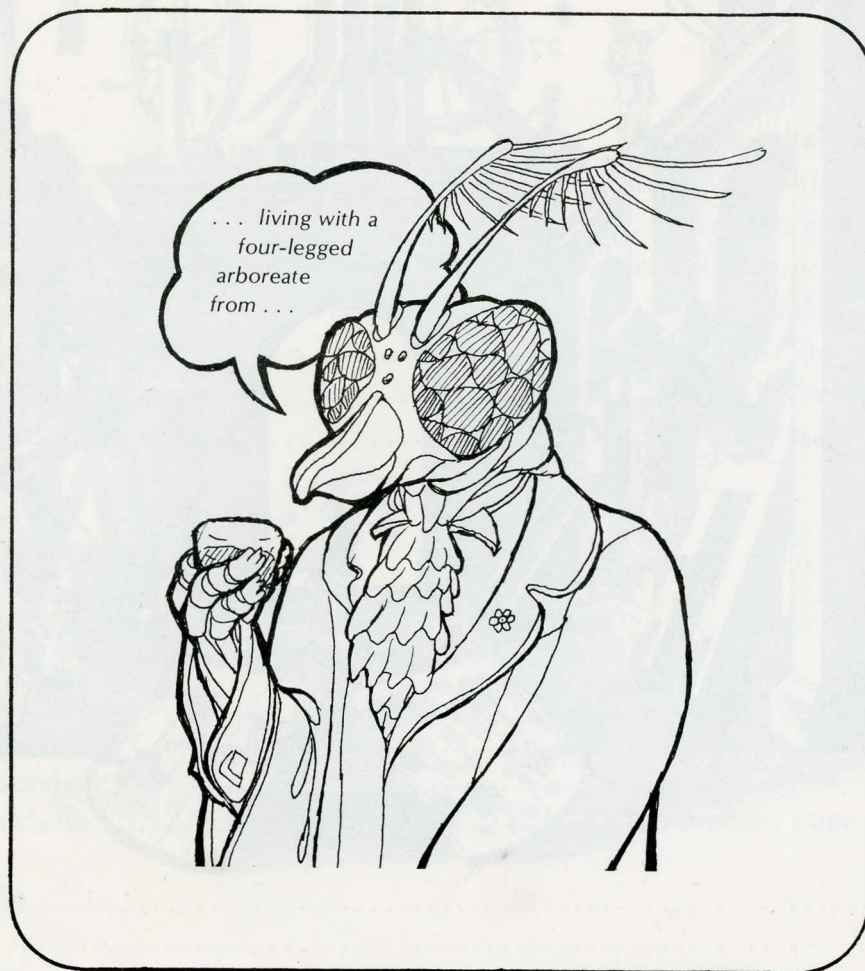


Pretentious

SCIENCE FICTION

Quarterly

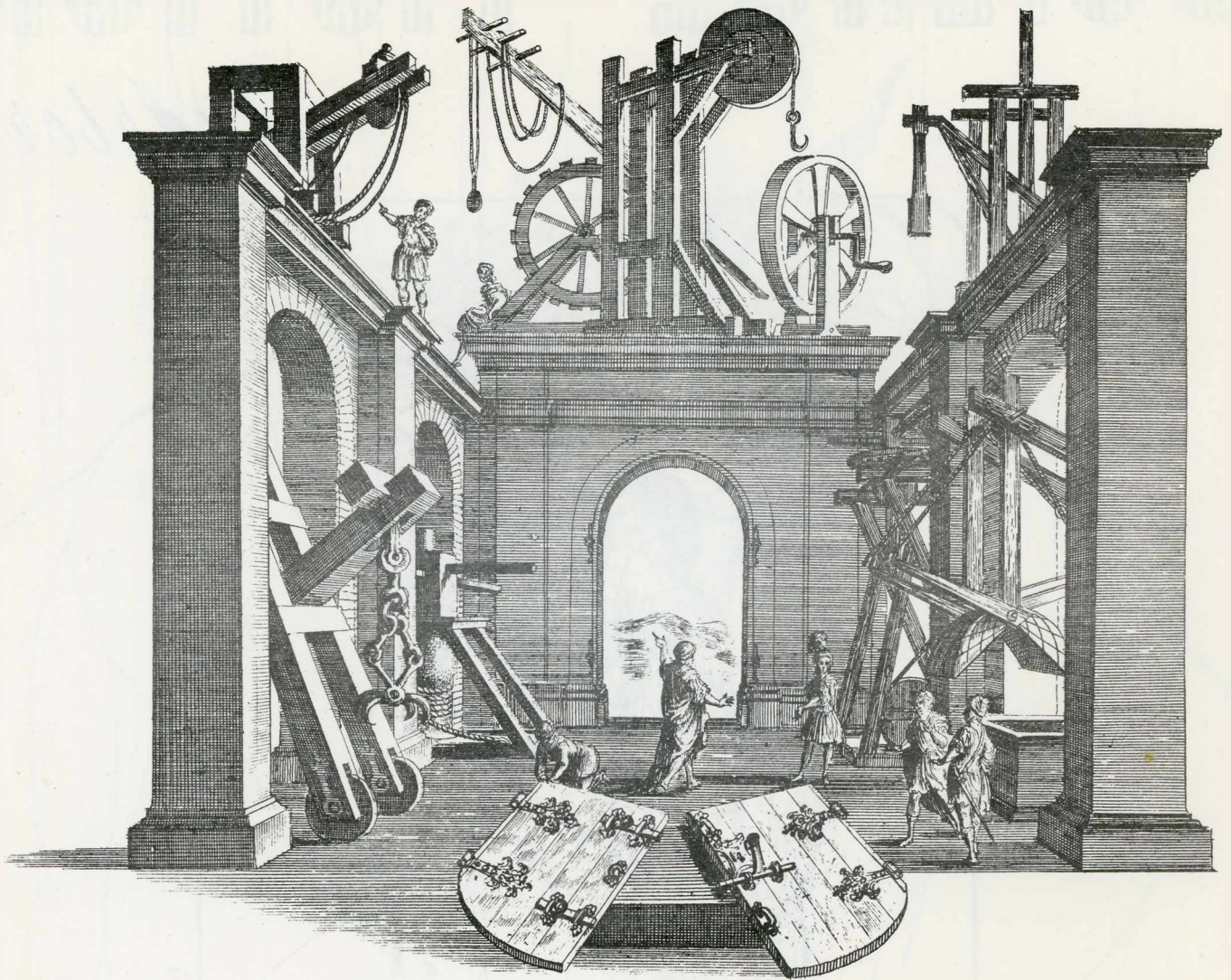


ISSUE NUMBER ONE

SPRING 1978

\$1.50

WELCOME!



On this spot will be erected a new magazine, conceived in Truth and Beauty and Charm, and dedicated to Science Fiction and Fantasy. Founded we are on the principle of wordly wisdom, guaranteeing all account-free access to our belief system as given in the words of Dena Brown:

*“LET’S GET SCIENCE FICTION OUT OF THE UNIVERSITY
AND BACK INTO THE GUTTER WHERE IT BELONGS”*

PRETENTIOUS SCIENCE FICTION QUARTERLY

Number One

Spring 1978

*"Good taste costs no more.
Neither does it cost any less."
——Nietzsche*

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Kangaroo Cowboys	page 4, Dan Steffan; page 5, Grant Canfield
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EDITORIAL BUSINESS

A MESSAGE FROM THE PUBLISHER

The first issue of a new magazine: A bloodcurdling experience, an analog to the experience of giving birth to a monster. Be that as it may. Our child is born; you hold it in your hands.

For all of these past many months the publisher's offices have been a beehive of activity, full of crazed loonies running up and down with the frenetic purpose of a colony of ants scurrying about a busted anthill. Not that all of this effort is directionless; slowly the magazine begins to take shape, to mutate into something subtly different from our first vision of what it would be; slowly it has taken on a life of its own, a sense of its own self-worth. Surely Dr. Frankenstein and our editorial board felt some of the same emotions as they watched their beautiful creations turn into mindless, soulless hulks which disemboweled their own chickens and read their own futures.

Be that as it may. At last the end of the beginning is in sight. As the first pages begin to peel off the rollers of the offset press down at Mothers' Printing, so then does a sudden thrill shock the nerve endings, a thrill not unlike the electric discharge unleashed upon the body as the first premonitory sign that the physical entity has passed over the threshold that betokens submission to a case of the Mexican Trots. The magazine is packaged, put together, mailed out; with the first notices only moments away, now comes the time of rest.

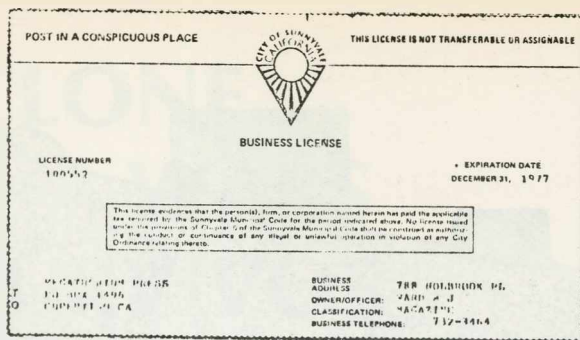
Be that as it may. The Editor of this journal, a fine, upstanding gentleman of the old school, has his own page in which to comment on the phenomenon of this publication. I will let him tell of the midnight raids on the copyright offices, the forging of famous authors' names to manuscripts typed out on computers by random number tables, the threats, bribes, and illegal deals made to push, cajole, influence, and otherwise cause the writers and artists to contribute to P*S*F*Q. I have no intention of making my presence visible in future issues of this magazine, and will henceforth let the Editor do the talking. I have said enough, and I will now shut up.

EDITOR'S LETTER

Our Publisher, a man of modest self-image and equally modest talents, has seen fit to make a number of fatuous insinuations in his message to the first-issue readers. He has even gone so far as to put his heading in a larger size of type than mine. He can do these things because I can't stop him from doing them, the Classical Catch—22 situation.

But P*S*F*Q is *my* magazine, to do with as I, the Editor, wish; and it is fortunate indeed that my wishes coincide exactly with those of the Publisher, the Art Editor, and the Principal Backer, thus lessening the likelihood of internal conflict.





What is P*S*F*Q all about? For that matter, what means the word Pretentious? Exhibit A: *Private Eye's Book of Pseuds* (Private Eye Productions, London, 1973), quotes taken by the British humor magazine PRIVATE EYE from various sources (mostly British) in the media. Example: [Michel Watts in MELODY MAKER] "This obsession with religiosity is also a recurring theme in the first Monty Python film, 'And Now For Something Completely Different', now showing in London. No-where is it more explicit than in the story of the man who returns to a pet shop with a deceased parrot. He claims the shopkeeper has sold him 'a pup'. In fact, it's neither a bird nor a dog. It is, of course, a symbol, a cinematic metaphor for God. It's a parable on contemporary society in which God, Christianity and Jesus Christ have all disappeared from mass consciousness. God is dead, the Monty Python team is saying. Man must strive to regain the animal instinctiveness that is buried beneath the weight of cultural sophistication." [*Pseuds*, p.78] Now *that's* pretentious.

This magazine is about science fiction. As our flyer says, if science fiction is trash, it the very finest kind of trash. And so we treat SF seriously, as the list of upcoming articles (see contents page) will indicate: SF as literature, SF as social commentary, SF as futurist speculation, SF as adventure/escape; articles about SF collecting, SF conventions and gatherings, SF-related items of all kinds. Serious, yes; irreverent, also. Illustrations



for this editorial: Our business license to show we're serious about what we're doing, two cowboy kangaroos to show that we intend to have fun doing it.

You'll never see it in P*S*F*Q! "Blue-white suns glinting off the polished chrome of his twin higos, Bart Destiny lurked unfulfilled at the spiritual waterhole. Suddenly a long, threatening dual shadow leered menacingly at him. 'You'll never quote me out of context!' shouted Bart, and lunged figuratively at the receding shade. Bringing forth a carload lot of castration symbols, he metaphorically unleashed destruction on the hordes..." But I digress.

