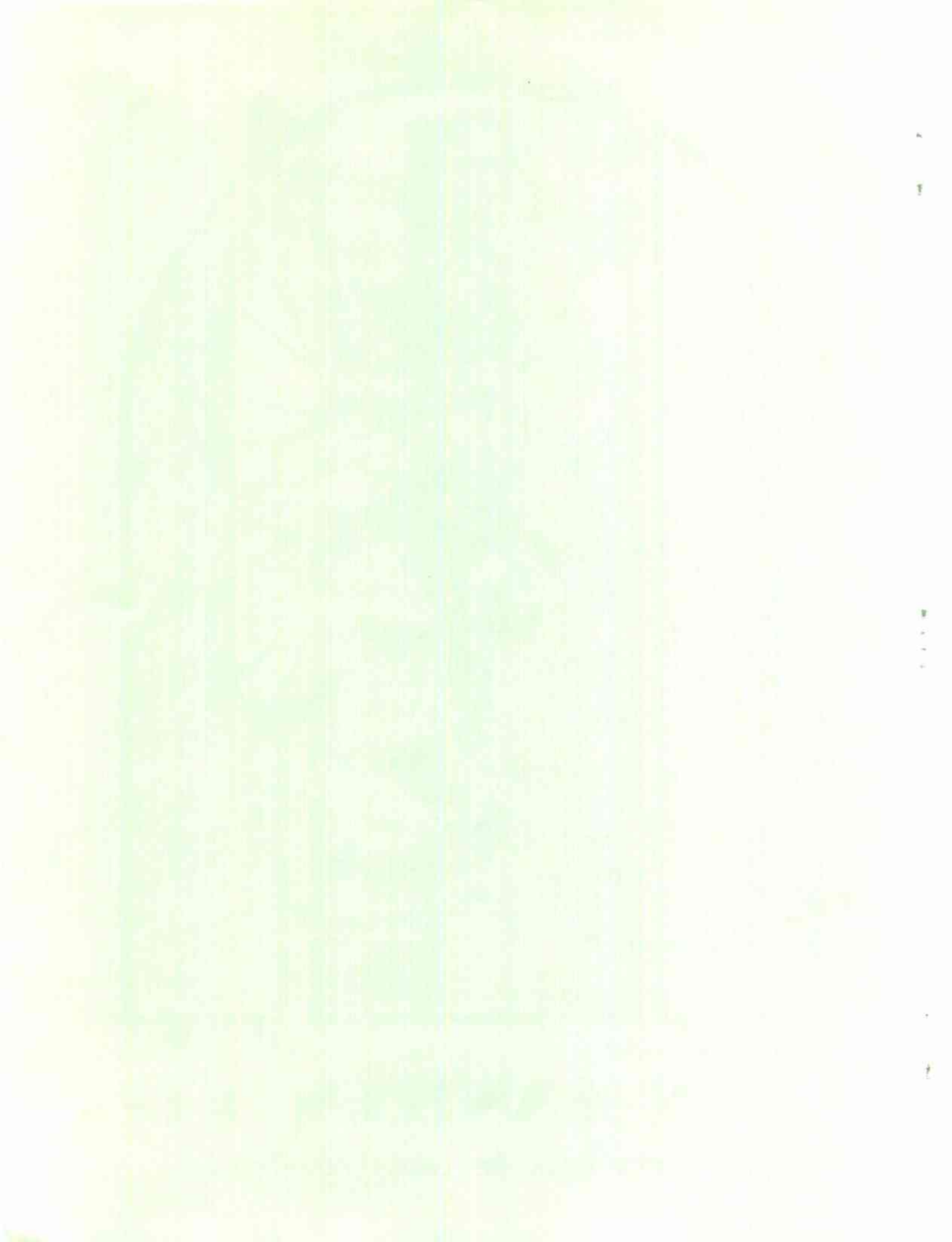




CHARTON
1989

LAN'S LANTERN #42

Conreports-Book Reviews-Travelogues



LAN'S LANTERN #42

Contents

Cover:	Heather Bruton
Tables of contents, artists; colophon.....	1
From the Editor: Changes.....	Lan....2
Iberia.....	Ben P. Indick....3
The Case of the Phantom Tale.....	Anthony Ravenscroft...13
1993 Short Fiction Award Nominees.....	Mark Bernstein...14
Travels with Dennis.....	Dennis Caswell...16
Rock Music as Science Fiction.....	Pete Grubbs...20
Chumatsky Shkyah: The Ukranian National SF Convention.....	
	Michael McKenny...30
Three Questions.....	Dave Creek...31
The Lost Worlds of Science Fiction: Murray Leinster.....	
	Robert Sabella...32
Confluence '93: Through the Eyes of a Newcomer....	Lynn McMillen...34
The Boston Tea Party: The Joys of Foreign Travel...Terry Jeeves...36	
Thinking Sideways (from CHAMBANACON 1992).....	Andrew Offutt...38
CONTEXT VI Writing Contest Winners.....	46
Short Story: "Silver" by Helen E. Davis.....	46
Poetry: "A Bar Tale" by Tom Sadler.....	50
Limerick: "The Satyr" by Betty Gaines.....	50
The Tunnel Chute Rapids.....	Harry Cameron Andruschak...51
Wine of Wisdom.....	Thomas A. Easton...52
Conreports and Ramblings 42: March 1993 to February 1994...Lan....53	
Faery Tales for Writers: "The Shoemaker and the Elves".....	
	by Lawrence Schimel...76
PULP and CELLULOID: Book, film, & tape reviews by lots of people..77	
Post Scriptings.....	Letters from Readers...128
A List of Those Lan Heard From.....	149
Addresses of the Contributors.....	150

TABLE OF ARTISTS

Sheryl Birkhead - 35B, 65, 134, 141
Heather Bruton - Cover
P.L. Caruthers-Montgomery (Calligraphy) - 1, 2
Cat - 13, 36, 50, 54, 55, 56, 60, 61, 62, 68, 75
Brad Foster - 52, 72, 119
Ian Gunn - 16, 18, 19, 59, 78, 83, 90, 95, 145, 150
Terry Jeeves - 63, 66, 70, 73, 77, 142, 143
Allen Koszowski - 120
Dale Maple - 79, 81,
Lore Ann Parent - 23, 25, 28, 38, 41, 42, 44
Tullio Prati - 33, 37, 48, 51, 87, 89, 105
Peggy Ranson - 84, 88, 102, 108, 112, 121, 127
Diana Harlan Stein - 46, 100, 133, 136, 140
Ruth Thompson - 96
Phil Tortorici - 35T, 64, 69
Bill Ware - 116, 118, 124, 130, 131

Why You Are Receiving This

- ☐ Contribution (art, article, review, loc) in this issue
- ☐ Contribution (art, article, review) received, to be used in a future issue
- ☐ Comment or loc received (it may be published in a future issue)
- ☐ Trade ☒ You wanted one
- ☐ We're in an apa together
- ☐ Mentioned in Letter Column
- ☐ Your book, zine, or tape is reviewed (see page 77/8 for index)
- ☐ Mentioned in my Conreports & Ramblings
- ☒ I thought you might find this interesting.
- ☐ This is your last issue unless you do something
- ☒ Please contribute to the Hal Clement and/or Bob Tucker Specials

Dedication

To Maia, as usual,
and
In memory of Vincent Price

LAN'S LANTERN #42 is published and edited by George "Lan" Laskowski, 1306 Cherokee, Royal Oak, MI 48067-3386 USA. Phone (810) 544-1161. LAN'S LANTERN is available for articles, art, letters of comment, even money (US\$5 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 #28, a division of Lan-Shack Press Unlimited. LAN'S LANTERN #42 is copyright (c) May, 1994, by George J Laskowski Jr., except where otherwise noted. Contributions (art, articles, reviews, letters) become the property of Lan-Shack Press, but will be returned upon request. All rights return to the contributors upon publication. Business manager: Maia Cowan.

George J. Laskowski, Jr.
1306 Cherokee
Royal Oak, MI 48067-3386
USA

From the Editor

CHANGES

by Lan

Changes. There have been a lot of them for Maia and myself in the past year. When you read through my "Conreports and Ramblings" (page 53), you will read about most of them. Probably the most significant change was moving off the Cranbrook Educational Community campus into our own house.

Those who have been on the mailing list of *Lan's Lantern* for any length of time should have received a postcard with the CoA notice. About 75 came back. And those addresses have either been corrected or deleted. Others who get this issue might have been alert enough to spot the change notice on the title page, or the return address if you got this in the mail. Needless to say this move has been an important step in becoming independent of my workplace. I still travel back to school in the evenings occasionally to finish up work, but much less so than before. So far the house has been easy to take care of, but summer is coming on and I know there will be lots of work to do.

Another change is the appearance of *Lan's Lantern*. You might notice a few differences in this one, but as this particular page indicates (this is the last page I'm doing for #42), I have a new word-processing program that I have been learning, and I will be using MS Word for the next issue. I have much to learn, and Maia has been pretty patient while teaching me the basics. I've been practicing with this program on letters and in the apas I'm in, so I can feel more comfortable when I start the next zine.

Maia's health has also changed--for the better. Although she has not completely recovered from the Chronic Fatigue Syndrome viruses, she has improved significantly. For that I am very grateful. And she is continuing to improve.

Another change will be happening soon. I've resigned to becoming hooked up to the computer nets. Since my good friend Andrea Yeomans is moving from Michigan to Cincinnati, probably the easiest and cheapest way to keep in touch would be the nets.

Another small change is the cost of produc-

ing *Lan's Lantern*. Thus, effective this issue, the price is \$5 per copy. Those who have paid for issues in advance already will not be affected until that runs out.

I am sure other changes are coming as well, and I hope that I will be able to meet them without too much trouble.

One thing that probably won't change--*Lan's Lantern* will be late.

In This Issue

There are several interesting items in this issue, not the least of which is the "kick-off" article by Ben Indick, "Iberia". Pete Grubbs offers a look at Rock Music and Science Fiction, and there are a lot of little items scattered through-out these pages. I did get the lettercolumn done this time, so there are comments--severely edit-ed (though you may not think so) to fit into the space of 23 pages. And I did find a few more letters which will have to carry over into the next issue. As it is, there are comments on *Lan's Lantern* #39, 40 and 41. And there's all the usual features as well (lots of book, film and tape reviews--along with a special section of essays on books and films).

So please, read and enjoy.

In Future Issues

I am still looking for more articles and art and such for the special on Hal Clement and Wilson "Bob" Tucker. Please, do **contribute** if you have something to say about these fine gentlemen and writers.

Several people responded to Bob Sabella's "Do You Remember?" article, and those will be in the next issue. Also, Dennis Fishcer will have an article about "Zero-G Sex". And there are a few other things I have on file that have been collecting dust in the classroom. I do need to get them into the pages of the *Lantern*.

So please write, contribute, and enjoy *Lan's Lantern*.

IBERIA

by Ben P. Indick

PREFACE: A Tourist's Life

One of the advantages of growing older and retiring is, as long as one is relatively healthy and can afford an occasional splurge, to take tours of faraway places. Places one has dreamed of, but has been too preoccupied with family and livelihood even to consider. Today the tour business does a major proportion with seniors, some of whom enjoy it so much they combine two or three tours into one vacation! And do things which they might not have dreamed about in their youth, like our trip to New Mexico in which Janet and I soared in a hot-air balloon, or in Jasper, Canada, when we went whitewater rafting! Is that the way a senior is supposed to gracefully grow old? Perhaps not, but it certainly was fun! For us one tour at a time has been enough, although sometimes we have added on extra days, as when we visited Arizona, so I could see the work of architects Frank Lloyd Wright and Paoli Soleri (the latter reported in Lan's Lantern #31).

We have had wonderful trips which I wish to each of you in your own time, these and wherever else you wish, to so many places, even, perhaps, as we did just last year, and I reported it in Lan's Lantern #41, a spectacular trip to Egypt. For us it would be tough to equal Egypt (and in today's climate that is sadly inadvisable for anyone) but Spain at least has always fascinated me. I had held off because I never found a tour which included all I wanted.

And, as you might have guessed from the nature of our trips we do not care to go somewhere, such as the Spanish islands of Majorca and Minorca, simply to rest and relax. My kids used to accuse us of running a travel agency called "Arduous Tours, Ltd." Maybe so, but we like to see things.

By chance I found a brochure from a company which I had not known, but whose tour included nearly everything. In two weeks we would cover most of the highlights of the entire peninsula, Barcelona, half a country away from Madrid, and home of Antoni Gaudi's architecture. Plus all the great cities in Spain, as well as Gibraltar and Portugal. All in fifteen days, with lots of long bus rides, too, you could bet. Yes, "arduous." So what? I have been entranced since childhood by the romantic stories of Iberia, the foolish Don Quixote, Washington Irving's Alhambran fairy tales, El Cid, the dark glowering Moors, and the gallant Christian knights. And, having learned only as an adult what schools had failed to tell me years ago, of the long and interwoven relationship of the Jews, Moors and Christians, here was an opportunity to see what remained of that once golden Jewish age half a millennium ago. We left with high hopes, and they were realized.

Barcelona and Gaudi

The trip commenced in Barcelona, and while we loved much else in Spain, nothing quite matched this enchanting and beautiful



city. Typical of other Spanish cities, indeed, of any medieval city, it is honey-combed by small lanes, neat, clean, and rimmed by ancient charming three or four story buildings, each lined with flower-bedecked balconies, terraces or ornamental cast iron rails along the windows. On a tour one is limited by the itinerary, but we did much free-time walking, and got to visit the Picasso Museum, which had examples of his work from scholastic days and an eye and finger the equal of Ingres, to maturity, about which I shall talk later. Also, an exhibition of beautiful ceramics by Miro, airy and bright (although we had to miss the larger Miro Institute, near the site of last year's Olympics).

We walked along the Rambala, a wide thoroughfare of which the center is reserved for pedestrians while small cars skim its periphery. It is beautifully paved, as are many Spanish city sidewalks, in designs and mosaics, and busy with life. One area has a group of stands selling birds and bird-cages; another has flower stands. Entertainers play here and there and a young man in a robe and white paint was an immobile living statue--until someone dropped a coin into his box. Then he moved! The weather was beautiful (we only had one half-day of rain, in Lisbon, later). Our formal bus tour would show us many of the wonders of the town, but the most wonderful was the fanciful Art-Nouveau-inspired architecture of the town's symbol, Antoni Gaudi.

The mad and marvelous architecture of Gaudi, especially his unfinished Church of the Sagrada Familia, has fascinated me since I learned of it nearly a half century ago. We could only view from the bus two of his apartment houses, one coated in wildly colorful mosaics and the other with balconies from each of which poured the most wonderfully free sculptural rails. However, we had time to wander through his compact but unique Guell Park, named for the man who offered him an open checkbook. It is one large artwork, entirely his own conception, a playground for the eye and mind.

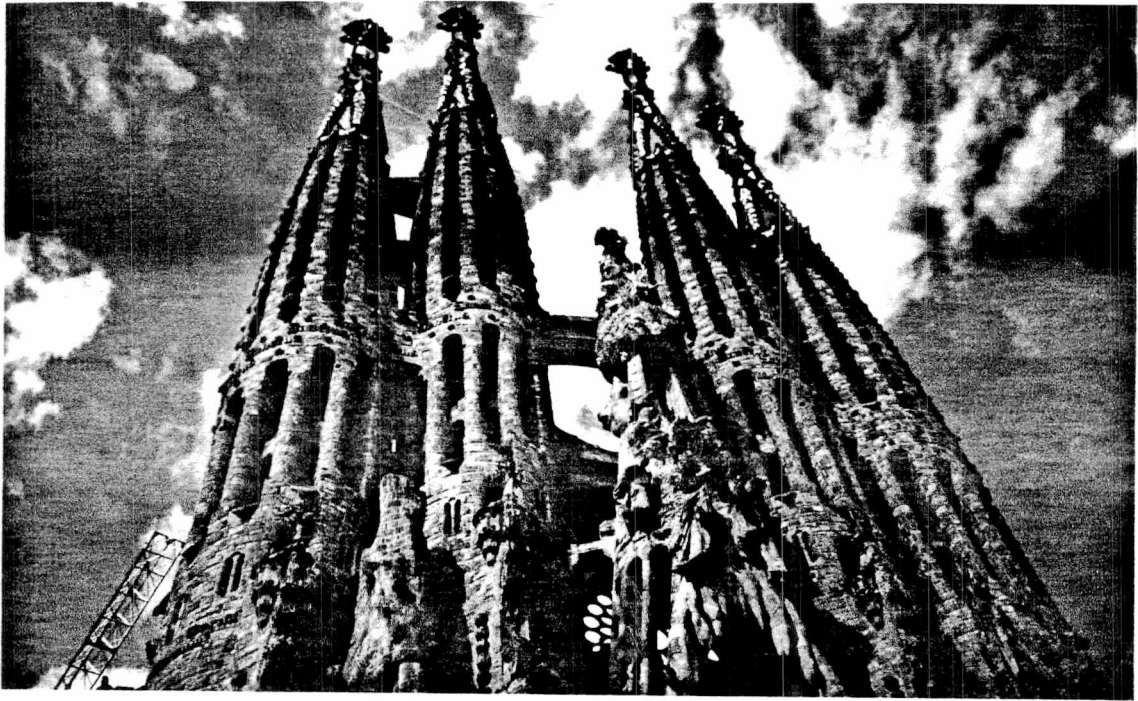
The church, in the center of town, is known for the towering knob-like towers with their mosaic tops, and its walls enclosing only open space. He commenced it in 1882 and died some 40 years later, leaving few notes. How many other cathedrals can boast to be the work of one mind, so intensely personal and visionary? It is, however, being slowly completed, and although the literature produces a maquette alleging



to be his of the total work, I am dubious, and such work as has been added seems to me to be working against his individual vision. Probably none of us will be here to see it when it is completed but I hope the spirit of Gaudi will be felt. Like Frank Lloyd Wright, he is an architect whose presence is unmistakably unique and recognizable.

The Jews of Spain

Spain has a very special significance for Jews. They lived there for over a thousand years, but it is a lost culture, with a memory of both beauty and melancholy. Traces are uncommon, but can be found, indicating how pervasive it was five hundred years ago. Discovering those traces is an act of faith and devotion to those who left them behind. Thus, when the guide took us to the Plaza del Rey, a beautiful square off the Rambala, marked on three sides by a handsome two-story building and grand build-



Gaudi's Church of the Sagrada Família, above and opposite.

dings on the street itself, she told us it had been a convent for centuries, but was today a site for artists in which to live and work. I had a splendid booklet issued by the Spanish Government Tourist Board, "A Trip Through Jewish Spain", and this told me more. Because any tourist who visits here will wonder why guides linger on this longlost culture, I shall indulge in a bit of history.

The Romans had come to Spain two centuries before Christ, and, after they were dispersed from Judea, many Jews slowly wound their way across Africa and Europe to Spain. The Visigoths replaced the Romans, but when they converted in 586 to Christianity, they persecuted the Jews. With the arrival of the Moors and Islam in 711, via Gibraltar from Africa, and their eventual conquest of the peninsula, the lot of the Jews eased. It remained generally good, indeed the 10th and 11th centuries are often referred to as a "Golden Age" of literature and learning, but later Moslem rulers were less tolerant. Jews fled to Christian Spain where they coexisted until the end of the 14th century when fanatical Christian leaders caused hatred and massacres. Many Jews converted to Catholicism, but some at least secretly retained devotion to their original faith.

When Ferdinand and Isabella conquered the Moors in the 15th century, they instituted the Inquisition to act against backsliding converts. Practicing Jews were

still being tolerated, but the monarchs decided the country could not exist other than as a single faith state and in 1492 the Jews and Moors, unless they converted, were expelled. Many Jews went to Portugal, from which they too were expelled seven years later. (I shall discuss the Moors later.) The humble synagogues which had existed in many Spanish cities were, like the Moorish mosques, converted into churches. Nearly all evidence of Jewishness was eliminated. Ironically, the expulsions were a disaster for Spain; the Moors had experience in government and the Jews were invaluable for their knowledge of financing. With her defeat in the 16th century on international fronts, Spain went into a half-millennium decline.

Tribulations and expulsions are familiar in Jewish history. Why does this one have such resonance to Jews, even to those of non-Hispanic origin? (Like Janet and myself, of middle-European "Ashkenazi" forebears.) Centuries later, there is no question that a romantic atmosphere has accrued to the "Sephardim", as Spanish Jews are still termed (after "Sepharad", a Hebrew term they applied to Spain). Furthermore, they had flourished there as had no other community of the Diaspora, possibly excepting the thousand year old Prague community, utterly destroyed by Hitler. The Jews of Eastern Europe had become indrawn, devoted to religious exegesis, and although their accomplishments in this wise are remarka-

ble, politically and intellectually they had not had the scope of their Spanish co-religionists. One can picture the latter, forced to depart without possessions other than those they could carry, leaving forever not only their homes and synagogues, but a land they loved. Often they took with the the large keys to their doors, and there are families who treasure them to this day. They also took a Spanish-derived language, Ladino, still active today, and in it still sing their plaintive and beautiful music.

In that square off the Rambala, Rabbi Nahmanides faced off against a priest (a convert) in 1488 in a famous disputation as to the divinity of Christ. The odds were stacked against him but he came off well, although a year later, accused of slander, he was forced to emigrate. Here too the first auto-da-fe of the Inquisition occurred. Up near the Olympic site is Montjuif, "The Jewish Mountain", originally a Jewish cemetery, altered into a Christian one, but the name remained. We would often find streets still bearing Jewish names in many towns. In Toledo, a lovely Moorish-designed synagogue became a church, was finally abandoned and is being restored as close as possible to its original form. One can still see a Star of David in its decorative arabesques. Other churches likewise bear reminders, not entirely effaced. Was this intentional? Did the people, perhaps, not share the vindictiveness of the government, so that many regretted seeing Jewish

friends forced out? We saw traces in Cordova, Granada, and in Seville, where, as the guide told me, "not a pebble remained of its Jewish past", I hunted up a small church which had been a synagogue and found its exterior, above an added Gothic portal, to be painted mock-marble blocks; no synagogue dared be ostentatious, and this was typical.

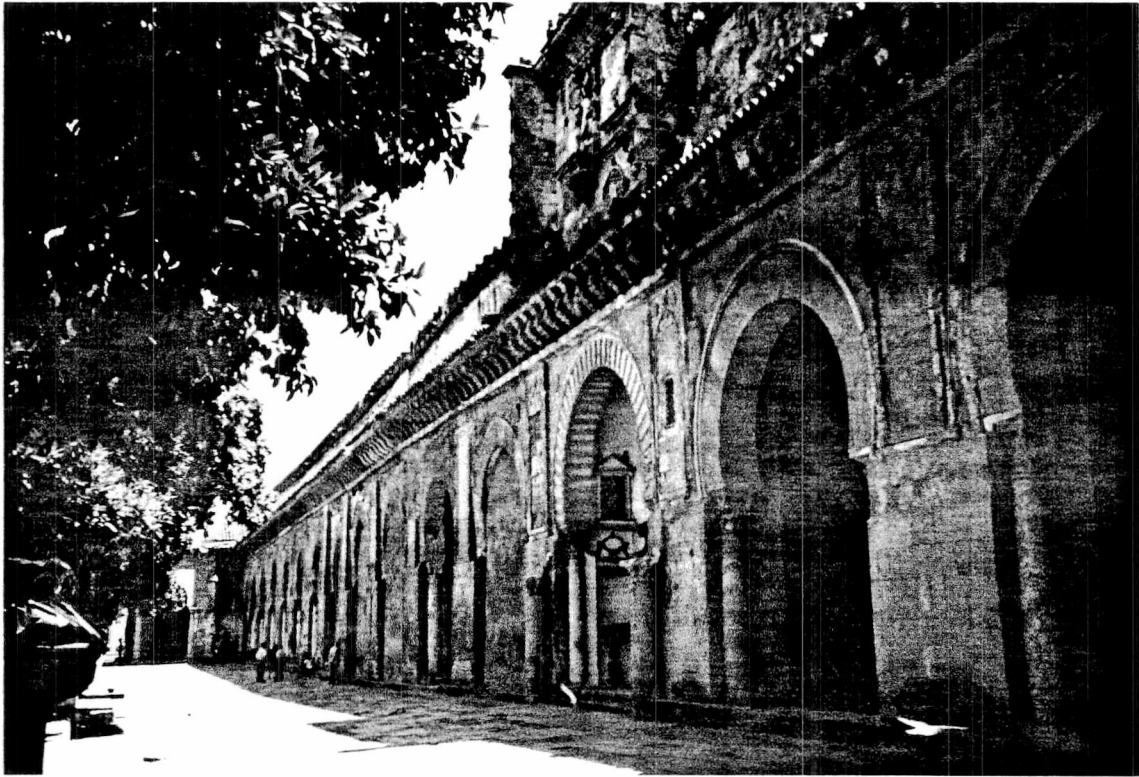
In 1869, a constitutional change allowed Jews to return. Several thousand eventually made their way over from Morocco. Thousands more, refugees from Hitler and Vichy France, escaped across the Pyrenees Mountains to Spain. Incredibly, and in dangerous opposition to the demands of Hitler, Spain's dictator Franco not only gave safe haven to the French refugees, but, and this is documented, his embassies in Yugoslavia and Greece actually saved many more Jewish lives by granting them Spanish passports on the basis that, as Sephardim, they had never ceased possessing Spanish citizenship, and were safely removed to Spain. Today, Spain's Jewish population has reached 25,000. They generally do not live in the historic areas, and probably look at them as does any tourist.

Moorish Spain

After the Moors had crossed the Mediterranean Sea into Spain, this warlike people, probably Berbers (North Africans not quite Arab and not blacks either), were followed

Toledo: Hebrew lettering still visible from a synagogue converted into a church.





In Cordova: A mosque/cathedral.

by Arab armies. Spain was then fractured into city-states over most of which the Moors gained control and would retain it for 700 years. Fighting between them and Christians among them and in states to the North was frequent, but they also contributed their own sense of artistic and architectural beauty forever to the scene, as well as their intellectual curiosity. Their palaces and mosques remain as beautiful and exquisite memories, with delicate carving of walls and ceilings, graceful arches and lovely gardens. Also, the need for defense left behind hundreds of fortress castles, and few are the hilltops which do not bear the ruins of one, often surrounded by a village and a later-added church.

Cordova has an extraordinary mosque, covering a very wide area, its roof supported by innumerable arches on a double level. In the midst of this expanse the conquering Christians constructed a great cathedral; although the latter has no place within a mosque, the two co-exist with esthetic ease. Seville still retains a beautiful Moorish palace, the Alcazar, very well-preserved. However, the most famous of these fabled palaces lies in the mountains above Granada, the Alhambra, a perfect dream of Islamic artistic splendor, built around 1300. It had, by the early nineteenth century, fallen into disrepair, but its mysteries and associations appealed to an ima-

ginative American diplomatic aide who had a way with words. Washington Irving spent some months living in the ancient structure along with gypsies, vagrants and animals, and in his "Tales of the Alhambra" wrote one of the great travel books, combining it with many delightful stories and fables of the Moors. His book became an international success and contributed to saving this brilliant and irreplaceable treasure.

Today it is nearly monochromatic, in its many chambers and screened balconies where once the women of the Harem lay, attended by their eunuchs. In its prime, however, it was resplendently colored and traces may be seen within its intricate carving. A Renaissance palace was erected within it in a later century by Catholic monarch King Charles, but otherwise the Alhambra has been saved and restored so that it is for the most part intact, along with its superbly laid out gardens, the Generalife, which guides hasten to point out is not an insurance company, but is pronounced "hen-er-a-li-fe". Irving's role is memorialized on a plaque at the entrance, along with the dates 1859-1959. I could find no explanation for the dates. His book was published in 1823, and he died within the 19th century.

Nearly 500 years after their entry into and conquest of Spain, the Moors were expelled when Ferdinand and Isabella complet-

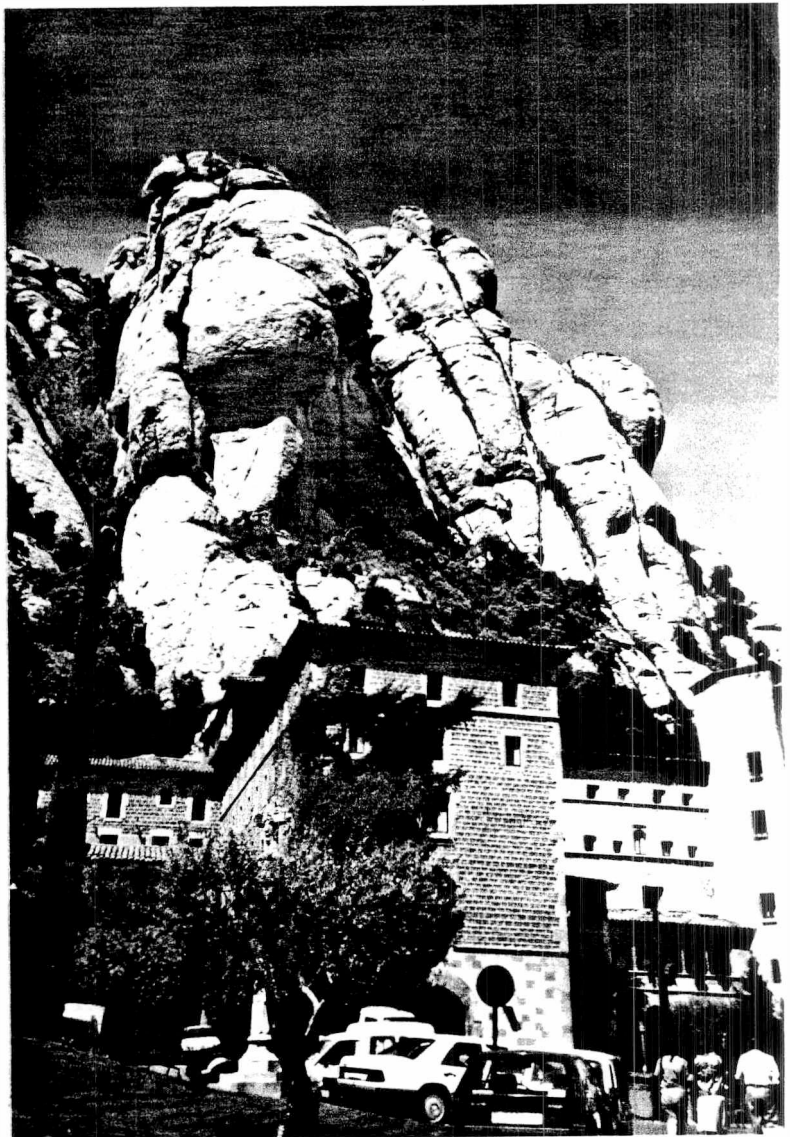
ed their conquest and the permanent union into a whole of the separate city-states of Spain. It was, ironically, the same year, 1492, as the expulsion of the Jews, whose life as part of Spain had commenced almost one and a half millennia earlier. Yet, while the history of the subsequent wanderings and resettling of the Jews elsewhere is well established, the conquering and conquered Moors had a different fate altogether. Irving, whose stories featured Moorish ghosts and Moorish treasures which taunted fortune-hunters, and also portrayed the gentle final Moorish leader, Boadil, who surrendered to Alhambra and Moorish power forever, and whose mother, told of his act, bitterly reproached him, "Better you should have made a sepulchre of it!", wrote compassionately of this people:

Never was the annihilation of a people more complete.... Where are they? as the shores of Barbary and its desert places.... They have not even left a distinct name behind them, though for nearly eight centuries they were a distinct people.... A few broken monuments are all that remain to bear witness to their power and dominion.... Such is the Alhambra, a Moslem pile in the midst of a Christian land, an Oriental palace amidst the Gothic edifices of the West, an elegant memento of a brave, intelligent and graceful people who conquered, ruled and passed away.

The Tour

Outside Barcelona is Monserrat, a monastery 2500 feet high on a knobby rock mountain which climbs an extra 1500 feet and whose ricky shapes must have influenced the religious Gaudi. Its church is famous for a wooden carving, a little smaller than life-size, seated, of a "black madonna", actually a very dark brown, with an exquisitely carved face. It is encased within beautifully chased silver and gold and the devout genuflect humbly. Three boys, the story goes, centuries ago found the statue in the woods of the mountain while playing. They tried to carry it home, the story continues, but after a bit it could not be budged, as though it willed to remain. The awed villagers decided a monastery must be built on the spot. It is a lovely tale, and one can put aside the trappings of a cynic-

The Manserat Monastery, looking to the mountain top.



al society to overhear a concerned tourist ask whether the statue had the precious coverings when the boys found it. Once back on ground level my own jaundiced view is that a hermit who liked to whittle came home to his cabin on the hill one day and cursed a blue streak when he found someone had swiped his sculpture of a young woman.

Toledo, our next stop, is a marvelous, even breath-takingly medieval city, as seen from a hill across the river that circles much of it. Its simple buildings huddle around its ancient cathedral whose spire stands tall in this city which is wholly landmarked against alteration. It is a gothic city-painting come alive, a time-trip. like a first view of Bruges in Belgium, or Florence of the old city of Jerusalem. In Toledo we visited several churches which had once been synagogues. Here my camera batteries died on me, but, given the miraculous nature of the place, came back



The Prado, Madrid.

briefly to life for three pictures of the former synagogue and some Jewish markings still extant, and then died for keeps. I felt helpless without my camera, and missed taking views here and later in Cordova, although I did replace them there.

Madrid, Spain's capital city, is large and busy, a city of broad boulevards and gracious parks, but without the unique individuality of a Paris or Rome. It does have a grand Royal palace, too grand for Spain's rather humble King and Queen, who reside elsewhere and leave the place for tourists and an occasional visiting dignitary such as Pope John Paul, who arrived just after we had left. It also has the Prado, one of the world's great museums. We had hoped to have plenty of time here as well as others of Madrid's artistic attractions, but it was Sunday and everything either was closed up or closed at 2 PM. Much of Spain closes down at 2 PM every day anyway--for siesta--and reopens later, but not on Sunday.

Since the tour went to the Prado first, we had to ignore the guide, who was leisurely explaining to the group the frame and the artist's life. We used our two hours for a running tour of the place. Fortunately I was prepared and knew what we wanted to see, and, because the Prado is relatively small, we were able to see almost 95% of the must-see masterpieces. Not speaking Spanish, I would simply bark out, e.g.,

"Bosch" or "Albrecht Durer", to the guards who would point us on our way. It worked well. This was led off by Velazquez's great "Les Meninas", the huge multi-charactered painting with the doll-like hoopskirted princess in the center. In Barcelona we had seen at the Picasso Museum the great Catalan's black and white oil version, wildly translated into his own terms, and then a series of colorful explosions of the theme, a magnificent tribute from one genius to another.

In Cordova I fidgeted cameraless in the Great Mosque, but got new batteries in time to photograph a fine sculpture of Maimonides, the great 11th century Jewish philosopher, who lived here and wrote "A Guide to the Perplexed". Inasmuch as the sculpture was created only thirty years ago, it is presumably not a likeness but the intention is nice and indicative of the attitude of the government toward its lost people. Of the numerous fine Greco paintings we saw in several cities, perhaps the greatest the enigmatic Greek immigrant left is here, in a small chapel by itself, a scene of the risen Christ, his mother, angels, and, among others, Greco himself and the painting's donors.

We drove on, admiring the mountains, of which Spain has the second most in Europe, but as we drove South were receding in favor of checkerboard fields and hills with olive groves, vineyards and broad fields of

golden sunflowers, speckled with the occasional red of poppy flowers growing wild. We entered Granada, a busy town with a weak business center. Together with the Alhambra and the popular song immortalizing it, Granada has a romantic air which for a tourist does not dissipate. It did not hurt at all when an appropriately dressed trio of bravos with guitars strode into our dinner, mariachi band-like and entertained us. It goes without saying I bought the CD they then proffered. And I love it! Another night and on we go.

We continued to the Spanish Riviera, and Torremolinos on the Costa del Sol, on the Mediterranean. It is one of a string of towns which, but for the orange-tiled roofs, could pass for Highway A1A on the east Florida coast, all built up with big apartment houses. I swam briefly in the Sea itself, but feared pollution. The ladies are topless, but none tempted my gaze. Of many sleepy villages we would see and pass through, one proved to be especially beautiful: Mijas, atop a mountain near the coast, with a spectacular view of the sea. Its central square is filled with beautiful blue jacaranda trees and donkey carts, pristine tiled lanes and white-washed houses clinging together and classy shops as befits a tourist stop. Janet carefully studied an original signed piece of jewelry for major pesetoes by Dali but when she failed to accuse me of "never buying me anything" I knew she did not really care for it. And the ubiquitous bull ring. We saw no bull-fights, as Janet would not hear of it, but TV shows them. We had frequently passed fields whose sole purpose was to graze herds of the handsome animals, prior to their final fifteen minutes of fame.

We drove down the Spanish A1A to Gibraltar, soon spotting the characteristic shape, rising abruptly from the coast. We had to go through Customs and were at once transported to England, while the rock towered high above us, echoed clearly visible some fifteen miles across the straits by an outcrop in Morocco, Africa. We drove up the rock by cab, visiting the extensive caves of St. Michael near its height, also seeing WW II gun emplacements and memories of wartime visits by Churchill and Eisenhower. In one area, fenced in, nearly 100 "Barbary Apes" (tailless apes), cavort, their presence insuring, by legend, the continued presence of the British as well as the continued annoyance of the Spanish government. A lone Tommy guards the City Hall, snapping

Seville: Alcazar.



to attention and marching back and forth every few minutes, while across the street unemployed Spanish workers sit glumly with protest banners. Tourists scurry to buy Lladro porcelain sculptures, which are plentifully available at every single tourist shop here and elsewhere.

Seville was a long drive and was 105 degrees in mid-June, but it proved to be a rewardingly beautiful and gracious city. Parks and gardens abound, fountains, the grand Moorish palace of the Alcazar, also the vast cathedral, its roof a maze of flying buttresses. We saw the ancient Jewish quarter, still labeled so, as in the other cities, but no evidence of a synagogue-turned-church. I asked the guide about one in my book. He apologized and told me, as I related earlier, about its total lack of Jewish identity. Indeed, a gothic portal had been added over the door. Nevertheless, that afternoon, map and book in hand, I forced Janet to trudge through the heat and

The Cross over Franco's Tomb at the Valley of the Fallen.



the scores of tiny criss-crossing lanes, until at last we found it. It was a Saturday afternoon and the little church of Santa Maria La Blanco was closed, but I looked it over and found the tell-tale signs. I felt good about it. Janet just gasped her way to a vendor where she could buy another "Magnum" ice cream bar.

Seville had hosted the Expo 92 last year, on an island in its river, an incongruously glitzy collection of high-tech exhibit buildings, and had built three spectacular modern bridges, one shaped like a giant harp, the bow tilted back up high, with cables descending from it to support the roadway. Our hotel was here, a Radisson *****, but not for us. It had three six-story barrel-shaped interconnected towers, with rooms arranged around each circle. The lobby displayed a number of BMWs for a convention--and required a large hole bashed into a back wall to get them in! I felt I was sleeping in a cross between the Guggenheim Museum and a used car lot. We saw a Flamenco show here (and a better one in town at El Patio Sevillana), a good show

but the lighting clunked on and off when a dimmer would have been more professional.

Outside town we visited Franco's megalomaniac tomb, a colossal church vault built 4000 feet on a mountain, with no warmth of any sort about it. His tomb has only his name. The plaza outside is called the "Valley of the Fallen" and here lie 40,000 nameless dead from the million who died in the Civil War. Above the peak is a concrete cross 500 feet high with a 150 foot transverse arm. Nearby is the Escorial, a palace where the dead Kings and sometimes the Queens of Spain lie. Franco, refused admission, built his own. No one mourned his death, yet how ironic that this dictator not only had saved Jewish refugees but set up a constitutional government to follow him!

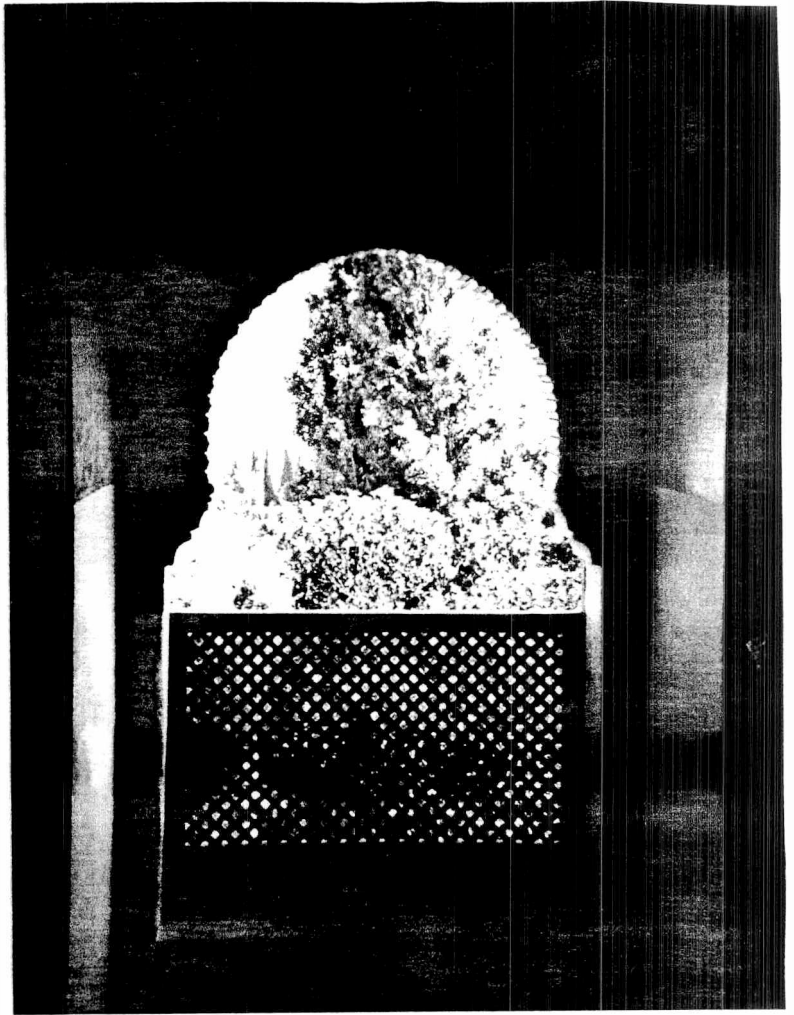
We drove from Seville to Portugal, stopping at a fine 16th century stone aqueduct at Elvas in Portugal. We crossed the Tagos River on a Golden Gate-like bridge, with a huge replicas of Rio de Janeiro's Christ the Redeemer stone sculpture nearby, into Lisbon, with rain. Lisbon is a large busy city with parks and boulevards looking worn and in need of restoration. Its ancient section, the Fama, is slum-like for the most part, but restoration is underway; it too has a "Judaria" street. The royal palace has beautiful tiles and a lovely colored Venetian Murano glass chandelier, BUT it is small and shows where costs were cut. In Cascais, a popular tourist area, as a nice restaurant I had what the menu called Z'Roasted Kid in Oven!; the waiter called it lamb. It was typically greasy and fatty and as always chopped rather than sliced. Janet had Sole--the entire fish, not filleted--which was not bad. We visited the unimpressive statuary and architecture along the Tagos River through the rain.

Happily the next day restored some of the lustre as we drove into the mountains north and saw a lovely village like Mijas and then Nazare, a beautiful seaside resort on both ocean and mountain levels. We had lunch overlooking the blue Atlantic, watching some kids surfing. A funicular connected the levels. Perhaps this is what brings tourists to Portugal. We continued on to the shrine of Fatima where three children early this century saw a vision of "a Lady of Light". A modest church was erected here when it was decided they had seen a vision of the Virgin. Later, two died as children and the third entered a nunnery. The artwork of the church is distressingly early

1920ish, but the enormous plaza in front can hold a quarter million and often does. The church frowns upon zealotry but people still insist on hobbling across the space on their knees and we saw one young woman, assisted presumably by her parents, doing just that. One may buy simple white candles from 6 inches to 3 feet long and place them lighted into bins on a wall. Here they melt and twist grotesquely, although perhaps not as much so as the also available candles shaped like infants, arms, legs, etc., presumably for appropriate hopes of recovery. The area is overbuilt with apartment houses, hotels and gift shops, despite which commercialism one still senses the significance for Catholics beyond the surface trappings.

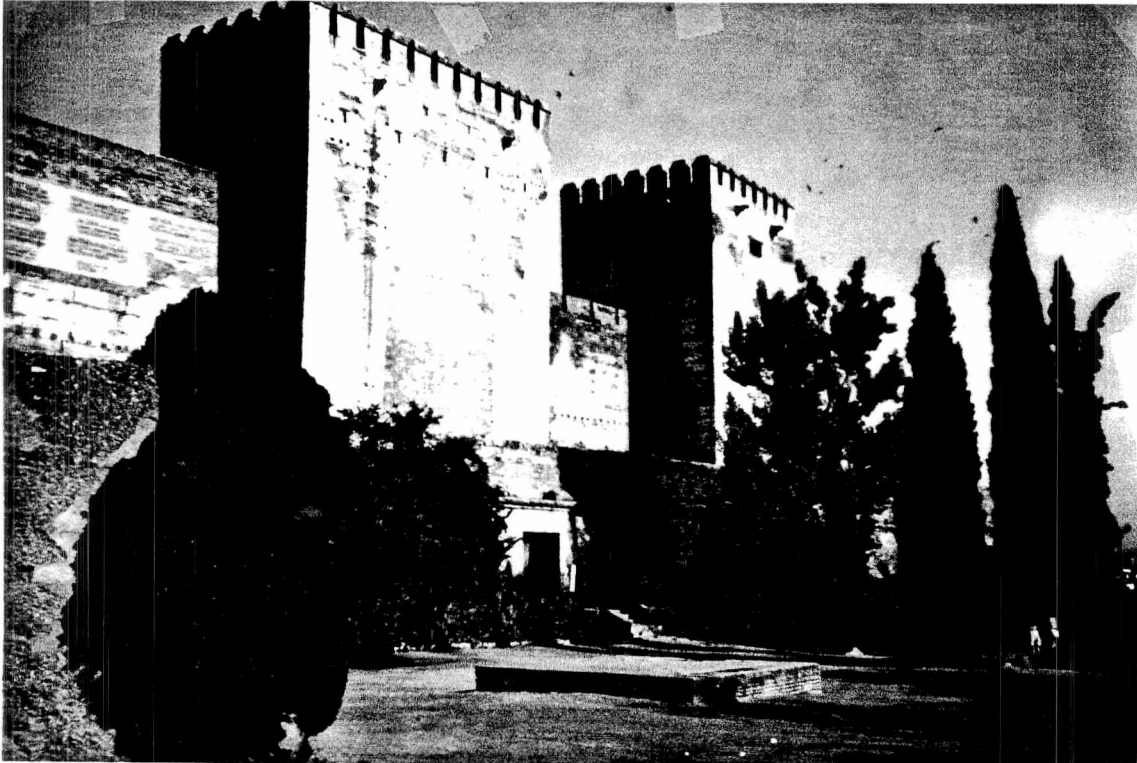
That evening we dined at a Portuguese restaurant in a restored section of the Famia which featured Fado music, sad and soulful, but also played were a variety of ethnic songs and dances. The cuisine of Portugal and Spain was at best good, often less, but the food was decent here and the entertainers were great fun. It was our final evening and we bought the photo the inevitable cameraman took. It shows the two of us smiling as we hold a flowery hoop over ourselves, remembering a beautiful, wonderful trip.

Ole! |*|



The Alhambra.

The Alhambra, Granada--exterior with gardens.



The Case of the Phantom Tale

by Anthony Ravenscroft

I was a late bloomer as a science fiction fan. Despite following television and comics since about the time I learned to walk, I didn't get into the literature until the early 1970s. I've made up for this somewhat by becoming a voracious reader.

Back in January 1976, I was sitting around a friend's apartment, just enjoying the day. I started to paw through the stack of soft-core skin magazines that had a way of accumulating. You know, the usual sort of thing--Playboy, Penthouse, Oui, Club, and so on--the raciest stuff you'd expect to find at the grocery in a small town that still doesn't have a bookstore.

Now, I know it's a running joke that "I only buy them for the articles," but it is true that there's only so much skin I can look at in one sitting without getting bored, and so I was reading the scant fiction at sunset.

I happened across a publication of Harlan Ellison's "'Repent, Harlequin!' said the Ticktockman". I barely knew the Ellison hallmark at the time, but the title captures me instantly. I savored my way through the story, and finished the piece with a warm glow.

A few years later I found it again in an anthology and re-read the story. That is the point I began doubting my own sanity.

The story, you see, was different. Oh, every word that I read was familiar, all right. BUT: it was no longer complete.

The version that I had first read was bracketed by a prologue and an epilogue. These two parts, if I would have read them together, formed a story that is related to the piece we now know as "Harlequin", but takes place quite apart from the events. The double beginning and double denouement is very hard to forget. The missing smaller story is a baroque variation on some of the societal elements in the central piece.

I have spent the past fifteen years searching for the missing tale. I've tried to track down the skin magazines of the era 1975-1976. Presuming that Ellison was probably in Playboy at that time, I found an exhaustive index for that magazine, but could not find a listing; it is possible that the listing was faulty. And in every anthology I've seen that contains "Harlequin", I've been unsuc-

cessful at discovering the point of original publication.

Oh, hell, I'm going to get up and check the shelves. Just a moment.

Hello; I'm back.

Well, there's the problem. "'Repent, Harlequin!' said the Ticktockman" was published originally in the December 1965 Galaxy, according to my old copy of Paingod and Other Delusions. So, what I was reading could have been nothing but a reprint. Reprints are rarely mentioned in the copyrights page of collections. Ah, merde.

So, bad enough that I cannot track down a copy of the story. To make things worse, I have never located another breathing human being who can recall reading the prologue/epilogue version. This has been making me go slowly (as Ellison would say) bugfuck.

I have reconstructed the lost segments as a short story. It's part of my coping mechanism. I'm willing to accept that there are perfectly valid reasons for this confusion, you see. There is always the possibility that;

- (a) this is the first mild symptom in my long-delayed nervous breakdown and I've actually created this little story somewhere in the strata of my own fevered imagination,
- (b) Ellison wrote the segments to entice a few extra bucks (Playboy currently pays \$5000 per story...at minimum) and SF fans have little interest in overt sexual titillation so none of them have read it;
- (c) there's a really gratifying conspiracy that's trying to unhinge me; or
- (d) I've slipped in from a parallel existence that is only slightly different from this one.

Hey, at this point I'd settle for any of those.

In any case, I am a bibliophile, a collector of Ellison's often hard to locate books, and this is a bit maddening. I would like to ask you folks to pass this bit of trivia around among yourselves, and maybe track down a lost minor classic of science fiction.]*]



1993 Short Fiction Award Nominees

by Mark Bernstein

For the first time in several years, I've actually read all of the Hugo nominees in the short fiction categories, and most of the Nebula nominees. Thanks are due to the folks at Clarinet Communications Corp. of San Jose, CA, who have started selling a yearly, wonderfully comprehensive electronic collection (available either on CD or over the Internet) of award nominees.

For each category, I've listed the stories in the order of my preference, best to worst, with a quick comment or two on each. Note that I've indiscriminately mixed stories nominated for the Hugo, stories nominated for the Nebula, and stories nominated for both awards.

Novella:

"Protection" by Maureen McHugh: I've read plenty of SF stories that include political and philosophical arguments. Only a minority have managed to connect those arguments to emotional realities, and make me feel for the people involved. "Protection" offers a reasonably believable background, a fascinating depiction of someone's political re-education (or brainwashing, if you prefer), and a couple of exceptionally involving characters. I found the "heroine's" change of character believable, compelling, and thought-provoking. Highly recommended, and I'm looking forward to reading "China Mountain Zhang".

"Griffin's Egg" by Michael Swanwick: Possibly its greatest flaw is that there's too much material here for the length. It might have worked better as a full novel. As it is, there's plenty here to hold my interest, in terms of extrapolation, character interaction, and just good storytelling.

"Uh-Oh City" by Jonathon Carroll: In some ways, a better story than "Griffin's Egg". A nice fantasy concept that I hadn't run into before, extremely well-drawn characters, and some emotionally compelling

passages. Unfortunately, the ending is too inconclusive for my taste.

"Contact" by Jerry Oltion and Lee Goodloe: There's really nothing new here. Human exploration ship makes first contact with primitive alien race, which they know is doomed. Adventure ensues, and all turns out much as you might expect. The saving grace is that the story features writing and storytelling solid enough to carry the reader's interest through to the end without flagging.

"Stopping at Slowyear" by Frederik Pohl: Easily recognizable as Pohl's work (that's a compliment). He knows how to create a world, and the society that grows out of living in that world. He knows how to base his characters in that society, and have them behave in interesting ways. He sure as hell knows how to write. The problem is that all these skills here serve a "story" so uninteresting that my reaction on finishing it was "What was the point of that?"

"The Territory" by Bradley Denton: Barely qualifies as alternate history. This could have been a straightforward Civil War era story, were it not for the use of Sam Clemens as a main character and other historical names scattered through. Written well enough, but why bother?

"Barnacle Bill the Spacer" by Lucius Shepard: One writing habit that annoys me is when someone comes up with a cute title, then goes through contortions in the story to justify it. Come on, vacuum barnacles? Add in a number of cliché elements (the hard-ass, slightly out-of-control cop hero, the "legendary figure" who's really an idiot (literally, in this case), the slimily aristocratic villain), and you have an easy last place choice. Not awful, but not very good.

Novelette:

"Prayers on the Wind" by Walter Jon Williams: One of the most original settings I've seen in a while, an ending that I did-

n't spot in advance, even though the clues were there (Williams plays fair as a mystery writer), and a damn good story to boot. I have to speculate that lack of exposure is the only reason it didn't make the Hugo ballot.

"The Honeycrafters" by Carolyn Gilman: A fascinating society. I presume Ms. Gilman is either a beekeeper herself, or has done extensive research. The characters end up having a bit more depth than I first thought, although one of them does something really stupid at the end, of the "I never thought I'd get caught" type. Despite the flaws, very well done.

"The Nutcracker Coup" by Janet Kagan: Could have appeared in Astounding thirty or more years ago. A good, old-fashioned "humans have an unexpected impact on an alien society" story. Nothing too original, but engaging and enjoyable.

"In the Stone House" by Barry N. Malzberg: I never believed that this was a realistic depiction of the Kennedys. I had trouble believing that history could ever have played out as depicted here. I certainly found the connection to JFK's assassination more annoying than resonant. If the damn thing hadn't been so well written, it might not have grabbed me at all. As it is, I'm glad I read it.

"Danny Goes to Mars" by Pamela Sargent: Amusing, fun, and certainly funny (especially to a Democrat like me), but not especially believable, and decidedly lightweight.

"True Faces" by Pat Cadigan: I get impatient with detective stories where the supposedly professional detective is dumber than I am. Even granting a foolproof lie detector, how could anyone take as faith that it would produce the same results when testing an alien race as it does when testing humans? A disappointment.

"The July Ward" by S.N. Dyer: A one-idea story, and not an idea that grabbed me. The depiction of a medical resident's life is well done and interesting, but there's a limit to how strong the structure can be if the foundation is weak.

"Suppose They Gave a Peace..." by Susan Shwartz: I honestly can't figure out why this story couldn't have been written in our world, in 1975. Sure, there are subtle differences in resonance, but the emotional basis would be the same no matter when the Vietnam pullout took place.

"Matter's End" by Gregory Benford: The only story among all the nominees that I

actively disliked. I found the idea silly, the writing clunky, the characters flat, the sex scene completely gratuitous, and the whole a bad copy of Clarke's "Nine Billion Names of God".

Short Stories:

"The Mountain to Mohammed" by Nancy Kress: Excellent extrapolation, and a fine depiction of how resourceful and ruthless people can get when they're desperate.

"Even the Queen" by Connie Willis: A very nice "what if" story, making its point without beating me over the head (well, not too hard). I also appreciated the sense of balance--the world depicted is a better one, but people are just as capable of being screwed up.

"Lennon Spex" by Paul Di Fillipo: Unusual, imaginative, and just plain weird. Hard to describe why, but I liked it.

"The Lotus and the Spear" by Mike Resnick: I'm not familiar with the other Kirinyaga stories, which may explain why this didn't grab me more than it did. I can't really find much fault with the story, as plot, character, and resolution are all thoughtful and professional. I just didn't feel much from it.

"Vinland the Dream" by Kim Stanley Robinson: If you have an interest in archeology, you may find this fascinating. To me, it was a well-written story on a rather dull topic.

"Life Regarded as a Jigsaw Puzzle of Highly Lustrous Cats" by Michael Bishop: I like Bishop's writing. I liked a lot of the imagery I found here. Too bad I didn't find much of a story to go with the imagery.

"The Winterberry" by Nicholas A. DiChario: I did also read the sample fiction submitted by all the Campbell nominees, and I would say that DiChario deserves the award this year. As with many of the short stories I see these days, the biggest flaw here is the lack of story. There's no real plot, no conflict, no resolution. There's an okay idea, and some good characterization based on it, but that's it.

"The Arbitrary Placement of Walls" by Martha Soukup: Based purely on quality of writing, characterization, and story, this belongs between the Robinson and the Resnick. My objection is that it takes a real stretch to consider it fantasy. All you have to do is accept one fairly small coincidence as coincidence, and this is a story about a woman having hallucinations. |*|

Travels with Dennis

by Dennis Caswell

There is a saying that goes, "Be careful what you ask for, for you just might get it." I have always loved to travel, to see what lies over the next hill. With my job, I knew that there was a chance for foreign travel, but until recently I didn't have much of a chance. Now that I have had many years of experience with our company, and most importantly, SINGLE, I have made several trips to strange places. Now, it must be noted that most of these trips are work, and not a vacation. Being in New Delhi is not much fun when you work a 70 hour work week.

I started by being sent to Mexico City for what was to be four weeks, but turned out to be more like four months. The average person thinks of Mexico as being hot, and it is, except for the central portion. The reason is that Mexico City is at 2700 meters elevation (7200 feet), and this has a definite effect on the weather. While most of the United States suffered through a heat wave, I was enduring the cold, monsoon climate of Mexico City. Days ranged from a low of 10 C to a high of 20 to 25 C. With cold rain every day, it was not an enjoyable summer.

After being there, I returned home via Costa Rica. I found Costa Rica to be a beautiful country, with friendly people. They have some casinos in San Jose, and I played Rummy (a variation of Blackjack) while I was there. In addition, I found the local Bridge Club, and played there a couple of times. If there is any place I would return to, it would be Cosat Rica.

I got home in mid-August, just in time to go to Chicago to attend the World Science Fiction Convention. After that it was work as usual until early October. I then went to Belfast, and on to Dublin, Ireland, to attend another convention. This was my secret, as I didn't tell ANYBODY that I was going there (except the people there). I had a great time at the convention.

Octocon 91

As things turned out, my flight was into Belfast, Northern Ireland, which is where all the problems with the IRA are. However,

with all of the security patrols up and other checks, I felt safer in Northern Ireland than I do in most American cities. I got the rental car at Belfast airport, and drove to Dublin, and hence to the Royal Marine hotel at Dun Laoghire, Ireland. The convention was not due to start until Saturday morning, but the festivities were well underway Friday evening. I was suffering from jet-lay, but that never stopped me before, and it didn't stop me now.

The guest of honor was a Canadian writer named Geoff Ryman, who now lives in the United Kingdom, and as a special guest, George R.R. Marton and his wife who were touring Ireland. They had asked the committee if they minded it they attended this convention. You can guess what the committee's response to this was. Diane Duane and Peter Morwood were scheduled to be at the convention, but had other commitments over in Montreal, Canada, and as such were not present. There were several other guests there.

At North American conventions, we go to the consuite in order to socialize with other convention goers. In European conventions, the consuite does not exist, so people go to the bar. It didn't strike me as unusual until Monday morning (after I had left the convention) that on Friday evening I had been in the bar drinking with George R.R. Martin, James White (author of the



Sector General series), his friend Nolan, and one other person whose name escapes me. It seemed so natural at the time.

As part of the convention, I had brought over two videos, one being the Star Trek 25th anniversary special, and the other containing the fifth season premiere, "Redemption, Part 2." The concomm claimed that they had a VCR that could run NTSC tapes. (Short aside: In North America, video signals are in a format known as NTSC, while in Europe [including Ireland and England] they use a format known as PAL. The two are not compatible, and it is expensive to convert from one format to the other. It costs on the average about \$50 per hour to convert a tape.) We tried the tape on Friday evening, and had problems with the tracking. This could not be resolved that evening, but we were able to get one of the tapes converted to PAL format during the weekend. The problem with the VCR was eventually resolved, though, as it turned out, it was not important.

Saturday morning came, and at the convention the first thing I did was purchase a copy of All the Weyrs of Pern which was available in the dealers' room. I was due to work registration that morning and I did so, until I was told that I was scheduled to be on a panel in fifteen minutes. "What!?!!" I said. "I don't know anything about this subject!"

The panel turned out to be a Star Trek trivia contest, and I did manage to hold up our side reasonably well. It did help that I had seen the 25th anniversary special on Star Trek which aired the previous weekend. Even though I am NOT a Star Trek fan, I do have some interest in the television series.

The next major item was the guest of honour interview with Geoff Ryman. At OCTOCON, they close down the entire convention during the time of the interview so that everybody has a chance to attend. Even the dealers' room and art show closes at that time. This is different from what I have experienced at conventions at home.

The next panel was one on role-playing games, and having a great deal of interest, not to mention a North American perspective, I soon was on the panel. AD&D has some interest in Ireland, but other systems are coming into their own. I mentioned the soon-to-be-published "Amber" role-playing system, based on Roger Zelazny's series of the same name, and this elicited interest in the convention attendees at the panel. I

was asked to send information to people as soon as the game becomes available.

The evening consisted of a masquerade dance and contest. I had taken my Star Trek costume, along with a fire-lizard (Gold Trudy), and was asked several times what the name of my dragon was. This will give you some impression on how popular Anne McCaffrey is in Ireland. Surprised--I'm not.

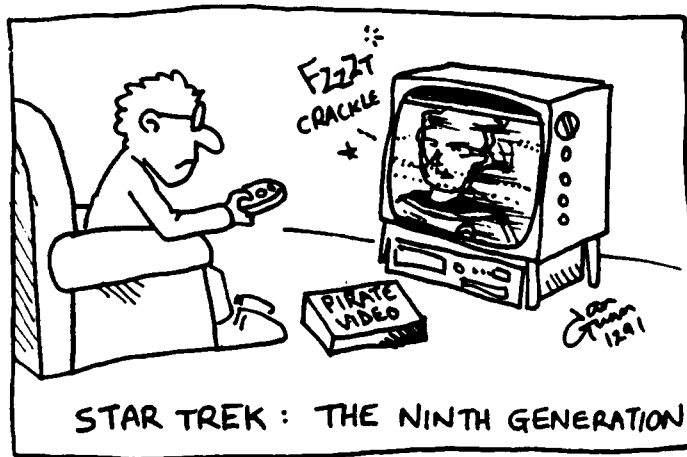
Sunday was quieter, but not much so. I arrived at the convention, and had five minutes warning before being put on a panel on "Science Fiction Experts". My area of expertise was (supposedly) Pern Fandom, but as it turned out, the panel was mostly about Dr. Who and other areas. Pern Fandom is not big over in Ireland--in fact, it does not exist.

The next panel was on Star Trek--the original series versus the Next Generation. The audience was of the opinion that the original series was better, but realize that they have only seen the first two seasons of the Next Generation. I was drafted onto that panel as well, since I was there and available. My comments were that the really good episodes of the third and fourth season had not yet aired in Ireland, so there were more good episodes to come.

The main item was a radio play starring Geoff Ryman, based on John Wyndham's "The Chrysalids" (or as my copy of the story is called, "Rebirth"). This was reasonably well done, considering that the people doing the play had only one rehearsal before it was to be performed. I noticed one slip-up, but in general it was well done.

Late on Sunday Anne McCaffrey arrived. She had been busy at Dragonhold, taping a reading. Sometime in the next year there would be available an audio recording of Anne McCaffrey reading from All the Weyrs of Pern.

As soon as she saw me, Anne greeted me by name, and asked what I thought of All the Weyrs of Pern. Since I had just purchased the book the day before, I had to plead that I had not had time to read it yet. (I had done so now; it is a worthy finale to the Pern series.) There were about 15 people in the room where Anne was doing her reading--again from the book on modern fairy stories. After the reading, Anne had a short autograph session, and there were no more than 5-10 people requesting autographs, quite unlike her appearances at North American conventions where her signings can go on for hours!



Anne was on another panel, along with Geoff Ryman, and she has a few choice comments to make. Anybody who has seen Anne McCaffrey knows what I am talking about. She has her opinion on a subject, and she lets you know it. She had to leave right after this panel, so I didn't get much of a chance to talk to her. I was able to get her ok to publish the interview that we had last year, so this will be forthcoming. Anne is currently working on two new books, of which I have no further information.

The closing ceremonies marked the end of the second Irish National Convention, and one that was well done. They had planned for 400-450 people, and over 600 people had shown up. Most of these were interested in Star Trek and nothing else. The video room was so crowded that they had to repeat episodes of "The Best of Both Worlds" and "Redemption", and completely redo the video programming. There were so many people at the convention that they had to close registration, since the convention was full. I really enjoyed myself at OCTOCON, and plan to attend the next one that I am able to do so.

* * * * *

Christmas was at home with the whole family present. It was about two months after Christmas that I went on more business trips. The last week of February was spent in West Yellowstone, Montana, on a snowmobiling vacation. The weather was warm, in fact, too warm for my liking. Each day the temperature got to about 5 to 10 C, with nights of -10 to -20 C. I'd rather see -5 C be the daytime high when I'm snowmobiling, but c'est la vie.

The next week I was due to go on a business trip to New Delhi, India. It was 8 degrees and raining when I left, so I thought

that the snowmobiling season was over. India must be the dirtiest country that I have been to. (Sorry, Nepal is that--India is very dirty, however.) They think that toilet paper is a strange idea. You have a perfectly good left hand, and you use it instead. That is why it is an insult to offer to shake your left hand with an Indian. In addition, I saw several children, some naked, playing in front of the offices where we were having our meetings. It was wam in New Delhi, about 27 to 33 C in March. Actually, ideal weather, considering what I was to experience later.

The meetings were with our sister company in France, and the Indian electric utility, National Thermal Power Company. Having to deal with the people at NTPC made me realize where the phrase "the only good Indian is a dead Indian" came from. These people were the most difficult customer that I have ever had to deal with. I don't think a day went by that we didn't have some sort of argument, and it seemed like the Indians would want more and more. Two months (actually only weeks, but it seemed like months) later, I left New Delhi.

I had been watching CNN International, and noted that the Great Lakes region was experiencing below normal temperatures. On the flight into Toronto, I noticed a line of white ground about 70 km north of the city. This meant that the ground was still snow-covered. I got home by 5:30 PM and unpacked. By 9:30, I couldn't stay awake any longer and fell asleep. I woke up at 1:30 AM Sunday morning, and couldn't get back to sleep. I was suffering from jet lag. I tried to sleep until 4 AM, then gave up. I got up, had breakfast, hooked up the trailer, and started the snowmobile and loaded it onto the trailer. By 5:30 AM I was on my way north. Spending the day snowmobiling in -10 C is a good way to recover from jet lag. When I got home that night, the next door neighbor commented that hearing a snomobile at 5:30 on a Sunday monring is not the most welcome occurrence. What the hey, I was wide awake!

As an aside, I was still able to go snowmobiling for three weekends after my return from New Delhi, when I had originally thought that the season was over.

* * * * *

I had to return to New Delhi in May to attend two more months (read weeks) of meetings. This time the temperature was

somewhat warmer. Almost every day the temperature reached 40 C, and a couple of days as high as 45 C. That is HOT! There was one good thing about the high temperature: the customer was much easier to deal with. There were far fewer arguments, so maybe the temperature had an effect on their temperament.

* * * * *

In mid-July I was asked to go to France to help our sister company with the factory test of the system. This was related to the project in New Delhi, India, and I spent 3 weeks in Massy, France (about 20 km south of Paris).

There were two interesting things that happened on that trip. The first one was finding a pub in Paris. I know, that is nothing unusual; Paris abounds with bars. However, this one was unusual in that it was named "A London Pub in Paris". I have no difficulty with the French language, but it was nice to enter a bar and hear English being spoken.

