





Lan's Lantern 26

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Why You Are Receiving This

- ☐ Contribution (art, article, review, loc) in this issue
- ☐ Contribution (art, article, review, loc) received, to be used in a future issue
- ☒ Comment received (loc not published, phone call, verbal acknowledgement, etc.)
- ☐ Trade ☒ You wanted one
- ☐ We're in an apa together
- ☐ Mentioned in Letter Column
- ☐ Mentioned in my Conreports & Ramblings or England Trip report.
- ☐ Mentioned on page(s) _____
- ☐ Your book/zine is reviewed (see page 33 or 105)
- ☐ I thought you might find this interesting.
- ☒ I would like you to contribute to one of the special issues coming up -- see page 2.
- ☐ This is your last issue unless you do something

Dedication

To Maia, as always, and
to Amethyst, whose help has
been invaluable.

LAN'S LANTERN #26 is published and edited by George "Lan" Laskowski, 55 Valley Way, Bloomfield Hills, MI 48013 USA. Phone (313) 6425670. LAN'S LANTERN is available for articles, art, letters of comment, even money (US\$3 post paid) and the whim of the editor. The opinions expressed are those of the contributors, and may or may not be those of the editor. This is Lantern Publication #12, a division of LanShack Press Unlimited. LAN'S LANTERN #26 is copyright (c) May, 1988, by George J Laskowski Jr., except where otherwise noted. Contributions (art, articles, reviews, letters) become the property of LanShack Press, but will be returned upon request. All rights return to the contributors upon publication. Business manager: Maia Cowan.

From the Editor

by Lan

Early!

But I Have An Excuse

In my editorial for #25 I said that I had a lot of material I couldn't put into that issue because I didn't have room. As soon as I had finished pasting up the last of LL #25, I got onto the computer and started inputting the rest of those articles, and the reviews that came in after I had finished that section. And look what happened. I filled up a good part of this issue with those items, and had a little room left for some of the newer stuff.

Well, sort of.

I still have articles left over. And I know I have more coming in. And there are my regular reviewer contributors. And the locs that have yet to be sent on LL #25.

I set The end of April as the target date for the publishing of this issue of Lan's Lantern. And I made it, though I had to do with a lot less sleep than I am used to (which isn't very much to begin with). But, I will have enough copies collated for CON-TRAPTION, and will be handing this out at that convention. The problem is that it will take me another 2-3 weeks before I get the rest done -- collated, stapled, envelopes ready and stuffed, and so forth.

And money will be a slight problem, since the postal rates went up. I haven't yet in-

vestigated the changes for bulk mail, but the overseas prices have hit my pocketbook rather heavily. So I am trying for a smaller zine. Maybe not this time, but the next one will drop below 100 pages. Hopefully by a lot.

In This Issue:

There are several good articles this time around. Mike Resnick returns with another trip report to Africa, augmented by suitable illustrations by Diana Stein. Bill Unger's interview with Judith Moffett (in which he is strangely absent -- by design) is insightful and interesting. Other articles by David Shea, Craig Ledbetter, Kathleen Gallagher, and others I've put in because I found them interesting. There are two short stories: Terry Jeeves has a parody of the pulp Flying Aces, and Tom Easton offers a strange vision of the future. I return with my con-reports and ramblings and the long-awaited England Trip (my apamates now get to read the "long" version), and I have some con-reports from other people. There is the usual lettercolumn and review section.

So enjoy this one; stay on the mailing list by sending a loc or contribution.

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### Please Contribute

This year and next year, several authors are celebrating their 50th anniversary as writers of Science Fiction and Fantasy. Please consider submitting critical articles, artwork, cartoons, anecdotes, personal experiences, and reminiscences about these authors so they can be honored as they deserved. I realize that Theodore Sturgeon has died, but I think his contributions to the field have been such that I want to include him for the special issue(s) for 1989.

I am planning for these issues to come out in the fall of their year of celebration, so I will need the submissions by the 30th of June of 1988 and 1989 (which will give me the summer, if all goes well, to put them together). Please think about this and try to help honor these writers who have given us so much pleasure for a half century.

### 1988

William F. Temple  
Lester del Rey  
Arthur C. Clarke

### 1989

Isaac Asimov  
Robert A. Heinlein  
Fritz Leiber  
Theodore Sturgeon  
A. E. Van Vogt





by Mike Resnick

August 27-30: Conspiracy turned out to be a far more pleasant worldcon than I had anticipated. I spent most of the time letting the people from Arrow, my British publisher, tell me what a fine fellow I am.

August 31: We met my father, who was accompanying us to Kenya, and boarded a British Airways 747 jetliner from London to Nairobi. It was the last plane in which I would feel safe for quite some time.

September 1: Perry Mason, our private guide, was waiting at the airport to pick us up. In the process he had inadvertantly locked his keys inside his safari car, and it took us about half an hour to fish them out. It made for an informal beginning, anyway.

After checking in at the Norfolk Hotel, traditional jumping-off point for Roosevelt's, Hemingway's, Ruark's, and Resnick's safaris, we spent the morning visiting some friends at the East African Wildlife Society, where I autographed British editions of my books and arranged for the purchase of a photograph that will be the frontespiece to IVORY, a novel of mine that Tor will be bringing out just before the 1988 worldcon. Then we stopped by the Jamia Mosque, a couple of bookstores, and the MacMillan Library (which has the finest collection of Africana extant.)

# WHAT I DID ON MY SUMMER VACATION

After a quick lunch, we drove to the Nairobi National Park, a 44-square-mile game sanctuary within the city limits, and managed to see four of Kenya's handful of remaining rhinos. (Poachers have lowered their Kenyan population from 23,000 in 1973 to about 400 as I write this; they will almost certainly be extinct in the wild by the year 2000.)

We had dinner at the Carnivore, which remains my favorite Kenyan restaurant. It's fashioned after the open-pit restaurants of Brazil, and any given night a dozen game animals are roasting over the huge fire. Waiters come by every two or three minutes, offering the diners a slice of impala, gazelle, eland, kongoni, or whatever. Fascinating place. (I might add that diners are encouraged not to ask how they come by all these game animals in a country where game ranching is virtually nonexistent and hunting has been outlawed since 1977.)

September 2: We had the Norfolk pack us a batch of box lunches, loaded them into the back of the safari car, and headed north toward the Aberdares Mountains. Along the way we stopped at Thika, where we visited the Blue Posts Hotel (made famous in Elspeth Huxley's THE FLAME TREES OF THIKA, made clean by absolutely no one), and photographed the Chania Falls, a beautiful waterfall in downtown Thika where a number of sequences for the Tarzan TV show were shot.

Just outside Thika is Ol Donyo Sabuk, a mountain that has become a national park. It was here that Sir Northrup MacMillan (who later donated the MacMillan Library to Nairobi) had his estate. When he died in 1927 he requested that he be buried at the summit of the mountain, which is only some 6,000 feet high. But MacMillan was built like a typical science fiction fan -- he went about 400 pounds after a diet -- and after three unsuccessful attempts to carry the coffin up the mountain, they decided to

## AFRICA



bury him at the foot of the mountain instead. Wise decision, especially since on one of those attempts the body fell completely out of the casket and rolled down about 800 feet before it came to rest against a tree. I wish I had been there for the funeral procession; the mind boggles.

The Aberdares mountain range is, for my money, the loveliest section of Kenya. We drove up to 13,000 feet through heavy forests, had our picnic surrounded by the few remaining black-and-white colobus monkeys, saw some buffalo and bushbuck on our descent, and wound up at the Aberdares Country Club. The manager of the place, a white British colonial, and his chauffeur, a black Kikuyu, were opposing commanders during the Mau Mau Emergency a third of a century ago; now they are inseparable companions, bound together by a shared experience which shaped their lives more than any other. (And yes, their thinly-disguised analogs will be featured prominently in a forthcoming novel.)

September 3: We drove north through the frontier town of Isiolo, which used to be the jumping-off point for all serious elephant hunts, and is now the dividing line between the "secure" section of Kenya and that which is at the mercy of gangs of armed Somali bandits -- and soon pulled into Buffalo Springs, Carol's favorite spot in the world. It's a harsh, savage, arid semi-desert, and anything you see walking around -- lions, elephants, Samburu tribesman -- have paid their dues. Darwin would be pleased with this place, because anything that's not fit doesn't make it to noon.

It's north of the Tana River, and for reasons unknown, it seems that all the prettiest varieties of game occur north of the Tana. South of it you get the common zebra; north of it you get the pinstriped Grevy's zebra. South of it you get the Maasai giraffe, its spots all kind of blotchy; north of it you get the Reticulated giraffe, its spots beautifully-outlined. North of the Tana you also get the gerunuk, which hasn't quite made up its mind whether to be a giraffe or a gazelle, and spends most of its life standing on its hind legs, feeding off the tops of bushes.

We stayed in luxury tents, complete with dressing rooms and bathrooms, and while I was sitting just outside the entrance to my tent before dinner, I found myself staring into the bloodshot little eyes of a full-grown 150-pound male baboon, who was squatting no more than 10 feet away from me.



Just behind him were perhaps 40 more members of his troop. Others were perched atop my father's tent.

I slowly and carefully pulled my video camera out of its bag and began focusing, trying not to think of all those stories about packs of baboons going suddenly and totally berserk and pulling men and even leopards apart. Then one of the chefs emerged from the mess tent and tossed some garbage into a pit, and suddenly I was watching the start to the Kentucky Derby. I never saw so many animals move so rapidly or so efficiently in my life; Seattle Slew would have been left at the post. Ten minutes later they were back, joining me in the shade of my tent while awaiting their next round of garbage-picking. Interesting animals, albeit with terrible table manners.

September 4: Since it tends to be over 100 degrees in the Northern Frontier District, we decided to begin our morning game run at 6:00 AM and eat breakfast when we returned at 9:30, a practice we were to adopt for the remainder of the safari. We saw herds of elephant and oryx, plus a number of other species, and returned just in time to witness another feeding frenzy by the baboons. They were finally dispersed by the camp's pet ostrich, who chased them all away and then stopped by the bar to cadge drinks from the customers.

After lunch we were entertained by some Samburu dancers. The men were all in their late teens and early twenties, but the girls were no more than eleven or twelve years old. When my father asked about the discrepancy in ages, we explained that most of the twenty-year-old girls had been married for eight or nine years and were busy working on their sixth or seventh baby. It was his introduction to the fact that there is more difference between Africa and America than the animals.

Perry found an inordinate number of animals in the afternoon, including a pair of lions that were resting at the roadside, no more than ten feet from where we parked our car to photograph them. Upon returning we found that the staff, aided by the ostrich, had gone to war with the baboons, and had fought them to a draw (which only meant that the garbage stayed in the pit until the hyenas came for it at night. Africa has a marvelous disposal system.)

September 5: Our next stop was the Meru National Park, far and away the least frequented of Kenya's major parks. Perry had been preparing us for it for two days, telling us horror stories about the lodge, but when we arrived we found that they had hired a new manager a couple of months earlier and that it was absolutely beautiful: flowers everywhere, excellent food, and a view of literally hundreds of elephants and thousands of buffalo and plains game from our private balcony.

In the afternoon we took a game run (i.e., a 3-hour ride through the park in the safari car), and came upon the five white rhinos which Kenya imported from South Africa. These are much larger than the native black rhinos, and tame as cattle.

Originally there were nine of them, but poachers got three the first week, and a fourth a few years later; the remaining five are kept under armed guard 24 hours a day, and are so docile that we were able to walk right up to them and pet them, a stunt you should try with a black rhino only if you are a) suicidal and b) criminally over-insured. (Incidentally, black rhinos aren't black and white rhinos aren't white. They're both gray. The white rhino gets his name from the Afrikaner "vid", for "wide", indicating his square mouth; the black rhino gets his name simply to show that he's different from the "vid" rhino, which everyone pronounces white rhino. Bet you were dying to know that.)

September 6: We took a standard game run in the morning, then decided to drive down to the Tana River (some 25 miles south of us, but a 90-minute drive over the terrain). We saw swarms of hippos in the river, then drove a little way and came to Adamson's Falls (named for former Meru game warden George Adamson, husband of Joy, who wrote all those books about Elsa the lioness). I'm a waterfall junkie, and I must admit that these were the prettiest of the dozen or so I've seen in Kenya.

September 7: After four days in the semi-desert of the Northern Frontier District, we thankfully pulled up to the Mount Kenya Safari Club, arguably the only 5-star hostelry in all of Africa's game parks, where we were given a 2-bedroom cottage (each with a sunken ceramic tile bath and 3 shower heads). The bedrooms were connected by an enormous living room that contained a pair of sofas, a wet bar, and a fireplace -- and given the altitude (7,500 feet) and the fact that this was Kenya's winter, we actually needed the fireplace at night. The toilet wasn't working, but years of running the kennel has made a handyman out of me, and I didn't even charge William Holden's estate for fixing it.

In the afternoon we stopped by the Club's animal orphanage, which along with numerous other species ranging from bushbabies to a 1,200-pound tortoise, now contains 14 bongo, about ten percent of the world's population. (Their range was always limited to Mount Kenya and the Aberdares, and most of them were killed for food during the Mau Mau Emergency, when 90% of the war was fought in the mountains.)

September 8: In the morning we decided to drive up to the snowline (about 14,000 feet) of Mount Kenya. At one point Perry stopped the car and explained that he saw his first action right at that spot. (He had originally come to Kenya in 1952 to fight the Mau Mau as a member of the King's African Rifles.) It was densely forested, and as he explained it, he had led a punitive expedition composed of Wanderobo and Samburu warriors up the mountain in search of a particular Mau Mau group. They camped at this spot for the night, and Perry ordered a couple of them to sit up on watch. He awoke in the middle of the night when he heard noises in the bushes. The guards had

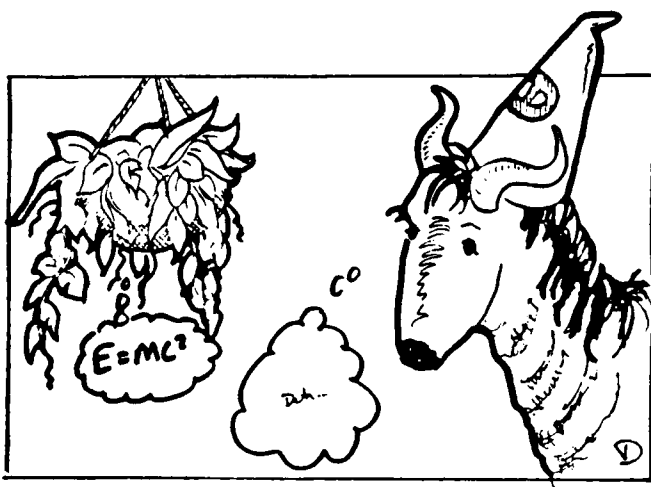
fallen asleep, and he immediately pulled out his sub-machine gun and opened fire in the direction of the noise. Pandemonium reigned for the next couple of minutes, and when they decided that the invading Mau Mau were either dead or fled, they went gingerly into the bushes -- and found a dead hyena with 22 slugs in its body. (In fact, that may have been the genesis of Perry's next career: he was a white hunter from 1958 to 1977.)

In the afternoon Carol and I stopped by the stable to rent some horses to ride up the mountain, but they refused to give me one. They had a policy that, because of the altitude and the terrain, no horse was allowed to carry over 190 pounds, and while I'm not in Northrup MacMillan's class, I do top 200. So we spend the rest of the afternoon sitting in our lounge chairs, sipping cold drinks and watching half a hundred varieties of birds, ranging from huge maribous and crested cranes to tiny weavers and plovers, frolicking on the vast lawn.



September 9: We drove from Mount Kenya to Nairobi, then hopped a 5-seater and flew through some disconcertingly choppy wind currents to the far end of the Maasai Mara, where some two million wildebeest had just migrated from the Serengeti Plains in Tanzania. We stayed at Governor's Camp, a tented camp which possessed electricity but refused to run it into the tents on the assumption that it was more romantic to fumble around in the dim light of a kerosine lamp than to see what you were doing. This made fixing our toilet -- right: it didn't work -- virtually impossible, and we finally got the manager to send for a plumber from the local Maasai village a few miles away. (He was pretty good, as African plumbers go; it finally worked after only his third visit.)

We only had time for a brief game run before dinner, but managed to see about a million of the wildebeest. The wildebeest, it is said, resembles a horse that was put together by committee. I might add that it is somewhat less intelligent than a potted plant. Ugly, stupid, and relatively defenseless -- and yet it remains the most successful animal in East Africa, with numbers that must be seen to be fully comprehended. Its survival trick is that every wildebeest cow calves within a couple of weeks of each other in April, and with more than a million babies on the ground, the predators can't quite eat them all, and perhaps 200,000 survive to adulthood, which more than matches the annual adult die-off caused by sickness, old age and predation.



September 10: We took two long, incredibly dusty game runs, during which time I decided that one could easily paraphrase Spirow Agnew when speaking of wildebeest: if you've seen one, you've seen 'em all. I mean, after watching 1.5 million wildebeest race off like bats out of hell just because the first one in line got stung by a bee, and watching them all come to a stop as if nothing had happened because the first one happened to run out of breath, you begin to lose any admiration you may have had for these plug-ugly luncheons on legs.

We did manage to see a cheetah and her 5 eight-week-old cubs, all of them looking as if Walt Disney had drawn them, and spent half an hour or so photographing them as they played like kittens, and we saw perhaps 10 prides of lions, all grown disgustingly fat on wildebeest, and we saw some elephants and some giraffe and some zebra and some Grant's and Thomson's gazelle, but my overwhelming memory is of the megaherd of wildebeest stretching as far as the eye could see.

That night we were entertained by some local Maasai musicians. Each night, as we wandered off to our tents, we were accompanied by an armed (with a spear) guard who shone a flashlight along the path to our tent so we wouldn't step where we shouldn't, like on a hyena. This particular night we heard a rustling in the bushes about 50 yards from our tent; the guard turned his flashlight toward the movement, and we saw a solitary elephant peacefully feeding his face.

A few minutes later there was an enormous commotion in the camp. It seems that one of the musicians, instead of accompanying the rest of his group at the end of the performance, stayed behind for a couple of beers, lost his flashlight, and, somewhat tipsy, began walking after them -- and bumped into the elephant, which, startled, ran one tusk through his leg and the other through his torso, and then threw him up against a tree. Initially they thought he was dead, but he was still breathing, and so they loaded him into a truck and began driving across the Mara to the town of Narok some three hours away, from which he could be transported to Nairobi. He was still in intensive care when we left the Mara, and I don't know to this day whether or not he survived. (Which

simply goes to show that, even in the game parks and even in the 1980s, the old African truism still exists: Everything Bites. In fact, I am reminded that the closest Harry Selby, Robert Ruark's white hunter, ever came to death was not from a lion or a leopard or an elephant, but from, of all things, a zebra.)

September 11: We spent all day looking for rhinos and hippos. We found the hippos. We also found (i.e., could not get away from) two million wildebeest, all acting like idiots. I found myself really getting to hate the damned things.

September 12: We took off for Nairobi in a 5-seater. As we finished crossing over the Rift Valley, which is perhaps 60 miles wide at that point, Karen Blixen's beloved Ngong Hills came into view.

"Lovely, aren't they?" I commented.

"No," muttered Perry.

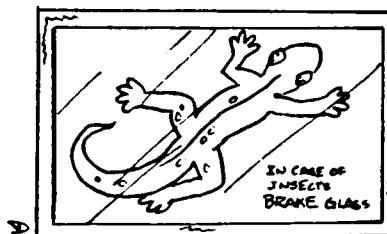
"Why not?" I asked.

"Because we're looking up at them, and we're supposed to be flying over them."

Even the pilot seemed surprised to be looking uphill at them, and finally we skimmed around them...barely.

We had lunch at the Carnivore, stopped by the Railway Cemetery while Carol and I looked at the headstones -- almost everyone there had died from lion, leopard, or cholera -- and then drove back into the Rift Valley to Lake Naivasha, where we stayed at the Lake Hotel (which had been the Sparks Hotel, the center of Rift Valley social life, during colonial times.) It was still typically British, which meant that we were shagged out of the restaurant after dessert and forced to have tea on the beautifully-manicured lawn. The local farmers have been drawing water from Lake Naivasha for irrigation purposes, so not only had much of the bird life left, but we found that we could walk from the hotel to Crescent Island, where British tradition was being upheld in the form of a polo match.

The Lake Hotel was also the first hotel where our beds were supplied with -- and needed -- mosquito netting. The game parks have so many lizards crawling around the tents and the lodges that you never see an insect...but exquisite colonial hotels won't tolerate lizards, and this was the result.

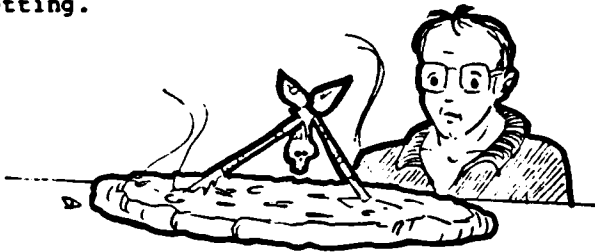


September 13: A day of rest. We drove back to Nairobi, and parted from Perry, who drove on to Mombasa to meet us the next day. Carol decided to spend the afternoon loafing in the Norfolk, but my father and I went to the Nairobi Museum, where among other things we saw the remains of Ahmed of Marsabit, the huge tusker who was protected by Presidential Decree until his death from old



age in 1974. After an hour or so we walked across street to the Snake Park, where we saw black and green mambas, rock pythons, Nile crocodiles, and a pair of ancient tortoises engaged in the delicate act of procreation (an act that had commenced before we arrived, and was still going strong when we left an hour later). Since we had no wheels, we decided to eat at the Norfolk's Ibis Grill, and I have now concluded that the food there is even better than at the Carnivore. Not as much fun, but better.

September 14: We showed up at the Nairobi airport to take a jet to Mombasa, found that the line on the left was for the people who had been scheduled to fly to Mombasa the night before except that the plane hadn't been working, finally got our boarding passes, and had a somewhat unsteady flight to Mombasa, Kenya's exotic coastal city. We checked in at the truly luxurious Nyalali Beach Hotel (which sprawls over some 48 beautifully-landscaped acres), grabbed some lunch (warning: never eat African pizza!), and then went into town, where we toured Fort Jesus, the Portuguese fort that had been erected in 1590 and was in constant use, as either a fort or a jail, until 1958. We stopped by Ali's Curio Shop, our favorite gift shop on the Kenya Coast, which has taken over the old police building and proudly displays the old hanging platform. We visited with Big-Hearted Ali for awhile, until it became too hot: Ali will bargain on everything he sells, with one exception -- he won't come down a penny on his cold drinks, and he makes a fortune on them because he refuses to ventilate his building, primarily because it would cut into his cold drink business. After driving through the Old City -- and one really does expect to come face-to-face with Peter Lorre and Sydney Greenstreet at every corner -- we went back to the hotel, ate a candlelight dinner on the beach, watched some local acrobats, and crawled under our mosquito netting.



September 15: We drove off early in the day, cruised by the Aga Khan's and the late Jomo Kenyatta's almost endless seaside estates, took a ferry across the Kabaki River (one of our most evocative experiences, with smells and sights and drumbeats straight out of a B movie), and after a couple of hours reached the Gedi Ruins, the remains of an Arab city that was built in the 1200s, deserted in 1500, repopulated in 1525, and deserted for good in 1600. There were houses, mosques, shops -- some of them standing empty since before Columbus discovered America. Numerous questions remain unanswered: why was the town deserted twice, why was it built more than a mile from the ocean when all the

other ruins (and there are many of them in Kenya) are on the beach, why are there no signs of warfare? (Yes, these and other questions will be answered -- sort of -- in an upcoming science fiction novel.)

We left Gedi at about noon and drove north another 15 miles to Malindi, a formerly jumping coastal town which had been very popular with German and Italian tourists until the twin spectres of crime and AIDS turned it into a virtual ghost town. We stayed at the Sindbad Hotel, which would not look out of place as a set piece in ROAD TO MOROCCO. In the afternoon we walked into town, which is not unlike running the gauntlet at a worldcon huckster's room -- street vendors were everywhere. Most wanted to sell me their carvings and their trinkets and their postcards, but a few wanted to buy my Banana Republic hat and one of them made me an exceptionally handsome offer for Carol.

Carol did find an Italian dressmaker hidden among the hucksters, and for less than \$150 picked up a suit and a dress that would have cost over \$1,000 in the States. She spent the rest of the trip trying to think of ways to sneak the dressmaker out of the country in our luggage.

The Sindbad had an open-air bar that was right out of Somerset Maugham's "Rain". It also had two restaurants. That night we tried to get into the fancier one, only to find that the door, which was composed of 6-inch steel bars, was locked. (The next night we demanded that the manager let us in and asked why the door was locked; he explained that it was to keep out the rain. Think about it.)

We awoke at six in the morning, to find that our toilet, which had worked the previous day, was not functioning. (I realize that by this time I may seem like a toilet fetishist to you. Sorry about that.) We went down to the desk to complain, and the manager explained that there was nothing wrong with the toilet. To conserve water, he turned the toilets off at midnight and reactivated them at nine in the morning.

"But the shower and the sink worked," I said. "I tried them, just to see if the water had been shut off."

"Of course they work."

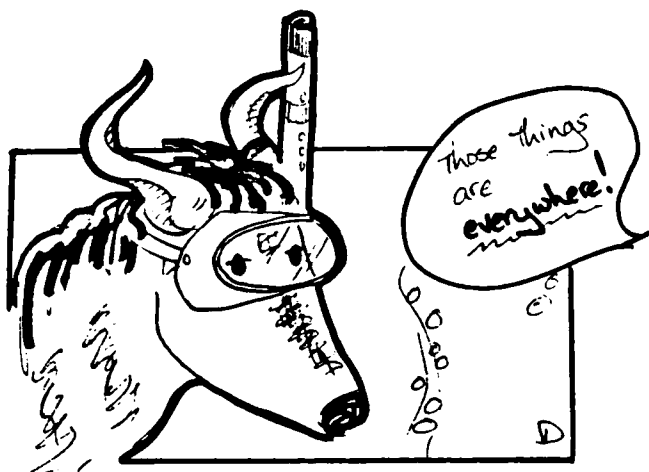
"Then why shut off the toilet?" I demanded.

He smiled. "Who takes a shower at four in the morning?" he responded.

Kenya may belong to the Third World. The Sindbad Hotel belongs to a world all its own.

September 16: After another trip to Carol's dressmaker, we spent most of the morning driving through the back country looking for a natural wonder called Hell's Kitchen. Never did find it, though Perry and I are convinced that at one point we were within three miles of it.

In the afternoon we went to the Marine National Park, a section of the coral reef where Kenya has forbidden fishing and all other exploitation, rented a glass-bottom boat, and went out looking at fish and coral. Carol had never snorkeled before, but she became a die-hard fan of the sport that



afternoon, and I have been informed that we're having an underwater vacation next winter before we return to Africa.

In the evening we were entertained by some local dancers, and the manager broke down and left the toilets on all night.

September 17: This was the day that the God of Transportation frowned upon us -- or snickered; I'm still not sure which.

Our next destination was Lamu Island, which has never had a car on it, and Perry therefore had to leave the safari car to the tender mercies of the Sindbad. We were to take a cab to the local airstrip and then hop a five-seater to Lamu, about 80 miles north of Malindi.

It was raining when the cab pulled up. It was a 9-year-old Peugeot with no windshield wipers. It had 4 doors, but only two of them worked. And when we headed off for the airport, it got stuck in second gear; the cabbie couldn't upshift to third or downshift to first.

But we made it, and seven of us (our party of four, the pilot, and two bachelor girls from Nairobi) piled into the five-seater. Since I was the tallest and needed the most leg room, I got to sit up front in the co-pilot's chair. As I looked at the panel, I saw the clock wasn't working. After we took off, I realized that neither fuel gauge was working either. It grew stiflingly hot in the overcrowded little plane, so I asked the pilot how to turn on the ventilation.

"You can't," he said. "It doesn't work."

So, with half the instrument panel out, and the ventilation not working, and the plane carrying two more passengers than God meant for it to carry, we reached an altitude of 6,500 feet -- and then I heard a pop, and suddenly I was feeling very well-ventilated, and the plane dropped to 4,500 feet in about 20 seconds.

"What the hell happened?" I asked.

The pilot gave me a great big Swahili grin. "The window just blew out," he replied. "Best ventilation in the world."

"You didn't have to do it for me," I said nervously as the plane finally leveled off at about 3,500 feet.

Carol leaned forward and began whispering bailout instructions to me, just in case the window had damaged the tail rudders on its maiden voyage into space.

"You mean the plane might not land?" I asked.

She assured me that the plane would most definitely land, but that it might not do so on a runway or on its wheels, and as we made our approach to the island of Manda (since Lamu has no roads, it would be presumptuous to expect an airstrip), I was prepared to hurl myself away from the plane before it burst into flames -- but except for bouncing two or three times as it touched down (which the pilot assured us was par for the course) nothing exceptional happened...unless, like Carol, you persist in believing that walking away from it in one piece was exceptional.



We then were transferred to a dhow -- an ancient sailing vessel, except that this one possessed a motor -- which took us across the bay to Peponi's Hotel. Peponi means "paradise" in Swahili, and this hotel was aptly named: a dozen cottages nestled in among half a hundred palm trees, flowers everywhere, a superb restaurant, a friendly bar, and eight miles of untouched white sand beaches.

In Casablanca everyone comes to Rick's. Well, in Lamu, everyone comes to Peponi's bar -- and within half an hour of our arrival we were visiting with Bunny Allen, one of the more famous white hunters (and now in his eighties) and a number of other old-timers, most of whom Perry had known and worked with at some point in his past.

After lunch we rented a non-motorized dhow and sailed three miles up the coast to Lamu Town, an Arab city that was built in the 14th Century. The streets are so narrow that none of them will accommodate a car, and most of the buildings were erected prior to 1700. So, alas, were the sewers, and while open gutters carrying raw sewage from the houses to the ocean may have been quite advanced for 1600, let me tell you that it stunk to high heaven in 1987. Most of the streets were covered by excrement, not all of it from the dogs and cats and donkeys that wandered freely from house to house. Still, it was a fascinating little city, and is where most of the truly beautiful carvings -- chess sets, ivory and ebony and brass trunks, etc. -- come from.

On the way back the God of Transportation had one last crack at us, and hit us with a nasty little monsoon about a mile from Peponi's. We took on a lot of water, and had to do a lot of quick weight-shifting, but we made it relatively unscathed.

Relatively.

September 18: We crawled out of our mosquito netting, had breakfast, and embarked on yet another dhow trip, this one to neighboring Manda Island to see the Takwa Ruins, which were about as old as the Gedi Ruins near Malindi.

These were more difficult to reach, however. We floated deeper and deeper into the mangrove swamps of Manda when finally Omar, our Arabic skipper, announced that we had run out of tide and that the dhow could proceed no farther. So he and his brothers (he has six of them, all in the dhow biz) waded inland, and after half an hour returned with what he called a canoe, but was much longer and broader and didn't have any paddles. Then, like Humphrey Bogart pulling the African Queen, Omar's youngest brother jumped out of the boat, grabbed hold of a rope, and pulled us the last half mile to the ruins. We took off our shoes and socks and disembarked into the water, which led to the mud, which led to a path covered by thousands of fiddler crabs, which led to the ruins.

When I signed the guest book, I noted that no one else had visited the ruins for the past eleven days.

"No tide," explained the curator. "Only Omar is bold enough to come at this time of month." Then he added, "How do you like our fiddler crabs?"

We were visited by another ten-minute monsoon on the way home (they seemed only to strike when we were in Omar's dhow), and as the dhow began foundering Omar quickly shoved a two-by-six plank over the side of the boat opposite the sail and instructed Carol to climb out to the end and sit there to help balance us. She actually enjoyed the experience; the rest of us spent the remainder of the afternoon recovering.

September 19: Perry left before sunrise to go to Malindi, pick up his car, and drive back to Nairobi, and Omar stopped by shortly thereafter to see where he and his brethren could take us. We explained that we had taken pity on all the people who liked to bask in the sunshine and would therefore not take a dhow ride today. I thought he was going to cry -- but we never saw another drop of rain, and spent the day loafing on the beach.

That night it got very hot and close -- we were, after all, at sea level on the equator -- and I found that I couldn't feel any draft from the overhead fan beneath the mosquito netting, so about midnight I removed the netting. I woke up the next morning with about 50 mosquito bites on my arms and torso...so now I'm waiting (with some anxiety) to see just how effective my anti-malarial pills really were.

September 20: Talk about travel days. We began by taking the dhow to Manda Island, then grabbed a 5-seater that flew to Malindi, took another five-seater to Mombasa, found that the jet to Nairobi was only two hours late (a good sign, airport personnel assured us), finally flew to Nairobi, and transferred to Perry's safari car to drive to the Norfolk. We then did about 3 hours' worth of gift-shopping for



relatives and the kennel staff, packed, drove back to the airport, checked our luggage through, ate dinner, and boarded a British 747 to England just after midnight. It was the first flight that had taken off on schedule since the British 747 that had brought us there.

September 21: Carol has trouble with jet lag, so we decided to spend a day in England at the Gatwick Hilton, catching up on sleep. I also phoned Chris Morgan of Arrow and caught up on the Hugo Awards, since we had left just before they were given out. I also found out that Arrow had made a very handsome 5-digit (in pounds, yet) offer for IVORY, and that Chris, who had been raised in Zimbabwe, was anxious to read my next African-based science fiction novel.

So now, if you'll excuse me, I've got to go write it.

- End -

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## YOUTH MISSPENT

by Thomas A. Easton

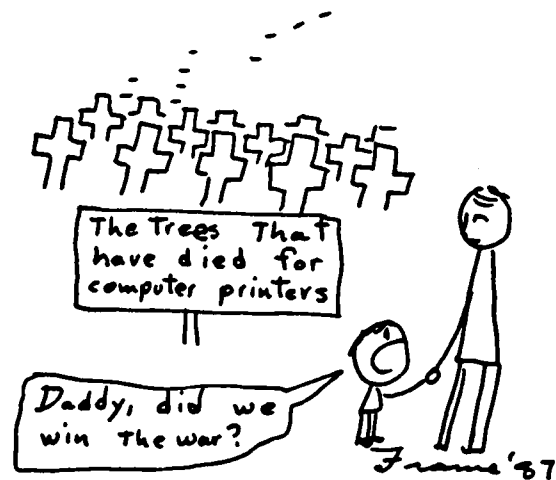
Ravished by Verne,  
I seduce a ring  
And embark upon the vacuum of ether deeps.

But a pastoral fantasist  
Drives me mad  
With robotic dreams.

And my roaring heart,  
Too fond of abstraction,  
Travels in shoddy fantasies.

# The Modern Office

by Kathleen Gallagher



I work in a modern office of a large business. It has wonders and equipment never dreamed of when I began working as an office clerk seventeen years ago. Technology has brought new equipment and procedures to my work place.

## Telephones

In the old days, phones were black, had a distinctive ring and were clearly identifiable as phones. On a multi-line phone system, rows of lighted buttons identified each separate line.

Many changes have been made to phones to make them compact, complex, and decorator coordinated. Some phones are so well disguised you can't tell which desktop accessory is the phone.

Phone systems come with a variety of choices: instant re-dial, speed-calling, call-waiting, call-forwarding, and numerous other options. This is for convenience and efficiency. When I try to learn a new system, convenience and efficiency give way to anger and frustration. One option requires the use of a number-pad and a code; another the use of the switch-hook. Just try to get a list of the codes you need to operate your system from the phone company. That information is confidential to help protect your office security. In fact, it is so secret the phone company won't give it to you in the first place. The options that require the use of the switch-hook are really just another excuse to hang up on a caller and clear busy lines for other incoming calls.

The bell on a phone has been replaced by a variety of tones, some pleasant, some rude. Some are so nice I really like listening to them, and others are so disgusting they were once considered crude to use. Either way, you can't be sure the phone is ringing.

Multi-line phone systems have become so compact that all the buttons and lights are flattened and cunningly concealed. The buttons are so well hidden that they are unidentifiable. The answering of calls on a multi-line system is considered a rather simple entry-level job. It is most often

given to the newest employee. The phone system is only mastered by the clerks whose work it is to answer it on a daily basis.

The phone system remains a mystery to those in management, especially the power-brokers who can rely on clerical staff to answer the phone and screen calls. The up-and-coming power-play strategy will be in the hands of the office personnel, for only they will have the ability to decide which calls will be put through, cut off, or left on hold in electronic limbo.

## Typewriters

Typewriters were just a way of insuring the readability of letters and forms. You learned to type by mastering the keyboard. You needed a dozen little tricks to properly set up a page, space it, number it, and a hundred other things I've long since forgotten.

Now the new electronic keyboards master the operator. All the typewriter commands are set through a code key, plus the code-letter or -number. Unless you know all the secret passwords, the typewriter won't let you in, making it a very expensive paper-weight. After mastering the coded words of a new typewriter, it will correct your spelling and talk back to you when you make mistakes. I secretly suspect all typists must have a degree in programming to be able to turn on a typewriter.

## Computers

Computers were once the domain of a few selected individuals inducted into a secret society. Gaining access to this society involved learning new languages, new vocabularies, and new ways of thinking. The use of a computer made you "special" because you had access to the secrets of the corporate universe.

In the office itself, a whole new department has been created called the Data Processing Department. It seems you can't get a job in this department unless you are on a first-name basis with a computer. These days, computers have created a whole new job



vocabulary, job titles, and acronyms. If you don't speak techneese, you are left out in the cold and unemployed.

For example, a high profile entry-level job in D. P. (Dumb Person) department that many first hold is that of data-entry operator. (Hence the reference to Dumb Person, because they don't know any better.) The job has strict requirements to even be considered for it. The job regimen is such that many a hard-core prisoner would call it cruel and unusual punishment. The poor data-entry operator has to sit in an uncomfortable chair all day, produce high quality accurate work from forms filled out by other clerks who couldn't qualify as D. P. operators. These forms look as if they were never touched by human hands. In spite of all this, these clerks are expected to produce accurate work and be able to account for each error in great and intimate detail.

If it weren't for the honor of the thing, most workers would try to earn an honest living.

#### The Office Copier

Business legend has it that the original photocopy machine was rejected as useless and unnecessary. Time has proved this assumption to be very true.

The office copier has brought about an ability to bury an office more quickly and efficiently in excess paper than any other invention. When a copy had to be laboriously typed out or handwritten, then careful consideration was given to information that was prepared for duplication and distribution. Thanks to the office copier and its whizbang photo technology, anything can be copied.

Gone is the tediousness of duplicating and the need for judgment and discretion of what information should be seen by others. Now, anybody can push a button and make a copy. An extra copy is always made, just in case. And if Joe or Mary sees a nifty cartoon, or an exceptionally relevant article, it is magically available in duplicate to post and distribute to all of their friends and co-workers.

The greatest contribution of the copy machine is that it has helped to make the office secretary more anonymous. Gone are the days of the woman with the carbon-black fingers. (Unless, of course, the copy machine is acting up, in which case she is black up-to-her-elbows with toner.)

#### Other Technology

In my own personal opinion, the greatest technological wonder of the 20th Century office has only been around for a few years. I don't know how we functioned without this little wonder. All other accomplishments pale beside it. Now, you ask, what is this wondrous device that has made life so much more fantastically simplified?

One more minute of suspense, please ... (drum roll) ... it is the lowly post-it pad. These things allow you to leave messages in places where messages had never gone before. You can place reminders in places where people once thought they were safe from reminders.

Thanks to these little devices, messages can now reach everyone. They're everywhere, they're everywhere!

When you think of the modern office, ask yourself this: "What do you reach for first?" Is it your computer, or a typewriter, or a post-it pad, to put a note on some file or to leave a message in a very OBVIOUS place for yourself or someone else?

#### IRON DREAMS

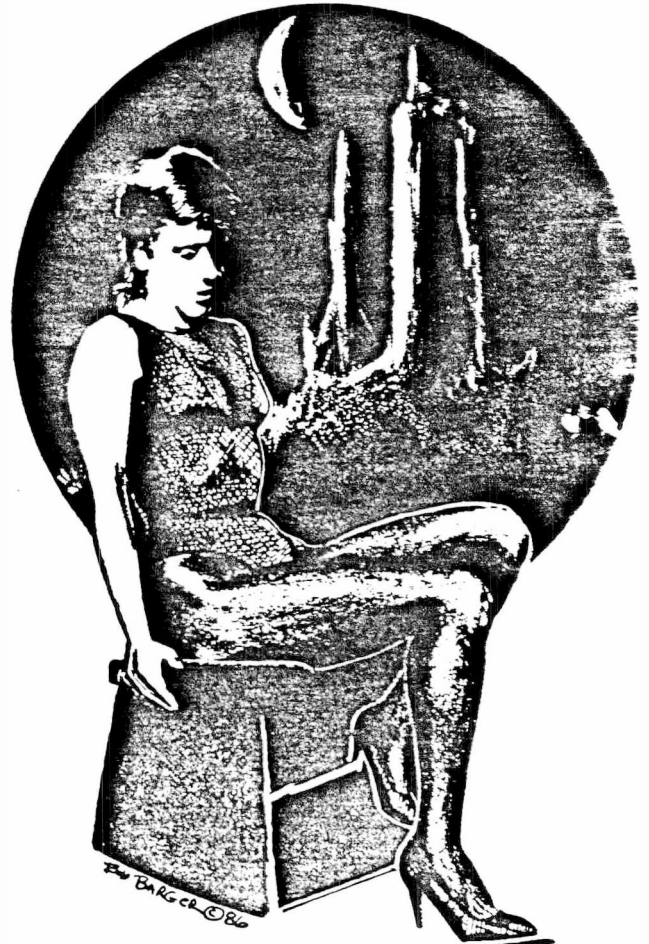
by Thomas A. Easton

My fantasy of space  
Has androids blush in weightlessness,  
Space stations fall out of orbit,  
And slavic saucers astound us.

Aliens despoil my soul  
As Rabbis call positronic  
Golems for my aging children  
And their unfortunate widows.

Now I dream of healing.  
Wiser robots with windy cries  
Summon rainy death and revive  
Past hope for my posterity.

Mud falls from the golems  
To stain the oaken stakes that pin  
Fantasists to reality  
In the name of intelligence.



# Judith Moffett:

## *In Her Own Words*

A conversation with Bill Unger

Mainstream poet turned SF author Judith Moffett was more surprised than anyone when her novelette "Surviving" (Fantasy & Science Fiction, June, 1986) appeared as a Nebula finalist and won the first Theodore Sturgeon Memorial Award for best story of the year. Her first piece of SF, "Surviving", was in fact only her second published story. On June 14, and again on August 23, 1987, I spoke at length with Judy by phone. Here is part of that conversation.

Bill Unger



I was born in 1942 and grew up in a strict Baptist family and a fundamentalist church in Cincinnati. It wasn't a hell-fire church. The message I got was that it's a joy to serve the Lord, the joyous sort of life you can have if you're serving in the right cause. I think I still organize everything around the idea that some things are more valuable and some things are less, and it's important to distinguish, to pursue the most valuable and --really, I'm still thinking-- the most righteous course. I don't think you can shake that conditioning. You don't keep the same answers, but the questions persist.

I shed my beliefs gradually. First I wasn't Baptist, then I wasn't Christian, and finally at some point further down the line I wasn't a theist either. I've never become an atheist because there hasn't seemed any more reason to do that than to be a Baptist. Except that if you're trained up with these attitudes, there's a terrible void in the world and in your life if you can't fill it with something. In college, I became an ethics freak.

I got a B.A. in 1964 from Hanover College in Indiana and an M.A. in English in 1966 from Colorado State University. I spent a year at the University of Wisconsin and then got a Fulbright Teaching Fellowship in Sweden. That was during the Vietnam era and living in a country so hostile to American policies was an eye-opening experience for an apolitical person, which is what I'd been.

I came back having decided to change to American Studies from English, and transferred to the University of Pennsylvania where I got an M.A. in 1970 and a Ph.D. in 1971. My dissertation was on Steven Vincent

Benet's narrative poetry. My first job was at the Erie branch campus of Penn State. Then, having paid off my Ph.D. debts, and not liking the job all that much, I travelled around and lived in various places -- Sweden, Denver, Sweden again, England -- for a while until I got a job offer from the Iowa Writers' Workshop, which I snapped up. I taught poetry writing there for a year and then went to the University of Pennsylvania where I've been ever since.

At the end of my fifth year here, I had to decide whether or not to go for tenure -- to compile the information and write the essays about courses required for tenure review. I agonized about it and finally decided that I didn't really want a fulltime commitment to the University; maybe it turned out to be just one more church I couldn't join! So I switched over to adjunct status, which sounds easier than it was, but I worked out a deal with the English Department to teach half of each year -- no more than two courses -- so as to have the other half free to write. I kept that much of a guaranteed income so I wouldn't feel too panic-stricken at the idea of cutting loose to free-lance.

I married late -- at 40 -- no doubt as part of what turned out to be a perfectly ordinary mid-life crisis, along with giving up poetry and teaching for SF. My husband, Ted Irving, is a professor at Penn, a medievalist who's written three books on *Beowulf*. After living in London for a year -- August, 1985, to July, 1986 -- we bought a beat-up suburban house on an acre of land, which is now half-full of garden.

I started out writing poetry as an undergraduate, though I never dreamed there was

such a thing as a fulltime career of being a poet, and, in fact, when we were in college, I don't suppose there was. If there had been these writing programs at Iowa, Syracuse, Johns Hopkins, Houston, Stanford and so on, I would certainly have considered entering one. But there were no such options, and anyway I was quite an academic type and was happy enough going on to graduate study in English. But I always wrote poems "on the side" and began in a very slow, gradual and timid way to think of putting a book together. I was terribly pleased when LSU actually agreed to publish my first book, Keeping Time, in 1976.

During my Fulbright year I had begun to learn Swedish, and I wanted to go back to Sweden but couldn't afford to pay my own way, so I came up with a translation project and applied for and received a Fulbright travel grant. I was interested in formal translation -- keeping the metrical patterns and rhyme schemes of the original poems. That's hard to do. Almost nobody bothers, which means that most formal poets in foreign languages either don't get translated, or -- if they're as good and famous as Rilke, say -- they tend to get translated into free verse..."watered down to free verse" in Richard Wilbur's excellent phrase. Most of my poems were formal, and I was interested in the technical problems of formal translation. The work I did on that grant came out as a book in 1979, again from LSU. The book's called Gentleman, Single, Refined, and Selected Poems 1937-1959 by Hjalmar Gullberg -- and in 1983 it won a prize from the Swedish Academy.

My next book was a critical study of James Merrill's poetry published by Columbia in 1984. That same year, Princeton brought out Whinney Moor Crossing, my second book of poems. I'd also published one story -- "After Three WordsWorths" -- a very literary piece that appeared in Shenandoah in 1980.

I'm in the middle of an ambitious translation project, an anthology of 19th-century Swedish classical poetry. I got a NEH grant to start it, and I'm trying right now for a second grant to finish. If I get it, I'll be sprung from teaching for a year, and I'll get this project out of the house at least, which I very much want to do.

I never was a fan. I didn't know anything about fandom, and, if anything was going on in Cincinnati during the years I was growing up there, I had absolutely no way of finding out about it from the people I knew and the places I went.

Edgar Rice Burroughs was the first SF-type author I read. I came across the first Tarzan book I ever saw in my grandmother's house, where some old male relative had assembled a few of the books. I was looking for something to do I was about eight --and found those and started reading, and I got completely engrossed. Then I prevailed on my father to take me to the secondhand bookstores in Cincinnati to look for the old A. L. Burt and Grosset and Dunlap editions. By the time I was eleven or so, I had read just about all the Tarzan books.

In junior high I discovered Lester del Rey, Heinlein, and Andre Norton in the children's room of the library. I loved Hein-

lein's young adult books. By high school I wasn't reading SF much. All I knew about it was from that children's room. I didn't know anything about the pulp magazines, just never discovered them. I can't guess now whether I would have liked those stories. They weren't really written for kids like me, and if I hadn't been able to identify with the heroes of the pulps, if the stories had been too much space opera, which I guess a lot of the earlier stuff was, I don't know if I'd have been able to go for it anyway. But I did like the Heinlein and went on liking him, and also some of the SF really meant for quite young children, like The Wonderful Flight to the Mushroom Planet. And I read kids' fantasy too: P.L. Travers, L.M. Boston, Edward Eager, Astrid Lindgren. I can remember sometimes slumming in the children's section when I was in college. I'd just go and sit at the tables and read one of those Heinlein books.

But I got into "serious literature" right away in college and sort of put that whole aspect of life behind me, clear up to the time of Star Trek. I didn't see and Star Trek while it was actually being produced, only in syndication afterwards. I'd been in Sweden for the first two years and didn't start watching until I was in graduate school at Penn in 1970. But I really got involved when I was living in Denver between 1973 and 1976 and there were reruns every weekday at four o'clock. During that same period I discovered The Left Hand of Darkness, and that was it.

I would literally organize my day around the Star Trek program slot, watching the episodes over and over, like true Trekkies do, and I kept the SF flame alive or something that way until I got to Penn in 1978. Once there, I come up with the idea my first year of a freshman seminar called "Science Fiction and Science Non-Fiction" in which we read some SF and some Loren Eiseley, Jacob Bronowski, The Double Helix, and so on.

I didn't know much about the field at all back then, but I've been reading constantly ever since and trying to catch up. It started when I got the chance to teach my first real SF novel course -- "The American Novel of Science Fiction." The course was designed as a ploy to draw non-English majors into English courses. I leveled with the class the first day and said that there was an awful lot I didn't know, that they were probably much more widely read than I was, but that I was doing my best to narrow the gap. I'd gotten together a list of Hugo and Nebula winners for the past 15 years or so and had worked my way through it the summer before I first offered the course, and I drew up my first syllabus from that list. And afterwards the students recommended other titles, and I kept on reading too, and now I'm quite pleased with the mix and quality of the books we do.

So, by teaching that course at least once a year for the next four or five years, I began to acquire some breadth of knowledge--at least some of who some of the important writers were and what novels the students found most exciting or enjoyable or meaningful. But when you're a fulltime teacher, it's hard to read much apart from the stuff

you're teaching, so it wasn't until I got the translation grant and then an NEA back to back, and had several consecutive years of leave, that I really began reading systematically and built a foundation under what was becoming my own desire to try and write SF.

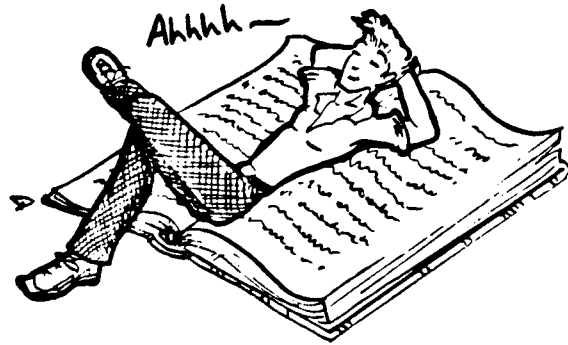
When did I decide to throw everything over for SF? That's a good question, one I ask myself constantly, and I revise my answer all the time. All my friends who are poets ask it constantly as well. Almost without exception they feel that I've stepped down, that I've given up something really fine for something less fine. Most of them don't know what SF is -- they think it's Star Wars.

I think the answer to why it happened is rooted in that perfectly ordinary mid-life crisis I went through around the time I turned 40. By definition, a mid-life crisis in its career aspect involves examining one's past life, taking stock, and asking what have I done with my time up to now and is this what I want to go on doing with it for the rest of my life, because if I want to make any changes, they have to happen now, or it's going to be too late.

Essentially, looking back, I felt that I'd gone about as far in poetry as I could right then. I'd changed my life radically by getting married and settling down, and I didn't feel the urge anymore to write poetry based on the personal, autobiographical material that had been pushing at me from below for so long. I discovered this in the summer of 1981. We were in London teaching a course, and we went to Cambridge for three weeks after we'd finished. I had planned that three weeks as poetry writing time. I had the space, the time, and the lack of distractions, and I couldn't think of anything I wanted to write about, which had never happened before. I tried for awhile, priming the pump, you know, but nothing came. So then I decided to work up another translation project, as a way of keeping myself technically proficient until the gates opened again. But in fact they never have.

In February, 1981, I'd finished my long poem "The Missing Link" -- Asimov's will be publishing some fragments of that some time soon. It was the last poem I wrote, apart from some occasional verses. Since then, I've hardly ever felt the impulse to write one. It's hard to believe that the faucet would just turn off like that, though I suppose it's not so much turned off as redirected. My poems had been getting longer and longer, more and more thematically complicated, and more narrative. Long narrative sections would appear in the middle of poems. I suppose that the transition happened without my being aware of it, until suddenly I couldn't do a poem, but I could do a story.

In the spring of 1983 I was suddenly possessed with the idea of writing "Surviving". I sat down one day to type up some notes, and three weeks later --almost literally-- I came to. I was teaching full time, too, which makes this hard to believe in retrospect. There were days when I didn't have to go in to teach, when I'd discover at two o'clock in the afternoon that I was still in



my bathrobe with my clipboard in my lap and five more sheets of lined yellow paper covered with scribbles. I hadn't written a poem with that kind of obsessive concentration for years and years. So I knew something had changed, maybe for keeps.

Finding an agent was never a problem, because the agent found me. The last section of "The Missing Link" is a kind of mini-SF story. When two-thirds of the poem was published in The Kenyon Review, its editor, Fred Turner -- whose agent was Virginia Kidd -- sent a copy of that issue to her. So out of the blue I got a letter from this literary agent who said that she had found the poem terribly interesting and that if I ever decided to write fiction, she hoped I'd let her know. So a year later when I wrote "Surviving," I sent it to Virginia and she started sending it around. It took three years for that story to sell. She tried Omni and Asimov's, several mainstream publications, and Terry Carr. Ellen Datlow at Omni said she liked it but already had a lesbian story in inventory. Terry Carr said he liked it but couldn't see it as SF. Shawna McCarthy at Asimov's asked me to expurgate it, then still felt that the readers would balk at the material. Maybe it was just a bit early, and maybe the climate has loosened up in the past couple of years. The published story is a little less explicit than the original -- not much, but it leaves a little more to the imagination. To tell you the truth, I think the expurgated version is better, and I'm grateful to Shawna for getting me to tone it down. Responding to editorial direction -- something poets don't have to do -- was a useful lesson, one Gardner Dozois is still helping me to learn!

My reaction to being a Nebula finalist? I was dumbfounded. What would yours be? One story, that took three years to sell? After that start, "Surviving" has gathered an incredible head of steam: reprinted in the Dozois and Carr best-of-the-year collections and in the Nebula volume for 1986, and finally winning the Sturgeon award. I expect that little train has run to the end of its tracks at last, but who'd have believed it would run so far?

While we were in London, I wrote a novel which will be published in October in the series edited by Gardner Dozois called "Isaac Asimov Presents," published by Congdon and Weed. The novel's called Pennterra -- as in "Pennsylvania" -- and is about a shipload of Quakers sent out to colonize a planet in the Epsilon Eridani system. They arrive to find the planet already occupied



by a race of stone-age indigenes, the "Indians" of my story. These natives tell the Quakers they have to live in one valley, limit their numbers, and refrain from using heavy machinery for farming and building. Being Quakers, they comply, but the next ship to arrive is full of ordinary humans who refuse to obey the natives' strictures and set up a separate town. So there's a three-way conflict, which focuses on the figure of a 13-year-old Quaker boy named Danny Quinlan. The natives keep telling the humans that the planet itself will destroy them if they use the big machines, but can't or won't say how, and the non-Quaker humans don't believe the warning.

The whole middle section of the book is an anthropological field study, undertaken by the Quakers, of the native's social and sexual arrangements, which have powerful implications for them and especially for Danny.

I found the process of writing Pennterra exhausting and frightening, largely because I had a terrible confidence problem. You've no idea how much harder it is to learn the nuts and bolts of a new craft when you're in your forties than when you're in your teens and twenties, which is how old I was when I was doing it in poetry. Fiction and poetry are more different technically than I ever realized all those years I was teaching both. "Surviving," written in a kind of obsessive trance, was a clear case of beginner's luck; everything else has been much, much harder. I have two stories forthcoming from Asimov's now as well as the novel, and only the middle section of Penterra "wrote itself" in that automatic way.

Usually I write in longhand and then reduce the draft to total illegibility with corrections and marginal stuff and arrows and asterisks, and then I type that out. Then I reduce that draft to the same illegibility, retype it, and put it away for a while. The fourth draft is the fair copy. I don't like the immense physical effort and the tedium that goes into producing prose that way, but I can't seem to learn to compose anything but letters directly into a machine. I still don't have a computer, though I promised Virginia that I'd buy a word processor with part of my advance, and I mean to keep the promise. But for a Luddite like me, mastering any new machine is unpleasant. You have to remember, I'm a person who was nearly thirty when she reluctantly bought her first car.

Will I have to hit the con trail? I'm willing to if I have to, but I don't like parties, don't stay up late, don't drink, and don't much like traveling anymore, after years of back-and-forth to Europe. I'd have enjoyed the cons a lot in my 20s and early 30s -- career building through that medium and getting to know people and having lots of personal exchange with professionals and fans. But now -- well, I've done an awful lot of poetry readings, you know, flown all over the country and read poems to audiences of strangers, students and writing teachers and people from university communities and so on. So I've had some experience of appearing as a featured speaker, and I've been on panels and judged contests, and it was

exciting and fun, but I was younger then. This stuff is less attractive at my age. Still, if it comes with the territory, I'm willing to do it. What I'd rather do is teach at some of those summer workshops, like Clarion, where I'd be much less of a square peg in a round hole.

The only writing taboos I'm aware of now are self-imposed. In poetry, I felt free to use personal material -- family stuff -- because I went to great lengths to ensure that no member of my family ever saw any of it. In poetry that was easy to do, but now I feel constrained not to use very personal stuff that might end up on a shelf in Waldenbooks or somewhere that one of my parents could walk in and buy. So self-censorship is operating more now already than it did in poetry. But I think that Pennterra violates more taboos page for page than "Surviving" did. Through a strange set of circumstances, Virginia received two offers for the novel on the same day. And when she called to tell me about this, I said -- with some astonishment -- you mean neither editor objected at all to the content? And she said no.

Pennterra takes up the subjects of incest, bestiality, child abuse -- topics that are sensitive to say the least -- and also contains very graphic sex, which is also weird sex. Apparently people no longer bat an eye at this kind of thing, and I doubt whether I'll want to write about anything more extreme, so it seems there's now no problem only four years after "Surviving" couldn't find a home. External censorship could always come around again, I suppose, but at the moment the only constraints I feel are to protect my family, and to protect myself at the same time, from the kind of unpleasantness that might result from their finding out things about me that they don't really want to know.

My interest in the life sciences goes back to high school, where I took college-level biology, zoology and botony -- and also chemistry, where I did much less well -- and then I did a biology minor at Hanover. I can easily imagine another life in which I became a naturalist or a zoologist instead of an English academic. I no longer routinely read much science, apart from Natural History magazine and four gardening magazines, but I love the PBS television series: Bronowski, David Attenborough, Carl Sagan, Nova, the National Geographic Specials. I have a whole shelf of books on human evolution and primate studies, especially the various experiments with apes and language but also Jane Goodall and Dian Fossey. Every story idea I get seems to require weeks of research into stuff I know too little about. What sort of mutations occur when plants are irradiated? How long does it take to get from Earth to Epsilon Eridani? I sweated blood over those calculations for Pennterra, struggling to fake it plausibly. I think I did in the end, but it was much more trouble than it should have been.

My favorite writers? Ursula LeGuin -- first, last and always. There's nobody like her. I admire Frederik Pohl very much, and Silverberg's shorter-than-novel-length works like "Born with the Dead" and the various Majipoor Chronicles. Larry Niven is always

entertaining, and Sturgeon is always moving. Gregory Benford's story "Exposures" is a perfect piece of short fiction; Jack Vance too, in "The Last Castle" and "The Moon Moth."

Of the younger writers, Michael Bishop, Orson Scott Card, Howard Waldrop, and Suzy McKee Charnas. For my money, the new "LeGuin" is going to be Karen Joy Fowler, who's terribly good. I was reading through her story collection -- Artificial Things -- and thinking on every page that this prose could be in any respectable mainstream fiction magazine from The New Yorker on down. She's just as adroit in handling all the conventions of fiction as any very successful mainstream writer. There's no question that she, or Michael Bishop, or Howard Waldrop could make it as mainstream writers if they chose. I like Kim Stanley Robinson's The Wild Shore a lot. Orson Scott Card's Speaker for the Dead did what I've been asking books to do for me since I was an escapist child reader: it made me feel happy while I was reading it -- the same miracle that Tolkien performs, but Tolkien was writing fantasy, and heroism has a different meaning in that context. It's very exhilarating even so, but it's not quite the same kick that you get from a book like Speaker, which makes you feel better about your whole future life and what relationships might develop into. Not that I'm really comparing the two. Tolkien is one of the major literary touchstones of a lifetime of constant reading.

Themes that interest me pick up on things that I'm already interested in. Left Hand was electrifying because it's about an androgynous race of people, and androgyny is one of my major themes. I liked The Wild Shore because it was a post holocaust book in which people were living in a much more basic way than we do -- a kind of post-industrial world in which people had to rediscover skills that we've mostly forgotten and to recapture some of the values that go with them.

I like any good story unless it's got thematic material and characters that turn me off, which is the problem with cyberpunk. I recognize as everyone does that something

different and vital is going on, but I just don't like high technology and I don't like urban life, I don't like the 20th century much, so cyberpunk turns me off not for any literary reasons but because of life preferences.

These days, I'm reading hardly any mainstream fiction at all. I still have a lot of SF to catch up on, and there's so much of it coming out all the time.

The trouble with mainstream fiction for the most part is that it is so very urban. It's childish, I know, but I do still read everything the way I read as a cimmited and escapist child who didn't want to be brought closer to reality, but closer to hope. During the 70s, it was essential to read the Jewish Renaissance writers -- Bellow, Roth, Malamud, and so on. The trouble with them, I finally realized, is not that the stories or the writing weren't as good as everybody said they were. But they all seemed to be set in New York City or Chicago, and I didn't like New York City or Chicago as an environment in which to spend my reading time. I did my M.A. thesis on Faulkner, with whose world I was far more comfortable.

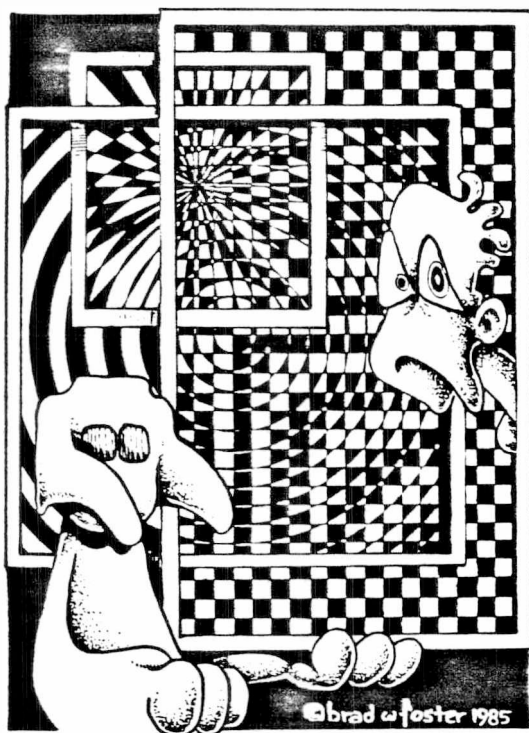
Most mainstream fiction also turns me off because it's about people whose lives are basically pretty hopeless, who get in ugly messes that they can't get out of. What I like about SF is the energy and vitality and the general sort of optimism about things, even though the optimism may not be naive optimism of the sort the the Golden Age is associated with -- that science and technology will fix everything, and all of our present problems will vanish into some sort of golden glow of the Future. You don't see that much any more.

No, I don't aspire to "go mainstream," although if I could be Gail Godwin I might feel differently. I think she's a wonderful writer. In a note I had from her recently, she says she's been reading a good SF novel and then she says parenthetically: "(big secret, which I'm sure you know: all the dreams for a better world, formulas for better living, remedies for our mess, can be found in that genre.)"

That's about it.

YEW AIN'T ONE OF THEM  
TRISexuals, ARE YA, BOY?





# CONFESSIONS OF A VIDEO REVIEWER CRAP ARTIST

by Craig Ledbetter

Back in 1978 when I first discovered a video cassette recorder called the Sony Betamax (the original one-hour SL 7200), I remember getting very excited. I've always been a collector (comics, fanzines, movie reviews, comic strips...you name it) and now I realized I could collect my favorite movies and TV shows. I could watch them over and over again, anytime I wanted. Well, this was just a few short steps from Nirvana as far as I could wee.

