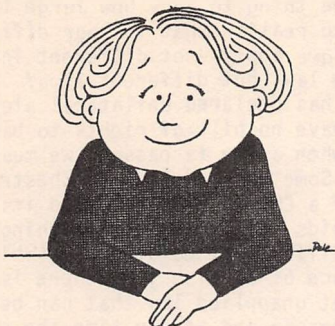


Remember many years ago
when you trusted me with
your innermost secrets?



Billy Bowers

Big mistake.

HA-HA - WAZ HI!
you see Mr "Exposé"
(ow you)
Letter + Film at
to Follow Elms Hatto
H. Horseman

OUTW(36)RLDS

...which is absolutely the LAST 1983 issue of the fanzine of which everyone is asking: "How long can he keep it up?" 'He', of course, is: BILL BOWERS [2468 Harrison Ave., Cincinnati, OH 45211] • & it's His Publication #133. Normally available by Whim, or US\$1.00...but the next issue (being the B*IG 14th Annish) can be had for US\$2.00 --and very few Whims. Take Heed of Mailing Label "X"'s! COPYRIGHT (C) 1983, BY WILLIAM L. BOWERS • 12/19/83 •••

THIS YEAR, FOR THE FIRST TIME SINCE 1978, I DID NOT PUT THE PORCH SWING UP ... BUT I KEPT BUSY.

THIS YEAR, FOR THE FIRST TIME SINCE 1974, I DID NOT ATTEND OCTOCON. BUT 'STRINGS' ARE MADE TO BE BROKEN, AS WELL AS TIED ... AND BESIDES, OVER THE COURSE OF 1983 I DID MANAGE TO ATTEND 10 CONVENTIONS, AS WELL AS PUBLISHING 6 ISSUES OF A GENZINE-ACCORDING-TO-BOWERS...

ALL IN ALL, IT HAS BEEN A RATHER SEDATE, BUT GENERALLY VERY GOOD, YEAR.

OF COURSE, I DO SEEM TO HAVE ACQUIRED YET ANOTHER RATHER COSTLY PERVERSION.

"So little has been happening lately that I'm uncertain where to begin my efforts at elevating the trivial. Bill Bowers, who is not trivial but merely esoteric, left here at 2:00 o'clock this morning, grunting under the weight of 200 freshly mimeoed copies of Outworlds #35. It seems that Bill has two loves these days, if we ignore the women, and they are Outworlds and cable television. Between publishing bimonthly and videotaping or watching movies, the rest of his free time has been ensnared to the point where it might be foofed away if he pauses to scratch his ass (as he has so little room among the kipple in his apartment, the main problem is that he would have to go out on the porch to do this). Anyway, I'm terribly envious of his wherewithal to publish a bimonthly genzine, though this is tempered by such kindnesses on his part as making me a columnist and allowing me to smell the fresh twilltone as he rips open the first ream and begins feeding it through Jackie's Gestetner. I also get to help collate. One time I even cemented-in electrostencilled illos, stencilled the heading for my own column, and sat here for an hour using a nail-file to flick the defective spring-return on his electric stapler. Fanpubbing is the good life. This morning, leaning against the Gestetner stand, I even

came away with ink on my fingers."

DAVE LOCKE LIKED THAT BIT OF WORD-WHIPPING WELL ENOUGH TO RUN IT, VERBATIM, IN TWO SEPARATE APAZINES. (AND, IF WE WERE IN MORE APAS...) I LIKED IT TOO--I ALWAYS LIKE SEEING MY NAME IN PRINT...GENERALLY REGARDLESS OF THE CONTEXT. BUT THAT'S NOT THE MAIN REASON I'M ELEVATING THE TRIVIAL FOR THE THIRD TIME. NO, MY ASS ITCHES...AND THIS SERVED AS A CONVENIENT LEAD-IN.

THE KEY WORD, OF COURSE, IS 'WHEREWITHAL'.

WITHOUT BEING MELODRAMATIC, DESPITE HAVING WORKED STEADILY THE PAST 2.5 YEARS, I AM DEEPER IN DEBT THAN I'VE EVER BEEN--WITH THE (POSSIBLE) EXCEPTION OF WHEN WE WERE BUYING THE HOUSE.

NOW THIS IS NOT YOUR CONCERN--UNLESS I OWE YOU MONEY--AND, ALTHOUGH I AM CONCERNED, I'M NOT TERRIBLY WORRIED. AS LONG AS I KEEP WORKING: IT IS, HOWEVER, A FACTOR THAT BEARS ON WHAT I DO...INCLUDING THIS HUMBLE FANZINE.

DON'T WORRY...I GOT THERE ALL ON MY OWN. I'VE ALWAYS INDULGED MYSELF SHAMELESSLY. BUT THIS PAST YEAR HAS BEEN MORE THAN SLIGHTLY BRAZEN: AH, WELL... I'VE HAD FUN...AND I'VE HAD FUN KNOWINGLY FULL WELL THAT THE TIME TO PAY UP WOULD COME. AND, THOUGH I'VE DONE OTHER THINGS OF WHICH I'M LESS THAN PROUD, I'VE NEVER RENEGED ON A DEBT YET...AND I WON'T NOW.

Outworlds HAS OBVIOUSLY BEEN ONE OF THE INDULGANCES--IF NOT ONE OF THE MAJOR ONES, STILL SIZABLE. THE NEXT ISSUE WILL BE EVEN MORE SO ... SIZABLE AND INDULGENCE. BUT IT WILL BE...AND SO WILL ISSUES AFTER.

HOW DO I DO IT, DAVE?

...WELCOME TO THE WORLD'S FIRST CREDIT-CARD FINANCED FANZINE. ©SIGH©

QUITE FRANKLY, I'VE BEEN DISAPPOINTED IN THE AMOUNT OF RESPONSE TO THE PREVIOUS COUPLE OF ISSUES. NOW'S THE TIME FOR MANY OF YOU TO LET ME KNOW IF YOU STILL WANT TO GET ON. • THE RESPONSE THAT CAME IN IS FINE →

HARRY WARNER, JR.
423 Summit Ave.
Hagerstown, MD 21740

If I ever yielded to the temptation to write a stream-of-consciousness loc, it might go something like this:

"The Same Time Next Year--" Now I wish I had gone to the Potomac Playmakers production of *Same Time Next Year*. This lead item in the new *Outworlds* must be a parody on the play. All I can remember reading about it is something involving a man and woman who have an affair once a year down through the years. No, Bill's style and content are so similar to his genuine con reports that I ought to regard with suspicion the "fiction" in the heading. Good grief, he doesn't give her name but he terms her "very short". Don't tell me this will end up with a climax revealing it was Harlan Ellison in drag. And how am I going to write a comment on this article or story or whatever it is when everyone else on the *Outworlds* mailing list might be aware of the identity of the woman if she's real and I'll only demonstrate again the ignorance in which I'm immersed from not going to cons and not hearing all the chatter about who's running around with whom. The handwriting in the note looks vaguely familiar but I could not possibly have seen it before and anyway, Bill wouldn't have saved a note five years. But here's more evidence that it's based on reality because this *Outworlds* arrived only about five weeks after the worldcon in Baltimore and it's improbable that Bill would have made up all this out of the whole cloth so soon after that event and he couldn't have known enough about the ConStellation facilities to have done it beforehand. Will literary people be conjecturing four centuries in the future about all this the way Shakespeare specialists are still arguing about the identity and reality of the Dark Lady of the Sonnets?

Aren't you glad that my locs are stodgy and pedantic instead of being Up To Date with modern literary devices like stream of consciousness comments? Anyway, I enjoyed this issue in spite of the tizzy in which its main feature threw me. I even found the tiny type a bit easier to read because I've acquired new glasses since the previous issue. I considered investing in contact lenses when the time came to have my glasses replaced. But I realized how my inability to accomplish mechanical feats would probably cause me to put the contact lenses into my eyes improperly so I settled for conventional glasses. Now I wish I'd made the other decision because you and I would have had something in common that way: skewed contacts.

I live only about thirty miles from Gettysburg and I've never gone over the battlefield (except to drive past the parts of it that border the main roads). So Bob Tucker is obviously a more diligent sightseer than I am. I don't know how it was with the dead at Gettysburg, but at Antietam, a dozen miles south of Hagerstown, burial parties after the battle buried only the Union dead in marked graves. The Confederates who died there were buried without ceremony. Some years later, part of a cemetery in Hagerstown was set aside for men from the South who died in and near Antietam, bodies were transferred from their resting places around Antietam, but most of them were unidentified and in most cases, I've been told, three and four bodies were buried in one coffin at the Hagerstown cemetery. And there was no clear victorious army at Antietam, unlike Gettysburg: the Confederates left the battle scene first giving the Union the job of cleaning up but the fighting itself was more or less a draw.

So here's another of that rare breed, the stay-at-home fan, Ian Covell. Some day fans like him and me and Bill Danner and Dick Bergeron and Eric Mayer and John Owan and a few others are going to stage the most memorable con of all time after which fandom will undoubtedly vanish from sheer disbelief that cause all the other fans to split off from reality. [11/6/83]

IS 'SHE' REAL? OR IS SHE MEMOREX...? WHO KNOWS?

IAN COVELL
2 Copgrove Close
Berwick Hills
Middlesbrough
Cleveland TS3 7BP
England U.K.

