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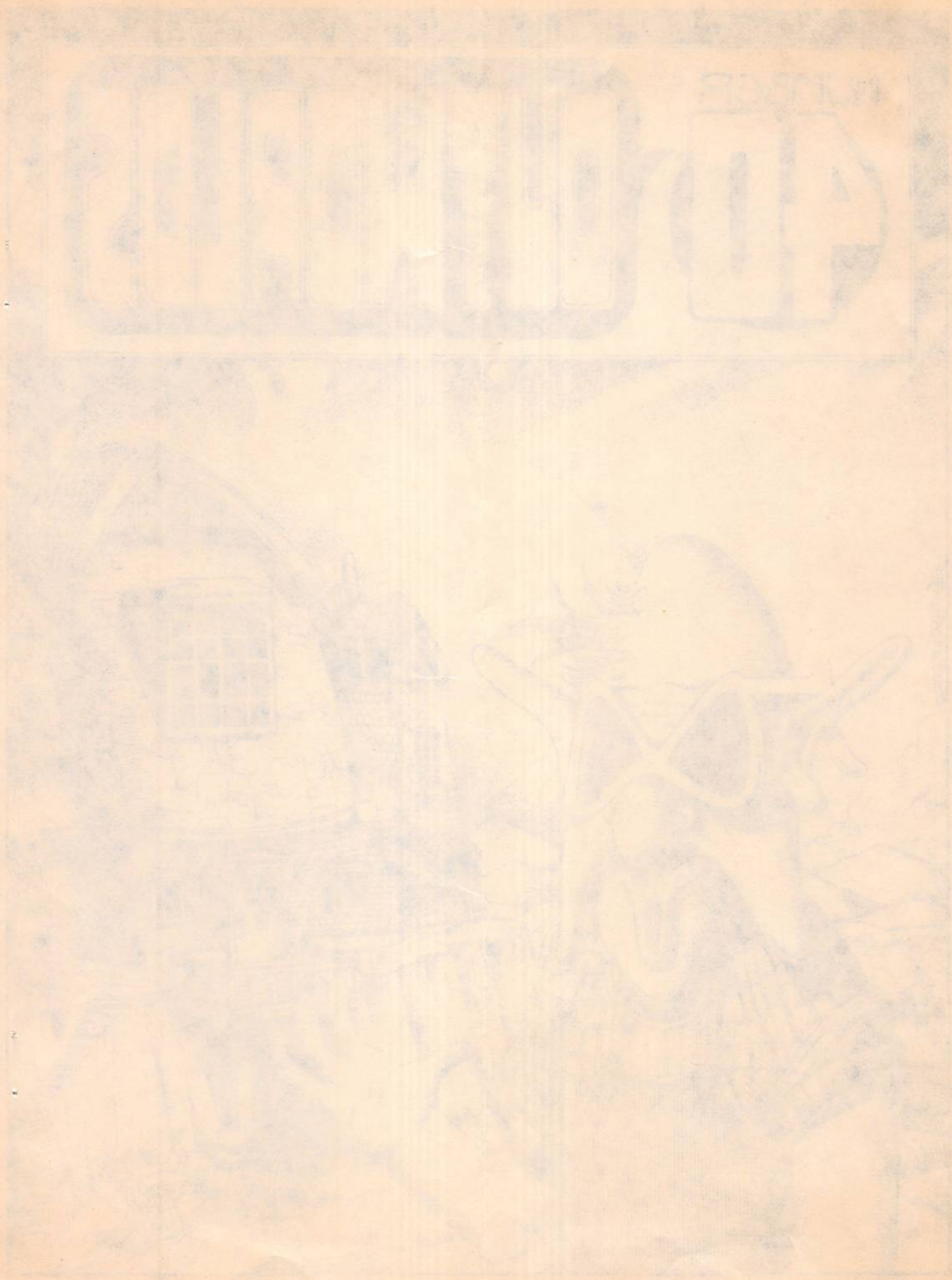
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OUTWORLDS

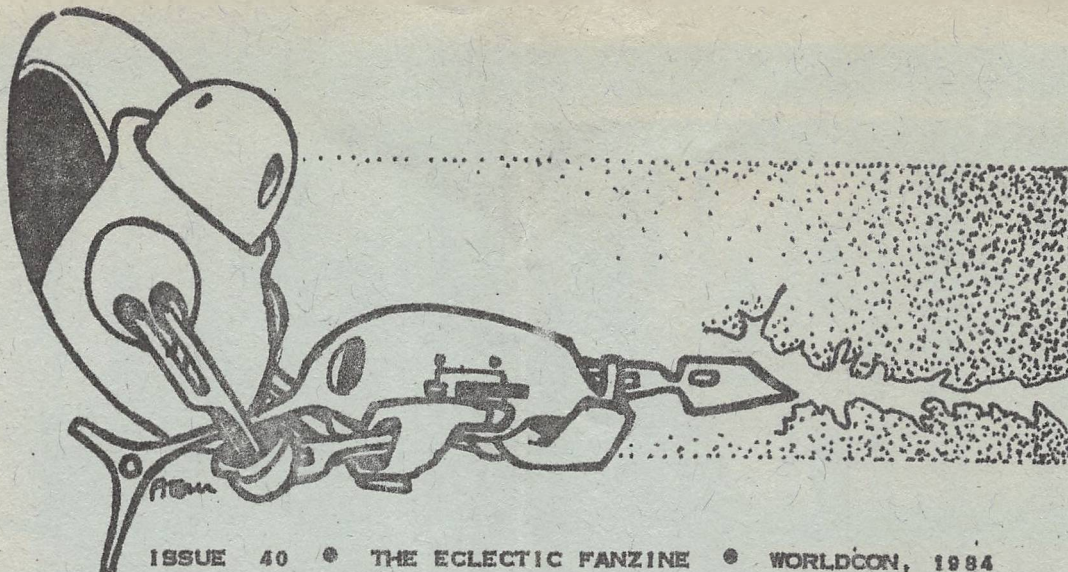
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**A Stalking the Wild Skewed Contact Creation; a subdivision of Adoxography, Ink.**

# OUTLINE



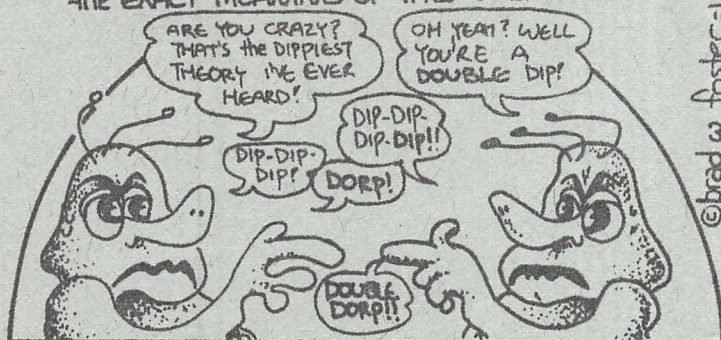
## U.S. SPACE PROGRAM COMMUNICATIONS

THE ON-GOING COMMUNICATIONS MONITORING OF THE MARTIAN SCIENCE COUNCIL HAS RESULTED IN A HUGE COLLECTION OF RECORDINGS OF EARTH'S CAPSULE/CONTROL RADIO TRAFFIC. AN EXAMPLE FROM THE EARLY 1960'S (EARTH-TIME):

CONTROL — "IT'S ALMOST TIME, WALLY.  
HOW YOU FEELING UP THERE?"

SCHIRRA — "ALRIGHT... BUT I'D FEEL A LOT BETTER IF I WEREN'T SITTING ON TOP OF THREE HUNDRED THOUSAND PARTS MADE BY THE LOWEST BIDDER.."

MARTIAN SCIENTISTS ARE STILL DEBATING THE EXACT MEANING OF THIS EXCHANGE.



**Call For Entries:** ...working plans call for two more issues before year's end, which will bring us to January, 1985, ConFusion & Corflu (whichever/if either I decide to attend), and a little number titled *Outworlds 43*. The 15th Annish. Send me your Best. ...and I will do my Personal Best, by you.  
Deadline: Thanksgiving. (December 1, for the Real World...and Canada.)

**A Tale of Two Badges:** "Oh, he's okay. After all, I shared a bed with him last night."  
...said my fifteen-year-old ward/protégé/sister.

SPACECON 6 came off, was fun...and successful. (Rusty & I made expenses...)

Prior to the con, I asked Jackie-Registration-Causgrove to make up some badges for Rusty & I, the GoHs (Gay & Joe Haldeman), and the sortta committee: her, Bill Cavin. Sure enough, two of the badges were subtitled "Sortta Committee"; Joe & Gay's were in full color (but too dark for this format); and Rusty's said "Rusty..."

Jackie, apparently in a mood to do everything twice, made me two badges. But she gave me the one on your right (below) to wear.

Thanks, Jackie. For everything. (...really!)

...and for those who had excused \*leave\* to Oklahoma, Louisville & Elsewhere: It's okay...All Is Forgiven...please come back: SPACECON 7---July 19-21, 1985. ---Bill

ALDRIN-ARMSTRONG-COLLINS

ALDRIN-ARMSTRONG-COLLINS

BILL

BOWERS

Co-CHAIR-SPACECON 6

15<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY-LUNAR LANDING

BILL

BOWERS

Co-CHAIR-SPACECON 6

41<sup>ST</sup> ANNIVERSARY-NATAL LANDING



# Dave Locke's



## Dialog with Two Fans:



# a chat with Buck Coulson

ANYTHING THAT MIGHT NORMALLY be mentioned by way of introduction to Robert S. Coulson is already included in the body of this Dialog. It comes out along the way. For most of you it doesn't make any never mind, anyway. You already know Buck or know of him, and an introduction would be superfluous to you.

My acquaintance with Buck goes back to 1961 when I blurged into fandom: I came in, and there he was. I met him, I got his & Juanita's *Vandro*, and later I was doing a column for *Vandro* and exchanging occasional letters and shooting the shit at the infrequent meeting. I even visited the Coulson Mansion once, and boggled at the various things there are to see.

Buck, and Juanita, are Eclectifen. As Buck wrote in *Mainstream* #9, October 1983:

*"I've just realized why I can never be a trufan. The trufan has a well-developed social consciousness; he/she worries about the state of fandom, as well as the problems attendant upon all these fakefans standing around isolated while aping their betters.*

*"Eclectifen soon find out they don't fit anywhere!" Funny, that never happened to Juanita and me and we've encompassed fanzines, conventions, filking, *Star Trek* in the early days, becoming dirty pros, huckstering...is there anything we've missed? We even got invited to a Dorsai Thing once, but didn't go; as I recall, I'd already used up my vacation time. (Oh, yes, I'm a stf collector, too...and Juanita has this file cabinet full of Golden Age comics...) Okay, we're not masqueraders, though I did participate in one masquerade and have been a judge at two others, and Juanita has judged several. (My one masquerade appearance, by the way, was in a *Star Trek* costume--no, not with the ears. I poked the side of the villains, naturally. No, not Klingons, either.) And we collect fan and pro art..."*

Buck Coulson, as I know him--and I don't admit to knowing him as well as those who see him most often--is a fan who enjoys his shtick. The image he bears, and plays at fostering, is that of one of fandom's resident hardasses. While Buck can be as much of a hardass as the best of them when occasion demands, it doesn't take long to see behind the party mood and recognize a person who is much more balanced than the

occasional image-tending would allow. In general: I find him a sensible man, possessed of a wide variety of interests including a great depth of knowledge in history and natural history as a consequence of being a buff and one of the most-read (goes beyond well-read) people I know, a person who speaks his mind without excitement or deep passion or acidity, who speaks clearly and without great embellishment, who delights in discovering the offbeat, has little patience with bullshit and naivete, and who enjoys finding people to discuss mutual interests. He is neither argumentative nor dedicatedly purposeful, his writing style betrays a droll light touch even when he's riding his shtick, and he always has time for anyone who makes a reasonable approach. Buck strikes me as an interesting, down to earth person who is as much an institution in fandom as the propeller beanie. The casual joke is that Buck's motto is *End Discrimination, Hate Everybody*, but I know for a fact that he's never killed anyone worth knowing.

