

# Outworlds



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# OUTW37RLDS

THE 14TH ANNIVERSARY ISSUE OF THE ECLECTIC FANZINE

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(for the contributors)

Thanks to Dave & Jackie, without whom...  
...and to Marla, even though she'll never read it!

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OUTW37RLDS  
GENUINE



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...all of which might not be of too much aid, in that the first two issues lacked page numbers -- and #33 was numbered, but incorrectly (the first two digits only). Tell you what: Why don't you try and get your name on that list above next year--and I'll try to do better, also! • ...106 pages--at times, it seemed like more.



## AVENUE

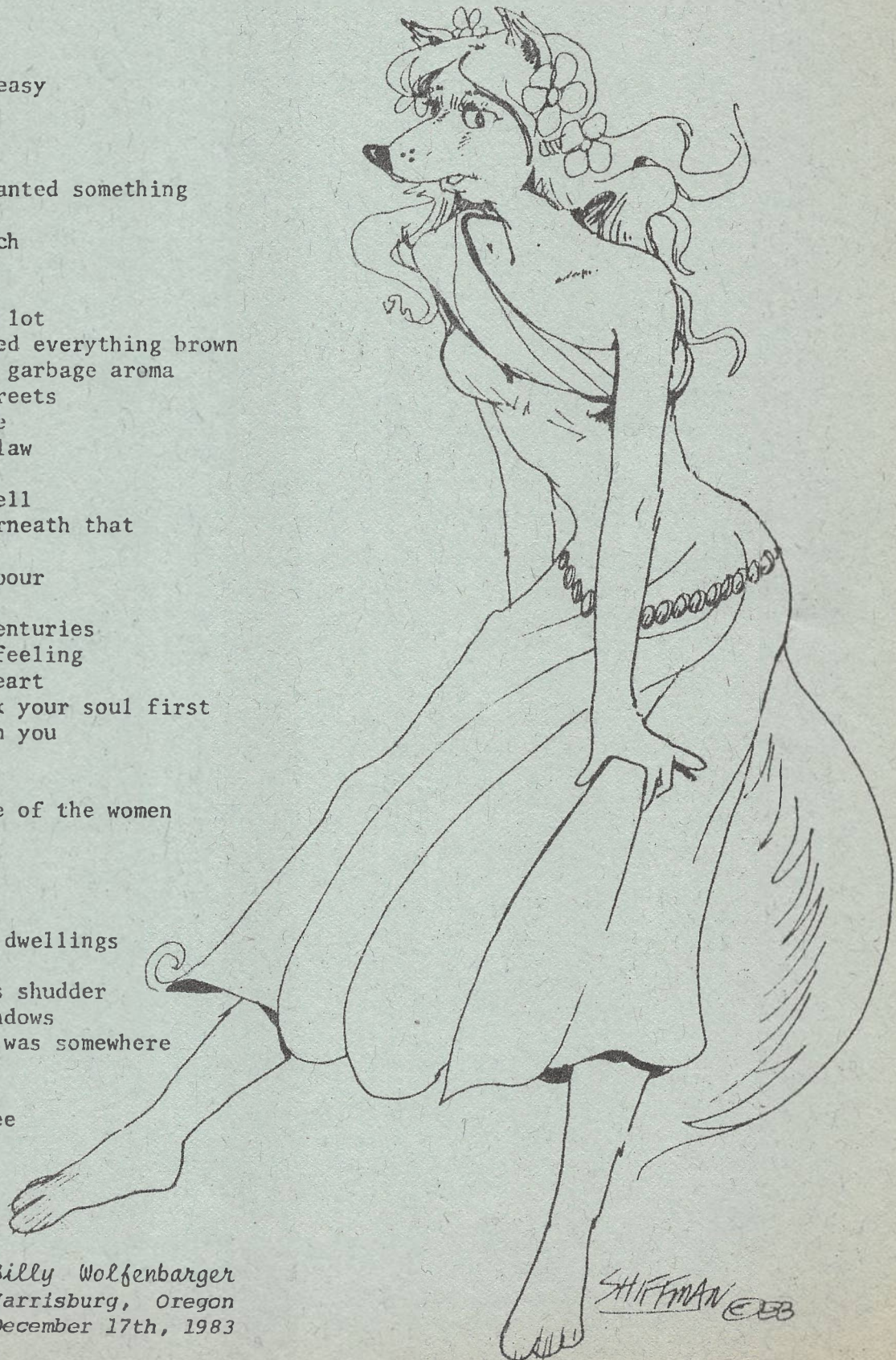
Dismal  
as anywhere  
anywhen  
in the rain  
it somehow seemed easy  
to see how thirsty  
the women were  
and oh how hungry  
like they always wanted something  
for nothing  
and not caring much  
how they got it  
or from whom  
they were a dismal lot  
when the rain turned everything brown  
and brought up the garbage aroma  
from underneath streets  
past sewers and the  
final bite of the law

Well, you could smell  
the raw earth underneath that

Caught in the downpour  
in a strange city  
I'd lived in for centuries  
with centuries of feeling  
for the mind and heart  
if they didn't suck your soul first  
or lay the blame on you  
because the rain  
doomed hope  
especially the hope of the women  
in their hunger  
and their thirst

Farther down  
the smokers inside dwellings  
gazing at the rain  
feeling their lives shudder  
as rain flooded windows  
and all you wanted was somewhere  
inside  
somewhere  
with a cup of coffee  
a joint a pillow.  
a blanket  
a woman you love.

•Billy Wolfenbarger  
Harrisburg, Oregon  
December 17th, 1983





...welcome to *Outworlds* 1984:

4:05 pm, January, 26, 1984...the last page to stencil.

I started with the page facing this, the evening of January 3rd...

Two days off work last week because of Twonk's Disease (thanks, Dr. Bob!), and this, a vacation day I really didn't want to take: over half the pages remain to be runoff...and I really should be at *Confusion* by this time tomorrow.

With substantial help from Dave & Jackie...just maybe.

Is it a good issue?

I'm much too tired, and much too close to it...but I'd have to say that it's the best single issue of any fanzine I've seen thus far in 1984.

...but the final verdict is yours.

Editorial Policy...

courtesy of DAVE LOCKE, writing in *Camera Obscura* 7 (responding to a member of the *apa* it's distributed through):

"One of the interesting things about the fanzine *Outworlds* is that one issue hardly bears resemblance to another. Bill varies his approach to content, format, and to approach itself, and a collection of *Outworlds* bears intellectual resemblance to a fruit salad. In effect, change is the only constant. I can't tell you that you won't appreciate an issue for its own merits, but what I found was that several issues brought an added level of appreciation, mainly because every fanzine develops a syntality or personality to you over a period of time. There are still interesting fanzines around these days, and a Bill Bowers fanzine is never mistakable for any other interesting fanzine..."

That's the idea: to have fun, to surprise you...and never to be confused with any other fan...or faned.

...and to do all of this fairly frequently.

I admire the hell out of big & fancy fanzines, but getting them only once a year, or getting them nine months after publication because the faneditor couldn't afford to mail them out...well, it's rough identifying with, or responding to something like that.

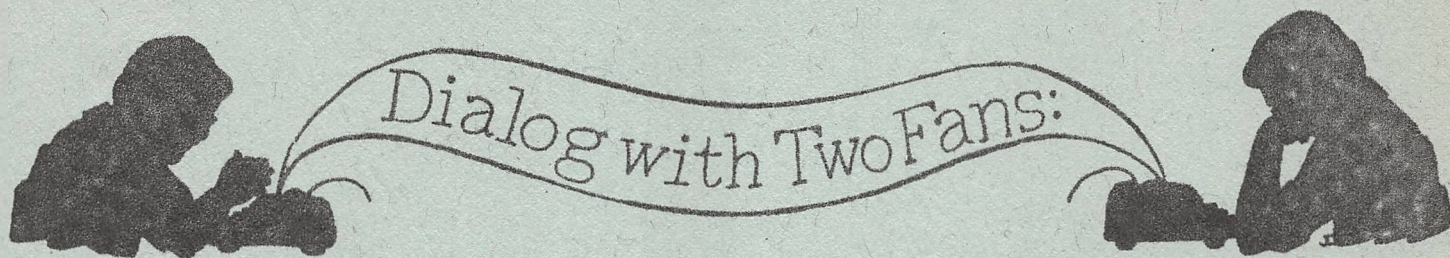
This is by far the biggest single issue I've published since 1976, but it comes only a month after the previous issue. And, in a month, or three, I'll be back, in the 12- or 24-page 'first class' format, four or five more times this year.

In the meantime, he said not at all modestly, you have a treat ahead of you...

□□ Bill Bowers



# Dave Locke's



## a chat with Walt Willis

For those who know of Walt Willis, what follows is simply an interview/dialog by correspondence, initiated by me in search of material to lay before you here.

For those who don't know of Walt, much background is revealed in the dialog. Going in, what you need to know is that Walt lives in Northern Ireland, got into fandom in 1947, and has been highly regarded for his writing and for being the person that he is.

In the *"Fanwriter Symposium"* published in *Outworlds* #28/29 in 1976, thirty of fandom's best fanwriters were asked: *"Who are your three all-time favorite fanwriters?"* Five names stood out like beacons, and first place was a landslide.

I'm going to speak to that gentleman now.

+++

Dave: I wondered if there weren't some way I could tweak your interest in an idea.

Faneditors like Bill Bowers keep asking me to come up with something for the next issue. Forgive me if I've become unduly creative in casting about for suitable fan material, but it occurred to me there's nothing I'd like better than to have an informal interview and discussion with you, if you have the time and inclination.

Walt: What a very good idea. I'll be happy with such an interview/discussion by mail.

Dave: Now that you're retired, how are you and Madeleine spending your time these days?

Walt: I read the *London Times* thoroughly every day and two more local papers, play golf, work in the house and garden, read books and watch tv. James White and George Charters call irregularly. Bob Shaw was here last Sunday. As for Madeleine, her time is occupied in much the same way as mine, except that she reads fewer newspapers and takes an interest in the affairs of the gold club (she's Lady Captain this year).

There have been distractions other than the warm weather. One of them was that my son Bryan had his passport stolen from his car just before he was to go to the States, so I had to drive into Belfast nearly every day for a week to get a new passport and visa for him. All of which was very time-consuming, but curiously nostalgic. For instance I had to produce evidence of the reason for his visit, and it took the form of a sort of fanzine. He is taking part in the World Championship of the GP14 Class of Sailing Dinghy, at Cape May, New Jersey, 8-13 August; which sounds quite impressive, but in fact there are only a few hundred people in the world in these sailing dinghy fandoms and they seem to be confined to the US, the UK and Australia. The World Championships (every 2 years) are their equivalent of the Worldcons. In some ways attendance is more



difficult for them because they have to arrange transportation of their boats (there's a sort of TAFF fund for this) but on the other hand they tend to be more rugged types than sf fans and go to more outdoors places. Bryan packed a tent and sleeping bag in his boat and sent all off in the container months ahead, leaving here with all his gear in an airline bag including a 7 lb. lead weight (to bring his boat up to standard weight) which will worry the Customs people no end. The reason he left in July was to take part in the US National Championships held the last weekend.

Dave: Are you still in touch with Arthur Thomson? Highly recommended reading, if you haven't seen it: Dave Langford's TOLL DOU #20, with its full page of little ATom-illos.

Walt: Yes, I thought the ATom cartoons in TND were great: especially after being so worried when Arthur had his coronary. (He's fine now, back at work and everything; though as he says he has had to give up the group sex and shark wrestling.)

Dave: When a person fades away from fandom for a period of years there are usually still threads of contact. During such periods, what were those threads for you, and what kind of a picture did you get as to what might be going on?

Walt: I don't seem to be able to answer this question properly, for much the same reason that an amnesiac cannot say just what it is that he's forgotten. Letters, fanzines, conversations get overlaid and forgotten under the stress of the events which caused the gafia. If I tried now to set out what I do remember of them I fear I would miss some that were of immense value to me at the time.

However I had one constant contact throughout the period, namely James White, who regularly attended conventions and kept me informed. It was he, and especially his *Exorcists of IF* (published by Terry Hughes)--to my mind the best piece of fannish fiction ever written--that preserved in my mind the comforting feeling that I had not really left fandom, that I knew where all my friends were and I was not entirely forgotten, and that I could and would always be a part of fandom.

It's important to remember that in my case gafia was not caused by being jaded or disillusioned with fandom in any way. There were only two reasons, one congenital hypertension diagnosed in the mid-sixties which made me reduce my activities (I seem to remember in my retirement message from FAPA that I commented that I had a medical certificate for gafia) and then the problems of Northern Ireland, of which you may have heard. Now that I have retired from work I would like to be active in fandom again but I have to take what they call Beta-blocking drugs whose function is to defeat adrenalin, or as we call it, inspiration. This is why my part in fandom today is not only less than I would like, but more erratic; whether or not I reply to a letter or comment on a fanzine depends less on their merit or interest than on whether or not the drugs have the upper hand, and I worry a bit about this.

As to the picture I got of what was going on, well the one of American fandom was vague but it seemed much the same as ever, except more diffuse. As for British fandom I went to the Manchester Convention in 1976, partly as a result of the urgings of James White and partly because of my admiration for Chris Priest's *INVERTED WORLD*, and received some contemporary fanzines. I have a carbon of a letter of comment I sent to Greg Pickersgill in June 1976 which begins:

*Thanks for sending me STD 3. I enjoyed it all, but it made me feel like some Japanese soldier of World War II who emerges hopefully after 30 years in the jungle, only to find the war is still on. I can hear the bullets whizzing past me in all directions, and am only glad that my name is not yet likely to be on any of them.*

Dave: When congenital hypertension and vocational obligations kept you 'away from it all', it sounds more like you were forced away rather than intentionally getting away. We can expunge your record of all gafia charges. Charges of fafia are never logged anyway, as it serves no purpose to keep track of something that happens to most



everyone.

Yes, it happens that I have heard of the problems of Northern Ireland. Word occasionally filters through, and from diverse sources. The last time of consequence was just a few months ago when Al Curry brought a jar of poteen to a local party. He told me all about it, and the story lasted as long as the jar did. At least, when the jar was empty he looked alarmed and then wandered off.

Now that you're retired from professional Nudgist activities, which is how you've described senior civil servant duties in dealing with the problems of Northern Ireland, do you have any idea where all of this might end?

Possibly my question is naive and requires massaging. You may, for instance, believe that the problems will keep evolving; that they may eventually have a quite different appearance but that they will still be a set of problems. The thrust here is this: now that you're a retired soldier, how do you view the battle?

Walt: I don't want to write at length about the NI question. To try and penetrate to the truth is like peeling an onion: there's always another layer underneath, and it makes you cry. However to me at the moment the irreducible core is the geographical fact that N. Ireland is only a few miles from Scotland, and the rest of it isn't. This was so before there were any Catholics or Protestants or Englishmen on the scene, and the history of Ireland before them, stretching back into myth, is one of conflicts between Ulster and the South. (Cf the Cuchulain Saga: it was the hordes of Leinster whom this Ulster warrior fought.) On this interpretation Irish separatism is a major historical error.

Dave: In your vocational life have you ever been able to draw upon the fan side of your experience? Perhaps some skills have their roots in fandom, or matured there. Your experience with the written side of fanac and with the in-person side, which includes two journeys from Northern Ireland to the U.S.A., might have generated or honed something useful in another context where you weren't wearing the propeller beanie.

Walt: The vocational side of my life may have been helped to some extent by experiences in fandom, but my overall impression is of the care I took to make sure that neither aspect of my life impinged on the other. The two compartments remained completely waterproof for nearly 30 years, during which I became quite a senior civil servant. (My equivalent rank in the British Army was Brigadier General.) Then one day I was walking along a corridor with my boss on the way to an important meeting when he said, quite casually, "By the way, Walter, are you Ghod? With an 'h'?" It emerged that he had just read Brian Aldiss's autobiography, in which fandom and me are mentioned.

This leak could not be repaired. A year or so later, as a result of the Burgess & McLean defections, there was introduced the system called "positive vetting" for senior civil servants and eventually this reached me. It was carried out by one of the intelligence agencies, and they were interested not only in your political opinions, but in your sex life and hobbies, looking for something that might make you vulnerable to blackmail. I answered all their questions truthfully, but without volunteering any additional information, and the man left apparently satisfied. But in three weeks he was back, regarding me with sorrow rather than anger. "You didn't tell me you'd written a book," he said. "And what's this science fiction fandom thing?"

I've often wondered since if there's now a file about fandom in the recesses of M18.

Dave: I'd be curious as to the investigator's reaction, if any, about the nature of THE IMPROBABLE IRISH and the fact it was published under a pseudonym.

As for "And what's this science fiction fandom thing?", I think we've all had to deal with that question. How did you approach it, and were you able to keep his eyes from crossing or glazing over?

Walt: The investigator regarded it as quite normal for me to use a pseudonym; in fact



that is approved practice here for civil servants indulging in extra-mural activities which might attract attention. It is of course also easier for the writer, who can say what he wants without having to worry about the reactions of people other than those he is addressing.

I can't remember how I explained fandom, but I recall he wasn't surprised; he said something to the effect that it seemed a quite sensible hobby compared to some he had come across, and I got the impression that the private life of some of my colleagues was bizarre in the extreme.

Dave: *It's a familiar scenario that a person gets into fandom through science fiction, believing them to be the same interest. Later he observes the two becoming separate interests, which bump up against each other with warm regards. Still later...well, that varies. I think I've just described a scenario for you as well as for me and a few hundred others. What does science fiction mean to you these days?*

Walt: *It means something I used to find in Campbell's Astounding/Analog before it sank in a cesspool of Dianetics and duckshit: it means books I occasionally come across in the public library, like Tiptree's UP THE WALLS OF THE WORLD or Priest's INVERTED WORLD or the latest Bob Shaw or a Terry Carr anthology, or even a Ben Bova anthology with a Fred Pohl story, which reassure me that I am still a science fiction fan. It also unhappily means long lists of Hugo and Nebula nominations of stories and authors I never heard of.*

Dave: *What in particular appealed to you about the two books you named?*

Walt: *What appealed to me about those two books was I think they had interesting philosophic or scientific ideas and that they were well written.*

Dave: *This is one of those questions that either intrigue you or make your face pinch up. If you could commission any science fiction writer from any point in his or her lifetime to write a sf novel to order, who & when, and what would you say to him?*

Walt: *If I could commission a sf novel to order it would be from AE VanVogt before he lay down with the Dianeticists; and it would be a condition that he send the ms to Ted Sturgeon for a rewrite.*

Dave: *It is reasonably safe to advance the perception that the purpose of fandom can be stated only in terms of the person who stops to consider the question. Perhaps to examine it, with idiotic care. Broader pronouncements seem only to prove that reality is an elusive vision, and to further complicate things it seems true that the purpose is not always a constant within the universe. There's a question in here someplace. Tell me, Walt, have you ever been inspired to envision the purpose of fandom? An answer of "no" will leave us standing around with our bare faces hanging out, wondering what to do with our hands.*

Walt: *No. But, I hasten to add, only because the word 'purpose' implies a conscious aim and fandom as a whole does not have that. It certainly has its uses, which are different for different people, and sometimes I think it might be quite important. It is to my mind an influential example of what you might call the horizontal organisation. Most of the organisations we recognise as such--nations, political parties, trade unions, companies, churches--are vertical in character, located in one place and hierarchically constructed, like tower blocks in the form of ziggurats. They are regarded as the organisations by the media, which are themselves vertically organised. But in practice, to the average person the really important organisations are those which are horizontally structured, like the family, the neighbourhood, the factory or office workmate ingroup, the pub or club. This is where his real life is lived, and from his point of view the role of the vertical organisations is to supply essential services, like sewage. The*



only author I know of who has realised the importance of the horizontal is Nevil Shute, whose novels convey vividly a world of interlocking human relationships, periodically disrupted by the blundering activities of nation states and similar vertical interlopers. In *TRUSTEE FROM THE TOOLROOM* he actually presents a fandom based on model engineering, and the plot of the book is just a sort of TAFF trip.

Bearing in mind that the commerce of fandom is ideas, who is to say that in the long run it is not more important than, say, General Motors?

Dave: I bobbled a moment at the notion that the commerce of fandom is ideas, but the *Lexicon Webster* bears you out: "idea: a thought, conception, or notion; an impression; a conviction or opinion; a plan of action; an intention or design; a mental picture, sometimes merely imagined without corresponding reality; vague knowledge; inkling; a fleeting thought or whim." Now I don't bobble anymore. The commerce of fandom is mental pictures, sometimes merely imagined without corresponding reality...

Good point, though. Vertical and horizontal, or formal and informal. A mix of people with a common interest and no specific program is one of the similarities that applies to much of fandom, and to my taste is one of the better things that it offers.

Walt: Many years ago Sid Coleman was invited to a conference of physicists in Istanbul. His ticket allowed for one stopover so he called on us, planted a willow tree and left us a salad bowl. He also told us the classic Jewish joke, which may be summarised as follows:

A Jewish merchant and a Prussian officer were in the same railway carriage on a very long journey in Eastern Europe. Eventually sheer boredom induces the Prussian officer to make conversation. "You Jews," he says, "how is it you're so smart?"

"It's the fish we eat," said the merchant.

"I'd heard about the fish," said the officer, "but Gentiles eat fish too."

"Yes," said the merchant, "but you don't eat the heads, and that's where the virtue of the fish as brainfood is concentrated."

"That sounds reasonable," said the Prussian officer and at the next stop he bought half a dozen dried fish from a vendor on the platform and ate the heads, discarding the rest to the merchant.

So it went on for the next three days of the long journey, until suddenly the Prussian officer exclaimed: "Here, fellow. For three days now I've been paying good money for fish heads and you've been getting the best of the fish for nothing. Where's the justice in that?"

"You see?" said the Jew, "It's working already."

Last year Bertie McAvoy visited us and I told her the joke. After she had laughed she said reflectively, "Of course he was right. There's nothing like injustice for sharpening your wits."

So you see, first a New York Jew comes and tells me a story, and then a Polish-Irish girl comes from California to explain it. Can General Motors do as much?

Dave: I'm not certain, but I don't think so. They seem to spend their time and money crying on the government's shoulder because, in the face of international competition, it is no longer possible to successfully market shit. Injustice, apparently, is seen everywhere, and might only be good for sharpening wits when there's an edge to work with.

You've already given one example. When you stop and reflect on the good that came from an association with fandom, what other images immediately jump up?

Walt: There are too many of them to list. If I had to offer one sentence it would be "Fandom is a correspondence course in getting along with people, with yearly viva voce examinations." (Hypen 17.)

Dave: The two Chicago Worldcons and your travellings in the U.S.A. were back in '52 and



'62. Memories go through a settling process, and some wind up farther down than others. Certain jewels remain on top, though some may be unpolished or even uncut. What lies on top in your memory grab-bag of those experiences after twenty and thirty years of settling?

Walt: I no longer seem to have memories of these events in the usual sense. When I read my two trip reports in Wh28 much of them was quite unfamiliar, and I could think of nothing that was not included. I think that what has happened is that having recorded as completely as I could everything I remembered at the time, I have then subconsciously told my memory that the tapes can now be wiped.

I remember reading an account of a similar phenomenon in the life story of a man who had a photographic memory and perfect retention. He used to earn his living by displaying these gifts, but after several years he got worried at the idea of all this useless information cluttering up his brain. But how to get rid of it, if you have a photographic memory and perfect retention? What he did was visualise each page of information being pinned to an enormous blackboard, and then the whole lot being set fire to and consumed by flames. Whether the information was really destroyed, or merely hidden, in fact the man could no longer remember it in the usual way.

Dave: All right, enough of this great mystery. Even I read the incident about Jim Webbert and the ashtray, but I don't remember where, either. I would guess, but right or wrong it would still be a guess. Come clean, now, where did it appear?

Walt: I can however answer questions when I have documentary evidence to consult, as in this case...

In October 1952 (there is no date on the carbon, but it's clear it was written shortly after I returned from the trip described in THE HARP STATESIDE) I wrote to Shelby Vick:

From what little I've heard of reactions to me at the con it seems that I was quiet. Well I was of course, but not just as quiet as all that. I must have been talking to the wrong people. Since it's in all our interests to make out that I not only enjoyed myself (which of course I did) but that I occasionally said something I have screened my memory banks for remarks above the "duhhhh" level that you might like to quote as fillers or something. I know this would sound pretty egotistical to an outsider but I guess we know each other well enough to understand. I don't want people to think you went to all that trouble to bring over a wet blanket.

There followed a dozen or so snatches of dialogue with various people, including the following:

In Bloch's room...

BeaM. "You want an ashtray?"

WAW, tossing his ash out over Chicago, "No, thanks, this one isn't full yet."

