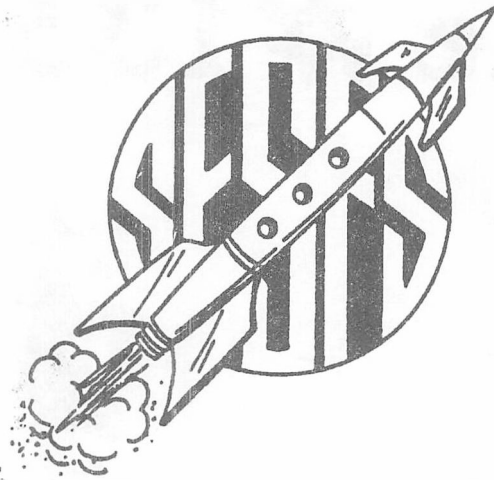


SFSFS Shuttle #135





South Florida Science Fiction Society

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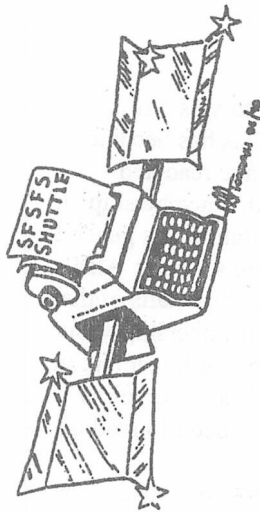
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Proof-reader: Ericka Barker (all remaining mistakes are
the editor's because he rushed the proof-reader.)



Upcoming Meetings and Events

July 18- *B5: The Story Up Till Now*. George Peterson (and an amazing array of audience participants) tell us about the world of *Babylon 5*. How did it begin? Where has the story taken us? Where are we going? And what is next from the creator? Find out all this, and a few more surprises.

Aug 15- *Tropicon XVII Presents an Introduction to Neil Gaiman and Charles Vess*. Shirlene and Peter Rawlik introduce us to their Guests of Honor for the upcoming Tropicon. Learn about the men, their works and maybe a few little known facts. Get to know them before you meet them.

Sept 19- *Worldcon War Stories*. Edie Stern and Joe Siclari tell us all about working on a worldcon. Not just the how-tos, but the real nitty gritty tales of terror and triumph that make a worldcon what it is.

Oct 17- Something by Carlos Perez.

Oct 17- Book Discussion: *Good Omens* by Terry Pratchett & Neil Gaiman, SF & fantasy that have been adapted from stories into graphic format and those that were originally in graphic format.

Nov 13-15- Tropicon XVII.

Nov 21- Another *Babylon V* presentation by George Peterson. George has so much material from his first presentation left over, he decided to do another one.

Dec 19- Annual dinner location: TBA.

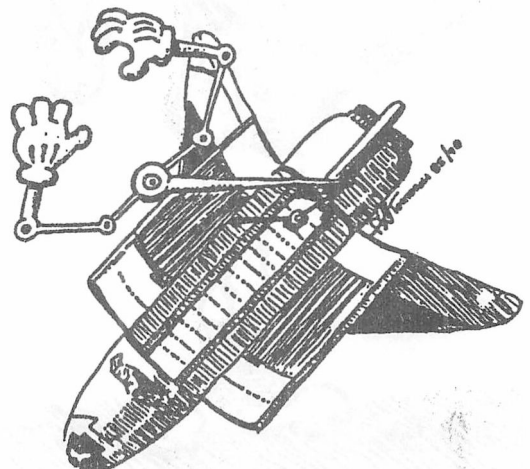
Sometime in the Future- Another Travelling Fete, chaired by Carlos Perez.

Upcoming media events- *What Dreams May Come*, *Bug's Life*, *Star Trek: Insurrection*.

If you are interested in more detailed information, please let us know. We can put you on our monthly postcard which contains announcements and activities.

Visit our website at: <http://scifi.emi.net/sfsfs.html>

The SFSFS Shuttle #135 July-August, 1998
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Recent SFSFS Activities

Due to a misprint or editorial blunder, we had a time warp in the last *Shuttle*. Any events labeled as June happened in May. It confused the heck out of me as I tried to assemble this summary. So let's get on with what really happened in June.

June:

The first event of the month was *The Truman Show*. I did not attend this media event, but the rumor is that it was enjoyable.

Next came the Travelling Fete in Naples, Florida. [For details, see an article by Bill Wilson elsewhere in this issue.] Pictures of this event are on the web at: <http://www.geocities.com/TheTropics/Cabana/8787/fete98.html>, thanks to Mike Hubschman. People continue to mention Ben Bova's talk about living forever. Another good sign is that no one came back with black eyes or broken limbs. [This event was such a success that another one is in the works.]

Our general meeting this month was a review of the Hugos, with a cast of thousands. This has become a yearly event. Those who supposedly have read and experienced all the Hugo works give the membership an idea of what they are like. This presentation is a general overview of the works because there are so many. Also, we use our book discussions to go into the details of these works. The idea here is to inform the membership about which of the Hugo nominees might be worth reading, in hopes that it will pique their interest. It also serves as encouragement for those attending Worldcon to read up on what was nominated.

That evening, we had our final book discussion on the Hugos. These tend to be livelier than the general meetings because we are allowed to tear apart works in detail. This discussion covered *Frameshift* by Robert Sawyer and *Rise of Endymion* by Dan Simmons, along with the nominated novellas and non-fiction works.

Frameshift was described as a techno-thriller more likely to be found among Tom Clancy-type books at your local bookstore, than in the SF section. One person commented on how the "seams showed" where Sawyer put together the bits of his story. The general consensus was that he did have some interesting ideas in the book but as a whole, it was bland. Most people did not read *Rise of Endymion*. This was because of one big flaw with *Rise of Endymion* — it is the fourth in a series, and the reader must be familiar with the other three books in order to get the most out of it. *Rise of Endymion* wraps up the Hyperion Cantos, managing to tie the loose ends together. The book was at times bogged down because of the need to explain everything. If Simmons had not used summaries scattered throughout the book, it could have easily been twice as long. As usual, Simmons shows himself to be an extraordinary writer, leaving those of us who write (or try to) gasping at his sheer talent.

The novellas were far more enjoyable to read than the other, shorter, works nominated. As you may recall from last issue's summary, most people found the shorter works to be disappointing. Of the novellas, everyone agreed that Adam-Troy Castro's work was the best. Maybe we are biased since we know the fellow, but his story has some extra qualities the others lacked. People also liked the two time travel stories, though I did not care for them.

To round out the month, we had a Writer's A-TC Workshop where everyone else's works were praised and mine was savaged.



July:

First up for the month was the media event *Armageddon*. I'll let Adam-Troy Castro speak for himself on this one in a review elsewhere. However, I will take a moment to upbraid our members for not showing up for these events (The *Armageddon* event had a whopping total of two members in attendance). We need more support here. If you can't send a warm body, send money. SFSFS can always use donations. This is a SFSFS event, folks. It doesn't matter if the movie is good or bad. Even if it makes your ears bleed and gives you stomach cramps that's no excuse for not showing up.

This month's general meeting was *The Secret History of Babylon 5* by George Peterson. This was an eagerly awaited and well-attended meeting. George had done a lot of research. He put a video tape presentation together that gave those of us who have not seen the show a sample. George covered some of the history of *Babylon V* and previous projects of J. Michael Straczynski, like *Captain Power*. He also talked about what is to come, giving us a sneak preview of the next Babylon Universe series.

George had so much material that he had to be cut short. One of the things which he did not have time for was going into Joseph Campbell's Hero of a Thousand Faces in *Babylon V*. [Luckily, we had an open program later in the year, and George will be back to continue his Babylon V presentation in November.]

The crowd enjoyed this presentation. The people's participation and reaction remind me of Bill Wilson's *Godzilla* extravaganza. We need more programs of this caliber. They are great crowd pleasers.

Finally, this month we had another Writer's Workshop where, once again, my story was badly savaged. Meir Pann presented us with an interesting retelling of Pandora's Box which we all liked, but could not figure out where exactly he could sell it. Adam-Troy Castro gave us the first installment of the second book in his *Spiderman* trilogy. As with his last *Spiderman* book, it's great fun to see a work being written and to give the writer feedback. The Writer's Workshop could use more people. If you are serious about being a writer, give it a try. We try to offer valid criticism of people's work without destroying their personalities.

August:

The month started with a Tropicon progress report work session which shocked and amazed all involved. Over the years I've been with SFSFS, the progress report work session has developed a reputation similar to that of an extended vacation in the Black Hole of Calcutta. [See my *Johnny Ricoh* article for more on this.] Needless to say, those who showed up had fun, and those who didn't missed out on having their fingers stained with ink.

The next weekend was Worldcon, which I'll let

a later *Shuttle* deal with. My closest experience to it was watching the Hugos on IRC. [See my editorial.] I can say that all of us were very disappointed that Adam-Troy Castoro did not win a Hugo, though he did come back from Worldcon with an amusing story or two. His fame is spreading. First it was a Stoker, and now a Nebula and Hugo nomination. He's surfing with the big boys, now.

The following weekend was the General Meeting, held at our clubhouse. It started two hours later than usual so that the membership could attend *Trek Happens*. *Trek Happens* is a mini-convention held at a local library. From what I heard, we passed out our pile of membership brochures and a ton of Tropicon flyers.

