



SCIENTIFRICTION SEVEN: "The Rabbi" by Joe Pearson: December/January

SCIENTIFRICTION 7

special tits'n stars issue

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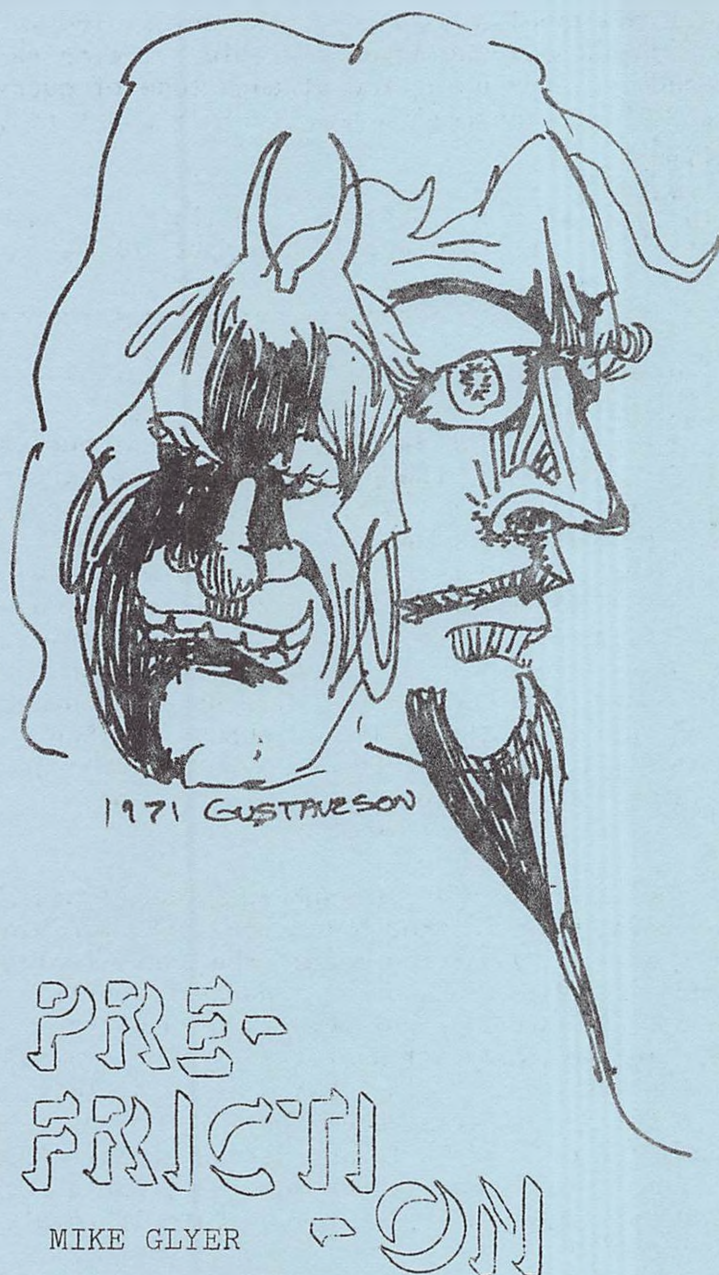
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WHEN WHIMS COLLIDE: Scientifriction (or Sci-Fri as we sercon types say) is a response-oriented fanzine. Of course that could be like saying a desert is a water-oriented landscape. Anyhow samples are available for a dollar. Thereafter your sterling letter of comment, article, artwork, or tradezine, is necessary to keep up the flow.

And lest we forget: Mike Glycer
14974 Osceola St., Sylmar CA 91342





last issue's cover was a travesty. To quote Phil Foglio: "JEEZUS CRYST! Who did the zipatone?" For a fellow who never reads fanzines, Phil remarkably got to the heart of the matter.

Let's begin with me swearing off zipatone -- I'll never overlay an artist's illo again. (Given Foglio's reaction it'd have been no surprise if Paula Marmor bit off my head, though she took it rather calmly.)

Now the fact is that cover was experimental -- it was not merely the last time I used zipatone like that, it was the first. I concluded that in all areas, not just art, too often instead of doing the things I do well in a fanzine, I'd been sliding along on experiment and make-do, compromising my way down the road to mediocrity. If nowhere else than in my own opinion, I know a lot about editing a good fanzine -- both in appearance and appeal. It's not always possible to get the raw material (articles,

1. Postcard from Nuremberg

In SFR 18 author John Shirley took strong exception to my review of EPOCH, demanding: "Glycer/ feels his own critical faculty is so flawless that he can conceive of doing physical violence to a struggling young artist whose product did not match Glycer's cardboard-cutout standards. Who gave Glycer this fascist authority?"

Until Shirley raised this thorny legal question I hadn't realized the manner in which I'd gone out on a limb. Yet any other believer in the Great Chain of Being would spot it in an instant.

Fortunately Lee Gold, with Dan Goodman to second the motion, introduced the Elegant Solution as part of LASFS' weekly business meeting. "MOVED: That LASFS grant Mike Glycer the fascist authority to unfavorably review stories and alleged stories by struggling artists. This motion is not intended to condone a Final Solution to the pretentious-writer problem."

As recorded in Secretary Ted Johnstone's minutes, "The reading of this motion was twice interrupted by applause and it was passed by acclamation." (Meeting 2035, 8/12/76)

Imagine my relief.

2. Fascist Authority Meets Zipatone

Outside of the Marmor illo itself,

artwork) to work with, and getting electrostencils made is always a hassle for me because I'm usually 2000 miles from my supplier. But it's about time I put it on the line. Presumably these very words are appearing on a better grade of paper, and in the company of more sf-oriented material to balance the fannish columns. Stan Burns' IBM is far better suited to stencilling than my high-school-graduation portable. I even remembered to insert my address in the colophon... Judging by the strange tone of outrage that greeted my omission of my address on STFR 5, remembering to put it in ought to be good for ten more votes in next year's awards.

One other thing I know about a well-edited fanzine -- it publishes a minimum of 'talking mimeographer's blues' and these editorial policy statements. Therefore let us make an end.

3. Fear and Goatherding

Los Angeles' standing as a cultural center is more likely to concern a resident of Encino or Bel-Air than one of the inner city or, for that matter, Sylmar. But because the media, particularly the Los Angeles Times, patronize the people who feel a personal stake in the town's pretensions to elite art greatness, the question is far from new or unknown to the rest of us. It's all in the mindsets of people as different as the dozen different communities they inhabit. There are those LA families who must have season tickets to the San Francisco opera, to feel that they are hooked into the mainstream. Then there are those families satisfied with season tickets to the Ahmanson Center Theater. And then there are those of us who listen to the Dodger games on radio and far from envying the Bay Area would wish the Ohio River might rise up and convert Riverfront Stadium to a public bath. We can only marvel anytime somebody from San Francisco interrupts counting the parade of suicides off the Golden Gate Bridge long enough to sneer at LA. The town has nothing we want outside of Otis Sistrunk and Jim Plunkett.

My opinion is that if any town in America should feel unjustly snubbed it's Chicago. Possibly I hold this opinion because I was born there, although I doubt that, because we moved west when I was 2 and I remember practically nothing except the snow; those who've been there in winter will understand. Somehow Chicago has managed to be treated as an orphan lost deep in the crevasse between the cultural heights of New York and Hollywood. I know I'd hate being there in the middle of winter -- taking pratfalls on ice-glassed sidewalks, and driving sideways as my car skids down frosted streets, are two things I'd like to avoid whether in Chicago, Bowling Green or York, Pa. Outside the winter weather, I cannot imagine any way the city of Sullivan, Darrow, Frank Lloyd Wright, Royko and Lisagore, plus a few million more residents and memories, could possibly lose its vitality. Yet one never hears about Chicago except when Daley's involved in his latest power grab, or after it's snowed half a ton.

In fact the media (tv/radio/newspaper) image of Chicago is quite insulting. As portrayed to the public, Chicago is nowhere near as striking as New Orleans, and lacks the personality of St. Louis. Being on the lake it's less comfortable than anywhere south of the Dakotas. Its ambiance combines Polish weddings, day baseball, black street gangs, and Alder & Sullivan architecture dotted by tommy-gun bullet holes. Even the city's negative imagery can't compete -- not as dangerous as Murder City (Detroit), not regarded as having a city government as corrupt as New York's or as fascistic as Philadelphia's, and tolerating second division sports teams whose betters have already been booted out of eastern cities. Despite its brilliant era in the 1890s, Chicago continues to be dismissed as an overgrown cowtown. And I have no answer to the question: why?

So by comparison to Chicago, LA is quite visible as a "cultural influence." That's why I wonder how come I'm so surprised every time a major exhibition of some sort sneaks into town. No doubt it's because one first hears of such exhibits when they



open in New York. Six months later when LA gets its turn one's first reaction is surprise: "Gee, is that still in the country?"

For example, the Soviet Union had created an exhibit of some of the Mermitage's most famous paintings. Keynoted by a Rembrandt and Matisse -- the kinds of famous paintings so seldom let out of Europe that it's like meeting a movie star on the street: "Say, isn't that --" -- the collection had pilgrimaged to museums up and down the country and at last to LA. I trooped down to the museum in the company of a hundred silverhaired ladies who probably went over the wall at the Home to get here. I admired the indirect (read:bad) lighting, the thick plastic housings which protected each painting against scalpel-wielding art critics, but most of my attention went to the excellent portraits created by several Russians I'd never before heard of.

Afterwards I stepped next door into the main museum. Just as an aside to my readers in Encino and Bel Air there is a reason this museum's collection is judged deficient: it is. Case in point is the exhibition of Southeast Asian temple art. The sculpture is battered and weatherworn, and even in mint condition would merely have been mediocre. Compare this with the art museum in Cleveland: it has a full room of the same category or art -- it has three times as many examples, everyone better in quality and virtually perfectly preserved.

This October another of these forgotten dreams arrived in LA. Last heard of during a congressional argument over the cost of dispatching 25 congressmen to ceremonially pick it up, the Magna Carta did make an appearance in the US for the Bicentennial. Once it came to town it was put on display in the local Chartered Bank of London. The bankers advertised it in the paper, announcing it as formally and proudly as if the LA distributors of Stolnicnaya Vodka had been loaned the body of Lenin for display in the window of a liquor store. Because it's far from every day that one of the most famous documents in human history goes on display within driving distance, I made some

TIME TO SEE IT.

PREFRICTION

4"

Mystery Tour

For starters I admit my mistake in equating "Historical Document" with the Declaration of Independence and its elaborate housing at the National Archive. Here at the bank was one of four surviving copies of the Magna Carta drawn up in 1215. It was enclosed in a shadowy cabinet and mildly illuminated by the faintest of electric lights. This carried to extremes the low-light policy of the Hermitage Collection, no doubt because the document is already so faded. In an echo of my first mistake, I expected something that I could read -- the difficulty in making out the writing would not have been helped by stronger light. The Magna Carta is Latin written in 'court script' -- worse than a doctor's, and indecipherable as my own. The text (I guess) is vellum; unquestionably it looks like withered sheepskin, sallow and wrinkled, stained with sepia handwriting. It is a working document with narrow margins and no paragraphing -- literally a copy of a contract. If the king and barons ever signed any of the copies it was not this: it has only three holes in it to show where the seal once hung, though long since disappeared.

However the bank made the trip entirely worthwhile by providing printed reproductions of the Magna Carta as souvenirs, with a translation on the back. This was the first translation of the charter I'd ever read, and by itself has rekindled my interest in medieval history. That subject got squeezed out of my college studies even though I majored in history -- half a dozen varieties of American and Asian history seemed more interesting at the time because I'd just been overdosed with Renaissance and Reformation studies in high school. And it's odd how much I missed. How do they expect anyone to understand the Renaissance and Reformation when his only conception of medieval Europe is as unsophisticated as the feudalism of CONNECTICUT YANKEE, the morality of THE SONG OF ROLAND and the religion of Roland Bainton?

4. March to the Sound of The Same Old Drummer

Checking the return address on the envelope I was puzzled why C.L. Grant, SFWA's secretary, would write to me. Now having read the press release in the envelope, I am even more puzzled. But given that SFWA feels compelled to defend its newest action to the 'fan press' (motley lot that we are) I shall take that as an invitation of sorts to editorialize on what I consider SFWA's faux pas.

This is an announcement that SFWA can and will no longer accept sales to or publication in Amazing or Fantastic magazines as a credential for membership, either for continuing members or applicants. Applicants will not be accepted into the SFWA on the basis of a sale to either or both of these magazines, or others published by Ultimate Publishing Co., Inc.

Any action regarding these magazines has been long deferred, to our embarrassment. In 1973, Ultimate made agreement with SFWA to make (token) payments to the many writers whose works they had reprinted with neither compensation nor notification -- often without even complimentary copies. That agreement totalled just under \$4000 and in increments of \$20 or \$40 for each reprinted short or novelet; small payment indeed. Sol Cohen agreed at the same time further to a pay-as-he-went plan on future reprints.

The agreement has not been kept, despite ridiculously numerous and expensive reminders and requests by mail and telephone.

In addition, there have been other grievances, insults to writers both as writers and as human beings. A new story in the August 1976 issue of Fantastic, for instance, had been submitted well over a year before. After receiving no reply to several queries, the writer wrote, formally withdrawing the story from consideration by that magazine. Subsequently he revised the story, retyped it, and sent it to another market. In addition to that expense, he has now been forced to write to that second market, embarrassedly

explaining and asking for the revised story. Too, while the lesser version of the story appeared in the August issue, as of September 13 1976 the writer had received neither payment nor a copy; his existence, indeed, has never been acknowledged other than by the publication of his story -- after he withdrew it from that market.

This writer's experience illustrates some of our problems, and the dangers of submitting to some markets. It comes on the heels of the voluminous reprints and the broken agreement, which had staved off SFWA action for three years. The organization can do nothing other than take a public stand; the president apologizes to all writers for not having acted sooner.

One does not expect this kind of irony -- a professional writers' group whose press release is characterized by bad organization, dangling participles, misplaced modifiers, and inconsistently used verb tenses. I am astonished by its ineptness, and thought few would believe it unless I fully reprinted it.

It would be one thing had SFWA issued a warning about FANTASTIC's unprofessional dealings with manuscripts, letting writers decide for themselves whether to run that risk. Writers submitting to GALAXY, and not long ago VERTEX and ODYSSEY have had to assume the same risk -- long delays on reading their submissions, and the risk of not being paid on time. While I've not heard of another magazine publishing a story without ever acknowledging the writer's submission, there is nothing new about the rest of the incident, nor anything SFWA ever bothered to publically stand against before. Therefore I ask what can SFWA gain by refusing to count sales to Ultimate as credentials for membership?

Does the change in membership policy have the effect of a boycott? If a boycott is SFWA's intent, why can't that organization simply make such a declaration? Is there a legal reason to avoid doing so? Why were the officers afraid to name the writer at issue in this press release? Have SFWA's executives' thought processes grown so Machiavellian that they've forgotten how to call something by its name? Or -- perhaps after 12 years in being SFWA still lacks the support of its members and there is a fear its members would ignore a boycott?

But what if a boycott is not SFWA's intention? Perhaps its main intent is to starve the two prozines to death by intimidating would-be pros (who naturally turn to the Ted White-edited zines) and neopros (who, judging by the cover of AMAZING, form the bulk of its contributors) -- telling them they won't be let into the club if they 'waste' their sales on AMAZING and FANTASTIC.

That strikes me as the ultimate lunacy of the union mentality -- destroying your source of employment. Unions ran plenty of New York papers out of business while proving how powerful they were -- and ran their members out of a job while they were at it. If SFWA succeeds in destroying Ultimate that may provide some SFWA members with increased illusion of their power -- but I doubt it will impress anybody whose publishing company is economically sound. One has to wonder about the choice of a tactic that (1) won't make a nickel for the victimized writers, (2) proposes to starve to death two of the five main prozines, (3) and won't add a whit to SFWA's prestige.

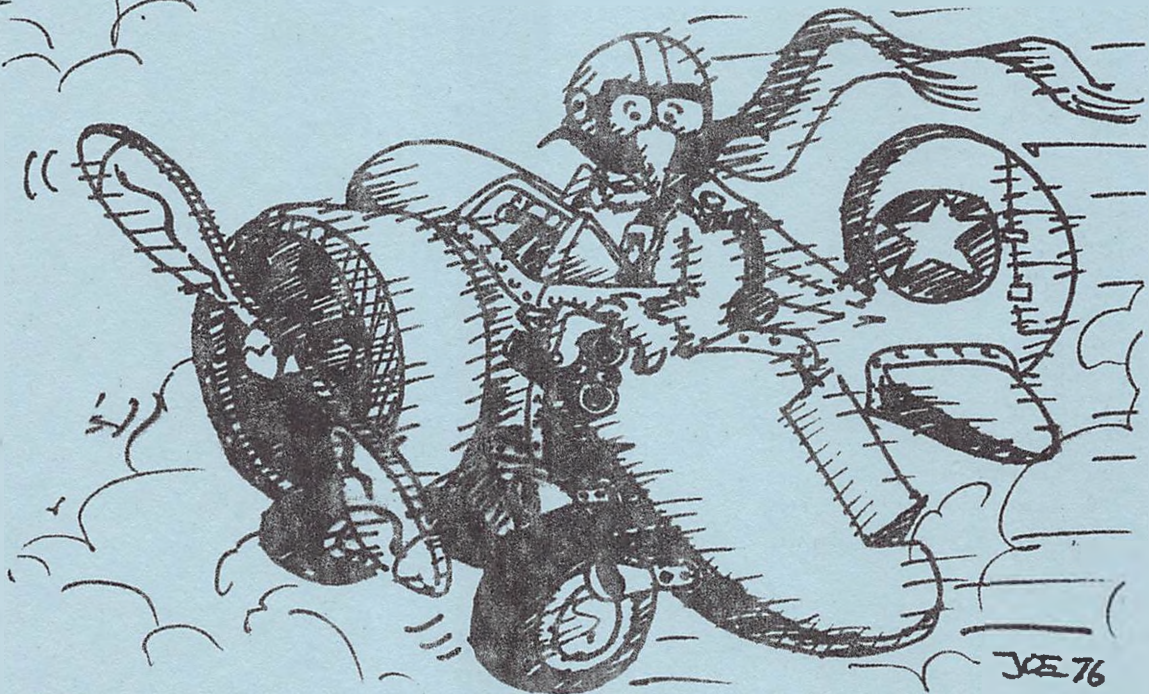
Given those facts it's quite easy to believe that this tactic is purely spiteful. Any fanzine reader is familiar with the personal feuds carried on between officers of SFWA and the editor of the Ultimate prozines. The issuance of this press release to faneds follows right in that line: particularly because SFWA's officers have adamantly pronounced on past occasions that SFWA's business is not a fan's affair.

The entire amount of money involved in the Ultimate dispute wouldn't make a good take



from a supermarket holdup. Therefore one must pin down SFWA on what its purpose is. Is SFWA primarily trying to create economic justice by getting the money for its members Sol Cohen has refused to pay them? Or is SFWA only trying to salvage its prestige and power -- rather desperately -- now that the cause celebre it believed to have resolved has returned to haunt it?

I entirely agree that the petty chicanery Ultimate constantly indulges in is indefensible, a hazard to writers, immoral, and also incurable by any other means yet attempted.



