

PERSONAL NOTES 4

PERSONAL NOTES #4 is a personalzine published by Richard Harter at 5 Chauncy St. #2, Cambridge MA 02138. Subscription rates are \$10.00 for one issue, \$5.00 for two issues, and \$3.33 for three issues. It is also available by presented certified documentation in triplicate that you have undergone forty days of ritual fasting and flagellation. It is also available by editorial whim. It is probably available for trade although no guarantees are extended. Unsolicited contributions are likely not to be returned or acknowledged although they might well be. If you really feel that I might like to run something you have written or drawn feel free to send it too me and I will appreciate it. Be warned however that my appreciation may not go beyond a thoughtful sigh of appreciation. It is not the normal policy of this zine to run book reviews. Letters of comment are greatly appreciated. Contents are informal, organization is minimal, and all policy is subject to arbitrary change, retroactively.

The discerning reader will note that this is issue #4, which establishes it as being eligible for nomination for the fanzine Hugo. It would not be proper for me, under the laws of fannish modesty, to advocate in print that you nominate it now that it is actually eligible. Modesty and fannish principles seem to be at somewhat of a discount these days, however, so I don't think I need to say explicitly that you should all get out and vote early, often, and right, come Hugo nomination time. But don't be surprised if I come out next spring with a 100 page, 2500 copy circulation, multi-colour offset issue, complete with articles by all of the leading pros and fan writer - with a preprinted Hugo nomination ballot enclosed.

WAHF'S:: Sue Miller who wrote to express appreciation for #1 and #2 and asking that she be kept on the mailing list; Judy McQuown, who described some lovely woods that she bought.

NOTES AND LOCS::

My mother, who is a truly marvelous person writes in comment:

+++++

June Harter

Highmore, So. Dak.

+++++

....

In the interest of being trivial or factual - take your pick:

I. You were born in the Harter house in town. The doctor was Dr. Jordan.

* The Harter family owned two residences, one on the ranch and one in town. (Actually there was also the house that Aunt Frances lived in.)

The house at the ranch was built before 1900 (I believe) by my grandparents on my father's side. Later on they moved up town and the house at the ranch was occupied by my parents. After World War II they built a brick ranch house one mile south of town and moved there. I knew I hadn't been born in a hospital and had somehow assumed that I had been born at home. - RH

2. After we started using tractors for field work the work-horse teams were used for pulling hay racks during haying and in the winter to haul hay out to the cattle. They were also used to haul the stoneboat when we gathered rocks to face dams.

I remember the work horses, but I only have very vague memories of them being harnessed up, except for the sleigh. A stone boat, for my urban readers, is not a boat made out of stone; it is a sledge used to haul rocks on.

3. Freckles was part Shetland and part quarter-horse. I don't recall whether any other breed was involved.

I have distinct memories of a beautiful golden palomino at Burki's which I had always assumed was one of Freckle's parents. Is this correct?

4. The horse that threw you was Linda, not Smoky. We had Linda before we had Freckles. After she tossed you we took her back to Burki and got Freckles. She, incidentally, was a damned good cattle cutter.

That she was. The only fault that I can remember was that she often got over enthusiastic and would get the cattle running too fast. Other than that you could shut your eyes, hold on, and she would do all the work.

Memory plays funny tricks. Now that you point it out I can recall that it wasn't Smoky that threw me, but another horse that we had before Freckles. I can even recall her quite well, but the name, Linda, just does not strike a bell.

5. The ranch is 11½ miles south and west of Highmore. Or, to be more trivial, 11 miles to the north edge of the ranch.

Now that is most unfair. Here I am, harmlessly exaggerating the rigors of my boyhood and you go intruding with facts. You're right, of course. It was 15 miles to the mission and my mind had the numbers mixed.

PS: I almost forgot to add that the cartoon of the swing appeared in Atlas/World Press Review. It is credited to the Financial Post/ Toronto. And it includes one picture that you didn't have in PN#2. It is captioned "As advertising sold it," and shows a nude fem using the swing. The captions for the other pics are different than those you used. In any event, it is a funny cartoon.

There are probably quite a few versions of that cartoon floating around, each adapted to different industries and organizations. It expresses what must be a universal law of organizations in action. But I like that final picture. Aint it the truth!!

+++++ Dear Fanzine

Tom Digby

1043 N. Curson Ave. #6
L.A. Cal. 90046

+++++

I've contemplated applying for a subscription at some extrapolation of your rates like 10¢ for 100 issues or 2¢ for 500 issues or forever for free but then the question arises that if I decide to cancel do I have to send you more money? Or if for some reason you suspend publication will your equivalent of a pro-rata refund be to demand additional payment? (Of course - RH) So I guess I'd better just count on getting this because you feel like sending it and not bother trying to subscribe.

On four-sided triangles - I imagine a good geometry lawyer could try arguing that since "triangle" is "triangle" rather than "trilateral" the thing that counts is that it had three ANGLES. Therefore something like four line segments joined end-to-end to make a jagged line but not a closed figure would count, as would a square with one corner erased so that only three 90° angles remain. Of course that still leaves open the question of whether an omnipotent being can change the laws of logic, or whether said laws vary in other universes. Or whether God can answer the question of whether it can change the laws of logic, truthfully say "This statement is untrue," etc.

** I rather wonder what sort of thing one has to do to become a geometry lawyer. In the old days there wasn't much formality about becoming a lawyer; one could apprentice as a law clerk. However everything is formalized nowadays so I imagine that there would be rigid requirements. There are problems. For example, would 360 degrees be required or would 90 be sufficient? I would guess that passing the bar exam would entitle you to practice Euclidean geometry but I suppose one has to pass special exams to practice the rest.*

Fans vs pros is also being discussed in LASFS (as a part of convention politics) and APA-L, and if I say anything interesting on the subject there you can feel free to reprint it (or if I mention your zine in regard to anything else, or say anything interesting.) One idea was that people are making unconscious analogies to sports and other fields where "amateur" and "pro" are very rigidly defined by various rule-making bodies, and with "pro" being the lower-energy state in that someone in the "amateur" condition has to be careful if they want to remain that way. (Or in other words, "amateur" is a little like being "virgin".) Your interjection in the editorial that being a pro in science fiction is more like being a fannish diety than being a priest reminds me of other quotes to the effect that pros are supposed to be fannish gods. The statements of various pros that conventions depend on their drawing power as Celebrities and that meeting the pros is a major reason many people come to conventions ties in with this, as do some LASFS history discussions that indicate that at one time, at least as far as the formal programming was concerned, one main function of LASFS was to help people learn to write stf stuff that would sell. So you have two conflicting schools of thought in fandom, that of "Pros are our gods" vs "Everybody is just people here like everybody else" and maybe the pros themselves are just sort of caught in the middle, especially since a fair number of pros were fans when they started (and some still are) and both schools of thought are probably represented. (I personally lean heavily toward the "just people" side. This does not mean I am unalterably opposed to things like paying people who do a genuine service, like if it can be proved that one of the major factors keeping cons out of the red is the fact that putting certain people's names in the advertising brings in more memberships.)

As to whether the universe is consistent, my personal feeling is that it is locally (at the microscopic level) inconsistent but that on any macroscopic level the inconsistencies tend to average out statistically so that

one rarely (almost never) see anything "wrong." This inconsistency has been detected as the "Heisenberg Uncertainty Principle." My logic is that if one sets out to create a universe by postulating and listing the laws thereof, then starts asking "If I do X, will Y happen?" it will become obvious sooner or later that one is working with a logic system of a type to which Godel's theorem applies and that in some cases it will be impossible to predict what will happen in some certain set of circumstances. If the foregoing is correct, then it follows that an omniscient being who lists all the laws of this universe and tries to predict events by logic (without recourse to any precognitive powers) will run into the same problem. Therefore you have cases in which you end up with "If I do X then either Y or Z will happen, with no way of telling which" which is an inconsistency in that you can do the exact same thing twice and get two different results. Whether one can get out of this by postulating an infinite set of postulates, one for every possible event, I don't know. But I do suspect that something like an Uncertainty Principle (although perhaps not always confined to the microscopic) is required in all universes complex enough to be of interest.

PS: If you change the normal postulate that two points determine one and only one straight line, and allow TWO to be so drawn (even if you can't see them because they look superimposed or something) you can also have "triangles" of up to six sides. Maybe God is non-Euclidean.

If we place three points on a sphere each pair of points determines only one straight line (i.e. great circle). However a pair of points divides a great circle into two parts, each of finite length, so there are indeed two sides for each pair of points, some of which cross each other.

One of the local inconsistencies are virtual particles which are allowed to violate the law of conservation of momentum because they don't stay around long enough to be observable. (One of our Physics maxims was that "The only physically real things are the nonobservables".) It has been my personal observation that the laws of arithmetic are not consistent; many is the time I have performed the same calculation three times running and gotten three different results.