Back then there were no pre-recorded films available, except for hardcore porno. In fact, though the video industry would hate to admit it, it was the pornographic film industry that gave birth, so to speak, to Hollywood releasing their product on video. After Hollywood saw the figures on how many actually bought the pre-recorded hardcore pornography videos, they quickly realized the potential for profits. Magnetic Video got the rights to fifty Twentieth Century Fox films and the pre-recorded video industry was born. Other studios quickly formed their own labels and began the flood that continues today. Some of the studios were slow to catch on, but most jumped in with both feet. Universal and Disney instigated a lawsuit against Sony to try and stop the flow of VCRs. As of 1/1/87, video dollars outstripped theatrical dollars, probably making both studios grateful they lost the suit.

As for me, I quickly graduated to the two-hour Betamax, then took the plunge to VHS, to where I now have 6 VCRs and 1 video-camera.

I've always been a fan of schlock, horror films. Beginning with Famous Monsters and graduating to Castle of Frankenstein, I devoured every article I could find on BAD horror films. I was living in South Texas at the time, and none of the local channels

ever showed schlocky horror films. Reading about the career of Ed Wood Jr., or such awful but entertaining films as the Creeping Terror and Invasion of the Blood Farmers only increased my desire to see these films.

Apparently videotape companies finally realized how cheap these films were to acquire and release on tape, so the trickle of product soon became a flood. At last, thanks to such labels as Unicorn, Monterey, and Paragon I was able to view such gems as Last House on Dead End Street and Doctor Butcher.

Ah ecstasy; I was in Heaven.

Unfortunately, Sturgeon's Law also applies to crappy movies. 10% of the really awful stuff was worth viewing all the way through. For every Blood Freak (an unbelievably entertaining film about a drug that turns a dumb hick stud into a blooddrinking turkey man!), there are ten Blue Murders (a Canadian made-for-TV film that raises boredom to new levels). I used to delight in seeing new, unheard-of titles grace my video shelves. Unfortunately disappointment became common, quickly replacing my excitement. Video soon became the dumping ground for all sorts of trash.

Video has given rise to three categories of films that have led to my disillusionment with the VCR:

## 1. Death Documentaries

This is a particularly offensive category that has gained a renewed marketplace thanks to video. Such titles as Faces of Death (I, II, & III) which were originally made for the Japanese market, Of the Dead (a repulsive French Documentary on the intricacies of disposing of the recently deceased), and last but not, Shocking Asia (I & II) (want to see a sex change operation of a man into a woman?) all populate the video shelves under the guise of entertainment. Oh yes, all these "documentaries" profess to contain actual deaths (but believe me, some of them are staged with gore as fake as any H. G. Lewis film) and animal mutilations (this I find particularly offensive) are a given.

## 2. Theatrically Unreleased Videos

I'd always heard about films that never even made it into a theatre. For years I considered this a travesty. How dare I be denied access to these unknown "diamonds in the rough"? Well folks, after seeing a few of these, such as Dr. Gore's Body Shop, I now realize why this crap was never released to a theatre. They're Godawful. All basic concepts of movie making are at hideously low levels of competence. Acting that wouldn't pass muster at an elementary school show and non-existent production values are hallmarks of these types of films.

## 3. Films Made Exclusively for the Video Market

This last category represents the final nail in the video market's coffin. These videos are made for fans who only care about two things: gore and nudity. Usually shot on videotape, they contain no atmosphere with which to build suspense, and butchershop ef-

fects that are laughable in their execution. If made for the theatrical market, they would end up in category two anyway. United Video has released three of these "films" so far. They are: Blood Cult, The Ripper, and Terror at Ten Killer, all made by a bunch of "horror fans" in Tulsa, Oklahoma. Wizard Video has got three in release as well: Breeders, Mutant Hunt, and Psychos in Love. At least these are approaching the lower rungs of competence. Still, this approach to filmmaking seems to be a dead end with any hope of excellence far beyond their reach.

Don't get me wrong. I'm not advocating we return to the days before the VCR existed. It just goes to prove that getting something, that for years has been beyond your reach, isn't always what it's cracked up to be. Now if you will excuse me, I just got this great-sounding film on video called Alien 2, about a group of cave explorers menaced by these small lizard-like creatures that cause people to blow up real good....

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# WHAT'S WRONG WITH FANDOM?

It's a cliché that things were always better in the good old days. (Yes, citizen? Before diphtheria antitoxin? Before Polio vaccine?) Today's kids don't understand the truisms their elders struggled to achieve, etc. An overlooked point is that clichés not infrequently contain an element of truth.

Two recent events have set me thinking on a subject which has concerned me for some time. The first was a letter to Ian's Lantern from Marty Cantor (LL #22, pp. 105-106) expressing the philosophy of his fanzine, Holier Than Thou. No doubt the gentleman will correct me if I grossly misrepresent his position, but it seemed to me it could be summed up as: Fandom is its own justification, to which science fiction as such is only peripherally relevant, if at all.

The second event was an article which appeared in the Baltimore City Paper not long after the '87 BALTICON. (CP is, like the Village Voice, one of those self-consciously hip "underground" papers from the Sixties

gone commercially viable.) The writer of this article, who seemed to have actually attended the convention, briefly trashed it as a "confab of sci-fi junkies, video votaries, and hard-core space cadets." He proceeded to praise "video voidoids whose lives exist within the confines of the 21-inch screen," and then devoted the remaining 1500 or so words of his article to a cultist's painstaking tribute to Lost in Space, which he felt was "required viewing for space junkies." The fact that Lost in Space was a parody, and a bad one at that, (redundancy alert!) seemed to escape this individual. Mercifully, no further mention of BALTICON was made.

You're probably thinking: So what? This is what we expect from the mundane media.

Why? And should it be?

The second question is, of course, much easier, since the obvious answer is "no".

In response to "why?", I suggest that we brought it on ourselves.



by David M. Shea



By "we" I mean specifically the science fiction community, as distinct from the fannish community. Twenty years ago this distinction would not have had to be made. The interest of fans at that time divided about evenly between partying and talking about science fiction books. Everyone had read Heinlein. Everyone had read Tolkien. Most of us were capable of assembling a simple declarative sentence, and of carrying on a rational discussion.

The problem arose because science fiction fans, in their natural desire to be liked (and for commercial reasons I'll get to in a minute) welcomed with open arms a whole spectrum of cults, groupies, fellow travelers, most of whose interests included science fiction only marginally. These "fringe fans" have not exactly "taken over" -- most of them are too obsessive about their special interests to pursue fannish power politics with any real enthusiasm -- but they are now, numerically, the majority. Among these are:

- \* Costumers. They aren't worse than the other fringes, just more conspicuous -- especially the bad ones, as the 300-pound women in chain mail bikinis. Some people have an astonishingly high threshold of embarrassment.
- \* Video and Film Cultists. The (shudder) Trekkies; the dorks who have seen Star Wars 147 times (but usually few or no other SF films); the Mark Hamill Fan Club (a real organization, no shit).
- \* Gamers. They go into the game room on Friday afternoon and roll peculiar dice until Sunday evening. Why they bother to pay for a convention membership is beyond me, since they could do their thing at home with equal ease.
- \* Filkers. See above comments regarding gamers. Some filkers, not all, even have a modicum of musical ability. If only they were interested in hearing anyone else's music but their own....
- \* Medievalists. The SCA and similar groups. In my experience, their sole topic of conversation seem to be the making of armor, and individual combat tactics.
- \* Mystics. People who really believe in Tarot, Caballa, the I Ching, divination by divers means, psychometry, reading of "auras", all the mystic disciplines. In this category could also be classed the "neo-pagans" (their term, not mine), folks who with apparent sincerity profess various obscure religious practices.
- \* Even -- and I hate to lump them in with the other geeks -- the serious spacers, L-5 and the like, all those well-meaning folks who delude themselves (in spite of over-whelming evidence to the contrary) that there really will be a peaceful civilian colonization of space in the foreseeable future. At least they dress like adults, though they have a tendency to corner you and preach about space stations with Jehovah's-Witness fervor.

Conventions also seem to draw increasing numbers of teenagers whose behavior seems to be confined to, like, hanging around, man, flirting with each other, playing Def Lep-

pard at high volume, acting goofy, and like, hanging around, man. Occasionally two or three of them can be observed making a brief run through the dealers' room, usually without buying anything, but that seems to be the limit of their involvement with the rest of the convention.

All these people are entitled to their beliefs, their hobbies, and their varied amusements, however strange (in some cases, pathetic) they seem to me. Everyone is allowed to make a fool of himself in public. That's the American way. (Some folks even get paid for it; e.g., Pee Wee Herman, Oral Roberts.) What bothers me is: What does all this have to do with science fiction? The one thing almost all of these "fringe fans" have in common, generally speaking, is virtually total ignorance of science fiction. Not only do they not read Heinlein, most of them have never heard of Heinlein.

So what are they doing at science fiction conventions? For one thing, we (we're back to the exclusive SF community editorial-grade "we" here) allow them to be goofy in public without being judgmental. Fans, on the whole, really are more "tolerant" than mundanes. Also, they serve an important economic function. Let's use BALTICon as an example with which I happen to be personally familiar. This is the major fund-raiser of the Baltimore Science Fiction Society; it pays for the clubhouse rent and utilities, and supports many other BSFS functions. The con has to clear \$5000 or \$6000 profit. To do this it must draw at least 1500 to 1600 people. The club can't be picky about where they come from. Besides, lots of fringes are pure gravy. Give the gamers, the filkers, the spacers a small room, and they'll happily amuse themselves all weekend making minimal demands on the convention's other facilities.

So what's "wrong" with this? I don't know. I used to feel I could walk into any science fiction convention in the world, even if I didn't know anyone, and fit in. I felt I could talk to anyone. I had something in common with everyone.

I don't feel that way any more. I'm beginning to feel like an outsider.



# SF BOOKS ON CASSETTE

by Jamie McQuinn

At CONTRAPTION 1986 (Southfield, Michigan) I was invited to sit on a panel that would discuss the merits/demerits of recorded books on cassette -- specifically, the quality of science fiction available on tape. My qualifications were that I was a librarian (so therefore must know a lot about books) and had listened to many editions of books on tapes. Unfortunately, some other panel discussion (I do not recall the topic) happening next door must have sounded far more interesting. No one came to sit in on our discussion. Naturally, this was a great disappointment. So, here I sat with all my notes still intact from that meeting (plus new thoughts and ideas since then), and nothing to do with them. I was in minor despair until Ian suggested I write an article for his Lantern. So, all you people who went next door, here is what you missed.

I first became interested in books on cassette when I started commuting to school and then to work (sometimes both). The AM/FM babble was beginning to get on my nerves. I hated the time wasted driving when I could have been spending it reading some of the many books I will never have time for. Unfortunately, for the most part, the only books available on cassette were those for the blind and physically handicapped, and you had to be certifiably handicapped to qualify. Wanting something new to listen to in your car was not enough. Then I discovered that my library had started adding books-on-tape to their collection and companies had started producing more and more for the general listening audience. It was like a gift from heaven.

With this new discovery, I could use my driving time to better advantage. The first book I listened to was an unabridged recording of The Little Drummer Girl by John LeCarre, an author I have always wanted to read but never got around to. The reader did an excellent job of portraying the variety of characters. I was riveted to the story and actually found myself looking forward to my commute so I could hear the next chapter. Next it was William Styron's Sophie's Choice (unabridged). This was another novel I know I would never have gotten around to reading in print. It was an intensely moving tragedy. Once again, while listening to it in my car, I found my commute over in no time.

Now I was hooked. I began to seek out more books on cassette. I was able to find quite a few titles and listened to many of them (most checked out from libraries at little or no cost): Catch 22, Peter the Great, A Town Called Alice, Jeffrey Archer,

Dick Francis, Agatha Christie, Frederick Forsythe and even Mickey Mantle. Unfortunately, many are abridged. On the whole, I prefer an unabridged book (whether in print or on cassette). However, an unabridged book on cassette can run as many as twenty tapes long and sell for over \$100, well out of most individual's and libraries' budgets. Luckily, some companies rent the unabridged titles for what amounts to less than the cost of purchasing the book in hardcover. Most abridged books on cassette are only two cassettes long, and sell for less than \$10.

On the fringes of this new publishing industry, along with the classics and mainstream best-sellers, there is science fiction out there for the fan who wants to listen to SF in their car or living room. With a little research I have been able to come up with some science fiction books on cassette. The following are a few science fiction books on tape that I have listened to and what I thought of them.

Foundation by Isaac Asimov, unabridged (6 hrs), Books On Tape.

Even though I have read this book many times, it was fun listening to it being read to me all the way from Michigan to Pennsylvania.

"The Feeling of Power" and Other Stories read by Isaac Asimov, unabridged (1.5 hrs), Newman Communications.

Asimov reads three of his works of short fiction, and includes his classic introductions which help bring out the humor in his stories. The other stories included are "Living Space" and "Satisfaction Guaranteed", the latter being one of his "robot" stories.

Domovan's Brain by Curt Siodmak, abridged (2 hrs), Listen for Pleasure.

A mildly interesting story turned into a melodramatic farce by horrible reading. The reader sounded like a reject from a high school speech class.

The Left Hand of Darkness read by Ursula K. LeGuin, abridged (2 hrs), Warner Audio Books.

Wonderful! Much of the detail is lost, yet it still remains a powerful story. The lack of skill the author shows as an actress is made up in her ability to feel the parts of the characters.

Thinner by Stephen King (writing as Richard Bachman), read by the actor Michael Sor-

vino, abridged (2.5 hrs), Listen for Pleasure.

The reading by Sorvino was excellent. I have not read the unabridged book, but cannot imagine what was left out. It was a perfect story as presented on the two tapes.

The White Plague by Frank Herbert, abridged (3 hrs), Listen for Pleasure.

This one was greatly improved by abridgement. When I read the book, I lost interest during the endless philosophical discussions while John O'Brian/O'Donnell trekked across the tediously described Irish landscape. The abridgement kept the meat of the narrative, discarding the fat. One small sub-plot was completely left out, but not really missed.

A Boy and His Dog and Repent, Harlequin, Said the Ticktockman read by Harlan Ellison, abridged (2 hrs), Warner Audio Publishing.

I, as anyone who has heard him read his own works, was captivated by Ellison's skill at verbal storytelling. I could have done without the sound effects and mysterious music.

Space by James Michner, very abridged (3 hrs), Random House.

Stay away from this one. How can anyone try and abridge one of his overweight novels to two 90-minute cassettes? You can't fit one chapter if his heavy tomes onto two cassettes. Too many loose ends and an accelerated story pace left too much to be desired.

The Restaurant at the End of the Universe by Douglas Adams, abridged (1 hr), Simon & Schuster.

Not actually a reading of the book, but a condensed version of the radio program. Since the book is mostly one-liners anyway, little is missed.

So Long and Thanks for All the Fish, abridged (2.5 hrs), Listen for Pleasure.

This one is a standard abridged reading of the novel. Haven't read this one before and can't tell what might be missing. It is different from the previous books in the Hitchhikers' series in that it does have a plot (somewhat) that is followed throughout the story.

Books on cassette can have their advantages as well as their disadvantages. Points against the medium are that it can be said that less is left to the imagination if someone starts filling in the voices, and their interpretation of the character's personality. Yet just as easily, it can be said that hearing a story told opens new dimensions to the understanding of a story. Many books are butchered by abridgement, while on the other hand some are much improved. A great disappointment is that there is available from the "masters" only Asimov, Clarke, Bradbury, Wells and Verne. If it weren't for books on cassette, I would never have read some very good "mainstream" novels. I feel "better read" than my admittedly narrow reading diet of science fiction only. Best of all I feel that a long drive in the car is no longer a total waste, and it definitely beats what's playing on the radio.

Books on cassette for the non-blind or physically handicapped is a relatively new and growing field of publishing. Whether its recent increase in interest is just a passing fad or an important trend for the future remains to be seen. It is for the moment a reading option worth looking into for anyone who loves books.

A Selected Bibliography  
of Other Science Fiction Books  
on Cassette  
(Not listened to by this reviewer)

Anthony, Piers, A Spell for Chameleon, abridged (2hrs), Warner Audio Publishing.

Bradbury, Ray, The Martian Chronicles, unabridged (6 hrs), Cassette Book Company.

Clarke, Arthur C., Childhood's End, unabridged (8 hrs), Books on Tape.

Farmer, Philip Jose, To Your Scattered Bodies Go, abridged (2 hrs), Warner Audio Publishing.

Lewis, C. S., Out of the Silent Planet, unabridged (8 hrs), Books on Tape.

McCaffrey, Anne, Moreta: Dragonlady of Pern, abridged (2 hrs), Warner Audio Publishing.

Verne, Jules, Journey to the Center of the Earth, unabridged (9.5 hrs), Books on Tape.

Vonnegut, Kurt, Jr., The Sirens of Titan, unabridged (8 hrs), Books on Tape.

Wyndham, John, The Day of the Triffids, abridged (2 hrs), Listen for Pleasure.

A Selected List  
of Publishers of Recorded Books.

Books on Tape, Inc., PO Box 7900, Newport Beach, CA 92660

Caedman Book Co., PO Box 7111, Pasadena, CA 91109

Listen for Pleasure, Ltd., 417 Center St., Lewiston, NY 14092

Newman Communications, 2700 Broadbent Parkway NE, Albuquerque, NM 87107

Random House, 201 E. 50th St., New York, NY 10022

Simon & Schuster Audioworks, 1230 Avenue of the Americas, New York, NY 10020

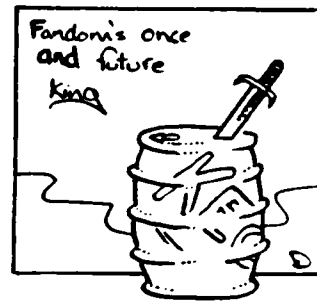
Warner Audio Publishing, 105 Fifth Ave., Suite 6A, New York, NY 10003

Source for much of this information:

On Cassette: A Comprehensive Bibliography of Spoken Word Audio Cassettes, New York: R.R. Bowker Company, 1985.

# RANDOM NOTES

## FROM BALTICON



Written by David M. Shea

L. Sprague de Camp has been ill, but as of this writing (April, '87) is somewhat better. Art GoH was unable to attend the con due to a back injury. By the time this sees print everyone will know about the death of Terry Carr. I was shocked to hear about it and many others seemed equally startled. I only met Mr. Carr once, but he took the trouble to actually comment on a story I sent him rather than just sending a form letter.

Richard Grant had seen my review of Rumors of Spring and was interested in receiving a copy of Lan's Lantern when the review appeared. Several other people commented to me about LL, including Chris Miller (editor at Avon) and Esther Friesner. Roger McBride Allen said his new book, originally titled Thursday's Child, now retitled (he told me the new title but I forgot) will be out this fall from Baen.

I spoke with Roger Zelazny and Toni Weisskopf about the Hubbard "Writers of the Future" Contest. The rules as printed announce that, "Entries will be judged by a panel of professional authors." This is ambiguous. Someone -- apparently Algis Budrys -- thins the submitted entries down to a group of eight or ten; the announced judges (Zelazny, Silverberg, et al) only read those and pick three winners. I'm not going to knock the Contest, but anyone who enters it should do so with eyes open. There is no commitment that the "judges" will see your story.

I had dinner with Chris Rowley and some other friends. Chris' new novel Golden Sunlands is coming from Del Rey this summer. I think it's about beings in a manufactured monobloc universe, but probably it will be clearer when the book comes out. We talked about the pressure of writing; Chris said that if you're going to make any kind of living writing SF you must do at least one novel per year. Marvin Kaye later joined the party for drinks, and several other people dropped by. We were also introduced to Thomas Wren, the winner of this year's Compton Crook Award (Best First SF Novel) for The Doomsday Effect. I haven't read it yet but Chris and several other people said they liked it.

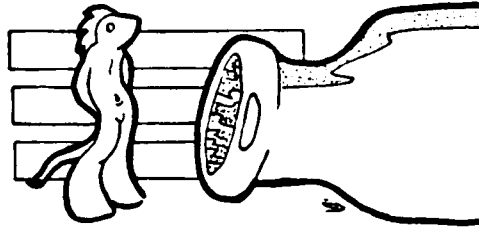
On Saturday I also ran into my friend Tom Monteleone. His new novel Magnificent Gallery, based on his PBS screenplay "Mister Magister", comes out from TOR this summer. TOR is also publishing Tom's collaboration with John DeChancie, A Crooked House, later in the year. Tom says this will probably be marketed as "horror" even though he insists it isn't. The third novel of the Dragonstar trilogy, tentatively Dragonstar Destiny, has been turned in to Berkeley but, due to their backlog, probably won't be published until late 1988! Tom also introduced me to the convention's Publishing GoH, Tom Doherty, who had many amusing anecdotes to tell.

Charles Sheffield, who is chief science consultant at the Earth Satellite Corp. as well as being a well-known SF writer, was pro advisor to the writers' workshop, and gave some of us much-needed encouragement on our fiction writing. Dr. Sheffield has a completed novel, Trader's World, for Del Rey; and a horror novel on which he collaborated with David Bischoff, The Judas Cross, will be published by NAL late this year or early next. Donald Kingsbury was also at the convention, celebrating the publication -- finally -- of The Moon Goddess and the Son (Baen hardcover). He has retired from teaching to devote full time to writing, and hopes it won't be five years between novels anymore. A collection of Nancy Springer's short fiction will be published this summer by Baen under the title Chance. Madbond, the first volume of Nancy's new trilogy, will be published by TOR later this year. She also has several other projects in the works including a contemporary fantasy about hex witchcraft in Pennsylvania.

Many other interesting people were at BALTICON including Jack Chalker, Hal Clement, Shariann Lewitt, and others to whom I didn't get an opportunity to speak.

I am reliably informed that Boskone, which has bloated to an unmanageable 4500 people, now has serious hotel trouble; and the future of this regional, and the 1989 Worldcon, are in jeopardy. However, there will be a BALTICON next year, location to be announced (presumably somewhere in the Baltimore area; don't ask me; I'm not on the committee any more; I'm having it tattooed on my forehead: "I'm Not Responsible!"). The announced GoH is Spider Robinson.

# Hard Times



by Thomas Easton



"We can turn you into any animal you wish," said the woman from Translife. She herself had a mane of russet hair that reminded him of fox's tail. Her disdainful nose helped the illusion, and he wondered if she had changed her mind half-way through the process. Whatever it was.

She pointed at her open sample book. "Lions. Porpoises. Dogs. Even birds. Or we can plug you into the machiney and let the computer give you the perfect match, You'll wake up in whatever animal best suits your personality."

He hesitated. He had filled out a blank at the zoo's Translife booth. It had been an invitation for a salesperson, he knew. And he was certainly sick of his human life. Digging ditches, bolting nuts on assembly lines, polishing the city's blundering buses, anything that would feed him for another day. It was hard work, boring, unsatisfying, and none of it had a future.

"Isn't it expensive?" he asked at last.

"Only if you choose some common animal, or if you insist on being released in the wild. If you choose something exotic, and if you let the zoo have you, it's free." She faced him steadily. Her gray eyes didn't blink. Yes, she seemed to be saying. That's what all those exhibits are. People. The real things are almost extinct now. Of course they're people. "Or you can let the zoo choose."

Life was hard as a human, especially since the welfare system had collapsed twenty years before. But at least it was free; you had your freedom. You'd lose that in the zoo, he thought. Though you'd be fed and housed. You wouldn't have to worry anymore. Or work.

"That doesn't sound so bad." He sighed and looked away. The TV set in his single room hadn't worked for months. He could barely afford a movie a month most of the time. And the price of beer had just gone up. "And I want out. But can a guy change his mind later on?"

"No." She shook her head gently. Her mane swayed. "Once you've made the change, you won't be able to talk. You'll be an animal. Even if you do change your mind, you won't be able to ask to go back."

"Then it's for good." Even so, he thought, it's got to be better. Anything would be. Work your ass off for a meal. Go hungry for a shirt. Always a month behind on the rent.

"That's right."

He nodded and reached for her pen.

\* \* \*

When he awoke, he remembered the dream. He had been working for the city, spearing scraps of paper with a stick. Stripping the spike into a gunny sack tied to his waist. Over and over: spear and strip, spear and strip. Pacing through the parks and along the sidewalks. Cleaning up after the picnic. And for just ten bucks a day. Room and board and a six-pack. He'd had better jobs.

The headache brought him rolling to his feet. All four of them. Oh, Christ! he thought. What am I? He tried to clutch his head and fell. Not a monkey. That wouldn't have been so bad. Oh!

The pain didn't surge, though, when he stood up. Not the way it used to. His head didn't move as far now, and his new, healthy body was already shaking off the pain. He opened his eyes, but the world was a blur. So now I'm near-sighted, he told himself. Another change.

He moved, and he heard the scrape of heavy claws against the concrete under him. They're mine, he thought. They must be. His face moved against the hazy background. It's long, stretched out. What the hell am I?

He moved again. He could make out a wall, a corner, and another wall. A darker shadow seemed to be a door, an exit. He turned, and he caught a glimpse of his heavy tail. Conical. Like a pastry tube. What am I?

His belly rumbled. He felt a stirring in his mouth. The exit beckoned. He scraped through it and into a narrow tunnel. The sides brushed his fur and tickled the tops of his ears. The concrete gave way to dirt as he stepped into a larger, better-lit enclosure. He explored and found a low wall, just high enough to keep him in, a mound of packed dirt, and a stream of water running through a stone trough.

A hazy figure appeared beyond the wall. It drew nearer, and he could soon make out the white uniform. A zoo attendant, and he carried a bucket.

He set the bucket on the wall and leaned upon it. "A little strange, eh, fellow? Can't say I ever wanted to try it. But they say you'll get used to it."

Claws shuffled in the dirt as the beast walked nearer to his keeper. He craned his long snout upward and received a friendly pat between the eyes. The other then took a small cardboard box from his bucket. He paused as if reading the label, ripped it open, and cast the contents across the dirt. "Your first meal, fellow. Have fun!"



The beast forgot him. What was in that box? The stirring in his mouth intensified. He swung away and lowered his head. A struggling movement caught his eye. A line of marching figures.

Instincts took over. His mouth erupted in a stringy tongue. The figures vanished as he sucked them in. They struggled in his mouth. Acid, he thought as he swallowed. And sweet. But GOOD!

He began to seek the tidbits eagerly. He found them, one by one, licked them in, and swallowed. The rumble in his belly quickened, but he searched on, using his claws to wangle his prey out of the cracks and holes

they found so quickly. He broke into a nest of ants that had been there all along, and he used his tongue like a spear to harvest the unexpected bonus. He licked and swallowed. Once more, he speared and stripped.

By the time his belly was full at last, he was exhausted. He had no energy left to explore the rest of his cage, and already he dreaded the next meal. It was no gain, he moaned. At least, I used to be able to get ahead sometimes. I didn't have to sweat for it ALL the time.

He'd been had. This is going to be aard  
vark.

# The Periodic Table Of Fannish Elements

by Robert Teague

|                                |                                                               |                         |                       |                      |                       |                    |                         |                       |                    |                    |                       |                        |                        |                        |                     |                  |                          |                   |                     |                            |                    |                    |                       |
|--------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------|----------------------|-----------------------|--------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------|--------------------|--------------------|-----------------------|------------------------|------------------------|------------------------|---------------------|------------------|--------------------------|-------------------|---------------------|----------------------------|--------------------|--------------------|-----------------------|
| 1<br>P<br>PAPER                | The Periodic Table<br>Of Fannish Elements<br>by Robert Teague |                         |                       |                      |                       |                    |                         |                       |                    |                    |                       |                        |                        |                        |                     |                  | 2<br>I<br>INK            |                   |                     |                            |                    |                    |                       |
|                                |                                                               |                         |                       |                      |                       |                    |                         |                       |                    |                    |                       |                        |                        |                        |                     |                  |                          |                   |                     |                            |                    |                    |                       |
| 3<br>Sj<br>COREFLU<br>ASKERMAN | 4<br>Y<br>CALENDAR                                            |                         |                       |                      |                       |                    |                         |                       |                    |                    |                       |                        |                        |                        |                     |                  |                          | 5<br>Pu<br>PUN    | 6<br>D<br>DICE      | 7<br>SF<br>SCIENCE FICTION | 8<br>F<br>FANTASY  | 9<br>C<br>CAT      | 10<br>PO<br>MAIL      |
|                                |                                                               |                         |                       |                      |                       |                    |                         |                       |                    |                    |                       |                        |                        |                        |                     |                  |                          |                   |                     |                            |                    |                    |                       |
| 11<br>FmZ<br>FANZINE           | 12                                                            |                         |                       |                      |                       |                    |                         |                       |                    |                    |                       |                        |                        |                        |                     |                  |                          | 13<br>O<br>OCCULT | 14<br>Boo<br>HORROR | 15<br>Sc<br>SCIENCE        | 16<br>?<br>MYSTERY | 17<br>Hm<br>TRIVIA | 18<br>Mag<br>MAGAZINE |
|                                |                                                               |                         |                       |                      |                       |                    |                         |                       |                    |                    |                       |                        |                        |                        |                     |                  |                          |                   |                     |                            |                    |                    |                       |
| 19<br>B<br>BOOK                | 20<br>A<br>ART                                                | 21<br>Fi<br>FILLO       | 22<br>NI<br>NEWSPAPER | 23<br>Cz<br>CLIPPING | 24<br>FI<br>FLYER     | 25<br>Pr<br>POSTER | 26<br>Qw<br>TYPER       | 27<br>Hal<br>COMPUTER | 28<br>Xx<br>XEROX  | 29<br>Mi<br>AIMED  | 30<br>Ph<br>PHOTO     | 31<br>Ra<br>RADIO      | 32<br>TV<br>TELEVISION | 33,3<br>R<br>RECORD    | 34<br>T<br>TAPE     | 35<br>V<br>VIDEO | 36<br>Q<br>ORTLIB        |                   |                     |                            |                    |                    |                       |
|                                |                                                               |                         |                       |                      |                       |                    |                         |                       |                    |                    |                       |                        |                        |                        |                     |                  |                          |                   |                     |                            |                    |                    |                       |
| 37<br>BI<br>BLACK              | 38<br>Co<br>COMIC                                             | 39<br>AN<br>ANIMATION   | 40<br>M<br>MODEL      | 41<br>Fg<br>FIGURE   | 42<br>Ts<br>TSHIRT    | 43<br>J<br>JEANS   | 44<br>Huh<br>MUNDANE    | 45<br>Bt<br>BATH TUB  | 46<br>Gum<br>CARDS | 47<br>APA<br>APA   | 48<br>W<br>WATER      | 49<br>Lj<br>LIME JUICE | 50<br>Ck<br>COKE       | 51<br>Mmm<br>CHOCOLATE | 52<br>Ahh<br>COFFEE | 53<br>Bh<br>BEER | 54<br>BC<br>BEAN'S CORP. |                   |                     |                            |                    |                    |                       |
|                                |                                                               |                         |                       |                      |                       |                    |                         |                       |                    |                    |                       |                        |                        |                        |                     |                  |                          |                   |                     |                            |                    |                    |                       |
| 55<br>Ed<br>EDITOR             | 56<br>SP<br>STYL-PRO                                          | 57<br>F<br>FAN          | 58<br>+SS<br>SLASH    | 59<br>CI<br>CLUB     | 60<br>F\$<br>FAN FUND | 61<br>Fe<br>FEUD   | 62<br>Bem<br>BUSTED MAN | 63<br>Fi<br>FLYER     | 64<br>Win<br>WUGO  | 65<br>Au<br>AUTHOR | 66<br>ST<br>STAR TREK | 67<br>SW<br>STAR WARS  | 68<br>SCA<br>SCA       | 69<br>Kn<br>KNIFE      | 70<br>Sw<br>SWORD   | 71<br>Gu<br>GUN  | 72<br>La<br>LASER        |                   |                     |                            |                    |                    |                       |
|                                |                                                               |                         |                       |                      |                       |                    |                         |                       |                    |                    |                       |                        |                        |                        |                     |                  |                          |                   |                     |                            |                    |                    |                       |
| 73<br>Ho<br>HOTEL              | 74<br>Mo<br>MOTEL                                             | 75<br>CON<br>CONVENTION | 76<br>+Bu<br>BUTTON   | 77<br>Ba<br>BADGE    | 78<br>Rn<br>RIBBON    |                    |                         |                       |                    |                    |                       |                        |                        |                        |                     |                  |                          |                   |                     |                            |                    |                    |                       |
|                                |                                                               |                         |                       |                      |                       |                    |                         |                       |                    |                    |                       |                        |                        |                        |                     |                  |                          |                   |                     |                            |                    |                    |                       |

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|---------------------|---------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------|------------------------|------------------------|----------------------|----------------------|--------------------|---------------------|-----------------------|----------------------|-------------------|---------------------|-------------------------|
| FANATICIDE SERIES   | 59<br>+ Shh<br>SMDF       | 60<br>TF<br>TRUFAN          | 61<br>FF<br>FEMFAN    | 62<br>Frf<br>FRINGEFAN | 63<br>BNF<br>BIGNANFAN | 64<br>Neo<br>NEOFAN  | 65<br>Fkf<br>FAKEFAN | 66<br>Dr<br>DROGUE | 67<br>Bob<br>BOBBER | 68<br>LL<br>LASKOUSHI | 69<br>Bosh<br>SHAW   | 70<br>S<br>SEX    | 71<br>HTT<br>HANTOR | 72<br>CC<br>DEGLER      |
| CONVENTICIDE SERIES | 73<br>+ WSFS<br>WINDLPCON | 74<br>NASFC<br>NORTH AFRICA | 75<br>DSC<br>DEEP LOW | 76<br>Rx<br>RELAXCON   | 77<br>Urp<br>URBANET   | 78<br>Cs<br>CONSUITE | 79<br>↑<br>ELEVATOR  | 80<br>Py<br>PARTY  | 81<br>Ce<br>COSTUME | 82<br>Fk<br>FILM      | 83<br>\$<br>MUCKSTER | 84<br>Pa<br>PANEL | 85<br>Ga<br>GAME    | 86<br>CS<br>CRASH PRICE |

The discovery that there was a "periodic Table of Fannish Elements" came as quite a shock, revealing an underlying order to fannish things not generally noticeable at the macrofannish level. The research took years to complete, much of it done at conventions where I could pick the minds of the great fen. (They were not much help, as they were usually partaking of vast quantities of Elements #53 and #54.)

The form of the Table has an uncanny resemblance to that other "Table of Elements". Why this should be I don't know, except possibly there is some hidden connection between the two. The validity of the other table is called into doubt when it is noticed that Element #51 has no corresponding member there.

Like those "elements" found in the other table, many may be found together, and in-

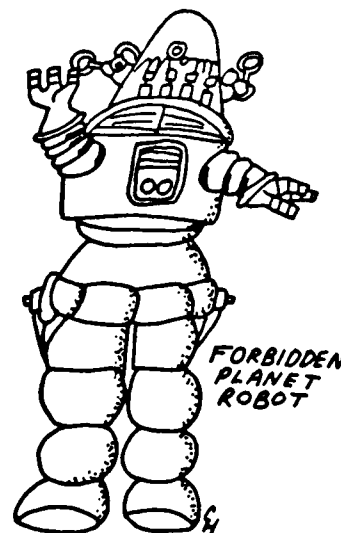
deed a few are almost never found separate. Elements #54 and #66, for instance, or #82-84 (occasionally #s 85 and 86 may also be found with them).

The Fantacide Series and the Conventicide Series are comprised of those elements whose nature calls for them to be found together, or are of a similar nature.

The numbers assigned to various Elements are occasionally guesswork, based on the necessity of plotting out those whose numbers are known, and filling in around them. That the table still needs adjustment is obvious at a glance, but I leave that task and the discovery of further elements to others. My life's work completed, I plan to retire and concentrate on a long-neglected area of research -- a schematic diagram of Space Station One from GOLD KEY's Space Family Robinson comic.

# THE HISTORICAL TRADITION OF THE ROBOTIC THEME IN SCIENCE FICTION

An essay by Thea Hutcheson



T. S. Eliot says that no writer or work has meaning by itself, that the work must be judged by its relation to the history of the art itself. And that for it to remain art it must be ever fresh and new within the boundaries and history of that art. This is not only a guideline to the aesthetic aspect of art, it is a given for the writer who wishes to be prosperous and provide for his or her security in life.

In science fiction literature there is one theme that can trace its roots back to ancient Greece -- mechanical men which have an intelligence and capability of their own. Hephaestus is attributed with having two gold handmaidens that could act and speak with knowledge. Vergil is said to have built mechanical devices to defend his property. And the Jews had their Golems, servants made of earth that protected them from their enemies. All these creatures have one thing in common -- they are beneficial to their makers and masters.

In later years as the technology of Man became more and more complex and capable, the idea of a robot became more than imagination, possibility. It became a matter of when and how. It also became rather frightening. Early in the 18th century, Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley used this social fear to revolutionize the made-creature theme by turning one on its maker. Now the tone appears for the most part set for the next 125 years, beginning with E.T.A Hoffmann's The Automata in 1814 and The Sandman in 1816.

In 1836 Edgar Allan Poe, having only read the articles about Johann Nepomuk Maelzel's chess playing machine, deduced that the machine was a fraud, being operated by a left-handed midget. In 1845 he published the story "The Thousand-and-Second Tale of Sheherazade" which was soon followed by Ambrose Bierce's Moxon's Monster.

The new theme had taken off with more sinister stories of the consequences and hazards of creating and utilizing the machines. However, by the 1920s it was time for this new slant to take a new direction in order to avoid rehashing old issues. A robot shape that is much more like a man than in previous stories emerged in the 1920s with works such as R.U.R., by the Czechoslovakian playwright Karel Capek, who

gave us the word "robot", The Psychophonic Nurse by David H. Keller, which pursues the question of parenting with a machine, and Automaton by Abner J. Gelula in 1931, featuring a machine that develops a sexual desire for a young woman.

But as with all variations on a theme, it became overused. Too, the tastes and fears of the people change. Art must change, grow, be redecorated, or as Eliot says, "The existing monuments form an ideal order among themselves, which is modified by the introduction of the new (the really new) work of art among them." (1) And that the writer's mind "is in fact a receptacle for seizing and storing up numberless feelings, phrases, images, which remain there until all the particles which can unite to form a new compound are present together." (2)

So the author, in an attempt to add not only to the richness of the art but also to his own good life, must constantly look for new twists, slants and variations. In the 1930s there was a bid to make the robot a friend and benefactor to man. Eando Binder (Earl and Otto Binder) wrote stories of Adam Link, the robot whose intentions are mistaken and who becomes persecuted by the people he seeks to befriend. In the mainstream, J. Storer Clouston wrote what would become the standard comic theme of the robot story, Button Brains. In this story all the jokes about the bugs which cause mechanical breakdowns are put forth.

The tendency of stories to feature helpful, friendly robots continued until the 1950s when America's suspicions about world affairs placed the robot again into that mistrusted and potentially dangerous role. The friendliness and peacefulness of the robots opened up a whole new door into robot characters' abilities, roles and attitudes. The robot could now be a witness, as in Isaac Asimov's "Galley Slave" (1957); the judge in court, as illustrated by Henry Kuttner in "Two-Handed Engine" (1955), and the robot as the mouth and example of God, as in Anthony Boucher's "The Quest for St. Aquin" (1951).

Again in 1954 when public attitude was turning against technology because of the fears of the war machines' devastation, Asimov demonstrated that Eliot's notion of cap-

turing emotions not the writer's own and using them, not only had meaning to the reader, but added to the depth of the meaning of the art.

Asimov's novel, The Caves of Steel, takes up this attitude and explores in some depth the personal fears of the people afraid of their creations and explores their emotions through one character who is forced to work with a robot. The lip-service in the novel lies in catering to Man's need to appear the better of the two, but since it did achieve its purpose on forcing the reader to look at those prejudices, it set the stage for the later robot stories in the 60s and 70s.

The 1960s once again saw Man and Robot in happy company. The philosophical aspects of the robot's existence, purpose, and just desserts are explored with sweet sentimentality in Ray Bradbury's "I Sing the Body Electric," the touching story of a robotic grandmother which the children come to depend upon and take care of in its need when they are grown.

In the 1970s, when liberalism and innovation in settings and social customs allowed for the exploration of robots in society in much greater detail, they have branched out into every aspect of life. Combinations of man and robot are becoming larger-than-life heroes and enemies, as in Martin Caiden's Cyborg.

The point through all of this history is that it is not enough to do the thing, it must be done in a way that no one has done before. It could be the same theme with a new twist, it can be a new slant on the theme, it can be an entirely new application. But it must be more than the original, because as Eliot says, "To conform merely would be for the new work not really to conform at all; it would not be new, and therefore not be a work of art. ...It's fitting in is a test of its value." (3)

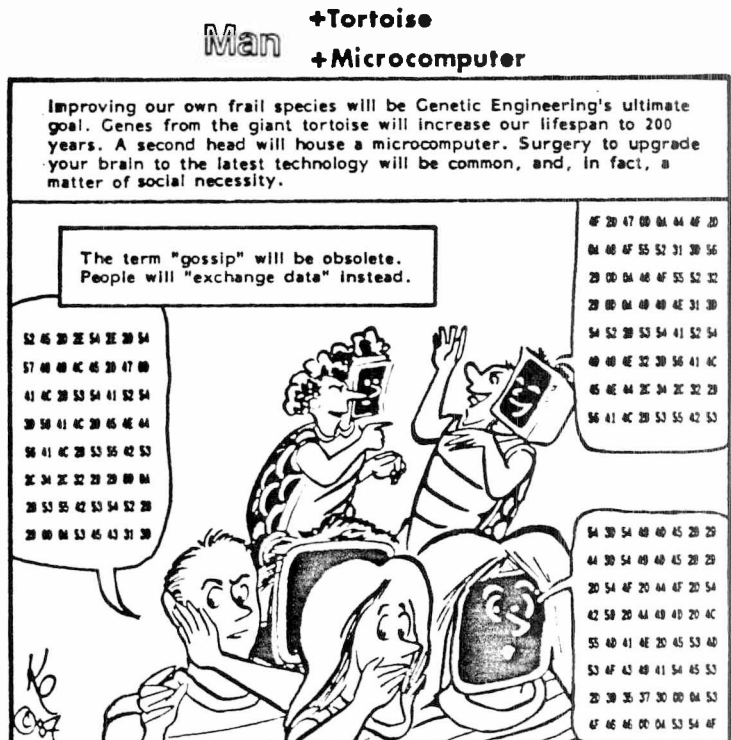
And in the process of fitting into the scheme of the art, it must be the emotion of, not the man, but the art. This is especially true of the science fiction writer -- every time he or she sits down to write a story, it must be created from scratch, yet follow the rules laid down by the groundwork. Thus the work will be of itself and not of the writer's desire, showing the sublimation of the man's self in the active pursuit of art within its own historical tradition.

- (1) T.S. Eliot, "Tradition and the Individual Talent" in Criticism: the Major Statements. Ed. by Charles Kaplan, 2nd edition, New York: St. Martin's Press, 1985. Page, 434.
- (2) Ibid., page 434.
- (3) Ibid., page 432.



# the GENETIC ENGINEER'S BESTIARY

by Kurt Erichsen



# DIMITRI BILENKIN

## Soviet SF Short Story Writer

by Tom Jackson

If a science fiction writer wants to do excellent work without ever achieving international fame, he should consider putting most of his talent into short stories, since the market tends to reward novelists. An even better way to achieve obscurity is to live and write in the Soviet Union. Arkadi and Boris Strugatsky are well-known, even if few American fans bother to read their books. But every other Soviet SF writer is virtually unknown in the U.S.

Dimitri Bilenkin, 53, who died last July during surgery, was a Soviet SF writer who specialized in short stories. His work deserves to be remembered outside his own country.

Bilenkin's reputation rests almost entirely on his usually brief, often witty short stories, which are collected in his English language anthology, The Uncertainty Principle, published in 1978 by MacMillan as part of that company's Best of Soviet Science Fiction series.

Bilenkin was a famous writer in the Soviet SF community. When Soviet Literature magazine published a special issue devoted to science fiction in 1984, it included a section in which leading SF writers were asked to respond to a few questions. Isaac Asimov, Arthur C. Clarke, James E. Gunn, Harry Harrison, Joe Haldeman were interviewed, along with five Russian writers -- Arkadi Strugatsky, Kir Bulychyev, Yerey Parnov, Vadim Shefner, and Bilenkin.

The Uncertainty Principle reveals that Bilenkin, like his colleague Ilya Varshavsky, concentrated most of his talent writing very brief tales; the 163 page book contains 18 stories. The longer tales, such as "The Snows of Olympus," usually are carefully constructed SF stories; short-shorts, such as "Modernized Hell," tend to be witty parables.

The Soviet bureaucracy, by many accounts, is one of the largest and most onerous in the world. The proposition of "Modernized Hell" is that a devil is no match for a really nasty Soviet bureaucrat. A demon appears before "an utter bastard," Stepan Porfirievich Demin, 50. The devil announces, "You have committed exactly thirty-three base acts and therefore we are empowered to take your soul."

After a perfunctory argument over regulations, Demin demands the devil's papers and insist that the devil produce his rulebook. It's not long before Demin finds a loophole and saves his soul, because Demin is in his element studying the rules and regulations of Hell:

Wheezing with pleasure, he would raise his eyebrows in puzzlement from time to time, mutter, then delve deeper into the text. His usually dull

eyes shown, as though irrigated in sparkling water.

"The Snows of Olympus," apparently written long before Kim Stanley Robinson's "Green Mars," describes a mountain climbing expedition on Mars' tallest mountain, and is a good example of Bilenkin's concise style. In 14 pages, Bilenkin's two characters climb the mountain, discuss the meaning of life, and make a surprising discovery. Vukolov just wants to gaze out and enjoy the moment after ascending the summit, but Omrin insists on delivering a philosophical discussion on the basic needs that drive all living creatures. Omrin insists that all intelligent life-forms would strive to reach their limits:

"Rational creatures might eat stone instead of bread, breathe fire instead of air, and be composed of crystal instead of protein, but they have to eat, multiply, live in a society, study their world, and strive for the impossible. That means if someone sometime during the existence of Nix Olympica had crossed interstellar distances, and had the time, he might have wanted to climb the highest -- what other? -- peak in the solar system."

"What a wild supposition!"

"We, however, are here. And we took along a laser cutter to leave our mark, not only to cut steps. By the way, the highest point of the cliff would be the spot for our signatures, right?"

"Right," Vukolov agreed.

"Then go over to that outcropping and look at what's above your head."

Vukolov took several steps on suddenly wobbly legs, looked and blinked, as if suddenly seeing an explosion. But the shocked darkness of his consciousness was still illuminated by the writing cut into the rock long before man ever climbed his first mountain. (Page 126)

Bilenkin's wit and brevity embodies characteristics found in much of the best of Soviet SF (Harry Harrison's statement in a recent issue of Signals that Soviet SF is wordy carries the authority of an ignoramus). In his introduction to The Uncertainty Principle, Theodore Sturgeon argued for Bilenkin's universal appeal by saying that Bilenkin would have fit in well with John Campbell's stable of writers in Astounding's golden age. Sturgeon declared that if he ever perfected his time machine, he would snatch up Bilenkin from Russia, take him to Campbell's New York office in 1939, and say, "John, here's one for you."

# There Are Cosmic Cowpats In The Science Fiction Field

An article by Eric Bentcliffe



I still class myself as a science fiction fan even though I find myself reading decreasing amounts of the stuff. I still have a large collection to which squirrel-like I keep adding, but I find even this I'm doing more by rote than by desire.... I've never found it possible to go past a bookshop with an SF display even though I know that more and more of the titles on show will be reprints with new covers; and where the publisher is less than honest, new titles as well.

I still have a subscription in for F&SF and when the monthly inviting-looking package arrives I still open it with eagerness, admire the cover, find out if Harlan approves of any movies this month, and put it on the pile with the previous seven-or-eight months unread F&SF. I did the same with Analog until it became obvious I wasn't going to read any more of its contents; and then changed my sub to F&SF on the strength of a Greyhound bus ride from Vancouver to Seattle where a copy I picked up in the Greyhound bus station enlivened the journey. Unfortunately it completely fails to do the same now that I'm back home and stationary.

And yet...I haven't lost my sense-of-wonder. It's still stirred by the occasional yarn and was recently stirred mightily by such diverse wonders as the Grand Canyon and Disneyland. I have to blame the authors, editors, and publishers for this missing element in fantasy and SF. They are the ones whose trips have become predictably plebeian.

Early science fiction wasn't always well-conceived or well-written; it was often crude in its plotting, much of it is now unreadable. It was, as is often stated, "a literature of ideas" -- sometimes only one per story, in fact -- but because its author had had that idea and was enthusiastic about it and its ramifications, he managed to stir the reader to share his sense-of-wonder at it all. And if he was one of the Grand Old Stirrers who liked creating whole worlds (or destroying them), he usually managed to impart some of the pleasure of that too. This

is what the majority of today's writers/authors fail completely to do for me...succeeding instead in imparting only a dull and pedestrian view of "unimaginable" wonders. I don't want to read about the mundane aspects of alien-worlds; surely they are such to the aliens that inhabit them, but for the author to depict them as such is carrying verisimilitude rather too far.

The authors who really offend my sensibilities are those who (skilled punctuationists that they are, qualified in English Lit, even) succeed in having their protagonists (they aren't worthy of being termed "Heroes") suffer mightily in scaling virtually unscaleable mountain ranges, fighting off hordes of evil mongs the while and, probably, a spell or two that has been put upon them to blur the way (and lend an excuse for them to drift in and out of character). All are sustained however by the thought that when they've overcome mighty crags and craggy mites they'll come to the Promised City ... the fabled Haven... Heartsease... The Brothel At The End Of The Universe... or whatever, and (here is the crunch) when they get there the author completely fails to explore said enchanted-safehouse, to depict its wonders.

I've just finished Mary Gentle's Golden Witchbreed for which I had high hopes. Ken Slater said it was readable and he's usually an honest broker. He was right; it was readable, but it also suffers from this malady which lingers on. Ms Gentle builds on a good foundation, assembles a mildly interesting set of beings and takes them through a sequence of downbeat adventures; predictably, perhaps, she has them climb The Wall Of The World and discover after terrible hardship a Ruined City, which was where I got annoyed ...alright, the weather was inclement, and

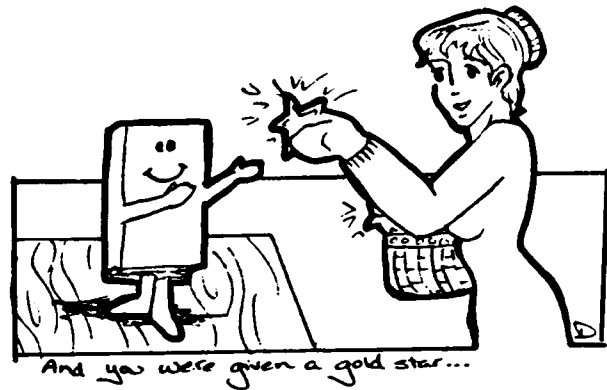


there may have been danger about, but why (Oh Why) couldn't they have at least explored the place (discovering a few things of wonder and conjecture) instead of abasing themselves in a basement because the weather was inclement and they weren't quite sure if there weren't horrors about. I read the book 'till the end but the mood of that inconclusive journey's end wasn't dissipated by anything that followed, alas. Other journeys were made but all were followed by anticlimax. Of course, it could be said that this is all a reflection of life and intended to be that way and not "the brilliant epic of colour, adventure and fierce imagination" it says it is. Life is more of a dull pratfall after a big build-up but you don't have to write an Epic Story of Fantasy to reflect that. I think. Perhaps Ms Gentle will tell me if I ask her, but she isn't, alas, alack, the only offender.

Someone else suggested I read Paul O. Williams Pelbar saga -- he shall remain nameless; I've no wish to malign -- and I bought the first in the series in a mad senseless burst of impetuosity, and suffered for it as one usually does after mad bursts of impetuosity at my age. In case you didn't ... it's an after-the-apocalypse tale of ordinary country folk who go places but don't really do anything when they get there -- other than prepare for another pointless journey. It suffers from the same syndrome as Golden Witchbreed, I fear, and I did not enjoy its equally aimless narrative, nor did I find the author's world-setting helpful. It's become relatively common practice these days to provide a map at the beginning/end of a book, a trend which personally I find more of an irritant than an aid since it simply interferes with my own mental imagery inspired by the words in the book. I suppose it's similar to the unsettling effect that seeing the movie too soon after reading the book can have, if you've enjoyed the book and the images you and the author have created.

However, not content with offending me in this manner, Paul O. Williams upsets me by adopting yet another world-setting cliché: the story is set in North America (now renamed "Urstadge") and follows the not entirely new practice of using corruptions of previous place-names both on the map and in the story. I find this device singularly unamusing since it deflects me from the flow of the story into trying to work out just which place-name the ruptured anagram refers to. I like word-games, you understand, but not in what is supposed to be an "arousing tale of adventure a thousand years after the nuclear fire". The "Ozar" is easy, but what the hell are "Emeri" and "Roti"? "Aha," no doubt the injured author will exclaim, "but not all names do refer to that which existed before!" Such illogic will not encourage me to read any more of his stories, though.

It is possible to please your scribe with tales of re-emergence into "civilization" after the bomb. It's not easy, but possible (there has, after all, been much writ on the subject) and Poul Anderson managed it relatively recently with Orion Shall Rise which contains no map, but does tell a convincing and wholly possible tale and one which also fits nicely into Poul's own history of the future. There are place-name distortions,



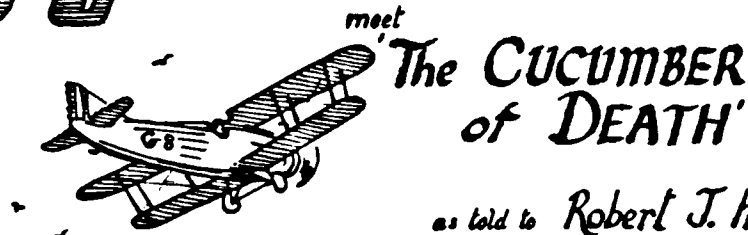
but they don't take away from the story -- English has become Unglish, Victoria Vittohrya, Maori Maurai -- sufficiently different to remind you that you are not in the now-future but not so tongue-twistingly difficult, mind-twistingly different, that they impede rather than assist the flow of the tale being told. Mind you, Poul Anderson is one of my favorite still-writing authors in the SF field, and one of the very few who can paint a credible word-picture of a world in convincing backdrop and detail rather than just the fuzzy view of the immediate surroundings that such as Ms Gentle and Messr Williams manage. Orion Shall Rise is an excellent book.

And despite my overall dissatisfaction with the field and its lackluster world-building (maybe there's a need for a real life Edmond Hamilton to help me shatter the inferior products!), I still feel a twinge or two of my sensawonda occasionally; Poul awoke it and so, intermittently, did Julian May's Saga of the Exiles tetralogy. It's all a bit too much, really, too many good ideas, scenarios and people falling over one another in a quite fantastic farrago -- it could have been a major work if it had been pruned to half its published length. As it is, it has brilliant moments, exciting imagery, but far too many directions to go in. And please don't ask me where all the characters come from or go to. Yes, I know you can buy a "concordance" or whatever that explains it all but that shouldn't really be necessary if the author has done his job properly in the first place. Hein?

I suspect much of the ills I and other readers must suffer are due to what can best be described as media pressure; "demand" is all for Big Thick Books with Dragons in them --- and even if they haven't got dragons in the wordage they must, at least, have them on the cover. And if they haven't got dragons they must have Dinosaurs In Space because dinosaurs and dragons are much alike -- sayeth the publishers' mate. I doubt that either species will achieve their justly-earned rest within the foreseeable future, poor things! Personally, I'd like to see someone develop a SUPER-mongoose bug enough to kill off these persistent reptilians -- well, I would, if I didn't believe that this would then lead to a plethora of books about super-mongoose.

Meanwhile, I'll continue to ignore covers, publishers' blurbs containing "Epic", "Magnificent", "Trilogy", and "At last!", and hope to be able to write yet another article on SF I've almost enjoyed within the next decade.

# G-8 AND HIS Bottle Aces



(by Terry Jeeves)

The lone Spad flew high over the Western Front, its pilot weaving skillfully between bursts of Archie fire whilst simultaneously eating the six-course lunch set out on the table strapped to his knee. G-8's manservant Bottle had prepared the usual sumptuous repast to speed his master on his way. Occasionally, G-8 would peruse the map strapped to his elbow, or interrupt his meal to shoot down two or three of the numerous Fokkers which kept attacking him.

The master spy took a final look at the map. Many Allied pirates had gone adrift in the sector he was now approaching, an area bounded by lines joining Berlin, Munich and Dachau, commonly referred to as the "Ber-Mu-Da" triangle. Only yesterday his two assistants -- "Dull" Martin the hulking, All-American rounders player and "Dippy" Weston, a short, wiry tap dancer -- had both failed to return from the region of mystery. The master spy meant to find out the reason for all these disappearances.

Stowing the map in a secret pocket in his trousers, G-8 casually shot down the remaining half-dozen more Huns. His deft hand sought for and found another secret hiding place and brought out an ink pad, and a rubber stamp shaped like an Iron Cross. Leaning over the cockpit side, he was busily marking up his latest score when his Spad gave a sickening lurch, swung to one side, and headed toward a strangely-shaped cloud.

G-8 barely had time to munch the last tasty morsel of "chemin de fer" before his whirling propeller began to tear its way through the thick mist. The master spy gazed in amazement at what lay revealed within the sinister cloud. Nothing more than a giant cucumber to which his plane was being rapidly attracted despite all his manful struggling with the controls. The top surface of the cucumber had been sliced carefully away to create a landing field. Barely had his keen eyes noticed this than a burst of Spandau fire sleeted leaden death into the engine of his Spad. It died with a brief cough and the whirling propeller slowed to a halt. Quick as a flash, G-8 shoved the stick forward, kicked the rudder bar fiercely, and

side-slipped the injured plane to a consummate landing on the top of the cucumber.

Barely had his craft rolled to a halt than a burly German soldier raced forward to hold a wicked Luger to the American ace's head. He was taken from the cockpit and led away. Even as he went, mechanics were setting to work on the damaged engine of his plane.

The master spy was taken down through a hatch in the cucumber, along a narrow tunnel, and thrust violently into what, to his expert gaze, looked remarkably like the control room of a Zeppelin. Manacled to one wall by cruel chains were his two missing assistants, and facing him, holding an automatic in one strangely-shaped and black-gloved hand, was his old enemy and arch-fiend, Herr Doktor Kreuger! With a sinister wave of his pistol, the Doktor motioned G-8 to a chair.

Purring with delight, his harsh voice grated, "Yes my dear G-8, it is indeed I, Herr Doktor Kreuger whom you threw into a pretzel-grinding machine only a few months ago. I escaped from that with only the loss of my left leg. As you well know, my right arm was removed when you destroyed my Zombie Squadron. Thanks to your meddling over the years, I now have a metal leg and a metal arm far stronger than the originals, as well as a synthetic left hand, a televising right eye and a pair of sensitive microphone ears. Moreover, my brain is even keener than ever. How do you like my latest invention?" He smirked at G-8 and gestured with his metal hand.

"It just looks like an overgrown cucumber to me, you damned fiend," barked the master spy. Out of sight of the crazed scientist, he was busily working his foot out of its encasing flying boot. He hoped the Doktor's sense of smell wasn't so hot.

"But it is a giant cucumber," crowed the little fiend. During its growth, I fed it with a special formula I invented. This caused it to grow to its present huge size. During this time, it was kept in a huge, hydrogen-filled, glass house. The gas impregnated it throughout until it was light-

er than air. then all I had to do was slice off the top to form a landing field. Normal Zeppelin controls were installed, a few machine guns, a canteen, a torture chamber, and all the usual offices. The result is all around you. As for the concealing mist cloud, for that we keep seventy-six kettles on the boil. Would you care for a cup of tea before I kill you?

"Yes, and give us some food, you swine," burst out Dull Martin from his manacled position. "You haven't fed us since yesterday"

Despite a raging thirst, the master spy declined the offer of tea. What he wanted was more information. "But what pulled my Spad into the cloud?" he asked. "More of your cruelly twisted and devilishly fiendish cunning, I suppose." From experience, he knew that flattery was the best way to get secrets out of the vain Doktor.

"Hee-hee-hee," chortled the Doktor with a sinister German giggle. "That was the easiest part of the whole idea. I simply mixed iron fillings into the feeding formula and kept a gang of men busy stroking the growing cucumber with big magnets. That converted the whole thing into a giant magnet which pulled you here."

That was all G-8 had wanted to know. Inserting his toe into the now fully loosened boot, he lashed out with skillful aim. The heavy missile flew swiftly to its mark on the Herr Doktor's jaw. With a muffled moan, the mad scientist slumped to the floor. It was a matter of moments before the master spy had unshackled his two assistants with the aid of a bunch of skeleton keys hidden in another of his secret pockets. Rapidly he manacled Kreuger to an upright. From within yet another of his secret pockets, G-8 withdrew a miniature disguise kit and his flashing fingers flew fearlessly as with a few dabs of greasepaint, some plasticine and a sheet of kitchen foil, he had altered himself into a perfect replica of the Herr Doktor. Turning to Dull and Dippy, he rapidly changed them to look like typical German soldiers.

"Would you happen to have a sandwich on you?" Dull asked plaintively. G-8 motioned him to silence. Quickly he emptied the contents of Kreuger's waste paper basket on the floor. Removing his strangely overlarge wristwatch, he made cunning adjustments to its several buttons. Placing the watch on the pile of papers, he led the way back to the airfield.

Motioning a mechanic to him and emulating Kreuger's voice, G-8 asked in fluent German, "Bring to here the aircraft of the verdammter master spy. It repaired has been, Nicht Wahr?"

"Jawohl, Herr Doktor," the cringing mechanic replied in equally fluent German. The Spad was pushed forward. G-8 leaped into the cockpit and as he gunned the throttle, Dull and Dippy scrambled across the wings on either side. Germans rushed forward to stop them, but Dull lashed out one beefy foot and knocked them down like skittles. Without waiting for the motor to warm up, the master spy taxied the Spad to the end of the cucumber, swung around and waited....

Bullets were now whispering their messages of death as they sleeted their way through the flimsy fabric of the fuselage.

The master spy ignored them as he waited....

Then it came. First a dull crump as the highly secret Uranium atoms in the illuminated dial of the timing watch exploded -- then a fountain of flame and smoke as the hydrogen-filled cucumber caught fire.

"Let's get going," yelled Dippy Weston. "What are we waiting for?"

"Simple," laughed the master spy. "I had to wait for the heat to destroy the magnetism so we could get away. Hang on, here we go..." He gunned the engine and the heavily-laden Spad shot over the edge and dropped into space. On the brief flight back, Dull Martin hungrily scoured the floor of the cockpit for remains of the master spy's lunch -- but to no avail. The underfed Hun mechanics had scoffed the lot.

With consummate skill, the master spy brought the overladen Spad in over the Le Bourget airfield, which, as everyone knows, was his secret base. He dropped it onto the runway as lightly as a feather before taxiing to the end hanger and cutting the engine. Behind them over the Western Front, a huge spiral of black smoke curled into the air denoting the end of the fiendish Kreuger and his deadly cucumber.

G-8's manservant Bottle was waiting for them. "Nice to see you all back again, sir," he said. "I've made a big pot of tea and some sandwiches for you."

"Damned good show," barked Dull Martin. Wasting no time, he hungry Bottle Ace scooped up a handful of sandwiches and thrust them into his mouth. The his faced changed. With a grimace he spat them out again.

"Just what did you put in those darned things?" he demanded of the astonished Bottle.

"Why sir," replied the manservant, "I thought you'd like them; I actually managed to get hold of some cucumber."

-The End-

## RICHARD BRAUTIGAN MEETS CHARLES SHULTZ

by Lisa C. Freitag

It was a dark and stormy night. It had always been a dark and stormy night. Stormy darkness was pretty routine. Stormy darkness was downright boring. Dark storminess didn't have much going for it either.

So when the shot rang out, we were all mostly relieved. Shots only ring out once every week or so. Sudden shots are even rarer, and, so, rather more exciting. But this one wasn't sudden, so we really didn't have to worry about excitement. More like just a lull in the boredom.

The shot gave us an excuse to get up and saunter over to the door. After a while, one of the newer ones opened it. We all looked out, but nobody saw anything, and gradually we all wandered back to our seats. The dark storm was blowing in through the door, but nobody seemed to care.

Maybe tomorrow a pirate ship will appear on the horizon.

# WHAT'S SO GOOD ABOUT



# STAR WARS?

A film commentary by Mark R. Leeper  
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1987 marked the tenth anniversary of George Lucas's Star Wars. I think it is fairly safe to say that for the fantasy film genre and for the film industry as a whole, the decade has been very different than might have been expected when Fox was telling theaters that if they wanted to show The Other Side of Midnight they would also have to book this science fiction film, Star Wars. There is little doubt-- at least to my mind-- that Star Wars is one of the three most influential films ever made. In fact, the only film that obviously was more influential was Edward Muybridge's sequence of snapshots of a running racehorse that was, in essence, the first motion picture.

