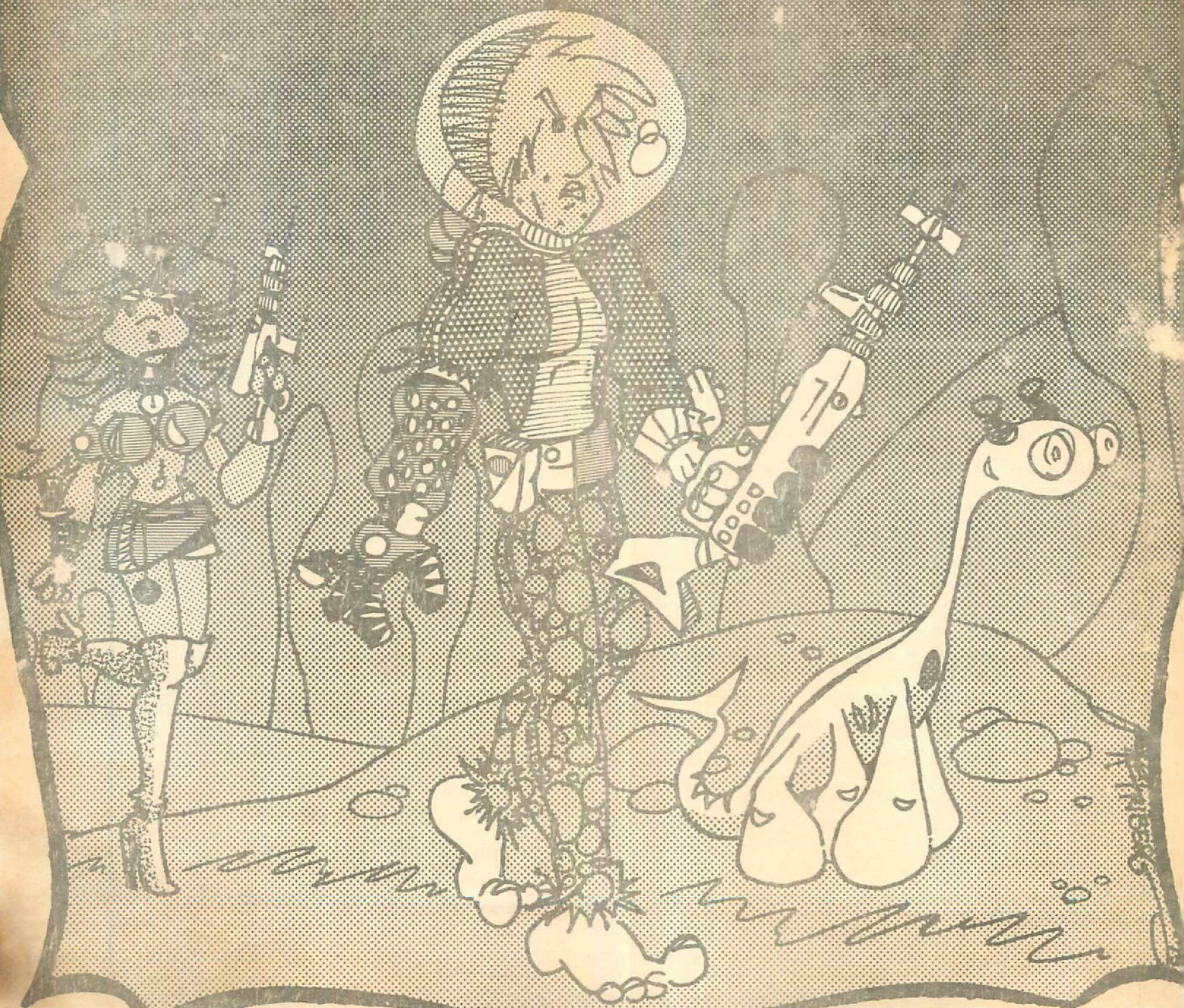
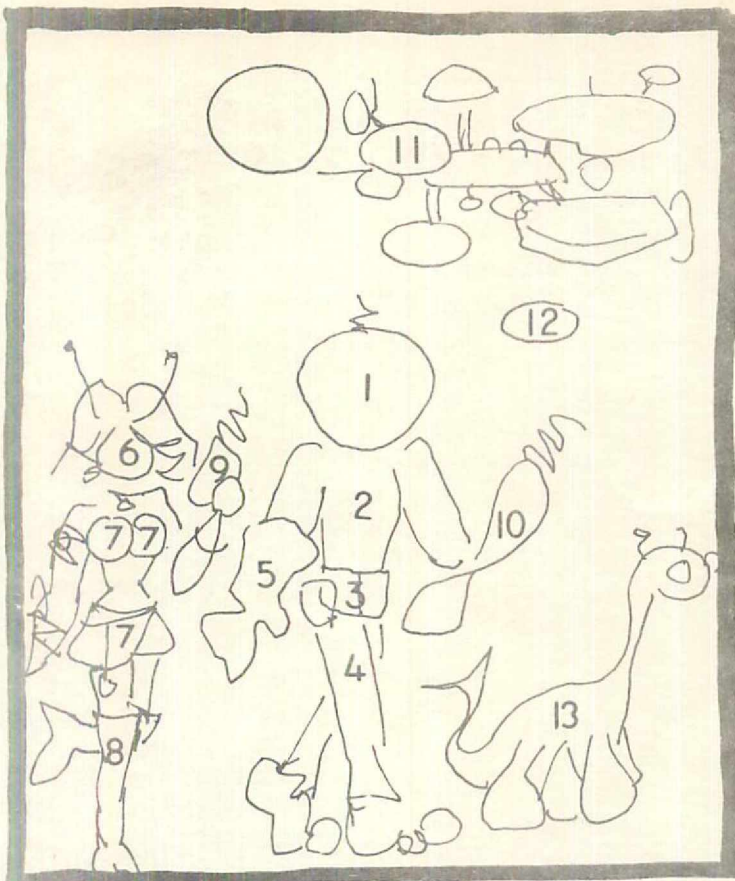


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THIS ISSUE'S COVER MODELS — PARKER AND KATHY



KATHY STARRED IN A BIG TV SHOW A WHILE AGO WITH A TEENAGE SINGING IDOL AND HASN'T BEEN HEARD FROM SINCE.



PARKER GOES TO SCHOOL AND IS VERY POPULAR WITH BOYS.

THE PROPER BOSKONIAN 18

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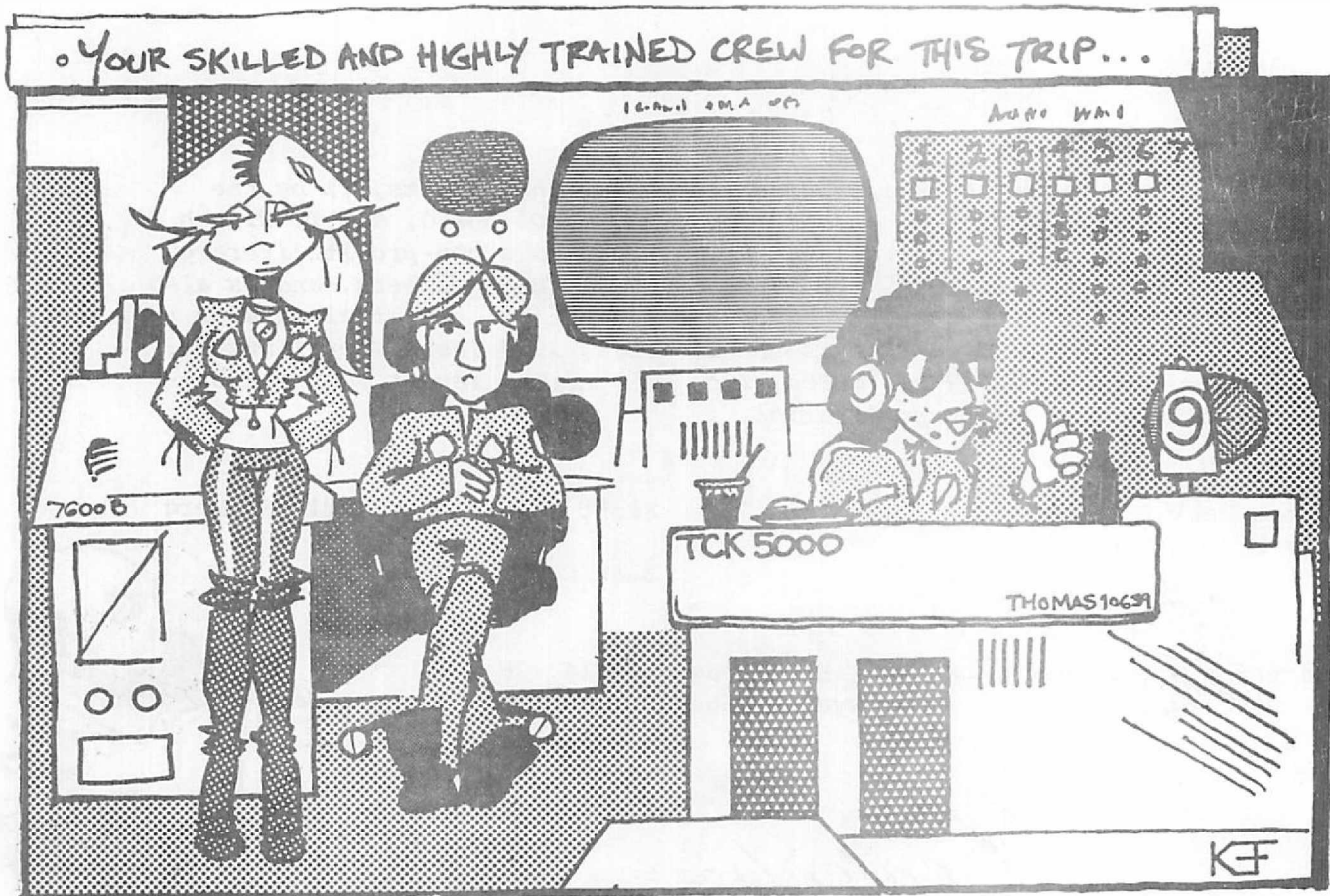
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The Editor would like to give Special Thanks to: Richard Harter, Mary Cole, Karl Friberg, Mike Blake, and Sean Dwyer.

"The Voyages of Arthur" was originally published in APA:NESFA.

PROPER BOSKONIAN



ANDERSON, MARK: MY WORDS (A FIRST DRAFT OF NEXT ISSUE'S EDITORIAL).

Welcome to Proper Boskonian #18. Before it becomes too evident, I should confess that I have never edited a fanzine before, much less the Quaterly Publication of a chartered Corporation. Since I didn't know much about fanzines when I started work on this issue, I appealed to NESFA for help. It is a credit to this fine organization that they sent me exactly what was needed to obtain an understanding of fan publications -- *The World of Fanzines*, by Dr. Frederic Wertham. This book proved invaluable, and is indirectly responsible for why this issue turned out the way it did.

Successful fanzines share one of the following characteristics: they either have a dominant, charismatic editorial presence, or have a theme under which all the articles are unified. For this editor, there really was no choice: PB must have a Theme, or find itself without even a chance of winning a Hugo Award next year (to hedge my bet, I'm printing this issue by offset).

So then, the theme for this issue of PB is "Life". Because this is such an important topic, deserving of thorough coverage, it will probably be next issue's theme as well. All the pieces in this issue address and belong to it, including our Special Tribute to Richard Harter. Enjoy, and reflect.

James Mark Anderson

TANITH LEE CHEATS!

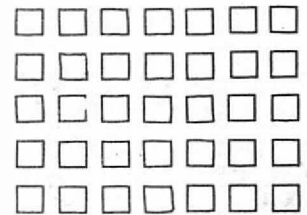
Suford Lewis

Don't read this essay if you haven't read Tanith Lee's *The Electric Forest* (DAW Books, 1979); not because the plot is revealed, but because the piece won't make any sense if you haven't read the book.

The plot is convoluted and the protagonist shallow, because *The Electric Forest* is "really" the report of a government research project. It is a well designed, well-carried-out project by good, competent people, but it's still an experiment, not life. For this reason, the epilogue "Post-Screening Sonogram" has more drama than the rest of the novel. Of course, since it is a novel rather than a real project report, the reader expects the protagonist and the most important character of the opposite sex to bond. This makes the revealed true relationship between them in the epilogue very satisfying, but sounds a discord throughout the rest of the narrative.

In the experiment, and for the purposes of the experiment, all the principle characters have flawed or evil motives, and things work out awkwardly and by chance. This is not what we want or expect in a novel (at least not an SF novel, not me). We want justice to triumph, and the ugly duckling to be a swan, and the heroine to be saved by the prince, or vice versa. Well, within the experiment, none of that happens. Then POW!! in the epilogue it all happens. In the experiment, good triumphs to the extent it does by seeming chance -- because Christophine was not thorough enough about killing Magda and Claudio. What is Magda's triumphal reward? Wealth, beauty, and a place in society to constantly contradict her expectations of loathing and contempt, the product of a personality crippled by never knowing love or respect. Yechh.