However I disagree that this ersatz boycott will have any worthwhile result -- even if it succeeds in its apparent purpose of destroying Ultimate, something I doubt it will achieve. All Sol Cohen has to do is shape up his company's handling of manuscripts and he'll assure himself a supply of fiction as long as he wants one.

So if somebody at SFWA hasn't thought of suing Ultimate and thereby forcing Cohen to pay or give up ownership of the magazines, then what have the officers been thinking? Maybe it's about time SFWA quit playing Henry Kissinger with "ridiculously numerous and expensive reminders and requests," coughed up the money for a lawyer, and initiated a lawsuit. Instead of merely destroying two prozines, SFWA might well attempt something it could be proud of -- wresting Ultimate from its present owner. If Ultimate goes under anyway -- SFWA will still have accomplished something it's already decided to do. But if SFWA wins a lawsuit, many possibilities open up depending on how SFWA goes about it: (1) Cohen might pay the money; (2) the court might take the zines away from Cohen if he couldn't pay, sell them to cover the damages, and thereby put the magazines into the hand of an honest publisher. Far better to attempt this than con-

tinue the present policy of impotently thumbing their noses at Sol Cohen while perpetrating this boycott-without-the-name. I mean, think about it. Instead of spending its annual budget on manufacturing the Nebula awards, SFWA might actually initiate an action that would help create justice in the SF marketplace, and do it with a chance of preserving two of the surviving magazine markets.

5. Wire Service Fantasy

TEN SECOND SPOT:

Q: How many people witnessed the knifing murder of Kitty Genovese in New York?

A: 37?

Q: How many social critics used it for years afterwards as the prime example of urban fear and callousness?

A: Half a zillion, give or take a dozen.

.....

The pistol burped fire. Its slug ricocheted off an apartment wall. The woman kept running down the street and rounded a corner, skidding with a Chaplinesque maneuver that got her out of sight without slowing a step. The expert -- reduced to marksman by his missed shot -- paused indecisively. And in the time it took a taut frown to wrinkle the edges of his mouth the scored apartment was emptying men like roaches from a flooded basement. But no scared men scrambled down the brownstone's stoop: two carried war surplus rifles, another waved a .22 pistol over his head, another pair in hunter's vests snapped shut fresh-loaded shotguns as they cleared the doorway.

"Oh shit." The expert reflexively backpedaled a few steps and took cover behind a farther stoop. The buildings were close together, a bare two feet or so ~~66~~ airspace separating tenements. He squeezed between them and fled....

A couple years ago a news reporter claimed a comparable incident took place in Baltimore and ever since then I've been trying to decide whether it's an improvement. For Kitty Genovese it would have been an improvement. Otherwise, having numbers of people running around like Good Neighbor SWAT Teams would seem to include its own risks. What do you think?

6. Profit in His Own Land

Ont after another Penguin Dave, Deb and Roger (cradling his camera) scaled the ladder and hurtled down the schoolyard slide. As I turned away from watching them, kids chased each other in and out of the schoolhouse. One, in a white football jersey stamped in purple with Sacred Seven, caught the eye of his sister. She demanded, "Why aren't you inside?"

"I can't go inside -- they'll put me in jail!" He squealed, face flushed from the thrill of imminent martyrdom. His sister walked on. He looked about. Seeing no one, he dodged back into the building.

The Ridge Street Elementary School Spring Carnival: a warm Friday evening with a late, spring sunset, flowers about to bloom, half a dozen tiny beige toadstools clumped in the dirt by the sidewalk entering the grounds.

That very day Penguin Dave Feldman, donning a McDonald's manager's hat of red paper and net, had faced a hall full of Intro to Pop Culture students and preached his analysis of McDonald's marketing successes for the past twenty years -- one symptom of which was more children recognized Ronald McDonald than Santa Claus. For props Dave used some sample wrappings obtained from the local outlet: and by serendipity he'd learned that Ronald McDonald was making a personal appearance later the same day. The Pop Culture graduate staff psyched itself up for the apotheosis.

Other mighty grad-asses would arrive later. Meanwhile we moved inside and used both eyes: one to store up exaggerations to lay on latecomers, the second to steer between running knots of youngsters who chased and hunted each other along the corridors. Feldman led the way, the Rasputin-eyed, penguin-imitating, black-bearded PC grad in his white Ronald McDonald t-shirt, poking his head into every room.

All over the building, even in the linoleum-floored, death-white gymnasium, once-banal schoolrooms had traded mundane identities for exotic ones. Each housed a timeless (or at least petrified) school carnival ritual. Bottle ring-toss. "Tattooing," performed for a dime. The "fishing hole," poles with lines of kitestring for casting over a blanket-hung line, behind which assistants attached penny Taiwanese toys for anglers to "catch." The spookhouse, blackshrouded school tables to crawl beneath, running a gauntlet of mock horrors.

In the gym, a wheel of fortune gave away novelty hats. A pot luck raffled off prizes cadged from town merchants. Forty-cent-per-slice pizza and twenty-cent "pop" (that favorite Ohio catchall: in this case red soda) both were vended from a corner counter -- pizza concocted in the school kitchen then borne upstairs on rectangular trays by a steady stream of committee-mothers.

At that moment the wheel of fortune absorbed the attention of our mentor, Dr. Michael Marsden, attired in chambray workshirt with its shoulders of liquid-embroidered trellis roses.

Next to the wheel of fortune stood the jail. The Wing Ding Jail, chicken wire on a wood frame in a corner of the gym, solicited "Hire a Wing Ding officer and put a friend in jail for five minutes." Two blonde sixth-graders propelled a 'friend' -- kicking, clawing, wailing in the best Chicago '68 tradition -- towards the cardboard doorway where a Wing Ding officer waited to seal his doom. Finally hustled to the threshold, the 'friend' was hoisted struggling like a gill-hooked shark, and hurtled into the back of Wing Dong Gaol. He instantly composed himself and smiled at his fellow inmates like an actor waiting for applause.

The jailer, a man of thirty, black-haired, sat down to his table again. Penguin Dave pushed a dime ticket at him. "We want to put somebody in jail."

"What's his name?" asked the jailer, red pen poised on the roster of Wing Ding jail, which kept in jest the kind of meticulous records that German concentration camps kept in earnest, and to about as much usefulness.

"Mike Marsden," said the Penguin, who then pointed.

The motive for his imprisonment? Hazing each other was a departmental pasttime. This was a sport Marsden excelled at, often coming up with lines that if not immortal at least deserved a wider audience. One of his favorite antagonists, Deb Hammer-Johnson of Tennessee (who spent her high school days in Oak Ridge, not to be confused easily with Hicksville) heard her accent constantly parodied in the yahoo growl Marsden passed off as a Southerner's. He fenced with her about hillbillies. And when she



warned him about picking on an ethnic group he railed, "You're not an ethnic group -- you're a landscape mutation!"

But he hardly went around, gearshift stuck in "manic" all day long. A dedicated family man, Marden's office bulletin board was always papered over with his daughter's primitive crayon masterpieces. As he stood behind her at the Wheel of Fortune we watched to see how our Irresistible Impulsiveness would be met by the Immovable Junior Patriarch.

Wing Ding's warden approached his prospective inmate like a tailor ready to sell his second pair of pants in a morning -- secure in his skill, still fresh.

Feldman hovered behind him. I stood aside. Wing Ding's Finest invited his prisoner to come along peacefully.

Marden was momentarily distracted from the spinning wheel, looked up with spacy, expressionless eyes. We waited for some emotion, ire, surprise, enjoyment, irritation, to cross his face, but we only found a kind of "This isn't part of my program" rejection. He answered, "Oh no, I have to be with my daughter," and turned back disappointedly as his daughter lost the spin of the wheel. A loss for the cause of Serendipity. The jailer returned Feldman's ticket and sat down to scratch the entry out

of his ledger.

We left to clock off the moments until our main reason for attending strode into view: Ronald McDonald. His announced appearance time was 7:30.

Seven twenty.

Uproar in the gym. People clotted folding chairs in twos and threes until nearly fifty jammed the area around the foot of the stage which formed one wall of the booth-filled gym. Hardly an audience, these self-centered fours and fives of parents and children combined to make a seated crowd. Randomly, boys forced their way down aisles that weren't aisles, and rent the air with Hong Kong whistles, or party horns that wheezed and unfurled yellowly like chameleon tongues snaffling butterflies.

Seven thirty.

Ritual booing drove off the emcee, a sunburned father in his late twenties with a little brush mustache. "Ronald will be here in just fifteen minutes," he announced, opening himself to trouble by specifying a waiting period. Scarlet stage curtains closed behind him when he went back to prepare. A jostling little mob of boys sprawled over the steps ascending to the stage, including two who prowled along the curtain's hem, lifting and gawking with look-at-me boldness.

Below, the Popular Culture cadres were parked in a row of eight, helping obstruct the view of all behind. Besides our original foursome were the medal-winning ex-GI piano player Forsberg; a plump redfaced Ohio/Floridian, a potential Flannery O'Connor character with a sense of humor named Packard; her roommate, Kathy, accompanied by the Bearded Celtics fan, Barson. Like eight Emersonian heroes we sat and vibrated with our surroundings.

Seven thirty-five.

The paunchy sixth-grader on my right looked into my face and chastized me. "You know, you ought to build your jails better." Pointing at a smaller kid he'd just bullied, who was fleeing off to safer ground, "Me and my friend had to chase him all over the back lot when he got out. Look at that jail. It's not closed. Anybody can climb over the top."

Examining Wing Ding penitentiary I judged that any climber on its chickenwire walls would collapse them. Far from needing an airtight Stalag he needed somebody who'd watch the door: mass escapes took place every time the door was opened to let in another "friend." That I had nothing to do with the Wing Ding penal system was the first thing I mentioned to him: rather dense of me. He immediately lost interest in my existence. Far more intriguing would've been his answer to the question "Why'd you think you had to chase him after he got out?" Was his expression of it as an obligation a symptom of the Ohio penchant for Law and Order infecting the new generation? More likely it was the fantasy of finding his Mission, perceiving a Purpose to life even if only for the five minutes needed to take a captive on the Ridge Street Elementary playground. Those who didn't outgrow it, of course, we'd find in another fifteen years writing tickets and having each other's cars towed away for auto trespassing.

Seven forty-five.

Ronald McDonald entered from behind his audience, charging through crowds of bystanders little shorter than himself, waving, completely blowing his entrance because everyone's attention was focussed on the parted curtains and the MC who was announcing him.

Penguin Dave gave a Burgess Meredith "Waah!" and slapped his atrophied wings together. The Boston kid, mouth naked without a toothpick, watched his date laugh with wide-open mouth and moon-white teeth, pressing raw hands together and rocking hilariously.

When Dave Feldman helped found the Penguin Party that ran Wolfman Jack against Ronald Reagan for California Governor in 1966, that's how our PC colleague earned his totem and nickname. After long experience with such popular culture shamans, Dave approached the moment of truth receptive but unawed. In fact he'd been told that ours was but one of fifty Ronalds servicing the nation. But ours, assured the McDonald's manager, never worked while plowed. Fifty fleshed-out icons in tow-truck striped overalls of red and yellow, complementary ties, white collars, Lucille Ball hair, greasepainted faces, all saying --

"Hello Boys and Girls! I'm Ronald McDonald and I'm glad to be here at the Ridge --" Like READERS DIGEST's subscription computer probing its memory for Your Name to personalize its machine-tooled spiel, the clown gaped into space until his brain clicked in the name of where he was -- "the Ridge Street School Spring Carnival."

The microphone rebelled, amplifying his greeting to a sinus-clearing wail. The clown interrupted himself. "Would somebody fix the PA system?" Nobody was near the gear but a couple of children. One gave it an open-handed hit, the sort of slap leading ladies land of the faces of movie cads.

The audience, too long waiting, lost patience. At the back of the gym continued the

raucus jailbreaks from Wing Ding Gaol. Whistles hooted. Children stampeded. Only two-year-olds with saintly blank stares, sitting on their parents' laps, the young parents themselves, oblivious to the confusion, remained attentive to the performance. No doubt the parents believed their children's stares represented rapture not stupefaction, innocence a mirror for the ground beef messiah. For the rest of his audience the clown possessed a pitiful lack of dramatic sense -- and now he even seemed to be starting all over again.

"When I turn around," he said over his shoulder, "I want to hear you yell, 'Hello, Ronald!'" A jumbled, mumbled greeting awoke the drill sargent in him. "Oh, I could hardly hear you. Now let's do it this time so that we'll raise the roof!" Ronald turned his back on us, wheeled again, and shouted "Hi Boys and Girls!" Our eight roared apoplectic hellos with leather-lunged abandon. (And if it had been Peter Pan asking us to believe in fairies, so that Tinker Bell's light would rekindle to full starbrightness, we'd as happily have done that -- while sixth graders would have snickered hysterically at the mention of 'fairies'.)

Ronald tried to quell the background noise with repeated calls for quiet "So that those who want to see the show many enjoy it," then commenced his search for stage assistants from the audience.

"I'm looking for big smiles!" said Ronald. Children wrenched their mouths, toothy leers to catch the favor of the clown. At the far right, unseen by Ronald, two junior high school girls dimpled in conscious parody of two hookers, cherry-soda pinked teeth vampiric in the sunset lighting. He saw ravenous smiles, the waving hands of a dozen boys jammed onto the stairs, five year-olds held aloft by parents praying for the vicarious thrill of being chosen. Ronald choked, like Alice Cooper, afraid to fall off stage because his frenzied listeners would tear him apart.

Rather than just point, and have five kids in the area jumping up, the clown tried to be careful and expedient. So for his last choice he specified a child in a numbered jersey, "...and that boy, in the Bowling Green shirt, yes, him," a 'boy' who'd made no smile or gesture to be picked. A 'boy' who stood there while all stared, unseeing, until a nearby boy added it up and cackled, "That's a girl!" Ronald lost points every time he opened his mouth. Where was the Mcmagic, the Mchappiness? All we had on our hands was a wounded clown.

Neither Penguin Dave nor any of the rest of us gawked hysterically cheerful like those who yearned to get on stage. "Why aren't you smiling?" I asked Penguin, the goggler of eyes in departmental meetings, the maker of soulful and insane gestures of ant-arctic joy.

"Because I'm not a kid," he said flatly.

No shit, I didn't say. Of course not. He wouldn't commit an unadult foolishness like that. Though why the hell suddenly not? I couldn't fathom why his manic sense of humor now failed him, since right about then I was wondering if we weren't the kids, then who was? A five-year-old picked out and propelled onto the stage by her parents, dumbstruck, the victim of vicarious ambition? A girl picked to join a four-person stunt on stage, obviously disillusioned and embarrassed at being required to don long red underwear which was stuffed with balloons, the total counted off as Ronald burst them with a pin? Two girls parodying their nonexistent sex? Gradeschoolers sotted by Misterogers, catered to by Sesame Street too long to tolerate anymore a clown doing a few pathetic balloon tricks? This magic show traded on a willing self-immersion in innocence which no child could or needed to conceive. So we sat at the feet of the clown and discovered that an aborted miracle is worse than no miracle at all, for when anticipation dies it leaves a hungry emptiness.

"That's the end of the show, but I'll be out among you in just a few minutes, distributing free burger coupons and personally meeting many of you! Bye, Boys and Girls!" Fill the hungry emptiness with burgers! The curtain swished shut to indifferent applause.

Descending sunset combined with the absence of gym lighting to mute all colors. The clown's orange and red became dusky, white turned gray, fire-orange hair parodied an Afro. Penguin Dave and camera-toting Roger chased the fading clown backstage.

I was by the stage's rear door. Strutting down the steps Ronald charged out and shook my hand. ("You're looking good, kid.")

Chaperoned by the Penguin and a carnival official in her (plastic) straw skimmer, Ronald roamed from exhibit to exhibit, ambushing preoccupied kids with cheeseburger freebies.

"Would you like something to drink?" asked the woman, leaving Ronald, going automatically for the pop stand and out of earshot when the clown replied, "Yeah, vodka and Seven."

That night all obvious things were obligatory, and only one obvious thing remained: Ronald must serve a term in Wing Ding jail. Kids followed up in a mob, tickets in hand to jail themselves with the clown. They piled through the door. Ronald, with Penguin Dave at his side posing for Roger's camera, whispered "Stay with me. These kids are going to kill me."

As the clown left jail, carried off in an undertow of Ridge Street schoolkids clamoring for burger tickets, Penguin Dave sobered. "I can't believe I just paid twenty cents to be put in a cage with Ronald McDonald."

7. Wipeout

It seems one can't get a fanzine from Canada or Britain lately without a sample of government-issue toilet paper affixed. Whether this is a new Commonwealth postal regulation I can only guess -- or perhaps our politicians have given their usual bad impression. Then, I thought, this might be a 'cast your bread upon the waters' scheme, a kind of scatological chain letter, and each of us was now expected to forward a 4-pack of Charmin to a fan in the UK.

Finally John Braziman hit upon the true meaning and explained it to me. These faneditors have instigated a new collecting fad, and each of us is expected to take the enclosed tissue, provide our sample, and mail it to the faned for inclusion in his vile file. Though eccentric, I imagine it's no more so than people swigging from a bottle of Beam, and then yelling "Smoooooth!" each with one arm raised like a roomful of slot machines. Just a caution to American fans travelling to Britain in '79 -- if you look over your shoulder and see a faneditor, run for it.

Last issue I successfully experimented with running the mailing list as part of the editorial. This was more convenient in the circumstance that I'd be handing out so many issues in person. It also seemed to be more effective than vague envelope markings. This issue I've expanded the list to include the list of fanzines I've received. Often I get somebody's first or second issue, and send him STFR in exchange. If I never hear from him again he doesn't get on the ml; but these are copies being mailed out and I might just as well reflect that some way.

Now for that bane of the fanzine typist, three empty lines before he can go onto the next page and avoid starting a list with two lines and breaking it up. Ah. That's it.

plausibility of that is another can of worms. ((I had overlooked the example of Zelazny in that respect; though so many of his characters like Corwin of Amber are personalities who sound nothing so much as Condensed Cream of Chandler -- a rather special instance.))

By the way, I saw your bit in that hilarious tape they were showing in the Neofan Room. How much did you pay them not to mention your name?

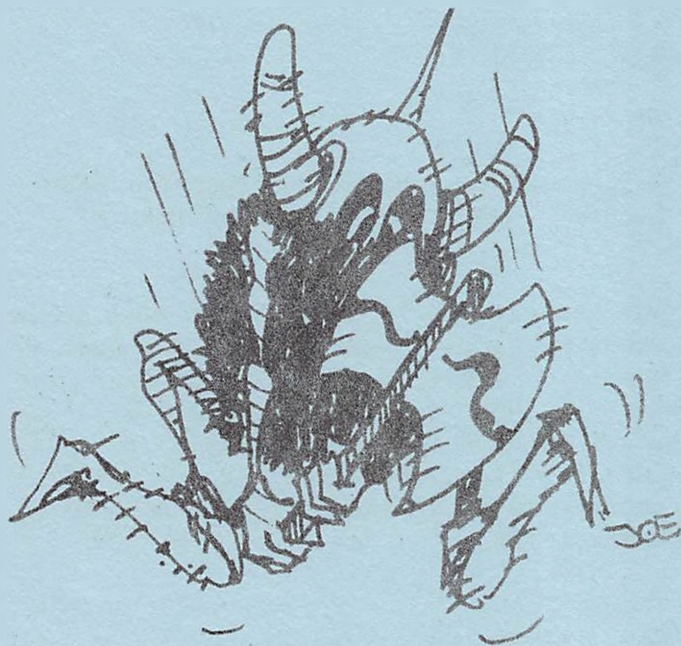
GEORGE FERGUS
1810 Hemlock Place, Apt.204
Schaumburg IL 60195

I've got to disagree with your contention that the use of modern slang in a story of the far future is an undesirable, hackish device. Certainly the cultural referents will be different, but I think most slang

rather tends to have lost its original referents anyway. The only example cited so far is "damn right!", which for me at least has lost any real connotation of wishing to see some poor soul consigned to the nether regions. In most such cases the insertion of any undefined expletive would have about the same meaning, but I expect that the substitution of some new made-up word or phrase would actually detract from a story's verisimilitude by making it seem more artificial.