Great cover [on OW34]. Mr. Foster's works have become--unless I've been lucky enough merely to have seen them in a 'proper' order--more detailed and solid over the years. A very striking illo.

Reading Patty Peters' letter reminded me yet again how strange your country sounds at times. It is one thing to know how large the US of A is, and another to realize that in your different regions different *laws* apply--not different interpretations of the same law, but different *laws*. In my country, no region has declared unilateral atomy (nor could it; we have no bill of rights to base a case upon) and so when a law is passed, we must *conform* or break it. Some regions (eg, Manchester--with its lay preacher of a Chief Constable--and its legendary 'obscenity' raids on virtually everything) apply the existing laws differently to others. (Which merely proves the other face of English law: there is a bed-rock of existing but unapplied law that can be brought into play for any reason and at any time the police consider fit (eg, the 1364 law on which they have just successfully prosecuted men looking for whores at the kerbside)).

She's right about 'marriage' being another confusing word. I wonder if people see the syllable 'mar' and extrapolate from it? The French for 'husband' is 'mari'--and it does sound like the perpetrator, doesn't it? And 'mariée' sounds like the victim...)

I'm afraid Mr Krislov's right about his story in *NATURE OF THE CATASTROPHE*--an indication, I think, proving that on occasion the complaints against the 'newave' were justified. (Where the message/impact was more important than how 'good' the plot was.)

It would do no good to argue with Mr Coulson on the subject of *Houston, Houston*... since several of the phrases he uses ('popular propaganda', 'less violent') are just vague enough to cover whatever argument I might make. It doesn't explain why the more virulently nonsensical feminist texts haven't been argued with to a great extent; ever and ever in such arguments I am reminded of the phrase in Donald Barr's lovely *SPACE RELATIONS*:

"...once a slave starts killing free-men for a good reason, he may, so to speak, generalize--he may then kill for a reason that is only nearly as good, and then for a questionable reason, and eventually he may kill on some quite farfetched analogy..."

I've just read Harlan Ellison's article on his revulsion to films like *THE OMEN*--and the audience reaction to the graphic violence in it--and the women-slasher films that have polluted the screen in recent years. Ellison quite rightly says this is probably a reaction to women's liberation-feminism...but it is a reaction that is predictable because godsdamnit, *I said it would happen*. I was saying it when I entered fandom in the early 1970s, and I was right. The virulence of such films came about because sides were drawn, and barriers erected by the militant members of certain groups. There was never any discussion. There is no discussion in such stories as *Houston, Houston*... or works by Joanna Russ and the like. They are 'protected' by some strange belief that using the anti-thesis of repression and revulsion is justified. It isn't. The reverse of hatred is not love. At least not the way the propagandists use it.

Stephen Leigh's article is affecting and precise. Having--strictly by coincidence--three babies born in to my immediate family, and two to friends of long...er...standing, I've heard tales and descriptions of events that make me as tense as this article. I hope Denise is past what must have been a traumatic period.

I read Dave Locke's column as far as I could, and began to comprehend the argument about fanzines that has 'ragged' across several that I have read recently.

I personally do not think fanzines can be, should be, judged relative to some standards. Since I have always seen such magazines as extended letters or chats, the notion of 'criticising' them is an odd one. If the magazine is clear, legible and at least halfway literate (participles can dangle all they want for me), then surely it is worth some minutes or hours of your time. The question of whether the contents and opinions are interesting/of worth is another matter altogether, isn't it? Have I been seeing fandom in the wrong way...

Why 'as far as I could'? I'm afraid I don't know what 'mailing comments' are... and the first half of page 1243 is incomprehensible to me. Very odd.

Brad Foster's remark that he 'wants' two million dollars for even a two-minute sketch does raise the question of how the value of things is ultimately judged. Now we are so distanced from the barter system, it's hard to think of a way in which we can measure one product against an ability...or whatever.

Sidelight 1--What of the bestsellers sold for several million dollars; how many readers think them worth even the \$3 for a paperback?

Sidelight 2--As this hints, I don't understand economics. Esp. the varying exchange rate of our currencies. My currency is now 'worth' one third 'less' of your currency than it was worth two years ago, yet what is the actual 'change' that occurred? The pragmatic Alfred Bester said write what the customer wants, take whatever is offered--as much as possible--and forget it.

So, Andrew J Offutt has written over 120 erotic novels. I was told it was about 50 or 60. I was wrong. I do wonder why Mr Offutt--much of whose work I admire--so determinately secretes his novels. I have the same curiosity in regard to other authors I like--example: Ken Bulmer--who change pseudonyms on an annual basis. Perhaps the market considerations that alter or distort what he *wants* to write 'force' the writer to put it under another name ('Cordwainer Bird') or perhaps he sets different standards for different pieces of work ('John Rackham')... The odd thing is that quite a number of books written under pseudonyms are 'better' in many ways than those under proper names. Which raises the question of how well an author can judge his work... I do not mean that every, or even most of the, books published under his own name is less(er) than pseudonymous works.

I suppose what I really regret are the many occasions on which--being unable as I, or anybody else, am to afford everything published in every field--I have learned that a book that looked interesting but which I forsook turns out to be by one of those authors I admire/collect. Aggravatingly it seem such pseudonymous books vanish faster and more completely than any others....

(I have an inquiry here: Does Anyone Else Know A Genre Whose Backlist Titles *Never* Go Down In Price And Whose Second-Hand Books Are Never Cheap, Other Than The Erotic Genre?)

I meant to mention, when discussing Ellison's article, that I found his opinion--while agreeable--very strange in light of the fact that the majority of his own stories seem gruesomely misogynistic and that his novella *A BOY AND HIS DOG* could stand fair comparison with many revolting women-as-victim films...

I have a prediction to end: there's going to be a huge argument in fandom in the next few months. I have no idea on what topic, or what form it will take, or who it will involve, but something is on the verge of snapping...

Maybe it's just me and the spectre of next year's feast on the brain.

[10/22/83]

NEIL REST
5309 N. Clark
Chicago, IL 60640

I didn't know you could mimeo print so little and still be legible.
Hey, the last two Chabanacons, a dozen or two people have gone out

to this great little place out in the sticks for Mexican food... wanna come along this time?

re the Breiding loc: what is this thing with zine fans incessantly comparing zines? Sounds like the parodies of wine freaks, "An audacious little twill-tone, with zesty enough electrostencil to excuse its audacity."

re the Brandt loc: why isn't zinedom excitedly celebratory about its so much slower than condom's growth? I have trouble with the seas of people at cons, but not only do I ordinarily recognize many of the names in almost any interesting zine, but several of the parties I liked most in Baltimore were zine fan parties. I'm going to have to loc more meticulously, just to be sure of being able to find the good parties. "skewed tastes"? Just what do you do when out of my sight? I'd never even suspected.

"Syntality" may be what I've called the Minneapolis disease. Minneapa is handed out at a MnStf meeting, and 50 or 100 people all find corners to curl up in to read what they said to each other. "Adoxography" sounds like the name of a Glicksohn zine.

You seem to share some of my scruples about gossip. I have levels of identifying detail I may or may not include in an anecdote, depending in whether I want the person(s) to be identifiable. I don't know how successful I am, but I try. There are stories I sometimes want to share (or flaunt, as the case may be) without identifying principals.

[10/24/83]

FOR WANT OF A BETTER TERM, LET'S CALL IT THE *Outworlds* 'MELD'. ¶ GIVEN THAT THESE THINGS HAVE A WAY OF CHANGING (GIVEN TIME & INEVITABLE FLUX), THESE DAYS THE ONE RESPONSE I LOOK FORWARD TO MOST IS THAT OF IAN COVELL. HE DOESN'T GO TO CONS, AND HASN'T PUBLISHED A FANZINE TO MY KNOWLEDGE. A RATHER RECENT ADDITION TO MY MAILING LIST...YET HE CAN ZING INTO WHAT I PERCEIVE AS THE 'ESSENCE' OF A GIVEN ISSUE MORESO THAN ANYONE ELSE...INCLUDING THOSE WHO'VE KNOWN ME FOR CENTURIES YEARS. ¶ OKAY, SO THE SIGHT OF HIS NAME ON THE RETURN-ADDRESS PORTION OF AN ENVELOPE DOESN'T SEND ME INTO SPASMS OF ORGASMIC ECSTASY. STILL (WITH THE POSSIBLE EXCEPTION OF ROTSLER AND/OR THE COULSON'S) HE HAS RECEIVED MORE OF MY FANZINES ON PUBLICATION THAN ANYONE ELSE. AND YET, AFTER MORE THAN TWENTY YEARS OF GETTING HARRY WARNER, JR. LOCs, I FIND THAT--ALTHOUGH I MAY NOT 'NEED' THEM TO THE EXTENT I DID AS A NEOPHYTE, HE IS STILL MORE THAN CAPABLE OF ENTERTAINING ME...AND OF SURPRISING ME, AS WITH THE OPENING SEGUE OF THE LOC IN THISH. ¶ ...AND THEN THERE'S THE ONES I'M PULLING IN, KICKIN' & SCREAMIN', FROM THAT 'OTHER FANDOM'... I'VE 'KNOWN' NEIL REST WHAT...SAY, SEVEN OR EIGHT YEARS, NOW. AND YET, UP 'TIL THREE MONTHS AGO I HAD NO REASON TO SUSPECT HE COULD SPELL 'LOC'--LET ALONE DO IT. I'VE BEEN PLEASANTLY SURPRISED...

