

THE ROGUE RAVEN 32 seems to have worked its way out of the time warp after a hiatus longer than I wish to tell. Suffice it to say that it's glad to be back and comes to you from Frank Denton, 14654 - 8th Ave. S.W., Seattle, WA 98166. Today's date is 28 Oct 83.

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Several fanzines have arrived recently in the mail. Actually, a whole stack of them. And I did sit down yesterday and write a loc, one that encompassed a whole page. The rest of them sit here, glaring quietly at me and making me feel twinges of guilt. Many of them will never get locced. They know it and I know it. The only way to erase that guilt, methinks, is to do something in return. Surely all of the wonderful people out there who have seen fit to continue to send me their fanzines deserve something in return.

I've been away from fanzine pubbing for over a year. The last issue of The Rogue Raven which I published was run off on my last working day, the day I retired. How come, I hear you say, since you are retired and have nothing to do, have you not published more, rather than nothing at all? A good question, and one, I suppose, which deserves an answer.

My first excuse was that I no longer had a mimeo. I had used the one in the college library, of which I was the director. No one dared question my utilization of it. Now I was cut off from its easy access. But that was really a poor excuse, since more than once Gary Farber and Jerry Kaufman have offered the use of their machines.

Secondly, and perhaps more to the point, was a feeling that I didn't have much to say. After some years of publishing fanzines, I seemed to have arrived at a place where I wondered if what I was writing was worth reading. I wasn't sure that anybody much cared. There have been a few squeaks of protest lately from both local fans and some further away, asking when I'm going to start publishing regularly again. So maybe somebody does care. I know that I enjoy receiving zines of all sizes and descriptions, including some very short ones. So maybe others out there might still enjoy knowing what I'm reading, doing, working on, where I've traveled. It's not pretentious, folks, but if it helps me to stay in touch with a few friends, people who write locs, and other fanzine editors, it will have fulfilled its purpose. It may even help you while away your brown bag lunch time or a second cup of tea on Saturday morning.

Thirdly, there is more to this retirement business than meets the eye. I'm only now beginning to realize that the sudden change does funny things to you, many of which you are unaware. Some things come easily. The house-husband part is one example. Anna Jo continues to work. Just last year she changed from being an elementary school teacher to being an elementary school librarian. I guess she figured that there ought to continue to be one librarian in the house. I had always helped with some of the household chores. Taking over the laundry and running the vacuum didn't seem to be an insurmountable task. Evening meal preparation was a bit more of a challenge. I do real well when orders are left and I'm told where various things are hidden; not so well when left on my own. I'm good at pasta, especially fettucini. I have also discovered the clay pot, a wondrous invention by some peasant aeons ago. And the crock pot makes excellent meals, albeit not haute cuisine. So, I try. Utilizing a woodburning stove almost completely for heat requires some attention to the wood supply (of which

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Dedicated to Gary Farber & Jerry Kaufman, who kept asking
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more later).

But one of the reasons I opted out of the college, after thirty years in education, was to see if I could learn to write. It's tough. And I can't report any great success. It requires a great deal of discipline and I think I've struggled with that, as much as anything. The year's work has produced several articles, three short stories, a collaborative short story with Gary Alexander which sold to Alfred Hitchcock Mystery Magazine (Mar. 83), one 60,000 word novel and about 20,000 words on a second novel. I'm learning, I'm learning. Come back int about four more years and ask what I've done.

In spite of all that writing, I somehow couldn't seem to do an issue of even the simplest sort of fanzine. Twice I started, made some progress, and then left the stencils to gather dust. The second time I put seven pages on stencil. And there they sit. A dittoed 5-pager did go out to about 80 people, but I felt that I was neglecting a lot of people, perhaps not so close, but still part of the family. And I was really slighting a lot of fanzine editors who deserve better for their labors.

So I'm back. With no great promises. No promise of any regularity of publication. No promise that I'll be scintillating, witty, deep, philosophical, wise, or even brave, clean and reverent. I do promise to fill nearly ten pages this issue and see what happens after that. I hope you find something you enjoy. Maybe enough even that you'll drop me a postcard and encourage me.