Presumably an omniscient being could settle these problems by trying all possible cases simultaneously. An infinite axiom system is not sufficient; mathematicians and logicians work routinely with infinite axiom systems. The critical restriction in Godel's theorem is that all proofs are of finite (but unbounded) length. I suspect, however, that an omniscient being (omniscient as far as the universe is concerned) would still be unable to predict its own actions.

I rather tend to be of the "Everybody is just people..." school myself. Another aspect of the problem is the near compulsive desire of people to accord and respond to status. One of the problems of being a pro, it seems to me, is that people do fawn over you and treat you as a minor deity. Not all, but sufficient numbers so that it is a problem. It is nice to be made much of but it is hard to have an easy one-to-one relationship with someone who insists on abasing themselves - let alone a group of people, most strangers, who insist on doing so. It is even more debilitating to the spirit if you come to require this sort of thing.

I am not very enthused about the idea of monetary compensation, per se. It seems to me that, for it to work, each program item would have to have an entry fee. I don't think I would be much interested in attending a con run along those lines. I feel rather strongly that if a pro feels that he should be paid for attending and/or participating, why then, God bless him, and let him stay home. There is some justice, I suspect, in the claims of exploitation, particularly nowadays. It is not the Pournelle's with their overswollen egos that I am concerned for; it is the Asimov's. It is those people who have generously given of themselves and their time and have come to be taken for granted.

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INTERLUDE: Theoretically this is supposed to be in junkyard format; that is, it is supposed to be a jumble of varied stuff in no fixed order, going in as it is created. The nice thing about junkyard format is that it is unstructured; you never quite know what is going to appear next. As it happens, however, there is a certain difficulty with this approach. Loc's tend to come in in a bunch. If one immediately gets them onto stencil, along with comments, one tends to end up with a letter column even if one didn't intend to. So be it noted that if you read several more letters in a row, this is not a letter column; it is merely what happens to be in the zine.

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+++++ Dear Richard,

Paul David Novitski

1690 East 26 Avenue

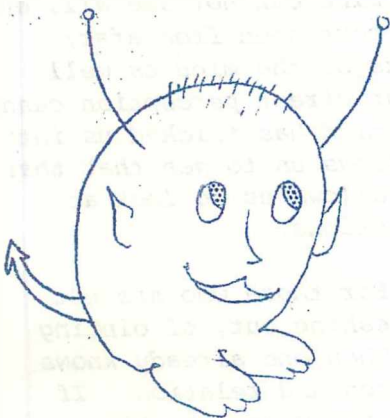
Eugene Oregon 97403

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PN 3 arrived even before I got around to thanking you for numbers 1 and 2. That isn't surprising, actually; it usually takes me about five years to respond to anything these days. This excepted.

I really can't get too enthusiastic over efforts to define science fiction. I mean, as soon as you come up with a watertight definition, then the only true SF lies outside your parameters, right? When SF can be successfully pinned down, it will no longer be a viable genre. I bet when you were small you hooked up a camera and flash to a tripwire to try to get a picture of the Easter Bunny.

Actually I like - I guess it was Chip Delany's statement - that SF is all fiction, since a fiction depicts an otherworld, a parallel universe. He then divided that up into that which could not have been, that which might have been, and that which might yet be - or something like that, I've probably disremembered it. But it doesn't really matter. You give the impression you're unable to



admit the existence of a phenomenon unless you can define it; that is, describe its perimeter with your parameters (ho ho.) It seems very insufficient to me. Western philosophy has always bored me because its practitioners spent ungodly hunks of time creating semantic problems for themselves, and then got ulcers trying to solve them. (Actually, philosophers tend to be long-lived and rather healthy.) And where did it get them? Well, into early graves for one thing, and besides that, they came up with dandy systems for solving problems they invent for themselves. I really can't get very enthused. I suppose the prime motivations for such "philosophers" are

1) It's fun to play with words, and 2) they're so fucking tangled in their symbologies they don't know how to escape. Like a kitten caught in a snarl of yarn, becoming more entrapped the harder it struggles. If that kitten only knew the Tao it would know enough to relax and let the yarn fall away.

I suppose you fit into the first category - you're a computer person (as I am, to an extent) - your mode of recreation is toying with symbology sets. But really, Richard - four-sided triangles? Come on!

Would-be definers of SF can never succeed unless they write SF. (God I wish Alexei Panshin would continue the Villiers series!)

"Those who speak of Tao don't know it; those who know Tao don't speak of it." Or is it the other way around; I can never remember and I'm too lazy to go look it up.

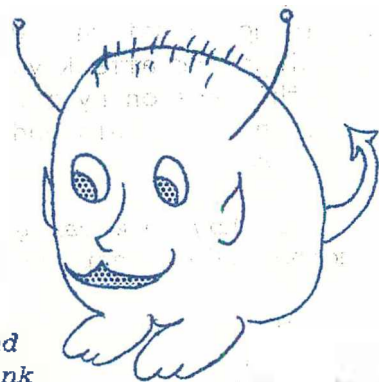
I suspect that you are reading and interpreting through the eyes of dogma. I even suspect that I recognize most of it. I don't reckon that I agree with all you say (photographing the Easter Bunny, indeed) but so much the better. If someone says something you agree you smile benignly and nod your head; when someone says something you disagree with you immediately become full of fire and brilliance, full of interesting refutations and discourses.

* Definition may be defined as the process of translating one irreducible concept into another irreducible concept while removing most of the content. Nonetheless it has its uses. It is true that watertight definitions of things which are "interesting" is impossible. This is in the nature of things. Korzybski's motto was that the map is not the thing; it would be more accurate to say that the map is not even the same kind of thing that the thing is. The map is an abstraction, a condensation. The reality is richer, more diffuse and at a lower level of abstraction (if it is an abstraction at all.) Still... Reality may be rich and diffuse, but it has regularities. We may not be able to tell precisely where the hill begins and the valley ends (and, in fact there is no single point where the valley ends and the hill begins.) Nonetheless there are hills and valleys. The world may be a seamless web but it is not without structure.

First comes the word and then comes the definition. The word is a label, an invention. It is a response to a felt regularity and arises from the experience itself. Then comes the definition which is an attempt at analysis. And analysis is not to be despised. It can be abused, particularly if it is made a substitute for the experience. Nonetheless analysis is an attempt at illumination; an effort to relate one regularity to others and to perceive the character of a regularity. Analysis is valuable in several ways. First of all the mind can not see all, even if it is attuned to the seamless web. There are things best seen from afar; things which are best seen in isolation; there are tricks of the mind as well as tricks of the eye. Analysis illuminates in a way that direct perception cannot. It allows us to recognize the false regularity that the mind has tricked us into perceiving and discover how the trick was played. It allows us to see that that this feature here is related to that feature there. It allows us to look at things in detail without the distraction of other connections.

* More mundanely definition operates at two levels. For those who are not familiar with a term to begin with it is a process of fleshing out, of pointing out examples from which the concept can be abstracted. When one already knows the concept, definition operates at the level of comparison and relation. If you say "Science Fiction" and I say "Science Fiction" we may mean two rather

different things. This difference may easily go unnoticed if we treat SF as a given, with no attempt at analysis. This becomes more consequential when we use our given understanding as a basis for further argument and discussion.



Then too, definition of the already intuitively understood serves both the purposes of illumination and clarification. When I attempt to express what I think I know I may find (and often do find) that there are glossed over lacunae in what I thought I understood clearly. I may find that there are facets and characteristics which I did not see until I looked with sharper and clearer eyes.

* The trouble with Chip Delaney's statement is that it does not differentiate between fiction as a whole and Science Fiction in particular. If it were true then there would be nothing distinguishing about Science Fiction. A definition should tell us something about what we mean or why we are using a term when we use it and his does not.

* To change subjects, it is true enough that Western philosophers have spent ungodly hunks of time creating semantic problems for themselves. However Oriental philosophy is, on the whole, much worse in this regard. The Kabbalah is a relative extreme in Western thought; much, perhaps most, of Oriental philosophy has the same character as the Kabbalah. One of the reasons for the semantic snarls is that most philosophy is intimately related to theological speculation. The result tends to be an indigestible mass of analysis, rationalization, and un verbalized and unperceived preconceptions.

* Consider that kitten for a moment. True enough that it probably won't get free of the snarl if it keeps struggling. But when it stops, what then? Sometimes the yarn doesn't just fall away. Sometimes you have to look carefully at the strands and see how they go and then move this one this way and that one that way, just so, and only then is the kitten freed.

