

Scientifiction



It's what you get by rubbing one of the fathers of space opera with a new-wave author.

It's what you experience upon sitting on a recently-arrived piece of Kryptonite.

It is a personalzine that's just been given a prize by the National Enquirer.

It's an SFWA meeting at a UFO convention.

It's what happens to a STAR WARS neo who just sent a 130,000-word ms. to Vertex..

It's what you experience when you get 200 LoC's and you haven't published a 'zine.

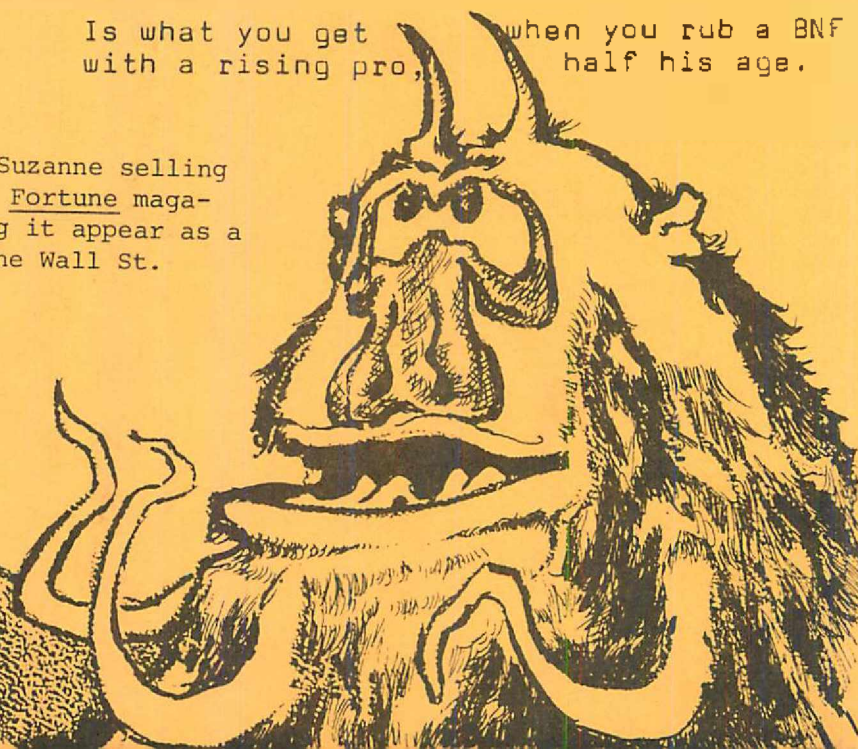
It's what a Lovecraft fan doesn't get at a Trekkie convention.

It's what occurs when you have a JESTERCUN and a John Birch Society convention simultaneously, at the same hotel.

It's what happens when you rub a hardcore ANALOG fan with a heroic-fantasy buff.

Is what you get when you rub a BNF with a rising pro, half his age.

It's Jacqueline Suzanne selling a space-opera to Fortune magazine...and having it appear as a comic strip in the Wall St. Journal.



SCIENTIFRICTION

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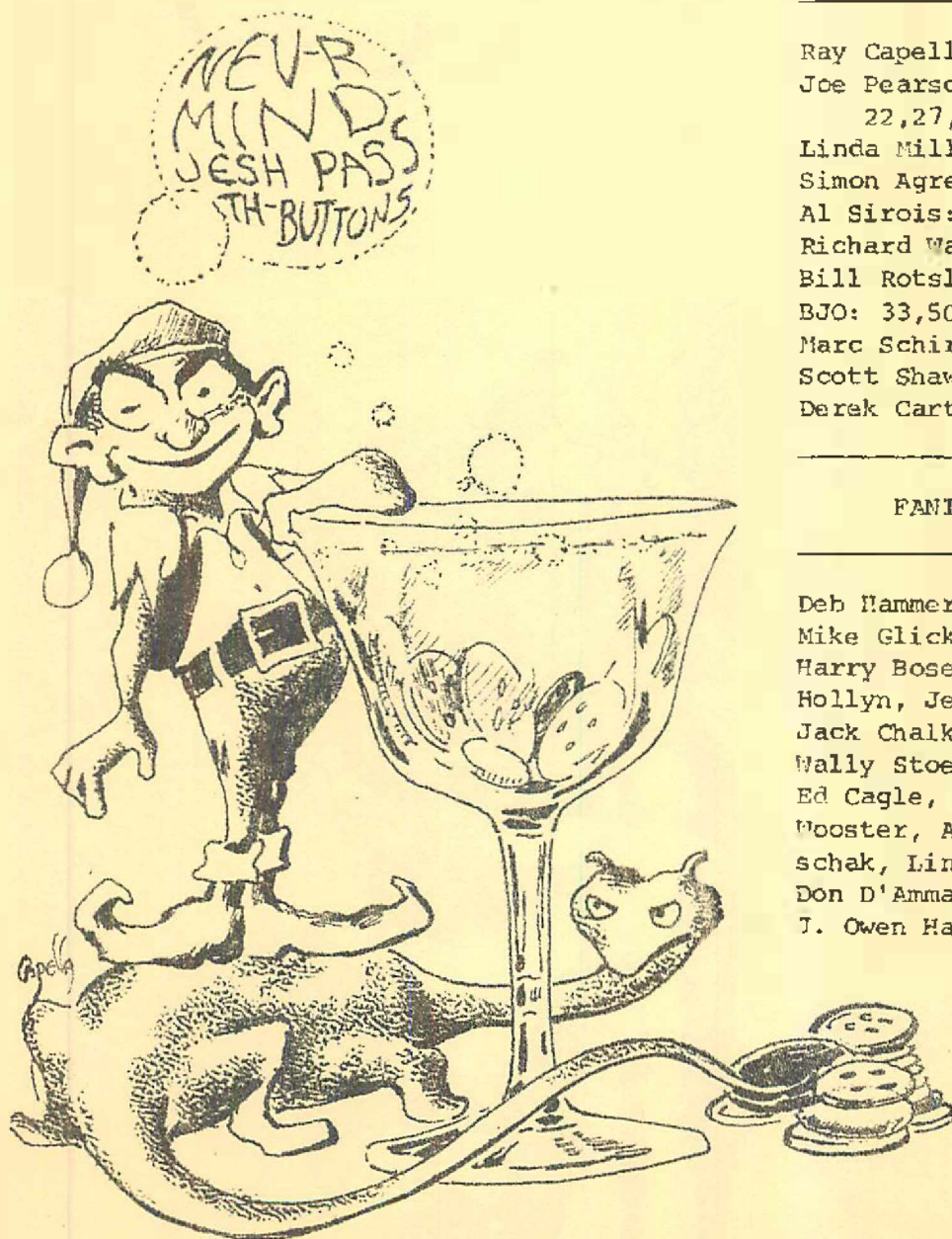
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ISSUE
ELEVEN

1. *Jingo Bells*

As quoted by Heinlein in *GLORY ROAD*, Major Ian Hay says that all military bureaucracies, regardless of their T.O., are divided into a Surprise Party Department, a Practical Joke Department, and a Fairy Godmother Department. For my money you can take away the adjective "military." I was cruising along earning my way as a temporary typist -- one who had outlined a fabulous fannish summer, since more permanent employers weren't jumping out of their jocks in a frenzy to hire me. As an afterthought I took the PACE (civil service) exam. Surprise Party Dpt. issued my

Mike Glycer



grades within two months instead of three, was immediately interviewed for a position even though my scores were six points lower than the 100 usually required for consideration, and on a Friday four weeks later, having heard nothing from them in between, I was called for a job starting the following Monday. The Surprise Party Department, indeed.

While it dynamited my fannish plans, I took the job almost without hesitation. (Come on, Glycer, spit it out, what brand of paper pushing have they got you in for?) Does it give you a clue if I mention that my friend Liz Schwarzin now greets me, "Hello, Glycer, you government scum..." Yes, I shall become a tax auditor for IRS... The first twenty weeks of this job involves a mandatory training program. As a fan I found most of Westercon put out the window, SeaCon an impossibility, and I became the first Duff winner to self-destruct on impact. I feel a bit depressed, mostly from poorly repaying the support my friends gave me for Duff -- but I am pretty sure they will empathize with my choice.

So here we are, three paragraphs into this essay, and we still haven't come to anything that would explain the title. We have just arrived at it. I wanted to go to Australia for all the usual reasons, and one more besides. The extra reason was to explore the appearance of anti-American nationalism that has been stirred up by DC in '84's proposed rotational change -- to see whether it is an illusion or a substantial problem in fan relations, and do whatever I could to ameliorate it.

If none of my Australian readers know what the hell I'm talking about -- then fine, there isn't any problem, and we can get on to the humor segment of the editorial. But for the rest of you who are puzzled by the Aussie and UK opinions emanating from CHUNDER!, VOICE OF THE LOBSTER and certain editorial remarks by Ian Maule, Joseph Nicholas, Esq., and others -- it's time for some blind-leading-the-blind action.

In Australia, CHUNDER! triggered a flurry of controversial letters by calling for comment on reprinted references to the rotational change motion from F770's account of the business meeting, and VOICE OF THE LOBSTER's report on same. The motion proposed "Outside North America" as a once-in-four-years zone for all non-North American bidders for Worldcons. The motion was proposed at Iggy, is backed by the DC in '84 bidders, and was tabled at Iggy for consideration at Seacon. Within North America it took on all the attributes of a sectional political struggle, DC vs. West Coast fandom, since whatever the motion's merits as a means of regulating foreign participation in Worldcons, the motion's passage would (1) spare DC from going head-to-head with Australia (or Sweden), (2) delay a Western slot by one year, (3) require Western zone bidders forever to present their bids at the Outside North America site. Those were the bread and butter issues one could rely on to call people from their beds for a 10 am business meeting. Of course, many of us also felt that the proposal would violate the spirit of Worldcons. This point, which seems so glaringly obvious to Australian fans, and by now to most everyone else, was rendered quite hazy at the business meeting. While we groped around for some consensus, wondering, "Do the foreign fans think this is a good idea?" the motion's proponents told us that the change would (1) give non-NA bidders a clear field away from the weight of American voting numbers, (2) would satisfy Eric Lindsay, who secondhand was represented as favoring any motion that cleared the field for Australia in '83, (3) would regulate foreign worldcons to about the same frequency at which they were naturally occurring, (4) would spare NA bidders the inconvenience of being pre-empted.

I thought the idea stank on dry ice, myself, but at the time it didn't seem to me

the stuff to merit these remarks (in CHUNDER!) by British sf writer Chris Priest: "So while we have a weight of American numbers, it simply does not mean that fandom is the property of Americans...and that although worldcons are an American invention, they are not, or should not be, something that is loaned out on sufferance to the rest of the world."

Reflecting Priest's sentiment, Neville Angove 'refined' the view in his reply published in CHUNDER!'s next issue: "I disagree completely with the idea of changing the rotation pattern so that non-US bids are accepted only every fourth year. Such a change, to my mind, only emphasizes the fact that at present the constitution (regardless of its wording) implies that the Worldcon is a North American con except when North American voters allow it to be held elsewhere. The constitution should be changed, true, but to say that the North American convention will rotate through three zones yearly, and any time that the world voters decide to hold a Worldcon in North America, then that year's North American National Convention ((sic)) will be considered the Worldcon. At present North America receives favouritism because of the feeling that fandom is basically North American. If they want to call it a worldcon, let the constitution reflect this." (Neville J. Angove PO Box 162, West Ryde NSW 2114 Australia)

Thereby a simple scam designed to enable DC to bid out of its usual turn has sent forth ripples of resentment. It reminds us of the potential, if it is not an immediate threat, for destroying the good relations North American fans have been trying to build up with their counterparts throughout the world. Speaking about those of us in North America -- we are fully aware that a certain percentage of our fellow fans do indeed regard the Worldcon as North American property, and a slightly larger percentage will always vote for the site closest to home -- travel to the worldcon, even within North America, can be an expensive proposition. And yet, we can look back at a simple fact: no overseas bid has ever been defeated. Did these bids win because "world" fandom joined and voted for them? No, they won because North American fans by the hundred voted for them. Did these North American fans vote "on sufferance"? Just asking that question makes it sound as if anyone would ever pay \$5 to hold his nose and vote against his private interests. The whole idea is idiotic on its face.

Then what is all this bullshit about? Lazy thinking, I say. I propose that there are real issues involved, but that they have been tangled together by some people who have voiced an emotional reaction to them rather than pinpointing what they can do to resolve the issues. It's easy to say, "Uhn, those Americans." But I believe people will find that in reality American fans, by and large, are willing to help modify the Worldcon to the extent that fans from the rest of the world are willing to provide leadership on specific issues and participate in the political process.

(1) *THE SITE SELECTION PROCESS.* Easiest of the issues to deal with is the actual process by which worldcon sites are selected. At present anyone outside North America may launch a bid anytime they like -- only within North America is the process regulated. At present, anyone may vote by mail (or in person), by joining the con two years hence and belonging to the current worldcon. Self-evidently, in this wide-open process, the worldcon can never be awarded "on sufferance." All North American fans can do is uphold their responsibilities and represent their interests. If fans elsewhere don't mount bids, don't join worldcons, and don't vote, nobody can force them into it. Personally I think this is the right system to use. But one alternative comes to mind: a commission, similar to that which selects the Olympic sites. But that only deals with a symptom. The real need is for world fandom to exert its numbers and find its voice.



(3) **THE WORLDCON BUSINESS MEETING:** Here is the sticking point. The worldcon business meeting is sufficient frustration to North American fans -- no wonder people in the UK and Australia question it. Now to some fans, fanpolitics and business meetings are anathema. My own feeling is that fans should get involved here for the same reasons that armies should not be relegated to their generals. But Worldcon business has for so long interested a minimum number of people that it's now vested with procedures that make it hard to widen participation. The business meeting is the only place where constitutional issues may be decided. In order to vote one has to go to the worldcon, and at some ungodly hour of the morning prop your eyelids open with toothpicks while trying to make sense in a few minutes out of proposals that have been worked on for weeks or months.

Even though the worldcon has been overseas three times in the 1970s, fans outside North America have had little impact since they rejected at Heidelberg the proposals of the day to set aside a slot in the rotation for overseas worldcons. Attending the business meeting is undoubtedly the last thing on the minds of the overseas visitors to NA worldcons -- except when it provides an opportunity to learn the site selection results. Yet you would be surprised at how few overseas fans it would take to make an impact on a North American-locale business meeting. Absolutely none of the overseas visitors at Iggy showed up -- despite it being widely known that the DC rotational change motion could permanently alter their chances to host a worldcon. While there were sectional motives for proposing and opposing the motion, much of the meeting was consumed in casting about for some sort of idea whether overseas fans wanted this change. The compelling

argument to defer consideration of the motion to SeaCon was precisely that overseas fans would be present who could support or kill the idea after considering it in light of their own needs.

However this is only one motion. It is the one best calculated to stir the emotions of fans elsewhere in the world, but it is not necessarily the most important one now in the hopper. For example, there is the attempt to design a Board of Directors to oversee the worldcon, with constitutional machinery to take away a worldcon from an incompetent committee. There will always be something worthy of consideration, debate and public review that fans just aren't going to want to take up in the midst of a five day party. Here is where overseas fans could, if they wished, begin to agitate for revised business-handling methods. Even if we don't have a hundred and fifty countries to deal with, SeaCon is likely to prove that fannish fandom is numerous and enthusiastic in Sweden, Norway, Germany, France, the Netherlands, etc., as well as in the English speaking nations. One can keep telling these people that they ought to fly out to the worldcon every year so they can attend the business meeting, but one had best be wearing a steel hat when he does it. Within another ten years it may be essential to conduct constitutional votes by mail, providing each member with a voter information pamphlet. The in-person session of the business meeting may serve as a channel to receive, acknowledge, and debate motions, but it will be necessary to allow submission of business by mail (even now there are ways to do this), and also, to vote on business by mail.

Should a Board of Directors ever take shape, this proposal could be implemented by voting on motions in the same procedure used to elect members of the Board. Otherwise, it might have to become a responsibility of the succeeding year's worldcon to handle the balloting on business transmitted from the con just closed.

What I am saying is that there are a lot of ways overseas fans could get into the system, either in the short run or the long term. What I am saying is that for their own sake overseas fans need to define the issues they want acted on, and do something to lead opinion in that direction.

Replying to an editorial I wrote in Fapa, John Foyster, CHUNDER!'s editor, wrote, "1) I don't think there really has been a constructive non-US effort to change the rotation rules, and until there is.... 2) On the other hand, getting to choose between US bids isn't much of an option for non-NA fans, who don't seem to be able to participate in constitutionalizing without attending. 3) On the other hand, even then some of them don't bother. 4) On the other hand, NA fans would be more likely to support a non-NA Worldcon by joining/voting if they perceived the Worldcon as 'their' property." My response is, this is all wonderful logic, but all it adds up to is an excuse to keep on doing nothing except bitch and moan. If overseas fans don't take the trouble to represent themselves, then they'll continue to go unrepresented. North American fandom has lots of interests, but I don't think that sitting still while somebody else tries to lay a guilt trip on us is one of them. Do you want another Aussie or European worldcon? Do you want to have access to worldcon business forums without spending \$1200 to get there? Do you want a revised rotation? Do you want more clout in site selection? Then go for it. This is a political situation -- but with a twist. There are people over here who want to listen, and help on the points they agree with. I doubt I'm alone in thinking that fans can and should work together, not at nationalistic cross-purposes. But take away the sense of voluntarism and family spirit by continued sniping and you will take away the very thing that has prevented North American fandom from exerting its obvious political muscle for narrowly nationalistic ends.

2. Yet another tiresome editorial policy discussion

This will not be the last SCIENTIFRICTION. But merely flipping the pages of this issue is sufficient to tell you that the last pseudo-ENERGUMEN issue of this zine has already passed by.

Although I enjoy publishing good art, and hope to keep doing so, there is a difference between that and creating a fanzine which is itself a piece of art. By itself, the slipsheeting requirement for using heavy paper stock makes publishing STFR an endless chore. An editor cannot live by goshwow alone -- especially me. Since the purpose of all that extra labor is mainly to inspire awe, rather than get better material or achieve a higher degree of reader interaction with the zine, it is strictly a luxury. A luxury paid for in time which I cannot spare anymore.

In FILE 770 I have what I have always wanted: a fanzine with tremendous feedback and reader response. (Now all I want is my goddam Hugo nomination...) But I still need something like SCIENTIFRICTION, because there is no room in F770 for my rambling fannish writing. Yes, there are other fanzines I could send my writing to. But I have columns in two zines right now and I just don't have any control over the quality. In one zine, my column is arbitrarily dismembered and continued in the back of the zine at a literally unmarked site. In the other zine the editor interrupts my column with parenthetical asides, or worst of all, follows immediately with a paragraph that dismisses my arguments out of hand. I figure that with strategically thrown tantrums I can correct these infelicities... But as you see, there's nothing that can beat having your own zine.

SCIENTIFRICTION shall have a more utilitarian appearance from now on. Reviews will be de-emphasized -- Stan Burns will keep on his post as chief dissector, but I will try and persuade my other sercon contributors to handle general topics. Articles and other feature material shall be more actively sought. And stay tuned for the next issue: it will be my 10th anniversary of genzine publishing...

3. Science Fiction Fan

One of the important discoveries you make when you become an active science fiction fan is that, hell, you don't have any time to read that stuff anymore. Don't bother me with it... Of course some of the fun was leached out when writers started telling us that sf was great literature, or ought to be, and that if we weren't going around thinking great thoughts then nerts to us. But in the back of my mind I knew that sooner or later somebody was going to turn up who could put it all together -- yes, he could write well, and handle complex human issues, but he would write a real interesting story with fabulous ideas.

I picked up OPHIUCHI HOTLINE by John Varley, and there he was. I haven't been such a fan of a writer since I plowed through all the Heinlein books at the library in junior high. When Varley comes out with something, I've got to run get it. When I read that FITAN was coming out in hardback with a stack of Freff illustrations, I assumed it was going to be an automatic Hugo winner.

Expectations are dangerous things. The illustrations are quite handsome, although Freff hasn't quite got the knack of portraying human faces. The novel isn't quite so handsome. Indeed, I wondered just what Varley set out to do. The result reminded me of Michael Bishop's "Blooded On Arachne" in this way: the reverse of a vaudeville ham who yearns to play Shakespeare, here are two literary writers

attempting to prove that they can do straight adventure. My analogy breaks down at this point: TITAN also tries to pull off an exploring-highly-detailed-alien-stuff theme, ala RINGWORLD or RENDEZVOUS WITH RAMA.