It's time for me to crank up the temporal drive and travel back to a few months ago when I began this hot-typewriter dialog with Buck. My typewriter is in Cincinnati, Ohio. Buck's is in Hartford City, Indiana. Let us begin.

• • •

DAVE: You've been a fan since before dirt was invented, and when I gafiated and had my back turned for a couple of years you became a pro while I wasn't looking. Let's ignore the professional writing for a long moment and focus on the crifanac. What is your personal view of fandom and which of its activities do you enjoy the most?

BUCK: What do you mean, I've been a fan for so long? It's a damn conspiracy; the Worldcon just stuck me on a panel with a bunch of the people who invented fandom, like I was part of their generation. It's only been 30 years; that's not too many....okay, so it's 31 years. I was a rank neo in 1952, and there had already been 6 or 7 fandoms before me. Okay, my personal view of fandom: It's a good place to meet friends. I'm not sure I care much for any of fandom's



activities; my preferred fannish activity is meeting friends and occasionally finding new ones. "Meeting" in the broad sense; via person or mail. One of our reasons for going to Baltimore is to meet Susan Schwartz; she's probably the only close friend of ours whom we haven't met in person yet. Fanzine publishing and con-going are both for the same purpose; I think I prefer meeting people by mail first, so fanzine publishing probably has the edge.

DAVE: I think I prefer meeting fans by mail first, also. Interestingly enough, or perhaps not, I've never met a fan I disliked in print and then liked in person. The reverse has happened: some fans I liked in print I didn't much care for in person, for whatever reason (taste buds, probably).

This is one of the things, likely unique to fandom, which I've been fortunate having over two decades to observe: the relationship between a written personality and the balance of the owner it came from. I find these observations ever intriguing, and follow each development as it unfolds. The first fan I ever met, a correspondent back in 1961, turned out to be an individualist who liked to fuck cows. He told me all about it when I got out there. His deaf mom sat with us, knitting and smiling. This experience may have focused my perceptions early in being aware of this interesting aspect to fandom, but unfortunately it set a high-water mark that hasn't been reached since.

Any high-water marks for you? Who most surprised you with the difference between how you had perceived them and how they turned out to be?

BUCK: Yeah, I've met fans who were interesting in print but not in person; none who were interesting in person but not in print. Generally, though, I think that letters are a good introduction to people. Differences in person and print...offhand I can't think of any major ones. I've met fans who were aggressive in print but shy in person, but usually I don't care much for either facet so I'm not even sure I could name one now. I suppose the biggest initial difference was in Gene DeWeese. When we first got acquainted, he wrote voluminous letters to loads of people but would barely say two words in a face-to-face contact. (A friend of mine met him once, and after he'd left, asked, "Does he talk?") But Gene loosened up in subsequent contacts, so there wasn't that much difference in real personality. Also, I met Gene in person before I'd had many letters from him. No, I can't really think of anyone who harbored any deep dark secrets not revealed in letters.

DAVE: Not deep, dark secrets. Just differences. I've heard for example that, without meeting the person, in the steadily receding long ago you introduced someone to Chicago fandom who proved to have unacceptable social graces (at least, to Chicago fandom). I've even heard that this was the reason you wanted to meet Jackie Causgrove (then Franke) before exposing her to fannish joys other than writing letters to Buck Coulson. I would assume your earlier correspondent must have displayed significant differences in persona between the ink and the presence, and that's the kind of thing I mean.

Care to take another whack at it, or to tell the story of the correspondent who bombed in Chicago, or to respond to Bill Bowers' accusation that you and Juanita were responsible for getting him into fandom?

BUCK: To be honest, I don't remember what the woman was like in print. I'm not even sure that I got an impression; she may have just written to ask if there was a club in the Chicago area. I got a fair number of questions like that when *Vandro* was monthly, and gave out a fair number of addresses. So, this one happened to be a nerd, according to Chicago fandom.

I never got all that much of an impression of her in person because I never talked to her much; said hello at a few cons is about all. (Chicago fandom is undoubtedly correct, but I can't say from my own knowledge that there was any difference between the in-person and print personalities. I got such a strong reaction from Chicago fans that I was very careful for awhile about recommending the club to prospective members.) Maybe that's why I don't notice personality changes; I just don't pay a lot of attention to most fans. Unless they strongly attract or repel me, they could have a change in personality and I wouldn't know it.

Well, Bowers says that Juanita and I got him into fandom; that's his story and he's stuck with it. (I wouldn't know if he'd had any other fan contacts before he wrote us; I never did attend all the conventions or read all the fanzines. I take his word for it.) Same way I take George Scithers' word for the fact that we were his first fannish contacts and responsible for his succeeding career.

DAVE: *Vandro* is an institution in fandom, and a Hugo winner, and still one of the most readable zines that passes through my mailbox. It's even older than your son, who is an adult now. After all these years and all those issues, despite a lengthening interim between issues in recent years, you and Juanita are still doing it. How do you view it these days, how did you view it in the beginning, and what are some of the major high and low points in its history that you've had to enjoy, contend with, or live through?

BUCK: Low points? I can't recall any, for *Vandro*... Except maybe right now, when it's been almost a year since we've published. Right now I view it as an overdue obligation, like an unpaid bill, but when we're on a more or less regular schedule it's just one of our activities. Not quite like setting out the milk bottles in the morning (I think that was Tucker's phrase) but a major part of keeping in touch with people. In the beginning--well, I wasn't there in the beginning, but when I first started writing for it with issue #11, it was a chance to get my idea of humor down on paper, a chance to visit with DeWeese and bounce puns off each other; we used to write our fanzine material by the alternate paragraph method, though it was never quite that formal. Editing was just something I got saddled with when I married. Juanita; my first editorial was a half-page long and "written more or less under protest". I got over that attitude, though. High points? Well...finding out that book publishers send free books to fanzine reviewers. Discovering Liz Fishman, George Scithers, and Jackie Causgrove. (George, incidentally, started out in *Vandro* and fandom as a cartoonist.) Meeting a good share of our close friends. (All of our good friends came out of fandom; not all of them came via *Vandro*.) I suppose getting on the final Hugo ballot in each of the first 10 years that there was a final ballot isn't exactly a point, but... As far as quality goes, we haven't had points, we've had cycles. Every letter I've received from a new reader saying "Where have you been all my life?" is a high point.

DAVE: I understand that *Vandro* is going to be printed, not mimeoed, in the future. What's the story? Is Juanita developing one arm that's twice the size of her other arm?

BUCK: For some reason, Juanita finds it difficult to write successful novels, cook meals, clean house, take care of the garden, keep up her guitar practice and singing, and do most of the stencil-cutting and all the mimeographing of a monthly *Vandro*. I guess she's getting old.



DAVE: Must be. Of course, as Dean Grennell points out, that's better than the alternative.

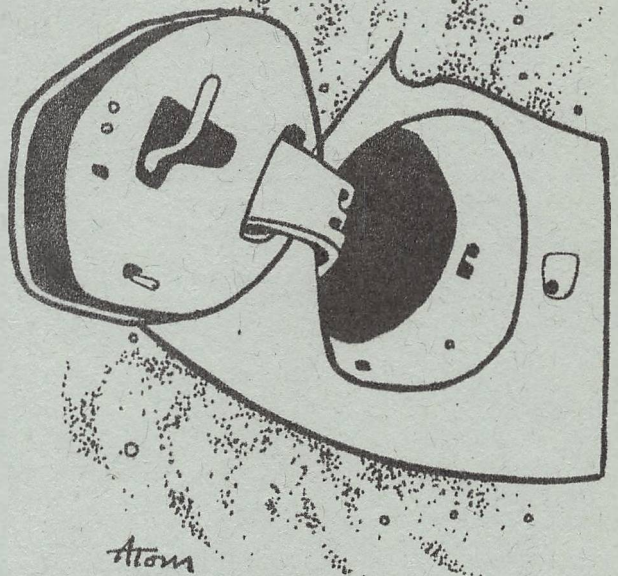
You've reviewed more fanzines than anyone I know or have heard of. Though in general I find virtually all fanzine reviews not worth reading for one reason or another--usually because they're so damned uninteresting or ambitiously inept, or both--yours I've always enjoyed. In fact, I thought the second and last issue of *Devlin's Review*, your short-lived fanzine review zine, was the most interesting fanzine I read in the year it came out. Independent of that judgement, Jackie expressed the same feeling, and I've encountered similar statements of appreciation from other fans. Speak to the subject of *Devlin's*, how it came about and the nature of its short life, and to the matter of how you approach fanzine reviewing.

BUCK: *Devlin's Review*. Well, I explained it pretty much at the time. I was getting so many fanzines that they took up too much space in *Vandro* and I thought that putting the fanzine reviews in a separate publication would solve the problem. It didn't; it created so much extra work that the first issue gave me a mild trauma and the second issue only came out because I'd promised fanzine editors that it would. I've never been fond of fanzine reviews; mine or anyone else's. I did them out of a sense of obligation to the editors who sent zines. After *Devlin's* I decided that the only way to keep the fanzine reviews from crowding out more interesting material in *Vandro* was to not review everything.

DAVE: It has been said that you like to eat neofans for breakfast and pick your teeth with crudzines. I even recall a Bob Tucker arkle entitled *THE HEART IN HARTFORD CITY* which enumerated your charms in this regard. There's a story concerning that arkle. Tell it, and anything else that comes to mind on this facet of your shtick in general.

BUCK: Ah yes, *THE HEART IN HARTFORD CITY*. Published by Linda Bushyager. Only fanzine I ever got with a rather nervous letter of explanation enclosed. Linda said afterward that she knew the article was a joke, but the letter sure didn't sound that way. Tucker was a trifle disgusted at the next con we both attended; he thought Linda was taking it seriously, too. I particularly enjoyed a comment in the next issue from Mike Glicksohn, saying in effect "he's not that bad"; I suspect Mike was taking it seriously, too, but he *might* have been going along with the gag. When I told Don A. Thompson about it, he said it was too bad that he wasn't taking the fanzine, because he would have written in saying "He is too that bad!" Other aspects... Sandra Miesel confessed that at the first con she and John attended, I was pointed out to them but they were afraid to come up and speak to me. And when Dave Jenrette and his wife attended a Midwestcon several years ago, Dave's wife admitted that there were several midwestern fans that she hadn't been too keen on meeting, and I was one of them. (On the other hand, several fans have said they look on me as a father figure--though I suppose if I wasn't around there's always Darth Vader.) And at one Midwestcon, I was with a group including Don A. Thompson, Bob Gaines, Bill Conner, and one or two others, when Ed Wood came up. Don and I talked to him; the others quickly left. Afterwards, Don was muttering, "Here we are, the two hardest-nosed reps in fandom, and we're the only two willing to put up with Ed; something's wrong." One thing about a reputation like mine; there's very little that Ted White can say about me that my friends haven't said first.