There are exceptions where one invents new slang, and perhaps some strange phrasing as well, for the express purpose of establishing an exotic atmosphere, as with Jack Vance or (as you suggest) Cordwainer Smith. But heaven help us if every writer tried to do what Anthony Burgess did in A CLOCKWORK ORANGE.

QUOTES



JODIE OFFUTT: I agree with Dave Locke right down the line (only I don't read her). And so does Andy. He has said the same things as Dave about Judith Crist -- almost word for word! He always reads Jesus' sister so he'll know what to watch. Just this week she tromped all over MAGNUM FORCE, a movie that I love and would not want to miss.

WE ALSO HEARD FROM: Ben Indick, Brendan DuBois, Harry Bell, Isaac Asimov, Louise Lague, Tony Cvetko, Andy Andruschak, Bruce Townley, Larry Mason, Jackie Franke (coa: c/o Derek Carter, 719 Yonge St., Suite 201A, Toronto Ont. M4Y 2B5), Dave Rowe, Rich Roesbarg, Eric Lindsay, Bob Tucker,



Q: I have just realized that I will very likely be alive and well in the year 2000, something I hadn't really thought about before. Can you give me some idea of what life is going to be like then?

ASIMOV: Well, I can tell you in a general way what life will be like: It will be very crowded. If all goes well, if we can avoid great catastrophes, the population of the earth in the year 2000 will be something like 7 billion as compared with 4 billion right now, as compared with 2 billion in 1920, as compared with 1 billion in 1800. I don't think we can reasonably expect to have the food supply go up sufficiently to feed those 3 billion as well as the 4 billion are being fed now. I anticipate, in the course of the next 25 years, there will be a kind of famine psychology surrounding the earth's population. I think the great, big, fat problem of the next 25 years is getting enough food.

Q: Do you see actual famine, when people die of starvation?

ASIMOV: By the millions. As a matter of fact people, of course, die of starvation right now, every day. But it will get worse.

Q: You're painting a very grim picture. Are we going to have any consolations. Will anything be any better in the year 2000?

ASIMOV: Well it's hard to say whether anything will be better because that depends on

ASIMOV: Q&A

LOUISE LAGUE

what mankind decides to do. It could be better if we all behave in a sane and rational way. For instance, I think that approximately half of all human effort and human resources goes into the maintenance of the various armed forces in the various nations of the world. We live in a time when this is a luxury we can no longer afford. It is something we can no longer use, a hangover from the 19th century when the nation-state made some sense, when it was possible for two nations to fight without affecting the rest of the world and without destroying themselves. But war is no longer possible except in the form of suicide. This is not only nuclear war but even non-nuclear war. Even a non-nuclear war cannot be fought because it is too energy-rich a phenomenon. We can't afford it these days. We're going to have to use all our energy to stay alive and we're not going to have any to spare for warfare. As a matter of fact, the modern energy-rich army is so extremely inefficient because it can only fight another energy-rich army.

Q: How about fighting the guerilla?

ASIMOV: There is no way in which we can fight, with our weapons and our organizations, a determined guerilla enemy. We've discovered that. Yes, we can defeat them, but only in the course of destroying the area. If mankind recognizes that war is impossible, short of suicide, recognizes that all national rivalries are foolish in the light of real danger, which is the destruction of civilization, if they get together any kind of extension of detente to the extent of forming a functional international organization, which for short we can call a world government, then even though we might go through some stiff times in the decades to come we may pull out of it all the better for it.

Q: But hasn't there been great resistance to the concept of world government?

ASIMOV: Now world government is something that doesn't sound so good, I mean we don't want to be run by a bunch of foreigners. But we are being run by a bunch of foreigners. That's the whole point. Whether we know it or not, we are at the mercy of the Arabs as far as energy is concerned. We are at the mercy of a bunch of other nations as far as some of our key metals are concerned. They're at our mercy as far as other things are concerned. Some nations are going to have to turn to us for food because we're going to be the only ones who have some food to give out. Other countries have oil to give out. Other countries have tungsten to give out. Other countries have lumber to give out. The whole world is the smallest unit that can exist economically now. Any smaller section of the world that tries to be independent is going to have to sacrifice its standard of living.

Q: Isn't it a basic of human nature that people carve out their territory, to be suspicious of strangers?

ASIMOV: If it is not possible for it to be otherwise then it is also not possible that

we survive. I'm not saying this ought to be done because it's easy. I'm not saying we ought to have world understanding because somehow this is the way people should be because deep down in their own hearts all people are good. I'm not saying anything of the kind. I'm not preaching brotherhood for the sake of virtue or justice or any of those high-faluting words. I'm preaching brotherhood for the sake of survival. Now if the people would rather die than get along with each other then they can die. There is no law that says they musn't die.

Q: But do we have the capacity to change, even under the pressures of survival?

ASIMOV: Things change surprisingly. If you could go back in time 20 years and talk to Americans and say that in 20 years the Cold War will be over and we will be in an atmosphere of detente, they would automatically assume that for some reason a bunch of wooly-headed pinko liberals gained control of the government and surrendered to this monolithic red force that is threatening the world. It's not so. The same people are in control of the government now who were controlling it then. We still have a Republican in the White House as we had then. As a matter of fact the gentleman, if I may use the term, who led the way to detente was one of the most virtiolic leaders of the Cold War forces. And the people who run China and Russia are essentially the same as those who ran China and Russia in the 1950s. There's been no revolution in either country establishing a different philosophy. It's come about entirely through compulsion. The compulsion of events. Go back 20 years and tell the people that in 20 years we will practically have achieved ZPG (zero population growth) in the United States. Who would believe that? Things can change. Things do change. The only question is that things are deteriorating so quickly, can society and man's habits change quickly enough. That is the only question. There is no question that we'll change to meet the deadly perils that face us. The question is, will we change quickly enough. That is rather doubtful so that come 1985 we'll be doing the things we should have been doing in 1975 and come 1995 we'll be doing the things we should have done in 1985 and when the 21st century opens we may find our civilization in a state of collapse and the question will be how much we can rescue of this.

Q: What happens to the social structure in the face of all this change?

ASIMOV: I should hope there will be a great deal of mobility in the population. My grandfather was a sort of small merchant in the Soviet Union and Jewish and therefore had no civil rights that anyone need respect. And my father was a storekeeper here in the United States and I'm a professor and novelist. And my son as far as I know is going -- well, I don't know what he's going to do, but it's not going to be anything much. In other words, each person finds his own level. In an ideal world, it seems to me, every person will find the level that he himself can support through his talents, through his attitudes. There's no limit to how much respect and admiration a person ought to have, but there should be a limit as to how much of the world's resources he ought to control. Within limits, which should be generous ones, even if a person doesn't starve he could be pretty uncomfortable; even if a person doesn't control much of the world's resources he can still be pretty well off. And within these limits, if each person has the right to find his level as high as he can make it, what the heck does class have to do with it?

Q: Do you see any good or encouraging trends moving with us towards the year 2000?

ASIMOV: As a matter of fact the scientific and technological world is still advancing. It is not in decay and this fact represents the largest single section of human affairs that can offer us surprises, possibly pleasant surprises. It may be, for instance, that we'll solve the way of dealing with controlled fusion energy or we may have breakthroughs in the use of direct solar energy. Or we may develop new methods for

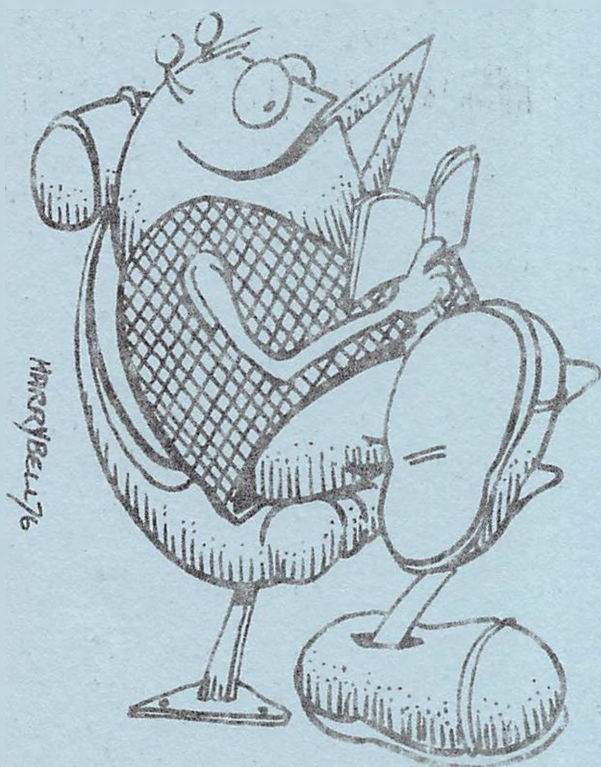
recycling our resources. Or we may grow to understand the human reproductive process well enough to be able to develop new means of contraception. We can benefit from advances in science and technology. I don't say we will necessarily but we can. This is the least predictable sort of thing because you can never tell when the next breakthrough will take place or in what direction. So, between that and the fact that more and more people everyday are becoming aware of the dangers that we face, it may be that between the increasing anxiety to behave sanely and the newer weapons of the direction of sanity that science and technology may place in our hands, that we may do better in the next 30 years than anyone has a right to expect just looking at the situation now.

(c) 1976 by Louise Lague

THE SHATTERED CHAIN by Marion Zimmer Bradley
DAW UW1229 1976 \$1.50

Marion Zimmer Bradley, during the last few years, has become a top science fiction writer. This latest novel in the Darkover series upholds that judgement. I would rate it third best in the series, one of the consistently best now going in sf.

In an Earth-derived interstellar Empire, one of her lost colonies evolved into a medieval/gothic world called Darkover whose ruling class is endowed with esper powers and is trying to keep renewed contact with the Empire from shocking Darkover into another Xerox planet of the Empire. CHAIN takes place early in the chronology, when the Empire has been on Darkover for less than 50 years; each culture is testing the other, warily seeking the other's weak points. But more than that CHAIN deals with the sexism of the Darkover culture where women are almost literally slaves. The theme of equality of the sexes has long been needed in the series.



Magda Lorne is a female Empire agent who finds that she is unable to do the undercover work she could on other imperial planets because Darkover culture limits the roles she could assume. Jaelle n'ha Melora is a free Amazon. Magda finds that she has to join the Free Amazons in order to fulfill her mission -- rescuing a fellow agent captured by mountain bandits. On the way back Jaelle falls in love with the rescued agent, Peter, bringing on a conflict between her Free Amazon pledge never to be "possessed" by any man, and her love for Peter and need for his love and companionship. Unfortunately the conflict is not explored. I have been told Bradley wrote several other chapters about this, but felt that they did not advance the plot, so is holding them with the intention of writing a sequel. It is badly needed, since the present novel doesn't resolve this conflict so much as thrust it into the future with a rosy tacked-on ending. Still, this novel contains some excellent characterization, a mature handling of its theme, and good plotting. One of the top novels of the year, and I cannot recommend it highly enough.

letters & reviews

AS IN STFR 5, letters and reviews will be casually inserted into the layout, though Stan Burns' own reviews can, for the most part, be found in their own section.

ROY TACKETT
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As a LASFSian I cast my worldcon vote for Uncle Len and company but that won't stop me from attending Phoenix (provided, of course, I have recovered from the financial trauma sure to be involved in attendance at Suncon.) I've read your remarks and I've read Arthurs' and I think you're both acting like a couple of idiots but, ah, where would fandom be without a good feud now and again? 15 or 20 years ago when such fannish talents as Lichtman and Carr were active this would have made an excellent piece of faaaan fiction -- the Great LASFS-Phoenix War. One could have had LASFSians attacking the Arizona orange groves and getting all tangled up in Sun City while the Phoenicians took over Boulder Dam and cut off LA's electricity -- thereby bringing all the electric mimeos to a halt and forcing a mad search for old handcranks -- and the like. Wonder if there

is anybody around who could do such a tale these days?

Bennett's article is quite interesting and proves that all one needs to run an sf bookstore is the ability to survive on practically nothing. I've often thought that operating a small bookstore of that sort might be nice after retirement but the more I think about it the more I become convinced that I don't really want to.

Find myself in full agreement with Brother Locke about reviews and critiques. Reviews are good -- they let me know what's available and what assorted readers think of it. Critiques on the other hand -- well, critiques in fanzines always strike me as amusing particularly when it is painfully obvious that the critiquer's literary pretensions are from Miss Dimwiddy's Thursday Literary Tea. A couple of years ago there was

that gal from Chiacgo...something Smith, I think...coming on heavy in the "literary" fanzines (is that a contradiction of terms?) and it was quite obvious that she didn't know her ass from first base about either science fiction or the subjects she was attempting to discuss. Locke is right in that it is all subjective and the critic's opinion and that there is no real basis for any of it.

FOUR REVIEWS BY T. L. BOHMAN:

THE STARDUST VOYAGES, Stephen Tall

Berkeley 1975: \$1.25; 230pp

THE IMMORTALS, Rene Barjavel - translated by Eileen Finletter

Ballantine 1974: \$1.50; 231pp

THE EARTH IS NEAR, Ludek Pesek - translated by Anthea Bell

Laurel-Leaf Library, Dell: \$1.25; 192pp

NIGHTMARE BLUE, Gardner Dozois and George Alec Effinger

Berkeley, 1975: \$.95; 185pp

THE STARDUST VOYAGES is a collection of reprints, each one being an adventure of the research starship Stardust as her crew explores the wonders and mysteries of the galaxy. Sound familiar? It ought to. The cover blurb, "In the great tradition of STAR TREK," makes clear the projected market for these stories if not their author's model. The ship is different, the characters are different (at least none has pointed ears) but the idea is certainly the same. And the similarities are striking. The Stardust even has its noninterference principle:

..."I do know the basic regulations under which the Stardust operates, and so do you. No interference! We discover, we observe, we record and collate data, we make recommendations, but we keep hands off. We don't take sides..."

The stories, individually, aren't bad. Stephen Tall's style is clear and competent and his imagination has created some marvelous alien landscapes for his crew to explore. The difficulties here are the same that came to plague the crew of the Enterprise: as one adventure follows another, the series runs low on imagination and becomes dependent on formula plotting. The noninterference principle is frequently quoted and regularly violated. Someday I'll read a story about the agony a commander faces in deciding whether to send an armed party after a friend in trouble. Maybe Tall will write it. But the conversation quoted above preceded a planetary war in which the earthmen served as military advisors to one side. The worthy side, of course. If only real life were so simple. Mind you, I don't object to planetary wars as plot elements and I don't insist on a moral dilemma in every plot, but when a writer offers a moral axiom and then casually, almost predictably, ignores it later on, I object. I'd prefer he forgot about the rule from the beginning.

A bigger failure of THE STARDUST VOYAGES was also true to a lesser extent I think of the Star Trek series: a fascinating cast of characters is created and never developed, never used to advantage. Roscoe Kissinger and Pegleg Williams are the protagonists and the best-drawn characters. Kissinger is an ecologist and since he dictates the stories from his starship log, the Stardust adventures naturally revolve around his solutions to the biological mysteries the crew stumble into. What disappoints me is that none of the other eminent scientists on the Stardust are seen as scientists, or even complete human beings: they're just incidental spear-carriers. In spite of Williams' prominence in these adventures, he serves as little more than Kissinger's sidekick and jeep driver. Even

Lindy, "Dr. Linda Peterson, microbiologist extraordinary" comes across as a big, beautiful, uh, woman ("As always, I was proud. She made every other woman down the long curved table look dull, dowdy, unfinished.") to whom Kissinger can never quite believe he's married. Why not, he swallows every other absurdity you could imagine. When Dr. Peterson does make a professional appearance she generally drops in just long enough to say it's all right for everybody to run in the grass without their spacesuits. Ursula Fotts is a crabby-but-lovable artist with a clairvoyant sense of observation. I wish there was more of her. And wonderful as she is, her insight is too frequently used merely as an awkward gimmick for advancing a bogged-down plot. The other characters range from the interesting to the absurd: Cap'n Jules Griffin who pilots the Stardust; Johnny Rasmussen, the impeccably English scientific research director; Stony Price, the wisecracking communications man; George Wildcat, who appears as an animal tracker (yeah, and he's an American Indian); and Moe Cheng, the Sulu-esque navigator whose only appearances are repeated descriptions as a "big-nosed, slant-eyed little man." Is this supposed to be clever?

Perhaps the most interesting story is "The Invaders," which departs from the usual formula in being told from the viewpoint of a sentient crustacean as it struggles with an ecological crisis and finally comes to understand it. The problem is solved only through a fortuitous visit of the Stardust, but the alien experience is fairly well portrayed.

A note listing previous publications of these stories suggests that "all have been revised to some extent" for this edition. Whatever revisions have been made are certainly minor. I wish, personally, that the repeated description of Moe Cheng, the explanation of Johnny Rasmussen's dinner parties, and the banter between Williams and Kissinger which appear so repetitively had been trimmed. They helped each story to stand alone, but slowed up action as part of this collection.

When the time comes to pass out awards for publishing idiocies, I'd like to nominate the brainless boob who gave Rene Barjavel's LE GRAND SECRET its English title. Okay, so "Le Grand Secret" is more than a little cornball, at least it proclaims a secret instead of giving it away before you hit page one. The cover calls this story an "electrifying story of a great secret so terrifying it changed the course of history," and inside the front cover I read that "the great secret which constitutes the book's raison d'etre is kept long enough to tantalize and to hook the reader," but all this Great Secret horseshit is belied by the big block letters of the title: THE IMMORTALS. You guessed it, someone has discovered the secret of immortality.

Barjavel's approach to immortality is intriguing, and perhaps unique. Immortality is literally a disease. An Indian biologist discovers a new virus which apparently affects all known animal life. It has a few adverse affects on its host: the infected animals develop an extreme sensitivity to the color red, laboratory mice lose their sense of smell, and the host becomes immune to natural disease and the aging processes. The infected animal becomes, in a word, immortal. The disease is highly contagious.

Consider the consequences of immortality. The world is overcrowded as it is; most of the world's four billion people are inadequately clothed and nourished even with aging and death, the population is still exploding. What happens when all living animals from insects and earthworms to presidents and dictators become immortal? Certainly famine would spread in the shadow of the infection, lifestyles and politics would chnage drastically. Somehow I doubt the inevitability of utter catastrophe that Barjavel hints at. Humanity would practice sterilization

and probably euthanasia. At some point they'd have to, unless they simply killed each other off. The animal world might not be affected as much as Barjavel thinks; in a world of accident and predation few animals in the wild die of old age anyway. Speculation on such a world should be interesting.

