



G.B. GOLDSTEIN

THE SPANISH INQUISITION

THE SPANISH INQUISITION #5

is brought to you by Jerry Kaufman and Suzanne Tompkins. As of July 1; Jerry's address will be 210 W. 102nd St, 3E, New York, NY 10025 (Phone: 212-749-3421.) Suzanne's address, until July 31, is 622 W. 114th St, 52A, New York, NY 10025 (Phone: 212-666-4174.) As Suzle has no definite address after that, all mail should be sent to Jerry. SpanIng appears three or four times a year and is available for contributions of art or written material, letters of comment, trades (in most cases), 50¢ (a new price--subs are simple multiples of 50¢, and if you have a sub now, it is being honored) and editorial whim. Deadline for next issue is July 31. This issue is our June, 1975 issue.

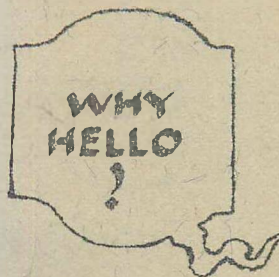


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 for the Ken Fletcher
 drawing.

SOMEDAY WHEN
THEY LEAST EXPECT
IT, BANG...

AND FANDOM
WILL BE
MINE !



If you only glanced at the colophon before moving to more interesting material, please go back; look again. This time, you'll notice, there is a change of address for myself, and an announcement of uncertainty for Suzle. Yes, we are going our own ways, for reasons which are our own, and with results which we can not predict. The break is, if you wondered, amiable.. We will remain, in fact, in very close contact. We'll have to.

We're going to continue to coedit this fanzine.

That may be a perfectly insane decision on our part, but we are agreed that we enjoy doing it together, that neither of us is likely to continue with the hard work and enormous energy output on our lonesomes, and it wouldn't hardly be the same fanzine if either of us did it alone. And the damn thing is just starting to hit its stride. So we continue.

By next issue, Suzle will have a new address. For now, you can send all mail for either of us to my address, and I will see that Suzle sees every piece of mail (and gets her share of all subs.) Trades are a problem. Let's do this, huh? If you've been sending two copies, by all means keep on. If you've been sending one copy to save money or because you thought we were a permanent couple, but would send us two if we were two people whom you were close friends with, please start sending two. If you having sending us one copy because I loc you or because you trade with us in an impersonal way, keep sending one. If Suzle really likes your zine we'll let you know or Suzle will sub. In other words, we're leaving it up to you.

Another thing about the colophon: it shows another price increase. This issue is over fifty pages and next issue will be even larger. So we think 50¢ is quite reasonable. Subs will be straight multiples of that.

In this issue you will find a great deal of material by or about John

2 Bewitched, Bothered

Jerry Kaufman

Curlovich. John's column was lost by the US Post Office, delaying this issue by at least half of a month. When it arrived, it proved to be another blast. I hope that it will excite as much reaction as last time but of a more thoughtful and less personal sort. (John says he will probably cover an author he likes next time.) As for the title of his column, well, it gave us a bit of a shock. When he suggested it we liked it fine. "Close to Critical" is shorter and more allusive than "The Peripatetic Trivialist." But in this morning's mail (June 14) we got Lurk, from Mike and Pat Meara in England, and Pat has a book review column called "Close to Critical." The more astute among you will note at a glance the similarity of titles. Since this is billed as the last issue of Lurk, we hope that Pat will let the title pass on to John. However, if Pat wishes to use the title in future Mearazines, John's column will undergo yet another title change. As for the special section of letters this issue, it was painful to do and we don't want to do it again. This sort of thing belongs in Outworlds. (Gee, sorry, Bill. Stop crying, Bill. The new Outworlds is lovely, Bill

We welcome Jon Singer to our ranks and files of columnists. Jon will be doing what I think of as "technological funnies." This time he's doing fanzine publishing technology, but in future he'll expand into other fascinating areas. Some of our regulars are not here, whether because they were too busy or because I neglected to inform them of the deadline, I'm not sure. But neglect the deadline I did. I could have sworn..in any case, the next deadline is July 31. We will allow extra time for locs, being generous. (Next issue will take longer to produce, anyway.)

The first issue of The Spanish Inquisition that was co-edited by Suzle and me, and was intended to be a genzine (the first two issues were apazines done for CAPRA) was distributed at the Discon. Next issue, therefore, will be the first annish. We're calling it the SpanIsh, and we hope it will be legend in its own time. In addition to the regular stuff by the regular columnists (all of which we are sure will be more than regularly fine) and art by Bathurst, Gilliland, Bell, Fletcher, Waller, Goldstein, Young, Shull, Foglio and Sirois (why, I'm even dazzling myself) we have a superb cover by Dan Steffan and great columns/articles by Rob Jackson (a doozy), Vin DiFate, Mike Carlson and Berta MacAvoy (well, to be honest, the latter is an amusingtrifle). And we have some lovely promises, but I won't embarrass the promissors with details.

* * * * *

"Is that a quotation?" I asked.

"Of Course. Quotations are all we have now. Language is a system of quotations."

Jorge Luis Borges, "Utopia of a Tired Man"

and Bemildred

3

I've been in fandom since 1966. I've been writing letters of comment, occasional articles and a smattering of poetry during eight years of activity (and don't do the math--I've gaffed once or twice without anyone noticing, thanks to faneds who've delayed publication and spread my letters over my periods of inactivity.) I've been to so many conventions that I quit counting. I tried to start two clubs, both of which failed. I almost nominated someone for TAFF once.

Suzanne Tompkins has been in sf fandom since 1967. She and Linda Bushyager started a club in Pittsburgh that still thrives, sends its contingent of fans to cons and its annual attempt at a clubzine to fans. She and Linda also founded Granfalloon. Suzle also has attended more conventions than she can count.

Together we edit a mildly interesting, but fairly new, fanzine.

So on the basis of this enormous record of fannish achievement, we have been selected to be the Fan Guests of Honor at the Balticon. This convention never had much of a reputation before, but there seems to be a new crowd there in Baltimore, and their convention this year got good notices (and large crowds). The convention will be April 16-18 of next year in Hunt Valley, which I assume is a suburb of Baltimore.

We are expected to be entertaining, of course, and we'll likely be on a panel apiece, myself on some serious sf panel, forwarding the cause of Delany, LeGuin and Al Ashley. Suzle will very likely be on a panel discussing the horrible things that can go wrong at a convention, and even wronger getting to and from conventions. (Suzle deserves honoring more than I do: she survived running several Pghlanges, and riding in rented cars with other Pittsburgh fans.) But these are mundane (you should pardon the expression) convention panels. We are working on something bigger.

We are inventing the live fanzine.

We are going to present The Spanish Inquisition as a stage show. We want our writers to present their columns, articles and humorous sallies, artists will draw their cartoons giant-sized and the audience will deliver letters of comment verbally. We hope to have large-sized caricatures of ourselves as covers, and intend to use wits and filk-singers for interlineations. And of course we'll badger those artists and writers to work with us in advance so we can match material and pace the show. We also intend to have a few surprises. Don't ask.

