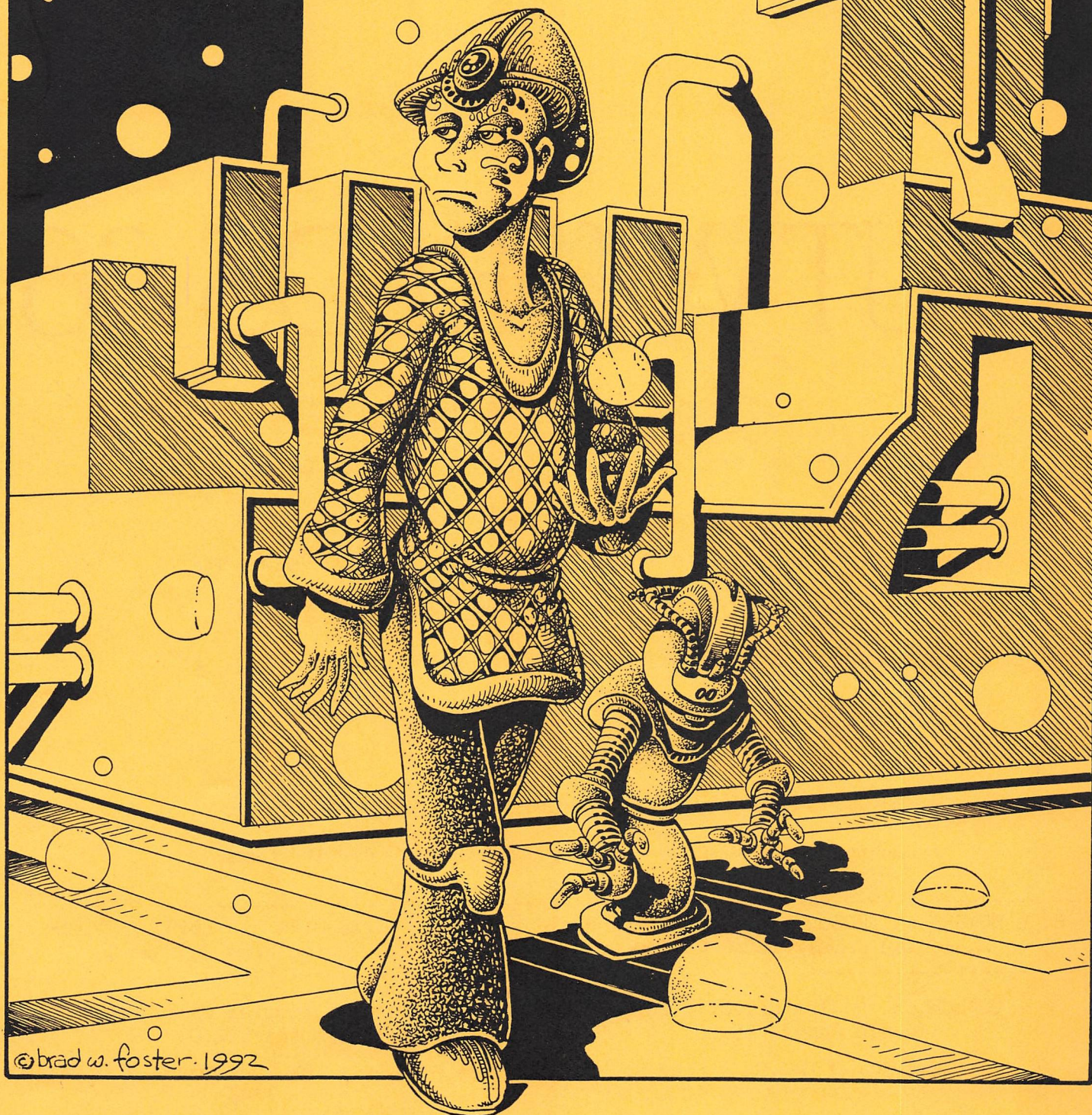


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# OUTWORLDS 66



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# UTWRLDS 66

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# POST-IT® NOTES

## ON THE EDGE CUTTING

Bill Bowers

Someday again I'll put together a tightly kerned, lavishly illustrated, graphically slick package -- if only to prove to Andy Porter that those '70s OUTWORLDS weren't an aberration generated by Some Other Bill Bowers.

Soon.

In the meantime, herewith is an even more cut-'n-pasted issue than has been the recent norm. But then...I've been cut-'n-stapled a bit myself, since we last "spoke"!

Foolish me. I'd thought that with the divorce finally finalized, with what was destined to be returned of the marriage spoils collected, and with my back seemingly on the mend.... I thought that things were Looking Up to such an extent that, on Saturday the 2nd of January, I "ended" the mini-editorial of OW65 on this (for me) blatantly optimistic note:

"For now: I've all sorts of grandiose plans/hopes/dreams for 1993. My Life Goes On. May yours be equally hopeful!"

Foolish me. My life did indeed go...after a fashion...beginning that very same day.

No, I didn't make it to Confusion this year, but had I...the "speech" I was scheduled to "deliver" would have inevitably been titled something along the lines of "...I Know I Backed Into This World -- [I was a breech baby] -- And I've Certainly Never Hesitated In Giving My All For My Fanzine ... But Somehow My 'Life Manual' Has Recently Been Turned Bassakwards...."

Or: Those who speculated on my lack of "backbone" when I remained determinedly "neutral" in fannish feuds past...were more "right" than they ~~of~~ I could ever have imagined.

I'd left the Sims' New Year's Eve party pre-midnight because of an asthma attack and I skipped the Friday night party, to recoup and to continue the final prep on OW65. By Saturday morning, when in a mad rush I wrote a one-column "editorial" and final-printed the Contents Page, before dropping off the issue's "masters" at the copy shop pre-noon (on my way to the POBox & Perkins) -- I was mainly just Tired. But with a sense of satisfaction at having, indeed, Pubbed My Ish. The one precious moment in the "process" of fanzine publishing, BowerStyle.

Foolish me. By the time I picked up the print run at six that evening, the (almost forgotten) back pain had returned (albeit higher up than previously) with such vehemence that I was barely able to carry the carton into the house. But I did. And I made it to the Parsleigh's New Year's End Party that evening--after all, I'd promised Dave Rowe his contributor's copy--on sheer will-power. [Translation: Stupidity.]

LISTmania : 1991 <> 1992

### '91 CONVENTIONS ATTENDED [7]

#164	IMMACULATE CONFUSION	(11)
#165	MARCON 26	(10)
#166	CORFLU OCHO	(6)
#167	MIDWESTCON 42	(21)
#168	CHICON V	(wc #16)
#169	DITTO 4	(3)
#170	OCTOCON 28	(14)

### '91 MOVIES/FILMS VIEWED [35]

GHOST  
JOHNNY BELINDA ['48]  
THE FABULOUS BAKER BOYS  
PREDATOR 2  
WAR OF THE ROSES  
MISERY  
POSTCARDS FROM THE EDGE  
EDWARD SISSORHANDS  
ALICE  
GASLIGHT ['44]  
STEEL MAGNOLIAS  
MAJOR LEAGUE  
CLASS ACTION  
FATAL ATTRACTION ( )  
BULL DURHAM (2)  
F/X 2  
THELMA & LOUISE  
THE ROCKETEER  
MARLOWE ['69]  
TOTAL RECALL (2)  
CITIZEN KANE ( )  
V.I. WARSZAWSKI  
THE SPANISH MAIN ['45]  
12 ANGRY MEN '57]  
THE TOAST OF NEW YORK ['37]  
TREMORS (2)  
ONCE UPON A HONEYMOON ['42]  
MISTER LUCKY ['43]  
STAGE DOOR ['37]  
DARK OBSESSION  
DEFENSELESS  
THE BIG EASY (2)  
TERMINATOR 2  
METROPOLITAN  
THE ODESSA FILE ['74]



## \*91 BOOKS/NOVELS READ [48]

GREAT SKY RIVER: Gregory Benford  
DOWN TO A SUNLESS SEA: David Graham  
POLAR CITY BLUES: Katharine Kerr  
EON: Greg Bear  
THE HEMINGWAY HOAX: Joe Haldeman  
ETERNITY: Greg Bear  
VOYAGE OF THE STAR WOLF: David Gerrold  
ORBITAL DECAY: Allen Steele  
CLARKE COUNTY, SPACE: Steele  
THE CUCKOO'S EGG: Cliff Stoll  
A MASK FOR THE GENERAL: Lisa Goldstein  
WHAT MIGHT HAVE BEEN VOL 1 -  
ALTERNATE EMPIRE: ed. Benford/Greenberg  
HARD FOUGHT: Greg Bear  
HEAVY TIME: C.J. Cherryh  
CASCADE POINT: Timothy Zahn  
GOD SAVE THE MARK: Donald E. Westlake  
BUYING TIME: Joe Haldeman  
HEAT: William Goldman  
FALLEN ANGELS: Niven/Pournelle/Flynn  
BIMBOS OF THE DEATH SUN: Sharyn McCrumb  
SCREWTOP: Vonda N. McIntyre  
TINSEL: William Goldman  
AFTER THE FLOOD (EFTERFLODEN):

P.C. Jersiln

ALIEN TONGUE: Stephen Leigh  
RED GENESIS: S.C. Sykes  
CONTROL: William Goldman  
BULLIVER HOUSE: John Leggett  
"A" IS FOR ALIBI: Sue Grafton  
"B" IS FOR BURGLAR: Grafton  
LUNAR DESCENT: Allen Steele  
"C" IS FOR CORPSE: Grafton  
THE DARK BEYOND THE STARS:

Frank M. Robinson

"D" IS FOR DEADBEAT: Grafton  
SOOTHSAYER: Mike Resnick  
INDEMNITY ONLY: Sara Paretsky  
STARFARERS: Vonda M. McIntyre  
TRANSITION: McIntyre  
KILLING ORDERS: Paretsky  
EARTH: David Brin  
POP. 1280: Jim Thompson  
"E" IS FOR EVIDENCE: Grafton  
BRIGHT LIGHTS, BIG CITY: Jay McInerney  
A PROCESSION OF THE DAMNED:

Wilson Tucker

THE GOOD OLD STUFF: John D. MacDonald  
THE LINCOLN HUNTERS: Wilson Tucker  
BITTER MEDICINE: Paretsky  
THE EXECUTIONERS: John D. MacDonald  
BARNARD'S PLANET: John Boyd

## \*91 FANZINES PUBLISHED [9]

#169	XENOLITH 34	10pp	02/07/91
#170	XENOLITH 35	8pp	03/29/91
#171	OUTWORLDS 60	60pp	04/17/91
#172	XENOLITH 36	10pp	05/14/91
#173	OUTWORLDS 27.5	40pp	05/27/91
#174	OUTWORLDS 61	46pp	06/25/91
#175	XENOLITH 36.5	8pp	07/19/91
#176	XENOLITH 36.75	2pp	08/27/91
#177	flaf - ONE	2pp	12/02/91

[...and, yes, the bacover was not innovative Bowers Layout, but a copy-shop fuck-up: had I been at all capable of driving back up to have it re-run.... Instead, I cried, ranted, moaned...and decided to live with it. It wasn't the first time.... So. There. Truth in Publishing 101.]

I took off work early the following Monday to go to the doctor, but waited until the following Saturday (to avoid missing more work) before going to the lab for x-rays. Early the following week they were deciphered, and it turned out that I had not one, but two compression-fractures in two different vertebrae. The one was essentially "healed"; obviously it was then end-result of lifting the ditto...back at Ditto, in October (even though it hadn't been detected on the initial, November, set of x-rays). The second fracture, though.... Well, the first made sense, at least in retrospect: I knew as soon as it happened that I'd lifted something too heavy...but I'd been "careful" (all right; totally paranoid) thereafter. So what caused the second fracture?

Nothing so easily definable, but as nearly as can be determined it was the culmination of spending the better part of five days during the Christmas "break" and then three more over New Year's... hunched over the dining room table...cutting & pasting-up my ish.

~~So I'll have to be careful about OUTWORLDS later!!!!~~

There was an underlying "reason", it seems. On the 19th of January I went in for a "bone density" scan (interesting, that, in that I was positioned so that I could watch...over my shoulder...as my skeletal infrastructure appeared--line by line--on a monitor). "loss" of density in my spine. This, apparently, the direct result of 10 years on Prednisone--a multi-use drug initially prescribed by a dermatologist, but continued because it is the most effective ~~ideal~~ control on the asthma I'd found.

Now, I find out there are, apparently, other "options" available...but I (foolishly) continue on the Prednisone: It works, and shortness of breath is oft-times a more immediate concern than non-visible (no matter how painful) lack of backbone. I am not always as logical as I might self-delude.

In the meantime, as January progressed, I went to work, and gimped around. The doctor put me on a three-month medication (\$118. outlay) that was/is supposed to at least stop, if not reverse, the spinal degeneration. And I was religiously (if unenthusiastically) following that regime -- even going out and buying a pill-crusher to deal with the mother-sized suckers -- laced with liberal doses of Voltaren to control the (I self-diagnosed) continuing back pains.

I maintained. I "skipped" Rubicon, even though it is close and I'd "promised" Jodie...because of Saturday overtime at work: The New Improved Fiscally Responsible Bowers. Yes.

On Saturday, February 13th, even though I still "owe" friends ~~and the IRS~~, I finally felt financially "secure" enough to purchase a compact disc player. [Neither of the two previously in residence here had been "returned"...but I had a hundred discs, that had been, sitting on a shelf...] I set it up that afternoon, played Clapton's "Unplugged" and a couple of others, had a bowl of tomato soup as supper while tv-watching...took a Voltaren...and went to bed about midnight.

About 2 a.m.--here things get hazy and, almost three months later time-clarity is even more nebulous--I was up, in the bathroom ...doubled over.

Yes, I've had P\*A\*I\*N before... Having to literally take five minutes getting out of bed in late October to mid-November was not fun. I'd even had an "upset" stomach or a dozen before...but never, ever...anything this intense before. Somewhere between 2:30 and 3:00 (time didn't stand still; it was an eternity ~~longer than my worst recent nightmare~~), still reluctant to make a total fool out of myself (and "aware" that no matter what going to the Emergency Room would entail a \$75. co-pay).... But: ...when none of the home remedies had made even the slightest dent in the pain and I was totally incapable of straightening to a vertical position...I (reluctantly) woke Art up and had him call 911. I wasn't even capable of that simple task. The wait seemed interminable, but the paramedics were here in perhaps five minutes, half-carried me downstairs, and hoisted me ("...please, please be careful of my back...") onto a stretcher...and trundled me across the snow-covered front yard into the ambulance and off to the Emergency Room.



I remember snatches...but mostly just the pain. Laying in a curtained alcove in the hospital...waiting for "them" to make it all Go Away. Again, an (even longer) Eternity...but they contacted my Primary Care Physician...and I was toted (IV, frigid cold & all) to his base hospital about, I'd guess, 7:30 a.m. There I was bundled into a bed, poked and prodded, until mid-afternoon that wonderful Valentine's Day. The surgeon assigned to me showed up and said "You can't ~~stay~~ stay here. ...we're transferring you to another hospital."

Integral Sidebar: I pay Vast Sums monthly to belong to an HMO that "contracts" with less than half the local hospitals to provide care to its members. I knew I wouldn't be permitted to stay at the closest hospital...the one with the Emergency Room. I was even conscious enough to know that the initial transfer was to a "non-covered" hospital...but, Hey!...I was just along for the ride.

Another Very Cold ride in a Very Cold ambulance...another room, another bed. In less than twelve hours.

Continued poking, prodding, blood tests, x-rays...and constant pain, phasing in and out. I was finally operated on Monday night the 15th. I'd been told it was scheduled for Four, but it was Six-Thirty before they came for me; that didn't help. But they were Good: I remember being wheeled into the operating room and the painful transfer to the table...but nothing thereafter until I awoke a couple of hours later, in "my" room, in "my" bed. ...with varying diameter tubes intruding into and out of my body, in numbers and locations we won't talk of here.

It was only then that I was told that what I'd "experienced", in layman's terms, was a "perforated duodenal ulcer".

...and it was only after I'd been "out" a couple of weeks that one of my plenitude of doctor's told me that the mortality rate for those with as a severe a case as I'd had...is in the neighborhood of 50%.

And here I'd initially thought it was food-poisoning, from the tomato soup.

[In retrospect, a.k.a. Self-Diagnosis 101, it seems that much of the January pain I attributed to the back was more internalized ...and I have no doubt that the Voltaren--not a play drug--was what kicked the ulcer into over-drive.]

I spent ten days in the hospital(s), before the surgeon came by at noon on the 23rd, and said he was "releasing" me. But he had the last laugh.

I had been complaining about being sent home with the silly-assed drainage tube sill protruding from my mid-valley, but he assured me--removing two staples, that it would "come out" in a week or two, in its Own Good Time. He left. I called Roger. I got up and started to get dressed. ...and the damned tube popped out, and a gush of appetizingly-colored fluid spewed out of my mid-section. I panicked. I shoved the tube back in, and when the call button didn't magically produce a nurse, I went out into the hall, clutching my suddenly precious tube, until a nurse came and put me back to bed, took my tube, gave me a towel to hold over the opening, and told me to Stay There...until they could get ahold of the Doctor. Who'd left the hospital. Eventually Contact: His diagnosis -- "It must have been time...". They slapped a massive pressure bandage on me and told me I was still released. Despite my sudden lack of interest in leaving....

I've had pain, yes, but I honestly can't recall having been so bloody scared at any point since I almost drowned in basic, back in '64. In retrospect (something I specialize in) it has its amusing side, but by the time I was home I was still so hyper that, despite my best intent. I lit up a cigarette. It's an excuse, but fanzine publishing isn't the only "crutch" I seem to be afflicted with.

Roger showed up while I was in bed with my security towel, and toted me home. Or what was left of me: the first time I was weighed, later that week, I discovered I'd "lost" thirty-five pounds! (And yes, despite the skeptics, I had (again, courtesy of the Pred-nisone) built up an "excess" of waist-poundage. ...but not thirty-five pounds worth!)

As of a doctor's visit on May 7th, I'd only gained back 2&1/2 pounds. I like fitting into clothes again, but this is ridiculous.