This General Meeting focused on our upcoming Tropicon GoHs, Neil Gaiman and Charles Vess. Our two panelists, Pete Rawlik and Shirlene Ananayo-Rawlik set out to educate the unwashed masses about the works of Vess and Gaiman. They had a load of books on the two big enough to choke a herd of yaks. They even gave out door prizes for those who attended. [See what you miss when you stay home and sulk.] Along with their presentation, they played a small part of Gaiman's CD which had a narrative about the horrible burden of being Santa Claus. They also passed around a plethora of visual aids for the crowd to "ooh" and "ah" over. One memorable thing among many was the fact that the American publishers saw fit to translate *Neverwhere* from British English to American English, so that we Yanks wouldn't become flummoxed over words the likes of "lift" or "tube".

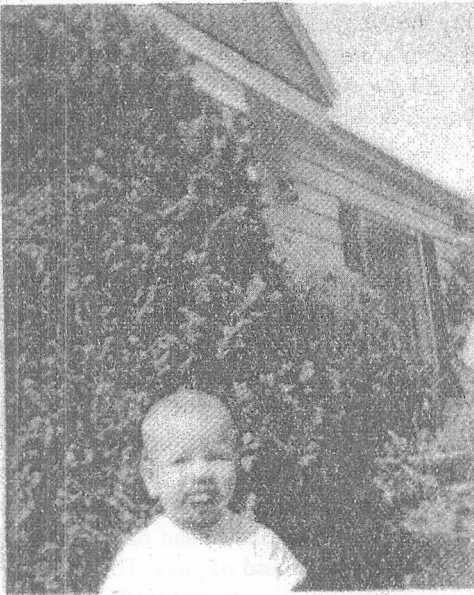
There was an auction with many bargains to be had. Pete Rawlik martyred his voice for the cause, selling the likes of self-sticking Garfield posters, Stephen Donaldson Novels, video tapes, a Ben Grim "The Thing" doll with well-endowed accessories, and lots of books. We made over \$30 for SFSFS. [I would strongly encourage people to bring donations for the auction. SFSFS needs more fund-raising events, and auctions seem to be the most cheap and painless of all the possibilities.]

That evening was a book discussion on *Boy's Life* by Robert McCammon and *Three Hearts and Three Lions* by Poul Anderson. With few exceptions, the majority of the people who read *Boy's Life* loved it, recommending it to everyone. Many of the people who read the book could identify with one or more of the various incidents in it.

Fewer had read the Poul Anderson book, and many of these had read it years ago and did not remember much of the plot of the book. Most of the discussion on this book centered around why modern SF novels have to be huge juggernauts of text, while Anderson was able to create a great novel in just under 200 pages.

One interesting concept brought forward by someone who shall go nameless (because his name is

(Continued on Page 21)



Eating Dirt 1967

A Word From Your Editor (pictured left)

The first thing I want to discuss is how the *Shuttle* is assembled. Hopefully this will help people puzzle out some of the confusing things in the *Shuttle*. If you have not guessed, the editors of the *Shuttle* tend to rotate and change. Look carefully on the first page of every issue, and somewhere there should be a notice of who is taking the blame this time around. [*Or in my case it should be blatantly obvious who's responsible.*] Most editors seem to be vain enough to include their name somewhere, while others incessantly insert comments here and there, bemoaning the fact that they are the editor.

This no doubt confuses the reader to no end, and does not allow the reader to identify with the editor. [*Do many of you find it easy to identify with someone who eats dirt?*] Most editors have grown used to receiving comments addressed to a past editor without too many problems. In fact, it is kind of nice because any negative feedback we see, we can always brush off as being "that other editor's fault." I, as Secretary, and supposedly in charge of SFSFS publications, is making an effort to put some consistency in the *Shuttle*, by trying to force any editors who are mentioned in a Loc to at least write some sort of response to it. [*I suppose it could be easier to fake these responses, but I suspect it works better to humiliate the editor who does not reply to Locs by, say, leaving a big blank space here and there labeled, "Insert comment by Editor X"*].

Once the *Shuttle* has been edited together it gets proofread. Sometimes the proofreader is a separate person who adds his or her own pithy remarks. In many cases, these remarks are accidentally not noted, and so appear to be from the normal editor. [*Abnormal in some cases, if you prefer.*] Some are not properly credited deliberately, thus foisting the blame for a really bad pun or excessive

pithiness on the poor editor, rather than the proofreader.

Now it's off to the printer where no monkey business happens (usually). I can't guarantee this, though. Again, the editor is usually also the printer, but sometimes that changes.

Next is the step that really bamboozles the reader. In many cases the editor, the label maker, and the packer/shipper are three different people. The three of them have a duel to the death over who gets what and what gets put on what. Lately, the Secretary puts together the labels and hands them to the editor, who may hand them to the shipper/packer. Often, a reference sheet comes with the labels, hopefully giving the person who is playing with those insidious check marks something to work with.

Oh, yes, the infamous checkmarks on the outside of your *Shuttle*. The checkmark business is a trial-by-fire, sink-or-swim system, believe you me. If you aren't familiar with the names on the list you just merrily check away in hopes you'll get *something* right, with the scatter shot effect. Often a loc is a good indicator that something wacky happened to the check marks. We'll receive something in the mail that looks a lot like: "Dear Shuttle editor: For the life of me I can't understand why you checked the box about "your cats suggested you have a copy" when you know full well that for the past ten years I've lived a life very similar to the boy in the plastic bubble. If I even get a whiff of cat dander I tend to swell up and get purple spots all over my face. You know I'm touchy about that subject, and there you go taunting me with that dreaded checkmark..." Or so it goes.

Now you know what happens and why. The Shuttle is a sort of controlled anarchy where many people pitch in to make a whole. *[Much like the audience at a vaudeville production pitches in, throwing rotten fruit at the performers until they leave the stage.]* I don't know if there are any other zines out there which incite such chaos when it comes time to put them out. The next time you get something confusing, weird or something which just does not apply to you, you know the reason.

The next thing I want to address here are two experiences I've had over the past six months on the Internet.

As you may have guessed, especially from the liberal use of his name, Adam-Troy Castro is a member of SFSFS. We're all very smug about this and quite proud of ourselves. *[As long as he does not build up a resistance to the hypnotism, and the bulb on our mind control ray doesn't blow out, we're safe.]* He's a great guy to have as a member, and contrary to what many seem to think, he does not show up in blood-stained clothes, wielding an axe. *[At the worst he sings "Ding Dong the Witch is Dead" from time to time.]* Since Mr. Castro was nominated for a Nebula, I was just about ready to pee my pants with excitement and could not wait to hear the results. Since I could not be there in the flesh, I managed to be there electronically. The SciFi Channel had a host attend the Nebula awards on IRC, and he gave a fairly decent blow-by-blow description of the festivities. For those of you not familiar with IRC, it stands for Inter Relay Chat. Basically you log onto a server somewhere on the Internet and receive text messages people type in. It's sort of like a CB radio, only you use a keyboard instead of a radio. Thousands of people use this every day, usually for no specific purpose. In the case of the IRC-broadcast Nebulas, the host typed in a description of what was going on, and the rest of us sat back and watched the text flow by.

Besides the thrill of getting to read the awards being announced in real time, the other benefit of "attending" the awards show in this way was that the host for the IRC Nebulas added a lot of other commentary, such as what various people were wearing, and what they were having at the dinner. They also included a blow-by-blow description of the keynote speaker's address. This lasted for a short while before everyone on-line began to have the same reactions as the live crowd apparently had, as well. Remarkably enough, a few lines of text managed to convey the long, droning bizarreness of this address, which I gather had some of the live participants in excruciating agony.

After this, the show continued, with more interesting comments, and much disappointment on my part that Adam did not win.

It's amazing how just a few lines of text can make one think that he or she was actually there. If you're interested, I believe a transcript of this can be found lurking on the SciFi Channel website somewhere. [<http://www.scifi.com>]

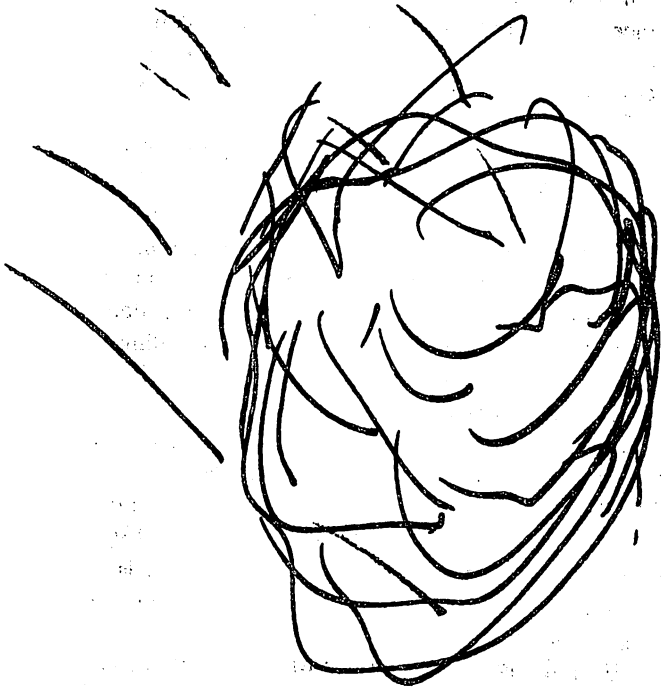
Since electronically attending the Nebulas worked so well, and since Mr. Castro was up for a Hugo (and since I was not at Worldcon), I decided to attend electronically again. This time, besides just the narrator/moderator, Robert Silverberg was on line to offer comments. The only line of his that stuck with me was when he called Gardner Dozois "the Godzilla of editors." Sad to say, this time around the electronic version was not all that good. There was far less commentary. There was basically just the announcement of the awards, and in between, Silverberg answering a few fannish questions. I got the feeling that the Hugos seemed to be rushing along at the pace one usually sees on a slaughterhouse killing floor. From the comments on-line, people seemed to be dreading a ceremony lasting on to infinity and were surprised when it was over so quickly. There was only one long-winded speech, by the person who accepted the award for *Contact*. This person said that there should be several media categories for Hugos — one each for TV, movies, and Anime. This was not only because there is a lot of material, but because it would attract more fans than are being drawn in now.