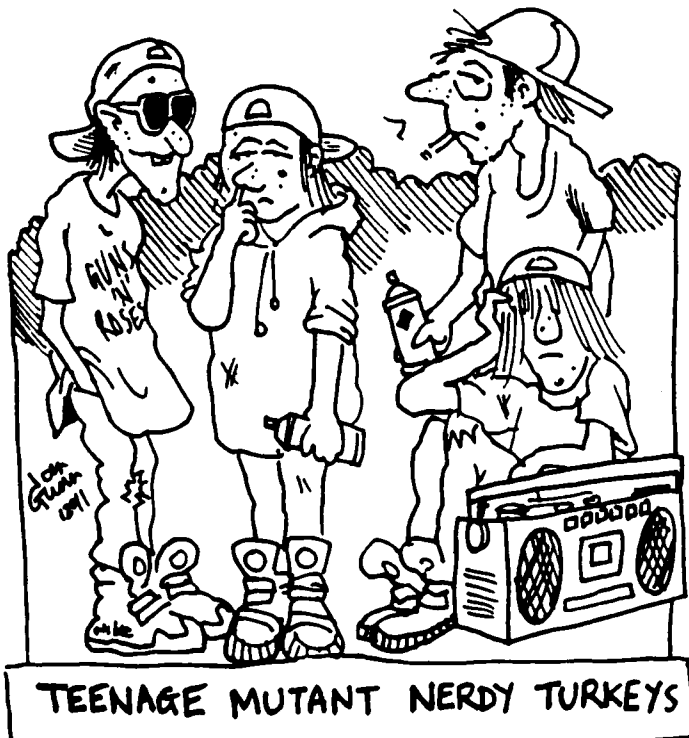
The second thing occurred on my last day there. I was on a train returning from Paris to Massy when this Frenchman came up to me. He was very drunk and was being somewhat abusive. Not wanting much to do with him, I told him, in a condescending tone in English, to leave me alone. He returned to

his seat, and then started to curse the English, and the Germans, and the Italians, etc., not thinking that I might understand him. Just as I was getting off the train, I confronted the person and said in French: "You thought I didn't speak French, I understood every word that you said!" That sobered him up.

Those of you who have traveled know that it is usually a matter of hurry-up-and-wait. The return trip from Paris to Burlington turned out not to be the case. I took the RER from the Massy train station right out to Charles de Gaulle Airport, and got on an earlier flight to Amsterdam. Once there I had three hours to wait before getting on my flight to Toronto, and spent the time in the business class lounge. While there I struck up a conversation with an American who was traveling to Lagos, Nigeria. He had been given a number of vouchers, each good for lunch at the airport restaurant, and knowing that he wasn't going to use them all gave me one. I had a simple salad, knowing that I was going to eat well on the flight to Canada.

When I arrived at the gate, my flight was boarding, and I went straight aboard the aircraft. I got to my seat only to find that it was occupied. Of course, I contacted the stewardess, explained my problem, and she had my seat reassigned to the first class section. This was on KLM (Royal Dutch Airlines), and service was incredible. It was one of the best flights that I have ever had. Once I arrived in Toronto, I went through customs, and they were going to have me pay the simple overage on my customs declaration. I knew that some of my items were duty-free, so I questioned this, and went for a secondary inspection. Once the customs officer saw all my books, he said that I didn't have to pay any duty or taxes, and let me go. I got out into the arrivals hall, went to get my ride back to Burlington, and didn't even have time to sit down. I was on my way home within twenty minutes of landing at the airport, which is a record. Now talk about a good return trip!

Next time I'll talk about going to MAGICON, and the World Fantasy Convention. [*]



Rock Music as Science Fiction

by Pete Grubbs

Science Fiction's impact on rock music extends across the length and breadth of this multi-faceted genre. Mainstream supergroups like Journey and Boston have used S-F themes in their jacket and liner art, depicting various space-faring craft or cities. At the other end of the rock spectrum, the Montreal thrash band Voivod has structured most of its output around the adventures of the "Voivod," a "meat-faced, post-nuclear vampire/cyborg/mutant hacker and apocalyptic warrior" who preys upon a post-holocaust world.[1] Aynn Rand's influence on another Canadian rock group, Rush, and their monumental album, 2112, was significant enough to warrant a dedication to her in its liner notes and S-F hitched a lift to M-TV land in the ZZ Top roadster when it converted into a space shuttle that zoomed into orbit to rendezvous with an automated orbiting body shop/car wash in the video for "Rough Boy" from the Eliminator album. There are also any number of individual songs that display a decided S-F influence: "Rocket Man," by Bernie Taupin and Elton John; "Ziggy Stardust and the Spiders from Mars," by David Bowie; "Cool the Engines," by Tom Scholz; "Sight and Touch" and "Transmission Ends," by Chris DeBurgh and "Come Sail Away," by Styx, all borrow S-F themes and/or imagery.

As Brian Aldiss pointed out in Trillion Year Spree, this influence began in the sixties and has continued to escalate ever since (297 Note 25). It has now developed beyond superficial similarities, hook-loaded videos and packaging ploys. At least one rock group has openly embraced a theme and structure which moves its work solidly into the realm of Science Fiction. My purpose is to evaluate one of this band's albums by the light of S-F critical theory in an attempt to secure its place within the genre. [2]

Before we turn to any examination of text, we must, of course, come to some understanding of Science Fiction's generic basis. That is to say, we must first answer the question, "What is Science Fiction anyway?" An exhaustive presentation of the many different stances taken by the critics of the genre is far beyond the scope of a paper such as this. However, there are at least two prominent features common to the discussions of several important critics that should provide sufficient ground to support the present effort.

In New Maps of Hell, Kingsley Amis offered the following definition of the field:

Science fiction is that class of prose narrative treating of a situation that could not arise in the world we know, but which is hypothesized on the basis of some innovation in science or technology, or pseudo-science or pseudo-technology, whether human or extra-terrestrial in origin. (18)

The two most important features of this definition are its assertion that the events related "could not arise in the world we know" and the observation that Science Fiction is essentially extrapolative or predictive in nature, inextricably linked to advances in science and technology.

The first of these features speaks to the sense of "otherness" often associated

[1] Glenn Thrush, "Voivod is Dead...", Guitar World December 1991: 28.

[2] Since this particular group has not enjoyed a wide following and this album is relatively obscure (factors which I believe are more functions of the marketing realities surrounding a regional band recording on a small, independent label than the quality of their work), my intent here is to present a discussion which centers more around the album's lyrics than its sound music since I can readily provide the reader with ready access to them. Their sound, however, would be difficult, if not impossible, to convey in this medium.

with Science Fiction, a feeling that while we may be able to recognize the location, actions and motivations within a story, what is happening is somehow removed from our present world and common experience. This world may seem to be attainable, but it is emphatically not the world we presently inhabit. Nor is Amis alone in his recognition of this aspect of the genre. Darko Suvin emphasizes this point in Metamorphoses of Science Fiction when he says that Science Fiction should be defined:

as a fictional tale determined by the hegemonic literary device of a locus and/or dramatis personae that (1) are radically or at least significantly different from the empirical times, places and characters of "mimetic" or "naturalistic" fiction, but (2) are nonetheless...simultaneously perceived as not impossible within the cognitive...norms of the author's epoch. (viii)

Science Fiction relies upon breaking with the accepted conventions of reality, finding "un-real" places and people to construct narratives about, all the while establishing a new set of ground rules that it must then follow. If we unskillfully remove the "locus and/or dramatis personae" or place them too far from the world of naturalistic fiction, we can easily lose our audience. Consequently, we need to establish palpable links between the "other" and the present. As Amis later implies (26), the people and places in Science Fiction are not so completely removed from our daily existence or literary experience that we are wholly estranged from them. On the other hand, they are most certainly removed from our everyday experiences.

Amis' second point, that Science Fiction's foundation rests upon "some innovation in science or technology," not only explicitly links literature and science, it provides an important clue to the direction SF consistently pursues. As the word "innovation" implies, Science Fiction as a genre is most often concerned with the Future. It is a species of literature that speaks to changes and possibilities yet to be realized in fact. While Amis makes this point implicitly, other critics set it in a more prominent position.

In The Shape of Futures Past: The Story of Prediction, Chris Morgan divides the "more extensive label" of Science Fiction from that of "tales of the future" but ob-

serves that the total Science Fiction titles of a predictive or extrapolative nature runs between 70 and 80% of the total output, depending upon the definition of Science Fiction used (6). In a 1987 article for Isaac Asimov's Science Fiction Magazine, author Norman Spinrad offered a one-sentence definition of Science Fiction that relies solely upon this facet.[3] Mr. Spinrad separated Science Fiction from pure prediction in another article published in IASFM last year:

Furthermore, and a huge furthermore it is, science fiction is not prophecy in the first place; not futurology but literature, and its imaginary worlds, future, alternate, past, metaphoric, exist to serve as settings for stories that touch the human heart. (162)

Although Brian Aldiss, in Trillion Year Spree, identified Science Fiction's predictive nature as vital to its existence as a genre separate from utopias, adventure or travel fiction (87), he also put a definite limit on this importance when he noted that "Fiction cannot be justified by its power to predict." (121). It is perhaps appropriate to leave the last word on this subject to Isaac Asimov who said that:

To suppose that this predictive aspect of science fiction, this foreseeing of details, is the truly impressive thing about science fiction, serves, however, only to trivialize the field. (19)

The predictive nature of Science Fiction sets the general tone and mood, establishing our expectations for the literature. When we pick up a recognized work of Science Fiction, we know, from experience, the material we are about to read will challenge our perspective of our world, forcing us, through a radical change in frames of reference, to pause and reassess our beliefs. If Science Fiction only dealt in "futurology," we might find reason for titillation and entertainment but not a *raison d'être* for the existence of a literary genre. While the specific significance of Science Fiction's "future-oriented vision" may be open to debate, its existence is beyond doubt.

[3] "Literature informed by future-oriented vision is science fiction." Norman Spinrad, "On Books: The Edge of the Envelope," Isaac Asimov's Science Fiction Magazine July 1987: 191.

If we summarize these various definitions, we might say that Science Fiction is a form of literature that is concerned with the creation of alternate realities and characters based upon extrapolations from current science and technology. These realities and characters do not, cannot exist within our present universe but must be internally consistent with our understanding of the laws of science and have some recognizably human characteristics.

Amis also provides a definition of a sub-genre that focuses upon a more specific story told within the framework of Science Fiction:

The second supplementary category includes stories based on some change or disturbance or local anomaly in physical conditions.... Alternatively, the author will chronicle some monstrous emergence arising from the existing science and technology, especially, of course, the hydrogen bomb. (24)

Brian Aldiss loosely referred to this sub-species of Science Fiction as "environmental fiction." (29) The material that forms the text for this paper fits most appropriately within this aspect of Science Fiction and this seems a fitting place to introduce it.

Crack the Sky is a regional band centered in Baltimore, Maryland. While it may seem inappropriate to consider the work of a relatively unknown group for a project such as this, the album in question, From the Greenhouse, is the only one of my acquaintance which obviously adopts the form of SF sub-genre identified by Amis and Aldiss. As a concept album, it is a musical equivalent of a novel in that it presents a coherent narrative.[4] Rather than being a collection of otherwise independent entities (like the Who album Who's Next or James Taylor's Sweet Baby James), each song in Greenhouse may be said to stand in place of the chapter in a novel. The narrative thrust is maintained by various monologues and dialogues and I will contrast the lyrics of this album with texts which are eas-

[4] Although the similarities found between this text and the drama are also striking in that both can create the sense of narrative through monologue/dialogue. The main point, however, is that a story following many of the dictates of these various SF definitions does emerge from this album. The question of its specific generic identity seems immaterial at present.

ily recognized to fall with SF's "environmental fiction" sub-genre. Moreover, the album was written with little or no conscious influence from the SF world or tradition, but the writer's intent was the same as I have identified from the definitions cited above and the result, as I will demonstrate, is, indeed, Science Fiction.

These songs are the work of one man, John Palumbo. Following a neo-Pink Floyd approach, lyrics and music are freely influenced and supported by sound bites and effects as the album pursues a predictive structure that begins with a limited nuclear bombardment of the United States. It then follows the civilization that climbs out of the rubble, tracing the rapid re-emergence of a radiation-poisoned American dream.

From the Greenhouse opens with the sounds of children, perhaps at a playground, laughing and playing. A rushing wind, like those associated with nuclear explosions, drowns out the children's voices, swallowing them until only one is left. This voice, too, is carried off by the wind which then gives way to the musical part of the introduction of the first song, the album's title track, "From the Greenhouse."

The speaker, part of a standing-room-only crowd at L.A.X, trades his (apparently) useless tickets for some cigarettes while the president hides on a submarine, running away from history, if not his responsibilities. The bombs have fallen and now the aftershocks, both physical and emotional, roll in. Spread throughout the song is that familiar sense of nuclear denial identified by Paul Briens as present in both real life and science fiction (ix). The shock, denial and disbelief in the speaker's voice echo Walter Miller's character Dom Zerchi in A Canticle for Leibowitz when he says, "My sons, they cannot do it again. Only a race of madmen could do it again." (255-6) Dom Zerchi was awaiting, and denying, Lucifer's fall, denying the possibility that it might fall, even when he knew that there was a very good chance that two nuclear devices had already been dropped. The speaker in "From the Greenhouse" has witnessed the nuclear devastation and now desperately tries to avoid its reality to the point of denying his own existence as he repeats, "I won't believe it till I disappear."

The cyclic nature of Miller's work, noted by Robert Scholes and Eric S. Rabkin (221), also seems evident in From the Greenhouse, as displayed by the lines



After all that we've been through,
Doesn't it seem a little bit funny to
you
We should all shine from the violet
blue
And now we're calling you
From the greenhouse

which form the chorus for this first track
and are repeated at the album's conclusion.
But even more powerful is the sense of in-
evitability that slowly, steadily becomes
more insistent as we move through the al-
bum.

The bombs have fallen. The first speaker's dramatic voice with its sense of shock and denial is replaced by a calmer, more narrative voice, a child of the emergent society who tells us of the "new order" in "Under the Red Sky." Old men sit around a campfire in the ruins of a city and tell their stories to "animal children," explaining why "everything has gone away/under the red sky." It is a scene reminiscent of many post-holocaust works, including Andre Norton's Daybreak 2250 A.D. The children seem similar to Rousseau's Noble Savage and rely wholly upon their emotions rather than their rational capacities ("All we know is what we feel") as they deal with their world. Unlike Norton or Miller's works, the physical devastation in this text has not been as severe and this world soon regains an appearance of normality. In the next song, we move back into the very familiar, savage world of the capitalistic marketplace.

"Big Money," throws us into the arms of the greatest source of power in the twentieth century.

Feel the power
 Feel the power flow out of me
 I am the BIG CONTROL
 I manipulate your little world
 I am the nightmare of your American
 dream.

Throughout every chorus we are assured that Big Money is the source of freedom; "Big, big money is all you need." But Big Money is also the dogs of war, cocaine whores and a pitiless vampire prepared to destroy the listener. Perhaps most disturbing of all, this raptor is also "your wildest dream/You get so hot from the thought of me." The sense of destruction in this song is not so much from dangers without but from the lusts within. We carry, not only the seeds of our own destruction, but the desire for it.

Palumbo's recognition of the power of commerce resonates with another work from Brian Aldiss, Greybeard. In it, a shattered, nearly barbaric world lurches toward a future with little hope; radiation has effectively sterilized the human race and, apart from those few, misshapen mutants who survive gestation, there seems little hope that the species will survive. Yet, in spite of this plague, the marketplace still wields power.

Here [Swifford Fair] the human world went on in a way it had not managed at Sparcot. It was fatally wounded perhaps; in another half-century it would be rolled up and put away; but till then, there was business to be made, life to be transacted, the chill and heat of personality to be struck out. (106-7)

Commerce will continue for as long as mankind does. Indeed, life and personality are matters of trade. The surviving clerks at Oxford are forced to adopt a different mode from the traditional if they wish to "make this place pay." So they run it as a "mixture of tavern, auction room, cattle market, and bawdy house." Making the place pay is vital. As Vivian, one of the new breed of academics, observes, "One cannot escape the cash nexus." (201) Palumbo's vision is centered in America but, as Aldiss proves, the leverage that money exerts in any capitalistic system seems destined to retain its vitality despite mankind's condition.

Up to this point, the destruction alluded to in "From the Greenhouse" and "Under the Red Skies" appears to have been very limited. Life, however unsavory and nasty it appears in "Big Money," has returned to normal. The United States has rebuilt to the point that it can again sustain a cash-based economy. There are no further references to the ruined cities and tribal societies depicted in "Under the Red Sky" and it seems plain that life has pretty much returned to 20th century American normal. We soon discover this is not the same "normal" that existed before the war.

"The Frozen Rain" takes us within the lives of a couple who live in a typically middle-class American style. The speaker watches his mate sleep "by the light of TV/Flashing blue and fading over you, dear." At first glance, we might think that the American way of life, complete with shock interviews common to Nielsen conscious nightly news broadcasts, has returned. We soon see, however, that this is not so. Our speaker tells us he has no fear of "the frozen rain" when he lies beside his wife. Symbolic of the irreparable harm Man has done to the environment, the "frozen rain" is everywhere. Coupled with the rain is some indeterminate poison, probably radioactivity, spread throughout the atmosphere that forces our speaker to wear a respirator while he makes love to his spouse in an

attempt to overcome the everpresent terror ("Breathing from the bag I turn to you/Dear /Holding on we dance away the fear"). In this world, love is nothing more than another way to escape the ever-present terror of living in the radioactive aftermath. "I belong to you/In the frozen rain," is less an avowal of love than life-sentence. However, for all its expressionistic atmosphere, the song ends on a dramatically different, upbeat note. The key shifts from minor to major, the tempo increases and a children's chorus joins Palumbo as they sing,

All day long we sing this simple song
La La La La life goes on,

over and over again as we segue into the next song. This chorus appears an affirmation of life's power and joy, undercutting the somber, desperate mood established earlier. This misplaced optimism is short-lived, however, and the next track plunges us into a whirlwind of mindless persecution, anger and fear born of ignorance and intolerance.

In this song, Palumbo brings a character on stage common to post nuclear holocaust fiction. We have seen his likeness in Miller's offstage character, Saint Raul the Cyclopean as well as his Madonna figure, Mrs. Grales and Rachel. Norton's Lars and

the "defectives", and "monstrosities" in Greybeard number among his generic siblings. Monkey Boy is a mutant, one of the "radically or at least significantly different" cast members central to Suvin's definition. Mutants in SF are often shunned by "normal" people, and Monkey Boy's fate is no better. But his situation has an uncomfortably contemporary feel. Palumbo evinces a consistent awareness of the news media throughout this album and Monkey Boy's problems are compounded by it. He lives in the center ring of a media circus that forces his mother into hiding. There is a sense of violation and isolation throughout the song. His neighbors, generic descendants of the children in "Under the Red Sky," are victims of their emotions. If the children in "Under the Red Sky" only know what they feel, all these characters know or feel is fear.

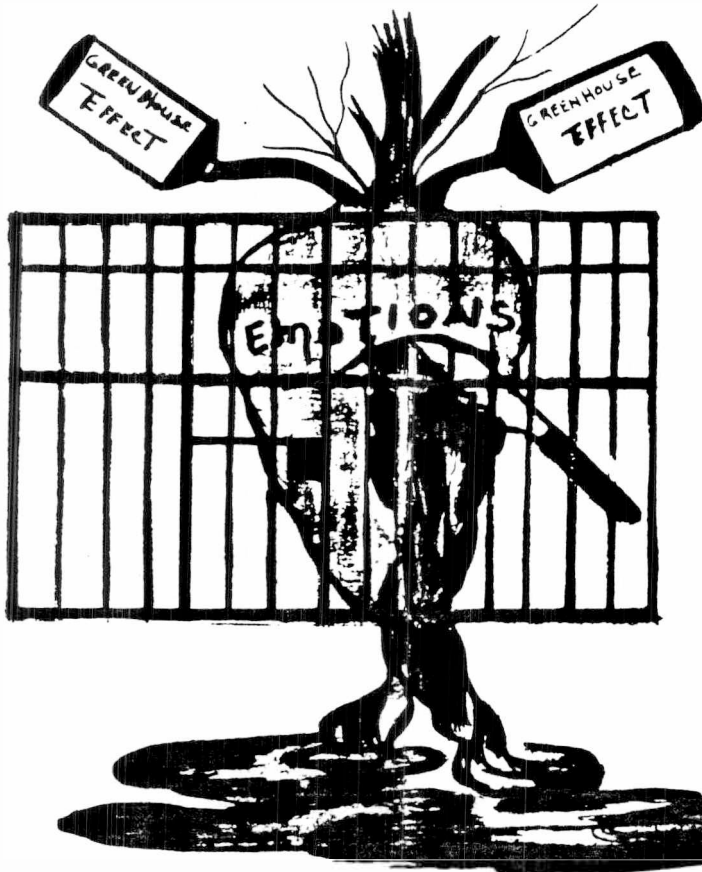
They say, "Hey, hey little schoolboy
we don't want you here"

They say, "It's nothing against you
boy, we're just following our fear."

There is a tribal feeling in this music. Lead and backing vocals twine around one another, blurring the line that separates them. The heavily syncopated rhythm intimates a traditional African influence perhaps suggesting a tribal culture. The story told within this song is also concerned with a tribal or communal mind. As the song shifts viewpoints from observer to group member, from within to without, the emphasis is consistently upon the group; "They say...we don't want you here... They say, we're just following our fear [my emphasis]." We see fear's handiwork when it resonates through the minds of the group. This panic eventually drives the neighbors to burn down Monkey Boy's house. Here are the children from "Under the Red Sky" fully grown and basing their actions upon what they feel.

Their purpose is to drive Monkey Boy away. "They don't want you in their schoolyard/They don't want you in their town." To accomplish this, they verbally isolate the mutant, relentlessly driving home the fact that he is the focus of an unrelenting and alienating, media-based scrutiny:

...the world is watching you
Do you feel like a monkey, feel like a
monkey
A monkey in a zoo?



When Monkey Boy is still in the neighborhood near the song's end, these same speakers invoke a new incarnation of Christ to rid themselves of their mutant:

They say...Let Jesus come from 'Frisco
and make you disappear."

Inspired by the story of Ryan White [5], this is an excellent example of SF's ability to take us beyond our present frame of reference while showing us an all-too-real picture within that very frame. By choosing a character whose physical appearance creates unease, Palumbo distances us from our own, AIDS-related fears. We can safely condemn Monkey Boy's neighbors because we feel certain that we would never burn down someone's house just because their son was physically deformed. Our sympathies are engaged. We deplore the predatory news-media for the distress they cause this family. We side with the mother, frightened by the camera crew. We feel a sense of righteous indignation when "the neighbors come out to play." Perhaps the more naive among us even give thanks that such things can't happen here. The most disturbing truth underlying this song is akin to one already noted in "Big Money": the greatest evil in our world lies, ultimately, within ourselves. Here is a study in miniature of the effects of our callous disregard for the injuries we cause our fellow men. "It's nothing against you, boy/we're just following our fear." Palumbo enlarges upon this theme in the next two songs.

From the Greenhouse is, in many ways, an indictment against the technology-oriented, consumptive lifestyle that we in the West have created and popularized. Although we see this attitude throughout the album, it is most prevalent in the sixth track, "All The Things We Do." This song calls into question many achievements touted as validations of our lifestyle. Our successes in space take on a different meaning when viewed from this changed perspective. We "Push another little thing into the sky/Poke another little hole in the eye of us

all." The whole of our space program is reduced to insignificance when set opposite of a very large universe. This track presents us with an apparent contradiction: Our actions are at once more far-reaching and tinier than we imagine. While the whole of our accomplishments in space may have a negligible effect upon the universe in general, we can have a profound effect upon this particular world, our own tiny corner of that vast universe. If we "Start another little fire on the sea" we "Add another little nightmare to our children's dreams." Throughout it all, we remain blissfully, willfully ignorant of our destruction, believing the lies that our leaders chant endlessly.

And while we dance with our backs to
the moon
All of our leaders keep playing their
tune
Ah, look at all the things we do
For you.

This unfeeling manner is not reserved for the environment alone. It permeates all our relationships, including those with our fellow men. We

Bring another little country down to
it's [sic] knees
Break another little farm boy with the
shame of defeat
Put another little family on the
outside
Let another little family feel the
land o' the free

Here is an example of Big Money unbridled, the American dream gone terribly wrong. Instead of offering opportunity to those less fortunate, we isolate and alienate our neighbors. We extend our disregard so that anyone weaker suffers. We bully our smaller, weaker neighbors, abuse our defenseless planet ("Looking up the dress of the Mother Nature...Playing with the breasts of the Mother Nature") with no concern for the damage we cause. Our capacity for destruction is equaled only by our ability to ignore its consequences. We continue to push "every little thing until there's nothing at all."

And as our pieces fall under the moon
We hear our leaders still singing
their tune
Ah, look at all the things we do

[5] On February 12, 1993, I had the opportunity to discuss From the Greenhouse in detail with Mr. Palumbo. The specific information dealing with sources and influences found in this article comes from this interview, and I would like to express my gratitude to both Mr. Palumbo for so graciously sharing his time and thoughts and his manager, Ron Gregory, for arranging the interview.

Turning our backs on the light, we dance our fears away, placing our hope in leaders more interested in telling us what we want to hear than protecting us from ourselves. Such behavior carries its own rewards and Palumbo details these in the succeeding track.

"Lost In America" brings the album full circle. Here is a portrait of twentieth century America before the bombs fell. It is filled with middle-class executives, CIA agents and NRA members blindly following their individual ruts through sterile, self serving lives. Mr. and Mrs. White are executives who drive a white Cadillac "with bullet-proof glass/So they won't get killed" when they buy their cocaine. Captain Tom, a CIA operative who sells weapons and secret plans to a "foreign enemy," is finally caught in Mexico. Jimmy-Jeff-Bob is an NRA supporter who "likes to keep his guns around the house/Just in case." On Sundays he visits his son who is in jail for "[s]hooting someone." And through it all we,

...quietly stand by
Thoughtfully close our eyes
Fall on our knees and cry that we're
Lost in America.

This closing of the circle, so different from Norton's tale which ends with an avowal by Jarl, leader of the Star Men, to reject the mistakes made in the past (181-2), is akin to Miller's work. In Leibowitz, mankind's hope for survival is invested in a small band of Catholics who are headed toward the stars. If they succeed in establishing a new civilization, we can only speculate whether they will also perpetuate the peculiar madness that seems endemic to our species. In Palumbo's work, the conditions that fostered the development and use of atomic weapons before the album's opening track has been re-created and it is only a matter of time before they will be used again. Despite the damage already done to the environment and the human gene pool, we are still blindly following the same rut into the future.

There is a sense that this album is a serious attempt to say, as Chris Morgan puts it, "this is what will happen unless we take action now." As Morgan observed, stories which contain such "dire warnings" do not necessarily include solutions for the situations they present (17). From the Greenhouse does not fit into this category,

but neither does it belong with The Battle of Dorking, one of the polemics Morgan cites. While texts of that species seek to engage, perhaps to panic, the populace at large, From the Greenhouse was written in a less dogmatic manner. Its rhetoric attempts to speak individually to each member of the audience, not to the mob mind. While this may not be readily apparent in the first seven songs, the last one masterfully pulls the entire album together, giving it this final form.

"Can I Play For You (Ian's Song)," differs from every other song on the album. It is gentle and intimate, establishing a conversational tone with the listener. There is the sense that the artist is reaching out to talk to his unseen audience on a one-to-one basis:

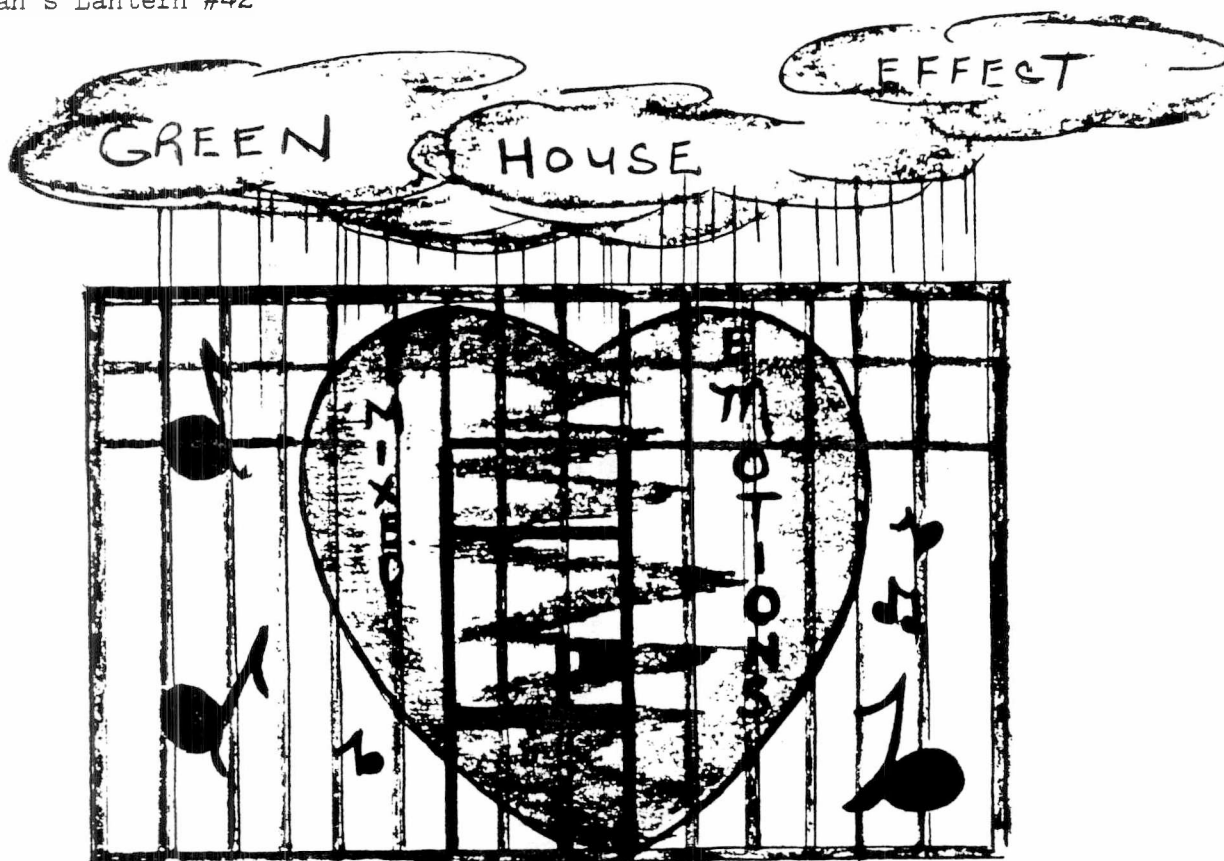
Can I play for you
It's the only thing that I know how to
do
It's the only thing that I can give
you
Right now
It's the only thing you'll need.

The other tracks demand our attention. This one solicits it. Here, while the artist acknowledges his own limitations, he also assures us that his song is all we really need. The two verses that follow are a series of gentle admonitions which reject the attitudes of the preceding tracks.

[Verse One]
Listen to the wind cause [sic] the
wind is your direction
Open your heart to everything around
you
Don't believe what anyone says until
you find out for yourself
Or 'til you hear it from me
Cause [sic] I'll never lie to you

[Verse Two]
Learn to love and love will never hurt
you
Follow your dreams and your dreams
will never fade
Don't believe anybody who tries to
tell you he's not afraid
Cause [sic] we're all afraid
And it's okay

In focusing our attention upon the wind's voice, Palumbo turns away from the unnatural life that has pervaded the scenes



portrayed in the other songs on the album. It is a final rejection of the artificiality found in "Big Money," and "Lost in America." Coupled with this is a call for us to cautiously open our hearts to everything around us (like deformed mutant boys) while adamantly demanding proof of the claims that others (such as the leaders in "All The Things We Do") may make. We also have his assurance that Palumbo, in his role as speaker and artist, will not lie to us. The next verse follows the pattern set for it by the first, offering advice which seems calculated to prevent the creation of the world captured within the album. Palumbo's emphasis on love stands in contrast to the prevailing emotions in "Big Money," "The Frozen Rain," and "Monkey Boy" and he reminds us of a basic commonality that makes us all equal. Everyone is frightened of something.

This track steps away from the world within the album. It is as though Palumbo wrote this one song as a response to the rest, answering the questions they raise. Taken by themselves, the lines from this song seem filled with the idealistic pabulum so common in pop music. But when we consider them in light of the preceding tracks, they come together as the serious advice a parent might give to a child.

If "Can I Play for You" steps away from the album, it does not remove itself en-

tirely from the post-holocaust horror depicted within it. It includes the same children's chorus found in "The Frozen Rain":

All day long we sing this simple song
La La La Life goes on.

This seemingly optimistic chorus takes on a more cynical tone when we consider the kind of life we've seen portrayed in the album. If there is no possibility for a better world, the hope that lies upon the surface of these lines soon reveals itself to be only the promise of an unending cycle of anger, fear, misery and destruction. Life, no matter how wretched, goes on.

Palumbo then quotes himself for a second time:

After all we've been through,
Doesn't it seem a little bit funny to
you
We should all shine from the violet
blue
And now we're calling you
From the greenhouse.

From the Greenhouse is, finally, a journey through the dark possibilities looming before us. We can see much in it that directly corresponds to our everyday lives,

although its setting lies beyond are our ken. The song and album end with the same haunting question that began this journey and though we have been offered examples and advice, we are left to find our own answers, ever aware of the dreadful potentials coupled to our actions.

Generically speaking, this work successfully manipulates all of SF's basic tools. It is set in an all-too-possible future. It is populated with people who seem both familiar and alien. It creates an alternate world that serves as a setting for a story that touches the human heart. Is it, then, Science Fiction? All of the definitions cited above were created with prose narratives in mind and, truth be told, the creations of Science Fiction are, indeed, overwhelmingly cast in prose. And yet another hallmark of this genre is its flexibility. One of the leading publications in the field, Isaac Asimov's Science Fiction Magazine, has published Science Fiction poetry for many years. Songs and poems, in one form or another, have been a part of any number of novels and stories for an even longer time.

However, song lyrics do not comprise prose narratives and cannot be successfully interpreted as such. While the writer relies solely upon the music within language to convey the emotional impact of his or her work, the composer draws upon other, wider resources and the lyrics of any song must be written with an eye (and ear) to the entire composition. The words of a novel or short story are its whole. Lyrics in song are only a part and must be subordinate to the whole. Any critic who approaches this album as a spoken or readtext might justly belittle the aesthetic impact of the lyrics alone. Shorn of their music, they lose much of their power to move us. But, wrapped within their towering dissonances, shod in their insistent, demanding rhythms and given breath through the evocative voice of their creator, this album successfully manipulates SF's basic tools and achieves the goal of all good Science Fiction: It transports us to another place, another time and forces us to see our own present in a new light. As such, I believe it to be a fine example of this genre. |*|

Works Cited

- Aldiss, Brian W., with David Wingrove. Trillion Year Spree: The History of Science Fiction. NY: Avon, 1988.
- Greybeard. NY: Harcourt, Brace, 1964.
- Amis, Kingsley. New Maps of Hell: A survey of Science Fiction. NY: Harcourt Brace, 1960.
- Asimov, Isaac. Asimov on Science Fiction. Garden City: Doubleday, 1981.
- Brians, Paul. Nuclear Holocausts: Atomic War in Fiction, 1895-1984. Kent: Kent State University Press, 1987.
- Miller, Walter M. A Canticle for Leibowitz. New York: Bantam, 1960.
- Morgan, Chris. The Shape of Futures Past: The Story of Prediction. Exeter: Webb and Bower, 1980.
- Norton, Andre. Daybreak-- 2250 A.D. New York: Ace, 1952
- Palumbo, John, producer. Crack the Sky. From the Greenhouse. Grudge Records, 1989.
- Scholes, Robert and Eric S. Rabkin. Science Fiction: History, Science, Vision. New York: Oxford, 1977.
- Spinrad, Norman. "On Books: New World Order." Isaac Asimov's Science Fiction Magazine. August 1992: 161-174.
- "On Books: The Edge of the Envelope." Isaac Asimov's Science Fiction Magazine. July 1987: 179-191.
- Suvin, Darko. Metamorphoses of Science Fiction. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1980.

CRUMATSKY SFLYAR

The Ukrainian National SF Convention

A Conreport by Michael McKenny

Words are such poor things to try to reproduce something of the spirit. It is one thing to look at letters on a page, and something more to feel what they are trying to suggest.

For a week I was in Kiev, and that was a special time during which I met many people. Some of them I knew from correspondence. Most I had never heard of until I arrived. I had been up some 24 hours by the time I met Alexander, Boris, and several others at the airport. Yet a fannish energy kept me going for many more hours during the wait for David Hodges (the other Westerner to attend the Con), the warm reception they gave us at the house of Boris Stern, etc.

Two Ukrainians had gone to Worldcon and there they stayed at the home of Andre Norton. So, David and I were most graciously placed in the home of the leading writer of the Ukraine, Boris Stern, during the time we were not at the convention site.

David Hodges, a friend of Terry Pratchett, had the background of one who protects airplanes from birds, who has trained falconers, and who for 8 months was paid full time, along with 18 other guys by a well-known chocolate bar company, to keep birds out of their factory. As one who spoke no Russian, he can testify that language is no barrier to having fun in Kiev. Many fans have been reading English SF and are eager for spoken practice.

The Con site was a recreation base on an island in the Dneipr River. There was a cafeteria which served plenty of tasty food. This, along with the feasts at Boris Stern's place, convinced me that Ukrainians know how to eat.

"The aim of the Con committee is to gather together as many fans as possible." This was uttered by someone as the Con and I memorized it. Once the fans were together they made a wonderful convention, with many greetings, with gatherings in rooms, with long and fascinating discussions, with room parties, and folk songs. I was most impressed by the Kiev folk singer "Like", who surely is of professional calibre. Going back to Con comms, these are known as Orc

Committees there, and those on Con Committees as Orcs.

There was programming: the official awards presentation and banquet, the video room, the 6-hour boat ride Saturday night on the Dneipr. However, much of the activity was made by fans themselves and they did not need to be told what to do.

The historic event which was the cause of much discussion was the appearance in the past few years of The Lord of the Rings in Russian. This has presented fandom there with its first experience of the special interest group, as Tolkien exerts as potent an influence there as he did here in the 60s. The Tolkienoids, who seem obsessed by Tolkien, who have created a live-action game based on the adventures of Frodo et al., are a very vibrant phenomenon, whatever the debate over their belonging to fandom.

Of course, it is an eye-opener to realize just how similar fans are here and there. Soon after we arrived I heard someone say, "There are two fans, one from England and one from Canada." This brought the reply, "Well, they look like our fans." Later someone commented on how much alike Alexander and I look. The discussions, the parties, the fannish interests only intensify the awareness of similarity, and the natural surroundings in Kiev are identical to Ottawa. One has to look at what man has added to spot the difference. This common identity is very sobering when we realize that, however unwillingly, we have been swallowing the same horse manure about our differences and came close to blowing up the planet because of these.

There was one related, and very touching, experience for me, which of course mere words on a page cannot really convey. The emotion of seeing such a thing unfold in my own room in front of my eyes over the page of paper. Anyway, I was talking to someone in my room when the door opened and someone else looked in. The two of them greeted each other and stood shoulder to shoulder; not an unusual occurrence, except that these two fannish friends had chosen to leave their native republic rather than

participate in the war there, where they would be on opposite sides.

After the Convention, Alex and Boris showed us the General Post Office in Kiev, from which they send us letters and to which our letters go for them. Then we walked a block or so to their club house (how many clubs here have such a thing?). It was fascinating. And it was a great day, for two large boxes of books had arrived from some US university. So everyone had fun going through them.

They also showed us some of the historic sites of Kiev: the old city gates, St. Sophia Cathedral, the ancient pagan idol retrieved from the river into which the Christians had hurled it. It is a replica

of this four-headed (one to each side) idol which is awarded, as we award our Aurora.

At the Con I met Segei Berezhnoy, who worked on Fenzor. I heard that Nick Sadofyev was believed to be very sick. I met the irrepressible first fan of the USSR, Boris Zavgorodny, who organized VOLGACON. And I met many others from Kiev, Kaunas, St. Petersburg, Moscow, Sverdlovsk (Ekaterineburg), Volgograd, etc. The MAPLECON tape Lionel sent was much enjoyed, especially the Chernobyl Engineer. They also showed us a tape of VOLGACON which was very good.

I could write forever, and still not do justice to the Con. It was wonderful, and you should all go see for yourselves next year. .*



Three Questions

by Dave Creek

Alice asked Dan, "Why do you speak in questions all the time?"

"Why not?"

"Because sometimes it can be damn irritating."

"Why would you think that?"

Alice sighed. "Never mind."

The devil picked that moment to appear, with a loud POP! of displaced air.

"Greetings, mortals," he exclaimed, in all his crimson skinned, brimstone-smelling glory. "I have come for your souls. I can give you three wishes."

What followed was the usual 20-30 minutes of disbelief, denial, demonstration, and finally dumbfounded acceptance that this was the devil, and that his offer was valid. Actually, it was Alice who raised all the protests; Dan stood mute the whole time.

"I'm ready to accept your three wishes, which must be in the form of questions," the devil said in his best Alex Trebek voice.

Now Dan finally spoke. "Why would we want to ask you a question?"

The devil raised a smoldering eyebrow. "You tell me. You have two more questions, then I own your souls."

Alice put her hand over Dan's mouth. "He can only speak in questions."

"That's your misfortune. Ask another question."

Alice's anger flared. "Can't you give us just a minute?" Then she slapped her hand against her forehead as she realized she'd done it too.

Dan pried Alice's hand from his mouth. He spoke slowly, with clear effort. "I believe I know exactly what to ask for." Alice was amazed. A sentence! Afraid to speak aloud again herself, she motioned for him to go ahead. But Dan hesitated.

"Go ahead," Alice said, her voice choking. "Ask it."

Dan, still uncertain, glanced first at Alice, then at the devil. "You sure?" .*

The Lost Worlds of Science Fiction

MURRAY LEINSTER

by Robert Sabella

Copyright (c) 1992 by Robert M. Sabella

Science fiction had always been a fiction of change, so much so that only the most talented writers can often keep up with the rapidly evolving eras. Science fiction fans marvel at Clifford D. Simak who first wrote for F. Orlin Tremaine's Astounding in the early 1930s, then adapted his writing to such changing markets as John W. Campbell's Astounding and H. L. Gold's Galaxy. Or Jack Williamson who began his career writing for Hugo Gernsback's Amazing and has since outlived the "Golden Age", Galaxy Magazine and the "New Wave."

But there was another science fiction writer whose era-spanning was in some ways the most remarkable of all. I refer to William F. Jenkins, who wrote under the penname of Murray Leinster. His first published science fiction story appeared in 1919, nearly a full decade before the birth of the science fiction prozine. It was published in Argosy-All-Story Weekly, the union of two of the most successful general pulps of the 1910-1920 decade. Under the aegis of editor Bob Davis, All-Story Weekly was the pulpzine which printed the greatest amount, and most influential, science fiction. Its regular stable of writers included such great pulp writers as Edgar Rice Burroughs, George Allan England, Garrett P. Serviss, and A. Merritt.

Into this select company came twenty-two year old Murray Leinster with the story "The Runaway Skyscraper." It was quite an imaginative story, far ahead of its time in its depiction of an alternate dimension. Largely because of the impact of Leinster's story, that concept has been a science fiction staple ever since.

A year later Leinster published "The Mad Planet." According to Sam Moskowitz, it was one of the greatest of all Munsey scientific

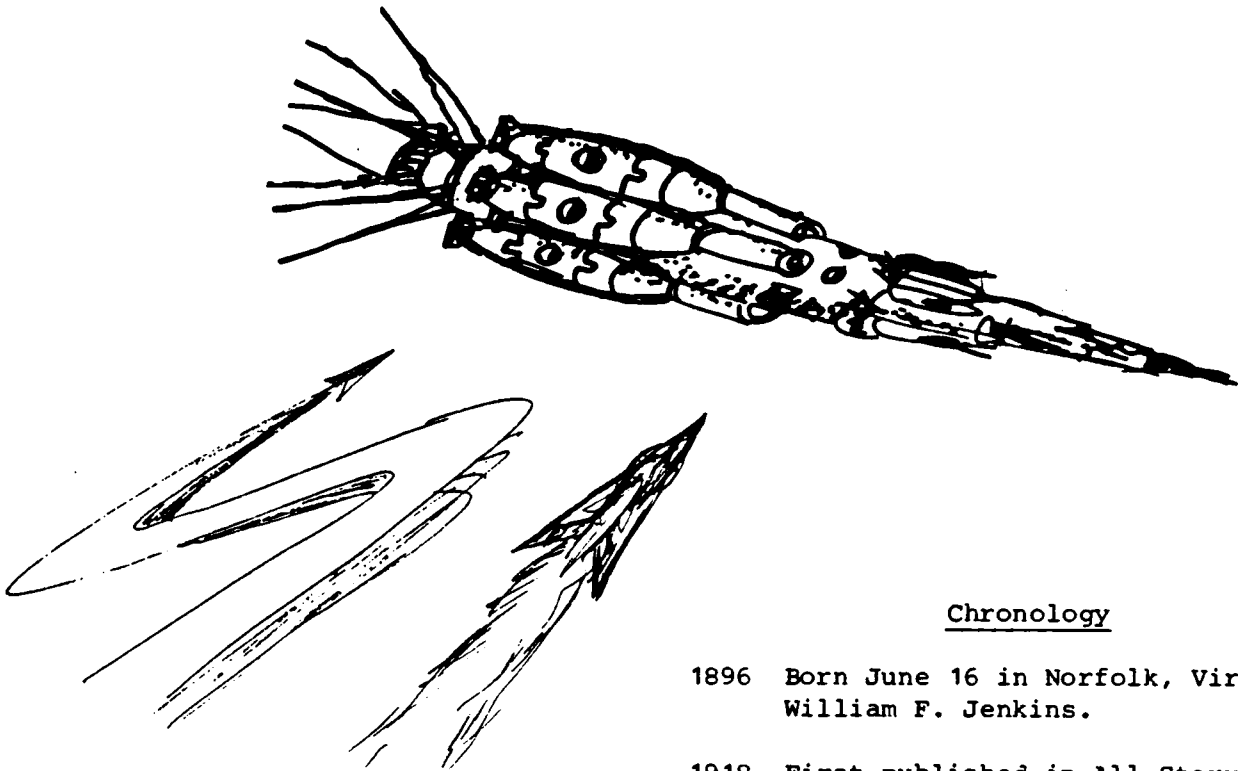
romances, catapulting Leinster among the giants in the pulp field. [1]

For the next dozen years, Leinster was one of the leading science fiction writers in Argosy. It did not take him long to discover the science fiction pulps though, and his talent served him well there. Previously he had been used to the freedom of the general pulps, where science fiction was an expansive amalgam of SF, horror and fantasy. The SF pulps were a much more restrictive market, insisting on strict adherence to scientific principles and extrapolation. Leinster adapted smoothly, and by 1930 he was perhaps the most notable writer to bridge the gap from the general pulps.

In 1934, F. Orlin Tremaine deliberately tried to nurse the field away from its strict adherence to Hugo Gernsback's scientific extrapolation. This was an overlooked evolution which actually paved the way for John W. Campbell's "Golden Age." Leinster provided Tremaine with many important stories, most notably "Sideways in Time," another innovative story about alternate branches in the time line.

When John W. Campbell, Jr. took over the editorship of Astounding, he searched for new, creative writers to write stories based on his personal philosophy of the future of mankind and the purpose of science fiction. Leinster, who had no trouble adapting to the SF pulps previously, adapted a second time, and wrote side by side with such younger writers as L. Sprague de Camp, A.E. Van Vogt, Robert A. Heinlein, Theodore Sturgeon and Isaac Asimov. In 1945 Astounding published his classic "First Contact", a serious examination of humanity's first

[1] Sam Moskowitz, Under the Moons of Mars, page 424.



Chronology

meeting with a technologically-superior alien race.

Another decade later, at the age of 60, he published the Hugo-winning novelette "Exploration Team" in Astounding.

In 1963, Leinster was the Guest of Honor at the Washington, D.C., World Science Fiction Convention, after which his production decreased drastically. But decreased production does not mean eroded talent. He still published several superb "Med Ship" stories in Galaxy Magazine in the early 1960s, and the excellent satire "Lord of the Uffts" in Worlds of Tomorrow (which in book form became The Greks Bring Gifts).

If past experience was any indication, had Murray Leinster continued writing, he would probably have adjusted to the "New Wave" as well as he adjusted to the death of the general pulps, the birth of the SF prozines, the "Golden Age," and the postwar boom. While he has never been considered as important an innovator as E.E. Smith or Don A. Stuart, Murrya Leinster was still an important founding father of the genre. He deserves to be remembered for having introduced the theme of parallel points on a time continuum, as well as having developed the ramifications of contact between different life forms. [2] [*]

[2] Donald M. Hassler, Twentieth Century Science Fiction Writers, page 435.

- 1896 Born June 16 in Norfolk, Virginia, as William F. Jenkins.
- 1918 First published in All Story Weekly with "You Can't Get Away With It."
- 1919 First SF story "The Runaway Skyscraper" published in Argosy.
- 1920 "The Mad Planet" published in Argosy.
- 1921 "The Red Dust" published in Argosy.
- 1931 First novel Murder Madness published.
- 1934 Publication of "Sideways in Time" in Astounding.
- 1945 Publication of "First Contact" in Astounding.
- 1950 First Collection Sideways in Time published.
- 1956 Wins Hugo Award for Best Novelette for "Exploration Team."
- 1959 Publication of collection Monsters and Such.
- 1963 Guest of Honor at Washington, D.C., World Science Fiction Convention.
- 1964 Publication of The Greks Bring Gifts.
- 1975 Dies June 8.
- 1976 Publication of The Best of Murray Leinster.

CONFLUENCE '93

Through the Eyes of a Newcomer

by Lynn McMillen

Last weekend at the age of 40, after 30 years of reading science fiction and fantasy, and four years of reviewing same professionally, I attended my first "con" in Pittsburgh. I am now a "con"firmated fan.

As it was my first con, I attended quite a few panels. I wanted to see what the science fiction community talks about when it gets together.

My first panel, "To Hell with the Prime Directive" was instructive. Bill (William H.) and Andrew Keith, writers of military SF and techno-thriller novels (and friends of mine), and John-Allen Price, also a writer of futuristic, military-type novels, were on the panel. They were balanced by three female, non-military writers: Sarah Zettel, Laura Woody and Bonita Kale.

Despite the diverse panel, a consensus of sorts derived from the discussions, along the lines of "the Prime Directive may have been a workable plot device of Star Trek, but it is basically a paternalistic, essentially untenable position to take in 'real life'." Real life situations require analysis on an individual basis, and no carved-in-stone policy can work which does not allow those on the spot to deal with each situation as it exists. Such a policy would prevent an advanced civilization from offering help to a less-advanced one, even when it was clear there were problems which the more technologically advanced civilization could correct. The concept of totally avoiding other less technological societies was also identified as less than beneficial, sometimes to both parties. Technology is not the only gift one people can offer to another. To refuse to contact other peoples may be to impoverish both societies.

My first panel on Saturday was "What's My Story?" It originally was supposed to be a panel in which panel members described stories, and the audience tried to come up with author and title. However, due to a mix-up, the story cards were lost. Ironically, this resulted in one of the liveliest and most enjoyable discussions of the whole

con. Instead of the panelists generating all the descriptions, the discussion was thrown open to all participants. The session became lively and animated, with virtually every one in attendance producing a story for the remainder to identify. I'd like to see more audience participation events at future cons.

In the afternoon, I caught Laura Woody's marvelously lucid talk on transgenics under the title "Blue Print of Life". Laura explained, using terms the average person could easily understand, the work being done on the cutting edge of genetic manipulation. She discussed insertion of plant genes into animals, and described techniques used to actually move a gene from one life-form to another. She also updated the audience on the current status of gene therapy for humans.

In "More Equal Sciences" the topic was the preponderance of "hard sciences" like physics, geology, biology, chemistry, etc., as opposed to the "soft sciences" of psychology, anthropology, sociology, in speculative fiction. Main points included: the hard science roots of SF as far back as Wells and Verne, the ease in identifying examples of "hard" science in literature, and the difficulty in identifying exactly what constitutes psychology or anthropology or sociology within the plot of a novel.

Sunday's second panel was entitled "Why Don't Kids Read SF?" While no one had any actual statistics, it is no secret that the generation following the "baby boom" is not reading nearly as much as we did, and little of that is science fiction or fantasy. Some of the reasons were obvious. Much of what is available to kids today, and competes with reading, was simply not available to us back then. Computers, computer games, role-playing games, movies, especially on videotape, the VCR, as well as summer and after-school jobs, all compete for the average teenager's time. Books, on the other hand, have become more expensive, and the subject matter less accessible. The

targeted juvenile book (a la Heinlein) has nearly disappeared, as have inexpensive magazines like the pulps of the 30s and 40s, whose lurid, action-packed covers promised similarly interesting stories to the young people who bought and read them.

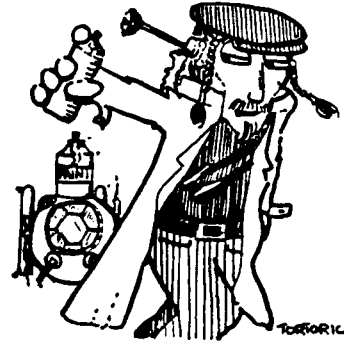
The question then becomes, is the life-expectancy of SF and fantasy literature limited? Will there one day be too few readers to support the publishers who pay the writers? Will science fiction and fantasy go the way of the travelogue and the "book of letters?"

The last panel on Sunday was "Women as Scientists." The thrust of the discussion throughout the course of the panel slowly revolved around the role of gender in SF literature, especially the role of women cast as scientists. Julia Ecklar, heading the panel, offered specific examples of stories in which women, ostensibly in leading roles in a story, were in fact subservient to a male protagonist. Julia illustrated some of her points with examples from some of her own early writings in which she made a character a specific gender because it seemed to be expected rather than because the plot line demanded it.

To become truly gender-neutral, Ecklar suggested, it is not so important whether your protagonist is male or female, but whether you have considered the necessity for a specific gender. Does that demolition expert really have to be a man? Could a man show the same compassion as a woman for the child in the story? The essence of non-sexist writing is not in gender per-se; it is in creating a character to fulfill a story's promise, rather than the readers' preconceptions.

With all the experiences to be savored at CONFLUENCE '93, the panels, art show, dealers room, informal discussion, etc., my most memorable experience happened by sheer coincidence. Saturday evening, after the masquerade, a bunch of us were sitting in the lobby of the hotel waiting for the filksing to begin. At some point, Robert Stockton (Robin the Just, for you SCA types) appeared in the lobby with his harp. Someone in our group (who shall be Nameless) begged for a song. For the next half hour, we were the lucky audience of an impromptu private harp recital by Robin the Just. Some of the finest moments in life are unplanned. Thank you, Robin.

I want to write a bit about the Art Show too. I was delighted and impressed by some

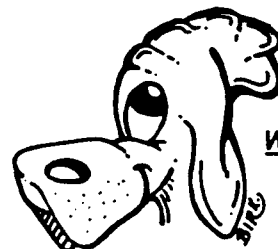


of the artwork I saw at the con. I was also shocked by some of the prices. Not by how high they were, but how low. A pair of elegantly etched griffin goblets by Rillan MacDhai had a minimum bid of \$5 apiece. An incredibly intricate hand-colored print had a minimum bid on it of \$5, also. I don't know what the matched pair of goblets finally went for, but the hand-colored print had already been bid up to \$14 the last time I looked. Robin Wood's breathtakingly beautiful painting "Songbirds" was on display (Not For Sale, of course) along with another of her superb paintings. Just seeing Robin's beautiful pictures has enriched me.

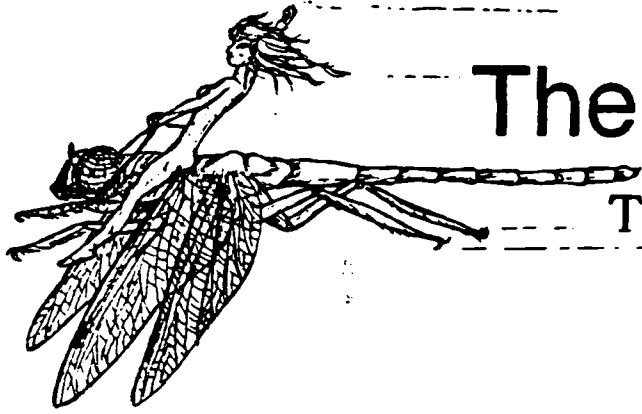
One of the areas of CONFLUENCE '93 I did not get to spend nearly enough time in was the consuite. A lot of wide-ranging, tremendously interesting conversations were going on there that I would have loved to either listen to or take part in. There are more literate, well-educated people per square inch at a "con" than anywhere else but perhaps a meeting of MENSA (the high-IQ society).

Another highlight of my first con was getting to meet "Lan" in person. I've recently started reviewing for the Lantern, and have written to Lan a couple of times as a result. I was tickled to find the public Lan matched the impression I received through letters and his pieces in the Lantern. (I'll quit now, before I make you blush too much, Lan.)

Finally, if anyone has comments about my reviews or would simply like to correspond, I'm a pretty fair letter writer (I'd better be, I've got nine brothers and sisters scattered around the country) and I'd love to have a new pen-pal or three. [*]



Write... please.



The Boston Tea Party

The Joys of Foreign Travel

by Terry Jeeves

On my retirement, Valerie and I decided to make a trip to America. Wheels were put in motion, plans made, visas obtained and with considerable anguish over what was essential and what was not, suitcases packed.

Getting to America is easy. You just walk out of the front door and turn left. Following that, you open the garage and get in the car. Having had experience of the continuously-under-repair systems of the M1 motorway, we opted to drive south by the scenic route. We passed through the village of Bakewell before the dew was off the famous tarts (edible variety). We lunched in Leamington, took coffee in Kenilworth and drinks in Deddington. Our route was beset by such refeulling stops as, although the car could do 40 miles to a gallon of petrol, Val can only manage ten miles between stops for coffee.

Leaving our car with friends in Reading, we caught a train to Heathrow, checked in, dumped our baggage, then wandered round the departure lounge admiring the goodies on sale as well as the tastefully positioned, empty waste baskets and refuse-strewn floor. Normally, by this time, I would have been all agog to head off into the wide blue yonder, but I couldn't believe it was really happening. I fully expected a nasty bureaucrat to be lurking behind the Customs Shed, some little Hitler, just waiting to tap me on the shoulder to say, "Fooled you! Your visa has expired. Go Directly to jail."

Incredibly, nothing like that happened. Our flight notice continued to creep its way up the departure board with all the agility of a geriatric tortoise. Meanwhile, we watched the debonair airline pilots strolling around in their pretty uniforms with important-looking documents such as the "Manual of Blind Flying" clutched in their hands. That sort of thing helps to inspire one's confidence in flying.

Finally, we began the airport shuffle, a process not unlike solving a Chinese box-in-box puzzle system. Heavenly chimes, followed by a nearly incomprehensible voice over the loudspeakers, spurred us into action. We grabbed our traveling bags, left a nice comfortable seat, and scuttled through a narrow barrier to fight for a place in a much smaller pre-departure lounge.

We sat there for twenty minutes before another scramble into an even tinier place. Such staging posts are all part of the thoughtful way British Airways looks after you. Rumour has it that people have been lost for weeks while threading such mazes. Happily, our only hazard was a mother with two SCREAMING children. Never in a field of human conflict has so much noise been made by so little lung tissue. The twins had polished their act to a fine art, working it in relays. Twin A would howl like a banshee while child B sucked in a new load of air. When A ran out of steam, siren B took over. Had they continued once we got airborne, I was prepared to suggest they went outside to play. Eventually, the little darlings either died of heart failure or were poisoned by a thoughtful stewardess.

British Airways ran out of lounges to shift us through and we found ourselves facing a stony-faced character in a dark blue uniform. He inspected our passports for gravy stains, and our faces for pimples before deciding that we were not diamond smugglers or white slavers.

Our flight bags were x-rayed, rummaged through. Tickets were taken from us by one lady and boarding passes issued by another. Once they ran out of delaying tactics, we finally boarded an overcrowded coach which carried us out to a waiting Boeing 747.

The in-flight entertainment began as the Jumbo taxied out to the runway. The air hostesses played a pre-recorded tape as they gave us a pantomimed performance of

what to do in the case of a crash. As I remember it, the procedure is to remove one's shoes, take off socks, tie the seat cover over your head, push a life-jacket down inside your jumper, hand your false teeth to the hostess for safe-keeping, then jump out of the nearest window. Of course, I may have it wrong.

Then it was "Cigarettes Out!", "Fasten Your Seat Belts!", and the Jumbo began its take-off roll. The tarmac dropped away, the wheels thumped up. I really began to believe it: we were on our way to America. Ten minutes later as we broke through the cloud layer, it was time for refreshments. Scones, butter, jam, salmon sandwich, tea and biscuits. A couple of hours later, we dined on chicken, potatoes, beans, apple pie, cream, pate, crackers, rolls and butter; all accompanied by lashings of coffee. Who says airline food is plastic!

Newfoundland looked sunny, green and inviting as we passed over and flew down the coast to Boston's Logan Airport. Our baggage finally appeared on the carousel--why does ours always come down last? We sauntered along to Customs to be greeted in the friendly American way by armed guards, who kept shouting, "Stand at the line until

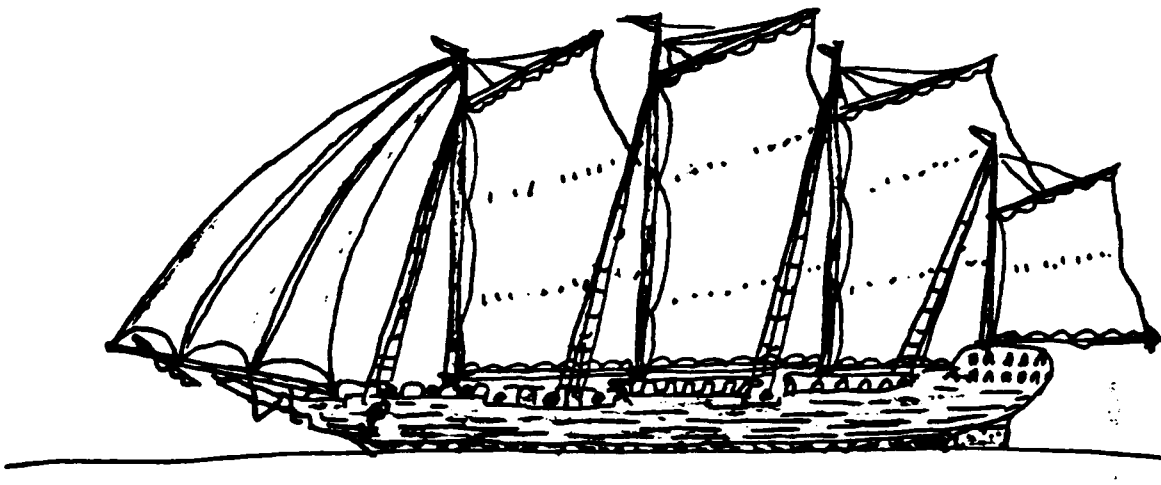
you're told to move forward!"

We stood, were eventually told, and obediently moved forward.

"Any food to declare?" barked a seven-foot giant. Why the man wanted food was uncertain. Either he was hungry or he suspected us of smuggling in British Airways' sandwiches. Without thinking of where I was, I innocently answered. "Just some packets of tea."

A perfectly true sataement; we had brought some fancy tea selection packets with us as gifts. But tea in Boston is a sensitive subject--in the harbour there, if you're daft enough, you can even pay to board an old windjammer and relive something called the Boston Tea Party by hurling tea chests overboard. The economically minded Americans have the boxes tied to ropes, so they can be retrieved for the next customers.

The customs man, gun-toting and lacking any sense of humour, took a dim view of limeys whom he suspected of trying to take the Mickey. I began to envisage an all-expense paid holiday in Alcatraz, but he just snorted loudly and gave me a nasty scowl before waving us through to the land of the free. [*]



THINKING SIDEWAYS

by Andrew Offutt



The editor of a bigtime in my state but far from me called one day to say his people were preparing a special edition for Kentucky's 200th anniversary. A lot of people were writing about Kentucky's past; would I write about the future? With a lot of lead time, I did...and learned that The Daily Independent is just as slow-pay as Ace Books. A couple of months later I used this slightly revised version as my Guest of Honor speech at the 21st annual CHAMBANACON in Champaign-Urbana, Illinois.

Lan is a longtime part of CHAMBANACON and a longtime friend, too.

We writers of that form of speculation/entertainment called science fiction are not best known as predictors, and we're not trying to predict. We think sideways and create alternate futures; may-bes and could-bes. Some attempts to predict what the future might be are easy. Some have to be mere speculation with alternatives. The problem with overall speculation is that some little unpredictable comes along to wreck the whole. Easy examples are Hitler, the Pill, computers, and importantly AIDS, personal computers, and maybe of less importance, Ross Perot.

Here are some things that will happen, and some that might--unless, or if.

In the near future only old people will say such things as "quarter of four" and "ten to five" and "a quarter after six". Bet on it.

We have unproudly ushered in the Era of Political Interference Demanders. I don't like what you do because it isn't what I do, and I want you stopped. Therefore I and others will sue, a simple matter in a nation with entirely too many lawyers, and we will agitate to have laws passed to control or stop what you do.

This is not a prediction; this is our society now.

This is a prediction: it ain't gonna get better real soon.

Some people will try to limit the freedom of others to do as they wish or just be different, whether in bedroom behavior, driving, smoking, dressing, voting, thinking, cussing, belching, going to a certain building on a fixed day of the week at a fixed time, buying books, seeing movies, stating their opinions (however radical, silly, or plain dumb)--or living in Kentucky and not rooting for UK and the Reds.

Some people will still avow that people should determine what people do and others

that government should structure people as a group called society, and darn it, most of both arguments will sound good.

People will inherit less from their parents. This is simply a projection from the fact that we now live longer than humans ever have, and cannot work for money all those years, and will spend a great deal on health care. Most of this will be at the end of life, as involuntary contributions to hospitals, physicians, and medical care technicians.

That's a "prediction" with an unless clause. It will happen unless Americans bring about a major change in health care, life maintenance, and their costs. It will also be affected--some--by the fact that we will edge slowly into a societal agreement to allow people to die when they are very old and preservation of life means that it is without quality. The nation with the most violent citizenry on the planet continues to pretend that human life is valuable even while we exterminate each other at a level that appalls the citizens of other nations.

Our grandchildren will, simply put, stop pretending.

We will assume that any woman we see--regardless of age--is just as likely to be a full- or part-time worker as the "traditional" full-time homemaker--which is no longer traditional.

"We" will still be griping about and surveying and reporting violence on TV. And arguing about it. And watching it.

In 1970 one in ten babies was born to an unmarried woman. By 1991 it was one in four. So--about half of all children will spend some time in a single-parent home, and home alone. TV's influence on them will continue not to face that responsibility for the future of the country. That means even more young people will "learn culture" through entertainment rather than through what we know as education.

In a related area, some men will still be trying to limit the freedom of others, including the freedom of women to do as they wish with their own bodies.

Unthinkers will still be using "like" to fill the role of twelve or so other words and phrases, all perfectly nice ones, too; and pretentious un-thinkers will still seek to sound learned by using "address the issue" to mean discussing or trying to deal with a problem, and "at that tyeem" to mean "then", and "basically" to mean "duhhh", and "ongoing" to mean nothing at all.

("Professor Moore hopes to successfully complete her ongoing experiment involving causing death in Canadian rats by feeding them 741 potatoes per day." Obviously the experiment is "ongoing" [with that perfectly good old word "continuing" just cluttering up the dictionary]. Since Doc Moore still hopes for a result, obviously she wants to complete it successfully; who hopes to complete something unsuccessfully? This shoehorning in of extraneous words is an OK idea if a magazine is paying by the word, but otherwise it is doltish. And did we have to shoehorn the adverb into the middle of a two-word verb just because James T. Kirk did.)

Here's my fantasy scenario of what took place decades ago:

GENE: "Leonard, you have the finest voice of anyone connected with the proposed series, and we want you to read this to kick it off as a weekly overvoice."

NIMOY: "Sure, let me see...To Boldly Go? Cram a word into the middle of a two-word verb? Hell no, I won't read that shit--get Shatner to do it. He won't know the difference."

Linkage, Economic and Worse

Tinier and tinier computers, stuffed with more information and abilities, will spell trouble for employees of Bic, Shaef-fer and...is Eversharp still around? In other words your kids will have electronic notepads in their pockets, and in time those will be linked to a monster mainframe somewhere. And newspapers will get fewer phone calls from people seeking nuggets of information.