DAVE: I remember a time when you were grumping about the Faan Awards, and Glycer interviewed you on that point. He commented that these were peer awards,



and you demurred, after which he asked you who you felt your peers were. You responded "Dave Locke", and I remember losing a mouthful of coffee when I read that. Probably I was as insulted as you were, or at least as amused, or more likely my name came immediately to your mind because I was as publicly grumpy about the Faan Awards as you were. In any event, there's very little that Ted White can say about you because he's even more of a grump than you are. I must admit, though, that it was beyond the pale even for Ted White when he called you a liar because you said you mailed him two copies of *Vandro* and he never got them. I doubt there's a fan alive or dead who hasn't had fanzines lost by the post office (in my case--alive, I think--the post office has not only eaten copies of the Coulsons' zine but Ted White's zines as well), and considering your reaction--which was to cut Ted White out of your life--is it correct that you've never had your balls frosted that much in fandom before?

BUCK: Later in the Faan Awards squabble, Roy Tackett claimed me as *his* peer, and I agreed to that assessment... On the rest, I give you alternate answers: take your pick:

1. Who's Ted White?
2. No, it wasn't a single instance as much as a culmination of petty annoyances, and I decided that Ted was no longer being very amusing or interesting, and why the hell was I putting up with him? So I quit doing it. But it wasn't a reaction to one event. After all, Jack Chalker once said that I was unfit to be a member of the human race, and I didn't quit speaking to Jack (though I did start laughing).

DAVE: That seems relatively clear enough. Even highly understandable. I wonder, though, about the concept of "putting up with" people in general fanzine fandom (as opposed to in an apa, which is built on a roster). Ignoring someone here is easy and generally not even detectable, because there are no obligations to address anyone as we parade in front of each other. Unless we come right out and say that we're going to pretend someone doesn't exist any longer, it's doubtful anyone would notice. In other areas of fandom--apas, cons, local activities--it's impossible to quietly ignore someone without everyone being aware



that you're doing it.

BUCK: Oh, I never claimed to *quietly* ignore someone I was fed up with. (Or at least, I don't think I did; if I did, I lied.)

DAVE: I can't resist doing this to you. Indulge the fantasy. Hundreds of neofans have gathered around a guru who sits atop a mountain peak, and are waiting to hear his proverb and give it to the world, or at least to fandom. You play the guru. Bear in mind they already know such basics as "never type a ditto master before removing the crudsheet", and "please don't write around the illos". What wisdom would you pass on to them, oh Guru?

BUCK: Okay; my Words of Wisdom: Fandom is never going to put any bread in your mouth (and science fiction probably won't, either), so quit taking it so Goddamned seriously. Either it's fun, or it's nothing.

DAVE: The guru speaks a core truth and says it well. For that matter, you've said it all. We're still free to dream. What is it you would like to see, given full range of your druthers, when you open the mailbox and look inside at fanzine fandom?

BUCK: That's a two-parter, really; my druthers on opening the mailbox are (1) seeing a check for a manuscript I've submitted, (2) discovering a free review copy of a book I've heard about and decided that I *must* read, (3) getting a letter from Susan Schwartz, Bob Briney, Lee Hoffman, Jackie Causgrove, Joe Hensley, Roger Waddington, Dave Piper, or a dozen or so other people, or (4) if you really want to fantasize, receiving a card that announces "You have just won the XXXXX Sweepstakes". But if you want to restrict it to fanzines... (any fanzine ranks below the above items) then I'd love to see *Hyphen*, *Destiny*, anything from Bob Leman, *Scottishe*, or a genzine from Grennell. For current fanzines, I suppose I enjoy *Debris*, *Stefantasy*, *Groggy*, *Amra*, *Dynatron*, *Wahf-Full*, and *Weber Woman's Revenge* the most.

DAVE: That's a wide spectrum of fanzines. What is the common denominator that ties them all together within your taste?

BUCK: Why do I like all these divergent fanzines? Damfino. Basically, I think, it's because the editors are obviously having fun, and also making their enjoyment amusing to the reader.

DAVE: If this isn't the same reason anyone else likes a particular fanzine, it's probably close enough.

Who should be driven from the glades of gafia, if only to stay in touch?

BUCK: I dunno...Bob Leman would probably be my first

I WILL NEVER  
DISSOLVE A FANZINE  
IN ICHOR AGAIN



choice. Then Willis, the Irish John Berry, Earl Kemp. Grennell hasn't exactly gaffiated, so I can't exactly list him.

DAVE: If you had it to do over again, what would you? Let the question arbitrarily confine you to fandom.

BUCK: If I had it to do over again, I'd probably do it pretty much the same. Only "might have been" I can think of is that I should have done more pro writing in the one 3-month period I was off work, when I first discovered that I had high blood pressure. No regrets for anything I've done in fandom. I might well have discovered it sooner, but that leads to all sorts of ramifications, and I'm pretty satisfied the way things are, fannishly.

DAVE: Let's investigate the poles. What do you like best about fandom, and what do you dislike the most?

BUCK: Like best? Finding people with mutual interests, senses of humor...compatibility in general. Like least? Finding that all the interesting people at the con are at the filksing, where I can't talk to them. (This is assuming that I'm in a mood to talk instead of taping music.)

DAVE: Are all the interesting people at cons usually in the filksing? How distressing. Where do I go for voice lessons, or isn't it required that I be able to carry a tune? My own tendency at a con is to stay in the bar, waiting for enough fans to come in so we can shove tables together and start a bar-con, though I do sing out when it's time for another round.

BUCK: No, all the interesting people aren't *usually* in the filksing, but there have been times when everyone I wanted to talk to was either singing or listening. (You don't need to sing; the singers appreciate an audience. But a listening audience, not a talking one.) And of course, late at night, most of the sober people are in the filksing, and drunks are automatically uninteresting to talk to, no matter how brilliant they are when sober. That's why I mostly stay out of the bar; drunks are only amusing to other drunks. (No, not everyone in a bar is a drunk, but you have to admit the proportions are higher. Also bars are too goddamned noisy for decent conversation, a good share of the time.)

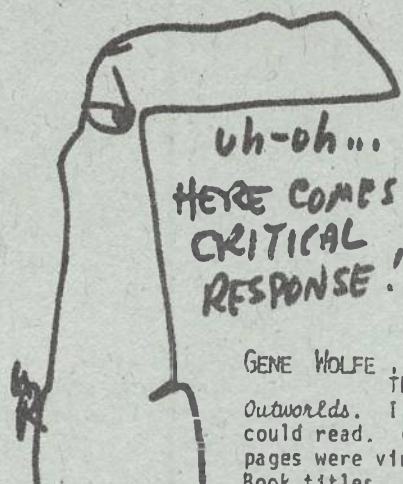
DAVE: Well, the hotel bar is usually quieter and more comfortable than the room parties. Not to mention the filksings... My own tendency was to start or join a barcon or two during the course of the afternoon, and then wander off to other things when it either broke up or had more than about ten tables pushed together. In the evening I'd play serendipity with the room parties. Then I'd go to bed and get up in the morning in time to say goodnight to most everyone else. This approach served me well, and had the added benefit that I could slide into Monday with minimal transition problems and without looking like death warmed over. I can remember cons in the early and mid Sixties where I had to go back to work just to rest up. These days I go to Midwestcon for a Saturday, and maybe a Friday evening, and do things like standing around talking to people like you. I take that back. There is no one quite like you in fandom, if we don't count Roy Tackett.

BUCK: An awful lot of hotel bars aren't quieter than room parties, because they have a jukebox, or a radio, or a tv, or a live orchestra in the fancier places. At parties, I can usually at least hear the person I'm talking to; there









GENE WOLFE

Thanks for sending *Outworlds*. I enjoyed the parts I could read. (No kidding, some pages were virtually unreadable. Book titles, in particular, tended to fade away even when the

surrounding material could be deciphered.)

Don D'Amassa mentions "the L. Frank Baum Society." Does he mean The International Wizard of Oz Club? I'm a member, but I never heard of an L. Frank Baum Society.

Don's comments regarding women's rights reminded me of Lysurgus's reply to the Athenian who complained that the laws of Sparta were insufficiently democratic: "So, you believe in democracy? Institute it in your family." Oddly enough, Sparta, the most authoritarian state in history (a Spartiate would have considered the Nazis dangerous liberals) gave women more rights than any other Greek state. Women in Athens could not own property, for example, or make a valid contract, although an Athenian from the 5th Century B.C. would consider the U.S. a tyranny. 7/10/84

...I thought I'd had problems in getting OW37 run off in time to take to ConFusion. They were as nothing compared to the Perils of 38. I had it all organized for a change, and then the mimeo broke, denying me the weekend before Midwestcon, while it was being repaired. So I trotted up to Causgrove, Ink, the Monday before Midwestcon--and promptly broke it again. A day later, after a combined total of well over \$500 in repairs, it turned out that I had somehow ... screwed up in stencilling the second half of the issue--whether because of the cheapie stencils or some unknown changing of the adjustments on this typer I'll never know, but by then it had become a matter of simply Getting It Out. ...and when I was up there Thursday night, while the pre-con party was in full swing at the hotel...the Causgrove-Locke Seleotrio died.

...Fanzine Publishing...who needs it? Well, I do --but sometimes I wonder why I couldn't develop some other simple and intellectually rewarding hobby...like being a biker, organizing Worldcon bids for other fans' cities...or simply being a Fanwriter. "Sigh"

I do apologize for the appearance of OW38; I was not pleased.

DON D'AMASSA

Many thanks for the kind words about *Mythologies* 15. I confess to a bit of hubris about *Mythologies*: I've always thought I had the most interesting lettercolumn around.

*Outworlds* 38 was fun as well. Ian Covell's comment about overheard conversations reminded me of a story told by Bennett Cerf. He was riding a bus one day, sitting behind two women. One of the women suddenly turned to the other and said, without explanation: "Poor Alfred burst in the pool yesterday." I'd love to know what they were talking about.

The volume of stuff I collect is its major drawback. With 30,000 books, 1300 record albums, 300 tapes, 200 video game cartridges, a stamp collection,

my files of letters, my board game collection, and my fanzines, I daren't ever move again in my life. The last move brought us into a 14 room house with a detached four car garage. The garage has been boxed in, electrified, and is being converted into my office, library and storage area. I expect to be crowded even there, but I have an acre of land to expand the building into at some time in the future.

Delayed letters. I have a good one for you. Back in 1964-1968, I was attending Michigan State University, shuttling back and forth between there and my home in Rhode Island. Sometimes mail wouldn't catch up with me for some time. One batch ended up in a box and didn't get opened until the very late 1970's. One of those letters was from someone named Tony Lewis mentioning that some Boston area fans were thinking of forming a New England SF Club, and would I be interested in helping to organize it? And that is how I escaped being a charter member of NESFA. 7/6/84

...I don't even want to hear about it, Don. Do you realize that my entire 'apartment' could probably fit comfortably within the confines of your 'garage'? If I were short of stature (I understand some people are) I would be in deep shit. Fortunately I've been able to expand vertically...and thus am only knee-high (? or 8 feet) in shit. I'm going to move. Eventually...