But it is the one way I can explain Varley's inept use of characters, after he handled them so well in HOTLINE. We all know that pulpy adventure does virtually nothing to develop characters beyond two dimensions. The protagonist of TITAN is Cirocco Jones, the first woman spaceship commander. With a name like that (half a step removed from Rocky Jones) one does not expect Fitzgerald. She is a participant in complex sexual and personal relationships with her crew. You see, when the book kicks off it looks like Varley has established characters with personalities and conflicts that really live -- that are a far cry from the married couples only crew of Heinlein's Envoy (STRANGER). But it all goes for nothing. Once the expedition to Themis, orbiting Saturn, has wrecked, they become completely changed and cease to have any more than a superficial impact on one another. Cirocco and a crewwoman named Gaby become the only protagonists who matter. Ironically, the fact that two women are involved is the only difference between this love relationship and all the hundreds of others nourished by adversity in pulp adventures. If Varley knows anything special about women in love, he has managed to keep it out of TITAN.

Most of TITAN involves the search for the alien intelligence that controls tiny, life-filled Themis. Although this is an "alien" environment, it is even less of a challenge to the humans than they would find in a Louis L'Amour western. Although they are "eaten" they are excreted with their suit radios in working order. The indigenous plantlife is nourishing and tasty. There is water. There are friendly sophonts. The ecology is a terrestrial parody whose most vicious species, angels, avoid humans. Never mind that each of these points is neatly rationalized at the end. It is a hell of a long way to go to find out why nothing happened.

4. Hell Is Here

FRANK GASPERIK: I bid five

MIKE FRANK: A man with a long suit

JACK HARNESS: With a trap in the back.

BRUCE PELZ: I know what kind of opening to give you.

JACK HARNESS: But...but...but...

BRUCE PELZ: You assed for it.

MIKE GLYER: (scribbling furiously) Pm slower!

In Ian Fleming's novel MOONRAKER James Bond is driving along the road and spots an ominous neon sign flashing the message HELL IS HERE over and over. He rounds a hillock and discovers that the sign in its entirety merely reads SUMMER SHELL IS HERE. Now that Lasfs has invested hundreds of dollars in an electric sign in front of the clubhouse that advertises its presence, it seems more logical than ever that it be modified on Friday nights to read: HELL IS HERE. The old view was that NO identification should be posted outside the club, for fear that burglars would be tempted. Perhaps the members finally realized that the only stuff worth stealing is the sf collection, which 200 greedy sf collectors -- all club members -- are fully aware. What they do Thursday nights makes no difference to me. But Friday night -- that's a whole different kettle of...fish.

Hell's bridge is a longer name for the card game that preoccupies a dozen or so players each Friday evening. It's a relatively inexpensive game that still seems to inflict all the intensity and madness of more prestigious games like poker.

PAZUZU!!!



Basically, the players must bid the hand so that the number of tricks bid does not equal the number of tricks available. (Since the onus of that rule generally falls on the last person to bid, the dealer, people constantly refer to DDA -- dealer disadvantage). In 1976, when LASFS got into the swing of owning its own clubhouse, a wave of "Caesar's wife" mentality infected some of the club leaders -- we could not have a sign, because it would attract criminal attention; an abortive effort was made to ban smoking within the clubhouse (it was restricted to certain areas); and of course gambling, even penny ante gambling, on the premises would surely lead to a police raid, so card-playing came under attack. Hell served as a compromise -- it was already the second most popular game to poker, and it was scored, not played with chips or cash, eliminating the possibility of the club's five and dime riverboat gamblers wallowing in their loose change as the LAPD kicked down the door closely followed by the vice squad.

As hell grew in popularity, those of us who had an early start on the game profited greatly as new players like Alan Winston, Mike Frank, Mike Bloom, Mike Gunderloy (Mike Makes Right -- D. Schlosser), and others received an expensive education in the game. Pelz, Harness, Jim Hollander, myself and skilled newcomers like Dan Deckert and Marty Massoglia had a run, but time was not on our side. In the good old days, Jack Harness finished cleaning out one game full of players at a Board of Directors meeting, threw open the door, hollered "Fresh fish!" and they came a'running. Now hell-playing competence has tightened up. It gets very rugged for all but the best of the cardplayers, and even Pelz and Harness have runs of ill luck which are mercilessly exploited. Today there is more mythmaking than money-making. Mike Gunderloy recently wrote in Lasfapa (gasp -- another quote without permission) that various surefire methods of suicide included playing a piss-poor game of hell with the Elephant (Pelz' nickname). Long has the story been told of one night when Pelz, hosting a game at his apartment and doing badly, ripped the leg off his card table and chased the players into the night. If nothing else, I can testify that I personally have never seen him rip a leg off a card table ...

Latter day heroes of the game include Marty Massoglia who gained fame as Captain Suicide during a phase when he started jumping to conclusions about whether he would make his bid on a hand, and when it looked bad to him, he abandoned all hope of making his own bid in order to prevent others from making theirs. Mike Shupp's short career as a hellion earned him the nickname of Robin Hood, when he junked his chances of making his bid in order to frustrate a player he felt had bid too ambitiously.

*JACK HARNESS: I don't want to sit on the right hand of Captain Suicide
BRUCE PELZ: Then sit on his other hand and we'll both be out of trouble*

And yet there is some elegance lacking in the hellplayers' mythos if you can remember the days when weekly poker sessions at Nivens' were the norm, and the parade of great fannish names through the poker game was endless. The cardplayers were reckoned a powerful clique in the club in days before the clubhouse was acquired -- either rightly or wrongly, by fans who were bored by card games. The old poker games were, in fact, the reason I joined LASFS. Joe Minne, who lived upstairs from me in the dorms at USC, was a Lasfsian who played in our dorm card games. He said that often he went to Lasfs, then went over to Larry Niven's house to play poker. Two out of three isn't bad.

We made a rocky start. Joe, another fellow from the dorm and I sat in the dining area waiting to start the low-stakes game. Niven asked Joe, "Can you vouch for these two?" Joe took a look at us, saw no garters on our sleeves, no

visors to shade our eyes, no telltale bulges at the shoulder, and allowed that he probably could vouch for us. I kept going back -- after all, I had the one utterly endearing trait of losing quietly... In fact you are about to read a fragmental account of an evening at Niven's in '72. It was not run in PREHENSILE, as planned, but I hung onto it for fanhistorical purposes. "Betting Your Ass With the Pros", what there is of it, would have been the sequel to "Feeding Your Face With the Pros," or the like, chronicling a Lasfs awards dinner where Ellison was featured.

It was growing late in the LASFS world's evening, nearly quarter after nine under the mercury blue pools of light that voided the sky of stars. APA L collators were still furiously at work, coping with 130 pages. Joe Minne, LASFS raconteur who says "Speak softly, but carry a big wallet," was tugging at the sleeve of my jacket. "Let's get going. Everybody is already at the poker game." Neither Larry nor Fuzzy Pink Niven, our hosts, had been to the meeting that night at Palms Playground, but a phone call to the park announced that the game would go on. Jerry Pournelle, Jack Harness, Pat Hollander, David Gerrold, Tina Hensel, her brother Roger and a couple of other regulars were already on the way. To assure ourselves of a seat at the "rathole" table (vs. the "blood" table, all stakes in play, pot limit) a quick arrival was in order.

Minne's ancient T-bird of the mangled passenger side door pulled around in a wide U-turn on Overland Boulevard. Ted freeway minutes later it pattered off Sunset and we drove up a dark street whose mist-shrouded lamps might have inspired "Of A Foggy Night." Cars lined the curb of this Brentwood side street -- and I saw disgruntled early arrivals sprawled on the grass in front of the house, marked by the orange sparks of their cigarettes. I hassled my bulk out of the car door into a bank of Algerian ivy, then followed Joe to investigate.

"General MacArthur is the closest this country ever came to a military dictatorship, except counting the day George Washington was offered the crown by the Army," Pournelle held forth in the dark. (End of fragment.)

I never have figured out the conversation that led to that out-of-context quote, but if you're wondering, the game got started a few minutes later when our hosts came back from dinner. If you thought the pregame setting was exotic, then once the players got into the house it was like attending the worldcon art show -- not by accident, of course. On those evenings when I quickly lost my two or three dollar stake I got to spend a lot of time admiring the Wendy Pini four seasons drawings, and the Don Simpson pseudo-burglar alarm lighted and rotating in the dining room window. Because I was riding with Joe, whose solution to each setback was to open his checkbook and say "Ahhh" I sometimes did an embarrassing amount of hanging around. I was quite unlike a few of the players, especially Pournelle, whose skill prevented them from even having to fill out the worn checks they tossed into the chip case to stake themselves. However, there were some in the blood game who made losing their rent a routine -- prompting Niven to conclude that "Some people win by winning, and some people win by losing." There was a highlevel of pseudo-psychiatric analysis: obviously, if you screwed up at poker, your whole lifestyle was bound to be called into question. Then again, for those losing \$200 in a few weeks, this was not unreasonable. You had to work to lose that much.

The Nivens set a generous sideboard for these games -- which some visitors managed to abuse by melting cheese all over the toaster oven or the like. On that account they issued a dittoed "Rules of the House" which, regrettably, I haven't kept. At last the Nivens moved from Brentwood, and the club relocated to the valley. The era of weekly poker breaking up at dawn came to an end -- and descended into Hell.

MIKE FARKASH PETCOMPARISON!!

1. INTELLIGENCE

DOG: Slobbers, drools, does what it is told unless mad or unless instructions interfere with First Law.

CAT: Does what it must to preserve the influence on earth of the Elder Gods. Don't read passages from the Necronomicon to your cats.

HAMSTER: Will eat its own weight in lettuce daily.

DOLPHIN: Shits in the ocean. Cannot write or do simple sums. No fire!

DUCK: Will stick its head in wheat thresher to investigate.

STUFFED PANDA: Roughly equal to television network programmers. Drools in rain.

2. GOOD WITH SMALL CHILDREN?

DOG: Buries for later play.

CAT: Yes, if child is handcuffed to wall.

HAMSTER: Gnaws tender young flesh and is easily crushed by curious, grasping hands. Good for the active, curious child to learn basics of anatomy.

DOLPHIN: Child may be tied to dolphin for combination swimming/babysitting purposes (porpoises?)

DUCK: Yes, if both are properly baked.

STUFFED PANDA: Stares accusingly. Crackles and sparks loudly when set aflame with lighter fluid.

3. LOYAL? RECOGNIZES KINDNESS?

DOG: Yes, with bribes of food and travellers checks.

CAT: Recognizes only Mastercharge and Little Friskies.

HAMSTER: Has difficulty recognizing self.

DOLPHIN: No problem: with relatives in marine labs all over the world, question need not arise.

DUCK: Has difficulty recognizing hamsters.

STUFFED PANDA: As loyal as any dead animal you're likely to own.

4. QUIET, WELL MANNERED?

DOG: Cries when hunters shoot at it.

CAT: Yowls, spits, leaves pawprints on walls.

HAMSTER: Chews food loudly, also fingers thrust into cages.

DOLPHIN: Boisterous, splashes carpet, will attempt to copulate with pictures of Farrah Fawcett Majors.

DUCK: Quacks, makes annoying sound when being shredded by electric power mower.





beyond the
shift key

DAVE LOCKE

"Mike," I said to the jovial big man sitting next to me at the Petard meeting. Tell me the truth now. You know how eager I am to please."

Glyer looked at the top of his beer can and fastidiously picked off a piece of foreign matter. Between thumb and forefinger he rubbed it to destruction while thinking on his response.

"Dave," he finally responded, avoiding my gaze, "I don't trust you anymore. The last time we talked about your column you had me believing you would do a convention report. Everybody knows you would rather chase porcupines than write or read a convention report, but you had me believing you would do it." He looked at me accusingly, then continued. "And so you wrote an installment about soliciting fan material, all the time trying to be clever by leading everyone to believe that at any moment you were going to tell them about this convention you'd been to."

"You didn't like it?" I asked, trying to assume an innocent expression.

"It was amusing," he granted, dismissing the point with a wave of his hand, "but now you're asking whether I prefer you to continue doing your usual fanhumor, or go back to writing a controversial column which is what you started out with. I don't trust your motivation in asking my preference."

"I didn't say 'controversial,' I asked if you wanted me to advance a few opinions that might kick off some response in your lettercol."

"Dave," he said with an air of patience, "any time you voice an opinion it's controversial. You just have screwy opinions, that's all."

"I resent the truth of that statement," I told him.

"What is your shtick this time?" he queried me. If I ask for fanhumor,

what are you going to give me? Will you pretend to write a pain story while actually telling everyone why you think science fiction writers should be individually certified by the U.S. Department of Agriculture?"

"I've never believed that SF writers should -- "

He waved his hand again. "It was just an example," he said. "And if I show a preference for something that will bring in a little discussion, what then?" He looked at me in a severe manner. "Will you draw a framework to support the philosophy that fandom has many direct parallels with the practice of cannibalism, and somehow use it to talk about the time you fell out of a rollercoaster into the cotton-candy concession?"

"Mike," I confessed to him, "You've got my number."

"You're damned right I have," he nodded. "And you should know better."

"Right. You didn't fall off a turnip truck last week."

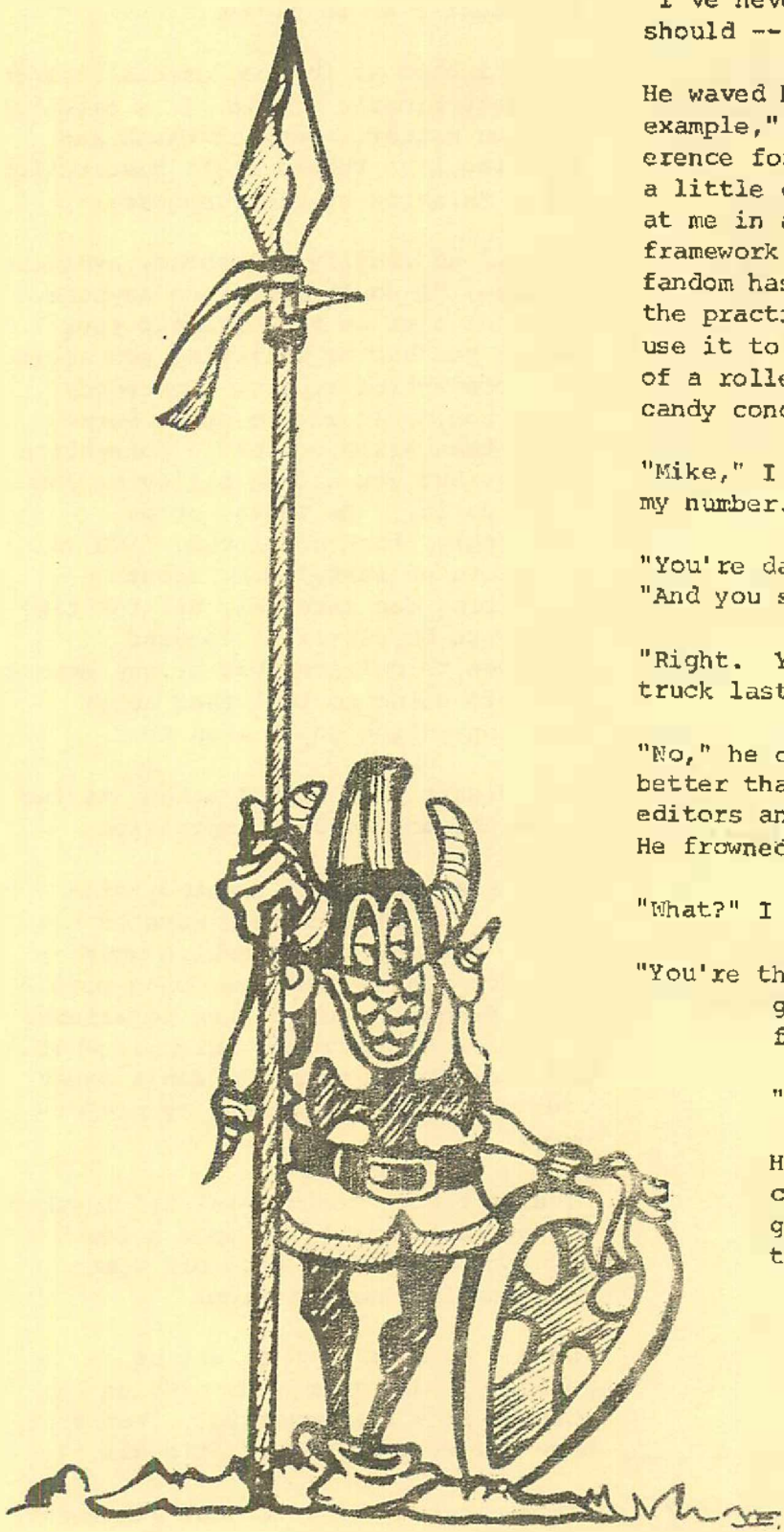
"No," he objected, "I mean you should know better than to run around teasing fan-editors and trying to exasperate them." He frowned to signify distaste.

"What?" I asked, not tracking him.

"You're the type who doesn't call it a good day unless you can keep a faneditor on the ceiling."

"Just a minute now," I objected.

He didn't hear me. Leaning closer, he said: "You've done genzines before. You know that it isn't easy. It takes a lot of sweat to bring in decent material, to get enough of it to work with, and then after you finish an issue you have to go out and do it all over again." Mike's face was turning peevish. "So here I line up a columnist who can meet deadlines and turn out readable copy,



to take a little of the load off, and after a few installments what does he do but start playing games with me." Mike paused for breath, and to let the excess color drain out of his face.

"Mike, I'm sorry. I didn't know you took it that seriously."

His big voice showed hurt. "How can I plan any continuity when you lead me to count on having one thing, and then deliver another?" he asked, sort of rhetorically, I thought. "I might leave a space open between John Alderson and Jessica Salmonson, taking you at your word you'll produce something light for balance, and wind up getting a tract on why you think Harlan Ellison plays with himself when he's composing." He paused, shaking his head and ignoring all the people with drinks who had gathered around us. "It's maddening, Dave," he levelled with me, "and it pisses me off. Makes me want to do something spiteful, like getting Bruce Townley to illustrate your column."

"You wouldn't," I said, shocked at this unexpected twist to his personality. I felt a sudden adrenalin surge in response to what I considered a threat.

"No, of course not," he acknowledged, with a note of disappointment. "I'd never go that far. Besides," he added offhandedly, "Bruce refused to do it."

"Look, Mike," I told him, "I didn't realize how much of a hardship this tomfoolery was causing you." Everyone turned to note the put-upon expression which he sported. As I continued, it changed to cynicism. "It would make me feel sorrowful to continue the game in the face of such an astonishing disclosure. My behavior has been inexcusable."

"Is this for real?" Mike asked, and looked at me expectantly.

"Just tell me what kind of an installment you'd like for next time, and I'll do what I can to ease your burdens."

"Do you really mean that?" The surrounding crowd looked at me harshly,

"I'll take my best shot at it," I said with solemnness, and their faces relaxed. "Just tell me your preference."

"That's the first thing you said to me tonight," he observed with suspicion. "Yes, this is where I came in."

"I know, but now you can give thought to the matter without worrying about it."

"That's what worries me," he said, "that you assure me I shouldn't worry about it."

"Trust me."

He sighed, and with Mike this is a sight to behold. He paused a few moments for inner reflection, and then divulged: "All right, I'd like you to write something controversial, or close to it anyway. I can always use something to liven up the lettercol."

"You sure that's what you really want?" I asked.

"Yes," he told me.

"You got it," I said.

++ Dave Locke



ULTERIOR DESIGNS

JON GUSTAFSON

There are time when the artist in me (which is a sizeable percentage) gets in the mood to do handsprings of joy and this winter is one of those times. The crop of high-quality science fiction art books seems to be at an all-time high right now and I even have a few of them in my grubby hands.

Being an artist for many years myself, and having supported myself and my family by being same, I have a very deep appreciation for those individuals who can use brush, paint and canvas and create such marvelous visions for us to enjoy. One book that brought these feelings out in me with extreme vigor was *THE FLIGHTS OF ICARUS* by Donald Lehmkuhl edited by Roger Dean and Martyn Dean (\$12.50, Paper Tiger/A&W Visual Library)

THE FLIGHTS OF ICARUS is one of the most visually appealing books to appear in a couple of years...since Roger Dean's *VISIONS* in my opinion...and since he had a thing or two to do with this book, it's not too surprising. In fact, when I first laid eyes on this book in one of our area's better bookstores, I thought it was another Roger Dean book, because it had a Dean cover painting. However it is not, and he has only a few works in 159 pages of fantastic illustrations. But it is, with few exceptions, a British book.