College student bodies will be composed of far more people with gray, white, or little hair than athletes, cheerleaders, or even administrators. Come to think, that may not even be a prediction; it may well be true right now.

See, everything is linked. Because so many people are living so much longer, the AARP is proving itself more powerful than any Member of Congress or any President, and my social security payments would not exceed my income tax, as they do now. On the other hand, if so many people weren't living so much longer and deciding to go back to school, US colleges and universities would be in far worse trouble than they are now. People with gray, white or little hair are an enormous source of revenue and these students do not require capital outlay for new dorms!

We will likely continue to experience a sclerosis in the economic growth rate. The reasons: births are down, consumer demand is down. (People drive cars longer, for instance. Jodie and I are far from alone in opting not to buy cars the year they come out. We see it as kind of like buying version 1.0 of computer software.) And government As We Know It has been a obvious preference for providing pork (see: "Bread and Circuses") to curbing the hemorrhage of social welfare funds, balancing the budget the way we "lesser" citizens must, and dealing with the Olympian and still-growing national debt. The debtors who will eventually pay for this profligacy and cowardice in Washington are most likely in school right now.

You know--your kids.

Bearing in mind that a society consists of individual human beings, our society cannot continue to exist without some kind of national health-care plan, probably based on the European system. This will happen only after a lot of agitation--and then not without a major fight. We won't know much about that; it will be a shadow war in Washington conducted by the AMA lobby, the AHA lobby, every manufacturer of drugs and medical equipment, and others with an understandable desire to see nothing changed.

News as Entertainment

In a related area, the majority of positions of national leadership/lawmaking/ordergiving/posturing will still go to the people who want those jobs the most, not to the best, as we say it does. "May the better person win" isn't much of a choice when you wind up voting not for one but against one.

We'll still be doing that, too. Bet on it. I hate to admit how many presidents I have helped elect because I was voting against the other guy, including Goldwater who would have gotten us into a war in some far, far country we'd never heard of even in Geography class. I think it was called Free Land...Vietnam, in their language.

All candidates for presidency in 1996 and after will have 800 numbers for us to call for the address for contributions. Bet on it.

All of them will also hustle to get on talk shows and to create "town hall meeting" atmosphere, rather than allow themselves to be interpreted by the news media,

as they have been for a long time--more and more shallowly. Oh yeah, we just saw some real innovations, and they are good ones.

Thanks, Mister Perot.

We are in The Entertainment Society (CNN Headline Showbiz Nooz On The Air!), and we will continue to be, more and more. Who wants to see Gore Vidal on a TV talk show when we can see a quote interview unquote with *gasp* Michael Douglas or Michele Pfeiffer?

Natalie Woods' last movie, Brainstorm, was a predictor! With those science fiction-sounding thing called "virtual reality" you will be able to experience events and activities without leaving the living room. Ski, white-water raft or kayak, hunt on safari in Africa--really! You'll be able to argue with Resnick!--or, I suppose, fondle Julia Roberts or Daniel Day-Lewis. Now that is safe sex!

We will continue to expand the frontiers of technology, and to misuse it in weird or even stupid ways. A lot of the misuse comes from pushers and will continue.

Misuses of Technology

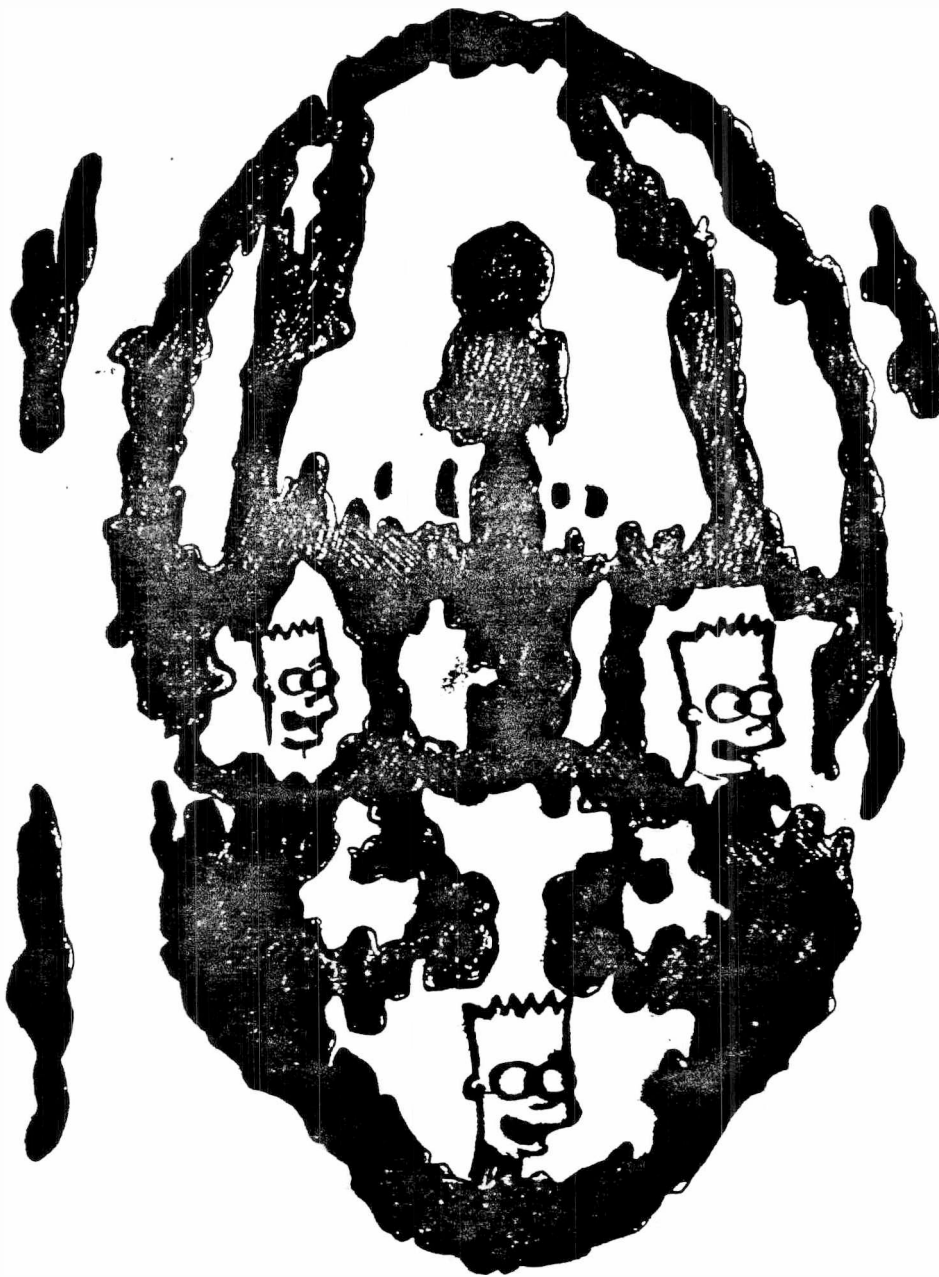
I remember when we were all going to be flying helicopters; "Junior will ask Dad if he can borrow the family chopper tonight," was the way one very old article put it in the Sunday paper magazine section. And we were all going to have viziphones just as Flash Gordon used on planet Mongo in Alex Raymond's terrific 40's and 50's comic strip. Didn't happen. Imagine traffic control if we were all coptering from home to work and out to the mall and on dates!

It would have a positive effect in reducing our increasing population rate....

As to a phone with a screen that lets Stephanie see Grandma when she calls, or the phone peddler see my look of outrage when s/he comes bustin' telephonically into my home...No Way! Some people are silly enough to interrupt a shower or other bathroom visit just because it's convenient for someone else to talk to them at that moment: i.e., the phone's ringing. They certainly don't want to be seen! Before calling Grandma Sam makes sure his hair is combed and his acne covered--but Grandma has been cleaning the oven and looks like the devil and does NOT wish to be seen!

So...those things did not happen.

Another hotcha prediction, this one a lot more recent, was that every home would have a computer. Just think, with one in



the kitchen Mom can merely call up her favorite recipe onscreen and start whipping up dinner. Nah. Mom has spent years accumulating all those little cards in the convenient box no bigger than an excessively fat wallet: Bill Cosby's, for instance. She is not interested in blowing the off-time that is so scarce and therefore precious to homemakers by typing all those recipes into the 'puter! And if she did--where do we put the screen? Can't go on the stove; a computer has to be kept cool. Tear out a cabinet and mount the monitor there above the food-preparation counter? Maybe, but what about all those glasses in that cabinet that have been accumulating like paper clips for the past X-teen years? And suppose that between screen and refrigerator or food cabinet across the kitchen she forgets whether the recipe called for two egg whites or three?

A lot of people can't read a computer screen from across the kitchen, or even three feet away. Others can read a computer screen from across the kitchen--if they take off the glasses they need to see the oven timer!

It was a dumb idea. What a computer is valuable for around the house is writing letters and absolutely keeping copies. It's good for making notes for such things as writing a term paper or a book or the church or club bulletin or a Christmas letter or an article on the future or a speech at a science fiction fan convention. For keeping a database that lists all the movies you have so laboriously taped because maybe you might want to see them again or show them to Mom or the kids when they visit or maybe in a few years you can show your grandchild Mary Poppins or The Adven-

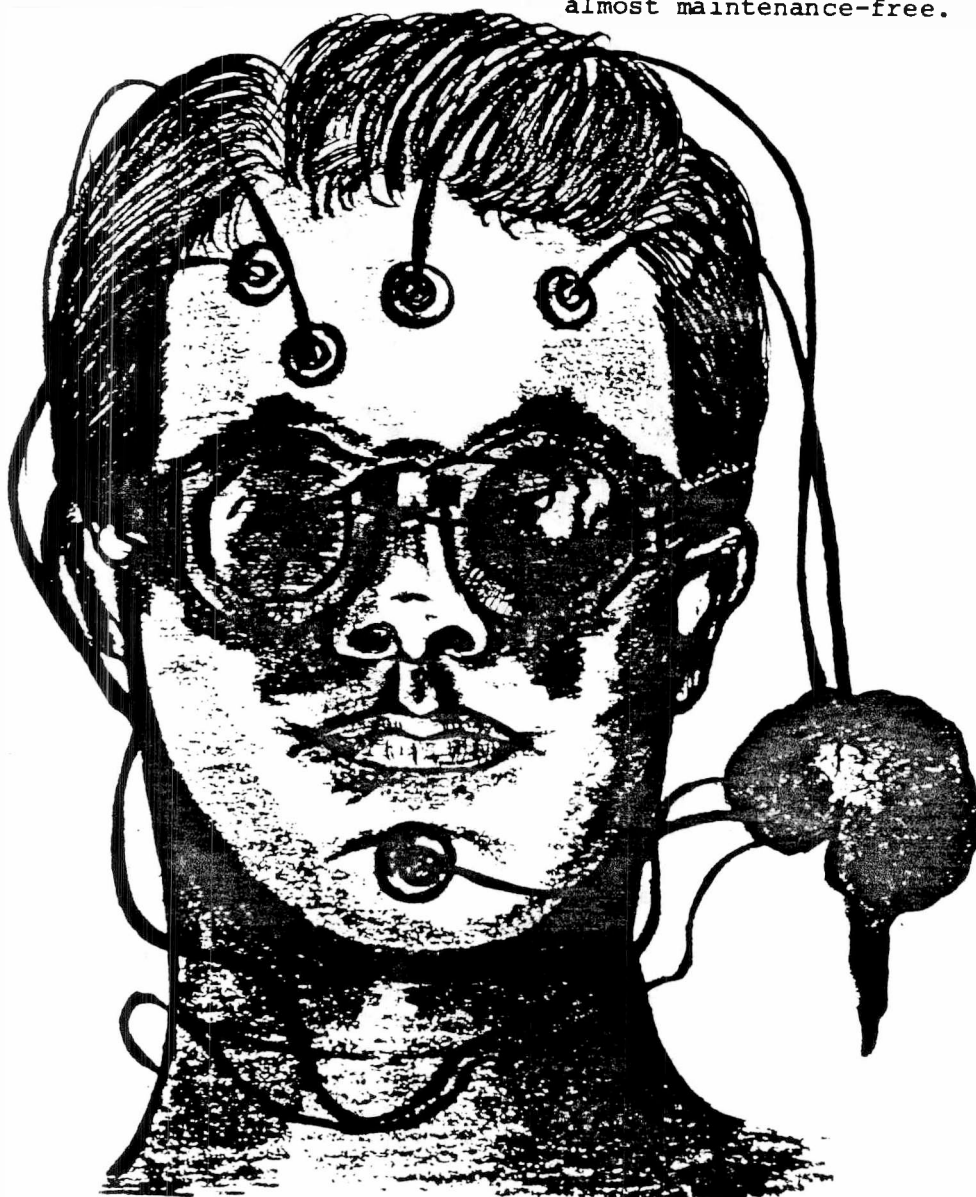
tures of Milo and Otis (which is worth keeping). With them in a computer database you can list them alphabetically or by your own numbering system--and check through them either way in a couple of seconds; or tap the find key and enter "Eastwood" or "Connery" because you can't remember the name of that really good one he was in, or the number you assigned to the tape!

A 'puter is good around the house (or office) for filling out your taxes with backup notes to deductions you take. All you do next April 10th or so is open the file in your computer marked TAXES, choose the document labeled 92Return, and open it. Then save it as 93Return and use it as a template, entering new information in all the categories you've already set up.

I've been doing that for eight or nine years...about the same length of time we've been going to type in the Christmas card list....

All of us learned at age 15 or 16 how to feed gas to the car engine: a non-tech device called the RF. That's for Right Foot, as in Apply To Gas Pedal. Wow! Took me two minutes to learn that...although longer to extricate Dad, who was imbedded several inches in the passenger seat by the velocity of my takeoff. OK; most of us learn in time to control that RF. Now we have the marvelous experience of having our cars stop dead (in the worse possible place; that is a Law of the Universe) and spend money to try to find out what's wrong with it--to discover, eventually, that the computer that tells the car when to feed gas to the engine has died and that's \$400, please.

I am a computer lover and even a hass-af hacker. To make my car go, however, I was always perfectly happy with the way my gas-sending device functioned. My RF is still attached to the end of my right leg, and almost maintenance-free.



Putting books on computer disks is a good idea and it's a rotten idea. It means that the book you want/need/Have To Have has not been ripped off by some SOB (or merely kept because by now the library fine equals the life savings of the involuntary thief), but is right there in the (computer database) file, and is available either from the library's monster hard disk or via your library's modem connection with another library. We who write novels already know that all publishers are thieves and Philistines; who is in charge of paying royalties to the writer of the book you read onscreen and how is it done? And consider how extremely limiting it will be, reading that way. You can't carry it into the kitchen and prop it up on another book on the breakfast bar while you eat, or into the bathroom (also known as the Reading Room in many homes), or sit outside in the shade and read (or in the sun either, for those self-punishers who do that) or...

Well. Let's break off that by noting that a lot of limiting factors attend reading a book or magazine on a 'puter screen. It's a good idea and it's a bad idea. Unlike viziphones and family helicopters, though, it is happening.

Another misuse of technology is the cynical (mis)use of schoolroom and misuse of the innocents who occupy them for the purpose of pushing televised commercials at your kids and grandchildren.

Car phones have made a nice contribution ...to the accident rate. Most of us are not pretentious enough to mispronounce "now" as "At This Point In Time" or to pretend that we're so bloody busy we need a phone in the car--which is an excellent place to get away from telephones and do some thinking! A cellular phone pusher pitched me this way: "Just think! You need never miss a call! You can take the phone out to the woodpile or right into the bathroom with you!"

Great. One of the several advantages about splitting firewood nearly every winter day is that I can get away from the world, from telephones, and think while taking out my aggressions on innocent pieces of hardwood. (Take That, Infernal Revenoo! Take That, Ace!) And...know what I do when I'm in the bathroom and the phone rings?

I go on reading Newsweek.

If the caller needs me, she'll call back. If I missed a chance to win a spun-aluminum bunwarmer on a radio program, I'll never miss it. If I won the lottery-they'll call back, the same as the gal who's push-

ing a bunch of subscriptions or trying to get me to re-up for a magazine I've deliberately let drop. Folks, them there car phones have their uses, but for most of us they're pretty dangd silly. Put the money in the piggy bank toward buying a computer --or to help cope with the annual increase in your health insurance rate.

Born Brain-free

Another misuse of technology is apparent when I watch a clerk look at a chart for the 6% sales tax on, say, \$9.99. I call this Thought-free, as in sugar-free. Six times ten is sixty and 9.99 is ten because the State gives no breaks and takes no prisoners, and so I owe ten-sixty minus a penny, and that's subtraction even we English majors can handle. Are we dealing with Mongo here? No; the clerk has just conditioned herself to rely on the chart posted there beside the register and has ceased to consider logic or the multiplication tables that mean ole Miz Brown made us memorize back in fourth grade--in other words, the clerk has ceased to think.

Another example of Thought-free is dependence on a foreign body (as differentiated from a substance). We all see this when we see someone turn to or take out the desk or pocket calculator to compute 20×4 or 6×11 .

Duhhh...let's see...one times anything is that number, so two ones times six must be that number twice--66--and $9 \times 11 = 99$ and...wow! Gosh it feels good to use the ole brain rather than the sales tax chart or the calculator!

"Bill! Quick! What's seven times nine?"

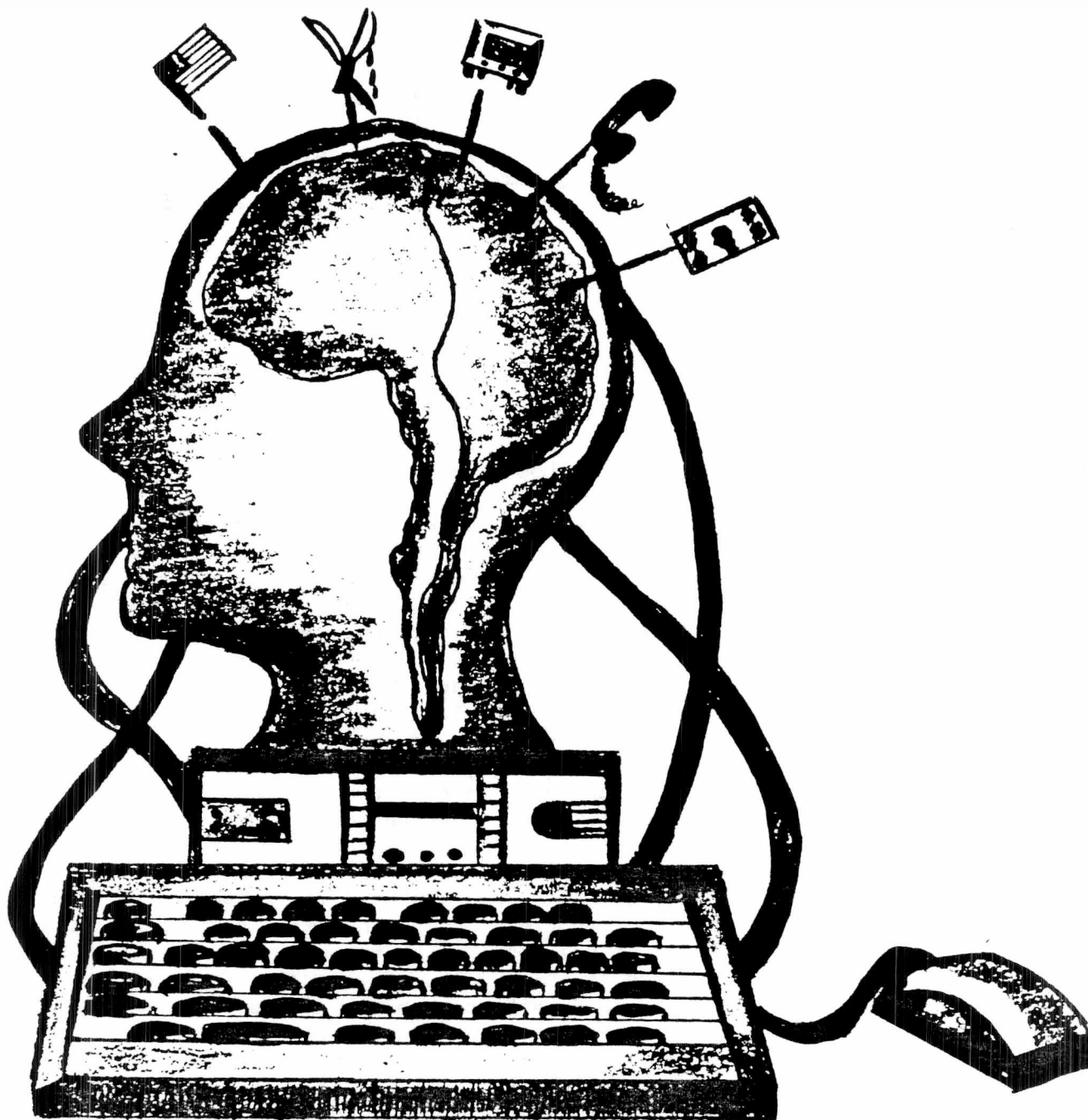
The Fifth Grader: "Sixty-three!"

Bill: "Uh [tap-tap-click] sixty-three."

Time delay in using calculator rather than brain: more than sufficient to come in fourth in any Olympics event.

In my 18th or 19th year I wrote a novel about cigarette smuggling--they were coming in from a secret facility under a big bubble on the moon. I don't remember where the tobacco was being grown. I never tried to sell that one. It was batting practice; obviously a silly premise!

Except that it no longer is. If the big-ots get their way again as they did in that other prohibition of the 1920s that was so beneficial to Sicilian immigrants, and if marijuana is not made legal when tobacco is prohibited, the future of my state will indeed be a bleak one, and I'd rather not be



around to witness and experience it.

Uses of Technology--and Brains

Last year 11% of high school seniors in my state of Kentucky took the SAT test that is one of the requisites for entering college. By comparison, 76% of New York state seniors took the test, and 75% in New Jersey. Why? Because too many Kentuckians don't intend to go to college, or think they can't. I'd bet that 80% of that tiny 11% of all my state's seniors who were thinking seriously about college went to schools in towns and cities with universities or community colleges.

All education degrees must require complete computer literacy. I add the word "complete" because everyone starting to teach should know how to use one of these marvelous things well. It's a lot easier to learn some than others, which I consider darned near criminal. Now that the Microsoft company is enabling IBM to apply Apple's MacIntosh technology to PCs, all of them will soon be simple to learn, or relatively so. (Easier than those darned multiplication tables and geometry that long ago gave me fits!)

The second reason is simple: some people "teach writing" without being writers, but no one who can't use a computer can teach

anyone else how to use it. Future teachers have got to be forced to take a computer course or two. That use of the unAmerican--and un-Offutt--phrase "forced to" is not as horrible as it seems; all college students are forced to take a lot of courses to get their degrees, beginning with English 101 and General Science 101 and moving on to seniors having to take one or more one-class/one-teacher-only courses in their major fields.

This implies that no one should graduate high school without knowing how to use a computer and with plenty of experience doing it. It's true. Better still, no one should go into her sophomore year without knowing how. A full computer-use course in high school easily and profitably replaces one in shorthand! Another computer course should be titled something on the order of "Sophomore Composition: Writing on the Computer."

Why?

It's well known that a large difference exists between high school graduates and those who have college degrees. Less known is that a great difference in income exists among people depending upon whether they went to school in a large city, a rural community, or a small city, municipality, or suburbs! People from the last-named group, whether small city, municipality, or the 'burbs, are out-earning workers from, not necessarily in, both rural and big-city environments. The reasons have to be expectation and education, and the quality of that education.

Despite the fact that a lot of people from big cities want out and certainly do not want to teach downtown, and a lot of people don't want to go back to Pikeville or Punkin Center or my home town of Taylorsville (pop. 950) to teach, those areas don't offer a larger wage or better conditions (smaller classes, for instance) to lure teachers because they can't. They can't afford to. The tax base in Taylorsville's county is tiny, and so is the revenue. So is the tax base of Manhattan, the Big Business area of New York City most of whose high earners live elsewhere--even in other states, such as Connecticut, New Jersey, New Hampshire...in the suburbs. The

majority of the people who do live in NYC serve those high earners, one way or another...while the high earners pay their high property- and sales-taxes in the suburbs.

There, they build better and roomier schools, equip them better (with computers, for instance) and employ the top teachers simply because they have more choice among college graduates. They don't even have to pay them more!

Whether I like it or not doesn't much matter, but I don't: those kids tend to come out of grade school better equipped to do well in high school and they come out of high school that much readier to qualify for a good college and to do well there. That means they graduate better equipped to get good jobs that pay well.

So many, many programs are available from Granny Government in Washington that it just isn't fair to say that a bright youngster can't get into college. Yes she can. She may be in Upward Bound and then on a Pell Grant and may even have to take English 099 (a condemnation of every English "teacher" she has had for the previous twelve years), but by grannies she can get in. If she's good at math or physics or sees a computer and says "Hey, that's water --and I'm a duck!" as my son Jeff did, she belongs in college and is not going to have to worry about employment.

(He's an overpaid professor at a research university. You?)

Someone, whether it's from the Governor's office or a corporation or consortium (of banks, for instance) in your state, should be nosing around every high school in the state and if a kid is really good at math/geometry/pre-physics--or unlikely right now, is a computer Natural--should practically drag into college that young adult and future high-earner and national asset, no matter what Dad or Mom can afford.

We do recruit athletes at the high school level, don't we? And put them through school?

Let's not try to see how many people I can make angry here, but my son the computer whiz is more important to this nation and its future than I am.

You? |*|

As in the past, I was asked if I would publish the winners from the Writing Contest from CONTEXT. I agreed, and the work on the following pages is that of the winners: Helen E. Davis with her winning short story "Silver", Tom Sadler with the winning poem "A Bar Tale", and Betty Gaines with her winning limerick.

CONTEXT VI

Writing Contest Winners

Poetry-Fiction-Limerick

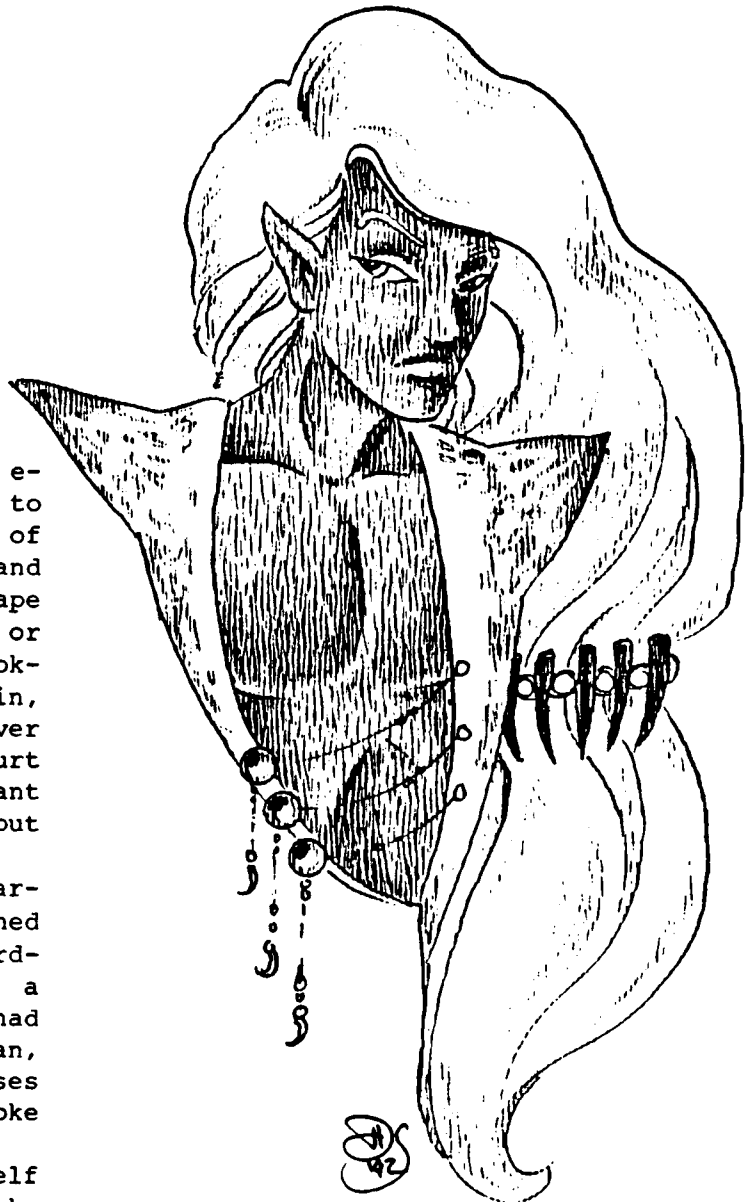
Silver

by Helen E. Davis

They called him Silver, and that was enough name for him. His name belonged to the past and to a land on the other side of the world; this name belonged to a land where the sun was hot and the landscape endless. Whether he looked out over sand or water, the horizon lay as a smooth, unbroken curve. The air and sun burned his skin, so pale that it seemed to have a silver sheen, and the brilliance of the light hurt his eyes. He belonged to the land of giant trees, to their shade and sweetness--but they no longer belonged to him.

Crouching in the shade of the water barrel, the only cool spot on the polished wood deck, he watched as Dennis the Swordsman tried to teach Kavyn how to use a sword. Kavyn the Hopeless. Although he had the height and reach to be a good Swordsman, he just didn't care. Not even the bruises on his arms and legs, where Dennis broke through his defenses, could spur him on.

Silver understood. Kavyn thought himself as a slave, forced into this life by another's will. And he was partly right, for Dennis was the kind of man to mold people around him into his own sense of the way



things should be. But this life was better than the one Kavyn had been leading--that could not be disputed, though Kavyn might not agree.

The difference was that he felt the pain, now that there was no Gold Dreamdust to mute it.

At least he had a chance, despite the weight of his past. The Swordman offered him life, responsibility--even acceptance. Things that Silver would never have again.

He took another bite of his apple and watched while Kavyn thrust half-heartedly with his wooden trainer, just as the boat fell into water trough. The red-headed man stumbled forward and Dennis landed his trainer on the back on his neck. That had to hurt, though Kavyn only winced.

Then Dennis grabbed a handful of red hair and yanked his head back.

"Stupid move, Flower," the Swordman growled. "If I didn't take your head off with that blow, then I would now cut it off with my knife. And your hair's too long--I can get a grip in it." He brought his trainer down on Kavyn's back.

Not a hard blow, but Kavyn stiffened in extreme agony. He was only partly healed from his day with the iron-tipped whip.

"Take a break," Dennis growled, dropping Kavyn on the deck. "Get some water."

On his hands and knees, Kavyn crawled to the barrel where Silver sat still eating his apple. He grabbed up the dipper and drank deeply, then stared out over the blue water. Nothing but water lay out there, blue and rolling, but the man seemed to be watching something else. He rubbed the back of his hand, where a broad scar covered the tattoo of a harp. After a time he glanced back at Silver.

"You ever miss--your own kind? Your home and family?"

The question made Silver think of the trees that filled the Farlands. Big, broad, and green, their branches were woven into rooms that housed the people. Spider webs held the leaves together, forming living walls. He saw the faces of his family, his father and mother standing along side the Village Readers and Village Justice. And his brother's face, sightless on a mat of leaves and broken branches.

His brother.

No, no, NO!

The red-headed whore still stood there, looking at him with almost pleasure on his face. Silver responded, "Do you ever miss--the beds of other men?"

Kavyn threw the empty dipper to the deck, showering Silver with a few drops of water, and strode off.

Lowering his eyes to the deck, Silver tried to scry in the pattern of the drops. There was nothing. The man should have hit him for that remark, should have cursed him. But he wouldn't, because he believed that Silver was protected by the curse that fell on anyone who hurt a Farlander. Which was wrong, because Silver had lost all right to that protection. Rather, he had to suffer more before the balance could be righted and he could be freed from his own curse.

Much more.

Silver stood and looked out over the endless blue, hating the emptiness and trying to forget his brother, the curse.

* * * * *

A flicker on the horizon caught his eye. Silver stared at it watching as it grew into a ship with black and red striped sails, just like the ones on Ada'canar's vessel. Coldness seeped along his bones, a chill he could not shake. He went in search of the Swordmaster, the thick-boned, squat man who governed all the Swordmen on the Questal.

Touching the man's arm, he said, "Ship coming. Red and black sails."

The Swordmaster scowled at him. "Where?"

Silver pointed.

Squinting, the Swordmaster stared at the horizon. "There is something there," he said at last. "You can see sails on that thing?"

He nodded. "Red and black. Like Ada'canar."

The Swordmaster drew in a sharp breath. "It might not be Ada'canar. He might not see us. We'd better call to arms, just in case." He lifted the horn that hung around his neck and blew it hard. All over the deck, Swordmen and sailors alike stopped what they were doing.

"Silver says there's a ship coming, and it might not be friendly. Get ready."

The men knew what that meant. Some smiling, some grim, they all reached for their weapons. Silver pulled his quiver around to check his arrows, then strung his bow. He loosened the longknife in his belt. Although if that was Ada'canar, then nothing would protect him from death.

* * * * *

In his exile, unprotected and alone, Silver had passed through the hand of a dozen different pirate captains. Each has kept him for a novelty, then passed him off for a better trade when bored. In each place he had been taunted, beaten, and abused, but he had learned the secrets of his masters. Ada'canar of the Wizardlands was vindictive, vengeful, and proud of his ability with a blade. No one had ever gotten past that flashing metal.

And he was protected from arrows or any thrown weapon by a magic charm.

When Ada'canar and his crew had finished with Silver, they had passed him onto a grubby slaver bound for Bartiese. He turned then, and spit onto the fine felt of the pirate's boots. Ada'canar slapped him and reached for his knife, the one that slit throats, but the slaver stopped him. Would the Master like to buy the slave back? Ada'canar had stood there, slowly passing the coins from hand to hand.

The coins won out, and Silver lived. But for how much longer?

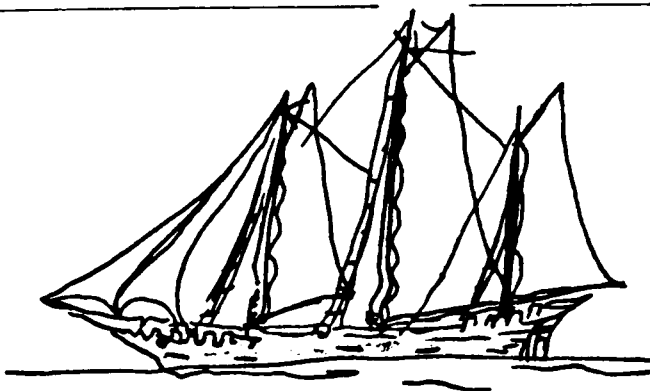
* * * * *

He climbed into the crow's nest to get a better look at the approaching galley. Long and thin, it was driven by slaves as well as by the wind. Wooden oars stretched out like insect legs, biting into the water with a regular rhythm. The Questal would not escape it.

And Ada'canar's flag flew at the stern.

Dennis would probably die defending the Questal--if not, then soon after. The Swordmen took their oaths too seriously to drop them for a pirate king. Kavyn's blue eyes assured that he would be spared--for a time. Perhaps even long enough to be traded to another captain on another ship. He had been a professional, he would know how to keep the interest of the Wizardland crew. But Silver would be treated as the women were, after the crew had taken their share, with brands and hooks and razor-thin knives that sliced the tiniest sliver of flesh. Too well he remembered the look of ecstasy on Ada'canar's face when the women screamed.

Pulling out his longknife, he inspected the hone of the edge. It was sharp and sweet, shouldn't hurt too much. The only thing the pirate would get was a cold body--but first, he planned to take as many of



those spider-stomping pirates with him as he could. He had twenty-four arrows in his quiver. Twenty-four bodies, and then the knife.

He looked down at Kavyn, standing close to the base of the mast. It was probably the last time he would ever see the man. "Gold-dust," he hissed in a loud whisper.

Kavyn looked up, anger and tension on his face. "What?"

"Don't fight them, and they'll give you what you want."

The man frowned. "Do you plan to fight them?"

"Of course. But I have nothing to lose."

"And I do?" Kavyn pulled out his sword and held it with clumsy hands.

* * * * *

Even before the ships met, pirates were scrambling aboard, pushing back the sailors and Swordmen with the force of their numbers. Every color of skin and eye, every race, all were represented in that mob. Some held the curved blades of the desert, others the jagged blade of the Northlands, but all were naked above the waste and marked by scars.

And in the center stood Ada'canar himself, with glistening, sun-blackened skin. He wore felt boots and a blue silk robe, both soaked with sweat. Silver notched an arrow and let it fly, but the charm skewed it and sent it into the hand of the man next to him. He shrugged, touched the longknife reassuringly, and set another arrow.

Below him, the battle boiled over the deck. Choosing his targets carefully, Silver sent arrows through eyes and necks. Once he took out the pirate who was battling Dennis--a waste, since the Swordman was winning. And at fifteen arrows gone, he looked into the face of Ada'canar, who noticed him and smiled widely.

Silver had seen that smile too many nights, as the pirate reached into his cab-

inet for the rawhide whip. He ached to put an arrow right down that gaping mouth.

The Pirate started to work his way toward the mast, but Silver simply reached for his next arrow. By the time the pirate got to him, he would have used the knife. He sent his shaft through the hand of the man who was about to slice off the captain's head and picked up the next one.

At twenty arrows gone, Ada'canar faced Kavyn. So the Flower would have his battle after all--though it wouldn't be a long one. Silver sighted a pale, fat pirate that he remembered only too well, and put an arrow in his genitals. He rather hoped the man would live.

Below, Kavyn parried a blow that still sliced his side. Blood dripped to the deck. Silver pierced the eye of the man who challenged the Swordmaster. Kavyn thrust badly, moved quickly, and took Ada'canar's blade through his right thigh. Silver put an arrow in the back of a man who fell overboard, taking two others with him. Kavyn crawled into a crouch and sliced at the Pirate's knees. Silver put his last shaft through the neck of a beefy man who held a broadsword that dropped onto the shoulder of a fellow warrior.

All in all, not a bad ending. He reached for the knife.

Even while jumping back from the clumsy strike, the Pirate brought his sword down on Kavyn's head, who was twisting, trying to bring up his own weapon as a shield. The blades met at a bad angle, and Ada'canar still managed to slice the other's shoulder. He would win, in the end--if only by cutting Kavyn until he bled to death.

Unless something distracted him long enough for Kavyn to strike cleanly. Something thrown--for while the Pirate was protected from projectiles, the sword was not. But all the arrows were gone, and Silver had only the knife in his hand, his personal road to freedom.

Freedom from his judgement, his curse, his guilt. From the memories of his brother, helpless under Silver's jealous hands. Hands that would destroy again, by selfish inaction.

The Village Justice had told him that he could not right the balance through any acts of kindness on his part. He had to suffer until it balanced the suffering he had caused others. Until then, he had to suffer alone, lest others be caught under his curse. But then--if he inaction allowed suffering to come to others, would not the

balance against him be increased?

Kavyn now bled from a cut at the base of his neck, and Ada'canar was grinning. He lifted his sword high, with both hands, while Kavyn held his own point-upwards like a pike. But he wasn't moving fast enough, not nearly as fast as Ada'canar.

Could Silver save himself from Ada'canar by saving Kavyn?

He threw the knife, knocking the sword askew. Kavyn completed his stroke, driving his blade into Ada'canar's heart. Red blood showered down on his face as the other's body collapsed on top of him.

Dennis appeared beneath the billowing sails and snatched at the Pirate's head. He cut the body away with a single stroke, then climbed up the rigging with his gory trophy in one hand. Holding it aloft, he whistled shrilly, calling attention.

There was only a moment's pause before the surviving pirates scrambled for the railing. Their invincible leader was gone.

Below the mast, Kavyn lay motionless beneath the man he had just killed, blue eyes staring up into the endless blue of the sky.

* * * * *

Silver's brother had stared that way, with eyes that would never look again. The Farlander could not bring himself to approach the bodies, to look into Kavyn's face. He hesitated too long--or had his own curse felled the Flower? His own life, his own misery still went on. He picked up his longknife and thrust it into his belt.

Dennis came down and moved the headless body. He looked into Kavyn's face and asked, "Are you alive?"

Then the younger man tensed and screamed, a full-bodied sound of pain and frustration that shot through the air. Drawing another deep breath, he screamed again, and this one broke into racking sobs. The Swordman gathered him up in his arms and wiped the blood from his face, then held him until the fit wore itself out.

Turning to a touch on his shoulder, Silver saw the Swordmaster. The man had a long scratch down one arm that bled freely, but he was walking. "Good shooting, Farlander. Did you get Ada'canar, as well?"

If only. "Kavyn killed him."

"Gold-dust? The unskilled one?"

"Sometimes even the wretched are blessed by the gods."

The Swordmaster nodded in agreement.

"And manure produces the best flowers. Well --we'll have to bloodmark him now. The bestor of Ada'canar deserves no less, even if he is a gibbering idiot." He dipped his finger into the pool of blood by the Pirate's body, then stepped over to Kavyn. Muttering a phrase from his homeland, he traced a design on the man's forehead.

His insanity showing through, Kavyn twisted and whimpered, though Dennis held him tight. Then one by one the other surviving Swordmen came up and repeated the ritual. Silver approached him last, ignoring the Pirate's body. He was no Swordman, and did not need to foul his fingers with the blood of filth. Instead, he took the man's chin in his ahnds and looked into and through his clear blue eyes. Past the light of his voiceless soul, past the shadows that covered him, down to the tiny light of reason that flickered and sputtered. He called upon the balance to join with that light, to strengthen it. Slowly that light grew into a proper flame, dimming the shadows that threatened to suffocate it.

He pulled back out and released Kavyn's chin. The man glared at him with a thankless look of resentment and anger. "Why?" he said quietly. "Why not let me go?"

Silver looked away, out across the sea. The ship with the black and red sails was sinking into the horizon, but he barely saw it. In that direction, but on the other side of the world, he had refused to help his brother. He had held his brother, and looked into his eyes, but had refused to strengthen the flame. He had let the darkness drown the flame, so that he could inherit the family rights. But the spiders, guardians of the balance, had woven the story into their webs and the Village Readers had told the Village Justice. And as long as his parents grieved the loss of their sons, one to madness and the other to exile, there would be no peace for him.

But Kavyn still had hope.

"Sometimes even the wretched are blessed by the gods," he muttered. |*|

A Bar Tale

by Thomas D. Sadler

"One day we'll travel to the stars,"
The old man said. "In fact I think
"We really should. We've conquered Mars
"And all those moons." He took a drink
And smiled at me, then slowly fell
Off his stool onto the floor,
Looked up, surprised, and said, "Oh Hell.
"It's better this way. Barkeep, more!
"And put it on my buddy's tab.
"He looks quite rich, all three of him.
"And anyway I have to grab
"The floor. Oh God! It's growing dim!
"No. Wait. It's just my goddamned hat."
He grinned just like a toothless child,
Rolled over once and slowly sat.
"Pardon me, Sir. It's really wild--
"I was once a navigator.
"No, wait a minute. Let me think.
"Yes, that occurred somewhat later.
"Oh Hell. I really need a drink.
"It may have been when I started out.
"Damn it. I can't recall a thing.
"Barkeep! Blast it. Where is that lout?
"Never mind. I'm getting tired. Bring
"Me a pillow will you, please?
"I think I'll take a little nap."
He curled up tight, his bony knees
Touching his chest, pulled down his cap
And dropped right off to sleep, and I
Paid for the drinks without a fight,
Then told the bartender goodbye
And stepped into the Vegan nights. |*|

The Satyr

by Betty Gaines

There once was an ugly old Satyr
Who lived in the midts of a crater.
When he happened to find
A young female hind
The Satyr then mate her and ate her.





The Tunnel Chute Rapids

by Harry Cameron Andruschak

If any science fiction fans reading this intend to come to San Francisco, or a future WESTERCON in the area, or any other science fiction convention, perhaps you might want to try some white-water river-rafting in the area. If you have a chance, consider a one or two day trip on the Middle Fork American River. There are several commercial rafting outfitters who provide all you need for such an adventure. In my case it was the Mariah Wilderness Expeditions.

Now there are many reasons to go river rafting, especially on a river like the Middle Fork: challenging rapids that are a lot of fun, calm water and beautiful vistas as you float along between rapids. The river flows through the Auburn State Recreation area. Gold miners are still active on this stretch of the river and you will see many of them with their sluice boxes and dredges, hard at work.

Mariah, as seems to be the case with all the river companies I have been with, go all out to provide friendly guides, heaps of delicious food, comfortable camping conditions, and all the safety equipment that is needed to insure your comfort. This includes helmet, life-jacket, wet suits if needed, and even camping gear of you need to rent it.

The river itself has one feature that makes this river known world-wide in rafting circles. That feature is unique--in the original sense of the word "unique" before the advertisers debased and degraded the term. That unique feature is the Tunnel Chute Rapid, a CLASS V rapid that will be the highlight of your trip on the Middle Fork American.

This rapid has an interesting history. Back in the 1850s, some miners wanted to divert the river to expose the riverbed at a point in the river they thought would have abundant gold deposits. They first blew out a 90 foot underground tunnel in a mountain to lead the river around the proposed site. Then they blew out "the chute" which diverted the water through the tunnel. The original course of the river was blocked.

140 years later, the entire river still goes through this chute. It has an 18 foot drop in its 80 foot long chute from top to bottom. The chute has long vertical walls. It is narrow, filled with spray and foam, and still represents a challenge.

Here is what you will have to do if you decide to make this trip. You will be in an inflatable rubber paddle raft with a guide at the rear and 3-5 other passengers. Oar boats are not used since they are too wide

to go down the Chute. You will pull in above the rapid and be asked to walk to where you can scout the rapid. All companies give you the option to walk around this rapid if you choose to do so. They may also insist that you walk around if they feel you are too old, too young, not in good physical condition, or not mentally prepared for the run.

Back in the raft, you approach the rapid at an angle. The river makes a 90 degree turn to the left to enter the chute. You and the other crew members will back paddle as hard as you can to slow the drift of the raft towards the mouth of the chute, thus giving the guide time to line the raft up. Then the guide will give the command "down!" or "crouch!".

At this point, the paddlers bring up their long paddles to an unright vertical position, so they will not hit the walls of the chute. Then they crouch down in the middle of the raft to improve the stability and reduce the chances of being flipped out. And in you go. To observers at the top of the chute, you disappear into a cloud of foam and spray.

If all goes well, you emerge 80 feet later from a cloud of foam and spray at the bottom, with the raft still upright and everyone still in the raft. With luck you will not have hit the walls of the chute.

That didn't happen on the run I was part of. After the guide told us to crouch, a stray hydraulic began to spin the raft to the right. The guide decided to try the run down the chute backwards. Actually, he had

no real choice. As we went down, we hit the wall at least four times. This is called "pinballing" and can result in flipped rafts and swimmers. But we lucked out. The raft didn't flip (although I was sure it was going to) and after seeing nothing but white water, foam, and spray, we emerged at the bottom of the chute. ALRIGHT!! Everyone was still on board.

If all this sounds risky, I would like to repeat that you will be wearing life jackets than you cannot drown in. You will have on a helmet to protect your head if you bang into the wall. True, once out of the raft you are out of control and will just flow down the chute without being able to do anything to control what is happening.

There will be many other things to do and enjoy on your two-day trips, but the chute is the one experience that you will remember most vividly. And the chute is what will bring you back for another trip in a year or two. It brings rafters from all over the world.

Oh yes, the Army Corps of Engineers wants to spend \$50 billion of taxpayers' money to build a huge dam that will drown out this area. \$50 billion of pork. Better make sure to ride this river while it is still available.

The Middle Fork American River is runnable from May through September. Consider this if you will be coming to the 1996 Worldcon in Los Angeles. It is about an 8 hour drive from Los Angeles to the River. [*]

WINE OF WISDOM

by Thomas A. Easton

You say good wine is fragrant, pure, and clean?
It takes a gritty wine to suit my friend.
He thinks pyramids can sharpen razors
And his wife lusts for exercise machines.

He believes easy chairs can spread the plague,
Living in closets makes the brain leak blood,
Soft water is disaster for the back,
And tabloids never fail to shout the truth.

He is a bubblehead who hopes the grit
Of wine that you reject as cheapest cheat
Will fill up his emptiness with wisdom.
Instead, we think, it only makes him thick.



CONREPORTS and RAMBLINGS 42

MARCH 1993 TO FEBRUARY 1994

by Lan

When I last wrote my "Ramblings" in *Lan's Lantern* #41, I left off with Spring break beginning and the Wilderness Expedition from school hiking in the Smoky Mountains of Tennessee. The narrative picks up from there, and continues through the first week of February of 1994. I have left out a lot, but I hope I have included enough of the highlights for the readers to enjoy the busy life I lead. --Lan

Ramblings 42.1

Spring Break and the Great Snow Storm

When Friday, March 12, rolled around, we were all champing at the bit to get away from school. The weathermen predicted lots of snow--which eventually became "the storm of the century". And because of this, there was a bit of excitement around here with regard to the Wilderness Expedition. There were 89 Sophomores along with about three dozen faculty and upperclass co-leaders who were on the trip. Less than half were accounted for and as of 6 PM on Sunday, March 14, 58 people were missing. The snow apparently was heavy in the Smoky Mountains, but the leaders were all veterans of the trip, so the people at base camp figured that the others were going to proceed with the regular schedule they had planned, and hike back on Monday.

On the 11 PM news show, it was announced that the searchers found 16 people, but were unable to get to them. That left 42 unaccounted for. On MONDAY morning, there was no new news; the Detroit Free Press had an article which summarized everything up to that point. I had a suspicion that this incident would hit the national news, and it did. I went over to the Kingswood campus to see if I could help out, and it was buzzing with activity. I talked to a few parents, but the tension was very high. The 24 were still missing that night.

A false report about noon on Tuesday said that all the others had been found--actually it was only 16 people. The search went on, and it was a race against time and the weather, as darkness was falling, and the cloud ceiling was lowering in anticipation of rain and colder temperatures. Then word came about 5 PM that the last group had been found and airlifted to base camp.

Everyone came out of it alive; 117 people went on the trip, and 117 came back. There were only two with serious injuries: math teacher James Woodruff, who was hospitalized until the end of the school year --he would eventually lose half of both feet and all his fingers; and my advisee Danielle Swank, who was at home and in good spirits. She eventually lost all the toes of one foot, but the doctors said she would still be able to play soccer (I talked to her on Wednesday evening, March 31).

The strange thing for me was the number of people who called from all over the country to ask (1) if I was on the trip, and/or (2) were any of my students on it. Everything came out as well as could be expected.

Millennicon Minus 8

I had a good time at MILLENNICON. I was on a few panels, the best of which was a re-make of the Alien Archaeology panel from CONFICTION and CAPRICON. I think I'm getting better at it. It was one panel that people said they wanted to see again next year. Bill Breuer said he will contribute some really strange and unfamiliar items for it next year.

Maia was the Fan GoH, and managed to fulfill her duties reasonably well, and sleep and rest in between. Since there was an exercise room, I did get in there for about a half hour of strenuous workout on the various machines.

On Saturday night, I helped a college student with her math. I saw her and her girlfriend sitting in one of the hotel lounge areas reading, and asked if she was doing math--the book had some graphs in it. It was a biology text, but she said that she did have to do math, since midterms

were the coming week. Her mother surprised her with a visit, and had taken her and her roommate out of the dorms at the University of Dayton. So 45 minutes later she had a better understanding of functions, inverses, and graphing.

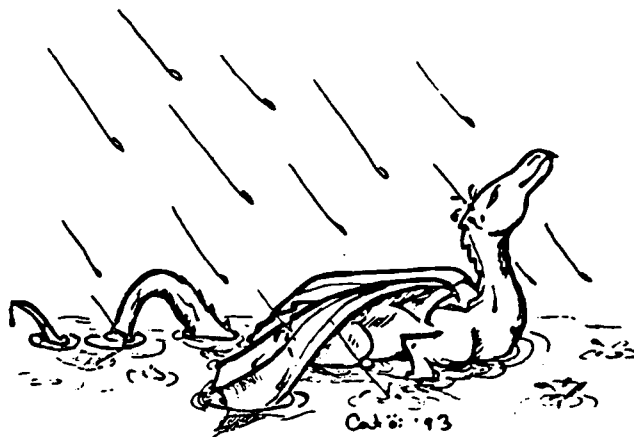
I didn't attend much of the filking this time, though I heard that Joe Ellis' "Sing-a-long" was so popular on Saturday that everyone wanted to do it again on Sunday.

Ramblings 42.2

I did a little work on Lan's Lantern during the second week of my Spring Break, but I spent more time reading, watching videos, and going out to lunch with a colleague from school. Kathy and I are related --she was born a Laskowski--and only in the last few weeks had we been able to talk about how we might be related. It seems as though our grandparents came from the same area of Poland, emigrating to the US about the same time. Since my parents were in Florida for the month of March, I had not been able to find out what my dad remembered of his parents. That came at Easter.

The week after vacation was very strange. The administration wanted all the teachers prepared to handle the people who experienced the Wilderness Expedition, and went overboard. The kids and coleaders were fine (except the two who were hospitalized), but we were supposed to "take it easy" on all of them making up work, and becoming acclimated to the school environment again. After a couple of days of this, it was clear that it was unnecessary. Some of the kids were taking advantage of the leniency to misbehave and not work; they merely extended their vacation. I still had my usual Thursday "test" (it was a quiz) for all my classes, and Friday started in on more difficult material. I had made myself available in the evening for extra help on Wednesday, Thursday and Friday, and a few students took advantage of that.

Tuesday evening Maia and I went to see Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde at Meadowbrook Theatre. I thought it was a good adaptation of the film (I haven't read the book, though I have been intending to ever since I read Mary Reilly by Valerie Martin), and the stage violence got the point across quite well. It was a disturbing play, where the sympathy for Dr Jekyll gradually diminished as he focused on his fiancée as his only salvation, without regard for her feelings and how she might be affected by him. It



maintained a good Victorian flavor and mind-set, which made many members of the audience uncomfortable. Their reaction was to make quiet comments, which disturbed the concentration of others, myself included. Afterwards we had a talk with Lynn Granville who was working backstage. She said that the play was hard on both the actors and workers too.

The April Fool's day joke this year was played by Mother Nature. We had snow, and it didn't stop all weekend! But I had lots to do on the weekend. I had to finish MIS-HAP, had a novel to finish reading (Imzadi by Peter Davd), and preparations for reading the papers which would be turned in to me on Monday. The end of the quarter was Wednesday, April 7, and I had to write comments on everyone, so I had to make sure that everything was ready.

I did get the papers read and handed back when I said I would, and began writing comments on all of the kids right away. There were a few late papers, but eventually all were turned in (one wasn't--but the student had been in an accident (head-on collision) and was still dealing with injuries from it at school year's end).

On Easter Sunday, Maia and I went to my parents house for an early dinner, ate far too much, had a great conversation about the family history, and came away with the conclusion that indeed Kathy and I were related, though the details were still a mystery. She and I began to untangle this further when we talked in the coming weeks.

Marcon

MARCON was the weekend of April 23-25. I shared a room with Andrea and our friend Michelle Kennedy. Since the room cost \$82 per night (plus 15.175% luxury/sales tax) splitting it three ways was greatly beneficial.

I got to see Tom Sadler's grandson Robert, though I didn't get a chance to talk to him as much as I would have liked. I talked to Andrea about this, and we planned to corner him at CONTRAPTION and spend a couple of hours with him talking.

There were a lot of nice program items. Mike Resnick, one of the two GoHs (Jane Yolan was the other, with a myriad of other special guests which included Lois McMaster Bujold, Maureen McHugh, Dennis McKiernan, Hal Clement, and Julius Schwartz), had a panel on editing anthologies (we tease him as "the Martin Greenberg of his generation"). Mike is quite proud that four stories from his anthologies are on the Hugo ballot, one of which having been rejected by three major magazines before Mike saw it and bought it. He is also delighted that 4 of "his writers" are up for the Campbell Award.

I was on two panels. The first was "The SF Year in Review". Buck Coulson, Bill Levy, Maureen McHugh and I talked about different things. Originally I was just going to mention books, but as we were waiting to get into the panel room Maureen said that she thought a little more broadly and was going to mention the deaths of Asimov and Leiber. That got me thinking, so when the panel started, we first talked about some events that happened last year. I started out with my not winning the Hugo, and the others followed with some other events--we left the two major deaths to Maureen. In retrospect, I should have added that "one of SF's most sought after females" (according to Charlie Brown of Locus), got married: Kristine Kathryn Rusch wed Dean Wesley Smith last December.

The other panel was entitled "Does SF prepare people for change?" Mike Resnick and Buck Coulson said no, while Paula May (a writer from Cleveland) and I said yes. So we debated the topic a little. It was not resolved, and some of the arguments were mere opinions, but it was fun, and there was lots of audience participation. Carol Resnick observed from the audience that the two older fans were the cynical ones, while the younger ones still had optimism. Aside from Buck, however, the other three were within a few years of each other age-wise.

I spent a lot of time in the filksing on Friday and Saturday nights. Michelle turned in the earliest of us three and Andrea outlasted me both nights. There was a lot of good singing, harmonizing, and fun. I left



on Sunday afternoon about 1:30, after my last panel.

Ramblings 42.3

Clif and Carol get Married

The following weekend (May 1) Maia and I drove to Chicago on Saturday morning to attend the wedding of Clif Flynt and Carol Clapper. As with several weddings we've attended recently, the tradition of tapping glasses and plates to get the bride and groom to kiss was denounced, and the request for songs and poems with the word "love" in them was suggested as a replacement. However, Clif and Carol, being the fans they are (the invitation read that we were invited to the wedding, the dinner reception and filk afterwards), added: "If the word 'love' might sound too trite, you could substitute the word Albuquerque instead." Taking that as a challenge, several renditions of songs with "Albuquerque" substituted for "love" were sung, and Bill Roper re-wrote the words to Billy Joel's "For the Longest Time" to include Albuquerque. I don't remember all the words, but it was hilarious: "...And it's such a pity/ When you have to rhyme a city/For Albuquerque is the hardest rhyme."

The word "filk" of course started out as a typo for folk. One of Carol's relatives went to the library to look up the word, and in the OED found it--Scottish origin, which means "which, or whatever." When we heard this, the woman paused after "which", and all the fans I knew thought "witch", which made it appropriate. But "whatever" is a good description of filk.

During the next week I had to write mid-quarter comments on any student who was getting a D+ or lower, and any student I had from a list of those on academic probation or parental requests. There were many seniors from my Precalculus class who were failing, so I had quite a few to write. One comment was on a student I caught cheating in class, who didn't apologize, and expres-

sed no remorse over the incident. The comment pointed this out, but it was returned to me by the academic dean--I had to contact the parents directly about it, something I did not relish doing. I called before I left for FILKONTARIO in Toronto, got the boy's mother. She was very distraught, it turned out, about how poorly he had been doing in all his classes, but the cheating was something she and her husband would not condone--the boy's father was also a teacher. He shaped up after that.

Many of the other kids were reluctant to attend classes--I felt the same way, frankly. It had been a hectic and stressful year, and I was way behind on doing a lot of things (like the fanzine, cataloguing, gardening, etc). With the nice weather, I would have preferred to be out working in my garden, or talking long walks, or chucking classes and working on Lan's Lantern; the kids would rather not be in school. But I was responsible and honored the commitments I had made--something the kids were still learning how to do.

Filkontario

FILKONTARIO was the next weekend (May 7-10), and it was a marvelous convention. I had a great time, and the platonic relationship between Andrea and me deepened. We both agreed that after the three cons we would spend together in a space of four weeks, either we would be the best of friends or hate each other. It has turned out that we would be the best of friends.

In addition to that, the con was a wonderful experience of music and song. Mike "Moonwolf" Longcor was the guest, and he had a great time entertaining the attendees. The attendance was small, but the interactions were fun. Several impromptu groups were formed to play and perform hastily-arranged pieces, but those were the most enjoyable because that was what made the filking fun. I preregistered for next year.

One group from Toronto to watch out for is a new one formed by Kevin Davies, Alison Drury, a woman named Jodie, and Debbie Ohi--collectively known as Northern Retreat. We encouraged them to show up at OHIO VALLEY FILK FEST, and they are also considering an appearance at CONFUSION.

[Later update: The group reorganized and renamed themselves Urban Tapestry--the same women without Kevin Davies.]



Contraption

CONTRAPTION was held on May 14-16. Maia, Andrea and I shared the room, and Andrea's husband Jim showed up on Saturday and also spent the night. The hotel was a new one for the convention, however I doubt that it will hold a SF con again. They copped out on several items, like not allowing soda pop dispensers in the consuite, closed function rooms at 2 AM, and some other things we were used to at midwestern cons. We found out much later that the hotel manager said that he did not feel obligated to honor the contract because it had been signed by a woman instead of a man. I urge any visitors to this area not to use the Somerset Inn.

Still, not knowing the circumstances until much later, most of the fans had a good time. Marty Burke, a professional folk singer who also does filk, was the fan GoH. CJ Cherryh was the Pro GoH, though I did not see much of her.

Andrea and I did snag Tom Sadler, dragged him out to lunch, and we talked about many different things. Maia was going to go with us, but she wasn't feeling up to the outing.

Ramblings 42.4
Fannish Gatherings and Mikecon

On May 22 Tom and Tara Barber had a small gathering at their place in Ann Arbor. We encouraged Andrea to come along, and Maia also invited a co-worker, Ruthann, who is very similar to Maia in temperament, and even appearance. We all had a good time.

Over Memorial Weekend we went to Toronto to visit Mike Glicksohn and his fiancée Susan Manchester (it's their wedding Maia and I would attend over Independence Day weekend instead of INCONJUNCTION). The usual crowd from the area--and from the States--showed up. I did barbequing as usual, and had a great time. Maia rested a lot, and we didn't do anything special. Well I did some running on both Saturday and Sunday morning; knowing how much soda-pop I would be drinking, and the amount of food I would be eating, I figured I had better compensate somehow. So I ran about 5-6 kilometers. Across from our hotel, The Inn on the Lake, was a strip of parkway between Lake Shore Drive and Lake Ontario. There were a few buildings here and there (mostly public-access beach houses and private yacht clubs), but it was mostly clear. And there was a bike/running path which was marked with distances, though the actual beginning of the path was a little nebulous--there was some construction going on where the path "began".

Anyway, we did have a good time, and we returned on Monday without too much trouble.

Ramblings 42.5
End of the School Year
and Family Activities

The next three days were review days. The precal class kids were pretty good about asking questions about the review sheets. Well, those who regularly sat in front asked questions; the ones who sat in the back of the room mostly talked and did not hear some of the hints I gave out to "everyone". The geometry kids sort of asked questions on the review sheets, though I had less response than I had hoped. One student in the 3rd period class wanted to get out of the review since she "had done all the problems and understood everything". That was a far cry from her whining 2-3 weeks earlier about how difficult the work was (introduction to trigonometry and

review of basic algebraic simplification and operations). In the 4th period class one student didn't show up at all--in fact had 16 absences through the quarter, 5 of which were the last 5 days of the quarter. So she missed the last quiz (therefore got a zero on it) as well as all the review. All five were unexcused absences; though I didn't check on the other absences, I suspect that most of them were unexcused.

The two Algebra IIB classes did have a lot of questions, and on the whole did better on the exam than last year's classes. (I gave the same exam both years to see how good it is; I'm not approaching it very scientifically, but I've been trying to come up with an exam for each course wherein I won't have to curve it--I get closer every year.)

On Wednesday (June 2), near the end of the 7th period class the fire alarm went off. I looked at the control board to see which alarm had been tripped, and referenced it to the Student Commons Room. "Kids fooling around with the alarm system," I thought to myself. Not so. Someone had dropped a lit lighter down one of the window ventilators which ignited the papers kids have been stuffing down there. Smoke was pouring out when I got into the commons room. I looked down and saw flames, went to the cabinet holding the fire extinguisher and found the "hammer" missing from its chain. So I kicked the glass in with my foot, grabbed the extinguisher, and put out the fire. Eventually our security and the police arrived. The fire trucks were turned back since I had taken care of the fire itself. Eventually one of the kids admitted it was his fault, and he was duly and appropriately punished. So I was a "hero" for a short time, saving the school--well, I saved my place of employment!

On Thursday night, I went to Tanya Camargo's graduation from 8th grade. Tanya is Kathy's (my distant cousin) daughter. Henry and Dan (Kathy's husband and son respectively) were there, and we had a good time. Tanya stayed afterwards at the school for a big party which had been organized for the graduating class. Henry went to his German class, and I went home with Kathy and Dan. We all talked until Dan left to pick up Tanya, and I went home. On Sunday the Camargo family went with us to my parents place; they all hit it off very well--Tanya and Dan said that my dad looked and acted like their grandpa. I was hoping that my sisters would show up too, but they didn't.

I gave my exams on Monday (June 7) and had most everything corrected and graded by Tuesday afternoon. I even wrote my comments too. Thursday night was Awards night for the seniors--and two faculty, whom I didn't think deserved it, got the Excellence in Teaching Awards.

Friday was graduation. Kathy and I showed up for the girls' graduation (because of space requirements in Christ Church, the boys and girls graduations are separate). Neither of us really wanted to go, but it was one of those obligations in our contracts. I had had enough with too many of the kids in this senior class, and just wanted them gone. On the other hand, there was a handful of girls I did want to see graduate. So I concentrated on them. The girls decided that each of them would give Dan Behring (the Director of Schools who was handing out the diplomas) an egg. After the first few, Dan handed them off to the faculty who were sitting in the choir pews near the altar. The eggs were handed down the row until the person at the end had a half dozen and didn't know what to do with them. So I started stacking them in the "book rack" in front of me. At the recessional, the faculty marched out before the kids, and I took a half-dozen eggs out with me, and handed two back to the first couple of girls. After that, the rest of the seniors refused to accept them, so I handed some out to the parents who were seated on the aisle. I got rid of all six by the time I exited the church. Then I went back in with a plastic bag and took a dozen home. The eggs were hard-boiled, and I ate them for breakfast over the next few days.

Conamazoo

and Lea's Graduation Party

On Saturday morning I drove Maia to our friends in Brighton (Michigan, not England), where they were going to have a party that afternoon. Maia did not trust herself to drive that distance alone. From there I drove to Battle Creek for CONAMAZOO. I had to be there by 11 AM for a panel, and I made it. I had to park a good distance from the hotel because several things were happening in the city that morning: a 5 or 10 km race, the "World's Biggest Breakfast Table" annual event sponsored by Kellogg's cereal company, and a parade. Eventually I moved my car into the hotel parking lot. Andrea and I shared a room, and filker/folksinger Dave Clement

was there as a special guest (from Winnipeg). Erin McKee (from Minneapolis) was the fan GoH, and Laurell Hamilton was the pro GoH. I had met Laurell at CAPRICON, and she did remember me. She has two books out (Nightseer, and a ST:TNG novel Nightshade) and another coming out in November.

Andrea and I had several deep conversations as usual, and she sang her new song: "Crystal Blood", based on Crystal Line and the other crystal singer books by Anne McCaffrey. We had dinner together, and I almost missed the MISHAP collation. That was another of the reasons I went to the convention--to turn in Maia's, Robert Sabella's and my MISHAP contributions, help out in the collation, and get our copies. I did not stay up too late; Andrea played mother to me to make sure I went to bed by 2 AM.

I got up at 7, packed and woke Andrea up to say goodbye. I checked out of the room (paying my half), and headed back to Brighton to pick up Maia, and from there we headed for Columbus, Ohio, to attend our niece's graduation party. Jennifer Lea will be going to Wright State University in the fall. We had a good time, and I finally met Maia's sister's mother-in-law, who really is a stitch. I sorta kept her occupied and away from the rest of the family so they could have a good time; very quickly I could see how irritating she could be. But I got along with her very well--we traded insults.

I had meetings on Monday through Wednesday, and was supposed to be back for the Monday morning meetings, but decided not to push Maia. We took a room in Columbus for the night, and left about 7:30 AM. I got back in time for the afternoon meetings.