But Barjavel has not chosen this tack. The subject of THE IMMORTALS is the more immediate problem of what to do on the discovery of the virus, how to contain the infection. First of all the discoverers and all those already infected must be quarantined lest the infection spread to the rest of humanity. And if at all possible, the great secret must be kept secret: what people could resist immortality knowing it was so easily available; what statesman could explain to his countrymen that they must grow old and die; what leader could himself resist the temptations of immortality? Naturally, if the secret is to be kept extreme tactics -- kidnapping, destruction of evidence, even murder -- may be necessary. It is against this background that the story is laid; the mystery unfolds as a young physician searches for her lover who suddenly and quietly disappeared on his way to her apartment, and whose laboratory was destroyed, almost vaporized, in an intense fire.

Somehow Jeanne Corbet cannot believe that Roland died in the fire. She searches Europe, America and the East for clues to his disappearance. Barjavel's theme is hardly new but his development of it sustains a surprising amount of suspense, considering how predictable much of the plot is. The style is immediate and journalistic, jumping from event to event as a newspaper account might. Detail and historical fact bring the narrative alive. Jeanne Corbet's searches weave through a chronicle of current history -- Nehru, Mao, Khrushchev, Eisenhower, Kennedy, Johnson, Nixon -- which gives the intrigues and disappearances a kind of pressing authenticity.

A sleazy authenticity. Unfortunately, Barjavel presses too hard. He draws in too much current history, forcing relationships between so many disparate facts, dropping cryptic references to the Islet 307, the brown and blue butterfly, Islet 307, and recounting so many mysterious disappearances that his novel reads like a Bermuda Triangle pastiche. If nothing else, we have been given a demonstration that anything can be made into a case for conspiracy, but ultimately the mystery becomes just a little cloying.

There are more disappointments. One is the predictability of the plot. Once the secret of Islet 307 is revealed, the denouement approaches with grim inevitability. Much of the interest hinges on several questions which Barjavel cleverly leaves unanswered, but these are not as satisfying as might be hoped. Above all, the awesome implications of immortality are continually hinted at but never examined: does immortal man grow bored, impatient, rigid and inflexible, senile? We don't know. The immortals might as well be vacationers on the Riviera, or members of an art colony. The butterfly reappears, its delicate wings in shreds, but the symbolism is never fulfilled. By the end of the book we have learned nothing more about the disease and little about the people it infects. THE IMMORTALS is a deeply engrossing novel, often an exciting one, sometimes touching, but imperfect and finally a little disappointing.

Have you ever picked up a book purely on the basis of a cover painting?

Who hasn't? The uncredited cover for THE EARTH IS NEAR is done in sandy pastels, the colors are muted, suggesting illumination by a remote sun, the spacesuited figure reaching for something far exceeding his grasp -- it's a haunting painting conveying a bit of the feeling that pervades the book. I'd never heard of the author. The cover sold me.

The first thing I discovered about the book itself is that it's a juvenile. Dell publishes the Laurel-Leaf Library "particularly...for young adult readers," and the back cover further explains that this book (or its author; like most blurbs this one carefully avoids precision) won "the German Children's Book Prize for 1971." Okay, I hadn't expected a juvenile, but then some of my best friends are...

Was I disappointed? Pesek's prose is vivid and poetic; he builds images which haunt dreams. The style, even in translation, surpasses that of the other books here, it creates human beings at war with each other and with themselves and lets us see hatred, envy, despair, exhaustion in concrete terms. Pesek gives us twenty men on the first expedition to Mars. Almost immediately we see the rivalry between O'Brien, biologist and chief scientist, and Norton, an Army major appointed expedition commander over O'Brien's head at the last minute. The crew plays out a psychological drama in the cramped spaceship and on the arid wastes of Mars. Sometimes the men seem too much like symbolic characters in an allegory, but you may disagree: the characters are deep, and work both ways.

But was I disappointed? Well, yes I was. I had a hard time, in fact, finishing the novel, despite the author's genius for vivid description. The plot is so spasmodic and jerky it almost dooms the story from the beginning. Aside from the final pages where the suspense of Martian liftoff holds the narrative tightly together, Pesek seems totally incapable of maintaining any semblance of plot momentum for more than 10 or fifteen pages. Blastoff from Earth. Quarrel between crew members. Resolution. Navigation error; course correction. Crewman overboard; rescue. And it continues like this for nearly 200 pages, with gimmick following gimmick in an artificial drama that occasionally becomes convincing only in spite of itself. The effect reminds me of Clarke's "Venture to the Moon" and "The Other Side of the Sky," but where Clarke achieves a unity in separate linked stories, Pesek fails: his episodes sound like devices to fill the space between the beginning and the end.

THE EARTH IS NEAR is another mixed blessing, one of those books I'm happier to have read than to read. Pesek's talents are obvious and impressive. Here the narrator muses to himself a few days before leaving Mars:

The dream that had come true for us four hundred and forty days before had been maturing for many years. We had landed on the planet Mars, where we found out that a dream come true is a hard thing. A single real stone is heavier than a whole imaginary mountain. But over that four hundred and forty days a new dream had matured: the dream of leaving all we had dreamed of and going back to Earth. Everything had changed. Our longing for the unknown had turned to a longing for familiarity.

Simple, direct, and true. Pesek is a potentially fine writer. If he ever learns how to build and maintain a story he could be one of the

finest writers in science fiction.

Karl Jaeger was a dead man.

He knew it. The Aensalords, shouting and laughing inhumanly behind him knew it very well indeed; they knew it as a certainty as irreversible as the rising of the sun. The grim faced men and women who waited silently in the green-decked halls of Schwabisch Gmund knew it, while they waited for his corpse to be dragged back. They had known it all along, in fact, with the resignation that comes of long, painful experience.

The Dktar, the Aersahounds, which salivated in their greedy pursuit, following his track implacably across fen and brush, knew it best of all.

Only Karl Jaeger's body didn't know it.

Thus begins NIGHTMARE BLUE: Karl Jaeger has just rudely crashed the Aensamanor and caught the Aensalords watching Aensatoons on the Aensatube. You'd think that if everyone knew Jaeger was dead we could all forget it and start reading something else. But not only does Jaeger's bod not know he was dead, nobody seems to have told the authors, either. Jaeger, of course, escapes from the Aensalords and the Aersahounds. What he does is take some photographic chemicals from the big bulky camera bag which is still slung over his shoulder as he is frantically running for his life, and well, you didn't expect realism, did you?

NIGHTMARE BLUE is, in a word, a pot-boiler. Dozois and Effinger are both fine writers and I'm not sure why they would conspire on this.

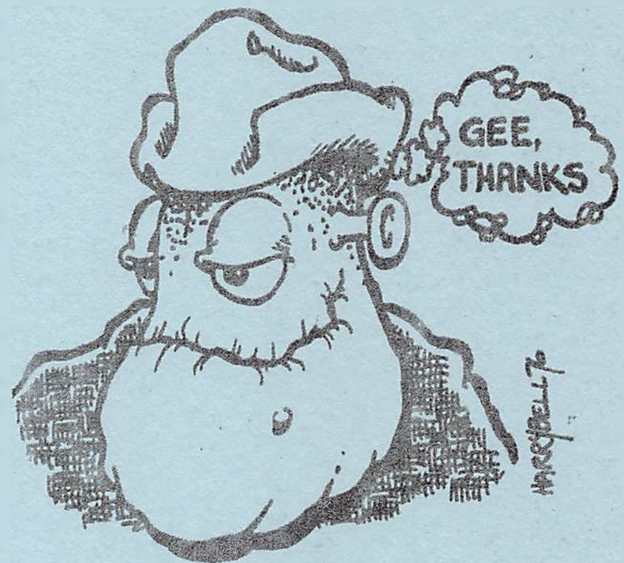
Maybe they needed the cash. Or maybe this book is the result of an all-night party. I hope they had fun. They must have had fun.

Look at what we get: the world's greatest private detective, a sinister alien plot to conquer the universe, terrestrial commandos to

thwart the sinister plot, and oh golly it goes on and on. Plots and subplots trip over each other with casual aplomb, and just when everything else has happened another villain drops out of the sky in a heli-jet and sprays the landscape with machine gun fire. Short lived comic-relief: the Aersahounds get him.

What is the dreaded secret of the Aensalords? I won't tell, not that it makes that much difference. It's just too improbable. Actually the entire plot is too improbable to be intended seriously, so maybe this did come out of an all-night party. The Aensalords are improbable, so is their mission, and their execution of it defies belief. Dozois and Effinger, of course, know exactly what they're doing; we get clues right and left:

Cordail Sendijen tapped a tentacle sharply against one of his fighting claws (the Eighteenth Gesture of the Rites:



utter contempt with insulting sexual overtones) and stared up at the massive ore wagon. This entire setup was completely absurd. Any other race of intelligent creatures he'd seen would have automated the whole system, but not the Aensalords. Automated, this system would run hundreds of times more productively, and would relieve an unnecessary drain on valuable slaves and man-hours besides.

I've quoted this slightly out of context, because, of course, there is a reason for the absurdities. Not a very convincing one, but a reason.

What I'm trying to suggest is that this is a bad book, but somehow, a rather good bad book, one which lacking literary pretensions is nevertheless a great deal of fun. So the plot is absurd, so the characters are mostly caricatures, the writing is still fast-paced, effective, and despite prevalent overwriting, often vivid and evocative. I guess you can't keep good writers down, even in a potboiler. Jaeger, for example, is your typical James Bond superhero. Still, he manages to show, even in the incredible situations that comprise his adventures, a reasonably appealing human emotional response to the things that are happening to him. Cordail Sendijen is a good alien, though certainly no one you'd want your sister to marry. Connor Coffey, as the world's clutziest hit-man, is a two dimensional figure who works well as a plot device. And the plot, for all its inanities, holds together logically. It's a Lewis Carroll sort of logic, but there are few of the loose ends that clutter, say, THE IMMORTALS. My irrational subjective feeling is that Gardner Dozois and George Effinger decided to have some fun and NIGHTMARE BLUE resulted. I may not know anything about art, but I know what I enjoy -- and surely sf affords its readers that much luxury. This one I enjoyed.

In terms of literary quality NIGHTMARE BLUE is the worst of these four. THE STARDUST VOYAGES, THE IMMORTALS, THE EARTH IS NEAR are, for all their faults, good books, good enough for their shortcomings to be irritating and frustrating. NIGHTMARE BLUE is an entertaining time-passer. I enjoyed reading it and I enjoyed reviewing it, but I don't expect to re-read it. It wasn't that kind of book.

STAN BURNS
PO Box 1381
Glendale, CA

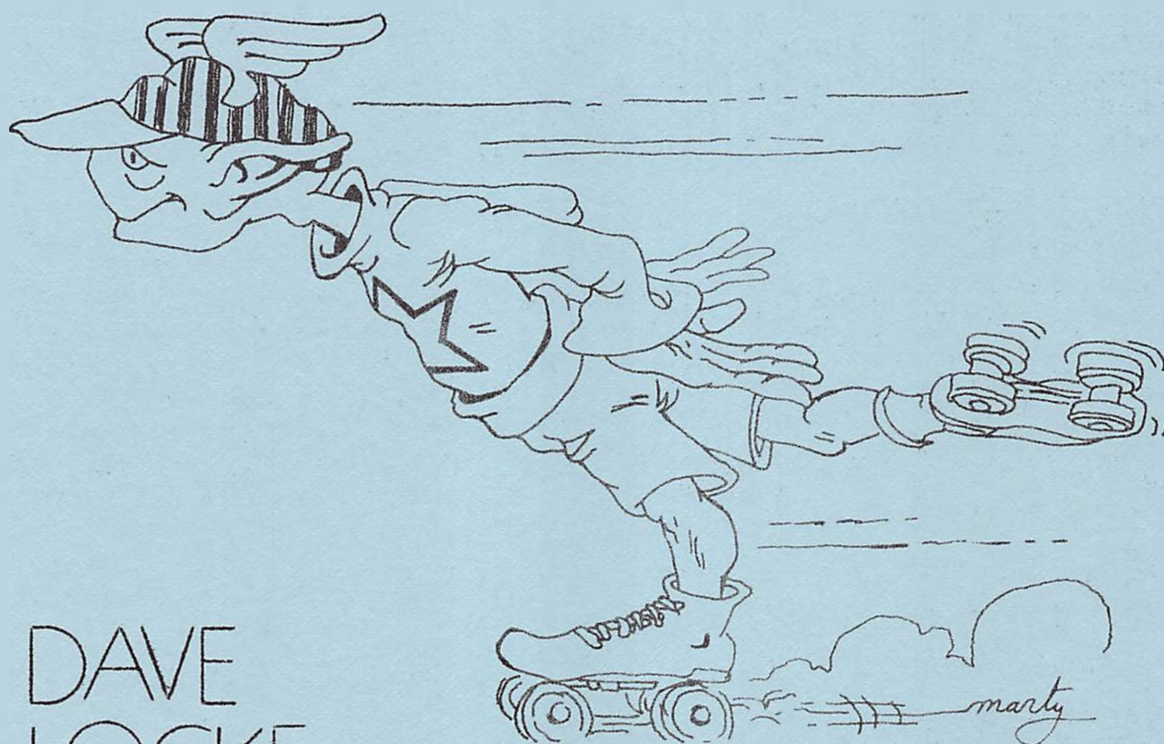
Please thank Michael Bishop for his kind words, and inform him that I would be glad to count the number of pages in other stories for him at the low, low rate of 25¢ for a short story, 50¢ for a novella,

and \$1 for a novel. DAHLGREN slightly higher. California residents add 5% sales tax.

I must disagree with Dan Goodman. The results over the centuries show that no one reads anymore. So why try writing? Let's all sit back and watch the idiot box...

George Flynn should be relieved to note that I am no longer writing reviews of books I can't finish. I'm donating them to the LASFS auction instead.

To Don D'Amassa: Bradley uses "damn right" (not "oh damn") once in an entire novel. It glares as much as "damn straight," etc. If an sf novel has been "translated" by the author into modern English, he/she must at least be consistent in that usage.... Don, do you really believe that modern day idiom fits better in a novel of the far future than in a novel of 1984? Slang has a hell of a better chance of surviving 8 years than 800.



DAVE
LOCKE

BEYOND THE SHIFT KEY

Let's talk about all the hot topics. We all know which ones they are. Sex, politics, religion and sci-fi.

Politics

I've never cared for politics. As Dean Grennell would say, in terms of politics I'm a radical middle-of-the-roader.

The only time I ever worked up the enthusiasm to register and vote was for the 1972 presidential election. I wanted to vote for Nixon, because McGovern scared the piss out of me. Do you believe this? However, I am the only person I know who voted for Nixon and managed to get his vote retracted.

What happened is that when I registered I failed to sign my name the way it was typed, but the men at the Duarte Volunteer Fire Department didn't notice that until after the election. At that point some one wrote me and insisted that I report somewhere and sign my name correctly or they would rip up my vote and throw it to the winds. Since I already knew how the election turned out, I said to hell with it. So I'm able to say that I didn't vote for Nixon. I did, but I didn't. You see?

That's all I have to say about politics.

Sex

This is a subject which is dear to everyone's heart, with particular emphasis being given to it at Midwestern fan conventions. Or so I've heard. I've never been to a Midwestern fan convention. Mike Glycer told me this and ever since then I've wanted to go. However, Mike Glycer stretches the truth occasionally, and if I go all the way out there and don't get laid I will be highly peeved with him.

Many years ago I achieved a mental breakthrough on the subject of sex. These don't come along too frequently, and therefore must be cherished when they occur. What happened was that I was talking with a female at the place where I worked. We were in the lunchroom. As I recall I had a chicken salad sandwich and she was eating sardines out of a can, although I don't suppose the details are too important. I just wanted to give you the setting. As such conversational interfaces between male and female often will, the discussion turned into an idle flirtation. Very idle. We were just tossing out lines actually. Or so I thought. And at one point I slipped in the time-honored but unsophisticated line: "You know, there's something about you I like but I just can't put my finger on it."

Being more interested in wordsmithing than flirtation, I thought she'd go for a topper. However, her response was a genuine conversation killer.

What she said was: "You never asked." She looked in my eyes as she said it.

The bread on my chicken salad sandwich suddenly stuck to the roof of my mouth. I was in the position of being caught with my bare face hanging out, wondering what to do with my hands.

But she was right. I hadn't asked. I thought about it, and it was a tremendous mental breakthrough for me.

However by the time I considered asking, lunch hour was over.

I've never eaten a chicken salad sandwich since then. I have, however, asked.

Religion

Religion is confusing. There are almost as many religions as there are people who are religious. It's a consumer's market, you might say. In California and Arizona, for the price of a postcard you can receive a legal piece of paper ordaining you as a minister, and start your own church and preach whatever you have in mind.

Television advertising is just catching up to where religion has been all along. Television tells you that Mullin's Crotch Talcum is the best crotch talcum on the market, and the only one worth bothering with. The various religions have been using that kind of advertising for centuries. Everyone knows that their own religion is the only one that counts, and the whole idea of going around and trying to convert people is to prevent them from going to hell via some other religion. The claims are all very confusing. I think the FCC should investigate the whole business and let us know which religion has the most honest advertising. Religions using false advertising should be made to issue public disclaimers, or perhaps submit to blind taste-tests.

Personally I'm beginning to lean toward belief in reincarnation. Just the other day I woke up to remember dreaming about my former life as a satyr. Or maybe it was just another wet dream.

In fact, I've now gotten so involved in the idea of reincarnation that I've drawn up

a list of predictions. Locke Predicts That:

Mike Glicksohn will be reincarnated as an unshaven Australian bush hat.

Donn Brazier will be reincarnated as a cut-and-paste comic book.

Mike Glycer will be reincarnated as a hektographed N3F fanzine.

Ed Cagle will be reincarnated as a coprozoic coprophagan with coprostasis.

Linda Bushyager will be reincarnated as George Putnam. Or maybe vice-versa.

Buck Coulson will be reincarnated as a discouraging word.

Everyone involved in these predictions should let me know how they come out. You can contact me in Hollywood, as I plan to be reincarnated as the first X-rated Walt Disney movie (YANK MY DOODLE, IT'S A DANDY).

Sci-Fi

I kind of like the term "sci-fi," which right off the bat puts me in an unfavorable position. It's sort of like saying "But I like the word 'n[REDACTED]'"

Nonetheless, as Prof. Corey would say, the word has a certain trashy charm. It also has several things going for it. For one thing it's recognized by an awful lot of people ("Ess Eff, what's that?" "What do you mean, 'Speculative Fiction'?"). Everything has to be called something, I suppose, and think how confusing life would be if everyone ran around trying to change household words:

"I know this looks like a handful of shit to you, Mrs. Harris, but in our little circle we prefer to call it rectal fruit."

"Look, Bonzo, to us this isn't garbage. When we pick it up it's called residential waste product."