#### DENTON VS. THE EPA

Earlier I mentioned that I was burning wood for heat. It's fun. And it saves money. (Retired folk always talk about how to save money, don't you know?) Before I retired, there were several things I wanted to accomplish around the house. I knew that my income was going to be reduced and that these things would be more difficult to accomplish after. High on the list was installing a wood stove.

We started looking for the right stove probably two years before I retired. I was all in favor of a freestanding stove, positioned on the hearth in front of the fireplace, with the stove pipe leading to the chimney flu. Gradually, as we looked in various shops and talked to various store owners, Anna Jo became convinced that a fireplace insert was the answer. Subbornness prevailed. Neither of us would give in. And so nothing was done for a long time. That was all right, as other projects on the list took the money allocated. But eventually we came down to having to make a decision. Since Anna Jo was not budging, I finally acceded enough to say that I would go looking at inserts.

Serendipity! We made a list, using the Yellow Pages, of stores which carried inserts of which we had heard or had been recommended to us. Also there were a couple of stores which we had driven by and which looked interesting. So one Saturday, list in hand, we set out on our explorations.

The nearest store on our list was the Wood Stove Store. Nothing pretentious about that. As I parked across the street and got out of the car, I realized that I was in a fire zone, a fire station directly opposite me. I told Anna Jo to go ahead, that I would move the car. I found another spot quickly and parked. Anna Jo, in the meantime, had reached the shop and realized that this store carried absolutely no fireplace inserts. She was about to leave the store as I came into it.

It was entirely fortunate that the proprietor was alone in the store at the



time. There was no other customer. We had her to ourselves. So Anna Jo seized the opportunity to find out why there were no fireplace inserts. This store is owned and operated by two women. They also happen to be two of the first chimney sweeps in this city's resurrection of an old and honorable trade, and they are very good ones, by all reports. We quickly got a short lecture on the pros and cons of stove styles and size.

From her chimneysweeping advantage, this woman had learned rather quickly that fireplace inserts created more problems than freestanding stoves. Since they are larger, filling the opening of the fireplace, they throw more heat. When people have become uncomfortably hot, they begin building smaller fires in them. These fires do not burn as efficiently and creosote builds up more quickly. She then asked me for a rough estimate of the cubic feet of the rooms we wished to heat. I gave her a figure. She pointed at the smallest stove in the store, a Jøtul, and said, "That will heat those rooms very adequately."

Anna Jo was convinced rather easily. I, of course, hadn't needed convincing. The choice was made and we haven't stopped raving yet. Did I gloat? Only quietly in my smug interior.

Prior to retirement we used about \$650 worth of oil a year. The oil furnace took the chill off of the house in the morning, was turned down to 50 degrees during the day, then heated the house to about 64 degrees during the evening. And on weekends, of course. We still use it to take the chill off the house in the morning. But I build a fire in the stove first thing, even before my breakfast. The stove heats all of the house, except the three bedrooms and the bath. Last winter I spent \$150 for firewood and the bill for oil came to \$165. Compared to \$650, that's not too shabby. Add about \$40 for a chimneysweep and we saved about \$300. The stove and pipe cost roughly \$500 so by this coming spring it will have paid for itself.

A cord of wood (alder) is running about \$75 here currently. Of course, I get to stack it to dry. And although it arrives split, I like to split it smaller. It dries more rapidly, and it builds a better fire. So I have to work a cord ahead, and I hope this year to put two cords of green wood by, split and stacked for next winter. I'm already set for this winter. I rather enjoy the exercise it gives me. I have a certain sense of accomplishment.

So now the EPA is becoming concerned about the hazards of wood smoke. People not taking care of their chimneys are asking for chimney fires. House fires caused by wood stoves rose 44.7% last year, according to statistics. And in some areas, particulates from wood burning are greater than those of \*gak\* the automobile. The one ray of sunshine in the article I read was that my Jøtul was one of two that would meet standards which the EPA is considering.

I enjoy the smell of woodsmoke. When I go for a walk in the evening, I can smell it from several woodburners in our neighborhood. I wonder what the EPA would say about western Ireland, where a great deal of peat or turf is burned. The turf fire is far from efficient. It smolders in the open fireplace, sometimes creating as much smoke in the house as out of it. But on a late August night in Ireland, with the beginnings of the autumn nip in the air, the smell of turf fires permeates the small villages in the west. And it smells glorious, like no other smell I've ever smelled. It may even be worth losing six months or a year off of your life.