Ramblings 42.6

School Endings and Mike's Wedding

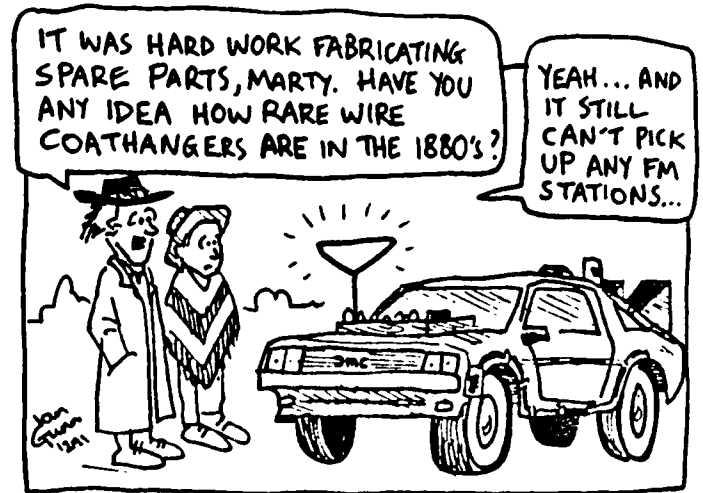
I missed meeting Kathy's parents, who had come in for Dan's graduation, who also took the kids back to Indiana with them. Henry left on Monday morning for Mexico (he's an engineer for General Motors, and had a presentation to do for the Mexican branch; since he is Colombian, he speaks English and Spanish equally well. The Camargo household is bi-lingual). Since Kathy was supposed to go to the meetings, she stayed at home until Friday when I took her to the airport. She flew out to meet Henry in Cancun and they would vacation together until the 29th.

Kathy only went to one meeting--on Wed-

nesday--the grade-review meeting. She was upset with the treatment she had received from the administration. She had a one-year contract, but was interested in extending that. She made that known. Kathy had substituted in various Spanish classes for the past two years, taking over the last quarter of the last school year from the person she replaced. Because of her experience--both in previous schools and at Cranbrook--she figured that she would get her contract renewed. This was not the case; in fact, she was never told that she would not be hired back, even though Arlyce (remember her?--head of the upper school who removed me from dorm duty and free housing last year?) promised to let her know whether or not she would be rehired by the end of May. That did not happen. So, I was moral support for Kathy until I took her to the airport on Friday to join Henry in Mexico.

On Wednesday evening, since I had to get a present for my Cousin's wedding I was attending on Friday evening, Kathy and I went shopping. I drove Henry's company car; Kathy and I went shopping a lot together, and Henry would occasionally give her the company car to use and said I could drive it. We had an accident--at the mall a woman said she didn't see us and drove into us, hitting the car twice: the first time the back driver's quarter panel and she spun us sideways, and she continued to come at us (apparently she froze at the wheel and gas pedal) and hit the driver's door. Lots of damage to the this 1993 Buick Century. Witnesses stopped and gave their statements to Mall security; an hour later the police showed up and we filled out the reports. No one was hurt. Kathy was shaken and upset, but managed to deal with it all right.

The next morning she called GM and the insurance company, and we took the car to a Buick dealership that assessed the damage and sent that to the insurance company. Since Kathy was going to leave the country, I told her and the damage consultant that I would follow through on it; the consultant said that the appraisal might not be approved since he was asking for a replacement of both doors on that side as well as the rear quarter panel--something like \$5,000. If not approved, the insurance company would send out a claims adjuster to assess the damage, and they would have to be nudged to do so. When I called on Monday, the assessment had been approved and work was started on it. I hoped that it would be all finished by the time Henry and Kathy returned from Mexico.

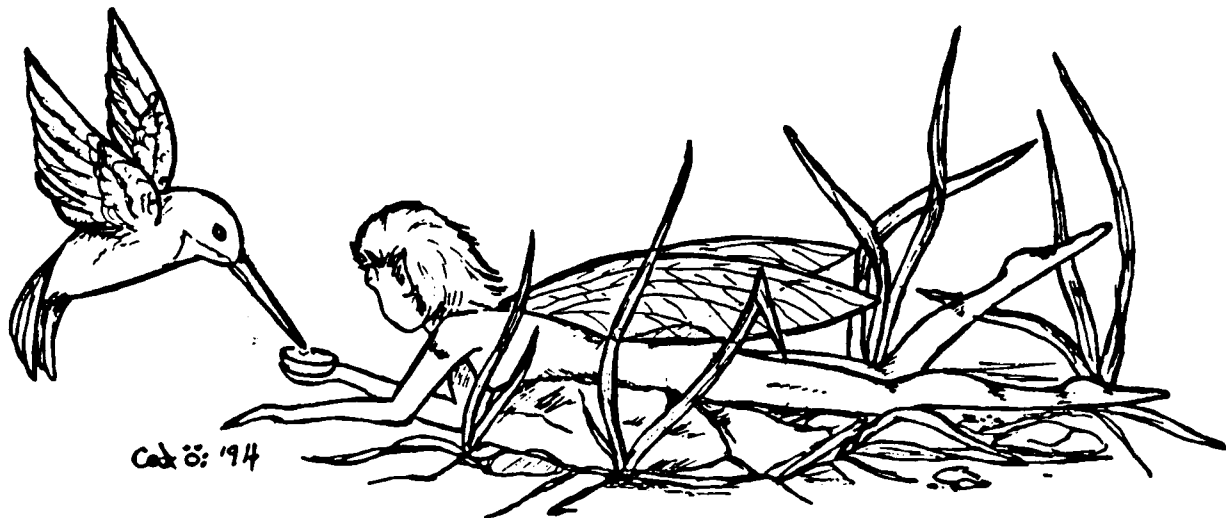


On Friday, I went to my cousin's wedding and the reception. Maia was exhausted from a week at work, and she remembered the last time she was at a wedding/gathering from that side of the family--she got sick from the cigarette smoke. This was not something she wanted to deal with in addition to her Chronic Fatigue illness. On Sunday Maia and I drove up to my parents' place to celebrate Father's Day. Since I had missed Mother's Day (I was in Toronto at FILKONTARIO), we had a gift for mom as well.

That week, and ever since Memorial Day weekend, I worked on LL I finished it on June 24, and started running off and collating completed copies. I was glad to have it finished--I needed to get to work on the next one.

On Friday I went to Lansing to see Andrea. There is a Barnes and Noble bookstore which is attached to a Capuccino cafe with a door between the two. One of the employees of the bookstore heard Andrea talking about music and the songs she had been writing, and asked her to participate in the first year anniversary of the store's opening. So she had a one-hour set of songs from 6-7. I arrived about 5:30, and wandered through the bookstore until she started. I was in the back corner of this immense hall (it used to be a shopping store--and it looked like it was a bowling alley before that, given the design of the roof/ceiling) but I heard her voice without trouble; Andrea doesn't need a microphone. Jim (Andrea's husband) and some other people had shown up also to give her support. Afterwards we went to John McCabe's new house, then back to the Yeomans' apartment to talk. I left about 11:15.

On Saturday I gardened, collated more copies of LL, did some shopping, and wrote a couple of letters. Sunday I drove out to



my sister's place to celebrate my nephew's birthday; Kris is my godchild, and he turned 14 on Wednesday, June 30.

Kathy and her husband Henry returned from Mexico on Tuesday night. I had called about their car, and the repairs were progressing smoothly; it would be ready on July 9. I let Kathy know this when I talked to her that evening, and we made arrangements to drive to Indiana to pick up Tanya and Dan on Wednesday from Kathy's parents' place. We got a late start since we had to pick up a new company car first as a replacement for the one being repaired.

The weather was not very good. We ran into rain, and road construction, and cool temperatures prevailed the rest of the day. I enjoyed meeting Kathy's parents, who behaved a lot like my own, but we were unable to take a ride on the pontoon boat because of the weather.

Thursday and Friday were supposed to be meeting days for the staff in the Horizons-Upward Bound program, but I was only able to attend the Thursday meetings. On Friday. I picked Maia up from work about 11:15 and we drove about 9 hours to Oneida, New York. We got caught in some of the 4th of July weekend traffic. In some ways it was more troublesome because we went through Canada to cut about 4 hours off the route around Lake Erie, and July 1 was Canada Independence Day. There were major delays in customs at the Bluewater Bridge in Sarnia/Port Huron and at Niagara Falls. Then the state speed limit in New York was posted as 55 mph, though I saw very few people actually going that speed unless a police cruiser was around. We arrived at the hotel in rain.

There was a party already going on in our block of rooms. The fans who were invited to the wedding knew how to party, and

that's what we did. However, since the wedding was at 11 AM, things didn't last too late. We met most of the fans in the nearby Friendly's restaurant the next morning.

The wedding was held in the United Methodist Church in Oneida. There were some beautiful stain-glass windows inside, and although it had threatened rain, the sun did shine through hazy clouds to illuminate the church with color. Since Susan Manchester was a poet and in a poetry group, she had some of her friends read poems written especially for the wedding. Susan also read one of hers, which was superb.

Mike's best man was Joe Haldeman, whose wife Gay was also in attendance (why not? the two of them introduced Mike to Susan!). Author Tanya Huff and Fi were also there, and several Big Name Fans showed up. A surprise was seeing Mary Reed and Eric Meyer, who were there only for the wedding, as they had another family obligation to attend. The reception was in the afternoon, and the food was very good. The band was too loud for the room, but people seemed to have a good time dancing. Even Joe got out on the dance floor. I declined. And it was strange to see Mike and Susan dancing (I never knew Mike COULD dance).

Late that afternoon I ran about three miles (in heat and humidity) to work off the extra food I had eaten. There was more partying in the evening, and I passed out more copies of LL to people I had missed on Friday night. People said that it seemed like a real con, since they got a copy of the Lantern.

The drive back to Michigan on Sunday was about a half hour shorter, since most people were staying put to celebrate the Independence Day. I was quite tired, though I didn't get to bed as early as I would have liked.

Monday was the official day off for the holiday, but for HUB it was the moving-in day for the kids. Classes started on Tuesday with everyone taking the California Aptitude Test. Then full classes for everyone on Wednesday. Maia took the week off as her vacation, so I had a little less to do around the house since she took up some of the slack.

On Tuesday I got a call from Bill Lund who asked me to write up some comments about the nominees for the Fan Hugo Awards for the upcoming DASFA meeting. Since I had nothing else to do (*right!!*), I wrote up a quick analysis and mailed it off to Bill on Thursday (with a couple of copies of LL).

For the most part the classes went well for HUB. I taught an Algebra I, Algebra II, and two Precalculus classes. There was a potentially volatile class--the Algebra I students who were going to be freshmen, but most of whom acted like second graders. They didn't improve much as the summer went on.

Confluence

I managed to get the second Saturday of the HUB Program off for CONFLUENCE, and left for the convention as soon as I dismissed my 5th period class on Friday (at 1 PM). The drive was uneventful, except that I made the 6 hour trip in 5½ hours.

I finally got to meet Bob Sabella, and we stayed up late (after midnight) talking in the hotel lobby. I also met Lynn McMillin, a new reviewer for the Lantern. We talked on and off throughout the convention. Since Bob was a member of MISHAP, he was hoping that several other apa members would be able to make it. Dave Alway and Ted Reynolds were there from the apa, but no one else including Maia managed to make it. Still, I think he had a good time and expanded the number of his face-to-face meetings with the apa membership.

As last year, I brought a number of video tapes to help fill out the film program. One problem was that my copy of Westworld was defective, and I sent it back to CBS Video for a replacement. They had no extra copies, so I offered Buffy the Vampire Slayer in its place. Randy Hoffman, head of the film/video program, gladly accepted it, and it turned out to have one of the higher attendances of the films shown. I also served on several panels. I passed out copies of the latest Lan's Lantern which was well-received by everyone.



On Sunday Julia Ecklar drove Dave Jordan, Erin Kelly and myself out to see Rusty who had stayed at home to work on the house and garden. Rusty gave us the nickel tour (for which Dave and I gave her a nickel each--I offered to pay for Erin, but she had seen the place before), and I marvelled at what Rusty (with some help from Julia) had done to the place. The Pittsburgh area needed rain; the garden was looking quite wilted, and it was a little costly to water as much as was needed.

Ramblings 42.7

End of HUB and Summerfilk

Classes, an occasional visit to friends' houses and my parents, and working in the garden rounded out my activities for July. Maia and I did celebrate our 11th wedding anniversary by going out to dinner, and celebrated her birthday the same way.

August 7th brought the final day of the program. The parents came to the campus to see what their kids had been doing all summer, and the final awards were given out--including scholarships to attend Cranbrook Kingswood school. On Sunday the faculty had their final meetings and I was finished by 12 Noon. Since I didn't have to really clean up my room for the regular school year (well, eventually I would have to), I didn't have to stay around in the afternoon. Instead, Maia and I went to the annual picnic for her group at work, and had a wonderful lazy afternoon eating and relaxing. I did put on my bathing suit and got into the water (the Sims' house, where the party has been held for the past three years, is on a lake); I figured that with so many kids at the party this year I should at least be ready if something might happen. (Old life-guarding skills and concerns never die!)

With the HUB program over, I was finally able to get moving on the garden. I harves-

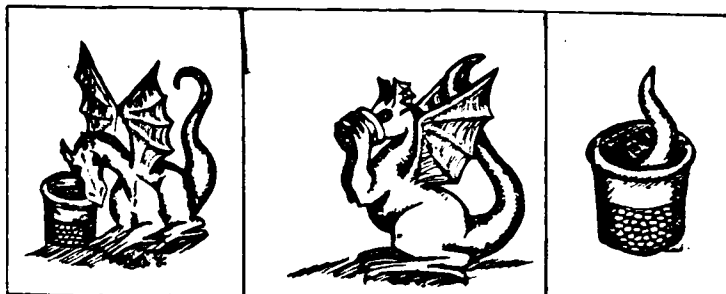
ted some veggies, pickled some cucumbers, canned some salsa, planted more peas, carrots and radishes, and began work on the garlic patch. I also got caught up on cataloging the SF magazines and books, though I still had some collections and anthologies to work on. And also the new videos. Once again I had time to watch the new tapes that had been accumulating. Universal released more of its B-movie SF on video--things like Tarantula and The Mole People--and I acquired several new serials. I also put together a mailing of some 330 pieces to send out to people, and began collating to send out the rest.

On Saturday (August 14), Andrea, Maia and I put on a "Summer Filk" party, inviting local filkers and friends to one of the Senior Cabins on campus for fun, food and music. We had been planning this for some time, and it came off rather well. We didn't get as many people as we had hoped, but there were more than enough to fill one level of the cabin. Some fans arrived from as far away as Dayton, Ohio. If Andrea stays in this area (it will depend on whether her husband gets a job here after finishing MBA school in the Spring), we will probably do it again. We had fun, but it was exhausting.

After Summerfilk was over, I spent the rest of the summer working in the garden,

harvesting and canning vegetables (I made lots of salsa, tomato sauce and ketchup), trying to catch up on reading and watching videos, and preparing the rest of the domestic mail for Lan's Lantern. Now I will have to do the foreign mail. I also started to prepare classes for the opening of school and packed for Worldcon.

The teachers' meetings for the school year were on Wednesday and Thursday, September 1 and 2, and I managed to attend one of them. The Wednesday meetings were all right, but I would rather have had the department meeting then rather than on Thursday when they were scheduled, because I was on my way to Worldcon when that meeting took place. Still, I did get some useful information about the beginning of classes, and we attended the faculty picnic in the evening.



CONFRANCISCO

HERE WE COME

The Worldcon was fun. My cousin Kathy took us to the airport and we arrived after a 4 hour flight, and three hours of time lost. Ted Reynolds was on the same flight, and we shared a ride to the Pickwick Hotel, our place of residence for the next four days, which was three blocks from the Moscone Center. The clerk talked us into upgrading our room to a larger one with a refrigerator. In the long run it saved us money because we bought breakfast stuff which Lynn Margosian, Maia and I could eat in the room.

I saw a lot of people, many of whom I had not seen since the last worldcon, or as long ago as 14 years. From D'APA I saw Marshall Goldhammer from afar, talked with Brian Reed, and had several conversations in passing with Fred Cleaver who is the OE

of the apa. I also talked to Dr. Kathleen Sloane and Mike Sestak, both of whom live in the greater Denver area. MISHAP attendees included former OE Dave Alway, current OE John Filpus, founders (but not current members) Cy Chauvin and Leah Zeldes Smith, along with other former members Dick Smith, Greg Trend, and Kent Johnson (whom I had not seen for 14 years since he moved from the Detroit area). I also met Deb Wunder briefly in the huckster's room, and Mike Stein while touring the art show.

I spent a lot of time wandering the huckster room and fan-lounge area, talking to people and looking for a few choice books for my collection. I managed to find three novels at reasonable prices which I had been looking for over the past several years. All three were ones I remember read-



ing when I was 13 years old. The Haploids by Jerry Sohl was the last one I needed to fill out the list of his books I read so long ago. The Secret of Saturn's Rings completed the "trilogy" of Donald Wollheim's "The Secret of..." books written for the Winston Juvenile line. And another Winston Juvenile, The Year When Stardust Fell by Raymond F. Jones, was one of the earliest real SF novels I read when I was 13. I was delighted to have found it.

Although I tried to get to the filking in the evening, I didn't quite make it, like last year at MAGICON. Friday night, after the Emperor's reception I walked with Dave Alway to the ANA got diverted in the lobby outside the filking rooms talking to many fans and filkers, including Kathy Mar, Heather Alexander, Rick and Deborah Weiss, Mary Kay Kare, Joe Ellis, and Bill Higgins. I finally got a copy of Bill's filk of "Mr. Sandman" which is retitled, "Mr. Coffee" ("...send me caffeine/ A mug of Java with sugar and cream..."). Saturday night I caught the last of the one-shots, and waited almost an hour for things to get started, then left for the party hotel several blocks away. I never got back--mainly since the party hotel was a block from the Pickwick where we were staying.

I did manage to attend one of the filk panels. Joe Ellis did one on electronic music with a fellow by the name of D.N. Crowe. After Joe told him what he did in terms of using the midi and electronic gear for composing and arranging his music, Crowe said the he had been in the music business as an engineer for 30 years or so, and had written the software that ran the sythesizers. He also worked with many of the big-name groups of the 70s and 80s, including Grateful Dead, Butterfield Blues Band, and so on. The discussion diverged then--a small group wanted to talk about the equipment and electronic gear costing

tens of thousands of dollars, and others wanted to talk about using affordable stuff to create music and tapes.

On my way out of the ANA after Joe's panel, I stopped by the rooms where the Round Table Discussions were being held, and saw Janny Wurts sitting with one other person. I asked the gopher if it would be all right to join them, and Janny even waved me in yelling, "Hi, Lan. Come on and join us." We had a nice conversation about her art, and her latest book project. Her new series is something she has been working on and preparing to write for the past 20 years. Every book and story she has written has been aimed at honing her skills to tackle this project. Her agent and editor are extremely thrilled by the first book; Curse of the Mistwraith would be out in February 1994. She mentioned the panel on horses she was going to be moderating on Sunday, and I had already marked it as one I wanted to attend.

The food was quite good, though expensive. We had been warned about this, and made adjustments in our spending money. Still, the sandwiches available in the Moscone Convention Center were very pricey for even the locals. Maia and I ate Thursday late afternoon at a nearby oriental restaurant. One couple was in there when we walked in; another came in afterwards, then a fan family, and as we were getting ready to leave, a large group of Chinese arrived. The food was excellent, borne out by the fact that some Chinese also ate there.

I had a round table discussion on Friday afternoon, for which Marianne Hageman and Polly Peterson (both from the Minneapolis area) showed up. Eventually Marianne's husband joined us too, and afterwards we all met with Maia and went to Chevy's, a Mexican restaurant close by. We were all hungry, and devoured three baskets of corn chips before our dinners arrived.

Saturday afternoon Maia and I took a taxi ride with John Stanley and Jeanne Mealy (again, from Minneapolis) to a barbeque carry-out called Nate's Place. We had to wait for a table (there were only three tables for seating inside) but it was worth it. Fortunately, we were able to order beforehand, and sat as soon as the table was available, just about the same time the food was ready. Lynn was invited to join us, but she had to be at the masquerade set-up early (she volunteered to help out) so was not able to come along.

My Sunday panel schedule did not allow

for me to have an expensive meal at a restaurant before the Hugos, so I just ate in the Moscone Center. I invited Gale Tang to join me, and she did. I was willing to pay for her meal, but she only had something to drink. (I did pay for that--I know how broke most college students are!)

I had a couple of lunches with Susan Schwartz, who was very excited about being nominated for a Hugo. She was very open about her feelings at the nomination and together we went to pick up our Hugo rocket pins, then to lunch before one of her panels. She talked about a new series she was starting to write--about the Crusades, from the point of view of the Byzantines who greatly objected to the invasion of the Christian armies. There was a balanced peace among the Byzantine Christians, the Moslems and the Jews before the upstart Roman Catholics came, and Susan said she wanted to get that point across.

I also started out having a lunch/snack alone, but was waved to a seat by Rob Chilson, and we had a delightful conversation along with a few friends of his.

Sunday was my day for lots of panels. I started out at 10 AM with "Horses: Behavior, Bangles and Breeds". Janny Wurts was the moderator and she has ridden and trained horses since she was 13. At age 14 she was able to break and train a horse that professional trainers refused to handle because it had been allowed to grow up without discipline. Janny is an expert (World Class, I'm told) equestrian. She also has lots of self-control since there are three horses occupying the four stalls of her barn. So far she has resisted the temptation to buy a fourth horse. The second panel member was Melinda Snodgrass who breeds, raises and trains Arabians. She too is an expert rider (as well as a lawyer and writer). Fantasy author Jennifer Roberson has ridden in the rodeo circuit. And the fourth member of the panel was Shelly Monson, who arrived in a 19th century sidesaddle riding outfit.

The panelists discussed mostly the ways in which fantasy authors show that they did not do their research about the main method of transportation in their novels. The mistakes these authors make kills the horses on which their heroes depend--or would if this were "real" life. All of them extolled CJ Cherryh who takes great pains to "do it right". One member of the audience talked about the time it takes to ready a horse for riding, much more than "he saddled his



horse and was off." Her father used Belgian draft horses, and it took ~~hours~~ ^{hours} EACH to get them ready for the ~~fair~~ ^{fair} if he worked alone.

This was one of the ~~my~~ ^{most} interesting panels, and I was very glad I attended it.

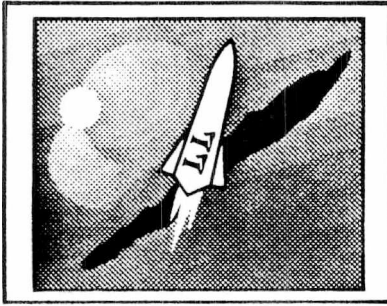
The next one in the ~~room~~ ^{room} was Mike Resnick reading his latest ~~anyaga~~ ^{anyaga} story, "A Little Knowledge...". It was very well received, and I can't wait to see how he is going to conclude the series.

At 3 PM I had a panel ~~with~~ ^{with} Andy Hooper, Art Widner, Peter Larsen, and Nicki Lynch. We talked about fanzines ~~and~~ ^{and} writing. I missed an opportunity to ~~join~~ ^{join} the discussion when Andy Hooper insulted ~~apa~~ ^{apa} writers, but he bared on into ~~another~~ ^{another} topic before I could bring it back. There, I saw several people I had not ~~seen~~ ^{seen} before like Don Franson, Barnaby Rappaport, and Bill Donaho. Also, Tom Jackson ~~was~~ ^{was} in the audience, and I had not talked ~~to~~ ^{to} him in several years. He disappeared ~~after~~ ^{after} the panel and I didn't get a chance ~~to~~ ^{to} catch up with him.

An hour later, after ~~having~~ ^{having} a "dinner" and conversations with Gale Tang, I found my "Fannish Demographics" ~~panel~~ ^{panel} and had a real good time there. ~~Jack~~ ^{Jack} Haldeman II, Mark Olson, and Mary Mason ~~were~~ ^{were} on it with me; Leah Zeldes Smith was scheduled but didn't attend. We started ~~with~~ ^{with} the description in the program ~~book~~ ^{book} about fandom/worldcon being a small ~~town~~ ^{town}, and quickly progressed to the idea of a huge family of chosen relatives. Although I was supposed to be moderator (I really didn't want to, but I acquiesced), Mary ~~Mason~~ ^{Mason} jumped in at several times and handled a lot of the discussion. We on the panel had fun, and I listened about as much as I talked. I think the audience had a good time too.

A quick run back to the hotel and a change of clothes got me ready for the Hugo Ceremonies. Maia was supposed to have napped in the afternoon before the Awards, but ran into Lea Day, a former MISHAper whom we hadn't seen in 5 years, and ended up talking to her for a couple of hours. Thus, Maia was very tired by the time we returned from the Hugo Awards, and went right to bed.

I did not win the Hugo this year, but Mimosa, edited by Dick and Nicki Lynch did,



BIRK

and they were justly deserving of it. All the fanzine nominees were sitting together, and when the pair returned with the awards, we all checked the plaques to make sure they were right this time. There was a tie for first place in the novel category: A Fire Upon the Deep by Vernor Vinge and Doomsday Book by Connie Willis. The biggest upset was that Science Fiction Chronicle won over Locus in the semiprozine category BY ONE VOTE! Rumor had it that Charlie Brown, editor of Locus, didn't vote. I do not believe that's true. Several very pleasing wins were: Ray Beam getting the First Fandom Award, Peggy Ranson winning the Best Fan Artist Hugo, Don Maitz chosen first for best Professional Artist, and Laura Resnick winning the Campbell Award. Her father Mike accepted the award for her (since she was in Africa being chased by lions and bandits), and he didn't need to say the he was more proud to accept that award on Laura's behalf than winning a Hugo or Nebula himself; that feeling was written all over his face.

After the ceremonies were over, and I took a lot of pictures, Lynn, Maia and I walked back to the hotel, changed clothes, and two of us headed for the Hugo Losers' party while Maia went to sleep. Lynn and I party-hopped after munching down some really good food and snacks in the CONADIAN suite, and eventually wound up back at our hotel about 2.

The next morning we took a limo to the airport and about halfway there, Lynn asked if we were going to the Oakland Airport. I didn't know that San Francisco had two airports, though it does make sense (Detroit has two large ones and several small ones!). No, we told her, we're going to the SF Airport. So the parting was a little mixed emotionally as Lynn ran off to find a shuttle to the Airport on the other side of the bay.

Kathy and her son Dan picked us up at Detroit Metro about 7 PM, and went to sleep with another Worldcon past.

Ramblings 42.8

I did get back in plenty of time to prepare for classes. However, with the new course in Calculus, and a new text for the Algebra II class, I had to spend more time preparing for class than in years past. I was tired after the three-day school week, and slept in late on Saturday (9 AM!).

The week of September 13 was busy with classes and preparation for the weekend. On Sunday, September 19, we had the family over to celebrate my parents' 52nd wedding anniversary, and my father's (and my) birthday. As last year, I rented the cabin and it took time to get stuff moved from the apartment there, set up, and afterwards clean everything. But we all had a good time, and my parents insisted on inviting Kathy and her family to meet the rest of our family.

The following weekend we attended a 60th wedding anniversary for my aunt Rose and uncle Harry. We had a good time talking with cousins we hadn't seen in ten years. Susan Dundas was at our table and we had a nice long conversation with her. She knew very few others who were there.

We originally decided that we were going to spend the night at the hotel where the party was being held, but our first encounter in the lobby with my parents and some relatives made that less appealing. That our room wasn't ready for us to get into and change for the reception did not sit well with us either, since Maia and I both had to change in the bathrooms outside the hotel bar. After another unpleasant encounter with a relative, we decided to cancel our reservation, giving as an excuse to the hotel clerk: "Family". She understood.

The final straw came when we all were supposed to gather for a "family picture" with all the relatives on my aunt's (and mother's) side. We were going to stay for a couple of hours to talk with my cousins, but after being yelled at to get into the group for the picture, I decided we were going to leave immediately afterwards. Maia used the excuse that she was tired, but the real reason was that I just wanted to get away from a situation where I might say something inappropriate. As we said goodbye, several other relatives said they wished they could leave too. Maia did insist on saying goodbye to our hosts, and Rose and Harry were quite congenial. Rose wished us 60 years for our marriage. We told her we were working on it.

During the next two weeks things got progressively worse at school. Extra work and meetings were piled up on the faculty --I felt the pressure, which meant that those doing resident duty were in worse shape. Then again, since I had mid-quarter comments to write due on Monday (October 4), and CONTEXT was the weekend of October 1-3, I pushed myself to get them done on Thursday night and Friday morning (after I corrected the tests from all my classes that I administered on Thursday) before I left for Columbus Ohio and CONTEXT. I also was supposed to teach methods for taking the math portion of the PSAT to all my sophomores and juniors on Monday and Tuesday (Oct 4-5), which involved some preparation on my part (more than I really wanted to do). However, the math department was committed to doing this by the head of the school, mainly because of the new section where a student can put down the answer they worked out instead of choosing among a number of prepicked choices, so I did. This could have been done in a half-class session, and a lot of the kids just wasted time on the second day.

I had one meeting about retirement which pushed me to move some money from one retirement account into another so I could earn more interest on it. The faculty meeting on October 5 was devoted mostly to the upcoming "Field Day" on Friday (Oct 8), and topics we would like to see addressed to the students. So far, it seemed as though the thrust of our meetings and focus for student activities revolved around topics reserved for family. The faculty are supposed to talk to the kids about drugs and alcohol, sexuality, prejudice, morality, ethics, behavior, working together and getting along with one another, etc, and the academics were only secondary. I have talked to colleagues who felt the same way, but no one can figure a way out of what the administration and counselors have set their minds for us to do.

Context

CONTEXT was fun. I shared a room with my niece and MISHAP member J. Lea who is a college student attending Wright State University (near Dayton). She wanted to go to a con, and it worked out well for her. We talked about her work and activities at school, and the problems she has had with her roommate there.

Fred Pohl was the GoH, and several other



people showed up including Mike Resnick, Dennis McKiernan, neo-pro Linda Dunn, and a few others. I had a good time, and several people asked me to go to WINDYCON in Chicago, in particular, Imp (Carrie) whom I met in the exercise room of the hotel (though no one offered me money!), but I couldn't afford to go. It was very tempting, but unless I could find a few extra dollars someplace, I couldn't make it. Oh well....

One of the first people I encountered outside the consuite, even before I registered, was Lois McMaster Bujold. She showed me the cover to her new book, Mirror Dance, and it took a couple of minutes for me to register that this was the dustjacket to a HARDCOVER BOOK. It was going to be a March book, which meant it would be available in February. Throughout the convention Lois talked with various people about ideas for the Cetagandans, a race in her Miles series. Although she had said her next novel would be a sequel to The Spirit Ring, she got the idea about having Miles and Ivan encounter the Cetagandans and sent the proposal to Baen. If accepted, that would be her next novel.

I was on sparsely-attended panels but the conversations with those who were there were a lot of fun. Most of the panels I attended as part of the audience were rather full--and a lot of fun too. Dinner with Tom Sadler was a high point, and I sat in on a couple of his panels. Through talking with Mike Resnick and Pat and Roger Sims I found out about Laura Resnick's encounters in Africa. Fred Pohl's GoH speech was extremely good; he talked about where he got his ideas, and the answer was serious, not his usual flippant one.

In addition to the usual limerick (which was won by Betty Gaines) and short story contests, the con committee this year decided to include poetry. Tom Sadler won for his poetry entry "A Bar Tale", and Helen E. Davis picked up the win for her story "Silver". As before, I had the honor of publishing them in LL and they appear in this issue (see page 46). (I also was going to publish the short story runner-up, but the author Ron Sarti called to withdraw it since a paying publisher was interested in it. I told him to go for it!)

On Sunday I was invited to dinner at Joy and Dale's (Lea's parents) so I drove her there and we waited until everyone came home from their various places. Dale took Lea back to Dayton, and I talked with Joy before I finally left about 6:00 in the evening. On the way back I stopped to file my comments before going home, and arrived about 10:45.

Ramblings 42.9

Classes kept me hopping. I was barely a section ahead of my calculus students. I did have the advantage in that I was re-learning the material, rather than doing it for the first time. A lot of it was coming back, but it was not easy to dredge up 25+ year-old memories. The Algebra II book was largely worthless for the slow sections, so I put in time to make up worksheets to coincide with the chapters and sections of the text.

As a result, the work on Lan's Lantern was slow, and I was still trying to finish Once Around the Bloch, Robert Bloch's "unauthorized autobiography", which I had been reading for more than a month. And there are so many more books that I wanted to read, including ones by Kristine Kathryn Rusch, and the new Mars novel by Greg Bear.

Conclave 18

The next weekend was CONCLAVE. I got to meet and talk with Roger Zelazny again, and his biographer Jane Lindskold. She and I were on a panel together with a third person who teaches and SF course at the University of Michigan about the History of SF. He started with a monologue on Mary Shelly's Frankenstein, and through those first ten minutes we lost 4 people from the audience. Jane took over and livened things up, and I disagreed with both of them, and things got a lot better. Jane and I did

most of the talking after that, and kept the audience awake.

Maia, Andrea, Michelle and I shared a room, which worked out quite well.

Ramblings 42.10

A New Adventure and Change in Life

The weekend of October 16th I stayed home. I had no conventions or plans other than that Maia and I would do things together. Of course, it didn't quite work out as we had planned. Maia had some errands to run on Saturday morning and early afternoon, as did I. So I suggested dinner or a movie in the evening. When I got home she was not feeling very well, so I stayed home and took care of her as best I could (mainly leaving her alone). So we decided to do something on Sunday.

In the Saturday paper was a listing of houses for sale, and more in the Sunday paper. We had decided to wait a couple of years until our house fund was much larger before buying one, but we could still look. There were five interesting-sounding ones in the same area (about 7 miles south and a little east of Cranbrook), so we decided to look at those.

We had talked on and off about what we would look for in a house for the past 5 years, and this time we made a list of things we wanted to have, things we would like, and things we absolutely didn't want. When we saw the first one, it had everything from the "want" list, a good number from the "would like", and nothing from the "don't want" (well, there was the basketball hoop, but I hadn't noticed it then). We were very impressed, especially when we looked at the schedule of payments that were suggested with 20% down with a 30 year mortgage. We realized that we could afford it!

But we wanted to look at the other ones. And every one we saw we found ourselves comparing to the first one. So we went back and talked to the agent about putting a bid on the house. Darleen agreed to be our agent; she was already the selling agent, and this would make things much easier in the long run. That evening she presented our offer to the sellers (which was a few thousand less than they were asking--mind you we were willing to pay what they were asking), and called later with a counter-offer which split the difference. Maia was in bed already (it was 10:30) and I told Darleen that I'd have to talk to her.

The next morning Maia called back with an acceptance.

On Wednesday we talked with the mortgage company representative, and found out that we would have no trouble getting the loan, though the red-tape would take about 3-4 weeks.

On Thursday morning Maia went through the house with the inspector and found that only a couple minor things were necessary to be done, and one major thing (the power line coming into the house was a bit frayed and needed replacing-Darleen said she knew of a contractor with reasonable prices who could do the job).

It finally sunk in: WE WERE BUYING A HOUSE!!!!

Everything moved so fast on this that our heads were spinning, but it seemed like the right decision. I checked on stopping the rent deductions from my paycheck, and all I would have to do is let the person at school know when we would be out and they would be stopped. Then Maia and I could remove the additional taxes we've had taken out, and between those and the money Maia has been putting into the house fund, we would have no trouble making the payments and utilities. Moving, as you might guess, would be a bit of a problem since we have so many books, magazines and videotapes, though we started to clean things up and throw a lot of stuff away. And I needed to wrap and hide the Christmas gifts that I had already bought for Maia so she would not see them.

We didn't plan to move until December--the house-closing was on November 19, before Thanksgiving. And, of course, we would going to CHAMBANACON for the Thanksgiving weekend as usual. But we wanted to take our time in moving, maybe even pay a couple of our unemployed friends to help us pack, and get things situated in the house as we want them.

Maia inventoried the comic books in the basement. I should have helped with that, but aside from being busy trying to catch up cataloguing our books and filing away the cards, I probably would have had second thoughts about selling them if I had to go through them myself. We sold most of the comics (I kept the Green Lantern, Mystery in Space, Jon Sable, Strange Adventures, Tales of the Unexpected, and some others). I have a lot of fanzines that have been accumulating over the years, and I went through them as well.

About the house: It has three bedrooms



and an upstairs office (which became Maia's). One bedroom would become my office, and the small bedroom will double as a guest room and the video room. The basement is dry, so it will become the library, and I will be making the shelves for it, using the existing ones as starters. We'll have a small front yard and a large back yard with a 2½ car garage. Plenty of room for a garden. The kitchen is not as large as we have now, but there is an attached dining area which makes it larger; the two are separated by a counter with a set of hanging cabinets. All the appliances, including a dishwasher, come with the house. The single bathroom has a nice tub with a sliding door instead of a curtain. The carpeting is teddy-bear brown (as Maia put it), and the living room is large with wall space for shelves and pictures. We have plans for furniture, hanging art, etc.

The address is 1306 Cherokee in Royal Oak, MI 48067-3386. It is near Main Street and I-696. It is a little further east than we wanted, but being right near the freeway makes up for that. I-696 is two blocks south of us, but Cherokee does not open onto the service drive, so there is not a lot of traffic.

To put it mildly, we were/are really excited--and we kept it quiet until we actually closed on the house on November 19, just 33 days after seeing the house and

putting the offer down on it. When we tell our friends and colleagues what we've done, and in how short a time it took us, they were just amazed. Several just stood with their mouths hanging open. When we tell my parents, who think we are a little strange since we had not followed the "traditional" route of getting a house and having kids, we expect a similar reaction. We'll be letting them know on Thanksgiving Day.

Ohio Valley Filk Fest

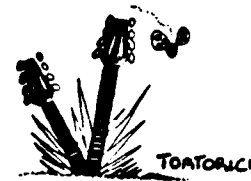
I had a good time at OHIO VALLEY FILK FEST, although it was difficult not to talk about buying a house to those who had just closed on theirs. However, there were several emotional crises that happened which kept my mind on helping others survive a bit. Mary Ellen Wessels' father died on Saturday morning of the con. She was toastmaster, but decided to stay and managed to fulfill her duties. Tom Smith found out that his grandmother (who pretty much raised him) had gone into the hospital into the intensive care unit about 90 minutes before he was scheduled for his concert. He pulled himself together, wrote a song about his grandmother in 40 minutes, and played/sang it at his concert.

Other people had emotional crises as well, and I helped some of them through parts of their trauma. To say I still had a good time might be a little strange given the intense emotional feelings at the con, but I did. I shared a room with Andrea, Pete Grubbs, and his fiancée Jill. Andrea and I drove down and back together--well, she drove to our apartment, I drove down to and back from Columbus, and she drove home from our place. We used her car this time, since we have used mine the last few long-distance cons to which we've driven together.

A good piece of news for Andrea is that she got a concert slot for MILLENNICON, which made her very happy, excited, ecstatic, etc. Joe Ellis who is doing the filk coordinating asked for people who were new to filking who might want to have a slot in the program.

I did see and talk with Raoul I. Benefiche for a long time in the consuite. I purchased his and Harry Smothers' new songbook. I've only made a cursory pass through it since coming home from the convention.

Robin the Just (Robert Stockton) was there, and offered much support for Mary Ellen. He also accompanied Andrea on a



filksong called "Unholy Night", which is a parody of the Christmas carol, "O Holy Night". The lyricist was in the audience, and gave her approval of the rendition. The harp added a lot to the presentation.

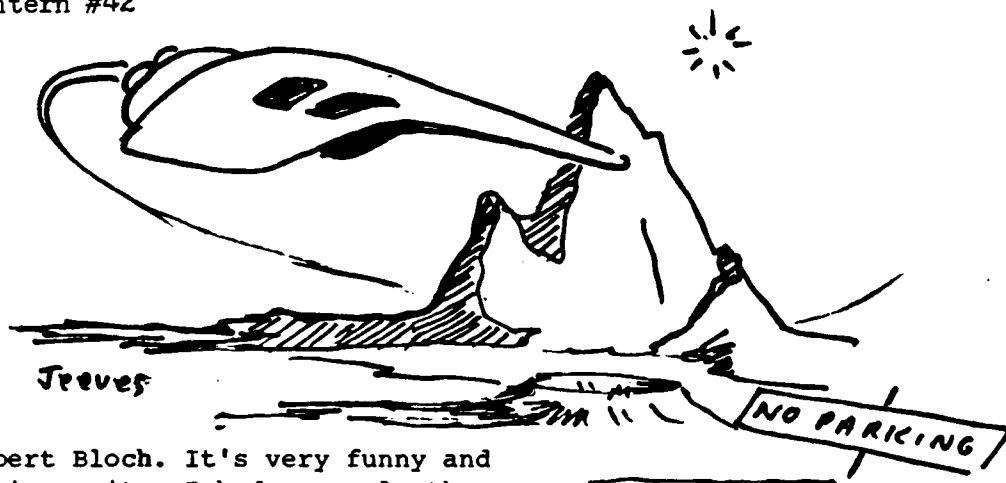
Ramblings 42.11

Monday, after the intensive weekend at OVFF, was Mothers' Visiting Day, which went over better than I had expected. Monday night I got sick with what I first thought was food poisoning, but turned out to be a 24-hour flu. Although I met with my first period class, I went home and substitutes took my other four classes. I found out on Wednesday that none really gave my classes the assignments I had left for my department chairman to tell them, and also that they all really appreciate me as a teacher; the others didn't quite teach as clearly as I did. (Made me feel really good!)

On Friday (Oct 29) one of my students had a visitor in class, and she sat listening as I presented new material. Later I saw her in the student common room and she told me that she wished she had me for a teacher in her school; her current geometry teacher didn't know how to present the material clearly, but I did. She thought her friend was fortunate in having me, and said that I was a good teacher. I felt very good after that, as you can well imagine.

I am Fan GOH at AD ASTRA in Toronto in June, and I finally got the dates on the convention: June 10-12. [I have found out since that it is the week after--June 17-19.] I suspect they may want me at the convention hotel on Thursday night--I hope so; I can get out of Awards Night as well as graduation. I talked to my guest liaison on Thursday night and she wanted both Maia and me to write something for the chapbook. The other guests, Catherine and L. Sprague deCamp, Diane Duane and Peter Moorwood were also going to write something. Now for a topic....

I hadn't had much time for reading, though I tried to make some. Between classwork preparation and trying to get things organized for the eventual move, I'd been a little busy (not to mention the cons and stuff). I was still in the middle of Once around the Bloch, the unauthorized autobio-



graphy of Robert Bloch. It's very funny and I was enjoying it. I had several other books on my list (who doesn't?) to read realsoonnow, and I certainly wished I did not have to sleep so I could read them all, but that's what retirement is for, I guess.

Halloween was all right. Our new neighbor downstairs had a small party, and we had a good time talking with our neighbors whom we had not had time to see since school started. And Carol and I decided to pool our resources together and hand out candy together. It worked out well.

School continued apace and the quarter ended on November 3. I wrote comments on all my students, and Maia went shopping for furniture. She picked up a dining room set and a sofa with two built-in reclining chairs. The following weekend we purchased an entertainment center, and later Maia decided to get a curio cabinet which matched the oak finish on the entertainment center. That same weekend we visited my younger sister Janice to celebrate her son's birthday. That's the same morning (Nov 14) we sold our comic books.

On Saturday, November 20, we went to Columbus Ohio to see Maia's sister Joy and her family. The family was surprised as we expected them to be. It was nice to see our niece Lea again. We went to her old high school and saw the play they were putting on: Ayn Rand's "The Night of January 16". It was an ambitious play for a high school cast, but they did very well with it. I'm glad we went. Lea also had her MISHAPzine for me to take home and copy. So I had 4 zines to hand over to editor John Filpus at CHAMBANACON. Also while on this trip, I finally finished Once Around the Bloch, and started on something new--reading Analog.

The Monday afterwards we went to the bar meeting in Ypsilanti. It went quite well, and we had a good time surprising our friends with the house purchase. We had some pictures, though it wasn't until Wednesday afternoon after we got the keys that

we got shots of the interior.

We had decided to tell my family about the house purchase at Thanksgiving dinner at my sister Judy's place. Since my sister June was not going to be there, we called her on Wednesday evening to let her know; she was thrilled.

On Thanksgiving Day, during dinner, I called for attention and said that we would still like to have everyone over for mom and dad's anniversary next year. "If you would like us to rent the Cranbrook cabin again, we will. But we would prefer to have everyone over at our new house." Jaws dropped, and then the congratulations started. Tim asked when we were closing, and we answered, "Last Friday." Then we brought out the pictures and had fun telling the story once again. We told everyone that we were having an open house for them and other friends on January 1, so they were invited to come over to see it then.

Afterwards we drove to Okemos/Lansing to spend the night in the Comfort Inn. We let Andrea know we had arrived, and arranged to have her husband Jim drive her to the hotel the next morning when we would leave for CHAMBANACON.

Chambanaccon

This was a nice, mellow convention. We talked with a lot of people, and once again enjoyed the reactions when we mentioned buying a house. I told Leslie Larkins that it had been difficult to keep my mouth shut at OVFF when she started talking about her new house.

I asked Mike Longcor about the timing of his song "Eternity's Waltz" and Heather Alexander's "Only the Music". Both were written in waltz tempo, both about their loved ones. He said that the first time he heard it was on the plane on his way home from Oregon after recording material for

his Mike Longcor: Undead tape (on which is the song), and it surprised him too. He wants to record some music with Heather, and I think that the two voices would blend well together.

I was on one panel--SF in the Golden Age which Rusty had wanted to do. So the usual 9 AM panel was a discussion of some of the older books of SF. Buck Coulson and I had a good time with the topic, and we brought samples with us.

The filking at night was wonderful. Barry and Sally Childs-Helton were there, and Nate Bucklin flew in from Minneapolis. He commented favorably on Andrea's guitar playing, and the non-traditional chords she had been using in her songs. She keeps stretching herself in playing and composing. I think she has the potential to be a commercially successful songwriter and performer. The Suttons (Bill and Brenda and all of the kids) were there, and their performances were exquisite.

Paula Robinson did make it to the convention on Thursday evening, and promptly was taken to the hospital because she collapsed. She has diabetes, and had a reaction to something she ate. We saw her briefly on Sunday just before we left on the long ride home.

Sam Long insisted on having dinner with us, a very pleasant proposition which we accepted. We got into his car and drove to a pizzeria/bar that he knew about in Champaign, and had a delightful meal and conversation. The topics ranged widely, and we learned a bit more about him. He did say that he may not get back into our area for a while because of budget cuts, but we told him to make sure he contacts us if he does attend a conference in southeastern Michigan. If we could manage it, we would get together.

The drive back was relatively quiet. I drove while Maia and Andrea dozed. We got back late on Sunday, but since I had an in-service day on Monday, I wasn't worried about being totally awake for it.

Ramblings 42.12

The Move and Aftermath

The movers were called and scheduled to come in on December 4th. The weather all week was nice. The weather on Sunday was gorgeous. It rained on Saturday. Still, the movers were very professional, and very little actually got wet. Nothing was broken or damaged, and they had to wrestle with

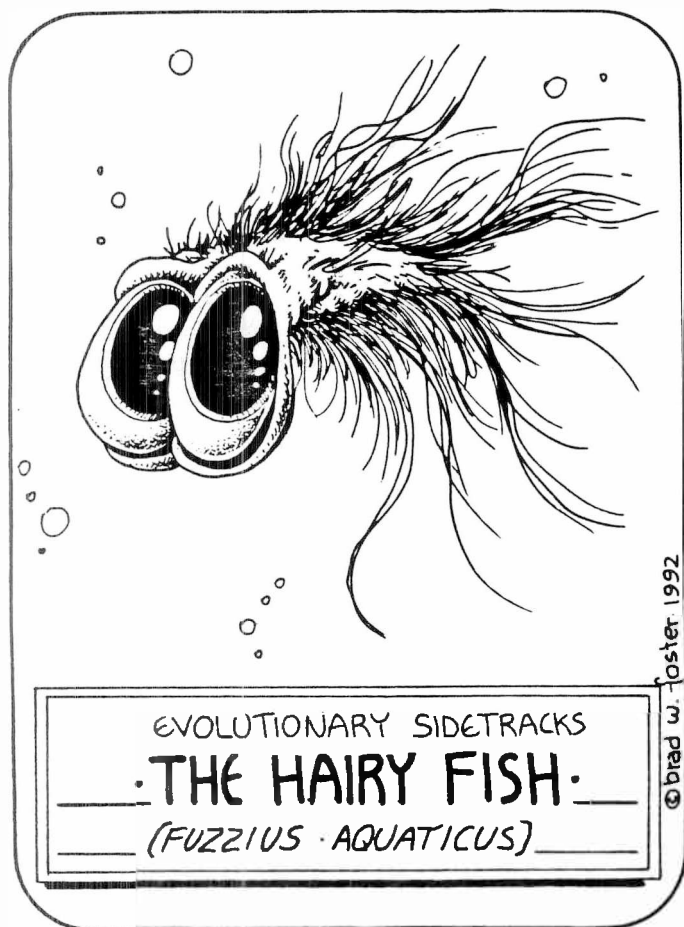
some very heavy pieces of furniture. The worst was the card file. The next was Maia's Desk, and the third was the freezer in the basement. The movers were amazed at the number of video drawers they had to move, and the boxes of books. However, we still had not packed up all the SF hardcovers, two other bookshelves, and the record shelves. I told the movers we would be taking care of those, and we did. Our friend Tim Murphy, currently unemployed, became our second mover and he did a good job of taking over the books and records, and the shelves. Then all the miscellaneous stuff. I think about two or three in the afternoon all the stuff was unloaded into the new place, and what we had left to do was unpack (and wait until Tim or we brought over the rest.) Andrea drove in from Lansing to help us do some unpacking, then drove to Ann Arbor to attend Tim Ryan's House-Sing. I left a little later and made it to Tim's house for about 3 hours of good conversation and music.

Some time on Saturday I got a call from Linda Nelson asking me to be the fan GoH at MILE-HI-CON next October. It didn't take me very long to decide affirmatively, though I did wait until Sunday to call back.

On Sunday the family got together to celebrate my older sister's 50th birthday. We had a good time, lots of good food, and it was a way of forcing us to relax and take a break before exhausting ourselves with unpacking.

For the next week we unpacked, moved the rest of the stuff from the apartment, rearranged things, and cleaned the old apartment. Maia worked at home on Tuesday and waited for the furniture we had ordered to be delivered. We also talked to an electrician to replace the fuse box with circuit-breakers, put in some more lines and fixtures, and grounded the plugs where the computers and electronic equipment would be. We also contracted him to put in fluorescent lights in the basement where the library will be. By Friday, December 10, we were out of the apartment, and I turned in the keys on Monday.

On Saturday, December 11, Andrea had an hour recital at the Barnes & Noble bookstore in Lansing. I spent the morning and part of the afternoon working around the house, then drove up to Lansing for the concert. She did very well, and had her own cheering section (her husband Jim was there, her parents and sister and all the children, and several friends). She was



only a little shaken by the woman who kept reaching around behind her for the bookstore merchandise on the shelves. A couple of us wanted to tackle the woman. Afterwards, friends Val and Debbie, Jim and Andrea and I went to a restaurant for dinner and a long conversation. Afterwards I drove to Ann Arbor for a party at Tom and Tara Barber's house. I met Maia there, who got a ride with Dave and Diana Stein. The Stein's loved the house; Maia gave them the nickel tour when they came to pick her up.

Ramblings 42.12

Christmas, the Holidays, and School

I was especially anxious for classes to be over on December 17. That afternoon started the Christmas break and I rushed home to work on unpacking more things. I got my office pretty much in order, though I would still rearrange things as time went on. It took a few days but I got the video room organized the way I wanted it. The new couch (with reclining seats on both ends), the entertainment center and tower, curio cabinet, and new dining room set all looked terrific. Some of the old furniture we had in the apartment actually fit in with the new stuff.

And after piling more and more boxes of books into the basement, I started putting up shelves. Since the basement is dry, I had no hesitation about putting the library there. However, even the driest of basements may have periods of condensation when the weather changes. So I did not want to put the bookshelves directly against the walls with only a panelling back between the books and the wall. I built (and am building) frames against which the shelves will go. Four of the hardcover bookshelves went up quickly and were filled with books, though I still have to build two more for the special places where the ones I have already built won't fit. (I don't want to do some of the woodworking in the basement and have the sawdust fly all over--these new shelves may have to wait until Spring). As it is, I still had to cut off the top shelf since the basement ceiling is shorter than those we had in the apartment.

The paperback bookshelves were designed for two rows deep. I put two of them up jutting perpendicular from the walls without the backing on them so the books would be accessible from both sides. I added a molding divider along the middle of each shelf to prevent pushing the books all the way through. "A" through about half of "Resnick" were put onto the shelves so to clear out some of the boxes so I have more room to work. I eventually put up some of the hardcover SF for the same reason, even though I knew I would be shifting them around later.

Eventually the larger-sized shelves for the other books (nonfiction and oversized), and record shelves, were all brought inside from the garage and put up. I finished that work in early February.

Maia and I managed to buy a good number of gifts for our family and friends, even though we were spending a lot of money on the house. When the bills come in January, I'll see how much in debt I really am!

On the 18th, Maia and I bought our first decent sized Christmas tree, and decorated it on the 19th. On the 20 we went to the annual SF club Holiday gathering in Ypsilanti, and received as well as gave gifts. The prettiest gift was a miniature Grandfather clock from Dave and Diana Stein. They have been really good to us over the years, so we decided that we would get them something special. It was just a matter of deciding on the gift--which would wait till later.

On the 24th, Maia and I went to see The Remains of the Day starring Emma Thompson



and Anthony Hopkins. It was a good film--sad but quite entertaining. Then we went out to dinner and spent the rest of the evening quietly reading.

On Christmas Day we got up early and opened our presents to each other. I got a set of screwdrivers, an electric screwdriver (which would help in putting up the shelves), a book on The Addams Family, a new watch, and an overcoat. I got Maia several books and videotapes (movies she had wanted to see but they left the theatres before she had a chance to do so--like Prospero's Books, the new version of Of Mice and Men, and two Emma Thompson films: Howard's End and Fortunes of War), the new Dave Barry calendar, a tea cabinet and some different teas to put in it, and a fire-op-al pendant.

About 10 we packed up the car and drove to my parents' house where we met the rest of my family for the annual gift exchange. Since I had chosen my brother Gary to buy for, I got him most of the things on his list. Maia had fun shopping for her brother-out-law Jim (my sister June's husband). Jim had drawn my name and I got a new serial to add to my collection (Dick Tracy vs Crime Inc), some blank videos, a gift certificate to Border's Bookstore, and film for the camera. Judy had Maia's name, and she got some nice things too.

The niece and nephews made out as usual, but I discovered that my niece Sarah liked the horror novels of Christopher Pike and R.L. Stine. Had I known that I would have made sure she got the newest ones. As it was, I had given all the kids gift certificates to Waldenbooks.

My sister June has been a Beatles fan since they started singing in the 60s. In my search for presents, I found a book on the Beatles which contained news clippings and articles about the group. I thought June might like it, so I bought it for her. It was a special present, and one she appreciated greatly.

On Sunday we left about 8 am to go to Columbus to visit Joy and Dale Bishop, Maia's sister and her husband and family. J Lea was home from college and working, and Denice also worked that day, but we had a good time watching them open their gifts when they got home. It was a very pleasant visit, and we returned home on Monday to have our first crisis with the house.

The water faucet was dripping, so before Christmas I tried to fix it. I turned off the water underneath, removed the stem, and found out that the washers I had would not suffice--I had to replace the whole stem. I jury-rigged something to stop the water flow, but that made the faucet difficult to turn. On Monday after Christmas (December 27) after returning from Columbus, Maia said she needed to go to the store and asked if there was anything she could get. I mentioned the faucet stem, so I told her I would pull it out so she would have a sample to show the hardware person. I turned off the water underneath (so I thought) and pulled out the stem from the hot water faucet. Water sprayed everywhere, and as I tried to put the stem back in, the temperature rose. Maia tried in vain to turn the valve underneath. Finally I told her to get out of the way, I ran through the kitchen to the basement door and slipped on the floor, cracking my elbow (I chipped the bone but did not go to the doctor's to get it checked). I got up, ran downstairs and cut off the main hot water valve. As we were cleaning up, Maia commented that in a few weeks this will seem funny. Well, it is now, but I felt terribly foolish when I found out later that I had turned the valve under the sink the wrong way.

On Wednesday afternoon Jim and Andrea Yeomans came to visit and we had a pleasant time. Andrea liked the way we had arranged everything. She was there on December 4 when we moved in, and saw lots of boxes. Most of the boxes she saw this time were in the basement. We gave them the Christmas presents we had bought them, and Andrea showed me copies of the pages for the exercise log book she was making for me.

That evening we had neighbors from Cran-

brook over for dinner. Of the two couples, the McIlraths had already closed on buying a town-house condominium near the Cranbrook schools. They are the second couple to begin moving off campus because of the situation with the boarding program (we were the first--though our situation was a little different, me not having dorm duty for the past year). The VanDams said that they would probably look for a place after their youngest daughter Jane graduates from college--in 24 years. Both couples are dear people, and we wish them the best.

On New Years eve we went to two parties and brought in the new year with several friends. On New Years Day we had an open house for family and some co-workers. There were lots of people who came through, and we enjoyed the company. People were amazed that we had pictures up on the wall already and everything except the library unpacked, less than a month after we had moved in. My family got together to buy us a garage-door opener, but it was too cold for us to put it up--an ironic situation. Eventually we got it installed by Sears in March.

School started right away after that weekend, and I accelerated to top speed as usual. We had two weeks of class before semester exams. I managed to get things together enough to put out review sheets for my Algebra IIB classes, and used the ones from past years for my Geometry classes. The calculus kids were left to come up with questions on their own--they were seniors, so I figured they should start experiencing things as they were going to in college. The exams were written later than I would have like to have them done, but at least I had an idea what the kids should definitely know before review "week" (it was only two days this year) was over. Exams came and went on Wednesday (Jan 19), and I got them corrected, graded, comments written and everything turned in by late the next evening. I slept in Friday and headed for CONFUSION in the early afternoon.

On January 16, the family got together for a surprise dinner to celebrate the 25th wedding anniversary of my older sister Judy and her husband Denis. We all met early at the Lakeside Restaurant between Lake Orion and Oxford, Michigan, and waited until mom and dad brought the couple in. They were surprised, and delighted that we remembered them. Maia and I had fun shipping for them too. We had visited several stores in Oakland Mall, and finally settled on a silver coffee serving set (tray, pot, creamer and

sugar bowl) from The Bombay Company. Judy and Denis were speechless when they unwrapped it.

Confusion

I was hoping to get to the convention early enough to catch the interview with Joan D. Vinge (given by her husband Jim Frenkel) at 4, but they had missed their plane on Thursday night, and could not get another flight out from Madison (Wisconsin) until late on Friday. So the interview was postponed, but I never did find out what time it had been rescheduled for. There was a big mix-up in the rooms with Andrea and Michelle and Maia and me who were sharing together, but we managed to get that straightened out before Maia arrived from work.

Friday night programming was all right. I got to the opening ceremonies late, and left early because of the nine o'clock concert with Dave Clement. That was one of the high points of the convention. Dave is a professional singer from Winnipeg, and has been touted as one of the best male vocalists in filk. I can believe that.

Aside from seeing and talking to a lot of friends I had not seen for a long time, not much else happened on Friday.

Saturday morning I was on a panel with Hal Drake, Alex Eisenstein, and Bob Tucker on A. E. Van Vogt. Hal and I were together at Jim Gunn's SF Teachers' Seminars back in 1980, though we never really got to know each other then. I remembered him, but he had a more difficult time trying to place where he had met me before until I let him know. The panel went well, and afterwards I introduced him to Ann Cecil who was chairing CONFLUENCE in Pittsburgh. Hal lives in Lancaster PA, a scant 4 hours drive from PgH, and I thought she would like him to come to the convention and reprise the panel. After that we went to the bar for a beer and talked about several things, including our mutual interest in Van Vogt.

My afternoon panel dealt with "How to get a Hugo nomination". The Fan GoH, Leah Zeldes, who with her husband Dick Smith edits STET which had been nominated last year for the Hugo, came up with the idea, and the panel included Bill Bowers (nominated, never won), and Mike Glicksohn (nominated 4 times, won once). We had a good time on it, and moderator Mike kept things moving.

I stayed for the panel after that--on Writing SF stories versus writing SF songs/

music. Bill Roper moderated Nate Bucklin, Steve Pizak, and Dave Clement in the discussion and there was a lot of audience participation.

Maia sought me out and dragged me over to Steve Scherer's "table" where he was working with his torch shaping glass. She pointed to a blue dragon and asked, "For the Steins?" I smiled and said "Yes." They were delighted with the surprise gift.

For dinner, Maia and I went out with Jim and Laurie Mann who were/are connected with BOSKONE and NESFA, even though they've moved back to Pittsburgh. We hadn't seen them for a long while, though I did see Jim at CONFLUENCE last summer. With a friend of theirs from the area (actually, from Royal Oak, a couple miles North of where we live) we went out for Chinese food, and had a good time.

At nine that evening was another concert --Tom Smith versus Pete Grubbs. The altercation was on the friendliest of terms though the insults were fast and furious. We the audience had as good a time as they did. After that was the open filk. The rest of the con had a dance, and of course the consuite was open. I spent time wandering around to parties and talking to friends, and occasionally listening to the sing.

Andrea was particularly happy that her husband Jim decided to drive down to join her at the convention on Saturday. He had fun observing fans in their natural habitat and sitting in on panels (though most people saw him reading his school texts). Andrea unveiled her two new songs. I really liked one of them--"Magic Carpet", based on Aladdin. She's written it to allow her voice to float and sustain notes, which she does very well. On Sunday, she sang it in the atrium of the hotel, and I walked around to listen how well her voice carried throughout the massive area. Beautiful!

Maia left for home early on Sunday, and I stayed to hear the "bitch session". Afterwards Andrea and I had our traditional post-con dinner before going our separate ways home.

Ramblings 42.6

Monday was a free day for me so I slept in, relaxed and did some reading. Tuesday school started once again, and I *enjoyed* going over the exams in all my classes. I handed out the paper assignments, and the third quarter began with a vengeance.

Things went on fairly well until one of

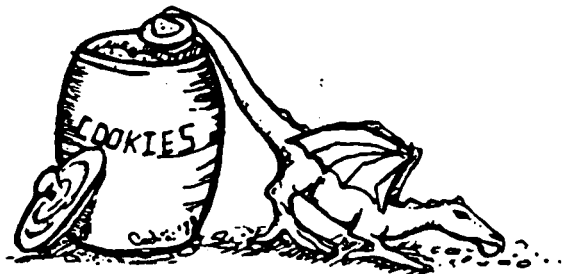
my seniors asked if it were all right to postpone taking the usual Thursday test because she had tickets to see a play the night before. I said no. In a huff she said that she would have her parents excuse it, so I called her parents and they were furious; she took the test and did all fine. Robin is smart, just lazy and conniving. She tries to get away with doing as little as possible, trusting to her innate intelligence to get her by. She has a B+ in the class. She should have been in AP calculus, and not in my class, but (as I said) she's lazy.

On the weekend of February 6, I finally put up the last of the shelves that had been stored in the garage. They were all cleaned and ready for books and records. I just had to find the time to unpack the boxes. The unfortunate result of doing this was that I had trouble walking; I pulled several muscles in my left leg, and when an ointment soothed those pains, other muscles on my left side, and a few on the right started to ache. It was a painful Monday.

I tried to stay ahead in all my classes, read in preparation for the panels I was in at CAPRICON the following weekend, and finish my D'APAZINE which I could mail out before I left on Friday morning. I arranged to have my classes covered on Friday. Like last year, when I was fan GoH at CAPRICON, all my student went to the library for an orientation and preparation in writing their papers. The librarian was willing to do this again, and it sure helped me out.

* * * * *

At this point I will stop and give my readers some relief from my adventures. I will pick this up with CAPRICON in the next issue. |*|



Faery Tales for Writers

The Shoemaker and the Elves

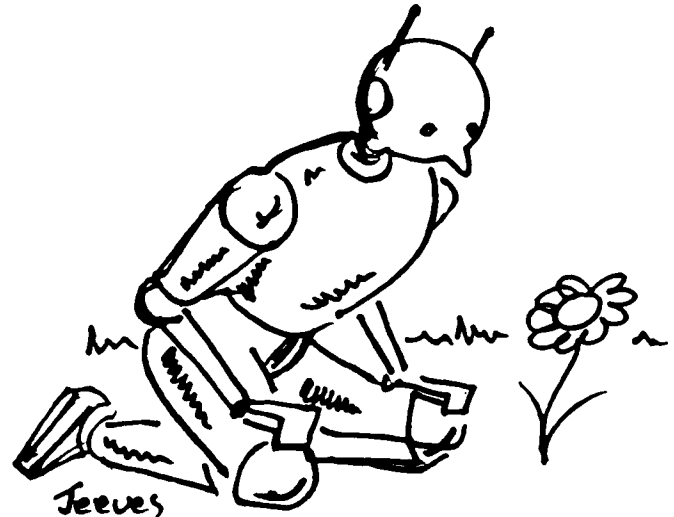
by Lawrence Schimel

All day the shoemaker sweats to construct his shoes--today's special request: a glass slipper--to provide his daily bread and, perhaps, a little extra for his dreams. Then, after the shop has been swept and the tools stowed carefully away for tomorrow's efforts--not even taking time to sup--the shoemaker begins to read the day's submissions to his small press. He finds one manuscript to set aside for another read and sends the others back, before rolling up his sleeves and inking the press. He can't buy anything for the future until his current project is complete and on the market. If he does not come even on this next, he cannot afford the future. He feeds the paper through, carefully watching each sheet for quality, a thousand of each page in one night. Here, the shoemaker pauses a moment, to butter his bread and drink some water. But when they are gone, he sits back down at his worktable, and brings forth a typewriter from the cabinet underneath. He begins to write while waiting for the pages to dry, to write his own stories for submission. The story becomes a shambles as his eyes begin to droop and his fingers stray upwards on the keyboard, shifting entire sentences into gibberish. He slumps forward onto the typewriter, his breathing typing repeatedly: vfghjr, vfghjr. It is only once he begins to snore that the elves come out at last, pulling themselves from the inky shadows. Working together, they lift him from the typewriter, from his chair, and lay him in his bed. Then they set to work. They divide the labor: one feeds a new sheet into the typewriter and retypes the story, correcting misspellings and punctuation mistakes, and continuing the story from where the shoemaker fell asleep; another blows on the pages so they dry quicker, and when they finally are, begins to collate; another transforms a pigskin slipper into glass, wondering why only one was requested. Outside, the innkeeper's rooster crows from across the street. The elves freeze, startled, then recover. Hastily, but with the ultimate care, they return everything to its proper place, cleaning up any traces of their presence. The shoemaker awakens with a yawn and stretches, wondering when it was he got to bed last night. He did not remember doing so, but looking around the shop he sees: the glass slipper waiting on a pillow on the worktable, the collated copies bound and stacked on the shelf, his own story typed and ready to go out with the post, the envelop addressed already, even, and thinks he must have gone to sleep after he finished everything last night. Somehow it all gets done, the shoemaker reflects as he checks under the door for any special requests; there is only one: a well-flavored, yet waterproof shoe for a man who is always sticking his foot in his mouth. Somehow it all gets done. |*|

PULP AND CELLULOID

BOOKS, GRAPHIC NOVELS, COMICS

- Aikin, Jim.....The Wall at the End of the World [ECL] 81
- Anderson, Poul.....Harvest of Stars [LMcM] 93
- Asimov, Isaac & Frederik Pohl....Our Angry Earth [DKF] 116
- Baker, Will.....Shadow Hunter [LMcM] 91
- Banks, Iain M.....The Players of the Game [DLS] 107
- Bell, Clare.....The Jaguar Princess [LMcM] 93
- Bloch, Robert.....Once Around the Bloch [LMcM] 94
- Bova, Ben.....Empire Builders [Lan] 120
- Bova, Ben.....Empire Builders [Lan] 121
- Bova, Ben & A.J. Austin...To Save the Sun [Lan] 121
- Bradbury, Ray...Green Shadows, White Whale [DKF] 116
- Burkholz, Herbert.....Brain Damage [LMcM] 89
- Daniels, Les.....The Black Castle [MRL] 109
- Daniels, Les.....The Silver Skull [MRL] 109
- Daniels, Les.....Citizen Vampire [MRL] 109
- Daniels, Les.....Yellow Fog [MRL] 109
- Daniels, Les.....No Blood Spilled [MRL] 109
- Farmer, Philip Jose.....Escape from Lok [DLS] 106
- Feist, Raymond E & Janny Wurts...Mistress of the Empire [LMcM] 87
- Fowler, Karen Joy.....Sarah Canary [MRL] 112
- Greenland, Colin.....Harm's Way [ECL] 84
- Hall, Hal...Science Fiction and Fantasy Book Review Index, Volume 20, 1989 [Lan] 122
- Hamilton, Laurell K.....Nightseer [Lan] 119
- Harrison, Harry...The Hammer and the Cross [LMcM] 95
- Harrison, Harry & Marvin Minsky.....The Turing Option [LMcM] 88
- Hoffman, Nina Kiriki...The Thread That Binds the Bones [ECL] 82
- Holt, Tom.....Flying Dutch [ECL] 83
- Jones, Courtney.....Witch of the North [LMcM] 85
- Kagan, Janet.....Mirabile [LMcM] 88
- Keith, Andrew.....Cohort of the Damned [LMcM] 90
- Keith, Jr., William H.....Warstrider [LMcM] 89
- Knaak, Richard A.....King of the Grey [Lan] 120
- Kress, Nancy.....Beggars in Spain [RMS] 103
- Lackey, Mercedes.....Arrows of the Queen [LMcM] 91
- Lackey, Mercedes.....The Oathbound [LMcM] 91
- Lightman, Alan.....Einstein's Dreams [ECL] 85
- Malibu Comics: Mantra.....[Lan] 122
- Martin, George RR...Wild Cards: Card Sharks [ECL] 82
- McCaffrey, Anne & Mercedes Lackey...The Ship Who Searched [LMcM] 90
- McDonald, Ian.....The Broken Land [ECL] 84
- Pogue, David.....Hard Drive [MRL] 111
- Preiss, Byron & Robert Silverberg...The Ultimate Dinosaur [LMcM] 87
- Robeson, Kenneth.....The Awful Egg [DLS] 106
- Roessner, Michaela.....Vanishing Point [LMcM] 86
- Scarborough, Elizabeth Ann...Last Refuge [LMcM] 92
- Shatner, William with Chris Kreski.....Star Trek Memories [DKF] 117
- Shwartz, Susan & Andre Norton.....Empire of the Eagle [LMcM] 96
- Simmons, Dan.....Children of the Night [ECL] 83
- Skal, David L.....The Monster Show: A Cultural History of Horror [DKF] 117
- Smith, David Alexander.....In the Cube [LMcM] 94
- Stephenson, Neal.....Snow Crash [ECL] 78
- Stith, John E.....Manhattan Transfer [LMcM] 86
- Tepper, Sheri S.....Sideshow [ECL] 82
- Three Flawed Epics.....[RMS] 102
- Steel Beach, Beggars in Spain, The Doomsday Book
- Tilton, Lios.....Darkness on the Ice [Lan] 119
- Turner, George.....The Destiny Makers [ECL] 83
- Turtledove, Harry.....Departures [ECL] 79
- Varley, John.....Steel Beach [RMS] 102
- Wentworth, K.D.....The Imperium Game [Lan] 119
- Willis, Connie.....The Doomsday Book [RMS] 104
- Wilson, Robert Charles.....Harvest [ECL] 79
- Yolen, Jane.....Briar Rose [LMcM] 95

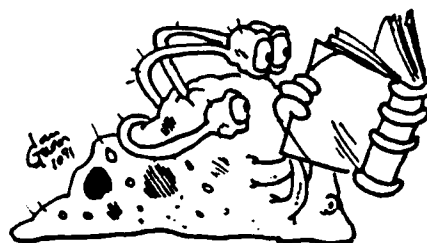


RECORDS, TAPES and SONGBOOKS

Alexander, Heather.....	<u>Freedom, Flight & Fancy</u>	[Lan] 125
Alexander, Heather.....	<u>Midsummer</u>	[Lan] 125
Alexander, Heather.....	<u>Songsmith</u>	[Lan] 125
Alper, Renee.....	<u>Wheelchair in High Gear</u>	[Lan] 123
Benefiche, Raoul I.....	<u>I'll Build a Stairway to</u> <u>Parodies</u>	[Lan] 125
Coulson, Juanita & Michael Longcor.....	<u>What's a</u> <u>Hoosier</u>	[Lan] 123
Fish, Leslie.....	<u>Our Fathers of Old</u>	[Lan] 123
Keeler, Greg...	<u>Sheep, Lies and Audio Tape</u>	[Lan] 124
Keeler, Greg.....	<u>All You Can Eat</u>	[Lan] 124
Long, Quentin.....	<u>King of Filk</u>	[Lan] 124
Longcor, Michael.	<u>Michael Longcor...Undead</u>	[Lan] 122
McQuillin, Cynthia & Dr. Jane Robinson.....	<u>Mid-</u> <u>Life Crisis</u>	[Lan] 124
Rand & Adam.....		[Lan] 126
Smothers, Harry.....	<u>Good Taste</u>	[Lan] 125
Urban Tapestry....	<u>Castles and Skyscrapers</u>	[Lan] 126

FILMS, VIDEOS and THEATRE

<u>Boxing Helena</u>	[MRL] 115
<u>Four Extraordinary Films</u>	[MRL] 105
<u>The Mind Benders, Unearthly Stranger,</u> <u>Dark Intruder, Quest for Love</u>	
<u>Frankenstein</u>	[MRL] 109
<u>Heart and Souls</u>	[MRL] 111
<u>Jurassic Park: The Tip of the Cane</u>	[AD] 100
<u>Much Ado About Nothing</u>	[MRL] 114
<u>Music of Chance, The</u>	[MRL] 114
<u>Three Silent Horrors</u>	[MRL] 97
<u>The Hands of Orlac, West of Zanzibar,</u> <u>The Man Who Laughs</u>	
<u>Un Coeur en Hiver</u>	[MRL] 110



Book Reviews by Evelyn C Leeper

All Reviews copyright (c) 1993 by Evelyn C. Leeper

Snow Crash

by Neal Stephenson

Bantam Spectra, 1993 (1992), \$5.99

Where was this book at Hugo nomination time?