...SO WE'RE NOT QUITE THERE YET...AND GIVEN THAT THE RANDOM FACTOR IS MORE OFTEN ME, THAN YOU--WELL, THE FIRST YEAR OF THE REVIVAL AIN'T TOO SHABBY, EH GANG?

HEY, NEIL...YOU SHOULD HAVE SAID SOMETHING AT CHABANA THIS YEAR. AS IT HAPPENS, WE WENT TO A MEXICAN RESTAURANT DOWNTOWN THIS YEAR. (I'M SORRY, BUT I CAN'T RECALL THE NAME OF IT OFFHAND--PROBABLY HAS SOMETHING TO DO WITH THE OBLIGATORY PITCHER OF MARGARITAS SHE ALWAYS INSISTS ON ORDERING--SHE PAYS, I DRINK!) YES, AS YOU SO ASTUTELY FATHOMED, A CHABANA CON--PAST WAS 'THE MIDWESTERN CON' REFERENCED IN THE FICTION LASTIME. ...AND, YES, 'SHE' WAS AT CHABANA CON AGAIN THIS YEAR. ALWAYS ASSUMING THAT YOU BELIEVE THAT SHE IS 'REAL'...

BRIAN EARL BROWN I'm astonished--your fourth OW 20101 W. Chicago, #201 this year! What is the meaning Detroit, MI 48228 of this, have you rediscovered the joys of fanzines or just run out of other, better, things to do? Well, I'm glad to see *Outworlds* 34, no matter what inspired you to pub it.

(That's an awful left-handed compliment. I'm sorry.) Looking over my letter of last ish I see a ghastly blunder; I left out the word "merely" as in, "I merely stared at her." Oh dear...

My interests were naturally drawn to Dave Locke's column as he was saying many of the things I agree about and better than I would have been able to say them. I can sleep soundly at night knowing that Dave Locke has made fandom safe again. Dave is damn right when he says that talk about doing one's "best" is too grim and serious for fandom. I don't think anyone tries to write poorly for fanzines (except maybe John Theil but who knows *what* he's trying to do). Too often their "best" is just judged "not good enough" by others. And this ties in with Dave's second topic, about apazines. People frequently look down on apazines because they don't respect that kind of writing and naturally conclude that it is far from the best.

D. West in his massive "Preformance" article wrote that fandom is a continuing conversation, and thus the most fannish fanzines have little that can be read with equal enjoyment when removed from their context. I think this is very true of *Pong*; there was very little in there that could stand the "test of time"--mostly a few longer articles in the Annish--most of the writing could be directly compared to apa-natter--in style, in tone, in skill. And conversely no zine more aptly embodies West's statement than an apazine because an apa is--ruthlessly--a continuing conversation. Trying to read an apamailing for the first time is like hearing only one side of a phone conversation; only after a couple of mailings is one really able to follow what's going on.

As much as I enjoyed Dave's column, I kind of think that I would say that Alex Krislov's "Unrequited Puberty" is the "best" piece in this issue. This is some really fine writing. The journalistic adventures of Harry Haggleshound were very funny and the jokes were delivered with perfect timing. I would hope that there would be a market for these two pieces somewhat more remunerative than *Outworlds*. They deserve more than to just appear for free in a fanzine.

Unrequited Puberty is an interesting concept. I never knew quite what I wanted to be when I grew up (which of course made it hard to plan for a career). Actually I never wanted to leave puberty. It was the happiest time of my life--not because I had discovered s*e*x (I hadn't) but because it had everything I wanted--a certain amount of autonomy and lots of leisure. Sort of like being on unemployment without having to worry about being cut off in a few months. Well, I hope Alex has found what it is he wants to be.

My first fanzine was an *Amra* but I was expecting something more like *Algol* in the way of fanzines and so wasn't impressed. The second fanzine I got was *Richard E. Geis #4*, the issue that began the transition to *The Alien Critic*. Tales of Geis' rubber vagina wasn't what I expected from fandom either. Finally I subscribed to *Outworlds* beginning with #18, your last mimeo issue until this run, and decided to become a fan. So Bill it's all your fault.

I really loved the cartoon you used for Stephen Leigh's article. Something about the time and place made Gilliland's punchline sound really funny. And it does fit in nicely with the subject of Stephen's article--in a crude sort of way. I'm also astonished at the aptness of Brad Foster's illu for Dave Locke's column. How did Brad know what Dave looked like, or how short he was? What a stunning likeness!

Finally, I want to mention how impressed I am at the way you have skillfully edited letters and your editorial matter so that the reduced material neatly and precisely fits between your articles. It takes a lot of planning to make things come out like that and only reconfirms that you are probably the best editor of fanzines today.

Just what are we supposed to make of your subtitle

--"a tenth anniversary fiction"--that perhaps the woman you write about seeing doesn't exist, or is a composite of many friends you've met at conventions? Or merely that you've recorded your relationship with her in some sort of cohesive fashion (i.e., a story, a fiction). I tend to believe you've made this all up; what could be more fitting for an enigmatic, slightly skewed and totally out-of-synch faneditor?

[10/15/83]

LET'S SEE IF I'VE GOT THIS STRAIGHT: IF I'M TO BLAME FOR YOU...AND COULSON IS RESPONSIBLE FOR ME...THAT MAKES YOU BUCK'S FANNISH GRANDSON. (AS IF HE DIDN'T HAVE ENOUGH TROUBLE WITH BRUCE...) HOWEVER, BEING AN ORPHAN, I HEREWITH DISOWN BOTH FANNISH PROGENITOR--AND SELF-PROCLAIMED PROGENY. I HAVE ENOUGH SINS TO BEAR...:

DAVID STEVER

788 Dayton Avenue
Saint Paul, MN 55104

I'm glad to see you still playing with formats, and this one looks interesting--you can use letters as lead-ins for articles, still

leaving a body of them for a "column" within the zine. Glad that you've discovered the talents of Brad Foster too. I guess everybody has by now, but I still like his work a lot, and he writes good letters, too.

Being one who has gone through fanzines, apas, and fanzines, only to recently join an apa again, I must say that I agree with Dave Locke a lot. I had gotten a few zines when I first came around in 1970, but the references didn't always make that much sense to me. I liked the stuff about SF, didn't understand the stuff about fans I didn't know (fannish abounded), and soon found myself in APAs NESFA, -45, and MINNEAPA. This turned into a blackhole lined with abortion arguments, so I climbed the ladder out, and ended up editing *Rune*, and knowing most of the fans referred to in other people's fanzines. Twelve years of hanging around will do that for you. I have joined APA-50 now, to better know a lot of people who know people I know...if you follow me. I can agree that there are many people who are writing *only* for apas who are brilliant. Denny Lein being one, and there being others that Dave and you might not ever heard of. I think that Diane Drutowski in APA-50 is another, so is Tony Cvetko. I intend this apa to augment my activities with fanzines as a whole, and maybe I can get some material for my now again delayed fanzine *Samizdat*. We shall see, though. As Cvetko and Wesson have said on many occasions, "Ooooh Stever, you're such a faaaan!" I'd rather be Stephen Donaldson, with the new Mercedes, and without the leprosy.

[10/3/83]

...OKAY, BOWERS...LET'S SEE IF WE CAN DO THIS WITHOUT SETTING OFF THE 'HUGE ARGUMENT' IAN REFERS TO.

THERE SEEMS TO BE A DEVELOPING BID FOR A WORLDCON IN CINCINNATI. (FOR 1988, I WOULD PRESUME.)

A GIVEN: ASSUMING A MULTI-HOTEL WORLDCON, CINTI CERTAINLY HAS THE FACILITIES. IN FACT, WITH THE SKY-WALK SYSTEM, AND THE CLUSTER OF MAJOR HOTELS, IT WOULD BE A MORE 'COMPACT' WORLDCON THAN ANY OTHER CITY I KNOW OF. (CERTAINLY MORE SO THAN DENVER, CHICAGO, BALTIMORE...EVEN PHOENIX.)

'WE' TALK ABOUT THESE THINGS FROM TIME TO TIME. AND THEN WE GO BACK TO PUTTING ON MIDWESTCON, OCTOCON, AND (TO A DEGREE) SPACECON. BECAUSE THAT'S WHAT WE DO BEST...AND THAT'S WHAT WE WANT TO DO.

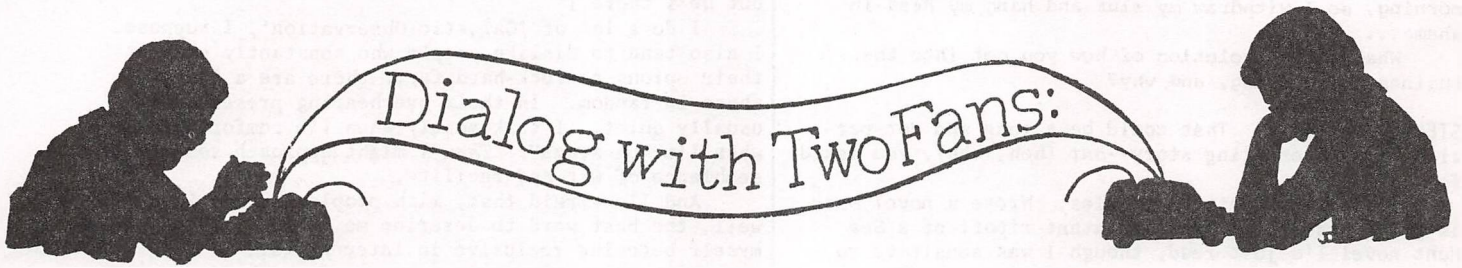
THE 'WE' IS GENERAL & NON-SPECIFIC, BUT SEEMS TO BE THE CONSENSUS.