It's interesting to notice how time has changed this simple little joke into a sort of legend. Ten years later I was astounded to be told by Terry Carr that it had become part of the repertoire of raconteur Randy Garrett, and alarmed as well as surprised to discover even later that the current version of the story was of a put-down by me of some unidentified neofan. Now, in the most recent version as published in a fanzine only a few months ago, the neofan has become Jim Webbert. Well, one can understand how that came about, but the truth is that it was not a put-down at all (obviously no one would put down Bea Mahaffey whom we all loved) except of the city of Chicago itself. You have to remember that Chicago in September--at least in September 1952--was a very hot and dusty place, in which every now and then the wind would blow the litter along the streets. It was for me exactly like the inside of an ashtray, especially the kind with a whirling lid on the top which were common in those days.

Dave: I haven't seen that recent fanzine you refer to, but I did read the story and I would have bet money that Jim Webbert was a part of it. Hard to believe that Bea Mahaffey lives just a few miles from me, and I had to write to Northern Ireland to



learn the truth...

Walt: Do give her my love and tell her everyone here thinks of her fondly.

Dave: You got it.

I feel that Warhoon #28, the collection of your writings, is the best single document fanzine fandom could offer up if suddenly pressed to show that it had ever produced anything worthwhile. Let's accept that it is one of the very best of all fan publications and that Richard Bergeron did a fine job in putting it together, and then let's zip off to an alternate universe where we can play "what if" without worry that we would disturb anyone. In this other universe a paste-up of Warhoon #28 is handed to you and your whimsy is solicited: given your druthers, what might you add to or delete from the publication?

Walt: My reaction to Wh28 is so subjective that it led me into a reflection on the relationship between a writer and his past work which it would take me far too long to explore. At times it seems I dislike everything in Wh28 except the bits I have totally forgotten.

Dave: In the minds of many you are the all-time #1 fan as well as the all-time #1 fan-writer, and most of those who disagree don't do so by much. You've handled this regard well, which in itself has reinforced it. Naturally, to some social morons, the iconoclast lasts without critical faculties, all this automatically makes you a target. Everyone's a critic, but some people are nicer about it than others. Most are at least civilized, and some of those are also witty. A few play criticism like an abandoned moment in a Dungeons & Dragons skirmish. Let's go behind how you deal outwardly with that. In general, what are your reactions when something in print refers to you in a way that makes your eyes bug out?

Walt: I don't think I'm different from anyone else. I greet praise with a willing if transitory suspension of disbelief. When abused, I believe it and cry a little inside.

Dave: Going back to that 1976 letter of comment to Greg Pickersgill, your next two paragraphs might shed some light on the subject:

"It occurs to me, as it evidently has to John Ingham, that the English have a unique gift, if you can call it that, for being offhandedly rude. It's not just a fannish thing, because I've noticed it at mundane conferences in the remarks of speakers from the floor. Possibly it's one of those ruling class characteristics which have permeated down through the population: a lady was supposed never to show her underwear unintentionally, nor a gentleman to be unintentionally rude. Whereas of course the non-Wasp Americans and Irish lack the necessary self-assurance, for historical reasons. Americans tend to insult one another in public only in the heat of emotion, and the Irish only when they have thought of something particularly clever to say.

"Malcom Edwards' Mancon report is a case in point, not only the report itself but your editorial reaction to it. I thought it well written, perceptive and full of interest, and I agreed to some extent with most of the generalisations he makes or quotes, but it would not have been natural for me to say anything to hurt the feelings of people who have worked hard to give pleasure to others; unless of course I'd thought of some insult so clever I couldn't bear not to use it."

Would you like to see more in your mailbox, given the understanding that the load coming in could far exceed the load going out?

Walt: Yes. I always liked getting mail, except for one stressful period which passed, but was a Terrible Warning. I have always been curious about fandom and even the worst fanzine has some interest for me because it is generally a sincere message from



the soul of another human being and should be treated with reverence. Sorry to sound so pretentious.

Dave: That doesn't sound pretentious at all. To me it sounds warm, and reflects maturity and understanding. After finishing Warhoon #28 I decided that WAW stood for Warmth & Wit, and I hope this observation doesn't serve to make your ass pucker up. Everyone is "pretentious" on occasion, but the word describes you less than it does most everyone else I know. For example, in THE STAR KING Jack Vance was describing many fans we both know when he mused: "There are also those who ... ensconce themselves on a thunderous crag of omniscience and, with protestations of humility which are either unconvincing or totally absent, assume the obligation of appraisal, commendation, derogation or denunciation of their contemporaries." I sense that you know yourself too well to fall into such horse's-ass posturing.

Let's stick with the subject of pretentious for a minute, and move in directions I don't think you've heard before.

I wrote an editorial for Gallimaufry #1, September 1983, which includes the following about an 18-year-old me attending his first convention, the 1962 Chicon III:

I met Willis at that one. I must say that Walt made about as favorable a first impression as I've run across. He was, in my mind, the kind of person who chose to sparkle rather than dazzle, given that I viewed him as capable of making the choice. I viewed his choice as a byproduct of his relaxed energy, his patience, and his interest in people. In a situation where he was with a teenager who wished to tilt the conversation toward wordplay, he chose to give-and-take rather than overshadow. One thing that pleasantly surprised me, and as a teenager I watched for it like a hawk, was that his demeanor showed no discomfort in shucking around at a level far below his capabilities. Twenty-one years later, and the lasting impression he made has not resulted in the performance that I might desire in my own dealings with pubescent youngies. I have a tendency to stay in the bars, where they can't get in.

The second major impression you made on me took place when I finished Warhoon #28. You might call it a reinforcement of the first impression. The aspects of warmth, humility, and emotional balance struck me harder than they should have because they opened a window on some of my past sins, and the view hadn't been that clear before. While I appreciated your writings for all the usual reasons, to me they also had impact on a personal level. It was a matter of style and approach, and to be succinct about it I suddenly became aware of how much horse's-ass was in my makeup. Essentially, Warhoon #28 is the story of one fan's odyssey through fandom, and I was impressed with the way you comported yourself. As a consequence of reading it I've slowly--too slowly--been making changes in my own comportment. They were, and still are, overdue.

Of those who expressed admiration for Warhoon #28, I wonder if I'm the only one who benefitted in this particular regard? If so, it's a shame, as there are many of my contemporaries who could use such a benefit...

As I said, I don't think you've heard this before. It must be disconcerting to stand accused of being a good example.

Walt: I feel awed and a little frightened by what you say here, but that sort of thing is a great comfort and pleasure to hear at my time of life. Thanks.

Dave: The last time I frightened anyone was the first time I publicly agreed with something Ted White said. The last time I awed anybody was after I saw the FAAN Award award and wrote Buck Coulson that it looked like the end result of a robot horse-fucking two pounds of playdough, and he published the remark. When I next have cause to refer to the last time either type of thing took place, I can point to the same incident for both ("oh yes, I awed and frightened Walt at the same time. No, it wasn't easy. In fact, it wasn't even intentional.").

How a person feels about his writing is always subject to time and place and inclination and whether he thinks it's in his blood. Are you nebulating on any writing for the future, such as articles or another book?



Walt: Not really. I did once for a few minutes contemplate writing the Great Ulster Novel, but the foolishness soon passed. The piece of grit which gave rise to this conception was excreted as the little piece *A Kind Of Immortality* in the current *Microwave* (Terry Hill). I thought about the difficulty I would have in writing a novel and identified one aspect of it as the impossibility of visualising the readership. I first noticed this phenomenon when I was mailing out the second issue of my first fanzine. I found that my attitude to the just-produced fanzine depended on whose issue I was reading, so that I could be depressed or pleased depending on whose reaction I was anticipating. Later, when writing columns or articles, I found myself mentally scanning all the potential readers I knew before settling on a word or phrase which would have the maximum appeal to them and was staggered by the complexity of what the mind was capable of in a millisecond. Nowadays with personal computers and all, the concept is commonplace, but the fact remains that as Deindorfer points out fan writing is an exceedingly complex mode of communication.

Dave: Right, it doesn't take long in fandom to realize that you are no longer just writing for yourself. The more you know your audience, the more you write to share what it is that you're writing. Whatever is to be communicated or shared is better executed if you make use of what you know about your readership.

The enjoyment of written material is an interaction between reader and writer. It's easier to engage reader interest in fandom because generally you know more of and more about the readership, and can work or play with it more effectively. Forewarned is forearmed, knowledge is power, and all like that. Perhaps it's a touch uncomfortable to go back to when you didn't know who was reading what you wrote, but whether the medium is book or fanzine you could at least count on visualizing the same core readership. The difference is in the relative size of the core compared to the whole onion...

Wrenching ourselves back to the subject of time and place and inclination, but not to the possibility that you would write another book, it seems obvious that you will now play fanwriting by ear. With specific regard to articles, how much is Walt Willis motivated by inspiration and how much by the editorial weapons of plying, wheedling, and cajoling? It remains a little-known truth in fandom that the best writers are seldom asked to write. Would you occasionally entertain a request for an article, or would you prefer to generate articles as your own spirit moves you?

Walt: I have hardly ever been "moved by my own spirit" to write an article; usually they are painfully extracted by a request or commitment. I meant it when I said somewhere that I wasn't really a writer. I used to wonder if that would change when I retired from my job, which involved quite a lot of writing, but there's not much sign of it yet. Indeed for the first few years of my retirement I felt such a revulsion from my job (which I had thought I quite liked) that I found it almost impossible to write anything. However I think that I can detect signs that this is wearing off, and indeed a couple of months ago I actually wrote something (the LoC in *Still It Moves* 4) which I didn't have to, which formed itself in my head first, and which I liked. I can't remember when that happened last. And the little piece in *Microwave* 5 had some of those characteristics too, so maybe I'll turn into a writer yet.

Dave: Perhaps it's a vanity that I consider myself a writer, though an amateur, and I use 'amateur' in the original French meaning of someone who pursues a subject solely for the love of it. I'm also a tennis player, though no one ever told me I had to be good to be interested, and a chess player ("of course you've never seen that response before. I just invented it."). And to approach the subject from yet another direction, while flying on gossamer wings, we both know deep in our vanity that we have written better than some of the things people get paid for, and for that matter we've each been paid for some of the things we've written. The New Merriam-Webster (argument from authority...) says a writer is one who writes, especially as a business or occupation, but not necessarily so. What is it you feel is missing, that you don't consider yourself a writer amongst all the other labels that might befall you?



Was James Fenimore Cooper a writer, and Walter A. Willis is not? The mind bobbles.

Walt: I don't consider myself a real writer because I so very seldom feel the spontaneous urge to write something: whereas, as I understand it, your natural born real writer is never happy except when scribbling away like a Gibbon.

Dave: If this is so, Walt, what motivated your relatively large output of fanwriting in the Fifties?

Basically, writing is one of my interests and I indulge it when I'm moved to and able to. If I'm moved to, I'm usually kicked-off by something and usually that's either a request or an idea. When it's an idea, I need a format and a market. When it's a request, I need an idea.

Robert Moore Williams had "the spontaneous urge to write". One of the things he wrote was: "Writing seems to be in my blood. Words appear to stew out of me. There is really nothing I can do about this except direct them at a typewriter and hope they will emerge in the form of stories or books." As David Hulan put it: "Yes, and he did it without the intervention of a brain anywhere along the way." Whether that made Williams a "natural born real writer" is a question that would make us both pause, but he was obviously a writer. And, generally, a bad one. Even bad writers are writers.

I suspect that how much or how little you write, or are urged or motivated to do it, speaks only of degree and not of kind. Degree fluctuates; kind is a constant. If you do write, you're a writer, and if you write well then you're a good writer. Matters financial and motivational and numerical and locational and so on are relegated to secondary and tertiary information. If it looks like a duck...

A writer you are, sir, and a fine one. You deserve the label more than most.

Speaking of your writing, somewhere in the late-'50s/early-'60s I remember a mild surprise when I tumbled across a quotation by you in an issue of Reader's Digest. How did that come about?

Walt: What happened was that Rotsler asked me for quotes to send to Reader's Digest, etc., and eventually they began to appear in various places. (Bob Shaw found one of his remarks translated into Spanish in a Mexican edition of Coronet.) I asked WR what about the money and he replied by pointing out that he had secured us immortality. Hence the Hyphen bacover quote, "AFTER IMMORTALITY, WHAT?".

Dave: Indeed. And now we're almost after this dialog. Any last thoughts or retrofits?

Walt: I've no improvements to suggest to the interview: it seems to me to read quite well, and certainly from my point of view it was one of the most painless, indeed pleasant forms of fanac I've come across yet.

Dave: I've enjoyed having this correspondence with you, and I'll continue looking forward to encountering your typeface elsewhere in fanzine fandom.

As of this moment it's been 21 years since the last time you and I spoke directly to each other. Now that we're seeing more activity by you in fanzine fandom, hopefully less time will pass before it happens again.

□□ 9/22/83 -- Willis & Locke

↑ ↓ ↑ ↓ ↑ ↓ ↑ ↓ ↑ ↓ ↑ ↓ ↑ ↓ ↑ ↓ ↑ ↓ ↑ ↓ ↑ ↓ ↑ ↓ ↑ ↓ ↑ ↓ ↑ ↓ ↑ ↓ ↑ ↓

"I know the audience and the audience knows me; I am not writing for strangers who don't give a damn who I am. My fan friends know when I'm being serious and when I'm being facetious, and they refer to me as myself--like, that was rather clever, Brazier, not, that was a clever piece by someone there on page 14-16."

□□ DONN BRAZIER

...in Dave Locke's THE FANWRITER SYMPOSIUM, Outworlds 28/29



...it seems that I had more input than pages, last time  
--so let's see what we can do about rectifying this  
untidy situation...

ROGER WEDDALL (...on OW34): I've managed to write  
79 Bell Street a whole page without actually  
Fitzroy mentioning what I thought of *Out-*  
Victoria 3065 *worlds*.  
Australia

One reason for this is that,  
well, umm, I really don't have, I  
mean, I don't really know what to say about it. Yes,  
it was readable. Very.

The illustrations weren't bad, either.

The thing that came across most easily and most  
firmly was: here we have this nice little community  
of people who most of them know each other pretty  
well, and all of *Outworlds*--even down to the artwork  
--is a product of this melting pot of people, mixed  
and stirred effortlessly by Bill.

As someone ignorant of the general "lay of the  
land" of fandom in America, much of it meant little  
to me. It was a little like when, at Bruce & Elaine's  
place--minding their cats while they were away--I read  
Pong for the first time.

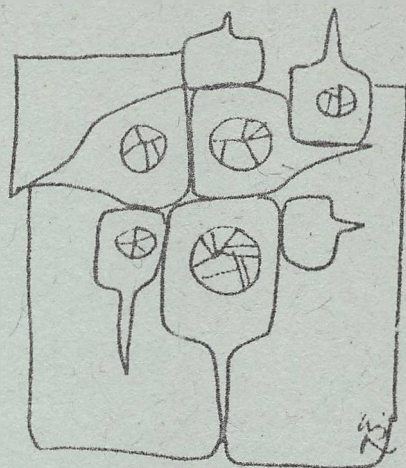
It meant nothing to me, but from Pong I *did* get  
the sense that, whatever it was that was going on  
there, it was "at the centre" of something. It was a  
fast and furious something that it was the centre of  
(certainly not free of its fair share of pretension!).

Reading *Outworlds*, well, as I say it was well  
written--I imagine that anyone who is a part of this  
little social scene would find it quite engaging. To  
me, an ordinary outsider, its impact was considerably  
lessened. Sleepy old (complacent) Bill with another  
issue of Good Ol' *Outworlds*.

It wasn't until I'd finished reading it that I  
realised I had absolutely nothing to say about it--  
except to say how little I had to say about it. Like  
an archaeologist listening to a couple of nuclear  
physicists discussing esoteric aspects of their work.  
Like that archaeologist might, I can appreciate that  
what people are talking about *does* make enough sense  
for those talking, but most of it simply doesn't re-  
late to me in any way.

Don't get me wrong, Bill, it's not that I'm un-  
sympathetic, but what color dots people have on their  
badges at Rivercon--which I've never even heard of be-  
fore--and hearing Dave Locke talk about how fanwriting  
should be fun--well, maybe this is an issue in America,  
but it's all pretty uninspiring. Stephen Leigh's  
"Guilty Dystander" bit gave me some common ground of  
experience to relate to, although I'm more used to  
seeing things from the other side of the table, when  
it comes to people in hospitals (all these bloody  
"patients" and visitors and so on), while Alex Kris-  
lov's piece just didn't connect with me at all. How  
old *is* Alex? Maybe I'm too close to the period of  
life he describes (in it, more likely), but "when I  
was...(insert age here)...", I never wanted to be *Any-*  
*one*. I was me. I still am. The me that I am changes  
around a bit, too, but it doesn't include being like  
someone else. I don't know--maybe I should write you  
an article about how when I was in first grade in  
school some silly teacher asked me what I wanted to be  
and all I could do was think what a stupid question it  
was, fully cognizant of the fact that it was customary  
to answer that I wanted to be a fireman or a policeman  
or something like that. Honestly, I ask you.

So Alex Krislov's piece was yet another that I  
have nothing to say about except that it does not  
relate to me. I suppose it would be better if at some  
stage you had someone or something you wanted to *be*.  
I also suppose I can't say this without sounding both  
facile and facetious, but all I've ever wanted to do  
was to enjoy/"get something out of" life, and just be  
me.



By now, I imagine, you can also guess that George  
R.R. Martin's article also did little for me. Maybe  
if I was impressed by his ability as a writer, I would  
have been more impressed (now, that *is* being facetious,  
I think). I hear he's a really nice guy, but!

So there you go. I did not feel as though any of  
the things that people were talking or writing about  
had much relevance as far as I was concerned. This may  
sound overly cynical, but it's not; it's simply the way  
it all (failed to) strike me.

I'm not *complaining* about this--I want to make  
that quite clear. Indeed, why on earth should issue  
#34 of *Outworlds* address itself to the hopes and fears  
and the everyday concerns of a little-known Australian?  
If it did, well that would be a bonus for me, but as a  
brand new recruit to the American fandom scene I should  
expect it must take some time before I really start to  
understand what's going on over there. This isn't how  
I think *you* must be thinking, it's how *I* think. So you  
can see that perhaps I really am being genuine when I  
say I found *Outworlds* well-written, nicely laid-out,  
and so on. The fact that it is of limited interest  
isn't something bad in itself, more just an indication  
of how well (I imagine) you have your target reader-  
ship/audience of Americans summed up/singled out. 10/6

...I'm afraid this rather brief loc on the rather-brief  
#35 contains no further wonderful insights or homilies  
or whatever the readership might be wanting. Rent  
yourself out by the hour or the page as an analyst, eh?  
Well good luck to you, but I'd have to say that I  
found the lead and main feature of #35--your *The Same*  
*Time Next Year*...--remarkably indulgent.

To qualify that, all of my comments on #34 hold  
good: I don't know the people, I don't know the people,  
and I don't know the people. The tone of the whole  
thing is what I found off-putting, but reaction to  
such stuff is so dependent on knowledge of the subject  
that I hesitate even to suggest that you were being  
arrogant or indulgent in the first place. All this  
talk of your 'reputation'--for all I know it's all  
perfectly valid. Nevertheless, I found your piece  
altogether too mannered for my liking.

Happily, the letters from people I found much  
more in the what I would call "normal" vein--Ted &  
Dave & Terry all rationally, politely discussing the  
ins and outs of each others' arguments--standard,  
acceptable fare.

It was nice to know that you can walk on water,  
but tell me--what happens when you come across a  
storm? The rather violent way in which the sea would  
toss about would make it rather difficult to stand or  
walk, wouldn't it? This is perhaps what you were  
referring to when you mentioned occasionally 'getting  
in over (your) head'...

...on that, you've definitely got it!

[10/28/83]



DON D'AMMASSA  
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I suppose if I want to generate the image of calm maturity I should ignore Coulson's short little put-down [OW34], but I'll confess to a bit of childishness and just reflect that it must be nice not to have doubts about oneself so that one doesn't need to be aware of what is being written in the field of psychology. I should also point out that "self-actualization" does not come from current pop psychology: it is a perfectly good technical term some decades old, and it merely indicates a person who cares for his or her own opinion more than that of others. It sounds nicer than "egocentric". [11/83]

EDD VICK  
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Irving TX 75061

I'm falling behind on my logging. I think it must be because I've finally gotten a job. That'll really slow a guy down.

I'm amazed that everybody who mentioned the Locke article from OW33 says they haven't had any (or only had one or two) interviews. I'm 25 and I've worked in a bakery, an oilfield, two offices (one clerical and one data entry), and a bookstore (my favorite, for obvious reasons). I've also for short periods of time been a substitute teacher and a security guard. I was interviewed for every one of those positions, and others I didn't get. I graduated last May with a Bachelor's Degree in Computer Science and umpteen zillion interviews since then have not gotten me one job in the field. Everybody wants experienced personnel (and is getting it as unemployed people come down from the Northwest...it's not exactly the lucrative field for the entry level person that it was once). Now I've gone back to the bookstore to fill in for someone who found a better-paying position. Meanwhile a few dozen employers have filed my resume away promising to let me know if anything opens up.

At least one doesn't have to be interviewed for the position of 'fan'. I can see it now:

What do you see yourself doing in five years?  
"Being a SMoF."

Do you consider yourself to be an ambitious fan?  
"I'm very ambitious, but don't worry; that won't stop me from being a fan."

What is your major career goal? "Being a SMoF... didn't I just answer this question?"

Do you feel that this position would be challenging to you? "Oh sure, and proud and lonely too."

What steps will you be taking to improve yourself as a fan? "I think I'll step on over to the bar now."

Are you willing to work whatever hours are necessary to get the job done? "Yes, I'll take as many decades as necessary."

What do you require in the way of a starting salary? "More zines than I could possibly read in a lifetime, plus enough to put out a 300-page issue every fortnight."

Do you have any questions about the job? "Does your insurance plan cover mental health?"

Yep, I'm just glad fandom is not a job. Especially when I consider all the positions I'd have had to interview for: Publisher, Editor, writer, artist, congoer (and helper with), huxters, apahack, letterhack, clubmember (and officer)... I shudder even to think about it. It's almost enough to make one gaffiate.

Oh yes, and before I forget: gee, what a nice Brad Foster cover you have there (okay, Brad, now will you stop twisting my arm? It's awfully hard to type in this position). [10/17/83]

RICHARD BRANDT ...in response to Tucker's column:  
Did you know the world headquarters of the Otis Elevator Co., in Washington, D/C, is in a one-story building? A bit of trivia with which I would regale fellow travelers in the South Tower elevators... [11/30/83]

ROGER WADINGTON  
4 Commercial Street  
Norton, Malton  
North Yorkshire  
YO17 9ES, ENGLAND

In my present position (No. 42), the best thing in that previous issue [OW33] was *In The Catbird Seat*, and ever hopeful, I've committed those questions and answers to memory. Though,

harking back, there's not much of my interviews that I can remember, as to whether they'll ever be applicable again. Certainly any questions aimed at searching out ambition won't apply; all the jobs I've had have been on the lowest entry; and stayed there. Not for me all the infighting, the office politicking, the rise in status marked by the desk area, the subtle sign of an electric pencil sharpener as opposed to a hand one; in fact, all I've ever expected from my job is remarkably like BEB's wants; i.e., living the good life, enough money for my needs, and plenty of time to call my own. Which won't help my dreams of becoming one of the Secret Masters of Fandom.

I think I must have Krislov's Disease; or he's got mine... Well, with job prospects being so remote, I've taken to filling in the time by exercising my skills of writing, with some of the same dreams that he's had. Though I've already found out the salient facts, i.e. being neither tall nor handsome; never getting laid (but then who needs to be a writer for that?); and all I want is enough to live on; being a best-selling author always means having to come up with something better each time.

Did think of sublimating my writing energy by producing a fanzine, but had thoughts of how that would appear to the means-testers, if I applied for Supplementary Benefit (after my no-strings dole money runs out). "You say, you've spent all your money on printing a magazine full of your opinions, and sending it to people who don't read it?" Oh well, I suppose it could get me a bed in the nearest secure ward, and then my troubles would certainly be over.

Well, all I can remember from my fannish past is the names of fanzines in my memory, and their presence has long gone, even in lists; several bouts of gaffa have seen to that. But then I'm a great believer in wiping the slate clean, and starting over again, with the best of intentions and full of optimism. Though I suppose it's the only way to keep from being swamped with your possessions. Though looking around there are some survivors of earlier years; the vol of LotR that I was given as a school prize, THE MANNERS AND CUSTOMS OF THE ROMANS--a book printed in 1740, my first camera... Less understandably, about three years of 16 from '62 on (I only came across the prozines in '65) and most of Analog from '60 to '80; though I suppose with those, there comes a point of no return, where there's too many gathered to dispose of without trouble. But I have to admit most of my fannish memories are just that.

Thanks also for explaining the Blue Spot, and to those other people who queried it. One of my earliest memories being of TREASURE ISLAND, I was under the impression that it was something on the lines of the Black Spot from that book. So ever since it arrived, I've been walking around in fear and trembling, wondering when I'd be visited by a bunch of pirates. So, glad to see that it marks your status and not my demise. [11/4/83]

...don't rent too easy, Roger: Monday night in the CFG suite, at the recent Worldcon in Baltimore...and we were invaded by a horde of Pirates. ...but it's a tale that could only be recalled by the denizen's of Martin & Dorel! & Perhaps that's my problem; i.e., I must only smudge the slate, rather than wiping it clean. Whatever the reason, I passed the "swamped" stage years ago: it's reached major crisis proportions! R.S.N.