Of course, some of us like to think that the term should be reserved only for Godzilla movies and Superman comic books and SPACE:1999. Unfortunately that isn't the case. The public makes no discrimination between good science fiction and bad science fiction (probably because they're not aware that there is a difference), and view the term "Sci Fi" as merely an abbreviation for Science Fiction. Mundania will view Science Fiction as being Science Fiction whether it's called "Sci-Fi," "SF," "StF," "Stef," or "that crazy Buck Rogers horse-shit." Doesn't matter to them what it's called. It

all means the same thing. Science Fiction.

Fans probably turn blue at the mention of "Sci-Fi" because the term did not really (not really. Really) come from within. It is not the term that they are accustomed to. Of a sudden, everyone was calling science fiction "sci-fi" except the fans, who were

still calling it "SF." It is not the language that they would require, so it is rejected out of hand.

But it's used, and accepted, and it's a commonly-found public word. And in the public's mind it doesn't mean "n[REDACTED]" any more than the words "Science Fiction" do. It seems a useless struggle to fight it. Fifty years from now will we be a bunch of white-haired old farts mumbling: "Sonny, in my day we called it SF. And when you're visiting my room here at the Home, that's what you'll call it, too. By crackey."?

Of course, personally, I've always been fond of the term "space opera." It has a certain trashy charm. As Dena would say, let's keep this thing in the gutter.

IN SUMMARY

Actually, I'm just being a horse's ass upon request. Horse's ass for hire, you might say. Mike Glycer has indicated to me that my usual humorous articles are ok, but they don't draw letters of comment and he doesn't get any letters of comment as it is. He has begged me on bended knees (fifteen other people's) to do a controversial series of columns just to keep his mailbox filled with egoboo.

He wrote to me: "I'm in dire straits. I put out a superlative fanzine which is the greatest thing since Sterno, and I get maybe three LoCs per issue. I know that you always write humor, but having met you I know that underneath all that you have a lot of serious but stupid opinions which everyone but Ed Cagle is bound to disagree with, and if you started writing a column full of that shit for SCIENTIFRICTION I sure could get a lot of letters. And I need to get a lot of letters or I will tearfully be forced to fold this superlative fanzine and start publishing a terrible crudzine so that people will write if only to tell me that I am publishing a terrible crudzine. I know this is a dangerous mission, Dave, and if you are caught I will be forced to disavow all knowledge of my complicity. However, it's a great challenge, and good luck if you accept it!"

It's the truth, I swear it.

I also have some swamp land in Florida that I want to talk with you about.

In the meantime I'm trying to draw up a list of controversial topics for my next installment. You could all help me by writing in with suggestions, but you also might tell me what you think of these topics:

- 1) Defending the use of Scottish engineers on spaceships, in space operas by Niven and Pournelle.
- 2) Promulgating the return of Roger Elwood to the anthology field so that we can add to the body of works in the genre of Christian Science Fiction.
- 3) Advocating another worldcon in Kansas City.
- 4) Attacking Mae Strelkov as a writer of unimportant fan material.
- 5) Criticizing Harry Warner's second fanhistory volume as being basically trivial and boring.
- 6) Accusing Mike Glycer of being so desperate for material that he writes these columns under my name.
- 7) Advocating that we resurrect John Campbell from the dead, just to see if we can do it.

If no one is interested, I'll have to go back to pain stories.

++ Dave Locke ++

THE LIGHT FANTASTIC
STAR LIGHT, STAR BRIGHT
(THE GREAT SHORT FICTION OF ALFRED BESTER)
Berkeley/Putnam 1976 \$7.95/ea

These two hardback volumes bring to science fiction a much-needed collection of short stories and novelettes by Alfred Bester. When I met Bester for the first time at Westercon 1975, it was in many ways the culmination of my years in fandom. I'd then met two great authors whom I'd read since my discovery of the field at the ripe age of 11 -- Robert A. Hein-

lein and Alfred Bester. Heinlein was every bit the gentleman you would expect: quiet dignified, a man who could and would give the acceptance speech for Arthur C. Clarke upon winning a Nebula even though *TIME ENOUGH FOR LOVE* had been a contender. Yet I wasn't too surprised when I met Heinlein -- I had heard too many stories about him. Alfred Bester, however, had always been something of an enigma. Stories told about him ranged from allegations that he'd been incarcerated in a mental institution to the simple assertion that he was dead. Meeting him was something uncertain, but looked forward to. He's tall, with a short goatee and wavy hair, both turning to gray. He wore a normal pair of glasses in front of his eyes and a pair of dark glasses on top of his head. His demeanor was imposing and distant, almost threatening...until I walked up and introduced myself. Suddenly he changed. His face warmed with a smile, his eyes crinkled with delight, and he seemed genuinely interested in talking with me. In a short time he seemed like an old friend. And that is the way his stories affected me too. They were strange and wondrous creatures that soon became rewarding friends.



The format of these two collections follows the successful one used by Doubleday in *THE EARLY ASIMOV*. The stories are interspaced with fascinating biographical accounts of Bester's life and, when he remembers, how and when the stories were written. The stories themselves range from his latest stylistic experiments ("The Four-Hour Fugue") to his early masterpieces (such as "Fondly Fahrenheit"). Some of the older stories are a bit creaky -- "Adam and No Eve" -- and the premises upon which they were written are invalidated by modern scientific discoveries, but since Bester has always been more concerned with the human elements of his stories than the gadgets and tricks of other older sf, they are still quite readable.

In order to demonstrate that his talents were not wasted, but simply channeled into other directions, Bester also includes two essays in the second collection -- one on Isaac Asimov, and "My Affair With Science Fiction" which gives a personal reminiscence of how he discovered, and came to write sf. Bester gave a great deal to the field, considering the small amount of work he produced -- three novels and a handful of short stories -- but his carefully worked out, human, believable characters, his elegant, experimental prose, both added much to bring sf forward from the pulps into the forefront of modern fiction. He amply proved that sf could have all the values thought important in modern fiction, yet still reach out to touch the sense of wonder. Bester was and remains a giant of the field. Highly recommended.

STAN BURNS

ALAN BOSTICK
46 Arboles
Irvine, CA 92715

By Ghod, PRE 15 has been sitting at the printers for a long time. It shows. I mean, why else would the cover illo by Taral Wayne MacDonald be dated four years ago? Anyway, it's a nice cover. Taral

once said something about his having improved since he had done certain drawings that had languished in faneds' files for a couple of years. On the basis of this long-languished cover, I'd have said that he didn't have much room for improvement. Well done, Taral. ((Such a comment is slightly grating, but I agree that all faneds who leave their contributors' material in the file for an outrageously long time deserve such comments. To explain one thing -- it's a little tough to present an 8½ by 13 astronomical without destroying it. I used a legal-length foldover format for PRE 15 specifically to have MacDonald's cover adorn it unmangled. Another thing, however much Taral has improved in the rendering of human and humanoid figures -- and he has improved tremendously -- I think he has plenty of reason to be proud of that drawing. Now while I'm trying to figure out why I'm the only one who shares that opinion with you among those who commented, let's continue...))

There's not much I can say about Mike Glicksohn's and Bill Bowers' speeches, except that I enjoyed reading them and am glad you printed them. I do have comments to make about Ro Nagey's recipe/article about SMOFs. I think Ro took the wrong approach towards the question.

Let us look at the matter from a different point of view. First, let us assume that there exists at least one true SMOF as we imagine such to be, with the ability to Plunge All Fandom Into War and is constantly pulling strings to direct fandom in the directions he wants it to go. Once we have determined what his activities are like, we then can ask the question, Is There Really Such An Animal?

The most obvious thing about a Secret Master of Fandom is that, as the title states, his position of power is a secret. No one is able to tell that he has any unusual degree of influence. He won't be in a prominent position. Thus we won't find him chairing a Worldcon or publishing a Big Time Fanzine, although he might have a position



on the worldcon committee or be an associate editor or columnist to the large fanzines. He probably doesn't throw any parties at cons, but he will generally be invited to most of them; the ones where he can exert his influence on the proper people (e.g. the ones whose opinions are either respected or disparaged by most of the rest of fandom.)

Aside from congoing, most of his activity is concentrated into letterhacking. He probably is a member of FAPA, and publishes a small personalzine which circulates among his intimates and perhaps other SMOFs, but letterhacking is where he directs most of his strength. Consider: a properly phrased letter in the right zine can touch off feuds, and if the writer is careful, and we can assume that a person becomes a SMOF by exercising care in his actions, the reaction to the letter might not touch him directly but fall heavily against those who first reacted to his letter. And in the letters of fanzines he is better camouflaged than he would be if he were writing articles in the same fanzines, since his voice would be masked by the massed voices of others.

(Of course, we can't rule out the possibility that very prominent fans are SMOFs; they could be using their very BNFity as a distraction, ie, Everybody knows Bill Bowers can't be a SMOF; he's too busy working on OUTWORLDS to pay close attention to the doings of fandom. Sure he is.)

Thus we have the picture of the SMOF, if he exists. The only question remaining is: Are there really such people, and if so, who are they? I'm not going to try to answer that right now. If I did, my life insurance premium would probably rise exorbitantly, and for good reason. My guesses are probably too astute for my own safety as it is.

Note to Dave Locke: Literary criticism, that is to say, discussion of a story for the benefit of those who have read it, does have a useful purpose. It helps the reader understand what went on in the story that he might have missed, thus furthering his enjoyment when and if he rereads the story. (Yes, enjoyment. I enjoyed reading DAHLGREN for a second time, and this was aided by explanations of some of the events to me in pieces of "literary criticism," even though I didn't agree with some of the statements made therein.

TOM COLLINS
338 W. 19th Street #1B
New York, NY 10011

What really causes me to write, beyond a strong faunch for further issues, is the column by Carl Bennett. Has he written before of such things as how much it cost him to go into business, and how he loca-

ted the distributors, etc? If not, you might suggest to him something of the sort. Anyway, it was an amusing article and informative, one way or another, and I enjoyed spending five pages in his company. Also his artwork was the best in the issue, I thought....(flip,flip)...Hmm. Some of the best in the issue.

Jeff Schalles' little critters are still ugly, but somehow their balloons seem funnier than they once did. Congratulations on luring him from retirement with both drawings and a genuine pseudo-loc.

That brings me to Dave Locke. Boy, is he full of notions! I don't know what his idea of criticism is, but I don't notice critics running around a lot saying things like "This is great!" or "That is terrible!" And often I don't see a lot of what I would consider to be overt opinion, in a critical article there isn't always even a lot of assumption that the critic has better taste than the reader. There is, for example, no assumption implied by the author of the article that the author of it has better writing skills than the reader, only that he has something to say from which he and the reader might both benefit. The critic doesn't have superior taste, of necessity, only that his taste and insight are different from yours, and you and he might both

benefit from his production of an article. Also, if he found something in a work that you missed, then your appreciation and enjoyment and understanding of that work might be enhanced by an encounter with his remarks. I think it is interesting, for example, to discover that sf read seriously (that is, in large quantity) year by year reveals something much different about the history and unfolding of sf than when the individual authors or magazines are read one by one instead of chronologically en masse. That doesn't have much to do with helping me feed my cats, but possibly it enhances something. I think the more knowledge a person has on a subject the more he is likely to get out of that subject. At this point, for example, I probably know as much about HP Lovecraft as any several-dozen fans, so I read the DeCamp biography with wrath, infuriated jeers, and contempt all besprinkling my respect and admiration like chocolate chips in a cookie. Boy that was fun! Good to get your blood up now and then. Likewise, I just saw a documentary on a subject I have spent about four months of this year researching intensively. I was pleased to see I could identify some of the people, and interested to see what some others, whom I had become rather familiar with -- though not in person -- looked like. I was able to spot some errors of fact and was impressed by the way the whole complex story was outlined simply and clearly while the personalities involved were examined. I sat through that film twice, and enjoyed the heck out of it both times. I could write a piece about it pointing out such things as the errors and the way in which a very difficult task was accomplished, and that could be film criticism that implies nothing special about my endowments in the taste department, but does indeed assume (or would) some special insight and knowledge of the subject.

As side comment on the same article, if I may. Judith Crist's reviews may be insufferable, but I suspect their degree of dullness depends in part on how much one wishes to know about a given film. Moreover, it turns out her reaction parallels almost exactly the reaction of the mass audience. If she likes a film it is almost guaranteed to make money at the box office, and if she hates it, it almost certainly won't. That does have a certain utility.

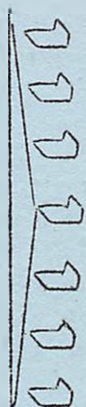
SPEAK LITTLE OF VERBOSITY, Barry Milgram
Flunt \$9.95 148 pp. 1976

Reviewed by Richard Roesberg

Shorter than either of his previous two novels, yet less than half their combined lengths, Barry Milgram's latest is definitely the third book he's written. On the surface it is the story of a man in search of his identity, god, and the meaning of life, but when read at a deeper level it becomes a good adventure yarn. The main character, Ars Longshot, suffers from malproportionateness and is denied passage on all spaceships until he can find a suit that fits. The author succinctly delineates his dilemma in chapters two through twenty-six, building his prose carefully around whole paragraphs lifted intact from Asimov, Sturgeon, Clarke and Heinlein, as well as better known writers. Cleverly doubling the romantic focus and comic relief, Milgram has the would-be spacer's lovely companion Margo doing double duty as she alternately lures Ars into bed and performs hilarious pratfalls while there.

It is easier for the average reader to relate to this volume than its predecessors, both of which followed the Cosmeck family, trapped in the hydroponic eggplant farm of a generation ship and coming to believe it was the whole universe. Still, the book does have its flaws. The problem is not so much that the author can't write, as that he can't type. Tighter editorial control probably would have caught this and prevented merely photocopying the handwritten manuscript and binding the results. This in turn would have lowered the \$9.95 paperback price and made the book available to even more suckers.

And yet who are we to judge a book that took its creator weeks or even months of his life to complete. For, as Ars Longshot says in chapter ninety seven while explaining how he came to be in the women's changing room of the Peace Through Hard Labor Robot Factory: "It's like trying to describe the taste of chocolate ice cream to a blind man."



JOE SANDERS

ON

STF IN ACADEME

The Everglades flow by in elegant swirls and ripples like the marbled endpapers of an antique book. As the plane's shadow lost definition and unraveled, the last white lines of road broke, ended. Now there is only the pocked green of trees, curving among lines of pale dirt, mottled purple-brown mud shining through shallow water -- and the dark centers of the loops, the pits of deep water. Morning light scrubs across the swirling colors. A strangeness. The flight down to Miami for the 1975 Science Fiction Research Association conference was at night; it is the first time I've seen this country from the air. And in this feeling of wonder I dimly remember the wonder I felt during my first flight ever, looking down at the checked pattern of tiny farms where I'd grown up. Yet I realize, with a flash of shame, that it's the newness of this land that holds my eyes. I've seen so much Midwest farmland from the air that it no longer excites me. If I were flying over Indiana now, I'd probably be grading papers or reading a stf book for review. When did the new perspective stop revealing things? When did I stop seeing?

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As the spectacular Cuban waitress cleared away our dessert dishes, the SFRA banquet settled down to its program of speakers and awards. I'd been one of the judged for the Pilgrim Award for criticism and knew the winner, but it couldn't have been much of a secret to anyone there -- why else would Damon Knight be sitting at the speaker's table, beaming gnomishly? But I was excited. I'd admired Knight's criticism for many years, and I was truly happy that he was getting another chunk of recognition. And I wanted to talk to him. With him, of course, but to him; I wanted to tell him that he'd inspired me, that I'd wanted desperately to see things with the same clarity and with the same precision. But I wanted to approach him in an appropriate manner: diffident but self-assured. Suave. So, of course, as it happens when I want something anxiously, I blew it.

"Mr. Knight, I think you deserved to win, and I'm sure glad I voted for you."

Aargh...

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It is the first time I've flown over mountains, too. Snow has settled around weathered Appalachian ridges. Bands of mottled, tree spackled gray alternate with black bare rock. Very unlike the Everglades, but beautiful is its way, too. But so is a plowed field in the snow. I suddenly remember standing in a thicket of saplings -- up-down black slashes against the white snow -- and looking out over the receding waves of fresh-turned earth, showing in gentle swells through the snow. I remember. Remember. I am not that boy anymore. Still, that boy is part of me, became me. I wonder, then, is all lost, the putting away of that first excitement when I can fall into wonder

again as I can look down at the mountains and remember a snowy field in early spring.

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Later, at a cocktail party, I listened to David Ketterer talking with Knight. I listened to Knight commenting that he didn't have much use for the kind of stf criticism that academics write, and I had to break in with another ineptly stated comment -- that however wrongheaded academic approaches to stf are, the root of their position is Knight's own viewpoint; that stf deserves to be treated seriously. Our approaches to literature may be wrong, but Knight was the one who said -- and showed -- that stf could be measured by literary standards.

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Is that true? It's sometimes hard to see the connection, sometimes, between the fan's delight and the scholar's pondering. Yet I know in my own life that reading IN SEARCH OF WONDER served to crystallize finally something that I'd felt with growing clarity for several years: I got the same kind of satisfaction from stf that I got from the literature labeled "serious." I'd heard -- from some teacher, not all -- that there was a profound difference between the two. Somehow they never quite convinced me. And I was right, damnit.

In the first installment of this column, I said that I felt myself to be a link between stf and academe. I should have said that the real link between the two was interest, concern, love. Sometimes it stays at an uncritical level, increasing only in its complexity of knowledge of the field. Sometimes it tries, with greater or lesser success, to extend its understanding of how and why works were created, by the tools of criticism. There's really no separation between the two, fan and scholar, except in the attitude with which they approach their reading. The distinction between wonder and scrutiny is a false one. And that's why Damon Knight earned the Pilgrim Award, because he helped us -- all of us -- get our act together and showed how we could treat the things we read and lived with the respect and care they deserved. I remember Joni Mitchell's "Both Sides, Now," which tells of her having grown past the pretty illusions about clouds, love and life, but having found no absolute certainty either. I think we too could use a little more humility. I think we should stop sneering at childish fans, pompous scholars. And I think we should stop asking whatever happened to our sense of wonder, remember the persons who felt that wonder became us and that the wonder is part of us, to be not only remembered but felt anew when we truly attend to the world around us. It's a matter of seeing, of opening our eyes.

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The gray and rust fields run into a tangle of suburbs and factories. I can see moving dots on the roads; they swell into cars. Cleveland Hopkins Airport sweeps up under the window. That evening Mary and I go to the circus' last show at the Cleveland Coliseum; I'd bought the tickets last week at a Ticketron window, information impersonally fed through a computer. My sons ogle everything. Have they lost something because they're not seeing the show under a tent, with roustabouts peeling away and folding the canvas walls as the last acts conclude? Maybe. Yes, something's lost but something's gained in living every day. I watch. I enjoy. I am the child I was; I am the man I am; I am one person...and still somehow it's life's illusions I recall. I really don't know life at all.

++ Joe Sanders



SF writers don't spend as much time writing as they used to. They don't have time. I don't believe I know a single writer who puts in a forty-hour writing week any more...I know many who work longer hours than that, but they are lucky if half the time is actually spent putting words on paper for publication. The other jobs of the professional keep them jumping.

Frederik Pohl: "The Science Fiction Professional" in THE CRAFT OF SCIENCE FICTION

Pohl goes on to list seven essential jobs: literary agent, contract lawyer, publicity man, performer (TV, radio, lectures), "apparatrik, helping to keep professional and fan organizations functioning," teacher, and critic. It would be arrogant of me to suggest that Pohl is wrong; that most of these are unnecessary.