The experiment sought to verify that someone like Magda would bond to another transferee more strongly than to her double. Even though a self-bond would exist with the double, the transferee's actual self is not the double's twin; the original crippled body is the actual self. Thus, an even stronger like-to-like bond would form with another transferee from another crippled body. That is where companionship and understanding could start, not with one of the flawless beautiful people. Magda even sees all these as uninterestingly flawless, characterless. She is not interested in them.



Tanith Lee does the Who-is-really-who psychological narrative very well. Just as in *The Birthgrave*, I was carried along, fascinated by the world and the protagonist -- in spite of being irritated by her. That the protagonist, the viewpoint character, should be self-deceived is a violation of one of the unwritten rules of SF. SF-world building requires the viewpoint character to be a clear channel for information about the world, or at least to be obvious about the biases introduced (as when current society is satirized by showing a contemporary's reaction to a future society). The biases form a commentary, they don't filter the events or physical descriptions.

But Tanith Lee manages to build her worlds anyhow. She carefully limits the viewpoint, so she tells you enough without giving the trick away. The key deception in both *The Electric Forest* and *The Birthgrave* is the true identity of the protagonist and certain important characteristics of the people around her. In both novels, these deceptions are an important component of the world Lee has built. When they are peeled away, the world (and the protagonist) are dramatically revealed. Since what Lee is writing about is How-Things-Are instead of What-Happens, she needs a trick like this for the narrative drama. It's a tough trick to pull off.

In *The Electric Forest*, Magda misperceives the other people because of the experiment and because, as Magda, she can only form a love-hate bond with Claudio. She has to identify with his cause (without even being too clear as to what it is) because the only relationship she has with anyone is with him. However, she has no commonality with him until she discovers that he, too, is a transferee.

In *The Birthgrave*, the protagonist misperceives every strong male figure she meets because of her hypnotic domination by a fanatic priest as a child. She expects every other strong male to be, like the priest, a Svengali-like savior from "The Evil One". She misperceives herself because she both believes and doesn't believe the priest's teaching: she believes that she is hideously ugly, but not that she is the Evil One.

In both novels the plot is resolved by the intrusion of things previously outside the narrative. In *The Birthgrave*, Karrakaz pulls down a spaceship out of the void to tell her who she is. In *The Electric Forest*, the experiment comes to an end and is revealed as an experiment. If the hidden trick were not so integral a part of the story, I could call it a *deus ex machina*. I rebel against calling it a widening of focus; it is too abrupt and jarring. On the other hand, it is purposely abrupt and jarring ... and dramatic. Tanith Lee is doing it on purpose! Not only that, I don't see how else she could do it. And that's totally unfair!

Did I like *The Electric Forest*? Well ... no. I liked the epilogue. I thought it was beautiful, touching, and heroic. However, the epilogue needed the rest of the book to be meaningful ... so don't ask me if I liked it. I feel very grumpy about it, and am going off to sulk.



Richard Harter ----

The Man, The Myth, &

The Magic ----



In May, 1979, the New England Science Fiction Association stunned a sleeping world by electing Richard Harter as their leader. Shapers of Fannish Opinion were unanimous in their division over the significance of this choice. Some felt that NESFA was simply putting into effect the underlying principles of Science Fiction, through thinking the unthinkable and doing the undoable. Others felt that, given Mr. Harter's gaunt, sinister appearance (including the full beard and set facial expression found so often among religious fanatics), NESFA might be turning away from the cold, impersonal world of 20th Century technology for the unique

charm and quaint interpersonal touches of the late Middle Ages. PB felt that it was high time to pay tribute to this man who is our President, and hopes that he appreciates it.

No effort was spared to verify the Richard Harter Story. Under the Freedom of Information Act, PB obtained his entire military record (two paragraphs, plus a list of demerits), and learned that Harter's oft-repeated claim of working with radar while in the Marines is true. "I assigned Pvt. Harter to the #3 radar-range, because the dish-water detail was too complex," recalls Sgt. Sam 'Attaboy' Fox. "Harter was deeply influenced by the war movies he had seen, making only Chinese food and insisting upon being called 'Cookie'. His hot&sour dishes just missed the mark - they were always warm & fetid."

Of course, some mention should be made of Harter's fanzine, Personal Notes. JMA



THIS is supposed to be a short article about Richard Harter. It will be, since Richard has been away from the parental home for more than half his lifetime, and the separating miles have a way of obscuring personalities.

On a quantitative basis, Richard is Number One son (he is the only son); quality is still out for consideration, but it appears to be in the top ten percentile. He is dutiful, according to the NESFA *Instant Message*. He is considerate, as testified to by his concern for one black-and-white cat and J. Mark Anderson. And Richard surely must be intelligent. After all, he chose a family which provided him with three remarkable sisters. Their comments follow:

From Doris Lynn Sisson: Cavorting through childhood with brother Richard was an experience unto itself, somewhat akin in excitement to playing with a petrified log. His recollection of our sibling relationship was recorded in a diary discovered some years ago, which demonstrated a decided flair for succinctness. For one entire year, the following entry appeared on each page: Doris was a snot today. It is cheering to know that, despite this mucous affront at a tender age, he turned out to be a splendid person who needs to be reminded occasionally that Freckles was *my* horse.

From Nanci Adams: I would love to participate in my brother's roast, but I never do my turkey until Thanksgiving.

From Lois Harter: Last night at work, I was eating some salted peanuts which a friend had brought for me. Soon, I had a large pile of discarded shells, and this morning I had a stomach-ache. Brother Richard used to consume vast quantities of these sam goodies while staying up late into the night, surrounded by reams of papers and books. Perhaps that explains why, when I think of him, "nuts" comes to mind. At least I don't get a stomach-ache...

Sincerely, June Harter



WHEN Mark Anderson asked me to write something about Richard I foolishly agreed, so here we are. Well, you can't live with someone for, good grief, four years is it? without having SOMETHING to say about him (or so I would have thought until I sat down to write this!)

OK. What is Richard Harter really like? I get asked that frequently. Mostly by Mark Anderson. Richard is 42 now, tall, balding on top with otherwise longish brown hair and a full beard (we've discussed the fact that he and I have, probably, equal areas of hair and skin on our heads, just distributed differently.) But you know all that. He's extremely intelligent, can be charming and witty if he sets his mind to it, and has a delightful sense of the absurd. This latter rears itself, for example, in a series of stories I'm told about George, Sam, and Ethelbert, three little aardvarks. Richard has a thing about aardvarks. And pangolins. And sheep, but that's best not discussed here. Anyway, he tells amusing stories full of dreadful puns.

Richard has a considerable knowledge and appreciation of wine. For some reason, this does not stop him from sampling an occasional Algerian or Chilean wine. We found one once that really tasted better in plastic glasses than in crystal. His acquaintance with the people at Cave Atlantique has resulted in our attending an occasional wine-tasting; he maintains a substantial wine-cellar in the basement.

Which brings me to the subject of lodgings. Richard lived in Cambridge for a good many years, eight of which were at 5 Chauncy St. near Harvard Square. At that location he had the distinction of having lived in the building longer than its owner.

In the summer of 1976 Richard bought his current two family house in Concord at my admitted urging. In retrospect this seems to have been a good idea. However, for some time thereafter the point was debatable as we renovated both the upstairs and downstairs. Since he is currently working at Lincoln Labs in the next town, Concord has proved convenient for him. Richard has even been known to bike to work, taking his life in his hands on Route 2A.

But these are superficial things. What of the man behind the myth? Living with someone causes an inevitable deadening of sensitivity it seems. Yet I am continually impressed with Richard's insight into people and situations. This is not something that is always evident because he is analytical and, hence, often quiet. A modest man, sometimes a self-conscious man who does not push his own advantages, Richard can be surprising. He can approach problems from perspectives and with an objectivity others lack. Enough.

Richard thinks of himself as a mathematician. Not that anyone would argue with that! He's quite happy making gobs of money as a consultant to Lincoln Labs and, occasionally, to BBN in Cambridge. He has a stretch of time in his past which was spent as a Marine. This is a constant source of amazement to people who've just met him. In fact, it's a source of amazement to many of us who've known him for years. Richard as a Marine is a mind-blowing thing to visualize. But those who've seen photos of Richard without his beard know anything is possible.

Richard also considers himself largely a self-educated man. Since most of his formal education was in math, he tends to read voraciously and omnivorously in a misguided attempt to compensate for lacking a "liberal arts" background. In truth he is better and more widely read than most liberal arts types, and certainly more so than the vast majority of people in the computer field. Which makes finding storage space for books a problem, but one with which you are all too familiar if I reckon my audience correctly.

And that leads me to NESFA. Well, it leads Richard to NESFA, anyway. He goes back ages to the days of Tony Lewis at MIT and all that. Though Richard is not a "joiner" in most circumstances, he has a history of sticking by NESFA through its good times and its little problems.

As I write this he's sitting across the room eating toast, cottage cheese and black coffee. Richard eats terrible things -- like tons of saltine crackers, lots of butter and peanut-butter. Oceans of black coffee. And popcorn. Other than that, he's not given to sweets and does enjoy real, honest-to-God, good food of almost any sort. He does a mean fried chicken and an outstanding hot and sour soup. In the main, he doesn't care to cook, though.

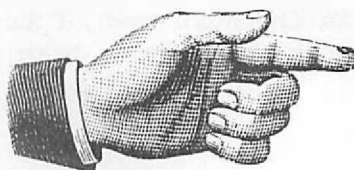
Much like the absent minded professor he resembles at times, Richard tends to be (let's not mince words) a slob. This is not particularly perjorative, merely a statement of the facts for the record. His friends have become accustomed to it and view it as a harmless eccentricity.

Speaking of eccentricities, Richard refuses to wear blue jeans. Something about refusing to "ape the working classes" or some such.

So the general picture I'm painting is one of a gentle, sensitive soul, well read, intelligent, eccentric in his habits, friends, and sense of humor. Except when he punches people, which isn't often.



Mike Gilbert



etched and drawn from
life by a man who's
seen it all...

and who wants to make
something out of what
I've seen...?

RICHARD
HARTER

the Man



the MYTH



THE Magic



THE
Man



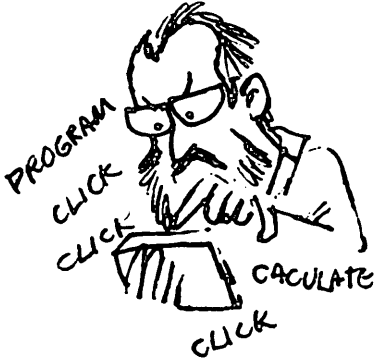
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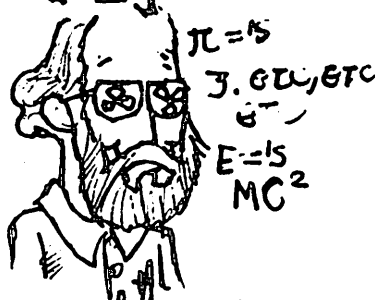
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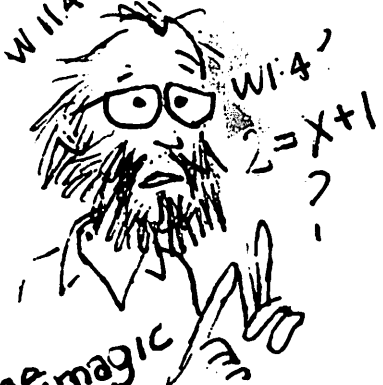
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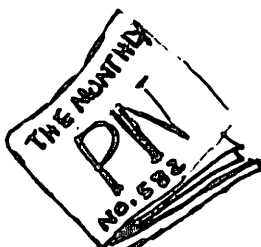
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THE 13 CRIMES OF SCIENCE FICTION
edited by Isaac Asimov, Martin Harry
Greenberg, and Charles G. Waugh.
Doubleday, 455 pp., \$12.50

Reviewed by Chip Hitchcock

The trouble with many of the recent "theme" anthologies is that enough themes have already been used so that new anthologizers have to strain their definitions to put such a book together. That's the biggest problem with *The 13 Crimes of Science Fiction*; the editors define "the thirteen classic kinds of mystery story" and then try to fit a story into each category. The results will be dissapointing for any academic type trying to build a course around this anthology (a reasonable possibility, since Greenburg in particular has produced several collections which were blatant textbooks, complete with questions for the student and suggestions for the teacher, and very little material that doesn't seem somehow slanted toward the textbook market). Not being a Mystery fan, I can't address the accuracy or completeness of the list of categories, but I can see that the stories frequently don't fit their given labels very well.