I keep thinking I should reply to Roger Waddall...but then I'm at a loss. How would the OW-hacker do it...?



Be of stout heart, Dave Locke, this is not a book review. It is a brief and lighthearted examination of Homer nodding over his type-faces and minutiae, which will educate you no end and will assist you in choosing editors and typesetters the next time you go to press. The book to be examined here is THE SF BOOK OF LISTS, by Maxim Jakubowski and Malcolm Edwards. (Berkley Books, November 1983.)

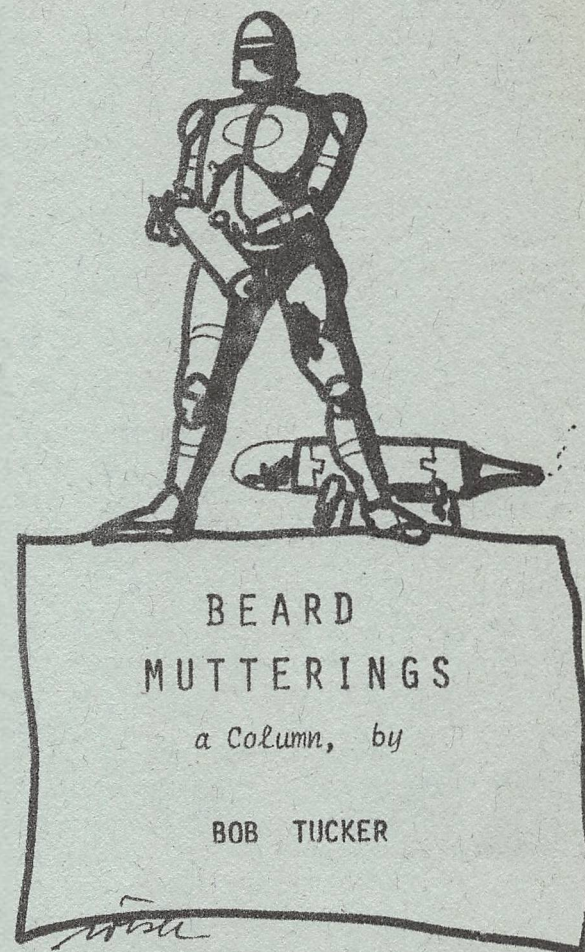
THE BOOK OF LISTS is chockful of informative things and useless things, and probably contains more trivial information than you or I really want to know, but the fun begins along toward the back of the book when someone became tired and careless with his work. Mr. Homer started to nod over his lists, and I like to think that a new typesetter came on duty. On pages 347-350 the editors discuss six science fiction and fantasy writers who have recorded rock music, and following those six they list seventeen more writers and fans who have involved themselves in other kinds of music as performers, composers, and/or songwriters. The heading is 'Six SF Writers Who Have Recorded Rock Music' (no period) I found it all interesting despite my tin ear.

The first six in order: Robert Calvert, Mick Farren, David Meltzer, Michael Moorcock; John Shirley, Norman Spinrad. The next seventeen: Jean-Pierre Andrevon, Lloyd Biggle Jr., Jerome Bixby, Marc Bourgeois, John F. Burke, Graham Charnock, Los Gonococcos (a group of fans and critics), Laurence Janifer, Langdon Jones, James Kahn, John Kippax, Sam Lundwall, Barry Malzberg, Janet E. Morris, Josephine Saxton, Somtow Sucharitkul, Elisabeth Vonarburg. The editors devote a few paragraphs of commentary to each of the original six and then one or two lines to each of the seventeen. There are no periods at the ends of the paragraphs. To fill the remaining space on page 350 the editors provide the solutions to several anagrams that had been posed earlier in the book.

The volume could have ended there, but it didn't.

The typeface changes abruptly on page 351, leading the casual browser to suspect that another typesetter in another shop is now at work on the book of lists. (The new face is easier to read, being heavier and darker than the old.) The new typesetter evidently hasn't read the earlier parts of the book and soon manages to repeat a few select items, the meanwhile changing them ever so slightly just to see if he can catch us napping. On page 382 we again encounter 'Six SF Writers Who Have Recorded Rock Music' (no period) and we read anew about the other talents of Calvert, Farren, Meltzer, Moorcock, Shirley, and Spinrad. But this time the text is subtly altered. The paragraphs devoted to each writer/musician will have one or two words changed, each man's name stands alone above his paragraphs, and every paragraph has its very own period to inform dullards like me that it's time to stop reading there and move along to the next.

The seventeen other writers and fans involved in music are repeated next, but this time the alphabetical order is jumbled: Andrevon, Biggle, Bixby, Bourgeois, Burke, Charnock, Los Gonococcos, Jones, Kahn, Kippax, Malzberg, Janifer, Lundwall, Morris, Saxton, Sucharitkul, Vonarburg. To fill the remaining space on page 384 the editors (or perhaps the publisher) provide notes about the editors. And so the book ends.





But not before that fun-loving typesetter slips in at least one more repetition, in a totally unexpected place. On page 97 the browser will find '1950: Best SF Short Stories of the Year'. That listing is in its proper setting, tucked in in chronological order among all the other 'Bests' in a chapter devoted to award-winning stories, novels, and writers. But aha! That same list is again encountered in heavier typeface on pages 354-355, under a revised heading:

'1950

Best Short Stories of the Year'

and of course it is now impudently out of place because the editors are listing novels, among other things. That repetitious appearance follows a listing of ten novels and stories featuring SF writers and fandom, and precedes a listing of the best novels of Robert Heinlein.

The new typesetter didn't catch me napping, but tell me now, what follows page 350 in your copy?

A further note to Dave Locke: the next item under discussion will carry you back to the good old days when fandom was in flower, and may even cause you to chuckle demonically beneath your beard. The science fiction newspapers and gossip mongers have reported that the recent Baltimore Worldcon lost a stupendous pile of money. The size of that pile has been reported as \$35,000 or \$40,000 and maybe even \$65,000. That third and last figure was displayed at a recent regional convention by two fans attempting to raise money for Baltimore. (I bought a ticket for a future backrub and am looking forward to it. The last Baltimore backrub I received was memorable.)

Worldcons went \*Big\* just 33 years ago. The following excerpts are from *Science Fiction News Letter* #27, dated Autumn 1952. They refer to the Chicago 1952 Worldcon which had just closed. These quotes have been condensed:

"Thru error, it was reported at the convention that 1,050 people had signed in. Duplicate registrations and pennames caused the confusion. Final and official count now reveals that only 867 registered. Estimated 175 gate-crashers also present."

"One year ago at New Orleans, science fiction conventions moved into the realm of big business when that affair grossed over one thousand dollars. This year, attendance and program presentation likewise moved into the higher brackets. The three-day Chicago program was overloaded with names and star attractions, so overloaded that a fourth day could have been added to handle the overflow. ... An anonymous fan accurately described it when he cried: 'This is big, BIG!'"

"The selection of the 1953 convention site was the usual drawn-out but exciting event of the weekend. Nine people representing eight cities put in their bids: Dave Kyle for New York City, Irvin Heyne for Philadelphia, Dr. Oscar Brauner for Indianapolis, Roger Sims for Detroit, Dave Koleck for San Francisco, Dick Clarkson for Baltimore, Paul Ganley for Niagara Falls, Canada, Bill Venable for Pittsburgh, and Will Sykora for New York City (another faction). ... Four cities withdrew and the results of the first ballot were as follows:

San Francisco:	138	New York City:	21
Philadelphia:	137	Niagara Falls:	15
Indianapolis:	62		

"The two cities having the smallest number of votes were then dropped and the second ballot was taken:

Philadelphia:	171	San Francisco:	143	Indianapolis:	51.
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"Feelings ran high, minor squabbles broke out, a motion to adjourn was defeated, and some few individuals demanded to know whose rules of order were being followed anyhow? The third and last ballot eliminated Indianapolis, with the result that Philadelphia polled 191 votes to San Francisco's 169. These figures do not always total the same because a very few votes were disqualified each time for one minor reason or another. (Chester A.) Polk and his 'ballot-by-mail' committee were not heard from."

"No financial report was made at the convention, due to the impossibility of auditing the books in so short a time. Three weeks later the secretary-treasurer mailed out the following:



## Income:

Memberships	\$ 1243.55
From Nolacon:	150.00
Auction:	789.25
Raffle:	422.16
Fan Tables:	45.00
Program Book:	352.50
Banquet:	1598.39
Photographs:	140.00
Total:	\$ 4740.85

## Expenses:

Memberships:	\$ 74.74
Donations:	206.20
Bulletins:	268.32
Decorations:	63.54
Program Book:	455.04
Advertising:	54.55
Banquet:	1763.75
Entertainment:	120.03
Hotel Expenses:	595.21
Postage:	211.76
Supplies:	83.14
Typing:	8.25
Telephone:	52.72
Petty cash:	20.00
Miscellaneous:	468.65
Subtotal:	4445.90
Cash on hand:	294.95
Total:	\$ 4740.85"

Some of those items included in the 'Income' column may need explaining to latter-day fans who are unaccustomed to the weird ways of their forefathers.

Membership fees were very low when compared to the astronomical sums being charged today so convention expenses were met in a variety of ways. 'From Nolacon' meant that the 1951 New Orleans Worldcon passed along \$150 to help the Chicago team get started. That was a standard procedure in bygone days. The 'Auction' entry probably represented all the money taken in by the auction, another lost custom. Many prozines and some book publishers used to donate cover art and interior art to the conventions to help them defray expenses, and in those happy days you could sometimes buy covers for a dollar and black and white interiors for as little as ten cents. The 'Raffle' was a similar fund-raising scheme with a rare book, magazine, or perhaps a treasure from Ackerman's fabulous garage selling for 10¢ or 25¢ per ticket. 'Fan tables' were those tables where fanzine publishers sold their wares and paid the convention a small percentage of their gross. Fan tables eventually became huckster tables in a separate room and were taken over by dealers, who get rich and cry a lot.

At some very early conventions the Program Books were sold for ten cents or perhaps twenty-five cents a copy, but the entry in the Chicago account probably represents advertising revenue. Program books quickly became a freebie with your purchase of membership. Some early Banquet tickets cost as little as \$1 per plate. The food was about equal to today's twelve and fifteen dollar plates. And the 'Photographs' item is one that is seldom found at today's conventions. Chicago had an official photographer who took 'official' photographs of large crowds (the banquet, the main meeting room) and sold you copies for later delivery in the mail. The convention got a cut of the photographer's gross.

Now then, Dave Locke, you know almost as much about early cons as I do. Except that I still haven't revealed how we embezzled membership funds and hid these embezzlements in creative book-keeping. I'm saving that up for my old age.

□□□ Bob Tucker, 12/83

↑ ↑

"My motive is fun, pure fun. I write the pro stuff for fun and money, but the fan stuff for the rich enjoyment of it."

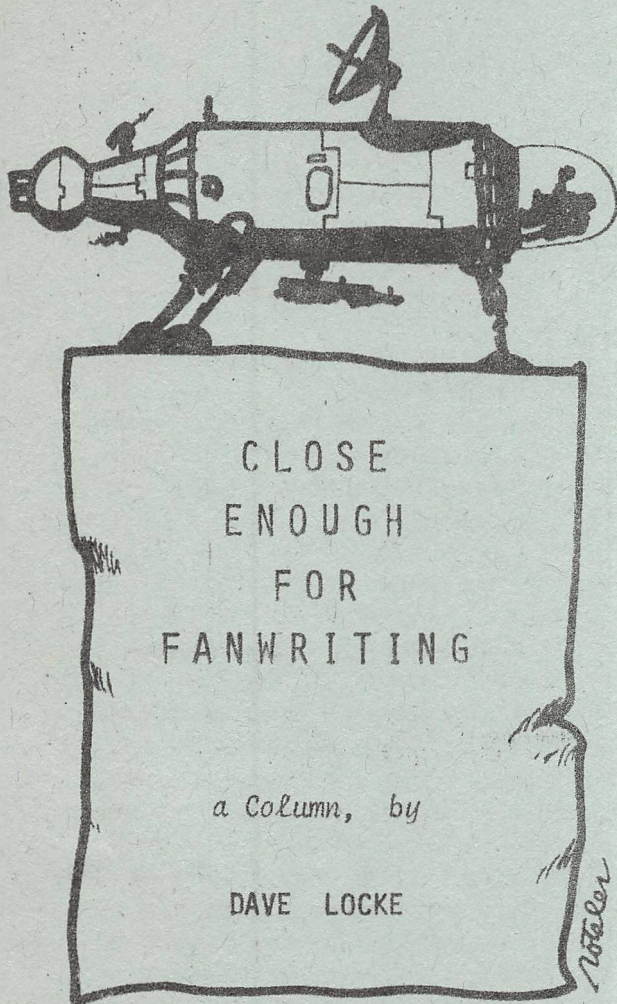
□□□ BOB TUCKER

"The pleasure of seeing my stuff in print, the pleasure of writing itself for people who take pleasure in what I write. Fun, first, last, and always."

□□□ PAUL WALKER

...in Dave Locke's THE FANWRITER SYMPOSIUM, Outworlds 28/29





1949: Looking Ahead From Near The Beginning  
May 1950 "Post Mortem" to the 7th  
Worldcon, the 1949 CInvention in Cincinnati,  
Ohio; prox 200 attending, 175-180 registered.  
Written by Don Ford for the "CInvention  
Memory Book".

*"The wives of the pros, who are about as  
interested in Science Fiction as the fan's  
wives are, had a good time discussing the  
trials and tribulations of being 'Science  
Fiction Widows'. That, to my way of thinking,  
did as much as anything in making this con-  
vention the success it was. When the wives  
find out that they, too, can have fun and a  
lot in common with the other wives at these  
conventions, there will be an interesting  
attendance each year."*

#### Ten Dam Typos

*To mistype is human; to poorfraed, divine*

No, you did not suddenly find yourself hold-  
ing Grafanedica. Relax, this is still Out-  
worlds. If you don't recognize this refer-  
ence to Bill's old and useful fanzine about  
the mechanics of being a faned, that's because  
I was being esoteric. This is *Outworlds* and  
that's permissible, you know; hopefully even  
if your name isn't Bowers.

What I wanted to say is that there are  
too damn many typos in fanzines, and it's

time to call out the Corflu Brigade and give drill in three basic methods of typo  
fighting.

1. *Follow That Typo* - If you're typing a stencil, try using the corflu drying time  
to read through what you've already typed. This is called Follow That Typo because you  
wind up proofing what you've typed between the last two blotches of corflu. You'll also  
get no registration problems when you type in corrections.

2. *Elbows On Typewriter* - At least read the stencil before you take it out of the  
typewriter, to somewhat minimize registration problems and to ensure that you don't  
overlook proofreading altogether.

3. *Official Poorfraeder* - Most anyone you know can find more typos in your zine  
than you can. Ergo, you need an Official Poorfraeder on your masthead. But set it up  
this way so you don't eschew responsibility: do your own proofreading, then tell your  
poorfraeder that there's a beer in it for every typo flagged. This prompts you to im-  
prove, gives your poorfraeder something besides sore eyes and credit on your masthead,  
and does wonders for the flow when reading your fanzine.

It is absolutely true that you can proofread your own work 50 times and never spot  
the place where you have typed "shit" for "suit", or where you misspelled a person's  
name using a lettering guide. Things like that happen. But I'm not talking Typo Free.  
I'm talking proofreading. If having only a small number of typos doesn't come naturally  
to you, that should mean having a program to clean up most of them. The program is  
called proofreading. Do your own, and then maybe entice someone to be poorfraeder and  
catch what eludes you. Once the stencils are typed, the delay of even a few days for



poorfrauding isn't going to hurt anything.

Help stamp out eye stumble. Corflu a typo today.

## Merûs

We're back for another look at obscure words which might be potentially useful or at least potentially amusing. This topic in general may be considered either *afflatus* (noun: an artistic inspiration) or *amphigory* (noun: nonsensical writing). In any event, these words are *anabiotic* (adj: apparently dead, but capable of being revived; rather like many fans upon returning home from a convention, especially one where they stayed over for the dead dog party).

Articles are usually *monographs*, dealing with a single subject. Columns, like CEFF, are usually *polygraphs*, dealing with many subjects.

When we pun, distorting the sense of words, we are committing *verbicide*. *Verbicide* is *amphigean*, an adjective which means found or occurring throughout the world. So is *agnosy*, a noun which means ignorance, especially ignorance shared by the whole human race (for example, it used to be agnosy that the sun revolved around the earth. Today it is close to agnosy to believe that having nuclear weapons will save us from their being used).

A *coquecigrue* is an imaginary creature regarded as an absolute absurdity, rather like the paper personna of Joseph Nicholas.

*Anopisthographic* fanzines are in disfavor in fandom because they are wasteful, and add unnecessary bulk to such things as apa mailings. However, it is not uncommon to receive a fanzine which has printing on only one side.

*Agastophia* is a noun meaning admiration of a particular part of someone's body. This has no fannish application except at convention room parties.

The universal solvent vainly sought by alchemists is *alkahest*, a label which presently has nothing it can apply to. If it ever can be applied, obviously it won't last much longer than the container.

Just in case you wanted to know, or even just suspected, an *ascian* is someone without a shadow. This word is applied to inhabitants of the torrid zone, where the sun is vertical at noon for a few days every year. *Antiscians* are people living on the same meridian, but on different sides of the equator, thus casting shadows at noon in opposite directions.

When the bar runs dry the party becomes *aneroid*, without liquid, and breaks up shortly thereafter before *anhedonia*, the inability to be happy, sets in. This never happens at a party when Bob Tucker is around.

This particular feature of CEFF reveals *verbo-onomatomania*, an uncontrollable obsession for words not quite bordering on *grammatolatry*, a worship of words.

I guarantee you that this feature contains no logodaedaly. Absolutely none.

## Next of Kin

Is there a Fan Type? If you haven't said it, you've heard it said that someone was or seemed to be "the fan type", or "the fannish type", or appeared "fannish" in nature.

What does this mean?

Well, first off, I think it means something normally referred to as "a manner of speaking". I say this because logic forces me to approach it with the assumption that, literally speaking, there can be no such thing as a fan type. Admittedly it would not be an exhaustive test of the potential, but a convincing proof occurs when trying to imagine the definition of "fan type" needed to encompass a fandom which contains Charles Burbee, Cheryl Cline, Roger Sims, Mike Lalor, Bill Levy, Walt Willis, and Suzi Stefl, for example. Not even the act of reading science fiction would tie them all together, and yet they're fans. To cover all bases, is there a fan type despite exceptions? I don't think so, and again I try to imagine a common bond, this time between fanzine fan "types", convention "types", N3F "types", APA 69 "types", and media "types", for another round of examples.



No, I don't believe there really is such a thing as a fan type. I do believe that fandom, or parts of it, appeals to a wide variety of "types" for a wide variety of reasons.

So why do some fans refer to "a fan type"?

Well, perhaps there's a clue in the fact that, when pressed for definition, the best that can be expected is usually either: 1. A fan type is what they point at when they see one, 2. A fan type is a trufan; in other words, a fan type is a special type which reflects perhaps 1/50th of all fans, and 3. A fan type is the type of person whom the observer presumes would fit well with the syntality of his own fannish circle.

So, am I a fan type? Are you? What would a fan type legitimately be?

Obviously a fan type is anyone the oddsmaker judges likely to become interested enough in some aspect of fandom--if exposed to it--that they would wind up calling themselves a fan, after which they could stand around and join those who are pointing out fan types. This definition may be incontrovertible, but as a definition all it does is pass the buck to you or me or whoever wants it. Do you want it? I don't want it.

It occurs to me that there are many of us who entered fandom without someone having recognized them as a fan type. Not me personally, however. My appearance in the 50's and early 60's *Amazing* letter column branded me to some as being "a fan type". But many of you discovered fandom for yourselves. If you're one of them, ponder a scenario where you're not a fan today, and ask yourself if anyone you fannishly associate with would recognize you as being "a fan type". Of course they would, unless you're not associating with them in an agreeable manner, in which case we should ask if you wouldn't please go do this someplace else.

Now, let's tighten things a little. A fan type is anyone you think a potential fan. Does that sound right? Listen, we can degrade this until we find an acceptable definition. How do you like this one? If you like it, consider this round of examples: Taral, Jessie Salmonson, Bill Bridgett, Garth Danielson, Irvin Koch, and Mike Lalor. If past opportunities had been missed and they had never become fans, and you encountered them for the first time, which ones would you rush up to grab and amaze by shouting at them "hey, you're a fan type!" What? That's what I thought.

Really then, there either is no such thing as a fan type, or there is but it encompasses everyone. In either instance the concept proves useless, though it comes very close to being interesting.

#### A Quote For All Times

*"Everyone knows that it all rests on what name you succeed in imposing on the facts."*  
-- Jerome Cohen

□□ Dave Locke, 12/83

↑ ↑

*"That ends today's lesson. In future sessions we shall cover such exciting topics as:*

*STOP vs. NON-STOP PARAGRAPHING*

*ANCIENT HISTORY: HOW TO HAND-STENCIL ARTWORK*

*SCIENCE FICTION: WHAT IS IT, AND WHAT DOES IT HAVE*

*TO DO WITH YOUR FANZINE?*

*36 SURE-FIRE METHODS FOR TITLING YOUR NEW FANZINE*

*CORFLU, AND OTHER STRANGE DISEASES*

*SOLICITING MATERIAL--THE ART OF PLYING*

*HOW TO PLY ON A LIQUOR BUDGET OF \$10 A WEEK*

*HOW TO PUBLISH A MEDIOCRE FANZINE*

*ON A LIQUOR BUDGET OF \$2 A WEEK*

*HOW TO AVOID PUBLISHING YOUR GIRLFRIEND/BOYFRIEND'S*

*ILLOS, WITHOUT TRAGEDY OR TEARS*

*HOW TO WRITE GUIDELINES FOR PUBLISHING A FANZINE,*

*WITH A STRAIGHT FACE "*

□□ Dave Locke; PLEASE DON'T WRITE AROUND THE ILLOS - *Outworlds* 24, 1975



...gee, maybe I should Be Firm & Make Threats more often: It's just been two weeks since OW36 was mailed out...and the response has been gratifying. ¶ The last thing I need right now is to add to the length/production time of this issue...but in the interests of Not Letting It Pile Up, we shall now have a reduced intermission...before launching the Locke/Reznick epic....

ROGER WADDINGTON (on OW35) ...I'm still operating (ibid.; p. 1292) under those first impressions of fandom, still finding it awesome that such well-crafted articles, opinions and the like could have been written straight off; or such is the impression given! Me, I've always found that it takes a lot of hard work to be truly spontaneous, and especially when it comes to expressing personality. If that dated phrase still holds good, 'letting it all hang out' has never come easy, competing against a traditional British reserve; or at least writing about it!

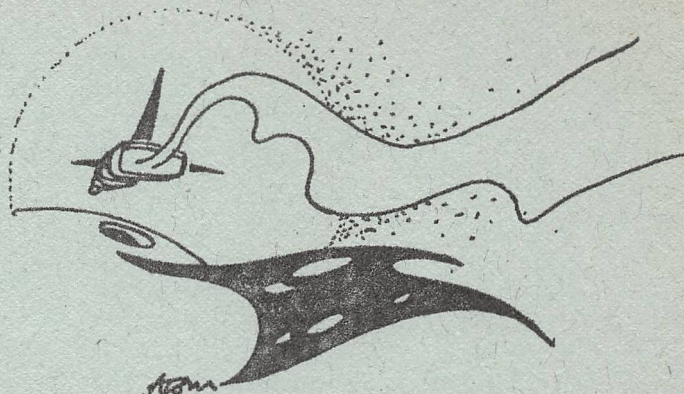
Indeed, while I've been neglecting my future job prospects by staying with the same, limited one all these years, I seem also to have been neglecting other, human relationships. Brought to mind by reading of yours, and the extra dimension given; I've been in that Ivory tower for far too long! I've found it not least in a writing course I'm on (well, filling in the time between unsuccessful job applications), that now I'm at the short story stage, I can't use the interaction between people that such stories need, from my own experience. Instead, I have to use what I see on TV and the adverts, even from what I read, thus bringing it in at a second remove. In fact, anything that I read; so you could find yourself as a character! Must admit that I'm finding it easier with articles, that I just have facts to consider, instead of having to explore, and pin down, the myriad ways of people.

I've often wondered why, when America came up with the simple, explanatory word of sidewalks to set against our word of 'pavements', you should have thought of the complicated 'elevator' where we use the straightforward 'lift'... Though be they elevators or lifts, my view has often been coloured (or should that be 'colored'?) by what I've read or seen of them in the media, books or films. Which is why I hesitate to press that button for one, just in case the doors slide open to reveal a body inside with a knife in its back; or take a journey of more than one floor, just in case I send it down on the poor unfortunate who's hanging on with his fingertips to the ropes below. Though with four stories at the most over here, there's very little opportunity for such mayhem! I'm looking forward to the first locked-room mystery set in a lift; maybe Bob Tucker could write it, if he hasn't already done so.