What you can do, if you've a mind, is get in touch with us if you have any ideas you'd like to suggest or anything you'd like to do. We won't accept everything, of course. Like any issue of SpanInq we'll be governed both by time/space available and our unpredictable, erratic taste. We are willing to accept material from people who won't be at Balticon and read or show it ourselves, and we want the same sort of material we have in SpanInq now: serious sf criticism, anecdotal humor, speculation on numerous subjects. Ditto the artwork.

We may even use the stuff we get in a Balticon issue of SpanInq (with the art reduced or redrawn, I suppose.) All in all, I think it will be completely different from anything presented at a con before, and

I hope it makes a sensation, I really do. Programming at cons in recent years has been so repetitive that it became possible for me to skip all and still talk intelligently about it. I know that there must be an infinite variety of things we could do, we imaginative and creative sf fans, to make our conventions interesting to ourselves. If we can at least suggest that there can be an alternative to "Six Authors in Search of a Topic," then we will have succeeded. (Bruce Gillespie was at two conventions here in the USA and neither had the wit to ask him to do his "I Must be Talking to My Friends" program item, ever-popular in his native Australia.)

* * * * *

My apartment keys spell out DUCK.--Freff, in a postcard.

* * * * *

I do believe we are out of the publishing slump. We seem to be getting quite a number of fanzines now, some of them fat personalzines, some of them fatter serious genzines, some of merry old English nonsense fanzines from the various groups (Rats, Gannets, Swansears, etc). The pile increases constantly (five zines in the last two days).

But if you think this is a lot, just wait. New York fandom is on the brink of a publishing burst that'll make your mailbox split its sides (and not just from laughing at my outrageous claims.)

Several fanzines whose lateness is legendary edge ever-closer to publication, while half-a-dozen are in various stages of planning. Two aspiring faneds actually have material in their hands, while two more have begun making earnest requests. The last two I am thinking of are doing personal zines, and have only themselves to blame if nothing happens.

Eight fanzines promised. That would be quite amazing. Eight more New York fanzines to join that lonely example of the small press, Algol.

And, of course, us. Yr. obt. & hmbl fmz, The Spanish Inquisition.



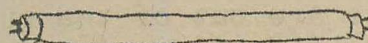
The Technocrat of

I Repro of the Future.

Hopefully this column will deal not with the population problem, but with the pfanzeen problem. I intend to present amusing little notes on various technical subjects, starting with processes of repro and perhaps branching later to various other technologies.

There is a rumour that Xerox is trying to bring out a copier to compete with Gestetner and ABDick...this is perhaps not as hard as it might seem: photoconductive devices are really very simple in concept, and not too complicated in execution. The main ingredients are:

a light source:



a lens:



a photoconductive drum:



a pile of ink powder:



a heater:



and, of course, a few sheets of paper:



That's about all there is to it. There are associated gear trains, paper feed and drive mechanisms, and so on, but if you think this is complicated, you owe it to yourself to look a Gestetner 260 in the guts sometime soon. Then think about the fact that the 260 has been obsolete, obsolete* for many years, and that the new machines are even more complex...

This brings up another thought: suppose we put this process through a couple small changes. First, substitute powdered ditto ink (I know that's not what it is called, but the fact remains that that's what it is. Pigment and binder...) for the regular carbon stuff. The image will look about the same, if you do it right. Now, you say, what the hell does that gain you? Well, if you put in a lens that inverts the image, you get a reversed, unreadable copy. Great. If you have been

*obsolete, obsolete, obsolete

the Breakfast Table

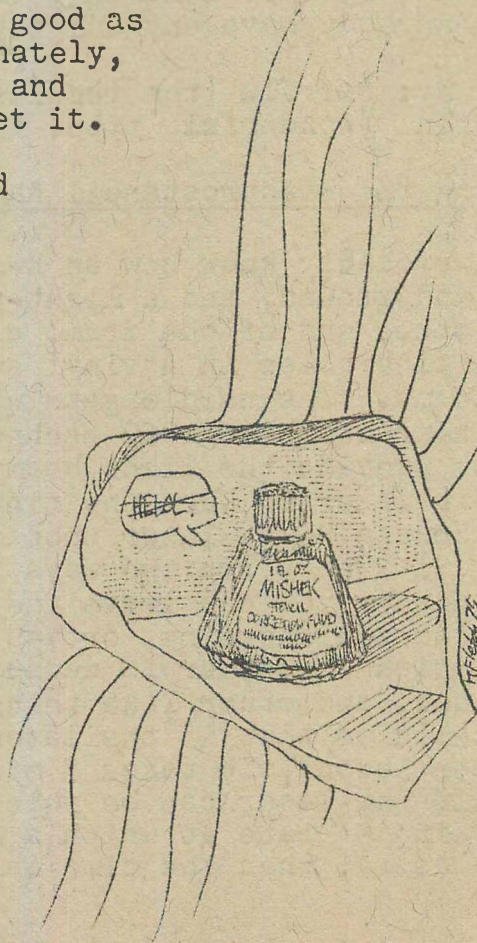
following this, though, you are now realizing that the nice reversed copy is, in fact, a ditto master. Right? Better than that thermofax business. Okay, now think about what happens if we do that, not with a regular Xerox 4000, nor an IBM Copier II, but instead do it with a COLOR Xerox. Full color ditto masters, anybody? I really shouldn't mention this, because somebody will sure as hell do it, and take the credit, but what the hell...

Moshe Feder and I figured out a way to do full color mimeo in one pass with one stencil. The idea derives from the nice new Panasonic color TV tube idea of having little rectangular color dots with black in between. This means that you would print on black paper, but I believe that there are ways around that, as, for example, printing a negative picture on white paper, so that an area which should be blue would have ink on it subtracting out the red, yellow and green. You would have to use transparent inks, but I don't see why it wouldn't be possible.* The main idea, then, is to create a repeating pattern of dots on the stencil, and to know in advance what ink color would be coming through each dot. Of course, you would have to position things VERY precisely so that the ink didn't come through the wrong dots. I envision a drum device with many many tiny ink tubes in it, running from three or four ink reservoirs out to the stencil. I can't see the thing having the extremely fine resolution that current mimeos are capable of, but it would be in full color, and would probably be as good as regular newspaper photographs. Unfortunately, the thing would be hideously expensive, and the machine to make the stencils...forget it.

II Corflu...Gesundheit. (Thanks to Fred Haskell for lovely Ken Fletcher illo.)

Ever overstrike an e with an o and then try to corflu out the crossbar? Rotsa ruck, keed. Moshe and I are thinking about improved corflu dispensers for fine work. Moshe tends to favor a "glue-gun" type of approach, with stencil wax in the shape of a pencil lead, very thin, and a heater at the business end of the device which would melt a small amount of the wax when the trigger was depressed. I tend more toward a device which would take standard liquid corflu and would shoot tiny droplets of it onto the stencil, possibly with an electrostatic gun (these are becoming increasingly

*Currently available mimeo inks are opaque.





popular for computer printers and are even starting to appear in typewriters: see the latest typer from Xerox.)