This is a shame, since this is certainly one of the better anthologies that I've seen recently. It opens with Tom Reamy's "The Detweiler Boy" -- not one of his best works, but still very good reading. Randall Garrett contributes "The Ipswich Phial"; like all his Lord Darcy stories, it has a horribly punning title. The weakness of the classifications is already evident; Reamy's is labeled "Hard-Boiled Detective", which is not only a poor description, but also not an exclusive category, while Garrett's, which requires neither telepathy nor clairvoyance, is marked "Psychic Detective". This is at best a very minor Mystery category (or at least in fiction; bookstores and newsstands are overrun with "true" psychic experience books). My favorites from among the other 11 stories were "Second Game" by Charles De Vet and Katherine Maclean (a "Spy Story"), and "Time in Advance" by William Tenn (on "Punishment"). They both have very neat turned-around endings.

The other stories are Avram Davidson's "The Ceaseless Stone", Jack Vance's "Coup de Grace" (one of the Magnus Ridolph stories), "The Green Car", by William F. Temple (more a monster menace story than the claimed "Why-Done-It"), Philip K. Dick's "War Game", Asimov's "The Singing Bell" (with Wendell Urth), Niven's "ARM",



"Mouthpiece", by Edward Wellen, "Time Exposure", by Wilson Tucker, and "How-2" by Clifford Simak. All of these are by people known as SF writers, mostly well-known and very good ones. Stories fitting better into the Mystery categories might have been found by going further afield, but it's doubtful that the quality of the stories would have been improved as a result. There's no one story I'd call outstanding, but many good ones and, for a recent theme anthology, a very low number of clunkers. Even the Temple and Wellen pieces are interesting, if not up to the standard of the better known authors.

I notice one interesting hole from the acknowledgements: the original publication dates of the stories are equally balanced between the two periods 1954-1959, and 1971-1977, with nothing from the Sixties. I'm also wondering about the degree of Asimov's participation in this anthology, since another publisher, Davis, is quite frankly using his name and editorials without expecting more active participation, but that's a minor quibble against an otherwise good book.

THE SPIRIT OF DORSAI by Gordon R. Dickson. Ace Books, 288 pp., \$5.95 Illustrated by Fernandez.

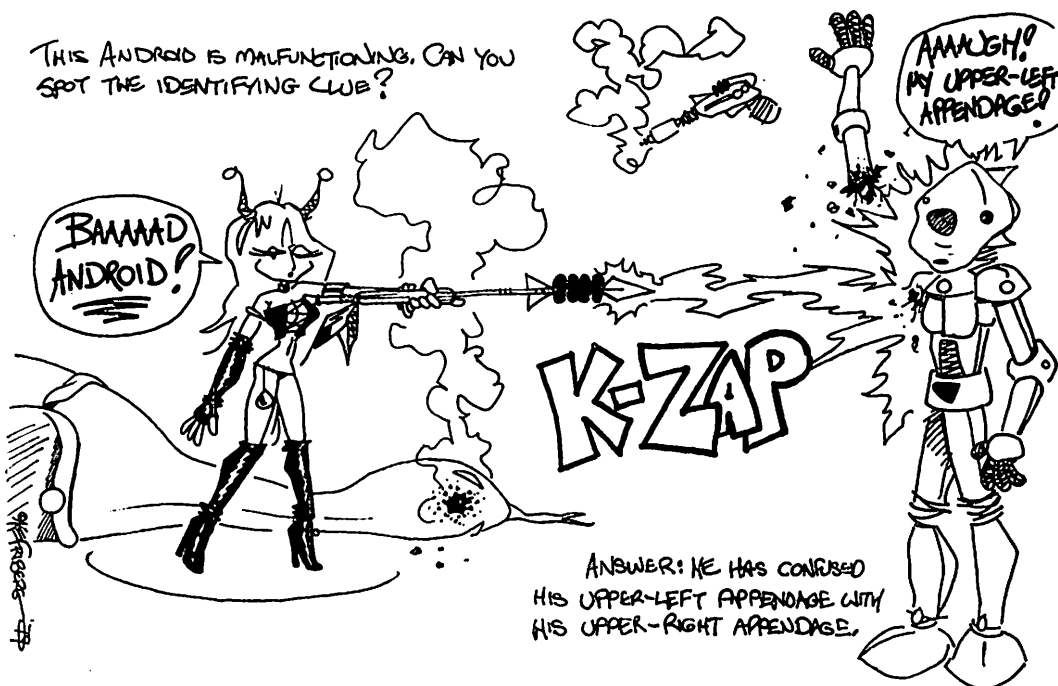
Reviewed by Gail Hormats

In 1959, Gordon R. Dickson published "Dorsai". That was the first of his Childe Cycle stories. Over the years, he has added to those writings with *Soldier*, *Ask Not*, *Necromancer*, and *Tactics of Mistake*. He has also added to the Cycle with (what he terms) "illuminations", short stories or novelettes set in the Dorsai universe dealing with events relating to, but not part of, the main cycle. *The Spirit of Dorsai* is two illuminations, tied together by the conversations of Hal Mayne and the third Amanda Morgan.

Divided into five sections, the first and third sections lead you into the two stories, while the fifth is a tantalizing peek at what the future holds in store for the Childe Cycle. The second section, "Amanda Morgan", contains the long-awaited details of the defense of The Dorsai as mentioned in *Tactics of Mistake*. The fourth section tells of the death of Kensie Graeme and Ian's "revenge", actions that are referred to in both *Soldier*, *Ask Not* and *Dorsai*!

It is clear why these two stories are illuminations. Though they stand as separate stories on their own, they tie so closely to the main books of the

cycle that they could almost be extracted chapters.



"Have you seen Amanda... in the hills of..." The Dorsai. Amanda Morgan. Strong willed, tyrannical, unfeeling, egocentric Amanda Morgan. But still she is well-loved by the people of Foralie Canton. Gordy has painted a picture of a very old lady facing the troubles of her day with both action and thought. There are two conflicts which are joined together in

Amanda's mind. One is the defense of Foralie from Dow deCastries' coalition-alliance troops, and the other is the internal argument of allowing her name to be passed on to succeeding generations. As Amanda stalks the hills above Foralie, around Graeme House and Fal Morgan, she must deal with the childe teams who will be defending the area, the crippled and aged advisors to these teams, Dow deCastries himself, and her own frailty. It is by dealing with the individual strengths and weaknesses of her support personnel, by facing down deCastries, and by overcoming her own physical weaknesses that she is able to face and resolve her inner conflict. As she handles each problem in defending Foralie, she comes to realize that it is not the name which is important, and no future child named Amanda will be Amanda as she is now. This is what she had been dreaming for. Eternity is not in the name, but in the memory.

With the successful defense of The Dorsai, the splinter cultures took deep root, leading eventually to the exotics, friendlies, and Dorsai of Donal Graeme's time. And it was the reputation of the individual Dorsai that enabled their planet to survive. "Brothers", an illumination describing the death of Kensie Graeme, addresses the question of reputation directly.

On St. Marie, the friendly worlds have come into conflict with the exotics and the Dorsai. As described in *Soldier, Ask Not*, when the friendly leader is killed, his troops surrender and leave. The local terrorists who had hired the friendlies set up a trap and successfully assassinate Kensie Graeme, the exotic's field commander, with the intention of stirring up the Dorsai. As Kensie's troops mass to attack Blauvein, the town where Kensie was killed, Ian Graeme, Kensie's twin and the exotic's base commander on St. Marie, attempts to locate and kill the killers, thus defusing a potentially violent situation.

The tradition has arisen among the Dorsai to avenge wrongs done to their own by razing the towns involved, as described in the troops' rendition of "Jacques Chretien" when Kensie's death is announced. Ian has been brought up in this tradition, but more than that he has been raised to know that the Dorsai live by their individual reputations. Kensie's name will not be marred by an indiscriminate attack on civilians if he can avoid it.

Ian is described as cold, dark, with ice-water in his veins, while his dead brother, Kensie, had the light and blood of two. The blue force expects Ian to make a superficial attempt to stop Kensie's troops and then allow them their head, thus getting revenge without marring his name. But how little they understand this dark twin. Ian is control personified. Utilizing every resource, including the local exotic ambassador, Ian succeeds in maintaining the honor of Kensie's name. The assassins are found and killed by Ian, without a house-to-house search in Blauvein, which would have led to many civilian deaths due to panic, fear, and anger. The potential war has been averted, honor has been maintained, and Ian is left to grieve in his own dark, silent manner.

I have not addressed the question of the connecting sections, nor in detail can I. The three sections surrounding the illuminations are in themselves an illumination of a different kind. They read like part of the next major story in the Childe Cycle, and while it is enjoyable to read them, it is also very frustrating. For those not familiar with the cycle in its entirety, many questions arise which are never answered, and the confusion tends to detract from the main reason for the book, the two illuminations. It is frustrating as well for those who are familiar with the cycle because, as I have said earlier in this review, the connecting sections offer a tantalizing peek at what Gordon R. Dickson is planning for the future of the cycle, and the questions that come to mind are

not answered.

As for the art (seventy-plus illustrations) , I enjoyed the illuminations of the illuminations. In general I like books which present a visual complement to the author's words, but though I liked Fernandez's art in *Spirit of Dorsai*, I disagreed with his interpretation of the Dorsai troops. These appear to be like World War Two Marines with funny looking M1's.

As a general recommendation, if you enjoy Gordy's Dorsai stories or any of his other writing, then you will enjoy *Spirit of Dorsai*. The inclusion of mostly new material, "Amanda Morgan" and the conversations of Hal Mayne and the third Amanda, offsets the \$5.95 cost, and besides, "Brothers" has not been in print for quite some time (to my knowledge, it hasn't been available since it was first published in 1973). If you have never read any of the Dorsai stories, the two illuminations serve as a fair introduction, with "Brothers" standing on its own outside the cycle better than "Amanda Morgan". "Amanda Morgan" relies somewhat on the reader having read *Tactics of Mistake* for the background motivations behind the invasion of The Dorsai. The connecting chapters can be ignored all together, though they too help introduce the Childe Cycle to the uninitiated.
Shai Dorsai!

ANOTHER FINE MYTH by Robert Asprin. Dell Fantasy, 244 pp., \$1.95

Reviewed by Ann A.B. McCutchen

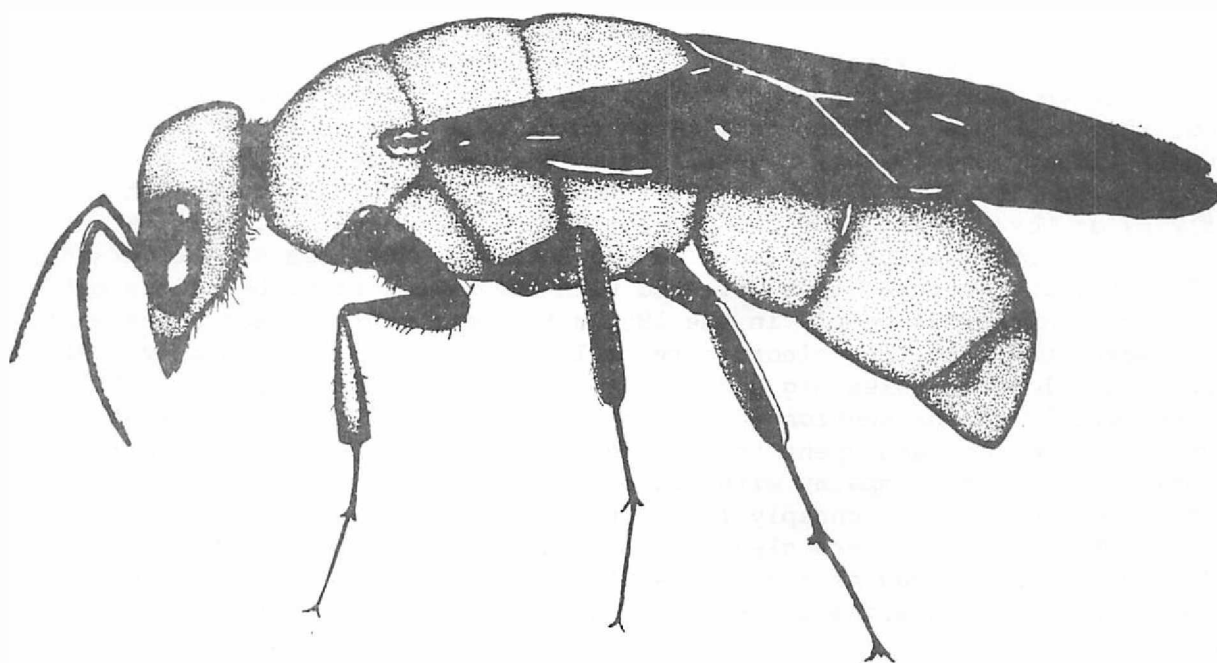
This is the mass-market paperback edition of the Starblaze book, so it is only to be expected that the cover is not as good as the original's. Nevertheless, it does serve to indicate that this book is not noticeably serious. It is instead a moderately humorous picaresque adventure.

