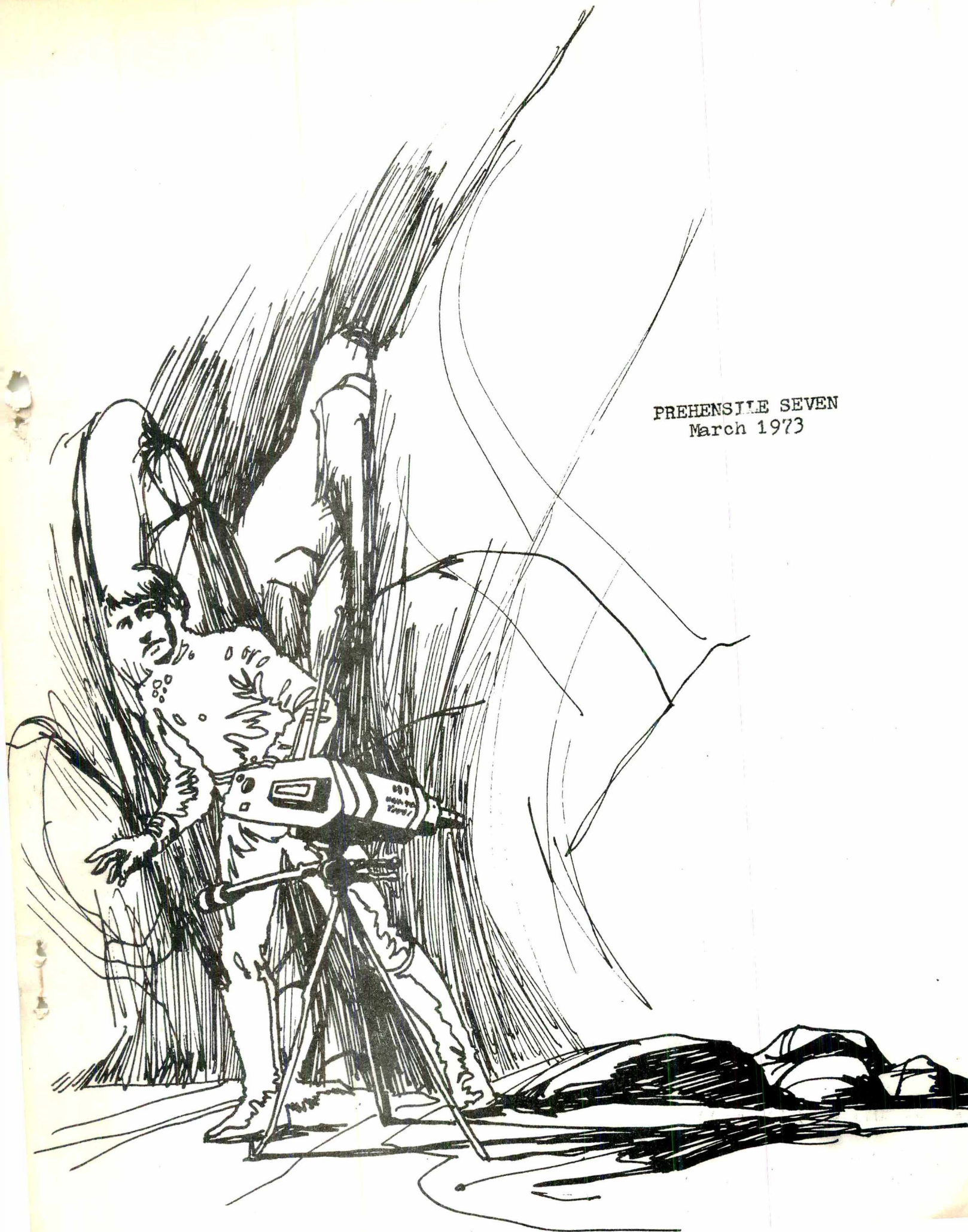


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PREHENSILE SEVEN
March 1973



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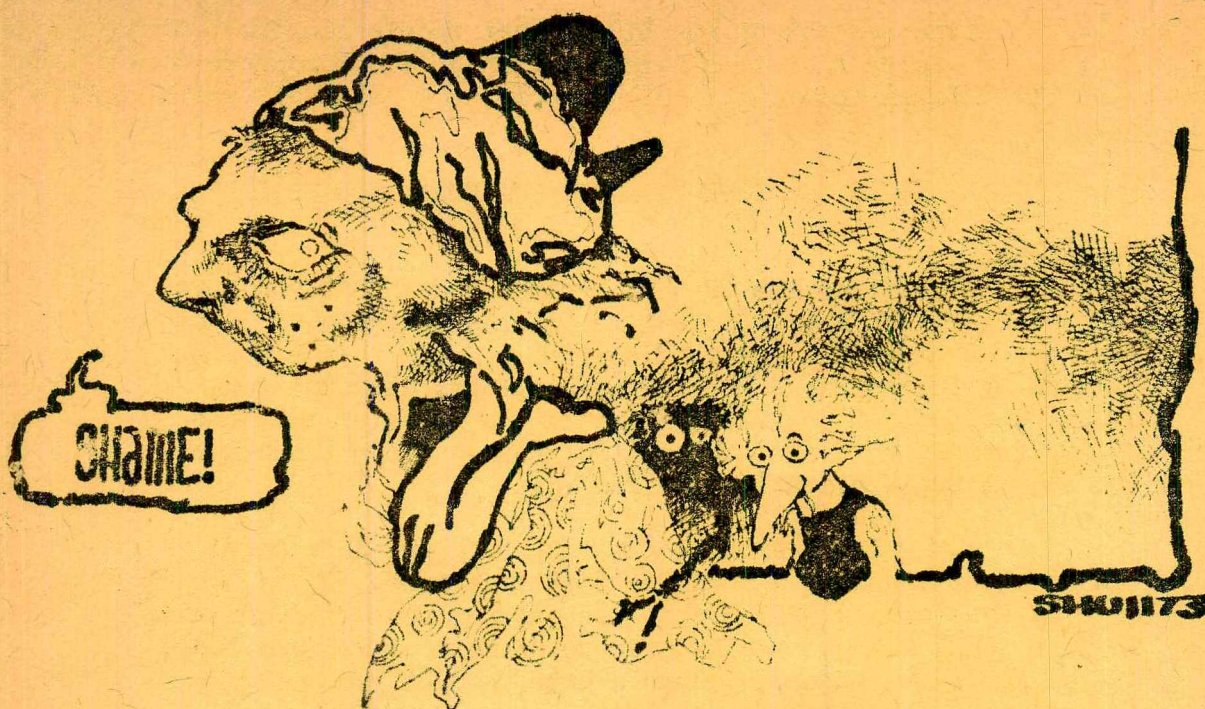
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—MIKE GLYER—

REPREHENSIBLE

1. FIRST, SECOND THOUGHTS The lettercol handles all the response to my polemic from last issue. Overall I have no second thoughts about that -- just that for too many of you it's the only report you've had on LACon. It's not really fair to let that be your only dose of the fun and strangeness of the late Worldcon. So contrary to other plans I am inserting the revised standard text of my DRAFTED ON STENCIL LACON report circulated through APA L and TAPS last September. The time lag of fanwriting should be overcome eventually -- others will turn out their reports. But permit me to prejudice you... (printed further along)

2. MORE CONVENTION POLITICS I never realized (until having landed right in the middle of them) what constant fun convention politics can be. Take, for example, the elimination of the North American Science Fiction Convention (NASFic, provided as a N. Am. con should the Worldcon go overseas as it is expected to in '75). Torcon II's committee consulted a barrister-at-law, evidently with the idea in mind to eliminate the proviso for NASFic, which had been voted into existence at Noreascon. The Torconcom has accepted the lawyer's rationalization (covered below) as their means of getting rid of a scheme they dislike -- unfortunately I think that same rationalization, fairly applied, would also make illegitimate their winning of the convention bid in the first place. Anyway...

Bruce Pelz and Chuck Crayne, co-chairmen of the LACon, have launched rival NASFic bids already -- Pelz has been out with the committee of his bid investigating hotels already, too. It is at least Pelz' desire that there be a major con in North America if Australia gets the Worldcon (as I hope it will), his intention that it be the NASFic

-- and even though Crayne has set up his bid so that people can "have a choice, not an echo" ((???)), both agree that this latest action of the Torconcom does not have the stamp of Phi Beta Kappa thinking. While preparing a joint statement, one of them, Pelz, has come out with:

OPEN LETTER TO: JOHN MILLARD, CHAIRMAN, TORCON III

Dear John,

I see from the PR that arrived today that you have had Smookler((the lawyer)) declare all the business at LACon Business Meeting null and void because we didn't take up the Minutes of the previous meeting in any form. In addition, you have cancelled the NASFiC part of the Rules of the WSFC on the grounds that the statement of purpos doesn't include the selection of sites for the NASFiC.

There isn't a thing that can be done, in a legal sense, about anything a WorldCon Committee does. If you don't want to fuss with a NASFiC that was set up, not at LACon, but at NoreasCon, all you really have to do is declare that fact. If you needed an excuse, I should have thought you could have come up with a better one, however.

Regarding the legality or non-legality of the LACon Business Meeting, I suggest that if it was non-legal, then you will have to change your Hugo Ballots, as you have two categories of the Award that were not in effect until the LACon Business Meeting passed them: Best Editor and Best Novelette.

Further, if you are going to throw out the NASFiC, you had better give some thought to the problem of what does happen if the 1975 WorldCon goes to Melbourne. Does the 1976 con come back to the West Coast, or does it skip the West Coast and go to the Central Area, as it would have under the NASFiC-included rules? If the former is true, then any bidders in the Central Area for 1976 or the Eastern Area for 1977 are going to have to revamp their plans and see if they can switch their hotel commitments to a year ahead of the one they were planning on. And if the latter idea is what you intend, then the Western Area will not get a large convention for six years -- at least according to the WorldCon regulations.

It should also be pointed out that the dropping of the NASFiC by the Worldcon doesn't kill it, but merely severs its connections with the WorldCon. If the 1975 WorldCon goes to Melbourne, there will still be a NASFiC on the West Coast, I can assure you. But the WorldCon won't have any say in the placement or running of it. I do hope you know what you're doing.

Yours for Melbourne (and Los Angeles) in '75!
Bruce E. Pelz

The wrapup paragraph of Smookler's letter (an insert with the second Torcon 2 Progress Report) Says: "The matters relating to the North American Science Fiction Convention are, therefore, in my opinion, unconstitutional and ultra vires i.e. beyond the powers of the Society to enact, and accordingly, the matters printed in the Los

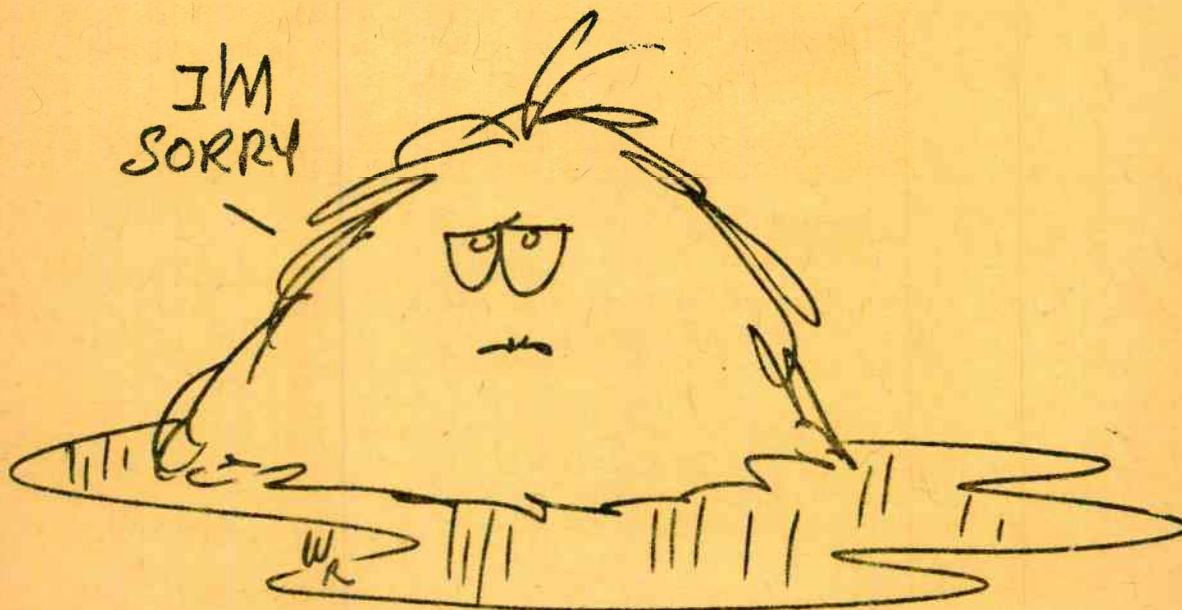
Angeles Convention Programme Book among the current rules of the Society and numbered as 3.07 and 3.08 cannot be effective since they are in direct contradiction to article 1.01. In my opinion these latter two sections should be deleted from the rules in order that there be no internal conflict within the constitution of the Society."

Which is what they did. Just for the sake of debate, though, wouldn't the Torcon have just as much legal right, and reason, to eliminate 1.01 as to eliminate the other two sections? (If they felt compelled to edit the rules.) And, in the name of semantics, can't those two sections be reasoned as contingencies rooted in 1.01's statement that "The World Science Fiction Society is an unincorporated literary society whose functions are: to choose the recipients of the annual Science Fiction Achievement Awards, known as the Hugos; to choose the location for the annual World Science Fiction Convention; and to attend the annual World Science Fiction Convention."

The Torconcom has displayed a marked lack of imagination and generosity, in this case, quite inconsistent with their policy of fannishness, innovation, and fun. Unless they are doing this to provide fun for those of us who pay attention to con politics... Why do they oppose a NASFiC? One anti-NASFiC theoretician says that it would prevent or draw off attendees from the WorldCon. He says this while also thinking the NASFiC would have to be run concurrently with the WorldCon. Perusal of the rules shows no mention of a date for the NASFiC. It could be run anytime in the given year, no doubt. I don't know that it would be run any other time, but it could be. On the other hand if the NASFiC is cut off from the WSFS, as Pelz says, you can be sure no formal fannish method will be available to arrange that.

3. PAVLOV AT THE CRANK This zine could all too easily turn quarterly if I don't watch it. Or even if I do watch it... But if I had kept to a strict deadline for this issue it would have had almost no art (faithful electro-stenciller Ed Green had his school's machine break down on him), no items from Goodman, Warren; ten fewer locs. On the other hand, it would have had a Paul Walker letter (we seem to have talked each other out of printing it). You win some, you lose some, but I am learning that RSN (Real Soon Now) may be as important to Fandom as SPQR was to the Roman legions.

4. ONCE AND FUTURE SHOCK PREHENSILE 2's discussion of Hugo nominees merited a Locus asterisk. Ever since, I have planned for this issue to have a bigger and better version. yes, you're quite correct, it didn't happen. Therefore I'll nominate in this discussion for the Dramatic, and fan categories so as not to completely miss the nominating season (see Hugo ballot enclosed).



THE DRAMATIC HUGO

BETWEEN TIME AND TIMBUKTOO
SILENT RUNNING
SLAUGHTERHOUSE FIVE
THE PEOPLE

CLOCKWORK ORANGE to anchor the list, our theatres and airwaves still ran a slate of admirable stuff (?).

Even if my beloved THX 1138 was annihilated in the voting by CLOCKWORK ORANGE, that we had both of them in '71 to argue the merits of showed how well the Dramatic category stood up to the other pro categories; there one occasionally found himself asking if any of the nominees deserved his vote. The year 1972 was just as rich in media sf. If there is no blockbuster like A

Zenna Henderson's THE PEOPLE was translated into commercial television as a short movie, as warm and human a story as was ever told about a band of aliens (again, ?). Her original work was treated with respect and creativity. So was Kurt Vonnegut's, in the public service broadcast version of BETWEEN TIME AND TIMBUKTOO. Not, apparently, written by Vonnegut, but drawn from his work, it brought across both his humanist satire, and his subsurface message that maybe what he's discussing is too serious to laugh about. (Unlike some humor, where the situation is so serious that you have to laugh at it.) In fact this untouched-by-Vonnegut version of his work, compared to the supervised-by-Vonnegut SLAUGHTERHOUSE FIVE, may persuade flick czars to turn Vonnegut into a modern Jason, strapped to the mast, his crew's ears filled with wax so that not only are they unable to hear the Sirens, but also unable to hear Vonnegut. Yes, that's too harsh. SLAUGHTERHOUSE FIVE is really an outstanding sf film, elastic enough to permit Vonnegut's load of antiwar message and still be of strong sf interest. Even though the sf elements (Tralfamadorian kidnap, time-jumping) have moved several notches closer to being deus ex machina for the antiwar sentiment, than they were in the book, SLAUGHTERHOUSE FIVE will be strong competition for SILENT RUNNING in the Hugo finals.

SILENT RUNNING:

Harlan Ellison said in THE STAFF (a breakaway paper from the LA FREE PRESS) that the acting of Bruce Dern saved an otherwise terrible script and batch of unscientific special effects (would you believe, among others, hearing explosions in space?). He was right. The strong character portrayal by Dern, playing off the anthropomorphized drone workers, makes bearable the mistakes. The concept he uses as background is badly used, but interesting: a fleet of freighter spaceships has been preserving in park state life forms from the now totally polluted earth. Down comes the order, out of the blue, though, to blow up the parks and return the ships. Dern, by killing the others in his crew, escapes with one park. The rest of the burden is how his character grows under the testing and strain of flight. The special effects are questionable, adding to the audible explosions: the models of the spacecraft are good, but marring the detailed realism are screwheads in various places; the penetration of Saturn's rings is played as if the ship is running through an asteroid belt, when as far as we know the rings are neither that dense nor made of that heavy material. And so on. But for all its flaws, I still like it best of my nominees.

Possibilities that I rejected were Night Gallery, UFO, SOLARIS, the final shot of Apollo -- and the new Firesign Theater record NOT INSANE (reviewed this issue).

FAN ARTIST 1972

DENIS TIANI
GRANT CANFIELD
TIM KIRK
BILL ROTSLER
JIM SHULL

The definition of eligibility for the fan-artist Hugo was made more honest this year. Before now, only artists' work presented in fanzines was legally considerable for the contest. But I'd venture to say that Wendy Fletcher did not get a Hugo nomination last time on the strength of her infrequent and weak fanzine appearances, and now other artists whose main showing ground is also the art show need not be penalized. Those artists who will be penalized, unfortunately, are the ones who do do most of their work for fanzines. The art Hugo now pits the offset or mimeo black and white illo

against the flashier graphic and color work in the art shows. But being in opposition to the further fractionalization of the Hugo categories (I am not displeased by Ellison's success in reinstating the fourth fiction category) this will have to be lived with as a compromise that recognizes the growing importance of the art show to fanish creative expression. Even if it means a Kirk oil that gets auctioned off for near \$200 is in competition with a given-away Rotsler cartoon.

Tim Kirk at both the Westercon and Worldcon exhibited more good oils than I can remember the titles of, including his series on Tolkien subjects (done for his master's thesis), and Samauri Starship, bought at Westercon by Len and June Moffatt. Tim also did the Hugo worthy portrait cover for NYCTALOPS' tribute to Clark Ashton Smith, and some of its interior illos (for Gary Drake's Opium and Sake: Prose Poems). Moving on into professional illustration, and having won, apparently to his surprise, this year's Hugo, he is in a still stronger position to repeat with the expansion of eligibility.

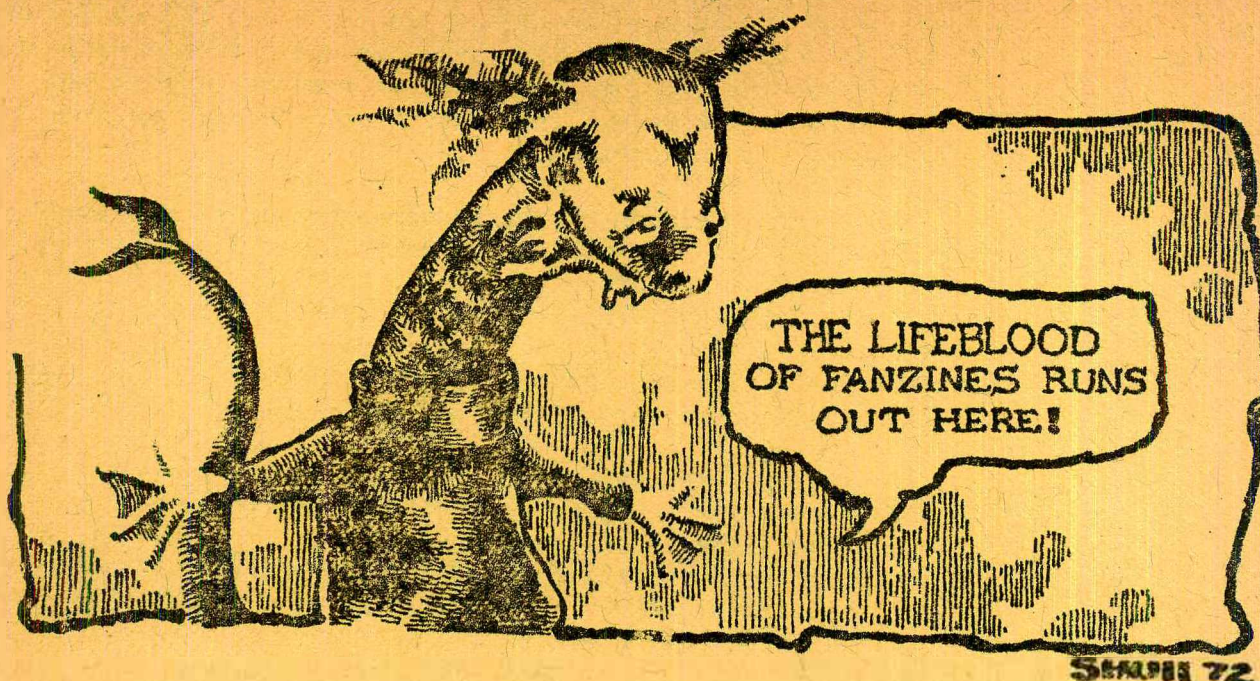
I think most of you will be saying "Nick-ta-what?" You shouldn't: Harry Morris probably has the best offset fanzine going. But he wouldn't without two excellent artists to justify the quality package. Kirk is one, and Denis Tiani is the other. Using a detailed style of design, dots, and contrasting black and white spaces, usually to interpret Lovecraftian fiction, his illustrations in NYCT 6 made it something all publishing fans can appreciate without a direct interest in weird fiction. Tiani, relatively unknown, will not make the Hugo ballot. Nevertheless he remains (in the opinion of yhos) one of the year's five best fanartists.