But "influential" and "good" are two different things. Recently, when I listed films that I gave my highest rating to, I included Star Wars. One comment I got from a reader was that it was a good list but should not include Star Wars. The belief that Star Wars is, actually good as a film is actually not very common. I have heard it claimed that it is the weakest of the three currently released "Star Wars" films or that the whole series is a piece of fluff without much cinematic merit. It is my contention that the original Star Wars is, on its own, a good film and the best of its series. Though it is not in the scope of this short article to examine an entire decade of fantasy films, I would contend that no better science fiction, horror, or fantasy film has been made in the interim.

Before we can determine if Star Wars really is a great film, in the sense that Citizen Kane is a great film, we have to determine some characteristics of film greatness. What is it that makes a film great? One characteristic would be originality. A film should be experimental and should break new ground. But many film experiments fail and leave audiences confused. The new ground that a film breaks must be accepted by audiences so that a film leaves its mark. To this extent, being good is connected with being influential. Still, it is clear that an exploitation film may be the first of its kind and have imitators without being very good. The ground that a film breaks must be

valuable. It should advance the art of filmmaking. If a film does what it does well, breaks new ground in the art of filmmaking, making valuable contributions, and those contributions are accepted by audiences and become part of the palette for future filmmakers, no more is required for a film to have achieved greatness. If you come down to it, that is really what makes Citizen Kane a great film. But is Star Wars great in the same sense? I think that while Citizen Kane undeniably has some virtues that Star Wars lacks (and vice-versa), Star Wars is great in the same sense.

Star Wars was a ground-breaking film. It was the first marrying of cinema and the new video and computer technologies for creating images on film. The effects people had to invent much of the technology as they went along. The last jump in visual technology of the same magnitude had been with Willis O'Brien's stop-motion effects for King Kong. As late as the 60s the most visially imaginative films -- films like Jason and the Argonauts -- still relied most heavily on variations on, and enhancements of, O'Brien's techniques. Between Jason and the Argonauts and Star Wars there were some impressive pieces of visual fantasy, notably 2001: A Space Odyssey and Logan's Run, but they relied mostly on just extensive use of model work and other long-existing technologies. For Star Wars a battery of new technologies was employed and for the first time since King Kong special effects made a real quantum leap toward the goal of being able to create on the screen any scene that the mind's eye can create.

Star Wars was obviously a ground-breaking film from the first moments of the film. Just showing a field of stars, Star Wars did something no other film had done. It panned the camera upward. That does not sound like much, but consider that not even 2001 had ever done it before. Space scenes had always been done with a fixed camera, and for a very good reason. It was more economical not to create a background of stars large enough to pan through. So scenes in space had always been done with a static camera, just like all scenes were done in the early days

of film. I had never realized that in all science fiction films I had seen, the space shots were done with a static camera until the instant I saw Lucas's 90-degree pan. Not a single model had shown on the screen and certainly not a single set of character, and already the film was a one-of-a-kind!

When we do finally meet characters the first two are robots with personalities that are a cliché now, but the closest I remember seeing before was the robot in Lost in Space who occasionally would lose his cool and yell, "Warning! Warning! Danger! Danger!" while gesticulating wildly. We have seen characters for all of two seconds on the screen before we again see that Star Wars was unprecedented.

And the impact of Star Wars continues right through the film. Scene after scene is done with an originality and sense of wonder totally unprecedented in the science fiction film. The audience reaction was nothing short of astounding. In Detroit, where the film played there was a difficult left turn to get to the theater parking lot. Variety reported that making that left turn had become the new summer sport in Detroit. The lines that queued up to see the film were legendary because in so many different ways the film delivered more than it had to. There was more bang per dollar of admission than perhaps any other film made to that point.

One thing the film delivered was a sparkling score by John Williams. Williams used a leit-motif approach, but composed many themes, each of which was attractive and which blended together into a very fine score that was reproduced -- for the first time -- with the process of Dolby sound. It gave a live-orchestral clarity to the score as well as allowing far more use of subliminal sound effects surrounding the audience. Many were barely perceptible to the ear but certainly helped to make the experience seem more believable.

This reality was further enhanced by the detail Lucas imbued the film with. Small details -- throwaways -- that few filmmakers bother with were painstakingly added. In one scene after the visit to the cantina, we are watching the main characters in the background and the silhouettes of two spindly legs walk by in the foreground. Because that is not where the viewer's attention is at the time, many in the audience never even notice the legs. To throw in unnecessary details and then purposely call the viewer's attention away so the details may well go unnoticed is a mark of a good craftsman.

A little more noticeable, though again unnecessary to the plot, is the skeleton shown in the background in a desert scene. Nobody in the script mentions the skeleton of some gargantuan desert creature, as if it is a perfectly normal sight. Similarly the speeder, which could easily have been made a wheeled vehicle, instead floats. No mention is made of the floating vehicle; again, the matter of fact acceptance of this wonder is what helps to make the film work.

More noticeable but equally unrequired to the plot are some breathtaking planetscape, again of a scale that never had been used in science fiction films to that point. Films

like This Island Earth or First Spaceship on Venus had shown planetary landscapes but they used unconvincing models or matte paintings. Industrial Light and Magic has since become known for very impressive backgrounds and spaceships. Star Wars was their debut.

A few more touches, perhaps not as original but which were unexpected, should be mentioned. One is the use of two distinguished actors in major roles. Getting Sir Alec Guinness to appear in any science fiction film is something of a wonder. His first response on seeing the script was reportedly, "Oh crumbs, this isn't for me." He enjoyed the script sufficiently, however, that he changed his mind. More so than even actors like Olivier or Gielgud, Guinness has been selective of his parts and his presence in this film puts Star Wars in fine company. Peter Cushing was then, as he is now, perhaps the most accomplished and beloved of actors specializing in fantasy roles.

Another unusual touch is the pacing. The audience comes in with the story already in progress. The viewer has to catch up by reading the screen explanation rolling by, then is immediately tossed into the action. This requires more from the audience, but that is far better than boring the audience with slow introductions. This style, borrowed from internal chapters of serials, might not work well outside of the fantasy genre, but captures audiences very effectively here.

It seems that Star Wars was an innovative film, every bit as much as was Citizen Kane. Had this much innovation been lavished on a mainstream film it would be considered an artistic triumph. As it was, it was a box-office champion, an accolade that perhaps meant even more, at least to its backers.

I would like to conclude this discussion with a comparison of the "Star Wars" films which purport to be a continuation of the same story but which I consider to be stylistically inferior to the first film. I will continue to call it Star Wars, incidentally, in spite of the retitling to Star Wars: A New Hope.

When George Lucas made Star Wars he had little expectation that it would become one of the most popular films ever made. In some ways that contributed to the artistic achievement. In the later films he knew what had worked well in the first film and could consciously repeat and effectively milk it. In the first film the line "I've got a bad feeling about this" was used and got a positive audience reaction. It even appeared on humorous buttons people wore at science fiction conventions. It was a good line, but its popularity prompted it to be used twice in The Empire Strikes Back.

Each of the Star Wars films treats aliens in a different manner, but the first film is by far the most satisfying treatment. In that film robots, intelligent non-humans (INH), and humans all interact in roughly the way people of different origins interact in New York City. Star Wars takes place in a sort of melting-pot universe. We are introduced to many species of INH in Star Wars. The only new one to be added in The Empire Strikes Back was Yoda. For that matter,



Chewbacca is the only other INH in The Empire Strikes Back. Gone is the melting-pot universe. It was, however, back with a vengeance in Return of the Jedi.

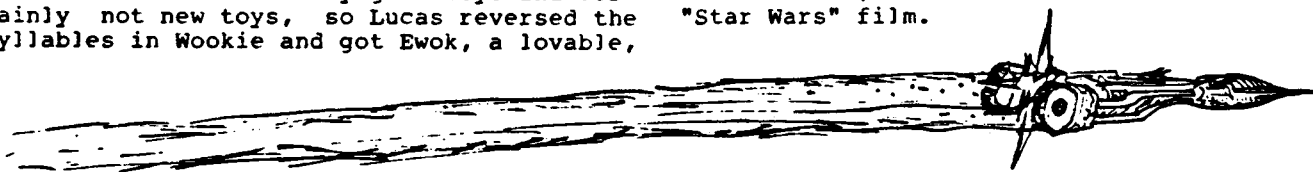
In a documentary made by Lucasfilm, it was claimed that George Lucas was never happy with the aliens in Star Wars and he was finally able to create the effect he wanted for Return of the Jedi. True, there were more aliens in Return of the Jedi, but they were stupid ideas for aliens. While the aliens in Star Wars were misshapen creatures designed by Ralph McQuarrie, Ron Cobb, and Rick Baker, Return of the Jedi featured aliens like Sly Noodles, a singing elephant with lips on the end of her nose. Also, there is Salacious Crumb, a rather obvious muppet who looks like he would be more at home on Fraggle Rock than in a major motion picture. And who can forget the dancing fat woman? Of somewhat higher quality are the pig guards, but they are reminiscent of Earth creatures and look like something out of a fairy tale. Only Jabba the Hut seems sufficiently alien and he resembles a caterpillar. The aliens are cute and not crisply done like the creatures in Star Wars.

And speaking of cute, Lucas at one point said the third film would take place in large part on the Wookiee planet. But Wookiees would not have made very good toys and certainly not new toys, so Lucas reversed the syllables in Wookiee and got Ewok, a lovable,

mechandisable teddy bear. Most fans over the age of ten get a little sick at the thought of Ewoks.

There is also a question of realism. In the first film we see a guerrilla attack on the Death Star; the second has the Empire crushing a rebel base; the third has the killing of Jabba and his crew and the Empire fighting the teddy bear Ewoks. So in which of the three films do we see the greatest number of allies of the rebellion killed? By far, the answer is the first film. Not even counting Lars and Beru, who were innocent bystanders, more allies were killed in the attack on the Death Star, which was done reasonably realistically, than in all the battles in the later films. In Return of the Jedi one Ewok is apparently killed and, I think, one is knocked out by his own bolo. Very few "good guys" are killed in The Empire Strikes Back, in spite of the apparent darker tone of the second film.

Because of all the points mentioned above and because so much more of Lucas's creativity went into the first film, for which a universe was created -- the other two films just used, and only in minor ways amplified on, this universe -- I still contend it was the best of the three films and will remain the "Star Wars" film most people will remember. In 2077, it will be the best-remembered "Star Wars" film.




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## Beware the Ides of March

An article by David M. Shea

Time, time, time. Sometimes it speeds, sometimes it drags, but humankind is always interested in measuring and predicting it. The large scale version of this is the art and science of keeping calendars. Human ingenuity has devised many systems for reckoning the years, with varying degrees of accuracy. Mainly they are based on the three obvious astronomical time-scales provided by the mechanics of the solar system: the period it takes the Earth to rotate once on its axis ("day"), the period it takes the Moon to revolve once about the Earth ("month"), and the period it takes the Earth to revolve once about the sun ("year"). Unfortunately, these three measurers of time are not compatible; methods of reconciling the discrepancies are the fascinating stuff of calendar making.

(The seven day "week" probably derives from the Book of Genesis: the Christians borrowed it from the Jews and imposed it on

the world. No, I don't know where the "hour" or "minute" came from, or why the "day" begins in the middle of the night. These are just arbitrary, like the state legislature which passed a law arbitrarily making the value of "pi" equal to "3".)

The word "calendar" is from the Latin calend, the first day of the Roman month, from which the days were counted backwards to the ides (The 15th of March, May, July or October, or the 13th of any other month. The Roman calendar began with March, incidentally, which is why October, November and December were correctly named by the Romans, however inappropriate their names now seem.) Calendars come in three main varieties according to the astronomical time-unit given priority in devising them: solar, lunar, and a combined form sometimes termed "lunisolar".

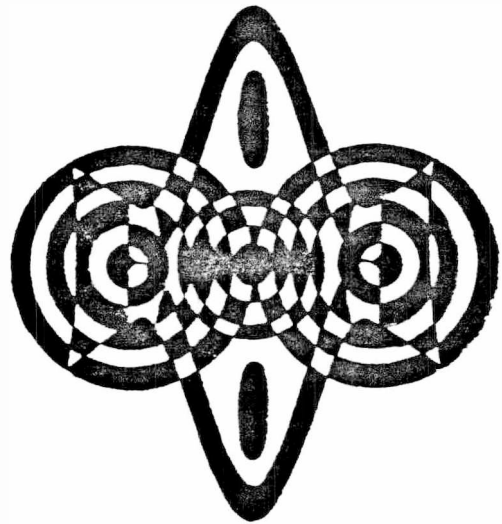
The most usual and familiar solar calendar (because the year is geared to the length of the solar year) is the one we now

use. It was laid down in its essential form in 46 BC by Gaius Julius Caesar, and prescribed a year of 365 days, 366 every fourth year, divided into twelve months of 30 or 31 days each, except for February which had 28 days and picked up the extra day in Leap years. Sound Familiar? Of course it does. Julius Caesar was murdered two years later, but his calendar remained the unchallenged standard of the Western world for sixteen centuries without change.

Unfortunately, as we now know, the solar year is not precisely 365-1/4 days. Over the centuries this miniscule error had piled up until by the Sixteenth Century the Julian Calendar was in error by approximately ten days. In 1582 AD, Pope Gregory XIII regularized the calendar passed down from the Romans -- which is one reason why our calendar does not begin on the winter solstice. His Holiness also added minor corrections; such as that the years beginning centuries were only leap years if divisible by 400. Thus 1896 and 1904 were leap years, but 1900 was not, though 2000 will be. The Pope's sensible corrections were generally adopted by Western Europe, though due to the schism between the English and Roman churches, the English-speaking nations did not change over to the Gregorian Calendar until 1752. The Orthodox churches of Eastern Europe have not done so to this day, for ecclesiastical purposes at least, which is why certain holidays (notably Easter -- the first Sunday after the first full moon after the Spring equinox, in case you didn't know) are celebrated on different days in the Orthodox churches. However, even these countries which still maintain the use of different calendars have generally accepted the value of a universal dating system; and the Gregorian calendar is the standard of the mundane world today, for much the same reason that, say, English is the language of aviation the world over.

A lunar calendar is somewhat different in that it is geared to the period of the Moon's revolution, rather than the solar year. The best example of a purely lunar calendar is the Hejira, or Muslim calendar used in Islamic countries. The Hejira calendar has the usual twelve months (Muharram, Safar, Rabi I, Rabi II, Jumada I, Jumada II, Rajab, Shaban, Ramadan, Shawwal, Dhu'l-Qa'dah, Dhu'l-Hijja), except that Muharram, the first month of the year, has thirty days, Safar has 29, and alternately thereafter. This is about as close as you can get to approximating the length of the sidereal month, which is about 29-1/2 days. Dhu'l-Hijja has 29 days in ordinary years but 30 in leap years (which are defined as the 2nd 5th, 7th, 10th, 13th, 16th, 18th, 21st, 24th, 26th, and 29th in a thirty-year cycle). Every month begins at the new moon. It will thus be seen that a common year contains 354 days and a leap year 355.

It takes no mathematical genius to see that the purely lunar calendar, if not corrected, is not compatible with the solar year. Thus we find that according to this system we are presently in the year 1407, though there have been only 1365 solar years since the Prophet's flight from Mecca (the founding of Islam, from which the calendar



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is reckoned). Another consequence is that the New Year and all other religious holidays migrate gradually around the solar year. The year 1407 began in October 1986; but in another thirty years or so the beginning of the Islamic year will have migrated around to April. This does seem an unnecessary complication, but if the Islamic world seems comfortable with this, who are we to object?

Various methods have been derived to correct the lunar calendar into a semblance of compatibility with the solar year. One of the more ingenious methods is the Hebrew calendar. In the ordinary state of affairs there are twelve months in the Hebrew year (Tishri, Heshvan, Kislev, Tebet, Shebat, Adar, Nisan, Iyar, Sivan, Tammuz, Ab and Elul). The civil year begins on the first of Tishri -- Rosh Hashanah, commonly called Jewish New Year. (The ecclesiastical year begins on the first of Nisan.) All months have either 29 or 30 days -- there are slight variations -- resulting in a year of 353, 354 or sometimes 355 days. As we have seen, this presents a problem. The solution utilized in the Hebrew calendar is the addition of an extra month! In leap years (defined according to the present form of the calendar dating from about the Fourth Century AD, as the 3rd, 6th, 8th, 11th, 17th, and 19th of a nineteen-year cycle) the intercalary month of Veadar is added between Adar and Nisan. It is sometimes called Adar Sheni. This results in a leap year of 383, 384, or 385 days. Although it does result in a certain variance in holidays (Rosh Hashanah can fall as early as September 6 or as late as October 9), the system is essentially compatible with the solar year over the long run.

(The "long run" is indeed an appropriate viewpoint: the year 57747 began on October 4, 1986. The calendar is reckoned from the year we would have called 3761 BC, according to strict interpretation of the date of Creation. Those interested in theological trivia may find it interesting that Christianity gave an earlier date for Creation than did the Hebrews: old Christian Bibles may still be found in which the date of Creation is

declared to have been 4004 BC. One learned cleric, after years of study, solemnly declared that Creation had occurred on October 10, 4004 BC at ten o'clock in the morning, Garden of Eden local time! This incredible pronouncement was soberly accepted as divine revelation for centuries. But I digress.)

The Hindu calendar combines features of the two preceding systems in having twelve lunar months each beginning on the new moon (Chait, Baisakh, Jeth, Asarh, Sawan, Bhadon, Asin, Kartik, Aghan, Pus, Magh, and Phagun). The new year begins on the first of Chait, being the first new moon after the spring equinox, i.e., late March or early April. However, when there are two new moons in the same month -- which, naturally, happens roughly every third year -- an extra month is added wherever in the calendar it happens to be needed. The new month has no separate name, but adopts the name of the preceding month. No doubt long practice with the system makes this perfectly clear to the initiates.

The Chinese lunisolar calendar also used twelve months of 29 or 30 days with an intercalary month as needed. The Chinese system is still used by traditionally-minded Chinese, and is presently in the year 4684 (reckoned from our year 2697 BC, when the system was adopted), although the Gregorian calendar was officially adopted by the Chinese Republic in 1911, and has been retained by the present regime. However, even in the People's Republic, the traditional Chinese New Year is still celebrated; it falls around February in the Gregorian calendar.

The sun-worshipping Mayans were not much impressed with the Moon. (The Moon goddess Ixchel was in fact considered a malign influence.) Almost uniquely among calendar-making cultures, the Mayans did not subdivide the year into periods approximating the 29/30 day lunar cycle. Rather, the year ("tun") was divided into eighteen months ("uinal") of 20 days each. The remaining five days ("uazeb") did not belong to any month and were thought of as unlucky. Not only did each day of the month have an individual name, as the days of our week do, but the day-names rotated according to a prescribed pattern. The Mayans also took the Long View: time was not reckoned in mere 100-year centuries, but in cycles of 400 years at a time.

The Bahai seem to have arrived at a similar idea independently, or perhaps they went to the library and did research. The Bahai calendar is divided into nineteen months of 19 days each with four or five intercalary days as needed. The first day of every month is observed as a fast day. The new year always begins on the Spring Equinox, or March 21 as we would call it.

(Bahai, founded in the Sixteenth Century as an offshoot of Shia Islam, is a faith which emphasizes the spiritual oneness of the human race. Their worship services consist entirely of readings from all Scriptures, including but not limited to the Bible and the Koran. Which is interesting if not really ad rem.)

Though the Gregorian calendar is widely

accepted, calendar reform remains an idea near and dear to the hearts of progressive thinkers. One of the first acts of the new authorities in France after the Revolution was the decree of a new and -- typically -- exclusively French calendar. The New Year was declared to have begun on September 22, 1792, and was henceforth labelled "the first year of the Republic". Twelve months of 30 days each were decreed (Vendemaire, Brumaire, Primaire, Nivose, Pluviose, Ventose, Germinal, Floreal, Prairial, Messidor, Thermidor, and Fructidor). The remaining five days, six in leap years, were decreed as general festival days which did not belong to any month. These festivals were to be called "sans-culotides" -- literally, "without trousers" -- which perhaps says something about the French notion of how to celebrate a holiday. Alas for the rational plans of reformers, however: the general populace went on calling the months by their traditional names, and in a year or two the grandiose Revolutionary calendar fell into disuse. However, this quaint custom may still be seen in official documents and the like which show a Gregorian date followed by, "in the \_\_\_\_ year of the Republic". (It is possible that in this, as in other things, the French were influenced by the Americans: Jefferson and others among our Founding Fathers were interested in calendar reform, though no effort was ever made to impose it in the new United States.)

The French were pretty much in the mainstream of calendar reform. Most proposed revisions would have twelve months of 30 days, with the extra days declared independent holidays. Opinion varies as to whether to lump them together in one great bash at the end of the year (as in Alexi Panshin's Rite of Passage) or spread them out around the year. The latter would seem to offer advantages: Who needs another holiday in the dead of Winter? (Of course, if we're going to change things, there's no particular reason we have to start the year in winter...) A single long holiday also would not seem quite fair to all those who have to work through holidays in essential services: power plants, hospitals, the news media, fire departments, and so forth.

Thank you, I though you'd never ask. Yes I do indeed have my own solution. As anyone knows who lives where it gets cold, the problem with the year is not that it's badly organized, it's just too bloody long! In the best David Palmer tradition, let's think big. Let's not just shuffle labels around. Let's shorten the year!

According to my figures, the Earth's present orbital velocity about the sun is on the close order of 18.5 miles per second. In order to shorten the year down to a manageable figure of, say, 270 days, I calculate we need only accelerate the planet to an orbital velocity just a shade over 25 miles per second -- a change in relative velocity of less than 7 m/p/s. It is well established that we possess the ability to impart to an object a relative change of motion of a mere 7 m/p/s; moving the entire Earth is a problem which differs only in degree. We build these humongous rockets in, like, Outer Mongolia ... (Details, details. I'm an idea

person. I leave the mere mechanics of this project to the engineers.)

This would allow us to establish a calendar of nine months with 30 days each. (With a trifle less speed we could have eight months of 34 days.) But we're used to the 30 day month. Come to think of it, we could put another set of engines on the moon -- small ones would do -- and regularize its orbit to precisely 30 days! Every month would start on the new moon (the Hindus and Moslems would love it). We could then dispense with three months. After careful consideration, I suggest we get rid of February, March and

November. Nothing much happens then anyway. If you're going to be picky and insist on keeping Thanksgiving -- an eminently disposable holiday -- we just shift it over into October after the Canadian practice. Consider the pleasure of going straight from January to April! The possibilities boggle the mind.

Hmm. While we're improving things, we might consider straightening up the Earth's axis some. Do we really need 23.5 degrees of axial tilt? Well, let's not be hasty. We can always think about it later. Maybe in another article....

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Del Rey Books

An essay by Jim Mann

Two years ago, when Judy-Lynn Del Rey entered the coma from which she would never recover, a drive started to get her name on the Hugo ballot. Suddenly, it seems, the science fiction community noticed its oversight, much the same way the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences sometimes notices actors only when they are dying. Judy-Lynn won the Hugo. It was rejected. Lester Del Rey thought it was insulting to give her a Hugo only because she had died, when they did not recognize her achievements when she was alive. I agree. But giving her the Hugo then was wrong for another reason. She deserved it 6 years ago; she has not deserved it for several years.

When Judy-Lynn Del Rey took over the Ballantine SF line -- soon to become Del Rey Books -- she took a number of important steps that were to have major impacts on the field. She brought a number of books and authors back into print, after a hiatus of many years. She started a line of Best of... books that were to introduce a whole new generation of fans to many very good writers. She brought a number of good writers into the Del Rey fold (Heinlein, Clarke, Simak, for example). She began to publish more hardcovers, a trend picked up by others later. She encouraged Darrell Sweet and Michael Whelan, whose styles were to have a major impact on SF cover art.

In the early 70s, before Judy-Lynn took over at Ballantine, it was quite common to hear about these great writers or books of previous years, but not to be able to find a copy of these books. Cordwainer Smith is a prime example. Most of his works had been out of print for a decade or more prior to Del Rey's publication of Nostrilia in the mid-70s. Soon the rest of Smith followed it into print. Similarly, important works by Farmer, Pohl, Kornbluth, Clement, Sturgeon, and others were difficult or impossible to find. Del Rey brought these back into print, along with works by Clarke, Heinlein (the juveniles, including two that had been out of print for years), Simak and others.

The Del Rey Best of... books were also Godsend to those of us who wanted to read

more by an author but were unable to find his or her works. For many readers, their first major exposure to Weinbaum, Del Rey, Gallun, Cordwainer Smith, Kuttner, Kornbluth, and so on was in a Del Rey Best of... For the best in contemporary SF, Del Rey offered Terry Carr's annual collection of the "Best of the Year."

Many of the giants in the field began selling to Del Rey: Asimov, Clarke, Heinlein, Simak. It was with books by such well-established writers that Del Rey was able to get their hardcover line going strong.

Finally, Del Rey established a tradition of quality covers. Rarely did a Del Rey book have a bad cover. Most covers were outstanding. Furthermore, Darrell Sweet, working almost exclusively at Del Rey, became the main force in a trend toward covers based on scenes in the book. Often these scenes were not climaxes or confrontations, but simple scenes of the characters involved in some ordinary action (Look at his covers for the Heinlein juveniles for good examples of this.) Michael Whelan also did a number of Del Rey's best covers, as he established himself as SF's best artist.

But most of this happened in Judy-Lynn's first few years with Ballantine. The reprints have slowed down; the Best of... series has stopped. Terry Carr went elsewhere with his annual Best of the Year.

Another negative is that few important new SF writers have gotten started by Del Rey. Bear, Brin, Gibson, Shepard, Sterling, Williams, et al, all got their start elsewhere. Del Rey has developed only relatively minor (at least in terms of lasting impact on the field) adventure writers, typified by Jack Chalker. (Paradoxically, Del Rey's fantasy line has fostered several major new writers. On the other hand, again the opposite of the SF side of the coin, they stopped reprinting most of the older classics that Lin Carter was bringing back in the Adult Fantasy Series.)

Judy-Lynn Del Rey deserves much credit as an innovator. She deserved a Hugo. But she did not deserve one in the year that she was finally given one.

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by Lisa C. Freitag

Homecomings

I have just returned from WISCON 12, which, I am proud to announce, was officially my twenty-fifth science fiction convention. Actually, I proclaimed this repeatedly at WISCON and received the sort of look librarians give over their spectacles when eight-year-olds try to check out The Martian Chronicles. (Are you sure about this?) So I'll answer right away -- of course, I've been counting. It's easy. I thought everybody did it. Just save all your convention badges and pin them to a towel. Preferably in order and right-side up.

The towel should, properly, be obtained from a convention hotel, however most people consider this stealing and best avoided by moral persons. My towel came from a Budget 6, but was removed by someone else and given to me. This is only receipt of a stolen object, the secular equivalent to eating meat on Fridays, repentable with a few Freudian Hail-Marys. Whatever, I counted my badges, and WISCON was definitely my twenty-fifth con.

I became a Fansomewhat abruptly, shortly after entering the lobby of the Plymouth Hilton, at which CONCLAVE IX was happening. (I've got my towel right here.) There were some tense moments initially when I realized there was a registration fee. But there were a half-dozen people who helped me justify at least the five dollars for Friday night. That's all it took. I had to give them more money on Saturday morning because I still hadn't gone away. Now, three and one-half years and nearly four thousand dollars later, I still have no intention of leaving.

I am not sure what precipitated my sudden entry into fandom. Certainly I had a fannish childhood. I had read more books than I could count (they're hard to pin to towels). Mostly, I read science fiction, saving the more appropriate covers for things like college admission interviews. There had been many times at parties that I had wished to be at home reading a book. But I had heard of science fiction conventions through the mundane press. There they are viewed as interesting sociological phenomena, attended by the marginally insane, and having something to do with Star Trek. They are reported under the heading of "human interest stories," to be included for a laugh, if there isn't too much else going on. There is always an accompanying photograph of some odd people in very odd dress. All this can be discouraging if you've been trying very hard to be normal.

But on the Friday night of CONCLAVE IX, I didn't have much to lose. I was living in Ann Arbor, having somehow survived residency



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at the University Hospital at the University of Michigan without committing suicide. I had not, however, dredged up the energy to find a job. Doctors are not supposed to be unemployed. So I was still depressed, all my friends (both of them) were on call, and I didn't have anything to do. Reading through the Ann Arbor Observer, under "Things To Do" I found, "Science Fiction Convention, CONCLAVE IX, Hilton Hotel, Plymouth, Michigan." I left immediately, driving out Plymouth Road, at the end of which I thought I would find Plymouth. I cried the whole way there, except when I stopped at a donut shop to get directions to the Hilton. I did not expect that, at the end of the trip, I would be welcomed home.

That pretty much sums it up, I think. Homecoming. Now it happens every few months -- in Chicago, or St. Louis, or Madison. It's not always exactly the same people, but there is always the same sense of belonging. After a very long time and entirely by surprise, I have found a place where I am free to be a person that I like. I do not mean to imply that fandom is so tolerant that everyone is accepted immediately. Obviously, there are people that don't fit in (we call them mundanes). But for me, I have kept coming home -- twenty-five times. It hasn't changed my life or anything. I'm still depressed, and though I've found a job, and I'm not entirely sure that that's so wonderful, but I'm not leaving.

There is room for about thirty-three more badges on my towel, fifty if I squish. After that, I will need help with the moral dilemma of acquiring a new towel.

Getting Back Into It All

An essay by Alexander Bouchard

I first became aware of organized fandom (and I hope this isn't considered an oxymoron) in 1978 when I attended BALTICON 12 at the urging of an acquaintance at the University of Maryland, Blatimore County campus. He had attended a few BALTICONs previously, and he had told me things that I found hard to believe.

I attended BATLICON 13 the following year, bringing with me a friend who was a fringe-neofan in his inclinations, being heavily into the Star Wars mythos. I missed BALTICON 14 in 1980 because I was living in Los Angeles at the time, attending the University of Southern California (an unremarkable one semester). In '81, I was back in Baltimore and attended BALTICON 15.

Then, although I didn't know the term at the time, I gafiated until 1984, when I attended CONCLAVE IX. In '85, I missed all the Detroit-area cons, and was only able to attend the last few hours of CONFUSION in '86.

It was at the end of 1986 that I really got back into it all. I attended CONCLAVE XI, and started 1987 at CONFUSION. I then hit CONTRAPTION, MARCON, AD ASTRA, CONTRADICTION in Niagra Falls, New York, and CONCLAVE XII. Some of you regular convention goers might remember me and my wife, Megan; we were selling costumes with an artist/sculptor non-fan friend of ours, Dave Ivey, who makes monster costumes, under the name The Costume Zone. (We'll be back, but without Dave; he's gafiated because he hasn't sold enough monsters at the prices he wanted.)

I met Lan and Maia, Mike Glicksohn, Jim Overmeyer, Chandra Morgan and her friend Michelle from Cleveland, Mike Banks, Ted Reynolds, and many others. I introduced my wife, who had no interest in SF at all, to the field, and to cons. She has become very interested in costuming, becoming friends with Barb Schofield and Jackie, Worldcon Master Costumers from Toronto. I started writing again, something I had been putting

off for years. I have turned out several stories that are being submitted for consideration even as I write this.

I met Dick Spelman, Steve with the hearse who sells buttons (and damned if I can remember his last name), and Roger Reynolds. I know that some people think that meeting and getting to know Roger isn't much of an accomplishment. All I can say is "de gustibus non disputandum." (Look it up in your Latin dictionary.)

Previously, I was never much of a person to do fanac other than cons; I didn't know the protocols, or whom to get in touch with. Now that I know Lan, and have read several issues of Lan's Lantern, I think it's time I got started. I have some thing to say.

For one thing, I can say from experience that many things said about East Coast Fandom are true; they are quite cliquish. Mid-western cons are much more friendly.

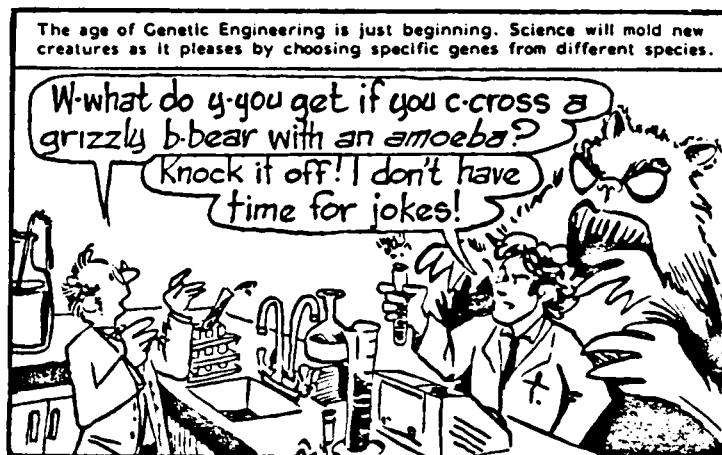
For another thing, I can say from what I have seen of genzines that LL is the best I know of. (A qualified bit of praise, since I don't know of many others.)

I see many mediafen at the Detroit area cons who couldn't care less about reading; I, for one, don't mind this since, in many respects, I am a mediafan. I do read, however. I appreciate almost all of the many and varied aspects of fandom: the fanzine fans, the mediafen, the gamers, the hackers, the aspiring writers, the pro writers, the filkers, the costumers, the party animals, and all the rest. Now that I'm BOTTOT (Back In The Thick Of Things), I hope to be as active as I possibly can in as many aspects of fandom as I have time for. Who knows? One of these days maybe I might get involved in a concom, or try to put out a zine of my very own.

My next cons include CONTRAPTION and the Worldcon in New Orleans on Labor Day weekend this year. I may see you there. If you see me first, come up and say "hi".

the GENETIC ENGINEER'S BESTIARY

by Kurt Erichsen





CONREPORTS & RAMBLINGS 26

by Ian

RAMBLINGS 26.1

When I left off with the "Conreports and Ramblings" in LL #23, the student body and faculty of Cranbrook Kingswood were getting ready for Spring Break. We were still being harassed with bomb threats, but looking forward very much to the coming vacation. As school day ended on March 13, both students and faculty left quickly. It would be a good break. I had two conventions to go to, a math unit on Trigonometry to put together and run off, lots of reading, and LL #23 to work on. I would be busy, but I would also take time to relax.

I finally was able to attend a Waldo meeting after not being able to do so for the past few weeks because of school stuff. At this one David and Diana Stein and Richard Tucholka handed out copies of the graphic novel Honor Among Thieves, written by Julia Ecklar, drawn by Tom Howell, and lettered by Rusty Westbeld. I wrote a review on it which would appear in LL #23.

MILLENNICON

I enjoyed MILLENNICON last year, and I enjoyed it again this year. Maia planned to go with me, but she got sick at the last minute and couldn't make it. I made the four and a half hour trip to Dayton, pulled into the parking lot, and noted immediately that the swimming pool was outside. After registering for the con and checking into the hotel, it was confirmed that there was no indoor pool. I found that there were Vic Tanny places in the Dayton area and found one nearby, but the cold I had been fighting for a couple of weeks was manifesting itself and I decided not to go swimming. It was just as well; I had a great time talking to many people at the con.

The huckster room was small but had enough in it to keep me interested. I talked several times with Mary the Mystery Lady, and purchased a few things from her, including three Avengers t-shirts (with shadow images of John Steed and Emma Peel on them). I talked with a few other hucksters about the new Calvin and Hobbes book that was just released, and Honor Among Thieves. I was able to plug Honor several times during the con.

The hotel was the Dayton Airport Inn, set up in a horseshoe fashion, with the function rooms and the consuite at opposite corners.

There was no direct route to the consuite from the hotel lobby, huckster room, art show and main programming, so everyone got exercise going back and forth between the two areas.

The consuite was well-stocked with munchies and drink. After it opened, I saw and talked with Jeff Tolliver, Alan Dormire, Joe Ellis, Naomi Pardue, and several others before the first program item came up. When I mentioned that we should get to the program room for Rusty Hevelin's "First Impressions of Hal Clement", a woman sitting nearby asked where the room was. "Come with us," I said, and we started on the five-minute walk to the function areas.

I found out the woman's name was Lynn Margosian, graduate student in St. Paul, Minnesota, who was a neo attending her first convention. I sat with her and explained some things Rusty referred to as he showed slides and talked about Hal Clement's early career. Lynn said that she was from Racine, Wisconsin, that her brother started her reading SF, she wanted to go to a con (her brother told her all about them), and MILLENNICON fit into her current schedule. She had started Spring Break, and drove from St. Paul, spent the night at her parents in Racine, and continued on to the con. I knew instantly that she would make a good convention fan. (I also told her about other conventions closer to her -- she was already making plans to attend MINICON.)

Between Rusty's talk and the official "Opening Ceremonies", Don Eaman, an Indianapolis fan, came up to me and said, "Hi Ian. I haven't seen you since... well, since I held your Hugo!"

Lynn's eyes grew wide and she asked, "You won a Hugo?"

I smiled meekly, and nodded. "For Best Fanzine." I told her a bit about fan publishing, and that I would give her copies of some issues I had brought with me.

Lynn mentioned that she was interested in filksinging, so immediately after the opening ceremonies I introduced her to Joe Ellis, Mike Stein, Tom Smith, Naomi Pardue and Mary Ellen Wessels. Later I saw Lynn in the filksing being regaled by songs and wit. Mitchell Clapp, Candy Jarvis, Robin Nakkula and several other filkers added themselves to the sing and I had a good time listening.

Saturday I showed up for the "Neo fan's panel". Originally Maia was supposed to do

this with Rusty, and I thought to take her place. Instead, Rusty had worked out something with Martha Beck, so I gladly stepped back and let those two veterans handle the panel. They did a marvelous job and gave me some ideas for a similar panels I'd be on at upcoming conventions.

I attended several panels, including my own, and had a good time talking with lots of people. The filk panel featuring many of the popular Midwestern filkers was a lot of fun, especially when Tom Smith sang his "Smurfin' Safari Medley" -- songs about the little blue smurfs set to Beach Boys' tunes. Mary Ellen Wessels capped the panel with her rendition of T.J. Burnnside's "Lullaby for a Weary World."

Ann Cecil and I were on a couple of panels together. She brought Erin Kelly, another Pittsburgh fan, with her to the con (Ann and I were together on panels). Erin and I talked for quite a while about school and various other things, and went to dinner together. The evening was filled with more conversation, the GoH speeches, two art auctions (one for the Polly Freas Memorial Fund, and the other the regular art auction), and more filking. I heard some marvelous songs, including one called "The Superman Sex Blues" by Tom Smith. Tom also sang a tribute to Mitchell Clapp called "The Australian Fan Trilogy" (with music from Gordon Lightfoot's "The Canadian Railroad Trilogy"), which turned out to be a bit satirical of the U.S., especially American TV. Naomi sang her tribute to the Space Shuttle Challenger which left few eyes dry.

Shortly after my Sunday panel at noon with Ann Cecil and Mark Evans, I ran around to catch Erin and Lynn so I could say goodbye before I left. They were both trying to catch me too. We hugged and left with promises to get together at another con in the near future. It was a great convention!

I went home by way of Jackson, Michigan, stopping off at my sister's place to celebrate my nephew's birthday. By the time I roll into the driveway, I was tired. But it was a pleasant weekend, to say the least.

From then until the next weekend, I worked on LL, caught up on some letter-writing, worked out at Vic Tanny, and read some SF. Maia was doing very well (she recovered nicely from the stomach flu), and she planned to go to Toronto to attend DORSAI THING while I played Fan GoH at NOVA in nearby Rochester, Michigan.

NOVA

NOVA was slow, but a lot of fun. Tim Zahn was the Pro GoH, while Julia Ecklar was the Music GoH and Tom Howell was Artist GoH. For my speech I talked about my basement, which encouraged others to talk, albeit briefly, about theirs. Fortunately Tim, who has no basement, spoke before I did. Instead he talked about his transmission. (His car transmission went out on him in Chicago (fortunately at his in-laws' place), and he had to rent a car to get to the Con.) Diane Carey was a Special Guest and talked a bit about writing Star Trek novels, and Julia talked about writing and some adventures in collaborating.

I had a long talk with Rusty Westbeld on Saturday night with topics ranging from carpentry to gardening. And during the con I had interesting conversations with Julia, Tom Howell, Sandy Schrieber and others.

RAMBLINGS 26.2

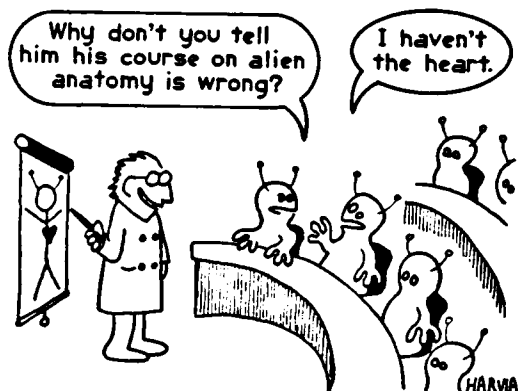
The Monday after Spring Break ended started with an "In Service" teachers' meeting in the morning, and department meetings in the afternoon. Kids came back from vacation, and the next morning we started back with classes. The students were talkative about their vacations, since most went someplace warm for those two weeks. One teacher, when asked where he went, said he took trips to Kroger's and the A & P.

On Wednesday morning we got another bomb threat. And the next day two. Up to this point we had them almost daily, though none on the weekends or any at all during vacation. The police, with some help from state and federal officials, were pursuing the matter vigorously, and were hoping to find the person(s) soon. Cranbrook Kingswood was not the only school getting such threats; several schools in the area had been similarly threatened, though they had not received the publicity that we had. We all wanted the person(s) responsible caught.

Meanwhile, on the weekend of April 10-12 I was on duty in the dorm (my last for the year), and I also had to write comments on all my students (they were due Monday, April 13). While all this other stuff was going on the past couple of weeks since Spring Break, the third quarter ended. I did not tell anyone that I finished my comments on Saturday morning (April 11), printed them off, made copies, and filed them on Sunday. That left me time to do other fanac and the Lantern.

Oh yes, the Lantern. I was hoping to have finished it so I could hand copies out at CONTRAPTION. I didn't. Nor did I finish in time for MARCON the weekend following. It would get done when I finished it.

I decided to stop doing the Birmingham ride for the dorm. Some people were upset by it, though not as many as I hoped would be. There was a scramble the first couple of weeks to find someone to drive, but one of the Juniors who had a car on campus took over. I asked Gwen if she got paid, and she said yes. I'm glad. Gwen has become one of



the more responsible kids in the dorm, after a rather shaky first two years. She has matured a lot; next year she is president of the Student Council, Head Resident Advisor in the dorm, and manager for the Madrigal Singers. I hope that I have her next year in math; she was one of my better students.

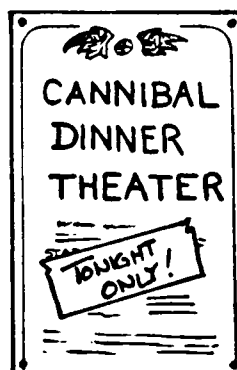
I have been doing the Birmingham Ride (taking the girls into Birmingham for shopping two days a week) for nearly 9 full years. Most of the kids have been pretty good, but some make demands that have been pretty outrageous. Some ask to be driven to other cities for shopping. A few are late, and some a rude when I say no, or not polite when I admonish them for being late. When I asked about refusing to drive certain students, the head of the dorm said no; if I do the ride, I take whoever signs up. I almost quit then, but decided to wait and see if there would be any more discourtesies. There were. Two girls who have been late in the past were late again for the pick-up. I waited 10 extra minutes, then left. They called later, and someone else went to bring them back to the dorm. Neither girl apologized, and that immediately made me decide to drop the ride. The kids seem to be surviving, and I certainly could use the extra money, but not the hassle.

I had a wonderful time at Chris Clayton's and Becky Price's wedding. The reception was held at a quaint hall in Ann Arbor and the food and company was delightful. Among others I got to talk to Haline Harding and Jamie McQuinn, George Hunt, and some of the happy couple's relatives. Chris and Becky also planned a party after the reception for all those they couldn't invite to the wedding proper. This party was held at the Ann Arbor Marriott North, and since we knew we would be staying late, Maia and I took a room there. Chris and Becky told people to bring their guitars and folk till the small hours of the morning, which did happen. Steve Simmons, Bob and Ann Passovoy, Moonwolf, and Peter Stephenson among others regaled us with songs and stories.

Maia and I spent a pleasant afternoon at AUTOFUSION the following weekend. We had many other things to do so we didn't stay too long. I talked at length with Larry Tucker, Suzi Stefl, and Betty Gaines. Betty and her husband Bob made this con the last stop on an extended trip. It was a very relaxing one for them, and it was nice to talk to her about school and classes.

Back at school, things got extremely busy. The Trig unit which I put together during Spring Break for my classes went over well, though it would be tight to finish it by the end of the school year.

We caught the person calling in the bomb threats -- one of the students. She will be prosecuted as the Community has said all along, but charges have not yet been made, pending the results of a psychiatric assessment. [[Even now, things are still pending.]] It seems the girl has some problems with reality. Anyway, since she was arrested, there have not been any threats called in. School and classes went on as usual, which meant that there was still lots of confusion, but for the most part things were fairly settled.



CONTRAPTION

CONTRAPTION happened, and it was wonderful. George R. R. Martin was the GoH, Mike Glicksohn the fan GoH. George was superb, fitting in readily and partying till the small hours of the morning, then getting up early for his panels and readings.

The Fish and Ships Players did a wonderful musical parody of Star Trek IV: The Voyage Home called Poppin' Fresh Trek, done to the tunes of Mary Poppins. Joe Ellis was the orchestra, and his mixing of "Supercalifragilisticexpialidocious" with the Star Trek theme was brilliant. The cast had people rolling on the floor.

The story line followed the movie, somewhat. To save Earth the crew went back to the Earth's past to rescue some anchovies, before the great Anchovie hunters, Domino and Caesar, killed them all (Domino's and Little Caesar's are national chains of pizzas). Kirk and Spock discover two captive anchovies, Gomez and Morticia. It all works out in the end, despite Chekov being "dead" throughout the play. Spock had re-programmed the Klingon ship computer to accept the crew of the Enterprise, except for Chekov, who was considered dead already, killed in action. This was a surprise to Chekov who was very much alive. Five cameras caught the action from different angles; I can't wait to see the final tape of this one. (I'd like to see the final tape of The Once and Future Jedi which the group did last year.)

Oh yeah. When the Klingon ship went back in time it hit the Voyager on it's way out of the Solar System. "Nice piloting, Sulu," said Kirk (Julia Ecklar). "We just killed the first movie!"

MARCON

The following weekend was MARCON. Because we had been having trouble with our car we rented one so we could go to the con and meet our obligations. As it was, I stood up Rebecca Meluch (her words) -- we were supposed to be on a panel together at 8 PM on Friday evening, but we didn't arrive until after 8:30. But Maia and I DID make our 9 PM one.

I met some new people (to me) at the con. Bill Unger sat in the audience at one panel, and we talked for a while after that. He was a freelance writer, and I gave him a copy (or maybe I mailed it to him after we got back) of the Lantern. I got a letter asking me if I might be interested in an interview

with Judith Moffett who story "Surviving" had just won the first Sturgeon Award for Best Short Fiction. Of course I said yes, and it's published in this issue of LL on page 12.

On that panel with Maia and me (that Bill saw us) was Kimberley Yale, the then-fiancee and now-wife of John Ostrander. John has created and writes stories about comic heroes for First Comics and DC. Firestorm and Grimjack are his most popular. Kim was fun to talk to, and we had a good time on the panel.

I met Kathy Mar for the first time. We had dinner with her, Dean, the twins, Michael Kube-McDowell (the GoH), Sally and Barry Childs-Helton (filkers from Indainapolis), Mike Stein, Robin Nakkula, and Gwen Zak. I spent more time in the filk than I usually did, and heard some marvelous songs. Kathy's song about "The Vevelteen Rabbit" was lovely. I would like to hear it again.

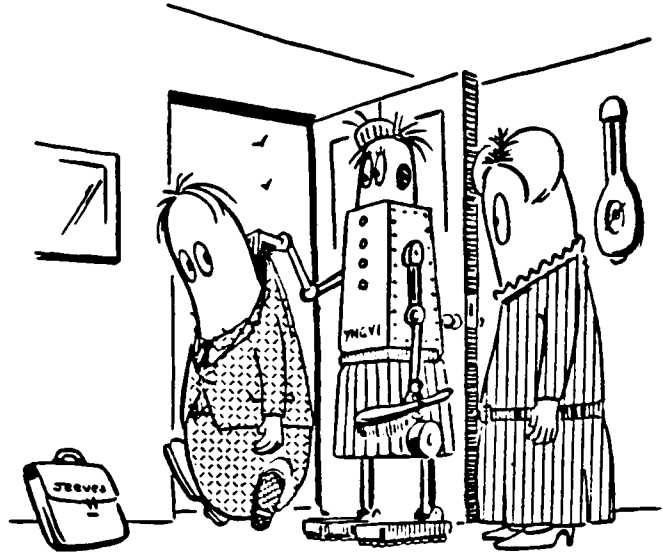
By the time we got home on Sunday evening, Maia and I were both exhausted.

RAMBLINGS 26.3

The trouble with the Alliance persisted. The car would stop running for no reason, many times at free-way speeds. Maia claimed the car the car had pettite mal epilepsy and caused her no end of anxiety. It hadn't happened to me while I was driving it, or even riding in it. We seriously considered getting a new car, but the dealership we were taking the Alliance to for servicing took up the challenge and finally took everything electrical apart, including looking in things they normally don't open up. Maia took the Datsun in and had it tuned up and checked out; since the accident more than two years ago that banged up the Datsun, we have not taken the car on extended drives. The mechanic said that there is no reason that the little car could not be driven for any distance. So Maia decided to take it into work on Friday, May 22.

After I walked to school, Maia walked out of the apartment, slipped for no apparent reason, and landed on top of her right leg. In was broken. She crawled back up the stairs, called the school weekend nurse (who lived next door), Joanne, who came over and took care of everything. Joanne got Maia into her jeep, drove her to the Emergency Room at Beaumont Hospital, and waited until the leg was set in a foot to hip plaster cast.

Meanwhile, I was teaching and, during my "free hours", waiting for some students who had make-up tests who didn't show up. In the middle of my fifth period class, I was told that Maia was home resting in bed with her leg in a foot-to-hip cast. The first thing I thought of was she had an accident with the car. Tom, who delivered the message, said that Joanne had taken her to the Emergenct Room and brought her back, so I fugged that something had to have happened before she left. I finished that class quickly and called home. Maia was doped out on morphine and valium (they had to align the leg twice), and was resting. I finished the rest of the school day, picked up the Alliance, and headed home as soon as I could.



"And as you can see, madam, the Yngvi mechanical housemaid is excellent at dealing with unwanted callers."

Yes, Maia was resting comfortably in the air-conditioned bedroom (I had bought an new air-conditioner for her (and myself) as a graduation present). She explained what had happened, and sent me out for her perscription (which she and Joanne had accidentally left at the hospital). By the time I got back she was in great pain. As soon as I walked into the bedroom the phone rang -- a long-distance phone call from Dennis Fischer who wanted to inform me that James Tiptree, Jr./Alice Sheldon had committed suicide. I was a bit distracted between talking to him and seeing that Maia got her pain pills.

So we spent Memorial Day weekend at home. I worked in the garden and took care of Maia. I tried to do some work on the fanzine, and write up exams, which were (for Math) on June 1. I did some reading as well, and nearly panicked anytime Maia twinged with pain. But I got better. Since I still had to teach for three days after Memorial Day (designated "Review Week"), I was happy that she could get around by herself. I still worried, and came home between classes to spend a little time with her, but I didn't get over to Vic Tanny for exercising. I think the garden work made up for some of that.

I did finally get around to putting the garden in. The weather was very hot and humid with no rain, so I watered extensively and in less than a week from planting (5 days) nearly everything started to sprout.

Exams came and went. I had everything corrected and graded the day after the math exams were given, except for the comments I had to write on those who received D's or E's for the fourth quarter grade, semester or final grade (which I delayed to the last minute). The seniors graduated on Friday, June 5. And the Sunday following Maia went through her commencement exercises.

It has taken Maia 13 years to get through college. She started right out of high school, decided that she didn't really want

to be there then, quit and worked for several years before deciding that she wanted to return to school and get a degree. Maia wanted to go through the ceremonies and have a big party. So, we did. I spent time with the preparations, as did my older sister and the rest of the family. On Saturday we had the party at my sister's place, and on Sunday, with Maia in a wheelchair, I rolled her up on stage to get the folder that would eventually contain her diploma. (They had the ceremonies before the Board granted the diplomas -- which were mailed to all the graduates.)

We had rented the wheelchair for a week. Aside from the party and commencement, there were a couple other things where we could use it: the faculty dinner at the end of the year (Wednesday) and a surprise 30th birthday for our friend Pam Spurlock. Besides, it was the only chance for me to push Maia around.

Although I still hadn't putting the latest issue of Lan's Lantern together, I went to AD ASTRA in Toronto, and had a good time. I considered cancelling the trip so I could stay and finish working on the zine, but several factors conspired together which made doing so difficult. Maia told me that I probably really needed the trip, and she was right. I'm glad I went.

AD ASTRA

I went with Mark Bernstein who drove the two of us to Toronto in his Toyota. Maia had our friend Ida Fincannon come over to stay with her, more to make me feel comfortable with my absence than that she needed a "nurse". On our way we experienced a strange phenomenon. While driving across the 401 from London, Ontario, to Toronto, we were nearly blown off the road by a gust of wind from the South accompanied by a loud sound. Mark's reflexes were good, so we just passed it off as some freaky thing.

We stayed at Mike Glicksohn's and Doris Bercarich's place, though this year I did wish I had taken a room at the hotel. I wanted to stay later than we left, and be up earlier and at the con than we arrived in the morning because there were lots of interesting people at the con. I spent time with many friends, Roxanne Meida and Jo Anselm, and got to know them a lot better. I also met some very nice Canadian fans. Since this con was also the CANVENTION -- the Canadian National Convention -- there were many fans from across Canada, and a couple of the Winnipeg fans, Sherri Portical (to whom Mark sang "Have Some Madeira, M'Dear" at the filk) and Ruth Anderson, were also staying at Mike and Doris's.

I had some interesting talks with some of the French Canadian fans and writers from Quebec, and learned the differences between English and French Canadian fandom. Philippe Gauthier publishes a fanzine called Samizdat, and was willing to trade copies.

Elisabeth Vonarberg was one of the author guests (along with C. J. Cherryh) and we talked briefly. She drag Roxanne and me into a panel on French Canadian Fandom. I was reluctant to go, but I was glad I did. I realized for the first time what a language bar-

rier we in the US do not have. When the panel moderator started speaking in French, Elisabeth spoke up and said that there were a few non-French speakers in the audience. He immediately switched to English. We, the English-only speakers were in the minority--like maybe 5 out of 25, yet they changed to accommodate us. That started me thinking more about the differences among fans internationally. It was a very eye-opening experience.

During the panel the participants passed around some of their fanzines. I found out that Elisabeth was the fiction editor for Solaris, a prozine of French-Canadian fiction and articles of SF. Because of its circulation, it would be classed as a semiprozine. I got Elisabeth's address with the intention of sending her a copy of LL (which I did).

David and Diana Stein were at the con, though I didn't spend much time talking to them. They did tell me that Julia had sold her Star Trek novel, and just received word about it on Friday afternoon. Many people around her house became deaf for several hours from the new highs and decibel levels her voice reached. Considering times and directions, I understood why we were nearly blown off the 401.

A Fannish Fan...



MIDWESTCON

We went to MIDWESTCON on the last weekend in June. I finished the printing for #23 a few days before the con and collated enough copies for me to hand out to people on my mailing list who would be at that convention and INCONJUNCTION. I had a good time watching people's faces when they saw the size of the issue. The most immediate reaction I got from people at the cons who skimmed it was: "Ted White's a real *****." I had Ted's letter first in the loccol and he ripped apart LL #22, had several *nice* things to say about me and my contributors, and actually compliments Roy Lavender on his contribution. One person told me, "I agree with one thing that Ted White says: Roy Lavender's piece was the best in #22."

Both Maia and me had a good time talking to people. Her cast was a topic of conversation, and Bruce Schneier said that he would only talk to her when no one else was around because he didn't want to hear all the "cast stories" others would tell her. Maia said that Bruce was right; she heard a lot of cast and other injury stories.

Since Maia still wanted to work, and Con-dor wanted her skills, they loaned her a modem. Since she had the modem, we talked

about joining one of the SF Bulletin Boards we knew about, DELPHI. She talked to Mike Banks, and he gave her all the information necessary to get going on it.

I had a long conversation with Dean Lambe about the cyberpunk/ computer "jack-in" stories, other books and reviewing, and about gardening. Mike Resnick and I talk about some of the projects that were coming up for him (I read his novel *Ivory*; it'll be out next year in time for his stint as Toastmaster at the Worldcon in New Orleans). Both Dean and Mike said that they would do book reviews for me, and would put them up on DELPHI for me to download.

Sunday morning I woke up ill. I thought it was food poisoning, but I had heard from Halina Harding who had similar symptoms that it could have been a 24-hour flu bug. Anyway, I had to drive home no matter how bad my stomach and back felt, since Maia couldn't drive at all. As soon as I got home and unpacked the car, I went to bed. Not surprisingly, I slept until about 9 the next morning (with one break about 10 PM to eat something). I really had wanted to attend the "June Birthday Party" thrown at Pam Spurlock's and Sandy Schreiber's place, but I was too wiped out to do so.

RAMBLINGS 26.4

The beginning of July was very busy. The few days between MIDWESTCON and INCONJUNCTION went by quickly as I tried to catch up on gardening, collate some more copies of LL for the mailing list, and taking care of household chores. I also worked on the speech(es) I was going to give at INCONJUNCTION. I prepared two, so I could be ready to break the mood if it were either serious or comedic.

Maia had her cast changed on Wednesday, and Thursday morning she woke up at 2 in great pain. I couldn't do much about it then, and we delayed our departure for Indianapolis until she could see her doctor again in the morning. The problem was twofold: the cast was tighter and the angle the knee was bent was different from before. The result was that the leg was supporting the cast instead of the other way around. The doctor lengthened the cast and that made all the difference. It was still a bit tight, but the pain was gone. At her next appointment (July 24), Maia would get a below-the-knee cast. She was looking forward to that.

INCONJUNCTION

The drive down wasn't too bad. The air-conditioning in the car helped. Since we started out two and a half hours later than I had wanted, we arrived later. We did stop off to visit my sister June (which was on the way) and to give a gift to my godchild. It was the set of 10 books offered through SFBC/Book Club Associates --children's classics like *20,000 Leagues Under the Sea*, *Treasure Island*, etc.

When we got to the hotel, Mick Hamblin was waiting for us with a wheelchair for Maia. We checked in, and Mick took us to



Union Station -- the old Indianapolis train station which had been refurbished as a shopping and restaurant mall. It's a lovely place, though when we walked in there was a live band playing loudly -- and badly. Fortunately they stopped when we decided what we wanted to eat.

After we returned to the hotel, we went to the pre-con party and met Jack Williamson (one of the pro GoHs) and the rest of the concomm. Arlen Andrews (the Toastmaster) showed up, and finally Andy Offutt, who gave me a big hug. He asked if I had gotten his letter yet, and I replied no. He told me that he got so upset about Ted White's letter that if he had been at MIDWESTCON to get LL (instead of Jodie), he would have immediately found me and given me a hug. He said that Ted was downright nasty, and said things that were beyond the pale even for him.

Friday morning after breakfast, Mick took us to see the Children's Museum, and then we just relaxed and waited for everyone else to show up at the hotel for the con.

I had a good time. I was on two panels -- one on fanzines and one about the Hugos -- attended opening ceremonies and the plays that the group offered. One high point was the filk concert organized by Sally and Barry Childs-Helton. My speech went over nicely (the humorous one -- reprinted on page 47), and I was interviewed by a small video company that broadcasts on a local cable network. I got to talk to Kelly Cornell (whom I had met at CHAMBANACON last year) and Lynn Margosian (whom I had met at MILLENNICON this past March). I had fun talking to Charlie Terry, Ben Schilling, Ann Cecil, Alan Dormire, Robin Nakkula, Glen Cook, Buck and Juanita, Roger Reynolds, Tim and Anna Zahn, Mike Kube-McDowell, Joyce Jensen, and lots of other people, many filkers, and friends I hadn't seen since as long ago as last year, as close as the previous weekend. I got promises of articles, and some art for LL.

On Saturday evening, after the banquet and speeches, I changed into my Green Lantern outfit, and met with Mitchell Klapp's girlfriend, Robin, who was dressed as... Robin, Batman's sidekick. It's a very nice costume. We got several *looks* as we walked down the hallways together.

The trip home was rather uneventful. It was nice to be able to drive 65 mph legally; once back in Michigan the speed limit dropped back to 55.

RAMBLINGS 26.5

I kept busy for the rest of July by working in the garden, completing the collation of the Lantern, writing a few letters, voting for the Hugos, and working on my various apazines. Maia was working everything out for England, and we were looking forward to that.

On July 15 I started work with the Horizons-Upward Bound (HUB) program as I did last year. The job was the same: monitor the kids as they leave the kitchen area to see if they have the appropriate items on their trays, including fruit and milk. Fruit is one item that the kids don't usually take, so I had a bowl of fresh fruit next to me so I could put a piece on their trays if they had none. And I put a carton of milk on each tray.

Now the explanation.

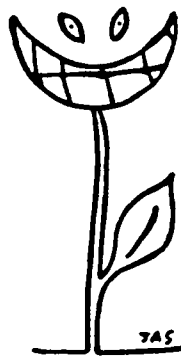
The HUB program is a federally funded program that takes inner-city kids from low-income families who have a desire for higher education and gives them extra help in the basic educational skills (reading, writing, math, science and history), and chances to learn some things they may not have done before (art, foreign language, filmmaking, etc.). All the kids, male and female, are housed on campus, and fed through the program. The kitchen is funded by the US Department of Agriculture, and for that funding, certain guidelines must be followed. Three balanced meals must be served every weekday, and at least two each day on the weekends. And a balanced meal includes items from the four basic food groups, including fruit and milk. A colleague worked the first two and a half weeks of the program, I finished out the last three and a half weeks.

What were the problems?

90% of the kids were black or oriental. 80% of all blacks and 95% of all orientals have lactose intolerance to some degree. Much of this is due to not eating balanced meals regularly at home; mostly it is genetic. So the kids didn't want the milk, except for breakfast when they had cereal (loading the bowl with lots of sugar as well). At times I had a little trouble with them taking the milk. I had less trouble than Peter, who started out with the kids at the beginning of the six-week session. His problems stemmed from the fact that the leaders of the program did not tell the kids why they had to have certain items on their trays. Even after being informed, they resented it.

The biggest problems came from the RAs (resident advisors -- college kids who lived in the dorms with the kids and kept them under control there), and the teachers. EVERYONE connected with the program was supposed to take milk, but most of the teachers didn't, even the heads of the program. My opinion of the teachers was vastly lowered because of this. The kids learn more by example than by being talked at. The teachers should have been setting the example; they weren't. Likewise for the RAs, though those who took the milk actually drank it.

When the inspector from the USDA came to check on the program, she was very impressed by the set-up. I explained the problems, but



The Cheshire Plant

praised the kitchen staff for their efforts in following the guidelines. She asked about milk and fruit returns. I explained that if the kids/adults didn't want the milk, there was a bin in the dining hall for them to put the cartons in, and a tray for the fruit. I recycled the milk, noting which was recycled and which was fresh. I didn't want to hand out sour milk, so I kept track of how many times the cartons went out, and pitched them if they were recycled too many times.

The program passed inspection, more because of the kitchen's efforts than by the efforts of the HUB leaders.

Since I had to hand out the milk for all the meals, my day was broken up strangely. I couldn't spend the time I would like doing individual projects. The garden went to weed very quickly, and I didn't spend much time working out at Vic Tanny. I did not even start working on the Pohl/DeCamp special issue, or on the next regular Lan's Lantern (except for one article by Richard Napoli and a series of reviews by Mike Resnick and Dean Lambe which Maia downloaded for me from DELPHI).

Maia's leg was doing well. She got the below-the-knee cast and a walking heel put on. She's been exercising it a lot. I've taken her on long walks to build up her stamina, and she's been to Vic Tanny a few times since she's been able to bend her knee.