#### LOOK! UP IN THE SKY!

The other day I stepped out of the house to go to the store. I heard a sound I hadn't heard in nearly forty years. It was the sound of a formation of propellor driven airplanes. I knew that sound without even having seen the planes, but my head



swiveled skyward immediately. My ears had not deceived me. Almost directly overhead, and quite high for prop planes, was a v-formation of five planes. They were too high for me to identify.

The sight and sound of those planes brought back many memories. It's not as though I never hear any airplanes. We live quite near to the Seattle-Tacoma International Airport (recently renamed the Henry M. Jackson Memorial International Airport; is that a mouthful?). While we are not in the flight pattern and are rarely disturbed by the hundreds of commercial flights which arrive and depart each day, still we do hear aircraft. Morning and evening the small commuter airline from Port Angeles arrives and departs pretty close to overhead. I think it is a Beechcraft 99, carrying about 16 passengers.

But the sight and sound of the military formation took me back to my childhood. I watched it until it disappeared from view. It was a pretty sloppy formation. No Blue Angels, these. For a moment I thought that the plane on the left wing of the formation was going to collide with his nearest companion. He must have thought so, too. He veered off sharply to the left, then made his way back into formation. Still he hadn't found his proper placement and veered off again as they disappeared from my sight. I wonder who they were.

I was eleven years old and living in Tacoma when the United States entered World War II. Two military bases exist to the south of the city. Fort Lewis is the Army post and McCord Field is the Air Force Base. Though I've been told that cargo planes, fighters and bombers fly out of McCord, we rarely see a military aircraft over Seattle. Once a year the Blue Angels or another military precision group comes to perform during the Seafair unlimited hydroplane races. To the north, Whidbey Island Naval Air Station is situated but their planes stay north and generally west of the city. As a child, I saw military aircraft every day. As we geared up for the war, more and more planes flew over our house every day. I spent a lot of time gawking skyward at the beautiful twin-fuselaged P-38 Lightning. Occasionally we'd see a P-39 Cobra or a P-41. And several times I saw P-51 Mustangs. My family had good friends who had two sons who flew during the war. One flew a P-51 in Europe and I thought it was the neatest plane in the world. Well, except for Britain's Spitfire, maybe. The other son flew a B-17 bomber in Europe, but it was big and slow, compared to the speed and grace of the fighters.

How impressionable we are as children. To this day I love to watch a plane fly by. I have a couple of friends who are into model building, and the temptation to recreate some of the planes I knew so well is pretty great. I've even started on a P-51 model, but it progresses slowly. I didn't need to take up another hobby.

I've never learned to fly. I suppose it's not too late. But expensive, oh, yes. I have flown in small planes a couple of times and the feeling is entirely different from a commercial jet flight. I've also had a ride in a sail plane, an exhilarating experience, believe me. And someday I'm going to ride in a hot air balloon.

Now we've entered again into the age of the ultralights. Dale Goble tells me that there were ultralights in the late twenties and thirties. They look like a lot of fun, but still beyond my means. I don't have the \$5-6K to put into one. But to me it looks like the ultimate in freedom. Out in the open air, cruising slowly enough to enjoy the passing scenery, low enough to identify places and buildings. Has anyone out there had the experience of flying an ultralight? Please write and tell us about it if you have.



## TRAVELING TIME

This is a heading that I have used often before and probably will again. Most of the time it's a segment on weekend trips that Anna Jo and I have taken. Sometimes it becomes a more extended trip report. No, I'm not going to tell you about the month that we spent in California this summer. It had some high spots, especially a few days spent in the gold country, a visit with our daughter, son-in-law and grandson, a visit to Nasa's Flight Center at Edwards, and Westercon. The gold country fascinated me and I'd like to return there for a more thorough look.