MIKE GLICKSOHN

Today being the "official" national holiday of Canada and hence the first day of my nine week vacation and also the first July long weekend I've spent in Toronto since 1974, I thought I'd spend most of it seeing whether or not I can still write the sort of locs I used to dash off to OW at the drop of an issue. (I mean an *Outworlds*, not *Megen*.) Besides, you hinted less-than-subtly that there's something in the issue that will strike a chord with me: I hope I'll recognize it as I read the issue page by page and comment as I go...

Hmmm...I wonder if there'd be any money in my publishing special Annotated *Outworlds* checklists after each of your issues appears? I feel confident that people like Ian Covell and perhaps two or three others would pay handsomely for an additional insert telling them "The woman on page 1339 is \_\_\_\_\_", or "The illegal act referred to on page 1287 was \_\_\_\_\_". On the other hand, I'd have to make at least half of it up and who really cares enough to pay for such information anyway? I'll stick to watching the Bluejays and leave your title as The Wizard of Esoterica unbesmirched.

Unless Ian has a truly bizarre definition of "romantic love" I find myself wondering how he manages to be a science fiction fan at all. The number of sf books I've read lately that dealt in any significant way with romantic love is negligible and without doing too intense an analysis of the sf field as a whole I'd guess that the great majority of science fiction relegates romantic love to the very back of the bus. If that's all Ian looks for in a book he can't enjoy much science fiction, even if he forces himself to read it.

As an aside, I note that as I read through these letters I could easily reply to much more than I'm going to. In the old days I might have thought "Well, what's my reaction to that comment?" whereas today I'm thinking "Does that comment create a reaction in me that's important enough to put on paper?" Much more than it once was the answer is "no". Since I doubt that the content of OW has altered significantly in intelligence level and interest over the years, I suppose the changes must be in me. And that's why you've not been hearing from me lately: it isn't that the material in OW is less interesting or enjoyable but rather that my own reactions to it are more low-key than they once were. End of aside.



I don't understand Ian's comment that 'hse' is the best literary asexual abbreviation but not the best vocal. Doesn't he pronounce the words he reads, albeit mentally not physically? I certainly do. Which is why I grind to a halt when I'm reading and encounter any of these ugly and, to me, unnecessary neologisms.

I was amused by the flow of this first installment of the lettercol. Ted to Larry to Bill to Billy to me, all with "cute" tie-ins, if obscure as hell. If you can't have fun with your own fanzine, what's the purpose of it all, eh?

I was more than a little amazed to read that Little Larry Downes had never read 1984 until now although I admire his determination in waiting until this particular year to enjoy that classic. In just seventeen more years he's got a hell of a movie to enjoy!

You will note that I requested material that was "interesting and commentworthy" to spark locs. This is a conjunction (in logic) or an intersection (in mathematics) and as an educated man you know that *both* parts must be satisfied for the entire description to be satisfied. There was much in the issue that was interesting and much that was commentworthy but little that fulfilled the double description. So I never got around to writing that loc I mentally composed as I read the issue, and I apologize for seeming to have slighted your very worthy Annish. But then again, how many locs did *you* ever send me?

It doesn't surprise me that I didn't see the apparent discrepancy in your pagination. I never notice such trivial details of a fanzine. I can rarely remember the number of an issue I particularly liked (nor do I remember the number of the issue of my *own* fanzine that contained favorite material) because such information simply isn't important to me. It's the content of a fanzine that is or can be memorable (along with the presentation as a secondary consideration) and the rest of it is important only to the editor. Which is the way it should be.

Norm needn't worry, Alex isn't "tall and ugly". Why, he's about as short as I am!

I see Norm has already come up with the idea of an Annotated *Outworlds* such as I suggested earlier in this letter. (There *is* nothing new under the sheets.) And I enjoyed the full and complete description of one of the esoteric comments that had baffled him in an earlier issue. However, it showed me what a foolish idea we'd had. At over half a page for a six word comment, annotating a typical issue of *Outworlds* would require an issue the size of the WASH! Hell, let 'em eat esoterica! (Say, does Naomi and/or ----- get OW? Does he *know*?)

I'd agree with you that Al Curry, that crazy Scottish friend of ours, is little different on-stage than off. This is probably because his off-stage personality is so completely bizarre as to be fictitious anyway! And I *do* admire the way he (and Lyn) confronts life as an ever-new, ever-exciting challenge. I know of no other couple who handle poverty with such enormous *panache*!

The first half of the issue was eminently well printed, old perfectionist buddy, but much of the second half verges on the unreadable, so spotty is the inking. Unless you deliberately picked out the worst copy to punish me for not writing to you, this may well be the worst issue of OW in many years as far as production values go. But as I read somewhere recently, "yesterdays luxuries...are today's clutter."

I'm sure even Avedon is willing to admit that any statement she makes could be contradicted by specific counterexamples but she continues to make them because they are *generally* true. It does lead to argumentative reactions, though.

Ian should try Resnick's more recent sf, written under his own name. I have little enthusiasm for most

of Malzberg but I thoroughly enjoy Mike's story-telling ability. His novels may be primarily entertainment but they are good reading with good plots and well-conceived characters and that's important to me.

I hope Buck's definition of "fannish" never becomes definitive because I wouldn't qualify. And I'd hate to have to give back all my souvenirs and awards from fandom.

I doubt that Americans are any less sensitive to the structure of fandom than other fans but because American fandom is *so* much larger than any other fandom, the chances of finding fans who aren't aware of fannish history, structure or context is larger than with other fandoms. Fannish fans in America are still active, but the chances of an overseas fan encountering them is reduced because their mailing lists are naturally less flexible being tied to the active core of American fannish fandom and already-established overseas fannish fans.

A casual reading of Jerry Kaufman's letter might almost lead one to the conclusion that Jerry was suggesting changes in the way you do OW because it no longer made much sense to him. Of course, we all know that Jerry knows that you don't publish OW so the readers can figure out what's going on so he'd never make such an outrageous suggestion. And if it's any consolation to Jerry, many of us who still spend time with you at cons don't understand OW in its entirety so it's understandable that a refugee from Seattle might be somewhat baffled.

Your answer to Lichtman about children so closely expressed my own feelings on the matter that I had to re-check the typeface to make sure it was you talking and not a loc from me you'd chosen to quote from. I was particularly impressed by your observation that excusing public or private obnoxious behaviour by children with "ah, he/she's just a kid" is a completely unacceptable rationalization for failing to do one's job as a parent. Somewhat like you, I accepted long ago that I lacked the interest and/or ability to handle that most challenging of responsibilities properly so I made sure I'd not have children. As a teacher, an adult and a fan, I frequently wish a few more people would demonstrate that degree of self-awareness.

Most fanzine fans are aware that Harry Warner has had a few stories published but I've never encountered any of them. So it was interesting to read that he's writing again with at least a thought towards professional publication. I'd very much like to see some of Harry's pro sf because it would have to be radically different in style from his locs and that thought intrigues me. Were somebody to ask me, "Which science fiction personality have you read the greatest number of words from?" (Interviewers almost always tend to ask illiterate questions when delving into our microcosm) I'd probably have to say Harry Warner. And of course none of it was fiction. Unless you count some of Harry's excuses for not having responded to a given faned within the last forty eight hours. I hope he gets that final draft written and the work submitted, just to give us another side of his way with words.

I'm not sure I follow the connection between "social misfits in fandom" and "males tend to have beards" that DD'A makes. Personally, I have a beard because I'm too lazy to shave every morning. Perhaps Don would care to expand on his theme? All the time remembering, of course, that he probably weighs less than many of the beards he'll be talking about...

The loc from George Martin is as good a letter as I've read in a fanzine in years. It's a damned shame that George writes so infrequently but I'm absolutely delighted he was moved to write this time, at length and so eloquently. As Doris might say to George, "Oh flow."

Well, I've read the whole issue, spent five hours of a perfectly lovely holiday indoors reacting to something you've done (and what have you done for me



lately?) and I'm damned if I know why I'm supposed to respond to the issue. Could it be the typo in my address? Could even Bowers be that Machiavellian?

What's not in this issue? Hmm...the answer is clearly not "restricted comprehensibility", "typos", "artwork", "personal esoterica" or even "outside contributions". Perhaps it's "editorial changes"? "Steven Leigh"? "Leah Zeldes"? and, naturally, "Dave Locke". There are so many correct answers how can anybody select just one? 7/2/84

...wrong, oh giver of tests: there may be several acceptable answers, but there is only one "correct" response. Prior to OW38, Dave had been present in each of the "new" series of Outworlds. (Ironically, I seem to have broken, inadvertently, a lengthy Brad Foster "string" with the publication of OW39...) • You may well know (you should) who "The woman on page 1339 is \_\_\_\_\_" but since I am neither present on, nor referenced in the course of page 1287 (and nothing either Dave or Walt brought up is illegal, even in Cincinnati) -- I suspect your proposed Annotated OW would come up rather short factually... • Indeed, Naomi gets OW; she even makes occasional noises about responding to it. ~~But then, Naomi had always been more of a bystander.~~ Perhaps, I shall persuade her to stand for TAFF in '87, against Cesar Ignacio Ramos, before the Vast OW Readership begins to doubt her reality. • As for her 'friend', no he doesn't get OW, and she is under oath not to lend her copies to him. As he is one of the two Cincinnati "area" fans who I would not permit to enter my abode (the other is one of the two "locals" [still] on the Cinoy in 88 bid), it would be illogical to give him my fansine. Illogical even for me. And that is why, Mike, even though you used his 'name' when you wrote, he became a 'blank' when transcribed: it's not a matter of censorship or even 'esoterica'-- it's simply a matter of Good Taste. • Having just seen you, while pausing for a weekend in the task of moving your words from one shade of blue paper to another, and having had to straighten out your failure to understand a perfectly logical fansine numbering system, I'm beginning to suspect that part of the problem is that you no longer read my fansine (even though I read every word of every fansine you've published in, say, the last four & a half years) but simply skim them. But that's okay...most of us are getting older... • Sure, I'll write you a letter... When you do something interesting and commentworthy. (I'm not sure which describes your attributing my 17th-published fansine as My First...but I'm reasonably sure it doesn't fulfil both parts of the conjunction...)

#### RICHARD BRANDT

Ian Covell notes on p 1362 that the UK government is using pigs in ballistics research. (Hmmm...remember the old Beatles lyric: "See how they run like pigs from a gun, see how they fly..."). A photographer here at the station, ex-Army, told me about some of his Ranger training while we were waiting to give blood once. In addition to taking their own blood, they were required to have some hands-on experience dealing with catastrophic ballistic-weapon injuries. So their trainers shot goats in the legs with high-powered rifles, leaving the trainees to repair the damage as best they could.

Your tax dollars at work.