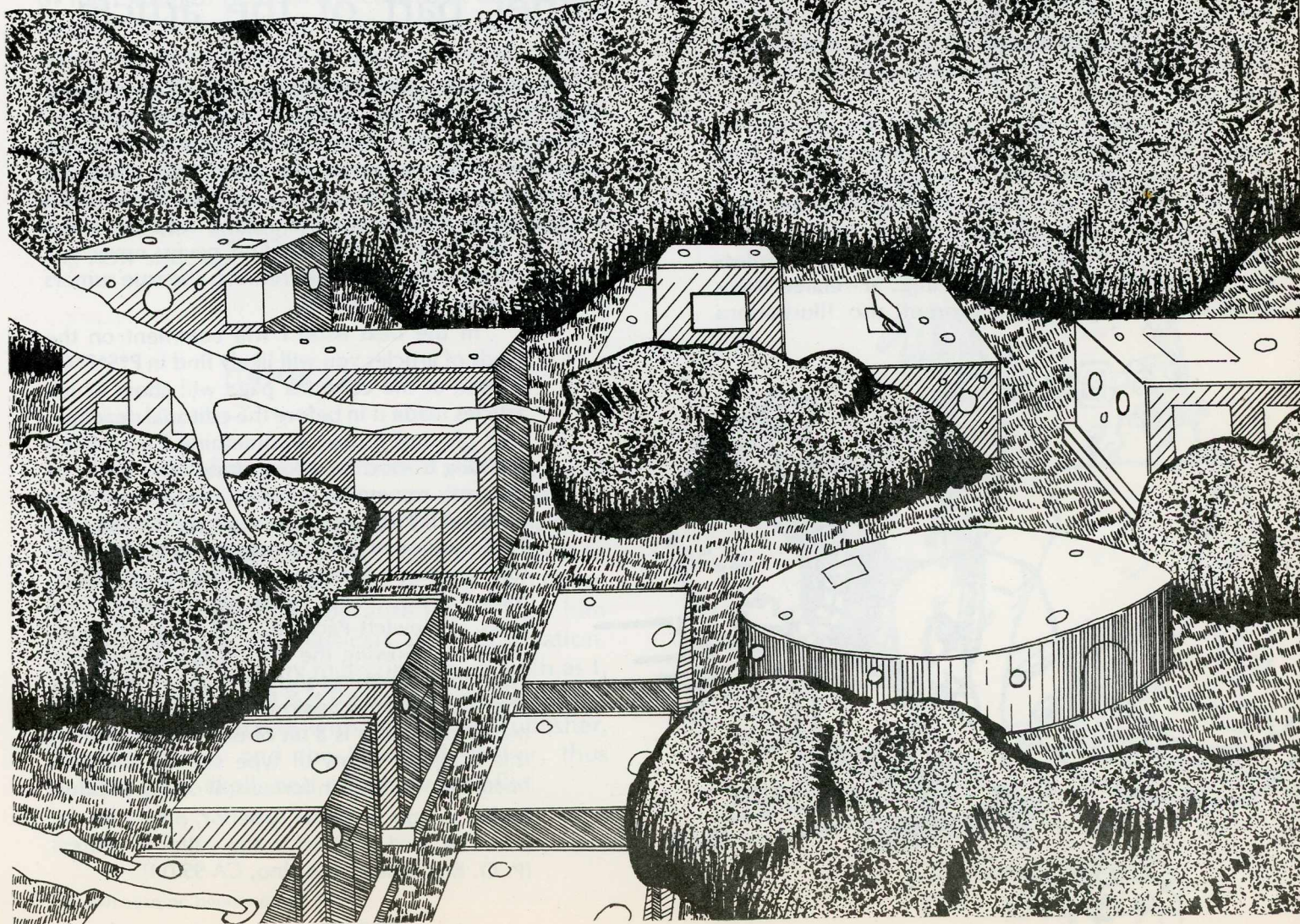
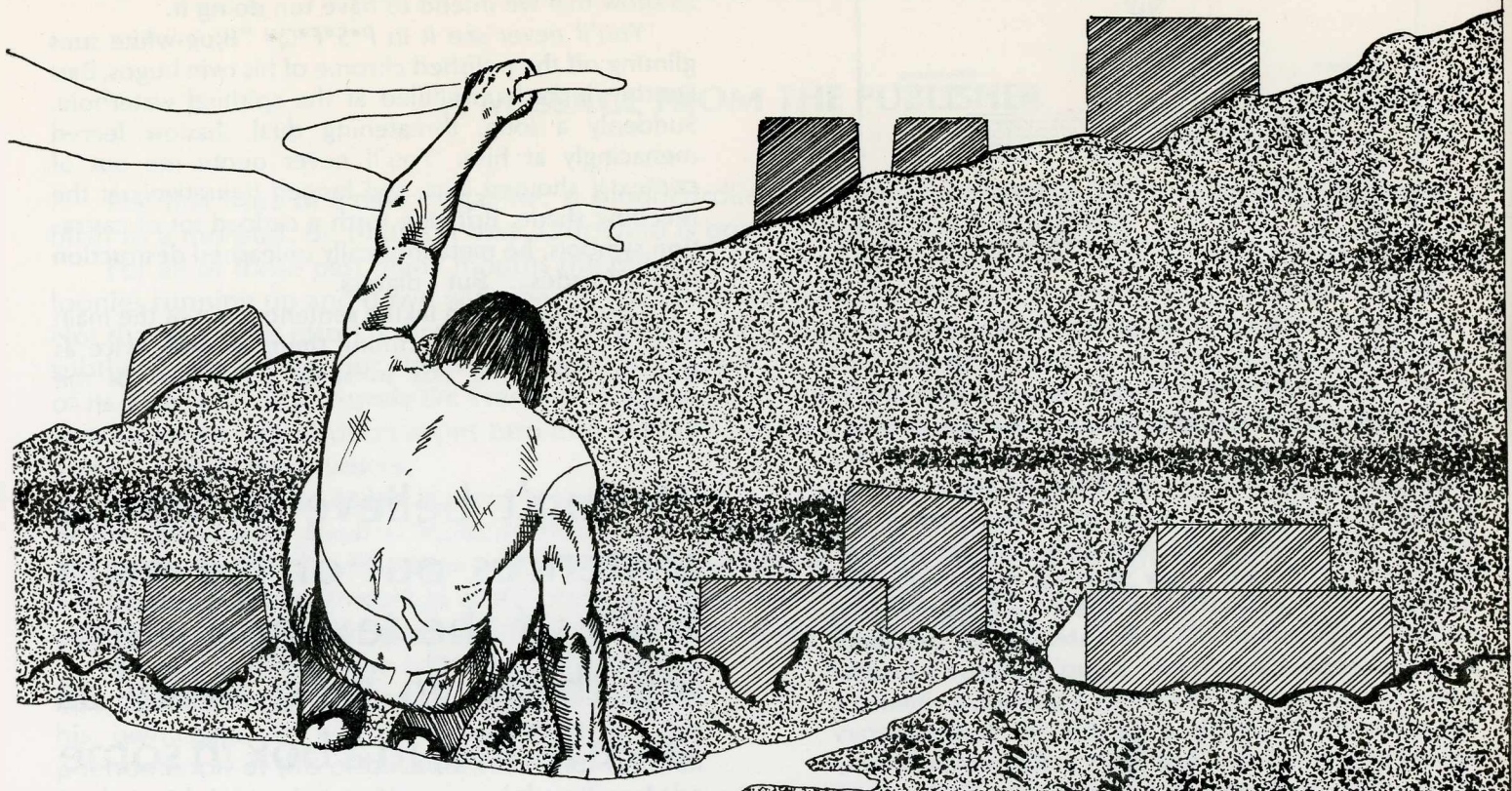
I don't believe in taking sentences out of the main body of the text and printing them, in type twice as large as life, in a box in some other part of the article.

"I don't believe in taking sentences out of the main body of the text and printing them, in type twice as large as life, in a box in some other part of the article."

Nor will the reader ever feel we are underestimating his intelligence and sophistication, miniscule and primitive though they be. Here at last is a home for the SF fan who wants to know who, where, when, why, what, and for how many dollars. If we know, we'll print everything we can under the First Amendment; if we don't know we'll do our best to find out. And never, never will we go around making up false rumors; the true rumors are fascinating enough as it is.

In the next issue I will comment on the kinds of articles you will likely find in P*S*F*Q; a peek at the contents page will show which articles made it in before the editorial deadline. Our physical format is something I have been working toward for a long, long time. Some of you may remember a West Coast SF newszine called WINNIE, some seven or eight years ago. That was one of the first fanzines to be set on an IBM Selectric Composer. WINNIE eventually folded. Now, thanks to the kind and generous folks at Hewlett-Packard, DSA-Laser Division, (who are allowing the use of their typesetting equipment evenings and weekends) I am finally approaching a professional appearance for the magazine. There is a bit of experimentation in this issue, in terms of type sizes and article headings and lead-in formats; if one or another seems to you to be far superior, please let me know by card or letter to the editorial address (P. O. Box 1496, Cupertino, CA 95014).

continued on page twenty



CLONE WARS SURVIVOR

by Paul E. Moslander

Where *Late the Sweet Birds Sang* affected me much like the Turn of the Century body-bounder at Marriott's Great America. Under the fair guise of thrilling my senses, the soulless iron monster lured me to the top of its track.

And dropped me.

I slammed into the bottom of the first dip. My abdomen held trajectory toward earth. The rest of me jerked skyward, at velocity. It came to me then in a moment of fierce lucidity that this was not pretamed, artificial danger for excitement purposes only.

No, no, no. This was real physical abuse. The corkscrew that followed didn't just dizzy my equilibrium. It battered my flesh, knocking me around like a hound savaging a rabbit.

Thus did it go with *Sweet Birds*.

Oh, no, not physically. I haven't been assaulted by a book since one malignly leaped off a shelf at my skull, corner-first. This was emotional battery.

I found Kate Wilhelm's book grey, bitter, and cheerless--easily the most unpleasant fiction I have ever experienced. That includes the unclean, maggoty crawlings of Faulkner. The language-conjurer of Yoknapatawpha enjoyed his noisome grotesqueries. He commiserated with his puling wretches and conveyed a love of them, even as he delineated the unwholesome details of their tragedies.

A Jason Compson is an endlessly fascinating monstrosity; a Thomas Sutpen embodies the epic-tragic; an Anse Bundren displays effortless mastery of passive manipulation, and it is always interesting to study a master. The entwined entrails

of their families' shabby writhings have a dark, swampy splendour. They are drawn with affection, if without mercy.

Kate Wilhelm did not seem to me to be having fun with *Sweet Birds*. Far from it.

What she produced reached me less as a novel than as a scream. Harsh, ugly, it grabbed me by the tender nape of my psyche and howled in my ear. The pain in the book shrieks, where Mistah Faulkner grins and dances and pipes his tortured fantasies.

Shaken and deeply shocked, I found myself coming to a profound insight into the nature of my own inner pain. However, this came only partly because Wilhelm had considerably opened the bloody wounds within me. Very fortunately, I was simultaneously sharing Alan Garner's traumas in his "Inner Time" contribution to *Science Fiction At Large*.

I recommend that essay collection highly (edited by Peter Nicholls, Harper and Row, 1976, \$8.95). Disch, LeGuin, Edward de Bono, Sheckley, and others illuminate aspects of the field. Garner, in his section, goes into inner, one-dimensional eternal time. There is the mental magic kingdom of ever-present, where emotional injuries encyst and fester in the ongoing now.

...Something happens to us. We are hurt. We don't like being hurt. "It" hurts. The event takes place in outer time, which is four-dimensional, and we, the organism, must continue. So, like an oyster, we enclose the pain, but, unlike the oyster, we

produce no pearl. We enclose the pain by "being sensible", "putting it behind us", "setting it down to experience", "forgetting all about it." ... We wrap the (hurt) round with emotional energy. But the (hurt) lives on, because the (hurt) is a creature of inner time, and inner time is one-dimensional--or infinite...All events seem to be simultaneously present...

(*Science Fiction At Large*,
page 128)

Garner thus elegantly verbalized something I have long known. I am contemporaneous with all of my past selves.

Beneath my veneer of nail-biting sophistication, I am still two years old, my arm scalded with boiling water, my body convulsing in agony. The events bound around that incredibly painful physical trauma still live within me. I'm told I used to scream with terror at anything white, the color of the bandaging put on my arm. I still have an aversion to the harsh sterility of dead white.