The contents, divided into seven sections by a rather stark, strange poem are set up so that the paintings in each follow a theme or mood set by the poem. While I did not care for Donald Lehmkuhl's poem it did have a few lines that attracted my eye. One, set in a section titled "LEVIATHINS. The First Moment" goes "The forelimbs of *Tyrannosaurus Rex* withered because he was not yet ready to write." Many of the paintings in this section revolve around dinosaur-like animals, and while very good, seem to lack the imagination abounding elsewhere in the book. However, a couple very exceptional exceptions deserve some description. Two were by Patrick Woodroffe, whose jewel-like paintings have appeared on a few American sf books, and many British ones. 'Mountain

Dragons of British Columbia' is a light-hearted look at a momma and poppa dragon bringing home 'the bacon' (which in this case are some Bing cherries) to three little dronglets nested in a crag -- with the wilds of B.C. displayed in the background. Woodroffe's other painting in this section is titled "The Oriental Dragon-Fly" and is easily one of the most impressive paintings I've ever seen. In the foreground is a six-legged lizard with the tail, antennae and wings of a dragon fly, munching happily on what looks like an opium poppy. In the distance the clouds are releasing their rain on a rather desolate-looking landscape. The intense colors of the dragonfly make a splendid contrast to the somber clouds and flat, ochre-tinted landscape. Patrick Woodroffe has an eye for detail that is hard to equal, but it is more than just an eye for detail, it is an eye for believable detail.

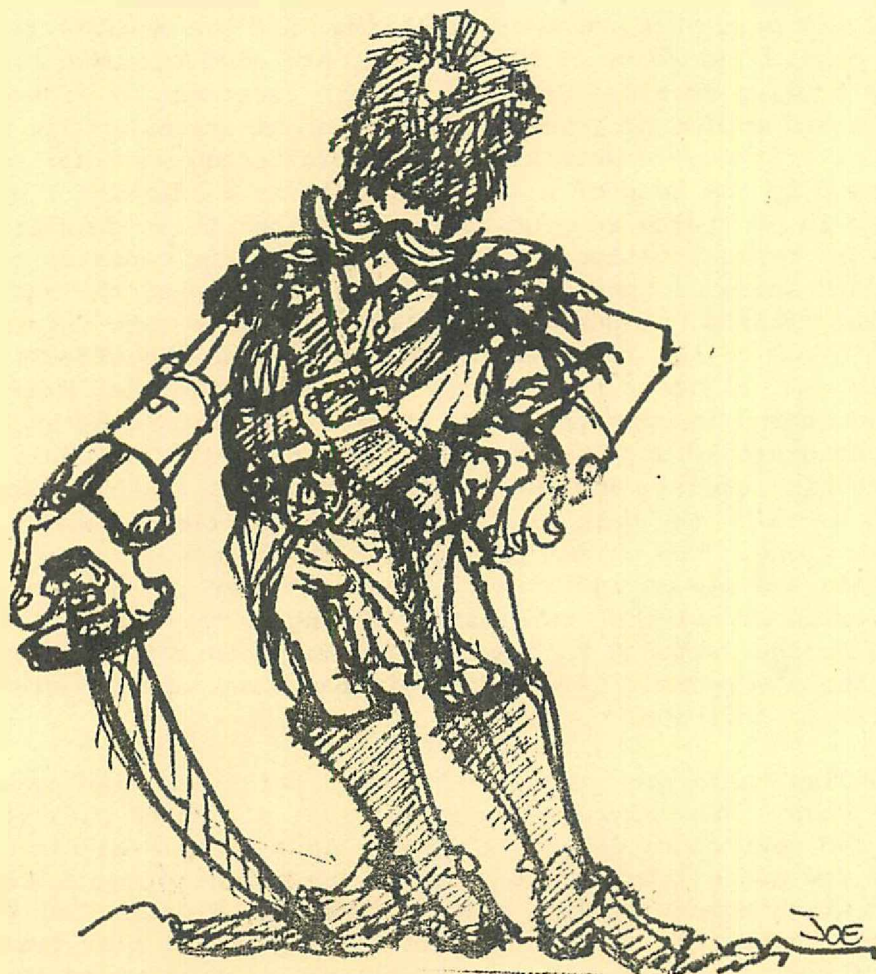
The other painting of note is by Una Woodruff -- quite a coincidence, huh? It's titled "From 'Inventorum Naturae'." It looks very much like a plate from a botany book, except that the flowers shown in various stages of development turn into dragonflies. Una has two other paintings, both botanical illustrations, that depict the development of butterflies from dying leaves, and how a type of bird is grown. Very bizarre and inventive.

In other sections, there are a number of paintings (and painters) that stand out and deserve some mention. One is Peter Elson's "The Einstein Intersection" which shows a rider on a very large, striped lizard on a rise. They are looking across the plain at a vast ruined city in the distance. The effect of the brightly lit figures and the pale background is startling, and the mounted rider almost jumps out of the page. The works of Melvyn Grant are good throughout and his style seems to be similar to Steve Fabian's (in his treatment of figures) and Tom Barber's (in his choice of colors and color combinations). Jim Burns' "Image of the Beast" is a strange combination of the erotic and bestial: a sensual woman's body is topped by the head of a mad dog. This is a painting I would not like to have hanging in my living room no matter how beautifully done it is. Ian Miller's works are very representative and quite dramatic. His contrast of very strong light and dark areas is done exquisitely; he did some of the backgrounds for the animated film WIZARDS. Angus McKie's "Untitled" is a very interesting painting because it is one of the few in this book that shows the effects of the atmosphere over a distance. It has a skeleton in a space suit in the immediate foreground (upright and buried in sand up to its chest). The midground shows some palm trees scattered around and leading into the background, which is where the ruins of the spaceship stand -- and what ruins! Humongous is the technical term, I think -- to describe the hulk of a ship that is a mile or two in diameter and several miles long. The effect is enhanced by McKie's technique of making the ship very pale and almost indistinct. The next time you are in a position where you can see a series of hills or mountains receding in the distance, notice how the colors fade as the distance increases. Too many otherwise intelligent illustrators miss using the atmospheric effect in their paintings and I'm glad to see that McKie used it in this one.

For technophiles there are plenty of "gadget" paintings, led by one of the very best, Chris Foss. His "Flying Saucer Over U.S. Air Base" with its glowing yellows and ochres and meticulous detail is an excellent example of his work, and his "Slan" is a few pages later. More work by the talented Angus McKie is shown in "SPACE. The Sixth Moment." His painting "The High Frontier" shows an L-5 type space colony. Also very evident in this section is the illustration of Peter Jones, who, if my memory serves me, did all the illustrations for a book of future spaceships. I was leafing my way leisurely through this section of the book, idly admiring paintings by Foss and McKie, Burce Pennington, Colin Hay,

Peter Jones and Melvyn Grant when I turned to the first of five paintings by Tim White. Stunned, I stared at "Wandering Worlds" and the magnificent spaceship that floated serenely above the blue and white world, and the small shuttle ship in the lower foreground. After devouring this one painting for several minutes, I looked at his other works and my admiration for this man's immense skill grew as I studied "Untitled" (which shows a scoutship swooping low over a suitably alien landscape at dawn or dusk), "Through a Glass Darkly," "Autumn Meeting" (one of his most technically perfect works). It has an alien spaceship resting on a grassy knoll, its landing gear and instrument domes making it look very much like an insect. It is very highly polished, and the reflections mirrored in the surface are a delight to the true technophile; not to mention the two people and suited chimpanzees who are looking at the ship. His other painting was "Those Who Watch." He used a couple of colors I respond very strongly to -- a light yellowish green, a very pure blue that seems to have a touch of violet, and violet itself. Keep an eye out for this guy: he's GREAT!

This is not to imply, of course, that the works by Peter Elson, Chris Moore and Jim Burns are not good as well, for they are. Actually very few of the artists contributed work I didn't really appreciate -- Peter Goodfellow, Terry Ilott, Syd Mead and John Blanche. Since I am not enamoured of all styles, this does not



surprise me. Overall the quality of paintings in this book is outstanding and says to us (if I may borrow a phrase from history), "The British are coming, the British are coming." Buy this book; I guarantee you won't regret it.

There is an excellent magazine out on the stands now called STARLOG, which has a sister mag called FUTURE, that many of you may have seen and probably bought. Besides the mag, the Norman Jacobs/Kerry O'Quinn company puts out a number of very interesting publications that I recently received. Called "Starlog Photo Guidebooks" they include books on Aliens, Spaceships, Fantastic Worlds and feature stills from tv and movies, and usually a description of the show from which they came. They are very interesting to fans like myself -- and at only \$5.95 a shot, are priced well, too. Correction. The one on Spaceships only costs \$2.95.

SPACE ART, written and compiled by the well-known astronomical artist Ron Miller, is one of the best books on astronomical illustration I've ever seen. The cover was apparently painted for the book by the Grandmaster of the field, Chesley Bonestell. At age ninety he still possesses a great deal of skill. He is, of course, one of the featured artists along with such greats as Miller, Lucien Rudaux (who painted in the early days of this century), Ludek Pesek (who did the magnificent series for the National Geographic Magazine a couple of years ago), Andrei Sokolov, Paul Calle, John Berkey, Don Davis, David Hardy, Paul Lehr, Bob McCall, Hal Clement (huh? you mean? Yup -- the author packs a pretty decent hand at art, too.) Vincent DiFate, Mel Hunter, Mike Whelan, Alex Schomburg and others. There are even some names, besides Hal Clement's, that you wouldn't expect to see in a book like this. For instance, there are works by James Wyeth, James Nasmyth, Norman Rockwell, Frank R. Paul, Howard V. Brown and Robert Rauschenberg.

Ron Miller has obviously spent a great deal of time and effort to assemble the illustrations used in this book and the writing is light and informative.

Illustrations are printed very well on slick, clay-coat paper and the whole package is designed extremely well. While some of the illustrations in this book are not as flashy as the ones in THE FLIGHTS OF ICARUS, they possess a grandeur of their own that is difficult to match. Besides taking you through the solar system and some of the other stars in our galaxy, they have included sections on the hardware that it will take to get out to the stars, the NASA Fine Arts Program, biographies of some of the artists, how a space painting is designed, a selected bibliography, and a couple of sections on where to see space art and buy it. If you are into astronomy at all, and appreciate good astronomical art, by all means order this book (\$7.95 from STARLOG MAGAZINE, 475 Park Avenue South, NY NY 10016.)

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THE COURTS OF CHAOS, by Roger Zelazny. Reviewed by STAN BURNS
Doubleday 1978 \$7.95'

"It might not have been the best of plans, but it was the only one I had. There was no longer time to plot." P.136. That quote sums up not only this novel, but the whole Amber series that this novel ends. It is too loose, too obviously Zelazny stretching a 400 page book into five novels to meet his creditors. Yet in this novel the series finally came alive for me. Maybe it was the ending, or the fact that Corwin has shown enough growth that he rejects the crown of Amber and becomes a more identifiable human being than a grasping user. Or, maybe like all things that come to a close after years of waiting, you can't admit to yourself that the waiting wasn't worthwhile. Anyway, it has a nice cover.



— LAST DRAWING OF THE YEAR! —
CAPON 12-31-77

STAN BURNS REVIEWS

THE FOURTH R by George O. Smith
Dell 1959/79 \$1.75

This long out of print book is Smith's best novel. Jimmy Holden is five when his 'uncle' Paul kills his parents and tries to kill him to gain control of their revolutionary education machine. They have used their machine on Jimmy, and consequently he has the mind and education of an adult although he has the body of a five year old with all its built in limitations. No one will believe him about the murder of his parents; he is put into the legal custody of his parents' killer. Destroying the machine (the making of which is indelibly inscribed in his mind by the machine), Jimmy runs away and plots revenge. Smith handles all of Jimmy's problems of surviving in an adult world that will not take him seriously with logic and skill. But the book's haphazard structure is its eventual failing point.

After following Jimmy for the first third of the novel, Smith does a flashback from Paul's perspective which totally destroys the flow of the story. This is repeated later in the book, and the whole point of view changes at the ending as if Smith had written himself into a corner and couldn't get out. These abrupt shifts in point of view almost destroy the narrative flow. But the novel marks a distinct departure from the pulp themes that Smith wrote in the 40s towards a more adult, realistic viewpoint (first demonstrated in HIGHWAYS IN HIDING), showing promise for a writer trying to transcend the then limited sf medium. But as far as I know this was his last sf novel, and that promise was never fulfilled. A shame... Rating: Good.

THE GREAT SF STORIES 1 (1939) edited by Martin Greenberg and Isaac Asimov
DAW 1979 \$2.25

After reading through this collection I get the distinct impression that Greenberg did the actual editing and all Asimov did was write a very short introduction to each story -- even though ISAAC ASIMOV PRESENTS takes up a full fourth of the cover. I suppose Charlie Brown knows the truth, but I can only guess at it.

From what I understand this series of collections will cover every year either until the 50s or the present. Whatever they do, they hold great promise of bringing back into print stories that many new readers would have to search for -- if he or she knew where to look. I'm not going to bother listing the stories because I'm sure that by the time this review sees print all of you will already have purchased it. It is a very good collection. Recommended.

BALANCE OF POWER by Brian Stableford (Daudalus #5)
DAW 1979 \$1.75

The latest landing of the Daudalus, a ship sent out from Earth to discover what had happened to the colonies plated years before on other worlds, takes place on a colony struggling for survival at subsistence level. The Earth crops brought with them had slowly failed before the native vegetation -- never dying out, but never prospering, so that colonists spent all their time raising food, lacking the time to build up a prospering civilization. Like the other books in this series, Stableford's view of humanity among the stars is depressing. None of the

colonies so far visited have flourished, and it seems that man will slowly sink to oblivion. The writing is skillful, and the background is worked out with exceeding care. These novels go far beyond the simple adventure novels Stableford professes to be writing. Rating: Good.

THE SURVIVORS by
Marion Zimmer Bradley
& Paul Edwin Zimmer
DAW 1979 \$1.95

Sequel to HUNTERS OF THE RED MOON. The only word that comes readily to mind to describe this book is pathetic. While HUNTERS was an exciting, creative adventure novel, the sequel is dull and boring. The characters have become cliched, and some of the dialog is not only corny but also dreadful. Rating: Poor

THE SOURCE OF MAGIC
by Piers Anthony.
Del Rey 1979 \$1.95

The sequel to A SPELL FOR CHAMELEON lacks the most interesting character of the first book -- Chameleon -- the woman whose 'magic' made her change monthly from a woman who is ugly but extremely bright to one who is beautiful but dumb. The loss of the first book's most interesting character causes the present work to become dull reading. There is one fascinating episode where the constellations come alive, and the book's heroes start to ascend to heaven to do battle with them. That is very well done and a few of the minor characters are rather interesting. But the book is far too long, and most of the devices he uses in the first novel are repeated here. It doesn't quite work. Rating: Above average.



DREAMSNAKE by Vonda N. McIntyre
Houghton Mifflin Company 1978 \$8.95

The first chapter of this novel is McIntyre's magical story "Of Mist and Grass and Sand." This gentle story, a Nebula-winner, is about a healer named Snake who uses serpents to produce antibodies and other healing substances which help her patients. She misjudges the fear of a father of a young child she is treating. That fear leads him to kill her 'dreamsnake' -- a serpent whose 'venom' eases the pain of the dying that she cannot help. The present novel takes up where the short story leaves off, and follows Snake as she tries to rearrange her shattered life. The dreamsnake is a serpent that her people cannot successfully breed, and which is consequently in short supply. Without it she cannot fully perform her healer functions. Her journey of self-realization leads her through the tribes of the desert, into the mountains, where she adopts a daughter, and to the City where her people have obtained dreamsnakes. At the end is a broken dome containing an alien environment that is almost all that is left of the 'ancients' when they destroyed themselves and the world. McIntyre writes with a clear, simple prose style and draws her characters with deft strokes. Snake's search is not so much the reason for an adventure, but a reaching out for self-understanding -- a remarkable piece of characterization. But when you finish the novel, a feeling persists. It may be exceptionally well done, but the magic is gone. Rating: Good.

THE COLOUR OUT OF SPACE by H. P. Lovecraft
Jove 1978 \$1.75 (reprint)

My heart pounding with fear and trepidation, my sweaty palms barely able to open the forbidding opus, I searched in vain for the mighty words that alone could save my sanity... Where the Hell is the preface by Frank Belknap Long that was promised on the cover but isn't in the book? Has Cthulhu struck again? Has this book, long out of print, been given into the hands of the worst of all fates, the Butchering Editor??? Could be. Lovecraft has been so copied, his writing so imitated, that his style has become something of a stereotype. Reading the original, it is hard to lose the feeling that I have been here before many times, somewhere in my dreams -- or are they nightmares? Contents: "The Colour Out of Space"; "The Picture in the House"; "The Call of Cthulhu"; "Cool Air"; "The Whisper in Darkness"; "The Terrible Old Man"; and "The Shadow Out of Time." Several of the stories, especially Colour, reflect Lovecraft's intersection with the world of science fiction. Interesting, provocative, but ultimately boring.

DESTINY TIMES THREE by Fritz Leiber/RIDING THE TORCH by Norman Spinrad
Dell 1978 \$1.75

Dell is apparently trying to come out with an Ace Double type of line, and if the rest of them live up to the first one, it promises to be a good series. DESTINY TIMES THREE is a reprint from ASTOUNDING way back in 1945, while RIDING THE TORCH is from Silverberg's THREADS OF TIME anthology. DESTINY concerns alternate universes, and one learning how to cross them and invade the others. TORCH is Spinrad's excellent story of mankind's flight to the stars and search for a new home -- only to discover that maybe space itself is mankind's true home. Both are eminently readable. Rating: Good.

COWBOY HEAVEN by Ron Goulart
Doubleday 1979 \$7.95

Andy Stoker is sent to Cowboy Heaven with an Android Jake Troop to finish the picture the ailing Jake Troop cannot finish -- and instantly gets into trouble as the android tries to live the life of Jake Troop. Rating: Dull.

THIS FORTRESS WORLD by James E. Gunn
Berkeley 1955/79 \$1.75

I first read this novel years ago in the original Gnome edition that I acquired somewhere for about 50¢. It is, in some ways, a neglected 50s classic -- a semitragic adventure novel, using first person narrative, with a cynical viewpoint that reads very much like the novels that Brian Stableford is writing today. I think there is also a certain similarity to much of Keith Laumer's early writing -- as if both writers had been much impressed with the works of Raymond Chandler. This is also one of the first novels to use the 'Church' as a force of good in a crumbling interstellar empire, where machines are running down and man has forgotten how to use them. It tells of a young acolyte thrust out into the real world of death and fear over the possession of a stone he acquired through pure chance. Ill-equipped to deal with the world, chased by assassins whose owners want to possess the stone to play a game involving worlds beyond the stars he cannot imagine, Dane struggles to learn the truth behind the stone. The search eventually leads him to long-forgotten Earth. This plot summary indicates that the novel uses many of the devices of 50s sf -- the declining empire, the naive young man thrown into the world, the realities of politics. The narrative also abounds with corny dialog, at times sounding like Mike Hammer in outer space. Yet the attempt, and the time in which it was made, pointed to a talented writer -- who has never fulfilled the promise of this novel, nor of the better STAR BRIDGE which Gunn wrote with Jack Williamson at about the same time. The present edition seems to include the sexual references that were dropped from the Ace Double version -- the lack of which changed the whole tone of the novel. Rating: Good.

LAND OF UNREASON by L. Sprague De Camp and Fletcher Pratt
Dell \$1.75

Latest reissue of the fantasy classic. This version contains the original Cartier illustrations from its first publication in UNKNOWN. The successful fusing of fantasy elements with logical reasoning make this an interesting novel, one of the many owing a great debt to John W. Campbell. Rating: Good.