I figure that each droplet would cover maybe one third to one half of the crossbar of the e, and that for larger stuff, one would either keep the trigger down or have two triggers, one of which would cause several droplets to be ejected. Bear in mind that these devices are not for corfluing out entire lines. The currently available technology is more than sufficient for that.

III The New Spiritualism.

Those of you who use ditto (when I say "ditto" I mean any spirit duplicator, just as when I say "mimeo" I mean any pad type or silkscreen type duplicator) would probably like to have corflu like the mimeo people do. I have been told that such is available, but I have never seen any. Suzle says that there is some sort of tape available which does the same thing, and that sounds neat. Nothing to spill... I don't do any ditto myself, but I am interested, and I figured (before Suzle told me about the tape) that I would try various things to see if I could find a substitute

for corflu for ditto. Well, regular mimeo corflu won't do it. Liquid paper won't do it. I haven't tried nail polish remover, but that just might. Anybody have any suggestions?

By the way: spirflu (the regular solvent used in dittos) is quite toxic. Be careflu (wonderful typo. I think I will leave it.) with it.

IV Doing the Electrostencil Rag.

You all probably know how an E-stencil is made with a drum that goes around and around, and a light-and-photocell to read the original, and on the other end of the drum, a little needle from which a spark jumps to burn tiny holes in a vinyl stencil. Now, this seems unnecessarily crude to me. The needle gets worn out in fairly short order, and the whole thing is about 1950 technology. Why not use a small Helium-Neon laser to provide the light beam that is used to read the original? Why not use a laser to burn the tiny holes in the vinyl? (Hughes recently brought out a He-Ne laser tube designed to sell for \$10 in large quantities...) There are two ways I can think of to use a laser to cut the holes: either you can leave the laser on all the time and modulate the beam to do the chopping, or you can pulse the laser when you want a hole. Which is better is dependent on how many holes you need to cut per second, and other like things. I have done a quick multiplication which tells me that if the laser can be pulsed at a rate of 100,000 times per second, it takes 7 minutes to cut a stencil at 500 holes per inch. If the laser can be pulsed twice as fast (which seems to me to be the kind of rate at which a modulator makes a lot more sense than a pulsed laser), then the time is down to $3\frac{1}{2}$ minutes. Alternately, one

might adopt a system more like the electrical one, in which the laser would be pulsed at some high rate, and then modulated. (My understanding of the method currently in use is that the oscillator which generates the pulses is on all the time, and that the amplifier which turns the pulses into high voltage is modulated.) This might be easier to build.

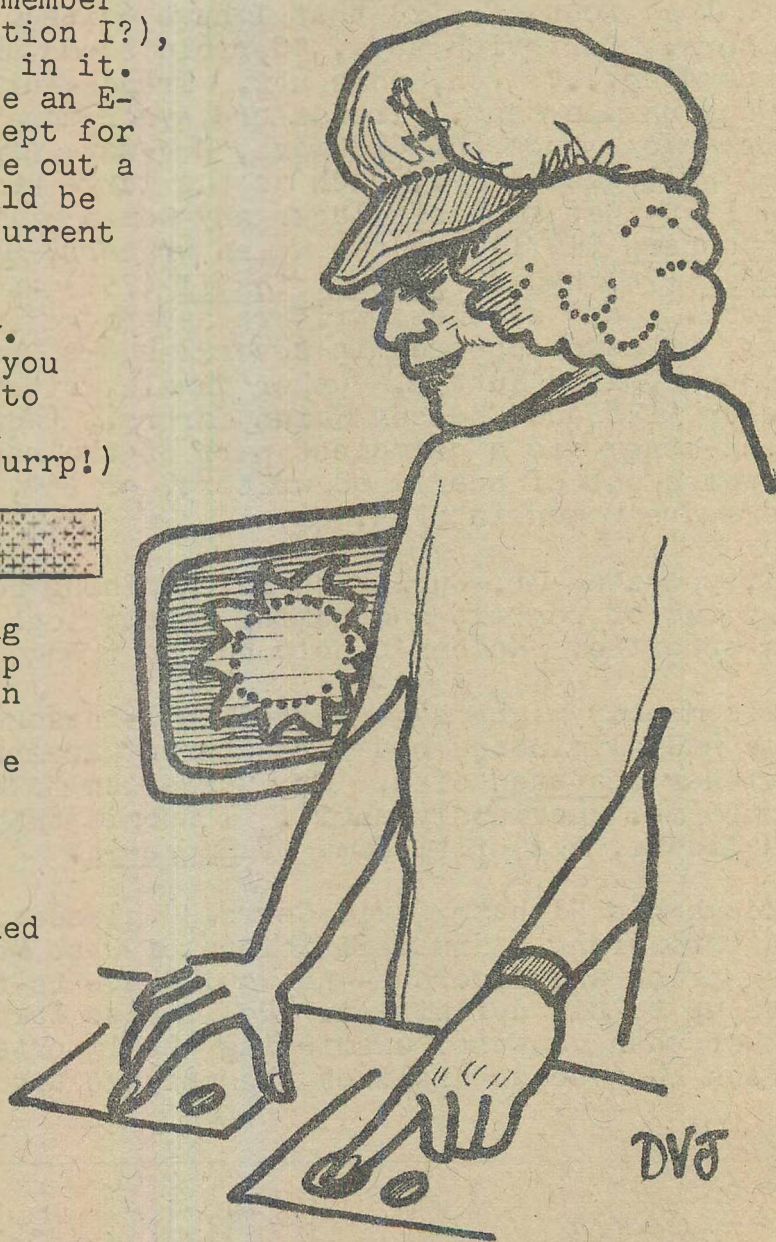
Of course, these are still relatively slow in comparison with the 60 seconds it takes to cut an E-stencil with the latest Gestefax machine, but the quality of stencil you would get is probably quite high.

There is another method I have been thinking about that is much faster and simpler: let's go back to the Xerox 4000 or IBM Copier II, and change the ink once again. This time, what we will substitute is some compound which reacts with vinyl. Begin to see what's coming? When you run the blank vinyl stencil through the machine, it gets this compound on it where a piece of paper would have ink, and when it goes through the baking stage (remember the heater back there in section I?), the stuff chews little holes in it. Zap. In one second, you have an E-stencil. My bet is that except for photographs, which would come out a bit strange, the stencil would be almost as good as the best current E-stencils.

Your Technocrat is tired now. Maybe next time I will tell you how to make an emergency ditto out of materials to be found about the home. (Vodka!! Slurp!)



George Wells asked us to plug Rivercon 75, this year's Deep SouthCon. It's July 25-27 in Louisville, Kentucky. Pro Guest of Honor is Philip Jose Farmer and Fan GoH are the Coulsons. Registration is 5 bucks until July 4 and \$7.50 after, banquet is \$7.50. A ride on a riverboat is planned but resurrection will be extra. Write: Rivercon, PO Box 8251, Louisville, Ky 40208.