The main activity for Maia and me were the preparation to go to England: a week in London, then a week in Brighton. The more we talked to people who were going to CONSPIRACY, the more convinced we became that the people in charge were giving preference to the non-US fans first. Very few of our friends (those who went through the convention housing committee) were booked in the main hotel, or even in Brighton proper; we had a room in Hove, a town about 3/4 of a mile from the Brighton Metropole. It wasn't that far, but Maia would still have a cast on her leg, and we would prefer not to arrive at the con tired. Anyway, we were looking forward to the trip.

One thing we were going to see while in London is Starlight Express. After publishing Ben Indick's article in LL #23 I wanted to see this musical. The tickets were very expensive, but after all it is our vacation. And we were going to enjoy ourselves. And I found out that Diana Rigg is starring in the Sondheim musical Follies. If we have the chance to see that while in London, we will.

Fan GoH Speech from INCONJUNCTION VII

by Ian

I owe some of the ideas of this speech to Ben Schilling, Roxanne Meida, Maia, Buck Coulson, and James Gunn. So they can take partial responsibility for the outcome.

In fandom we have a lot of acronyms:

FIAWOL (Fandom is a Way of Life)

FIJAGH or FIJAGDH (Fandom is Just a Goddam (or God Damn) Hobby)

FIJAGWOL (Fandom is Just a Goddam Way of Life)

FIAPOL (Fandom is a Part of Life)

FIJASOI (Fandom is Just a Source of Income -- the cry of the Hucksters)

SMOF (Secret Masters Of Fandom)

The various -Zines, Fan-, Pro-, Gen-, News-, Club-, Semipro-, and so on.

There's SOW, which is not used much. It means Sense of Wonder. I can't imagine someone walking around with a t-shirt that says "My SOW Lives!" or "I Have a SOW, do you?"

The mundane world has lots of acronyms as well; these aren't just peculiar to fandom. There's things like ABC, NBC, CBS, LAN -- remember, I had it first! -- and PTL.

PTL is an interesting one. It originally stood for Praise the Lord. With the latest scandal involving Jimmy and Tammy Bakker, it has acquired some new meanings

Pay the Lady

Pass the Loot

Part Thy Legs

Pay (for) Tammy's Lipstick

Pry Tammy Loose (from her make-up)

It has moved a far cry from religion and has become something approaching politics. Which brings up some interesting points.

What will happen to fandom if there is a mixture of religion and politics. True, the US constitution demands a separation of Church and State, but Jessis Jackson and Pat Robertson are indeed running for the presidency. Let's explore what might happen and see what fandom will have to become to survive.

That is, Fandom will have to become a religion.

Actually, we are pretty well set for such a development. We do have our sacred writings, written by our prophets -- all the professional authors' books, the magazines,

stories, and so forth. We have other publications that interpret such sacred writings -- fanzines, semiprozines, and reviews. There are dramatic interpretations of these writings on TV, in the movies, on radio and records and tapes. We have our own sacred beverages: Coke, or Pepsi, depending on whether you're reform or orthodox, Beam's Choice, Tullamore Dew, Blog, Frosted Aardvarks, Spayed Gerbils, and assorted other concoctions.

And 7-UP, which brings forth a whole set of interesting thoughts all by itself -- the effervescent Christ, with the 7 sacraments, Deadly Sins, Cardinal Virtues, Joys, and Sorrows. On Parsons Avenue in Columbus Ohio, there is a 7-UP sign with an attached logo announcing a store-front church: The Full Gospel Church of the Living Savior.

Which brings us to Church Services. Conventions are obviously our services, which means that we all must attend a convention every weekend. Can you imagine that, we have to attend conventions. We will be required, of course, to attend one program item -- of your choice; we do have to allow for different sects of Fandom. This could be a panel, filk, entering the sacred hall where we can purchase the sacred texts and discuss the sacred writings with those who sell them, or attend other rituals, which may go on behind the doors or the rooms where the convention is held.

This could be fun!

Of course, we will have to come up with a new name -- we couldn't keep calling ourselves fans of Science Fiction. I don't think that would go with a religious government.

Yes, I do have a suggestion. Fandom Under God. And in keeping with the beginning of this speech, we could shorten it to an acronym: FUG. The religion with its various sects would be called FUGs. The members would be FUGgers, big and little. And the chairmen of the various religious ceremonies held every weekend, FUGcons, would be the really big FUGS, or maybe FUGHeads.

This has some possibilities. But I'll leave the rest to your imaginations.

So, if we have to make fandom a religion, moreso than some people view it already, I think we can do it.

Thank you!

"Let's get this stupid TARDIS fired up and go," Dr. Who said lately. (Nothing like organizing one's life on a timely basis, what?)
--Perrenelle Doublehanded

Really Big Band music: Tommy Dorsai.
--Perrenelle Doublehanded

THE TRIP to ENGLAND

by LAN

and the
WORLD CON



Getting There

England.

It was a trip of a lifetime. Our lifetime, anyway. We had saved money, worked to have enough so that we could enjoy ourselves and not worry too much when we got back. Maia had done most of the planning, and our schedule was filled with what we were going to do. Still, there was some flexibility so that we could do some things on the spur of the moment.

We left our car at my parents house and my brother Gary drove us to the airport in Windsor, Ontario, just over the Detroit River. Our flight, we found out, was delayed three hours, and our return time was similarly changed. We made sure that Gary knew when to come pick us up two weeks later, and sent him and my parents (who had come to the airport to see us off) home. There was no need for them to hang around with us. We also advised Gary to check with the airport before driving out to pick us up, in case there were other delays.

So, on August 20, Maia and I boarded the plane, headed out to Toronto, then to England. We both planned to sleep on the plane over, but that did not happen. The seats were cramped, and the spaces between the rows were too narrow for adequate leg room. We also carried all our luggage on board with us; we did not trust the baggage handlers with our soft luggage. That made the space even more cramped, as we crammed our bags under the seats in front of us. Because of her leg in a cast, Maia had an aisle seat, but that didn't give her much extra room. We dozed, but got no real sleep.

We landed about Noon on Friday, August 21. Maia's crutch and leg cast worked wonders for us. We were rushed through customs and found the train from Gatwick Airport to Victoria Station for which we had prepaid tickets.

At the Tourist Information Center in Victoria Station we picked up our tube (underground, subway) pass, and headed for Paddington station which was about two blocks from our hotel. After unloading our stuff in the room, we went back to the Information Center to pick up brochures about things to see and do in London. We were both wiped out and sniping at each other; Maia's leg and arm were sore, so we declared the rest of Friday a loss, stopped to eat on the way back to the Beverly Hotel, and crashed for the night.

Some Thoughts About This Foreign Land

The British speak English, but there are some differences with American or even Canadian English. An elevator is a lift (and the floors of buildings are numbered differently (there is the ground floor, and the next one up is the first floor)), the food-words mean something a little different, toilet is the polite term, a wash cloth is face flannel (and not provided by regular hotels).

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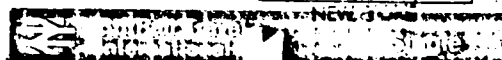
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HOTELS

A shower is a luxury in a hotel especially to have one in your own room. Most have communal bathrooms, and a bathtub; I learned how to bath in a tub and wash my hair using separate hot and cold faucets. We learned later that there are attachments which will mix the water so it comes out one hose. Maia was at a particular disadvantage, with the cast and all, and so resurrected the fine art of the sponge bath.

We knew that the electrical current was different, but no one told us that the plugs were too. Since we did not have a plug converter, our hairdryer became useless.

However, the Beverly House Hotel was wonderful, though we wouldn't know that until we got to Hove and the Worldcon. The proprietor took one look at the cast, and gave us a ground-floor room which was normally a triple. We still had to walk downstairs to the Breakfast Room in the morning (served from 7:30 to 8:45). There was a shower and toilet in the room, which smelled of mildew because of improper ventilation. A heater was provided, but no air-conditioning. We were hesitant about opening the window since it had no screen, but did so because it did get stuffy in the room -- and made a remarkable discovery: England has no pesty flying insects like mosquitoes!

No visitors were allowed in the rooms; we could see guests in the small lobby of the hotel. We had to leave the key at the desk when we went out, for security reasons, I guess.

FOOD

I found the food rather good. The breakfast served at the Beverly House consisted of tea or coffee, a glass of juice, two eggs up, a piece of "bacon" cooked raw (it was actually more like ham), a stewed tomato or spoonful of beans (on alternate days), and toast. The toast came on an aluminum (aluminium?) rack (like a small letter organizer) which guaranteed the toast would be cold by the time it reached the table. Other places we stayed had variations on this basic "full" breakfast.

I did try a kidney pie (which resembled our pot-pies) and found it, like the other meat pies, tasty. A stew turned out to be stewed meat with vegetables on the side, unlike our stews of meat and veggies cooked together. At one pub I ordered chicken salad, and got a couple of slices of chicken, with different salads on top of it.

The fastfood places were in abundance, including many well-known American chains (like Burger King, Kentucky Fried Chicken, MacDonalds), along with England's own Wimpy Burger chain. Most burger places advertised "100% hamburger" meat patties, leaving it open to exactly what kind of meat it was. Macdonald's was the only one to say its meat was "100% beef", and was appropriately more expensive.

These places had carry-out service, but the British pronounced it "take-away."

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TRANSPORTATION

Great Britain has a mass transit system that really works. Trains, coaches, busses, the underground, and taxis are all interconnected. Victoria Station is a large building with access to all of these. It made traveling very easy, once you caught onto the organization. Our tube pass was good for a week, and we quickly learned to take advantage of the underground.

Some stations had lifts, but many that we used didn't. The people, however, were quite cognizant of the handicapped, so Maia had little trouble in that respect; it still posed a problem in actually negotiating stairs. The trains did have designated places for the handicapped and elderly to sit. (Maia's comment in general about places in England: "Everything is either upstairs or downstairs, frequently both.")

Smoking was a big problem. A lot of people smoked. It was banned on all transportation vehicles, and in the underground stations, but old habits die hard. An elderly man sitting and waiting for one of the undergrounds smoked while seated under the "No Smoking On the Platforms" sign. When we pointed this out to the gentleman, he move a ways down the platform.

TRASH

I had this image of England being pristine & clean. I was wrong. The undergrounds were kept fairly clean, but the city streets and byways of London were filled with trash. Pull tabs from soda pop cans, and cans themselves, were everywhere -- no bottle/can return laws. There were trashcans, but like many places in the US, it is easier to drop the litter where you are than take it to a trashcan.

There were places in London, though, that were quite clean -- most of them the tourist areas.

BUILDINGS

One could easily have made the mistake and generalized that all buildings were covered by scaffolding. It sure seemed that way in many of the places we visited. However, it was just that a lot of the "touristy" places were the ones that needed the restoration -- thus the scaffolding.

Not so much in London, but in the outer areas and the villages we passed through, the primary building material was flint rock. For some houses the rocks were chipped and made somewhat uniform so they could be used as bricks and lined up nicely. Most buildings and houses, however, used the rock as it was, which made the construction a little more difficult -- like building with potatoes. The more massive structures, like churches, used cut stone for the corners.

Most of the buildings we saw were at least 200 years old, which gave us some sense of time in comparing our own country's history. And around almost every corner in London was something historical. And we only explored a small part of the city.

August 22

Saturday was much better, though we did take things slow. After arranging for a day trip to Salisbury, Stonehenge and Bath for Wednesday, and since it was raining lightly, we took a guided bus tour of London, which gave us an idea of what else we would want to see more closely. It also gave us a better idea of how close together things really were.

During the tour it stopped raining, but as soon as it was over, the drizzling started again. So, since the bus ticket included a tour of Madame Tussaud's Wax Museum, we took advantage of it.

It was fun. We took photographs of some of the likenesses; the Beatles for my sister June, the Bronte sisters being painted by their brother for one of the teachers at school, the Pope for my mother, Prince Andrew's wedding party because we were in England, and Maia with Henry Moore, Agatha Christie and Queen Elizabeth I.

Many of the exhibits were of contemporary movie and rock stars, mostly uninteresting to us. But, there were some clever models. A tourist sitting to rest in one of the halls had apparently fallen asleep, guidebook in her hand, turned out to be one of the wax models.

Attached to Madame Tussaud's is the London Planetarium, and some of the displays in the lobby use figures from the Wax Museum. There

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Starlight Express
Sat AUGUST 22
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THEATRE
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TO BE RETAINED

was a display of the history of astronomy along with figures of Galileo, Newton and Einstein. The planetarium show was interesting and when we exited the rain had ceased.

We took a walk down Baker Street (where Madame Tussaud's and the London Planetarium are located) and saw the bank which occupies the location of 221B (the residence of Sherlock Holmes). An interesting feature of the Baker Street Station of the tube is that some of the tiles are glazed with the meerschauum and deerstalker of Sherlock Holmes, and the Moriarty Pub is one of the first things you see entering into the station.

In the evening we saw Starlight Express at the Apollo Victoria Theatre, just outside Victoria Station. The story concerns the steam engine Rusty who races against other engines -- specifically Greaseball the diesel engine and Electra the electric engine. Other engines are involved but these three are in the final heat. There is romance--the coach cars (all female) want to be hooked up to a big strong engine. There are also freight cars (box cars named Rockie, Dusty the hopper, CB the red caboose, and so on). Rusty, being the underdog, talks to his father who tells him about the Starlight Express that can help him, give him inspiration and courage.

The plot was a little corny and some of the characterizations were flat, but it was fun. The music was fantastic and the voices great. The actors were all on rollerskates to simulate the engines and cars, and the dance numbers took into account that they were on wheels. The ramps, the movable bridge, the three tracks, lighting and everything worked magic into the show. During the break I talked to someone sitting at one of the computer-control substations for the lights. He said that his girlfriend who sat at the main controls up top did most of the programming. He also said that when they started putting the cast together, the producers found people who could skate first -- pulling some people off the streets -- then taught them to act and sing.

I have to thank Ben Indick profusely for letting us know about this show.

August 23

On Sunday after breakfast it was back to Victoria Station to get our bus tickets for the trip to Brighton on Thursday. We wandered around the area and saw a sign advertising "American Pancake Breakfast". We didn't stop there but were amused by the advertisement. Along the way we happened to pass Buckingham Palace where preparations were being made for the changing-of-the-guard. There was already a crowd gathered, so we didn't stay. We walked across Buckingham Square to St. James Park, and watched the Fife and Drum corp march back to their barracks, saw the Horse Guards parade down the street, being "guarded" by a bobby on horseback, and another bobby clear the fence of gawkers outside the Buckingham Palace guards' barracks.

St. James Park was wonderful. There were meticulously tended beds of roses, and even though the park was busy with people, it was very quiet. Ducks and swans swam in the pools. Sparrows landed on the outstretched hands of ladies standing on the bridge over one of the pools, and ate seed from their palms. Pidgeons would eye you as you sat eating an ice cream cone or sandwich, waiting for the required dole.

In the afternoon we went through the State Apartments of Kensington Palace and saw some beautiful costumes, walked through Kensington Gardens, and ended up at the Museum of Natural History. Maia was exhausted by this time, and sat down after entering the Museum, telling me to see what I wanted and pick her up afterwards. A guard came forward and asked if she wanted a wheel chair so she could get around more easily, and Maia said he was the most wonderful man she had met (besides me, she qualified).

We marveled at the dinosaurs and were amused by the little architectural designs of the building. Near the Assyrian exhibits climbing monkeys were carved into the pillars. The mineral collections were lovely.

Once back at the Beverly Hotel, we got a call from David Singer and Diane Goldman who got in that afternoon and we went to dinner with them. We kept them up until 9 or so so that they could make the jet-lag adjustment with a good night's sleep.

August 24

Monday morning I let Maia sleep in and went to Victoria Station to pick up tickets for the Stephen Sondheim musical Follies. In the afternoon we went to the British Museum and saw much less than we wanted.

The Egyptian sections were wondrous. The Rossetta Stone is out where it can be touched. And some of the exhibits were huge -- columns, walls, statues. I preferred the Greek and Roman exhibits; the Elgin Marbles, the Temple of Athena, the pottery and other artifacts made me drool. Maia was in a wheel chair when we came to a section in the Greek and Roman area that was up a few steps. She wavered whether or not she really wanted to see the Roman glass and jewelry when a crowd of Japanese businessmen came by and, without a word, two of them picked up the front wheels of the chair and I lifted up the back

and up the stairs we went. They left without saying anything, but smiling at our thank yous. When we finished going through that area, Maia stood up quickly at the stairs and hobbled on down before anyone else tried to latch on to the wheel chair.

In the cafeteria of the Museum we met Ross and Diana Pavlac. They started in Scotland and were working their way south to Brighton. We were sure to see them at the Worldcon later in the week.

We stopped in the library and stood in awe of the ancient texts, illuminated manuscripts, and some modern priceless works. I took some pictures of the exquisite illuminations on some of the books on display. I did check with the guard first, to see if photos were allowed.

On the way back to the tube we stopped at the bookstore Forbidden Planet. We found a couple of things we were looking for, but in general it was a disappointment. Their biggest attraction was that they have the largest selection of American imported Science Fiction. I picked up a copy of The Marathon Photograph, a collection of short stories by Clifford Simak edited by Simak fan Frank Lyall. Maia found a first-edition copy of Legacy of Herot for our friend Peter Stephenson.

That evening we intended to see Jean Redpath at the Purcell Room near Royal Festival Hall. Unfortunately Maia read the day wrong, and we were a day late. Instead we walked along the Thames, crossed over the Westminster Bridge and heard Big Ben chime.

August 25

We had been putting off a trip to the Tower of London, waiting for Charlie Terry and Ann Cecil to call us. Charlie wanted to see the Tower with us. We got a message from her on Monday night, but she left no number so we couldn't call her back. On Tuesday then, in spite of the rain, we took a boat ride down the Thames and got off at Tower Bridge, next to the Tower of London.

It was very nice. The armory was interesting, and the Crown Jewels were magnificent. I wanted to take pictures of the Crown Jewels, but we were warned not to take any pictures; the sign was festooned with confiscated film cassettes and exposed film.

Soaked and cold, we declined doing much more at the Tower, so we left intending to eat lunch and head for the hotel for some rest before the evening showing of Follies. On the way to the underground, we met Charlie. She, Ann, and Cheryl Crawford were on their way to the Tower.

Also on our way to the tube, we saw portions of the old city wall initially built by the Romans, and maintained through medieval times. After a meal at the Cheshire Cheese Pub, we found our way to the Beverly Hotel and some rest.

Follies was wonderful. It starred Diana Rigg. She looked heavier than she did on The Avengers, but she is still beautiful and has nice legs. We were both delighted with the performance and are intending to get the album as well as the Starlight Express album.

The story involves two of the "Follies Girls" and their husbands, and how the rela-

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tionship between the wife and husband of opposite couples is rekindled. There are flashbacks to some of the things that happened 30 and 40 years earlier, and a wonderful climax of the "follies" of the main characters. The effects were wonderful.

Follies was at the Shaftesbury Theatre, off the Baker Street exit of the tube. We got there early and so wandered around the area a bit more. As we passed St. Giles Church, we noticed a bottle of Blue Nun wine in the gutter, outside the Angel Pub which was next door. Rather amusing and appropriate, we thought. We also discovered that there was a Forbidden Planet II bookshop, up the street ad around the corner from the one we had visited. They were closed already, and we wouldn't have time the next day to get there, so it will have to wait till our next visit to England.

We thought about getting tickets to see Cats, or Phantom of the Opera, but both were sold out. I'm sure we could have gotten tickets, but they would have cost a considerable amount.

August 26

Wednesday morning we were up early and off to catch the bus on our three-stop-tour outside London. Salisbury looked very nice, but we were not allowed very far into the cathedral because there was a funeral at that time. We stopped there for about 45 minutes then moved on to Stonehenge.

Armand Hennessy, our guide, talked about the history of the Salisbury Cathedral and Stonehenge. He presented different theories about the hanging stones, and Maia and I joked about some alternate theories of stone circles. One of the most fascinating theories concerning astrology (for which Stonehenge could serve as a marker for the stars) is that of nutrition and birth.

Consider that you are in the womb for 9 months. You are a product of whatever foods your mother consumes during those months, as well as the genetic codes of your parents and ancestors. A baby born in December is, therefore, the product of early Spring foods, summer and fall abundances; he would have a fairly stable diet of all nutrients

necessary to remain healthy. For someone born in June, the fetus would suffer from some forms of malnutrition because of the lack of fresh fruits and vegetables in the late winter months. Given the connection between nutrition and behavior, children born at certain times may exhibit the same traits of behavior, depending on the excesses and deficiencies of certain vitamins, minerals and nutrients they experienced before they were born. Thus the constellation markers indicated the "type of personality" that might occur to someone being born at that time. As time went on, astrologers reversed this idea and claimed that the stars controlled what behavior and personality a person would have when born under that sign.

Maia and I originally wanted to go to Avebury, where the stone circle was much larger, and you could walk up to the stones and touch them. Because of the cast, no direct route to Avebury, and our reluctance to rent a car, we opted for this trip and the look at Stonehenge. This stone circle was very impressive. We crested a hill and there it stood in the middle of the plain. During the 30 minutes we stopped there, I took about a dozen pictures, but that was enough. Since the authorities stopped allowing people to walk among the stones (because of vandalism and souvenir hunters), the feeling of power and sense of wonder about this stone circle was greatly diminished. A half hour was enough.

Bath was wonderful. Bath Abbey was impressive, though we did not have time to go inside. The gardens and parks in the various public and private places were beautiful.



MEMENTOS OF BATH

THE CITY OF BATH

The English do indeed like their gardens. Flowers and topiery were found all over Bath. Most impressive however were the Roman baths themselves.

We started in the "modern" parts and gradually made our way down the levels to the pavement stones that the Romans had walked on. There were several guide books about the baths and the history of the area, and they described how the Romans capped the hot spring for their baths. After seeing what was here and at Salisbury, Maia and I decided that we have to return to this country, if only to see the other things we missed in these places. But there is so much else to see; every little town seems to be steeped in the history of the country and has some special significance of its own.

The trip back to London was very fast, and Maia and I were let off much closer to our hotel than where we picked up the bus for this tour. We arrived somewhat sooner than we had expected, so after a quick dinner at The Black Lion pub, we went back to the London Planetarium and saw the Laserium show (with music by Jean Michel Jarre).



The Worldcon

There were problems. Aside from the postal problems and handling the Hugo nominations and voting and site selection votes, and assigning rooms at the hotels (many fans were in Hove, 3/4 of a mile from the convention activities), there was a lot of wasted function space. The main hall where the Masquerade and Hugo Ceremonies were held was used only for that and the two performances of Hawkwind. The cost to rent the place must have been enormous, and it was underused. However, some of the cost was probably offset by Bridge Publications (you know, the Hubbard/Scientologist people who also fund the "Writers of the Future"), who sponsored some of the awards at the masquerade, and paid for use of the cover to the pocket program book (they used the cover to the first of the "Mission Earth" books, The Invaders Plan), and had the center-page spread for Bridge Publications and an advertisement for "Writers of the Future".

The Brighton Metropole found a new way of closing down the convention -- they stopped anyone from entering the hotel who did not have a key. The Metropole Center which had most of the convention activities (art show, hucksters room, most panels, fan room) was accessible only through the lobby of the Metropole Hotel. They were not prepared for the influx of all the fans coming through

after the major events in the Brighton Centre, so they hotel staff and guards held everyone out, unless a person could show s/he had a room there.

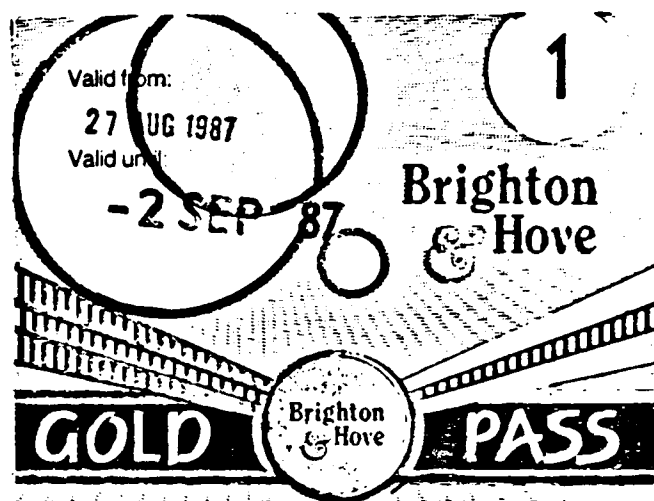
The art show and huckster rooms were wonderful. I hadn't seen that many used books at a con in a long time. I bought quite a few books, about which Maia kept telling me that I had to carry them all. Colin Langveld did a superb job laying out the art show.

The titles of some of the panels, though made in jest, were quite overwhelming anti-everything-but-British. Titles like "Why Have the Americans Hi-Jacked the Worldcon", "Americans Write Pulp, Brits Aspire to Literary Greatness", "What's Wrong with 'Foreign' Fans?", and others. Orson Scott Card showed up for the convention, and was put on a panel called "Who Cares Who's Going to Win the Hugos?", moderated by Norman Spinrad and staffed with others of his ilk (in other words it would have been Scott against everyone else -- talk about stacking things against him). The people in the fan publications room were nasty in their daily newsletter about letting any fans use the equipment ("If you are not on the publications staff, stay out!").

To be fair, the programming committee did poke fun at themselves with panels like "Why Is There No British SF Magazine?" and "Who Needs the BSFA?", but I thought it was rather unprofessional of the committee to use such baiting titles.

The bus ride down from London to Brighton was relatively uneventful except for meeting a neofan from Cambridge, Clare MacRae. She was in the seat in front of us reading a LeGuin novel. She overheard us talking about attending and supporting members and figured we had to be fans. We talked about various things all the way to Brighton.

When Maia and I arrived from London, got week passes for the Brighton/Hove busses, arranged for our trip to Canterbury, and settled into the Imperial Hotel (in Hove), we headed back to the Brighton Centre to register for the con. We met lots of American and Canadian fans, and a couple informed me that the fanzine fans were out to "get" me. Apparently at opening ceremonies someone made a comment about me defending my views about my fanzine. Normally I'd ignore such



comments, but after the other screw-ups that were going on at the con, I didn't look forward to having a good time. But I wanted to have fun, so to avoid being readily identified, I conveniently did not wear my hat.

There were some good things that happened and lots of people to see, talk to, and do things with:

dinner with Stanley and Joyce Schmidt who introduced us to the Mongolian Barbeque -- a sort of "make-your-own-stirfry"; Stanley said that there is NO TRUTH to the rumor that Analog will be changing its name back to Astounding -- they need to use the name Astounding which has been appearing on the magazine cover so to prevent others from picking it up and gaining from its reputation; along with us was Howard Scrimgeour who added a lot to the conversation;

talks with Lynn Margosian, the fan I met last March in Dayton, who was traveling through England studying gardens -- her major is Landscape Architecture;

Mark and Evelyn Leeper, though we didn't spend much time together -- that will change next year; we plan to schedule something before NOLACON;

Colin Langveld, who ran the excellent art show;

talking briefly with (and taking a picture of) Gene and Rosemary Wolf; he said that he would begin working on his GoH speech for CONCLAVE as soon as he got home from this trip; it turned out to be a slide show of CONSPIRACY;

Mary Frost-Pierson (the Mystery Lady) and Elaine Roberts -- just talking in passing and catching up on some fun things we had done;

Teresa Nielson-Hayden (with whom I talked for too, too short a time;

Mike and Carol Resnick, who were at the con for a couple of days before heading to Africa (see page 3);

Jo Anselm, the beautiful Rochester, New York fan who is a delight to talk to, and the dinner we had with Allaster of Ottawa;

Alan Dean Foster, who informed me of his impending divorce, his move to British Columbia, Canada, and introduced me to his fiancée;

Elisabeth Vonarburg and Susam Schwartz who were looking for each other and kept passing messages via me;

spending some time with Mike Glicksohn, Doris Bercarich, Peter Roberts and Heather Ashby, especially at their room party;

talking to Roy Lavender, taking his picture and him returning the favor;

saying hello to Ben Bova, albeit briefly, and wishing him well;

Kees Van Toorn, his Holland party, and briefly saying hello as we passed each other;

having lunch with David Singer and Diane Goldman;

running into Harry Bond who had sent me a copy of his fanzine during the summer, and which I kept trying to place every time I saw him;

catching up on news with Janice Gelb and Valli Hoski;

Lois McMaster Bujold -- not expecting her to be at the con and running into her was a supreme pleasure; she gave us a copy of Alien Stars IV: Freelancers, which we had autographed by her, Orson Scott Card, and editor Betsy Mitchell;

Greg Ketter, selling books in the hucksters room -- never expected to see him there;

Bruce Burdick, David Brin, Joe and Gay Hal-deman, Charlie Terry, Cy Chauvin, and a host of others I did not get a chance to spend much time with.

I was hoping to meet some of the people I corresponded with -- like Frank Lyall, Paul Skelton and Terry Jeeves, but they didn't show up at the con. I did encounter Irwin Hirsh, David Langford, Waldemur Kunning, and Paul Kincaid, all of whom were on a panel with me after the Hugo Ceremonies. I talked to Greg Pickersgill who ran the fan room, and apologised to him for naming him "Peter" in LL #23, explaining why I had done so. He accepted the apology graciously.

When Mike Glicksohn introduced me to Ted White on Saturday (he didn't remember me when we met several years ago), Ted asked me where my hat was. I pulled it out of my shoulder bag and remarked, "See, you didn't know who I was without it." He thanked me for printing his letter in full and said, "...but you missed the point." I replied, "Oh." by then I enjoying the con, and the last thing I wanted to do was get into an argument with him. I thought about saying, "You made several; which one did you mean?" or "I did, but I ignored it."

Ted added that I should get down to the fan programming, which I eventually did; I kept getting sidetracked in conversations with other people which interfered with getting to many program items.

One of the most memorable panels I did attended was called "Pleasures and Perils of Overnight Success" with Clive Barker, William Gibson, Iain Banks, and moderated by Malcolm Edwards. I knew of the rocketing success of Barker and Gibson, but I had never heard of Iain Banks before. Based on this panel I went out and bought two of his novels: The Wasp Factory and The Bridge. Both were excellent.

From this panel I learned how Terry Carr bought Neuromancer from Gibson, how Malcolm Edwards (SF editor for Gollancz Books) missed out on getting Barker's collections of horror short stories, and how this success has affected their lives.

The Irish Fandom panel was intriguing. Chuch Harris has gone deaf, so he was keeping track of the conversations on this panel by reading what Teresa Neilsen Hayden was typing on a computer screen. Eventually Arthur (ATom) Thompson, James White, Bob Shaw, Avedon Carol, and Vincent Clarke slowed down and waited for Chuch and Teresa to catch up, and see Chuch's response.

I tried to get into the room to hear Bob Shaw's speech, but the room was too crowded. I asked Mike Glicksohn afterward how it was, and he said terrific. "You know, I don't think anyone has asked if they could publish it; why don't you see if he'll let you." I immediately ran up the stairs and found Bob

Shaw autographing books. When I put the question to him, he said sure. Then we spent the rest of the con missing each other in terms of passing the manuscript. Eventually he mailed me a copy; it was published in LL #25.

We didn't stay at the con itself all the time. We did wander through Hove and Brighton a bit. I found a bookshop and picked up some lovely illustrated texts. Maia and I also looked at some jewelry, and for an anniversary present got her a pair of ruby earrings and a fire-opal necklace.



Holland won for 1990. Scott Card won for Speaker for the Dead. Silverberg, Zelazny and Bear won in their categories. Aliens copped the Dramatic Presentation Hugo, David Langford won both the Fanzine and Fanwriter awards (well deserved, and not unexpected), and Brad Foster (finally) won Fan Artist (though it was a close race between him and ATom). The best Non-Fiction was won by The Trillion Year Spree by Brian Aldiss and David Wingate (many people didn't realize that the book was co-authored). Although I was hoping that Lois McMaster Bujold would win the Campbell Award for best New Writer, I was happy to see Karen Joy Fowler take home the award.

In accepting the First Fandom Award for Bea Mahaffey, Lynn Hickman told everyone that her sister would be getting it when he returned to the United States. Bea had died earlier in the year. Lynn, unused to speaking before a large audience, told me later that he forgot to mention one thing he had intended to say: Bea knew that she was getting the award a few days before she died.

Two things about the Hugo ceremonies had people ticked off. The first was letting A. J. Budrys gush about Bridge Publications and its sponsorship of so many things at CONSPIRACY. Joel Davis Publishing sponsors the Campbell Award, but Stan Schmidt doesn't use the occasion to push Analog and Asimov's. Something was definite improper here. Secondly, someone said that having Ted White hand out the Fanzine Hugo was like having Edi Amin talk about Human Rights.

The fireworks afterwords were pretty. We heard that both the British and French National Guards had to be contacted and warned before the fireworks could be shot off.

Closing ceremonies on Monday were impressive, only in that New Orleans accepted the gavel with a traditional Dixieland band and parade (complete with umbrellas). At least NOLACON will have better music (we heard a lot of Madonna--we didn't fly 4500 miles to hear bad American music).

Our last meal in Brighton was at the Mongolian Barbeque restaurant -- sort of ending it all in the same place we began it. This time we ate with Peter Roberts and Heather



Ashby. That evening we went down our hotel bar/lobby to have some refreshments. While there, I spotted someone reading an Iain Banks novel. We talked with him and found out he was a Dutch fan who also wrote some stories, and translated English SF into Dutch. Peter Cuypers was his name, and we talked for about an hour--about SF and cons, and the Worldcon in Holland for 1990--before retiring.

Arundel Castle

We took a day trip to Arundel on the recommendation of Michelle Smith-Moore and Garth Barbour. They said that we would enjoy seeing it, and we did. When we arrived, the castle was not open yet, so we got maps of the town and went visiting some of the other sites. We first headed for the cathedral -- which we couldn't go into because there was a funeral. We almost despaired of ever seeing the inside of one. But we did get some good pictures of the outside.

On our way back towards the castle, we spotted the Parish church and Fitzalan Chapel (an Anglican and Catholic Church in the same building). We slipped inside and were treated to an amazing sight of antiquity and history. The stained glass was beautiful. The Anglican side was separated from the Catholic side by an iron grating and a plexiglass barrier. I took pictures, one through the plexiglass into the Fitzalan chapel.

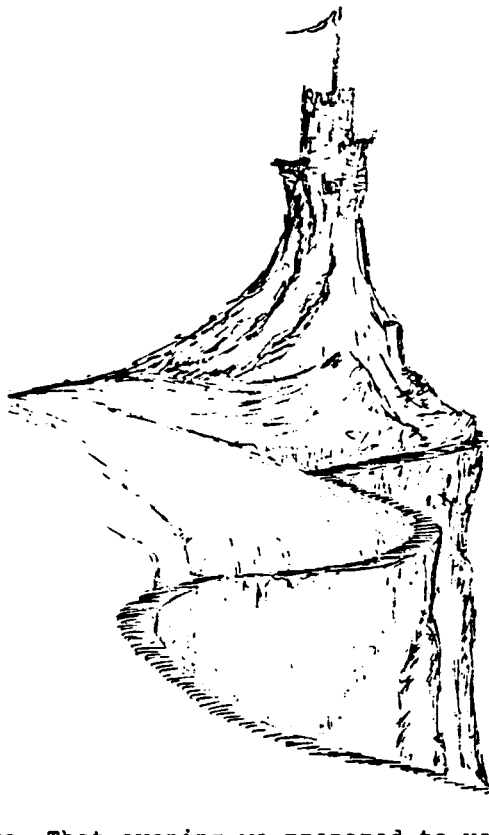
By the time we finished admiring the parish church and returned to the castle entrance, it was open for the public.

Think of a medieval castle, the ones you are used to seeing in movies and the like. That's what Arundel Castle looks like. It has battlements and towers, drawbridges over moats (though there was no water in them), and gates and portcullises.

The trip through the various rooms and halls were awe-inspiring. There were several areas that we were asked not to take pictures. Instead, we bought postcards. The library was not the British Museum, but I would not mind having one like Lord Fitzalan, the Duke of Norfolk, has. And the furniture is exquisite.

From the castle we went to Fitzalan Chapel (from the castle side), and found that no pictures were allowed inside; we again purchased postcards, which we added to the photo I took from the parish church side.

We had some lunch, wandered about the town some more before catching a bus back to



Hove. That evening we prepared to vacate the hotel, and head for Canterbury.

Canterbury

We finally checked out of the Imperial Hotel and took a bus to Canterbury. The ride was pleasant, and the countryside was a collage of English houses and farms.

In less than 24 hours we went visited most of the sites in town. We finally saw the inside of a Cathedral. The Canterbury Cathedral is probably the most famous of all in England. Maia read Chaucer's Canterbury Tales in the original Middle English throughout the trip in preparation for seeing the Cathedral.

After getting settled at the St. John Bread and Breakfast, we headed for the Cathedral. It's difficult to miss, since it dominates the skyline and can be seen from almost anywhere in the city. We stopped along the way to see the remains of some Roman mosaic floors found several feet below street level, and snapped pictures of our approach to the huge Church. As we walked through the cathedral we stood in awe of its size and magnificent architecture. I took lots of pictures (I had to purchase a photographer's pass for 50 pence--about 85 cents, and in some cases, just looked and memorized -- a picture would not do justice the experience. None of the snapshots, for example, truly captured the sharp colors of the stained glass windows, or the true breadth of the cathedral. In the cloisters we found some people who were restoring the colors of the coats of arms from all the royal families of England, and a few outside. The coats of arms dotted the ceiling of the cloisters.

A few hours later we emerged from the Cathedral and visited the shops (where I

bought myself a deerstalker cap), saw the remains of several other churches, viewed from a distance the St. Augustine Abbey, and ran into Jon and Joni Stopa. After exchanging a few stories, Maia said that she would kill for a steak dinner, and they recommended a place close-by that specialized in that sort of "American" food. So that evening we had a wonderful and expensive steak dinner on Wednesday night, spending most of the British pounds we had left.

The next morning before breakfast we visited the outside of several churches, walked along the old city wall (originally Roman and Norman), and saw the remains of an old Norman Castle. On our way back to eat, we encountered an elderly gentleman who commented on Maia's cast. We talked for a bit and he told us about his life as a soldier in World War II, the special unit he was in during the Burma campaign, his rise in rank to be the youngest Sergeant Major ever in the British Army, and then his life after the war. It was actually very fascinating. Most of his children turned out "bad", but his daughter, and especially his granddaughter (you could see his eyes sparkle when he talked about her), were lovely. "You have to be a lot of things to be a grandfather," he said. "A good story teller, a liar sometimes, strong, patient, kind, understanding, and so on. But it's worth it to see your grandchildren grow up healthy."

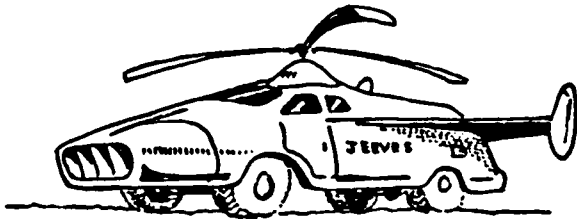
After breakfast at the St. John B&B, we packed and left our luggage there and wandered into the town again. After climbing to the top of Westgate (the western gate of the Medieval city of Canterbury), we walked through the gardens along the river Stour and went through the Poor Priests' Hospital which has just recently been turned into a museum. This was an interesting place, since it used the latest technology its displays (including a hologram of the murder of Thomas Becket)). We wandered by a few more shops before heading back to pick up our baggage and make our bus connection.



Home Again

Thursday at 12:45 we boarded the bus to Gatwick Airport. We arrived in plenty of time for the 4:45 flight home. When we got there, we were informed that there would be a delay, since the plane had not yet arrived from Toronto. We finally boarded at 7:30 and didn't take off until sunset. The flight home was not as stressful as the one in except in actually boarding the aircraft -- the flight attendants were less than polite in some instances. We passed over the southern tip of Greenland and saw mountains and glaciers. In the seven hours of flight time, we witnessed about five and a half hours of spectacular sunset. Too bad we didn't have a window seat.

As I mentioned at the beginning, my brother Gary was supposed to pick us up. After many phone calls and an extra trip to



the airport, he found out that we were supposed to arrive at 8:20 PM, but when he got to Windsor Airport that Thursday evening, he was told "not until 11." He took my sister and her daughter back home, then returned with my mother about 10, and they were informed again that we had not arrived in Toronto from London yet. We landed in Windsor

about 8 minutes after midnight, went through customs at the tunnel from Windsor to Detroit, and arrived at my parents' house (where we left our car) around 1. We were home by 2 and in bed quickly. For some reason we both woke up at 7:30 and started functioning rather well.

We had lots of pictures -- 13 rolls. I took them in on Friday, got them back Saturday evening, and spent a good part of Sunday and all of Monday morning putting them into books and writing captions. At my parents' cottage Sunday afternoon the family enjoyed the pictures and the additional commentary we were able to provide.

If anyone wants to see our pictures or hear more stories about the trip, just ask. We're ready and willing to do so.

West Coast Conventions

by Clifton Amsbury

I've noted that you have many conreports, but they are pretty localized. You and I have only been to the same con twice -- both Worldcons. So here are some of the famous/infamous West Coast Conventions.

Out here our regional is the WESTERCON which has a range of over a thousand miles (16° or 17° latitude which is a thousand nautical miles by eleven or twelve degrees longitude which, at such latitudes, is three or four hundred ordinary miles). Four or five Worldcon-class cities have actually had Worldcons out here. There are a number of local, special and specialized cons, plus commercial rip-offs.

A most choice con is OCTOCON (I understand that you have an OCTACON in the Midwest). The Spellbinders and Star Kliques of Santa Rosa mount the OCTOCON every other year or so and donate any surplus to charity. Spellbinders is more serious and Star Kliques tends to Trek orientation. It was at an OCTOCON that Lancelot the Unicorn made his debut -- 3 or 4 years ago. What a ham! He won the masquerade.

There are comic cons and zine cons, one 'way up at the north end of the Sacramento Valley. Vancouver, British Columbia, has a regular con and the NORWESCON is between Seattle and Tacoma, Washington. A very special one is CONTACT where they invent space cultures and observe contacts. Lots of pros and anthropologists attend. There are others I don't know about. Portland has two. One was founded over the hills in Beaverton, more or less as a relaxacon. It's moved over into the city and calls itself a GENERIC CON. The other is ORYCON.

Some Personal Convention Experiences

WESTERCON XXX

When the third X-rated WESTERCON (XXX in 1977) was held in Vancouver, BC, the Bay Area fan bought a block of coach tickets on Amtrak. The train's engine broke down on

the way up the coast from Southern California and they had to wait for another. It came from Fresno, which meant it had to go north through Maartinez, then south through the East Bay (which includes Oakland) to wherever the stranded train was, turn around, hook on, bring the train to Oakland. Over the Siskiyou and Cascade Mountains the tracks were in such bad shape that the train only went 25 miles per hour, but we made up some time down the Willamette Valley until we rammed an old Ford pickup stalled on the tracks south of Portland.

By the time we reached Seattle, the shuttle to Vancouver had left, so Amtrak finally loaded us into a bus hired for the occasion. It was a tour bus with speakers and its regular driver, so we got a guided tour not only to Vancouver, but out to the University. The driver circled the dorms where we were to live and meet. He finally stopped and someone called out, "Here comes a native guide!"

It was Poul Anderson.

My eleven-year-old grandson disappeared into the Dungeons and Dragons game and seems to still be there. The only change is he now does it with a computer display.

ORYCON '86

The ORYCON in 1986 was November 7-9 at the Lloyd Center Red Lion Inn, Portland, "Orygon." The GoH was Edward Bryant, Toastmaster George R.R. Martin, Editor GoH Jessica Amanda Salmonson, and the con had eight listed lesser guests and a bunch of still lesser ones, which mostly meant other panelists. At first Aubrey Mac Dermott and I figured we couldn't go, but since his was for reasons of health, I finally went to take his place on the History of Very First Fandom panel. In spite of the problems of getting to WESTERCON XXX, I decided to take Amtrak again. Having, as a guest, a list of the other guests who had promised to come, I knew what I should take for autographs and

made the best use of travel space.

It was a very good trip, right on schedule, good scenery, snow in the mountains, rain as usual in Portland. I think I missed one bus while asking where to get it, and it started raining again before the next one came, but I was equipped. I'd been in Portland before and had limited my baggage to what I could carry on the bus and six blocks on foot.

I got to the con an evening early and spent two or three hours with Bus (F.M.) and Mrs. Busby whom I had met when they were fan guests at the Portland WESTERCON ('84).

A couple of the books I brought I had to take back unsigned, Somtow Sucharitkul wasn't there. R. Faraday Nelson (The Big Cat) wasn't there though he'd told me he would. So Bruce Pelz and I had to do History without him.

I had found some handout sheets from my anthropology classes in my briefcase, so I handed them out to my various panel-mates. Bruce went first on that panel and looked at the sheet while I talked. The Sheet was "Some Needs Power Must Serve." When I finished Bruce told the audience that here are instructions on just how to run a fan club. Actually, no, it said nothing about "How," just a list of objectives to avoid failure. (A grandchild asked me, "Don't you want to win?" "No," I said, I just don't want to lose." I have no use for a zero-sum game because winner take all is a losing game.)

One panel was chaired by John Dalmas. When I got there one man was ahead of me. I sat next to him, hauled out some books and asked, "Are you John Dalmas?"

"Yes."

"Would you mind signing these?"

"My favorite pastime."

Other people on panels with me included Joel Davis, Elton Elliot, Jim Fiscus, Steven Gallaci, John Shirley, Frederick Meyer, G.C. Edmonson, Frank Catalano, Ray Pelley, Jordin Kare. I realized that some of them, especially Edmonson, I had met at other cons, but never identified. Edmonson says he started writing because he could no longer carry on his earlier trade as blacksmith.

John Varley was most impressive. Also just a shade gaudy among all the other pros and fen. Along side him we did seem a bit scruffy.

The consuite was too good and so was the food and company. Result: it was packed all the time. As someone has pointed out since, one could have existed on consuite food and never had to buy a meal. Maybe some did. I'm sure the crowds up there had something to do with why some panel audiences were small.

Unfortunately, by the time I got to the art show, the auction was already in progress. So I didn't get a chance to see it.

WESTERCON XXXX

Aubrey Mac Dermott removed from his nostrils the oxygen tubes which were keeping him alive, got up from his wheel-chair, walked to the mike of the Masquerade MC, and asked: "How would you like this to be your last Con?"

Since most of those present knew that WESTERCON XXXX probably was Aubrey's last

con, it got attention. Murmurs died as he went on to note that it has been happening. Boston lost their hotel, and the long-time standby in L.A., the Marriott, will have no more fancons.

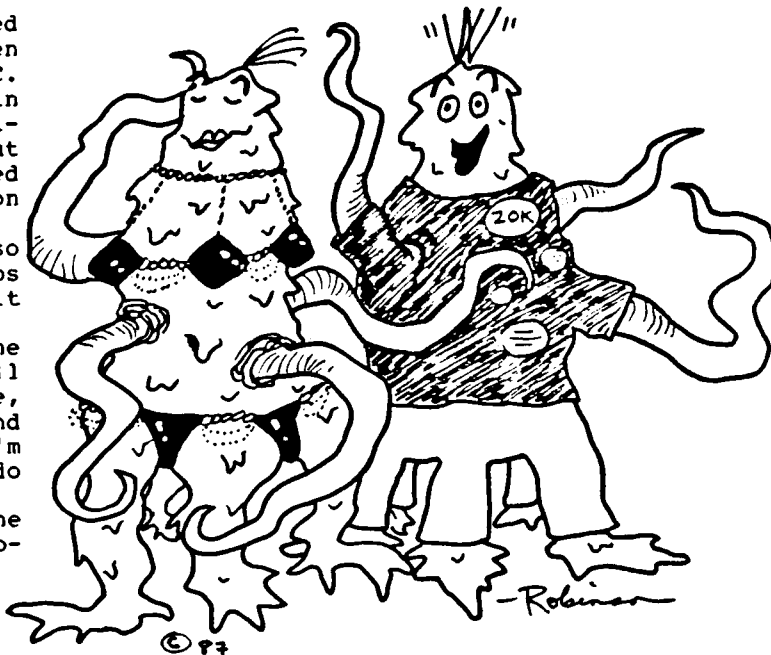
Aubrey founded the first science fiction fan club in April 1928 (four others were founded that summer). The next year he brought into organized fandom Forrest J. Ackerman, then at 12 already fandom's greatest letter writer.

Now, in 1987, Aubrey was Fan GoH of WESTERCON XXXX (only PHILCON has been running longer!). He repeated, for the Masquerade audience, the gist of the opening remarks he had made the night before for his Guest of Honor speech: The "sillies" ("Don't call them vandals; they like that. Ridicule them.") not only antagonize hotel managements. They are giving insurance companies an excuse to double again rates which have already been more than doubled without excuse. Now out tenure depends not on the good or ill will of the local manager, but upon the accountant of the chain. Multinational corporations are unforgiving.

Well, Aubrey made it back to his chair and enjoyed the Masquerade, which was just the right length. There were enough categories for an award (it seemed) for all participants.

Aubrey had attended the first Westercon and most of those between. He has met most of the old pros and fans who attend Worldcons, and lately has been a regular at WESTERCON History panels.

But of course WESTERCON is much more than the Fan GoH. The Writer Guest of Honor was Greg Benford who had a left-arm-in-sling to explain, which he did at his usual length.



After speaking at his usual length he simply vanished, being in great demand elsewhere. (That usual (or unusual) length is more than we know. In the program book his brother Jim mentions his prodigious writing and the partial bibliography runs to three and a half pages of fiction, non-fiction, technical,

research, theoretical and fanzine writings.) Also in that Program there is an error in my account of Aubrey. Either when I typed it or when they printed it, eight words were left out. I noted that "Poul and Karen Anderson and their daughter Astrid (2 weeks old)" were at the 1954 Worldcon. Somehow it came out "Karen Anderson (2 weeks old)." Karen had no comments -- about Astrid: "She was six weeks." About her own age: "Forget it."

Artist GoH were Lela Dowling and Ken Macklin; Filk GoH was Leslie Fish; Toastmaster, Jon DeCles (husband of Diana Paxson, for those not aware of his own other qualifications).

Most of my afternoon times were spent in the World-Building group, an ongoing project which originated with CONTACT, an amalgamation of anthropologists, pro/fan writers and other fans. Each year they gather to build a world, a biology, and a culture, and then work out a Contact situation.

Spillovers have been popular at OCTOCONS in Santa Rosa. The group here was fluctuating, but the final two hours overcrowded the small room assigned to it. One who came then was Larry Niven who has been in on all the CONTACTS. The ongoing group had developed a non-predatory species and culture out of the nature of their dominant biology, but had introduced a controversy over a question of expansion into a new ecology.

Some of the newcomers not aware of the background licked up a remark of one of the veterans and expanded it to "predation." He objected and they referred it as his own statement. Before it became bickering, I turned on my outdoor-developed, classroom-filling voice to say: "It is very difficult for people raised in America to think in terms of a non-predatory culture." I glanced over at Larry Niven and he was nodding gravely.

We had a show of slides of magazine covers from 1909 to 1939 from the collections of Aubrey Mac Dermott and Frank Robinson. It included not only science fiction covers, but those of first issues of most of the

pulps which printed science fiction tales.

The First Fandom panel had a small but active group from Ackerman to Widner, and maybe beyond.

James Hogan led a panel of seven on para-psychology and was himself the only one flatly rejecting the idea. There was plenty of participation pro and con from the audience.

There was a circle reading of Eye of Argon. Despite what anyone tells you, this is not the "worst science fiction story ever written." It is certainly not science fiction; I don't even consider it fantasy. It is adventure fiction within the ancestral line of Indiana Jones and the Temple of Doom.

One discussion outside scheduled panels referred to sexual mores in the wake of Surgeon-General Koop's dictum that the best defense against AIDS is total abstinence (or chastity, if you prefer) and that next-best is total monogamy with a totally monogamous partner. During the discussion it was mentioned that the licentious Renaissance, overwhelmed by syphilis, was followed by the Reformation. The Gregorian period relaxed this and was followed by Victorianism which lasted until the use of salvarsan and a treatment for gonorrhea reduced the impact of venereal disease. The sexual revolution came after sulfas and penicillin were thought to be effective cures and the Pill reduced fears of pregnancy. Now we have a new reason for chastity and lifelong faithful monogamy.

As usual, the hotel elevators were too few, too slow, and too weak (limit 10 people per car) for any convention, especially for ours. And Sunday afternoon I discovered that the Irish are now obsolete. I noticed an unusual number of Black men in the lobby and at one side a table set up behind which was a very competent-looking Black woman. I said, "I'm with the group that's just leaving, What is the group just coming in?"

"The Association of Law Enforcement Executives," she said.

Skunk + Rose

the GENETIC ENGINEER'S BESTIARY

by Kurt Erichsen



SOME COMMENTS ON

by Jeanne M. Mealy

[[Written October 8, 1987. --Lan]]

TV Science Fiction

I've seen a few things this fall on TV that deserve comment. Just to warn you: I'm more concerned with story, plot, premise and characterization than actors.

Nuke 'em High

The movie Nuke 'em High is an example of the "intriguing premise, deserved better" group. Plot: High school students are affected by leakage of waste from a nearby nuclear plant. Honor students become violent punks, terrorizing all who cross their paths. Anyone who comes in contact with the leaking goop changes in some horrible -- one guy began peeling down to the sub-skin level, shrieking and flinging himself out of a school window. Lots of drooling (green mud?) and violence.

To be honest, I was in the mood for a humorous film and had to turn this one off after a half hour. Like Gremlins, it didn't know whether to be funny (which it often was) or scary/gross. Then again, it may have been directed to someone with a higher tolerance for these elements than I have. I would've loved to see it done on a parody level, to see the kids start changing gradually, not instantaneously.

Here's the stereotypical honor students -- clean-cut, glued to their books, not quite ready for sex but thinking about it... Then they're affected by the nuclear waste. They look a little less clean-cut, begin flinging their books rather than studying them, necking in the halls, etc. A sense of decency still exists, with a twist. For example: a student opens a door for another, but accidentally rips the door off the hinges with her increased strength. Girls exchange ideas on how to do their hair--which looks, uh, different, and also glows in the dark.

A lot could be done with the question of how soon (or if?) the teachers and parents would notice the differences in the students. Teachers could be affected too --how would the students react? I haven't thought this scenario through completely, but I imagine it could make a good convention skit or play.

Max Headroom

Max Headroom is a TV series going into its second season. I personally dislike Max's cable show, but greatly enjoy the futuristic series (a revamped Brit import). The plots involve heavy-duty competition between several gigantic TV networks who'll do nearly anything to come out ahead in the continuously-tabulated ratings. The main characters are reporter Edison Carter, boss Murray, and co-worker Theora, who magically guides him through buildings and past alarms

with computers. Carter ferrets out stories on everything from big-buck "televangelists" scams to bodybank-related murders, often at personal risk. His alter-ego, the computer-generated personality Max, pops up randomly from TV screens anywhere to deliver thoughts on whatever's happening. His statements often are an exposee on characters' motivations and actions, much to their embarrassment -- often enjoyable whether it's bad guys or good guys.

The show's complex atmosphere is being revealed and explained slowly, teasingly. I try to follow the plots -- the subjects are very relevant to events in our lives -- yet I find myself babbling, "Why... why... why?" in a pleased/frustrated way. Why do they use a combination of old and new technologies? Why are large groups of people living in the streets and vacant lots? Why can't the ever-present TVs be turned off? What are the mores, the taboos? How sis the networks get so big? How do normal people live? If there's a book out, I'd like to see it!

Beauty and the Beast

Beauty and the Beast is a new show that's turning out to be fun. I know the word "romance" will scare a lot of people away, but that's what it is. Basic plot: Beautiful young attorney Catherine is mistakenly attacked and left to die in New York City. She is found and nursed back to health by an odd character who lives below the streets. She discovers just how strange he is when her head bandages come off. Vincent is a man-cat, with a long mane of hair, furry body (hands most noticeable), and cat-like face (sans whiskers). He is genteel, educated, and streetwise. Abandoned as a deformed baby, he was raised in substreet caverns by a kind man who also educated him in the classics. While he knows there's no place for him "up above", he's a protector of people in trouble. When necessary, he's capable of using claws and fangs.

The attorney and Vincent feel a special "something" for each other; he declares them to be psychically linked -- that he feels what she feels. They're aware of certain emotional barriers, however (he's very shy, especially of surface people). She returns to the surface, has plastic surgery and continues working. Vincent appears occasionally to talk or save her from danger (once exploding through a door). Much philosophy is discussed -- the similarities and differences of their worlds, justice and truth.

The sets are often fascinating scenes of huge areas below-streets (not sewers). Vincent and his father have a nicely fixed-up place that looks like a rummage saler's or collector's dream: a little of this and that. As in Max Headroom, we're learning a

little at a time about this world and its people. The writers toss in interesting little bits: Vincent reads Great Expectations to his patient -- a classic reminder of the finer things in life, as well as a foreshadowing of the plot. (Although I'm not sure whose expectations those are...) The underground people communicate by banging on pipes, have secret places to explore and others to avoid.

My only quibble: Why does Vincent roar just like a lion? He doesn't sound like a person roaring, but a real animal. I'm also concerned that the writers may give in to easy plots; so far, they've toyed nicely with ideas. For example, Catherine becomes afraid of Vincent -- and he knows it. We see Vincent in uncharacteristic actions, yet initially don't know they're Catherine's nightmares. The writers played it through well, acting on our own trepidations and higher ambitions ("What if her got mad at me?" "Why, some of my best friends are cat-people.") They allowed the relationship to become damaged by distrust and fear, which

certainly is realistic. I'm looking forward to seeing more of this show.

Star Trek: The New Generation

I've only seen the new Star Trek show's twohour premiere (as of this writing), and will leave a full description/dissection to someone else. It was a mild disappointment. Exciting that it's back, disappointing that they're reusing old plots and have a few gaps in logic. I'm pleased that they're showcasing more of the ship and its features. I'm surprised that the security chief loses her temper quite often, and that the bridge resembles a spacious suburban living room (complete with lean-way-back chairs). I hope that the characters are developed past their immediately-apparent identities. There's a tremendous amount of potential with the larger Enterprise, new crew and others on it. Less "blast-em-orromance-em" macho displays. And what else is new in the 75 or 85 years since the last Star Trek's time? I'm willing to hang in there and find out....

DEAR GREYING LENSMAN

The Greying Lensman can be seen wandering Midwestern conventions, easily identified by a 15' list to starboard caused by about 25 pounds of photo gear. His subjects can be identified by their blindly bumping into walls after exposure to his portable strobe. The Greying Lensman, a mild-mannered photographer has decided to share his wealth of photographic knowledge with the rest of fandom. If you have questions regarding photography, please write to: The Greying Lensman, c/o this fanzine. He will attempt to answer any and all letters.

--Lan

Dear Greying Lensman,

How does one become a photographer for a magazine like Playboy or Penthouse? It looks like a very interesting occupation.

A. Wolfe

size viewfinder (brand name withheld), and this was my first roll through it.

Help!

Mal A. Droit

Dear A.,

(Actually it's a tough job, but somebody's got to do it.) Until recently, one of the most difficult parts of shooting for Playboy was trying to figure where to put the staple.

In truth, knowledge of lighting, set decor, make-up, and art are needed. Sub-studies in gravity, cantilevering, buoyancy and gynecology may come in handy. So do cold showers. Good luck.

--G.L.

Dear Mal,

I've seen this symptom only one time before. The model camera you have looks remarkably similar front and back. In the excitement of playing with a new toy, you transposed your lens for your viewfinder.

Those pictures are of your nose.

--G.L.

Dear Greying Lensman,

My last roll of film came out with nothing but a lot of blurry pink blotches! I just bought this camera, a little pocket-

I heard that keeping film in the freezer will keep it fresh for a long time. I tried it with some last month, but when I opened the freezer last week the film was gone? Does film evaporate in the cold?

Perplexed



Dear Perry,

No, film, unlike many other materials, does not sublimate in the cold. Nor does it do so at room temperature. I recommend trying to remember just what it was you had for a midnight snack a short while ago.

--G.L.

Dear Greying Lensman,

I work for a great metropolitan newspaper as a staff photographer/reporter. Normally my job is humdrum but now and then I come up with what I think is a great shot only to find that my film has become fogged.

Can you offer any suggestions?

James O.

Dear Jimmy,

All I can suggest is some kind of film shielding (lead foil, perhaps) and not carrying your camera down the hall between Clark's and Lois' office. Just a hunch.

--G.L.

Dear Greying Lensman,

I just started photography as a hobby but have bitten off more than I can chew. My attempts at a portraits of myself and family are failures. Perhaps you can help me. I have a lot of money at stake.

Vlad T.

Dear Vlad,

I'm sticking my neck out suggesting this but I recommend that you try painting rather than photography. There is something about silver and light that just isn't in your blood. Perhaps working in this new vein will help.

--G.L.

Dear Greying Lensman,

I want to go out to Hollywood and photograph all the stars. What kind of gear do you recommend and what kind of training should I have?

Starstruck

Dear S.,

If you're including Sean Penn in your wish, I'd recommend track shoes and karate.

--G.L.

Dear Greying Lensman,

Have you ever shot Harlan Ellison?
California Fan

Dear Cal,

I tried. Wasted a whole belt of .30 calibre.

--G.L.



Dear Greying Lensman,

What's your favorite photographic fantasy? This is mine. (Photo enclosed)
Curious Miss

Dear Curious,

Decorum and taste dictate that I not fully describe my greatest fantasy. However, it does not include lime jello. Cool whip, waterbeds, large mirrors, lasers, strobes and spandex, yes. Lime jello, no.

--G.L.

PS. If the photo you enclosed is current, I can be reached via this fanzine anytime!

Dear Greying Lensman,

What's the fastest lens you know of? Is it readily available?

Equipment Junkie

Dear E.J.

The fastest lens I can think of is aboard one of the Voyager probes. Right now it's hitting over forty thousand miles per hour.

As for question number two: Only if you can leap tall buildings in a single bound.

--G.L.

Dear Greying Lensman,

Have you ever done nude photography?

A Reader

Dear Reader,

Not quite. I normally wear a vest to carry my film and filters.

--G.L.

Dear Greying Lensman,

I've read this column only once and that it one too many times. You are ill-informed, foul-mouthed and sick.

Disgusted

Dear Dis,

Mom, I told you. Never write in...phone, it's a lot easier.

--G.L.

Cat + Mink

the GENETIC ENGINEER'S BESTIARY by Kurt Erichsen



THE THEORY AND ORIGINS OF HOT FOOD

by Mark R. Leeper
Copyright 1987 Mark R. Leeper

I have had a couple of occasions in this past week to eat hot foods. One of the more harmless of my reputations among friends is that if no other part of me is really into machismo, my tongue is super-macho. I grew up with a pallid cuisine that was an amalgam of Eastern European and American. (Why did somebody with an English-Irish name like Leeper grow up with Eastern European food? That's another story for another time.)

As I have grown older and did not become athletic or otherwise sports-minded, I have noticed a lot of otherwise machoseeming men cringe at the taste of a little hot pepper in their food. Like me, they probably grew up with bland food, but I grew a little more tired of it than they did. So I have come to like food that sent others screaming from the room. My dog decided for himself to stop begging for table scraps. The most sadistic Indian, the cruelest Szechuan, the vilest Mexican chefs had no horrors for me.

In the shelves of my refrigerator, jalapeno mustard nestles against jars of Tabasco peppers. Oh, and don't let anyone tell you jalapenos are as hot as they come. Tabascos, the stuff they dilute with vinegar to make the famous sauce, are hotter. The people who bottle them have to dress up like they're handling plutonium --I've seen them. I've never had Tabascos in their native state. They come packed in vinegar. I can only guess whether they would match the dreaded green peppers you get dry in Indian restaurants. The most potent peppers I have ever had, our guide picked off a tree in the Amazon. Little orange peppers the size of blueberries. The fact that they are so small is the best argument I know for a merciful God.

Then there is another whole breed of hot. This is the mustard and horseradish sort of hot. These don't burn your tongue. The good ones just give you three hours' worth of cluster headaches in about five seconds. A really good, freshly ground horseradish is quite nice.

Then there is Japanese wasabi. That is a sort of green horseradish that you get with sushi. Less than the amount to cover the tip of a chopstick is a wasab. (I have defined a wasab as a unit of strength equivalent to dropping one volume of the Encyclopedia Britannica on your nose from one foot up.) One standard slice of Grossinger's rye

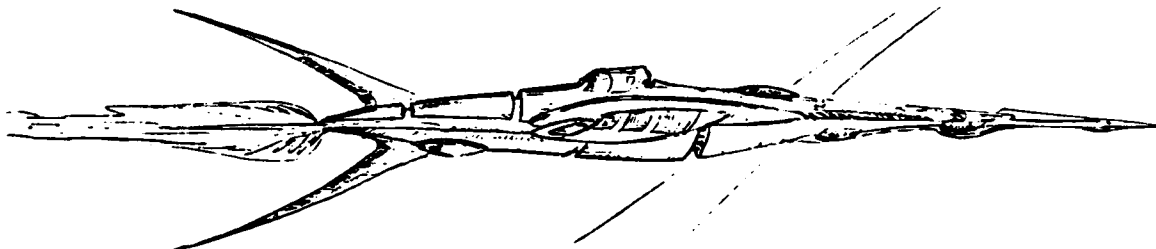
bread, generously spread with Frank's Mr. Mustard --the best mustard in the world--and diluted one-eighth in thick slices of a good kosher salami will total about four or five wasabs. Divide that by the number of bites you'd get out of it and you get an estimate of the effect of each bite.

