







# PREHENSIBLE 8

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Cover: Jim Shull

\*\*\*\*\* combined 7 and 8 \*\*\*\*\*  
DISCONTENTS \*\*\*\*\*

PREHENSIBLE 7 & 8 is the double-issue of the genzine edited by Mike Glycer. Rumors say that PRE tries to be approximately bimonthly; available by sub at 35¢ each or 3/\$1, for contributions of words and art, locs, trades (one for one, unless otherwise arranged with me). From 14974 Osceola St., Sylmar, Calif. 91342. I'm interested in getting reviews of current SF, elaborate and unlikely items of fannish and sercon interest.



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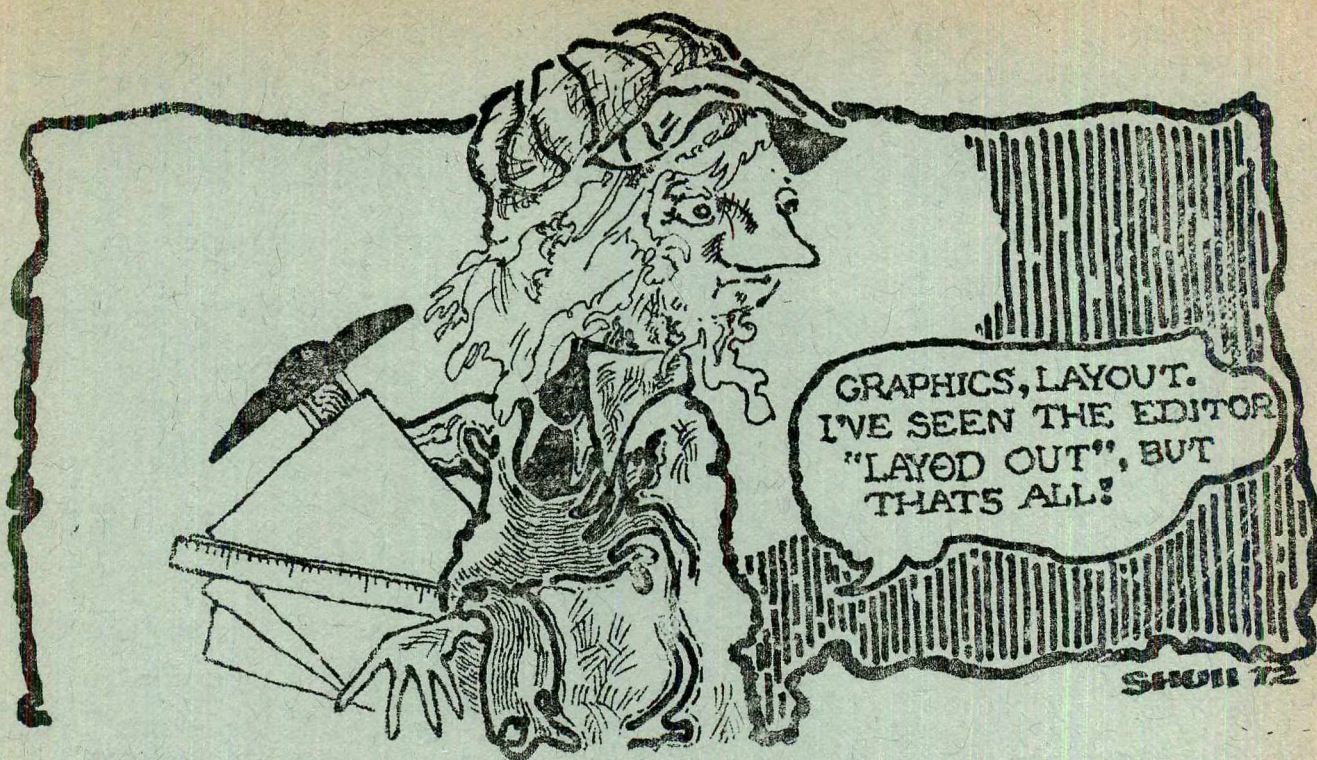
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# 1. THE LIGHT AT THE END OF THE TUNNEL

About five years ago (about the time when McNamara was making what turned out to be ridiculous estimates of how soon the war in Vietnam would be over) the phrase "the light at the end of the tunnel" referred to a time when we could confidently predict an end to our involvement. Usually -- six years ago -- it referred to the present.

A political cartoon was captioned: "WILL THE LAST GI OUT OF VIETNAM PLEASE TURN OFF THE LIGHT AT THE END OF THE TUNNEL?"

Now, even though Tom Collins has not made formal ratification, not only is the light being turned off (permitting the rest of the riot to go on in the dark) but the power poles are being uprooted, the money-generator diverted, and South Vietnam itself remanded to a fate which most of us suspect but hope that the loss of 50,000+ lives has postponed indefinitely.

# 2. THE BLIGHT AT THE END OF THE TUNNEL

But what about this fanzine? Somebody ripped off with the bubbl! I've been trying to get it out since January, and at first my delay was not the usual snore-inducing fanziner's tale of woe. No, various history classes at USC have been compelling me to spend time (1) determining the influence of British propaganda on the entry of the US into WWI, (2) avoiding dropping the atomic bomb, (3) finding a path out of the Great Depression. You laugh, but it's for real. By February 28 I was sure I had Woodrow Wilson and every president through Truman whipped. For pure hindsight I had every one of their defects logged and flogged, yes'm.

And here you dudes thought I was fooling around trying to recoup late electrostencils. get overdue columns, type stencils days on end, and run off 90 pages worth of stuff. Fooled you. To tell the truth, the answer is (e) all of the above. But since it would have caused me no end of mortification to hang onto this material additional months, or get it out past the deadline for Hugo nominations, I am hurrying. Even so, it's



MIKE  
GLYER  
REPREHENSIBLE

too close to the deadline for me to bother including a ballot form. If you haven't voted when you get this (if it is before April 1) I imagine putting your nominations in the categories on a sheet with your LACON or TORCON number should suffice.

While my fanzine has been likened to ~~plagues catastrophes~~ things biological, never until now did it multiply by dividing. So welcome to PREHENSIBLE, the fannish bacterium. The main reason I divided the issues was to give all the contributions a place in the sun -- to avoid spoiling the fannish items by sticking them in a layout ghetto after the sercon fleet of Walker, Wadholm, Taylor and company has taken over everything else. Besides, if there is one thing I will not tolerate, it is producing a 90 page fanzine. Sorry, folk.

3. THE MAN IN THE FELSENSTRASZE

No slight intended by what follows to either Franz Rottensteiner or Andy Offutt.

I enjoy both in their opinionated, enraging, confidently reasoned pokes at prodom or fandom, respectively. Yet I still have to laugh at the appropriateness of their reactions to my editorial (now I can pass it off as that; polemic is more accurate) in the last issue. Offutt, between the lines, dismisses my points as the aberrations of a foolishly raving fan; (and if that's not what you're saying, Andy, fetch that reply out of the trash and let's see). Franz not only agrees with what I said, but advances to the fore with more of the same. Offutt disagreed most, Rottensteiner agreed most. These two polar forces remain incredibly predictable. For sheer entertainment I can think of only a few things more intriguing than a permanent fanzine column that had the two of them debating various pro and fan topics. Of course it wouldn't do much for them, so that's not likely to get off the ground.

Says Franz: "Your editorial strikes me as highly sensible. The attitudes of professionals in US fandom have always appeared to me amusing -- or annoying. To enter "Prodom" seems to be considered an act of almost the same importance as becoming a priest has for Catholics. This is all the more astonishing in a country where hobbies such as fandom are pursued with an enthusiasm that must appear zealous to any outsider. In European countries you can find no such thing. ((read Van Toorn's column in this issue and say that again.)) Does this perhaps indicate that you Americans (and the British too) have more respect for creative work, that writers are more esteemed there than as with us? It may seem so, but rather I think the opposite is the case: if any writer (and in science fiction, "writer" means in 99% of all cases a no-good hack) is treated with awe, and almost nobody escapes the fate of having stuck the label "genius" on him by someone or other, you soon run out of comparisons, and are left only with linking a writer to God. One should perhaps also point out that one can find a similar attitude in whoredome, where the prostitutes look down with disdain on the amateurs, and in gangster and spy novels, where the professional killers take great pride in their art and speak equally contemptuously of the amateurs.

"It also seems to me that it is exactly those sf writers who are of very little importance who wave around their professionalism the most, and if they had a sense of humor, they would notice how ridiculous they appear....If it weren't for fandom they would be nobody at all, beings who are treated with contempt by their own publishers, and ignored in the media; only in fandom can they play the important writers and achieve the import-



ance they have failed to achieve in mundane life." Franz takes up other points, and the rest of this loc will be published next issue. It arrived after I had run off both lettercols, you see.

The reason I brought Franz' quotes directly into the lettercol is to show how hard a case can be made on the pros. We shall have to rely on somebody else to make the hard case against fans in this thing.

To tell the truth I'm not concerned with whether my editorial was highly sensible or chiefly hot air. It's volume control was way up so that the dumb things that had created the situation would be clear, and in overplaying them that people would take steps to accomodate each other before the pro-fan relationship (profane?) really did get into such a rut.

As for the pretensions of sf writers -- so little worthwhile/excellent fiction is being created in the mainstream these days that to put down pulphackers is rather wasteful, and to comparatively put down any sf writer because he writes "genre" fiction is a cop-out. Whether a writer uses his professional pride to conceal his lack of creativity is not something that can be generalized on.

4. ...STUMBLES INTO A HOLE AND DROWNS." ((Mandatory Geis reference for this issue.))

Bill Bowers (PO Box 148, Wadsworth OH 44281) has opened up a fanzine journal and letter substitute called INworlds. A monthly item, going down in America at 5/\$1 and in Australia at 3/A\$1 airmail (Dennis Stocks, Box 2268, GPO, Brisbane, Queensland, 4001), INworlds looks as if it will be the debating stand for faneditors, and a check-in point for genzine editors seeking slightly more reassurance than LOCUS-one-liners and Geis listings. While I would like to see him (as well as Geis, YANDRO and others) stop using the subjective 1 to 10 scale for reviews, since it tells us little, and use a personalized system of preferences -- Bowers' input is good to have.

Issue 3 of INworlds has an exchange between Tom Collins (editor IS) and Bill Bowers (editor OUTWORLDS). As you know, the more an editor thinks he deserves a Hugo, but the less real chance he has of getting one, the more he hates LOCUS. Mathematically: D-R=HL. Yez. There is the minus-R factor, because the closer one actually is to getting a Hugo, the more he makes an accomodation with reality that will save him much frustration when he misses. Bowers, being much closer than Collins, actually ended up defending LOCUS, as much confusion as that cost him. (Under this system I should really hate LOCUS, but there's a reduction to absurdity factor which means below a certain level of likelihood you have for getting a Hugo, you ought to leave the hassling to others. Right now I'm working on deserving a nomination, then we'll worry about the package.) Says marse Collins: "One question I would like to see discussed and since someone has raised it directly with TORCON's committee I suppose I'll get to do so is the matter of whether LOCUS is eligible for a Fanzine Hugo nomination. Item: it is primarily for and about pros. Item: it does not exchange for fanzines. Item: it shows a profit... Now it may exchange and it may not show a profit, but it really is a newsletter for pro writers and keeps track only of what they want to keep track of... And besides, he's got so damn much power that he can go on copping Hugos from people who don't read any other fanzine, forever..."

If some delightful person really desires to STOP LOCUS, the rules shouldn't be too hard to screw up -- and TORCON, rule-screwing capital of fandom, would be the place to do it. Simply pass at the business meeting a motion redefining the category -- make it Best Genzine, requirements for eligibility fixed at four issues of more than 20 pages (the requirement now is to have published four issues). If Charlie Brown cared to meet the requirements (a couple more art issues would bring him to four total issues over 20 pages) or not would be his concern. But we would kill off small zines, eh guys?



I'd say abolish the award "if it weren't for the honor of the thing." If the editors aren't willing to take on all comers, size or no, circulation or no, readership or no -- then they aren't really interested in winning a legitimate Hugo, and to hell with them. The only point at which I'd want to see a zine disqualified is if it were paying wordage rates for material. Many zines already pay for art (whose purchase is often exceeded in cost by reproduction anyway). But when you start running your zine like a prozine on the inside (as well as the "outside"-- with circulation-boosting business practices) you definitely cease to be an amateur publication.

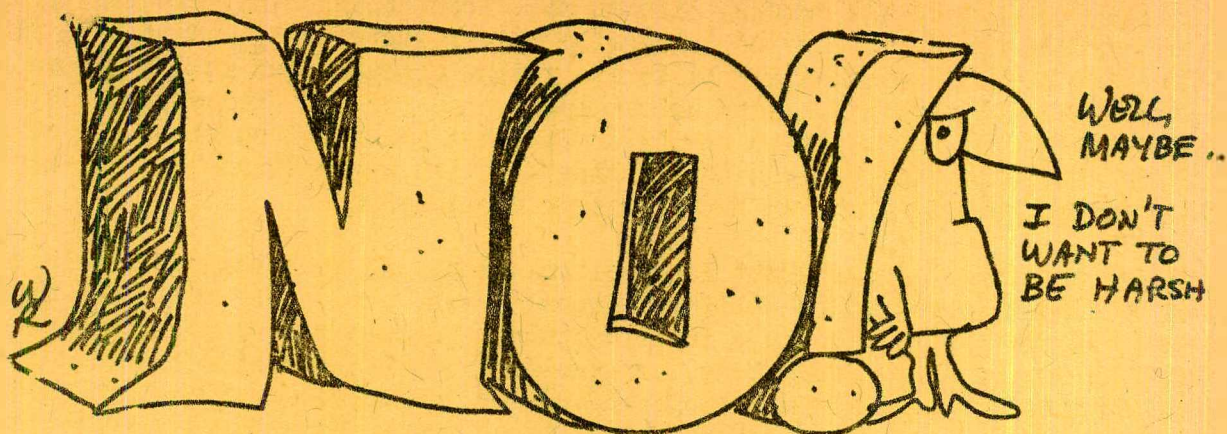
Of course you see I don't care about large circulation. In the precious little time I've been in fandom (compared to Collins, Bowers, Brown, etc.) only two zines have won the Hugo -- SFR and LOCUS. The Hugo itself: nothing, because its winner is predetermined. The Hugo nominations: everything, because in the top 5 you have the community of fanzines that most successfully met the standards of, and pleased, fandom. Why is the award predetermined? For the reasons that got those zines their large circulations to begin with: they carry on a current discussion of sf, they are service fanzines, they are comparatively reliable and frequent, they are edited by persons with great competence in editing and expertise in discussing the sf field. Neither is lavishly reproduced, nor in SFR's case much more than competently designed. LOCUS in the past was very art-oriented, but now is staid, even colorless in presentation. Readers (subscribers who also attend conventions like LACON or TORCON) nevertheless find what they are looking for in both. (Past tense is most accurate for SFR.) Evidently their critical standards do not rest on what fannish pillars are published (even though LOCUS has BNF stuff in periodically, it's rarely very good, and rarely fannish), nor how supercolossal the art and repro is.