The John Curlovich Papers

David Gerrold

The David Gerrold that John Curlovich writes about does not resemble any David Gerrold that I am familiar with. Mr. Curlovich's perceptions are faulted with the inability to see the totality of what he is looking at. He writes of work that is seven years old, of the David Gerrold who wrote The Trouble with Tribbles, not the David Gerrold who wrote The Man Who Folded Himself, When Harlie Was One, Yesterday's Children, Space Skimmer, In the Deadlands, etc. (Three Nebula nominations, two Hugo nominations, one Jupiter award third place, in two years.) Foul, sir. Most foul indeed. Either his prejudice is showing--or his ignorance.

Case in point. Emphasis is not a "first" effort. It is the fourth anthology (out of six) that I have edited. All of them focus on new writers. Curlovich says, "Gerrold seems unaware of trends of major importance..." (Oh, come now. Trends--at least in literature--are always unimportant. Trends are synonymous with fads. When was the last time anyone took the Old-wave, New-wave argument seriously? Relevance is a willowisp.) "...such as the large number of women writing SF." The fact that Emphasis lacks any women writers is only coincidence. Protostars (1971) had two women writers, Generation (72) had 7, Alternities (74) had 2, Alternities II (75?) and a still untitled book have 3 more. Some of these writers have more than one story represented per book, or have appeared in several books, such as Kathleen Sky, Vonda McIntyre, Lisa Tuttle. Other female writers include Pamela Sargent, Evelyn Lief and Chelsea Quinn Yarbro. (Women, Mr. Curlovich, are not a trend--they are a permanent part of the race.) Altogether, a total of 14 women out of nearly 60 writers, or 25%, a higher proportion than there are women in SFWA.

But, you see--Mr. Curlovich is examining both the editor and the anthology out of context and making assumptions about the general case from the specific. He can't help but be wrong.

His comments might have seemed well-reasoned, if the editors of the fanzine had eliminated his first three paragraphs, thus eliminating the reviewer's stated bias. Mr. Curlovich makes no secret of his feelings toward me. Obviously anti-. I submit that they color, and therefore invalidate, his criticisms of Emphasis.

Through his "I hate David Gerrold" glasses, his vision is thus myopic and intolerant. His definitions of what makes a good SF story are far too strict and rigorous--he would have us throw away half the field to live up to his definition. He is also far too preoccupied with style rather than content, dismissing the importance of a work, a book, or a person because he dislikes the package around the ingredients.

Gerrold, Faddis, D'Ammassa,

: responses & rebuttals

But it is the ugliness of Mr. Curlovich's intolerance that I must deal with here. He can review all he wants, pro or con--but even the most savage of reviewers (Lester Del Rey) knows the bounds of courtesy.

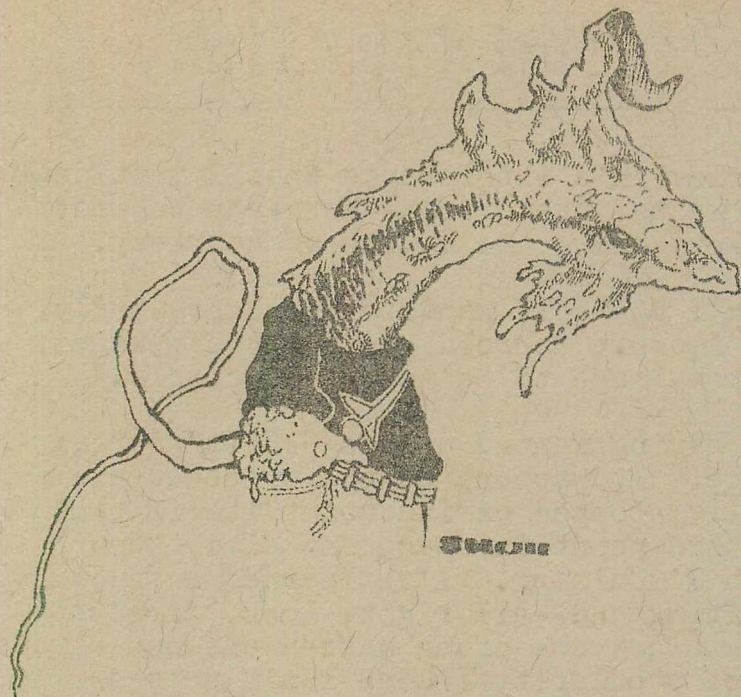
Curlovich says (I am paraphrasing): "Gerrold wants a Hugo very badly. Gerrold wants a more respectable image. Gerrold panders to Trekkies. Gerrold is trying to shake his Trek-image to be more respectable."

Okay, one at a time: I admit to having wanted a Hugo/Nebula/whatever-award-they-were-handing-out. Once. It was one of the wretched excesses of a wasted youth. I really stopped caring about it (if truth be known) sometime in 1968. At this point in space and time, the awards are not the goals at which I'm aiming. I've learned a few things about myself and about writing and--all right, look, first of all, the mechanics of winning the award are often uneven and not always representative of quality--only of popularity (which isn't necessarily a bad thing, but it is subject to the whim of trend.) What the awards actually represent are the books that most of the readers liked the most, nothing more. Recognizing that, it is no longer imperative to have a rocketship or quartz brick on my mantle--that's not the credential I need. What is more important is that my books please the most rigorous and demanding critic of SF I know. Me. I write to please myself. First, last and always. (I believe I know my own faults better than anyone else--I try to avoid calling attention to them.) If in the process, I produce a book that pleases others enough to win an award, fine, I'll accept the statue, brick, plaque or parchment. But the real credential is not the award, it's the book. (For whatever it's worth, the author of a book is really the one doing the honoring; if he considers the award worth accepting, he's honoring the group that gives it; thus, an award is a group's way of asking a writer to share some of his honor with them.) (It just so happens that I consider the plaudits of both the fans and the pros to be quite an honor--but not the sole honor, or even the soul of honor, that a writer should pursue.)

"Gerrold wants a more respectable image." Oh, horse-pucky. Gerrold doesn't want an image--any image. Gerrold wants to be himself. I want to be left alone by fans, want to be able to attend a convention without clotheads playing target practice with my identity, because they've been primed by all the stories they've heard. (But, of course, the stories are always more fun than the truth of it.) I am unconcerned with images--what I want most is to have fun. If others have fun with me, great, the more the merrier. If not, well then, go away--go rain on someone else's parade.

"Gerrold panders to Trekkies." "Gerrold wants to shake his Trek image." Oh, pooh. Trek was very good to me--started my career with a big

Bishop & Curlovich



splash. I'd be a rotten son of a bitch if I didn't acknowledge that debt. Sure, it gave me a cross to bear in that I will always be a Trek-writer to those hardcore fans who resent having SF made popular--but why shouldn't SF be popular?

My involvement with Trek and Trek-fans is based on a desire to show them the same kind of exciting science fiction that I grew up with, that there is more to TV production than stars--there are writers, and that there is more to SF than Star Trek. Trek has introduced thousands of new fans (many of them female--fandom is no longer

90% male and this is a change that has occurred only in the past 5 years or so) to SF. Many of these new fans are even inspired to try writing their own SF because of their enthusiasm--sound familiar? Many have outgrown Trek but stayed on in science fiction. That is Star Trek's ultimate value to the field, it has widened the horizons as well as the appeal. I will continue to tell Trek-fans about the other kinds of SF and urge them to read SF books (even some of mine) as long as they will continue to invite me to their conventions. And in that, I will be in good company, along with Isaac Asimov, Hall Clement, Ted Sturgeon, Harlan Ellison, Larry Niven and others.