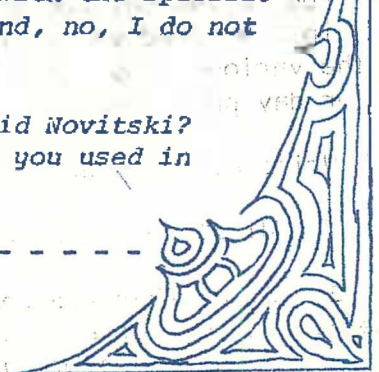
* Oh, I can't agree with your comment about the necessity of being a science fiction writer in order to be successful at defining it. If one were talking about how to write SF, yes, then it would be useful to be a successful practitioner. (Although it is notorious that one writer cannot tell another how to write.) There are aspects, no doubt, which are more readily understood by a writer who must deal with the specific aspects of creation. But simply to generally understand, no, I do not see the necessity.

* Incidentally, do you prefer Alpajpuri or Paul David Novitski? I used the latter in the heading because that was what you used in the heading of your letter.

++++
Roy Tackett
915 Green Valley Road NW
Albuquerque, NM 87107
++++

Howdy Harter

You have sent me now
three issues of PERSONAL NOTES
and I feel I really should do



something in return. What I should do, of course, is purchase a ticket to Cambridge and attack your typewriter with a 10 pound sledge but I am deterred from this action by the certainty that should I get anywhere near that part of the country I would end up on a school bus bound for Roxbury or some other ridiculous place.

Now Roy, how can you say things like that? Everyone knows that Boston is a hotbed of enlightened liberalism.

Nevertheless, as Professor Cory sometimes says, I feel that I should do something so I suppose that I will have to write a letter. I will not, as Harry Warner does, preface this with seven or eight lines explaining why I am late... my record on writing letters these past few years speaks for itself...there isn't any. This is known as silent speaking.

Write that down. (OK)

We are, as you know, very large on horses out here. Near Albuquerque is the village of Corrales which has, according to a local song, "one thousand people, two thousand dogs, and three thousand registered horses." At the Santa Fe Fiesta last year the Mayor of that town noted the number of Albuquerque mounted units in the parade and opined that Albuquerque had more horses than Santa Fe had people. Which may not be an exaggeration.

Warner correctly points out that most riders these days are young girls. Somewhere around 90%, I would say. The rest are older women and men - people from age 40 up. Young boys are seldom found in the company of horses.

Inflation has forced the Tackett menage down to a sole remaining steed - a Morgan gelding. I will hang on to him as long as possible...after all, a man without a horse is a peasant.

Ah, your editorial on fandom as religion set me to thinking. True, true there are many elements of religion to be found in fandom. This undercurrent is perhaps the reason that so many fen have had themselves ordained in a variety of odd-ball churches.

I am moved, Harter, yes moved to proclaim the Church of Trufandom. I will, of course, be the Pontificis Maximus and Vicar of Campbell on Earth. There will be a College of Verdants - the Princes of the Church, as it were. As soon as I get things organized a bit we will undertake the problem of what is or is not SF and also attempt to promulgate a definition. That way, you see, whenever the question arises as to whether or not a certain story is really SF it can be referred to the College of Verdants for a decision which will duly be handed down in a hundred years or so. We shall also undertake the proper classification of the various gods and saints of the field, expunging, I am sure, a number of latter day pretenders.

Write all this down, Harter.

Why didn't Highmore get the bid?

I suspect that the reason Highmore didn't get the bid is that the Committee excellent judgement and carefully did not file a formal bid. There was much too great a likelihood of winning if we had.

We did give a presentation at Discon. Tony Lewis and Stu Brownstein handled the presentation while I, as co-chairman, sat in the front row and heckled. An anonymous masked man named George Flynn got up and gave a nominating speech in Frisian. We had slides of the various facilities at the con site but the Discon people didn't get us a slide projector so we passed slides around the audience. Various novelties of the programming such as compulsory attendance at the program were explained. It all went very well. I am told that about half of the people who attended the bidding session gave Highmore their first place vote.

Whoops. I just noticed that I didn't switch typefaces. The above is commentary by me and not part of the letter. It is hereby defined as being in italic.

* I rather thought you would like that editorial. I am stirred by your proclamation, and am rather inclined to enlist my banners in the true faith of Trufandom as proclaimed by Roytac. However there is one thing which I must know before I take up the cause: Do you sell indulgences?

* The cost of owning a horse in the East is quite frightening. It is more expensive to own a horse than a car - people charge a hundred and up a month for boarding a horse. Back home you just turned it loose in the pasture.

I have thought vaguely of owning a horse. However I expect I will wait until I am somewhat better as a rider. I would like to feel that I am not going to be inadvertently teaching an animal bad habits just because I own it.

* It is certainly true that most riders are young women. This is somewhat of a mystery to me. There is an obvious Freudian explanation that I have heard advanced more than once, but it seems insufficient. After all, when horses were the principle mode of transportation young men were quite often very enthusiastic about horses. When the automobile came in they switched their allegiance, but that would seem to indicate that there is nothing inherently sex-linked about an enthusiasm for horses. Sports like sailing and skiing tend to be more or less equally divided between men and women, so why is horseback riding so strongly a feminine passion?

+++++ Dear Richard

June Harter

Highmore So.Dak.

+++++ One thing I meant to write about in the other letter and forgot is a place where you can get real ice cream. The place is Steve's Ice Cream in Somerville, and to find it you "enter a nondescript storefront marked 'United Cleaners' and settle into a long line at Steve's Ice Cream." Avoiding the lines can be done on weekday afternoons. The ice cream is rich, creamy, home-made and chemical free. They use real cream. The place is open 2:pm to midnight. And, if it matters, they have a player piano instead of a jukebox.

Now from the sublime to the ridiculous. In recent weeks several head of cattle and some horses have been killed and mutilated in NE Nebraska and in one county in South Dakota. Blood was drained from the animals and their sex organs removed. One theory has it that (because of recent UFO sightings) the killings were done by creatures from outer space. Another theory says that they are ritual killings for some kind of religion.

* Recently one of the underground newspapers ran an ice cream tasting comparison. Steve's was consistently near the top or at the top. I haven't been there yet, but it looks as though I am going to have to put it on my list of places to go. After all, if its fame has reached all the way to South Dakota it must be something special.

* The ritual killing theory is even plausible. There are some very strange religions floating around these days.

+++++ Dear Harter

Mike Glicksohn

14 High Park Avenue

Toronto, Ontario M6P 2S3

+++++

After all this time, I still feel awkward calling you that. But anyone who's pretentious enough to call God She just to make a rather obvious point is going to be pretentious enough to have an usual manner of being addressed, so it's my hang-up obviously and not yours. But enough of these pleasantries...

* Now that is a topic which always slightly bemuses me. For reasons that are obscure to me most of my non-fannish friends tend to call me Dick whereas most of my fannish friends tend to call me Harter. Then there is a small group which calls me Richard. I have speculated that I serve as a father figure or something like that to fans. It's all very confusing. Why do some people choose one form of salutation and others a different? It very much seems to be a matter of social setting. I'm obliging however; everyone is welcome to use my true name ... Sir.

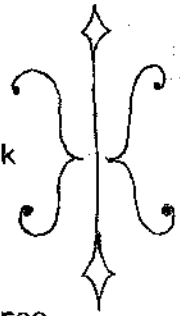
During my summer vacation overseas, and in the hectic two weeks since I got back from DISCOM, three issues of PN have backlogged here. I owe you at least a note of thanks for including me on the mailing list. And there are things to comment on too, if time permits. (Which nowadays it often doesn't: there just do not seem to be enough hours in the day any more... not that there ever really were ...)

It's too late to comment on #1 really, but unless I got an updated version, I didn't see any dire predictions about TORCON. I also remind you, which #3 seems to indicate is necessary, that at TORCON the rules concerning Hugo eligibility for fanzines were changed at my request. You now have to publish four issues that appear before the end of the year under consideration. Good luck with the award in Australia (assuming that you get #4 out by the end of the year. I'll happily volunteer to pick up the statue for it, should I get to the con.)

* I, for one, would be startled as Hell if PN got nominated. However, if it should, and if it should win, and if I'm not there and you are, you are hereby deputized to pick up the Hugo for me.

* Actually, of course, PN is never going to get nominated. (Although I shouldn't rule the possibility out entirely; if someone got a good hack campaign going it could probably get on - which would be amusing.) No small circulation personal-zine, no matter how good, is a prospective Hugo nominee. It is sort of like a welterweight trying to win the heavyweight world championship title. Of course winning a Hugo would be nice. But I am simply not interested enough to put in the time and effort necessary to create a Hugo class zine. I don't want the hassles of subscription lists, chasing down contributors, hustling fan artists, etc, etc. It's too much work and I'm too lazy.

Luckily, there isn't very much to comment on in #2 since my interest in working out a good definition of Science Fiction is completely nil. I'm just pleased nowadays when I have the time to read some, without worrying about a topic that has always struck me as rather useless in any but academic circles. Not that I am suggesting there is anything wrong with spending time on the topic. Heavens, no. But it lacks practical application. About the only thing in its favour is that it enables me to skip a few pages in the lettercol of #3, and with forty five of the ninety three fanzines I got over the two months I was away this summer still unread, anything that does that can't be all bad.



