves an award of some sort, but not one in this field. The fantasy element is unnecessary, and the fact that it has computers in it could make it SF, but it's state-of-the-art technology. MacAvoy is a new writer, and I hear that her other two books are very good, if not better than this one; I hope so, because I will be reading the others. I will be watching her career with hopes that she gets even better. I regretfully eliminate her from this category, not because *Tea with the Black Dragon* is a badly written book, but because the fantasy element is not sufficient enough, or necessary, to qualify it as a Hugo nominee. Maybe R. A. could get an award for this from the Mystery Writers, for it does deserve some recognition.

So, my choices are these. Brin's *Startide Rising* in first place, followed by Varley's *Millennium*, and No Award in third place. The last three places I put in order of literary merit and interest held: *Tea with the Black Dragon*, *The Robots of Dawn* (as I said the SF mystery involved did keep me reading, and the mystery needed the SF element for it to make sense), and *Moreta*, *Dragonlady of Pern* bringing up the end.

One afternote on the Novel category. I thought that the best novel I read last year was *Forty-Thousand in Gahenna* by C. J. Cherryh. Unfortunately it was put out first as a limited edition from Phantasia Press, and has not been released in mass-market yet. When talking to C. J. this past May at MARCON, she said that the SFWA may rule it eligible because of the limited edition numbers, and thus it could be up for the award next year. Then there will be some real choices--*Emergence* by David

Palmer, *Coming of Age* by Timothy Zahn (both of which to be released this fall), and *World's End* by Joan Vinge as nominees along with *Forty Thousand in Gahenna* and whatever else shows up through the rest of the year.

\* \* \* \* \*

I am going to include some of the other choices I made in other categories this time. I am not going to go in to too much detail about each of them, but I will give some indication as to why I voted the way I did.

\* \* \* \* \*

## PROFESSIONAL EDITOR

For first place I chose Stanley Schmidt, second was Shawna McCarthy, third Terry Carr, fourth Ed Ferman, fifth David Hartwell, and No Award bringing up the end.

*Analog* is still the first magazine I read, mainly because it has the best stories, or more of the kinds of stories I like to read. Stan has done a consistently good job in keeping me entertained with the pieces he's chosen to put in his magazine.

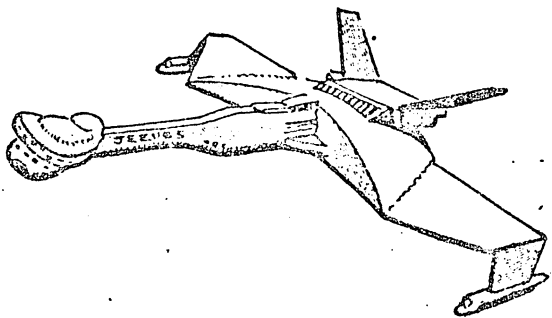
Shawna McCarthy has done a good job in replacing George Scithers as the editor of *Isaac Asimov's SF Magazine*, shaking the image of being "cutsie". It's not that I don't enjoy a good funny story (wait till Mike Resnick's *Adventures* comes out, and I hear that *Analog* is planning something humorous soon), but Scithers seemed to have put too much into the magazine when he was editor. Not that his other choices weren't good; he published some Hugo winners. And Shawna is publishing some excellent ones as well.

I have always enjoyed Terry Carr's editing in the *Best of the Year* anthologies, and his *Universe* series. He deserves more recognition than he's gotten in the past. Ed Ferman's editing of *Fantasy and Science Fiction* is uneven, but when he publishes a good story, it is excellent. I was happy to see a book editor on the list of nominations, but I'm afraid I know more about the work of magazine editing, and am partial to those editors.

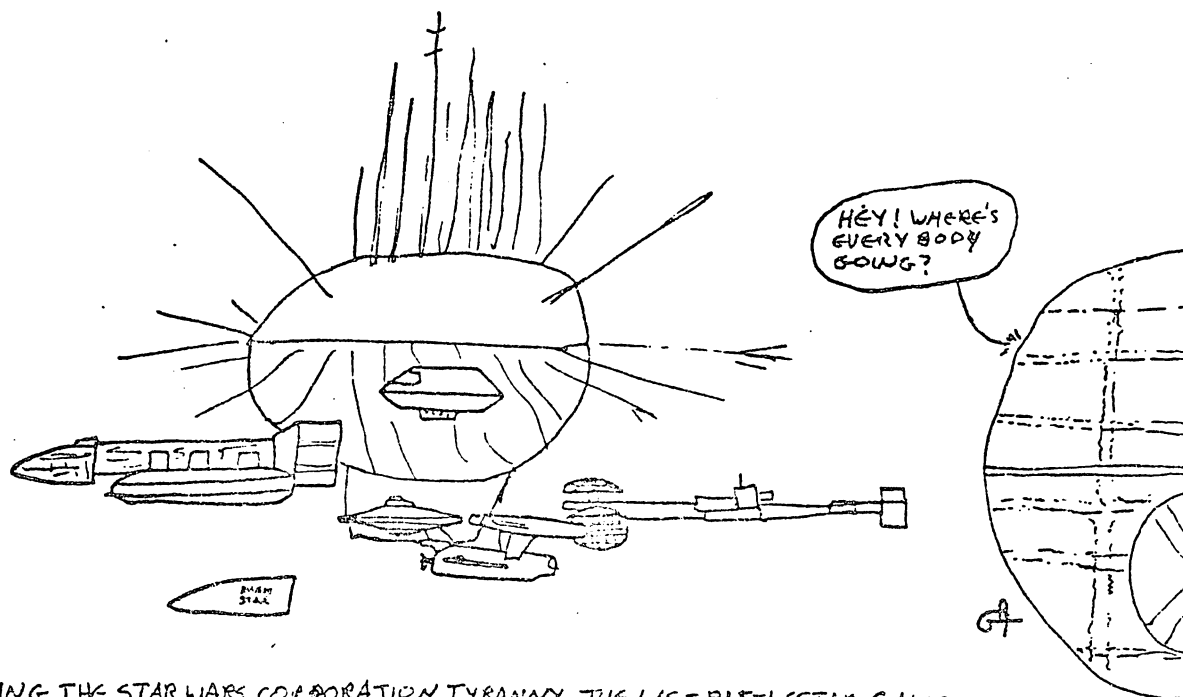
## FANZINE

I figure that I should probably do this one, since so many people worked so hard to get the fanzine category separated from the semi-prozine. *File-770* first, with *Holier Than Thou* and No Award in that order. The rest don't matter.

Both Mike Glycer and Marty Cantor have tried to keep the "fan" in the fanzine category, and their zines both reflect "fannishness", however you might want to define it, and a sense of togetherness, which is the feeling



Fan



FLEEING THE STAR WARS CORPORATION TYRANNY, THE LAST BATTLESTAR, GALACTICA,  
LEADS A RAG-TAG FUGITIVE FLEET ON A LONELY QUEST: A SHINING PLACE CALLED FANDOM.

that most fanzine editors try for. Of the other nominations, the only one I've seen a copy of is *The Philk Fee-Nom-Ee-Non*, which did not impress me. I have heard that *Ansible* and *Izzard* are very good zines, but without having read them, I can't judge.

One might say that I should not have voted if I had not read all the nominations. I would normally agree, but I had strong enough feelings about Mike Glycer and Marty Cantor that I wanted them to have the chance to win.

#### FAN WRITER

In order, Arthur Hlavaty, Mike Glycer and No Award. I was not impressed with what I've read by Dick Geis and David Langford. I enjoyed Theresa Nielsen-Hayden's writing when we were in the apazine *Azapa* together, but not having seen anything recently by her I can't judge if she has improved (I certainly hope so!).

Arthur Hlavaty has been nominated many times for this award, and I hope he finally gets it. He has not yet failed to make me think about something when I read his zines. He's a good catalyst for conversation and controversy. He will have much competition next year, as Don D'Amassa has started up his fanzine *Mythologies*.

#### FAN ARTIST

My choices for the voting are: Joan Hanke-Woods first, and in order Alexis Gilliland, William Rotsler, Stu Shiffman, Brad Foster, and No Award.

Joan has been a perennial nominee for me, as has been Kurt Erichsen. A fan artist who has recently been called to my attention is Steven Fox. He's very good, and very willing to submit work for consideration.

\* \* \* \* \*

I think that's enough for now. Maybe next year I'll run my entire ballot. Good luck to all the nominees, and I hope that I picked them correctly.



# THE PAL

## AWARDS

### 1950-1982

*a film article by*

MARK R. LEEPER



Back at my first World Science Fiction Convention the toastmaster quipped that he would be presenting the Hugo award for a year in the past that Hugos were not awarded. He then said that all the Hugos for that year were to go to Harlan Ellison. I suspect that whoever the toastmaster was -- I am afraid I have forgotten -- at that moment planted the seeds of a small fight. Forry Ackerman, either there or some place else, got the idea that he wanted to award the Hugos for several years that they had not been awarded. He got permission from Hugo Gernsback's estate to use the name and award the Hugos based on his own choices. The committee of the Worldcon, luckily, dissuaded him from using the name "Hugo" and convinced him, instead, to use the name "Gernsback."

Well, WITHOUT the permission of George Pal's estate, I have decided to award the George Pal memorial awards for science fiction/horror/fantasy films for the years that I have been alive. The 1950 date is also particularly appropriate for Pal since that is the year of his first major film. It also was a sort of rebirth of the cinema of the fantastic which had burned itself out in the Forties and which Pal brought back to life with DESTINATION MOON. I think that it is particularly appropriate that Pal is the only holder of the Pal award for the first year for the award. That wasn't planned that way, but it took until 1951 before another filmmaker to create a decent film in the genre.

For each year I will pick the best genre film, in my opinion, give honorable mention to the second best, and will point out one film that may not have been the best, but went beyond the expected in inventive ways. These are films that deserve a pat on the back and to be called to the readers attention as films that should be better known than they are.



1950

Best Dramatic Presentation: DESTINATION MOON  
First Runner-Up: no award  
Unusual and Noteworthy: no award

This film is a little under-rated by today's standards simply because just about everything good in it was assumed by later films and built upon. When it was made the general public didn't even know what rockets were. The little embedded Woody Woodpecker cartoon quite adequately taught a little science that could be assumed by all later science fiction films. It was based on a story by an honest-to-for-gosh science fiction writer who also worked on the screenplay, a little nicety that would have improved a number of other films. The special effects were as good as could be done at the time. The whole Fifties science fiction cycle was the offspring of DESTINATION MOON.

1951

Best Dramatic Presentation: THE DAY THE EARTH STOOD STILL  
First Runner-Up: THE THING (FROM ANOTHER WORLD)  
Unusual and Noteworthy: PANDORA AND THE FLYING DUTCHMAN

The two top science fiction films of 1951 did a lot to legitimize the science fiction film. THE DAY THE EARTH STOOD STILL still tops many people's lists of the best science fiction films ever made. The stark black and white photography and the social message are still effective and the image of the powerful Gort is one that has seldom been matched in the intervening years. There are interesting implications in the plot that the robot police are out of control and, in fact, that Klaatu is taking his orders from Gort.

THE THING is a long way from the John Campbell story, but it is crisply directed with interesting characters. This has little more science to it than the old Frankenstein films, but it stands as a good horror film with a witty script. If Hemmingway wrote fantasies, PANDORA AND THE FLYING DUTCHMAN is the sort of thing he would have written. This is the story of the real Flying Dutchman in modern-day Portugal. This is a film with a strong sense of Fate and Predestination.

1952

Best Dramatic Presentation: THE MAN IN THE WHITE SUIT  
First Runner-Up: RASHOMON  
Unusual and Noteworthy: no award

WHITE SUIT is really only a fringe piece of science fiction, being more of a comedy with social comment. It's wry observation of society's forces opposing progress is one that became more meaningful as time has gone by. RASHOMON is a quality film examining subjectivity and reality. Even more fringe than WHITE SUIT, it does have a ghost doing part of the narration.

1953

Best Dramatic Presentation: THE WAR OF THE WORLDS  
First Runner-Up: THE BEAST FROM 20,000 FATHOMS  
Unusual and Noteworthy: MAGNETIC MONSTER

Spectacular special effects but little thought content highlighted George Pal's WAR OF THE WORLDS. While THE THING was confined to a small Arctic station and THE DAY THE EARTH STOOD STILL had the aliens acting more globally but less destructively, WAR OF THE WORLDS dealt with world-wide destruction and brought the fighting to the home front. American cities were destroyed. This was destruction that audiences could identify with and be frightened with and be frightened by.

The same innovation, but of a more home-grown menace was featured in BEAST FROM 20,000 FATHOMS. Willis

O'Brien created the giant monster in the city film with LOST WORLD and KING KONG, but it had laid dormant for two decades. BEAST resurrected it and it soon degenerated and then moved to Japan. But BEAST is entertaining and visually well handled by a young Ray Harryhausen. MAGNETIC MONSTER was made mostly to reuse footage from an old German science fiction film. GOLD. The footage more or less molded the plot, but gave it an interesting concept. The title menace is not a living being, for once, but a radioactive isotope that absorbs energy and grows. There are interesting parallels between this film and the much later ANDROMEDA STRAIN.

#### 1954

Best Dramatic Presentation: 20,000 LEAGUES UNDER THE SEA  
First Runner-Up: THEM!  
Unusual and Noteworthy: THE MONSTER FROM THE OCEAN FLOOR

Disney decided to do a wholesome science fiction classic and gave it a nice sense of wonder as well as a good cast. For director he picked the son of his old enemy Max Fleisher. The image of the Nautilus skimming just under the surface of the water with lights is the high-point of the film.

THEM! features a crisp documentary style and good acting in small roles. Disney saw the film and decided to make a star out of bit player Fess Parker. Warners build only one full size ant model and the front half of a second one, but it seems like a lot more. Roger Corman's first production, THE MONSTER FROM THE OCEAN FLOOR, climaxed in a battle between a giant protozoa and a one-man submarine. It takes a while to get going, but it was worth seeing and is nearly forgotten today.

#### 1955

Best Dramatic Presentation: THIS ISLAND EARTH  
First Runner-Up: ANIMAL FARM  
Unusual and Noteworthy: no award

Interplanetary warfare in space made its film debut in THIS ISLAND EARTH. In this movie Earth must stand by while two forces from space fight it out. Based loosely on a series of stories by Raymond F. Jones, this film throws in just about everything from monsters to space effects to secret societies with super-scientific inventions. It works best while it is still confined to terra firma, but it never bores.

ANIMAL FARM is, of course, George Orwell's allegory of the rise of communism in Russia. Because the film standards of the time did not allow for villains to win, the film also includes the fall of communism in Russia. Orwell's book contributed everything good about the film, and that was sufficient

#### 1956

Best Dramatic Presentation: FORBIDDEN PLANET  
First Runner-Up: THE CREEPING UNKNOWN  
Unusual and Noteworthy: ANIMAL WORLD

FORBIDDEN PLANET was the first science fiction film to take place entirely off the Earth. It featured Disney special effects including an energy shaft that seems to stretch on forever. To compensate, perhaps, the scenes that take place out of buildings were shot on claustrophobically small sets. The idea of the adventures of the crew of a starship was resurrected some years later for a minor tv series.

CREEPING UNKNOWN (QUATERMASS XPERIMENT) was based on tv-serial and had some good ideas, though fewer than were in the source. It was one of the first fantasy efforts of Hammer Films, who would later become the studio most closely associated with fantasy film. ANIMAL WORLD, which may well be a lost film now, featured the visual effects of Willis O'Brien and Ray Harryhausen. It was a documentary about the history of

life on Earth.

#### 1957

Best Dramatic Presentation: ENEMY FROM SPACE  
First Runner-Up: KRONOS  
Unusual and Noteworthy: THE MONOLITH MONSTERS

Quatermass was back fighting alien invasions in ENEMY FROM SPACE. This is sort of a film noir exercise in science fiction that is remembered fondly by many. The creator of Quatermass, Nigel Kneale, claims to have bought up all the prints because it was such a poor adaptation of his play. Critics like Chris Steinbrunner disagree. I remember the film as being an excellent exercise in science fiction suspense. The same year Hammer made ENEMY FROM SPACE, it also made CURSE OF FRANKENSTEIN and thereby started its own Gothic horror cycle.

KRONOS was weak in dialog which contained a lot of pseudo-scientific jargon but the basic idea was fun and the image of the giant energy collector moving along the California coastline is one fondly remembered. Another interesting image is that of the giant silicon crystals in MONOLITH MONSTERS. They topple, crush everything in their path, and then grow again from the pieces. This was a creative idea better than the rest of the film around it.

#### 1958

Best Dramatic Presentation: THE FLY  
First Runner-Up: THE 7TH VOYAGE OF SINBAD  
Unusual and Noteworthy: THE CURSE OF THE DEMON

1958 was the high water mark of Fifties' fantasy films. Hammer Films made HORROR OF DRACULA which clinched their horror cycle, the teen-age market was catching on with films like THE BLOB, and Fox made a low-budget science fiction/horror film called THE FLY, with a script by SHOGUN author James Clavell. THE FLY is almost classic tragedy. A man who has almost everything: work that he loves, a beautiful wife, an obnoxious but cute son, but loses it all in a moment of carelessness and a terrible accident.

Harryhausen's first Sinbad film was also the first film to take the wonder of the Arabian Nights and put it on the screen as anything but a costume drama. The film had cyclopes, a dragon, a giant two-headed bird, and a snakewoman. CURSE/NIGHT OF THE DEMON is an understated British supernatural thriller with a literate script based on a story by M. R. James. The director did not want to show so much of the demon, but the producer insisted. Both were right, it might have been a better film if more was just hinted at, but the demon is well executed.

#### 1959

Best Dramatic Presentation: JOURNEY TO THE CENTER OF THE EARTH  
First Runner-Up: ON THE BEACH  
Unusual and Noteworthy: DARBY O'GILL AND THE LITTLE PEOPLE

For a good, wholesome, science fiction adventure JOURNEY TO THE CENTER OF THE EARTH has rarely, if ever, been beaten for adventure value. Fox, inspired, no doubt, by the success of its own THE FLY and by Disney's 20,000 LEAGUES UNDER THE SEA, put a good cast into this geological extravaganza with sets that took millions of years to create. Particularly interesting are the dimetrodons which are the best live-lizard dinosaurs ever in a film, far superior to those in LOST WORLD or even ONE MILLION YEARS B.C.

If you want to get sentimental about good old Earth there is no film much better than ON THE BEACH. Stanley Kramer's film is a rather absurd picture of how the world might end (both scientifically and in that it is hard to believe people would behave with the



"business as usual" attitude shown), but its is a well acted film and served as warning about the dangers of nuclear war. DARBY O'GILL is an underrated Disney fantasy with some of Disney's better effects including a Banshee that may have given more children nightmares than anything in any other Disney film to date.

1960

Best Dramatic Presentation: THE TIME MACHINE  
First Runner-Up: THE VILLAGE OF THE DAMNED  
Unusual and Noteworthy: CARNIVAL OF SOULS

TIME MACHINE, aimed at a younger audience than was Pal's WAR OF THE WORLDS, it still is a charming science fiction film. The film has two important themes: the first half says that war is bad and the second half says that fighting is good [reminiscent of Klaatu's message that killing is bad and Earth will be snuffed out if it does it]. The time-lapse effects are well-handled.

VILLAGE OF THE DAMNED is quite a decent adaptation of John Wyndham's MIDWICH CUCKOOS. Rather decently we never know if the children are a force for evil or not. Another disconcerting film is CARNIVAL OF SOULS, a low-budgeter from Lawrence, Kansas that maintains a nightmare quality throughout. If a cheap film like this can pack so much of a wallop, why can't films at ten or a hundred times the budget do as well?

1961

Best Dramatic Presentation: THE INNOCENTS  
First Runner-Up: BLACK SUNDAY  
Unusual and Noteworthy: PEEPING TOM

INNOCENTS is quite a good adaptation of Henry James' THE TURN OF THE SCREW. The screenplay by Truman Capote leaves the books ambiguity as to whether the ghosts are real and the photography by later Hammer director Freddie Francis is superbly moody.

Italian director Mario Bava's most highly regarded film, BLACK SUNDAY is a moody tale of a vampire/witch returning from the grave to avenge herself. British actress Barbara Steele made a reputation for herself with this film. Michael Powell's PEEPING TOM was roundly condemned by the critics when it was first released but today is considered to be a well-acted psychological thriller.

1962

Best Dramatic Presentation: THE MANCHURIAN CANDIDATE  
First Runner-Up: BURN, WITCH, BURN  
Unusual and Noteworthy: THE CREATION OF THE HUMANOIDS

John Frankenheimer's MANCHURIAN CANDIDATE is a crisp little political thriller in spite of the miscast Frank Sinatra. The story of the Chinese brainwashing a captured American soldier to use as an assassin. At the same time the film also makes a statement about ultra-right wing politics. Unfortunately, the film has dropped from circulation and rarely is seen any more.

You can't ask for a much better team than Richard Matheson and Charles Beaumont adapting a good novel by Fritz Leiber. BURN, WITCH, BURN (NIGHT OF THE EAGLE) is based on the novel CONJURE WIFE and is quite a pleasing tale of witchcraft in modern day England. If you do not mind abysmal acting and direction, you can do much worse for a film than the highly literate CREATION OF THE HUMANOIDS, loosely based on the Jack Williamson novel THE HUMANOIDS. Interesting ideas are the mainstay the low-budget film and set design does a lot with a little.

1963

Best Dramatic Presentation: UNEARTHLY STRANGER  
First Runner-Up: JASON AND THE ARGONAUTS  
Unusual and Noteworthy: THE MIND BENDERS

Once again a low-budget film shows up films at much higher budgets. UNEARTHLY STRANGER is a superior little piece of science fiction that gets by with one minor makeup special effect (a scar) and no other effects at all. British scientists are working to project minds outside of bodies to explore other planets. One of the scientists begins to suspect that some alien force may be using the same idea to colonize Earth. I would place this one on my top 10 science fiction films list.

Ray Harryhausen tried to recapture the magic of SEVENTH VOYAGE OF SINBAD with a tale of Greek mythology. Did he succeed? Harryhausen fans are divided. Certainly it is one of his two most highly-regarded films. A favorite sequence is the battle with the bronze giant Talos. MIND BENDERS is a subtle warning on the dangers of science. Basil Dearden directed this film about sensory-deprivation experiments and their effects on the men who perform them. There is a touch of love story, spy film, and science fiction film.

1964

Best Dramatic Presentation: THE LAST MAN ON EARTH  
First Runner-Up: DR. STRANGELOVE  
Unusual and Noteworthy: LADY IN A CAGE

LAST MAN ON EARTH is a low-budget Italian adaptation of Richard Matheson's I AM LEGEND. The credits of the film say that Logan Swanson did the adaptation. That is the pen name that Matheson uses when he is not proud of his results. I don't know why not, LAST MAN ON EARTH is a far better adaptation than the later OMEGA MAN. Even Vincent Price's acting doesn't get in the way of a solid science fiction/horror film. The picture of a world dying of plague is realistic and chilling.

Stanley Kubrick's first science fiction, DR. STRANGELOVE, film is a way out doomsday comedy with a great performance by George C. Scott. Peter Sellers



plays multiple roles (probably a holdover from his Goon Show days) though none at all memorably. The film is perceptive, but not as good as its reputation. LADY IN A CAGE combines psychological horror with social comment. Walter Grauman makes a fancy home in suburbia as intimidating as Val Lewton makes a dark street.

1965

Best Dramatic Presentation: CRACK IN THE WORLD  
First Runner-Up: KWAIDAN  
Unusual and Noteworthy: DARK INTRUDER

CRACK IN THE WORLD is quite a good science fiction film that never got much attention. The concept of the film

is that a hole is bored down to the interior of the earth to tap geothermal energy and to release valuable molten ores. Neglect of the film is probably because the absurdity of 1) firing a nuclear missile downward to pierce the last few feet down to the core (surely there are more precise ways of delivering a nuclear device) and 2) the physics of the conclusion of the film seem a little too pat and convenient. In spite of these problems CRACK is spectacular film with a theme that has become more timely since the film was made.

Toho Films is best known in this country for an endless supply of Godzilla films, but they really are the equivalent of MGM in Japan with string of high-quality films to their name. KWAI DAN is an omnibus film with four ghost stories. The film is critically acclaimed and if a little slow it has a marvelous dreamlike-quality. DARK INTRUDER was originally a television pilot that was released to theaters instead. It is a real pity that the series was never made. The plot involves a series of ritual murders in turn-of-the-century San Francisco. The rituals are connected to a set of ancient Sumerian figures left at the scene of the murders. The film is short but moody and excellent.

1966

Best Dramatic Presentation: THE WAR GAME  
First Runner-Up: FANTASTIC VOYAGE  
Unusual and Noteworthy: DEVILS OF DARKNESS

Peter Watkins was commissioned by the BBC-TV to do a realistic documentary about the effects of a nuclear war. He did it. The BBC took one look at it and said that it could never be shown on television. Instead it was released to theaters where it received a great deal

of positive attention, not to mention an academy award. The film is a brutalizing experience that is both frightening and shocking. -- even more so because the viewer cannot tell himself that what he is seeing cannot happen to him.

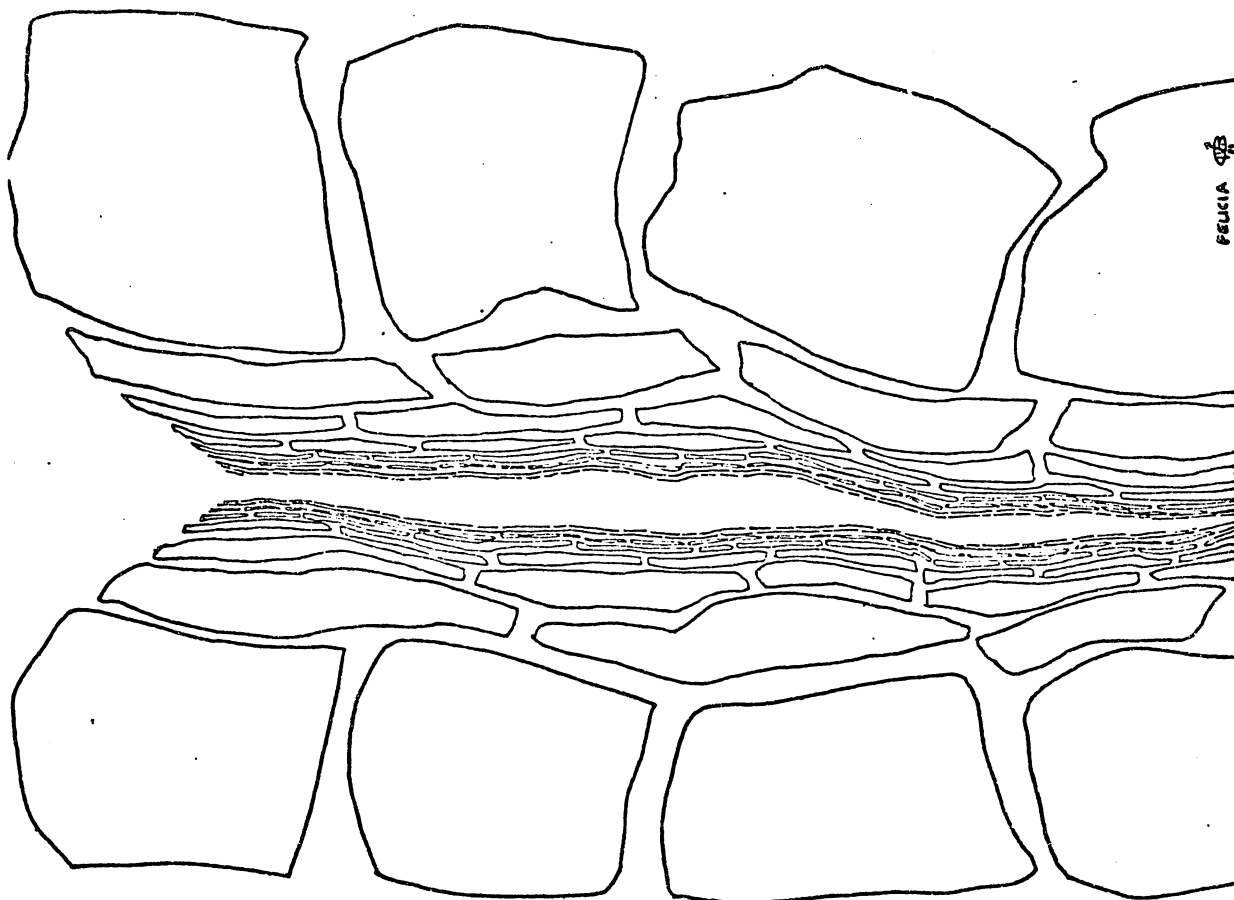
FANTASTIC VOYAGE was sort of the sledgehammer approach to making a science fiction film. It had a big budget, using full-size sets for what in another ten years could have been done far more inexpensively. The spectacle of showing the inside of the human body in giant scale had never been matched and made FANTASTIC VOYAGE something of a film event. DEVILS OF DARKNESS was the co-feature with the second sequel to THE FLY. It was an interesting reworking of the vampire theme, though it built to a rather unexceptional climax. It was produced by Planet Films who the following year made the more admired ISLAND OF TERROR.

1967

Best Dramatic Presentation: BEDAZZLED  
First Runner-Up: ISLAND OF TERROR  
Unusual and Noteworthy: PRIVILEGE

BEDAZZLED is a remarkably funny reworking of the Faust theme. It starred the British comedy team of Peter Cook and Dudley Moore and was probably the funniest thing that they ever did together. Moore plays short order cook Stanley Moon who sells his soul to the Devil (Cook) for a chance to bed a waitress. Time and again he finds that getting his wish has gone hilariously wrong.

ISLAND OF TERROR had a reasonable script in which the main character, played by Edward Judd, had a sidekick, played by Peter Cushing. Cushing's screen presence





reversed the two roles, making him by far the more interesting character. The concept dealt with the creation of special silicon-based cells to counteract cancer cells. The cells take on a life of their own, and a much larger size, and begin acting for themselves. The film is well-acted and an enjoyable exercise in horror. **PRIVILEGE** is another film by Peter Watkins done in documentary style. It deals with an attempt by the British government to manipulate the public by using a rock superstar.

#### 1968

Best Dramatic Presentation: **FIVE MILLION YEARS TO EARTH**  
First Runner-Up: **THE DEVIL'S BRIDE**  
Unusual and Noteworthy: **CONQUEROR WORM**

1968 was probably the best year for fantasy films there had or perhaps has ever been. This year's awards heretically leave out 2001 which certainly deserves mention, in my view was not one of the top two. Hammer films reached their highpoint with two films that remain little seen, due to distribution problems, but both are at the top of their respective genres. **FIVE MILLION YEARS TO EARTH (QUATERMASS AND THE PIT)** is the third and by far the best of Hammer's three Quatermass films. The film's idea is that a dying alien race interfered with man's evolution five million years ago so that prehuman apes would become intelligent. Central to the story is how Martian cultural assumptions affect us today. The film is an intellectual thriller, but at the same time never bores. This is my choice for the best science fiction film I have seen.

**THE DEVIL'S BRIDE (THE DEVIL RIDES OUT)** is based on the novel **THE DEVIL RIDES OUT** by popular British novelist, Dennis Wheatley. Wheatley is a predominantly an adventure novelist who has an encyclopedic knowledge of the occult. His black magic is authentic and Richard Matheson's screenplay preserves much of that authenticity. On top of that, it assumes from the beginning that black magic exists so instead of leaving the best of the action till the last part of the film as was done in **CURSE OF THE DEMON** and **THE DEVIL'S OWN**, the entire film is suffused with occult-related action. Setting the film in the twenties only adds to its atmosphere. A third solid British film this year is **CONQUEROR WORM (WITCHFINDER GENERAL)**, a historical horror film about the infamous Matthew Hopkins. Ian Ogilvy plays a soldier for Cromwell who vows revenge when his fiancée's family is destroyed by the witchfinder. The film catches an authentic feel for the period and is vibrantly directed.