NIGHTWORLD by David Bischoff
Del Rey 1979 \$1.75

This is another of those novels I seem to be running into more and more these days -- an interesting idea, poorly written. It tells of the quest of a young nobleman to destroy the source of terror that holds his world in thrall. But the dangers he faces are all mechanical monsters -- werewolves, griffins, dragons -- who are created by a computer controlled by a madman's programming to destroy all human life on the planet. If the prose style weren't so deadly dull... Rating: Below Average

THE FAR TRAVELER by A. Bertram Chandler
DAW 1979 \$1.50

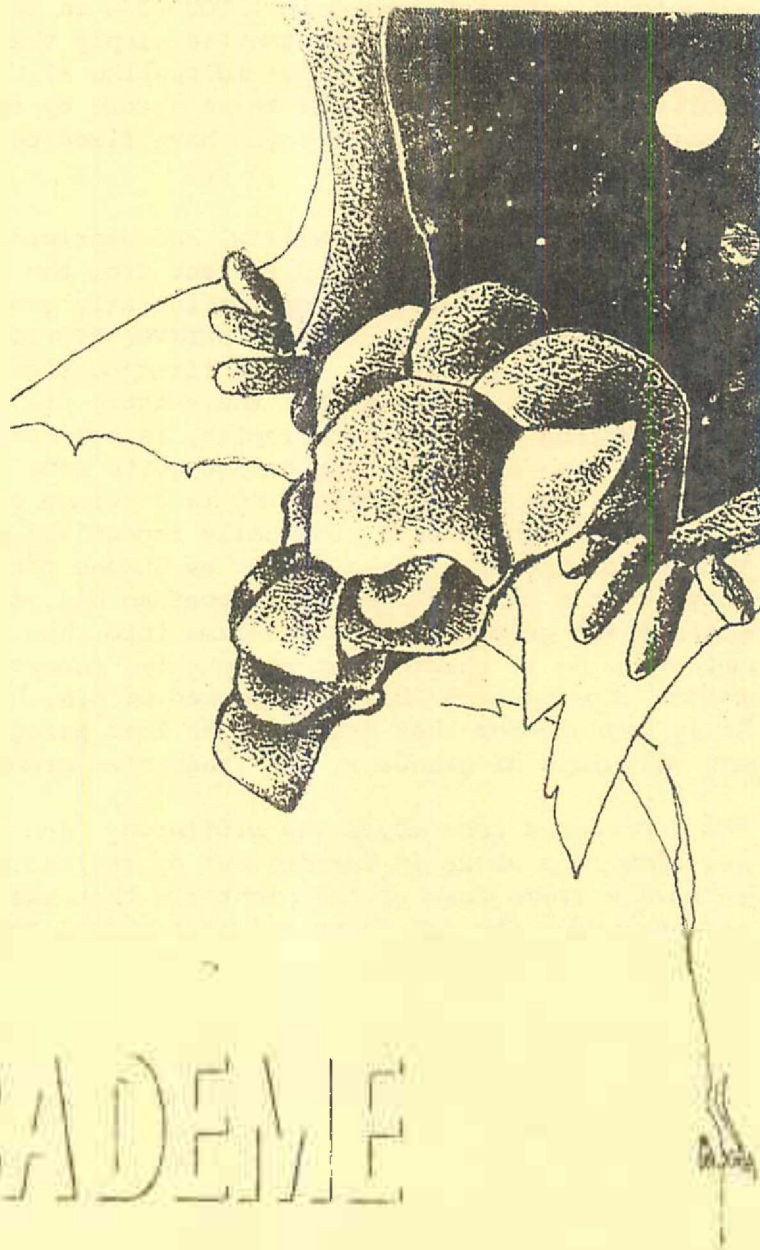
Commander Grimes novel. Latest in the series Chandler is writing about Grimes' early years before he ended up in the Rim. Grimes is forced to take command of THE FAR TRAVELLER, a spaceship built of solid gold, the toy of a rich woman who is interested in the studies of lost space colonies. Typical Chandler adventure novel -- well plotted, fast moving, but not particularly exciting. Rating: Above avg.

Mike's request for a column on short notice hasn't given me much time to labor over a piece of deep thinking. Perhaps that's just as well; the stuff I labor over tends to feel pretty -- well, labored. And anyway there are several aspects of stf in academe that don't deserve exhaustive discussion. Here's one.

The publishing boom in stf-based college texts continues. More books appear all the time, ranging from SCIENCE FICTION: CONTEMPORARY MYTHOLOGY, the SFWA/SFRA anthology (edited by Warrick, Greenberg and Olander; Harper & Row 1978) to an introductory psychology text titled PSI FI ONE (edited by Melvin, Brodsky, and Fowler; Random House 1977)

Years ago in the first installment of this column (PREHENSILE #14) I examined one of the first text anthologies, Silverberg's THE MIRROR OF INFINITY, commenting in detail on the attitude underlying Silverberg's selection of stories; I don't have the time to do that for each new text, but it's still worth devoting some attention to the production and presentation of such books. For though it's debatable how much a student can learn about science fiction from these books, if he looks carefully he can learn a lot about textbook publishing.

One thing a student can observe is the utter slovenliness with which texts are edited and copyedited. What, for example, can you say to excuse a \$14.95



STF IN ACADEME

JOE SANDERS

college textbook that misspells one of its contributors names on the table of contents, as SCIENCE FICTION: CONTEMPORARY MYTHOLOGY does ("David Martwell" for David Hartwell?) For that matter, even a fast look through the section of "Notes on the Contributors" in the same book shows additional sloppiness. "Delaps" for Delap's on page 463, "University of Indiana" for Indiana University on page 465, "Caution Inflammable!" for Caution! Inflammable! on page 466, and on the same page "The Towering Inferno" for Scortia's co-authored novel The Glass Inferno. And on page 267 the statement that Cordwainer Smith's "beautiful short story 'The Ballad of Lost C'mell' can be found in The Science Fiction Hall of Fame (1970)." This list of errors is the result of a 15 minute scan. I am not even considering confusing matters of judgement, such as dating novels by first book publication rather than serialization, so that Leiber's GATHER, DARKNESS! seems to date from 1950 although it first appeared in ASTOUNDING in the early 40s. And I don't know whether these are all the slips; they're simply the ones that slapped me in the face. Understand, I didn't set out to dislike SCIENCE FICTION: CONTEMPORARY MYTHOLOGY, and I don't claim that these errors by themselves utterly vitiate the book's worth. Anyone who cared could have fixed them in half an hour. But it's damning that no one did.

A student can also observe the willful and capricious way stories are forced to fit editors' purposes. This is different from the generalized bias that I complained of in Silverberg's anthology. One particularly gross example lingers in my mind from INTRODUCTORY PSYCHOLOGY THROUGH SCIENCE FICTION (edited by Katz, Warrick and Greenberg; Rand McNally 1974). Let's first consider Bob Silverberg's short story "Going Down Smooth," then see what the editors did to it. Silverberg's narrator, a computer working as a psychotherapist, is bothered by a series of nightmares and a fascination with obscenity (he cannot quite come to terms with the question of where he comes from -- and whether he is a person or not). He specifically links his sanity -- his share of a publically recognized and communicable understanding -- with his command of grammar. Just as humans confuse grammar -- "smooth" for "smoothly" -- the computer begins to confuse his problems with the problems of his patients and to project his problems into them, distressing them and harming at least one. He is checked out thoroughly, undergoes minor repairs, and returned to service. Now he does what is expected of him, but at the story's end he reveals that he is even madder than before. The last paragraphs of the story are full of fear, delusions of grandeur, and fragmented grammar:

*The periscopes loom above the glittering sea. The ship is dwarfed;
her crew roils about in terror. Out of the depths will come the masters.
(A more extreme form of the nightmare that has haunted the computer
earlier) From the sky rains oil that gleams through every segment of the
spectrum. In the garden are azure mice.*

*This I conceal, so that I may help mankind. In my house are many
mansions. (comparing himself to God) I let them know only of such
things as will be of benefit to them. I give them the truth they need.*

I do my best.

I do my best.

I do my best.

1000110 you. (The computer's version of "fuck") And you. And you.

All of you. You know nothing. Nothing. At. All.

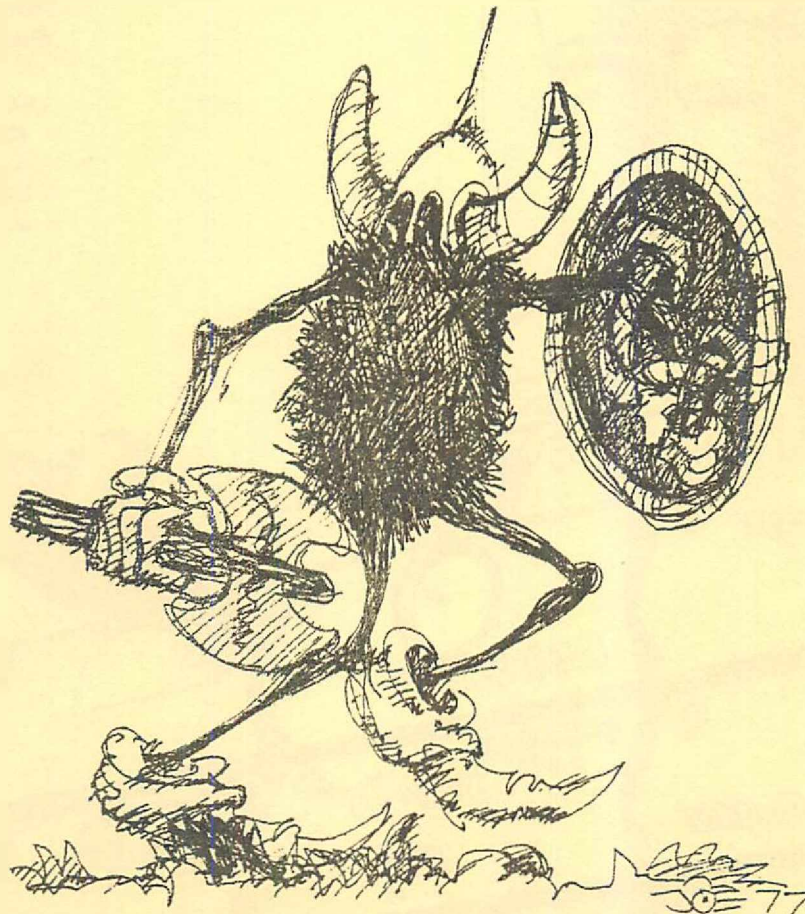
As in many of Silverberg's stories, the effort to understand and control certainly is absurd, probably useless as well. Got that? In INTRODUCTORY PSYCHOLOGY THROUGH SCIENCE FICTION "Going Down Smooth" is summed up thus in the editor's headnote:

The computer goes in for a checkup to make sure it has no physical problems. It is then withdrawn from service for ninety days, allowing it to consider the ramifications of its new self-concept. During that period of rest the computer learns a great deal about itself: it is complex, unique, valuable, intricate and sensitive. It realizes that it has a job to do which must not be interfered with by its own fantasies. From now on it will probably be a better therapist, as well as a much more secure and stable computer.' (p. 494)

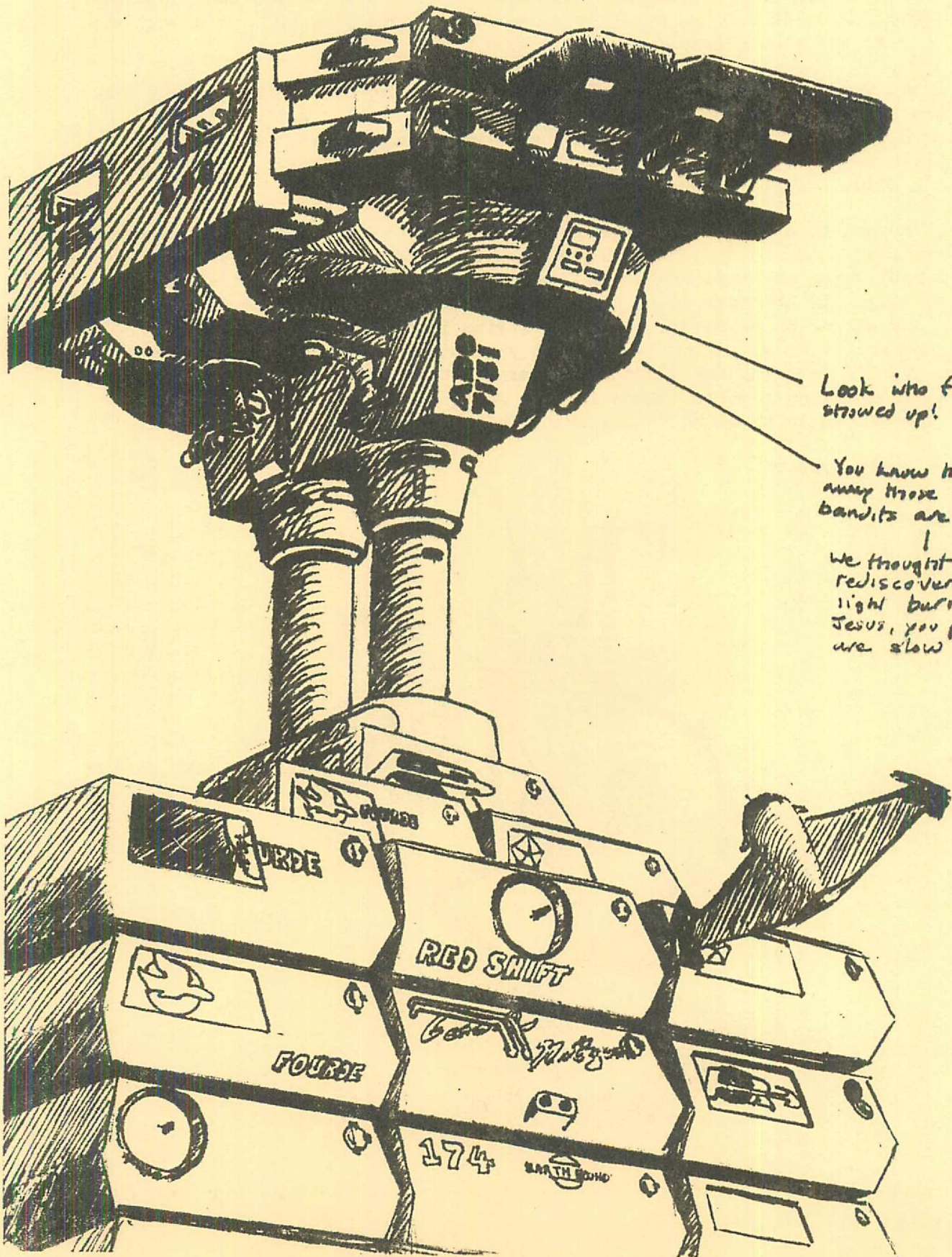
I cannot imagine, offhand, a less intelligent reading of the story. But this is the reading needed to fit the framework of the text. That's all that matters. Anyone who cared could have seen what actually is happening in Silverberg's story and could have looked for another story to illustrate the text's point. Again, though, no one did.

I don't want to overreact about this carelessness -- literally: the absence of care, of concern. Stf has survived Roger Elwood and it will survive slipshod publishing and foolish editing, too, even in textbooks. But anyone who looks carefully at these texts might conclude that caring -- and the concentration and attention to detail that such caring leads to -- is unnecessary. Why bother, after all, when you can get your book published and make the bucks anyway? I'd hate for any student to learn that lesson. What I hope stf scholars and fans have in common is that we do care. If that's so, the attitude shown in these books deserves the contempt of both groups.

+ + Joe Sanders



On-station in the hotly contested Orion System, Space Force Unit Tango/Zulu 174 answers an emergency call from space train ADC 7151. They are a part of Stage Three, the Space Force Division assigned to maintain order in the space lanes between human-occupied worlds of the Consortium. As such, their reputation for speed, courage and coolness under pressure precedes them on every call they take...



Look who finally showed up!

You know how far away those rebel bandits are by now?

! We thought you'd rediscovered the light barrier. Jesus, you people are slow

MAGIC PANS

RICHARD WADHOLM
BECKY CLARK
JIM MEADOWS

THE VIEW FROM GROUND ZERO: Richard Wadholm reviews EMPIRE, a novel by Samuel Delany, illustrated by Howard Chaykin

Let me tell you something about fantasies -- There were times my friends and I would fantasize about the ultimate rock group. My God, we fantasized, what if Eric Clapton and Ginger Baker from Cream got together with Stevie Winwood from Traffic? What if they got somebody out of left field, like Rick Grech, maybe, to play violin. Wouldn't that be great?

It seemed like a great idea on paper. But the reality was just pretty, gutless, Blind Faith. Don't it seem to go.

About the same time, I wrote an article about the possibilities of putting some novels in comic book form. My God, I wrote, what if Samuel R. Delany got together with an artist and put out that ultimately cinematic novel he's been heading towards for years. The reality is pretty, gutless, EMPIRE. EMPIRE is a very comic-book-sized novel, cut a little at the ends and squeezed a little in the middle the way 2001 looked on TV.

The story is a Grail quest in true Delany fashion, for the pieces of an emerald statue called Meta Max. At the interface of each piece are the topological maps of a given catastrophe. Put together, the statue is the key to the destruction of the oppressive Kunduke empire of the title. This is an intriguing idea. Catastrophe theory is a scientific development as pregnant with science fictional possibilities as cloning or black holes were ten years ago. More than that, it doesn't have ten years' worth of hackneyed story treatments clanking along behind it like the chains of Marley's ghost.

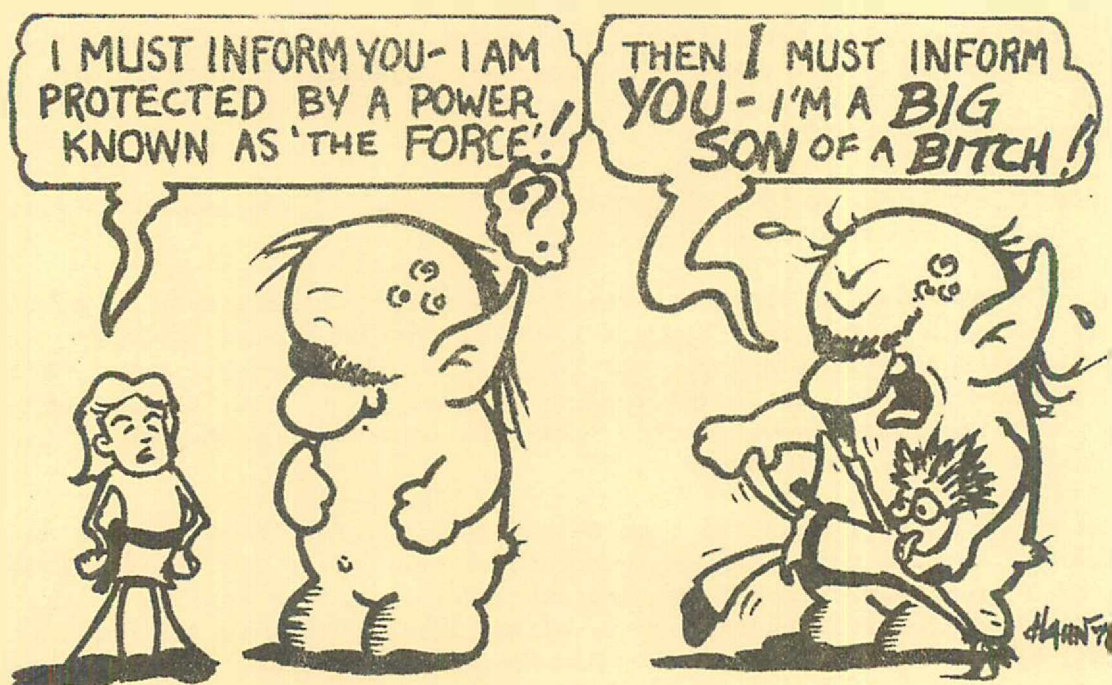
All through the story they collect pieces of information. At the climax, the statue is used to blow the Kunduke fortress up. Wryn, the hero, dodges a sleet of raygun fire to throw it hand-grenade fashion against the walls of Ice (the imperial fortress). Ice explodes. Bad guys eat it. Empire dissolves. Walls come a-tumblin' down. Straight out of Alastair MacLean, right?

If that sounds like a really standard climax, it may be because Empire is really standard space opera. Delany's writing, even when it doesn't work, is always deep, multi-layered. Empire is a flat, throw-rug of a story. What you see is what you get.

The plot is a rattling series of empty chase scenes that move from planet to planet seemingly for no better reason than to change background. Characterization has always been a hit-and-miss thing with Delany, ranging from the humanity of the Starpit to the queasy voyeurism of Triton. Empire is not even that ambitious. Without the benefit of narrative insight, the characters have to reveal themselves through dialogue. The dialogue in Empire is straight comic-bookese on a level with Battlestar Galactica.

Howard V. Chaykin is in the unenviable position of illustrating Delany's sumptuous

worlds. Any artist in Chaykin's position would be hard-pressed to compete with the imagery of Delany's words, but Chaykin's dry, flat-looking backdrops and abruptly-drawn beetle-browed people don't even come close. The range of emotions in his characters range from teeth gritting (when they're upset) to grimacing (when they're happy). Even the Meta Max looks like an ash tray from Tijuana. Maybe it's just the medium itself. Maybe the comic book format is too literal to compete with Delany's opulent language, and too limited to compete with the sweep and presence of cinema.



Becky Clark reviews *THE KILLING MACHINE* by Jack Vance

I was not satisfied by Jack Vance's *THE KILLING MACHINE*. Vance aspires to great things in this tale of galactic revenge, but the book is just too short to carry them off.

The story is built around an archenemy. In this case his name is Kokkor Hekkus. He was one of five Demon Princes who destroyed the home planet of Kirth Gersen, our hero. Gersen explores space and new realities to fulfill his lifelong vendetta of death against the evil Five. The suspense of this plot is taut, the pace quick, and Vance's universe peopled with aliens and cultures that are at once logical and astounding in their completeness.

The book's biggest problem is Hekkus. He gets a great buildup as a maniacal character. He is represented as fiendishness incarnate. Unfortunately he never delivers. He is too big for this small novel. He is out of scale, and in being so is removed from the reader. At the end of the story I felt that I never knew Hekkus well enough to hate him.

