

PERSONAL NOTES

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This, ladies and gentlemen, is another special pre-Hugo-eligibility issue of Personal Notes. In particular it is issue #3 which means that there is only one more issue to go and it will be eligible for the big silver phallic symbol. It is, for those of you who have not received issue #1 or #2 or who are not familiar with the concept, a personalzine. A personalzine is sort of like a genzine only it causes fewer cavities because it is 99 and 44/100ths % pure. This particular one is made by skilled native craftsmen who take pride in their work. The editor of record is one Richard Harter, a low scurvy knave, a fan of low and degenerate moral character who has no compunction in spreading the basest and vilest lies to milk a little interest in his rabid and vicious babblings. And that's what his friends say...

Copies may be obtained by sending a self addressed envelope to the Kremlin, Moscow, U.S.S.R. None have so far but you might get a copy that way. If it doesn't work the first time, keep trying and let me know how it works out. For the less ambitious I suggest sending a request to Richard Harter, 5 Chauncy St. #2, Cambridge MA 02138. It is entirely conceivable that that might do the trick.

Subscriptions are also available - ten dollars for one issue, five dollars for two issues, and three dollars and thirty three cents for three issues. Otherwise it is free, subject to my whim.

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At various times in the past I have written a number of satirical reviews, mostly under the name of Nathan Childers. Because I need material and have no compunction about reprinting my own I decided to gather all these priceless gems together for the delectation of my readers....

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. The Nathan Childers Papers .
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The Gods Hate Nebraska, Nathan Childers, Burning Cross Publications, \$6.95.

In the forward to the book Mr. Childers explains that when his mother was pregnant with him she read *The Gods Hate Kansas* and that he was marked for life as a consequence. I previously had no notion that pregnant women had such high responsibilities in their choice of reading matter. This book represents Mr. Childers attempt to work out his obsession. He is not, as he is the first to admit, and SF author or reader - the book that marked him so tragically is probably the only SF that he has ever read. (He has, however, written a number of reviews. It shows...)

The main story line is about the owner of a Jewish/Mexican Pizza Parlor who converts Anchovy Pizzas into unmanned flying saucers in his spare time. Unfortunately one of his Anchovy Pizza flying saucers escapes the atmosphere and is captured by a beneficent race of elder gods who take it as evidence that Nebraska has been taken over by Deroes. Shocked, they cauterize the infection at the source by drowning Nebraska in a deluge of tomato paste, followed by shredded garlic, and a half ton of Russian salad dressing.

Reviewed by Richard Harter in APA-L #469

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The Day the Dinosaurs Ate Lower Manhattan and Shit Petunias All Over New Jersey, Wilhelm Scheiskopf, Burning Cross Publications, NY, \$19.84.

It would be nice to welcome Burning Cross Publications to the list of publishers carrying a line of Science Fiction. However it will be utterly impossible to do so if this monstrosity is going to be representative of their line. Many years ago L. Sprague de Camp wrote a manual on writing SF. This book might well serve as a manual on how not to write it.

One should not object that the plot is absurd; many excellent stories have absurd plots. One should not object that it is incomprehensible; some excellent stories have had incomprehensible plots. But the combination of a trite 1930's pulp plot with psychedelic trappings and fourteen pages of calculus should be beyond the pale.

Weak as the plot is, it is sterling when compared with the characterization. Bad as the characterization is, it shines compared with the dialogue. Many stories have cardboard characters and wooden dialogue; this has cardboard dialogue and toilet paper characters. In summary, I would definitely say that this is one of the worst Science Fiction stories ever written, totally without redeeming value, either social or anti-social, an utter bomb that will disgust any one with the slightest appreciation of the English language.

Recommended.

Reviewed by Nathan Childers in Personal Notes #1.

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RECORD REVIEWS: THE GREAT INTERSTELLAR MARSHMALLOW CONSPIRACY or
A PLANET NAMED SHELPH
Godovac and Sons, Belgrade, Yugoslavia

Many people have complained that the way the Hugo awards are set up makes it very difficult for worthy non-English works to get on the ballot. However foreign authors have it easy compared to foreign records. This year (1971) two records made it into the drama award category which is all very well, but the record that should have didn't.

I refer, of course, to that brilliant comic opera, The Great Interstellar Marshmallow Conspiracy. If it had been recorded in English it might have had a chance even though it is classical comic opera and not rock. However a record which is sung in Croatian and which was distributed only in Yugoslavia (except for smuggled copies) obviously never had a chance.

The story line is simple enough: The International Zionist Nazi Capitalist Conspiracy is defeated in a great people's revolution. The bloated capitalists flee to Alpha Centauri where they find the Nik-Naks, a race of gentle peace loving bagel farmers. The bloated capitalists immediately enslave the Nik-Naks and put them to work in gigantic marshmallow factories. The capitalists return to Earth and attempt to defeat the democratic people's republic of Earth by bombarding them with gigantic marshmallows. They almost win because of a lazy drunken commissar's son, but they are finally defeated by a heroic tractor driver. At the end the hero and his tractor sail off into the sunset to Alpha Centauri to free the oppressed Nik-Naks.

As can be seen the story line is straight communist party line propaganda. The lyrics are something else, however. They satirize everybody with equal fervor. Some of the cuts are:

Marshmallow Moon over Belgrade
I'm a commissar's son - I don't have to work
The Virgin's Lament or I Wish I Were a Tractor Wheel
The Marshmallow Thoughts of Chairman Mao
Why Can't the Nik-Nak's Learn their Place?