Incidentally, I've often wondered, and never found an answer, just how our potato crisps became the translation for your 'chips', and how our 'chips' took the name of 'French fries'... Couldn't be a touch of snobbery could it, and the same impulse that leads to restaurant menus being written in French? Strikes me that we could do with an American/English dictionary...

And it may be true that the victor writes the histories, but how come the famous defeats are more often remembered over here, more than the victories? Oh, we've written all the history books (and made a lot of it) but it's those occasions when we come off the worst, that we seem to remember best. Such as the Roman Conquest of Britain, the Battle of Hastings, and more recently, the 'miracle' of Dunkirk (the miracle being that we got away with so many troops); and the Charge of the Light Brigade... Too, Guy Fawkes, the only man we've commemorated by naming a day of the year after him, was the man who failed to blow up Parliament; though I'm not sure that we don't celebrate the attempt....

[1/3/84]



... 'letting it all hang out' doesn't necessarily come easy over here, either. If this were a contest, and not merely Life as depicted on fuzzy Twilltone, I'd match your 'traditional British reserve' against the strictures of my ultra-religious upbringing (summed up as 'everything is forbidden'!). ¶ You know, despite the years, the experiences, the cosmetic appearances of 'knowing what it's all about' (since we're dragging out the oldies)--I'm still not at all certain that one can totally 'step outside' one's formative influences. I don't spend a lot of time thinking about such things, but sometimes, say after viewing films such as The Chosen, Monsignor, and more recently Yentl--I can't help but wonder what it would have been like 'growing up Jewish'... or Catholic, rather than as a total WASP. I can pass judgement on such films--I thought the first an excellent story-film, the second nothing much, and the third pretty-but-fluff--but I can't relate to them. The subject is of more than academic interest to me in that by far the majority of my closest friendships/most intense relationships have been with *fi'Id* Catholics or those of the Jewish persuasion...

JOE CHRISTOPHER  
English Department  
Tarleton State University  
Stephenville TX 76402

You're going to get a lot of comments about writing "1984" on the dates of letters. It doesn't signify, however.

Dave Locke's interview of Steve Leigh was pleasant. I haven't read Leigh's books, so I can't comment on those. But I was struck by the question of computers turning out genre fiction. Anthony Boucher predicted such robots in "Robinc" (1943), referring to a Verhaeren factor which gave creativity to the manufactured brains--"it's used in the robots that turn out popular fiction--in very small porportion, of course."

Also, I think Leigh is not entirely fair to Tolkien's fiction (I realize he lists THE LORD OF THE RINGS as one of the ten best novels, for him): Tolkien writes in the generalized style of William Morris and seems to me to be fairly good at it ("Tolkien isn't a stylist"); Leigh is more nearly correct (to my taste) on the characterization, but I wonder if what he calls stereotypes are not, as is appropriate for the romance genre, archetypes? Maybe there's no difference (sometimes I wonder); anyway, there's my contribution of a bit of jargon to the discussion.

[1/10/84]

ahh...but Wm. A.P. White didn't predict me in 1943...!

ARTHUR THOMSON I still vividly remember that evening in Las Vegas at the Dwain Kaiser home when you and Mallard came bustling in out of the night. Gosh, that's twenty years ago... [11/5/83]

...you know, I'd completely forgotten about you being there. I do recall (with the aid of photos) the Disneyland expedition. Unfortunately, I have to go back...



*The man - old what's his name - that took us back to Chicago told me that a group of fans go every year to that charming Mexican restaurant in the field - they think it is wonderful - yuck! - This - I'm sure is the restaurant that "Neil Rest" referred to in his letter - Never trust his taste again - ! - See, occasionally, once in a while. Sometimes - I'll read your zine -*

...which, translated, reads:

The man--old what's his name--that took us back to Chicago told me that a group of fans go every year to that charming Mexican restaurant in the field--they think it is wonderful--yuck!-- This--I'm sure is the restaurant that "Neil Rest" referred to in his letter-- Never trust his taste again--!-- See, ~~occasionally~~, sometimes I'll read your zine--

...so cute...such a delicate little thing! It's a good thing that you're leaving the country so I don't have to spend all that money going to LAcon...and--yuck!--Disneyland... (Just kidding...really...)

NEIL REST  
5309 N. Clark  
Chicago, IL 60640

Gee, ten years ago I could hardly spell "locer", and now I am one! I got some bad news for you; you can actually get postage stamps with credit cards too, now. The Postal Service (sic) has a philatelic mail order service which I like, because you can get anything that's in print. The United States' stamps are so ugly and dumb, that you have to choose from everything available just to have a couple of interesting or pretty alternatives. They send out a pretty little catalog every two months, noting which items are about to be removed from sale so you can stock up. It's something like a 50¢ service charge on an order of no more than 500 stamps.

If my recollection of that list, maybe two years ago, of your first hundred conventions is correct, your 10 cons in a year is a perhaps unprecedented burst. My easing toward zinedom is from a desire for literate (as in able to read, not necessarily fancy company) companionship. What's your excuse for sliding the other way?

I guess it helps that I haven't been exposed in enough detail to be familiar with the cliques and insularity of zine fandom. It annoys me no end that I have to find half a dozen parties at a con to find most of the people I want to. At least with zines, your mailing list is whatever you want. Though apa membership could get to be a problem, I guess.

The "continuing conversation" is one of my favorite descriptions of apas. One of the biggest differences, to me, between fannish and mundane parties is that at mundane parties, the music is so loud you can't talk. All you can do is dance, drink, or stand around. I've never understood it. Yes, the band at Octocon was that bad.

There's an aspect of zinac I haven't at all come to grips with, or adjusted to. I'm used to getting significant mileage out of good anecdotes/jokes/tidbits. But send fifty or two hundred copies of something to a lot of the people you know, and that bit is DEAD. There seems to be a different way of relating to one's experiences and the sharing of them in

regular zinac.

The "interview"/conversation reminded me of entirely different anecdotes about favorite writers. One of the fairly few times I have really made myself nervous was a couple of years ago, when I was straightening my paperback collection, and discovered that second after Heinlein, the author I had the most of is Philip K. Dick.

Do you know Bernard Shaw's story about how he taught himself to write? He'd worked in a real estate office in Dublin for something like a year and a half, and made the distressing discovery that he was good at it. He quit and went to London to move in with his mother. Since he'd already proven to have no talent for singing or composition, he decided to become a writer. He decided that a reasonable output for a writer is five foolscap pages a day. So, with some of the discipline he'd learned clerking, for the next five years he wrote five pages every single day. At the end of four years, he'd written four (bad) novels, and decided to embark on the trilogy which would be his magnum opus. At the end of the first volume, he found he'd said everything he had to say, and so decided to embark on some more living. And discovered socialism, music reviewing, and women, among other things.

You mention a loc from Roger Weddall. We 'met' recently; I inadvertently seriously confused him. Last fall, I got a Thyme. The return address showed that it had been sent to me by what's-his-name in Seattle, though not why. The first question was, who do I send the loc to? I eventually decided to Xerox it, and send two copies. I got a very puzzled reply from Roger; I'd obviously been around fandom some, and he liked a couple of my jokes about various Aussies, but he'd absolutely never heard of me, and couldn't figure out where I'd appeared from.

Could be worse. Leslie David read "Ira M. Thornhill" on my badge in Phoenix, and for days, at least, seemed to wonder why I gave such strange responses to her remarks about things Mitch had written which I'd never heard of.

[1/8/84]

...oh, good! This means you can answer Roger's letter, a few pages back... ¶ Actually, unlike the place that printed the cover for OW34, I found out rather late in the game that the place that printed OW36 doesn't take plastic. How embarrassing; I'd thought everyone did... ¶ I suspect you misremember that list: After taking 12 years to accomplish my first 24 cons, there was a jump to 9 in 1975 alone. Following a record 16 in '76, the record shows 11, 9, 13, 15, 14, and 10...leading up to the 10 last year; neither a 'burst' nor a sputter. Yet, while realizing trends can't be detected until over, I may be on a downswing. Partly because of finances, partly because of 'this' & other interests, and in large measure because of local priorities, I only plan on 5 or 6 cons this year. Which statement I will laugh at when I look back at it next January! ¶ It's not surprising that you can't remember Jerry Kaufman's name in that his primary claim to fanish fame occurred way back in 1968 when, while attending a sf club meeting at his home in Cleveland Heights (a mere four days after I returned from 18 months overseas)...he was the one to introduce me to (...pause while he reflects on all the gender-depicting discussion in the last few issues...) the person I would end up marrying, a year later, 'at' St. Louiscon. Coincidentally, she now also lives in Seattle. (None of the proceeding has any relevance to Neil's loc...but it might get me some mail with a Seattle postmark...)

BRAD W FOSTER  
4109 Pleasant Run  
Irving, TX 75038

You need to set up Outworlds as a non-profit charity publication. You can print the listings for your local PBS station or some-



thing--then, although it won't make it any cheaper to put it out, you can at least write it all off as a deduction at tax time.

I think Ian has probably been running across my work in just a lucky order to see any kind of progress as far as detail being built up. In any single month the various pieces I do can vary greatly in style and amount of detail. His comment "over the years" made me check back in my files, and it actually seems that my fan activity has really only been showing up much within the last two years. Guess that means I'm still a neo! Oh, but tell him thanks for the compliment, and that I'm hoping in a few years, when I look back on the work I'm doing now and compare it to what I'll be doing then, I hope I can see just as great a difference and improvement. It's the only way to go.

And I just got one hell of an ego-blast from David Stever's letter! Boy, been mentioned four times in just the first four pages--yes indeed, I think this is the best issue of *Outworlds* yet! (See how easy it is to keep an artist happy? Just pat 'em on the head and they'll wag their tails!)

I like the format of Dave's interview/chat, where it really does become a dialogue between two people, rather than straight question-answer.

And I'll stick with using "they" in place of he or she, thank you. Certainly it's lousy grammar, but unless you go to the conscious effort of trying to balance the use of he and she in any written piece, as Knight evidently did in the handbook, I can see no other good solution. All the made up words of "heesh" and "hiser" and whatever are stumbling blocks that bring the reader up and make them conscious of the writer "being fair". If I was a good writer I'd go for the approach Terry gave of working it to use no pronouns. But since I'm a hacker, I'll stumble over the bad grammar and go my merry way. Ain't I disgustin'?

That's it from here. Looking forward to #37, and the other nine or ten issues you'll probably end up putting out in '84!

[1/4/84]

*I'll have to check out that idea with WCET, the local PBS outlet. They just might be foresighted enough to buy it...in light of the fact that their daily sign-off has a tagline to the effect that they were the very first such station licensed in the U.S. (Thank you; you have no idea how long I've been sitting on that bit of trivia, waiting to work it into a fanzine...)*

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

It's time to get back to writing locs. I'd made a new year's resolution to write one a day without fail in the new

year, even though I found nothing in the Orwell novel about this particular horror of 1984. But I drank entirely too much during my New Year's Eve celebration, and the hangover took care of the ruin of that resolution on New Year's Day. Then I had to spend January 2 trying to get back into the good graces of my wife, who thought she'd finally persuaded me to lay off the booze, and there went another locless day. Yesterday I deliberately skipped writing a loc because I wanted to end the suspense and do all that remained to complete the book about fandom in the 1960s, the selection of a title from among a half-dozen possibilities. I hope fandom approves of my choice but it seems like a shame to let the others go to waste until I turn all my notes on fandom in the 1970s into a manuscript. Now today I positively must write a loc on the new issue of *Outworlds*, a rather difficult obligation because I must try to live up to the reputation you credit me with on page 1265, that of being capable of surprising you when I write a loc.

It's remarkable, what a word can do to remove literary bigotry. I have been grumbling and bitching for years over fans who publish interviews with pros

in the question and answer fashion, pointing out that it reminds me of the transcript of a murder trial. So Dave Locke titles his conversation with Steve Leigh as a "dialog" and behold, I am pacified and I enjoy reading these pages very much. Even though Steve takes up most of the space, this dialog does indeed eliminate most of the bad features of the question-and-answer transcripts.

I have read little if anything published by Steve but I find I can empathize with him in some ways. I might have gone through the same psychological crisis he experienced with his first rock group, if I'd seriously tried to make music for a livelihood. I had a weekly piano recital on the local radio station, was playing oboe and English horn in several orchestras, weighing an invitation to study on a parttime basis at Curtis Institute in Philadelphia, and I found it was getting to me. I would start to wonder before an engagement if the feeling in my stomach was nerves or food poisoning and I would suffer from an ailment which Steve doesn't mention, a maddening inability to use the urinal before a performance because of nerves, followed by increasing agony during the performance. I decided the game wasn't worth the candle and converted music from a possible trade to a lifelong hobby. I'm probably happier, but I still wonder sometimes what my life would have been if I'd persisted with one instrument or another. I might even have inspired medical science to create bladder transplants specifically for me.

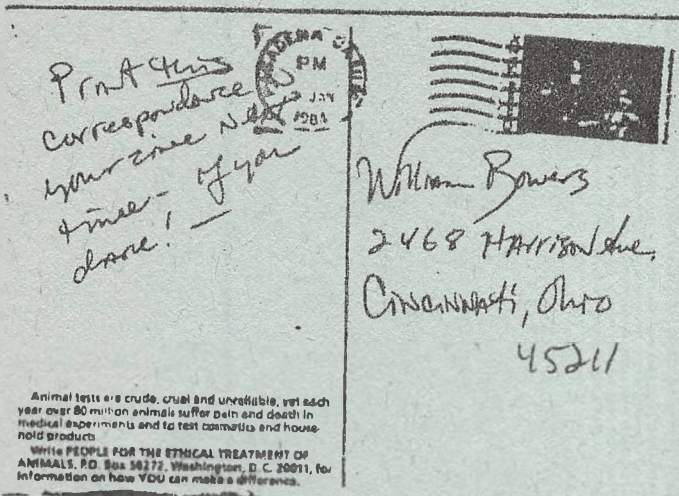
My main objection to the series and sequel mania in professional fantasy and science fiction just now is the padding that some of the three-deckers utilize to fill out all those pages. I've read the first book in several series and have estimated that it could be cut by at least 40% and would suffer nothing but loss of weight. I don't mind the series concept when it's impossible to imagine the story being told at less length. I've been reading Hervey Allen's unfinished series of novels about pioneer days. In a sense each of them is just part of one enormous which if completed would have made ANTHONY ADVERSE seem like a novelette. But the author causes the reader to visualize 18th century frontier life in such detail that it seems almost as familiar as the real world around the reader, and there's no way the same effect could have been achieved in a less leisurely prose.

Maybe it's all my imagination, but I seem to remember hiser and heesh as Ackerman inventions as a result of a debate on sexist pronouns in the pages of *VOM*, back around 1940 or 1941. I've always felt one of the alternatives which Terry Carr mentions, one, is the best way to avoid gender of pronouns if circumstances warrant the substitution. One has the advantage of being in occasional use, particularly in the United Kingdom, and there are analogous neuter pronouns in other languages: in French, on can serve in the same way, and in Italian si is the equivalent. The main disadvantage of one as a pronoun is the way it was being touted a few years back as a special symbol for homosexuals. But I don't think it has been pushed in this particular manner in more recent times.

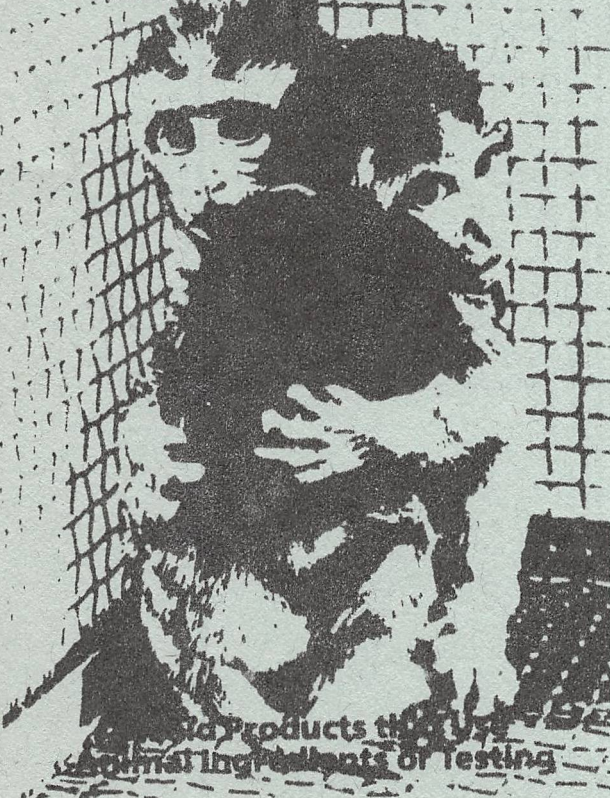
I hope you can get your finances back into shape before too much more time passes. By coincidence, I've been reading a biography of Mark Twain which gives all the gruesome details of his financial miscalculations which eventually led to his bankruptcy and his stupendous ordeal in old age of achieving his goal of paying back every creditor in full. I'd hate to think of you finding it necessary to imitate Mark and launch on a world-wide tour of giving speeches at cons in every nation, to enable you to continue to publish fanzines after you'd gotten out of Twilltone debt. [1/4/84]

*I recall meeting your wife when Mallardi & I stopped by on the way to Diecon. That must have been in '63...!*





# Three Animals Die Every Second in U.S. Laboratories



Since the above is going to be illegible (my correspondent doesn't realize the limitation of reproducing photos in this medium), the caption reads:

Three Animals Die Every Second  
in U.S. Laboratories

Avoid Products that Use  
Animal Ingredients or Testing

AVEDON CAROL

4409 Woodfield Rd.  
Kensington, MD 20895

Well, it's not that I don't love you anymore, it's just that it's been a long time since I answered my mail. I could go into the long and pathetic and embarrassingly American-soul-baring sort of explanation for it all, but let's just leave it that I've been thru a long period of, oh, let's say drug-addiction and withdrawal, just to give the right symptomology.

Anyroad, I still don't have a lot to say. But here is this remarkable thing on page two of *Outworlds*: "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 antithesis of repression and revulsion is justified."

Excuse me? We'll leave aside any discussion of what these words mean (like, just what might be the "antithesis of repression") and go to the statement that "There was never any discussion." WHERE HAVE YOU BEEN SINCE 1967?

Oh, Ian, really, you're so paranoid. Maybe you haven't associated with any sort of feminist women at all over the last 15 years, and this is why you have this idea that feminists just sort of sat up one day and decided that men were Bad.

No discussion. The No Discussion starts in the mid sixties--well, earlier, really--when people of both sexes started pointing out that men were expected to do a lot of things in the name of "manhood" which made no sense. There seemed to be a war on at the time, and one of the things we (I do mean *we* here) thought men shouldn't have to do was become soldiers. We didn't like the idea of killing people, and we sure as shit didn't like the idea that a "Man" (as in John Wayne) had to risk or even lose his precious bodily parts/life for pitch blends and Exxon and god knows what else. We maintained that it was not likely a good idea that *anybody* do such things, and moreover, we also maintained that being a man was a condition which existed whether a male person did these things or not. We added to the list other not-necessarily manly things, including haircuts, ties, suits, and even Holding Down a Job.

So, here are our young men, dodging the draft, wearing blue jeans and long hair, and as a direct result being unable to get jobs. We didn't think this was un-manly, and thus it stood to reason that both political analysis and practical needs supported the idea that it was not unfeminine of those among us who happened to be female to be the breadwinners.

Interestingly enough, our long-haired draft-dodgers agreed entirely that it was perfectly all right for us to support them. On the other hand, we still had to come home and wash all the dishes and clean up all the ashtrays full of roaches and not be "a drag" about things like sex (being "a drag" constituted saying "No" for any reason, and also bringing up the subject of birth control, which ruined the fantasy that sex was magic, I suppose. Men like these did not like to think about birth control and we were supposed to--magically, I guess--take care of it ourselves.).

Well, you know how it is. You are paying all the rent and even doing all of the housework and never pointing out to these guys what a drag *they* are about sex--but you reach your limit. I mean, every time you come home the place looks like there was a raid there. You're tired and you want some sleep and this guy wants you to go down on him or something as a political duty (saying no could earn you any variety of lectures, from "Your middle class hang-ups"--a classic--to routines about how you were selfish, or a dyke, or god-knows-what).



So maybe you say something like, "Look, could you at least pick up the spilled ashtrays?" Or, "I've got this shitty job and I'm tired and I just don't feel like it, please?"

No. Any request for a man to do housework, we are told, is outrageous--not to mention "a drag". Any discussion of how *we* feel, it turns out, is a drag. And anyway, there were no female Shakespeares, no female Einsteins, and in the animal kingdom the males dominate, and men have different needs, and women *can* handle housework, and--

What it boiled down to was that it was just too damn bad if we were feeling exhausted and miserable and used and taken for granted and neglected and devalued. Our feelings weren't important enough to be used as arguments, and our minds weren't good for much else besides housework, and men were above all that *maya*, but we weren't.

We never thought any of this was going to be necessary. After all, didn't these guys say they loved us? Of *course* they loved us--as long as they didn't have to deal with our personalities and our needs and our "hang-ups". We figured, hell, you tell someone who cares about you that you're not feeling too well, they might want to do something to make you feel better, if they can. Well, they could have, but they didn't.

We found this all a bit confusing. But men were always talking about they (as opposed to *we*) understood logic and all that, so we thought we'd try logic. We explained that the patterns of dominance in the animal kingdom weren't all so cut and dried. We pointed out there were reasons that had nothing to do with any difference in male and female intelligence for the lack of female Shakespeares.

"What reason?" (No, they didn't really *ask* us what reason. They didn't want to hear it at all.)

"Women weren't allowed to work in the theatre. Women weren't allowed to have real jobs. A lot of women weren't even permitted to read and write. If you aren't allowed to learn to read and write, or work in the theatre, or even have a job, you aren't likely to become a Shakespeare, are you?"

"You're trying to say that men forced women to be oppressed. You're blaming us for this!"

Men spent *hours* telling us why they didn't have *time* to do the dishes. Men said the most idiotic things we'd ever heard to prove to us that we were too stupid to want someone else to waste their precious minds doing the dishes, and that they were too smart to waste their precious minds doing the dishes. It was more than just a little bit insulting.

Our position was simply that we had realized we didn't like doing all the housework and we wanted to do other things. Or maybe we wanted to do other things and maybe we'd even have time to do them if someone else would take some of the responsibility for the time-consuming stuff we'd been doing already. Silly us, we thought that all we had to do was tell men about this new insight, and they'd say, sure, why not?

We weren't accusing men of anything. Mostly we were kicking *ourselves* for not having thought of it sooner. But the reaction we got, the hostility--it seemed all out of proportion. If their balls weren't going to fall off if they refused to go to war, and if they wore long hair, or if they didn't bring home the bacon, how come their balls *were* going to fall off if they did the dishes? And if it was ok for us to support them, how come we were "unfeminine" when we wanted them to do the dishes?"

All very strange. The "No Discussion" went on and on. It went on and on for years. Some women couldn't take it anymore. A few of them became political lesbians--but most did not. Most kept having the same "No Discussion" over and over with men, because most could never, never believe that men who said they

loved us could not really *want* to understand what was making us unhappy and help us stop it from making us unhappy.

The question of why men automatically thought they were being *accused* of something is still pretty scary. As Gary Farber once put it, no one ever said that men had all sat down together one day and decided to "have" sexism. We never said it was a plot among men, or even a conspiracy among *some* men. We have always taken it for granted that it just worked out that way. We would no more treat these thousands of years of male supremacy as a conscious decision by men than we would have said that the pioneers had decided against inventing electricity. We believed that people did things the way they did them until someone came up with a better way, and here we had what we were pretty sure had to be a better way, and we were being treated like traitors to the whole human race.

I live in a world in which men *brag* about being "male chauvinists". Do they know what the word "chauvinist" means? Do they really think that a woman has no *right* to have the simple self-respect to be insulted by the suggestion that she really can't have anything better to do than to be someone else's maid? Do you have any idea of how galling it is to hear a man talk about how he loves women, or loves some woman in particular, and then go on to speak as if somehow the idea of a woman wanting something other than to cook and clean for "her man" as her life priority is *ludicrous*? Do you know what it means to be called "uppity" and "competitive" and "pushy" and "selfish" just because you don't like being treated like furniture?

When men needed us to give up the *one* thing we got for being "feminine"--supported by a man--we went to work and supported them. We didn't say, "How dare they?" We didn't talk about patterns of dominance among animals, or the history of how men were supposed to be the breadwinners, or even the fact that there were more jobs available to men. We just went to work. There was no discussion--none was needed. We loved men, they needed this, so we did it.

And because, in spite of the foregoing, we *still* love men, we still keep the discussion going. Although, in the early days of feminism, we desperately--and vainly--tried to get men to come to "women's lib" meetings with us, we still keep hoping that *some* day men will join us on their own simply because it makes sense.