Even though the Hugos broadcast wasn't as good as the Nebulas, I knew instantly who won, which is what I was there for.

What will the future bring? For example, will they broadcast these award ceremonies via the Internet on live video? Well it get to the point where there will be thousands of people doing as I did, rather than the measly few (less than 100) who were on-line this time around? And will the internet actually change any part of the awards show itself? For instance, this year David Langford did not make it to the awards, but he had someone there to accept his Hugo by reading a speech which he intentionally wrote backwards. *[Again I know this from seeing it on IRC.]* In the future will he, or others who can't be there in person, simply pre-record an acceptance speech into a laptop and have it dumped onto a big screen at the appropriate time for the audience to read? Are the Hugos themselves becoming the stuff of Science Fiction?



HALF A PROPELLER
SHORT OF A
FULL LOAD.



Armageddon: the Review

by Adam-Troy Castro

In one of the puff-piece magazine articles accompanying the release of the asteroid movie *Armageddon* – and I wish I remember which magazine ran the article, but trauma has wiped it from my memory – much is made of the director Michael Bay's uncanny devotion to detail. We are told that he directed his set designers to cover the asteroid set with about an inch of corn flakes, so the actors would make crunching noises whenever they took a step.

This, we must admit, is attention to detail. It is absolutely wrong detail, in that there is no sound in space, but it is still detail of a sort, still the kind of grace note good directors use to foster the illusion of reality. In a way, it's very much the same thing the great Japanese director Akira Kurosawa did, filming *Ran*, when he covered an entire mountainside with talcum powder to make sure the galloping horses stirred up lots and lots of photogenic dust whenever their hooves hit the ground. Crunching sounds may be wrong, but they're still detail, still part and parcel of assembling a sufficiently persuasive milieu. I cannot fault Michael Bay for the corn flakes.

But it takes a truly awful director to go to that much trouble in the production of a film so unceasingly loud and so dizzyingly edited that the

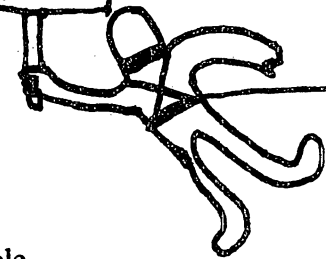
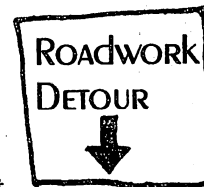
audience probably wouldn't notice those corn flakes even if the actors were drowning in them.

The problem with *Armageddon* is not its basic concept, which has already been the source of one flawed but fair-to-middling movie this year. Nor is it its scientific illiteracy, exemplified by its assumption that an asteroid "the size of Texas" can be predictably blown in half by a nuke detonated a mere eight hundred feet below its surface, and that the halves of this perfectly and miraculously bisected rock will pass by the earth "on either side" without being captured by our gravitational field. That is so stupid it might give Ben Bova a stroke, but let's face it: sharks don't act the way they do in *Jaws*, either. If every other element in the film had worked on a good level, or even a relatively competent one, then even the most nitpicking of us might be moved to suspend our critical faculties long enough to watch the damn thing.

Similarly, we might be willing to ignore the space mission prepared in thirteen days, the catastrophe aboard a Russian space station that makes no sense whatsoever, spaceships equipped with radar, for God's sake, and the asteroid itself, which for no reason other than the fact Michael Bay evidently thought it was cool, has been constructed to resemble a bunch of pipe cleaners twisted together after being rolled in table salt.

Hell, if we were feeling especially charitable about the whole thing, we might even be willing to forgive the film its characters — from the heroic Bruce Willis character who chases his daughter's lover across an oil rig with a shotgun, to the two young lovers themselves, who share an interlude so laughable that even the late, lamented Ed Wood would have said, "Naaaaah!"

Picture this, guys. The earth is about to be destroyed by a killer asteroid. Ben Affleck is wooing Liv Tyler by acting out nature scenes on her belly with animal crackers. So far, so cute, right? Then she says, "Do you think anybody else in the world is doing what we're doing right now?" And he says, "I hope so, otherwise, what's the point?" Leading some literalists in the audience, like me, to scratch their heads and say, "The point is acting out nature docu-

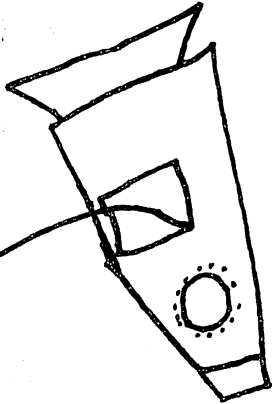


mentaries with animal crackers? Huh?" No, even that is forgivable.

We enter danger territory with the screenplay, which does have some moments of humor but is so overflowing with cliches that it even resorts to the standby of the bomb that has to be defused by snipping the red wire and not the blue one. But, again, we have seen that in films we liked.

What makes *Armageddon* not just a stupid movie, not just a bad movie, not just an awful movie, not just an unbelievably rotten movie, not just the

worst movie of the year, not just a textbook example of everything that's gone wrong with the art of popular filmmaking, but quite possibly, one of the all-time worst movies ever made, is the directorial style of Michael Bay, which is epilepsy codified on celluloid.



Bay is the kind of director who not only learned his craft from music videos, but seems to have an attention span entirely derived from that art. For most of the film, getting especially obnoxious in the last hour, there does not seem to be a single shot that lasts more than two seconds. Most shots seem to be a fraction of that, and even those feature dizzying swishpan camerawork which ensures that anything of any real importance has the clarity of a sidewalk mugging glimpsed from the window of a car racing by in the other lane.

All of this is accompanied by blasting music, shouted dialogue, constant explosions, and crises that seem to come at the rate of two a minute. It is not exciting, but dizzying and headache inducing; the issue quite literally becomes, not whether the asteroid will destroy the life on Earth, but how much longer we'll have to put up with all this before the damn thing finally ends.

Armageddon is not the first movie that utilizes this idiotic style; it's a regrettable trend among many of the young directors. It's marred films of varying quality, ranging from *Con Air* to the Schumacher *Batman* films, to Bays' previous exercise in cross-cutting, *The Rock*, to some genuine dramas like *Murder in the First*. However, no film until *Armageddon* achieved the sheer

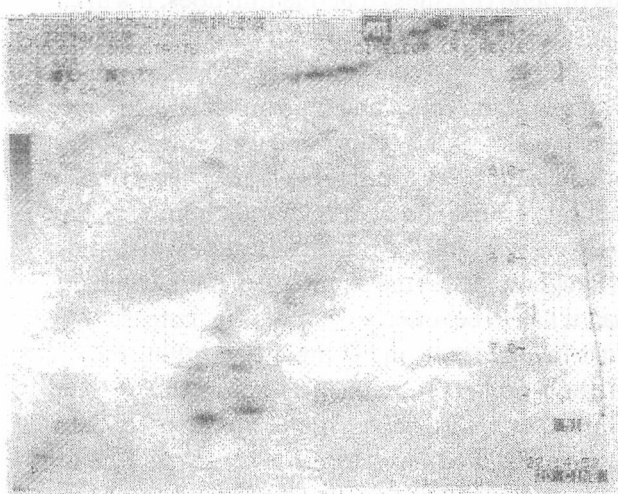
heights of obnoxiousness that this film does. It's like being in a room with somebody who won't give up the remote control, and who's determined to race by all the channels at top speed and top volume, even though every network is showing the same damn movie.

Despite a few memorable money shots (the destruction of Paris and of the Chrysler building), the style makes watching the film agony almost all the way through. It makes the stupid story more incoherent than it has to be, utterly destroys the pretense of audience involvement, and obliterates anything the actors might do to approximate a performance. Certainly, Steve Buscemi and Peter Stormare (both of whom play whacked-out astronauts) were much better as the dimwitted killers in *Fargo*, a film where the director had an attention span, and both actors were allowed to finish syllables before crosscutting. And as for Liv Tyler, who in the second half of the film is reduced to a wistful, worrying face we keep seeing in dizzying half-second reaction shots – exactly what did Bay do, to direct her scenes? "Okay, love, act worried. Actioncut! All right, another angle. Actioncut! Beautiful! You're a natural!" But when action and cut are so close together they practically become the same word, you no longer have a movie: you have a multi-colored strobe light. And if that's entertainment, then it cannot be fixed by any amount of corn flakes. Please, bring on the Asteroids.



"WORKS EVERY TIME!"

I.T. DISASTER



A New SFSFS Member

In case you have not heard yet, Shirlene Ananayo-Rawlik is with child. She twisted my arm (hard) and forced me to include this picture of the little person. She has several of these sonograms shots and wanted to inflict one on the *Shuttle* readers. Thank goodness this is not a multimedia endeavor or you could also watch the 15-minute video. *[We did discuss turning it into Real Audio and putting it on the SFSFS web page. You could thrill to the child doing back flips and H. G. Giger impersonations.]* The picture reproduced here is like one of those magic eye kind of deals. Look at it hard, and perhaps even stand on your head or hold the image up to the mirror. If that does not work, try folding it like a Mad magazine fold-in.