It occurred to me that we hadn't been north to Canada for over a year. We used to go much more often than that. Sometimes a person just gets too busy. Finally I told Anna Jo that we just had to find a weekend to go north. I felt a need to visit Vancouver again. Ed and Norma Beauregard had attended Moscon in Moscow, Idaho. I hadn't seen them in a long time and they berated me for not attending the last few V-Cons. They were right; we had not attended for several years. I promised that we would attend the next one come spring. And David George has long range plans for a Vancouver bid for a future Westercon. All of which is neither here nor there; I did have a yearning to visit British Columbia again. The calendar kept filling up with other stuff, but we finally settled on the weekend of October 8-9. That turned out to be the Canadian Thanksgiving weekend. But since the holiday was on Monday, it did not hinder any shopping or sightseeing plans that we had. As a matter of fact, we got to celebrate Thanksgiving with the Livingstones, about which more later.

The weatherman had promised rain by Saturday afternoon or evening, with more of the same on Sunday. He lied. We have been having a wonderful Indian summer in the Pacific Northwest. It has hung on and has only begun to rain a bit toward the end of October. We couldn't have chosen a more beautiful weekend. The sun shone; it was warm. The deciduous trees were turning color and giving us a real palette. There was a slight chill in the evening air, but daytime temperatures were in the mid-fifties. All we needed were light jackets. What gorgeous weather for a trip.

And what a surprise we got when we went through the border. We have for years chosen to take the truck route through the border. It usually has a much shorter line. We haven't gone through the main crossing at Blaine for years. The truck route is perhaps a mile east and one can quickly get back to I-5, the main highway. We didn't have any trouble getting through. In fact, there were only a couple of cars in front of us. The surprise was the number of Canadians coming south. I can't imagine what it must have been like at the main crossing. At this alternate crossing the lineup was bumper-to-bumper for over a mile. The Canadians come down in droves to shop for groceries. The price differences, even with a 20% exchange rate on the dollar, are still attractive enough. I'm told that it is like this every weekend. On Sundays, of course, they come down to drink. Our taverns and bars are open and British Columbia's are not.

We arrived in downtown Vancouver a little after noon. We found a new and inexpensive place to park our car and then went looking for some lunch. On Robson Street we almost immediately came across a Lebanese restaurant. My, was the food good. We had pita bread and hummus. Anna Jo had a lentil soup and felafel. I had a salad and filo filled with ground beef and pine nuts. They called it a Mediterranean plate, but this Lebanese substitute for a sandwich must have another name. Clifford??

Feeling a little better, we tackled Robson Street, one of the most interesting streets in Vancouver. Mostly we just window-shopped. I found a new bookstore,



Manhattan Books, dealing in remainders, mainly British and Canadian. Controlling myself, I came away with only four books. Anna Jo bought a few children's things for her school library.

The find along Robson Street this time was a tiny little shop selling shoes. It was run by a Chinese woman with a young East Indian assistant. Anna Jo just went in to look. The store featured Romika shoes from Germany, mostly clog style with a composition sole. After Anna Jo found two pair for herself on sale, she insisted that I try on a pair. I don't think I've ever slipped my feet into any shoe which felt so immediately comfortable. Of course, the clogs which I bought were not on sale, but I think that they were a bargain anyway. They should last for years, and the comfort is worth the price.

Feeling smug, we wandered over to Robson Square, found a cup of coffee and relaxed for a few minutes in their Food Fair. Then we did a whirlwind tour of The Bay (Hudson Bay Company), whipped through Eaton's, and came back to Duthie's Book Store. I'm a sucker for anthropomorphic animal stories and I found a couple. The one I've found time to read is The Song of Pentecost by W.J. Corbett (Methuen, c1982). Snake loses his lakeside property to a wily cousin and enlists the aid of Pentecost and his band of harvest mice in getting it back. It wasn't as good as the jacket blurb by Raold Dahl said it was. A second is Jan Needle's Wild Wood (Magnet Paperback, 1982), which appears to be the story of Mr. Toad and Toad Hall as viewed by the Wild Wooders and told by an old ferret. It's not supposed to be a sequel to Kenneth Grahame's Wind in the Willows, nor "neither parody nor satire," but with elements of both. I'm looking forward to reading this one a lot.

I'll only mention a couple more books that I bought in Canada. You don't want a rundown on all fourteen (yes, I controlled myself) that I brought home. Leslie Thomas's The Hidden Places of Britain (Penguin, 1983) is a beautiful trade paperback about out-of-the-way places in Cornwall, Scotland, the Hebrides, Kent, Wales, and others. Lots of black-and-white and color photographs and good writing. (I'm an Anglophile; you haven't forgotten that in the intervening time since the last TRR, have you?) I should mention another recent book I found that has incredibly fine travel writing, but I'll leave it for a separate paragraph later on. The last book I'll mention here is The Scarecrows by Robert Westall (Chatto and Windus, 1982), a juvenile and winner of the Carnegie Medal. It's apparently a psychological thriller and looks very intriguing. You'll get a report, one of these days.