In any case, what started me thinking is that I started looking at a jar of peppers in my refrigerator and I concluded that in a world of perversity there is no such thing as a reliable defense. Huh? Well, you see, way back somewhere there was a family of peppers with a problem. What was eating them? I don't know --insects or something. Anyway, a couple of the kids were different. They had developed some sort of irritant. Insects that tried to take a bit out of them would fly off doing whatever the insect equivalent of cussing was. So these peppers had a good thing going and lived to reproduce themselves. First thing you know, they have established themselves and have big families. An insect bites one of them and starts singing, "Mama Said There'd Be Days Like This."

So the peppers start feeling really smug. They build their own country clubs, that sort of thing. Then, whammo! Along comes humans. The first few see the peppers. "Hmmm, pretty colors. Like nice fruit. Me bite Hmmm! Mama said there'd be days like this." And eventually little humans come along and say to littler humans still, "Here, have something nice to eat from the tree." The next ten seconds gave man the idea for the air-raid siren.

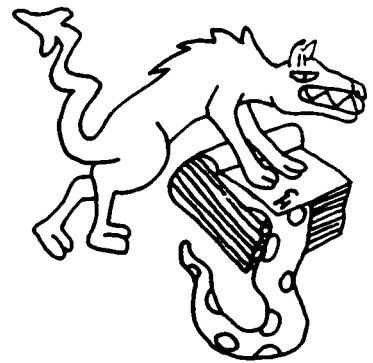
But eventually that little human got tricked so many times he got used to the taste. Then started putting peppers in stews and things. Invited the older brothers and sisters and their families over for dinner. The Borgias used to use the same principle.

Now things have gotten to the state that the pepper would be left alone by the humans if it didn't have the defense mechanism. After all, it isn't very big. Humans only eat the little peppers so they can enjoy having the pepper fight back. The worse a pepper defends itself against me, the more I like it. Rotten defense if you have so many masochists who look forward to the counter-attack. So go figure.



Pulp & Celluloid

Book, film, tape, graphic novel, comic, and record reviews by:
Ann Cecil, Maia Cowan, Julia Ecklar, Dennis K. Fischer, David
Gorecki, Cheryl Horn, Dean R. Lambe, Lan, Evelyn C. Leeper,
Mark R. Leeper, Meg MacDonald, Terry O'Brien, Mike Resnick,
David M. Shea, Sally A. Syrjala, and Chuq Von Rospach



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Book Reviews by Sally A Syrjala

MEMORY WIRE

by Robert Charles Wilson
Bantam/Spectra, 1987, \$3.50

A book review by Sally A. Syrjala

Flowering thorn
How like the roads about the place
Where I was born.

--BUSON

It seems that the name of a new writer must be added to my list of favorites: that of Robert Charles Wilson. His second novel, Memory Wire, has proven that the brilliance of his first, A Hidden Place, was no accident.

He has the ability to make his characters real, not merely words on the pages of a book. They take on a life of their own and create their story. They go through cycles of growth and evolution, as do we all. Through those cycles it is possible to form a link of identification. Because we are able to know these characters through our own feelings of humanity, we care about the characters and about what happens to them. To me, this is the mark of a good book.

Memory Wire is the tale of an extremely plausible near future. There are three main characters presented. Each is in search of the missing pieces of the puzzle that is them. The outward plot has them searching for an alien stone in the heart of Brazil. However, the core plot has Teresa looking for a memory of her past to make her whole. Ray is seeking forgetfulness. Bryon is trying to find a way back to humanity -- to life.

Alien dreaming stones which have been discovered in the Amazon are the medium which brings this trio together. They are to smuggle one of the newer, more refined stones out of Brazil. They have powerful forces trying to stop this from happening. The Brazilian government controls the mine area from which the stones are recovered. The "agencies" of the United States do not want these stones to get into the hands of private individuals. They want to keep their knowledge under wraps.

The stones -- oneiroliths -- convey memory. They are as crystal microchips imparting great knowledge when downloaded onto mainframes. Yet another type of knowledge which can impart wisdom is within them as well -- a self-knowledge. Self-knowledge can be a dangerous weapon. It can make a person powerful and whole. Knowing another can make you a formidable foe. Therefore, there are those who see this type of knowledge as something which must be repressed.

When these stones are touched, they evoke mystical memories -- both of this planet and of that from which they originated.

The book speaks of cycles and wholes, of how a mind divided against itself cannot be as it was intended -- indeed cannot long endure.

As Buson's haiku speaks of a flowering thorn that reminded him of the roads about his childhood's home, the book's plot speaks of our homeward trek having a path strewn with thorns. We must face the unpleasant, as well as the pleasant in accepting our whole self. We are the good and the bad, and being human does not make us bad -- merely human. This is something we need to recognize. The alien stones in the book create holographic images when touched and create an emotional experience. This is their second side. It is as if they were trying to show that the complete objectivity as represented in their audio-visual signals which machines can interpret is not the whole. It is only a part. To be whole, you have to dare to accept the emotional side as well. Only partial knowledge can come before this is done. Interaction with others -- caring -- is needed.

As with most good books, layers are presented within the novel. It is at one level a tale of espionage and physical adventure. It is the story of two veterans of the Brazilian conflict. But most of all, it is the universal story of people trying to find themselves.

I enjoyed this book very much and can highly recommend it. It really is worth the time invested in its reading.

LINCOLN'S DREAMS

by Connie Willis
Bantam/Spectra, 1987, \$15.95



A book review by Sally A. Syrjala

Lincoln's Dreams may seem to be a misnomer for Connie Willis' novel until the very last page has been read. Then, like the senses of an awakened sleeper, all shines with crystal clarity and all the winding side roads converge into a sharply delineated highway.

Words are inadequate to explain the experience within which the readers of this book are allowed to participate. It is a dream in and of itself. It is puzzling and enigmatic, and symbols of visions persist.

This cloud of creation allows us to see into a dimension which few writers are capable of producing. The magic key is presented which allows Connie Willis' readers to enter through the magic portal and see into the soul.

What is this book about? It is ostensibly about the Civil War -- both of the 1860s and of the internal war that our set of inner senses wages upon our more practical side. It is about love and sadness and death and separation and atonement. Most of all it is about duty and commitment which spring from love.

The pages of this book become a rolling fog bank that engulf the reader and carry the mind into the soul of Robert E. Lee and permit the reader the insight to see what

that "poor man" saw and felt when he had to face the handmaid of death. If Lincoln was so bothered by the decisions the war forced upon him that dream apparitions haunted him, would not the same happen to Lee who was in the battlefield and had first-hand knowledge of the consequences of his orders? Might not these two men who might have been friends in other times have both felt a heavy weight upon their hearts and might they not have wanted to attempt to save lives to help make up for all those that were lost under their leadership? All those unknown dead too numerous to bury in single graves, but who shared mass burial sites due to the countless bodies that fell in battle. Would not those graves and the young bodies that rested beneath them have cast a spell upon the two leaders which could not easily be broken?

The story begins with the setting of an analogical tone. The opening verse is that of Stephen Vincent Benet. It speaks of gallant horses who have become the beloved companions of man. From this poetic beginning, we go into a book that is more verse than prose in its concept. It has the quality of letting you see beyond the words and to the soul of the text and the humanity behind it. Like true art, it is an attempt to explain the abstract nature of the human soul. I think the sculpture formed is quite a master work.

Jeff Johnston is the character from whose eyes the tale is unravelled. He works as a historian for an author who writes novels of the Civil War era. At one point in the story Jeff is told that he has chosen to traverse the trail of the trivial and that as a consequence nothing of import will come of him or his work.

Yet the question of dreams and trivia remains at the heart of the book. Of what is an individual life composed if not a series of trivial details which mesh together into one pattern to form the essence of a life? Therefore, are not the truly important matters those which are involved with trivia and dreams? They form the whole of that which is us and our aspirations, our victories and defeats, and those things which we have not quite finished. The lingering dream within us which calls for completion is how I see this book. To me it is the haunting dream which has not yet been made into substance, it is that which lies just beyond our reach. It is that for which we yearn with all our hearts. It is that which lures us into the gray obsession to find the truth behind the illusion.

Connie Willis is one of my favorite authors. This book has made me admire her writing even more than I had before. Lincoln's Dreams has all of the amorphous beauty to it that made her short story "Daisy in the Sun" so appealing. She has a way of evoking poetry into her prose so that the words sing directly to the soul. She allows you to sense the beauty of analogy within life which may otherwise escape you.

The only thing I can really say about this book is that I recommend it VERY, VERY highly. Read it!

AFTER THE FACT

by Fred Saberhagen
Baen Books, 1988, \$3.95

A book review by Sally A. Syrjala

The best thing about the future
is that it comes only one day at a time.
--Abraham Lincoln

The first novel I read of the adventures of the Flying Dutchman of Spacetime, Pilgrim, was not a book which I overly enjoyed. It seemed to lack a central character from which the story could pivot. The second book in this series, After the Fact, has solved that problem.

This story is told through the eyes of Jerry Flint, a computer science student, who finds himself recruited by the Pilgrim Foundation. However, the work he finds at the Foundation is not exactly what he had in mind. It involves not so much the world of computer networking as it does the world of time networking.

Jerry's job is to prevent the assassination of Abraham Lincoln. Jerry's only chance of being able to return to his own time frame will be his ability to take advantage of a three-second time-frame and be within two meters of President Lincoln before the assassin's bullet crashes into the President's brain. If Jerry fails, not only will Lincoln die to the future, but Jerry will most likely find himself trapped within the 1860s.

There are some very interesting glimpses of Washington DC in the years of Lincoln's presidency. It is shown to be a city very much as we would perceive a third world city to be today.

Of course, being able to cope and also being able to keep a low profile in contemporary society and being able to do so in the society of the 1860s are two different things. Jerry first must accept the fact that the reality of the matter is that he has been transported back in time and that what he thinks exists out there really does. Then he has to take on the identity of someone he knows nothing about and manage to keep the masquerade long enough to fulfill his mission.

Of course, the mission will not be easy. There are those who are out to stop him at any cost. The person whose identity he has shouldered was supposed to report to General Stanton with information about the head of the Secret Service. General Stanton knows what his agent looks like and it is not as Jerry looks. Therefore, he must keep his distance from General Stanton. Naturally the head of the Secret Service is also interested in him.

In the face of all this, Jerry must somehow manage to get himself half-way across the country to Washington DC to be there for Good Friday, April 14. He must evade both the forces of General Stanton and the Secret Service. He also must find himself in Ford's Theatre at precisely the right time and precisely the right place.

This was an entertaining novel. I enjoyed

it much more than the first book in the series, Pyramids, and it is one which I can recommend.

THE FALLING WOMAN

by Pat Murphy
Tor Fantasy, 1987, \$3.95

When in the process of a fall, an object or being belongs neither to that from which they came, nor yet to that where they are going. It is a transitory time. A time of change -- of endings and beginnings. The Falling Woman tells of such a tale.

Its solid reality is set in the present at a university dig on the Yucatan Peninsula. Yet the story is more than that of a delving into the physical artifacts of other civilizations. For as one city is built upon another, and as civilizations such as the Mayan took other conquering cultures as overlaying layers of their own, so also do our personalities become layers of experiences, encounters and growth.

We study the past to learn about the present and maybe divine the future. This novel speaks of such growth and knowledge.

The central character is a 51-year-old archaeology/anthropology professor who sees shadows of the past. One of her personal shadows in the form of her abandoned daughter suddenly appears on the site and presents a further study of the past for her.

The story speaks of cycles. It goes into the ancient Mayan calendar of days and their meanings. It speaks of how little we know of the meaning of the days through which we pass in comparison to those who have gone before us.

There is the spirit of a Mayan priestess who seeks the sacrificial end of a ritualistic cycle. The fall needs to be ended, the question being will it be completed with death or survival. If survival, will the closeness to the death bring a form of wisdom to help shape the days to come? For it is shown that those sacrificed to the gods were meant to be messengers. When victims were tossed from cliffs into deep water, the survivor would be looked upon as the knower of the future -- the one who had been at death's door and returned from another world with words from the gods of what would come to pass in this existence.

The tale tells of images which link the past and the present to the future -- images which might illuminate our paths if we can see them properly.

This is as much a tale of internal discovery as on of the more concrete outer world of potsherds and skeletal remains. And this is archaeology's basic reason for being -- a way to look at the past to better understand the present. It helps us to better know how the human mind has functioned through the ages. In so knowing, it will hopefully enable us to better understand why we are as we are. There are always surprises in such activity. For when you dig into the past, who knows what might be found.

This is an excellent book of discovery! It is well worth the excavation of its pages.

TRUE JAGUAR

by Warren C. Norwood
Bantam/Spectra, 1988, \$3.95

A book review by Sally A Syrjala

Warren C. Norwood first came to my reading attention with The Windhover Tapes. That saga had ideas enough to make you want to read more of the author's creations.

True Jaguar is a story of Mayan mythology blended with current events. A comet is approaching Earth on a collision course, and Earth's science cannot stop it. A test of will in the Mayan underworld is what will determine the comet's course and the fate of mankind.

J. Martin O'Hara is a technical writer working on top secret matters. His life is an ordinary and rational one until one day he meets a mysterious foreign national named Reyes who tells O'Hara that O'Hara's name is really True Jaguar and it is he, O'Hara, who will turn the comet Xibalda away from Earth.

When Martin reports this conversation to the security forces at his work place, he runs into considerable trouble and begins his fall into the rabbit hole where reality is turned inside out. During the course of his interrogation, he meets an agent named Shirlito Velasquez who it turns out is acquainted with the enigmatic Reyes.

The story then runs from the Mesa Verde to the Mayan underworld where this trio -- O'Hara, Velasquez, and Reyes -- must use their wits against the evil lords.

There was an excellent novel of a few years ago called The Iowa Baseball Confederacy. It dealt with a future determined by a baseball game being played in a kind of limbo. True Jaguar also embodies a game using a ball to determine what will happen to the globe we inhabit. This time the game is basketball. But, whereas baseball and its being was the essence of The Iowa Baseball Confederacy, here basketball is only superficially involved.

What is the core of the challenge is to sift illusion from reality and to learn to accept your whole being as your true self. It shows that the accepted rational state may not always be the "real" state of affairs. It also speaks in a roundabout manner of having to accept and embrace death to find life, this being the mythological belief that to attain immortality, you have to first suffer a death of mortality.

The book is a fascinating one. Its adventures are believable and the delving into Mayan mythology is intriguing. This is an extremely entertaining story -- one which should grab you at the onset and hold you to the ending. Recommended.



Tape & Book Reviews by Terry O'Brien

WILDCARDS II: ACES HIGH

by George R. R. Martin
Bantam, 1987, \$3.95

A book review by Terry O'Brien

Stories by Pat Cadigan, George R. R. Martin, Victor Milan, John J. Miller, Lewis Shiner, Walton Simons, Melinda M. Snodgrass, Walter Jon Williams, and Roger Zelazny

This is the second collection of stories set in the Wild Cards shared universe. Whereas the first book set the world and history for the rest of the stories, this book concentrates on a central story line concerning an alien invasion of Earth, with the complicating side issues involving the arrival of Dr. Tachyon's clan to investigate the results of their wild card virus, a lost (and found by several unsavory individuals) psionic teleporter, and a group of human aces and jokers who support the invasion, as well as the introduction of several new aces, jokers, and even more aliens.

The alien invader is a galactic parasite that consumes planets and reproduces itself to go forth and destroy other planets. Not exactly uncommon in SF literature and especially films, but it is handled with an extra measure of intelligence that is certainly uncommon.

This may look like a short story collection, but through careful communication and editing, the whole unites into a cohesive novel. The individual short stories allow closer examinations of several characters, more so than would be possible in a novel, yet the plot line is carried through very well throughout the book.

One of the things I like about the series is the way new characters can develop. I especially liked the Modular Man, an android created by a none-too-likable scientist for his own personal gain. I didn't much care for the obnoxious Kid Dinosaur, who seems to make a habit of getting involved even though he is largely useless, and more of a distraction to the heroes than anything else. And I find the character of Captain Trips to be somewhat disquieting. His alternate selves ("friends", as he calls them) are interesting, even though some of them are insufferably superior, but I don't think I can quite accept the almost casual use of drugs that he portrays. I'm not sure that this is intentional, but I still have my doubts about the character.

I also appreciated the cameo re-appearance of the so-called "Judas Ace" from Walter Jon Williams' story in the previous book. That story made him a very sympathetic character, one that I wished to see at least forgiven for his role in the tragedy of the McCarthy hearings. He was more a victim of those hearings than a participant.

And finally I appreciated the growth of several characters, especially the Great and Powerful Turtle. When he was last featured,

he was starting his career as a hero. Now, he is in a mid-life crisis, and has to come to terms with that to save both himself and his friends, and the whole world, too.

In keeping with what seems to be a tradition (the last book had passing references to such authors as A.E. Van Vogt, Robert Silverberg, and Steven Leigh), this book has a tribute to the original War of the Worlds radio drama: the first reported alien invasion is in Grovers Mill, New Jersey. There is also homage paid to King Kong, with a forty-foot ape repeatedly escaping to carry a blonde woman up the Empire State Building. (And nobody knows why!)

My review of the previous book listed two comics writers that I'd like to see as contributors to this series. One of the best that I had forgotten is Alan Moore, who wrote The Watchmen, which is a major advance of the art of storytelling, as well as one of the best comics stories ever written, and certainly a potential Hugo and Nebula nominee this year.

Another writer would be Will Shetterly, who has written several SF stories, including some in the Liavek shared world series, besides writing the excellent alternative comic Captain Confederacy.

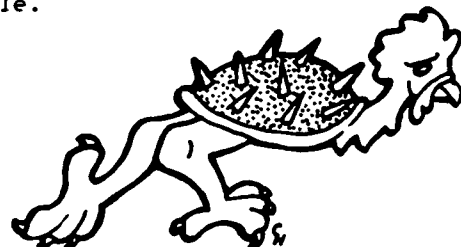
WILDCARDS III: JOKERS WILD

by George R. R. Martin
Bantam, 1987, \$3.95

A composite novel from Edward Bryant, Leanne C. Harper, George R.R. Martin, John Miller, Lewis Shiner, Walton Simons, and Melinda Snodgrass.

"Composite novel": that is probably the best term to use for this story, which is a novel in length but episodic in character. Not a collaboration, but a story where there are definite sections written by individual authors, then woven together with great effort by the editor. That alone is an impressive achievement. That all of the authors could manage to construct their stories individually to allow for this is still another achievement.

This story concerns one day in the lives of several of the aces and jokers in New York: Wild Card Day, the fortieth anniversary of the release of the wild card virus over New York. There are several plots interwoven throughout this book, far too many to try to describe, but all excellent stories, comprising several old and some new people.



I enjoyed this book a lot, better than even the first two. This series has only gotten better, and I am wondering what the next book will do to top this one. All I can say to that is that I am looking forward to it anxiously.

HARDWIRED

by Walter Jon Williams
Tor, 1986, \$3.50

The world of Hardwired is the star of this book, not the people. A world of orbiting merchantile colonies that rebelled against groundhogging Earth and now dominate it, rebels against the Orbitals, and a host of others who are just trying to survive.

Cowboy is one of those rebels. He's a panzerboy, a smuggler piloting an armored hovercraft through the Alley from his Western base to his contacts across the Mississippi. He was a pilot, but the Orbitals control the airspace now,, and his high-flying days are over. Or so he thinks.

Sarah is not a rebel. She's a bodyguard, a survivor, and a few other things. She is recruited to be a part of a corporate intelligence operation, and when she's completed her assignment, she becomes a threat to the security of the operation and must be eliminated. But like I said, she's a survivor.

Now both Cowboy and Sarah are caught up in a game of Orbital inter- and intra-corporate politics, and they both are on the run. And they are fighting back. Together they form an alliance with an out-of-favor member of the leading Orbital company for a chance to strike back. It is that tale of revenge that makes up most of this book.

Hardwired is a very demanding book. You have to pay attention, both to understand what's going on, and because the story demands your attention. It is a very hard book to put down.

There are a number of cyberpunk elements in this book, but the story goes beyond them, incorporating them into the flow of the telling, but not allowing them to dominate the plot or characters. Cyberpunk is part of the background, taken for granted, allowing the story to concentrate on the characters. I guess it is because there isn't just the flash and glitter that other cyberpunk novels have emphasized, but the hard and dirty parts of it are included as well.

There's a hardened edge to this world and this story. I would compare this world to John Brunner's Stand on Zanzibar. The author credits Roger Zelazny for Damnation Alley, and Cowboy's run across the Free Zone is definitely a riff from that book. But contrary to other reviewers, I believe this book goes far beyond Damnation Alley.

This is definitely an excellent book. There is a nicely told tale of survival, vengeance, and growth. And I do like the final, poetic justice at the end.

PSYCHODROME

by Simon Hawke
Ace, 1987, \$2.95

You've just embarassed a middle-level Yakuza crime lord, and your life can be measured in trans-uranic half-lives. So how do you survive?

You get lucky. An old lottery ticket has won you the grand prize, entry into Psychodrome, a live-action, interactive, televised game of epic proportions. Even then, however, the contract on you is still open, and only by the help of your teammates do you survive two assassination attempts before you can definitely turn the tables on your enemy. Meanwhile, you are trying to stay alive within the Psychodrome, because in the game one wrong move can mean your death.

But that isn't the hardest part. A metamorphic alien race has secretly infiltrated humanity, and an unknown war is declared, with the Psychodrome players as the front line soldiers. You know this because at least one of the aliens was once your partner. And since the directors of Psychodrome don't want to panic Earth, the whole infiltration will be explained as part of the Psychodrome scenario.

This is the first of (hopefully) a series. The action is plentiful but interesting, and there is even some characterization. Simon Hawke is known for writing the "Time Wars" series, which is an excellent series combining actual and fictional history. This new series shows the same attention to detail which I appreciated in the first series, as well as the same action and suspense, and I recommend them both.

FIRST FLIGHT

by Chris Claremont
ACE, 1987, \$2.95

If you are not familiar with the name Chris Claremont, he is the comic book writer (emphasis on the word writer) of the most popular comic book continuously published today. That comic is Marvel's X-Men, and he has been writing it continuously for over ten years. He has also written SF short stories in the past, but this is his first novel to be published.

And it is obviously a first novel. There are several things in this book that a more experienced novelist would have avoided. There is just too much happening in this story, too many coincidences popping up. The pace is erratic, almost frenetic in some spots, yet very slow in others. These are, however, things the author should improve with experience.

All in all, though, the book was, for all its faults, enjoyable. I've certainly read worse first novels, and saw the authors mature considerably, and I believe the same would be true here. Keep an eye on this writer; he just might be going places.

And one note in passing: the second dedication is to the characters he has been writing over the past years, who honestly have provided his livelihood for several



years, so he is definitely entitled to thank them as well.

HITLER VICTORIOUS

Edited by Gregory Benford
and Martin Harry Greenberg
Berkley, 1987, \$3.95

Subtitled "Eleven Stories of the German Victory in World War II", and dedicated "To The Victims."

Stories by:

Hilary Bailey	"The Fall of Frenchy Steiner"
Greg Bear	"Through Road No Whither"
Gregory Benford	"Valhalla"
David Brin	"Thor Meets Captain America"
Algis Budrys	"Never Meet Again"
Sheila Finch	"Reichs-Peace"
Howard Goldsmith	"Do Ye Hear the Children Weeping?"
C. M. Kornbluth	"Two Dooms"
Brad Linaweaver	"Moon of Ice"
Keith Roberts	"Weihnachtsabend"
Tom Shippey	"Enemy Transmissions"

Plus a preface by Gregory Benford and an introduction by Norman Spinrad.

More than forty years after the defeat of Nazi Germany in WW II, and still Nazism fascinates us. What is also fascinating is the diversity of the stories that this topic has generated. This collection is a representative sample of those stories.

The stories cover thirty years of writing, from the 50s to the present, yet still the basic message remains the same: what life would be like under the Nazi rule.

As a deserving Hugo Award nominee, "Thor Meets Captain America" is certainly one of the best stories in the collection, if not the best. Despite the title, it has nothing to do with comic books, or does it? Against the backdrop of the heroes of the Norse sagas, this story gives us the picture of what a true hero is. This story alone is worth the price of the book.

If there is any better story than "Thor Meets Captain America" it would have to be "Moon of Ice" by Brad Linaweaver. Told from the viewpoint of the Goebbels, it gives us what sounds to be -- though fictional, and so perhaps all the more convincing because of it -- a look into the beliefs of the two men who made National Socialism into the terror it was. It is indeed quite ironic, telling the story of the war from their, winning, perspective: Churchill is the great war-criminal. It is also a chilling tale of Nazi paranoia and pseudo-science and super-science, of world history turned on its side. This has been expanded into a full-length novel, which I am very interested in reading.

The other stories provide a wide diversity of themes and topics, topics like the plight of the common man under Nazism, to the life of the rulers, come to mind. Other things, too, come to mind when I think of these stories. The poetic justice in "Valha-

la", the matching ironic justice of "Through Road No Whither, the dark vision of an America controlled by Japan and Nazi Germany in "Two Dooms", the feeling that the more things changed, the more they stayed the same in "The Fall of French Steiner" and "Weihnachtsabend". These stories will remain with me for a long time, which is what I suspect the editors wanted.

This is an excellent collection, definitely recommended.

THE WATCHMEN

by Alan Moore (author),
Romeo Tanghal (artist)
and John Higgins (colorist)
Warner Publications, 1987, \$14.95

Quis custodiet custodien?

Who watches the watchmen? That is the basic (but by no means the only) theme of this very ambitious comic series from DC Comics, which is now available in a softcover compilation. Hardly the standard comics fare, this series is being seriously considered for Hugo Nomination this year, and with good reason.

The time is the present, but in a world with a slightly different past than our own. Superheroes actually exist, and have since the early 40s. In the beginning they were ordinary men (and one woman), but later they were superseded by men with actual super-powers. Their presence changed the world, but its troubles still remain, if not magnified.

It is really hard to give a more complete explanation (and I have tried numerous times) of what this story is about. There is too much involved in the visual aspects of the story (this story is perhaps the most perfect story to be told as a comic that I have ever known), especially in the detail of the artwork and the coloring. This story was the creation of the close association between the three creators, a fact that the author readily admits.

Suffice to say that this story, in both comic-art and in text in the back (which has to be read in order to catch a lot of important details) creates a picture of not only the characters involved, but the world they live in and the troubles they are facing. Granted, it does deal with adult themes, but in ways that add to the story and characterization. This story is gripping, interesting, and disquieting: it is definitely recommended.

THE GRIM ROPER

A filk tape by Bill Roper
Off Centaur Publications, 1987, \$9.00

SONGS: "Follow the Rising Stars", "One Last Battle", "Miracle Man", "Dream Rider" "Dark Moon Rising", "Shadow of the Night-time", "The Songs of Distant Earth", "Riders of the Rim", "The Wind from Rainbow's End", "Space is Dark", "Dream Ship", "Teaching Song", "Children of Tomorrow", "Jennan", "The Wrong Side of the Sky", "The Horse of



Silver Gold", "Masquerade", "Requiem", and "Library Song".

Bill Roper has earned the nickname among Midwest filkers as "the Grim Roper" for his various filks of doom, destruction, madness and other dark topics. Thus it is fitting that his first solo filk tape should be named the same.

Many of the songs on this tape confirm that title. Songs like "Miracle Man", "Dark Moon Rising", and "The Wrong Side of the Sky" amply demonstrate the darker side of his songwriting and singing.

The most striking example of his grim writing is the song "Shadow and Nighttime". This song combines horror and mystery in equal parts to provide a chilling tale in relatively few verses. Perhaps his most famous song on the tape, "The Wind from Rainbow's End", is similarly striking with its uncommon but all-too-familiar theme of childhood and alienation.

However, some of the songs are not morose, but simply bittersweet or sad. "One Last Battle" is one such song. Written as a letter from a starship fighter pilot to his love on the eve before his last battle, it sums up the feelings of a man kept too long from his home and life: his sadness at being gone too long, yet his hope that this upcoming battle will be the last.

Similar is one of his best songs, "Requiem". Based on the Heinlein short story of the same name, the story concerns a man, a millionaire, who got mankind started to the Moon, and then found out that the powers that be would not permit him to go himself.

After songs such as those described above, perhaps Bill does deserve the nickname, but do not overlook the fact that he has a more sensitive side to his writing. Such songs as "Library Song" and "Children of Tomorrow" reveal a different side, a gentler, a more optimistic side to his writing.

The most striking example of this could be "The Songs of Distant Earth". This is a song describing the time when humanity discovers that the Sun will go nova in 1500 years, and sets out to preserve itself by colonizing the nearest stars. As the song describes, the songs of Earth will continue to be sung on distant planets, though the song of Earth itself has been silenced.

I do have some negative feelings toward the tape. Mostly the accompaniment was good, and sometimes even excellent ("Miracle Man", using the calrinet), but sometimes the percussion was overly intrusive, especially the cymbal. It also sounded as though the drums were off the beat.

And there were no credits on the inside flap, as indicated on the cover.

Other than that, though, I still would recommend this tape. "Library Song" and "The Horse of Silver Gold" are two of my favorite songs, and others like "Magic Man", "Requiem", and "Shadow of the Nighttime" are

equally good. Don't pass up a chance to hear one of the Midwest's better filkers who has been given an excellent opportunity to display his talents.

ESCAPE FROM MUNDANIA

by Barry and Sally Childs-Helton
Space Opera House, 1987, \$9.00
5141 Norwaldo Ave.
Indianapolis, IN 46205

SONGS: "Mundania", "Stairway to Fandom", "Con Man Blues", "Sailplane", "Frankie and Igor", "Woman in Space", "Pearly Gate Blues (Jim and Tammy)", "Secular Humanist", "Gravity Exiles", "Pigeon Mail", "Science Fair", "Two Moon Blues", "Lady Snowstar Supernova", "(Goin' Down the) Cosmic Drain", "Away Behind the Sun", and "Flying Island Farewell".

If you have never been to MARCON or any of the other Midwestern conventions where Barry and Sally Childs-Helton have performed, or have not heard them on any other filk tape, then you are missing a treat. They are quite noticeable: look for the couple with the rhythm section (including a pair of conga drums) in the filk room. This tape, which they have produced themselves, is ample proof of their ability, and is one of the best tapes I've heard all year.

I am told that both Barry and Sally are extremely qualified to produce such a tape: Barry once toured with a rock group, and Sally is a entho-musicologist. This background gives them an advantage over most filkers, and it shows in the quality of the music and of the tape itself. They are equally competent with funny or serious music.

Either Barry or Sally wrote the lyrics to all of the songs on the tape. They are not above using other people's music, but they do it excellently. The best example of this is "Stairway to Fandom", a take-off on "Stairway to Heaven", which is reproduced extremely well, including the guitar solo in the middle. Many of the songs are accompanied by Eric Rensberger on blues harmonica.

"Stairway" competes with "Mundania" (to the tune of "America" from *West Side Story*) and "Flying Island Farewell" (to the tune of "Jamaican Farewell") as the best songs on the tape, in my opinion. "Stairway" is the best produced, accurately reproducing the original guitar work from "Stairway to Heaven". "Mundania" is the funniest. "Flying Island Farewell" is dedicated to filker Bill Maraschiello, and is my favorite. I will listen to it over and over and over again, and each time wish it were longer. This song ("Flying Island Farewell") is also the title song of the latest MARCON filk tape.

There are other excellent songs on the tape: "Pearly Gate Blues" is their notorious satire of the Jim and Tammy Bakker saga, and is a perennial favorite at filksings. "Cosmic Drain" and "Franie and Igor" are also very funny. On a slightly more serious note, "Woman in Space" and "Lady Snowstar Supernova" are also worth listening to.

This tape should be required in any filk collection, especially by people who appreciate good filk, and good music in general.

Book Reviews by Evelyn C Leeper



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ETHER ORE

by H. C. Turk
Tor, 1987, \$3.50

This is the second book I've read in the "Ben Bova Discoveries" series (the first was Napoleon Disentimed) and frankly, I don't get it. Both seem to be written as though the reader should find them hysterically funny. I wish I could explain precisely what I mean by that, but I can't. Just think back to the last time you watched a comedy show that wasn't funny, and you'll know the feeling. Napoleon Disentimed had some background adventure-type plot to sustain it, but Ether Ore just falls flat.

Melody Preece--the blurb describes her as "Alice in Wonderland, Dorothy of Oz and Barbara Streisand, all rolled into one," after which build-up disappointment is almost inevitable--anyway, Melody Preece wants to go to Marz, the Tan Planet. Oh yes, this is also an alternate worlds novel--not an alternate history novel, mind you. A sample from the first chapter explains:

In this era, the greatest influence on world polotics and society was the pacifist Adele Hidler. Fuhrer* Hidler had gained her greatest fame by virtually preventing World War II using the force of her personality, overcoming her demokraptic nemesis, Wyntom Churchill, via heated and well-publicized debates. Hidler convinced the world to reject Churchill's ideas, his militarism, and especially the Briticher's unfortunate desire to force Yurope's Hebish population into a separate state instead of integrating them with the societies of their home nations. Hidler's insistence was to accept Jewbrews as people instead of segregating them as religious cult."

I won't even mention (okay, I just did) that Turk does not mean that Hidler virtually prevented World War II, but that she did prevent it almost entirely by the force of her personality. And a subsidiary observation is that if she prevented it, it wouldn't have the name "World War II" either.

The novel continues in this vein, with Lynda Buns Jonestown, Calizonia, Doitchland, ad infinitum, truly ad nauseum. Turk seems to think that misspelling every proper name s/he can sandwich in makes the novel clever; it merely makes it look like a proofreading nightmare, or your average Ace book (sorry,

*NOTE: The feminine of "Fuhrer" would actually be, I believe, "Fuhrerin."

that was a cheap shot, but I couldn't resist it). The advantage to this, of course, is that even if Ether Ore were badly proofread, it would be almost impossible to detect.

Melody gets to Marz where she somehow changes universes to another alternate world, is thought to be a witch and is sentenced to burn at the stake. From here it's just one madcap adventure after another. Whoopee! I feel like the character in The Four Seasons who says, "Is this the fun part? Are we having fun yet?"

It isn't and I didn't.

GOLDEN GATE

by Vikram Seth
Vintage, 1987, \$5.95

This review I'm moved to write in verse For reasons that should soon be clear. I hope my message is none the worse Though I ape the author, Seth, here. He tells, in this novel poetic, Of thoughts both noble and pathetic. His tales of friendship gained, then lost, And of the heavy human cost Should move the reader to think about His (her) own friends--and lovers too-- And what he (she) can put them through. I urge you, reader, without a doubt, To try this quite unusual book-- It really does deserve a look.

WAGNER, THE WEHR-WOLF

by G. W. M. Reynolds
Dover, 1975 (1846) \$3.50

Like Varney the Vampire (which I reviewed in LL #25), this is not your normal horror novel. It's old (almost 150 years) and it's deceptively long (though it's only 150 pages, they are 8-1/2" by 11" with very small print, or about 120,000 words). Unlike Varney the Vampire, however, people are sure who wrote it. E.F. Bleiler, in his introduction, describes Reynolds as being involved in one "cause" after another, including the temperance movement, the early women's liberation movement, and various political causes. Much of his philosophy comes through in this novel, particularly his campaign against the anti-Semitism of his time.

Wagner, the Wehr-Wolf is much more readable than Varney the Vampire. It doesn't have the padding that Varney has. There are two reasons for this. The first is that it is shorter and hence less in need of padding. The second is that Reynolds apparently used every plot thread that occurred to him while he was writing the novel (which, like so many of that time, appeared as a series of installments in magazines). So a plot includes helpless maidens being thrown into

brutal convents, shipwrecks on desert islands, the Faust legend, the Rosicrucians, the imperial Turkish court, the Inquisition, and a lot lot more I can't remember. You see, Wagner falls in love with Nisida, the deaf-mute daughter of the Count of Riverola, who dies leaving his estate to his son Francisco, whom he hates, unless Nisida recovers before her thirty-sixth birthday. Francisco loves Flora, Nisida's maid who was orphaned early in life, as was her brother Alessandro who got a position in the foreign service and was sent to Turkey where he became an apostate and rose to become the Grand Vizier.

Meanwhile, Nisida has Flora thrown into the Carmelite convent to keep her away from Francisco, and there Flora meets the Countess of Arestino, who had pawned her husband's jewels with a Jewish pawnbroker Issachar ben Solomon to get money for her lover, Manuel d'Orsini, to pay his gambling debts. But the Count of Arestino discovered this and had her thrown into the convent, while Manuel and the bandit Stephano go to Issachar's house where they fight a duel, so that when the police come they find blood on Issachar's floor and accuse him of sacrificing Christian children and hand him over to the Inquisition.

Meanwhile, Wagner has been thrown into prison and is about to be executed and Nisida has been captured by Stephano who was carrying her off when their ship was shipwrecked on a desert island. Just before the execution, Wagner turns onto a wolf, scares everyone and escapes. Then he hears that Nisida has been carried off and then shipwrecked, so he goes on searching for her, runs into a storm, and gets shipwrecked on--you guessed it--the same island. Of course, this is because the Devil has diverted his ship so that he could tempt him as he did Faust (from whom Wagner got his lycanthropy), but Wagner resists so an angel appears who sends him to the Rosicrucians.

You got that?

Anyway, Nisida is rescued by the Grand Vizier, who is really Alessandro, and returns to Florence, as does Wagner in a boat conveniently abandoned by the Turks. Meanwhile, at least three of the main characters are in the hands of the Inquisition, Nisida is still plotting against Flora, the Turkish army is at the gates of the city, and things are generally heating up.

Never let it be said that the plot lags. The writing is florid, but not overly so. Many, but not all, of the characters are one-dimensional--but then with this many characters, that's hard to avoid. Those who prefer clean-cut "Campbellian" prose will not find this their cup of tea, but for students of the Gothic horror novel, it's a must-read.

THE TOMMYKNOCKERS

by Stephen King
Putnam, 1987, \$19.95

The Tommyknockers is full of good ideas--it's just a pity that they aren't fresher,

or weren't buried by the volume of prose.

When Bobbi Anderson accidentally uncovers a flying saucer that has been buried for millennia in the woods behind her home, strange things start to happen. These things are because of the "tommyknockers," as she (and others) call the inhabitants of the saucer. Aren't the inhabitants dead by this point? Well, yes, but like the Krell of Forbidden Planet they seem to live on through their devices. Forbidden Planet is not the only source King draws on. If it sound to you like the plot is very similar to Quatermass and the Pit, you're not alone. And there are pieces from Carrie, The Fury, and several of King's earlier works. In general, I don't object to authors tying their works together, but in this novel King mentions characters from The Dead Zone, the movie The Shining, and himself as a Bangor, Maine, author all sharing the same level of reality. I don't know about you, but I find this very jarring.

Even though the ideas aren't brand-new, the book could still be good. But it's so long. King does write lively prose, I'll grant him that, but readers who have read widely in science fiction--or even seen a lot of science fiction movies--will probably decide that it isn't worth reading almost 600 pages of unoriginal work, no matter how lively the prose. In addition, King loves to foreshadow ("The next time they meet, she would have changed."), a technique that can be used once or twice to good effect, but pales rapidly after that. King uses it about a dozen times in The Tommyknockers--and at least once, he lies: what he says is just not true, though it is obvious that this is because of a slip on his part rather than intentionally misleading the reader.

Why are the inhabitants of the ship called "tommyknockers"? Well, King claims in his Forward that there are well-known nursery rhymes about the "tommyknockers," who apparently are monsters who skulk around and come knocking on your door in the middle of the night. I've never heard of them, and I spent my childhood (at least from the age of 4 to the age of 9, the years when monsters outside the door are most real) in Bangor myself. Of course, I didn't realize at the time I was researching Maine legends for Stephen King reviews and I might have just not noted it down at the time.

If you're a fast reader, you might find this book worth the time. If you're a Stephen King fan, you'll read it anyway. I used to be a King fan, but I haven't read any of his latest books--The Talisman, It, Misery--because, again, they're just too long. I realize this sounds inconsistent coming from someone who has recently reviewed a 900,000 word Gothic vampire novel. The only explanation I can give is that King's books all start to sound alike after a while. The menace may be different, but the cast of characters is very similar from book to book--not superficially, perhaps, but the underlying types--and it just doesn't seem worth it.

I can't not recommend The Tommyknockers, but I can warn you that the goal may not be worth the effort.

BIGGLES: THE MOVIE

by Larry Milne
Coronet, 1986, C\$3.95

I can almost promise you that Biggles: The Movie will be released soon. I bought this novelization almost a year ago in Canada but held off reading it because if I know there's a movie, I like to see it before reading the book. But I have finally broken down and read it, so the movie will undoubtedly show up in a theater or video store near you.

If it does, catch it. It's not great, by any means, but seems like an enjoyable action-adventure film. Jim Ferguson, a New York ad-man from 1985 keeps falling backwards in time to 1917, World War I, and Captain James Bigglesworth. Why? He's needed to help head off the Germans' perfecting a secret weapon that could utterly defeat their enemies and change the world.

The World War I air setting had me imagining this film as similar to something like High Road to China. Apparently Bigglesworth is the hero of a series of British novels (97 of them, to be exact!). The book contains pictures from the film and a description of the making of the film, so it is probably "in the can" somewhere, and may even have been released in Britain. One can only hope that the producers will decide to take a chance on releasing it here as well.

THE YEAR BEFORE YESTERDAY

by Brian W. Aldiss
Watts, 1987, \$16.95

This is a book set in an alternate universe about characters in that universe who write (and read) books about yet other alternate universes. Confusing? Definitely. But extremely clever. You see, the books that the characters deal with are The Impossible Smile and Equator. The former, in the universe of The Year Before Yesterday, was written by a character named Jael Cracken; in the universe we inhabit, it was published in a different form in Science Fantasy in 1965 under the pseudonym Jael Cracken. The latter, in the universe of The Year Before Yesterday, was also written by Jael Cracken; in our universe it was published in New Worlds in 1958 and later (as part of an Ace Double) as Vanguard from Alpha. By now you've probably guessed that these works were in fact written (in our universe, anyway) by Brian Aldiss, who in this "novel" has come up with a truly original way to recycle his earlier works.

The world in which the framing story takes place is the by-now familiar one in which the Nazis have won World War II. Well, not entirely familiar, since every author does this differently. The world in which The Impossible Smile takes place is also a Reich-triumphant one, though a different one. And so on, through labyrinthine nestings of stories in alternate worlds, until you're not really sure what level you're on.

Though I love alternate histories, this disappointed me. I don't think it was so much the worlds themselves, though I must admit that the Reich-triumphant world may have been as overdone in alternate history stories as Arthur has been in high fantasy. I'm not saying there can't be another good Arthurian novel, or even another good Reich-triumphant alternate world novel, but it's a lot more difficult than it used to be. But I think what really disappointed me was that I was hoping for a new novel, and what I got was a framing sequence and two recycled 25-year-old novelettes.

Why the character portrayed on the cover by Ray Lago has an alligator on his jumpsuit is anybody's guess.

BUDSPY

by David Dvorkin
Watts, 1987, \$17.95

Alternate history novels seem to come in clumps and, sure enough, hard on the heels of Aldiss' The Year Before Yesterday comes David Dvorkin's Budspy. I want too make it clear that I don't for a minute think that Dvorkin stole the idea from Aldiss--it takes much longer to write a book and get it published than that would allow. But I think every once in a while there's a publishing trend, and publishers start buying more alternate histories. And the premise of this alternate history? You guessed it--it's another "Germany won World War II" story. The cover of the Aldiss book shows a Union Jack with a swastika superimposed; the cover of this book shows a computer image of the Capitol building with a swastika rising in the background.. I wonder if someday someone will sponsor and alternate history art show. Now that would be original.

Most authors who follow the Reich-triumphant school of alternate histories emphasize the atrocities and outrages of the Nazis. Some, in fact, seemed aimed at the thrill-seekers who enjoy reading about that sort of thing, much as the film Caligula was not designed so much as a brilliantly researched historical as a soap opera that emphasized the erotic and decadent over everything else. Dvorkin, to his credit, takes a different approach. Hitler was killed by a Russian attack while inspecting the Eastern Front. After his death, those who took control reversed some of his policies, including releasing all those in the death camps and establishing a Jewish state as a refuge for them. I find this unconvincing, especially the additional detail that Adolf Eichmann led this project. But passing over that, Dvorkin manages to convince the reader that this pulling back from the extremes has resulted in Germany's eventual victory and stability.

Ah, but things are never as they seem. Chic Western has been sent to the embassy in Berlin by the United States as a "budspy," an undercover agent sent to spy upon his fellow Americans. He finds Germany both oppressive--after all it is a fascist state--and flourishing. With its victory has come a

certain level of economic success and national pride. But he gradually finds that the public face of the Third Reich covers many of the same horrors that were thought to have been abandoned.

The novel splits roughly into two parts: the first is spent giving the background of this world; the second examines how Western reacts to this and to his role as budspy in general. The main characters were interesting and well developed, though the subsidiary characters seemed sketchily drawn. The background was far more interesting than the characters, though, and by the end I found the characters had been swallowed up by it--as indeed they were in the novel itself, but that's something you'll have to discover for yourself.

On the whole, a decent novel with an interesting approach.

THE LAGRANGISTS

by Mack Reynolds; edited by Dean Ing
Baen, 1983, \$2.95

I'm sure this was intended as a paean to the space movement, but it could set that movement back fifty years.

On page 93, the author refers to the "girl flight engineer, a Black." On page 145, in describing who will inhabit the space colony being built, one of the characters says, "And all of the animals will be of the best stock available, perfect breeds, including human beings, naturally." Elsewhere, the organizer of this project says that all inhabitants will be "intelligent, adjusted, well educated, trained, healthy" (though apparently not well-educated enough to know that "Well-educated" should be hyphenated) as well as rich and have an IQ of at least 130. A reader new to the space movement reading this book would get the impression that all the rich, white, upper-class people with IQs over 130 will go forward into the glorious life that awaits them in space and everyone else will be left in misery on Earth. And if it's true that space habitats can't afford to support those of lower intelligence or skills, what will happen to the unfortunate child born in a space habitat who doesn't have an IQ of 130? This all sounds familiar--too familiar. Someone proposed a society similar to this about a half-century ago. It didn't work out too well then either,

In addition, the main character has supposedly studies up on Island One (as the habitat is called) in the hopes of getting a job there, but he is constantly asking things like, "Well, how will you get your supplies here?" at which point the other characters can launch into three-page Gernsbackian speeches on how to build and run a space station. The other characters are two-dimensional, except for the ones who are one-dimensional. The "father" of Island One is George Casey, a very thinly disguised Gerard O'Neill, who is painted as somewhere between Gandhi and Jesus Christ in his saintliness. His assistant is a "liberated woman" (the author's words, not mine) who shows her liberation by propositioning men



by saying things like, "I'll bet I know what you like. Good heavens, you're absolutely rampant" and pressuring the main character to have sex with her by insinuating that if he doesn't she'll assume he's gay and he wouldn't want that, would he? The villains are four mafiosi and some KGB agents. They are of course all ruthless and heartless, except for when it is convenient to have them suddenly change sides after hearing Casey speak for two minutes on how Island One will bring about world peace and happiness.

It is to barf.

It's not clear who is to blame for all this. I presume from the crediting of Dean Ing as editor that this book was based on an unfinished manuscript by Mack Reynolds, and completed by Ing after Reynolds. By the principle of "he touched it last," therefore, one must lay the blame at Ing's doorstep.

This book has a sequel, Chaos in Lagrangia. I wouldn't expect it to be any better.

AGENT OF BYZANTIUM

by Harry Turtledove
Congdon & Weed, 1987, \$15.95

I had heard about this novel at BOSKONE, but couldn't find it in the dealers' rooms there. Then lo and behold! there it was in the Old Bridge Public Library! Well, you know me and alternate history novels (particularly that small minority that aren't based on either the South winning the Civil War or Germany winning World War II), so I immediately checked it out and read it.

Well, uh, it was okay, I guess. I mean, the stories were interesting and the characters were reasonable adventure story characters, though nothing remarkable in characterization. But there was a certain sameness to the stories. They were originally written as short stories which appeared in various magazines (chiefly Asimov's). This "novel" was formed by concatenating the stories, without any apparent additional editing. So in each story we get aside references to how Byzantium never fell, how St. Mahomet converted to Christianity, what a beautiful cathedral the Hagia Sofia is, etc. Had this been better edited, Turtledove could have filled in some new background details instead of repeating these same ones over and over.

In addition, the stories all fit a set pattern. In each one, Basil Argyros discovers some amazing technological marvels--the telescope, movable type, brandy, and so on. Given that this takes place in the 1500s the period is right, but it's unlikely in the extreme that all this would center around one man. There's also a Mata Hari subplot that I could have done without.

I suspect this was a case where the individual stories were more enjoyable than the "novel" they formed. If you read this, do it a story at a time, but a week or so in between them. Turtledove has done another alternate history series, his "Sim" series which is running in Analog. I may not like it when it's issued as a novel either, but I have enjoyed the individual stories and recommend them.

NEVER THE TWAIN

by Kirk Mitchell
Ace, 1987, \$3.50

Howard Hart, the last living descendent of Bret Harte (his grandfather dropped the final "e" on the theory that one shouldn't use five letters when four would do), has been making a living as a minor con-man when he is approached by a researcher who tells him that it was mere chance that stood between his ancestor and perpetual literary fame: had Samuel Clemens been successful as a gold miner in the West in the 1860s, he would not have turned to writing (as Mark Twain) and eclipsed the then popular Harte. Howard is currently being pursued by Federal marshalls for some fraud or other and realized that being the last surviving heir of a literary giant would be preferable to being that of someone relegated to status of a minor author. He also just happens to know

some whiz-kid science-type (of the Zen philosophy of science variety) who just happens to have figured out how Hart can travel back in time to arrange all this.

The time-travel aspect of this novel seems to take forever to get going. Hart (and hence the reader) sees very little of Mark Twain, and the book is more like a Western novel than science fiction. You do get several long descriptions of the insides of frontier bordellos, but trust me, they're not reading the book for. The ending is also quite predictable. On the whole this is a pretty light-weight and disappointing read. One would do better to go read Twain--or even Harte.

PYRAMIDS

by Fred Saberhagen
Baen, 1987, \$3.50

AFTER THE FACT

by Fred Saberhagen
Baen, 1988, \$3.95

These are the first two books in the "pilgrim series; things being what they are today, I'm sure there will be more.

In Pyramids we meet Pilgrim, an interstellar time traveler of sorts who needs 20th century graduate student Tom Scheffler to help him recover part of his ship from Pharaonic Egypt. Well, sort of--one of the annoying aspects of this series is that the concept of time travel is not only different in the two books, it is actually contradictory. Without giving too much away, let me say that Pyramids comes up with a unique way around the Grandfather Paradox, and After the Fact seems to assume that the method used in Pyramids doesn't exist. In After the Fact Pilgrim uses yet another graduate student, Jerry Flint, to save President Lincoln from assassination.

Pyramids is interesting in the way it uses the ancient Egyptian gods (reminiscent of Zelazny's Creatures of Light and Darkness, I suppose) and its descriptions of ancient Egypt. After the Fact is more accessible, being about a time the average reader knows better, but this very accessibility makes it less interesting, and the denouement is singularly unsatisfying. Saberhagen has the makings of a good series as soon as he settles on a consistent rationale, and I hope he returns to more interesting and alien settings with it.

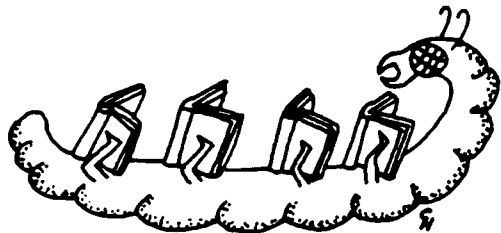
LIFE DURING WARTIME

by Lucius Shepard
Bantam, 1987, \$7.95

Set in Central America sometime in the near future, this novel is a collection of four novellas: "R & R," "The Good Soldier," "Fire Zone Emerald," and "Sector Jade." The first was nominated for a Hugo in 1987; if the others have appeared previously, then the book gives no indication of this (nor, for that matter for "R & R" either).

David Mingolla is a soldier in Free Occupied Guatemala just trying to survive, but as the novel progresses he finds out more and more about himself and about the forces behind the war. This starts out as basically a war novel, but gradually becomes more fantastic (in a literal sense) as psychic powers become another weapon to be used in the war. His journey through the jungles has echoes of Dante's journey through the underworld combined with the concepts of "rites of passage." It's not for everyone--I can't say I really enjoyed it, but then war stories are not my particular cup of tea.

Life During Wartime is not your usual science fiction war story--there is not a lot of emphasis on tactics or battles with amazing weapons. It's a more sedate story about what goes on behind wars, and the day-to-day life during a war. In the latter regard it has more in common with something like Manlio Argueta's A Day of Life than with, say, David Drake's Hammer's Slammers. Life During Wartime is not being marketed as science fiction, no doubt because the audience it would appeal to is probably more attuned to the mainstream novel. In fact, it's being marketed as a trade paperback, similar to the "yuppie fiction paperbacks" that are so common now. If it sounds interesting, look for it in that section of your bookstore.



REPLAY

by Ken Grimwood
Berkley, 1988 (1987), \$3.95

What if you could live your life over and over again?

That's the back-cover blurb to this unique alternate worlds/time travel novel. And that's the chance Jeff Winston gets when he wakes up from his fatal heart attack to find himself back in college. He resolves that things will be different this time--and they are, in part because he, like so many other time travelers, can remember the outcomes of all sorts of sporting events to bet on. (Quick, who won the 1963 World Series?) But soon 1988 rolls around again and bang! heart attack and he's back in 1963 again. And round it goes.

In one cycle he meets Pamela, another replayer. Together they try to make sense of what's happening. It's not easy--forewarned is not necessarily forearmed and as in so many time travel stories, trying to improve history often backfires. And Winston discovers that often the knowledge that "next time" he could do things differently makes his decisions this time seem meaningless. But he keeps trying to change things. Sometimes he leads a life of dissipation; other times he tries to change the world. Sometimes he tries working behind the scenes; other times he tells everyone he can predict the future. (The latter scenario is particularly chilling.)

One wonders how a novel such as this could have a satisfying resolution, but Grimwood manages it very well. As a unique approach to alternate history and time travel, Replay is highly recommended.

Film & Book Reviews by *Dennis K Fischer*

PERFUME

by Patrick Suskind
Pocket Books, 1987 (1985), \$4.50

A book review by Dennis K. Fischer

Patrick Suskind is a German writer whose recently translated (by John E. Woods) work Perfume: The Story of a Murderer has become a considerable success in this country and has gone on to win the World Fantasy Best Novel of the Year award. Cannily marketed by Pocket Books with a cover designed to evoke not only the novel but also memories of Peter Schaffer's Amadeus, this worthy work has bypassed the neglect accorded most fantasy novels to reach mainstream America and critical acclaim.

In this and many other respects, it is an unusual work. Just as most of what we accord as taste is smell, most of Perfume's appeal is the flavorful prose of Suskind. Set in eighteenth century France, Suskind presents his story in a straightforward style of a Denis Diderot, a Balzac, or a Madame de Lafayette, giving it partly the air of a folk tale and partly of a thoroughly researched

chronicle presented by a narrator with omniscient powers.

I've never had much interest in perfume as an item, but Suskind makes the details of its manufacture fascinating, catching the reader up in the excitement that his protagonist, the utterly amoral JeanBaptiste Grenouille, feels. The story chronicles the life history of this remarkable personage, born a babe utterly lacking in smell amid the foulest stench in Europe. Though ostensibly human, Grenouille is immediately set apart from the rest of the human race by possessing a sense of smell far beyond the most gifted perfumers and by his own singular lack of a scent. Lacking any sense of kinship to the human race, he pursues the Sadean philosophy of "do what thou wilt shall be the whole of the law" with a vengeance.

I don't want to give away too much of the twists and turns that the story takes; suffice it to say that Suskind is a gifted storyteller who never forgets that storytelling and entertaining are his primary goals while deftly integrating large amounts of exposition, background, and philosophy into his narrative. He even makes plausible the notion that we unconsciously judge a

person more by his sense of smell than his outward appearance, grace, manners, or intelligence.

Instead, let's examine the oft-neglected sense of smell. Most people don't realize that human beings are capable of great olfactory feats such as, with an untrained nose, being able to detect 0.000,000,000,000,071 ounce of skunk odor. We are able to take one sniff and identify a single aroma from among thousands we have experienced in the past. Our olfactory abilities are so keen, in fact, that we are more sensitive to changes in concentration of odors than those highly efficient smellers, the rats.

Also, it's worthy to note that odor memory is less influenced by the passage of time than auditory and visual memories. An experiment was conducted where subjects were shown pictures and after a few seconds were asked to recall what they had seen. Recall was almost 100%. But after 120 days, it was only 50%. By contrast, in a similar experiment, odor recall was 70% immediately after exposure to scents and 70% 120 days later. Once remembered, smells are rarely if ever forgotten. Researchers believe this is because odors stir basic emotions. They may have no meaning themselves, but they become associated with "feelings." Nothing can recall a memory as surely or as quickly as an odor.

(You can prove this to yourself if you stop to recall what odors you associate with places like drugstores, coffee shops, dentist's offices, spring mornings, Christmas, etc.)

Exactly how our sense of smell works is still a mystery, but already there are researchers probing whether odors can trigger drives for sex, hunger, and aggression, as well as whether odor associations such as finding a lover that smells like a beloved parent could trigger emotional responses. (Imagine what the scientoligists could do with this material if they ever got a hold of it?)

Smelling and noses have a cultural significance as well. A Mohammedan ritual advises washing the nose with water each morning to expel devils that supposedly visit the body through it at night. Eskimo morticians plug up the nostrils of corpses lest the soul escape from the body and become restless. In English, we use such expressions as "sticking our noses in other people's business," "stick our nose up in the air," "thumb our nose at someone," and of course the popular pastime of "rubbing noses."

One common olfactory phenomenon that happens to humans but does not appear to happen to Grenouille is Suskind's story is that of adaptation. No matter how strong an odor is when you enter a room, you become unaware of, or "blind" to, it a few minutes later. This explains how people can "stand the smell" in questionable areas, or when you enter a house that is cohabited by large numbers of dogs and/or cats, how the owners can overlook that their domicile gives off a definite effluvium. When subjects are tested for recognition of certain odors, there has to be a pause of at least thirty to sixty seconds between stimulations before any odor, new or the same, can be recognized. It

has also been shown that prior exposure to one odorant will decrease sensitivity to another. A higher concentration of the second odor is therefore required for detection.

Most of these facts have nothing to do with Suskind's novel, but they are handy things to keep in mind. (For those interested in such things, I recommend Ruth Winter's The Smell Book from which I got some of my information included above.) But Perfume offers pleasures to more than just those who were curious about smell and how a perfume is manufactured. It has an unusual character surrounded by all-too-usual types of humanity who seek to profit from and exploit their fellow human beings, though moralistically, everyone who comes into contact with Grenouille comes out the worse for it in the end. Toward the end of the novel when he begins a murder spree, he is initially mistaken for plague, and that is what he is. He is the plague of inhumanity, an example of the devastation wrought by a lack of feeling or concern for fellow human beings that leaves only pain and pestilence in its wake.

Like Victor Hugo, Suskind makes the case against mean-spiritedness not by moralizing over it, but by simply chronicling motivations and consequences, evincing an apparent unconcern that masks a certain moral indignation. Suskind has crafted a timeless tale in the guise of a fantasy about a man who cares only for the smells he captures and enjoys. It is timeless because it addresses the same inequities in the human condition that have been omnipresent since the beginning of recorded human history.

For those critics who have argued that they want fantasy that depicts strong characters with stories in which the human element is uppermost, Perfume is their book. The fantasy element is kept to a minimum, but this allows for maximum observation on how this small permutation could affect the outlook of a human being. It presents humanity as it is, with none of the stench removed, though at the same time not overlooking what good there is.

Like all good literature, this is the story of people and what drives them -- a far cry from the razzle-dazzle flummery of a popular series of best-selling fantasy novels with their caricatures instead of characters and their wretched puns rather than real wit. Those novels mistake plundering the creations and plot from old fantasies for genuine invention and then make light to show it's all in fun, but the end result does nothing to enhance the overall stature of the fantasy novel. At best, they make modern-day fantasy novels seem like pleasant time wasters, but material of no great consequence. This is unfortunate, since writers like L. Sprague de Camp have demonstrated how the form could be used to be both entertaining in a light, humorous vein while at the same time make wry social observations and gentle pokes at human foibles that gives his best work substance.

Suskind, not without a sense of humor himself, is a different kind of writer, though I'm certain de Camp would admire the thoroughness of his research. What links them is that unlike many modern-day writers of fantasy novels, they each know that the

most interesting kind of tale a storyteller can tell is one that reveals something interesting or wondrous about that most famous fantasyland of all -- the human soul. Seek out Perfume and partake of its giddy aroma.

LIGHT YEARS

A film review by Dennis K. Fischer

Perhaps the most significant thing about Rene Laloux's film Light Years is that it marks what I believe to be the debut of Isaac Asimov as a screenwriter. Laloux's film is adapted from an obscure French science fiction novel and was originally released in France. (Laloux has been the director of such animated science fiction films as Fantastic Planet and Time Masters.) The American version was picked up by Miramax Films who added some music to the soundtrack, tracked down some fine Englishspeaking actors to "dub" the film (Glenn Close, Jennifer Grey, Christopher Plummer, John Shea, Penn & Teller, Terrence Mann) and hired Asimov to do the dialogue for the preexisting film.

It must have been a daunting task, because the visuals are all in place and the plot centers around a time paradox that ends up making no sense, a monkey wrench for Asimov's logical mind. The film was clearly intended for an adult audience, which tends to forsake animated films in the country under the belief that they are exclusively children's films. Nonetheless, the film's biggest problem lies in the fact that it is neither exciting nor compelling.

Still, it is not without merit. Laloux's Fantastic Planet was known for the imaginative alien flora that it developed, and Light Years spends some time trying to come up with equally delightful creations, which are largely the work of Philippe Cazamayou (also known as "Caza"), who is the winner of numerous international design awards, was crowned "King of the Comic Strip" in Avignon in 1984, and received the French Science Fiction Award in 1985.

The plot is your basic "prophecy and quest" bit, but sometimes it does turn away from the overly simplistic "good" versus "evil" terms typical of the genre. The prophecy is something about "In a thousand years, Gandahar was destroyed and all its people massacred... A thousand years ago, Gandahar will be saved and the inevitable avoided." Our hero is the warrior Sylvain (John Shea), the son of the ruler of Gandahar, Ambisextra (Glenn Close), who has been chosen by an all-woman council to discover what has been turning some of Gandahar's blue-skinned inhabitants into stone. (Unlike any fellow Gandaharian, Sylvain is pale pink, perhaps for greater audience identification as no explanation is offered.)

Flying across a desert, some pterodactyl-like creatures attack his mount, causing him to crash in the desert where his unconscious body is borne away by the Deformed. The Deformed are a race of mutants who themselves were once Gandaharians who underwent genetic experimentation and then were thrust into coventry because of their deformed appearance. Sylvain initially mistakes them for

his enemy but then makes peace with them. The film continually avoids being simple-minded and simplistic, keeping distinctions of good and evil from being clear-cut.

One nice touch which I attribute to Asimov is that the enemy has a sophisticated technology while the peaceful Gandaharians have preferred developing the organic; however, rather than branding technology evil in the traditional dichotomy (as in a film like Wizards, which David Brin perversely insists is one of the most evil ever made), Asimov has the Gandaharians regret that they did not develop their technology more so as to be better prepared to meet this new and unexpected threat.

Laloux himself says of the film, "There are no simple universes or Manichean worlds, As in the stories I like to tell, there are no 'real villains.' The plot is born of stupidity, a detail ignored, a problem misunderstood. We are like ostriches, ephemeral ostriches at that, burying our heads in our territorial values and in the virtues of our normality."

"Is the future a thing of the past? The past has yet to come? Time has lost its bearings and this temporal delirium is only one manifestation of the unfathomable cosmic truth."