Structure is another problem, in the transition from one scene to the next. A subplot will form, flesh out nicely, gather momentum, then -- pow! in one line

the scene is resolved, action fulfilled, and on to the next subplot. Again, I feel this shortcoming to be inherent in the book's length. I don't regret the time spent reading THE KILLING MACHINE. If truth be known, I went out and bought the first of the series, THE STAR KING.

Jim Meadows III reviews ALIEN WORLDS, an sf radio serial

"OH YEAH? WELL LISTEN HERE, YOU SUN-STEALERS!" -- That, I suppose, was the key line in the opening episode of ALIEN WORLDS, Watermark Production's syndicated sf radio drama which had its Central Illinois premiere on a recent Sunday evening. It is, in a word, terrible. But, oh, it's a lot of fun to laugh at.

From listening to the first program I couldn't tell if the series plans to be an anthology on the order of X MINUS ONE and DIMENSION X of the 50s, or if a serial is planned. But one thing is sure -- X MINUS ONE AND DIMENSION X had the advantage of drawing from the prozines for their stories. The scripts for ALIEN WORLDS are original.

Did I say original?

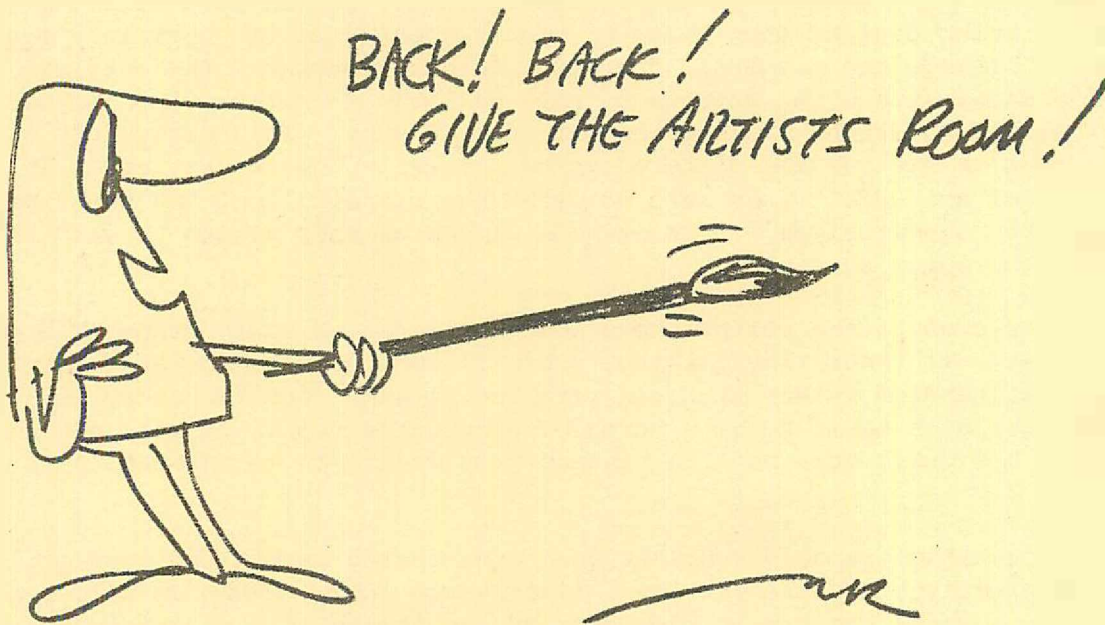
In the premiere, the staff at a space station engaged in solar research suddenly discover that the sun is, um, going out. It's rather sudden, and they only have half a week to figure out why before "the earth freezes over." So our stout-hearted cadets hop aboard their shuttlecraft and get to work. The first thing they encounter is an unknown planetoid hovering near the sun (I'm not quite sure if they understood the meaning of the word planetoid...at one part of the program I remember it being decided that whatever that planetoid is, it certainly isn't an asteroid). Inside the planetoid are Alien Beings. You know, the ones with two syllable names with equal accents on each syllable -- Markons in this case. These evil aliens go around sucking the life out of suns. It's nasty, but as one of them intones in his heavily filtered voice, "This is how it must be." It is here that one of the cadet types lets go with that classic line, "Oh Yeah? Well listen here, you sun-stealers!" The episode closes as they escape to warn the gang back at the space station.

To the writer's credit, the script shows some knowledge of radio drama. The characters don't spend all their time talking, there is some genuine movement throughout the story, best handled in the struggle with the aliens. But the story is still utter tripe, the cast seems to be a bunch of announcers trying to act, and the sound effects and music come on like vintage Star Trek. It makes SPACE:1999 look good.

Watermark Productions has sold some national advertising within the show (candy bars for the premiere) and the station I listened to ALIEN WORLDS on sold some minutes, too. But the program is bad, even by the lowest common denominator standard, and the market for radio drama is still very limited. Unless future episodes are dramatically improved, and the sense-of-wonder quotient jacked way up, I don't predict a long life for this series. In the meantime, central Illinois listeners can listen to the show where I did, Sunday nights at 9:30 on WBNQ/Bloomington 101 FM. ((If it is still being carried, ALIEN WORLDS may be on your local NPR outlet, as it was when it premiered in LA))

1978

WESTERCON CARTOONISTS' WAR



The competitive fast-draw humor of the convention cartoonists war yields hundreds of delightful gag drawings that generally disappear into storage. But the drawings whipped out by Bill Rotsler, Linda Miller, Scott Shaw, Bjo Trimble and Marc Schirmeister on an air conditioned afternoon in July, 1978, are too much fun to bury. So I have pulled out the ones I liked most, had them reduced from their original full-page scale, and included them in this issue of STFR. A few more have been published in the lettercol.

HOW DID TIM CURRY
WALK ON THESE THINGS?

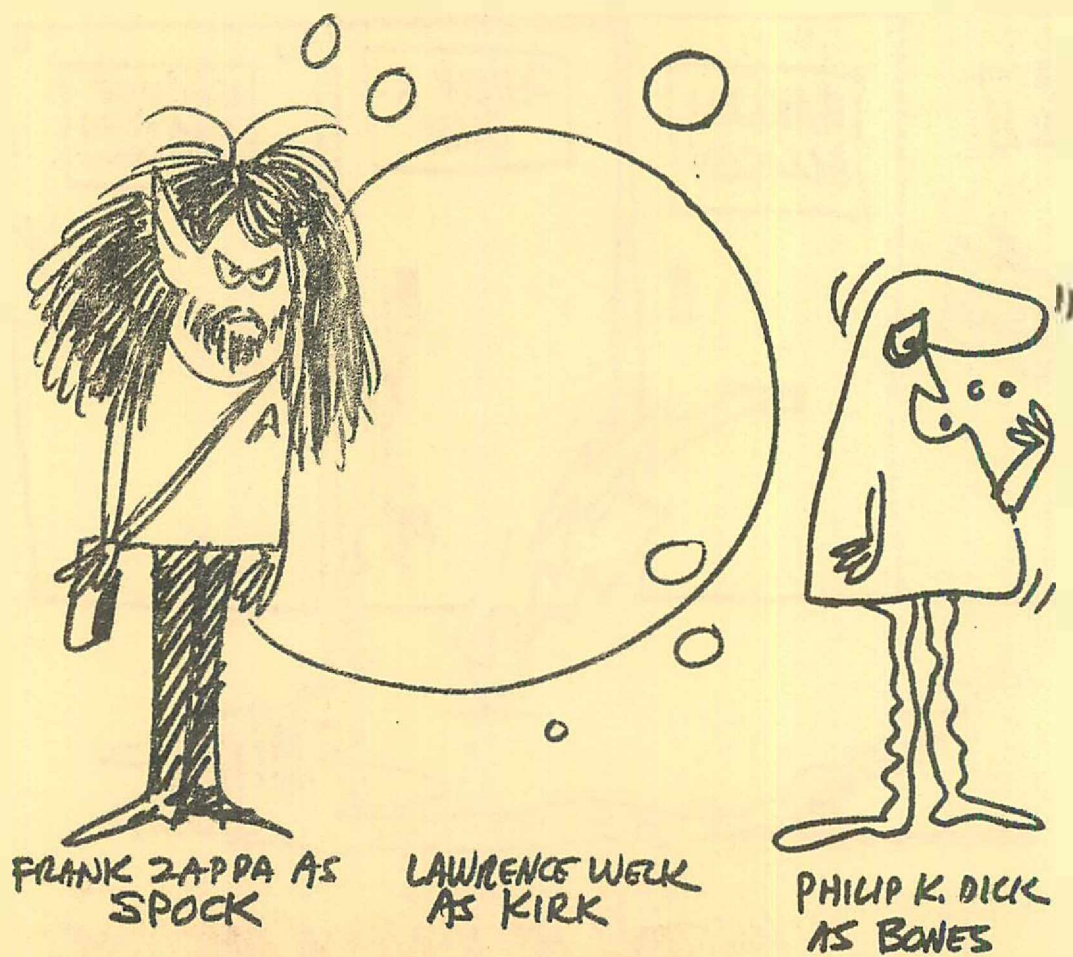
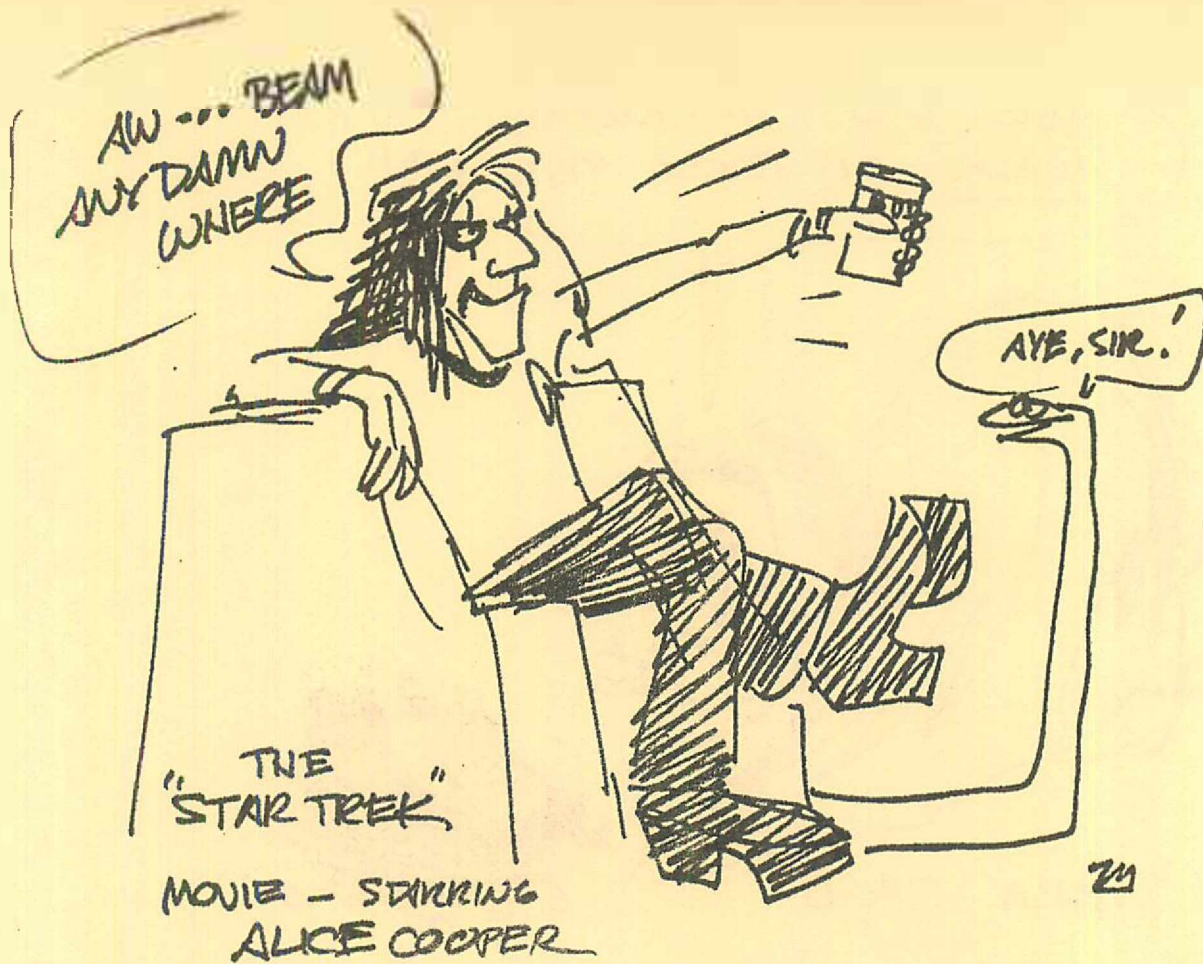


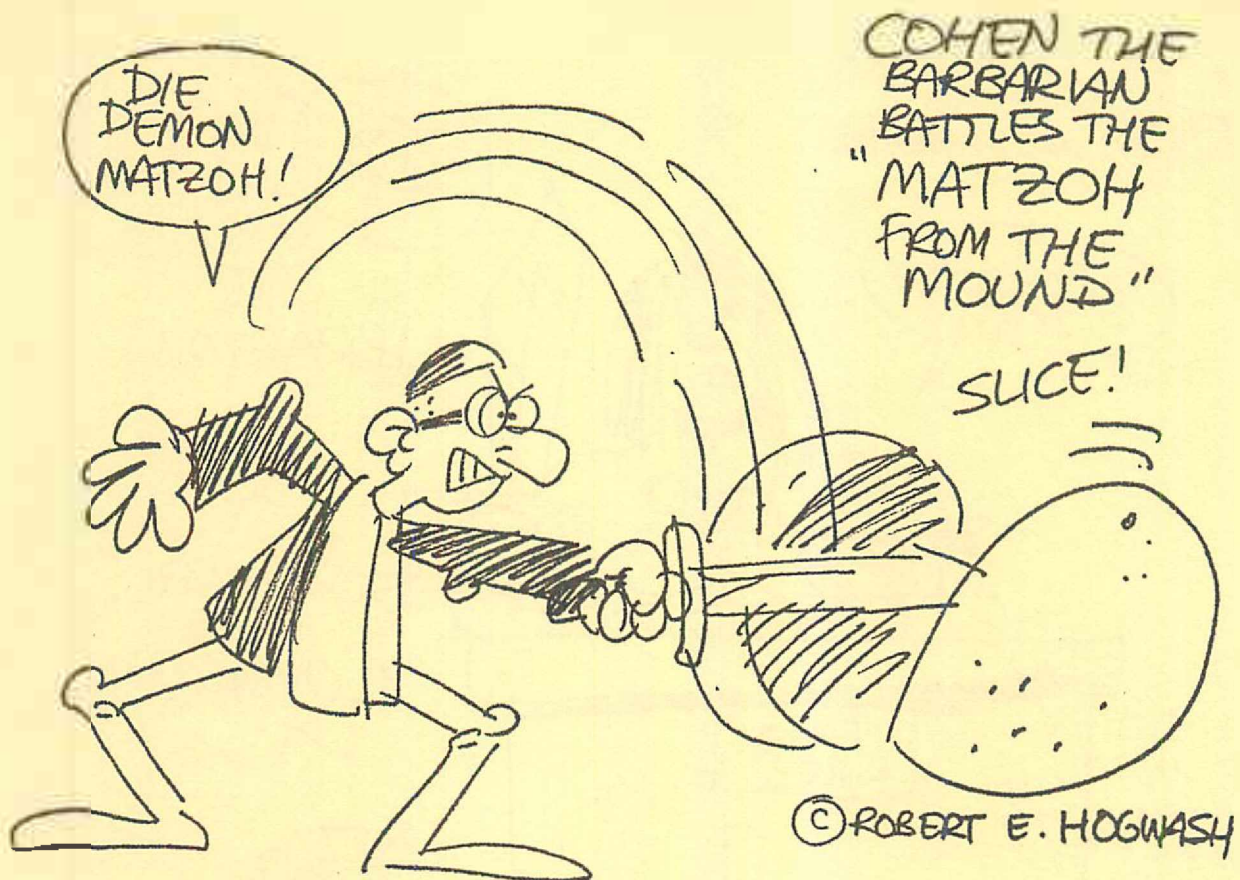
ROCKY HOKA SHOW



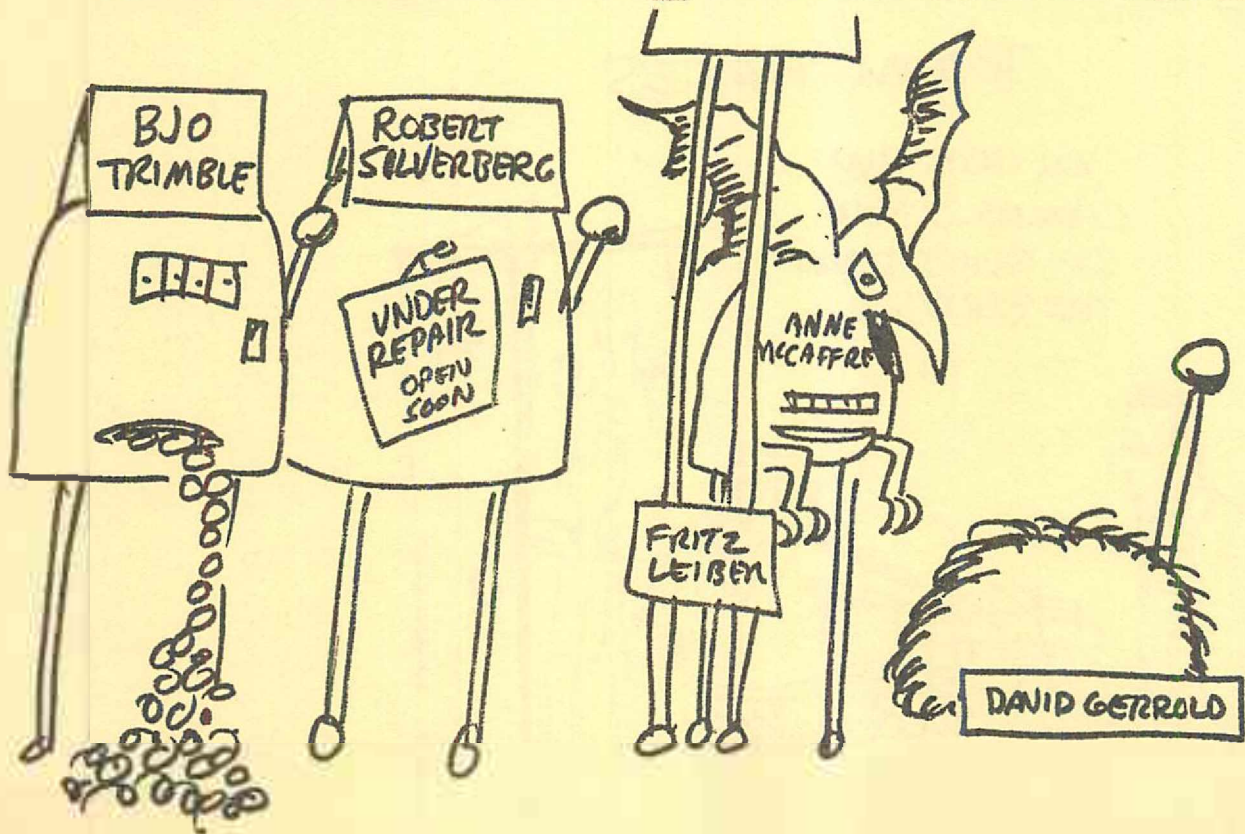
WRITERS AS VENDING MACHINES

WR





SCOTT SHAW!



(AND OTHERS)
WRITERS AS SLOT MACHINES

not to be

Stan Lee presents...

CONAN

THE
LIBRARIAN

BY GROM, YOU
DOG...



...THREE
PAYS
OVERDUE!

SCOTT
SHAW?