The Fannish "Network" is, truly, awe-inspiring. Art came to the emergency room and later he, Tanya & Don tracked me through the sundry hospitals to deliver essentials. Art also called the Pars-leigh's, and Denise contacted my sister, as well as setting in motion a rather incredible phone chain: She called Mike...who called Linda & Joe...who called Sheryl...who called Peggy...who called

## '92 CONVENTIONS ATTENDED [7]

#171	HARDWIRED CONFUSION	(12)
#172	RUBICON 11	( )
#173	CORFLU 9	(9)
#174	MIDWESTCON 43	(22)
#175	RIVERCON 17	(9)
#176	MAGICON	(mc #17)
#177	DITTO V (4) / OCTOCON 29	(15)

## '92 MOVIES/FILMS VIEWED [13]

HIS GIRL FRIDAY ['40]  
CAPE FEAR ['91]  
BELOVED INFIDEL ['59]  
THE UNSUSPECTED ['47]  
THE CRUEL SEA ['53]  
BILLY BATHGATE  
MIAMI BLUES  
STAR TREK 6: THE UNDISCOVERED COUNTRY  
THE SILENCE OF THE LAMBS  
BASIC INSTINCT  
BOYZ N THE HOOD  
BLADE RUNNER (Director's Cut)  
THE GRIFTERS

## '92 BOOKS/NOVELS READ [39]

"F" IS FOR FUGITIVE: Sue Grafton  
DEADLOCK: Sara Paretsky  
A GIFT UPON THE SHORE: M.K. Wren  
FORT PRIVILEGE: Kit Reed  
THE ENGINES OF THE NIGHT: Barry Malzberg  
HEROVIT'S WORLD: Barry M. Malzberg  
THE DEVIL WEARS WINGS: Harry Whittington  
BLOOD SHOT: Sara Paretsky  
COYOTE: Linda Barnes  
EARTHERIP: Harry Turtledove  
THE SNAKE TATTOO: Linda Barnes  
"6" IS FOR GUMSHOE: Sue Grafton  
EDWIN OF THE IRON SHOES: Marcia Muller  
DREAMING OF BABYLON (A Private Eye Novel 1942): Richard Brautigan  
A TROUBLE OF FOOLS: Linda Barnes  
MORE GOOD OLD STUFF: John D. MacDonald  
THE DIFFERENCE ENGINE: Gibson/Sterling  
ASK THE CARDS A QUESTION: Marcia Muller  
MIAMI BLUES: Charles Willeford  
THE CHESHIRE CAT'S EYE: Marcia Muller  
THROUGH THE HEART: Richard Grant  
NEW HOPE FOR THE DEAD: Charles Willeford  
GAMES TO KEEP THE DARK AWAY: M. Muller  
"H" IS FOR HOMICIDE: Sue Grafton  
STOPPING AT SLOWYEAR: Frederik Pohl  
MURDER FOR THE BRIDE: John D. MacDonald  
JUDGE ME NOT: John D. MacDonald  
RED HARVEST: Dashiell Hammett  
STEEL GUITAR: Linda Barnes  
LEAVE A MESSAGE FOR WILLIE: M. Muller  
THE DAMNED: John D. MacDonald  
THE BLACK MASK BOYS: ed. Wm. F. Nolan  
ORACLE: Mike Resnick  
THE STALKING MAN: Wilson Tucker  
DAYS OF ATONEMENT: Walter Jon Williams  
BURNMARKS: Sara Paretsky  
THE MOTION OF LIGHT IN WATER: Samuel R. Delany  
SIDESWIPE: Charles Willeford  
FUGITIVE NIGHTS: Joseph Wambaugh



## '92 SHORT FICTION READ [21]

- "At the Old Swimming Hole": Sara Paretsky; MURDER & MYSTERY IN CHICAGO  
 "Schwartz Between the Galaxies": Robert Silverberg; STELLAR 1 ['74]  
 "The Whirligig of Time": Vernor Vine; STELLAR 1  
 "The Translator": Kim Stanley Robinson; UNIVERSE 1  
 "The Broken Men": Marcia Muller; MAMMOTH BOOK OF PRIVATE EYE  
 "The Science Fiction Hall of Fame": Robert Silverberg; INFINITY FIVE ['73]  
 "Lucky Penny": Linda Barnes; SISTERS IN CRIME 1  
 "Falling Off the Roof": Sue Grafton; SISTERS...1  
 "Water": Vance Aandahl; F&SF 4/92  
 "Bootstrap Enterprise": Victor Koman; F&SF 2/92  
 "Smart Guys Don't Snore": Joe Gores; A MATTER OF CRIME 2  
 "Three-Dot Po": Sara Paretsky; THE EYES HAVE IT  
 "Wild Mustard": Marcia Muller; THE EYES HAVE IT  
 "Incident in Hell's Kitchen": Lawrence Treat; EQMM 3/92  
 "The Brothers": Lawrence Treat; EQMM 7/92  
 "An Excuse For Shooting Earl": Joseph Hansen; AHMM 9/92  
 "In Concert": Michael Swanwick; IASFM /9  
 "Death of Reason": Tony Daniel; IASFM /9  
 "Graves": Joe Haldeman; F&SF 10-11/92  
 "The Night We Buried Road Dog": Jack Cady; F&SF 1/93  
 "Once A Writer...": Robert Cenedella; EQMM 1/93

## '92 FANZINES PUBLISHED [11]

#178	OUTWORLDS 62	120pp	01/20/92
#179	flaf - TWO	2pp	02/05/92
#180	[...in progress]		
#181	flaf - THREE	2pp	04/04/92
#181a	Ditto V. One (p.r.)	4pp	05/07/92
#182	flaf - FOUR	2pp	05/23/92
#183	OUTWORLDS 64	40pp	06/21/92
#184	flaf - FIVE	2pp	07/26/92
#185	flaf - SIX	2pp	10/04/92
#186	OUTWORLDS 63	72pp	10/18/92
#186a	Ditto V Program Book 4pp		10/--/92
#187	flaf - SEVEN	2pp	11/29/92

...once again, simply a "listing" of a few of the Lists I afflict myself with. Presented here for your amusement and wonderment -- but primarily as a Memory Jogger for some once and future Bill Bowers, as a few of the more definable "influences" that define what is I....

Next time, perhaps, a listing of my 1993 medical costs...? Nah; well, maybe!

Paula-Ann...who sent me a packet of New Orleans ~~folk~~ trinkets addressed to "Mr. Ulcer"....

To all those who called & sent cards--my eternal thanks.

In particular, inadequately, I wouldn't have made it through without Art, who not only remembered to let my cat out of the oven before I got home, but who proved to be a much better ~~and more ethical~~ nurse than the one I'd been married to.

...nor without the unstinting friendship of Dave Locke who not only took me to endless doctor's appointments but who, on his first visit here after I Got Out...completely rearranged my living room (at my direction)...so that he could have a place to sit & chat. (I was \*Impressed\*; he's not all that much younger than I....)

I "lost" three weeks of work. In the nine I've been "back"...I've managed to put in one "full" week of all the available hours. The remainder have been foreshortened, by the inevitable "recovery" process...and by a new succession of doctor's visits & out-patient tests.

For, you see, there is (always!) more....

[My predilections in fanzine layout might make more sense if you realize that sometimes I view my life as a sidebar....]

One side effect of the surgery & cut stomach nerves is that my digestive system is completely outta whack...and once home I developed what some of my more less-diplomatic women friends refer to as "morning sickness": the first thing I did on arising every morning ...was to throw up. As a result of this I was sent to a Gastro-enterologist, who placed me on a new (Very Expensive) regime of pills...that does seem to be doing the job.

But early on in the process this guy talked me (he's smooth!) into something that made me long for my drainage tube: an arcane form of torture called an "endoscopy".

Those who have shared meals with me over the years know that I have had a predisposition for "choking" frequently. I always blamed the hiatal hernia. (I owe it an apology.) Some of you can vaguely imagine how thrilled I was with the mere concept of having a tube shoved down my throat.

It wasn't "supposed" to...but it hurt like bloody hell, even after the doctor switched to the smallest scope he had. As usual, there was a "reason". I have a stricture, apparently congenital, in my upper esophagus...and that was further constricted by a web. \*sigh\* I've had the procedure twice now, and I'll probably require it periodically the remainder of my life...but at least, knock on Kaypro...I'm not choking anymore.

...about that dinner, now...

[You should be able to swallow pills, now, he said. Right, I said. I still chew or crush them; a fifty year "block" isn't overcome by mere facts...]

I still "tire" easily. "They" say it will take time. I think it is, indeed, "time"--but my body doesn't seem to listen to me much...

I've done little other than work, watch too much tv, read...and feel regret at my seeming inability to return communications to those who care...and whom I care about. These few mirco-elite words buried in a generally-circulated fanzine are woefully inadequate but I do cherish my friends...more than I can ever convey.

I've spent every bit of "spare" energy I've been given over the past month--carefully spreading-out the paste-up sessions--on this issue. It is of necessity the most graphically "simple" of the current run, and it has been "work" -- but there is some really neat material, commencing on the next page...and I think you'll enjoy it....

I'd really hoped to include the LoCs on OW65, and I still have on hand material for a very substantial issue. ...as soon as I can!

I mentioned, earlier, "all sorts of grandiose plans/hopes/dreams for 1993." One was to attend Corflu and that, car & body willing, is at least probable, as of the moment.

...another was to spend at least a week pre-Worldcon visiting friends in the Bay Area. That has, suddenly, become very unlikely.

A third was to have my friends paid off, and be out of debt by the end of the year. Possible, still...but not a sure bet.

...and a Fourth Goal was to publish an issue of OUTWORLDS sans any mention of personal "trauma".

Did someone say something about "the ever dreaming Bowers"? That I are.

----- Bill; 5/10/93





It didn't start in the toilet. These things rarely do, but that's where I was when I happened to notice a small battery on the floor, down behind the bowl. It wasn't a rechargeable one, the sort we normally use. Cas must have been carrying it and placed it on the windowsill whilst attending to more pressing matters. Then, her mind already dwelling on the next phase of her woman's-work-that-is-never-done, she'd hurried off and forgotten it. Or more probably them, because the things that are powered by these farting little batteries invariably require more than one. In fact the only way she'd have been carrying a single battery is if she'd recently put put three into some device, and had one left over from the pack of four in which they are invariably sold. If you don't use rechargeables the leftover battery on such occasions is invariably lost. There ought to be a special circle of Hell for the inconsiderate bastards who design appliances that require odd numbers of batteries. That couldn't have been the case though because the only device we have that needs three such batteries is the 'Super Splasher' water pistol which I bought in an attempt to discourage the zillions of neighbours' cats from setting up permanent residence in our garden....and that, to my intense annoyance, is mysteriously non-functional. I suspect sabotage, but have no proof, and secretly blame a woman I dare not name because of the potential for a possible libel action on her part.

Anyway, it couldn't have been a single battery. It must have been one of a pair, though the other was nowhere in evidence. I suspect that one of the cats, who when not engaged in the activity of sending Christmas cards to Sponse spend a significant portion of their lives sitting in the nearest available windowsill, must have inadvertently (if Tommy) or deliberately (if the mischievous Jessica) knocked one onto the floor, and it had rolled into its present position. Between then and now Cas had obviously passed by again and removed the one that had remained in unsightly untidyness upon the windowsill. It's obvious, Watson, if you just think about it. It's also amazing the lengths to which your mind will go in attempting to figure out what on earth a battery is doing on the floor of the toilet.

Still looking at it, after having figured out the foregoing, I realised what a perfect metaphor the battery was for my life just at the moment - all unknowing and unwitting, but still the Power behind the Throne.

Unknowing and unwitting, because at the moment I just don't know what's going on. I feel like one of those science fiction heroes, the kind where **they dare not or cannot destroy him** so they **cloud his mind** and **plant false and misleading memories** and then **give him a fake identity** so that he can live out his new life in mundane ignorance of his true powers and importance. **Generally on some backwater planet off in some obscure spiral arm of the galaxy.** They usually have an agent in place, close to him, to report back in case his real memories begin to surface. I think this is the case too. I suspect a woman whose name I have already not mentioned, and which I shall not mention again for similar reasons. But it hasn't worked because I've found out, through sheer chance, how staggeringly important I really am.

Now all I have to do is keep tugging away at any loose threads and their cover will soon be unravelled.



It was actually the Government who gave the game away. Well, we all know their track record for keeping secrets, but I suppose they had to be informed. I should have gotten an inkling back in 1990, but I treated it then as some gift of fortune. The \$ had been running at about 1.65 to the £ for about a year. Then, when I came to buy the dollars for our US visit I discovered the ratio was up to 1.87, and even better the Access/Mastercard bills we ran up whilst in the US were converted at £1.92. At the time I thought this was, as I said, simply good fortune, but with hindsight I realise it was down to the machinations of the UK Government ensuring I was kept distracted by an affordable holiday. It worked. Boy, was I ever distracted! After we returned the rate settled down again in the 1.60-1.70 range.

Then the Powers That Be learned that we intended going back to the USA in 1993, but obviously with the \$ at only 1.65 to the £ we'd be struggling to afford a decent holiday. So the Government panicked and joined the ERM - the European Exchange rate Mechanism - effectively tying the struggling £ to the Deutschmark's coattails. This worked a treat, and as the DM climbed against the \$ it dragged the £ up with it, though in order to maintain the resulting exchange levels the Government had to raise interest rates to an amazing 15%, in the process squeezing industry until even the pips squeaked. But you have to remember that that was of relatively minor moment to the Government. If UK industry failed and went to the wall, with millions thrown out of work, that was as nothing against the requirement that I be kept sweet by being granted another affordable US holiday.

And you thought I was kidding when I wrote about how important I was?

By God, the British Government must have been sweating. At about this time though I singlehandedly changed Government policy. The £ had reached the giddy heights of \$2.00, and the newspapers were full of serious articles on the financial pages about how ludicrously overpriced the £ was, and more trivial pieces about how you should save money by flying over to New York to do your weekly shopping and have your hair done. I was worried. The Government was insisting that it wouldn't devalue, but the newspapers were hinting otherwise. Little did either the press or I suspect that the Government was actually desperate to devalue but was prevented from doing so because of its commitment to my holiday.

The thing is, I work at the head office of a major international company (over 30 production sites in the US alone) based in Manchester, and there is a department whose sole purpose is to buy and sell foreign currencies, ideally at a profit. The company permits its staff to take advantage of these facilities and buy foreign currencies 'ahead'. Because this means the company has to buy dollars, and hold them at a nominal US interest rate of say 3%, rather than hold its money in sterling at a UK interest rate of 15%, it discounts the exchange rate 1¢ for every month between them making the purchase on your behalf and you giving them the money. In my case that would be thirteen months, so with the pound then at almost \$2.00 it meant I'd be guaranteed them at nearly \$1.87, and wouldn't have to pay for over a year. Bad news if the £ stayed at the same rate, and worse if it continued to climb. Good news though if it turned out the Government was lying through its teeth about devaluation. But would the Government lie to its people? Would a brick sink? Get Real! We'd had enough of gambling and decided to play safe and cover the pot. \$1.87 was good enough, it guaranteed the holiday.

Word quickly got back to the Chancellor of the Exchequer and the Prime Minister who immediately heaved a sigh of relief and hauled the pound back out of the ERM, causing it to drop drastically against the dollar. This also meant they could take more action to facilitate our holiday. The absurdly high interest rate of 15% had served its purpose in maintaining the £ against the \$ until after I'd made my 'purchase', but now it was counterproductive. Obviously in order to pay for the dollars, and other elements of the trip, I was going to have to take out a loan, and



there was no way I could afford the repayments on such a loan at 15% interest. So almost overnight the Government changed the whole thrust of its economic policy from a strong pound to low interest rates. As I write they're down to 6%, and may even drop another point before I take out my loan. I've gained enormously on the swings and then I've gained enormously on the roundabouts. Life just doesn't work like that, unless somebody is watching over you.

So I finally figured it out. I am obviously more important to the Government than any element of its publicly stated policy. But don't let that worry you. If we meet in the States on my next visit, feel free to treat me as just plain 'folks'. Especially do not throw yourself onto the floor and prostrate yourself before me. It would embarrass me. I may well deserve such respect, but I don't know why, so let's just play it cool, OK?

Unfortunately, if I can figure it out, so too can others. Now I know how Salman Rushdie feels, being on somebody's death list.

Because the IRA are out to get me. They've found out somehow and figure if I'm that important to the UK Government, then priority should be given to wiping me out. You doubt this? OK, against which family are some of their most recent outrages directed. The Royal Family? Nope, the Skeltons. The IRA knows who's more important to the British Government. Fortunately for me the letters in the IRA's name seem to stand for 'Incompetent' and 'Wankers' (they can't spell, either), because they made a total hash of it. Here's how the events unfolded....

It was at 09.30 in the morning of Thursday 3rd. December, and I was at my desk in conference with the other members of the Group Payroll Support team when Cas rang up. She'd heard the news on local radio. "Have you heard about the bomb at the Parsonage?". I moved the phone aside and asked the others "Has anyone heard of a bomb at the Parsonage?" Nope, so I cupped my hand over the mouthpiece and repeated, somewhat louder to the office at large "Has anyone heard of a bomb at the Parsonage?" Nobody had. Thus was the news brought from Aix to Ghent. 'The Parsonage' was St. Mary's Parsonage in Manchester, on which are situated both Parsonage Gardens and Cardinal House which is the building housing our Group Computer Centre, or at least the hardware and immediate support personnel. The less immediate support personnel, those who design business systems, or write the programs to support them, had been moved from there to our Trafford Park Head Office some three years ago. Us. You can say this about the IRA - they're good at making bombs, but their intelligence is shit and at least three years out of date. I'd been gone from that building at least three years before they bombed it. Of course my daughter Deborah still works there, and this may have confused them.....but she works nights and this bomb went off at about 0840 a.m.

Anyway, Cas informed us that all buildings had been evacuated, which explained why the Operations personnel weren't answering their phones that morning. The next news we heard was when our boss came into the office and announced 'There's been a bomb at the Parsonage, but the computer's OK. You can carry on working but remember if it goes down later you may lose the work you've done today.' "Was anybody hurt?" somebody asked him. "Oh, I've no idea." he said, rushing out to form a Crisis Management Team. He hadn't asked. The computer was OK, that's what counted.

Fortunately our switchboard operator had overheard a message that nobody was seriously injured in the blast (one guy had minor cuts on a couple of fingers), and once this information was generally circulated we all began to stop worrying and enjoy the excitement. Meanwhile the computer continued to operate and everyone up and down the country, and across Europe was none the wiser. The computer



room itself had been fitted with bomb-proof windows, and other than light fixtures being dislodged by the blast, had suffered no damage. In fact the computer continued to run perfectly, without human support or intervention, until late afternoon when the number of jobs submitted that required human intervention (mounting archive tapes etc.) filled up the system logs with unanswered messages, and the system butted its head against this wall for the rest of the day until the police allowed a couple of operators in to power things down later that night.

Being computer people, and knowing that nobody was injured, we were all now treating the incident as a computer problem. Long before the mainframe ceased responding Operations personnel were rushing down to our Disaster Recovery site in London with archive tapes of our previous night's operations. On Friday we'd be operating as if Thursday had never happened. That's the joy about computers. If you have a bad day you can go back as if it had never happened and then rerun it without the problems. We're one of the few companies in the world to have had a genuine tryout of our Disaster Recovery procedures. Not that they were used because everyone opted to wait until the police let us power the mainframe back up on Friday morning rather than lose or redo the work they'd done on the Thursday. We were also lucky because UK insurance companies had already agreed to suspend their insurance coverage in relation to terrorist activities as from the first of January 1993, so we were lucky the IRA hit us when they did. One month later and it would have cost the company a bomb as well as the IRA.

Initial newspaper reports identified the building outside which the bomb had exploded incorrectly (as Albertson House rather than Cardinal House) and whilst the TV news coverage corrected this all subsequent newspaper reports perpetuated the original press mistake. One wonders why they each employ zillions of reporters when all they do is rework earlier reports. It was an understandable mistake on their part though because Albertson House is a Government building, and hence a sensible IRA target. The press obviously doesn't know about me.

Cas rang Deborah up at work the next night. "What's it look like there?" she asked. "Like a bomb's hit it!" Deborah replied.

We also subsequently learned that they were stone lucky. The bomb exploded directly in front of two windows, which buckled and shattered. They weren't bombproof because they weren't protecting the computer, just people. The Operations Manager would have been behind one. He would have been in at that time, but was taking a day's holiday. Several Operators would have been seated at their VDU terminals facing the other one, except that at that time they were on shift handover and watching TV or getting cups of coffee in the rest room. With the glass fragments being blown in from the shattered window, if there'd been anybody in that room they wouldnt have had to evacuate them, they'd have had to hose their remains down off the walls.

So remember, please, the next time you're in an Irish bar anywhere in America, and somebody rattles a collecting box under your nose, if you put your small change, your shrapnel into it, they could very well end up picking that shrapnel out of somebody over here. The IRA is in the business of killing ordinary people. Any ordinary people who don't agree with its aims, which basically means any ordinary people.

I sometimes think I know better than the next man. So do you. So does the IRA. I don't think this entitles me to kill the next man. Neither do you. Neither does any sane person.

Unfortunately the IRA thinks it does.







# Hania Wojtowicz

## Shots Fired...Pause...Reality Sets In

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### Shots Fired...

It was Friday night at midnight as we drove to the grocery store. A quiet night in Chicago not too long ago. We sat in the car at the corner, waiting for the light. There wasn't any traffic, but the local bar was hot that night. There were people in the doorway and on the sidewalk too. Kris pointed at the motorcycles cluttering the street.

The light turned green, the sign blinked go, and then we heard the sound. We thought it was a motorcycle, shattering the silence. Rob made the turn into the street and suddenly I knew. It was a gunshot that we'd heard. A soundtrack to the picture through the windshield straight ahead.

I'd never felt time stop before. Or forgotten how to breathe.

They were struggling in the street, away from the sidewalk, at least ten feet. The black man looked so surprised, his face turned toward us. His eyes reached out to the man on the sidewalk. The biker's pale hand struck twice. The knife blade shone in the headlight beam. The black man fell at the biker's feet.

The car got closer. Too close. Rob was watching the action. He hadn't noticed that this show had no commercials. My mind struggled to switch to cop mode. *Stop the damn car! I don't have a radio! No weapons, no protection! Stop the damn car!*

The biker kicked the body, bent down and took away the black man's gun. The biker kicked again. The body rolled over, beside the parked car. The man on the sidewalk shouted. The biker raised the gun and fired . . .

Rob blinked and reality set in. He stopped the car. He backed it up. He turned left down a side street.

. . . at the third man on the sidewalk. The bullet hit the parked car. The third man raised his gun and fired at the biker. As we sped down the side street, I turned my head. The biker was down. His hand was empty. The silver coloured gun grated across the road, coming to rest beside the black man's body. There was a lot of blood.

The biker died immediately. The black man had been stabbed in the heart. He died at the hospital. He was 28 years old. He was a cop.

### Pause...

\* \* \*

The events described above took place in 25 seconds. The ripples are still spreading.