After hearing this record I feel that if every fan learned Croatian and moved to Yugoslavia the world would be a better place.

Reviewed by Nathan Childers in Proper Boskonian #8

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The Encyclopedia of The, Vol I, Compiled by Nathan Childers

This ambitious effort, necessary to the compleat collector, is the first of a projected program to list every occurrence of the word "the" in the English language. Volume I covers the Brookings, S.D. Shepherders' Guide. The author, who has previously written a definitive treatise on the Anchovy Pizza, is a scholar of international obscurity. His new work is on a new level of literary criticism, and its value is obvious.

Reviewed by Richard Harter in Stroon #1

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An Introductory Treatise on the Anchovy Pizza, Nathan Childers, 1023 pages, Burning Cross Publications.

In the inner circles of the East two schools of pizza eaters have arisen: those of the Anchovy School, and those of the Anti-Anchovy school. Those of the latter tend to regard the former as low-down, scurvy, decadent, simple-minded degenerates. Those of the former tend to regard the latter as arrogant, conceited, boorish, eccentric asses. Despite this, relations between the two schools remain unfriendly.

Therefore it is welcome to see, in an area fraught with bitterness and controversy, a book with a clear unbiased presentation of the history, morality, philology, economics, and metaphysics of the Anchovy Pizza. It is easy to see that Mr. Childers knows and loves his subject; that he has, so to speak, immersed himself in his subject (which, perhaps, accounts for the unusual binding of the book.)

Chapters I and II discuss the history of the Anchovy Pizza at length. First discovered by a natural child of Atilla, it enjoyed a brief popularity in the Imperial court until the fall of Rome. It then lapsed into obscurity, the secret of its manufacture kept only by itinerant goat herders of the Albanian hinterland, until it was revived by the troops of Tamerlane. The Anchovy Pizza has been popular with many noted men; for example, Atilla, Tamerlane, Benedict Arnold, and Adolf Hitler.

Chapter III is a brief but brilliant investigation of the source of the name. Mr. Childers shows that, contrary to popular belief, the name "Anchovy Pizza" does not derive from the Urdu expression for Cow Dung. Instead he traces it back to the Orkish "best food."

It is to be regretted that the rest of the book is not as thorough. In particular the chapter on religion makes no mention of the role of the Anchovy Pizza in the Black Mass. Similarly the chapter on the Existential versus the Freudian interpretation of Anchovy Pizza eating is presented only from the Marxist viewpoint. Despite these flaws, the book is a monumental effort which stands well above most current scholarly effort and may be highly recommended to those who will enjoy it.

Reviewed by Richard Harter in Twilight Zine # 16

I suspect that I wrote another one or two. If I did they must be in issues of TZ that I don't have. I expect that I will get down to MITSFS one of these days and check through their copies. If any more turn up I will print them somewhat later on in this issue.

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First Stockbroker: So how is this market treating you?

Second Stockbroker: Why, I sleep like a baby.

First Stockbroker: What, in a market like this you can sleep like a baby?

Second Stockbroker: Yeah. I wake up every three hours and cry.

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Excerpts from the Galactic Encyclopedia

Immortality...

The only true immortals known are the so-called half gods of Kalidor whose existence is known to be necessary for the existence of the universe. (It is shown in Gellift that for matter to exist in the universe there must be certain discontinuities in the space-strain functions which imply the existence of the Kalidor half gods.) It is not certain whether the Kalidor half gods are truly sentient or whether the observed phenomena are merely subjective responses induced by the associated temporal phase shift fields. Even the half gods themselves remain divided on the question....

fanzine reviews

Outworlds #20 - Bill Bowers

There are many fanzines but there is only one *Outworlds*. There are many fanzine publishers who strive to put out a good fanzine, or an excellent fanzine. Many try to put out the very best that they can. But most of these seekers of excellence pursue a publicly defined excellence. Their standard, although private in part, is principally a public standard. Or, rather, standards for there are several archetypes of fanzine excellence. It is, so to speak, a public grail that they pursue. *Outworlds*, however, very much represents the pursuit of a private grail, a determined and somewhat fanatic pursuit of a private vision.

This obsession with perfection and various kinds of perfection imposes a severe task on the reviewer. Consider the problem of reviewing a typical fanzine, *The Jackass Brays*, for example. One may categorize it by type - genzine, personalzine, lettercolzine, etc. One rates repro, contents, layout, artwork, etc. And, having rated and described one particular issue, one has characterized the zine in general. Issue # 30 of *The Jackass Brays* will be much like unto issue #29. The contents will differ and the artwork will be different, but the style and the general level of quality will be much the same. This simply is not the case for *Outworlds*. Each issue represents a different style, a different attempt at excellence. Each must be judged in its own terms.

This particular issue is blue print on white paper, offset, center stapled, in more or less conventional magazine format. There is a modest amount of artwork, most of which is fairly good. It is noteworthy that the layout of interior artwork follows the procedures used by most professional magazines. I.e. most professional magazines tend to use artwork principally at the beginning of an article, story, department, etc, and only rarely for interior illustration. Layout is generally very good (I think the choice of typefaces and layout for titles is particularly well done.) The one real fault - and it is a recurring one in Bower's zines - is that the layout is too busy in places. The contents page is too much of a jumble of typefaces and assorted lines. Similarly there are places where there are too many lines - too many things boxed in or lines separating comments.