I'm going to be arrogant. Five of these seven "essential" tasks are utterly unnecessary for an sf writer.

Pohl makes an excellent case for the necessity of being a literary agent and a contract lawyer. And he gives excellent basic instructions for both tasks. But once he goes to the third item on the list, we get this: "So why bother? Well, two reasons. One reason is that publicity may be wasted effort, but also it may not be. You never

DAN GOODMAN IS THIS JOB NECESSARY?

know.... The other is that selling books is not the only thing that may be gained from publicity. You may get lecture invitations, writing assignments, invitations to prestigious events...."

The first sounds like an excellent reason NOT to spend time and energy on publicity. Time can be better spent on tasks which you have evidence will produce results. If publicity sold more sf books, then by now the difference in sales between self-publishing writers and those who don't bother would long since have become evident.

Most of the benefits of the second reason have nothing to do with the job of writing. Invitations to prestigious events have no relationship I can see to any job, unless business can only be conducted at such events. Lecturing is another job entirely -- something I'll get to in a moment.

Writing assignments are directly related. Maybe. The sf field has its own grapevine, by which those who grant assignments to write sf are more likely to learn about writers than through mundane publicity. Assignments to do articles on science, or the future, or even sf, are again another job.

And the word "may" turns up as a warning. Pohl doesn't say what the odds are that publicity will bring writing assignments.

"I've given most of that up out of fatigue," Pohl says of lecturing. If he genuinely considered it necessary, surely he wouldn't let fatigue stop him? In any case, Pohl's description of the work and joys of lecturing makes it plain that it is a job in itself. You don't have to do it to write sf for a living; you don't have to write sf for a living to lecture. If someone enjoys lecturing, or finds the money worthwhile, that's another matter.

Pohl barely goes into two of the three remaining "essential" tasks. He points out that there's a need for teachers that know something about sf. Again, this doesn't mean that any one sf writer has to take this extra job.

In fact, a case could be made that teaching sf will cost the writer money. Why go out of your way to create competition? Or to train readers to be able to spot flaws in your work?

"Reviewing someone else's book is a good way of keeping your name in front of the book-buying public until your next book comes out." Well, yes; it can be useful. But is it necessary? I can't recall seeing a book review by Heinlein, but his work sells nicely. I haven't seen a recent review by Clarke, but IMPERIAL EARTH seems to sell well enough.

The task left over is keeping professional and fan organizations going. I agree that both sorts of organization should be kept going -- though both have a history of dying in their own waste products. (SFWA isn't the first organization for sf writers. It's merely the first to prove its value.)

But both take talents which have nothing directly to do with writing. A few sf writers have the needed skills; most don't. The only two professional writers to serve as Procedural Directors of LASFS in recent years barely got through their six-month terms.

The job of the sf writer is to write sf. The only other essential jobs are learning enough to write competently in this field; typing manuscripts well enough that they can be sold; selling; getting paid; and keeping track of correspondence and records.

Let me state my biases. I'm not much good at working with other people, and don't much

enjoy it. Therefore, I would tend to go through Pohl's list looking for ways to avoid the activities which involve working with people. So it may not be coincidence that these are precisely the activities I've decided aren't essential. (I must thank Mr. Pohl for explaining why he considered them essential clearly enough that I could come up with reasons why they aren't.)

But a lot of writers of sf are also bad at working with people. And would-be writers, by all evidence, are worse. (The established pros can at least get along with IMAGINARY people.) If you wish to be an sf writer, and you have noticeable problems in dealing with people, then leave Pohl's other jobs alone.

++ Dan Goodman

ROGER L. DUTCHER
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Dave Locke's reviewing of reviewing never seemed to get anywhere, although with a subject such as that it is hard to get anywhere. I don't feel critiques are looked upon by writers as guides to being

better writers (although never having talked to any writers about it I can't be sure). Despite my general disagreement with Mike Glicksohn's slightly paranoid attitude toward the writer of critiques, one can never, as Dave points out, come out worse from exposure to other people's ideas. Dave may be interested in reading W.H. Auden's comments on criticism, which in some cases match his own. Some examples, if I may:

"Attacking bad books is not only a waste of time but also bad for the character. If I find a book really bad, the only interest I can derive from writing about it has to come from myself, from such a display of intelligence, wit, and malice as I can contrive. One cannot review a bad book without showing off." "Some books are undeservedly forgotten; none are undeservedly remembered."

I agree with Steve Miller that it is not necessary to come up with something original for every story. You would indeed be wasting your time, or at least more time than necessary to come up with a good story. And if I may, Auden again: "Some writers confuse authenticity, which they always ought to aim at, with originality, which they should never bother about." (I should thank Paul Ritz for pointing these quotes out to me before I read STFR, they turned out, among many others, to be very appropriate when STFR arrived.)

As for Mike's intro to Bill Bowers' speech, I can't thank you enough. Being a fringe-fan, and being located where I am, it is impossible for me to get to any of the larger cons (although I hope to attend Windycon this coming month) and thus experience any of these classic little speeches.

NEIL KVERN
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What do you do when you find a copy of PRE 15 and STFR 6 in the mail, along with a letter from Sheryl Smith, who loves my poetry as I love her, vicariously I'm told, and a threatening letter from an attorney-

at-law for some book club who seems to believe that they'll sue me for \$2.72?

Now, now. Hmm. Dave Locke...welll. I think he overreacted to Don Keller. Just a little. To quote Vonnegut is a strike against him, especially when he's talking about the state of literature. Vonnegut stinks...JESUS GHOD! Now if that wasn't a fucking hallucination! I looked out the window (here in sociology class) and saw Dick Nixon playing basketball with the Harlem Globetrotters! Who says sf ain't a ghetto?



D. GARY GRADY
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Well, you put your address in the right place this time, but you left out your name... (Good thing I remembered, isn't it?)

Carl Bennett is one of the few people I would really consider voting for on a Hugo ballot. I generally dislike the whole philosophy of the Hugoes (and the Emmys and the Edgars and the Oscars and the Nebulas and so on, including the Nobel Prize) but there are sometimes people like Carl who are so talented and dedicated and hard-working that it seems a crime not to honor them in some way. I'd call his piece the best thing in a good issue.

I didn't see Shirley's letter in SFR since Geis and I haven't been on writing terms for years (he got pissed when an economist and I tried to tell him that our going off the gold standard wasn't the cause of inflation, as I recall). What did he have to say, and

how does it relate to our ongoing discussion? Anyway I'm glad to hear you haven't been upset with me. I haven't been upset with you either. Now, why don't you go buy a pizza to celebrate our first fight and mail me half? (I'll get Brooks to taste it first, a routine safety measure, you understand.)

HARRY E. BOSE
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Throughout both #5 and #6 reference was repeatedly given to a sacred mailing list and the chance that many would soon be deleted. It seemed you'd stated an editorial policy and received insufficient response

in the form of locs, articles, etc. My previous experience with fan publishing hasn't included such zines as STFR, meaning they've all been purchasable. The idea is somewhat foreign. That one must actually work (writing these things is work) steadily to remain on the list. Even by minimum wages the time involved should equal less than half an hour, and it'll take me at least twice that long to do a rough draft and finished letter. Besides, how am I to know if it's not for nothing? If someone sends a loc of unpublishable ramblings (some what like this? hope not!) will you have a sudden fit of benevolence and extend to him a copy of the next is-ue anyway? And before it arrives the first bomb might drop, so what's the use? Ignore the last sentence. It's the sharp tip of my weltschmerz poking through a calm introverted exterior. Still, the zine is interesting and you did send me two for the price of a single and I've a spare afternoon. I shall make the attempt.

Carl Bennett is an effervescent writer. The illos! He does caricatures of himself

and Sammy Davis, Jr. magnificently. I was beginning to believe that no one had a larger nose than mine. It's comforting to find that Carl Bennett's is slightly longer and more voluminous. The article, effectively a lengthy attention-grabbing plug, definitely decided me. I'm going to drive up to Portland, a city I'm unfamiliar with, as soon as possible and visit THE ILLUSTRATED STORE. Unfortunately as soon as possible is probably a few months. Keep on plugging, Carl, and forgive my tardiness.

Dave Locke, what are you trying to pull? Judith Crist's writing abilities aside, do you actually want people to think, using an example from last night, that given a choice you'd rather watch "The Love Boat" than "Slither," or, closer to home, enjoy "Gemini Man" more than "Serpico"? You're saying you'd prefer "The Bionic Boy" over "Gone With The Wind"? The phrase "...if she likes a movie it will probably put me to sleep, and if she pans it then I'll probably be well entertained," is so ludicrous it damages the credibility of your article. I can imagine you and those corroded senses of value sitting down in front of the tube to watch "Airport 1975" next week. The preceding's only an opinion of people's opinion, inherent suspect. The suggested revision to Sturgeon's law has a firmer base and should be generously considered, considering this was a sercon column.

GEORGE R. R. MARTIN
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Brian Earl Brown says that reviews are not written for the author's benefit, and muses out loud as to whether THE ISSUE AT HAND has improved the field. I would answer yes, most definitely, it has. Blish's

criticism -- and the earlier work by Damon Knight -- have been enormously influential. When I attended the 1973 Milford Conference, I was struck by the fact that virtually every writer there had read Blish and Knight and taken their critical dictums to heart. certain coinages that originated in THE ISSUE AT HAND and IN SEARCH OF WONDER -- "idiot plotting" (in the technical sense, not as a pejorative) and "said-bookisms" and "call-a-rabbit-a-smeerp" -- were brought home so forcefully that they have entered the common parlance of the field. No modern SF writer has to have it explained to him when you charge him with calling his rabbits "smeerps." He understands you instantly. And if you bother to look around, I think you'll discover that smeerps and said-bookisms are a good deal rarer today than they were when Blish and Knight first took up the critical scalpels. To be sure, bad writing is still with us. It always will be. But I don't think it is quite as bad as it was when Damon began to search for wonder, and perhaps more importantly, the good writing is a good deal better. Now Knight and Blish didn't do all that by themselves, certainly. But they helped, ah yes, they helped,

As to Brian's other point, that reviews are not written for the author's benefit, that reviewers should address their readers; well, certainly. But the two are not mutually exclusive, y'know. The sort of review that is of the greatest benefit to the writer is often the same sort of review that is of most interest to the reader. Brian's assertion notwithstanding, catchphrases like "slow-paced" really convey very little information to the reader OR writer. "Slow paced" can be used to describe a book in which very few events take place. It can also be used to indicate that the 'action' of the story is primarily emotional/psychological rather than physical. Or that it is surrounded by large amounts of introspection and character analysis. It can even be out on a story because the author has a discursive, leisurely style which somehow makes the flow of his narrative seem slower than it actually is. Even in a shopping-guide review this sort of label is next to useless. The reader has no way of knowing which one of these various meanings the reviewer had in mind, unless he happens to know the reviewer's critical biases beforehand. And "slow paced" is a word that at least seems to denote something objective and measurable. Calling something "badly written" or "dull" is a thousand times worse.

Dave Locke can shout "Literary criticism is personal opinion" all he wants and that isn't going to make it true. Certainly, opinion is a part of criticism and reviewing. But only the worst of the would-be reviewers depend on it entirely. (I readily concede that there are a good many such people currently operating in fandom). The best critics we've yet had in the genre -- Knight and Blish in the Olde Days, Algis Budrys today, perhaps the Panshins and Richard Delap and Don Keller and a few others as well -- spice up their work with personal opinion, but the core of it is analysis that is not at all subjective. When a critic says Robert A. Heinlein is a "good" writer or a "bad" writer, he is offering us empty opinion; when he says that Heinlein is a non-visual writer who very seldom describes the physical appearance of anything in detail, he is offering us a veritable truth. If we have never read Heinlein, but are strongly enamored of Jack Vance and Mervyn Peake and other strongly visual writers, we have been given a chunk of information that is a good deal more valuable than some moron muttering, "All us right-thinking fen will rush out and get this one!" Instead of telling us whether or not to buy a book, the critic will be giving us data with which we can make up our own minds. Knight, you know, never just said that a writer was "bad" -- he took apart their stories and DEMONSTRATED why he felt they were bad. It wasn't a question of "personal opinion," for example, when Knight disembowled A.E. Van Vogt by showing that the plot of THE WORLD OF NULL-A made no sense.

Skipping away from SCIENTIFRICTION to PREHENSILE, I find Dave Locke again, this time jumping up and down on Don Keller with hob-nailed boots. Tsk. Keller did rather put his foot in his mouth; the quote that sent Locke into his frenzy is rather wild and indefensible overstatement. But so is virtually everything Locke says in rebuttal. After reading Locke's latter, I have to wonder whether he has ever read anything by Keller besides the quote to which he takes such strong exception. He says, 'Too many critics succumb to the God complex, pushing their personal tastes upon you as though there were no other tastes worthy of attention. They do not usually bother to tell you why they dislike something, as presumably the mere fact that they dislike it should be sufficient...' Now that's all good, and I agree with it completely, and that kind of reviewing I bitch about too. Only thing is, Don Keller doesn't happen to be one of the people who does that sort of thing. I think Keller is one of today's top fan reviewers precisely because he does tell us why he dislikes something, usually in detail and at some length, but entertainingly. Moreover, he is one of the few critics who doesn't push his personal tastes on us in the sense that he is absolutely up-front about what his tastes are. The sort of statement that sent Locke to gnashing his teeth is damned useful, though this particular specimen is more than a bit pretentious and overblown. I'd much rather deal with a critic who begins by saying, 'See here, this kind of stuff I generally admire, and I'm strongly prejudiced against this kind, for these reasons, and now with that in mind, here are my opinions on this particular book,' than with the faceless mystery men who pronounce things 'good' or 'bad' without giving the slightest hint as to what criteria they are using for their value judgements.

MIKE GLICKSOHN
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Carl's article on his bookstore was only of moderate interest, although his illustrations were delightful. Most of what he said was fairly self-evident, or had been said previously either by himself or others.

The one area I thought he came across weakest on was in trying to justify exorbitantly high prices on books. It doesn't even sound sincere! I just don't believe in the honesty of a commercial agent who claims that despite obtaining merchandize at a very low price he feels obliged to charge a very large amount for it just to ensure it goes to a 'good home.' Come on, now, Carl. Suppose you've got a regular customer that you know is a collector, a man or woman who has previously shown a willingness to pay large amounts of money to get and keep rare books. And suppose you stumble across a rare book for a dime at a rummage sale. Would you then say to this valued customer, "Look, I know you love to preserve books and my main desire is to see these rare items

properly looked after so instead of charging you twenty dollars for this I'll sell it to you for a dollar, thereby making a nine hundred percent profit and ensuring the book will be properly looked after." If you can honestly say yes to that then I'll accept your attempts to justify what you do as far as prices are concerned. Otherwise, your remarks are specious.

I certainly don't agree with Dave's main thesis. Most literary criticism is most certainly personal opinion, although I do happen to believe there exist certain fundamental standards against which works of fiction can be measured. However, while entertainment can be a major feature of a work of criticism I also feel that because some critics bring a background in literature, a type of mentality and reasoning power that I've never developed, and an interest in science fiction which is greater than my own to a work they are reviewing, then I can and often do learn from what they have to say about a given book.

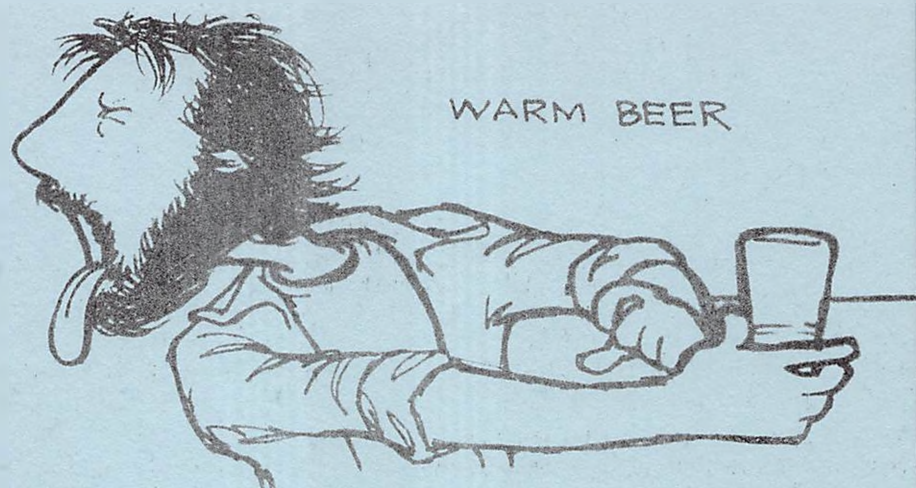
When someone like Susan Wood writes about a book I've read myself, she usually makes clear to me levels of meaning in the books that I was completely unaware of because I lacked the knowledge to see that they were there. I consider this function of the critic to be an extremely useful one: as a reader (occasionally) of science fiction who lacks any real knowledge of the field of literature as a whole, I can often get a much greater appreciation of an sf novel by reading and analyzing the thoughts of writers who are more knowledgeable than I. Criticism may be personal opinion, but there are probably references, analogies, undercurrents that are put into many books by their authors and missed by readers such as myself who are less perceptive than Dave. And I'm not being in the least sarcastic. If a Jeff Smith or a Doug Barbour can point these things out to me, things that may have been perfectly obvious to Dave, then I'm grateful and have benefitted from their criticism. So I don't share Dave's opinion that criticism is necessarily one of the lowest forms of fanwriting, even though he quotes me as agreeing that it often turns out that way. Perhaps I can get a lot more out of fan criticism than Dave, so I consider it more worthwhile than he does.

DR. A.D. WALLACE
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For perpetrating silly nonsense Dave Locke should be wrapped in old mimeo masters, tied with typer ribbon and stewed in corflou. To begin, hear the plaint of the instructor in freshman English: it is impossible to write well about nothing. It is person-

al opinion that the author should have written it, that the publisher should have accepted it, the distributor should have disseminated it, the retailer should have stocked it, the reader should have bought it and that the reviewer (or critic) should have written about it.

What is unpleasant about the piece is that it is scornful, snobbish and opinionated, in addition to containing false and misleading statements. It is true that literary critics differ, but it is false that 'they are always at odds with each other.' It is true that much fan reviewing is poor, but it is equally true that much fan writing is poor and (quoting the instructor of freshman English) it is difficult to write well about poorly written novels. It is the mark of an amateur writer to ask portentous hypothetical questions, a manifest flaw in Locke's article. In essence, though it is difficult to separate reviews and critiques) a review should be a journalistic, reportorial article. Locke puts it well in saying that it is a buying guide. A good review, or critique, is both helpful and entertaining. A good review should not attempt to guess the author's purpose, or read the author's mind. It should minimize explosive expressions of like or dislike. ((Peculiar about that, but I disagree almost diametrically with most of your reviewing axioms. Honesty in personal opinion, and clarification of one's views, are the two axioms I stress. Explosive opinion is not excluded.))



OBSSESSION, with which I am...er...can I say...obsessed?, when a woman at the bar turned and injected herself into our conversation unannounced. We didn't know whether to be flattered or enraged. Both Doug and I are overtly shy around women we don't know, but she and Doug engaged in a sprightly little exchange that ended with all parties insulted. It was rather funny, now that I think back on it, although I can't remember whether that's due to the drink or to my twisted sense of justice.