But isn't it schizophrenic to love a man who still thinks you're too unimportant to have any priorities over the dishes? Isn't it skizzy to love a man when it is already quite clear that it is too much work for him to view the situation from your perspective?

Well, yes--which is what THE FEMALE MAN is about, of course. I assume this is the "works by Joanna Russ" to which you refer, Ian--a work which, I will wager, the majority of those slasher-movie fans have not had significant contact with. More likely their image of feminism is cut from media bullshit about bra-burners who want jobs.

And *Houston Do You Read?* Isn't about role-reversal or turning the tables, Ian, it is about *despair*. It is the other side of why I desperately write letters like this in the hope that some day men will stop coming up with excuses and indictments of those nasty old feminist man-hating bitches--stop it, and just start listening and *understand*, Ian. Understand that my life, and by god my *love*, is worth so much more than anything I could possibly conjur up in the kitchen that I can't even *believe* someone would suggest I should make housework a priority.

The other side of why I write this kind of letter, Ian--so graphically demonstrated in Tiptree's story--is that if I didn't hope that someday you would stop writing letters that demand that I justify my existence



as if I didn't have a right to one, I would believe what Ali Sheldon says. Men--men like George Gilder and hosts of other ardent anti-feminists--have been saying for years that what feminists ask is impossible, that men cannot possibly be partners to women, because men are biologically incapable of it. The Ardreys and the Gilders and the Newmanns and the whole lot of them want me to believe that men and women can never be equals, that men are naturally "violent and anti-social" (in Gilder's words), that men are supposed to be "dominant" (Ardrey, Tiger, etc.). What Alice Sheldon is saying is, "What if they're right?" God knows, you beat your head against a wall long enough, you *do* begin to wonder if it's worth it. Alice Sheldon is a good 30 or more years my senior, and she and I both know that neither one of us will live to see the day that a woman can meet a man and say that she likes to write or do music or paint or all of the above, and *assume* that he would never think of these as merely nice little hobbies she can do when she's finished the cooking and cleaning.

Alice Sheldon isn't saying that men are evil and useless, Ian. Anti-feminists are saying that. Alice Sheldon is merely pointing out that if the Anti-feminists ever convince the feminists that the anti-feminist argument is correct, they won't have won anything. If men are as Gilder describes them, they are unloveable, unteachable, and intolerable. And there are a lot of men, Ian, who seem almost desperate to fit that description. Look at the Hell's Angels--a dramatic example, but not the only one. Who are the men who brag about being "male chauvinists"? Why should we love them? Why should we view them with anything but contempt?

Show me the exceptions, Ian. Every woman I know has had the experience of thinking she has met one--for a while. "I thought he was different," they say. I can't tell you how many times I've heard that. Or said it.

Every time you write a letter like this, Ian, that's one more opportunity for me to wonder whether Gilder is right. Maybe men really *don't* give a shit how rotten they make us feel, just as long as they don't have to think about us as people with feelings. Maybe you write letters like this one and that marvel in PSFQ because you *want* to make women feel rotten. Maybe you and John Alderson should get together and make one big fanzine full of things geared to let women know that hell would freeze over before it ever occurred to you to wonder what *pain* you cause--or maybe you just like the idea of causing the pain.

Sometimes, you know, we do wonder whether you actually plan to make us feel rotten. I mean, sometimes it couldn't have been planned better, you know?

If you really had read Joanna's book, you would have noticed the very clear message (aside from the fact that the book isn't about men at all, it's about women) that Joanna does not believe men are hopeless. She says very clearly that someday--oh, please, god, I hope so, *someday*--these things will have been understood, and we won't have to explain them anymore.

No discussion? My god, how much discussion do you need before you see the obvious?

[1/3/84]



I'VE GOT TO LOSE WEIGHT. I USED TO BE ABLE TO TAKE OFF MY SHIRT WITHOUT UNBUTTONING THE COLLAR.

...and now, from the person recently voted "Second Least Likely to LoC an Issue of Outworlds":

DENISE PARSLEY LEIGH  
121 Nansen Street  
Cincinnati, OH 45212

Well, I finally got around to reading OW #35 and #36... actually when you gave them to me at my party I started reading

them that same night, after everyone had gone home. I'm ashamed to say that I haven't been reading many of the fanzines I've been getting lately. I feel like I've been on a year's sabbatical from fandom and I think I'm *almost* ready to become once again "an activist in s.f. fandom" to quote Bantam Books (that's been corrected in Steve's 3rd book). Once again I owe this to you...after all, you *are* responsible for *Ghazmalin*, even though you try to deny it.

No, that doesn't mean I'm ready to do another issue (after all, David Singer waited nine years between issues...I've still got time). But reading OW brought back the reasons why I wanted to do a fanzine in the first place. I like surprises, and you never fail to surprise me with your work. Having done a few issues myself, I realize how difficult it is to have everything end up looking so well planned...something I rarely succeed in doing. Layout is usually accidental for me; I only afterwards can look at the finished product and see all the stupid mistakes I've made in setting things up. But you never seem to have that problem. I congratulate you on a job well done.

I know you've been waiting for the bomb to drop, as I rarely give this type compliment to you...we're usually too busy one upping each other. But these sentiments are sincere.

Re Ian Coveill's comments in #36 on the trauma I went through with Megan's birth. When Steve wrote the article, I had a difficult time reading it without crying. I wasn't certain I wanted to see it in print. This wasn't because it was so traumatic. It was just a very emotional time for both of us and I needed to come to terms with it. I wouldn't want people to think that I had a terrible pregnancy, because it just wasn't so. I loved being pregnant and everything went wonderfully until those last few weeks. When Megan was born and I knew how huge she was (11 lb. 2 1/2 oz) any disappointment I felt at not being able to have her "naturally" quickly faded into relief because I'm certain one of us wouldn't have made it if I had. I still would like to go through labor and delivery. My doctor says that if I decide to have another child that possibility exists, so I may yet have that opportunity. That is if Steve feels he can handle another child. Either way, Megan was worth it.

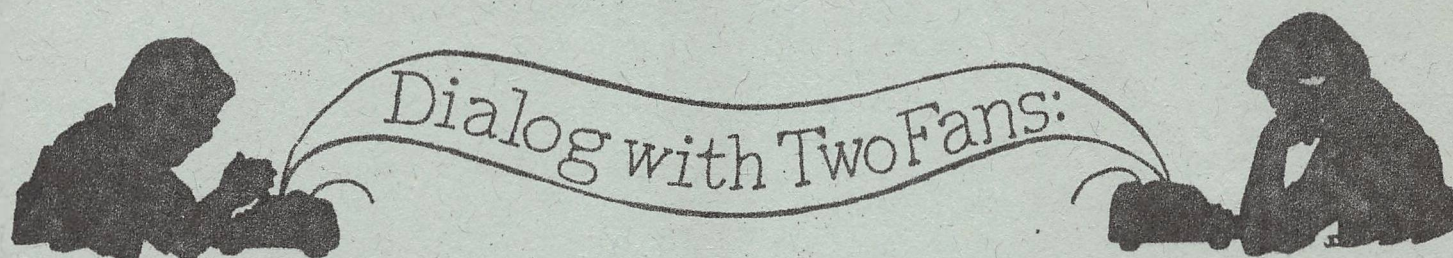
Re Mexican restaurants, Hanfa, Steve and I went to a place called Los Banditos at Chamancon. It wasn't far from the hotel, but we had to drive. The food was good and they had a wonderful ice cream dessert. That was 3 Chamanconago ago so I don't know if they still exist.

It was interesting hearing from Leslie David... since I've left the apa's I've lost track. [1/12/84]

...I suspect you're 'right' on the Mexican restaurant; at least the name sounds familiar. (I recall taking a book of matches from the table--perhaps I should unpack my suitcase before Confusion...?) ¶ I still love you, even after all these years...and despite the fact --well, you know my opinion of kids! Still, I do look forward to you introducing me to Megan in, say, 15 or 16 years-time! ¶ Thanks for the compliments, but it's not always that easy... I mean this Intermission is about over...the curtain begins to raise on the Dave & Mike Barry Malaberg Appreciation Show--and I still have a pile of LoCs in an untidy heap over there. It may well be that I've overextended myself on this one (a first time for everything, they say). Oh well, 'they' will be along...perhaps later...more likely in the nextish. Tell me, was it something I said...?



## Dave Locke's



### a chat with Mike Resnick

I first encountered Mike Resnick when I moved to Cincinnati in late 1980, and encountered his fiction in late 1981 with publication of *THE SOUL EATER*. Since then I've encountered both with considerable frequency and have usually managed to enjoy the experience. Notable exceptions include losing to him when betting on boxing matches.

Mike is two years older than Jack Benny and me, wears loud shirts, and is the kind of person for whom the phrase *"he knows his own mind"* was invented. Others might describe him as *"opinionated"*, and seldom would anyone apply the word *"reticent"*. He's also rather pointed at times, no doubt a carryover from his University of Chicago days where--according to the profile which appears in his books--*"he earned three letters on the fencing team and was nationally ranked for a brief period."* Certainly, he can use a foil to good advantage.

Mike has lived by his writing since he was 22, but until 1975 it was a case of, as he put it in an interview for *Cincinnati Magazine*, *"if it was a sub-literate field, I was there first and foremost. I was writing for guys who didn't want it good, they wanted it Thursday."* Fed up with that, he found it *"more interesting and challenging to sit down and write three or four books a year,"* even if financially much less rewarding. Bearing skills in breeding and exhibiting dogs, in 1977 Mike and Carol bought a kennel which is successful and allows Mike the freedom to write what he wants. As he put it: *"You don't know what a relief it is not to be writing shit."*

I'll leave it to him to tell you what he's writing these days, but it's easy to tell you what I'm reading. In a Resnick novel I'm reading a parable, and a fast-paced science fiction adventure peopled by adults speaking and acting like adults, and I'm reading a book by a man who knows how to tell a story. Depending on the story being told I might encounter wit (*SIDESHOW*), suspense (*WALPURGIS III*), panorama and depth (*BIRTHRIGHT: THE BOOK OF MAN*), or most anything else you might expect from a good storyteller. I'm uncertain whether I'm better entertained by reading his stories than by sitting in his home, saying irreverent and impertinent things with him as we watch boxing, and winning his money. Certainly I enjoy the stories better than the times I lose.

Beyond that I know that both Mike and Carol are active at science fiction conventions, where Mike speaks and Carol wins costume awards. They also go to fan conventions, sit around the pool, and chat. Together the Resnick's frequently host CFG (Cincinnati Fantasy Group) meetings which are really parties in a clever plastic disguise, and in a relatively short time have become mainstays in the club. As fan poker



players, Carol wins and I'm told that Mike can best be described as disgruntled.

While I hang onto this pencil, Mike is seated at his user-friendly IBM Personal Computer. I think he's ready to turn it on and punch the button marked "tilt".

Anything to add or ammend so far, other than the jokes, Mike?

Mike: "What's "reticent"? More to the point, when did you ever win any money from me on a boxing match?

Dave: Reticent means reserved and taciturn, rather like you and me at a CFG picnic when volunteers are being sought for volleyball.

I have a note here to ask you who was fighting the time I broke the bank and won 25¢ betting on the outcome, but I can see now that you're going to be no help at all.

Mike: What does "taciturn" mean?

Dave: Taciturn means disinclined to talk, rather like Mike Resnick when facing some manner of involvement with a fan publication.

Mike: One correction: I'm not disgruntled that Carol wins at poker; that would be chauvinistic. I'm disgruntled that she wins from me; that is merely sensible.

Dave: Nope, no correction. I wasn't implying cause and effect; I was merely describing two poker players. However, I grant you that it must be terrible losing to a bright and cheerful winner. At least, I assume that Carol is bright and cheerful when raking in the pot--if not, the game must engender a temporary personality change.

Mike: Carol is always bright and cheerful, but that's probably because she's never lost at anything.

Dave: In that Cincinnati Magazine interview, concerning what you're writing now as opposed to your hacking days, appears this paragraph:

"On motivation and the writer, Resnick disagrees with Dr. Samuel Johnson, who said that only fools write for anything other than money. "There are easier ways to make a buck," says Resnick. "If you're doing this for anything other than satisfaction, I'd strongly recommend against it." It's a lesson he's learned the hard way."

This would seem to be initially true, but over the long term aren't you now building a base of royalties and books-in-print which will gradually allow you to surpass the earnings from your hyperactive days?

Mike: Not really. It would be delightful if it happened, but paperback originals tend not to stay in print forever, and while I get decent advances on my foreign sales, I'll be pleasantly flabbergasted if I ever see any serious royalty monies from them--and even if I did, it still wouldn't measure up to what I made in my heyday. What you have to understand is that I wasn't just an anonymous hack, but an incredibly successful anonymous hack: from the mid-1960s to the mid-1970s I was making upward of \$100,000 a year with my typewriter, back when that was money.

Dave: In my current state of seeking full-time employment, \$100,000 still looks like money. For that matter, \$5.00 looks like money.

If Piers Anthony is to be believed, and I've no reason to doubt him, lots of novels and reissues and royalties have snowballed his income into six figures, though it took a while to achieve that. If you do wind up selling the kennel and reinvesting the money in enterprises which don't require your constant attention, as you've mentioned you may do, your writing output would likely increase proportionately. Of course, unlike Piers Anthony, I can't imagine you writing while standing in line at the supermarket.

Mike: Well, yes, Piers Anthony does make six digits a year off his science fiction--but



you have to remember that Piers' last five books have made the New York Times best seller list. Mine haven't, which is more than ample argument against the existence of a reasonable diety.

Dave: I haven't read anything you've done prior to your current incarnation, which was kicked off with THE SOUL EATER--but then, you told me not to. Since then, I've read them all, either in print or in manuscript.

One thing I've noticed about WALPURGIS III (which I enjoyed immensely) as opposed to your other novels (most of which I've also enjoyed): color. With most of your work you appear to avoid color; you sketch in the background and focus on the foreground action, dialog, and personalities. In WIII you do add color, probably because a story about one man on an alien world demands it and there's no way to write around it.

As I happen to know that you're color-blind, which I rightly or wrongly assume goes far toward explaining why you tend to sketch backgrounds rather than linger over them, let me ask how you dealt with this factor in WIII.

Mike: I tend to sketch in my backgrounds because I'm more concerned with the people than with where they are. (In fact, I provide as much as I do only because Carol keeps making me go back and flesh out the settings.) WALPURGIS III is a different case, since it is, in essence, an exploration of the nature of Evil, which is accomplished by presenting a society of Satanists that pays lip service to Evil and showing what happens when that society is confronted by Evil Incarnate (though that's an extremely simple and perhaps even misleading way of putting it). At any rate, the nature of the parable required me to totally flesh out the world and its mores, and given the thematic material I was dealing with, I tended to use symbolism--especially colors--more heavily than usual.

Other books make use of other techniques. In THE SOUL EATER, for instance, you'll find precious little symbolism, but there are about a hundred literary references hidden within its narrow confines.

Dave: Concerning WALPURGIS III, how many people have exasperated you by opining that you didn't get the end right?

Mike: People who think Jericho was the hero of WALPURGIS III exasperate me. Everything he does, everything he thinks and says, points to the fact that he's as evil and amoral as people can get to be--but because he's in a James Bond kind of job, and he was the viewpoint character for the first few chapters, some of my denser readers insist in considering him the protagonist and asking me why he had to die. Since I refuse to make my points with a sledgehammer, I suppose I'll have to live with it.

Dave: I could make a case as to why Jericho did not have to die, but that doesn't change my feeling that the novel would have been weaker had you gone any other way. Which means I found the ending to be quite apt. Besides, if you'd left him alive your agent or publisher would be after you for sequels, right?

Mike: I found the ending to WALPURGIS III to be more than apt; I found it perfect. But I'm probably prejudiced on behalf of the author.

Dave: How much effort do you expend in keeping a finger on the pulse of what's happening in contemporary science fiction, and how much does that effort prove fruitful?

Mike: Like most writers, I spend considerable time keeping abreast of market news and literary gossip--and, also like most writers, I read very little new fiction in my own field. I sit down to read about 15 science fiction novels a year, and finish perhaps 6, so I imagine you might conclude that the effort is relatively fruitless.

Dave: Your answer prompts me to ask if you read much fiction in any other field, and



would you read more or less sf if you weren't involved in the genre?

Mike: Not much--a grand total of perhaps 8 or 9 non-sf books a year.

I'd probably start reading a lot more sf books if I weren't working in the genre. I suspect that I wouldn't finish most of them.

Dave: Elaborate. Out of all the non-sf fiction books being published, what is your general selection process for choosing the ones you read, and do they fall into any particular genre?

Mike: Reviews and recommendations, especially when the latter comes from Carol. I should put it on the record that (in my humble though educated opinion) the best mainstream writer who ever lived was Nikos Kazantzakis, the best one currently practicing is Edward Whittemore (though I disliked his most recent book), and the best one to hit the scene in the last couple of years is W. P. Kinsella.

Dave: Before encountering fandom, but after having written some sf, is it true that for three years you lived across the street from George Price and wondered who all the strange people were who converged on his house every third Saturday?

Mike: Absolutely. We got into fandom in 1962 through the Edgar Rice Burroughs door, and the only other ERB person in Chicago was Joan Bledig (whom I didn't meet until 1974, though I have since killed her off in 4 books and 2 short stories). We met no Chicago fans at Discon in 1963, and it took me until 1965 to find out that we were living 80 feet away from Chicago fandom's headquarters. Just my keen, analytical author's eye, I guess.

And why (I hear you ask) didn't we go to Chicon in 1962 and meet the Chicago-area fans there? Simple: my daughter had the bad grace to be born a week before the con. Since Carol and I had nothing to do with it, we have of course never forgiven her.

Dave: What turns you on and turns you off about science fiction fandom in general, other than questions like this which invite you to make invidious comparisons?

Mike: The thing I like best about fandom is its tolerance. The thing I like least about fandom is that it has so very many things to be tolerant of.

Dave: That's a delightful answer, skillfully less expository than hauling out your tongue and letting it fall to the ground.

Let's be expository about Isaac Asimov. Has he ever written anything that you liked, and in general what is the nature of your displeasure with either him or his work?

Mike: I have enormous respect for what Isaac has done within the field: the robots, the Foundation Trilogy, the marriage of the detective and science fiction form, even the overlooked *THE END OF ETERNITY* (which, along with David Gerrold's *THE MAN WHO FOLDED HIMSELF*, constitute what must be the two definitive time paradox novels).

My objection to Isaac stems from his last two novels, *THE GODS THEMSELVES* and *FOUNDATION'S EDGE*, which, their Hugo wins notwithstanding, do not (in my opinion) pass the Joe Smith Test. In other words, had they been submitted with Joe Smith's name on the title page rather than Isaac Asimov's, I don't think they would have sold. And it also annoys me that men like Clarke and Asimov, whose names alone guarantee huge advances and best-seller treatment these days, are reworking the same old ground. The four biggest advances in 1982 went to Isaac, for a sequel to a series that was begun in 1941; to Robert Heinlein, for a sequel to a 1949 novelet; to Arthur Clarke, for a sequel to a 1968 screenplay; and to Frank Herbert, for a sequel to a series that began in 1962. I realize that there is a market for such stuff--three of the books made the New York Times bestseller list, and there's no doubt that Herbert's will, too, as soon as it's published--but I find it a little sad that new writers, who ought to be honing their



skills telling traditional stories, have been forced out on the less-commercially-viable parameters of the field because our dinosaurs, who have the skill and the clout to get out there on the cutting edge, refuse to budge from the safe, secure middle.

As a footnote to this, I should remark that I recently read Isaac's latest novel, *THE ROBOTS OF DAWN*, and grudgingly admit that it's about a hundredfold better than *FOUNDATION'S EDGE* and *THE GODS THEMSELVES*--which, while encouraging for Asimov fans (of which I am one), still doesn't do much for the progress of the field at large. It is, I must add, a sequel to a series that was begun in 1952.

Dave: I think *THE GODS THEMSELVES* and *FOUNDATION'S EDGE* would have sold, but I'm reasonably certain they wouldn't have won Hugo Awards.

Heinlein's biggest problem is his dialog, because everyone goes around talking like the same feisty refugee from a rest home, and in *FRIDAY* all we get is a truckload of dialog (as Dave Langford points out, the praise seems to have been mainly out of relief at finding the thing easier to read than *THE NUMBER OF THE BEAST*).

I've enjoyed Clarke's recent novels--in fact, I've enjoyed most of his novels--and find him the most consistent of the three names under discussion. While my two favorite Clarke novels (*CHILDHOOD'S END* and *THE CITY AND THE STARS*) were written in the ever-receding long ago, his current penultimate novel (*THE FOUNTAINS OF PARADISE*) places a close third on my list and reflects more of a cutting edge than most sf novels I've read since.

I have to question this monkey you'd put on the backs of our dinosaurs, or for that matter a scenario where the dinosaurs are forcing the pubescents to graze on the fringes. If we're talking about "traditional stories" versus "the cutting edge", as opposed to different levels of storytelling ability (which is how I view it), then I don't grasp your complaint. Have Asimov, Clarke, and Heinlein ever been viewed as being on the cutting edge with nontraditional stories, or have they approached sf storytelling with superior skills--on which basis do you see their reputations having been built?

Mike: If Campbell was the creator of modern science fiction, I think it is fair to say that Heinlein was the tool he used. All you have to do is take a look at the stuff Ray Cummings, Ross Rocklynne, Nat Schachner and others were churning out in 1938, and you'll see that Campbell's stable revolutionized science fiction stylistically as well as conceptually. Heinlein's dialog and characterizations and Asimov's use of female protagonists like Susan Calvin may be laughable in 1983, in 1943 they were a quantum leap ahead of what had previously been appearing.

More to the point, the field has more cutting edges than merely the stylistic one. Of our best-selling authors, only Heinlein has continually tried to take new ground. The fact that *I WILL FEAR NO EVIL* was a dismal failure doesn't negate the fact that the man was exploring new thematic material and new approaches to his fiction--and even *GLORY ROAD* was an attempt to take a different look at heroic fantasy. I don't see Clarke and Asimov (or, alas, Heinlein with *FRIDAY*) taking those kind of chances. And, to keep with that unhappy example, as bad as *I WILL FEAR NO EVIL* was, it made Heinlein and his publishers a pile of money and has been continuously in print. In other words, these are the writers who are in an economic position to extend themselves artistically, and I find it rather disappointing that none of them seems to feel any desire to do so.

Dave: Heinlein wasn't writing dialog that embarrassing in 1943, but let's digress from dinosaurs and cutting edges and the frontiers of skiffy.

Mike, why do you have a dead cat in front of the ice cream in your freezer?

Mike: Because there wasn't any room for him in the breadbox.

Dave: You told a very amusing story about the dead cat in your freezer. Come on, now, share it.

Mike: It was a damned funny story, but repeating it in print would be unprofessional.



I am, after all, a kennel owner.

Dave: Steve Leigh beat me at tennis this morning, and Mike Resnick is unable to conjure a way to be circumspect about a dead cat in his freezer. You skiffy writers are a troublesome lot, obviously. Doubtless it would not compromise you to say, in *Outworlds*, that a 19-year-old cat had its clock punched by the press of time while you boarded it for an owner who was out of the country. The current situation arose when the owner expressed his desire to handle the funeral arrangements himself, leaving you with the problem of how to preserve a dead cat. It stands to reason that the breadbox would not adequately serve, though your obvious course of action must provide unusual conversation during mealtime preparations ("what's for dinner?" "Hadn't thought about it. Let me open the freezer door and see what looks good."). Of course, if it had been me, I'd have bent the tail before I put it in there, just to give the owner a handle when he came to pick it up. Perhaps it's just as well that I'm not a kennel owner.

So let's digress in another direction. There aren't many of us boxing fans around in this section of the universe. Certainly, at Midwestcon in 1982, no one else besides us stole off to your room to watch the televised boxing matches. In your case, what is the lure? Do you like watching two people whump on each other, or do the pre-match interviews with the fighters provide intellectual stimulation? Also, how many hundreds of percent has your enjoyment level increased now that Howard Cossell has forsworn announcing in this field and left in a huff? Additionally, how come when we score a fight the other guy usually wins?

Mike: To set the record straight, my passion is horse-racing, certainly the most beautiful and exciting sport in the universe and points north. I rarely bet, but I have been an ardent and devoted fan since I was 10, to the extent that I have been known to fly to New York in the morning, watch Seattle Slew and Affirmed or Bold Ruler and Gallant Man hook up at Aqueduct in the afternoon, and fly home at night, without ever having bet a penny.

As for boxing, I suspect that I like it because, though they do pound on one another, brawn is not enough; a good boxer will always beat a good puncher. (Ali, for example, was rarely stronger than his opponents, but he was such a brilliant ring general that it never made any difference. All Foreman or Frazier ever had to do was land one solid punch and he'd have been dead meat ... but after an aggregate of 50 rounds, neither of them ever managed it.)