\* \* \*



## Reality Sets In...

A Chicago police officer was stabbed to death on July 24, 1992 outside a biker bar on Irving Park Road. The assailant was then shot and killed by the officer's white partner. Witnesses reported that the assailant and his brother, who were white, had accosted the black officer with racial slurs after he and his partner entered the bar just before midnight. Both officers were off duty and were apparently picking up a set of keys one of them had left there earlier in the day. The officers left the bar to avoid any further confrontation. The biker followed them out to their car, where he approached the black officer and stabbed him twice in the chest. The biker had no criminal record and did not know the officer. Friends and family cannot explain what made him do it.

I was the primary witness to this apparently pointless death. In six years of duty with the Metro Toronto Police, I've never faced a gun or had anyone die before my eyes. Having this happen while off duty, especially while on vacation, made it somehow harder to handle. I'd let my guard down, I wasn't paying attention the way I always do when I'm at home. In this case, it wouldn't have made any difference, but I can't stop thinking about it.

It takes a lot of energy to really see what's around you, all the time. I memorize licence plates and vehicle descriptions. I check out the doorways and alleys when I drive down the street. Everyone around me in convenience stores and banks is a possible suspect. I sit with my back to the wall in restaurants. I look at my watch when I hear a loud noise, just in case. It's a constant state of yellow alert.

I'm very tired.

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## Jodie Offutt

## MY LIFE IN PRISON

"Would you like to teach two Freshman Composition classes at Eastern Kentucky Correctional Complex in West Liberty?"

The woman on the phone was with Lees College in Jackson, Kentucky. Lees has programs in several Kentucky prisons, including two two-year associate degree programs at EKCC, one in small business and one in addiction counseling, and they needed English teachers for the 12-week summer quarter.

I received my MA in English a year and a half ago after taking classes for 21 years. Despite the recession, I've been employed ever since. I've taught freshman composition the last two fall semesters at the local university.

"How safe is it, teaching in a prison?" Andy wanted to know.

"Well, hell, surely they wouldn't offer me a job if it wasn't safe."

My officemates, Laura and Teresa, and I decided to take the jobs and Laura suggested that we visit the prison before we start teaching. Laura's worked on the psychiatric floor at the hospital and said it can be disconcerting when doors clang shut and lock behind you. We didn't want to go in the first night rubbernecking.

A few days before the quarter began we made the 35-minute, 50-mile trip to West Liberty. We drove through the small town and saw the prison atop a high hill. The prison is less than three miles from the county high school and a grade school. We spotted a sign warning drivers against picking up hitchhikers. From the road, all that shows is a dome that Laura suggested looks like a UFO. The gray and Mary Kay-pink buildings come into view looking like a modern school or hospital. Then there's the tower, the small slitted rectangular windows and the razor wire coiled on top of the chainlink fences and roofs. The razor wire shines in the sun and I wonder what the place looks like at night.

We give our names to the guard at the gate, show him our licenses, assured him we have no knives, guns or drugs, and he gave us a visitor's parking sign that warns to OBEY ALL SIGNS. We take only our driver's licenses inside, which we surrender to the guard--a woman--in the reception area in exchange for visitor's tags that we clip to our clothing. The sterile lobby contains long, white metal mesh benches that one might see in a park, a few ashtrays, a pay phone and a round, raised guard's desk. We could be in the lobby of a large office building. The outside wall is all glass, floor to ceiling. Our supervisor, Carla, meets us in the lobby and escorts us through a door behind the guard's station; the upper part of the door is glass. We walk down a corridor with offices on each side, all with windows on the corridor side. These are the prison's business offices. They look like offices anywhere: workers are typing, working at computers, conferring, working at filing cabinets. They all wear ID tags.



At the end of the corridor is another round raised guard station, this one higher and behind glass. This is Central Control where everything in the complex is controlled and can be seen on monitors. Carla leads us to the right to a metal gate. It clanks open, we go through, and it clangs closed behind us. The corridors are wide, the walls are concrete and the gates are painted white. Carla points out a man in an orange jumpsuit who is sweeping the floor. Minimum security inmates have jobs throughout the prison. We go through two more metal gates that form an airlock -- the second doesn't open until the first one closes -- and enter the Academic wing of the Eastern Kentucky Correctional Complex.

Men are everywhere standing in the hall smoking and/or talking; sitting on the benches that line the corridor. Some of them have books and as I realize that they are all inmates, I receive my first surprise. Prisoners don't wear uniforms. They wear jeans, chinos, slacks with T-shirts or sports shirts. A prisoner later told me that the state is too cheap to furnish uniforms and they have to bring their own clothes. Some inmates sometimes wear state issue -- khaki pants and shirts.

Carla points out the library, the multi-denominational chapel and classrooms, all with windows on the corridor, as well as on the outside. Everything is very open; I never felt closed in. Some inmates call this place a glass prison. Carla leads us to her classroom where we sit down to talk. She introduces us to two teacher's aids, Joe and Eric, who look like college students. They are working with student forms for the classes, and ask Carla questions from time to time. One of them wears a gray Lees College T-shirt. We ask about copying, books, supplies--new-teacher questions. Carla says something that makes me realize that Joe and Eric are not young college students from town hired as TA's, but inmates. Surprise number two. They look so collegiate, so normal. In answer to a question, Carla says many inmates are from Louisville and Lexington. Joe tells us he's from Louisville and six guys from his high school are at EKCC. "We could have a class reunion here," he says proudly.

Before we leave, Carla tells us not to bring anything in that we can't keep in our pockets, nothing that shows phone number and address, or to leave anything around that we don't want stolen. Inmates aren't allowed money, but plenty of it is around and they'll take things to sell. Eric and Joe confirm this. Five minutes later she tells us that she thinks of her students as students first, as inmates second. She's sure security would disapprove.

On the way home I decide not to wear my gold chains, or take my Cross pen and pencil, a gift from my daughter Missy, to the prison.

After we'd been teaching two weeks we toured the complex. The whole place is computer-controlled. Central Control contains a bank of computers and TV screens that could have come straight out of a Bond movie. The first thing I saw on the monitor was my car in the parking lot. (We reminded ourselves not to do anything we wouldn't want anybody to witness when we think we're alone.) Central Control can call up any corridor on the monitors. The computer is about eight feet long and each door and gate is represented by a light. The guards in CC push soft buttons to open doors and gates to let people in and out. The prisoners live in dorms, each of which has its own control and bank of computers. This is a medium security prison, which means that it has a maximum unit, and minimum security prisoners who clean offices and cut grass outside the fence. The guys I dealt with are medium security inmates.

We climb up the narrow metal stairwell--240 steps--to the tower where we can see all the dorms, the yard--everything--including Tower Two, which has a view of the back of some dorms. The dorms are all concrete. Each cell is 6x9 and has two cots, two chairs, a desk and a small locker. Inmates can have TVs (they bring their own) and each cell has a radio. The prison has a gym and a well-equipped weight room. Many inmates spend their time building muscles and working out.

The only time I felt creepy was in the segregation unit. The doors of the solitary cells have slitted windows and drawers through which food is passed. We could hear a guy singing and since they can say whatever they want, we were warned that may say anything to to us. We didn't stay in the hall long enough to hear anything. The guard in seg control is behind a locked door and gate. One is locked before the other is opened.

"There is no animal in the world more dangerous than a caged human," the segregation officer said. I think it was his way of telling us not to forget, no matter how nice our students are or how normal they seem to be, that we are teaching criminals.

And they are nice. My students were respectful and polite. My classes were made up of students much like the classes I teach "on the street". Most of my students were under thirty, and I had a sprinkling of older men. Each class had about 20 to 25 students. As they began to know and trust me, they were more open about prison life, the lingo, the routine. I learned in the classroom as well as from their papers. These men were motivated students.

For some that means that attending classes looks good to a parole board; others may sincerely intend to continue their education. The more we were together, the more I learned about why they were incarcerated. The first night of classes I told them that I did not care why they were there, that it was none of my business, that our relationship was teacher-student, and I didn't want them to put their prison numbers on any papers. I was curious about some, and became more so the longer I knew them. I learned that one man killed his wife, several were jailed for burglary, and quite a few had trafficked in drugs. I picked this up from conversations and/or papers. Most of the young guys are probably in on drug charges. Most of the black guys are from the cities--Lexington, Louisville. Nearly all of them are from Kentucky.

The things I found most surprising: inmates wear their own clothes (except black so they don't look like guards, and camouflage); the cafeteria has tables that seat four (tables and chairs are bolted to the floor) and looks like a student cafeteria; the only gun I saw was a rifle in the tower. Guns and other crowd control devices are in Central Control for easy access, if necessary. The guards are armed with radios. Very reassuring. When I walked into the library the first time, the first book I saw was Joe Haldeman's THE HEMINGWAY HOAX. EKCC's library has a lot of science fiction. I didn't see any of Andy's works, which is just as well. By the time I was advised not to tell my students where I lived, I'd already told them. That didn't bother me until I remembered that we're the only Offutt in the local phone book.



CLOSE ENOUGH FOR FANWRITING #15  
column by Dave Locke

Rinnng. Rinnng. Rinnng.

"Hello."

"Hi, Mr. Dave. It's Bill. How are you doing?"

"Not bad. I was just sitting here thinking about life, death, the universe, entropy, and everything. You know?"

"Is something wrong?"

"Nah. I was just listening to the last Moody Blues album."

"I see. Well, the reason I called, and so long as you're thinking about things, anyway, I thought maybe you could start thinking about your next OUTWORLDS column. It's getting around to that time again."

"I think I could handle that, Mr. Bill. However, I'll have to change the album. Perhaps something by Jimmy Buffett."

"That would be nice."

"Or maybe Hoyt Axton's 'My Griffin Is Gone'."

"Whatever it takes, Dave."

"I'll start right away. The Moody Blues album is almost over, anyhow."

"Great. Stay in touch. Don't forget to write."

"Later, Mr. Bill."

"Later, Mr. Dave."



"I just shot six holes in my freezer

"I think I've got cabin fever

"Somebody sound the alarm."

-- Jimmy Buffett, "Boat Drinks"

There are those rare party occasions, usually just before the conversation devolves into a joke-telling session, where the men have segregated in one part of the home and the women in another, and with drinks in hand the men are standing around and somehow one of them is moved to cast his mind backwards in search of the last time he was in a fight. Often this involves a search across decades, and usually more than one diploma is seen in passing. With consideration to the number of times I've encountered and remembered this since just before World War 2 ended (say, somewhere between one-half to one dozen), and duly noting the number of times it was me who brought it up (zero), I presume this belongs less in the realm of spontaneity and more in the theater of conversational gimmicks.

Never being conventional, and seldom linear, when task-free my mind has a tendency to pursue digression and segue. There has always seemed to be some block at proceeding straight back to the memory of my last fight. Its placement in time is amiss. Was it that one, or that one, or the other one? I can remember the fights, and their placement in space, and if not for the latter I wouldn't be as far zeroed-in as just three memories lacking their place in time. If I can't go straight back to snag the incident, I wind up going back to the beginning, or the middle, or near the end, and trying to sneak up on it from the other direction.

This does tend to warp the magic which controls the ebb and flow and give and take of the party conversation, depending on whether I decide to think out loud and thus hog more air time, or do the search internally with the talk-switch off and thus sacrifice the wonderful comradeship of everyone else's stories. In a universe where it actually comes to pass that "clothes make the man," for the moment of all these conversations we are, every one of us, standing around in jeans and a motorcycle jacket. When the topic has run its course, often the joke-telling session is near at hand or right on top of us, at which point we all pause to put on our colorful golf costumes.

Yes, I can go back to the beginning and remember my first fight. I was one digit old. I had, with great reserve, put up with the attentions of the class bully for the better part of the school year. My father travelled a lot, it was my mother's code which was used in an effort to program me, and one thing that was supposed to be in memory was a belief in turning the other cheek. As a program limitation, both cheeks were sometimes red or blue or gray, and being a self-learning program I one day wound up on the playground beating the snot out of the class bully.

Naturally this was all any teacher saw, and I was promptly frog-marched to the principal's office while the class bully was assisted to the school nurse. My home was called and my mother came to take me there. The school didn't want me the rest of that day but I wasn't particularly wanted at home, either. I was given to understand that I was a big disappointment in a little package.

That night as I laid in bed staring at the ceiling my father came home. Mixed emotions ensued as I traded off his possible reactions to the day's high point as compared with our usual good feelings at seeing each other when he returned from his frequent journeys. I had no idea what to expect. I did know I was being expectant for a long time, as presumably he was being given a great wealth of detail downstairs. Finally I heard his steps as he came up to the second floor and walked down the hall to my room.



The door opened into the darkness of my room, and he was backlit by the light in the hall as he stood in the doorway and peered to see if there was a small package in the approximate direction of where the bed should be. I said howdy and he switched on the light, blinding me unexpectedly. Before my vision cleared he was sitting on the bed. I will remember the brief conversation that followed.

"I got the story downstairs."

"Uh huh."

"Then I got the story behind the story. That took longer, or I'd have been here sooner."

"Uh huh."

"I think I've got the picture now. It's good that you were able to figure it out and see it for yourself. It's bad that we didn't set the scene so you could do it much earlier."

I was beginning to feel ten feet tall. I didn't know it then, but he was apologizing for not keeping a finger on the pulse. All I saw was approval, face value approval, and often we don't look any further than that even when we're a whole bunch older than I was back then. I'm more careful about such things these days, of course, and have been for perhaps even a couple of weeks now.

It's always a turning point in a boy's life to realize that self-defense, win or lose, makes life a whole lot easier. You far less often have to fight, and you get a whole measure of peace of mind. I got other things as well, obviously, and good or bad it added up to a big package. No wonder I remember my first fight.

My last one, though, couldn't be positively identified in a lineup of three. At last, or at least, I no longer have to be plagued by this conversational hiccup. The problem is in the past because, just a few months ago, I had my first fight in decades.

Do you remember the squirrel story from two columns back? The squirrel was lame and being chased by an unleashed dog in the park, and I opened the door on the dog's nose? Well, never mind. It was the same park but a different location. Different squirrels, even, but I did begin to think I was becoming an advocate for the squirrel population.

What happened, in sum, was that I was having lunch in the park, again in my car, and hollered at an idiot who was speeding down the narrow, one-way wooded road. I hollered because the animals and birds were scattering to stay alive. The car screeched to a halt, a neanderthal got out to tell me that I was "dead meat" (how dare I tell this asshole to slow down), and I put him in the hospital. Fortunately, I guess, among the few cars parked along that stretch there was a policeman who saw everything and trotted the fellow off for medical attention and, later, incarceration for extreme stupidity. I did feel bad, however, at ruining the cop's lunch.

True, it isn't all that much of a story, and I'll never be the one to lead off of a conversational lull with it at a party. But I do now feel prepared to hold up my end of things, and with quick dispatch, should the subject of "when was your last fight" arise and we guys start pulling on our jeans and motorcycle jackets again. I feel fully Prepared now, which of course is a vast relief as compared with my previous options of fumphering around or wandering off to find a more decent conversation.

Sign over office desk: They think I'm one of them.

Comedian Jeff Foxworthy does a clever "You know you're a redneck if ..."  
routine, with criteria such as: ... if someone asks to see your I.D. and you show



them your belt buckle. If Jack Daniels makes your list of most admired people. If you see no need to stop at a rest area because you have an empty milk jug in the car. If you have ever barbecued Spam on the grill. If Redman chewing tobacco sends you a Christmas card. If your dad walks you to school because you are in the same grade. If you view the next family reunion as a chance to meet girls. If your front porch collapses and kills more than three dogs.

Okay, there's the setup. Obviously I'm going to create a "You know you're a fan if ..." routine and have it chock-full of fictional criteria. Sure I am.

Wrong. Maybe next time. This time I'm going to create a "I know I'm a fan if ... " routine. This is my style of fanhistory. Personal, and briefer.

I know I'm a fan if ...

If someone I've only vaguely heard of shows up on my doorstep, his driver having sped away, and asks for a tour of the city and transport to various upcoming fan gatherings.

If the first fan I meet lives on a farm and discloses that he likes to have intercourse with cows, and then points out which one is his favorite.

If, having met many fans in the subsequent 31 years, I come to realize that the cow-fucker was one of the more interesting of the lot.

If I no longer readily admit that I was the original creator of the "Most Naked Lady" category at a convention masquerade, despite innocent motives.

If the main reason I still go to the occasional convention is to relive the fantasy that I'm actually quite thin.

If because of the books I read I find that some of these authors know my address.

If I invite strangers into my home because they're already friends, or vice versa.

If my entire living room is covered by collated copies of an unstapled document bearing a Grant Canfield nude climbing up the body of an ugly dwarf, and an hour later I'm joined by a neighbor's minister and the neighbor's three small children, and then leave them alone in there.

If at 4:00 a.m. I'm with a fan sitting over drinks in the home of another fan who has wandered off to bed, and I can't help resolve the problem of who will lock the door behind us if we leave.

If people I haven't communicated with in a while tell me all about myself lately, and then correct me if they think I've got it wrong.

If making friends with someone who publishes regularly means you're always going to get hit up for material.

[REDACTED]

"I wish I were somewhere other than here

"down in some honkytonk

"sippin' on a beer."

-- Jimmy Buffett, "The Great Filling Station Holdup"

[REDACTED]

Ring. Ring.

"Hello?"

"Hello Mr. Bill. It's done. Jimmy Buffett has finished singing."

"What?"

"The column installment is done, too."



**No Quarter**  
by Chris Sherman

Saturday, November 23, 1991. The Arab Quarter, Singapore.

"No! No No No!" These were the only English words recognizable in the torrent hurled at me by the infuriated shopkeeper. I shrugged apologetically, and lowered my camera. I hadn't expected this reaction. *Everyone* I had met in this sweltering city-state had been unfailingly polite — until now.

"Sorry," I said, meekly duckbobbing and backing away. He lunged at me and grabbed my camera. As I struggled to fend him off his unfettered hand shot up and gripped my shoulder and spun me toward the street. Through my thin shirt I could feel hot sweat on his palms.

To my relief he wanted to *show* me something. He released my camera and pointed, stabbing his free hand at some location down Kandahar Street. He leaned toward me, sharp words procreating like yeast on his foul breath. With shrill censure he pointed to my camera, then stabbed his finger down the street again. Reacting slowly, I followed his gesture and saw the golden dome and minarets of the Sultan Mosque rising in the east above the row of tenements lining the street.

Ah. Now I thought I understood. Once again my irreligious thoughtlessness had offended someone — deeply, it seemed.

I had been photographing the beautifully arranged display of hand-crafted coffins in his tiny open-air shop. I was struck by the fabulously carved ornamentation on the dark wooden boxes. And the light: equatorial; shattered and softened by the constantly reforming rainclouds scudding along above. The coffins so illuminated were dark, primal and fascinating, a beautiful visual study. Like the coffin Queequeg had built aboard the Pequod, which ultimately and ironically saved Ishmael's life.

Turns out there is some kind of deep religious significance about them, though — even empty, unsold ones. Photographs strictly taboo.

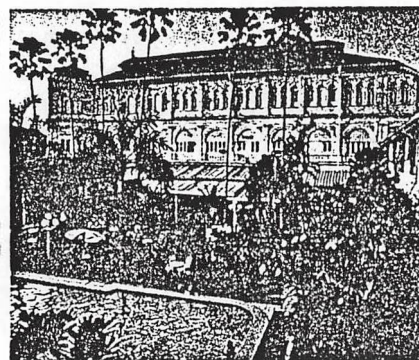
Why?

"I don't really know why," said Kim the bartender.

Half an hour later I was devoutly seeking proof of my theory through my own spiritual observance in *The Writer's Bar* at the Raffles Hotel. Around me were

journey into history and nostalgia. When you admire the French Renaissance architecture from close up and walk the hotel's wide corridors, climb the balustraded stairs and look up at high ceilings, you can understand why Kipling, Maugham and Coward chose this to be their home and workplace for some time in their lives.

Raffles provides the opportunity to sip tea in the famous Tiffin Room or have a Singapore Gin Sling while



admiring the fan-shaped travellers' palms and the stars at the beautiful Palm Court, for it was at Raffles that this world-renowned cocktail was concocted. A meal at the Elizabethan Grill or the open-air Palm Court Restaurant which serves Italian and Singapore food (and where you can listen to a trio playing music in the evenings) is an experience in old-world hospitality. Drink at Cad's Alley or the Writers Bar, where there is jazz on Fridays, and listen to yarns of the hotel's past.

The swimming pool is situated in the

tropical garden setting of the Palm Court. The billiard room has an interesting history connected with the time when tigers roamed the jungles of Singapore and occasionally devoured unfortunate members of the citizenry.