At a little after five we joined a stream of cars going west across the Lion's Gate Bridge, and found a nice quiet motel on Capilano Canyon Road.

In the morning we drove up Capilano Canyon a ways to a gift shop which has been in the same place since my childhood, The Canyon House. There we discovered the art of David Wicker. This young Englishman sculpts small English houses, representative of various parts of England, using the lost wax process. Then he somehow casts them in crystalline plaster, then paints them by hand. They are miniature delights. Oast houses, Tudor structures, thatched roof houses, Cornish fishing village houses, and many more. The largest piece represents a portion of a small village and reminded me of some of Tim Kirk's pen-and-ink drawings. I think I'll have to save some money for our next trip to Canada.

Anna Jo wanted to cross the Capilano Canyon suspension bridge. We had done this when the kids were still small. I recalled that it was a terrifying experience for Anna Jo and wondered why she wanted to do it again. She said, "I've been getting better at a lot of things I couldn't do when I was younger. Probably some fears my mother implanted in me. I just want to see if I can do it



more easily now." And, sure enough, she did. The bridge is 230 feet above the Capilano River, probably about 400 feet long, and sways and dances as a good suspension bridge should. Another fear down the tube. Good for her.

After grabbing a hamburger, we drove east to Chilliwack to visit with the Livingstones, Don and Shirley and their family. It's always a treat to visit with them. Don is a collector and fan from way back. We were treated to Thanksgiving dinner (Canadian style isn't any different from American style). Don and I talked books and shared our recent acquisitions. I gave him a copy of a book about M.R. James, the English ghost story writer. It also contained some short essays and other writings which had not previously been collected in book form.

We watched a videotape of Castle, a one-hour presentation about castles, spotlighting Harlech, Caernarvon, and Conwy in Wales. We have visited the first two, and have seen the exterior of the third, so we found it of great interest. David McCauley, who has done the marvelous book, was one of the hosts of the show. The other tv show we watched was the beginning of a series on war by a Canadian journalist and centered on boot training for the U.S. Marine Corps.

Along about eleven we headed for home, and Anna Jo slept most of the way. Traffic was light and the return trip uneventful. A nice full weekend in Canada. I don't think I'll let an entire year go by before heading north again. We always have such a good time visiting up there. And thank you, Don and Shirley, for being such wonderful hosts and sharing your Thanksgiving with us.

#### LETTERS OF COMMENT

It's been so long since I did an issue of TRR that I'm not sure that any of the letters I received are relevant any longer. But I must at least acknowledge the people who were kind enough to write. I appreciated the letters, and it's only my own ineffectualness that prevented some of them from being excerpted. Thank you, one and all.

Reed Andrus, Harry Andruschak, Eric Bentcliffe, Sheryl Birkhead, Dainis Bisenieks, Wiktor Bukato, Carl Chaplin, Ed Connor, Buck Coulson, Chester Cuthbert, Leigh Edmonds, Al Fitzpatrick, Don Franson, Gil Gaier, Bill Gibson, Bruce Gillespie, Gary Green, Jack Herman, Don Herron, Hilde Hildebrand, Arthur Hlavaty, Gary Hunnewell, Terry Jeeves, Dorothy Jones, Jerry Lapidus, Guy Lillian III, Ed Lauterbach, Eric Lindsey, Don Livingstone, Dick Lynch, Cindy McAuliffe, Tim Marion, Eric Mayer, Jim Meadows III, Chris Mills, Larry Paschelke, Dave Piper, Tim Powers, Pete Presford, Steve Sneyd, Bob Spale, Don C. Thompson, Bruce Townley, Lisa Tuttle, Ed Vaughn, Harry Warner, Jr., and Tom Whitmore. And Chu forgive me for any that I missed.