** Actually I tend to agree with you about the general utility of definitions of SF - it isn't a topic that ordinarily excites me either. This one was tossed off originally as a casual APA statement while I was nattering on something or the other. It was only after I said it that I realized I might have said something worth listening to.*

Very perceptive review of OUTWORLDS. I'm rather disappointed that someone with your knowledge of fanzines and your feel for the act of creation they represent isn't going to be doing this sort of thing regularly. There just aren't any top-notch fanzine critics active today, and you'd do a damn fine job. But I understand your lack of interest, and am glad for the little morsel you've tossed out.

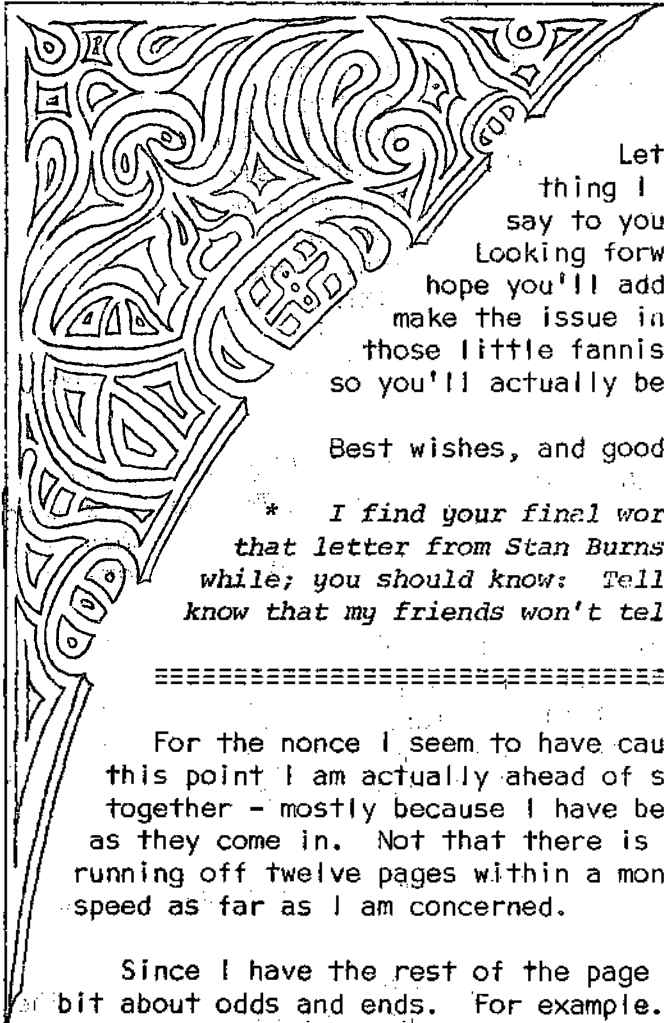
** Flattery will get you everywhere. Just for you I will try to sneak in a couple of fanzine reviews.*

Your analogy of fandom to a religious community is a bit stretched, but there certainly are points of contact there. About the only priest-figure I can think of offhand would be Rusty Hevelin, who seems to devote his entire career to fandom, in the convention going aspect of fanac, and supports himself by huckstering just enough at each con he goes to in order to cover his expenses. Then he packs up and enjoys the con.

Thanks, though, for providing me with a rationale for my concern over the status of certain fanzines. I'd been thinking that I was more or less motivated by a concern for a fair degree of competition among people essentially engaged in a labour of love on a non-commercial basis but you say it so much more profoundly and reveal depths I didn't even know I had. (I do??) (Personally I don't mind how desperately someone faunches after and strives for a fanzine Hugo, as long as he/she plays by the same unwritten rules everyone else is using. And don't ask me what those are, 'cause if I wrote 'em out they wouldn't be unwritten any more, would they?)

I believe TORCON is still having its books audited and will eventually publish a more formal financial report than the one that's already been issued. But I'm not real sure on that point. The committee has not been exactly active of late, and I haven't been on the committee for almost two years anyway. It's a good idea, though, to get a financial report out, and I hope DC does follow our example, as we followed that of LAcon ... with certain improvements, though, I think.

Reading Stan Burns letter made me think he was actually writing about me, except that I lost to Charlie twice, not Gels. Then I got to the part about the femmefans throwing their bodies at the feet of the faned and I knew it was mere coincidence that so many of the other points fitted so closely. With only the names changed to shroud the guilty.



* *Actually it was the Tuna fish sandwich that made me sure it was you he was writing about.*

Let me take this opportunity to say something I really didn't get a chance to say to you say to you at DISCON: Hi. BIG bugger, wasn't it? Looking forward to your conreports next issue, and I hope you'll add your own to Mike and Sheila's. It may make the issue indelibly fannish, but everyone knows it's those little fannish zines that really deserve the Hugo, so you'll actually be improving your chances.

Best wishes, and good luck with the fanzine. You poor fool, you...

* *I find your final words a little ominous, particularly after that letter from Stan Burns. You put out a big-time zine for a while; you should know: Tell me Mike; is there something I should know that my friends won't tell me?*

=====

For the nonce I seem to have caught up with the incoming letters. At this point I am actually ahead of schedule as far as getting this zine together - mostly because I have been industriously transcribing Loc's as they come in. Not that there is any real schedule, you understand, but running off twelve pages within a month of the last issue represents excessive speed as far as I am concerned.

Since I have the rest of the page to fill I expect I will just natter a bit about odds and ends. For example... As many of you may know I live just a few blocks from Harvard Square in Cambridge. Many years ago, when I got out of the Marine Corps I came out to Boston. (People sometimes ask me why I came to Boston. It was like this: When I was in the Marine Corps one of my lieutenants told me that I should go to MIT. When I got out I went back home, saw that there wasn't anything I wanted to do there, and decided to go out to Boston to take a look at MIT. True, I had never been there and had no idea what I would do when I got there, but what the hell...) One of the first things I ran into was Harvard Square, which I immediately fell in love with, and have been attached to ever since.

Over the years I have noticed a certain tendency which disturbs me a little. Harvard Square is slowly succumbing to what I call creeping Chi-chi-ism. Let me illustrate: When I first arrived there was a book store just off the square named Phillips' Books. (That is, the book store was named Phillips' Books. As far as I know there is no square named Phillips' Books - although there might be. Who knows?) I used to spend many happy hours browsing in the Mathematics and Philosophy sections. In those days the store was oriented towards the Academic community; it was a place where people with scholarly interests could find material. There were textbooks, to be sure. But there were more than textbooks, there were treatises and monographs too. Let us say, it carried works for the informed reader. Some years ago Phillips' was acquired by Brentano's which operates the same store under Brentano's management. It carries a line of adult games, Springbok picture puzzles, the latest best sellers, lots of coffee table books, etc. Much glamour, much glitter, but no depth. For example, in the old Phillips' they carried MCO (Modern Chess Openings - a standard and authoritative manual of chess openings.) In the new Phillips' they carry Bobby Fischer teaches Chess tutortext.

Harvard Square and the surrounding area is a physically attractive place; there are the brick sidewalks, the Harvard yard, the Cambridge common, etc. But more than the physical environment the thing that made Harvard Square what it was that it was a place geared to those who lived there; particularly the students and professors of Harvard, and the Cambridge carriage trade. In addition to these there was a neighbourhood community. The old Harvard Square was mildly shabby; the comfortable shabbiness of the highbrow.

Times change. The atmosphere of Harvard Square attracted many hangers on (of whom I should probably be counted as one.) There are many people, particularly among the young, but of all ages, who are particularly attracted to the spirit and character of an intellectual community but who do not have either the willingness or the ability or both to engage in serious sustained intellectual activity. They like the area as a consumer good. And they have made it a very popular place.

Let me list some of the places that have disappeared and what has replaced them: Phillips' I have told you about. A neighbourhood bar is replaced by a fashionable clothing store. A newstand which operated for many years is replaced by a copying center. A family style drugstore is replaced by a succession of "pop" stores, which sold waterbeds, furs, and light boxes. Residences become a Meri-Mekko. A Barnes and Noble bookstore becomes a restaurant. Two cafeterias become a succession of restaurants. A garage becomes a bank. A grocery store becomes a paperback booksmith outlet. Etc.

Let me talk about the Meri-Mekko complex for a moment. This is a complex of buildings with a number of businesses in it. There is Meri-Mekko itself. There is Design Research, several clothing shops, etc. The building is all plateglass, chrome, and wood; an easternized and slightly more tasteful and restrained version of Neiman-Marcus. It is a haven for would be beautiful people. The goods sold are mostly consumer goods. There are tasteful, modern, and, above all, expensive. They are chi-chi.