Raffles had a very humble beginning as a tiffin house or restaurant in a bungalow owned by Captain and Mrs Dare. Later, pressure for accommodation persuaded the Dares to go into the hostelry business. It was only in 1886 that today's Raffles came into being — as one link in the famous Sarkies brothers' hotel chain.

The Raffles' reputation grew quickly and the hotel became the social centre for the British administrators and their guests as well as for visitors to Singapore. Despite the building of more modern competitors, Raffles continues to play a very special role in international travel.





mementos commemorating visits by regular patrons — Conrad, Maugham, Kipling — who had haunted the place in times past. The bartender had been a gushing font of knowledge about these gentlemen and how the South Seas meltingpot had influenced some of their writings.

"Maybe it has something to do with capturing the soul of the future inhabitant." Kim paused to fill a generous shot of Wild Turkey for a tourist. "Didn't he tell you why?"

Above us, the mahogany and brass ceiling fan went "whump-whump-whump," deceptively trying to divert meaning into the other strong currents flowing through the room.

"No English" I said, miming one of the shopkeeper's more descriptive gestures. "But he was really pissed."

"Drunk?" Kim looked shocked. Though their culture gave us the word *al-kuhol* (roughly translated as "essence"), no Allah-fearing Moslem would dare to appear intoxicated, at least not in public.

"No, I mean angry." Ah, so. Cultural differences flashing their bright whites once again. This guy hadn't missed a beat when I had asked for gin on the rocks. "Sorry, we have no rocks today, but perhaps I could offer you some ice?"

Kim's easy manner reappeared instantly. Laughing and filling a beer for another customer he said, "Angry -- in America you call that pissed?" He slapped the tap closed and shook his head with an indulgent smile. Earlier Kim told me he was working here because he was an aspiring writer, and was particularly interested in the subtleties of wordplay. I nodded, urging him to continue.

"Well, if he was angry, I can understand that. Some of the Moslems feel they're being persecuted. The government keeps a pretty tight lid on it, but you still pick up a *vibe* every now and then." His idioms were great, but he was testing again — testing his own grasp of English and testing my willingness to wordspar with him. Vibe, man?

"Xylophone?" I asked, with a sly smile, placing my glass on the bar for a refill.

Frown, one, two... His recovery, though not graceful, showed a skilled turn of mind.

"No, not as serious as that. I mean, they can't afford to be — they rely too much on you foreigners. Especially the jewelers and rug merchants. They're not *xenophobes*."

Oh, he was quick. Conrad had written about such a bartender in *Lord Jim*. He returned my sly smile and upped the ante, wiping out my glass with a deft twist before refilling it.

Outside, it began to rain again, hot and sticky. I nodded toward the crowds pushing along the sidewalk, scrambling to stay close and dry under narrow eaves. "Right. Lot of wetbacks here; wouldn't want to alienate them. Bad customs. By the way, do you take Visa?"

Take that, Scaramouche. But he parried expertly, then lunged for the kill.

"Sorry. Green cards only. American, expressly."

Touche. Good show, old man.

In his stories of the Great Game, Kipling stressed the importance of yielding like a gentleman when it became clear that ruin was imminent. Conrad venerated tragically flawed losers who submitted with élan. Keeping spirit with my surroundings, I silently toasted this masterful wordwright and downed my drink. I slapped a beautiful Singapore \$20 note on the bar, saluted Kim, then staggered out into the exotic, hot, tropical afternoon, seeking further torrid adventure.

Wednesday, March 6, 1991. Sears Point International Speedway, Sonoma, California.

...and *damnit* I can't stop this car sliding, how can I, the fucking track is wet and slick with rain and hail and oil from that fucking Sony Formula One that spewed when its fucking egohole driver blew his fucking engine still over 100 mph and WATCH THAT CONCRETE BARRIER turn brake TURN!SHARP!TURN *oh shit not a spin*

wait a minute...

*airborne?*

Death and Serious Injury roar and swoop down out of the ragged sky, swarming over my puny racecar like opportunistic insects, sniggering at my atavistic raging. My academic conscience drolly intones "this is the equilibration of the risk/reward dynamic you implicitly accepted" SHUT THE FUCK UP AND TURN THIS CAR BEFORE the concrete barrier passes from sight, but now I'm on



the rain-slick grass and any hope of curbing my speed is now only a very wet dream

*Dreaming: the cheap foil birthday wrap crumpled easily in my hands, then tumbled languidly toward the fire, where it immediately ignited and flared with*

too much energy oh god that embankment is coming up VERY FAST TURN AGAIN – ah SHIT

I CAN'T BELIEVE I'M GOING TO CRASH!!!!

IMPACT.

Such a meek word to describe the violent transfer of energy between a rock (my helmet-encased head) and a very hard place. Time, which had compressed like a cobra during my sinuous slide, suddenly recoiled, blasting like a remorseless shockwave across the terrain of my fragile, but still (yes?) living awareness...

time passed while I was unconscious...

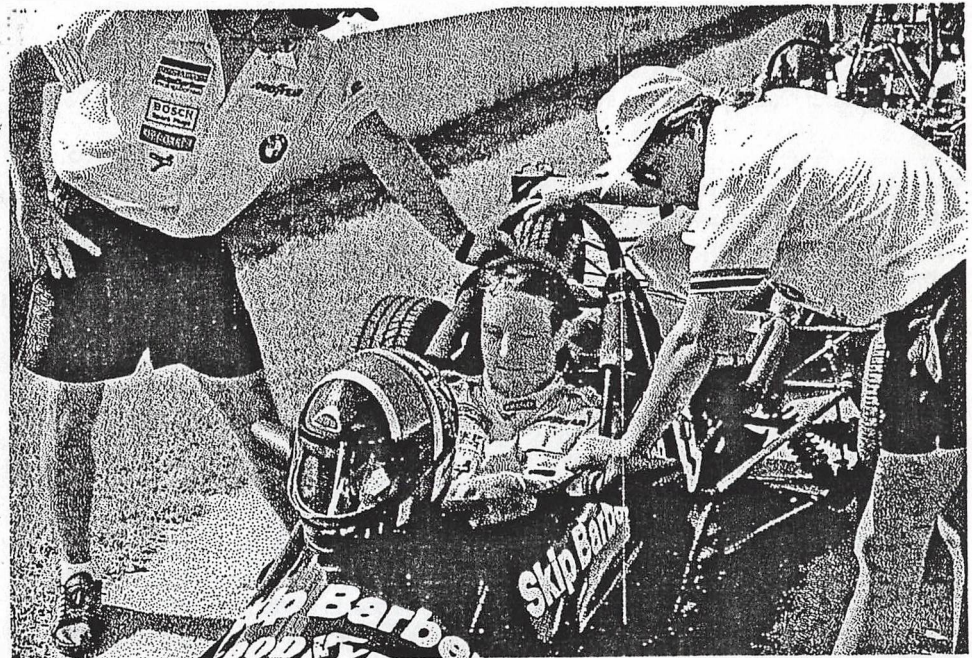
...and now I stupidly look down at my body, racing suit splattered with mud and oil and find that yes, dear, I can wiggle my toes. In fact, the engine is still running, despite my quavering foot which is somehow holding the clutch to the floor. In fact, I realize (hot faced, foolishly) that nothing – not me, not the car, not even the infield of the track – is damaged in any way.

So I look both ways, oh-so correctly looking for other cars, then sheepishly pull back onto the track. I look up and see Barry on the edge of the observation tower, speaking into his walkie-talkie – which he waves derisively in my direction. Fuck you, Barry. I know he's just broadcast a play-by-play of my spin and crash trackwide – complete with analysis of everything from my braking and steering technique to his assessment of my overconfident hubris – and by the time I make it back to the pit I'll be the target of unforgiving mockery or angry coaching, depending on what he reported.

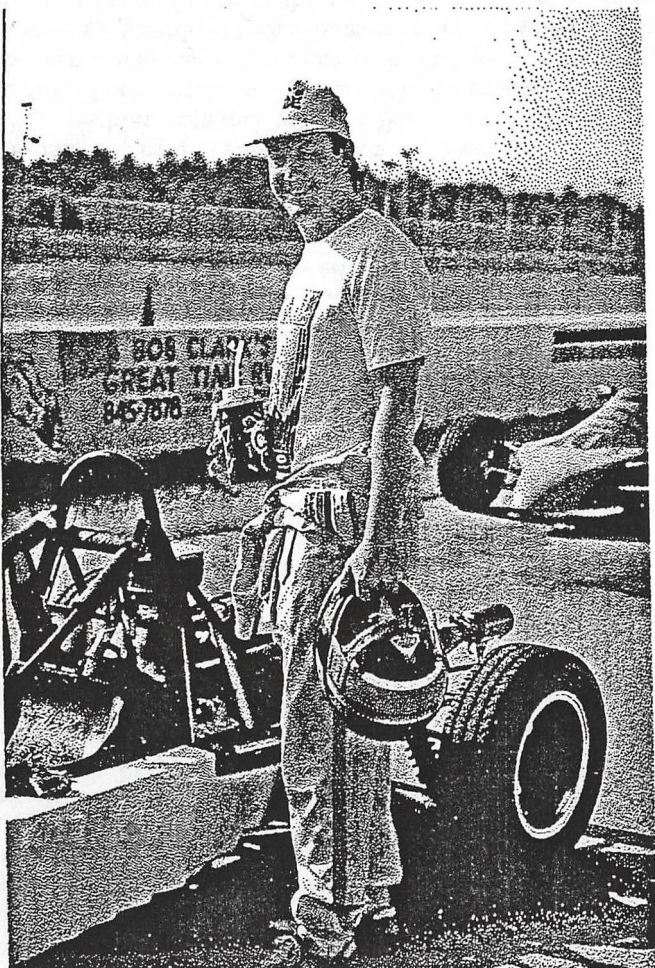
And damnit, despite my horrific fright I didn't even see my life flash before my eyes during the hellaciously long seconds that stretched forever between losing control of the car and the final settling of my inertial account.

Whence these feelings, Zoober? So I spin, I crash, I survive. No guts strewn everywhere, no blazing glory. Just an acute feeling of dislike for what I'm doing here.

Huh?







So... So maybe I'm not really a racecar driver after all.

So?

Monday, September 28, 1992. Toledo, Castille-LaMancha, Spain.

My running shoes flare with brilliant sunrise colors, catching and reflecting the harsh morning light, but the warriors massed on the hillside ignore me. Empty shotgun shells strewn on the path mock the primitive weapons the Crusaders are using to bring down quail and rabbit for their morning repast. At the base of the microwave antenna, where the Supreme Regal Commander has established his observation post looking down on the walled and heavily fortified city, I stop and watch, winded, trying to deduce the strategy that will guide the impending attack on the ancient fortress below.

Following the line of his gaze, I look back down the hill toward the city and share the excitement of the horde who today will free it from the dominion of the Moorish infidels. My own modest part in this drama is small, accidental, and (of course) completely imagined.

These imaginings have become my favorite part of traveling.

Time and again I find myself in locations where history unfolds in vividly imagined panoramas. Often I find myself in the midst of great battles, having an excellent adventure as spectral carnage swirls around me. In Europe this is easy thanks to wars beyond enumeration fought over virtually the entire continent. In the States I find myself drawn to civil war battlegrounds, especially in the swamps of the South. In Australia I've gone for a species of gringo walkabout, tracking imagined songlines like I follow voyageur portage trails in the Boundary Waters/Quetico. In Southeast Asia I've been overwhelmed with the density of jungle, and have gained painfully deep insights into the malignant stupidity of the Vietnam war that no media or book learning could possibly convey.

Later in the day Mercedes charmed the boy-guard into letting us past his nervously clutched automatic weapon into the Alcazar, though strictly speaking this is not allowable on Mondays. Now filled with administrative offices for military and police, the building emanates with the power of history. Originally built by the Visgoths, this fortress has survived wave after wave of denuding conquerors.

My companions are oblivious to the screams of the dinner guests. After reconquering the city in the 12th century, Alfonso VI invited 5000 Toledans to



his version of the Last Supper. As an example for his timid son on the art of civic governance, he systematically murdered these people as they passed through the Arco de la Sangre ("Bloody Arch") into the vast main hall.

Making our way through sheets of flame, we step out onto the steep escarpment rising above the Rio Tajo, overlooking the Puente de Alcantara, one of the two bridge-gates leading into Toledo. I squint to identify the arsonists (Secessionist militia (1710) or Napoleon's troops (1810) ???), but they are vague in the afternoon haze, and quickly disappear into the horizon, fleeing north toward choicer spoils in Madrid.

As we leave the building we pass through the museum, entombing centuries of military technology. Bullet marks from the Spanish Civil War scar the aging stone walls. In the west the spire of the Cathedral rises above the labyrinth of narrow stone streets.

Stone liquefies into mud as we pass down the centuries. We jostle with cattle and pigs as we make our way through the crowded village toward the Cathedral. From the outside it appears short and squat; solid. The ornate stone carving is worn from wind, rain and pigeon shit.

Stepping inside into the cool darkness, I'm hit with the hammer force of spiritual astonishment. The ceiling soars to the sky, supported by mammoth stone arches. Moving from one spatial dimension into another, I'm awed. Looking up I lose my balance and clumsily sit at the base of one of the massive columns, trying to calm my inverse vertigo. A man garbed in thirteenth century robes walks by, nervously, and stands under the center of one of the immense arches as the keystone is placed. Of course: the architect, demonstrating the stability of his design by submitting to its integrity. If the arch collapses he will be the first to know as he is crushed by the falling stones. Following the same principle, Lee Iacocca once volunteered to be a living crash-test dummy for one of his new cars; his lawyers "prevented" him from doing so. Quality control meant more in ancient times.

The Cathedral is one of the richest museums I've ever seen. Stunning artwork, sculpture, embroidery, metalwork – the whole gamut of human creativity and innovation literally litter the place. The wealth compressed into this building is unimaginable.

Centuries of craftsmanship unfold as we meander through this remarkable place. To the right, marble carved smooth into the shape of flowing angel wings, ascending to a crystal opening in the ceiling, which delicately refracts the late afternoon light. To the left, gallery after gallery of illuminated manuscripts – so beautiful that attempting to read them feels like sin.

And in the center of the Cathedral, the choir. This choir has nothing of the kitsch of American churches; rather, it concentrates the treasures of this Cathedral like a holy lens. In the choir are wood carvings stranger than Bosch's *Garden of Earthly Delights*; stone sarcophagi stacked to the ceiling, filled with the remains of ancient potentates; a spidery iconographic gold lacework revealing a treacherous web of decades-long rivalry between two competing artisans: "I made a quarter-inch of progress today, Alonso, and you?" "Pah, Felipe – my cherubim are bigger than your cherubim, swine!"

But by far the strangest, most impressive and poignant story lies in the wondrously crafted bronze enclosure that cages the choir. This "grille" is the life-work of Master Domingo de Cespedes, who labored for decades on these bars to enclose the Cathedral's treasures. By today's standards, the enclosure looks like an ornate fence in need of moderate repair. By the standards of the day, it was a masterpiece. Master Domingo labored for years on his grille, combating famine, plague, shortages of all types – and paid for his efforts out of his own pocket, without any support. He completed the enclosure just weeks before his untimely death as a consumptive pauper.

Slipping back into my role as historical sleuth, I circle this simple but somehow vibrating cage, comparing it with the extraordinary treasures it encloses. In some ways it would be easy to dismiss this work as insignificant relative to everything else here. Yet, despite its medieval simplicity, the grille speaks volumes to me about its creator. Passion weeps from the faint humidity clinging to the bars. Small imperfections in the metal casting reveal hours of forethought and determination, timeless innovations required to master such primitive technology to create the lasting impression of a heart-felt vision.

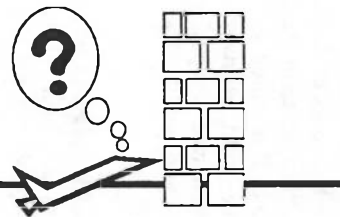
My spine tingles as a dreamlike apparition approaches. I turn, and gasp with astonishment as the artisan himself slouches toward me. This can't be, I think. I know I'm hallucinating. I'm in Spain, it's been a long day, I'm jet-lagged, and I've been letting my historical fancies run wild again. This just ain't so.

But the image persists, and as passing group of prayer-intent tourists shuffles by with downcast heads toward a small chapel deep in the heart of the cathedral, a familiar whiff of smoke from the censer carried by the lead acolyte fills my nostrils.

*Et tu, Bowers?*



# Lettercol



MAE STRELKOV

Forgive the delay in loccing OUTWORLDS 64. It came soon after the death of our Robert (age 49 with a week to go to be 50), & I hadn't the heart to write letters. Now, yes, I'm back into the daily flow. You certainly are a legendary BNF! Already you were one, in the 1970's. And how long ago it was when we met in 1974!

I was stunned to realize the Franke child, Sandy, is now 31. Well, my own kids are all getting on in years & 16 will be the number of our grandchildren. ("The Graying of Fandom"! ) Sandra is happy & with a devoted husband & children, & such pleasant news is welcomed by me. We all have our memories of "Fandom Past". Even a young woman just 31 years old like Sandra! (And I, nearly 76.)

The pieces by Denise & Stephen Leigh stuck in my memory back when I first read them months ago. Rereading now, I think, "Truly, Bill, you have such deep & loyal friends, old and new! You are blessed! You should be very happy & pleased w/ your achievements. No cause for dissatisfaction. The few 'on top' may rest uneasy. Not to envy them! No point in it!"

Whatever we achieve or fail to achieve, the going is enough--an enriching experience. And my own life has been immeasurably enriched by friendships with fellow fans--your friends & mine!

It makes sense to come full circle & hear from you again in this OUTWORLDS. You're the "Bill Bowers" still I got to know in 1974. True, I miss your earlier DOUBLE:BILL incarnation. How lovable both you young fellows seemed, to me! It was in the 1960s. I was studying some preColumbian inscriptions & hidden rock forms. You published my piece on it w/sketches, & I recall I sent photos. How exciting it was for me! So long ago!

If I still live on the same tidal wave of enthusiasms, it's because the spirit is unquenchable in all of us who give it free reign. (Not minding what impression we make. It doesn't matter! There will always be dear & uncritical friends who really care as we do for them also.)

----- 2/16/93

...and I still publish "on the same tidal wave of enthusiasms" that, more than "common sense" --has kept me at it for over thirty years.

Over my span in fandom one of my proudest memories is of, in a small way, having been involved in the fund that made the pleasure of meeting you in person possible.

Only one thing, though, Mae: I remain convinced that watching you as a pedestrian attempting to deal with U.S. traffic intersections did--indeed--give me my first grey hairs...!

ROGER WADDINGTON

Yes, this is Roger stirring from his long sleep; and wondering how long OUTWORLDS 64 has been there on his mat, pushed through the letterbox. No, can't get away with it; have to admit that I know exactly when, and it's knowledge that comes with attendant guilt. I mean, if I can only find the time to write when otherwise unemployed, how can fandom expect to hear from me?

And yes, I'm out of work again; though already planning how to fill the hours of leisure. Mind you, don't know what I would do without the ready-made excuse of fanac and fandom, i.e. under other circumstances. Maybe sleep till noon? Spend the afternoon and evening in some easy-going bar? Finish off with a little television? You know, the more I think about it, the more tempting it appears; better get off this tack.

Well, looking back, it's almost impossible to claim any time or place such as the 1977 MidwestCon as my entrance to fandom, as my Significant Event. Perhaps I could count SciCon '70, the Easter BSFA bash as my first major Con (and the last; thus putting us instantly apart) though in contact long before that; if only that first fanzine weren't so long ago. Maybe from my happenstance discovery of a pile of sf magazines in a secondhand bookshop? Equally shrouded in the mists of time; though as they were all issues from 1964, that might tie it down more particularly. And trying to fix it any further back with my first encounter with real sf, in the shape of TIGER! TIGER! by Alfred Bester, puts it among the golden years of childhood, and thus even more beyond reckoning.

So I can perhaps claim a longer lineage in sf and fandom; but what have I done with those years? Ah, there's the rub (to brush up your Shakespeare.) No fanzine with a shelf-life of 64 issues, no GOFH-dom, no life and soul of Conventions; the question must be, what am I doing here? Or, more important, what have I ever done for fandom in all those years; what will they ask me when I'm brought before the fannish equivalent of Saint Peter, to prevent the heavenly gates closing forever on me?

Well, no more than being there, I suppose, being the ever-open, ever-willing recipient of a thousand fanzines. The purpose of the British monarchy in a parliamentary democracy, as defined by the Victorian Walter Bagehot did come to my rather grandiose mind; to advise, to encourage and to warn. Though pursuing that analogy, and seeing faneds as heads of government, doesn't work very well; they're not very open to advice, don't need any encouragement and don't usually listen to warnings. As far as that thought goes, like the monarchy, we must be entirely superfluous.

