

SIRRUISH 11

YAFFE





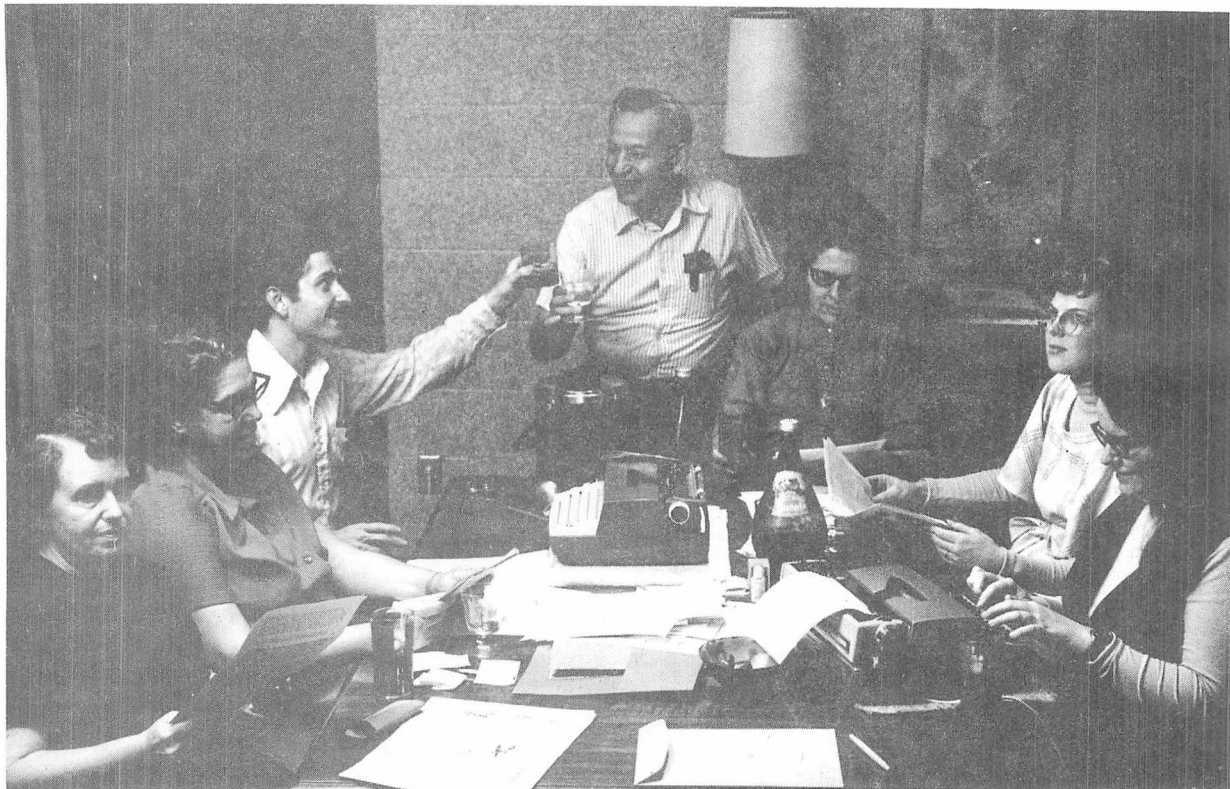
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 Sent for trade, letters of comment, contributions, or 50¢

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ART: COVERS - Jon Yaffe; p. 3, Wolfe; p. 4, photo Joe Bothman;  
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## hanging out at the Ishtar gate

LEIGH COUCH:

Social evenings are fine and I enjoy them, in moderation. But the sit and talk, and sit and drink, and sit and be bored screamingly stiff routine is not for me. At Railee's we have the best of both worlds, we sit and talk and drink, but we also create. We write and think and publish a fanzine and that's my kind of evening. I don't have to listen to a lot of mundane mouthings about jobs and kids and homes, etc. ad infinitum ad nauseum. I do listen to good talk about books and authors and what fans around the world are doing. We discuss layout and plots and artwork and associated subjects, all of intense interest to me. We are a microcosm of fandom. I don't know where else such a motley group of people would get together. I don't know what my friends politics or religions are and I barely know how they make their daily bread, but I know them very well in a different and more intimate way. I know that all things change in this fluid world, but I can't imagine not being in the company of fans. If St. Louis suddenly became completely devoid of fans, I think I would have to move or else recruit a whole new group. "Gosh-Wow" is an incurable disease.

CELIA TIFFANY:

Railee was my first friend in fandom and one of the closest. Mostly I'm here for the company, but also to feed my author's ego on something more exciting than computer how-to books. I also type with two (sometimes even three) fingers and talk far more than I work. When I'm not reading, writing, or gloating over SF, I can be found digging rocks out of pastures or polishing jewelry stones. I'm joining the new Creative Anachronism colony in St. Louis, so I can trail around in a flowing gown and ogle the knights in shining armor. (There's only one thing sexier than a man with a sword -- a vampire!)



GENIE YAFFE:

Right now I'm all up in the air about being accepted to the Fall Nursing Program at the local community college. I'm going to learn a salable trade!! Going back to school is a real trip -- much easier than the first time around, probably because I'm not taking it anywhere near as seriously. However, I get annoyed at poor courses - disorganized, taught by teachers who aren't interested, or those who have wrong or out of date information (and if I can tell, it's just got to be at least ten years out of date!). After all, I've paid my money and I really want to get more than just credits out of the course. I also sew, knit, read a lot, try to please my husband, and am caretaker for two kids, a dog, a cat, three turtles and a house.

VIRGINIA (GINGER) TIFFANY:

My reasons for coming with Celia to Railee's home the first time were two-fold. First, on the long, dark drive from St.Charles I could make myself useful by scaring off the wild animals that roam the jungles of St.Louis County, not to mention the "ghoulies and ghaisties and long-legged beasties and things that go bump in the night". Second, I was curious as to whether our hostess could possibly be as warm, friendly, relaxed, and interesting as I'd heard. (She is.) Since then, I've been returning to enjoy the company of mature people who like to read and discuss fantasy and science fiction in all its many aspects. Sometimes I help a bit with SIRRUIISH by dotting a few i's and crossing a few t's. The rest of the time, I just sit back and listen to the conversational sparks shooting across the non-existent generation gap.

DONN BRAZIER:

What am I doing here? I've often asked myself that--at least twice that I can remember--because it takes me away from my TITLE-baby and my jazz 'friends' on the hi-fi. However, a man needs diversion, such as the company of such wondrous creatures as Railee, Leigh, Celia, Ginger, and Genie. Jon, Genie's husband, may be diverting to her, but I find his attendance at these Bagel-Bashes cramping my surrogate-Cagle style. I can't say a damned thing against Joe Bothman, the guy who took this picture of Jon and I insulting each other with stinky-flowered compliments, because he owns the house -- along with Railee and their three charming at-home daughters who make me wish I were quite a bit younger. I am certain you will be able to tell from this that I am an eager neofan and have kept a sense of wonder. Reversing that last phrase, I wonder why this group has kept me; I sense it's because I talk so much about science-fiction and hardly ever drink any of Railee's wine. Now, if she only had some wild-pickle juice!

JON YAFFE:

Jon Yaffe cries at painful moments of Kung Fu, yet remains a creature of iron in the presence of his wife. He is a never-ending source of mystery in the lives of all of us.

RAILEE BOTHMAN:

Why didn't anyone ever tell me what enjoyment publishing is? For years I thought it was just something that Joe amused himself with - putting out the regional model-railroad magazine. Now I have a science-fiction family that I hope will keep on expanding, and the beginnings of many new friendships (if I can learn to type fast enough to keep up with the mail.) I do feel apologetic about not feeding everyone in the true fannish tradition, but hope to remedy that in the near future. This year I have been setting traps for wild pickles, but so far no luck -- I can't even catch the mice!

# IN PRAISE OF PRAISE

by Paul A. Walker

Since I began reviewing books for SFR a few years ago, and especially since, more recently, I began to publish a series of interviews with sf writers, I have received more praise from more people than ever before in my life. And for the first time in my life, "praise" has become an influence on my life. I have come to expect praise from both the reviews and interviews, and have been bitterly disappointed when a particular favorite of mine does not receive the praise I think it deserves.

This will shock some people as an immodest statement, but it isn't. It is merely the truth. I have never catered to an audience. I write to my standards, and I base my hopes for any piece on how good I think it is, and I have learned to live with the anxiety that I can never predict how an audience will react; that whatever I do, with the best intentions, involves the personal risk of being stigmatized as a "damn fool" or worse. Fear of the audience is every bit as strong, as pernicious (and as healthy) an influence on me as "praise" is. In fact, it is more so. I have written ambitious critical essays that had me trembling with anticipation to see how they were received - and one was so badly chewed up by more knowledgeable fans that I could not summon up courage to do another for over six months.

The problem of "Praise" is a serious one. I admit it frightens me, especially when it is lavish; and I admit I need it to go on. I doubt that even if I received pay for my fan work, it would compensate me for a lack of praise. I have always thought of myself as an entertainer, even when I was doing book reviews. I am always conscious of the reader; always anxious to hold his or her attention; always aiming to interest, stimulate and amuse more than inform. Success with the reader is my measure of literary success, period.

Some professionals are known to cut fans short when the fans begin to compliment them. Others are tolerant, listening with a kind of nervous impatience as if any moment they will bolt for the door. Others accept praise with a bored resignation: "Thank you very much--\*sigh\*." Others accept it as if it were an act of charity, of kindness, on the part of the fans: "That's very kind of you." Still others accept it as a personal challenge: "Yes, yes, it wasn't too bad." I have yet to meet a pro or fan who had the etiquette down pat.

We are a Christian society (Jews included) which extolls humility and disparages pride and self esteem, and as such, we are all at a serious disadvantage when confronted with our own public success. As much as we like to succeed, to earn the respect and admiration of our peers, we cannot accept it without a certain guilt and embarrassment. Our society values success, but disparages the successful. Yet what other reason is there to strive for any goal but to succeed at it?

Praise is a kind of success, but there is a variety of praise. The most disappointing and useless type is to be told something is "very good" without explanation. Usually, the person who gives this sort of praise does not really appreciate what you did; and usually you are too self-conscious to press for an explanation; it might seem as if you were fishing for compliments. A better praise is "interesting" which may mean anything at all, but can be interpreted as meaning that what you wrote made them think. However, as few people can tolerate the effort of thinking for more than eight point one milliseconds they will never be able to explain to you or themselves why your piece is "interesting".

"It was terrific" is a wonderful praise to receive, but its value depends on its source. From an intelligent source it may mean it stimulated and thoroughly entertained, and may remain in the back of his or her mind for some time to come. From a dubious source, it means "very good".

"You are hip" and "you are perceptive" mean you are interesting, although the use of the latter adjective probably indicates that the fan got something out of the piece, while the former indicates only that the fan believes that you think the way he does. Personally, I have always hated to be called "hip" or "aware" or "with it". Or to be told that I "understand". And yet I realize these can be the highest compliments. I also hate to be told that I am "one of the---" or "among the---", or (and I hate this more than any other) "sure to be---".

"I enjoyed your ---" is a simple statement of truth; it may mean the fan liked your --- very much or only sufficiently, but it is always true, and may be the best all-around compliment. Said in a solemn tone, it sounds flattering; however, in a frivolous tone, it sounds...insincere.

"You are my favorite---" is a totally irresponsible praise that is never really true, but it indicates a true fan, and there is nothing more precious to a writer. As with "You're terrific", its true value depends on the source. A better, more flattering version is "I read all of your---". (I'm a sucker for this one. I can think of no higher praise than a reader who wants to read everything I write, even if he or she doesn't think I'm "one of the---".)

"I was interested to read your---" is a compliment from an academic type. It means he or she was interested and got at least one idea from what you did, which is what they are writing you about. It is a very special kind of compliment, for it is a very special kind of achievement to put a new idea into a reader's head, and it takes a very special kind of reader to humble himself to accept a new idea from anyone.

These are some of the commonest forms of compliments received by writers, fan and pro, from readers, fan and pro. Naturally it is more of a thrill to get a compliment from a pro than from a fan, but to date, the best compliments I've received have all been from fans like myself. The pros are usually brief and friendly, while the fans will go on for six single-spaced pages telling you everything you did wrong, and maybe forget to mention that they really like your stuff, but leaving you moved that anyone cares that much.

However much all kinds of praise are appreciated, it should be evident that most of it is worthless to the writer. It doesn't tell him what, or why, something was liked, or whether it was liked in the way he hoped it would be. I never write anything that I don't intend to be enjoyed in a specific manner. This one I want readers to laugh with. This one I want them to think about. This one I want them to be now sad, now excited, now elated. Every idea I put down on paper carries an emotional charge designed to ignite inside a reader's head, to produce a specific emotion. And the success of the piece is dependent on how many of my charges ignite successfully.

A writer's only measure of this success is from reader reaction, from reading between the lines. Each interview I do is structured to convey my own personal impression of the writer as gained from his letters, so when I read the fan reaction I look for specific comments of the reader's impressions, usually simple off-hand remarks that let me know if they got the same impression of the person as I did. If they tally, I know I succeeded in what I wanted to do, and to me, that is a supreme feeling of satisfaction. And the same is true of articles, reviews, and fiction. Even if the reader didn't like them very much, to know they responded to what I was trying to do makes the effort worthwhile. And vice versa, if they failed to respond as I intended them to, even if they praise the piece I know I have failed.

The initial response of the young writer to praise is, understandably, elation. In time you develop a callus against it as you develop a callus against negative criticism. You listen, seeking that desired response, even soliciting it; and you hurt from the putdowns. But I think in time you realize that both praise and damnation, as useful and as necessary as they are, are ultimately the enemy. I think you realize that the literary goal you've been striving for so long is meaningless. Real success for a writer is to be able to write and be read at all, and to go on writing without end, and this is more important than the "realization of his potential as an artist" or "the attainment of due recognition". Writing is a passion, an obsession, the fulfillment of which is the act of consuming itself.