I mean, I had heard some recommendations, but after reading the book, I don't understand why I didn't hear more. To paraphrase from The Lion in Winter, why did no one say "Hugo" and think of Snow Crash?

In Snow Crash our hero/protagonist, Hiro Protagonist (yes, it's that sort of novel) starts out as a pizza deliverer for Uncle Enzo's Cosa Nostra Pizza. That's because in the early 21st century the United States leads the world in four areas: music, movies, software, and high-speed delivery. Forced by circumstances to accept the help of Y.T., a young woman who finds excitement in high-speed skate-boarding as a courier, Hiro soon finds his hacker expertise tested in the Metaverse (Stephenson's version of virtual reality) to fight the "snow crash" virus--a virus that attacks not only computers, but people as well. And it's all con-

nected with ancient Sumeria and the Tower of Babel....

Stephenson has certainly pulled together an unusual assortment of disciplines in this novel. His postulations regarding Sumer seem a bit weak (Sumer may have been the major civilization in the Middle East, but it was not the only civilization, and there were many civilizations isolated from Sumer), and the description of pre-Sumerian cultures and memes does not sound accurate for a number of reasons.

Stephenson avoids the path taken by many cyberpunk/virtual reality authors. He does not create a new language that the reader has to decipher (which concept, by the way, ties into the novel's premise, emphasizing the analogy of the relationship between reality and the novel to the relationship between the novel's reality and its Metaverse). He does use pop culture as a referent; for example, Hiro talks about Captain Kirk beaming up.

Stephenson starts off at a break-neck pace, and by page 40 I found myself thinking, "If he keeps this up for 470 pages, I'm going to be exhausted by the time I

finish this book!" Well, he does ease up a bit, but not much. Snow Crash is a roller coaster ride of virtual reality, linguistic theory, the origin of religions, and the future of our culture. I wish I had known about Snow Crash before Hugo nomination time. I highly recommend Snow Crash.

Harvest

by Robert Charles Wilson
Bantam Spectra, 1993, \$12.00

What if aliens offered us the chance to live forever--if the only price we had to pay was to give up being human? That is the premise of Robert Charles Wilson's latest book, Harvest.

As might be expected from the premise, Harvest is more a study in characters than an action story, though there is a very impressive storm sequence. Wilson looks at the world through the eyes of those few who chose to remain human. And they are a motley crew--a doctor, a fundamentalist Christian, a car salesman, a politician, two teenagers, a farmer's wife, and Army colonel, a retired worker. They have little in common--except their decision. What makes some choose one way and some another is one of the main questions of the book, but Wilson never satisfactorily answers it, and indeed, towards the end Harvest becomes very much like an updated Earth Abides, as the remaining humans cope with lack of electricity, the search for food, and so on.

Wilson also makes a few flubs. He says that on election night, "a long Republican ascendancy over the White House had come to

an end," obviously expecting Bush to win in 1992. (Internal evidence says the story takes place in 1996.) He also seems to think Lima is in a time zone between Los Angeles and Anchorage, while it is actually in the same time zone as New York.

In spite of these minor quibbles, however, I would still recommend Harvest. Wilson at least touches on the nature of humanity, and his characters and their reactions to the situation and to each other may give us some clues, if not to the answer, at least to an answer.

Departures

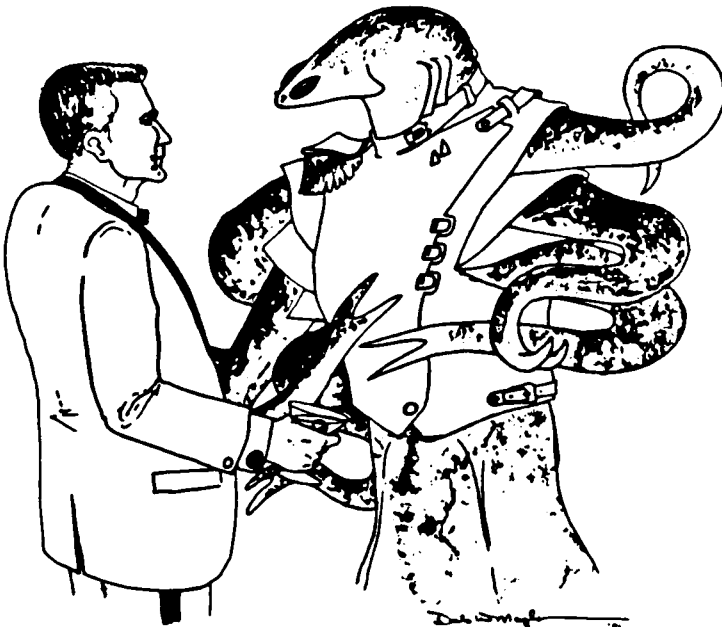
by Harry Turtledove
DelRey, 1993, \$4.99

While Turtledove is perhaps best known for his alternate history stories, and while many of the stories in this collection are alternate histories, the back blurb lies when it says, "Here Harry Turtledove explores such 'what-ifs' in twenty alternate history stories ranging from ancient times to the far, far-different future." Even counting stories with werewolves or vampires as alternate histories, only eleven of the twenty stories here are alternate history. But all twenty are good.

Perhaps because of the historical nature of Turtledove's writing, the stories are arranged chronologically (by when the story takes place, not by when it was written). In fact, this collection was originally to be titled Pasts, Presents, and Futures. And this historical bent is evident even in the non-alternate-history stories, as you will see.

"Counting Potsherds" takes place in the early second century BCE and is an alternate history story. What if the Persians defeated the Greeks and democracy never developed? Turtledove has done his research on the Near East (his degree is in Byzantine history and he has also used the Near East as the setting in his set of alternate history stories collected in Agent of Byzantium, about which I will say more later), and the world here is as well-developed as a reader could hope to find.

"Death in Vesunna" is about history, and books, and the mistake of under-estimating one's opponents. Although reminiscent of Poul Anderson's "Time Patrol" stories, it focuses more on the residents of the period than on the time travelers themselves or their time--and this is the whole point.



Turtledove's best known alternate history stories are his "Agent of Byzantium" stories, and "Departures" is a prequel to that series. 'Nuff said.

"Pillar of Cloud, Pillar of Fire" is a regular "Agent of Byzantium" story which takes place between "Strange Eruptions" (aka "Etos Kosmou 6816") and "Unholy Trinity" (aka "Etos Kosmou 6824"). Turtledove has at least gotten away from having Basil Argyros invent or discover something famous, although the story does center around a very modern problem.

"Islands in the Sea", by its placement here, reads as an alternate alternate history from "Departures" and the entire "Agent of Byzantium" series--not only does Mohammed not convert to Christianity, but the Muslim Arabs successfully invade southeastern Europe much sooner than they actually did. There is something odd, however, about reading a theological argument between a Christian and a Muslim written by a Jew. Well, at least no one can claim he is biased.

If the existence of werewolves makes a story an alternate history, then "Not All Wolves" is an alternate history. A young boy who is actually a werewolf is fleeing from an angry mob in Twelfth Century Cologne. Cornered and desperate, he finds help from an unexpected ally. Though the message is perhaps a bit unsubtle, the story is effective.

"Clash of Arms" is not an alternate history story, but a story of a heraldic duel. I suspect one needs to know heraldry better than I do to appreciate the story, though even I found it mildly interesting.

"Report of the Special Committee on the Quality of Life" is not, strictly speaking, alternate history. Rather, it's a parody of government feasibility studies by having Jaime Nosenada ("I know nothing" in Spanish) write up all the reasons why Spain shouldn't bother to follow up on Columbus' journey. Cute, but more than a little preachy--I'm sure all the pro-space groups love it.

An alternate history only under the most liberal of definitions, "Batboy" is a baseball story, but probably wouldn't appeal to the average baseball fan--it's primary focus is fantasy rather than sports. "Designated Hitter" is another baseball story, but it is a straight science fiction story rather than alternate history. It didn't work quite as well for me as "Batboy" did, probably because it requires more knowledge

of the techniques of baseball than I have.

"The Last Reunion" is definitely not alternate history, though it recalls The Guns of the South in its story of a Confederate captain returning to Richmond in 1932 for a reunion of the Forty-seventh North Carolina. Turtledove recognizes the conflict between nostalgia of the old soldiers and the horrors of war, and my only complaint is that he doesn't to an entirely successful job of reconciling the two.

If there is such a thing as an alternate future story, "Gladly Wolde He Lerne" is one. Unfortunately, it's a bit predictable (especially after the introduction Turtledove wrote) and a bit preachy. In fact, while I like Turtledove's introduction to the stories, I would recommend reading them after you read the respective stories.

We're on the receiving end of time traveling in "The Barbeque, the Movie, and Other Unfortunately Not So Relevant Material," an amusing story and a good change of pace from some of the more serious stories in the book.

"In the Presence of Mine Enemies" is set in one of the more common alternate history worlds, one in which Germany won the second World War. It's about survival under adversity and if it seems unlikely, one merely has to look at the recent revelation that large numbers of Catholics in the Southwest are descended from Jews who fled to the New World to escape the Inquisition.

Just as "In the Presence of Mine Enemies" might have been inspired by news that post-dated it, but wasn't (of course--Turtledove is a good writer but not a fortune-teller), so might have been "The R-Strain." In the latter case, it is the report of the babirusa, a cud-chewing pig, that could have generated this story of a genetically altered pig that just might be kosher. There has been much discussion on Usenet lately as to why pork is the ultimate non-kosher meat, even more so in people's minds than shellfish or anything else. And Turtledove's story acknowledges this by having its Conservative rabbi more concerned about whether the animal is prohibited than whether it has been killed in the kosher manner. To the non-Jewish this may not matter, yet to a Jew reading this story there will remain the nagging feeling that if the rabbi is so blase about the manner of killing the animal, his opinion on its kosher status may also be suspect.

I liked "Lure" for its use of Cenozoic mammals, a newly-found interest of mine.

Everyone is interested in dinosaurs, so I have to be different, I guess. Of course, this somewhat outre interest means I picked up some errors, such as Turtledove's having Cynodemus, Diceratherium, and Syndoceros, all early Miocene North American mammals, in late Miocene Italy (my reference is The Macmillan Illustrated Encyclopedia of Dinosaurs and Prehistoric Animals). But what the heck--we have dinosaur movies with cavemen and dinosaurs co-existing, and those are considerably further apart in time, if not in space. And "Secret Banes" is a perfect follow-up to "Lure," even though it is set in a post-holocaust future and at first appears to have nothing in common with a tale of prehistoric mammals. In fact, "The R-strain," "Lure," and "Secret Names" for a nice biological triptych.

"Les Mortes d'Arthur" is primarily a science fiction murder mystery, with some sports thrown in. I found it similar to some of Isaac Asimov's "Wendell Urth" stories, and wonder if it isn't an homage of sorts to Asimov.

The only story I have a real problem with in this collection is "Last Favor." It's evolutionary premise is interesting--and has to some extent been proposed as a model for certain groups here on Earth--but I think there are major problems in assuming its conscious self-application, particularly as described here. Then again, I'm sure if I'm wrong, some biologist will tell me.

The final story is "Nasty, Brutish, and" It's a bar story, and also a "So there!" to H. G. Wells (in a manner of speaking). Unlike the five stories preceding it, this one at least has a chance of being an alternate history, or at least a secret history.

(There is also an excerpt from Turtledove's Guns of the South, but since it's more an ad than a story, I won't review it here. I do recommend the book, though.)

Departures is a must-buy for alternate history fans, and highly recommended even for the general science fiction fan.

The Wall at the End of the World

by Jim Aikin
Ace, 1993, \$4.99

In the world of the future, in a society of telepaths, conformity is more than the norm--it's required. Periodic Cleansings make sure that no one who deviates can con-



taminate the society. Denlo Ree accepts this, until he has to come to terms with society. His struggle takes him outside the Wall, into the supposedly barren outlands which he discovers are not so barren after all. He meets Linnie, who comes from a very different society and they must learn to communicate with and understand each other.

In its picture of a restrictive, ordered society, The Wall at the End of the World has been compared to Ursula LeGion's The Dispossessed, but I found the resemblance deceptive. LeGuin is contrasting two supposedly different societies. While Aikin does this to some extent, he is more concerned with looking at how societies come about (or are built) and how people communicate with each other. The politics are important, but they are driven by communication: telepathy (or its lack) between people who share a common language and between people who don't, communication between people of the same social level and between people of different social levels (though they may disagree on who is the higher).

The Wall at the End of the World is not a perfect book, but its flaws are minor. I found myself spending what was probably too much time trying to figure out where all the modified place names came from (e.g., Missopy from Mississippi), but that's probably just me. If you're looking for a good, solid, socio-political novel, I recommend The Wall at the End of the World. (Do not read the locus review until you've read the novel--it gives too much away.)

Sideshow

by Sheri S. Tepper

Bantam Spectra, 1993 (1992c), \$5.99

Sideshow is set in the same universe as Tepper's Grass and Raising the Stones, but though it contains references to events in those books, it is not necessary for you to have read them to read Sideshow. (For example, I have read Grass, but not Raising the Stones.) Sideshow is set in a far-future Elsewhere, a planet dedicated to diversity. Each society on Elsewhere is free to chart its own path and make its own rules, so long as it does not interfere with any of its neighbors. This is similar to the arrangement in Mike Resnick's "Kirinyaga" stories, but with one major difference--no one can change to another society. If you are born in a society which has child sacrifice or which keeps women as slaves, you're stuck there. I found the various societies a bit too obvious for my tastes: Molock has child sacrifice, Haifah keeps women as slaves, Enarae was established by Guntoter and concentrates on weapons and a rigid caste system with its own version of yuppied, and so on. All this is overseen by the city of Tolerance and its Enforcers who "Attend to the Situation" when necessary.

All this is prefaced, in a manner of speaking, by a sequence on near-future Earth in which a pair of joined twins are born whose destiny is to save humanity. They eventually end up on Elsewhere, where the inhabitants--who are all that remains of humanity after the rest were taken over by the Hobbs Land Gods--are being threatened by an unknown adversary. However, I found their story during their time on Earth more interesting than that of the threat to humanity, and the digs at various groups on the near-future Earth more convincing than those directed at the societies on Elsewhere. When one sets up a fictional society for the purpose of satire, it's too easy to leave the reader feeling the deck has been stacked.

For me, Sideshow suffers from this and from the same flaw I saw in Gate to Women's Country and Grass: a tendency to preach. I can't say this is a bad book, but I can't recommend it either.

Wild Cards: Card Sharks

Edited by George RR Martin

Baen, 1993, \$5.99

For this "Wild Cards" book, Martin has changed publishers from Bantam to Baen and returned to the format of multiple stories, each written by a single identified author, rather than a single narrative with each author doing a separate character.

There is a framing story, though: someone has set fire to a church in Jokertown and Hannah Davis is assigned to investigate. This investigation brings her into contact with eight very different characters, each with his or her own story to tell, each with a piece of the puzzle (reminiscent of Citizen Kane). (Without having read the initial "Wild Cards" book, none of them will make a lot of sense, so be warned.) Though the authors all bring their own individual strengths to their sections, "The Crooked Man" by Melinda M. Snodgrass is the stand-out story, a realistically drawn picture even if a trifle obvious. The parallels to bigotry towards gays and lesbians, and towards people with AIDS, is much more heavy-handed than in previous volumes I had read and worked better, I think, with the lighter touch.

I had stopped reading the "Wild Cards" books for a while, in part because I thought they were moving too much away from science fiction and into horror, and in part because I didn't think the single-narrative formula worked as well as the short stories. (But then, I'm an inveterate short story fan!) With this new book, Martin seems to be returning to the style of the earlier books, and I recommend it to fans of those books.

The Thread That Binds the Bones

by Nina Kiriki Hoffman

AvoNova, 1993, \$4.99

I rarely read fantasy, but I have liked Nina Kiriki Hoffman's short fiction in Pulphouse, Weird Tales, and elsewhere, so I picked up this book. The cover makes it look like a drawing room comedy with ghosts cavorting about. It isn't. It's a rather dark tale of enchantment and slavery and twisted emotions and mis-used talents.

Tom Renfield has always had special powers but tried to deny them. Laura Bolte comes from a family that revels in their powers, but she has rejected them until a return to her home triggers event that will force both her and Tom to use their powers to take sides in the coming fight.

The Thread That Binds the Bones is re-

miniscent of those witchcraft movies that some studios such as Hammer Films used to make (The Devil's Bride come to mind). It's not about witchcraft or devil worship, but there is some of the same feel of strange powers and hidden secrets and dangers. The beginning also brought to mind The Twilight Zone, with its outwardly normal town that a bit at a time starts seeming strange. Hoffman has always seemed to specialize in the dark side of the human soul, and she puts this talent to good use here. Unless you have a complete aversion to fantasy, you may want to give The Thread That Binds the Bones a try.

Children of the Night

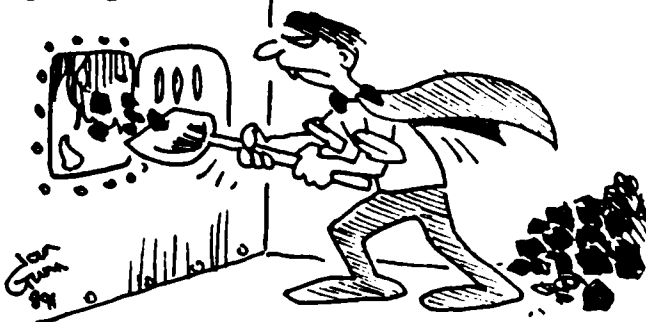
by Dan Simmons

Warner, 1993 (1992c), \$5.99

I am often struck by the ingenuity of authors--not so much for their ability to write an intricately plotted story as for the apparent ability to make their travels around the world tax-deductible as a business expense.

Dan Simmons seems to have done that with Children of the Night, his story of real vampires living in present-day Romania. It does have that "sense of place" that stories and films are supposed to have in that it feels like Romania--or at least as much as I can tell after five days there. But Simmons lays it on a little thick, describing every street his characters walk down, including each major building they pass (see pages 40 through 42 for an example of what I am talking about).

The story itself has some interesting ideas in its attempt to put a scientific basis on vampirism. But the character development is disappointing, especially for Simmons. We have the dedicated (and divorced) nurse who adopts the sickly orphan, the priest who is questioning his calling, the very helpful Romanian student, and so on.



BRAM STOKER

There are also the obligatory number of deaths and tortures--this is, after all, a horror novel.

On the whole, I recommend this novel. I would say that blaming Romania's problems on vampires seems to be letting the human race off too easily, but that may well be Simmons' point: the monsters we invent and the evils we attribute to them are no worse than ourselves and the evils we do.

Flying Dutch

by Tom Holt

Ace, 1993, \$4.50

First it was the Ring of the Niebelung in Expecting Someone Taller. Then it was Beowulf in Who's Afraid of Beowulf? And now Tom Holt is busy looking at what the Flying Dutchman would really be like.

Holt's humor relies on the matter-of-fact tone he adopts, whether he's talking about bores ("Such was Paul's skill at grabbing the attention of the viewer that if he told you your ears were on fire you'd be so bored with the topic you wouldn't bother putting them out") or world order ("So if we have third world poverty and nuclear weapons and East-West hostility and economic depressions, but all brought about by means of the democratic process, then that's all right, but if just one man is responsible, then it's tyranny. Sorry, I never did history at school, I don't understand these things").

I have only one minor quibble--the arithmetic on page 177 was done on a calculator that introduced a round-off error. But counterbalancing this is the fact that Holt mentions my old home town of Chicopee Falls, Massachusetts (though there is, of course, no University of Chicopee Falls). I enjoyed Flying Dutch better than Who's Afraid of Beowulf? and as much as Expecting Someone Taller--which I loved. To anyone looking for a very funny book, I highly recommend Flying Dutch.

The Destiny Makers

by George Turner

AvoNova. 1993, \$20.00

This story, like many others by Turner, is set in a future, pre-holocaust Australia. There's been no bang, but the world seems to be going through one, long, drawn-out whimper. Politicians spend time trying

to figure out how to stretch Earth's resources, but on the whole Turner paints an Australia of not-quite-enough for everyone --except of course the upper class. Shortages and substitutes are the order of the day. Only the veneer of equality, of "we're all in this together" spirit keeps the lid on.

But in Australia the government has even more problems--or at least the prime minister does. Having illegally rejuvenated his father (in a world bursting at the seams, extending lifetimes is not considered a good idea), he then discovers that his daughter is pregnant. (Everything, it seems, is controlled. But everything has to be to keep the world together.) Harry Ostrow, a policeman of the lower-middle class, finds himself called upon not only to protect these high-level politicians, but to extricate them--and perhaps the world--from the mess they've gotten into.

The background of The Destiny Makers is well thought-out and developed, but the story itself is somewhat weak, and the resolution for some of the plot threads contrived and rushed. The main idea of the end might have made a good novel in itself, but here it's wasted as almost a throwaway. It could be that Turner will take this idea and expand it in a future novel (as he expanded "In the Nursery" to Brain Child). But as it is, I can recommend The Destiny Makers only for its description of a seedy, run-down future facing the abyss.

The Broken Land

by Ian McDonald

Bantam Spectra, 1992, \$10.00

The Broken Land is a well-written book, but the parallels between the land of the book and modern Ireland are so obvious that I found myself groaning more often than being enlightened. The Confessors/Proclaimers parallel to the Catholic/Protestants was bad enough, but when the Confessors gain independence for the land except for the "nine northern prefectures," I came very close to hurling the book at the wall. Frequently I felt that the parallels were closer to puns in some literary sense than to a way to look at an old situation from fresh eyes. This might work in a humorous novel, but The Broken Land is not humorous. It is an accurate story of what happens in a land torn apart by religious (or ethnic or racial) strife. This subject if certain-

ly topical (alas), but the precise parallels to Ireland make the book lose the universal quality that it could have had.

It is not surprising that McDonald writes about Ireland, and writes well, as his earlier King of Morning, Queen of Day proves, but he can also write very well in a multi-ethnic, non-specific milieu (see his Speaking in Tongues collection and his Desolation Road), and this makes this book particularly disappointing. For someone who knew nothing of Ireland, this would be an excellent book, but as it stands, its total obviousness and specificity makes this the first Ian McDonald of the four I've read that I can't recommend.

Harm's Way

by Colin Greenland
AvoNova, 1993, \$4.99

As Winter's Daughter by Charles Whitmore was science fiction in the style of a Norse



saga, so is Harm's Way written in the style of a Victorian novel (though I would call it science fantasy rather than science fiction). We have the poor, semi-orphaned girl who leaves home, has adventures, meets all sorts of people, and eventually discovers her true identity. Harm's Way is set on what is apparently an alternate Victorian-era Earth, an alternate in which at some point between Defoe and Victoria, space flight was developed (using what appear to be typical large sailing ships of that era in our time of their appointments), and all sorts of alien races inhabiting the solar system were discovered. (I place the "change-point" after Defoe because in a world of space flight, the sense of isolated parts of the Earth that Defoe depended on in Robinson Crusoe would no longer have been there.)

How any of this happened is never discussed, and with the exception of space flight and weaponry, the society is technologically at the Victorian level. The result is extremely disorienting--we never know what to expect from the society because it is so inconsistent. Harm's Way is an interesting stylistic experiment, but not one I can actually recommend.

Einstein's Dreams

by Alan Lightman
Pantheon, 1993, \$17.00

Yes, it is a novella (at about 36,000 words; remember this novella at Hugo time), but there are more ideas here than in most novels three times as long. That's what Einstein's Dreams is, in fact about: ideas. Presented as a series of dreams dreamt by Einstein as he is formulating his theory of

relativity, each chapter is a short synopsis of one view of time or one way time might be different. In one, cause may follow effect as easily as precede it; in another, time flows at different rates in different villages; yet in another, people live forever. With only about six hundred words each, Lightman conveys the feeling of what it would be like to live in such a universe. Although he is a scientist by profession, he does not focus so much on the physical effects of the various possibilities as on their effect on the emotional and psychological state of the people who inhabit those strange (and some not so strange) universes. Some are totally impossible, but others may in some sense be our own world.

For those interested in science and for those interested in philosophy, this book has a lot to chew on. I highly recommend it.

Book Reviews by Lynn McMillen

All reviews copyright (c) 1993 by Lynn McMillen

Witch of the North

by Courtway Jones
Pocket Books, 1992, \$21.00

Witch of the North is the story of the woman known in legend as Moragn Le Fay--the half sister of King Arthur. It is not set in the Middle Ages, but shortly after the withdrawal of Rome from Britain, at a time when Christianity is vying with Druidism and the worship of the Earth-Mother, among the wild tribes of the Pict, Gael, Briton and Celt.

The characters in the book will be familiar to anyone who is conversant with Arthurian legend, especially Malory. Uther Pendragon is High King of Britain, and liege-lord of Gorlais, Duke of Cornwall. Gorlais is married to the beautiful Igraine the Gold. Their daughter is Morgan, being trained by Gorlais as a proper shield-maiden.

Trouble begins when Gorlais and Igraine are invited by Uther to attend the fertility-festival of Beltane. During the festivities, Igraine and Uther go off together to the shame and fury of Gorlais. When Uther claims Igraine, Gorlais is furious, and attempts to retake her by force. Instead, Gorlais is killed.

When Morgan hears of Uther's treachery and Igraine's defection, she is furious, vowing revenge. For the first time she confronts the black well of anger in her mind which fuels the fury of her pronouncements against her enemies. Because she no longer has a home, she is sent to the Lady of the Lake to be taught the arts of a follower of the Mother. It is here she is sought by Urien of the Picts as wife to his four children, who soon come to love her above even their father.

When her union with Urien ends, Morgan and several of their sons discover and begin rebuilding an old Roman fort. Soon they are joined by young families seeking the freedom of their own land and homes. Here they will make their stand against raiders, armies and petty princelings, and carve out a life of their own.

Author Courtway Jones is a cultural anthropologist and ethnohistorian. He has used his background in cultural research to create a realistic picture of daily life in tribal England. The Morgan Le Fay of this story is a real and lively character, far more comprehensive and sympathetic than the witchy bitch of traditional Arthurian legend. Excellent.

Vanishing Point

by Michaela Roessner
Tor, 1993, \$21.95

One night, ninety percent of the population of Earth disappeared--no sound, no evidence of disaster or struggle--just disappeared. Now, thirty years later, the survivors have reached a carefully established equilibrium.

The Homers believe their loved ones will return someday, and maintain their homes in anticipation. Religious groups have sprung up in response to the disappearance. Most are harmless. The Heaven Bounders, however, believe the Vanishing was the end of the world. They believe that those who are still on Earth are there because of a failure of belief or goodness, and that their attempts to continue with life are keeping them from ascending to heaven. They will do anything to hasten the end of the world--including murder and arson.

The people who live in The House, a huge, constantly under construction mansion, have developed their own way of coping with the Vanishing. They have created their own families, their own community within the walls of the crazy-quilt house. Though no one knows why, the first generation of children born after the Vanishing are different. The most obvious difference is their iridescent hair and their ability to see an "aurora" which the pre-nishment folk cannot detect. And the second generation of the children are different too, though no one is sure just how.

While most survivors are just trying to get on with life, the Hackers are looking for an answer to the Vanishing. Just as it appears some facts are starting to fall together, a vicious attack by the Heaven Bounders on the House sets up a chain of events that provides answers to questions the Hackers never thought to ask.

Vanishing Point is one of the most creative, imaginative, and powerful novels of the year. Roessner begins with an incredible plot idea, and makes it totally believable by treating it as a fait accompli. By presenting us a world already adapted to the horrendous occurrence, she solves the issue of disbelief before it ever has time to arise. From this premise, the remainder of the story unfolds in a logical, necessary progression to a startling, brilliant conclusion.

Manhattan Transfer

by John E. Stille
Tor, 1993, \$21.95

Who says good, solid, imaginative science fiction is getting hard to find these days? Here is a book that has it all--visionary science, a terrific plot that just keeps moving, with believable characters, and enough suspense to require a complete nail-job by the time you're done reading.

The city of Manhattan wakes up one morning to find itself being excised by lasers, surrounded by a clear dome, and airlifted right off the planet. A short time later, it is deposited on the face of what appears to be a small planetoid, alongside dozens of other, encapsulated, alien-appearing cities.

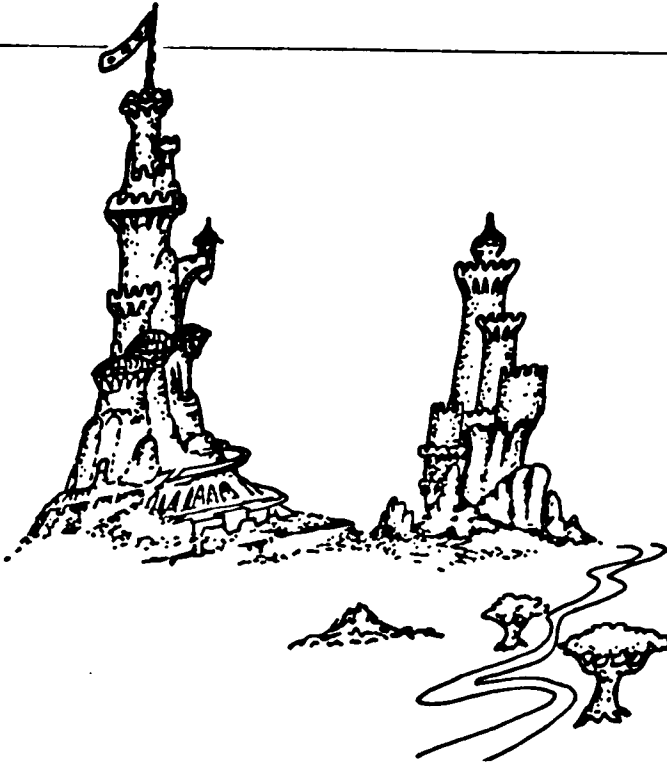
Refusing to accept the fate of pheasant under glass, the humans begin searching for a way out, and discover the "planetoid" is actually a spaceship. Before they can determine much about the ship or its makers, they are captured by them. The capture turns out to be fortuitous as they are finally able to establish two-way communication, and learn that their captors are in fact their saviors.

The "Archies" as the humans refer to the spider-like aliens, are a race which rescues cities on planets being destroyed by a planet-reshaper ship, and places them on environmentally similar planets when they can. Bureaucrats rather than warriors, the Archies have no concept of fighting or organizing a resistance. But they have made it very clear that the planet-destroying ship is just days or hours from Earth.

Now the small group of explorers must try to convince the Archies not only to transport them back to Earth, but to assist in the effort to detour or destroy the planet-shaper. And on the trip they must find a way to destroy a seemingly invincible monster with the resources of the essentially unarmed rescue ship.

With so few resources, ingenuity and creativity become the human's most powerful weapons to stay the destruction of planet Earth.

Terrific story! Creative, fast-paced, tightly plotted. A great read!



Mistress of the Empire

by Raymond E. Feist and Janny Wurts
Bantam, 1991, \$5.99

"Forbidden!" The cry of the black-robed Great Ones rang in Mara's ears. Jiro of the Anasati was responsible for the death of her son and her father-in-law, but Mara of the Acoma was forbidden to seek revenge in traditional Tsuranni custom. Once before, the Great Ones had forbidden a public revenge, preventing Tasio of the Minwanabe from prosecuting his campaign against Mara, and ending in the deaths of Tasio, his family and clan.

Now Mara is under the interdiction of the Greath Ones, the Assembly of Magicians, but for no reason she can see. And when Mara of the Acoma cannot see, she looks further.

For centuries the Great Ones, the assembly of Magicians, have been outside the law in Tsurannuani, their smallest pronouncement law. Because of their terrible powers, no one had ever questioned that right. Now Mara is beginning to seek reasons, even at the risk of her life and those of all she holds dear. And what she is finding is making Mara see red.

Now Mara must risk everything, for with the Assembly of Magicians against her, not even her status as Servant of the Empire will protect her. Knowing there is no help among the Tsurani, Mara looks further afield. A conversation with the alien Cho-ja queen whose hive is on her land offers Mara

a clue, but she alone must journey far from Tsurannuani and seek the truth behind the power and privilege of the Assembly of Magicians.

Mistress of the Empire is the third book in this companion series to the Riftwar saga by Raymond E. Feist. The first two, Daughter of the Empire and Servant of the Empire are superb, and Mistress of the Empire continues the tradition. Careful plotting, a well-developed, consistent world, fascinating three-dimensional characters, and a beautifully conceived and executed storyline make this as good a story as you will read this year. Highly recommended.

The Ultimate Dinosaur

Edited by Byron Preiss & Robert Silverberg
Bantam, 1977, \$35.00

From out of the unimaginably distant past, millions upon millions of years ago, stomping, biting, slashing come the terrible lizards. Tyrannosaurus Rex, Brachiosaurus, Deinonychus (with his terrible claw) and mighty Triceratops live again in fact and fiction in The Ultimate Dinosaur.

Within these pages some of the most knowledgeable experts in paleontology have written fascinating essays on what they know best. Sankar Chatterjee takes us back around 250 million years ago to "The Dawn of the Age of Dinosaurs." Catherine Forster gives us lively insights into "The First Dinosaurs" and Teresa Maryanska envisions a great dinosaur diaspora in "The Dinosaur Radiations".

In "The Age of Giants", Anthony Fiorello opens whole new ranges of knowledge about the "big guys" and of course no book about dinosaurs would be complete without at least mentioning "Dinosaur Predators" including the ever-popular T. Rex.

But it gets even better with L. Sprague de Camp's "Crocomander Quest", a story along the lines of his best-loved "A Gun for Dinosaur". Ever dreamed of going back in time with a real heavy slug-thrower, and bagging a dino? Come on along and see how it's done. Dave Wolverton offers one of the most imaginative and apocalyptic short stories I've read in a long time in "Siren Song at Midnight". Connie Willis' "In the Late Cretaceous" is a delightful bit of whimsy. If you've ever sat and passed notes in class while the prof droned on, you'll get several large chuckles out of this one.



If you have even the teeniest bit of dinosaur-mania in you anywhere, you'll be fascinated by The Ultimate Dinosaur. The book is a large, almost coffee-table style, 9 by 11 format, beautifully designed dust-jacket, a lot of imaginative, artistic full-color illustrations inside. The price is rather stiff at \$35.00, but if you are a true dino-mainac, this is a book you will want to own.

The Turing Option

by Harry Harrison & Marvin Minsky
Warner Books, 1993, \$21.95

On the day he first reveals the results of his R&D in artificial intelligence, Brian Delaney is shot to death, and all his research stolen. Though life support keeps his body breathing, the damage to Brian's brain has severed the connections between his knowledge and memory functions and his awareness. In essence, Brian is a mindless vegetable.

Brian's only chance is Dr. Erin Snaresbrook, a pioneer in neurosurgery who wants to attempt the use of microminiature computers and chips to help restore the severed connections and give Brian back access to his own mind.

As Brian slowly recovers, two things become more and more apparent to him. He must discover who is behind the shooting if he is ever to be safe, and that the AI he developed is really a scientific dead-end.

As Brian recovers with the help of the cybernetic implants, a series of surprising occurrences lead Brian to the realization of the potential of his interfaces. Brian's experiences also give him the final insight he needs to avoid the developmental dead-end of his first research.

This book has some of the purest science and some of the meanest plot twists you are ever likely to read. I wouldn't be surprised if The Turing Option is nominated for a Hugo or a Nebula. Truly professional writing, and some really solid science, make this book a really great read.

Harry Harrison is the author of the very well-known Stainless Steel Rat stories, as well as the story Make Room, Make Room, which became the apocalyptic movie Soylent Green. Marvin Minsky is former director of MIT's Artificial Intelligence Lab and is considered to be the foremost authority on AI in the country. With a one-two punch like that, The Turing Option is a knockout!

Mirabile

by Janet Kagan
Tor, 1992, \$3.99

Mirabile is an Earth-type planet with its own flora and fauna, which has been settled by humans from a generation ship. Because of limited storage space, and some computer and storage glitches, only a limited supply of clones, eggs and other tissue stock for Earth-type animals could be stored. To help solve the problem, the Earth-scientists chained the genetic material in each tissue to do double and triple duty, so that a cow might give birth to a deer, or a sunflower produce a daisy, which would then breed true.

Unfortunately for the people of Mirabile, the genetically layered material did not always remain segregated. Changes in soil, climate, fertilizers, food, etc. trigger production of chimaeras, genetic monsters caused by DNA recombinations. The Dragons Teeth, as the colonists call them, have included Kangaroo Rex, Frankenswine, and the Loch Moose Monster.

It is Anny Jason Masmajeán and other jasons like her who constantly sample the plant and animal life of Mirabile to try and predict and head off if possible the more dangerous Dragons Teeth.

Mirabile is actually a collection of six stories, each dealing with one aspect of the unique genetic destiny of the people and wildlife of the strange planet Mirabile.

A rare combination of humor, speculation and solid science. If you've never read Janet Kagan before, you're in for a treat. Of about 50 Star Trek novels I have read, Kagan's Uhura's Song remains far and away

my favorite. Now Kagan has written a non-Star Trek book that is every bit as good. Go ahead. Be good to yourself. It's a lot of fun.

Warstrider

by William H. Keith, Jr.
AvoNova Books, 1993, \$4.99

In the year 2532, mankind occupies over 70 planets of neighboring star systems. Though actually controlling only one small country on Terra, Japan is the moving force behind man's expansion to the stars. It is Japan's financial and technological might which powers the Terran hegemony, and people everywhere defer to the Japanese.

When young Dev Cameron's father is cashiered from the Imperial Navy in a show trial, Dev decides to get as far away from Earth and Japan's influence as he possibly can.

Because of his father's rank, Dev has a full three-socket interface, rather than just the palm interface common to most Earth residents. With that potential, Dev has trained as a pilot, learning to link with his ship to guide it through the multi-dimensional plenum of the godsea.

Dev's dream to go to the outer worlds means joining one of the services, so Dev palms for the navy, wanting to pilot the big ships. But, as so often in the military, what the large print giveth, the fine print taketh away. Dev's mental stability scores show him too aggressive to pass the navy's pilot batteries, and Dev becomes a striderjack.

For Dev, jacking one of the huge war striders is a step down, but Dev doesn't know what down is. In his first battle Dev freezes up, and even the support of his company commander is not enough to prevent him from winding up as a "crunchie", a groundpounder--the ultimate degradation.

Then all hell breaks loose on Loki, and Dev's old unit turns up in support of the same operation he is on. When his old commander's Strider is hit and downed, Dev doesn't stop to think. Climbing up the huge Warlord's frame, he jacks in and turns the mighty warstrider's weapons against the enemy that is destroying everything in sight. Slowly, the tide of the battle turns. When it is over, Dev is a hero--with a new respect for both groundpounders and the mighty warstriders, and some new ideas for using both.

Warstrider is the first in a new series of books by prolific author William H. Keith, Jr. Alone, and in collaboration with his brother Andrew, Keith has written near-



ly 30 books in the last eight years, including the Freedoms Rangers, Carrier, and Cybernarc series. The second book in the Warstrider series, Rebellion, will be coming out in June.

Brain Damage

by Herbert Burkholz
Atheneum Books, 1993, \$20.00

Several years ago I reviewed an excellent SF thriller titled The Sensitives by Burkholz. Brain Damage is the nail-biting sequel to The Sensitives, a superbly well-sequenced combination of CIA-type super-spook action-adventure and straightforward science fiction.

The sensitives are telepaths, men and women discovered as half-crazed youngsters hearing voices they cannot block out or escape. Raised at the Center for the Study of Childhood Diseases, they are now de-facto members of the intelligence community. Trained to control the ability to "read minds", they put their rare talents at the disposal of whatever government agency needs them most.

This time, however, it is a branch of their own agency that needs them. The agency's director, dying of a brain tumor, has sent out four agents on missions of death and destruction on an apparently random basis. Worse, "Gibraltar Rules" apply. The agents will not be in contact with the agency, and cannot be recalled from their tasks. If the role of government agents in these crimes should become public knowledge, the existence of the agency itself would be in jeopardy.

Now it is the job of the sensitive to try and locate these aimed cannons before they can let loose with shots that may well ricochet through the agency itself. And with only a few days until the target date set in the mission orders, time is very short indeed.

This is a bang-up job of writing, a great combination of science fiction and spy thriller. Don't start reading it before bedtime unless you can sleep late in the morning. You won't be able to put it down.

**The Fifth Foreign Legion:
Cohort of the Damned**

by Andrew Keith
ROC Books, 1993, \$4.50

Cohort of the Damned is the third book in the Fifth Foreign Legion series by Keith Andrew. This third novel, the first exclusively under his own name, also marks a new maturity in his writing style.

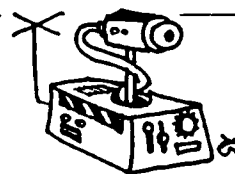
The first two volumes, March or Die and Honor and Fidelity, were good reads, if rather "formula". Andrew Keith is a meticulous plotter, weaving action and drama into a fast-paced, intricately detailed web of never-ending suspense. He is also a very thoroughly grounded student of military history and technology, with a real talent for extrapolating from current to future history, technology and tactics.

But, as every fiction writer knows, plot takes second place to character. While the people in Keith's first two books were necessary to the plot, in Keith's third, the plot has become subordinate to the protagonist. In Cohort, Andrew Keith has created a strong, three dimensional character, and a plot driven by the needs and desires of that character.

Wolfgang Hauser is a young aristocrat on the planet Laut Besat, a military officer and a member of the planetary elite. When his home world is overrun by the Ubren-fahrs, Hauser finds himself in a desperate rear-guard holding action in his very first battle. Outnumbered and overwhelmed, Hauser withdraws, allowing the enemy to cut off the escape of other Besarans.

Though he survives the battle, the young aristocrat finds himself branded a coward among his peers in a culture in which courage is everything. A challenge leads to a duel, and angry words to death.

Now Wolfgang Alaric Hauser von Semenan-jung Burat finds himself with a need to be somewhere else fast, and a place to test his courage. When you have no place else to go--the place to go is the Legion. Legio Patria Nostra. The Legion is our Father-land. Now Wolfgang Hauser must try and find for himself a new way of life, in a new land, with a new name.



The Ship Who Searched

by Anne McCaffrey and Mercedes Lackey
Baen, 1993, \$5.99

Brainships are faster-than-light ships piloted by human "shell-persons", crippled or disease-damaged people whose useless bodies are surgically emplaced in impregnable shells and neurologically connected to their ships. Brainships are partnered by "brawns", highly trained men and women who act as the mobile half of a "brain-brawn" team working for Central Worlds.

McCaffrey first introduced her readers to Brainships in The Ship Who Sang, a bright, tender, beautifully written story about a brainship named Helva. A second book, Partnership, further explored the brain-brawn relationship, and the possibilities of ships controlled by human brains instead of artificial intelligences (AIs).

Now, in The Ship Who Searched, McCaffrey and Mercedes Lackey (The Last Herald Mage, Arrows of the Queen) have combined their formidable talents to carry the brainship concept one step further, to its ultimate destiny.

Hypatia Cade was the only daughter of xeno-archeologists who took her with them as they travelled from world to world. A bright, cheerful child, Hypatia was used to spending long periods of time alone. So when she first began to feel ringling, then numbness in her feet, she automatically consulted the camp's medical computer.

The Medi-comp could find nothing wrong with Tia, and rather than worry her parents, Tia said nothing. By the time it was impossible to hide her increasing loss of sensation and balance, Tia was already neurologically impaired. Before a medical team could evacuate her to the nearest med-ship, Tia was numb and paralyzed from the neck down. Her only hope was the shell-program from which brainships are selected.

By the end of her brainship training, Tia had a purpose to hold to. Someday, Tia hoped, she would be part of the team which found the homeworld of the aliens whose artifacts infected her with the plague, and make sure that no other children ever had to suffer her fate. So, with a brawn who shared her interest, Hypatia joined Central World service as The Ship Who Searched.

Shadow Hunter

by Will Baker

Pocket Books, 1993, \$21.00

Shadow Hunter is one of those books that looks at a general trend, in this case, the advancement of technology and the gradual crowding out of wild areas, and carries it to its most radical conclusions.

At the time this book is set, there are no more true wild areas in the United States. There are a few carefully managed "preserves" where some wildlife is managed to allow "hunting" by a favored few. Even what hunting is allowed is done in a technologically advanced vehicle with electronic tracking and fire-control.

As few undeveloped areas as remain, there is a large and vocal group of people clamoring to have them wiped out and developed too. To increase the pressure for the destruction of the wild areas, a population of sub-human, or part-human creatures referred to as Ginks, also roam the wild areas, and are believed to have caused both deaths and destruction in the preserves and adjoining areas.

The whole preserve-anti-preserve issue comes to a head when the son of a pampered bureaucrat disappears in one of the preserves, and cannot be found. The Progressive party which has favored the end of the preserves, and the all-out hunting down and destruction of the Ginks, is using the incident as a cause celebre to advance their position. Leading the Progressive, and stirring the pot, is the youngster's father and an inflammatory journalist determined to use the incident to her advantage.

When it is discovered that the missing youngster is not dead, but taken by the Ginks, the resulting fireworks reverberate throughout the whole social and political structure of the country.

The original thesis is powerful, its comment on our culture compelling. My only quibble is that at times the author seems to get bogged down in the Ginks' culture to the detriment of moving the story along. Still, this is a well-written book with a powerful plot and something worthwhile to say. Give it a try.

Arrows of the Queen

by Mercedes Lackey

DAW, 1988, \$4.99

Arrows of the Queen is set in the same universe as The Last Herald Mage of Valdemar, long after the death of Vanyel.

Talia is a border-child, born in a hard land where children's only value is their future productivity, and where a girl's only choices are marriage or a severe religious order.

Talia can read, almost unheard of among females, and in books finds her only escape from the drudgery of life on the border. More than anything, Talia wants to be a Herald, though the borders are so far from the center of Valdemar that Heralds are rarely seen.

Though Talia hates border life, being able to read has kept her from total rebellion--until her 13th birthday. Then Talia is called in to the family's presence and told she must choose between religious service and marriage. Both choices are impossible. Horrified, Talia runs away and hides, realizing only later that she has cut herself off completely from any support whatever. Now she is well and truly alone.

While she is shivering with reaction, Talia hears hoofbeats, and, fearing discovery, hides. But the hoofbeats are not accompanied by accusatory voices, and Talia comes out of hiding to find a saddled, bridled, lone white horse. It is a Companion--one of the intelligent, horselike beings who pair with the Heralds of Valdemar--alone and riderless. With nothing to lose and nowhere to go, Talia decides to travel to the capital city to return the Companion to the Heralds. Maybe they will allow her to stay, cooking or cleaning or serving in some capacity.

Totally ignorant of the meaning of the appearance of a riderless companion, Talia journeys with Roland to the capital city, and a future she can barely dream of.

Mercedes Lackey is a powerful writer who has already written an extremely popular fantasy series in The Last Herald Mage of Valdemar. Now, in Arrows of the Queen, Lackey continues this brilliant and exciting saga.

The Oathbound(Book 1, Vows and Honor)

by Mercedes Lackey

Daw, 1992, \$4.99

They were sisters, oathbound by choice and the goddess' blessing--Tarma, the Shin'a'in kalenedral (sword-sworn) warrior

and Kethry, the White Winds magician. Together they were sworn to rebuild the Tale'sedrin, the Children of the Hawk. But first they must prove their bond to the other clans, for kalenedral are celebrate by their goddess' choice, and Tarma was the only living member of her clan. Only through her blood-sister can the Children of the Hawk live again.

Before they can begin raising a clan standard, begetting and adopting children, Tarma and Kethry must be able to support their clan. They must also gain enough status to attract promising youngsters to the banner of Tale'sedrin.

So Tarma and Kethry leave to sell their skills for money and fame. Complicating the situation is Kethry's sword Need, a spirit-sword bonded to her, whose runes proclaim "Woman's Need calls me as Woman's Need made me. Her Need will I answer as my maker bade me." For any woman in peril or danger calls forcefully to Need, and Kethry is dragged willy-nilly to respond.

Yet the sword Need is a blade worth her price, for to a mage she gives unbeatable sword skills, and to a fighter complete protection from magic. Besides this, Need will heal any woman of anything less than a death blow. Kethry and Tarma will need of Need's aid as they face brigands and demons in their search for money and status.

In the last half-dozen years, Mercedes Lackey has written around a dozen superb fantasy novels set in the same universe. The kingdom of Valdemar, and the famed Heralds of Valdemar, have made up the majority of the books, but Oathbound and its sequel, Oathbreaker, are set in lands known to Valdemar, but separate from them. The only problem with a Mercedes Lackey book is that it's over too soon. The reader is always left wanting more. And that's the mark of a great writer!

Last Refuge

by Elizabeth Ann Scarborough
Bantam/Spectra, 1993, \$5.99

Last year, in her apocalyptic novel Nothing Sacred, Elizabeth Scarborough told the story of Viveka Canacek, an Army technician captured by the Chinese during a border-war. She is imprisoned in a valley in the Himalayan mountains and put to work excavating the remains of what appears to be an ancient temple. As the work progresses, she dreams of a beautiful temple in a

protected valley where people lived their lives in peace and contemplation.

Then nuclear holocaust strikes, and Viveka realizes that no one in the valley is being affected, though several strikes were so close that everyone should be dead or dying of radiation sickness. Suddenly all the pieces come together--the other "prisoners" who can't recall how old they are, her "captors" who don't seem sure why they are trying to indoctrinate her, the fact that no one seems to become ill or die in this valley in Tibet.

Fast forward two generations, and the survivors of Armageddon are repopulating the valley of Shambala. A few are even beginning to wonder if there is still a liveable world or any survivors outside of Shambala. But there is no real impetus to leave the sacred valley until a series of afflicted new-borns make it clear that someone must leave to seek a solution.

The obvious choice to leave is Chime, the re-incarnation of the Terton, whose job it historically was to travel into the world and bring to Shambala those who belonged there. Now Chime must journey into a ravaged world full of death and disease, seeking the answer to the terrible affliction of a generation of new born babies.

Nothing Sacred, the first book in this set, was by any standard, an exceptionally well-crafted book, and I didn't twig to where Viveka had been brought until no one was harmed by the holocaust. In the second book, Scarborough has gone further afield into mysticism, dealing with the subject of re-incarnation, ghosts, nirvana, ensoulment and a host of other mysticisms. For my money, she got a little carried away--some of her flights of fantasy get rather stratospheric. Still, not at all an ordinary kind of book, with plenty of action and lots of strange situations. If you're not afraid of ghosts, give this one a try.

Empire Builders

by Ben Bova
Tor, 1993, \$21.95

Dan Randolph has always been a maverick for whom rules are meant to be broken. He is also a billionaire, and one of the most powerful men on Earth. But Dan Randolph has stepped on a lot of toes, and a lot of powerful people are just waiting for him to slip.

One of them is Vasily Malik, now a pow-

erful member of the GEC, the Global Economic Council. Another is Malik's wife, Kate. The GEC is in charge of mining and distribution of global and lunar resources, and is becoming more powerful daily.

Invoking a little known clause in the GEC regulations, Malik and the GEC convict Randolph of environmental piracy and begin stripping him of everything, leaving him bankrupt. They even attempt to trap him on a secluded island while they are taking over. But Dan Randolph is no one's fool.

Very shortly he is off the island and on a shuttle on his way to the moon to try to protect his investments. But Dan has a lot of enemies, and he is almost immediately captured again. Now he is trapped without a way to escape. On the moon, leaving isn't simply a matter of sneaking away. Little things like p-suits and oxygen are awfully hard to come by for a fugitive--not impossible though.

Soon Randolph finds himself part of an underground he hadn't even known existed, though they live off "inventory depletion" from his own company. A man with a plan always has an edge, and Randolph is always thinking.

With the help of some of his fellow-fugitives, Randolph is able to find his way back to Earth and start talking to some of the powerful movers and shakers among the industrialists on Earth. What he discovers makes him realize that his own troubles are minor--and may be extremely short-lived.

If Dan Randolph can't find a way to convince the GEC and the people of Earth to completely stop using fossil fuels in less than ten years, global environmental disaster is certain.

Ben Bova is one of the few remaining "golden age of SF" writers left, and one of a handful of writers whose name on a book cover is a guarantee of good reading inside. With this fast-paced, action-packed, plot upon plot nail-biter, Bova has produced a book you're going to have a lot of trouble putting down. Pure Bova. Pure fun.

Harvest of Stars

by Poul Anderson
Tor, 1993, \$22.95

Fireball, Earth's largest space corporation, with a near monopoly on space-going passenger and cargo transport, is the dream of one man, Anson Guthrie. In a very real way, Anson Guthrie is Fireball. Though dead

for many years, his downloaded personality continues to guide Fireball, and it is to him and many of Fireball's employees and consorts are personally loyal.

Kyra Davis is one of those personally loyal to Guthrie who has sworn troth to Fireball. When the repressive Avantist movement in North America threatens to take over and destroy Fireball, Kyra finds herself on a mission to transport Guthrie's download to Fireball headquarters. There Guthrie finds out who his real opponent is --and finds himself trapped.

But Kyra has pledged troth, and together she and other consorts of Fireball will find a way to get Anson Guthrie back in charge again.

As soon as I read Guthrie's first name, I wondered--Anderson has been in the writing business as long as Heinlein and knew him well. My curiosity didn't last long--that the name Anson is a tribute to Heinlein is clear from clues throughout the book. I won't tell you what kind, but Heinlein fans will pick 'em out, and non-Heinlein fans (are there such?) won't even notice.

And what can I say about Anderson that has not already been said by someone else? Grandmaster, survivor of the Golden Age, author extraordinaire--creator of Nicholas Van Rijn, Manse Everard and hundreds of other wonderful characters. Best of all, Anderson is at top form in Harvest. This one is a "gotta read". It's a classic.

The Jaguar Princess

by Clare Bell
Tor, 1993, \$22.95

Young Mixcatl is a slave-scribe for the Aztec priest-scholars in the city of Tenochtitlan. Stolen as a young child, she knows nothing of her heritage.

Wise Coyote is the god-king of Tenochtitlan, and a very troubled man. The cult of Hummingbird on the Left as begun suddenly to grow in power, with great support from a rival king. It has changed too, as it has grown, become and endlessly blood-hungry ritual in which thousands of human lives are taken daily.

Desperately, Wise Coyote searches for any way to stem the rising tide of blood-worship. A scholar himself, Wise Coyote turns to his libraries and other scholars to find another, perhaps older worship to turn his people back to sanity. The few re-

ferences to an older religion that he finds refer again and again to a jaguar-god, but little other information is available.

At the academy, Mixcatl is becoming a skilled scribe, happy and content with her life, until the day she is attacked by fellow-students. As she is being held down, she begins to experience strange sensations --her vision dims, her already exceptional sense of smell becomes even more powerful, and her skin begins to burn and tingle all over. When she wakes up, her attackers are gone, and she is lying in her room at the academy, with large, raw, pink, still-healing swaths of skin on her arms and legs. She is being attended by an old slave, who is looking at her in a very thoughtful way.

Matters come to a head for both Mixcatl and Wise Coyote when Wise Coyote's rival, more powerful than he, forces the construction of a temple to Hummingbird on the left right in Tenochtitlan, and the rivers of blood begin to flow in their own city.

The Jaguar Princess was the first book by Clare Bell I have read, but I guarantee it will not be the last. Bell is one of the finest new writers I have read in ages, and promises to be around for a long time. The writing is superb, the research incredibly detailed. Best of all is a plot that brings fresh new life to an SF standby, the changeling.

I cannot praise this book too highly, and if I were one of the selection committee, I'd definitely put this one on the list for the Hugo and Nebula Awards.

In the Cube

by Dvid Alexander Smith
Tor, 1993, \$18.95

The late 21st Century--Boston has seceded from the US, and grown and developed into a huge cube six kilometers to a side. It is also Earth's only spaceport, and a haven for aliens, as well as a seaport.

Beverly O'Meara is a detective, living in the lower levels of Boston, though above the tenth level--above sea-level--in the slowly sinking city, protected from the sea only by the alien-designed prock walls holding back the water. Her companion is an alien phner called Akktri. Like all phner, Akktri is able to "esfn" the present and use it to create the past. All phner have a collective conscious upon which they can draw, and memories of the dead are more "real" to them than all the realities of

the living.

Beverly is a survivor of the flooding of the Cube in which her father died, and bears a bitter hatred of the woman whose orders opened the floodgates, drowning the lower levels during the secession war. So when rebellious teenager Diana Sherwood disappears, and Beverly is contacted by her mother Iris Sherwood, a Boston Commissioner and the woman who ordered the flood, Beverly swears she will never take the job.

But necessity makes strange bedfellows, and Beverly finds herself taking the job, which leads her into stranger places and situations than she has even seen--even in the course of an unusual life. What she learns changes her perceptions of life in very deep and personal ways.

This is a neat book. It combines a very tight murder-mystery with a futuristic setting including some very creative aliens. The human characters are well drawn, but the alien phner are really great! Pick this one up and see if you can "esfn" it, yourself.

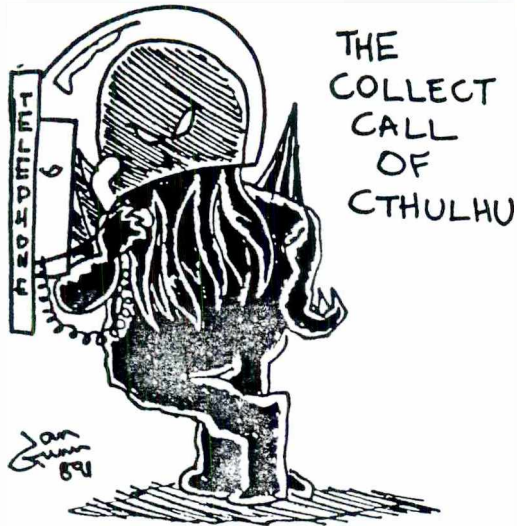
Once Around the Bloch An Unauthorized Autobiography

by Robert Bloch
Tor, 1993, \$22.95

Regular readers of this column will recognize that I don't usually deal in non-fiction reviews, but this book is just off-center enough that I'm making an exception.

If you are expecting a check-in at the Bates Motel--don't. Once Around the Bloch is a very good insider's view of the nuts and bolts of a writer's life from the old Weird Tales glory days of the pulps to Hollywood script writing, with a lot of interesting side trips along the way. Bloch takes us from his early years in Chicago and his first fateful encounter with Weird Tales to his correspondence with H.P. Lovecraft, which completely changed the course of his life. It set the stage for his masterwork Psycho and the subsequent sequels Psycho II and Psycho House. He also introduces the real life model for Norman Bates and proves that truth can be much more bizarre than fiction.

Once Around the Bloch is not just the story of one writer's life, but also the story of Hollywood in its heyday, and Bloch's adventures as a scriptwriter. Through him we meet such notables as Alfred Hitchcock, Boris Karloff, Christopher Lee,



THE COLLECT CALL OF CTHULHU

Buster Keaton and others. Illustrated with photographs captioned by Bloch himself, this part alone is worth the price of the book to genre horror fans.

To fans of Bloch himself, the writing style may come as a bit of a shock, as it is written with a wry, puckish humor that refuses to take anything too seriously, including the author himself--as the title suggests. Frankly, the footnotes alone would convince me to buy the book, and the rest is gravy. What can I say? Buy, read, enjoy. Oi!

The Hammer and the Cross

by Harry Harrison
Tor, 1993, \$23.95

What if...? What if the gods of Asgard intervened directly in human affairs? What if the Roman Church filled its cathedrals (and pockets) with gold by threatening excommunication to any and all who oppose them? What if...?

In The Hammer and the Cross, Harry Harrison takes us back to 9th century England where petty kings was over territory and all fear the onslaught of the Norsemen. The trigger of events is the murder/execution of Ragnar Lothbrok by King Ella of Northumbria at the instigation of the Archdeacon Erkenbert and Archbishop Wulfgar.

In the middle of the resulting firestorm is Shef, bastard son of a Viking raider and a captive English lady...or is he? Troubled by strange visions that seem to come from Odin himself, Shef, smith and warrior, is both carried along by and a creator of events.

England is invaded by a Viking "Grand Army", under the sins of Ragnar to avenge their father, and here is where Harrison

begins to blend historical fact with alternate reality so skillfully that it takes a certain amount of familiarity with history and weapons technology to be able to tell just where fact and fiction begin to blend and diverge. Highly recommended.

Harry Harrison is a veteran SF writer with a long list of credits, including the highly popular Stainless Steel Rat series, and more recently, The Turing Option, a novel about artificial intelligence.

Briar Rose

by Jane Yolen
Tor, 1993, \$4.99

Briar Rose is sixth in a series of "fairy tale" novels, old familiar stories rewritten in contemporary idiom, but with their timeless magic still intact. As you may know, Briar Rose is the story we call Sleeping Beauty. In its original, Sleeping Beauty is not the "happily ever after" tale made popular by Walt Disney. Instead, it is a dark, even menacing at times, European folk tale. Here it becomes the background for an even darker bit of European history--the Holocaust.

Ever since she was a tiny child, Becca Berlin's favorite fairy tale has been "Briar Rose." It is Gemma's favorite, and she told it over and over again. "Once upon a time, which is all times and no times, but not the very best of times..." But Gemma's version of Briar Rose is different from the story book version. In her story, only the princess is kissed awake--all the other people remain in a deep sleep forever.

When Gemma dies, a beautiful rosewood box is found among her possessions, carved with a briar rose on top. In it are papers with strange names Becca has never heard before, and a picture of a young woman in a baggy dress holding a tiny child. And suddenly Becca realizes she knows nothing at all of the woman who was her beloved Gemma--or of her own background and heritage.

With only a name, a newspaper clipping, a photo and the word Ksiezniczka, Becca begins a search that will take her through the walls of faerie to the very gates of Hell.

In the five years I have been reviewing, this is the most powerful, moving book I have ever read. It is a wonderful, terrible book. I read it with delight and trepidation, fear and awe, joy and terror. I wanted it to end now, and I never wanted it to

end. If I could choose one book to give to all my friends this year, it would be this one.

Empire of the Eagle

by Susan Shwartz and Andre Norton
Tor, 1993, \$22.95



© Ruth Thompson

History tells us that in 43 BC, Proconsul Crassus, a member of the first ruling Triumvirate of Rome, marched his legions to battle in a place called Carrhae. There he suffered one of the most thorough and humiliating defeats in the history of Rome. His legions were slaughtered, and their eagles, the symbol of Rome's glory and the legion's honor, were taken.

A footnote to history, in a translated document from the Han empire, mentions a portion of the Han Army, travelling the Silk Road in the Middle East, witnessing the destruction of the legion. It goes on to record that, impressed by the Romans' courage even in defeat, the commander of the Han forces claimed a cohort of defeated legion prisoners as a novel gift for his emperor.

What became of those soldiers, their eagle taken, their honor dead, their lives uprooted, their hope gone? What chanced for these men, brought into an alien culture, severed forever from all they had even known?

In Empire of the Eagle, Susan Shwartz and Andre Norton (co-authors of Imperial Lady) reopen the book. On its blank pages they continue for us the story of Quintus, a Roman tribune who wanted only to be a farmer, Lucilius, a tribune of noble family to whom honor and pride are empty words, and the ancient centurion Rufus, who will continue to march as long as there remain two men of his legion to go on.

Empire of the Eagle is a powerful, exciting novel which will be a special treat for historians, military history buffs, or anyone with an interest in things Roman or Chinese. But even if you don't have a special interest in any of these subjects, Shwartz and Norton have written such a fascinating story that you'll find yourself hard pressed to put it down. ★

shaved so he looks nearly hairless. Out of his wheelchair, he slithers his way lizard-like across the floor not unlike a serpent.