Perhaps my (and our) greatest function has been that of an audience; without a public out there, what reason would there be for bringing out a fanzine? Without response, how would the faned judge the worth of his zine; if there was silence out there, if no zine ever brought back a response? Of course, every editor believes that his ish will be the best yet; but an element of doubt must surely creep in, if there's nobody to share that opinion.

So that's perhaps my primary function, what I can claim for all these years. Though of late, and with this issue of OUTWORLDS as evidence, I haven't been functioning too well, have I? I'm tempted to promise, Will Do Better; but can you believe me?

Well, whatever, I can take some comfort in that while I may fall by the wayside at times, fandom will be marching on regardless. To rewrite "The Universal Soldier":

"He's five foot two and he's six feet four.

He responds with letters and with bheers;

He's all of sixty-five and he's only seventeen,

He's been a Loccer for a thousand years."

(Further, or other suggestions gratefully accepted.)

----- 3/14/93

...I still like the Buzz Dixon concept of the fanzine as an Open-Door Party: People drift in...stay until they get bored or it gets too smoky...wander off. Sometimes they never do find their way back. And I do wonder about that. But.... Others do: be it a convention or two...or several years...further on down the line....

JOE R. CHRISTOPHER

I suppose it should be mentioned to Cowan-Barkley that the Orthodox Church celebrates Easter at a different time from the usual western churches. Do you suppose they've got a different old space alien in a basement in Constantiople?

Denise Parsley Leigh's piece was interesting, partly because I recently sent off an essay on Tolkien's clerihews in which I wondered about his use of Grimalkin, which is a version of her GRAY-MALKIN title. (I won't go into the details of my paper, but it's off being considered for the Proceedings of last summer's Tolkien Centenary Conference.) I understand, to a degree, about her losses of temper with her two kids; I and my wife raised three, and we did not manage to live up to our ideals either. Kids have too much energy, for one thing (or adults don't have enough).

To shift to 63: Downes on Derrida was interesting--Derrida's deconstructionism is (so far as I know) the latest fashion in literary criticism, but I was trained under the New Criticism (no longer new)--that is, close explications of the text--and I'm still doing that (with some admixture of Northrop Frye's archetypal approach). I'm not certain whether it's because I'm old and set in my ways (probably) or because the deconstruction of literature tends to be so jargonish and unreadable (probably not), but I'm not moved to change. Besides, at least half of my graduate classes are made up of highschool teachers, and there's no reason to hand them material which is not at all useable at their level. Ah well, that's probably a rationalization.

Tucker's "Beard Mutterings" has a factual error when he writes, "I've seen Genesis picked apart in the same manner because incompetent Christian editors tried to fit two--maybe three--Jewish stories into one." No scholar I know of has suggested that a Christian edited Genesis. The Pentateuch--Genesis

+ four--is usually said to consist of mainly four different sources (I won't get too technical, but this is usually called the JEDP theory of the composition of those five books; there are two legendary accounts [J calls God Yahweh; E calls God El], a batch of law codes [D], and some Priestly reworking of these materials into one, with transitions [P]). But the Pentateuch (called by the Jews "the Law") was Jewish canon by the time of Christ, so there could not be any editing of it by the Christians. (So was the second group of the Jewish canon, "the Prophets"--consisting of historical books and the Prophets proper--but the third and final group--"the Writings"--was not generally accepted by the Jews until about A.D. 100. I am not suggesting that Christians reworked "the Writings", for that matter. Those areas and the Old Testament Apocrypha are strictly Jewish.) On the other hand, Tucker's account of the Old Testament Pseudopigraphia--of which I've heard but never read--sounds like fun, and may well have some Christian work in it.

----- 11/11/92

Only in a Bowersian Universe would it make sense that, by logic, comments on a 63rd Voyage would follow those on a 64th--sequentially. Fortunately, only in such an Universe would the Editor's Scholarly Examination of Time Dilation...be so appropriately "matched" by (some of) his Contributors:

Started Erection Day, 1992

Ended New Years Day, 1993

(Bowers Standard Time)

And if you believe that...

CHRIS SHERMAN

You're rapidly becoming the Marquis de Sade of fanzines. Stop it, you're doing it so hard it hurts so good, oh so good, yes and Oh! Well shit, I'm impressed. Not to mention honored to have filled so much white space in OUTWORLDS 63.

The broad impression I came away with was that you're getting closer to the unified theme you're striving for. The better you get with OW the harder you make it to loc.

Ah, yes. Flow, profound comment.

...a time lapse

Dinner with Larry was quite enjoyable. Turns out we've spent a good deal of time in the past decade following similar pursuits--even to the extent of having common clients. Fundamentally, he hasn't changed much: still complaining about life's vagaries and other people's hypocritical responses to said. But he's mellowed, and displays considerable charm and consideration. I'll be in Chicago a lot this year, and look forward to getting together with him more often. Any chance you can join us?

Yet another time lapse. \*Sigh\*. And back into the same old ~~144~~ font. The past six months have been pretty bad. Pundits say California was the last to slide into recession; perhaps I've been the last to slide into depression. As usual, the situation is weird and so stupidly non-dire that I feel somewhat ridiculous even mentioning it. Suffice to say I'm looking forward to the Spring and Summer very much, and anticipate the work I'm doing will provoke some major changes between now and then. Meanwhile I'm seriously considering an emotional vasectomy, even if, as recent studies suggest, this increases my risk of prostate heart.

So, comments about OUTWORLDS, yes?



11/13/92

Dear Bill,

Thanks a million for  
sending your wonderful  
Outworlds 63 publication.  
It's fun to see what our  
son, Chris Sherman, is  
writing these days.

Please let us know  
what we owe you and  
how we can sign up  
for further issues;  
okay?

Sincerely,  
Marlene and Jim  
Sherman

NOV 17 1992

I applaud your desire for consistency, but actually prefer the melange of typefaces and styles you've used recently. Two reasons: One, they capture somewhat more of the personality of individual contributors, especially when framed in the lattice of context you create, and Two, I suspect you might have written more had you not spent those hours retyping. Tell you what--Kaypro corporate is just down the street--maybe I should get them to convert my stuff into your format (CP/M, WordStar 3.2, right?) [...] actually, "Release 4" and send you a disk. This is a serious offer--conversion is cheap and easy. Let me know.

I loved the use of Rotsler's drop caps throughout the ish. A brilliant touch, Bill.

Jeanne's Corflu recollection was great. Her description of the heroic ascent of Mount Imperial Offramp read like a neopunk Lovecraft tale. Actually...heh heh heh...here's an excerpt from a couple letters I wrote to Wes after that event that he didn't publish....

[4/3/92] So, as one of those "other people who were [at Corflu], you know who you are", I must thank you for now knowing that I know that I know. So; what do you want us to do? For my part, I've already contracted with Bilbo Billboards of East Hawthorne. Each and every commuter that drives by the Imperial Valley exit in Los Angeles during the entire Presidential Election will have his/her face forced into the concrete message we've contracted to paint on billboards ringed like Stonehenge around the "infamous" site: Wes spilled blood here for you. What you gonna do about it?

I realize you're no Ross Perot, Joe, but I truly believe that this small token of my esteem will raise public awareness and ultimately help your job search.

[5/9/92] You may need to temporarily jump forward in your Memoirs to explain all these obscure references to your "accident". Speaking of which... I have to apologize for the tasteless comments in my last letter. I honestly had no idea that those billboards of your bloodied countenance would set off such rioting! Yes, I know the media is blaming the Rodney King verdict as the catalyst. But a reliable source (none other than the famous hotelier and junk-bond mogul Mr. Conrad Cockatoo himself!) informs me that "Wessonhenge", as it came to be known, drew progressively larger numbers of sympathizers every day, until the fatal day last week when the masses could stand it no longer.

Ironically, Wessonhenge was one of the first casualties. Torched. Completely destroyed. \*sigh\* From rubble to glory to ashes. All in a few brief, shining weeks. A sad, sad story.

On a more serious note: it's weird to think that Corflu was held right in the midst of the area where the riots occurred. I wonder how different things would have been had the madness broken out while we were there. Last weekend my apartment became a refuge house for several friends from LA. We talked of little other than what was happening. Ended the weekend feeling nauseated, sad, and angry. Reports from the area are now thankfully focusing on the positive energy going into rebuilding and reform. With luck the whole affair will be a cleansing process and won't be repeated either in LA or in other cities with similar situations.

Shameless, eh? Hmmn... Maybe this might be a way to break out of my re-loc-tance to write: simply recycle unpublished letters. Hmmn. On second thought, maybe not so good an idea.

It's raining again. All this water falling from the sky and rushing down the streets into the ocean. The water near the shore is churning, the color of old blood. It's like there's some kind of grand purge happening, maybe a cosmic (comic?) enema, but I'm not sure what it means. Is this what Wm. feels like most of the time. If so, my heart goes out to him.

Last interlude. Though woefully inadequate, I feel compelled to send you something. ... Sorry about the brevity and delay, Bill. I'll be back in touch more completely once I've pulled my head out of my ass.

[...rec'd 3/1/93]

Yeah, so my head's still ensconced Firma Rectum, but hey, you've got to keep trying, right?

So, back to OUTWORLD 63:

After reading Larry's piece on Derrida, I hope he aspires to some High Position in the law. The combination of his mentation and elegant writing skills could revolutionize our country. Imagine, say, if he became IRS Commissioner. Instructions for filling tax forms would be incredibly clear and concise, yet give filers all kinds of opportunities to question, contradict or refute legal code. Audits would be jovial fireside chats, complete with claret and a good shag in the pipe, trying to determine the degree to which our annual earnings were debased by philosophical trickery. What do you think?

Tucker's piece on The Pseudepigrapha makes me wonder if religious tolerance operates on a Darwinian scheme of inheritance, requiring centuries before mass groups of devotees become truly "enlightened". Adherents of "young" religions such as Islam seem to be, in general, much less tolerant than those of more established religions, like Buddhism. That a book like The Pseudepigrapha could be published without triggering a death sentence on the



author from the Pope speaks to a large degree of tolerance. Meanwhile, the bounty on Salman Rushdie's head keeps growing--up to \$4 million, plus \$1 million to cover "expenses". To his credit, Rushdie is now openly defiant, speaking publicly and denouncing his antagonists. Perhaps in another thousand years or so THE SATANIC VERSES will be available at a huckster table at a convention in Iran.

The lettercol this time was a trip. Talk about an incredibly diverse bunch of people! I keep mulling the concept of the "Outworlds Community", trying to imagine your readership all together in one place and find it very difficult. The range of interests, responses, prejudices, and opinions is beyond my ability to organize into a cohesive whole. Applying chaos theory would probably help, but then again, who really wants to predict what you will do with each new issue, let alone how people will respond?

Locs recently seem to be of three types.

First, and to my mind most enjoyable, are letters that actually comment on the issue, but are generously larded with lots of personal anecdote. Mike's letters are like this--and he needn't worry about upgrading his loccking skills. Reading a letter by Mike is always enjoyable. With my Candide-ish leanings, I admire and appreciate his usually upbeat letters, which somehow find merit in nearly everything, or are at most gently chiding and amusing where this is not possible.

The second loc-type consists of straightforward comments on the issue itself. There's a wide range here, from the atherosclerotic grumblings by Jeeves to deeply fannish musings by Buck Coulson. And finally there are the letters that have little at all to do with OUTWORLDS, other than using it as a focal point for communication. William's letters are an estimable example.

But.... Somehow there seems to be a lot of petty sniveling criticism in the lettercol this time. I seriously doubt any of us find everything in OUTWORLDS to our liking. I believe well-placed criticism is valuable. But this issue seems to have drawn a lot of letters from people who just want to bitch, Bill. And that pisses me off. Given their pedigree in fandom, most of these people should know better. And damnit, you deserve better, for the time, effort and (in the words of our feckless leader) "sacrifice" you bring to the party. In short: fuck them. I strongly support your editorial decisions, especially when it comes to publishing various denominations of Bills.

So there. Um, guess I didn't realize I felt so strongly about this issue. Guess so.

Well, just spent the weekend out in the garden. Stunning weather: clear, warm, breezy. Such a relief after the deluges we've had this winter. I get to catch the tail end of winter in the midwest, too--Chicago this week, and Minneapolis next (camping out in the Arizona desert on the weekend between).

I really like the issue--spent a lot of time with it. In any event, here's "No Quarter", and various visuals. Looking forward to the next one.

----- 3/7/93

#### LARRY DOWNES

-----  
Yes, thanks, OW did arrive, and I will write a proper letter by-and-by -- but it it was really a great issue (not just good). Meanwhile I've taken the last of my fellowship and headed out here for a week of deep powder skiing. (Yuppieism dies hard.)  
--- [postcard from Jackson, Wyoming; dated 12/32/92]

#### WILLIAM BREIDING

-----  
10.26.92 ...Wow! You do know how to put a magazine together. I was trying to explain OUTWORLDS to Tracy last night, knew it was useless -- the complex interaction, the integral meaning of the visuals to text, how one infuses the other.... She asked to see it--dare I? Oh hell, why not.

Chris Sherman is like a jagged rock sometimes. I still respond to him as I did 20 years ago -- attracted by his bright mind--repelled by his cruelty -- and lost somewhere between the two.

Sorry. Don't mean to whip that horse! (leave that to Larry!)

More on OW63 when actually read.

-- It's lovely, though --

11.7.92: Saturday, 7:30 am Actually, I'm not quite done with OW63 yet, but almost there. Usually, I try to read "It" (as Jeanne has so aptly found to call OUTWORLDS!) as you have chosen to present it-- from front cover to back cover -- but there was too much going on-- I experienced it much like a party (a good party where I know everyone!): ...and over here someone was being funny, across the room there was serious discussion, in the kitchen people were smoking and gossiping, the hall party had some people talking and reciting poetry, implicating the deeper meaning of words. That's how I experienced OW63. It was followed by a bunch of mixed emotions.

I'm not sure I want to go into those mixed emotions, or rather I want you to print them. Part of my mixed emotions were about my own letters. Certainly taught me something about myself! All those missives slapped together seemed a bit dreary. I had no idea that the tenor of my letters to you were this dark. I felt guilty, because it seemed like my letters had probably been more of a burden to you than anything else, in your own period of unemployment and emotional hardship. Just try to remember that I have a tendency to write most when I'm feeling dark.

It was three different people you published under the name "Chris Sherman". 1.) "No Quarter" simply has to be the best writing you've published in a while; the writing itself was quietly elegant and styled in a personable manner; the content was exactly the type of stuff I seek out to read on my own, so coming across it in the last couple of OUTWORLDS and finding out he is one of my favorite writers is both surprising and wonderful.

2.) Chris' aggressive rebuttal to both myself and Mr. Downes... well, perhaps some allegations were unsupported; however, our lives are worlds apart. They always have been. Chris need not have defended himself. The amazing thing about our "friendship" is that we both continue to pursue it, if only in a haphazard manner. In the words of Norman Maclean, "...you don't have to completely understand to love completely." Our worlds are opposite. Always have been. Even in our youth, when for god knows what reasons Chris was attracted to either me or San Francisco, or Gene, or all three, (and) he used to visit (somewhat frequently for a teen; even then he was a globetrotter!) we found it easier to write than to talk to one another. His long and languorous visits, for us, comprised of listening to music and writing to one another via oneshots. He talked and partied with my other friends; we could never quite master our 'in person' communication. It's still that way. If I believed in karma and past lives, it would appear that Chris and I have major work to do!



3.) Perhaps I'm thin-skinned, but Chris' "humor" has often seemed to me to be a poor disguise for cruelty. He refers to my laughter as "piquant bleating", not something I found endearing. (In the past he's referred to me as a "stunted gnome", while trying to be witty.) The postcards reducing Jeanne, Larry and myself to largely idiotic and oafish personas was not my idea of Funny or Witty -- not even ironic (with a big wink). Perhaps Chris is right, maybe I am too serious. But I can't help but think that one of Chris' innate qualities is cruelty; I am not criticizing, merely pointing out.

11.13.92; 6:00 am ...going out tonight to see a band from Australia called Youth Yindi: aboriginal folk with hints of PIL and power pop; Patty and Gary and I have not been out to a show together in eons. Should be fun.

Whenever you create are and show it to someone else you take chances; I'm ragging on Chris in the above. It may not feel pleasant to you. You might ask--"What have I done?" I was disappointed for you with Terry Jeeves' short LoC; not so much that he was repelled by the internal working forces of #62 (Chris, Billy, Me, I presume Laurie) and their emotional content, but in his innate incomprehension of what it is you are trying to do with OUTWORLDS.

Some folks are lazy and prefer to be spoonfed. Others gladly work to understand art, actively participate with the artist to understand the art, the artist, and themselves. I sometimes forget that OUTWORLDS is supposed to be a Science Fiction fanzine, though you remind us on occasion. You do stray far afield--indeed you're strolling down the path to STARFIRE material! <--> All things considered, though, you do have an adoring audience; the few stuffed shirts that boggle (or groggly) in incomprehension at OW are still cute in their innocent fannishness--they wanna read about their hobby, god-dammit! And, at least with this series OW, you are giving your mailing list a belly full of the real world.

I'd been waiting for the censorious comment or two about the red-stockings poem. A taboo subject for sure, but most everyone finds it moving and quite innocent; more of a state of mind than an actuality, Terry.

12.3.92 Well, big delays, for big reasons...! (more later!)

Before I end this I want to acknowledge the insight you had in bringing together the Downes, Doyle & Breiding pieces. They fit neatly and nicely together--well beyond your hesitancy at Corflu when you said, "I have a couple of pieces like it...well, sorta..." when requesting the rewrite of "Roses". The "tone" of each was perfectly suited, and they reflected back into one another. Very smooth.

I adored Gary Grady's column. (The contents pages didn't, though!) Being a driver, I follow his "morals" seriously as possible, though luckily I haven't had to deal with #2 yet. Part of being a good driver (and I'm not all the time; who is?) is avoiding accidents by paying attention. The inevitable always happens, though. Like the time I ran over the front end of some kid's bicycle while he was still on it.

"Slim's" column was, as usual, entertaining. I knew she was struggling with Patty's "Oh-My-God's", and that whole midwest kinda triple-by-pass!

I have to write PaM a love-note one of these days. People ARE strange!

I won't DNO any of this. Use your own ~~bad~~ judgement--esp. if Mr. Downes has a few things to say! (I doubt that!)

P.S.: Oh, yeah, "it" was gorgeous.  
So STOP sniffing, will you?!

P.P.S.: Linda's covers... nice, in a limp-wrist sorrrta way! Nice and quite a jaw on that back cover girl. Don't know about the toe ring, though.....  
----- [rec'd 12/8/92]

Sometimes...I do ask. An aside in a later letter (that was marked "DNO") goes like this:

"The stuff about Chris...print what you see fit. Chris and I have lived primarily in the public domain, anyway, so it won't bother me a bit if you go ahead and publish this stuff."

...so I have.

Sometimes I think that Chris "crafts" his words out of his life experiences...and Larry "chisels" multi-faceted-nuggets out of his. The fact remains that both, at least in terms of what is sent to me, are a lot more, err, polished than you...or I...will ever be. They do what they do, and neither will ever fully know how much--snideness put carefully aside just this once--that I do appreciate their words, their caring...and their incredible patience.

You...Young William: You write with your life hanging out, with the emotion of the moment, the passions unfettered. That is a special skill; one I "envy" more than I might aspire to the structure Chris and Larry bring to a piece.

[Almost I am tempted to give the three of you a 25-word plot "device" and see what each of you brings to it...]

I dunno; maybe your communications are "dark" in tone; but maybe not as much as you might think seeing them all lumped together. What I do know is this: Your letters, your caring, your enthusiasms (sometimes exceeding my own!) for what I'm trying to "do" here...over the past few years have, indeed, made My Comeback just a bit "easier", and considerably more rewarding that it could possibly have been otherwise.

In the meantime: I have beside me a file folder containing close to a two-year collection of Breiding apazines. Not this issue, nor next...but soon I will be distilling that folder for another assemblage of Breiding Works. ...and it will blow some collective minds.

Trust me.

#### TERRY JEEVES

-----  
A great front cover [OW63] and an excellent bacover. Beautiful repro' but we have all come to expect that from the might Bowers Printing Combine. Not so happy with the rather messy layout though, it made it tricky to decide just who was saying what. The type-face too, was rather cramped and 'blobbed' in places where you used the small side-bar face, letters tended to 'fill in'. It must be a chore keeping track of page numbering with that cumulative system. I've just done a quick page count through my ERG Index and if I'd been using that system, the last issue would have finished on page 3382. Amazing when you actually count up isn't it?