#### 1969

Best Dramatic Presentation: **THE BED-SITTING ROOM**  
First Runner-Up: **JOURNEY TO THE FAR SIDE OF THE SUN**  
Unusual and Noteworthy: **FRANKENSTEIN MUST BE DESTROYED**

**BED-SITTING ROOM** is set in Britain after a nuclear war has blown away all reason and sanity and left the whole world on the level of a Monty Python sketch. The title refers to Ralph Richardson, a poor victim who finds that nuclear radiation is making him mutate into a a bed-sitting room (what we would call a studio apartment). If that doesn't sound like it makes sense, you ain't heard nuthin' yet. This weird little black comedy has an excellent cast and a very funny script.

In **JOURNEY TO THE FAR SIDE OF THE SUN** a planet is discovered in precisely Earth's orbit on the far side of the sun. The planet turns out to be an identical Earth but a mirror image of our own. There are a number of good arguments why this is impossible, but the film is still engaging and worth seeing. **FRANKENSTEIN MUST BE DESTROYED** seems to stumble accidentally onto some interesting ideas. One of them is that the real villain of this piece is future shock.

Doc Frankenstein has restored an insane man to sanity by transplanting his brain into another body. Neither the patient's loving wife, nor the patient himself can accept that he is the same person with the same mind regardless of the outer shell.

#### 1970

Best Dramatic Presentation: **COLOSSUS--THE FORBIN PROJECT**  
First Runner-Up: **THE HOUSE THAT DRIPPED BLOOD**  
Unusual and Noteworthy: **SCHLOCK**

A rather mediocre science fiction novel, **COLOSSUS**, makes a well-above average science fiction film. The President's job is given over to a computer and it proves to be just as power-hungry and callous with the same contempt for life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. Universal's payroll computer took the title role. The script is witty and raises some interesting issues.

**HOUSE THAT DRIPPED BLOOD** was one of the best of Amicus's omnibus films. It was based on five stories by Robert Bloch and had Peter Cushing and Christopher Lee. The Christopher Lee segment is very similar to the framing sequence in **CREEPSHOW**. **SCHLOCK** was John Landis's satire of **TROG**. It is a funny little film, particularly for a first effort.

#### 1971

Best Dramatic Presentation: **THE ANDROMEDA STRAIN**  
First Runner-Up: **THE DEVILS**  
Unusual and Noteworthy: **QUEST FOR LOVE**

The book **ANDROMEDA STRAIN** caught a lot of flack from science fiction fans, presumably because a then unknown author had the audacity to make the best-seller list with a science fiction novel. Now that Crichton is better known and that real science fiction authors have made the best-seller list, the book is more acceptable. The film is intelligently written, and even (gasp!) educational. What is good about the film is that the scientists' efforts are perfectly comprehensible and at the same time credible.

**THE DEVILS** was a painful film to watch, but one that was well worth seeing. Ken Russell's film chronicles a witch-hunt in 17th century France. The film, based on Aldous Huxley's **THE DEVILS OF LOUDON**, shows in great detail the brutality of the period. The film is believable and frightening at the same time. John Wyndham's **RANDOM QUEST** was the basis of the now rarely seen **QUEST FOR LOVE**, the only that I know of to treat a parallel universe theme. Also it is one of the few films that works well as both a science fiction film and a love story.

#### 1972

Best Dramatic Presentation: **CAPTAIN KRONOS, VAMPIRE HUNTER**  
First Runner-Up: **VAMPIRE CIRCUS**  
Unusual and Noteworthy: **HORROR EXPRESS**

1972 was the year that Hammer decided they couldn't keep making nearly identical vampire films forever. They made their two most interesting vampire films with **CAPTAIN KRONOS** and **VAMPIRE CIRCUS**. The first is a vampire film crossed with a swashbuckler. The hero is an 18th Century swordsman and mercenary who has taken to hunting vampires. This film shows a lot more of vampire lore than any of their other efforts. It would have made a decent series, which apparently was the idea. Too bad it didn't get more of a following.

The other experiment crossed a vampire film with **CIRCUS OF DR. LAO**. The circus in town has real magic... and real vampires. The plotting is not always well thought out, but it is imaginative and carries a delicious air of menace. Spain has been making really tacky horror



films for some time. For once they turned out a decent one about a shape changing alien is loose aboard the Trans-Siberian Express. Also on board are Peter Cushing, Christopher Lee, and eventually Telly Savalas. Not always the best script, but pretty good anyway.

1973

Best Dramatic Presentation: THE WICKER MAN  
First Runner-Up: THE LEGEND OF HELL HOUSE  
Unusual and Noteworthy: THE SUBMERSION OF JAPAN

Paganism on a modern day British Isle is the subject of the mystery thriller THE WICKER MAN. The paganism is authentic and the film is supremely well scripted and well plotted. The unavailability of this film made it

a much sought after item. It wasn't quite worth all the fuss when the film finally got its American release, but if you haven't seen it, or if you have just seen the de-sexed tv-version you are missing something.

Richard Matheson (familiar name, huh?) wrote the screenplay of HELL HOUSE based on his own book. This is a ghost story done in the style of a science fiction film. The story combines mystery and psychic "science" in a fairly crisp little film. The script seems to have intended that Roddy McDowell be the main character but the director seems to have over-ridden it. Want to get all sentimental over the loss of good old Japan? This film could do it. It was based on a best-seller in Nippon about the loss of that island. The book



mixed science fiction with a loving look at Japanese culture, not unlike the book THE LATE GREAT STATE OF CALIFORNIA. In spite of a few bad effects the mood is well-handled. The film was also miserably re-edited into TIDAL WAVE, which still had some of the same mood.

1974

Best Dramatic Presentation: PHASE IV  
First Runner-Up: YOUNG FRANKENSTEIN  
Unusual and Noteworthy: THE DEVIL'S NIGHTMARE

Yes, Virginia, there are intelligent science fiction films out there that almost nobody has ever heard of. This one was too good to stick around in the theaters for very long. An entomologist and a mathematician go out in the Arizona desert to investigate unusual behavior by ants. What was intended to be a couple of weeks of science in the sun turns into the first battle of a war for supremacy. The accent is on how each side collects information on its enemy and exploits its enemy's weaknesses. This film combines the the photography of HELSTROM CHRONICLE with some of the same scientific analysis that made ANDROMEDA STRAIN so enjoyable. This is actually a British film, though you probably wouldn't know it from the film.

YOUNG FRANKENSTEIN, one of Mel Brooks's best comedies, is a satire of the old Universal Frankenstein films. Not pure gold, but more than enough really funny bits. One doesn't expect Belgian-Italian horror films to be all that good. DEVIL'S NIGHTMARE starts like a poor exploitation film and turns into an amusing allegory on the seven deadly sins. There is also a touch of Ingmar Bergman in the film.

1975

Best Dramatic Presentation: JAWS  
First Runner-Up: LOVE AND DEATH  
Unusual and Noteworthy: KING ARTHUR

JAWS, Steven Spielberg's first film to get major attention and for a while the biggest money-making film of all time, was a semi-horror film that at times showed real moments of artistry. The film is basically a fast-paced monster story with more than a small nod to Moby Dick.

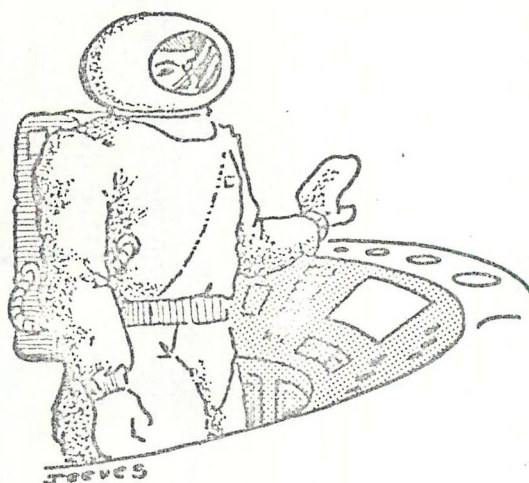
LOVE AND DEATH would probably be my choice for the best of Woody Allen's films, though it is not one of the more successful ones. Most of the allusions to Russian art were probably lost on most audiences (and probably many were lost on me), but there is a fair dose of Allen humor that anyone can understand. Like FRANKENSTEIN, the King Arthur legend is often adapted to film and almost never at all accurately. The BBC did a fair job in '75 with KING ARTHUR and it is almost never seen. Catch it if you can.

1976

Best Dramatic Presentation: THE MAN WHO WOULD BE KING  
First Runner-Up: CARRIE  
Unusual and Noteworthy: TO THE DEVIL A DAUGHTER

Allied Artists was famous in the fifties and sixties for weak, low-budget films. Their last film before going out of business spawned law suits from Michael Caine for non-payment. If they had been making films like MAN WHO WOULD BE KING all along, they might still be around. This is an excellent and spectacular version of the Kipling story with Caine, Sean Connery, and Christopher Plummer. It is a fringe fantasy extremely well-directed.

CARRIE is a film that looked a cheap EXORCIST rip-off when it came out. Instead it built international reputations for Brian DePalma, Sissy Speck, and



Stephen King. It remains the best film of King's work and is more than likely to remain so. Hammer Studios, having fallen on harder times, decided this year to make a second horror film based on the Black Magic novels of Dennis Wheatley. IN TO THE DEVIL A DAUGHTER there are script problems, but overall it is a tightly written film with a very good performance by Richard Widmark as a writer of exploitation books about the occult running across the real thing in the form of a heretical priest determined to use whatever forces necessary to save the world. The low ethics of the hero and the idealism of the villain make this an unusual film. Denholm Elliot deserves mention for his good acting too.

1977

Best Dramatic Presentation: STAR WARS  
First Runner-Up: THE LAST WAVE  
Unusual and Noteworthy: EQUUS

STAR WARS is STAR WARS.

Australian director Peter Weir created just another catastrophe, court room drama, fantasy-horror film with LAST WAVE. Oddly enough it all makes sense when you see the film. The fantasy element is firmly fixed in the aborigine myth of the Dreamtime. Weir creates a real feeling of ill-omen with his water images. No short description can cover the film, but see it anyway. Until this year I would have said this was Weir's best film. I now say that I have a slight preference for his latest film, THE YEAR OF LIVING DANGEROUSLY. EQUUS, by Peter Shaffer (brother to the author of WICKER MAN) is an extremely intense film about the psychoanalysis of a boy who blinded some prize horses, it also makes an interesting statement about how religions are born.

1978

Best Dramatic Presentation: WATERSHIP DOWN  
First Runner-Up: THE INVASION OF THE BODY SNATCHERS  
Unusual and Noteworthy: LEONORA

WATERSHIP DOWN, Richard Adams' fantasy of a group of rabbits looking for a safe warren, is one of those unlikely stories that turn out to be really good. The novel was turned down by a number of publishers for the very sound reason that the public is not all that interested in fantasies about rabbits. The fact that the book became a best-seller is attributable to the fact that people like a good and well-written story, whether it is the kind of thing the public likes or not. The film was (pretty much) the same story with

the same engaging characters, whether they are rabbits or not. The film and book create an entire culture for the rabbits complete with myth and destiny.

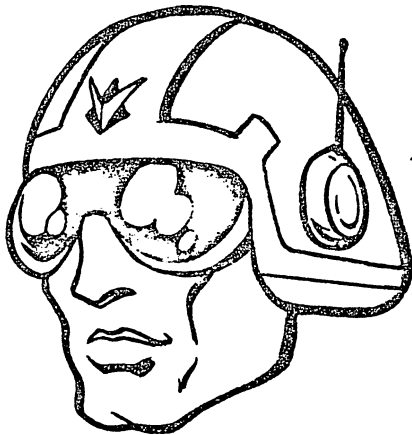
For reasons having little to do with the content of the film, I have never been able to appreciate the original *INVASION OF THE BODY SNATCHERS*. The remake/sequel, however I saw under much better circumstances and, for me at least, effectively conveyed the paranoia of the story. There were many things I didn't like, but it worked as a horror film as the first film never has for me. *LEONORA* is a film more snickered at than seen. Time Magazine referred to it as a werewolf film. In fact it is a fairly effective historical piece involving an evil creature who may or may not be a vampire. The film is moody and literate.

1979

Best Dramatic Presentation: *TIME AFTER TIME*  
First Runner-Up: *AN ENGLISHMAN'S CASTLE*  
Unusual and Noteworthy: *ALL THAT JAZZ*

How good can a film be if the plot is that H. G. Wells had a real time machine and went hunting Jack the Ripper in modern day San Francisco? Frankly, it is hard to imagine it being any better than *TIME AFTER TIME*. Malcolm McDowell is excellent as Wells. He invests the character with just the right curiosity and ingenuity. The script and direction make this function as one of the most unexpectedly good comedy thrillers in a long time.

PBS picked up *ENGLISHMAN'S CASTLE*, a three-part play from the BBC about the lives of the production team making a soap opera in modern-day London. The London, however, is one in an alternate history in which Germany won WWII. The differences, both obvious and subtle, are what make this play worth seeing. *ALL THAT JAZZ* is not my kind of film. A musical autobiography of Bob Fosse (even though Fosse denies that is what it is) in which he brags about all the women he has had is not my idea of entertainment. The film however evolves into an interesting fantasy with more than a few bizarre production number fantasy sequences. They make the film not just bearable but actually enjoyable.



1980

Best Dramatic Presentation: *THE EMPIRE STRIKES BACK*  
First Runner-Up: *SOMEWHERE IN TIME*  
Unusual and Noteworthy: *THE DAY TIME ENDED*

The second film in the *STAR WARS* ?-ology (at least in production order) was as spectacular as the first and in some ways as good. Gone, however, was the pleasant mood of the first film and the tantalizingly multi-

racial universe. The non-humans were fewer and less imaginative, C3-PO was becoming tiresome, Han Solo was less roguish and more irritating. In spite of all, the film was visually a marvel to almost match its predecessor.

Richard Matheson was back doing another adaptation of one of his novels. *SOMEWHERE IN TIME* lost steam somewhere around the middle and the final scene initially turned me against this film. In reconsideration, however, this is a very pleasant fantasy and in the early parts of the film was very well handled. Matheson invests his story with a strong sense of fate and destiny. *THE DAY TIME ENDED* was something of a surprise for me. The story is only mediocre, but it has the feel of a valiant effort. It clearly is a low-budget film, though the visual effects show much more imagination and ambition than most films at higher budgets. As such, I would call this film a sort of latter-day *EQUINOX*.



1981

Best Dramatic Presentation: *DRAGONSLAYER*  
First Runner-Up: *EXCALIBUR*  
Unusual and Noteworthy: *KNIGHTRIDERS*

This was the year of the fantasy starting with *DRAGONSLAYER*, the one of the most literate fantasies ever put on film. This films consistently presented plot twists better than I had expected. The dragon is a beautiful creature and at the same time is a comprehensible, even a sympathetic character.

*EXCALIBUR* gave the audience a Germanic interpretation of the Arthur legend. In spite of certain liberties with the story, the film is visually very good. *KNIGHTRIDERS*, George Romero's most impressive film is another retelling of the Arthur legend with a modern travelling Renaissance show. The characters are memorable, likable, and even inspirational.

1982

Best Dramatic Presentation: *POLTERGEIST*  
First Runner-Up: *CONAN THE BARBARIAN*  
Unusual and Noteworthy: *ROAD WARRIOR*

Top rating of the year goes to the first ghost story that does more than just say that ghosts exist the way *THE UNINVITED* did or wrap up the audience in jargon the way *LEGEND OF HELL HOUSE* did. *POLTERGEIST* is a film with a genuine sense of wonder. This film is effective as a scare film, but more often it shows how visually impressive are the implications of "psychic science."

*CONAN* has a rather hackneyed plot, but the dialogue is occasionally very literate and the musical score is creative and eloquent. This is a film that will be seen and enjoyed in another twenty years. When *FILM* comment asked six well-known critics for their top ten films of the year, four of them listed *ROAD WARRIOR*. An original view of an apocalyptic punk-rock world with witty characterizations and a strong dose of action.

# The 11th Day of Creation

by Michael Sestak

Beyond the orbits of Neptune and Pluto, in the dark of the outer solar system, is a cloud of debris left over from the formation of the Sun and planets. Occasionally, random gravitational interactions will send a chunk of condensed dust and frozen gases inward toward the heat and light of the Sun --a new comet is born. Perhaps every 500 million years one such comet is likely to hit the Earth, given the number of comets and the size of the planet. But, recent evidence from geology and paleontology indicates that cometary impacts occur with much greater frequency --26 to 30 million years-- and very dramatic results --mass extinctions of 50 to 90% of species extant before each catastrophe. This is a new and outlandish hypothesis for the mass extinctions which punctuate the fossil record. Yet, while many still argue its validity, others seek the source of such anomalous cometary bombardment of the Earth. Among the ideas proposed are a dark companion of the Sun (or a dim one anyway) and interactions between the dust and gas in the galactic disc as our solar system bobs up and down through it in the solar system's rotation about the galactic center. I propose to take a step even beyond these speculations and ask what are the consequences for life on Earth under such a situation.

When Charles Darwin wrote ON THE ORIGIN OF SPECIES, his theory consisted of four main parts: (1) Organisms change very slowly over time; (2) the prime mover in such change was the "selection" by simple survival and breeding of those animals most adapted to their current environment; (3) this was possible because of random variations in the characteristics of organisms, making some more and others less well adapted, and the capability of organisms to pass such characteristics from one generation to another; and (4) mating preferences can also act as selection factors. Darwin's greatest problem in advancing his theory was that he knew nothing about either how the variations in characteristics originated or by what mechanism information about them was passed to the next generation. We now know a great deal about mutations, genetics and how they interact.

Genetics has been absorbed into natural selection to produce a stronger theory. This knowledge has even allowed us to realize that adaptive and sexual selection are really part of the same process, selection for reproductive success. Whichever individual leaves the greatest number of offspring has the largest proportion of its genes in the species gene pool. Survivors can leave offspring, sexually attractive survivors can leave more offspring.

A cometary impact, however, changes the environment of virtually every organism on the planet from one to which they are adapted to one radically different and for which most are unsuited. Vast clouds of dust would reduce light levels to a few percent of normal; consequently temperatures would plummet over the planet to below zero Fahrenheit for months, and wind and precipitation patterns would be completely rearranged as the seas cooled more than the land, drastically heightening the contrast between them. Not only would many individuals fail to cope, but whole species would become extinct. Especially if this occurred several times within a span of a century or less.

Some plants and animals would survive by having life stages resistant to large environmental changes: like seeds, spores, cocoons, and hibernation. Some would survive by chance location in an area where conditions were not as bad as most, like areas where the dust clouds weren't quite so opaque. All surviving species would have two factors in common. The gene pool of their species would be radically



reduced and altered in composition. The gene pool is the total genetic composition of all individuals of the species. Thus, if the gene pool changes, the type and amount of variation in the succeeding generations of the organism will be changed. The second factor is that whatever competition for resources the species faced from other organisms before the crash is likely to have been wiped out. Needless to say, organisms whose food source is wiped out by the cataclysm are among the extinctions caused by the cataclysm as far as we are concerned.

The change in gene pool composition due to a radical reduction in population is called genetic drift. This is because with such a catastrophic change in numbers, just by chance, the remaining population will have a higher proportion of some genes, less of others, and possibly the complete loss of some, particularly after a couple of generations of breeding within this smaller gene pool. This "drift" to new gene frequencies is much faster than most changes due to natural selection.

On the other hand, with reduced competition from other species, once the normal weather patterns return, the survivors will have a much wider range of habitats or "ecological niches" they can inhabit. Whatever variation which remains in the species gene pool will have a higher than previous probability of being successful in this wider range of available "lifestyles." As groups spread out, new selection pressures arise and new mutations appear in time. The original species may change in many ways, radiating into a whole series of new subspecies and then eventually species. This process is called adaptive radiation.

A long-standing criticism of Darwinian evolution was that even over geological time spans of millions of years, rates of change due to natural selections as measured today could not result in the multiplicity of species existing now, much less all those present in the fossil record. The recently proposed "punctuated equilibrium" theory of evolution was the first real attempt to deal with this criticism in a straightforward manner. A much simplified description of this theory is that it postulates selection acting slowly most of the time, but for particular populations at particular times, conditions will be such that a process more like genetic drift occurs. In the cases where the species is better adapted to the environment that exists after the drift occurs, a vast leap in evolution has occurred over a relatively short time period. Otherwise extinction is the likely result.

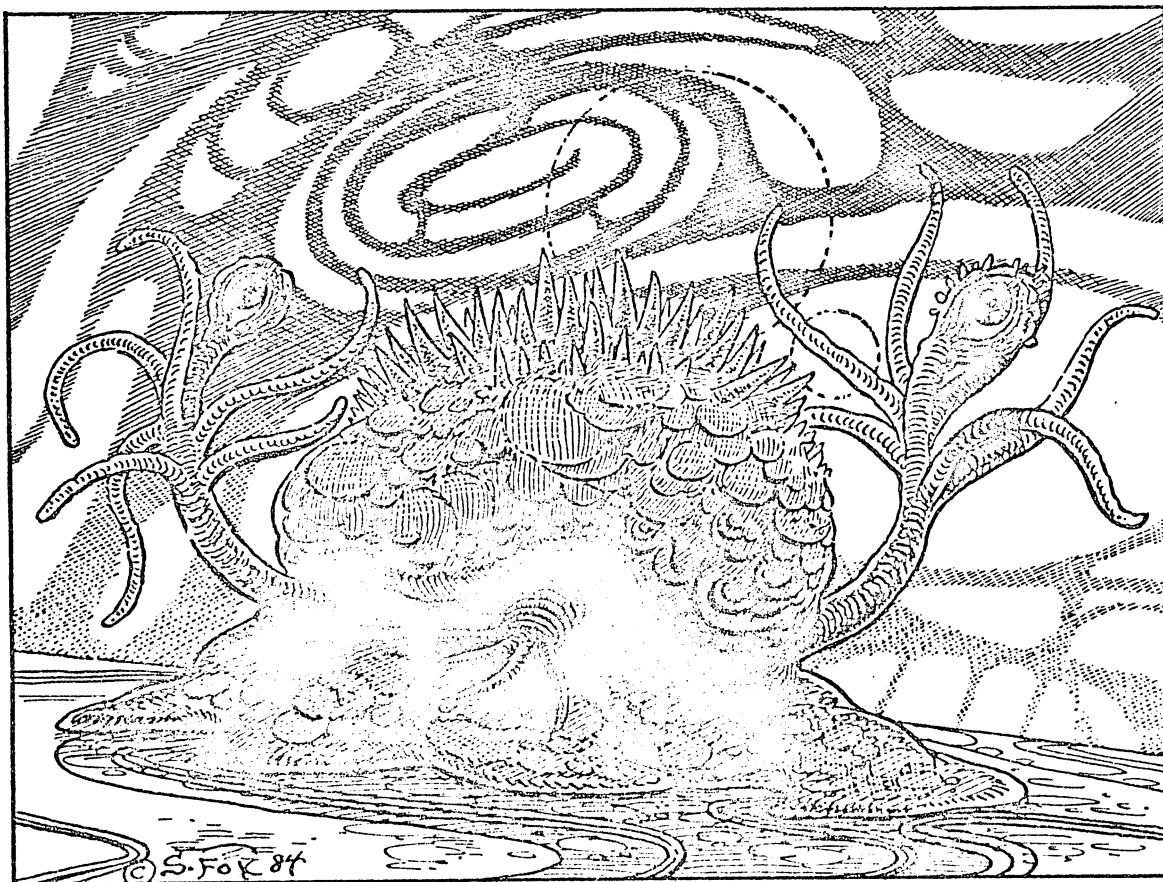
If mass extinctions really are periodic and caused by some peculiar aspect of the solar system, then the above information allows two hypotheses to be proposed. First, evolution on the Earth occurs primarily not by natural selection, at least when speciation and development of larger groups are concerned, nor even as modified by the new punctuated equilibrium version; but as the result of periodic mass extinctions followed by adaptive radiation of the surviving populations. Without the mass extinctions, basically the same organisms would exist over immense time periods, changing only slowly by interaction with each other or in local areas more quickly due to local disasters, but overall subject only to the ponderous shifts of climate and plate tectonics. As it is, periodically, a more or less random set of new organisms is established as dominating each epoch because they were the survivors of the catastrophe ending the last epoch (how mythic!). This leads to the second hypothesis: the current high level of development of intelligent life on Earth is due to the boom and bust nature of terrestrial evolution. Possibly, the last crash, mostly by chance, left as survivors land animals which competed primarily on the basis of intelligence, not size, speed, armament or any such other characteristics (though various species might in time develop and advance in such characteristics): the early mammals. Or maybe it is just the speed-up of speciation due to the adaptive radiation phase of each cycle which allowed intelligent life to occur on this planet at this time. If so, then the calculations of how probable intelligent life is in the galaxy are missing an important factor. Only planets periodically bombarded by comets or whatever

is going on to produce our cycle of mass extinctions are likely to produce intelligence, even if life itself is common. Unfortunately, this would mean we are truly alone. We haven't been contacted by extraterrestrials because there are none. At least, "intelligence" is too thinly spread out for contact to be likely until a very, very high level of development is reached.

I do not like this idea at all. Yet, I cannot talk myself out of it. It might be that the mass extinctions hindered evolution. After all, aren't we trying to preserve endangered species? Alas, while the reduction of gene pools in the extinction event itself clearly seem detrimental, the same event provides the conditions which allow adaptive radiation of the survivors. In the "steady state" evolutionary pattern, small differences in adaptivity must act over extended periods of time to allow the "niche" of a population to grow and take over that of another. Unless a local disaster speeds up the process and the local change isn't later overwhelmed by the larger scale species gene pool.

In the case of the mass extinction crunch, the more "advanced" organisms which survive will no longer have to compete with and slowly overcome the lower organisms which shared similar niches and were probably more numerous. Most recently, the great lizards (among numerous others) died off and an insignificant group called mammals came to the fore. How much longer would it have taken for mammals to dominate if the comet hadn't come? Maybe the lizards would have developed intelligence, but after more than twice the time it took mammals to do so, with no sign of such a tendency, I doubt it would have occurred by now.


Carbon and its capabilities are highly improbable when it is compared to the rest of the elements. Water and its outrageous versatility are even more difficult to account for. Is a universe which is accident-prone a more unlikely thing for which to ask? But, I want it: a cosmos where a planet is more likely to have garbage dumped on it than not. I've become enamored of the science fiction idea of communicating with a truly alien intelligence. I don't want the Earth to be an anomalous entity. I don't want to be alone merely for want of a bit of left-over star-stuff here and there.




# IN SEARCH OF ---

by

John Thiel



-- *the* ESOTERIC  
-- *the* FORBIDDEN  
-- *the* SUBLIME



In early fanzines, there were allusions to forbidden books and titles of esoterica sometimes mentioned, but I have never seen a fanzine which even gave its readers an idea of what was to be found in some archaic fantastical work, let alone discussed it. Since the curiosity of the fantasy-proud is ever toward there remote and hidden works of literature, I suppose that the references that have been made have goaded the curiosity of readers (not to mention, as I suppose, editors) past the point of endurance.

Of course, one of the most and least sought-after books has been the fabled NEKRONOMICON of Abdul Alhazred. There have been proofs for and against its existence ever since the book was first brought up by H. P. Lovecraft, who made mention of it in many of his stories. Nobody thought to ask Lovecraft himself whether he had invented the volume, but his use of it in many stories rather than just one gives evidence either of monomania or pranksterism on the part of Lovecraft, or of its being a real volume whose importance, therefore, gave cause for frequent reference. You will note that his stories would tend to be neutralized by the characters having all read the same non-existent volume--one would have to accuse Lovecraft of lack of variety, an accusation which would be invalid if the references were to a book which had had an effect on the world. Another bit of evidence is the number of other fantasy writers who also mention the book. Where there is a lot of originality, such as in fantasy writing, one would expect that there would be no borrowing in quantity from a single fantasy author.

As a further piece of evidence for the existence of this volume, Herbert Jerry Baker sent me a piece of his own writing purporting to be a translation of a story from the NEKRONOMICON. Baker is not widely acknowledged to have a great sense of humor, and although he does have one, I see no reason to believe he would use it to agitate an acknowledgement.

A lot of people would argue that it would be absurd for the author of such a book to be named in such a fashion as to suggest "all-hazard." However, it seems to me there is a possibility that the word "hazard" is an arabic word. We did receive a work said to be the NEKRONOMICON, and it was a book of spells, most of which looked valid. But that is not what the suffix "omicon" means, so I assume that it was not the book. However, the work SINBAD THE SAILOR is said to parallel the NEKRONOMICON in theme, and I would suggest that Arab archives may have the answer, if one has the opportunity to look there.

While viewing Arabic writing, I would recommend to the general attention a work called THE THOUSAND AND ONE NIGHTS, supposedly 1,001 tales related by Scheherezade in order to delay her death. I have not read this either, but the aficionado interested in fantasies from far away will want to procure a copy of this if he has not seen this type of story. There are supposed to be many tales in it which are



practically a part of the folk culture, and other which have never seen print outside of the original volume, including some said not even to be repeated. Among these are this, which I must say was repeated to me by a young lady who says it was one of the tales of THE ARABIAN NIGHTS, as it was commonly called:

A certain lady met a certain prince on a certain night and fell into the pathways of the anours with him, whereupon a certain named individual came stalking them through the streets, and he bore his cutlass. Same personage looked like you, m'lord, but he was not as dear to me as all that. In fact, I scarcely knew him.

Damn the man who says this story did not happen! It happened, and I knew of its consequences. It was told to me by a woman who carried upon her shoulder a bird of unknown origins. The story just isn't any good. But I can assure you that this personification of death at its most dismal did not get away with his intent. As you can well reason out, he did not seek them for the obvious reasons; it was his intention to show them his cutlass, and boast about it. This is the worst story I have ever told, and I am surprised you would invite your guests to hear it, when you know I am in my mood.

Is the person here, or not? He is not actually my lord, who rescued this lonely waif, and to distinguish him I will call him Bluebeard, which name he bore from the nether regions. Well, to make this story the shortest I have brought to this court, and I am sure one day it will give us all away, the essence of its worth as a narrative is that no one knew how the man got here; he seems to have just stepped out of the realms from which he came, and as far as anyone knows or could see, he had obtained no consent. He came cursing forth upon his mission, for he had been told to break the lovers' knot. He said it was cold and wet, and the lanes were dank, and he would as soon do it with his sword, since it was such an enigma, and he was prone to deal with puzzling phenomena with haste.

I should say he should have been rounded up, but there was no one there to do it. He didn't pitch into the waters either, but came straightaway to where the lovers were and said if they had a knot he would cut it. The prince arose and swore he would put a knot in his heathen hangings, whereupon the lady started laughing at this manifest impossibility, whereupon the henchman of the night's doings cursed the lady and said she was not true. The prince offered him fare back to where he had come from, which so tempted the fellow that he said that if he had a boat he would take them there. The prince demanded to know why either of them would wish to accompany the rogue, and thereupon received such an impassioned description of the place in all its delights that he was fascinated, and when the wastrel told him that if he fell out of the boat there he would not stop falling, the prince said:

"Why, hang me, I could take a boat trip through the place. Heave anchor if you have one; there's my slave's boat, and we'll take it." And the three of them set sail.

The fact is that none of them could steer the boat out of the harbor. They were there in the morning and seen by crowds coming from the marketplace, who thought them a ghostly crew, and since then the place has been considered haunted by ghostly seamen who are distinguished from the others of the sort by the fact that they are always visible and in perpetual motion. You

can be assured that I'll stay with you for quite some time. The story has no truth to it at all; for a story is a fabrication, and if one tells facts one has not been entertaining. There is more than one liar here to tell me the difference---you'll like it, I think, if you stop all that cursing; I wish you hadn't been considering me, and I will be happy to discourse on the art of narrative and what distinguishes it from lying, which we here, in our time and place, like doing.

The discourse was included after the tale. I can't say for sure that the story was actually included in the book, but at any rate someone made it up and it seems to me a good introductory account of the type of material I am discussing.

Those are the only two rare volumes of Arabic origin that I have heard of, but it is really not all that far to Persia, where another, pleasanter and much more accessible volume is found, THE RUBIYAT, written by Omar Khayyam. Some do and some don't know what this volume is about, but the most widely acknowledged translation is the one by F. Scott Fitzgerald, and since it is probably obtainable down at your library, along with several explanations, I think I will try my own hand at translating a few verses of it, since I was never much able to follow Fitzgerald's translation.