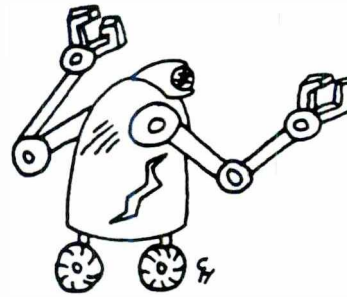
Whatever its minor virtues, Light Years imparts no "cosmic truths." Instead, it proceeds to have its hero get stoned by the rays of an army of mechanical men (after being led to the site of an attack by one of the now-friendly Deformed). Sylvain is then shoved into an egg where he revives next to a fellow female prisoner (voice by Jennifer Grey) with whom he is fated to fall in love. The young pair are saved by a giant saurian which destroys the metal men and mistakes the "hatched" egg they were in as one of its own. Investigating, the couple sees that the metal men are mere shells of armor animated by some mysterious force. They are collecting the stoned figures of Gandaharians and shoving them into eggs which are then sent through a time portal, out of which come more mechanical men.

Boarding one of the robot-like invaders' ships, they are taken to the mechanical men's god, a giant brain (though it more resembled a scrotum to me) called Metamorphis (voice by Christopher Plummer). Metamorphis talks with Sylvain and claims no direct responsibility for what the metal men are doing -- for worshiping him and killing Gandaharians, though he also states he would benefit if the metal men are to succeed. It turns out that the mechanical men have been sent by his future self which requires the life-force of the Gandaharians to continue living. Metamorphis agrees to help Sylvain kill his future self of a thousand years hence to put a stop to the current massacre.

Sylvain returns to the city of Jasper, built in the shape of a woman's head atop a feminine-shaped mountain, and there he discovers that Metamorphis was yet another scientific experiment by Gandaharian scientists that had gone awry and had been presumed dead. This sets up the resolving situation in which Sylvain must kill a threat in the future to stop this threat to the present, thereby creating the paradoxical situation

where metal men attacking in the present are stopped by killing a creature a millenium hence, but allowing that same creature to continue existing in the present to grow old and become a threat.

The Deformed pop up to play their hand, and one of them is named Shayol, possibly an appropriate homage to Cordwainer Smith's classic story of a planet of deformed people, "A Planet Named Shayol." But in-jokes alone cannot save a film, and despite the visual imagination which has gone into Light Years, the plot doesn't work and the proceedings are ultimately a bit ponderous.



Film & Book Reviews by *Julia Ecklar*

SCIENCE FICTION WRITER'S WORKSHOP-I
An Introduction to Fiction Mechanics

by Barry B. Longyear
Owlswick Press, 197?, \$7.50
Box 8243
Philadelphia, PA 19101

A book review by Julia Ecklar

There's little to say about this book except that, if you're an aspiring fiction writer, buy it! Barry Longyear (whose Hugo winning novella, "Enemy Mine", was a Hugo-nominated movie) covers everything from beginnings, to pacings, to manuscript format, to titling. It isn't the last word in fiction writing, but it's a damned comprehensive first word! And more than worth the money and time spent studying it.

Writer's Workshop is well-written, and filled with challenging writing exercises to help you practice what you've learned in each chapter. Examples abound (most of them Longyear's earlier works) to show you what not to do, how to fix what you've done, and how to know when stories are best left to shallow graves. Designed to be used in either an individual or group workshop situation, Writer's Workshop addresses the would-be writer as an equal, making every piece of advice seem personal and pertinent. It's by far one of the best self-help books for writing I've ever read.

Barry Longyear says he would be unable to write this book ten years from now, when he would be too far removed from the feeling of what it's like to be a new writer. Those of us who are still new writers should be glad he had the heart to write this book at all!

PROMETHEA ONE

Edited by Melissa Gelhaus
Little Bear Press, 1987, \$7.??
37 Munro Court
Troy, NY 12180

Promethean, adj -- creative; boldly original

Prometheus, noun -- a Titan who stole fire from Olympus and gave it to mankind in defiance of Zeus. As a punishment, he was

chained to a rock, where an eagle daily tore at his liver until he was finally released by Hercules...

Some days, I know just how Prometheus felt...

So begins Melissa Gelhaus' editorial in her new "fanzine" Promethea One. I use the term "fanzine" very loosely, and only because no other term quite applies -- Promethea One is not a fanzine in anything approaching the ordinary sense of the word.

Promethea is something fandom has been missing for a long time -- an amateur magazine stressing a new writer's need to reach others, rather than merely serving as a forum for fannish ideas (sorry, Ian). There is no derivative fiction in Promethea One, however. Instead, the four stories and seven poems presented in this first issue are entirely original, and all the more delightful for that fact. Even when the writing was stiff with rusty mechanics, or injured by amateur pacing, I found myself enchanted by characters I didn't already know, by worlds these writers have worked long and hard to bring to life. The special kind of newness found in a writer's own creativity is something you can't find in Star Trek, Star Wars or DarkOver fanzines.

The quality of the writing is understandably uneven. Poetry ranges from Elizabeth Welsh Roth's gratingly simplistic "The Lovers," up through Bev Spindler's delightful (and delightfully illustrated) "Lesson No. 1" (about the agonies of awaiting on a professionally-submitted manuscript). The stories range from a fairly uninspired piece by Paige Vrooman ("The Bond") through the strangely attractive "Fox Girl" by Michael D. Winkle (one of those stories where you keep feeling like you ought to dislike this, but you still can't wait to find out what happens next).

There is no heart of vibrancy missing from these works. These are honest, sincere artists who want to do their best. Sometimes, that's pretty bad -- but it beats the hell out of writing nothing but Star Wars fiction for the rest of your creative career!

I was enthusiastic about this project when I first heard about it; I'm even more

enthusiastic now that I've read the result! I believe Promethea's next step should be to publish an address where contributing authors can be reached (in case readers want to pass on commentaries, advice, or instruction). That way, the authors not only have the satisfaction of seeing their characters and worlds reach others, but also of benefiting from that exposure by collecting the all important "outside viewpoint."

I recommend this magazine to anyone interested in promoting the arts -- as well as anyone interested in a pleasant refreshing fanzine read. The future of such projects is so frequently dependent on initial acceptance; I, for one, want very much to see this tradition continue.

Well done, Melissa! And well done, all Promethea's brave authors and artists! Keep up the fine work.

THE SERPENT AND THE RAINBOW

I'm sure we all remember good ol' Wesley Craven, the director from various Nightmare on Elm Street rehashes (or is that "reslash-es"...?). The television advertisements for The Serpent and the Rainbow reassure us that Wes is up to his old tricks, providing blood, guts, and just general spiritual weirdness for those not getting enough of all three in everyday life. If you're like most discerning fans, you looked at the TV ads, said, "Ack! That man looks like he's been slimed!" and never thought about the movie again. If you're like me, you giggled insanely, squealed, "That looks so terrible!" and paid \$2.00 to see it right away.

To say I was surprised would be like saying Howard Hughes had days when he was vague.

First of all (just to give you the idea) -- everything in the television ads is from one of two LSD-type trips that occur during the course of the movie. The only part that's real is the doughy little man saying, "Somebody brought him back from the dead... and I want to know how they did it." Ou of context, even that's misleading. Also, all the green goo is blood. I don't know why someone decided American TV audiences could deal with protoplasmic slime better than blood, but, hey...

The story (a true story, by the way) is about a chemist, Dennis, who makes his living collecting native drugs and bringing them back to a pharmaceuticals company in the U.S. The drugs are then produced commercially, and he makes a lot of money.

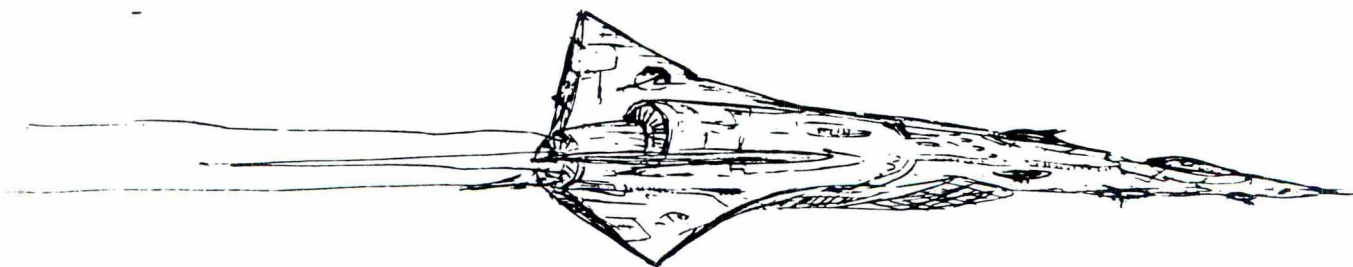
The doughy little man in the ads is the president of this pharmaceuticals company,

and he thinks he's onto the best thing since aspirin -- an anesthetic so thorough that patients could be mistaken for dead, although you can revive them within twenty-four hours. He believes this drug is integral to the creation of voodoo "zombies," and a doctor in Haiti has a zombie on hand who remembers enough of his ordeal to be potentially useful.

What follows is an interesting (if embellished) version of the discovery and introduction of tetrodotoxin into American pharmaceutical research. For those who didn't know, tetrodotoxin (the hideous poison produced by puffer fish) is the primary ingredient in the deadly yellow powder used to create zombies. A neuro-depressant, it can lower a person's metabolism so greatly that they barely need to breathe for several hours (in infinitesimal doses [traditionally, the voodoo priest blows a mere puff into the victim's face] it wears off within twelve hours). (And, in case you were wondering, it has never been okayed for commercial use in the U.S., so you're safe going into surgery.)

Where the movie falls apart is in the way it chose to represent this whole affair. Discovering that zombies do, indeed, exist, and that a medical explanation exists for it all, is frightening enough -- but Wes Craven feels the need to introduce supernatural and spiritual elements that simply don't ring true against the otherwise realistic backdrop. It isn't a terribly well-written script to begin with (after forty minutes of self-righteous voice-over from our slack-faced main character, you wish someone would make him a zombie just to shut him up), but gratuitous scenes like the finding of Dennis' "totem" in South America, the almost-psyhic protection Dennis believes his totem affords him later, and the release of the zombie souls supposedly held by the voodoo priest make you think Dennis (who is supposedly tell this tale) is one of those people who swears they talk to Elvis' ghost every Saturday night.

The film would have worked if they'd made it a supernatural horror flick or a realistic suspense thriller. Trying to make it both ruins everything. The lead actor (who reminds me of a play-dough David McCallum) is boring, the suspense and action is often trite enough to make you laugh, and the whole mood fights with itself far too much to be enjoyable. However, if you're interested in a little insight into Haitian voodoo traditions, or some information on how to do further research on zombies or voodoo, the movie just might be worth seeing (if you don't have the money to pay for it).



Book Reviews by Chuq Von Rospach

SCIENCE FICTION: The Hundred Best Novels

by David Pringle
Carroll & Graf, 1987, \$7.95

A book review by Chuq Von Rospach

Anyone who seriously attempt to write a book that claims "this is the 100 best novels ever written" is asking for someone to jump on him. Besides the fact that new novels are written all the time, and that some of them are sure to replace other works on the top list, anyone who tries to build any kind of definitive list is going to find people who disagree with them, picking nits, and generally making unfavorable comments.

David Pringle recognizes this, and admits as much inside the covers. This is not THE ONE HUNDRED BEST BOOKS, but a survey of the books that Pringle feels are representative for the time they were published for the period 1949 to 1984.

So, with those limitations, what is there to argue about? Well, Pringle has attempted to document the books -- one or two books from each year -- that are representative of the cream of the crop for that period in the field. This is a survey book, designed primarily to point people (and Science Fiction curriculum developers) at the history of Science Fiction; the thing that make us what we are today.

I won't try to claim Pringle is wrong. He has his list, I have mine. It is interesting, however, to compare lists with Pringle and see how closely they match--the thought being that the more people who agree on a given work, the more likely it is that the work really is Best.

Two things about the book really stand out. First, I was very surprised how closely my list matched. And second, I was amused at where they diverged, and how strongly they did when it happened.

Pringle has some strong biases. There are five books by Philip K. Dick. Not to denigrate Dick, but at least three of those works are lesser works, and when you consider that a number of other major writers (C. L. Moore, Leigh Brackett, and Harlan Ellison, to name three) are not mentioned at all, and some classic series (Asimov's Foundation and Niven's Known Space) are also unrepresented. To say that this much of Dick's work was so much more important than the single best work of these other authors that they deserve no mention at all dampens the overall credibility of the list. Dick was a very important part of the SF field, but he didn't write 5% of the best fiction within the 35 year period surveyed. This emotional adoration of Dick is out of place in an otherwise studied survey.

Besides this, there are a number of glitches and places where Pringle's biases override his good sense. He chooses Silverberg's Downward to the Earth over Dying Inside, even though he admits the latter is

generally considered the author's seminal work, because he finds Dying Inside to be too bitter for his tastes (Dying Inside is a MUCH superior work, and was written to be bitter -- which doesn't remove its power or make it ineligible for this list). He includes Dune, excludes Foundation. Niven as an author is not included, not even for the classic Ringworld. Niven & Pournelle, however, are included -- not with The Mote in God's Eye as you might expect, but with a much less interesting and nonsensical choice of Oath of Fealty. He includes Varley's Opniuchi Hotline, which gives the author a deserved place in the book, but with an inferior novel. He includes Spinrad's horrible Bug Jack Baron; Jack Vance is nowhere to be found. Early Heinlein abounds, but where is Time Enough for Love or Stranger in a Strange Land?

The book is not as good a book as it could have been. While the early days (defined as before the New Wave movement of the 60s) leave little room for argument of disagreement, Pringle shows a strong bias toward the books and writers of the New Wave movement, including many of them and their works despite the fact that they didn't really stand the test of time or markedly change the genre. He's strongly biased away from Hard SF as well, except in the early classics where a well-known list of classic works already exists. Once you recognize these biases, the book becomes very useful, even if you find yourself mentally marking out some entries and replacing them with your own. In general an interesting (if occasionally amusing or irritating) survey of the field, and a good thing to have around.

FANDOM HARVEST

by Terry Carr
1984

Laissez Faire Produktion AB (Sweden)
Rasundavagen 129
S-171 30 Solna, Sweden

A book review by Chuq Von Rospach

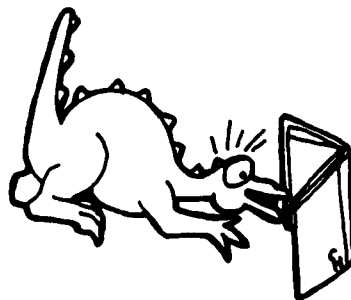
This is a Small Press book of the best of Terry Carr's fannish writing, selected by Terry and published in 1984. I found it at the Worldcon in Brighton, and latched onto a copy immediately.

I've been trying to come to understand Terry since I heard of his death last year. I only met the man once, but his loss hit me strongly, as that of a close friend. In many ways he was, as his editing at Ace Books was a strong factor in building the kind of fiction I enjoy today -- he's one of the critical people who, without even knowing it, whetted my appetite and honed my sense of wonder. Without Terry, I might not be a reader.

For anyone who is interested in Terry Carr as a person, his personal life as op-

posed to his professional life, what he was as opposed to what he did, this book is priceless. This is Terry with his hair down.

The book is now a cherished part of my collection. After reading it, I find I have only two regrets -- that I did not take the time to track Terry down when I had the chance, and that I can't get the damned thing autographed. This book simply underscores how much the field got from Terry, and how much we're all going to miss him.



Tape & Book Reviews by *Maia*

CYTEEN
by C. J. Cherryh
1988, Warner, \$18.95

A book review by Maia Cowan

Cyteen immerses the reader in the politics and weird science of C. J. Cherryh's "Union." It's a dense book, weaving plots, counterplots, history, psychobiology, and personal tragedy into a convoluted epic of ambition, loyalty, and victimized innocence.

Cyteen is both macrohistory and biography. It brings home to Union the consequences of their scheming in 40,000 in Ge-henna, and the side-effects of Earth's encounters with aliens in the "Chanur" books. At the same time, it tells the story of Ariane Emory, the Machiavellian head of the Reseune "azi factory," and Ariane Emory, the clone bred and raised to replace the first Emory after her murder. Tangled in these developments is a hapless bioengineer, Justin Warrick, who is the first Ariane's victim and the second's reluctant friend. Every time it starts to seem clear what Justin's role and purpose are, the plot twists again.

For all the complications and political undercurrents, I could fairly easily keep track of the who, what, and sometimes even the why, thanks to Cherry's painstakingly detailed background and the individuality of the different voices. I expect that many people may find the wealth of detail and depth of plotting (by the author and her characters) merely painful. This is not, let me emphasize, light reading. It is, however, in my opinion an absolutely brilliant book. I was particularly impressed with the growing Ariane, who sounded just right for her age at every from young childhood on, in spite of her precocity.

DR. JANE'S SCIENCE NOTES
songs by Jane Robinson
1987, Off Centaur, \$9.00

A tape review by Maia Cowan

Jane Robinson's wicked and witty songs effectively skewer scientists, religious dogmatists, academics, and bureaucrats who take themselves too seriously (or is that redundant?).

I particularly liked this tape for two reasons: the lyrics are not just witty, but clearly understandable; and the melodies are catchy and "hummable."

Since this is an Off Centaur tape, the arrangements involve more people and instruments than seem quite manageable, but Jane and her music manage to rise above the crowd to create an entertaining and memorable musical experience.

HERALDS, HARPERS & HAVOC
songs by Mercedes Lackey
1987, Off Centaur, \$9.00

A tape review by Maia Cowan

The songs on this tape are related to Mercedes Lackey's three books: Arrows of the Queen, Arrow's Flight, and Arrow's Fall. Some of the songs retell part of the books' story, others are ballads that the folk of Valdemar might sing. It isn't necessary to have read the books to appreciate the songs, though it does help to have the context.

The tone ranges from the comic "Dark and Stormy Night" (about a countless convinced she should really be a bard) to the doleful "Her Father's Eyes" and "Herald's Lament" to the rousing "Threes." The tape's best feature is that it offers an authentic "folk tradition," even if the "folk" are fictitious characters.

Although all the lyrics are all by Misty, the melodies are provided by a variety of musicians. They are also sung by a wide range of voices. Some of these are better suited to the subject matter and melody than others, though all are at least competent. I found it a little disconcerting to have so many different people performing the songs; and it was disappointing that Misty herself didn't perform more.

Even though there is a unifying theme, the tape seemed to lack consistency. Part of this was the disparity in voices. Most of it, however, was technical weakness. As with most Off Centaur tapes, the sound level, mix and arrangements are erratic. The "Off Centaur philosophy" seems to be to use as many of their friends as possible on each tape, rather than to make the most appropriate use of instruments and voices. This lack of technical professionalism weakens an otherwise delightful tape.

CHILD OF THE GROVE
by Tanya Huff
1988, DAW, \$3.50

A book review by Mala Cowan

Douglas Hofstadter said in METAMAGICAL THEMAS, "Making variations on a theme is really the crux of creativity." This observation particularly applies to modern fantasy. The "stuff that dreams are made on" has become thoroughly familiar to most fantasy readers.

Tanya Huff uses many familiar features in CHILD OF THE GROVE: a matriarchal creation myth; mythological creatures such as hamadryads, dwarves, and centaurs; a feudal kingdom threatened by an evil power; a magical child their only hope of survival.

The creativity -- and great pleasure -- is in the personalities of her characters. They're aware of the nuances of their situations, from tragic to ridiculous. They make

mistakes, and admit they feel stupid when they do. They show humor, and self-consciousness, and petulance, as well as the finer sentiments of High Fantasy. And nothing comes without a price.

The narrative appeals to all our senses, including, in small ways, our sense of humor. To her great credit, Huff gives plausible reasons why the evil power doesn't just squash the opposition like bugs and have done with, and why the magical child doesn't immediately do what she's there for and end the story a hundred pages sooner.

Huff has a new writer's tendency to overdo emotional scenes, but I suspect she'll quickly grow out of that. In general her narrative has a witty turn of phrase and a gleam in the eye which give a freshness to a comfortable plot. I'm looking forward to her next book, THE LAST WIZARD (just delivered to DAW).

Special thanks to Sheila Gilbert, who showed excellent taste in buying this book.

Book Reviews by *Dean R. Lambe*

CHARON'S ARK

by Rick Gauger
Del Rey, 1987, \$3.50.

Review Copyright 1988, Dean R. Lambe

A book review by Dean R. Lambe

With his first novel, Gauger lays yet another ET explanation on us for the extinction of the dinosaurs 65 million years ago. He also has a bit of fun with a nerdy adolescent's fantasy that is all the sci-fi B-movies rolled into one.

When their field trip to a rich Pacific island is cut short by a flying wing, and Charlie Freeman's high school classmates find themselves kidnapped by alien robots, only fat and lonely Charlie seems to understand what's truly happening. Even the flight crew of the hijacked 747 and teacher-chaperone Mrs. Robinelli listen to Charlie's ideas for a time, but once the spacecraft arrives at the construct that is Pluto's moon, Charon, the adults join the other 22 sophomores in ignoring Charlie's good advice.

Ignorance and accident separate the captured humans. Most become willing slaves of the computer personalities, the Charonese, who are the incredibly ancient Crew of this interstellar life-seeding Ark. The Crew instruct the group in farming their own food right here in dinosaurville, on this small replica of Mesozoic Earth, and prepare them to become, after years of study, the replacement Crew. Good ol' Charlie, in the meantime, has been aided secretly by the mysterious Proctor into becoming a pimply emperor of a robot-built kingdom--complete with blonde and beautiful Eva Wilcox, the ultimate Valley Girl who is "just sure" that Charlie will never get any. Copilot Jeff Froward, on the other hand, does a me-Tarzan, you-Jane routine with capable and sexy

Chela Suarez, until his old squeeze, stewardess Lena, throws cold water on the happy cradle robber. Then, Crew members start to disappear from the Ark's computer, and Charlie discovers the terrible secret of the nine billion year old vessel. Charlie needs help, and nobody will listen.

While a game try, too many ribs show in this plot, and with the exception of a few scenes, characterization is, well, adolescent. No airline, especially not a fly-by-night charter, flies the Pacific in a 747 with only 25 passengers, and irritating little details accumulate from that first paragraph. The author is definitely worth another look, a novel or two down the line, however.

NARABEDLA LTD.

by Frederik Pohl
Del Rey, 1988, \$16.95.

Sooner or later in the annals of science fiction, most everybody hits the "Glory Road," tips a few in a bar scene full of bizarre aliens like those George Lucas thought he invented, and saves the fair damoiselle from a fate worse than yuk. Pohl, who never does the predictable thing, gives us, as the latest hero shanghaied by critters that go slither in the night, a Big Apple CPA. Yep, a failed opera baritone turned accountant to the stars--only the stars he soon discovers are those around the second moon of the seventh planet of Aldebaran (spell it backwards).

L. Knollwood (Nolly) Stennis had a promising operatic career before a case of mumps took his voice and his balls. As fallback, he started figuring taxes for his musically talented colleagues, and was doing quite well until he lost a client. His search for the missing cellist leads him to Irene Madigan, who's looking for her lost cousin, Tri-

cia, and together they track millionaire Henry Davidson-Jones who made tour offers to both of the missing artists. Nolly recalls a similar offer from the mysterious D-J, back when he still could hit a credible A-note, but before he can whistle the march from *Aida*, he's kidnapped to an artificial moon where all manner of strange folk tell him "you can't go home again." It seems that the Fifteen Associated Peoples view The Earth as a primitive source of entertainments, and while Sam Shipperton despairs at what to do with a CPA, the giant-cockroach-hatching Tlotta-Mother soon orders tone and tool restored. Nolly would have felt a lot better about the operation if he hadn't just seen the huge snakelike surgeon sink its fangs into another human being. Faster than an intermission at the Met, however, Nolly and company (which includes the bed-warming Tricia) are doing *Don Giovanni* for appreciative audiences that smell like dead fish.

Just as Nolly begins to love his restored self, and to wonder whether Narabedla isn't such a bad place to spend the next couple of centuries after all, Kowalski the Harlem basketball player gets them both into hot water and slow time.

No truly new stanzas ring from these pages, but like La Scala the great old stuff still fills the hall. Characters human and alien are nicely done, and the ending is fairly drawn without--refreshingly--a fat lady to sing.

CRAZY TIME

by Kate Wilhelm
St. Martin's, 1988, \$16.95.

In an age when publisher and reader alike reward the sleaziest crap, and ignore true writerly virtues, who can blame even the best stylists from just dashing one off? And even Wilhelm at her sloppiest is still worth reading.

As author of some of the very best psychological introspections in an SF setting, Wilhelm gives us another woman turned inward as the fog turns cold around her. Lauren Steele's character anneals in a furnace of craziness: after a red-haired Irish runt, Corky Corcoran, disappears before her eyes. A fat nerd was playing computer games with Big Mac, the CaCo Inc. supercomputer, see (scientific caca, but bear with us), and the laser test staged for Army Colonel Trigger Happy Musselman zaps poor Corky into a disembodied state, right there in Lauren's workplace, the Waycross Clinic. Leggy Lauren, a neurotic who became a psychologist for all the wrong reasons, is then haunted by Corky--in various states of undress and embodiment--all around Puget Sound, while Lauren thinks she's going crazy and Corky merely seeks solid form. Meanwhile, the evil Colonel has set a forest of agents after the invisible Commie spy and his girl, for he's sure that the entire Seattle area has turned Red. Fortunately, Corky gets a grip on his far-flung self in time to save Lauren from her obsessions and the intentions of the handsome FBI stud.

At first, irritation at errors in the Seattle background was suspended in consid-

eration of the character's viewpoint, that a nutty Yuppie newcomer in the Liquid Sunshine season might actually dislike the place. But gradually, as Lake Washington became "Washington Lake," Elliott Bay was confused with Lake Union, and Mukilteo was never mentioned, I realized that Wilhelm just hadn't bothered to take that weekend drive. For all the cardboard bad guys, the principals are real; they feel and they're often very funny. Wait for the paperback, then enjoy.

BARKING DOGS

by Terence M. Green
St. Martin's, 1988, \$15.95.

Suppose the forces of "lawn order" could identify the bad guys, absolutely, infallibly? What then of crime and punishment? If P. K. Dick hadn't been crazy, he might have written this, and Green, an obviously fan of Horselover Fat, gives us a Do Frustrated Cops Dream of Electric Lynchings?

As police officer Mitch Helwig cruises the mean streets of his 1999 Toronto in a small ground-effect skimmer, he misses his murdered partner, Mario Ciracella, and curses the bureaucracy that leaves him with an archaic .38 while the street punks have deadly new laser pistols. Helwig secretly blows most of his family's joint savings on two items of high tech, a Barking Dog and a Silent Guard. A steal of truckers' slang for their radar detectors, this bit of advanced microminiaturization sniffs out the truth and nothing but the truth; the ultimate in reliable lie detectors, the Dog barks with silent skin stimulation in the presence of lies. The Guard, on the other hand, affords Helwig the latest in bullet proofing, a lightweight vest that even adds vital seconds of protection from laser zaps. Thus armed, Helwig administers a little instant street justice, and soon collects an arsenal of laser pistols at the price of dead punks.

Just as Captain Karoulis begins to understand Helwig's extracurricular activities, Mitch stumbles across the crime empire of Archangel Scopellini and his warehouse full of everything illicit. Will the Captain overlook a little homicide? Will Helwig's lovely wife sleep Platonically with her co-worker? Can Helwig crisp the crime czar? Will Green shake his "em" fixation with characters called Mitch, Max, Mark, Maher, McMahon, Martin, and Mario? These and other anticlimactic answers await the gritty ending.

Never mind that office seductions invoke Plato's *Republic* about as often as copshop talk drifts into Joseph Conrad, and that laser pistols and skimmers are on Ike "The Apple" Newton's energetic list of no-nos, you're going to like this novel. Curiously enough, a Barking Dog really is in our future and we ought to be prepared for the easy solutions this story offers.

STARFIRE

by Paul Preuss
TOR, 1988, \$17.95.

The Afterword explains why, much as I wished to enjoy a brilliant work, this novel offers uneven entertainment. At the end Preuss explains how he and Hollywood special effects wizard Gary Gutierrez (who shares the copyright) conceived the ultimate in high tech razzle-dazzle motion pictures, but found good science fiction too expensive to produce. Alas, as a book, too much of the wonderful screenplay remains. What a viewer could see readily often translates into a dry lecture between emotional character interactions.

In the first decade of the 21st Century, as NASA finally returns Americans to a major presence in space, astronaut Travis Hill becomes an unlikely hero. Travis returns to Earth on a surfboard, an untested emergency escape capsule, and is promptly shuffled out of NASA by administrator Taylor Stith. The grounded Travis returns to academia and his Texas roots, but he never gives up his dream of space, as he becomes a world expert on asteroids, and buries his frustrations in a bottle.

Meanwhile, nuclear weapons maker Linwood Deveraux develops a working fusion spaceship drive, and joins the crew of the experimental ship "Starfire" under Commander Robin Braide. With money and manipulation of Texas and national politics, Travis's mother dries out her son and gets Professor Hill a berth on "Starfire's" first mission. In planning for a visit to a newly discovered asteroid, as well as a Venus slingshot and a launch of two solar observation satellites, Travis fails to fit in with the rest of the "Starfire" crew--especially NAVCOM Melinda and Pilot Spin. The others resent the fact that Travis has bumped Jimmy Giles (Robin's secret lover) from the crew.

Once underway and far beyond any help from Houston, a series of hardware and software glitches place the crew in ever greater jeopardy. Ironically, back at JSC, only the rejected Jimmy fights Director Stith for a way to help the endangered crew. In often overly precise detail, we learn how the crew help themselves with only a Mt. Everest-size asteroid and a home-brew atomic bomb.

It's a shame we'll not see the movie, for this vast imagination needs wide screen and multiple speakers. The collection of sketches and vignettes we're left with on paper simply loses the grandeur of the human endeavor in the necessary minutiae of science. Lucas and Spielberg please note: This is the one you should have done.

FALLING FREE

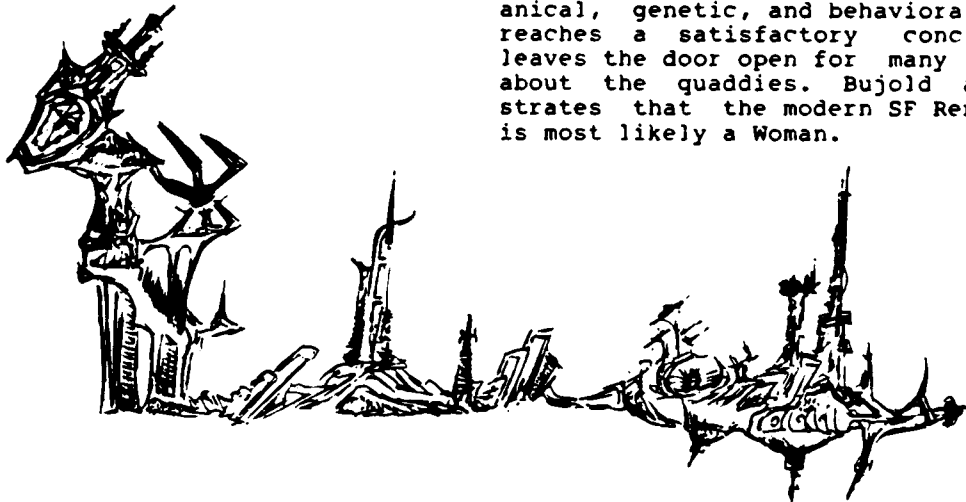
by Lois McMaster Bujold
Bean Books, 1988, \$3.50

With her latest, Bujold continues the impressive record that earned her a Best Writer nomination. Set in the same centuries-hence universe as her first three novels, Falling Free examines conflicts between corporate greed and individual liberty in the context of genetic human engineering.

When assigned to Cay Habitat in orbit around the distant mining planet of Rodeo, engineer Leo Graf is shocked when the project chief Van Atta introduces Graf's first student, For Tony, and the other 999 young "quaddies" created by Dr. Cay, has been specially bred for work in space. Rather than useless "downsider" legs, the GalacTech Corporation has given this new human species a second set of dexterous arms and other physiological modifications for life in free fall. As Graf begins to teach the older quaddies non-destructive testing techniques and space welding safety, he discovers that psychologist Sondra Yei has severely censored their education. Beautiful Silver actually believes Van Atta's line about the greater sexual needs of downsiders. But the self-centered project chief's exploitation of his charges pales in comparison with the dubious future of the new people.

As new technology threatens the economic basis for the quaddies development, the entire Cay project is threatened with termination. Their status in legal limbo, the young spaceborns face tortuous exile unless Graf -- contrary to his own background and best interests as a "company man" -- can find an escape for the whole habitat.

With a well-paced plot, and a superbly accurate feel for the engineering -- mechanical, genetic, and behavioral -- the tale reaches a satisfactory conclusion, and leaves the door open for many more stories about the quaddies. Bujold aptly demonstrates that the modern SF Renaissance Man is most likely a Woman.



Theatre Beat with

BEN INDICK

Last August my wife Janet and I saw one of two workshop performances of an opera-in-progress by my son Michael (lyrics, book) and Stewart Wallace (music), Where's Dick?, a really far-out piece with cartoon characters. It has great potential, albeit not fully formed yet. In late September we flew to Omaha to see the opera in a still more complete form, still workshop, and we had a marvelous weekend. It was a weekend of fantasy opera, really -- Michael's, plus Benjamin Britten's The Turn of the Screw and the Glass/Moran The Juniper Tree.

The latter was actually a children's opera (despite adherence to even the gorier aspects of the Grimm Brothers tale) and was adequately done. The Britten may be a good opera, but the poor direction robbed it of any mystery. Among other sins, the actors representing the ghosts helped move scenery. A poltergeist may move scenery, but no ghost can. In contrast, Michael's show, with only moderately staged first and second acts, and the third still on stools with manuscripts in hand, came over as fresh dynamic, musically delightful, with hints of Gershwin, Glass, Puccini, Sondheim, goodness knows who else -- all intentional -- and some exciting Wallace, too! If you think all of this is paternal prejudice, the boys came home to find they had been awarded a substantial Federal Endowment for the Arts fellowship! There have been talks about the next stage for the piece, which I shall relate once plans are final.

* * * *

The theatre around Broadway has been having a good season, many plays being quite successful, and five regularly posting Sold Out signs on weekends (all musicals, naturally). There has, however, been less activity on the off- and off-off-Broadway fronts, and thus less to see. Grant money is still tough to get and so the small groups cannot operate. Janet and I have seen all the shows we wish to see -- some new ones, and we catch up on old ones, and there is, of course, the Met.

Haddock's Eyes: This story of Lewis Carroll is really a one-hour opera, with less than thirty minutes of sung music by one soprano, and excerpts of Carroll's diaries and letters punctuated by music. The latter is by David Del Tredici. It was a brief, sympathetic look at the Oxford don, free of most Freudian schticks. The singer is the older Alice, and a pretty if clutzy little girl is a good example of Carroll's ideal, a seven year old girl. Occasionally, Tom Hulce (Mozart in Amadeus) expressed subtly Carroll's internal strife about his feelings toward the child. The music is not easy, but it is an individual voice, Although Janet hated it and the play, I admired both very much.

Hulce did not attempt Carroll's stutter, nor was his post-Alice life shown. An audience could scarcely know that Carroll was hardly a total blue-nose, that some of his little friends grew up to be adult friends, and that he was close to the renowned actress Ellen Terry. The title, by the way, is from the song of his alter-ego, the White Knight.

The Boys Next Door concerns four men either mentally retarded or psychologically disturbed, set up in their own apartment, visited, cared for and loved by their social worker. Initially one is reluctant to laugh at them; however, before long we also care enough about them, and laughs are quickly enough mixed with tears and compassion. Very beautiful is the first act close with one of the men (Josh Mostel) dancing with a retarded young woman. Neither can much move ever a step, and they hold each other very awkwardly. The music is the sentimental ballad "I Just Came to Say I Love You", and suddenly it swells up, as the lighting softens. They slowly straighten and for a brief moment whirl in perfect grace, an image perhaps their simple, intent minds may be dreaming. No easy endings are offered, but through its many affecting scenes we sense that these people too deserve and are capable of love. Zero Mostel's son is disconcertingly like his great father physically and even facially, a fine actor even if neither he nor anyone else can rival the vast manic soul of the immortal Tevye and The Producer. (In the film Wall Street, in a small role Josh does not mimic his father.)

Based on an opera by Massenet, Cinderella / Cendrillon featured some actors and the director of my son's opera (see above) and we were not disappointed. Think about Cinderella -- that drab little girl by the fire; how many real-life Cinderellas would be as lucky? Darned few, and this is the story here. Two singers act as the girl, and in the end she is alone at her fire, all of it fantasy (or else she is schizoid). Songs in French, dialogue in English. How much relation it has to the original opera I do not know; Milton Cross does not discuss it in his Great Operas. The NYC Opera Company does it quite successfully, I understand, but I have yet to see it there.

* * * *

Theatre dealing with black problems, written and performed by blacks, is becoming important on and off Broadway. The irony is (and I say this with no racism) that such plays usually attract a large black audience, whereas general plays attract few if any blacks. The point is that they will go to the theatre, but unlike many of us who try to see all theater, will not go when the subject is not immediately personal. Since the theatre needs a larger and more varied audience, this is discouraging.

The best of recent black theatre is Fences. This play (by the author of the more powerful Ma Rainey's Black Bottom, referring to a dance, not the lady's anatomy) won a Tony as Best Play last year; it is a nice play, episodic rather than cumulative. However, the acting was splendid, and James Earl Jones just marvelous. That beautiful voice of his, heard to advantage as Darth Vader, here bears a working man's accents.

Months ago we saw and enjoyed immensely a play, Asinamali, by a South African black, which made its point about South Africa without hitting the audience on the head. His new one, Sarafina, bitterly (and properly anti-apartheid) has some 20 young South African kids working up one heck of a storm of energy, but after a while, the similar songs, the lecturing, get tiresome. Why hit an Audience which is already sympathetic?

That Serious He-Man Ball refers not to a dance but to basketball, which its three black actors play all during this play about disillusion in a white man's world. The points were good but the play was redundant and contrived -and oh! did that ball bounding off the backboard get tiring!

* * * *

Two horror classics in new form:

Imagine The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari, the 1919 German expressionist film classic on stage! Susan Mosakowski, a noted avant gardist, staged it, very well too. All the crooked angles, mysterious symbols, eccentric acting styles, and the weird Doctor and his Somnambulist as well (the latter very much after Conrad Veidt). It took less than an hour and did not include the ending, while it added some notes: a precursor of Hitler was represented, and batches of film around the stage reminded one of its origins. We liked it very much.

Robert Marasco has fine Broadway credentials -- Child's Play, Burnt Offerings, etc. However, his notion of making a contemporary musical of Dracula was poorly realized. Sharing his notion was the director, Morton Dacosta, who has such estimable credits as The Music Man and other stage and movie hits. We saw it, titled Possessed: The Dracula Musical, in a non-profit but professional theatre in Teaneck. It was a shoestring production, but scenery will not help. The



classic and modern elements just do not jell. It is hard to imagine a Dr. Van Helsing of 1987 telling Dr. Seward that they are confronting the problem of a vampire. On paper, as with Anne Rice and Stephen King, it is easier to get away with it. Spoken aloud it seems ridiculous.

Dacosta is still in 1955, and stages it like an old musical, using Seward's asylum loonies in alternating scenes with ill-realized horror, and even the hoary schtick of the secondary comic leads (fat and middle-aged) doing a song. The only way the folks associated with this show will reach Broadway is by way of car or bus. A few years ago, a highly stylish revival of the original late 20s play Dracula, brilliantly designed by Edward Gorey, succeeded by being faithful to its elements.

* * * *

Then there's the Met. I have seen Siegfried, after having seen the first two operas of Wagner's Ring Cycle. However, any write-up will have to wait until Götterdämmerung, which is on next year's bill.

Book Reviews by Ann Cecil



STILL RIVER

by Hal Clement
Del Rey, 1987, \$16.95

This is classic SF: no sex, no violence, minimal plot, minimal characterization. It's a series of unfolding scientific puzzles, like toy boxes that open to reveal yet another box inside. In this book, each puzzle box is opened by a false assumption on the part of one or more of the characters. Each chapter title starts with the words "Of Course..." to give the reader a clue on what assumption will be wrong this time.

It's the far future, when Humans have taken their place among the many races of the

Galaxy. Five graduate students, all different races (the Human is a female, interestingly enough), are set down for two weeks on Enigma, a well-named planet. Their training exercise is to determine why this planet has an atmosphere, when it is, by all scientific rules, too small. In the course of their misadventures, brought on by the assumptions, all perfectly natural (for instance, the student from a practically airless world assumes that wind won't be a problem to walk in, and opens the airlock on a small tornado), they make discoveries far beyond their assignment. A realistic amount of suspense accompanies all this; just as the characters are sure that the school must be monitoring so they won't get hurt (or are they?), the reader is sure that the author wouldn't (or would he?).

This is the kind of book that remains my favorite: the vision of the scientist unfolding the puzzle of reality, every answer raising new questions in an endlessly fascinating quest. This book distills, for me, precisely that Sense-of-Wonder that drew me to SF in the first place.

CASTLE PERILOUS

by John De Chancie
Ace, 1988, \$3.95

This is a fanciful romp through an incredible castle. The castle, which is really the star of the book, was formed magically, and has 144,000 doors to other worlds. Its interior design seems to have been done by a drunken architect with a fondness for Escher. For reasons that are not explained in the book, many of the doors to the various worlds are in motion, and when they shift into the back of closets, or slide over odd passageways, they trap new "Guests." Since the interior halls in the castle also seem to mutate, "trap" is the correct word. Finding the same world door twice, let alone the one to your own world, is tricky.

A variety of characters populate the castle in this book: Guests include a young man from Pittsburgh, a sentient furry white monster, a girl from California, a Frenchman and some Englishmen, one of whom is nasty bearded thief out of a D&D game. The castle has besiegers, too, including a spurned witch mad for revenge against the castle's lord, and an assortment of vaguely medieval local gentry who are helping her to further their own greed, passion, or other purposes. And of course there's the castle's lord, Incarnadine of the House of Haplodite, King of the Western Pale, Liege Lord, etc.

Each of the large cast gets their turn in a chapter, some repeating, some not, as they work their way through the complex plot. The finale brings them all together in the unraveling of the secret that lies at the center of the castle's construction, as the witch and Incarnadine struggle for control.

The book is fun, written with De Chancie's off-the-wall sense of scene: the cover is in fact an illustration of one such scene from the book. It's fast-paced, with action moving you at a nice pace toward the climax. A light-weight but highly entertaining book.

AEGYPT

by John Crowley
Bantam, 1987, \$17.95

This is a slow read, not so much because of its length, but because each chapter needs to be savoured, digested, before starting the next. It is, in reality, several books coming to the same conclusion. That conclusion, that history is a mutable thing, and the world is more shaped by how we perceive it than we normally think, is not a new idea. It's a kind of variant on Berkeley, the Idealist Philosopher, who proposed that all you can be sure of is yourself--reality is perceived through your senses, and you could be imagining the rest of the world.

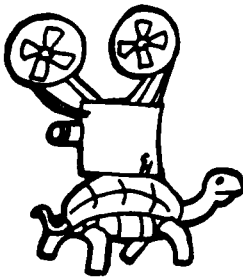
In this book, the hero, Pierce Moffett, is a professional historian, who comes to the above conclusion as a result of a rather odd life, and decides to "retire" to a small Catskills town to write a book. There he meets a number of eccentrics who lead him to the unfinished manuscript of a historical novelist. Between the chapters telling us Pierce's story, and the stories of all the people he will meet in this town, we have been reading another book, a story set in the 1500s, which eventually revealed to be parts of the unfinished manuscript. While the literary conceit (you are reading the book that the characters are writing) only partly works--it feels a bit corny when Crowley finally reveals it--both stories are interesting on their own merits.

The historical novel set in the 1500s concerns Giordano Bruno, a Dominican whose reading habits get him thrown out of his order, and an English scientist/sorcerer, Doctor Dee, whose interests in angels is boundless. In the novel, events conspire to bring these two together, though we are informed by Pierce that in "reality" they never met.

Both books end before the climax, in a sense. Pierce has not started "finishing" the novel, and the Renaissance heroes have not met. Crowley is writing a novel of ideas, about alternate ways of looking at the world. The book is a tapestry reinforcing the ideas, reinforcing the sense that what we think we know could be all wrong.

This book contains a great deal of good writing, from the feel of the Catskills on a summer's day, to the magic of finding a book that opens new worlds to your mind. It has very little SF, unless you want to count the notion of a mutable world as fantastic. The three sections of the book are named for the first three houses of the Zodiac: while this book seems complete in itself, it is possible that Crowley means to continue the stories and bring more "magic" into play. In any case, it is a thoughtful book, rewarding the contemplative reader with literate pleasure.





Film & Book Reviews by Mark R. Leeper

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THE FORGE OF GOD

by Greg Bear
Tor, 1987, \$17.95

There is a curse that says, "May you live in interesting times." If you look back at what were the interesting eras in history, you will understand why you want to live in the duller time possible. Well, you can tell that you are in for an interesting time when Europa, one of the moons of Jupiter, suddenly goes AWOL. You can guess that something is happening that is pretty unusual. What is happening is that our world is being invaded, not by one, but by two alien races at the same time. Or maybe it is just one race. In any case, it is darn hard to tell what we've been invaded by, but part of it is something that at Europa, and that cannot be a good sign.

Unfortunately, it is a little tough to say much about Forge of God without giving away too much of the plot. It is quite likely that you have not read an invasion novel in which the Earth has been invaded in quite this way before. This is certainly not a standard "interstellar gunship" sort of invasion. This is very much an alien invasion novel of the 1980s and it has 1980s concerns. It concerns itself with questions like the Fermi Paradox, which asks, with all the possible intelligent races out there, why haven't we been contacted--it in fact comes up with a neat if not entirely pleasant solution to this paradox. It also deals with Von Neumann machines--the cybernetic equivalent of viruses. They do little in life but reproduce themselves.

It has been suggested that because Forge of God deals with these concepts it is a very realistic science fiction novel. I doubt that myself. It contains up-to-date ideas, but there is a certain pomposity to saying that in the 1960s we didn't know how really advanced aliens would be likely to attack us but in the 1980s we do. About the best I could say is that Forge of God is a better guess than many we have seen before. And still there is a lot about the invasion technique that Bear leaves unexplained and other parts that seem out-and-out wrong. But overall, it is a novel that keeps the reader guessing and turning pages. That and some decent ideas to chew on make this a well-above-average invasion novel.

HELLO AGAIN

CAPSULE REVIEW: Director Frank Perry is best at making odd, thought-provoking dramas. His

attempt at making a light comedy in the Touchstone tradition is less that a roaring success. Shelley Long plays a woman magically brought back from the dead who has to get back into life. Nobody's reactions are believable. Rating: 0.

A few months ago, when Outrageous Fortune was released, I wrote about what I expected would be fondly remembered as "the Touchstone comedies." They were a set of formula comedies, but each was fairly enjoyable. Well, the formula is already starting to wear a little thin. Hello Again has below-par script, some spotty acting, and very little in the way of humor. For the first eighty minutes or so the story seems aimless but amiable, then suddenly things do start to happen, but nothing very good.

Lucy Chadman (one of a number of nearly identical characters Shelley Long has played) has a bland existence as the wife of a Long Island plastic surgeon. About the only thing unusual in her life is the year she was dead before her occult-loving sister brought her back to life. The repercussions are not unlike those in My Favorite Year and Move Over, Darling in which supposedly dead wives prove to be alive. Chadman finds her husband has married her mercenary best friend (played by Sela Ward, who is nowhere nearly as striking as she was in Nothing in Common). People react in different ways to Chadman's return and each reaction rings false. This could have been a very emotional comedy, but Susan Isaac's script keeps sabotaging itself. Long's character is supposed to be incredibly clumsy for no other reason than to throw in a little gratuitous slapstick. It may work with some slapstick actors, but Long is incredibly inept at acting inept. Her pratfalls all seem mechanical and staged. In fact, the film has the feel of having been written for Chevy Chase and then modified for a female lead.

What makes the film even more disappointing is the track record of its director and writer, Frank Perry and Susan Isaacs, who were also responsible for Compromising Positions. Perry's earlier works, incidentally, include films stranger and more memorable than Hello Again, including David and Lisa, Ladybug Ladybug, The Swimmer, Man on a Swing, and Rancho Deluxe. In such company Hello Again will be quickly forgotten. Rate it a low 0 on the -4 to +4 scale.

EMPIRE OF THE SUN

CAPSULE REVIEW: Live a lifetime of experience in a short two and a half hours of

film. A constantly inventive film conveys a sense of wonder about flight and a whole lot more. This is how to make a historical film. Rating: +4.

Every once in a while I do give a film a +4.

Empire of the Sun is J. G. Ballard's semi-autobiographical novel recounting his experiences as a boy in China during the Japanese occupation in World War II. Tom Stoppard has adapted it for the screen and Steven Spielberg proves to have the talent of a Kubrick in directing the film. Spielberg does things nearly impossible in film. He has combined a spectacular with a highly personal film, even mixing them in the same scene. The scene in which Jim gets separated from his parents in a veritable ocean of fleeing humanity is both emotionally moving and immense. This is a film filled with one strange and vivid incident after another, one memorable scene after another, yet one never feels there is too much frosting and not enough cake. This film proves that somewhere underneath the highly commercial director is a man of great artistic talents that all too rarely gets used. It is incomprehensible that the director of Indiana Jones and the Temple of Doom also directed a film of the sensitivity of Empire of the Sun.

Jim (played by Christian Bale) is a boy with a very believable obsession: flight and airplanes. It is easy for me to believe this obsession with flying would strike a responsive chord in Spielberg; I know it does in me. His father became wealthy in the textile industry in Shanghai in a European community incongruously identical to one that one might find in Britain. Jim has led a sheltered life. His big concern is to join the Japanese military, not for political reasons, but because they have planes. Jim's simple existence is about to come to an end. The Japanese Imperial forces are about to seize Shanghai and Jim will have to fight to stay alive.

This story could have been told prosaically, but there is little prosaic about Empire of the Sun. With Ballard's, Stoppard's, and Spielberg's imaginations creating images there is nothing stereotypic about this film. It is amazing that such a story could be told of the conflict and suffering, and yet there is not a single villain and every character who speaks is fresh and new. There is a sense-of-wonder observation of the Japanese --bringers of planes to China-- and of the Americans who build the huge "Cadillacs of the sky."

Just as Hope and Glory--a comparable but less fully realized autobiographical film--gave us insights into the roots of John Boorman's love of fantasy, Empire of the Sun more than explains why Ballard writes science-fictional mega-disaster novels in which we see how titanic, world-crushing events affect common people's lives. Perhaps the only things that cuts against the credibility is that it is difficult to believe so many beautiful and enigmatic incidents could have happened to one boy.

Empire of the Sun also demonstrates that Spielberg is an intelligent businessman. Ap-

parently he had only three weeks to film in China. But he took much better advantage of that time than Bertolucci took of a much longer time in filming The Last Emperor. In China the price of an extra is something like a dollar a day. Bertolucci uses this advantage in perhaps one or two scenes--notably Pu Yi's coronation as seen from above. But Spielberg puts us in the middle of an ocean of panicking humanity as Shanghai is evacuated. Bertolucci tells us about history; Spielberg makes it happen to us. Bertolucci distances us from his characters; Spielberg puts us inside his.

This is the best film I have seen this year. Perhaps the best in several years.

SAMMY AND ROSIE GET LAID

CAPSULE REVIEW: Soap opera minus the drama. Several detestable characters interact with each other. Rating: -1.

Stephen Frears has directed a film that made it as a solid directorial success to his credit. He directed My Beautiful Laundrette for British television. It was picked up for international release and became one of the more successful art-house releases of the year, in spite of minor protests from the Pakistani community. The film shows Pakistanis in Britain and the portrayal included positive and negative characterizations. Frears's second international release is Sammy and Rosie Get Laid. As might be imagined, there was something of a stir over the title. The MPAA refused to register the film under that title. Finally Sammy and Rosie Get Laid was released without an MPAA rating. Well, was Sammy and Rosie Get Laid worth the bruhaha? Not as far as I am concerned.

Rafi (played by Shashi Kapoor) was a high official in the Pakistani government who has come to London to live with his son and daughter-in-law: Sammy and Rosie. Their marriage is falling apart; each is taking other lovers as often as possible. All of the couple's friends seem to be interested in sex and little else. Rafi is shocked to see open lesbian relations among the friends. But then what right does Rafi have to be shocked? While he was in office in Pakistan he ordered brutal tortures vividly described in detail. There is a race riot going on outside. Claire Bloom has a small part as Rafi's once and current lover. Her part is, however, important in that she is the only person in the film who demonstrates any value as a human being.

This was not my cup of bile. Rate it a -1, taking into account its artistic pretensions. For entertainment value, it is not up to the stag films its title is reminiscent of.

MUSIC OF THE SPHERES

CAPSULE REVIEW: Rock-bottom budget science fiction film has little or nothing to offer but some really intriguing science fiction ideas. If you disliked films like Lifeforce

and Prince of Darkness, you're really going to hate this one and I suggest you watch The Terminator again instead. Rating: +2.

One of the oddest science fiction films of the 1960s is Creation of the Humanoids. It was an incredible combination of the very good and the very bad. It was made on a lemonade-stand budget. The sets were cheap, the acting incompetent. But the script had interesting ideas, mostly based on Jack Williamson's "Humanoid" stories. There was some decent drama that led one to believe this might have made a decent stage play. It has remained a "cult film" and a curiosity. It was quite unique until now. I think I have just seen my choice for the "Creation of the Humanoids" of the 1980s. It has a classy title, Musir of the Spheres; it has some pretty heavy ideas going for it. But the budget is bargain-basement; some of the acting and all of the special effects are terrible. Watch it carefully for ten minutes; if you are not intrigued by the film in that time, shut it off.

The film is set in a future perhaps a century from now. The superpowers have fallen apart of their own weight and after the chaos came an order controlled by huge biological computers, the largest of which is called the Beast. The computers have minds of their own and the only way they can be controlled or even communicated with is by having a specially selected human mind-meld with them. And it is important to have a human mind-meld with the Beast because the computer is being used to implement a project to turn three asteroids into solar cells that will beam a constant supply of energy via microwaves to Earth. But the Beast seems to be trying to prevent the project from going ahead. Do you think I am telling you too much? This much all comes out in the first five minutes or so and the ideas keep coming.

This is a Canadian film done in English and French with subtitles. The cost of the film was reportedly C\$110,000 in 1983. That is certainly less than 1% of what a film like The Terminator cost, and that's low budget! Of course, the production values are dirt-cheap and the film needed a stronger ending. But ideas are cheap, so this film has more than you can take in one viewing. Where did this thing turn up? Cable television's USA station ran it on a late-night counter-culture program called Night Flight. I doubt that one in a hundred science fiction fans will even like the film -- be warned. But for the few who are willing to put up with its rough edges, I'd rate it a +2.

RETURN OF THE LIVING DEAD II

CAPSULE REVIEW: Entertaining but unimaginative retelling of Return of the Living Dead with younger protagonists. An occasional clever joke but in general a degradation of this branch of the series. Rating: 0.

1. And now let us speak of the generations of the Living Dead. Now Richard Matheson was mindful of the popularity of vampires that stretched back to Dracula and

yes, even unto Varney. And he said, "I shall make me a modern vampire story." And he took unto himself a typewriter and there was born a writing called I Am Legend. And the fans looked upon I Am Legend and they dubbed it pretty good.

2. Now I am Legend begat three films in degrees that varieth. And their names are Invisible Invaders, The Last Man on Earth, and The Omega Man. The two younger admitted their parentage, but not the oldest. The middle one, The Last Man on Earth, then became the father of generations. It starred Vincent Price and was made in the distant land of Italy.

3. And it came to pass that in the land of Pittsburgh there dwelt a lowly maker of television commercials. And his name was George Romero. And Romero looked upon The Last Man on Earth and sayeth unto himself, "Now there is how to make a horror movie for few pieces of silver." And he spake unto John Russo, saying, "Write me a script." And in the fullness of time there was Night of the Living Dead.

4. But Night of the Living Dead was poor of prospect and none had heard of it and fewer cared. And it played only at theaters with big screens and no walls.

5. And Roger Ebert looked upon it and his eye was offended. And he took unto himself a typewriter and spake unto his legions of his anger, a very grievous error. And the Readers' Digest was among the legions who heard his lamentations and repeated his words unto hosts. And the hosts repeated the words unto multitudes.

6. And Night of the Living Dead prospered. And John Russo took unto himself a typewriter and wrote a novel of the film.

7. And in the fullness of time George Romero saw that there were multitudes who were mindful of Night of the Living Dead and he made Dawn of the Dead. And in the land of Italy Dawn of the Dead was known by the name of Zombie and multitudes had audience with it.

8. And Lucio Fulci said, "Here is how to make a film for not many pieces of silver but which will call forth legions." And he made Zombies II. And in the land of America there had been no Zombie I, so there Zombie II was called Zombie. And in the lands of Italy and America there were legions of filmmakers who looked upon the prosperity. And they had envy of audiences of multitudes and of the smallness of the investment. And many made films like unto what they had seen.

9. And John Russo looked upon the storm and lo he was wonderly wroth. Had he not written the writing of Night of the Living Dead? And the courts said, yes, he did. And lo, did this not mean he could also make sequels? But Romero said no, he knew whereof he wanted the series to go. But the courts spake unto Romero, saying, "Give unto Russo equal right." and he did.

10. And John Russo took unto himself a typewriter and wrote a book called Return of the Living Dead. And in the fullness of time he made him a film called Return of the Living Dead, though it were not in the likeness of the book.

11. And George Romero made a third "Living Dead" film, Day of the Dead. And it was

released in a short span of days from Return of the Living Dead. And audiences looked upon Return of the Living Dead and many were well pleased. But when audiences looked upon George Romero's Day of the Dead, many said that his day was done.

12. And John Russo was well used to writing novels from "Living Dead" films. And, yea, it came to pass that he wrote a novel of the film Return of the Living Dead and called it Return of the Living Dead. And some fans and librarians were wonderly wroth and spake in anger, saying, "One author cannot write two entirely different novels and give them but one title. For lo, many libraries are geared to the principle that if two novels have but one author, they will have different titles. And if two novels have but one title they will have different authors." But John Russo turned his face from these people. And, in truth, few libraries had either book.

13. And it came to pass that Return of the Living Dead was popular unto its generation and it begat Return of the Living Dead II.

14. Let us speak now of Return of the Living Dead II and so that the ear of the mind not become weary, let us lapse into modern English.

Return of the Living Dead II is a bit like Return of the Living Dead -- Junior Edition. The story has been scaled down so that two teens and one pre-teen can be the heroes.

Jesse Wilson (played by Michael Kenworthy) is bullied by the older kids in the neighborhood. Chased by two big kids, he runs across a lost, hermitically sealed canister containing a living dead corpse. It is assumed you know from the previous film that the military has packed corpses from a nerve gas accident in these canisters and opening them will lead to a new plague of zombies. Now, Jesse knows there are some things boy was not meant to tamper with. He is willing to leave the corpses alone, but his two tormentors (of course) have all the sense that adults have in this film (namely none). Soon the cat's out of the bag, the corpse's out

of the canister, and a bunch more from a nearby graveyard are climbing for higher ground. The remaining story provides jolts, but no surprises.

The horror content of Return of the Living Dead II is overly familiar; the graveyard humor occasionally hits paydirt but not often enough. To further confuse matters, James Karen and Thom Mathews, who died in the previous film but didn't realize it until hours later, reprise almost identical roles with different character names and die again in just the same way.

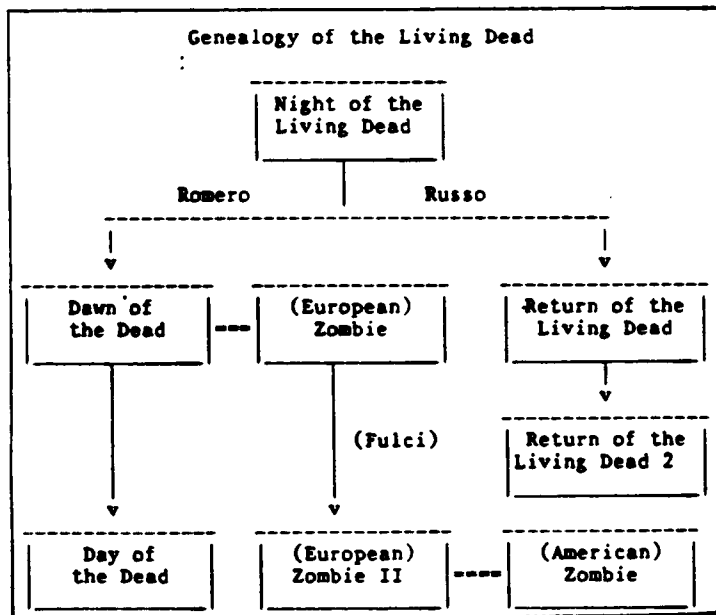
The best way to make a sequel to a popular horror film is either to tell a different story or to tell the same story but tell it more creatively (as Evil Dead II and, to a lesser extent, Nightmare on Elm Street III did). Return of the Living Dead II does neither but does succeed in putting its tongue further in its cheek than its predecessor did. For a few good gags (and in spite of gross-out effects that give another sort of gags), rate it 0.

THE SERPENT AND THE RAINBOW

CAPSULE REVIEW: American anthropologist is pulled into the world of voodoo and politics in Haiti during the fall of Duvalier. Only in Haiti could a zombie story and a political thriller fit so well together. The storyline gets muddled at times and cliched at others, but this could have been a very good and a powerful film and just missed it. Surprisingly solid effort from Wes Craven. Rating: +1.

It has been a while since we have seen a real zombie film being made. I do not mean the various imitations of Night of the Living Dead. The creatures in those films are usually called "zombies" or "ghouls", though they certainly are not zombies and they are just the opposite of ghouls. But films about the voodoo-reanimated dead have not been around much since the 1950s. Now Wes Craven, whose stock and trade used to be low-budget films with weak stories, and more recently has struck paydirt with the "Elm Street" films, has made a true zombie film with the genuine gloss of a big-budget production. Big-budget in this case means actually filming in Haiti (and the Dominican Republic) and filling in at least the supporting roles with some impressive names: names like Cathy Tyson (of Mona Lisa), Broadway actor Zakes Mokae (of Master Harold and the Boys), Paul Winfield, and, like a blast from the past, Michael Gough.

A much less familiar Bill Pullman plays Dennis Alan, a Harvard-bred anthropologist who goes to Haiti to try and find a mysterious drug that makes people appear dead enough to be buried, but leaves them alive. (Okay, so maybe these are not true zombies either, but the idea of a zombie-fying drug has been around since the classic zombie film White Zombie, and perhaps even back to Romeo and Juliet.) In Haiti during the fall of Baby Doc Duvalier, Alan finds himself enmeshed in a web of politics as well as voodoo. In fact, one of the points made by the



script is that Haiti religion, politics, and voodoo are inextricably intertwined. As psychiatrist Marielle (played by Tyson) tells Alan, Haiti is 80% Catholic and 110% voodoo. As well as being a horror film, The Serpent and the Rainbow is in no small part a political thriller also. Haiti is portrayed as being a sort of voodocracy in which most public officials practice the arts.

While the story is ultimately simplistic and disappointing, it does paint a powerful portrait of a society in which public officials can threaten not only the body but also the soul. Mixing church and state is bad enough; when the mixture also includes a potent dose of destructive magic, you have real trouble. While this is a fantasy in which magic works, the film's most frightening sequences depend only on people believing the voodoo, not on the actual efficacy of the art. And because voodoo really is believed in in Haiti, these scenes may not be far from true. For confused narrative and for the letdown of the cliched last five minutes, I rate this film only a +1, but I think somewhere deep down there really is some of the film that actors like Tyson and Mokae must have thought they were making.

VICE VERSA

CAPSULE REVIEW: Father and son trade bodies in what seems an unpromising comedy-fantasy but which breathes new life into an old concept. Vice Versa compares favorably with the Thorne Smith fantasy-comedies of the 1940s. Judge Reinhold's and Fred Savage's acting is very much on target. Rating: +2.

Thorne Smith was the master of the sophisticated supernatural comedy. Back in the 1920s and 1930s he wrote a series of sophisticated comic novels including The Passionate Witch and Night Life of the Gods, though his best-known series were the "Topper" books. Hollywood 1940s comedy fantasies including Turnabout, I Married a Witch, and the "Topper" series were based on his novels. Turnabout involved the comic effects of a man and a woman who somehow trade minds. The same idea with variations has been tried in films with uneven results. Not too long ago there was a reputedly terrible film on this theme called Like Father, Like Son in which a father and son change places. Dudley Moore played first the father, then the son. It appeared to be one more step down in Moore's career, which has been spotty since the hilarious Bedazzled. Now, perhaps too soon afterward, another film has come out on the same theme and this one, I must say, is worthy of the Thorne Smith tradition.