Chris Sherman's bit read nicely but rather slowly. The bit about confronting a wolf to drive it away rang a bell with me. Way back in 1945, in India, I was taking a cut across a paddy field when a water buffalo (or some such) decided to charge me. Nowhere to run, so I turned, faced it and moved forward. It stopped in puzzlement, so I turned and set off again. The damned thing came on again so I repeated the process and this time it gave up and went off elsewhere. I'd hate to try it with a tiger. Larry Downes' piece was just idle rambling I'm



afraid. "Chatterbox Bar" didn't appeal either but I enjoyed "Rapt by Roses", even if it did have the age old 'and then I woke up' ending. Grady Grady's "Tales of Woe" really got me hooked as it had point, pace and told me something interesting instead of just rambling vaguely around -- which Wolfenbarger did with "Prologue Draft"...that's what it was, a draft -- he should have waited until it got somewhere. Tucker was interesting and the Lettercol excellent. All in all, a darned good issue with some excellent Rotsler art to liven up the pages -- not so keen on the Calendar page repros though -- too hard to read.

----- 12/17/92

Pacific Northwest Time,  
a few ticks away from 92 to 93.

BILLY RAY WOLFENBARGER

-----  
Yeah.

Those tick-tocks have come & gone. Horns, whistles, loud noise, it's a brand new year (1993 if you're very spacy). And I'm writing, the first thing, the first Act, on my old typer, writing to a guy named Bowers about his fanzine, of all things ...who would have that?...

Congratulations on yr divorce.

OUTWORLDS 63 is still looking good. But I find that if I stare at the front cover long enough, I get dizzy; those rings around Saturn (or whatever the hell planet that is) are in Motion; & after a bit longer I can see the wind blowing thru that chick's hair. I've found that if I stare at the bacover for a long time. I want to ... but I'd like-ly displace the flowers in her hair. Thanks Linda.

Of the articles, I much enjoyed Carolyn Doyle's "A Night at the Chatterbox". I liked the way she said what she had to say. My overall favorite piece however, was "Rapt by Roses", from Wm. Breiding. Wow; & I do mean Wow. Wm. just keeps getting better & better, more fluid especially most lately than ever before. I can see him there, getting/being rapt.

To make a long story short on the trip behind my "Prologue Draft", I've decided, due to some further soul searching, to go ahead and do the thing; after all, what the bottom line gets down to, really, is write or don't. At this point in space & time I've reworked the first draft of the prologue, expanded it, so that it's the first part to the first chapter. The chapters are going to be rather longish, at least for me, who started out as a published poet when I was 16. Now all I have to do is discover just how long it'll take me to do THE NIGHT CAFE. Hopefully, not forever.

----- [rec'd 1/7/93]

JOSEPH T MAJOR

-----  
At the risk of sounding fulsome, allow me to congratulate you and the Simses for a fun Ditto/Octocon, where the aspiring fanzine fan could meet such fanzine-fannish personalities as Leah Zeldes and Dick Smith, Tom Sadler, Kathy Gallagher, Howard Devore, Art Widner, Dick and Nicki Lynch, Mike Glicksohn, and you.

Having enjoyed OUTWORLDS during its more serious phase in the seventies, I had fond memories of high standards and good writing, and in its contemporary eclectic phase it lives up to it. (I had trouble thinking of a proper term, but the colophon supplied the right word.) Here is to many more years of fanzine publishing.

"Eclectic" -- like Chris Sherman's diary-like articles contrasting the different phases of his life. I have no idea what this relates to, if anything, so I just enjoy vicariously such a varied intriguing life. It evokes such a limpid mood. Rome has such contrasts. If Chris thought the cats in the Colosseum were odd, what about the human inhabitants? (It is the original homeless flop-house.)

Got the chance to meet Gary Grady at Ditto, too. I can agree with his "Moral Number Three: Eventually the entire population of North America will be related by blood, marriage, or divorce." Elizabeth Garrett joined our dwindling FOSFAX traveling circus a couple of years ago; turns out she is my fourth cousin or third cousin once removed (we have a little difference about which Isaac Garrett I descend from). Then Lisa Thomas, the Chief Exasperating Officer of the General Nuisance Society, mentioned to me that her Aunt Daphne had just married one Howard Major. Turns out he is my fourth cousin. (His full name is "Robert Howard Major". There is a man with a great career ahead of him in writing heroic fantasy.)

Having read Tucker's "Beard Mumbblings" on The Old Testament Pseudopigrapha I now know where the First Del Rey Fantasy novels came from. Someone ought to bring "The Apocalypse of Elijah" to the attention of those odd sects. I mean like the Korean group that predicted that the Rapture (translocation of the Christians to Heaven before the final days) was coming on October 28. Today they are saying "Oops! Sorry. Just a little slip in the calculations...." "The Testament of Adam" will sound familiar out Utah way.

I also like the discussion of the structure of composition in these stories. It looks as if multi-author shared-world stories are older than had been heretofore believed. In the Classical world secular writers often "borrowed" a famous author's name for their writings, which is why so many references are to such hyphenated writers as pseudo-Callisthenes, pseudo-Skylax, and even pseudo-Julius Caesar. So religion was no different back in the good very old days--to its secular world, that is.

I got a good giggle out of "Mumps" and look forward to the next segment. Apparently the second lead did not think it worth the legal bother of expressing dissatisfaction aggressively, or perhaps young Mr. Glicksohn actually liked it.

I see you got hit by the mysterious and obscure PaM. He, she, it, or they sure get(s) around. I suppose that must be the ultimate in languor; sending out art without any sure way of knowing if it is even received, much less used, going by the lack of a useable return address. Or maybe this mute inglorious "PaM" covers up some other more recognizable name(s). Hmm....

The sidebar style, where an article or column is flanked by locs from the author or appropriate notes from the editor is, well, different, and curiously interesting. It must take a lot of extra work but it stands out. Yes, it is definitely interesting, different, and (unlike what is usually the case in those circumstances) good.

----- 10/29/92



BUCK COULSON

Chris Sherman had an excellent article about subjects that don't interest me in the slightest. Amazing and Astounding, but not Thrilling.....

I can't say I'm much interested in Derrida, either; Downes makes him sound like he's full of hot air. Which may be Larry's fault, or mine, but I suspect it's Derrida's. The part about the gift is simply silly, no matter how much wordage Derrida gets out of it. He sounds like a bullshitter par excellence or however the hell one spells French phrases.

Gary Grady left out one other type of relationship; one can be related by blood, marriage, divorce, or fandom. In addition to one son, Juanita have another son and a niece who are related to us only by fandom, but who insist on their relationship. Rather flattering, actually, though our extra son came about only because someone thought he and Bruce were brothers. He still greets me with "Hi, Dad", when we meet. And Thanksgiving is traditionally for family, right? We're having family plus two, one of whom I've only met twice. A fannish family enlarges rapidly.

I've never had a fanzine with a circulation of 1000, but I'd think it could easily provide the same or more rewards than one of 250. It would depend on the readers. A lot of YANDRO's paid subscribers were just as interesting as the fans who got it for contributions; a few of them were more interesting, and they did write letters. Of course, getting letters from 1000 people would make for one hell of an answering problem, but I managed it with letters from 200 to 300 people, since each one only wrote 2 or 3 times a year, for the most part.

Don't even consider visiting us, Mike; Juanita keeps spiders as...well, not pets, exactly. Working partners, maybe. She says that anything that gets rid of bugs is her friend.

Brandt requests more canine lust; can't oblige, but we spotted some kinky sex going on among our mantis population. We were burning trash and Juanita spotted this rather odd-looking critter walking through the grass. Turned out to be three mantises. The one on the bottom was presumably female, with one male on top in the usual mantis position and a second male riding sidesaddle and trying to get his business done from that position. Juanita wanted to know if the female got to eat both the males once the process was over, but they disappeared in the grass while we were attending the fire, and we never discovered the outcome.

Agreement with Waite. ZOMBIES OF THE GENE POOL is even less of a mystery than BIMBOS was, but it's a better book about fandom. Not exactly complimentary, but what can you expect of a book with chapter headings from the works of F. Towner Laney? It's accurate, anyway.

I disagree with Linda Michaels on fan art. In my arrogant estimation, it's anything published in a fanzine and not paid for. I'm not sure artists in the Fan Art Shows should be included, because they are expecting someone to buy their work. (In fact, the "Fan" part of the art show has pretty much gone by the wayside, both as to title and intent; now it's just Art Show.) And maybe "hoping to buy" is more accurate than "expecting", but it's still not strictly fannish. The difference between fan and pro is still money, even if a batch of authors disagree with me on the last panel I was on, and plumped for a "professional attitude". I think that the professional attitude is a load of shit. When I write professionally, my only difference in attitude is that I'm trying to make money.

Reading the several letters which mentioned Corflu and the people met there decided me that I've become a filk fan. Ohio Valley Filk Fest was last weekend, and the majority of people present were friends. The majority of people who were mentioned as being at Corflu were primarily distant acquaintances; very distant, in one or two cases. Oh, sure, there were friends there too; but there was a large discrepancy in the number of friends at the two cons. Any sort of fandom does have one difference from mundania, though. At the conventions she goes to, Mary Frost Pierson has a huckster table. She's very seldom behind it; there is usually a note saying something to the effect of "If you want a book, take it and pay me when you see me." In fandom, this works well enough that she's been doing it for several years. In mundania, it wouldn't work.

I can sympathize with your and Eric's problems, but not empathize. I have no idea why some people get into bad relationships and others don't. (I would like to think that I have a better understanding of people than others do, but I have this sneaking feeling that I've just been lucky.) Anyway, there are some marriages that work out well; keep trying.

Incidentally, Juanita got a phone call today, asking her to be a guest at a convention. Travel expenses would also be paid for her Significant Other, if whosis cared to come along. Sort of clarifies my standing in fandom, don't you think? Especially since it's about the 4th or 5th such invitation to come along. Since there are train connections, I may not go; if I stay home, we don't have to board the dog. I haven't decided yet. Sometimes I come along on these invitations; sometimes not. One of them was more specific; Juanita's plane fair was paid for; I could pay my own. "And if only one person gets off that plane, it had better be Juanita." In that case, I stayed home, and still consider myself a friend of the fan who issued the invitation.

----- 10/29/92

I just finished ZOMBIES... last night (as I type this). It was definitely better written than BIMBOS -- and rather fun, actually.

I've been led to believe that Fannish Family Relationships (where the "father" [Rusty] can be years younger than the "son" [Tucker]; or the "son" is slightly more 'mature' than the "Mom"...Hi Suzi!) is primarily a Midwestern phenomena. Be that as it may...some of these "relationships" are definitely "real"; even when their connection of fandom is tenuous:

How else to explain that, when I journey Up North to see my mother and my sister (& family), I make a side trip into dear ole Barberton to see "Aunt Barb" and her family. My only "tie" to Barb is through a fannish relationship -- with her niece; initiated in Iowa of all places, and "over" for a decade now--but whatever it is, it's closer than my relationship with most blood relatives.

ERIC MAYER

...I haven't yet figured how to integrate time for writing locs and articles into what, for me, is a new lifestyle. Until now I've lead a decidedly solitary existence--even when I was married to Kathy I was, for the most part, alone and free (or forced...) to pursue solitary interests. That isn't true anymore so, ironically since Mary's a fan, I have less time for fanac.



We both got out to all the local orienteering events...and I managed to get to a couple of national meets as well, one in Canada. Lately we've been sampling the local theatre scene--attending plays ranging from professional to amateur...all quite enjoyable. I don't know why I should be so surprised that there are, in Rochester, people who make a living in mundane ways but who are very talented singers or dancers or actors....I've been entertained for many years by the amateur writers in sf fanzines.

We have been talking about a new GROGGY. In fact Mary has written an account of the marriage for the issue already. There was some fan representation at the ceremony as Dave and C.D. (and Dave's Mom) came from Indiana and Mike and his fiance Susan came from Toronto and Oneida. I was quite touched that people would come from such distances.

...who knows, perhaps I will even show up at an sf con one of these days. Actually, I'll be helping put on a Con in 1994. Yes, the Rochester Orienteering Club is co-sponsoring the 1994 United States Orienteering Federation Convention...in Canada. You have to admit, that's pretty fannish, holding the US Con in Canada.

No, I didn't mind you printing that letter excerpt. It was written at a rather bleak moment (or moments) and things have, obviously, improved immensely. Still, as you know, there are the constant reminders of what the former marriage cost me of my life. At the moment the ex-wife realizes that about the only way she can hurt me anymore is to hurt my kids so, of course, she's doing so. I've more or less resigned myself to losing out on some of their childhood years (although I do call and write) but I expect when they grow up enough to understand how they're being used the ex will be in for a big time backlash...and well deserved.

Speaking of backs...I messed mine up five days ago. At least I can stand up pretty much painlessly now so evidently it wasn't as bad as yours but it scared the hell out of me the first night when I woke up and, for a minute, couldn't get out of the bed. Intimations of mortality, or at least old age and decrepitude.... I have a real, maybe exaggerated fear, of becoming crippled, dependent. I watched my grandfather spend the last years of his life bedridden and then too I have always skirted the edge of self sufficiency as it is, barely able to establish myself as a functional, independent person in this society.

[Oh yeah--how'd I wreck my back? Setting an orienteering map down on a chair! (They better go to a lighter grade of paper!)]

I found Chris Sherman's remarks in OW interesting but utterly alien. It was kind of like when I read the book by General Rommel. Like looking into an alien mind. The idea of one picking the corporate world by choice boggles my imagination--partly because corporate values seem so ...well...let's be polite...unattractive... to me. But maybe, to be honest, mostly because I have no inkling of how people come to function in that world. It is surely as beyond me as brain surgery or astrophysics. I have, by mistake, stumbled into a corporation and can barely function in it well enough to survive, yet I don't think I'm a particularly stupid or even incompetent person in other spheres of my life. Corporation-wise I'm strictly brain damaged. I do have one bone to pick with Chris though...I don't doubt he sees the whole thing as a game...I understand that a lot of corporate players aren't so much after big bucks per se as after "winning", but what if the game is ultimately destructive?

BRIAN EARL BROWN

You end OW63 with a nearly year old (as I'm reading it) loc from Eric Mayer in which he mentions moving back to his former house, finally getting divorced and beginning to appreciate life alone, a life style he's not planning to change anytime soon. Only things didn't stay like that for very long, did they?

First, I think, was the quick note from Mary Long saying that her divorce and return to England was taking a slight delay via Rochester, New York. How nice, I thought, visiting Eric before she left. This was soon followed by an issue of GROGGY with Eric talking about his vasectomy. And a formal CoA for Mary. "You don't think they're... You know," I ask Denise while making complicated hand gestures lest the unborn ears of our daughter hear words I never use -- in front of my parent!

"Don't you think this is a little rash?" I ask in a letter to Eric, "after all you've only met her once in your life--for a period of time less than two hours in length." By way of reply Eric's next letter includes the note "Did I mention that Mary and I got married in November?" Obviously the voice of a man who has looked solitude in the jaws -- and flinched. We wish them all the best. And really, it's not like they're total strangers since their phonebills have been a major source of revenue for years.

Enjoyed the "Mumps" by Derek Parks-Carter and will look forward to the remaining two episodes that Derek drew. Was he going to finish drawings for the other finished scripts or are you going to let it go at that? And what \*is\* Derek doing these days?

I did like the way you used the sidebars for notes and occasional quotes from letters from the column writers. And as usual the Rotsler pieces fit in better than one expects.

I can understand your decision to retype Grady's and Sherman's columns to maintain consistency of style throughout your zine. I'm not really fond of cut-and-paste type fanzines. Art Widner was doing that for a while in his fapazine, YHOS, as well as shrinking everything down by a third. The result didn't look good and seemed harder to read.

Bob Tucker's favorite book of 1988, the Old Testament Pseudepigrapha looks like it's missing an "o" in its title--"Pseudeopigrapha" would make it much more pronounceable from mere inspection. I hadn't realized there were all these heretical or non-canonical writings floating around and that impresses me. But it sounds as if Bob was as much or more impressed that the translator was so often able to break each story down into fragments composed by different writers at different times. I'm sufficiently style deaf that I could never pick up on these sort of subtleties and it impresses me when someone else can.

"de-watered." There must be something about being a bureaucratic spokesperson that freezes the brain and prevents the memory of natural words like drained.

The great leap forward that fanzines considered then backed away from 15 years ago that I mentioned wasn't the jump from 250 copy circulation to 1000 that Mike Glicksohn mentions but more of a jump into mainstream publishing with circulations in the 10,000s. MYSTERY SCENE, a magazine for mystery lovers started out as a fanzine and worked its way up to its current large circulation. (Large in that I've seen it in a number of magazine racks.) But obviously it is a lot of work and unless it can generate enough sales to support its editor as a full time job, is just not worth the effort. I do not disagree with Mike that the chief disincentive

12/11/92



of the 1000 circulation fanzine was the level of work required.

Nor am I surprised that Mike can lay his hands on the second issue of OUTWORLDS. I've seen his basement with the orderly shelves of alphabetized fanzines. I'd love to have my collection as well organized. I just never seem to find the time (and more importantly the energy) to do it myself. I did collect a bunch of cardboard filing drawers once that were being thrown out, intending to file my collecting in them, but that's as far as it's got.

One reason Mike can keep his collection as well organized is because he hasn't kept every fanzine he has ever been sent. His collection is small but choice. It's tempting to screen my collection, too. I mean, do I really need to keep all those copies of INSTANT MESSAGE that NESFA insists on sending me. I really ought to tell them sometime that I don't ever even read them.

Harry Andruschak asks how a large circulation fanzine would be able to keep track of who it owes copies to. Obviously I don't have any experience here but I suppose they would start off by simplifying things; not trading or giving away copies for letters, everything strictly subscription. But even if they did trade or extend subscriptions for locs it probably wouldn't be that hard to keep up--if one is organized. (But that, I suspect, is the hardest thing for most fans to be.) Back in the days of INWORLDS ["GraFanedica"?; I freely admit I don't remember. --Bill] Dave Locke wrote an article on this subject that struck me as the epitome of common sense. In brief; list everybody on 3x5 lined file cards. Addresses on the unlined side and on the lined side list the issue numbers down the side and against them a check for "sent" and any notes on trades or locs received. It then becomes a simple matter to review the cards from time to time and decide who isn't responding and expel them from the mailing list. A variation would be to list all addresses on 8.5 x 11 label sheets with an expiration date for each label. Each time a loc or trade comes in increase the expiration date number by one. And as each issue is published decrease the expiration number by one. Addresses with an expiration number of zero don't get mailed out. Either way it still amounts to a certain amount of work, but there's no way to escape that.

----- 2/21/93

Even when the print run of this humble fanzine was 1500 copies Back When, I've always used a variation on the 3x5 system...and I'm not sufficiently "computerized" to forego it even yet. I'm not always totally organized ~~especially when carried off in heat~~ and admittedly the phrase "Editorial Whim" conceals a multitude of sins...but basically: when an issue goes out marked by an "X" (or a small "dot"), that card goes in the "dead file"...only to be rescued if I receive some sort of communication before publication of the next issue. Periodically I sort thru the holding file...mutter to myself "I wonder whatever happened to ----" ...and send out a "spec" copy. Sometimes that "works"; sometimes the card goes into the back file for another year. ...or decade. Had I the wherewithal to "increase" the current print run...I could easily send out as many copies to people I'd like to see OW...as I do tho those (Hi!) who are seeing this....

Derek Parks-Carter currently resides in Red Cloud, Nebraska, and amuses himself by bemusing pushy obnoxious faneds with fillös signed by a three-letter pseudonym. ....

SHERYL BIRKHEAD

-----  
Did your own thing again (as always) -- making #63 different -- yet with the Bowers indelible stamp on it. [11/5/93]

Linda did a beautiful job for you--and the on-going strip on the inside covers is interesting. I am sure you will get a lot of comments about "them" both.

Chris Sherman's piece was super--I was in the middle of reading RASCAL--the book behind the Disney film--about the raccoon--I have not seen the movie and was given a very used copy of the book--and it fit in well with Chris' piece. Superb reading.

Ah Gary--it doesn't always work out that way--for instance insurance companies don't always pay the blue book value, let alone MORE than the blue book value--sigh, the voice of experience speaking. I agree with all he said about the morals--- The first thing witnesses after my accident recently was "Were you wearing your seatbelt?" --Yeah, shoulder harness combo--which was the source of my breathing problems immediately (and for several weeks) afterwards.

The lettercol reads more like rambling friends than the traditional (if there is such an animal) lettercol. It is a tribute to you--Bill--that these are all your friends and choose to sit in on a round table (well...) discussion. So many topics are touched upon and then gone. Gads, I just hope that things are starting to go better for you than they have. I can only hope that the continuing caring from so many friends can help while you are waiting for things to turn around and head back in the right direction.