We all wish Shirlene well. She is due in February. If you come to Tropicon, perhaps we can arrange for the rental of a Sonogram machine and you can experience the child first-hand. If a sonogram is not available, perhaps Shirlene could stand in front of a strong light and we could squint hard. We are also trying to determine just how much a SFSFS membership should cost for Shirlene's baby. Do we have a pre-birth category of membership? No doubt it should be some sort of discount rate.

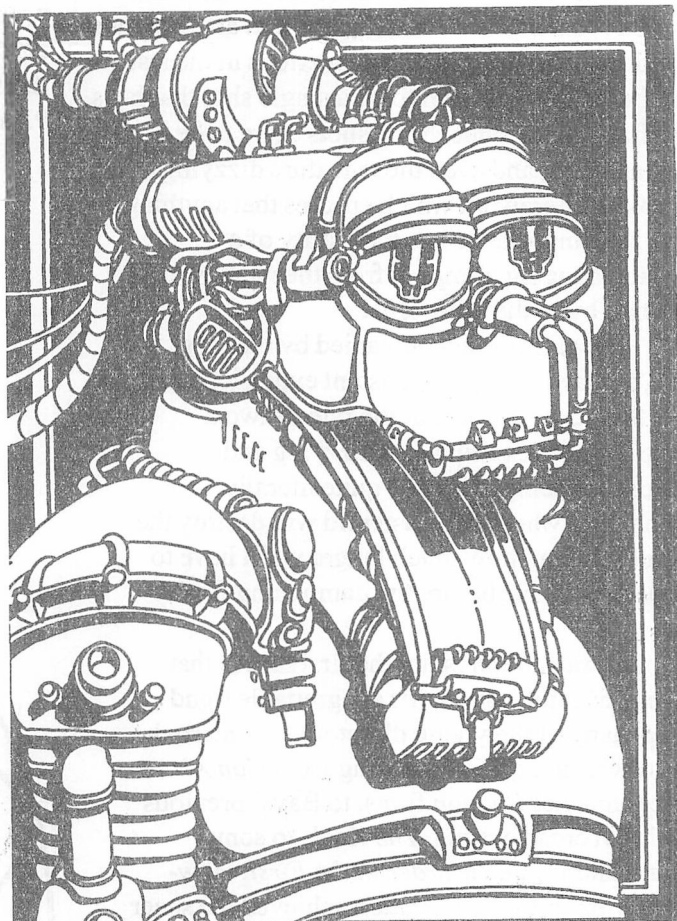
Oh yeah, I should mention the proud-as-punch father-to-be, Pete Rawlik, as well. He is at least partially responsible, or so they teach us in biology. Although, if you are a creationist, perhaps what happened was a strong lightning storm, or maybe the crop of cabbages was extra good this year. Or was it all a result of eating beans?

Anyway, perhaps others in SFSFS should follow this brave couple's example. Maybe it will be easier to recruit members this way. Instead of canvassing the community we can grow them ourselves.

On Saturday, August 7th, 1998 Nick Simicich's computer hard drive crashed. Nick has been kind enough to provide SFSFS with a home on the internet both for our mailing lists and our web pages. With this crash went much of the information about who was on our mailing lists. Nick has some information and was able to rebuild part of the mailing list, but not all. No doubt if you received email after that date, you know what is going on. However, if you have not, then you need to subscribe to our mailing lists again. We have two of them and you should probably subscribe to both of them.

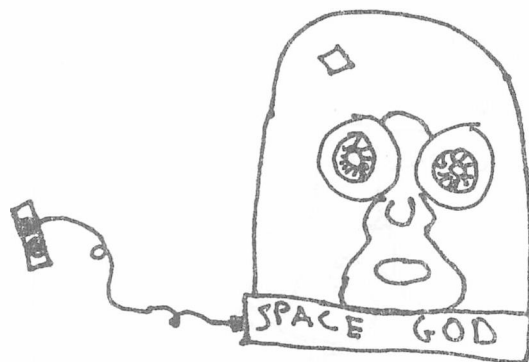
The easiest thing to do is just subscribe to both lists at the same time. To do this, send email to Majordomo@scifi.squawk.com. In the body of the message put the followings lines:
Subscribe sfsfs-announce
Subscribe sfsfs-discuss

Besides the mailing list, you may have trouble reaching our website at: <http://scifi.squawk.com/sfsfs.html> If you do have trouble, the crash is probably the cause.



BOT-1214-92

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Participate in S.E.T.I.

The other day I came upon a link that might be of interest to the *Shuttle* readers, especially with *Contact* winning a Hugo. The weblink for this project is: <http://setiathome.ssl.berkeley.edu>. This is a project being put together by The Search for Extraterrestrial Intelligence—SETI. They are creating small programs that will run on home computers to help them search the tremendous amount of signal data they receive each day. At the moment, it is next to impossible with the resources SETI has to analyze all of this data. What they are in the process of doing is creating a program to run on people's home computers. It is designed to run on idle cpu cycles. The program will download from the internet part of this vast set of data and analyze it, uploading the results. Since the data has been broken into small chunks, many machines can work on it at once. The idea here is to get thousands of computers across the internet to help out, basically turning the internet into a massive parallel computer. (You can see another application of this nature that has been up and running for over a year at <http://www.distributed.net>)

Personally, I think it is a really cool and exciting project and can't wait for it to get under way so I can help start searching for intelligence in the universe. I'm doing a code cracking project now. All I had to do was install a program on my machine and forget about it. It runs in the background and I never see it. I can't even tell it is there except for looking at the daily reports of how much progress it has made.

Just think what it would be like to run the SETI program and find something. Finding life outside the bounds of earth has been a dream for many and, I assume, especially for people who join SFSFS or participate in fandom. I'm sure many people have been annoyed or upset by all the grief SETI has had to put up with over the years. This will be a simple and easy way to show your support. Besides, it's exciting!

CLASSIC BOOKSHOP BOOK REVIEW *MOONWAR* BY BEN BOVA

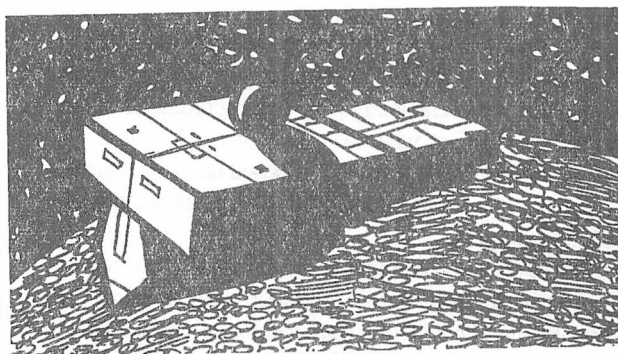
by Daniel Foster

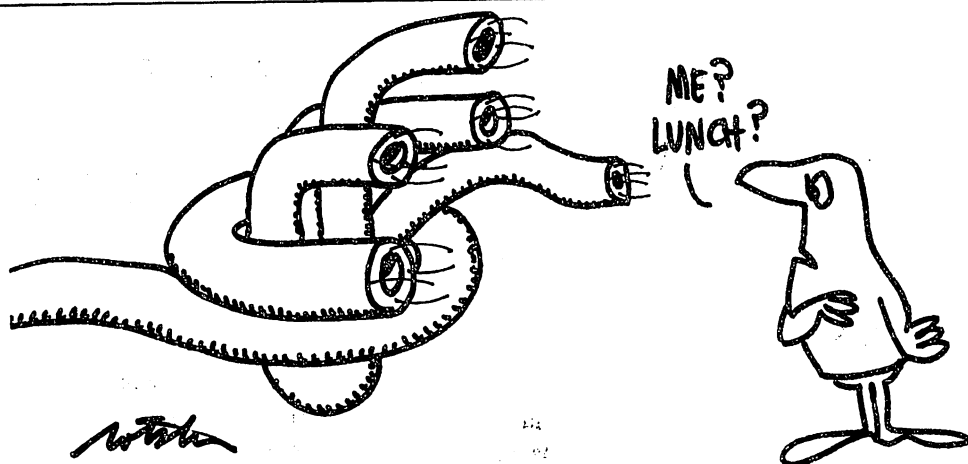
Ben Bova has written an excellent sequel to *Moonrise*. And not just an all out, shoot-em-up action thriller. He has expanded upon his scientific blueprint for a lunar colony, while holding the reader's attention and taking them on an exciting adventure.

Douglas Stavenger has watched his fledgling lunar community prosper over the past seven years. It is nearly self sufficient, thanks to nanotechnology — machines so small they can't be seen by the naked eye, yet can perform many of the costly and dangerous tasks on Moonbase. Despite its benefits, the nations of Earth have outlawed nanotechnology, and the leadership of the United Nations has demanded that Moonbase give it up. Douglas refuses — he is fitted with nanobugs after a near disaster at the lunar pole. Instead, Douglas declares independence for Moonbase. Tensions rise, and after a botched raid by U.N. forces, Earth and Moonbase are brought to the brink of war.

Once again, Ben Bova combines cutting edge technology and the latest scientific discoveries with wonderfully drawn characters to make a dynamite novel. Whether it's genetics, virtual reality, lunar or Martian exploration, Mr. Bova writes with authority and expertise. *Moonrise*, now out in paperback, and *Moonwar* make a powerful one-two punch from Avon Eos. Read these books!

[As editor, let me add my two cents here. I ate these two books up, as well. Both of them are a very good read. If SFSFS ever gets its act together and starts putting out a reading list like NESFA does (oh we just love imitating them!) I'd suggest putting both of these books on it.]