Grant Canfield is fandom's top cover artist -- take most any issue of ENERGUMEN, SANDWORM, or OUTWORLDS and see. Combining texture effects, lettering, and line he parades a repertoire of mechanized women, hunched dwarf figures and beasties. In 1972 his magnum opus was an issue of OUTWORLDS taken over by his art, though he can almost do the same thing unconsciously to other zines because his art is so popular -- again look at the better fanzines.

The underground Rotsler Resistance is surfacing in fashionable loudness. "Nay, nay -- nominate not again thy old Rotsler" they cry. He is now assassinated in pseudo-artistic arguments, called names like "space filler." Tut; such blasphemy against the best fanpolitical cartoonist, a man with a pen to slash machete-like and halve the shells of our heads while he peers in to sketch our lives, our honor, and our sacred putridity. But I think the reason that Bill keeps getting beat out for the chrome rocket is that essentially he is a wit -- and, for instance, Kirk is a humorist (on top of his serious work). Between wit and humor, humor always wins out. Rotsler is a stabbing wit with a facile pen and a sharp remark. Kirk, with floppy wizards and bemused dragons, injects humor into -- for example -- building the starship (LACon progress reports' covers). Besides there is the traditional inclination among Hugo voters to favor the fantasy artist (Freas, Barr, Austin etc.) and Kirk's style is identifiable with fantasy art.

Jim Shull continues to refine his style. Some of the cross-hatching has been stripped out of his work; the parodies of animals are changing from what looked like stuffed toys a child had pummeled out of shape, to otherworldly cats, geese, ducks, dogs and humanoids. There is still the framed deliberation of a wood carving in his art, the stripes of solid dark giving a look of depth. And there is still the incongruous line: a black-eyed fox dumping Energumen from his box of Cracker Jack: "What a prize." Jim is no less deserving of his place on the ballot this year than last when a rush of Wendy Fletcher support cost him a share of the limelight.

The usually stiff competition is made even stiffer this year by the expansion of eligibility. George Barr, Alicia Austin, Ken Fletcher, Mike Gilbert, Connie Reich Fad-dis, Freff, Tim Boxell, Vincent DiFate, Jim McLeod, Greg Bear, Joe Staton, Steve Stiles,



SHARP 72

Terry Austin, Dany Frolich, Jack Harness, Ross Chamberlain, Joe Pearson and a lot more than them have various recommendations for a nomination. A six-way race wouldn't surprise me, but anyhow I recommend my five favorites to your deliberation.

FANWRITER

rich brown
TOM DIGBY
RICHARD GEIS
SUSAN GLICKSOHN
MILT STEVENS
PAUL WALKER

Nobody ever said modesty was a common virtue of faneditors -- nor sanity for that matter -- but I expect you will agree with much of what you see here to the left and right.

If trends begun in 1972's crop of fanzines continue, and if my list of fanwriter nominees happens to be the

FANZINE

ENERGUMEN
LOCUS
SCIENCE FICTION
COMMENTARY
ALGOL
PREHENSILE
NYCTALOPS

final list, 1972 will be known as a milestone year in fanpublishing. There turned out to be more Busby Berkeleys in fandom than either you or I suspected -- editors who would spend great piles of the green, and send fifteen artists plus ten writers high-kicking across their graphic stages. With **ENERGUMEN**, **GRANFALLOON**, **OUTWOLDS**, **CARANDAITH**, **NYCTALOPS**, **ALGOL**, **CITADEL**, **IS** and **GEGENSCHEIN** there seem to be more aspiring "little magazines"/graphic-trip zines than any other kind, let alone the humble little plain mimeo cram-everything-in, that used to predominate. Contrariwise, the best fanzine writers (adding to that list Terry Carr, Harry Warner) were in large measure either published in only a couple of zines, or published almost all of their own work. The declining frequency and number of genzines has made the time lapse between submission and publication long (particularly among the upper dozen genzines), and on the other hand apas, namely **FAPA**, have revived and brought back into publishing its new members like rich brown, Dick Geis, Milt Stevens. Tom Digby has always run most of his stuff through **APA L**, and almost all in some apa. Susan Glicksohn coedits **ENERGUMEN**, where her serial on the role of women in the comics earned praise. (Terry Carr has had most of his work in **LOCUS** and, I hear, **Lilapa**.)

Disappointingly, the "greatest" fanzines in 1972 rarely published excellent fanwriting; which does not mean they didn't publish good or interesting fare. Making the reading matter of the big zines what it was, was a series of reprints by Terry Carr,

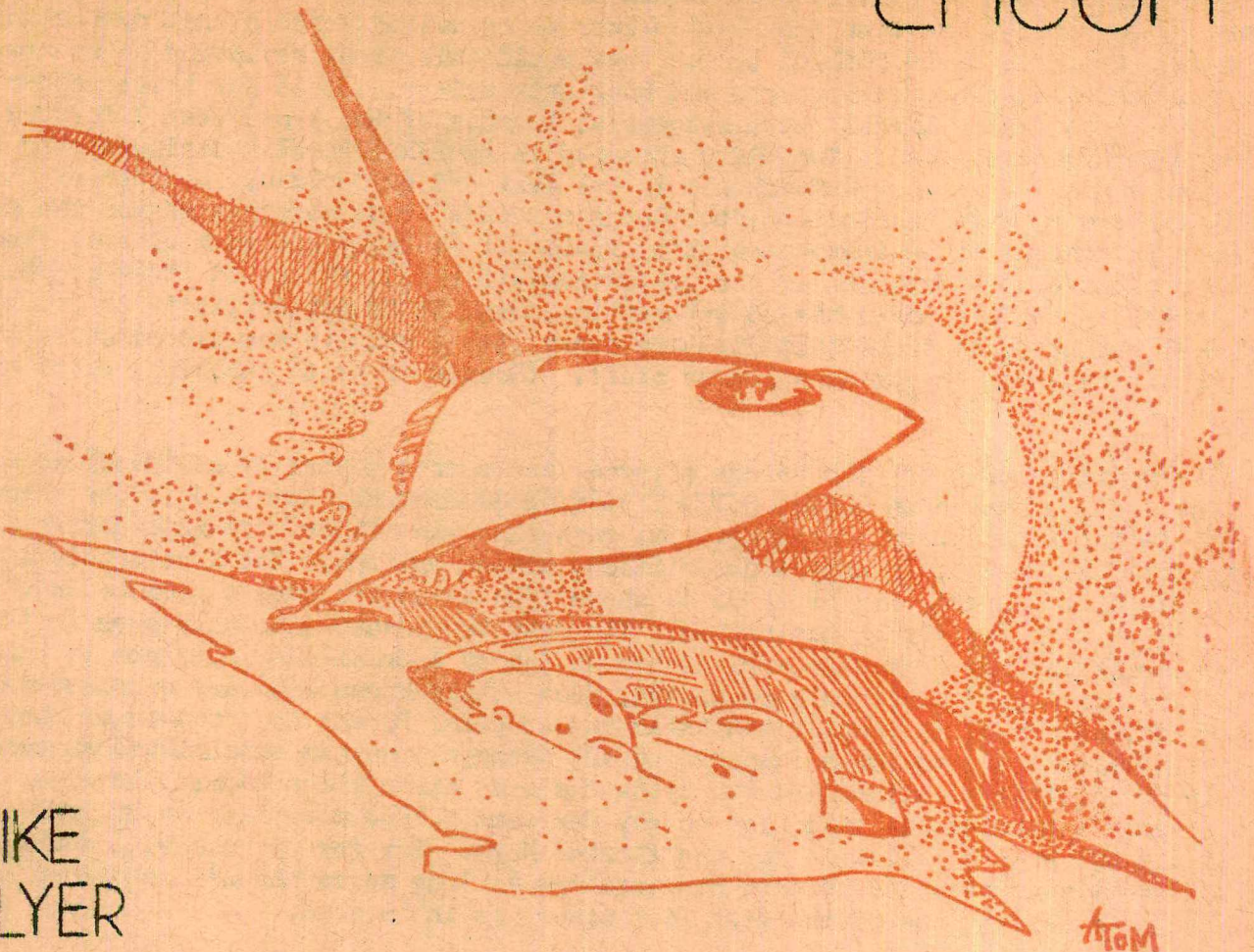
a series of interviews with pros by Paul Walker (appearing mostly in MOEBIUS TRIP and LUNA), occasional columns from pros, spots by Walt Liebscher, the wordworking skills of Leon Taylor, Sandra Miesel, Jeff Glencannon, Aljo Svoboda -- and lots of letters. Those letters sometimes came from Paul Walker -- he writes letters that mysteriously turn into columns, as in MOEBIUS TRIP. They would talk about reviewing as an art, or the critical stages of fan into pro and hack into writer. It is for these rather than the interviews (which largely were successful because of the pros) that I forward Walker for his nomination. Tom Digby appeared in PROPER BOSKONIAN during spring '72, then had a mini-fanhistory done on him in the last PRE by Goodman. Neither of these fully exposes Digby's imagination, but Goodman's came about as close as you can get without having all those interested join ARA-L. It is Digby not as a classic fanwriter (who exaggerates odd experiences, or writes semi-fiction), but as an "idea tripper" (Goodman's term) that makes him so interesting. And it is not realistic to fob him off with a line "Yeah those subtitles are funny, but I want to see his longer stuff." That's coz he almost never does longer stuff. (Sounds of teeth gnashing, glass breaking.)

The writings of pros, the doings of pros, and sercon matter by semipros, accounted for most of the matter in LOCUS, SCIENCE FICTION COMMENTARY, and ALGOL, for example -- not fan or fannish-style writing. But each zine was either very interesting or highly useful, so that is only a description, not an epitaph. Yet I privately have doubts about the creativity of ALGOL -- whose 19th issue included a plea by Andy Porter, its editor, for a Hugo nomination. Its past two issues (the only ones in '72) got material chiefly from a book published in '68 by a Brazilian institute to which pros had contributed numerous good essays, from little known literary or commemorative magazines, and from the Amazing/Fantastic reject pile. Porter is a scavenger faned with the flair and cash for a fascinating art package, who has established successfully his own "little magazine" and may crack the mass circulation barrier in time. He has already announced his intention to pay for some future material, so by next year ALGOL may not even be eligible for the fanzine Hugo. But for right now, I doubt if anybody really cares where he gets his articles as long as we haven't read them before, and ALGOL is clearly one of the best five zines, so in it goes.

NYCTALOPS, as I already implied, is the best offset fanzine (in my *humble* opinion) -- besides its art, it is a wide-ranging service and sercon zine in the Lovecraftian subgenre. Harry Morris is doing more to satisfy the overall desires and needs of that subgenre's fans than any current fanzine is doing to satisfy general fandom's interest in pro material, fanhistory, fannish comment, and an active, frequent interchange through the lettercol. The latest issue of ENERGUMEN (#14) did in a special issue a very good job to tying all these elements in. But it won't be around for much longer, I regret. Actually it is because I hold these standards, and believe PRE has come closer and closer to meeting them, that I venture my own zine for a nomination, rather than what you thought -- a delusion of grandeur that makes me blind to the good points of OUTWORLDS, MOEBIUS TRIP, GRANFALLOON, IS, etc. etc.

In the meantime, though the FAPazines of Brown, GEIS and STEVENS also hit near the bull's-eye in these departments (minus lettercols), none of their zines are eligible. Brown, formerly coeditor of the faanish newszine FOCAL POINT, came up not only with faanish work in beardmutterings (two issues, offset, illustrated by Staton) but with comment on things like pro art and TAFF that seemed unusually serious and constructive -- but always fascinating. Richard Geis, either a fannish flasher or the most honest ENF in our history (I prefer the latter), has changed his zine now to THE ALIEN CRITIC -- an omnibus of diary, self-analysis, reviews and general commentary. Milt Stevens, if remembered in '72 for nothing else, produced a great conreport from the point of view of a concom member (quoted in last PRE). But he did other things in his two issues of PASSING PARADE -- and did them well -- plus contributing to AWRY. ((Next September we'll compare notes.))

LACON



MIKE
GLYER

THE 30TH WORLD SCIENCE FICTION CONVENTION

1. AND THE MORNING AND THE EVENING WERE THE FIRST DAY

Richard Wadholm and I managed to fill the red Volkswagen with his artwork and a boxful of my 46-page calling card PRE without worrying where our later passenger would sit. Richard had discovered a few months before that every once in awhile there would come along somebody willing to pay him cash money for his work, and subsequently began financing his record collection through his artwork. The fact that he had actually sold something later eliminated him as a candidate for professional guest of honor at the Ranquet. And considering Norman Spinrad's endearing example of professionalism perhaps we didn't really need a pro at all.

It's a long, long way from May to December, and it's a fair piece from Sylmar to the LA International Airport (unless you've just driven from Seattle to LA nonstop, in which case it's a snap). Wad and I let the tide of traffic sweep us along

at an average sixty-five mph even though the San Diego Freeway was as closely packed as a parking lot. In traffic like this it is helpful to be able to see past cars in front of you; but the Labor Day proliferation of trucks, campers and large camper-buses drifted even over the inside fast lane. Curses did not help speed the campers onward. Therefore by the time Richard and I were at the airport seeking a parking space and a haven from traffic, the first time that Norm Hochberg had announced as the first flight he might be on (as a student standby) had passed. Again proving my mettle as among the world's worst auto navigators, Richard and I ended up on the second deck of a parking structure about a quarter mile from the American Airlines terminal. Tough.

"About ten to twelve," answered the mighty Wad to the question of time. Standing before the paging and message desk we were asked by the clerk, "May I help you?"

"Yez; do you have a passenger list for the incoming 11:30 flight from NY?" I asked, stretching the initials so that they became fully half of the awesome title for the city with Two Names.

"Nozzir. But could I page him?" The name was given. "Will Norm Hochberg please contact the message desk? Norman Hochberg?"

Mighty Wad, long hair and freckled eyeballs, joined me in staring at the floor; at the man picking the sailor's pocket; at the desk; Then: "Will Mike Glycer please report to the baggage claim area?" Contact! We trucked on over, through and around the crowd, past the Hasidic insurance applicant filling out a form beneath his beard, fording the stream of people flowing from the automatic walkway, out through the electric doors into the hurly-burly of baggage snatching.

No flashing neon sign pointed down to Hochberg, but soon Wad spotted a guy in lavender shirt, sporting a mustache and a Rotsler-style namecard titled REGURGITATION SIX. It had to be Norm Hochberg Live and In Person. And he had already volunteered my service to deliver a young lady of his acquaintance to the hotel and her baggage too (which turned out to be a trained plaid suitcase that followed her on a leash. But Judy (as much of her name as we ever got out of her) turned out later to be Lin Carter's ex-wife, so it goes for that potential fan legend.

There's no gentle surgical art to loading four people cum baggage into a VW. After much debate: Hochberg, with boxes and art. . . was crammed into the back seat with Judy's trained suitcase wedging him in; Wadholm was up front with her on his lap and her head hanging out the window; I sat in the driver's seat calculating the price of new shocks. The car got going and did a quick orbit around the airport with a police car driving nonchalantly beside, then whiffled off onto the city streets to the convention hotel. WELCOME TO THE 30th WORLD SCIENCE FICTION CONVENTION. Yeah, hi there.

Norm surprised me by hiring an actor to play Scratch Bachrach -- who mumbled greetings to Norm when they met in the lobby. And I was starting to worry that this meeting would be the high point of the day. It seemed to go downhill when, in our room (637) with the door open Wad and Hochberg were feigning being freaked out by the passage of Larry Niven, baggage in hand. They obligingly presented a floor show to the hall.

Later the door was still open when in walked a hot, husky man with clipped-close steel gray hair, glasses, and a poke strapped to his shoulder that I took for a photographer's bag. Obviously a reporter type lost on the sixth floor. "Anybody here know the ropes of this convention?" he asked. The three of us looked at each other, mentally shrugging -- I spied back some info that told him what he needed to know to register. He took it all in contemplatively, and with one hand on the back of his head he mentioned, "Oh, and I don't think I've introduced myself yet. My name is Mack Renoylds."

That name hit the floor and kept on going down seven levels where it struck a dent in the foundation's cement. Mack Renoylds; the man who between him and Christopher Anvil wrote a fifth of

the titles run in ANALOG in the 1960s. Glycer, Hochberg, and Wad did an instant Chinese fire drill racing up to pump his hand and show him to a seat on the edge of one of the beds. As a point in conversation Renoylds was pleased to brag that he had not paid a cent of American taxes in twenty years. Wad, aspiring high school radical, gave him a right on for ripping off the Uncle above and beyond. Then with proper lead-in Renoylds shed some light on the Dave Van Arnham story (Van Arnham I was interested in as an early contributor to APA L, though now he is a selling pro). DGVA in the last couple years had also been living in Mexico, when one of his friends was arrested for marijuana violations. Van Arnham paid him a visit in jail, taking along a little gift. Real soon Van Arnham, too, was residing in jail -- and his friends in Mexico had to get money together for his food; the Mexican jail budget doesn't provide for survival rations.

In the end they got him out on parole with the agreement that he'd not return to Mexico until his sentence had expired. According to the FAPA roster he's receiving his mail in Florida.

Several pages deep into my conreport and I had not even essayed into the lobby. No matter. Nothing was scheduled that afternoon, and only the LASFS meeting that evening. Hochberg found Mike Glicksohn ("the Hat") with a knot of Canafen gathered about. I hurried back upstairs (and considering these elevators, that was no mean feat) to gather some of my calling card, then got introduced to Charlie Brown's principle competition for a Hugo. Arrayed in Messianic hairstyle, shorts and a bush hat, Glicksohn got around to telling me why I had graduated from beyond the need for his LoCs. But before I had the chance to put the knife between my ribs, Elaine, fairest of the concom, made us all honest stoop laborers trotting out bags of DC in '74 propaganda to the registration area. These bags, reportedly bought off a Boy Scout Jamboree, were stamped with the DC message and stuffed with various cons' adsheets. While good for those pirating stacks of freebies from the literature table to run through apas, and looking for a place to hide them, they were hit with a little flack on the assumption that giving out DC materials favored that bid over the New York bid. *yawn*

I lined up at the head of the reg line, and if the G section of the file box had been ready I'd have been out in a flash. It wasn't, but like I said, nothing else was going on, so what the hell.

Colonel Sanders' Kentucky Fried Indigestion provides a splendid belly filler in a box for a mildly extortionate price. Unable to locate a McDonald's (something we later did for the Ranquet) we allowed ourselves to be directed to this area by Sandy Cohen. On the street there were three good, cheap restaurants and a couple Plastic Food franchises like The Colonel's. If you didn't find them, and they definitely weren't within walking distance, better luck next trip. Where we ate wasn't as important as how soon we ate -- the LASFS meeting was slated for around 7:30 and Norm definitely didn't want to miss meeting Dan Goodman, Jack Harness and the stars of the Los Angeles Science Fantasy Society (Inc.!) While other fans toured Disneyland, we hustled back to the International, as we often would be with Norm like a Guide pointing out people walking towards the shopping district ("And on our left is Mike Glicksohn, Linda Bushyager, Andy Porter and a cast of thousands.")

In the strict sense of doing LASFS-type things, the evening get-together was no meeting. Digby (Procedural Director) and Pelz (Treasurer) dispensed with Minutes, money gouge (the entire Con substituting as best it might for that) and sliding directly into the program "Clubs -- what they can do, and what they do." The discussion labored mightily to get off the track, and like two Lawrences of Arabia Andrew Porter and Dan Goodman derailed it with side comments on local apas. But by then the audience was punchdrunk from Jean Berman's strangulation of the microphone in the process of relating NESFA's glory. Between the audience and the panel the discussion was pretty mundane, George Svithers, Alderson Fry, and a voyageur from Tennessee coming over as the most interesting.

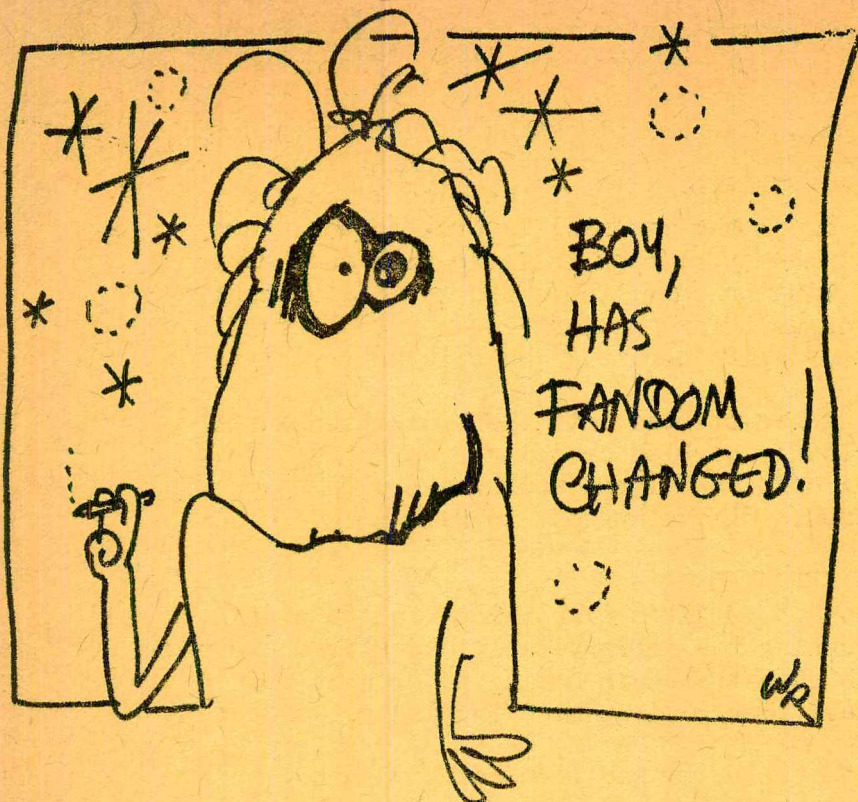
During the meeting I turned in the APA L contributions from Hoch

berg, Mike Wood (OE of Minneapa, which had gotten a lot of Midwest and West Coast fans acquainted in the week preceding the worldcon) and myself. I actually met, after the meeting was evacuated by the announcement of a "Meet the Pros" cash bar in the Penthouse Room, Minneapans Mike Wood and Nate Bucklin, emissary of Tallahassee fandom Rich Small, and Andy Porter (sort of). I found conversation with Porter an iffy thing, since his bearing and expression sometimes leave in doubt the issue of whether he's listening. Anyway, when I get into doing the proposed special issue on APA F (or perhaps that in conjunction with the 10th anniversary special on APA L coming up in 1974) (a double issue? ...write it down Glycer) I'll have to have Porter's help either in a fanhistorical article or some such. I didn't get a definite maybe from him, though rich brown in response to a previous letter said (or seemed to say) he was prepared to write for such an issue.