TO THE BEST OF MY KNOWLEDGE, THERE IS ONLY ONE CINCINNATI FAN ON THE BIDDING COMMITTEE. IN OTHER WORDS IT IS AN 'OUTSIDE' BID...WITH A LOCAL FRONT-MAN. WHICH IS FINE AND LEGIT. NOBODY'S ARGUING THAT.

BUT SOME OF US DON'T WANT TO BE IDENTIFIED WITH IT. WE THOUGHT YOU MIGHT LIKE TO KNOW THAT IT ISN'T A CFG BID.

...NOR IS IT AT ALL A 'CINCINNATI BID'. (HOPEFULLY, IN TIME, IT WILL SIMPLY FADE AWAY...:)

Dave Locke's



a chat with Steve Leigh

His card reads "Stephen Leigh, writer - musician - odd jobs", and a profile in his two Bantam SF novels (*SLOW FALL TO DAWN* and *DANCE OF THE HAG*) tells us he's been selling short stories (*Analog*, *Asimov's*, *Destinies*) since 1976, has a Bachelor's in Fine Art and Art Education, makes his living as a bass guitarist and singer for a couple of rock groups (one group, and it isn't rock except on request, and he also works in a camera shop), and that he's married to Denise Parsley Leigh "who is an activist in SF fandom" (someone at Bantam doesn't know the difference between a person who is active and a person who is an activist, and gets paid for writing things like that).

I can add that Steve is active in fandom, also. He's been in two apas, he writes fanarkles, attends conventions, and once in a blue moon he attends Cincinnati Fantasy Group (CFG) 'meetings' when he finds a Saturday night he isn't playing with the band, which is called Stage Door Johnny. If anything two fans do together is fanac, as Tucker says, then Steve and I fan together on Sunday mornings out on the tennis court. We beat the hell out of three fuzzy, green balls, and then crawl back here to groan and do something really fannish like drink beer.

Steve is also a pro-class juggler, often performing at conventions as half of a juggling act called *Cosmos & Chaos*. Recent performance in another regard has resulted in the birth of the Leigh's first child, Megan Elizabeth.

Anything you want to add or amend to that, Steve?

STEVE: Well, there's a few addendums. Re Stage Door Johnny: we *do* play rock--mostly a light variety, and mostly stuff tinged with jazz (whatever jazz happens to be this week...). Hell, you've heard the group--how would you categorize it (other than "Loud")?

DAVE: When I said that you aren't rock except on request, I neglected to mention that the request comes from the establishments that hire you. Despite that, you slip in an occasional piece of jazz and your rock numbers are "tinged with jazz". I'd categorize you as a frustrated jazz band.

STEVE: As we say, that's close enough for rock and roll.

Re apas: the key to that sentence is the use of the past tense. I've never been very comfortable apa-

hacking. Despite the good people in them, after a while the apas start feeling isolated and dull through repetition of the same themes. They also kill the rest of my writing production.

Re juggling: you should probably add for the sake of completeness that my juggling partner-in-crime (for what we do on stage is decidedly criminal) is Ro Lutz-Nagey. He's Chaos. I wanted to be Chaos, but we spent one ConFusion accosting people and asking which one was Chaos and which Cosmos. They kept pointing to Ro and shouting incomprehensible things like "My feet are lost in the washing machine" or "Uncle Albert ate the snorkel". Even my fluorescent red and green socks didn't help.

DAVE: Tell me, Steve, why do you rush to the net on a short approach shot?

STEVE: That's *strategy*, Dave. I figure if I run to the net screaming "Banzai!" and foaming at the mouth (incidentally getting the net soaking wet and making the footing rather treacherous for my twice-bent right ankle), well, one of these days we'll be playing a very important point, and I'll *fake* that charge. When you throw that lazy lob at me I'll be sitting back near the baseline waiting and I'll smash the ball right past you. Probably never hitting the court in the process.

DAVE: One of the things I admire about you (not your backhand or your second serve) is your diversity. You have three sources of income, which include one mundane job and two career fields. Is this just the way things worked out, or was diversity one of your goals?

STEVE: Now really, Dave, I thought my backhand was finally starting to work. My second serve, though... well, *neither* of us is going to scare Jimmy Connors (or Bobby Riggs, for that matter) with our second serves.

The diversity isn't truly planned. It just fits me. I'm a narcissist, and I have a large streak of self-indulgence blended with an erratic egotism--consequently, I *detest* working at an unpleasant task/job unless it's vitally necessary, while I could diddle about tapping on a typewriter, sketching, and strumming a guitar all day. I can't make writing pay my bills (yet), and music has its attendant indignities, and I've done too little art--fine artists strave unless

they're *very* good or *very* lucky, and I've enough self-objectivity to know I'm neither.

Diversity was a necessity. Lots of small incomes to make a decent one.

DAVE: Your backhand was good enough to beat me this morning, so I withdraw my slur and hang my head in shame...

What's the evolution of how you got into the business of writing, and why?

STEVE: Oh, shit. That could be a long and not-particularly-interesting story--but (heh, heh), you asked for it.

I've always written stories. Wrote a novel back in grade school. It was a blatant ripoff of a Sea Hunt novel I'd just read, though I was sensitive to plagiarism even then and I cut out Lloyd and his bubbles and inserted me and two other neighborhood friends as the erstwhile protagonists. Moved us from Baja Mexico to the Gulf, as well, which didn't really matter since I knew equally little about either locality. We dove for pleasure and fended off pirates and sharks. There weren't any women--I didn't like them at that time. The monstrosity was written in grand old grade school style--under the covers by flashlight. That ms. was rather thick of pages as I remember it and has been thankfully lost to posterity, though I have this nagging fear of my mother some day stumbling across it in the attic and pulling it out in front of me at a particularly embarrassing moment.

After that attempt at being the sixth grade's answer to Norman Mailer, the disease had apparently set in to stay. I wrote bad stories and worse poetry through high school, somewhere in there discovering sf, which moved me from Sea Hunt to Star Hunt.

Through college I painted and sketched my way to that BA which is mouldering in a desk drawer somewhere here. I played music to pay my tuition. I wrote, too, but never sent anything out. It was with the encouragement--nay, insistence--of Denise and mutual friend Earl House that a ms. finally hit the Post Awful bearing my name. I sold a few stories to *Eternity*, a semi-prozine, and one to *Amazing*. (That one never appeared, but that's another story: I don't think I've ever quite forgiven Ted White.)

I graduated, married Denise, taught school, quit teaching. All through that I continued to play music. I kept writing as well, in odd scraps of time. A few more sold: *Analog*, *IASFM*, *Destinies*. And while the writing (and selling) started getting easier, I was becoming more and more disenchanted with the traveling that a fledgling rock star must do. I didn't care for dingy hotel rooms (and yet I'm in fandom...?), didn't like bars and the stench of vomited beer and smoke, drunken people that didn't look that great under bar light and looked worse in the sun. I thought writing seemed a better occupation all around. So when the band exploded, I didn't try to re-employ myself as a full-time musician.

Which means, I suppose, that I just drifted haphazardly into writing. By accident. And a cruel Fate.

DAVE: You have a handsome, smiling face, a pleasant disposition, and a tendency to be on the quiet side. When you do speak it's obvious that you're a silver-tongued devil, but in all the situations where I've encountered your bearded countenance you generally appear inclined to keep your thoughts to yourself. Does this make you a gregarious introvert or a galactic observer?

STEVE: I don't find that I'm a "silver-tongued devil". My perception is quite the opposite, in fact, at least in most situations...

Denise's friends, back in high school days, used to call me "God". That wasn't due to superior intelli-

gence, but a sarcastic nickname thrown at me because I generally stayed in the corner during parties, watching and not speaking much. (It didn't help that when I *did* speak, it was often with a derogatory witticism--you haven't read DOTH, so you don't know, but there's much of the character Helgin in me. He's submerged, but he's there.)

I do a lot of 'Galactic Observation', I suppose. I also tend to dislike people who constantly present their opinions as rock-hard fact: there are a lot of those in fandom. In their overbearing presence I'm usually quiet. I talk mostly when I'm comfortable or when I'm "on stage". Then I might approach some semblance of wit and facility.

And I'm afraid that, with people I don't know well, the best word to describe me is shy. I can see myself becoming reclusive in later years.

This quietness isn't a trait of which I'm overly proud. A goodly number of the more successful writers of my acquaintance not only toot their own horns, they sometimes conduct entire symphonies of self. It may well be a business survival trait. If so, I lack it.

DAVE: I remember starting to read a book called *HOW YOU CAN MAKE \$20,000 A YEAR WRITING (NO MATTER WHERE YOU LIVE)*, by Nancy Edmonds Hanson. All I learned was that it would help tremendously if I could develop a personality like that of, say, David Gerrold, but I only got to page twelve and no doubt there were other distressing tips to be encountered.

You've said in Denise's *Graymalkin* that your ability to verbalize, at least in any quick fashion, has atrophied as writing becomes more important to you. You now reserve your silver tongue for the ideal ("when I'm comfortable") and the mandatory ("on stage"); in all interim levels preferring to keep most of your thoughts to yourself. It's the mark of a private person, beyond question. Address yourself to the on-stage you: where and what?