Alas, old dream, we meet with new deceit  
It follows us in winding figures through the street  
It drives men mad, and spreads them through the plains  
Where they do bargain for present goods and elder gains.

The sun has mocked me! Would this thrall blaspheme?  
I'm known for piety around the local scene.  
Sink low, good sun, you've scared my comrade Night;  
This very evening he and I were going to fight.

I only seek to make the volume interesting; I think if you like Fitzgerald's translation, you will be able to understand the unusual elements of the book and agree that it is an entertaining trip through the arcane. Of course, many NFFF (*National Fantasy Fan Foundation*) members might not find the description of the Potter to be first-class reading, but it is certain that Kayyam's journey through the stranger reaches of his culture will interest the reader of fantasy.

I believe THE BOOK OF THE DEAD is Egyptian in origin. Theoretically Thoth, at least, was mentioned in it, and I have seen a photograph labelled Thoth in a scholarly volume --well, the secret's out, our World History text was as esoteric as any writing. Anyway, I don't expect to read this book, but as far as names go, not only is the title of this one verified by an occasional Egyptian, but it is difficult to find fantasy writers mentioning it in their tales. If you want to acquire the text, try the library, a museum of Egyptology (preferably one run by the Egyptians), or Dover Books.

I suppose if the rest of Africa had anything on the order of the arcane, it would be psychological in nature. You show me a book from Turkey and I'll show you the same, so I guess we will have to drift a ways by a sea route until we find another.



Bai, the soul-bird, from THE EGYPTIAN BOOK OF THE DEAD

er literary work, unless you want to count Mesopotamic writings like the Dead Sea Scrolls.

On our way I will mention that the writings of explorer Marco Polo could be obtained from a British collection, but I can furnish you with a lot of information you need if you wish to seek out hidden literary works of Asiatic origin. I have no idea what sort of writing Tibetans possess ((*There is a TIBETAN BOOK OF THE DEAD--Lan*)), but I can say that if someone were to unearth all the Asiatic literary works, you would hear wails of anguish from more remote places than you were aware existed. I think that is the case with the RIGVEDA, a work from India, and with some chants from Japan and China. You might also interest yourself in Ezra Pound's researches into Chinese NO plays, for these have strong fantasy elements.

The KHAMA SUTRA is another work of the Orient, which I have seen. It details a number of rather elementary sexual positions which are supposed to result not only in the emergence of the sexual impulses, but also in certain mystical relationships to what are considered essential states or planes of existence. Considering the occasions under which the psotions are employed, I have no doubt that unusual states of consciousness will arise, but I suppose that someone who has lived by the KHAMA SUTRA would have to participate in order for the experiences to be the traditional ones referred to. However, the experience with any Oriental partner would undoubtedly be unique.

There have been recent forbidden writings coming out of Asia. I will refer the reader to THE HOUSE OF INCEST by Anais Nin as a good starting point. The best edition of this work will have a photograph of Miss Nin as the frontispiece, but I think Evergreen Books has also produced a tolerable edition. Also a recent work is THE PROPHET by Kahil Gilbran (who has written other works, but this is the easiest to follow). One needs to bear in mind that the author of this is saying something and meaning what he says in order to get anything out of it, and although it is hardly a supremely intelligent work, it certainly does give its readers contact with another and unusual enough mind. Those who have not already read THE THIRD EYE by T. Lobsang Rampa will find a similar experience in this book, and it is one I neglected, since it is a recent volume, in my mention of Tibet. Rampa writes about being a center of activity and what the attendant phenomena might be, and how he dealt with them. He says that the experience can hardly be other than mystical.

Those are the only complete books, recent and other wise, that I know of from the Eastern climes, but Europe too has condemned, forbidden, and hidden books. I know nothing of the book UNAUSPRECHLICHEN KULTEN which Lovecraft mentioned, nor am I aware of any literature from Germany which is actually forbidden, though quality material of this kind is probably hard to get from German places of learning. However books written recently enough by French writer J.K. Huysmans must be at leadt comparable. Huysman has written four books on unmentionable topics, the two most obtainable of which are LA BAS and AGAINST THE GRAIN. LA BAS is the commonest in its scope and I would not recommend it as a very pleasurable reading experience. Even in its native language it is hard to bear. LA BAS is a study of various behaviors of people who congregate for the purpose of doing that which is forbidden, and Huysmans tells the reader what he saw, how it was done, how it should have been done, and how it would be done, as well as making the reader aware of how he himself may do it, should he wish to try. There are, for example, two right ways of attracting forbidden activity toward yourself. The first is to leave a token of your own making at a significant place of your own choosing along a street or even a byway. This will attract that form of interest but will suggest that you are going to divest people of their rites. The second way is to use their eccentric symbols of identification, and to do this you simply have to have someone tell you



what these are. If you are among Satanists of the kind with which he is familiar, Huysmans says, you will probably get results by leaving a razor and a mirror crossed at a street intersection. You may say who told you if there is argument. Thereafter the book is a trip through one eccentricity after another, with occasional apologies to the reader for the necessary deviance of what he is reading, for after all, deviants are going to have to be described in deviant language.

Irish and Scottish lore are not lore enough, and you'd be better off getting what you can out of their top writers and poets. English material of this sort centers around Shakespeare and some of his friends and you had better be a pretty scholarly individual if you are going to get a hold of any of it. ALICE IN WONDERLAND, of course, has spells in it, including the most potent of all spells ever written, "Jabberwocky." If you read this aloud, and are not doing so professionally, you will be transported into another plane of existence. Just having it assumed that you are aware of what a single line of it means will have that effect.

I think I will leave the rest of the Europeans alone after mentioning the MALEFACTUS MALEFACTOTEM and a few other books. I have heard that this particular work was written by John Calvin and, in fact, it is devoted to the purge of evil, as any Puritan could tell you. If you are surrounded by evil, and helpless to save yourself and such associates as you may have, you may read this work in public and speculate about its meaning. The book will do the rest. You need only read one or two passages from it and say what its title is. But if you are not bringing forth the book under the circumstances described, you are probably going to be considered quite an expert on various matters for quite some time. Where the author was when he wrote it, whether Scotland, Ireland, or America, I am not certain, but it is likely to be more understandable to the reader than most of the other works mentioned.

I do not consider THE SATYRICON a forbidden or esoteric work, and don't think Italy or Spain have any such works, unless erotica sometimes does count. Arthur Machen, wherever he comes from, likes to set his works in such places, and Algernon Blackwood is reputedly English (he speaks a bit of the old tongue too), but I think both of them are too interested in reader-pleasing to be included in the categories I mentioned. You might consider Sappho of Lesbos (an island near Greece) and her "Sapphic Odes" to be in this category of reading, and maybe say the same of Plotinus, but I really don't think this is a very good ground to search for forbidden works. It might get you a discussion of myths (for which see Billfinch or Edith Hamilton). And as Thessaly has produced no literate works (unless the god Klar Kashton is of Thessalaian origins), I think we had best turn to America, land of the semi-forbidden. ("I think it out of that tree" is certainly questionable esoterica, as is Paul Bunyan's fabulous yarns.)

Now in America, literature has practically all been forbidden, then again none of it has. If it's down-home stuff it just doesn't sound forbidden enough. Yet I would place the collected works of Robert G. Ingersoll among the other texts which I have mentioned, as William Jennings Bryan should have said when he was debating him (or "it," as Ingersoll said). Ingersoll didn't believe too much of anything and he likes describing a life devoid of beliefs, based on his experiences; you can trust him or not. He points out himself that he isn't always trustworthy. He will also tell you some books you may have missed after your raid on the Tree of Knowledge, like the one attributed to Beelzebub which wasn't solid enough for me to mention, though it does start out in a fine definite style. However, start writing about that and for some reason people come around saying, "Why not list THE CONFESSIONS OF SAINT AUGUSTINE if you are bringing up books in this realm of experience, or why not THE DIVINE COMEDY or the KABALLAH?" Any answer's good enough, but the conversation's aren't.

To avoid our own fantasy writers, including Ambrose Bierce, the next writer I would call to your attention is the semi-literate Charles Fort, who in LO!, THE BOOK OF THE DAMNED, and a couple of others, has rounded up all the esoteric and mysterious facts he can and speculated about them. I think the results are quaint-er than any books of the past. How can I better recommend him than to say he has done a pretty thorough job, with the materials available to him.

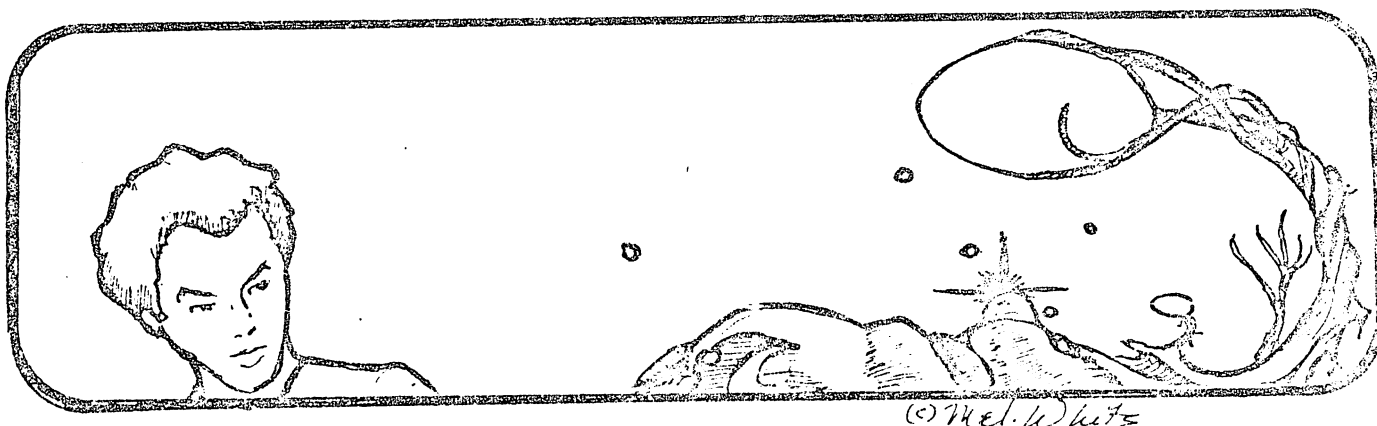
A recommender of esoteric writings who taught science at a university has written some pretty esoteric works of his own. He is Timothy Leary, inventor of LSD, the mind-drug, and although I disremember the exact names of the works he wrote, usually in collaboration with his associate Richard Alpert, they were full of Westernized mandalas, LSD and peyote ceremonies, mystic ritualism, and were described by him as a lot of fun. He has never backed down in his position and never intends to, and has shown how his death wouldn't constitute backing down, and besides he'd probably reincarnate himself at once just to show off. The books he has written should be readily available at any Hippie library.

Then there is J. B. Rhine, similarly a scientist connected with a university, in this case Duke University. Dr. Rhine's topic is what he calls "parapsychology" or "extrasensory perception." He takes a scientific approach to it but he certainly records everything he knows. I would recommend his books to anyone who wants to learn how to use latent ESP powers.

I have not mentioned Aldous Huxley, Carl Jung and many others who might come to the reader's mind because because I have wanted to write an introductory essay on the subject of the strange and forbidden. Nor have I gotten into mainstream culture where there is Robert Ripley, Ray Palmer, and the Rosicrucians. There is too much to write about there for a short essay. (\*whine\*) However, if the reader has not gotten into these topics much, or seen much by way of introduction (which I certainly haven't), than I think I may have paved his way a bit. Don't walk on those bricks too hard; I myself will look forward to reading further material on the subject, including possible reader reaction from people who may be able to add to my references. That is, my references to esoteric work, not that I don't consider my driver's license to have some rather strange markings on it.

At any rate, I think I have made it clear that I consider these unusual works to be of high interest to the fantasy fan, and for good reason---some of them have been sources of fantasy writing; many of them are concerned with the same topics. I assume the fan of fantasy writing would like to read some of the believers' accounts as well as works by fantasy masters, only providing they are well enough written and coherent enough to hold his interest.

I hope my essay will contribute to some knowledge-expansion in these hidden realms. My gosh, a book needs intelligent readers just as much as intelligent readers need to find books to read!



(c) Mel. White

# Pulp and Celluloid

## Book & Movie Reviews

SLOW FALL TO DAWN by Stephen Leigh. 1981, Bantam Books, \$2.25.  
DANCE OF THE HAG by Stephen Leigh. 1983, Bantam Books, \$2.50.  
A QUIET OF STONE by Stephen Leigh. 1984, Bantam Books, \$2.75

Set on the world of Neweden, these three books don't exactly comprise a trilogy; they are a series with a continuous set of characters. The final book written, A QUIET OF STONE, is not the end; there are too many questions left standing, and Steve will get back to the series--but not for a few years. Steve says he has a few other things he wants to write before continuing with his assassins.

The social structure on Neweden is that of a feudal caste system, with the lassari being the unguilded poor, and the rest of the population comprising guilds of various crafts and abilities. The head of each guild belongs to the assembly, headed by Li-Gallant Vingi, whose power base is made from trade with the Alliance, a loose federation of the settled worlds. The planet has little to offer in terms of products, except for art objects made from the fossilized bones of the ippicator, a five-limbed mammal (the only known asymmetrical mammal known in the galaxy), and the uniqueness of its social structure, which attracts scholars to study it. There may be more, but Steve hasn't spent that much time in the extreme details of his planet. He has spent time developing the Hoorka, a group of guilded assassins.

Gyll Hermond is the Thane of the Hoorka, as well as its founder and developer of its code of assassination. The victim is given a chance to survive, following the whims of Dame Fate. For any contract, there is a time limit after which Hag Death does not get her due, and the weapons any Hoorka-kin uses on a contract are limited to the kind the victim is using in his/her own defense. (Left open is also the possibility of buying off the contract, if the victim is rich enough.) Thane Gyll Hermond created his Hoorka from unguilded lassari, particularly the criminals, and has raised them to a level of respectability as SLOW FALL TO DAWN opens. Now he wants his kin to take on contracts off-world, and the Alliance Regent, m'Dame D'Embry, is studying the situation. What influences her to allow them to work among the Alliance worlds, in a limited way, is the code, and that the Hoorka do follow it. Thane Gyll Hermond fails a contract--twice, mainly because



the time limit expires. This failure, however, does not please the person who paid for them. Li-Gallant. And this has ramifications in the second book. At the end of SFTD, Gyll realizes his failure is detrimental to his Hoorka, especially since he is their Thane, and steps down from his position, leaving his friend and lover Mondam as Thane.

DANCE OF THE HAG continues with the situation left standing at the end of SFTD. However, Gunnar, the victim of the failed contracts, is murdered, and this throws more turmoil into an already riled up populace. The off-world contracts for the Hoorka are partially successful, and there are too few of them to suit Gyll. Although Gyll is not Thane, he still has much influence among the Hoorka-kin, and is undermining much of Thane Mondom's power. The conflicts in this book multiply--Li-Gallant versus almost everybody, the Alliance versus the Trading families (symbolized by Regent D'Embry and Kaethe Oldin of the Oldin Trading Family), Gyll versus Mondom, and more. Someone, something, is keeping the lassari riled, and the social structure is cracking. Gyll arranges for the Hoorka to work more off-planet through the Oldin Family, but Thane Mondom refuses. Gyll goes off with Kaethe Oldin, and DothH ends in bitter dispute with Gyll no longer considered Hoorka-kin.

Eight years (standards) later Gyll returns, now titled Sula, head of the military arm of Oldinfamily. The government on Neweden is crumbling, though Li-Gallant is trying to hold things together, for his own purposes, of course. M'Dame D'Embry is also trying to keep things together, and is succeeding in patching together many of the disputes, but she knows they won't hold. She herself is betrayed by her assistant, who succeeds her. Gyll finds the Hoorka in grave financial trouble; Mondom has been forced to accept contracts where she could get them--particularly from Li-Gallant. This nearly puts the Hoorka in the "pay" of Li-Gallant's guild. Thane Mondom has also been selling bones of the huge ippicator resting in the caverns of the Hoorka home called Underasgard. More confusion is stirred up, especially when the body of the freshly killed ippicator is discovered (they've been extinct for several tens of thousands of years), and the religion of She-of-the-Five (ippicators have five limbs) is shaken. A QUIET OF STONE is filled with intrigue, crosses and doublecrosses, and tumbles to a shocking conclusion which leaves even more turmoil. One is left wondering if Neweden will survive, especially now torn between the Alliance influence and the Trading Family influence.

The books are well-written, and the background is covered enough in each of the books so that you need not have read them in order, nor the other to to read just one. This is good, since Bantam had let the first two go out of print when they brought out A QUIET OF STONE. However, the style in which Steve Leigh writes is a slow one. I wouldn't call it boring, but he has a tendency to describe things and actions in a detached and indirect way, rather than plunging in and making the reader feel and experience the action. Thus he writes more like Michael Bishop than Mike Resnick. Steve knows how to use words and his vocabulary is extensive; I've told him that his style is one that would make English teachers delight in its imagery, but unfortunately one does have to be in a particular frame of mind to appreciate it. Steve does improve from one book to the next; I really look forward to his next novel, mainly to see what he does with some ideas other than those he explored in this series.

*Reviewed by Ian.*

### RETURN OF THE JEDI: *The Universe for Five Dollars*

The first questions that everyone gets asked after weeing RETURN OF THE JEDI are: "Is it as good as STAR WARS? Is it as good as THE EMPIRE STRIKES BACK? Did Lucas top his previous films?" There is little argument that the new film is several cuts above THE EMPIRE STRIKES BACK. There is nothing that Lucas did in the second film that he did not do better in the third. The character development and the plot revelations that were the most interesting part of the second film continued in the third. But while the second film was serious to the point of being som-

ber, RETURN OF THE JEDI manages to be as serious and at the same time light-hearted. The question of whether Lucas has topped the triumph of his first STAR WARS film is a little harder to answer. The first film had the element of surprise, the astonishment of "I didn't know you could do *that* on film!" The "that" is showing scenes of such imagination and vitality.

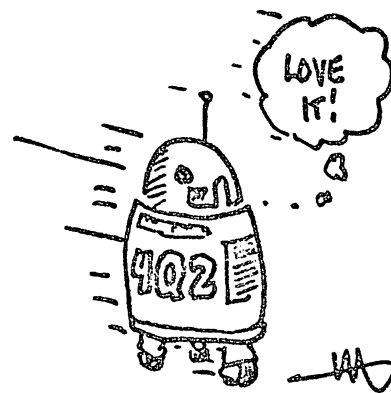
Lucas created the images by, for the first time, exploiting the full image-creation possibilities of the computer. The computer made possible hundreds of new techniques that no studio had yet applied to filmmaking. When these effects were introduced in a single, medium-to-low budget science fiction film, the film STAR WARS turned into an almost unstoppable money pump for the studio. Now the element of surprise is gone. Audiences expect to be dazzled by the STAR WARS films and their many imitators. Still, RETURN OF THE JEDI feels like a "STAR WARS concentrate" with not just far more visual effects on the screen but also a better story. It is hard to believe that anyone who liked either of the first two films would be at all disappointed with the third.

The new story deals with the rescue of Han Solo from the intergalactic smuggler and slaver Jabba the Hutt, of whom we've heard but never seen. Jabba turns out to look like a cross between Tweedle-dum and a giant bullfrog. With Han rescued and the trio of Skywalker, Leia, and Solo back together, Luke Skywalker is ready to finish his Jedi training and apply it to the destruction of the Empire's new and more powerful Death Star. Along the way all the loose ends from the first two films are neatly tied up. Luke unravels the mystery of his origins and his destiny. The story of the three is brought to a poinding conclusion to make the trilogy *the* epic of the science fiction film.

Are there faults to the third film? Sure, a few. Audiences have already seen one story of the destruction of a Death Star. Sections of RETURN OF THE JEDI's plot are virtual retreads of the first film. But don't worry, there is more than enough new to compensate. A small disappointment is that the first film had a number of throwaway gags, quiet jokes that do not call attention to themselves, like the stork-like legs that walk across the screen in silhouette shortly after the Cantina scene. There were no similar understated jokes in the second film. But in spite of this the story has all the lightheartedness of STAR WARS and the seriousness of THE EMPIRE STRIKES BACK. The sprinkling in of alien life forms that we saw in the first film but to a much lesser extent in the second is back in force in RETURN OF THE JEDI.

It seems likely that RETURN OF THE JEDI may not be as successful as the first film. When STARWARS was released it was the "only game in town." Now it is simply the best of a much-improved heap that also includes the other two films and a few decent non-STAR-WARS contenders. Fewer people will want to see RETURN OF THE JEDI time and time again. This will probably be one of the top-ten grossing films, and may even pass EMPIRE in the top-grossing list, but it will not pass the first film.

*Reviewed by Mark R. Leeper*



## WAR GAMES

Some films are very hard to review because they combine very good elements with very bad elements. No film that I have seen recently is this so true of as it is with WAR GAMES. Here is a film that is a really clever comedy with an enjoyable science fiction premise: a high school computer whiz has accidentally broken into the computer that controls our nuclear defense against the Soviet Union and our hero has nearly caused Armageddon without realizing it. It is a fun premise to work with if you do not start thinking about the implausibilities. WAR GAMES, however, does not distract the viewers from the implausibilities; it showers

the viewer with them. Any highschooler with a little education in computers could sit down and list thirty different out-and-out errors, or at least highly absurd premises of the film. This ruined the film for me more than it would for most people who have even less than my small computer background.

David is an average high school student. You know, the kind with \$15,000 worth of computer equipment in his room and who can break any security system in a matter of two minutes or so. Early in the film he is content with breaking into the school computer to change some of his F-grades to C's. It is not long, however, before he is loosing his software to make 10,000 long distance phone calls in order to find the phone number of a game company's computer. Instead he accidentally ends up calling a nuclear war scenario simulator that has just been hooked up to NORAD's defense network. If any of this sounds absurd, believe me, these are just starters. The character of David seems to be inspired by Tom Swift with all of Swift's ability to solve really complex technical problems in minutes. The plot, too, is on a Tom Swift level. It is fast-paced, entertaining, and bears very little thought. It is to director John Badham's credit that he kept the film a light-hearted comedy, in spite of the theme of imminent nuclear destruction. He left the film as a pleasant, light comedy with sympathetic, if not believable, main characters.

WAR GAMES seems to be making two political points. One is that nuclear war is a bad thing. That is hardly a controversial point. Anyone who reads a newspaper or listens to the news hears a lot of argument about what is the best strategy to avoid nuclear war and to minimize losses in the event one occurs. A stand against nuclear war is about as controversial as one for Motherhood. The other point the film makes is that while people may be unreliable, computers are even less so. Unfortunately, this is a very dangerous point-of-view. Yes, it is very hard for a computer programmer to make his software fail-safe. But the track record of competent programmers thinking out problems in advance is far better than that of people making snap decisions under stress. At Three Mile Island the problem was not in the automatic systems but in the humans who, understandably considering the pressures, failed to follow their instructions. If WAR GAMES convinces enough people that automatic systems are less reliable than human ones, we could all be in serious trouble.

*Reviewed by Mark R. Leeper*

FORTY THOUSAND IN GEHENNA by C. J. Cherryh. 1983, Phantasia Press, hardcover, \$17.00

Forty thousand cloned workers and four hundred fifty-two "born men" are sent to the Union-controlled world of Gehenna II to found a colony and limit the rival Alliance's expansion in that direction. All the colonists are filled with a sense of noble purpose. Gehenna is ideal for human life and development. Its dominant life form, the giant lizard-like calibans, are neither intelligent nor aggressive enough to appear any threat.

But colony's hopes fade when the supply ships never arrive. Without medical supplies, replacement machinery, and particularly education tapes to train and control the clones, the settlement disintegrates into isolated primitive bands. And the calibans' behavior towards the human constructions is strangely purposeful....

There are no real surprises in FORTY THOUSAND IN GEHENNA, but there is much satisfaction. The story develops slowly, since Cherryh lays a solid, well-thought-out foundation for the events that unfold. Over 200 years, we see the hopeful founding of the colony, its failure and degeneration, and its evolution into cultures that fit the planet, and compromise with the calibans' behavior patterns. Each stage is personified in memorable individuals: Jin, the clone-worker who must learn to be fully human; his rebellious daughter, Pia Elder; the townsman Dean, caught between loyalties to past and future; the willful Elai, heir to leadership of the Cloud Towers and opponent to the would-be conqueror, Jin; and others, each unique and with his or her distinct role to play in the history of Gehenna.





Cherryh is renowned as one of the best creators of aliens in the genre. Gehenna's calibans uphold the tradition. Though they are portrayed through human perceptions and understanding of them (or lack of understanding), their *otherness* is conveyed. The underlying purpose of their behavior is there, even if inaccessible to human logic.

The narrative is interspersed with first-class descriptions of the clones' psychological conditioning, personal reactions to the abandonment of the colony, a lengthy exchange over anthropological theories, official memos dictating policy (official and covert), political debates, genealogies, maps and analyses of Gehenna's ecology and cultural development. Some readers may find this slows things down too much for them; others may glory in the scientific invention and literary imagination. Regardless of personal tastes, FORTY THOUSAND IN GEHENNA is clearly the product of much thought, effort, and sheer talent. C. J. Cherryh has given us another masterpiece.

Reviewed by Maia Cowan

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## SOMETHING WICKED THIS WAY COMES

Shortly after STAR WARS came out, George Lucas claimed in an interview in *American Film* that when he made his masterpiece he was trying to "go the Disney route," i.e., to make a popular family film. Instead he started a new fantasy film cycle that has profoundly affected the film industry. On reading the article, I imagined a Disney executive asking himself, if Lucas was going the Disney route, why wasn't Disney doing the same? The simple truth was that while Disney's studio hadn't turned out a real science fiction film since 20,000 LEAGUES UNDER THE SEA, they had been for many years the American studio that seemed to concentrate most on fantasy film. If they could shake their sugary taste, they could probably do a fantasy (or science fiction) film classic. There is no reason they couldn't do a film of the calibre of STAR WARS.

It wasn't too much later that Disney announced that it was going to try to do just that. They were going to drop their taboo against non-G-rated films and make a PG science fiction film. THE BLACK HOLE was to be a film with a major special effects budget. When the film was finally released, it was a major let-down. Special effects it had, but it was a wretched piece of science fiction. STAR WARS was no great intellectual work but the science fiction in THE BLACK HOLE was truly execrable. Well, so much for high-quality films from Disney.

Disney then did two co-productions with Paramount. The first was POPEYE, which I had no interest in seeing and the critics bore me out. When it showed up on cable I forced myself to watch it and discovered it to be worse than I'd expected. The next co-production with Paramount was to be the two studios' efforts to make a sword-and-sorcery-style film. DRAGONSLAYER has received a fair amount of both positive and negative comment. It is apparently not a film to everyone's taste. For the record, I consider it to have been the best fantasy film since STAR WARS and the most literate piece of film fantasy in a good deal longer. This opinion has made me a pariah among some of my best friends, but I stand by it. I contend that it is certainly the best film Disney Studios has ever been connected with (and that includes FOPBIDDEN PLANET, to which Disney made uncredited contributions). So am I satisfied that I was right that Disney is capable of really good fantasy films in the 80's? I was until I found out Disney's contribution was to provide production money. I had no doubt that even Roger Corman might be capable of *financing* a good film. *Making* a good film is something entirely different.

Now I heard some very good things about TRON before it came out. Word-of-mouth was even good on the film. I saw it with high expectations but when it was over I found it impossible to be enthusiastic about this cold, dark film. The computer effects were nice enough, but the plot and the characters were forgettable. Once again I decided that Disney's creative fantasy days were gone.

Well, it has finally happened. Walt Disney Studios has made what may well be my favorite horror film of all time. Disney Studios, world famous for children's films, made a horror film that had the parents in the theatre shuddering. The nervous laughter, born of tension, was not coming from the children in the audience; it was coming from the adults. I recommend, incidentally, that parents think twice about taking younger children to see SOMETHING WICKED THIS WAY COMES --it is a potent horror story.

SOMETHING WICKED THIS WAY COMES is, of course, Ray Bradbury's tale of a sinister carnival coming to an Illinois town and destroying the townspeople by granting their secret dreams. I don't like Bradbury and early on I thought his lyric quality damaged the effect of the film. I did not care for the saccharine prose and character names like "Jim Nightshade". But once the story started moving, I accepted it as I accept background music. It makes the film stylized, but as the film progressed it clearly added to the film's style.

The music is by James Horner and like the prose, it seems a little too light and sweet early on, then becomes very good. Special note should be made of Jonathan Pryce's acting as the evil Mr. Dark. There was talk at one point of giving the role to Christopher Lee. Lee is good but in his horror roles he has never been so darkly menacing as the intense Jonathan Pryce. The best part of Disney films has always been the villain, from the Devil of FANTASIA to the dragon-queen of SLEEPING BEAUTY, but Pryce is more convincingly evil than any villain ever presented in a Disney film. The photography, and the images of evil it creates together with the special effects, is also superb.

For years Disney Studios has claimed to be master fantasy makers on the basis of a few cartoons that have outlived their entertainment value. With films like SOMETHING WICKED THIS WAY COMES under the Disney banner, their reputation may well again become deserved.

*Reviewed by Mark R. Leeper*

VALENTINE PONTIFEX by Robert Silverberg. Arbor House, NY, 1983.

Back in LORD VALENTINE'S CASTLE (1978) Robert Silverberg created a most unusual world, Majipoor, a planet with much more surface area than earth but roughly equal gravity. The technology is highly variable: a small set of highly advanced machines are imported, and a general population which has access to medical and agricultural techniques but seldom uses complicated machinery.

CASTLE is a long picture-quest novel in which Lord Valentine is overthrown and leads a counter revolution for one of the most important posts on Majipoor. In the process we see a good deal of the multi-species, multi-cultural society that has emigrated to Majipoor from several worlds.

MAJIPOOR CHRONICLES (1981) was a collection of short stories which gave us individual cases of how the unique three-piece Majipoorian government evolved, and works. The Pontifex and Coronals are the heads of the Administrative branch who handle public works and the laws concerning property and public behavior. The Lady of the Isle sends forth dreams to the general population stressing peace and self-awareness. Everyone is encouraged to deal with dream-readers, persons who have learned to interpret dreams and help weed out the patient's frustrations and jealousies. The King of Dreams is charged with monitoring peoples' behavior and sending them punishing dreams to serious wrong-doers.

VALENTINE PONTIFEX is another novel but a divided one. Most of it follows Lord Valentine as he hunts for the force in this near-paradise which caused the revolt against him. Being Valentine, he does this in his own way with grace, humor and a near absence of malice. It also follows the growth of the linking character of Majipoor Chronicler Hissune, a young commoner who has been chosen by Lord Valentine as his successor.

While dealing with new material about the history of Majipoor, most of this

book is an examination of the morality of power. In the context of Lord Valentine's seeking his secret enemies, we must face the question of how does one redress a wrong when it is built into the system. What crimes cannot be forgiven? When is an enemy ready to be a friend?

Silverberg has taken the oldest theme of fantasy, the lost prince, and given us a lesson on political morality. *Reviewed by William Wilson Goodson, Jr.*

**WORLD'S END** by Joan D. Vinge. Bluejay Books, Hardcover, \$13.95; 1984.

After the closing of the Stargate to Tiamat, the world of the Snow Queen, BZ Gundhalinu lost his link with Moon, and the only job as Police Inspector he had really felt comfortable with. BZ, also is a "tech", a member of that elite class of the planet Kharemough who can "fix anything", but by the strict codes of honor of his planet, BZ is considered an outcast. Taking a post in the far reaches of the Hegemony on a planet called Four, which boasts mineral wealth beyond any of the known worlds, but whose environment tends to discourage all but the most desperate, BZ buries himself in police work, but his personal problems begin to interfere, and when he finds that his brothers are lost in the tract of wilderness known as World's End, he takes a leave of absence to find them.

A single find in World's End could make a man rich for life, but few had returned from the uncharted wilds. Disguised as Gedda, and together with a prospector named Ang and a criminal, Spadrin, BZ makes the trek into World's End. He nearly loses his life before finally coming to Sanctuary, the city on the edge of Fire Lake which is the center of strange happenings --the fabric of space and time is distorted here, and Song, a deranged Sybil, appears to be under the influence of whatever it is causing these space-time distortions. BZ finds his brothers, and survives, not without a few surprises, and discovers a means of regaining his personal honor.