After I handled in a month's dues to Bruce Pelz I strayed with the popular jetsam to the rooftop bar. There in 'atmosphereic' near-darkness I disappointedly found what I expected -- a mob of fans gawking at a slew of pros. Trouble was none of the pros were bothering to wear name badges, and there's no profit in stumbling around saying "Hello, I really like your stories. Who are you?" And finding out it's some Trekkie from Bakersfield. I did meet Jim Young, Jeff Appelbaum and Frank Stodolka (another part of the Minneapolis contingent) between episodes of stumbling past Don Fitch and Dave Fox. And Ellison, in leather vest, was doing his number on several people while the latest in his succession of beautiful companions stood by. I gave it up as a lost cause.

Down on the 12th floor were hardies who had resisted the herd instinct and holed up in the Spacewar room, pumping quarters into the control board and gorging bleary-eyed from constant attention to the TV screen that served as a playing field. Spacecar is a coin operated game. The object is for you to guide your simulated spaceship on the screen by use of controls on the panel beneath, and destroy either of two computer-controlled saucers as often as possible. Meanwhile the saucers try to wipe you out as often as they can. The winner was the side that in 100 seconds could destroy the other more often. Simultaneous destruction happened when ships collided, the simulated guided missiles were handled by the attitude controls that steered your ship (thrust was a separate button). Frank Gasperik, the Minstrel, claimed 29 kills in a single game, and he, Staniel and Gordon Monson (latter SCA tournament fighter, Staniel the PRE reviewer) were knotted around one machine trying to outshoot and outtalk each other. At intervals players would be out scouting the halls for change -- a dollar for three quarters, if you were sharp.

In the hotel room Hochberg, Jim Hollander and I tossed coins to see who would end up sleeping on the floor. I lost. I returned to the Spacewar area and found Joe Minne (LASFSian, USC student, pokerite). Wadholm came along, and the three of us opted for that 24-hour-a-day heartburn service, Tommy's. The World's Greatest Hamburger -- so they claim, doused with chili. Well, they sell thousands every day anyway. Joe, who digs the scenic route, took his time and indirectly kept me around to see that despite the tradition of all-night parties and bull-sessions until late in the morning, this was a quiet convention. Friday morning at 2:30 when we got back to the International most of the lights on the parking lot side of the hotel were off, and virtually all of those on the street side. Nor did I hear reports of any parties in the morning. Except for a brief stay in SamD Meschow's Philcon bid party before making it to the pros bar on the roof, I heard of very few. True, the DC group supposedly had a party. But what I saw of that the next night, it seemed to be a haven for a few pros to hide in, while other fans who had heard about the party wandered in, sometimes talking, sometimes asking themselves "Where's the party?" Very quiet affair, unlike Meschow's were The Minstrel, Nate Bucklin and a couple others who knew the words pulled out all the stops for "City of New Orleans" and assorted filksongs. Earl Evers gravitated to the party to egoscan PRE 5 and find out why zETn was so admired by Dan Goodman. To Earl there seemed to be some question as to whether Goodman should have publicized the connection between Sanders and "Jeff Glencannon." That's Cult hassle I suppose, but besides Goodman, a couple non-Cult fans had been speculating in my direct-



and a brief chance to unwind. The meeting between Gerrold and Keller, perhaps not quite like that between FDR and Churchill, was fun to watch. Dan Goodman popped in then to exchange words, too.

The scene of David Gerrold as huckster is not on the list of LA events handled by Ticketron and no seats are available. It is Standing Room Only at his every performance. Tribbles on the one hand, vending companion on the other, he wrung money from each passing fan with the hands of (a) an expert (b) a born milkman who can get five gallons of milk out of a bull, yet. When the huckster across from him, a young lady backed by a Planet of the Apes display,

answered his question by saying that she was selling a Star Trek record at \$8 -- that he'd been pushing at \$12 -- he sotto-vocalized to his partner "Cut the price on that Spock record to \$7." Why is this man wasting his talent on editors when he could be in Chicago selling vacuum cleaners?!

Don and company stayed to take in the huckster room, I moved on to the art show. Most of the stuff on the skethtable was abysmal -- but worse yet was the fact that all the good stuff was by artists who had sent it to NERG, BAB, GF, etc. to print it. A slim number of Freff illos was in there, which I scarfed up, and Norm showed me later some Shulls he had encovered. There was an awful lot of Mike Gilbert art there -- and that describes it, an awful lot. While there was good stuff mixed in, largely Gilbert seemed to have a low opinion of the people he was selling to -- it was all vastly overpriced.

The prizewinners in the art show came out later -- a lot of prizes, reflecting the massive amount of work in the show. Two pieces of sculpture stick in my mind. One, a candlestick cast in metal, a creature fastened to it that enveloped the whole corner it sat in with Lovecraftian foreboding; and a massive bewinged demon, talons stretching out into space. They both had asking prices in the thousands.

In the evening Richard Wadholm and I investigated the pizza of another of those places on Lincoln Blvd. It turned out to be soup on a crust, but it beat the product of the Wizard of Ahs.

By one in the morning I was hanging around the book exhibit in 1219 where great heaps of 30's reprints (Ralph Milne Farley et al), and a mass of new pbs were laid out to tantalize the senses of fans who where they lived suffered with less well-stocked shelves. Bruce Pelz indentured me to the LASFS table for the next morning (people thought the chairman should spend more time being complained to and less peddling LA's surplus junk). Met Greg Bridges and his friend, from Tennessee. Though they didn't know Chapdelaine too well, and I knew no one else in Tennessee, we helped the conversation stagger on with the help of Hochberg and Wadholm until Mike Glicksohn came by with -- lo and behold! -- genuine IPA, the panther piss of the ghods. Bridges took this opportunity to warily

sniff its delicate bouquet, and passed out on the floor. But Richard Wadholm had the immortal boon granted to him: a sip from the bottle. The rare beverage trickled inside him. When he awoke in the hospital the next morning he still had a look of effervescent ecstasy on his face. I asked Glicksohn if Jim McLeod (chief proponent of the Coors faction) had gotten to him. Perhaps a drinking tourney could be staged? Regrettably the green bottle held in the grip of the Canuck was the last of its kind west of the Pecos. Maybe at Torcon the two will be able to work something out -- except that by then the Australians may be back in force with some of their beer. Bill Wright let me try some of the bidding committee's stock; it was light and excellent. Glicksohn laid a benediction on us before he left, wearily, "I wish people who don't drink would stay out of the Coor's/IPA debate." What is he trying to do? Kill the whole rivalry?

Harlan Ellison goose-stepped into the exhibition during our conversation and was greeted by some loudly garbled creebing from Harry Harrison. I had the sudden vision of them squaring off, as Ellison would have with Asimov, but the whole thing never got properly started. Glicksohn went to talk to Harlan, and I went down to claim a bed.

3. BLUE BANANA CUPCAKES

"It's nine-thirty in the goddamned morning?" I was incredulous. The woman running the library table had stowed her trash in our room and had now phoned with the news that she was coming to pick it up. When she got to the door I shoved it out to her, then gave up sleeping and got dressed.

Among the most fun I had was manning the LASFS table. I had been seated behind the Barr-Kirk illos, the old fanzines, the cupcakes, pendants, medallions, and assorted matter for about fifteen minutes when Charlie Brown showed up in the area. The LASFS table was on a main-traveled route, in front of the escalators and beside the elevators, one on route from the huckster room to the art show, on another from the information table to the registration desk. It was inevitable that everyone should pass by there at one time or another, and upon Brown's arrival a passing Norman Hochberg ~~fingered~~ pointed him out to me. Charlie and a young woman came over to the table and exchanged pleasantries, Charlie analyzing my LOCUS locs as silly (he's right, too). I did not associate/recognize Dena as such, and when she started feigning to strike my defenseless (er) person I asked for an introduction. When I found out that she was Dena then I knew I'd better duck. I arranged to have plenty of my "What kind of people read LOCUST" circular in the con area; stacks of the prototype (What Kind of People Read LOCUST?) were at Westercon, and the temptation was irresistible. It went over in APA L well, for it included such takeoffs on the pro's quotes as "KILGORE TROUT: 'locust became rapidly -- even immediately -- essential as soon as I discovered my Sears Catalog was gone.'" As a matter of fact it enjoyed a certain reputation at the con, for the following Thursday night I continued to get the rumor carried to me by beaming fan faces that "Charlie Brown says he's going to sue you."

At about 12:30 I got my chance to play reporter. A radio show producer on ABC's network stages a program called The View From 2000, into which two of Saturday's panels fit exactly. The first one, Patterns of the Future, produced about two pages of notes on a subject being fought over today -- power plants and the matter of atomic generating stations. Moderator Jerry Pournelle probably came off looking better than anybody -- better than the SoCal Edison stooge, the taciturn ecologist from the Sierra Club, the corporation ecologist, or Mrs. Koupal of the People's Lobby who had a comeback for everything but nothing new to say. The debate was fought to a standstill, like a WWI battle which could sustain a million casualties and advance the line sixty whole yards.

Right after they emptied out the Patterns group it was time to refill the house for the Harlan Ellison Show, cohosted by George Scithers. If they ever get a trumpet player they'll knock Carson off the air. (the gist of Ellison's speech was mentioned last issue).

That evening the costume

was crammed with cafe tables and people pressing forward so they could hear the presentations that went along with some of the costumes. Prominent entries included The Turd -- a lad clad in Skippy peanut butter, Ed Green as a fannish flasher whose trench-coat was whipped open to reveal NEO! on his chest, Astrid Anderson painted red, and a man superbly decked out as the Fres cover for the Queen's Own FBI.

Weinstein, Baker, Harness, Nielson, Hochberg, Mitchell and I retired to 637 to plan our alternative to the Banquet. Producing a single sheet bit of propaganda on Elliot's ditto machine (here Mike Wood introduced both expertise and confusion, enough of the former to overcome our latter), we then headed off past one in the morning to distribute it. A quick swing through the lobby and we were out in the poolside area where most of those still awake were quartered. The point of the flyer was THE RANQUET -- to be staged at a McDonald's out on La Tijera prior to the Banquet itself, permitting fans to gather and eat together at comparatively zip cost instead of 8 bucks, and to witness the presentation of the Hocus, APA-H's equivalent to you-know-what.

Elliot and I had already been down there earlier in the evening to talk with Bill Wright about ANZAPA, Larry Nielson also present to lead our way. We stayed to see Robin Johnson work the projector for a showing of one of the funniest flicks I've ever seen, and the only fan film I've ever seen, an adventure involving Aussie Fan as the foiler of a plot to kill the Australia in '75 concomm. The film was still being shown when we arrived later, so we passed some RANQUET flyers to the person nearest the door and moved on. There were probably forty or fifty people in the area, and most got a flyer. Before we wore out our welcome Elliot, Jack Harness and I made the grand circle back to the hotel where valiant efforts to wear it out nearly came to fruition. I'm kidding, of course, but having two guys nabbing everybody in sight to hand out literature tends to wear on a group's patience. We tried to keep people aware that it was all a fun thing, not a protest or anything of that nature.

SEPTEMBER ZYRMP, 1941, A DAY THAT SHALL LIVE IN INGLEWOOD... Sunday's opening event was a venture out to Sylmar with me, Harness, Hochberg, Baker, Mitchell and Weinstein. My mother spread out beef and ham, and the conventioners who had been surviving on infrequent ingestions of junk food stowed away a considerable helping of the real thing. The current ANALCG had come in the mail, with Gaughan's first cover for it. My opinion of Gaughan's cover art has always been low -- just don't like what he did. This was different but no more attractive, certainly nothing like his stuff that was going in the auction. Apparently the direction Gaughan takes for his best work is not that preferred by editors and art directors.

We contrived to get Jack Harness back fannishly late for his own panel, fandom in the 60's, one of several fanhistorical panels held. Eddie Jones, Buck Coulson, rich brown, Lon Atkins joined him. It was a smoothly run recounting of the decade's trends, mainly each person explaining how he'd been overturned from his vantage point and outdistanced by other fan for prominence. All had in their way windled BNF-size influence in the 60s that now they have either let go, had taken away from them, or in Coulson's case, changed his tone in using it.

That evening the RANQUET was wild. A lot of people had said they'd come, but since it was well out of walking distance I knew most wouldn't come. But with Ed Green (Professional Neo), Jack Harness (Fan GoH), Norm Hochberg ("Pro" GoH with 2 whole rejecsclips), and Elliot Weinstein as Toastmaster, plus Joe Minne, myself, Mike Yampolsky, Scott Baker, Glenn Mitchell and Matthew Tepper all expected, the four people who came as a result of the flyer totaled the gathering to 15. Not bad. We filled two tables at the side of McDonald's, performed our program (Ed Green parodying Ellison with a speech on amateurism). The plastic lids on the coke cups served as impromptu Ranquet badges. We broke up around 7:00 and lit out for the real Banquet. There we lucked into an empty table and listened to Elliot make noise with the glass goblets of water.

Robert Bloch livened the crowd and

upheld his reputation as a really funny toastmaster. Too soon he gave way to the Coulsons and Fred Pohl. Both attempted humor, but following Bloch is tough. And when the Hugos came due, it was no laughing matter.

You know the results long since. The tension experienced in having them announced to the audience was artificial; if I was surprised by a couple of results, I cared only about one. As for that one, when Rotsler was announced second in the FANARTIST category, I joined the rebellious undercurrent with my own obscenity. If this were Munich (the Olympics ran concurrently with the WorldCon) garbage would have been thrown onto the stage amid loud catcalls and whistles. But it's ridiculous to do this at Tim Kirk's expense, seeing as he won the majority of the 498 votes. He hesitantly, as if dazed, thanked the group and disappeared quickly to mass applause. This is I believe Rotsler's fourth consecutive nomination without gaining the Hugo. I suspect a special award for his contribution would be fitting. After all, to have the voting majority say no four times in pretty convincing, but to come in number two so often also deserves recognition. If the voters don't think he's the best, what can you do? Browbeat them into submission? Convert Rotsler to another style of cartooning? Harangue the masses?

Farmer got the Hugo for best novel -- fine, I voted for him. Silverberg finished fifth -- a surprise, since the fan press had so vocally championed him. Anderson ascending triumphantly to the stage to get his Novella prize. Larry Niven, as if opening the visor on a helmet, displayed a huge unending smile when his "Inconstant Moon" picked up a Hugo. CROCK-WORK won. F&*yawn*SF traipsed off with Best Prozone. LOCUS beat NERG -- inevitable, I guess. Warner deservedly copped best fanwriter. That Vardeman edged Digby underwhelmed me mucho. And Ullyot? Really, man, that is too much.

5. A NICE DAY ~~FOR~~

~~SCREENING~~ IF IT DON'T RAIN

I zooped on in to spy the Business Meeting -- figured it was a good way to ~~pop pop pop~~ fulfill a fannish duty and see some for real BNFs. Only they weren't wearing their name badges either... Honest, dudes, how can us panting tourists get our jollies if you remain anonymous? Bruce Palz and the omnipresent Program Coordinator George Scithers (who did an excellent job) opened the meeting. Various housekeeping measures were passed, Harlan Ellison shepherded through the change from Best Prozone to Best Editor (a wise, realistic move), and the re-inclusion of Best Novelette (boohiss). Alex Elsenstein was persuaded to do the right thing after much prompting -- his motion permits works (non-English) to be eligible for Hugos both when originally published, and when translated into English. Brian Burley pled his case for a lengthening of the bidding cycle from two to three years. As Fred Lerner informed him, "You couldn't pass the Crucifixion with a speech like that." I think it would depend on who was giving it...

Norman Spinrad favored us with his visit, and in the words of Jim Hollander "The worst experiences I had at LACon were: getting lost in crowds where I could see no one I knew, and personally meeting Norman Spinrad." He was manning the upstairs LASFS table which Spinrad o'eturned.

And, of course, there was My Panel. In my fan speaking career I've proved that I'm best in print. But there was no way I'd turn down an invite to sit aboard a WorldCon panel. I grabbed it. But the day, a couple weeks before the con, that I got the formal note about serving I opened it to see the names of participants listed at the top. When those names hit the California earth Dr. Richter's machine punctured the drum with its stylus. There was:

CHARLIE (sesimic rumbling in the Sierras, forests knocked about like toothpicks) BROWN

JUANITA (tidal wave smashing against tall cliffs in a hurrican while cool, clear voice resonates a filksong) COULSON

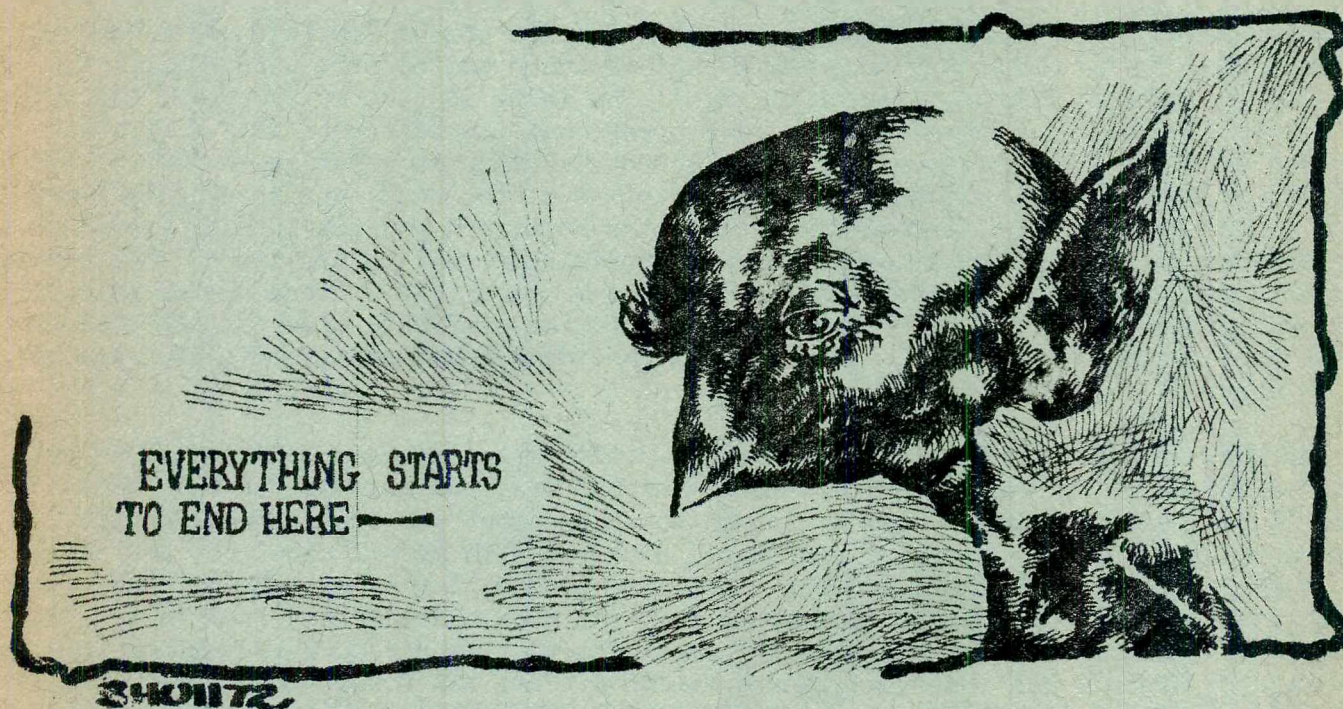
BOB (ton of bricks falling from massed bomber squadrons of the RAF, striking plate glass) VARDEMAN

MARSHA (massive hailstones pelted from thunderclouds into a volcano) ELKIN

SCRATCH (gratuitous explosion) BACHARACH
MIKE (popcorn popping) GLYER

Suddenly I had a silent spring complex, rereading MY LIFE by Helen Keller, and other valuable aids. It was heavy stuff, all right, only the heaviness was the combat between Charlie Brown to stay on the subject, and Scratch, with the able assistance of Al Schuster, to get into reminiscences about the size of cons to come. Our panel's conclusion is that everything's going to hell, soon fandom will be so fractionated that nobody will know what's happening. Since then, though, I've noticed that nobody knows what's happening anyhow, and since when hasn't fandom been fractionated? Our ability to communicate between the parts when we desire still remains, and that's as much as has to remain. LOCUS contributed muchly to that union; for you LOCUS haters in the audience, sorry, but IMHO over all.

One thing, if anyone thinks he's going to make a pile of bread on a Worldcon, it's the junior partners of the Philly in '77 bid -- Burley, Lerner and Scratch. You guys remind me of the sercon worldcon Goodman once joked about -- 10,000 attendees, dressed in uniforms for security and easier management. Maybe the joke's on us?



AUSTRALIA IN '75

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HOMO HACK

.....

I'm a man who says what he thinks, but is never quite sure of what he thinks until he says it. Once it's all out in the open, I can look it over to see where I disagree with myself; which is why I prefer to talk an idea over with someone before I commit it to paper. Once I've written something down on paper, it is true, and virtually unalterable until I've seen it in print and appreciate how wrong it may be. God, I sent off an essay to a publisher with the most insane paragraph I've ever written. I mean, it is absolutely, totally, utterly wrong, and I secretly knew it was wrong when I wrote it, and its wrongness haunts me to this day, but it is so well-phrased, so extraordinarily perceptive, and interesting in its utter wrongness that it seems to me it ought to be right. In fact, I showed the paragraph to two respected friends. I asked them what they thought, in one last desperate effort to save myself, and both simply said it was "interesting". That is, until the last time I spoke with one of them: "Yes," he said, "I remember that. Man, was that wrong."

Never rely on friends for honest criticism: they're honest too late. When editors wouldn't read my fiction, they encouraged me. Now when editors are encouraging me, they say my fiction "stinks." A pox on them! The thing is that my wrongness was not the result of ego, but lack of it. I let my prose get the better of me. I got so involved with the flow, balance, etc., I allowed the prose to generate an idea of its own; and it can do that. It's sort of like rapture of the deep; you're writing along allowing the logic of one sentence to dictate the next, and you get into a dream-like trance of words. Sometimes it can turn out surprisingly well: other times, most times, disastrously. Style can be the worst enemy a young writer has. Every one of us should develop a contempt for it. Our language should be the simplest, clearest expression of our ideas, and nothing more. If it is, if the ideas have merit, style will emerge: see Zelazny.

But what is all of this about? I'm prose-drifting again! See! See! I started this letter after a day at the typewriter and I'm washed out, but this is the only time I'm going to get to write, so -- What I planned to write about was criticism. And what I planned to write about criticism was that I disagree with myself about how useless it is. When I wrote that letter, and the other zine pieces, I was very discontented with my own reviews, and suggestions to improve them (or models available) from more serious reviewers. Since then I've read some pro criticism that impressed me. Wilfred Sheed's "The Morning After", for instance; Edmund Wilson's three fat books without a dull word in any of them; and Lionel Trilling's "The Liberal Imagination" which is impossible to read for ten pages without hitting an insight that will have you pacing the room for hours. (Actually, it made me too nervous to finish it.) I still agree with what I said as it pertains to 99.5% of all academic critics, and 100% of all fan reviewers; but the exceptions are marvelous! I have thoroughly enjoyed them as literature, and I have learned from them. Good criticism can definitely deepen your appreciation of literature. And it can serve literature, and writers, handsomely.