And this is the direction that Harvard Square has drifted. These places are oriented towards people who are affluent and ambitious consumers. The square used to be principally a mixture of places that catered to inexpensive intellectualism and to expensive but conservative consumer goods. The expensive and conservative places are still there; the inexpensive is becoming squeezed out; the intellectualism is slowly becoming popularized; and the neighbourhood character is vanishing rapidly, if it is not already gone.

There is a conspiracy... (*The dour and paranoid words of our time.*) In this case there is, though. Or to be more precise, there is an interlocking group comprising the Harvard Square Merchants association, Harvard University, and other Harvard Square realty interests. This group has acted to improve, enhance, and preserve the character and quality of the Square, *as they see it*. In several cases they have forced businesses out, either by not renewing the leases or by jumping the rents. (The rent for the no longer present Hays-Bickford cafeteria was tripled, for example.) They have fought a half-hearted battle against the counter culture. I suspect half-hearted because the chic and exotic elements are profitable and attractive as long as the scruffiest elements are kept under control. Land in Harvard Square and the surrounding area has become very expensive; rents are high; the shops are increasingly more chic and expensive.

One of the by products of this is that the intellectual base that formed one of the real attractions of the square has been undercut. It is not gone, far from it, but it is declining. (The square is still a garden of eden compared to

most American urban areas.) A high cost area cannot afford marginal enterprises - and any enterprise which appeals to the interests and tastes of a small minority will be marginal. (Street vendors are an exception to this, because they don't pay for the facilities they use.) There is more money to be made in selling textbooks than in selling MCO; and if you have to go after the money, MCO will vanish.

Oh well, times change.

=====

Richard Hart, Harter, Hartest,
Jack Harness Editor of PERSONAL NOTES
714 S. Serrano Ave.
Los Angeles CA 90005 Dear Sam,
=====

That Clever Rotsler IIIo looked cubist...or should we say it looked abstract...or that it looked like nothing so much as...nothing.

Enclosed is an unsolicited solicited contribution, carefully disguised as an overrun from APA L. Not that I am attempting to influence your editorial judgment (In my judgment, your editorial was influenced by, and under the influence) but I am amenable to rewrite if you'd like.

Go ahead with a DISCON report. I didn't attend, so I could use some wordage on it. Saw a slideshow of Costumes from the Masquerade, which showed a plethora of winged costumes. Kathy Bushman had an excellent winged costume at the Westercon which won a prize, and we were surprised that she didn't win with an even better winged costume at D.C.

Speaking of APA L, there has been discussion in it about squids and octopi and whether tentacles are or are not arms and all that sort of thing. Someone last week gave a paper bag to Bill Warren, with a note that it was "To Bill Warren from a friend" Inside was a baggie with two pounds of small squid. Somewhat dead. It was left after the meeting ... and discovered some days later in an oversize condition that wasn't covered by LASFS's Robert's Rules of Odor. We are all hoping that Bill doesn't make any more friends.

Hoping you are the same,

Jack Harness

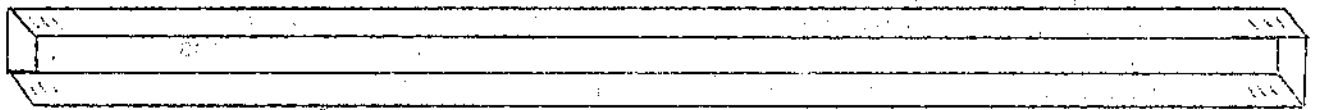
* Oh surely you can't mean that you don't want Bill to make any new friends. That would be harsh and unfair. But I can see that you would hope that whatever new friends he does make are, ah, more discriminating in their generosity.

* I suspect that I won't get in anything on DISCON in this issue. I have 14 pages already. Your Tone Scale thingie will be another two pages and I sort of promised Mike Glicksohn that I would do a couple of fanzine reviews. Besides, Mikey hasn't sent up his illustrations yet. However, at the rate I seem to be turning out issues, con reports should show up fairly quickly.

* The Tone Scale, which follows, is interesting. One obvious question is whether the numerical values represent some sort of calibration scheme or whether they are merely an ordering. (Example: The conventional hardness scale is only an ordering; something which has a hardness of 6 is harder than something with a hardness of 5 but the numbers are arbitrary.)

The Tone Scale

by Jack Harness



- 3 to 4 General happiness and well being
- 2 to 3 Bearable existence
- 2 Beginnings of Boredom
- 1.5 Anger
- 1 Fear
- Apathy, Grief
- 0 Death

The Tone Scale originated as just a listing of four states of existence, in the sequence in which they occurred. Here we see the May, 1950 version as it appeared in the book, "Dianetics." Observe that the sequence really does seem to be correct... I was derived from actual experience, however, rather than mere pronouncement.

It was observed that when a person was directed to re-experience a past incident of stress, that he moved through the above set of emotions. He might spend longer on some or flash briefly through others, but when he went through the incident several times, this was the sequence that manifested. He would feel sad, talk about the sad things that occurred in the incident, or feel the grief others felt in the incident, singly or in combination. Then he would move on to the Fear parts, then the Anger, then feel Boredom, and eventually become cheerful about it all.

As he moved through this sequence, he would be able to recall more and more of the incident, and negative aspects deriving from the incident had progressively less and less power over him. When he had reached Zone 3 to 4, he was free of those effects.

It's easy enough to see that a person succeeding in life will be cheerful, optimistic, and well off. Conversely, people not doing well, their life crumbling, are apathetic and sad. In between are people struggling with life: if they succeed, they move up to happiness... if they fail and they lose the struggle, they drop down to the sadness and other states of zone zero to one. Here's a closer look:

- 3 to 4 Person successful, attention extroverted, creative, originates new things, good at projects, boosts others morale. Healthy.
- 2 to 3 Person moderately successful, but not enthusiastic; doesn't really originate new things but can be depended on to maintain things fairly well. Sees good things in people. Slightly extroverted. Takes life well.
- 1 to 2 Person less alert than above states. Finds things wrong and is oriented toward fighting, overcoming wrongness rather than effortlessly making things go right. Can commit sabotage just to "get even." Fights others and eventually himself. Not a happy person, but can manifest "Glee" instead. Forces things.

0 to 1 Person far less alert than the above states. Oriented toward succumbing rather than surviving. Advocates worthless causes. Seeks to defend, cannot conceive of success, distrusts active people. Chronically ill, naturally, because he is fighting himself and "forgets" precaution. Dull and dumb. Failure.

Further observation of thousands of people produced the more explicit scale:

4.0	Enthusiasm (Cheerfulness)	Lighthearted, flexible, a winner
3.5	Interest (Amusement)	Active, sustained interest
3.0	Conservatism (Contentment)	Conformist, resists changes
2.5	Boredom	Spectator, casual about things
2.0	Antagonism (Overt Hostility)	Resistance, opposition
1.8	Pain	Irritable, touch, scattered
1.5	Anger	Demands obedience, holds grudges
1.2	No Sympathy	Acidly polite; suppressed anger
1.0	Covert Hostility	Knives you in the back
0.9	Fear	Anxiety, the "running away" type
0.8	Sympathy	Afraid of hurting others
0.7	Propitiation (Appeasement)	Does favors to protect self
0.5	Grief	Feels Betrayed
0.375	Making amends	The human doormat
0.05	Apathy	Given up, turned off; suicidal
0.0	Death	Failure

There are more emotions listed in the lower registers; evidently more turned up there. Note that few political "Conservatives" are at 3.0; they are more likely at 1.5, where Fascism is.

This sequence turns out to be the way emotions run in everyday life. A person will not go from one point on the scale to another without passing through the intervening steps.

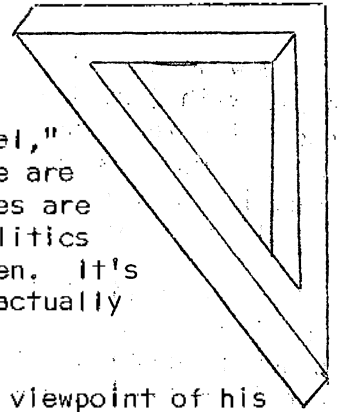
It turns out that people have a chronic position on this Scale; they usually operate at a specific point, day after day. Successes tend to raise them slightly, failures tend to lower them on the scale. If they are low on the scale, they're really frozen there. If they are high on the scale, however, they will have more range of emotion and expression, and if they get heavy losses they won't stay down but will rebound.

You can see that a person at the top handles life as it comes and works toward survival for himself and his associates; the lower a person's chronic position is, the more he is oriented towards succumbing - both for others and for himself. If he is low enough he seeks to lose rather than win. A person's faculties are best when he is uptone; the downtone person has a low attention span, small awareness of his surroundings, gets ill easily, and does not recover quickly. Roughly speaking, the break even point is 2.0.