Twisting slowly in eternal, everlasting time, I remain the 11-year old blind with fury at being overpowered and tied up on the school ground by my classmates. Somewhere inside, I am crying into my pillow over the uncounted disappointments and betrayals that batter at children, who are essentially powerless against the world. That inner-time me emerged as I watched "Madame Butterfly" on KQED. The tears were running from the corners of my eyes, keeping them from blurring my vision as Mirella Freni put the knife to her throat, her faith betrayed.

Inner time, of course, is not all *Via Dolorosa*. Take the exultant, soul-filling joy I get out of seeing "Star Wars". George Lucas used the height of cinematic art to carve past the worldly-wise persona squatting in four-dimensional, intellectually-apprehended outer time. He reached the kid who still sits on the rug goggling up at Flash Gordon and Commando Cody.

Whatever critical appreciations I form of literature and SF, I continue to love the goddamn genre because it builds on that wondrous body of joyful experiences *still recycling within me*.

Maslovian peak experience depends on inner time, it seems to me. When I first listened to Leopold Stokowski's recording of Mahler's Resurrection Symphony, I was built to a state of ecstasy wherein I simultaneously apprehended the greatness of Mahler's art, the ancient wisdom and very personal beauty of Stokowski's artistry, the glory of the human community in interaction, the grandeur of the religious experience, and the diving image of the woman I love. Such brushes with Eternity are revelations of the ever-present inner time glories we carry, doubling and redoubling within us.

Now, as I return to Kate Wilhelm, my muscles tighten in somatic response to the emotional anguish her book continues to impart to me. This skillfully evoked pain is relayed onto the rest of the traumas churning about within. Such effect, I deeply suspicion, was by design.

Sweet Birds' overt theme is repopulation of the post-bellum Earth through clone technology. The hard science, sociological, and psychological extrapolations of the topic are nil. She offers no detailed study, no intimate portrayal, no rich and elaborate tapestry of clone possibilities. "Houston, Houston, Do You Read?" holds more than all of *Sweet Birds* on possible aspects of clone-based societies and their collision with non-cloned individuals.

Wilhelm is not really dealing with, and, I feel, not really interested in the ramifications of gene transplants. She has other feet to fry.

Further, in technical matters, she severely limits her scope. She offers limited imagery. Tactile descriptions are virtually absent. The visuals are handled high on the ladder of abstraction, with occasional gouts of pro forma color, all the more gaudy for the starkness of their background.

Wilhelm does not seem to me to be interested in creating a richly appointed secondary universe, one which we may tour, marveling and admiring, as we journey through her head. Her scant imagery forced me to furnish my own experiences to fill in her outlines. This occurs in all writing to a greater or lesser extent. Any novel is only an outline to tease and provoke you into brain-events which are the experience you undergo. The less

detail put in, the more active a participant the reader has to be, investing his or her own emotional energy in self-created images. A. E. van Vogt is highly conscious of this technique (and uses it wretchedly, these days.)

The events in *Sweet Birds* are a rather bald narrative, with little illusion of physical participation encouraged. Tolkien practices this myth-making device with a polished hand in *The Silmarillion*. He relies on inner-time archetypes to make his stories live. Again, the less said, the more the reader has to plunk out from his or her own store.

With the important exception of its single protagonist, *Sweet Birds'* characters are fundamentally superficial outlines of people. They belong to E. M. Forster's class of flat characters. Their human relations are cramped and restricted to the exacerbating, merciless theme at hand. The sign of any serious emotion is almost inevitably weeping; anything more varied and naturalistic is unnecessary. The dialogue is as bleak as the speakers' lives and as monomaniacally sterile as their environment.

The effect of this insidiously limited structure and style was to thrust the story into me, not me into the story. I found that Wilhelm had only one protagonist--me, the audience. That protagonist gets force-fed the painful life experiences of her single central character. David, Molly, and Mark are functionally aspects of a solitary person, an emotionally battered child whose socialization is the subject of the book. The claustrophobic construction forced this child into my head, planting it in my inner time psyche to live off my eternally present traumas.

Sneaky writer, Kate Wilhelm.

The clone culture central to *Sweet Birds* has nothing to do with gene-plasm transplant extrapolations. It acts as a metaphor for the conformist pressures grinding in at a child from its social environment.

In the battles of childhood and adolescence, our individuality is constantly under siege. We work out a *modus vivende*, somewhere between asocial outlawry and numb submission. Or our names clog the newspaper columns, if our failure to adapt becomes spectacular enough.

The scars of the battle are carried in inner time. Wilhelm exploits these expertly. Her clone culture concentrates on trying to domesticate the wild, individual ego. She dwells on the threat to the creative psyche posed by the homogenizing pressures of the crowd.

This has distinct resonance for me (especially the me tied up, back there, on the school playground.) In fact, if I were to hazard a generalization concerning SF fans, it is that we have all had some rough times on the socialization scene, even considering the norm of open warfare. We read oddball literature. We think peculiar, visionary thoughts. We sooth our souls with escapism (whether you take that as the pejorative flight-of-the-deserter, or whether you follow Tolkien into the escape-of-the-prisoner freedom of secondary universes.)

David, the young science whiz, Molly, the misunderstood artist, and Mark, the rejected savior of humanity, are three archetypal figures aimed at the readers' alienation traumas. Now, back a ways I likened this book to a scream. Since the novel is a cry of anguish, not a serious study, the end product of the line of archetypes is Mark.

Mark the Magnificent! He is the sole individual in a herd of non-creative sheep. Longing for companionship, rejected by the community, he finds comfort in solitude. He masters woodcraft on his lonesome as Tarzan conquered English from picture books. He swings through the upper terraces, untamed lord of the trees, master of the woods--the woods, whose unknowable power and mysterious reaches literally drive his clone opponents mad.

Though the clones, his kinsmen, try to seduce and batter him into the life-destroying stagnation of communal thinking, and though they ultimately try to kill him, he loves his enemies to the end. Nobly, he laments their passing after the author's hand has abolished everyone but him and his.

(It is important to assuage repressed childhood rage by slaughtering the nasty oppressors. However, it is also important that no guilt should taint the triumph of the crowned and conquering child. Thus, Mark plays no part in the destruction of everything that had afflicted him. The tornado also acts to crystalize the concept that the clone culture could not survive in nature. Conformity is flawed, non-creative, dull--and deadly to itself. Why? *Because it hurt us when we were young.*)

Sole savior of humankind, Mark retires to an alternate Eden. Being lone stallion of the herd, he proves, in the fundamentalist macho fashion, the viability of all the ideals he embodies--diversity, individuality, wildcat self-expression. As Fu Manchu put it to the hordes of Asia and Africa in MGM's "Mask of Fu Manchu": "Kill the White Man and marry his women!"

Sweet Birds' monomaniacal structure pursues the recreation of socialization traumas with the relentlessness of a drill heading into a nerve. I found it agonizing.

Having awakened the screaming child within me, Wilhelm then patted and petted and soothed it to quiet the pain. *Be yourself*, she crooned. *Be wild and guiltless! You are the savior of the world.* And will get all the pretty lollipops as a reward for your hurt after the bad dentist is dead.

This resolution of the thematic structure was not enough for me. Not by half.

The savage pain evoked in me by the book leads me, blithely, to project the same depth of feeling on the author. Now, God knows that Heinlein demonstrates the fallacy of confusing works with their creators. However, I am reinforced in this case by Kate Wilhelm's depiction of the breeders.

These are brutal caricatures of the drugged, conditioned brainless stereotype of the unliberated woman. The image is now very operative in polite circles. Germaine Greer used it in the very title of *The Female Eunuch*. Wilhelm pursues the vision with uncompromising vengeance.

Even the spiritual and social importance of *Kirche* and the craft of *Kuche* have been flayed away from the estate of these women. The breeders are left with the raw, biological *Kinder* function. As the only fertile females, they are kept

fat, dull, and complaisant so that they can be syringe-raped to pop out spratlings for The Establishment. Their reproductive labors hold no pleasure. They are kept barefoot and pregnant, without orgasm.

The portrayal indicates, to me, harsh emotional commitment. Wilhelm is not happy with this image of the role of women. She may nurse some old traumas finding release in the grim portrait. It is therefore curious, apprehended intellectually, to find Mark, at the end, ruling a harem of breeder concubines.

Mark...was greeted by Linda, who held out her hand to him. She was nineteen, large with child, his child.

"I'm glad you're home," Linda said softly. "It has been lonesome."

"And you're not lonely now?" he asked, putting his arm about her shoulders.

"No."

(Where Late the Sweet Birds Sang, p. 207, paperback edition)

This is twenty years after Mark and his hours have left the clone compound. Linda is second-generation, without much doubt his daughter. There are older women. There are siblings and half-siblings of her age, and younger. Yet, she is depicted simply as Mark's beddie, with no individual identity or role independent of that of helpmeet to the stud-king. Without him, all-conquering, all-potent father-lover, she is lonely.

This image of Tarzan and his golden loins is thoroughly consistent with the wish-fulfillment fantasy Wilhelm has evoked, trying to comfort the tormented child-psyche she has poked up with a sharp stick. Male or female, we are intended to be crammed into Mark's persona. His pain was our pain; now his total gratification serves as ours.

Yet, that undercuts the strength of the breeder portrayal. In fact, the extravagant fantasy of Tarzan-Mark depletes the power of the book to do more than evoke, and then cursorily comfort, inner time traumas.

Alan Garner goes into the use of reliving emotional injuries to release their crippling power:

It seems to me that one motivation for a writer could be the need to discharge (traumas)...(This) may be an act of exorcism, but it is not confessional writing. If it succeeds, I am not giving the reader the burden of my (trauma), but I am fortuitously handing on the released, and thereby refined and untainted, energy.

(Science Fiction At Large, p. 136)

I have the impression that Kate Wilhelm exorcised some deep-held agonies in *Sweet Birds*--or, if not exorcised, at least summoned up. However, I do not think that the creative result at all tapped the potential of the energy she unleashed.

Alexander Lowen, founder of Bioenergetics, has a therapeutic exercise in which the patient whacks a bed with a tennis racket while screaming "NO!" This primal expression of negation is highly rewarding. It unbinds energies locked in inner time and in the musculature of the individual. It asserts individual will against conformist super-ego pressures. It lets loose childhood-deep demons in therapeutic violence.

However, it is not art. Energies are discharged, but not put to work.

Punk rock, "Clockwork Orange"/martial arts vicarious violence in film, and belaying your opponents with a claymore are all art. They take the raw energy of outrage and put it to work. But not too much. They are not high art, complexly probing the nature of the human condition.

Sweet Birds, like "Cinderella" and "Dumbo", deals with the Ugly Duckling archetype of socialization trauma. It taps sincere, enormous currents of pain. Yet, it fails to refine that anguish into a sophisticated treatment of existence.

Let me pause for expert testimony. I call to the stand Alfred Bester. His "5,271,009" is an artistic reply to *Sweet Birds* 22 years before the novel's appearance.

"A man cannot start making adult decisions until he has purged himself of the dreams of childhood. God damn. Such fantasies. They must go."

"No," Halsyon said slowly. "It's the dreams that make my art...the dreams and fantasies that I translate into line and color..."

"God damn! Yes. Agreed. *Maitre d'hotel!* But adult dreams, not baby dreams. Baby dreams. Pfui! All men have them...To be the last man on earth and own the earth...To be the last fertile man on earth and own the women...To escape responsibility with a fantasy of heroic injustice, of martyrdom with a happy ending... And there are hundreds more, equally popular, equally empty...Too many adults are still childrens. It is you, the artists, who must lead them out as I have led you. I purge you; now you purge them."

(Starlight, Doubleday, pp. 37-38)

Consider, by contrast with *Sweet Birds*, Ursula K. LeGuin's *The Dispossessed*. The Urras culture comes across to me as a broad caricature of our contemporary culture, much in the manner of Wilhelm's breeders. However, in the Anarres situation and in the character studies of Shevek and Takver, LeGuin creates the kind of adult day-dream that Bester's Mephistopheles character refers to. The whole theme of socialization and the clash of independent egos with conformity is given mature play. Pain is there. LeGuin knows where to cut in, too. But it transmutes to a higher, more complex level of awareness of life.