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## COMMANDMENTS

THOU SHALT LEAVE ONE INCH  
BORDERS AROUND AND  
ABOUT THE PAGE

THOU SHALT USE BUT ONE  
SIDE OF THE PAGE

THOU SHALT NOT SHADE

THOU SHALT SIGN ALL  
WORK

THOU SHALT NOT TOLERATE  
OBVIOUS ERASURES

FOR

## CREATORS

THOU SHALT USE BOND PAPER  
OR THAT WHICH IS HEAVIER

THOU SHALT NOT MAKE  
LIGHT LINES

THOU SHALT NOT USE  
COLORED PAPER OR THAT  
WHICH IS LINED

THOU SHALT NOT SMUDGE

THOU SHALT HONOR THY  
PRINTER AND OBEY HIM  
ON ALL THINGS

\* TAKE TWO TABLETS AND CALL ME IN THE MORNING

# GODZILLA

VS THE PLANET OF THE APES by Randall D. Larson  
(inspired by a comment by Carl Phillips and an article by Dave Locke)

As you remember, earthman Tayloruki had found this planet, where the apes rule and the humans were the monkeys, to be his native earth, and that he had passed through a great time-warp on his way to what he thought was a new planet. In searching, Tayloruki found the ruins of what once was Tokyo. Tayloruki searched amid the wreckage; not a sign of life was to be found. Tayloruki wandered, very depressed but also happy that there were no apes here. Eventually he reached a vast field, several miles north of Tokyo. In the center of this field, protruding from the ground, was an odd land form.

"That looks like one of the spikes on a monster's back!" Tayloruki joshed from where he sat. Suddenly he leapt to his feet, his face in an expression of sheer terror and surprise. He stared at the land form, and suddenly screamed, "Godzilla!" and ran as fast as he could away from the area.

After he had left the area, the spike began to shake slightly, then it vibrated fiercely, and an immense honk came from under the ground. A great shape unheaved from the ground and lo, the great Godzilla, king of the monsters, was again alive.

He lumbered grotesquely toward the north, crossing miles in mere moments. The great Pacific Ocean was no longer there, and the great beast was totally confused. He seemed to be searching for something. Sniffing the air and honking grossly, he proceeded across the desert.

Ahead of him, the great monster spied a group of people parading toward him on horseback. Godzilla headed for them -- where there are humans, there must be what he is searching for! When he got closer he noticed that these puny creatures were unfamiliar -- they had hairy and poofed out faces.

The leader of the party, the son of Zauis, waved his hand and brought the company to a halt.

"Look," he said, pointing at Godzilla. "What can that be?"

The members of his party looked at the monster and suddenly departed at a very fast gallop. Zauis, not noticing their hasty departure, waved the party onward and proceeded alone toward the great beast. "We'll get him!" he said boldly.

Godzilla halted, observed the sole being before him, and honked, clearing his sinuses.

Zauis called to his party to set up a line of defense. It took him a while to realize he was alone. Although tempted to stay his ground and hold a crucifix before him, Zauis felt it best to depart, and began to turn his mount.

Godzilla was quicker and breathed an immense gaseous white cloud upon Zauis, which promptly overwhelmed the ape. Zauis, overcome by this foul-smelling cloud, was quickly killed.

Godzilla was proud of his breath, foul as it might be, and exhaled a few more times for effect. He observed the fallen ape, and noticed something peculiar. Zauis had slanted eyes. Something in Godzilla's mind clicked.

Click.

The great beast scanned the horizon, covering his eyes with his hand to keep the sun out. In the distance he saw the ruins of what must have once been a great city. Tokyo. Godzilla jumped for joy and waddled towards the ruins.

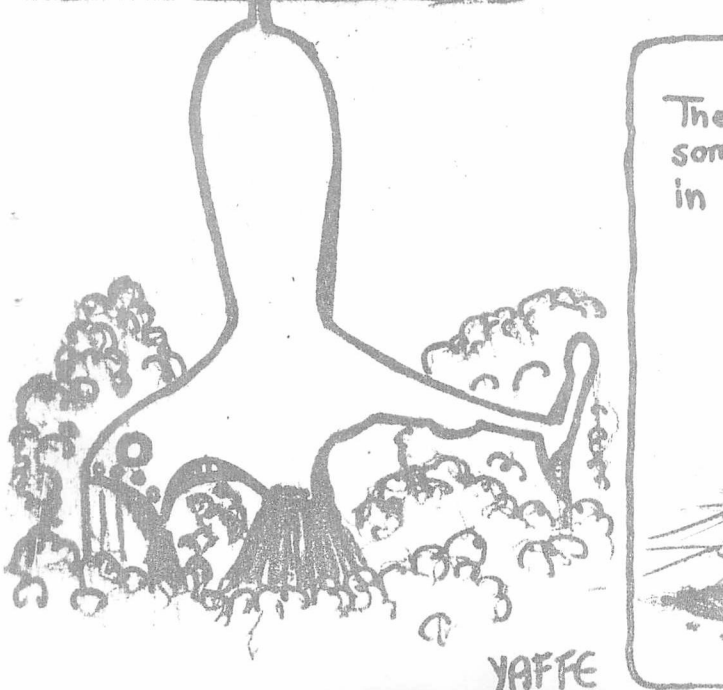
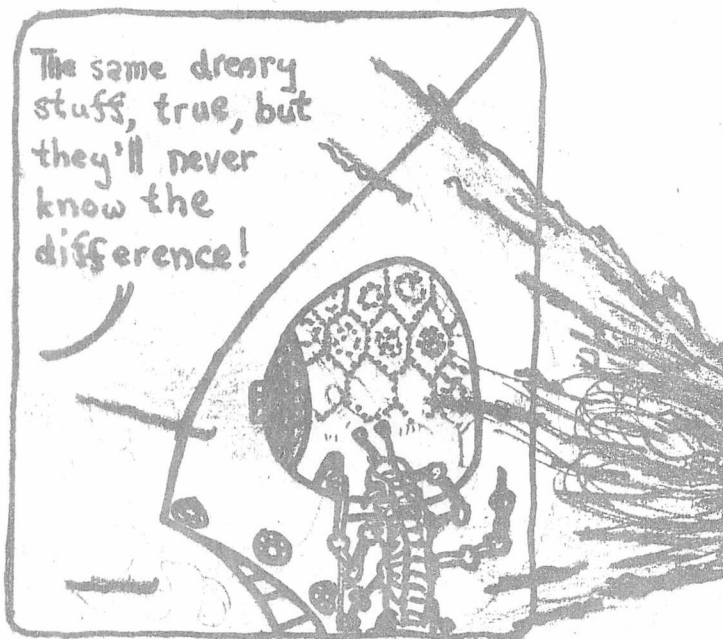
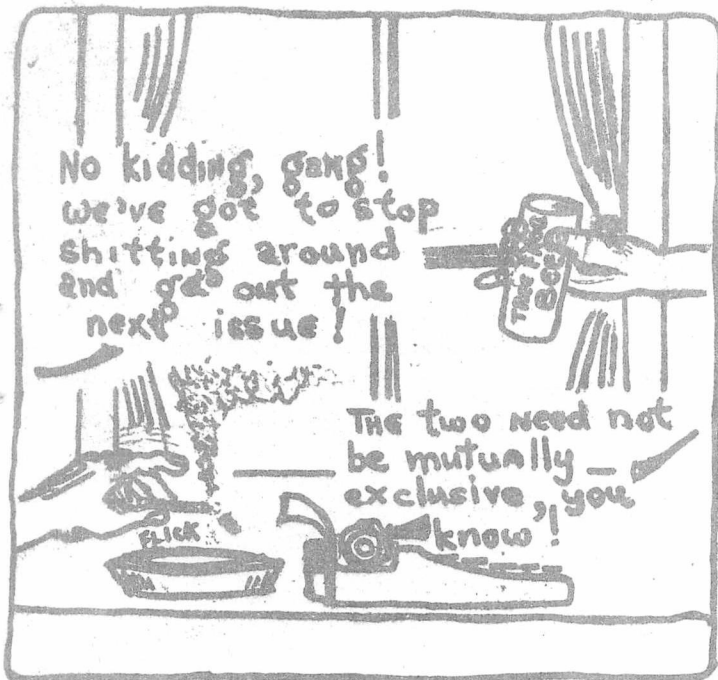
Tayloruki was breathing heavily. He had run all the way to Tokyo from where Godzilla had first been seen. He was worn out, but content that here, in his native Tokyo, he was safe. Suddenly a massive earthquake struck; the ground rumbled and wreckage wrecked. Tayloruki looked up - in the distance he could see the huge bulk of Godzilla bounding toward the city. Tayloruki screeched, and ran to the safety of the Imperial Palace. He hid beneath a mango tree.

Godzilla had reached the city; he was lumbering forth at a slower rate through what once was Sumida River. Tayloruki observed him sniff the air. He seemed to be searching for something, not unlike he had in the many times he had besieged the city in the long-forgotten past.

Godzilla passed in front of the Imperial Palace, heading for Olympic Park. He honked, and suddenly stopped short, his eyes wide. Tayloruki looked for what the beast had seen -- the huge stadium at Olympic Park. Tayloruki was puzzled, and watched as Godzilla strode toward the stadium, his tail nimbly destroying St. Ignatius Church and the Jochi University. Tayloruki stood in the grassy field in front of the palace, and watched in wonder as Godzilla reached the stadium. The monster looked around, his face in an expression of sheer glee. Content that he was alone on this dead planet, he lifted his huge tail and sat down on top of the stadium. Tayloruki at last realized the truth. For all the many years Godzilla had terrorized Tokyo, he had been searching for something. What, Tayloruki never knew, until now. Godzilla settled back into the comparatively tiny stadium and sighed. After all these years, countless battles, and endless searching, Godzilla, king of the monsters, had finally found the object of his search. The great beast, his belly outstretched and his tail wavering up around the edge of the stadium, sighed in absolute relief. After all these years, Godzilla sat back in the stadium, and at last relieved himself.

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# THE ODDITY, OR, AS THE WORM TURNS

Taken from Collected Ballads and  
Epic Poems on Mu'd Drip, volume  
54, by the Princess Irulan.

(May be accompanied on the bassinet  
to the tune of that Arakeen classic,  
"Howdri Iam")

## Prologue

I, the Princess Irulan,  
(Regent for the House Corruptos,  
Woman who that More-Than-Man  
Not for beauty or for love chose;  
Cousin of his dukely father,  
Also of his enemies--  
That nephew and the fat grandfather  
Who tried to kill the Atredes,  
Forgetting the "Lissen, Ah'll Betterya,"  
Et cetera, et cetera . . . )  
My husband's gospel spreader tried and true,  
Give this, his wisdom to all man  
(For lack of anything better to do.)

## I.

"Even at an early age, A. Pauling Atredes showed the great depths of his prescience capabilities. While still a babe in arms, He would chant, "Goo goo . . . ga, pthr, glug!" which, translated from the Bhotani and ancient Chakobsa, means, "Boy, am I ever thirsty!" -- from Mu'd Drip, A Childhood History, by myself.

In the beginning was Caladan  
As every Bene Gesserit knows;  
On which young A. Pauling played and ran,  
Through flowers, grass, and waterflows.  
From the experts he learned to kill,  
While training in the "B. G. Way."  
With Guernsey Cowlick he practised each drill,  
And studied with Dr. Yuck each day.  
But oh, those joyful, happy times  
With potato-faced D. Idaho,  
And childhood innocence sublime,  
Ended in fast flight and woe.  
And as A. Pauling prepared to pack,  
He was gom-jabbared in order to check  
If he was the Kwisatz Haderach --  
Which proved to be a pain in the neck.  
Then off to Arrakeen misery they flew,  
With the selected, loyal few.



## II.

"Oh, you silly Harkonnens!" -- St. Ail-ya the Strange.

Meanwhile, on Giedi Prime,  
These evil, greedy Harkonnens  
Gleefully discussed their crime --  
The destruction of all Atredes men.  
The Baron and his mentat Peter settled the affairs,  
Grinning and arguing both with glee,  
Amidst Feyd-Rautha's pouty stares --  
That young nephew-Baron-to-be.  
"Your Lordship, take CHOAM, that's fine with me.  
Lady Jessica's my latest.  
Oh!" cried Peter, "tee, hee, hee!  
It's so fun to be a sadist!"

## III.

"Yuck, Yuck, Yuck!" goes the refrain. -- from A Child's History of Mu'd Brip.

Soon after leaving Caladan,  
The Harkonnens began their cruel attack.  
Who would have guessed that Yuck was their man?  
The Sick School should take his diploma back.  
The cute little hunter seeker,  
Driven on by Dr. Yuck,  
Almost killed the Atredes weaker,  
But tricky A. Pauling managed to duck.  
Not such luck for Leto, alas,  
Through whom Yuck aimed at his mark.  
By a false tooth of poison gas  
His bite proved stronger than his bark.  
Through post-humous help of the Sick Yuck  
And Leech-Keen's eco-logical aid,  
Paul and his mother, with great luck,  
Performed the most amazing escape yet made.  
But nonchalantly braving sand-storm rages  
Is indeed a natural, normal thing.  
A. Pauling's death cuts out four hundred pages,  
And what trauma that would certainly bring!

## IV.

"Those Arrakeen  
Sure are mean!" -- Capt. I. M. Touff, in the Imperial Sardaukar Poetry  
Collection, vol. 1.

The nasty Baron Harkonnen  
Cleared Arrakis of the Atredes threat,  
And named as Duke one of his kinsmen --  
The slightly slow Count Glossy Rabbit.  
This new Duke was forced to meet,  
Despite the Baron's strange ignoring,  
The poor, poor Sardaukar's defeat,  
While brutally seeking all Fremen warring.  
Only one desire through all his snarling  
Did the Baron not disown --  
That of putting F-R darling  
On the Arrakeen ducal throne.

"Back in Caladan, all alone, I looked into a deep pool of cool water, my face glaring back at me, rippling and flowing with the movement of the water. You can also get similar effects with a cracked mirror." -- from Private Reflections of Mu'd Drip.