This is not a philosophy of "Always Smile" or "Always seem cheerful - no matter what." If you accidentally hammer your thumb instead of the nail, go ahead and cuss, if you want to. If you've lost a dear one or are enjoying a sad book, your grief is appropriate at the time.

But note well that some people are accident prone, or out to destroy things. You've at least heard of arguments blaming all the world's woes on the Papacy, the Bavarian Illuminati, or the DeRoos ... and you've cackled or snorted about it. All that is being said here is that the people oriented towards succumbing are working

toward succumbing. A high tone person may act incorrectly out of ignorance, but he is oriented towards seeking truth. A low toned person advocates worthless causes and has a track record of bungling things. There's a book, "Science of Survival," that goes into this at length, showing how to spot where people are by various observations of the various tones. Certain illnesses are typical of one tone level, for example. Or take a person's politics and see where that fits on the scale. Or how he treats children. It's well worth reading, and you'll see for yourself that the book actually describes how people operate, all across the lines.



Let's look at how this operates. A person has a personal viewpoint of his abilities and the way the world operates. If he loses at something, the world seems sour and he adjusts ... downwards on the scale. If he wins, things are rosier and he's more optimistic, and he operates on this optimism. His Tone reflects the way he is.

As a rough rule of thumb, the "thousand natural shocks that flesh is heir to" tend to drag a person downscale as he gets older. Not everyone, of course. Some people go upscale in life and some stay the same.

People communicate best when at the same tone. Did you ever tell someone who's crying how great things are? Doesn't reach, does it? Doesn't get across. For one thing you are in too much motion for him to deal with, because the Tone Scale is also a scale of motion.

At the bottom, a person makes no motion - death, you know. At apathy, motion tends to pass through him because he can not generate much motion himself, let alone stop any motion. He may have "Found God" or be on tranquilizers and tell you that everything is wonderful. And everything is all right - except that he talks slowly and is in a near hypnotic state. He drifts along; accomplishes nothing, really.

If he becomes better, he will give up his gambling, alcohol, drugs, or whatever, and become the super "Yes" man with blind loyalty to whatever "pulled him out of it," begging forgiveness for his past. And, because he's only .375, he is still a nothing, a loser.

If he gets better, he'll be terribly sad about things. He is now just barely capable of sensation, and anything he perceives shows his loss. He hangs onto pictures, souvenirs, memories. He can't hold on to possessions in present time. "Oh, what shall I do?"

If he gets better he retains memories of his grief and does favors, asking for nothing in return. Politically, he will give away territory to buy off an enemy. This strengthens the enemy and weakens him, but he's still Succumb-oriented at .8 (Propitiation.)

If he gets better, he's "understanding" and sympathetic. The gooey, icky-sticky "Dear Lamb of God" religionist if he turns to religion. He's risen above his own grief and, if he were to get better, he could and would see that life is terrifying. Note that this type of pity is words, emotions, and never strength to get someone out of a crisis. This Tone level still pulls down others higher than he is. (.9)

Up above this he unsuppresses his fear. He's careful - much too careful. He's scattered, nervous, and postpones things, so that he doesn't have to confront things. Tone 1.0.

Now we come to a famous Tone, 1.1, Covert Hostility - a fascinating tone. People with just the rudiments of grounding in Scientology overwork the word, in describing what they don't like. Here is the person who tells you everyone is against you - except him, of course. Like a Communist Cell that clandestinely plots to do in an opponent (in secret, of course, and making it look like someone else did it) and, when there is no enemy in sight anymore, does itself in.

If he felt that he was stronger he wouldn't have to do everyone in - he could just ignore them. At this Tone level (1.2, No Sympathy) he only wants to know enough to destroy. He doesn't report uptone, survival possibilities. If you get done in - and he figures that you will be - that's tough.

Upscale of this is anger (1.5.) Other people are now starting to exist - before, he was too shut down to perceive them as individuals. Now he is strong enough to control them. The simplest way to do this is by putting stops on them - rules, regulations, and flareups of temper.

The difference between pain (1.8) and grief (1.5) is that pain is felt. Grief finds a tight shoe too excruciating to bear. That's not real pain, if it's only a somewhat snug fit.

At antagonism (2.0) a person has solved some of the complexities of life. He'll debate an issue rather than just declare he's right. He rebels, picks fights, or loves to enter one. Other people and the environment are now real enough to be fought.

If he goes upscale the battle has been won and there's no new game yet. So he's bored. He now does more survival actions than nonsurvival ones, but it's casual. He's comfortable, even flippant. (2.5)

If things get even better he is contented (3.0.) He is poised, conforming, and restrained - not out of fear, anxiety, apathy, or anger, but just because things are going nicely on an even keel, and should be left that way. He isn't generating severe problems for himself. And here, for the first time, you will encounter truth. Below 3.0, truth is hap-hazard. 3.0 is ethical, but will tend to withhold minor and unimportant bad news.

The level of truth increases at 3.5. (Interest, amusement.) Such a person finds much that interests him and seeks to interest others in worthwhile action. Up here a person can change his mind quickly and doesn't fear to be found wrong if he is wrong. With enormous reserves of vitality and persistence, he enjoys tackling problems.

And at 4.0 (Enthusiasm) the zest is even greater. At this level he is an enormously good influence towards others, raising the Tone of them - radiant, inspiring, exceptional, successful. And, what is more, you can move up to this tone also, and become free of the muck.

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*Three Rings for the Elven-kings under the sky,
Seven for the Dwarf-lords in their halls of stone,
Nine for Mortal Men doomed to die,
One for the Dark Lord on his dark throne
In the Land of Mordor where the Shadows lie.
One Ring to rule them all, One Ring to find them,
One Ring to bring them all and in the darkness bind them
In the Land of Mordor where the Shadows lie.*

THREE HUGO WINNERS



1967 - *Niekas*
1968 - *AMRA*
1969 - *SFR*
1970 - *SFR*
1971 - *Locus*
1972 - *Locus*
1973 - *Energumen*
1974 - *Algol/TAC*

Those, chillun, are the Fanzine Hugo winners for the last eight years. Of these, all but two are "big time zines," the exceptions being *AMRA* and *Energumen*. *Niekas* has folded, *AMRA* is a law unto itself, and *Energumen* is folded. *TAC* is a reincarnation of *SFR*.

Mike Glicksohn has the distinction of being an editor of the only fanzine with a circulation of less than a thousand to win a Hugo in the last six years. It figures that Mike knows something. So, when Mike says, "Go review fanzines," it behooves one to listen. Alright, already, so I'll review some fanzines.

I thought it might be kind of interesting to take a look at some recent Hugo winners. What are they like? How good are they, and how do they compare with other fanzines? Do they really have anything going for them besides circulation? Let's look at *Locus*, *Algol*, and *The Alien Critic*.

One of the things that these three have in common, besides being Hugo winners, is that they are all large circulation zines. They all have a current circulation of over a thousand. Now, unless you have a fairly good bankroll, you don't put out a 1500 copy run for free. Regardless of the method used an issue is going to cost several dollars to put out. There is no choice; either you're fairly well to do and can afford to indulge your hobbies or the thing pays for itself. It doesn't have to pay for the labor - that you can provide at the usual rate of one mil per megayear - but it's got to cover substantially all of the out of pocket costs. The "big time zine" lives or dies by its subscription list.

An obvious point, perhaps, but it does have its corollaries. One thing that distinguishes these zines from zines like, say, *PN* is that relatively large numbers of people are willing to pay cash for them. Why do they do it? (Good question, that.) Well, first of all there has to be a market; there simply have to be that many people or more who are willing to shell out money for fanzine subscriptions. The zine has to be such that people are willing to put out money for that particular zine. (For example, just because there are a couple of thousand people willing to subscribe to *TAC* doesn't mean that they are also willing to subscribe to *The Jackass Brays*.) And, they have to know about it. The latter is an important factor. All three of these zines are advertised, one way or another. *Algol* runs ads, and so does *TAC*. *Locus* is mentioned every so often in Schuyler Miller's

book review column in *Analog*, etc. And, of course, there is word of mouth. This is one of the most important of all, in a way. You don't just start out from scratch and get a circulation of that size. You have to start out with a much smaller circulation and build it up.

You have a zine. For one reason or another it's popular and it stays popular. The circulation increases. Eventually it becomes institutionalized. You acquire a subscription list that is both large and reasonably stable. And that is one of the distinguishing marks of these zines; *large numbers of people have been willing to pay money for them over the years*. Obvious, perhaps, but there it is.

One of the reasons for outcry against these zines is just this necessity for commercial success - the continual whine that these are "semiprofessional" zines. And there is something to it. I, with my press run of 130 or so, can afford to be very pure in my fannish heart. Charlie Brown, with his press run of 1800 or so, had damn well better worry about whether the money is coming in or not. Fannish purity is a luxury he cannot afford. But ... there's another side to it. I am not put to the test. He is. I do not take the risk of failure; he does. I put this zine out for my own pleasure. It may be good or it may be bad, but there is no objective measurement of success. I need not heed the words and opinions of others; I can, if I choose, think it most fair and not be subject to disproof, for I have not been put to the test. And the big time zine most assuredly is. You don't get the subscriptions unless you have something people are willing to pay money for.