The narrator is Skeeve, an apprentice magician and would-be thief. He has been studying with Garkin, a small-time magician of little talent and even less ambition. The story begins on the day Skeeve finally lights a candle by using magik -- after four years of failure.

At this point in Skeeve's life, the pace DEFINITELY picks up. As assassin shows up just as Garkin summons a demon, so Garkin kills the assassin, but is killed in turn, anyhow. This leaves Skeeve to cope with the demon, who is large, green, scaly, and has lots of sharp teeth. But it's really all right; "demon" is short for "dimension traveler", and Aahz is really a fellow magician and nice guy -- sort of.

However, Garkin removed Aahz' magic powers, so Aahz co-opts Skeeve as his apprentice, and together they go off to stop Isstvan, who sent the assassin, and who is a madman out to rule all the dimensions. On their way, they encounter dumb assassins, a demon hunter, a Devel, a dragon, and a dame (sorry, I dot darried away). They outwit the bad guys and acquire the aid, such as it is, of the good guys. Eventually, after a side-trip to Deva, they confront the evil nutso, Isstvan, in an elaborately devised scheme, which doesn't seem to work, but which, in fact, does. At the end of the book Skeeve, Aahz, and Gleep the dragon are ready for further adventures.

As I have subtly indicated, the book is trivial, but pleasant. Some of the



S.D.

humor is pratfall (dung throwing, for example), and much of the rest comes from place names, of all things (Skeev, being from Klah, is a Klahd; Aahz, being from Perv, would rather be known as a Pervect than a Pervert, etc.). Since Bob Asprin is a fan, there are some fannish references, such as "Gremlins do not exist." The best humor is to be found in the apt little "quotations" at the head of each chapter, which I won't spoil for you.

The writing is simple and lucid, but I do have a few nits to pick. First, a practitioner of "magik" is referred to as a "magician", but there is never any explanation for the k/c dichotomy. Also, the narrator writes down (correctly) the comments of others that he indicates he didn't hear clearly. (Us reviewers feel obliged to pick nits).

All in all, I feel the book is worth more like \$1.75 than \$1.95, but you wouldn't hate yourself for buying it, and it would be nice to assure Yang that you had at least read it.

DESTINIES (Vol. 1, #5; OCTOBER-DECEMBER 1979) Edited by James Baen. Ace \$2.25 320 pp.

Reviewed by Chip Hitchcock

I'm rather dissatisfied by this. I didn't read much of *Galaxy* during Baen's editorship, but I've heard a number of people saying that Baen was a fine editor who should be given a better chance at turning out a decent magazine than he got with the grossly mismanaged *Galaxy*. This is the first *Destinies* I've read more than fragments

of, and it doesn't say much for any of the people putting it out.

The cover identifies this as "the paperback magazine of science fiction and speculative fact." "Speculative fact" is a horrible oxymoron to put on the cover, but it's also the politest term I can think of for some of the contents. The nonfiction includes Jerry Pournelle's more level-headed efforts, a description of what it was like to be at the Jet Propulsion Laboratory during the Jupiter fly-by of Voyager II, plus two extremely far-out pieces: G. Harry Stine in support of the Dean Drive, and "The L-5 Review". The less said about the last of these, the better; it's infested with the same sort of boundless optimism that caused various people in the 1950's to swear that nuclear power would be so cheap the resulting electricity could be practically given away. Stine's piece has logical holes big enough for the original Dean Drive to rattle through, particularly in the section where he attempts to explain why it might possibly work. As someone who spent three miserable years working for a contract research firm, I have some sympathy with his contention that the validity of his ideas could be proven quite cheaply if all the peripheral nonsense now thought vital to contract research were cleared away, but I'm not sure it's worth even the \$50,000 to \$1,000,000 he suggests would be the price. The Pournelle piece is good; he's talking without his normal arrogance about a thoroughly interesting moment.

The remaining non-fiction is pedestrian but competent. Spider Robinson's book reviews are clear and useful; James Gunn's description of how *The Immortals* was transferred to television (sort of) is about what you'd expect if you have read Harlan Ellison's description of what happened to *The Starlost*, except not as funny; Poul Anderson's conclusion of a series of essays on SF is interesting, but a bit muddy (although it might make more sense in the context of the previous four pieces).

The stories are even more of a disappointment. The cover story, "Silver Shoes for a Princess", by James P. Hogan, is a terrible, drawn-out hard-science clunker that tries hard to be a human-interest story and fails miserably; it confirms my impression from his novel *The Two Faces of Tomorrow* that Hogan's first need is an editor that will cut the fat out of his work. I don't think I've read anything quite so bad in this line since *Ralph 124C41+* (of course, I haven't been reading SF long enough to have read that in the original printing, so I may have missed something). If he really wants to tell a very juvenile fairy story, maybe he should try selling to *Jack and Jill*.

Fortunately (for us, not for Ace), the cover story is the worst. Frank Herbert's "Feathered Pigs" is trivial; David Drake's "The Predators" is a nasty police procedural with competent writing. Roger Zelazny's "Go Starless in the Night" and Jack Haldeman's "What Kind of Love Is This?" are short but pointed; neither is a ground-breaking story, but both are better than those I've already mentioned. Kevin O'Donnell's "Three Aliens" is quite good, although the conclusion gave me an itch in my residual Libertarianism; the contrasts among a human, a Berserker-type spaceship, and a sun-sailing alien are convincing, which is more than I can say for the rationale for requiring everybody to be computer-controlled by an implant two years out of every hundred.

The package as a whole is not very attractive; a lot of the interior illustrations are second-rate (though some may look worse because of the low-grade paper they're printed on). I was struck by the image of the girl in the computer banks on page 55. The cover is an almost monochrome jumble, and a very poor representation of the story it illustrates. A large type-face means that even

with 320 pages with almost no margins you aren't getting a lot for your money, but the price isn't out of line with today's average. My biggest objection is that this reads like a poor imitation of *Astounding* in its later period, when the hard-science bias was accented by Campbell's increasing crankiness and the number of exciting new writers who were selling most of their material elsewhere. Those who still like that period may be attracted to this.

EMPIRE OF THE EAST by Fred Saberhagen. Ace 20562, 558 pp., \$6.95

Reviewed by Tony Lewis

When I first saw this advertised, I thought it was a sequel to the three Ardneh novels Saberhagen published in the late 1960's and early 1970's. It isn't. It is those three novels, perhaps updated, with some interior illustrations (at least one from the earlier paperbacks). For the record: *The Broken Lands*, (1968, Ace G-740); *The Black Mountains* (1971, Ace 06615); *Changeling Earth* (1973, DAW UQ1041, #41). The last novel has been retitled *Ardneh's World* here. You could have bought the original three novels for \$2.05 (50¢, 60¢, 95¢). Now, you are paying \$6.95 for three (or \$2.32 for one -- not significantly over the average paperback price). If you don't have the three original novels, it is probably worth your while to get this. One final note -- the cover is by Enric; the covers for the three original novels -- Richard Powers, John Schoenherr, Tim Kirk. Noted without comment.

The first part of *Empire of the East* is a fairly standard wrecked future civilization with magic (rationale provided in part three); young hero finds weapons of the ancients, etc. Competently written. But, the hero is not the most interesting character. No sir, there is a minor villain named Chup who is much more human. In fact, he manages to develop as a human being throughout the second and third parts (sometimes off-stage while the hero-stuff goes on in front). You might even say that he is the Heinlein hero but he happens to be on the wrong side. He is in love with the wrong kind of woman -- the bitch without a heart of gold. She's much more interesting than the heroine (who shows up in part three). Unfortunately, the East, which is inchoate and somewhat horrifying in parts one and two, becomes defined in part three as a fairly common evil magician type hierarchy. Still, it is a good adventure story with a few plusses. If it is reprinted in the mass-market edition at less than \$6.95, grab it up. You might still consider it at \$6.95, but it is marginal.

THE SCIENCE FICTION ENCYCLOPEDIA Edited by Peter Nicholls. Doubleday, \$24.95 (hardbound); \$12.95 (paperback); 672pp

Reviewed by Mark Anderson

Moreascon Two, the 1980 World Science Fiction Convention to be held in Boston, has announced a Special Hugo category for the best "non-fiction" book in the field published in 1979. This is a category which has been deserving of its own award for the last few years, but rather than lament for all the fine SF reference books which have not had the opportunity to be so recognized in the past, we can be grateful that this first "non-fiction" Hugo Award is being given for a book published in 1979. After all, *The Science Fiction Encyclopedia* was published in that year, and I can think of no SF reference book (or, more properly, no "non-fiction" book) published within the last twelve months which is more deserving of this Special

Hugo Award. It is magnificent.

Nicholls and his contributors have put together a marvelously complete, concise, and, as far as I can tell, accurate compendium of information and opinion about SF. Here you will find detailed essays on writers (including "mainstream" and "outside of the U.S." authors), magazines (including the pre-1926 "formative" magazines, like "Blue Book" and "The Strand"), films, television, publishers, illustrators, fanzines, critics, foreign SF, Scientists (like Sagan), Pseudo-Scientists (like vonDaniken) -- undoubtedly the most comprehensive survey of the field currently available. Every entry goes beyond its facts and statistics with critical and descriptive commentary by noted SF scholars and writers (not mutually exclusive). An additional feature *The Encyclopedia* offers is its "theme" entries -- 175 essays which explore the relationship and history of SF with regards to such topics as "Cosmology", "Taboos", "Women", and "Parallel Worlds", to name only a few. Want to know how SF has been treated in "Music and Opera" or "Theater"? Or how about a survey of such classic themes as "Galactic Empires", "Generation Starships", and "Time Paradoxes"? Not to mention "Conventions" "Fan Language", "SF in the Classroom", or any of the other 167 essays, which are informative and just plain fun to read.

The book has many black-and-white photographs and illustrations which complement the entries. There are omissions, but the overall quality of this work more than compensates for these (I believe) oversights. It is the best general reference work available at present (Nicholls plans to update and revise this volume, which contains no developments occurring after June, 1978). My only serious complaint with it is that the paperback edition's binding is flimsy and will not withstand extensive use -- it probably is a good idea to spring for the hardcover, as the revised edition may be some time away. But, by all means, get a copy of *The Science Fiction Encyclopedia* (and then use your Hugo Ballot wisely).

THE WHIRLIGIG OF TIME by Lloyd Biggle, Jr. Doubleday, \$8.95, 241 pp.

Reviewed by Rick Katze

This is the fourth "Jan Darzek" novel that I have read.* Biggle began the Darzek series in 1963, with our hero encountering a race of aliens on the earth, and by the second book, Darzek was out in the Galaxy. The books are science fiction detective stories in which the clues are given early on, so that the villain can be determined. Biggle has created a galactic-society which is ordered and above-board. For example, galactic traders make their money by analyzing the situation and collecting information which anyone who is prepared to work hard could obtain, and not through doubledealing or sharp commercial practices. The villain will display certain behavioral patterns which would be considered fairly normal on earth. The reader must identify these in order to solve the problem. In this book, Darzek must identify the villain (who is threatening to turn an inhabited planet into a sun), and, at the same time, catch a teleport who has information concerning this. Biggle has found a way to write an enjoyable SF detective novel, without producing new information or technology at the end of the book in order to resolve the situation. *The Whirligig of Time*, while not perfect, is RECOMMENDED.

* *Whirligig* is the fifth in the series, the other four being *All The Colors of Darkness* (1963); *Watchers of the Dark* (1966); *This Darkening Universe* (1975); and *Silence is Deadly* (1977). --JMA

CHILDE MARTHA by Elfrieda Eppinham vonBasingstoke. Burning Cross Publications, \$15.00, \$15.00, \$15.00

Reviewed by Nathan Childers

Burning Cross Publications is noted for its line of children's cookbooks, and its eccentric forays into genre fiction. These ventures do not make money for the firm and are not expected to; they are handled by the Publisher's nephew who is working on his PhD in English Literature. The firm makes its money publishing hard-core pornography on non-stick paper. Prior to *Childe Martha*, Burning Cross had not published a gothic novel, a sword-and-sorcery novel, or a feminist-protest novel. This may be why they jumped at a chance to publish a novel which combines all three genres.

Bringing the book out with three different dust-jackets so that it would be displayed in three different places in bookstores was an ingenious marketing ploy. It might be objected that this little marketing ploy is a fraud on unsuspecting readers, that the consumer of gothic romances has the right to expect that a work packaged and sold as a gothic romance will, in fact, be the desired product. There is some justice to this viewpoint, and perhaps some budding consumer activist will seize upon this moneyed lack of ethics as the spearpoint of a brilliant campaign of consumer protection. On the other hand, who cares?