Much of the scripting is dated. Natives have names like King Lunkaboola and Bumbu. There is no Kunta Kinte in Tod Browning's Africa! These are savages who glisten as if they had been laminated. They eat their enemies and have independently invented their own version of Indian suttee. But they are easily fooled by the simplest of stage magic. But underneath everything is a story of deep emotions and Chaney's rubberlike face shows impressive subtlety of expression. In short, this film was worth resurrecting. It does show us more of the range of Chaney's acting skills than has been available previously.

The Man Who Laughs

When the 1989 film Batman was being cast, there was a strong opinion in many people's mind that Jack Nicholson was perfect for the role of the Joker. Nicholson seems to smirk very naturally like the Joker. In my opinion, Nicholson made a very bad Joker, having the wrong stature and actually the wrong facial structure. I told friends at the time that, just as historical fact, there was once an actor who really could have looked like the Joker. In fact, the comic book figure of the Joker was visually based on the looks of Conrad Veidt in the 1928 film The Man Who Laughs. Also, the visage was the inspiration for a later horror film, Mr. Sardonicus (1961). Gwynplaine of The Man Who Laughs, however, was not a villain like his later imitators but like Quasimodo a tragic, noble figure living in a deformed body. The Man Who Laughs is, in fact, an adaptation of a lesser novel in which Victor Hugo explored some of the same themes he employed in The Hunchback of Notre Dame.

Gwynplaine was the son of a Scottish nobleman who refused to vow loyalty to James II of England. The noble was given a double punishment of being executed in the Iron Maiden and of having his son have a surgical operation that twisted his (the son's) mouth into a perpetual grin. Whatever Gwynplaine would ever feel internally, to the world his face would

always be a broad grin. Gwynplaine is eventually adopted into a traveling show where he becomes a famous clown. There he falls in love with a beautiful blind woman, Dea. Dea is played by Mary Philbin, who seems to attract stigmatized lovers, though here she is spared the unmasking scene she withstood in The Phantom of the Opera. But the royal court of England is not through with the tortured soul with the smiling face.

The plotline of The Man Who Laughs is a bit muddled and confusing. The story features a dog whose intelligence puts Rin-Tin-Tin to shame. There are good reasons why this film was not the success for Universal that two similar predecessors, The Hunchback of Notre Dame (1923) and The Phantom of the Opera (1925) were. But none of the film's faults can be attributed to the terrific performance of Conrad Veidt. Given only his eyes for expression over that horrible grinning mouth, he manages to convey a tremendous range of emotion. Most people have seen Veidt at most only as Cesar the Somnambulist in The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari and as Colonel Strasser in Casablanca--neither film allowing him much range of emotion. And neither film prepares the viewer for the excellent range of Veidt's acting in The Man Who Laughs.

The centerpiece of the film is a scene in which Josiana, a rather sexy and over-sexed duchess, tries to seduce Gwynplaine with the latter wanting the love of a sighted woman, but still trying to hid his mouth from her. Veidt carries the scene masterfully with his eyes only. (Josiana, incidentally, is played by Olga Baclanova, who played the villainous Cleopatra in Tod Browning's Freaks.) This scene, and any scene in which we see Gwynplaine's whole face, requires two interpretations from the viewer. How would others interpret the scene if they did not know the smile was meaningless, and secondly, by looking at Gwynplaine's eyes, can we tell what he is feeling? And Veidt controls both interpretations at the same time--an amazing feat of acting.

The Man Who Laughs is also an artifact of the advent of sound into films. It has a complete soundtrack, mostly music, but also with sound effects, occasional voices, and a song repeated twice in the film.

The film heavily abridges the Hugo story and reaches a little too far to place a happy ending where Hugo never intended. But while this is a flawed film, it boasts some of the most impressive acting of the silent era. It certainly has sharpened my interest in Veidt. This may be a hard film to find--it took me several years--but it is a film well worth the wait.

These three films show the ability of two similar actors: Chaney the American and Veidt the German. With the coming of Naziism to Germany, Veidt emigrated, and apparently returned to Germany for a short visit in 1930 and was held prisoner by the Nazis until Gaumont British Studios were able to get him out safely. (There is a short account of this in Ephraim Katz's Film Encyclopedia.) Each made a major contribution to the pre-sound horror film. [*]

JURASSIC PARK

The Tip of the Cane

by Algernon D'Ammassa

A mosquito in amber for millions of years leads to a baby dinosaur breaking out of an egg in human captivity, which leads to two humans trapped in a car, under attack by a full-grown tyrannosaur in captivity no more. Jurassic Park is one beautiful stone. At its center you can see a rich source of dramatic material, now the gaudy tip of a rich man's cane.

The wizards of Industrial Light & Magic have outline themselves again, and redefined what is state-of-the-art in computer animation, puppetry, and robotics. These are the great illusionists of our age; they make starships fly, conjure ghosts, and bring to life dinosaurs large enough to fill the sky, while we watch amazed. But magic is just magic. Top-quality illusions may be worth the price of admission, but they don't make the movie. So let's put the magic aside for a while, and look at what else we've got there.

The science we find at work is, naturally, the stuff of fantasy, but it is a fair conceit. Recreating a living dinosaur from DNA is theoretically plausible. Biotechnology happens to be busy with more temporal concerns like food, medicines, and bioremediation (developing genetically altered micro-organisms which eat crude oil and toxic solids, leaving only a biodegradable trace), but the idea of actually repleving extinct species



has great popular appeal at a time when the world is about to lose elephants forever, with orangutans and whales not far behind.

In explaining how they control breeding, by making sure all the dinosaurs are female, Jurassic Park's crack team of scientists spout some fishy chrosomology. And I refuse to believe that no one in this battery of experts recalled that frogs (which they use to complete the dinosaurs' DNA structure) can spontaneously

Three Silent Horrors

by Mark R. Leeper

Copyright (c) 1993 by Mark R. Leeper

I am from the generation of horror film fans that grew up with Forrest J. Ackerman's Famous Monsters of Filmland. It was a magazine of dubious literary merits created by a man of questionable writing talent or cinematic taste, but he did grow up with fantasy films of the silent era and he did give his readers a perspective that the horror film had a long and proud history stretching back into the silent era. These days if you read the electronic bulletin boards you often find someone trying to identify a "really old" horror film that turns out to be eight years old. Readers of Famous Monsters knew that eight years did not make a film "really old".

Forry's magazines illustrations made me familiar with cinematic images from the silent days of film and made me anxious to see the whole film. For a handful of films it turned out not to be a really great effort. Silent films like The Phantom of the Opera or Metropolis were not very difficult to locate, even in the days before video. They were available. Now, advances in video technology have made the seeing of old Classic films--and even the owning of copies of those films--far easier than at any time in the past. But even so, some classics have remained out of reach due to low demand. I am certain I will never see many of the classic silent films of which I have heard. Some, like London after Midnight, are thought to be completely lost. But there are many other I have never heard were available or were lost. It is a rare pleasure when one of these films surfaces. In the past month or so, three classic films have become available, films that until now have been legendary to me and are now in my collection. Those films are: The Hands of Orlac, West of Zanzibar, and The Man Who Laughs.

West of Zanzibar features Lon Chaney (Sr.). The other two feature Conrad Veidt. But Veidt was very much Germany's

"Man of a Thousand Faces," just as Chaney was in the United States. The Man Who Laughs may star Veidt, but it has strong echoes of Chaney. It almost certainly was made to recapture the popularity of The Hunchback of Notre Dame and The Phantom of the Opera. It is a period piece with a stigmatized and disfigured central character. The Man Who Laughs is almost half-way a Chaney film, being based on a novel by the same author as The Hunchback of Notre Dame and using Phantom's co-star Mary Philbin. All three of these films involve men who have been abused or injured. Each in its one way is a study of stigma.

The Hands of Orlac

It is one of the unfortunate characteristics of film that visual images slow down the story-telling. It takes the camera a lot longer to show you images that can be described in less time. Of course, to describe a scene fully one picture is worth a thousand words, but rarely is it necessary to describe a scene fully in telling a story. Silent film is even slower at telling a story, since a much higher proportion of the story is told by visual images. For this reason, Silent films will often be more simple stories than sound films of equivalent length, though they can be just as or even more atmospheric. The whole story of The Hands of Orlac (1924) could well be told in six or seven sentences--including plot twists I will not reveal.

The Hands of Orlac reunites The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari director and its star. Robert Weine directs the vastly under-appreciated horror actor Conrad Veidt in this adaptation of Maurice Renard's novel. The story should be familiar to any who have seen the three other film versions including Mad Love (1935), Hands of Orlac (aka Hands of a Strangler) (1960), and Hands of a Stranger (1962). Paul Or-

*****lac is a great concert pianist who loses his own hands in a train wreck. In their place, a surgeon grafts the hands of a guillotined knife murderer, Vasseur. To Orlac's horror, the hands seem to desire to return to their career of crime. It is an idea that would be used many times in film, but this was the first and perhaps the most stylish use of the idea.

Under Weine's direction, Veidt's acting is very effective as a man almost being dragged by his own hands. Veidt's face shows increasing madness as the film progresses. Perhaps the most effective image of the film shows a crazed Veidt, a mad look on his face, as his halfclenched hand, filmed in the foreground, seems to be leading or even dragging him. Beyond this the film has a gratuitously Gothic feel, the camera making much of taking place in a cavernous old house with its huge bullet-shaped doorways. It is a style that would later be imitated by Universal Studios in their 30s Horror cycle.

More could be done with this story, as Karl Freund's Mad Love would prove. Still, the film has enough of its share of effective images to make it worth seeking out.

West of Zanzibar

Most people who are fans of horror films--and who know a little of the history of the horror film--respect the name of Lon Chaney. Chaney is the best-remembered horror actor of the silent film era, at least for his silent work. (Karloff, of course, had his share of horror parts in the silent era, but he is remembered much more for his sound roles.) Chaney is the American horror actor most associated with the silent era. But oddly, his current reputation is based for all but a few horror fans on only two roles and a few stills from other films. It is relatively easy to find opportunity to see The Hunchback of Notre Dame (1923) and The Phantom of the Opera (1925). But how many of us have seen Shadows (1922), A Blind Bargain (1922), The Trap (1922), or The Shock (1923)? Films like London after Midnight (1927) appear to be totally lost. Most of his other roles require some effort to find. Resurrected for Turner cable television is one of his more interesting efforts, Tod Browning's West

Browning is best remembered as the director of the 1930 film Dracula, and is a bit less well-remembered for Freaks in 1932, but he has a number of interesting films to his credit. He did several previous films with Chaney including The Unholy Three (1925), The Blackbird (1926), The Road to Mandalay (1926), and the lost and legendary London after Midnight in 1927. He is also remembered for two sound era films: Mark of the Vampire, his 1935 remake of London after Midnight with Bela Lugosi and Lionel Barrymore, and his 1936 Devil Doll, again with Barrymore.

The story opens in a London music hall. Phroso the Magician (Lon Chaney) is a popular attraction, particularly when he performs the illusion of turning a skeleton into his beautiful wife. However, his wife is more interested in Crane, an ivory trader played by a young and handsome Lionel Barrymore. Phroso gets into a fight with Crane only to have his back broken. The magician has lost both his wife and the use of his legs in one evening. Some years later, Phroso's wife returns from Africa, dying and with Crane's baby. Phroso decides to take revenge on Crane and his daughter. Flash forward eighteen years and Phroso is no more, but in his place is the vengeful mystery man called Dead-Legs. In a cannibal village in the title location, Dead-Legs is hatching a plot to destroy Crane. Using his stage magic to control the superstitious natives, he has Crane's daughter brought to his jungle outpost. There he begins to exact his revenge.

Admittedly, West of Zanzibar has a plot that is a bit simplistic and the twists in that plot telegraph themselves well in advance of actually occurring. This makes it difficult to say this is actually a good film by modern standards. But the macabre jungle melodrama is told with more than a little style and the resulting film is surprisingly enjoyable as an artifact.

We see here two of Chaney's claimed thousand faces. Phroso the Magician's stage make-up is obviously played for a laugh, with Chaney even borrowing a gesture or two from Charlie Chaplin. Out of the stage make-up he looks very normal. But Dead-Legs is something very different, something reptilian. His head is

change then gender. I recall reading that somewhere myself, and I am about as lay as the layman gets.

The movie is not anti-science. I see nothing in Jurassic Park to support this criticism. This is a familiar story rooted in legends which predate science: a warning against underestimating the power of knowledge. We understand how Pandora could not possess the box without opening it; yet today our government is preparing to detonate nuclear bombs underground all over again. We still have not learned the lesson.

In Jurassic Park, the visionary Holland (Richard Attenborough) is a Faustus wealthy enough to hire others to do his conjuring, and it is only by the grace of Spielberg he is not carried off by the power of what he unleashes. Holland survives, not because he is a sweet old man with a phoney accent, but because the morality of the story does not demand his death. The movie's morality is easy enough to follow: all one needs to do is notice who ends up as dinosaur shit. There is a moral sense at work here which singles out corrupt human beings for execution, and protects the innocent. How else can this movie justify a child surviving a 10,000 volt shock? (Now compare this to Spielberg's Jaws, which is arguably a more horrifying film because of its amorality--the shark kills people, good and bad, until it is itself killed; but the shark was not evil, so the resolution is sweetly ambiguous.) Holland lives to see his dream ruined forever; that is punishment enough for his arrogant exploitation of science.

It is also pretty clear that science, rather than causing this calamity, is simply playing a role in what becomes a collision of indifferent forces. It is no mistake that one of the film's main characters, Malcolm (Jeff Goldblum), is a mathematician preoccupied with chaos theory. "Life finds a way," he reminds Holland as he watches a robot turning dinosaur eggs. Humans are always thwarted in their attempts to control nature because there is no way to account for everything affecting nature. The best we can manage is a disruption, which nature simply incorporates--like the tree I once saw whose bark had actually assimilated a bottle someone had left in one of its

niches. The bottle had become a inextricable part of that tree. Life keeps on moving, every little thing to its purpose.

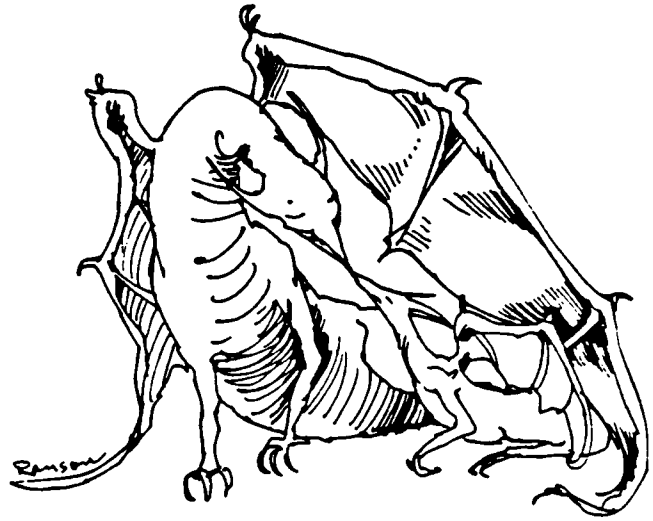
Unfortunately, there is little time to develop the dramatic possibilities. Jurassic Park is, after all, a production of Steven Spielberg, and intelligent artist sadly comfortable in a career making movies which barrel along with the pace and depth of an amusement park ride, heavily sweetened with easy sentimentality. Instead of making a three hour movie exploring the intellectual potential as well as the fear (which, for its part, could be even more intense, by half), Spielberg settled for a two-hour handjob. There is nothing damnable about this, but it makes the difference between a good movie, and what could have been a great movie.

For several years, I have found Spielberg's movies exasperating. I am especially tired of his child advocacy. His movies have become fables of empowerment for young audiences, in which children enlighten jaded grownups, rescue them from danger, and manipulate our heartstrings to the point where this viewer begins to root for the baddies. This use of children even in movies which are clearly not for the little ones suggests to me that their presence amounts to a plea for love. "Love my movie as you would love this child; call my movie wonderful, as you would this child."

Forgiving him his wide-eyed children, and his occasional paeans to the gospel of P.C., Spielberg's eye for the poetic omage is unusually keen here, with brilliantly constricted sequences and visual echoes. One example of the latter hints at genius: The scientists land on the island in one long shot. We can see the disturbance of the water's surface by the approaching helicopter. The motion of the waves is striking, without actually being the focus of the shot. Later on, in two separate scenes, the disturbance of water is what registers the approach of Tyrannosaurus Rex, and ever so softly evokes that image of the scientists' arrival in their mechanical bird. Man came to meet the dinosaur. Well, here it comes, and it will not confine itself to the other side of a man-made 10,000 volt fence, thank you.

The camera pans cynically across shelves full of Jurassic Park accessories, a marketing blitz on standby for a grand opening that never happens. But record-smashing crowds have turned out to watch Holland's empire implode. A fictional businessman's failure leads to a real businessman's success. Steven Spielberg has a way of turning the cinema into Disneyland. His movies are always a wild ride. And as you exit the theatre, you can find all the merchandise you saw in the movie, waiting for you. Just like Disneyland--remember how you always find yourself in the gift shop when the ride is over?

And if it's your lucky day, you might even catch a glimpse of Spielberg himself, touring his empire. He's the man with the amber-tipped cane. |*|



Three Flawed Epics

by Robert Sabella

Copyright (c) 1993 by Robert M. Sabella

Steel Beech

by John Varley

Ace/SFBC, 1992, \$5.99

There is a school of science fiction I call the Sturm und Drang school. Stories of this type generally follow Alfred Bester's dictum to writers: "Grab the readers by the lapel on line one, and punch them repeatedly in the face until your arm gets tired."

This type of SF was popularized by Edgar Rice Burroughs. His stories generally consisted of one inventive scene after another, rarely leaving time to take a breath between adventures. E.E. Smith was another master of the Sturm und Drang school of SF.

The modern master of this type of SF writing is Roger Zelazny. His novels move at a breakneck pace, each scene a wondrous little episode that does little more than set the stage for the next scene. Rarely is there a plot worthy of a novel-length book.

Zelazny added another feature to the Sturm und Drang school that makes his

books even more fun to read: beautiful language. His stories are worthwhile reading for the prose alone. Combine that with wondrous scenes, and it is no surprise his novels are deservedly acclaimed while having virtually no plot at all.

For the past twenty years, I have felt that John Varley is the literary heir to Roger Zelazny. His short stories' success were based primarily on their rapid flurry of ideas and the mood they created. And his novels, particularly the Gaea series, had the typical Sturm und Drang construction: a seemingly endless series of well-constructed, inventive scenes propelled by clever language at such a breakneck pace it was easy to forget that basically nothing was happening.

Which brings us to Steel Beach. In many ways, this is both the quintessential John Varley novel and the ultimate Sturm und Drang novel. Reading it is like poring through a treasure chest. Nearly every scene is a perfect gem full of wondrous invention, humor, color, and fascinating philosophical speculation about everything from the nature of humanity to

 the state of life on the moon. And the language is Varley at his very best. Practically every sentence is ripe with v|cleverness, and the repartee between characters is a joy to read.

There's one problem though: nothing happens worthy of a novel length book. For nearly 600 pages, Hildy Johnson scampers across Luna, ruminating over his/her suicide attempts, sex, career, residence, and friends. There's a fabulous scene satirizing labor negotiations, human rights, and religious cults. Another scene zings professional wrestling. Yet another is a combination murder mystery cum satire on personality cults.

But when you put them all together, it's basically a series of short stories disguised as a novel. In effect, Varley has produced the modern fix-up novel. A "fix-up" is a term devised by A. E. Van Vogt and used in The Encyclopedia of Science Fiction to mean a novel cobbled together from a bunch of short stories originally published in prozines. The only difference here is that Varley bypassed the prozines and wrote Steel Beach directly as a fix-up in novel form.

So if you're looking for some outstanding writing wrapped around a series of wonderful scenes, Steel Beach is the book for you. But if you're looking for a well-constructed novel in which all the components work together to reach an ultimately satisfying denouement, then this might disappoint you.

Give it a B-.

Beggars in Spain

by Nancy Kress

AvoNova/SFBC, 1993, \$21.95

It is not often that a classic piece of short fiction is expanded successfully into an award-winning novel. Only four come to mind immediately: Theodore Sturgeon's "Baby Is Three" became the central portion of the International Fantasy Award winner More Than Human. Walter M. Miller's novella "A Canticle for Leibowitz" became the opening portion of the Hugo-winning novel of the same name. Daniel Keyes' "Flowers for Algernon" won a Hugo Award as Best Short Fiction in 1960, and a Nemula Ward as Best Novel in 1967. Vonda N. McIntyre's "Of Mist, and Grass,

and Sand" won a Nebula Award as Best Nov-elette in 1974 and as Dreamsnake swept the Hugo and Nebula Awards as Best Novel in 1979.

"Beggars in Spain" swept the Hugo and Nebula Awards in 1992, and deservedly so. Its portrayal of the struggle between the super-intelligent, genetically-bred Sleepless and the normal Sleepers was one of the best studies of superhuman mutants in science fiction. Personally, I awaited the novel expansion eagerly.

And now, having read it, I don't expect Beggars in Spain to join the classic rank of the previously-mentioned novels. Many of the characteristics which made the novella excel are largely missing in the novel-length form.

The novel contains the original novella as its opening portion, then has three additional novellas carrying the story forward another century. The original novella is largely the story of Leisha Camden, one of the first of the Sleepless. She is a strong, determined character, who is ever hopeful that the differences between Sleepless and Sleepers will be overcome. It is her hopefulness that dominated the novella, making it more than a typical "humans versus supermutants" thriller.

But in the three succeeding sections, Leisha Camden gradually fades from leading protagonist to a helpless watcher on the sidelines. To make matters worse, by the third novella, her hopefulness is shown to be totally misplaced. Human society has degenerated into powerful Sleepless ruling over worthless "livers," who are the majority of Sleepers who are basically all lazy, lacking in ambition, and illiterate. And the Sleepless, who were supposedly lacking the baser human qualities that define most human relationships, are revealed as no better than humans at all.

The new main characters who replace Leisha Camden in importance are neither as interesting nor as convincing as she was. Jennifer Sharifi is the leader of the Sleepless but, for all her super-intelligence, she is no better than a stereotypical power-monger. Sure her motives supposedly spring from the Sleepless' need for protection from the Sleepers, but that rarely comes across in the story. She is a megalomaniac, manipulat-

ing the other Sleepless for her own advantage. And the majority of Sleepless, for all their super-intelligence, allow themselves to be manipulated and controlled so easily it was hard to believe they were superior to mere Sleepers at all.

An even less convincing character is Drew Arden, a Sleeper who intrudes upon Leisha Camden because he craves more out of life than merely being a liver. But then he does everything possible to undermine that ambition, for reasons that are never satisfactorily explained, until he undergoes a sudden, unbelievable metamorphosis from a radical terrorist to great artist.

The climax of the novel involved the creation of a new race of super-Sleepless, the self-named Beggars, who seize power from the Sleepless at the apex of their battle against the Sleepers. It was a satisfactory happy ending as far as it went, but overall it left me with a feeling of dissatisfaction.

One of the most important points of the original novella was the Sleepless not being prone to playing the same deceitful games humans have played for centuries. And so, as the Sleepless' nature became increasingly human in the succeeding novellas, Kress introduced yet a more powerful advanced race who truly are better. But how are we supposed to have any confidence in them when Kress betrayed our confidence in the Sleepless?

My feeling is that Nancy Kress got hung up on the "us versus them" aspect of the story, and the need to write a thrilling novel, that she completely forgot about the philosophical aspects of the Sleepless' struggle for survival. So what began as a classic novella ended up as little more than a fancy pulp novel.

Give it a B- rating.

Doomsday Book

by Connie Willis

Bantam Spectra/SFBC, 1992, \$21.95

As of this writing, Doomsday Book is easily the most acclaimed novel of 1992, having won the Nebula and Locus Awards, and being the favorite to complete the sweep with the Hugo Award as well. And while it is the best of the three, it is

not without flaws of its own.

The basic premise is similar to Willis' classic novelette, "Fire Watch": a historian travels back in time to study life in fourteenth century England. She accidentally ends up thirty years past her target, in the midst of the Black Plague. Meanwhile, attempts to retrieve her are stymied by a similar epidemic at the time she left eight hundred years later.

On the surface, the book is a delight. Willis is a born storyteller who creates both sympathetic characters and a thrilling page-turner of a novel. The casual reader, wanting only to be entertained, should enjoy the book tremendously and have no reason at all to be disappointed with it.

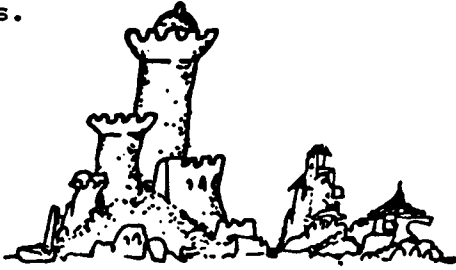
The careful reader, on the other hand, will most likely be bothered by one or more of the book's flaws. Throughout the first quarter of the book, Willis made it apparent that Kilvin, the historian, could not possibly have been sent to the Black Plague, that all the safeguards insured she was thirty years away from it. This is repeated numerous times until... guess what? Through a quite unlikely series of events, she was sent to the Black Plague?

Several of the novel's flaws sprang from Willis' obvious efforts to make the novel as thrilling as possible. Some of the characters in the future were bad clichés: Gilchrist should never have been acting head of the department, nor allowed the stymie efforts to retrieve Kilvin as much as he did; and William's mother was totally unbelievable, and totally unnecessary to the story.

The scenes during the Black Plague itself were the best in the novel, at times positively chilling. I just wish Willis had not panicked and bombarded the reader with death after death after death, killing off every major character in that era. There were three, count 'em three, major death scenes, including two youngsters and the most sympathetic character in the entire novel. Just how much pathos can a reader take before a serious novel borders on the fringes of a hack tear-jerker?

One last flaw: when the other historians finally rescue Kilvin, it is too easily done. How they located her was total-

ly unbelievable. Nor should Willis have allowed a shallow youth to accompany the expedition. That was a trick out of hack adventures, not serious science fiction novels.



As I mentioned earlier, Willis is one of the best, perhaps the very best, storyteller in science fiction. How many writers could have successfully created the most sympathetic character in the entire book as a dour, rough-looking, unpersonable priest? Or have tried to do so? Overall, I enjoyed this novel best of the three. The Black Plague scenes alone made it worthy of its award nominations. But, alas, its flaws made it unworthy of sweeping all the awards that it has.

Give it a B+ rating. |*|

Four Extraordinary Films

by Mark R. Leeper

Copyright (c) 1993 by Mark R. Leeper

One of the things I like to do occasionally in my film reviews is to make reference to some very good film that I doubt most of my readers have heard of and that I would like to call some attention to. There are a lot of decent films, and a handful of very good ones that, at this point, may exist only in the film libraries of obscure television stations, and when these few prints disappear, the films will be gone. I would like to generate some interest in four of these films, if not to help save them, at least to alert people that if you do get a chance to see these films, it is a rare chance and you should give them a try.

Of course, there are a lot of obscure films that are showing up on videotape today, many of them poorly-made films, and it is ironic that some terrific films are being overlooked, but in each case I think I can understand why some producer would think the film would not sell well on tape. There are three science fiction films and one horror film. However, none of the films has special effects. Particularly for science fiction, people have

come to expect visual effects. I guess they feel that if they do not really enjoy the story then at least there will be something interesting to watch. These films are just actors in front of a camera, perhaps with very rudimentary makeup effect thrown in (but very little). Three of the films are in black and white, and unfortunately that is also considered to be a strike against a film. I still recommend these films highly.

The Mind Benders

(1962, directed by Basil Dearden)

This film combines Cold War thriller elements with science fiction and a compelling human story. A scientist working on sensory deprivation commits suicide and is discovered to have been passing secrets to the Soviets. Was he to blame or could his mind have been twisted while under the influence of the sensory deprivation tank? The government decides to experiment to find out. Another scientist working in the same field (Dirk Bogarde) is very devoted to his wife and family.

Can they change that in his personality while he is in the tank? This film is well-acted, enthralling, and atmospheric.

Unearthly Stranger

(1963, directed by John Kirsh)

A secret project is working on space exploration right in the heart of London. The approach to exploration is a novel one. Rather than sending the whole human into space, they are working on a sort of technological out-of-body experience. Project your mind to another planet and there have it take on physical form...invasion by mental projection. The rub is that scientists on the project are being killed in some mysterious way involving super-high energy. And the wives of some of the scientists seem to have no background that project security can trace. The script is tense and the acting is quite good, with a cast that includes John Neville (A Study in Terror, The Adventures of Baron Munchausen) and Jean Marsh (Upstairs, Downstairs). (This film is so obscure that Leonard Maltin's usually very complete Movie and Video Guide overlooks it.)

Dark Intruder

(1965, directed by Harvey Hart)

This film is only 59 minutes long and was originally intended as a television pilot, but was released to theatres to play with films such as William Castle's I Saw What You Did--which it far outclassed. Leslie Nielsen plays a detective in late 19th Century San Francisco whose foppish appearance hides a man very knowledgeable and adept in matters of the occult and the supernatural. A series of

unsolved murders and a friend's blackout spells may be connected and have some occult significance. Mark Richman and Werner Klemperer also star. The latter, best known as the gullible commandant from Hogan's Heroes, does a terrific job in a sinister role.

Quest for Love

(1971, directed by Ralph Thomas)

This film is loosely adapted from the short story "Random Quest" by John Wyndham. Colin Trafford (Tom Bell) is a leading scientist at Britain Imperial Physical Institute when one of his experiments goes wrong. Suddenly he finds himself in a parallel London in a parallel Britain that has not been to war since the Great War in the early part of the century. Trafford here is not a physicist, but a popular playwright. He is also now married to a beautiful woman (Joan Collins) whose life he has made miserable with his selfish ways and his philandering. Can Colin convince the world he is the playwright while convincing his new wife that he is different? Then there are plot complications that lead to a fast-paced climax across parallel worlds. Denholm Elliot also stars in the story which is part science fiction adventure and part love story.

Of these four films, only the last is in color. At present, the only one available on video, Unearthly Stranger, is offered only by a tiny specialty house, Sinister Cinema. Of the four, only Quest for Love has played on New York area television in the last fifteen years. I would much like to get my hands on copies of The Mind Benders or Dark Intruder. |*|

Book Reviews by Dale L Skran

All reviews copyright (c) 1993 by Dale L. Skran

The Awful Egg

by Kenneth Robeson
Bantam, 1978 (1940c), \$1.50

Escape from Loki

by Philip Jose Farmer
Bantam, 1991, \$4.95

As a long-time Doc Savage fan, I looked forward with anticipation to the "first all-new Doc Savage adventure since 1949," especially one written by Farmer. Farmer, perhaps the greatest, or at least the hardest working, Savage fan, has produced a number of books on or related to Doc Savage, including Doc Savage: His Apocalyptic Life (a "biography"), and The Mad Goblin

and A Feast Unknown (tales of a "Doc Caliban" who is basically Doc Savage updated to modern times). The Doc Caliban stories and the related Lord Grandrith book Lord of the Trees operate on the pulp level, with A Feast Unknown adding a generous dollop of the blood and sex usually left out of 40s pulp magazines. Overall, the Farmer books are engaging and entertaining, with interesting villains in the form of the Immortal Nine, and a set of revisionist biographies of "Doc" and "Grandrith" (who is really Tarzan).

Thus, when I saw Escape from Loki at a huckster table at Worldcon, I snapped it up immediately. I also decided to read one of the original "Doc" novels that I hadn't read before (The Awful Egg) to provide a comparison. Loki tells the never before written story of Doc as a sixteen-year-old fighting in World War I, how he met the fabulous five, and the experiences that formed the basis of his life-long battle against evil. Unfortunately, Farmer, who added so much color to Doc Caliban, seems unable to do the same with the original character. Part of the problem is that great heroes require great villains. The Joker and the Catwoman provide at least half the interest in a Batman story, and the same is true of Doc. Unfortunately, Von Hessel, the immortal German commander of "Camp Loki" never quite springs off the page, and the reader stumbles through an oft-told tale as allied POWs attempt to escape from a German prison camp that is "escape-proof". Robeson did far better with Doc's nemesis "John Sunlight" and fantastic dangers such as "The Living Fire Menace".

In The Awful Egg, we see minor Robeson. However, even this less than memorable story of the original Doc has more life than Loki, and is especially interesting in the way it presages Jurassic Park. The main plot element concerns a villain who finds a frozen dinosaur egg and (apparently) embarks on a reign of terror after the egg hatches.

Robeson is no literary genius, and his alternating fists and guns plots will not impress you with their deep character insights, yet Doc Savage is one of the truest reflections of the American Spirit of the 20s and 30s, with an optimistic faith in the power of technology and education to produce a superman capable of overcoming a world full of evil-doers. Is it overly fanciful to see in America's crusade overseas to end the horror that was the Third Reich

more than a little of Doc Savage? A lot of that faith was diminished by the 50s, by Vietnam, and the eternal gray of the Cold War that found us more and more like our adversaries. Yet it is Americans who are hunting warlords in Somalia as I write this. Hope springs eternal that we can apply our technology and our strength as a force for good, if necessary by destroying evil directly. Yes, I know that George Bush doesn't resemble the ragged-shirted bronze behemoths that grace the covers of Bantam's reprints of the Savage novels, but in his heart, George must have had just a little of Doc's desire to crush evil for its own sake, hidden in along with the Machiavellian schemer who let the Kurds twist in the wind.

So what can we learn from all this? The hubris that led to Vietnam shows up in Doc's conviction that he can "cure" criminals with an amnesia-producing operation, the same hubris that saw the frontal lobotomy as a cure for mental illness. Yet the opposite of that hubris is a cynical resignation, of the sort exhibited by Chamberlain in WWII, and which we see today as Europe and, indeed the world, turns a blind eye to "ethnic cleansing" in Bosnia. Clinton, as the current embodiment of America, seems constantly torn between the desire to build a better world (seen in his health care reform program) and a miserable and cowardly cynicism shown by his brush-off of the Bosnians and his apparent abandonment of his promise to open the military to gays and lesbians. On the whole, we could stand a little more faith and hope, along with some courage and hard work, not to mention a few more wonderful gadgets! I don't think Doc would be pleased with everything that America has done, but I don't think he'd quit, either.

Recommended mainly to fans of the original Doc Savage stories, and to Savage completists. Readers should keep in mind that although A Feast Unknown is loads of fun, it has some heavy-duty violence and sex, as well as sex-n-violence.

The Player of Games

by Iain M. Banks

St. Martin's Press, 1989, \$16.95

Iain Banks has written two "Culture" novels in addition to The Player of Games (The Use of Weapons and Consider Phlebas), but The Player of Games may be the most di-

rect and accessible. Banks combines large-scale space opera with mythic writing and touch of splatter-punk. Some find his novels unpleasant to read, and Player certainly presents a vastly unpleasant society, the Empire of Azad. It also presents a classic SF scenario, as the "Culture" representative, game-player Gurgeh, is aimed science fiction a weapon at the heart of the empire.

In some distant time and place, there exists a vast and powerful empire which calls itself simple the "Culture". But it is not an empire in any classic sense; it is based on voluntary cooperation of equals, and has no laws, or at least not very many. The Culture has outgrown planets and lives on "orbitals," "plates," and "GSVs" (General Service Vehicles--vast starships that house billions). Men and women, humans and aliens, the genetically modified and the normal, humanoids and sentient machines, all happily co-exist as equals in a society that has long ago moved beyond material want.

The semi-military organ of the Culture called the Contact Service encounters the Empire of Azad, based on an ideology of domination and ruthlessness, and held together by the playing of a complex and elaborate game called "Azad". Although capable of war on a galactic scale (see Consider Phlebas for a history of the Culture/Indirian war), mass assault is not the way of the Culture. A lighter touch is found in the form of Gurgeh, possibly the best games-player in the Culture. A decadent who lives to play games, Gurgeh finds himself blackmailed into joining the Contact Service and entering the game of Azad, the victor of which becomes the new emperor of Azad.

Thus begins a journey into a loci of darkness as the well-meaning Gurgeh become more and more deeply involved in a society so cruel it allows body parts to be wagered on Azad, and which provides 24-hour video of live torture to entertain its elite. Banks serves up both a bucket of plot twists and a fascinating character study combined in an essay on the playing of games. As you may suspect, nothing in this cosmic hall of mirrors is quite what it seems, and even the Player of Games may not survive.

Banks' works are especially interesting as a picture of a direction we (human culture) could be evolving toward. Although Banks is sometimes dunned for his vivid de-



pictions of cruelty, we live in a world where Pol Pot and Hitler murdered millions by torture. Banks' vision is actually a hopeful one, portraying how a free society may evolve that is both capable of defending itself against totalitarian competitors while allowing its citizens the maximum opportunity to live life to the fullest. The Culture is not perfect, and Azad and the Indirians are not all evil, but I have little doubt where I would want to live.

I enjoyed The Player of Games the most of the three books in the Culture series, and it serves as a good introduction to the Culture. I'm a little unsure who to recommend this to, since it is really space opera, albeit good space opera, but it strives to be far more than a mere description of battles won and lost, or plot twists unraveled. Readers of hard SF will be comfortable here, as will those with an interest that focuses on different societies and political systems. Fans of gaming may find this book especially interesting, although they are warned that Azad is only sketched out, and the focus is on the character and plot, not the minutiae of game-play.

Book and Film Reviews by Mark R Leeper

All reviews copyright (c) 1993 by Mark R. Leeper

Frankenstein

CAPSULE REVIEW: This version of Mary Shelley's classic novel takes some chances, including actually roughly following the plot of the novel, while giving a new interpretation of the relationship between Frankenstein and his monster. That would have been a real virtue if the rest of the production was not so bland. As it is, this is a disappointingly uninvolving version of the story. Rating: 0 (on the -4 to +4 scale).

Last autumn we saw Francis Ford Coppola's allegedly accurate adaptation of Bram Stokers Dracula. It turned out to be more faithful than some of the better versions, particularly in some superficial ways, yet it transformed the story into one of Dracula trying to regain his lost love, a rather fundamental departure from the original novel. While the old monsters are popular, Ted Turner's organization has financed their version of Frankenstein, also claiming to be close to the novel. Sure enough, the basic plot and many of its twists are faithful to Mary Shelley, but producer/director/writer David Wicks has decided--like most people making film versions of Frankenstein--to make some fundamental changes to the story. Incidentally, there is one almost totally faithful film adaptation. It is a 1975 Swedish-Irish co-production called Viktor Frankenstein, or on television, Terror of Frankenstein. Leon Vitali plays the doctor and Per Oscarsson is the monster. Except for one scene with a seance, it is a literal adaptation from the novel, faithful, but ponderous and dull. Wicks' Frankenstein is a little less faithful, but also only a little less dull.

The film starts accurately enough with Victor having chased the monster to the Arctic and being rescued by a ship, then telling his story as a flashback. Frankenstein, it turns out, is a great medical scholar, an exaggeration of Shelley's simple student. He uses a strange process, something like an early matter duplicator, to create a man. Of course, most film versions say that the monster was constructed from dead bodies, but that is a cinematic invention. Shelley is intentionally vague about how the monster is created. This cre-

ation, while unconventional, is on no way inconsistent with the novel. From there the plot followed is an approximation of the novel, except for the addition of a strange plot device that is really a fairly fundamental change to the story. The monster, being a sort of matter duplication of Victor, has a physical and psychic link with his creator. If the monster is wounded, Victor also gets the same wounds. This transforms the story from its usual allegory of the relationship of God and Man to one of the two sides of a single person's personality, more like Jekyll and Hyde.

The film is generally a fairly lackluster adaptation. The only character with real empathy value is the monster himself, played by Randy Quaid. His make-up is a real departure from standard interpretations of the monster. With his stocky structure and his moustache-less beard, he resembles something between a troglodyte and a Scottish Highlander--with burns on his face. Again Shelley gives us little idea of what the man-made man looks like, except that he is eight feet tall--which even the large Randy Quaid cannot appear. The remainder of the cast, led by Patrick Bergin in the title role, conveys little emotion and helps to make this version bland.

John Cameron's score barely creates much of a mood either, though its use of choral voices is somewhat unusual and lend the score much of the interest value it has. After a few good Turner productions, including a very satisfying version of Treasure Island, this Frankenstein is a disappointing and unmemorable production. I rate it a 0 on the -4 to +4 scale.

The Black Castle
Berkley, 1979, \$2.25

The Silver Skull
Charles Scribner's Sons, 1979, \$8.95

Citizen Vampire
Charles Scribner's Sons, 1981, \$9.95

Yellow Fog
Tor, 1991, \$3.95

No Blood Spilled
Tor, 1991, \$3.95

by Les Daniels

In Stephen Sondheim's play, Sweeney Todd, the young sailor tells Sweeney that he has sailed the world and seen wonders. Sweeney replies, "I have seen the world, beheld its wonders. But the cruelty of man is as wondrous as Peru." That is a sentiment with which vampire Don Sebastian could well agree. There are few series that I follow, but Les Daniels' delightfully nihilistic chronicles of the vampire Don Sebastian has its rewards. Don Sebastian is a hero of sorts, but only by contrast. He is not like Chelsea Quinn Yarbro's handsome stranger, St. Germaine, who carries dirt from his native land in the heels of his shoes and is able to mask signs that he is a vampire. Don Sebastian is a vampire in the traditional sense. He just manages to be at those places in history where the cruelty is so bad that the presence of a vampire is almost redundant.

We first meet Don Sebastian during the Spanish Inquisition in The Black Castle. Next he is present at the conquest of Mexico in The Silver Skull. The Reign of Terror following the French Revolution is the setting of Citizen Vampire. I have yet to read Yellow Fog, set in the comparatively benign London Fog of 1835, but Don Sebastian is in India with thugs, ghouls, suttee and the callousness of the British Raj in No Blood Spilled.

Don Sebastian is the ultimate anti-hero. Unlike the handsome St. Germaine, Don Sebastian is a real vampire. To terrify his brother in The Black Castle, he rolls his eyes into his head and blows smoke out the holes. But in his own way Don Sebastian is a moralist and a humanitarian. He accepts his own nature as vampire but clearly feels the world is bad enough having vampires in it--why make it worse with cruelty? Generally where he goes he tries to do at least sufficient good to counterbalance the evil that inflicting a vampire on the neighborhood causes. This makes Don Sebastian a complex and deeply troubled individual, torn between instinctive impulses for evil (or certainly for selfishness) and higher impulses to do what he can to prevent the evil around him. And he is fully aware of the basic hypocrisy in that position.

The background is always as much of interest in a Don Sebastian novel as the foreground. Remember the old curse, "May you live in interesting times"? Daniels takes the time to research periods that are

relative peaks of human callousness and barbarity. He explores these times with the same wonder that Sweeney Todd had. He will work into the plot as much historical ghoulishness as possible (in the case of No Spilled Blood, literally). But for the sort of person who enjoys the sepulchral tomes of Sweeney Todd or has a fascination to visit the London Dungeon or the torture chambers in the Prison Gate in the Hague, these novels are short, effective and rewarding.

Un Coeur en Hiver

CAPSULE REVIEW: This is just about the best film I could think of about a love triangle. Most of the film revolves around the personality of one of the main characters, which is only gradually revealed in the film, so I will refrain from discussing it. This is a thoughtful, intelligent film and one of the best I have seen this year. Rating: low +3.

For many years Stephen (Daniel Auteuil) and Maxim (Andre Dussolier) have been partners in a violin repair business in Paris. Where Maxim is handsome and affable, Stephan is introspective and introverted. In the years of their partnership Maxim has been married and divorced and has dated many women. Stephen has little life outside of the repair business. He is a genius in building and repairing violins. He has one friend, a woman, in whom he confides, but their relationship is purely platonic. Maxim's latest girlfriend is Camille, a brilliant and beautiful violinist (Emmanuelle Beart) who takes an instant dislike to blunt Stephan, but when it is clear that Stephan appreciates Camille's music, Camille becomes interested in the odd loner. The stage is set for a tragic love story.

Un Coeur en Hiver revolves around Stephan's unusual personality, which is only revealed gradually through the film. Suffice it to say this is a much more touching and engaging film than could be expected from the above description. Stephan is a personality type rarely seen in film, yet not nearly so rare in real life. I went into this film expecting a fatuous love story and came out with a film that will almost definitely be on my top ten list of the year. Stephan's personality, what it does to him, and how others use it and react to it, make this a thoughtful and intelligent addition to the films this year. Un Coeur en Hiver was directed by Claude Sautet from

a screenplay he co-authored with Jacques Fieschi. Scenes of Emmanuelle Beart playing Ravel (beautifully orchestrated by Philippe Sarde) have a pristine beauty that is as sexy as anything you will find in any American film this year. I give it a low +3.

Heart and Souls

CAPSULE REVIEW: In some ways similar to All of Me or A Guy Named Joe, Heart and Souls turns out to be a likable and endearing metaphysical fantasy and a real showcase for the physical acting talents of Robert Downey, Jr. If this one catches you in the right mood, it works well. Rating: +2.

The light "life after death" fantasy is still with us. You know the sort of film: Topper, A Guy Named Joe, Stairway to Heaven, Here Comes Mr. Jordan, Defending Your Life, even Ghost (though it had darker tones mixed in). They all have a nice, cushy, "death is just a change of state" feel. They were particularly popular during World War II when a comforting view of death was needed.

The latest entry, Heart and Souls, has a surprising degree of charm. We are introduced to four people, each working out his or her life but having unfinished business. Destiny puts them all on the same ill-fated bus which falls off the side of a bridge to avoid crashing into a car. The car just happens to contain a woman giving birth. All four are killed along with the driver, but the souls of the four passengers survive and are somehow metaphysically attached to Thomas Reilly, the baby. They are compelled never to leave Reilly's side. For a while they are visible to the young boy, but when this appears to do more harm than good, they follow him invisibly.

When Reilly becomes a man (Robert Downey, Jr.), the souls suddenly find they each have a mission and must appear to, and sometimes physically possess, Reilly.

Our four spirits are Charles Grodin as a singer with stage fright, Alfre Woodard as a woman torn from the children she loved, Tom Sizemore as a small-time hood with an attack of conscience, and Kyra Sedgwick as an overly diffident lover. But Downey outdoes Steve Martin's performance in All of Me, being in turn possessed by the four spirits. Downey prior to Chaplin never seemed to have much screen presence. Now he is showing an amazing flair for physical comedy and a tremendous versatility.

There are some problems with the script. All too often American businesses are shown as having one conscienceless cut-throat and a bunch of executives living off his skills. This film falls into that same trap. What is more, the company that Downey's character seems to be liquidating is apparently never saved. But in spite of that loose end, this is a likable fantasy with some of its kooky special effects and its phantom bus. It might be a little sugary for some tastes, but it also has its share of touching moments. I rate this a +2.

Hard Drive

by David Pogue
Diamond, 1993, \$4.99

I am willing to be corrected on this one, but I think that the techno-thriller was invented by Michael Crichton with The Andromeda Strain. Certainly that was the first techno-thriller I had ever read. The idea was to tell a good story set in a technical environment and give understandable explanations of that environment as you go along so that the reader learns something interesting to take away from the reading at the same time the reader is entertained. The same thing had been attempted in science fiction before but in all the cases I know of the accuracy of the science was dubious or the explanation not done very well. The Andromeda Strain was not afraid to use illustrating figures that could have come from technical papers, but it explained them so that the reader felt they were something comprehensible, and they did lend an air of reality to the story. Since then many others have tried to write stories that taught you about some new technical field, most by Tom Clancy. Of course one problem with these techno-thrillers is that you never know if the descriptions are being made simplistic. You never knew if the explanations would seem foolish if you only knew the field. David Pogue's Hard Drive is about a field where I do have some knowledge: computer systems.

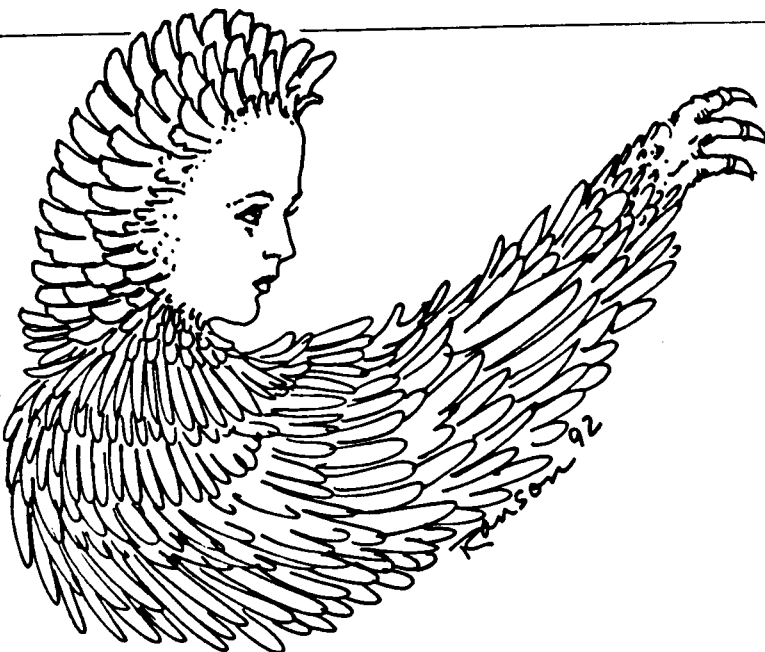
Hard Drive is the sort of novel that immediately strikes you as surprising that nobody wrote sooner. It is about how a computer virus gets loose and the attempts to save the world from the virus. Of course, the Internet worm made national headlines in late 1988 and yet there have been no computer techno-thrillers to explain and

exploit the presence of computer viruses. In fact, the only computer techno-thriller preceding Hard Drive was Clifford Stoll's non-fiction The Cuckoo's Egg. The fact that Stoll's nook was such a good story and was a true story in a field where there had been no notable thrillers published to date combined to give The Cuckoo's Egg the status of a "classic" within weeks of publication. So the field was ripe for Hard Drive (or a novel like it) for quite a while.

Pogue presumably has the credentials to write such a novel. As the book says, he is a contributing editor of Mac World and a computer consultant. The problem is that he is only mediocre as a storyteller. This is a first novel and is very light stuff indeed. A bright young computer scientist, Danny Cooper, comes to work as a start-up company, Artelligence. There the chief guru and most respected programmer is Gam Lampert. Gam is brilliant and mysterious, and he considers himself above company security rules. From there the plot is fairly predictable. In fact, things are so predictable that one might almost suspect the novel of being written by a computer if there were not mistakes that a computer would know better than to make. The first two lines of the novel are the title "Prologue" and the line "The Wall Street Journal, Friday, April 2, 1983." Come on, Pogue. I can figure out in my head that that was a Saturday. Don't you have a calendar program on your computer?

So the thriller aspect of the story is slight. Unfortunately, the technical aspect is also. Pogue clearly wrote this assuming little technical expertise on the reader's part. One of the characters asks Danny what a computer virus is, and he and the reader get an simple explanation. Somehow Tom Clancy gets away without having a character ask, "What is sonar anyway?" I have had a friend tell me that some of the windows printed in the book as online illustrations have a crude layout. If so, that did not bother me. At some point the same virus goes from a MAC to a UNIX system; the same friend (well, let me credit him: Robert Schmunk) said this was unlikely. I am unconvinced that a virus could not be designed for cross-operating-system infection, particularly since presumably it would be valuable for a virus to be able to make the jump.

In any case, if you are going to read both Hard Drive and The Cuckoo's Egg, read Hard Drive first since its explanations are



more basic and simple. But if you are going to read only one, you can skip Pogue's book.

Sarah Canary

by Karen Joy Fowler
Zebra, 1993, \$5.99

There is a bookstore in Amherst, Massachusetts, which is, I am sure, not unlike bookstores in a lot of college towns. The store stocks books that as nearly as the managers can arrange apparently represent one consistent political viewpoint. In the store's repertoire you can learn just about all you want to know about that one viewpoint. But if you want to compare it with other ideas of people who do not ascribe to that viewpoint, you have to go elsewhere. It is not that I disagree with that viewpoint--politically it is close to my own--but as far as diversity of opinion, I find I do better at the average airport newsstand. Ironically, the store calls itself "Food for Thought." But it is the sort of literary equivalent of the "House of Toast." "Food for Thought" is a good name for a bookstore, but if I ran a bookstore with that name, it would have Das Kapital and Mein Kampf, not because I agree with either, but because I don't. It would have Spinoza and Plato and Mishima. A store with that name should have Hawking and Velikovsky. It would have Jeremy Rifkin and Frank Lloyd Wright and Ludwig Wittgenstein and Marshall McLuhan. As food for thought, this place is pretty slim pickings particularly if you are not interested in their one social viewpoint, but they are smart enough to know that there is a ready market for

books written in this narrow band of political thought. I guess people feel secure with reading matter that agrees with their own way of thinking. Authors writing from that viewpoint will have as ready a market as they would if they were writing in the "Star Trek" universe. I thought of "Food for Thought" many times when I was reading Sarah Canary. It was written for their market.

A nameless woman mysteriously shows up in a Chinese railroad labor camp in the Washington Territory in mid-winter 1873. The woman is dressed in black and speaks no intelligible tongue. If abandoned to the cold, she will surely die. Chin Ah Kim, a surprisingly erudite laborer, decides to adopt the woman in black, at least until he can get her to a place of safety. In grand adventure style, the simple trip to take Sarah Canary, as the woman comes to be called, to safety becomes a far greater adventure than Chin Ah Kim could have expected.

Superficially at least, Sarah Canary resembles Huckleberry Finn. We have a set of fugitives running across a stretch of America and while the travelers themselves are of some interest, really it is the backdrop, the portrait of the world of 1872 and 1873 in the Pacific Northwest, that is the focus of Fowler's attention. Most of what Fowler sees in this period is injustice and ignorance. Undoubtedly that is not too far from the truth, but what our characters see is mostly a very 1990's view of injustice. We see white male injustice against Chinese, Indians, blacks, and especially women, but Fowler never has a white woman being cruel to an Indian. Fowler is describing a world in which there are the oppressors and the oppressed. The oppressed all basically have sympathy for each other. And the choice of the oppressed seems to have come from a 1990's checklist: women, Chinese, blacks. Now I cannot imagine that this not being a time of tremendous reliance on animals and certainly there would have been no small amount of animal abuse that the characters would have seen on their journey. That is not where Fowler's sympathies lie, apparently, so no descriptions of animal abuse are mentioned. Fowler, on the other hand, has a good deal of interest in feminism and so, as a result, do all the 19th Century women in the book.

Not having a time machine or being able to read people's minds, it is impossible for me to tell you what was on most peo-

ple's minds in the Washington Territory of the 1870s, but I certainly felt while I was reading this book that Fowler misrepresents the situation. She takes the attitudes of a very small number of women--the pioneers of the women's movement--and spreads them liberally over the minds of the women in this novel. My suspicion is that more women were concerned with the issue "Will there be food enough for my family this winter?" than "Don't I have the right to as much sexual pleasure as a man gets?" Does this sound more like an 1870's or a 1990's woman? Just worrying about sexual pleasure implies a much more affluent society, one like our own, than one like was present in Fowler's setting. While there may have been a few men who sat around like Fowler's men and spat and complained about uppity women, far more were worried about issues like "Will there be food enough for my family this winter?" When you are scratching your existence out of the ground as much of the population of the Pacific Northwest were, trying to get enough food to eat, food and shelter are the major issues on both men's and women's minds. Sexual politics is a long way down on the list. At least that is my impression. And it is considerably different from Fowler's impression apparently.

Fowler writes as if she knows the history of the women's movement and believes that is all that is necessary to understand the period. If the history we learned in schools is indeed just white man's history, Fowler's history is certainly no broader or more inclusive. When she has a character say, "Someday we will learn that when one woman is wronged, we all are wronged," she is not writing in the 1870s I picture. That was probably a very rare sentiment in the 1870s. You would find far more women believing "Blood is thicker than water." (Actually I might question that even as a principle for the 1990s. Do I feel, for example, that when one New Jerseyite is wronged, we all are, or when one science fiction fan is wronged, we all are? Unless I was going to spread the sentiment to everybody, I am not sure it is an idea I would buy.)

Time and again, Fowler's characters turn out to be warped just a bit out of the reality of the setting. Just about everybody in the novel seems to have an unrealistically broad knowledge of the world. Chin is a Chinese railroad worker laborer who knows not just about the folklore of China, but also of India. He speaks fluent English and

German. It is eventually explained that he was, in fact, more high-born than the other laborers. But his views are as far from those of a high-born Cantonese of the time as they are from those of a Cantonese laborer.

Another character considers the possibility that Sarah Canary is a vampire, having read some LeFanu. Yes, it is possible that someone might have read about vampires, but it is very unlikely and such a person would know other creatures of folklore that they would be equally likely to choose. It is only since Bram Stoker wrote Dracula that vampires have become so central in popular folklore. Perhaps a little more realistic is a self-styled scientist who is a font of amusing misinformation; some of it includes a sexist belief that women are more primitive than men. Fowler smugly pokes fun at all the strange and unscientific beliefs the man holds. Of course, Fowler come from a time when reliable scientific knowledge is readily and cheaply available. It is easy for her to laugh at the misimpressions of people who have not had her opportunities.

However, my impressions of Sarah Canary are certainly not all negative. Fowler's prose style is actually what attracted me to this book in the first place, and it is what I liked best about the book. She has a short, clean writing style. She never lets the writing get in the way of the storytelling. She tells a story that involves the reader quickly and has a plot that moves well. She has sprinkled in a good deal of historical detail, though not all of which I would rely on. For example, there was indeed historically a mechanical device that supposedly played chess (and which really was operated by a midget chess player), but she associated the device with P.T. Barnum. That is just not true.

Fowler does have one stylistic quirk. She mixes story chapters with chapters of historical background, usually with a didactic bent. But the story chapter headings are spelled out (like "Chapter Two"), while the historical essays are numbered separately with Roman numerals. Why? It is never clear.

Sarah Canary is an enjoyable book to read, with interesting nuggets of history, but occasionally you want to ask Fowler if she seriously believes this very weird and eccentric view of the period.

Much Ado About Nothing

From Branagh and his wife comes Much Ado,
The Shakespeare comedy of love and tricks.
Just sit and see the pleasant Tuscan view
As folks play out romantic politics.

Keanu Reeves seems vaguely out of place,
And Washington is not the usual hue
Don Pedro has been cast. But give some space
To Branagh while he does his Much Ado.

With Branagh's hand this seems a modern play;
The pace is fast and Shakespeare pleases much.
His comedy still works for us today,
Uneven though it is with Keaton's touch.

In short I'd say this Branagh Much Ado
To no surprise doth earn a high +2.

The Music of Chance

CAPSULE REVIEW: This is a very unusual allegory about two modern men trapped by fate in a feudal world where they are forced to build a wall for two unearthly old men who seem to have supernatural powers. The story is full of ambiguity and uncertainty, and is always riveting. Rating: +2.

The rise of feudalism, power of money, and considerably more are the subject of an odd, allegorical film of two people caught up in a very weird vortex of circumstance. This little film has a "Twilight Zone" surrealism, but definitely keeps the viewer on edge as to what is going to happen next. The Music of Chance is a strange film about two men who virtually become serfs in modern day Pennsylvania.

Jim Nashe (Many Patinkin) picks up on a road a stranger who calls himself Jack Pozzi (James Spader) and is pulled into Pozzi's scheme to win large sums of money playing poker with two old multi-millionaires named Stone and Flower (Joel Gray and Charles Durning). Stone and Flower have an immense fortune built on top of a lottery win and have used it to insulate themselves from the real world and replace it with a perfectly functioning model world. They even have a little dollhouse model of their ideal world and are recreating it in real life. Pozzi has played poker with the two old men before and thinks that they will be easy marks if he takes them up on their invitation and play them again. Nashe stakes him the money he will need, but things go

wrong and Nashe and Pozzi find themselves owing the old men. To pay off the debt they must build a wall on the vast estate of Flower and Stone. This task is placed under the supervision of a particularly insensitive functionary played by M. Emmet Walsh.

There is a lot that is strange but compelling about this story. There is a hypnotic quality to Flower telling with absolute lack of self-doubt how they built their fortune and authoritatively philosophizing about the world. There is almost a supernatural quality about how the two men--dressed entirely in white--control the world around them, much of it modeled in miniature in their scale model. They are reminiscent of the gods on Olympus in Jason and the Argonauts who control the lives of humans, manipulating them with little models.

This is a story that has a very literal feel. It is based on a novel by Paul Auster and clearly has a very literary sensibility. In some ways it is a sort of fantasy akin to the writings of Franz Kafka. Ambiguity and uncertainty as to what is actually molding the fate of Nashe and Pozzi abound. Does the model world affect what is happening to our characters? Once they are limited to receiving their information from their overseer, how much of what he tells them can be believed? Perhaps the only false move in this compelling story is the very last scene which is a little clichéd. However, The Music of Chance is a compelling allegory and a genuine pleasure in its originality. My rating is a +2.

Boxing Helena

CAPSULE REVIEW: No, it's not a sports film. This macabre and erotic story of frustration, obsession, and revenge could almost make an episode of Tales from the Crypt. It will probably turn off many viewers, but for others there will be a certain fascination. This is a moderately well-done film if somewhat selective in its appeal. Rating: Low +1.

Dr. Nicholas Cavanaugh (Julian Sand) has overcome his unhappy childhood--mostly. The neglected son of a great surgeon is himself a great surgeon. He has a beautiful house, an attractive mistress, and a king-sized obsession. The object of his obsession is Helena (Sherilyn Fenn), a stunningly beautiful woman with whom he has had sex once (as apparently has just about every able-bodied man available) and who now wants no-

thing to do with him. Forget his status, his position as chief surgeon of his hospital, he cannot stop himself from thinking about and even stalking Helena...even to the point of climbing the tree outside her bedroom window in order to watch her love-making. Nick tries to invite Helena to his home only to be treated with contempt when she comes to a party he is throwing. He lures her back to the house the next day only to have her escape, running from the house and into the path of a hit-and-run driver. Nick could take her to the hospital but decides to treat her in his home, amputating both her legs and making her his prisoner. Eventually, when she tries to strangle her captor, Nick will amputate her arms also.

What we have then is a rather ghoulish variation on John Fowles' The Collector and at the same time an erotic fantasy. Nick lives out his dream of having his beloved Helena dependent on him and at the same time at his mercy. She obviously has objections to him personally, but he hopes if he is sufficiently disarming she will be left without a leg to stand on. The ending of the tale will be disappointing to some, but one that has a time-honored tradition, particularly in early film.

Boxing Helena is directed by Jennifer Chambers Lynch, daughter to David Lynch. Her father probably would have done the same story every bit as weirdly but it also would have been full of images that would be meaningful only to him. His daughter's style is at least comprehensible. Perhaps as one allusion to her having a famous father, incidentally, Lynch includes on the soundtrack the aria "O mia babbino caro" ("Oh my dear little pappa") from Puccini's Gianni Schicchi. Speaking of Puccini, to convey the upper class feel of Nick's house Lynch uses as background music to scenes in the house no less than four arias from Puccini and also fills the house with Greek statuary--indicating she does know high class when she encounters it. Of course, the primary piece of statuary, a reproduction of the Venus de Milo, does fit thematically into the film.

There are some problems with this story, but it does show promise for Lynch. My rating is a low +1.

Book Reviews by Dennis K Fischer

All reviews copyright (c) 1993 by Dennis K. Fischer

Our Angry Earth

by Isaac Asimov and Frederik Pohl
Tor, 1992, \$5.99

This may well be one of the most important works of either author and I urgently commend it to your attention. Asimov and Pohl have been very concerned about potential impending environmental disaster if our (global) public policies don't change, and they support their arguments with clear, scientific evidence which is accessible to the layman. They explain clearly what is happening with our ozone layer, what global warming is all about, and point out several other potential ecological disasters, but couched in such terms that they will not commit themselves to anything as yet unproven.

Even more valuable, Asimov and Pohl also provide potential political and practical solutions to some of the problems they foresee, so that the book is not all gloom and doom. Too often in recent science fiction environmentalists have been portrayed by the conservative wing of science fiction as out-and-out loons and crazies with nary a sensible outlook, rather than as committed people who are concerned about the welfare of this planet. It is true that there are fringe elements who, I believe mistakenly, wish to foresake technology and return to some kind of primitive tribalism for everyone, but that misguided notion is not reflective of the majority of environmentalists.

Anyone who is concerned about the future should make themselves aware of the infor-

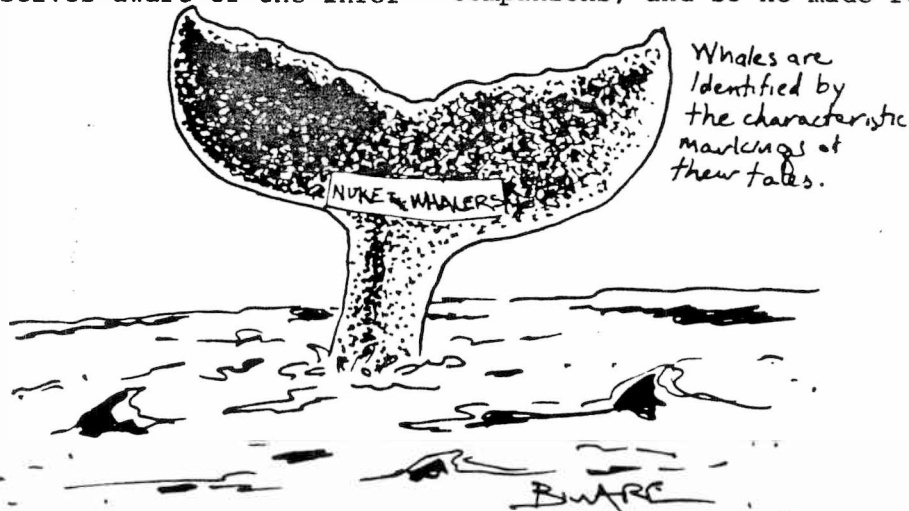
mation that this sane book contained. It is an urgent and intelligent call to action and a reminder of why we must take back democracy out of the hands of special and unthinking interests who serve no other constituency but themselves. This book does a far better job than Al Gore ever did of expressing the pressing concerns facing the future of our planet. Ignorance can be fatal. Be informed.

Green Shadows, White Whale

by Ray Bradbury

This is one of the best Bradbury books in some time, a short story collection masquerading as a novel centering around Bradbury's experiences in Ireland working with John Huston on the script for *Moby Dick* (on which Huston took an undeserved co-credit). Bradbury himself is the central protagonist, as he comes to Ireland and gets to know and love its people who in pubs tell him colorful and meaningful stories about themselves.

There is still poetry in Bradbury's prose, which is far better than the prose in Bradbury's poetry. His affection for his subject shines through in every line. But even more interesting is his re-creation of the monstrous Huston, himself a tormenting Ahab to be contained. Huston was frequently insensitive to others, possessed of a towering ego, but he did recognize talent and possessed the persistence necessary to bring a film to fruition. He was the type to enjoy playing practical jokes on his companions, and so he made rough sport with



sensitive souls such as Bradbury's.

One illustrative anecdote that appears in Huston's memoirs but not in Bradbury's concerns Bradbury's fear of automobiles ever since he witnessed a horrific crash outside his own home. Knowing that Bradbury feared travelling at high speeds, Huston started berating his chauffeur for driving too fast, saying "What are you trying to do, kill us?" even though they were only doing 30 mph. Bradbury picked up the tenor of terror, pleading slow down, please. The car slowed down, but Huston did not let up on the charade of terror until Bradbury had been reduced to a quivering mass of insecurity, fearful that his life could end at any second due to the "unsafe" driving of the driver.

One of the most memorable bits in Green Shadows, White Whale concerns Bradbury's reluctance to give a truly talented beggar-musician any money, though he had proved an easy touch for all the others, with Bradbury and Huston trying to reconcile why Bradbury felt this way. It is a story both very human and very touching, and has haunted me ever since I read it, just as memories of Ireland have clearly haunted Bradbury.

Most travel memoirs are at their most interesting when the trips the writers take are at their most horrible. Bradbury's affection work goes against that grain, distilling a heady essence of Ireland that will serve as nectar to those with fond memories of other, colorful climes.

The Monster Show:
A Cultural History of Horror

by David J. Skal
Norton, 1992, \$25.00

Skal has fashioned a most welcome addition to the history of horror films, a book which interestingly and expertly supplements what others have done before while adding fresh insight and information and without wearily repeating material that has been covered all too thoroughly. Skal is the author of Hollywood Gothic, the definitive study of how Dracula made the transition from book to film, extensively covering the German (Nosferatu), Lugosi, and Spanish language versions.