Respectability? I think those motivations are pretty respectable. Look--nobody thinks of himself as a bad person. I think I'm okay--I have to, or there's no point in going on. But neither am I the one putting pedestals under my feet--it's fans and reviewers who ascribe importance too easily, then feel betrayed because the writer wants to be a human being and not a statue. (It wasn't me who advertised, "Discover why _____ was nominated for a Hugo.")

In truth, I'm just one more dumb schmuck who tells stories for a living --wants to make the best living he can--and wants to tell the best stories he can. It's someone else who's decided I (or any writer) has to be a source of all magic. Well, that hat doesn't fit any of us. Check our feet--see, real clay!

Look, Mr. Curlovich, if you want to take potshots and see if you can shoot me off the pedestal, fine--but it's your pedestal. You're the one who treats SF so damn serious. (The rest of us are trying to have fun, remember.) At least use fresh ammunition and make sure it's the right caliber. Then, and maybe then, I could learn something, perhaps better my writing, better my ability to reach my audience, and ultimately even be a better person and a credit to my phylum.

But not this way, Mr. Curlovich--it does neither of us credit.

PS**Mr. Curlovich is to be lauded for one thing. He, at least, made an attempt to answer the three basic questions that a reviewer should answer. What was the author (editor) trying to do? How well did he do it? Was it worth doing in the first place?

He did it ineptly, but he's still entitled to one point for getting the questions right.

John Curlovich

First of all, I do not hate David Gerrold. I find him amusing at best, annoying at worst--a gadfly in our ranks reminiscent of no one so much as the late Jacqueline Suzann. She is the only other writer who comes to mind, for instance, who ever tried to use tjis "I just want to have fun/I'm just telling stories for fun" line as a defense against serious criticism. Also like her, Gerrold clearly takes himself seriously ("the most rigorous and demanding critic of sf I know"); and to the extent he does, so do I. It's very nice for him to tell us he's "just one more dumb schmuck" (not altogether inaccurate), but when he tries to claim he's rigorous and demanding at the same time, I've got to figure there's something wrong somewhere. I have a vague suspicion that if I thought him a wonderful writer, he wouldn't object to my taking him seriously at all. I don't recall that he ever tried to talk down the lavish praise he got in the Star Trek zines, for example. The problem seems to be that Gerrold does want to be taken seriously, but without taking the pains to write or edit well. (Why shouldn't my standards be rough? Ted Sturgeon says that 90% of SF is crud, and I agree with him. I may never really be able to raise the level of writing in the field through my criticism, but I'm damned if I can see anything wrong with trying.) If Gerrold wants to cut a gay, care-free swath through our midst, that's fine. But he's got to realize that sooner or later people are going to recognize him for what he is.

As for stories by women in his books, the number of stories he's bought from women for his other anthologies isn't really to the point. Emphasis is the one that claims to feature all the best young writers in the field, and the table of contents makes it clear that Gerrold doesn't think there are any women in that class. This is the point made in the review, and I think its accuracy is really quite self-evident.

Finally, to be quite blunt, I'm not the one who created Gerrold's image as "the Trekkie writer." He has huckstered and promoted his own way to that distinction. At Torcon, for instance, he did everything conceivable (or nearly so) to please the massed Trekkies, often ignoring the rest of the con's attendees entirely. Despite what he says in his letter, the image is clearly one he enjoys, and frankly he's got an awful lot of gall acting self-righteous and outraged when people react to the role he has written for himself and played to the hilt.

Connie Faddis

People like John Curlovich exhaust me. I hardly know how to begin to explain my reaction, except to openly announce to SF fandom that I am

a Trekker, and everyone knows that ST fans eat shit. I can't explain my addiction, except that some mysterious feedback from the zeitgeist of Star Trek (and it isn't Spock-shock, thank you) appeals to my own sense of being. Perhaps it's because I am a visually-oriented person, and ST offered occasionally excellent (and occasionally trashy) science fiction in an attractive visual format. For whatever reasons, I like the stuff, like it enough to write and draw for ST fanzines long after my interest in SF fandom has waned.

John's hostility is symptomatic of the increasingly uncomfortable vibes I get in SF fandom. About a year ago, I felt tempted to become actively involved with the WPSFA club in Pittsburgh again, after several years of virtual gafia. I was immediately labeled the "token trekkie" and engaged in several arguments (not usually initiated by me) about the worthiness of the show and the appropriateness of "trekkies" within the SF fandom community.

At the Discon, I sat in the balcony during the Hugo banquet with several WPSFA people, enduring a tremendous onslaught of barely suppressed rage directed at ST and unconsciously at myself, because the Discon was too big (and ST was being blamed), and because a number of ST-identified people were nominated for Hugos. Now, I am not denying that many ST fans are fuckheads, that they are also hostile, defensive and outright rude; the same goes for SF fans, on occasion, as well. I do not deny that there could have been bloc-voting for ST people nominated for Hugos; I have no information on this. But in fact, I have begun discussions with a number of other Trekkers involved in ST's own conventions, in an attempt to institute some form of ST's own awards for excellence in the fan-publishing categories, in the hopes of relieving some of the tensions, and also because no ST person has a real chance of getting a Hugo as long as SF fans are so hostile. Even the fantasy writers, the pros, have been forced to take advantage of the death of Tolkien to establish the "Gandalf" awards--an appropriate gesture in honor of Tolkien, but, I suspect, also a necessary move to create some separate award of merit for a field which has had considerable difficulty gaining votes in Hugo races.

Of course, John's article is reviewing a book and not throwing slings at Star Trek fans at all. Or is it? The words of denigration aren't there, but the overall tone of the first three paragraphs is hostile. John discusses, obliquely, the facets of David-Gerrold-the-ambitious-writer (who, ghod knows, is no more of a saint or a prick than Harlan Ellison or John Curlovich) (or the beloved Dr. Asimov, for that matter). I am sure that Mr. Gerrold is capable of defending his own motivations if he so chooses. But the attack on Gerrold is a sly, but barely disguised, attack on ST fandom as well, an oblique smearing-of-shit.

CUT IT OUT, FOLKS! Or at least spread it around a bit more, won't you/ Star Trekkers may be the most visible target, but take a look around and see what other special-interest groups are contributing to the outsized conventions and bloc-voting. Watch how "Planet of the Apes" does this year in the Dramatic Presentation category; it may not win anything, but I'll bet there will be at least one nomination. And frankly, the "Ape-ies" have a right to push their show, if they like, as much as Mr. Ellison had the right to display and promote his potentially excellent A Boy and His Dog film.

I will continue to read SF (and I do read it now, people) because it is simply too wonderful to ignore; I will occasionally send art to SF fan-eds, because they are my friends and we share a simpatico of creativity; I will go to Worldcons because they are the only chances I get to visit with some wonderful people who are SF fans, and have become good, though distant, friends. But John Curlovich, and the rest of you aggressive, angry and self-indulging anti-Trekkers: BUGGER OFF!