A Fete report on the con with 25,000 panels.

by Bill Wilson

We rolled into Naples about 6pm Friday, to a miniature city cobbled together from several different antique motels and called the Old Naples Inn and Suites. Cindy and I checked in just in time to go out to dinner. The restaurant was called Terra's and was fine, comfortable dining. Fans gradually filtered in, filling our table last. Joe and Patti Green sat with us and discussed several current events. My sister, a spouse abuse counselor from central Florida, couldn't help but notice the numerous bandages Joe had on his face. He explained this to be from a sudden recent sidewalk encounter. My sister looked satisfied at this explanation, and Patti relieved. So then we talked about NASA and Joe's current retirement.

We returned to the consuite where we experienced the fact that Size Does Matter when it pertains to your consuite air conditioner. It was the little air-conditioner that could, so long as no people were in the room. And there was this odd ceiling fan which seemed to circulate sweltering air upwards, no matter which way its blades spun. This led to a late night (pseudo-silent 'cause it was after hours) swim in the pool. The hot, salty pool had an effective residual sun blocking factor of 40, which would come in useful the next day.

On Saturday, we assembled at 9am, to join a vehicle ride-sharing program to the Corkscrew Swamp conservation site, which was Ben Bova's choice for the Fete special event. It was a fun and fascinating event, lead by the head coordinator of the facilities, which is, in fact, what we visited first. There is a wastewater treatment plant there that is based on environmentally sound principles — a water recycling ecosystem, a model for possible future plants.

Then we slathered on our sun screen (those who had not swum in the pool the night before) and took a one mile trek through the swamp, on a well-constructed tourist path so as to minimize the disturbance to wildlife. This path, made of 25,000

individual planks (or panels) of some super hard, water resistant wood, led through quite a scenic tour where we saw all manner of birds, owls, butterflies, beautiful tropical plant life, and 'gators. Although the temperature was in the 90s, the tree-shaded portions were cool, and all of us survived, extremely impressed with the conservation area.

Back to the consuite shortly after noon, where we dined on a buffet prepared by Melanie Herz. (Melanie, we are most grateful!) Sated and cooled, we rested awhile before beginning the traditional "every inflatable you can get into the pool" party. We had Godzillas old and new, a two-foot mosquito, various dinosaurs, and the universe. Missing from the pool party was Judi Goodman's inflatable Titanic, which she threw away 'cause it sank in trials a few days earlier. Judi, wasn't it supposed too?

Ben Bova returned at around four o'clock for a talk in the consuite. He described some of the scientific principles of his new book on immortality, and how it might actually become real in our lifetimes. I personally still have my doubts, but his speculation on how this will change the basic structures of society will undoubtedly make interesting reading.

After finding out we would probably live forever, we went out to eat fish who would not. We all sat together at a long, long table and made a serious dent in the all-you-could-eat seafood buffet. I think it was called The Grouper House.

The evening consuite talk just got too hot. The aforementioned air-conditioner couldn't keep up, and just enough disrobing took place to warrant a grand jury investigation, if any of us ever runs for president. So I opted to explore a bit of Naples that night (O.K., I went to a late night movie...but I'd never been to that theater before!)

On Sunday Cindy, my sister and I left early, right after the deflation of the pool toys event. We got lost in the everglades on the way home, but didn't run out of gas, so we weren't reeeecallly lost.

Meet Johnny Ricoh

If you examine the Shuttle you hold in your hands you will notice a difference. Look at how it is printed. This was not printed with a Xerox machine. It was printed with real ink. You can even smear it like newsprint, if you try.

SFSFS has made a new acquisition to their clubhouse in the form of a Ricoh VT2130. For those of you who sneer at us for not acquiring a bona fide Gestetner, a careful examination of the service information found online will show you that a Gestetner 5315 is actually a Ricoh VT2130 with the Gestetner name slapped on it.

Since it's trendy for SF clubs to have Gestetners (or a Ricoh in our case) it's also trendy to name them. NESFA has Mr. Gestetner. So we gave ours name. After all, we try to surf with the big boys. We call ours Johnny Ricoh for a number of obvious reasons. We'll leave it as an exercise for the viewer at home to figure out why.

Now, for those of you still scratching your heads over all this, maybe I'd better explain what Johnny Ricoh is. I'm no technical expert on the subject, so I'll just tell you my perception. Johnny Ricoh is a duplication machine, like one of those mimeograph machines from olden times. A Xerox machine makes a copy by photo activating a selenium drum which bits of toner stick to, that in turn stick to the paper and are heat set in place. Johnny Ricoh uses a photo process to burn a silkscreen master (sort of like a ditto master or a stencil) which it then uses to make copies. We all know how a printing press works, where you have the type or image set in a plate which is put against the paper much like a rubber stamp. Well Johnny Ricoh takes this stencil and puts it against the paper just like a printing press. The Xerox and Johnny Ricoh processes are similar but have different advantages. We acquired Johnny Ricoh for all the advantages it gives us, and we can live with the disadvantages.

Let me break these down into points and discuss each one:

Speed: Johnny Ricoh can produce 120 copies a minute. Our Xerox machine can produce 99 copies in five minutes. Two years ago it took us over 8 hours to produce the progress report on the Xerox machine. (Last year the machine broke.) This year we produced the progress report on Johnny Ricoh in one and a half hours. One of the big problems we have had in the past with doing any sort of collating party is that people are very reluctant to help because they know it will be very time consuming — they may be there for four or five hours before we are up to speed. With Johnny Ricoh we can finally deliver, on time, work for everyone. We can more efficiently use our

manpower.

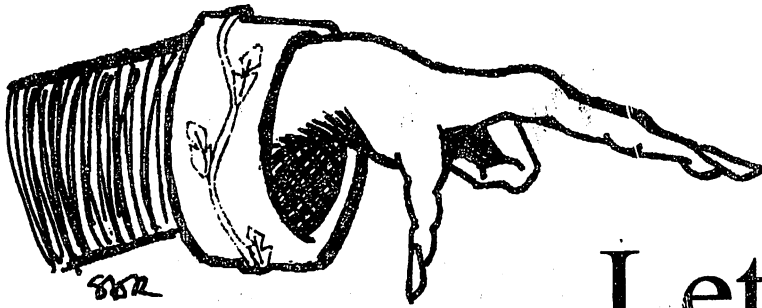
Reliability: Our Xerox machine was never designed for the tremendous load we often put on it. This resulted in it overheating, and sometimes breaking down. For the past two or three years the machine has broken down many times during an important print run. Because of these breakdowns we have had to go to commercial copiers and waste a lot of money, to which I'm sure our treasurers can attest.

Volume: As I said above, our Xerox machine was never designed to handle the loads we put on it. SFSFS may make some occasional copies but usually we only do large print runs, either for the *Shuttle* or for Tropicon. Johnny Ricoh is designed for large print runs. They are very easy to do, and in fact Johnny Ricoh should not be used for single copies, or print runs of less than 50, because it is not cost effective. Already we have discovered that volume runs can be helpful. 1000 Tropicon flyers were left at a single comic book store. In a week, half of them were gone. It was easy enough to fire up Johnny Ricoh and whip out another batch. We could not pull stunts like this on the Xerox machine.

Best and most cost-effective method: The board has spent a great deal of time and done much research to determine that Johnny Ricoh is right for us. We looked into other possibilities as well, like purchasing a new, larger Xerox machine, or trying to set up an account with a commercial source.

SFSFS needed a new printing machine: As noted above, the existing machine seems to have outlived its usefulness. To get a Xerox machine that could handle the load and produce the output of Johnny Ricoh would have cost considerably more.

Now that SFSFS has acquired this new wonder machine, there are some things you can do to help. Johnny Ricoh was not cheap, though we did get him used, which saved us a lot of money. Johnny Ricoh was another big hit to the SFSFS treasury on top of the clubhouse. This means SFSFS needs to start building back its treasury. You can help us out by spreading the word about SFSFS and getting us more members. You can give us donations for the auctions which we try to hold at every meeting and bid on the stuff at the auctions. You can also help supply Johnny Ricoh with paper. He tends to eat it awfully fast once he gets going. He could especially use color paper. Johnny Ricoh can use 20 or 24 pound paper. 24 looks a bit better but it costs more and makes our mailings heavier which could mean more postage. Johnny Ricoh uses normal sized paper though he can also use legal, or even bigger sized in a pinch, for flyers or what ever.



Letters

Robert Coulson
2677 W 500 N
Hartford City IN 47348

7/23/98

Dear SFSFSers,

Not many checkmarks in this issue. How close are the fires coming to you down there? Presumably not close, or they'd have been mentioned... Never read comics, never been to a writer's workshop, and so on. (Putting up more bookshelves struck a familiar chord, but the house is full now so that's past history. I'm culling books now and taking them to conventions to sell, so there will be room for the new arrivals.)

[The fires weren't all that close to us. However, the smoke was. Much of the July 4th weekend was spent indoors, as our area was shrouded with thick smoke. The first time I saw it, I was working on the third floor of a building. I went into an office and looked outside towards the ocean. Then a few minutes later I looked out again, and everything was covered by what looked like fog, but was really smoke. This is when everyone started noticing that things were going crazy. Everyone was calling the 1-800 emergency number to get or make fire reports, or checking the web.]

Now, this smoke wasn't ordinary fire smoke – say, like what you might get on a campout. It was terrible stuff, closer to teargas than a barbecue. Many people, including me, were having breathing problems. I stayed indoors close to my air purifier the entire weekend because of it. If you stepped outside and took a deep breath it felt like you had inhaled brillo pads. To add to this, the smoke also smelled like burning creosote, or something equally nasty – it was as if they were burning old dirty underwear, tires and half-rotten telephone poles all at once.