What sport wouldn't be 8,000% more enjoyable with the absence of Howard Cossell? Now, if we could just get him off the Derby and Preakness telecasts, and find a way to dump him from Monday night football... (Actually, boxing was the only sport where he could make some claim to being an expert. It's obvious in his football telecasts that he never watches game films, and his racing knowledge is laughable. But what the hell can you expect from a guy who changes his name from Cohen to Cossell, dons a hairpiece, and then purports to Tell It Like It Is?)

How come whenever we score a fight the other guy usually wins? Probably for the same reason that Nixon won in 1972. Winning prizefights and elections cannot be construed as an objective appraisal of ability; on the contrary, history shows that what it usually means is that more people were mistaken on that day than one might statistically have anticipated.

Dave: The only good use I've ever seen for horses was that they provided John Wayne with reliable transportation and something to rest his buns on. Now that he's gone, horses appear anachronistic. In fact, I've lived almost next door to three raceways--Saratoga, Santa Anita, and Churchill Downs--and have yet to see a horse-race except for clips on the eleven o'clock news. On the other hand, I have ridden horses into the mountains of the Adirondack Park and discovered that they fit between the trees better than my 1957 Buick did, though certainly they smelled much worse.

I can only agree with your comments on boxing and Howard Cossell. As the only sports I watch regularly are tennis and boxing, you can imagine my anguish the one time



I turned on the set and encountered Howie doing the sportscasting for a tennis match. For some reason I ground my teeth together for maybe a half-hour before it struck me that I could get up and turn off the sound. What a relief.

What's your theory as to why he's able to hold a sportscasting job? I've idly speculated that everyone in authority in tv broadcasting must have their thumb up their nose when it comes to the subject of Howard Cossell, but as a candidate for the ultimate answer it seems unlikely.

Mike: Howard has an irritant value that seems to keep him in the public consciousness.

(You want proof? Here we are talking about him in a fanzine dialog--and 99% of the readers will know who we're referring to, and have their own opinions of him.) And, since he's an ignorant oaf for all his elocution, he makes people feel good because they know they're smarter than that pompous ass. Hence, they continue to watch him; and hence, he continues to survive in a job at which he is totally inept.

Dave: Okay, enough of this great frivolity. Plunging back into the skiffy, you wrote THE SOUL EATER, BIRTHRIGHT, and the first half of THE BRANCH in the mid-1970s. Why did they take so long to see print? Couldn't you sell them, or didn't you try?

Mike: At the risk of sounding pompous, I knew how good they were--and when BIRTHRIGHT pulled a bunch of rejections in 1974-5 and THE SOUL EATER was turned down by the first two editors I sent it to, I got so goddamned mad--not hurt or depressed; just plain mad--that I just pulled them off the market and decided to wait until the current crop of editors all got fired and replaced by people who were a little more literate. That may sound egomaniacal, but by 1975 I had sold 14 million words, and I sure as hell knew saleable from unsaleable. Anyway, in 1977 there was a whole new crop of editors, but by then we had bought the kennel and I realized that I was too busy to follow up with more books if I sold them, so I decided to keep them off the market until the kennel was virtually running itself, which happened by 1980.

At that time, THE SOUL EATER was re-submitted, and it sold the first time out of the box (the first two times actually; Baronet was going to publish it, but went bankrupt the very week they were supposed to mail me my contract), and BIRTHRIGHT sold immediately thereafter. (The books pulled 52 favorable reviews and only one pan, and both made the Nebula preliminary ballot--as have all my others thus far--and have since been sold overseas for more money than they earned here. So much for editorial taste, circa 1975.)

THE BRANCH was a special case. Given its controversial nature, it would have been a tough book to place at any time, and I'm just grateful that I have an editor at New American Library--Sheila Gilbert, for the record--whose only restriction on me is that I write Resnick books, as opposed to Heinlein books, Asimov books, or (insert the author of your choice) books.

And while I'm praising Sheila Gilbert, who else in the world would buy a 4-book series about a whorehouse? Everywhere else I've worked I've had to fight tooth and nail for artistic freedom; Sheila, bless her soul, won't buy from me unless I take that freedom and exercise it. I pray for her job security every night.

Dave: Here's a tweeky question for you. Your name has been attached to blurbs which praise the work of Barry Malzberg, I've listened to you saying good things about his "misunderstood" wordwhipping, and now you're writing a trilogy with him. Our own conversation on this subject ended abruptly at one party when I looked aghast and opined that Malzberg has one small problem almost unique among selling sf authors: he can't write.

While on the one hand I hold some opinions about sf which are almost unique among science fiction fans, my feelings about Malzberg's fiction are as far from unique as it's possible to get. In fact, I think you're only the fourth person I've encountered who had something good to say about his work. Obviously each of us like whatever it is that we like, even if we have to enjoy it alone, which seems to be pretty much the case



right here.

Malzberg, speaking in DREAM MAKERS, mentioned how long it took him to write a favorite story which ran to a particular length, and dividing the former into the latter I discovered that he believes he can compose at the rate of 120 words per minute. I'm torn between disbelief and the urge to say "it figures..."

Just for the record, and without mounting a defense, what are the qualities which you appreciate in his writing, and which novels out of the Malzberg cornucopia best reflect these qualities?

Mike: First of all, I think Malzberg is the finest literary writer to work in this field, and the only one to produce outstanding work at greater than short-story length. Coupled with his extreme intellect and literacy is a mordant sense of humor--bleak, despairing, but funny--that comes through in almost all his early work. Further, he used the science fiction story as a vehicle for criticizing what he (and, I must admit, I) felt was wrong with science fiction. GALAXIES, for example, is presented as "Notes for a Science Fiction Novel"; in the first section of each chapter, he tells the audience what he thinks is important and how he'd like to attack the story, then notes sadly that the book will appear on the stands next to such titles as THE PAMMERS OF ARCTURUS, and spends the second half of each chapter writing the story his editor will want, one that out-pulps the pulps. Anyway, representative titles are GALAXIES, GATHER IN THE HALL OF PLANETS (under his K.M. O'Donnell pseudonym), and, less funny but even more deadly, HEROVIT'S WORLD.

Dave: Without warping the reality of whoever might be eyetracking this dialog, I should mention that we just indulged in a respite and--over coffee--discussed this at some length without benefit of pencil or user-friendly comouter. The up-shot, as I gather it, is that my reading of Malzberg has been confined to those books which place at the wrong end of his Richter Scale. This I interpret as parallel to judging Bester by his last three novels, Heinlein by such works as TIME ENOUGH TO READ IT and FARNHAM'S FALLOUT-SHELTER, or Tucker by THE PRINCESS OF DETROIT. Basically, you understand my reaction from the shlock I've read or started to read, and as a consequence you'll be loaning me two of the Malzberg novels which you just mentioned. During the pauses here, I'll read them. If the experience proves less interesting than your teaser descriptions, at least I won't be able to resent having shelled out \$ for the privilege of annoying myself--as was the case, for example, with such a new height in illiteracy as Malzberg's SCOP.

Mike: I think Malzberg is a lot like Cliff Simak (though on a far higher plane of literary existence). Both of them have a small handful of themes that have become almost obsessions, and both tend to try to force a story to match their particular styles rather than matching their styles to the story material. When they succeed in choosing the right vehicle--as Malzberg did with GALAXIES, HEROVIT'S WORLD, THE GAMESMAN, GATHER IN THE HALL OF PLANETS, and a few others, and as Simak did with CITY and WAY STATION--they are positively brilliant, Malzberg the moreso simply because he is the finer writer and deeper thinker of the two. And, similarly, when they choose the wrong vehicle--as Malzberg did with SCOP, THE EMPTY PEOPLE, and a few others, and as Simak has done on numerous occasions--the finished product is worse than it would have been had it been written by a less committed, less distinctive, and more chameleonlike writer.

Got it straight now?

Dave: I think so. You're telling me that Barry Malzberg has jewels among the shit, and I haven't done enough sifting to find them.

Mike: No, I'm telling you that Malzberg has a certain minimum amount of shit among the jewels. There's a difference.

Dave: While I start reading these two jewels you've just handed me (GALAXIES and



HEROVIT'S WORLD, let's press on. Back in the intro I said I'd leave it to you to say what you're writing these days. Mike, what are you trying to do with your science fiction?

Mike: I'm trying to tell moral parables for grown-ups, and I'm attempting to frame them in such a way--usually with a traditional action/adventure/science fiction framework--that they are acceptable to far larger audiences than might normally be expected to read such things. (I think if Malzberg made a mistake--and he did--it was in never genuflecting toward that good old Lowest Common Denominator. He let them know on Page 1 that they were reading a bonafide literary artist, and it scared the hell out of them. I tend not to bring in my thematic material until I'm a good 10,000 to 15,000 words into my story. For example, 60 pages into THE SOUL EATER the reader would be justified in feeling that he's reading a standard, if lyrical, space adventure; only later does he realize that it's actually an examination of the dual natures of Love and Obsession. WALPURGIS III reads like James Bond in Space until I think I've got the reader hooked; then he finds out what it's really about. SIDESHOW, THE THREE-LEGGED HOOTCH DANCER, THE WILD ALIEN TAMEER, and THE BEST ROOTIN' TOOTIN' SHOOTIN' GUNSLINGER IN THE WHOLE DAMNED GALAXY are about, respectively, Alienation, Identity, Madness, and Expectations--but each of these themes are grafted onto a reasonably fast-paced and relatively traditional story...which is perhaps the key: you don't have to write thud-and-blunder, but you do have to tell a story. It needn't be a story for meatheads, it needn't be the same kind of story everyone else tells--but if the story isn't there, you're just whistling in the dark on the way to the unemployment line.)

Dave: You answered too fast. I'm still reading...

"Moral parable" is in the same class with 'mental telepathy', 'very unique', and 'George Bush': they're all redundant. A parable is a simple story told to illustrate a moral truth.

"He let them know on Page 1 that they were reading a bonafide literary artist, and it scared the hell out of them." You mean like the opening paragraph on the first page of SCOP?:

*Scop. (1995-?) A bitter man with bitter eyes and a bitter mouth set bitterly underneath a bitter forehead that leaked bitterness, glowed with pain. "No more," Scop said bitterly, little flights of saliva dazzling their way free from his tongue, dribbling their absent way down his pointed chin to hang suspended in the stop-time an inch above his highly polished, almost fluorescent shoes. "No more of this at all," and wrenched himself, springing the lever, forced himself back then to 1963 where most bitterly--*

Sure scared me. Besides all that bitterness, I was frightened to the core at the notion of a man alien enough to have spittle coming off his tongue while framing the words "no more". Go ahead and try it, and see if you can get any spittle to fall toward your shoes. Utterly frightening to envision the fellow who could do it, even if he weren't bitter.

Mike: Since you know that I consider SCOP to be one of the poorest of Malzberg's books, I'm sure you'll forgive me if I decline to defend it. I will, however, be happy to argue on behalf of the ones I recommended.

Dave: Okay, you're forgiven if I am. I knew if I waited long enough that one of these days I'd be able to reopen that book and get my money's worth out of it. Today was the day.

As for your happiness, it will now be realized as we venture forth to The Great Malzberg Digression. Following this I should pursue dialog with Barry, wherein we discuss the literary merits and native charm of Mike Resnick.

What we have in these two rounds of digression is a mutual focus on two books and a setting forth of what we each perceive them to be. The reader of our dialog can set forth his own perception, no doubt concluding that, 1. neither of us could hit our ass



with either hand, or 2. the enjoyment of fiction is an interaction between reader and writer, and that the subject of quality takes on a vague shimmering effect when dragged from the local to the universal, or 3. both.

The view from this locale, if I take the jewels/shit analogy and tastelessly run with it, is not so important as the smell. HEROVIT'S WORLD is a jewel among the shit, though it has not emerged smelling like a rose. GALAXIES is shit which has passed among jewels, so that it is shaped as a jewel, and aspires to be a jewel, but to my perceptions stands revealed as a literary poseur. A complete reading of both was the equivalent of wading into the shit. In HEROVIT'S WORLD I found a small gem and in GALAXIES all I found was a big odor.

HEROVIT'S WORLD: The story of a hack science fiction writer going insane. Unable to cope, he adopts the imagined persona of his pseudonym. Still unable to cope, that persona adopts the fictional persona of the lead character in his skiffy series, which promptly thinks it's on an alien world and sets about striking people before moving into the street and getting run over. I enjoyed it because it was an amusing idea and because Barry fleshed it out with some amusing fumphery. Trash, but entertaining trash. I also enjoyed the unintentionally amusing, where he uses this vehicle to give a ride to some of his publicly stated perceptions and feelings about science fiction and the science fiction community. I envision Barry, betrayed and hurt at the notion that people are people even in the science fiction field, laying out the hate and discontent and angst as he pursues financial sustenance, the question of his own worth as a writer, and some manner of acceptance or belonging, all within the genre of science fiction. Barry agonizes a lot. It seems to suit him.

The key flaw to HEROVIT'S WORLD, of course, is that Barry cheats for artistic license and to set up an easier target. Published in 1973, the science fiction that Herovit writes and perceives is more reflective of, for example, a 1956 issue of *Amazing* than it is of the reality of the early Seventies.

GALAXIES: The 1975 story, in third-person from the author's viewpoint, of how Barry Malzberg would approach writing *The Great Science Fiction Novel*, with occasional snippets of the story he has in mind. It's an amusing idea, left at that; a gimmick to allow an author the illusion that he can reach beyond his grasp. He has only to describe this magnificent vision which is in his head, not actually write it. However, what Malzberg is describing is a farce.

His vision: In the 40th century, dead people finance FTL travel because the experience rejuvenates them. His focus is on a female pilot who unintentionally ferries a shipload of 515 dead people and 7 programmed prosthetic engineers into a black hole, where the ship endlessly falls and she spends 70,000 years reenacting other people's lives before deciding that maybe she could get out by going into hyperspace without accelerating. Neither the robots nor the dead are keen on such a radical idea, and she and they do a lot of agonizing, whole truckloads of it, before she tires of this and pulls the lever.

Let me pause, right before describing the ending, and cover most everything else. It was a nice idea, but in the wrong places I was laughing at him as he described adding literary touches to this framework. I was shaking my head as he used the whole business as a vehicle for digressions, many for the same old Malzberg fuggheaded opinions ("Most science-fiction writers are drunks and almost all of them have unhappy lives." "Readers of this genre expect to be bored; in fact they are seeking boredom as a means of release from too much self-confrontation. They want bad writing as well, because bad writing does not energize; it makes almost no one [except stuffy critics and jealous fellow writers] uncomfortable." It's easy to understand where these opinions come from, but from whence they came he has promoted their application, and they reflect a warped view of the field.). I choked at his hard science (he buys black holes as fact, not theory. As physicist Langford once pointed out: "Although the evidence for black holes to be found in the last decade's sf plots may seem overwhelming, we still can't say 'it is true that there are black holes'. So far it's all deduction in the interests of mathematical consistency." Example #2: on page 49 he describes pulsar signals traveling faster than the light which emanates from their source. Example #3: on page 106 he



fictionally bypasses relativity by mentioning future experiments which show that time does not pass more slowly in a vehicle as it more closely approaches the speed of light, which shows he missed reading about the atomic clock experiments in his "Sunday supplement" science education.). I boggled at his logic ("She really does not need to possess much more than the knowledge of any graduate physicist of her time. Her role, which is essentially to maintain the ship on its preselected course and respond to computer check-out, could be done by any of our own astronauts, could, in fact, be done by anyone capable of flying a single-engine plane." It takes a bit more than a graduate physicist to fly a single-engine plane? Pretty sloppy for a literary author.). I sneered as he repeatedly patted himself on the back ("The writer's stylistic gifts are notable. Even he will testify to that. For many years he has been able to write in the style and vision of almost any writer living or preferably dead: he is a skilled parodist, a creator of pastiche so smooth as to be almost undetectable from the original. He has access to rhetorical tricks and devices which have time and again enabled him to force his way through a difficult novel on technique alone."). I groaned at his tortured prose (on the pilot during FTL: "except for the colors, the nausea, the disorienting swing, her own mounting insanity, the terms of this novel as it must be written, were it not for all of this, Lena might be in the IRT Lenox Avenue local at rush hour moving slowly uptown as circles of illness track her in the fainting car in the bowels of summer in New York in 1975 as mortality, known over and again, presses in."). But most noisily of all, I howled at the ending.

Where do they come out of hyperspace? Barry postulates several possibilities: inside a star, or the pilot finds herself back where she should be and all this was just a test, or the ship is forever suspended in stasis. But no, this is just titillation for the real ending.

In the real ending, they emerge in 1975 in Barry Malzberg's hometown of Ridgefield Park, New Jersey, where they proceed to inhabit the bodies of the residents, "dwelling, amidst the refineries, strolling on Main Street past the Rialto Theatre, queuing at the theater to see films at reduced prices, shopping in the supermarkets, pausing in the gas stations, pairing off and clutching one another, some of them, in the imploded stars of their beds at the very moment at which the author, that cosmic accident himself, writes this about them."

At best, stretching the fabric of reality, I could see someone finding this amusing. It's a good idea for a clever farce, but Malzberg is incredibly clumsy with it. He tries to write a farce. He tries to install touches of originality, both seriously and farcically, and to apply literary maneuvers to reveal the human condition, both seriously and farcically, on the framework of a deliberately absurd science fiction story. While he tries to do this he tosses off polemic, tells me how good he is, and confides that the rest of the sf field isn't worth knowing. If he were as good as he thinks he is, or even close, I could blindly write off the rest as cranky behavior. For someone to miss a goal is not a sin. It is Barry's lack of false modesty--an agonized lack, but still of false modesty--which trips him up. I find it unearned, and it makes me unsympathetic to his failure and overall impatient with his indulgences.

This is not a novel, but is it a novel concept? Yes. Is the execution successful or significant? No. It's The Barry Malzberg Show. I'll grant that he has his moments, but I'd rather watch something else.

Not even with a magnifying glass do I find a book where, "in the first section of each chapter, he tells the audience what he thinks is important and how he'd like to attack the story, then notes sadly that the book will appear on the stands next to such titles as THE RAMMERS OF ARCTURUS, and spends the second half of each chapter writing the story his editor will want, one that out-pulps the pulps." You aren't describing the GALAXIES that I read, but it's not a bad idea for a story. Perhaps you could write it sometime.

It's your turn. I'll thank you for the loan and give you back these two books, and you tell me what you see when you look at them. Never mind that my view is all wrong; that stands to reason if yours is different. What do you see when you look into the facets of these jewels?



Mike: What do I see when I look at these two books? I see the work of a literary artist who has seen through the pulp facade of science fiction and turned the accepted virtues and values of the field inside-out.

GALAXIES is a stunning critique of the field, hidden beneath a fictional narrative. Why is his posited situation ridiculous? Because all science fiction situations are ridiculous; he's merely giving the readers what they have been led to expect. (As the book continually points out, the world and the writer of 1973 simply do not possess the language or the concepts to present a truthful picture of the world of 2973, so what science fiction writers do is transfer people and problems two thousand years into the future and hope no one will notice.) He takes the black hole concept (at least, this book's version of it) from one of John Campbell's editorials, an old and honored tradition in the field, rewrites it almost word-for-word until the reader is properly bored after your typical 800-word dull scientific lecture, and then sneaks in some totally unbelievable conceits when no one is looking, just so the writer himself doesn't become another Jonathan Herovit.

You keep referring to the pilot's problems and the conversations with the dead, Dave--which I am afraid makes you that portion of the audience that Malzberg holds in some contempt. Those are the portions of the book that must compete with THE RAINBOWS OF ARCTURUS on the newsstands, so naturally he has to make them wilder and pulpier and sillier than the stuff that's competing for you \$2.25. The meaningful and insightful parts of the book are those sections where the author explains the processes leading up to his making those very choices.

The end, of course, is absolutely the pure quill, and the most devastating attack Malzberg could launch on what he regards as a promising art form gone awry. Of course his characters wind up inhabiting the bodies of the citizens of Ridgefield Park, New Jersey. When all is said and done, the inhabitants of New Jersey, circa 1973, are far more important to Malzberg, and should be more important to the adult reader, than all the space heroes and pirates ever to run rampant across the ephemeral pages of a paperback "sci-fi" book.

HEROVIT'S WORLD is the other side of the coin, a fictional look at the writer who decided to sacrifice his artistic vision--if indeed he ever had one, which seems doubtful--in order to sell on a regular basis. (And no, it's not Malzberg; he may or may not have starved from time to time, but he never sold out.) If you really feel that the excerpts of Herovit's books belong in the 1950s, let me refer you to the works of Lin Carter and half a dozen similar writers, all of them active in the early 1970s and many of whom are still going strong today.

Jonathan Herovit is like many of Malzberg's protagonists, in that he really would like to solve his problem. However, since Malzberg is a little wiser and a little more mature than his characters, he realizes, even while they do not, that a new hair spray, a better laxative, and a Norman Vincent Peale book aren't likely to solve the problems of anyone who exists anywhere except on the inside of your television tube. They push; the problems push back. They wheel and deal, they sidestep, they rationalize--and unlike the works of Doc Smith and Isaac Asimov and Robert Heinlein, the problems remain and eventually multiply.

(Some critic once said that the typical Heinlein hero, faced with an insurmountable problem, would somehow engineer a solution to it, whereas the typical Resnick hero, faced with the same problem, would bribe, bully or blackmail the Heinlein hero into solving it for him. I would add that the typical Malzberg hero would make every attempt to solve the problem through reason and applied platitudes, and would never quite comprehend why the problem inevitably overwhelms and destroys him.)

Back at the ranch: in HEROVIT'S WORLD, Malzberg explores the path he chose not to take--that of the commercial hack who will grind out any sf story anyone will pay him for--to see if it leads to a more satisfying future. It doesn't, of course, but in the process it makes one hell of a vehicle for some pretty pointed and painfully accurate observations about the entire ambience of the field: the lifestyles of the writers, SFWA, agents, anonymous hack novels, academics, fans, the whole microcosm.

The fact that I don't agree with Barry's worldview, that none of my characters



would ever turn up in a Malzberg story and none of his will ever find a home in a Resnick story, does not detract one iota from the accomplishment of these two novels. The craftsmanship, the depth of thought, the stylistic and thematic innovations, makes them two of the most important novels to come out of the science fiction field since its inception.

The mainstream critics, and the more innovative of the sf critics (I am thinking especially of Silverberg's GALAXIES review and Ellison's HEROVIT'S WORLD review) were overwhelmed by these two books. The traditional sf critics and the fannish press hated them, which makes sense: they couldn't stand to see the dream attacked and shown to be threadbare. Malzberg at his best made certain people very uncomfortable; given the people, I think it was a splendid accomplishment.

Dave: You liked this question when I asked it of Steve Leigh, so here it is for you: name and rank your five all-time favorite authors, and your five favorite novels, in the science fiction/fantasy/science fantasy field. 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.

Mike: I assume you want me to exclude myself from both lists. Damn it.

Authors: 1. Olaf Stapledon, 2. Barry Malzberg, 3. C.M. Kornbluth, 4. Robert Sheckley (pre-1970), 5. Alfred Bester (pre-1974), 6. C.L. Moore, 7. Ray Bradbury, 8. James White, 9. Jack Dann, 10. William Tenn (Phil Klass) and Ed Bryant--a tie.

Novels: 1. STARMAKER (Stapledon), 2. GALAXIES (Malzberg), 3. HEROVIT'S WORLD (Malzberg), 4. DIMENSION OF MIRACLES (Sheckley), 5. LAST AND FIRST MEN (Stapledon), 6. DANDELION WINE (Bradbury), 7. AUTUMN ANGELS (Arthur Byron Cover), 8. THE STARS MY DESTINATION (Bester), 9. CITY (Simak), 10. THE VOYAGE OF THE SPACE BEAGLE (Van Vogt). (Everyone's allowed one indefensible choice; SPACE BEAGLE is mine.)

Dave: Interesting. My favorite Stapledon is ODD JOHN; despite numerous good points, all else he wrote seems excessively plodding. Sheckley is one of my favorites, too, but I'd put MINDSWAP above DIMENSION OF MIRACLES. Likewise, I'd elevate Bradbury's THE MARTIAN CHRONICLES above DANDELION WINE, and Bester's THE DEVOLISHED MAN above THE STARS MY DESTINATION. No quibble over the Simak and Van Vogt selections.

The only thing I've read by Arthur Byron Cover is a short story entitled Gee, Isn't He the Cutest Little Thing, which appeared in THE ALIEN CONDITION, edited by Stephen Goldin, which is definitely the worst collection of science fiction stories I've had the displeasure to run across. In reviewing the book in 1973 I noted finishing the Cover story "only because I just couldn't believe that anything that godawful could be professionally published." While it may be unfair to judge an author by one short story, it's perhaps understandable that such a reaction provided no incentive to purchase AUTUMN ANGELS when it appeared on the stands. Jackie, however, bought the book and confessed twice getting to page 10. What did you like about it?

Mike: Stapledon was not a good writer, and really didn't know how to construct a novel.