QUASISAPIEN

Paul Walker discusses
the ancestry of reviewers
and pro writers in a
letter to ye editor.....

PAUL WALKER

For one thing, criticism is an advertisement. It tells you a book is available, and it tells you what it is about. It tells you who wrote it, and who the author is; if this is a first novel, a second, or a third. But more importantly, it tells you what is best in it, and what is worst. It tells you how it is like the writer's previous books, and suggests what it portends. It tells you that it is a book to be taken seriously; or one to be ignored. It tells you the writer is a serious one, or merely an entertainer. And it tells you that at least one intelligent human being liked or disliked it.

And a body of criticism is an effort to bring order into chaos; to instill sanity, and the semblance of discipline, into the hysteria of adulation and condemnation. To give the reader a perspective on the literature of his or her day, so they won't think it exists in an island of time.

And a good critic is a quixotic (perhaps inevitably foolish) champion of the writers. It is his, or her, thankless task to see that truth prevails: that the best in a writer is seen by the readers; that the best writers are read at all, and read specifically for what is best in them. And his task is also to hound the worst, to define and dismiss them for their foul, hackish deeds; to haunt those who achieve popular fame with the truth of their shallowness.

I say quixotic, and inevitably foolish, because such a critic must feel very strongly about fiction; must have very definite notions of what is good and what is not, and why; and fiction being the abstract, elusive, changeable thing that it is, no critic can stay "with it" indefinitely. His, or her, convictions eventually become reactionary, archaic, narrow. Even quaint. Perhaps it would be wiser for the critic to discourage his convictions; to develop a sense of "selflessness" to be as receptive as possible to new forms, new ideas in literature.

Reading is an experience: a memorable one at best; and no less memorable at its worst. We like to relive our experiences in memory, in conversation, in books written about them; we like to rediscover old experiences; renew old enthusiasms as well as acquire new ones. Criticism can give us new perspectives on reading; revive old experiences; and it can also help us to over-

come our prejudices, to see the newer, more difficult forms in simpler, more acceptable terms. At least, this has been my experience from reading Sheed, Wilson, Trilling. I recommend them: they are exciting reading.

And I would like to comment upon my speculations on the nature of Homo Hack Quasi-sapien. Let me offer another vague distinction between writers: the Hack is one who writes for an editor. The Serious Writer is one who writes for a reader. That is, the Hack looks on writing as a living: he or she is there to supply a particular editor or editors with what they need, or ask for, as swiftly as possible. They are concerned with producing a saleable product within a minimum time with minimum effort; and will gauge their ability, not by the literary quality of their efforts, but by the sheer quantity of their output. None of which means that they do not enjoy what they do; or that their efforts are without redeeming social significance; or that they will not have a large readership; but that their concern is for quantity of output rather than quality.

(A slightly more sophisticated type of hack is the "professional" who is less concerned with editors than with "markets." He is after larger profits, movie and TV sales, etc. He studies, or is guided to, the current fads in literature: best sellers, or at least big sellers. If suspense is in, he writes suspense; if porn is in, he writes porn. He is adaptable. He may be talented more than the average Hack, or less, but he is more sales conscious: he, or she, will do anything for money.)

Those of us who have not made money writing cannot imagine what it is like to write for money; what it is like to think like a writer who has, and is, making money at it. I've known amateurs; I've known pros. Believe me, they are two different worlds. An amateur is all aspiration; a pro is all intention. To an amateur writing is something ritualistic, cultish, enigmatic; to a pro it is just something he does, for a job. He may do it for a living, or he may do it for pleasure, but to him there is nothing mysterious, or unusual, about the actual practice of it: one sits down and writes, period. And what one writes will often appear in print, eventually. They've done it so often that it has become a routine. It probably still is fun; they still get a kick out of seeing their name on a new book; they are still flattered by fan letters, invitations to cons, etc., but it has long since stopped being a thing of wonder, or novelty; it is a job, an experience in itself that only another pro can appreciate.

Perhaps one of the things that turn a promising amateur into a Hack is the amount of bullshit he or she is forced to excrete in the first years of professional activity. Famous editors lose their aura and become working stiffs like everybody else: how fast a young writer's opinion can change from reverence for an editor like Pohl, or Campbell, to contempt for them because they dared to change the writer's title, or cut his story. They're human! Damn them. And when the young writer find himself with three novels to do for Ballantine, two short stories for Galaxy, and a novellette for F&SF that he's been promising for the last year: writing is suddenly hard work.

I believe the most talented writers tend to become hacks, because I believe that writing is easier for them than for others. Writing itself can be very pleasurable; you feel free, euphoric, about time and space. And having people enjoy your writing, having them praise you, and see the respect in their eyes, can be pleasurable as well.

And knowing your work will appear in print can give you confidence and new self-esteem like nothing else. But rewriting is another matter. Outlining is tolerable, even interesting. Writing, as I say, is pleasurable, but if you lack the discipline (as a younger writer) to produce a really professional job on the first draft: if you have to revise and rewrite more than once -- perhaps several times -- and then if you are never sure it is publishable, or, if it is, that it is any good, then writing can be painful. But even if you are sure that you can do it in one draft, that it will sell,



but the ms. demands tremendous concentration and constant care, it can be unpleasant.

If you have sufficient natural ability, or talent, and are willing to devote the time and expend the effort, you can learn to write, and be a professional: you do not have to be good to do it, either. But natural ability is not enough: writing requires a sense of discipline, organization, and generally a heroic willingness to practice, for it is a skill, a craft, not a body of knowledge. And regardless of how much natural ability you may have, if you are incorrigibly undisciplined, or lack a sense of organizing a story, may never be able to write a saleable story, or if you do, never be able to do it prolifically -- writing will always be more work than it's worth.

This is particularly true of hard science fiction writing. Unless you know your science, it is unprofitable because it involves too much time in research.

That 's why I believe our Hacks tend to be more talented, and that young hacks tend to become better writers than the more serious but less able variety. If you cannot acquire the knack of writing, the concepts of form, a facility with language, for whatever reason, if these things remain a constant problem, then it will be extremely difficult to progress to more sophisticated structures; and if you have worked at them regularly (that is, written every day) for more than two years, it would probably be wiser to give up writing fiction, because even if you do sell, it's unlikely you'll be happy. I suspect that the major reason most amateurs never make it is less because of a lack of talent than the sensible realization that writing is too hard for them to be rewarding. (That is, it requires two frustrations in exchange for one sat-

isfaction.)

But by saying that writing is "easy" for someone, does not mean that it still isn't hard work. It is grueling work. It involves tremendous concentration of mind and energy, usually compressed into a few hours. Yet it is worth it if the product is as good as the effort you've expended on it. Writers will turn out bad books that they know are bad books because they didn't have the time, or inclination, to work at them; and the bad ones won't upset them as long as they know they could have done better; they could write just as well as they intended to. It is crucial for a writer to learn early in his career just how capable he is, and at what he is most capable. If he overestimates himself, he can ruin his reputation with his first novels. It is tolerable for a young writer to begin as a well-meaning, or typical hack and progress; it is less tolerable for a young writer to come on like Updike (his work is usually complete imitation) and descend. But the more common fault (and not only with writers) is to underestimate themselves.

I suspect that the most common cause of mediocrity in sf is the lack of ego in its writers. This may sound hilarious to you, but the best writers I know don't think of themselves as being "serious" or capable of being "serious" writers. And they are afraid of speaking too seriously about their work; some are afraid of reading serious mainstream works for fear of taking themselves too seriously; and some write very little because they don't think they are very good.

Some of the worst writers I know (some of whom are equally talented) write badly because they are afraid to write well: it would mean admitting to themselves that they are wrong in too many assumptions. Learning involves some humility and the belief that you can be better than you are. Weak egos are fearful of finding out that they are no good at all. They would rather live with the anxiety that their work is inferior, rather than admit it and try to improve it.

Writers can get all the egoboo they want from editors, and readers, and other writers who will forgive anything, tolerate anything, if the writer is making money, and turns out his share of entertaining stories. A writer can achieve a safe standard of quality, and prolificacy; and as he becomes more experienced, he can dabble in more serious ideas, etc. But he will have to maintain his facade of indifference to art.

Of course, there are a few artistic types who are capable of art, but many pros, many well-known ones, could do better, more consistently, if they thought better of their work. This is not advice: it is, I believe, a fact.

A piece of advice I would give to a young writer who has begun to sell is not to confuse "seriousness" of effort with "seriousness" of content. The latter is dependent on your experience and intellectual capabilities: if you are a Brain, you will write Brainy stories; if you have a "sense of life", you will write sensual, sensitive stories.

It is better to allow these things to surface of and by themselves, and not to force them, to emulate writers you simply admire, but may have nothing in common with. "Seriousness of effort" is another matter: it means trying to do your best, regardless of what you write about; however deep and sensitive and intellectual it is, or however simple and entertaining, try to make every story as good as it can be. Risk being pretentious. But don't try too hard on any one story: your fiction is something you do, not what you are. If you allow it to be a measure of your personal worth, it will kill you. Never invest your whole ego in one story: it may fail, for some stupid reason, and you will be flattened. Never invest your whole ego in writing at all! If you put all your eggs in one basket, you're going to be crushed. A writer needs a second source of self-esteem: sports, business, sex, something to supply a reserve when writing goes badly. Think of writing in terms of writing, as an on-going activity, and of the stories as aspects of that activity; and regardless of how badly a story may treat you,

never break the continuity of working regularly at it. When all else fails, and there is not a hope left, or a thought in your head, the sheer momentum of habit can keep you going.

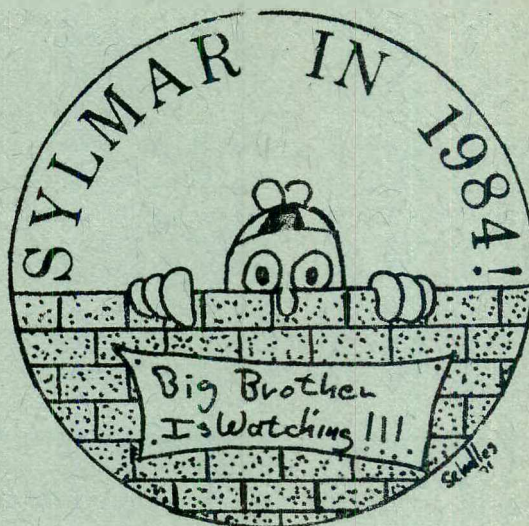
PUTRICON ONE

" THE STORY OF A CON OF DISTINKSHUN " *****

ELLIOT WEINSTEIN

ONE YEAR AGO, the Dusty Palms MotorLodge closed down due to an order from the Los Angeles County Health Department. It was so unlike any other site that fandom has experienced, that we decided to select it for the Putricon I. Today, the building is still condemned, but we are not going to let that stop our con.

The Dusty Palms MotorLodge is not a Hotel. If it were, it would be the wrong place to hold the Putricon. Actually, it is the only remnant of a once large slum that covered half of North Hollywood until 1945. Its staff is composed of ex-cons who flunked out of sixth grade, who will literally kill fans with their unique sense of humor. They are likely to drop bombs at our parties and place disorder in our programs. We will have one full two-story cramped apartment in a vacant lot behind the lodge completely at our disposal. The heated cesspool is perfect for skinny-dipping or Polish baths. There is a Film Room, where only the worst movies ever will be shown. The Dusty Palms is one place where your money will be welcomed.



FANS WHO ATTENDED Putricon 0, held two years ago at the Dusty Palms will be pleased to note these changes. The plaster that was falling off the ceiling is now on the floor. The windows that were slightly off their hinges are now completely off. The dust is much deeper and the food is many times worse. In addition, a coffee shop with exceptionally poor service has been added to supplement your enjoyment of the con. There are three McDonald's, two Kentucky Fried Chicken, one Taco Bell and a Jack-in-the-Box within ten miles of the Dusty Palms.

THE DUSTY PALMS operates on the Putridplan: If you can catch it, you can eat it. Meals are served in troughs within a fifteen minute period at irregular times. Break down, it's cheaper to catch and broil a cockroach, which fortunately are in great abundance.

THE CONVENTION will run from March 17, April 31, and June 31. The Dusty Palms agreed to provide nothing for an additional \$25.00, otherwise you have to eat the meals served.

THE ROOMS are so small that only one person could sleep comfortably. However, due to the limited number of rooms (we have ten) we are forced to require that at least twenty people share rooms.

THE PROGRAMMING WILL INCLUDE: The worst movies ever made, the Hugu Ranquet and Hugu

Presentation. Autograph parties with Your Favorite Hoaxes. Panel discussions on all topics, mass exodus to all the putrid spots in town, Saturday night at the meat-packing plant, water balloon fights, SKINNY DIPPING. An art show where anonymous and cruddy artists display their wares, and their art. An auction where the worst art will get the most money, a Huxter room with raised podium on which David Gerrold will hold sway. U*N*I*F*O*R*M*I*T*E*D-G*U*A*R*D*S! 25-inch diameter identification badges, a two-and-a-half page full color ditto program booklet, and a collating session for APA-H.

Be there -- or be square! (?)

THE ONCE AND FUTURE PRE

RELICS

My thoughts flow out like water
To wherever they will fly
And rest in some dark niche
Across the frosted sky.
Or hide among the future
Or times we've left behind
Scrawled on a yellow cave wall
Across the ceiling of my mind

Everything is circles turning wheels
within
We watch our presence ripple as our
universe begins
Flowing to its end

Our time is caught in relics
Of images of us
In amber colored wavelengths
Across the universe

And everyone is like a wave of
memories and more
That splash and turn and ripple
Back from some galactic shore
To where we were before.

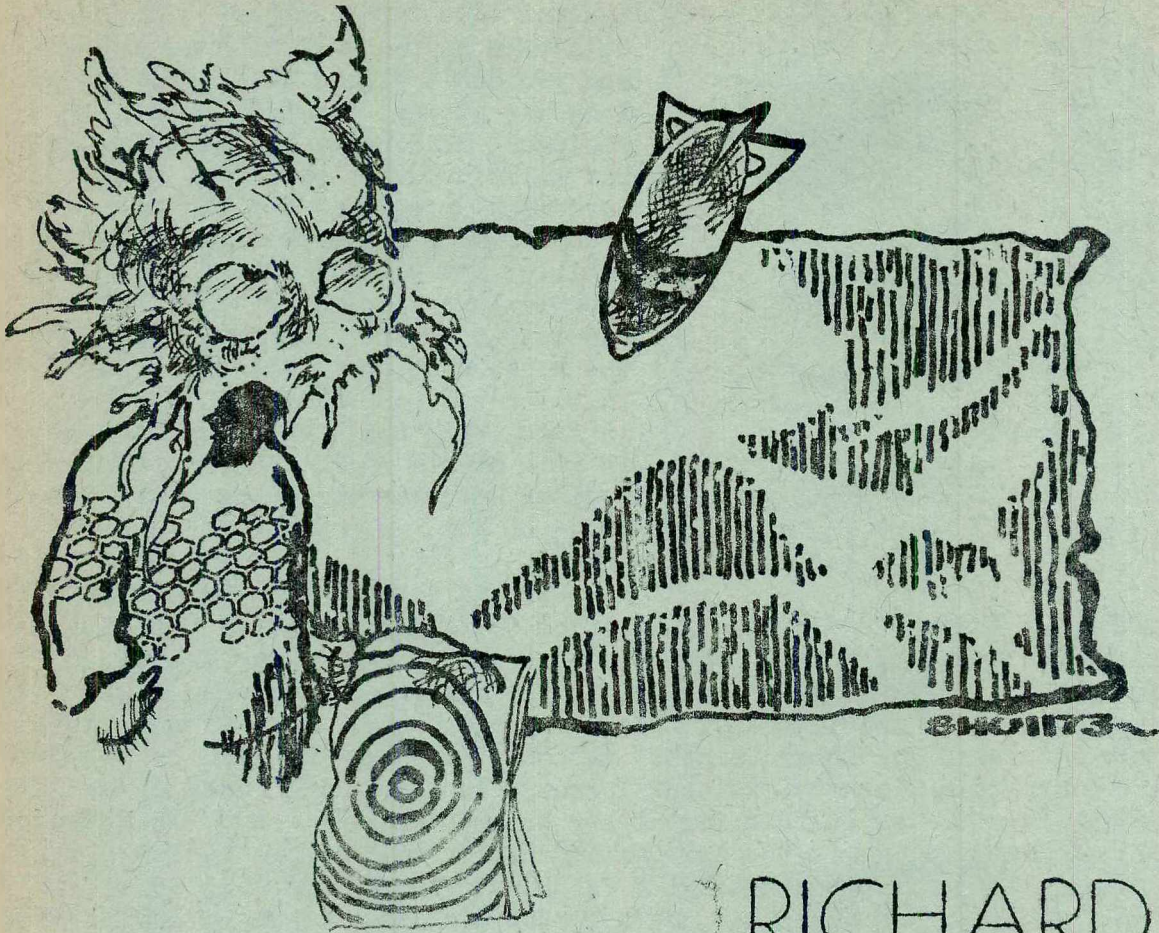
----- Richard Wadholm

Ever since issues of SCIENCE FICTION COMMENTARY, THE JOURNAL OF OMPHALISTIC EPISTEMOLOGY, and SPECULATION dropped into the mailbox in the span of a week, and combined to give me a view of that vein of sercon I hadn't seen before, I've been itching to get into some editorial commentary on an alternative sercon. There's much difference between that trio, and the Loc From Chairman Leon to follow, for instance. And that trio of zines seems to suggest a set of assumptions that, while perfectly valid in that setting, are not universally valid and deserve ~~triple~~ examination.

Then, I seem to have the luxury at long last of knowing somewhat of the material in next issue. CY CHAUVIN will favor us with SF: THE UNREALIZED DREAM. Stan Burns will praise and cleave the sundry DAW books -- 48 in the first year of existence -- during a full overview of the Wollheim products. Other than that nothing is for sure, but having in the course of a week at USC had to "avoid dropping the atomic bomb" and "chart a course out of the Great Depression" for two history classes I am feeling rather self-satisfied and something is bound to turn up. (It's really cool to tell people "I can't contribute to APA-L this week -- I have to solve the Depression!" And then watch them yawn nonchalantly -- that's the cool part.)

Art-wise, the next issue ought to be something of a surprise. Herr Rotsler is vending fiction rather than fanart now, and as David B. Williams said: "Can you taste the irony: what if Rotsler wins a Hugo as a Vile Pro writer before getting one as a fan artist?"

THE VIEW FROM GROUND ZERO



RICHARD
WADHOLM

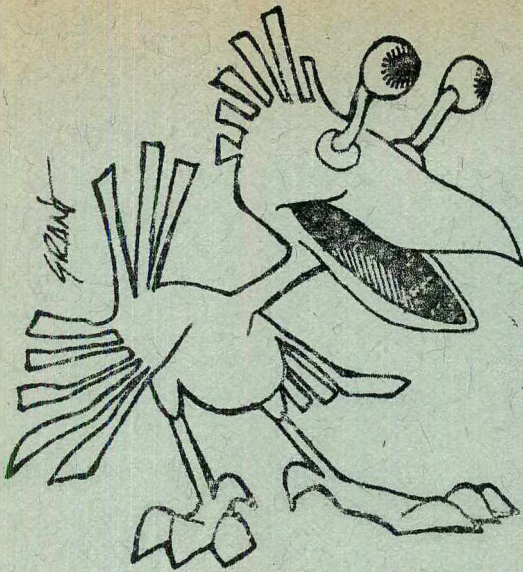
THE VIEW FROM GROUND ZERO
(I'LL THINK OF A TITLE A
LITTLE LATER...)

I just finished reading Spinrad's book, or Spinrad's Book, for those of you who've read it. You know, it's a funny thing about some authors. Spinrad is the prime example I can think of, off-hand. They may not write the best material -- may not even be all that well-liked by the masses -- but their work, good or bad, is always shot back and forth across the pages of fandom for years afterward. That's the way it's been with Spinrad with most of his novels. Either that or else all the novels he's written except *MEN IN THE JUNGLE*, *THE IRON DREAM*, and *BUG JACK BARRON* have had a distribution of like, twenty or thirty to close friends and family.

His new book is the same way. I mean, it's better than the others -- it doesn't have the high points of *BUG JACK BARRON*, but it doesn't have the low ones either -- but still, what can you say about a book that rests its worth on being bad? "Hey yah, Norman, that's a really bad book. Congratulations babe." But the criticism's been like that. There's been a lot of talk about Hitler's/Spinrad's book but most of it that I've read has been on the level of "isn't he clever?" and leaving it at that. This may be the view I get from having limited access to the zines around, but it seems the criticism's been a lot lighter than the book. If you don't expect a book to have be-

RICHARD "THE MIGHTY WAD" WADHOLM

THE VIEW FROM GROUND BEEF



lieveability (and Spinrad's book, at least on the basic level, doesn't) and you don't expect it to have characters that are the least bit believable (anybody ever met a Trueman like Feric Jagger? Ever think you will?--in anyplace besides Marvel Comics?) and you don't expect it to have action (the book has action, but it's so stilted that you don't realize it is unless Hitler/Spinrad tells you) and you don't expect it to have mood or color (each of his scenes sounds like a stage setting for Cecil B. DeMille) and you even count the cloddy style trekkie-like monologues and all, to be assets (to me they were half the humor of the book) what do you read the book for? This isn't a condemnation of the book -- in fact, this won't even be a review of it in a minute -- but the one thing most reviews have missed is the most important thing of all. The point.