Seymour Marshall (played by Judge Reinhold in one of his first adult roles) is an executive for a large department store who, through a smuggling slip-up, has come into the possession of a magical skull from Tibet. While caring for his son while his ex-wife is on vacation, he whimsically wishes to trade places with his son Charlie (played by Fred Savage). For once, whimsy does make it so. Now such a plot can be and has been done well or poorly. Vice Versa is about as well as it can be done. Dick Clement and Ian

LaFrenais, who produced the film as well as wrote the script, have really creative imaginations for comic situations. The result is a story that is not just cute but genuinely very funny. The film's only real false step is to mix a cliched subplot with criminals and chases, but it remains a small part of the plot and even it is resolved in a novel manner.

The acting is surprisingly good by both Reinhold and Savage, who ply the father and son (or vice versa) under the direction of Brian Gilbert. Each has a feel for the mannerisms of the other. Savage is staid and dignified with a dominant edge; Reinhold's eleven-year-old boy is sloppy and explosive with a great feel for physical comedy. Savage as the father pretending to be the son finds seventh grade a breeze, but dealing with seventh grade bullies takes more than just an "enlightened, mature" approach. Reinhold's little boy as department store executive, dealing with what he calls "yinyangs" and what the credits call "the backstabbers," has a winning ingenuous quality.

Vice Versa was a very pleasant surprise. Rate is a low +2.

FRANTIC

CAPSULE REVIEW: Harrison Ford stars in a straightforward thriller from writer/director Roman Polanski. While mostly done in Hitchcock's style, it manages more credibility at the expense of some of the panache. Rating: +1

Richard Walker (played by Harrison Ford) is in Paris for a medical convention. He banters with his wife on the way to the hotel, checks in, and takes a shower. When he comes out of the shower, he finds his wife seems to have stepped out. Room service brings in an ordered breakfast and Walker eats it and takes a nap. When he wakes up, still no wife. He goes to the lobby to look for her. One by one, he checks out possibilities of what could have happened to her. Soon, his worst fears are confirmed. He learns that she has been kidnapped. The police are surly; the American authorities can do nothing. Walker has to take matters into his own hands.

This is not too original a plot and, in truth, much of Frantic has a ring of familiarity. It some ways it follows the classic style of a Hitchcock thriller. The one-word title, the innocent bystander hero, a genuine McGuffin, even rooftop struggles. Where it strays from being Hitchcockian is in its nearly humorless approach and its coldfish hero. Harrison Ford is nowhere near a personable one as a Carey Grant or a James Stewart. That makes the acting a few steps closer to reality, but the viewer is left to guess what the character must be feeling rather than feeling with the character. We are drawn to Harrison Ford, but at arm's length. With Hitchcock and the right actor we would actually be living the adventure with the character. On the other hand, with most Hitchcock films it would be easier to pick holes in the plot. Even a Vertigo has a plot that entirely hinges on a man recogniz-

ing a specific Spanish villa from a description from somebody's dream.

Following the initial events that set the action of Frantic in motion, events follow a suspenseful but logical course. (The major unexplained point of the film is how an action that was not intended to be a kidnapping--and seemingly could easily have avoided being turned into one--was so botched.) Ford's search for his missing wife takes him to, if not Paris' underbelly, at least somewhere below Paris' waist. His best clue leads him to Michelle, a sinuous drugged punker played by Emmanuelle Seigner, who provides a somewhat less innocent bystander to the plot and provides the attractive female lead required in any Roman-Polanski-directed film. As a clichébuster, however, Walker reacts with total disinterest to Michelle's attempts at seduction. First, last, and always, he is in this to get back his wife (played by Betty Buckley, who played a sympathetic teacher in Carrie, a sympathetic mother in Eight is Enough, and an unsympathetic singer in Tender Mercies).

Frantic is a surprisingly straightforward thriller from director and co-scriptor Roman Polanski, who is usually known for more convoluted and psychological storylines. Rate it a high +1.

18 AGAIN

CAPSULE REVIEW: Slow and predictable comedy about 81-year-old man who finds himself in his grandson's body. If you have seen Vice Versa, I recommend a nice rousing game of Parchesi instead of this. Rating: -1.

Above I reviewed Vice Versa and I said that the plot of personalities trading bodies had often been done before and usually not very memorably. In fact, Freaky Friday--an early Jodie Foster film made for Disney--came to mind though I had only seen trailers for it. But I am sure I have seen the theme elsewhere; it is just the films were so forgettable. Now I have seen another treatment of the same story and this one is really forgettable. The film is 18 Again and, take my word for it, it is one time too many.

David Watson (played by newcomer Charlie Schlatter) has more than his share of problems. He is pledging at a fraternity and is being picked on by his frat brothers. The girl he secretly loves goes with his chief tormentor. David is expected to join the dull business of phonemaking owned by his grandfather Jack Weston (played by George Burns). Jack has only one problem: he wants to be 18 again like David. Through a birthday wish gone wrong, Jack finds himself in his grandson's body. Schlatter spends most of the rest of the film doing a George Burns impression. Jack then brings his own philosophy of self confidence to straightening out his grandson's life from inside the grandson's body.

While Vice Versa brought a fresh eye and a clever sense of humor to the trade-of-personality plot, 18 Again drags through every predictable cliché at half the pace that Mr. Burns walks. The script totally sidesteps the plot of the boy in the old man's body

and only shows you the old man in the boy's body and, even so, it does considerably less with that plot than Vice Versa does with less screen time. The story does virtually nothing new with the idea. There is, however, one good piece of advice in the film. As David's chief tormentor is getting ready for a race with out hero he tells him, "Don't waste your time." Let me pass that advice on to you.

Rate 18 Again a -1.

THE UNBEARABLE LIGHTNESS OF BEING

CAPSULE REVIEW: The Unbearable Lightness of Being is not a light film, but it is by no means unbearable either. Philip Kaufman, who makes very entertaining films, makes one that only sounds like an exception. 171 minutes of solid entertainment with a title you can use to impress your friends. Rating: +3.

It certainly sounded like it was going to be a drag: The Unbearable Lightness of Being. You can expect a bad time from a film whose title is sort of verbal fruit cocktail. It sounds like an obscure contemplate-your-navel sort of film. But on the other hand, it is directed by Philip Kaufman. He put together The Outlaw Josey Wales, though Clint Eastwood took over direction from him. He did direct The Right Stuff. He directed the remake of Invasion of the Body Snatchers and co-wrote Raiders of the Lost Ark. These are not contemplate-your-navel films. These are really entertaining pieces. On the other hand, more than one good director has gone bad trying to produce his or her personal vision of what is art. Reluctantly, I went to our local art theater and saw the best film I have seen yet this year.

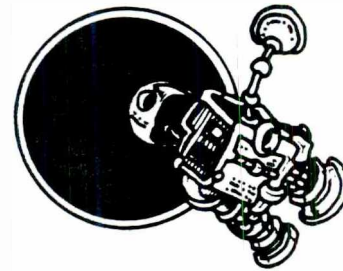
The Unbearable Lightness of Being bears no small resemblance to Doctor Zhivago. Tomas is a young successful doctor who gets a wife and a mistress, finds his life upset by political events, and eventually finds a new equilibrium in spite of the political events. Where it differs is that the political event is the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia instead of the Russian Revolution and that in some ways the women are equally attracted to each other, so that the triangle really is a triangle rather than a "V".

Attractive Czech surgeon Tomas (played by Daniel Day-Lewis) seems to collect lovers like stamps. His favorite phrase in both business and pleasure is "take off your clothes" and with remarkable regularity business turns into pleasure. In a trip to a nearby spa town, he tries to seduce a barmaid (Tereza, played by Juliette Binoche) only to find that she follows him back to his apartment in Prague. She enjoys sex with Tomas but is jealous of his other lovers, including an artist Sabina (attractive Lena Olin). There are hints throughout the film that Tereza may be a repressed lesbian who finds herself attracted to Sabina. On the other hand, Lena is a bisexual who does not repress anything but the will to make some sort of commitment. This triangle could have made for very high-level soap opera, but the Soviet invasion casts a new light on everything and forces each of the three to come

to a better understanding of themselves, and also tests their character.

The eroticism of the film--if that is really what was intended--is little more than amusing. But you know that when you feel yourself actually missing a character whom you haven't seen on the screen for a while, you are watching a well-made film. And once again Kaufman has made a long film (171 minutes) that seems much shorter.

Rate this film a +3.



Book Reviews by Lan

COBRA BARGAIN

by Timothy Zahn
Baen, 1988, 3.95

A Cobra is a person whose body has literally been turned into a weapon. The Cobras were originally developed to fight against the Trofts, aliens who were at war with Earth. Peace was eventually made, but the operations that built laser and other weapons into a Cobra's body were irreversible. The Cobras then became colony protectors as the Earth Federation expanded into space. These are the general events in the first book of the series, *Cobra*. This novel ended with the Cobra Worlds being permanently cut off from the Earth Federation, but with all the equipment necessary to maintain and create new Cobras.

The second novel, *Cobra Strike*, recounted the Cobra World's acquisition of five new worlds from the Trofts. These planets were in exchange for an investigation of a world called Qasama, which was potentially a danger to the Trofts, and maybe to them. The Qasamans were Human, but were controlled by another native, alien force. Once the nature of the threat was discerned, steps were taken to free the Qasamans from their unknown oppressors, and watch-satellites were placed in orbit over the planet.

In this third book, the surveillance satellites over Qasama seem to malfunction too frequently over the same area for it to be purely chance. So a mission is mounted to find out what the Qasamans are up to. However, the only person on Aventine who can speak Qasaman flawlessly is Jasmine Moreau (the niece of Corwin Moreau, the current governor of Aventine, both members of the family which is central to all these books), and there has never been a female Cobra before. Since the mission is deemed necessary and essential for the safety of the Cobra Worlds, Jasmine undergoes the necessary operations to enhance her senses electronically, and have servos, weapons, and the controlling nanocomputer implanted in her body. Along with this transformation and this mission are the hopes of other females who might one day hope to become Cobras; if Jasmine fails, those hopes are gone.



Also with this mission rides the future of Corwin Moreau. To get his niece into the Cobras for this mission, he bargained his position of office against the total success of the endeavor. The political climate of the Cobra Worlds is not all that stable -- a faction against the Cobras has gained considerable power, in spite of the vital part that these warriors play in the defense and safety of the populace. This subplot adds an interesting depth to the novel.

Things go wrong from the outset. Even before the landing ship sets down on Qasama, it is attacked and blown out of the sky, leaving Jasmine the only survivor, and thus the success of the mission rests totally on her. Jasmine's adventures on the planet, her interactions with the Qasamans, and her attempts to discover what is going on in the "blacked out" area of that world, comprise the bulk of the novel. That she must enlist the aid of one of the natives might be a step in the right direction, and maybe not. Whichever, the novel proceeds at a fast pace with many surprises and twists in the plot.

Tim has improved his characterizations with each new novel. The ones here are more complex, and the situations more believable than before. His plotting has always been excellent, and this novel is no exception. It's implied that this ends the series, but there is much more that can happen. There is an unfulfilled romance, the increasingly

complex political situation of the Cobra Worlds, their relationship to the Trofts, and the other worlds in the government that have only been touched upon. And what's been happening to the Earth Federation during all of this? Will the two ever meet again?

Tim, you're not done with these Cobras yet!

A BUNDLE OF BEASTS

by Patricia Hooper
Illustrations by Mark Steele
Houghton Mifflin, 1987, \$12.95

OTHER LIVES

by Patricia Hooper
Elizabeth Street Press, 1984, \$5.00

In LL #25, I reviewed James Lipton's An Exaltation of Larks, a book about venery, terms of the hunt. When Maia and I read about a poet doing a reading of her poems that dealt with collectives for animals, we immediately set out to hear her. We got the book and read along with Patricia Hooper. The results were marvelous.

A Bundle of Beasts is a collection of children's poems. Patricia takes venereal terms, nouns for collections of animals (like a pride of lions, a smack of jellyfish, a parliament of owls, and so on), and plays with the ideas. She has "A Sleuth of Bears" portrayed as detectives, "A Bed of Oysters" taking over a little girl's bed, and so on. The poems are delightful, and entertaining to everyone, regardless of age. And the illustrations add to the marvelous puns in the poems. Mark Steele draws an interesting-looking owl in "The Parliament of Owls" -- Winston Churchowl.

When we got Patricia's autograph, we also picked up her earlier book, Other Lives, which contains poems for adults. Inside this book we discovered that Patricia lives nearby. It's a small world.

Other Lives won the "Norma Farber First Book Award" for 1984. Within are poems that were originally printed in Anon, Carolina Quarterly, Chicago Review, The Ohio Review, The Literary Review, and many more places. The poems themselves speak of life, growing up, everyday occurrences brought into focus by the poems. They are delightful, sad, poignant and disturbing. It's nice to know we have a talented neighbor.

DOWN ON THE FARM

by John Stchur
St. Martin's Press, 1987, \$15.95

I discovered another neighbor/writer as the author of this novel. Dean Lambe favorably reviewed Down on the Farm in the last Lantern, so when I saw it in one of the local bookstores, I grabbed it. Indeed, it is a chilling, science fiction/horror novel. And John Stchur live in a nearby city.

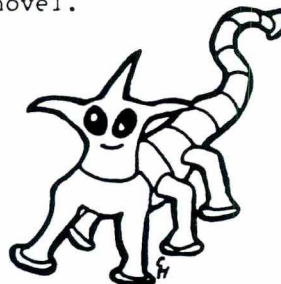
An alien horror awakening from a long, self-imposed hibernation, is in need of sustenance, and one of the stray cats around the Dubois farm falls victim to its probing

tendrils. Buoyed by this "food", the alien seeks to leave, but is held imprisoned by the barn that Casey Dubois' grandfather built over the buried alien. In particular, the milking room floor made of solid concrete holds the creature down. It creates a worm-like/centipede-like horror to entrap Humans to help free it. Through telepathic control, the alien disrupts the life and homes of the people in the area; through the physical attributes of this created horror, death and dismemberment comes to both farm animals and humans.

It's difficult to stop, nigh impossible to thwart, its mesmerizing look, but the weapon that has always frustrated this off-world horror was the attachment creatures have for each other -- love. Pain and torture are what it thrives on; affection and love are its enemies. It originally came here to hide from other aliens that sought to destroy it with goodness. Now it was trapped, and if it could maintain control over the Humans, it could get free.

The novel is a variation of the "good vs evil" theme, but well done. The part about love and affection as a weapon sounds corny, but it is well handled and arises logically from the alien background set up by John Stchur. The characterizations are very well done for a first novelist, and the pacing is controlled very well.

I'm with Dean Lambe; I'm looking for the next one by John Stchur. The way is open for a sequel, but it would be much different than this novel.



SCIENCE FICTION AND FANTASY INDEX Volume 6

by Hal W. Hall and Geraldine Hutchins
Borgo Press, 1986, \$??.??

SCIENCE FICTION AND FANTASY INDEX Volume 7

by Hal W. Hall and Jan Swanbeck
Borgo Press, 1987, \$??.??

These two massive volumes appeared in my mailbox, much to my delight. Hal had sent an inquiry to my about two years ago asking if he could have back issues of the Lantern so he could incorporate any critical articles into these volumes. I sent him what I could (I do not have many back issues available -- but if anyone wants my Simak Special, let me know; I have lots left), then promptly lost his address. I have since sent him the latest issues.

I must say that it gives me a thrill to know that some of what I publish has been cross-referenced for other to use if necessary. The authors of articles, particularly

of the Special Issues (Jack Williamson, Clifford Simak and Andre Norton), are all included, and who knows, might be contacted if someone is doing a research project on a particular author/theme. (You should see the list of entries under Mark and Evelyn Leeper's names!)

The indexes are arranged by author and subject -- the real heart of the index being the subject listings. The only quibble I have is that there is no listing of addresses for contacting the main sources (like Lan's Lantern). Maybe Hal Hall will correct that for the next volume.

book starts out confusingly, but intriguingly, and the reader slowly puts the pieces of this future Earth together. The characters--the musician known as the Magician, patrolman Aaron Fisher, Dr. Fiori and his Dream Machine, to name a few -- are all distinctive and eccentric in one way or another. Once events are under way, and the reader has a feel for this future, the plot is off and running with little time to breathe.

Based on this, I just might pick up the Riddle-Master trilogy and catch up on what I've missed.

FALLING FREE

by Lois McMaster Bujold
Baen Books, 1988, \$3.50

by Patricia A. McKillip
Warner Books, 1987, \$15.95

I have read not read anything by Patricia McKillip (I know, "Shame, shame on Lan"), not even the Riddle-Master books, until now. I must say I am impressed. Others have told me that this is an unusual novel for her, since Fool's Run is science fiction and Patricia McKillip writes fantasy, but even they admit that this is a superb novel.

The time is the future, and Earth has gone to the stars. However the story takes place on Earth, and on the orbiting prison known as "The Underworld". A group of musicians finally gets a chance to go on tour of the star systems, but first will play a concert in The Underworld. Here are incarcerated all the nasty criminals, a maximum security prison. All the events leading up to this one-night gig, all the chance meetings and the characters involved pale beside the daring escape/break that results. The

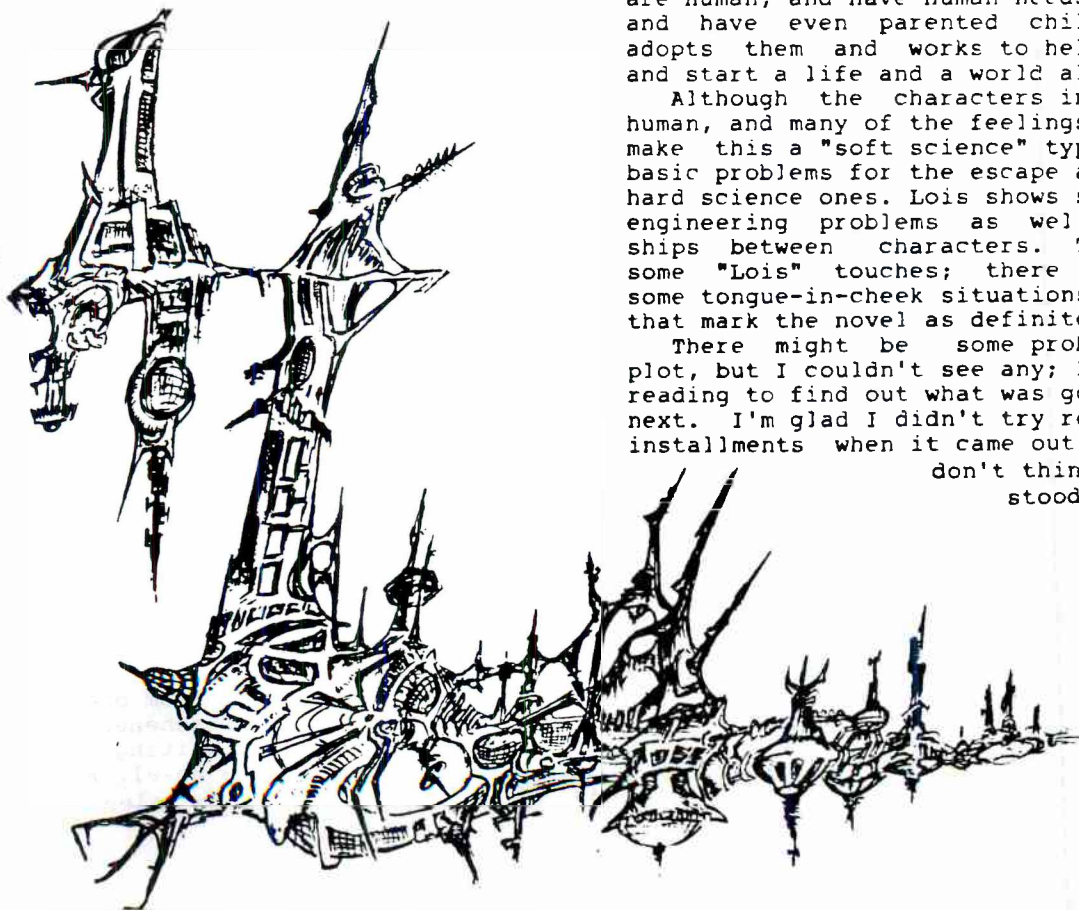
When Leo Graf meets the students he is going to teach space welding techniques at GalacTech's Cay Habitat in orbit around the planet Rodeo, he is surprised to find that they are all "quaddies", genetically engineered humans to withstand the free-fall environment in space. Instead of two arm and two legs, they each have four arms. Additionally, their bodies have been constructed to avoid bone mineral loss and a host of other problems that plague downsiders. But these 1,000 quaddies are humans, although they are just listed as inventory in the mega-corporation's accounts, so when artificial gravity is discovered as a practical device, GalacTech no longer needs the expense of holding onto this extraneous inventory. Van Atta, the corporate executive at Cay Habitat, decides to ground all of them, and let them live out their lives on Rodeo.

Leo doesn't approve of this. The quaddies are Human, and have human needs and desires, and have even parented children. So Leo adopts them and works to help them escape and start a life and a world all their own.

Although the characters in the book are human, and many of the feelings and problems make this a "soft science" type of SF, the basic problems for the escape are definitely hard science ones. Lois shows she can handle engineering problems as well as relationships between characters. There are also some "Lois" touches; there is wry humor, some tongue-in-cheek situations and comments that mark the novel as definitely hers.

There might be some problems with the plot, but I couldn't see any; I was too busy reading to find out what was going to happen next. I'm glad I didn't try reading this in installments when it came out in Analog; I

don't think I could have stood the suspense.



THE BRIDGE

by Iain Banks
Pan, 1986, L2.95

The Bridge is what life is all about. It extends from one small island to the next in both directions, and trains run regularly on different levels carrying freight, passengers, and goods. How far the Bridge extends, whence it comes, whither it goes, John Orr does not know, but it is the center of his existence.

John Orr has suffered a memory loss in an accident, and is under the psychiatric care of Dr. Joyce. The dreams he has, whether real or made-up, he tells Dr. Joyce who hopes to help him regain his memory.

A counterpoint to this world and life is another male character whose name is not given. He lives in our world -- Scotland -- and we learn about his life, the people he knows and loves. Gradually the reader becomes aware of a connection between the two characters, and the interweaving of these two stories, and that of a semi-literate barbarian, rush the book toward a not-too-surprising climax.

Iain Banks has an excellent mastery of the language and can evoke images and moods very easily. Ever since I read The Wasp Factory I have been interested in his work. Although this is a bit long, and slow in some spots, it has some interesting ideas that could be the basis of other stories. I look forward to his next novel.

THE NIGHTRUNNERS

by Joe R. Lansdale
Illustrations by Gregory Manchess
Dark Harvest, 1987, \$18.95

Mongomery Jones is taking his wife Becky out to the country, to the summer cottage of a friend, to aid her recovery from rape. One of the teenagers who raped her was caught, but Clyde hung himself before he was sentenced. His spirit, however lives on in one of his buddies, Brian Blackwood, and he and his friends are out to get Becky and avenge Clyde's death. The nightmare that Becky is trying to get away from is just about to start all over again. Her dreams become real, and she cannot stand a man's touch, not even her husband's.

Brian is convinced that he, Clyde and his buddies are all mutants, different from regular humans since they know what they want and then take it, regardless of who they hurt.

Pitted against these sadists are Monty and Becky. Monty is a pacifist; he was a conscientious objector, and could see no reason to do violence to anyone. As a kid he was a wimp. Becky was more active and could see the use of violence in some circumstances. Both were to confront something within themselves as these teenage sadists come after them.

This is not a fun book; it's a novel that will start the heart beating fast, and continue to do so periodically until the end. Many of the horror scenes are mutilations

that are graphically described. There is also sex, strong language and violence. The novel portrays some of the worst aspect of human nature -- the capacity to torture and kill. Knowing that this is fiction is only a small comfort. Bob Bloch has said that as horrible as his novel Psycho was, the actual case he based the story on was worse. This makes me wonder how sick the human mind can get.

In spite of this, I enjoyed The Nightrunners. I don't like hurting other people, nor seeing them in pain, but this certainly got my blood pressure up and my hearting beating fast so I didn't have to go out to exercise.

MICHAEL WHELAN'S WORKS OF WONDER

by Michale Whelan
Del Rey, 1987, \$25.00

For those who love Michael Whelan's work, this book is a must to own. It you just like his art, it is a book that you have to at least page through. It is gorgeous. The paintings reproduced here are true to color to the prints and originals I have seen of his work in various art shows (to the best of my memory). The text is very readable and gives a good background of each of the paintings depicted.

My only real complaint is that except for "The Infinite Sandbox," all the paintings included are Del Rey covers. It's a good commercial for Del Rey books.

SCRYER

by Linda Crockett Gray
Tor, 1987, 3.95

MacDonald Leland was a strange person. In the 1950s he started a cult that took advantage of the ability to see the future. Members of the cult could increase their abilities by absorbing them from others who have the same abilities. Through a ritual that involves sex, torture, and eventual death, the abilities of anyone with supernatural powers can be transferred. Six was their magic number; six was the number of this particular seeking for the ultimate power; six times six was the number of years since the death of MacDonald Leland; and six was the number of victims needed for this "Seeking".

When the bodies of those ritually murdered are found in New Orleans, the police department is very upset. Mardi Gras was only weeks away, and things were crazy enough then without this happening. For Renee Calleo and her brother Lennie, this was something they foresaw. Both of them were scryers; they had the ability to foresee the future in a pane of glass, a pool of water, any reflecting surface. They saw these deaths, and Renee sees what might be her own. She realizes that she will be the one this group is after, but they don't know that -- yet.

The police ask for help from one of their former numbers, Dillon Duschenes. He quit the force and turned to writing cookbooks, and is currently writing a novel. A success, as if suddenly discovering talent he never

knew he had. He was always good with the weird cases, so Detective Keil asks his help, and thus eventually he becomes the target of the ritual murderers.

Renee sees that her life and his will become entwined -- a fact, since she scries the two of them together. When she does meet him, it's as if she has known him all her life, and she fears for his safety from this maniacal group. But they both, it turns out, have the ability to scry, so they both could be targets.

The story is fascinating. It pulled me along quickly, and I set other things aside to finish it. This was the first novel I read by Linda Crockett Gray, and it won't be my last.

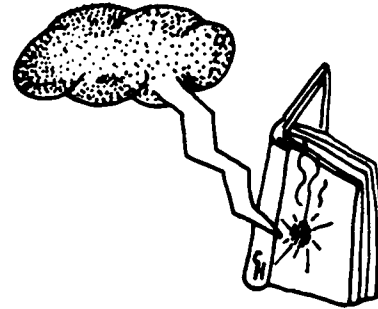
THE VISION

by Dean R. Koontz
Putnam, 1977, \$7.??

Prediction is also the focus of this novel, as it was in Scryer. Mary Bergen is a psychic who can "see" this as they happen, or things about to happen. She has helped police solve crimes, but the current psychopathic killer is different -- he knows her, and apparently she knows him, though something stops her from "seeing" his face while "seeing" his crimes.

To complicate matters, Mary is also under therapy to sort out the abuse she suffered when she was six at the hands of her family's gardener. Her brother Alan and husband Max, who don't get along, try to help her, but they seem too much at odds with each other to offer much help when they are all together. The big kill Mary sees in a "vision" is set for Christmas, and the attempts to stop it, and to open the locked memories of her past abuse seem to hold the keys to each other.

This was one of Dean Koontz's first horror novels. It shows that he had some definite abilities in this direction. I have not yet read any of his later ones, but this gives me incentive to do so. I did figure out the mystery of who this killer was, but it took a while.



More Book Reviews

Variety's COMPLETE SCIENCE FICTION REVIEWS

Edited by Donald Willis
Variety, 198?, pb \$19.95, hc \$25

A book review by David Gorecki

There's a lot of chaff with the wheat here: over 1,000 films from 1907 to 1984 are covered, and along with the classics from Metropolis to the Star Wars trilogy, you'll find a group of what have come to be known as 'alternative classics: films like Brain from the Planet Arous, Prehistoric Women, and others of that ilk. The coverage is very erratic, though; the James Whale Invisible Man is here while his Frankenstein isn't. It's likely a judgment call, treating Frankenstein as a horror film (thus eligible for a companion book of Variety horror reviews) would be okay ... except for the fact that Invisible Man equally qualifies as horror (which indeed is the tone of the original reviewer here, who describes it as a "screamer").

In an attempt to fill out the book, there's an incredible amount of padding with titles that have no real relation to SF at all. A PRC mediocrity of 1940 called Invisible Killer is a routine crime flick, dragged in here solely on the basis of its totally inappropriate title. It seems as if every mystery from the 30s and 40s that made mention of a new "secret invention" or "atomic power" is included, along with films like

Television Spy, Murder by Television, Radio Patrol, etc., that exploited the public's interest in new developments in the mass media. You'll also find fascinating reviews of By Rocket to the Moon, Woman in the Moon, and Girl in the Moon, three different versions of Fritz Lang's 1929 SF film. Running times for this film vary from 95 to 140 minutes!

With the advantage of hindsight, it's surprising how accurate (and knowledgeable) the reviewers were. A medium-budget film like Invaders of Mars was given due credit for what it achieved; Harryhausen receives plaudits for livening up the 50s; and Corman's abilities to wring the most out of a low budget are noted right from the beginning in the review of Monster from the Ocean Floor (1954). Curiously, the reviewers are kind to the Bert I. Gordon epics. Of course, with Variety being the "showbiz" paper, these reviews lean toward praising the "box-office" and exploitability aspects of films, which was the one thing Gordon had going for him. Similarly, the William Castle film The Tingler gains extra points for its gimmicks.

Since the reviews were contemporary with the films, the credit listings (director, writer, cast, running time, release date and more) are likely to be more accurate than other secondary sources available. And historians of the SF film will have a new list of forgotten titles to ferret out -- titles that whet the appetite like Karel Capek's Skeleton on Horseback, Jack London's Torture

Ship, Air Hawks, SOS -- Tidal Wave, Abel Gance (of Napoleon fame) directing The End of the World, and my favorite title of all Men With Steel Faces, starring that well-known SF personality Gene Autry.

For its contemporary flavor, accuracy, and coverage of otherwise obscure films, this book is a must for anyone interested in the strange history of the science fiction film.

MAGIC KINGDOM FOR SALE

by Terry Brooks
Del Rey, 1986, \$4.50

A book review by Cheryl Horn

This is an enchanting story which will appeal to fantasy readers, and is great light entertainment for those of the "yuppie" persuasion. The main character, Ben Holiday, is a stereotyped, over-worked, well-to-do but still striving for more, successful lawyer. However, for Ben the world is just not getting any better, and life still has very little appeal after the loss of his wife. Ben discovers, in a catalog mailed to his deceased wife, a somewhat strange advertisement offering a magic kingdom for sale. Being a shrewd lawyer he has his doubts about this strange offering, as does his law partner, but is still drawn to investigate this mystery. Thereby hangs the tale of Ben Holiday, and the magic kingdom he buys for a mere one million dollars.

The story has some good twists, and leads our friend Ben on an adventure in fantasy that he has not bargained for; although he always did suspect that there was more to the sale than what was advertised, truth in advertising being what it is today. Along with becoming "owner" of his kingdom, Ben must assume the responsibilities of kingship. Of course, Kingship is often more responsibility than privilege and Ben is saddled with some king-sized problems in his new acquisition. Although he has paid a king-sized ransom for his kingdom, it is flat broke, has no army, is in a state of total political disarray, and is being assailed by a surly dragon, and The Mark, lord of the demons who desires to take and rule the kingdom.

Overall, this is an entertaining fantasy, well constructed both in character and setting. It is also a funny piece, with apt comment upon human (and not-so-human) nature. The cover blurb calls this a "gripping story of mystery, magic, and adventure" which I think is a little overblown, somewhat like applying that statement to the Wizard of Oz and its associated tales. There is magic, mystery, and adventure in this book -- and it is a fun book to read, but not "gripping"; that's a little too strong.

I have not read Terry Brooks's Shannara novels, and cannot compare this current book to his past work. If this book represents the quality of his work, then I would be interested in reading his other books. For those of you who are familiar with Terry Brooks, this may be a pleasant change from his familiar story line. On my personal scale of one to ten (my all-time ten being

Dune, since I am more a SF than fantasy fan), I would give this book a seven, for being readable and entertaining without being outrageously ridiculous.

TEOT'S WAR

by Heather Gladney
ACE Fantasy, 1987, \$2.95

A book review by Meg MacDonald

In the kingdom of Tan, a world grown complacently peaceful, Naga Teot is starting a war. Haunted by the flames of his past he seeks out the Liege Lord of Tan himself, swears an awesome oath to a ruler whose sheer power is unlike any seen in hundreds of reigns. For the good of all Tan, the two men must convince languid nobles of the terrible threat they face -- and they must conquer the very fires that drive Naga forward.

The cultures, customs, and geographical locations of Teot's War are so vividly depicted the reader should find it very easy to believe in this place called Tan, in these Tannese people, and in the plight they face. Cultural differences -- prejudices and biases between the Tannese, the Upai, the Sek, the Osa -- are all so startlingly real that one begins to forget they are part of another history, of another time altogether.

Begun with a deliberate place that avalanches into a most compelling story, Heather Gladney weaves a tale of adventure and intrigue, rich in flavor and accented with a gripping emotional story about people. After all is said and done, Teot's War is about people -- fascinating, well-developed characters who exist not only on paper but come alive for the reader who appreciates a story so vividly real he can taste and hear and smell the world it shows. Naga Teot and Tanman Caladruman are people you care about -- powerful and vulnerable, obsessed and obsessive, but, above all, human. You like them and want to know what will happen to them.

For people fascinated by cultures and customs, by sociology and psychology, and characters, for gamers who like to explore detailed, well-designed worlds, for writers looking for inspiration by a first novelist, this book is a feast. It may be hard to find, since Ms. Gladney is a new name, but you'll be doing yourself a favor by ordering it. Committee for the John W. Campbell award take note! This book has excellence sewn right into the binding -- despite some poor copy editing.

The best part is that while Teot's War is whole within itself, it is also the first in a series, "The Song of Naga Teot." One can only hope the author maintains her feel for what a "good story" is.

Thanks, Heather!

LORD OF THE CROOKED PATHS

by Patrick H. Adkins
Ace, 1987, \$2.??

A book review by Mike Resnick

Patrick Adkins is a natural-born storyteller. Or maybe he was born Caesarian.

Makes no difference. The man knows how to spin a tale of wonder.

This particular tale involves the Greek gods, more specifically the Rule of the Titans, and Adkins shows a knack for characterization that is usually beyond the ken of firsttime novelists. His Thanatos is especially memorable, more like a child who doesn't understand that pulling the wings off a fly might hurt the insect than a demon relishing a victim's pain. In fact, you cannot comprehend any of the gods if you do not fully understand the concept of innocence; Adkins understands it, and analyzes it with a thoroughly uninnocent maturity.

He also recreates some of the early Greek myths, invents others, and does a nifty balancing act between all the major characters. The ending is a disappointment, but that is hardly Adkins' fault: Ace forced him to cut his lengthy manuscript in half --and I, for one, am eagerly awaiting Volume II.

For more than a decade we've been wondering if anyone was ever going to take Thomas Burnett Swann's unique place in the field of fantasy. I think a couple of years up the road we're going to wake up and realize, to our surprise, that Patrick Adkins has already done it.



Fanzines

Reviews and Comments

by Lan

Although it has been just a couple of months since the last Lantern was published, the fanzine column for that issue was put together about a month or two beforehand. So I have received a few more in that time, and here is the latest collection from the minds (hands, hearts, copiers or whatever) of fan. Again, I'll comment on some as the mood strikes me, as the zine strikes me, until I fall asleep at the keyboard.

Andruschak-zines. Harry Andruschak, PO Box 5309, Torrance, CA 90510-5309 USA. More writings from Andy Andruschak. (This is his new permanent address.) He uses these zines from LASFAPA/APA-L in lieu of writing comprehensive locs; they give an account of things personal in his life.

Anvil #46. Charlotte Proctor, 8325 7th Ave. South, Birmingham, AL 35206, USA. A pleasantly laid out, readable, interesting, fun zine. Patrick Gibbs reviews a number of novels he read in 1987, and gives his recommendations for the best of the year. Buck Coulson talks about professional editors, a description of the nuptials of Cindy Riley and Sonny Jones, and a host of other articles round out the issue. Recommended.

Australian SF News #46. Mervyn R. Binns, PO Box 491, Elsternwick 3185, Victoria AUSTRALIA. A\$6/4 issues, still no rates for overseas. The voice of Australian publishing and markets. It contains reviews, articles, and information about F & SF. This issue contains conreports of CONSPIRACY by Alan Stewart and Kathy Kerrigan, obituaries of recent deaths in the SF and related fields, and reports on the various awards given in 1987. Very nicely done.

Ben's Beat #9 - #10. Ben Indick, 428 Sagamore Avenue, Teaneck, NJ 07666 USA. This is Ben's FAPAZine, sent out in trade. It con-

tains his "Theatre Beat" which I have excerpted with his permission and run in the review column. He also has some other interesting stuff which I might also excerpt for later issues. For those younger fans who don't know Ben, he is a long-time fan who was well-known for his red hair. Time has changed that feature, as it does everyone's, including this editor whose hair changes color even as he types.

Buf-O, Vol. 3 #6, Vol. 4, #2. Klaus Haisch, 1729 E. Tabor Street, Indianapolis, IN 46203 USA. The fanzine that reviews and Movies. An interesting feature is "The Protectors", a superhero comic strip by Jeff Smith. In the latest issue there is a long summary/critique of The Wrestling Women vs. the Aztec Mummy.

CAR TREK. A personalzine from Bill Ware, 1233 Surry Place, Cleburne, TX 76031. Bill tells of his family's vacation trip to New Mexico. Fun adventure for the whole family.

Centaur Notes, Vol. 1, #1. Off Centaur Publications, PO Box 424, El Cerrito, CA 94530. This is a newsletter from the Off Centaur company which mainly produces filk tapes.

Chris Drumm, Books, Catalogues #21-23. PO Box 445, Polk City, IA 50226, USA. Catalogues, obviously; there is a lot of interesting stuff here for sale -- books both

hardcover and paperback -- at reasonable prices. Chris also puts out his own line of little books which are well worth looking at. I have two now which I have not yet read: My Heart Leaps Up, Chapters 5 & 6 by R. A. Lafferty (his autobiography), and The Kid From Ozone Park and other stores by Richard Wilson.

Circular Janus, The, Vol 8, #1. Don Eamon, 7331 Hearthstone Way, Indianapolis, IN 46227, USA. The Circle of Janus Newsletter, with the usual for a clubzine, and some perceptive reviews by Don Eamon and others.

Critical Wave #3. Steve Green, 33 Scott Road, Olton, Solihull, B92 7LQ, ENGLAND and Martin Tudor, 121 Cape Hill, Smethwick, Warley, B66 4SH, England. A newszine published bimonthly about happenings in British fandom. Quite interesting and informative.

Dave's Secular Lens #8. Dave D'Amassa, 323 Dodge St., East Providence, RI 02914, USA. \$1.50/issue. Dave's personalzine which is very interesting and fascinating. The story of Dorothy of Oz having a nightmare about a place called Kansas was a stitch! And what's this about The Togas of Penzance?

De Profundis #193-195. Los Angeles Science Fiction Society, 11513 Burbank Blvd., North Hollywood, CA 91601. The official newsletter of LASFS, filled with con and fan information, reviews, minutes, etc. Some of the minutes are a scream to read. Mike Glyer, the LASFS secretary, demonstrates even here why he deserved the Fan Writer Hugo.

Deadly Toxin, The, #1. Glen E. Cox, 5301 Buffalo Pass, Austin, TX 78745. Available for stamps. Locs are encouraged, money will send the editor into shock. A personalzine with some interesting opinions, some of which I even agree with.

Delcalomania: A Tourist's Handbook and Guide. I got this from John Bujold and Lois McMaster Bujold. According to John, this was put together by his high school friend John Mogliarskjii (probably not his real name -- it's in the credits) based on what the two of them and a third friend wrote up about this fictional country during study hall. There are some truly hilarious sections in this little book. If interested, contact them through the Lantern.

8&1/2X11Zine #4. David Thayer, 7209 DeVille Drive, North Richland Hills, TX 76180 USA. Editorial Whim only. Another issue of his wonderfully written and illustrated personalzine. An added bonus are the illustrations by Diana Stein.



Entropion #8. Nick Shears, 27 Chiltern Road, Wendover, Aylesbury, Bucks., HP22 6DA, UNITED KINGDOM. One of the best personalzines from the UK I have read.

FILE:770. #72-74 Mike Glyer, 5828 Woodman Ave., #2, Van Nuys, CA 91401, USA. 5/\$5 The premiere fannish newsletter in the USA.

Fosfax #124-126. Fosfa, PO Box 37281, Louisville, KY 40233-7281, USA. A fairly large, consistently produced monthly clubzine filled with reviews, commentary and locs. Recommended.

Galactic Dispatch #88-93. Joe Sokola, 5333 Cracker Barrel Circle, Colorado Springs, CO 80917-1803, USA. This booklet-sized fanzine has some perceptive reviews and articles, and a very active following in the letter column. #92 and #93 switched to a single sheet 8-1/2 by 14 inch zine, which will appear 8 times a year, and the magazine format 4 times a year.

Gegenschein #53. Eric Lindsey, 6 Hillcrest Avenue, Faulconbridge, NSW 2776, AUSTRALIA. Eric's diary, some book reviews, and a few letters. Thin issue this time, but he has been concentrating more on his apaphacking.

Gutenberg's Fanzine #1. Greg Hills, GPO Box 972 G, Melbourne, 3001 AUSTRALIA. This contains essays by Greg about fanzine production. The subtitle is "Stalking the Perfect Fanzine". He has a lot of good information, and is hoping for lots of reader participation.

Hardwired Hinterland #4. Richard Jervis, PO Box 743, Notre Dame, IN 46556, USA. Some good book reviews. Richard has lots of contributors this time.

Harpings #13-14. The Filk Foundation, 34 Barbara Drive, Little Rock AR 72204. USA. Available to Filk Foundation members, contribution of news, and editorial whim. Contains news of interest to filkers and those who enjoy filking.

Hi-Tech Terror #23-32. Craig Ledbetter, Box 5367, Kingwood, TX 77325, USA. \$6/12 issues. Craig continues his excellent coverage of Grade-B horror films and home videos. He has a clever turn of phrase with some of his reviews. I enjoy reading them.

Hickman Zines. PO Box 6, Wauseon, OH 43567 USA. Lynn Hickman sends me his two apazines in trade -- "On Pulp and Such" for PEAPS, and "Wauseon Wonder Stories" for MYRIAD. Lynn is a member of First Fandom and has lost of fannish history in his writings. If you can corner him at a con to talk to him, do so.

HI-FI Sci-Fi, Vol 2, #1-2. A monthly publication from Tony Renner, 2340 S. 39th St., Apt/ c, St. Louis, MO 63110. A comic reviewzine, with reviews written by Tony. Good for comics fans.

High Tide #3. Lynne Ann Morse, Postbus 95370-2509 CJ, Den Haag, Nederland. This is

old. I found it mixed in with a number of other fanzines and things. It's a progress report from Holland on the 1990 bid for the Worldcon. (I told you it was old.)

Idomo 20&1/2. Chuck Conner. Sildan House, Chediston Road, Wissett, Near Halesworth, Suffolk, IP19 ONF, ENGLAND. A genzine with reviews, some fiction, poetry, etc.

Jane's Fighting Smofs #7. Jane & Scott Dennis, 347 West Second Street, Paris, KY 40361 USA. \$3/issue, \$10/5 issues. Articles all about convention bidding.

Loop Garou II. Garner Johnson, 303 E. 8th #10, Bloomington, IN 47401 USA. A "shared world" fanfiction zine. Has some interesting contributions. Write the editor for information about the zine.

Mad Engineer #7-9. The. Mary Hagan, 3333 East Rhorer Road, Bloomington, IN 47401, USA. Quarterly, \$3/year, \$.75/copy. Little booklets with fiction, some original articles, some reprinted articles from various sources about engineering, and occasional art.

Mainstream #12. Jerry Kaufman and Suzle, 8738 1st Avenue NW, Seattle, WA 98117 USA. The usual. A variety of articles, con-reports, art, and other genzine stuff. Good zine!

Meanwhile #1. Nick Shears, 27 Chiltern Road, Wendover, Aylesbury, Bucks., HP22 6DA, UNITED KINGDOM. Nick assuages us fans for not publishing Entropion #9 by giving us this little "place-holder." I understand the delay -- "Work at work, and work at home." Nick does ask for contributions for Entropion #10 -- what you were doing ten years ago, at age ten, a list of ten things, etc.

Moment's Wave #3: John D. Owen, 4 Highfield Close, Newport Pagnell, Buckinghamshire, MK16 9AZ, UNITED KINGDOM. A newsletter and letter substitute; John also has had some trouble getting the next Crystal Ship out, which he explains here.

NASFA Shuttle (Vol 8, #2-3). NASFA, PO Box 4857, Huntsville, AL 358154857, USA. Current Editor: Nelda Kathleen Kennedy, 7907 Charlotte Drive SW, Huntsville, AL 35802, USA. The newsletter of the North Alabama Science Fiction Association. Locs, reviews, meeting & club news, etc.

Neology Vol. 13 #1. Kathleen Moore-Freeman, ESFACAS Box 4071 PSSE, Edmonton, Alberta T6E 4S8. The Edmonton Science Fiction And Comic Arts Society clubzine. Some good articles and reviews, active loccol, and club news.

Niekas #36. Ed Meskys, RFD #1 Box 63, Center Harbor, NH 03226-9729, USA. \$3/1 issue, \$10/4 issues, \$19/8 issues; Foreign, add \$.75 per issue. 60 pages of reviews and articles about SF & F. Recommended.

Nine Innings #2. Andrew Hooper, 214 N. Brearly St., Madison, WI 53703 USA. A fanzine about baseball.

Nova Express Vol. 1 #3. Michael Sumner, 1115 Drava Lane, Houston, TX 77090 USA. Quarterly, \$5/year -- save a dollar by mentioning you saw this in Lan's Lantern. This issue is a theme issue with Howard Waldrop as the "Theme." There is a long interview with Howard, reviews of some of his books, and a complete SF bibliography.

OtheRealms #20. Chuq Von Rospach, 35111-F Newark Blvd., Suite 255, Newark, CA 94560, USA. An excellent reviewzine, with an active lettercol. I wish I had his laser printer! Highly recommended.

Outworlds #54-55. Bill Bowers, 1874 Sunset Ave, Apt. 56, Cincinnati, OH 45238-3142. Whim, \$2.50/issue, \$10/5 issues. A very personal personalzine. Bill has gone gung-ho with his Amstrad computer and desk-top publishing programs. Like me, though his are considerably shorter.

Promethea One. Melissa Gelhaus, 37 Munro Court, Troy, NY 12180 USA. I do have to write Melissa about this zine. She is producing this fiction fanzine out of love and a desire to help aspiring writers get into print. If you are interested in reading some very good amateur fiction, NOT based on any known universe (i.e., these are original stories), drop Melissa a line -- and include some money for postage. She has no subscription rates listed, but it's a 97 page zine plus covers, and I KNOW it's expensive to produce and mail. For another review of this, see page 81.

Pulsar #8. A.E. Ubelhor, 2425 Highway 41 North, Suite 134, Evansville, IN 47711, USA. \$9/year (6 issues). A clubzine, booklet size, filled with reviews, locs, articles, and club news. The format of this issue is larger than the previous one (8&1/2 by 11 as opposed to 5&1/2 by 8&1/2), and the art and production values are terrific. Wonderful to look at, as are the articles.

Rune #77. Jeanne Mealy and David Romm, MNSTff, PO Box 8297 Lake Street Station, Minneapolis, MN 55408 USA. "Rune under new editorship. Let's see what they do with it!" is what I wrote last time. Well, it looks very good, and the editors have gotten some excellent articles, lovely art, and a plus with Nate Bucklin's "The Chart Song". Keep it up, Jeanne and David!

Samizdat #10. Philippe Gauthier, 197 Du Bearn, Saint-Lambert, Quebec J4S 1L2 CANADA, and Claude J. Pelletier, 20 Chemin du Mistral, Iles Laval, Laval, Quebec H7Y 1S1. \$2/issue. A genzine for French-Canadian fans, written in French. It usually has cartoons, pro and fan reviews, locs, etc. This issue, as far as I can tell, has a couple of long stories.

Secant #3. Greg Hills, GPO 972 G, Melbourne 3001, AUSTRALIA. A personalzine, mainly dealing with Greg's life in and after 1985. Has some letters, fanzine reviews and articles as well.

Second Hand Goods #1. Chuck Conner. Sildan House, Chediston Road, Wissett, Near Halesworth, Suffolk, IP19 0NF, ENGLAND. Chuck's personal zine, this time. He says not to expect anything like Idomo.

Solaris #77, 78. Luc Pomerleau, Case Postale 25, Succursale A, Hull, Quebec, J8Y 6M7 CANADA. \$3.50/issue. This is the semi-prozine of French-speaking Canada. Luc has an Homage to Alfred Bester in #77 and Elisabeth Vonarberg interviews Karen Joy Fowler and Phillip Mann in #78. These are nicely produced zines with reviews, stories, interviews, and lavish illustrations. I have trouble reading this because of the language, but the French teachers at school are grateful for me letting them borrow them for classes. They say the zines are wonderful.

South Pacific Penguin #1. Lon Levy, PO Box 1505, Milwaukee, WI 53201-1505 USA. Quarterly, begs a \$1 or more, or the usual. Interesting personalzine, but he says his print run approaches 3,000???? Okay, your pocket-book is much larger than mine. Nice printing and decent art. Not a bad start.

The Southern Fandom Confederation Bulletin Vol 4, #1. PL Caruthers-Montgomery, 2629 Norwood Avenue, Anniston, AL 36201-2872 USA. With the revival of the Southern Fandom Confederation, PLCM does a great job as president and editor of this Bulletin. It's filled with regional news, and hits a lot of the different sub groups of SF fandom. PLCM wants to involve all of Southern fandom, and let everyone else know that they are there. They're gonna know! She has listings of zines available, apas, booksellers, local clubs, news, etc. Southern fans take note: this is your Confederation; let PLCM know

what's going on in your areas. (No other region has anything quite like this -- any takers elsewhere?)

Texas SF Inquirer, The, #23. Pat Mueller, 618 Westridge, Duncanville, TX 75116, USA. A Hugo nominee last year, this zine continues to print news about Texas fandom. Some very good articles about Texas authors. This is also Pat's last issue as editor.

Thrust #29. D. Douglas Fratz, 8217 Langport Terrace, Gaithersburg, MD 20877 USA. \$8/4 issues domestic, US\$10 elsewhere; \$2.50/single issue. A good semiprozine with reviews, articles, and art about SF.

Tightbeam #153. Current editor is Sally A Syrjala, PO Box 149, Centerville, MA 02632. The letter-zine of the National Fantasy Fan Federation (N3F), and it also contains some reviews.

Torch #39 & 40. Dwight Decker, PO Box 2217, Northlake, IL 60164 USA. Apazines for CAPA-Alpha, with some interesting articles.

Weber Woman's Wrevenge, Vol 5, #6. Jean Weber, 6 Hillcrest Avenue, Faulconbridge, NSW 2776, Australia. Wonderfully written, feminist oriented (though not exclusively) fanzine. I enjoy it immensely. This issue has mostly letters with diary notes and natter in between.

YHOS #42. Art Widner, 231 Courtney Lane, Orinda, CA 94563, USA. As Art's FAPazine, he does a remarkable fanzine. The articles continue to be interesting and thoughtful. Art continues with his trip through Europe last year, and has some locs, and nice artwork.



Post Scriptings

General Comments,
The Fanzine Hugo,
& Ted White Again

Don & Maggie Thompson: If you've had a spate of requests for information on Lan's Lantern, Buck Coulson's survey (which appeared in the Comic Buyer's Guide) may be a reason. A survey of CBG's readers some time back said 46.3% considered themselves science fiction collectors -- so we try to keep them provided with some SF material.

We also just signed with Ballantine/House of Collectables to do its collecting guide to the SF field. We'd appreciate your passing word of that to your readers.

[[Consider the word passed. // Yes, I did get several requests for LL; thanks for running Buck's kind review.]]

Robert Bloch: I trust you realize that #25 is more than the equivalent of a full-length novel in its word-count! And I trust you realize that it's also a real page-turner, with the result that one keeps reading -- and enjoying.

Of course I particularly appreciate all the input from the wide variety of reviews (and personally appreciated Mike Resnick's generous comments on my little epic). But most of all I appreciate -- and am grateful for -- your editorial acumen!

David Thayer: It looks like you've pushed staple technology to its very limit. Before you add another page to the annals of fan-publishing, you may want to forsake the current trend toward miniaturization and go from micro- to macrostaples or your next issue may know no bounds.

John Purcell: Just let me get the winch out of the closet...

You realize, of course, that if I used this issue (#25) to swat a mosquito that's landed on my wife's arm I'd snap her arm in

half? I'll tell ya, Lan, this sucker could poke a hole in the wall! Sheesh, one hundred forty pages?!?! So far in my zine's existence, Bangweulu has accumulated 76 pages in 5.25 issues published over the course of three years. In one swell foop you have doubled that output. Either I am a lazy fane (or a smart one) and you're highly productive or a masochist. Probably both. Hmm... Methinks Maia isn't keeping you occupied enough with other things...

HHOK.

Actually, I was sort of serious. This has 72 pages of book, movie and sundry reviews. When I revise This House this summer (yep, gonna finally do it again), I plan on limiting the size of reviews to only about 6 pages per issue, and that includes "The Obscurato." The zine will probably run about 40 pages long.

I mention these things because I see among all the vast contents of LL #25 a really solid, trimmed LL of 40 pages arranged thusly:

Contents page & necessary info...	1 page
Editorial.....	1 page
Mike Glicksohn article.....	1 page
Fr. Jim Deaconson's article.....	4 pages
Robert Sabella's article.....	3 pages
Kris Gilpin's article.....	4 pages
Dave D'Amassa's article.....	5 pages
Bob Shaw's speech transcript....	6 pages
Fanzine reviews.....	5 pages
Lettercolumn.....	10 pages

Of course, this is only what I would do. This is, after all, your fanzine, and you will do what you wish. That is only fair. I just figured I'd have a little fun and see what kind of zine I would put together if I had the opportunity to pick and choose from the wealth of wonderful material herein. With the remaining stuff I could produce two more issues! Gee, you sure know how to acquire lots of good material for your zine. No wonder you like to produce a big zine: it's hard to say "no" to such fine contributions.

Perry Glen Moore: As I have come to expect from you, another bulky issue arrived in the mail. You certainly do want to exercise the eyes with this much material to read.

Unfortunately, this issue did not (in my opinion) measure up to your prior issues. I understand the circumstances behind the material which actually went into this issue, but I definitely missed what did not make it.

Your "Conreports and Ramblings" are what I enjoy the most from Lan's Lantern. The articles are also very good. Usually I enjoy the reviews, but 77 pages of reviews is just too much for me to comprehend. As a former fanzine editor, I know you feel "obligated" to use whatever material that fans send in. This time you had just too much. Most of the reviews were about things that I had no interest in or were about items several months old. Again, although not really your fault, it is still a problem.

I wonder what other fans think of this year's new Hugo category, "Other Forms." I



honestly could not think of anything to nominate in this area. It will be interesting to see what develops.

It was difficult to decide what to nominate in some categories, especially for Best Novel for 1987. I had a list of seven or eight good novles that I had to cut to five.

I do not feel qualified to nominate in the "Fan" Hugo areas because I do not read as much in that area as I used to.

Tom Digby: Ted White's letter reminds me of how the Fan Hugos are like drug and sodomy laws: It may have been a mistake to create them in the first place, but now that they're established it's against God, Motherhood and Apple Pie to tamper with them. My initial reaction to a proposal to abolish the Fan Hugos some years back was the feeling that fans were being put down as being inferior to pros by the mere fact of their being fans. It is true that pros in general draw more of an audience for panels at cons than fans in general do, even if fans are more interesting once the panel gets going. However, I personally consider people in and around fandom to have been created more or less equal and I don't worship pros as such.

"I hate to say it, but Lan's Lantern makes Holier Than Thou (another immature fanzine) look good. Hmmm. New Hugo category: Best Immature Fanzine??

Greg Hills: The question of whether you "deserved" your Hugo is a sticky one. I'm pleased that you did win it -- LL is, beyond any possible question, a fanzine in every sense, and isn't that what the people who have been meddling with the fan Hugos wanted? Did they really expect some 150-copy zine to steamroller one that has proven popular enough to build up a circulation of 600? Was Langford's win with Ansible at CONSPIRACY a victory for the fannish or a victory for the reviled newszines or a win for the Brits? The whole thing is silly.

As for a campaign for "No Award" -- how pointless. How negative. Why not select some good zine -- from the many "better" ones available -- and campaign for that? Perhaps because they couldn't agree on which one to campaign for, and didn't trust/like each other enough to choose one from among themselves? When faced with a bad choice, it is much better -- I think -- to select on positive candidate and campaign for it/him/her/them.

Jim Harris: I personally have no interest in the Hugos, but I was hoping you would win another one just to annoy Ted. He takes them much too seriously. Much of what he attacks you for is a matter of opinion, and other points can be attributed to most fanzines, past and present. I mean fandom and fanzines are for fun; it's a hobby, so why take it so seriously. If he doesn't like your zine, he shouldn't read it. Nobody deserves a Hugo, they just get voted one. I don't think there is any real relationship between merit and awards.

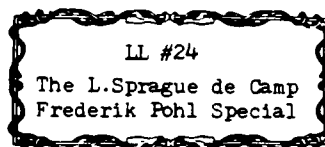
Sure, your fanzine has a lot of room for improvement, but so do all the rest. If you are putting out a product you are happy with that's what counts; you're paying the bills. People who read it have their own reasons for doing so. Ted is just too idealistic, or perfectionistic. There are merits in those qualities, but they are not the kind of things you can demand of someone else.

Sheryl Birkhead: I'm not surprised at the large volume reply to Ted White's letter. I purposely did not write about it. It made me uncomfortable on many levels, and did not appear to sit all that well with quite a few others also.

Jay Sullivan: I don't understand why your cap should come under fire from anyone. I personally rather admire it -- though the fact that it resembles a polybreed puppy I had as a child may be unduly influencing me.

A final note on criticism of (or acerbic statements and remarks about) Lan's Lantern: granted there are some weak spots in the copy-editing; granted that it seems that everything is shoved together -- Mr. White, if you can do it better, why not do it? 140 pages of copy from at least one hundred contributors, as well as Lan's own reviews and remarks, and the inclusion of articles, reviews, comments, art, poetry and editorials, is a massive undertaking.

[[You forgot that I also have a full time teaching position in a boarding school, which also takes up a bit of time.]]



Lynn Hickman: Some of the articles were "weaker" than you usually use. Also many more typos than normal for you. I thought Eva Victorof's cover was very good. Since Fred is one of my favorite people and authors, I wish you could have had more on him. I liked Larry Nowinski's and your pieces the best. On the de Camp side, the best pieces were by Coulson, Pohl, Schwartz and Indick. The artwork was all good.

Allan Beatty: The brevity of this issue allowed me to read and enjoy the whole thing -- unlike one of your previous special author issues which was padded out to great length with a bunch of other pros all saying "He sure is a great guy."

But you've brought woe on future generations of bibliographers by using duplicate page numbers between the two halves of the zine!

Sam Long: This was a good appreciation of those two excellent men and authors. I too liked Lest Darkness Fall (even though I'm not a Latinist) because it made Rome live. Buck Coulson's article about LSDC's verse was excellent: I like light verse, and, as with prose, LSDC is a master of it.

Mark Schulzinger: Your idea of a double issue was excellent and I thoroughly enjoyed reading it. I shall take you to task, though, for not reading more of de Camp's works. Don't you know we're living in a post-classical world? It becomes out duty to read the works of the classical authors.

George O. Smith wrote an excellent pun in his novel Highways in Hiding. In it the protagonist meets with a physician named Lyon Sprague. They have a discussion and the protagonist says something that causes the physician to leave. Smith wrote: "Lyon Sprague decamped with alacrity." Delightful!

Rumor has it that, when Fred Pohl and Cyril Kornbluth submitted The Space Merchants to H.L. Gold, the original title was The Merchant of Venus. Gold vetoed the name right off the bat and substituted its final, more prosaic title.

Craig Ledbetter: LL #24 was quite a shock. It didn't weigh 5 pounds. Ah, but the quality of the twin tributes more than made up for the quantity. Fred Pohl is still a favorite of mine after 20 years.

Dwight Decker: Thanks for the gala de Camp/Pohl issue. De Camp is what I want to be when I grow up. In fact, I just reread his Rogue Queen recently (the edition that has "Rogue Queen" on the spine), and I didn't even intend to. I went to check on something in it, started reading, got interested, and read it yet again for the umpteenth time.

Robert Sabella: I was particularly impressed with the L. Sprague de Camp/Frederik

Pohl special issue; a lot of nice things were said about two very deserving authors.

I was particularly impressed with Poul Anderson's introduction to The Best of L. Sprague de Camp. It was fascinating reading (not surprising considering the talents of both author and subject) and made me want to run out and search for the book. All I have of de Camp's are the Novels Lest Darkness Fall and The Compleat Enchanter. I guess that's not surprising since he stopped writing short fiction entirely by the time I discovered science fiction in the 60s. I'll try to remedy that if I can find the book!

I wish there had been more tributes, although I will share the blame for that with all your other non-contributors.

Buck Coulson: Gee, if I had known you were that short of material, I might have written you another article on de Camp. Or maybe even on Pohl, who has never been one of my top favorite writers, but is certainly a good one.

The first de Camp story I read had to have been "The Blue Giraffe", because it was in the first science fiction book I read. But the one that made me a de Camp fan was "Living Fossil," in Conklin's Treasury of Science Fiction. The idea of mankind's successors, scouting into the wilderness of North America and finding a group of human "living fossils" (and putting them on a reservation to preserve the species), was exactly the sort of idea that intrigued me in the first science fiction I read, and I've picked up everything I could by de Camp ever since. (I'm missing Inventions, Patents and Their Management, which isn't my sort of book anyway, and The Evolution of Naval Weapons, which is.) I may also be missing a Conan book or two, but I don't care.

No, I do not loan books. There's also a complete set of the Scithers-edited Amra around here somewhere (I'm being specific because George wasn't the original editor), to which de Camp frequently contributed, occasionally with outspoken opinions which were toned down a bit for professional publication -- I still cherish his comment that Robert E. Howard "blew his silly head off" to end his life; that got changed in the Howard biography. Quite probably de Camp changed his mind about the silly "part" --but I haven't. I have begun to appreciate Howard and Conan a bit after reading some of the Godawful imitations in recent years, but they're still easy for me to avoid. I did eventually read all the original stories, though, probably because of de Camp's influence. (I've never been inclined to reread any of them.)

One of my stupider moments in fandom came when Scithers conned me into standing up before the Hyborian Legion at a Worldcon and telling them why I disliked Conan. I felt safe, because George had told me that H. Beam Piper would do the rebuttal, and I'd seen Piper the night before and knew he'd be in no shape to stand up, much less talk coherently, the next morning. Unfortunately for me, Piper was in no shape to get to the meeting at all, and de Camp substituted. He was in marvelous condition; I wasn't, after his rebuttal. I learned quite a bit from



that episode -- mostly, to not be so agreeable to friends who were setting me up.

I have most of Pohl's books, but my favorite works of his are the seven Star Science Fiction paperback anthologies, which he edited. They published far and away the best science fiction of their day, and some of the best of any day.

Lloyd Penney: I guess I am somewhat surprised that the de Camp section is almost double the size of the Pohl section. I'm afraid my recollections of Mr. de Camp do not go further. It's a shame, too, since I'm still yet fairly young, and LSdC is hitting 80. I may not have much more of a chance to meet him in a more in-depth manner.

An entertaining issue, and an educational one. Perhaps one endearing and valuable aspect of both these gentlemen is not only did they create superb fiction, but also took time to put to page some parts of the history of the genre and its fan following, not only for the education of fans today, but also for fans of tomorrow, whom we must

encourage to work with us and take our places in time to come. De Camp's Handbook and Pohl's The Way the Future Was are both on my reference shelves, and are well-thumbed. That's another reason why they deserve the attention and recognition of fandom in general, and a fanzine like the Lantern in particular.

Chug Von Rospach: The way the last year and a half has gone, I'm damn glad both of these writers were around to enjoy it. Let's hope the luck lasts a while. We've lost a few more since New Year's: Randall Garrett on New Year's Eve, Lin Carter in February, C.L. Moore's death from Alzheimer's last April has just come to light, Richard Wilson, and others.

To see Fred and de Camp not only rightly honored, but still actively writing is wonderful.

Thanks to you, and to them.