As A. Pauling and his mother neared a town  
 After their long and fearful desert trek,  
 They met a band of men with hostile frowns,  
 Who only wished to slash them in their necks.  
 However, through a little kind persuasion,  
 For which the "B. G. Way" had trained them all,  
 The two succeeded in their death evasion  
 And had the Fremmen pinned against the wall.  
 Coincidentally their leader, now dead,  
 Leech-Keen, the ex-ecologist,  
 Had told the Fremmen to save these two who fled,  
 And all turned out, as usual, for the best.  
 By even greater luck there'd been a tale  
 Instilled in all Fremmen conveniently,  
 That prophesied the coming of such a male  
 As Paul could easily pretend to be.  
 Time passed, and Paul became well-known.  
 Through besting Jamis he gained a wife --  
 Hardup, for whom no affection was e'er shown,  
 He loved another, Chani, all his life.  
 But more important was that through this bout,  
 And in the funeral which then followed,  
 (A thing in which all of blood's drained out,  
 A little hard for even Dracula to swallow)  
 A. Pauling was given a name  
 For use only within the village --  
 Awful, which the Fremmen claim  
 Means "Mighty Base of the Grand Pillage."  
 Because another heard him quip  
 A name for use throughout the universe so wide,  
 He took the title of the Mu'd Drip  
 Whose symbolic meaning can ne'er be denied.  
 (And even he remarked behind their backs  
 That Mu'd Drip's easier to pronounce  
 Than something like "Kwisatz Haderach.")

Jessica the Weird bore a daughter  
 Who had been present when she came a Reverent Mud'der.  
 Strange all the women thought her.  
 "What Ail-ya?" they would quietly utter.  
 Mu'd Drip fell in love with Chani  
 And often sang with her that old refrain:

Tell me of thine eyes  
 And I will tell you of my knee.  
 It comes as no surprise,  
 But in stillsuits we all look alike to me.

And as he grew in desert ways,  
Mu'd Drip had it confirmed  
That he had reached that frightening day  
To try to ride a great big worm.  
(A major segment of society these create,  
And thus they eat accordingly.  
Tons of spice these things regurgitate,  
And consume much iron quite healthfully.)  
Upon the biggest maker M. D. rolled around,  
Because in his legend it is written,  
"These things sure beat Greyhound."  
Stillsuit flapping in the breeze,  
He cried as he rode about,  
Leading the Fremen wherever he pleased,  
"Rudolf Valentino, eat your heart out!"

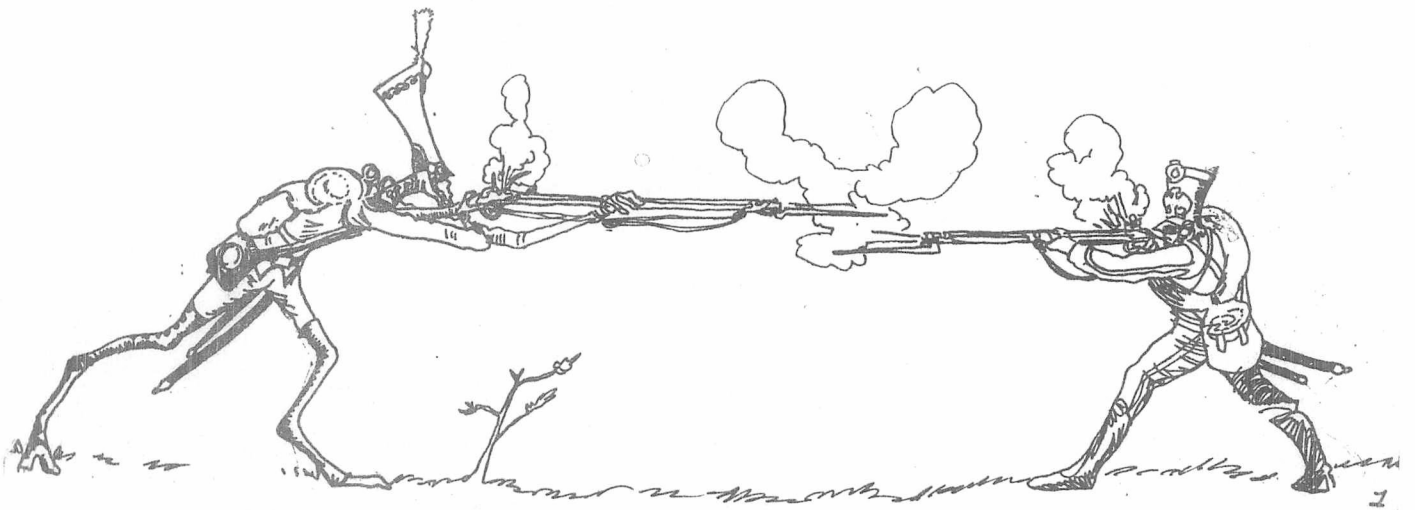
VI.

"Somehow I have a feeling that I've been through this before." -- Collected Profundities of Mu'd Drip.

As the great battle came near,  
The Water of Life A. Pauling tried.  
He said, where no one else could hear,  
"Now I'll see if I'm that Kwisatz guy."  
Of course, by now we who study his glory,  
Know he made it through this test;  
For without that there would be no story,  
And my life would be empty, at best.  
United under Drip the Fremen took up arms  
(And weapons also for that matter).  
And throughout Arrakis sounded alarms  
And atomic crashes, bangs, and splatters.  
After Ail-ya the Freak  
Made her dear granddaddy get the point,  
Mu'd Drip convinced the whole Imperium weak  
To get out of his desert joint.  
But in his dramatic duel with "Darling,"  
He almost succumbed to trickery.  
However, never one to lose at quarreling,  
That Drip won, also gaining me.

Which brings us to another story  
Where Paul's intrigue once again gets denser.  
So 'till you buy the Dune Messiah,  
I'll leave you hanging in suspensor.

-- Kathy Wofford



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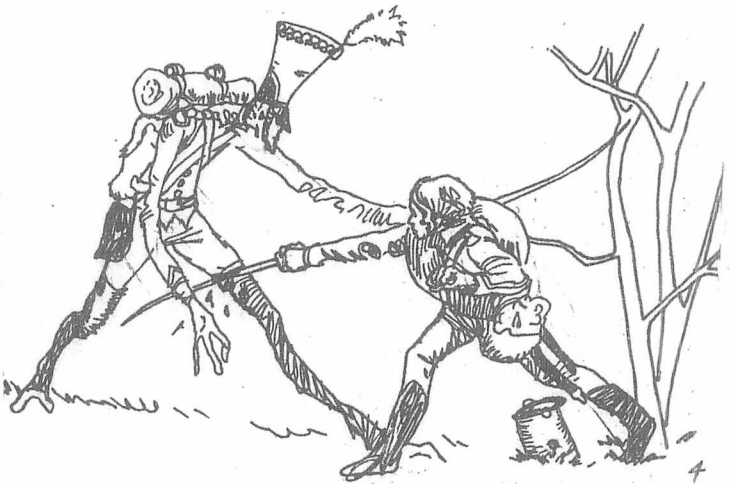


2.

The age of  
Honor: Tau Ceti  
2870, at Kalamine



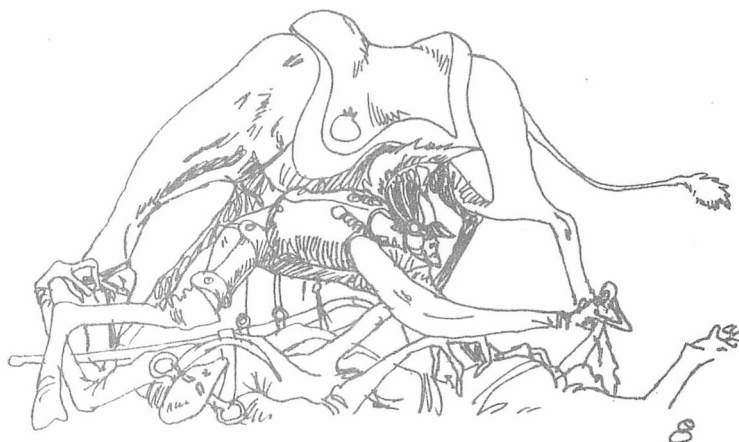
3.



4



by MIKE GILBERT



# THE SARAGON ARMAGNAC

Chaplain Link followed the warden down the dungeon stairs. The walls were cold and damp, and the stairs themselves were deeply worn. Granite, thought Link, the hardest of rocks, how many passing feet had it taken to wear those steps so? A new regime should put in new steps, to start fresh.

"Here's the Duke's cell, sir," said the Warden, "He should be finishing breakfast."

"I have an hour?" the Chaplain asked.

"Less rehearsal time. The execution is to be televised and broadcast all over Garmiddé, and Number One is scheduled to speak immediately afterwards from Kapitá."

"It wouldn't do to keep Number One waiting," Link agreed and entered the cell.

Within, sat Galeazzo Cardinal Sforza, Duke of Garmiddé, a very old man with an erect carriage and hawklike visage. He rose to greet his visitor.

"My dear fellow," he said affably, "you have been sent to give me what comfort your heretical religion affords. Just what I should have expected from the Lion of Garmiddé. Would you care for some wine?"

"No," Link replied, "I have come to hear your confession and to shrive you. Your time is growing very short."

"Of course," the old man agreed, rubbing his beak of a nose, "You would not really appreciate this '82 Otava Rosé in any event. It is a remarkably subtle vintage, and a teetotaler's palate is, perforce, lacking in subtlety."

"What great crimes oppress your soul?" Link hesitated, torn between using either appellation, Duke or Cardinal, then, seeing that Galeazzo was dressed in a military uniform with Ducal insignia, "Duke?"

"Duke," sighed the old man. "The proper form is 'Your Excellency'. To a reigning Duke, 'Your Highness.' Call me Sir, if you wish, in deference to my advanced years, since the old forms offend you."

"Well, sir, will you confess yourself?"

"You sound like my interrogators. And my answer, of course, is yes. It is a relief to unburden my soul to an understanding fellow such as yourself."

The old man poured himself the last of the wine, and swirled it gently within his glass.

"Many years ago," he began, "when my father was still alive, my steward purchased a 2000 liter cask of brandy from Waters and Black. The brandy was distilled on Saragon from the '31 vintage, a vulgar commercial pressing possessed of little intrinsic merit. A check showed that grapes from a dozen vineyards were blended to give a commercially acceptable table wine, a portion of which was made into brandy. The caskage was black oak, which qualified the aged product to be called Saragon Armagnac. I believe that the choice of the caskage was based purely on the euphonious name."

"In any event, the brandy had been purchased by the Embassy of Imperial Electronics on Bentony, and had been rejected by them after a years time as inferior quality. Waters and Black took it back for half price and resold it at cost simply to be rid of it."

"Aimey, my steward, said the brandy was good, so I bought it. It turned out, over the next few years to be remarkably good, and a second cask of Saragon Armagnac turned out to be irretrievably mediocre."

We checked to see if the '39 vintage was different from the '31, but if anything, the '39 was marginally better."

What a beast, thought the Chaplain, here he is soon about to die, and he sits guzzling perfumed wine and talking about brandy he swilled in his youth.

"At any rate," the Duke went on, "we left the '39 in the hopes it would improve, and served the '31 on very special occasions. The '31 became something of a legend, you know, among the diplomatic corps."

"All good things come to an end, unfortunately, and the time came to tilt the cask for the last few liters. That night Aimey brought me the decanter--Terean rock crystal, cut and polished on Silversea, a gift from the Emperor--and raised it to the light. 'Excellency,' he said, for though I was the Planetary Ruler at the time, between us there was -- in private at least -- a certain informality, 'Excellency, there is a hair in the brandy'."

I knew at once it had come from the cask; Aimey would never have tolerated it otherwise. I told him I would take care of it and sent him to bed. The dregs of the brandy were better than ever, but the hair -- long, and blonde, and fine -- that bothered me. Finally I took a camera with a fiber bundle lens, and a supplemental antenna flash, and poked it through the bung hole to take pictures. Within the cask was a body. A strikingly beautiful woman, perhaps nineteen years old, she lay nude save for a cruciform dagger thrust between her breasts."

"Then the stories that you were a cannibal were true!" ejaculated Link. "All those years you thought you were drinking fine brandy, God had put embalming fluid in your mouth! Who was she?"

"I never inquired," the Duke replied, "it should be obvious from your reaction that a great many important people would be offended if the news got around that my brandy was more than it seemed. Besides I was innocent of any conscious evil..."

"That is still a terrible thing you did," began Link, sternly, "and your conscience..."

"I have not finished, my son. There was still the problem of what to do with the body so unexpectedly in my brandy cask. In the end, I decided to fill the '31 cask with the '39 brandy, since it was obviously some virtue in the cask that made the '31 so good. Sure enough, in a years time the '39 was better than the '31."

"You knowingly drank embalming fluid!? You deliberately left that poor girl without burial!? You filthy swine...you unutterably evil...evil..."

"Gourmet?" suggested the Duke.

"I took care of her burial as best I might. In my capacity as cardinal I went into the cellar and blessed both the cask and the brandy within. And to rest in sanctified brandy, lending it a touch of your own sweetness and grace, is to have a memorial worthy to stand beside the great tombs of the past, or the mighty poems.



Brandy gives pleasure as much as poetry or architecture -- and if the brandy is transient -- why, who reads English today so that the sonnets of Shakespeare might live? Who knows even the planet on which the Taj Mahal was built?"

"You vile drunkard...slave to debased...app -uh- appetites!" Link clasped his shaking hands together. "God forgives much sir, but you show no remorse, no consciousness of wrong doing, you will die and surely go to hell, for no ministry of mine can save..." he suddenly put his hand on the Duke's arm, "Your Excellency, in a very few minutes now you will be dead. An act of contrition, truly felt -- even now, would do much to save your soul. Do you feel no remorse, no revulsion, at what you have done?"

"Very little," the Duke admitted. "Perhaps as cardinal, the keeping of other consciences has somewhat benumbed my own. After we finished the '39 Armagnac, I refilled the cask with '58 and finally, '79."

The warden tapped at the cell door.

"It is almost time, Chaplain. Another minute is all I can give you."

"To swill embalming fluid!" hissed Link in horror.

"That cask was one of the trophies of victory," the Duke remarked calmly. "Now I believe that your ah...Number One keeps it in his cellars. The '79 was the best of the lot, actually."