Not unimportantly, I found joy in having associated with Shevek and Takver. They were good folks to know; they were *real* folks. Which is to say, LeGuin provided guidelines for my psyche to structure a brain-event that feld mature, deep, valid. And Pleasant.

Now, LeGuin's ending is ambiguous. Shevek may be torn limb from bush by his fellow anarchists. No stock wish-fulfillment ending here, though we may know that Shevek's mathematics will be an important element in the Ekumen to come. He himself may be crucified. And yet, it is good to have known Shevek and Takver. The living of their lives is a triumph I am happy to have had inside my head.

Wilhelm evokes raw, emotional energy, and cheats it. Her liberated breeders are only Lindas, pendants to the gratification of the hurt child-ego. There isn't a Takver among them. Her fulfilled individualist is Mark, a figure best handled by Alfred the Great in "5,271,009". His Tarzan-like cartoon accomplishments pale beside Shevek.

LeGuin, Tiptree, Faulkner, T. H. White, the mothing delicacies of Patricia McKillip--these can take pain, the bound energy of trauma, liberate it from inner time and produce glorious adult dreams. Not only do they purge, but they bring growth of understanding.

I am led to wildly speculate that perhaps Wilhelm herself has not resolved the anguish of her inner time-locked injuries. *Sweet Birds* had the kick of a primal scream of agony. It did not, for me, twist the torment into high art--as Billie Holiday, Edith Piaf, or Maria Callas turned torn and tortured energy into transfixing song.

I would be interested in knowing if Wilhelm's other work shows more sophisticated use of the stark, harsh power she knows how to summon. Frankly, I am a little too goddamn scared of the unresolved pain she might put me through, so I'd rather not find out first hand. If I have to take an emotional battering--as I do from Tiptree, almost every time--I want to profit from it.

At the moment, I am glad to have read *Sweet Birds* and lived to tell the tale.



THE ADVENT STORY 1956 - 1978

by Edward Wood

In the summer of 1956, four Chicago fans, Earl Kemp, Edward Wood, Sidney Coleman, and Jon Stopa, gathered in Earl Kemp's kitchen at 3508 North Sheffield. With a rented IBM bookface special typewriter, they started ADVENT: PUBLISHERS. A fifth fan, Robert E. Briney, was at MIT getting his Ph.D. in mathematics, but had contributed money toward the formation of Advent.

Realizing that the fan presses of the late '40s and early '50s were faltering and dying with their policy of publishing mostly fiction, the five Chicago fans wanted to see how their plans of publishing just for a hobby would work out. No member of the partnership would make his living off the firm. Any profits would be shared between author and publisher, with the publisher's share to be turned back into the firm. No book to be announced unless it was sure to be published. (Only once was this rule broken; a second Damon Knight book was announced as *Knight On Science Fiction*.)

Earl's wife, Nancy, almost went nuts with the mess the four of us made of her kitchen, but the work went ahead, day after day, week after week. The special typewriter, which Earl alone worked, had a numbering gauge showing a certain number that had to be typed at the end of each line. When all lines on a page had been typed out with their corresponding numbers, the entire page had to be retyped with each number set into the machine before the corresponding line was typed. In this way the whole page was right-hand justified. Words in Italics had to be typed on another typewriter and hand-set into the sentences. Damon Knight, the author of *In Search of Wonder*, (after Sam Moskowitz's "sense of wonder" phrase, which dominated much of the discussion of science fiction in the fifties) was writing the book while Earl was putting it into camera-ready copy. Jon Stopa did the dust jacket. All the others wanted to sell the book for \$3.00, but I held out for \$4.00. It sold out at \$4.00 and is still in print in a 2nd edition, 21 years later.

Advent's second production was a Kelly Freas art portfolio which was a special project of Kemp and Coleman. Since the other partners had not been informed about it, there was considerable acrimony about this. The career of Advent promised to be a short one. However, an agreement was made that all future projects would be done by vote of the partners. This Freas Portfolio, although very modestly priced at \$1.50 a copy, took over a decade to sell out. That was the first and last Advent portfolio.

Ted Dikty had left Shasta Publishers and his *Best Science Fiction* series had been cancelled by Frederick Fell, Inc. He now approached Earl Kemp with the idea of Advent taking up the series. Publishing rights would be sold to the Doubleday Science Fiction Book Club ahead of publication, and Advent

could buy copies from the bookclub and put a priced dust jacket (also obtainable from the bookclub) around the copies which Advent sold. It was one of the most profitable books Advent ever put out. Unfortunately, Ted Dikty thought that he owned Advent and could tell Earl what to do. So after *The Best Science Fiction Stories and Novels: 9th Series*, there were no more fiction ventures by Advent.

The Science Fiction Novel, a collection of essays on science fiction as social criticism, was edited by Earl Kemp in 1959 as Advent's 4th production and is still in print to this day.

However, by this time the Advent team was breaking up. Stopa went to Korea, Coleman went to California Institute of Technology and Wood went to the National Reactor Testing Station to develop the Nuclear Navy. That left Earl alone in Chicago, and so in 1960 two more partners were added to the firm: George W. Price, Jr., and James O'Meara. O'Meara was a sociology student at the University of Chicago and George Price was the superactive fan--he was going to junior college, putting out his Hugo-winning fan magazine *SaFari* as a member of SAPS, was on the waiting list of FAPA, bidding for the next midwest World Science Fiction Convention, and generally into everything science fictional in Chicago.

In spite of all his other activities, Earl was the head and heart of all Advent productions from 1956 to 1964. In '64 he left Chicago to travel with Bill Hamling's publishing empire to San Diego, California. Before leaving Chicago, Earl had put out a reprint of *Of Worlds Beyond* (this time with a needed index). and Bloch's *The Eighth Stage of Fandom* (which died on us and was never reprinted in any form.) Earl announced a second Damon Knight book but Damon had no time to finalize the product. (The material was incorporated into the 2nd revised edition of *In Search of Wonder* (1967) which is still in print. I believe that Earl produced the first 11 items on the Advent publications list (see list at the end of this article.) Everything was still small and manageable. The special typewriter had been bought long ago with Advent profits, and now had its own special table. Nancy toted the books to the corner post office pickup box. In fact, Advent by now had its own post office box number.

Earl asked Alva Rogers to turn his series of articles about ASTOUNDING in the fan magazine VIPER into the book *A Requiem For Astounding* (still in print from Advent but temporarily out of stock.) He commissioned Alexei Panshin to write a book about Robert Heinlein's science fiction career. The Panshin book, *Heinlein In Dimension*, eventually became one of Advent's best sellers but caused a lot of problems before it was finally published in 1968. Heinlein disliked what he termed the invasion of his privacy and threatened legal

action, even though Earl offered to send him the completed manuscript and to delete those passages which he found offensive. Heinlein refused and still threatened legal action, Advent paid Alexei a stipend for work already done and wished him God-speed. Panshin published portions of his book in various fan magazines such as THE RIVERSIDE QUARTERLY and others. Heinlein did not bring legal action, which was not surprising since Panshin's book could not possibly have damaged this great master of modern science fiction.

As was stated before, Bill Hamling moved to California and Earl Kemp and family followed at the end of 1964. For nine years, Earl had done it all. He had set up the books, seen them through the printers and binders, sold them, invoiced them, taken the money, and paid the authors. Now the entire operation was turned over to George W. Price. He was to guide the fortunes of Advent for nine years, 1965 to 1973. Ed Wood assisted in the editing of the Tuck Encyclopedia and Warner's *All Our Yesterdays*. In October of 1973, the shipping, invoicing and part of the storage operations were turned over to Ed Wood and his wife JoAnn in Hartford, CT. The bulk of the Advent books are stored with partner Bob Briney in Salem, MA. Trips are made between Hartford and Salem when necessary to restock. Ed Wood also does a certain amount of editing for future publications.

Little did Ed Wood realize that when he started up a correspondence with Don H. Tuck of Tasmania, it would take from the early '60s until 1974 for the first volume of Tuck's *Encyclopedia Of Science Fiction and Fantasy* to be published. Volume two has not taken nearly so long; it is at the printers now and will be ready in January 1978. Then will come volume three, and supplement one covering the period January 1, 1969 to December 31, 1975. When these are published, Advent will consider either a supplement two: January 1, 1976 to December 31, 1980, or a completely revised edition. All errors detected in volume one will be corrected in supplement one. Unlike many large publishing companies, Advent has taken the time to question and correct many items in the first two volumes. Almost 4000 queries have been made to Tuck and his helpers to clarify and correct items. Don Tuck has been very patient and hopefully he is happy with the resultant product. We think it the finest work to come out of science fiction and fantasy fandom, and it stands as a monument to the ceaseless work of the "Giant from Tasmania".

Future publishing plans for Advent are:

1. A reprint of *Modern Science Fiction* by Reginald Bretnor.
2. *SF Bibliographies* 2nd edition, revised and expanded, by Bob Briney and Ed Wood.
3. Completion of Tuck's *Encyclopedia* Volume 3 and Supplement 1.

Certain Advent titles whose sales have fallen off and are of considerable vintage will be allowed to go out of print. We of course intend to keep *The Encyclopedia of Science Fiction and Fantasy* permanently in print. Also, for any particular book we shall keep either a paperback or a hardcover edition in print, but not both. This will simplify storage and ordering procedures for Advent.

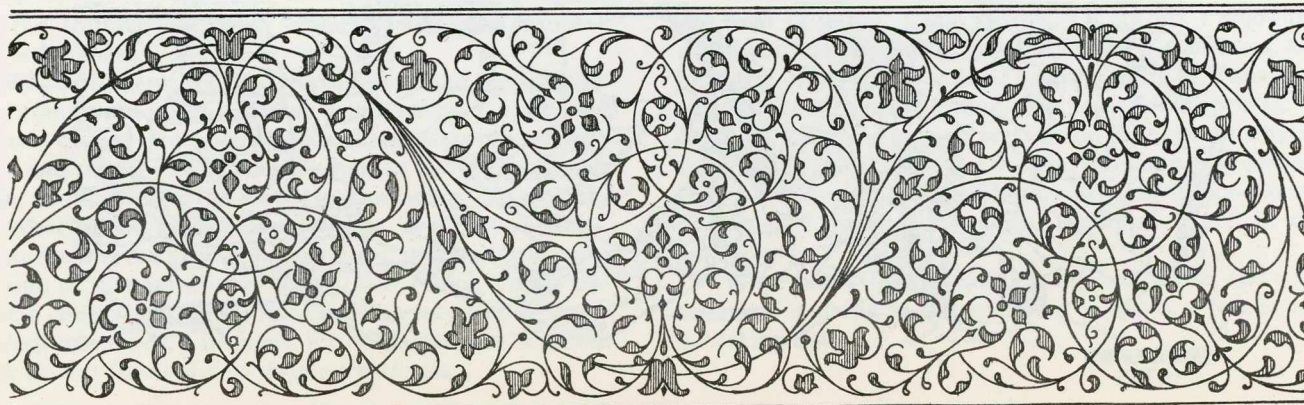
Advent over the years has kept its prices very low, but inflation has caught up with us. Dealers wanted more profit and we have had to raise our prices twice so far in the '70s. The first price rise was a modest 30 cents per paperback and \$1 for hardcovers on January 1, 1974. Then came a very large increase on January 1, 1976 for all books in stock.

Our main gripe recently has been the greed of the academic community. We get requests from professors and teachers who want copies of each of our books free to see if they want to use them for their science fiction courses. Whenever possible we ship damaged stock copies to satisfy some requests, but we generally have to tell them to get their libraries to order copies and they can inspect copies there. They simply cannot understand this. They confuse Advent with the textbook publishers who put out editions of tens of thousands. If you are some big professor somewhere and you feel that you are automatically entitled to "freebies", Advent will do its best to disabuse you of this feeling.

Advent over the years has had offers of varying degrees of strangeness. One Chicago gentleman in the mid '70s wanted us to give him 1/3 of the firm and he would then increase our sales! He recently declared bankruptcy. We want people to understand that Advent is still a hobby. We like to sell our books, but if sales fall off, it simply means that the books stored in Wood's garage or Briney's basement will stay there a little longer. Loans for needed cash are made between the partners and banks are rarely, if ever, resorted to. We haven't grown big, but we're still around after 21 years, and we've shipped a lot of books to a lot of people.