STEVE: The on-stage me is Sleigh. That nickname dates back to rock days: you see, in a group with two Steves and three Mikes, we had to do *something* to avoid confusion. Mike Straw was Strawman, Mike Bedinghaus was Michael B., Mike Russell was, well, Mike. Steve Gallant was S.G.; I was Sleigh. We'd all been in high school together, and that was the way I'd affected my signature on all my artwork--still do, in fact. At that time, I was doing most of the lead singing, and as the group progressed, I started doing almost all the front work as well--the yakking inbetween songs to which very few people listen.

By self-admission, I'm an egotist. I love attention. I enjoyed the egoboo that comes from being the one in the spotlight, the most visible member of the group. Hell, I was certainly the most physically active of those on stage--I'd strut about, jump on top of the amplifiers, walk all over the stage, jump out onto the dance floor. I'd invent outrageous lies concerning the next number we'd play, and make up atrocious puns. A crazy man.

As you've pointed out, that doesn't much sound like me. It was and it wasn't, I suppose. After a time, I began mentally seeing myself as two different people. Sleigh onstage, Steve off. I'd psych myself up before going on, and be *very* quiet off.

Psychologically, it probably wasn't a very good idea. I paid for it. I started getting severe jitters before playing; heavy stomach cramps, diarrhea, nausea. During the set I'd be fine; inbetween I'd bundle myself into the nearest dark corner and not talk to anyone until we started playing again. It got so I couldn't eat for hours before a gig, couldn't drink anything alcoholic or carbonated during the job itself. I ended up with nervous colitis, taking medication to control it. That was one of the reasons that when the band *did* die (for other reasons than me), I didn't

make a large effort to try and put it together again. I had to meld Steve and SLeigh, or more precisely, put them back together again. That took a while, but I think I've got it.

All of which probably makes it sound more dramatic than it was. I was just some guy with advanced stage fright of a sort. I still perform--music, juggling--but I'm more calm about it now. And I enjoy it far too much to quit.

DAVE: Most every good fan writer is an egotist, except possibly the egoists. I know that, in my case, when I'm live and on-stage (as Rotsler said: "My whole life has been first draft") I'm an absolute Ham and possess the feeling that I'm In-Charge. At least, until someone hands me a drink and I wander off looking for a table.

Listen, Steve, during these wild gyrations in your Prentic Period did you ever do anything silly like sprain your ankle trying to run up the curtain at the back of the stage, perhaps as the result of someone lobbing a tomato?

STEVE: No, I haven't managed to sprain an ankle on stage. I *have* dropped a Hammond B3 organ on my toe, burned the hell out of a hand with a too-warm spotlight, been knocked off a ladder by a short circuit while hanging those same lights, and had much of my hair burnt off.

That last incident took place in South Carolina--we were playing at some college or other, in a local pub. The stage was about the size of your average bathroom. When we got all the equipment up there, we almost had room to stand. There was a second floor to the place, with a balcony overlooking the stage area--our soundman and lightman were both above. At the time, we carried a lot of lighting equipment, and Michael B. was a pyromaniac--he *loved* to set off flash powder. There was the time we blew a three foot hole in our drummer's lawn, but that's another story... I checked out the set-up that night, looked at where Michael B. had placed the flashpot and squinted up into the shadows of the balcony. "Ain't that a little close to me?" I said. Michael B. giggled. "Hell no," he said. "Don't worry about it."

I didn't. End of the first song: BOOM! I could feel the heat--that wasn't terrifically unusual, but smoke kept coming from behind me, and there was an awful stench in the air. I glanced over, puzzled, at the keyboard player, cocked my head quizzically. Rick was making patting motions on his head. I shrugged. The crowd in front of us was shouting--"Yeah! Alright! Far out!" and other early seventies phrases meant to convey awed appreciation. Rick mouthed words to me: "Your hair. Your hair." Smoke still eddied around my ears, the smell was getting worse. I continued playing with one hand, felt the back of my head.

Hair fell into ash with a sound like paper being crumpled.

I glared up at the balcony. Michael B. had his head in his hands, swaying from side to side, Ray--the soundman--was roaring with laughter.

I couldn't seem to find Michael B. after the set was over.

I'm not really accident-prone, Dave. Really. I have good dexterity, honest. Sure, I broke my elbow doing a mock version of TV wrestling with an un-named Baltimore fan (whose initials are R L-N), but I'm not clumsy.

DAVE: Speaking of that, what's this story I hear about a terrible band at Octocon and you booing them during their breaks?

STEVE: Now wait a minute--I didn't boo the band at Octocon: that was Bill Marks. I was standing next to him handing him the \$10 bill. I'd never boo a band--

though I came close with this one. I will admit that when they said "I understand that we're too loud," I shouted back that "You're not too loud, you're just *bad*." I felt guilty about that, but not too much. What I really wanted to do was wrench the guitar from the bass player's hands, set it aside gently (the instrument after all was innocent) and then break the suckers fingers.

DAVE: If you were to hop a time machine and zip back a few years before you got involved in fandom, how would you explain fandom to your earlier self?

STEVE: Bloody hell, I don't know. Not in glowing terms, but also not derogatorily. Fandom has its problems for me, as does mundane society; it's just that I find that I like a higher percentage of people within its confines. There are still plenty of assholes.

DAVE: What's this "bloody hell" business? Have you been reading Dave Langford again?

STEVE: Langford's *real*? Hell, all this time I thought he was a nom-de-plume for Asimov (or was it Joseph Nicholas?).

DAVE: I'll soon be talking to Dave in these pages and in roughly this manner, and I'm certain he'll recall this particular comment... Boy, are you in trouble, or if not trouble, at least an excessively witty rejoinder. Geis is right: Langford can get away with saying anything. Of course, that's only because we all think he's deaf...

As I see it, the associations we form may initially be based on a common interest, but are ultimately judged by the interest we have in the people. In that sense, your answer is appropriate. Leaving aside the people, and viewing the primary structures within which we interact--the fanzines, the various types of conventions, and the local activities--what appeals to you out of what you've encountered so far?

STEVE: Actually, my answer was intended to dodge the question, but SPLAT! you've hit me with it again. But damn, Dave, I can't leave out the people, since 90% of the appeal of fandom has to do with them. With the exception of the tiny bit of business that gets done at a con, the only reason I attend them is to see friends, to enjoy their company. As for the rest of it, well, fandom is a false environment, and as much as some may protest that it's a way of life, I don't think it can be, fully. To that extent, maybe it's even unhealthy, lulling people with its supposed acceptance of the strange and unusual when in fact it seems to be as insular and clique-ridden as any other aspect of mundane society.

As to the other aspects you mention, well, I enjoy the fanzines, but too many times it's the way I'd enjoy reading my old high school literary magazine--it's nice to see all these people making such a big effort of writing, but many of the articles are still pretentious or self-serving, or dull or boring or simply badly written. I know...it's like reading an anthology--you can't expect to enjoy every story. But you still expect a certain consistency in the editorial choosing, and I often don't feel that it was there. I think the editors should probably edit more. (Lest we get the idea that I'm the snooty sort that can't have his golden prose meddled with [i.e., edited], let me say that I will and have changed a story to meet an editor's whims. I'll do that as long as I feel that I haven't compromised integrity--either the story's or mine. I think most writers would say exactly the same thing. What varies is where the border of compromise is drawn.)

DAVE: Don't misunderstand: I agree with you. Fully.

Given that fandom is people (which not everyone understands), I wanted to draw you out on the topic of the fan structures within which fans interact.

Sometimes I think I'm the only faneditor who edits. Most faneditors don't edit when editing is called for. Most faneditors merely assemble. Except for the handful of prima donna fanwriters, most fans--including me--appreciate our ass being covered when we screw up. Out of the 100-plus fanarkles I've written, only twice was I displeased with the editing my material received. Of course, I've only been edited about six times, and false modesty aside that's a goddamn shame. Or maybe not, considering the potential editing abilities of most faneditors.

STEVE: Let's see, what else did you mention ... Conventions. Well, I've gone into that already, I guess, but one thing about them that I've unanimously disliked is the power-tripping that seems to set in on certain staff members of these things. But then I've seen more than one pro tripping over a dangling ego, as well.

The local groups? No, no, I'm not going to slander the CFG here ~~even if it deserves it~~ since I have to live with it. I enjoy the local group, with a few exceptions, but mostly.

I notice that you tend to confine yourself to the written word with your fannish interactions, attending very few conventions. Why did you make that choice?

DAVE: Your question on my crifanac omits the existence of local fanactivity, and that can be an important point on the triangle of potential fanac. Forinstance, in LA there are two main social organizations: LASFS, and the Petard Society (so named because in 1966 member Rick Sneary misspelled "host" as "hoist"...). The Petards are an invitational group of the older fans (Hulans, Atkins, Pelzes, Nivens, Moffatts, and some 30 others), and I was quite active there, including three years as their sole officer (finally choosing not to run again to avoid becoming an institution). I very much enjoy local fanac, or more specifically local parties with a good crew, and my favorite form of in-person fanac is simply having one or two people over for an evening or visiting in someone else's home.

As for conventions, since puberty I have always enjoyed going to a con every year or two, but learned that my interest decreased in proportion to any more frequent attendance beyond that, and that less often didn't bother me. I can enjoy cottage cheese on the same timetable.