Chaplain Link sat in stunned silence as the cell door swung open, and the guards came in to lead Galeazzo Cardinal Sforza, Duke of Garmiddé to his death. The old man came to attention and stepped between them.

"It is quite true, my son. The Lion of Garmiddé has a taste for good liquor so he drinks my brandy by right of conquest."

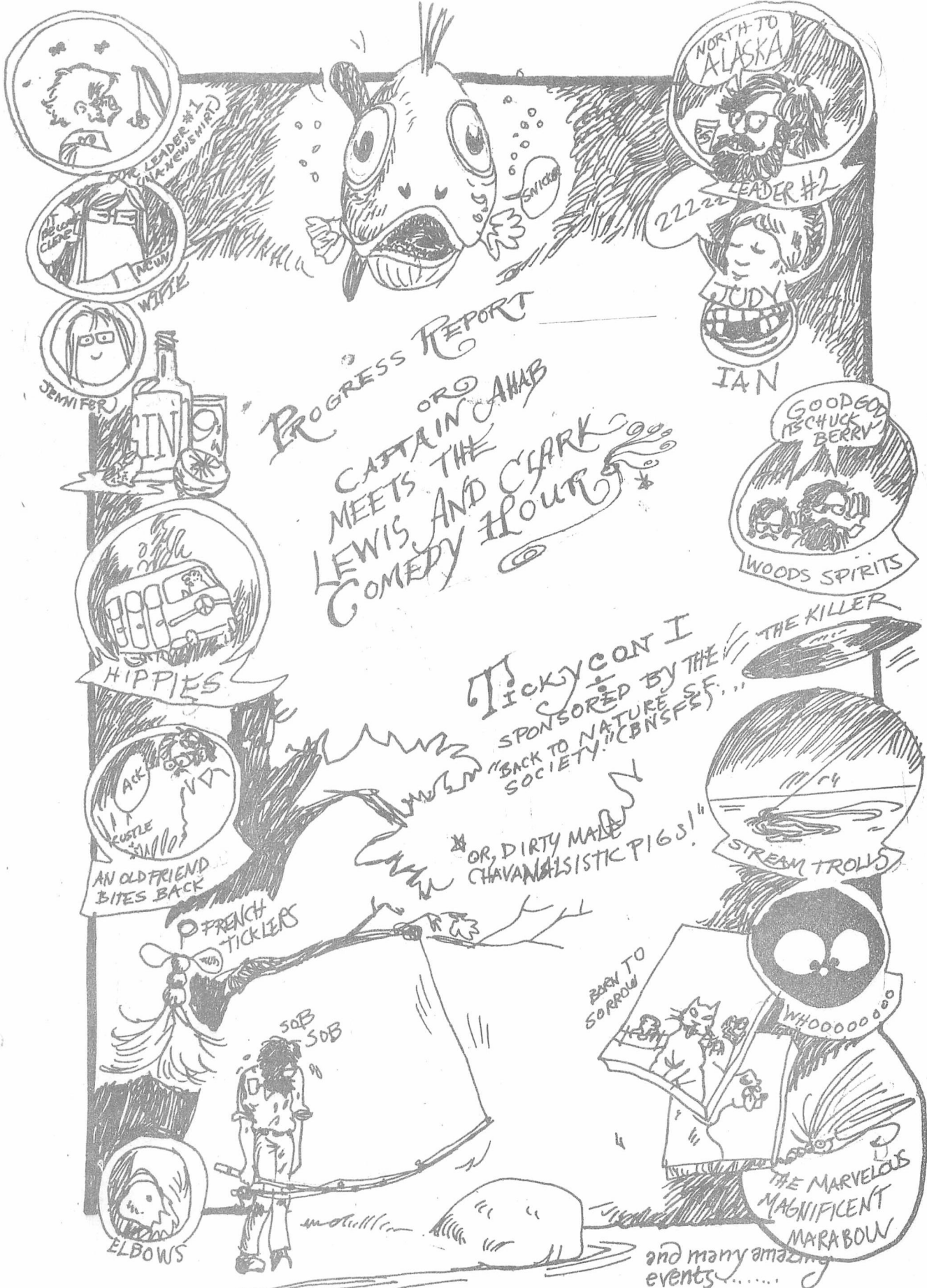
Then the warden gestured, and they marched off to the place of execution.

Questions for the reader.

- (1) How will Chaplain Link tell Number One that his favorite brandy has a dead body in it?
- (2) How will Number One reward Link for this service?
- (3) If Link does not tell Number One, will he be able to keep his mouth shut?
- (4) Why couldn't the Duke find out whose body it was?
- (5) Why didn't the Duke appreciate the chaplain's efforts to save his soul?
- (6) Why does Number One want to execute the Duke on planetwide TV ?

by ALEXIS A. GILLILAND





THE ARTIST RESUMES NO RESPONSIBILITY FOR SPELLING...

# TICKYCON 1

(Or Captain Ahab Meets The Lewis and Clark Expedition)

To celebrate the Annual Gilbert Car Sickness Memorial Day Catastrophe, our cute little MG that had faithfully carried us so many arduous miles (you have to be nice to cars) decided that Memorial Day weekend was a national car holiday. To prove its point it went on strike. Thereby hangs a telephone conversation.

Finding ourselves stuck in Edison instead of the wilds of Rochester, we began calling around to see what our friends were doing. We were not long in finding salvation. Placing a call to the great white hunter at Schoenherr Estates, we invited everyone out (down/up?) to Edison for a barbecue in our professionally tamed park. But suddenly we found that our invitation had been reversed, and so.. Saturday morning after cleaning the house and making a valiant effort to polish the car, hoping this beauty treatment would placate the little darling, we found ourselves waving dirty cloths and green hands hello as the express bus to the Schoenherr estates pulled up before our very door.

After everyone had momentarily relaxed and Mike had displayed his latest efforts to the master, and we had displayed our two new miniature tomatoes and blooming plants, and the kids had put together balsa wood airplanes, (WHEW) we boarded the express, breaking one plane in the process, and lit out for the PA border. Breaking our journey at the local food and other things emporium, we proceeded to buy necessary groceries such as limes and tonic, and then got hooked on some fishing equipment, a first-aid kit, and new half-priced scissors. Then it was on to the famous Estates where, after a much enjoyed lunch, Jack, Mike, Jenny and Ian went off to fish at the falls, leaving the "womenfolk" behind to cook and clean house. I must admit I just watched and talked. The grand catch of the day was three sun-fish which the cats enjoyed immensely.

Returning with energy to burn, the conquering heroes indulged in a rapid-fire game of frisbee with the newest top-secret frisbee creation, nicknamed KILLER. Jennie, being swift, escaped with all her limbs intact.

Then came dinner, a beautiful roast and a real neat salad as well as enough wine to confuse as to whether to have more meat or salad or both. Needless to say, we settled on both. The only hazard of the meal was Jack waving his knife about, threatening all comers against taking the bone, which we decided was his by right of conquest and inertia. Mike got his usual lecture on eating too fast but it didn't slow him down noticeably.

Judy found the wine to be a little overwhelming and enterprising Jenny lapped it up with glee. Then on to dessert, homemade cheesecake, which was quite good in spite of Jack's soon familiar comment that it was overdone.

Then Jack and Mike desert us for the studio and Judy and I settle down to a series of bad movies starting with Ten Gentlemen from West Point, a great epic in which you could predict every line of the dialogue, and concluding with The Bullfighter and the Lady, which exerted enough force to bring the men back from the barn and Ian downstairs to learn the art of bullfighting. Only Jenny slept through it all, having been sated on ghost stories at dinnertime and probably immersed in her own ghouliah dreams. It's only a pity the rest of us weren't. Anything had to be better than the movies.

Meanwhile, back at the studio: After dinner and a yummy bunch of gin and tonics we staggered out under a full moon to Mr. Pro's studio. We stopped as our nature-fied ears heard faint loud bad Chuck Berry music coming from deep in Jack's 23 acres. Slowly we stumbled into the woods, hitting tree after tree, slowly creeping toward the source which suddenly erupted into silence, leaving us deeply perplexed as there was nothing out there for miles but trees. Returning, we worried, Jack painted, showed me terrible 1950's commercials from Philly on the tube -then we lapsed into tasteless Italian jokes ending in hilarious jokes about gothic homosexual novels- gaythics- which are certainly not repeatable if we wish to keep our reputations.

Sunday Judy was up early, taking the kids off to Sunday-school and then on to shopping. When Jack, Mike, and I got up we decided it was a perfect morning for fishing. So off we went to the falls and worked our way around until we found a place where there were trout as well as the ever-present sunfish. The trout, however, ignored all our efforts and only the sunfish deigned to play with us. Eventually the kids joined us and after a time the tired expedition headed for home with nothing to show. At least until Jack brought back several sunfish which he cleaned and stowed in the already overflowing refrigerator.

Then it was time for the first visitors of the day and as two families complete with kids came driving up we all settled in for a talk. It seemed to be visitors' day at the Schoenherrs' because shortly after the first people left, another family arrived and the second tour of the Schoenherr Estates was begun.

Finally we all sat down to dinner, and once again glutted ourselves, while Ian slept and Jenny begged for ghost stories. Having satisfied everyone, we found that Mike and Jack had wandered back to the studio, leaving the exhausted ladies behind to doze on the couch.

Monday dawned bright and clear, which was just as well because the kids were scheduled to put on a gym show. We had all been issued tickets and given seat numbers and at 11:30 the show began with Ian as MC and Jenny as star performer. The show was a big success with everyone.

Then it was off to the big town (the store) to buy some more lures and try to outwit the wily fish. Mike and I amused ourselves with the local pinball machines while Jack went in to intimidate the salesman. The kids amused themselves with the candy stand, until we were ready to hunt up Jack. Having recovered our fearless leader we started for the car and noticed an elderly couple staring at us in amazement. This lead to a series of freaky commune jokes which lasted us for the trip home.

The afternoon was a series of minor tragedies for the children as they went off fishing with the men. They were sent back to the house to get things that Jack had forgotten he had. Then they had to bring a picnic lunch to the mighty fisherman and on the way back Jenny and Ian fell into the creek. At that point we decided it was bath and relaxation time for the kids. As the kids rested we chatted and ate our own lunch and awaited the conquering heroes who returned with nothing but a lot of lost lure stories. You know, the one about the tree and other such classics.

No one was hungry enough for dinner, so we settled for gin and tonics and giant stuffed mushrooms, an innocent sounding meal, but one that led to the palace revolution as Judy and I, the second and third children, refused to be duped out of the good mushrooms by Jack and Mike, the first and only children who get

all the toys. I don't know if it was a victory but the mushrooms were really good. After the lethargy of the drinks wore off we decided it was time to return to Edison. As Ian had insisted we take his body if he was asleep, we packed him in the back with Jenny to look after him and drove through the nonexistent Memorial Day traffic back to Edison. The kids stumbled in and immediately sacked out, while the rest of us turned to coffee and One Step Beyond. Before Jack could find himself in the same position as the show he decided to drive his sleeping family back to the wilds, thus ending the tickiecon. Z..Z..Z.....

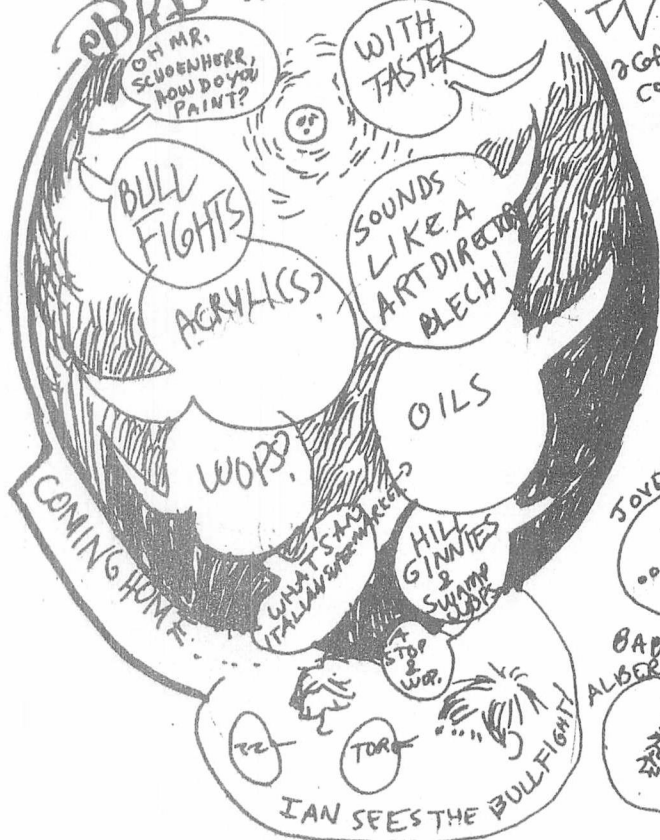
JENNY GETS GHOST STORIES



MIXIE & JACK GO TO STUDIO 11:30

ROCK MUSIC IN THE WOODS!  
O O O  
B TALE IN THE TEXT!

IT'S ALL IN A BAD TASTE?



CHEESE CAKE!

SUNDAY

FISHING AGAIN  
WE COME BACK



DINNER GET IT! SHEY GREASE

THIS CHEESE CAKE IS OVER...

GIRLS SLEEP...  
THE BOYS PLAY...



WE READ "BORN TO BORROW" We all retire early....



HAHAHA  
HA

ZZZ

SUNDAY

The gym show!!!

STARRING MISS SCHENHERR  
JOHNSCHOBHERR'S DAUGHTER



THEN



JACK STOCKS UP AGAIN  
6 NEW LURES



THE LEWIS & CLARK COMEDY  
KID BRING LUNCH & IPA

GO FISHING  
AGAIN



IT BEGINS...



MORE GIN & TONICS...  
FINALLY... IN EDISON





MEMORIAL DAY LOOMS, AS USUAL THE CAR IS SICK

CAN YOU  
COME OUT TO  
PLAY?

NONSENSE,  
WE'LL COME  
AND GET  
YOU....