Another thing that these zines have in common is that their editors all have lots of experience. Dick Geis has been putting out major fanzines for a long time; *The Alien Critic/Richard E. Geis/Science Fiction Review/Psychotic*. *Algol* was around for many years before Andy Porter decided to push it into the big time. Charlie had been a fan for many years and was involved with *Niekas* before *Locus*.

Let's take a look at the zines:

.....

Locus is published by Charles and Dena Brown, P.O. Box 3938, San Francisco CA, 94119. Subscriptions are 18/\$6.00 in North America.

In a way it is hard to compare *Locus* with other zines because it is a special type of zine - a newszine. One can evaluate it on its own terms - how good is it as a newszine - but how do you compare it with, say, *Algol*?

There is another, personal problem that I have in evaluating *Locus*. I remember when it was started and was involved with the people who started it. I tend to see it as it was then. In discussion about *Locus* I tend to be on its side because I was a partisan in the good old days.

Let me digress with a bit of history. I have before a copy of *Locus*, trial issue #1. The masthead reads "LOCUS is published bi-weekly at PO Box 430, Cambridge, MASS 02139 by Charlie Brown, Ed Meskys, and Dave Vanderwerf. (Yes, it does get crowded in there.) It is available for news or for 15¢, 2/25¢, 10/1.00. A Puissant Pussycat Press Publication."

"Puissant Pussycat Press Publication" you ask. Dave Vanderwerf? Ed Meskys? Cambridge, Mass? Huh? Well, you see, it's this way...

Back in 1965 or so people in the Boston area were getting involved with Fandom. The first of the new series of Boskone's was held with Dave Vanderwerf as chairman.

Charlie and Marsha and Ed Meskys showed up and there began a period where the CCNY crowd and the old MITSFS crowd sort of became annexes of each other.

It was during this time that Dave Vanderwerf conceived the ambition of putting on a worldcon bid for 1967 - a venture that was not particularly successful. (Highmore in '76 got more votes than Boston in '67; on the other hand the Boston in '67 votes were officially counted.) Despite its impressive lack of success Dave's bid sparked a great deal of interest in really putting on a bid next time around.

One of the byproducts of this interest was the organization of NESFA. Another was the Boston in '71 committee which did, in fact, win the '71 bid and put on Noreascon. And still another byproduct was Locus.

The full genesis of Locus is obscure to me. The general idea was that something should be done to establish Boston in the eyes of fandom. Somehow the idea of putting out a newszine was adopted. Perhaps it was because of the natural advantages that a con committee has if it is associated with a newszine. It might have been thought of because Frank Prieto was associated with SF times. It might have been because of Focal Point. Or all or none of these reasons.

The original idea was that it should be put out by three editors, Charlie, Dave, and Ed Meskys, each producing an issue in turn. Issue #1 was put out by Dave and was printed on Tony Lewis's A.B.Dick. (The Puissant Pussycat Press.) It turned out, however, that this arrangement didn't work out too well. Ed got tied up with a Tolkien conference and Dave gaffed, in effect. Issues 1-8 all carried the triple editorial listing but most of them were put out by Charlie and Marsha. Issue #9 was the first issue to only have one editor on the masthead. (Note: Issue #8 announces that "We prefer letters and news to subscriptions" and issue #9 lists circulation as 250 with a press run of 300.) (Issue #10 has the news that Dick Geis is changing the title of *Psychotic* to *Science Fiction Review*.) Oh yes, trial issues #1 and #2 are undated but appeared in May and June of 1968. The first official issue (as distinct from the trial issues) appeared June 27, 1968 - apparently by Dave. Issue #2 was obviously by Ed Meskys (*Micro-elite*, you know.) From thereon out it appears to be all due to the Browns.

In the early days *Locus* tended to be strongly oriented towards Boston and Boston news. It was also subject to attack by the revived *Focal Point*. Time goes by. Charlie lives in San Francisco now. Charlie and Marsha are now Charlie and Dena. (Or Marsha and Eddie - take your pick.) *Focal Point* had an erratic career as a newszine; blossomed into a genzine for a while and disappeared. But I still think of *Locus* in terms of what it was and how it came about - my vision of today is tinged with the memory of yesterday.

In some ways *Locus* hasn't changed too much over the years. The general format and the content are much the same. For a good while it carried on the gaudy tradition of *Niekas*, with a lot of emphasis on artwork and heavy usage of multi-colour work. (Not surprising - the *Niekas* equipment was being used and the people doing the production work had all worked on *Niekas*.) This emphasis decreased with the passage of time. Recently, of course, there has been the change from Mimeo to Offset. The type of content has shifted slightly over the years; mostly in that the amount of news about fandom has declined and the orientation has shifted more towards professional news and items of interest. Again this is a change of degree only.

There has been a fair amount of change in format in the new offset *Locus*. It is now triple column, reduce, as compared to single column. Titles are centered above sections; before they were in caps at the beginning of paragraphs. Liberal

use is made of Presstype. Everything is black and white, of course. The writing style and the contents remain much the same.

I can hear someone saying in the background, "This is all very well. You've told us about its history. You've told us what kind of news it carries. You've told us what it looks like. But what is the soul of *Locus*? What is it all really about?" Hard question, that. To be sure, there are those who would say, "Soul? Soul? *Locus* has no soul. What is this soul you're talking about?"

That sort of comment is only marginally useful. It says, perhaps, that those making it feel that *Locus* is impersonal, that it has nothing to say to them. But it doesn't help to pin down the character of *Locus*, what it is like and why people keep coming back for more.

In a way, *Locus* reminds me of nothing so much as a well done company newspaper. (It even calls itself the Newspaper of the Science Fiction Field.) With the shift to offset it even looks like a company newsletter. The pro's are the equivalent of the company management. The market notes, etc, are the equivalent of stories on the business of the company. The con reports, etc, are the equivalent of the stories about the bowling league. The tidbits of fannish personal news that appear are the equivalent of the little personal items that these things always run.

Or perhaps you might prefer to think of it as a college newspaper. (The official one - not the underground one.) But it is in that general style. The journalism is good; it has gotten smoother and more professional over the years. A journalism school would be proud to own Charlie as a graduate.

But there it is. *Locus* is Science Fiction's company newsletter. It may be that the style and the type and form of content are the inevitable result of what is being attempted; that a successful and enduring newszine must end up looking something like *Locus*. It may be that Charlie has reinvented that style of journalism - or adopted it deliberately.

In part, company newsletters have the tone that they do because they rely heavily on handouts. Company newsletters and college newspapers have to - they are creatures of the administration. *Locus* doesn't have to - after all Charlie is a free agent. But the handout is the path of least resistance. It takes work, time, and contacts to dig out news. The handout is given to you. It's easier.

It's work to put out a successful newszine. The law is: You must publish; you must publish frequently; and you must have news. A newszine cannot survive on a fine flourish of fannish enthusiasm. It has to be put issue after issue after issue. It becomes a habit; something you do because that is what you do. And I think *Locus* has become like that. There is no great enthusiasm in it and that comes across. The news gets out; to falter would be unprofessional and *Locus* performs. But the easier path is taken; it all becomes a matter of routine.

Exciting? no. The college newspaper is seldom exciting. But you read it. You want to know if the football lockerroom is going to be moved into the cafeteria. You may be affected if the Agricultural Biostatistics Department just got a federal grant and will have twenty new fellowships.

Exciting? No. Pulitzer prize winning reporting? No. Humdrum? Yes, at times. Painfully illiterate? Never. Professional quality journalism polished smooth by the routine of year in, year out reporting. Yes.

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Algol is published by Andrew Porter, P.O. Box 4175, New York NY 10017. The single issue price is \$1.25. Six issues \$5.00.

In my review of *Locus* I made no reference to particular issue numbers. The character of *Locus* is such that you have to review a body of work and not particular issues. *Algol* is much more a magazine with one issue being different from the next. This review will be based on issue #22, dated May 1974.

The first thing that strikes the eye about *Algol* is that it is slick, both physically and metaphorically. It is, to begin with, published on slick paper. The printing is all justified. There are the little professional touches like having the magazine name and date at the bottom of each pair of pages. The layout is professional in spirit and in fact. This is a magazine that you could find on a newsstand and, unless you read it, would not recognize as being a fanzine. It looks like a literary magazine of commentary - somewhat rather better produced than most.