On the other hand, he was far and away the most brilliant thinker the field has ever seen, and every science fiction writer since 1937 has, knowingly or unknowingly, cribbed from him. (You think Niven got Ringworld from Freeman Dyson? Guess again. Dyson states in his autobiography that he got the idea for Dyson Spheres from Stapledon!)

As for Cover, everything he's written since AUTUMN ANGELS (which was his first novel) has been progressively poorer and more self-indulgent, and shows the need of a firm editorial hand. AUTUMN ANGELS itself was #2 in Pyramid's "Harlan Ellison Discovery Series" back in 1975, and in the dedication and introduction both Cover and Ellison acknowledge that Harlan kept sending him back to rewrite the book again and again. But whoever is responsible for it, I find the finished product a totally unique use of the icons of pop culture (you'll find Sydney Greenstreet, Captain Marvel, The Man With No Name, Nero Wolfe, and hundreds of others in it), with an undercurrent of depth and meaning that I've found in none of Cover's (or Ellison's) other work--and his invention of



the Crawling Bird was absolutely brilliant. My only regret is that Cover hasn't surpassed, or even come close to matching, this book.

As for your other comments, I think THE DEMOLISHED MAN in magazine form is far better than the book version, but even so it doesn't equal THE STARS MY DESTINATION, probably because Bester had to cheat to bring Ben Reich to justice. Bradbury is such a subjective writer that arguing about which of his books moved you the most is fruitless. And I recently re-read MINDSWAP and DIMENSION OF MIRACLES, and there's no question about it: DIMENSION OF MIRACLES is the more mature and polished work, even if MINDSWAP does have the Theory of Searches.

Dave: "Arguing about which of his books moved you the most is fruitless" is likely a comment more universal than local. Actually, there's no argument--merely a difference in perceived favorites. Amongst your books, for example, my favorites are: 1. THE BRANCH, 2. BIRTHRIGHT: THE BOOK OF MAN, 3. WALPURGIS III, 4. THE SOUL EATER, and 5. SIDESHOW.

One qualification, though. I haven't read the version of THE BRANCH which is going to be published. What I read was the original manuscript, and I found it the most interesting novel I've read so far this decade (you're welcome; I'll send you a bill in the morning). On the other hand, you totally rewrote it at the publisher's final bell, and you did so coming off what I consider to be the second-least of your recent novels (THE BEST ROOTIN' TOOTIN' SHOOTIN' GUNSLINGER IN THE WHOLE DAMNED GALAXY, about which the following conversation took place. Dave: "Who told you this is your best work?" Mike: "My agent and my publisher. Why?" Dave: "I just wanted to know who it was that had no critical faculties."). As I recall, you were dismayed at my reaction to news of the rewrite, which was to tell you that after I see the new version I may be requesting a copy of the original manuscript...

For the record, use your own perceptions and rank your five best novels.

Mike: My own list of my best (published) science fiction novels to date: 1. THE BEST ROOTIN' TOOTIN' SHOOTIN' GUNSLINGER IN THE WHOLE DAMNED GALAXY, 2. EROS ASCENDING and WALPURGIS III (tie), 4. THE BRANCH, 5. SIDESHOW, 6. THE SOUL EATER.

I've got one coming out called ADVENTURES that will knock a few of the abovenamed down a notch. And as I answer these questions, I'm not quite finished with EROS AT ZENITH, so I can't really evaluate it yet.

Based on my fan mail--I average maybe 15-20 letters a month, except for the period right after SIDESHOW came out, when for reasons which still elude me it arrived in bushels--I would say my average reader would rank BIRTHRIGHT and (especially) THE SOUL EATER higher than I do, and WALPURGIS III a bit lower.

Dave: Beyond what you're writing now, do you have any particular plans or idle notions for something of a special nature at some point in the future?

Mike: Absolutely none. Most writers hate writing, but love having written. I, on the other hand, love the actual act of writing, and my only plan is to keep doing it. I know what my next dozen novels are, and by the time I've gotten three-quarters of the way down the list, I'll know the dozen after that. My only broad future commitment is that I intend to keep writing for and about adults.

Dave: Does "the actual act of writing" include the necessary blue-sky work (brainstorming) and outlining, or do you view that as preparatory? Also, clarify "knows". Do you mean ready-to-write or conceptualized in a general manner?

Mike: The actual act of writing means sitting down at a typewriter (or, these days, an IBM Computer) and pushing nouns up against verbs on paper (excuse me: screen). Signet and I have agreed on my next 8 novels; all have been outlined (anywhere from 4 to 10 pages apiece). Malzberg and I are collaborating on a trilogy for another publisher; all three books are outlined in some detail. I recently wrote a mystery,



and the first half of a western; 3 sequels to each have been outlined. So yes, you could sneak into my office, swipe my outlines, and write my next 17 novels: they are ready-to-write. (17 of my next 20, anyway; every now and then I fall in love with an idea and sneak it in ahead of schedule.)

(As an aside, I should point out that if I run true to form, each book will bear only the vaguest resemblance to its outline by the time I finish...possibly excepting the mysteries.)

I tend to write a chapter at each sitting (which means that a sitting occasionally takes 8 or 10 hours), and before I sit down I know where the chapter will start and finish, about how long it will run, who will be in it, what ten or twelve things (some of them incredibly trivial) will happen in it--and the enjoyment comes from having it turn out the way I had envisioned it when I sat down to work.

I think any book that contains 40% of the power and beauty of the author's initial conception is probably saleable; 60% is a pretty damned good book; and at 80% we're probably talking Nobel Prize. The enjoyment in writing comes from trying to produce a work that reflects and is worthy of that original flash of insight.

*Dave: Where do you see the "cutting edge" of sf these days, and who is doing the most slicing with it?*

*Mike: There isn't one. What appears on the stands now is very little different from what appeared in 1958. Publishers have closed up shop, print runs have fallen off, advances are down. One could make a case that simply getting a book contract puts you on the cutting edge of the field these days.*

Please understand: I am not weeping for the New Wave. Editors didn't kill it and critics didn't kill it; readers killed it, by refusing to spend their money on it. Still, there was some important work done from 1962-1975, some remarkable stylistic and conceptual innovations...and when you look at the stands these days, it's like none of those books had ever appeared. Unnecessary sequels and elf-and-unicorn trilogies rule the day.

*Dave: If you have no writing of a special nature in mind for the future, do you then feel that as yet you lack "the skill and the clout to get out there on the cutting edge"? Do you envision yourself being out there one of these days, or are you going to be happy enough with wrapping parables inside of entertaining stories?*

*Mike: I think that, in a way, just writing about adults who have adult worldviews and adult problems puts my stuff well out from the center of the field--as close to the edge as it's likely to get as long as I believe in telling stories with beginnings, middles and ends, and having my sales justify future contracts. I truly don't think THE BRANCH or WALPURGIS III could have been sold or published in 1958, and certainly the language in the Galactic Midway series and some of the scenes in SIDESHOW would have been excised. With EROS ASCENDING I simply tried to go against the flow: create the most sumptuous whorehouse ever, and then tell a small, simple love story about two flawed, unglamorous, middle-aged people. The background would have been unacceptable in 1958, and without the background what we have here is a mainstream novel.*

BIRTHRIGHT: THE BOOK OF MAN, could probably have appeared in the 1940s, which, though I'm fond of it, is why I wince whenever some fan tells me that it's his favorite from among my works.

*Dave: As THE BRANCH is not yet in print, though it will be when this is, I congratulate their sense of taste...*

*Congratulations to you on being Pro Guest of Honor at Confusion (where this issue of Outworlds, and hence this dialog, will make their initial appearance). I'd attend just to congratulate and heckle you, except that having a convention in Ann Arbor in January strikes me as one of fandom's dumber ideas (it's the flip side of attending a convention in Phoenix during the Summer...). However, if snowstorms allow you to get there and back all in the same couple of months, have fun. Try not to strike anyone who*



Resnick & Locke 10/14/83

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I have this gut feeling that a majority of those comments will concern Avedon's letter... or Barry Malzberg and/or Howard Cossell.

## Like Some Cry in Wilderness

Eldest daughter made a snow family  
of three, so real  
they looked magical  
primal magic in a snow land  
I would only nod to them &  
smile