OUR RIDE ARRIVES - AS WE MAX CAR

THE CRITIQUE

NOT BAD  
FOR A  
SUNDAY  
ARTIST!

NOW, ON TO

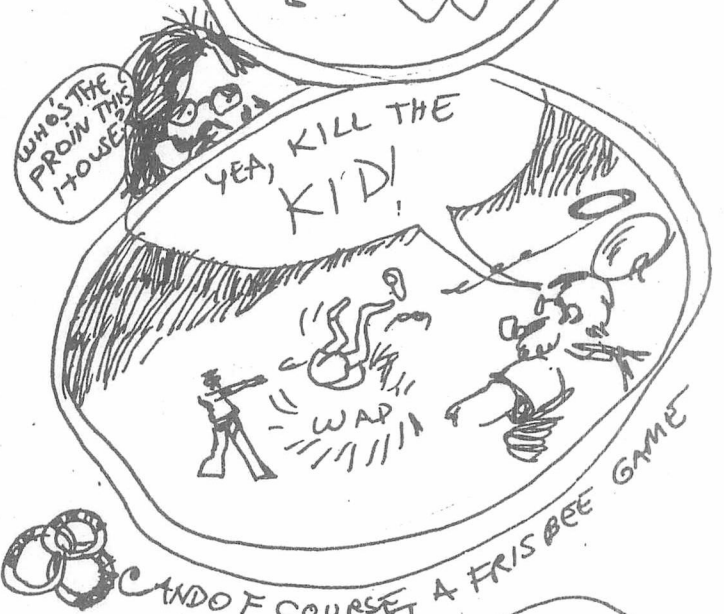
LOCKTOWN - BOOMVILLE OF JERSEY -  
JACK STOCKS UP AFTER AGONY OF DESIGN!

MORE,  
MORE FISH  
STUFF

JACK SCARES THE SALESMAN



JACK AND KIDS GO TO FALLS



AND OF COURSE, A FRISBEE GAME



# FIVE

## FATES

# FOUR

## FAILURES

FIVE FATES by Keith Laumer, Poul Anderson, Harlan Ellison, Frank Herbert, and Gordon R. Dickson. Doubleday, 252pp, \$4.95

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Reviewed by CY CHAUVIN

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Five authors were asked to write a novella or novelet beginning with a common prologue devised by Keith Laumer -- and this book is the result. Obviously, the prologue idea is just a gimmick used to bind five very different stories together into a sort of "theme" anthology, but since it has inspired a couple of noteworthy (or at least controversial) pieces of sf, why complain? (On the other hand, why not complain? I get tired of these publishers who seem to spend all their time thinking up new gimmicks to sell books instead of simply concentrating on getting good stories.) The fiction here originally appeared in F&SF, GALAXY, WORLDS OF TOMORROW, and WORLDS OF FANTASY.

If this book has any true serious intent or theme to it, then Poul Anderson's novella, "The Fatal Fulfillment", has run away with it and left the other four authors standing way back on the starting line, sucking their thumbs and hoping that nobody notices their incompetence. Yes, it is that good -- and from a writer I had previously considered an ANALOG hack.

In a microcosm, Anderson's story explores the possibilities suggested by both the book's title and Laumer's prologue. What would be the best kind of world, if we could choose from all possible? That's the question Anderson tackles in his story; and he deftly sketches out that *all* societies, political systems, etc., have their faults and weaknesses, and that there is no such thing as Utopia. None is perfect. The pasture isn't



*"If only I could get off this stinkin' land and live in the castle!"*

really greener on the other side of the hill so much as it is simply a different shade of green. You exchange one set of faults and virtues for another.

One of Anderson's most consistent faults (both in this story and a number of others) is that his characters have a tendency to lecture one another on various aspects of the story's background. Anderson can be very skillful at blending these lectures in with the normal conversation of his characters, but it still rings false. I wouldn't object to it if the technique were used sparingly, but it isn't, and once the reader catches on, he starts seeing it *everywhere*, which makes the dialog seem very artificial. Perhaps this was the only way he could compress all the details of the five alternate worlds he sketched out into the relatively short space available.

On the other hand, Anderson has a certain dry wit, which is a good trait for an sf writer. Take a little ironic bit like this:

*The professor sighed. "My own breakdown was quite genuine. You try explaining modern American economic policies." (p. 32)*

"The Fatal Fulfillment" was also nominated for a Nebula, so I guess the SFWA must share my high opinion of the story; not that I necessarily have a high opinion of the SFWA, however!

Harlan Ellison's "The Region Between" is the other story which has received a lot of attention and controversy, and it was nominated for a Nebula and a Hugo in 1971. This novella probably represents Ellison at his imagestic and stylistic best -- and he can be dazzling and effective when he wants to, which may not be apparent to the readers still recovering from the onslaught of four-letter words in "A Boy and His Dog." Unfortunately, the fame this story has received has been due entirely to the typographical experiments used, as well as the extensive graphics by Jack Gaughn in the GALAXY version. In the afterword to his story, "The Prowler at the Edge of the City" (in DANGEROUS VISIONS), Ellison mentioned that he used various typographical experiments in that story to give it a sort of *cinematic* effect. This also seems to be the goal he is groping toward in "The Region Between", and he comes much closer to success in this story -- at least in the GALAXY version. Unfortunately, the typographical experiments in both versions are ultimately failures, for while they make the story more interesting to look at, they don't enhance the actual *emotional impact* of the story, its content, or the message that Ellison is getting across. And anything that fails to contribute in this way to a story is merely a useless white elephant, a curious anachronism that should be cut out. Ellison is actually throwing roadblocks in front of the readers, impeding their enjoyment of the story. How will turning a book sideways, upside down, and twirling it around in a circle make the story more meaningful and more enjoyable to read? It only serves to destroy the reader's concentration.

Ellison said in the introduction to one of his short story collections, "I expect a bit more erudition and concentration and cooper-



ation from my readers." And the readers in turn, I might add, expect a little more than a half-baked story with some irrelevant and superficial typographical tricks handed to them. Take away all the controversy caused by this story's typography, and there isn't much left.

I have seen no comments anywhere saying "what real, lifelike characters 'The Region Between' contains", or "what a stunning emotional impact it has on the reader", or even "what a fast moving, suspenseful plot Ellison weaves." He doesn't do any of this. The story reminds me of one of Ellison's 1950's stories, rewritten and polished up in a superficial sense, but with no reworking of the basics underneath: the plot, the characterization, the emotional impact.

Ellison's latest collection, *ALONE AGAINST TOMORROW*, is chock full of stories just like it. In all, it is a rather sad fall for a writer the calibre of Harlan Ellison.

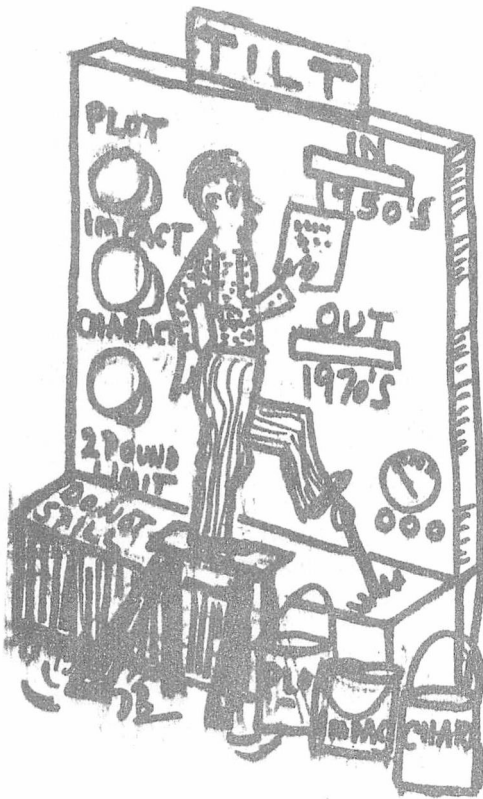
Gordon Dickson is now a writer I approach with a keen eye. Why? Well, Leon Taylor has probably expressed the reason most colorfully:

*Gordon Dickson is the only sf writer whose work I approach with fear and trembling. No, not because he has a Terrifyingly Important Social Message -- only mainstream writers have those, and they generally die in their sleep. And not because I'm afraid the author will leap out of the printed page with his claws unleashed for my heart -- only Harlan does that...No, I pick up every new Dickson opus with quivering hands because he is a schizophrenic writer...There are two faces to his coin, and you never know which one will survive the toss. Dickson the Hack (grinding out three or four nov-*

*els a year, adding countless links to his already-lengthy chain of space operas), or Dickson the Writer, who digs deep into the human soul and unearths some enduring stories. (from EMBELYN 2, June '70)*

Dickson the Writer has produced some good stories like "Call Him Lord" and "Jean Dupres", but I'm afraid that the offering presented here, "Maverick", is the side of Dickson we see most often (and wish he would hide). It's not quite space opera, mostly because it does not take place in outer space, but it certainly seems contrived and meaningless.

Yet perhaps Gordon Dickson the Writer is like a man starting to work out with barbells. He may not be able to lift 200 pounds in the beginning, or even 150 pounds, constantly. It's going to take some time before he leaves all his hack work behind, just as Henry Kuttner,



John Brunner, and Robert Silverberg have. Have patience with the man, don't kick him in the shins every time he drops the damn thing 'cause it's *heavy*; it's like condemning James Blish for writing all those awful Star Trek books (and about as futile). However, I do not suggest that you run out and read all of Dickson's 94 lbs. weakling stories either, nor would I ever call "Maverick" a heavyweight.

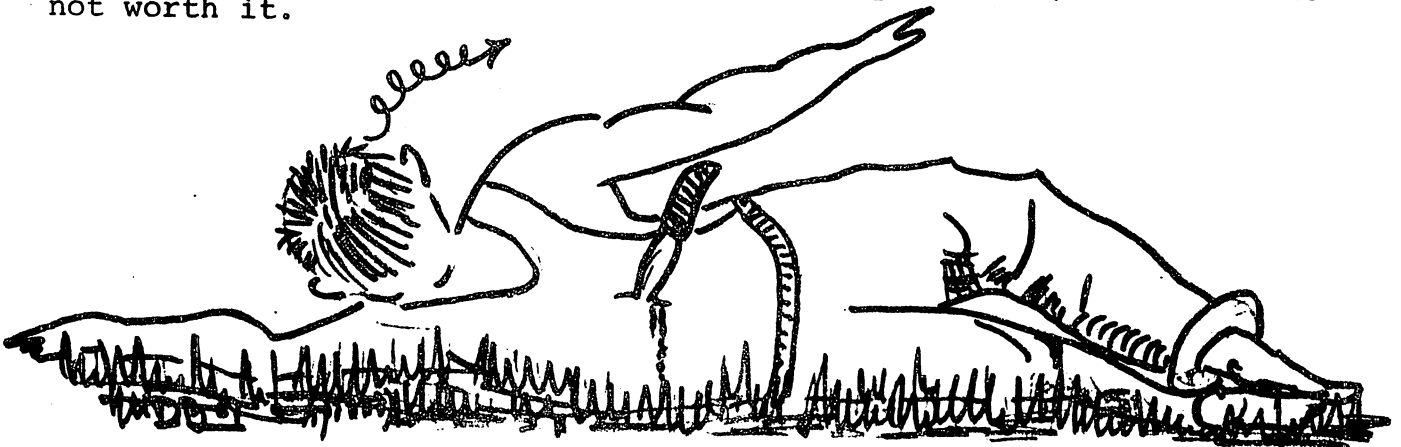
Keith Laumer, originator of this book, contributes "From Death What Dreams", which was probably written before all of the other stories in this book (it was first mentioned in the September, 1969, GALAXY as "coming up in the next issue of WORLDS OF TOMORROW.")

"From Death What Dreams" is a rather odd piece of science fiction; it seems like a fusion of three separate short stories, or at least parts of three separate short stories, since three times during the course of the novella the plot changes direction radically. The end of the story has little or no relation to the beginning. Other than that, "Death" is a simple adventure story, and if you take it on that level, it is fairly worthwhile.

Frank Herbert contributes "Murder Will In", but I don't think he really has his heart in the story. He doesn't seem to be *trying* anymore. Like others have remarked, Herbert (like Laumer and Dickson) isn't so much a bad writer as a bad *thinker*. He uses the same old hoary ideas over and over again, rather than inventing new ones and exploring new territory. His stories also almost inevitably lack a strong emotional impact -- something which is nearly essential for a good piece of fiction.

Not that "Murder Will In" is completely without worth; Herbert depicts a fairly interesting composite alien creature, called Tegas/Bacit. It's two aliens joined together, and it captures the minds of various human beings. At the death of its human host, it jumps to another body, and can keep on doing this indefinitely -- thus achieving immortality. However, it must have a strong emotional center to focus on when it jumps, and thus tries to get someone to murder the body which it inhabits when the body becomes old and worn out (hence the title). This is quite a hodgepodge of old ideas, but Herbert manages to inject some life into them through this new mixture. Of course, I must admit that I'm fond of aliens.

Five stories, with one winner, one bomb, and three mediocre. Unless you haven't read Anderson's story previously in F&SF, this book is not worth it.



# dragon tales

A Cauldron of Witches (The Story of Witchcraft), by Clifford Lindsay Alderman, Archway Pocketbook, a division of Simon & Schuster, Inc., 182 pages, 75¢ (pb).

Mr. Alderman's entire first chapter and his attitude towards witchcraft may be summarized in just five lines:

My readers I would not deceive:  
In witchcraft I cannot believe.  
Though there is no such thing,  
Yet its story I'll bring --  
A most difficult feat to achieve!

Since the only way to write the story of the non-existent is to enter the realm of fantasy fiction, the author circumvents his problem by describing in vivid detail the more flamboyant witchcraft trials. In fact, the book is a history of witch hunters and their innocent victims rather than a study of witchcraft itself. If Mr. Alderman could have made up his mind as to what constitutes witchcraft, the task would have been simplified. He discusses not only the usual "witches", but goes on to include werewolves, ghosts, poltergeists, ESP, and the cult called the "Old Religion" by Sybil Leek. It is a pity that he did not limit his field, because his chapters on voodoo, obeah and African witchcraft are interesting but necessarily superficial from lack of space.