The contents this time around are fairly interesting. The ructions of the Ted White/ Harlan Ellison/ Philip Jose Farmer/ SFWA imbroglio are dying down. It is just as well, too. That sort of controversey is usually amusing (to those of us on the sidelines) and interesting. However strong controversy tends to suck everything else up into and eventually fades into the ghosts of recriminations past.

Poul Anderson puts down his thoughts on what a right and proper taxation system for a libertarian society and offers a suggestion of his own. What he has to say about taxation policy makes a great deal of sense to me - and therefore will undoubtedly not be adopted.

Ted White discusses lawnmowers (Ted can find more interesting things to write about lawnmowing than most people can find to write or say in a lifetime), Mike Glyer's comments about fan writing, and a replay of prior arguments in the pages of *Outworlds*.

Piers Anthony has an article about the sculpture of Sterling Lanier and his other various careers. The center fold is two pages of Lanier sculptures.

The meatiest and, to me, the most interesting part of the contents is *Grafanedita* #1, which is sort of a subfanzine about fanzines. There is an editorial by Bill, an article about the artwork of Jim Shull by Barry Gillam, and articles about editing a fanzine by Bill Bowers, Larry McCombs, and Dave Locke. The article by Gillam is, I believe, the best and most intelligent thing I have seen written about fanzine art. Larry's article is a how-to manual for the beginning fan ed. Bower's article is nominally for the beginning fan ed and is full of informative information but it is also laced with his own philosophy of what and why is a fanzine. Dave Locke writes about writing editorials, which he feels is often the weakest part of a fanzine.

Outworlds is available for trade, contributions, editorial whim, and cash on the barrelhead. Subscriptions are \$1 for one issue, \$4 for five issues. The schedule is quarterly. Write to William L. Bowers, P.O. Box 148, Wadsworth, Ohio, 44281.

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Prehensile #12 - Mike Glyer and Milt Stevens

Prior to this issue *Prehensile* was edited solely by Mike Glyer. It is offset, black on white, and digest sized. It also photo reduced, another instance of that pernicious plague that is infecting fandom.

Outworlds is a Hugo nominee - *Prehensile* is an almost that has been mentioned for consideration here and there. The contents are conventional; there are fannish/personal editorials by the editors, fanzine reviews by Mike Glicksohn, book and movie reviews, and articles by Jodie Offutt, Dan Goodman, and Richard Wadholm. And, of course, a lettercol. Glicksohn's column on fanzines is long and mildly interesting (much more interesting than this one for comparison.) Mike is one of those people who is inherently turned on by fanzines - even when he tells you that a fanzine is dull and uninteresting he makes the fact that it is dull and uninteresting *seem interesting*. Stan Burns's book reviews suffer from the common fault of fanzine book reviews - a tendency to be too ready to sneer and use the meat cleaver for the joy of wreaking carnage. The letter column has Jerry Pournelle explaining. (Jerry is president of SFWA and takes it and himself very seriously - he is given to controverting about SFWA suites and parties at conventions.) It also has letters from Ted White, Mike Glicksohn, Dave Locke, and many more.

Basically *Prehensile* is competently done and not very exciting. The pieces are all there but there aren't really any pieces that stand out in your mind. (*Sorry about that Mike - I call them as I see them.*) There is nothing that grabs you - nothing outrageously fugg headed, nothing brilliantly inspired, nothing deliciously offbeat - not even anything hopelessly bad. A representative better grade fanzine.

Available for trade to *both* editors, for contributions, editorial whim or for 50¢ per issue. Quarterly schedule. Write to Mike Glyer, 14974 Osceola St., Sylmar CA 91342 or Milt Stevens, 14535 Saticoy #105, Van Nuys CA 91405.

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Son of the WSFA Journal - Don Miller

Nobody - nobody reviews *The Son of the WSFA Journal*. Well, maybe someone does but I don't recall it. To be sure it does not meet the standards of those who faunch over layout and art. The repro is passable; the format is rigid, pedestrian, and

competant. The contents are almost never exciting - in fact, they are mostly a little dull. And yet... It is the single best and reliable newszine around. *Locus* you say? If you want a full rundown on the fanzines being published you'll do better to read *Son*. If you want the magazine contents, year in, year out, likewise. Reviews of what is being published in greater volume than anywhere else - again *Son*. The strictly fannish news coverage is minimal but it is there.

Perhaps I exaggerate a bit when I say it is better than *Locus*. (And perhaps not.) But it does seem to me that it is valuable and reliable and that its real merits are overlooked. It is, I think, an unappreciated institution.

Mimeo, 8½ x 11, weekly schedule, subs 25¢ each, 9/\$2. Available for trades. For information on trades and subs write Don Miller, 12315 Judson Road, Wheaton Maryland 20906.

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SPECIAL FAANISH EDITORIAL DEPARTMENT

So much for fanzine reviews. Every good fanzine should run some fanzine reviews at least once in the course of its career. Having done so, I now feel relieved of my obligation to fannish posterity and feel under no obligation to do so ever again. (Which does not, of course, stop me from running them if I happen to decide to.)

I expect that most of you reading this have read *Letters From the Earth* by Mark Twain. (If you haven't go out and get a copy and read it.) In it he has a great deal of fun poking into the vagaries of organized religion and expresses grave doubts about the collective and individual intelligence of the Human Race, if any. The vagaries of religion and society gave him plenty of material for satire. It seems a pity, however, that he lived and wrote in the last century. If only he had lived and worked two generations later and had discovered Fandom. Then he would have really had fun. It seems a shame that such a brilliant satirist should have missed the chance to work with such promising material.