In total, I hit seven drinking establishments on that excursion and got to know some of the best places in the downtown area. The idea was to have a backlog of pleasant drinking pubs lined up for entertainment purposes whenever a good friend or fan came through town. So, if any of you people come through Portland way and want a little conversation, come with an empty mug.

++ Carl Bennett

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THE MAN WHO LIVED IN INNER SPACE by Arnold Federbush
Bantam Q8794 1973/5 \$1.25 Reviewed by Stan Burns

The main reason for this novel's existence is so that the author can present mystical essays in fictional form on the sea, and what it means to us today. (Of course there is also a plotline -- man, crippled in an explosion of a chemical factory, finds union with the sea and regains his self-image -- but all that is background for the Sunday supplement level science lectures, spliced together by mystical passages where the hero is called to the sea by a mermaid/seal.) The cover blurb says the book is "Part Jules Verne, part Jaques Cousteau, part Rachel Carson." Unfortunately it doesn't add that the book is equal to the worst that any of these three could produce. The main problem is that the novel is a juvenile (very) packaged as an adult sf novel -- and anyone reading it as such will be disappointed. It is a fair juvenile, but the author lacks Heinlein's skill in interweaving lecture with storyline that made the spacesuit essay in HAVE SPACESUIT, WILL TRAVEL so good. Federbush can't seem to generate the enthusiasm that Heinlein did.

OTHER WORLDS, OTHER UNIVERSES by Brad Steiger and John White
Doubleday 1975 \$7.95 Reviewed by Stan Burns

Collection of essays on UFOs, 'lost' civilizations, ESP, extraterrestrial intelligence, etc. Most would be of minor interest to sf fans. Book does contain an essay titled "Starseed: A Way Out" by Timothy Leary, in which the guru pushes the idea of building a city at the pole to launch a starcity and get away from the Earth. Humorous, if not particularly factual. Also an excerpt from Stapledon's STAR MAKER. Avoid...



four nights in a row).

Reasons why I made such a big thing out of going out and drinking after I had turned twenty-one escape me now. I don't suppose I had a very concrete grasp on them anyway. It's the forbidden fruit, in a sense. Tavern-drinking. Hell, I've done a great amount of drinking for years before this. Who hasn't? I also put away my fair share of mixed drinks at V-Con, too.

At the risk of some very outraged screams for blood from feminists out there, I have to admit I went to watch women more than anything else. I was totally surprised at the balance of males to females in all of the places I tracked through those nights. And everyone seemed to be there to have a nice time, and weren't so concerned with pick-ups -- as they seem to be in honky-tonks and cocktail bars. I guess I know the right places. At any rate I felt, and do feel, perfectly comfortable about drinking in some of the places I visited because the patrons weren't involved in social games as much as they were social fun.

The big attraction spot on my excursion was Jake's. This pub and restaurant has been a Portland tradition since the late 1800s. The atmosphere (when you're capable of taking it in) after ten o'clock is simply exciting. Here in Oregon's town/city of Portland is a taste of the public houses of Great Britain. By eleven the place is so full of standing people that you can do nothing but try not to spill your drink on the person you're talking to while people shove past you on the way to the bar or restrooms. Jake's is alive at this time of night. Irish coffee is a specialty of Jakes, and it's best to start off with one when you first drop in -- while you can still appreciate its warmth and taste. Half of one of those drinks and you're friendlier than Gil Gaier (which is pretty friendly).

One evening, a friend of mine, Doug Holm, and I stopped at Bogart's Joint after having seen Brian De Palma's OBSESSION for the second time. Bogart's has one of the largest public collections of movie stills I've seen, most of them of the great Bogie himself.

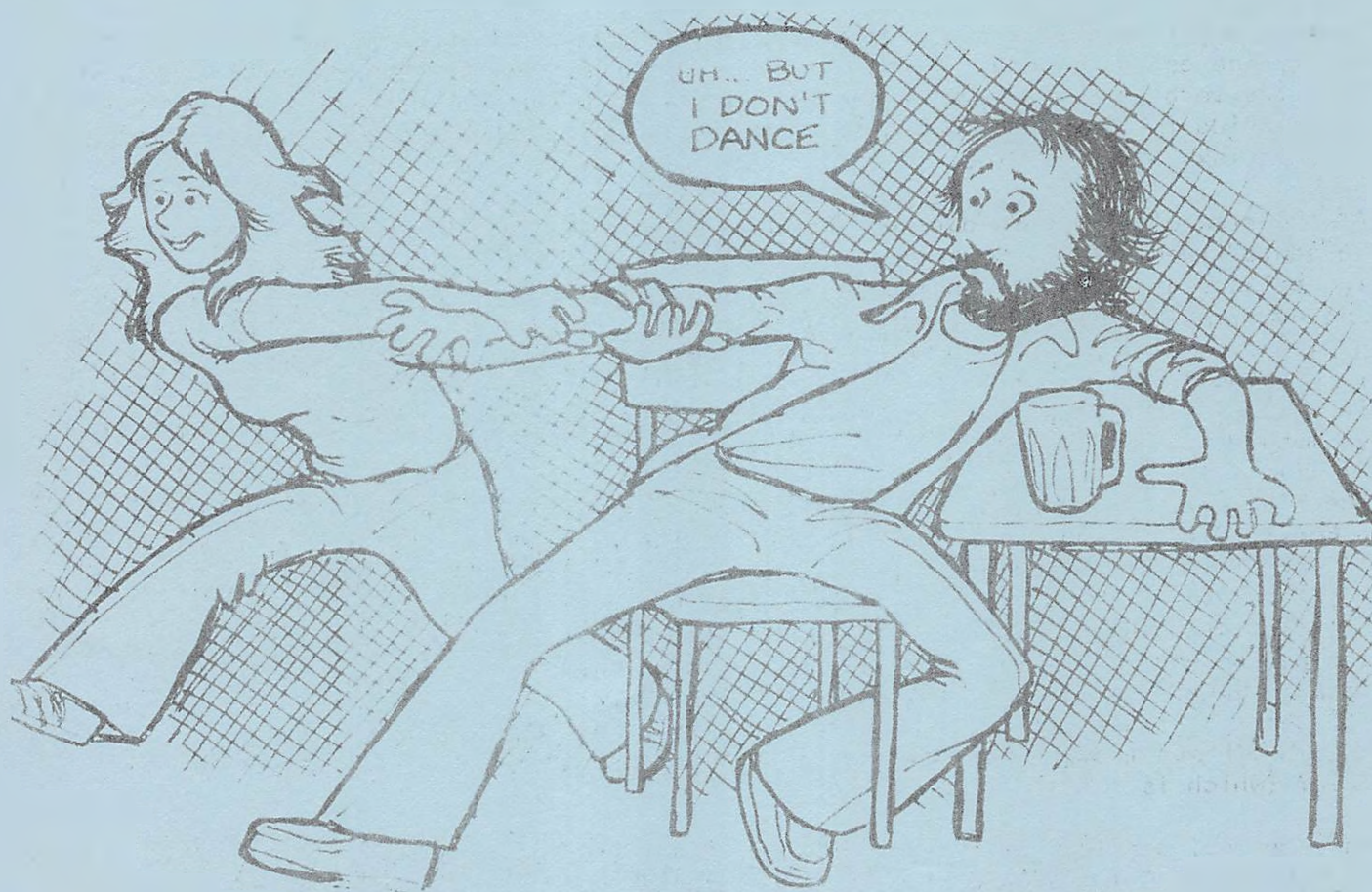
rest. Perfectly natural. But then, I have turned twenty-one in America, and have spent nearly 100% of my time being instructed in the urban American way of life. Since I do not live in a vacuum (or I do, depending on your opinion of American society) much of the training has settled in and grown a fine set of roots in my upper forty.

What happened, was, I went out for four consecutive nights after turning twenty-one and literally blasted my brains out on imported beers like Heineken Lager and Guinness Stout. Great stuff. I didn't know what I was missing in imported beer until this urban pub expedition. Sure, the imported stuff tastes little more tangy than domestic, but you don't get up the next morning with a sore throat and a dully throbbing head (reasons why I could make it

At this particular establishment the two of us ordered up a couple of pitchers of Heineken and sat down to talk over OBSESSION and Genevieve Bujold, and to puruse the latest issues of FILM COMMENT and CINEFANTASTIQUE. However, we soon found ourselves gradually turning into rogues and leering at the dancing couples. Sitting in the dark with the loud music surrounding us, Doug and I found it very easy (with help from the lager) to scoff and laugh at a few of the people attempting to dance. In truth they were quite laughable -- no sense of movement or rhythm. Most of them were males and did nothing but bob up and down. Although I laughed at these people I admit they had more courage than I -- you see, I have no desire to ridicule myself in front of fifty or more people. On the last night of my excursion, several of my friends and I were listening to a c & w group in which another friend of mine plays upright bass. The Hank Williams and Bob Wills tunes were getting punchier and started to really swing like the good ol' times (which I never saw, considering how they died in the late Forties). Anyway, here I was doodling cartoons in the dark when a nice-looking woman comes over, grabs me by the arm, attempting to literally drag me to the dance floor. Terror gripped my heart like a black satin glove crushing a white rose. "No," I shook my head vigorously, "I don't dance." She jerked harder. "I don't dance," I said, begging off.

She gave up after a few more seconds, probably realizing that I couldn't dance. I have as much sense of rhythm as a crippled tortoise. I wouldn't have minded attempting some kind of dance, Lord knows I've been watching this woman all night, but friends have long memories and like to do a lot of playful harassing.

After Bogart's, Doug and I drifted over to Jake's (as we seem to do every night) and started with Irish coffee. At one o'clock we still hadn't exhausted our discussion of



THE ZINEPHOBIC EYE

MIKE GLICKSOHN

I'm not really a very good fanzine reviewer. And I'll tell you why. My interests and my abilities aren't broad enough; and I lack the time to expand them to properly cover the whole fanzine field. (We also split infinitives.) My personal preference among the huge number of fanzines that arrives here (ninety-nine fanzines in the last sixty-two days, as an example) is for fanzines like DILEMMA, MOTA, SWOON, KRATOPHANY, and TRUE RAT. I enjoyed the revival of Tom Perry's QUARK, and went back to my unread pile of old fanzines to read my three Willis-laden issues of QUARK's earlier existence. I revel in RUNE and TITLE and AY CHINGAR; and they're all fannish fanzines, to one degree or another. I'm just not competent to review sercon fanzines properly, so I'm giving you a one-sided view in this column. Hopefully most of you know that, because you know me, and try to find the better serious fanzines on your own.

Most people consider SF COMMENTARY to be the best of the sercon fanzines, but I don't have the time to even read it. (I'm busy folks, I really am! Hopefully when the high school football season is over I'll have a little more free time.) Still, Bruce sends it to me and I feel guilty because I don't treat it with the respect it deserves. And the BSFA seeds VECTOR, another fanzine I merely skim then guiltily put aside. There are a lot of serious, intelligent fanzines; fanzines that care about science fiction and are actively trying to improve either the field itself or the way it is received. And the swing in the fanzine pendulum seems to be more and more towards the sercon side, if the recent arrivals are any indication. If that trend keeps up, I may have to terminate this column, but for now here are a few non-fannish fanzines you ought to know about.

I first met Doug Fratz several years ago when he was primarily a comics fan whose main claim to fame was living close to Harry Warner. I lost touch with him for awhile but rediscovered him at MidAmeriCon and found he'd been combining with the University of Maryland's SF society to publish THRUST, a sercon offset fanzine subtitled "Science Fiction In Review." Number 7 is his special Harlan Ellison Issue and is well worth



getting hold of. Appearance-wise this issue of THRUST has a few flaws. The offset is competent but the design misses in places, with a multitude of typefaces creating a somewhat chaotic appearance and some of the layouts and illustrations leave a little to be desired. Overall, though, it's an attractive presentation, allowing one to concentrate on the written material.

The highlight of the issue is an interview with Harlan Ellison which is eclectic enough that many readers might consider this a fannish fanzine! Ellison discusses the nature and expression of the creative impulse, some personal anecdotes about Ted Cogswell, current sf and television and Cordwainer Smith. It's a typical Ellison exchange: outrageous, delightful, amusing, provocative, fascinating. I happen to like Ellison, and know a lot of what he thinks, but there was a lot of new information here even for me, and I thoroughly enjoyed the interview.

The rest of the Ellison-oriented material is an article by Dave Bischoff (co-author of Laser Book #30 but he's a nice guy, honest) about his personal contacts with Harlan. Dave tends to a slight degree of hero-worship (which crops up again in his review of THE FOREVER WAR) but knowing the charismatic nature of sf's enfant terrible, this is understandable. The article recreates much of the Ellison mythos as seen by yet another person encountering the quicksilver moods of a remarkable personality. And Ellison comes across as well or as badly as you choose to view this man who refuses to change his ways to please anyone but himself. I like him, so I liked the article and this issue. So I recommend it. If you're not an Ellison fan, though, the reviews which fill out the issue probably won't offset the rest of the material for you.

A little more on the sercon side is the new issue of SCINTILLATION, which used to be Carl Bennett's personalzine but has been moving more and more towards serious examination of sf. With this issue, Carl has gone to three column offset on newsprint (more identified with another rather famous fannish inhabitant of Portland) featuring interviews with and articles about sf personalities.

The cover is a delightfully Woodish cartoon by Al Sirois showing an alien with two empty eye-sockets juggling three eyeballs but inside things get more serious. There's a lengthy interview with Frank Herbert which stands out in my mind from the spate of recent interviews for the insight shown by the questions posed. Instead of the usual specific personal questions about individual books, Daniel DePrez gives Herbert a chance to expound on his general views on fiction and modern society, including politics, education, and, of course, ecology. It's serious and not particularly concerned with science fiction (although, I hasten to add, there are questions on the field) and shows Herbert to be an intelligent and thoughtful man. To be honest, I wasn't all that interested in it, but that reflects my own spheres of interest. I recognize a good review when I see one.

The interview with the two editors of the new sf magazine GALILEO wasn't as effective as the session with Herbert. The questions are far more specific and oriented toward the nature and expectations of the magazine. Of interest, I suppose, to people who are fanatic about the field, but it didn't really appeal to me. In addition, the interview reads as if it were conducted by mail, with the two editors often saying the same thing in response to the same question. A little editing would have tightened it somewhat.

Reviews and an intelligent lettercolumn add considerably to the interest of the fanzine but the other highlights of the issue is another column by would-be pro John Shirley, a fan/writer whose columns have managed to rile up a large number of SCIN readers, which has fairly obviously been Shirley's intent.

It struck me while reading this column (about Milford, a few minor points, and the

stuff. And the interviews with Williamson and Bradbury cover an equally wide range of topics while presenting a vast amount of thought-provoking material. For the interviews alone, TANGENT is well worth having. Anyone interested in both the ideas behind sf and the people who work with (and often create) those ideas will enjoy these interviews.

The rest of the issue, more than half of it, after all, is a mixture with varying degrees of appeal. Bucking a trend in serious sf fanzines, David presents three short stories and two poems. I wish I could tell you they were either typical of their class or excellent anomalies, but I didn't read them. They may well be brilliant but it's an indication of the general quality of the magazine that even if they're terrible TANGENT is still a fanzine worth having.

There are also the trappings of every genzine: letters, reviews, fanzine reviews, and articles, plus a couple of pages of convention photos. Most of this material is well done and the feminism article by Leta DiSalvo is one of the best in a spate of such pieces to appear lately, showing a tolerance that seems rare among feminists, many of whom have worked hard to earn the overworked adjective "shrill" so often tied to them. As an example, "To blame male authors for not giving us women characters as women see themselves is to blame men not for being bad writers, but for being men. A fanatic feminist may very well do that -- as Joanna Russ does -- but the criticism is irrelevant -- and deadly -- to the writing of good fiction." That strikes me as a far more sensible approach to the whole problem/question of feminism and sf, and the article fascinates and interests because of it.

TANGENT is jam-packed with worthwhile material which will be enjoyable to anyone interested in science fiction, its past, and its future and in the people who have made it what it is today.

I said at the beginning that I'm not a very good fanzine reviewer and I'm about to (further) prove it by "reviewing" a fanzine I've only skimmed. But it's one that you should at least be aware of, in case it more closely fits your interests than it does mine.

Tom Collins' APOLLO 7 (formerly IS) is as close to a professional magazine as anything in the fanzine field other than possibly ALGOL. A hundred and fourteen pages of typeset, justified copy on rich creamy stock with a slick glossy cover, a wealth of illustration and many full-page photographs, this is visually a most impressive and expensive looking production. Those readers with good memories will recognize this as the logical continuation of Tom's IS of several years ago.

The unusual aspect of this magazine is that with all the money poured into its preparation it still contains some absolutely inept artwork and is rife with production errors of amazing magnitude. For example, my copy is missing pages 103-06 and there are entire paragraphs double-typeset and printed. These are things that Tom may have no control over, but if he doesn't object rather strongly to his printers and demand either a refund or a better job next time then I'm going to be very disappointed in him!

What of the contents? The feature is a forty-plus page article on Heinlein by Alexei and Cory Panshin written after I WILL FEAR NO EVIL but before TIME ENOUGH FOR LOVE. Panshin, of course, won a Hugo for his critical book on Heinlein (and the undying enmity of that worthy, so I'm told) so despite being dated this piece is probably a must for Heinlein fanatics, either pro or con. (The BB Sams illustration in the middle of the piece rates as one of the best fanzine illos of the year). There's a lot of poetry, about which I know nothing, including ten pages of variations on a theme by

Tom Disch complete with drawings by Disch that Collins obviously found delightful and which I found abysmal. Different strokes for different folks, eh Mr. Disch? APOLLO is a heavy fanzine in many ways, but it's certainly an impressive publication and may well become a collector's item. Expensive, yes, but worth it to the audience it is aiming for.

Neil Kvern and Rhonda Boothe are two young poets/writers who have joined with fanartist Randy Mohr to produce DOUBLE ECLIPSE, an eighty page digest-sized offset books of poems and stories, with drawings (not illustrations as far as I could see) by Randy. It's an obvious labor of love and deserves to be treated seriously. Since I'm totally incapable of giving it the consideration it deserves, I called on my Poetry Editor to review it. Here is what Susan Wood had to say:

"DOUBLE ECLIPSE, a most attractive small book of poetry, fiction, artwork and photos, is the sort of publication which collectors fifty years from now may seek out in specialty shops, paying outrageous prices for this early work of the artists concerned. Or perhaps not.

"It's hard to say anything about the early work of artists, and especially, poets, without sounding patronizing. 'This work shows promise' is such a damn smug comment to make, somehow; pat the kids on the head and tell them to write more, that sort of thing. It applies here, though. Neil Kvern's poetry shows all the virtues and all the flaws you expect from an intelligent 17-year-old's poetry. There's a tendency to deal with Vast Cosmic Themes ('The Gates of Love and Pain') and to write of emotions which don't seem to be perceived from the outside rather than felt -- the writer doesn't yet have the language to express what he feels. There's a lot of vagueness, and a lot of awkward writing. There's also humor to offset a certain pretentiousness. (Kvern, at times you are weird, is what I mean). Neil Kvern knows how to use the English language, is my main impression; he's got the resources to be a good poet. Same comments apply to Rhonda Boothe's work, which makes up the other half of the written contents. I'm less impressed with her poetry, which has an overly romantic overlay of knights and minstrels and remote Child-ballad fantasy. I am much impressed with her fiction, which shows real ability to present character and situation.