From a later letter:

I've cooled off now, and I'm not quite as adamant about John Curlovich's fugg-headedness as I was then, but I still feel the letter is accurate enough about my long-range feelings to be published. I'd like to add one note, though; that letter is my own personal response. I cannot be taken as an elected, appointed or even self-appointed representative from ST fandom; for that same reason, I am not able to write an article for SpanInq attempting to explain the continued existence of ST as I had suggested to her--JAK. I can speak only for myself. And some of my views are badly biased by personal disappointment in people that I identify with SF--probably just as unfair to them as labelling me your standard Trekkie would be unfair to me. John has grated on my sensibilities for some time, for instance. In my own opinion, he has all the potential of being another Ellison, both in personality and talent. The world needs and appreciates the talents of such people, and since their uniqueness must stem from their personalities, then the world (and I) must learn to endure the hostilities that emanate from these personalities. I can endure; I don't have to pretend to enjoy.

And you have my permission to send a copy of this letter to John. I am trying to be honest, and honest feedback is a rare item, even when it's negative. John will be what he is; that is only fair. I just wish (being a g-d idealist even after many burnt offerings) that he would stop labelling people, and critique them on their individual merits. Or demerits. But then, that takes a lot more mental energy, doesn't it?

I don't want to make some kind of bible-thumping dictum out of this; it's just my own opinion. I am very weary of not being allowed to be myself at SF cons--half a Trekker, half a SilverBob tripper, Ellison-admirer, Asimov-enjoyer, Clarke-appreciator. All my SF fan friends see is the Trekkie. And if I may say a word in my defense I get jumped on. Instantly. Nobody enjoys that kind of response.

John Curlovich

It's very difficult to know how to respond to something like this except to point out what I thought was obvious from the review: I am not hostile to Trek fandom, merely bored with it. Star Trek is dead, and all the fanzines and conventions in the world won't change that (the proposed movie will be at best a short exhumation, no real resurrection). Granted, the series had a few striking episodes; but even these seem terribly trite and hackneyed after a few reviewings. Television is like that.

I would like to propose a Beverly Hillbillies fandom. We could sponsor large conventions and invite Buddy Ebsen and Nancy Kulp to speak to us, never mind that they don't have much to say. All the women could rush to touch Max Baer's dimples. Maybe some important people would attend (if we paid them to). We could publish fanzines full of pseudo-scholarly articles on subjects like "Mr. Drysdale's Relationship with Ellie Mae".... You see how absurd all this sounds. Yet it is no different, qualitatively or quantitatively, from what goes on in "trekdom". I fully realize that Trekkies have the right to pass their time however they please, and I quite honestly respect that right, but that doesn't change the fact that the way they choose to pass their time strikes me as colossally foolish.

My old Shakespeare professor used to be fond of quoting a statistic which, if it's not completely accurate, at least gives a good reflection of affairs in "Shakespeare scholarship": there has been an article or book-length study of Hamlet published an average of every twenty minutes since the year 1800. I don't think anyone would try to argue that this isn't excessive, to say the least. But at least Shakespeare has some genuine artistic merit; Star Trek was milked of whatever significance it had years ago. The Trekkies are not only beating a dead horse, they have flayed it and are dancing among the bones.

Don D'Ammassa

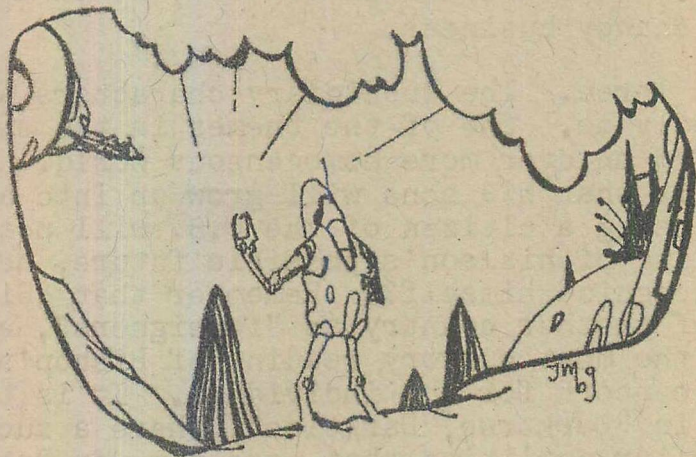
John Curlovich is, normally, a perceptive, fair-minded critic, whose work has impressed me enough to nominate him for the fan-writing Hugo and the Fanzine Activity Achievement Award for writing. It is therefore disturbing to see him engage in such a gross misunderstanding as he did in his review of Michael Bishop's "On the Street of the Serpents" in your last issue. While I too have certain reservations about the success of this novella, many of Curlovich's criticisms seem to indicate two failings on his part--an inability to separate Michael Bishop the writer from "Mike Bishop" the character, and a lack of familiarity with the body of Bishop's work.

Curlovich's criticisms seem to be the following:

- 1) Bishop engages in self-indulgence by casting himself as the central character.
- 2) "The story is a hymn to the military ideal, which is to say killing, without any consideration for moral or ethical concerns."
- 3) Bishop's characters are dull or unpleasant because "he perceives us as having no importance in ourselves."
- 4) He divides his story into four divisions which are often pointless and serve no useful purpose.
- 5) "He uses odd words...sometimes correctly."

An impressive list of indictments, ones which--if accurate--would certainly indicate a story to be avoided. But many of these criticisms are contradicted by the story itself. Take Point One, for example. Curlovich makes no distinction between the author and "Mike Bishop" the character, assuming that the attitudes of the former conform to those of the latter. Perhaps John felt that Jonathan Swift really was advocating the slaughtering of Irish Infants for food in

"A Modest Proposal". Bishop states quite clearly that "I didn't belong in the role I had scripted for myself." So why write himself in as the central character? Simply to demonstrate that the unsavory tendencies portrayed in the story are ones we all share, even Michael Bishop the author: "...the same hatreds, allegiances, and gut fears that move the multitudes move me." "Bishop" is a megalomaniac with a mission, a point



made abundantly clear within the story. When his son is born, his wife is referred to as a "madonna"; and the son is named Christopher. The father of Christ is, obviously, God, with the power of life and death over mere mortals. His second son is named Joshua, the successor of Moses. When "Bishop" successfully assassinates Mao, "the sun dimmed, the air burned, and the ground heaved." Just in case the careless reader still hasn't recognized the character's mania, Bishop closes with a confrontation between the assassin and his son, Christopher, who tells him: "But you aren't Moses...Your people aren't the Chosen People." The destiny of the human race does not lie exclusively, or even primarily, with America. This is a point which is made even more effectively in the recent novelette "Allegiances", and peripherally in the novel, A Funeral for the Eyes of Fire.