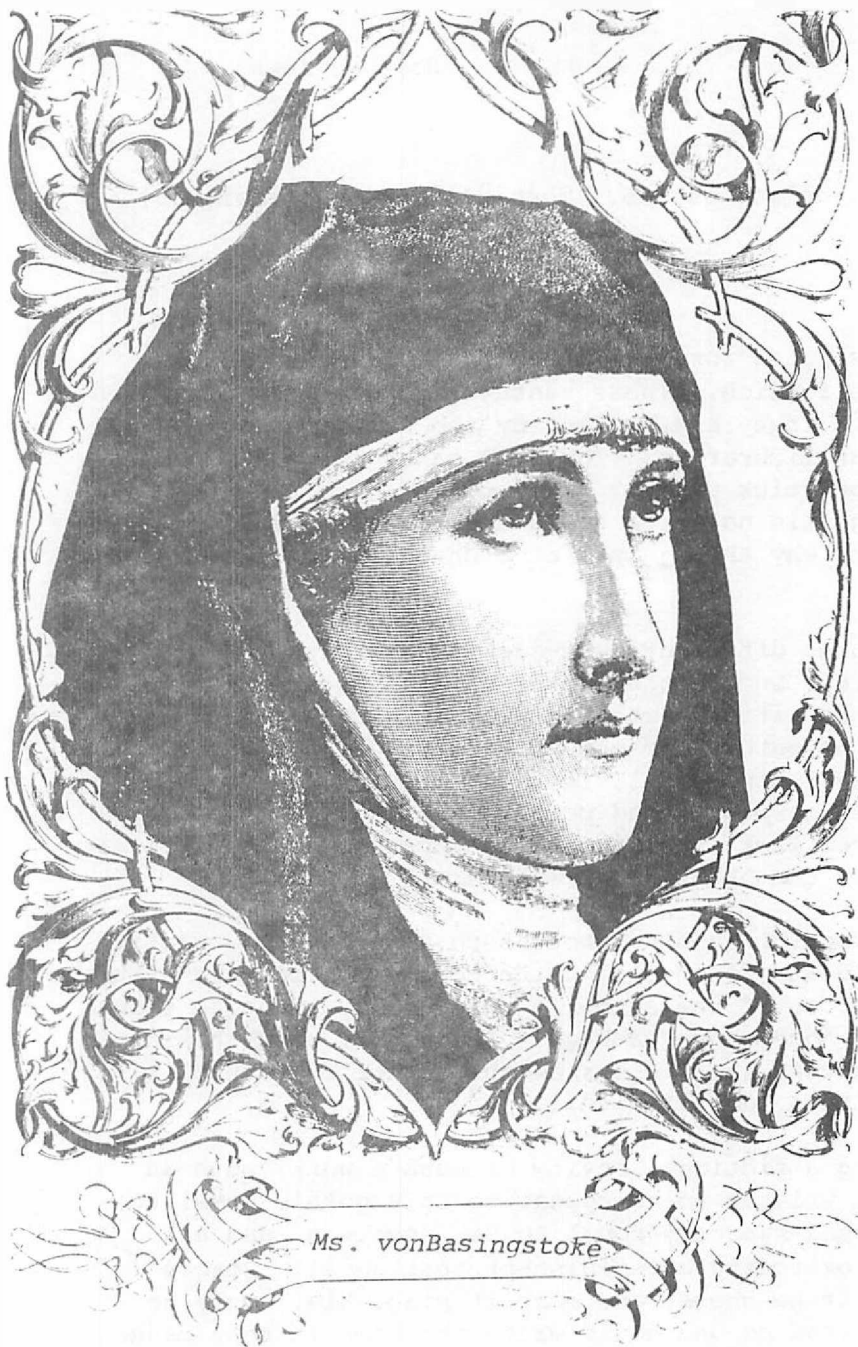
There are two questions that spring to mind about such a work -- why was it written, and how was it done. The dust-jacket claims the novel represents a natural organic upwelling of the deepest forces of the author's personality, much as though the book were a superior variety of home-grown cabbage. An inquiry with the Publisher has elicited the information that those who know the author felt that it was only natural that she would write a book like this.

One can imagine Borges writing a fictional review of such a work, with an ingenious description of how it was written so to appear to be a gothic novel to a reader of gothic novels, a sword-and-sorcery novel to S&S devotees, and a feminist-protest novel to someone expecting a feminist-protest novel. Borges could write such a fiction review, if he chose, and make it plausible. Only he could write such a review, however, and no one could write the book in that manner. Wisely, the author does not try.

Instead, she attempts something more complicated and ingenious. Upon the first reading, the book appears to be a rather long and complicated fantasy romance. On the whole it is satisfactory, although the complexities of the plot do make it seem disjointed at times. The characterization is somewhat obscure, which may be why The New York Review of Books called it "Don Quixote without the windmills."

Briefly, the plot runs as follows: in the prologue, the village is sacked by Barbarians and its women are raped. One of the victims becomes pregnant, has twin daughters, and dies in childbirth. The daughters are named Ruth and Martha. The latter name was chosen from a legend which told how the land would be rescued from its oppressors by a female warrior named Martha. Martha, whose name is auspicious, is adopted by one of the local gentry; Ruth, whose name is not, is adopted by a local peasant.

The book resumes seventeen years later. As may be expected, Ruth has had a hard time of it and Martha has been treated well and gently. At this point the book begins for S&S fans with the appearance of Ferric the Red. Ferric has left



his homeland, and is working his way south as a mercenary. There is just a hint that Ferric's father may have been the Barbarian that raped Ruth and Martha's mother; the incestuous implications are never made explicit but they are used as a background for some complicated and irrelevant symbolism which impedes the plot, but which allows the author and her readers to congratulate themselves for catching all the subtle tricks.

We follow Ferric for a few franchises which establish his credentials as a genuine sword-and-sorcery hero. He eventually comes to the area where our heroines reside and takes service with the local Count, Vladimir, The Almost Certainly Evil. It doesn't take him long before he realizes that Something is Not Quite Right. In the meantime, Martha is hired by Count Vladimir as a governess and Ruth is forcibly seduced by Ferric. Since Ruth is a peasant this is regarded as an unimportant event by all parties involved.

We are now at the point where everything is S&S from Ferric's viewpoint and is a Gothic romance from Martha's viewpoint. The events of this section (some 70% of the total) are of no particular importance. The Count is found to be practicing vile sorcery, Martha is threatened with a fate worse than death, Ferric kills the

Count, marries Martha, and becomes the new Count. Ruth's story is also followed; her lot is one of indignities and is the setting for some savage commentary on the treatment of women. The main section ends with the death of the almost certainly evil Count, the marriage of Ferric and Martha and the birth of Ruth's child, all on the same day. Ruth names her baby daughter Martha, after her aunt, and all ends happily, for the moment.

Two epilogues follow. The first, which takes place about five years after the big finale, shows the beginnings of the corruption of Ferric and Martha. Ferric is becoming a whimsical tyrant given to bursts of rage, Martha's gentility is shown to be a small-minded selfishness; place and power have given her mind scope for becoming less. The second epilogue occurs sixteen years after the big finale. Ferric and Martha have become inhuman creatures of vice, corruption, and barratry. They are swept from the land by the armies of the Childe, Martha, daughter of Ruth. Childe Martha has rallied the people and liberates them. She dies in the moment when she plunges her sword into the bodies of the tyrants. So much for the plot.

We have only touched upon Ms. vonBasingstoke's subtleties. The lives of the three protagonists are in a correspondence with one another. Ms. vonBasingstoke set up the symbolism of the Gothic romance, the Sword-and-Sorcery novel, and the Feminist-Protest novel so that a symbol in one corresponds to a symbol in another. If we look at the stories of the lives of the three protagonists, we discover that they are the same story, interpreted through different sets of symbols. It is as though she were saying that all stereotyped lives are essentially equivalent.

On the other hand, the three central characters all have distinct personalities. Ms. vonBasingstoke has gone to great lengths to ensure that they are all distinct. I am not sure why. There may have been a deep symbolism here that has escaped me. On the other hand, it may simply be an accident.

One of the interesting things about the novel is its preoccupation with the themes of innocence, grace and Messiahhood. Childe Martha is a Messiah figure, of course. In depicting her, Ms. vonBasingstoke follows rigid conventions which she mentions in her book. A Messiah is the focus for a Messianic event and has no real history prior to the event. They usually die as the culmination of the Messianic event, which takes care of the history afterwards. We cannot legitimately write a novel about a Messiah, or even use one as a real character. Messiahs are not people; they are events, like hurricanes. This is why Childe Martha only appears at the end of the book when she performs her prophetic deeds. Even then, she is not seen directly -- the final epilogue is told by one of the soldiers in her army.

We are all born innocent; we all lose aspects of our innocence along the way. Ms. vonBasingstoke focuses on the little events that mark the beginning of the loss of innocence. Grace, unlike innocence, can be gained and regained as well as lost. Ferric and Martha are each offered grace, and each unwittingly rejects it. Ruth begins in a state of grace, loses it, and then regains it in the final epilogue as a gift from Childe Martha. This preoccupation with the themes of innocence and grace suggest that Ms. vonBasingstoke is quite familiar with the Victorian Transcendentalists. I don't think this is a fourth genre for a novel, however. If it were, the correspondences would be greater.

It is hard to place this novel and judge it. If it were poorly written one could dismiss it. Considered as an S&S Gothic Romance it is a failure -- these genres are quite rigid in their formulas. It is hard to judge the book as a feminist-protest novel. Although there is a general protest-novel formula, it is not obligatory. One must judge the book in ideological terms -- does it present a correct viewpoint, does it have the right slant? It appears to, insofar as I can judge, but I don't think it matters. It seems to me that treating feminism at the same level as another sexist genre fiction is an ultimate ideological sin that overrides formal correctness.

It goes without saying that this novel cannot be Literature. No work of fiction in a commercial genre is eligible to be considered as Literature. Even though the novel is not in an identifiable genre, it takes genre fiction seriously, which amounts to the same thing. We may also enquire if it is enjoyable to read (granted that this is irrelevant to literary criticism, but there may be some who wish to know). For them I quote the Archbishop of Canterbury, who said, "It's a helluva good read."





The Voyages of Arthur

Earl S. Wajenberg



As a general rule, I try to limit these essays to topics relating to science, fiction, science fiction, or fantasy. I generally try to eschew anecdote. But my brother Arthur seems to fit under several of those headings, so I decided to give in and tell you about him.

Arthur is the black sheep of the family. We Wajenbergs are a fairly academic lot, but not Arthur. He went out for football in high school, and got through the first two years of college on an athletic scholarship. Then he began working through a series of exotic religions and odd jobs. He is three years my junior and I understand younger siblings tend to be more rebellious. This may explain something, although Arthur isn't very rebellious in the usual sense. Just...eccentric.

This July, I got a phone call from him. The conversation went something like this:

"Earl, this is Art. Guess what? I'm getting married!"

"What?! To whom?"

"Wanda Gardner." (Name changed to protect my sister-in-law.)

"I don't place the name."

"You've met her. Remember, I brought her home last Christmas. And before that you met her at Thanksgiving."

"Is that Green Sequins?"

"Yeah."

(Wanda is known to the family as Green Sequins because both times we met her, she was wearing the same tight, spangled bodice covered with green sequins. They tended to flake off when she breathed deeply.)

"Isn't she the one who was going to manufacture nipple-rouge in thirty-one different flavors?"

"Yeah. For nursing mothers." (This, at least, is what Wanda told the family at Christmas.) "She's already got the recipes for lemon, orange, grape, butterscotch, and chocolate."

"That's nice, Arthur. When and where is the wedding?"

So he told me, and I relayed the data to the rest of the family as gently as possible. They took it surprisingly well. The service took place in a Nitran-Shoshu Buddhist temple, in California. We had a hard time finding the place, since Arthur forgot to tell us that the temple occupied one niche in a mall that used to be an office building.

I had never seen a place of worship with a revolving door before.

The door posed a real problem, since there was a funeral scheduled just before the wedding. They got the coffin out by standing it upright on some casters and rolling it through the door. Wanda (without sequins) had trouble with her dress-train on the way in.

The service sounded just like a civil service to me. There was no Japanese spoken, nor did anyone present look Oriental. In the meantime, we met the "Gardners" and found them surprisingly ordinary. It seems that Wanda and Arthur are both black sheep.

The Priest (or whatever the officiant was called) kept calling Wanda Linda, but other than that the proceedings went smoothly. Their honeymoon plans were secret, as is sometimes the case, but I found out about them a couple of days later when I got another call from Arthur:

"Earl, can you come down to Miami?"

"If absolutely necessary. Why? Are you in Miami?"

"Yes. Wanda and I need someone to identify us, and I think that you're the closest."

"Explain. Why do you need identifying?"