Also, because of the dryness and fires, most of the surrounding counties had banned fireworks, so there were no do-it-yourself displays. Some displays were canceled because of the danger of fire or else just because of the smoke. I don't see how anyone in their

right mind could go out in the stuff.]

Agreed that *Kirinyaga* doesn't work as a novel; I read it that way and didn't like it. Probably would have liked most of the individual stories if I'd read them separately.

Sheryl was inventive; I never thought of hitting matches with a hammer, but then I was shooting real guns from age 5 on, so I could make all the noise I needed. (Dad had to be there to supervise my earliest shooting, but once he decided that I knew the rules and followed them, I was on my own.) Actually I never much liked noise for the sake of noise; I accepted it as part of accomplishing something.

[Actually, it was Mal with the hammer. After eating dirt, he moved on to making tremendous amounts of noise. I also found that you could get quite a bang if you put starter fluid in one of those old metal "Quik" (instant chocolate milk) cans with a small hole in the end. Spray in the starter fluid. Put the top into place then touch a match to the hole. Alas, I don't think they make metal "Quik" cans anymore. Maybe a metal paint can would work.]

I could never make noise with guns because I wasn't allowed access to them. Then again, our backyard was kind of small. I had enough trouble with a bow and arrow and a tennis ball cannon.]

Never read Tom Swift; did read *Uncle Wiggly*, at least one book. Come to think of it, wasn't it *Uncle Wiggily*, with an extra "I" in it? It was probably from the country library; don't believe I owned one. There was also an *Uncle Wiggily* game that I used to have. (May still have, packed away somewhere, or may not. When I got married, I left some of my stuff with Dad, and he eventually threw it all out. My regrets are for the Buck Rogers Rocket Pistol, which was selling for fabulous prices some years back; doubt if the rest of the stuff was worth anything.)

*[SFSFS has a gaming group. Maybe they can do an exhibition game of *Uncle Wiggily* for us sometime. I know how you feel about the Buck Rogers Pistol. I picked up*

some sort of ray-gun cap pistol at a garage sale as a kid and had so much fun playing it, it eventually fell to pieces. I really miss having it. I think I've seen it in those ray gun collectors' catalogs, as well. No, it wasn't a Buck Rogers pistol but something else. Maybe the Winky space blaster or something.]

Juanita still has a Royal portable typewriter, Harry, but mostly uses her Brother word processor.

Fortunately, I never had to track down any ancestors; two of my aunts did the work. We have a Coulson Crest (sort of a second-class coat of arms). Sandra Miesel researched it, and said it initially belonged to another family; a Coulson married that last surviving daughter and got the Crest transferred to his name. Nice to know I had an enterprising ancestor... Well, two of them actually; Joseph Coulson came to America in 1713, which took some enterprise back then. (And then there was the ancestor who had 16 children...)

[The crest incident was very clever. I'm supposed to be related to one of the Lord Mayors of London, who used to go on midnight romps fencing invisible opponents, among other things.]

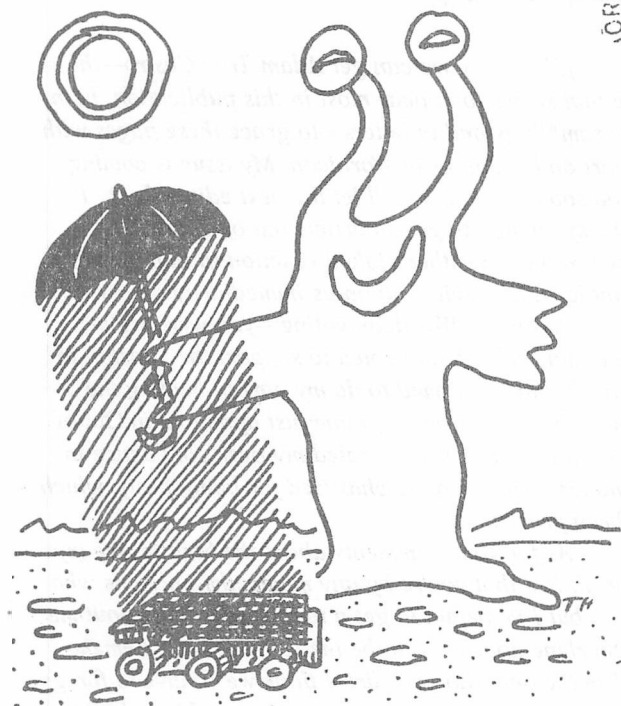
You mean, fandom isn't the end all and be all of

reality? What a shocking idea... (Well, actually, I guess making a living is the first reality – but Juanita and I are making a good share of our living out of fandom these days...) The person I should thank is Dave Jenrette, who put a note in a box of books I'd ordered, telling me about Indianapolis fans and giving an address to write to. I think I did thank him at one point, though. That not only got me into fandom, it got me married and provided a co-author for most of the novels I've sold.

[Maybe fandom is the be all and end all. I enjoy it, but it can get very discouraging at times, especially with trying to hold a club together, run a clubhouse or even set up a con. Volunteers are sometimes hard to find and those who do volunteer may not follow through with their end of things. Many people seem to take belonging to a club for granted, and the handful who take things seriously do all the work year after year. For various reasons it's hard to get new blood. I gather that this is a problem all over, and ties into the whole "graying of fandom" which people are always talking about.

Of course, after years of putting up with this silliness and never getting much for it one tends to burn out and develop these strange ideas that maybe fandom isn't the be all and end all. I'm sure there must be other groups which suffer the same problems. I'm sure there

Eroded clay formation, Big Bend National Park, Texas



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must be plenty of church congregations with similar problems. There's the thousand year-old organist who can't retire because no one else will do it, the guy with the limp fish handshake who hands out the weekly programs because he's the only one who will run the mimeograph, and so on.

Fandom, of course, would be perfect if somehow these problems never appeared. If we magically had money to pay the rent for the clubhouse, or magically had monthly programs for our members. Or if you could push a button on Johnny Ricoh and it would pop out a Shuttle.

So one has to take the good with the bad of fandom and just suffer though. Some of us fast, and give up certain foods for various reasons, while in fandom we give up our evenings and weekends to make sure the club continues.]

We're supposed to be getting a visitor this week who will drop off recording equipment so Juanita can record another filk tape, but it's already Thursday and he hasn't arrived... Initially we were supposed to go to Chicago and record there, but we couldn't find a day convenient to both parties. I gather that it's difficult to be a company exec in real life and a tape producer in fandom. (I've never been either one, but I did do the actual recording on one tape – and not one of Juanita's, surprisingly enough.)

Buck



Dear Peter,

Thank you for Shuttle #134. It shows steady improvement. I especially enjoyed Adam-Troy Castro's combined travelogue and Nebula Awards report.

At this writing (late July) I have the impression that the site selection voting for the 2001 Worldcon is not quite such a done deal as you apparently take it to be. I emphasize that while I favor certain bids, I have no grievance against their competitors. Philadelphia/2001 and San Francisco/2002 are my first choices, but I can live with the alternatives.

I had the sense of a few places where white space was left for art that failed to materialize. This factoid is fairly well publicized, but California fan Bill Warren has piles of original Rotslers available to faneds. Having said that, I know I've seen his snail-mail address recently but just can't remember where! Alternatively, you can write to Marty Cantor who I'm sure can provide the source and/or pass on a request.

Umm, no offense, but maybe the quantity of editorial response in the letters column is just a little intrusive?

Concerning your comment to Elizabeth Osborne about not doing fanzine reviews: several of my readers have indicated that my fanzine review column has given them sources to get deeper into fanzine fandom. (Others have found the reviews too short; my take is that a short review is better than no reviews at all.)

Sincerely,
E. B. Frohvet.

[Hopefully we can get Adam-Troy Castro—the name that seems to appear most in this publication, both in my ramblings and in letters—to grace these pages with a report on his doings at Worldcon. My issue is coming out too soon for that, so I'll let the next editor do it. I was lucky enough to get an article out of Adam. He seemed to have a rather violent reaction to that movie, and inflicted the review upon us immediately afterwards.

As for the Worldcon voting --you were right. Then again, SFSFS had voted to support the "Boston in Orlando" bid, so I tried to do my part in beating the drum, as it were. A note of mine just appeared in Out of James' Attic which also revealed my over-confidence in the matter. I was likewise chastized for being hasty, which has been proven.

As for your comments about the Shuttle, see my editorial. Not that you're by any means the only one who does it, but I've begun to get a tad exasperated about me and Shirlene appearing to be the same person. Remember, I'm the one who eats dirt. I think we'll have to forego art on the cover from now on, and just use big bold letters stating who the editor is! I suppose Shirlene can play me and I can play her on occasion. Then again, maybe the problem here is that Shirlene and I sound too much alike.

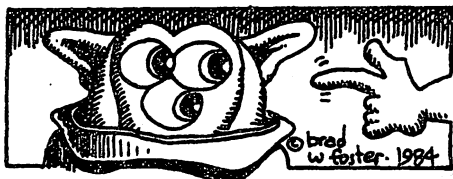
I think we probably both tend to ramble.

And you are right, there was some white space. According to the editor, she was missing at least one piece of art. At the moment, we do have a small collection of art and need to dig up more of it. We probably have more somewhere, and it got misplaced in the clubhouse move. I'll not bore you with the details of the missing art box, for fear I'll get impeached from SFSFS..(though that might be a good thing.) Your mention of Rotsler art reminds me that in the past you did send us a whole bunch of it, which I have here and will hopefully use on some of these pages. (I write this before I start assembling the Shuttle.) We also have art from others, and I need to use it. I also do art myself, as you may have noticed. In this issue you should see visible proof that someone must like it because I will by gum reproduce the wonderful postcard that Teddy Harvia sent me, which I've got on my desk here to inspire me.

