

[illegible]

All right, you guys and gals. A little more respect, please. You are now talking to a bona fide A #1 grandpa. Yep, just take it easy on the old man from now on.

A black and white line drawing of a small, winged devil-like figure. The figure has a round face, large pointed ears, and small horns on its head. It is wearing a bow tie and has its wings spread. The figure is holding a trumpet to its mouth and appears to be playing it. The drawing is done in a simple, sketchy style with cross-hatching for shading. There is a small signature or mark at the bottom left of the drawing.

When I got home from work everything was in turmoil. We were to have a birthday dinner for Sean. The table was all set, the food all prepared and Anna Jo, unable to wait at home for another minute, was headed out the door. Tim and Candy came, Tim just home from work. I got the food on the table and Sean arrived. The party must have lasted all of ten minutes. Sean opened his presents, ate a few bites of food, cut the cake and the three of them split for the hospital. As it chanced, I had scheduled a business appointment for that evening and was stuck at home. Around nine o'clock everyone got back home much relieved that it was all over and momma and child were both doing well.

I finally wound up the business conversation about midnight and just then, Joe Fasekas, the new dad, and Tim and Sean came roaring in to drag old grandpa off to the local rock emporium to hoist a couple of pitchers in celebration. It was a funny night. The band was Shy Anne and they were even louder than Sean's band, Gryffyn, who have played this same spot. A lot of strange behavior on the part of some of the people there; Tim says it was the day the reds hit town. Anyway, we toasted the new life and generally enjoyed ourselves and shared our relief for the next couple of hours before stumbling home (tiredness, rather than too much drink - four of us only did away with three pitchers) at 2:30 in the a.m. Needless to say we're all proud of The Kid, but I'll try to cool the Grandpa bit and not talk too much about him.



### STRANGE THINGS ARRIVE IN THE MAIL

So this package arrived in the mail one day. Not an unusual occurrence in this household where books are always being sent for. But I skimmed the address written at the top of the re-cycled padded bag and it seemed to have come from Regina. Aha, I exclaimed. It's from the Mistress of the Prairie, Susan Wood. Excitedly I tore open the package to see what rare treasure Susan had wrought. It was a children's book entitled JASON'S QUEST by Margaret Laurence, a Canadian author. One more attempt by those two intrepid teachers of Canlit (Susan and Doug Barbour) to lead me into the wilds of Canadian prose and poetry. Well, I haven't finished the book as yet, but up to this point it's delightful.

Jason is a mole, an inhabitant of Molanium, an underground city which was founded by some intrepid moles who came to England with the Roman legions. For centuries it has flourished but now is struck with a strange malady which has sapped all of the energy from the molish population. Jason, for some reason, is not taken with the illness, and determines to go on a quest for a cure that will bring the town back to its industrious and energetic self. He finds odd companions for the quest; an owl named Oliver and two cats, Calico and Topaz. Their very first adventure leads them into companionship with a scoundrel of a cat who cons them out of their three silver coins, their Silver Reserve, as they call it. If the rest of the book reads as well, it will be an endearing treat, and if you're into children's fantasy, as I am, I'll recommend it to you. JASON'S QUEST by Margaret Laurence, Macmillan (Great Britain), Alfred A. Knopf (U.S.), McGlelland and Stewart (Canada); 1970. The book has charming illustrations by Staffan Torell. Thank you so much, Susan, in case this reaches you before my note does. By the way, I've not finished FIFTH BUSINESS yet, but I'll comment when I do, for certain.

### IT'S MOVIE TIME

Anna Jo and I felt like a movie the other night and YOUNG FRANKENSTEIN happened to be playing at a theater close by. We didn't feel like going all the way downtown and I had wanted to see Gene Wilder anyway. I'm no great film critic so I can't go into the film at great length. I was surprised that the film was in black and white, a rarity indeed these days. I must say that the use of black and white was quite effective. Gene Wilder was his own excellent self, but I'll be the first to admit that I can no longer be objective about his ability to act. Since Anna Jo and I first saw him in QUACKSER FORTUNE HAS A COUSIN IN THE BRONX, we've been fans of his. The film has a lot of funny lines and a lot of funny scenes in it and the clichéd characters really play their roles in finestyle. I don't know if Mel Brooks is a genius or not, but he knows how to make people laugh. I was particularly impressed with the performance of Marty Feldman; it was darn near perfect. But others have told me that he simply played himself. Good, good film. The scene with young Frankenstein and the monster doing the buck and wing dance is alone worth the price of admission. See it if you can.

### READ THAT OVER AGAIN

It seems like this is the time to read things over again. I'm not sure what that is symptomatic of. Could it be that what I've been reading lately hasn't been turning me on the way it's supposed to. Bob Silverberg complains of this quite often, but I'm surely not as critical as he. I suppose it's been a toss-up lately. Some good and some bad. I read Michael G. Coney's THE JAWS THAT BITE, THE CLAWS THAT CATCH and it's got some fine writing in it. Mike's extrapolation of hang gliding is one of the most delightful things I've read in a long time, and I'm generally not that excited about extrapolations dealing with technology, even those of a sport. Now give me a game like Jack Vance's hussade -- ah, I digress, as usual. Sorry, Michael. But it's not just the sling gliders that fascinated me about Michael's story. There are sea



creatures of various sorts which had been adapted as land creatures (sharks, barracudas, neat pets, huh?) and are highly dangerous; there is a system of bondage for criminals which allows them to lessen their sentences, but with the chance that they may have to give up a limb or an organ if their bond-master needs it; there is an activist movement; and, finally, a really rotten penitentiary system. Gads, the book has enough ideas in it for several novels. Seth thinks that Michael cannot write. I disagree; Michael can tell a hell of a story.