#### DOUG BARBOUR RECOMMENDS

// I wrote to Doug some time back asking him if he would jot down some short comments on what was new and interesting in books in Canada. So few Americans pay any attention to what happens up north, that I try to make myself be aware. Not to belabor the point, I think we miss a lot by not knowing what is being published in Canada and are the poorer for it. // Doug's inimitable writing style produced as received. //

frank has asked me to talk a bit about recent canadian fiction, & so, off the top of my head, that's what im going to do. first, can I count COURTSHIP RITE? it's sf & published in the states, but the author is (now) canadian, teaching at mcgill, & it is, despite some flaws of structure & style, a good example of speculative



science fantasy. i enjoyed it, even as I saw the ways it made use of narrative ploys from earlier sf, like, say, DUNE. to tell you the truth ive been reading more poetry than prose recently in canlit; i could recommend a lot but only to a very few readers. bp nichol continues his lifelong epic experimental poem THE MARTYROLOGY, with BOOK V. i once wrote in victoria vayne's fanzine about the sf aspects of the first two books. the poem is now firmly rooted in the streets of toronto & the whole of canadian space but the speculative impulse is still there. a wonderful extraordinarily human book. from coach house press.

but new novels: the best book i read last year had to be timothy findley's FAMOUS LAST WORDS (published in the us, & now out in paperback). if you haven't read it, i also recommend THE WARS, a very powerful novel about WWI, with a young canadian at its (burning) centre. but FAMOUS LAST WORDS is the kind of book id imagine readers of disch or delany would like. the central narrative trope is audacious in the extreme: findley has made an american novelist of ezra pound's invented figure, Hugh Selwyn Mauberly, & this man, who has been involved with the duchess of windsor before & after she married the duke writes his story (their story; the story of certain intellectual's entrancement with high fascism between the wars) on the walls of a hotel near the end of the war; we read the walls after he is found dead along with the american soldiers who find him. it's an extraordinary fable, a marvelous re/making of recent history, a thriller, a document of moral ambiguity.

i also enjoyed robertson davies' THE REBEL ANGELS, a too-clever-by-half story of murder & intrigue set in a university setting, which allows davies to fill the book with his usual arcane knowledge. great fun, though lightweight when seen in the light of The Deptford Trilogy (which, if you havent read, you should - it will give frissons to all lovers of fantasy, though it isnt fantasy, just fantastic). there's a new short story writer, originally from the states, leon rooke, who writes plain weird fiction that is wonderfully alive in its language. two recent collections are well worth trying to find if youre in canada: DEATH SUITE & THE BIRTH CONTROL KING OF UPPER VOLTA; anything else you find by him is also well worth your while. in a few months (in both the us & canada) a new novel i cant wait for: SHAKESPEARE'S DOG, literally a story told from the point of view of the dog. i'll report on that one later. back to sf; if you can find them & an i think theyre published by atheneum, get the Isis Trilogy by monica hughes: superior & moving young adults sf. she lives in edmonton & she is a good writer.

#### HELP!

At a Nameless meeting the other night I was talking with Matt Hargraves, who has been working on an Anne McCaffrey bibliography for quite a while. He's trying to run down some elusive information. Maybe someone out there can help. It appears that around 1969 two fellows named Tim Henderson and Howard Lowery were planning a fanzine that was to be more like the semi-pro magazines of today. They had submissions from Philip Jose Farmer, Piers Anthony, Dean Koontz, Robert Moore Williams, and, of course, Anne McCaffrey, which is the reason for Matt's interest. The fanzine was never published. Matt does not even know whether it had been given a name. If anyone has any knowledge of Tim Henderson or Howard Lowery and their current or last known addresses, Matt would appreciate it greatly. Just send the information to me on a postcard and I'll see that he gets it.

#### SHORT TAKES

The weather has been wonderful this fall. Actually that is not meant to be sarcastic. Puget Sound country had a long and beautiful autumn with warm temperatures and little rain. But recently I've had reason to grouse about the



weather. Thanksgiving Day brought a terrific windstorm which blew my backyard fence down. I just rebuilt that fence two years ago. So now I'm taking it apart, and wondering what to do about it this spring. Right now a concrete wall sounds very appealing. And it's snowed three times already this year. It doesn't snow in Seattle. Well, very rarely. But we are in a cold snap (as is the rest of the country) and the weathermen are predicting a real snowfall, not just a trace, by Christmas day. So we'll hear a lot about a white Christmas (only 12 times since 1891) and Puget Sound country will shut right down, because so few of us know how to drive in the stuff. Bah! Humbug!