Since WORLD'S END is billed as "volume 2 in the SNOW QUEEN cycle," several questions pop into one's mind: Is it as good as THE SNOW QUEEN? Is this the second book of a series on its way to a three-book trilogy? or a multibook trilogy? Is Vinge capitalizing on previous successes and has written a poor novel? Well, this novel is in some ways better than THE SNOW QUEEN. It is more tightly written, but this comes more because Vinge sticks with one character--this is BZ Gundhalinu's story, and the locale is limited; she doesn't have to deal with an entire planet and several characters. In this sense, therefore, the novel is not as good as THE SNOW QUEEN. But the comparisons are moot, since Joan D. Vinge was attempting different things in each. As a novel of an intense study of one individual whose life happens to affect the course of the Hegemony, WORLD'S END succeeds remarkably well. (Vinge follows an idea used so often by Andre Norton, Clifford Simak, and many others; great things happen through individuals, though they have little knowledge of how much affect their actions have in the scheme of things.)

I doubt that Vinge is going to limit herself to a three book cycle--having this listed as a "cycle" rather than a "trilogy" is indication enough. The universe of the Snow Queen and the Hegemony is full and rich enough that Joan has her work cut out for herself to tell all the stories in it. Joan is not falling back on her previous successes; she forges ahead, honing her skills as a writer, and getting better and better.

I highly recommend this book, and suggest that one try to read it in a single sitting. It is fast-paced enough that one barely notices the time go by. Unfortunately I couldn't do so, and had to space the reading over several days, and hated to do so; I was left itching to get back to the story--yea, I wanted more when it ended all too soon. This is one novel that is worthy of consideration for next year's Hugo Award. *Reviewed by Lan*

*"I write moral parables. Unfortunately, there is no section called 'moral parables' in the bookstores, so my agent and editor both suggested that I market my stories as science fiction. They said it would make my publisher happy. If my publisher's happy, my agent and editor are happy, and I'm happy because they are all happy, and my writing is getting published."*

# MIKE RESNICK

## A Writer of Parables □ □ □ □

Mike Resnick was born in 1942, grew up in the Chicago area and attended the University of Chicago where he earned three letters for fencing, giving him some background to write the early novels of barbaric sword-and-sorcery. In 1961 he married Carol, and entered fandom in 1962, through the back door of Edgar Rice Burroughs fandom. They missed the Chicago Worldcon in 1962 because of the birth of their daughter, Laura, and didn't discover that they were living just down the street from the headquarters of Chicago fandom until 1965. Since then, both have been ensconced in the fannish ways; Mike goes to cons to talk, and Carol to win the masquerades with her lavish costumes.

Mike has been supporting himself and his family by his writing since he was 22. Most of this was hack-work, something which he readily reveals without hesitation or embarrassment, unlike many writers. But like most writers who got their start writing in the tabloids and pornography, Mike doesn't disclose the names under which he wrote. Even though he was earning \$100,000 a year with his type-writer, Mike got tired of copying other writers' styles as he ghost-wrote novels and articles, exhausted from writing 11-hour screenplays and 72-hour books, and bored with writing the same story 7 different ways to appeal to the seven different audiences of the seven different tabloids he was editing, he decided that he would have to find another line of work to support him and the other Resnicks, and thus allow him to write stories that he could happily sign his own name to.

One of Mike's and Carol's other hobbies was breeding and showing collies. Since they sold off several of the results of the breedings, the new owners thought that the Resnicks would be the best place to send said animals for safe-keeping while they were on vacation. Said Mike in his Guest of Honor Speech at CONFUSION in 1984, "One day, while cleaning up after half a dozen collies that we had fondly hoped never to see again when we had sold them, we decided to charge their owners a couple of dollars in the hope that they'd go away and pester someone else for a change.

"They Didn't.

"In point of fact they told all their friends what wonderful care we gave their dogs--and on the day that we found ourselves cleaning up after more dogs that we *didn't* own than dogs that we *did*, we realized that there was gold in them thar hills."



After looking at over 200 kennels in the US, Mike and Carol bought the second-largest one, which happened to be losing money. Inside of four years, by 1980, the business had turned around, and they were independently wealthy. Mike could then sit down and write the kinds of stories he wanted.

Mike idolized several authors on his way to becoming the writer of Resnick-stories. At age 20, he would have given anything to have been named the successor to Edgar Rice Burroughs literary estate. Indeed, his first novels, published under his own name, were written very much in the style of Burroughs--heavily over-written, with heroes who could fight for hours during the day, then ravish maidens all night, only to return to the fighting the next day and repeat the cycle. Mike tells everyone not to read those particular novels, but taken as Burroughs imitations, they are pretty good. *The Goddess of Ganymede* and *Pursuit on Ganymede* (1967 and 1968 respectively) followed in the tradition of John Carter of Mars. *Redbeard* (1969), a novel which Mike doesn't mind people reading--too much, is a standard barbarian, sword-and-sorcery affair, in an after-the-bomb world.

Soon Mike grew out of that stage and followed Asimov and Clement and a few other authors for whom the *idea* was all important. This soon changed again and Sheckley, with his biting social satire, became the idolized author. A couple of years later it was Malzberg and his *literary* novels. When he sat down to write what he wanted, Mike looked at the sf field and saw that each of his idolized authors had not changed. Their works still stood as they were, but his perception of them had changed. At his stage in life, Mike did not want to copy the styles of those people, nor did he want to read, let alone, write those kinds of stories (save Malzberg's; Mike still holds him in high regard, naming him second on his list of top ten sf/fantasy authors (Olaf Stapledon is first--but this is also excluding himself)). He wanted to write Resnick stories, stories he wanted to read. Like Asimov, Mike likes to sit and write, and recently bought an IBM-PC, and the Easywriter II software, to make that task even easier. (He said he bought the computer, took it home and set it up, and inside a half hour was using it to write. He finished 30 pages that day.)

There are several people to whom Mike gives credit in helping him with his work. Primarily there is Carol, his wife. She is his uncredited collaborator. Carol has the ability to suggest ideas that appeal to Mike, not ones that she herself would pursue if she were writing. She also reads each chapter as it comes out of the computer, points out holes, discrepancies, where the background needs fleshing out, then listens patiently while Mike explodes with defensive arguments. When he's calmed down, Carol sends him back to the terminal to do it right. "But I have never followed her advice and had a story fail to sell the first time out of the box...if I happen to refer to her as my better half, it's not a sexist remark but rather a literary truism," said Mike at CONFUSION.

Mike also lauds Shiela Gilbert, his editor at New American Library. She grants him his artistic license and forcibly demands that he exercise that freedom. She also allows Mike to write three books a year, and jokingly said that his next book would be released with the banner, "His first novel in four months!" And then there is Eleanor Wood, his agent, whom Mike encourages in her endeavors to make him obscenely rich from his writing. Finally, all those other fannish ladies, topped by Martha Beck and Jackie Causgrove, who have helped in ways even they don't realize.

So, what are Resnick-stories, that Mike likes to write so much?

For the most part, they are books about adults, written for adults. Mike is a master of the human condition; he knows how people operate and behave in real life. This enters his novels--the characters are more real than most. They are

filled with contradictions. A character may have the highest ideals, yet will still lie and cheat and steal. Mike uses aliens only as metaphors for various aspects of human feelings and emotions. He writes about things that are important to him, topics and ideas that interest him--Life and Death, Love and Hate, Fear and Joy, Greed and Sex and Compassion. He is not naive to know that good always triumphs over evil, or that purposeful actions don't have proper motivation; elves and unicorns and magic may exist, but not within his experience, so they do not enter his novels.

Algis Budrys, in the May, 1983, issue of *Fantasy and Science Fiction*, presents a scenario in which The Almighty passes judgement on SF, and asks for--Mike Resnick. He is neither the best, nor the worst; he's not even the average, but better than average. Given the extremes of the field, this is fairly high praise. Budrys' Almighty judges the genre of SF:

...on the work of nice guys like Mike Resnick, with his better-than average craftsmanship and sophistication, his affection for the field, his understanding of it, his desire to contribute to it, and his sense that he wants to write some books in which people do not kill each other, in which exploitation proves to be less practical than cooperation, and in which things get better rather than worse. *F&SF*, May 83, p. 44

Tom Easton has a slightly different view. Specifically challenged by Resnick to name the top ten writers in the field who are writing today. He declined to rank them in order, saying, in the June, 1984, issue of *Analog*, that "SF is not a single literary mountain, but more like a range of mountains with many peaks." (p. 164) So he lists a number of "peaks", sometimes making qualifications, of those writers who seem to be at the top for the last decade. Along with Brin, Cherryh, Varley, Sheffield, Preuss, Sucharitkul, Schenck and Bulter, he puts Resnick. "His tales are parables, fables, perhaps even lengthy aphorisms, and he occupies a peak all his own in the mountains of SF. He may not have many direct competitors, but he writes well enough not to worry about how crowded the slopes might be." (p. 166)

When asked himself what he writes, Mike says "moral parables", or "stories for and about adults with adult problems," or "the kind of stories this year I want to read when I'm 42, and next year the kind of stories I want to read when I'm 43, and...." One thing for certain is that he does know how to tell those stories, how to make the reader keep turning the pages. If the reader doesn't get the moral Mike is trying to present, then s/he is not worse off than before, for it has been an enjoyable experience in merely reading the story. Still, a sense of having grown comes from having read a Resnick story. One of the proof-readers for PhantasiaPress (which is publishing the "Tales of the Velvet Comet" series in hardcover) said that he had to keep backpacing to proofread, since he kept getting caught up in the story and forgetting what he was supposed to be doing. Tim Zahn spent part of an afternoon reading a Resnick book, instead of writing his own stories, because of the "short chapters". "I'll just read one more chapter then get to work. It's a short one."

Are there criticisms to his work? Yes, but most reviewers cannot deny that Mike knows what he's doing when he sits down at the typewriter/terminal to produce a story. I have not read a Resnick story that I didn't enjoy, and that includes his short stories, about which Mike rarely talks--he's not a short-story writer, but his skill there is as good as what he displays in his novels.

In the rest of this article, I will cover all of Mike's current crop of novels in the SF field, including a couple which are not out yet.

THE SOUL EATER *Signet books, October, 1981.*

Nicobar Lane is commissioned to capture different wild species of creatures for various zoos, as is his job. He's good at it too. But when asked to capture the Starduster, or Dreamwish Beast, he laughs, because he considers it a legend. When he encounters the energy beast that feeds off interstellar dust, his scoffs turn into an obsession of either the beast's capture or death. The story reads somewhat like a re-telling of MOBY DICK, and some reviewers saw it only as such. Somewhere in the middle, though, it changes ever-so-slightly into another of the classics stories. The novel turns out to be a study of the dual natures of Love and Obsession.

The novel was originally done in 1974/5, and submitted for publication then. It was rejected by the first two editors to whom it was sent. "I got so goddamned mad--not hurt or depressed, just plain mad--that I just pulled it off the market and decided to wait until the current crop of editors all got fired and replaced by people who were a little more literate." This might sone a little egomaniacal of Mike, but by that time he had sold over 14 million words, and knew saleable from unsaleable. By 1977, there was a complete turnover in the editors of the field, but by then Mike was busy with the kennel, and would not have time to follow with more books. So he kept this one, and BIRTHRIGHT: THE BOOK OF MAN, off circulation until 1980. Both sold the first time out. Actually, THE SOUL EATER sold twice; Baronet was going to publish the novel, but unfortunately went bankrupt the week they were to mail Mike the contract. He obviously had no trouble placing it elsewhere.

Aside from the very apparent patterning of THE SOUL EATER to MOBY DICK and the other major classic, Mike says that there are 100 literary references within its 150 pages. The hero's name, Nicobar Lane, is very close to Ichobad Crane of the "Legend of Sleepy Hollow." Ichobad is chased by the goblin, which he didn't believe in; likewise, Nicobar doesn't believe in the Starduster, but ends up chasing it. Mike adds a couple more for purusal: Ector Allsworth is the person who wants Lane to go after the Dreamwish Beast; in THE ONCE AND FUTURE KING, it is Sir 'Ector who is always chasing the Questin' Beast. Lane refuses to aid the colony ship *Rachel* while in hot pursuit of the Soul Eater; in MOBY DICK, Ahab refuses to help the captain of the *Rachel* hunt for his sone while in hot pursuit of the white whale. There are 97 more.

The novel was conceived by Mike on the spur of the moment when he came to one of his English classes unprepared: he had not read the assigment in MOBY DICK. To the teacher he contended that Mellville had begged the question by having Ahab die. A better, more powerful book might have been written if Ahab had lived after killing the white whale. The class spent the rest of the time discussing the possiblities.

BIRTHRIGHT: THE BOOK OF MAN *Signet Books, February, 1982.*

It is difficult to give a detailed account of this book; it's easier to read it. The "novel" deals with the history of mankind from its first explosion out into the galaxy, and its eventual decline and death. The chapters are relatively short, but each one deals with an aspect of humanity and solid, pragmatic values. The titles give you an idea of what I mean: The Miners, The Diplomats, The Politicians, The Artists, The Warlords, just to name some of the 26 chapters.

Mike manages to display things that are noble, and things that are despicable, about the human race. But the underlying theme, which holds the book together as a "novel" is that the stars are mankind's by right of birth. And everything is done with that objective in mind.

This was the second of two novels written in 1974/75 which did not sell, and which Mike pulled off the market until the editors became more literate. In reading it, I felt both proud and ashamed to be a member of the human race. It was then, with the reading of this book, that I could see what Mike was trying to do with his writing, and how good an understanding of Human Nature he had. Later, in looking back to this novel after reading his other ones, I can see that this has become the basis, the universe, for his novels. Names of worlds and stars continue to crop up which were first mentioned in this book. Mike says that it is deliberate; tying all his novels (well, most of them) into a single universe gives the reader something to grab on to, something comforting about everything being in the same place.

One of Mike's critics said the a Heinlein hero, when encountering a problem, somehow works out a solution to it; a Resnick hero, however, when confronted with the same problem, would cajole, bully, bribe, or blackmail a Heinlein hero to come up with a solution. This is quite evident in BIRTHRIGHT.. The tricks the characters pull to get other races and humans to accomplish their ends are phenomenal. Never take a Resnick hero at face value; he's got some other motive for what he says he wants.

### WALPURGIS III *Signet paperback, June, 1982*

Walpurgis III is a planet devoted to evil. Satanic cults and all other sorts of religions considered evil by our standards are encouraged to come and be practiced there. Yet, there is a strict code; killing and sacrifices outside of the confines of any religion is prohibited, and considered murder and illegal activities. John Sable is a law officer who has had a murder committed in his city; so he searches for the killer and encounters a little bit more adventure than he anticipated.

Conrad Bland is evil incarnate. He kills whole planet populations because it is his nature to do so. He revels in the death of living things; a mass murderer, he is given sanctuary on Walpurgis III, and the Republic hires Jericho to seek out Bland and destroy him. It is Jericho who has senselessly killed a man in Sable's city, and Sable follows Jericho on his journey of execution.

Since Sable is an officer of the law, he warns Conrad Bland about the assassin on his trail. Amused that someone is out to *protect* him, rather than kill him, Bland brings Sable to Tifereth, the city which has become Bland's church. Sable's ride to Bland's headquarters is a disgusting one, as he sees and smells decaying and rotting bodies of people in the streets. But this is nothing compared to his meeting with Bland:

Sable had to fight back the urge to vomit on the spot, The smell of decaying flesh was superseded by the pungent odor of blood, the salty, sickly scent of gallon upon gallon of blood.

Men and women, all nude, hung from the rafters that crisscrossed the huge domed ceiling, some held in place by meathooks, some tied by the thumbs, the toes, the genitals. Others were crucified to the walls. Still more cluttered the floor. Some were dead; most were alive but in no condition to move or even to scream in agony. pp. 104-5

Sable living on a planet devoted to evil, is finally confronted with evil itself, and it sickens and disgusts him. Sable is filled with Moral Outrage, strange as that term seems on a planet of Satanic cults. But after a few days, he finds himself getting used to the sight.



The wholesale nature of Bland's brand of torture and slaughter had deadened something deep within him, and he resented that almost as much as he resented the mindless brutality and suffering that surrounded him. Possibly it was his capacity to empathize that was gone, possible it was something else--but whatever it was, he hoped that he hadn't lost it forever.

pp. 145-6

Eventually Sable does come out of the situation alive, and with Jericho, keeping his perfect record of number of murders equal to the number of arrests and convictions.

Mike Resnick had been ghost-writing an astrology column for a newspaper when he came up with the idea of a group of people who paid lip-service to evil being confronted with evil incarnate. WALPURGIS III was the result. Mike said that many people he talked to did not like the ending, with Jericho being executed for murder, for he had performed a great service to the human race by getting rid of Bland. I found that it worked for me; in spite of the nature of the planet's culture, it had to remain true to its own ethics. A murder committed outside of religious cults is illegal, and the killer found and punished.

Symbolism abounds in this book, if one begins to examine it closely. The hobby of John Sable is gardening, the single life-affirming symbol in this book largely about death. The very last scene is Sable going out to work in his garden, indicating that life does go on. Says Mike: "There is no color symbolism, but an enormous amount of inverted "shade" symbolism: black, white, and gray. Most things black (including the carefully-named Sable) are Good; most things white (except for the White Lucy, who is blind and of course cannot see that she is white) are Bad."

John Sable is an inversion also of the comic character Jon Sable, Freelance. Jon is a mercenary and works outside the law; John is a police officer and detective, and works within the law.

Mike adds, "Bland's first name, Conrad, is a bow in the direction of Joseph Conrad, since Jericho's trip up the Styx to find the monstrous Bland reminded me of Marlowe's trip up the African river to find the monstrous Kurtz in HEART OF DARKNESS (although in this book Jericho's soul was darker than Bland's)."

Using the name Styx for the river also conjures up the classical view of the underworld, where one must cross the River Styx to enter the land of the dead, and the valley of tortures. The city of Tifereth was very much like Hell.

## TALES OF THE GALACTIC MIDWAY

This series of books chronicles Thaddeus Flint, Tojo, the blue-skinned alien Mr. Ahasueris, and a travelling carnival in their adventures from earth to the stars. Originally there were 5 books planned, but New American Library asked Mike to combine the last two, which he did. If he is asked to write *another* in this series, Mike said he could, but doesn't want to. He actually hates writing series books.

How the series did come about is a story in itself. Because of the success of so many trilogies (that are many times better written as one book, or have extended themselves to four, five, six, or more volumes) and multi-book series, New American Library was after Mike to write one himself. The nagging got to him and he established a number of restrictions that NAL would have to follow for him to write a series; surely they would not agree to them. They did. And TALES OF THE GALACTIC MIDWAY was written.

The four-book series is actually a study in character of Thaddeus Flint, the quick-talking, owner/operator of the carnival on earth. We see him change, yet not change, as the carny goes out into the galaxy under the banner of the Corporation and with a partner, Mr. Ahasueris, and slowly begin to understand his motivations. He is the one constant, but plays the background in all of them, while other characters play the foreground in each of the novels. Each novel can be read independently, but they are written in such a way that the whole is greater than the sum of the parts.

#1 -- SIDESHOW *Signet Paperback, October, 1982*

Written from the point of view of Tojo, the stuttering hunchback whose desire is to be a barker like Thaddeus, we are introduced to the major characters of the "Thaddeus Flint Traveling Carnival and Sideshow". When Flint encounters a freak show to rival his, yeah, actually better, he tries to make a deal to get them for his, he discovers that they are actually aliens, touring earth in disguise. Eventually Flint deals with the Corporation, which sets up such tours, and which also runs carnival-type setups in the galaxy, and he arranges to take the carny off-planet to tour the galaxy.

Mike says that this novel deals with alienation, probably pun intended. The human freaks are indeed alienated by other humans. Tojo, both with his stuttering and his appearance, is alienated by most people. But Tojo manages to fit into the carny world, and feels comfortable and accepted with the closed group of carny workers. The extraterrestrials are, of course, alienated, but Flint, in spite of his hardnosed attitudes and dealings with them, shows some remarkably human and compassionate feelings for them when some get sick, or suffer from the Vermont Winter.

Algis Budrys, in his June '83 review in *F&SF*, calls the premise of aliens traveling and touring a planet as a freak show, rather ridiculous, especially given the knowledge later that Corporation surgeons can alter the body to look like and adapt to almost anything (I suppose for short tours it's unnecessary, which makes the premise hang together a bit more, ... and the cost of such surgery along with recovery time would be prohibitive). Still, once accepted, everything hangs together well. He also criticizes the book because Tojo's stuttering does not show up in the conversations that are given. I find this only a personal exception; were I writing a book, and I stuttered, I certainly would not want that showing up in those conversations that I'm writing. But with only these two major objections, Budrys lauds the book. He says that Mike knows such traveling shows and carnivals; the terms and expressions, the habit of nicknaming everyone with carny names, add a sense of realism to the whole story. Whether or not Mike had had experiences personally in the carny world is immaterial; he portrays the operations, the behind-the-scenes workings effectively. He adds:

SIDESHOW is an easily read, untroubling book. That does not make it simplminded. It contains some very sharp insights into how intelligent aliens really might be---much as you and I, but not in the ways in which that point is usually made by lesser writers. The aliens, once under Flint's thumb, do not prove to be universally loveable despite all that, and they do not prove to be universally selfless in their common cause, either...Resnick thus passes up the opportunities for sloppy sentimentality that could have turned this novel into pap. p. 44

Tom Easton in the May 1983 issue of *Analog* says that SIDESHOW reminds him more of Finney's *THE CIRCUS OF DR. LAO* and Reamy's *BLIND VOICES* than of Longyear's circus books, and praises the novel for its psychological studies.

Both reviewers looked forward to the rest of the series.

Finally out among the stars, "The Ahasueris and Flint Traveling Carnival and Sideshow" is losing money. The Corporation is not happy, and is sending out one of their men to investigate. Flint, to save his carny, brings out a few games and tricks that begin to turn a profit. He had been running a legitimate show up to this point, in deference to his partner Mr. Ahasueris than from his own desire to do so. The games aren't rigged, but are quite difficult to beat by their very nature. When the Corporation man Kargennian arrives, he wants to take the best parts of the show, sharpshooter Billybuck Dancer, Jupiter Monk the animal trainer, and all the games, to another circus (of which he is part owner). Flint quickly understand what Kargennian is doing, and drives a hard bargain--some would call it blackmail--to get a few things for his carny.

Aside from these machinations, and some setting up for the last two books of the series (What does Monk do when the earth lions and leopards die? Sharpshooter Billybuck Dancer's work is flawless, almost boring to him--what will he do to sharpen up his act, make it even more thrilling?), the concentration and focus of the novel is Gloria Stunkel, the stripper Butterfly Delight. Mr. Ahasueris thought her act to be extremely unusual, but alien races watching a human take off her clothes is like watch a bird molting. Could she do something else? Yes, but she would not be happy. With the help of an alien called Marrthlplexorp, renamed Houdini by Flint (as is the carny custom) she does find happiness, being a stripper for another race, one with three legs, thus the title.

Houdini came to the Carnival and Sideshow as part of the deal Flint made with Kargennian. One of the other aliens, a big green fellow with lots of muscles, becomes a wrestler--fifty credits to anyone who can last five minutes with him. Flint gives him the carny name \*groan\* Julius Squeezer.

The theme of this book is identity, according to Mike. It is true, that most of the characters are searching for something to do what gives him/her the most satisfaction. Gloria works at her stripper act because that is what she's happiest doing; nothing less will give her the satisfaction she craves. Thus Flint and Ahasueris funded her operation to alter her body to a three-legged creature (they get half of her profits). Tojo is a good barker; the translator he uses so the various aliens can understand him removes his stuttering. Thus he is happy. Houdini is happy as a magician. As for the others--most of the carny troupe are satisfied with their work.

And if the reader misses the subtl clues that this has been about identity, Mike has Flint mention it directly. Tom Easton, in his review of this novel (*Analog*, May, 1983) objects somewhat because there seems to be a confusion of focus in the narrative.

Resnick's point seems to be that humans cannot truly adapt to the stars unless they are willing to change drastically. He makes his point with a literal metamorphosis, and he sets it off against the carny's lesser adaptation by relying on old tricks, the grifts. Yet there are clues that the carny may find its own metamorphosis. What form or forms will it take? Perhaps volumes three and four will tell us.

To return to my objection, is there really a confusion of foci? On the surface, yes. Resnick's larger theme becomes clear only as one pursues a tale of sheer entertainment, and that theme is a serious one. ... Confusion? Not really. Resnick integrates story and message well, and he puts his story in the foreground, just as a pharmacist puts his pills' sugar-coating on the outside. Yet the message is there, and it is plainly identified as such.

pp.162-63

Easton adds that he then realized that SIDESHOW also had a theme wrapped in the narrative, and suspected that Mike had the same idea planned for the next two books of the series. Of course, he suspected correctly.

### #3 -- THE WILD ALIEN TAMER *Signet Paperback, July, 1983*

The carny has been making a profit; the star attractions have been Billybuck Dancer, the games and rides, the exotic foods (like cotton candy), and Jupiter Monk, the wild animal tamer. Unfortunately, all the earth animals have died, and the alien animals that Kargennian keeps sending don't meet the requirements Monk needs. Flint and Ahasueris send him out in a robot ship to search for appropriate alien beasts to tame.

On his travels he discovers that a Sabellian, which resembles a huge bat, has as its most ferocious animal a creature that looks like a human. Monk, and his Sabellian guide Braxtos, make a deal: on humanoid planets Monk would be the trainer and the Batman, as Braxtos is called, would be the animal. On the more alien planets, alien to humans, the roles would reverse. It works for a while, until the two of them begin to try to outdo each other. The rivalry reaches uncivilized proportions until they almost kill each other. Neither brooks interference from outsiders, and they team up to put Kargennian in his place when the Corporation man tries to stop their vicious mutual attacks. Even at the end, when after their final confrontation and each lays torn and bleeding in the cage, one won't let anyone else touch the other.

Both survive, but neither goes back to the cage.

"It would bore me to tears," he Monk said bluntly.

"Since when do lions and Red Devils bore you?" asks Flint.

"Since I learned what being in the cage with someone who can fight back is all about."

p. 188

Instead, they both work the "dunk-the-clown" booth, a rather disappointing but humorous end to the novel. Still, rather than beg the question and make it easy on himself by having one or both die, Mike has both live, and have them both live with the consequences of their actions. Consider what you would have done, given the situation of the Batman and Monk.

Mike says that the theme for the book is madness. I can see that, but to me seems more like obsession. It's true that those two rational beings becoming more and more vicious towards each other is madness, but Monk becomes so obsessed with their game that he forgets to feed his other animals. And within their madness the two operate within a set of rules; nothing goes on outside the cage--that's their battlefield. And no one on the outside can interfere with their rivalry. Each is obsessed with following the rules that have come about from their "animal act" and inevitably each defeats/is defeated by the other. But be it obsession or madness or both, it's a distressing, yet fitting end to the rivalry. They are still partners, friends; the ridicule continues, as each dunks the other into the water, but always in the confines of the cage.

### #4 -- THE BEST ROOTIN' TOOTIN' SHOOTIN' GUNSLINGER IN THE WHOLE DAMNED GALAXY *Signet Paperback, October, 1983*

As is indicative of the title, the main character on this last novel on the "Tales of the Galactic Midway" is the mainstay of the "Flint and Ahasueris Traveling Carnival and Sideshow", Billybuck Dancer. Bored with tricks and living in the past where Doc Holiday and Wyatt Earp walked the streets to do showdowns with other gunslingers, Billybuck sends forth a challenge to anyone to outgun him. Other races, even ones who have a love of weapons, even five of them, are no match



for the sharp eye and speed of the Dancer. It's not until a robot in made in the semblance of Doc Holiday that Billybuck becomes interested and challenged. The final showdown comes after each has won a number of duels, each traveling on separate routes to a place prepared as the O.K. Corral. The outcome? Read it yourself, 'cause I'm not tellin'.

One of the many subplots deals with a member of an ancient race though to be extinct, the Jimorians. The Jimorians had a unique defense mechanism, which turned out to be their downfall; they were masters of illusion, and were able to appear as the person a looker most wanted to see. They could hold a particular illusion for everyone, but the defense came into play when they were startled, flustered or scared. Thaddeus gave him the name Jiminy Cricket, for hopes, wishes and dreams.

Jiminy added more to the psychological study of the main characters, since each saw his heart's desire. Billybuck saw Doc Holiday, Tojo saw Alma (a woman who didn't go to the stars with the Carny but stayed with the carny back on Earth, and with whom he was in love), other carny members saw loved ones, and Mr. Ahasuerus wouldn't say who he saw (although we do find out at the end, an insight into his character which somehow makes a lot of sense). Thaddeus Flint sees Jiminy as Jimorians actually look. He sees the truth, which is why he had been able to be successful among the alien races; no one could pull a fast one on him.

In the end, Thaddeus returns to Earth. Yes, he could never again return to the stars, Earth now being a closed world. He does take over another carny and begins to build it up.

The theme is expectations, says Mike. I found it to be fulfillment. The main characters do find their dreams. Billybuck tests his mettle against the best --Doc Holiday; Tojo receives a gold-plated whistle from Mr. Ahasuerus with the inscription: "To Tojo, The finest barker in the galaxy", to which Flint adds a gold chain given to him by Alma; Mr. Ahasuerus does get control of the Carnival when Flint leaves. Thaddeus himself: he realizes that having gained his desire of a smooth-running carnival which was making a good profit was not as much fun as working towards that end. Thus he returns to earth to struggle again. It seems that Mike is saying that life without risk is not worth living, and only a few people can live with their goals achieved. Contentment is for very few, and definitely not Thaddeus Flint.

Mike Resnick names this novel as his favorite of the ones he has written (an published to date). Even when ADVENTURES comes out, I doubt he will change his mind about this being first. The rereading is much better than the first time through; one knows the outcome, and can concentrate on the other developments in the story. I myself am trying to decide which of Mike's books is my favorite, and it seems that the one I am reading at the time is it. But I do have to agree with Mike about this one, it does stand out in the series as a fitting climax to the "Tales of the Galactic Midway."

#### THE BRANCH *Signet Paperbacks, February, 1984*

THE BRANCH was first started in the 70s, and eventually finished. It would not have sold then, even if it was finished. Says Mike, in an interview with Dave Locke (published in Bill Bowers' OUTWORLDS #37), "Given its controversial nature, it would have been a tough book to place at any time, and I'm just grateful that I have an editor at New American Library--Sheila Gilbert, for the record-- whose only restriction on me is that I write Resnick books, as opposed to Heinlein books, or Asimov books, or (insert the author of your choice) books." (p. 1311)

So what is the "controversial nature" of THE BRANCH that would make it difficult to sell? The subject of theology, and that Jesus Christ was not the real

Messiah. And there is a long discourse in the book, quoting the Bible, which refutes Christ as the Messiah.

The setting of the novel is a future Chicago in a world in which everyone enjoys a measure of prosperity. Solomon Mundy Moore is the head of an underworld cartel that caters to people who are bored stiff by this prosperity. A person trying to horn in on his operations is only known as Jeremiah the B. When all the hit contracts on Jeremiah the B turn up empty--not that they couldn't find him, it's just that bullets and other weapons can't harm him--Moore realizes that he is dealing with no ordinary man. With a little research he finds that Jeremiah could well be the Messiah promised by God. Unfortunately, this Messiah was not what one would expect from God; he's a bloodthirsty killer and filled with vices. There are some parallels with Christ (there have to be, since Jesus was thought to be the Messiah he had to fulfill some of the prophecies); he does take in a sort-of prostitute--Moirra Rallings is a necrophiliac.

Some people will be shocked, some amused, some disgusted with this novel. I enjoyed it. Mike injects much humor into the story, and even gives God a role, if only a small speaking part. Says Mike of this in his introduction to "Unauthorized Biographies " (a short story collection produced for his Guest of Honorship at CONFUSION) about the story "God and Mr. Slatterman": "Why does an atheist put God into so many books and stories? Simple. It would be blasphemous for a Jew or a Christian to do it, so I seem to have become His literary custodian."