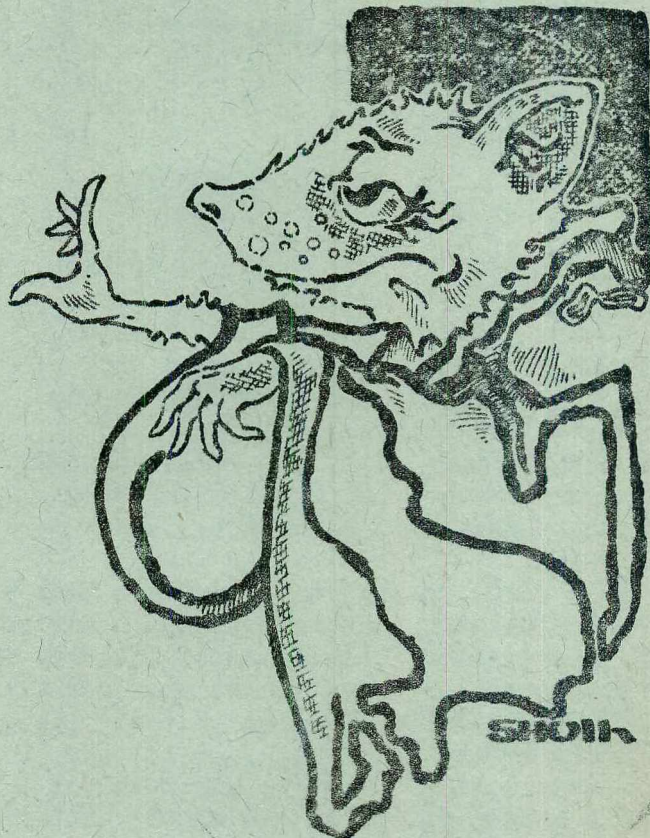
Spinrad's point has been kissed-off as having any number of things to do with A) Politics B) Dictatorships C) Hitler D) Literary criticism of SF by the Academe E) All of the Above F) None of the Above. If that were all there was to THE IRON DREAM's point, I'd be kissing it off, too. But I don't see that. His approach is too literary. His devices and villains are too classically SF. His little afterword by "Homer Whipple" may only be a detour from the political targets of the story to a literary one, but I choose to think not. Look at it this way: Feric Jagger is not a substitute for Hitler or even Spinrad, he's the archetypical sf hero. Lord of the Swastika is not the fantasy Hitler might have written, it's a caricature of every sf novel from SKYLARK OF VALERON to LORD OF LIGHT. And Hitler is not Hitler, or even Spinrad's alter ego, he's Gordon Dickson. Or E. E. Smith. Or Poul Anderson.

RITE OF PASSAGE was accused of being social comment on fandom by Judith Merrill. The review that she wrote was very favorable to the book, but her idea that its social comment was directed toward fandom limited the scope of Panshin's targets considerably. Lord of the Swastika is a different book aimed at different people for different reasons. The social comment it directs toward SF is valid, and any laughing you did at the book was laughing you did at a lot of others. It is billed as satire. It's a science fiction book written by Adolf Hitler, and as such we can laugh comfortably at what reads quite accurately as the kind of thing Good King Schickelgruber would write and think that we're laughing at the ravings of a universally hated villain. You're not. Lord of the Swastika is only a silly-putty, farcial model of most of the books and stories written in science fiction. What you're laughing at is the basic plot and characters of almost every sf story you've ever read, and probably liked. In short, what Lord of the Swastika is to, say, THE OUTPOSTER, Frank Zappa is to rock music. Does my heart good, too.

I mean, I have had it up to here with novels that read like "He was the only man with the power to save the world -- or destroy it. And they were looking for him." Does that look silly to you? It is fast becoming the bane of my existence. On the one hand we're telling the world that no matter what they see on the late show, we really aren't escapist literature and on the other we foster compliments from university professors that 'at least we haven't let the cynicism of straight literature infect

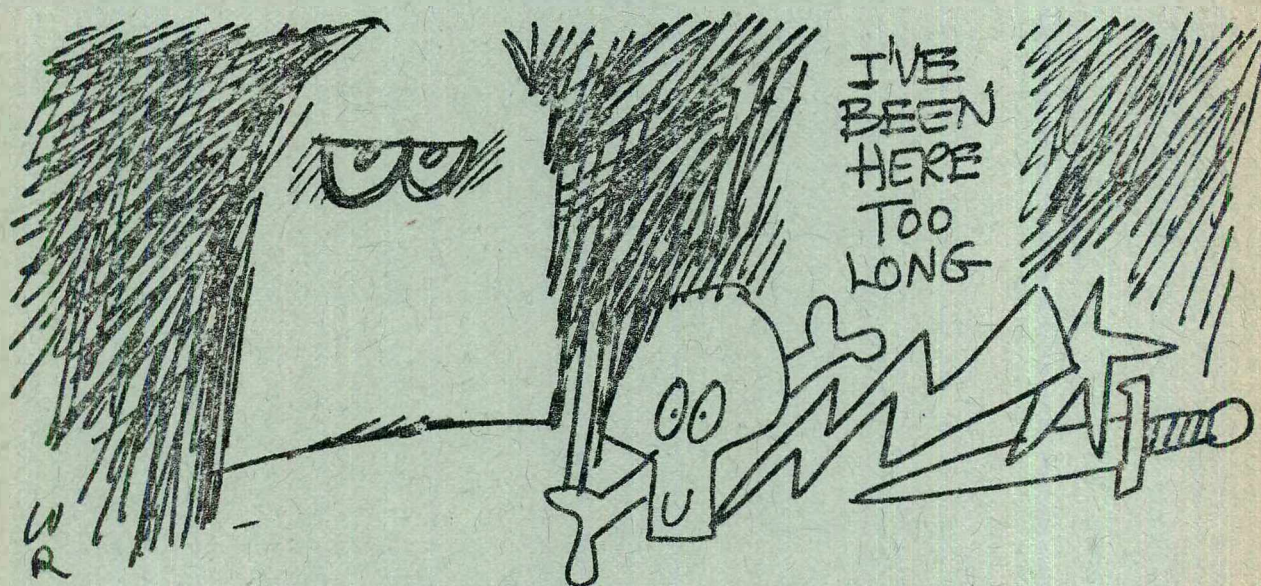
Us and our superheroes with The Way Things Really Are. And they're right, too. If we were really as much into realism and honesty (I hesitate to use the word liberal) as we would like to think, and would like the world to think, you know what would happen? For one thing, ANALOG would not now be the only SF prozine in the black. For another, all the Gordy Dicksons and Frank -- The Hack -- Herberts would be bus boys or shrimp fishermen or something. If we were as honest as we wish, a book like RITE OF PASSAGE might have been a more popular book. I heard lots of reasons why it should be an unpopular book (tho it came in first for the Nebula and second for the Hugo) but reading between the lines I kept getting the impression that the real reason it was laid down was because there were so many more colorful, adventurous, romantic and HEROIC books around. I mean, "Lookit this here, Ned, them fools at thuh Neb'lah 'wards got this here Silverburger book 'bout trucking around in time and getting killed an' ever'thing and they got this weirdy by Brunner an' even though I don't understand it, it's new wave and all and you know what they choose? Thuh Mutherz give it to some book about a 14-year-old chick growing up. Jeez, if I wanna read about that I'll start reading Gidget books. 'An' you know what else, Ned?" "No, whuzat, Clarence?" "She don't even kill anybody! Imagine that! She doesn't snuff out a single living soul and gits a book written about her." "There's no justice, Clarence." Yah, well that dude that wrote it's a red, I can tell cuz his first name is Alexei." "It shows, it show."

Look, of course there's a sense of wonder in science fiction. And at one time that quest for the sense of wonder was what made sf more open-minded than straight literature. Stories like "Heresies of the Huge God" and "The Star Pit" are as beautiful as they are for that very reason. But when that sense of wonder becomes a straight jacket and a book has to have the grandness of mighty things happening and worlds being shaken and people dying like flies before it will be accepted as good sf, it's time to realize that other things can cause a sense of awe a little smaller than the explosion of a galaxy. The coming of age of a young girl is also an awe-inspiring thing, if to no one else, at least to her. And denying that is snobbery as stilted and deep as that shown by mainstream critics in what they once wrote about books that talked about galaxies exploding and worlds being shaken. No doubt, there were flaws in RITE OF PASSAGE and I'm not about to say that everyone who didn't like it is automatically a throwback to the days of Murray Leinster. What I'm saying is that some authors, a comparative handful such as Panshin, Kornbluth, (the comment about him in Ground-0 a couple issues back was either a typo or a Wado because he's been one of my main men), Delaney and Norman Spinrad realize that everyone is a hero to himself no matter which side he's on and no matter how easily he can be killed by the starship commander. They've stated in their work an understanding that the big man that shakes worlds is very often a manipulator and a villain whether he's working for the side of Good and Nice or not, and that



the people really worth writing about are the pawns and spear-carriers who are both the victims and the audience to the James Kirks and Lorq Von Rays and Adolf Hitlers and Franklin Roosevelts of the realestate and unrealestate of the world. Panshin understood that and his novel was the lamb sacrificed to it. Delaney and Kornbluth understood it and won their reputation for everything else but. Spinrad understands it and since his comment is brought out by being as mighty and flashy as possible, he got away with it. As with everyone else who reads science fiction, I'm writing a novel too. It's on the 102nd page so I guess it will be finished. Here's a little advertisement ahead of time: its hero does nothing to change the course of history. He wants only to find his way home from an inter-galactic war and in the end he decides to run away from the galactic problems that affect him and everyone else. And I'm proud of that. If it doesn't sound like your kind of novel, it may be because you're not my kind of audience.

"Hey Ned, that Wad kid just may pull it off, yuh reelize that?" "Nah, lookit whut he's writing about." "Yah, maybe his story bites the Big One, but he's got the ego for it..."



((In response to Richard Wadholm's column in number six, Chairman Leon laid a few words on me. Taylor, chairman of review fandom, says: "Where on earth did I pick up the nickname 'Chairman Leon'?? I definitely don't look Chinese; my problem is that I look all too Irish..." Well, you see, reading your reviews has greatly improved my ping pong game, and I thought...))

LOC FROM THE
CHAIRMAN
LEON TAYLOR

Just a note, really, to inform you that you can have Richard Wadholm's coming-out party any time now. The investigation and toughness in his latest PREHENSILE column are, I think, some of the rinds of literary maturity; he has gone to ask, in echo after echo, that restless "Why?" question. Not all reviewers are so blessed. Most cannot see past the justified margins of their latest free book: with this novel, Silverberg is above/below/at his average...this time at bat Silverberg's strong point is plot/theme/characterization/style, his weak point is plot/theme/characterization/style... with this latest effort we can expect better/worse/similar things from Silverberg in

the future. (Instructions: circle the adjectives least/most likely to arouse fury)
Most fan reviewers are like the technocrats in those *Ace Doubles* they are always knocking: they are smug in their conventional wisdoms, preplotted in their courses. Richard thank God is not so afraid of being an ignoramus. He not only recognizes the obvious things, but probes them for principles that are partly obvious but mostly subtle. That takes an oblique angle of vision, whereas most fan reviewers are too level-headed to deduce original shadows.

Anyway Richard is a valuable instrument because he is beginning to ask the questions that really matter -- that is to say the larger ones. Since he is beginning to shed his skin, I might pass on to him a bit of advice Bruce Gillespie gave me a year ago: get away from sf for awhile. Read up on the hard sciences, the soft sciences, the anti-sciences which is the identity of science fiction. For sf is not a simple-minded genre, but a convergence of complex forces; the fact that we usually treat it as a simple-minded genre is a reflection on ourselves, not on sf. Someone is going to laugh, but I earnestly believe that the moment is coming when anyone unacquainted with science fiction will be unable to consider himself a modern man. I really am convinced. But that sort of sf, the sort that can function as a fella's sixth sense, is going to have to be a lot more vibrant, more cosmopolitan, more full-bodied than the collection of odd bones that passes for the name now. The trouble is, sf is constantly being equated with mystery and westerns as a specialized fiction. Not so. SF may have been that specialized in Aristotle's day, or even Voltaire's, but it can no longer be lean. Technology's the ticket now. If you will consider technology as a technique rather than a bunch of machines, and ponder the intuition that nothing man does is untouched by technology, then you will begin to see that science fiction is the only available lab for the final synthesis, and thus, guiding philosophy. G.K. Chesterton nominates humor as the religion of the future; I would argue for science fiction. Perhaps we are talking about the same thing.

But like euchre and low comedies sf is too often the subsistence diet of stimulus dodgers. With practiced effort it can be flagging and as predictable as the holes in doughnuts; yet, because it is alien, at its least sf carries sufficient novelty to barely carry its reader along with it. Believe it or not, some people are like that. They don't have to think or feel guilty: their minds are magically kept at bay by just enough stimulus. Here we have the sf fan rendered as a Baby Huey, sucking placidly on his latest Belmont blockbuster: a good old boy, but sorta dull. Not exactly prime wood for the torrents of the future.

Now I don't want to disparage mindless sf all the way to hell: it has its uses. For one thing, it is one of the few art forms that is as mortal as its creators. Delany is a fine writer, but he is liable to go nuts under all this insane pressure to produce *Novels That Stop The World Dead In Its Tracks*. Unless he is an immigrant hero out of the *Odyssey*, he is eventually going to have to take time to crawl out from under his beast of burden and screw around with some mindless sf. So mindless sf can be the cause that refreshes. It is the most common sort of science fiction, in both sense of the word: it is the most accessible form to beginners and confused pros. It is to meaningful sf what finger exercises are to the piano; and anyway, who wants to listen to Chopin heavies all day? So mindless sf is also a certain measure of fun.

In its place.

But when mindless sf becomes so rampant that it is the standard rather than the ice breaker, then a funeral is in order. Because it is pure entertainment, it is sufficient unto itself: thus it has no need of outside knowledge. Already sf becomes a closed circuit. But worse, because the most effective mind pacifiers are the familiar objects, mindless sf leans like a hunched man on a handful of willful carbonated symbols and sit-

uations -- like time travel, the planet that turns out to be earth, the rebel whose genes went wrong, and, of course, the terrible intergalactic war barely shunted by the Senator's mailboy. The Terran Ambassadors, you see, had been wearing hats of an enraging color.

Like a spider impaled on a fishhook, sf is so crippled by such crutches that it turns upon itself and dies. Only an occasional morale-booster like LEFT HAND OF DARKNESS saves it from a gaudy Ziff-Davis Reprint Tombstone.

For enlightenment, let us partake of an illustration (certainly preferable to an ill castration, wouldn't you say?). In our own tidy province of Fandom, we make use of certain abbreviations as shortcuts to familiar concepts. Faaning, fugghead, gafia-tion, loccing -- none of the definitions behind these words are difficult (providing you have a foothold in the basic fannish premises) and they are rather pleasant worksavers. But see here: using this jabberwocky isn't simply a mechanical substitution. Having been summoned from the void, these words take on a life of their own...as a matter of fact, they drain their life from the concepts they represent. The importance of the words becomes greater as the clearcut lines of the concepts fade and eventually the concepts themselves become pat cliches. When I was reviewing zines for Doc Watson's OSFAN, Dave Lewton used to complain that my columns were so burdened with this faanish lingo that they read like Sears catalogs for spaceshipsfreaks. That obliged me to shamefacedly admit that the fault was not in the faanish words themselves, but in my use of them. I had not been careful; I had forgotten that the shortcut words must be constantly infused with new blood or they and their mother concepts become vague and unattractive. If you become spoiled and let the term degenerate into a cliché, then the concept gets lost in the shuffle, as many OSFAN readers wished my columns would.

Well, to make a long story longer, the same process occurs in sf. Take this business of the FTL drive. Originally it was an exciting idea; but because it was rather convoluted, writers tended to simplify it more and more over the years until nothing was left but a single term for a mechanism. A mindless cliché, in other words: a piece of magical equipment that reader and writer put their blind trust in to zip away to their private dismal universe. Nowadays few writers are willing to return to the original concept and rethink it through in order to fashion a new twist. In sf, the FTL drive has been sucked dry of its emotional and creative possibilities, and only a gadget is left. American knowhow strikes again.

This deterioration of concept to shorthand to cliché is also discouraging familiar in non-literary fields such as religion. Ask me about the ikon in Russian religion sometime (go ahead: I dare you. Just ask me). This decay is certainly a curious disease: as if somebody started with a hale and succulent fruit, then somehow drained it dry of its juices until only the undisturbed rind was left.)

Wild, huh? But you can really stock up on underwhelming mediocrity when you apply the same principle to complexes of concept. Like time travel. Anybody who regularly reads F&SF (and honestly -- wouldn't you rather be shot by a firing squad? At least there's some excitement in that) has to drend or fake his way through at least one t-t ditty per issue. Invariably it's the same BY HIS BOOTSTRAPS variation: some incestuous anecdote about Joe Schmuck and the Mirrors of Time. It's more excruciating than bleeding bowels. Yet -- by harkening to the same self-meets-self pattern every danged time do you see what sf writers are missing out on? Here they have been handed free reins to Time -- Time! That intangible intoxicant which has infuriated philosopher and peasant alike -- and the hacks upstairs want to rethread the Laurel & Hardy bit. For stimulating reading, give me the million monkeys and their million typewriters anytime.

Yet I know how much it is to ask sf writers to reconsider their damnable cliches, to sniff them, poke them, bowl them into walls and torture them in every other conceiv-

able way just to find another angle to their substance. That sort of inspired inquiry requires incessant education and a mind more flexible than a moebius strip. I know how much that is to ask. So I won't ask it.

Instead I shall set for a proposition here for any sf reviewers who are halfway interested: that we unclog the possibilities of sf in our own criticism (yes, criticism. Might as well start thinking big now.) That we consider the billion and one facets of the Whole Wide World as expounded in physics, anthropology, religion, psychology, oceanography, linguistics, sociology, music, chemistry, political science, metaphysics (does anybody want to go on?) etc., ponder them, link them and present them in the peculiar light of sf as acquired knowledge. That we blow up our closed shabby formats and rules of reviewing -- I am sicker than I can tell you of 'critiques' that are meticulously laid out to be 1/3 plot summary, 1/3 threadbare adjectives and 1/3 title page statistics -- and invent some wilder creatures. Why hasn't anybody reviewed LEFT HAND OF DARKNESS from the standpoint of Arctic anthropology? Or considered NEUTRON STAR in light of the recent Black-Hole-Of-The-Universe theory? Or initiated a psychoanalytic treatment of Sturgeon's love stories (ever notice the rampant sadism in them?) Or picked up James Blish's hatchet and execute an analysis of his doctrine of evil in BLACK EASTER?

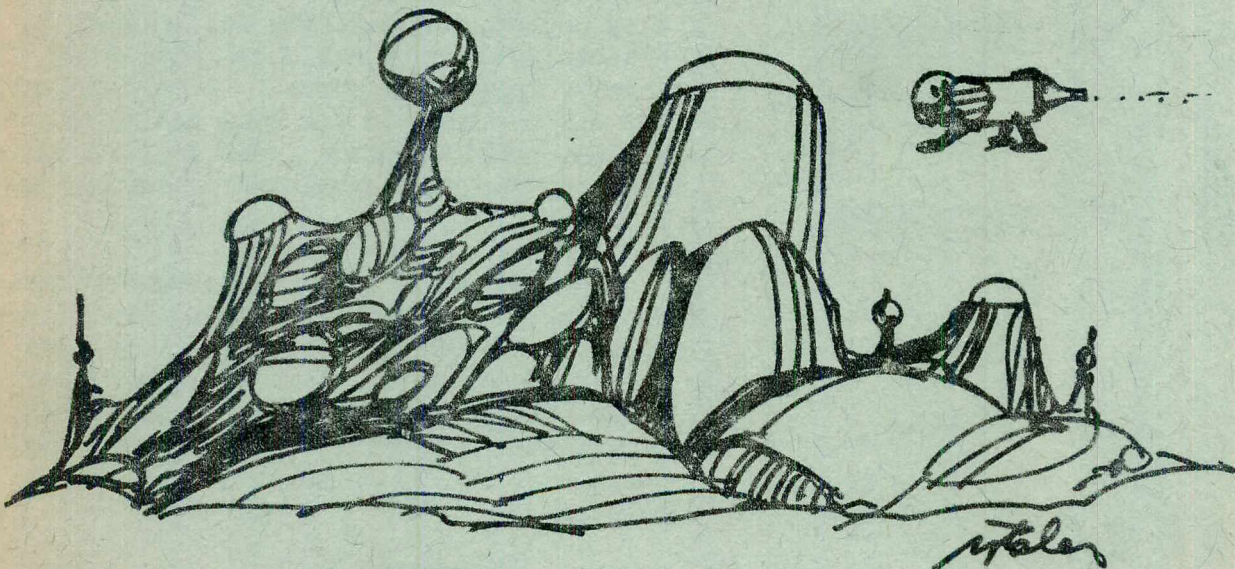
Of course, this sequence can be run backwards: it is also possible and potentially exciting to suggest what avenues sf writers can begin to explore. How about a novel based on a Skinnerian society? Or another treating Maslow's five levels of obsession as the class distinctions in a psychoanalytical society? Or a real investigation of the possibilities of a music based people? (the attempts at this so far have been laughable. Like, Dean Koontz is actually proud of the fact that he devoted 100 music-research hours to DARK SYMPHONY. Gosh, 4 whole days! And DARK SYMPHONY smells of it,.

And all this is only on the rationalist side of sf. For anyone who has the courage, the articulation of the emotional half of sf lies virtually unexplored. This is an extraordinarily difficult undertaking, because it requires making up your own theory of approach -- but you would definitely be your own man here.

I don't mean to suggest that quickie reviews have no use: they do make dandy shopping guides. But gentlemen -- and especially you Richard -- greener pastures lie ahead, and they are ours for the taking. Numerous mountains must be surmounted, however, and you must provide the necessary muscles.

Why bother?

Why not bother?



THE GUNS OF AVALON, Roger Zelazny

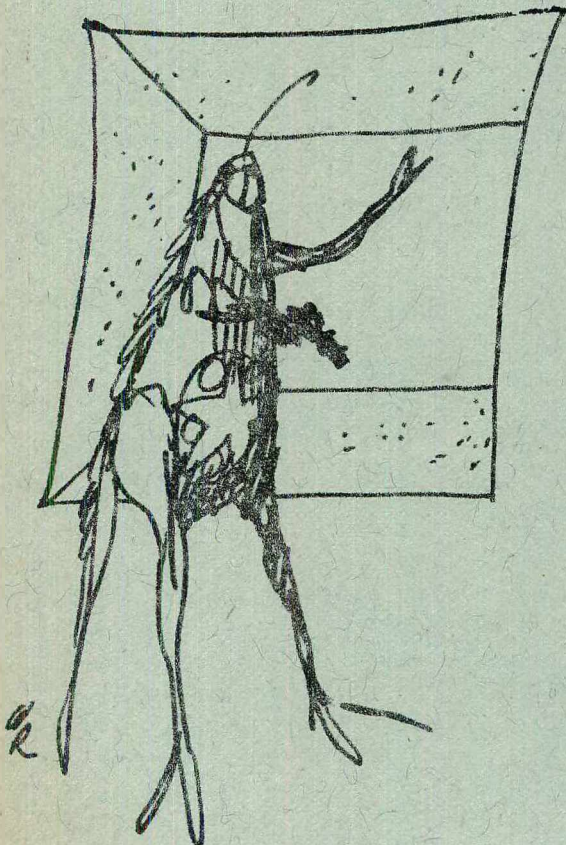
Doubleday \$5.95 180pp.

++ review by Donald Keller ++

came to the sequel eagerly, but cautiously. I had high expectations for NPIA, and they were fulfilled by the brilliant first half; but the second half disappointed me. It was a good fantasy, but not a great one. Expecting a similar book, I enjoyed the sequel much more.