As for the editorial comments getting in the way of the letters, you are right. My proofreading wife looked at her last copy of the Shuttle and said we'd gotten totally out of control. I think Shirlene and I were trying to outdo each other. I'm beginning to suspect I'm doing it again here. One should save this longwindedness for Locs to other people's publications, instead of putting it in your own.

As for the fanzine reviews, I agree with you. I'm constantly plagued by guilt at not doing a fistful. When I sit down to do the Shuttle, I'm on a time limit, and I write the other stuff first. Doing fanzine reviews is a time consuming task. I like reading fanzines way too much, and it takes me forever to plow through a lot of them because I'm enjoying myself. You are very right in that reviews are very helpful to other fans finding their way. The Shuttle has gotten new people through others reviewing us. We should return the favor.

Reviewing fanzines, especially with the volume we get, is hard work, and you cannot devote an infinite amount of space to them, which is what they need. It's hard to do a lot of them justice without cranking out a Loc for each one as a form of review. We get a lot of really good quality ones and I live in constant fear that if we make a hash of the Shuttle we'll start losing the ones we get. (Can you say "high-strung editor", boys and girls?)]



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July 21, 1998

THE SFSFS Shuttle
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Post Office Box 70143
Fort Lauderdale, Florida 33007-0143

Dear SFSFSians:

The past months, in review... I would agree, at least, with the high recommendation of *Gattaca*. I have said this somewhere else, but if they ever want to make a movie about the life and interesting times of L. Ron Hubbard, then, after seeing him play the evil manager in *Gattaca*, Gore Vidal will make a perfect LRH. [I've yet to see *Gattaca*, which was nominated for but did not win the Hugo. I saw *Contact* for the first time, right after the announcement that it won a Hugo for the first time, and was not really impressed. I'm hoping *Gattaca* will be better. *Contact* was at times very muddled, and often seemed to rely on the cookie-cutter character type to get by. Many of the characters annoyed me extremely, especially the government officials. I suppose they were designed that way but it made the movie very hard to watch in some scenes. The whole trip was interesting to watch, as was the opening, but the rest of the movie I could have easily done without. One touch I did like was how the aliens sent the plan for the sphere without any chairs and such inside, and the engineers go and put a chair in there and it turns out to be a completely wrong thing to do.]

The Nutshell Version...Yes, Gaiman's and Pratchett's *Good Omens* was interesting. I liked the bit at the beginning which should advise security guards to watch out for suicide bombers with long skirts. [SFSFS picked *Good Omens* as the next book we are going to read for our book discussion. We need to read a Gaiman book, since he is the GoH at the next Tropicon, and this book was the easiest one which our members could get ahold of. Neverwhere was also suggested, but I'm loath to read it now, after the revelations that they removed much of the British phrases because we stupid Americans wouldn't understand them.]

The Nebula Awards... So the Man is sfarad? May Shalom and the Mercy of G-d be with you.

LoCs: Before Tom Swift, there was Frank Reade, Jr., hero of several dime novels. Like Tom, Frank was into technology - I thought that using an electrified stun net to suppress Indians was an interesting idea. All the novels were written by Luis P. Senarens, under the pseudonym of "Noname". The indefatigable Sam Moskowitz digressed on Reade and Senarens at length. [Oh, I'll have to keep an eye out for these too. I'd like to see one of those "Steam Man of the Prairie" books, too, although I think that most of

those are lost. I sometimes want to kick myself because I remember being a kid and seeing some of this old stuff, and was not smart enough to buy them all up at the time. Then again, with my allowance, that might have been hard. Now as I grow older, these books are getting scarcer and scarcer. It used to be that the used book stores were filled with old books from the '60s and '70s—you know, the kind that had novels which were 120 pages long or so. Now all I can find many times are the huge, waste-of-ink paperbacks with the crummy, unimaginative covers that started being published in the '80s.]

Well, gee, I read *Battlefield Earth* all the way through. There are some good scenes - the one with the financial manipulations is pretty funny and the ending where Johnnie Goodboy Tyler finds out he can't raise his son the way he was brought up is appropriately bittersweet - but the book is, as a whole, an 800+ page pulp novel written in a style which would not do for 80 pages. [Well, how does *Battlefield Earth* stack up against the Mission Earth series? I read several of those at one point, mostly out of pure astonishment that they were published in spite of their tremendous silliness. All I can remember of them now is that some character wore a uniform with ornamental bits meant to represent gold-plated intestines (or something like that).]

You know, there just might be a chance to get Kornbluth back before the public eye. If someone were to make a movie of *The Syndic*, say. You can even explain it as a high concept. For the uninformed, Hollywood people have very short attention spans. Most of them could not even get through *The Attention Deficit Disorder Child's Guide to North Amer - Hey!! Let's Go Ride Our Bikes!!*, for example. However, being able to say "Hey, Jon, Peter, you look beautiful today. Dig this - *Blade Runner* meets *The Godfather*. Is that cool, or what!" [I have to dig up my old copy of *The Syndic* and read it. All I remember is them playing polo with machine guns, which could look quite impressive on the silver screen. Sort of a Rollerball for the Nineties. Still, with the release of *Bladerunner*, did Dick get back in the public eye?]

The Science Fiction Book Club is living up to its ostensible name (going over the brochures in the past few years, I have felt that it should call itself "The Fantasy Book Club") by issuing the *Lensmen* novels in combined editions. Since Volume One has three of them - *Triplanetary*, *First Lensman*, and *Galactic Patrol* - I presume there will be two volumes. They are also being reprinted in individual trade-paperback volumes.

[Hip Hip hooray! The other day I was drooling over a couple of volumes of the *Lensmen* series in hardback with the dust jackets. Very tempting, though very pricey. I settled for a fistful of Talbot Mundy from the *Mysteries of Oriental Adventure Series*. I have Sax Rohmer in this edition as well and wish I could find more.]

The Stratemyer Syndicate was very much a factory operation, with no room for a cult of personality — like TSR, which made a habit of firing any writer off of their

series if the writer started getting popular with the readers.

Scanning causes problems. Howard W. Garis, not "Cans". "Oh my ears and whiskers!" Uncle Wiggly said extremittally.

[Certainly does, but it saves time as well. I think I'd have a nervous breakdown if I didn't have a scanner for the Shuttle. Of all the letters we get, yours are the easiest to scan in. I used to really fret a lot about putting art in the Shuttle until I got this new scanner. I have a big problem with jaggies and blockies in scanned in images. Like a nervous tick, I print everything out each time I scan it in or change it to make sure it looks close to the original. The problem with scanning anything in decently for the Shuttle is it eats a lot of disk space. I scan in everything at 600 x 600 which is what my printer does.]

"You Are Getting This Because: Your cats contacted my cats telepathically and told them you were lonely." Looking over the four cats, why wasn't this checked? Lisa has been writing about the cats for FOSFAX. This morning, I came down to eat breakfast and was put under observation by four pairs of cat eyes. So they ate first.

[See the editorial about this one. We have a new fangled mailing list database now. Perhaps we can include a field for "cat owner". Of course the other explanation is that for some reason your cats did not contact "my cats" telepathically. Perhaps the summer sunspot activity or something that interferes with short-wave also causes problems with cat telepathy.]

Joseph T. Major

(Continued on Page 21)

I LIKE TO THROW MY
PEANUT SHELLS ON THE
FLOOR.

They crunch like
DEAD ROACHES
when I walk on them....



Tropicon XVII

November [Friday, the] 13th to 15th, 1998

Author Guest of Honor: Neil Gaiman

The author of many things, including: *Neverwhere*; *Good Omens* (with Terry Pratchett); and *The Day I Swapped My Dad for Two Goldfish*. He's also the co-creator and writer of *The Sandman* series, *The Books of Magic* series, and *The Stardust* mini-series (just to mention a few) from DC/Vertigo Comics.

Artist Guest of Honor: Charles Vess

A marvelous artist and illustrator whose art has graced the covers of magazines as diverse as *Heavy Metal* and *Reader's Digest*. He is Green Man Press and the man behind the illustrations of the *Stardust* mini-series.

Other Confirmed Guests:

Lynn Abbey, Adam-Troy Castro, Hal Clement, Charles Fontenay, Joseph Green, Caitlin R. Kiernan, Holly Lisle, Mike Resnick

Location:

Sheraton Suites Cypress
Creek Hotel
Fort Lauderdale, Florida
(954)772-5400
nightly rates:
\$84 single/double;
\$94 triple/quad

3-day membership rates are:

\$25 until Oct. 31, 1998
\$28 thereafter

Special combo rate:

\$35 for a Tropicon membership AND
a 1 yr. membership to SFSFS
(offer valid until 10/31/98)

Turn over for more info on the Art Show, Dealers' Room, and most things Tropicon-related, or contact Pete or Shirlene Rawlik via phone: 561-844-6336 or e-mail: tropicon@scifi.squawk.com

for up-to-the-minute information, visit our website at:

<http://scifi.squawk.com/tropic/tropic17.html>

for information about the South Florida Science Fiction Society, visit the website at:
<http://scifi.squawk.com/sfsfs.html>

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

I have enclosed a check for \$ _____ for _____ 3-day memberships!