Fandom should, I suspect, be counted as a religious community. It has all of the stigmata. Like religions it has its core of true devotees who follow the true way and give themselves to it, a larger body that participate but don't make it their lives (Sunday church goers), and still others who only casually participate (Easter Sunday christians.) Like all universal religions it accepts rich and poor, male and female, black and white, demanding from them only devotion to the true way and observance of the sacred rituals. Like all good religions it counsels its believers that they are members of the elect and really somewhat better than non-believers. Like all good religions it has its central ideology, its body of moral beliefs, and its rituals. Like all religions it has its backsliders and heretics. And, like most religions, it is somewhat squeamish and hypocritical about money.

This hypocrisy arises because the true faith (any true faith - pick one for choice) is concerned with the true way. It is independent of economic considerations. Nonetheless the apostles must live in the real world which keeps intruding with irrelevant economic considerations divorced from the essential content of the true faith. As a result there is an inevitable tension, a conflict between what should be and what is, that expresses itself in an essential hypocrisy. This accommodation between the world and the faith is always made in religions, and it is always unstable. On one side there are those who demand that the faith bend more to the exigencies of the world - which they most often do in practice rather than in words. On the other hand there are those in whom the faith burns with a hard, asphalt-like light and who denounce the inevitable perversions of the true way.

In the beginning the devotees of the true faith are all amateurs - the poor and the very rich who, each in their own way, can afford to be indifferent to the world and to such sordid topics as money and the pursuit thereof. As time goes on the poor are faced with a dilemma - they wish to devote full time to their religion and yet the demands of the world press in upon them - they need must fill their bellies. And to this dilemma there are but two answers. One is to pull in their horns, to make of their religion a part time thing, to become a Sunday Christian. And the other is to make their religion their profession, to become a priest, a monk, a bible salesman, a manufacturer of religious artifacts, a Science Fiction author, a book dealer, a publisher of Locus. (*Actually, becoming an SF author is not quite the same - it is more like opting to become a deity - keeping in mind, of course, that fen are generally pretty disrespectful of their deities, particularly the minor ones.*)

This inevitable advent of "professionalism" creates problems. In its pure form the true faith is indifferent to money and its works. And, yet, the "professional" must make it pay, willy-nilly. In most professions it is a right and honorable thing that a man should try to make money; and is not ashamed to do so. But it is different in the priesthood; it is disreputable for a priest to be concerned with making money and with the problems of the world. Since the priest must eat, devices must be grafted onto the true faith to extract money from the congregation. By the nature of things these devices will be at odds with the True Faith because they are needed for accounting to the world, which the True Faith is not concerned with. And yet they must present so that the true devotees may eat, and worse still, they must be rationalized and made legitimate so that the true believers who become "professionals" may believe that that they are still walking in the light of the True Faith. The whole thing is a subversion of the original religion, of course, and is usually transparent. But it is a necessary subversion and the "professional" usually manages to find room for it in his beliefs with only minor twinges of conscience.

In time, if left to his own devices, the priest will generally find a way to make his religion very profitable indeed; the cant of one generation becomes the accepted doctrine and the basis of departure for the next. Unfortunately for the priest and fortunately for the True Faith, he is seldom left to his own devices. There are always those who insist on returning to the original faith, the prophets in the desert, and the converts. This is hard to avoid. The priest depends upon the faith; without ~~marks~~ believers in the True Faith and what it offers there will be no one to extract money from.

The prophets and reformers, those who would defend and restore the true faith, usually will accept no compromise with the world. This may seem unrealistic; after all, some compromise with the world inevitable; the True Faith cannot exist in a vacuum. It is, however, highly realistic. The principle of concession knows no bounds; once one has accepted the blandishments of sin and accounted them as not being sin, there is no end to sin. The reformer must demand purity if his demand is to be successful. To be sure, his goal of purity will never be attained; reality does not permit it. The result is a limited accomodation with the world, a modest amount of sin, which represents an equilibrium between the inevitable backsliding and the impossible demands of the reformers.

As I have remarked, fandom bears the stigmata of religion, and this conflict, this necessary hypocrisy, is one of its features. A good example of this is the recurring complaints about the "semi-professionalism" of fanzines like *Algol*, *Locus*, and *The Alien Critic*. In the rationale accounting of the mundane world these are hobbies - obviously amateur. In the eyes of the true believers they represent dangerous backsliding and must be rigorously preached against.

Put it this way: Suppose my avocation is making model soldiers. Suppose further that I discover that there are people willing to pay me money for model soldiers, enough to cover the cost of materials with a little bit left over. Say, for the sake of argument, that it takes me ten hours to make a model soldier and that I net a dollar on it. Suppose further that this figure of a dollar net does not include an allowance for depreciation and amortization of the cost of tools. Suppose further that I give some to friends as gifts and that I keep those that I particularly like for my own collection. Is it not obvious that making model soldiers on these terms is not a business in any realistic sense - even a part time business. Is it not clear that this is a hobby that happens to recover its costs. And so it is with these "semi-pro" fanzines.

The purists, however, denounce such things as abominations. They have their point. Fanzines are put out for love. The motivation is, and must be, a desire to publish. It has become a tenet of the faith that publishing a fanzine is a good thing in its own right. Since they are put out for love, one is not supposed to count the cost. If the cost is not too high this is feasible and an attitude that a concern with money is impure is quite reasonable.