George RR Martin on Malzberg: Just who are these egregious hacks he's stacked next to on the shelves, anyway? In any case, I think he's not entirely correct on Malzberg's failure to create human characters. He doesn't create many, because nearly every Malzberg story is written first-person, and every character is perceived through the filtering perceptions of that viewpoint character. If Malzberg characters are

stereotypes, it may be that they're only seen displaying those attributes the viewpoint character perceives; at least they are usually recognizable types. If the viewpoint character is always a mouthpiece for the author, then Malzberg must be a complex and borderline psychotic man with a tenuous hold on reality. At his best, Malzberg depicts this type of character very well. (It's just that he keeps trying to repeat his best performances in endless variations. The words have been changed to protect the publisher.) I keep wondering what Barry's porn novels can be like, though. Enough sercon. 7/84

I must admit, despite the damage it will do to my well-deserved reputation as a perceptive and with-it fanned, that it wasn't until after OW38 was out that I happened by a newsstand where one of George's books was racked next to...a couple of Barry's... It was then that the incentive for (as opposed to the substance of) George's letter made sense. • I understand that George took a certain amount of flack at Archon, generated by a couple of our mutual friends. I won't use their names, but it is my understanding that (assigning them the random nom de plumes, strictly for the purposes of this aside, of Denise Parsley Leigh and Terry Mats) the thrust of their thesis is that George "abused" his "position" in the field in rendering a helpless opponent. • If I didn't summarise the gist of their argument correctly, I'm sure I will receive copious amounts of verbal abuse, and I'm also reasonably certain that I'll not receive any corrections in a written-down form, from either of The Two, that I could share with you next time. • But back to the subject at hand: In a word, bullshit. I don't hate Barry, and there are a few Malzberg books on my shelves (he said, having very carefully sat out this, err, debate, to date). But it seems to me that in articles and reviews over the years, Barry has asked for more so (with the possible exceptions of Harlan and David Gerrold) than anyone the reactions he generates. In other words, he struck the match, and now he can't stand the heat. And this has little to do with the "quality" of his fiction. In my humble opinion. • I personally thought George's letter well-done, logical and, all things considered, eminently fair. I make that statement with some degree of validity: I am possibly the only viable contender (even if a distant runner-up) to Dick Geis' experience with typing up love feasts from one pro to another. • In another word: I think George's letter brilliant, and my only regret is that it was so hard for you to read, not because of his words but because of my presentation of them. • It is my understanding that Mike Resnick sent Barry a copy of George's letter, and that Barry has responded directly to George. This is fine: like I said, I have the experience and it's on my fannish resume. Barry has the right to defend himself here, but I'm just as relieved if he's willing to suffer it in silence. Dave Locke sets 'em up, I innocently put 'em out, you respond...and then I get bored... We're working on modifying this loop, but... • I do to a large degree sympathise with Mike Resnick: virtually all of the response to his 'dialog' has been about the Malzberg papers, and that's a shame. The current Resnick's are a good read, and you don't have to a) like Malzberg or b) know Mike that well...as a prerequisite. Ask me. • A Story. By Bill Bowers. I went to a Luncheon several years ago. Gahan Wilson was the GoH. As I wandered around it didn't take me long to "identify" which one was the GoH. Until the formal programming began, and when the introductions got around to Gahan Wilson...and a perfectly normal, even "straight-looking" fella walked up. Later on, I got close enough to read the nametag of the one I'd been convinced had done the decade's worth of cartoons I'd experienced in Playboy, F&SF... He wore black, and made me look overweight. The nametag read: "Barry Malzberg". This is a True Story. There is no moral...



BUCK COULSON

Pages 1363 and 1364 were missing from my copy of *Outworlds* 38. Now, I realize that nobody's perfect, and a missing sheet is nothing to get excited about. But this missing sheet HAD MY LETTER ON IT! I can only assume this is a deliberate denial of egoboo, especially since you listed my name in the back so I would be sure and notice what had been eliminated. You're vicious, Bowers. Now I suppose you'll fill the next issue with attacks on what I said, knowing that I've long forgotten what it was, and so can't defend myself. Very underhanded ~~AND IN THE BEST FANZINE TRADITION.~~

I agree with Covell; THE PRINCESS BRIDE is silly, and series and 3-part novels are to be discouraged. Frankly, I think the general attitude toward series is an example of the television mentality in fandom. TV series--in this country, at least--continue running until their ratings fall below an acceptable level. Book series--Numarest, Conan, Grimes, et al--continue until their profits decline. In both cases, the consumer (viewer or reader) seems to have the same attitude; more material about a particular set of characters is preferred to a variety of characters and backgrounds. (I make an exception for "Darkover"--though I get tired of it, too--because characters and backgrounds do vary, though some of the recent ones haven't varied much.)

We've already proved that fanzine publishing isn't genetic. Bruce talks about taking over *Vandro* when we're done with it (no, we're not), but what he's doing is running the game room at assorted conventions.

And if I said all this before, it's your fault for not including my letter so I could check. 7/12/84

...no, no, Buck! If my being in fandom is YOUR fault (as it was a few pages back), it therefore follows that nothing I do within the context of fandom is MY "fault". Though of course I'll take the credit for all the un-faultable things I've accomplished... • Undoubtedly the reason your letter was missing was that it was in the section Dave collated...and he was trying to get your attention simply to tweak you into publishing his last *Vandro*-column. The man is devious, I tell you (even to the extent of going along with you to the filking, but then sneaking out to head for the bar).

BRAD W. FOSTER

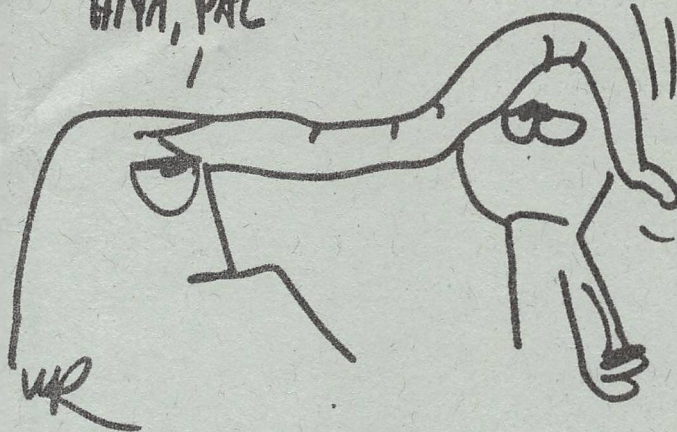
Reading the little snippets from previous issues on the cover of *Outworlds* 38 had me caught up in an almost overwhelming wish to leaf back through the past issues and try and put all these fascinating tidbits into context. Almost, that is.

Wait, what's this? A fellow confessor to be a writer of porn simply for the bucks? (What little there are, by the way.) I refer to Al Curry's loc. Makes me wonder just what percentage of writers around have put at least one of those sleazy little paperbacks under their belts in the past. Me, I just had my sixth published, and this one finally had my real name on the spine. I mean, it may be disgusting, nothing-but-sex-every-page-sleaze, but damn it, it's my disgusting, nothing-but-sex-every-page-sleaze! Actually the stuff is boring as all get-out to write, as it takes some time to fit six adjectives into a sentence when only one is really needed.

The other item missing from that report of the Dallas convention of Biblical archaeologists was the complaints of other residents of the hotel of scholars dressed up in costumes of their favorite Bible heroes, racing drunk up and down the halls and trying to walk across the surface of the hot tub.

Argh, moving into eye-strain territory here. The printing in my copy is starting to breakdown on page 1361, and glancing ahead it looks like half the remaining pages are in the same sad shape. But I shall

HIYA, PAL



plunge boldly ahead--

Surprised to see you printed my letter, which really didn't seem to have much of interest to anyone else. But then, maybe this "behind-the-scenes" of fanzine production could be of some slight interest to some. In any event, the work is completely done on the children's book, the final pages mailed off this past Monday (yes, that's the beginning of July, and don't ask why it was two months later than I'd first said. Suffice to say I've been sweating blood since March to try and get this sucker done!). Official title is "Monica the Computer Mouse", it's being published by Sybex, and is to come out this Fall, with official info of...written by Donna Bearden and illustrated by Brad W. Foster (and they left in my middle initial, bless their souls!) Unfortunately, I've long ago spent the advance on trivial things like food and rent, so back to square one again. But when it comes out, you can rush out and buy several thousand copies, as this is the first book where I've managed to get a piece of the royalty pie.

As for a new cover, funny you should ask. While working on the book, I screwed up a couple of times in laying out some pages, and ended up with perfectly fine sheets of paper with borders drawn only slightly off what they should be for the book. Not wanting to waste paper (hey, that stuff costs bucks! Well, pennies at least...), I set those aside and doodled around on them in spare moments, working up larger full-page illos with an eye toward trying to get them out as covers. I've got one here of a funny-lookin' alien type standing in front of his "farm" house...

Oh, and it's not anything "different", more along the lines of the one I did for #34. Of course, if you do go for this one, I'll have to come up with something bizarre after that again, to keep things in proper balance. Maybe we can work on a hologram...no, that's already been done...

Now, Jeanne Bowman's response to the cover was the proper attitude to take, really, in a way "getting into it". Sorry 'bout that. 7/14/84

Well, I like the "behind-the-scenes" stuff! • Sounds like an interesting cover...maybe I'll see it some day? • And I'll definitely buy a copy of 'your' book--let me know when it's out...

BILL BREIDING

(...referencing some enclosed apazines)  
You have a choice of 3 things to do with them: Read them, file them, or throw them out. I leave this to your discreet midwestern mindset.

This is kind of another pre-loc (ha--will the other real loc get written? Will I ever make the real lettercolumn of *Outworlds*?). I've skimmed #38 and the word that came immediately to mind was "brilliant"...



not as the critics use it, but in its original sense: brilliant; that is to say BRIGHT, emanating with an interior GLOW. Your cover concept was one of those that elicited jealousy pangs from a former fmz editor; "why didn't I think of that!" It was the coolest.

Your contest is just too easy. I noticed it even before coming to the list of addresses and your prodding. In fact, long before I even opened the *Outworlds* beyond its front pages I knew, I sensed it had an absence of DAVE LOCKE.

Your little grouping of time haunted friends was enjoyable...to us, but what of the rest? I was vaguely uncomfortable with that obvious personal chatter seeing print. But it functioned. It set the mood. It made me want to write you. 7/3/84

I should mention that Richard Brandt also 'guessed' the contest answer...but YOU were the first! • "Time haunted friends"... I like that. I understand that Larry will be commuting to Dallas from Chicago (rather than NYC) soon. ...and perhaps we can induce Leah to join in (it's not as if she has a job, or a con to program in January!) before we celebrate some sort of 'reunion'...at Big MAC 2...in 1988!

HARRY WARNER, JR. ....

...I suppose it would be too much to ask, but if you could just find a source of of quick-fading mimeo paper, I could leave *Outworlds* in the sunshine for three or four days and presto, I could read without difficulty the black ink on white paper. Nevertheless, I persevered, and read everything, even that sexist remark you dropped about a widow line.

Publishing a loc more than a dozen years old is the sort of thing I enjoy immensely. It enables me to compare a fan's old writing style with his present style (I can't find any great difference between the old and the new in the case of Ted White) and it appeals to me because another item has been rescued from complete oblivion and it maintains the time-binding quality of fanzines (like the ones that resume publication thirty or forty years after the apparent last issue, those that reprint lots of stuff from the past, and those that appear three or four years behind schedule, not to mention something like *Science Fiction Five Yearly*.)