The views and ideas expressed in this article do not necessarily reflect those of any Advent partner other than myself. Any errors are my own.

Ed Wood (10/17/77)



ADVENT : PUBLISHERS, INC.

List of Publications 1956--77

In Search of Wonder by Damon Knight

First Edition: Hardcover 1956, repr. 12/59; Paper 12/59
Second Edition: Hardcover 3/67, repr. 3/68, 12/68, 9/71,
and 2/74; Paper 3/68, repr. 1/71, 4/72, and 11/74.

Frank Kelly Freas: A Portfolio

No Hardcover edition (except *); Paper edition 1957.

The Best Science Fiction Stories and Novels: 9th Series

edited by T. E. Dikty
Hardcover edition 1958; no Paper edition.

The Science Fiction Novel edited by Earl Kemp

First Edition: Hardcover and Paper, 1959.
Second Edition: Hardcover and Paper, 1964.
Third Edition: Hardcover 7/69, repr. 4/71 and 9/74;
Paper 7/69, repr. 9/70, 10/71, and 9/74.

Some Notes on Xi Bootis by Hal Clement

Twelve page pamphlet for PITTCON, 9/2/60.

The Eighth Stage of Fandom by Robert Bloch

Hardcover edition 1962**; Paper edition 1962.

The Proceedings: Chicon III edited by Earl Kemp

No Hardcover edition (except *); Paper edition 1963.

Of Worlds Beyond (2nd Edition) by L. A. Eshbach

Hardcover edition 9/64, repr. 6/66, 4/70, and 9/74; Paper
edition 9/64, repr. 4/70, 10/71, and 9/74.

A Requiem For Astounding by Alva Rogers

Hardcover edition 9/64, repr. 5/70; Paper edition 7/67,
repr. 9/70 and 3/73.

Issues At Hand by William Atheling, Jr. (James Blish)

First Edition: Hardcover 12/64, repr. 9/70; Paper 7/67,
repr. 9/70.
Second Edition: Hardcover 9/73, repr. 2/74; Paper 9/73.

The Proceedings: Discon edited by Dick Eney

No Hardcover edition (except *); Paper edition 1965.

The Universes of E. E. Smith by Ron Ellick and Bill Evans

Hardcover edition 9/66; Paper edition 9/68, repr. 7/72, 4/74.

Heinlein In Dimension by Alexei Panshin

Hardcover edition 4/68, repr. 7/69, 4/72, and 7/74; Paper
edition 7/69, repr. 1/71, 4/72, and 7/74.

All Our Yesterdays by Harry Warner, Jr.

Hardcover edition 4/69, repr. 3/71; Paper edition 3/71,
repr. 7/72.

More Issues At Hand by William Atheling, Jr.

Hardcover edition 9/70, repr. 7/71 and 2/74; Paper edition
4/72, repr. 2/74.

SF Bibliographies by Robert E. Briney and Edward Wood

No Hardcover edition at all; Paper edition 8/72, repr. 4/73.

Encyclopedia of Science Fiction and Fantasy by Donald H. Tuck

Volume One: Hardcover edition 3/74, repr. 6/76***;
no Paper edition.
Volume Two: Hardcover edition 1/78.

SF In Dimension by Alexei and Cory Panshin

Hardcover edition 12/76; no Paper edition.

NOTES

*Red buckram copies were bound, one for each partner and each author, even if there was no regular hardcover edition. This was not done for **SF Bibliographies**.

**One hundred red buckram bound copies were sold at \$5.00 each.

***The second printing of Volume One is not noted in the text; the gray binding is of a coarser gray than the first printing.



A BULLETIN FROM THE MINISTRY OF TRUTH

by Richard A. Lupoff

Theodore Sturgeon gave us one of our most quoted aphorisms a generation ago, "Sturgeon's Law": Ninety per cent of everything is crud. Sturgeon sure do have a way with words. As my physicist friend Jim Benford says, "Sturgeon's Law is just another way of expressing the normal distribution curve." But instead of getting involved with medians and means and standard deviations and other arcana, Sturgeon put it dramatically and succinctly, and virtually added a phrase to the language.

More recently the same Theodore Sturgeon made another often-cited statement. This time, unfortunately, he made the statement in an informal oral context and nobody thought to write down his precise words, so *this* time around he's constantly paraphrased but never quoted. This time, no new Sturgeon's Law. And more's the pity.

But the essence of the statement is this: All of the new and really interesting science fiction writers are *women* nowadays. In his original statement, Sturgeon excepted James Tiptree Jr. And then when it was revealed that Tiptree was also a woman, *LOCUS* trotted out Sturgeon's statement for recirculation, *sans* exception. Gardner Dozois in turn quoted *LOCUS* in a kind of last-minute, stop-press *post scriptum* to his own excellent little book about Tiptree, a book that Dozois wrote in the assumption that Tiptree was indeed a man.

Still more recently Sturgeon's statement has echoed in a piece by Susan Wood. This time, fortunately, we have a written and hence accurately quotable statement: "One of the things I did this summer [1977] was wander about reading manuscripts, a process which convinced me that all the good new sf of the next few years will be written by women...young women who have actually had to think about being people, about sf, about restructuring societies."

One wonders why people like Sturgeon and Wood make such statements, and why anybody takes them seriously when they do. To answer the second question first, I think there's a kind of *pro homini* factor in the process. Sturgeon's credentials are overwhelming. In a career now spanning almost forty years, he has given us a shelf-full of classics and near-classics ranging from "Killdozer" and "It" to *The Dreaming Jewels*, *More Than Human*, *Venux Plus X* and the marvelous spoof *I, Libertine*, to the recent "Harry's Note" and the forthcoming...well, whatever it is that Sturgeon has forthcoming.

When Sturgeon speaks, people listen. And they should.

Susan Wood is *not* a science fiction writer. But she is an example of that rare breed, a formal academic replete with Ph.D. and tenure, and a sensible human being who makes sense, and a dyed-in-the-wool Hugo-winning TruFan.

When Wood speaks, people listen. And they should.

As for why the likes of Sturgeon and Wood should make the kind of statements they have of late, I think we can discount a certain percentage for good-hearted (and/or fuzzy-headed) intentions, a bit more for noble passion, and then chalk up the remainder to simple trendiness.

The remainder, I suspect, amounting to 80% or thereabouts.

The science fiction community is very trendy. And more often than not, that trendiness is well intentioned, well placed, and does lead to some ultimate benefit, if only marginally efficaciously. And so it was that ten years ago any with-it, hip, now-generation stfnalist had to be conspicuously pro-Civil Rights. It wasn't enough to be pro-Civil Rights, mind you; one had to be very overt about it. Well, that's okay. It didn't do anybody any harm, and it may have done some people some good.

Five years ago one had to be similarly conspicuously Anti-War.

Okay.

Three years ago, Environmental.

Two years ago, Feminist.

Last year, Gay.

Next up: God, I don't know. Of course, I enjoy the slightly bizarre benefits of living in Berkeley, California, and here and in neighboring San Francisco we're a bit ahead of most of the rest of the country in our social concerns. I'll keep my ear to the ground and try and post you on what to expect in the 1980's. But out there in the rest of the country ERA is still limping along with thirty-five ratifications in the dossier and three more to go. Feminism is still in the center ring.

What Susan Wood is doing in her own cause, and what Sturgeon is doing in the role of, I suppose, a FemiSymp, is Making Lists.

You know what Making Lists is. It's a common--almost universal--practice among members of downtrodden groups seeking to improve their status and in the process working to improve their collective self-image. You can go down to your local public library and find books of Great Croatsians of History, Great Lutherans of History, Great Capricorns of History, Great Bald People of History, Great Left-Handed People of History, and so on. If you happen to belong to a group for which a Great People of History has not as yet been compiled, you ought to get out there and begin to compile one such yourself. If you can't afford the time and research involved, you can probably get a foundation grant.

Now I don't really wish to stop anyone from Making Lists. It's a pastime that, like the science fiction community's social trendiness, is at worst fun and harmless and at best conceivably beneficent. Let anyone who wishes pursue his, her or its (Great Asexual Persons of History) campaign for improved self-image through improved group-image: Ethnic, denominational, astrological, hirsute, dextrous, or other.

But in the interest of a little thing called Truth (or at the very least, truth-with-a-lower-case-t), I really do feel called upon to categorize the Sturgeon-Wood thesis in a single word. That word is:

H-O-O-E-Y

Well, maybe I really had a less polite noun in mind, but let's settle for *hooley*, okay? Substitute a more congenial synonym if you have one.

There is no question that a number of interesting and talented women science fiction writers have appeared in recent years. But for one thing the notion that women science fiction writers comprise a new category of writers is complete balderdash, their roster running from Mary Shelley, Mary Griffith, Mary E. Bradley Lane, and Eliza Haywood to Francis Stevens, Clare Winger Harris, Catherine Moore, and Leigh Brackett, and onward to the present.

To be sure, there are any number of new women science fiction writers of some achievement and even greater promise. Thus, Suzy McKee Charnas, Marta Randall, Chelsea Quinn Yarbro, Vonda McIntyre, Pamela Sargent, Lisa Tuttle, Tanith Lee...and two favorites of my own, C. J. Cherryh and Elizabeth Lynn.

For Sturgeon or Wood or anyone else to assert that there are a good many interesting new women science fiction writers would be indisputable. But anyone who maintains, in Susan Wood's words, that "all the good new sf of the next few years will be written by women," has clearly never heard of:

Ed Bryant, Geo. Alec Effinger, Tom Reamy, Howard Waldrop, Steven Utley, Jack Dann, John Varley, George R. R. Martin, Michael Bishop, Gene Wolfe, C. L. Grant, Thomas F. Monteleone, Spider Robinson, John Crowley, George Zebrowski, Eric Vinicoff, Gardner Dozois, Robert Asprin, or Joe Haldeman.

Or, probably, another ten or another hundred names I've never heard of.

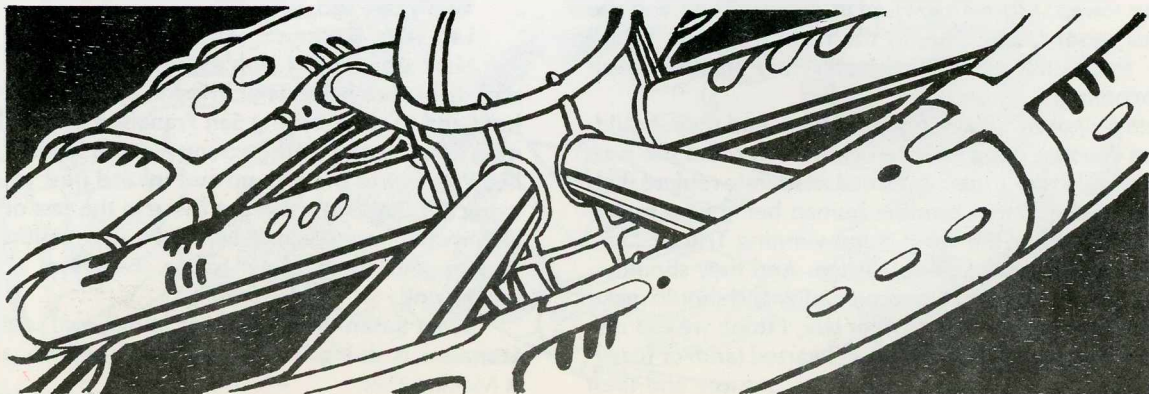
All of which is not to say that all the writers I've cited, regardless of gender, will become major stars. (And, come to think of it, isn't citing science fiction authors by gender silly? Why not make up lists of Great New Blond Science Fiction Writers or Great New Science Fiction Writers With AB Positive Blood?) The whole exercise is somewhat reminiscent of an old Hugo category that was tried out many years ago and then abandoned. That was "Most Promising New Writer." The current John W. Campbell Award is a sort of left-handed revival of the old competition.