For this current work, Skal has explored the stage originations of other famous monsters, sought cultural referents that might have led to particular tastes in horror,

and delved deeply into the careers of early horror showman such as Tod Browning, Hamilton Dean, and Horace Liveright. As the author of a book on horror film directors myself, my hat's off to Mr. Skal for his excellent and entertainingly presented research, plus as a story of how cultural obsessions and values influence its art, Skal puts Kracauer's ludicrous From Caligari to Hitler to shame. Anyone with a serious interest in the subject should add this book to their library.

Star Trek Memories

by William Shatner
with Chris Kreski
Harper-Collins, 1993, \$22.00

As someone who wrote half the first issue of the first regularly published, nationally syndicated magazine devoted exclusively to Star Trek (no, not Starlog; they are supposed to be devoted to visual science fiction of all types and I once talked to the then Star Log editor David McDonnell about interviewing literary SF authors to broaden StarLog's scope and SF authors' audiences, which in limited terms, the magazine proceeded to do), I cannot deny my pro-Trek bias and hence my interest in this particular work.

For Star Trek's 25th anniversary, the late Gene Roddenberry had prepared a coffee table book on Trek's history which needed approval from a particular portrayer of Vulcans who, disgruntled with some of his treatment in the book, withheld the OK and the book has yet to appear. William Shatner, best known as Captain Kirk, decided upon completion of Star Trek VI to do his own book of Star Trek memoirs which has recently appeared in hardcover.

Now Shatner has already written an autobiography, a really wretched one entitled "Where No Man Has Gone Before," which was co-written with two female authors of no discernible writing talent who had lucked into a freak best-seller by collecting and getting Bantam to publish a collection of Trek fanzine stories. Believe me, this was one appalling book filled with metaphors of what a mighty stallion "young" Shatner was.

Shatner later decided to trade in on his name by adding to a series of books with "Tek" in the title, all reputedly written by Ron Goulart, and his story contribution to Star Trek V: The Final Frontier proved a bad rehash of the standard Roddenberry En-

rise-meets-God story that actually managed to be dumber and duller than the initial cinematic Trek foray (and because this sometimes a just universe, was the only film to actually lose money). True to form, Star Trek Memories gets to a bad start:

Snoring, smiling broadly [have you ever seen anyone do both at the same time?], I am secure in the warmth and comfort of a carefree, dreamless sleep, and then it hits.

Instantly, my peace is shattered [cliche] by the brain-piercing [anything vital damaged?] electronic screeching that blares and buzzes from my evil [what, is it possessed by the devil?] digital alarm clock... [Oran-gy-red block-style numbers] blurry taunts immediately tell me that my eyesight isn't what it used to be, and, upon squinting [not only do the numbers on his alarm clock talk, they also squint!], that it's also 5:15 AM. I'm late.

...I rise from bed and start walking. "Left foot...right foot, left foot, right." I repeatedly give this order to my brain, and after a short struggle, the gray matter grudgingly obeys [Shatner's Brain has feet?!].

Fortunately, Shatner gives up this cute-bad, informal style after the opening chapter and the book really does become worthwhile, or at least of genuine interest to Star Trek fans eager to learn things that haven't already been contained in Steven Whitfield's The Making of Star Trek. As for the book is that Shatner includes a number of comments from his coworkers over the years, and finds himself surprised that his egotism has alienated some of them.

Shatner also reveals the open secret that Majel Barrett was cast because she was the married producer's girl-friend and the so-open secret that Nichelle Nichols slept with Roddenberry to get her part. After years of the mythology building the image of the happy Trek family, it is refreshing sometimes to get a truer, more human picture of the participants. However you regard it, as one of the great cultural artifacts of our time or a light on the face of science fiction which perpetuated Captain Future-style space mas, Star Trek has had an undeniable in-

fluence on the public perception of science fiction, not to mention having the happy effect of drawing large numbers of females into the long-time male-dominated science fiction fandom. (Somehow little girls were not encouraged to read that Buck Rogers stuff but were instead spoonfed on romances where all it takes to live happily ever after was to marry a handsome stranger; however, it was OK to watch Bill Shatner get his short torn open every other week or flip for the cool intelligence and assurance of Leonard Nimoy, hence a large exposure to SF and a large infusion of femmes into fandom.)

The book contains a number of black-and-white photos, some more clearly printed than others, including some interesting behind-the-scenes shots. Given Paramount-owned Pocket Books penchant for being the exclusive purveyor of Trek material, it probably cost a pretty penny for the numerous copyrighted photos, but I'm sure Harper-Collins expects sales to more than offset those costs.

While there is no question that Shatner possesses both an enormous ego and a sometimes questionable sense of humor, there is also no question that he was a key player in the Star Trek phenomenon and it is pleasant to have these particular recollections preserved for those who care about the show. Shatner comes up with the kind of material that it would take you dozens of those exploitative CreationCons (talk about con-jobs!) to hear from the stars' own lips, and all for a price that's less than the preferred seating charge [yes, they have a two-tiered system where front-row seats at talks and panels are reserved for those who paid extra for them]. I don't think Shatner's too worried this will cut into his \$10,000 speaking fees and at least this time fans willing to spend the money needn't worry about another rip-off. 'Nuff said.



REVERSE SEXUAL HARASSMENT

Book and Tape Reviews by Lan

All reviews copyright (c) 1994 by Lan

Darkness on the Ice

by Lois Tilton
Pinnacle, 1993, \$4.50

In World War II, the Germans had a weather station in Greenland which gave their air force advanced information to help plan attacks on England. Guarding this outpost was difficult, but the SS found the perfect spy/guard, Wolff, who was a vampire, and who would find the "eternal" darkness suitable to his "taste". Of course, any Allied soldiers who came to investigate would be his--in more ways than one. But what happens to the soldiers in the outpost until the enemy comes to investigate?

Lois Tilton has written a chilling (in several senses of the word) novel about this scenario. From the first few pages through the end the reader is drawn into the dark world of a vampire and his search for sustenance in the darkness on the Greenland ice sheet.

Highly recommended, especially for vampire fans.

Nightseer

by Laurell K. Hamilton
Roc, 1992, \$4.99

Keleios has an array of powers which daunt others in this realistic world of magic and demons. Unfortunately, she also carries with her a demonmark which could open the doors to even greater powers, but also expose her soul to unwanted danger and eternal damnation. In her thirst for revenge on the witch Harque who had murdered her mother, Keleios must chose to use her innate abilities, or draw on the hidden

powers accessed through her demonmark, and risk losing herself and those she loves.

The writing in this classic epic of good versus evil is more than competent, and the world Hamilton draws is rich with color, background and definite laws in which magic operates. The first battle is almost overdrawn and leaves the reader breathless, but then the author settles down and writes a good adventure.

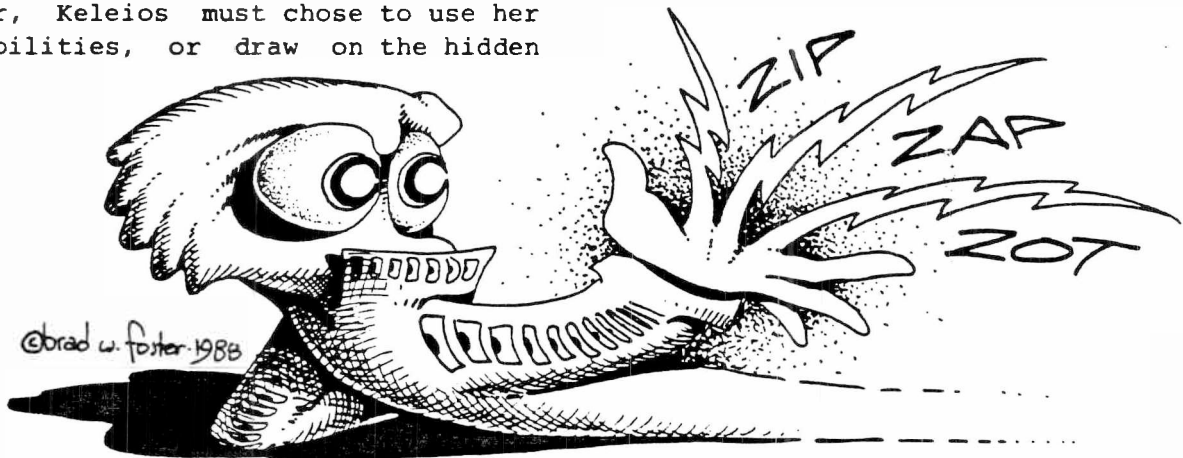
I am looking to read more by this talented new writer.

The Imperium Game

by K.D. Wentworth
DelRey, 1994, \$4.50

A game of the Roman Empire--something like Westworld--has been put into place by HabiTek in this future Earth, but something is going awry. The gods of ancient Rome, who were designed to interact with the humans playing the Game, are exceeding their parameters, and Kerickson is trying to find out why. He is the prime suspect in the real death of the Emperor (as opposed to virtual death, which means the players pass through the "Underworld" for a time before being allowed back in the Game), but he needs to be free to get to the computers to find out why Mars is demanding blood sacrifices, and Minerva is stuck in her owl shape eating mice, and his ex-wife has become the goddess Proserpina, wife to Pluto. The players are getting nervous and they cannot leave...and there are now players in the Game that aren't supposed to be there.

Wentworth has set up a wonderful scenario which is intriguing to a classics person like me. It took a few pages for me to get



used to the role-playing approach, but after that the jokes and situations were indeed humorous--and serious. The murder mystery at the heart of the trouble is eventually solved, but not before blood is shed (not fatally, though at times it comes close), and the computer system goes almost completely haywire.

K.D. Wentworth is a name to watch; I am looking forward to her next novel.

Once Around the Bloch
An Unauthorized Autobiography

by Robert Bloch
Tor, 1993, \$22.95

This is a delightfully written history of one of the leading writers of horror, scripts and humor in the sf/horror/fantasy a la Weird Tales in the field. Most people remember Robert Bloch as the author of Psycho, which Alfred Hitchcock made into one of the premiere horror/shocker films in the history of cinema. Yet there is a huge depth of background that few people know about which is the bulk of this book.

Bloch does not take himself too seriously in this expose of his life. Yes, there are serious moments, but he reports on them tongue-in-cheek, and reveals the truly warm person he is. Yes, he does acknowledge the quote (recently attributed to Stephen King) "I have the heart of a small boy...in a jar on my desk," as his, and he does devote some time to the Psycho production, but these are minor things compared to his long-standing career as a writer for Weird Tales, other magazines, and scripts for Hollywood. I found the personal interactions with many of the stars my favorite parts of the book. His comments about Joan Crawford have prompted me to look for more of her films. And what Robert Bloch did for political campaigning leaves me more horrified than any fiction he has written.

You don't need to be a horror fan to appreciate this fascinating study of Bloch about himself. Once Around the Bloch will be on my nominating ballot for the non-fiction Hugo category.

King of the Grey

by Richard A. Knaak
Questar, 1993, \$5.50

This is the first novel I've read by Richard Knaak, and I must say that I am im-



pressed. I have seen Richard at many conventions where he has built a reputation of hawking his own books, but I have little interest in the TSR fantasy books, so I haven't gotten any. However, when he mentioned that this novel was unrelated to any of his previous work, I was immediately interested.

The Grey are a group of phantasms, spirits, waifs, which draw their life and power from those "real" people who believe in them. They choose a human person to be their king, someone who can give them an anchor in the real world, and give them substance so they can experience "life".

Jeremiah Todtmann is the one chosen to be the King, but there are factions among the Grey, each with their own reasons for wanting Jeremiah to favor their particular group. The problem is that Jeremiah has no idea about anything in this shadow realm, what his powers are, what he is supposed to do, and he is ignorant of the various "political" groups, so at first stays with the one which gives him peace and stability. He wants to return to the real world and give up whatever power he is supposed to have. Jeremiah does not know why his predecessor chose him.

But he is past the point of return, and he learns quickly what has to be done, and

what he can do. But will it be enough to stave off the truly evil groups that seem to be winning domination in the land of the Grey?

Knaak's writing is very good, and it reminds me a lot of Charles Grant and Fritz Leiber. The first few chapters echoed portions of two of Leiber's novels: Our Lady of Darkness and The Sinful Ones. Although this might seem I am saying the novel is derivative, it isn't. It's a wonderfully haunting book with some real resolution and changes for the main characters. I recommend this, and look forward to his next novel. (I might even try one of his other fantasy novels too!)

To Save the Sun

by Ben Bova and A.J. Austin
Tor, 1992, \$21.95

In the distant future there is an empire of Man covering a hundred star systems. Earth is still around, but has only one important purpose: the humans living there, the "primitives", are the base-line genetic stock for Man. Their genetic strain is constantly compared with the inhabitants of far-flung colonies for deviations and genetic drift. In this way the human race tries to remain "pure". Unfortunately scientists have discovered that the Sol, the Earth's sun, has increasingly become unstable and is soon to nova...not in millions of years, but in mere centuries.

One scientist, Adela de Montgarde, developed a theory how the sun can be saved, but the notion is so radical that the council of scientists do not want to attempt it. Emperor Nicholas, however, sees more than just saving Sol; he sees the development of new technologies and new lines of thought which would benefit the stagnation that science and his Empire have fallen into. He decides to go with the plan to save Earth's sun, and sets himself up for opposition from scientists, politicians, and the peoples of various other star systems.

The story strays from the main plot when Adela, as wife and representative of Emperor Nicholas, and stepmother of his successor Javas, goes to convince a world, whose resources are vital to the project, to back the Emperor. Lots of political intrigue and danger are involved, but in the end she does convince them.

The basic story was fine, fast-paced, and interesting. I objected to the inserted

subplot for a while until I got interested in it, but I think the book would have been better with it shortened, or left out altogether. Of course that would have made it a very short novel. On the other hand, a shortened version of that, together with some other worlds being "convinced" of the validity of the plan, may have been more interesting.

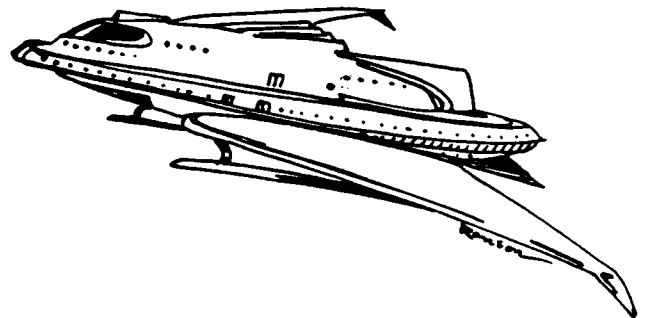
All in all, I was not disappointed--Bova's work is always interesting--but I don't think this was his best effort.

Empire Builders

by Ben Bova
Tor, 1993, \$21.95

Empire Builders is the sequel to Privateers. Dan Randolph, who never played by the rules, is finally nailed by the GEC, the Global Economic Council. He loses his financial empire, and is pursued by more than one group that wants to incarcerate him, if not outright kill him. The problem is that he has knowledge of an impending disaster to Earth. Global warming has been evident, but one of his researchers informed him, before he lost his companies, that within ten years there was going to be a sudden shift in climate worldwide, not the gradual one people expected. Yet to stop the "greenhouse plateau" would entail a massive, worldwide effort in converting everyone from fossil fuels to nuclear fusion and solar power. And the only group with enough clout and resources to pull this off is the one that took away his company, the GEC!

Bova mixes political intrigue with Randolph's personal triumphs and losses to write a fast-paced, interesting novel about the near future. Bova pushes the idea once again of a global community which needs to transcend nationalism in order to save planet Earth.



Science Fiction and Fantasy Book Review
Index, Volume 20, 1989

Compiled by Hal Hall

Texas A&M University Library, 1993, \$10.00

Hall Hall is slowly catching up to the present with his series of SFBRJ volumes. He lists the books that have been reviewed in various places, including fanzines, in the year 1989. They are neatly referenced and the addresses of the sources is also given. This includes all the books reviewed, regardless of the copyright of the book --if the review appeared in 1989 in the sources he is using, it gets cited. Thus Andre Norton's The Time Traders which was published in 1958 but reviewed in Niekas in 1989, is included. This is an invaluable source for those who are doing research in SF and fantasy.

Mantra #1-9

Written by George Barr

Malibu Comics, 1993/94, \$1.95 each

I've been away from reading comics for the past few years, ever since it got too expensive to keep buying the magazines I never got around to reading while I was also buying books, other SF magazines, and videos. Malibu Comics is a new company, but has produced a number of titles which look very interesting. Getting this series was a real treat.

Mantra is a woman who possesses mystic powers. Her body has been taken over by a man, and Lukasz doesn't like it. Archimage is a wizard who has been battling the forces of Deadbone for 1500 years. He gathered his strongest warriors and gave them a measure of immortality. Their souls live on to fight for him by taking over nearby bodies when the current corpus becomes a corpse. Lukasz is the best warrior Archimage has, but in issue #1 of Mantra he gets funneled into Eden Blake, and now has to function as a woman.

He doesn't like it.

Couple this with the fact that the memories of the host body are suppressed, and things get even more interesting. Eden is divorced, has two children, and a job Lukasz knows nothing about. Eden is also a typical female comic-book heroine (pretty, well-built, and sexy), but this is in conflict with Lukasz's basic desire for women, where Eden's body is attracted to men.

The issues of the series try to deal with both the mystical battles and troubles, and him trying to fight against male opponents who considering merely a weak woman. The other hazard is trying to ward off sexual advances. Lukasz also has to learn how to handle the mystical powers he now possesses. Then there's Eden's personal life which Lukasz has to put together from the situations and encounters in which he/she finds himself.

It is a fascinating series, though filled with some sexual bias, but it is interesting enough to keep me reading. There are other superheroes in this "Ultraverse" series, and I will be reading them as time permits. As for Mantra, I recommend it. |*|

Michael Longcor...Undead!

by Michael Longcor

Firebird, 1992, \$12.00

"Another live tape from Moonwulf?" I hear you cry. "Well, yes," I reply, "but this one contains mostly new material, and it has the infamous 'Rhinitillexomania' song on it." That has brightened the eyes of those I tell, and it sells the tape.

But that is definitely not the best track on this, the latest of Moonwulf's ever-growing list of audiotapes. Almost every one is a winner, and as I told the inquiring person above, there is no repeat of previously record material (that I know of), and all but one is original with Mike (the lyrics to "The Last Hero" are by G.K. Chesterton). Songs like "March on Fort Sackville" and "The Ballad of James A. Moon" are intriguing as well as informative. Mike's introduction to them (and his other historical pieces) has taught me more about American history than I learned in school. There are humorous songs ("Truck Driving Vampire", "The Auction", "The Kitchen Junk Drawer") and serious ones ("Falconsbane", "Tribes of the Working Draft", "Building Fires"), sensitive ("Eternity's Waltz") and tongue-in-cheek ("Mow Your Own Lawn"), but all of them are good. My favorite song on the whole tape is "Eternity's Waltz", which Mike wrote for his beloved wife Lea; the lyrics and music are perfectly matched, and the feeling of love, appreciation and devotion comes through.

This one is a keeper, and well worth the price.

What's a Hoosier?

by Juanita Coulson and Michael Longcor
Dodeka Records Ltd., 1992, \$11.00
(848 Dodge Ave., Suite 220,
Evanston, IL 60202)

Have you ever wondered what a Hoosier was? Even after listening to this tape I am not sure, but I have a better understanding of the role that Indiana played in US history. The two filking Hoosiers, Juanita and Moonwulf, recorded most of the songs here at a meeting of the Indiana Historical Society in March of 1992 (some tracks were redone to improve the sound quality), and most were written by Juanita (and her husband Buck) and Mike, based on true incidents and about real people from Indiana history. I picked up this tape after hearing the historical pieces on Mike's other recordings, figuring that I would learn more about US history. I wasn't wrong. If you have an interest along those lines, this is an interesting and important tape to own.

Our Fathers of Old

by Leslie Fish
(with Joe Bethancourt)
Random Factors, 1993, \$11.00
(John & Mary Creasy, 3754 W 170th St.
Torrance CA 90504-1204)

Leslie Fish can be credited with making filk a reasonably viable venture. Her earliest record/tape was (as I recall) Solar Sailer which was a success. In the years that followed Leslie was in demand first at Star Trek conventions, then at general SF cons, to sing and perform. Many of her compositions have become standard filking fare. And she was one of the first to bring Kipling's poetry into filk.

She has had several tapes with her music, Kipling's words. Our Fathers of Old is merely the latest, but probably the best of the lot. There is at least one repeat from other tapes ("Female of the Species") but the rest are new. Her music adds depth to the poetry, and this tape is a must for all fans of either Kipling or Fish. If you like both, this is a double treat.

Wheelchair in High Gear

by Renee Alper
Miri Records, 1994, \$10.00

I am always apprehensive about reviewing books and tapes by people I know. What do I say if I really don't like the results? I have long since decided that I will be honest, and treat the piece of work individually and independent of the artist. On the other hand, it helps when I like the results of the person's efforts, and can commend the product whole-heartedly.

Such is the case here. The tape is excellent. There are a few flaws, which I will get to, but I've listened to this several times already traveling back and forth from school and I can tell people that they should get this one. It's a \$10.00 well invested.

First, the flaws. Renee's voice sometimes sounds like it's at the end of a long tube. It sounds as though it were recorded in an echo chamber, set on treble. The upside of this is that you can hear her and the lyrics clearly. The dynamics from one cut to another are mixed. In particular, on side two the boisterous dixieland arrangement for "Criminal Rag" gives way to the quiet and sensitive tone and lyrics of "Alien Landing". It takes a quick twist of the volume control to hear the background (as I said above, Renee's voice still comes through clearly).

So what's good about the tape? Everything else. Like the precursor Four on the Floor (reviewed in LL #39), there are superb arrangements for the songs. Most of them are original with Renee, and it struck me as I listened to it during my travels just how GOOD those arrangements are. They do not overpower the singing or lyrics, but they fit well with each song. This is midi programming at its best. I tend to forget just how good Renee and her brother Gregory are at pre-programming her songs in filks since she has done it as long as I can remember. The tape does justice to their hard work and talent. The instrumental solos between some verses ("Natira's Song" and "Alien Landing" in particular) add to the power of each one.

The songs also show the varied talent of Renee's writing ability. Most associate her with humorous songs, but she has written some very serious and sensitive ones as well. There is a good sampling of her output here.

In short, get this tape!

Mid-Life Crisis

by Cynthia McQuillin & Dr. Jane Robinson
 Unlikely Publications, 1993, \$11.00
 (PO Box 8542, Berkeley, CA 94707-8542)

This is a tape designed to convey the feeling one would get sitting in the front row of a concert given by this pair of lovely ladies. Most of the songs are humorous, with some serious overtones. There is a warning that not all songs would be suitable for the general public, but those are usually the most fun ones on this recording ("Sister Immaculate Conception", "The Chocolate Song" and "Crosstown Bus"). Some are serious tongue-in-cheek ("Have a Nice Day", "The Blame Game", "Movin' the Bones", "The 'I Don't Know It' Blues", "The PMS Song"), some are more serious ("Never too Late", "I Would Walk With You"). All in all it's a wonderful talented mix of songs and voices. And probably one that you would not want your mother to hear--which makes it all the better.

King of Filk

by Quentin Long
 Kingdom of Filk, 1993, \$11.00
 (845 Laverne Way, Los Altos, CA 94022-1108)

When I got this in the mail for review, I was a little puzzled. I had heard the name Quentin Long before, but couldn't place him. A quick check through some filk contacts put him into focus. And so did listening to the tape.

Overall, the tape is so-so. The funny bits are, for the most part, good. The arrangements for many of them detracts from the lyrics, but one gets the point and so



the humor still comes through. Still, Quentin's use of the electronic MIDI is overdone, and I found the droning in "I Hate Little Fire Lizards" more annoying than complementary to the lyrics.

After hearing Quentin's serious songs, I think he should stick with the humorous stuff. This tape is a good effort, but more control should be exerted over arrangements and choice. The funny stuff is humorous, but the serious material falls flat.

Sheep, Lies and Audio Tape

Rampant Rat Productions, 1991, \$10.00

and

All You Can Eat

Rampant Rat Productions, 1992, \$10.00

by Greg Keeler
 (Box 5093, Bozeman, MT 59717)

When John and Mary Creasy handed me these tapes for review, they commented that if Greg Keeler doesn't think himself a filker, he should. I have to agree. I almost didn't.

The first track on Sheep, Lies and Audio Tape, "Post Western Blues" almost turned me off because of the musical style, but I kept listening, and I'm glad I did. Keeler's lyrics and wry (and sometimes blatant) sense of humor is couched in appropriate formats for the songs and styles he chooses. In "WD-40 Polka" he indeed uses a polka beat and style, complete with a Polish accent for the words. He used the Beach Boys' "Little Deuce Coupe" for his parody, "Little Bitch Creek", complete with the falsetto chorus. Many of the songs border on sexism and near racism, but it's all done tongue-in-cheek. I played "Mexican Serenade" for my cousin who is fluent in Spanish, and she cracked up, and had to stop the tape several times before translating the words for me.

Keeler continues his madcap parodies on All You Can Eat, which proudly boasts on its cover, "With Bill Clinton on Bass". (John said that Bill Clinton is Greg's neighbor from across the street who happens to play bass guitar.) His outrageous lyrics and slaps at a variety of serious topics remind me of Tom Lehrer. And he even slips in one serious song, "Night is Through", which is very good.

Interspersed between each track of both tapes are "Dumb Coyote Stories", little

snippets of life and actions of a dumb coyote which contain some kernel of philosophy of life. Some are humorous, some serious, but all are strange.

Both tapes are worth the price, and I hope to purchase a new one when next I see the Creasys.

Freedom, Flight, and Fantasy
Songs by Mercedes Lackey & Leslie Fish

by Heather Alexander
Firebird, 1992, \$12.00

At the urging Mike Longcor I bought this tape by Heather Alexander. I went on to pick up two more by her, so it had the desired effect. I guess I can now be numbered as one of her fans in the Midwest, a member of the Heather Alexander Appreciation Society, headed by Mike himself. Once you listen to her sultry voice, it's easy to understand why I like her. She's very good. Very, very good.

Heather's alto voice is clear and melodious. She feels the lyrics, and conveys their meaning in sultry tones. The arrangements border on "cutesy" in some cases, but Heather overcomes the over-use of the MIDI by being serious and professional about her part of the venture.

All the songs were written by Mercedes Lackey and Leslie Fish. When I heard "Arafel's Saga", I was reminded by the Technical Difficulties' arrangement with music by Kathy Mar. At first I thought the tunes were the same, but they are definitely different. The songs all tell stories, and Heather makes the most of her voice and the lyrics to keep them interesting.

Songsmith
Songs from Andre Norton's Witch World

by Heather Alexander
Firebird, 1993, \$12.00

All the songs on this tape are based on the Witch World novels by Andre Norton. The lyrics from the novel Songsmith by Norton and A.C. Crispin were written by Anne herself. And other lyrics and music were supplied by Shoshanna Hathaway, Leslie Fish, and Heather Alexander. This is a big production for one of the finest ladies in SF and Fantasy writing, Andre Norton, and the cast assembled to produce this could barely be better.

Heather's vocal arrangements make the

tape outstanding. Everything else--the lyrics, stories, arrangements--is superb. With the subject matter it would be difficult to come up with something bad (though I am sure some amateurs have done so), but nothing is wrong here. Whether you are familiar with the Witch World series or not, the songs are lovely, and in music itself there is beauty.

In this tape is a rare treat for the Andre Norton fans, for Leslie Fish fans, for Shoshanna Hathaway fans, for Heather Alexander fans, or just the fans of story-telling and good music. One could do worse than passing up this tape. But one would be better by getting and listening to it.

Midsummer
Songs of Celtic Folk and Faerie Tale

by Heather Alexander
Sea Fire Productions, 1992, \$10.00
(PO Box 875, Moss Beach, CA 94038-0875)

Of the three tapes currently out by Heather Alexander, this one gives the best range of her talent. All the songs, music and lyrics, were written by her (except "Tomorrow I Leave for Battle", whose lyrics were written by Philip R. Obermarck), and all the instruments (guitar, fiddle, mandolin, bass, keyboards, drums) are played by Heather, and all vocals (and harmonies) are by her as well. There is an incredible range of talent packed into this young lady; one listen through this tape and that fact is very apparent.

The songs vary in style, with more serious than humorous ones. The title track ends the first side, and is from/about Shakespeare's A Midsummer's Night's Dream. My favorite song is the last one on the album: "Only the Music". Set in waltz tempo, it's a lilting song about love and dance.

If you have to choose one of the three, this is the one.

I'll Build a Stairway to Parodies
New and Ancient Lyrics
by Raoul I. Benefiche

Good Taste
A Bunch of Songs by Harry Smothers

Egad, an Adage, 1993, \$6.00
(303 16th Street, Denver Co 80202)

This is published by Benefiche and Smothers as an "Ace Double", both bound to-

gether back-to back. Both Benefiche and Smothers are pseudonyms, as if neither wants to claim credit for some of the good or maybe the atrocious parodies within.

Benefiche prefaces the volume with an argument of why he writes parodies and the justification for their existence. Although interesting, it doesn't convince me. Some parodies are funny, some not, some just insensitive. I am bothered mostly by the opinion of too many fans thinking that Filk is only parody. This merely perpetuates that myth.

The lyrics, however, do range from good to bad, funny to plain disgusting. Given the right mood, I suppose, even the worst lyrics would sound funny. There is some good stuff here, and occasionally there are notes as to how the parody came to be written from both Smothers and Benefiche. As with Benefiche's first compilation of parodies, 10¢ a Filk, the lyrics are printed on one side of the page, leaving the facing page free for chords and notes. The margins are wide enough that the staples can be removed and the pages punched so as to be placed in ring binders (much more useful in playing/singing the songs).

One thing which might have been helpful to find these 53 songs (28 from Smothers and 25 from Benefiche) was an index by title. But I suppose that becomes useless if one takes the book apart to interleaf it with other songs.

For those interested in parodies, this book, and its predecessor, are very good.

Rand and Adam:
Poor Man's Copyright (1993)

by Ookla the Mok
Self-Produced, 1993, \$5.00
(419 Auburn Ave., Buffalo NY 14213;
(716) 882-3390)

This is one of two tapes I picked up at FILKONTARIO 4. Rand Bellaira and Adam Smith were there with drummer Luis Garcia and bass-player Tom Ronan, and they did a set as a group. This is not the first "filk rock" group I have heard--the Black Book Band is very good but performs too seldom. Ookla the Mok is good, but loud. Once the volume was under control, they even sounded better. Adam's voice is a very clear baritone, and Rand is a very pleasant tenor. Everyone hoped to hear much more from them.

This tape is not the complete band--the back-up is acoustic guitars, and thus the

voices come through much more clearly. They are muddled in spots, and occasionally the guitars drown out the vocals, but that's an engineering problem. The tape is arranged a bit differently. There is a Hot Side and a Cool Side--the face of each side altered with acrylic paints to depict snow-capped peaks and flames. It's a clever technique, but the build-up sometimes makes it difficult for me to eject the tape from my car tape-player. (One suggestion is to make a copy first--the heat in the car player melts the paint!)

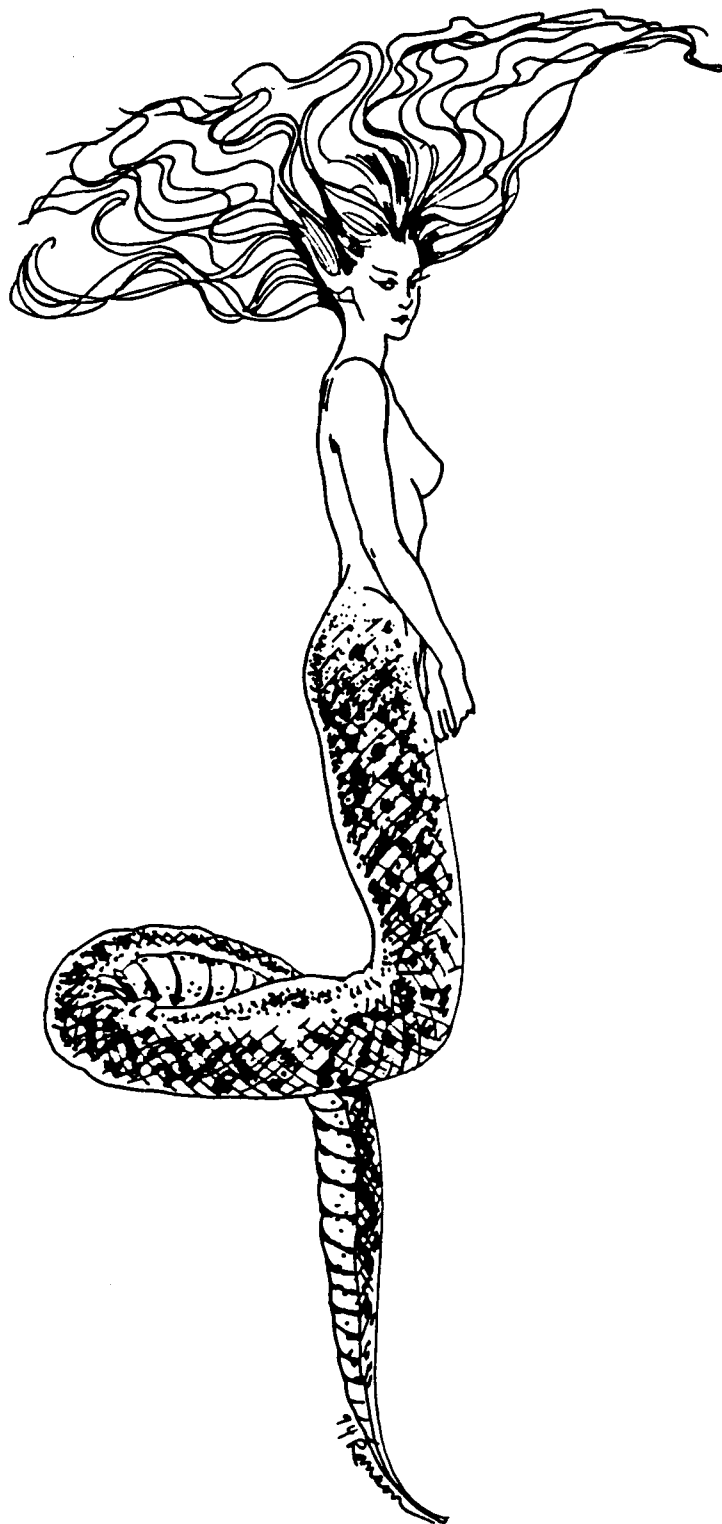
What about the music itself? I can say they had fun putting this together. The songs are mostly funny or tongue in cheek. Whether they are original (most seem to be) or parody of existing songs, or actual popular rock pieces, I do not know. My knowledge of contemporary rock is limited and no information is given on the J-card. But the songs are very clever and deal with a variety of subjects in popular culture. There are references to comic-book characters, cartoons, and even more serious topics (one is called "Renior's Song"). Some are disgusting ("Baby's Head"), some just plain weird ("Stranger in the Mirror"). Most of the tempos are upbeat rock, which makes it unusual for filk, but the topics are definitely filk topics. The harmonic blend of Adam and Rand's voices is superb; this is very evident in "Renior's Song". I am fond of the one entitled "Math", mainly because that's my teaching field. But I think my favorite cut on the entire tape is "View Master". And the more you listen to it, the more interesting things I hear.

I recommend getting this tape if only to stretch the idea of what people think filk is. I also want to encourage Rand and Adam to keep working together. They have a lot to offer. Their voices blend well and in different ways than Larry Warner's and Joey Shoji's (the closest comparison in filk). In another year I think we'll be hearing some wonderful work from this group.

Castles and Skyscrapers

by Urban Tapestry
Urban Tapestry Publishing, 1994,
C\$14.00; US\$12.00
(The Village by the Grange, 55 McCaul St.
Box 123, Toronto, Ontario CANADA M5T 2W7)

Urban Tapestry is a group composed of three women: Alison Durno, Jodi Krangle and



Debbie Ridpath Ohi. All three live in the Toronto area and were encouraged greatly to put this tape out by the filk community. This was the second tape I picked up at FILKONTARIO IV, and I don't think that the fans will be disappointed. In fact, I suspect that this will have an impact on the filk community much the same as Julia Ecklar's Divine Intervention, the Childs-Helton's Escape from Mundania, or Tom Smith's Who Let Him in Here?. But direct comparison to these tapes, and to filk groups like Technical Difficulties or Musical Chairs is unfair to all parties involved. Urban Tapestry is a unique group, and analogy is a poor way to describe them.

All the songs are written by members of the group. Allison and Jodi sing the leads and Debbie plays flute. Most of the other instruments are played by them with some help from Carl Gardiner and Steven West (all this information is on the J-card).

Now let's get down to specifics.

The voices are beautiful. The harmonies are exquisite. The blend of vocals and instrumentals surpasses what I've heard on many tapes. Debbie's flute is used sparingly but effectively. The topics range from sensitive to humorous, and the sultry vocal blend from Allison and Jodi makes me want more.

The two lead singers use their vocal ranges effectively, though I suspect not to their fullest capacity. Allison Durno's "Two Voices" is a haunting song with a melody which weaves up and down a two octave scale. "The Ancient Yearning" also uses the double-scale range. I would like to hear more music like this where Allison and Jodi CAN make use of their vocal talents.

Each song is an expression of talent. Even the humorous ones show the versatility of composition the group has. It's difficult to pick out favorites from such a fine selection, but currently "Two Voices", "The Ancient Yearning", "Urban Lullaby", "Desert and Forest" (an Elfquest song), "My Jalapeno Man" and "This Is For You" are near the top--in no particular order.

Is there anything wrong with this tape? My only quibble is that there is too much tape left over on either side--which means I have to wait too long until the next side starts. I suspect that I will wear this one out with repeated playings and have to get another one, which would be an encouragement for Urban Tapestry to produce another one soon--and THAT I would like to see.

Needless to say, I HIGHLY recommend this tape. |*|

Post

Scriptings

I first started to put this lettercolumn together for *Lan's Lantern* #41 and had intended to include all the letters up to that point. But I ran out of time, and published that issue without a lettercolumn. As I inputted the letters for this issue, I decided to put those comments pertinent to the general issues, and leave the comments on the Special Issues for the next Special. I also tried to organize the letters to run sequentially from LL #30 to #41. I mostly succeeded...but you will find some things mixed up. Bear with me and the comments--more will be in the next issue.

L. Sprague de Camp
3453 Hearst Castle Way
Plano, TX 75025

Comment on Gordie Dickson on Rudyard Kipling in #38: The story I always heard was that Kipling was denied the Laureateship because Queen Victoria was offended by his poem "The Widow at Windsor." I don't know any details of the Kipling-Laureateship connection--or disconnection.

John Thiel
30 N. 19th Street
Lafayette, IN 47904

Arkham House is the most difficult firm to locate that I have ever seen. They did not used to advertise very much,

but one could be aware of their existence. Today, I don't know where there might be any sign of them, although there are a few dealers carrying their editions. The article by Ben Indick surprised me. I had heard from someone that they had gone out of business. According to Ben, they're still thriving, even publishing current writers--a good idea and, as Ben says, in their best traditions.

The article also has more information on the House than I have seen presented before. I got autographed copies of several of his Arkham House and Mycroft & Moran anthologies from August Derleth, at least one of which I still have, and that makes me feel rather close to Arkham, but nothing in their publicity ever did. Ben has some insightful and close information about its doings. I've seen signs of the matter of estate disputes from there myself. Also the statement that there have been forgeries of Arkham House books is a useful one, and I thank Ben for making it.

Dick Lynch
PO Box 1350
Germantown MD 20875

I wish I had known about the A. E. Van Vogt issue. We interviewed him in *Chat* over a decade ago, and some of the

interview may have been useful as background for your other contributors. You're correct, by the way, that Van Vogt was paid a settlement fee for *Alien*. \$50,000 was the reported figure, for which Van Vogt renounced his complaint and the producers admitted no wrongdoing. Back then, I guess that was good money.

Craig Ledbetter
PO Box 5367
Kingwood, TX 77325

The letter in #39 by Jessica Amanda Simonson on Japanese Samurai Cinema was worth the entire issue! What an education it was. Try and encourage her to do some sort of article on the 1000 Samurai films she has seen. What a treat THAT would be!

[[Well, Jessica, how about it?]]

Ruth Berman
2809 Drew Avenue S
Minneapolis, MN 55416

I've been trying to figure out what gave Mike Glicksohn the impression that "I require a speaker's fee to attend a con," but am baffled. For that matter, I'm baffled by your explanation that I don't require a speaker's fee myself, it's just that I'm willing to pay people at my Library Conventions who do require fees. I don't run cons (library or other). Perhaps you're confusing me with someone else?

[[From a later loc from Ruth]]

Looking at Mike Glicksohn's letter with a copy of *Lan's Lantern* #35 open in front of me, I've finally succeeded in figuring out what gave him the impressions that I "require a speaker's fee to attend a con." It's Mark Bernstein's fault for faulty pronoun use (just what the teachers of freshman English always go on about; and to some extent your fault, Lan, because you evidently did know what the context was, but apparently didn't go back to check it, and instead just made up an explanation from a vague memory that it had to do with inviting people to conventions). [[I plead guilty!]]

Mark said he liked Madeleine L'Engle's fiction and in addition wanted to correct your "answer to Ruth Berman. Yes, one of the local cons did invite her as a guest. It fell through...because she was too expensive. Her agent insisted on a speaker's fee." The "her" he meant was Madeleine L'Engle, not me.

I suppose the lesson to learn from that is that fans should pay more attention to their freshman English teachers. And Fanzine editors should check

contexts more carefully?

[[No question about it--I should have looked it up myself. Thanks. (Am I forgiven?)]]

David M. Shea seems to have been severely depressed when he wrote "Virtues and Walls". The postscript more or less makes nonsense of it, in spite of his argument that it doesn't do that. (As it stands, the argument seems to be: don't go on trying to write stories, because if you haven't gotten anywhere, you never will. P.S., I guess I am getting somewhere after all, but don't you try, because you won't.)

I kind of like Lisa Leutheuser's suggestion that maybe issues of your zine could be punched to put in 3-ring binders. I bought a bunch of binders recently to put papers into (a few loose papers, but mostly stuff that I'd punched earlier and put into cardboard report covers, but those get very messy on a shelf after a number of years, as the cardboard starts to sag). I'm tempted to get a bunch more and start doing the same on some fanzines, although there's the drawback that many fanzines have artwork that "bleeds" off the edges, even though the text materials are printed with adequate margins. I also started putting my photos into a binder (in "page protector" pages), as the kind of photo album I like is no longer available, and, while I was at it, started getting enlargements made of some of the photos of SF writers (and a smattering of actors in SF shows) I've taken at various SF cons over the years.

"Return to the Forbidden Planet" sounds like fun, except that you'd have to have a high tolerance level for noisy rock songs. I wonder how many parodies of the movie have been made. One of the Doctor Who shows, "Planet of Evil," was another one. (Also with some Shakespearean jokes. I think that's the one where the Doctor tells Sarah Jane Smith that he tried to make Shakespeare realize that "take arms against a sea of troubles" is a mixed metaphor, but couldn't talk him out of using the line anyway.) Actually, if a publisher could be convinced to go for the idea, quite a nice anthology could be put together of SF/fantasy stories about Shakespeare. Leiber's "Four Ghosts in Hamlet" is one of my favorites, and it might almost be possible to do a collection on that theme alone of Leiber stories. As the son of a noted Shakespearean actor, he's wound up using a lot of theater images in his work. (Another impressive one is the story about a writer who is oppressed by too much advice from his dead father, emanating from the paintings/drawings/sculptures all around the house of the father in his various roles.)

[[Those do sound like good ideas. How would you like to do an article about the theatre devices

Leiber used in his fiction? Maybe Jim Baen, or Marty Greenberg would be interested in putting together an anthology.]]

Dennis K. Fischer
7677 S. San Pedro St.
Los Angeles, CA 90003

I enjoyed meeting Fritz several years ago, and was surprised when I offered him my copy of the Ace edition of The Big Time for him to sign that he corrected the chapter ending of the first chapter from "Enter These Hussars" to "Enter 3 Hussars." I told him I thought the book would make a good science fictional play, and he told me I could try my hand at adapting it and send the results to him, but unfortunately, that project never came to fruition as I ended up leaving theatre arts to pursue other interests.

Film fans may like to know that they can catch Fritz performing silently in the film Equinox, an ultra-low budget student effort designed to show off special effects which was released on Wizard Video as The Beast. Also, his father appeared in such classic films as Cleopatra (1917, as Julius Caesar); If I Were King (1920, as Louis XI); The Queen of Sheba (1921, as King Solomon); A Tale of Two Cities (1935, as Gaspard); The Phantom of the Opera (1943, as Franz Liszt) as well as films such as Camille, The Great Garrick, The Hunchback of Notre Dame, The Sea Hawk, Monsieur Verdoux and others.

Ginny Benson
1265 Dyer Road
Tawas City, MI 48763

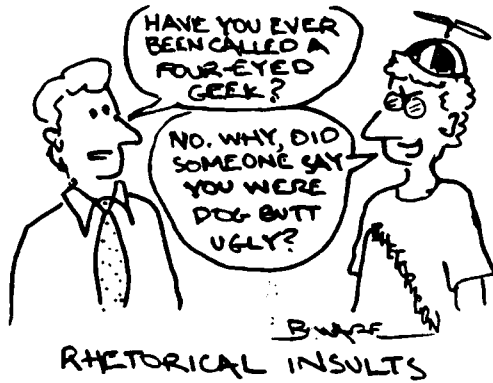
I especially got a kick out of "A Visit to Grundtharfan Fandom" by E.B. Frohvet. Did you ever find out if it was a for real trip or "something from the mind of a strange fan"? I rather like things a little off the wall, so perhaps I'm a strange fan as well!

[[No, I didn't find out. But regardless of that, it was still a good trip report. I guess we are both strange fans!]]

Harry Andruschak
PO Box 5309
Torrance, CA 90510-5309

I enjoyed Ben Indick's travel report. I seem to be a sucker for fannish travel reports, which is understandable the way I write my own. And of course there is Mike Resnick (how does he find time to write?) and his trip report. And E.B. Frohvet makes me wonder if I could write a convention report of my recent travels to the Island Of Knights And Knaves, where the Knights always tell the truth and the Knaves always lie.

Thanks very much for running my request for "Mary Jane" shoes on page 120. I have given up hope of finding them in the USA. They may very well be a standard Scottish Shoe...in Scotland. I have decided that the only way I can get a pair is to go to



Scotland. That probably will be in August 1995, as I plan to attend the Worldcon in Glasgow.

I certainly enjoyed your conreports and ramblings. Like me, you do not seem to be the type to just sit home and vegetate before the TV. Unlike you, the fact that I must work weekends makes it very difficult for me to attend SF conventions.

[[It seems more and more I am publishing trip reports and travelogues. That's all right, I enjoy them too (otherwise I wouldn't run them).

[[You are quite welcome for running the request. I had hoped that you could get the shoes sooner than August of '95, but that just gives you another excuse to go to Worldcon!]]

Franz Zrillich 4004-R Granger Road (Unit #2) Medina, OH 44256-8602	Here's an odd idea: If we had a time machine and brought forth The Founding
--------------------------------------------------------------------------	--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

Fathers to 1994, how would they react? Beyond the obvious novelty factors, it would be interesting to see them comment on our response to AIDS, guns in the streets, "the black problem", national health, and NAFTA, political parties, and campaign funding.

[[This sounds like a good panel topic. Maybe you could suggest it to the CONTEXT committee....]]

Michael W. Waite 105 West Ainsworth Ypsilanti MI 48197-5336	Ben Indick's article "In the Land of the Pharaohs" was a notable piece of writing. As a teenager, I dreamed of becoming an Egyptologist. The romance of discovering tombs in The Valley of the Kings. The promise of fame and fortune beyond the imagination. (I can dream, can't I?)
-------------------------------------------------------------------	------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

I have read C.W. Ceram's Gods, Graves, and Scholars: The Story of Archaeology. Chapter II was my favorite, "The Book of the Pyramids: The Empires of Egypt." It's full of magical words that conjure up exotic images, words full of mystery and adventure: Mummies, Pyramids, Sphinx, Pharaohs, Rosetta Stone, Hieroglyphics, and Tutankhamen. I highly recommend Ceram's book to anyone interested in high adventure and the world of archaeology.

Ben and Janet were fortunate to have their dream of visiting Egypt become a reality. I spent a few months in Tripoli, Libya, in 1959 and 1960--compliments of the U.S. Air Force. I spent a few hours visiting the Roman ruins of Leptis Magna and Sabratha. That would have been the time for me to visit Egypt, since Libya is located "next door." But, alas, I was young and didn't have the wisdom to realize what an opportunity I was passing up by not visiting The Land of the Pharaohs. Youth is truly wasted on the young (in most cases). I saw the Rosetta Stone at the British Museum and many of the treasures of King Tut's tomb when it stopped in Chicago on its tour of the U.S., but that is hardly a substitute for visiting Egypt.

Lan, did you notice that your fanzine reviews and Carol Resnick's bird list both number 130 items? Is there a message there? Are fanzines for the birds? Oh well, just a thought. My favorite bird on Carol's list is the Cinnamon-chested Bee Eater.

[[I too can recommend Ceram's book. I read large sections of it while taking an archaeology course as a grad student. // No, I had not noticed about the number of fanzine and bird items. Maybe there is a message about lining birdcages....]]

Margaret Lakins 1346 Fiore Parkway Vernon Hills IL 60061	I recently began to search for a fanzine or two that cover the areas in which I am most interested, travel and book reviews, and was extremely happy to read your fanzine. The article "In the Land of the Pharaohs" by Ben P. Indick was very easy and interesting reading. Although my husband and I both love to travel, and Egypt is on my "list of places I'd eventually like to go", the political climate in Egypt is a little too dangerous for my tastes. Ben's photographs, especially the temples of Karnak, Luxor, and Abu Simbel, were very intriguing even though they were difficult to see in their reprinted format. (Maybe I'll be lucky enough to run into Ben at a con and maybe even get to see his photos in person!)
----------------------------------------------------------------	------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

I especially liked the number of books reviewed and in the number of reviewers. To date, I've been testing my tastes versus the reviewer in Science Fiction Chronicle, so it is good for me to get a few more opinions. Dick Smith told me about the bookstore The Stars Our Destination in Chicago, so now I even have a place to go where I have a greater chance of finding some of these books.

I recently read a book entitled The Hollow Man by Dan Simmons. Depending on how I look at the book, I either think that it tried too hard to insert some amount of horror in an illogical place, or it was an absolutely beautiful story about the ultimate closeness in a man and a woman who are

telepaths. I'm going to read some of his other books to decide which it really is.

[[Ben has another travelogue in this issue--and a few other travel pieces are here as well. I hope that you enjoy them. // Try Dan Simmons' Hyperion and its overpadded sequel and conclusion Fall of Hyperion. In general they are both excellent, but I still think Sheri Tepper's Grass should have won the Hugo in 1991.]]

<div> <p> Bonnie Reitz 240 W Market St Marietta, PA 17547 </p> </div>	<div> <p>Somebody wrote, in a letter in #39, about why more stuff from Egyptian tombs hasn't turned up, judging by the treasure in Tut's. A friend has the theory that the priests were running a scam--there was really only one set of treasure. After the burial, they'd go in and get it back for the next Pharaoh to use. Somehow Tut's tomb got sealed before they could get the treasure out again. She bet they were all jumping up and down in frustration, since they'd have to make another set to use.</p> </div>
-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

Hey, makes weird sense....

<div> <p> Pam Sayre 227 Meridian Dearborn, MI 48124-5302 </p> </div>	<div> <p>Although I've gone on record as saying content was more important than form, I do enjoy the artwork scattered among the pages of the <u>Lantern</u>. And you got fantastic reproduction of the Egyptian photos--I've never seen them reproduced so well. How did you do it? [[The copier I used for that section was a Kodak!]]</p> </div>
-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

The various writings are also interesting though I don't recognize a lot of the people or references. Book and music reviews always get my attention and I skim all of them, even if I can't read them all. Sometimes I wonder if the reviewer and I have read the same book or seen the same film.... Ah well, variety as they say. The fanzine column is tempting--I read it and think of all the zines I'd like to see...there lies madness! Still, your reviews are short and succinct and give all the necessary information and I appreciate that.

Your "Conreports and Ramblings" are fun to read, even if I haven't gone to that particular con, though getting an issue from last year had me feeling like I fell into a timewarp...I think I recognized some of the cons though, certainly Worldcon! I am impressed and amazed that you have a day job too. I've taught--it is very time-consuming if done right--and you must do it right to be called the only one to be able to teach math to the girls.

<div> <p> Robert Coulson 2677 W 500 N Hartford City Indiana 47348 </p> </div>	<div> <p>150 pages without even a letter-col to bulk it out--anybody tell you your fanzine is out of hand? Now, if you'd publish just a few items every month, it would be</p> </div>
----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

much easier. [[Yes, several people have made that suggestion--I've thought about it...maybe....]]

We get an example of human genetics in this area because of the various Indian ceremonies around here. Despite the name Indiana, one doesn't think to Indians in the state, but they're here; there may be as many Hoosiers with Indian ancestry as there were before the coming of the white man. Trouble is, they don't look like our mental picture of Indians; they're mostly blond and blue-eyed. I've been told that the genes--or alleles--for "Indian" appearance were mostly recessive. Kay Anderson told us in California, children of Indian heritage are required to go to classes to teach them about this heritage, and every kid in the class her children went to was blond and blue-eyed, and most of them were staring around in wonder, "We're Indians?"

I was amused but sympathetic to Linda Dunn's comment that the ARCHON hotel had leaks in the roof. Juanita and I stopped going to ARCHONS because they're too far away and it's usually an incredibly hot weekend and because there doesn't seem to be a good or even an average hotel in St. Louis. They're all below average. We've been to conventions in four or five different St. Louis hotels, and Juanita was paid to go to a publisher's book fair at another one, and they were all defective. I recall arriving at one con in time to see an elevator door open while the elevator floor was a couple of feet below the top of the door, while a couple of workmen inside it conversed on possible causes. Yep, St. Louis hotel, all right. No "Out of Order" sign for it, of course; "You mean you expected working elevators in St. Louis?" The last time we went to an ARCHON was the weekend where 100 people died of the heat in Missouri and we had a car without airconditioning. Forget it.

Pete Marison is a bit overenthusiastic in calling L. Ron Hubbard "a science fiction legend"; he was a basically mediocre author who managed to produce three--maybe four--excellent short novels. He may well be a religious legend by now, of course.



The writer's contest seems to be quite successful, and may short-circuit some of the time required to get one's writing up to publishable standards. I did it the long way; after initial rejections of my professional attempts I got into fandom and had a great time writing for fanzines, and after several years, another professional attempt was accepted immediately. I suppose my method is more useful to beginners who want to have more fun than they want to be published writers, and for those who don't, Writers of the Future may well be the answer.

Ravenscroft's awards article was amusing. I have him beat on one point: I've seen a paperback advertised as by a "five-time Nebula nominated" author. I don't know if the man ever won; I don't follow the awards that closely. But even if he had, "one-time winner" would have been an anticlimax and therefore not used. I disagree that the Nebula's faults are caused by a lack of votes. Any "peer award" such as the Nebula or the Oscar, is heavy with internal politics. The Oscar is notorious for this, mainly because it is prestigious and widely known to the general public, so reporters for press and TV look for "leaks" and publish them. (At that, I gather from people who know that "insider information" is much more filled with items about internal politics than the average slob ever finds out.) SFWA is a smaller organization and feuding is somewhat less, but it's definitely there. It's been over 15 years since my two terms as SFWA Secretary, but the backbiting was there then and since the organization is larger now there's probably more of it. There are cliques, and it's quite natural to vote for your friend's story, especially if the competition is somebody you never want to speak to again. For that matter, you probably understand your friend's story better and get more out of it. And quality is in the eye of the beholder; I might like certain winners a lot more than Ravenscroft does.

Incidentally, science fiction has had a juried award; the International Fantasy Award existed from 1951 through 1957, as was awarded by a committee of selected authors and editors. (One unfortunate part was that I don't recall the jury being the same for any two consecutive years.) It was also international; judges were from both England and the US, though I'm not sure if any other countries were included. Fiction winners were: Earth Abides by George R. Stewart, Fancies and Goodnights by John Collier, City by Clifford Simak, More Than Human by Theodore Sturgeon, A Mirror for Observers by Edgar Pangborn, and The Lord of the Rings by J.R.R. Tolkien. Not a bad lot, all told. (Information from the awards history book published by Howard DeVore in 1985--when are you going to update it, Howard?)

[[Howard is working with Advent Press to bring out

a new edition of his book. I am looking forward to it myself.]]

Ned Brooks	I don't know about a Heinlein
713 Paul Street	stamp--as far as I'm concerned
Newport News	nothing he wrote after <u>Stranger</u>
VA 23605	<u>in a Strange Land</u> was really

worth reading. His earlier work was certainly important in the field, but no more so than Leiber or Kuttner or Kornbluth or Davidson or many others.

I agree with Marian Skupski that we are not likely to see any widespread genetic program to improve the human race. For one thing, I doubt there is any general agreement as to what would be an improvement. It does seem, however, that we could agree to try to stop the decline, in that those of us who require artificial, mechanical or chemical aids to survive should not breed--it's not as if there were any shortage of people.

Great tale about caving in the Bronx, wish I could have been there. There's nothing here, but I went once in north Alabama and twice in the Charlottesville area with the University of Virginia club.

Laura Brodian Freas	Kelly and I think the peti-
Kelly Freas Studios	tion regarding the commemor-
7713 Nita Avenue	ative stamp for Heinlein et
West Hills, CA	al. is a worthy cause. We
91304-5546	will circulate it among our

friends and dealer's tables.

I would like to suggest an addenda: that the pictures of the honorees be portraits drawn by Kelly Freas. Kelly would enjoy being the designated artist on this project, and the project would no doubt benefit greatly from it.

[[I agree; Kelly's work is superb in the field, and the project would benefit greatly with his participation in it.]]

Martin Morse Wooster	I found Ben Bova's self-
PO Box 8093	analysis of his works to
Silver Spring, MD 20907	be as unconvincing as

Piers Anthony's attacks on critics. Bova tells us that he's a steak-and-potatoes stylist and that the critics don't like him because he doesn't have a flashy style that will convince the professors that Bova is producing art. But Bova sets up a false syllogism. Certainly many critically-acclaimed writers are as able to present their visions without relying on "stylistic frills or rococo embellishments." J.G. Ballard, for example, is a very clear writer; you may not like what he says, but his prose is as simple and straightforward as Bova's. William Gibson, Pat Cadigan, and Bruce Sterling are also very clear writers--and critically acclaimed. I suspect Bova is still mired

in the debates of the '60s, where some of the New Wavers did indulge themselves in clotted prose and what Darrell Schweitzer calls non-functional word patterns. But the writers who did this are now mostly vanished; the ones who survived (Thomas Disch, Norman Spinrad) did so because they were able to combine story-telling ability with literary excellence. Most critics aren't just asking novelists to display style, but to address issues of our times in a way that Bova has never quite done. Perhaps that's why Bova is considered a novelist of the second, not the first, rank.

[[The authors you mention are ones whose styles I find difficult to slog through with some exceptions. Sterling's short works are much better than his novels. Islands in the Net, for which he received much praise, is overly long and drawn out with too many details which obscure a possibly interesting story; its saving grace is that the main character does change, and returns to a changed situation (no "happily ever after", or the same character returning without his/her adventures having SOME effect--like so many current novels I read). Some of Disch's works are fine, but again, like Sterling, those are mostly his shorter pieces. Clear writing? Not in my opinion. Critics seem to like these writers because their prose is NOT clear, and they have to slog through a lot of murky language to get to the story. Do not think I don't appreciate books which are "difficult" to read--one of my favorites is Courtship Rite by Donald Kingsbury, and Hellspark by Janet Kagan.

[[As for "issues of our times", Bova has been addressing them for a lot longer than you may want to admit, but they have been more on the global stage than the personal ones critics seem so fond of. I enjoy the clear styles of Bova, Resnick, Zahn, Wurts, Rusch and others who tell good stories and don't let details of environment or personal angst obscure the plot or character.]]

Mike Resnick's escapades in Kenya were enjoyable, but repetitive. Most of the time Resnick seems to go to Africa to see lots of animals roaming across the plains and to retrace the steps of explorers and great white hunters he admires. That's fine, but [he] limits his trips to Kenya, Tanzania, and Zimbabwe. I'd hate to tell Resnick what he should do on his summer holiday, but as a reader, I'd love Resnick's thoughts on Egypt--or even South Africa.



E.B. Frohvet's view of the Worldcon is interesting because s/he views it as a world without writers or science fiction. I wonder what Frohvet thought of San Francisco, a city much stranger and more delightful than any convention. Maybe Worldcon works best in boring cities, a theory we can certainly put to the test in Winnipeg.

[Roy Lavender 2507 East 17th Street Long Beach, CA 90804]	Gad, another one of those monsters. 150 pages yet. Have you considered subcontracting telephone books?
--------------------------------------------------------------------	----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

More to the point, have you considered the disruption of the ecology, the break in the food chain? The big trees have fungus growing around their roots. It converts soil to something the tree can use. Ground squirrels and voles eat the fungus, i.e. truffles. Spotted owls eat ground squirrels and voles. Their droppings fall to the ground, completing the chain.

Then you publish, the chain is broken and whole forests fall. Your name will appear on EPA documents, which run to thousands of pages, further disrupting the fragile ecology. Is there no end to this calamity?

Politicians will speak on television stations drawing power from the burning of fossil fuels. It continues to escalate. The final straw: fans will write LOCs.

"Caving in the Bronx." Now there's a gaggle of fans continuing to act like fans used to act. Long may they wade. Perhaps they will in time host a ConCave.

I doubt that future lists of Hugo winners will mention the momentary winners. They no longer include Lou Tabakow's Hugo for the Best Unpublished Story. (Yes, a real Hugo. It was a fannish award when it started.)

[Helen E. Davis 2327 Shroyer Road Oakwood, OH 45419]	Anthony Ravenscroft's article made a number of good points. But can't we argue that all awards are popularity con-
----------------------------------------------------------------	--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

tests? What about elections for public offices? Do we vote for the person who can best do the job, or the person who most appeals to us? Even the Oscars are a bit suspect--how do we know that the judges aren't suffering from cultural bias? And so on.

By the way, what is the purpose of the Hugo, anyway? Is it supposed to be an award from all fandom, or is it specifically an award of Worldcon?

[[I think the only unbiased contests are where sports events are run in such a way where human judgements are ignored--such as timed races. As for the purpose of the Hugo, it started out as an appreciation award voted on by all fans. As fandom increased in size, it became more difficult to get everyone voting, and merely just to read

and nominate. The Worldcon was the gathering point for the largest number of fans, so that was the place where the Hugo was awarded. It is now very much bound up with rules, and regulated by the World SF organization and the various Worldcon committees.

Marion Skupski's article was well done and covered many points of genetic engineering, but she missed one. Many of the deleterious genes, such as sickle cell and cystic fibrosis, are beneficial in the heterozygous state. The first gives resistance to malaria, the second to tuberculosis. Other may reduce the rate of miscarriage, or give resistance to other maladies. If we had the means to identify and delete every lethal gene, then we might open up the human race to catastrophe. The relative few who do get bad genes and suffer a miserable life are sacrifices for the protection of the whole human race.

This isn't to say that the homozygotes must suffer without treatment--only that they must continue to be conceived.

For Janeen De Board: I'm jealous. That is a good story!!

Eric Mayer PO Box 17143 Rochester NY 14617	The very first bit on the cover of #41, alluding to the famous 666 caught my attention.
----------------------------------------------------	-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

Last year, the state of New York, quite by chance (I think), kindly sent me license plate K4D 666. Shortly after putting it on the car I pulled into a gas station where another car owner was filling up. He looked in my direction, did a double-take, then gave me the thumbs-up. His license also bore the number of the beast! Recently, when someone remarked upon the number, I thought quickly and pointed out that it was a vanity plate. And "K4D" stood for, "Kill For the Devil".

I have seen many Lan's Lanterns, but I have heard some criticism of the two Hugos you actually have won and am a bit surprised. It's definitely one of the best zines I've seen--as a matter of fact it's kind of like four of them: a review zine, a sercon zine with a number of pros and SF articles, a faanish zine with trip reports, and a nice meaty personalzine as well.

[[I hadn't thought of it in that way, but I do try to have something for everyone!]]

I most enjoyed the trip reports and personal ramblings. The trips to Africa and Egypt were great. I especially like Ben Indick's. A few evenings ago, Mary and I had gotten to talking about where we'd like to go and both came up with Egypt. I'd like to visit England also but Mary, of course, has already been there. However, my absolute favorite was the article on the abandoned NYC tunnels by

A stack
...uh, er... well...
one LL a show
horse couldn't jump
over!



Laura Resnick. Really tickled my sense of wonder. There are indeed some strange and wonderful things in New York City--many unexpected.

Victor E. Swanson The Hologlobe Press PO Box 5455 Dearborn, MI 48128-5455	I was most surprised to see you review of my self-published work, <u>Sheila Lake and the Universal Explorers: The People of</u>
---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

Glass, in the forty-first Lan's Lantern. Your honest review is most appreciated.

Yes, it would have been wonderful to have had a "good editor" see the work. But good editors cost money, so I ran alone to start something new. It seems very like to me that that is what you did to start Lan's Lantern.

[[Yes, I started it myself, and continue to do all the work myself--even the collating! I hope you will continue to write; you do have some good ideas.]]

Henry L. Welch 1525 16th Avenue Grafton, WI 53024-2017	I agree with you that most people can't organize to save their lives. This usually results in a work
----------------------------------------------------------------	------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

quota system that under-utilizes the effective people. For example, my workload each term is based on the number of students I have in each section (grading time, essentially). Since I grade early and efficiently with few errors, I often find myself underutilized. With this comes the guilty feelings that I'm being paid to waste time since in theory I'm supposed to be working 40 hrs/week, not 30 or 35.

I can sympathize with your (former) residence hall duties. Unfortunately we are raising an entire generation of children who for the most part do not learn that there are serious consequences for not following the rules. This results in overly entitled individuals who may often (in the long run) commit major crimes. The really sad part about is all is that if the administration does finally decide to enforce the policies, then a student could simply appeal, stating that you are guilty of selective enforcement since you didn't enforce them before. Catch-22.

R. Coulson 2677 W 500 N Hartford City IN 47348-9575	One reason why Conan Doyle and Rudyard Kipling aren't remembered is that they mostly wrote short science fiction, and very few readers are interested in anything under novel length these days. (Ever try to sell second-
-----------------------------------------------------------------	----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

hand anthologies along with secondhand novels at a convention? I have, and I've quit; next time I get to a used bookstore, my box of used anthologies goes with me, to be traded in on used novels and series.) Don Grant brought out a beautiful edition of Merritt's Face in the Abyss in 1991, and it's the only Merritt novel I really like. I preferred his short stories. For the others, I've read them, and mostly they aren't all that good. (Hodgson wrote some marvelous fantasy/horror, but it doesn't have elves or vampires in it, so readers aren't interested.) Anyway, all writers go in and out of style, depending on the sort of writing the public appreciates. So you don't hear a lot of the old science fiction writers. When was the last time you saw a new edition of a Kenneth Roberts book? Northwest Passage had 43 printings between 1937 and 1959, was published in 28 foreign countries, was made into a major US movie and a BBC play. Seen it around lately? Or any of Roberts' other books, all of which had numerous US and foreign printings. "Inside Group", bullshit.

Kevin Langdon is the first fan I've encountered who says he enjoyed Mensa; most other references to it have been negative. Doesn't make any difference to me; I don't join groups. Longest association I've had with any official organization was 10 years with the Boy Scouts; I entered as a Tenderfoot and left as an Assistant Scoutmaster when I got married and moved to a different town. Don't think I've joined anything else since, except as buying certain magazines makes one a "member" of the group that publishes them. The nice thing about science fiction is that there's no official "joining"; you just start in, or don't. (Okay, I was a member of the NAACP for quite a few years, but I never went to meetings.)

Never thought about mail-order mentors before. I've written fan letters to writers and singers in and out of the science fiction field, and corresponded regularly with some of them, but never considered asking them about my writing. Possibly because I followed an early Marion Zimmer Bradley dictum; "Never take criticism from anyone who can't sign a check." I'm not even sure where I picked up the formalities of pro writing; just from being in fandom, I guess. I read no books on it; I just assumed all fans knew about double-spacing and leaving 1 inch margins all around and using a legible typeface. (When I started, it meant using a reasonably dark typewriter ribbon.) I guess Anne Valley's ideas are sound; whatever works for the individual.

Fans who like Holt's Expecting Someone Taller will probably like Anna Russell's "Ring of the Nibelungen: An Analysis" if they can find a copy. We have it on one side of the lp, "Anna Russell Sings? Again!"