El Nino hit the northwest coast this past summer and has screwed up the fishing industry. Unusual fish, never seen in these waters have been caught off the Washington coast. And a parasite brought north by the warmer water has created havoc with the clams along the beaches. It is estimated that millions of clams have died from the parasite and clam digging has been cancelled indefinitely.

Gee, other than that the weather's fine, thanks.

My, didn't the astronauts get a little testy on their last shuttle mission? On the one hand it was amusing to hear them fire back at Control. On the other, it was like hearing a brief dramatization of a page from science fiction books we have all read. It sounded as if the astronauts had so many experiments, procedures, etc. to accomplish that they felt rushed. More demands from Earth were the straw that broke the temper of one astronaut. "You tell me what you want done. I'll leave what I'm doing and go do it." You could hear the frustration in the words and certainly in the inflection of his voice. I guess the success of the space shuttle flights has led scientists and technicians to want to find out more and more about how materials react in space. They'll need to be careful about the workload expected of the people they send out there. They are sending the best; they ought to work out schedules that accomplish a great deal yet don't ask for so much that the astronauts are interrupted and ultimately frustrated. Fewer tasks accomplished well seems better than too many attempted, but done poorly or not completed.

#### READING

I still like to talk about books. No many fanzines do any more, it seems. When Jim Turner and I see each other at The Nameless, the first thing we say to each other is "What have you been reading lately?" Some zines occasionally have lengthy reviews of one or two books, but YANDRO seems to be one of the few with many short reviews. I still wonder where Buck finds the time to read so many. Me; mostly I just like to hear what other people are reading and whether they enjoyed it, or thought it stunk.

A couple of short story collections have provided me with reading I can do at odd moments and feel somewhat satisfied by coming to an ending once in a while. Avram Davidson edited Magic For Sale, an anthology of stories about those mysterious little shops which deal in the unexpected. Good authors here: Bester, Collier, Silverberg, Bloch, Carr, Davidson, Ellison, Leiber, deCamp, Sturgeon. Excellent value.

That mad Irishman, R.A. Lafferty, has just had a collection of his stories published. The title is Ringin' the Changes. Lafferty's bizarre mind boggles the imagination. He makes one want to break one's typewriter.

Roald Dahl has edited an anthology of ghost stories, sifted from hundreds that he read for a television series. He said he couldn't find all that many really great ghost stories. Roald Dahl's Book of Ghost Stories contains three



stories from before copyright and eleven stories dating from 1902 to 1964, the latest being Robert Aickman's "Ringing the Changes" (where have heard that before? Is there an echo in here?), a real chiller that Larry Paschelke insisted I read several years ago. It made me an Aickman fan on the spot. Other stories are by L.P. Hartley, Lady Cynthia Asquith, Rosemary Timperley, Edith Wharton, Mary Treadgold, F. Marion Crawford and others.

For science fiction and fantasy I've been reading P.C. Hodgell's God Stalk and just started on Brian Aldiss's Helliconia Spring. For mysteries I've recently finished K.C. Constantine's A Fix Like This, Arthur W. Upfield's Sinister Stones, and Umberto Eco's The Name of the Rose. Currently I've decided to take a long term whack at the Complete Sherlock Holmes. Over the years I've read quite a few Sherlock Holmes stories, but never have approached or even seriously attempted reading the complete Canon. So there's a challenge for the New Year.

And for Anglophiles or anyone who has traveled extensively in England, may I recommend Frank Entwisle's Abroad in England. It is one of the finest travel books I've ever read. Entwisle came home to England after some years as an overseas journalist, so he feels he is abroad. He also wishes to compare the England to which he returns with that of a half century early, as portrayed in H.V. Morton's In Search of England. Excellent writing and highly recommended.

Well, by the time you receive this, we will be into 1984 and already sick of comparisons with Orwell's work of the same name. Let me take the opportunity to wish all of you a Happy New Year. As I write this Christmas Eve is just a couple of days away. I don't know what Santa Claus has for me this year, but I just know it's going to be another Christmas where I don't get a pony or an electric train. Oh, well.

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