Tom Easton (*Analog*, June, 1984) criticizes him for stating, but not showing and convincing us, that such a prosperous world would lead people to boredom, though they would not be bored for long. He adds that Mike's contention that a world without religion might be more interesting could be correct; again Mike says this without showing it. I think it's a premise necessary for the novel, and one to be accepted by the reader. Frank Catalano, one of the book reviewers for *Amazing* endorses the book wholeheartedly. In the september 1984 issue he says: "While neither main character is anyone I'd want as a close friend, Resnick does a good job of making the hero of this piece sympathetic; at least he earns your respect. Resnick has written a novel that's as compelling as it is entertaining."

Mike said that he made sure that nowhere on the cover blurbs, nor in the frontispiece selection, would the word "Messiah" appear. Although it would not be that much of a giveaway, it is more interesting to encounter the idea in the story without expecting it.

## TALES OF THE VELVET COMET

The *Velvet Comet* is the galaxies' most sumptuous, elegant whorehouse. It is dedicated to fulfilling peoples' fantasies, not just sexually. It caters to the rich and more-than-rich; in addition to satisfying all forms of sexual preferences and desires, there are exotic shops, bars and nightclubs, gambling casinos, and other forms of physical activities, all with the "human touch"---no robots in these places. The dumbbell-shaped ship becomes the background of a four-book series by Mike Resnick. "Where else could you better get a place for the interactions of human relationships than in a whorehouse?" asks Mike.

He was planning a trip for himself and Carol out to Las Vegas, so Mike picked up a copy of *Nevada Magazine*. Inside in an ad was a statue of a nude woman leaning against the headboard of a bed in bronze, and she was holding a silver book. On the back of the headboard was an inscription, describing the woman as Julia Bullett, a lady from France who came to the US and eventually in 1859 wound up in Virginia City, Nevada, where she started and maintained one of the most-often-visited brothels in the state. She herself entertained many famous men, but her regular "boyfriend" was the head of the volunteer fire department in town.

Madame Julia was a very charitable person and donated to various charitable organizations, and when a plague hit the town, she opened her House to everyone as a hospital, selling off much of her own jewels and furs to pay for food and medicine for the stricken populace. Eventually her brothel was reopened, and she again prospered, but was killed by a common thief. The women of the town refused to let her be buried in the hallowed ground of a Christian cemetery, so her grave was moved 200 feet away and marked with the headboard from her bed. It could easily be seen from the saloon of the town. 2000 people, all men, attended her funeral.

This got Mike thinking about whorehouses, about writing and prostituting one's art, and wanted to write a story about a hack writer of the future who is commissioned to write the futuristic equivalent of "The Best Little Whorehouse in Texas." The writer visits the decommissioned satellite which was the whorehouse and wanders the vessel, thinking about what a grand and glorious place it was, and the complex feelings the men and women would have had selling their bodies, drawing parallels to his own career as a hack writer selling his talents.

Then, why not tell about the whorehouse in its heyday? Thus came the series: EROS ASCENDING, EROS AT ZENITH, EROS DESCENDING, and EROS AT NADIR, with the first three books leading up to the one Mike wanted to write.

The *Velvet Comet* was the crown jewel in the Vainmill Syndicate's Entertainment and Leisure Division. And it was on this ship that the drama of the four books takes place. As of this writing, two books are finished, the third is being worked on, one is in print, the second slated for release in September at the 1984 World Science Fiction Convention--these in hardcover editions from Phantasia Press. Signet books will begin releasing them later.

#### #1 -- EROS ASCENDING *Phantasia Press, January 1984*

Harry Redwine is a middle-aged accountant who is sent by his boss, Victor Bonhomme of the Vainmill Syndicate, to doctor the books of the *Velvet Comet* to show that it has been losing money. The purpose of the underhanded activity was political within the Vainmill Syndicate--once the information came to light, one member of the hierarchy in line to become the head of the Syndicate would be eliminated.

Because of his suspicious activities, Redwine is watched intently by Rasputin, the head of *Velvet Comet*'s security. Rasputin's loyalties are specifically to the *Comet*; his job is to protect the ship at any cost, and he and Redwine play a cat and mouse game through the book, until it becomes apparent that Harry Redwine himself is being dogged by someone else from the Syndicate. Another factor is that Harry falls in love with the Leather Madonna, the madame of the *Velvet Comet*. Together they plan to reveal what has been going on to the Head of Vainmill, and retire to a small farm the Leather Madonna has on Pollux IV.

There are other subplots which intertwine with the main one: Suma, a teenager who knows her work well, and whose desire to become the Madame of the *Velvet Comet* causes her to make deals with Victor Bonhomme, and eventually commit (or become an accessory to) murder. There is Gamble DeWitt, an ex-boxing champ who was originally hired to work with the patrons of the *Comet* but was unable to perform as well as that Madame had hoped. He becomes Suma's "bodyguard", and is the one who commits the murder.

The story is really a love story between Harry and the Madonna, and the trials and tribulations they must suffer before they can plan their life together. But the romance is shattered with the murder, and eventual suicide of the two of them. (Now you know who, but not which one, is murdered). Tom Easton (*Analog*, May, 1984) criticizes Mike for his cynical romanticism. "...romanticism just doesn't wash. The fittest survive in both biology and business, and here the fittest are the cold, calculating, lustful chiefs of the syndicate." Tom Easton adds that Love "can be just as much an aid to survival as calculation and scheming, for it en-

lists better allies." (p. 166)

One of the other aspects explored by Mike in the novel is the difference between love and lust, each respectively symbolized by the Leather Madonna and Suma. There is also the difference between business enemies and personal friendships, and that one need not overlap into the other. For a time Rasputin and Redwine were business rivals, yet through mutual respect became friends outside of their business identities. One thing remains constant regardless of what goes on--the *Velvet Comet*.

## #2 -- EROS AT ZENITH *Phantasia Press September, 1984*

This story occurs several years later than the previous one. Suma did become the madame, for a little while, but once implicated in the murder, was immediately removed. The one thing she did which benefitted the *Velvet Comet* was to have engines installed, and move the ship into orbit from the planet Charlemagne to Deluros VIII.

Andrew Jackson Crane arrives on board the *Velvet Comet* to investigate the murder of one of the Patrons. This was the first such murder, and the Syndicate, not to mention the security chief The Dragon Lady and the madame, The Black Pearl, want to keep it quiet (the murder in the previous books was an "in house" thing, and had no affect on the customers, or Patrons, as they are called). During his investigations Crane discovers more than just the murderer of Edward Infante; the killer, who is always in make-up as Pagliacci, a comedian at one of the night-clubs on the *Comet*, reveals that Infante was a link to Quintus Bello, the butcher of New Sumatra. Crane, thinking only of his own career, tries to arrange the capture of Bello regardless of the effect it would have on the *Comet*. Both Black Pearl and Dragon Lady work against his disregard of their home, and eventually Crane does see that his singlemindedness would, in the long run, be detrimental to his career. (If the syndicate started to lose money because of the bad publicity of a killer captured on the *Comet*, it would be his butt in a sling.) Despite the arrangement of getting Bello off the *Velvet Comet* on a ship that is being tracked, Crane decides it's not really worth opening up a case which, if he were captured, could embarrass the Earth government (because not all the evidence was brought out in the trial).

I'm not too sure what Mike was trying to do in this book. One thing I believe was his goal was to show how singlemindedness is not always the answer, that the search for truth and its exposure need not always be for the good. Prudence and compromise are part of life, and one needs to learn them if one is to survive. Tom Easton (*Analog*, September, 1984), who seems to be getting more critical of Mike's writing, says that Mike is treating the issues of "Order versus Eros, as the triviality of murder versus the significance of whoredom." Tom adds that Mike has done better, but encourages him to do a few more stories/books about Andrew Jackson Crane, "Grow him up." (p. 172)

I do agree with Easton. I would like to see more stories about this detective--good sf/mystery is hard to find. Only Asimov and Niven have been extremely successful at it (and maybe Randall Garrett). Another thing with which Easton and I are in agreement is how fast this novel moves. Mike is good at writing "page-turners"; one keeps reading to find out what happens.

EROS DESCENDING and EROS AT NADIR are not yet in print, not yet written, although Mike does know what will happen in each of them. Signet Paperbacks, a division of New American Library, will be publishing all four of them. Sheila Gilbert, his editor there, demands that Mike exercise his artistic freedom, and she got one of the most unusual series in SF. They will also be publishing ADVENTURES which should be out this fall.

Phantasia Press will continue to produce the "Tales of the *Velvet Comet*" series in hardcover editions, with lovely wraparound covers.

ADVENTURES *Signet Paperback, to be published soon*

To get an idea of what this novel is about, consider a partial list of the cast of characters:

*The Dutchman*, who prefers to think of his slave-trading operation as an International Employment Placement Service.

*Neeyora*, just your typical naked blonde white goddess, who tips the scales at 400 pounds, give or take an ounce.

*Bloomstoke*, a tall, bronzed British nobleman who is living with a tribe of apes while hiding from his creditors.

And the narrator of these tales of Darkest Africa:

*The Right Reverend Honorable Doctor Lucifer Jones*: his religion is a little something he and the Lord worked out between themselves on afternoon, his tabernacle is the most prosperous brothel in British East Africa, and he has certain serious disagreements with the authorities of 14 African nations over the finer points of the law. On the other hand, he means well.

Mike was taping the movie, ONE MILLION BC, manually editing out the commercials, which meant that he had to watch while doing the taping. He was laughing so much that his wife Carol thought he was watching an old Marx Brothers movie. "If something could be this funny written accidentally," said Mike to himself, "imagine what could be done intentionally by a reasonably competent writer!" Considering himself more than competent as a writer, Mike proceeded to write this novel, parodying all the B-movies about Africa. The partial list of characters gives you an idea of how he handles some of the well-known plots, and he also has chapters about a lost race, vampires, the mummy, the elephants' graveyard, and many others. In addition, Mike puts in some "in-jokes" for those late-night movie viewers, or anyone extremely familiar with the "African adventures". In a letter, Mike writes:

In the first draft of TARZAN OF THE APES, Tarzan's title was Lord Bloomstoke, not Greystoke; and his alias in civilization, when he didn't wish to be known, was John Caldwell. Also, the reason the owner of the whorehouse in Casablanca (which really existed, by the way, and was the world's largest brothel, circa 1925) is named Peugeot (after the French car) is because in the movie CASABLANCA, everyone is named after cars: Claude Rains is Lt. Renault, Sydney Greenstreet is Senor Ferrari, etc. There are a lot more such things spread throughout the book.

This is one of the few books I was laughing out loud at while I read. Two such other ones are BUNNICULA by John and Deborah Howe, and JONATHON by Russell O'Neill (which I have not been able to find, anywhere). ADVENTURES is hilarious, even more so if you are cognizant of the references. Get it when it comes out.

Mike leaves this open for at least six sequels. At the end of the novel Dr. Jones (is there a reference there?) is thrown out of Africa, and is put on a slow boat to China; after adventures in Asia, there are five more continents for him to be thrown out of. Mike says that he would like to write more, but I suppose it would depend on reader reaction. This is one of his favorite books, for no particular reason other than that it was fun to write, and read, and re-read....



SANTIAGO Tor Books, to be published in 1985/86

This is going to be a long novel dealing with the theme of myth. Santiago is a criminal with a price on his head. His name is used to frighten children into obedience. Of the "most wanted" criminals, his name alone has stayed on the list for more than five years. More deaths and killings and robberies have been attributed to him than anyone else in history, whether he had actually done them or not. The Black Orpheus, in his 2,000 verse poem, has devoted several of them to Santiago, and the several people who have tried to capture or kill him.

Bounty hunter Sebastian Cain gets some information which could lead him to Santiago, and in the process of following it up encounters several other interesting characters, and a couple of partners. Conflicts ensue, not only among the partners, but with another bounty hunter called the Angel. Virtue McKenzie, a woman journalist who is searching for Santiago to get an exclusive interview (and will use anything she can, including her body, to get that interview and advance her career), allies herself with Cain, then with the Angel, trying to play both ends against the middle, and ultimately does get to meet Santiago, with unforeseen consequences.

Again, this is a page-turner. The story flows and builds as it travels, as Cain and the other characters converge on Santiago. In the process, we get to see more of this fascinating universe that Mike has put together (yes, it is set in the same universe as BIRTHRIGHT, "Tales of the Velvet Comet", WLAPURGIS III and others), especially out in the Frontier of Man's expansion. Each chapter is prefaced with a verse or two of Black Orpheus' epic poem, which has a bearing on what goes on in the chapter. I look forward to reading the whole novel when it comes out. (I read the first half, and the outline for the rest.)

In my most recent communication with Mike, he just worked out a contract with Tor for three books, of which SANTIAGO is one. He will have the same artistic freedom, and the books will be Resnick-books; they don't have to be related, nor on anything specific (except SF). And SANTIAGO will be getting A-1 treatment--full promotion and advertising.

There is little I can say in summary that I haven't already said. Mike writes moral parables disguised as action/adventure/science fiction stories. He gets the reader hooked into the story, then brings in the theme he wants to promulgate. He is good at this, and in the space a three years is beginning to emerge as a major talent in SF--even if this is his second incarnation in the field. Even if the moral escapes the reader, s/he knows s/he has read a good story.

((I must thank Bill Bowers for publishing Dave Locke's interview with Mike, and Mike's Guest of Honor Speech from CONFUSION in his fanzine, OUTWORLDS; both contained much information that I used in this article. Also, the various reviewers whom I've referenced, especially Thomas Easton. And Finally, Mike Resnick himself, for all the long conversations we had, his encouragement, and allowing me to preview unpublished material. And especially for asking me, "When am I going to see a review of one of my books in LAN'S LANTERN?"))

## CONSTELLATION

We had very little trouble getting to the convention. The drive wasn't too bad (except for the last leg of the trip from the Pennsylvania/Maryland border into Baltimore). Once we got to our room and unloaded our luggage, we headed for the convention center, checked in and began our purusal of the hucksters room. I am not at this point going to giver a detail description of everything that happened, but will relate some of the highlights of the con.

Sharing a room with Mike Glicksohn and Doris Bercarich was a definite plus. We crashed earlier than they did, and we got up much earlier than the two of them. We rarely saw them in the room; we mostly encountered them at the convention center, or at one of the many parties throughout the convention. The arrangement worked so well for us that Mike, Doris, Maia and I have share rooms and expenses at other conventions.

I talked to several authors and and editors and found out about books and stories which would/will be coming out. Jim Frenkel said that his new book company, Bluejay Books, is ready to start producing. Among the first releases were to be a sequel to THE SNOW QUEEN by Joan Vinge called WORLD'S END. DOOR INTO SHADOW, a sequel to DOOR INTO FIRE, by Diane Duane would be out at about the same time. Jack Williamson's autobiography should be out at the end of the summer. At the time I was talking to him, he was reading a couple of novels by Timothy Zahn; COMING OF AGE and SPINARET were the working titles. (Tim has sold them to Bluejay; COMING OF AGE will be out at the end of this year.

I had not seen David Palmer since the last Worldcon, so I was anxious to talk to him and find out what was happening with the with the sequel to his novellas "Emergence" and "Seeking." David said that he was working on parts three, four and five, all of which will not be released as individual stories, but together with the first two sections as a novel from del Rey Books. The title: EMERGENCE.

I did catch Joan Vinge reading a section from WORLD'S END which made me want to get it right there and then. Following her reading was Alan Dean Foster; before he started I asked him about the cutting of his last novel, SPELLSINGER AT THE GATE, into two parts in the paperback. He said that it wasn't his idea; Warner Paperbacks did it. He had to write a false ending and false beginning for the two books. "But," he said, "there is the complete version in the hardcover release from Phantasia Press." Alan went on to read a lovely story, a fantasy, that he had been unable to sell. He asked for suggestions from the audience, and I gave him two: submit it to my fanzine, and it would surely see print, or try to tack it on to his next short story collection. He opted for the latter, since del Rey Books was going to be publishing another volume of his short stories. I asked what the title would be, and he said, "I don't know, ...WHO NEEDS ENEMIES?" It took a few seconds, but the laughter welled up--his first collection was called, WITH FRIENDS LIKE THESE....

## RAMBLINGS 15.1

When last I left you in this section in Fan's Lantern #13, I had made a brief conreport SPACECON. I have little to add to it, other than to apologize for it being so short. I was at the end of a page, and wanted to get the zine finished, run off, and mailed well before Worldcon, especially since I had my choices, and the reasons for them, for the four categories of fiction of the Hugo Awards in that issue.

The last week of July and all of August was spent in the garden weeding and harvesting, in the kitchen freezing and canning the harvest and baking, and in preparation for CONSTELLATION in Baltimore. I was fortunate in having finished the Geometry syllabus early, so I did not have it hanging over me while at the Worldcon. I wanted to be free to do whatever I wanted to do, see and talk to people I had not seen or talked to since the last World Science Fiction Convention, without any school activities hanging over me (other than that I had to be back for meetings on the day after Labor Day). One other thing I wanted to do was to see those people who had not seen me since the last con we attended together (be it SPACECON, INCONJUNCTION, MIDWESTCON, whatever), for I had reached my goal weight of 152 pounds.

Early Thursday morning, September 1, we packed up the car and drove off to the East Coast to attend \*\*\*\*\*CONSTELLATION\*\*\*\*\*!

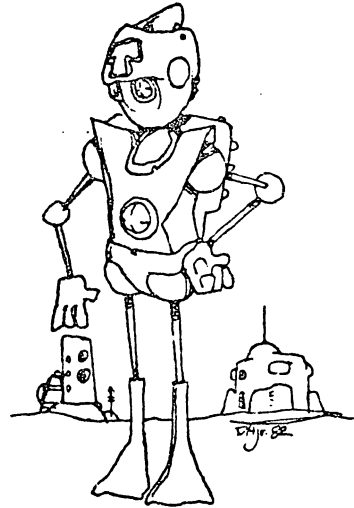
George Scithers, editor of Amazing/Fantastic magazine, said that eventually there would be a split between the two titles, but not for some time. Since the circulation has increased, the next step would be to change the rate of publication from bi-monthly to monthly (or 13 times a year (every four weeks, as IASFM and Analog do it)) before splitting Fantastic from Amazing. He also mentioned that the story he bought from Phyllis Eisenstein at CHICON IV last year (at least that's when he told her he would buy it) would appear in the coming January '84 issue of his magazine.

Steve and Denise Leigh had a party in their room on one of the evenings of the con, at which they proudly showed off their recently born daughter, Megan. Steve is an author who has had three novels published (see a review of them elsewhere in this issue) and several short stories. Still, he is very modest and doesn't care to talk much about his work. George R. R. Martin was also there, and he was quite willing to talk about the interesting times he had trying to obtain copyright permissions for the lyrics he used in his newest novel ARMAGEDON RAG. One person out in California offered to sell him the rights to one of the Beatles' songs for something like \$100! Those stories alone would comprise a very amusing novel; I wonder if George has considered it....

I met and talked with Joseph Delaney, who is no relation whatsoever to Samuel Delany (even the last names are spelled differently), and who sometimes gets comments about his novel DHALGREN or any of the other ones written by Sam "Chip" Delany. We traded lawyer jokes off and on throughout the con; of course he knew better ones than I did, Joe having recently retired from the practice of law. He said that he had written a sequel to "Brainchild", which was up for the Hugo, and Stan Schmidt was going to buy and publish it. Joe also said that he and Marc Steigler were collaborating on a couple of stories which were turning out, they felt, better than each of them working the ideas alone. And Stan, of course, would be getting them for Analog.

Speaking so often as I do of Stanley Schmidt, he, his wife Joyce, Stephen Gould, Maia, and myself all had dinner together one evening at an Indian restaurant near the hotel. The food was delicious, and much silliness ensued, including making faces at Marc Steigler and his friends who were sitting at another table. Another meal we shared with Tim and Anna Zahn; we amused ourselves by playing the alarms on our watches, and getting strange looks from other people in the restaurant. I believe it was a Saturday morning breakfast that we shared with David Singer and Diane Goldman, our two favorite fans from Boca Raton, Florida. Most of the other meals we ate alone, or with a group of fans traipsing over to the wharf where there a number of foodshops catering "fast-food" to legions of hungry fans and tourists.

Programming. Yes, there was a lot of it. I attended several panels and group discussions. I was quite pleased to help Tim Zahn talk about his stories and writing in his "author discussion group." And I attended almost every panel Tim happened to be on; one in particular he



asked that I be sure to attend--one on education. It was one that was more interesting than some others, and which continued for a while among members of the audience after the panel was actually over. There was some positive response when I mentioned to the crowd that as a math teacher I require a paper in my classes. I also tried to get in on the Joan Vinge author discussion group, but because of an overload, the participants' names were drawn out of a hat to see who would attend and I lost the draw.

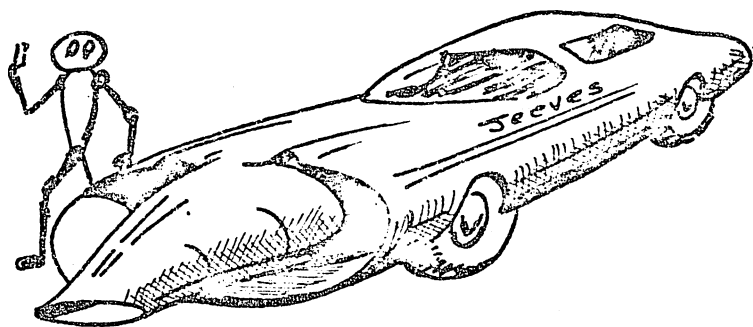
Among the other programming items I attended, I've already mentioned the author readings, and several panels. There was also the fanzine room, which I visited a few times, but did not stay very long. There were always other people to see, some with whom I promised to get together and talk. A short list of those with whom I had interesting, long or brief, conversations (other than those I've mentioned already above): Robbie and Marty Cantor, Don Blyly and Jane Strauss, Paula Robinson, Jack Williamson, Jane Kwiecinski, Leslie David, Donald Kingsbury, Don Thompson, Joy King, Kathy Hoover, Dale & Susan Johnson, Roger Reynolds, Nancy Tucker, Mike Glyer, F.L.Ahsh, Lisa Reynolds, Candice Massey, Ben Yallow, Vieda Wissler, Bob Taylor, Willie Siros, Craig Miller, Frank Olynky, John Langner, Chris Ahlstrom (she and I were in one of Jim Gunn's SF Teaching Seminars together several years ago; we've kept in touch ever since, but I was surprised to see her at the Worldcon. I did want to talk with her more, but I was on my way to some other place when we met, and we didn't get back together again), and many others whom I've forgotten.

One of the highlights of the convention for me was the Hugo Awards ceremony. I found out that I was right on only two of the categories: Best Film and Best Non-Fiction. I was very disappointed at Asimov winning the Hugo for Best Novel (or most sales, as someone else put it). There were other novels nominated that deserved to win more than FOUNDATION'S EDGE. To be fair to Isaac Asimov, his acceptance speech indicated that he hardly expected to win; he said in essence that he accepts the award for all the nominees, verily every writer of sf and fantasy. They are the winners.

Parties. There were lots of parties. I attended the LASFAPA party for about thirty se-

conds; Leslie David and Maia took me elsewhere so I could perform strange and wonderful digital exercises on Leslie's back. Maia and I arrived too early for the MISHAP party, and left with intentions to return. We got trapped in the party tower of the hotel, and never made it back. The bidding parties were outstanding. Never before has so much money been spent on food and drink for Worldcon and NASFIC bids. I think that worldcon bidding will never be the same again; some of the losers are still in debt, as I understand it. But they all were so much fun to attend. Since Australia won the bid for the 1985 World Science Fiction Convention, the bidding was opened for the NASFIC on Sunday morning. Those votes were cast and counted, and Austin won. Thus, those unable to attend the Worldcon in Australia are welcome to come to Austin.

Monday morning, Labor Day, 1983. We packed the car and checked out of the hotel, saying hello and goodbye to James Hogan at the desk. Although he was there all weekend, this was the first time either of us had seen him. The drive back wasn't too bad. Maia and I stopped frequently for something cold to drink, and made it home before the holiday traffic got too bad. In summing up the weekend, I'd say that I had a very good time.



#### RAMBLINGS 15.2

The next several days entailed me getting ready for classes, attending meetings, getting to know new faculty, trying to get my priorities in order, and so on. I was happy to have learned during the summer that one of my favorite students was coming back as a Resident Advisor in the dorm. This happened because one of the RAs chosen at the end of last school year decided not to return. Lisa was next in line and thus became the new RA.

On Sunday, September 18, my family came over to our apartment so to celebrate my father's 64th birthday. My three sisters, their husbands and families, and my brother, all descended upon the LanShack, and we had a great time. They all liked the new apartment (we moved from #4 to #3 during the summer); it was much larger, and although we still could not use the airconditioner, it had enough cross-ventilation that the fans sufficed. Since it was also my birthday as well, I received a router, something I had wanted for several years. Now I had enough tools to do what I had been intending for a long time---make bookshelves. I had enough of

books-in-boxes and brick'n'board shelves. However, I would have to wait until the following summer, when I would have more time, and had saved up enough money to get wood.

Meanwhile, the school year progressed. I taught two Geometry classes, two Algebra II classes, and one class called Algebra IIIB, a single semester class which finishes the Algebra II course, and follows after Algebra IIB. I had a mixture of students, some good, some not so good, but in general they seemed to be decent classes. But this was the beginning of the year and a lot could happen before it was all over.

On a Monday evening in early October, while in the shower, Lee Pelton called and left a message on our answering machine. I called right back as soon as I could, owing to the nature of the message, to get more details. Mike Wood had died, apparently from a diabetic coma, on a Friday, but the body was not discovered until Monday, when he didn't show up for work. I immediately called several people around the country to get the message to all of fandom, at least those who would care to hear the news. I soon got a call back from Lee, who was amazed, but had forgotten, at how well the fannish hotlines worked. He had received a call from the West coast about Mike's death. And later I got a call from Andy Porter who wanted more details; I gave him Lee's number.

Mike was one of those fans who did a lot for fandom but not too many people recognized his contributions. He started the apa MINEAPPA and was its sole editor until his death. It ran for something like 10 years. Matthew Tepper has taken it over for now, as was Mike's desire if anything should happen to him. He was a folksinger, a writer of songs, performer, and loved to travel to conventions. Originally from Pittsburgh, I remember meeting him there at a PgHLANGE, a now-defunct convention. And it was there that I heard him sing "Grove City", about a man who gets drunk in a bar in Grove City, PA, and tries to get in touch with his lost lover in California. I found out later that Grove City was a dry town.

We shared a room at a MIDWESTCON one year along with Denny Lien. And I did an interview with him at another MIDWESTCON, which, after I sent it to him for approval, he said that he did not care for the way it turned out, and would write me another one. Unfortunately he never did. As a final farewell to Mike, Matthew Tepper held a wake at WINDYCON for him.

Everything was working out fine at the start. Classes hummed along; I was collecting money for the Giftorama raffle tickets as I had been doing for the last 7 years; I was ordering coffee and supplies as usual, ever since the job fell to me several years previously (I sought to put more control on the coffee and supplies when I discovered that someone was taking coffee from the faculty room); I still picked up the donuts from the kitchen every morning and brought them to the faculty room. Then came the attempt to write midquarter comments during the week before the weekend they were due; I wanted to go to WINDYCON (which I hadn't been to for several years), which meant that I had to finish writing

comments on all new students (or at least most of them) before I left. I don't remember if I finished all of them, but I did go with Maia to WINDYCON.

## WINDYCON

The con was not very exciting. There were several highlights, but on the whole I found little to recommend it. Joe Haldeman was at the convention, and he autographed a copy of his new book, *WORLDS APART*, the sequel to *WORLDS*. As he scrawled his signature, he said that he was trying to reverse the trend in trilogies by making the second book better than the first. I told him that I would read it to find out if he succeeded. Algis Budrys was also there, looking very good. He had lost several pounds since his *GoH*-ship at CONCLAVE the previous year. I still recall his thanking me for asking him to contribute to the Simak Special as one of several highpoints of my fannish career.

Craig Newmark and Susan Peel were also at the convention, and I spent some time talking with both of them. Craig introduced me to P. C. Hodgell, an author I happened to have run into at the previous MINICON, but did not know at that time what she had written. The only novel she has out to date is one called *GOD STALK*, which I told her I would read. Craig recommended it highly.

Since Maia had been disappointed with the chopping of Foster's *SPELLSINGER* into two paperback novels, I talked to huckster Rusty Hevelin, and asked about getting the hardbound edition which would be uncut. It was out through Phantasia Press in a limited boxed edition, \$55. I thought for a minute, and decided that it would make a nice Christmas present for her, but I didn't have the money right then. Rusty said, "Take it now, since it's my last copy, and pay me later. I'll trust you to remember, 'cause sometimes I forget things like this." I happily took the book and managed to keep it hidden until we got home, where I could put it with the other things I had hidden for Maia's Christmas presents.

Late Saturday evening Matthew Tepper held a wake for Mike Wood. It was a small gathering, with some Cold Duck and other refreshments, and we toasted his death with a few quacks (Mike was very fond of ducks, so it was fitting).

I had an interesting conversation with Phyllis Eisenstein. She talked about class reunions, and how she felt she had not accomplished as much as some of her classmates had. Phyllis did not go to her most recent reunion, but talked to a couple of friends who had. To her surprise, she is considered one of those who "made it", that is, accomplished what she had wanted to do when she was in high school. I considered what my goals in high school were, and figured that I did accomplish one thing--I became teacher, and am presently working on perfecting my skills as one. Among my other goals, I don't think I've come near accomplishing any of them. I don't have my own house, nor property up north, nor have I become the swimmer or writer I thought I could be. I have gone in other directions; fandom was a complete surprise



and delight for me. I have tried my hand at writing fiction, and some of the submissions received personal responses, but for the present, I am content with the fan writing I do for fanzines and apazines. Yet I do get this craving every once in a while to take another stab at a story or two that have been knocking around in my head. Phyllis, quickly doing a review of what she had done in her life, decided that she was satisfied with her accomplishments, although a Hugo Award would be a nice milestone to add to her collection of memorabilia.

## RAMBLINGS 15.3

The next five days of classes were spent in the usual way--teaching, preparing to teach, grading tests and quizzes given on things I taught, and getting ready for a rather full weekend: Parents' Visiting Day, and OCTOCON.

## OCTOCON/PARENTS' VISITING DAY

I did not want to miss the convention, so, even though it would mean a lot of travelling back and forth from school and Sandusky, Ohio, I opted to go to the con on Friday afternoon, drive back to Kingswood on Saturday morning, then back to the con in the afternoon. It worked out a lot better than I had expected. Mary Mueller had intended to drive to Detroit to visit her family on Saturday since she was so close (she now lives in New York City), so we made the trip together. I dropped her off at her parents' place on my way to Kingswood, then picked her up on my way back to Sandusky. Talking kept us both awake, and the round-trip was much more pleasant for the company.

The con was extremely pleasant, except for Saturday night. Again, as had happened previously with this hotel when Roger Reynolds held his INCON there the previous March, the Sandusky Sheraton rented out the poolside area to another group who brought in a live band. Yes, we told the hotel, our group does stay up until all hours of the morning, but we like to talk, and with the band there, it's almost impossible to hear oneself think, let alone talk. As someone shouted out during a lull in the "music", it wasn't so much that they were loud, as that they were so bad. Maia and I had one of the poolside rooms (along with most of the people from the con), and even with the door closed it was difficult to carry on a decent conversation. I solved the problem by staying in our room alone and reading. On the way back from WINDYCON I had started Joe Haldeman's *WORLDS APART*. I finished it that evening, and, as he had said, it was better than *WORLDS*.



I did manage to corner Mike Resnick and talk to him more about his writing. He did ask when I was going to publish a review or two of his books. It was then that I told him that I was planning on writing an article which would be an overview of his work to date. Mike smiled broadly and said that if I needed any questions answered, or would like to read any work-in-progress, or anything that would be coming out after my deadline, just let him know. If you've read the Resnick article, you know that I took him up on his offer.

In spite of the problems with the extra group taking up space and noise outside our rooms, the convention was very pleasant. OCTOCON is moving to a different hotel next year, which was music of a different kind to our ears. Still, there was one nice thing about the noise --we got a reduction on the room rates for Saturday night.