"Well, the police think she and I are counterfeiters."

"Are you?"

"No!"

So I went down to Miami with proof of my own identity and some of the wedding pictures to help prove that he was my brother. It turns out that he and Wanda coincidentally fit the descriptions of a pair of counterfeiters known to be in the Miami



area. My vouching for them did little besides casting suspicions on me until their fingerprints were cleared in Washington.

When they (or perhaps I should say we) were released, they (we) were met in the entry hall of the Police Station by a thin man in late middle age who greeted the newlyweds by saying, "Wanda! Arthur! Congratulations on a truly remarkable synchronicity!" Arthur introduced him to me, and we will call him Dr. Matrix, since I consider him to be quite similiar to Martin Gardner's fictitious con-man, except this Dr. Matrix may believe his own patter.

"Are you the one who wrote '*Lord of the Rings*' Decoded?" I asked.

"Yes! You've read it?"

"Mm." (Have you ever given up on a book after the table of contents?)

"Dr. Matrix is taking us on a cruise with him," Wanda said.

"To Bermuda," Arthur added. Suspicious began to form in my mind.

"Yes," the Doctor said. "Your brother and his wife will be helping me with some very valuable research. Earth-shaking research, really."

"What might that be?" I asked.

"Communications with Extraterrestrial Intelligence."

"Are you going to Aricebo?" I asked hopefully. "I thought that was in Puerto Rico."

"Oh, my, no! We're using much more direct methods than that. We will be cruising in their busiest sampling area, using their own communications methods. And we expect excellent transmission."

"Really? Why?"

"Uranus is in Pisces. And that, taken together with the Jupiter effect, should-" To spare you the technical explanation that followed, I will simply tell you that Arthur, Wanda, the Doctor and his crew were attempting to contact UFO's in the Bermuda Triangle.

"You spoke of transmission," I said. "What kind of transmission?"

"*Philodendron verrucosum matrixi*. My own specially developed breed."

If you think *P. verrucosum* is a common houseplant, you are correct. They took me down to the ship and showed me around. It was a largish yacht, littered with potted plants and manned by a pair of thirty-year-old hippies.

"These don't look like philodendrons," I said, stopping before a row of soggy little flower-pots. "Aren't these Venus Fly-Traps?"

"Well, yeah," Arthur admitted. "I'm in charge of 'em. Did you know they'll eat hamburger?"

"Yes, I knew that. What are they for?"

"They're ... uh ... defensive weaponry. You see, there's this bunch of Koreshanity people who are opposed to CETI because they don't believe in Outer Space. And the Doctor thinks that they may send their trained killer whales against us."

"Uh-huh. To smash the ship?"

"No -- telepathic attack. The Fly-Traps are to counteract them."

".... Oh. Gee, Arthur, some of these plants look dead. You probably shouldn't leave them connected to the polygraph for so long."

"Hey, those plants are Clairvoyant Specialist! Look!"

He turned on the plotter, and demonstrated how the needle moved back and forth as people approached and receded from the wired-up plant.

"Arthur, that's called body-capacitance. It's not the plants doing that, it's your equipment. It would work even better with no plant at all."

This failed to impress Arthur, who has always seemed to regard conventional science as merely the stuffiest of several competing schools of magic. I left shortly after that, with a parting gift from Dr. Matrix -- an autographed copy of his latest opus, *Hidden Doctrines of the Narnia Chronicles*.



I got a call from Arthur a few days ago. He and Wanda have arrived safely in Bermuda, and have even been paid by the Doctor, as per contractual agreement. "And we saw the Aliens, Earl! Honest-to-God Aliens! You be sure and tell all your sci-fi friends." So I am doing so.

"That's very interesting, Arthur. What did they look like?"

"Blobs of pale purple light. Dr. Matrix said they must be made out of pure energy."

"Pale purple light? Exactly when and where did these Aliens show up?"

"On the ship's radio mast. We'd wired the plants to it. I suppose that was what attracted them."

"Uh-huh. Arthur, what was the weather like when they showed up?"

"It was kind of stormy, early one night. Wow! You should have seen them! They just sort of slowly appeared, like out of a Star Trek transporter."

"Yeah. Arthur, I think that was St. Elmo's Fire."

"Aw, c'mon, Earl. I saw that you didn't believe what the doctor was saying, but that's no reason to bring in the supernatural."

"No, Arthur. That's just the effect's name. It's really just a corona discharge, an effect of static electricity. Try thinking of it as a large, slow spark."

"Well, that's what the Doc said they were -- pure energy."

"But -- Never mind, Arthur. Happy First Contact. How are you and Wanda?"

"Oh, we're fine. We had a little trouble finding a place to stay."

"Really? I thought Dr. Matrix said that he had sent to a friend to arrange things. Did he -- Oh. Arthur, did he 'send' to that friend by way of the philodendrons?"

"Yeah, but that guy never got the message. Guess the Koreshanity people must have fouled up his vibrations."

"That sounds plausible. Have a nice honeymoon, Arthur."

"Thanks, Earl. 'Bye."



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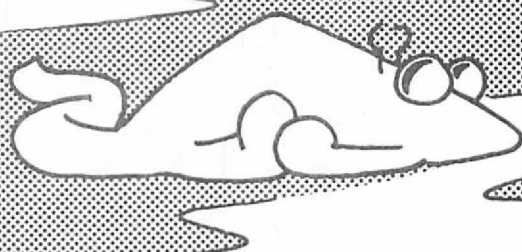
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STARRING
THE
DELECTIBLY
EXTRATERRESTRIAL

KATHY
RELLY...



WITH HER FAITHLESS SIDEKICK
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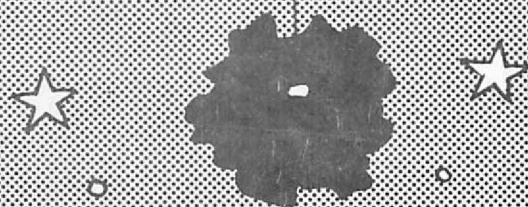


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AND ENVIROMENTALLY SAFE
SPACESHIP...

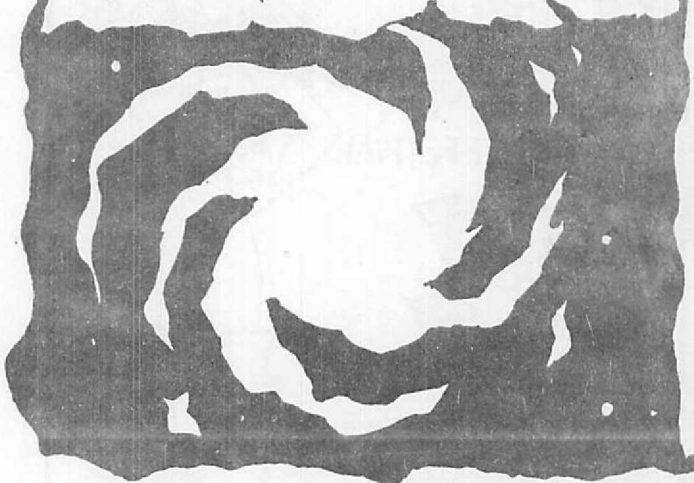


GEORGE HER CYBERNETICALLY
CONTROLLED HOME
AND BASE OF OPERATIONS, WHO SOME-
TIMES ACTS LIKE AN OVERPROTECTIVE
MOTHER, REMINDING HER NOT TO GO OUT
ON DANGEROUS MISSIONS WITHOUT HER
CHAPSTICK...

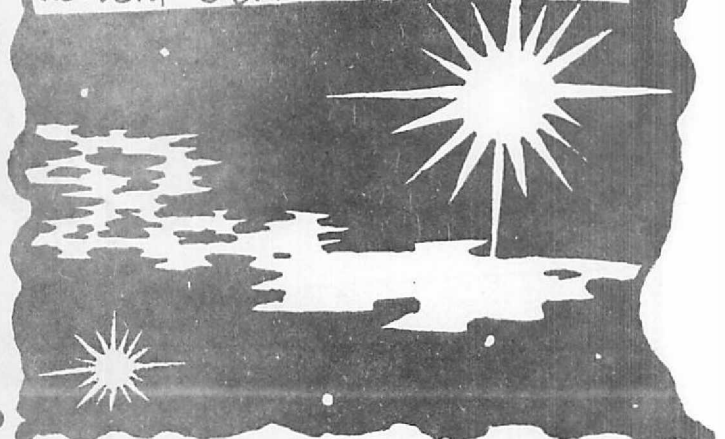


IN
GROSS
ENCOUNTERS
OF THE
THIRD
KIND

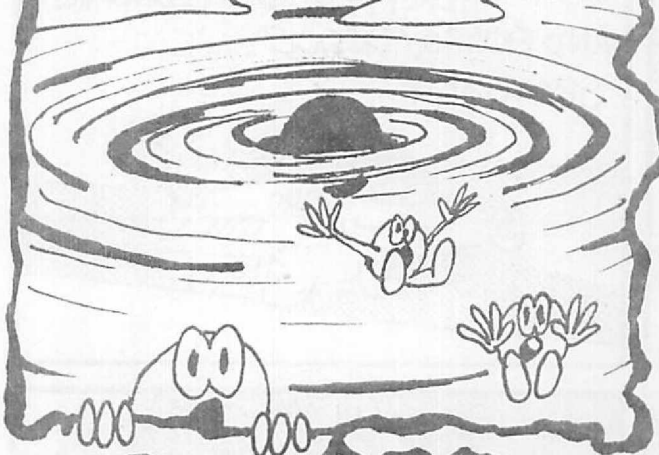
OF COUPLE A HUNDRED YEARS FROM NOW,
IN A GALAXY JUST DOWN THE BLOCK



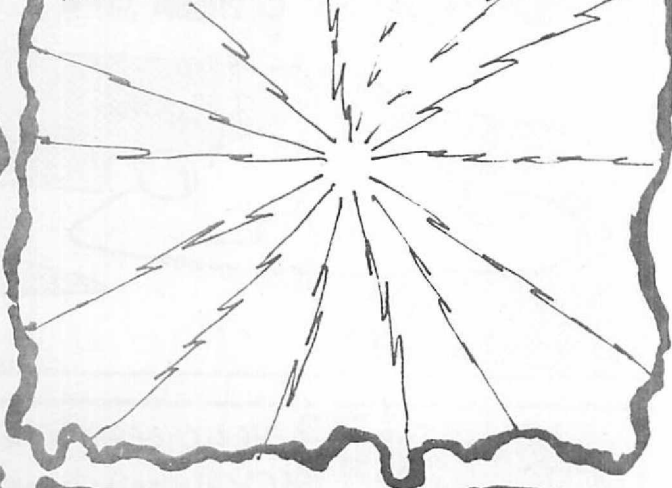
WHERE VAST DRIFTING GOBS OF MO-
LECULAR GOOK WEAVE THEIR WAY
BETWEEN HUGE BALLS OF EXPLODING
NUCLEAR STUFF



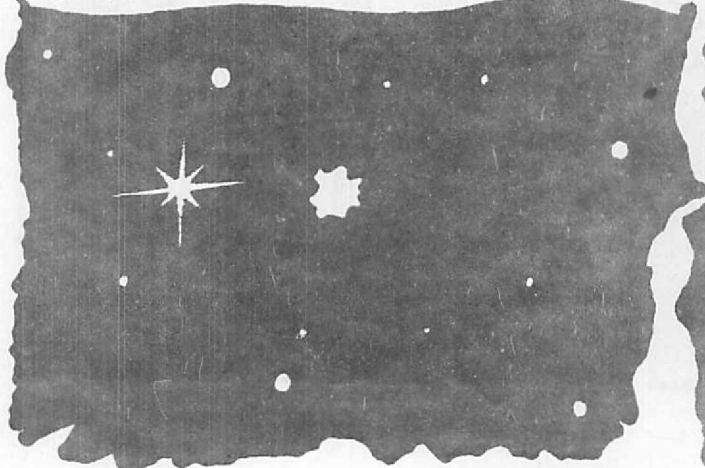
FOREVER LIVING IN THE FEAR OF
BEING SWEEPED INTO A BLACK HOLE
AND BEING ETERNALLY CRUSHED
INTO MEANINGLESS NON-EXISTENCE



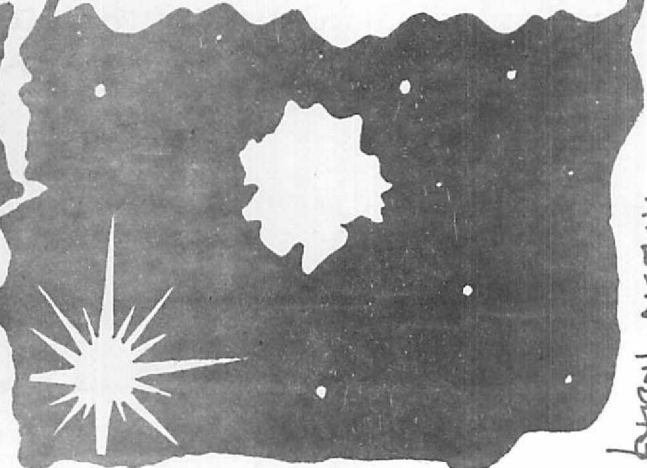
IN THE DISTANCE, THE QUASARS, THE
MYSTERIOUS BEACONS OF SPACE, BEAM
THEIR OBSCENE MESSAGES THROUGHOUT
THE UNIVERSE