Point Two charges that Bishop glorifies the military and killing, and that he is unconcerned with moral or ethical considerations. To prove his point, Curlovich quotes Bishop out of context. The "forward looking young men" of the Air Force Academy to which he refers are enamoured of "ingenuous prophecies," and "the winter night urged me to obliterate the futures they predicted." He compares the military at one point to "a genial Frankenstein monster" and, when "Bishop" criticizes Taniguchi's decision to leave the military, he is clearly bested in the ensuing discussion. In A Funeral for the Eyes of Fire, Bishop tells us that "coercion is the tool of the desperate." Does any of this sound like "a new, young Heinlein," or an apologist for the military? I think not.

I also find it difficult to believe that anyone familiar with Bishop's work considers him bereft of "moral or ethical concerns." "Cathadonian Odyssey" deals exclusively with moral considerations. Markcrier Rains from "The White Otters of Childhood" is "the guilty conscience of a species." A Funeral for the Eyes of Fire is wound around a core of societal and individual moral responsibility and the role of conscience in civilization. "On the Street of the Serpents" fairly reeks of moral dilemma. The U.S. is described as "having gutted ourselves of all rectitude" in Southeast Asia, and as having made "our moral commitments on the basis of a coin toss, or worse." Indeed, the entire novella seems to hinge on a single question of morality, the corruption of youthful ideals in a changing world. I say "seems" because the deeply personal viewpoint of the story does tend to make it opaque at

times. Confessional literature, as Curlovich points out, does tend to be a chancy business.

Point Three. The subsidiary characters are indeed colorless, but designedly so. One of the themes in the story is man's search for identity in an ever more homogeneous world. The central character's concern is that his sons will grow up into an even more colorless world, when being a citizen of the U.S. will not imply any superior stature. Speaking of his son's possible future, he asks, "How, therefore, may he recognize himself?" Remember that "Bishop" always refers to nationals of another country as "foreigners", even when in their own country. Even the most cursory reading of Bishop's other fiction reveals his deep concern for the individual. It is the crucial point, for example, in "Darktree, Darktide", where a succubus robs a young boy of the "peculiar qualities that made him Jon Dahlquist and not somebody else."

Point Four becomes invalid if one grants that the story does in fact deal with the corruption of youth. Only by showing us the various stages of "Bishop's" life can we gain a proper perspective on its corruption. The ploy does not work entirely, I grant, because the story is convoluted enough to confound easy comprehension. This does not, however, reflect on the conception but on the execution. The last point is a cheap shot. I see no reason why an author should feel obligated to debase his own vocabulary to the level of some hypothetical reader. The impression Curlovich gives by the words he extracts is of a cold, intellectualized style, rather than the deeply personal style actually utilized. The implication that Bishop misuses words, presented without evidence, is contemptible.

I would not want any of the above to be construed as criticizing the article for dealing with the author's personal views rather than his ability as a writer. As my own articles have shown, I consider any aspect of a writer's work to be fair game. Nor do I believe that each individual story should not stand alone, or that differing interpretations of the same work may not be equally valid. I myself have misunderstood stories in the past and expect to do so in the future. I don't completely understand "On the Street of the Serpents". But neither does John Curlovich. Before I would condemn any writer for his personal views as harshly as was done in this review, I'd be damned certain that I really understood what the author was saying, and I would at least attempt to deal with an isolated piece within the context of the author's full range of work. By setting up a paper Michael Bishop for dissection, Curlovich has done both himself and the author a monumental disservice.

Michael Bishop

John, I've just read your review of "On the Street of the Serpents", which was forwarded to me by Don D'Amassa, and like him I cannot understand how you so hugely fail to understand the story. My main point is that the "Michael Bishop" in the story, particularly its final section, is not the Michael Bishop that I am (and it hurts painfully, by the way; to be viewed as a militarist when the exact opposite is the truth), but instead a character vastly deluded--who represents not a model for emulation but a frightening archetypal figure who believes his own viewpoint the only conceivable one for all men to hold. And I,

the real Mike Bishop, believe precisely the opposite--that no one individual or ideational fix has a monopoly on the truth. There are innumerable roadsigns in the story to suggest this to a perceptive reader; the main one that I'll mention is that the character "Michael Bishop" assumes the identity of a blind man to kill Mao. Why a blind man? Because he himself--the character "Michael Bishop"; not, I hope, me, the author--is morally blind to the significance and the consequences of the act that he is obsessively, blindly, committing. I am not the hero of the story, John, and I a little resent your raking me over the coals for something which I am not and which the story itself clearly shows not to be the case.

Incidentally, I got out of the Air Force two years ago, after my service commitment had expired, and I am now living free of most organizational encumbrances in Pine Mountain, Georgia, with a wife not in the least dull and two small children who are more intelligent and lively than you deserve to know. But I wish that you could meet us, just to dispell your delusions of what we really are--which are quite as grandiose and unconscionable, by the way, as those of the character "Michael Bishop" in the story.

Finally, Don D'Amassa tells me that you are ordinarily quite a perceptive critic, and I will believe him because I think Don himself quite an astute reader; however, John, before you jump so mercilessly on anyone's work, I beg that you take a little more time to understand it, both for your own sake and the writer's. "On the Street of the Serpents", I will admit, has flaws, but in very few instances are they the ones that you so vehemently detail. Even your perceptive criticisms of this story--it may (just may) be a bit overwritten, for instance--lose their impact in the face of your total misunderstanding of what the story is about.

John, I think you owe me another reading of "Serpents"; it may not improve your opinion of my handling of plot or style, but it ought to disabuse you of your misconceptions about the novella's theme. You'll be surprised, I assume, to find that I'm on your side.

John Curlovich

Most of what I could say to Mike Bishop is contained in my response to Don except for one question: If the people in the story are not really Mike and his family, why is he so offended by what I say about them? Why not just assume Curlovich has made a mistake and forget it? You can't have it both ways.

There seems to be no chance that I might get Don to see my point of view about the Bishop story, but I'd at least like to try to persuade him that I wasn't really as unfair in my review as he seems to think. First of all, there is the question of Bishop the author vs. Bishop the character (it was he himself, it seems, who set up that paper Michael Bishop). Don has had the advantage of corresponding with Bishop; Simply, I haven't. I have no way of knowing what he thinks or feels about...well, about anything, except from his stories. When I first read "Serpents" I found myself shaking my head and muttering, "This guy's got to be joking." When I reread it, just before writing the review, I went out of my way looking for indications that the

intention was satiric. I've now read it a third time and still have found none. Satire demands a degree, usually large, of exaggeration. But "Serpents" reads with great fidelity like the most mindless and impassioned kind of right-wing rhetoric, a mirror-image with no distortion or magnification. I don't mean to be glib when I say that the problem with the story might be that it does too well what its author intended. Any good writer must have a "negative capacity"--the ability to write about viewpoints not his own in a way that is effective and convincing. But when that becomes the dominant factor in a story and there is no compensating factor, such as comedy, a gross imbalance results. To the extent that "Serpents" succeeds as imitation, it fails as satire. The confusion of having a character named Michael Bishop who is not really Michael Bishop only worsens this imbalance, adds a muddled plot to the muddled theme.