But why, you say, do these publishing giants strive for such large circulations and expensive fanzines that they needs must concern themselves with money? This brings up the topic of *The Buddha Nature and Huges*.

One of the characteristics of humans is that they seek and appreciate egoboo. This appreciation and pursuit frequently leads to a certain problem. There are many activities in which prizes are awarded. It is human nature to covet these prizes. Hence it is natural for those practicing these activities to make attempts to win these prizes. However a conflict arises when the pursuit of the prize is inconsistent with the motivation needed for the original activity. The starkest example of this is in Buddhism, where the usual motivations for attaining the Buddha-nature are inconsistent with having it. The pursuit of the prize always involves a distortion of the original motive for undertaking the activity.

It is this distortion that the purists are sensitive to and denounce. To some degree it is part of our culture to be unwilling to accept a too naked pursuit of the prize; partly because of our Christian heritage, and partly because of an intrinsic awareness of the dangers involved. It is another area of uneasy compromise.

These considerations go far, I believe, in explaining the otherwise irrational nature of certain fanish controversys about certain fanzines and types of fanzines that would otherwise be incomprehensible. And that is comforting. It is nice to feel that there is some rationale behind these disputes.

some locs

..... Dear Richard

. Harry Warner, Jr. .

. 423 Summit Ave. .

. Hagerstown MD 21740 .

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I thank you for the first two issues of Personal Notes.

I should write this loc on them just about the time all

the fans are getting back from Sydney, if I take them in

turn. But I'm getting so tired of starting every loc

with an apology for being three weeks, three months or three years late that for the past week, I've been turning to newly arrived fanzines. That way, I can plunge right into comments on the fanzines, without a prefatory paragraph of seven or eight lines of explanation.

Your long discussion of horses hurt a little. It's not that I've ever gone up on one of those things, but a mild fannish trauma which must afflict all of us who have been in the field for a quarter-century or longer. You see, it was horses that took Lee Hoffman out of fandom just when she was at the peak of her enthusiasm and abilities, and even though she eventually returned to fanac, she never again quite attained the enormity of her previous publishing and writing and drawing output. Besides, I don't think she ever thought so highly of fans after she had had the opportunity to compare their characters with those of horses. On the other hand, the literary world would be poorer some of its best western fiction of recent years, perhaps, if Lee hadn't switched hobbies in mid-stream for a while. So maybe you will eventually breed back the unicorn strain into the equine race or do something equally noteworthy as a result of this sudden attention to the hayburners.

You are right about the fascination that horses still exercise over growing girls. The 4-H people around here started a few years back to offer a course in horse care, and, as a result, I suspect that this county's farms have more horses right now than they possessed before the first tractor steamed over the mountains into this western frontier. The 4-H horse show at last week's county fair attracted more entries than the youth exhibits in pigs, cattle, and sheep combined. I handled the results of that show and one listing caused me to wonder if either the horses or the kids are forming a union, because there was a class for "goulding." In any event, your article told me more about riding styles and gear shifts than I'd picked up from any source in the past. But after suffering two busted hips in falls from my own level, I doubt that I'll risk the consequences of a tumble from anything with such a high rise construction.

Maybe the real truth about God and four-sided triangles is the matter of language. God should be able to dispense with nouns, if omniscient, and therefore there would be no "triangle" or "square" to a divinity. Things got named in Genesis as a memory aid to mankind, most probably.

I've always believed that a worldcon committee is entitled to some left-over money, if it has run a tight ship and hasn't damaged the con to build up the profit. If most fans oppose such handling of excess worldcon funds, I can't think of any consistent alternative except to require all profits to be turned over to future worldcons at a prescribed ratio: such a percentage of the profits to the next worldcon, and the remainder to an emergency fund. The objection to that procedure would be the temptation for worldcon committees to spend too freely so they'll just about break even, risking a series of worldcons ending in the red. But there is one innovation which I would like to see become mandatory for every worldcon: an audit of its books by a reputable local CPA firm, followed by publication of this audit. It would cost several hundred bucks but it would provide fandom with a clear picture of the

Clever Rotsler illo goes here.

event's finances and it might prevent endless amounts of rumormongering. Besides, it would give potential future worldcon committees a good idea of how to budget, how they might save or spend more money by shifts in emphasis, and so on.

The back cover on your second issue is marvelous. You're a genius if you created it, and you're a benefactor if you copied it from somewhere so the rest of us could see it. I wish I could somehow translate it into words for my newspaper columns. Exactly the same thing has happened around here repeatedly, such as a project to prevent a small stream from repeatedly flooding a small town, which would have ended up by taking half a mountain out of private ownership, creating reservoirs, establishing new parks, and probably creating a new Sahara. The area's residents voted to scrap the whole project after they became horrified at what various federal agencies had done to it.

The problem with any definition of "science fiction" is the same for a definition of "stroke" or many other words. Some words are used for several different purposes and there's no way to find one definition for any of them. "Science fiction" is stories about extrapolations from today's conditions to the near future, it's stories about other planets and other solar systems in the past, present, or future, it's stories which are based on science's future developments, it's stories about time travel, parallel universe and similar speculations which aren't justified by today's knowledge, and there's no definition that will fit them all. Not, that is, unless you cheat a little and use the old distinction between science fiction and fantasy fiction: the former tells what will happen if and the latter tells what would happen if.