I use "professional" here in the sense of being produced in the manner and style of professionally produced magazines with the same skill of execution being shown, and not in the sense of "produced to make money." Let me quote: "Gee, Harry, it's simple making articles come out even. You count the number of lines in each article, prepare exacting and precise layouts of each article - and then start pasting up from the back forwards. It's something which Sol Cohen evidently doesn't believe in, but continued lines are a nuisance, when you can avoid them so easily." Now there is a professional talking.

First of all the professional sees the problem. He knows beforehand that this is one of things that have to be handled. Secondly he knows beforehand how to solve the problem. Not for him the unthinking question, "Well gee, I've put in the article and I have half a paragraph left over and what do I do with it." The professional knew that problem was going to be there before he started. He knew what to do before he started. He knew how to do it. It wasn't a problem in layout to be solved, merely a technique to be applied. It's all old hat; he's an old hand with wheels - he doesn't have to reinvent them. And, of course, he takes it for granted that it should be done. He spends the extra time and effort to do it right. It isn't as much time and effort for him as it would be for an amateur because it's all well worn technique, perhaps, but it is still taken for granted that you do put in that extra time and effort.

This professionalism extends throughout. The professional puts *this* here and *that* there because he *knows* what works effectively. I do not work in magazine production. I do not know all of the tricks and techniques of the trade. I am not a professional. But ... I'm not blind either. And, when a magazine is professionally produced I can tell the difference even if I can't spot all of the tricks of the trade.

So that is one aspect of *Algol*; physically it is produced using the skills and techniques of professional magazine production. But what of the content? It avails nothing to learn a language unless you have something to say in that language. Similarly professional magazine production means nothing unless the magazine has content.

This particular issue has an editorial, articles on SF and film by Robert Bloch, Poul Anderson, and Wolf Rilla. It has an interview of Roger Ellwood conducted by Richard Lupoff. It has a column by Ted White and an Imaginary interview of Gene Wolfe by Barry Malzberg. And, of course, it has book reviews

by Dick Lupoff and letters from the readers. There is quite a bit of art. Artists are DiFate, Gilliland, Healy, Ingram, Jeeves, Kirk, McLeod, Mead, Miller, Nilsson, Odbert, Pesch, Staton, and Steffan.

The contents are by professionals for the most part - but are they good? Well, as a matter of fact, yes. The articles by Bloch and Anderson are ordinary; well written, pleasant, but somewhat pedestrian sercon material. The article by Wolf Rilla (director of *Village of the Damned*) is fascinating. The two interviews are both worth reading. Ted White's column is a column by Ted White. This time around Ted is not nearly as contentious and controversial as he sometimes is. Interesting and informative, though, of course, one has to read it with the usual reservations.

Dick Lupoff's book reviews are quite good. The book review has a bad reputation, mostly deserved. Everyone has written book reports in school and too many think a high school (or grade school) book report is the same thing as a good book review. Of those who rise above the book report level fall into the trap of writing cute killer reviews. The book review is mostly a minor art form. In the hands of a master it can be a major literary form. Dick Lupoff is not at the master level but he is not down in the muck either.

The letter column is good. There are a lot of letters and there is a lot of interesting material in them. One advantage of a large circulation and lots of good material is that you get a lot of good letters of comment. It is noteworthy that the letter col is not a dialogue column. That is, people are writing about what was in the last issue and topics that the last issue suggested. They are not remarking on what other correspondents said.

Much has been made of the semi-professional stature of some of the big time zines. I must admit that in the case of *Algol* I feel there is some justice in this contention. Not because of the large circulation and the emphasis on bringing in enough money to keep the thing going without eating Andy Porter out of house and home. Nor because Andy pays for some of his material. These things do not keep it from being very definitely a fanzine. But *Algol* is professional in character. It is produced in the style of and with the techniques of professional magazine production. In fact the level of professional competence displayed is higher than that in most magazines currently on the newstands. And when you're playing it the way the professionals play it and beating them at their own game, it's hard to claim the status of an amateur.

And that's *Algol*.

The Alien Critic is published by Richard E. Geis, PO Box 11408, Portland Oregon, 97211. One issue is \$1.00. Subscriptions are \$4/one year and \$7/two years. This review is based on issue #10.

Emmanuel Lasker, chess champion of the world from 1894 to 1921, was also a Philosopher and Mathematician. In his work *Das Begreifen der Welt* he conjured up the fearsome nightmare of the Macheide. The Macheide (the son of battle) is a creature "whose senses or mental abilities have been so sharpened by millions of years in the battle of life, that it chooses always the best, the most efficient way of perpetuating itself."

Richard E. Geis is the Macheide of fanzine editing.

It is easy to see that *Locus* and *Algol* are special sorts of fanzines. It is less obvious that *The Alien Critic* is. It is, after all, a genzine much like unto other genzines. True, it has a lot of material - 55 pages of small type in triple columns - but there have been other genzines as large. In it's heyday, *Niekas* ran even more material.

The special magic of *TAC* (and its immediate predecessors, *REG* and *SFR*) is not immediately obvious. The material is good - but other people have gotten good material. There is nothing exotic about the format - it is rough and workmanlike. Unlike *Algol*, *TAC* is obviously a fanzine. The aspiring fan editor can look at *TAC* and, hyped up with dreams of fannish glory, say to himself, "with time and effort I could put out a zine like that."

Forget it. It can't be done. *The Alien Critic* is a demonstratable impossibility. No one, no one can put out a zine like that - except Richard E. Geis, and Richard E. Geis is the Macheide.

Consider: First of all you have to start with considerable writing talent - that is common enough, but you have to have it. You have to have an iron determination to put out fanzines, major fanzines, that remains unflagging through the years. A less common attribute, but one that also exists. You have to have contacts - but these can be acquired.

But one thing that you, or I, or anyone else doesn't have is the necessary time, energy, and dedication. It takes time to run off 2-3000 copies of a 55 page zine. It takes time to collate all those copies. By God, it takes time to type the stencils. It takes time to handle all the work entailed by all those subscriptions. The effort required is incredible ... and it's all done single-handedly.... and to a regular frequent schedule. More time than is available to someone who works at a regular job.

It takes an incredible amount of time and effort. And it takes an incredible amount of determination, of single mindedness. You must be willing to make putting out such a fanzine the focal point of your existence.

And it is this single minded, inhuman dedication that makes *TAC* larger than life. It has quality of content, to be sure. But it is the overwhelming conviction, the obsession of Geis to do what he is doing that gives it its special character. The conviction, the certain inner belief that this is worth doing, that this must be done, pervades the zine.

It would be anticlimactic, after that flamboyant characterization, to routinely describe the contents of this particular issue. And, indeed, it is much like unto the contents of other Geis zines. It is a rich and mixed bag. There are reviews, letters, and articles. This particular issue is less contentious, less scrappy than many in the past, but the thunder clouds are never far off.

The Alien Critic, or whatever other name Geis chooses to call his zine, is well worth reading and getting. It is a major and unavoidable fannish institution. It is not usually given to one man to be an institution all by himself. But then, Geis is not just one man - he has an alter ego. And he puts out the fanac of ten. And besides, Richard E. Geis is the Macheide.

And that's *The Alien Critic*.

So there you are - three big name, big time fanzines, all Hugo winners. Each is, in its own way, unique. Each is, in some respect, larger than life. Each represents qualities and special characteristics beyond the reach of the ordinary fanzine publisher.

Some cry FIJAGDH - Fandom Is Just A God Damn Hobby. Some cry FIAWOL - Fandom Is A Way Of Life. But to publish zines like these is more than a way of life. These zines dominate the Hugo awards, and it's not surprising. It's not the large circulations, and it's not the "semiprofessionalism", it's the simple fact that these zines are a little bit bigger than life, a bit beyond the reach of the ordinary fanzine publisher.

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Well I did it Mike. You said to write some fanzine reviews, full of sensitivity to fannish creativeness and all that sort of good stuff. So I did it. Is it OK? I mean, like I really tried, Mike, I really did. So, is it OK, Mike?

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Sigh. Twenty six pages yet. And pretty much all fannish to boot. I didn't mean for it to be this way. Twentysix pages is stretching the limit for a personalzine. And the idea was that this was supposed to be full of little anecdotes about what I'm doing and observations on life and all that sort of thing. And, really, a good personalzine shouldn't run over twenty pages or so. Oh well.

I am modestly embarrassed. I had planned to put Mikie's DISCON report in this issue. However it didn't show up immediately so I put in what I put in instead. Naturally it showed up today while I was typing the last two or three pages. And I'm just not going to run this over thirty pages and his report will run at least eight.

So it's just going to have to go in the next issue. Sorry about that Mikey. Actually I expect the next issue to come out very quickly and be short. (If it is going to come out very quickly, it has to be short.) I dunno what else will be in it - let me get this one mailed out and I'll think about it.

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And, in closing, a poem by Richard M. Nixon:

MIXED EMOTIONS

I still have mixed emotions on it.

I don't know.

I don't know.

*I have been one way one time,
one way another.*

.....

That's it folks,