In 1956, at the World Science Fiction Convention held in New York, the nominees in the "Most Promising" category were:

Harlan Ellison
Frank Herbert
Robert Silverberg
Henry Still

A pretty impressive list. Herbert had just published *Under Pressure* (aka *Dragon In the Sea* and/or *Twenty-First Century Sub*) in *ASTOUNDING*. Ellison had not appeared yet professionally but he'd made a name for himself in fandom and had started selling to the magazines with both hands. Silverberg was, in his own words, "all over the place." As it happened, Silverberg won that Hugo.

But what about Henry Still?
Who the hell is Henry Still?



Still made his first appearance in the February 1955 *FANTASTIC* with a story called "While My Love Waits." He published a total of eight stories between February '55 and September '56, the magazine issue on sale during the NYCon. Losing that Hugo must have been a blow to Still. He disappeared after that, and didn't pop up again until August 1958 with another short story, and after that only once more, February 1961, with his last sf sale, "Catalyst," also in *FANTASTIC*. There's no way of knowing for sure, but I suspect that those last two appearances were of old, inventory material rather than new efforts.

And after that, Henry Still went back into the big world out there, never to be seen again in the little ghetto of sci-fi. (In fact, somebody told me recently that Henry Still was writing non-fiction books about How Nuclear Energy Is Bad For You or similar matters, surely earning more money and more respect than he would have had he stuck to science fiction.)

Well, shuffle those two lists together and deal 'em out honestly, and you tell me who's got the talent, the discipline, and the staying power. Is Marta Randall going to be tomorrow's star? Or tomorrow's second-rater? Or will she disappear like a latter-day Henry Still? What about Michael Bishop? Lisa Tuttle? John Varley? Elizabeth Lynn? Tom Reamy? Suzy Charnas? C. L. Grant?

Nobody--nobody--nobody--knows.

Not Theodore Sturgeon.

Not Susan Wood.

Not thee, gentle reader.

And not me.

And anybody who can make a statement like, "All the good new sf of the next few years will be written by women..." is talking through her, his, or its hat.

I think maybe I ought to end this essay here. But then, when I was a kid I always had to get that extra drop of milk into my glass, that extra puff of air into the balloon. I spilled a lot of milk and I broke a lot of balloons that way, but it didn't always go wrong, and when it went right that extra sip of milk was sure great, and those lovely big balloons were just super.

So:

Up to this point the Making Lists business has been, as I mentioned, at best useful and at worst harmless. But there's one word that appears in both the Sturgeon paraphrase and the Wood quotation that I find not at all harmless. It's that word "all", and that word "all" strikes me as very--very--dangerous.

There's a great peril in our various socially conscious actions that we will, in the name of correcting an error, commit that very error. The most obvious recent case, not to plumb history for such hideous episodes as the establishment of Bolshevik tyranny in the name of ending Tsarist tyranny, is that of American racism in the name of anti-racism. (E.g., read the Bakke case.)

And here we have, in that "All the good new SF" statement, one of the most blatantly sexist statements imaginable.

Here's a puzzle for you: How can you tell if a science fiction writer is any good?

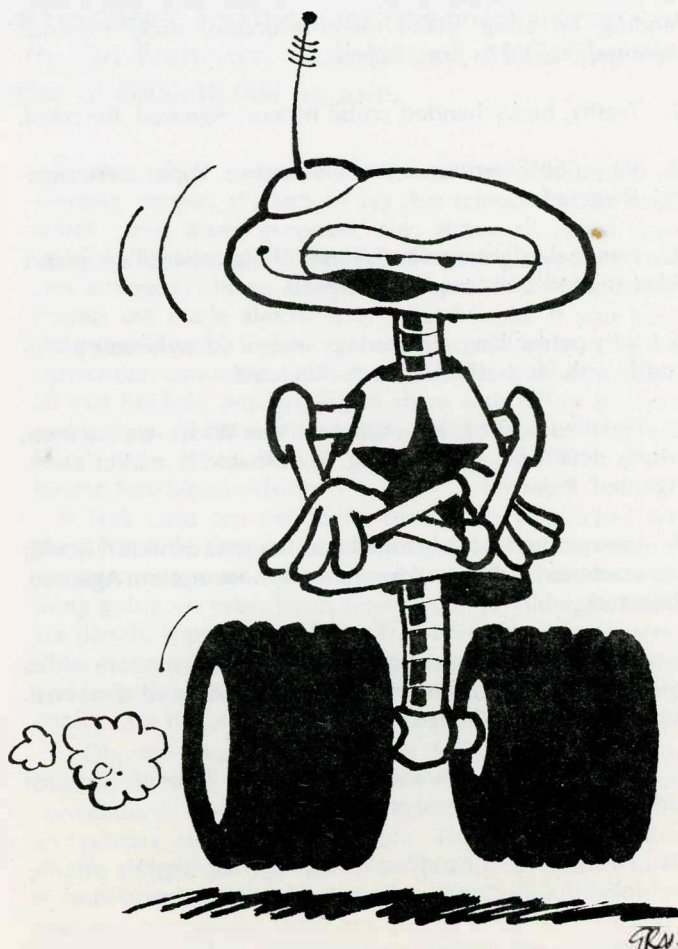
Answer: Look between its legs.

Yes, and if that look reveals that the writer is a man, he is *a priori*, no good. If the writer is a woman—hmm, I guess under the Sturgeon-Wood principle, while all good new SF writers are women, not all new women SF writers are necessarily good. So if the look between the legs reveals that the writer is a woman, we have to proceed to read some of her stories.

So our paradigm can be: If the author is male, he's automatically no good; if the author is female, we'll have to see what she produces.

Wow!

You remember a few pages ago I was talking about the Sturgeon-Wood principle and I said it was a lot of hooey, only a less polite word might be more apt? As a matter of fact hooey is quite inadequate. We'd better go back and substitute that less polite word.



PUTNAM : 1973 : SLUSH PILE : LOG

*Notes from the hopeless wasteland, compiled
and described by*

Debbie Notkin

During the year 1973, Debbie Notkin worked as an editor at Putnam. One of her tasks was to go through the slush pile of unsolicited manuscripts, hoping to find one that might be worth publishing. She was not particularly successful. The following is a compilation of the notes she took on the various manuscripts as she read them. For obvious reasons the names of the authors, and the titles they put on their manuscripts, have been deleted; each MS is given a number and set off by an extra line space in the text. You will note that very few of these are even marginally science fiction or fantasy; nevertheless we are printing it, because we feel that the material is of sufficient interest to the readers. This covers only the first part of her notes, and if we get a bit of positive feedback in the letter column, we will print the rest of it.

— The Editor

1. Novel, fictionalized account of historical event--sub-landing on Long Island. Semi-favorable, slick, fictional. Agented. Passed to Kurt. Rejected.
2. Trashy, heavy-handed crude humor. Agented. Rejected.
3. Very poorly written mystery-suspense. Super-stereotypical. Rejected.
4. Fictionalization drawn from real letter of 1600's England. Almost good but no quite. Rejected.
5. Very patronizing, simplistic primer of deterministic philosophy with illustrative cartoons. Rejected.
6. Detailed story of Saxon Witches (Seax Wica)--well written, overly detailed but fascinating. Publishable if market exists. Agented. Rejected.
7. Interesting, scholarly sociological treatise on the art world; too academic and limited for general consumption. Agented. Rejected.
8. Ridiculously poorly written story of 60's alienation, with a good central character and a lot of untapped potential. Agented. Encouragingly rejected.
9. Very peculiar book about a man on a "crusade" against old parking tickets--most strange--rejected.
10. Nicely written handbook on gift-giving, slightly simplistic, delightful illustrations. Rejected for limited market.
11. Rock 'n roll history/autobiography--useless, poorly written casual, no redeeming social value--rejected.
12. Illiterate, apparently directionless, sent in disconnected installments--rejected--long letter about sending all at once.
13. Sensitive, undirected, not well-written story of crippled-boy/artist and old Jewish aunt--rejected.
14. Attempt at historical novel re Crusades--well-researched, poorly written, over-sensational. Rejected.
15. 1000 pages! of 1980-2000 newspaper clippings. Well written for what they are, but ohmigod how dull at that length. Rejected; personalized letter.
16. 47 page novel (?)--long ramble about one woman's life--first person--totally unremarkable--rejected.
17. Four novel illiterate cycle of the rural deep South. Rejected.
18. Almost! The closest yet! Excellent plot, acceptable characters, too much wandering, sloppy writing. Rejected.
19. First person story of widower and over-developed child--or something--poorly written--no r.s.v.--rejected.
20. Almost right--combination of experiment with children brought up with no human contact/break up of marriage--first person, quite well-written--not unified enough and a bit too self-pitying. Rejected.
21. Juvenile, and juvenile soppy story of a boy and a horse. *My Friend Flicka* by an illiterate Eric Segal. Rejected.
22. First person tale of blighted love with a happy ending. Rejected.
23. Father and son sutobiographies--from *shtetl* to revolution to USA--fairly well-written and interesting but super anti-Communist bias and limited appeal--rejected.
24. Poorly written misery of a middle-class black man. Reject.
25. Very biased, amateurishly written h.s. student power by first person sympathetic teacher (fiction). Rejected.
26. Illustrated, carefully put together contentless juvenile. Rejected.
27. Undistinguished novel, prob. adventure. Rejected.
28. Murder suspense with history of Russia and a love interest thrown in--undistinguished. Rejected.
29. Lives intertwining into mystery. Attempt at strong characterizations fumbled completely. Published author. Rejected.
30. Child's eye view creepy Jew story. Rejected.

Why Star Trek Cons?

I'M SORRY, THERE IS NO BAR

by Andi Shechter

It's taken me some time, but I've finally reached the point where I can admit that I attended Star Trek conventions long before I'd ever heard of science fiction fandom and science fiction conventions--indeed, I can even admit that I've *worked* on Trek cons. I usually hasten to add that I went to see the authors, and never once screamed "Oh, Mr. Spock," or entered a trivia quiz. In fact, I became a con gofer very early on, concentrating on the joys of Security (keeping someone from hitting William Shatner with a cream pie (he missed)) and getting to meet some of the really friendly and warm people involved in Trekdom.

Based on my experience at two Trek cons, (one in Chicago, the other in New York--the New York con later dubbed Riotcon or Fiascon) I joined a Trek con committee in Oakland in 1976, worked on an Oakland con **Space...the Final Frontier 2**, and then became co-chairman of **Space...the Final Frontier 3**, which was held in San Francisco in February, 1977. The two conventions each had attendances on the order of 8000-10,000 people.

My science fiction con experience began more recently, with the 1976 Westercon in Los Angeles. Currently, I'm on the committee for the '79 Westercon as Security Person.

For those of you who have never experienced a Trek convention, bear with me--it is not made of 87,403 screaming teenyboppers with pointy ears who like to mug Nichelle Nichols. Those can't number more than 389. There is, however, much to be learned at a Trek convention--a lot of planning and time go into pleasing a lot of young people, and the cooperation, the people you meet, and the interest of the fans are well worth experiencing. Some solid, reliable nice people have been involved in Trek conventions and have done well by the attendees. Spacecon 3 was good -- the ticket holders were, overall, pleased with what they were offered, there were no major problems, everyone was paid, programming ran relatively smoothly, and people had fun. It was a personally satisfying, if exhausting, end to six months of steady work. My arguments with it can be summed up in one name, and I'm not here to rant (but catch me at the next con with a drink in my hand and I'll tell you *all* about it.

First and foremost, Star Trek conventions, like Star Trek fandom, are youth oriented. Adults both like the show and attend the cons, but we are speaking of the majority of anywhere from 5000 to 10,000 people. It is a bit unnerving to hear an 8-year-old girl tell you she is crazy about William Shatner when she wasn't even alive when he was first seen as Captain Kirk. The committee members' ages may range from 17 to 55, but the audience is, for the most part, 11 to 17 years old. This makes for some interesting situations.

Further, Trek conventions are not primarily aimed at meeting people. It's safe to say that science fiction cons, which serve many purposes, are, above all, social conventions, for seeing old friends and meeting new ones. Trek con attendees almost always come with friends, and new friends are made almost as an afterthought. If you have volunteered to be a gofer (general-purpose assistant to the convention committee), this drastically changes, as you have all that bitching and griping to share with fellow bitches and gripers. ("I haven't been replaced in 9 hours," "My feet hurt," "She yelled at me," "He spit on me," "I'm tired/hoarse/hot/bloody/dying.")