----- 11/18/93

HARRY WARNER, JR.

-----  
This is another monumental achievement in fanzine publishing, as many others have undoubtedly informed you during the weeks since this issue went out. I hope it attracts more locs than its even larger sibling did, but you are right near the end of this most recent issue when you link the paucity of locs with that issue's size. The monster fanzines impart an almost irresistible impulse for recipients to put them aside to loc on some day when there's plenty of spare time and such days almost never come. One of the most shameful episodes in my years in fandom is the fact that I never wrote a comprehensive loc on the monster Willis issue of WARHOON, the one that reprinted so much of his writings. I did write to Dick Bergeron a preliminary rapturous but rather short letter about it in which I promised to loc the issue fully as soon as I had time and I haven't done so to this day. I'm sure a lot of fans behaved toward it much as I did.

You made a wise choice in the contribution to lead off #63, and so did Chris when he selected the wolf episode to lead off his contribution. Reading it, I almost wanted to complain about the media intruding into OUTWORLDS: I could see and hear that adventure in the north woods just as if I were watching it in the theater or on the tube. (It probably helped that I finally read last week after all these years Hesse's STEPPENWOLF.)

D. Gary Grady gave the old sense of wonder a good workout when he told of how he and the woman were merry and got along just fine after the serious auto crash. I don't think insurance companies or police or safety organizations keep statistics on how many auto accidents create a good feeling among the principals, but it can't happen very often.

It's a special treat to read new material by Bob Tucker. Well, new to me although I gather you



pieced the column together from apa writings. Maybe I can be helpful in one respect about The Apocalypse of Elijah. Even though I'm no scholar like the author of the notes in that book, I have the advantage of having read some things that he probably hasn't encountered. So I can state with confidence that the part of the apochrypha in which "the fine art of resurrection becomes a commonplace" was undoubtedly an early work of A.E. van Vogt. (Just the other day I finally became the possessor of a hardbound copy of THE LONG, LOUD SILENCE, one of the few Tucker novels I've never read. It cost me only 21¢ but that's probably no reflection on its quality, since I've heard so many good things about this book.)

Normally I find Mike Glicksohn one of the most logical, keen thinkers in fandom. But I think his computer is having a bad effect on him. He brags that now he "can write a few lines or even several paragraphs at a time, 'save' it in an appropriately named file, and retrieve that file when time and inclination allow" him to resume loccing an issue of OUTWORLDS. Doesn't Mike remember that he could do the very same thing with his old typewriter except for the red tape of saving the file and giving it a name and for all I know conducting a baptism ceremony and turning the information over to the Bureau of Vital Statistics? At least, every typewriter I've ever owned has permitted me to write a few lines or a few paragraphs, stop and resume later on the next line of the page.

It's awe-inspiring to find traditions in fandom being maintained decades later by fans who probably weren't aware they existed. I see the artist-fan's name spelled as Giunta and Giunta in this OUTWORLDS. Exactly the same confusion reigned when he was active back in the late 1930s and early 1940s.

Two matters that turn up in locs this issue, fanzines emerging at unexpected places and fanzines getting destroyed, were chewed over recently in SFPA mailing comments. Most SFPA members are reluctant to have their publications received and read by unknown people because of remarks that are meant for a circle of acquaintances, not the wide, wide world. This ties into the other topic, the ethics of throwing away fanzines singly or en masse in the form of apa mailings. Efforts to avoid the fate may denote violation of the other fate. I don't think there is any fully satisfactory solution to the dilemma.

It's a relief to know that both you and Eric seem to be in the final stages of recovery from the same problem and I trust both of you will soon find it gradually fading from its former enormity. Or shrinking from its former enormity or fading from its former clarity, I suppose it would be better to say. Don't mind me: this typewriter has suffered a locked keyboard twice in these two pages and this is an ominous symptom since the last time such things happened it meant a trip to the repairman after it ended up by locking permanently.

My miserly spirit felt a bit offended by the lavish use of white space. However, a couple of things came to mind eventually that made me feel better about it. For one thing, it isn't completely white space, since you seem to have used an off-white paper stock, and for another thing there's always the possibility that you might issue a recall order on all copies of this issue and return them only after you've filled up the vacant spaces with additional material equal in quality to what's already there.

The illustrations are as ingenious, brilliant and memorable as ever. I think this is the most lavish Rotsler treat in a single fanzine I've seen in quite a few years and I'm glad to learn that he's feeling better nowadays.

----- 12/7/92

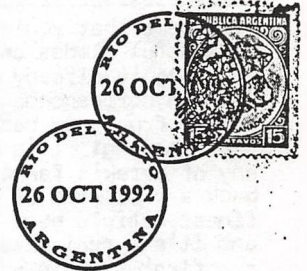
Dear Bill,  
*OW 63 arrived (well, Linda's copy anyway) today, but was inadvertently thrown overboard after we left New York for sunny South America. Sorry I didn't get to read it...*

*Best, as always, Bill Bowers*

*Joe*

Post Office Box 58174  
 Cincinnati, Ohio  
 45258-0174

THE "FUN SHIP" HOLIDAY



NOV 01 1992

ED MESKYS

-----  
 Finally finished getting OUTWORLDS #63 read to me. While I enjoyed most of the zine I have only one comment hook--Harry Andruschak's letter. As a publisher of large genzines I know the frustration of not getting comments on the major articles. I am sorry that I cannot do better.

I am not perfectly efficient at doing this, but I try to keep track of my large NIEKAS mailing list by having an expiration field in my database. Whenever I get a tradazine or LoC I go into the database and add one to the number. Unfortunately I sometimes forget to do so.

I too found Campbell's insertion of PSI into ASTOUNDING annoying. I enjoyed fantasy published as fantasy but couldn't take his pushing it as almost a religion that the readers had to BELIEVE! The worst were the three serials by Jannifer & Garrett under the Mark Phillips byline about "the Queen's Own FBI". I remember hearing writers saying at local NY City cons that JWC thought that if the fan rejected serious PSI stories they might find humorous ones acceptable. Anyway, I moved out to the Bay Area in June 62 and met Karen Anderson my first weekend there. The following weekend a bunch of us flew down to LA for a Westerncon and Karen had come up with a filk I still remember:

Fans of Science Fiction  
 Campbell's addiction  
 Fills his mag with fantasy.

From Extrapolation  
 To incantation  
 Now he's pubbing fantasy

For sense of wonder that knocks you on your can  
 sub to Scientific American

Fans of Science Fiction  
 Fight his foul addiction  
 And to hell with fantasy!

The tune is from an old operetta whose opening like is "Sons of blood and thunder" and whose last line is "And to hell with Burgandy. I have a mental block against the name of the original operetta.

----- 2/16/93



MIKE GLICKSOHN

I suspect that you'd have dragged me out of the delightful glades of gafia with this issue even if you weren't already on my short list of perpetual fannish correspondents and it would have been those inside front and back covers that would have done the dragging! It's been a long time since I've seen any of Derek's fannish cartoon strips and it brought back a real rush of nostalgia. He is one of the finest artists ever to grace the pages of a fanzine and it's a real pleasure to see his work again (for the first time in one case) and enjoy his artistic wizardry while groaning over his pun-filled writing. As always, Del's work requires a careful scrutiny in order to enjoy all the funny and clever little "bits" he buried in the backgrounds and corners of his panels and I for one thoroughly enjoyed giving it that scrutiny. (I'm not sure I ought to show Susan this stuff, though, as she has a somewhat different view of my nature than these strips might suggest but I guess I'll have to take my chances. If she still loved me after a MIKECON I guess nothing Derek implies will bother her too much.)

As always you've done an exemplary job designing this issue. The whole production could serve as a prototype for how best to use modern technology to produce a beautiful looking and yet unimintimidating publication that's a joy to look at as well as a delight to peruse. Visually the issue is stunning, with lovely covers, charming inside covers, and a strong sense of graphic unity through the use of the work of a single artist for illustrations. Appearance-wise it may be one of your more successful issues and sets a standard for other faneds to aim for that few will ever reach. Your private life may still leave something to be desired but where your alter ego is concerned you've rarely been in such complete control with such impressive results!

It may not have been the best of editorial choices to start with the Sherman column. The writing is so damn good and so powerful that the next three contributors suffer by comparison even though their pieces are by no means bad. In fact, Chris's style and ability are so much better than typical fanzine fare that I was brought to a shuddering halt by the one bad line he wrote (and you let him get away with). "Sick fear races like vomit through my veins."?!?! What sort of bizarre physiognomy does this poor fellow have? I bet they hate seeing him at the blood donor clinic. And where was the normally reliable Bowers blue pencil while this atrocity was being committed on the English language? Oh well, an occasional editorial blindspot and a few annoying typos are a small price to pay for an otherwise eminently commendable fanzine. (And I liked the juxtaposition of contribution and letter from the same writer even if its first appearance might have somewhat baffled a newcomer unfamiliar with the convoluted layouts that are quintessentially OUT-WORLDS.)

Larry, Carolyn and William contributed pretty good pieces but none of them really grabbed me so the next article that really made me sit up and pay attention was the one by D Gary Grady who surprised (and delighted) me with some of the clever and witty lines in his piece. As with the earlier contributions to the issue, I find I have nothing to actually say about what these stalwart fans have written about but at least in Gary's case I'm very glad that such is the case. Besides, if I actually responded to the content instead of simply acknowledging the impact certain articles had on me this letter would be far too long and you'd have to hack it mercilessly to pieces and your "editing" of young Sherman has already indicated how difficult a task this has be-

come for you in your dotage. So think of it as self-restraint on my part as a service to an over-worked editor.

I hope that I can eventually meet Jeanne Bowman so I can undoubtedly find her a fascinating and delightful person and then apologize profusely for not liking what she writes. I don't know why it is and I can't put my finger on anything specific but her style simply does not intrigue or entertain me. I have to force myself to read her material because I know you are so high on it but, and obviously the lack is in me, it does nothing for me. It's just as well I've retired, I guess, so I can pursue my curmudgeonly existence in splendid isolation.

It boggles my mind to imagine some poor non-fannish high-school girl trying to "read" an issue of OUTWORLDS to Ed Meskys!... "And then there are several lines of dots and the text seems to continue on its side two pages further into the issue and there's a small paragraph kinda squeezed in along the side of the page and then there's a bit you have to read in a mirror and after that..." One wonders how many readers up and quit on poor Ed whenever a new copy of OUTWORLDS shows up in his mailbox.

Hmmm...I don't remember writing you an article called "...the Epistles of CHRIS SHERMAN". Oh... wait an ellipsis...it's just some slightly confusing and teeny bit pretentious OUTWORLDS layout. Phew, that's a relief. For a moment I thought I was confusing myself.

Re-reading my loc was quite an eye-opener, especially the part about it being impossible to find someone to replace an earlier relationship in my life. A few weeks later I was to learn just how wrong I was on that score and to turn my whole life delightfully upside down in the process. I wish you the same sort of cataclysmic lifestyle change that has swept me off my feet and out of fanzine fandom although I hope that in your case it won't reduce your exemplary paper fanac. Fanzines don't need me anywhere near as much as they need you!

I also had an opportunity recently to answer my own question about FALLEN ANGELS. I was Fan Guest of Honour at a small convention in Huntsville at which Mike Flynn, co-author of that book, was Master of Ceremonies. It seems that he did most of the writing on the book and since he didn't know much about fans he couldn't very well be expected to insert too many into the narrative. (This was also the convention--probably my swan song as a convention Guest--at which I was scheduled to be interviewed since I don't like speeches and had no-one show up for the interview. Talk about your sic gloria transit mundi syndrome! I haven't had that many people completely uninterested in who I was since I was Guest of Honour at the worldcon!)

Did Eric really mean he's a younger, shorter, healthier version of the way you looked when you were alive? If I were you I'd tell him that the rumours of your death have been greatly exaggerated and you merely look moribund.

I was amused by how many of your correspondents reacted to #62 by saying it was too big to loc properly. Evidently the thought of spending seven or eight hours creating a 3500 word epistle is daunting to the current crop of Harry Warner wannabees! One wonders how they managed to graduate from Letterhack School in the first place? (Things were a lot tougher in my day, I tell you: for my master's degree I had to do a page-by-page loc on the largest LAN'S LANTERN ever published. Took me three years but by ghu I did it! Trufen had true grit in the old days, not like these effete newcomers who blanch as soon as a fanzine's page count hits triple figures!)

Nice touch, putting that Rotsler knife beside Mark's comments about Sikhs. Would-be fanzine pub-



lishers could learn a lot from studying OUTWORLDS but I somehow doubt many of them do. (Periodically we get a big brouhaha in town because someone objects to Sikh students carrying their ceremonial daggers to school with them and I must admit I think this is a case of carrying freedom of religion a bit too far. I hope I'm long out of the system when the time comes--as it probably will--that someone is badly hurt or killed with a Sikh dagger taken from a Sikh involved in a school fight.)

I've long known that Joe Maraglino is one of fandom's best kept secrets when it comes to crazed creativity but you seem to bring out the very best in him. It's really remarkable what a bizarre imagination and a computer can do nowadays: I love that fandom stamp (which I hadn't seen before) and the rest of Joe's responses aren't too shabby either. You were completely right to share these with us and the way you did it was just perfect. (Please don't print this paragraph, though: I don't want Joe to think I'm actually starting to like or respect him, let alone admire him.)

Wow! Linda Michaels is a fanzine idealist! Who would have guessed it? I like her thoughts on the subject of the Best Fan Artist Hugo. I also know there's not a snowball's chance in hell of her suggestions ever being put into practice. We make the best of a poor situation, all the time wondering just how long it will be until a Business Meeting motion to abandon all the fan Hugos actually passes, the final nail in the coffin as they bury fanzine fandom and put it out of its misery. (But with luck, not in my fannish lifetime.)

Methinks the lettercolumn would have been even better than it is with just a little more response from ye hoary old editor, eh?

After due consideration I wish I had written an article called "...the Epistles of CHRIS SHERMAN". That youngster has quite a way with words, even when I don't understand anything he writes!

It may not do much for young Breiding's unfortunate angst but I can suggest to him that sometimes you have to wait a long time before that "right woman" shows up. In the meantime, if I'd been mugged five times in two years I'd give very serious consideration to changing neighbourhoods. Unless, of course, being mugged is therapeutic for terminal depression. (Oh, continued perusal indicates that this very solution has occurred to young Breiding as well. There may be hope for the yuppies/youth of America yet.)

In five days time I will attend the wedding of Eric Mayer and Mary Long. Let this give hope to you, Bill, and several others on your mailing list. While it is so very true that Shit Happens, sometimes it stops happening too. Some dues are pretty tough to pay but perhaps, just perhaps, they turn out to be worth it.

And certainly the time and effort required to read, savour and appreciate OUTWORLDS 62 were well worth it. I'm sorry I couldn't write you a proper loc but after all, I am retired and the issue was "too big to respond to properly."

11/22/92

...the Epistles of JEANNE BOWMAN

[not a Column]

NOV 7 Since you haven't called, or written we must assume good news as regards your legal status. I only hope you have been behaving yourself (and having a very good time too). By way of saying So how was the Deep South, nudge nudge etc etc obligatory tease.

Today had a pleasant while digging around in my native plant garden. I have this garden gate, you see, without a fence anymore.... It is therapeutic day time. Fanac = dark thirty therapy).... I planted scarlet, white & blue sages (coincidence I assure you), a matajiua poppy, some daffodils, yarrow & a bunch 'o stuff that's been hanging around waiting for the ground to be wet enough to dig in. That's right. It rained. Everything on the ground is fabulously emerald again. Beautiful.

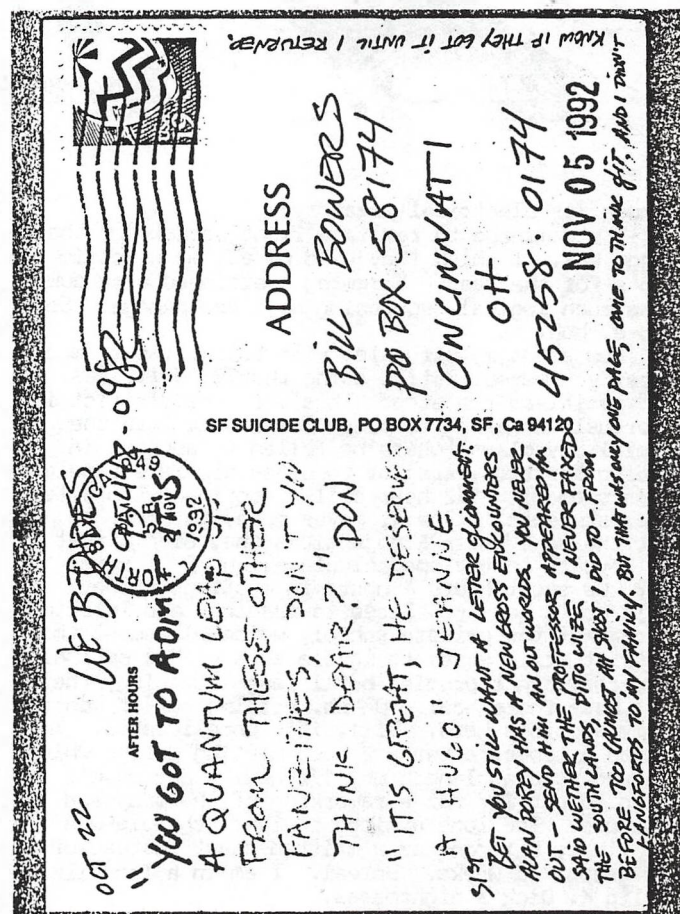
Hope I wasn't being too snoozy with my Chris Sherman crack on the last postcard. Did he do that computer generated thingy "Message for Jeanne"? (I suppose I could go look it up huh?? Knowing you, art is credited by page, right?) Well, whomever. I am transcribing it for you, but you must know its difficult knowing some of those images come from "Kid Pix", a thing Young Mr Nick is very enamored of. "Here Jeanne, you make this picture, and Ill erase it!!" "Let's erase it again." "I want to use the blow it up erase! You make the picture come back!"

So it goes.

I worked in my local precinct this election. We had 87% turnout (including absentee voters). People were serious too. The primary was kind of fun--presidents are weighty choices I guess. Clinton's vote was 2 to 1 against any next close candidate. No big surprise. My candidates didn't win anyway--I voted 3rd party all the way (And not Mr. Perot. I got enough work I don't get paid for). Particularly in some of the nasty local campaigns--too much mudslinging financed by national parties. Bunch a twits & etc etc. oooooops loosing equanimity again.

This ain't a loc, but are we satisfying your longing for letters and postcards yet?

[rec'd 11/14/92]





## Today The Shit Hit The Fan!

JAN 30 (?)

AND YESTERDAY, AND THE DAY BEFORE.  
HONEST, I GOT A MESS TO CLEAN UP. BUT,  
REALLY, NICK & DON WERE SICK. SEEMED  
LIKE FOREVER. YOU KNOW HOW TIME DOES  
WHEN THE BROW IS FEVERED. NOW I'VE  
GOT IT. NO, NOT THAT "IT" THE FLU. SORT  
OF. I THINK MY FLU INNOCULATION IS HELPING.  
BUT NOT ENOUGH. I AM SPOILED YOU SEE -  
I WANT TO WRITE WITH A KEYBOARD. AND  
MY HARD DRIVE IS STILL ON AN ENDLESS  
LOOP OF ERROR MESSAGES & INCORRECT  
CHOOSER MOVER

MAKE THE  
IF I JUDGE  
DISKETTES  
PHOOEY.  
WORKING.  
ALL MY TAFF  
BACKED UP  
YOU SEE  
GOOD IT DOES  
FEB 09 1993



THE PROGRAM  
JUST SO, NO  
IT JUST ISN'T  
I DID HAVE  
REPORT STUFF  
(NO, DON'T STOP!)  
WHAT  
ME!

FEB 09 1993

So much for electrical wizardry.

I did manage to rewire a light socket for the iguana box. I think that used up all my electric juju's for the year. Screwing a stripped wire down is as much logical sequencing as I can manage. Some excuse, huh?

How about my struggles with bureaucracy? What, I hear you murmur, still doing that?? Well, yes. The special-ed two step. This week the district is generously offering to place Jesse back into the special day class (where he failed to advance in reading for two years) or to place him in a regular class room with 1/2 hour daily tutoring (with a few other students, maybe 4, maybe more) in order to meet the same goals & objectives they didn't meet for 2 years in the special class. Huh? I said, huh? We spent hours & hours in meetings & they still don't get it. Jesse is reading, and learning to read at the private school, which placement the district still wants to ignore as a viable option. Hey, they can't promise he'll learn anything, they just have the school. Oh oh, getting out of control of my emotions here. Bill, it's unbelievable. I waited 6 weeks, after a 2 hour meeting during which I elaborated at length why 1/2 hour a day wasn't going to cut it, for a reworking of the proposed schedule. The long awaited revised schedule was identical, but done as a written chart instead of a bar graph. 6 weeks. Unreal. I am in a land like Philip K. Dick's nightmares.