Mr. Alderman has an easy writing style and holds the reader's attention throughout. His book will serve as a very good introduction to the subject.

-- Reviewed by Ginger Tiffany  
(Also responsible for limerick)

The Mind Master, by Bernhardt J. Hurwood, Fawcett Gold Medal Book, 160 pages, 75¢.

This is a sequel to The Invisibles, which I haven't read. Forget the jacket blurb; as is often the case, the blurbist didn't read the book. The author employs the somewhat risky literary device of alternating excerpts from the personal journals of the two protagonists, Dr. Larry Conrad and Petra Valentine. Like many male authors, Hurwood has a peculiar notion of the female point of view (the only one I can think of offhand who does get it right is James H. Schmitz). His Petra is shallow and unbelievable. However I'll forgive him this common flaw, because the plot really moves. Aside from a few too many sex scenes, the book is remarkably free of non-essential clutter. And of course that "too many" is a blatantly subjective judgment! This time, his psychic duo are battling a sinister political mastermind.

I have read very little of the current rash of occult fiction and non-fiction. So I can't say how much of the occult material in this book is original and how much is "everyone knows it's like this". Astral projection, mind reading, and telekinesis are all stirred into the plot. Are out-of-body sexual activities supposed to be standard, or did Hurwood invent the technique? Actually I was a poor choice to review this book; it is far outside my experience. But I found it interesting and lively entertainment nevertheless.

-- Reviewed by Celia Tiffany

The Devil Child, by Parley J. Cooper; Pocket Books, a division of Simon & Schuster, Inc., 124 pages, 95¢ (paperback).

The Devil Child is a humorless, slow building story of macabre discovery. The tale does not so much unfold as free itself from knots. The heroine is Lillith, subject to fits and reared with the understanding that she is possessed. Her family, both the survivors and those gone these many years, is shrouded in dark-hued mysteries. We know that these must cover truths too awful to bear. We know that as things progress our fear of the supernatural will be supplanted by loathing - of the evil living in "just plain folks." And so it goes.

Predictable, slightly satisfying. I recommend it for people who wash their hands several times daily (whether they need it or not).

Reviewed by Jon Yaffe

The Kondratieff Wave, by James B. Shuman and David Rosenau; World Publishing Company, 196 pages plus bibliography, \$6.95 (hardbound)  
Reviewed by Jon Yaffe

I am an infiltrator, and this is a subversive review; I cannot deny it. This book is neither speculative fiction, nor is it science fact. It is, if you will, speculative non-fiction. I review it here because it blew my mind, as theoretical or technological synthesis does so nicely (Neutron Star). The book feels good. It makes your head tick and puts you in that nice lean animal place that a good manhunt does.

The book is about the near future; the economic and social future that may await Western culture in the next two decades. It evaluates the last hundred and fifty years of American history in the context of a theory advanced by the Russian economist Nikolai Kondratieff in the 1920's. Without mincing words, the theory states that Western economy is subject to the effects of an extremely potent 50 year cycle of expansion and decline. This is characterized by inflationary peaks occurring at regular 50 year intervals, in association with prolonged and unpopular wars (War of 1812, Civil War, WW I, and Vietnam); patterns of economic decline, characterized by full-scale depressions in the second of the three decades of decline; and a twenty-year period of inflationary expansion leading to another major war.

Wisely denying responsibility or accountability for World War II, the authors cover a great deal of economics, history, and social psychology in a delightfully satisfying fashion; and then put forth their extrapolations and predictions for the 1970s and 1980s (loved them, hated those!).

Authors seeking input as to near-future cultural fill will find a gold mine here. What form will be taken, for example, by an out-of-hand depression in a time of advanced technology (1980!!!)? For all of us there are signs to watch for, and plans - very important plans - to be mapped-out in cheerless contingency charts. And what, though the authors do not push this far, can we expect from the War of 2010?

# what the postman came dragon in....

ROY TACKETT 915 Green Valley Road NW Albuquerque, N.M. 87107

I'm sure you sent me SIRRUIISH 9 which is probably buried around here somewhere. Did I read it? I'm not sure. I know there are stacks of unread fmz around here. I did, however, read SIRRUIISH 10. Can't say I got excited over it or that it even stirred me to comment but I've got to get back into things here. Gad, I even renewed in the N3F. I am determined.

Celia Tiffany should get some sort of award for condensing LACon to two pages. And Mid-America Con to a half-page. So the latter lost 2 kilobucks. Gee, that's too bad! That'll teach Keller and Taylor to believe those who tell them that stf cons are sure money makers. "Big Mac"??? Yeah. My original impression of Mid-America Con, from the pre-con literature, was that it was going to be as plastic as a MacDonald's hamburger. Still Celia Tiffany says it was a good con. You're not plastic, are you, Celia?

Enjoyed Brazier's thingee. Sounds like a typical stf club. We have one here in Albuquerque they tell me. Must look it up some day.

Donn, in re Keel's book. There's a number of them, of course. Strange unsolved mysteries and all that. Who is to say??? The one that interests me at present, about which I've read comparatively little, is the discovery of what are apparently ancient ruins off the island of Bimini. Walls and buildings and all that. And, in the same general area, is the mystery of the Bermuda triangle. HMMMMM.

Vardeman, like all prognosticators, wasn't above bending events a bit to match his predictions. He predicted an attempt on the life of Hussein and declared a hit when one was made on Hassan. Hussein, Hussan, wotthell, one Ayarab is much like another, aye?

Leigh Couch: Right, who can tell one of them chinks, or spics, or fans from another one.

Donn Brazier: We, here at the club, want to know what "stf" means.

Celia Tiffany: And what "plastic" means in this context?

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ROSE M. HOGUE 1067 W. 26th Street San Pedro, CA 90731

Thank you muchly for SIRRIUSH 10 - I have several SIRRIUSHes(SIRRIUSHI?) about and really enjoyed them all even though I've never located an issue... Why haven't I you might indeedly be asking?? Well, most zines never do more than hack my loc to a WAHF...bet if I try real hard I could qualify for a Ms. WAHF award again this year...sigh...

Jack Gaughan's cover looks like something out of a children's book - fairy tale sort, that is - or something from LOTR.. or even a S&S novel... the more I look at it the weirder and more involved I get with it...

Have heard of Mid-America Con and I was saddened to hear of the loss of money-- it sounds not quite fair that Ken should have to sell his collection to recoup the losses...had heard from someone somewhere that they were still selling Pro-

gram books to try to make up the difference...does anyone have the address?

Actually for a "Short History of the Stellar Strongmen" it was sort of a long article... Donn did a darn good job of writing it up. One of these days I'll have to write about the non-existence San Pedro group and our bid for Worldcon 1999 to be held at beautiful Point Ferman Park just before San Pedro sinks into the Pacific...

"Tokyo Rose" was fantastic--I really enjoyed it--have all my kids watching the monster movies but not too often they opt for some many times rerun cartoon. In fact, littlest one gurgled at "Son of GODZILLA" when she was three months old and "War of the Gargantuas" is one of her all time favorites...but then this may be because we only have a black and white set and it sits on top of the bar... (just noticed that I've been spelling the name wrong the whole way through this loc...that's good to get me in Dutch...)

The only printed matter I manage to part with is of religious nature or political indoctrination or because my stack of newspapers falls over on the back porch floor...thereby making access to the back doo impossible.

Railee Bothman; My family is always after me to get rid of books and other impedimenta that I haven't used in more than a year, on the grounds that they don't want to cope with it when I die. I figure then it will be their problem...meanwhile I just keep on collecting.

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BEN P. INDICK 428 Sagamore Avenue Teaneck, N.J. 07666

Old Barbecue fooled me, the devil. I was reading along, and mostly it seemed reports on cons, engagingly written. When I reached STELLAR STRONGMEN, I accepted it at face value. ("Joe Neofan" was regrettable, though, for it gave the game away. So, I adjusted the height of one eyebrow, kept reading. When I found I was actually laughing out loud, I checked the contents, and discovered to my delight that it was dear Donn himself, turning in a truly chucklesome article. Eight hundred thousand thanks for this! (Used to be a million, but it was recently devalued.)

Dave Locke hits the spot, too. One of the favorite "monster movies around here, for years, has been the terrifying tale of that monster moth, MOTHRA! Now how the Japanese thought a moth could seem terrifying (maybe to their silk industry---hm, does THAT still exist, or has it been replaced by transistors and nylon) is as inexplicable as how Americans recently thought Frogs could be terrifying. Especially such a patently phoney monster. I look forward to THE TERRIBLE PUSSYCAT or THE LADYBUG FROM 21,000 FATHOMS. Real scare stuff...

I blush to say that, apropos of your discussion with Ed Lesko of stf poetry, the samples herein will not raise it to an art, either. However there ARE some good examples of science fiction in verse. Ray Bradbury's recent OLD AHAB, for one; also, I recall Stephen Vincent Benet wrote several really fine stf poems. Fritz Lieber has done fine work. So it is not a field entirely bereft of good examples.

Leigh Couch: I had never heard of MOTHRA until you wrote, that is, unless you are "having me on". I saw "The Fall of the House of Usher" this past week-end and it still scares me. Fine macabre stuff.

Donn Brazier: In the Benet "poems" if it's Nightmare Number 3 you refer to, isn't the worth of his product in the idea which might have been even more effective in prose form?

JACKIE FRANKE Box51-A RR2 Beecher, IL 60401

Appreciated thisish of Sirriush immensely! But it was far too short...skipped around as I usually do when reading a fmz, and was shocked to find that I had read all the material so quickly. Either put in a few long, dull articles to break up the pace or put more into it! Preferably more, naturally.

For some reason, there haven't been as many Worldcon reports out this year as usual...at least I haven't seen but a few. Perhaps fans feel that everyone went, so why bother telling the non-existent stay-at-homes about it? Well, as one who couldn't go, I'd like to hear about the LACon...give my thanks to Celia. Between her "fan-view" and Milt Stevens's "committeeman's view" I have a fairly concise picture of the goings-on...

Bliss's description of the operations and care of gismoks came at just the right moment. We attend many country auctions out here, and were just about to toss out an apparently empty box (9x12, approx.) that was included in a batch of odds and ends we had gotten for a minimum bid of 25¢. It looked empty. but I'm not taking any chances... anyone have a three-phase holograph camera?

I've never belonged to a SF club, but Brazier's recounting of the short but happy existence of the Stellar Strongmen sounds too accurate for comfort. I'd lay odds that similar events have happened in exactly the order given. We all know that you people are a bit down on clubs right now, but can't you display the teeniest bit of mercy?

Bruce D. Arthurs has done me a great favor...always wondered how Harlan worked out his stories...now I know! He forgot the instructions for constructing Weighty Afterwords though...next issue?

What can be said about Dave Locke's article? It's all so damned true that all I can do is nod my head. My problem is that while I watch the Nipponese nonsense as sheer Camp, my kids are getting deeply involved. In their case though, they root for the monsters...like seeks like, I suppose. They actually wept for "Son of Godzilla"...but I can sympathize with them on that one. But why feel sorry for Ghidra, the Three-Headed Monster? He was out-and-out Evil...

Leigh Couch: We aren't really down on clubs. Donn just happens to have a great talent for humorous writing. Clubs seem to go through a life cycle, tentative beginning, growth of enthusiasm, great fannish projects, then either a dramatic bust-up, or a slow lingering death.

Donn Brazier; I really envy your possession of the "apparently empty box (9x12)".

Railee Bothman: My children root for the horses when watching movies. Woe to any actor who uses his horse as a shelter during a gunfight!

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GENE WOLFE Box 69 Barrington IL 60010

Thank you for sending SIRRUIISH 10---wonderful cover. I do think, however, that the minutes of your fanclub are out of place in a genzine, though I know WSFA does it. I believe I met Max Berg at Chambancon last year, but I was still bored. Perhaps if I had met Astrid Allen instead it would be different.

Harry Warner might be interested in hearing that I attended Edgar Allen Poe Elementary School (in Houston, Texas) where the study of Poe was compulsory--we were a morbid bunch of little kids.

Donn Brazier: The minutes of our fanclub are out of place anywhere!

Leigh Couch: We have since drowned Max Berg in a cask of Amontillado that Railee Bothman happened to have around the house. Astrid Allen is dying to meet you.

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andy offut Funny Farm Haldeman, KY 40329

Celia Tiffany (migod, what a magnificent name! I wish I'd thought of that!) provoked me to thought, and once I recovered I tried to get it down, here:

She says she "was mulling over blowing the whole wad (of her worldcon art budget) on one little painting by someone I'd never heard of" when she saw some art she could afford, by someone she had heard of. Jesus, Tiffany! What a fantastic, bloodyawful cattleminded viewpoint! Mau-mau Utrillo painting a picture for a brandy in a little bar in Montmartre...people LIKED his work, but after all... Who'd ever heard of that poorly dressed clown....The point is, did you like better the Jones and Freas work you bought, and would you have liked them less had they been signed, say, Celia Railee or Genie Couch or Herkimer Snarley? And finally, aren't you going to feel dumb if that unknown cat winds up being Big, and Famous even, and this his work becomes expensive! Who the hell was George Barr ten years ago (or Kelly Freas in 1873), and who the hell was Larry Niven ten years ago?

This was probably highly unwarranted, and Tiffany probably meant something else altogether, and I am coming on Bad. The original art I've bought are the original Wally Wood drawings for my first story sold as a professional (as opposed to the first one I was paid for), and I dickered for those; a paint-on-black-velvet beauty combining 2001 and Creatinn, by Dennis Dotson of Nashville because I love it and think he's just superb; a Jackie Franke scratchboard, because it's sweeping, soothing, excellently executed (and has a nekkid lady) and besides Jackie's going to be Big and I gonna sell it for a million to some impressionable ugly American--immediately, you understand, after Jackie starves to death.

I see that Genie Yaffee contributed both a drawing with words and a review of one of my books (thank you all). Her drawing -mini-story concerns a dinosaur and I wonder how much time intervened between that work and her mini-reviewing of my novel. This is of interest because the drawing and sentiments could have illustrated the review. The Castle Keeps, after all, is about dinosaurs, too, more recent ones, mis- and mal-adapting to their environment and to each other. I cried for them in Keeps; to quote Yaffe: "I wonder when they find (our) bones if they'll know I've been crying?"