It is the readers, not the editors, who award the Hugo. I'm always at a loss to hear editors who turn away subscribers, who say they print whatever suits them, and do so whenever it is convenient, talk as if they were being cheated out of a Hugo by mobs of ignoramuses. The mythical creatures who get only LOCUS and vote for LOCUS because it's the only zine they get. I remember when I got only SFR (and that's considerable to say, because I was publishing my own fanzine before ever seeing another -- you know how long it took to recuperate once I received a copy of SFR, then) -- and rooted it on to a Hugo. But I didn't vote -- I wasn't going to join a convention I couldn't attend. I know of many fans more experienced than I that do the same -- one of the reasons you've never seen FOCAL POINT nominated for a HUGO. Thus I must ask that if somebody is going to join a con, and then bother to vote (less than a fifth of the total LACON membership voted), is he automatically going to vote ignorantly? Probably that's where the fanzine NO AWARD votes came from. Which leaves?

And what about people who receive many fanzines and still vote for LOCUS? Further, any zine with 250 LACON-member readers could have beaten LOCUS simply by being voted over LOCUS on the ballot. They did not even have to put for instance NERG first, only higher than LOCUS. On the first LACON fanzine vote, 179 went for LOCUS, 234 voted for other zines (not no award) (which got the other 69). 234 votes would have been enough to beat LOCUS (223 total at the 4th ballot). So I would like to suggest very strongly that there is no injustice being done to the world by LOCUS, either actively or passively. Even if LOCUS votes came from people who saw no other zine, every other zine has its share of those; and it could have been beaten if backers of GRANFALLOON and SCIENCE FICTION COMMENTARY had fallen in behind selecting genzine over newszine.

But to maximize the chances of voters being familiar with this category, a compromise measure is available. (1) Place atop the ballot a warning to know at least 3 of the contenders in any category before voting in it, and (2) close the voting earlier, so that the use of free copies, etc., will have less time to sway the uninterested. More than this would open up faneditors to ridicule. Would you throw Ellison out of the short story, or Heinlein out of the novel category just to share the award? Even if their work may have been the only one read by certain voters?





I usually get the question from another writer. "How can you possibly be collaborating on a novel? Somebody else's fingers muddling your ideas -- and wouldn't you always be trying to gallop off in different directions? How can you stand it?"

Well, by God, it takes planning.

I have now lived through two novels written with two different men. David Gerrold and Jerry Pournelle are two very different people, and we produced two very different novels. I shouldn't really be using the past tense, because MOTELIGHT is not quite finished. Another month will do it.

Two novels, one 150,000 words long, one almost 200,000. That's enough experience to lay down certain tentative rules. I stand ready to be instructed by Fred Pohl or Randall Garrett, but in the meantime, here they are.

1) The standard professional writer writes because he has his own ideas of how the universe runs. He makes his own worlds. People who interfere with his world-picture can cripple him. It's happened often enough in television writing.

He isn't built for collaborations.

2) Every collaboration is different. It has to be learned all over again. Let me give details.

With David it turned out that we could work in the same room, trading typewriters. We were trying to write a funny novel, and our senses of humor matched most of the time. The plot was loose and simple. We knew what the characters were trying to do, we knew how difficult it would be, and we knew we could solve it. We worked with the likely and unlikely consequences. We took turns doing the homework -- which was extensive: weaving, magic, balloon flight.

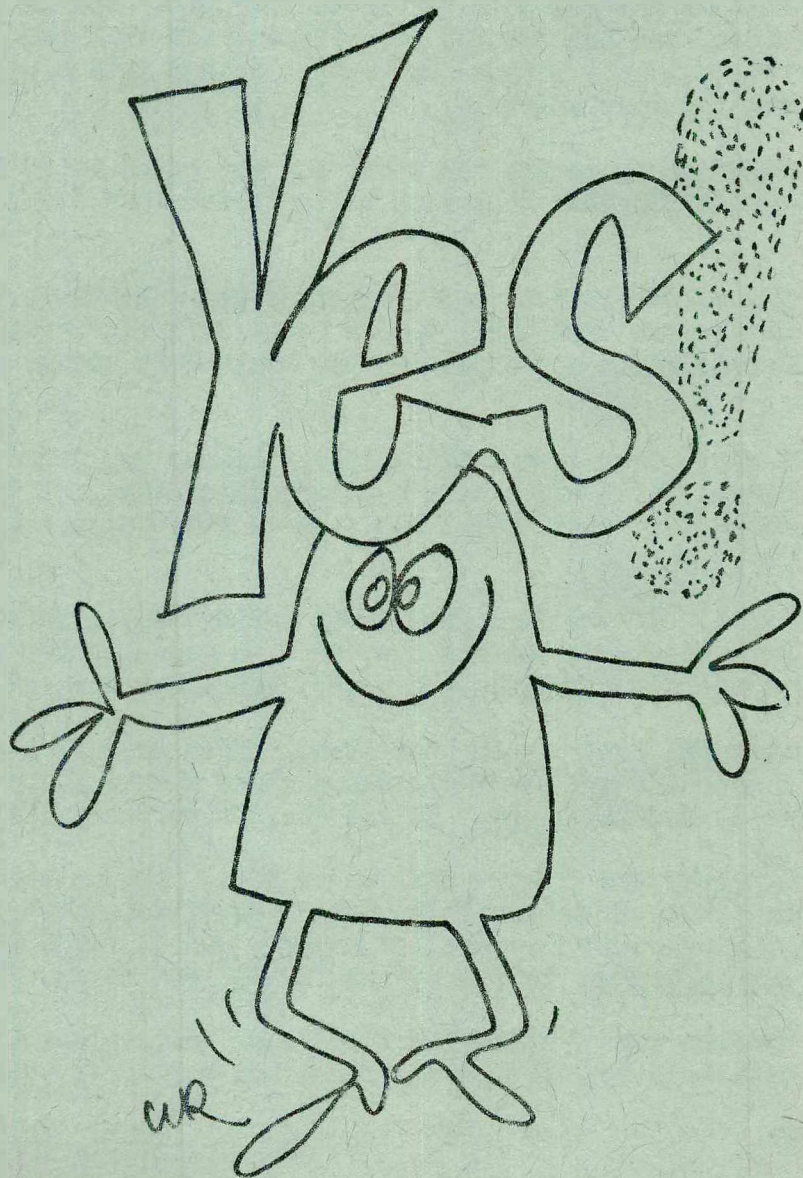
In contrast, Jerry and I never tried to work in the same room. We plotted our novel with infinite intricacy before we ever started. We early discovered that each had skills to match the other's blind spots. Therefore we worked to produce a plot that would use our combined strong points to the fullest extent -- and we traded the novel off, one keeping it for weeks or months.

We worked in his universe, which has a tighter, more detailed history than my own Human Space. Jerry handles politics, warfare, and conversations among large groups



# COLLABORATION

BY  
LARRY  
NIVEN





of people far better than I do. I'm good at aliens, and at descriptions of alien scenery. It turned out that we could plant an alien world in the heart of his Empire, with complete consistency.

So he works with political aspects. He writes scenes dealing with details of Navy life. I write exploration scenes and human-alien interactions. In addition, each of us has his favorite characters. All of these people have deepened and developed through the interaction of two writers. But we each have favorite spokesmen, and we work with these.

3) In both collaborations, we decided two things at the outset.

a) One of us has to have veto power. In both cases it was me. But it has to be someone -- it prevents a hell of a lot of argument -- and it has to be decided at the outset. I used it a lot with David, where our sense of humor didn't match, and where his TV training had grown too strong. (In TV you are permitted to lie to the reader -- "killing" the main character, or dooming the enterprise -- just before the commercial. Afterward it turns out not to be true.)

b) Somebody has to do the final rewrite.

Look: a collaboration is not going to be smooth in style. You'll learn each other's styles to some extent, but not enough. The first draft will read rough. One of you does the final draft, not only because he'll spot things both of you have missed, but because it will read far more smoothly.

In both of my collaborations it was the other guy who opted to do that final back-breaking job. I offer no apologies: they both write faster than I do, and they both volunteered.

If you're planning a collaboration, and neither of you volunteers, play showdown or flip a coin. You might even wait until you've got a full first draft, so that the loser doesn't lose interest while contemplating the manifestly unfair extra work ahead of him.

4) For God's sake spend some time talking it out before you start such a project. Outline what you're doing. David and I didn't do enough of that, I think, and it shows in *THE FLYING SORCERERS*. Jerry and I did. We've got enough notes to fill a normal book.

5) Collaborations fail. If you find your novel coming apart, burn it. Then make agreements as to who gets the ideas for his own use. In general, two writers writing from the same ideas produce utterly different works; you might work on that basis.

6) It doesn't matter who contributed what idea. Argue or brag about it if you want, but keep this in mind: If you can't tell who came up with what by reading the work, the collaboration is working right. If you can, it probably isn't.

7) Every so often, Jerry and I Xerox what we've got. Then we each get a copy. Highly recommended. This way we can both work on rewrites, jottings in the margins, etc. You wind up with non-identical copies, of course, but it turns out that melding the two copies takes one afternoon for one of you for 150,000 words. I was startled.

But why do it? I confess that I tried the first time just to see if I could. I went into the second collaboration because the first had worked so well.



1) I have this quirk. I can only write so far on a novel, then I have to turn to something else for awhile. With MOTELIGHT and THE FLYING SORCERERS the problem never arose: I had plenty of time for short stories and other things while the novel was elsewhere.

2) It's a wonderful thing to know that your novel is writing itself elsewhere while you're attending the Chestercon and traveling around Europe. It's almost eery to see you scenes improve themselves, shape themselves into what you were trying to say but couldn't get quite right.

3) You know that feeling you get when talking to a fan about the intricacies of your universe? I get it every time I meet someone who's done the math for NEUTRON STAR. Well, there's a touch of that here. Each of you seems to be flattering the other. When you're stuck on a scene, the other guy can get you off the dime, or even take over the writing until you see where you're going next.

4) With Jerry, there was this beautiful matching of blind spots. We're writing something neither of us could have written alone -- and that's the principle reason for doing a collaboration.

5) Corollary to above: You learn from each other. I begin to see how to write of boardroom power and precedence battles; I get a glimmering of military strategy; I can write of duty-oriented characters (though I'm still more comfortable with the likes of Beowulf Shaeffer: tourists in life). Jerry works well with the alien Moties, and has contributed some things I never thought of. He's comfortable with Renner (a wordy Shaeffer character sucked into the Navy against his will) and Bury (who was flat at first because Jerry hated him).

David and I learned too. I learned not to hesitate so much before jumping into a scene. You can always burn it afterward. David knows how to cut. And I'm convinced his writing skills improved considerably.

How do you get into a collaboration? I don't know. David and I started a short story one night. Jerry and I sat down with a bottle and spent a long night working out ideas,

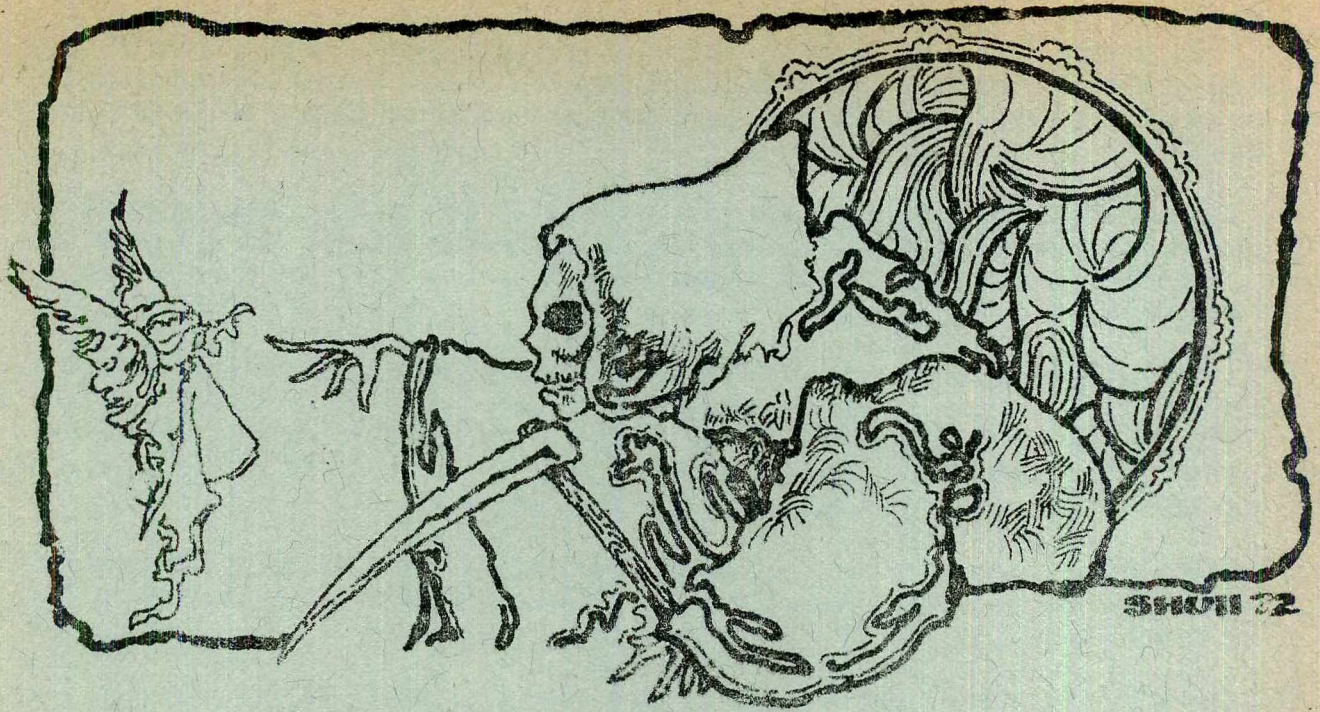
One thing: you don't start a collaboration with an amateur, not even if you're an amateur. Two proven professionals will know enough about writing to carry their weight, and to quit if it isn't working.

--And one exception. I tried this when Hank Stine and I were both new to the game. It was a story I'd found unsaleable. I handed it to Hank with the idea that if he could improve it, we'd split the take. It worked to this extent: we sold it five years later, to Ted White.

The point is, what did we have to lose? I'd already done the work. Hank wasn't committed to anything.