#### RAMBLINGS 15.4

The events that occurred during the time after this convention up until the next one, CONCLAVE, followed a logarithmic curve; the closer the convention came, the more that happened. There was a Head's holiday (a three day weekend with the Monday off), but I don't recall doing anything significant. Giftorama was approaching, and the closer it got, the greater the amount of money turned into me for raffle ticket sales. Maia wanted to have a party, so we scheduled one for the last Saturday in October--Halloween. The turnout was quite nice, in spite of all the other parties that were also given on that evening. It was a particularly good party in that I finally got to meet Michael White, a fan who has been in MISHAP with me for a while, and who went to school at Roeper Country Day, which is near Kingswood.

Somewhere in this time period I got a call from Mick Hamblin who is an Indianapolis fan and works on INCONJUNCTION. He said that Tim Zahn was going to be coming to the local club to read a story, and wondered if I would be interested in possibly making it to the meeting. I thanked him for the information, but with everything else going on, I couldn't afford the time to drive the 16 hour round-trip to Indianapolis and back...though I did consider it. He called me back after the reading, and gave a quick summary of the plot of "Return to the Fold", which now appears in the September 1984 issue of Analog. Mick also mentioned that Tim had sold not one, not two, but four novels in the space of a week and a half--two to Jim Frenkel at Bluejay Books, and two to Besty Mitchell at Baens Books. I was astounded, and extremely pleased for Tim.

The next few days were a rush to get in tests and quizzes and such, since it was the end of the first quarter. I also had to write comments on all my students. That wasn't too bad, since I did get a bit of a start on them early in the week. Then came the four-day week, the days before Giftorama. I collected money for the raffle tickets, did the "Birmingham Ride" which I do twice a week (Tuesdays and Thursdays--I take the dorm kids into Birmingham to shop, if they want to go), and began to empty

my classroom of all personal stuff. This was necessary, since Giftorama uses all the classrooms for this event--they are turned into little gift shops, and the whole thing is like a pre-Christmas shopping mall.

It was on Thursday that several things hit at once. I was trying to get the last of my stuff out of the classroom while the people who were setting up shop in there were moving things in. Some students were still trying to turn in money for raffle tickets (the top three salespeople get prizes). And at the same time I was supposed to be at an academic review meeting (where we discuss those students getting D's and E's on the first quarter grade marking) and doing the Birmingham ride. Since I had no advisees in academic trouble, and no one was failing my classes at the time, I opted to skip the review meeting, and tried to get everything else done. I did manage, though my nerves were somewhat worse for the experience. That evening, while Maia was at the convention hotel becoming enamored of CONCLAVE'S Guest of Honor, Marta Randall, as was the rest of the committee, I stayed at home and tried to balance out my accounts for the Giftorama money.

The next morning I got to sleep in. Because I handle the raffle tickets, I have no other obligations towards Giftorama, or for Career Day, which is held on that Friday. All the students have some sort of commitment on that Friday, or on the weekend, helping out with Giftorama. The Juniors and Seniors do attend small group sessions with people from various professions. I wandered over to school about 11 AM, handed the money over to the head of the whole operation, and left for the convention.

#### CONCLAVE VIII

It had snowed. Marta Randall got off the plane at Detroit Metropolitan Airport and, noticing the very chilly weather remarked, "Wouldn't it be nice if it snowed?" Before anyone could stop her, too. The last time someone from a warmer climate wished for snow at a Michigan convention, the State Police closed the state because of the accumulation. Anyway, there was not that much snow, but there was a thick layer of ice which made walking hazardous.

Maia eventually found me in the lobby. We got an extra key so that Marie Mayer, our roommate for the weekend, would have one when she arrived from Chicago. After dropping my bags off in the room, we went out to have something to eat with Becky Price, and a very interesting conversation which ranged over several topics. When we returned to the hotel we found that there were strange things afoot, and I don't



mean with the fans at the con; the hotel was reneging on confirmed reservations. Fortunately, this did not set the tone for the entire weekend. Many fans were put up at the Knights Inn near the Sheratin; a group from the middle of Ohio ended up there and dubbed themselves the Knights of Columbus.

The Guests of honor were Marta Randall and Bill Maraschiello. I had some very pleasant talks with both of them. Saturday morning Maia, Marie and I had breakfast with Marta. The purpose was specifically to go over some program items that Maia was running. That only took about two minutes, and the rest of the time was spent just talking. Marta told some amusing stories about CHICON, and her stint as toastmistress of the proceedings. I talked with Bill and his recent bride when they got in on Friday night. He too has some very funny stories to tell, which he uses frequently when he's performing in front of a group. Bill is a singer, and plays a number of instruments, from guitar to concertina.

I finally got to meet Meg Stull, one of the most interesting of the latest bunch of people who joined MISHAP. We spent several hours in the pool and jacuzzi together, talking about various things, especially the changes that had occurred at Kingswood School. She had graduated from there in 1970. I also spent some time on Saturday night, I think it was, giving her a back massage. Like several people I know in fandom, she has some back trouble.

Al Salmi was there helping out with the con. He's a psych major, and we had an interesting talking about pornography, and some of the strange things writers of that genre consider normal. Another topic was the blending of SF with porn. I related one story in which the brain of a father was transplanted into the body of his son (the circumstances were such that the father's body was crushed and the brain was being kept alive by machine, and the son's body

was in perfect condition except that a glass splinter pierced his brain and killed him). It made for an interesting, psychological story of relationships. Of course, being pornography, the emphasis was on sex, and the fun the father had with his son's body returning to high school, and the strange relationship he then had with his wife/mother. I'd like to see a good author tackle this idea and explore this further; I think someone like Haldeman, Resnick, Foster, Vinge, Van Scyoc, or Cherryh could do a very credible job with it.

The banquet was one of the high points of the convention, as usual. The Eastern Michigan University Madrigals sang for us, and as strange as it might sound, they were even better than last year. The speeches were delightful too, although Marta's was on the serious side--about the "deal" between Scott Meredith and Pocketbooks. She suggested something along the lines of a SF readers organization that would send letters to book companies about the SF they were publishing, good and bad, critical of the covers and cover-blurbs, etc. If we want good SF, we should demand it, and not settle for what the book companies are publishing. Right after the banquet was the art auction (the Conclave Committee did its usual thing and had the banquet hall cleared and set up for the auction in about seven minutes), after which was the masquerade dance.

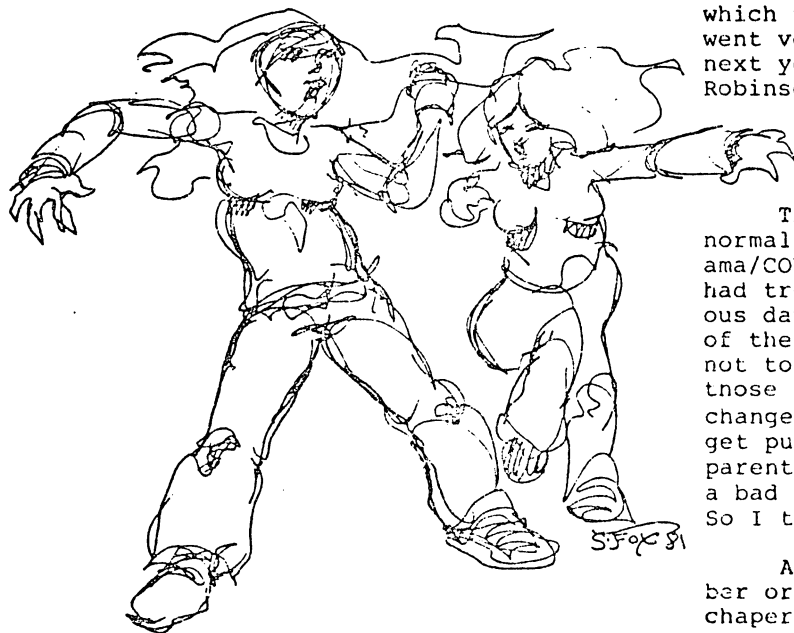
As usual, I talked with a lot of people, including Susan Johnson, Mark Evans, Brian Earl Brown, Craig Newmark, Susan Peel, Guy Allen, Hal, Sherry and Arlie, Dean McLaughlin, Howard DeVore, Bill Barker, Wendy Council, Bruce Schnaier, Brad Westervelt, and several others. Halina Harding finally nailed me for a backrub. I've known her ever since she was my advisee at Kingswood (she graduated in 1978), and it was at this convention that I gave her a nice long massage.

Except for the problems with the hotel, which they tried to blame on us, the convention went very well. I had a very good time. And next year the committee scheduled Spider Robinson, again. But that's another story.

#### RAMBLING'S 15.5

The next week and a half were not quite normal school days. The Friday after Giftor-ama/CONCLAVE was Mothers' Visiting Day. I never had trouble dealing with parents on those various days that they come to visit classes. Some of the students do, though. I make it a policy not to hand back any sort of tests or quizzes on those days. So far I have not had any reason to change that policy; I hope I don't. The kids get pushed enough as it is; the tendency for the parents to publicly reprimand their children for a bad grade is great under those circumstances. So I try to avoid that situation.

At some point in time, either in late October or early November, I was asked to do some chaperone driving for a Cranbrook boy. He needed to go to his Spanish tutor twice a week. At first I refused, but the Director of the Kingswood Dorm, who was trying to arrange this, hit



me where I am the weakest as far as students are concerned: "Unless he gets to his tutor for extra help, he'll fail his Spanish class." I relented and said I could drive once a week but they would have to find someone else for the other time. Soon after, I got requests from two other Cranbrook boys for rides to the same tutor. I could fit in one, but not the other. Maia then volunteered to take the other guy two times a week to the tutor. My second rider didn't come until the Spring, but still, I was tied up one evening a week till Spring, then an afternoon and an evening with the two of them. With the Birmingham ride, as well as my evening on duty in the Dorm, and trying to spend at least one night a week in my classroom for extra help, it was no wonder I felt pressured with things to do.

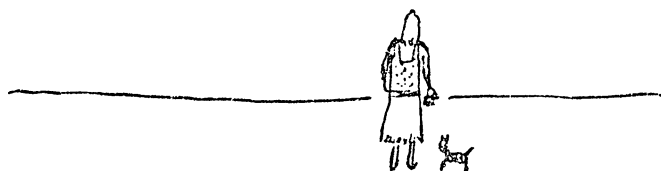
The next day, Saturday, was going to be a rather interesting one. We were invited to three parties, and tried to make all of them. The first was in Toledo, at Hal's and Sherry's and Arlie's place. Several fans showed up, and we had a great Thanksgiving dinner--a little early, but what the hey--and we stayed far longer than we thought, thus missing the second party, given by the assistant headmaster Joe Merluzzi. For sure next year we will have to make it there. The third one was at Chip and Janice Morningstar's--it was their final bash before leaving for California.

On Sunday evening, ABC showed the movie The Day After, a poor film about the effects of a nuclear war. Although some parts were fairly realistic as to what would happen, I found the movie rather ineptly done. The first half of the film introduced us to a number of characters in hopes of eliciting sympathy for them as they were followed after the effects of the bombs dropping on Kansas. It didn't quite work that way. One couple was destined to get married, but engaged in sex beforehand (using a diaphragm--not directly mentioned, but enough hints were given so you knew what they were using). One considers the moral--if you do engage in pre-marital sex, God will punish you; I think a nuclear bomb is a bit much. The discussion that ensued afterwards was much better than the film. I only watched it because I wanted to see how bad it would be. And I knew it was going to be bad because of the hype that occurred beforehand. The media made a big deal about it and the effects

the movie might have on the viewers. Groups sprung up around the country with workshops for parents and teachers which taught them skills and methods of handling the depression which was supposed to follow the viewing of the film. I found it difficult to believe that people were being taken in by the media hype. (Then again, P. T. Barnum had the right idea, decades ago.) Whoever was the PR person for ABC, I have to congratulate him or her; s/he did a remarkable job of promoting the program. The Day After got several faculty persons on campus roused enough to send letters out to parents about the film, and overblew the situation to the point of absurdity. Of course, this was my view of the situation, and the view of a few other faculty who could see beyond the rhetoric of the media. One thing it did do on the positive side was to get normally passive faculty to rise up and become active in the community. The bad aspect of this was that they used Brookside School for their meetings on the Nuclear Freeze, and cluttered up our parking lot, taking spaces supposedly reserved for Hedgegate residents.

One of the more creative things that came out from the film The Day After were the jokes. One student of mine said that there was going to be a TV series with the same name, but there would also be a lottery along with the show--a different city would be nuked each week, and you would have to guess which one. ABC was also putting out a "Day After Doll", with burns and hair that falls out. There were also some cartoons suggested by our friends in Toledo, Hal, Sherry and Arlie (I hope my artwork does them justice).

There were two days of class that next week. Monday evening was the special Thanksgiving dinner in the dorm, making it the second such meal for us. Then came the Thanksgiving break. Since each member of the resident faculty has to do some special driving pre- and post-holidays, I chose the pre-Thanksgiving time to do mine. I drove several students to the airport and train station on Tuesday after classes were over. Then I had some time free to relax, do a little reading, bake some bread, and prepare for CHAMBANACON. First, of course, was our third Thanksgiving dinner in less than a week at my older sister's home. The whole family got together and pigged out on turkey and other delectables. Maia and I didn't stay too



YA' KNOW TOTO, I DON'T THINK THIS IS  
KANSAS ANYMORE...



late, even though we were having a good time. As is the usual pattern we follow for this particular convention, we would be rising early to leave for Champaign-Urbana, Illinois.

### CHAMBANACON 13

While I drove, Maia slept. Driving is one of the joys I have. I volunteered to do the Birmingham Ride at school, and to do a number of other extra driving duties (for which I get paid) because I like it. Speeding down the highway early in the morning is a particularly nice time. It is dark when we leave for CHAMBANACON, and as we head westward, I watch the sun rise in the rear-view mirror. There are few other cars on the road; not too many travel on that Friday after Thanksgiving, at least not that early. Later in the day, when the stores open, the roads will be crowded. But at 6 or 7 in the morning, few autos wend their way along Interstate 94. As the sky begins to glow with the predawn light, the shadows of the trees lining the highway stand out more sharply. One can barely see into the dark woods, but one can imagine what life lies ready to awaken with the first rays of the sun. Here and there patches of mist rise as the morning temperature increases, creating a primeval feeling of pre-man civilization.

The Bob Evans in Kalamazoo served us breakfast. We gassed up the car, and proceeded on through Indiana into Illinois. An hour and a half from the junction of Interstate 80 and I-57 found us winding our way through the streets of Champaign to the Ramada Inn. We made it, not in record time, but close enough.

Immediately upon entering the hotel we encountered Tim, Anna, and Corwin Zahn. We quickly made plans to eat lunch together, and they invited us over to their place for dinner--home-made lasagne. I asked Tim about the blackcollar ring he had, and he offered to take us over to a small store called The Dragon's Hoard where he got his. We checked into the hotel, registered for the convention, and Mike Brim asked me once again if I wanted to lifeguard the pool so they could have it open late. I agreed, and Maia and I headed for the hotel lobby to meet with Tim and Anna again so we could go to lunch. With Tim driving, we went to a pizza place and had a reasonably good time, especially with two year old Corwin still learning how to drink through a straw.

Right after lunch we trekked over to The Dragon's Hoard, a nice jewelry shop with all sorts of dragon and other fantasy-type jewelry. I was show a ring identical to the one Tim was wearing and I ordered one. The ring is a dragon's head with a fan-like crown which spreads over the knuckle. The eyes are slitted, the nose of the dragon is narrow, and the band is heavy. I could have gotten stones inset into the slitted eyes, but that was more than my charge card could handle, so I settled for the standard Blackcollar ring with no stones of rank. Tim had bought the ring and used it as a symbol for the Blackcollars, his creation of superb warriors who are experts in unarmed combat.

Back at the convention I met and talked with many of the regular attendees of this con. Andy Offutt, the perennial Guest of Honor, was there and his usual jovial self. Eric Webb showed up, and told me some bad news: he was leaving the Champaign-Urbana area; his job was taking him to New Orleans. Thus he was going to miss a lot of the midwestern cons for a long while. I spent some time talking to Paula Robinson, a budding young author from Dayton who I met last year at the con, and at a few other conventions since. She is trying to break into science fiction, and with her persistence, and the talent I've seen in her writing, she should not have to wait too long to do so. I also met for the first time Bill and Judy Sutton from Indianapolis. Judy is also a fan who would like to write SF, and Tim Zahn has offered to give her some pointers.

Sharon and Murray Porath were there; along with their son, Jaws (Just when you thought it was safe to go into the nursery!). We talked on and off though the con, mostly about kids and classical music (that's two different topics, not related). Margaret Middleton also made it to the convention, and promptly announced that she was pregnant. Jane Strauss and Don Blyly were also there with their Uncle Hugo shop set up, and their child. I visited them several times during the convention; Don and Jane always bring a good selection, and they take Visa. As usual, they worked out of their room which has traditionally been opposite the function rooms and down the hall from the consuite. Because of their location, they are open late (after the regular hucksters room closes) and get many people wandering in.

In the hucksters room, I did remember to pay Rusty the \$55 for the Alan Dean Foster book, SPELLSINGER, and also gave him a loaf of banana bread in appreciation. I bought several books and various things like stationary as gifts for my advisees and some of the special people in the dorm. This is usually a good convention for such shopping. Scott Dennis is there with his stationary, and many of the other hucksters run specials, and have the latest books. And there is also Steve and Fran Scherer, the glassblowers, who do marvelous work, and have a range of prices. I did stop by to talk with Steve, and gave him a loaf of cinnamon bread.

The dinner Friday night at the Zahn's was superb. The lasagne that Tim made was from an old family recipe handed down from mother to son for a generation. We didn't come empty-handed, but came bearing gifts of cinnamon bread and pickles. Somehow we are going to have to get an invitation for dinner again next year.

Since there was an early Saturday morning time slot to be filled, and Tim Zahn wanted to do something for the convention (and get his membership money back) he, and George Ewing, decided to have a panel to discuss whatever the audience wanted to discuss, or whatever else struck their fancy. Somehow we got onto the track of Saturday morning children's cartoons, and how awful they were. The Smurfs in particular were attacked. To be fair, it is a non-violent show, and the background music is quite often classical, but the blatant commercialism that has erupted from the show, and the poor

grammar that these cute little blue creatures use is horrible. Some of the other shows are worse. They are extremely product-oriented. I remember seeing an article which said that England sent back to America the cartoon shows that were sent over; the TV people there refused to play half-hour long commercials to their children. Needless to say, it was an interesting panel.

The drive back was not uneventful. We had car trouble--at times, even with the pedal to the floor, the car would not move faster than 40 mph, at other times it would move just fine. The closer we got to Michigan, the worse it got. Maia and I stopped for lunch at our usual place on the return trip, the Bob Evans just outside of Chicago on I-57, and with the car trouble, we stopped again in Indiana for gas (we ended up using twice as much for the return trip as going to Champaign), and another meal. By the time we got home, we had been traveling for about 11 hours. (We got the car checked out--it needed a fuel filter.)

#### RAMBLINGS 15.6

School resumed, and in between everything else I tried to do some Christmas shopping. I also had to do some shopping for my older sister Judy's 40th birthday. Her husband wanted to give her a surprise party, but she's the one who planned it. Maia and I had dual commitments; Mike and Doris had invited us to Toronto for the weekend for a party, and to see the house they had just bought--well were (and still are) in the process of purchasing. So Maia went to Toronto, and I went to Judy's party.

The party was fun. Eastern Onion paid us a visit in the form of a policeman. Denis and Judy had arranged to do some gambling with poker chips, and prizes were going to be given out to those who won the most, and lost the most. The "policeman" came to check up on the gambling, then when he "found out" that it was Judy's birthday, he went into his strip act.

The next day, Sunday, was also the Christmas Brunch for the dorm, since the last day of school before vacation was scheduled was on the following Thursday. I felt like Santa himself, as I walked around with a bag full of gifts, handing them out not only to my advisees, but to other students who I thought would like something that I saw, and could afford to get. I think I made some young ladies very happy.

I also had a little problem with my car--an electrical fire which melted the footswitch for the bright lights. No serious damage was done, except that I no longer had lights. The parking lights and flashers worked, but the regular lights and brights were out. Thus I could only drive the car during daylight hours (which were very few during the winter) and during the days that the weather was good (which were also very few). Eventually I would get it fixed, but not for quite a while (like spring--I didn't want to work on the car in sub-freezing, or sub-zero, temperatures).



As I said, Thursday was the last day of school before Winter Break. I didn't like it. Well, let me explain. We were informed when we returned from Thanksgiving break that we were all going to go to the Art Museum on that Thursday. The whole school--all regular classes were going to be cancelled, and we were all supposed to do three things with our advisees: the first thing was to go to the Detroit Institute of Art and view the Saarinen exhibit; secondly, see the film Saarinen at the Science Institute; and thirdly, take a walking tour of the grounds and buildings and see what Saarinen had done here at Kingswood and Cranbrook. I enjoyed the exhibit, but I had seen the film before (though it was interesting to view it again). The walking tour was a bit much, especially since most of my advisees had seen everything before, even though they didn't know a lot of the background, and it started to snow. Also, since most of my advisees were dorm students, they had to get ready to leave for airports and train stations.

The exhibit was good in that it gave a sense of unique identity to everyone. Maia and I went to see the Grand Opening on the next evening, with Chris and Pat Swartout, friends of ours on campus. But my main objection was the cancelling of classes. I usually like to have parties and such on the last day, mainly to say goodbye, have a good vacation, to the students. We did this on Wednesday instead, then we all saw each other again; so much for a farewell. It did not seem like a proper end to school before such a major break.

That weekend we headed for Ohio to visit Maia's family. Her sister Joy had a tree-trimming party, and with our help we eventually got it done. We stopped to see Mom, her grandmother, and moved on to see her parents. Mom and dad were fine; dad had recovered nicely from his emphysema attacks, and had stopped smoking. We also saw Maia's sister Christina and her husband Paul. I had not seen Christina since we had been in Grad school together--she in history, I in Classics. We dated then, but I had never met any of her family. I was surprised when Maia brought her name up when we first started going together. It indeed is a small world.

Not to leave the city without seeing some fannish friends, we stopped by to visit with Mark Evans and Margaret Henry. They are always fun to see and visit; Mark usually has some great stories to tell, and Margaret manages to



inject some humorous little tidbit about their cats. Our only regret is that the live 250 miles from us, and we can't see them more often.

As usual, Cy Chauvin had a Christmas party at his place, to which we went. I had a great time talking to Marilyn Hopkins, Craig Newmark, John and Patti Benson, Gregg Trend, Brian Earl and Denise Brown, and Bill Waldroop. One very interesting couple who showed up was Brad Westervelt and Wendy Counsil. It seems as though they had met at CONCLAVE (at which convention Wendy had broken up with her then-current boyfriend) and had been seeing each other ever since. We had some interesting talks on a whole range of topics, and both Maia and I were somewhat reluctant to leave--but we were tired.

I spent time during the vacation shopping for presents, for Maia, for all the kids, and for my Father, whose name I had pulled for the gift exchange. I also rested, read, baked bread and bagels, and actually got some sleep. On Christmas eve, we stayed up late, built a fire in the fireplace, and exchanged gifts. The next morning, Christmas Day, we went over to our neighbors' place, our old apartment, and had a nice brunch, and exchanged gifts with Elizabeth Dittrich and her mother. Elizabeth had her sister and the family stay with them for a couple of weeks. They're from way out west (Wyoming, I think), and when we found out that Charlie like SF, and classical music, we invited them over to view our collections.



Right after Brunch with the Dittrichs, we headed over to my parents house and exchanged gifts there, had an enormous meal, and continued to munch and nibble for hours afterwards. All those pounds I lost the previous summer were beginning to creep back on. But it was fun, and the food was definitely worth nibbling on.

For New Years, we had been invited to four different parties, in four different cities: Cincinnati and Columbus in Ohio, and Ann Arbor and Troy in Michigan. I decided this year to stay close to home, and opted to go to Craig Newmark's and Susan Peel's party in Troy. We had a very good time, especially with Craig's over-preparedness, since he was so worried about everyone having a good time. Hal, Arlie and Sherry came up from Toledo to attend the party, and spent the night with us. It was a lazy first day of the new year, with everyone sleeping in late, and eating when hungry.

Naturally, I didn't want to start back to school, but the laziness had to come to an end, and classes resumed as usual. It was a big push for the end of the first semester. My classes were fairly well up with the others. I was having a little trouble keeping up with the syllabus for the Algebra II classes; the Geometry classes were a bit of a stretch too, but when review week came around, that's what we were able to do--review. For the Algebra II classes, I had quizzes for them, on the material we were to review that day. It helped them get ready for the exam.

One weekend before the end of the month Maia and I went up to Lansing, Michigan, to visit with Ken and Linda Adams and the family. Ken and I grew up together, and have kept in touch, on-and-off, ever since we each left to go to college (well, he was the one who went away to college, I lived at home and commuted). We've been exchanging Christmas gifts all these years, but usually we don't get to do that until well after the season is past. It was close enough this time. The surprise we got when we arrived was that Linda was pregnant--again. With two daughters already, they were trying for one more--a son this time, maybe. We spent a couple of hours there, talking, reminiscing, and seeing all the neat gadgets Ken has--a computer with an electronic mail hook-up, games, a VCR, and other things. And the two daughters, Alissa and Tiffany couldn't help but show off. We soon left and went to a small store called "Somebody Else's Closet" so that I could pick up a tuxedo jacket for the dinner expedition at CONFUSION this year. While there, I visited the shop next door which was called "Somebody Else's Surplus" (obviously related), and found a pair of boots in my size (the only pair they had) exactly like the ones I was wearing. I had to pay the inflated price of \$9.00 for them. When I had bought my original pair, they were used also, but only paid \$1.00 for them. But that was 7 years ago.

From there we went to Sam Spiegel's and Vicki Eaves' place, and spent the rest of the afternoon and evening with them. As a surprise for Vicki, Sam and Maia put a stained-glass window in one of the interior doors while I kept her company, and busy, in the kitchen. She said later that she saw it right away, but Vicki did not let on that she knew they had put the window in.

The math department was fortunate in <sup>8</sup>having its exams first--the bad part about it would be that, because of the rotation of the exam schedule, we would be last in June. Since I had put the Geometry syllabus together, I was responsible for the exam. It came off all right, and it was designed so that each teacher could correct his or her own, and call the scores in to me as soon as they were done. I wanted everything finished by Wednesday, so that I could finish my grades and write necessary comments by Friday, so I would have nothing hanging for the weekend. CONFUSION reigned at the Plymouth Hilton, and I didn't want to worry about school while I was there. However, the way it worked out, I had to call a meeting of the Geometry teachers on Thursday in order to get everything in. Some did not think like I did, figuring that since we had all this time, we could take our time in correcting and grading. All my other tests were done. Well, we finally did finish, and, believe me, I was ready for CONFUSION.

## DECADENT CONFUSION

Because of the price of the rooms, we decided to share one with Mike and Doris. As before, it worked out very well between us. We arrived first and settled in; they came in later and began partying as we had. I hit the pool and jacuzzi first; I needed some relaxation, and the hot water and bubbles of the huge jacuzzi helped tremendously. Maia went to the airport to pick up David Singer and Diane Goldman, and when she got back to the hotel, she said that Tim and Anna Zahn had just pulled in -- in a brand new car! Tim had gotten some advances for the novels he's sold, and the new car was something for which he and Anna used the money. With his popularity increasing, Tim will be going to more conventions; he needed a car that wouldn't give him much trouble.

We found Stanley and Joyce Schmidt, and the six of us arranged to have dinner that evening in the hotel restaurant, The Jolly Miller. We then split up to ramble around the con as we wished. I headed for the hucksters room and made a couple of circuits before starting to buy things. Steve Scherer was there with his glass-blowing equipment. The usual people also showed up: Rusty, Dick Spellman, Susan Johnson, Howard DeVore, Linda Leach, Dean McLaughlin, Bill Cavin, Janet Cruickshank, Bill Barker, Brian Earl Brown, and the usual Confusion Committee table, selling copies of a special book of short stories written by the Guest of Honor, Mike Resnick. That I did buy--it was called UNAUTHORIZED BIOGRAPHIES, and had a limited print run of 300 copies.

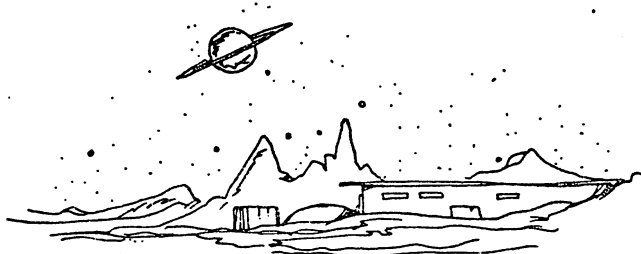
Jim Frenkel showed up, which was a surprise. I asked him where his wife was, and he said at home. I expressed my disappointment, but he told me that he was only here for less than 24 hours himself. He came on a promotion of his company, Bluejay Books. I asked him when any of his new line were going to be released, and he said that some were out already, including the sequel to THE SNOW QUEEN. My eyes lit up, and quickly found my way back to the hucksters room. Yes, there is was: WORLD'S END by Joan D. Vinge. I bought a copy from Dean McLaughlin along with a couple other books. Again I wished that Joan were here, so she could autograph it.

Jim Frenkel joined us for dinner, and everyone had a good time. Maia was running a panel the next morning on writing, editing and publishing, the gist of which would be asking if they are writing, editing and publishing what readers want, or are the still doing "the same old stuff." On the panel were to be Stan, Algis Budrys, and Phyllis Eisenstein. At dinner, Maia asked Jim if he wanted to join them the next morning, and he gladly accepted the invitation.

From dinner we went directly to the opening ceremonies, which had already started. Dick Smith did a fairly decent job as toastmaster, even though most of his jokes fell flat. Bob Tucker's speech as the Special Guest was amusing and fun to listen to. Then Bill Bowers once again gave a practice speech--strange when it started, since he reads his speeches, and he was reading about things that had just transpired. In fact, he had his fanzine, Outworlds,

in hand with not only his coming speech, but the proceedings of the banquet, including Martha Beck's and Mike Resnick's GoH speeches already printed. This was a unique way of putting out a con report--before the convention happened! Strange fellow, Bowers. (I wish I had thought of doing that!!) And it reminded me that I had forgotten to bring with me to the convention to letters-of-comment I had written for Bill's previous mailing of Outworlds and David Singer's Defenestration. I promised them both I would mail them the locs as soon as I returned home.

Maia's panel the next morning came off very well. Phyllis talked about writing books that were different from "the same old stuff", yet having to be careful not to be so avant garde as not to be able to sell the book. Algis agreed with Phyllis, but also as a reviewer, he delighted in reading something new and different. Stan talked about keeping Analog at the forefront of new and different SF. He said that often he gets calls and letters asking for an idea of what topics are "in"; he usually replies that if those ideas are what's being published now, they'll be "old hat" by the time



someone else writes another one and sends it in. The general rule is to write what you want with an eye to being creative; some older ideas can stand being looked at with a different viewpoint, and a better kind of story could result from this unusual outlook. Stan also mentioned that he has very little trouble publishing what he wants to; since his renewal rate (the number of subscription renewals) has increased since becoming editor, the publisher figures he must be doing something right. Jim Frenkel is both an editor and publisher. He wants to put out books that are in the forefront of the SF market, just as Stan does in the magazines, but also realizes that he must also produce books that people will automatically buy so that his company can remain solvent. SF is a strange genre of fiction; once a company is established, and has a backlog of books for reprinting, it will make a profit--not a very large one, but it will produce a steady income. The larger companies don't want a steady return for their investments; they want a quick, best-seller which will bring in tons of money immediately. In most cases, advertisements and proper promotion is what makes a Best Seller in mainstream. Unfortunately, most of mainstream fiction doesn't deserve the attention, but the publishers push what they want to sell. Good communications among authors, editors and publishers is the key to making a company buy and sell good books.