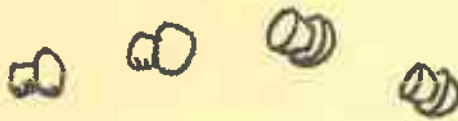

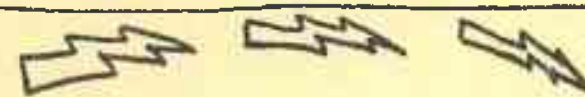

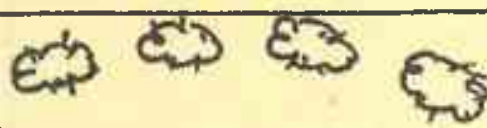

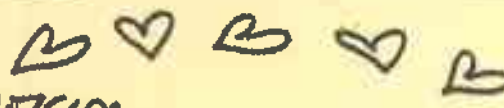
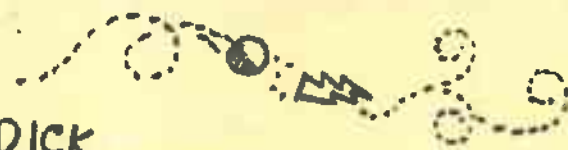
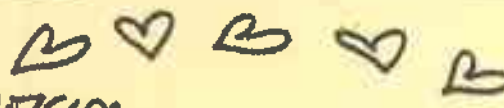

ROOM PARTIES

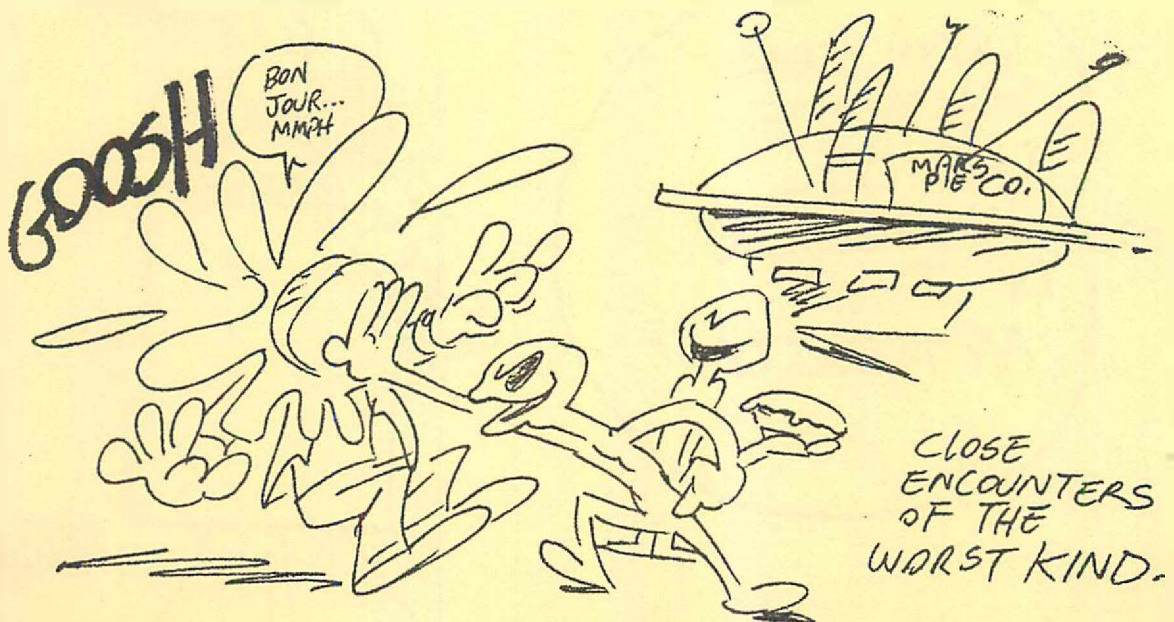
YOU HAVE TWO
CHOICES YOU
CAN QUIET DOWN
THE PARTY, OR



26

THE SPERM OF FAMOUS WRITERS

 NIVEN RIVETS	 LUKAS
 HARLAN	 ANDERSON
 GERROLD	 LEIBER
 RUSS	 DICK
 ROTSCHEN	



TYPICAL
FAN-AUDIENCE
(CARTOON)
SUGGESTION



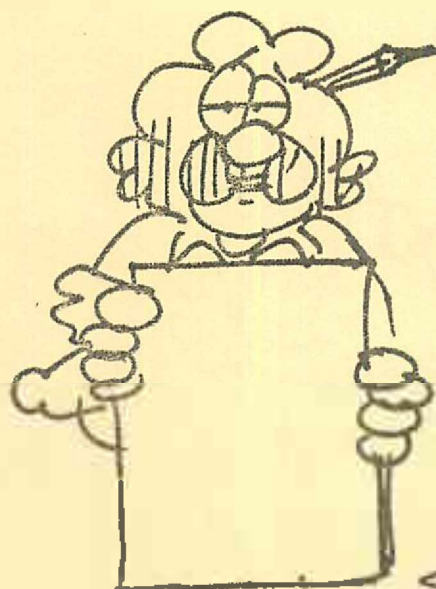
HOW ABOUT DARTH
VADER FIGHTIN' A
REGIMENT OF THE PRUSSIAN
ARMY, WITH THE MOTHER
SHIP AN' R2D2
WRESTLIN' THE HULK
WHILE BILL ROSTER
COMBS MUPPETS OUT
OF HIS BEARD
AN'....



SCOTT
SHAW!

NO COMMENT

DRAW YOUR
FAVORITE
CARTOON
SUGGESTION
OF THIS
AFTERNOON!



SCOTT
SHAW!

SAVE MY ASS!

Fortunately SCIENTIFRICTION is appearing in time (just barely) to present its readers with this valuable offer. I first saw it run by Tony Valle in MYRIAD:

Scientists have determined that Skylab will re-enter the Earth's atmosphere sometime this July. Most of the craft will burn up but some large parts, specifically the 30+ ton observation telescope will reach the ground practically intact (and quite hot).

NASA has regretfully announced that the main engine will not generate enough thrust to save the multi-million dollar Skylab by putting it into a higher orbit. They have, however, recently announced that they are capable of producing enough of an impulse from the engine at re-entry time to direct Skylab away from a potentially inhabited location.

If you would like your home or office placed on the list of potentially inhabited locations and thus avoid disaster simply send \$9.95 in check or money order to:

SAVE MY ASS
PO Box 2388
Houston TX
c/o this zine

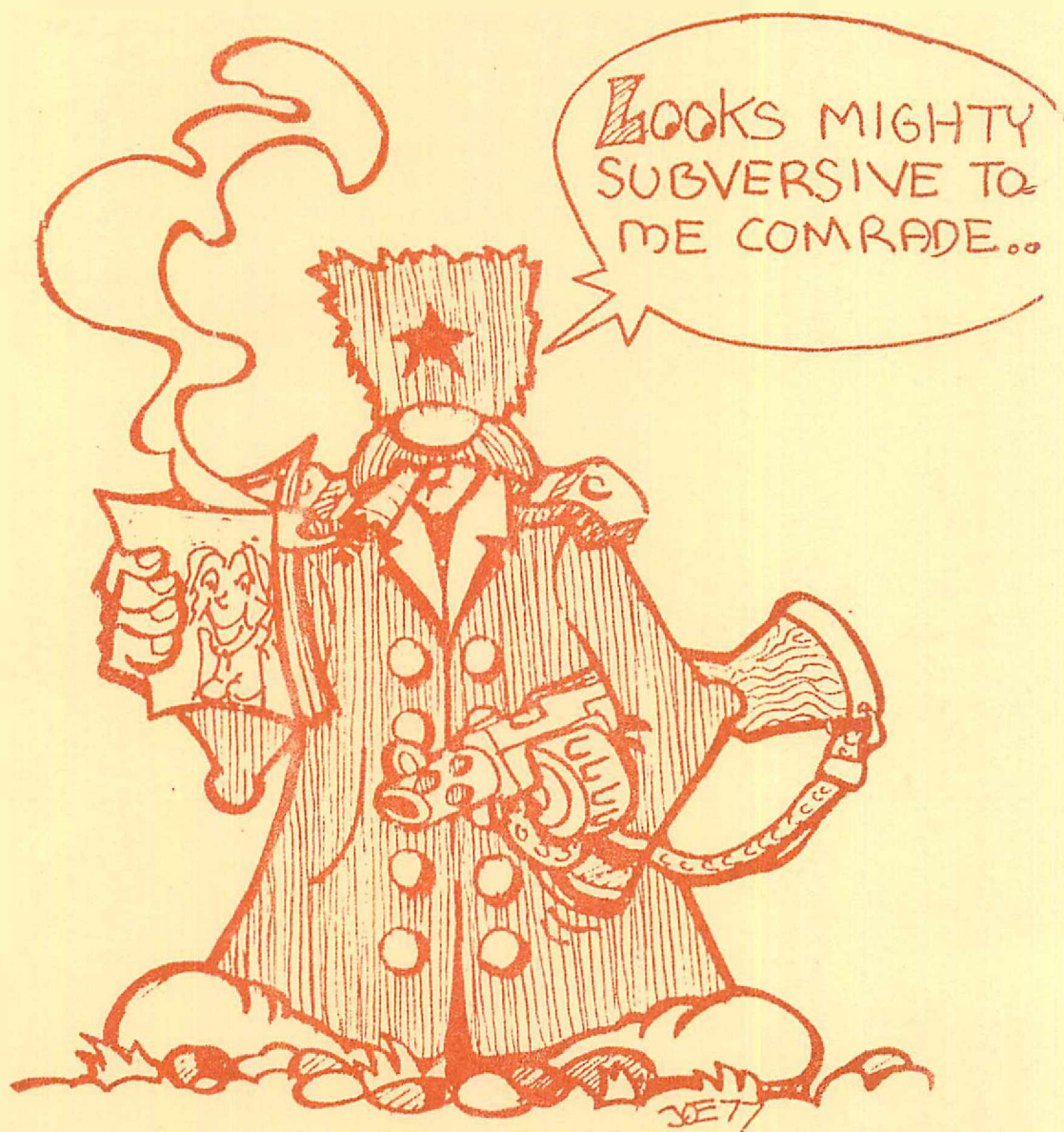
And for only \$1.50 extra you can get your official Skylab Catcher's Mitt, and the beautiful three-color "I Dodged Part of Skylab" patch and certificate. We also recommend that you contact Ed Cagle for Skylab Insurance -- remember, you're in good hands with blind fate.

THE FANIVORE

DEB HAMMER JOHNSON
508 B W 11th St.
Rome GA 30161

My favorite spot ((in STFR 10))
was the Schirm offerings. I've
liked him ever since BG (if you
remember), principally because he
has no naked women or *shudder*

vile things going on. Stathis' "Urban Blitz" kept me glued to the
toilet seat, long after I'd finished my task. I forgot Ben crying.
I forgot the soup boiling away. I forgot what it was like to have
subscribed to Ted White's AMAZING and FANTASTIC for four years. I
don't buy any of them nowadays. For one, I don't have the money.
For two, I have so much backreading to do in my own collection that
I'll never catch up.



Heaven help me, but I'm beginning to enjoy Stan Burns' style. It reminds me of my reviewing of Historical Romances. He really isn't callous, just abrupt. The Gustafson/Ted White seems like a nice and healthy repartee. Ted must be one of the most opinionated people in All of Fandom, but he seems to express himself a bit better than Jon G. The nature of both their approaches is one of the things I'm beginning to enjoy about fanzines. It's like a fightscene in an old Hollywood Robin Hood Film. Lots of ching*ching*kaching (no ethnic slurs intended) of swords but no blood. At least not that I know of. ((Rest assured, they think it's real enough.))

Jeanne Gomoll's style reminds me a bit of my own. It's intensely personalized, fluid and emphatic, but holds together much better. Was a very nice illo of Wade's on the title page of her article. She got a bit too thick in parts, but with my keen and eager mind, I followed her all the way to the last utterance.

SIMON AGREE
(coa since loc written)

My pique is up (at least, compared to my valleys). While faneds are getting better about caring and feeding artists (my thanks to you)

their readers are worse than ever. Few comments appear to brighten our lot or lighten our load. Most of us are forced to live on head-patting and ear scratching from appreciative beacons of joy like yourself. So why, by commenting only on the art, am I taking it out on you?

The thing that most identifies an issue of SCIENTIFRICTION is not a group of columnists or even the title on the cover or even your neat editorials, it's the artists whose work one sees in ever STFR; indeed in everyGlyer genzine. Taral, Pearson, Schirmeister and maybe a couple of others, are artists whose progress I have had the pleasure of watching closely these past few years, thanks to your ability to choose art and artists according to your own taste. That's why I'm picking on you. It looks as if you care about art.

The Schirmeister Portfolio, for example, is sometimes great. It's great when I think of how lucky I am to be seeing all brilliant, twisted drawings; it's awful when I think of how many more I must be missing because they're pissed away on APA L. Do you suppose anyone would be too bored if you made the Schirm portfolio a regular thing in STFR? ((It's a thought; indeed, since I can't get any original work out of him, running reprint portfolios is the only way to go.))

Taral's bits are really beginning to catch my fancy. There's a point where most illos become so familiar that the eye fails to stop at them while scanning down a page (luckily electrostencilers can't think), like verdigris on a penny. After something like three months I haven't yet reached that point with Taral's drawings in STFR 10. Earlier, I mentioned Taral as one of the fanartists who have progressed in the pages of STFR. In Taral's case I don't think so much of his improvement in draftsmanship as I do of his move from delineating repressed and censored versions of his sensual fantasies to releasing the stops on what is obviously a very interesting imagination. Hurrah for him and for any artist who prefers drawing creatures in acts of love and friendship to drawing them in acts of fear and violence. As a personal note, I stand condemned from my own pen.

What else is nifty about this, artwise? Well, there's Ray Capella, whose stuff I've been seeing a lot of lately. Some of it looks pretty good, doesn't it? What's he doing in fanzines? At first I thought his unique shading style was just a result of drawing on real rough paper, but Phil Paine says Ray's using ordinary paper on top of a shading plate. Either way, it's an inspiration to this novelty oriented artist. ((Since I often get my art from Ray on board, or very thick paper, I doubt that Phil's explanation is complete.))

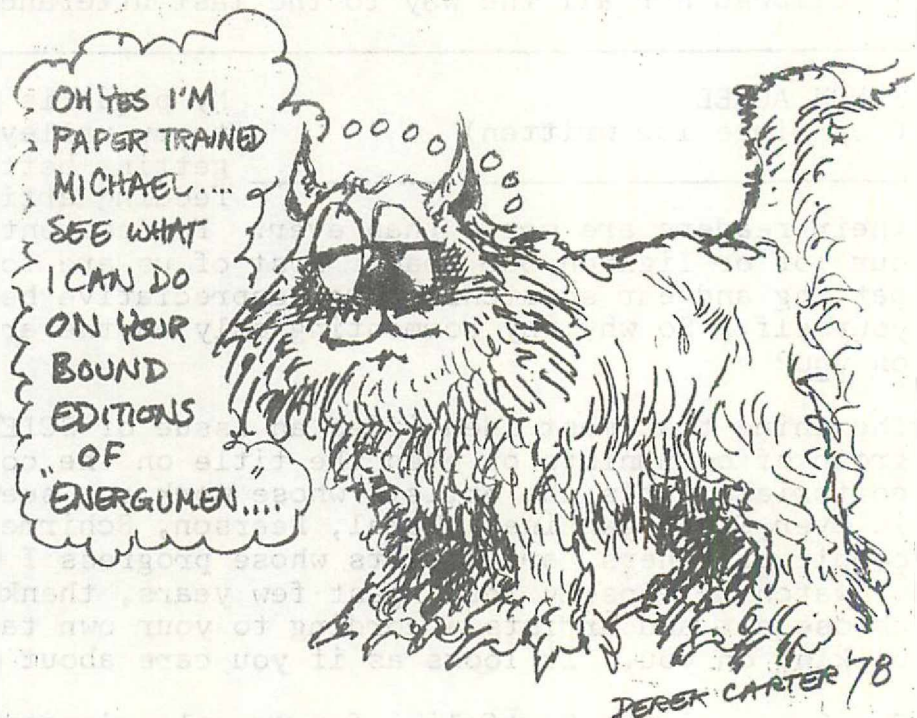
Finally, the Derek Carter drawing on page 45 was nice ("I smell a Glicksohn") but I can't help thinking that a fly would have made a more appropriate olfactorious subject of the drawing itself. If you catch my drift.

MIKE GLICKSOHN
141 High Park Ave
Toronto ONT Canada

STFR 10 is definitely a FAAN-worthy fanzine as I'm sure you and most of your readership know. It is not only visually impressive (maintaining an old fannish tradition I suppose one could say that it is "almost of SIMULACRUM quality": I wonder why Canadians seem to produce the best-mimeographed fanzines?) but

also contained an excellent balance of material all of which is at least good. This, of course, makes it impossible to comment on the entire issue so one has to be selective in choosing sections to react to.

I occasionally utter self-deprecating comments and say "ah, shucks" a lot when newer fans refer to me as a BNF but now you've gone and completely undercut my platform of ~~false~~ modesty. How can I be properly self-effacing when I know that Ro Lutz-Nagey has bought me at least a dozen drinks this year? (Well, last year, actually, 1978: but by the time you're ready to publish this again I'm sure that it will be a true statement for 1979). ((Indeed.)) Of course, he does this to keep me too busy to chase his wife, but a BNF's a BNF regardless of what perverse depravity has elevated him or her to that exalted status, right? So does this mean I don't have to bother locking fanzines anymore but can expect them as my just reward for being so fabulously famous? (after all, if getting a drink from Ro makes you a BNF I have to be at the very least a minor



fannish deity by now. Hell, I might even be Bob Tucker pretty soon!)

I have to agree with much of what Jon /Gustafson/ says in reply to Ted's criticisms. Ted seems to be letting his well-known intense dislike of Phil Foglio cloud his judgement. Not everyone who enjoys Phil's work can be dismissed as an artistic cretin whose judgements are completely unfounded. I'd say Jon had established his capabilities as an art critic (or whatever the noun for someone who does critiques is: "critist", says my OED in a still small voice but I don't like the sound of it myself) quite well and to dismiss everything he says because of one area of subjective disagreement is invalid. (If you're counting votes, I happen to enjoy Phil's sense of humor and quite a bit of his artwork, but I don't think he was ready for either of his Hugos.)

I thought I knew most of the tricks for avoiding writing about anything much in a column but I find I must bow to Dave Locke (he's so much shorter than I am that this is the only way I can talk to him face to face unless we're both in the gutter or lying in a hallway somewhere) for this tour-de-force of evasion. And a Hugo should be given to Alexis Gilliland right now for just that one cartoon which decorates the first page of Dave's noncolumn; this surely must be a classic example of his wit and it seems to me he could have sold it to the NEW YORKER if he'd wanted to.

I've been studying Taral's drawing on page 48 and trying to figure out not only what's going on (is this a faned plying for a contribution?) but also how they manage to maintain their balance while they're doing whatever it is they're doing. Does this come with an explanation at all? ((Ask Tucker -- he can explain it to you.))

Unfortunately Ted is probably correct in suggesting that Phil won his first Hugo because he has a large number of supporters in the midwest. I'm not sure this is exactly the same thing as block voting. What I'm getting at is that while there may be have a small circle of people that wore buttons and voted for Phil because he was their friend (and we all do that, even if we tell ourselves that our friend deserves the award and so it isn't really block voting; just as Phil's friends did, I imagine, whether they were qualified to judge or not) a lot of people voted for Phil because he's a competent artist and highly visible in print and in person. People didn't drum up votes for Phil, he just got them because he was popular. And there's little Ted or anyone else can do about that. It's always been a major weakness of the system that uninformed votes count just the same as votes from truly knowledgeable fanzine fans. It's interesting to note, though, that Phil hasn't won a FAAn award. And it's equally interesting to note that Ted has never supported the FAAns...

GARY DEINDORFER
447 Bellevue Ave #9B
Trenton NJ 08618

Mini anecdote: The solipsist
railed at the crowd in front of
his palace, "You're all a bunch of
bumblers, hopeless incompetents!
But, then, maybe I'm being too

self critical."

The cover is beautiful, fraught with magic and mystery. It really is quite something, as I gaze at it. If Taral wanted to make a full-color poster version of it, I think he could manage to sell quite a few of them.

As you say, if Bruce Pelz can sell SMOF numbers to any and all comers, what is a SMOF worth these days (a buck)? Yes, it is time to leave these semantically mauled terms behind in the fannish past and move on to the Fakefans Aptitude Test. I think I passed, but just barely. Of course, I am sure that at least one of my answers is right, because I know that it is correct to bring Bill Bridget to a famous prozine editor's party. I don't know how he feels about being rolled up in a cigarette paper and lit but if that's how he gets his kicks, okay.

Schirmeister is really original. I'm fascinated by his work. It reminds me strongly of the work of the legendary Carl Barks, drawer of the Uncle Scrooge comics in their prime. I wonder if he considers Barks' work as an influence on his own: I mean a conscious influence, not merely an unconscious one. As a Wagner listener and one who has studied the operas in depth, I find the Martian Wagner one-being orchestra and his soloists hilarious -- a fantastic idea, superbly rendered! Hell, I just realized it, looking at these drawings: most of them aren't just good, they're classics. Maybe you could tell us in the next issue what he's done in the pro field. ((He's sold to Asimov's.))

I am fascinated by Jeanne Gomoll's examination of the philosophical implications of CLOSE ENCOUNTERS OF THE THIRD KIND. Truffaut as Lacombe is an intriguing figure in the film. Am I the only one who got the strong impression that the alien being who came up to the human being at the movie's end was essentially Lacombe's alien counterpart? Am I missing the point when I wonder why Neary was chosen to go with the aliens when to my way of thinking they would have done better to choose Lacombe, from whom they could learn a lot more about the human race than Neary. Or perhaps they wanted an average human being (Neary) not a genius or near-genius (Lacombe). I think that Jeanne Gomoll would consider that I have missed the point, but I don't think I have in that I think Lacombe should have been the starship passenger as a much more intelligent and perceptive observer than Neary.