When you start a collaboration novel, you've got a lot to lose. You may have a great deal to gain.





It's hard to decide what advice I might give you about random. In some ways, we are very different people; and fandom changes rapidly enough that in three years most of what little you have learned will be outdated. However, I can give you some general advice; much of which, with a bit of adaptation, would be useful to a neo of my own time.

1. Don't worry about the running of worldcons, unless you become directly involved in the workings of one. This will be hard advice to follow -- the '64 worldconcom is going to -- never mind, you wouldn't believe it. But it isn't going to matter in the long run, except perhaps to a half-dozen people; none of whom will be truly harmed when the fuss dies down. No matter how badly a worldcon is run, it seems near-impossible to ruin that one and impossible to do permanent harm to the worldcon as a series.
2. Don't bother too hard getting along with people you think you ought to like; it won't do any good, and your instinctive dislike of them is probably accurate enough. (Don't go out of your way to antagonize them, of course.) The people you do like, including those you feel you ought not to, are the ones you want to associate with.
3. There are going to be a good many broken marriages among those fans you know now and those you'll meet later. Don't count on Charlie and Marsha Brown staying married, for example -- odd as that sounds right now. Don't worry about it. (Don't go around speculating aloud on which marriages will break up when, either.)
4. When you encounter Fanoclasts and related groups, stay out of the ingroup hassles so far as you can. Don't try to decide who was wrong or right. It isn't going to matter; usually, the broken friendships will be patched right up again even when this seems near-impossible. Sometimes they won't be. So what? You worry too much already. (The same goes for any number of other groups in fandom.)
5. You'll hear a fair amount of authoritative comment on West Coast fans and fandom from more experienced members of NY fandom. When you move to the West Coast a few years from now (I won't say just where you'll be living; you wouldn't believe me); you'll learn that what you've been told ranges from inaccurate to distorted to oversimplified. Start gathering knowledge about fans and fandom from more direct sources.



-----DARK ALLEYS OF FANHISTORY

+++++

.....  
FROM: DAN GOODMAN

1973

TO: DAN GOODMAN

1963  
.....

6. It happened that the fannish activity you'll enjoy and benefit from most, and the one you'll get along with best and are most likely to involve people you'll enjoy, has not yet been invented.

Here I can give you specific advice. Next year, a weekly apa is going to start in NY -- first of the "local apas." Contribute to it, soon as that becomes possible for you -- and ignore most of the adverse comment -- at least in print. When a similar one starts up in LA, join it; and any others which come along.

7. Right now, you're over-impressed with people who are your age or a few years older, and have been active in fandom somewhat longer -- and far more productively, so far. These oldtime fans won't seem as impressive when fans of your generation gain the same old-time BNF status; or when you start getting into contact with fans who were active before those oldtimers were born.

9. Right now, your political opinions and beliefs are well left of most fans'. A number of people who are now quite conservative (they'll be voting for Goldwater for President next year, in some cases), will be well to your left within a few years. Don't worry about it. Don't worry about being a head, either -- that's going to become not only more acceptable in fandom, but just about mandatory in some circles. (Right now, if it interests you, several fans who have been hesitant about having it publicly known they were homosexual have admitted it -- usually to the accompaniment of yawns. What the equivalent will be in the late Seventies or early Eighties, I have no idea.) Similarly, several fans -- mostly fanartists for reasons I wouldn't care to guess at, have recently "Found Jesus.")

\*\*\*\*\* And the equivalent memo from 1983? Incomprehensible, I'm afraid. It seems that, at that time, I will be very much in favor of Demi-conguent marital corporations; and the worldconcom will be rather opposed. I am advised to publish a cormazine -- I gather these are published daily or oftener, but otherwise I cannot make out what they might be. The fuss over playing Gatromancy at LASFS meetings will be forgotten within three years? I should hope so.



# PAUL WALKER

In the last two weeks I have received two letters from good friends warning me that I was about to be attacked in PREHENSILE for my Silverberg piece. They cited two names as the culprits, which, curiously enough, were their own. Both argued that while some of the things I said about Silverberg (if not everything I said about him) were true, they enjoyed and respected his novels far too much to accept this implied dismissal of him. To both, Silverberg is the best, or one of the best, writers today.

And I would agree if we confined that last sentiment to his short stories, which as I said in the letter, I think are brilliant. It is his novels that I find unreadable. And I say that without implying that those who do find them readable, enjoyable, who respect them, are "liots." I have not studied Silverberg, nor have I read everything he's written in the past ten years. My opinions are based on strong impressions from what I have read, and from what I've heard about him, aside from my brief conversation with him.

I think Silverberg is better at technique (craft) than he is at content. He has little, or nothing, original to say, but he has the ability to repeat the ideas of others in new, and interesting, ways in his short stories. When I complimented him on "Good News From the Vatican", he referred to the story as a "stunt;" when I disagreed, saying it was more than a "stunt" he said something like "Well, it's a good stunt." Later I was told that he usually responded like that to compliments. But it is interesting to consider the response in itself. A "stunt" is a trick, an illusion, a bit of craftsmanship that does not pretend to be art. It exists to entertain. It does not appeal to anything higher, or deeper within us. But that does not mean that the "stunt" in itself should be an object of contempt; it means that it is something other than art, with its own means and ends to serve, and should be judged in, and for, itself, alone.

The aesthetics of the "stunt" is how well the stunt is performed; how much it commands our attention, deludes our senses, evades our higher powers, to interest and entertain us, despite ourselves. Every audience comes to the theater or to a book wanting to be entertained, but every member of the audience secretly wants the performer to fail -- to make a fool of himself. And the test of success or failure is usually within the first few moments of confrontation between them. If the performer appeals to that instinct for entertainment, then regardless of how thin his performance may be, the audience will fight for him, ie forgive him. And there is no question in my mind, regardless of my feelings for his novels, that Silverberg appeals strongly to his audience. Regardless of whether his work is art or not, regardless of how flawed it may be, it performs successfully.

In the interview I did with him for NERG (originally for SFR), he said "Once we had a lot of hacks in sf -- encouraged by editors as cynical and lazy as themselves, whose only interest was in filling the proper number of pages by deadline time." He admitted he was a hack himself until he was economically independent, then he "turned (h's) back on hackwork and (has) steadily moved toward artistic independence..." But he did not go on to announce himself as an artist, although he did say that he now wrote for himself, and refused to allow editors to maul him. My feeling at the time was that he was not entirely candid about his own status, nor his feelings, and I say this based on what appeared in NERG, alone. My impression was, and is, that Silverberg does not regard himself as an artist, literary type, or potential mainstream candidate, or anything but what he is -- a working writer.

However, I also got the impression that Silverberg believes that the day of the working writer (be he hack, pro, or whatever) is over. "one problem," he says, "encountered by most writers who



have been hacks and reformed is that con-  
osseurs (sic), that is, the audience they  
are now most eager to reach, have already  
categorized them as not worth reading."  
He cites Brunner and Ellison as examples,  
and says they solved their problem with  
"a single extraordinary book," so "the new  
readers find it incredible that such gift-  
ed authors as X or Y or Z were guilty of  
writing space opera..." In other words,  
the "reformed hack" had not simply to im-  
prove the quality of his fiction, he had  
to improve the quality of his image.

What I think Silverberg is saying here  
and it has been said elsewhere, is that in  
the last decade the prestige of the writer  
who writes for the sheer joy and profits  
involved, and whose sole "artistic" aim was  
a good yarn, has died a terrible death.  
Such a writer today is branded a hack and  
ignored. Sf has an audience of English  
majors who have definite notions of what  
literature ought to look and sound like,  
and if the writer wishes to sell to them,  
he must write to their pretention and bi-  
ases, if not adopt them himself.

His use of the word "coniosseurs" sug-  
gests some contempt on his part for this  
new, psuedo-intellectual audience who is  
imposing its pretensions on the genre. I  
got the feeling that he knows he can't be  
honest with these new readers because they  
don't understand why he writes -- they  
don't care! -- they want to think they're  
reading L-I-T-E-R-A-T-U-R-E by "serious"  
writers. They would despise him if he  
told the simple truth that for him, as for  
a great majority of sf writers, writing is  
a profession, period. And it is a commer-  
cial profession rather than an artistic  
one. It has its own special demands, its  
own special technical problems, its own  
special means and ends that differ from  
those of John Updike or Norman Mailer. But  
little, or no credit is given to these spe-  
cial problems, to the professional writer's  
ability to cope with them. Instead, the  
pro is judged on how closely his works  
mimic the mainstream, or art.

Compelling the professional writer to  
conform to image of the artist invites the  
corruption of both the writer and the aud-  
iance. The writer is denied appreciation  
for what he is and what he does, and the

audience is denied the truth. Many of  
the writers lose their respect for their  
audience, or even become hostile to them.  
And I suspect this works on editors as  
well. When an editor starts giving the  
people "what they want" the whole market  
suffers, inevitably.

.....  
A latter letter -- to  
avoid the "Et tu, Brute?"  
speech in the last act.  
.....

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SILVERBERG

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# CAPTAIN NEO SEZ

In the class I teach at the nearby elementary school in Beginning Fanac (made up almost entirely of fourth and fifth graders, though we do have one precocious third grader), I've gotten to the point where I can ask certain easy questions and get almost coherent answers. My question today was a simple one, leading up to the biography of Harry Warner (the new one put out by Houghton Mifflin, not the old Dutton one) we'll be reading in class starting tomorrow. Not sure what the results would be, I asked "Who is the Fan on Top of the World?" I thought you might be interested in some of their answers. That precocious third-grader I spoke of has been writing a lot of faanfiction in class lately, and his answer reflects it:

"The Fan on Top of the World was, of course, a hermit for most of his life. He sat in a chair with a typer before him, typing during the day and cranking his mimeo all night. He lived in an ivory tower made of bheer cans far from the rest of fandom, and went downstairs only to pick up his mail. And occasionally, other fans would make a pilgrimage to see him and to collate his fanzine for him. When they returned to South Gate or Hagerstown or wherever they came from, they would tell their acolytes about it and add to the Fan's mythos, which exceeded even Mike Glycer's." All typos are his, of course. Not really bad at all, though I have a sneaking suspicion that he's read the Houghton Mifflin edition...

A fourth-generation fan writes from experience, I suppose: "The Fan on Top of the World inherited his name from the last Fan on Top of the World, who was either his father, mother, or a distant relation. Guess who's next in line?" Similar to his answer is that of one sixth grader: "The Fan on Top of the World is me." Need I tell you that he has also won several ribbons at Fan Field Days for Biggest Ego? I'm very proud of him of course.

Our resident faan wrote: "The Fan on Top of the World is Charles Burbee viewed as a helix of Arnie Katz and Calvin Demmon. But maybe not." To which our resident sercon rebuts: "The Fan on Top of the World is like Hugo Gernsback or John W. Campbell only better." This name-dropping distrubs me for some reason. I get the feeling that at times they know more about fandom than I do.

Inevitably a few kids' answers were unutterably mundane (I don't know why they got into the class in the first place -- probably to please their parents.) For instance: "The Fan on Top of the World (sic) is the one who lives on a big mountain." Huh? Or, "The President of the N3F is the Fan on Top of the World. He told me so." This is only a sampling of some of the stuff they wrote, of course. Sometimes, I get so discouraged, especially when fewer and fewer of my students go on to Sixth Fandom and Advanced Fanac. So many promising neos, down the drain...

Witness these, the fans of the future!

# ALJO SUOBODA



I believe that it is necessary, in order for the unsuspecting reader to understand my book reviews, that I set forth the standards by which I judge a novel. A novel is (hopefully) a work of art. As such, the only way it can be successfully examined is by what it succeeds in communicating to the reader (me in this case). Being a calm, withdrawn and highly rational man, I realize, by introspection, that I am just as prone to make highly personal and prejudiced judgements as any other reviewer, and just as prone to being a Fugghead on occasion. So with that reservation in mind, I will continue....

The first, and most important aspect upon which I judge a novel is simply: is it interesting? Does it capture my imagination? Does it compel me to continue until I finish, even if I have to stay up half the night to do so? Am I satisfied, after I have finished it, that it was worth the time and effort that I took to read it? I hate being bored, and I hate feeling depressed. Therefore I will not waste my time on a novel that causes either of these emotions to be thrust upon me.

There is enough boredom and depression in the world without my going out of my way to find it. I don't like to have the problems of War, Overpopulation, Pollution and Poverty thrust down my gut by some preaching author. I am already aware of them, I see them every day on the streets and on the "glass teat." Enough is enough. And I especially don't like paying \$5.95 for a novel, and finding out that the novel that I have just purchased with my low supply of cash isn't worth the paper it is printed on. If I am going to spend the bread, the author had better damn well make my purchase worthwhile.

Next I look toward the structure of the novel. I am guilty of dividing novels into two classes: the novel written for some serious purpose by the author, and the novel written simply to entertain, as is the vast majority of science fiction. But the standards of judgement remain the same even if I am inclined to be more lenient with the latter type of writings. Thus I ask myself: Is the plot interesting? Or boring? Is the novel built around some fascinating central theme (as was RINGWORLD or TO YOUR SCATTERED BODIES GO)? I can forgive bad writing in such a case, because the concept itself is breathtaking (after all, most early pulp stf was "gadget" fiction -- VENUS EQUILATERAL for instance. Also, I should make clear, I don't consider the previous books to be examples of bad writing, but examples of the "concept" type of novel.)

Is the author trying to communicate some of his insight into the human/alien condition (as did Clement in MISSION OF GRAVITY)? If so, does he succeed or fail in this endeavor? Does the action flow evenly, or does it hesitate and halt as a result of inept writing or plotting (as White did with his latest novel LIFEBOAT)? Are the characters consistent in their actions, how human and believable are the characters? How appropriate is the writing style? Does it fit with the nature of the story (for instance, FLOWERS FOR ALGERNON), or does it hinder it? Is the style even or uneven?

## A DECLARATION OF PRINCIPLES

STANIEL

SUCH AS THEY  
ARE



Does the author give equal emphasis to all events, or does he skimp over some to the detriment from others? (As Zelazny did in NINE PRINCES IN AMBER.) Does the author sustain the point of attack/conflict/confrontation of the novel, or turn aside and lose it in inappropriate sidetrackings (as Norton in ANDROID AT ARMS)?

I am much more critical of a serious novel. When the author reaches for the moon, and his effort never leaves the launching pad.... Well, failure there is much more glaring than an effort that succeeds only partially as light entertainment. Characterization, style and mood are much more important to me with this type of novel. The actions of the protagonist have to result from his heredity, environment, the influence of his peer group, and/or his political/economic/religious beliefs and conflicts -- not by some unknown outside force that is button-pushing as if the protagonist was held captive in a massive Skinner box. The characters must be real, human, they must live and breathe and care. Otherwise the characters fall apart into the cardboard that they are, their actions merely the manipulations of the author, puppets of a "typewriter in the sky" lacking in any free will.