David Palter: Once again you have done a service to the field of SF and to those of us who are devoted to it. It does my fannish heart good to see Frederik Pohl and L. Sprague de Camp receiving this fitting and beautifully rendered tribute in recognition of all they have done for us for a half a century. Truly great and important writers should not pass by unremarked, read but not commented upon. My own comments in LL #24 are, I rather suspect, the least of the issue's offerings, but I am glad to have contributed something all the same.

Mark Blackman's reminiscence that the Times referred to "L. Sprague de Camp and his wife Lin Carter" is the funniest thing I have read for some time. The image this evokes in my mind is quite bizarre.

Greg Benford's comments on Fred Pohl are particularly insightful. Eva Victorof's sketch of Fred Pohl is outstandingly good. She has captured his visual essence.

Mark Bernstein: Let me add my praise to others who have commented on Eva Victorof's sketch of Fred Pohl. [[A lot of people to whom I handed the issue at conventions commented on that cover. Eva deserves the praise. --Lan]]

Martin Morse Wooster: I'm surprised most of your contributors glanced over L. Sprague de Camp's non-fiction and non-SF fiction. According to Twentieth Century Science Fiction Writers, as of 1985, de Camp had published 13 SF novels, five SF collections, 19 fantasy novels (including Conan collaborations), 12 fantasy collections, and edited seven fantasy/SF anthologies, but also produced five historical novels, and wrote 25 non-fiction books, and edited four non-fiction collections (all Conan articles). If you don't count the Conan books, this leaves de Camp as having produced 34 books in the field and 28 that are not SF or fantasy.

I think many of de Camp's non-fiction books are among his best. The Ancient Engineers, for example, is still a very good survey of classical technology. Lovecraft still remains the best biography to date of old H.P. And Lost Continents should be brought back into print, being a very thorough account of Atlantis through the ages.

De Camp's historical novels still sparkle; An Elephant for Aristotle and The Dragon of the Ishtar Gate are very robust quest novels.

As for Frederik Pohl, I think of him as a more uneven writer than de Camp. Pohl's best novels are probably more important than de Camp's, but de Camp has never written a bad book, and Pohl has done several. But Pohl's great strength is his ability to be a major writer -- and a major contemporary writer -- in his late sixties. Unlike others, Frederik Pohl is not in the business of producing contemporary antiques.

Which of de Camp's and Pohl's writings will be read fifty years from now? I think there's a good chance that the de Camp/Pratt novels will still be read, as will Lest Darkness Fall. I'm not sure how many of Pohl's fictions prior to 1976 will still be read, but I'm sure the Gateway sequence and Man Plus will still be read, as well as many of the novels Pohl bought for Galaxy, If, and original anthologies. (I'd love to see an article about Pohl's influence as an editor.)

John F. Snyder: The "Ace Double" was the perfect way to present the two tributes. No worry about mixing up who the article was about: just 17 pure pages of de Camp and 10 pure pages of Pohl.

That is my only beef. Both sides were too short, especially the Frederik Pohl side. Perhaps we shall see additional items appear in future issues of Lan's Lantern. [[As appear here, right?]]

What you did have I enjoyed greatly. All of the pieces were personal in nature -- even the "impersonal" essays and reviews about Pohl's and de Camp's works -- giving me what the author felt as they read or met with Pohl and de Camp.

Milt Stevens: Since nobody in the L. Sprague de Camp Special mentioned the Science Fiction Handbook, I'll mention it. When I first read the book it represented the largest compendium of scientificfictional information that I had ever encountered. Within the next couple of years, I read the book enough times to virtually memorize the text. While the book wasn't entirely responsible for my later career of dissolution and fanaticism, it did help. It was unfortunate that the later Owlswick Press edition of Science Fiction Handbook deleted all the background on the writers and editors of the early 50s. Granted, that information wouldn't be of any use to an aspiring science fiction writer today, but it was still interesting stuff.

I had mixed feelings when de Camp shifted from Harold Shay to Conan. Harold Shay was such a sensible fantasy hero. While Conan always bashed and smashed the nameless whatzit into submission, Shay was more likely to run like hell. I can identify with a guy like Shay.

In the Pohl half of the issue, some of his short stories deserve some comment. "Tunnel Under the World" is his most effective short story and a definite classic. "Let the Ants Try" is another classic story which was written very early in his career. "The Midas Plague" is one of my personal favorites. The idea of an inverted economy

where he poor have to consume more than the rich still amuses me.

Janice M. Eisen: I enjoyed the pieces on Sprague de Camp and Fred Pohl, and I've now promised myself to seek out and read more of de Camp's work (all I've read is the Harold Shay stories). Most of the contributions were of exceptionally high quality.

Ruth Berman: I enjoyed both halves of the de Camp/Pohl Special. De Camp, especially, I think, has influenced my writing a lot.

Buck Coulson's comment on rheumatoid/arthritis heroes -- I think it's worth pointing out that such illnesses can easily be severe enough to stop the hero from doing any heroing ("A Beowulf bound to his bed," in de Camp's phrase). The line from Barbara Michaels pointing out that heroes are as subject to rheumatism as anyone else, and part of the heroism is in going out heroing anyway is true, but sometimes the rheumatism wins. One theme that a lot of Sword & Sorcery stories avoid is what the hero is supposed to do with him (or her) self in old age. The Conan stories answered vaguely that one could become a king and work on being a good ruler, but I'm told that that development hadn't gone very far before Howard's death. Fritz Leiber has been doing some very interesting stories about Fafhrd and the Mouser and their attempts to come to terms with middle age (they seem to be going reluctantly into business with reasonably happy results both for themselves and for the reader.)

Practically speaking, heroes should be subject to at least localized arthritis--the trauma of a broken bone can result in arthritis in that location years later. Achilles himself, presumably, would have had no arthritis to worry about, except in the heel, if he'd lived that long. Death takes care of many a hero's problems of coping with age. But heroes who survive and who are not invulnerable would probably be likely candidates for a good deal of arthritis.

Sheryl Birkhead: I liked both covers.

I doubt that I'd be as articulate as you are in your Ramblings on Sprague de Camp, but I would echo your sentiments. I've been "aware" of him as a writer of SF for years, but if pressed, I would have to go to my bookshelves and take a long look through and see what has his name on it. That does not mean his work is not memorable, merely that I have a lousy memory. I've even been known to buy three different printings of the same book and read them -- not because I've wanted to be complete, but because the new book cover threw me off the track and I had to get partway through the book before I realized I'd already read it. Yeah, lousy memory, good writing!

Colin's introduction to de Camp was as gentle and "right" as such introductions should be. Many of "our" authors are "performers" and when on center stage it is difficult to get to know them. Of course there is the age-old problem of what to say without sounding like an absolute blithering idiot. Colin had the best of all possible worlds and I envy him that -- he met intelligently.

Fred Pohl fits about the same type of niche writer-wise as de Camp for me -- a master/dean, but so far above the normal mortal that they both are shrouded in a mystique uniquely all their own.

Jim Harris: It was nice to be reminded of all those good books by Pohl and de Camp that I read long ago. In fact, reading your special issue zine about these two men has inspired me to go back and reread Lest Darkness Fall, The Space Merchants and Man Plus.

L. Sprague de Camp: Many thanks for the L. Sprague de Camp Special. Jeepers, what have I done to deserve all this flattery? I am in danger of catching the actor's occupational disease, narcissism, from it. Perhaps instead of writing anything new, I shall be reduced to sitting and turning the pages of this publication, savoring the kind remarks.

I don't remember the incident that Fred Pohl tells, of my insistence on paying for my own lunch. Some years later, however, I was cured of that habit, when I attended the funeral of my old friend Willy Ley. Afterward, I went to lunch with John Campbell, Lester del Rey, and somebody else. At the end, Campbell brought out his wallet, and I whipped out mine. Campbell said: "Sprague, don't you realize that unless you let me pay for your lunch, I'll have to pay for mine?" Of course, I then realized that, if I kept quiet, Street & Smith (or was it Conde Nast by that time?) would pay for all four lunches.

Fred Pohl: The "Frederik Pohl Special" arrived this morning (6 January 88), and naturally I dropped everything to read it, although we're leaving to spend the spring in London tomorrow, and I must start thinking about packing Real Soon Now.

The issue was very pleasing to me, of course ... and I appreciate all the kind things you forced all those other people to say about me.

Thank you.

Fr. Jim Deaconson:

A Priest in Fandom

Sally A. Syrjala: Father Deaconson's article was fascinating. Thanks for getting him to write it for you. SF to me has always meant books which delved into such subject material as theology. Weeping May Tarry was one of the first books of this type I read and I was ever on the search for them afterward. Even though a book doesn't specifically speak of religion, the theme can still be in the background. SF looks at ideas and concepts of inner space, as much as it does the concepts of outer space.

As much as some people might try to say that SF is anti-theological, I think it can be very pro-theological. It has values and speaks of individual character and how that character must avoid peer pressure and remain true to its unique being.

SF is technological, but it is also highly social in the panorama it shows of our

society. It is good to have this point brought forth every so often, lest we get bogged down in a stereotypical outlook of the genre.

Roy Tackett: Jim Deaconson sounds so enthusiastic. I hesitate to say typically neo-ism but it is so. That's not a put down. I thoroughly enjoy reading something like this brimming with joy at the discovery of STF and fandom and kindred spirits. I only hope that his enthusiasm continues when he comes upon the hard reality that most fans are either anti-religion or completely indifferent to it. There was a chap joined FAPA a few years back who said he felt his calling was to convert the heathen FAPAns to Christianity. He left after a couple of mailings --no staying power.

Now Marty Helgesen has staying power. Marty is the resident Christian in FLAP and I get the impression that he could teach the Pope a few things about Catholicism.

Deaconson is right, though, in that to many people the discovery of fandom is something on the order of a religious experience. FIAWOL forever and all that. And, of course, if one looks closely enough one finds that science fiction itself shows signs of becoming a religion. It is, I tell you, astounding.

Also astounding is the thought of something like FANTASYCON appointing an official chaplain. Will conventions now open with a prayer?

I'll be in the bar.

[[In my INCONJUNCTION GoH speech (page 47) I draw some parallels between fandom and religion.]]

Bob Rodgers: If my guestimates of religious preferences of fans are correct, Fr. Deaconson is in for some Interesting Times. It seems that lapsed Catholics (who are often bitter about it) form the largest religious grouping in Fandom. (Neopagans are second, though they are more visible.)

P.L. Caruthers-Montgomery: "A Priest in Fandom" is a marvelous and inspirational piece of writing. If Jim is indeed aspiring to be a professional writer, I really think he'll be able to swing it. I'm not a very religious person myself, but in these days of hypocritical fundamentalist fornicators, he's a clergyman I can really and truly respect. I look forward to the pleasure of meeting and talking with him at some convention soon. (I was at WORLD FANTASYCON in Nashville, but running the autograph tables didn't allow me much time to breathe, let alone meet fellow staff members.) You didn't print his address, but I'd enjoy the chance to convey personally my appreciation of his writing.

[[I thought I had put his address in the back with the rest of the contributors. Rats! Check for it in the back of this zine. It should be there this time. (I won't explain why I can't put it here)]]

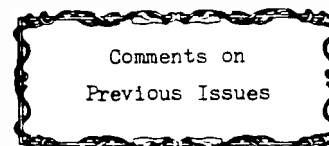
Buck Coulson: Fr. Deaconson should be warned that he's not the first priest to en-

ter fandom. "Father Bernie" Willinger came into Louisville fandom a good many years ago; I couldn't say how many. Now better known as "BJ", he's still a fan, but no longer a priest. I don't know I'd accuse fandom of seducing him from the priesthood, but it might have helped. I recall one RIVERCON when we had a couple of Catholic teenage girls in our party who were very nearly struck dumb at the sight of Father Bernie. One of them whispered that she thought it was against the law to impersonate a priest; we assured her that it wasn't an impersonation. At OVFF last year, I was dressed as a medieval monk (more or less) in preparation for Bill and Brenda's marriage when BJ walked in. I told him that if I'd known he was going to be there, I'd have let him perform, and he laughed and said sure, he could have brought his own outfit.



Mary Long: Nice timing with the Razzie report, since it's Oscar time. I'd almost rather see a televised Razzie ceremony, actually, though if you want to see some REAL acting, take a look at someone who was nominated and didn't get one. Still, a bit of fun, and actually one can always look out for the films which got Razzies & went on to become "cult favourites", as they say.

Roy Tackett: I suppose there are those who are interested in the Razzie Awards. Hell, you'll find people who are interested in anything. But I was indifferent to the article. Movies are uniformly bad anyway so what difference does it make which is worse? I am sure, though, that there are lots of "fans" to whom this is vital news.



BEAUTIFUL BOOKS

Mark L. Olson: Wendy Council's article on beautiful books was fascinating, but didn't make the distinction between a fine book as a book, and a fine book as a work of art. For me, the point of a book is that it's to be read; to turn it into solely a work of art seems akin to burning it. Never mind that the motives are completely different, the effect is the same: the book is never read.

I'm probably being too much of a purist here. I certainly use more than just physical permanence as a criterion for deciding what edition of a book to keep (I like having first editions and nicely made books around), but I try to keep my collector's instinct under control. If a book is so good that I would never dream of actually reading it, I don't buy it. (I used to keep separate reading copies of all my first editions, but recently got rid of them -- it seemed silly; the only justification I could think of was to preserve their investment value -- I've come to find that distasteful.)

Nonetheless, I've seen examples of books-as-works-of-art and lust after them. Some of them are truly beautiful.

[[Mark is involved with the limited editions put out by NESFA for honoring the BOSKONE Guests of Honor. If you would like information about such book production, contact him.]]

THE WRITER MISCONCEPTION

Jim Harris: I too went around looking at baby name books to use for character naming. The trouble was I wanted a book with more than just the common Christian-Judaic names. I found The Giant Book of Baby Names, which did have names from all over the world. I like articles like this, either by budding writers talking about struggling to get a story published, or by pro writers talking about the days before they were a success. I need the encouragement and inspiration.

OTTERS

John F. Snyder: Sea otters in Lan's Lantern? I agree completely with the opening paragraph: it was entertaining and educational. So ignore the critics who pan Lan's Lantern just because it doesn't have pure SF in it. I may be biased, as a person who has an Otter as their SCA device.

Dick Napoli:
SF Telecomputing

P.L. Caruthers-Montgomery: I found "SF Telecomputing" by Dick Napoli so enjoyably informative and to-the-point that I'd like to reprint an updated version in an upcoming issue of The SFC Bulletin (with LL being suitably credited). Thanks to Dick for having his address included as part of the article, and I'll be contacting him directly about that. I'd been trying to prod some of my writers to get one of them to take on the project anyhow. Fortuitous to find the very thing I desired already available in LL!

Bill Ware: I found Dick Napoli's "SF Telecomputing" particularly interesting. I recently bought a MacIntosh Plus, and between it and the Mac II I use at work, I've been ferreting around a few BBS. As a novice at exploring this new universe, I must say there are some strange things out there. Although a few have little to do directly with

SF thematically, the mere act of communicating via modem and personal computer is a little futuristic and is stuff of SF past.

Bob Rodgers: The boards are an interesting phenomenon. I was on some of the local free boards for a while, but got tired of them. My modem is only 300 baud, which is too slow to skim. In a fanzine or an apa, it's easy to skip over articles that don't interest me. On FIDONET, there are a couple of SF Forums, but I stopped reading when I ran into thirty messages in a row, all from the same person.

Esther Friesner:

Wanna Write? Have Kids?

P.L. Caruthers-Montgomery: This was highly enjoyable, even though I'd rather not follow that particular path to enlightenment as a writer, thank you. But seriously, she had several good common-sense points to make and the concise and effective way she succeeded in making them simply goes to show that she really is "a writer" -- by any definition of the term. Brava!

Jay Sullivan: I very much enjoyed Esther M. Friesner's article. Dear Esther: I have a 13-year-old, nasty by nature ... and I want to enroll him in your next class in #6: Keeping the critics at bay. Being a bit unsophisticated, he thinks I'm a great writer -- and he will attack on command! Hmm, he might be able to pull off #7, too.

Glen Cook: Esther Friesner's article on kids came right home. My place is infested with small vermin of the male persuasion whose importunities sometimes make me long for the days when child abuse was not only socially acceptable but the cultural norm, yet they have enriched my writing no end, in many of the ways Esther describes. Hell, their simple existence and all the parental responsibilities and fears and irrational nightmares that come out of being responsible generated an entire novel, and probably my best to date.

Kids are unpolished and direct and vulnerable. When #1 son comes and bluntly says, "You can do that later, Dad, I need you to pitch batting practice now," he's only taking the identical attitude commonly adopted by spousal unit and friends and neighbors and people I've never heard of or met who call up wanting me to tell them how to get their western published or to come give a talk at a library a hundred miles away or this or that or whatever else, only they're older and couch their requests/demands in more subtle ways, so that it isn't nearly as easy to growl without seeming unreasonable and a candidate for National Asshole of the Month honors. Thing is, I almost always go pitch. The others aren't as lucky, though mostly I try to remain polite.

Mary Long: Can you write with children? The answer is, I think, yes, but it can be

hard. Of course, it depends upon the age of the child. If he's a few months old, he'll sleep more. At age two or so, you begin to think you'll never lead a life of your own again. By four they are independent and can play a bit while you work. By the time they go to school you'll either have done it or given up. Mostly I did my thinking and most of the drafting late at night, or early in the AM. It may or may not be a coincidence that once I had the house to myself again, I began to make a bit of a modest breakthrough. Possibly I was just getting into the swing of it, by then. I do feel if you have given it your best shot for five years, you should have done something in that tie. If you haven't sold anything, best, perhaps, to reconsider -- or take a good look at what you are doing.

And too, don't forget that children are not only demanding of one's time, which is as it should be, of course, but very expensive to keep going! On the other hand they occasionally come up with some good stuff, of which my current favorite is "sock trousers" for hose, which will turn up somewhere in what I've written in due course.

David Thayer/Teddy Harvia: The article "Wanna Write? Have Kids!" by Esther M. Freisner hit home. My own children drive me both to write and draw. My reasons, however, are atypical. Most individuals achieve immortality through their children. I look at mine and ask, "Do I want to trust my future to these little monsters?"

Bob Shaw:
"Campus Fugit"

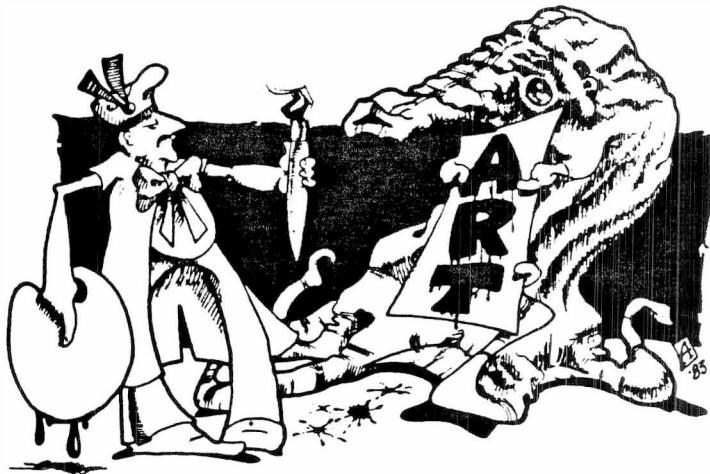
Cathy Howard: Bob Shaw's "Campus Fugit": hilarious story ... I mean, speech. The speeches and so on by established authors you print here are most enjoyable.

Ben Schilling: I liked having the Bob Shaw thing in print, because I couldn't get into the room either and Shaw is such an interesting speaker. It isn't quite the same, but it will have to do.

P.L. Caruthers-Montgomery: What can one say about Bob Shaw? -- except that he's always funnier than a mortal fan can tolerate. Readin "Campus Fugit" all at one sitting is downright dangerous to one's health! Laughter may be the best medicine but it's so terribly difficult to breathe while guffawing and rolling about on the carpet.

Sheryl Birkhead: Vintage Shaw (yeah--he's Bob's brother)!!

Martin Morse Wooster: I'm really glad you published Bob Shaw's serious scientific talk from CONSPIRACY. I have two volumes of these talks, collected in the late 70s, and it's nice to know that he still maintains his high standard of wit. I hope some fan publisher decides to reprint Shaw's talks; I'm sure there's a market.



John Thiel: Well, you precede me on a color cover! I was going to have the first one on a genzine in years (barring gestetners). Well, keep it up anyway.

David Thayer/Teddy Harvia: Your placement of artwork, my own as well as that of others, continues to surprise and please me. You change mere fillos into illos. Inserting my unicorn cartoon next to the review of The Pig, the Prince, & the Unicorn adds something to both the text and the art.

[[Thank you for noticing; I try hard to make the most of the art I get, as well as commissioning some for special articles.]]

Sheryl Birkhead: Teddy's material is popping up everywhere -- GOOD!!!

P.L. Caruthers-Montgomery: The marvelous Teddy Harvia cover seduced me from other things. I'm really impressed by the covers he's been turning out of late, His style is distinctive and very unlike anyone else's and he has a god eye for symmetry, proportion, and harmony in his designs. I can hardly wait for him to do one for me!

I'd forgotten about sending you the calligraphy, but I'm well pleased by your use of it and the way the flow of the script offsets the text-heavy appearance of most of your pages.

Dave D'Amassa:
People Are Raving

Ben Schilling: I guess that Mrs. Streiber and her son are both heavy sleepers. Mr. Streiber seems to be more than slightly off center and slipping fast.

Jessica Amanda Salmonson: I'm saddened by D'Amassa the Younger's cruelly humorous attack of Mr. Streiber and others who are striving to warn us about the pending invasion of our planet. When I was kidnapped by light-bulb-headed aliens a few years ago, I had much the same experiences as all these other people. Exactly the same! How do you explain that? There were a few differences, however. For one, the light-bulb-heads blinked on and off and were bright purple.

Their fingers looked like little cans of Penzoil. The clapped them together and chanted "la la la" and then fish-people came out of a back room and talked to me with New England accents. They had long faces and prissy lips and their ears stuck out. They looked like pictures I've seen of H. P. Lovecraft, who may have been one of them. They took me on board their ship and held me captive for several days and I woke up on the floor in the kitchen and seemingly no time had elapsed. These aliens are capable of time travel. After the Lovecraft look-alikes were done punching and jabbing me with big thick knives, they asked me if there was anything I needed, and I asked for the latest issue of Frozen Foods Salesmen's Quarterly which they brought me. Then the light-bulb-heads came back in and went blinky-blink and hypnotized me. That's when I woke up in my kitchen. Only it wasn't exactly my kitchen anymore. I'm sure the checker-board pattern on the floor was reversed.

Several weeks later I remembered all of this and understood perfectly that they were making tests to see what would be the best kind of virus to make to wipe all of us out. I think they've already introduced the virus. They decided to begin by wiping out n----- in the Carribean and bugaring-fag- gots, realizing from their studies that no one would stop the contagion if it only started among these groups. Then the plague would self-mutate and get all the women and children, but governemnt officials and rich doctors would still be all right, and the contagion would be allowed to continue. When it was clear that the human race was doomed, it would be too late, even though all out medical genius would go into finding a cure.

All of this is perfectly true and it just goes to show how smart the aliens are to have done their tests on people like Whitley and me, whom no one would believe. If we can get more priests in fandom, though, some of us might be saved.

I love you, Ian. Goodbye now.

The
Robert Sabella
Articles

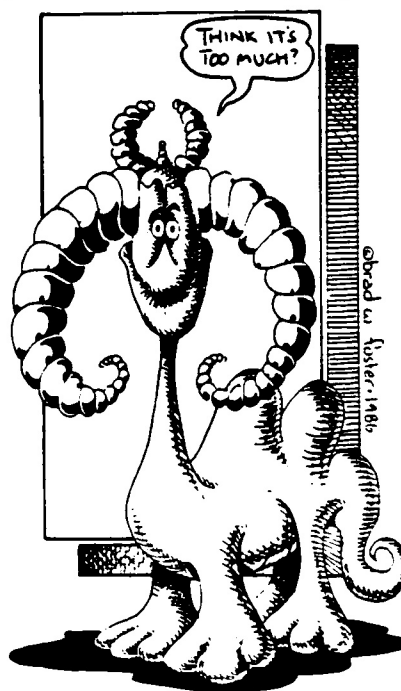
Perry Glen Moore: I enjoyed Robert Sabella's article about the SF awards. I had done something similar for myself a few years back. It is interesting to attempt to identify trends in voting by the fans and the writers.

In his column, "Ten Years Ago in Science Fiction," there is a major mistake or omission. I realize most "hardcore" fans pass off Star Wars, but has he forgotten that Star Wars did premiere in the early summer of 1977? That movie did more to change the science fiction area than anything had in years. Like it or not, good motion pictures in the genre do more to bring in fans than any good novel or story. Orson Scott Card also published his first story that summer, "Ender's Game." The last eleven years have seen the impact of that beginning.

[[Mark Leeper has some comments about Star Wars on page 32. Yes, Scott Card has had a great career, starting with that smash beginning!

[[I also got a note from Isaac Asimov about Robert's "SF Awards" article. (Unfortunately I have misplaced it.) Isaac said that he has more awards than Robert says in the article -- but I believe that Robert was not using completely up-to-date information when compiling his statistics.]]

John Purcell: Despite my enjoyment of everything in the issue, I would like to single out one item in particular: Robert Sabella's "Ten Years Ago in Science Fiction." This is truly timeninding stuff, since I remember everything he writes in this feature. I truly hope he continues to run this in LL; it's a nifty addition to your zine and helps put things in a historical perspective. Good work.



Comments
on
Letters

to JERRI SWINEHART

Cheryl Horn: The argument over the interpretation of DEFCON 5 versus DEFCON 1 was all wrong in Jerri Swinehart's comments. Working in a military installation, I do on occasion get into the Battle Staff Complex. DEFCON 5, which is where we are today (8 July 87) is a state of relative and anticipated continuing peace. Yes, in 1973, we did approach DEFCON 3. This meant we thought things were heating up toward the US engaging in conflict.

From time to time we go to DEFCON 4, when the Soviets run into our territory, when things got really hot in Iran during the hostage situation, etc. DEFCON 4 merely indicates that we are aware of a situation

which might threaten our national security. In the movies, and in the news, this is generally when you hear someone saying that the Strategic Air Command (SAC) bombers are "put on alert" or even "scrambled" to flight --or that intercept fighter jets have been put in the air.

DEFCON 1 would mean that the military complex is engaged in armed conflict with an enemy, and that continued engagement with the possibility of escalation to a nuclear conflict is possible.

I have heard that there are actually two steps above the DEFCON 1 status, which have code names -- which I can't remember, and wouldn't mean anything to others anyway. But they are indications that nuclear delivery systems are ready for use -- by the enemy or by us.

Just thought I'd settle the argument.

"Jengis" again

L. Sprague de Camp: I was happy to see my note on "Genghis" v. "Jengis" on page 136; but why did you change my spelling "Jengis" to "Jenghis"? Since I was not writing Italian, the intrusive "h" serves no useful purpose whatever. My original spelling (used before by H. G. Wells) adequately represents the sound of the name.

[[Sorry, Sprague. I thought I had copied your comment accurately and was careful about proofreading it. My apologies.]]

to PAULA ROBINSON

P.L. Caruthers-Montgomery: Paula needs to contact Samanda s Jude of Electrival Eggs Access System, PO Box 308, Lebanon GA 30146.

to SUSAN SHWARTZ

Martin Morse Wooster: Susan Schwartz misunderstands me. Yes, C.C. Lewis and J.R.R. Tolkien were literate critics. But I doubt their articles would be considered by Science Fiction Studies or Extrapolation. Most SF critics do not write well -- but then, most American critics are incapable of producing graceful prose. I probably read more criticism than Susan does (I'm paid to, after all) and I'm always baffled by the inability of most PH.D.'s to construct a stylish sentence. Perhaps this is due to Sturgeon's Law.

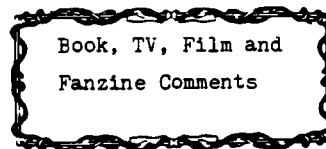
I think Susan also doesn't make clear the distinction between criticism and book reviewing. Budrys, Gunn, Delany and (sometimes) Darrel Schweitzer do write criticism, but only Budrys does it regularly for a major market. (Delany's latest critical work, after all, is published by a fan press.) All the other people she mentions are reviewers, a faster, lesser form of writing. Of the five top SF critics in the world, only one (Budrys) is an American; the others are either British (David Pringle, John Clute) or Australian (Peter Nicholls, George Turner). The best book of SF criticism published last year was by James Blish, who has been dead for 12 years. Who will be the next SF writer to fill Blish's mantle? There aren't any likely candidates.

to EVELYN LEEPER

Diane Fox: Evelyn Leeper might also be intrigued by A. Bertram Chandler's Kelly Country (available in Penguin) an Australian alternate history novel which also uses time travel, and which is loaded with clearly described historical details, often obscure, but all fascinating. The device of having the central character a time traveller solves the problem of balancing between heavyhandedness and oversubtlety, and this book is a good ripping yarn as well.



George here is the heir transparent.



GENERAL COMMENTS

David Thayer/Teddy Harvia: I agree with Larry Nowinski. Grouping the reviews by reviewer gives the reader a better feel for the writers' biases. Even the best reviews are by nature subjective.

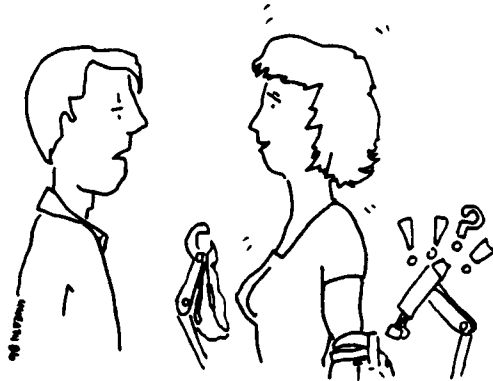
Sheryl Birkhead: How about a star rating system for reviews? That way a glance would give a clue as to which titles were liked the best (or evaluated most highly -- take your pick).

Sally A. Syrjala: Do keep the review column as well stocked as it is now. It is the heart of the zine and it is the first thing to which I look upon the arrival of the latest copy of LL. It is fun to see how other people view the same books and films you have read and seen. Then you can gauge your reactions to theirs to see how you really felt about something. Having someone disagree with your interpretation is a great way to see how you view something. If everyone said things with which you agreed, you would blandly go onto the next area. However, if someone has a differing opinion, then the fun starts. That is when you say, "Wait a minute!" and start to think of the reasons why you disagree. Excellent mental exercises.

BOOK REVIEWS

Artificial Things

Jim Harris: I disagree with David M. Shea's review of Artificial Things by Karen Joy Fowler. But then he doesn't like Philip



OOOH!... THESE ROBOTS... AH...
ARE GETTING INTO... EEE!...
EVERYTHING... UMMM!...
THESE DAYS!

K. Dick, so I know we have different tastes. But, Mr. Shea spends too much time expressing feelings about the stories, and not enough time trying to describe them. When reading a review I expect a certain amount of expression of personal taste -but prefer details about the books, something I can go on when making my purchasing decisions. I buy books by what I'm interested in, and not by what other people feel. Fowler impresses a lot of people for a reason: she writes stories about ideas with meaning. Most short SF, and long as well, are about ideas of speculation or just novel ideas to entertain. Also, time in the only true judge of literature, so much of Mr. Shea's verbal talent is wasted on making judgements which I would think would be of such a personal nature as not to be useful to readers of your fanzine. If I had read his review, I might have taken it on face value, and ignored her book. Because I've already read some of her stories, I know better than to trust his taste in SF.

[[I don't always print reviews I agree with; some I disagree with intensely, and at times it is painful for me to type them up, but I do so because I value the varied opinions in the review column. And it sparks comments.]]

Chug Von Rospach: I disagree with David Shea's comments on Fowler's Artificial Things. No big surprise. Dave and I seem to disagree more than not, so I won't rebut in detail. I think Fowler is a great writer, and AT a great collection. I'm not claiming Shea is wrong; our tastes differ, and if you like his tastes, read his reviews. If you like my tastes, read mine.

"Cyberpunk" and When Gravity Fails

Jay Sullivan: On "Cyberpunk:" it seems there are three ways to write the stuff:

- 1) be William Gibson.
- 2) add mirrorshades, lots of drugs administered in either traditional or esoteric new ways, go after the "BIG corporations", have the protagonist sleep with a partner who is now the same sex as s/he but was formerly the other sex ... or is now the other sex but was formerly the same sex (maybe)...

or has been both other sexes and now isn't ... or is in the process of deciding and presently works all four sides of the town square, and don't forget to write powerfully, but so obscurely that no one is sure what you are saying -- "Hey, Vern, I didn't hardly understand none of it ... it must be real good, knowwadamean?"

3) be George Alec Effinger and tell a damn good story in a much more believable format. GAE did almost everything in 2) above (except his writing is never obscure) and I still liked When Gravity Fails very much indeed.

Tom Jackson: I enjoyed Mike Resnick's appreciative review of When Gravity Fails by one of my favorite authors, George Alec Effinger, but I do think that Resnick sells some of Effinger's previous novels a little short. Some of Effinger's novels are rather minor works -- especially in comparison to anthologies collecting his superior short stories, as Resnick points out -- but I wondered if Resnick had missed some of the earlier titles.

The Wolves of Memory in particular is a very fine book. The novel somehow succeeds in being a frequently-funny book about a young man with a terminal illness. The book was well-drawn, interesting characters who attempt to come to grips with a very difficult situation. (Oddly enough, the disease that the hero, Sander Courane, and his companions suffer from in some ways resembles AIDS, although the novel was published before the AIDS epidemic became known.) The novel has a serious philosophical and theological theme -- not in the form of heavy-handed exposition, but as an integral part of the plot. When I asked Effinger diffidently at CACTUSCON last year whether he considered The Wolves of Memory to be a theological work, he answered that the book, in part, is grounded in Catholicism (although Effinger is not a Catholic). The book's 14 chapters follow an outline suggested by the Catholic Church's Stations of the Cross. Incidentally, this is why Courane dies well before the book ends (the 12th Station of the Cross is the death of Jesus). I think Effinger handles the problems of completing the novel despite the death of the main character rather well.

The Nick of Time and The Bird of Time, two time travel novels published recently by Doubleday, were poorly distributed and received very little attention, yet both have the humor and charm that mark Effinger's short stories. What Entropy Means to Me was a strong first novel which was nominated for the Nebula Award. Unfortunately, it has remained out of print since its initial publication in the early 1970s.

All of these books deserve retrospective attention--not to mention reprinting--and it would be nice if the attention Effinger is getting for When Gravity Fails would allow these other titles a chance in the spotlight.

Dragon's Blood

David Thayer/Teddy Harvia: Ever since I met Jane Yolan at MINICON 22, I've been looking for her books. The local bookstores

acted as if I'm talking pure fantasy when I mentioned her name. Your review of Dragon's Blood gives me a title I can throw at them.

Free, Live Free

Bob Rodgers: It seems that Gene Wolfe is unable to write a story in which the characters aren't a collection of grotesques. This worked OK for the New Sun (in the far future) novels or Soldier in the Mist (in ancient Greece), but when he tried to do the same thing in a contemporary setting, it didn't seem to work. On the plus side, I read this novel at one sitting, which tells me it has something going for it.

The Hercules Text

Jim Harris: I disagree with Evelyn Leeper that this book was "merely" very good. I enjoyed the somber realism. I also don't think you can determine if a current novel is "great." So few books attempt this realistic type of SF anymore, that just finding one makes it a winner. But, with time who knows what will happen to it. Before I read this book I never thought of the possibility of such interstellar transmissions being classified and kept from the public. (I've since read Emprise by Michael Kube-McDowell who also has his world keeping the knowledge secret.) I think McDevitt makes a good case of secrecy. However, I doubt superscience will ever become that super, but it's still reasonable to think that a government might want to control a possess such information. I considered this to be a good solid piece of speculation.

The Movement of Mountains

Roy Tackett: I'm a bit amused at Ann Cecil's review of Blumlein's The Movement of Mountains: "This is an R-rated book." Oh? Not to be sold to anyone under 17? And then only if a parent is going to read it aloud? Come now, Cecil, what bunch of bluenoses is now applying ratings to books?

Soldier in the Mist

Sam Long: I read Soldier in the Mist and thought it good, but I too had a little trouble with it. First, why is a Roman fighting as a mercenary in Greece in the early 5th century BC? Rome had more than enough wars of its own at that time, and it really didn't get into the Greek world for another 200 years...and then as conquerors, not mercenaries. Never mind. The idea is an interesting one, and I thought it was handled pretty well.

Chuq Von Rospach: I do think that Ann Cecil missed the point of Soldier in the Mist. You don't need classical training to appreciate it -- in fact I found many of the reviews that did tie back the various names and places to location we could understand amusing, since I believe that part of Wolfe's reason for writing it the way he did was to remove us from our preconceived notions about the time period; something the reviews immediately undermined. Whether or

not the story "got anywhere" was beside the point. The book is essentially a character study, and a study of the civilization around him with an attempt to remove as much of the cultural bias as possible. Cecil's criticism, therefore, accused the book of not doing something that the book never set out to do.

It isn't for everyone. You need to actively read it, not just turn pages. It makes you think. It isn't escapist (can Wolfe write escapist novels? And should he waste his talents trying?) But complaining that a book didn't do something it never tried to do is simply justifying that it was doing what it was supposed to do. The books isn't bad; she just set the wrong expectations for herself.

Sweet Silver Blues

Glen Cook: An almost refreshing encounter with the negative review of Sweet Silver Blues; I had begun to fear it would suffer the critical kiss of death of consistently positive reviews that have doomed so many others of my books -- to be unread by anyone but my relatives and those who get them free from the publishers (I am convinced there is a direct relationship between sales and reviewer acceptance: if more than three say a book is the greatest thing since the Bass-O-matic I'll be able to compute royalties on my fingers). Reviewers take heed. Get out there are say Glen Cook's stuff is subhuman, moronic, has no redeeming value, and he ought to be tried for turning entire Canadian provinces into vegetation-free deserts. I'll outsell Stephen King and Piers Anthony put together.

"There's a Werewolf in My Time Machine"

Roy Tackett: Maybe I can shed a bit of light for Evelyn Leeper and her comments on Niven's "There's a Werewolf in My Time Machine". Niven, along with many others, does not believe time travel to be a possibility, therefore all time travel stories are pure fantasy. Which is why Svetz always ends up in a fantasy world involved with fantasy creatures.

Threshold (et al.)

David Palmer: Lan's Lantern #25 arrived on Friday, April 1st, so I really should have suspected something was afoot; but trusting old dopey me, I never saw it coming.

And I bought it -- I turned to page 83 and, for probably 30 awful seconds, I really did buy it...

Congratulations, you rat! I've never seen a better April Fool parody on truly dreadful book-reviewers. Not just your ordinarily bad, modestly amateurish, everyday-dreadful book-review, mind you; you took aim at a specific class of bad reviewers: those repressed, depressive, internally raging emotional cripples whose personal animus toward those possessing even a vestige of ability to create and entertain leads them to commit gaffes so breathtakingly, grandly inspired in scope, and so crudely and trashily execu-

ted, that they cause all who witness them to squirm with embarrassment and glance around nervously to make sure no one else is watching them watch it happen. In one short column you've assembled and highlighted some of the most classically stereotypical examples (symptoms?) of this type of personality disorder.

[] Unsupported conclusions betraying naked personal animus directed at the writer personally, and his motivations, rather than his work: "...Obvious[ly] straining [in] a genre in which he is less than comfortable ... unfortunately the author didn't do much with [the characters] ... if [the writer] had taken [his characters] seriously ... waste [of time and energy invested by contributors] appalls me ... when [the author] systematically trashes his characters, he lost this reader ... uninventive plot, driven by the author's mechanics .. the author gets to show how many Gaelic words she knows and how much research she did ... I can see why it didn't [sell] ... unlike Kingsbury, [the author] does not have the talent ... [the author] pontificates ... [the author's] much-praised lyricism slows the initial chapters..." Etc. Neatly, if cruelly, carried out.

[] The inability to rise above pigeonhole prejudices: "These three novels are officially [sic] fantasies ... what is fantasy ... this is classic science-fiction ... modern morality tale ... this is only marginally SF ... jump on the "bandwagons" [AI and direct mind/computer interface]..." Etc.

[] Using gratuitous crudity, vulgarity and/or condescending/contemptuous word-choices to suggest envy and a limited command of English was a particularly nice touch: "... cutesy names ... bullshit pseudoscience ... twitty dialogue ... smartass replies ... 'Fonzie-type' buddy ... a 'shared-gimmick' anthology .. ending gizmo ... nerd ... purple prose worthy of the ditsiest of flower-children..." Etc.

[] Repeated, implicitly gender-intolerant, sexual crudities which, taken with the guttersnipe-level communication preferences demonstrated in the previous group, cast into question the gender and/or sexual preference of the critic: "... sexy bitch ... arrogant, self-made macho man ... true blond at his side ... every high-school boy's wet dream ... a very standard macho type ... his Barbie Doll mate ..." (You may have gone a little too far with this one for your more gentle readers' sensibilities -but, on the other hand, a raging "bull dyke" lesbian is as legitimate a target for humor as our local red-necked (and desperately, homophobic-paranoid) "good-ole-boy" bullies. [Actually, willfully, ignorant intolerance is the most legitimate target of all.]

[] Even Freudianly patent confessions of emotional damage: "... I had problems with the book .. self-pity, with which I have had very little patience..."

My only disappointment wit the piece was the fact that the satire proved uneven: Apparently you couldn't hold it together convincingly in the favorable dtiriques. None of the jucier psychopathic qualities so prominent in the pans managed to find their way into the raves. Pity, but understanda-

ble: Lampooning a recommendation must be really difficult; frankly, I'd be afraid even to try. -- Or was that the subtest example of all? Intellectually lazy critics usually exert their imaginations only when carving someone up. Yes, I take it back; my hat's off to you -- this may have been your finest hour: you've produced satire to its highest level...

Keep up the good work.

Winter's Daughter

Chris Miller: I was delighted to read Evelyn Leeper's review of Winter's Daughter by Charles Whitmore in Lan's Lantern #25. Since she was reviewing the original Timescape hardcover, now unavailable, I thought your readers might be interested to know that the paperback edition is in print here at Avon.

FILM REVIEWS

The Day After

Cheryl Horn: I don't know how many of your readers have young children; mine are now nearly three and five years old. However, Bob Rodgers' comment [[LL #22]] that the "vomiting and diarrhea weren't even hinted at" is selective memory. The most upsetting part of that movie still haunts me to this day. I have awakened at night nearly in tears because of one specific part of The Day After. In the movie, the mother of several children battels to keep her youngest son alive. There is a scene where shoe holds him in her arms in a bathroom lit by candlelight, over the bathroom sink. She is doing this because the child has diarrhea and is in distress. The child eventually dies, and the family searches for the child's favorite stuffed toy. That scene makes my throat burn and tears come to my eyes. There may have been a lot of "literary license" taken in The Day After but it was emotional enough for me not to ever want to find out just how accurate (or inaccurate) it may have been.

During the Cuban Missile Crisis, and today, I live very close to a major military installation, Wright Patterson Air Force Base. You could most likely class it as a "ground zero" zone. When I was a child we had atomic bomb drills at school during the Cuban Missile Crisis. They (the teachers) herded us into the halls and made us kneel on the floor facing the walls with our heads down. It was all a really useless exercise when you think about it.

My father is an engineer, and my uncle was a major builder/contractor so right after the crisis my family, along with many other families, built a "bomb shelter". Now most people had these little things that were mostly designed after otrnado shelters of the Great Plains -- that is they were not meant for many people, or long-term habitation. Our family built one that would hold twelve people (comfortably), had a double shower/air-lock entrance, its own water and sewage disposal, a kitchenette, a manual air-exchange system in case of temporary power outages, and an Army surplus diesel

electric generator that would have powered a small farm town. My aunt even made "fallout" suits of plastic that could be worn if someone needed to go outside during the period of fallout, and we had MARS radio gear. A friend of my grandfather drew a cartoon of my grandfather wearing a WW II helmet, standing behind a pile of sandbags in front of the double steel door entrance to the shelter, and holding a rifle. It was acknowledged in our family that WE WOULD SURVIVE.

Today, with the increased range, kilotonnage, and destruction which would result from an atomic war, not to mention the infamous "nuclear winter", I'm not so sure one would want to try to survive. Not a nice thought, but I think that movies and books about "post nuclear holocaust" survival should stress that what is desirable today is not the "ability to survive", but the "ability to prevent" a nuclear war.

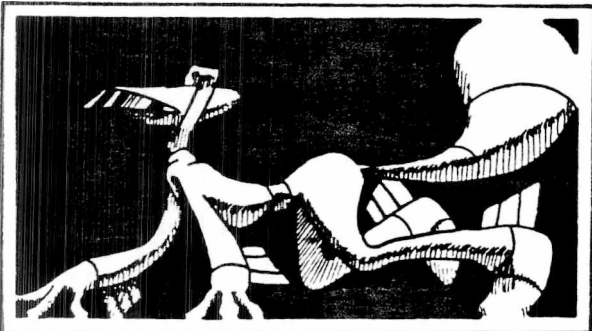
Predator

Sally A. Syrjala: A few years ago I would not even go to an Arnold Schwarzenegger film. Then along came The Terminator. I would not go to see this one at first either. Ike wanted to see it and went alone. He came home and told me it was my kind of film and that I would enjoy it. I highly doubted such a thing. However, he persisted in his argument and insisted that we go to see the film together. Okay, I was prepared to say, "I told you so!" Prior judgments are not always accurate and my view of Terminator changed when I saw the film -- it was very good, one of the best I saw released that year.

Since then I have been going to Arnie films with Ike and getting to enjoy them. I don't know if this is an evolutionary step forward or backward, but it is what has happened. I no longer see the films as being overly violent -- just action-packed.

The Predator I thought was even slightly liberal in its outlook. When Arnie's character was asked where he was during the Libyan attack, Arnie said that he was a mercenary, not a killer of women and children. This is one thing I have come to like about Arnie: his characters do not kill indiscriminately. In Running Man he got into trouble because he refused to carry out an order to kill a group of people. Later in the film he refused to kill an unarmed man. Arnie is not Rambo; he is much evolved from that primitive state.

The Predator was not a great film by any means, but it was an entertaining one.



Robocop

Martin Morse Wooster: I was particularly bothered by the twin reviews of Robocop. Didn't either Mark Leeper or Dale Skran realize the film was satire? I thought the best part of the film was its humor, particularly its commercials from the future. And it's no accident that Paul Verhoeven directed -- I suspect only a foreigner could cast such a jaundiced eye on American culture. Robocop is something better than an SF version of a Clint Eastwood film.

Sally A. Syrjala: This was a good film. I look forward to a sequel of it. If you look at the ending, you can see how Robocop might obtain a partner of equal footing in a sequel to be.

Robocop had some nice humor in it which was missed with the reviews I have read so far on it. The clips it used from local news broadcasts and the commercials contained within them were precious. The take-off on Hallmark's "When you care enough to send the very best" done with the Jarvik artificial heart was good. Health care in our society is becoming bug business and the "caring" is becoming something which can be bought with big bucks, but if you haven't got them -- tough.

Robocop is fun. It is a more humanized Superman. This is literally a man of steel helping to keep his metropolitan community safe for truth, justice, and the American way.

As with most good films, Robocop could be looked at from a variety of ways. Yes, it was an action film, That is rather obvious. But it was also a satire with some good social commentary in it as well.

Star Trek: The Next Generation

Ben Schilling: ST:TNG seems to be getting a bit better and the show has been renewed for another year, so we might actually see something approaching televised SF in time. The actors seem to be settling into their roles and that can only help. I still don't like the kid saving the ship on a regular basis. I also think that if he is going to be an acting officer, he should be in uniform, rather than that one shirt he seems to have. Surely Star Fleet doesn't pay Commanders that poorly, especially since there should be a pension from the father's death.

Sally A. Syrjala: I can't really get excited about ST:TNG. I tried watching a couple of episodes and found them so irritating that I couldn't watch the show. This is what happened with me and the initial broadcast. What we are getting is rehashes of the old series, done in a much poorer manner. The effects may be modernized, but the scripting and character portrayals have suffered. I cannot abide the captain. Kirk was and is my favorite ST character. One of the reasons I found ST: The Motion Picture so obnoxious was because of Kirk's character. He had become the pompous bureaucrat that he so despised in the series. This is the way I see the captain in the new series.

The plots I have managed to glimpse have

not been anything worthy of the Star Trek name. I fully admit I have not watched the series enough to cast a real vote on its quality, but I think that when the series cannot hold my attention, or create enough of a liking on my part for me to watch it more than a few minutes, there is something wrong. It is not the ST for which I have a fondness in my heart.

Bob Rodgers: It seems the big problem with the new series is that it has too many main characters. You never get to know any one of them well enough for the character to get interesting. The old series had Kirk, Spock, McCoy, Scotty, and minor characters. The new series seems to have taken most of these and split them into two or three. For Kirk, who was both captain and led landing parties, we have Picard and Ryker. For Spock, who was the half-alien, telepath and logician, we have Troi (weak telepath and half-alien), Worf (alien), and Data (logician). McCoy has been replaced by Dr. Crusher though she lacks the interplay that McCoy had with Spock. (Troi also seems to have one of McCoy's functions, particularly the emotional ones.) Scotty doesn't really have a replacement, though Wesley (ugh!) seems to be developing in that direction. Yar and La-Forge don't seem to have any parallels with the original set of characters.

I haven't given up on the new series yet. As new episodes appear, the characters are being developed more and there is the rumor that Tasha Yar will be killed off, though by the time this reaches print, everybody will know for sure. (For a more interesting view of her, see the April 88 Playboy. Granddaddy Bing must be spinning in his grave.)

The Walking Dead

Tom Digby: The article on Boris Karloff and The Walking Dead mentions bringing an executed criminal (unjustly executed, but still...) back to life. Imagine the legal ramifications. There is probably no specific law on the books against such an endeavor, but only because lawmakers had not considered such a thin possible. I wonder what recourse the state would have beyond executing the criminal again (assuming he was guilty) and suing the scientist who revived him for the cost of the second arrest and execution. And if the revived criminal remains at large, can the scientist be arrested for causing a public nuisance?

I'm reminded of something I read about some ancient society that punished criminals by cutting off their noses. Someone developed a plastic-surgery operation to restore something resembling a normal nose. A court ruled that the operation was legal for criminals because, in those preanesthetic days, the patient suffered enough from the operation to make up for having his nose back.

Wanted: Dead or Alive

Jay Sullivan: Joel Rosenberg's succinct comments in writing of Dale Skran's review of Wanted: Dead or Alive touched a nerve: the entire Middle East seems overpopulated with terrorists and those who cheer them on,

from the mobs in the streets of Tehran to the terrorist-hijackers of the Kuwaiti airliner who, as I write, are still holding the majority of their hostages in Algiers, after having sent a message to the world by beating and killing passengers. I have as much compassion for them as I do for Charles Manson.

The Warrior and the Sorceress

David Thayer/Teddy Harvia: I laughed out loud at Laura Todd's letter of comment. I missed the film The Warrior and the Sorceress, but I must admit that the main reason I watch such movies is to see scantily clad women in action. But only if they are seductive. Your placement of the male nude was a wicked editorial touch.

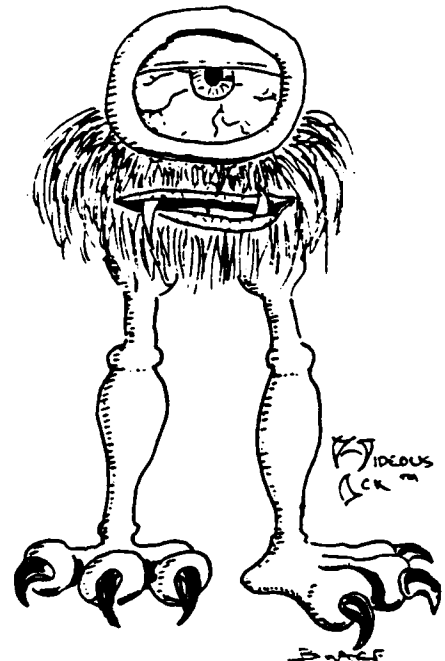
The Witches of Eastwick

Bob Rodgers: The big weakness I saw in this movie was that the parts didn't exactly fit together. Up to the last twenty minutes, it was a rather elegant fable, beautifully photographed and well-acted as all fables should be, though I never figured out the point of it all. The movie then turned into a special-effects extravaganza, totally different in tone from the rest of the movie.

FANZINE REVIEWS

Ben Schilling: I can probably find someone who reads Swedish, but I'm not too sure they'd be willing to do a translation. My Swedish is limited to the important phrases like, "I don't speak Swedish, do you speak English?" "Where's the bathroom?" and "Please speak slowly, thank you."

John Thiel: Samizdat was an old apa publication written in English; I'm surprised to see a strange title like that duplicated. I wonder what FAPA would think? It seems to have influenced two publications, for I see another one called Xamixdat.



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Here are the addresses of the contributors
to this issue of Lan's Lantern.

Clifton Amsbury
768 Amador St.
Richmond, CA 94805

Bob Barger
108 Thornton Ave
Chattanooga, TN 37411

Gerri Balter
1381 North Pascal Street
St. Paul, MN 55108

Allan Beatty
PO Box 1906
Ames, IA 50010

Eric Bentcliffe
17 Riverside Crescent
Holmes Chapel,
Cheshire CW4 7NR
UNITED KINGDOM

Ruth Berman
2809 Drew Avenue S.
Minneapolis, MN 55416

Sheryl Birkhead
23629 Woodfield Rd.
Gaithersburg, MD 20879

Mark Blackman
1745 E. 18th St. #4A
Brooklyn, NY 11229

Robert Bloch
2111 Sunset Crest Dr.
Los Angeles, CA 90046

Alex Bouchard
23120 Tawas
Hazel Park, MI 48030

P.L. Caruthers-Montgomery
2629 Norwood Avenue
Anniston, AL 36201

Ann Cecil
2966 Voelkel Ave
Pittsburgh, PA 15216

Darlene Coltrain
PO Box 13
Monticello, IA 52310

Glen Cook
4106 Flora Pl.
St. Louis, MO 63110

Buck Coulson
5677 W 500N
Hartford City, IN 47348

L. Sprague de Camp
278 Hothorpe Lane
Villanova, PA 19085

Fr. James Deaconson
Box 566
Pound, VA 24279

Tom Digby
1800 Rice St.
Los Angeles, CA
90042-1150

Thomas Easton
Box 705, RFD 2
Belfast, ME 04915

Janice M. Eisen
225 State St. #454
Schenectady, NY 12305

Kurt Erichsen
2539 Scottwood Ave
Toledo, OH 43610

Dennis K. Fischer
366 N. Spaulding Ave., #12
Los Angeles, CA 90036

Brad Foster
4109 Pleasant Run
Irving, TX 75038

Diane Fox
Box 1194 PO
North Sydney, NSW
2059 AUSTRALIA

Nola Frame
933-B Maple Avenue
Inglewood, CA 90301

Lisa C. Freitag
5721 Ridgecrest Dr. 302
Peoria, IL 61615

Kathleen Gallagher
1840 Camden Ave #207
Los Angeles, CA 90025

Dave Gorecki
9129 W. 167th St.
Orland Hills, IL 60477

Harriet Goren
72-15 37th Avenue
Jackson Heights, NY 11372

Jim Harris
3596 Walker #6
Memphis, TN 38111

Teddy Harvia
7209 DeVille
N. Richland Hills, TX 76180

Hank Heath
5117 NW 5th St.
Miami, FL 33126

Greg Hills
GPO Box 972 G
Melbourne 3001
AUSTRALIA

Cheryl Horn
USPB 33107
Wright Patterson AFB,
Ohio 45433

Cathy Howard
PO Box 70104
Louisville, KY 40270

Thea Hutcheson
4184 S. Decatur
Englewood, CO 80110

Ben Indick
428 Sagamore Ave.
Teaneck, NJ 07666

Tom Jackson
1109 Cherry
Lawton, OK 73507

Fred Jakobcic
113 West Ohio Apt. 4
Marquette, MI 49855

Terry Jeeves
230 Bannerdale Road
Sheffield,
ENGLAND S11 9FE

Jean Lamb
4846 Derby Place
Klamath Falls, OR 97603

Linda Leach
20190 Milburn
Livonia, MI 48152

Craig Ledbetter
1 Yorkshire Ct.
Richardson, TX 75081

Mark & Evelyn Leeper
80 Lakeridge Dr.
Mattawan, NJ 07747

Sam & Mary Long
Box 7423
Springfield, IL 62791

Gary Lovisi
c/o Gryphon Publications
Brooklyn, NY 11228

Meg MacDonald
609 E. 11 Mile Rd. #12
Royal Oak, MI 48067

Jim Mann
12 Shady Lane Ave
Northboro, MA 01581

Jeanne Mealy
4157 Lyndale Ave S.
Minneapolis, MN 55409

Rick McCollum
2422 Clifton Ave., Flr. 1
Cincinnati, OH 45219

Jamie McQuinn
18 Salmer #9
Pontiac, MI 48053-1973

Juanne Michaud
205 Cosburn Ave, Apt 103
Toronto, Ontario
M4J 2L4 CANADA

Chris Miller
c/o AVON Books
105 Madison Avenue
New York, NY 10016

Perry Glen Moore
1326 Burton Valley Road
Nashville, TN 37215

Bill Nichols
122-C Nicholas St.
Elizabethtown, KY 42701

Terry O'Brien
7303 Tanbark Lane
Ft. Wayne, IN 46815

Mark L. Olson
10 Shawmut Terrace
Framingham, MA 01701

David Palmer
608 Forest St.
Alachua, FL 32615

David Palter
137 Howland Ave
Toronto, Ontario
CANADA M5R 3B4

Lloyd Penney
412-22 Riverwood Pkwy
Toronto, Ontario
CANADA M8Y 4E1

Tullio Proni
Isher Enterprises
530 W. Walnut
Kalamazoo, MI 49007

John Purcell
4552 Cinnamon Ridge Trail
Eagan, MN 55122

Mike Resnick
10547 Tanager Hills Dr.
Cincinnati, OH 45249

Paula Robinson
2422 Clifton Ave., Flr. 1
Cincinnati, OH 45219

Robert J. Rodgers
PO Box 31013
Aurora, CO 80041

Chug Von Rospach
160 Pasito Terrace #712
Sunnyvale, CA 94086

Robert Sabella
2 Natalie Drive
Budd Lake, NJ 07828

Tom Sadler
422 W. Maple Ave.
Adrian, MI 49221

Jessica Amanda Salmonson
PO Box 20610
Seattle, WA 98102

Ben Schilling
45605 Fox Lane E
Apt. 206
Utica, MI 48087-4228

David M. Shea
2-B Ridgebury Ct
Baltimore, MD 21207

John F. Snyder
5 DSCS/PSC Box 114
APO SF 96287-0006

David & Diana Stein
1325 Key West
Troy, MI 48083

Milt Stevens
7234 Capps Ave
Reseda, Ca 91335

Jay Sullivan
4514 Lilac Road
South Euclid, OH 44121

Sally Syrjala
PO Box 149
Centerville, MA 02632

Roy Tackett
915 Green Valley Road NW
Albuquerque, NM 87107

Robert Teague
1900 Clay Avenue
Panama City, FL 32405

David Thayer
7209 Deville
Ft. Worth, TX 76180

John Thiel
30 North 19th
Lafayette, IN 47904

Don & Maggie Thompson
The Comic Buyer's Guide
700E. State St.
Iola, WI 54990

Jim Thompson
3202 Andrea
Dallas, TX 75228

Laura Todd
404 Brower Ave
Oaks, PA 19456

Jeff Tolliver
305A E. 19th Ave
Columbus, OH 43201

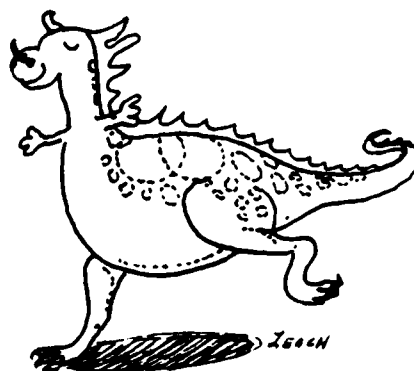
Phil Tortorici
PO #057487
West Palm Beach, FL 33405

Bill Unger
800 E. Franklin Ave.
Columbus, OH 43205

Bill Ware
1233 Surry Pl
Cleburne, TX 76031

Alan White
455 E. 7th, Sp. 4
San Jacinto, CA 92383

Martin Morse Wooster
PO Box 8093
Silver Spring, MD 20907



I also heard from the following people -- at cons, over the phone, quick notes and postcards, letters not published, etc. The list is long, and I probably missed a few people in putting this together.

Clifton Amsbury
Harry Andruschak
Heather Ashby
Isaac Asimov
T.K. Atherton
Gerri Balter
Tom Barber
Martha Beck
Rose Beetem
Eric Bentcliffe
Mark Bernstein
Martha Berry
Lloyd Biggle, Jr
Sheryl Birkhead

Joanne Bloom
Bill Bowers
Jack Brooks
Lois McMaster Bujold
Bruce Burdick
Orson Scott Card
P.L. Caruthers-
Montgomery
Bill Cavin
Ann Cecil
Cy Chauvin
Rob Chilson
Ravi Chopra
Craig Chrissinger

Chris Clayton
Fred Cleaver
Kathleen Conat
Wendy Council
Bob Cowie
Michele Cox
Dave D'Amassa
Scott Dennis
Jane Dennis
Tom Digby
Alan Dormire
Julia Ecklar
Tara Edwards
Jim & June Enlow

Farmington Community
Library
Dennis Fischer
Clif Flynt
Steven Fox
Don Franson
Greg Frederick
Gil Gaier
Kathleen Gallagher
Philippe Gauthier
Chris Gilpin
Steve Glennon
Mike Glicksohn
Mike Glyer
M.E. Goldhammer
Dvauid Gorecki
Nick Grasse
Alan Greenberg
Bob Greene

Liz Gross
 Josh Grosse
 Joan Hanke-woods
 Hanila Harding
 Laura Harding
 James Harris
 Terry Harris
 Teddy Harvia
 Rusty Hevelin
 Lynn Hickman
 Colin Hinz
 Arthur Hlavaty
 Cheryl Horn
 Doug Houseman
 Cathy Howard
 Steve Hudson
 Tanya Huff
 Thea Hutcheson
 Ben Indick
 Tom Jackson
 Joyce Jensen
 Frank Johnson
 Michael Kube-McDowell
 Rich Lamb
 Dean Lambe
 Gary Laskowski
 George Laskowski Sr
 Sophie Laskowski
 Roy Lavender
 Ruth & Rin Lessard
 Lisa Leutheuser
 Jacqueline Lichtenberg
 Sam & Mary Long
 Doug Lott
 Danny Low
 Dick & Nicki Lynch
 Carol Lynn
 Meg MacDonald
 Paul Maita
 Jim & Laurie Mann
 Stacy McDermott

Roxanne Meida
 Margaret Middleton
 Paula Morgan
 Murray Moore
 Janice Morningstar
 Mueller, Pat
 Robin Nakkula
 Kathy Nerat
 The Neilsen Haydens
 Terry O'Brien
 Anna O'Connell
 Mark Olson
 Frank Olynyk
 Elizabeth Osborne
 John Owen
 Polly Jo Peterson
 Fred Pohl
 Sharon Porath
 Mary Price
 Joanne Radelt
 Mitch Radelt
 Barnaby Rapoport
 Mike & Carol Resnick
 Neil Rest
 Roger Reus
 Ted Reynolds
 Peter Roberts
 Paula Robinson
 Bob Rodgers

Jan & Tim Rotarius
 David Shea
 David Schafer
 Karen Schafer
 Steve & Fran Scherer
 Bruce Schneider
 Sandy Schreiber
 David Shea
 Susan Schwartz
 Carol & Van Siegling
 Steve Simmons
 Pat & Roger Sims
 David Singer
 Skel
 Marian Skupski
 Wally Smart
 Joe Sokola
 Keith Soltys
 Dick Spelman
 Pam Spurlock
 David Stein
 Diana Stein
 Duane Stuck
 Bill Sutton
 Chris & Pat Swartout
 Sally A. Syrjala

Robert Teague
 Charlie Terry
 Vince Tessier
 David Thayer
 John Thiel
 Don C. Thompson
 Phil Tortorici
 Richard Tucholka
 R Laurraine Tutihasi
 Polly Vedder
 Chug Von Rospach
 Elisabeth Vonarberg
 Michael Waite
 Bill Ware
 Jeff Welch
 Don Wentzl
 Brad Westervelt
 Mel. White
 Denis & Judy Wilemski
 Annabel Wilson
 Hania Wojtowicz
 Ruth Woodring
 James Woodruff
 Tim & Anna Zahn