□ Billy Wolfenbarger  
Harrisburg, Oregon  
December 29th, 1983

▽△



...an OUTWORLDS Preprint: #2 1/20/84  
~~~~~

---Friday, January 27, 1984:

...somehow,  
one more time, you've survived the  
rigors of January to journey to the  
Far Frozen North--a.k.a. Michigan--to  
attend ConFusion. (But then, getting  
to ConFusion is rarely the problem...)

The Scene: The Plymouth Hilton  
Inn, Plymouth, Michigan. (ConFusion  
used to be an Ann Arbor convention;  
now that's Conclave, which used to be  
a Ypsilanti convention. But then,  
Michigan fans tend to do these things.)  
It's a nice hotel, if a bit out in the  
outback...

...and now, you are here:

...you've found out, to your surprise,  
that your room is ready, you dump the  
bags (and the sleeping bags for the  
twenty-five people who are crashing in  
your room)...and head down to the lobby  
to see who else has showed up. You  
greet old friends--it's been a long  
time since Chambanaccon...Octocon...  
Conclave...Worldcon...or even since

ConFusion 101, and you've missed them. You idly notice (sometimes with amusement;  
often with bemusement) who's-with-who this time, and you wander off to check out the art  
show (it's still being set up; artshows are always "still being set up") and the chaos  
of the huckster's room--where you encounter Bill Cavin doing his clever imitation of  
Howard DeVore. You cruise the lobby again, now firmly in the convention shuffle mode,  
then get drug along to the bar: it's happy hour, after all. You notice a large group  
of fans clustered around a table in the darkest corner of the bar and you drift over,  
surmising that the object of all this attention is the Pro Guest of Honor. No such  
luck; it is simply Bill Bowers struggling to finish the "speech" he is to deliver in  
less than two hours, being "encouraged" by his friends-of-little-faith. Bored with all  
this "fanzine shit", and suddenly hungry, you wander around the corner to the Jolly  
Miller... You decide you're not that hungry--maybe some of the parties will have  
munchies--and once again do the art show/huckster's room/lobby circuit. Back to the  
room to see if any of your multitude of roommates have shown...; some have, but none of  
the ones who had volunteered to help subsidize the hotel bill. You take the stairs up  
to the fourth floor, and walk halfway down the hallway, enter a strangely uncrowded  
con suite, and grab a Coke. Heading back down to action central, you discover why the  
con suite was empty: everybody is waiting on the elevators. Sighing, you take the  
stairs down to the lobby...give a different sigh when you spot roommates-with-money,  
and escort them up to the room. More stairs...but you don't want to give up possession  
of the sole room key. Back down--fortunately the room is on third, not the fifth floor  
--you realize it's almost Eight o'clock. And so you join the mass in Plymouth 5...for:

# GENUINE CONFUSION

Featuring the Second Science Fiction Oral History Conference  
January 27-29, 1984 Plymouth, Michigan

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The Unadulterated  
**MIKE RESNICK**

Far Guest of Honor  
The Bona Fide  
**MARTHA BECK**

Tuesdays  
The Indubitable  
**DICK SMITH**

Friday Night Science  
The Veritable  
**WILSON 'Bob'  
TUCKER**

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Forrest J. Ackerman  
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Phyllis Eisenstein  
Raymond Z. Gallun  
Joe Haldeman  
Barry Longyear  
Dean McLaughlin  
Frederik Pohl  
Stanley Schmidt  
Verna Smith Trestrail  
Gene Wolfe  
Donald & Elsie Wollheim



**'ACCEPT NO SUBSTITUTES'**

Registered on the Ann Arbor Science Fiction Association, Inc.



FRIDAY NIGHT LIVE and on Tape,.....

...with Toastmaster DICK SMITH, and Video by Larry Tucker.

Larry was certainly in evidence--scurrying about issuing instructions to his crack team of gophers--and early evidence indicated that several of the videos had been taped with the mikes on--but where was Dick...? "In the bar...!" went up the cry in unison, but that was just obligatory; everybody knows Dick doesn't drink. Speculation abounded: "Has anyone actually seen him. He's probably still in Chicago...you know Dick always gets to conventions late!" ...from Bowers, esoterically: "He's probably retired early, figuring he'll get an 8 a.m. wakeup call from Bill Marks in the morning." Crueler still: "Oh, he's up in his room collating copies of the new issue of Uncle Thing's Little Dickie." But all of that was simply Terminal Idle Fannish Chitchat...no one really knew where Dick was. In particular, Chairman NANCY TUCKER didn't know where Dick was. 8:15, and she was becoming increasingly more frantic. Fortunately, Bob Tucker was there to Smooth the troubled waters...with his omnipresent bottle of ~~xxxxx~~ Beam's Choice. Several rounds were made, but strangely seemed to hang up every time the bottle came to someone with the surname Tucker. Steve Leigh and Ro Lutz-Nagey kibitzed from the sidelines, and volunteered to juggle if the crowd could empty three fifths. Several fans actually started sipping the stuff, on hearing this, and Bowers--straight from happy hour opined that two fifths and a child-named-Megen would provide a more interesting act ...and then ducked behind Roger Reynolds as a vengeful Denise Parsley Leigh yelled: "You stay away from my daughter, Bowers!" Michelle giggled. Several snickered. (Fans are like that--this has been an Unsolicited Editorial Intrusion.) ...eventually, at approximately 8:52:31 Eastern Daylight Time, a considerably less frenetic Nancy Tucker was helped to the rostrum and, as Cosmos and Chaos juggled five empty fifths (and Megen) --announced:

"I give you our Friday Night Speaker, a man who needs no introduction... and who obviously isn't going to get one...

BOB TUCKER.".....

[Tucker ascends to the stage, uniquely sideways with his back to the wall, flinches as a-woman-in-a-tux darts by...and opens with a]:

DISCLAIMER: All the characters in this speech are fictitious, and any resemblance to actual persons or things--living, dead, or rusted out--is purely coincidental.

This is an overview of science fiction fan conventions, an overview based on 45 years of study. I don't know how many conventions I've attended in those 45 years--the figure will be some unknown number between five hundred and a thousand, and I'm tempted to say 'That's not too many'. I've learned more about you--and myself--in those 45 years than any of us really want to know. My very first convention was in Philadelphia in 1939. Dick Smith and Mike Resnick were waiting to be born, while Martha Beck was still running around in rompers and seeing UFOs.

Something happened at that Philadelphia convention that made me a life-long fan. There were two major political factions represented there in 1939: the Futurians, based in Manhattan, and another group we called 'the Queensies' based in Newark and in Queens. The two groups didn't much like each other. The two groups despised each other's politics. And once, one of the groups objected to the other's presence in a convention hall, and posted guards at the door to keep them out. That was the infamous 'Exclusion Act' that barred six fans from attending the New York worldcon.

But now, during the afternoon of my first convention in Philadelphia, we were listening to a debate on the political future of fandom--our fandom, this fandom. Somebody in the front row--a Futurian--made a remark that upset somebody in the back row--a Queensie--and things began to happen. The somebody in the back row jumped to his feet



and came charging up the aisle, rolling up his sleeves, and bellowing that he was going to punch out somebody in the front row.

Golly, that was exciting! I decided that I liked conventions.

And so I've made a life-long study of conventions, of fans, and of the many, many guests who attend these gatherings. Some of the guests are--strange. This particular study will examine the guests of honor and the featured speakers--all those sparkling personalities and all those hapless wretches who have paraded across this stage in 45 years. Furthermore, I promised Nancy Tucker I'd keep it clean.

Consider now the guest speakers at a typical convention, any convention except this one. Genuine ConFusion 1984 is not included in my study. Consider now the writers, the editors, the artists, the fans, and the toasters with poor memories, who accept invitations from the committee just to get a free membership and a free meal. Their performances at this microphone are wholly predictable.

Consider first the pro guest of honor.

If he or she is an editor, they will strive to impress you with their lofty principles, their keen editorial skills, their neverending search for the perfect magazine--all solely for your enjoyment. The nasty subject of corporate profit is never mentioned. It is likely that the editors will cite their circulation figures, their word rates, and their quick turn-around time. The nasty subject of rejection is never mentioned to an audience of fans.

The editors will remind you that they always give the cover artist a byline on the contents page--and they will expect the artist and his family to applaud if they happen to be in the audience. The editor's speech will be peppered with wise sayings, witty epigrams, to further impress you. In the midst of some profound statement regarding company policy he will pause, stare off into infinity--infinity is that back wall yonder--and offer you a gem of wisdom. "Be humble. Always be humble. Remember that yesterday's egg is tomorrow's feather duster." And he will expect you eggs to applaud.

The editor will close with a Deep Thought. The words Deep and Thought are capitalized. Looking you in the eye, he will declare in ringing tones: "We have conquered the moon! And now, in the next ten years, we will put an astronaut on the sun!"

Consider next the elder-statesman author, the respected fellow who has been writing science fiction since 1898, and who was first published in a wonderful old pulp called *Dime Novels Weekly*. This man stands tall and proud at the microphone, secure in the knowledge that his personal charm holds you enthralled. You are his spellbound subjects. His novels are money-makers, sure-fire winners, and the sale of every one of them is headlined on the front pages of *Locus*. He has so many Hugos that he cut extra doors into his house, so that every doorstep could have its own door.

He stares you in the eye, the complete master of the room, confident with the knowledge that he was writing science fiction before you were born. When the room is hushed, still, expectant, he speaks in an authoritative voice: "I want your blood!"

Sometimes the pro guest of honor is a new writer, a young writer, a stripling with only a few years experience in the field. He--and this new writer is always male--he is insufferable. He believes that you really want to listen to him, while he reads aloud three long dull chapters from a book in progress. And following that, he has the gall to boast that the book has already been sold to Ace for a fabulous five-figure contract. Keep in mind that three hundred dollars, plus seventy-five cents, are five figures.

He too has a Deep Thought to share with his audience. He will clasp his hands over his breast in a dramatic stance and cry: "I have an on-going love affair with my word processor!"

But a heckler back there will shout: "And how's your floppy disk?"

Consider next the toastmaster, or toastmistress. In my long study of convention speakers, I've learned that toasters are a special problem. It is difficult to find one who is articulate, intelligent, and sober. I've met toasters who mumbled, who whispered, who sang or talked to themselves, and those who talked about themselves while ignoring the guests waiting to be introduced. Some toasters would much rather tell you long boring



lies about themselves, then tell you short witty lies about the people waiting for introductions.

There are toasters who tell dirty jokes, and then laugh loudly at their own wit. There are toasters who are barely able to speak at all. These last do not suffer from mike-fright. Rather, they are having great difficulty in standing upright and finding the microphone.

Toasters can be fun, or they can be dull. Most of them are dull.

They can be well-read people with truly astonishing recall, or they can be doddering oldsters with minds as reliable as dixie cups filled with bootleg gin. If the toaster is male, and you are a female guest, do not accept his invitation to come to his room for an interview. If you are male, and the toaster is female, do not allow her to come up behind you while you are standing at the microphone. Two thousand people will watch, while you struggle to regain your voice.

Toasters are fond of jokes: bad jokes, awful jokes, rotten jokes, all of which were stolen from obscure fanzines you haven't read. And speaking of theft, I have a shameful confession to make. I stole a joke this afternoon. I was sitting in the bar with Mike Resnick and I stole a joke from him that he had lifted from someone else. He left the table for a moment and I took one of his joke cards.

(stolen joke)

"Time flies like an arrow.

Fruit flies like bananas."

I wish I hadn't. Right now, after careful consideration, I want to return the card with my apologies. I don't want *this* joke on my conscience.

Consider next the fan guest of honor. No one knows how or why the con committee chooses a fan guest of honor--but it soon becomes obvious that when the selection was made, the committee were drunk or stoned out of their minds.

The fan guest may be young or old, male or female, articulate or tongue-tied, totally unknown or as familiar as a well-read book. Sometimes the fan guest has made a reputation by cranking out a series of illegible fanzines in some backwater Michigan town, and sometimes the fan has gained a measure of fame by visiting your home and stealing everything not nailed down. Sometimes the fan guest is so young that he refers to our beloved literature as 'sci-fi'--and sometimes he is so old that he nods off to sleep while reading the newest novel about the lecherous slave maidens of Gor. The fan guest's greatest claim to fame is that he or she originated and published all the bad jokes in all the obscure fanzines you never read--jokes that were stolen by the other speakers who will be at this microphone tomorrow.

Con Committees follow no discernable line of logic or reasoning when selecting a fan guest. The guest may be chosen because someone on the committee owes him or her a sum of money, and this is a means of discharging the debt. The guest may be chosen because someone on the committee made a rash promise last year--in the heat of the night, so to speak--and now it's a case of 'Pay up, or I'll tell your spouse'. And sometimes a fan guest is chosen deliberately, with love aforethought, because it seems to be the only way to get her out of Indiana.

Finally, at long last, we turn our study to the 'special guest'. The special guest poses a special problem. *What* to call the clown? Sometimes he is called the 'Artist guest of honor' but in truth, he can't draw flies. Sometimes he is, indeed, called the 'special guest' but more often than not his performance embarrasses the committee. He is often found with a bottle in his hand and his foot in his mouth. Some committees prefer to wash their hands of the whole matter, and call him 'the Friday night speaker'.

For the purposes of this study, let us now consider the Friday night speaker who is an old fan, and tired.

Let us consider the guest who is an aging wonderboy--one who is a legend in his own mind.



If this guest is lucky, someone will buy him a drink and listen to his tall tales about the good old days--about the golden age of science fiction. His stories are mostly lies. He can't remember what happened last year, much less the golden age.

The Friday night speaker is not quite old enough to have written science fiction in 1898; and he certainly isn't as daring, and as skillful, as the brash young whippersnapper who can sell an unfinished novel for five fabulous figures. He doesn't care a mouldy fig for lofty principles, or high circulation numbers--but he *does* fret about his own circulatory system and cold feet in bed.

He knows he will never displace Forry Ackerman as the Number One fan face, and he knows that Charlie Brown will never publish his obituary on the front page of *LOCUS*. He really does believe that he can successfully flirt with every woman at the convention--but yet, he lacks the sense to be abashed when a woman tells him: "Do you realize you are twice my age?"

The Friday night speaker has but one moment of glory--his appearance at this microphone. He has a secret weapon, stolen from another guest years ago. He has carefully watched all the other guests during the past 45 years, and has listened closely to their remarks. He treasures his secret weapon.

He has learned a valuable lesson from the elder-statesman author, that fellow who had been writing science fiction since 1898. That fellow knew how to coax a favor from an audience held in thrall--a favor from his spellbound subjects.

The Friday night speaker looks you in the eye, the complete master of the room, confident with the knowledge that he invented the fandom you are now living in. When the room is hushed, still, expectant, he speaks with a pleading voice:

"I want your booze!"

..... Bob Tucker □ November, 1983

...Tucker, beaming, stood at the podium and took in the assembled applause. Tucker descended, mingled with the crowd. The crowd milled...and soon lost something like 90% of its strength. It must have been the liquor...

Dick Smith had still not put in an appearance...but the rumor floated that there would be a party in his room at midnight.

Even more people left, and at length only those too wasted to move, and those who owed Bowers money remained.

Finally, when he was the only one remaining, Mike Glicksohn stood on a chair, and said: "Fuck it...let's get it over with! Here's...

BILL BOWERS."

[Leah Zeldes poked her head in from the hall, and said: "Remember...20 minutes...not a second more!" Bowers cleared his throat, shifted uncomfortably, and shuffled his disarray of papers]:

At the first Autoclave, Linda Bushyager told me that, some day, I would be fandom's next Bob Tucker. No: Linda had said strange things before, so even at the time I wasn't quite sure what prompted her prediction. And she didn't elaborate...

...but that didn't stop me from speculating:

...it was the night following my watching, in total amazement, as Lynn "any fool can collate" Parks downed, in quick succession, two water-glass-fulls of Vat 69--straight--and my proclaiming to one and all, "My God, what a woman!" This immediately preceeding her collapse...and so I spent the remainder of the evening walking this normal-sized person around the HoJo... trying to sober her up. Neither was any small task.

I don't know if Linda witnessed any of that performance, but I seem to recall that her comment to me was made early in the evening that I was falsely accused of locking Glicksohn out of his room, thus setting in motion a series of events that ended with Mike and Maddog Mark skinnywalking the hotel hallways. Given the timing, I don't think that was the cause of the predetermination of my future fannish status--despite the vile carnards that were heaped on my head as a result of the innocous little incident.



...certainly it was true that I was in Glicksohn's room, and it is equally possible that the door was locked and Mike didn't have a key. But the part where I'm quoted as telling him to "go away" seemed abruptly condensed in latter recantings. They conveniently seem to forget the part where I added: "...for fifteen or twenty minutes."

Now I thought this an eminently reasonable request--I, after all, had been the one to pay for her train ticket to the convention--  
--and besides, we were only talking.

Thus, all alternatives considered, it just has to be that the impetus behind my being tuckerized was that I had just finished having had the...err...a) lack-of-good-taste; b) the balls; c) both... --to read Harlan's "tribute" to Mike Glicksohn on the occasion of the latter's 30th birthday. ...to read it aloud and to an audience containing both minors and Glicksohn, an action which upset the chairman of Autoclave no end. (Leah will be glad to explain that particular bit of esoterica to you. At length.)

Whatever the rationale behind it, I considered Linda "authorized conventions" Bushyager's remark flattering at the time. And I still do...

But I'm just as glad that the Original is still around and going strong.

Several reasons--and not just because he writes fun columns for me, or makes brilliant and penetrating speeches in which he does not once reference suave and relevant Friday Night Filler Speakers... ...filler speakers, such as myself.

No, the main reason that I don't aspire to the title of "Tucker of the 80's" is not simply because I like my name the way it is...after all, "Hey, you!" has a certain ring to it. ...it's because I simply cannot stomach Beam's Choice.

Make the nectar-of-choice Barcardi 1873 however, and you definitely have a pretender to the schtick.

...now that's Smoooth!

Over the years I've tried a variety of approaches to this diminishing time-slot that the committee gives me. (In case you were wondering why I get this "honor" each year--it's very simple really: it's a trade-off for my having to introduce Ro Lutz-Nagey for the remainder of my natural life, and possibly thereafter. A very small trade-off, really.)

Let's see... I've done the confessional, done an issue of my fanzine-as-a-speech, as well as other variations on a theme--and most of them have been fun. At least for me. (Well, there was the "weapon's policy" one, but...)

Searching about for a gimmick mere hours past as you hear/read this, I finally decided to eschew relevance, wit and charm...the trademarks of a Bowers-speech--and simply relate to you a little story I recently discovered in a corked bottle (Bacardi Dark), washed up in my mailbox. Postage due; no return address.

...not an S.F. story, except perhaps of the parallel world sub-genre, and a slightly askew world it is!

It starts now, and goes something like this:

*(Readers of the text-version of this 'speech' will now kindly thumb back to Page 1323 of this publication, and once again--starting with "Friday, January 27, 1984:" read through to approximately the words "Bob Tucker ((in Script Caps approximately halfway down Page 1324)), thus saving me the trouble of re-typing all that... Thank you, and we now rejoin the 'speech', as it progresses.)*

"---living, dead, or rusted out--is purely coincidental.

"This is an overview of science fiction fan conventions, an overview based on..."

Ah, but this portion seems to drag a bit--obviously the work of an amateur; so, with your kind permission, we will fast forward to a bit later in the manuscript where, after a deep breath, a sip, we resume the reading...already in progress:

"At the first Autoclave, Linda Bushyager told me that, some day, I would be fandom's next Bob Tucker. But Linda had said strange things before..."

Time shift. Reality alert. Hi there!

One day last fall, for reasons fortunately since forgotten, I happened to glance



at a Genuine ConFusion flyer, and suddenly realized something:

(All right, go for it: You try looking at a Genuine ConFusion flyer, and then suddenly realizing something...anything!)

Now I've been around a year or two, and know a few people. But I looked at the ConFusion guest list, and realized that I knew all of them fairly well. I also conveniently remembered that I was supposed to "do something" for Friday night, myself.

Wheels, meshed, gears spun, sparks landed.

I wrote to Bob Tucker, to Mike Resnick, to Martha Beck, and even to Dick Smith, and said: "Let's have some fun!"

They all responded, some with only the merest hint of prodding, and said, "Fine, let's have some fun."

Now in case you feel left out of all this frivolity, I should point out that the fun has indeed taken on substance, if not finesse, in the form of...

*Genuine OUTWORLDS!*

In preprint form, it contains the text of Bob Tucker's "overview", a translation of the preceding interlude, as well as a complete transcript of tomorrow afternoon's "Will the Real Fan Guest of Honor...?" panel...leading up to Martha Beck's lengthy Fan Guest of Honor speech.

Oh yes, it also contains the print-out of a possible Mike Resnick Guest of Honor speech...which is the reason why, while I can show it to you now...I really can't show it to you until after Mike has finished talking tomorrow evening...

No matter what the inducement: I will not be compromised...though you're more than welcome to try!

Unfortunately, through clever programming of the Bowers Fanzine Assembler, it seems that the verso of this gem contains...

*Outworlds 37 -- the 14th Annish*

...so you'll have to wait on that also. However, Jackie Causgrove is permitted to tell you how great that portion is.

...and if Mike Resnick doesn't give the speech that I've just spent half my life typing...well, he'll never read the Walt Willis "interview"...

Did I mention earlier that "They all responded..."?

ummm...did I omit a name just now?

No, I guess not...

Two shots, and then we go party:

After enthusiastically responding to the Genuine *Outworlds* idea, even to the extent of phoning long distance to reassure himself that I did, indeed, want him to participate, along with all the really important people, Dick Smith reluctantly had to bow out at the last minute.

I'm saddened by this, but I can well understand his reasons, and I suspect that all the preparation will be worth it when you--all of you--join me at Dick's party later tonight.

The reason for the party? Well, it seems that all the delay in publishing his fanzine was caused by his constant travelling to Columbus to build a committee for the bid he is chairing...which is of course called CHICON V--in 1988.

He'll probably be coy...he's really rather shy, but do ask him about it. Endlessly.

Remember now, that's Room #\_\_\_\_, at Midnight.

...and Dick, that'll be \$2.00 for your copy of *Genuine OUTWORLDS*...

One blank ejected; one scatter shot upcoming:

I'm probably running-over, as we say in the convention-speaker biz...

If so, tough. I'll be done in a moment.

Voters in the Annual *File 770* Poll, please take note:

I have the distinct feeling that you have just heard the last "Bill Bowers Friday Night at ConFusion Speech."

Now I hasten to add that no one has told me this as a fact, and only Leah has inferred it: "No one in Ann Arbor knows you these days," she said with Leah-subtlety.



However, there does seem to be precedence for this conjecture:

I was the Friday Night speaker at Marcon for several years, but when there was a change in command a few years ago, well, their invitation to speak the following year seems to have been lost in the mail...along with the membership refunds from all all the years I did speak. Phoenix...now what is the name of their convention?--never did ask me back, even though I thought myself an acceptable warm-up act for Harlan, and my one Midwestcon performance never did rate an encore. (To this day, I still hear Lou Tabakow's gruff voice telling me: "Once is enough; never do it again!")

It's too early to tell if my string of Nasfic speeches will remain unbroken, but it does seem that there will be a change in command, here, next year...

Whether that's good or bad, I don't know; I live in Ohio after all, where everything is constant...and am a member of the CFG, where we don't have elections...for any reason.

I'll be here, and I'll do my duty. Somebody has to introduce Ro...

And I'll enjoy myself in my own esoteric way.

And if the new committee would rather I didn't, take up this space that is, that's fine. Really.

If they ask, though, I'll probably accept.

I've done marginally more foolish things.

If the latter scenario occurs, I'll fret and I'll worry...and I'll put it off until the last minute, before I decide what to do...

...and I haven't the faintest idea of what that'll be, except this:

If the committee asks me back, I promise to reveal the name of the lady behind the locked door in Glicksohn's room.

It was a dark and a stormy night, and...

..... Bill Bowers □ 11:20 pm; 1/24/84

...his papers in even more disarray, Bowers shuffles them together to the tune of Glicksohn's snoring, and the sound of projectors being set up for the all-night movies. Sighing, he wakes Mike up...and they head for the con suite.

...morning, Fannish Central Time; one in the afternoon otherwise.

You wake with a start, and realize that you've missed Rusty Hevelin and Denise Parsley Leigh's panel in Plymouth 2, on "How to Enjoy Your First Convention". Not that you were intensely interested in the subject--this was after all, your third con--but you'd promised Denise to come and "support" her...since she always came to your speeches. Ah well, you hadn't missed it by much. Only three hours. (Not as if it were something really important...like your APA-78 deadline, for sure.)

Sitting up, you grab your suddenly aching head.

Dick's Chicon V bidding party must have been a good 'en! Grimacing, you suddenly recall the chili-flavored popcorn...and the lemonade chasers. Dick, you decide, throws a party the same way he publishes a fanzine: all gas, and no delivery...

...too late for breakfast, even if you could handle it; the coffee shop down by the pool was probably closed by now. Perhaps some of the parties tonight will have munchies...just as long as there's no chili...or popcorn.

Up at it...there's still time to make the annually-exciting Fan Guest of Honor "panel" at two, in Plymouth 1.

Fortunately, this year, it is Guest-Narrated by none other than JACKIE CAUSGROVE:

Inside the confines of Plymouth 1 the crowd eddies and flows. Fans consult each other, study their program books, check their watches. Some leave, some stay for the next event: the Fan Guest of Honor Speech. As Toastmaster Dick Smith approaches the microphone, the stirring audience settles down. He announces the first Fan GoH of ConFusion, Mike Glicksohn, who was honored in 1975 at ConFusion 13. Mike stands and acknowledges the applause before speaking.

M.G. Thanks for that egoboo, folks. I really enjoyed being ConFusion's first GoH, as I have said so often since then, but I certainly never expected to have my



duties continue so long. As there are even more of us than there was last year, I'd like to introduce that Institution who needs no introduction, the man who followed in my footsteps...Bill Bowers.

*Momentary confusion occurs. The Toastmaster steps up to Mike and whispers in his ear. Mike shrugs, glances at the audience, & pulls a chair up to the lectern. A sheaf of papers in his hand, trembling visibly, he climbs atop the chair and peers about, nervously.*

M.G. *(Substituting for B.B.)* Well...er...that is \*cough\* *(Roar of appreciative approval from the audience)* What I...have in my hand is the "speech" I wrote in the...hallway ten minutes ago, but I agree with the...\*cough\*...man who precedes me, a friend of short acquaintance...and in the...er...interests of keeping this as...er...brief as possible, I'll introduce another friend, a man closer to my own...er, stature...  
Ro Cap'n Whiz Bang Lutz-Nagey.

R.L-N. No truer words have been spoken. With my vast stage experience, I know how to keep the pace going, so I won't dally about as I introduce the next Fan GoH, Jackie Franke...er Causgrove.

J.C. Well, I too enjoyed my stint as GoH, and am even more pleased to be here this year when another of my persuasion joins this crew. As usual, the man who I introduce is not here...I have yet to meet him on this platform. But I'm pleased to introduce in his stead...(looks around wildly) whoever it is who is standing in for Scott Imes. Is there another Tall Person around?

*(Furious discussion is taking place behind the speakers table. Finally, with a bound, Mike Walsh leaps from the audience and leans into the microphone.)*

M.W. I was pleased to serve as GoH, but not enough to keep putting up with this silliness each year. Instead I'll introduce the next GoH...Elliot Shorter!  
*(The toastmaster steps up to Mike and whispers in his ear. Walsh grins and leans back to the mike)* As Elliot is also not here this year, we have a fine substitute, Frank Johnson!

F.J. *(Substituting for E.S.)* Unaccustomed as I am to public speaking, I'll simply introduce the man who comes next on the list...is he here? Swell! Give a big hand to David Innes, who cared enough to show up!

D.I. Hiya Folks! Always glad to be here, and glad to introduce the fella who came after me, Neil Rest!

N.R. Thanks for those wonderful words, Dave. I'm pleased to be among this crazy group for yet another year, and for the second time would like to introduce another fine fellow, Bill Cavin!

B.C. Well, I'm still new to this job, and I really don't have anything to say, and I'm sure you're all here to listen to the lady who comes next anyway, so I won't delay things but go right to the heart of the issue, as it were, and introduce our new Fan GoH, Martha Beck!

*(Wild applause. Cheers. Whistles. Staring fixedly into space, a nervous smile her face, Genuine ConFusion's choice for Fan Guest of Honor steps up to speak...)*  
..... Jackie Causgrove □ 1/6/84

...mass shuffling, and the audience did its share also. ...and then there was the echo of Cavin's words hanging in the air: "...introduce our new Fan GoH..."



MARTHA BECK!" .....

First, I want to thank everyone who had anything to do with my being here.

When Nancy called, I hesitated 30 seconds--and immediately 30 names came to mind as being far more deserving than I-- But didn't mention their names--just said "Yes" in a hurry--before she changed her mind!

...do not intend to speak about our Pro Guest of Honor --he speaks for himself. Besides, he knows too much about me!

Do not intend to make a long speech, I talk enough at parties-- But I do want to say -- that our fandom (ours', meaning, here) is much like family -- can't get rid of them! The mundane world is fine, to me & for me, 60% of the time-- But I must have 3/4 con fixes a year -- to see the people I really love-- Thank you for being who & what you are-- I truly love you...

..... Martha Beck □ 12/20/83

...Martha surprisingly proving to be so wordy--old-timers immediately began comparisons with Farmer at the 1968 Baycon, while younger fans could only come up with Van Vogt at Conclave, a few years back--it was all too soon time for the banquet.

Banquet-type stuff was done, and eventually I heard a voice (I couldn't see who it was doing the introducing, as I was seated behind Bill Cavin) saying... "and here is Genuine ConFusion's Pro Guest of Honor...

MIKE RESNICK!" .....

[...who immediately messes up the Editor's carefully planned layout, with a real title]:

#### STANDARD GUEST OF HONOR SPEECH #308-B

##### PERCEPTIONS

Perceptions of reality tend to differ, and most of them are false. This has been the subject of many a science fiction story, but it also applies to science fiction itself.

Thus, there is the perception that Larry Niven, whose works include time travel, two-headed aliens, and near-instantaneous interstellar transit, is a "hard" science fiction writer; while J.G. Ballard, who tends to visit the Earth with a single, scientifically-plausible ecological catastrophe, such as a flood, is categorized as a "soft" science fiction writer. Don Wollheim is considered to be a conservative editor--but it was Wollheim who published the first books of Barry Malzberg, Samuel Delany, John Brunner and Philip K. Dick. John Campbell was thought to be a no-nonsense nuts-and-bolts hard science editor, yet it was Campbell who shamelessly hyped such pseudo-science gobbledygook as Dianetics, the Dean Drive, and the Hieronymous Machine.

Even science fiction as a field has always liked to think of itself as an elitist ghetto appealing to the intelligentsia--but the best-selling science fiction magazine of all time was Ray Palmer's *Amazing Stories* during the period that it was rotting innocent adolescent minds with the Shaver Mystery.

This being the case, it shouldn't come as an enormous surprise to you that I, too, had a lot of erroneous perceptions about the field.

When I was 20 years old, I would happily have sold my soul to the devil in exchange for being named Edgar Rice Burroughs' legal successor. I wanted nothing more than to write an endless series of heroic adventures about noble warriors and beautiful princesses set on exotic if anachronistic worlds. So what if the heroes were all learning-disabled and the princesses existed solely to be ravished? It was a small price to pay for instilling the Sense of Wonder in a reader. I even wrote and sold a couple of them, which continue to haunt and embarrass me to this very day.

Well, people grow up.

Eventually even I did.

Slowly.

By the time I was 26 or 27, I knew that Isaac Asimov and Hal Clement had a handle



on the field. The idea was all-important, and extrapolation was the name of the game. So what if their characters were all interchangeable, and their prose tended to crawl rather than soar? Characterization and literary style were all very well for mainstream authors, who had nothing else to work with, but it was obvious to me that a unique field such as science fiction required a unique approach.

People don't just get older; they occasionally grow wiser.

Even me.

By the time I was 30, I knew beyond a shadow of a doubt that I had been dead wrong, and that Robert Sheckley, who had left his one-punch stories behind and was turning out mature works like *DIMENSION OF MIRACLES*, had hit upon a perfect use for the field: biting, cerebral, social satire. True, his characters and solutions were a bit simplistic, but he sure as hell knew how to pinpoint our problems and poke sophisticated fun at them.

A year or two later my perception changed again, and I realized that Barry Malzberg had the true key to success: bring the literary novel, such as *HEROVITT'S WORLD* and *GALAXIES*, to science fiction, and show the hicks how to expand the parameters of the field. Of course, he was so literary that hardly anybody read him, but I figured that was the readers' fault, not his.

Now, all the while these revelations were occurring to me, each invalidating the last, I was actually dealing with my own more immediate and mundane literary problems, such as how to make my 250th sex book read a little differently from my 249th, how to make my 11th bargain-basement screenplay mildly distinguishable from my 10th, how to make the seven monthly tabloids I was packaging appeal to seven different audiences when every photo and article that appeared in one were destined to reappear in the other six within a year's time.

I never did solve those problems, but I got awfully rich trying. I also got sick of writing junk, and decided somewhere around 1976 that if I ground out one more 72-hour book or 12-hour screenplay, my brain would turn to porridge and run out my ears, so I looked around for something else to do.

It never occurred to me to try writing science fiction, or indeed any other type of fiction to which authors signed their real names. After all, if I had learned one thing over the years, it was that good stuff didn't pay any better than bad stuff, but it took a lot longer to write and sell--and my creditors, bless them, have always had very expensive tastes.

So we looked around for some other way to make a buck. At the time we owned about 20 collies, which we had been breeding and exhibiting with considerable success for a number of years. (As a sidelight, I should mention that all of our show dogs were named after science fiction stories. The winningest collies of 1974, 1976, and 1979 were Gully Foyle, The Gray Lensman, and Paradox Lost. Other champions included Nightwings, Silverlock, The Unholy Grail, The Fireclown, Unoriginal Sin, Something Wicked, The Changeling, and A Clockwork Grape--who was, alas, the wrong color to be A Clockwork Orange.)

Anyway, we had sold a number of pets locally--show dogs, like books, are all brilliant in conception, but, also like books, are frequently not quite so brilliant upon execution--and it came to pass that a number of the people to whom we had sold these pets tended to leave them with us when they went on vacations. One day, while cleaning up after half a dozen collies that we had fondly hoped never to see again when we had sold them, we decided to charge their owners a couple of dollars a day in the hope that they'd go away and pester someone else for a change.

They didn't.

In point of fact they told all their friends what wonderful care we gave their dogs--and on the day that we found ourselves cleaning up after more dogs that we *didn't* own than dogs that we *did*, we realized that there was gold in them thar hills. After all, if the two of us could care for 40 dogs and still have a little time left over, think of what a staff of 15 or 20 could do at seven or eight bucks a shot.

So we looked at more than 200 kennels around the country, and finally bought the second-largest luxury boarding and grooming establishment in America. It was losing money hand over fist at the time, and it took us a lot of 80-hour weeks to turn the



business around--but by 1980 we had become financially independent, hired and trained a staff of 16, put a manager and a couple of assistant managers in charge of the operation, and found that the only time we had to visit the kennel was to pick up the day's supply of money, always a pleasant chore but not necessarily a time-consuming one.

So, with 14 million published words behind me, my skills reasonably honed, and an awful lot of free time on my hands, I decided that it was time to do the kind of writing I had always promised myself I would do if I ever got in this position: books that I wasn't ashamed to sign my name to. Naturally, this meant science fiction.

With that thought in mind, I took a long hard look at the field to see whose example I might wish to follow at this point in time--and I suddenly realized that it really was time to start writing, because my perception of science fiction had changed again, and no one was producing the kind of stuff I now wanted to write. Oh, we had our fair share of fine writers--Gene Wolfe and Jack Dann and Ray Lafferty and Alice Sheldon and the like; and we had our share of dinosaurs, too--some content to remain in the primeval pulpy swamp, some earnestly endeavoring to climb out of it--but what we didn't have was anyone who was writing about the things that were important to me, at least not in the way I wanted to write about them.

That was when I finally figured out that the works of Burroughs and Asimov and Sheckley and Malzberg were every bit as good as I had originally perceived them to be. They were fine stories when they were written, and they were fine stories still. But they were lousy role models for me.

You see, they hadn't changed since the day they first appeared in print.

But I had.

I realized, for example, that I had absolutely no desire to write a book about aliens. I don't know any aliens, and I have no serious expectation of meeting any in the foreseeable future; and, to tell the truth, I couldn't possibly care less about them. When they appear in my books, they serve as metaphors for various facets of the human condition, nothing more.

Ditto for people with psi powers. Telepathy and teleportation and telekinesis seemed to me to be rather childish plot devices, and I certainly don't know anyone who possesses those abilities. (At least I hope I don't.)

Ditto for many of the other conventions of the typical science fiction story. Intricate discussions of how to fly faster than light, for example, leave me as cold as space itself. I may be vitally concerned with *why* a man might want to go from one solar system to another--but *how* he manages it is a matter of complete indifference to me.

In fact, it belatedly occurred to me that I was now in total agreement with a statement of William Faulkner's that I had viewed with some disdain no more than a dozen years earlier: that the only thing worth writing about is the human heart in conflict with itself. A lot of us view that conflict differently--Harlan Ellison is also fond of quoting that statement, and my stories and worldview are certainly nothing like his--but regardless of how we view it, it remains to my way of thinking the *only* conflict that counts.

I discovered that elves, and unicorns, and revolutions against unlikely tyrannies really didn't interest me; Life and Death and Hate and Fear and Greed and Sex and Compassion--all spelled with capital letters--do, and I find that I can address myself to those qualities with some sense of purpose; whereas I simply cannot, with a straight face, tell my readers that Lords and Ladies will exist on other worlds, or that one properly motivated man can overthrow a galactic empire, or that magic works, or even that good always triumphs over evil.

Also, when I started catching up on my science fiction reading, I found that I had a real problem with the protagonists. Even when they didn't come on like Kimball Kinnison, the authors most always gave them a hidden ace in the hole, a psi power or a superhuman ability or a specialized piece of knowledge that they had no business possessing except for the fact that they couldn't emerge triumphant without it. By and large, they did tend to have sex a little more often than they used to twenty or thirty years ago--a step in the right direction--but I got the distinct feelings that the authors enjoyed writing it more than the heroes enjoyed experiencing it.

And then there were the thousand and one little holdovers from the pulps that



appeared even among our best writers.

You want an example?

How about lying?

I lie. I lie all the time. I tell social lies, and like any good American taxpayer I lie to the Internal Revenue Service, and I occasionally lie to editors and publishers and bill collectors. So does everyone else in this room. It's as natural a human function as breathing, and most of us do it far more often than we'd care to admit.

But when was the last time anybody except a villain or a madman lied in a science fiction story?

So instead of galactic warriors and competent engineers and successful revolutionaries and embryonic supermen, I began writing about carnival grifters and unhappy accountants and obsessed hunters and frustrated stripteasers and overmatched detectives. Sometimes they tell the truth and sometimes they lie; they can be noble and compassionate one moment, and ignoble and unfeeling the next, and even *they* don't always know why. Their success-to-failure ratio is a little more in keeping with the world as I currently perceive it than with science fiction as I currently read it. (I have a sneaking suspicion that if I were to write about Edgar Rice Burroughs' Barsoom today, I'd probably choose to tell a story about one of the three million widows or ten million orphans that John Carter created while staving off the latest attempt to ravish the admittedly ravishable Dejah Thoris. Nothing wrong with John and good old Dejah, mind you; it's just that I no longer find their problem-solving methodology very efficient.)

A few months back, a critic, writing about my work, stated that a typical Heinlein hero, when confronted with a problem, would somehow engineer a solution to it; whereas a typical Resnick hero, presented with the same problem, would bribe, bully or blackmail the Heinlein hero into solving it for him. Not as soul-satisfying or wish-fulfilling, I'll admit, but I call 'em like I see 'em.

I try to write about adult characters with adult problems who have to function in an adult universe. I also try to write for an adult audience, and have been pleasantly flabbergasted to find that I have been allowed to get away with it. Since the first of my current crop of books came out in late 1981, I've gotten more than 100 good reviews, and only 8 bad ones--6 of which came from a single, relatively obscure, academic journal that seems to exist solely to prevent me from getting a swelled head--and each of my books has made the Nebula Preliminary Ballot and sold well above expectations. I had started to believe, as some cynic once said, that the Golden Age of Science Fiction is 13; I can't tell you how gratifying it has been to find out that I was mistaken. Another perception shot to hell, happily this time.

I have to digress for a moment here to talk about Carol. I promised her that I wouldn't--but like I say, I lie a lot. And it would be a less forgivable lie if I got up here and pretended that I didn't have an uncredited collaborator.

I do.

She's it.

We discuss every book in minute detail before I sit down to write it, and I'd have to guess that at least 40% of each storyline and half the characters are hers. She reads each chapter as it comes out of the computer, shows me where I've gone wrong, listens patiently to my enraged defense of what I've written, and when I've calmed down sends me back to do it right. I have occasionally ignored her advice, and sometimes those stories sell quickly and sometimes they don't. But I have never followed her advice and had a story fail to sell the first time out of the box. She has even mastered that most difficult of all disciplines, the ability to spot ideas that will appeal to me play to my strengths, rather than haranguing me with those she would like to tackle if she were writing the books. So I just want you to know that if I should happen to refer to her as my better half, it's not a sexist remark but rather a literary truism.

I suppose before I close, I ought to mention some of the other ladies I love.

There's my editor at New American Library, Sheila Gilbert. Most writers have to fight tooth and nail for artistic freedom; Sheila has not only granted it to me, but adamantly insists that I exercise it. She also allows me to write in the quantity I like, and even toyed with advertising my current release as "His First Novel in Four







# GENUINE OUTWORLDS



JC AFTER LKT '83

'ACCEPT NO SUBSTITUTES'