I've had sad experience with the same kind of ignorant experts Bob Tucker writes about. My cousin's first husband was a journalism teacher at one of the largest state universities in the Midwest. Soon after the wedding, they came to Hagerstown to meet their local relatives and stopped at the newspaper office to see me. My cousin's husband seemed quite interested when I showed him around the newspaper plant. Before he left, he confided to me that this was something he had always wanted to do, see how a daily newspaper is published. He had been inside the buildings where weekly newspapers were published but never had he visited a daily paper due to all the time it took him to instruct students in how to work for newspapers. Then there was the Friday night when almost everyone in the news department was off duty for one reason or another. I had to do all the dummyping, headline writing, handle the news wire, serve as copy desk for local news, check the page proofs, and so on. There was only one reporter on duty, a young woman for whom it was the first day on the job. She had worked several years for the AP in a metropolitan city so the management had no hesitation me with just this one person to handle any local news that might turn up. I gave her a couple of press releases to rewrite and she looked embarrassed. "Don't expect too much," she said. "I've never written a news story in my life."

But I have doubts about the theory that the Shroud of Turin is a fake. If it had been forged in the 14th century, the image on it would conform to the assump-

tions about the Crucifixion that can be seen in many paintings and sculptures from the Middle Ages. But the image on the cloth shows wounds from nails on the wrists, not in the palms as all the Crucifixion images depict. Recent experimentation with new corpses has shown that a nail through the palm will not support the body's weight and it must be done in the wrist to prevent the hand from being torn in two. The image on the Shroud shows the victim's hair was in a sort of pigtail, a common practice of Jews in Christ's time which wasn't known to Middle Age painters and sculptors. There are other discrepancies and the overwhelming evidence is that the Shroud image is a negative. The full import of that image wasn't realized until someone took a photograph of it and looked at the negative where it appeared as a positive image. If a pious faker did it, what conceivable reason would he have had for creating a negative image, almost five centuries before the invention of photography? Negative images don't exist in the pre-scientific world.

In the same vein, I'm not sure if I should accept as factual this plug for Uncle Albert's Video Fanzine. I hope it's not a joke, because I've been dismayed by the failure of fans to do much creative with video tape recorders and I've been thinking gloomy thoughts about the contrast with the way fandom took to the first audio tape recorders when they came on the market soon after World War Two, corresponding by tape and creating taped plays and forming round robin tapes and doing various other things until the novelty of it wore off. Of course, the VCR requires a camera costing five hundred bucks or more and the audio tape recorder usually came with a microphone, one big probable reason.

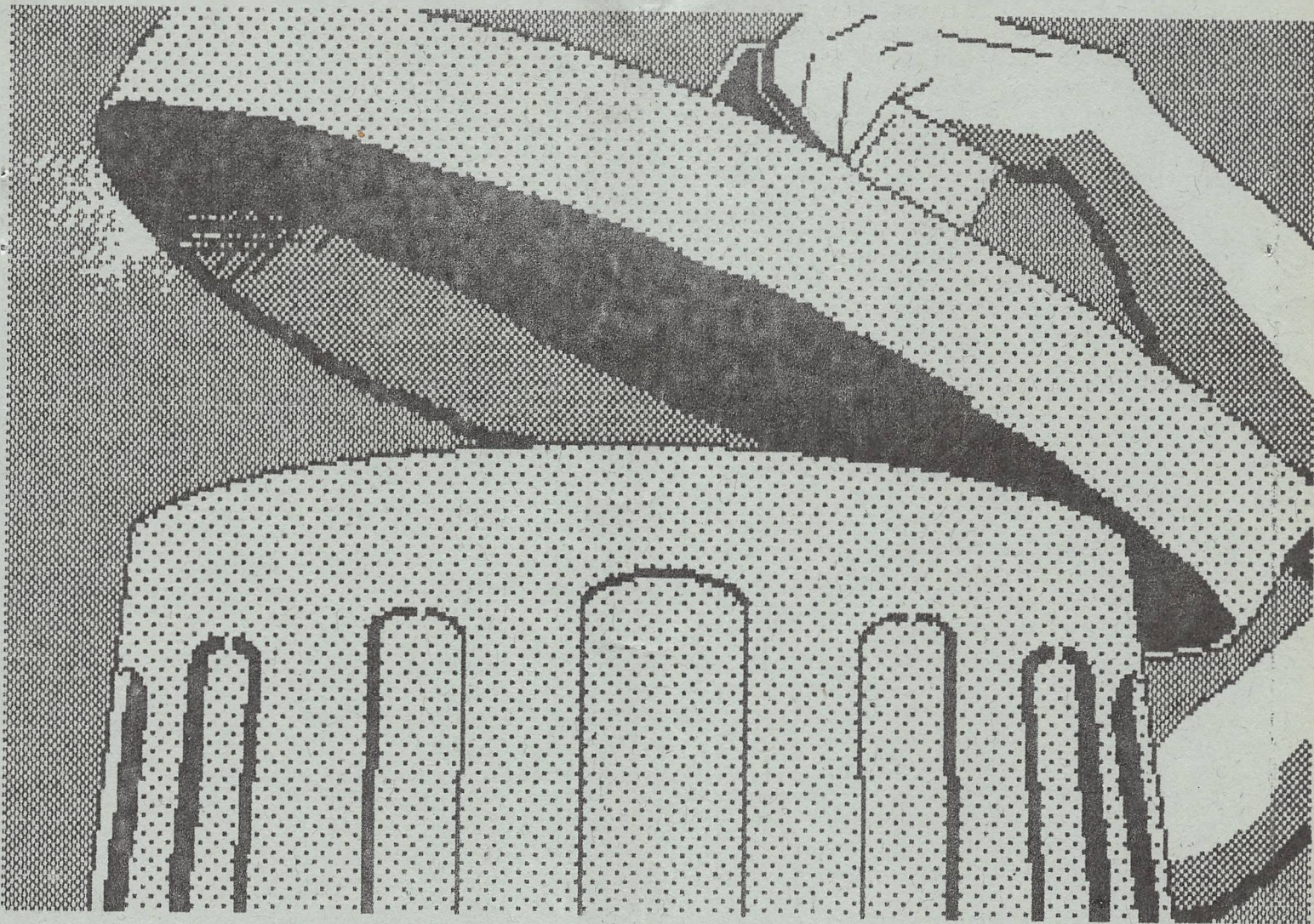
I can't agree with George R.R. Martin's concept of science fiction. "We transplant present day concerns and characters into the future. What the hell else would we do?" That describes correctly science fiction as it was until late in the 19th century. Up to then, most science fiction was about utopias which were commentaries on contemporary social and political matters or it was a medium for satire and parody, as in the case of Gulliver's Travels or Micromegas. But it seems like a hopelessly antiquated description of science fiction today. How could it suffice for such classics as A Martian Odyssey, RENDEZVOUS WITH RAMA, THE SKYLARK OF SPACE, THE TRIUMPH OF TIME, the Foundation series, LAST AND FIRST MEN, THE LEFT HAND OF DARKNESS, and a hundred others? "SF is not--never has been, never will be, and should never attempt to be--any kind of predictive science." Of course, it's only a rare coincidence when a story predicts a specific event in detail, like the accident when a novel entitled SWASTIKA NIGHT told about Hess's flight to England years before it happened. But very little has happened in the last three or four decades that wasn't described in general terms by science fiction previously: problems created by atomic weapons and power, details on equipment for flying to the Moon, waldoes, advances in medical science, the transportation revolution, television and its impact, and I'm confident that some day we will be able to add to a long list such things as first contact with intelligent creatures from other worlds, and time travel. 7/18/84

AL SIROIS .....  
I appreciated the intro a la HILL STREET BLUES...really gave a distinct auditory sense (as it were) to that first page, as I could hear Taurean Blaque's voice-over. Your use of quotation marks helped, too. 7/7/84

I'm glad you and Bill Breiding, at least, noticed my tribute/send-up. It wasn't a 'quote-cover' folks...  
• That does it for the feedback on OW38, except to mention that I got a ~~renewal~~ short note from ANDY PORTER -- and that yesterday a three-pager from AVEDON CAROL came in. It'll be along next time, Ian... ●●●



# Al Sirois



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## GRAPHIC VIOLENCE

Hardly anyone has come up to me in my capacity as a computer artist to ask, "What is to be done about the problem of making sense out of software documentation?" In fact I have had to ask this of myself more than once, which is just too bad for YOU, because repeated questioning often prods me out of my comfortable lethargy long enough to get words on paper.

Those familiar with commercially available software will agree that the documentation which accompanies it often requires more effort to understand



than the software itself does to use. (And here I should point out that I count myself among the "users" as opposed to the "hackers". Computer "hackers", as anyone who follows BLOOM COUNTY knows, are those personal computer owners who delight in cracking the codes which corporations use to conceal valuable information, such as the recipe for Wheaties, in computerized files. "Users", on the other hand, are those who don't give a damn about what goes into Wheaties. They simply want to be able to list their gas bills for the past seven or eight years in order to be apprised of how quickly the latest round of rate increases are siphoning off their ready cash. These people can't afford Wheaties anyway.)

I am given to understand that software documentation is often written by a form of life called a tech writer. Tech writers are to writers as military music is to music. Let me give you an example of technical writing, from the field of Organizational Behavior. (As a fledgling manager, I have had to read this stuff and be able to quote specific passages in response to questions hurled at me by an inquisitional board of which Torquemada himself would have been proud.) I quote from READINGS IN ORGANIZATIONAL BEHAVIOR AND PERFORMANCE:

"...OB is defined as the study of individuals and groups within organizations. The units of analysis are individual and micro (e.g., dyadic) interactions among individuals. Organizational characteristics (e.g., structure, process, climate) are seen either as 'givens' which assume a constant state or as independent variables whose variations are assumed to covary with or cause variations in the relevant dependent variables."

I don't know about you, but when I come upon "e.g." used twice in the same paragraph, my mind wanders to the possibility of there being some leftover chili in the fridge.

And the same effect obtains when the innocent user gets home with his spanking new packet of software. Or, as in my case, when the latest graphics package comes in the mail. The office manager, knowing what I am like in the morning, opens my mail for me because she understands that a man in my position (supine) doesn't want to take the time to fuss with an envelope. Besides, she has a knack for opening them in such a way so as to NOT tear in half the sheets of paper inside.

She then buzzes me on the intercom to say that the software I ordered has arrived and would I like to try it out on my nice IBM pc.

Leaving all this aside, from here on out the process of road-testing new software is the same



for me as for the home user (or ab-user, in the case of those who cheerfully supply pirate copies for the gimlet-eyed thugs they call friends). I pop that sucker into the drive and boot 'er up!

Let me say at this point that it's my contention that if you have to read the documentation at ALL, for any other reason than to assure yourself that the company has not tricked out their code so that it trashes your drive if you try to copy the disk, then you are in possession of an all-but-useless piece of software. We are living in the Dark Ages of personal computing: in years to come our descendants will look back on even the most cogent documentation as somehow pathetic, a desperate hanging-on of print media, vermiform appendix-like, to the harbinger of the electronic revolution.