[] *Oh now I can't agree with your comments about defining Science Fiction. It's like defining an automobile. Someone could come along and tell you that you can't define "automobile" because some are red and some are black and some have steam engines and some have power steering and so forth. But these variations are not important; to define "automobile" you have to get at the root idea of what is meant by the term "automobile". Sometimes you have a word like "stroke" or "run" which, by now, comprise more than one root idea, and hundreds of definitions. But I don't think that is the case with Science Fiction. To be sure there are all different kinds of kinds of stories, but I think that there is a root idea under which they can all be subsumed.*

[] *It is not possible for a CPA to give a full certified audit of the books of a major SF convention. The problem is that the cash income and outgo cannot be validated. (The father of one of the NESFA members is a CPA and filled us in on some of the problems.) The usual procedure in audits when there are cash flows in the form of cash rather than traceable paper is to use preestablished estimates based on actual logging of cash flows. But this is impossible in the case of cons where there are large amounts of cash coming in in the form of good old greenbacks and the amounts coming in and received cannot be established from previous history. For this reason it is impossible for a CPA to certify the accuracy (let alone the honesty) of the books of a con committee.*

However it would still be desirable that the books of a worldcon committee be cleaned up and published relatively soon after the con; even if this cannot be done in final form. One of the problems is that Worldcon committees tend to collapse after the damn thing is over. The enthusiasm that carried them through the con disapates and such things as clearing out the books, putting out proceedings, etc, tend to get lost in the shuffle. Something of this kind happened to the Noreascon committee. The committee sort of faded away with the proceedings half done and the books not quite closed out. However the whole thing has been turned over to NESFA recently and things are being done again.

☐ The back cover of issue #2 has been circulating in the computer fraternity for some time. And, yes, ain't it the truth.

☐ Tsk, tsk. I almost got the impression that you were about to say that Lee found that she preferred the whole horse to just part of it and thought better of it. I don't think that I am going to drop out of fandom on account of an interest in horses, but sho knows, if someone had told me three years ago that I would be enthusiastically riding two or three times a week I would have been flabbergasted.

☐ Er, are you sure that was "gilding". It couldn't have been "gelding", now, could it have?

☐ Ah yes, I did notice that you included a prefatory paragraph of seven or eight lines explaining why you were writing right away so that you wouldn't have to write a prefatory paragraph of seven or eight line.

.....

.....
. Stan Burns .
. 2460 Glenoaks .
. Glendale CA 91206 .
.....

Dear Nut,

I can see it all now. First the poor unsuspecting fan pubs a personalzine. People respond to it; Loc's fly through the air like shrapnel. Money starts arriving; rave reviews, subscriptions, controversy, mean and degrading letters from pros. The zine expands and so does the readership - egoboo is piled in every available corner. The fan's head begins to swell. He goes offset, starts printing sercon material. Neofemmes throw their bodies at him at conventions hoping he will write Loc's to their crudzines. He feuds with Ted White. Rejects illos from Tim Kirk.

His offset sercon fanzine is nominated for a Hugo. He throws large drinking parties at cons, hoping to buy the votes he needs. Failure. He loses by two votes to Geis. Drinking. More drinking. He drowns his sorrows in rounds of the local Chinese restaurants...

He joins the Fapa wait-list. Tries unsuccessfully to sell stories to the prozines. Is again nominated for a Hugo. Again loses to Geis. Even more drinking.

Decides to fix the vote. Becomes chairman of Worldcon bid. Goes to other cons pushing his bid. Gets blackmail photos of BNF's to secure his Hugo. Sells story to Roger Elwood. Becomes active member of Fapa. Moves to larger apartment to accomodate the two fems, dog, five cats, 60,000 fanzines, and tuna fish sandwich he is living with.

Wins Hugo from Geis by two votes in fifth round of balloting. Gets drunk, picks fight with Harlan Ellison, and gets knee cap busted by right cross. Femmes leave him for Isaac Asimov. Dog eats cats and runs away to Cincinatti. Apartment burns down with all wordly possessions due to misuse of vibrator (insurance canceled the week before.) Car stolen, and the only thing recovered is the left bumper. Fired from job on morals clause. Thrown out of Fapa for not pubbing for last four issues. Story not pubbed because of the Great Elwood Collapse. Goes out to drown sorrows in Chinese dinner. Has fight with chef. Killed by meat cleaver - chopped up to make chop suey. Gives heartburn to forty patrons...

Really Richard. Is this what you want to end up like?

☐ I dunno, it depends. Do I get to pick the forty?

.....
George Flynn
27 Sowamsett Ave
Warren RI 02885
.....

Dear Harter

For the last couple of months I've been groping towards a coherent response to your definition of SF.

I'm not sure that's exactly what I've come up with, but at least I should have some semi-coherent ramblings taking off from various aspects thereof. I think your definition is one of the best that I have seen; but it is still subject to the general principle that may be stated: Any one sentence definition of SF is almost certainly oversimplified. So let's look for some of the complications. To begin with, let's outline a taxonomy of the field based on your definitions:

- I. General fiction (realistic)
- II. Fantasy (essential element of unreality)
 1. Science Fiction (mythic rationale: science)
 2. Traditional fantasy (mythic rationale: mythology, magic)
 3. ----- (mythic rationale: other or none)

We have a problem with the nomenclature, since the most common use of "fantasy" is to designate class II.2, or else all of II except science fiction. Some people, of course, use "speculative fiction" to refer to the whole of class II. I, myself, tend to use "SF" (not "science fiction", just SF-with-no-referent) in the same sense. But I'm not about to propose a new terminology, so let's proceed.