Style and mood are important, they must blend in with the point of attack, and guide the reader onward in the author's direction through his characters. The background material must blend in with the style, helping to give insight into the actions and thoughts of the characters, and the setting and understanding of the conflict/confrontations the author leads toward -- giving meaning to the changes and suffering the protagonist has gone through.

So much for what I remember of my writing courses. I look for all of these features in a novel, and judge it on how well it meets the standards. Few of the novels I read do. The New Wave puts too much emphasis on style and characterization, in most cases, and not enough on the plotting. If novels, they end up as beautiful mood pieces (such as THE FIFTH HEAD OF CEREBUS) that just don't go anywhere. The Old Guard novels place too much emphasis on plot, to the detriment of style and characterization, and go to pieces in a rain of dissolving cardboard.

#### THE GUNS OF AVALON

ROGER ZELAZNY (Doubleday, 1972, \$5.95)

This novel is the sequel to NINE PRINCES IN AMBER. It is difficult to classify as straight fantasy, since it contains elements of science fiction. It is, if you are not acquainted with the previous novel, an alternate worlds story -- an excellent example of the type of hack writing that is so prevalent in the field these days (and has always been so, for that matter), writing that fills the prozines and is instantly forgotten after being finished, never to be thought of again.

The plot line, inane at best, picks up with your favorite villain/hero and mine, Corwin of Amber, walking in Shadows seeking a means of trying again to dethrone his brother and seat himself upon it. His search takes him to look for a gunpowder substitute that will work in Amber, and he is sidetracked en route by an effort of the author to pad the length of the novel and

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Well, kiddies, this time Unlce Staniel has three fantasy novels to review for you. One good, one could have been better, one pile o' Mung. Let's save the best for last and start with the pile....

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give some meaning to an other wise ridiculous plot. No real action occurs that is essential to the plot until the last chapter when an adversary is introduced which Corwin will have to face and which must be the basis of the next novel in the series. I have heard the Zelazny is under contract to produce four of these potboilers for Doubleday, and that he turned this one out in two weeks. Judging from the level of writing, that is one rumor I find easily believable.

But while the plot is bad, the characterization in this novel does not even reach up to the low level that was prev-



alent in AMBER. Characters appear and disappear at the whim of the author, all talking in modern English though they are each from separate alternate worlds. The dialog is extremely poor. Considering the substantial differences between ghetto English and American, I find it difficult to believe that Zelzany is incapable of putting any emphasis on the differences in language that might occur in the lands of the Shadow.

The use of slang is even more atypical in this type of hack writing. While using modern slang itself is an interesting and proper arrangement (Corwin wandered over this earth for 600 years, after all), having him slip back to slang in use thirty years ago does nothing but confuse the issue. Why not the slang of 300 years ago? It would be more appropriate to the world of Amber which is still in the sword and sorcery stage.

His elaboration and choice of scenes is also open to question. If this novel was a movie, it would be unviewable. Huge battle sequences that cover hundreds of miles and take all dayslong are imparted in one or two pages, while he uses four pages to give a stream of consciousness account of traveling in Shadow (which he did in the first book anyway, so why repeat it?) Parts of the novel read like an outline that the author was too lazy or money-hungry to enlarge.

All of this puts the novel in the action/adventure/chase Laumer category, except that it fails to live up to the rapid turns of plot and pacing that allow Laumer to turn out much more successful and believable works. Save your money to buy the paperback when it comes out, or better yet borrow a copy from a friend. Six bucks it ain't worth. Or five... Or four...

## CRYSTAL GRYPHON

ANDRE NORTON (Athenum, 1972, \$5.50)

The first thing I wish to state is a warning about this publisher. Look through an Athenum book before you purchase it. Pages are stuck together, or even torn in some editions, and in this particular case the bottom half of the book wasn't cut

right. Only one of the three copies that I looked through wasn't damaged in one of the above-stated ways. This is the could-have-been-better novel, one of the most frequently printed, and most aggravating types of novel I run into.

GRYPHON is the eighth of Miss Norton's WITCH WORLD books. I would rate it below WITCH WORLD, WEB OF THE WITCH WORLD and YEAR OF THE UNICORN, but above the others in the series. This is, as far as I know, the first one to be printed in hardback. While not a sequel, this novel takes place in High Hallack, the location of her previous SPELL OF THE WITCH WORLD. It is much more medieval in its setting than the previous novels. The lands of High Hallack are divided into dales, and not under a central authority as are the lands of Estor and Alizon.

Once again High Hallack is faced with invasion from Alizon, as it was in SPELL. The weapons of Alizon seem to be those of Kolder, and would thus place the novel in the time of WEB although a different location. The plotting is simple but the style makes it difficult to explain. The story is narrated in first person by both Kerovan and Joisan, in alternative segments. This is a device that Norton has used before, although more effectively than in the present case. Basically Kerovan is the only male heir to his father's dale of Ulmsdale. But he was accursed at birth, and was born with hooves instead of feet, and amber yellow eyes. His mother exiled him from the keep, and he is raised in the countryside. His father, fearing that his mother wished to place her daughter in power, arranges an Axe marriage to Joisan to strengthen Kerovan's claim to the throne. But before the marriage can take place, in fact as well as symbol, the invasion begins and both are thrown apart by the winds of war.

This like most of Northon's novels is a juvenile adventure. To carry the plot forward, she must, of necessity, keep the flow of action moving, and for the most part she succeeds. Until the last fourth of the novel. Then the sty-



le begins to drag the novel to a halt. Telling the story from two different viewpoints is an opportunity to achieve insight into the characters so portrayed, and into the culture of High Hallack, but the effect is lost after the meeting of Joisan and Kerovan. Rather than keeping the story moving by alternating to different viewpoints during the times of stress that they face together, Norton repeats almost verbatim scenes that have taken place in the preceding section. The effect is to stop the flow of the novel just when the action is reaching its climax, and the final confrontation is taking place.

Another problem she fails to deal with is Kerovan's characterization. Forces beyond his control and understanding are at work, and he has little or no movement of his own (perhaps Norton believes in predestination?) He becomes a manipulation that serves to advance the plot and not his own desires. He is, of course, the standard Norton cripple (physical, mental or social) lead character, and is thrown around by the forces of the "Old Ones." Norton of late seems to be presenting more and more a viewpoint of man as a helpless creature, anti-technological in nature, who has no control over his destiny and is prey to forces physical/economic/political that pull the strings on which he dances without his knowledge; as opposed to her earlier image of man as an adaptable creature that, given a chance, can live and contribute in almost any situation into which he finds himself flung. The wall of rationality is down with fear and evil seeping in to devour the "old ways". Future shock???

The ending itself is ambiguous enough to give her room for a sequel. This novel would be much improved if the author had taken time before publication to trim out the duplication of action that halts the flow of action she had maintained to that time.

## FARTHEST SHORE

URSULA K. LE GUIN (Athenum, 1972, \$6.25)

This is the final novel in the Earthsea trilogy. Like other trilogies, the last novel is better than the middle one, but not quite up to the standards of the first.

Again a warning. I found that several pages of this novel were stuck together. This novel is a juvenile, intended for early to middle teens, and of course it suffers, as do all juveniles, from writing down to such a young audience. It does not deal to any extent with the problems of sex, violence and maturity that most "adult" novels use as themes. But that is not really a drawback in this case. This novel achieves a kind of flowing, simple style, characterization, and mood that is beautiful and fulfilling. Of the three novels, I would judge this alone to be worth the price, and definitely worth the time.

I must admit that I have some sort of consuming fondness for fantasy. Good Fantasy. Like some of Leiber's Fafhrd-Grey Mouser stories. Or De Camp's THE GOBLIN TOWER. As should be obvious, I don't like (put can't stand) the Howard-Carter "with a mighty effort he swung his broadsword against his twelve opponents, hewing them into small pieces" type.

In my opinion, it takes more than sword and sorcery to make a good fantasy novel. It takes a keen understanding of the workings of the so-called "primitive mind"

In our culture myth basis is proclaimed "science"; in others it is ascribed to the workings of the gods, or the spirits of the dead, that haunt the night outside the circle at night surrounding the fire. Le Guin shows a keen understanding of the workings of the latter type of mind that I must consider her background. Her father started the anthropology department at the University of California. Her mother wrote one of the best, most compelling and understanding works on American Indians, ISHI IN TWO WORLDS (and those of us who have read that work cannot be unaware of the similarity between its theme and that of THE LEFT HAND OF DARKNESS.) There is no other way I can explain Mrs. LeGuin's comprehension and exposition of the wonder and fear innate such a worldview.

In the world of Earthsea, magic works. She writes to me that it works, and I be-



lieve. I don't know how to explain it. Is it the simple, flowing, weaving style, that threads out the story into rich and beautifully woven cloth? Is it the love she lavishes on her characters? They live a simpler, exciting life that conflicts strongly with our placid one. In their world the maps are incomplete, there is unknown territory at all four points of the compass. "There be Dragons" is not a statement to be taken lightly as it is when we gaze on the maps of old.

But there is danger in her world. Magic is, for an unknown reason, on the decline. The words, the secret names that give control, are being forgotten. The islands beyond the barriers of the Inmost Sea have lost touch with Roke, the center of learning and knowledge. Ged, the Archmage of Roke, and Arren, prince of Enland set sail in the boat Lookfar to search the southwestern reaches for the cause of the living death that is settling upon Earthsea.

In this novel Mrs. Le Guin rounds out the story of Earthsea, and of its greatest wizard, Ged, as he enters into the lands of the dead to defend the meaning of life. It is a fine ending to an excellent series. Seldom do I come across what I consider a near-perfect novel, and when I do I cherish it with all the greed and hunger that arises within me. Oh, I have some complaints. At times there is a misplaced "to it" and at others a missing "of" but this is of such a minor nature that it is like looking for one apple in a barrel ten feet high that contains a worm. Thank you Ursula K. Le Guin for proving that out there in the great wasteland there is someone who can understand and create a Fantasy that lives, breathes, and takes us together on a trip into the lost wonders of childhood...

## OTHER DAYS, EYES

BOB SHAW (Ace, .95, 186pp.)

++ review by Jeff Clark ++

This is a remarkable book: for its excellentes attributable to the particular talent of its author, and for what it is not able to do -- or achieve -- in the more impersonal area of form. What I mean is this:

The only lengthy Shaw I have read to date is THE TWO-TIMERS, yet it seems to be rather clear that he is one of the few SF writers who can really manage traditional story-telling and otherwise novelistic hallmarks. It's true that a large part of this impression derives from the fact that he attempts -- and succeeds in -- treating with character its development in a straightforward manner, whereas a majority of other SF writers who at least ought to be toiling in the same area can barely manage their people in dribs and drabs. Nevertheless, the simple and clear scheme of his character relationships become virtually classic in contrast. Perhaps the "classic" texture is tinged with an occasional view of oversimple mechanics where one sees how a scene is supposed to work but -- due to this fact -- never quite can tell whether it actually does. However, these moments are sparse enough in the present novel, and are adequately overshadowed by some genuine virtues.

I can understand protagonist Albert Garrod's character type full well, and why it is right for the "type" of novel Shaw has attempted. If in the final scene where Garrod must decide to leave a blind and possessive wife he does not love (and choose another woman in so doing) the author has not seemed to sufficiently give prior indication of the man's unwillingness to hurt others -- and must insert a last-minute indication of this fact -- still the confrontation works in one way because of the intensely sympathetic writing of it. (There is another element in that scene which brings to a culmination a major problem that has been plaguing the novel, but I'll return to that later.)

The character of Garrod is acutely understandable within the context of this novel -- especially to anyone who can immerse himself with total satisfaction in traditional "hard-science" fiction. It is almost a case of one temperament recognizing its nature in a fictional character: and Shaw has presented what is perhaps a typical SF "problem solver" and given the reader the other, accompanying half of his life. Garrod is the portrait of a man who can immerse himself brilliant-



iantly in speculation and invention, while on the other hand remain excessively subject to quietly abrasive human vicissitudes. He can be embarrassed, tentative, and in other ways personal. For the course of the novel he is a pretty fairly realized man.

In addition to this, Shaw's writing is often more than adequate for his purposes. At times it achieves a quiet brilliance: it does not flash at the eyeball but lays down pertinent and freshly unearthed facts of observation; at nearly every crucial point the author attempts to avoid the cliché and the emotional gloss, especially where personal relationships are concerned. And this lends individual scenes some human honesty and the reader's rapt attention. There are, indeed, some snippets of description that read rather well out of context as examples, but I've let them slip by without taking notes, and other than as small illustration they would be pointless for purposes of an unstudious review.

Inevitably, though, Shaw must make his human story serve the ends of his broad socio-scientific speculations, and because of this the overall framework hints at its seams and pieces. The characters must ultimately accomodate their conflicts to the explication of retardite's varied practical applications and effects; and there is no denying the situation, precisely because the people are so well-writtenly prominent in the movement of the book. A lesser writer might have gotten off a bit easier here. But Shaw writes with beautiful lucidity of concepts of "slow glass" as well: it is certainly clear how a man's fascinated mind can become continuously absorbed in such an attractive and likely scientific abstract. Shall I quote something here? -- No. You should read the novel itself. Anyone reasonably abreast of the SF field will, anyhow.

Readers aware of Bob Shaw's work are all generally familiar with -- first, and foremost -- his initial slow glass story "Light of Other Days" which appears as Side-light One within OTHER DAYS, OTHER EYES. This story presents such a meticulously speculative photo-dynamic concept, and it butts up against such a small, banal personal element of a single human life, that

that it fills some otherwise vacant area of idle wonder with a thing that does not demand the laxity of simple fancy. It is difficult to see how anyone could avoid be engaged by the whole idea. The author has expanded it while attempting to retain his human outlook, but in exploring the situation at greater length he has finally allowed his form to deprive his creation of a unified effectiveness.

The personal story and the requirements of rigorous speculation are not compatible at all times, as I've indicated earlier. But the entire problem is brought to clarity and culmination in that final scene of the book where Garrod must make the decision to leave his wife. It is tense for him and it is tense for us -- and it is the climax of his private story as well. But coinciding with this thread is a professional problem that nags at his mind for resolution. He suddenly becomes aware of the fact that the government is seeding the atmosphere with all-seeing retardite crystals; to arrive at this destination his mind enters a "preternatural calm" as he considers the "mechanics of the proposition". Yet throughout the scene it really looks like the same determined thought, a similar effort of will, with which he faces his private crisis.