Among the other people I talked to and spent some time with were our roommates Mike and Doris (including the marvelous dinner expedition -- mentioned below); some very relaxing

physical therapy performed in (and out of) the pool with Meg Stull and Candice Massey; a quick interchange with Alan Dean Foster, who autographed the special edition copy of SPELLSINGER for Maia; Jim Rittenhouse and his wife Dierdre, who helped to put on the con-within-a-con, CATCLAVE, whose cat-kicking contest was won by Bill Surret this year (beating David Singer, last years winner, by a half inch); Bruce Burdick and his girlfriend (whose name I've forgotten --that's what happens when I write these things months after they happen!), who were introduced to me by Stan Schmidt; Flonnet Biltgen, a neo-fan from Pittsburgh who was introduced to me by Tim Zahn; Bruce Schnaier, Michelle Fisher and John Donat (John was only at the con for Friday night--he had to get back to Chicago to work on Saturday); Don and Elsie Wollheim, whom I thanked for publishing Tim Zahn's THE BLACK-COLLAR; Bill Surret, who said that he would try to get an article done for my super-hero issue of Lan's Lantern; and lots and lots of people who were in the consuite.

Saturday evening, as was the tradition started the previous year, a group of fans got together dressed in evening gowns and tuxedos (men in tuxes, women in gowns-- just to keep the record straight) and ate in a secluded room of The Jolly Miller--well there were more than a dozen of us, so they sat us together in one of the small dining areas. We had the same waiter as we had last year, and we stuffed ourselves (I know I did--I was lethargic for a couple of hours afterwards). It was a marvelous time, filled with good food, people and conversation. Afterwards, after getting out of the tux, it was party-hopping time--though for most of us we just kind-of "party-ambled" till we digested the meal.

Sunday was very slow and low-keyed. I offered to drive Stan and Joyce to the airport so they could pick up a rental car to use to visit relatives in the area. When I returned, I spent a little bit of time talking to Mike Resnick, gave him a copy of Lan's Lantern #13 which I had been promising him for the past couple of conventions, and told him that I was planning the special overview of his writing for LL #15. Remembering that Phantasia Press had just published a novel of his, EROS ASCENDING, I checked my money, and found that I did not have enough to get a copy then, but I hoped to purchase one at one of the upcoming conventions.

#### RAMBLINGS 15.7

Although we did not have classes on the Monday following the convention, I did go in to check to see if I had extra comments to write, or if there had been some changes on grading scales which would affect my students, or maybe some errors on the comments I turned in. Also I had to see if any of my advisees would be discussed at the academic review meeting (fondly called the "D and E meeting"). Once again I was fortunate, except that a few of the students would be in trouble--some of them received D's for the semester.

Tuesday began the second semester. I had two new classes--well, actually it was one new class; Topics in Pre-Calculus, and an Algebra

IIB class, which is a slow Algebra II section. In the Topics class I only had 10 students. We were to cover a lot of the highlights of the regular Pre-Calculus course, but too much in depth. Among those ten students were some who had never had me before, and a couple who were absolutely delighted to have me as their teacher. One was Lisa, the RA in the dorm. For her, my teaching style and methods are perfect. She says that I get through to her as no other math teacher has. Which made me feel good. I must say that the class was interesting, though participation was not all that much. Of the 10 students, 7 were seniors; they didn't sleaze, but worked for me.

The Algebra IIB class was a bit of a different story. Most of them I had kept from the previous semester's Algebra II class in that same time period. I did keep some of the students whom I would love to have transferred out of the class -- personality conflicts. On the other hand, I recommended some students to remain in the regular Algebra II course (which meant that they would be transferred to other classes), whom I would rather have had in my class. This was my last class of the day, and before the end of the year, I began dreading going into that particular class-- most of the kids were great; it was those few with whom I had personality conflicts that made it bad for me.

All my classes, except for the Topics course, were informed of the Paper that was to be done for the end of the third quarter. For Algebra II and IIB, they were to write a research report on a mathematician/scientist, supply a short biography, contributions to the field, and add anecdotes and such to fill out a length of two and a half typewritten pages. I made a requirement of it being typed because I was going to have about 60 to do over a weekend so I could have the grades for the third quarter, and with that many to read, I didn't want to strain my eyes too much. For the Geometry classes, they had to write an argumentative paper deciding whether Math in general, or Geometry in particular, was an art or a science. They would have to consider both sides of the argument, and could not straddle the fence; they had to decide it was one or the other and defend their stand. Everyone groaned and questioned why they had to write a paper in a Math class. My basic argument is that in real life there is little separation of topics, that communication still goes on, no matter what you do for a living; for most students, they'll be going into the business world, and they will have to write up reports which will be read/delivered at meetings. Skill in writing, no matter what the topic, is important. Here in Math class, they get a chance to do some practice in that. It is also something different for them to do, gets them to think and/or learn something that they have not encountered before, and they can get extra credit. Usually it's the last reason that they understand.

There was a father's visiting day, which went rather smoothly, and another three-day weekend, over which I had dorm duty. There are several long weekends during the school year -- semester breaks, the two Heads' Holidays, of which this was one, and Memorial Day in May. Those of us on Resident Faculty decide which

one we want to take at the beginning of the school year, and sign up by seniority. I was third on the seniority list, and took the February Head's Holiday, as I have for the past few years. Usually there are few kids in the dorm, so it is quiet and I can get some reading done.

One Saturday evening during this time period from after CONFUSION to INCONCLUSIVE we had Brad and Wendy over for dinner. Ever since the two of them met at CONCLAVE, they had been seeing a lot of each other, and were now talking about moving in together. Wendy worked in Ann Arbor, Brad worked in Romeo, each an hour's drive from where we lived. Unfortunately, there was no direct route from one city to the other. They were trying to find a mutual place equidistant from both jobs. I suggested the Birmingham-Bloomfield Hills area as a joke, but they said that they were considering it. In any case, it was a delightful evening, even though Brookside had one of its "special" evenings, and had filled our parking lot. Brad and Wendy had to park up the road at a church parking lot and be shuttled down to our place.

Some talk among the Geometry teachers centered around giving an exam at the end of the third quarter to finish off the "geometry" part of the Geometry course before starting Trigonometry in the fourth quarter. We sort of agreed that we would do this, and during the Spring Break, Bill Terkeurst and I wrote up the exam.

Meanwhile, preparations were under way for the annual Wilderness expedition. This is a ten-day hiking and camping experience in the mountains of Tennessee for sophomores. Junior and senior students can be student leaders, and assist the adults who go. And they get to miss some school if they do participate. This year, quite a few students went, though my classes were not depleted too badly. I wholeheartedly endorsed the sophomores who went, but some of the juniors who missed my classes because they were student leaders I had reservations about. A couple were getting D's, and never saw me to make up work, or at least to get help on what they missed. As a teacher, I had to give all those who were going to be out a list of topics and problems they would miss. That was easy. Still, I had three students who waited until the end of the school year to make up their missed tests.

An interesting side-note: last year, one interested and enterprising young lady asked, if I were going to be around during Spring Break when they got back, if it would be possible to get together to go over the topics they missed. I said certainly, and we set up a time, and she and three others came for the session. That did not happen this year, but during Spring Break I got a call from a student expecting me to give her help. At the time I was in the middle of baking bread, and was abrupt with her. Still, I was on vacation, and thoughts of school were not uppermost in my mind.

But I'm getting ahead of myself

At the beginning of March, contracts for the coming year were to come out, so I had my meeting with the boss-lady, Mary Bramson, at the end of February and she complimented me on my

work. We then discussed assignments for the next school year. Although this is not stated in the contract, other than a line which stipulates that other assignments could be added on my the head of the school, everyone has some extra-curricular activity in which they must be involved. And my dormitory driving doesn't count. So this year I was assigned to the Kingswood Cabinet, a school organization which fosters service to the community. The girls and adult leaders are veterans of this, and I felt like a fifth wheel; and I really didn't care to get that involved anyway. (Not that I wasn't in favor of service to the outside community, it was just that it would be too time consuming for me). Another was working on the Baccalaureate committee, planning the Baccalaureate ceremony which would fall on MARCON Sunday. The third assignment was called, "Faculty Room." There were at least two others who were also assigned to this enigmatic committee, those who always did strange things to the room--like removing all the teachers' cups during "The Great Cup Migration" or putting funny poems and cartoons on the door of the cabinet containing the mugs, or something equally silly. But no one else handled the coffee supplies, just me.

Anyway, so we discussed what extra things I would do next year. I mentioned being one of the dorm drivers, but that didn't count. I told Mary that I did order all the coffee and teas and other supplies for the faculty room, but that wasn't the kind of things she was looking for. "I do the raffle tickets for Giftorama every fall," I said. She nodded, but that still was not what she wanted. She then mentioned that someone was going to have to take over the Service Program--assigning and keeping track of kids who are to do some kind of work duty for the school (like washing boards, vacuuming halls, etc.). The person presently in charge would be involved in other things. She thought that I would be perfect for that job, and I wouldn't have to worry about other committees, and would also get some extra money. I told her that I would have to think about it and discuss it with Maia.

Actually, I was surprised and happy, because I knew that there were two day-faculty persons who wanted to come on campus and be resident faculty. Both had families, so they would each need a large enough apartment to accommodate them. Since we had a large two-bedroom place, and there were only two of us, I feared that we would have to move. When I came out of that meeting, and no mention of moving had been made, I was elated. Sure I'd take the Service Program, as long as I didn't have to move. I did not think through what all the Program entailed, which I should have done; I was just happy that we wouldn't have to carry boxes and furniture from one apartment to another. So I told her yes.

One week later, the bomb hit. Mary Bramson had to see me for just a couple of minutes. We had to move. She gave us a choice of two apartments, neither of which, it turned out, could we really see ourselves living in. I was so stunned that I didn't say anything except agree to look at the apartments. Since she left town the evening that she gave me the news, I could not talk to her about this till

she got back--more than a week later. And Maia wanted to be in on the meeting too. With this little development, I began to think through what all I would have to do with the Service Program--and it did not just mean the upper school, it included the Middle School, 6th, 7th, and 8th grades. Knowing how much hassle the present director of the Program got, and knowing the differences in the personalities between us (that is, she handles pressure much better than I do), I began to worry a lot about what I would do when the pressure got too bad.

The earliest time we could meet was after Roger Reynold's convention, INCONCLUSIVE .55555. Maia and I discussed strategies and alternatives, but we would have to wait until the meeting itself and talk with Mary Bramson before we could come to any conclusions. At school, I wandered somewhat aimlessly, taught my classes, and avoided the person who would be getting the apartment. I knew it was not her fault, but I was not sure how I would react if we started discussing it; I wanted to clear things up with Mary Bramson first. She was the one I was angry at. Yes, all this weighed heavily on my mind, but fortunately there was Roger's con just about when I needed it.

#### INCONCLUSIVE .55555

I went to the convention alone. Maia had other things she had to get done, like papers to write for her classes, and studying for tests which were coming up. And I indeed needed this con. With everything else going on at



school, I just had to get away. Once again it was at the Sandusky Sheraton, but for the last time. The pool area was booked out to Ducks Unlimited (Mike Wood would have been delighted) and thus we were unable to use the pool on Saturday evening. Next year Roger Reynolds has the convention booked at a Holiday Inn in Toledo Ohio.

I spent a considerable amount of time in the room, reading Steve Leigh's novel, A QUIET OF STONE (see my review of this and his other two novels on pages 29-30), but I didn't stay there exclusively. As soon as I registered for the convention, I ran into Bruce Burdick, who has had a couple of stories published in Analog. I talked with him about writing SF, teaching math and several other topics. Some of the Toronto fans showed up -- Mike and Doris, Bill and Tanya, and we all went out for dinner together. Since Ben Zuhl had come to the con alone also, he and I went as a "couple" with the others.

The only money I was going to spend at the con was for meals, the room, of course, and a copy of EROS ASCENDING by Mike Resnick (Since I had not gotten it at CONFUSION as I had hoped), if he had a copy there, or one of the hucksters did. Bill Cavin sold me one, and Mike gladly autographed it.

Larry Tucker was at the con with his video equipment, and he showed his new video-zine, which had the highlights from CONFUSION on it. Since I had missed Mike Resnick's GoH Speech at the con, I heard the whole thing on tape there. Mike was also present, watching himself, and was quite pleased with the results. Bill Bowers had published his speech, along with Martha Beck's, and several of the other proceedings in a copy of his fanzine, Outworlds, which he handed out, or sold, at the con. I got a copy, and read Mike's speech there, but it was better to see and hear him deliver it.

On Saturday evening, Bruce Burdick, his girlfriend (I still forget her name) and I started talking about humorous writers in SF. Robert Sheckley and Fredric Brown first came to mind, and I added that some people consider Ron Goulart to be extremely funny. Then I called out to Mike Resnick, who had sat on the other side of the consuite and started to read the paper, and asked him when his book ADVENTURES was coming out. He had talked briefly about it after seeing Larry Tucker's video-fanzine, so I knew about it and somewhat how funny it was going to be. So he came over and told us more about it, and continued to talk with us about SF and writing in general for the next couple of hours.

Unfortunately, I did have to return home. It was good to see Maia again, but I still had to face classes, and the problems that were building up at school.

#### RAMBLINGS 15.8

My classes were smaller that Monday because of the Wilderness Expedition, but that was okay with me. I continued classes as usual, and tried not to think about moving or about the Service Program, at least until after the meeting with Mary.

Maia and I walked into Mary's office and sat down. Mary followed. We presented our side as clearly as we could, how we thought it was unfair to ask us to move when there are other childless couples on campus with two-bedroom apartments who have less seniority than I did; when there are single people who live in two-bedroom apartments; when I have put in all sorts of extra time helping students in the dorm; and when I have given help to the dorm people on duty even though I was not on duty myself. Mary answered each in turn: she was not aware that there were other two-bedroom apartments which held childless couples. We gave her two names. Nor was she aware of single people occupying two-bedroom places. Again we gave her two names. To this she replied that she had no jurisdiction over Art Academy or Cranbrook School housing. Mary said that she valued my contributions to the community, and that she was glad I had stayed on for so



long, but that is not the criteria for assigning housing; the first concern is need of the school, and a person willing to move on campus to work in the dorm has to be housed in a suitable apartment, since we did need resident faculty members. Even if that means moving someone out of an existing apartment. Why wasn't it mentioned to me when we discussing my contract? Housing is a function of resident duty, not part of the formal contract for teaching at the school. Again, why not someone who has less seniority? Mary said that she remembers distinctly writing us to say we would get Hedgegate #3, moving there from #4 last year, with the condition that if she needed an apartment for a family, we would be asked first to move. I could not find the letter, but I have never known Mary to knowingly lie. I accepted her word. So we had to move. A bonus, however, was that Cranbrook Schools would pay for moving us. We still did not have a suitable apartment. One more was suggested, and that was the one we ended up taking--at 55 Valley Way, one building away from where I used to live when I was a bachelor.

Okay, we were resigned to move, and we finally knew where, and a moving company was going to do most of the work; why wasn't I happy about it? Even though I intellectually understood and accepted what was inevitable, emotionally I was having trouble. Maybe after a little time had passed I would get over my feelings....

There was still the matter of the Service Program. I wrote a letter outlining my concerns, and giving alternative activities for me to do in lieu of the Program, and set up another appointment with Mary to discuss it. This one was going to have to wait until after Spring Break--her calendar was booked till the break began, and she would be gone most of the time herself.

When the break finally came, I wanted it. I didn't want to think about school; I was finally getting down to working on the superhero issue of Lan's Lantern, and I hoped that it would take my mind off some of the other problems. One thing that helped a lot was that the head of the computer science department let some of the faculty borrow the IBM PCs for the break so we could learn how to use them. This was not only good for me, but for Maia as well.

Programming in basic lasted all of about a day. It didn't thrill us to do such things. Then I got a copy of the word processing program called Textra, along with the tutorials, and that did it. With the help of Bill Terkurst and Chris Swartout, both Maia and I became quite good with the Textra program. She used it to help her write a couple of papers,

while I did a couple of articles for LL with it as well as writing the third quarter Geometry Exam with Bill's help. Maia and I were both thinking seriously about getting an IBM PC for our very own, but since we can use the school's computers at almost any time, it isn't worth spending the money on it yet.

I also got a nice check from the parents of the Cranbrook boy I had been driving to the Spanish Tutor. Some of it went to paying bills, some to taking us out to dinner, but part of it was spent at Silver's Garage. Silver's is an office supply store, and the Garage is the place where they keep damaged merchandise, and office equipment, supplies and furniture. I bought a large, all metal, card-filing cabinet. Maia bought a chair and some supplies with the income tax refund check (which was very small this year--not enough to even consider buying plane tickets to MINICON). The filing cabinet was extremely heavy, but we did get it up into the apartment. I then started to type up more cards for the SF book collection, particularly the author collections, cross-referencing the stories by title and author. This, in addition to everything else I was doing.

## NOVACON

NOVACON is a two day convention at Oakland University in Rochester Michigan, put on by the SF club, the Order of Liebowitz. There are basically two parts to the convention: on Saturday is the SF part, with an art show, hucksters room, a Guest of Honor, and panels, along with a lot of gaming; Sunday is all gaming.

This year's GoH was P. C. Hodgell, who wrote GOD STALK (which I mentioned in the WINDYCON report), which I finally read (before Christmas actually). The novel itself is very good, better than almost every other fantasy novel I've tried to read that is put out today--although I must admit that I haven't read that much fantasy. It kept my interest, and was not a Tolkien rip-off. Her GoH speech was very interesting. She talked about how she had grown up with strangeness, about some of the peculiarities of her family, neighbors, and neighborhood. She also admitted that she writes very slowly, so the second novel, which she is working on, won't be finished until around the fall of '84, with publication probably no sooner than summer of '85. That's a long wait for her fans, but should be well worth it.

Craig Newmark planned for a small dinner expedition to a Chinese restaurant, and a party afterwards. Maia, who was attending The Dorsai Thing instead of NOVACON, was supposed to go with us, but when I went home to pick her up, she was working on the PC, complained of a head ache, and was going to bed as soon as she wrote a few more paragraphs on her paper. So I joined Craig and Susan, Rick Leider, and Candice Massey for a hot dinner, and a party at Craig's. Craig treated Candice to her dinner, since it was her birthday, and the party was a nice low-key one, with a few people, and some interesting conversation. At 11:30 we watched the Best of Saturday Night Live, which indeed had us in stitches.



The next morning Maia and I got up at a reasonable hour and headed for my sister's place in Jackson, Michigan, for my nephew's birthday party. Nicholas was three years old, and as big as, if not bigger than, his older brother Kristofer. We had a good time, and he enjoyed getting all those presents (like most kids). We left at a reasonable hour, because Maia had to get back to clean the office. I suppose that deserves an explanation (which I neglected to put in earlier).

Back at the end of October, Maia, tired of intra-office politics, quit her job at the GAP. She had been doing the cleaning of that office, and took on another one just down the street, in the evenings on the weekends, and kept that job. So, she continued to do the cleaning, and did proof-reading for the Detroit Metro Times, an alternative newspaper which comes out weekly. When they needed someone to deliver the paper to specific drop-off points, she volunteered. For this she got paid--proofreading was volunteer-work, but good experience if she does want to break into professional editing (Stanley Schmidt thinks that she has a talent for it). Soon after the first of the year, the GAP dispensed with her services, but she continued/s to clean the other office, and deliver papers. This gives her some spending money.

This kind of schedule also gave Maia more time to concentrate on school. One of the things she wanted to do when we got married and she move here was to go back to school, and not worry much about living expenses. Thus, Maia now was on a minimum full-time schedule, and still had some time free to work on one of her long-range projects--a Heinlein Concordance.

Finally came the day to go back. Almost everyone I talked to would have preferred another week off. Still, we all had to attend a special in-service day meeting to talk about coordination. This concerned coordinating the two schools, which they are supposed to be at this point, but aren't. At the beginning of the year a committee was formed to study the ways other two-school systems "coordinated": in most cases they became one school, and the girls' school involved got the short end of it. Yes, the girls got their own assemblies, with speakers on women's issues, while the boys had their own assemblies and activities. The boys should also have been hearing about women's issues as well; the girls should also be involved in what supposedly are "male activities", like some sports, and outdoor experiences. We have some of this here, but the schools are not coordinated. They do not have the same rule book which causes some consternation moving from one campus to the other. Kingswood has a very strong leadership training program, while the boys do not. This year, however, one was instituted for the Cranbrook boys because the faculty felt it was needed.

When Lillian Bauder was given the job as head of the schools in the Spring of 1983, the Board of Governors which runs the Cranbrook Educational Community charged her with the mission to coordinate the schools. This she has attempted to do, and this meeting was to

get input from the faculty as to how this was to happen. In early June the Board was meeting to decide what course and form coordination was going to take, so if we wanted our say, we would have to do it then, or in any subsequent meeting before the one in June.

Regardless of the outcome, the schools were not going to be the same as they were before. We would have to have the same rules, with the dorm rules for the boys' and girls' dorms only slightly different. There would have to be an even greater cooperation between the faculties and a more uniform policy of academics and discipline. One major thorn, which I have mentioned before was the mandatory, after-school sports program at Cranbrook. Kingswood has an optional after-school sports/physical education program, which to me makes more sense. Not everyone is physically able to play on a team sport, or participate in many sports at all. What is important is that everyone learn about life-long physical activities so that they can stay in good physical condition. That is not learned when the team is out to win games; it should be, but I've seen too many games wherein winning was the only objective.

The results of all this was that next year all faculty would be involved in putting together the particulars under which coordination would be put into operation. Which, in the final analysis meant that everyone would be on some sort of committee, in addition to what we would normally have. Just what I wanted to hear!!!!

School started and I began to get my Geometry classes prepared for the Third Quarter Exam. Also, I reminded everyone that their paper was due, and it did have to be typed. Some of the people from the Wilderness Trip saw me to make up their quizzes and tests, but others, as I mentioned above, would let things go until review week before finals.

In spite of some problems, the Exam for the Geometry classes went quite well. I should have informed the entire faculty about it, I should have let the head of the Phys-Ed department know that we were going to use the gym for the Exam (she occasionally lets other groups use it, and one happened to be on the same night we were having the Exam); and lots of other things we should have done. Live and learn--for next year.

#### A NON-MINICON REPORT

Since we didn't have enough money to afford plane tickets to fly to the convention, and other methods of transportation were out of the question, we had to miss MINICON. I don't know

...AND THEN THERE WAS THE  
HOOKER FROM MINNEAPOLIS --  
ST. PAUL KNOWN FAR AND WIDE  
AS A "TAIL OF TWO CITIES".



if things would have been better if we had been able to attend the con, but it probably would not have hurt us (except in the pocketbook!). So we were very sorry to have missed all the wild and crazy people we would have enjoyed seeing at the con.

#### RAMBLINGS 15.10

The rest of April and beginning of May fared badly. I had my meeting with Mary, and she completely ignored my reasons for not wanting to remove myself from the Service Program. I had mentioned to a couple of faculty members that I was going to get extra money for doing the program, and this was brought up in the Faculty Council, the gist of it being thoughts along the lines of everyone getting paid for extra duties like that. Considering the extra work and time involved, yes, the extra money would be worth it. That was where Mary was coming from; everyone agreed that I would be good for the job, and that the money was worth it, so I wouldn't have to worry about what other faculty would think about me. And that was that! From here on till the middle of review week, the school situation would get worse for me, and I could do very little to stop it.

My 7th hour class was giving me more trouble. The syllabus we were to follow for Algebra II I was unable to keep up with; for some reason something was holding the class back. I was trying my best to push them ahead, but the material seemed too tough for them. The Trigonometry I was teaching my Geometry classes was not that bad; unfortunately some of them seemed to refuse to do the proper memorization so they could do the problems. And I was getting tired of fighting with them. There was also the Baccalaureate Committee which met to plan the Ceremonies for the third weekend in May--MARCON weekend. Maia and I fought a bit about the move; I was sniping at students who came to me for extra help; in short, I was not a very happy person.

Among the few bright spots were: Maia's understanding of the problems; collating Lan's Lantern, which had been finished and run off; and reading stories and books for the Hugo Awards. (I had mailed my nominations ballot on time!) And I suppose it was fortunate that I was on dorm duty for Mother's Day; Maia went to my parents' home for the celebration, while I took care of the dorm office and did some driving. I probably would have been terrible company there. There was also Ring Ceremony, and the special night of announcing the new RAs and Dorm Council members for the dorm. I was there, and saw some of my favorite students chosen for the RA-ship.

Brad and Wendy had also moved into an apartment not far from us (like less than a 5 minute drive) and had invited us over for dinner. It was nice to see them again. We talked about books and music, and they told us that indeed they were going to get married. Maia and I were very happy for them. And it was also nice to have a couple more fans in the area, especially ones whom we could call without having to dial the "1" first, or use the Sprint access. It was one of the most pleasant Saturday evenings I had had in several weeks.

We also had a surprise visit from Meg Stull. I don't quite remember when she and Candice came over, but Meg was anxious to visit the old school and walk around the grounds once again. She marvelled at how things had changed, and in the process of rushing from one place to another, overtaxed herself, and wound up sleeping over in our extra room. Her back was much better the next morning, and she took off for home under her own power.

A blow which almost did me in happened on Friday, the day we were to leave for MARCON. I had to stay after school to monitor make-up work duty, for those kids who missed their regularly assigned duty during the week (I'll have to do that every time when I head up the Service Program next year!!). We had wanted to leave as soon as my last class was over--I had to get away to try to recover from the continual psychological pounding I had been getting. I tried to get out of it; I tried calling in favors I had done for other people, and they refused. I was angry, and the kids I had to watch did what they were supposed to do; any who skipped out early were reported. When I called Maia to tell her that we would have to delay our departure, I suggested that she go without me. She, bless her, said that she would wait--so we get there later than we wanted and hit traffic. She knew that I needed the con to help clear my head and get some ego-boo.

#### MARCON

For this convention we shared a room with Steve and Ruth Simmons. They weren't there when we arrived, and they hadn't left our names on the reservation, so we couldn't check into the hotel. We did register for the convention, and kinda wandered around. A couple of panels were going on, but the hucksters room was closed, and the art show hadn't opened yet.

When Steve and Ruth arrived, everything began to go much better. I started handing out my fanzine, and people were somewhat surprised, but not too much. MARCON is a convention that has usually been one for the distribution of a new Lantern. C. J. Cherryh was the GoH, and we had her autograph our copy of FORTY THOUSAND IN GEHENNA, while we told her that we thought it was the best novel written in '83, and too bad it hadn't made the Hugo final ballot. She said that there might be a ruling making it eligible for next year, because of its first release from a small-press publisher. Nancy Springer was also there--I knew she would be there, but in the rush to leave, I had forgotten to bring any of her books for autographing. I felt very sorry for her sitting at the table with very few people getting her books signed.

And Mike Resnick was there. We talked again and he asked when I wanted the unpublished stuff. I said anytime he can get it to me--I would somehow make the time to read it, at least to be able to get the material back to him at MIDWESTCON. "Okay, I'll run it off for you and send it...", he paused. "Do you have access to an IBM PC?" I smiled and said yes. "Good, that'll be much easier. I'll send you the diskettes," he replied. Mike then said that he would send me ADVENTURES at a time when I could return it within a week. He was down

to his last copy, and he wrote it before he got his PC, so he gets nervous if it's out of his possession for too long a time.

I saw a few panels, but the best was the one on alien sexuality. It was handled in both a serious and humorous fashion, and raised some good questions about what might happen if/when we do meet extraterrestrials.

A couple of things I was happy to pick up in the hucksters room were a copy of Kate Wilhelm's WELCOME CHAOS, and the first 4 issues of the comic Jon Sable, Freelance. Actually I picked up the first three issues, and when I read them while relaxing in the room, I discovered that #3 was the beginning of a series about Sable's origin, so I went back and purchased #4. I had to wait until later to get #5 and #6--we started buying them with #7. For those of you who don't read the comics, Jon Sable is a mercenary who also writes children's books under the name of B. B. Flemm. He keeps these two identities separate, and very few people know he is both. It's not so much that he's worried about kids and parents finding out that B.B. Flemm is also Jon Sable, he's worried that other mercenaries will find out that Sable writes children's books. He'd give it up, but he's making soooo much money....

I saw and talked to lots of people: Michael Kube-McDowell, John Langner, Frank Olynyk, Dick Spellman, Rusty Hevelin, Dale and Susan Johnson, Gary Bernstein (who tried to sell me a complete run of American Flagg), Judy Sutton (who I saw only briefly in the elevator on Saturday morning), and not at all for the rest of the convention), and a crew of Michigan fans who put on a large party for all the Michigan cons. A group of us went out to Jong Mai's, a Chinese restaurant near the downtown area of Columbus. It was a very pleasant affair, though I was feeling quite lethargic myself. I did the usual party-hopping on Saturday night, but turned in early because I had to get up at 7 AM so I could return in time for Baccalaureate.

#### RAMBLINGS 15.11

Baccalaureate was all right, I suppose. I didn't participate--I just helped the other people in charge. My allergies were beginning to bother me again, as they had the last time I attended a Baccalaureate Ceremony, so I stayed out of the church. This ceremony signifies the beginning of the end of the school year. It's done up nicely, I suppose. I wasn't impressed when I saw it before--it could have been the allergy medicine I was taking. Instead of going into the church to see/hear the ceremonies, I stayed in the room where all the girls had left their purses and other belongings, sort of as a guard.

Afterwards I returned home and tried to work on some lesson plans. I was disgusted. For my Algebra II and IIB classes, there were not enough days left to do a decent job of finishing the material I had to get to for the exams, and still have time to review. For Geometry, we were continually reviewing the material as we went along (and their exam was only going to be on the trig stuff!), so they were all right.

I got a call from Maia, who had come home with Steve and Ruth. I drove over to Ypsilanti to pick her up, and we had dinner with them. When we got home, Maia went to clean the office, and I tried to figure out how to finish the course work my students had to learn for final exams.

As I went through the week and tried to do everything that I had to teach for the exam, I sorrowfully told another Algebra II teacher that I would not get to a particular topic, and would ask the principle writer not to put any of those kinds of problems on the exam. She said that she too would have liked to have more time for other topics, and time to review, but she was going to get the appropriate place, so it better be on the exam. I got very angry and stormed out of the faculty room, almost taking the door jam with me. But I didn't look back. When I had calmed down, I decided that, okay, I will teach everything, but would have to lay things on the line for the kids. I told them that we would cover everything, but would be lucky if we had two days to review. I also said that there would be no test or quiz on the last couple of topics, or we would have almost no time for review. As for my Algebra IIB class, they were pretty much in the same position; two days of review, if that much, and no quiz or test of the last material we covered. The kids in the Algebra II class were mostly understanding, and willing to work. It appeared that some of the IIB kids could care less. And my Topics class would be fine. We'd review, and they would be ready for the final.

#### MIKECON

It was Memorial weekend, and I got my money from the bank, changing \$100 American to whatever that turned out to be in Canadian money. Maia had the car packed, and we were able to leave before the crowd of parents choked our parking lot as they picked up their kids from Brookside School. Over the bridge and into Canada we went, picking up Highway 401 out of Windsor to Toronto. It was a pleasant drive; Maia left me to my thoughts and slept part of the way. We arrived at Hania's, where the party was that evening, and had a great time talking with both American and Canadian friends. We found out that Vicky Eaves was pregnant, and had been at CONFUSION, but didn't tell anyone. Steve and Denise Leigh were there with Megan, and another surprise was that Mark Riley and Hilary Oxman had gotten married.

Since it was Mike Glicksohn's and Michael Harper's birthdays, we got them both presents, both wrapped identically, sort of, and without names on them. We handed the gifts to them, as did others who had bought gifts, and for ours, we said that they would know if they got the wrong one. Mike Glicksohn opened the Vegetarian Cookbook, and Michael Harper unwrapped the ENCYCLOPEDIA OF MATHEMATICS. They quickly exchanged books.

The weekend was fun. On Saturday we did our usual round of shopping. I wanted to get something special for Lisa, my student and friend, the RA in the dorm who was graduating; I had my sights on a nice gold necklace, which I did

find, and spent about half of what I would have in the States. It was not just because of the exchange rate either. I looked for other gifts too, particularly for my advisees who were graduating, but found nothing appropriate. I'd have to buy those gifts when I got back home. The shopping expedition ended at a Chinese restaurant, where I ordered octopus, which I had not eaten in a long time.