None of which I started to say. Go buy Michael's book and see what I mean. On the other hand, I was disappointed with E.C. Tubb's ELOISE. It's a Dumarest story and Dumarest is one of my favorite characters. This one started out to have a great deal to do with the Cyclans, Dumarest's enemies, or so I thought. But somehow it turned into a rather pedestrian novel and to tell the truth I have not finished it yet. Tubb, you copped out on me this time. Well, one out of, what - 13 or 14 - that isn't so bad, I guess.

I did grab Cordwainer Smith's NORSTRILIA, which is a combination of THE PLANET BUYER and THE UNDERPEOPLE, but as it was originally written. It seems that Smith wrote one long novel but it was chopped up to make the two novels back in the 60's. I must confess that I don't remember just how the two novels stack up against this one large novel. It has been some time since I read the two. But I will say that NORSTRILIA reads very well. If I had lots of energy and nothing much else to do, I'd go back and make the comparison. I recommend this highly for those of you who are already Smith fans. You'll enjoy reading it again. If you've never been introduced to Smith's world of Old North Australia, stroon and C'Mell, oh, what a treat you have coming. Foot race it down to your paperback rack and get this. You'll never regret it.

This week caught me home for several days with the New Zealand flu or a reasonable facsimile. Since both Sean and my son-in-law, Joe, had been talking about THE LORD OF THE RINGS lately and since I had not read it since 1968, there was no better time to wade into it. I'm still some 100 pages from the end of the first book, but it reads ever so well, as well as I remembered it. Subsequent readings of any book have got to be different from the first reading. In the case of LOTR, for me at least, it's the small things that grab me this time. I remember the general story line, but I'm delighted to find small nuances that escaped me the first time through. I was in a big rush that time and didn't pay an awful lot of attention to a lot of the details, nor especially to the map. Now I take time out to check on the map and think about the number of days' journey between places. I'm sure that this reading is going to be a lot more thorough and probably as equally pleasurable in its own way. I was going to say more pleasurable, but I don't think there's anything like the first reading of LOTR if you are enjoying it. Of course, there are those who couldn't stomach the book the first time and put it down after 50 or 100 pages. LOTR is one of those books you either love or disdain.

TODAY'S FORUM IS CHAIRED BY DOUG BARBOUR -- IN DEFENSE OF "DHALGREN"

.....But as you might have guessed, I am really responding to Mike Kring, who also seems not to like THE DISPOSSESSED (according to his letter to GORBETT 11). Gee, Mike, that's too bad, but where do you get off calling it "pure drivel from one end to the other"? Mike may not really care for the central character, that doesn't mean no one will. Frank: I don't think this is going to be a book that will win fan awards, or perhaps any other kind (within the small world of sf), because I can just feel that a lot of people will not like it. But I did. Like it, that is. As well as think it a damn fine job of very complex writing for most of its 380 pages. That's a lot of writing, and undoubtedly there's a lot of room for mistakes when handling such a large project. For me, Delany manages to do a lot of very daring things, and do most of them well, with grace and wit, and intelligence, et al., as well. I enjoyed DHALGREN,



Frank, and I don't mind that a lot of people won't enjoy it, but where do they get off trying to tell me it's no good? By what criteria? And do they even apply, in the case of this (or a lot of others) book?

By the way, Delany knows THE STARS MY DESTINATION very well, and any number of his earlier books show he learned the lessons Bester taught so well in that book very carefully. But DHALGREN is a very different book for Delany, and it's not trying to do the things Bester, or earlier Delany, did. I always get a bit angry at people who refuse to try to see what a work is doing before they apply criteria based on other works to it.

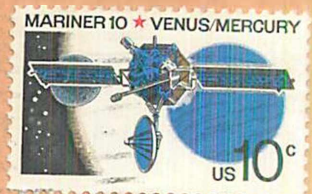
ANOTHER CANADIAN HEARD FROM

Don Livingstone checks in with assorted remarks: "In a local book store recently I came across Richard Adams' latest book, the title of which eludes me. /SHARDIK/ The book is a fantasy about a gigantic bear - the bear's name is the title of the book. I think part of the reason I forgot the title was the price of the book - \$16.50 - quite a bit more than Adams' first best seller, WATERSHIP DOWN. The edition on sale here is from an English publisher and thus the high price, I suppose. Somehow I must get it, but what to do? Wait for the Penguin edition? the Literary Guild edition? (I doubt that they will release an edition) or spend \$16.50? I have spent that much and more on special editions from Grant, Arkham and such but balk at paying so much for a book which is not a limited edition. Then again....."

Ah, vacillation will get you somewhere. The Literary Guild is indeed coming out with an edition, and the American publisher's edition is supposed to be out around the 1st of May with a price tag, if I remember correctly, of \$8.95. I'll even act as procurer (can I say that in a family fanzine?).

Don continues, anent the Cap Kennedy series: "I have read, and greatly enjoyed, the first two stories in the series of 14 published so far. They are well written, have good characterization and, for me at least, bring back that old "sense of wonder." Try one; you may like it. In my opinion, they are highly entertaining stories - but then many people consider my opinions to be rather odd. For instance, I have always considered Marlon Brando to be a mediocre actor of limited range and felt his performance in The Godfather to be inept - I felt Heinlein's TIME ENOUGH FOR LOVE was an excellent soporific - and I feel that some of the Great Canadian Films made in recent years are further evidence of how masochistic we sometimes are - but Cap Kennedy is great. / The rumor keeps saying Sturgeon, but Vardeman says he's heard Kenneth Bulmer.!

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FIRST CLASS MAIL  
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"Throw out your gold teeth and see how they roll  
The answer they reveal, Life is Unreal" - Steely Dan