As a result of both these elements being handled equally, and being handled in alternate bursts, one simply interrupts the other and attenuates the tension of the scene. And because the technical problem is not readily intimate and is in a sense merely a grand topper in a long string of them, it is the element that seems almost a nuisance. Though the impression may be somewhat due to the absence of a heightened enough sense of style at this point, the developing form of the story tends to straitjacket the scene, to narrow the range of choices. Even so, Shaw does try to entwine and merge his disparate parts, and to push them past their solid knot to one last brief and handsome fillip. This does not quite work either, and when the author rather queasily expands the ending in a rush -- nearly depersonalizing it in a way -- he winds up with what amounts to



a sort of sober epigram. It seems something better suited to a visionary fairy tale.

Some of this might be called carping: so what, we know about this problem, it's a long-standing necessary evil in certain kinds of SF. Yet it is precisely because Shaw has worked so hard at his product -- and without seeming to advertise the fact, which is one of the things I like best of it -- that I concentrate on some of the points at hand. Repeatedly good writing deserves some close criticism.

One final observation deriving from an examination of the novel's schema is this: the book's Sidelights reveal uses of retardite that cannot be illustratively incorporated into the direct line of the plot, but, apart from this, these distinct sections in addition contain Shaw's most clearly metaphorical writing, and infuse the slow glass concept with the most succinct expression of its intrinsic wonder. On the other hand, the mainline human story is largely employed as a framework to explicate the evolving mechanics of the retardite complex. The two varieties of feeling, that for the human and that for the ideational -- must remain distinct and can never quite mesh. Again one can see that the form of the novel never achieves a successful unity.

And perhaps there is no way to bring this about -- as the book is conceived. I think Shaw may have done his best to make it workable. Yet the success of "light of Other Days" in and of itself could point to another way: what might possibly work in a kind of mosaic pattern of small stories or vignettes that illuminate various aspects of the slow glass concept. But this is an easy suggestion from me, and it would require a lot of intense writing in pieces to make the whole greater still. OTHER DAYS, OTHER EYES is a pretty large effort in itself. And Shaw has given us his arresting concept, detailed it, and in that detail made it more fascinating still. This, and its stylistic highlights, are quite enough to recommend it.

## UMMA GUMMA

PINK FLOYD ++ review by Richard Wadholm

Pink Floyd at their best are subtle, eerie and cool. One of the top two or three sf bands in the world. Umma Gumma is Pink Floyd at its best. It is a double album that caught the Floyd walking the balance between their inexperienced freshness of their first few albums and the technical brilliance which marched a duller period in their career. Just after this album was released. The result is fresh and technically brilliant album. The production is so fine on the live set that it can't be distinguished from the studio material until the applause comes in at the end of the music.

As for the music itself, Umma Gumma culls the eerie majesty-of-concept of the early Floyd on album one, and the questing experimentation which marks all Pink Floyd albums on record two.

Album one is filled by four fat rendition of Pink Floyd classics. Set The Controls for the Heart of the Sun, Careful With That Axe, Eugene, Astronome Domine, and Saucerful of Secrets. All of these songs were originally Top-40 length. All of them on Umma Gumma fill up an album side. And the amazing thing is that there is not a single wasted note on the entire album. The pace of each song is casual, not wasteful. They are built up thought by thought, note by note, mood by mood.

Set the Controls For the Heart of the Sun is an eerie, quite masterpiece about the things man will take with him into eternity. It is a padded, rolling, coolly frantic drum rhythm, a twisting, unnerving organ which does a fine job of taking your mind out beyond the edge of the universe.... Or into the heart of the sun, and effectively understated vocals, like echoes out of the core of an exploding galaxy. I mean, this song has everything in it but a red-shift. Every time I listen to it, some part of the song leads me out to a point in deep space and then waves goodbye and recedes into eternity.



After that, Saucerful of Secrets slides out into the room sinisterly. Everything I said about Controls goes ditto here. It's like a more experimental version of the song that was before it, except for the majestic Clarkian overtones of the last two bands of the suite, Celestial Voices and Storm Signal. If Set The Controls For The Heart of The Sun is space flight, Saucerful of Secrets is arrival in a distant, lonely galaxy.

Side one begins with a reworked Syd Barret (the original lead guitar, till he threatened the other three members with a gun at one of their early concerts) song, reworked completely out of the boundaries ol' Syd wrote it in. Influences? Try Asimov, or Olaf Stapledon, or even Clarke again. This is the only song on the albums which uses its lyrics to tell more of the story than its music, but it's still a grand, rolling, thundering space opera, lighted by the blank glitter of stars in deep space, and tinged by the soft colors of a gas giant or two. I can't tell whether it's the story of man going into the universe, or of a man going out into the universe. But then, part of the glittering beauty, and lonely, austere mood of the piece is not knowing.

Careful With That Axe Eugene is the only song more or less on a conventional topic: a psychotic axe murderer. It begins in thoughtfully dead silence and builds on an odd worming organ and Nick Mason's classic drum style up into a rasping frenzy of guitar, drum and organ. At the height of the crescendo, the whispered "Careful with that axe, Eugene," is bled off into a series of the most inhuman shrieks I've ever heard. You get the definite impression that, no, Eugene was no as careful as he could have been. And maybe it's stretching the sf-influence thing a bit, but while I was doing a lot of listening on this song I was reading Harlan Ellison's "Prowler In The City At The Edge Of The World." Yaaah, I can feel it.

Album two is a kind of group showcase, but before you remember other group showcase albums like the Yes' Fragile and Creedence Clearwater's Mardi Gras, let me add that this is much more also. There is a mood here. A very prevalent, rather dark

and Renaissance mood. Sisyphus starts it on a somber, impressionistic note. This band was cut by their keyboard man, Rick Wright. It didn't lay down too specific an image, but the mood of darkness is really there. The guitarist and lead vocalists' two tracks change the atmosphere by turning it into a simple, acoustic, lazy summer afternoon. This melts into about the oddest piece of music I've ever heard. It's called Several Species of Small Furry Animals Gathered Together In A Cave And Grooving On A Pict, and that is exactly what it is. From the slap of the flyswatter, the sounds of marsh birds fill the room. In moments the sounds are speeded up to a feathery rhythm of frenzy while other bird and animal noises are jamming off it. It's like a bare cave and a crowd of small furry animals huddled together in a frantic unearthly religious rite. Cold gray light flows into the cave from a flat cold gray world. That's what it's like. What they're worshipping, you decide.

Side Two opens with The Straight And Narrow Way, a moving, changing, happy and light, dark and lonely, thoughtful and sad song that moves from semi-acoustic light blues played against a backdrop of distinctly Floydish sound effects to a heavy electronic Black Sabbath piece and then grinds down into a dirgish, distant version of Pilgrim's Progress. It is blue fog in a narrow rocky valley, vacant-eyed travellers on a road that leads to a Mecca they don't know they're headed for.

Nick Mason, the percussionist (there are drummers, and then there are percussionists. Mason's one of the best) of the group creates a suite depicting a sort of middle-ages fair at dusk. His movements have no words, but the Floyd haven't need words to express themselves for a long time. It is beautiful and atmospheric, just like the rest of the albums.

This is supposed to be one of their best albums. Their new one is supposed to be another one of their best. They're both worth having, along with a lot of the other Floyd albums which are not the



Floyd's best, but could be if they were another group. They are so infectious that I can't begin to tell you. It's amazing that the FM stations haven't picked up on them before, but I guess you have these groups like musical versions of Dr. Pepper. Try it, you'll like it.

## ORBIT 11

Ed. DAMON KNIGHT ++ review by Don Keller++

The unusual thing about this latest volume of ORBIT is that it is the shortest (200 or so pages) yet it has the most stories (20). Apparently Knight had a huge number of very short stories, and when Putnam decided to drop the series, Knight decided to get rid of these stories all at once.

Not totally surprisingly, the three longest stories in the book are among the best. After a multitude of shorter pieces in earlier ORBITs, Gene Wolfe has the second long book-opener in a row; last time the brilliant "Fifth Head of Cerebus", this time "Alien Stones." It is, on the surface a mystery story in a hard sf setting: where are the aliens in the giant space ship? It is not an ANALOG story, however.

The details of the future spaceship, with its specialized crew, including empaths, and its captain with his fascinatingly original training, are well handled; but Wolfe does not do as much with the situation as he could have. The tale, longest in the book, should have been longer yet to develop the ideas to their due. But nevertheless, as with most Wolfe, it is a well-written and enjoyable story.

"Down By The Old Malestrom" is the first piece I've read by Edward Wellen, and it's a good one. As can be seen by the title, it is full of puns and other forms of wordplay, extremely well-handled, as a group of people travel through a surrealist dream-Germany. Unlike several stories in the book, it has something of an ending, but the reader is still left rather mystified at the end as to exactly what happened. It is fun reading, however, and the sense of the nonsense is worth unraveling.

Hank Davis' "To Plant A Seed" is an excellent (again) hard sf story with a difference, combining the theories of the creation of the universe with a time-stasis device, coming to a highly ironic ending. The characterization, especially of the scientists involved in the project, is noteworthy.

Beyond these, there is hardly a story that breaks ten pages. The best of these could be termed "snapshots"; fleeting glimpses of a future world, making a brief point, then ending.

Gardner Dozois carries a velvet-covered sledgehammer. His stories have none of the pyrotechnic stuff of Ellison, yet in their quiet way they pack just as much punch. They sneak up on you, but they get you before you finish. "Machines of Loving Grace" while lacking the stylistic variety and mythic structure of ORBIT 10's brilliant "A Kingdom By The Sea" nonetheless has, line for line, just as much power. What are the drawbacks of freedom from death? The answer is wrenching, depressing and very, very sad.

Another "snapshot" is Vonda McIntyre's "Spectra", a closely-detailed account of man tyrannized by his machines. The wake-from-their-grave opening is overdone, but the ending beautifully recalls Ellison: "I want to cry. I wish I had tears."

Dave Skal's highly-touted "They Cope" shows a good deal of talent. Its future glimpse is well-handled, but one is inclined to say "OK, fine, but so what?" It seems to need something more.

The humorous side is presented this time by Robert Thurston and Geo. Alec Effinger. As in his earlier "Punchline" Thurston seems to be obsessed with the idea of identical women: "Goodbye, Shelley, Shirley, Charlotte, Charlene" is the story of a man who falls in love with a series of women, all perfect, all the same. It's highly entertaining, lightly written with some really good lines, but it does not lack for deeper implications. Its only problem is a rather irrelevant



symbolic opening section.

Figlet is one of my favorite writers, and here he shows the same sharp satire to humorous purpose that he showed in his marvelous novel WHAT ENTROPY MEANS TO ME (rather than the serious purpose in his "All The Last Wars At Once"). From its title ("Things Go Better") right on through to the end it shows Figlet's facility with the slogans, cliches and standard attitudes of modern America, which get used to illuminate a most amusing clash of lifestyles. It also seems a trifle autobiographical. It's one of his better stories.

As often happens lately, there are a couple herein that are not really sf. Fredrik Pohl's "I Remember A Winter" is pure mainstream nostalgia, nicely written, but scarcely a story. Joe Haldeman's "Counterpoint" is a double parallel biography: its only speculative elements are a jump a couple years into the future and (the story's whole point) an extremely unlikely string of coincidences.

Ed Bryant's "Dune's Edge" is an allegory, resembling Beckett's work, but with some stronger characterization. My only quarrel with it is that the ending, while it worked, is too blatantly symbolic. "Doucement, S'Il Vous Plait" is a typical James Sallis story; I'm getting closer and closer to liking his stuff. This one is narrated by a letter as it gets shuffled from mailbox to mailbox. If you like this sort of thing, it is quite well done; it's certainly odd, though. "The Summer of the Irish Sea" is probably a first story, since I've never heard of C.L. Grant. While sensitively written, it is frustrating because so much must be surmised. It is apparently about future treatment of criminals, and contains a fascinating touch of paradise-myth. I wish it had been a fuller story. "Father's In The Basement" confused me at first, until a friend pointed out that the girl caring for her father was a witch -- and then the whole story fell into place. A somewhat gruesome horror story.

The rest of the stories elude me for one reason or another. Kate Wilhelm does as usual, with "On The Road to Honeyville": seemingly a mainstream piece, I can't figure

what she's driving at. Steve Herbst's "Old Soul" evokes the life and dreams of a black nurse to the point of where I'm still not sure what is real. I feel the same way about "Dissolve" by Gary K. Wolf; in the future TV is rediscovered and clips of this alternate with TV bits, which are nicely satirical but reality is hard to pick up.

Jack Dann's "The Drum Lollipop" is similar to Farmer's in that the little girl protagonist has the power here over a Gahan Wilsonlike blot; beyond that there's nothing much I can say about it. Charles Platt destroys our greatest city in "New York Times" while detailing the everyday life of one woman; I missed the connection. And John Barfoot's "Crystallization of the Myth" is a nonfiction essay about a gigantic crash on a future superhighway; he tries to imply a great revelation at the end, but it does not come across.

Summing up, Knight continues to do his best to provide a mix: traditional and experimental, sf and mainstream, plus a little fantasy and horror. He did not succeed this time, leaning too far in the direction of the short experimental tale. It is not one of the best volumes of the series.

FUN WITH YOUR NEW  
THOMAS M. DISCH (Doubleday, \$4.95; HEA!  
++review by Cy Chauvin++

One author short story collections often have a big disadvantage before they even start. No matter the author, or how great the diversity of techniques used in the collection, you will usually find a feeling of sameness running through the book. This is especially true of a collection drawn from as short a period of time as this one (1964-1968) though I'd say that Disch makes a fair attempt at diversity: although this in no way approaches a well-balanced anthology in terms of variety.

Disch is one of those writers who always struck me as being far more inclined toward mainstream fiction than SF. He



is really a mainstream writer using SF techniques (or, "the mythology of speculative fiction" as Harlan Ellison would say) to achieve mainstream ends, rather than vice versa as some other SF writers (DeLany and Brunner) seem to do. The sf elements in nearly all Disch's stories are the icing on the cake, incidental bits of background that have little to do with the stories' main themes or the effects Disch has tried to create. If one writes and reads science fiction, it is different in some way from mainstream fiction, or because it is different, then there is no purpose in studying this book. While I hate people to think that I have become obsessed with this idea, I believe that good SF must, by definition, achieve something different from mainstream fiction, and that the SF elements in the story must have some vital, important connection with the story's plot and theme. (The story must also be well-written; I am not one of those people who call stories "great" just because they have interesting ideas, even though they may be poorly written.)