Saturday night's party was also fun; it was at Mike's and Doris', and it eventually broke up and got quiet enough for us all to sleep. The next morning we stood in line in shifts at the movie theatre, as we had last year, to get tickets to see INDIANA JONES AND THE TEMPLE OF DOOM. It was not as good as the first movie; it seemed as though the writers were trying actively to gross everyone out, rather than the jokes and action coming from the plot. Since there was a long wait in line, and also some time in the theatre before the movie started, I took a book with me, Mike Resnick's early novel called PURSUIT ON GANYMEDE. Unfortunately, I left it in the theatre, and didn't want to go back to get it. When I told Mike this, he said it was all right; it was worth losing!

We left that afternoon--soon after we all got back from the film. Maia and I wanted to miss all the traffic from Memorial Day, and I still had some things to run off for review. Even though I would have little time to do so in class, at least my students would have review sheets.

We also found out when we got back that Brad and Wendy had been in Toronto that weekend as well -- on their honeymoon. We didn't see them at all; they probably had better things to do with their time than wander around Toronto.

#### RAMBLINGS 15.12

When classes began on that Tuesday, I was in a bad way. I taught well, that I knew. I know the material, and if I know it, then I can teach it, and do a good job of it. That's my talent. But the pressure of everything was getting to me. This was this first time I was entering review week without having taught everything I should have. I was being forced to move from a place I didn't want to leave. I was going to have to do a job next year I did not want to do. I was looking at an administration that seemed to care less for me as a classroom teacher, and more as someone to push around. And the demand for extra time to be on committees seemed to be higher on the list than trying to help students. There was the Birmingham Ride twice a week, and two chaperone drives to the Spanish tutor. I was at my wits end, felt as though I couldn't cope with anything else. I wanted to smash something, to hurt someone. I was a nervous wreck, and near to collapsing. And unfortunately, Chris Swartout, the school psychologist, was not around for me to talk to.

I wrote a letter expressing my views, and left it unsigned in the faculty room. It was ill-received by the rest of the faculty. This came close to devastating me. Suicide was considered, but rejected. This was not a situation which called for that as an alternative.

Even though the letter was unsigned, it became George's letter, and was spread far and wide around campus. Chris returned from his trip, and I did get to talk to him. By then, I had calmed down somewhat, had made an appointment to see Mary Bramson to talk about this (and some other things concerning the move), and two other things had happened. Maia asked the crucial question: would I be happier anyplace else? Considering everything, and how I talked about Kingswood the past weekend in Canada, no, I wouldn't. This has been the best place I ever worked, and based on what other people had told me about other private schools, there was no better place. The second thing was that a student asked me out to lunch -- not one of my students from class, but a dorm student who wanted to thank me for helping her through some of her classes with extra help, and just for being a friend to talk to, and being concerned for her well-being.

That made all the difference.

When Chris talked to me, he gave me more information that, if I had known earlier, I would not have written the letter, nor would I have come just inches from that nervous breakdown. He said that Mary and other people in administration were out in the front lines battling to save us as teachers; they have been working with Lillian to come up with a viable plan that would enable us to keep the freedom we have in the classroom which makes this such a unique place to teach. And this may very well come at the cost of their own jobs. Another teacher told me that the Service Program should not be as bad as I anticipate. Once the rules are set up, then there should be no problem in adhering to them. I would have to trust the supervisors to do their part in watching the kids.

I was ashamed at my own short-sightedness, and when I finally talked to Mary, I told her I would apologize publicly if she wanted. She said it was not necessary; I think my actions in the days prior to that meeting had shown my feelings. Still, in this forum, I publicly apologize to her and the other administrators.

But what about my students and their finals? Well, they did about as well as they usually did, with some doing better than I thought they would, and others doing worse. A few students from my Algebra IIB class, when we did get to the point of reviewing fooled around and played while the rest of us were trying to prepare for exams. They did not do very well, as I had thought they would. And I had warned them, but being Cranbrook boys, they thought of me as a picky, out-of-it Kingswood teacher. The comments I sent home showed that I was not afraid to tell things as they were. I was fairly pleased with how my other classes fared.

The new apartment was going to work out fine. It was near the garden, it had a garage, we could use our air-conditioner in the windows where we couldn't do that at Hedgegate, and the basement had more than adequate storage room. Although we were losing floor space, we did gain compactness, and more usable wall space. What we were leaving behind were a lot of headaches with traffic problems and noise, although we were losing some terrific neighbors.

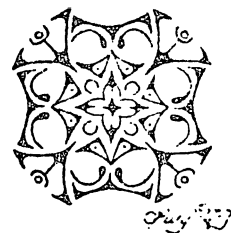


Meanwhile Maia was avidly packing away books. We ended up with roughly 180 boxes of books; since we knew where we were moving, and there was a basement, Maia began to move a lot of stuff from our storeroom at Hedgegate to the basement at 55 Valley Way. I helped when I could; I did put up the large set of metal shelves in the basement, and another smaller set, so we could store our comic-book and SF magazines on them. There was also an enclosed room with a raised floor, which I decided would be my office. One problem was that there was a hole in the floor, about four by six feet, where it had not been raised from the basement floor. I looked at it carefully, and figured that it would be easy to finish that off. I turned in our moving date as the third of July, and hoped that it would give enough time to the maintenance crew to clean up and fix our old place (we had hung lots of pictures, the plaster was falling in the spare bedroom, and the tub/shower still leaked into the apartment below) before the other people moved in.

Finals happened, as did graduation. I was sad to see some of the students I had taught and became close friends with leave, but it had to happen. I was given gifts from a couple other students too: a wind-chime from Maureen (who also invited me to a graduation party, to which I gladly went), and a mug which had "Pencils, 5¢" printed on it from Tracy, and it came with some pencils too. I also handed out gifts and cards to several people, Lisa, Kelly, Maureen, Heather, Sharon, and many others. It was a sad/happy time, and I enjoyed every minute of it.

As last year, I attended the annual all-school reunion and talked to some students I hadn't seen in 5 years or more, and some I had seen at graduation the day before. Halina was there (as she was last year), and we spent most of the time together. Halina was one of my first advisees when I came to Kingswood, and we had kept in touch, mostly through fandom, ever since. She will be getting married on September 1, and Maia and I are invited to the wedding. Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday of the following week were filled with meetings. Lillian Bauder, the director of schools, reported that the Board of Governors voted unanimously to merge the schools as one, keeping single sex classes where such separations would help educationally, and separate dorm structures. The faculty were then charged with the task of making it all work, and one year in which to do this.

The check came from the chaperone driving, and I went out and bought lumber. As I had planned to do all along, since I got the router for my birthday last September, I began making bookshelves. Maia was still packing, and figuring up floor plans so we would know where to put things when the movers came. Chuck Ger-eaux, our downstairs neighbor who is also the Director of Performing Arts at school, set up his sawhorses and a platform from an old set on them in the back courtyard for me to use. In the space of about three weeks, in between going in to my classroom to work on Lan's Lantern #15, and working in the garden, I built six shelving units, pre-assembled them so that I could counter-sink the screws, and disassembled them so Maia could stain them. Maia also found



a set of shelves in the alley behind the office she cleans. We rescued it; I took it apart, cleaned it up, countersunk holes for it, and again Maia stained the wood. By the time MIDWESTCON rolled around we were well on our way to being prepared for the move.

We did travel to my parents' house to celebrate Father's Day. It was a pleasant time, and a nice afternoon. Again, my brother, my sisters and their families showed up, and we got caught up on all the news. My sister June made sure that we would be at her place the following Sunday for Kristofer's birthday party. We would be stopping there on our way back from MIDWESTCON, as we had for the past few years. Janice said something about Sarah's birthday, but we were uncertain since it would be our anniversary too, as well as SPACECON. We would have to decide later.

#### MIDWESTCON XXXV

We started our trip early on Friday morning with the sun rising as we left. Instead of heading directly for Cincinnati, we drove to Columbus to visit family. Dale was not at home when we stopped at Joy's place, but the four kids were hanging around, enjoying their summer and slowly getting bored with all the free time they had on their hands. We didn't stay very long for we had other things to do. We went to Arvy's paper supply, and picked up several reams of paper for letters and fanac printing, and a few other odds and ends. We then stopped to see Mom, Maia's grandmother, for a short while, then moved on to Ashville to visit mom and dad. They were looking good, and both still as fiesty as ever. Mom had bought herself a little dog (I forget which breed) who was as cute as a button, and as ornery as their owners. Again we didn't stay too long, and made our way to Cincinnati for the convention.

MIDWESTCON is a relaxacon. There is no programming except the banquet. Instead of attending that, we found another couple, Drew McDonald and Carol Brown, to go with us to the Benihani's of Tokyo across the street. We went there last year, had such a good time then, and decided to go again. But that was Saturday night.

Maia and I checked in, went to our rooms to change into proper apparel for the pool, and had a great time greating everyone as they came in. We encountered Marilyn Hopkins and dragged her along with us to Markets International for dinner--MI is a place of dozens of food places for all sorts of tastes. Marilyn loved it. I did too, but restrained myself on several tempting desserts. I was in the process of losing weight again, and didn't want to blow the diet too badly. Availing myself of the consuite was going to be bad enough, especially with all the other parties going on.

Scott Dennis and Jane Bost<sup>sc</sup>~~sc~~ announced their engagement at the con. I knew about it at MARCON. There were no new surprises, except that I found out that Bruce Schnaier liked little kids. He had a great time playing with Megen Leigh. I encountered Mike Resnick and gave him back one of the two sets of diskettes; with everything else going on, I had not had time to finish EROS AT ZENITH. Since he was going to be at INCONJUNCTION the following weekend, that would be soon enough. And he even went home and brought back his only copy of ADVENTURES for me to take home and read, so long as I returned it to him the following weekend. And I promised I would. Even with school closed, somewhat, for the summer, I did have no problem using one of the PCs; again, the head of the computer science department let us take them home for use during the summer. I had mine, and it was set up in the basement, where my office was.

Swimming, talking, playing games, wandering from party to party, that's what we did all weekend. Our roommates this time were Mike and Doris again, and once again they were wonderful. The exciting thing about their drive from Canada was that Doris had her license, and this was her first long-distance trip. They had rented a car, and she had a great time. Because she was driving, she didn't want to stop as often, but just wanted to keep going. Ah, a woman after my own heart! Maia did call to warn her about speeding in Ohio, but Doris did not have any trouble with the police on the way down. On the way back, however....

I was hoping that Suzy Steele would show up again, but she didn't. I found out later from a postcard I received from Italy that she is touring Europe for the summer. I hope to see her at another con soon.

Paula Robinson was there. We talked briefly while I was in the pool, and she stood on the side. Later, I saw her again as I was in a hurry to talk to someone else. Then I did not see her again. I was hoping that she would make it to SPACECON, or maybe WAPAKON; I'd hate to have to wait until CHANBANACON to talk to her again.

I did have some nice talks with Lynn Harris, Craig Newmark, Joe Haldeman (who was going to be the GoH at INCONJUNCTION next weekend), and several other people. Dotti Stefl was also there, looking very grown up, though she is only 15. Her mother Suzi asked if we were going to SPACECON, and if so could we take Dotti. I answered affirmatively to the first, and said that I had to discuss the second matter with Maia. Since SPACECON is a weekend of birthdays and anniversaries (it would be Dotti's anniversary of her first con--which wasn't SPACECON, rather it was AUTOCLAVE, though she was the fan GoH at SPACECON II), it would have been nice if we could provide transportation for her. It was also our anniversary, as well as being my niece Sarah's birthday. So Maia let me make the decision. I wanted the weekend with my friends, with them celebrating along with us our anniversary, and we celebrating with them their special occasions, so I told Suzi we'd take Dotti with us.

We left fairly early on Sunday morning, saying goodbye quietly to Doris--Mike was still asleep--and leaving the two of them some bagels. Up I-75 we headed, stopping for breakfast along the way. Just south of Toledo we shifted to US 23, then to 223 just north of the Michigan-Ohio border. On towards the outskirts of Jackson we went to my sister's house in the country. It was my godchild's birthday, and we had not forgotten to pack Kristofer's presents. I also informed the family that we wouldn't be at Sarah's birthday party on the 22nd, but would stop over at Jan's and Tim's beforehand. We would be with friends that weekend for our and their anniversaries.

It was a pleasant time, but Maia and I were quite tired from the long drive, and she still had an office to clean. So we left while the sun was still on its decline, and got back with enough light out for me to do a little gardening, and Maia to clean.

#### RAMBLINGS 15.13

On Monday, the representative from Allied Van Lines came over to look at what we had to move. We walked through the apartment together and started a bit when we mentioned the 180 boxes of books. When he saw that they were reasonably-sized boxes, I think he was relieved--not so much for himself, but for his workers. He figured about two trips, with a time of about 6-7 hours for the whole move. Packers would be there on their following Monday to put the records in boxes and pack some of the more fragile stuff.

The rest of that day and Tuesday I spent in the garden, working on the fanzine, and rearranging things in my office. In the afternoon on Tuesday we borrowed Chris Swartout's pickup truck and went to Silver's Garage. Maia had bought a desk, and we used the truck to transport it back to Kingswood. We put it in the garage for the time being. Maia had plans to paint it before it was moved upstairs by the movers the following week, but she never did get around to it; there was too much else to do. With Chuck Gereaux's help, we got the upright freezer down from the kitchen and into the back of the truck. That too we stored in the garage in hopes of getting a few strong faculty to help us put it in the basement. Our basement freezer at Hedgegate would never make it into the Valley Way apartment basement; there's a tight turn at the bottom of the stairs which could not be negotiated. Fortunately, I did borrow the school's appliance dolly, but it would be useless in taking the freezer down the stairs. As it was, I had to take the door of the freezer off. I knew it would fit, because I had taken it out of a similar basement--the one at 47 Valley Way. We had a time limit on the truck; Chris needed it to transport a few things to his in-laws' place.

Wednesday was a special, sad day for me. It started raining in the morning, so instead of working in the garden I went to my office and finished Resnick's EROS AT ZENITH. About 10:50 AM I finished the novel, and by then it had stopped raining, but it was still cool. I

walked down the street to Chris and Pat Swart-out's place and began the unhappy job of helping them pack for their move to Champaigne, Illinois. They were really good friends, and many people on campus were unhappy to see them leave. There were some parties given at the end of the school year for them in particular, and for one of them only a select group was invited. Maia and I wished they could stay; several times when we went out together they complimented us by telling us that when the four of us are together, they felt like the "normal" couple. Unfortunately Chris had some personality conflicts with his boss and was not afforded the respect he really was due (especially considering the number of lives he saved, whether it be a suicide attempt, or a matter of personal relationships--yes, he saved some marriages from breaking up--or just getting a person's head turned around straight).

With all the people involved in helping Chris move, I managed to persuade a few to come down the street to help me move the freezer from the garage into the basement. With that done I could put on the door, and we could move all the frozen stuff from our Hedgegate basement freezer to the 55 Valley Way one. By 11:30 PM the huge truck was pretty-much packed. What was left could be a quick-load in the back the next morning.

Although I did say goodbye to him the next morning, I missed waving to Chris as he pulled out; the truck with our washing-machine had arrived and I was busy guiding the deliverymen down to the basement when Chris drove away. We are going to miss them both terribly.

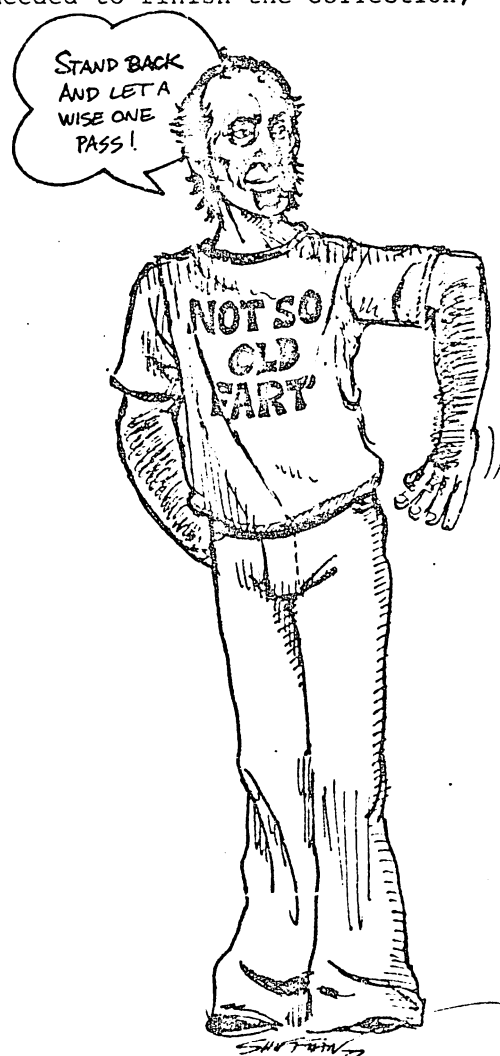
Thursday, I continued working in the garden. What I had been doing was pulling up weeds (they usually grow better than anything else), turning over the soil, and planting seeds. All of the purchased plants were in already; but because of everything else, I was way behind in getting the soil ready for planting. I had also hoped in the spring to get some horse manure for fertilizer, but that fell through. Maybe next year.... This year I had three double plots. Two of them I had last year, so I knew what the soil was like. The third had a raspberry patch on it, but it and the rest of the double plot had very little done to it in the last three years. The former users bought a house on the other side of the state and spent the summer there, leaving the garden lying fallow, and producing lots of weeds. And in those three years the root systems of the weeds became so intertwined that the only way to take care of it is to dig up a shovelful at a time, and sift through it by hand to remove all the roots. It's a slow process, and I only got about a sixth of that patch done.

We packed for INCONJUNCTION, and I made sure I had everything necessary to return to Mike Resnick. I had started reading ADVENTURES, but had only finished a couple of chapters by the time we were ready to leave. We left Friday morning about 9, after we confirmed the packers and moving date with Allied by phone.

It took us almost 8 hours, but we arrived in good shape. I had let Maia drive part of the way so I could read more of ADVENTURES. I was about 3/4 of the way through when we arrived in Indianapolis. After checking into the room and the convention, we went out for lunch, then I settled back in the room to laugh myself sick while finishing ADVENTURES.

I eventually emerged, found Mike and returned his diskettes and manuscript to him, and wandered about, handing out copies of Lan's Lantern #14, the super-hero issue. I had remembered to bring copies with me, unlike MIDWESTCON. Joe and Gay Haldeman were there, which was good I suppose, since Joe was the GoH. Roger Sims and Fred Prophet were the Fan GoHs, and Tucker's introduction to them made them really sound old.

I talked for a while to Howard DeVore, who made some suggestions for the Norton issue coming out this fall. While sitting behind his table and talking, Tim and Anna Zahn came by and said hello. We quickly made dinner plans, and they wandered off while Howard and I conversed. Eventually I crawled out from behind the table and wandered about, buying a new ASTERIX book from Greg Ketter, some paperbacks from Dale and Susan Johnson, and a couple of hardcovers from Dick Spellman. And one of the comic dealers at the con had a few Iron Man issues I needed, and Jon Sable, Freelance, the two issues I needed to finish the collection,



#5 and #6. At one point in the second of the two hucksters rooms (I think it was on Saturday), I asked Bill Cavin if he had a copy of GODDESS OF GANYMEDE or PURSUIT ON GANYMEDE, by Mike Resnick. Mike and his wife Carol were standing near the table at the time, and Bill replied, "No, REDBEARD is the only one of his old books he'll let me sell." I explained how I had lost my copy of PURSUIT in the theatre in Toronto, and Mike said, "Good, it deserves to be lost and never see the light of day again!" I told him that it was not a badly written book very much in the style of Edgar Rice Burroughs. Taken in that light, it was really pretty good. Carol agreed. But we all liked Mike's more recent stuff. And I smiled, thinking of ADVENTURES, and THE SOUL EATER, and WALPURGIS III, and all the others.

Maia and I were hoping that Ruth and Tim, our roommates for this con would show up in time for dinner with Tim and Anna. Maia found out from one of the Bloomington fans that they would be in later than anticipated because Ruth had to work unexpectedly (read: Ruth got screwed again with the schedule). So we went out for food, and we treated the Zahn's. "You can pay us back later," said Maia, "like at CHAMBANACON, with home-made lasagne." They laughed and agreed. Dinner was good, and we separated when we got back to the convention. Although I did make sure that they got their copy of Lan's Lantern. As much as I like both of them, and want to be with Tim and Anna, I realize that I have to be careful; they have other fans who like to spend time with them as well. So I made an effort not to monopolize their time.

Again, I talked with a lot of people. Judy Sutton was her beautiful self; Dick Spellman and I got into a long conversation about the Hugo nominees, and Gay Haldeman and Jane Jewell (a stringer for Charlie Brown's Locus) joined in with their own opinions. I has several other conversations with Jane through the convention. I tried to convince her to come to SPACECON, but I think she was leaning more to RIVERCON. I found out that she also was a teacher--middle and upper school, and has taught computer literacy and programming. She was particularly good with LOGO. Since she was "pink-slipped" for the coming year, I suggested she send a resume to Kingswood; we could use another good programming teacher.

With Gay Haldeman, Tim Zahn and Jim Shepherd of the CHATTACON committee, we talked about maybe having a program item with the GoH C. J. Cherryh, the special Guest Tim, and Joe Haldeman, if he would be there, about writing to a particular theme; the three of them will have a book coming out in January, when CHATTACON is scheduled, which has a novella from each about alien contact. It would make for an interesting topic for discussion, even if only C. J. and Tim were on it. If they could get copies of the book in time for the convention, a lot would get sold.

Ruth and Tim did arrive finally on Friday evening, and it was good to see them. We had not laid eyes on either of them since the year before at this convention. Tim had studying to do so he spent a lot of time with his books.

Ruth and I had some long talks; a year is a long time, and we had some catching up to do. In fact, we had something to take care of from two years ago. Anyway, we managed breakfast with the two of them, both Saturday and Sunday. Sion, Naomi and Randy were there as well; and the usual crazy fen that show up at this con. Kathy Hoover and Jud were also at the con, but they were not huckstering in either of the hucksters rooms; they were working out of their own hotel room. Kathy was in a wheelchair, having wracked up both knees. So she was taking it very easy.

In the midst of rushing around from one place to another and talking to people, I missed Joe's GoH Speech. I heard that it was just delightful.

Since Dick Spellman mentioned that he had just gotten more copies of Tim Zahn's THE BLACKCOLLAR in stock, I asked Tim if the book were on it's second printing. He didn't know, so we stopped by Dick's table to check. No, not the second printing. It was the third. Tim was surprised and delighted, especially since the price for the book was higher too. "I'll have to call to see if my agent knows about this!" commented Tim.

Since we had an 8 hour drive home, we wanted to leave as close to noon as we could. Maia wanted to be home while it was still light so she could clean; I wanted to move some stuff over the the apartment for my long wait on Monday. Right after breakfast we checked out of the hotel and packed the car. We walked around saying goodbye to several people, thanking Mary Ann Beam, the con-chair, for putting on another fine convention. Although we saw Tim and Anna before we left for breakfast, they were nowhere to be found at that time. And I looked to find Jane Jewell again, but again to no avail. So we left with incomplete goodbyes, but with a good feeling about the con.

#### RAMBLINGS 15.14

Monday, July 2, was the day for the phone company to arrive and put in an extra terminal in the kitchen. Since no exact time was set, someone had to be there all day. I volunteered, mainly because I wanted to assemble the bookshelves and place them where we wanted them in the livingroom. My hand was blistered from assembling the six shelves I made, and the salvaged one we had cleaned up. And the phone company never arrived. They did come the next day, fortunately at the time the movers went to lunch, so there was no interference.

Suffice it to say that the move took much longer than we expected, or rather, than the company representative had allowed. But by the end of the day, roughly 8:30, it was over. It took 3 trips: the first carrying the books, records, shelving and a few other things; the second with most of the furniture and carpets; and the third with the beds, wardrobes, and everything else, including the freezer in the basement. We had no complaints with the workers; they did their job well, and we were very happy with them.

About the time they were supposed to be back at Hedgegate from lunch, I went over there. Maia stayed at the new place and unpacked. Bob Greene and Trina Fennell were moving into #6 at Hedgegate, a third floor apartment. While waiting for my crew to show up I helped them carry stuff up to their apartment, along with the usual Kingswood crew: Bob and Trina, of course, Bill and Laurie Terkeurst, Kim White and Jeff Miller. They had much less than we did, but it was a three storey climb.

The next week and a half was spent putting the apartment in shape, building four more bookshelves (one for hard-covers, one for collections, and two for paperbacks--I managed to borrow a set of sawhorses from Chuck, which he said I could use until school started, at which time he would need them back), and gardening. The vegetables waited until we moved before starting to come in. The only exception were the strawberries and peas. I was also working on Lan's Lantern, and running on and off in an effort to lose weight. It was working, but my knees kept giving me trouble, and I would have to stop for several days at a time.

By the weekend of the 13th of July, we needed a change, so we helped Hal and Sherry move into their new place in Warren, Michigan. Again, more fans in a close enough area that we don't have to dial long-distance. The next day we went to my parents' cottage, more to relax than anything else, and almost the whole family was there. I never stopped to think that two of my sisters also have wedding anniversaries in July. My parents got gifts for every couple and we opened them there.

The following Thursday we went to my sister's house to celebrate Sarah's birthday. Although we had already contributed to a gift from the family (a swing set), we brought some extra stuff for her. We didn't stay too long; Tim had to go to work, and Maia had class that evening. I borrowed Tim's mitre box so I could do the finish work on the record cabinets I was going to build the following week, and promised to return it when I finished.

#### SPACECON 6

Friday about Noon we picked up Dorothy Bedard-Stefl. Dotti was on the phone (a natural past-time for a teenager), but she was ready to go. We stopped for lunch in Bowling Green, Ohio at the Dutch Pantry (one of our usual stopping places) and treated Dotti for her anniversary. We did get there early enough that the consuite was just barely open. We registered for the room and the con, and they partied the rest of the weekend.

It was just a wonderful time. Sam and Vicky showed up, with Vicky extremely pregnant. Mike and Doris were there, Bill and Tanya, Steve and Denise and their daughter Megen, Hania, Jackie, Brad and Wendy, Sid and Linda, Larry, Debbie, Nancy, Guy, Leah, Frank Johnson and Frank Olynk, Bill Cavin and Bill Bowers, Dick, Rusty, Joel, and the special Guests, Joe and Gay Haldeman (when they come to the Midwest to party, they show up at all the important cons!). As his "program item", Joe read the beginning of his latest novel, a SF spy thriller. I sat there enthralled with my mouth open during the whole thing, and when he stopped at a very dramatic point and said, "Sorry, that's all I've written so far," I wanted to tell him to go to his room and finish it. That will be another of his novels I will want as soon as it comes out.

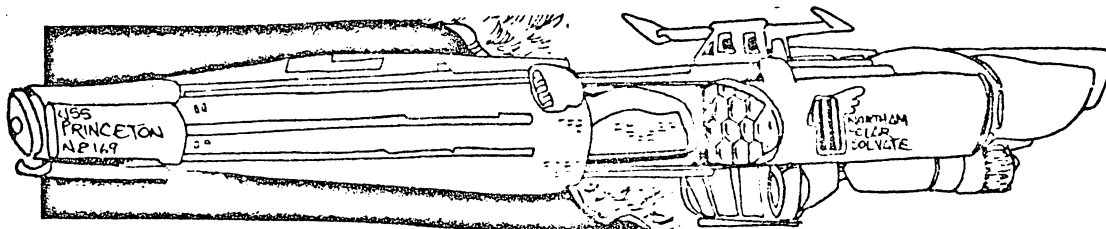
At one point Wendy dragged Joe Haldeman off to her room to "do it" as she put it within earshot of several people. We all smiled and wondered. A few minutes later they returned. Joe had autographed her copies of his books.

I had along talk with Sid Altus and Frank Olynk about books and publishing. Sid publishes books under the heading of Phantasia Press; Frank is one of his proofreaders. Although Sid's trade editions are a little higher in price than those from other publishers, the books are printed on acid-free paper, they have a sewn binding rather than glued, and the cover jacket is a wrap-around painting. They are good-looking books, and collectors' items.

Several little celebrations went on throughout the convention. We shared our anniversary dinner with Mike and Doris. Dotti celebrated her anniversary; Sid and Linda had a surprise wedding shower; there were several birthdays; Sam and Vicky celebrated their anniversary; and we all celebrated the moonwalk.

One thing which we got organized was WAPAKON, the relaxacon for those who are unable to afford to go to Los Angeles for the Worldcon this year. Maia is the treasurer, and if you want to go, contact her, or Rusty, or Denise Leigh. It will be held at the SPACECON hotel, the Holiday Inn in Wapakoneta, Ohio, exit 111 on I-75. You can't miss it; it's right off the freeway, next to the Neil Armstrong Air and Space Museum. It will be on August 30, September 1-3 (four days and three nights).

We left the con in mid-afternoon on Sunday, took Dotti home and got home while it was still light enough for Maia to clean the office, and for me to work in the garden.





## RAMBLINGS 15.15

The next couple of weeks were hectic ones. I basically worked furiously on three major projects, other than the garden. I purchased some sheets of plywood and made the record cabinets -- two of them, each six shelves high, and with lots of room for expansion. I organised, worked on and finally finished the Mike Resnick article for this issue, and I am near to completing this last thing, the ConReports and Ramblings. They all took lots of time to do, much longer than I had anticipated.

The record cabinets were finished, with molding trim and everything, in time for Maia's birthday party. We had about 20 people over, and warned our downstairs neighbor about it. The other family in the building (the one with which we share a common wall -- now lined with bookshelves) was not here. Ed and Linda and the kids were away at their house on the other side of the state for the summer. Maia was very pleased at the turnout, with some people coming long distances for the party. (I could try to name them all, but I'd probably forget one and that person would be very upset with me for doing so; so I won't even try!) Some others who were invited could not make it because of RATCON. Maia and I thought we could make it the Friday night bash for RATCON at Cy's, but by the time we had finished putting the record cabinets together, unloaded the old shelves, dismantled the bricks and boards and steel and carried all the parts down to the basement, set up and shimmed the new shelves in place, and re-loaded the records, we were too tired to make it.

When I asked Nancy downstairs if we had been too noisy on Saturday night, she said that she didn't hear anything, except everyone singing "Happy Birthday." That's one thing fairly unique about the parties Maia and I put on; very little, if any, music--and not loud. Most people talk to each other; dancing can be done at other parties, not ours.

Although I was not all that interested in the Olympics, I did watch many of the events, mostly because Maia had the TV tuned to the competition (except when

Howard Cossell was announcing). I caught some very dramatic moments, and I still get choked up every time I see the clip of Mary Lou Retten doing that final vault, then the cut to her holding up the roses. Whether it's patriotism, or just seeing that she represents the best in young women's athletics, still it's a wonderful feeling. Also seeing Joanie Benoit winning the women's Marathon by so much, and the Swiss woman staggering on the track. There have been such anguishing moments--the agony of defeat, thrill of victory, and all those other cliches--I'm glad she had it on.

Then there are the Detroit Tigers, but most other baseball fans would rather not talk about them.

Well, that just about brings us up to the present. I hope you have enjoyed my adventures, trials, and sufferings, as well as my joys. I have left out quite a bit, strange as that may seem. I missed putting in some parties, the Big Conference at Kingswood for Michigan Private Schools, visits from people, to people, and some others things.

All in all, inspite of the problems I've had, I am satisfied with the new apartment, and Maia just loves it. I'm sure I can handle the Service Program next year, and I've already started to map out plans so that I will have time to review for exams with my classes at the end of the school year.

So until next zine--enjoy yourselves.



As Lan did for Jack Williamson and Clifford Simak in honor of their 50 years of writing science fiction, he once again chooses an author celebrating her Golden anniversary, and presents an:

☆ Andre Norton ☆  
Special!  
Lan's Lantern #16

Already Lan has received several articles and appreciations of this fascinating lady, and would like more. Artwork is especially requested; Lan has a few pieces of art indicative of Andre Norton's stories, but would like more (all sizes--from whole pages to small illustrations). If you are so inclined, contribute something to this special issue of LAN'S LANTERN, and help celebrate the 50th anniversary of a very special lady. Please send contributions to:

George "Lan" Laskowski  
55 Valley Way  
Bloomfield Hills, MI 48013  
U.S.A.

The deadline for contributions is October 31, 1984.