IT IS HERE, IN THIS HOSTILE, FORBIDDING
AND COMMERCIALY UNDERDEVELOPED
SECTION OF THE UNIVERSE THAT WE FIND

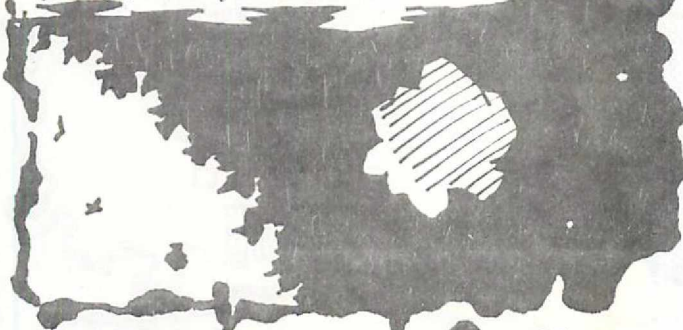


A SMALL ASTEROID, DRIFTING
AIMLESSLY FROM STAR TO STAR

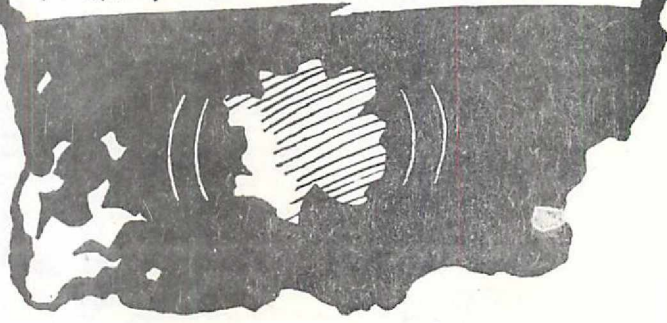


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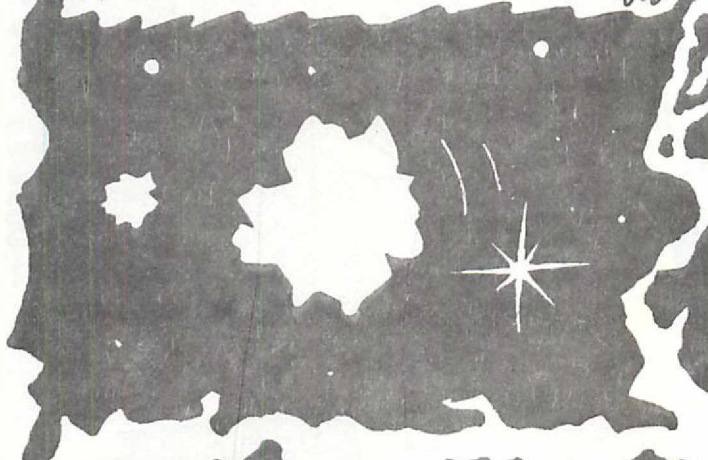
ALAS! THE TINY WANDERER IS CAUGHT IN THE GRAVITATIONAL PULL OF A RED GIANT. SOON THE LIFE OF THE CELESTIAL STRANGER WILL BE FOREVER EXTINGUISHED IN THE HYPERACTIVE NUCLEAR FURNACE



BUT THIS IS THE WAY OF LIFE IN THE COLD, HARSH WORLD OF THE OUTER COSMOS. PERHAPS IN A FEW BILLION YEARS IT MAY FIND ITSELF REBORN, MATTER RECYCLED INTO A PLANET OR ... BUT WHAT'S THIS...?



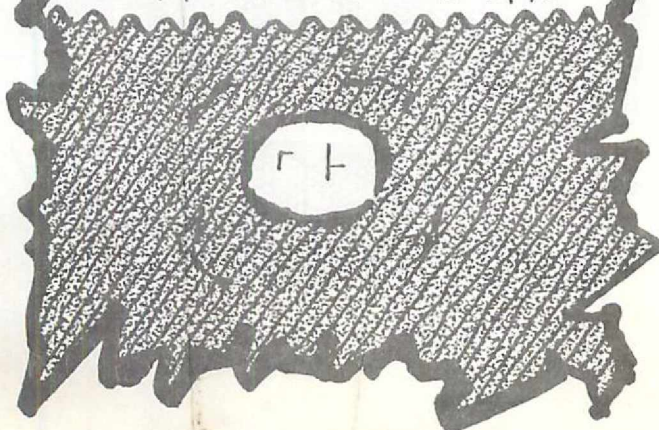
THIS PSEUDO-DEBRIS IS MOVING AWAY FROM THE FLAMING BEHEMOTH ... UNDER IT'S OWN POWER!!!



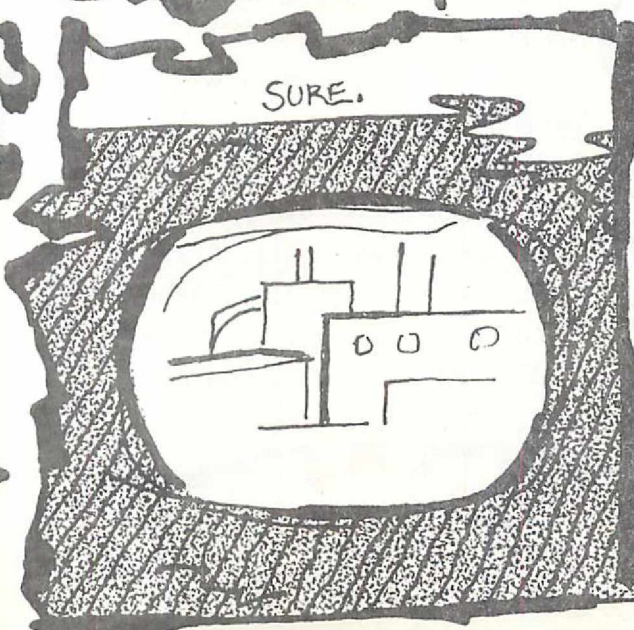
COULD IT BE THAT THIS INNOCENT LOOKING HUNK OF SILICONE IS IN FACT UNDER THE CONTROL OF SOME SORT OF SUPERIOR INTELLIGENCE? (INSERT SCARY 'WOOO')



INDEED, YOU MAY AS WELL ASK IF YOU COULD LOOK INSIDE, FOR THE ANSWER TO BOTH IS

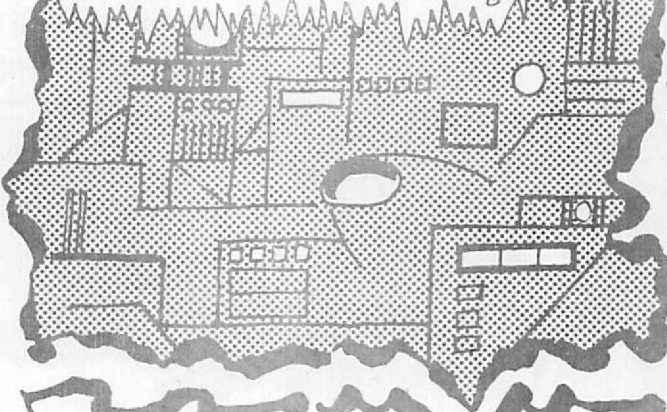


SURE.

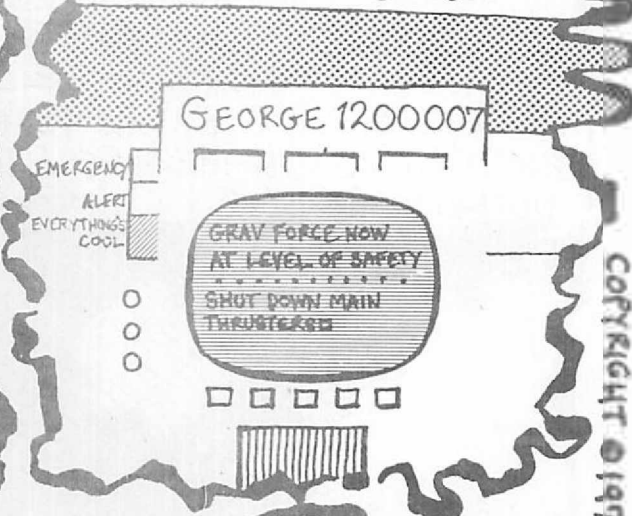


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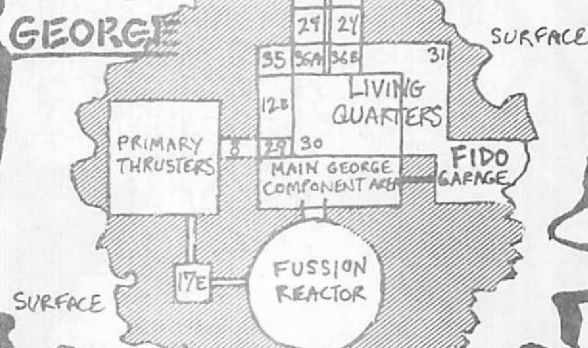
YES, FRIENDS OF SCIENCE FICTION AND SMALL ANIMALS, CONTROLLING THIS NUCLEAR POWERED HUNK O' ROCK IS A HUGE COMPLEX MACHINE-OF-SORTS. A CYBERNETIC COMPUTER!



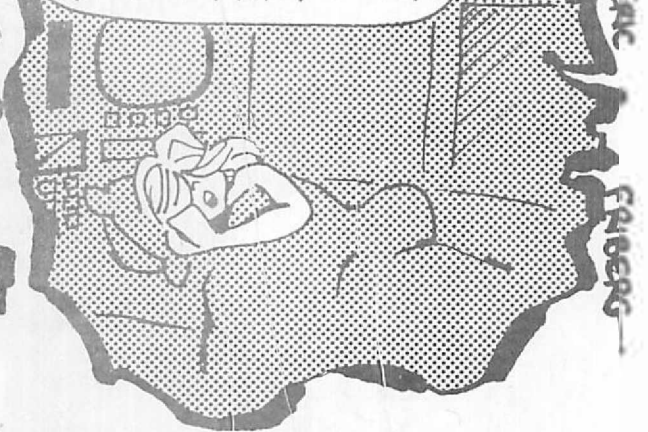
HIS NAME IS GEORGE.



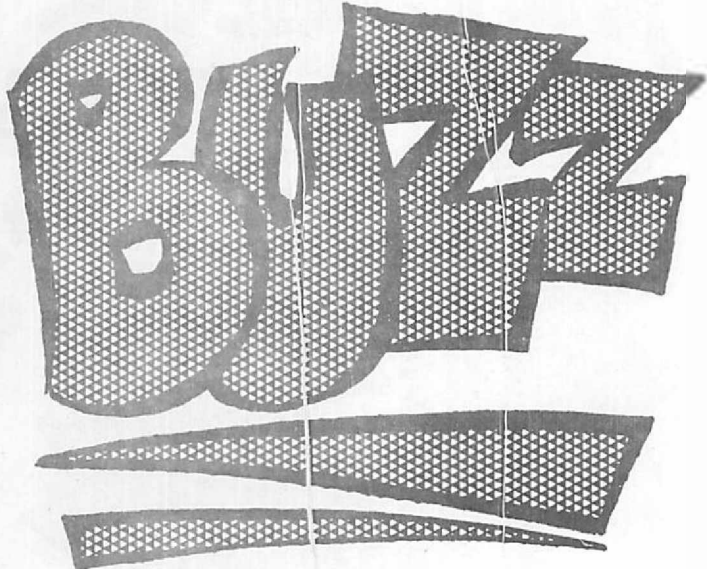
BUT GEORGE IS MORE THAN THAT. GEORGE IS A HOME, A HOME FOR WHAT, YOU ASK



FOR THIS, FRIENDS. THIS SLEEPING BIT OF PULCHRITUDE. HER NAME IS KATHY REILLY.



SURE, I KNOW WHAT YOU'RE GONNA ASK. WHAT'S A NICE GIRL LIKE THAT DOING WAY OUT THERE IN THAT inhospitable FORBIDDING ENVIROMENT, ON THE OUTER EDGE OF THE UNIVERSE, FAR FROM THE NEAREST CIVILIZATION. OR IN A COMIC STRIP LIKE THIS. WELL IF YOU'LL STOP ASKING SO MANY DAMN QUESTIONS YOU'LL FIND OUT...