"The writing in DOUBLE ECLIPSE isn't great. Much of it, though, is good; and all of it makes me want to see what these people will produce when they've had ten years of hard, hard work and living, and feeling, and rewriting, to go with all the talent just emerging here.

"All the preceding comments should be doubled for Randy Mohr, the artist whose work graces DE (triple eclipse?) Mohr is going to be very, very good I think. His sword and sorcery stuff is certainly competent; it's not a genre that thrills me, so I can't really judge more except to say everything is in proportion (that is, he's developed his skills) and there's a nice sense of composition. His fantasy stuff, especially a wizard in his island castle, is truly lovely (and original, too, in a mode that usually makes people resort to cliches)."

PS: If I may be allowed another very brief nonreview, I'd like to recommend once again Rob Jackson's MAYA to any of you who may not already be getting it. Simply put, and allowing for my prejudices, MAYA 11 is the best single fanzine to appear so far in 1976, and Bob Shaw's incredible article 'The Return of the Backyard Spaceship' is the funniest article written this year. This is a must issue for anyone interested in fannish writing of the highest possible caliber!

MAYA: three-yearly; 4/\$3 or \$1. 71 King John St., Heaton, Newcastle-on-Tyne UK

THRUST: semi annual; 75¢, 3/\$2. 1810 Metzert Rd. #14, Adelphi MD 20783

SCINTILLATION: 3/yearly, \$1.25 or usual, \$3.50/yr. Box 8502, Portland OR 97207

TANGENT: quarterly, 4/\$5 or \$1.50. Probably the usual. 611-A Division St., Oshkosh WI

APOLLO: irr, 4/\$8 or \$2.50. Maybe usual. 4305 Balcones Dr., Austin TX 78731

DOUBLE ECLIPSE: \$2.25; Neil Kvern Box 258 Cataldo, ID 83810

Spehner REQUIEM 11,12:Katz SWOON 5,6:BENTCLIFFE TRIODE 23:BCSFazine 38,40,41:Reichardt WINDING NUMBERS 4:Bankier ORCA 1:Ortlieb MAD DAN REVIEW 4,5:Denys Howard WANDERING ABOUT, MEN & WOMEN 6:Dave Cockfield ATROPOS 3:Ian Williams GOBLIN'S GROTTO 3:Rob Jackson MAYA 11:Weston SPECULATION 33:Strelkov THE GOING OF DANNY:Ian Maule CHECKPOINT 73, 74:Kevin Williams BLAND:Robert Coulson YANDRO 237:Bruce Gillespie SCIENCE FICTION COMMENTARY 43,46:Alan Sandercock DREAM VENDOR 1:Ed Connor MOEBIUS TRIP 25:Barry Hunter WHAT THE POSTMAN BROUGHT 3,4:Sheila D'Ammassa PROPER BOSKONIAN 14:Charlie & Dena Brown LOCUS 191,192,194,195:Bob Sourk SF BAZAAR:Siegel SOUTH OF THE MOON 13:Ross Pavlac AVENGING AARDVARK'S AERIE 8,9:Harry Morris NYCTALOPS 4/5:Eric Larsen SHADOW OF THE MONOLITH 60,61,62:Steve Beatty FMZ DIRECTORY:Eric Batard MAGNUS 8:Victoria Vayne SIMULACRUM 2B:Alyson Abramowitz ALVEGA SP.,SUM.:Luttrells STARLING 34:Bill Roper THE CHIMAERIAN REVIEW:Tom Collins APOLLO 7:Linda Bushyager FALSE KARASS,GRANFALLOON 20, KARASS 24,25,26,27:Brian Earl Brown MAD SCIENTIST DIGEST:Howard Thompson THE SPACE GAMER 6,7:Klug WHUNDERFUL 2:Howard Lyons UNINSPIRED ACTIVITY 1:Michael Kalen Smith THE POET'S GLASS EYE 1:Bill Breiding STARFIRE 8:Sworro Burbee COATTAILS 1:Porter ALGOL 27: Josenhans WYKNOT 5:Peter Roberts CHECKPOINT 75:Ken Amos NIGHTSHADE 3:Mearas KNOCKERS FROM NEPTUNE 10/76:Skel INFERNO 13:Geis SFR 19:Fratz THRUST SF 7:IGUANACON BULLETIN: Leroy Kettle TRUE RATE ATE:Finder THE SPANG BLAH 9/76:Mark Keller SECONDARY GROWTH 1: Reed Andrus HARBINGER 7:Robert Whittaker HUNTING OF THE SNARK 10:Dave Hulan THE HIGH AESTHETIC LINE 13,LOKI 13, STOBCLER 17,18:Simon Agree ABBA ZABBA 8:QUANTUM 4:Jackie Franke DILEMMA 13:Carl Bennett SCINTILLATION 10:BRITAIN IN '79 PR 2:Bruce Pelz OVERBROOK #1 A,B, BABBLIOGRAPHY 1:Michael Shoemaker THE SHADOWLINE 14:Donn Brazier TITLE 56:Sam Konkin NEW LIBERTARIAN WEEKLY 43,44,46,47, CLEAR ETHER 16:MYRIAN 63:Michael Bracken KNIGHTS 16:Fred Patten DELAPS F&SFR:Beverly Warren DE PROFUNDIS 89:Ned Brooks ICITM 23:Dorneman WELTANSHOT:Langford TWILDDU 4:People's Computer Co: Dave Bridges ONE OFF.

Cvetko,Coad,Poole,Siclari,Hughes,Sanders,Rockow,Zrillich,Anthony,Beatty,Bowers,Cox, Coulson,Collins,Connor,Chapdelaine,Chauvin,Cagle,Denton,D'Ammassa,Franke,Flynn,Geis, Grady,Gaier,Indick,Katz,Konkin,Locke,Kaufman Luttrell,Larsen,Markstein,Jodie Offutt, Schalles,Jeff Smith,Schweitzer,Tackett,Don Thompson,Townley,Warner,Susan Wood,Downes, Brian Brown,Don Ayres,Ro Nagey,Dr. AD Wallace,Don Keller,Stee Miller,Fergus,Bathurst, Canfield,McLeod,Shull,Taral,Reed Waller,Capella,Pearson,Sirois,Zeldes,Bishop,Martin, Lopez,Bell,Boak,Pardoe,Piper,Rowe,Darlington,Jeeves,Skene,Vayne,Gilson,Glicksohn, Bangsund,Lindsay,Strelkov,Silverberg,Ted White,Wolfe,Knight,Bose,Burns,Andruschak, Goodman,C.Miller,L.Miller,Schirmeister,Tucker,Lague,Asimov,Larson,Gilson,Roesberg

Hopefully there hasn't been excessive duplication; preferably this would be interfiled in alphabetical order, but the waste of time prevents it. If you find your name missing from both lists, but contributed to this issue, or have material in my files, your retention on the mailing list is ensured.

GEORGE FLYNN
27 Sowamsett Ave.
Warren, RI 02885

Let's take another look at the argument over LASFS MAC memberships. The trouble is that there've been two distinct motivations for escalating membership rates.

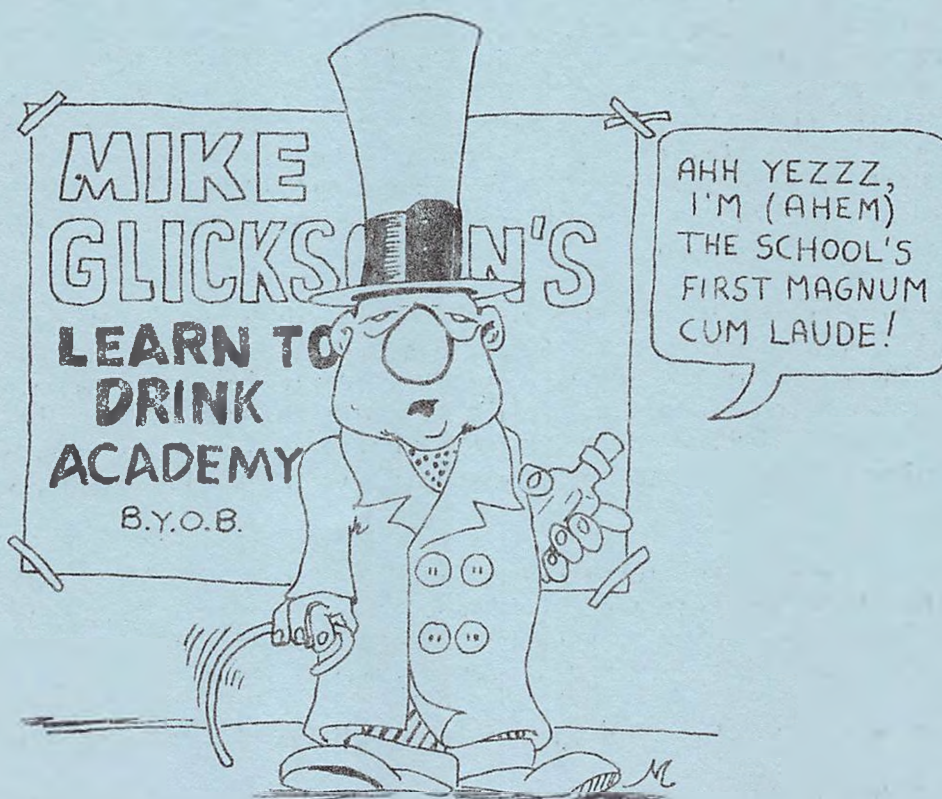
The original reason was to get people who would've joined anyway to send in their money early, when the committee needed it most; from this point of view buying a block of memberships is doing a service. But MAC's aim of discouraging people from coming at all is in direct contradiction to this (and seems, ironically, to have been too successful). So what we had was two more or less praiseworthy goals in collision, spiced by the joy (hah!) of fueling.

On the first point you're arguing with Don D'Ammassa (the use of contemporary slang in far-future stories) I'd say it all depends on the distancing the author wants to convey. In Zelazny it usually works, in Cordwainer Smith it wouldn't. Of course, for it to work the society depicted must resemble ours in significant ways, and the

nature of fans and fandom) that John Shirley is consciously modelling himself to be the Harlan Ellison of the middle seventies. He is arrogant, insulting, abrasive, and egotistical. He is also talented and a damn good writer, despite a tendency to pomposity and pretentiousness. He seems to be trying to establish a reputation as the fan you love to hate but I for one won't give him the pleasure of reacting to his provocations ("The voyeuristic fans are those of you -- the majority, unfortunately -- who strive for the advancement of your reputations and egos USING SF AS A VEHICLE for this social climbing. Voyeuristic fans could really care less about the field, beyond a little entertainment-titillation (on weekends, when they're not trying to seduce writers or editors at cons and getting drunk.)"), not because there isn't an element of truth in what he says but because he is obviously writing from an uninformed viewpoint. ("SF cons remind me of technologically-oriented drag shows.") It's possible, perhaps even probable, that John Shirley will be a famous member of the sf community some day. But right now I don't really like him at all. To his credit, he couldn't give a shit about that, and you ought to read his stuff: he's awfully cute with his various posturings.

Moving yet another rung up the sercon ladder one comes to TANGENT, possibly the most enjoyable and exciting new fanzine in some time for serious sf fans. Ninety-six pages of well-illustrated, professionally offset material highlighted by a series of interviews with personalities such as Ray Bradbury, Jack Williamson and Ed Hamilton and Leigh Brackett make this an exceptional value. The fanzine is well-designed, extremely well-produced and has some really impressive graphics. And despite the nature of the material it didn't strike me as quite as serious or heavy as editor David Truesdale suggested in his slightly overheavy editorial.

The interviews, for example, while they deal with the involvement with the sf field of the writers being dealt with, also include a large amount of nostalgic and personal material that made them, to me, more readable than the Herbert interview in SCIN. The interviewees come across better as people rather than merely impressive intellects. The sixteen pages of interview with Hamilton and Brackett, for example, range over such topics as the history of sf and the magazines, women in sf, movies, astronauts, William Faulkner and Ray Bradbury's bicycle, to name just a few. Really fascinating

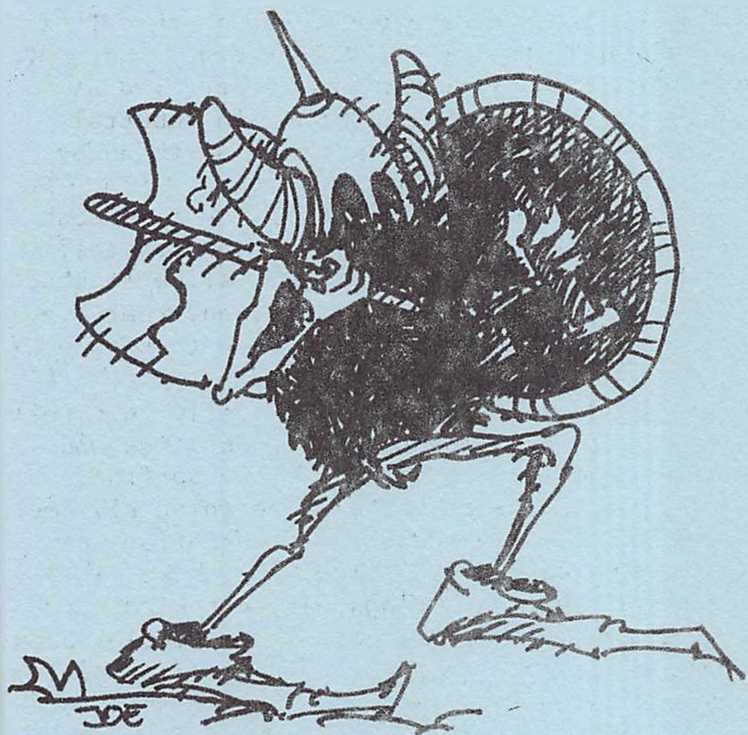


INTERSTELLAR EMPIRE by John Brunner
DAW UW1252 1976 \$1.50

Reviews by Stan Burns

Wollheim has once again claimed a reprint as "a Daw Books Original" -- something I feel is an unethical practice. Contains "On Standing on One's Own Feet," an essay on the other stories in the book from AMRA; THE ALTAR OF ASCONEL (half an Ace Double), a good adventure novel about three brothers' fight to regain control of their home planet now that it has been enslaved by a symbiotic religion. There is "The Man From The Big Dark," about a man who seeks revenge against another who took and killed his lover; and THE WANTON OF ARGUS (originally THE SPACE-TIME JUGGLER, another Ace Double), an early and below-average Brunner novel about the struggle for power and succession on Argus, former capital of a disintegrating Galactic Empire. Brunner has borrowed from Asimov's foundation trilogy for his Galactic Empire, but has also postulated that a great race has left the Galaxy, abandoning huge numbers of self-repairing space ships which man used to colonize the stars. A similar concept was used in the REBEL OF RHADA series. The only good story is THE ALTAR ON ASCONEL, the others are not up to par, or downright bad. If you've read the originals, you can avoid this novel. I get rather

annoyed when Wollheim and others reprint this way, without giving proper credit to previous publication on the cover. The "Daw Books Original" label can fool a reader into buying a novel he already owns. Rating: average.



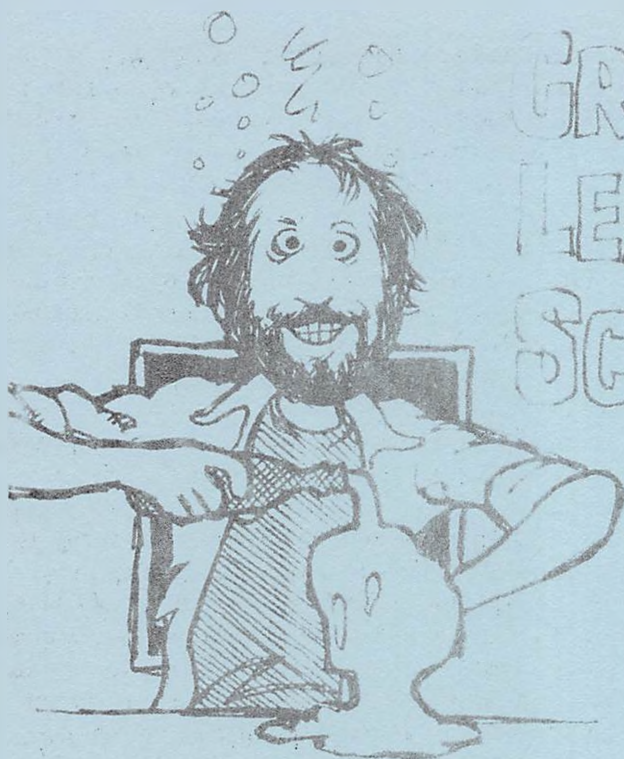
DANCE OF THE APOCALYPSE by
Gordon Eklund
Laser #46 1976 \$1.25

Laser seems to enjoy publishing books about what happens after a catastrophe -- be it bombs, plagues, meteors -- or the unnamed disaster that created this present novel's background. Michael is a scrounger who searches the dead cities for anything pre-disaster to sell to wealthy collectors. He chances to meet Bill Stoner, an escaped slave who dreams of

an end to violence and some sort of restoration of order which won't repeat the mistakes of the past. The plot line is choppy, the writing is adequate: even though Eklund has Michael, who is illiterate, mouth some sophisticated philosophy. About the level of a sixties Ace Double. Rating: average.

EPITAPH IN RUST by Timothy Powers. Laser #47 1976 \$1.25

Another after-the-disaster novel. Brother Thomas leaves the monastery to see the world. He travels to postwar Los Angeles where he becomes involved in riots, androids, birdmen, dwarves, and revolution. The novel has a few interesting features (a duel at chess, with glasses of liquor instead of pieces -- copped from OUR MAN IN HAVANA) but much is not up to the standards of the worst DAW novels. Rating: slightly below average.



GROWING UP IS LEARNING HOW TO SCREAM CIVILLY

a column by
Carl Bennett

SCENE: Interior. A dimly lit bar laced with tacky Irish decor. A country-western band is playing their own version of a Bob Wills classic. Several couples are dancing themselves into a streaming sweat and stop only to inhale cigarettes and beer. The thin rumble of conversations hangs under and the fog of cigarette smoke hangs over the sweetness of the band led by a pedal steel guitar. The honky-tonk atmosphere is completed by waitresses that bounce here and there with drinks and dead bottles.

The camera tracks in to a figure sitting at a table with a few other silent people. He is drawing on a small pad of paper with a bottle of Heineken and a glass at his elbow. We track closer and see in his eyes a desperate loneliness as he rushes through cartoons for the delight of the people around him. Somewhere deeper in his eyes we can sense that Mike Gyer is waiting for something right now from this man, and he doesn't know exactly what Mike is waiting for. We track right into the retinas and see the reflection of a dancing blonde framed in the band's yellow spotlight. We then pull away quickly because we've nearly poked the poor man's eye in with the camera lens.

Hey, look. There's something I must stress before I can start this column. I don't really want to surprise you people out there, but I just turned twenty-one. Now before your eyebrows start doing funny things, remember that everyone turns twenty-one eventually. I just happened to have turned sooner than some of you and later than all the