After booting, I am confronted by a blank monitor screen, which has ominously changed color, usually to blue. (Why in god's name all IBM graphics software turns the screen BLUE is beyond my ken.) I hopefully tap the <RETURN> key. Several lines of type appear on the screen. They read, THE GRACE L. FERGUSON STORM DOOR AND SOFTWARE COMPANY PRESENTS T\*H\*E G\*R\*A\*P\*H\*I\*C\*S C\*O\*N\*C\*A\*T\*E\*N\*A\*T\*D\*R FOR THE IBM PC. CAN YOU READ THIS? IF NOT, YOU MUST GET RID OF YOUR COMPOSITE MONITOR AND BUY A DECENT RGB ONE, PREFERABLY FROM PRINCETON GRAPHICS.

After adjusting your monitor, you're ready to draw. Or, at least, I am, and as I'm the one writing this, you can damn well follow along and learn a thing or two about computer graphics.

Let's say I want to draw an ellipse. Fine. The program is now displaying its main menu screen, from which I can choose a number of modules (or sections of the entire program). Each module is designed to have some differing effect, on the screen or deep within the ROM. Or RAM. Or, perhaps, REM. I have my choice of a text module, a special effects module (this sounds enticing, and I'll want to come back to it later because I've always wanted to know how they get those explosions to occur on spaceships so that one can hear them in the airlessness of space), and a module that will enable me to issue disk commands. THAT excites my managerial sense, but I will let it go for now and stick to drawing ellipses. So I type the requisite key for the DRAWING module and snappily prod <RETURN>. The screen goes blank. Time passes...I can see myself reflected in the dull grey glass of the monitor face...I have not shaved today...

My ruminations are interrupted some time later by another blue screen with a line of characters along the bottom. This, I know from past experience, is the COMMAND LINE. I look for the "E" which will indicate that the ellipse-drawing function is up and running.

There is no "E".



Instead, there are the following: Q R H X 2 4 @ J Z \* and something which looks like an icecream cone. Daunted, I tentatively tap the Z key but nothing happens. In fact, nothing happens after ANY of those keys are tapped. I don't even see a cursor on the screen.

Now I'm stumped, so I have to go to the documentation. It's a hector piece of paper, faded, which even Eric Mayer would disown. Words are missing from it where the stencil became folded over, resulting in a narrow v-shaped blank which runs down the page. This happens to be the page that explains the symbols on the command line as well as how to invoke their functions.

The rest of the documentation is no clearer. It reads, in part, as follows:

JOIN function: (This I take to be somehow related to the J on the command line.)

Purpose: The Join function connects the line adjacent to the current line to the current line.

Remarks: The cursor may be located anywhere on the current line, and does not move after you connect the two lines.

I find myself amazed anew that computers can do such things automatically! Why, I would have to LOOK FOR that second line and laboriously connect it to the first one by hand, the whole process taking me several seconds. The computer allows a non-artist to do it with only a few hours of study.

I still haven't gotten that ellipse drawn, however. A quick survey of my co-workers reveals that none of them has ever heard of the Grace L. Ferguson Storm Door and Software Company, so they have no idea of how to work this software package. I decide to call the company for help, but they aren't listed in the business directory. The nice lady at Information tells me that the Ferguson Co. phone number has been disconnected some weeks previously. I work the time out on my calculator and discover that the phone had to have been cut off right around the time that they mailed me my Graphics Concatenator package, which arrived fourth class.

Reluctantly I conclude that I won't be getting any user support from these people. It's back to plotting my ellipses by hand, picking those pixels one by one. This bytes the big one.

So the problem of software documentation remains unresolved. But there may still be hope. My company has developed a graphics package of its own, partly in an effort to keep me from jamming my scissors in my disk drive out of frustration. I've begged them to let me write the documentation for it. I've told them that I have a number of publication credits, but they say that these do not make me a tech writer. I make, they say, too much sense. I suppose I'll have to tell them that what I write is science fiction.



6828 Alpine Avenue # 4, Cincinnati, Ohio 45236 \* 19th July 1984 \* Thursday

Dear Bill -

There is much truth, and a lot of reaching around to find pieces of it, in last issue's letters from Skel to you and from you to me.

Part of what Skel is telling you is that, at your most esoteric, your word-whipping does not provide something for the many fans who haven't the personal knowledge to understand what you're talking about. At some later date we'll discuss what it provides to those who do understand it, but let's not worry about that right now...

The rest of what Skel is telling you is that he, too, is wrapped up in writing for his friends. Indeed, wrapped to the point that he considers writing Skel-things for only his own mailing list, because otherwise "a fair proportion of the people I write it for never get to see it."

Part of what you tell me in your letter (I think; bear in mind that when it's you who seeks to frame or answer a question, the reader finds even more false leads than you do), is that you don't know how to defend the value of what you write in the face of an obvious miscommunication in how Skel reads you (as opposed to how he reads what you write). Yet that doesn't change your determination to "write about these things", to write for your friends, and to publish for yourself. And, like Skel, you too are "reluctant to send stuff out to other fanzines."

Skel even quotes me on his journey to isolationism: "...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."

However, if as Skel says my comments are particularly germane here", then they mean something different to each of us.

To Skel they mean a scenario where, for example, "Some of the things I write, with Mal in mind, Mal may never see."

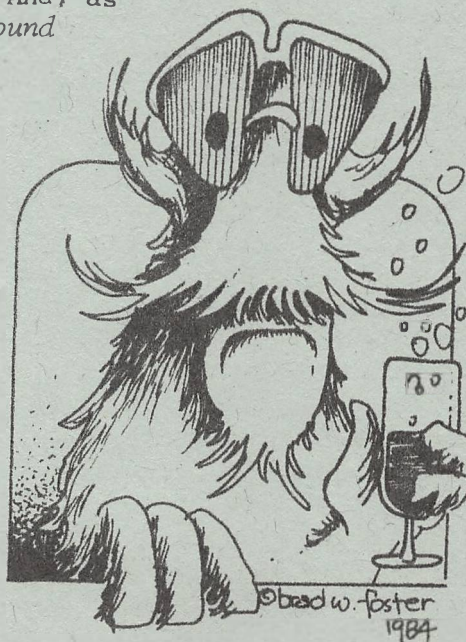
To you they may mean wanting to share "my journal, my diary, my record of my own timeline" with whoever has "at least a minimal interest in me, and what interests me."

To me their meaning is at face value, but augmented by my unquoted sentence which originally followed: "Whatever is to be communicated or shared is better executed if you make use of what you know about your readership." Something else that followed is: "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." And, as you point out, Bill, "some commonality of background has to be assumed."

What we're talking about is an approach to fanwriting. Let's kick it around. Here's a preamble: 1. There are a number of ways (42, as we all know) in which an item of fanwriting can be interesting, 2. It is not necessary to be a good writer per se to be interesting, and 3. It is necessary to be interesting to be read.

Can't hardly get no more basic than that. We can, however, elaborate. You know, I have this series of unpublished notes in something called an Idea Book. They were jotted down in 1980, or maybe 1981, and for some reason portions of them appear to have been patiently waiting for this moment.

Know your audience, or at least who you're writing for. If you're writing for



...a letter from DAVE LOCKE



yourself, don't publish it, unless you can look your mirror image in the eye and objectively explain why someone else would read such a thing. If you're writing for what you know of your audience, don't publish it unless you can objectively read it as though it were written by someone else and you don't find your intelligence insulted or your No-Doze required to wade through it (or until three people sign notarized statements that this is okay and that they are not related to you in any way).

There's nothing wrong with writing for yourself, or for a friend, or friends, or a group that's wild about pederasty, or for whomever. Tie that in with your distribution, however. Don't send your coals off to Newcastle, your submarines to Nebraska, or your cows to India.

I do think I can synthesize a weighted structure of approach to fanwriting--certainly to my own fanwriting--which will provide more specific meaning. Here's the bromide that's pinned to a wrinkle on my frontal lobes.

1. If it doesn't interest or amuse you, don't write it. If it isn't going to be of much interest or amusement to someone else, don't publish it.
2. The challenge is to write what you envision. The joy is to effectively communicate with what you write. (Note to you, Bill: If in any area your audience has to know you before they can understand you, help them along a little bit.)
3. The tools of the trade are your writing abilities and what you know of your audience. Use all your tools, not just your fingernails. (Note to Skel: If you're writing to please old Mal, or old Mal and whatever *"people drift in and out depending upon what I'm writing at the time"*, you'll stagnate from not being challenged by the perspective of writing, also [and, if necessary, on a separate level], for intelligent fans of lesser acquaintance--something which you do very well.) (Note to Bill & Skel: There's nothing wrong with writing for *"a handful of people at any one time"*, but the trick isn't to write for a few. The trick is to write for yourself, to communicate and share that with an intelligent readership [no matter whose], and to create an added, heightened enjoyment for a few, if you wish. Every 'market' requires a new approach which may or may not have significant effect on the end product, depending on where you think you can measure an effect from. If you find the spot, let me know.)
4. (As Buck Coulson says) Either it's fun or it's nothing.

There are writing challenges and different experiences in correspondence, WO3W interchanges (Wide Open 3-Way, copyright Dean Grennell), apas, personalzines, and your own genzine. But when you write for somebody else's fanzine, there's usually an abrupt drop in your level of familiarity with the readership. You reach further into the community of fandom. It's a whole new ballgame to use what you know and what you don't know of your readership to massage the nature of writing what you envision and communicating what you write. But it's fun, and along the way you encounter future friends and other interesting people. The known-quantity fanac is fine, but it's from the somewhat new and untried and unknown--the mailing list that stays with the community of fandom but mixes (for you) the familiar with the unfamiliar--that you learn the difference between community and fraternity and appreciate the value of communicating with both.

And what is the value? Very straightforward: To keep pushing outward to add to the fraternities you're already in, and to find new fraternities of merit. To stay enough in touch with the community at large that you do not encounter the declension which can result from settling in with any one real or perceived coterie of friends.

Certainly it's good to have your own mailing list, but you have to keep building it. Certainly it's good to work with the fixed community of an apa, or to establish your own. Certainly it's good to pick an issue and go on the stump for it. Certainly, too, it's good to be eclectic, selecting what seems best of varied sources. You can tread in place for only just so long and then you either go forward or backward.

The theory of searches says that if you stay in any one place long enough, sooner or later the whole world will come to you. This is the turd-on-a-stump approach. It's good that other people know where to find you, but it's also good to balance that by getting out to find other people.



If at any point in my lifeline I say "I've found my group of friends, and here is where you'll find me", from that point I walk the path which--unless serendipity intervenes--leads via attrition to having fewer friends as I get further along. Given that direction, if I live long enough I'll wind up with no friends at all. While I love having my friends around me, or being around my friends, I also love making new friends, and think it's important that I contribute to the process which allows that to happen.

I've strayed from the subject of writing, to focus on the purpose and direction of socializing in fanzine fandom. To stray back again: writing is itself a process and a challenge, both personally and socially, as well as a means to various ends. If it's in your blood, you're going to accept that challenge. If it isn't, or it isn't yet, then writing provides few surprises to yourself or your friends or any other readers, and opens few new doors.

End of that. Satisfaction.