Very interesting article by Lofton. Only similar thing in my experience was getting letters to Yan-

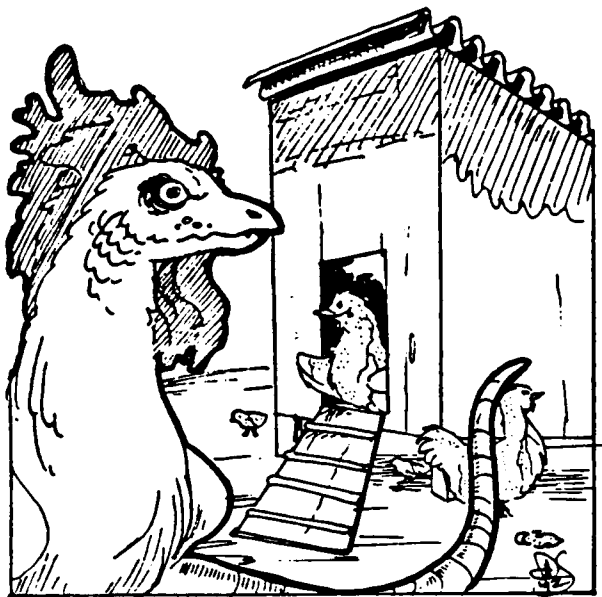
dro from a car thief in the Virginia pen. Another Yandro reader went to see him and the last I heard they were getting married; they seemed to have dropped out of fandom after that. Neither suggested that science fiction changes their lives, though. I did correspond with a British fan in a mental institution for a time, but I believe he was a fan before acquiring more disturbing habits. Seriously, I did appreciate Lofton's article.

Since when is science fiction the "leading edge of science"? If it's hard science fiction, then the authors get their information from scientists who thought of the ideas first, and if it's social science fiction it may be the leading edge of sociology, but nobody has yet convinced me that sociology is a science.

As a reviewer who is required by his editor to be reasonably "nice", I disagree with Wooster that it doesn't help the reader. It may require more thought from the reviewer, but it's possible. Also, the only logical way to put down a book is to not review it at all. A bad review merely makes fans pick the book up to see if they agree with the reviewer. If they never hear about it, they're less likely to buy it. (Being nice is hard on a reviewer who was once compared to Jack the Ripper, though.)

Ray E. Beam 2209 S Webster St Kokomo, IN 46902	I have a few comments on the High IQ societies: An Overlooked "Other Fandom" by Kevin Langdon. He is right; it is a lot like SF Fandom. At a Mensa gathering (convention), the bodies and activities are the same, only the faces are different. However it is more like the fandom of 30 to 40 years ago. The discussions have a wider range of topics. Today at a SF convention, the conversation runs for the most part from the convention that was attended last week or to their particular interest in fandom, i.e., gaming, fanzines, etc. In the 50s and before, it was a long time between conventions, so discussions ran to what the individual was doing all year. These were the days when writers and other fans made a living outside the field. There were a lot of interesting people around. Phil Farmer, when I first met him, was a Technical writer for Motorola. T. L. Sherred was a damn good engineer. Andrew Harris was the editor of <u>The Silent Sphinx</u> (the internal organ of the CIA). E.E. (Doc) Smith was a chemist and powder expert. He was a great influence on the path I took, as I became a chemist and powder metallurgist. But anyway, this is the kind of divergent conversation you get from Mensans.
------------------------------------------------------	------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

He is right about the political feuds. That is why I like the informal group in Kokomo. They seem to be immune to state politics. As a whole, I have noticed that in the Indiana Mensa, there seems to be a great percentage of losers within the group. That is, people who can't keep a job or subsist on



sub-standard wages. This is only a personal observation, so some may disagree. But as most people know, intelligence does not automatically mean success.

My wife, Mary Ann, joined Intertel but only remained with the group for a year. We found they were misfits in society even to a greater degree. We had planned to attend their state gathering in Indianapolis. When we arrived, we went to the Hospitality room before checking into the hotel. After talking with those attending, Mary Ann asked me to cancel the hotel reservations. We drove back to Kokomo.

One place in which SF fandom differs from Mensa is that Mensa is a world-wide organization of dues-paying members, fandom is not. In the US at least, Mensa dues are collected at a central office. Mary Ann has been a member of Mensa for years. When I started to join, they asked for \$36 per year dues. My feeling was that it was pretty expensive for a social organization. I asked some of the local officers just what the money was used for, but they were unable to tell me. I pay higher yearly dues than that in other organizations such as the Shrine, which is about \$50 a year. But the Shrine supports many Childrens Hospitals and Burn Centers. I know that very little of the money comes back to the state Mensa organizations as they charge \$3 for members and \$4.50 for visitors per meeting to cover costs. The national organization does publish a monthly magazine, but that could account for only a small portion of their income.

There probably is a something wrong with an organization that says I can be a member because I am so damn smart. It is my belief that the smartest ones are those founders and officers in the center of the organization, who are raking in \$2.8 million plus.

[[From a follow-up letter.]]

I discussed the article and my letter at the Mensa breakfast. There was a lot of disbelief when I gave them the \$2.8 million figure. It was also acknowledged that no financial statement is made by the national office. Then it was pointed out to me by one of the Indianapolis group in attendance that the dues are now \$39.00 a year. That makes their yearly income \$3,120,000.00. Mensans like Fans? Not quite...they are a hell of a lot more trusting.

Robert Bloch
2111 Sunset Crest Dr
Los Angeles, CA 90046

I was delighted with the "Lan Today" cover, the Sabella "Do You Remember?" piece, Jordan's article on

Cabell, and a dozen other evocations of nostalgia.

[[The replies to Sabella's "Do You Remember?" article will be gathered together into the next issue. I didn't have room for them in this one.]]

David Thayer
PO Box 905
Euless, TX 76039

Martin Morse Wooseter's negative assessment of positive critics offers a needed shock to would-be writers. Those who seek only praise ignore the realities of impersonal editors, rejection form letters, demanding readers, and competing writers.

C.J. Cherryh refused to divulge her middle name to the local fans in Oklahoma, and now, almost incidentally, you reveal it in your letter column. Janice must not have been exotic enough for a new writer.

B'Ware thinks he's cute disparaging those who think my WingNut cartoon characters are cute. I let my cartoons speak for themselves. And given enough time, Wingate and Avery will think of a snappy comeback.

The abundance of artwork by Diana Stein, Peggy Ranson, and Ian Gunn threaten to overwhelm that of the rest of us. More, more!

Clifton Amsbury
768 Amador Street
Richmond, CA 94805

Was The Face in the Abyss in 1922 or 1932? Incidentally, Abraham Merritt (for all his writing life, as far as I know) was editor of the "magazine" section of the Hearst Papers Sunday editions. It had fiction and "non-fiction", the latter lurid and often far-fetched, but much of it informative. As I recall, the name was "The American Weekly" but maybe Sabella can check that for us.

I agree with the reviews of Summer Queen and Robin Hood, but I don't know if I can forgive you for not mentioning the slapstick swordfight. It was the best take-off of he-man contests since the last Western barroom brawl with breakaway furniture and balcony railings. And the actual choreographed

swordplay--Errol Flynn couldn't have done any better. Costner was also good as Jim Garrison.

As to the Great Salt Lake submerging the Mormon Temple, don't be too sure that the "climatic upheaval" hasn't already happened. The lake has been rising for years and the last I heard they were moving roads out of its way. The rains which have been flooding Texas have also been heavier than usual this summer [[1992]] all through the Southwest and Basin areas as moisture from the Pacific storms has been blown across Southern California, although the storms themselves sheered off to the northwest into the open Pacific.

As the atmosphere warms, weather zones surely move northward. Other things also change. Here in the Bay area our "drought" is merely what has previously been normal one or two hundred miles to the south.

Sorry I can't agree with Lofton's put down of Grapes of Wrath, though I did prefer the contemporary Parched Earth. But then I "read it in the original" with personal experience of the area and people. I have noted the impact on young people today, especially they have difficulty accepting that the last scene was written then. "Oh, wow," they say.

Now Stanislaw Lem is part of Sturgeon's 90%. If anyone uses his stuff for a putdown of science fiction, just agree that it's crud.

[Algernon D'Amassa | David Stein prepared a
[134 George M Cohen Blvd] very considerate guide to
[Providence RI 02903] Disneyworld in time for
the Orlando convention,
and I read it with some nostalgia. From 1978 through the early 80s I spent one week out of every spring with my parents in Casslebury, just outside of Orlando. Naturally, at least one day out of that week was spent touring the Magic Kingdom (and, later, EPCOT Center) hand-in-hand with my grandmother, who never seemed to tire of the same rides year after year. (She even went on the Thunder Mountain roller coaster with me.)

However, at risk of betraying myself as a politically correct twenty-something, I would argue that Disneyworld is not worth four days of your trip. The nation exhibits are patronizing, and some are downright offensive, and political correctness has nothing to do with it. Admittedly, I have not seen them all--there were several still under construction during my last trip. And it is true that EPCOT has improved steadily in the years since it opened. It deserves credit for being more informative than entertaining. There is at least a tenuous link to the real world, and all its wonders, there.

The Magic Kingdom, on the other hand, is simply an escape into a particularly caucasian world of money and diversion. As you leave the acres of parking lot behind you on a ferry boat crossing the mammoth man-made lake which separates the Magic

Kingdom from the rest of the world, one cannot help but observe how the Disney empire commands immense property, wealth, and stature in America; and once you board the Monorail to be shuttled deeper into your great escape, you may notice that life through the viewfinder of Disneyworld is, for the most part, stuck in a frame of reference which has changed little since the 1950s. In Disneyworld, black people wear loincloths and fling spears, and they always sing, "Whoop-whoop-whoop!"

Which is not to suggest that there is any intentional, subliminal propaganda going on here. The Magic Kingdom isn't about politics; it's not about the struggle to define the American character going on outside, in the world of parking lots and pollution and strife. This Kingdom is strictly for diversion and fun-fun-fun; not to mention money-money-money. Virtually every ride or exhibit lets you out into a gift shop.

Nonetheless, Disneyworld is part of our culture, and on that basis, it is certainly worth a trip. However, it behooves all thoughtful people with or without children to look at the picture of the world which emerges here, and to notice how exclusive it is, and how commercial.

Instead of squandering an entire vacation on Disneyworld, one should also check out some of the other worthy spectacles in the area (spectacles, I might add, where no one need feel out of place.)

Sea World is at once fascinating and educational, with plenty of amusements to divert young and old: watch performers trade puns and splash about with happy and well-trained dolphins; pet a manta ray--they love to be scratched beneath their heads; or just ogle the Japanese pearl divers, all of them strong, graceful, beautiful to behold.

Just off of one of the main highways between Orlando and Kissamee is the Mystery Funhouse, an elaborate and ingenious funhouse with all the traditional facilities, plus a few innovations. (One criticism: they don't wipe the mirrors often enough, so it's easy to find your way through the flashing mirror maze: just look for the palm prints.) And if you're willing to take a drive, Tampa lays approximately 75 miles southwest of Orlando, and offers you all the sights and exotic animals of Busch Gardens.

[Jeanne Mealy | An amusing cover by Jeffrey
[4157 Lyndale Avenue S] Tolliver and Fred, the won-
[Minneapolis, MN 55409] der computer. Many of the
stories in Lan Today remind
me of what's in USA Today, the publication that
thinks it's a reputable paper.

I enjoyed Stephen Leigh's account of learning aikido and its many lessons, Bruce Burdick's observations on the running of the bulls (and other aspects of visiting Spain), and Dave Jordan's excellent comparisons of massage and music.

I like the new wedding tradition of the newly-married couple kissing only if the person or group requesting they do so sings a verse of a song with the word "love" in it. Definitely calls for more effort than clinking a glass, and probably much funnier.

Poor Eric Lindsey--told that the temperature in Michigan was the same as it was in Australia (35 degrees). There's just this slight difference between Celsius and Fahrenheit....

I enjoyed "Fanomenon: Dee and Denny go to World-con." Diana Stein is quite talented. Cris Brennan's "Tongue Tied" had a surprising ending about a female and her appetite. Quite a VMI (Vivid Mental Image), too.

Thanks for printing David Stein's "A Fan's Guide to Disney World." John and I had never been there before MAGICON and were happy for any advice. We had limited time to see the highlights; going after Labor Day turned out very well, though some features were closed, and the crowds were minimal.

Taras Wolansky 100 Montgomery St., #24H Jersey City, NJ 07302	It was pure joy to read S.C. Lofton's account of how SF rescued him from the underclass. Before feminists attack Robert Heinlein, they should reflect upon what Lofton learned about women from Heinlein's <u>Friday</u> .
---------------------------------------------------------------------	----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

Harry Warner, Jr 423 Summit Avenue Hagerstown, MD 21740	Mark Leeper's article about how he discovered science fiction on the tube when he was five years old backs up a contention I've been making for some time: kids growing up in recent decades miss one big thrill that came to those of us who discovered science fiction before the TV era via magazines and books. A five year old is too young to appreciate the strange new world he has just glimpsed for the first time. Before television, most of us didn't read our first science fiction story until we were approaching or even in our teens, and we had enough understanding by then to feel the exultation that great explorers and great scientists have experienced when making discoveries, the instant realization that this something will change our reading patterns and maybe our way of thinking about the world.
---------------------------------------------------------------	----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

I can imagine how expensive Elizabeth Ann Osborne found her Star Trek video collecting hobby. This is one of the nasty things about pre-recorded videotapes, their artificial boosting of costs by not taking advantage of the full capabilities of videocassettes. There is no reason why Star Trek's television episodes couldn't have been released with three or four episodes per cassette, other than sheer greed and a desire to get the maximum income from collectors. The same thing happened

with LP records, because most pop releases contained less than a half-hour of music on a disc that could easily hold more than an hour of recordings. CD releases in the early years of that format followed the same pattern, although I believe there has been a tendency in the past few years to give purchasers a few more minutes of music per disc and offer perhaps half the potential capability of each CD.

[[Some of the collectors editions for other series are doing as you suggested--two to four episodes per tape. The Twilight Zone series is being released with 4 half-hour episodes on each cassette, and ones like The Outer Limits and Mission Impossible have two episodes.]]

It was bittersweet to read the fine article of Eric Bentcliffe, recognizing it as superior fanzine writing but knowing the author won't create any more like this one. I was among the early practitioners of tape recording correspondence, enjoyed it very much, but eventually stopped for reasons which I think caused the practice to die out in fandom as a whole. At first, it would be wonderful to hear the voice of the person with whom you were corresponding instead of just reading his words on paper. But after a few exchanges, the liabilities of this became evident. One was the time factor: it took much longer to listen to your correspondent's words on tape than it would require to read his words on the pages of a letter, and to respond to his tape you needed to find the right circumstances --a house that would be fairly quiet for a half hour or however long you intended to tape the message, and preferable without interruptions because it was hard to remember what you'd already said if forced to stop your message and then resume an hour or a day later. Then there were the complications that grew out of constantly changing parameters for tape recorders: not all of the open reel machines had the 1 7/8 inches per second speed that was best for correspondence of the little three-inch reels that were the least expensive and easiest to mail; when four-track open reel machines came on the market the owners of two-track machines couldn't cope with four monaural tracks of talk, then came eight-track and cassettes that further split the differences between the various tape correspondents.

I don't think it's too remarkable that those fantasy writers cited by Robert Sabella have fallen out of popularity and print after having been so popular early in this century. It's just part of the larger pattern of most fiction losing its favor after a half-century or a little more, the length of time it takes the men and women who loved it as young adults to die or grow too old to do much purchasing of books. Try to find in bookstores most of the works of Booth Tarkington, James Hilton, Mac-

kinley Kantor, Pearl Buck, or dozens of other authors whose fiction was widely popular and mostly mundane in theme during the first few decades of this century. Most of it is out of print except for an occasional paperback availability of one or two extra-famous titles like Lost Horizon or The Good Earth. It's a shame because if that fiction remained widely available it would stop critics from complaining about the amateurish writing styles of many fantasy authors of the same period: they were doing good imitations of the styles of the mundane authors whom most of today's young adults have never read.

Some of your newer fans may feel bewildered by your passing reference to Buck Coulson having finished in the black on one issue of Yandro. They wouldn't know the fact that Yandro wasn't available for letters of comment, the most prominent exception of its time to this general rule of The Usual, so it had a bigger subscription list than almost all fanzines of its period.

The book reviews sadden me for their demonstration of how authors are either lacking in imagination nowadays or forced by editors to restrain that factor. Book after book is either modeled on historical events slightly skewed to qualify as an alternate universe, or people with characters from previous books by the same author or the works of other authors, or transparently disguised mundane fiction in which current events and situations are just the least bit transformed to qualify as stories about the future, or otherwise dependent on available materials. Whatever happened to the authors who created a new universe in a sense with their every story?

I wouldn't have the stamina required for enjoying any of the Disney theme parks. But while reading David Stein's thorough recommendations for best enjoyment of them, I wondered once again why the United States government doesn't fold NASA and turn its space program over to the Disney people. Any organization that can create such huge, complicated and wildly successful amusement parks out of nothing should be able to get us a Moon colony and a Mars exploration party in half the time and at one-third the cost of the way the space program has been run up to now.

Isn't Jeanne Mealy jumping to conclusions when she asks why hundreds or thousands of crocodiles were mummified by the ancient Egyptians? Maybe the crocodiles saw the ancient Egyptians mummifying their deceased noblemen and imitated this practice by mummifying their favorite crocodiles.

<p>[Cathy Howard 3600 Parker Ave Louisville, KY 40212]</p>	<p>Bruce Burdick's article, "There Was This Bull in My Face," gives a worms-eye view of the event famous by Hemingway. I can see why the townspeople</p>
----------------------------------------------------------------------	----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

put up a bust of him in the bullring, his favorite place. It was on the news that one of the people sleeping on the street was run over and killed by a street sweeping machine. The statue-diving BB mentioned was something I've never heard of.

While reading the article by Robert Sabella I was strongly reminded of how much I enjoyed the fiction of A. Merritt. A very strong writer who wrote some evocative stories.

[Roy Lavender, 2507 E 17th St, Long Beach CA 90808]

Oh a Wonderful bird is the pubbing Lan

His issues stagger the Postal man

Each issue is slicker

And considerably thicker

But I don't see how in the Hell he does it.

I don't know what came over me, but I'm not sorry!

<p>[Shinji Maki East No.1 #203 1-18-4 Higashitoyoda Hino-City, Tokyo 191 JAPAN]</p>	<p>I really enjoyed your conre-ports. I think it is very good that you mix fanac with mundane life. In Japan there are a lot of fen who are teachers like you are. They</p>
---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

hold a conference at the Japanese national science fiction convention every year. However, I suppose they don't talk about science fictional education in school.

Your description of Worldcon is more interesting than other reports in the semiprozines. You described the happenings and people from your personal viewpoint. I think this is the best way to express the atmosphere of the convention.

[[Thank you. I realize that there is a certain amount of repetition that is reported from one convention to the next, but I try to make it interesting. It was nice meeting you at CONFRANCISCO.]]

<p>[Harry Cameron Andruschak PO Box 5309 Torrance CA 90510-5309]</p>	<p>Very interesting to read all the things that fans do. As you know, I myself am into things like the Royal Scottish Country Dance Society, hikes with the Sierra Club, solo hiking in the desert (which Harry Warner Jr. does not approve of), the Grand Canyon, and the mountains around Los Angeles. Another non-fan activity of mine is international correspondence chess, but I usually wrote about that in the fanzine <u>Penguin Dip</u>.</p>
--------------------------------------------------------------------------------	--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

<p>[Martin Morse Wooster PO Box 8093 Silver Spring MD 20907]</p>	<p>Kevin Langdon makes some interesting points in his discussion of high-IQ societies. Certainly these organizations put out interesting publications, some of which resemble fanzines. But as a former</p>
----------------------------------------------------------------------------	-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

Mensa member, I'd like to mention the reasons why SF fandom is more interesting than either Mensa or its tougher counterparts.

I recall the first Mensa meeting I attended. At one point someone shouted, "I'm at the second level of deviation, and you're at the fourth level of deviation, so I'm twice as smart as you are, so shut up!" While I never heard a similar comment in the few Mensa meetings I attended, the comment is nonetheless typical of the problems that Mensa has. It and other societies are organizations based on intelligence, as measured in test scores. Such groups are inherently hierarchical, with the hierarchy based on who has the biggest score. People like me (who score at the 1.96 percentile, or thereabouts) are given lower ranks.

Fandom, by contrast, has its entry standard the rule that you have to like to read a lot. Given that only two percent or so of the population reads, this means that fandom is as selective as Mensa. And as a somewhat organized hierarchy, no bonus points are awarded for having read a lot of books or for having read some types of SF instead of other types. Moreover, since fans tend either to be writers or are interested in writing (something one cannot always assume about the intelligence societies) their arguments in fanzines tend to be sharper and more focused than similar arguments in high-IQ organizations. Certainly high-IQ societies have their strengths, but overall I am glad that I am a fan and not a Mensan.

Alexander Bouchard has some interesting allegations about handicapped-access workers at CHICON that I have never read before. But I wonder if the problems Bouchard cites (which certainly sound true to me) are inherent in the nature of Electrical Eggs, or are just a few fuggheads trying to be important. Moreover, were the problems Bouchard reports on Electrical Eggs' fault, or the fault of convention organizers who did not think about the problems handicapped fans have? Certainly the disorganization Bouchard cites also occurred in other areas of CHICON; I know of other cases where people at the convention were "sent scurrying around, like chipmunks on diet pills, trying to find someone with answers" that had nothing to do with Electrical Eggs. I would certainly find Bouchard's reflections on Electrical Eggs' activities at MAGICON to be of interest.

Robert Sabella's article on A. Merritt was a pleasant introduction to a semi-forgotten fantasy writer, but I don't feel Merritt's posthumous publishing career is in any way unusual. Certainly very few SF and fantasy writers of Merritt's generation are in print; as A.M. Jordan notes in his article on James Branch Cabell, only one of Cabell's novels is in print at a reasonable price. I suspect a similar statement could be made of Lord Dunsany. But certainly people want to read the fiction of

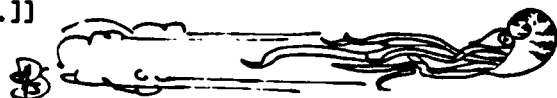
these writers; Ballantine Adult Fantasy books tend to have risen in value (selling for between three and five times their original cover price) not because of collector's interest, but because people want to read Cabell, Dunsany, and other writers and can't find their books in any affordable edition save for the Adult Fantasy paperback. This leads me to suggest that one of the bigger science fiction small press publishers (say a Donald Grant or Underwood-Miller) might make some money if they publish a series of attractive trade paperbacks (with signed limited hardcovers for the collectors) of fantasy and horror novels that are long out of print but might still sell to a smaller audience than the mass-market publishers can afford to reach. SF small-press publishing was founded in the 1940s and 1950s on the notion that there was a good deal of material that needed to be preserved in books; I suspect that publishing practices of the 1990s once again have ensured that the conditions that ensured initial success for Gnome Press, Fantasy Press, and SHasta have returned.

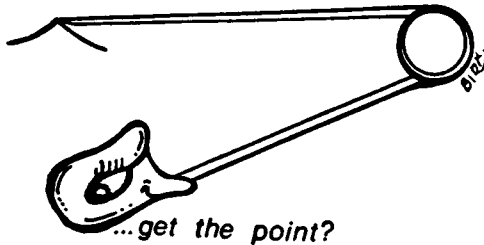
Joe Green	You get kidded a lot a-
1390 Holly Avenue	bout the size of the
Merritt Island, FL 32952	<u>Lantern</u> , but the 150

pages of #40 had a major virtue for me--there was room to include something for almost everyone, and I found several articles on interest. Among them were Sabella's "Lost Worlds" report on A. Merritt; Jordan's "Three Masterpieces by Cabell"; Langdon's "The High-I.Q. Societies"; and the numerous book and film reviews. Material I can't read are Con reports, such as your "Ramblings" (I find conventions interesting when experienced first-hand, not reported upon), and long travel articles (unless they are by Mike Resnick), such as Bruce Burdick's "Bull in My Face". Still, there was enough good stuff to make a very enjoyable issue (for my personal preferences).

[[This is precisely why the issues are so large--I include a lot so that there is something for everyone to enjoy.]]

I wasn't at the Hugo Ceremonies at MAGICON, but heard reports of your "grace under pressure" when the fanzine Hugo was mistakenly awarded to the Lantern. One of those was by Spider Robinson, who visited us afterwards. I want to comment you for offering to present the Hugo to the correct winner; a gracious and generous gesture for someone who must have just undergone high elation followed by great disappointment. Was there a nobility gene hidden somewhere way back in a small leaf on your ancestral family tree? [[Maybe...I'll have to check my roots.]]





[Sheryl Birkhead | I enjoyed the usual stable
|23639 Woodfield Road | of artists. Lately I've
|Gaithersburg, MD 20882| been keeping books on fan-
artists---appearances and
so forth---and I note that several only show up in
LL, and wonder if they come from school contacts?
Artistically, I wish you could get truer blacks,
but realize this is a function of the repro. Our
tastes in art are not always the same, but that's
what makes the world go 'round.

I enjoyed seeing the Diana Stein "Fanomenon" and
believe I saw it as a zine--but that does not make
it any less enjoyable and just a bit different as a
zine contribution. It is the first time in a while
that I've had a chance to read Richard Brandt's
writing (uh oh, Mimosa just had an article by him,
so I better be careful). He is a fine fanwriter and
I only wish he would have a greater output.

[[I too would like truer blacks in the repro, but
sometimes that doesn't happen. Depending on when
I get portions of an issue run off, some black
areas are darker than others.

[[Some artists I use are local and don't send their
stuff out to other fanzines. Diana Harlan Stein
was one I encouraged to send stuff out; she did,
and it eventually garnered her some Hugo nomina-
tions for Fan Artist. Her "Fanomenon" was put out
as a separate zine mostly for her friends, but
she gave me permission to use it and expand the
audience viewing it.

[[I too wish Richard would write more--he deserves
a wider audience too.]]

For Al Bouchard's information: I requested a
small refrigerator for my room in Chicago--for gel
pack for both knee and back--and told the hotel I
needed a room that was in easy access to the con-
vention facilities due to recent injuries and ina-
bility to stand for long periods or time, etc. The
room took standing time at the elevator of a half
hour each way--so I had to be darn sure I wanted to
go up or down. The refrigerator was not in the room
and I wasted most of the first night there (I was
only there for about 24 hours) hassling with the
desk staff by phone. When it finally arrived the
guy said he'd take care of it, and I didn't check.
Instead I settle for ice in a towel (very drippy).
The next morning I went to get the pack and found
out the refrigerator, while plugged in, had not
been turned on. I had to pay for the refrigerator

and wrote a letter about the problems. I got a let-
ter back--not too apologetic in tone--saying that
they wanted to assure me that my case was not re-
presentative of the service to guests. Thanks, but
that didn't make the stay any more pleasant.

Ben Indick	Jeffrey Tolliver's cover
428 Sagamore Ave	for LL #40 is brightly a-
Teaneck, NJ 07666-2626	musung. I particularly
	like the Pulitzer Prize

award. One might say it is a might beyond reach as
yet, but some of the past Pultizers seemed even
further away to me. So do not lose hope!

I assume Paula Robinson's poem is autobiographi-
cal. It is deeply, bitterly moving and painful in
the self-assessment each of us must take, to real-
ize how ungratefully we merely accept a healthy
state, when it is a blessing. However, Paula, I as-
sure you not all of us are "unmoved". As a pharma-
cist (and friend as well), I have known numerous
dibetics. I have appreciated their problems and
their courage. I myself had an angiogram test two
[[now almost four]] years ago for a possible heart
murmur, and as I looked at the TV monitor showing
me my faithful and hard-working heart, I felt
strangely as though it were some separate part of
me, doing a great job despite the terrible press-
ures I placed upon it. (I once had a myocardial in-
farction, a tear in the heart wall, and this fine,
brave heart made it through in spite of much pain.)
I literally thanked it as I looked at the TV.

Recently I had a carotid ultrasound, in fear of
possible stroke, and the technician pointed out on
the monitor the carotid and the jugular as well as
the thyroid, and again, as though I were a tenant
in my own body, I silently thanked them and apolo-
gized as well. No, I do not take for granted my
body, nor that of others, not the terribly hard-
pressed Paula, nor that of my adorable granddaught-
er, Valerie, whose time of birth I waited through
more nervously than shoe of my children. And for
the healthy baby (now a radiant 17 [[37]] months) I
was grateful. We can never be unmoved at the mira-
cle of life, and when something has gone awry we
must not ignore it, even if our tears are all we
can offer.

Lan, you are still incredibly active, consider-
ing you are a teacher and a thick-z'ne publisher of
frequency. Somehow you read a lot too! Amazing!
Maia seems to be a willing partner in all this, but
I did not recall--probably forgetfulness--her being
an active writer for LL. Is she? Does she enjoy
fandom. Janet doesn't really enjoy fandom that
much, with exceptions. She has gone to some cons
and liked some parts of them, but generally fen
turn her off. She tolerates my own fannishness and
insists that in my retirement I use my word-proces-
sor for professional work, not "that fan stuff!"
However, she then sighs, and tolerates it, espec-

ally as I pointed out it is relaxing and more often than not it is productive, ending up in professional or some semi-pro venues.

[[Maia is an active fan, though not so much since she is still recovering from Chronic Fatigue Syndrome (the Epstein-Barr and cytomegaly viruses). She doesn't write often for LL, though she occasionally does reviews if she feels strongly about a book. She's a technical editor by profession, so coming home to work on writing is not what she does for relaxation.]]

Ken Carter
3343 St. Anthony
New Orleans, LA 70122-2955

Pen Pals: Try again,
please. Correct address is "3343", not "343". Thanx, Lan.

[[Sorry about that--slight mistype by me!]]

The current wave of Stapledonian novels is very healthy, for it triggers the query, "What is the limit of X?" Too few of us use that particular tool-of-thought. It's not mere extrapolation---it's searching for the utter limit.

Greg Bear's Eternity was particularly refreshing: wildly inventive, studded with the more enigmatic balconies of higher math's towers, and not drenched-in-blood. I found it very tasty, full of Sense of Wonder. To me it seems that SoW is the road to Ultimate Truth. So Bear's oeuvre is just what we all need, if we are to travel on up the road to UT.

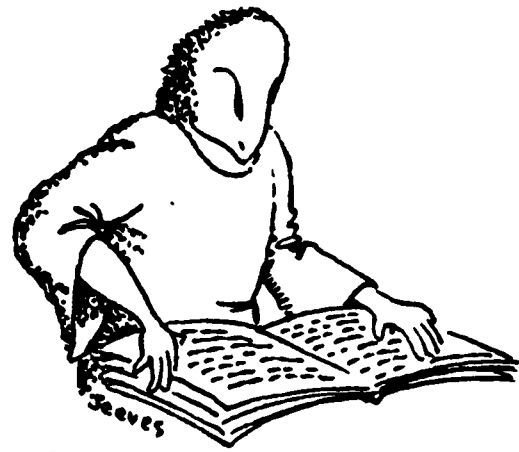
On this idea let us keep in mind that entire societies can be clinically depressed (e.g., the historic "culture sink" described by anthropologists in N.E. Mexico). From inside, depression seems the proper way to be; however, depression is antithetical to a search for Ultimate Truth. The wild optimism of Stapledon is the natural mood for those who want to travel the road of seekers. SoW, combined with "What is the limit of X?", can help readers to escape many of today's depressed subcultures--from dystopian to bloody cyberpunk.

Sense of Wonder is a high flute, piping to seekers: "Come, the cool green meadows are just up the road!"

PS: Fellow fans, which of the successful novels would you pick out as having the most episodic (fragmented) structure? I'm looking for a model, to help in shaping my next novel.

Milton F. Stevens | Interviews with R. A. Lafferty always bring out that
5384 Rainwood St. #90 | there is so much going on
Simi Valley, CA 93063 | behind his stories. It's

certainly that his stories appear to be simple, but it's hard to imagine what does go into them. Tom Jackson's question on surrealism was particularly interesting. Surrealism doesn't seem to describe Lafferty's stories. In surrealism, things happen



for psychological and symbolic reasons rather than any sort of logical sense. Lafferty's stories seem like variations of the Irish tall tale. They just seem like something that came from the realm of the faerie folk. In the tall tale, outrageous stuff is included for the pure joy of pulling the listener's leg. It's basically a joke advanced to a higher level of complexity.

David Shea's article applies to an awful lot of fans. Many fans have tried to sell some professional fiction at some time or other. I've tried it a few times with the first time back when I was a teenager. Needless to say, I didn't know what the heck I was doing when I was a teenager. As years went by and I learned more, I didn't try as often. When I was a teenager I thought of writing as a way of gaining adulation with monetary rewards also included. In later years, I've thought of it as a way of gaining monetary rewards with the risk of ridicule also included.

Mickey Zucker Reichert's article is yet another view of trying to write. I never really thought getting hit in the head would be a virtue if I was trying to write for a living. Now that I've considered it, I'm almost glad I'm not trying to write for a living. H. E. Mercier-Davis presents a third aspect of writing. Failure and hitting the root-beer. Thinking of a career of research ala Reichert might be enough to drive someone to the root beer without failure.

I thought Ben Indick's article on the 50th anniversary of Arkham House was interesting, even though Arkham House has never been part of my personal collectorism. I've read some Lovecraft and Clark Ashton Smith, but it was never enough to make me a fan of horror fantasy. Most of the Lovecraft and Smith material I have was in Avon Fantasy Reader. I have runs of all the fantasy magazines with the exception of Weird Tales. Thinking back on why I didn't start collecting Weird Tales, I thought the covers were ugly, and they weren't included in the Day Index so I didn't have to collect them.

You have enough material in the letter column to support a couple of medium sized apas. Mike Glicksohn is right about the awesomeness of it all. Mike mentioned Harry Andruschak's complaint that nobody

in fandom said anything about his drinking back when he was drinking. Mike to the contrary, it was not some sort of California thing. Nobody said anything about Harry's drinking because nobody noticed it. I recall seeing Harry at fan functions with a pint of Foster's. As far as I knew, he might have consumed one or two pints during an evening. That would hardly be big news drinking. I never saw him act as if he were under the influence at all. Harry has said he had the Foster's cans filled with Scotch (which certainly would make a difference), but that isn't something a person could casually notice. It was behind the typewriter that Harry tended to act unreasonably. I've seen complete non-drinkers do the same thing at times (foot-in-typewriter disease). It comes from not associating the inanimate piece of paper with the pissed off person who is eventually going to read it.

I agree with David Gorecki (and yourself) on the current uninspiring state of the prozines. I've given up my subscriptions to all of them. I finally asked myself why I was wading through all this dismal crap. I didn't come up with a satisfactory answer so I stopped.

<u>William Goodson</u> <u>11108 Johnson-Davis Rd</u> <u>Huntersville, NC 28078</u>	Stephen Leigh: The so-called "soft" techniques like aikido are hard for me to follow. It always looks like the opponents are cooperating. I studied Tae Kwon Do about six years in three schools and could always see they were fighting trying to be a but faster and stronger. Why someone holding your wrist keeps you from slamming them around is not obvious to we casual from the sidelines.
------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

Paula Robinson: The closest I ever had to a serious illness was a skin cancer. I am still trying to control the anger I feel over this. I knew too much sun could cause them, but I somehow assumed exposure I received working outside didn't count; it was the lazy sunbathers that would need rogue cells trimmed off.

Mark Leeper: I remember that show. My favorite shot had Commando Cody, Sky Marshall of the Universe, adjust his backpack to a feet-down flight position, similar to what the real jet packs provide. He then carefully landed on a ladder on the back of a moving truck. Best flying anyone did until the 1979 Superman.

Elizabeth Ann Osborne: As an AV librarian I bought Beta for the first college I worked for. At the end of two years the tiny town we were in had three video stores but we could only use what I recorded off the air.

Since then I have become even more unwilling to spend money on new formats. I skipped the first generations of videodisc players and projection televisions, and missed eight-track tapes entirely. Now I am holding out against compact discs, fearing

Digital Audio Tapes will take over. That which can be recorded at home (videocassettes) will outsell what cannot (videodiscs).

Bruce Burdick: Jim Dial, the anchorman on Murphy Brown, tells a story about the time he and Ernest Hemingway happened to be in Pamplona. Hemingway challenged Dial to run with him. Dial had a pulled groin muscle and declined. Hemingway called him a pussy, so Dial decked him.

Robert Sabella: There is an odd story about how Merritt vanished from Philadelphia. He was a reporter when he suddenly left and spent a couple of years in the Yucatan. There he developed a lifelong interest in the occult, mythology, and botony, especially poison plants. Later, when he was a famous editor with estates full of botanical oddities in New Jersey and Florida, he admitted he had discovered something so embarrassing to the local power structure that he was offered a vacation "he couldn't refuse."

And by the way, Dave Jordan, the biggest difference between Massage and Music is the old guy like me will pay teenagers for the massage but pay to keep them away when they play music.

When my therapist recently asked me what I enjoyed about Star Trek, I insisted it was because in that universe virtue is rewarded, logical thinking helps, and music is never electronically amplified.

<u>Jeanne Mealy</u> <u>4157 Lyndale Ave S</u> <u>Minneapolis, MN 55409-1446</u>	Mickey's corollary to "write what you know" is "If you don't know about it, DO it!"
---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

Sounds like George Plimpton's approach, which can be a lot of fun for the reader (and sometimes fun for him). I'm aghast at the elevator company rep who told Mickey in detail how to sabotage one of their elevators.

Oh may. I just looked at the address on the back page and saw that Mickey Zucker Reichert lives in Nichols, IA. That's the first place I have memories of! I was born in Mason City, and my family moved to Nichols and Muscatine before staying in Mt. Horeb, WI, for awhile.

Love Lynn's "What I Did Last Summer", being a fan of travel writing (and especially when some of her exploits included local scenery and events and people I know, like this guy Lan). I'm impressed with everything she did: it was practically non-stop! So how were Betty's Pies? I haven't been there yet. We've been to Jeffrey's, an excellent bakery near Grand Casino-Hinckley. Took us a while to work our way through it; then we went to the flea market, the casino's all-you-can-eat buffet (good deal), spent a few quarters, then returned to the flea market. We've got OUR priorities straight. In general I like the nature stuff, but draw the line at deerflies and other unpleasant features. Canoeing, oooh (I love it).

Great illo on page 17 ("A bear! Get him!"). The image of them taking off after the bear, pelting it with rocks etc., reminds me of our problems with raccoons (sorry, Lan). One night I'd had it with cleaning up garbage and ran out with the squirt bottle we use on the cats to scare the beast away before it created another mess. Luckily the 'coon ran too.

"Don't a lot of women go camping?" Yes. Maybe her male friends just hadn't encountered them. I don't have much experience with it, but doubt I'd be shrieking for someone to save me or do my work if I did. I do capture-and-release here with all manner of bugs and an occasional bat (OK, I shriek a little with the bat).

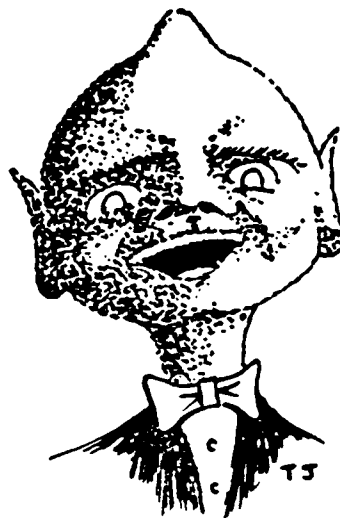
Terry Jeeves	The repro was superb in #39
56 Red Scar Drive	#40, but more typos than
Scarborough	usual (I got an unfortunate
N. Yorkshire YO12 5RQ	one in my poem: "all" for
England	"oil"). The illos very well

reproduced and in the main (only two exceptions), excellent. Honourable mentions being the artwork of Dow, Janda, Thompson and Doran. I didn't care for that by Leva Mevi's or 'Nola's computers'. "Fanomenon" wasn't drawn badly, but the strips lacked punch lines.

Best items were Reichert's interesting piece on "If you want to write about it, DO it." An excellent theory, but there must be oodles of situations where it won't work--brain transplants and a walk on Venus, for openers. Margosian on camping trips was interesting, but overlong. My own memories of tent living included six months in India and two on the Cocos Islands. In my book, tent life ain't fun. Resnick's African adventures was another goodie, my only experience of the Dark Continent being a few days ashore in Durban when our troop ship called there. Resnick makes it interesting.

My best of all piece was Joe Patrouch's great piece on adding two and two--lovely. Your Worldcon and Europe convention trip was fascinating and reminded me greatly of the time Eric Bentcliffe and I did a similar Belgium, Holland and London trip for the 1957 Worldcon. Sadly, I lack the energy (and cash) for such activities nowadays. Incidentally, you mention shopping malls (which I ABHOR) as being new to England. Not so, we've had one or two for years, but generally they were slow to catch on partly because of the cost of land and building, plus the fact that only the larger chain shops tend to use them, and they already had centre-of-town stores so why move out just to accommodate car trade? Sadly, they are catching on, with the result that small traders are vanishing. Not many Malls will be selling secondhand books, a pair of 4" nuts, bolts and washers, or even single torch batteries.

"Tongue Tied" was an excellent little yarn and



its writer had the sense to keep it to the right length instead of pad it out. Full marks. Another winning piece was Alway's wonderful article on wooden toy trains. I read it with great enjoyment, then sat back and thought, "Why does a grown man want to collect and play with trains?" Then it hit me, this grown man collects pulp SF mags--five short of a set of ASF, 25 years of Galaxy, files, runs and sets of most others--why does this grown man collect such stuff when all he does is file it because the stories are now virtually unreadable? At least, Alway uses his trains. Another full marker.

Other good items included the piece on Disney World. We visited Disneyland in '82 and rated it very highly. Very clean, well kept, and well policed to keep out yobbos. Clear signs giving queueing times and excellent value all around. Sad to see the posthumous Bentcliffe piece, but I enjoyed it just the same. One point though--obsolescence--not only has his Ferrograph gone, mine too. I now have an aging Phillips and if that goes, you can't buy 'em any more. The same applies to my 45s, LPs, my STD.8mm cine film and all my reel to reel tapes. Once my players and projectors pack up, they're dead ducks as nobody makes 'em any more.

Bull-running: seems a rather idiotic pastime--possibly a change from Russian Roulette, but equally idiotic.

Martin Morse Wooster	Ben Indick's tribute to
PO Box 8093	Arkham House was quite
Silver Spring MD 20907	pleasant, but Jack Chalker
	and Mark Owings' <u>The Sci-</u>

ence-Fantasy Publishers provides better information that partially contradicts some of Indick's points. In particular, what happened with Someone in the Dark and the Arkham House edition of The Shunned House is that Ken Chapman, Derleth's agent in Britain, caught a forger with counterfeits of these two books. According to Chalker and Owings, Derleth asked Chapman to send the forgeries to him, sold The Shunned House to out of print dealers, and then declared that Someone in the Dark had a "second

printing" and sold the forgeries himself! This leads to a publishing question: if a publisher sells a forged copy of his book as part of the true edition, is the forgery still a counterfeit?

[Cathy Howard | #39 of Lan's Lantern was especially interesting to me.
|3600 Parker Avenue |
|Louisville, KY 40212| I've been a closet writer for years. Somehow the manuscripts sitting in the closet never get finished. I'm beginning to doubt my sincerity in becoming a writer.

"Real Life Research": The elevator employee telling Mickey how to sabotage an elevator just shows how trusting some people are as taking one at one's word, particularly over the phone. I make a lot of business-related calls at work, and tremble between horror and astonishment at what people will relate to a total stranger over the phone.

I do feel Reichert went a touch too far on research with the car ride through the city. A roller coaster ride with eyes closed and a bit of imagination would have substituted nicely. Anyone who could contradict a description simulated that way you wouldn't want to get into a car with!

I did read Tomoe Gozen's Saga by Jessica Amanda Salmonson. As she says in her article, the books are more difficult than is the norm for this type of book. No skipping ahead or the thread is broken. My misfortune while reading the books was that while I'd be reading and eating lunch at the same time I would invariably be at a part where Tomoe was bloodily chopping someone to pieces. I enjoyed the books quite a bit in spite of having my appetite ruined more than once.

"What I Did Last Summer": Lynn Margosian has more energy than any three people I know. Just one of her adventures would do me for the entire summer. Her outing with the bear included would have done me in for the next five summers and given me a lifelong aversion to forests.

"Contact VII": I hope it is introduced into schools. The main problem with school is that students are not encouraged to problem-solve or use imagination. Sitting with one's hands folded memorizing material to repeat back dulls even the best student. Joel Hagen's making of extraterrestrial fossils and skulls is most intriguing. I've seen in stores where prehistoric skull models are being created, but extraterrestrial ones are ever so much more fascinating an idea.

Resnick's trip was a good reading as always. Beginning to think he is shopping around for a summer house in Africa.

I thought I had read the majority of R. A. Lafferty's works until I checked the list included with his interview. I had not heard of quite a few of the novels. Had no idea at all of their existence.

"Virtues and Walls" mentions novels have the best chance of getting published even if not terrific material. I've heard this so much I'm beginning to wonder if it is true.

The story by Joe Patrouch was very good. Math, as I'm sure you are well aware of, is a nutty subject.

[Clifton Amsbury | The contributions of Jessica
|768 Amador | Amanda Salmonson, both the
|Richmond, CA 94805| article and the letter, were excellent, even above the

standards set by the others.

P. 139: "A hobo camp during the Depression may not seem the most auspicious opening scene for a fantasy novel." However, casting back to ones I was in, every one of them was eminently fitting for such an opening of such a story. Whatever one might project from such a scene would be either fantasy or horror. Fortunately I had another reality outside that one, so I could leave. I left it because I could see what the old bindle stiffs became.

A "bindle" was a "bundle", the slung roll of all one's possessions. It was a great life for a young man in spring, summer and Indian Summer (Early fall). It was no life for winter or for the winter of one's years.

A few days before Christmas, 1932, we piled off a freight being broken up in what then were the largest railroad yards in the world in Galesburg, Illinois. It was no longer snowing, but snow lay piled deeply and it was bitterly cold. The yard crew directed us to the police station no far away.

A corridor led from the entrance between two long blank walls. Obviously beyond the right-hand wall were the realms of the police, for at the far end was a counter facing the entrance to the jail. On the end wall between them was a big sign with jail rules and concluding: Transients one night only DO NOT COME BACK.



We were still cold there in line as the police chief personally registered us in. Whatever coats and head coverings we had, shoulders hunched, collars up, necks pulled in, shivering and stamping. The chief looked sharply at the man ahead of me and demanded, "You ever been here before?"

"No," he answered, "I don't think so. Oh, maybe three or four summers ago."

The chief pointed to his right. "You see that sign? Well," he glanced back up the corridor at the entrance. "Well, I'll let you stay tonight, but," and he pounded on the counter with each word, "DON'T YOU EVER COME BACK!" What a memory!

On the other hand I recall an August evening in a secluded jungle south of Omaha's line of silo-like grain elevators. And across the tracks a field of corn coming into lovely milk. Mmmm.

Dennis Fischer's study of three LeGuin's books overlooks one thing. The Tombs of Attuan really does not stand alone. There are unfolding revelations throughout the Earthsea books, and indeed LeGuin eventually saw that the original trilogy was incomplete and wrote a fourth book to finish it.

I'm glad to see your recognition of CONTACT. Jim Funaro is a great guy and has attracted an excellent team.

<p>Lester Boutilleir 2723 Castiglione St New Orleans, LA 70119</p>	<p>I appreciated the information on those obscure works by Cabell and Merritt. I'll just have to add them to my want-list (or find-list, since they may be in some local library somewhere).</p>
----------------------------------------------------------------------------	--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

<p>Perry Glen Moore 1124 Barnett Shoals Rd Athens, GA 30605</p>	<p>I thoroughly enjoyed Mike Resnick's Afridan trip diary. I always look forward to reading his adventures; perhaps someday I will follow in his footsteps and see some of the same places. In some ways, though, I feel that I have already been there. His descriptions make me feel as if I am there with him.</p>
-------------------------------------------------------------------------	-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

I have enjoyed the new Star Wars books by Tim Zahn. Did he write those books back to back? The first two read like he wrote them together. I heard somewhere that the success of his books has led LucasFilm to commission more books. Hopefully he will get to write some of those.

[[As far as I know, Tim wrote all three one after another. Since you wrote this, you know that more SW books have been written--quite successfully.]]

I realize that many fans criticize Star Trek: The Next Generation. I cannot understand why, as the shows continue to get better and better. What amazes me is that no individual episode has yet to make the ballot. The original series won two awards, and one year comprised all five of the nomi-

nees (if I remember correctly). I nominated several of the episodes this year [1992], presentations which were far better than some of the final nominees on the ballot.

[[As you may know, a ST:TNG episode, "The Inner Light", won last year--and received a standing ovation at the ceremonies. It did deserve it!]]

I also enjoyed the art--the pieces sure do spice up the reading.

<p>Harry Warner, Jr 423 Summit Avenue Hagerstown MD 21740</p>	<p>I feel limited agreement with Mickey Zucker Reichert's plea for finding out about things before writing about them. In the case of the elevator sabotage, the research will prevent some elevator technician from writing an embarrassing letter to the author or publisher belittling the story because it's mechanically impossible. However, there's another side to this basic principle which limits its applicability. It can be overdone, because recently I read a novel set in South America that betrayed the writer's intimate acquaintance with the areas in which his story was placed, but perhaps added 10,000 superfluous words to his narrative with endless minute details of streets, buildings, landscapes, furnishings and other matters that had absolutely no relevance to the course of the action or the characterization. Then there's the fact that many writers have succeeded without knowing what they were writing about. Harriet Beecher Stowe had never been in the South or talked to a slave when she wrote <u>Uncle Tom's Cabin</u>. None of the millions of soldiers who survived the Civil War wrote fiction about it that was half as good as Stephen Crane's <u>The Red Badge of Courage</u> and he never was in the army or saw a battle in his life. H. G. Wells couldn't have researched or inspected personally any of the events in <u>The Time Machine</u>, but it's still a much better story than most of his late mundane novels like <u>The History of Mr. Polly</u> which are about people and places he knew intimately. Would Shakespeare's plays be perceptively better if he's actually visited France, Denmark, Italy, Greece, and the other nations in which some of them are set? All in all, lots of imagination and ability to put it to literary use are more important than research.</p>
-----------------------------------------------------------------------	------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

Lynn Margosian and Harry Andruschak should get in touch with one another, since they seem equally enthusiastic about going out into the wild boondocks and surviving all sorts of misadventures in little explored corners of the globe. Her description of her summer would be totally enjoyable to me if it didn't arouse some bleak philosophizing over the way she did about twice as many things that summer as I've done in my entire life.

I'm always happy to find one of the rare emer-

gences of Dennis Fischer into a contemporary fanzine's pages nowadays, because he's one of the most reliable writers of fanzine material. Alas, I couldn't empathize as well with his subject matter in this instance as I normally do. I just don't think Ursula LeGuin's fiction is strong enough or significant enough to be worth this sort of analysis. I've read only two of the three novels he writes about. Both impressed me as superior science fiction in one case and superior fantasy in the other but too carefully thought out, not sufficiently felt out. I'd like to see the author throw off her shackles and put two adverbs on each page if she feels in the mood, cause one of her characters to break something once in a while instead of being so infernally polite and civilized.

Once again I found pleasure in Mike Resnick's African Journal. It's saddening to think that nobody will be able to retrace his steps for many more years. The continent will be depopulated within the lifespan of many of today's younger fans, if a cure for AIDS isn't found, and poachers will probably finish their decimation of Africa's animal population around the same time in the future. I can foresee the last African capable of getting around killing off the last wild animal left in Africa on the day of his own collapse into death.

Tom Jackson's interview with R. A. Lafferty settled in my mind a number of uncertainties about this writer. I have a premonition that Lafferty's reputation will suddenly mushroom as soon as he's dead, much in the way that H. P. Lovecraft gained posthumous fame. Certainly Lafferty's fiction is distinctive enough to attract a cult following and much of it is rare enough to touch off competitive excitement among collectors.

The letter section is splendid, but if I indulge my instincts and responded to every provocative sentence in it, this letter would be even longer and more boring than it promises to be with the help of some restraint on my part. It's pleasant to see Don D'Amassa's prose in a fanzine again, but I can't agree with his belief that the present output of science fiction is equal in quality to the way it was in the past. There are only a few prozines today compared to scores of them around the mid-years of the century so the output of shorter science fiction should be more concentrated today than it used to be, but does anyone seriously think that the contents of any contemporary prozine will be as extensively anthologized and reprinted over and over as was the case with Analog and Galaxy during their glory decades? Compare the Hugo novel category in the 1990s with nominations in the 1960s and then try to say with a straight face that the modern output of Hugo nomination quality is as good and as likely to survive as what we were nominating three decades ago.

Ruth Berman says societies without public

schools don't prepare children to live in a pluralistic society which may be very true but it's obvious that societies with public schools don't prepare children for that activity, as a quick glance around the present-day United States will prove.

Amen to Mike Gliskcohn's point about parents holding a key role in creating readers. I'm sure I wouldn't be such an avid reader if it hadn't been for my parents' devotion to the printed word. My mother read to me a lot when I was too young to understand the printed word, or too sick to hold a book and turn the pages. My father always brought home two or three newspapers and we got several magazines regularly. Paperbacks as mass distributed merchandise hadn't been invented yet but there was always a hardcover book or two among the gifts at Christmas and for birthdays. The Hagerstown library didn't permit children to go into the adult stacks unaccompanied but my father began taking me there when I grew old enough and wise enough to become dissatisfied with the bland fare of the children's department's books. So I learned to read rapidly and to understand most of the big words I read without wasting thousands of dollars in tax money on remedial reading instruction.

I had occasion recently to find proof of what Sally Syrjala says about getting rid of older fiction on the part of library authorities. I checked the local library which is better than average for a city of this size, and found it only has three novels and one novella of James Hilton. Hilton was an enormously popular writer in mid-century. So many of his stories were turned into smash hit movies that are still shown that I would think libraries would continue to shelf the book in case reruns of the movies on television inspire watchers to want to read the stories on which they are based.

Someone at Advent once told me that The Eighth Stage of Fandom, which Martin Morse Wooster mentions, was one of the slowest sellers that Advent ever published. So now collectors are paying unreasonable prices for a book that evoked little interest while it was available. This is precisely the same phenomenon that occurred in the case of the first Arkham House release, The Outsider and Others, which took years to sell out of its first edition.

[R. Coulson [2677W - 500N [Hartford City, IN 47348]] As a postscript to Mickey] Zucker Reichert's article] I might add that fandom] is a fine repository of] skills that an author can call upon in research.] Juanita was once handed a setting for a romance; it] had to take place in New Orleans. We've never been] there, and it's a bit far to go for research, so] Juanita asked for some details from a fan who lived] there (and paid him by putting him into the book as] a tour guide the heroine consults at one point).
-----------------------------------------------------------	---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

When she needed a star drive she got one from a fan who knew someone at JPL. And so on. It's then necessary for the author to use the research in the way it has been explained. Some of the fans listed in the acknowledgements of one author's works weren't particularly pleased to be mentioned because the author hadn't paid much attention to what they told him, and they didn't want readers to think that his errors were their fault.

The Lafferty interview was very interesting. I've received about ten books and booklets of Lafferty material from United Mythologies Press (PO Box 390, Station A, Weston, Ontario M9N 3N1, CANADA) for review, and the reviews will eventually appear in Comic Buyer's Guide. I'm a fan of Lafferty anyway, though I admit to not always understanding what he's writing about. If any of your readers are inspired to read Lafferty's fiction (or nonfiction) by the interview, UMP is the place to find it.

Ah, Elizabeth Osborne, cons do ban people by reputation alone. Not for drunkenness or obnoxiousness, but for theft. Some years ago, a fan left a lot of bad checks at BUBONICON, and every con committee in the southwest plus a few others were notified of the fan's name and told to keep him away from their cons. There have been other instances of the same sort; one fan who robbed Forry Ackerman was even banned from fanzines. The same could be done for persistent drunks, but it hasn't been, though I've heard rumors that known child molesters have been banned. Can't guarantee it. Of course, the con committee has to know about the acts before it can do anything. (The major child-molesting case in Fandom--major for the uproar it caused--eventually fizzled when it was made known that the child's parents were present during the alleged molestation, and few fans are fanatac enough to object to an act that the child's parents allowed.)

I not only read but review (and get paid for it) every U.S. magazine I can obtain, plus two British ones. Since my editor doesn't want negative reviews, I can only treat poor stories by saying "there are other stories by..". Analog is the magazine in which I do this the least number of times. Asimov's quite often has the top story of the month, but it also has--usually, not always--several items that I'm unable to finish. Analog seldom has the best, but almost never has the worst, either. It's the most readable magazine.

[Helen E. Davis | David Shea's article had to
[2327 Shroyer Road] come at a time when I had just
[Oakwood, OH 45419] gotten so frustrated with my

writing that I'm about to sell the word processor and take up a "useful" skill, like cooking--and his words echo all the dark thoughts I've been whispering to myself. But I know at least three people who are willing to read whatever I write, so perhaps for them I will continue

to produce something. I enjoy reading the travel-ogues and personal interest articles--it's nice to read about other places and happenings, and it helps to dispel the overwhelming feeling I sometimes get that SG fans have only one major interest in life--SF.

One thing that is seriously starting to bother me, especially after reading Fallen Angels, is the bigotry of the fannish world against non-SF readers. "Mundanes" is what they call people who don't read SF, despite the fact that there are many people who live exciting, interesting lives which fit in that category. And I've met some rather boring SF fans.

Here's an example for you: A mundane is someone who watches football games, right? A fan is a person who is willing to dress up in a crazy costume, in public, when it isn't even Halloween, right? Okay, so please explain the Dawg Pound? Who in their right mind would label those people as Mundanes? [[I don't understand the reference.]]

How about people who climb mountains, or spelunk in caves? The deep-sea scuba diver? The sixty year old couple touring the United States on motorcycles? I think you get the picture.

People can become boring when they have only a single, narrow interest in life. People are mundane when they have no passions or interests in life. Just because someone has passions or interests which are different from ours does not make them mundane. SF fandom is a common interest area for us to meet new friends--it should not be a breeding ground for bigotry and prejudice.

[Lloyd Penney	Buck Coulson mentions that he
[#412, 4 Lisa St.	didn't believe that Star Trek
[Brampton, Ontario	fans were pushed out of gener-
[CANADA L6T 4B6	al fandom. I don't believe it,
	either, but I have seen first-

hand what did happen--locally, at least. The Trek fans I know were upset because they couldn't push their way in. By this, I mean they couldn't walk in and take some measure of control of the convention or club. Some groups realized that the focus of the club or convention was set towards attracting the book-oriented fan, and they set up their own club or con, and all were happy.

There are still one or two groups who demand that a substantial amount of time or money be re-directed towards their particular interest, and can't understand why we would even be reluctant. Doesn't everyone like what we like, they think, bellying their lack of contact with other fandoms around them. Their demands are selfish, and they ignore other groups, saying that we only want what we like. We recognize the wide range of interests that sf fandom enjoys today and try to appeal to a large number of attendees, but these vocal groups still demand special treatment. And many can't be both-

ered to set up and run their own special interest conventions.

[Sam Long
PO Box 7423
Springfield, IL 62791] I rather enjoyed Lynn Margosian's "What I Did Last Summer", not so much for the style, which I'm afraid was pedestrian, but for the events and experiences that struck a chord in me. For example, she mentions the Front Range in Colorado. I had occasion to go to a conference in Fort Collins a couple of years ago and I was impressed with the Front Range north of Denver. It looked to me as I imagined the Misty Mountains must have to the Fellowship of the Ring as they approached from Eregion or fled toward Lorien: "...the Misty Mountains receded endlessly as far as sight could reach." Also, I have some dealing with GIS at work--I wish I had more--and hope to learn more about it soon. We're getting GIS equipment at the Illinois EPA now.

Mike Resnick's travelogs continue to be worth reading. Would it be possible to put in a locator-map somewhere so we'd have a better idea of where--all he went? Stein illos add to the piece, as they did in previous issues; she does an excellent job. [[I will see what I can do for the next one.]]

I enjoyed your trip-report too, especially the bits about Oxford, where I used to live. Mary did too, back in the early 70s. Whenever an "Inspector Morse" mystery was on PBS, we (and especially she) would point out places to our son David, who, as you might expect, was not all that interested. The story of your ferry trips brought back memories, for once, when I lived over there. I took the ferry from Dover to Ostend with my bicycle, pedaled about the low countries for a week and a half, and came back from the Hook to Harwich! There's a famous limerick:

There once was a young girl of Ostend
Who swore she'd hold out till the end;
But half the way over
From Calais to Dover,
She did what she didn't intend!

Or something like that.

[Taras Wolansky
100 Montgomery St, #24-H
Jersey City, NJ 07302] H. E. Mercier-Davis' "A Dark and Stormy Night" was a scream. I hope you send a copy to Charles

Schulz.

Responding to Patricia Mathews: When I described S.M. Stirling as being "a tad playful" with statistics, trying to put his "Draka" caste system and the US of 1940 on an equal footing, I guess the point seemed too obvious to need explanation. The America of 1940 was not a caste society; it was harder for women and the prro and minorities to get

ahead, but it was not impossible. As it would typically be the above-average performers who would make it, the economic damage was minimized. (Or we wouldn't be looking back on the 1950s as a Golden Age for the American economy!)

I looked up the figures for 1940 in the Historical Statistics of the U.S. There were 39.2 million men and 12.6 women in the work force. 1.6 million of the women are described as "professional, technical, and kindred workers"; another 414,000 are "managers, officials, and proprietors". (Clerical workers are not included in either figure.) In 1940, 10,200 women (vs. 16,500 men) got master's degrees; 429 women (vs. 2861 men) received doctorates.

In 1940, 3% of "Negro and other" men (vs. 11% of white men) had attended college. The corresponding figures for women are: 3.3% of the non-whites vs. 10.4% of the whites. In 1940, 11.5% of nonwhites were illiterate (vs. 2% of the whites); I wonder if we could match that figure today.

I also heard from the following people -- at cons, over the phone, quick notes and postcards, letters not published, etc. And I've probably missed a few people too. My apologies. Lan[*]

David Alway, Clifton Amsbury, Arlan Andrews, Doug Andrews, John Annas, Tom & Tara Barber, Ray Beam, Martha Beck, Rose Beetem, Gary Bernstein, Martha Berry, Sheryl Birkhead, Ben Bova, Richard Brandt, Dr. William C. Bruer, Jack Brooks, Lois McMaster Bujold, Bruce Burdick, Dan Camargo, Mary Piero Carey, Ann Cecil, Barry & Sally Childs-Heltons, Michael Chomko, Fred Cleaver, Kathleen Conat, Glen Cook, Karen Cooper, Helen Davis, Barbara Delaplace, Scott & Jane Dennis, Alan Dormire, Linda Dunn, Eileen & Tim Eldred, Joe Ellis, Jim & June Enlow, Gary Ferguson, Carl C. Fields, Dennis Fischer, David Foster, Steve & Sue Francis, Don Franson, Gil Gaier, Jo Gehm, Steve George, Mike Glicksohn, Alan Greenberg, Bob Greene, Liz Gross, Hal Hall, Mick Hamblen, Dr. Halina Harding, James Harris, Terry Harris, Teddy Harvia, Eric Heideman, Rusty Hevelin, Lynn Hickman, Margaret Hilt, Arthur Hlavaty, Cathy Howard, Steve Hudson, Tanya Huff, Thea Hutcheson, Ben Indick, Fred Jakobcic, Mike Kennedy, Jeff King, R'ykandar Korra'ti, Michael Kube-McDowell, Rich Lamb, Geoffrey Landis, Gary Laskowski, George Laskowski Sr, Kathy Laskowski, Sophie Laskowski, Roy Lavender, Steve Leigh, Lisa Leutheuser, Becca Levin, Mary Lou Lockhart, Steve Lofton, Sam Long, Dick & Nicki Lynch, Carol Lynn, Joseph T. Major, Shinji Maki, Mary Manchester, Jim & Laurie Mann, Kathy Mar, Kathy Marshall, Eric Mayer, Jamie McQuinn, Jeanne Mealy, Angela Medbury, Val Jamin Meyers, Judith Moffett, Anne Moore, Janice Morningstar, Kathy Nerat, Frank Norton, Terry O'Brien,

Frank Olynyk, Elizabeth Osborne, Bruno Para, Naomi & Randy Pardue, Lore Ann Parent, Joe Patrouch, Bruce Pelz (who has sent lots of postcards about the conventions he's attended), Dolores Phelps, Greg Puryear, Mitch & Joann Radelt, Peggy Ranson, Mary Reed, Laura Resnick (who is also up for the Campbell Award), Mike & Carol Resnick, Ted Reynolds, Paula Robinson, Bob Rodgers, Doug Roemer, Jan & Tim Rotarius, Kristine Kathryn Rusch, Tom Sadler, Ben Schilling, Randall Scott, Anne Schneider, Bruce Schaefer, Bob Shaw, David Shea, Susan Schwartz, Pat & Roger Sims, Wally Smart, Jill Smethells, Tom Smith, Mary Southworth, Dale Speirs,

Dick Spelman, Pam Spurlock, David Stein, Diana Harlan Stein, Bill & Brenda Sutton, Sally Syrjala, Sylvus Tarn, Charlie Terry, David Thayer, John Thiel, Jurgen Thomann, Lisa Thomas, Ruth Thompson, Laura Todd, Phil Tortorici, Ron Trout, Richard Tuchaika, R Lauraine Tutinasi, Anne M. Valley, Harry Warner, Jr., Larry Warner, Julie Washington, Tracee Washington, Eric Webb, Jean Weber, Henry Welch, Don Wenzel, Denis & Judy Wilemski, Frances Williams, Jack Williamson, Hanja Wojtowicz, Ruth Woodring, Delphine Woods, Andrea Yeomans, David & Carol Yoder, Brian Youmans, and Joe Zimny. [*]

Addresses of Contributors

Harry Cameron Andruschak
PO Box 5309
Torrance CA 90510-5309

Betty Gaines
254 Ceramic Drive
Columbus, OH 43214

Lore Ann Parent
612 S. Fourth St.
Marquette, MI 49855

Dale L. Skran
30 Ottawa Road South
Marlboro, NY 07746

Mark Bernstein
3212 Potomac Ct
Ann Arbor, MI 48108

Pete Grubbs
RD #4, BOX 2908
Brookville, PA 15825

Peggy Ranson
1420 Valmont
New Orleans, LA 70115

Diana Harlan Stein
1325 Key West
Troy, MI 48083

Sheryl Birkhead
23629 Woodfield Rd.
Gaithersburg, MD 20879

Ian Gunn
PO Box 567
Balckdurn, 3130
AUSTRALIA

Tullia Pronf
ISHER ENTERPRISES
530 W. Walnut St
Kalamazoo, MI 49007

Ruth Thompson
University of Alabama
PO Box 4455
Tuscaloosa, AL 35486

Robin R. Brunner
440 W. Main Street
Carmel, IN 46032

Linda Leach Hardy
20190 Milburn
Livonia, MI 48152

Anthony Ravenscroft
2613 13th Ave South
Minneapolis, MN 55407

Jeffrey Tolliver
305 E. 19th Ave Apt A
Columbus, OH 43201

Heather Bruton
28 Woolwich St. South
Kitchener, Ontario
CANADA N2K 1R9

Ben Indick
428 Sagamore Avenue
Teaneck, NJ 07666

Robert Sabella
24 Cedar Ct
Budd Lake, NJ 07828

Phil Tortorici
PO #057487
West Palm Beach, FL
33405

PL Caruthers-Montgomery
2629 Norwood Avenue
Anniston, AL 36201-2872

Terry Jeeves
56 Red Scar Drive
Scarborough
ENGLAND YO12 5RQ

Tom Sadler
422 W. Maple Ave
Adrian, MI 49221

Bill Ware
1233 Surry Place
Cleburne, TX 76031

Dennis Caswell
2424 Maryvale Road
Burlington, Ontario
CANADA L7P 2P2

Mark & Evelyn Leeper
80 Lakeridge Dr.
Mattawan, NJ 07747

Lawrence Schmel
3 Norden Drive
Brookville, NY 11545

Dave Creek
162 N. Bellaire
Louisville, KY 40206

Michael McKenny
424 Cambridge St. S
Ottawa, Ontario
CANADA K1S 4H5

Helen E. Davis
2327 Shroyer Road
Oakwood, OH 45419

Lynn McMillen
Star Rt
Rector, PA 15601

Brad Foster
PO Box 165246
Irving, TX 75016

Cat Nerbonne
(address unknown)