My reaction to it can be gauged by the fact that I read the entire book in about two days' spare time (of which there wasn't much). I read the last portion on the bus home, and got so engrossed that I nearly missed my stop. I got off and stood there finishing the last four pages, riveted with suspense, and walked home in a state of aesthetic bliss. This book really ends with a bang, rather than the rather quiet ending of NPIA: it "gathers to a greatness." Zelazny proves himself again a master of pulp-action plotting, catching up the reader and not letting him go. At the end, incidents and bits and pieces of background suddenly all fall into place: as in NPIA there are conflicts resolved, but there are even more important ones created, leaving the reader gasping. There is definitely the need for another sequel.

The book is very well-handled stylistically, with straightforward readable prose which often tends toward the poetic, but never the overblown. At one point (one of Corwin's journeys through Shadow) there are a couple pages worth of being printed as free verse. The other interesting point is the dialog: most of the characters speak in Standard Fantasy Poetic, while Corwin speaks in Standard Colloquial American. The contrast and anachronism (if one could call it so in Amber's universe) is really fascinating, funny and effective. It also works when Corwin returns to Earth (one of the Shadows) with a fantasy character from another Shadow: the incongruity is used to full effect.



I have come to the conclusion that if it weren't Corwin of Amber was the protagonist of the book, I'd consider him the villain, because he really is a son of a bitch. He is Zelazny's typical demigod, the super-competent man (twice he has beaten a foe he deemed unbeatable), very self-centered and a trifle monomaniacal. I hated him late in the book for spurning a chance to do a totally noble and altruistic act in favor of his own schemes -- and then later doing it anyway, because it served his self-interest. Yet his position in the book and Zelazny's writing skill create a great deal of reader sympathy for him; even sons of bitches have feelings.

One odd point is that the love-story plotting of the book resembles that in Morris' THE WELL AT WORLD'S END; I can't be sure Zelazny has read it, however, so I won't accuse him of borrowing. Besides, it's a plot that could easily be thought up independently, but I was still struck by the likeness.

I think what bothers me most about the Amber books is that they are merely 'good' fantasy. Zelazny can use powerful archetypes and hint at depths of history with the best of them, but doesn't take the time to really flesh out the background of his fantasy cosmos. GOA takes place almost totally in Shadow, and we see very little of Amber itself. In fact, I think that until now we have seen only a Shadow of Amber; Zelazny has not yet brought the realness of Amber across like it should be.

Zelazny shows in the Amber books (as well as in the brief Dilvish series and JACK OF SHADOWS) that he stands with Le Guin, Garner, Joy Chant and perhaps one or two others as a writer capable of an epic fantasy like THE LORD OF THE RINGS. But being a free-lance writer he probably won't take time to anytime soon.

Roger told several of us at Philcon that the third book will be called THE SIGN OF THE UNICORN, and that there will be two more after that.

LEVIATHAN '99, play by Ray Bradbury
 ++ review by Mike Glyer ++

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Keller
 Glyer
 Miller
Wadholm.....

If one of you will step out and see what that spinning noise is in Herman Melville's grave, I'll tell you about the most recent interpretation of his MOBY DICK by the one man movement to make Melville relevant, Ray Bradbury. I could do a "killer" review on this and get very witty, but you wouldn't learn much about the play itself -- and for all its cataclysmic flaws, it is important to figure out this stage of Bradbury's development, and the play's contribution to the LA cultural scene. So let us see if I can balance the scholar and the carnivore.

As a local newspaper critic expressed it, LEVIATHAN was thick with Shakespearean soliloquies, Robert Penn Warren rhetoric, and Platonic "dialog". To wit, it consists of about two hours of actors making long, involved speeches to one another at the top of their lungs, using long sentences freighted with adjectives and epic philosophies that no sane man, even William Jennings Bryan, has ever tried to use in real life. Realism dies in the first five minutes, snapping the suspenders of my disbelief.

At base of the plot is MOBY DICK, transformed to a spaceship and a vast comet. Here one's nose is rubbed into unreality -- the comet, so the captain says, will destroy earth. Though today's scientists believe that even if a comet did hit earth nothing would happen because they contain so little mass, the interior conflict about aborting their mapping mission in favor of attacking the comet is not based on whether the comet actually threatens Earth, -- but on whether the captain's belief that it is on collision course is correct. So the science is faulty, and the technology (rockets, with cramped quarters) is nearer to 50s SF than 70s.

What prevents this play, then, from being dismissed as a total flop unworthy of

additional space for discussion? Four things: it was written by Bradbury, it was acted by two especially competent actors, William Marshall (late of BLACULA) as the Captain, and another whose name I can't find (lost my program) as Ishmael, it contains the Space Sermon -- the most intriguing cross between religion and space exploration I have yet seen, and it was staged on the Goldwyn Studios lot in Hollywood using many good tricks for scenery and sound.

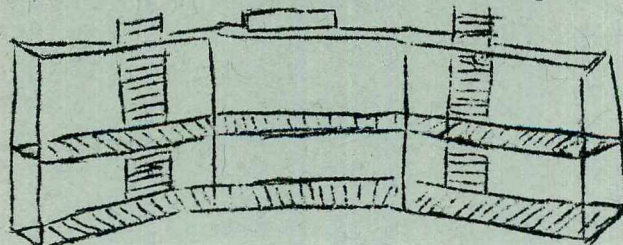
Bradbury is always disclaiming belief in religion; so why is this play and much of his other recent stuff shotgunned with religious references? Dunno. But in the first act Ishmael is in the spaceport chapel where the robotic human-like priest who had died there years before continued to dispense his message: "Is God dead? It's an old question now but once hearing it I laughed and said 'No, not dead, but merely sleeping until you chattering bores shut up.' A better question is -- are you dead? Does the blood move behind your hand? Does that hand move to touch metal? And does that metal move to touch space? And wild thoughts of travel and migration move behind your flesh? They do. You live, therefore God lives. You are the thin skin of life, upon an unsensing earth. You are the growing edge of God which manifests itself in hungers for search. So much of God lies vibrantly asleep, the very stuff of worlds, galaxies, they know not themselves, but here -- God stirs in his sleep -- you are that stirring. He wakes -- you are that awakening... He goes to find, you go to find, himself. Everything you find along the way, therefore, will be holy. On far worlds you'll meet your own flesh, terrifying and strange, but still your own. Treat it well. Beneath the shape you share the godhead..." I enjoy this segment, but if you look at the heavy structure, and consider this is probably it used at its best, you will understand one of the problems Bradbury caused for himself. William Marshall, an impressive figure playing the blind Captain, strained every fiber of his talent to get long items out in loud declamations that could be understood (literally, heard) -- he did it, but it seemed a waste of his energies. An actor's energy should not be sapped by the physical work of making his lines comprehensible.

By far the best thing about LEVIATHAN is its technique of production. It is the first time a movie sound stage has been used as a playhouse. Bradbury, who spoke to the audience after the play, expressed it: "It's a wonderful thing to see so many of you here. It's a whole new thing in our lives, to work in an environment like this. I've been hanging around these studios since I was a child, and often wondered why more people didn't take advantage of facilities like this and build a theater. You know, there are very few places in Los Angeles to put on a play this size... So I finally came over here about a year ago and spoke to the head of the studio and said, 'How about letting us come in?' And they said -- Welcome. And that's how we wound up here. Nobody had asked them before. In all the years of having the sound stage here nobody had thought to ask. I have a lot of nerve, don't I?..."

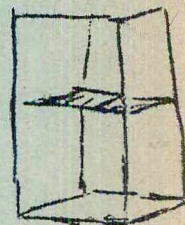
The set design is as follows: to begin with there are two two-level cage-like boxes perhaps 15 feet high at the left and right. A flat curtain, close to the audience, runs between them onto which there are projected various art slides pertaining to the space chapel or the rocket field. The opening sequences consist of action analogs to MOBY DICK going on between actors on the stage, and up in the various four parts of the boxes. Eventually the sheet is rolled away to reveal a jungle-gym like three-level platform serving as the spaceship (see diagram.)



RAY BRADBURY



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LEVIATHAN '99

Then at other times soundtracks from speakers towards the rear lend the impression that action is going on all around the audience -- a really excellent effect; used both when Ishmael and friend are in the space chapel (audio tombstones read themselves off), and when their ship is in rendezvous with others ships and the seeming distance of the speakers with their messages puts them at a scale distance from each other.

Bradbury has opened up new alternatives in the LA theater, but did not exploit them too well on his own. LEVIATHAN is about equivalent to seeing Bradbury take a bath in a dictionary, though Bradbury says the play version is a way of working out problems with his novel in the same vein that will be published in about a year from now. It is 50s SF, with the additional problem that Bradbury is still trying to cope with Melville.

((Editor's intro to NOT INSANE review: I have been telling Norm Hochberg and Craig Miller each other's interpretation of the latest Firesign Theater record. Miller believes it a flop, Hochberg calls it a work of genius. Miller, whose opinions are retold at right, had been, in Hochberg's view "seriously misled (along with a ton of other people). Firesign, according to a letter in a recent Rolling Stone, is not breaking up. The original rumor, started by Stone, is false according to him.. Craig's reasoning is a bit silly anyway, why did he assume that Firesign would throw together a piece of shit just because they had to throw something together. At any rate, if he listens without any preconceived notions, he just might find it an album that is up there with their best... using a pastiche of things."))

which would somehow explain/expand upon the opening, and record it. This opening is what was stuck in at the end; Young Guy -- Motor Detective. (That's the only thing done specifically for this album.)

However, during the month that followed, the FT began to separate. Growing apart, so to speak, after several years of working together. They were feeling ~~fat and~~ ~~lazy~~ lazy and didn't really want to work on the album. Also, one or two thought that he might go off and try it as a solo act.

The album, though, had been contracted for and the FT were ^{legally} bound to come through. Scheduled to come out in late August/early September, it finally reached the streets in November.

I was not aware of any of the above information about the split until after I had heard the album. I actually expected it to be quite good and was disappointed because the material I had heard recorded was excellent. I had heard one rumor -- third hand -- that the FT had split but discounted it. Then I heard the album.

I talked to Edgar Bullington, the FT's quasi-manager and number one fan (who helped on the chronology/history of the FT run here a couple of issues ago) and he concurred with my theory, adding a point or two. The additions from Edgar are includ-

NOT INSANE OR ANYTHING YOU WANT TO, by
the Firesign Theater; Columbia KC 31585 \$4.98
++ review by Craig Miller ++

I don't know what Mike Glycer said last time when he summarized my verbal comments to him about this slapdash album. Norm Hochberg's comments about it were related to me. Therefore, I wrote this review including my reply to Norm Hochberg's "allegations".

Last July I went over to Columbia Records to attend the recording session for this album, at the FT's invitation. Written and recorded on that day was what was intended to be the first (approximately) 10 minutes of the NOT INSANE album. They were then going to take a two week break, write the rest of the record --

ed above. The FT are now in the throes of getting back together. They discovered that not doing albums and/or radio shows leads to, among other things, a depletion of resources. (By the way, never believe anything Peter or Phil or David say to the press. And only half of what Phil says. They only say things to put on the interviewer. Just as do Andy Warhol and other people interviewed by PLAYBOY.)

Question: why would my reasoning be silly? If you were going to hurry and throw something together because you have to meet a deadline, more than likely it will tend to be a piece of crap. You don't have time to do something spectacular. And I don't call throwing bits of tape together "using a pastiche of things."

NOT INSANE, the Firesign Theater's latest album, simply isn't up to snuff. It has several good bits included on it, unfortunately, they are visual. The album is made up largely of several things left on Steve Gilmor's video tapes and bits from other albums. The Young Guy routine is quite good, and had the album followed the original plan of being about Young Guy it could have been one of the FT's best. Unfortunately, as related above, the planned did not become the accomplished. Much of the Edmund Edmund routines are lost to the record audience and that is unfortunate. I was lucky enough to have been able to see Gilmor's video tapes of the Ash Grove performance and that is regular FT stuff. Only they aren't record cuts. There are, of course, many individually good lines, but not enough to make up for the qualitative lack in the basic material.

Other comics, such as George Carlin and Cheech and Chong, have material that is just as funny in person as it is on a recording (take that anyway you want). The FT doesn't. They have record/radio bits and they have stage bits. And the NOT INSANE album has lots of stage bits. The opening of the album is a total waste. It is the sound of the setup for the Martian Space Party radio show/movie. And when I say set up, I mean the large audience moving in, power cords being put down, cameras tested, announcer cues, etc. I know, I was there. Following this is a couple of lines from DON'T CRUSH THAT DWARF, HAND ME THE PLIERS and then some track playing. (What is track playing, you may ask. Track-playing is when the FT decided to change from the usual way they used the 16-track recording tape -- 8 channels for vocals, 2 to 3 channels for sound effects, gongs, explosions, etc. -- to using all 16 tracks for vocals. Overlapping vocals. At this point the individual words are indistinguishable. After 12 tracks they are.) Following this was some more of Gilmor's tape ends. Mostly two lines out of three line gags, repeated endlessly; overlapping.

Then comes the only good section of side 1, the Columbia University Show of Edmund Edmund. However, part of this is, alas, invisuals. Side two is far better than side one, but then it is mostly the original Young Guy material. The opening was some more track-playing and clowing with stereo effects.

This album falls far short of being "one of the best." And it's unfortunate. The FT may not make another album for quite awhile. It's terrible to have to look back at a shoddy job as your last work.

THE OUTPOSTER by Gordon Dickson
++ review by Richard Wadholm ++

So here is Gordon R. Dickson's latest book. I realize that it may not seem like his latest book... it seems like his first... or second, or tenth, or twentieth. I mean, when has Gordon R.

Dickson's latest book seemed like his latest book? No doubt many of the horde are going to read this and say "Well, Wad, you Anus, you've taken a good bite of the Big One this time, trying to slay one of the Main Men," but bear with, because this guy and all he is and all he isn't has been on my mind since I saw his...latest book in

the library wearing that stupid photographed literary-person's-idea-of-an-intellectual-sf-cover. The cover is the book. The cover is tepid and hep and antiseptic and maddeningly mediocre.

For those of you who have never read a Gordon R. Dickson book -- any Gordon R. Dickson book -- and don't know the plot of this one before you start, I'll fill you in. Mark Ten Roos graduates from school at eighteen. His parents are long dead from an attack on a colony world by the Meda V'dan. Therefore, he decides to get some revenge. He enlists as a babysitter for the next group of colonists going out and leaves for Garnera IV, but not before Dickson does an all-too-familiar trip with him and once again sets the hero apart from the yellow-bellies by making him have a run-in with Those in Favor before the story starts. Last time I read one of Dickson's Interstellar Westerns, it was a young space force officer who showed up a general over dinner. This time he gets in trouble with the general's daughter. The general's name is different this time, but it's the same general. Same girl, too. Matter of fact, it's the same hero. You gotta say: when Dickson's got a formula, he doesn't waste it. While we're about it, I might add it's the same story too. The Tactic of Mistake had a fun moment here and there because it was nice to see all the millions of angles this hero had. However, there were plenty of other times when Dickson could not even write a decent paragraph. Now he's taken TACTIC OF MISTAKE and put it in a new setting. The only thing is that all the hero's tricky plans ran out of steam as of his last book. The result is a book as stalely plotted and cliché ridden as TACTICS with none of the bright moments that made the latter parts of that book tolerable. The rotten prose is gone, but who cares? The way he's written THE OUTPOSTERS you hardly notice it.

What's worse, he not only steals from his own work, he not only steals from other science fiction writers, he steals from the Late Show. Yes friends, it's all here. Everything you got bleary-eyed to see -- the vengeance for my pa (it's interesting that his parents were killed before he was a year old, and yet the ol' vengeance burns hot in our boy), the girl who hates him for being cold and nasty and then loves him for...Well, seems that Dickson forgot to say what she did fall for him for: anyway you've seen it too many times before, and with a general's daughter, too. The hero's the same guy, too, The Great Stone Face. I don't know what Dickson's story is, but he's got this thing about who a good guy ought to be and who the bad guy ought to be and who the sort-of bad guys are. Laumer writes with one hero and one enemy in different disguises too, but that's different, because I like his hero. Igor Ravel, or Florin the Man of Steel, or, for that matter, Bugs Bunny, punch and wisecrack their way into my soul, even if I am too old for that kind of thing. Dickson has this guy he keeps dredging up from novel to novel who is, like, Mister Cold Himself. These vague stirrings in my mind seem to tell me that what Dickson sees as the hero is a cool, rather cynical (he's been burned-off buy the bad guys and paid hisself some dues, yuhsee) and very aloof individualist who has all the answers.

What I see is a self-righteous, ambitious, conniving stereotyped conservative who doesn't even have the brains to see himself as a conservative. He's a man who's very aware of how your typical hero should look. He's the embodiment of everything that is clean and sanitary and WASPy and machismo. He's supposed to be cool, but he just comes off as emotionless. He'd be a rather savage caricature of the All-American Boy if Dickson has the brains to play it that way once, but you know what? Come to think of it, I believe he's more than that. The more I read about this fool the more I'm convinced that this fool is Dickson himself. Yes, yes. You can tell when Chad Mulligan is really nothing more than the radical side of John Brunner, and if you think about it awhile, I think you might see a lot of Gordon Dickson in Mark Ten Roos, or whoever the paste-up man is this month.

The bad guys are also all the same. Always there is the enemy, who is really noth-

ing more than a target for Our Man With A Plan. They are shadowy figures, unthought-out, undeveloped. Oh, he gives them a reason. He gives them a little background. He makes a little piece of the enemy to give his hero something to fight (there's a better story that way; gives him more to do.) The real enemy is the lily-livered bureaucracy, the pompous generals, the space-age versions of Lord Chamberlain. Man never gets tired of knocking those people down. No conservative ever does. No Mark Ten Roos style conservative, anyhow.

Those are the elements of this one. There's not much else worth mentioning. There's a moment of mood when they enter the Meda V'dan ship, but it's not a moment worth waiting for. And that pompous tin man just does-in everything he touches. I know Dickson has more talent than he's showing. I've read some short stories of his that are richly picturesque and thoughtfully laid out, but I haven't read enough to make me want to read anymore. If Dickson deserves the big name he's got, he earned it a long time before I started reading science fiction. As for the here and now, I'm tired of reading about Saint Gord and the Dragon. The next time I have to read through a novel that sounds like "Bud Anderson Builds A Space Ship" it'll be somebody else. Hopefully somebody who takes himself less seriously.

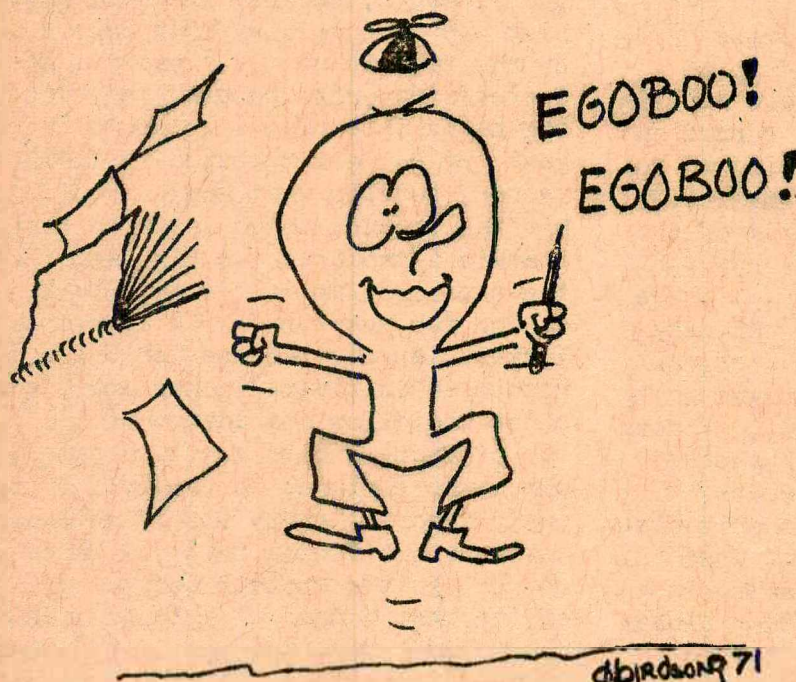
NIGHT OF DELUSIONS by Keith Laumer
 ++ review by Richard Wadholm ++

So here is Keith Laumer's new book, and I must admit that if there's a more painless way of spending 190 pages, Sam Delany hasn't written it. It's not really all that good a book. I'll say that

right off. However, the only time I've ever read Keith Laumer, either good or bad, and been bored, was trying out those "classic" Retief stories. NIGHT OF DELUSIONS gets boring at a few places near the end, but the book as a whole is not boring. This time the Keith Emerson of Time Travel, the Jackoff of Time and Space calls himself Florin and gets hired on as a bodyguard for a senator. Soon the senator story falls by the wayside and Florin has too many of his own troubles to worry about. Things keep happening over and over. A neighborhood salamander keeps telling him what's good for him. Things like that there. Florin does the right thing by accident in each scene and gets sent on to the next square, to be confronted by more unreality so he can accidentally do the right thing again. To get to the bottom line, this is the archetypal Laumer book. The hero sounds like a bullet-proof Bugs Bunny in first person. He finds himself in one story in one role, and then suddenly he's playing another role in a much wider scene, and then somebody else in an even wider scene. It goes on like that until the end, when he takes on the wide scene and the scenes get rather narrow. The pretty girl is there ("She had a face like you see in dreams, and even then only in the distance...") so are the not quite above-board government men and everyone else Laumer puts into his stories. You may think from reading this that I didn't like NIGHT OF DELUSIONS. That's not so. NIGHT OF DELUSIONS was some awright reading. Its prose was more consistently written than Dinosaur Beach (though the ANALOG original of Dinosaur Beach -- Timesweepers -- has both books wrapped up) and, for most of the book I had the feeling of being picked up and carried along without having to read. No doubt about Laumer, he's an entertainer all the way.

However, put the book down for a minute after you've done and let all that soak in. Think about just what it is that Florin, or Bardell, or Lance Bardell the Senator, or for that matter, God (that who our Man is by the end of the book. Laumer doesn't spare the sauce when he wants you to believe in his man, does he.) has accomplished at the end of the book. You still don't know exactly what it is he wanted, except for some truth, and Laumer's point in the end is that there is no truth. First he sets up a goal for this man to find out who he is and how much of his life he's lived and how much he's dreamed, and then makes his whole point that nobody can ever know

what is real and what isn't. This may be just what the author ordered, and if the whole thing is only a daydream of the character who is Florin at the end, then Laumer does a nice job of simulating the way daydreams go and go and go until they outgrow their reality. However, it doesn't work. Florin does all these things and you go along for the ride to see a result besides zilch, or in this case, an uncertain semi-zilch. The letdown isn't in the story -- Laumer forbid! -- the letdown is when you put the book down and realize that for those grand locations and magnificent actions and cosmic personae, very little has actually been accomplished right before your eyes. The Laumer can get away with it a lot of times, but I can't think of anybody else who could, but in this case he gets away with it just barely long enough to get you to the last page before you feel cheated.