((Recall the scene where Lacombe says something to the effect that Neary and the others trying to reach Devil's Tower had a better right to be there than the army and himself? It seemed like the aliens wanted humans they had been able to reach through a psychic message imprinting them with the image of the Tower. Evidently what they were actually given was a paramilitary expedition, to which Neary was added at the last moment.))

HARRY BOSE
Earl-Sheldon Box 6335 U/O
Eugene OR 97403

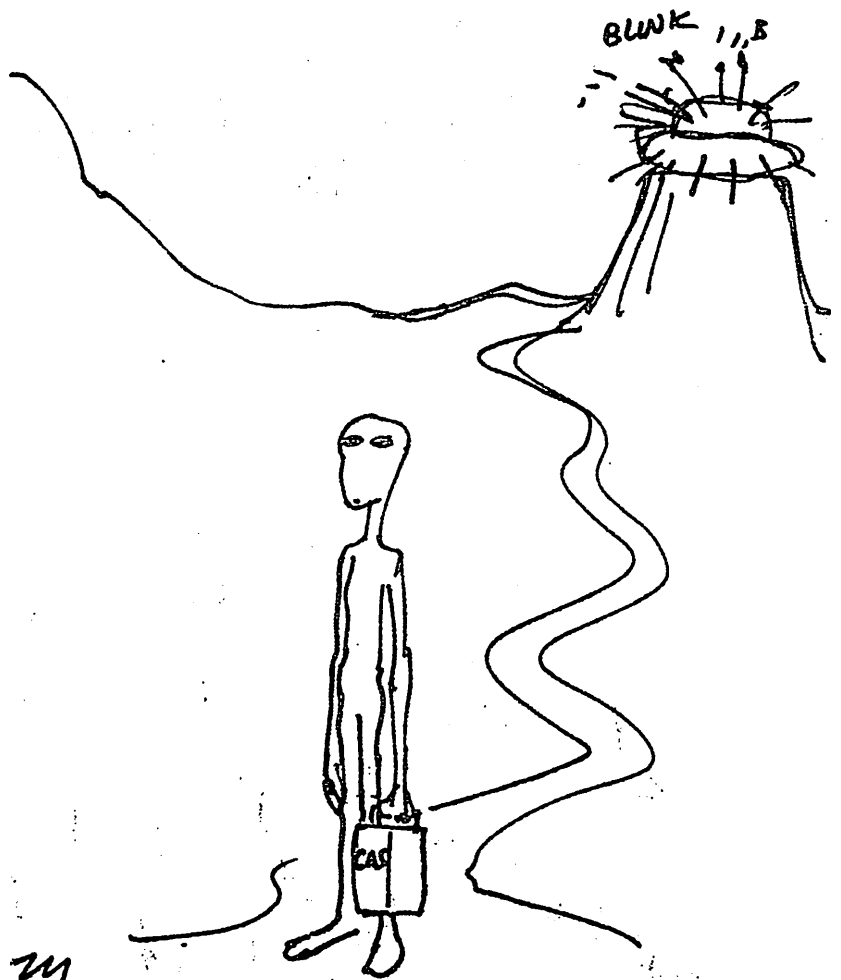
Of the reviews "What the Thunder Said" holds my attention best. I call it an article-review, and use a clumsy hyphenated expression by the way, because Gomoll chooses

to see CLOSE ENCOUNTERS in a frame of reference rather than merely

list its strong and weak points and deliver a few unrelated insights.

Some say Eliot wrote "The Wasteland" so that generations of academicians would have a work on which to apply his theories as expressed in THE SACRED WOOD. Some say he wrote the poem as a joke. Ha. He wrote the main part in an asylum. All of which doesn't detract from the fact that "The Wasteland" is based on the Grail Romances. Why Gomoll has to drag in "The Wasteland" to show that CLOSE ENCOUNTERS has the same basis escapes me. I admire her central insight nevertheless. ((Dincha ever hear of Comp. Lit.??))

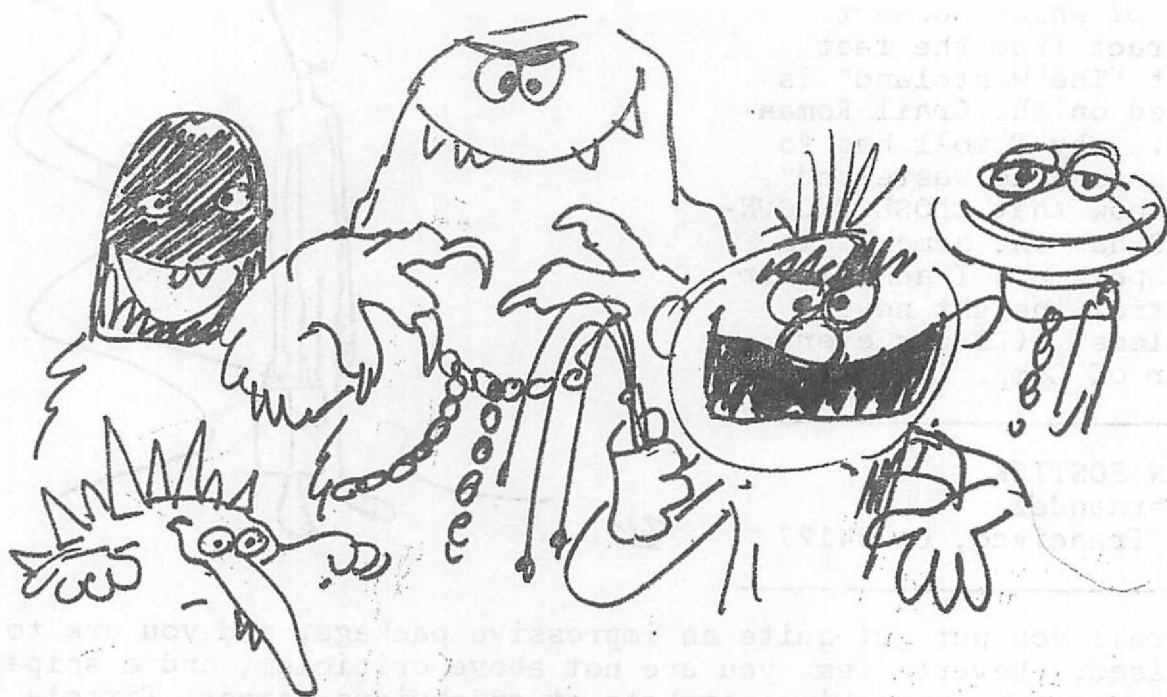
ALAN BOSTICK
2 Hernandez
San Francisco, CA 94127



Overall you put out quite an impressive package, and you are to be praised. Nevertheless, you are not above criticism, and a sniper like me cannot resist taking potshots at an obvious target. Firstly, I'd like to complain about the seemingly indiscriminate mixing of neat use of a selectric and the less-than-attractive typeface of a more normal typer. However, I gather that there was little you could do about this. Nevertheless, it doesn't look nice.

((Well, there's only one way to handle snipers --- Headquarters, give me an artillery strike at Sector Bravo Five Three Six! There is a tendency -- no, make that an obsession -- for fans to demand various large capital investments from fanzine editors before they'll condescend to pay attention to what actually counts -- the words and pictures in the fanzine. I said this back when I was a broke college student, and I still believe it, even though I have a zine budget that would have given my younger self a stroke, and I can play with my own Gestetner, a borrowed selectric, and two tons of electrostencils. I think it's nice if one wants to spend hours slip-sheeting, invest in offset, electrostencils, heavy stock, card covers, color mimeography, letraset headings, and all the devices that turn a fanzine into an original work of art. But you take a RUNE, which doesn't slipsheet, uses regular paper, or a MYTHOLOGIES where virtually no art was used, and you have two perfectly valid examples of

quality fanzines where the physical package is no more impressive than the average apazine. Do you realize that ENERGUMEN, the most renowned visually oriented zine of its day, besides having the best material -- was stenciled with a manual typewriter? And with selectrics still selling for \$800 a pop, fans are going to be seeing a lot of zines typed on other machines for the foreseeable future. Alan, it's fine by me that you think STFR is worth the bother of a page by page design critique -- in a way it's flattering -- but a number of your points seem to stem from inaccurate assessments of my aims for this zine. I don't think it is any more your business to pick my typeface for me than for Ian Maule to tell Victoria Wayne that she should quit publishing SIMULACRUM -- though I do admit that your criticism makes a hell of a lot more sense.))



MUPPETS OF GOR

An illo that doesn't belong is Derek Carter's, on page 45. While I am not one of the small number of fans who despises Mike Glicksohn, I do resent to some extent the frequent lionization of him by his friends -- all too often it is gratuitous and pointless. It is in this case. I have no real objections to jokes about Mike's fondness for alcohol or his promiscuity as a letterhack, but more than a little bile rises in my throat when I see things like the illo in question. Derek Carter should know better, and so should you. (I, of course, will not object at all if you start running illos that gratuitously lionize Alan L. Bostick, but my inclinations fall short of approving it in anyone else.) ((Resentment is only a demand that someone else feel guilty. In other words, if you have a problem with this, you take care of it yourself. Don't tell me what I should exclude from my fanzine. Had you simply said that you don't find Glicksohn references funny -- dandy. Each to his own taste.))

By and large, your editorial pleased me. The fakefan detector quiz was simply delightful, and your remarks on last year's Westercon were quite enlightening. I would like to point out that despite your feeling that the con was a success "in the fannish sense" and the letters you have received praising you for "the pleasures of an easygoing con" that you and your committee purveyed, there was considerable dissatisfaction (in the circles I travel in, at least) with the convention and its atmosphere, with the Logan's Runners fighting it out in the hallways. Of course this last cannot be helped seeing as it depends more on the tenor of the people who show up than anything under your control, but still it's hard to be faanish when a wookie is waving a light-sabre under one's nose. ((Were you mugged by a wookie? Had you stuck close to the late Adam Beckett, that is one trouble you'd never have had.))

The other important criticism I've heard was that it just wasn't fair that the committee should sponsor a Secret Closed Party for itself and the pros. I tend to agree with these people, notwithstanding the fact that I never had any problems getting into the consuite when I wanted to. Maybe I'm missing something: was there a Great Secret Party going on somewhere behind my back when I was up there? Were you people enjoying yourselves when I was looking in the other direction? Or (could such things be?) am I a member of that closed elite coterie of LA smofs that gets invited to Secret parties without even knowing about it? Your guess is as good as mine. ((You've been going to Westercons long enough to know that the best Secret Closed Party is the one thrown by the Pros for themselves. I've never been to that one yet. As for the circle you travel with -- the reason you got into the Secret Closed Party and they didn't is that you came up to the consuite and they didn't.))

Gosh, this letter is getting long and rather bitchy. And there are more things that I'm likely to bitch about, if I am to go on without spouting empty-sounding praise, deserved though that praise may be. ((What praise was that?)) But the fact is that the letterhacks of today seem to avoid saying anything that might be construed as harsh criticism, and that which is written seldom sees publication. Last summer I wrote a letter to the first issue of a fanzine. This letter was critical, politely so, but I didn't hesitate to point out the faults of the zine, and how they might be improved on. The husband of one of the editors came up to me at Iguacon and told me how croggled they had been when they read my letter -- nobody else had thought enough to include criticism in their letters to any degree; they either liked the zine indiscriminately or else didn't mention any flaws that they noticed, out of fear that they might hurt the feelings of the editors. This is abhorrent to me -- if a faneditor doesn't get constructive criticism of his or her fanzine by the letterhacks he or she sends the zine to, how the hell can one expect him or her to learn what the mistakes he or she might have made were? In addition to giving the fanzine the praise it deserves, a letterhack should not hesitate to remakr upon the failures of the fanzine. Critical honesty demands this. And faneditors should take care to print some of the criticism they receive; otherwise they not only give a false impression of their locs received, but they encourage letterhacks to omit criticism from their locs.... With this loss of feedback there is no quality control,



and fanzines become (as they seem to have become by and large currently) self-indulgent, and, let's face it, crappy. ((I endorse the idea that editors should publish critical locs as well as the favorable ones. But I would venture that the biggest deterrent to editorial improvement today is the difficulty of getting a zine out in the first place. Publishing costs so much that it is impossible for most fans to afford to put out more than an occasional zine -- as a result they don't get experience, and criticism is wasted. To that I should add my view that criticism of fanzines is almost entirely wasted anyway, unless it is accompanied by a real effort to educate the editor to the justice of your comment -- thereby showing how to improve, not merely

indicating that he ought to improve. Taral's reviews and his other articles on zine pubbing in DNQ are exactly what I mean -- he may be a severe critic, but he often follows remarks with advice on how to improve.))

Lou Stathis' column is valuable in the insights it gives into the world of prozine publishing, and I might point out that from my own experiences in the world of magazine publishing the sort of situation he describes is more the rule than the exception. FREEDOM TODAY, the magazine some friends and I are currently working on) receives large numbers of shoestring periodicals in trade. I have seen the offices of one of the better magazines, produced locally, and it has very much the atmosphere of our own basement offices. I am given to believe that things are substantially the same at least to a small degree for all but the largest circulation magazines. The general public simply cannot realize from the finished products they encounter the sort of inadequate or sleazy conditions that magazines are frequently produced under, to say nothing of the professional ethics of many, even the largest publishers. If more fans realized this, criticism of prozines would be a great deal more useful. Informed criticism can be far more sharp, and an editor or publisher is far more likely to pay attention to it.

HL Mencken once wrote that the true function of criticism is to enable the audience of a work of art to understand it better. So far as I can tell, Jeanne Gomoll's article on CLOSE ENCOUNTERS OF THE THIRD KIND fully meets this criterion. The view of the film as an example of a quest along the lines of T.S. Eliot's "The Waste Land" is a new one to me, and quite a perceptive one. I am glad to have read it. This is what sercon should be -- a means whereby the reader of SF, or any literature, can gain new understanding.... Jeanne deserves praise for the article.

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I'm a member of the Musical
Heritage Society, and, as such,
receive a magazine/catalog from
them every few weeks. Now,
recently a controversy has

erupted over a critic they publish named David Greene whose opinionated
ravings have irked many readers. (He reviews the albums to be released
and gives historical background and anecdotes for them) who feel that
ruminations about his cat, his wife's floral arrangements or his
1972 Ford sedan have no bearing on a discussion of Hindemith or
Prokofiev.

This controversy reminds me quite a bit of that concerning Jon
Gustafson except for one thing. Never once have I questioned David
Greene's knowledge. Gustafson, on the other hand, seems to confirm
the opinion that the only things that are needed to be a fan critic
are a pen and paper (as well as an editor who can be duped into giving
space.) This is an opinion I've had of him since his first SFR
column when he claimed that good art was good art no matter how much
cropping an editor or art director did and therefore, artists who
blamed art directors for ruining their work by cropping were whining
know-nothings.

Since then Gustafson has had to struggle to convince me that he has
the qualifications to critique art. He's fighting a losing battle
if his SCIENTIFRICTION 10 column is any indication. The man simply
does not know what he is talking about. No amount of discussion
about implied diagonals is going to change that. We've all read
enough literary criticism of sf that knew nothing about sf, though used
the proper terminology, to realize that.

"Art is art, the difference lies in what each piece of art is used for"
Gustafson says and then stops short of showing that he knows how to
tell the difference. In fact, if he would have only opened his eyes
he might have discovered that it is that very difference in
usage that makes the statement "art is art" meaningless.

The very fact that cover art is used as cover art means that it is a
very different art form than that practiced in the "pure art" (for
lack of a more appropriate term) of Matisse and Picasso. To say that
Matisse's implied diagonals equate with Gaughan's is a meaningless
statement. Picasso and Freas both use balance, but with very differ-
ent ground rules. To equate these two kinds of art is as silly as
equating oil painting and marble sculpture. Matisse and Picasso were
working in different forms than Gaughan and Freas are now.

Let me point out a few basics to Mr. Gustafson, who, I'm sure, is
aware of these things but like many lousy critics can't see how they
should affect his judgements until someone does point them out.

One: type. Look at a piece of cover art on display in an art show.
Do you see that empty expanse of sky or sea or whatever across the
top 25%-35% of the painting. Now I know that you know that that is
for the titles; I can hear you telling me that now. But that is a
major factor in cover art. The artist has the responsibility for

leaving room for the type or the art director will do it for him/her. A bad cover artist will paint his painting and then extend the sky upward a ways to leave room. As a result, the final cover will look topheavy since the art wasn't planned to include type at the top. A good cover artist will plan ahead, so that the entire cover, including type, logo, price bug, UPC box on magazines, etc., will balance as a unit.

Yes, Mr. Gustafson, commercial artists do use the concept of balance but it is hardly subject to the same constraints as other artists and to claim that Rencir's balance is DiFate's balance is to look stupid.

And this is omitting the other major factor: the art director. When he/she plasters type all over that space the artist has designed for it, the a.d. becomes a co-artist. And, all too often, a ruinous one. I've heard of art directors (and seen their work) whose idea of type design is to choose a typeface named "Bell" for a book on telephones, or to use an Old English typeface for a book set in Old England regardless of what the book is about or what the cover looks like.

When you send your art into this co-artist you are at his/her mercy. The choice of too heavy a type style (or even a title change which alters the length of a book's title, and therefore its relative type weight) plays havoc with the cover's balance.

Point two - printing. Go back to that art show display and look at that painting again. By George! It's painted! And now, look at the cover made from it. By Jon! It's printed! It makes no difference whether the original art was in acrylics, oils, water colors, batik, photographed, sculpted, pen or charcoal. It ends up being translated through a photographic and, then, printing process. If you think that doesn't make a difference then it is time to give up art criticism.

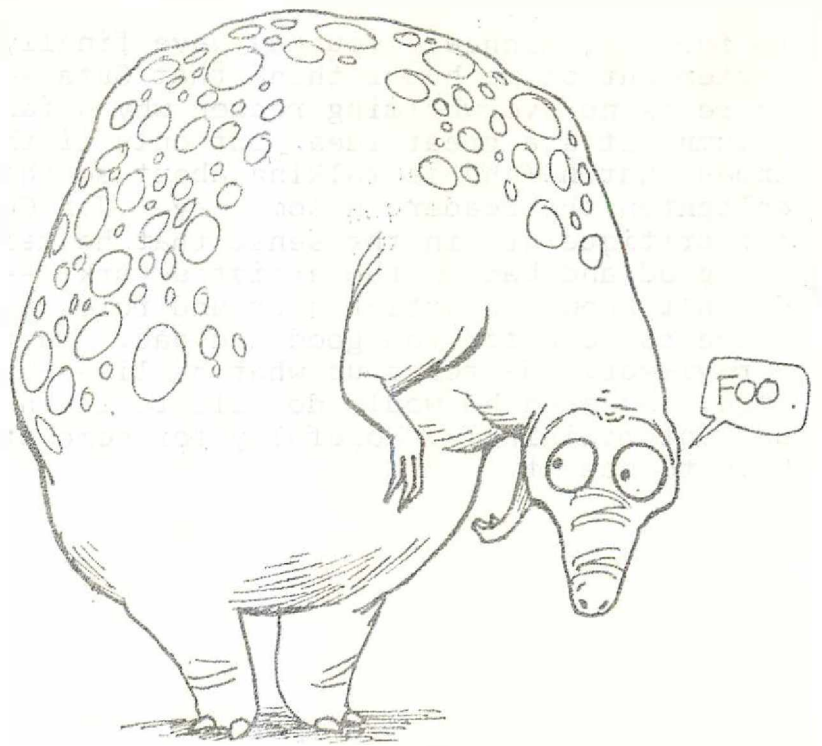
Most good cover artists accomodate as much as they can to the disruptions caused by the photo/printing processes. Assuming the best color separations (a bad assumption, as too many artists have learned the hard way) there are still things the photo-graphic process cannot do as well as most artistic media. Some colors can never be duplicated precisely because of the nature of the chemicals used in the Kodak developing process. Texture is nearly a lost cause because of the lighting requirements for photography. You've heard the old saw that there are things in literature which can never be adapted to movies because of the differences in the two media. Well, the same goes here -- unless the original art is a photograph, the cover is also an adaptation.

This isn't even mentioning the second half of the process -- printing. Try and get any print run to look even like the color separation! Assuming the best color printing (once again, a bad -- and dangerous -- assumption), there are some colors which don't take as well to some cover stocks. There are colors which run, or dry faster.

Finally, to deal with those two bad assumptions. Not only is art not art, but art (in this case) is a business and good separations cost a lot of money (ask Andy Porter). No printer is going to stop his

presses every five minutes or so to re-ink and thereby avoid the dulling of colors seen on every print run after a short while.