But don't write me off on conventions. As of this moment I've attended 17 (and briefly attended two others) and co-managed one (but a significant and fortunately successful one: Westercon XXV in Long Beach in 1972). While cons are much less interesting to me than written fanac, parties, and gettogethers, they're interesting enough if I don't go too often.

Is it possible that your question about my confining myself to written fanac is generated out of your vocational penchant/necessity to be strumming and vocalizing for \$ on Saturday nights, while I attend CFG meetings and flirt with your wife? This is a lie. I don't flirt with Denise. Well, sometimes. Anyone my age has no business flirting with Denise, except on those nights when I drink too much. Wait a minute--I think that explains everything...

Let us uncork no fanac before its time.

STEVE: I'll grant you that I don't see your local fanac, even if it consists of flirting with Denise. Hell, lots of people seem to flirt with Denise; occasionally she even flirts back. No one much flirts with me, though--this can be distressing. Therefore, to avoid the embarrassment, I book up my Saturday nights playing.

DAVE: Makes sense. Of course, I wouldn't call myself hyperactive in Cincinnati fandom, and the CFG is the smallest part of the socializing. I play tennis with you, and watch boxing with Mike Resnick, more than I'm active in the CFG per se. Personally, I'm in favor of abolishing the meetings and having a CFG picnic on every warm weekend; providing, of course, that we can find a park with decent tennis courts.

Concerning your future as a writer, what lies on the front and back burners with regard to what you might be writing? If you have any long-range objectives and would speak of them, please do.

STEVE: As far as goals are concerned, I have only one. I'd like to be able to write and do nothing else, and support Denise, Megen, and myself with that income. I can't do that yet; there's no guarantee I ever will. Oh, hell, I'd still play music (I'm infected with that, too) but I'd chuck the camera store job in a moment. To do that, I need to feel some security about continuing to sell. I need to feel that I'm reasonably prolific.

I'm not certain about any of it, yet.

DAVE: I believe you've got the talent to do it, and I hope you persevere and succeed.

STEVE: Thanks for the compliment (and I hope like hell you're right), but I'd have to comment here that talent alone probably isn't enough. I keep having this recurring nightmare about always being four months behind the business--finding that novels about left-handed heroines with leather fetishes are all the rage, writing one under a pseudonym...), only to learn that the editors now all want St. Bernards. I realize this is hyperbole (no self-respecting editor would want a St. Bernard for a protagonist when he/she could have a poodle), and very few writers pay such attention to the market, since we all write only what we want to write--this is why you'd never see a sudden glut of horror novels, vampire novels, dragon novels, series novels, or the like.

And there's always that other intangible: luck.

DAVE: Of course I'm right. I'm always right when it comes to judging the quality of fiction, because I never presume to speak for anyone's taste but mine. Controversial but absolutely--IMHO--true: there are no absolute literary standards, and the appreciation of fiction is strictly a byproduct of the interaction between reader and writer. This truism goes far toward explaining, for example, why our local friend and fellow boxing fan Mike Resnick can read Barry Malzberg's GALAXIES and perceive "the finest literary writer to work in this field", while I sneer my way through the book and perceive a fellow who couldn't hit his ass with either hand, literarily speaking.

When Al Curry sold his first porno book a short while back (for the same reason most anyone we know writes porno: to put food on the table when other financial options are scarce), Greenleaf encouraged him to do another but suggested a touch of bestiality to ride the current wave of public taste in such things. I gather there was no specific qualification for poodles or St. Bernards, and I'm unsure how Al proceeded, but he managed to sell it to them before popular taste shifted and the focus moved to solar-powered dildoes, or whatever.

With regard to future writing projects, which I recognize can be influenced by editors, would it be fair to say that you're the type of new writer who will--regardless of the project--seek to stretch himself as a writer? Or do you see improvement occurring strictly as a byproduct of the doing?

STEVE: Yes and no. (How's that for being decisive?)

Yes, I deliberately try to stretch myself each time I do something. I just wonder if it shows. For example, I feel that John Irving's *HOTEL NEW HAMPSHIRE* is an improvement over *THE WORLD ACCORDING TO GARP*--a stretching. But...HNH is almost identical in style to *GARP*; *better*, but it's the same method of telling a tale, with similar characters and situations. Does the reader see this as "stretching" or just the writer yawning over his typewriter?

I also know that you can improve any craft simply by doing it--I've certainly bored my housemates ears often enough playing the same damn thing over and over again on the bass until it's--nearly--right. (And very little in this world is more like aural chloroform than some idiot practicing bass lines.)

I find a large improvement in the writing of *DANCE OF THE HAG* as compared with *SLOW FALL TO DAWN*--and there's two years between the writing of *SFTD* and *DOTH*. Then we have six months between *DOTH* and *A QUIET OF STONE*; correspondingly (perhaps), there's not as marked a difference in their writing styles, either. I've learned my craft better--by doing.

And yes there are exactly seven hundred and fifty-three counter-examples of sf writers whose style hasn't progressed book to book--some have even *gasp* gone the other way. But if you didn't want me talking through my hat, you should have to me to leave it at home.

DAVE: Which hat are you talking through right now, and why is it I can hear you quite clearly? Nodding doesn't improve the hearing process, does it?

Okay, let's get down to the rough stuff. Pretend I'm Charles Platt.

I enjoyed your first novel, *SLOW FALL TO DAWN*, but must admit I have the sequel, *DANCE OF THE HAG*, on lay-away. This is for the same reason I sandbagged reading Farmer's *THE DARK DESIGN* until his *THE MAGIC LABYRINTH* was issued to cap off the Riverworld series: because I was told it did not stand alone. I'm the kind who used to buy the SF mags and gather all installments of a serialized novel before reading it, and now I'm carrying the practice over to paperbacks.

I like stories that can stand alone, whether part of a series or not. I'm uncertain of why I shouldn't expect them to be that way.

In the August 1983 *F&SF*, Algis Budrys got a bit ticked at having enjoyed Saberhagen's *THE FIRST BOOK OF SWORDS* until he realized it wasn't "getting anywhere." "For that," he said, "you have to spend" money "on the next book in the series, in the perhaps foolish assumption that it will at least begin to resolve some of these permutations." He spoke of "the endemic and already sufficiently notorious sequel-game that many publishers are playing." "...each book deliberately unfinished, each narrative deliberately dragged out." "It is, I think, time to rebel against this trend."

My question boils down to: why shouldn't each book in a series stand on its own?

STEVE: Ideally, I feel all the books of a series *should* stand on their own. I'm probably too close to the books to be an unbiased witness, but I think the Neweden series does that. *DANCE OF THE HAG* may *lean* a bit, but I feel it can be read without *SLOW FALL TO DAWN*. A few people have indicated to me that they're perturbed that a murder remains unsolved (at least until *A QUIET OF STONE*), but the *identity* of who killed Gunnar isn't important to the main thrust of *DANCE*, only the fact that the murder has taken place.

And *SLOW FALL* was written as an entity. It was intended to stand all by its lonesome--I really had no thought of a sequel when it was written.

Sidewise to the subject: You see, I'd only written short stuff at that time. I was *scared* of novels, didn't know if I could write anything longer than 10,000 words. The idea for the novel had occurred to me, but I truncated the poor infant into a novelette and sold it *into slavery* to IASFM. Later, I went back

and tearfully put the pieces together again: *SLOW FALL TO DAWN*. But that still wasn't writing a novel--to some degree, that was, ahh, padding a novelette--not *really*, y'unnerstan, but ... I was *still* scared of the Big Bad Novel. The novelette had been mildly popular, I suppose--George Scithers asked for other stories concerning the Hoorka, and forwarded a few fan letters he had received. I'd never done much toward writing those other stories, but there were shreds here and there in my files. So after I'd sold *SFTD* (or Science Fiction Touch Down), I gathered up those fragments and cogitated and set up *DANCE OF THE HAG* and *A QUIET OF STONE*. I *did* want them to be viable by themselves--after all, when I sold *DOTH*, I had no guarantee that AQOS would ever be bought.

But...the Neweden series was written mostly so I could teach myself how to write novels *at the expense of my readers*, and it was easier to do that using characters and landscapes with which I was familiar.

End of sidewise commentary.

Back to the subject.

I feel that some writers are using the 'cliff-hanger' endings to series books simply to ensure that the reader will buy the next-in-line novel--if only to see how the situation is resolved. That style bothers me as well as you. But I find that I'm relatively satisfied if a book contains one or two resolved plotlines within its framework; I don't mind a loose end here or there left to be picked up in a future book.

And it isn't just novels that have picked up on this approach--what is *STAR WARS* but a series, or *HILL STREET BLUES*? The approach sells, and (self-fulfilling prophecies or not) what the powers-that-be perceive as marketable, they insist upon.

We don't have to like it, but about all we can do is grit our teeth and wait for the fad to pass. Which it will.

DAVE: Name and rank your five all-time favorite authors, and your five favorite novels. Or come as close to doing it as you can. When I do this exercise my list of five usually contains fifteen entries, so I won't ask more preciseness from you than I'm able to deliver.

STEVE: You realize, of course, that favorite authors and favorite novels are two entirely different things. For instance, Samuel Delany is one of my preferred authors, but none of his novels would make it into my favorite list. *DUNE* is one of my novels, but Herbert isn't on the author list. You get the idea. So...