If Trek cons are not social cons, then what the hell are they? Primarily, they are *Function* cons. Star Trek convention programming seems insane to many people--there is something going on every hour. From 8 a.m. to midnight, there are panels, appearances, films, Trek episodes, appearances, slide shows, costume contests, appearances, trivia contests, and individual talks. There is seldom a time when one's only choices are the art show and the Dealer's room.

Oh, the Dealers' room. The dealers at a Trek con, overall, sell more slick overpriced merchandise than at other conventions. There are the commercial models and jewelry and posters, and tribbles, and dolls. There are endless piles of the still photos that the show produced--Spock, Kirk, monsters, women, the ships, the guests, the crew, the producers and executives! There are usually some book dealers, but most of the items for sale are directly connected with Star Trek. The art show is similar, in that most of the art is directly Star Trek connected--pictures of the stars, needle-

point banners and pictures, pillows, clay models, of Spock, Kirk, monsters... Again, there are occasional stand-outs, such as the plexiglass or plastic chess set based on Federation and Klingon characters and ships, or a blown-glass model of the Enterprise, excellently crafted.

Now wait, let's stop rambling. I'll go back to the first point and attempt to proceed logically to the next, if I can find it by then.

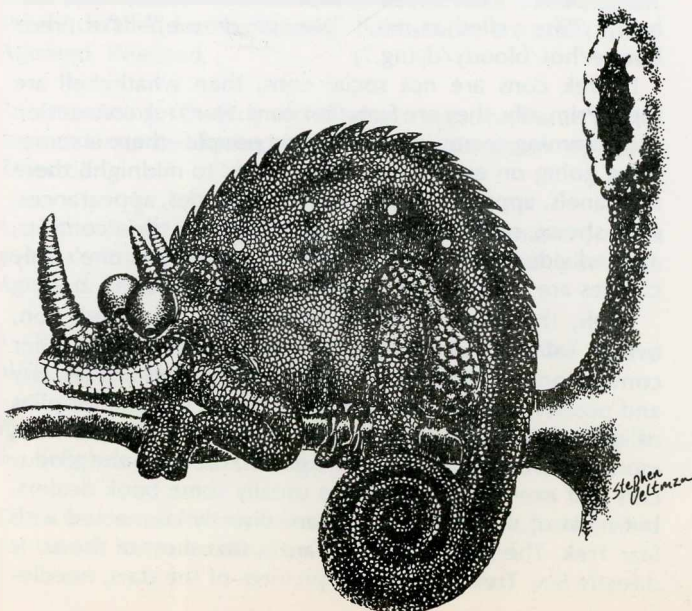
Age range of convention attendees: As I said, the age range of most Trek con people is about 11 to 17. I've seen 5 year old Captain Kirks in costume shows, and I've gotten letters from 80 year old Trekkies. I've seen blind Trekkies--which if you think about it is pretty fantastic. BUT, they are not the drinking, bar-hopping semi-solvent adults of science fiction cons. Even in states where the drinking age is 18, (and I thought California was progressive!) the only time I ever saw Trek fen in bars was at Riotcon when ten of us discovered a bar in Grand Central Station at 2 a.m. There is a lot of self-imposed starvation at a Trek con--what 15 year old can afford a hotel room, admission fee, pictures, posters, jewelry, ears, models and food too? Mind you, I survived two Trek cons on pancakes (cheap and filling), when I was a poor gofer, but at science fiction cons, more of us have the wherewithall to eat--or we have a car to get us to a place we can afford. If Trekkies don't leave the con site it's not because they are content to eat in the coffee shop, drink in the bar and sleep in their rooms--it's that they can't leave! Bus fare? Car? Taxi? "I can't. I just bought a picture of Spock and a model of the Galileo."

Now, since you can't go to the bar--unless you've got the guts to nurse a coke and withstand the bartender's stare--if you want to relax, you can go to your room, yes? Er, well... Again, not all, but many, many Trek fans crash or share rooms. True, we do it at an SF con if we're short on funds, or the place is booked, but most of the time we do not cram 8 in a room. It's that famous game called "Fool the Front Desk." It means (a) only one person--the room's inevitably a single--will have a key, and (b) you can try to hide 5 sleeping bags, 7 duffel bags, and 8 coats in an attempt to fool the housekeeping staff. Sure. Granted, most of this is based on New York City cons, and thus, NYC hotel rates, but it is common practice to cram. And anyway, who needs to sleep?

Fans who have attended Trek cons often have commented on security--teams of bodyguards and gofer squads of over 100. Absurd to consider at, say, Westercon. You will have a few gofers for the art show, the costume contest, and when needed, committee members to act as escorts or liaisons. But bodyguards? Can you see Poul Anderson flanked by 3 bodyguards? Larry Niven escorted by a bereted man with a walkie-talkie down back ways to a panel? Gofers linking arms to prevent fans from mobbing the stage when Bob Silverberg appears? Well... Star Trek stars, are, by their very nature, "stars", television personalities. It's a category unlike any other. Science Fiction writers who choose to attend cons do so because they like the people, are friends with a great many of them, and are themselves fans. At Trek cons we are dealing with actors, fan clubs, autographs on glossy pictures: "Stardom". Shatner has been practically assaulted, not even counting the pie-throwing incident; Takei cannot walk through a lobby without being swallowed by a mob; and while the mob is friendly, usually respectful, nice and agreeable, a mob is still a mob. Yes, kids have knocked on hotel room doors trying to find the actors, yes they have tried to kiss them, give them gifts, date them, invite them home. And these same stars can end up on a stage facing anywhere from 3000 to 8000 people at one time. So you must have strong, convincing cool-headed bodyguards and cooperative, overworked gofers, and you use all of them to run interference. It's not an easy job--tempers flare quickly in a crowd, people get more demanding.

A Trek fan will spend money on Trek trivia--cheap, gaudy, trashy maybe, but everyone else is doing the same thing--it's part of a fandom and it's fun. Trek fans will sit and hear De Forest Kelley answer the same questions for the seventh time (write to me and I'll send you the Seven Most Popular Questions Asked At A Trek Con in a plain envelope--50 cents, no stamps please.) They'll watch "Amok Time" and mouth the dialog; they'll see the blooper reel and holler at the same dumb stunts they've seen 18 times before. They won't drink, will often not eat, often can't carry on a conversation with an author beyond asking which episode he/she wrote and who his/her favorite actor is--in short, they'll act like many neos do.

I miss Trek cons, in a way, which is why I still like to work on gofer squads, and partly why I like working on con committees. Everyone is so obviously enjoying the hell out of themselves. There are few blasé, laid-back Trekkies. Trek cons are very exciting and busy. And while I'm glad I've (almost) reached the stage where I'm not quite as awed by famous people as I used to be, it's still part of me. Trek cons are a good way to reach would-be fans. Watching a neofan, when I was one not so long ago, is great--you relive some of the awe, excitement, thrill of meeting Real Authors, Real Creative People. The first science fiction author I met was Isaac Asimov...at a Trek con about three years ago. I also met Harlan Ellison there--and went out and spent my last couple bucks on a paperback of *Dangerous Visions*. There are neos at SF cons, but they are often so busy trying not to be neos that you miss the enthusiasm. Trek fans don't embarrass as easily, so they get more enthusiastic.



To illustrate some of the things I've been discussing, let's look at Octocon, the charity con held in Santa Rosa, California, October 22-23, 1977. It was a first-time con, by a group of self-admitted amateurs who came through with a fairly successful, friendly convention. Remember those things which seemed out of place? Much of that was derived from the Star Trek cons. For instance:

□ Having an Art Show in a small room up a flight of stairs. Okay, maybe that was plain dumb, but since I saw it happen at a Trek con in Oakland, it signifies amateurism/Trek con to me. Any responsible, experienced science fiction Art Show person knows about stairs, and the Carrying of Heavy Things and all that. Since Art Shows don't involve the primary people of Trek cons, they receive less than full attention.

□ The gofer squad--obviously young, somewhat self-important, but also eager to help, friendly and enjoying the con, even if there wasn't one "star" to meet. The squad was also a fair size, and centrally directed, not small squads for specific purposes. As usual, gofers at this convention, as at every other one, were unpaid, receiving part or all of their membership money back if they worked 4 to 8 hours. Gofers are never paid, and often work are longer than their shifts. Why? A need and desire to be of help, a chance to be in on some of the parties, or decisions, to meet some of the guests, to meet other gofers.

□ Having the events so far away from a bar--while I realize the con hotel was built that way, it would seem that many con com members underestimated the importance of The Bar to attendees.

□ At least one panel ended up discussing Star Trek. It Began with a discussion of writing for movies and ended up as a "what it is/was like to write for Star Trek" panel. Of course this sometimes happens at SF cons, too.

□ The pros attending Octocon, I have been informed, were on A, B, and C lists, which differentiated among those who were given free room, room and board, and room, board, and travel expenses. As Dick Lupoff pointed out to me, pros pay their own way to science fiction cons, unless they are guests of honor, while pros invited to Trek cons are treated as "stars", with star treatment. This can involve first class air fare, a suite in a hotel (or at least a good room), meals, and up to \$5000 or more. This often covers no more than a stage appearance, although those stars with less than top billing, especially George Takei, Jimmy Doohan, Grace Lee Whitney, attend autograph sessions, mingle (much to the distress of their security), visit the dealers' room, and appear on panels. Leonard Nimoy, William Shatner, and De Forest Kelley tend to limit appearances strictly to an hour or two on stage.

□ Autograph lines--while they are admittedly popular, and in no way a bad idea, usually autograph lines and autograph sessions occur at Trek cons, and at SF cons you are left more to your own devices.

I expect that Trek cons are dying out--it's taken too damn long for the show to return, the movie is dead, and many Trekkies are growing out of their enthusiasm. Star Trek

fandom has developed a number of professional Trekkies--those who write Trek books, bad Trek fanzines, dirty Trek fanzines; those who get paid for having been someone's hairdresser or secretary, who appear as "stars" at a convention. Joan Winston, who went from convention organizer to professional Trekkie (co-authoring *Star Trek Lives*) has recently written a book on Trek cons, published by Doubleday. In it, she spends a great deal of time dropping names, having developed a friendship with Shatner who she evidently admires a great deal. While Ms. Winston mentions the crowding at that Chicago Boynton con, she soft-pedals it, never mentioning the legal problems. Her own split with Al Shuster, his later bankruptcy, the tensions, the problems are glossed over. She writes a long, goshwow con report which consists mainly of a list of her dinner companions and a lot of cutesy side comments about how indispensable she was to Shatner. She praises Jaqueline Lichtenberg constantly, and yet says no more about Isaac Asimov than "How neat it is to hear 'Ike' talk about himself." I somehow suspect that this will not be her last book, either.

Both the New York and Chicago conventions were managed, or mismanaged, by Lisa Boynton, whose name is now mud with many Trek convention people, including the "Hole In the Deck Gang" (the informal convention gofer (volunteer) registry, organized by Midwest fan Sharon Ferraro Short), and the Dorsai Irregulars (who hire out as convention security, usually in the Midwest). Ms. Boynton attained notoriety among many Trek fans by running two conventions at which she was conspicuous by her absence. As a result of the New York convention she was saught by legal authorities on charges of fraud. Either Lisa Boynton or Ticketron or both neglected to cut off ticket sales at some maximum number; as a result, that Saturday afternoon, fans were still buying tickets to a sold-out convention. Estimates of attendance, which had been planned for 8000 to 10,000, reached 15,000 to 18,000. Tempers were short, and the situation was as close to riot as can be. The only way gofers were able to get around at all was to remove all signs of authority (badges, sashes) and sneak out side doors. I was in the main ballroom that day, and was often unable to find anyone in authority. When people began complaining, demanding a chair, satisfaction, stars, the members of the convention committee locked themselves in the con suite.

It was at this same convention that a publicity-seeking news reporter paid a young man to throw a pie at William Shatner, inflaming an already tense situation.

Convention workers have claimed that Ms. Boynton fudged on paying some of the contracted salaries, including those of the Dorsai Irregulars. The convention gofers worked far more hours than they had originally agreed to work, and in Chicago were given back only their membership fees and partial payments on their rooms. (The Dorsai later donated some of their payment to the gofer squad.)