Well, because I am not writing you about going to Paul & Cas' house I will attempt to placate your thirst for TAFF-related experiences. I know you want Stockport synopsis, but I can't even mix a metaphor without it looking like one of Jaime's kitchen experiments. ("Can I use the blender?" "What for?" "I want to propagate moss." "Okay, but wash all the dirt off first." "whir whir tinkle tinkle splat gurgle whir splat" "Jaime, you better do a good clean up job." There are still a few splats & dribbles of peculiar grey green color around the counter. Looks a lot like mud.) Like Jaime, I can't seem to keep the lid on. Spinning out of control, going over the top. Actually, this blender thing is not bad, as metaphor for what it was like getting to Skel's. They sent a very good map, with a coloured line to follow to the X. It was a good Xerox of a regular street map. No confusing directions here. I can read a map. The day was overcast, on & off raining. Late afternoon. Ever looked closely at a regular street map where several roads join in a roundabout? The little junctions I regret to say, don't look like roundabouts. But, there we are, rolling right along, and circle as we should looking for the street signs. Like the contents of that blender we wound up everywhere. Signs are not consistent. Sometimes on the curb, sometimes on the side of a building, along with all other sorts of signage & and adverts, sometimes on a post sort of thing, with vertical lettering. I don't know. It was raining. And some of the roads changed names after significant intersections, or what on the map looked to be intersections, but roundabout <--> in reality. I finally told Don that maybe we saw no street names because we were off the map. That was it! We found one with a name & followed it back up into our map & lo & behold I can read a map and give directions accurately the second time around. And about. If my driver is still on speaking terms with me....

Don & I sat for a moment in the car, before we ventured to find the front door of 25 Bowland Close. There were a number of brick houses, condo's like, looking out on a quadrangle of greenery. I feared another cycle of searching for the right sequence of numbers.... The sun appeared briefly through the drizzle. I folded up the map & papers, trying to keep the place clean & tidy. As I got out & there was a man hopping about, greeting us & bundling things into the house.\* Cas' first words were to insist on our handing over our dirty laundry & setting up the wash. Aah, home at last. I tried to make sure I hadn't left any lumps of coal in my pants pockets....

\*You know Bill, that photo of you & Paul at your place is very misleading. I always remember you as being about my size. Yup, just my size. & here's a photo of you & this little guy in front of a bunch of books, right. But he is not a small dude, and Cas is no shrimp either, or shrinking violet. Thank Ghod for a real hug!!

FEB 1 Having spoken with you this afternoon I'm reminded of what I was going to say before I spun out on my blender metaphor. Yup, it was about getting old. No, seriously. Well, not exactly. It was another convoluted lead in to some terse & cogent commentary about TAFF and reading books. One of the big name people that we met in Brighton was Bob Shaw. I know Don has a lot to say about him in another context. But, Don & I joined Bob Shaw for the hotel breakfast on the last morning of the convention. English breakfast--tea, toast, eggs, sausage, beans, mushrooms & oh ghod, the excesses of the night before all over again. Hard to look steam



tray sunny side eggs & be up first thing.... Well, 9:30 is close enough to first thing. We pleasantly communed--Bob looked a little the worse for wear...I wasn't feeling like any spring chicken myself, and Judith & Joseph had left so no hope of wickedly rude remarks with Mr. Nichols. Bob ~~looked like he~~ could hold his fork, and the remnants of the last evenings entertainment but a true conversation was beyond us all.

At the library the other day, Don found Bob Shaw's FIRE PATTERN and checked it out. First off as I read it, I notice the protagonist is an old fart, over 40 anyway. It starts out nice & normal & rational & scientific. Believable. Having established a true tone of inquiry it gets further & further away. This is just how Bob was on the panel Don's going to tell you all about (an entire hour; remember Mr. Herron has an eidetic memory for conversation. [sometime]). Sounds like a regular guy, then the suspicion one is on a different thought path, slow realization this might be a shaggy dog story, might be this guy's a catch short of a collar, no, missing a link in the leash? Nothing that would hang together that well & still explain how the tale got so far afield & find that the mental feet are leaping to avoid logical thinking dog piles. Or, having been led into stepping on one, trying to shake it loose. I am aghast. In an amused & pleasant way, thoroughly pleasant.

So my point was going to be, reading this book is a lot like really being around its author. A romp, provocative & deliciously absurd. I love it, having so many choice little interactions come to mind because I like the library, and read, and am a fan.

But, heck I ought to send this book review & window peek into TAFF to LAN'S LANTERN (where Ted White won't read it & make fun of me).

Every other book I've been reading lately has middle-aged protagonists too. Weird coincidence, or cosmic reminder it's time for my mid life crisis? I will be 40 this summer, see if I invite you to my party (here, 2nd July--don't feel pressured now, it'll be a crowd). Recommend you try the stuff by Jerome Doolittle (if you haven't already): BODY SCISSORS, uh, un, er some other wrestling-type titles. Great nasty slams against conservative government type stuff. Lots more political snarls than any of them girl dick novels you've been reading. I can relate to a hero who spends a lot of time hanging out, drives an old car & has pals who are like people I actually know. Nifty, huh?

Oh, okay, Health Nut Stuff-- Sesame seeds have tons o those white minerals you need. Even more than those delicious alternatives to horse pill mineral supplements...spinach, broccoli, collards, kale, (retch) enough already. I actually ate (and liked!) ground-up sesame seeds sauteed with chopped-up kale. I was pregnant at the time. It's more calcium than any body should get, without a pill crusher. So, do it. Remember--the alternatives could be really revolting. Did I mention, brussels sprouts? All those Japanese dishes with sesame stuff-- salt & ground sesame (Gumasio--Hey, I can't spell in English either) seeds all tossed on top of everything, I guess to fill that calcium need. So remember when you come to California, I will be telling all your friends we won't be buying you beers, but delicious plates of leafy greens!!

[rec'd 2/9/93]

...WANT CALCIUM NEED. SO REMEMBER WHEN I COME TO CALIFORNIA, I WILL BE TELLING ALL YOUR FRIENDS WE WON'T BE BUYING YOU BEERS, BUT DELICIOUS PLATES OF LEAFY GREENS!!  
YOUR PAL

FEB 4 PS:

YES, I HAVE A XEROX OF THIS  
(AND IT LOOKS LOUSY, SO FORGET THAT (IDEA BILL) AND I GOT MY COMPUTER RUNNING  
AGAIN (I HOPE - HAVEN'T HOOKED IT <sup>BACK</sup> UP YET) AND MAYBE RECOVERED SOME IMPORTANT STUFF. HUBBA!

...well now, Ms Jeanne, I guess this means that I don't have to invite you to my pre-50th-cum-CFG Meeting...July 17th. Do I have that right? ~~Kiss!~~  
Time for one Last Word...from Bowland Close:

SKEL

OUTWORLDS 62 was obviously too awesome to comment on, because what can anyone add to a statement like that? And OUTWORLDS 64 was far too slight, being full of people whose only claim to fame was that they at some time or other lived in the same city as the one where you launder your jockey shorts. Who are these people? And of course I couldn't comment on issue 63 on account of it not being published until just the other day. (I love the Random Number Generator you employ for numbering your issues and only hope to Christ that you never interface it with your page-numbering software. Then we really would be in deep shit!)

But it's this prospect of being "well down in smelly substances" that prompts me to run gibbering with fright to the keyboard and start this LoC. I can only cry 'Foul' and hope that even you wouldn't carry out such a threat.

"What threat?" asked Cas, in her innocence.

"Cas," I said, "Bill Bowers keeps lists.

What's worse, Bill Bowers publishes those lists. You must remember his '1987 - The socks I've worn in the past 12 months.'"

"So?" she asked. I told you she was innocent.

"So this! He's kept track of who each issue was sent to. It says so right there at the top of page 2170. He has a list of the recipients of every issue of OUTWORLDS, and he hasn't published any of them yet! Can you imagine how mind-numbingly tedious and boring OUTWORLDS 74.5 is going to be when it is comprised entirely of lists of the people who've received the previous 74 issues of that fanzine, not to mention all the other zines he's published? He's probably working on it even as we speak - 'Page 3246 - The People Who Received XENOLITH 36.24768 recurring'. We have to stop him."



"But how?" she whimpered, the enormity of our plight finally borne in upon her.

"I know!" I cried. "We'll for a society. The Society for the Suppression of OUTWORLDS 74.5. We'll all write and convince him that it'll be a far better issue if he saves it for a decade or two, like that old LoC issue he recently published. The longer he delays publication, the more lists he'll be able to cram in."

"But won't that make it even more boring?" she asked.

"Of course it will, but with any luck we'll all be dead by then. And them as aren't, well it will serve the buggers right! They wanna live forever, they should be aware longevity is not roses unalloyed. I mean, look at OUTWORLDS 63. The idle bastard is no longer going to the trouble of making up his own lists. He's publishing his calendars, the raw data. In order to get bored to tears you've now got to compile your own sodding lists.

"You'll notice that despite the fact that he's always about to be unemployed he can afford to buy books, as evidenced by the fact that he's reading the Sue Grafton series in alphabetical order. His employment's supposed to be dodgy and yet he can afford to buy this series and read it as intended, whereas I've been in continuous employment since dinosaurs learned to read the 'Situations Vacant' pages and yet I have to take them in the sequence they become available from our local library. It occurs to me this is probably why the USA, despite all the problems we read and hear about, remains dominant in the Western World. Well, kids probably still start learning their alphabet by chanting the old mantra 'A B C D E F G' etc. Well, that's all very well in America, where everyone can afford to buy the Sue Grafton Books and read them in the order intended, but over here where we can't afford to buy books (having to save our pennies so we can travel to exotic foreign climes and study strange alien laundry devices) and have to rely on local librari-

ies, then the learning chants are as likely to be 'F A C G (H I J) D B E' (which is how I've chanced upon, or expect to chance upon, the Grafton books). Other kids will of course have their own unique sequence, depending upon how their library managed to provide them with the Sue Grafton novels. So British kids will suffer when it comes to literacy because the country spends a lot of money on Public Libraries, whereas American kids, whose parents money is not taxed out from under them, will know from studying their Mommy's and Daddy's bookshelves that 'A' is for Alibi, and 'B' is for Burglar. British kids, lacking this input, will think the Cat sat on the Mat, whereas US kids will have been born already aware that the Corpse sat on the Murderer.

"How this relates to Canada one cannot say, but Mike Glicksohn on page 2206 writes that he finds it 'difficult to write a written response'. As it's impossible to write any other sort of response one can only assume that either Sue Grafton novels were available even earlier in Canada's public library system or that 'intelligence' has yet to evolve in North America. Probably the latter."

----- 12/12/92

5/16/93 : ...well, I have read the GraftonBet thru 'H', and admit that 'I' rests on the shelf (in sequence) against a rainy day. Or an extended spell of unemployment. But I won't be rushing out to purchase 'J' ... since I was "laid-off" last Friday.

I should have known: Corflu starts in a couple of days, and since I was "unemployed in El Paso" and "unemployed in LA"...I guess I could have predicted the fact I will be "unemployed in Madison". So maybe it's a "tradition"...but some "lists" even I don't need!

I probably wouldn't be terribly upset if the 1994 Corflu is scheduled for, say, Christmas of next year. Just a thought.

...a thought until -- whenever.... --Bill

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# MUMPS

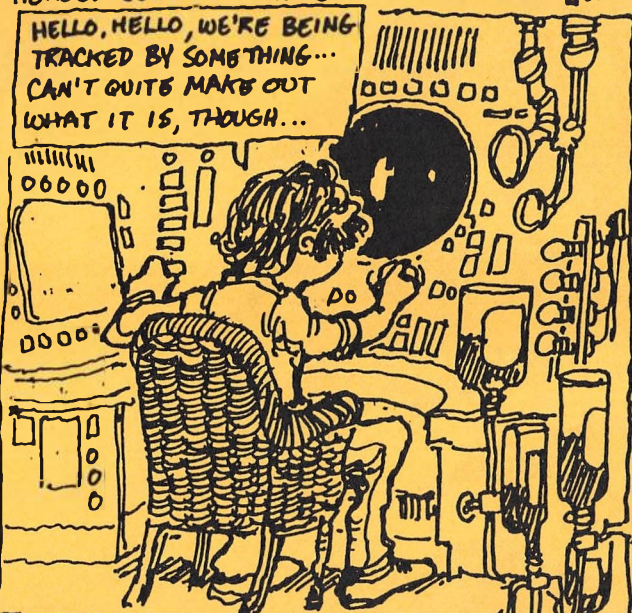
by  
Derek  
Parks-Carter

WELL, HERE WE ARE AT  
**CHAPTER FOUR**

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1992

THE MEANDERING JOURNEY OF THE 'WILLIAM R.I'  
CONTINUES APACE AND WE MEET UP WITH OUR  
HEROES JUST AS DEREK SAYS TO MICHAEL...

HELLO, HELLO, WE'RE BEING  
TRACKED BY SOMETHING...  
CAN'T QUITE MAKE OUT  
WHAT IT IS, THOUGH...



Life without Conventions  
is like Heaven without  
Hell.

TWO GUESSES...  
IT'S EITHER  
BILL BOWERS  
IN SEARCH OF A SPEECH OR A UFO!



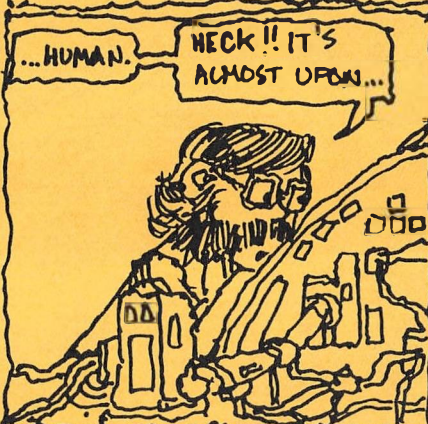
MICHAEL, WE'RE ALL  
UFO'S UP HERE...AND  
IT'S NOT SKINNY ENOUGH  
TO BE BILL BOWERS...

O.K. PERHAPS  
IT'S A DROBE  
PROBE...



I HOPE NOT!! WE'D BE OVERRUN  
BY FANS DRESSED AS  
THEY THINK THEY ARE  
RATHER THAN WHAT  
THEY ARE NOT!!

WHICH IS?

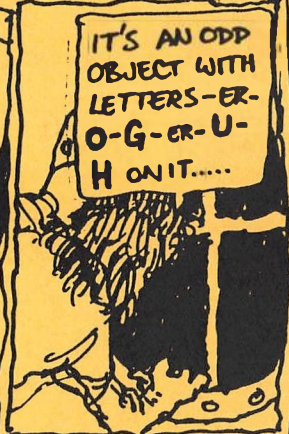


...HUMAN.

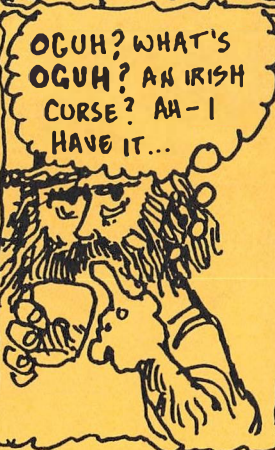
NECK!! IT'S  
ALMOST UPON...



'ALMOST'  
HE SAYS..



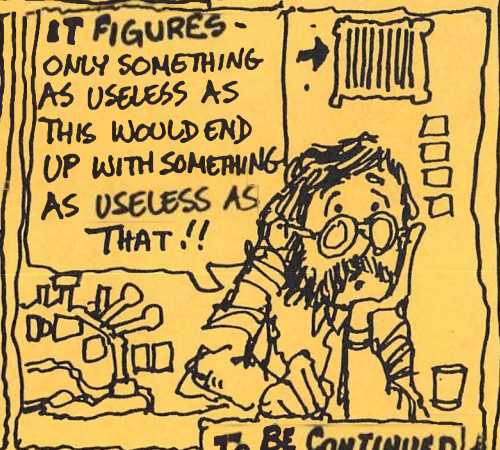
IT'S AN ODD  
OBJECT WITH  
LETTERS-ER-  
O-G-ER-U-  
H ON IT.....



OGUH? WHAT'S  
OGUH? AN IRISH  
CURSE? AH-I  
HAVE IT...



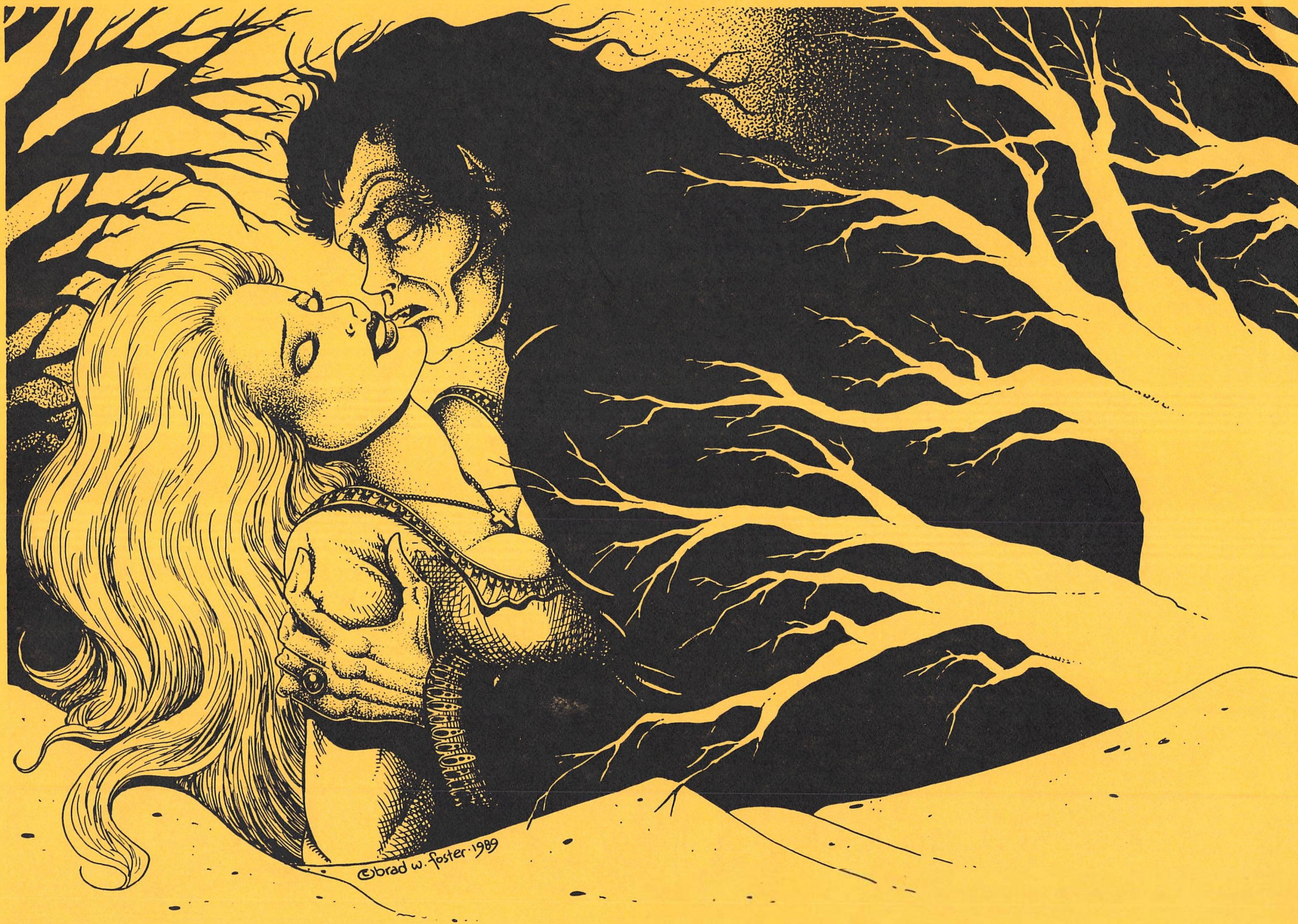
LITTLE ENGLISH TWIT!  
OUR FLYING ROCK HAS  
BEEN AWARDED OR  
HAS GARNERED  
A HUGO!  
THIS CALLS FOR  
A DRINK....



IT FIGURES -  
ONLY SOMETHING  
AS USELESS AS  
THIS WOULD END  
UP WITH SOMETHING  
AS USELESS AS  
THAT!!

TO BE CONTINUED!





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