Class II.3 isn't one of your categories, but I invented it as a catchall to hold the problem cases. Are there mythic rationales other than science and magic? Logic says there should be, but can we think of any? As you may have guessed, I have a candidate; history. Stories with history as a mythic rationale ("meta-historical fantasy"?) would include those extrapolating known history into the past (tales of prehistory - excluding those about Atlantis, ancient astronauts, etc), into the future (lots of short-range political extrapolations with no scientific element); or in parallel (the what-if or uchronian stories.) That seems to be enough to make a respectable category. One can probably come up with other mythic rationales; for example, are talking-animal stories with no other "magical" elements (from Aesop to Animal Farm) a branch of traditional fantasy or not? Finally we have those stories which appear to have no mythic rationale at all, including Borge's fictions and a lot of the "New Wave"; one could probably define a rationale here too, but I'd rather not try.

Then we have the problem of where to draw the line between fantasy and "realistic: fiction: just what constitutes that essential element of unreality? At this point I shall appeal to a number of impressive quotations (mainly those I know where to look up in a hurry.) Of course, we always have Fletcher Pratt's "All fiction is fantasy", which defines the problem out of existence; thought-provoking, but not exactly useful. More to the point is Samuel R. Delany's "Naturalistic fictions are parallel-world stories in which the divergence from the real is too slight for historical verification." Better, but not to be taken literally: plenty of clearly mainstream stories have details which can be refuted historically. Suppose we modify that last phrase to "is not significant to the story." That is, if a story mentions in passing a president of the US named Smith, that's certainly a significant difference in the absolute (or historical) sense, but, in general, is not significant to the story. On the other hand, a story in which the president is impeached is clearly fantasy (though of a somewhat different variety than it would have been two years ago.) And a final quote, from Norman Spinrad's new anthology, Modern Science Fiction: "Originally all fiction was speculative fiction. People weren't so sure that they knew what was real and what was not until the eighteenth century..." He defines "speculative fiction" as fiction "about the could-b-but-isn't", a category

including 11.1 and most of 11.3. But the quote is more interesting as illustrating the relativity of our definitions, the next point I want to take up.

You correctly point out that your definition of fantasy is relativistic. In determining the "element of unreality", whose conception of reality do we use? Three possible standards come to mind: that of the author (a), of the individual reader (b), or of the consensus of society (c). For a sufficiently old story we must distinguish further between the consensus of the author's society (c-1) and that of the (present day) reader's society (c-2). Now we can start assigning things to these categories. We seem to be agreed that the Iliad and the Odyssey are fantasy by criteria (b) and (c-2) only. I suggest that the Aeneid is also fantasy by (a) but probably not by (c-1). And while the Bible may be fantasy for many individuals (b), it hasn't reached that point for the whole of society (c-2).

Using all the paraphernalia I've introduced here one could systematically classify any work in compact and easily computerizable form. (*Aha!! I knew that thought would come out sooner or later. - RH*) For example: Iliad - 1(a,c-1); 11.2(b,c-2). How about bringing out The NESFA Classified Index of All Fantasy? (This is the sort of idea that could get me fired from the Index Production Committee.)

Ah, but it's not that simple (if you can call the foregoing simple.) We've got a classification system, but what are the entities we're classifying? Through all of this discussion we've assumed that it's stories that we're talking about - i.e., literary works taken as a whole. But in many cases that's unsatisfactory. Does one definitely extrapolative but subsidiary plot element make a mainstream story SF? (Advise and Consent comes to mind.) Conversely, is any fantasy converted to realistic fiction by simply adding at the end, "It was all a dream"? Not at all satisfactory, but is there an alternative? I think there is: let us say that our definitions apply to plot elements rather than whole stories. Then we can freely say that The Incomplete Enchanter, say, contains both science-fiction and traditional-fantasy elements, without any obligation to define it as one or the other. What's that you say? You want to make such distinctions? All right, then all you need is a system that weights the various elements. As it happens, I've recently read just such a formula (combining SF, fantasy, and mainstream factors to come up with an SF quotient or some such), but I can't recall where it was; does anyone remember this?

There isn't much else in PN that I can comment on since (!) I know nothing about Equestrianism, (2) the faanish stuff in #1 is out of date, and (3) the Boskone portfolio is great but defies comment. Perhaps I can come up with something, though. I note that #1 contains no indication of your address; this might create a problem if you gave it to anybody who doesn't know you. (After all, what if there is someone out there who's willing to pay your subscription rates?!) Then there's your "General Note" disclaimer on the back page; this was seen by a fan not familiar with the, ah, flavor of your writing and characterized as typical NESFA red tape. *Sigh*

I do have one substantive comment concerning your essay on four-sided triangles. I feel that the flaw in the argument lies in its allusion to what triangles "really" may be. For a triangle is a mathematical abstraction, and has no "real" existence outside the mind. This simplifies the problem considerably, as we need only ask whether God can create minds capable of conceiving four-sided triangles. Since such minds clearly do exist, the matter seems settled. I add that a "triangle" is by definition a figure with three sides, so that a four-sided one would constitute a contradiction in terms. This definition is, of course, also in the mind only, which brings us back where we started.

Will the Gilbert-Green portfolio appear in PB like its Noreascon prototype? (Why should Fandom at large be deprived of seeing this? On the other hand, the more people who see it, the more Freddy can sue you for.)