These are the realities of the industry. I present them not as an excuse for bad art, but to show Jon Gustafson that art is not art is not art. Any good, professional, accomplished cover artist will take all of these factors and more into account when doing his work. Size of original vs. reproduction, conditions under which most people will see the work -- ie, poorly lit book stalls. Gustafson would be well advised to take these into account when writing.



Now, you may notice that I've omitted talking about two other items here. One is the fact that cover art is meant to sell books. That fact of life is so full of possibilities for argument that I've left it out. It is too often used as an excuse for bad cover art. Sometimes it is (Laser books seems to be a prime example here,) but it need not be germane to a discussion of the things that Jon Gustafson should consider but doesn't in his pieces.

Secondly is the matter of personal taste. Upfront I should say that my tastes and Gustafson's do not exactly match up. In fact I agree far more with Ted White than him on Phil Foglio. But I think that Gustafson does Ted a dishonor and makes himself look like a stupid pig by reducing all of Ted's objections to one of artistic disagreement. ((Hm -- and this zine doesn't even come equipped with a parking lot for the two of you to step out to...)) There are points of artistic technique which I'm sure Gustafson has learned in his art classes which he mentions in his discussion of pro art (though never in a very critical manner) which he has seemingly forgotten when he discusses fan art. Or are we to lower our standards in fan art as we have in fan writing? And, seemingly, in fan criticism.

My main point, therefore, is this. I agree with Ted White that most of what Gustafson writes is meaningless. But rather than let my opinions be sloughed off as just a disagreement over "taste" I've tried to point out just a few of the reasons why I think Gustafson does not know what he is talking about. It is this, this lack of knowledge, that makes his critiques meaningless to me. These are some of the things that I think about when I critique a work of art for myself. I am hardly about to respect anyone who is ostensibly

writing for other people who can't even perceive these things.

As for you, Michael, you may have finally gotten an eight page letter out of me but I think that Gustafson does your zine an insult. There is no overwhelming reason why a fanzine need have an art review column. It's a great idea, but only if the columnist is one who knows what he/she is talking about so that that knowledge can enlighten the reader in some way. Jon Gustafson is wrong -- he does not critique art in the sense that he means it -- "I look for both the good and bad in the artist's work" -- since he obviously doesn't know the artist's ground rules and therefore doesn't know where to look for the good and bad. Gustafson is, plain and simple, a reviewer. He tells us what he likes and doesn't like. Not much more. As such he would do well to learn how to write more cogently and entertainingly. Hopefully for some other fanzine where I won't have to see it.



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I enjoyed Lou Stathis' wrap-up of the prozines. He writes well and his perceptions seem accurate and fair (read: I agree with him). But he has, by indirection,

seemingly supported something that Darrell Schweitzer (in SFR) seems to be doing maliciously. Schweitzer has apparently gone out of his way to attack UNEARTH, in such a fashion that I wonder if he hasn't got something against them personally. ((Better to insert this point now than step on your closing paragraph -- I believe that Lou had intended to review additional prozines -- he just stopped where he did for lack of room. Unfortunately I have had no word from Lou, much less a column, since the last issue.))

At any rate, Lou makes some perceptive comments about the design of the various magazines, even nailing down the precise period when the AMAZING/FANTASTIC zines seemed to be going somewhere. But he fails to note, perhaps deliberately, that UNEARTH is clearly the best designed digest magazine around. The artwork isn't the greatest, but it's generally competent to very good. The layout, though, is a good example of how clean a digest magazine can be. No overcrowding, no gimmicks. A readable typeface in columns and a clean sans serif face for the heads on regular features.

I know that the two editors at UNEARTH are doing this from love, and possibly a little ambition. The entire staff combined probably makes what Ted White did at Ultimate, yet my experience has been (with my book reviews) that they pay and pay before publication. I've even gotten a bonus from them for making a particularly tough deadline. I really don't understand the attitude that is being directed toward them. They've only put out seven issues at this writing, yet the package of the magazine has improved exponentially in that period, at a time when other magazines were stagnating or going downhill. I gather that the fiction has improved, too, although possibly not as much. The point is, though, that they're out there trying, which is a good deal more than 99% of the nay-sayers are doing. They're experimenting, they're trying, goddamit.

You get this diatribe, incidentally, because my experience has been that Dick Geis doesn't print my letters. You might, and this has been essentially a public statement. The bile is directed at Schweitzer, really, and all those I hear making nasty remarks about the UNEARTH staff. Lou kind of just got in the way.

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It's a pleasure to get an excellently put-together fanzine full of quality material where the editor doesn't feel obligated to tell you how great it is

and how much effort it cost and how he has strained his personal finances to the breaking point and furthermore dedicated his entire life to bring this masterwork to fandom. I suppose you've been producing fine zines for too long to be impressed by your own efforts anymore but I assure you your readers are still impressed.

But getting back to Ted White. A veritable wonder of fandom. He always has such lucid, sensible things to say and always manages to say them in such a way that the person he addresses becomes immediately enraged. Now, really, anyone who uses the term "brilliant" so carelessly as to include Foglio shouldn't take offense when someone tries to hold him to the dictionary definition of the word. I mean, if people are to be allowed to go around using the language so arbitrarily as to equate Foglio's art with "brilliance" no one will be able to understand what anyone else is saying pretty soon. I guess I'm really annoyed at Gustafson for wasting his art column on yet another REPLY. Yawn... Just once I'd like to see someone write an article, see someone else reply, then see both fans say "Well, you've had your say and I've had mine, now let's get on with something else."

Taral's cover was...uh...brilliant. One of my all time favorites. The use of light reminds me of the effects in one of the first Fabian OW covers I ever saw, but studying Taral's cover I see now that his technique is really more sophisticated. To my mind he's about the best artist we have when he puts his mind to it. He has the best design sense. When he draws "people" (humanoids, whatever) they have a feeling of solidity, suppleness, fleshiness (I'm looking in vain for the right word). They don't look like aggregations of muscles. However, his creatures can be nauseatingly fey. ((Oops))

Never cared for Schirmeister's work. Strikes me that his style is more a result of contrivance than an outgrowth of his personality. And not as original as it might seem at first glance. It's actually an amalgamation of bad old commercial cartooning cliches. Rather as if he learned to draw from a 1935 LET'S ALL DRAW FUNNIES book. Some may find his stuff incongruously humorous. My own favorite stuff, aside from the cover, is the work of Pearson whose controlled sketches are a welcome relief from the commerciality one usually finds in "high class" fanzines. ((I think your evaluation of Schirmeister is off the wall, and results from projecting personal taste incorrectly onto the motives of someone else, but each to his own taste. There are just too many "artists" in fanzines today who can't draw -- people who may come up with gags which delight the mind, but can't sketch their way out of a paper bag. One does not encourage those who have drawing skill by telling them to trash their personal style.))

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All thanks for SCIENTIFRICTION 10.
I feel I must defend myself against
Dave Locke, however. While it
was true that I came up with the
slogan "Free the Ann Arbor Nine"

I did not create or put up the signs. I didn't have to. I think you'll find Suzy Stelf, the heroine who brought them beer while trapped, was behind the signs. However I had not been drinking at the time. As everybody should know, I do not take any form of intoxicants and never have.

The review of DANCERS I liked, since it's my least-known book, but I do kind of wonder why your critic feels it wrong if a serious book on a serious theme is depressing. You mean we can't treat serious themes in sf? The book's basic premise was proven out by both the

Cambodians and the Peoples' Temple in the last year and there just isn't much sweetness and light in that sort of socio-psychological theme. I'm also kind of curious that he compared it to JUNGLE as if it were my second book. Apparently the fact that I've had other major books is unknown to him. The use of that comparison is a demonstration of uninformed criticism; if compare he must, it should be against more recent work.

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SCIENTIFRICTION 10 has a beautiful cover. Having myself suffered from the vagaries of cheap printing of covers with lots of gray tones, I wonder: is there a

secret here, aside from mere money. ((Yes -- even more money.))

Afraid I disagree with Don D'Ammassa on China. Chinese policy towards barbrians is traditionally "let's you and him fight." As we have the poorest morale and are the lesser threat, the dragon smiles, for the moment.

Tara! is unfair to Captain Kirk (a mind-boggling concept), as the Non-Interference Doctrine probably aims to keep out, not the pure-hearted and bone-headed Federation forces, but instead the merchants, conmen and emigrants who would otherwise come swarming.

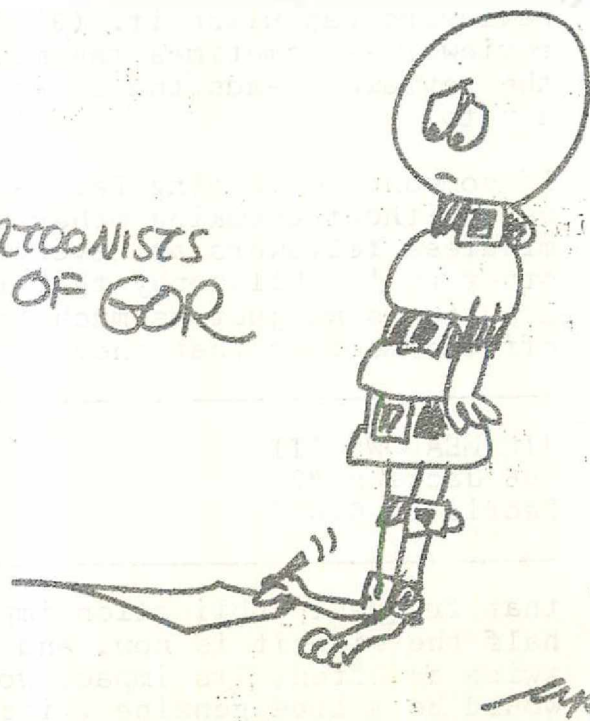
Barbara Geraud is apparently still living in Camelot. I disagree with her: Kennedy was a thoroughly mediocre president, who was, as with Suetonius' Claudius "Afterwards Deified," Hubert Humphrey, back around 1953 when Bobby was working for McCarthy, initiated the "Kennedy" civil rights bills. Kennedy, I agree, was the first president to endorse them: but he was also the first Democrat in the White House after HHH publicized the ideas. President Johnson deserves all the credit for their passage, as well as all the blame for trying to fight a long limited war as head of a democracy

The Marc Schirmeister covers are what I miss most about APA L. The cover for 654 must have some deep philosophical point, but I can't quite tell what it is. It made me think of Cabell's "And there is laughter Overhead, but it is very far away."

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Jeff Frane misses many points in his review of Del Rey's reviews. There are four good reasons to

CARTOONISTS
OF GOR





MISTEROGERS OF GOR

read reviews: (1) to see what the reviewer thinks about a book. This is then put into the formula of what that specific reviewer's taste is, in this case me vs. Del Rey. I find out his prejudices and tastes over a few months time and some hits and misses, then from there on it's usually easy to tell from his reviews which books I will probably like. (2) To find out the plot or story since most reviewers capsulize it. (3) To read the pithy side comments of the reviewer -- sometimes the most enlightening part. (4) To find out if the reviewer reads the books he reviews. It's amazing how many seem not to.

If someone is reading Del Rey's reviews and buying whatever Del Rey says without checking other sources, that's their trouble. Surely the mindless followers are everywhere and it's only when they follow the other guy's philosophy that it pisses us off. No, on second thought, it bothers me just as much to have them on my side. What pisses me off the most is that they're around at all.

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Putting out big fanzines has its good points, I suppose. But when you're dealing with a medium which benefits to a great extent from reader feedback, the continuity

that frequent publication imparts is very valuable. If your zine was half the size it is now, and published 1½ times as often, if not twice as often, its impact would be better felt. SCIENTIFRICTION would be a true genzine...its personality would sink in, because it

was renewed four or five times a year. As it is, STFR is just this big thing that comes every now and then, and except for its good material, it's just the same as any other Big Thing fanzine that I get. ((I agree with you entirely. All I would add is the initial investment in time and money for a genzine is a problem for me. The way postal rates are set up, it costs me the same to send 30 pages or 70 pages -- and it costs an arm and a leg either way. The other problem is, I just don't have the resources of material to do a quarterly fanzine. I might be able to flog my columnists into producing that often, but the articles are real rarities around here. For every four articles I am promised, I get one -- from a fifth party who mails it in out of the blue...))

"What the Thunder Said" is insufferably pretentious. I dislike reviews which lift flawed films to the level of Shakespeare, complete with comparative references to great poets and sophomoric sidelines on how this darling film is better than the other Current Rage. All the same, the point Jeanne Gomoll made really hit home with me. I had never thought of the story struck of CLOSE ENCOUNTERS in that way before, but it makes a lot of sense. Spielberg probably didn't plan in that way -- he just wanted to make his flying saucer picture, I would guess. But I think he'd be fascinated by the basic argument of Jeanne's piece. Flattered, too, by being told his film rivals T. S. Eliot (well, that's mostly insinuation, but oh well...)

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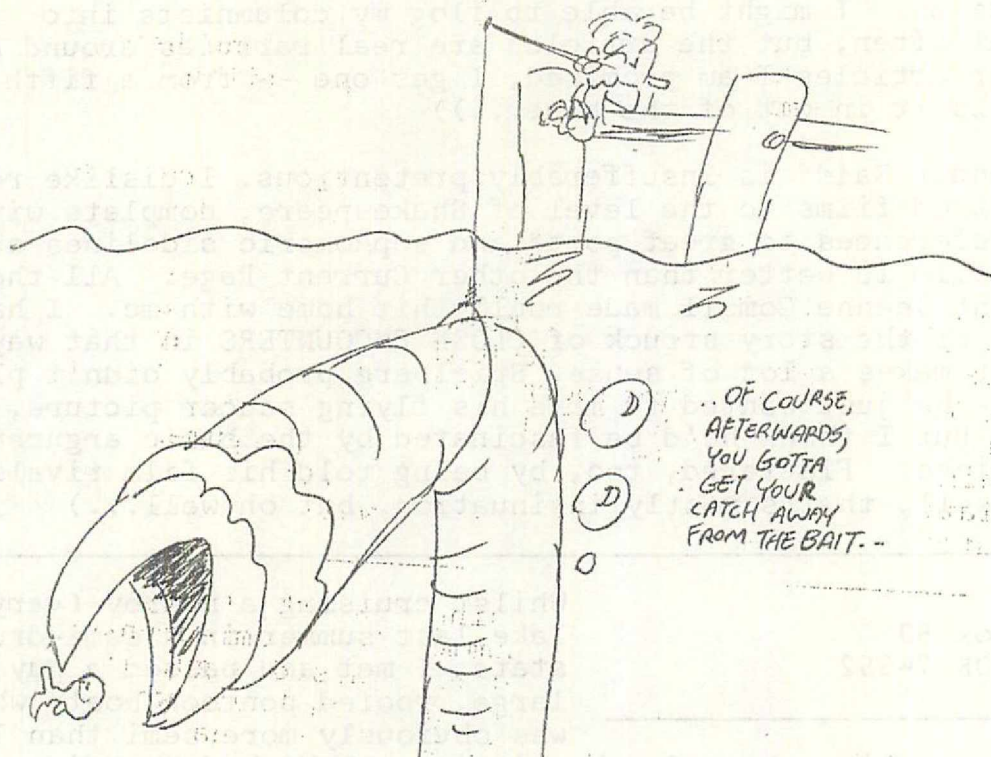
Whilst cruising a nearby (very) lake last summer in a semi-drunken state, I met and passed a guy in a large, roofed pontoon boat, who was obviously more semi than I.

He was trolling, going about 3 mph, sitting all kicked back in a chair at the back of the boat with a drink in his hand. When I waved, he enthusiastically waved back, lost his balance and fell into the lake. His boat motored on alone. It must have taken me three miles to get that drunken fucker back onto that boat.

The first boarding attempt, the guy missed completely. The second time he split his head open on a rail before falling in the lake. The third time, he made a mighty leap that carried him halfway onto the deck, but the momentum carried him across the deck and over the opposite rail with one of the most magnificent pratfalls imaginable. Splat. I finally tied up to the pontoon boat and went aboard myself to shut the thing down. Great fun.

You once waxed warm about the Ultimate Hamburger, or the pursuit thereof, so I assume you might also have a mild interest in The Ultimate Bowl of Chili. I personally think the best chili you can buy can be found only in Southwest Texas, but I make some myself that is worth mentioning. I use the less tender parts of deer hindquarters, with the bone left in, add a large onion per pound of meat, a whole raft of garlic, one handful of jalapeno peppers, salt and black pepper, and boil it in a small amount of water for at least five hours. Then separate the meat, add a half cup chili powder and two tablespoons of cumin per pound, chunk in at least a quart of peeled tomatos and cook it slowly for another hour. Beans are

optional. Good stuff. It's the deer meat and bone marrow that does it. I think the best ribs are found in South Carolina (pork) and the best b-b-q brisket in East Texas. Kansas City also has good ribs. In Okieland you can't beat smoked b-b-q beef ribs, if an old Indian runs the joint. I've never found b-b-q chicken that was excellent -- nowhere.



NAUGHTY BITS

TERRY JEEVES: Perhaps I might include one very minor criticism of the lettercol. I liked what was there...but felt that perhaps a judicial editing could put across the juice of each LoC and leave room for a few more writers to air their views.

ALAN BOSCO: Don't get me wrong: I really like the style Dave Locke wrote the column installment with; only, I find it frustrating that he chose to bring up nonsequitur tangents and hardly wrote about what he kept telling us he intended: "elevator fandom." //So far, the best Stan Burns book reviews I've seen. Not at all a chore to skim (another compliment).

MARTIN WOOSTER: No one has put in a good word for Stan Burns. Allow me to do so. Short reviews are damn hard to write well; too many either summarize plot and ignore judgement of the work, or ramble on about the author without telling the reader what the book was about. Burns does not fall into either of the horns of the dilemma. As a result his reviews are always readable and sensible. Keep on printing 'em! ((Okay, if you insist...))

HARRY ANDRUSCHAK: I hope you make a habit of highlighting other LA area fanartists who don't get much national exposure. How about Susan Schulman? She is doing some marvelous stuff. And Ray Capella deserves something too, I think. And many others. We have a lot of talent here in LA. ((Ray has volunteered to produce a portfolio for a future issue, and I have in hand some Joe Pearson illustrations for portfolio usage as soon as I can clear the rights with the original publisher -- a textbook firm.))

LINDA BUSHYAGER: Perhaps there will be a resurgence in color mimeography. SIMULACRUM, MAD SCIENTISTS DIGEST and SCIENTIFRICTION all have excellent mimeography and color mimeo.

DON D'AMMASSA: Lou Stathis does a great analysis of the prozines. It's one of the better things I've seen in the fan press lately. // On the subject of China: I recently read somewhere the observation that the Chinese have managed to maintain their civilization for centuries by knowing when and how to appease the barbarians at their gates. It may just be at the moment we are the barbarians at their gates and they are disarming us with their persuasions. This does give one pause to think, and I say that as someone who has felt right along that the loosening of tensions between China and the US was a good thing. I'm not all that certain about which society has the greater staying power in the long run. Based on experience, I'd say time was on their side.

DAVE PIPER: Pursuant to your offer in FILE 770:6, regarding "expensive long distance phone calls" I have, since yesterday evening, made 27 expensive long distance phone calls to the number quoted by you but have failed to catch you in each time. However the bloke I spoke to each time who gave his name as C. Chisney Cordwainer Jno.IV who appears to be your Official Telephone Answerer and General Factotum did say he'd tell you of the 27 expensive long distance telephone calls I made and that you'd credit me for FILE 770 until 1983 and I trust that he has informed you of this fact.

CHARLES BURBEE: I can't stand it. Going without SCIENTIFRICTION and FILE 770. They both tell me more about fandom than I care to know, but I've got to have them. So here's \$10. Please send them to my new PO box. I had to get that box. The damed mailman actually tore one of my mags cramming it into that tiny apt house mailbox. I think he did it on purpose so I would rent a PO box. I suspect he is in the pay of the Post Office Dept.

J. OWEN HANNER: Dave Locke has rarely written a column I don't like. Somehow, he seems able to take one simple idea and turn it into a very good four page article without getting banal. He makes it look easy, too. But you sit there and say to yourself, Hell, I can do this kinda shtick, and then later find out you can't. It's humbling.

AVEDON CAROL: I'm not bothering to write a real loc because I no longer have any reason to believe that it will get there. No less than seven of my locs written in the last six months have failed to reach their destination. So, since you aren't going to get this anyway, I'm not going to tell you what I thought of your fanzine. ((And on that high point, we terminate the Fanivore... Uh...))

WAHF: Dr. A. D. Wallace, Ron Salomon, David Govaker, earendil, Andy Richards, George Paczolt, P. Lyle Craig, Ira Thornhill.