AUTHORS (in no order whatsoever): SAMUEL DELANY: I find him to be one of the best 'poets' working. He'll glue two words together to describe something and leave me scratching my head in joyous bewilderment at this new and perfect juxtaposition. Some of his short stories cause me to purr. His novels are ... interesting. JOHN D. MACDONALD: Hey, a series writer. Probably will never be remembered as a literary giant of our time, but I *love* McGee. A very human character. MERVYN PEAKE: Much like Delany for me. Can put words together like a divine madman. I find all his works flawed, some terrifically, but there are flaws in many gems. I wouldn't ever want to write *like* him (or anyone mentioned here), but I enjoy reading his stuff. I wonder what the Gormenghast books would have been like without his illness. GENE WOLFE: The man amazes me. One of the "quiet" ones himself usually, but then he'll rip you apart with his wit. His deep and vast and wide store of knowledge awes me. And he can *write*. Maybe over the head of his audience, sometimes. ARTHUR C. CLARKE: The best of the oldies. I went through a phase (way back then) when I thought Clarke was hell on a typewriter. RAYMOND CHANDLER: A grimy, gritty visionary, whose pessimism I adore. And the creator of another character that I have grown to love. I didn't find Chandler until just a few years ago--I

wonder who else I've just missed.

And that's six already and I haven't mentioned a ton of others whom I at least partially admire. Let's just say that it's a poor writer in whom you can't find anything to like, be it plotting, characterization, dialogue, description, the way he writes his dedications, his luck at getting published at all...

BOOKS: *DUNE* by Frank Herbert--still holds up fairly well, despite some stereotyped characters. *DRIFTGLASS*/Samuel Delany--not a novel, but a collection of short stories. A good book, nonetheless. *THE LORD OF THE RINGS*/J.R.R. Tolkien--there's much not to admire in this; Tolkien isn't a stylist, and some of the characters go beyond stereotypes to hackneyed. But the breadth of the creation is staggering, and I doubt that anyone's gone to so much trouble ~~to~~ *to* *little* in detailing a world's history. I've read it many times. I grimace over some of it, I want to kick Sam in the teeth every time he grovels before Frodo, but there's always something there to enjoy. *THE PRINCESS BRIDE*/William Goldman--thanks, Dave. *CATCH 22*/Joseph Heller--for those dark and depressed moods when you want confirmation that the world is someone's midden. *LETTERS FROM THE EARTH*/Samuel Clemens--damn, I forgot all about old Mark Twain during the writer's section. He should have been up there. This collection's the best; the late, self-searching Twain.

And on and on. Another ten minutes and I'll have another five or six novels. Who thought of this exercise, anyway?

DAVE: I don't know who originated the exercise of listing favorites, but it's a fun and agonizing one, isn't it?

You're welcome on *THE PRINCESS BRIDE*. I've recommended it and/or given away enough copies of the book that I was inspired to write an article entitled "I Was A Pimp For The Princess Bride". It's the most delightful novel I've read, fantasy or otherwise.

To spin off from here, how much and what kinds of reading do you generally indulge in?

STEVE: I do all types of reading. I suppose sf is the single largest category, but I read a fair amount of non-fiction as well--mostly history (medieval usually) and some science. Also mysteries, mainstream fiction, the occasional 'classic'. I'll read damn near anything with pages.

Except romances.

DAVE: I don't even need pages. I'm very well-read, for example, in the cereal box genre. Of course, since Ron Goulart dropped Ralston Purina as his publisher, the field hasn't been the same. I still buy Chex cereals, but there's no "newspaper" on the back of the box, and these days you'll never start your morning with a chuckle if you eat Chex. Do you have idea what the fuck I'm talking about?

STEVE: Of course I know what you're talking about. Serials. There's nothing like Philip José Farmer with milk.

DAVE: Or Edgar Rice Crispies.

How do you, a new writer of talent and promise, view the shape and direction of science fiction today? If you're prompted to tell me that you're after just one little piece of it, bear in mind that every reader has his view of science fiction. As a reader and a writer, your view will be important toward understanding the context in which you place your work.

STEVE: The shape is a rhomboid, the direction is northwest.

Ahh, I can tell by the fact that you just dumped your beer in my lap that you're not amused.

I interviewed Spider Robinson a few years ago for

Bill Bowers--at that time, Spider's comment on the "state of sf" was that it was "raining soup." Four years ago, it was. But those Campbell-lined clouds have all dried up; it doesn't look so good now. The market's very tight; there's a lot of writers out there and not so many places to go as before. In addition, based on what I've been told, the middle ground in advances seems to have vanished. You can get smaller advances--say in the mid-four figure range--and you can (if you're Known) get the big ones that *Locus* loves to report. But not the inbetween advance. I don't know what that portends, other than the fact that I'm going to have to wait a lot longer before writing can be my major income.

The sf market also seems to be chaotic. I see a lot of categorization, which seems manifestly silly in what's already a genre category anyway. Editors want very specific "types" of science fiction and fantasy. Again, I wonder whether that is because this is what the market demands or whether this is what the editors/publishers perceive that it is demanding.

DAVE: Good question. If I had to take a wild-ass guess, with my luck the coin would land on edge. Is it possible that the future of science fiction, away from the cutting edge and toward the "made in Taiwan" stamping on the shank, belongs to uninspired formula opiate for the masses? More importantly, will the field retain enough good writers creating good science fiction, or will that core of good writing be eroded as science fiction disintegrates back into pulp? What is the influence of declining literacy in general: is it inexorable?

STEVE: It always disturbs me when I think that a best-selling sf book will be read by less people than the population of Cleveland, Ohio. But I think that's always been the case, even with mainstream books--the general population just doesn't read more than a book or two a year at best. They do seem to watch a hell of a lot of TV, or go to movies, so the best bet for a writer wanting to make his fortune is to write next year's *BEVERLY HILLSBILLIES*. Since the sf angle's been popular lately, we could entitle it *THE L5 HILLBILLIES*: god, what a scene--Jed prowling about with that beat-up shotgun, just "shootin' at some food..."

No, I don't think the field will disintegrate back into pulp--I just think we're going through a 'bad' period. I wonder if it hasn't come about because, a few years back, a lot of publishers decided that sf was potential Big Business. They threw money at the field for expansions of sf lines, for high advances, for publicity. Then they found that no matter what they did, sf books *still* sold about as well as they did normally. There are exceptions, of course--for a while there the NY Times best-seller list always had three or four sf books on it. But despite that, we've seen lines fold or cut back--the expansion is over and now we're dwindling back to a viable size, which hopefully will be larger than before.

DAVE: It's a problem of the Marketing Dept. being in charge. Happens every time. They're in the uncomfortable profession of packaging an image, and hoping the rest of the company will somehow come through with adequate quantities of something which bears a resemblance to it. The editor turns to the writer and requests that he take a copy of this oversize form--letter home and fill in the blanks creatively. It is not the nature of the marketing personality to let truth stand in the way of a bad story.

It occurs to me that computer technology is already capable of offering machine-generated formula fiction, and that quality of type would be limited by the creativity of the person who wrote the program. As a final question, can you see the writing of

certain subgenres being taken over by non-thinking, non-drinking machines?

STEVE: I suppose it *could* happen, but I tend to doubt it. Economics is one factor--after all, the publishers still have to pay the programmer, if no one else, so why bother making a change that doesn't particularly save them money? And I think there might well be a backlash effect from the reading public (all three of them) after the initial surge of interest as a novelty item: I suspect that "computer-generated" would be perceived as somehow less than the efforts of a "real" writer, regardless of any true difference in quality. We're all elitists, and one of the common elitisms is that a person is always (somehow, somehow) better than a machine--how else could Kirk keep blowing circuits with his silly logic questions?

And for my own elitism, well, I'd like to believe that sf relies too much on intangibles: extrapolation,

intuitive leaps, emotion...things that would be difficult for any program to mirror.

Besides, how do you interview a program?

Of course, if we could feed good scotch to a personal computer, who knows? You could always interview Eric Lindsay of crazed Australian fame and ask him. Me, I think I'll go juggle floppy discs...

DAVE: I'm going to juggle some icecubes, and try catching them in a glass. Listen, Steve, I appreciate having this opportunity to chitchat and fumph with you. As soon as I can pour something wet over the icecubes I'm going to raise a toast in your direction. After that we should immediately rush off to a tennis court and practice our second serves for two or three days, or until someone pours us another round, whichever comes first.

To Steve Leigh, a good fellow: Cheers.

☐☐ Dave Locke

...THAT WAS FUN, WASN'T IT? ACTUALLY, STEVE'S WAS THE THIRD OF DAVE'S 'CHITCHATS' TO BE COMPLETED. THE FIRST TWO WILL BE ALONG IN OW37. ONE IS WITH CONFUSION'S GON, AND THE OTHER... WELL, BY WAY OF A PS. TO A LOC ON Gallimaufry, WE HAVE SOME ADVANCE COMMENTARY FROM...

CHUCH HARRIS
32 Lake Crescent
Daventry, Northants
ENGLAND U.K.