To throw out another radical-sounding idea, I found a lot of Disch's stories in this collection very reminiscent of the type of story ANALOG publishes -- at least in a way. Both Disch and ANALOG writers depend on a single new idea, often; they trot it out on the story stage in front of us then begin to explain what it's supposed to do ("Squirrel Cage", "Venus Melancholy", "Fun With Your New Head" are all quite obvious examples of this). But unlike ANALOG writers he doesn't often bother with the cardboard props or plot -- the idea is left bare and unadorned. (Perhaps Disch is a bit more honest?) Still, how many non-stories can the field take? They seem to me like circus freaks: one is interesting, but they are not a viable form, and after you read so many of them they become nauseating. "The City of Penetrating Light" is a "fictional essay" told/written by a person the author invents, and is a fragment of a story, a voyage to nowhere without sense or purpose. (Or at least one I cannot fathom; if someone would like to enlighten me on this I would honestly be quite interested in knowing what I missed.) Another fragment that I found more interesting was "Flight Useless, Inexorable The Pursuit" a four page fragment that ends with:

"the telescoping limbs began to strip away his cotton suit, quickly but with gentleness, the protective plates slide as de to reveal the main compartment, and for the first time he could its huge rubber lips..."

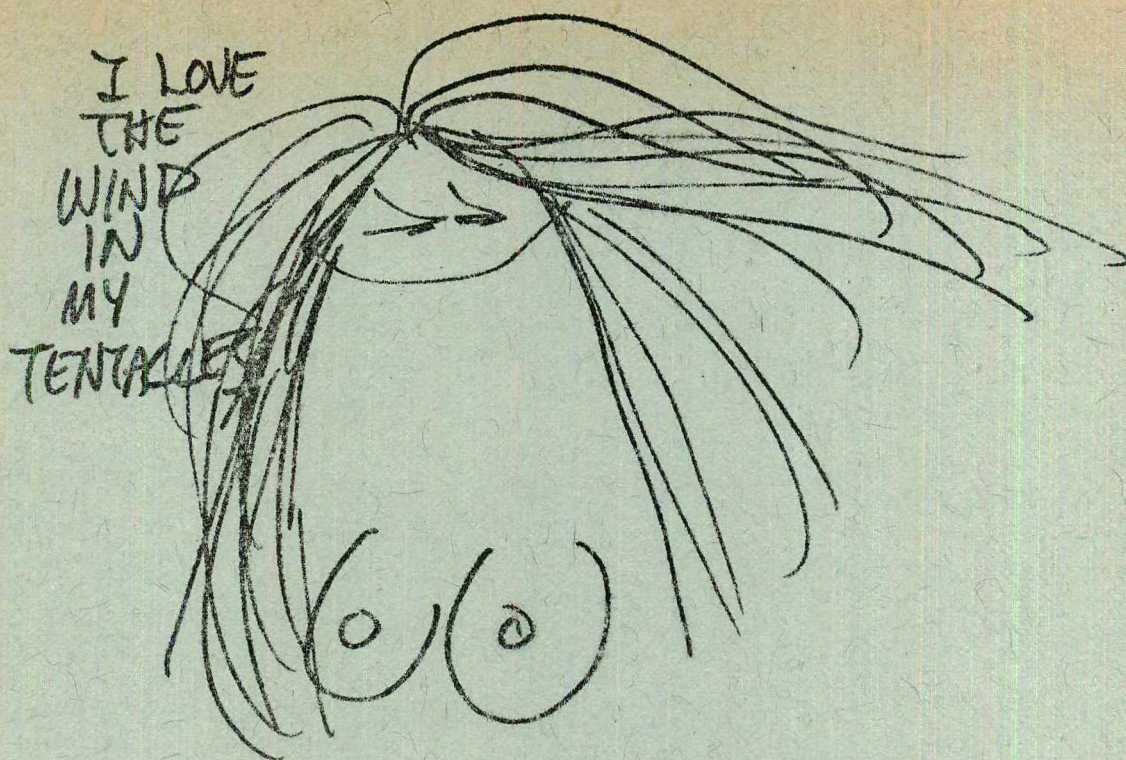
Somehow I found that part very poetic and perhaps the whole story is only a four-page prose poem. But it seems more absurdist, a sort of pop art soup label translated into prose. Maybe good something, but not good science fiction/.

Also often times Disch tends to impotent writing -- that is while his stories tend to be different and inventive and thus interest me intellectually, they rarely hit me on the gut level. There is little real emotion behind the words in these stories -- or rather, little real emotion comes through the words though it may be lurking in the substrata of the fiction. Part of this is probably due to the fact that I can hardly identify with a Disch character -- he seems to have problems putting real people into his short stories, though I believe he does it quite well in his novels. The people seem shallow, insane caricatures, wooden dolls painted a stark and somber black. Their attempts at life end in 100% failure in nearly every story; it is much easier to produce a believable tragic ending than it is to produce an equally believable and convincing joyous ending, so instead of producing the pseudo-happy endings so many sf writers cop out for, Disch does this. But the effect is sadly still the same: Black Gloom Shines Forever.

So: I can't recommend this collection. There are some interesting stories here, of course, ones that should be read: "Descending" from FANTASTIC, is probably the most notable. But most are just short, fragmentary borderline stories, and it is a shame that a writer with as much talent as Disch has is writing this kind of material.

Thomas M Disch -- make yup your mind! Write SF or mainstream, but don't mix them, for if you are lukewarm I vomit you from my mouth!





## FILM REVIEWS

There are minor glories of cinema to be found in sf and horror films and their makers, to borrow a phrase from Andrew Sarris. (However, I don't agree with him as to who are these minor glories.) I don't mean well-known directors like James Whale or Roman Polanski who are truly fine filmmakers and who have done their best work in this field, I mean directors who are almost completely unknown to those who aren't horror movie freaks, people like Terence Fisher, Freddie Francis, and the subject of this ish's lecture, Mario Bava. He's an Italian, started in the field around 1956 as a cameraman; he moved over to director with *BLACK SUNDAY* in 1960, and has since directed various films, including *BLACK SABBATH*, *BLOOD AND BLACK LACE*, *PLANET OF THE VAMPIRES*, *DANGER DIABOLIK* and *WHAT!* I recently saw three relatively new Bava films, *HATCHET FOR THE HONETMOON*, *BARON BLOOD*, and (distributor's title) *TWITCH OF THE DEATH NERVE*. *Baron B* stars Joseph Cotten and Elke Sommer in a cliched story about a resurrected ancient sadist, apparently suggested by the real-life Dracula. The screenplay is awful, but Bava makes full use of color, fog, and his authentic castle sets. It is not a good film, but it is a very handsome one. See it at a drive-in and turn the sound off. *TWITCH OF THE DEATH NERVE* was originally going to be called *CARNAGE*, a very fitting title since of the 16 characters wh are seen during the film, 13 are murdered, some extremely graphically. One of the other characters is a service station operator with no lines, the other two are children. The film, plotted and photographed by Bava, as well as directed, is wickedly humorous and quite convoluted; as each character is introduced he first appears to be the hero or protagonist, but is soon revealed to be a true baddy, and is then dispatched (except for four teenagers who are just Wild Kids, and who meet ghastly deaths). Among the other interesting sights is that of a very real octopus crawling over the decaying face of a month-old corpse. Yet the film ultimately is a comedy; as death is piled on death, the absurdity grows until the final two killings are actually hilarious. Bava keeps his small cast under control, and tosses out at least one red herring every five minutes. Nobody kills for the reason he seems to be doing so at first, and everybody's death



# CITIZEN FAN

## BILL WARREN

film reviews by  
~~Robert~~ the Wombat

(with the four exceptions noted above) is highly justified. An extremely entertaining film in exquisitely rotten taste -- highly recommended.

At the second annual Los Angeles Film Exposition, or Filmex II, the Soviet Film of Stanislaw Lem's novel SOLARIS was shown to a capacity house. Apparently Soviet films owe more in general to Eastern style filmmaking than to Western, for SOLARIS is very long and very slow-paced. It is not, however, dull, at least I didn't find it so. The story is about the planet Solaris, covered by a thick viscous fluid on which floats a Terran experimental station. An astronaut has come to this station, where people have been dying one at a time for years; he discovers that the fluid of the planet can create what he desires. And so his long-lost wife appears. The film is not about the scientific aspects of the story, but about the human side, about the astronaut's relationship with his Solaris-created wife, who gradually becomes more and more human. The film is extremely handsome, in color and wide-screen, but the slow pace makes it difficult to watch for most western audiences. And the director has taken some very strange directions: there is an extremely long one-take scene of a car driving through downtown Moscow; it is extremely boring and seemingly out of place. There isn't much point in recommending the film, since it unlikely to be shown theatrically in this country.

Other films of fantasy-film interest were shown at Filmex II. Among these was Robert Altman's new film IMAGES, starring the beautiful Susannah York. Altman seems determined to never repeat a film-type. So far he has made THAT COLD DAY IN THE PARK (twisted love story), COUNTDOWN (hard sf), M\*A\*S\*H (military comedy), BREWSTER MCCLOUD (wacky comedy), and McCABE AND MRS. MILLER (debunking western). IMAGES is a study of a psychotic (Miss York) who lives in a gory fantasy world, haunted by real-not-real images of present and past lovers, some of whom she kills (or does she?) very graphically. She is also pursued by a phantom dog, a double of herself, and memories in general. The film and Miss York are good, but it has been done before and better by Roman Polanski in REPULSION. One of the things hampering the new movie is what seems to be endless pretensions -- like the names of the characters are the names of the cast, only scrambled, so that no one plays someone with his or her own name. There seems to be no real reason for this, except possibly to suggest that All This Can Happen. And there are dozens of dangling wind chimes in the film, which have more than their share of ominous close-ups -- to no apparent avail. Yet IMAGES is a good film, because Altman is a good director and York is a very good actress. It is always interesting and sometimes fascinating.

SISTERS, the first horror movie of comedy director Brian De Palma (though he says it is a comedy) is modeled fairly obviously on PSYCHO, but deals with a set of separated Siamese twins, one of whom seems to be a homicidal maniac. The picture is fast-paced, witty, gory, and features a dream sequence that is as much like a real nightmare as anything I have seen. The ending is annoying inconclusive and the tone seems flippant. But what the director tried to do is difficult: to make a very traditional horror movie even clichéd while letting the audience know that the director is aware of this -- and still scare the bejabbers out of the viewers. That Palma succeeds is a great tribute to his skill. (Also of note is an excellent score by Bernard Hermann, the composer of the scores of films as various as CITIZEN KANE, THE DAY THE EARTH STOOD STILL, THE SEV-



## ENTH VOYAGE OF SINBAD, and PSYCHO.

When a 20-year-old is given a wad of money by his aunt, there are many things he can do with it. John Landis made SCHLOCK (the name of his movie, not the description). This is a bright and inventive comedy about an ape man (played by Landis) who murders over 70 people on the screen, and dies a tragic death. The film is full of weird and abrupt references to dozens of other movies, including 2001, THE BLOB, Laurel & Hardy, KING KONG and like that. Landis has a lot to learn as a director, but his acting as the apeman (called Schlock) can hardly be faulted -- his bizarre Jerry Lewis takes are invariably funny, and he makes incredible use of Ric Baker's fine makeup. Forry Ackerman has a cameo spot in the film, along with fans Don Glut and Bruce Hanson.

Jack H. Harris bought SCHLOCK for distribution -- and is unleashing it on an America which has barely recovered from his last film, SON OF BLOB. This is, obviously, a sequel to GONE WITH THE WIND, and tells what happens when a hunk of the original BLOB is brought back to where it is warm by geologist Godfrey Cambridge. It soon thaws out, eats Cambridge and wide, Carol Lynley, Burgess Meredith, Shelley Berman, and director Larry Hagman (twice, at least). Hagman and his mob of happy fools have made a happy, foolish movie, much more of a comedy than THE BLOB. Everyone at Filmcon 1 seemed to love the picture -- and I hope that Hagman (late of "I Dream of Jeannie") directs more silly movies.

Several years ago, some friends of mine devised a shorthand movie rating system based on school grades. That is, 0.0 means a truly rotten movie, one of the worst ever made; 1.0 is a poor movie, not terribly rotten, but certainly not good; 2.0 is a thoroughly mediocre movie; 3.0 is a good, competent film, and 4.0 designates one of the greatest movies ever made. And the intervening movies/numbers indicate gradations. SO... Here's a batch of other movies, seen recently, and their ratings: NECROMANCY - 1.4; THE THING WITH TWO HEADS - 2.4; GARGOYLES (tv) 1.1; THE LEGEND OF BOGGY CREEK - 2.0; COUNTESS DRACULA - 2.4; RAGE (borderline sf) 2.2; THE DEVIL'S DAUGHTER (tv movie) 1.9; THE NIGHT STRANGLER (tv movie) 3.2; FRANKENSTEIN (tv) 1.9.

## DE NACHTWACHT KEES VAN TOORN

In the last column there was a lengthy report on EuroCon 1, something that has been of great value to European fans. Also I frequently mentioned something about Eurocon 2. Quite recently I came in touch with one of the Belgian BNFs who organized the second fannish event, Simon JOUKES. An active person in Europe who publishes several zines inside the Belgian fan field. In one of his zines recently he wrote a lengthy article on the whole of the second EuroCon. I personally think the report has some stunning and revealing facts, so I asked permission to reprint it, written up for PREHENSILE. Simon is, like me, a firm believer in international fandom. Shortly he will give his opinion in NIGHTWATCH about the internationalism discussion in PRE 5.

In response Belgian fan Jan JANSSEN's article in FANJAN about the mess called Eurocon 2, Simon Joukes revealed the story of the organization. It was written in English, as you now read it:

"....So I'll try to tell the real story about BRUSFELS '74. As you probably know ((US fans won't)), the whole thing started at HEICON '70. One evening some Belgian fans (including Claude Dumont, Danny de Leat, Michael Feron and some others) had a famous meeting during which many bottles of Vurgusz and Franconian wine were killed.



As a result of this slaughter these people decided to put up a Bidding Committee to get Eurocon 2 in Brussels in 1974.