Celia Tiffany: I did like that piece of artwork (it was Bob Kline's "His Mother's Enemy", if you're curious. It was priced at \$150. I had barely that much if I stayed out of the hucksters' room. But I couldn't really afford it. I liked the Jones and Freas work much better, and I bought them not because the artists were famous, but because they were good. Harry Warner got my point - see his loc.



Leigh Couch: I had the privilege of being the first fan to buy Jackie Franke art. I agree with you, she's a real talent.

Donn Brazier: Jon's gonna be mad.

Genie Yaffe: I'm extremely flattered to be thought the artist as well as the writer of the family, which is my own opinion, however Jon does most of the art work and is rather insulted.

Jon Yaffe: I am insulted - at Donn and Genie who decided that I was insulted before I ~~was~~ even got to read your letter. As for you..."that's one.." (I've stopped counting on Donn. One more from him and I draw a telephone on his body and dial him with an ice-pick.)

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HARRY WARNER 423 Summit Avenue Hagerstown, Maryland 21740

The tenth issue of Sirruish was a remarkable pleasure to read; almost too legible since that snow white paper causes the spots in front of my eyes to show up so clearly.

The best thing about Celia Tiffany's conreports was the plain talk about art prices. Maybe it isn't entirely my word orientation that has been making me, too, suspect that a lot of fancy figures are being asked and paid for quite ordinary art work. I wonder if the key to this situation isn't the instinct for exclusive ownership of something, no matter whether it's something that justifies exclusive ownership? There isn't too much in fandom that becomes private property with no one else sharing: gossip, pro fiction, fanzines, hotel rooms, even some of the women are passed around generously or shared by many. So there must be a subconscious impulse to have something which nobody else can have unless the owner chooses to put it on the cover of his fanzine. Maybe one solution to keep down the prices of first-rate non-color art would be good lithographed reproduction, limited to a dozen or so copies on heavy stock suitable for framing. The artist could sell them for one-fifth the price that the original would bring and would still end up with bigger income and the purchasers would have semi-private pictures of their own.

I'm as dazzled by The Gismok as by almost everything W.G. Bliss writes. A fanzine battle of words between him and Tom Digby, something like the art battles that have been printed here and there, would be a wondrous thing to publish.

Short History of the Stellar Strongmen should become a fannish classic. Donn Brazier reminds me a little of Bob Tucker when he writes in this style. Moreover, he gets his own opinions across much more convincingly when he puts them into this form than when he simply complains about the conditions at a real fan club. This set of minutes is funny, pathetic, touching, stark realism and a better introduction to neofans than anything else I can think of.

It's edifying, the way Asimov's books continue to be admired by both veteran and newer fans. It's a good lesson to the effect that stories which aren't relevant to the very latest news headlines remain relevant to many other things a lot longer.

The only books I've ever thrown away were vanity press publications. One of the firms that profits from writers subsidizing their own books had me on its list

for a long time, presumably because it disposed of some unsellable books by sending them to newspaper people. I don't remember ever succeeding in reading one of those books. Most of them were so unspeakably amateurish and dull that preserving them would have been as wrong as putting kittens born dead in alcohol and lining up the jars on the mantel.

Barry Smotroff touched on a sensitive spot when he mentioned the people who don't know how to handle records. I make the rounds of this area's Goodwill, Rescue Mission, and similar junk shops, and records are part of the reasons for the never-ending quest. But if I don't happen to visit a store on the very day that it puts out some newly acquired records, it's too late. Much of the patronage consists of mothers with small children. Something causes every small child to pull from the jacket any record it can reach. I don't know what the kids expect to accomplish by this behaviour because they're usually too young to read labels and the grooves are sort of dull to look at. They never put the records back in the jackets. They're usually scratched beyond redemption within another hour, as the next two or three families of kids go through the same unmotivated ritual of inspection. In recent months I've grown so tender-hearted that I've saved some records from this fate by buying them, even though I'm not anxious to own them.

Leigh Couch: I own a few pieces of fan art and it is all proudly displayed in my home. I don't know if I'm possessive, but it gives me a warm feeling to look at them.

Virginia Tiffany: Now I know why I can never find any good science fiction books when I make my annual rounds to Goodwill, Rescue Mission etc. in Hagerstown- Harry Warner gets there first!

Donn Brazier: I blush!

Jon Vaffe: Brazier does not blush! He holds his breath.

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MIKE GLICKSOHN 32 Maynard Ave. Apt. 205 Toronto 156 Ontario Canada

Unpretentious best sums up the appearance of this issue, I think. Jack's cover is nice, but the rest of the art is, my personal opinion and nothing more, of course, inferior in execution. The repro is certainly adequate but suffers from that degree of faded irregularity that I've come to associate, rightly or wrongly I don't know, with paper plates used in offset work. Luckily, SIRRUIISH isn't after any awards for graphic excellence and is enjoyable to read. What more can you ask?

A Worldcon report is always filled with comment hooks because every fan who was at the con has similar or opposing stories to complement/set off the report. I've already written a report on my own trip, so I'll refrain from saying much here but one or two points are worth discussing. I can sympathize with Celia on the rising prices of artwork in the art shows. LA was the first worldcon of the six I've attended at which I was unable to buy the things I wanted because the prices rose too high. On the other hand, I understand that this situation merely reflects a rising degree of artistic appreciation among fans and since most of the fan artists who exhibit in these shows are personal friends of mine, I'm glad to see them getting the recognition and the rewards they deserve. Untalented artists who set high minimums in the hope of earning a fast buck lose out when

no-one meets the minimums. And a talented artist, whether known or not, deserves as much as George or Tim if his/her work is of comparable quality. I've always been a bit disgusted by the many people who buy art on a "name" basis only. I've heard comments like "If that was a George Barr I might buy it" while wandering around the art show and I just can't understand such an attitude. A good piece of art is worth whatever you're willing to pay for it, whether it was done by Grant Canfield or Richard Brandt. (And if you said "Who he?" you get the point.)

I'll have to disagree with Celia's contention that there were no good eating places within easy walking distance of the hotel. It all depends on your definition of "reasonable walking distance", naturally, but about 15 minutes away on Sepulveda were several excellent, and inexpensive, restaurants. Nevertheless, I fully agree that the hotel's facilities were completely inadequate for a convention of that size. Toronto, of course, has no such drawbacks...

I've read that Mid America Con lost a bundle but much of this seems to be due to bad judgement on their part. The printing bill on the program book was enormous, and this was very much an unnecessary expense. Still, its a damn shame that someone has to sell his own collection to get even again.

Jesus Christ on a harlie, as Norman might say! If Genie Yaffe finds andy offut's extrapolated society in THE CASTLE KEEPS a "not too unusual situation..." and merely "a little more crime" than we have now, I'm mighty glad I live in Toronto and not in St. Louis! "...business as usual?" Fortress homes, armed gangs of rapists terrorizing the countryside, small children armed and trained to kill? This is business as usual? Remind me not to drop in unannounced on any Missouri fans, will you?

I've often heard that Dave Locke is a fine humorist and that his YANDRO column is a classic of its kind. Never seeing that venerable fannish institution, this article was my first real exposure to this aspect of Dave's writing. Everything I've heard was an understatement! This column(?) was priceless and had me laughing out loud all the way through. Being a devotee (dare I say an "energumen"?) of horror films of all nationalities helps me to appreciate a really fine and funny satire. Dave's dialogue was superb, far better than any of the originals I've sat through. These are lines I'll be reading and retelling to friends, and that's a rare and complimentary thing to say about a fanzine article.

The only little tick I see in the letter column is beside Genie's all-too-true comment about new expensive editions of books I already own. Ballantine just re-issued a whole raft of low-level Burroughs books with gorgeous Frazetta covers and 95¢ price tags. So far I've resisted the urge to duplicate my cheapie Ace editions, but how long can I hold out...?

An enjoyable issue. It prompted me to write a loc and I enjoyed writing the loc! Please keep this fanzine coming!

Railee Bothman: Enjoy! Enjoy! The "faded irregularity" comes from paper offset plates made on a Xerox camera that was ancient when Ray Fisher got it, I think, and even odder when Joe got it from him. Come to St. Louis, or rather Kirkwood, and you'll find it most peaceful....no fortress homes. As for armies of children, when one bright teenager can tear me to shreds verbally, who worries about child armies?

Jon Yaffe: I'm keeping score regarding comment on my artwork. It's just a hobby, but then so is my study of techniques for committing ritual suicide.

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SHERYL L. BIRKHEAD 23629 Woodfield Road Gaithersburg, MD 20760

It is funny, but after LACon, I expected to see con reports popping up all over the place. Insread of the mass germination, it seemed that fanzines grew scarcer and... Well, they finally seem to have regained the same frequency, but I still haven't seen more than a handfull of reports. I was there ( kinda), but I enjoy reading about all the good stuff I was too busy elsewhere to do/see/hear.

Poor old dino- was just reading about coelancanths in the most recent NATURAL HISTORY magazine. Ah, at least there is one "preemie" which hasn't gone as extinct, quite, as man had thought.

About the Stellar Strongmen--isn't a dollar a meeting a little steep? Besides, I'll bet you could have gotten a ledger a lot cheaper if Max had shopped around. Ah, but that's what's so good about hindsight!

The INSTANT PLOT has definite merit - must try that the next time I get into a writing binge and see what ~~howsense~~ gems of wisdom I can come up with. Seriously though, I sincerely doubt that I'd have the wit to come up with such plausible (so to speak) meanings for the mishmash.

Ah, yes, and on to the book reviews. Well, in general I like book reviews but that is about all the good they do me---we are at least a year or so behind the rest of the world here, so I couldn't find any of the titles no matter how hard I wanted to. Either I am not getting into the bookstore-giftshop at the right times and all that's left when I do appear is the dregs, or else they simply are not buying what I had in mind. Besides that (hate,hate) all the occult and stuff along that line, which rightfully belongs on another shelf, has crept up and is strangling the SF shelf.

I just had the once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to watch GODZILLA, somehow I've managed to miss it all these years. I really didn't expect it to be like that.. gee, all those monsters look alike. Ya seen one three-hundred-foot tall glop and you've seen them all.

Celia Tiffany: Perhaps con reports are getting scarce because many fans don't read them. I was sure fandom was going to be swamped with them, but those two cons and SIRRUIISH were the whole of my fanac last year, so..

Leigh Couch; You have touched a prominent gripe of mine, all the occult books edging out S.F. It really annoys me but when you complain to the clerks, they tell you that they stock what sells. Arrgh!

Donn Brazier: A dollar a meeting isn't too steep when it's an I.O.U.

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RANDALL D. LARSON 774 Vista Grande Av Los Altos, CA 94022

Good Lord! Not another St.Louis fanzine! Do you realize that in the past few months almost half of my entire fanzine input has been from St. Louis? You people are giving us out of state fans an inferiority complex. Mebbe I'll move to St. Louis....

Dave Locke's article on Japanese monster movies is a classic in itself. One of the most humorous (and truthful) pieces I've ever read on the subject. I might disagree with him, however, on the earlier films. GODZILLA, MOTHRA, RODAN, the

first giant-monster movies, apparently intended as a one-shot, were pretty well done. Then they found out the moey making value and began hacking out all sort of awful monstrosities, the latest being GODZILL VS THE SMOG MONSTER. Then another company (Daiei) came around with all sorts of winners using a giant turtle named Gamera, with fantastic special effects as realistic as the classic THE LAND UNKNOWN. I agree with Dave -- current Japanese monster movies should have stayed in bed that morning. His article was still funnier than shit. Japanese shit, that is.

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MATTHEW SCHNECK 229 Albany Post Road Croton-on-Hudson N.Y. 10520

If you like gismoks, you'll love guethophones. They're an invention of Frank's; the world's only silent instrument. They are invisible and intangible (like gismoks) and they are what cause quiet rooms and doldrums and the silence of interstellar space (you thought it was the absence of air!). Frank can give you much more information than I possibly can.

The Stellar Strongmen remind me of Croton fandom. That is to say, Frank and me. We must be the one extreme of fan groups (we meet whenever we feel like and talk about whatever we want), the other extreme being like LASFS, I guess. And you people are in the middle, apparently more like Croton fandom, which I prefer because I'm 50% of the membership.

Another fun way to get mutilated plot is to get a story in a pro magazine and read it straight across the page, both columns at once. You could be liberal about changing the punctuation and grabbing halves of hyphenated words. I offer no example, try it yourself and see what you can come up with.

Support Croton's bid for the Worldcon!!!

Donn Brazier: Your system for mutilated plots may straighten out some visions, dangerous as it may seem.

Railee Bothman; I would like to buy a guethophone for when my daughter Stefanie practices the piccolo. Perhaps Donn might be interested, too, one of his sons plays the drums.

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FRANK L. BALAZS 19 High St. Croton-on-Hudson N.Y. 10520

Locke's monster article brought to mind something that's always been bothering me. You know, how in every monster movie ever made (well, I mean ones with lumbering prehistoric-type beasties) there are octillions of fearful folk running pell-mell away from the monster as he/she/it happily stomps on cars and swipes at buildings. Yes, there are even some scenes in which the unfortunate people escape the monster by turning down a side alley... until the monster knocks the building down on them. Well, I think that if these people would be half-intelligent they would try to sneak around the monster and thus be safe. I mean, have you ever seen a monster backtrack? The only safe place is either behind the monster or out of the theater.

Whenever I find myself thoroughly disgusted with a book, I usually inflict the library with the copy. This is not a good way of sowing sf, I suppose--though I guess some of the books have something, since someone likes them! For instance my school has a copy of RINGWORLD that I generously donated.

Did throw away one book a 1-o-o-o-ng time ago. My first Bradbury, THE MARTIAN CHRONICLES it was. I believe I went so far as to burn it. And now that I've heard about FARENHEIT whatever the # is, I can see how fitting it was. (Recently been reading other Bradbury figuring that my tastes have probably changed in the ensuing six or seven years. After all, I was only ten then.