Please make all checks payable to SFSFS

return to: Tropicon XVII, c/o the Rawliks, 539 37th-St., WPB, FL 33407

TROPICON XVII

November [Friday the] 13th to 15th, 1998

*Author Guest of Honor: NEIL GAIMAN Artist Guest of Honor: CHARLES VESS
more info: The Rawlks, 539 37th St., West Palm Beach, FL 33407, 561-844-6336*

ART SHOW

A consistent crowd pleaser for Tropicon has always been the Art Show. In addition to the display by our Artist GoH, we will have works from a variety of artists from around the country!

If you are an artist interested in displaying your works for purchase, the prices are as follows:

Panels: 4 x 8 = \$25.00

4 x 4 = \$15.00

Tables: 2 x 6 = \$25.00

2 x 3 = \$15.00

Info: Becky Peters @ address above.

BANQUET

At this time, final decisions are still being made regarding the banquet. Tickets for the event will be \$25.00. We can assure you it will be a fun-filled event that will take place on Saturday night. Participants will be automatically entered in drawings for several mystery door prizes. You've got to eat the meal to see the deals!

CHARITY AUCTION

The main recipient from the proceeds of this year's charity auction will be Neil's favorite charity, the Comic Book Legal Defense Fund (CBLDF).

Very simplistically put, CBLDF is a non-profit organization that helps individuals within the comic book industry to defend their own first amendment rights. Neil is a major supporter and fund raiser for the Fund who does what he can to educate others about the CBLDF, what it does, and why it should be supported.

There will also be items auctioned off on behalf of the SFSFS Clubhouse Maintenance Fund. For those of you who don't know, SFSFS has a small clubhouse.

Both charities are accepting donations, so if you have anything

that might be someone else's potential treasure, please donate! Don't forget to let us know which charity should receive your donations' proceeds.

Info: Dan Foster @ address above.

DEALERS' ROOM

It will be November and those gift-giving holidays will be just around the corner. What better time and place to look for those unique items to give your family, friends, current and former lovers!

Attention all interested dealers! There are still spaces available. For the mere price of \$45, you too can take part in the organized chaos that makes Tropicon so much fun! Your fee comes with a 6' x 6' space in the Dealer's Room with a 3' x 6' table and a 3 day membership to the convention. The cost of membership for an assistant would be \$15. There is a limit of two assistants per table/space.

GAMING

At this time, Ned Bush is gathering the list of GMs who will be running games as well as a list of the games that will be run! If you are interested in participating as a GM during the course of the convention, please contact Ned at the address above.

HOTEL

Yes, the rumors are correct. Our hotel has changed management from the Doubletree Guest Suites Cypress Creek to the Sheraton Suites Cypress Creek. Our original contract is still being honored, so anyone with a reservation should be fine. Anyone who has not reserved room nights yet should do so soon, as the "Season" will be upon us by that time and the hotel promises to be crowded.

PROGRAMMING

Between the guests and their interests, we've got a wonderful start on a diverse schedule sure to pique anyone's interest! In addition to SF Trivia, interviews, and author readings, there will be panels like "Fantasy Illustrators I Like" [with Charles Vess], "Why Recombinant DNA Technology, Airplanes and Rollerblades Have a Place in the High Fantasy Novel" [with Holly Lisle], and "The History of the CBLDF". There'll be something for everyone!

REGISTRATION

What?! You haven't sent in your registration yet?! C'mon, what are you waiting for? In addition to having a really spiffy looking pre-printed badge, there will be other goodies awaiting the first 130 sentient beings who send in their registrations. Children under 8 years old will be free with an adult membership.

VIDEO ROOM

This year's video room promises to be chock-full of new visual sensory pleasures from the laserdisc library of our video dept. head, Joe Siclari. We're sure that you'll have a difficult time deciding between many of the panels and catching a glimpse of the eclectic gems Joe will have running!

VIP PARTY

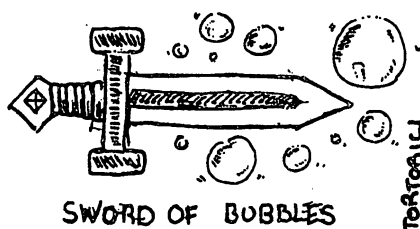
The Velvet Comet has been overrun by goblins! This year's VIP Party will be transformed into the Goblin Market, complete with new games, new rules and lots of prizes you'll need to barter goblin vendors for! Sound intriguing? You've got to be there Friday night to meet the guests, play a few games of chance, and try your luck at outwitting the goblin vendors!

(Continued from Letters)

[We also heard from Brad Foster. Yes, Brad we do have some of your art. Let me apologize here for any confusion or annoyance we have caused. I am using a piece for this Shuttle. Please see the Editorial for an explanation of the crazy check marks. SFSFS needs to go back and organize its files of art better. At the moment, we have the "Art Box" which we pass from editor to editor. However, we all know the "Art Box" barely scratches the surface of what art we have. We need to mount a grant expedition to the SFSFS files and drag up all the art that has been submitted to us and make it available to all our editors.]

Since I ran out of room elsewhere, let me end here but reiterate that, as noted in the last Shuttle, I'm extremely flattered by the postcard Teddy Harvia sent in all the chaos of my office, it still manages to stand out in a place of honor.

Also it appears I was a bad editor and left my comments interspaced with the LOCS instead of pulling it out at the end as I should have.]



(Recent Events Continued)

batted around enough in these pages) was the "buy back guarantee". Basically, you recommend a book to someone with the guarantee that if they do not like the book you will buy it from them so as not to waste the reader's money.

The next event I shall disclose to the unwashed masses was a media event to see *Pi*. *Pi* has a very limited release, so if you see it advertised, go see it immediately. All of us who saw it liked it, or at least had far less negative attitudes toward it than some of the other movies inflicted upon us as of late. *Pi* is a black and white movie made with a budget of about \$60,000. It does a great job with that little amount of money. The plot is about a mathematical genius who discovers the secret behind *Pi*. Other people desperately want that secret and will go to any length to get it. It's a powerful secret which can affect the very fabric of reality.

The movie reminded many of us of *Eraserhead*, only this movie made sense and was far better. This was probably due to some of the photography. I've seen *Eraserhead* once, and I really don't care if I ever see it again. I would, however, like to see *Pi* again, perhaps more than once. This movie is well worth seeing, and is good enough to be considered for a Hugo nomination.

SFSFS Treasurer's Report 7/18/98

Current Balance	10,154.87	
REVENUE		
PAID MEMBERSHIPS	1,113.00	
CONTRIBUTIONS: FBBF	113.00	
DONATIONS & AUCTIONS	243.56	
T-SHIRT SALES	0.00	
INTEREST	41.27	
SUBTOTAL	1,510.83	
BOOK DIVISION TOTAL SALES IN '97	2,257.46	
COSTS	1,656.35	
DIFFERENCE (PROFIT)	601.11	
EXPENSES		
CLUBHOUSE RENT	1,200.00	
CLUBHOUSE EXPENSES	89.33	
COPIER	2,247.15	
COPIER SERVICE	350.00	
SHUTTLE	458.01	
MISC.	141.98	
SUBTOTAL	4,486.47	[1,889.32 WITHOUT THE COPIER]
TOTAL INCOME	2,111.94	
TOTAL EXPENDITURES	4,486.47	[1,889.32]
DIFFERENCE	(2374.53)	[222.62 WITHOUT THE COPIER]
TROPICON 17		
INCOME	866.00	
EXPENSES	84.85	
TRAVELING FETE 5		
INCOME	675.00	
EXPENSES	317.98	

THE FINAL WORD

Here's the last bit of space in which I get to ramble for a few moments to fill it up. This *Shuttle* taught me a few more things about editing. I enjoy much more slapping the whole thing together than going through the process of writing all the articles. The article writing is much more time consuming and heaven forbid any of you saw what they would have looked like without my wife to do the proofreading.

This *Shuttle* is running late, but what else is new. I know there will be some errors and some ugliness here and there. It comes with the territory. This will be the first *Shuttle* to be produced on Johny Ricoh and I sure do hope it works. I do not anticipate too much trouble and if there is, well I learned something at least. [If you are reading this you can assume Johny Ricoh performed properly]

I do want to add one thing here. I'd like to thank Ericka, my wife, for proofreading all this and giving helpful design suggestions. The *Armageddon* layout was all my idea and I thought it would look nifty. It may not because of the way we bind the Shuttle. The illustrations are supposed to be a two page spread and they may or may not work. Special thanks to Ericka for connecting the dots and drawing the lines and insisting I use the computer for the words instead of using my scrawl.

Also we should all give Bill Wilson a vote of thanks. He is reorganizing the mailing list for the *Shuttle*, and SFSFS in general. He's been doing a great job of it.

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3

YOU ARE GETTING THIS BECAUSE:

- ☒ YOU ARE HELD IN GREAT ESTEEM BY SFSFS.
- ☐ YOU CONTRIBUTED SOMETHING.
- ☐ TRADE FOR YOUR ZINE.
- ☒ WILD LEMURS MADE ME DO IT.
- ☐ YOU ARE LIBELED; WELL AT LEAST YOU'RE MENTIONED.
- ☐ EDITORIAL WHIM.
- ☒ YOU ARE A MEMBER OF SFSFS.
- ☒ WE NEED MORE CONTRIBUTIONS.
- ☐ DO NOT USE AS BIRD CAGE LINER. YOUR PET MAY BECOME SMARTER THAN YOU.
- ☐ WILD LEMURS MADE ME CHECK THIS BOX AS WELL. SEND MORE BIG K.
- ☐ IT'S BECOME A SHUTTLE TRADITON TO USE THESE.
- ☐ WE'VE COMPLETELY RUN OUT OF IDEAS BUT WE NEEDED TO CHECK SOMETHING.