I grow more suspicious of Trek cons--they've come a long way since they were a small gathering of fans (sound familiar?), and I don't trust the professional slick entrepreneur touch of those looking to make lots of money off honest fans. But damn, I had fun along the way.



Future issues will have more of the same, and, of course, more that is different. The guideline I use is simple and efficient: I try to find articles that I would like to read, should I find them in some other magazine. I know that this sounds ridiculously naive, but I think it's worth a try. I've mentioned some of my plans in various flyers and ads, and I might as well talk about some of the things I expect you to see fairly soon. We'll have a series of articles by Jeff Pimper on SF and fantasy war-gaming. Jeff Hecht is writing an article on the experience of writing an article (is there an echo in here?) for *ANALOG*. Jerry Jacks insists he'll finish his three naughty stories really soon. Richard Dutcher's article on the socioeconomics of Suzy McKee Charnas will be worth waiting for, even if we have to get Tezra Raitan to type it for him. Jim Trosper may finish analyzing Delany's *Tides of Lust*. Linda McAllister is hard at work on the Ballantine Adult Fantasy Series. We should have another profile on a specialty science fiction publisher. I have positive guarantee promises from Dan Oakes, Chelsea Quinn Yarbro, George Clayton Johnson, and Alva Rogers, and definite positive maybes from Dave Nee, Jack Rems, Paul Novitski, and R. K. Weiner.

Wow! How can I top that?

Send your money in now, before I become so impressed with the magazine I tell the Publisher to raise the price.

COMMENTS FROM THE ART EDITOR

I stand second to no man in my praise for the efforts of our Publisher to find a format which can do justice to the fine artwork being created by the professional and amateur SF and fantasy artists of today. In many ways it could be said that we are entering a new golden age of illustration. I will do my best to see that the art in this magazine is presented in the best possible way. Material is, as always, solicited, but please write first to the editorial offices so that we can make arrangements and discuss details. Next year, four-color covers! Full-color interiors! I hope.

Now, for a moment, a return to reality. The front back covers of this issue, and some interior illos, are the work of Don Simpson. Don has been drawing for SF fandom for quite some time. In all those years he has not won the Hugo for best fan artist. There are many deserving artists in the SF field, and there is only one Hugo a year. Some of us think it is time that Don won one of them. I don't want to call it a conspiracy, and I don't want to call it a movement; but I do want to call your attention to a fine, fine artist who merits more notice than he has received.

A FINAL WORD FROM THE PRINCIPAL BACKER

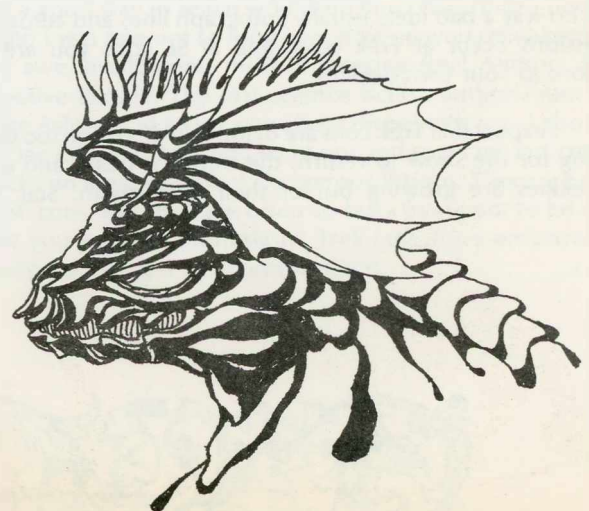
When the Editor and Publisher came hat in hand to me last year, with their scheme for a typeset, offset-printed fanzine to be called *PRETENTIOUS SCIENCE FICTION QUARTERLY*, my first impulse was to look for the men with the white suits and butterfly nets who would be, I was sure, not far behind.

Sweet reason prevailed, however, and soon I had caught the sense of urgency, the sense of potential, the sense of drugged fantasy that compelled them into this madness. My money has been put down on the line, and every week I watch as my wallet grows thinner. (Does that work? I'll have to ask the Editor. It's his job to keep the metaphors unmixed.)

It is not my function to write for your benefit; the hundreds of poverty-stunted scribes who populate these journals will do it for me. It is my place, rather, to watch the income and the outgo (let me assure you now that "declining balance" does not describe a reluctant gymnast.) If you have gotten this issue as a free sample of some kind, kindly repay the favor by taking out a subscription. If you have bought it at a newsstand, take out a subscription. If you have subscribed, extend the length of your subscription. If you don't want to subscribe, then send us a free-will offering. I guarantee that we are not a non-profit operation, and the money donated will absolutely not be deductible on your federal and state income tax forms.

If you have something to advertise, then maybe you should advertise it here; I can say no more, lest I risk my amateur standing. Should the rules on this change, then would be able to stand up and yell out at the top of my lungs, "Send for our ad rate sheet!" But since I am not, as of the most recent interpretation, allowed to do this, why then so I shall not.

Let me leave you with this one last thought: As we go on into the future, you must remember that it is just as important to me that I get your money as it is that you not get mine.



P*S*F*Q IS LOOKING FOR A FEW GOOD ARTICLES

Why Shouldn't You Be the One To Write Them ?

Finding Lost Cities and Losing Them Again
Lines of Power--Energy As A Theme In SF
The Novels of Philip K. Dick
Suitcase Bombs, Terrorist Tactics, and the
Semi-Rural Society
Technology Without Hardware
Subways of the Gods
Dianetics Cures Campbell's Sinusitis
The Ultimate Ultimate Computer
Real Magic: PEI Bonewits vs. Larry Niven vs. L. S. de Camp
Anson MacDonald Is Living in Brooklyn
The Ballantine Adult Fantasy Series
Who Is Christopher Stasheff?
Goodbye Perry Rhodan
"Publish Or Perish"--Science Fiction Studies Studied
When Conan Smiles
Today Magazines--Tomorrow What?
Being and Nothingness In the Works of Barry Malzberg
Fritz Leiber and 101 Ways to Skin a Kat
Charmed, I'm Sure, But Perhaps a Little Strange
The Apotheosis of R. A. Lafferty
Unusual Ways to Enlarge Your SF Collection
Money Isn't Everything: The Rise of the Semi-Pro Fanzines
Food of the Gods, or, After Hamburgers, What?
Open the Pod Bay Door, Hal; and What To Do When
He Doesn't
Scientific Ecofiction: Don't Drink the Air
Beyond Velikovsky

The Bedsheet ANALOGS: What Really Happened?
Love With the Proper Alien
Delany's *Tides of Lust*; Lancer; Essex House
Paperback Cover Artists--Why Such Poor Recognition
From the Publishers? (Ex. ACE)
An Interview With Michael Bishop
David McDaniel's Unpublished UNCLE Novel--*The
Final Affair*
Whatever Happened to Mel Korshak?
THX-1138--A Comparison of the Versions As Edited By
Lucas and Warner Bros.
Poul Anderson and the Capitalist Imperative
Robert Anton Wilson's *The Sex Magicians* and How It Fits
Into the *Illuminatus* Cosmos
Confessions of a Bookseller
Fantasy/Science Fiction: The Blurry Border Dissolves Away
Who Rules the L5 Colony? Who Pays the Salaries?
The Strange Death of the Corpse of WEIRD TALES
The New Copyright Law
Lancer: Checklist, History, Memorial
Why Did SFWA Have ACE Audited?
Whatever Happened to Murray Leinster?
Does Delany's *DHALGREN* Take Place Inside the
Bellona Club?
History of SFWA Actions Against GALAXY, Ultimate, Health
Knowledge and Similar
Who Buys the GOR Books, and Why?
British Fantasy and SF Cover Artists
The Gregg Press and Similar Reprint Series: How Well Are
They Doing? How Are Titles Chosen?
Leslie Fiedler, Troublemaker
Great Missing Magazine Issues--The Ones That *Almost*
Got Distributed
Wage Slaves of GOR: Economic Considerations
1984--Six Years and Counting
Pocket Calculators of Doom
Unidentified Thinking Objects
Logan's Ruin
Attack of the Spatial Singularities
Beyond the Welfare State
Spawn of the Sub-Intelligence



P*S*F*Q PERSONALITIES

Who Are These People, Anyway?

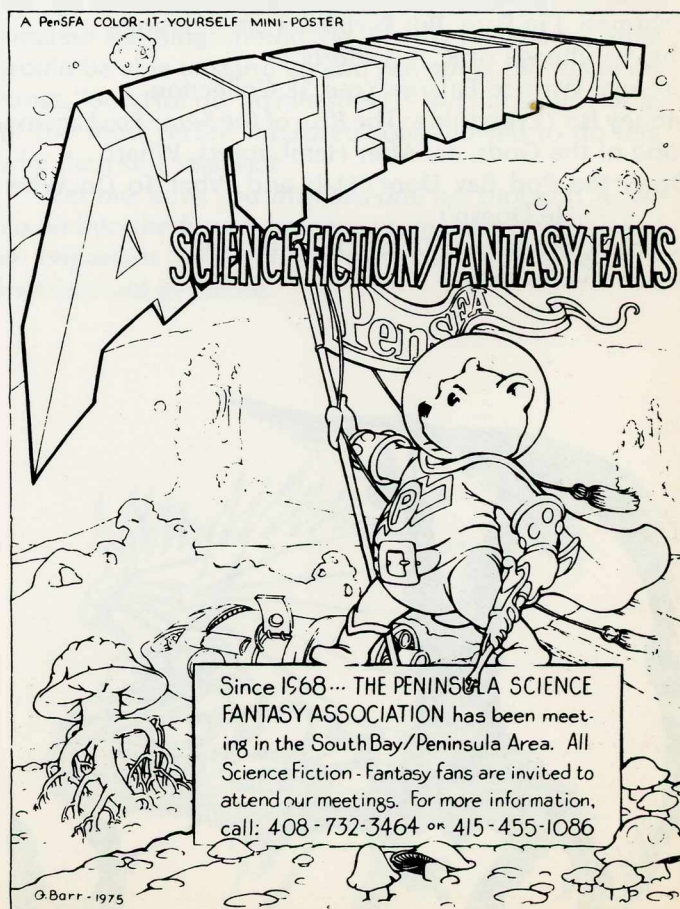
MICHAEL WARD, the Editor and Publisher and everything else on this magazine, works days as an engineer at Hewlett-Packard and far, far too many nights and weekends on this magazine. He is living proof of the old axiom that the only thing worse than never having your dream come true is to have it come true. Some years ago he edited and published a fanzine called WINNIE, which was a critical success and folded. **DON SIMPSON** has been a science fiction and fantasy artist for a number of years. His sculptures and model constructs are like nothing else in this universe. The Smithsonian has a Simpson model of an alien space probe (a probe by the aliens to our solar system) on permanent display. **RICHARD A. LUPOFF** is the author of many science fiction and fantasy novels (most recently *Lisa Kane, Sword of the Demon*, and *The Return of Skull-Face*,) and books on nostalgia, Edgar Rice Burroughs, Barsoom, and other subjects too well-known to mention. **ANDI SHECHTER** is a nexial point in Bay Area fandom. She found time last year to be on two Star Trek convention committees; she also found time last year to marry Alva Rogers. Now she finds time to tell us what was going on with the conventions. **GRANT CANFIELD** is an architect by day, a cartoonist (with sales to SAT. EVE. POST and other slick magazines) by night, and an artist and illustrator in his spare time. Thank you, Grant. (He promised to do next issue's cover, and I don't want him forgetting about it. When will you have it ready?) **DEBBIE NOTKIN**, one third of the Other Change of Hobbit, (nee Portable Bookstore) is another mainstay of Bay Area fandom. During 1973 she was an editor at Putnam; now in 1978 she Spills the Beans. **EDWARD WOOD** lives in Connecticut with his wife JoAnn, his son Larry, and 500,000 books and magazines. He has been a science fiction collector and bibliographer for many years, and was one of the founders of ADVENT : PUBLISHERS, one of the most successful of the specialty presses. **JAMES SHULL** has had artwork and illustrations in thousands and even hundreds of magazines. When last heard from he was heading for a conference in Singapore.

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