Just before GI arrived, I was looking through Walt's [WILLIS] carbons and found a copy of the interview you are going to use. I didn't know I'd ever be in contact with

you so you may be interested in an unsolicited testimonial. Quote:

"The Dave Locke interview carbon fascinated me. I thought it the best piece of fan journalism I've seen since my resurrection, ---marred only by the fact that I didn't choose the questions.....superb...polished...fun to read...novel...would love to see the same technique used on Hoffman, Bloch, Tucker, 4e, White... Ellison...A Vincent Clarke." (Heady stuff, eh?) (There's more: "...Locke has certainly found his forte here...projects himself as a thoroughly nice bloke.... full of admiration but not worship...with an enviable knowledge of fandom...." No more or you won't sleep tonight. [11/11/83])

...BUT ALL OF THAT--AND MUCH MORE--IS NEXT TIME...

TERRY CARR
11037 Broadway Terrace
Oakland, CA 94611

Ian Covell's reaction to the word "heesh", which he evidently didn't like so much that he suggested "hse" instead and

then got all tangled up in his tongue trying to pronounce it, was pretty funny. One of its amusing aspects was the fact that Ian seemed to think I'd made up the word, which certainly isn't true. It was in fairly common use over thirty years ago in fandom--yes, during Sixth Fandom--and was one of the entries in FANCYCLOPEDIA 11 (which didn't say who had coined it). Along with "heesh", there were also "hiser" and "himer", thus proving that long before feminists began filling fanzines with remarks about how the English language discriminates against women, fans were aware of the problem and tried to do something about it. (Tucker and even Degler can take some small measure of pride in this manifestation of fans' broad mental horizons.)

Ian's right in thinking these terms aren't perfect, but then, I've yet to see any that were. At least these fannish words have had some currency for a third of a century, so in that respect they're better than the various other terms that have been suggested since, like Ursula LeGuin's "per", etc. The main objection I have to them is that they're simply contractions of "he or she", "his or her", and "him or her", thus consistently putting the male form first and the female one as a kind of afterthought. I find them

useful for some kinds of fanwriting, but in general I try to steer away from having to use them: most sentences in which "he or she", etc., would appear can be cast in such a way as to eliminate the need for such pronouns altogether--instead of writing, "No one should feel he has to..." you can instead say, "No one should feel the need to..." and so on. Or you can write directly to your readers: "You shouldn't feel you need to..." One can even resort to writing, "One shouldn't feel..."

These constructions put a sentence into the passive mode, though, and often that's undesirable; it weakens the punch of the statement to be made. So sometimes it's best to bite the bullet and write a sentence that seems to call for "he or she" or the equivalent; in those cases, "heesh" becomes the preferable alternative, at least when writing for fanzines. When writing for broader audiences, maybe you've got to come out and say "he", just for the sake of good traditional grammar. I'm much in favor of good grammar, myself, but I try to remember that "she" is as grammatical as "he" in these constructions, so I often write "she" where others would say "he". The most impressive example of such writing, for me, was Damon Knight's handbook of tips for new writers at Clarion, in which he used "she", "her", etc. as often as their masculine equivalents. Damon never once paused to explain why he was doing this; presumably it was obvious, or could be explained to any dolts in a given class who questioned it. Damon's handbook, somewhat revised, was later published by Writer's Digest Books under the title CREATING SHORT FICTION. I recommend it highly, and not just because of the pronouns.

As for those who make it a point to write "they" in place of "he" or "she", I beg to barf. "They" may be politically correct, or "pc" as they say in Madison, Wisconsin, but it makes for lousy grammar because the nouns and pronouns don't agree. "No one should feel they have to..." Aargh! Continue any of these into the verbs and you've got a real mess.

As for the rest of Outworlds 35, I liked most of it, even your own piece, in which I admired the implicit pastiche of Borges together with just the right touch of Rod McKuen. [10/19/83]

rich brown
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Washington, DC 20009

You have the essentials of that "old grudge" I had against you correct, but are a bit harder on yourself than was the case--

at least, as I recall it. You only threatened to cut those fan editors off your mailing list if they didn't trade "all for all" with their special for-money-only issues for the BoSh Fund. If you actually cut any of them off, it must have been for some other reason, since as each of those issues came out, I helped them over this little hurdle by purchasing a copy of the issue in your name which they could send to you, and

thus be both "square" with the BoSh Fund Committee and save themselves from this Fate As Bad As Death. As several of them were relatively new to the microcosm, I didn't try to point out that getting cut off your list might be regarded by some as a blessing in disguise--and I got my money's worth in bitching about it all, later.

As for the whole thing now, I suspect Glicksohn is right. [12/5/83]

...MORE THAN LIKELY: I WAS LOOKING FORWARD TO 'MEETING' YOU AT CONSTELLATION...BUT I SEE FROM A CERTAIN UPPER-WEST-COAST FANZINE THAT YOU WERE 'BUSY' MOST OF THE CON. I CERTAINLY DON'T DISAPPROVE OF SUCH BEHAVIOUR (EVEN THO IT NEVER HAPPENS TO ME), SO, PERHAPS, SOMEDAY... RICH ALSO HAS 'WORDS' FOR BEB, BUT IN THE INTERESTS OF PROVING THAT I'M AN EDITOR AND NOT MERELY AN ASSEMBLER --I HAVE FORGONE THAT PORTION OF HIS LOC...

LESLIE DAVID
A C of S, Services
HQ 19th Support Command
APO San Francisco 96212

I find it amusing at a time when I was looking to limit my fanac that fans are the only people who have written me, here at the ends of the earth.

Today I mark my one month anniversary here in Taegu. I'd planned on spending the 3 day weekend in Seoul, but with Ronnie's visit it seemed like the place not to be.

So how do I like Korea so far? I like it; I'm overwhelmed and enjoying every minute of people watching and travelling I can get in. So far I've been to Seoul twice (I live in a sleepy, cliquish Army community 175 miles south of Seoul--Taegu is the 3rd largest city with a population of 1.5 million, but is still fairly provincial), and to Wonju and Chun chon, both up north in the mountains, once. I'm still waiting for culture shock to set in, but maybe living in Brazil as a kid has left me with a buffer. I'm getting used to driving offensively on my bicycle (here the lines on the road are purely for decoration), and am doing my best not to break down into Pidgin English (phrases like "How muchee" and "I steady customer, you give discount" come to mind). So far I've learned a few phrases of Hangul and am hoping to take the language course next semester. I'm currently taking Korean Culture through the II of Md. and the Army is picking up 75% of my tutuion, because it's job related.

So, Bill, how do you meet these women?
I've started dictating my journal since I don't

have time to write and I was finding it impossible to convey the tone I wanted in the time I actually had. Somehow I can't see writing pages on pages to everyone about my MAC flight over, my first impressions of Seoul, taking the bus to Taegu, my first glimpse of Oriental plumbing, buying roman noodles from a vending machine (complete with chopsticks) and learning how to use my chopsticks on the back of a bus, shopping in Seoul and bargining with the shopkeepers, going to a disco and seeing men dancing with men while women danced with women, and just the general crowds an American woman attracts going down the street--this more in smaller towns. Here they have open markets and the stores just spill out into the streets. At night they hook up an electric light bulb or light candles and keep on going. The food section is quite fascinating as they sell all sorts of live and freshly killed fish, chickens, all sorts of stuff. God I love it here. I love how friendly the people are and how eager they are to help, whether they can speak English or not. It's truly nice to be in a country that wants us here and I'm glad I'm not doing a tour in Europe right now. [11/12/83]

...AND I'M GLAD FOR YOU, EVEN THOUGH--AT THE TIME--IF I COULD HAVE GOTTEN GERMANY, I PROBABLY WOULD HAVE RE-UPPED FOR AT LEAST ANOTHER FOUR. IT OCCURS THAT MAYBE ENOUGH TIME HAS PASSED SO THAT I CAN SURMOUNT THE POLITICS THAT SENT ME THERE...AND GET BACK TO RECOUNT-ING THE MEMORIES OF MY 18 MONTHS IN THE PHILLIPINES... WE SHALL SEE. IN THE MEANTIME I REALLY ENJOYED YOUR LETTER--A SENSE OF WONDER IS CONTAGIOUS...

+ + +

THIS PAGE HAD BEEN CAREFULLY RESERVED FOR THE ANNUAL 'INDEX/RECAP'...BUT THAT CAN WAIT. I SHOULD MENTION THAT THE 'HEADING' ON PAGE 1267 IS THE WORK OF JACKIE CAUSGROVE, AND THAT THE ILLO BELOW IS BY BRAD FOSTER.

...AND THAT, DESPITE MY EARLIER CARPPING ABOUT THE LEVEL-OF-RESPONSE, I SEEM TO HAVE LEFT-OVER LOCs FROM Roger Waddington, Mel. White, Edd Vick, Richard Brandt, Don D'Ammassa, & Roger Weddall--SOME OF WHOM WILL BE ALONG NEXT TIME. AND SINCE 'NEXT TIME' IS ONLY ABOUT 3 WEEKS, BOTH YOU & I HAD BETTER GET WITH IT...!

...YES, ANDY, I AM SERIOUS ABOUT STANDING FOR DUFF IN 1985...

...AND YES, THIS THE YEAR OF THE 'REVIVAL' HAS BEEN A GOOD 'UN--WITH SPECIAL THANKS TO DAVE & JACKIE. HOPE YOU HAVE/HAD A HAPPY... Bill 12/25/83

Response #2

"...and yeah, next time IT WILL BE the bar. 'less I'm really bored at Conclave."

APPARENTLY SHE WAS. AT LEAST TWICE OVER THE COURSE OF THIS YEAR'S CONCLAVE. ...THESE WOMEN: *SIGH*

Outworlds 36
BILL BOWERS
2468 HARRISON AVENUE
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