Railee Bothman: How about that! We've heard from 100% of the fans in a whole town! That's a really terrific response!

Donn Brazier: I'll go along with your disposition of RINGWORLD, but burning THE MARTIAN CHRONICLES....shudder!

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ANN CHAMBERLAIN 4411 Van Horne Ave. Los Angeles, CA 90032

I am pleasantly surprised on seeing SIRRUISH. As I remember, the word indicates the takeoff sound of an advanced type mechanism of the air. The J.G. drawing is indisputable. Attracting, but it has no ship. So there goes another nice illusion.

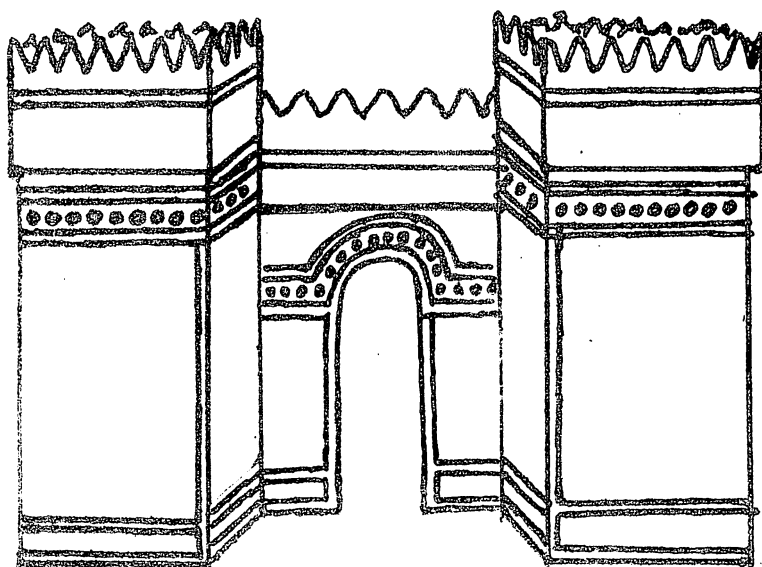
Celia Tiffany's con report was read with much interest. She could make anything that she reports sound good because she is, must be, a real writer.

One year our Shrine Auditorium had a Hobby Show, everything from button collections on up was on display. Also some of those members of the National Model Railroad Club was in evidence. I could hardly stand the zinging of model planes, it got noisier and noisier. It was there I saw the first and only machine for polishing stones...a tumbler. I was impressed, but---no room for one where I lived then. They sold for \$35 and I'll bet the new ones cost much more. Many had new inventions which they demonstrated and had on sale...but I guess it wasn't a monied crowd as they didn't stay the week out. One booth had Space Games and next to it some of our L.A. fans did what they could to ensnare prospective members. What I'm getting at is that a Hobby Show is fun, especially when sponsored by somebody like the Coca-Cola company. The hobbyists pay a very nominal sum for their booth and if they have something to sell, it just may go. Fans, too, are hobbyists...maybe someday someone will have a Hobby Show instead of a regular con, a place where you can get hot dogs or burgers, cola and/or hot fudge sundaes.

Leigh Couch: Being freaky for hot fudge sundaes I would probably go.

Donn Brazier: SIRRUISH is more than the sound of an advanced type mechanism of the air; it is the advanced type mechanism of the air--a winged dragon!

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# how SIRRUISH got its name

Back in the sixties, two St. Louis fans named David Hall and Jim Turner started a serious SF fanzine. Hall named it SIRRUISH, after the title beastie in L. Sprague de Camp's The Dragon of the Ishtar Gate.

Now any de Camp book is worth reading, but most have not had fanzines named for them. So I looked this one up to see why it was so special. It is indeed delightful, although not what is commonly called "sword-and-sorcery". In it, a Persian gentleman and a Greek scholar in the time of Xerxes journey across the Persian empire and up the Nile in search of the dragon depicted on the walls of conquered Babylon. Along the way, they pick up a motley collection of traveling companions, including a sorcerer of the sort that gave the profession a bad name. The whole novel is solid, completely believable, and authentically historical (naturally, seeing who wrote it!). The heroes and villains are such as have lived again and again on this earth, and the dragon quest is no more fantastic than thenineteenth century explorations of Africa. Still, in the broader definitions of the terms, the book is a fantasy of swords and sorcery -- and a mythological(?) beast.

One of de Camp's sources (credited in the Author's Note at the end) was Willy Ley's non-fiction book The Lungfish, the Dodo, and the Unicorn; in fact, de Camp used the title as well as material from the chapter on "The Dragon of the Ishtar Gate". It records the discovery of the gate and the zoological controversy stirred up. Unfortunately I don't have a copy of this book, so I can't report the latter portion. A friend sent me a copy of the first few pages (because I asked for a picture of a sirruish -- if I'd known about the chapter, I'd have been greedy and requested the whole thing).

When the Ishtar Gate of ancient Babylon was excavated in 1902 by the German archaeologist Robert Koldewey, it was found to be decorated with bas-reliefs of lifelike animals strolling in proud rows. The walled processional way leading from the gate features lions; the walls of the glazed brick arch are decorated with thirteen alternating rows of bulls and dragons. Cuneiform inscriptions inform passersby that the gate was built by Nabû-ku-dûr-ri-u-su-ûr (better known as Nebuchadnezzar II, who reigned 605-562 B.C.). The cuneiform word for "dragons" is read as sîr-russû or muš-russû, with the singular form presumed to be sirrush or mushrush.



Obviously sirrush is the more desirable form for a fanzine name, English connotations being as they are. David Hall embellished the spelling with an extra i for SIRRUIISH. I'm not acquainted with him so I can't tell you why, but it does make it easier to pronounce. After all these years, the present staff won't bother to change it -- we aren't that hung up on authenticity.

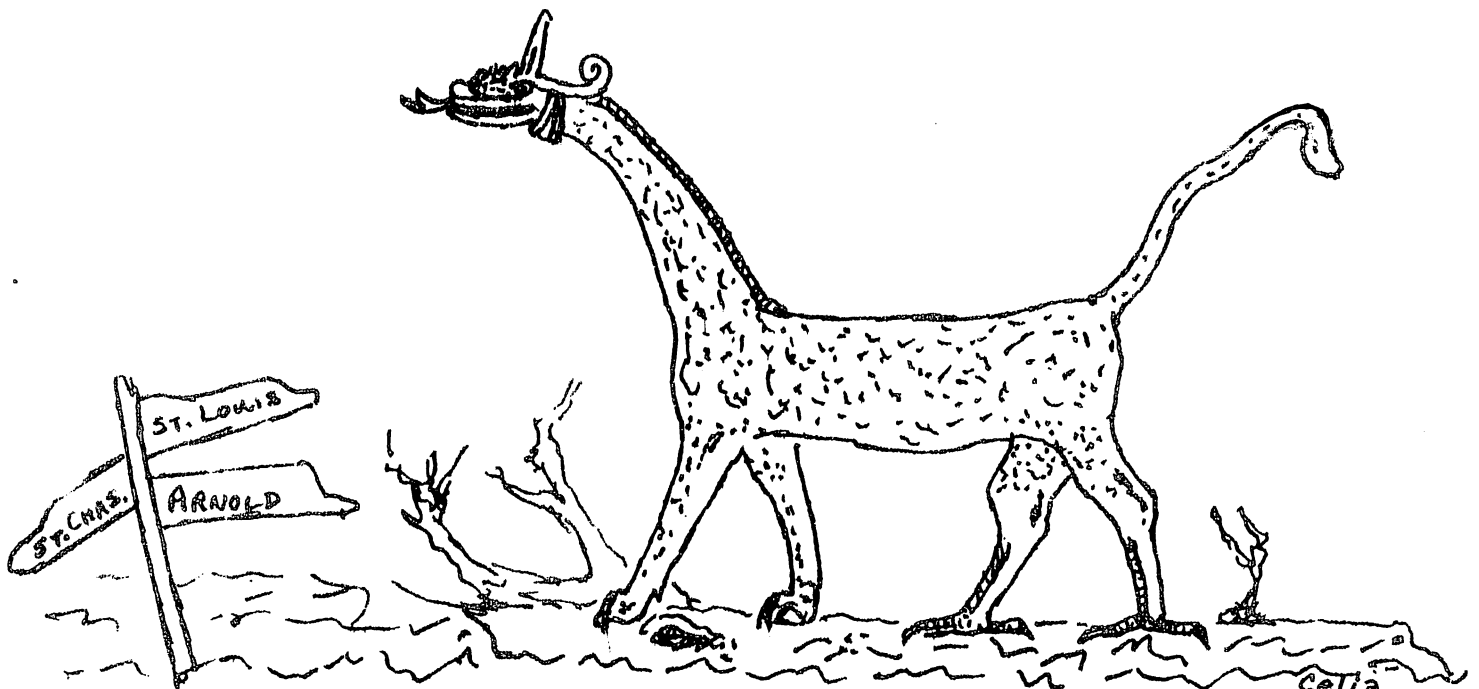
The Ishtar Gate (also called the Gate of Semiramis by the Greeks) was well known in the ancient world. The dragon was the symbol of Babylon, just as political cartoonists today draw Uncle Sam for the U.S. and a bear for Russia. You will even find the Dragon of Babylon in the Bible, whose authors had cause enough to hate the empire it represented. In the Book of Revelation, the "Whore of Babylon" rides a sort of dragon, although the fancifully fearsome description bears little resemblance to the graceful creature of the gate.

And what was the sirrush to the Babylonians? It was the sacred beast of Marduk, god of the city of Babylon since at least the twenty-eighth century B.C. Marduk was originally a minor Sumerian diety, a son of the water god Enki, but as Babylon rose in glory so did he. First he was an agent of Enki in magical rituals against demons. Then he was patron god of the magicians in the Babylonian and Assyrian religions. Finally he became a sun god (the name Marduk means "young bull, the sun"). The legend of Creation was edited to credit him with slaying the dragon Tiamat and binding the dragons of darkness (or chaos), then creating the universe afterwards. Quite a promotion for a tribal shaman.

-- Celia Tiffany

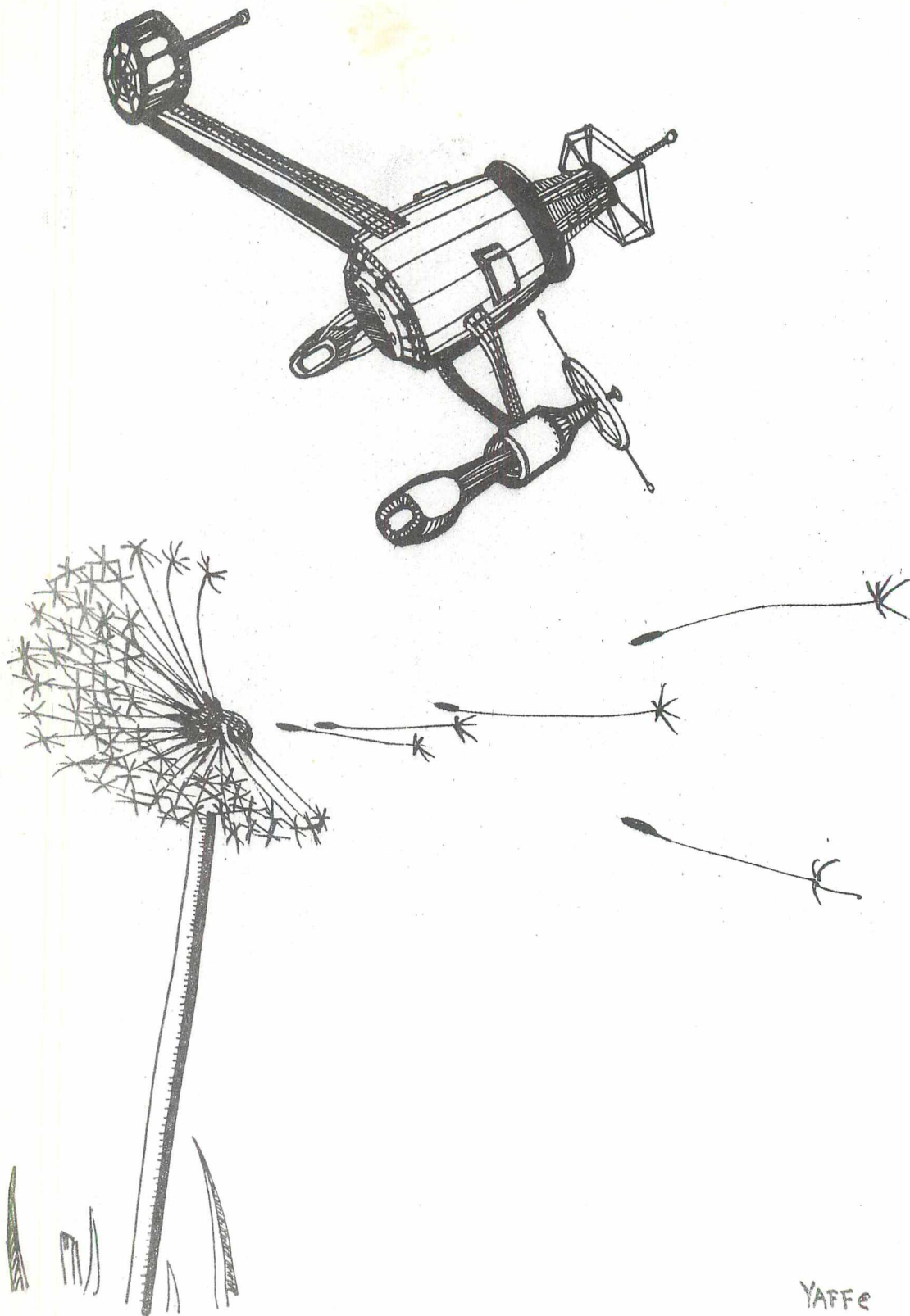
#### Sources

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Willy Ley, The Lungfish, the Dodo, and the Unicorn.  
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Giovanni Garbini, The Ancient World, vol. 2 in the series Landmarks of the World's Art, McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1966.



This flood had better not last as long as that other I went thru. 40 days and 40 nights....





YAFFE