"Michael Feron, though stating 'the whole project is foolish and impossible I'll never join that Committee' accepted, back in Belgium, to do some printing for the Committee and stimulate European fandom ((Michel Feron is THE person in Belgium with excellent contacts over the greater part of the BeNeLux -- that's the Netherland, Belgium and Luxemburg together. Where did you take Geography, huh? -- and France as well. That is the reason he usually agents for Cons.)) Andre Leborgne, another fan at HEICON '70 attended the meetings at first but soon dropped out saying 'don't talk so much, I haven't got time to waste in endless meetings. Organize the Con on a professional basis.' Exit Leborgne. In the meantime a terrible, silly and not yet

settled feud developed in Antwerp where SFAN, the only organized SF club in Belgium, had achieved its first goals: a successful clubzine and a local Con. In a not too polite letter ("you're all skunks") Danny de Laet, at that time member of the Committee of SFAN, asked the club for cooperation with BRUSFELS '74. Julian C. Raasveld, at that time president of the SFAN, refused... As the open letters between Dann de Laet and Julian C. Raasveld became more and more disgusting, I tried to reconcile the 'enemies'. ....Danny De Laet refused to come back to SFAN, which he left a few weeks before, while Julian C. Raasveld resigned as Charirman of SFAN, though remaining a member of the club. At that moment the opinion of the SFAN committee on behalf of BRUSFELS '74 might be described: (1) anybody has the right to organize a con if he wishes so. (2) SFAN hasn't enough experience at the moment to think about organizing a EUROCON. It could eventually be done in 1980 at Antwerp. (3) Anybody is free to join the Committee 'BRUSFELS in '74' at his own risk.

"So I joined the committee for two reasons: (1) getting all the information as soon as possible in order to inform SFAN on what was going on. (2) I thought that it is an honor for Belgium to be chosen as the EUROCON country. At that moment, the real site of the Con is less important.

"In September 1970 the first meetings of the Brussels Committee took place. There was a lot of talking about a badge, a fanzine, etc. Different meetings were needed to decide the name of the fanzine! After two months a title, TANELORN, was chosen. Meanwhile Michel Liesnard was elected chairman of the Committee, which had about 14 founding members; some of whom never paid their fee. Michel Liesnard did a pretty good job by gathering preliminary information about Conhotels and Consites... [He] presented his first conclusions that the only place in Brussels which might be big enough and offer





enough accomodation ((like simulataneous translation facilities)) is the so-called 'Palace of Congress' where the EEC ((European Economic Community)) take place. But the cost is very high -- £ 2,500. Naturally nobody wanted to sign for/that much/...

"In the meantime ((October 1970) I became member of the Committee of SFAN and I had the opportunity to inform regularly the Committee of SFAN on what was (not) going on in Brussels; which I did several times... This went on very slowly until SFANCON 2 in April 1971. At this Con we had a business meeting under Chairmanship of Donald A Wollheim... There were some important comments made by Michel Liesnard and Michel Feron. The conclusion was that SFAN is prepared to cooperate with anybody who wants to organize a con, but doesn't want to take any financial risks/responsibility, nor wants to be involved with commercial business, neither in fans' daydreams. If some thing were asked of SFAN, the Committee would consider the matter...

"At the General Meeting of SFAN, January 1972 I was asked by some fans whether EuroCon 2 would take place in Brussels or not. My answer was: 'I don't really know. Probably not. Up to now, there's not even a bidding committee for it.'"

"...But some strange things happened at Trieste /Eurocon 1/. All attendees seemed to ignore the problems with the Brussels Committee -- I can't understand why -- and without proper discussion gave a unanimous vote for Brussels as the Eurocon 2 site! What could we do? At that moment our friend Andre Leborgne asked for the microphone and explained how we might organize a con in Brussels. Hurrahs and Cheers! I must say that Andre's plan for Brussels seemed very attractive to me. As we could not let him stand alone, other Belgian fans joined the Committee: Michel Feron, Pierre & Tania Vanderberghe and myself /Joukes/..."

The rest of the article is rather uninteresting to this discussion, but here you face the facts of a possible no-go on Eurocon 2. LOCUS recently had the usual two-liner about the Con telling the American fans that all was well, but damned nothing is well at all!! The new Brussels in '74 Committee meets regularly and things begin to accumulate though seldom any news comes outside the board's room.

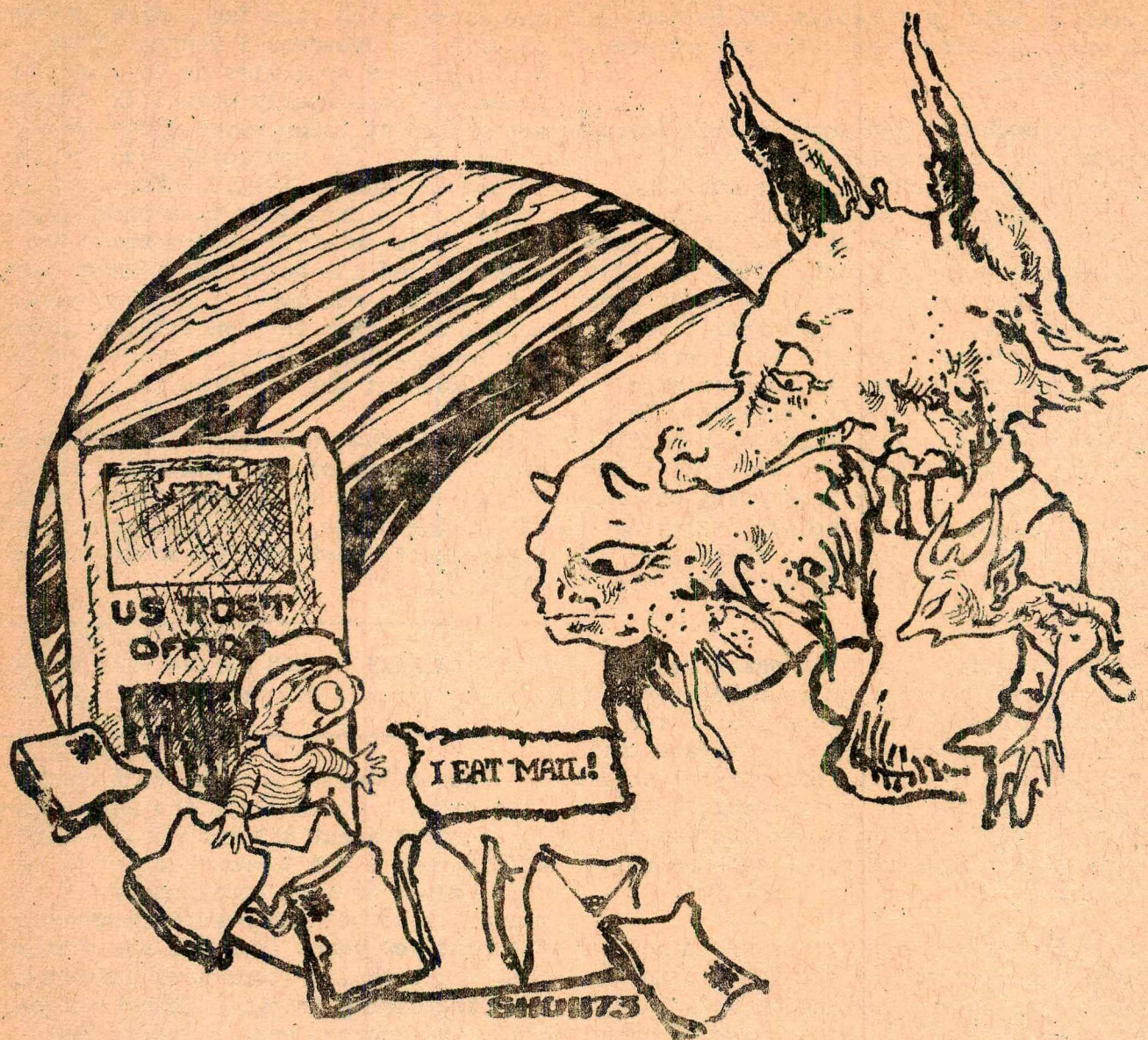
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European fandom is gathering within the back of their minds and organization called ESFA (the European Science Fiction Association). One of the first results of international cooperation is the BeNeLux con in Belgium. The Con will be held in Ghent, and its organization is by SFAN in cooperation with NCSF (the largest fanclub in the Netherlands) and perhaps a Luxemburgian organization. The con will rotate every year, and next year the site will be somewhere in the Netherlands. Guests from all over Europe are expected, Guest-of-Honor is Brian W. Aldiss, the Fan Guest of Honor will be Gerd Hallenberger, publisher of the newszine TELLUS INTERNATIONAL that comes out very irregularly. (Haven't seen it for months, to be honest.) Besides the GoH, the most important feature will be presentation of the SFANawards.






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PREHENSILE SIX arrived in the letter-box this afternoon, which, since it was posted in Mission Hills, California on 24th November and took exactly two months to cross the Pacific Ocean, doesn't say much for the APO (American) or the APO (Australian).

This fanzine has the distinction of being the only publication in the last year and a half I have received which has prompted me to write an immediate letter

of comment. At this time of year, Melbourne is in the grip of a heat wave, with temperatures over the 35 degree mark (Celsius, that is. I keep forgetting you Americans are in the dithering stage before going metric). ((I dunno -- it looks by the time we get converted, which isn't all that far off, we won't have anything worth converting. Here's to the 10¢ dollar!)) Anyway, the sea-green cover was most welcome to one accustomed to grieving over the dead grass in the lawn which I am not allowed to water. The water situation is so desperate here that Robin Johnson has been forbidden to put any in the evaporation unit of the air conditioner in his flat. The authorities have organized a system whereby people are encour-



aged to pimp on "water cheats" among their neighbors. Said authorities had better watch out next elections. The voters are in no sweet mood.

I very much enjoyed your Polemic Against Fuggheads. I remember being vastly entertained by Harlan Ellison's marathon speech at LACon, but at one stage I felt like yelling right back at him, "Don't come the raw prawn with us sport. It's not just the readers you're talking to -- we're fans!" but I remembered just in time that I was a guest in a strange country from a very small fandom which wants to make friends with everybody, even Harlan Ellison. Then Harlan took a vote and I discovered most of the people he was talking to were not fans anyway, which was a very chastening experience. I walked out of the hall thinking how different it is Australia where the only people who get to SF Conventions are fans.

LACon terrified me. The sheer scale of an American Worldcon is overwhelming. The biggest Australian convention so far had about 150 members, and I am afraid that I experienced a mild form of cultural shock. I tell you here and now that I will be absolutely horrified if there are any more than 700 attending members of the Australia in '75 Worldcon.

This is not saying that it would not be worthwhile coming across the Pacific in August 1975. We are working on a fantastic program, and there will be a range of group tours to suit all budgets, including visits to local fandoms throughout Australia.

The controversy about large conventions making fat profits for the organizers was raging at LACon, but I didn't fully appreciate what it was all about until I read the July AMAZING on my return to Melbourne and found out what Ted White had said. The notion of an Australian convention making a profit is laughable, and so all the authors who want to sell us their services had better stay at home. Of course we want the authors out here -- that is part of what it's all about. But the number of people we can afford to subsidize is going to be severely limited.

I appreciated the Jim Shull illustration

tions in PREHENSILE SIX, and especially the cover which made for a nice daydream of cool sea breezes. I wonder if you could pass my apologies on to Jim. He loaned me some really beautiful original art plates at LACon which I was to take to Australia for use in A75 ads and return to him in January 1973. Unfortunately, these were packed away in a brown-paper parcel between stiff covers ready for packing, and the hotel staff threw them out with the rubbish. I spent almost an entire day after the Con sifting through the International Hotel's rubbish pile, but I was not able to find it...

((I passed the word onto Jim, and he told me the history of that ill-fated artwork. Spooky. -- here the creepy atonal music floods the stage, and a shadowy hunched figure trots past, bundle secured under his arm...))

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temporary address  
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Your editorial and the FAPA contribution of Milt Stevens are the only things I have read about the wonderful LACon affair, and I don't know whether to be more amused or more appalled by the whole thing. I've been increasingly aware over the past few years from the few fanzines that I get that writers have definitely been increasing in ego. This is a generality, of course, and I'd never apply it to Terry Carr or Bob Silverberg or, indeed, many other fine writers. Nevertheless the whole use of the Imperial I has been appearing with increasing frequency in the fanzine contributions of published pros, and one hears strange things about some writers at conventions. This has to be the topper.

Now I don't hold with discrimination. If a pro wants to attend a convention in the guise of a fan--i.e., one who is interested in sf and other people with similar tastes -- then he or she should be allowed to do so at the fannish rate. If, however, he wishes to attend in the role of a professional, meaning convention expenses are tax deductible and he might reasonably expect to make business



connections, etc., then his membership fee should be double or triple or possibly more. This does not hold for the guest speaker, naturally, since he is, as his name implies, a guest.

About the rest of the magazine I have mixed emotions. I gather from your comments and the lettercol that you have vastly improved the appearance of PREHENSILE in recent issues. If you'd care to do me one favor along these lines, I'd appreciate it if you'd buy a bottle of correction fluid to correct strikeovers. I can see from occasional gaps in the text that you must have a bottle and paint out the more glaring error entirely, but that isn't what the stuff is for, you know... Similarly in your 2-column style you occasionally let the columns get too close together, which is also distracting. And you hyphenate words in places they were never intended to be rended. Makes the mind wander just a tad. Your layout sometimes slips... take page 18 for example... I find it all distracting.

On the other hand, some of your artwork is excellent. I particularly like Jim Shull and Elaine Beitch... and your mimeography is very nice. ((Actually it was the Selectric that was very nice -- it cuts nice wide letters that let through more ink, and on this ink pad thing that is essential.)) I think the continuity of the issue would be enhanced if the contents page were the first thing inside the issue, but that's a personal choice -- I'd also use a blank piece of green cover stock for the back cover to give the magazine a little more finished appearance. For the most part, though, visually the magazine is very good.

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This new issue of Prehensile emits an uncanny aura of the ghost of SFR. I'm not sure why this should be so because your way of putting together a page isn't too similar to Dick Geis' departed fanzine, and the material isn't as much current-science-fiction slanted as SFR used to be. But I feel if you got enough copies of this issue

to the old SFR mailing list, you too would have three or four times your present circulation via paid subscriptions and would quickly be forced to discontinue Pre in favor of a publication which would describe every intimate detail of your encounters with other fans or something just as sensational. So maybe you can keep Prehensile pretty much as it is now and we'll all be happy.

I have much doubt about the way payment for pros at worldcons would succeed... What about pros whose standard fee for a paid performance is much greater than that \$100 proposed by the SFWA; Would Ellison strike if Vonnegut got \$200? And if eabh worldcon submitted to the Internal Revenue Service a statement of money paid this and that person for giving a talk, would this alter the deductions for business expenses that pros normally claim as a result of con-going?

Paul Walker's article is a curious one. There's a quantity of accuracy in much of what it contains, and yet it's unfair to dive into this deep, chill pool with a death clutch on Bob Silverberg, the one writer who consistently creates science fiction for adults. I suppose it happened partly because Paul was in a bad mood when he wrote this, partly because we all feel resentful of the discovery that nobody is perfect and there's a greater temptation to criticize those who do very well for this lack of perfection than the hack who never does anything right.