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BUCK COULSON Route 3
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There were a few errors in your editorial; some excusable, some not so. (One minor one could have been corrected by reading any of the fan newsletters; there were not 2500 people in attendance at LACon, but a bit under 2000 -- 1956 was the number bandied about, as I recall.) Anyway, a major one wasn't your fault, but should be corrected anyway. To wit: there was not any SFWA meeting on Monday, for any purpose whatsoever. There was a meeting of several pro authors, most of whom I suppose belong to SFWA (since I don't even know who they all were, I can't say if they were all mem-

bers or not). Aside from what I might call the coincidence of membership, the meeting had nothing to do with SFWA or SFWA policy. There was no attempt to inform SFWA officers that it would take place. (Jerry Pournelle is not a SFWA officer; I am.) Any resolutions adopted at the meeting are those of the authors who attended; they have no bearing on anyone else and certainly not on SFWA as a whole.

You are going to get more of a separation between fandom and prodom as more people join the pro ranks without knowing or caring anything about fandom. This is coming now; at a guess I would say that everyone who sold a story to CLARION III is now a SFWA member, and I never heard of any of them before (not that there aren't

quite a few bona fide fans that I've never heard of, but when all the new pros are unknowns I suspect that most of them are non-fans). On the other hand, I was one of the Fan Guests of Honor at LA and simultaneously SFWA Secretary; SFWA BULLETIN is being published by George Scithers, and SFWA Treasurer is former Washington, D.C., fan Joe Haldeman. There isn't going to be a complete break as long as fans keep selling stories.

Leon neglected one facet of James West's personality; his relationship to plate glass windows. (This may help explain his apparent cool; anyone who is turned on by a plate glass window is not going to relate too well with the rest of humanity.) Watch a few episodes; say a minimum of three. In at least one of those three -- maybe all of them if you're lucky -- there will be a confrontation inside a building between West and half a dozen baddies, all of them bigger than he is. (They have to be bigger -- Harlan Ellison would look down on him if he didn't wear elevator shoes.) Anyway, when the confrontation occurs, check the room for a window. If one is visible, chances are five to one that West will dive through it before the scene is over. Even if there is an open door closer to him; he obviously gets his kicks, not from girls or alcohol, but from diving through windows. And, hey, Leon, it's Miguelito Loveless, not Manuelito. Loveless is undoubtedly the best villain on TV. Not only is he reasonable and logical in his demands (his ancestors owned half of California under Spanish land grants, and all he wants is his own property back, with maybe the rest of the state thrown in for interest), but he stands for everything that modern youth holds Right and Good and Noble. In tonight's episode for example, he was musing over the possibility of blowing up half of Washington DC: (He didn't have enough explosive for the whole thing). "All those politicians and generals," he murmurs with a blissful look on his face. In the other episodes he has come out in favor of ecology, of wiping out everyone over thirty (actually I think he was going to wipe out everyone over 10, but you have to admit his general idea was along the right lines), of halting the white settlers' encroachment on Indian lands, and other such groovy, anti-Establishment ideas.

THE FANIVORE

I really think the trouble with Stathis is that he is trying to break into the clique of people who really matter in fandom, and of course he has a hard time. He can't even find the right clique, because it doesn't exist; nobody really matters in fandom and all he can find are the fans who think they do. (Not including Ted White and Terry Carr, who have better things to do than pay attention to belligerent nits.) I can name you a fan (but I won't, because it would embarrass him) who came to his first convention and by the time it was over was one of Bob Tucker's favorite people (and even the big names in fandom look up to Tucker.) How? By being interested in Tucker as a person, not for what Tucker could do for his fan status, which seems to be the way Stathis approaches the Big Names. (And, no the nameless fan wasn't me; I'd been in fandom for years before I ever spoke to Tucker, largely because Ted White said I needed to "cultivate" Tucker and I wasn't about to follow any advice of Ted's. Matter of fact, I have achieved fame and... umm...not fortune, certainly...by studiously ignoring every bit of well-meant advice about fandom that Ted White gave me, but that's another story. Ted is one of the best judges of science fiction in the world today, and one of the worst judges of people.)

TOM DIGBY 1043 N. Curson Ave., Apt. 6
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I think one of the main reasons so many panels are filled with pros rather than ordinary fans is, except in cases where knowledge of the pro field is the main issue, for the value of their names on advertising, program listings, etc. Therefore if pros must be paid it might be reasonable to pay only those who consented to let their names be used. Under this system you could still have panels of fans and lesser-known pros but you couldn't announce in advance who the panelists were to be. For many panels something such as "several prominent fans of the period discuss fanzines of the '50s" might be sufficient information for most of those interested in the subject. I think pros enjoy cons enough that SFWA would have a hard