To wander over to one of your digressions, yes it is true that by & large one of the things that you and I do not have in common is conventions. You know, it's strange, but previous increased attendance at conventions had served to curdle much of my overall interest in fandom. Somehow this didn't seem fair to my interest in fanzine fandom and in the occasional local fan activities and even the occasional convention. Resolution: segregation. Except under Bob Tucker's definition (anything two fans do together is fanac), conventions never seemed much like fanac to me anyway. Especially the relaxacons, which are mostly attended by people you'd never encounter elsewhere nor particularly want to. That some of my favorite people go is the only reason that I occasionally will, of course, as all else about these things seems unfortunate or very close to it.

To wander to another of your digressions: "'Friend' (as with 'Love') is one of the most overused words about. I overuse them, and then, when I catch myself doing so, I become reluctant to use either word". Relax, it's a fault of the language. In the absence of sufficient words to adequately describe relationships, qualifiers are required to impart shades of meaning. We don't always use qualifiers, and we don't always set a stage of context in which the qualifier is absent but understood. There may be good reason for this. What we mean when we say 'friend' or 'love' may not be what the other person means, and in the absence of being specific we can find common ground for agreement.

As Jack Vance had Adam Ostwald saying in THE LANGUAGES OF PAO: "Any collocation of persons, no matter how numerous, how scant, how even their homogeneity, how firmly they profess common doctrine, will presently reveal themselves to consist of smaller groups espousing variant versions of the common creed; and these sub-groups will manifest sub-sub-groups, and so to the final limit of the single individual, and even in this single person conflicting tendencies will express themselves."

Best & such,  
Dave

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JOE CHRISTOPHER When I received *Outworlds* 38, my first thought was to go over to the library and see if I could find a review of *ROCKET TO THE MORGUE* and discover approximately when it was published. October was unlikely, but who knows? Surely the *New York Times Book Review* (if it mentioned the book at all) would have its review appearing fairly close to publication date; maybe the *Publisher's Weekly* would have listed it. (Was PW around in 1942? I'm not certain.)

But I'm happy to report that inertia and laziness have prevailed. After all, I said Boucher predicted you. I think it's remarkable of him to have done so the year before you were born. After all, the publisher was responsible for the date of the book; Boucher wrote it before that. That's much more impressive than to have merely timed it to mark your conception or birth. After all, you were (in one sense or another) in the world at that point--but to have predicted you before your genetic makeup was established! Ah, there's the greatness of Boucher!

8/21/84



TERRY CARR OW 38 was very welcome here: I do love such indications of fandom's not-always-continual continuation. Keep a-goin', Bill.

Your quover was great fun, but I wish I could say the same for the written contents. Naturally I understand that you put my letter first in this issue in order to prove with the following nearly forty pages of locs that I was dead wrong to think that frequent fanzines don't gather much feedback. Okay, I concede the point (and happily, too) -- a frequently-published fanzine can garner a whole lot of locs even in today's fanzine-fandom. (In the fandom of years long gone by, OW might not have fared so well, I still maintain: your publication schedule of every month or two or three or four would have been unremarkable in say 1959, whereas I notice in your lettercolumn, most of the issue, that today's fans think you're publishing with dreadful frequency--surely a sign of our time when, because of new postal rates and inflation in general, that which was normal in years gone by is now just too expensive.

By and large, though, I found the multitude of letters a bit of a disappointment; I think about half of them could have been left out, for all the interest they hold for the casual reader (and god knows I'm casual). I felt as though you'd simply handed me a sheaf of all the letters you'd received in the last couple of months, and though of course there's a certain interest in reading Other People's Mail, perhaps you should have edited them. (Actually, I'm sure you did...but not enough, to my taste.) Some, like George R.R. Martin's long one, were excellent; too many of the others seemed to be just ramblings about nothing much.

I appreciate your owning up to having misspelled "grammar" for me; it is of course a word I never muspel. Speaking of such things, Ted White's old letter shows something I've suspected for some time now: he's improved his spelling a whole lot in recent years. But he was right in saying I was getting pretentious when I wrote that art operates on a higher plane than intellection. "No, it operates on a *different* plane," as Ted correctly noted.

Was amused to read that your doctor told you, "...you are totally allergic to Cincinnati." Much the same was said to me fifteen years ago by my doctor in New York City when I was suffering from chronic bronchitis and often couldn't sleep at night because I was constantly coughing. I'd quit smoking cigarettes and even Anything Else, but he explained to me that the air pollution in NYC made simply breathing the air the equivalent of smoking two packs a day. That was a major reason why Carol and I moved away to California in 1971...and my chronic bronchitis disappeared immediately as we passed out of the City Limits.

I don't remember reading Robert Moore William's SFR letter, mentioned by Ian Covell, in which RMW lamented the vast amount of hackwork he'd written; the fact that he did so raises his memory in my mind, and makes me feel sad for him. It must be rather dreadful to find yourself near the end of your life and realize that in 30 years of writing you produced mostly junk. I believe it was somewhat earlier, about 1961, when he wrote a piece for Shaggy in which--possibly because he was then trying to deny these feelings--Williams blew his own horn loudly and used flowery prose to describe himself as a writer in the tradition of the Celtic bards. After he died, his family must have adopted the earlier attitude, because when somewhat later I wanted to reprint one of the few short stories he wrote that I liked, his daughter or niece or some such demanded a preposterous amount of money for the reprint rights, claiming that RMW had been one of the Great Writers of sf. I had to leave the story unreprinted. (It was "Dark Reality", a prettily-written story that appeared in *Comet*, March 1941. Ray Palmer later bragged that he'd "straightened out" Williams by telling him that whenever he produced a story he considered well-written, he should throw it away. Since *Comet* was by no means one of the bigger-paying markets in 1941, I assume Palmer had rejected it. That's a shame: it was about the last non-hack story RMW ever published, and showed that, given better editorial direction, he could have been a pretty good sf writer.)

Edd Vick's musings about looking up words in the dictionary remind me of the tramua suffered by both Bob Silverberg and me some ten years ago when he looked up the pronunciation of "pejorative". Bob, like me and everyone else I've ever known, had always



pronounced it "pehJORative", but his dictionary said that the correct way was "PEEjorative", which isn't nearly as euphonic. I was so taken aback when Bob told me that I looked it up in my own dictionary--which agreed with his. Oh dear. The dictionary I currently use (Rand-McNally) still says the same, though it lists "pehJORative" as a secondary pronunciation. This is one of the few instances in which I happily go along with changing fashions in language; I still use that secondary pronunciation, and in the spirit of sf I believe I'm merely going with the flow of history and will be considered correct by future generations.

Arthur Thomson is quite right about people who've visited the Willises and come away extremely happy with the way they were treated. Carol and I (and Ted White and Peter Graham) visited with Walt and Madeleine in 1965, and they treated all of us exceptionally well. Walt went considerably beyond that when he sent us a postcard a month ago saying, "Wish you were here...again." The Willises are the salt of the Earth, I believe, and they don't have the unfortunate side effects that most salt has.

Your comments about children (pg. 1371) state my opinions about children pretty well: I love other people's kids but wouldn't want to have any myself because I wouldn't want the responsibility of dealing with them when they were being Impossible. I recently went to a family picnic organized by my 7-year-old brother Allan, meeting five or seven nephews and nieces for the first time since they were wee chillun, and meeting their kids. Allan told me that day that I'd greatly disappointed him by never having made him an uncle, which didn't impress me much because he's a father many times over and even a grandfather many times, so in the humorous mode of my family I told him I'd deliberately refrained because I hadn't wanted to make him too happy. He said, "Ah! Did you all hear that? I want witnesses!" So I continued by saying, "Gee, and I really wanted kids, too; but I figured, Nah, it'd make Allan too happy." This passes for humor in my family. (The truth is that when Carol and I were thinking of marrying we first discussed the matter of having children and were both relieved to find that the other didn't want any, mostly because neither of us wanted the responsibilities of parenthood. Both of us realized the rewards of having kids but neither of us wanted to pay the price of sleepless nights, etc.)

Your contest for the readers to tell you what's MISSING from this issue strikes me as too damned easy. Obviously Dave Locke's column isn't here, nor is there any long and obscure piece by you, but those are too obvious to be worth mentioning. So are a lot of other things such as Wm. Rotsler's autobiography, Harry Warner's article about his sex life, Mike Glicksohn's piece about how he once spent two weeks putting ice in his scotch, and Robbie Cantor's piece about living with a nonfan. The correct answer, of course, is that in your contributor's list you noted the page on which everyone's contribution appeared, except for mine. That's what is missing: in the very issue in which you issued this challenge, you didn't list where my letter appeared in *Outworlds*. Oh dear and shame on you.

8/21/84

...and THAT wraps up the OW38 feedback (with the exception of Avedon), once again... Who knows what the next mail will bring (yesterday it brought Joe...today, Terry), but it is late Saturday night, this is the verso of the 2 ounce weight-limit page, and I leave for LA in not too much over 48 hours...hopefully with this issue packed away in my bags. (I say "hopefully" because Jackie called a bit ago...to say that the mimeo is glitching...again. \*sigh\* It's only a fanzine; not as if it were my life or anything.)

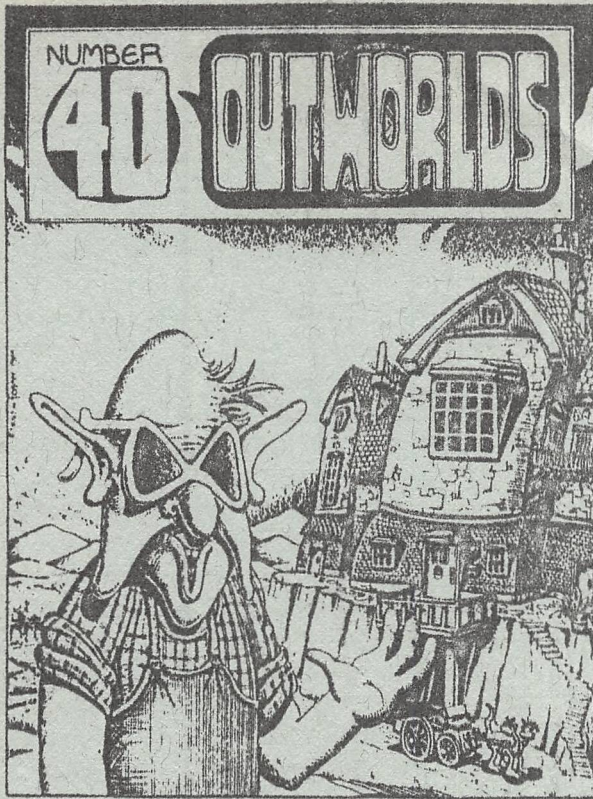
And no, the 'full-size' status of the last several pages is NOT my subtle way of saying that these letters are more 'important' than those preceeding Al's ARTicle... Simple, really: My reduction facilities are not available on weekends. (Now do you know of any other faned who'd have to issue such a disclaimer...? Oh yeah? Name one...)

And yes, I did edit Terry's letter: I 'cut' two lines...24 words. Ruthless, I am.

NEXT TIME: Terry Matz; Brad Foster; Richard Brandt; Harry Warner, Jr.; Al Sirois; Leslie David; Buck Coulson; and Mike Glicksohn...all responding to OW39. Plus...

...and no, I'm not running for DUFF after all. It's a short story... Bill...8/25





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