Dark Alleys of Fandom told me a lot of things I'd wondered about. I felt a trifle dazed after I finished it, as if I'd just watched the end of the world condensed into a half hour for busy people. Maybe someone will next produce a special issue of a fanzine devoted to lengthy extracts from Tom's writing, in the hope that a Hugo can still be promoted before too long.

The reviews held my interest, even those that could have benefitted from a revision into a second draft before publication. It's curious how quickly I've gained the delusion that science fiction reviews in fanzines are a lost art.



Of course they're still appearing in several fanzines, but the quantity of them decreased drastically when SFR self-destructed and I have a nagging mad thought that there won't be any more after these are gone. ((Of course several of the most prolific reviewers have retired, or have decreased or scattered their output -- reviews by Richard Delap, -- except for two columns run by Ed Cagle recently -- Wayne Conally, and pros have ceased. Ted Pauls has quit writing them, either to work on Discon or out of weariness. Fred Patten's are few, and go only to APA-L then to be picked up by IS or LOCUS. Paul Walker's decreased for awhile, now are more frequent, usually in MOEBIUS TRIP. These were the mainstays of SFR, the archetypical reviewers in my mind. Picking up in their place -- hesitantly at first, now with greater confidence, are Leon Taylor, Don Keller, Darrell Schweitzer, Richard Wadholm, Cy Chauvin and Jeff Clark in varying proportions who can be seen in two or more zines, and then individual editors -- Geis, Varde-man, Connor etc. -- who do reviewing for their own publications. The catch is that outlets for reviews are few and far between -- so few that most zines that publish reviews publish them from the editor and a couple of his friends. Therefore instead of many fans contributing occasional reviews to fanzines while a handful of prolific writers supply the bulk, some few of us publishers rally round us the remnant of review fandom and like monks preserve the art. Having written this whole Beeg Theory I wonder why I am telling it to you when you certainly know all this. But it's your fault for huling out such a comment hook...)) ((The buck don't stop here?))

The artwork is almost totally fine. It's good to see Jack Harness as a signature on a fanzine picture again. The front cover sticks best in the memory of art this issue, of course, partly because it's big and partly because of the uncanny three-dimensional effect Jim Sull somehow achieved.

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I'm amazed at the good things which can turn up in the mail as a result of sending

off a little money for a previously-unknown fanzine -- PREHINSELE and MOEBIUS TRIP being among recent discoveries. These two magazines remind me of one another -- seeming to combine as they do many of the good things from the late SCIENCE FICTION REVIEW while avoiding some of the frothy disputes.

Chin up, Paul Walker...you and the other regular SF reviewers do the genre an inestimable service. After all, how many reviews does your ordinary run-of-the-mill book receive? A mainstream novel? If it's not a bestseller, very little. Nonfiction books probably fare somewhat better percentagewise -- but still the vast majority must go completely unnoticed. A work so specialized as to be "scholarly" is probably lucky to receive a half-dozen reviews in the appropriate journals. That's why the SF reviewers are useful -- they serve that portion of the reading public which seeks some kind of guidance within the genre; and moreover, in the long run, they provide something of a sampling of readers' responses to various trends in writing. I'd hate to think of the mass of commentary one could find on 2001 or some other such prominent science fictional offering in the fan press. ((Paradoxically, I have to discount the service element in fan reviewing. Except for a zine like YANDRO, where Buck Coulson's wide-ranging reviews, plus his personal judgements tell readers what might be good to look for outside SF, and LOCUS, which does reach the portion of the reading public that can use reviews, only a small number of people will have any use of the reviews even in a zine like PRE or MT -- since such a large part of the audience is fanish, or will decide independently what it wants to read.))

((Then you may ask why bother? Because the reviews are useful to their writers, and to the fans as a means of comparative judgement. They also contribute to a more complete understanding of what SF is and is becoming.))

I like fan history, so I enjoyed Dan Goodman's article on Tom Digby's writing. All the subtitles of his zines



were a little much -- but now I understand a little better some of the "why" of all the enthusiasm NESFANS and others expressed over his writing. The subtitles of his zines seemed like the gems of good sf stories; I guess that is the principle virtue of Digby -- a gift for imaginative and innovative conceptions. I still haven't gotten over the idea of "witch lines."

Now will someone only print a collection of "The Best of Digby" before the ditto fades from those 80-some (or however many) copies of APA L which went out in the first place? ((APA-L is now up to 410 issues; Digby's zine is slightly higher in number! That's a lot of L's and a lot of ditto to fade. -- copy count of L has in that time been mainly between 50-75.)

Bill Warren was quite interesting on recent Vampire films. Don't think I've seen any myself since "The Return of Count Yorga." Quarry, I thought, was an admirable vampire.

Reviews were interesting and well-done -- Don Keller's of IRON DREAM having especially caught my attention. Hitlerian Germany seems to exercise a strange fascination upon the American psyche -- perhaps spurred by the prominence of the use of force of arms to resolve disputes throughout our history. Define the enemy and destroy him. (( Destroy him by defining him. I'd like to read some psychological studies about the American fascination for Hitler and 'Naziana'. Is it the combination of power and corruption? The fact that it took a Hitler to catalyze the only period of virtual complete union and singleness of purpose this country ever had? The seeming fact that "only one man" was able to set the whole world at his feet, however he did it?))

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Sorry, but I wasn't all that thrilled with PRE 5. In every way it is a decline from the previous issue. Layout-wise it looks like hell. It's always legible, but very cramped, with titles too close to texts, columns too close together, etc.

You desperately need whitespace in this zine. The deletion of a couple hundred words over the space of an entire issue would be well worth it if the thing looked better. DON'T cram like that, DON'T go carrying the ends of articles on to different parts of the magazine (especially when all the pages aren't numbered); to find the end of that article by paging all over the magazine is very distracting. I should think you'd learned that by now.

I suppose the best thing in the issue is the Goodman column. It doesn't really work as fan history, but some of the letters reprinted are worth reading for themselves. Evers was absolutely right about making value judgements on people. This is perhaps the only real fannish taboo and should stay that way...

It's interesting to see Harry Warner bemoan the absence of fannish fiction. At the time of writing, of course, serconism was the big thing, but there was much fannish fiction going around. For example, there was "Tales From The Third Foundation" which was a long fanfic serial running in THIRD FOUNDATION. (Harry loved this zine regularly). I was publishing fannish fiction at the time, too, mostly by Gordon Linzner and Joe Pumilia. More recently we had the outstanding sample of such, "A Story For Shangri-L'Affaires" by rich brown in one of the later BEACHEMAS...

## EXCERPTZ

MARK MUMPER: You seem to have taken over to a certain extent the mantle of the fallen Science Fiction Review -- the nature of your articles and their positioning are reminiscent of Geis' zine, and while you haven't reached the pinnacles of artist contributors and pros belching in the letter column that marked SFR for what it was -- an energetic, always fascinating and frequently humorous zine that was useful -- you may do so if you care to and try harder. PRE has a nice LA feeling to it that helps along, too. ((All this comparison to SFR wipes me right out. If anything, PRE is an indelicate



cross between APA-L and ENERGIUMEN, skewed to account for my tastes and bucks.))

I've really got to take issue with Paul Walker for his article on Robert Silverberg. What really bothers me is his superficial analysis of Silverberg, his prose style, and his professional intentions. Paul says Silverberg's prose is "adequate" but that it "rarely rises above its purpose; in other words, in undistinguished." That got me, because I can be less than a page into a Silverberg story and immediately recognize his personality at work on the words; his style is anything but merely adequate. It is effective, and by this token does not often drown one in a flood of purple words. ((At the risk of falling into hairsplitting, adequacy and effectiveness are not mutually exclusive -- a comparison between Silverberg and Ellison might be a good example for that. Successfully expressing what you want to, and expressing it masterfully, are important degrees of the same thing.)) Rather than dazzle one, his prose continually remains so clear in intent and rhythmic in construction that the total effect is greater than any one passage. I cannot verbalize how its poetry reaches me, but I think an open reading of much of his fiction will envelope one in a massive Gestalt of feeling. ((I still have to go with Paul -- "Passengers" is my pick for an example of Silverberg's style working its hardest, but TIME OF CHANGES, Hugo-nominee, is his style "dogging it" and just getting along. Silverberg puts forth the effort necessary, not the same power in each story. --There's a statement you can jump on...))

ED CAGLE: I.....said he cordially, without a trace of intent to condemn, destroy, or even criticize,.....am not impressed with book reviews in general, and often even tend to regard their presence in fanzines as 'boiler plate', or filler. No doubt they serve a purpose, but to others, not to me. I see so few reviews I find accurate and perceptive that I have almost given up trying to read all the dross to find one that is at the very least .....readable. ((Then howcum Delap had two columns in your fanzine, huh guy? And did you read the reviews in PRE or not?))

NORM HOCHBERG: Flo certainly has come a long way. I remember her first two columns -- a long thing on hanging wallpaper and a review of an old SFR. Now she's useful and entertaining even if she does molder the mudder tung.

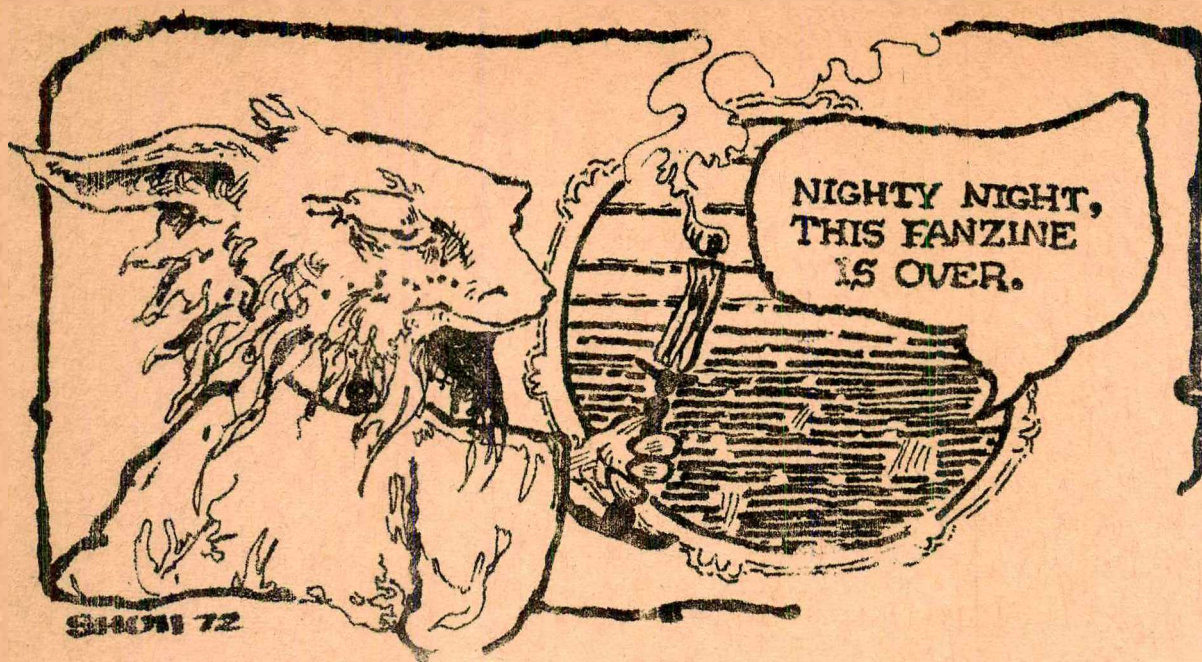
The article by Goodman is strange. It's the type of thing that looks boring and should be boring but is really quite interesting. Most of this is, of course, because he lets Digby carry it all.

The reviews were dwarfed by the IRON DREAM piece. It seems so well thought out and executed that the others seem pale next to it -- shallow or amateurish. You did well to put it first. ((If that's so, did I do well to put it first?))

ERIC LINDSAY: It was actually my intention to provide a review of the novel: "The Year of the Angry Rabbit" as your review of "Night of the Lepus" by Bill Warren mentions not having heard of it. Unfortunately my copy was borrowed by someone and never returned. The novel, by Russel Bradon, was rather successful in Australia, running in both hardcover and paperback editions. It was in effect science fiction as the main plot was about a line of mutated larger than normal rabbits that were immune to the myxomatosis (who knows how to spell the damn thing) that is normally considered to control rabbits in Australia. However, the plot is really unimportant since the novel was a satire on the Australian way of life and especially its politicians. An example of this is the prime minister actuating the Australian defences by pushing a button hidden in the cistern of a toilet. That doesn't sound very funny here, but the way the novel presents it is; especially if you are an Australian with cynical views about the Australian defence network.

SEAN SUMMERS: I see you do know about my condition and how I feel. It's obvious from the cartoon on page 25 ((PRE 5)). Isn't it amazing how your fingers will keep right on typing when one's mind has gone completely blank?





ROBERT BLOCH: ....The all-important thing to remember is that while most SF writers are members of SFWA, they are not authorized to speak for SFWA -- their opinions are personal, their proposals are their own -- and unless such opinions and proposals are duly voted upon and passed by the SFWA membership and thus become "official" there is absolutely no grounds for anyone to consider them as anything but individual sentiments. No resolutions regarding fees, etc. were voted on at that LACon SFWA meeting, nor any vote of censure of any kind. I've written to LOCUS to correct Terry Carr's misstatement.

SHERYL BIRKHEAD: Wow, I hardly knew PREHENSILE when it bounded into the mailbox this time ((I beg your pardon -- my fanzine does not "bound" -- Senda's checks bounce, but my fanzine never bounds!)). I really like Jim Shull's artwork and in fact I'd like to know how he does his artwork -- maybe it is obvious to an artist, but being a poor doodler leaves me at a loss for analysis of technique. Anyway, I liked the cover and every single Shull piece throughout! Then of course there is Grant Canfield. What else can I say?

Ever since I got back from the LACon I've been expecting writeups and analyses

of the con in every fanzine going. Well, it seems to me that fanzine output has declined a bit since the con, but even in those zines which did roll in there wasn't a whole lot said. I really enjoyed your piece on the con. ((There's a full report this time around. I too was surprised at the lack of written comment and so I put my report in this issue even though it's not exactly earth-shattering stuff.))

WAHF: This is the first time I've ever had letters left over after doing a lettercol -- but even having left a few kind words out of this zine, I thank for their writing: JOHN ROBINSON, JEFFREY MAY, ROSE HOGUE, JAY BARTOS, LAURINE WHITE, the one and only BILL BOWERS, and from varied sources besides locs: JEFF APPELBAUM, MIKE WOOD, NATE BUCKLIN, BILL MARSH, KEN FAIG (again) and a whole bunch of people...

Next issue should be out in May or thereabouts. If I don't collapse from exhaustion of the typing fingers.