FURTHER COULSON

time keeping them out of such things as the room parties. And what of black market bootleg programs held in people's rooms, supposedly without the knowledge of the con committee? Many pros might well participate for the egoboo alone. Another possibility might be to eliminate pros from the program, filling all the various panels with fans, and saying that this arrangement lets people mingle better with the pros because they aren't constantly busy being on the program. And if individual pros want to be paid for mingling, there's nothing stopping them from charging individual fans so much per hour for conversation, con committee or no. If they are willing to pay a page to the con committee (for gathering all those fans for them to talk to) they could probably even arrange a corner of the huckster room for this.

~~~~~ If pros try to charge fans for the privilege of meeting them, why can't fans turn around and charge the pros for egoboo? Have a monitor follow each pro around, count the "Goshwows" and autographs and present a bill at the end of the con??

Your movie reviewer mentions seeing movie at a "snake preview". Is this a typo or is it like when there's no projector available so they just unreele the film and pass it around the audience (sort of like a snake) for people to examine frame by frame? Or is it something more sinister?

One of your reviewers says of a book, "...it almost lets you forget that the story was written at all." Isn't this the case with most stories? I haven't tried keeping track, but I think about the only times I really think of a story as having been written instead of being concerned entirely with what is going on is when the story is about writing or authors, it makes reference to the reader (remember the style of story with the narrator saying things to the "Gentle Reader"? or the mechanics intrude in the form of New Wave typolayout experiments, gross typos or the like. I wonder how many readers, when reading science fiction, see (1) the action described in the story, (2) the author writing the story, or (3) some combination?? And I wonder if that's why I've never made any real attempt to write reviews: if you think of the story as a series of happenings rather than a work of art

there is little to review or criticize. This reminds me of an incident that happened once while visiting Fred Patten. I noticed a painting on his wall that looked familiar and asked him about it. He replied with the title and the author of the story it illustrated. I asked if it was the story in which one group of aliens were telling some Earthmen how they (the aliens) landed on the planet of another group of aliens, mistook their biological technology for primitive conditions, and almost got wiped out by germ warfare before they patched things up. (I think the picture was of an alien holding a parrot-like bird used as a translator.) Fred replied that he didn't know. I wonder if reviewing tends to force one more toward the viewpoint of seeing the author, etc. while reading a story... and the people who see the story action tend to group into different factions within fandom, or prefer different fanzines, or different types of programs at cons and club meetings.

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I didn't attend LACon for a variety of reasons -- most of them involving money or, more precisely, the lack thereof -- so all I know is what I read in the fanzines. However, knowing the personalities involved I have no reason whatsoever to doubt the veracity of the events reported in ~~rePREHENSIBLE~~.

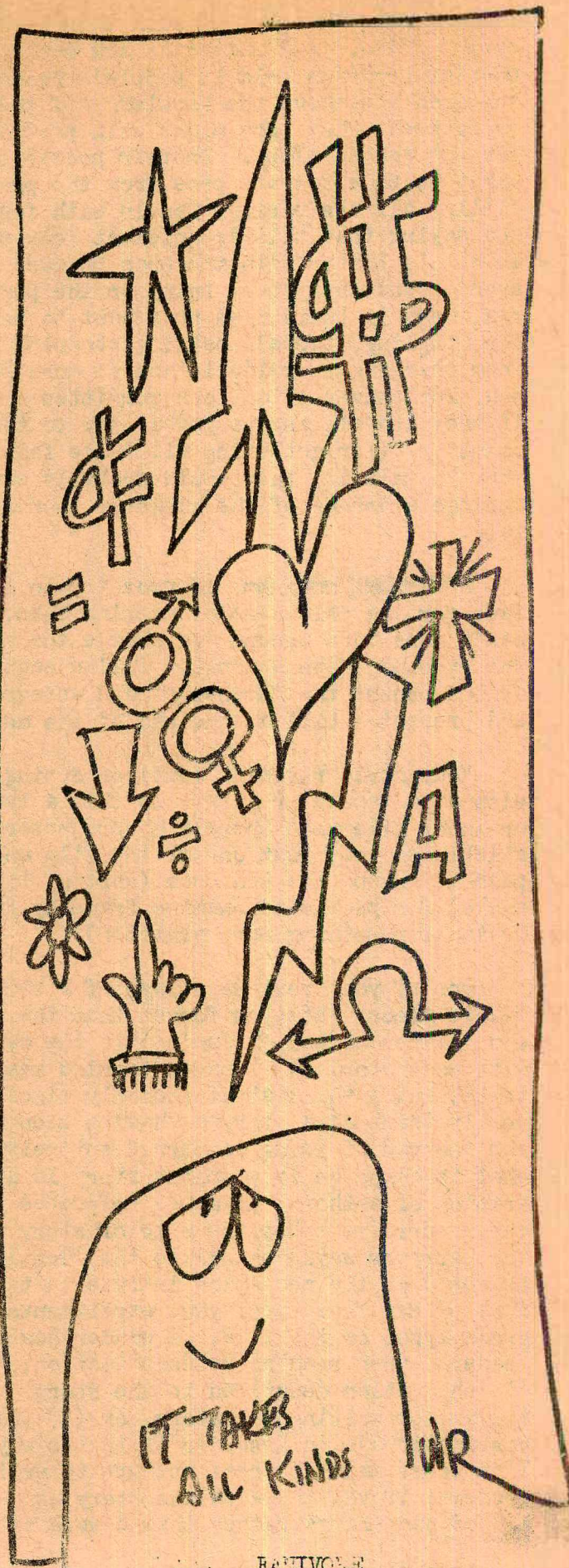
I could, like the knight of old, jump on my horse and ride off in all directions on this, but I really don't think it would serve any purpose. Let it suffice to say that there is no surprise here. Time was, of course, when sf conventions were relatively small and informal things where people got together to discuss science fiction and enjoy each other's company. In the past few years, however, the worldcons in particular have grown increasingly large and commercial. Perhaps this is just a reflection of the good old American booster idea that bigger is better. In view of this it is no surprise that those who presume themselves to be the star at-



tractions want a piece of the action. The solution will have to be worked out by those who involve themselves in putting on conventions and make them into something more manageable is the answer. For my own part I'll still go to cons to enjoy the company of old friends and new and to talk with those who are knowledgeable of the subject and I really don't give a damn whether the egotrippers show up or not.

Perry Chapdelaine really doesn't offer anything new in his article on telepathy although I question comments about "the lack of scientific data on extrasensory perception." Now I grant you that such data is extremely hard to come by in this country -- all of it being, presumably, classified for one reason or another ((why presumably? the Rhine experiments aren't classified, nor the experiments run on the Apollo flights, just to name two off the top of my head)) -- although reports on official (as they say) US Government experiments in telepathy and other psi talents were reported in Japanese magazines and newspapers more than a decade ago. I wonder, though, if Perry rejects out of hand the reports of Russian experiments with ESP that have been reported in various periodicals in this country. The Russians, after a lengthy period of intensive experimentation, are apparently convinced that wild talents do exist and can be tamed. (Maybe Schmitz will have to change his heroine's name to Telzya Amberdonya.) The last reports I saw -- in the public prints -- indicated that the Russians were moving ESP from science to engineering. ((There is a book out -- which I have not read yet -- on psychic phenomenon in the USSR; far from anybody in the US trying to suppress the discussion, publishers seem to be getting a profit out of it. And I don't know if Perry rejects any of that stuff -- just as I don't know how those reports relate to his criticism of a lack of scientifically conducted research into ESP in the US. If I thought he hadn't been offering something different, new or not, I wouldn't have run the article, so my bias is, er, blatant.))

Walker says he can't believe that Silverberg believes what he puts in his fiction, more properly sf, books. I really don't think that is one of the requirements





for a fiction writer. And when one considers what a prolific writer -- and Silverberg is certainly that -- may present a multitude of different viewpoints or espouse a multitude of causes, one certainly should not expect that he believes everything in his books.

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ALJO SVOBODA 1203 Buoy Ave.  
Orange, Calif. 92665

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I vowed to do a serious loc with something to it, a good loc, this time around. So I'm a liar (I am now looking at the cover of PREHENSILE SIX, remarking on its quality). I feel like a trufan, almost like a BNF. That certainly is a nice cover. Has a nice feel to it, you know? Makes you look respectable, too. So I'm a liar.

Glyer, you certainly do put things well. Well-turned phrases abound, and you always carry a metaphor to a timely demise. You destroyed quite a few in your polemic, but with judicious nursing, I think one or two can still be revived. Quite a stirring piece you dashed off there. What fandom ought to do, obviously, is keep a stock of pros on hand at all times, to be rented out at a nominal fee to any convention that wants to use them. We can forget about the rest of the pros. You can't really point out anything wrong with white slavery, can you? Let Harlan Ellison jeer...armed with one or two second-rates and one or two faded Big Names, we'll soon have pros begging us to take them off the streets. Just watch...

Mike Glicksohn says you're the next EN-ERGUMEN, so you must be getting good. Yes, you're getting pretty good. (I don't hand out egoboo in large doses, or to many people, you realize, but you're pretty grand). There, that's out. ((And for your efforts I award you the Month of February's Golden Shovel. Thankyew, thankyew...)) I can only advise that the egoboo you get be wisely used...there's hard times a'coming, and the stuff's going to be scarce. You see, since fandom is built around egoboo, tangible egoboo ((refrangible, chrome egoboo?)), every fannish urge or instinct has its roots in the desire for egoboo, which is necessary,

ALJO SVOBODA

Essential, to the support of fannish life. If a fan lacks egoboo, he gafiates (although he will, of course, search diligently for and usually find an excuse that proves he had no other choice but gafia.) It's all very simple. I am, at present, working on a scholarly article with footnotes that will explain the psychology, philosophy, and mentality of the Essential Fan in more detail. Watch for it. Watch out for it.

Florence Jenkins is obviously unaware of Richard E Geis' sinister plot to publish the first personalzine with a circulation of 1,000 and thus subtly undermine the precept of fannish theology which states that any zine with a circulation of over 25 is not to be trusted. Obviously. A cold, calculating villain, he hopes to hook fandom with tales of his sex life and suddenly spring thirty pages of book reviews on them all at once while they're firmly in his grasp. He's one of the had guys, yes.

Anxiously await the next issue of DE PREHENERGUMEN L'AFFAIRES REVIEW, wherein all the prophecies of your fate come true. Maybe.

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MIKE GLICKSOHN 32 Maynard Ave., #205  
Toronto, 156, Ont. CANADA

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Paul seems unduly harsh in his criticism of Robert Silverberg. He flays Bob for utilizing familiar symbols, but for me although the symbols may not be original, I find that Bob's reworking of them usually is. If Paul wants each and every Silverberg novel to be a completely new concept in literature, I think he's being highly unrealistic. I also wonder how Paul reacted to BOOK OF SKULLS, which I found to contain Bob's best writing in ages and some of the best characterization he's ever done. And lastly, it seems to me that the very things Paul finds objectionable with present sf reviews ("...they lack enthusiasm, if not affection for the genre. They demand it to be something it is not, and express contempt for what it is.") best describe his own reaction to Robert Sil-

FANEOVORE



verberg.

As usual, I cannot take Leon Taylor too seriously. Leon has a habit of taking something relatively insignificant and building it into a scheme of cosmic proportions. His analysis of WILD WILD WEST and his attempts to extract a deep philosophical basis for the concepts behind the show seem to me to be a case of hunting mice with an elephant gun. I'm intrigued to know how many pages and what weighty conclusions he could draw from ROGER RAMJET. (Come to think of it, though, that's probably a far better subject for analysis than any of the standard adventure series would be!) ((No, Leon, send it to him -- not me...))

Dan Goodman presents Tom Digby in a flattering light in his very entertaining article. Nobody has ever really denied that Tom was a tremendous idea man and Dan gives us very clear evidence of Tom's strength in this area. I found myself laughing out loud all through the appendix. Unfortunately, I'm still not convinced that Tom is a very good fan writer. A writer needs more than good ideas and Tom doesn't strike me as having very much skill in writing itself. (An analogy, only slightly strained, might be to suggest Terry Hughes for the Best Fanwriter Hugo since he sends Grant Canfield so many fine cartoon ideas.) ((Actually I would have to argue that your analogy is herniated... When you speak of "fanwriting" I assume you refer to the much revered work of the Burbees, Shaws, Willises and so on. Even though the fanwriter Hugo includes any kind of fanwriting people want to put up in contention. The chief difference between your concept and what Digby does is that he never uses characters; whereas classical fannish writing is made many times more effective and entertaining by fictional means of creating it. At their best those great fanwriters have not recently been matched. But there have been plenty of imitators, and you know my opinion of them -- Ulliot, Katz, Carr, for instance. These imitators use characters, but rather than enhancing the byplay of the ideas written about, those characters only pad, and it is sometimes habitual for one idea to be inflated into long-winded columns. Why, in order to prove how good a fan writer he is must he use forms that I suspect neither he nor anyone else now trying to use them can innovatively exploit? Isn't it far better for him to put

out his flood of wit/humor/counterpoint in a concise way, letting us enjoy them all without being weighted down with paragraphs of parafiction -- to see what he does for being different, than have it be channeled into derivative fanwriting? Excuse me for going preachy on you there... And those named above are not named for slavish imitation of 50s writers, but for being too concious of their form, too worried about upholding a reputation for being entertaining. Digby is prolific, informal, innovative -- and not meant to be read too much of at one sitting, article in last PRE notwithstanding. Whether he can carry on a high-quality prose style of writing I don't know, but I'll consult with Goodman and Digby and see about reprinting an example.))

Lou Stathis seems to be trying very, very hard to make a name for himself by denigrating everything and everyone in fandom. His piece in REGURGITATION SIX and his letter here show/indicate how his mind works. If he's so convinced of the worthlessness of fans and fandom, why does he bother with us. ((Er, Lou, why have't I gotten a LoC from you yet? 1/29/73)) I refuse to give him the satisfaction of answering his deliberately provocative nonsense.

Howcum Dan Goodman mentions me in his letter? I've never even met the fellow! How does he know I'm not a hoax invented by David Hulvey? ((Because he invented the hoax of David Hulvey -- hey, don't hit!)) Dan should stick to references he knows... Larson E. is indubitably real, as ten of the twelve white mice he got as a Christmas present would testify, if they were still around to testify, of course. I've known many hoax fans (such as "David Hulvey") but I've never heard of a hoax snake in fandom. ((If you want to read about one, there's this fanzine named ENERGUMEN that usually mentions one...)) There was a hoax elephant in English fandom some while ago, but I don't believe its trunk was ever considered to be a snake.

Fanzine reproduction, as Perry says, is a purely technical problem, but fanzine design is an exercise in creativity and is something worthy of discussion, and comment. Perry naturally won't agree, since he and I



never agree on anything, it seems...

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FLIEG HOLLANDER 1429 Plum St.  
Iowa City, IA 52240

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A nice looking zine I must say. However, I am not all that fond of Schull as an artist, and somehow your zine seems awfully full of Schull illos...a selection with less emphasis on Schull would hit me much better. (This is, of course, personal and not necessarily representative.) ((Is it Shull or Schull? I would have put 'sic' above if I hadn't seen others spelling it the same way lately, including one who Should Know. But see how the weak can be swayed -- here I am commenting, and on last issue's cover it is spelled 'Shull'. Stay tuned to this fanzine... // Also, Flieg, I just happen to like his work a great deal and will use as much as I am given. // And his return address is spelled 'Shull' -- case closed...))

Thanks for the LACon report. I wasn't there, and this is the first really thorough view that I've had from anyone. It makes me very sorry that I couldn't make it.... I agree with you that cons could not really afford to pay the pros what they would get for other types of speaking appearances. On the other hand, I think Lester del Rey's reported retort to Harlan (in Carr's column in Locus) gives the answer that most pros would give. When Harlan asked him what he was getting out of the con he answered, "I'm a fan, Harlan." Most pros are fans as well, and go to the con as both fans and pros. As fans they enjoy the convention in its own right, and as pros they are fans that "made it," and lap up the egoboo like milk. If they didn't enjoy it they wouldn't come. ((Considering the tension of the moment, dramatically, del Rey could not have made another answer without being made out as a stooge for Harlan -- and yes, it is improbable to imagine that del Rey would be a stooge for anyone. Nevertheless that parry was pure hype -- a necessary fiction so that Ellison wouldn't have it all his own way, and so that del Rey wouldn't cut himself off from friends in fandom by impromptu remarks. Further LACon matter in this issue.))

Getting to the meat of the issue as far

as I am concerned, we come to Perry Chapelaine's article on ESP. Overall I am in agreement with his comments, if, as he postulates, telepathy and other forms of ESP are explainable in terms of present day physics and chemistry or extensions thereof. His definition of a telepathic signal is excellent. What he says from there on is perfectly reasonable and follows from his assumptions.

But, and this is a big but, I am not all that sure that his assumptions are the only ones possible, or are even necessarily the correct ones. First of all, he rules out any sort of mind-brain dichotomy i.e. that the "mind" (whatever that is) is separable from the brain and the rest of the physical organism of the human. This is a knotty and unsolved question, but I feel there is as much evidence in favor of the mind and brain being two completely distinct things as there is in the theory that they are inseparable and the same. If the mind is non-physical, then all the assumptions that he puts forth are useless, and there is a whole area that has to be thought all over. We will have to invent a whole new science to deal with things of the mind in addition to physiology and chemistry/physics. He takes into account part of my objection, but not all of it, as he assumes that any new discovery will fit in with the rest of physical science. It ain't necessarily so.

Withal, his definition still holds up, and his approach to the testing of various ESP powers. One does have to watch out for the interpolation of "spirit" into the argument, however, if no physical explanation can be found for the observed phenomena.

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DONN BRAZIER 1455 Fawnvalley Dr.  
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Sorry to see Perry's article on telepathy end. The delicately balanced arrow he mentions as a suitable object to demonstrate a PK can be found in one of those cheap radiometers -- the toy that has a silver/black vane that spins in the sunlight. I set one on my desk and stared at the thing, urging it with softly muttered



oaths to spin, damn you, spin. Nothing happened, but, then, of course, I don't believe I have any PK force. In fact, I do not believe anyone has.

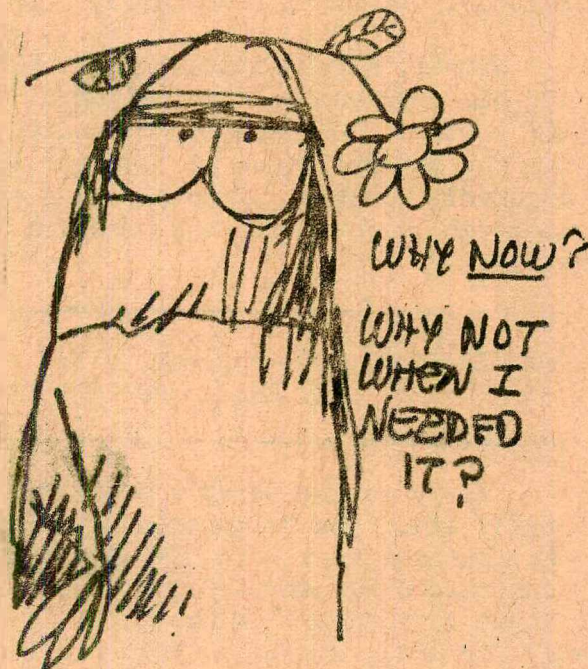
One of Perry's possible (9e) assumptions was practice. Several weeks ago while I was waiting to cut an interview tape, I chatted with the next guest -- a local but nationally-known psychic named Beverly Jaegers. She runs a "school" for training people in ESP, etc. I asked her about who could learn. Anyone. How could they learn? By starting in small, with partial successes, and practicing every day. Does it take concentration? No, just the opposite. You relax and let the mind "stretch." I got the impression there is some sort of dimly-lit void into which the mind can stretch... so far I haven't found it.

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ROBERT MOORE WILLIAMS    Fountain of Youth  
Spa, Box 12  
Niland, CA. 92257

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Thanks for the most recent issue of your fast-improving magazine. I read with great interest your Polemic Against Figgheads, and on page 5, when you described the effective function of the SFWA, a sort of smile crept over my face. No question



ROBERT MOORE WILLIAMS

about it, you fans are slow learners, but when you get hit on the head often enough you do learn...The pros are slow learners too but when the devil ego drives, all men are fools.

I also read Perry's material on telepathy, or tried to, but I don't believe I fully grasped the definition of a telepathic signal. Somewhere along the line the signal seems to have been analyzed out of existence. A sad thing! It was such a happy signal. I do not care what science (or scientists) think or do not think, I don't care what is proved or disproved, I have seen too much, experienced too much, explored too much, to have any doubt whatsoever about the existence of ESP.... Thus, a couple of years ago a group to which I belonged in Escondido was exploring this very subject. We used about 35 different symbols, each one hand drawn on a five by nine card. We took turns selecting a card, and after the selector had looked at it, he tried to transmit it to us and we tried to read his mind. All kinds of room for error in this, thank God, but part of our purpose was to keep the action as much fun as was possible. We weren't scientific, we had better sense we kept no records. Probably each of us was scared right down to his boots at the possibility of proving that somebody else might have access to what he had hitherto regarded as private, his mind. It kind of bugs you, that idea....About 4 o'clock one afternoon of the night the group was to meet, I was farting around under the big pine tree just outside my front door, when a symbol came into my head, the image of the little sea horse that was on one of the 35 cards we would use that night. Enough other data came along to indicate this would be the first card drawn at that night's meeting....At the meeting that night I was very careful not to touch the cards, not to shuffle them, not to handle them in any way. But as the first card was being drawn by someone else, I said "Sea horse!" And it was!

I would never claim that anything is proved by what I have said. In fact, I think I'm too smart to try to prove a relationship that goes out of here and into there, then comes back into here with a dozen wild variables clinging to

THE FANIVORE



it. I know very little about there but I'm trying to learn. But one thing I do know, it's better to be scientific and to analyze the signal out of existence than to try to think, just think, about what I have said here.

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PERRY A. CHAPDELAIN Route 4, Box 137  
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One correction, page 12, first column, line 29, #5, where it says "(5) Still not fair, rebuffs Rhine, then I wouldn't have anything to show since the scores wouldn't add up to the neutral five," should have read "Still not fair, rebuffs Rhine, then I wouldn't have anything to show since the scores add up to the neutral five."

Donn Brazier: To answer your question regarding the use of statistics in telepathy experiments of the simple 5 card test: The basic significance test is inferred from an equations whose last term (as usually written) involves a correlation coefficient which cannot be known. "If the correlation is zero," the reasoning goes, "the term drops out, and such and such are the consequences, maybe." This is where the phrase "null hypothesis" derives. To answer your question more fully, Definition: A statistical hypothesis is a statement concerning the probability distribution of a random variable. It is common for a priori considerations to suggest that not every conceivable hypothesis should be admitted. Those that are considered possible are referred to as admissible hypotheses.

((Falling in between is a page of closely argued detail about the makeup of statistical tests. You have been warned.))

It is common to specify hypotheses by giving the type of the distribution and the value of a parameter of the distribution.

Assume that we've decided what kinds of populations would make us prefer action A and what kinds action B. We can't think of the collection of all admissible hypotheses in two piles, which we label  $H_0$  and  $H_1$ .  $H_0$ : the set of all simple hypotheses which, if true, would make A the better action.

$H_1$ : the set of all simple hypotheses which, if true, would make B the better action.

The hypothesis  $H_0$  is true, then, if the population is described correctly by some one of the simple hypotheses in the set labeled  $H_0$ . The hypothesis  $H_0$  is simple or composite according to whether there is just one or more than one hypothesis in the pile. Similarly for  $H_1$ .

The hypothesis  $H_0$  is often called "the hypothesis being tested" or "the hypothesis under test" and  $H_1$  the alternative hypothesis. It is said that we "test  $H_0$  against the alternative  $H_1$ ." Such terminology is standard, but asymmetrical. This is unfortunate since really we are making a decision between two actions; it would thus be more descriptive to say that we are testing to decide between the hypotheses  $H_0$  and  $H_1$ .

Definition: A statistical test of hypotheses concerning a population is any rule which operates to choose for us between two courses of action, on the basis of a sample from the population. Such a rule must prepare us for any contingency -- must give us before the sample obtained a course of action to follow corresponding to each foreseeable outcome of the sampling.

In the construction of a statistical test, one must first have in mind the two courses of action and then make a decision as to which hypotheses correspond to one action and which to the other. These are subjective processes. Consequently in statistical theory it is usual to phrase results in terms of hypotheses rather than in terms of actions to be taken. When a rule comprising a test is followed, we say "We accept  $H_0$  (and automatically reject  $H_1$ )" if the result of the sampling is such that the rule chooses action A; and "we reject  $H_0$  (and automatically accept  $H_1$ )" if the result is such as to choose action B.

Definition: The range of values of a test statistic which, for a given test, requires rejection of  $H_0$  is called the critical region of the test. It is important to observe that once the test stat



is given the test defines the critical region and the critical region defines the test.

It must be realized that the results of a sample can be misleading. The particular sample on which the decision is to be made might turn out to be quite different in character from the population from which it is drawn. It can be so different as to lead to a decision to reject  $H_0$  even in cases where  $H_0$  is true, or to accept  $H_0$  in cases in which it is not true. A statistical test is subject to error in these two ways, called type I and type II errors, respectively.

We should be concerned about making either type of error and considering the probabilities associated with errors of decision. Since statistical tests are subject to errors, the test cannot prove anything about the population. If the rule defining the test tells us to reject  $H_0$  in a given instance this does not mean that  $H_0$  is necessarily false. Nor does the statistician have to believe that  $H_0$  is false. He is asked to act as though it were false, taking therewith the accompanying risk of a decision that is wrong.

If that doesn't answer your question, I'll have to get into the math itself. (Well, Mike, guess that'll turn off your bastards readers, especially the kind that read science fiction because they like the science, but can't stand science). ((But Perry -- gee, that's why I spent the first two years I read SF going through all the Anderson, Heinlein, and back issues of ANALOG that were in the Sylmar Library!))

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andrew offutt    Funny Farm  
                  Haldeman, KY 40329

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offutt to Glycer, peace.

Prehensile #6 came in the other day, and I was deep into wading through it before I discovered that it was address to the woman I live with. Gosh, I'm sorry. ((Well, it surely won't happen again. But not having heard from you since New Elliptic 8 and all I was beginning to wonder...))

I spent 75 minutes writing four (4)(IV)

in response to your diatribic "editorial", realized I wasn't coming off any better than you did, and threw it all away. Which is terrible; I've never done that before, and I'll be goddam if I read any of Jodie's mail again! ((Those quotes around editorial came out of your typer, not my fanzine. I called the column "A Polemic Against Fuggheads" -- I didn't say it was unbiased or offer objective solutions to some vitally important world problem -- like, you are right in content but really, man! -- And it's too bad you didn't send the stuff anyhow -- used an assumed name if it suited. I've been hoping somebody would stand up and deliver a counter-argument.))

But I want you and Walker to know that I read and really appreciated/empathized with Paul Walker's little article. He is confused, ambivalent in many areas, and he made it come across as he wanted it to do. I appreciate it, as I have appreciated most of his reviews in the past. This is a person who has tried to be serious about a deadly, enemy-making, absolutely thankless task undertaken by entirely too many ax-grinding, acerbic asses -- one of which he sure as hell ain't.

It was a surprise to read what he said about "critics" on page 12, since it's pretty well known that I agree down the line, but with more pressure on the Loudness control dial. Some few understand or try, Walker, and think you're pretty good, and it is the few that you want to please, not the iggurunt masses. ("When you find many people applauding you for what you do," E.E. Scripps wrote, "and a few condemning, you can be certain that you are on the wrong track because you're doing things that fools approve.")

My feeling is that we need a great surge of honesty, a great bloodless purge of this hideous mass of mediocre mentalities of all ages who perpetrate what they call "reviews" and of the poor children content to bear the title "critic." (And god knows this is not wholly subjective; I haven't read that many negative reviews of my work.) Then we need about five more Paul Walkers. And to



Walker: keep a copy of this to send me  
lest at some future time I blast you for  
blasting one of my little books.

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LOU STATHIS 76-44 167th St.  
Flushing NY 11366

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Breathtaking..pant,pant..Shull cover.  
Great. And a good move on your part to  
make with the green paper. Minor quibble,  
the name is almost invisible. Like it took  
me, eagle-eyes and all, about three or  
four scans to find PREHENSILE artfully con-  
cealed in the water. But, as I said, only  
minor and a truly beautiful job on Mr.  
Shull's part. ((Yez, but who cares if the  
name is even on the cover at all?)) The  
general level of competence in the inter-  
ior illustrations as well continues its  
upward march. Whoever the hell Joe Pear-  
son is, he's damn good. The color job on  
page 6 was nifty. His intricate designs  
show that he pays some attention to his  
work and gives it the same amount of care  
that, say, Shull or George Barr do. On  
the other hand we have Mr. Rotsler who can  
knock things off faster than his perverse  
mind can think up new ideas. I can safely  
say the first Rotsler I have ever liked is  
on page three. The female has nice big  
jugs, but I'd prefer larger nipples. ((I  
bet you would.))

You give Ellison all he deserves in  
your editorial about that professionalism  
turd. What the hell defines exactly who  
is a pro and who isn't? Can't say some-  
body who is a full-time sf writer, because  
that would immediately chop off 90% of SF-  
WA. Once again it comes down to the good-  
old Ellison value judgement: He who is a  
shitty writer is therefore an amateur. So  
for the time being that makes me (and about  
50% of the SFWA for that matter) an ama-  
teur... And you're right about the obes-  
ity of cons. Like Noreascon was so damn  
big it practically cured me of any sort of  
con going. The only remotely famous type  
I met there was some guy who claimed he was  
Franz Kafka. I think he was an impostor  
because he had a beard.

Once again Paul Walker gets my undying  
admiration and awe. His Silverberg piece

was great. He has, I think, pinned  
down what has been bugging me about the  
man for quite some time. Silverberg has  
been afflicted by the dread hack virus  
running through his blood and he can't  
seem to shake it. Sometimes he manages  
to shakefree, but never for long. Odd-  
ly enough, I think "Good News From The  
Vatican" was a pretty crummy story, and  
definitely not one of his best. I have  
high hopes for Silverberg and every time  
I see a new story or novel of his I  
pounce on it and hope that this time  
will be it. A couple of times he's al-  
most done it (NIGHTWINGS, BOOK OF  
SKULLS, "Passengers" and a few others)  
but I've yet to be completely satisfied.  
If Delany doesn't hurry and come out with  
something, it might just be that Silv-  
erberg will write the definitive sf nov-  
el of the 70s... When Paul says that  
critics are useless and have never bene-  
fitted anybody, I think he's making too  
big a generalization. I think Blish  
did a lot of good, and maybe Damon  
Knight. The ideal position, I think,  
is the editor-critic since editors are  
the guys who really wear the pants these  
days. This is where Knight's influence  
has really been felt -- as editor of the  
ORBIT books. Campbell was also an edit-  
or-critic but kept his criticism to per-  
sonal letters to writers and one-on-one  
talks, avoiding the traditional essay  
route. And we all know how much he in-  
fluenced things.

Wadholm's "October Carnival" was  
pretty good. Nice vivid images like  
"neon arrows", "Shattered prism schemes"  
and "arid autumn dreams" make it a strik-  
ing piece of work. If only he had  
avoided the monotonous rhythm, though...

Like Leon Taylor I am also addicted  
to tv. As a matter of fact I used to  
watch the WILD,WILD WEST every Friday  
when it was doing its regular run...But  
I don't think Leon quite hits it when he  
tries to figure out why so many people  
found it such a neat show. I never real-  
ly thought much about the good-evil bus-  
iness, and James West always impressed me  
pretty much as a dip. The attraction  
for me was the bizarre plots and weird  
villains. Michael Dunn as rotten Dr.



Loveless was undoubtedly one of the coolest meanies ever to waddle across the Tube.

I think old Mad is hitting premature old age. He crabs just like my old man about "The good old days of ought-seven." Sure the sixties were vibrant and things seemed exciting, but it's 1973 now and we are all suffering in a fart cloud of Nixonian despair ((or is it puberty?)) We gotta be happy with retreads like AGAIN DANGEROUS VISIONS until something better crawls out way. Just look at the brighter side of things... maybe 1973 and beyond will be worse! It's possible, you know -- Darrell Schweitzer could win the Hugo for best fan writer and David Gerrold could emerge as the premier talent in the field and up the price of his autograph to a dollar, Harry Warner could turn nasty and decide that nobody out there deserves one of his LoCs, or maybe Mike Glickson will come down with cirrhosis of the liver and be forced to give up alcohol. Any of them could happen, you know, and worse even.

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Walker has a few valid points to make but I find his argument and opinions basically flawed and inaccurate -- for one thing, "Good News From The Vatican" is a totally nothing story, and his constant references to it as "brilliant" are questionable indeed (also his praise of a particularly good book in the context of discussing some far better and far more important Silverberg work. He says some intelligent things about Silverbob's writing, but I question his premise -- why must Bob be nothing but a money-grubber, playing on the whims of an eager book-buying public?

But Flo has one of her better columns to date; I still wish she would do some real honest-to-god CRITICISM, but I guess this is all we'll ever get from her. And I did enjoy Dan's piece, yes indeed. Including five pages of subtitles. I love Bill Warren's writing, but I wish he had a few better films to use it on.

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Did anyone ever tell you that you are as clever as all hell? Running the Paul Walker article with "Leon Taylor, if you are out there, come in and relieve me" bit still on and then (miraculously) rousing Leon from gafia so he could write an article to follow Walker's. Some people are beginning to wonder How You Do These Things... that deal with the devil really worked out, eh?

For awhile Mad almost had me convinced. But the only trouble is that no one can ever agree on when a golden age is, let alone when it's past. An old-time fan might say it passed back in the forties, along with jazz, hot rods, and all that other stuff. The author of a recent book called FOP: FROM THE BEGINNING moaned about the rock of the sixties and longed for the good ol' days of the 1950s. ((I am always suspicious of people who long for the good old days of the 1950s. IMHO it was one of the least creative and most incredibly stilted eras in American popular culture: the end of dramatic radio, the McCarthy persecution of various artists, full retreat of art from the crackdown on EC comics -- not that I give a damn about them, but it's symptomatic -- to the automatic writing of Jackson Pollock. Actually I like Pollock's art, but it's intellectual impact, so I gather, was to further the trend that ended up in acceptance of Warhol's bilge, since nobody anymore seems able to tell what legitimate art is from what is put-on art.))

I think it's much more likely that the people's enthusiasm for the stuff wore off -- that's why most people only read sf for two or three years then quit.

Paul Walker says that once critics "systematize their thinking" it "quickly becomes rigid like cement...inflexible...oppressive, suffocating." I don't think that's true; I think that anyone when they judge a book must use the same standards from book to book or they



aren't being fair. It isn't right to criticize one author for poor characterization and then in your next review let different authors get off scot free, even though they do just as bad a job. Does Paul Walker invent a new set of criteria for every book he reviews? Do we change the laws every time we bring a new criminal before the court? ((I can see you uttering that last line with a wicked smile on your face, Cy -- "the prosecution calls andy offutt..." I won't claim to be speaking for Paul, but clearly anything as prone to subjective judgement as fan reviewing can't come on like a set of standards for high school creative writing classes, nor the new laws of physics/pulphacking. There is an art to accounting the input to each new novel or story, to understanding its place and impact in the body of SF. Certain standards of quality are always in mind, but they are only a part, not the whole of, reviewing.))

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[Wadholm] poses an admirable question in the recent VIEW FROM GROUND ZERO... As for Richard's thesis; he's right, he does oversimplify. It would take a detailed reply to explain exactly where he does go wrong but for openers, it simply isn't true that culture as a whole is collapsing in America. Yes, fiction is dying, but that has been a steady demise contingent on Hemingway's death. Rock is beginning to reach the same orbits of disinterest that jazz did in the mid-50s, the birthdate for R&R; popular music is like the Pheonix in that it undergoes the same cycle (simplicity to innovation to depth to intellectualizing to dissolution -- you see, carried to its logical extremity, music is nothing but noise. Thus there is no reason why the fully-aware man cannot treat all noise as music -- the concept of organization is after all mentally applied -- and music tends to reach this conclusion faster than most other arts. Art itself is the only other one that can keep pace.) Movies are undergoing a shift in emphasis from star-actor to star-director, and Richard's assertion that "the field is not as exciting as

IT WAS A FEW YEARS AGO" sounds pretty feeble to me. I'd like to see Richard's bill of proof. Maybe Best Film Oscar goes to stuff like AIRPORT nowadays, but it also went to SOUND OF MUSIC in those days. Besides all that, cultural forms like the New Journalism continue to evolve rapidly...but overall I suppose that it is true that there is not as much rampant cultural excitement as there has been.

On to Richard's basic thoughts. "An art media... reacts to general large world events in large general ways" (love that word order). Only in the large world of large general generalizations, Richard. "When things go bad in real life, an artist is driven to perfect an unreal life" -- tell that to John Steinbeck and Upton Sinclair. "The natural drive in an artist is to escape real life" well, here we go into the semantics sludge, but it would seem fairer to say that the natural drive in an artist, a gentleman who is more concerned with consciousness than most, is to find real life. What is so real about 8 dull hours at General Motors donating screw #3496 to every new Black Widow automobile? The artist, far from running from life, seeks the principles that control it. But, of course, this depends on your definition of "artist." Richard's probably differs greatly from mine.

It certainly isn't true that artists (whoever they are-) create the least in good times. Richard should get acquainted with the Renaissance, the Age of Enlightenment and Athenian Greece. The new wives tale that in the current Nixon Era "people are escaping less because they see less to escape from" is devastated by the full brunt of social science research: all studies indicate that Americans are withdrawing from clubs, political activities, churches, etc. Not one survey to my knowledge runs against this basic conclusion. There are endless sources for this sort of thing, but the two that would probably be most accessible to Richard are PSYCHOLOGY TODAY and HUMAN BEHAVIOR.

Basically what Richard is proposing



is that artists are all sado-masochist types in Erich Fromm's definition of the term, and all are generally authoritarian. Interesting, but hideously distorted, I think. Artists are famed as anti-authoritarians and anarchist-sympathizers -- not as wretched souls with a dire need for dictators (both emotional and political) who will make them suffer. But the latter kind of artist does exist under special circumstances that Richard has actually described, not the basic condition of Artists In The World (but here I go with my overgeneralizing).

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If people tell me that Mike Glicksohn has a boa constrictor around his place I am willing to believe them until I see the animal, or fail to see it, for myself. And if I never get to see the Glicksohn mansion to check it out for myself it just makes the Glicksohn myth that much more enjoyable. Where would we be without myths, legends and in-jokes; real life is usually not that much to write home about, a snake is just much more enjoyable to read about than mowing the lawn and the relatives coming around. ((It is the willing gullibility of fans like yourself that has made my continuing invention of the hoax fan Mike Glicksohne worthwhile. It does take a lot of work for me to edit the material in "his" genzine ENERGUMEN, almost as much as it takes Bill Bowers to design and publish it -- you wondered why he wasn't heard from more often? -- and for Richard Geis to make all those appearances in cons and such. Why else would Geis have to fold SFR, and "move" to Oregon where nobody would ever visit him? Geis hates running around in a bush hat, army jacket and shorts, and says the beard makes him itch, but it's all worth it to entertain fandom.))

It is very rarely that I'm moved to comment on the artwork in and the layout of a fanzine but in appreciation of this issue I must say that I thought you did a very good job. Jim Schull is particularly good and you did him justice in the way you presented him. ((I have talked to Jim -- and

fandom can now forget the 'c'. It is Shull. Forget them Carandaith covers man....))

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This is the first time that I for one have been able to actually read anything by Digby and now feel myself to be an expert. I do think though that the fanzine subtitles would seem much more bright and shiny if read as they naturally appeared. ((Yes -- but there's no way I'm going to run 200 copies of red and green ditto on yellow paper -- and no way you people who get the second hundred copies will be able to read it.)) For every original idea one finds nine others are merely inventively contrived or amusing ((welcome to fandom)), and after all that is all that Digby meant them to be ((now you're progressing)). I enjoy the premise of the column and hope that Goodman keeps on for the indefinite future.

Wadholm and Taylor each have at least one head on their shoulders; they are appreciated.

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CLOSING GNOTES

If somehow you are only getting this part of the double issue, which would be a neat trick, I concede, here are the facts of the matter:

PREHENSILE is a theoretically bi-monthly fanzine that for all its other hangups does come out at least five times a year (five issues). It is available for 35¢, 3/\$1; locs; trades -- one for one unless otherwise arranged with the editor; contributions on file or in print of art and words. If publishers care to lay a few free review copies of SF books on me -- or those who have done reviewing in this issue -- it's an almost guarantee that we'll print comments on them by next issue. Address: 14974 Osceola St., Sylmar, Calif. 91342. Phone: 361-0694. (213)

Poor man's NERG -- sheesh!