[] Actually the Noreascon thingie was not a prototype. Mikey and Howie used to do illustrations of their trips to Rochester and either Marsha or Sheila would do text for them. There were about five or six Rochcon reports run through Apa Nesfa and Apa 1.

[] I may have set those subscription rates too low. After all three issues for \$3.33 is only \$1.11 per issue and that's not far from the price people are asking for fanzines these days.

[] What's this "ah, flavor of your writing" jazz? I'm always very very serious and everything I say can always be taken at face value. (And if you believe that, I have this nice bridge you might be interested in...) I give up, did the chap think that it was a NESFA regulation that members putting out their own zines put in a disclaimer? How charming.

[] It won't quite do to say "a triangle is a mathematical abstraction". It is an empirical fact that the universe follows mathematics, that $1+1=2$ as a mathematical equation implies things about the way the world is. To use a favorite example of philosophers suppose I have a pile of tiles and suppose that I count them and find that there are twelve of them. Then I can lay them out in a 4×3 rectangular array without any extras and without coming up short. Apparently there is no exception to this. Yet $4 \times 3 = 12$ is an abstract mathematical equation; how is it that the real universe appears to obey this mathematical abstraction?

It is also a matter of observation that mathematics appears to be consistent. (We have to say appears because we are in the embarrassing position of having proved that if Mathematics is consistent we cannot prove its consistency.) Presumably the universe is also consistent (although what an inconsistent universe would mean is not clear to me.) Now we can devise methods for handling inconsistent systems and reasoning within them, based on the notion of not letting the left hand know what the right is doing and vice versa, to get a system which is locally consistent everywhere but is globally inconsistent. It is less easy to imagine how to operate with a system that is locally inconsistent.

The question is, then, could an omniscient God operate with a locally consistent and globally inconsistent mathematics? Could She construct a universe based on such a Mathematics? She appears to have constructed a universe which conforms to the laws of logic and mathematics - could She have done otherwise? Has she? And if She has constructed a universe which is based on a formally inconsistent mathematics could we detect it?

[] Your comments on SF are very interesting. Following up Susan's comments and yours I would classify your "History" as another "mythic rationale" with the mythos being our own currently accepted perception of reality. Our perception of reality can be divided into two parts: how-things-happen and what-has-happened. To give an example, we know that if Hydrogen and Oxygen are mixed under the right conditions water and large amounts of energy will be liberated. But our knowledge of what would happen if does not tell us what actually happened - it does not tell us that the Hindenberg blew up, for example. History has, or appears to have, a brutal accidental character; it rolls on with all of its accumulation of unnecessary and irrelevant facts, indifferent to our theories and suppositions, unordered by reason. The History story keeps the laws and principles part of our reality but substitutes a different set of facts.

Dear Al

. Jack Harness

. 714 S. Serrano .

. L.A. 90005

..... for it other than GALLANT GALL STONES and an occasional f/r
from the CULT. Oh, small illos, maybe. How would you like an
article on Scientology? Come to think of it, don't bother
answering, I'll send you one.... unless you keep sending me more P.N.

Word here is, 24 hours after the announcement that ROCKY was indeed the choice
for v.p., the Dirty Time Co. had gotten its first shipment of Rocky faces in stock
to affix to their watches. I wonder if they had any other faces designed and sent
to their manufacturer in advance of the announcement? You might also wonder, as
I do, if they have FORD faces in stock. Will have to look up their ad in L.A. FREE
PRESS and find out. In this, the first year of Our Ford....

PS: I will swipe that "Mommy, fans smell funny" cartoon. Oh. Do you know anyone
who'd be interested in joining the LENS, our monthly fiction apa? Only 30 copies
required.

[] *I'm glad to see that someone recognizes who is really putting out this zine*
- Alphonse.

[] *Ouch - the first year of Our Ford, yet. Shocking as it may seem I wonder how
people will miss the allusion because they have never read Brave New World?
However it doesn't quite seem appropriate, because the people in BNW thought they
were living in a Utopia. I doubt that many people have any such notions today.
I am told that there is an old Chinese curse that goes, "May you live in interesting
time." We seem to be living in very interesting times.*

[] *I must say that is a very sneaky way to ensure remaining on the mailing list.
But who knows? Although I am not an enthusiast of Scientology, I might actually
be interested in a good article on it. I must admit that, like many fans, I do not
have a high opinion of Scientology. However it seems like it would be interesting
to see what someone reasonable who knows it from the inside has to say about it.*

=====

I could, I suppose, put quite a little bit more into this issue. For example,
I could do a DISCON report since this is being written in the week after DISCON.
I have in mind the outlines of an article on Women's Lib. I could natter on about
a number of topics, such as my new job, my new car, etc. I might do a discussion
of the Swedish Ivy in the livingroom which is threatening to take over the entire
apartment. It would be nice to put something else in the issue, because I am not
entirely pleased with the contents - they are entirely too fannish. One of the
ideas I had in mind when I started this thing was that it should reflect a generality
of interests - that it should not be just a fanzine, existing totally within the
sub world of fannish interest.

However, he says, frequent and small is the game. All of these things will
require overcoming a certain amount of inertia. Better get this one out and wait
till next issue for all of the promised goodies. In the next issue there should
be an illustrated DISCON report by Mike and Sheila Gilbert, plus some offbeat
articles on this and that, plus whatever. In the meantime, peace -

RH