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CHERRY

YES, FIDO! OUR HEROINE'S ALL-PURPOSE INTERPLANETARY WORKHORSE WHICH SHE UNFORTUNATELY FORGOT ABOUT LEAVING IN THE SERVICE AREA...

NOW THIS IS THE RIGHT CHUTE FER FIDO!

WSLAP!

THIS REALLY SUCKS THE FLIES OFF A DEAD HORSE!

FIDO BOARDING CHUTE

BUT AT LAST OUR BRAVE LASS IS ON HER DELAYED WAY...



WELL DID SHE MAKE YOU CRY
MAKE YOU BREAK DOWN
HMM HMM HMM HMM HMM
HMMMMMM HMM HMM

SOON SHE IS WITHIN VISUAL RANGE OF THE PSEUDO-FATEFUL PROJECTILES...



WHOA! THAR SHE BLOWS!

YOU LOOKED ON, GEORGE?



YEP! GOTCHA, KID!

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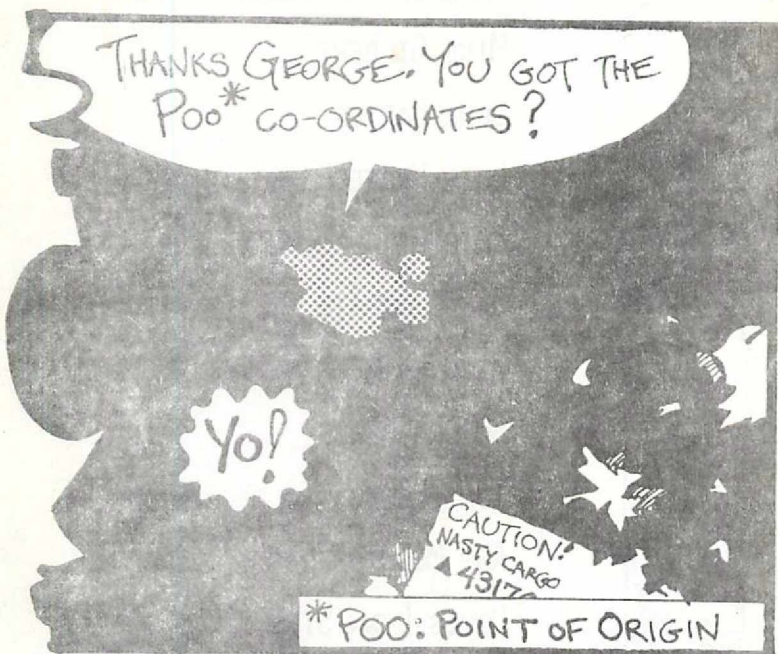
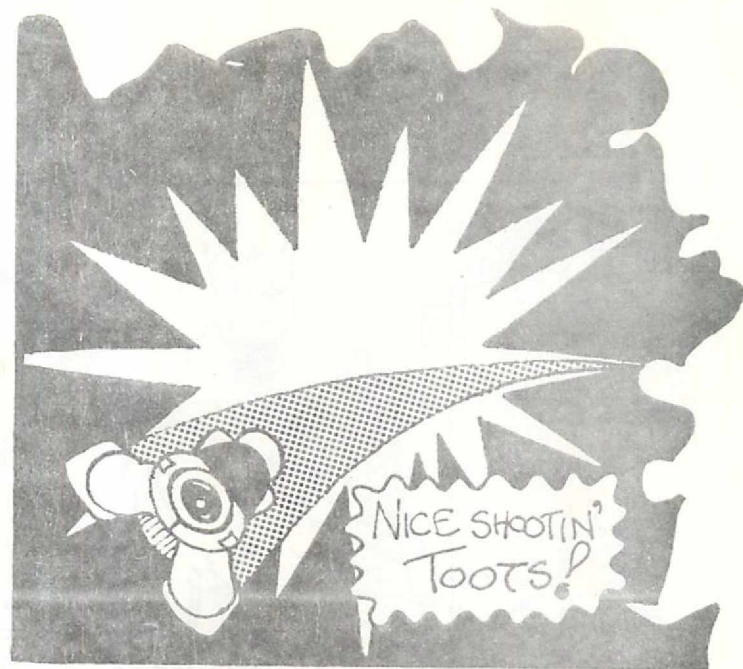
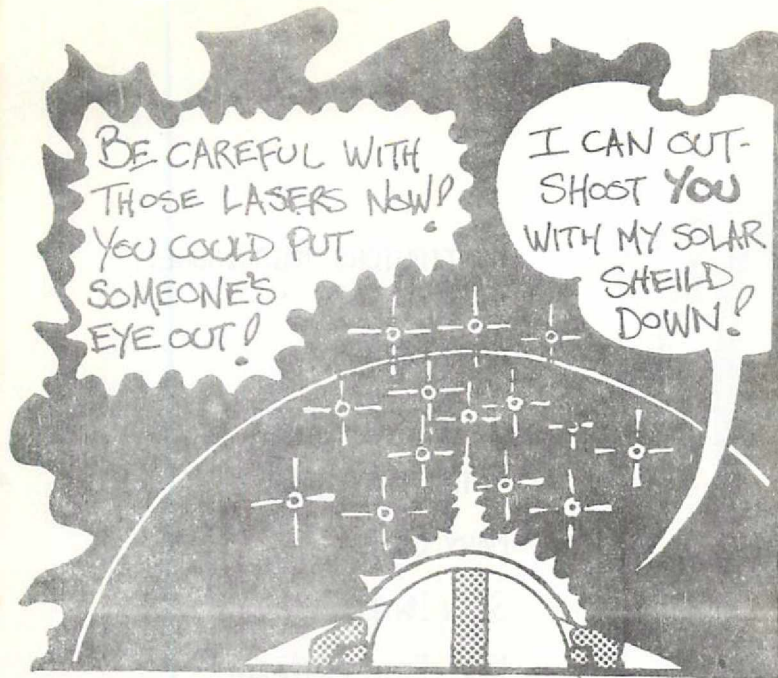


STUCK!

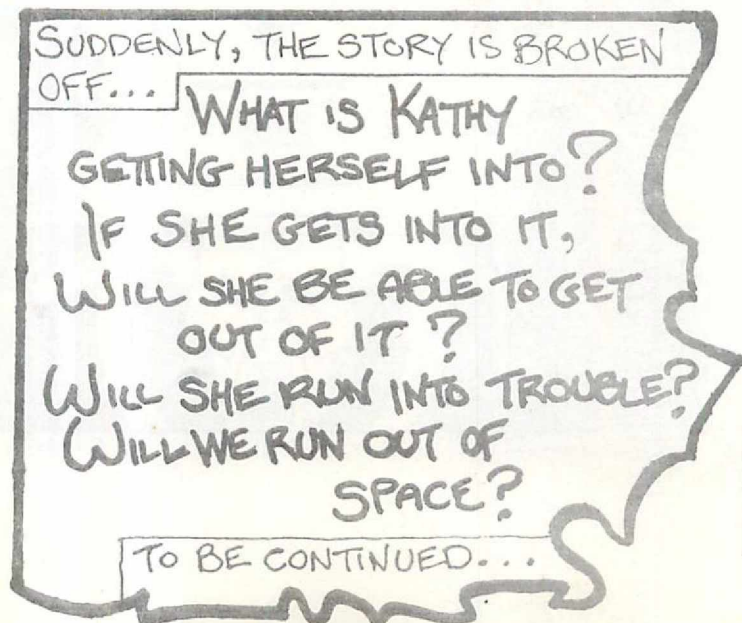
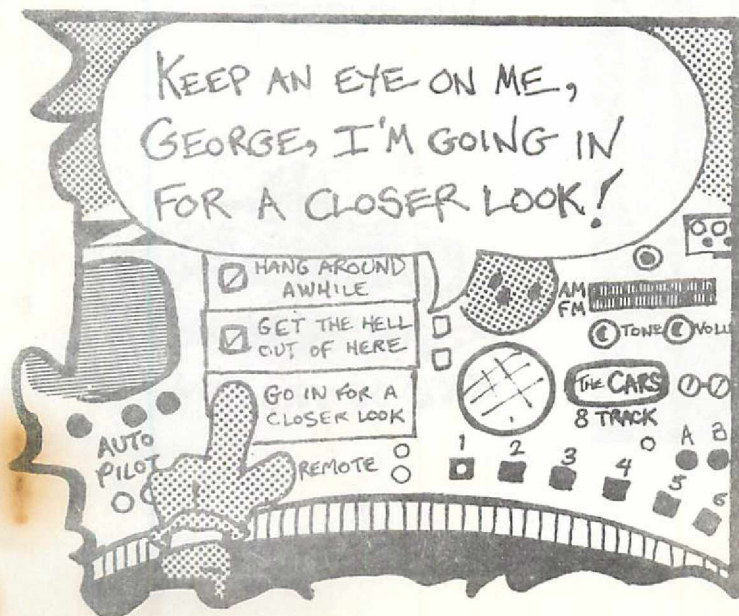


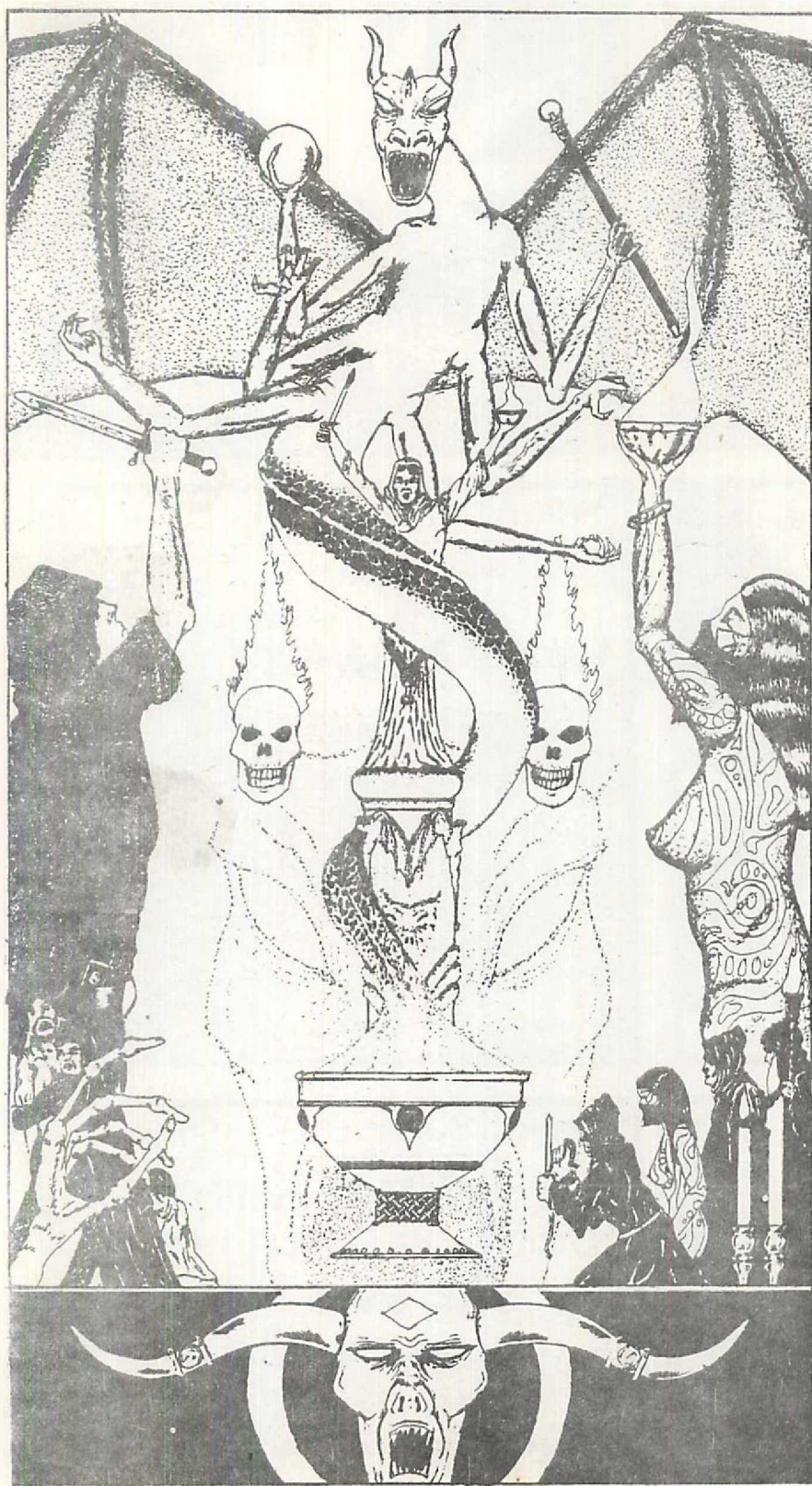
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END OF THE VOLUME.