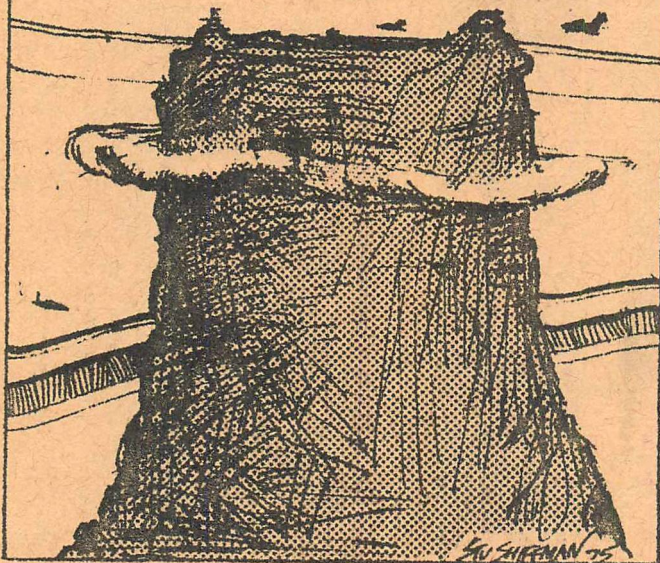
(And please don't throw Swift at me, Don. A Modest Proposal was published anonymously, and its fictional "author" was given an elaborate persona, even down to details of his family life. The main reason Swift didn't use his own name was political, of course. But he was also a good enough writer to know that using his own name would have caused confusion and consternation, thus defeating his purpose in writing the thing to begin with. Clarity is a hallmark of all good writing.)

Beyond this, I really can't accept the premise that a knowledge of Bishop's other stories can make this one seem better than it is. (It might deepen understanding a bit, sure; but Don seems to be claiming a lot more than this.) I've always felt that any story should contain everything the reader needs to understand what the author is trying to do. Why should I have to read "Cathadonian Odyssey" in order to discover what Bishop thinks about the central issues in "On the Street of the Serpents"? This doesn't make sense, and it's a damned shoddy way of trying to make an inferior story appear better than it is. Good writers sometimes write bad stories, and bad writers good ones. But each story should be judged on its own merits. The fact that Childhood's End is a first-rate novel doesn't alter the fact that Dolphin Island is relatively trifling, even though Clarke deals with some of the same themes in it. Or, suppose you had read all of Van Vogt's novels except the ones about general semantics. If you then read World of Null-A, would you be justified in assuming that he doesn't mean what he says there, simply because his other books say something else? Authors, like other people, change their minds about things. Everything in "Serpents" is straightforward, not to say tedious, in its lack of satire. Why should I have assumed anything but that Bishop meant it that way? If it turns out he didn't mean it after all, that's just one more reason for thinking it's a poor story.

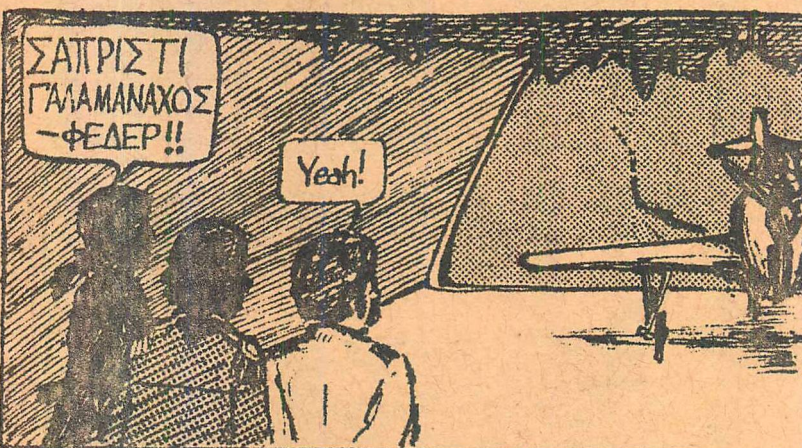
Jerry Kaufman

At last report, John and Mike were exchanging letters privately with mutual respect but no ground-giving...we ran Connie's letter because we both feel that Trek fandom is large and unavoidable, and maybe we should figure out some way of meeting. Your intelligent comments are requested...David Gerrold and John Curlovich make comments revealing whole philosophies of reviewing, and, by implication, reading, literature. Rise up, Bruce, Sheryl, Jeff, Dave...Suzle and I do not agree with much our correspondents say here, but we refuse to write a letter of comment to our own fanzine.

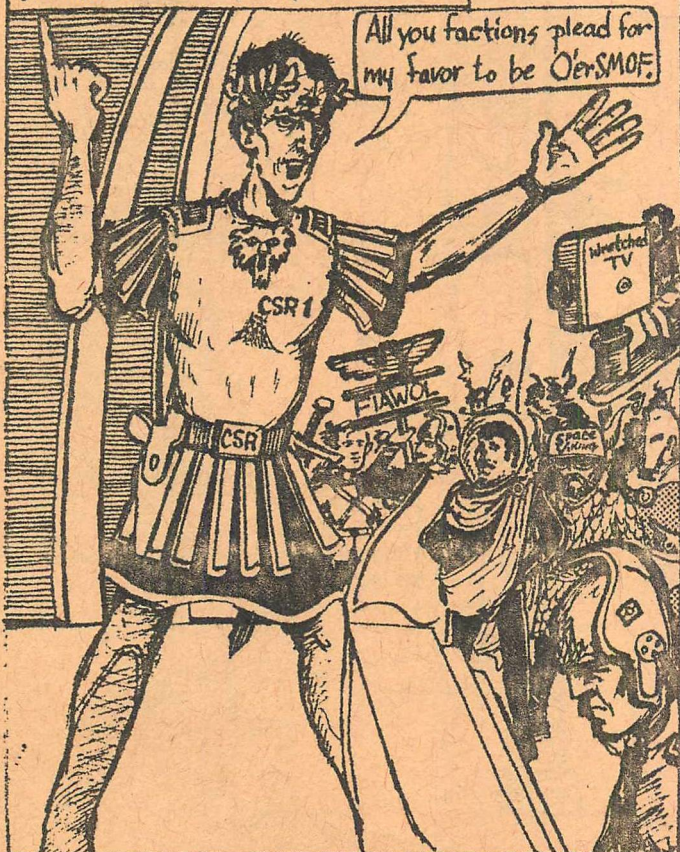
FEDER OF THE FANNISH FACTION



Feder returning from strafing the land of the Mundane...



Meanwhile, CAESAR rails against Commander Feder's influence...



Creeping Federism - its pseudo-fan pretensions - endangers us!



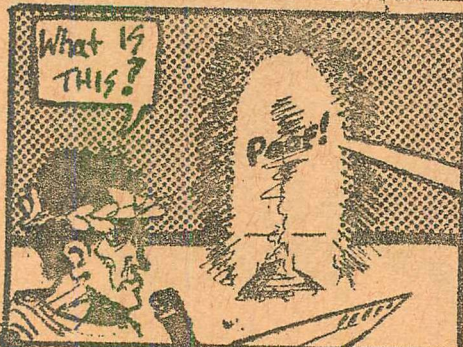
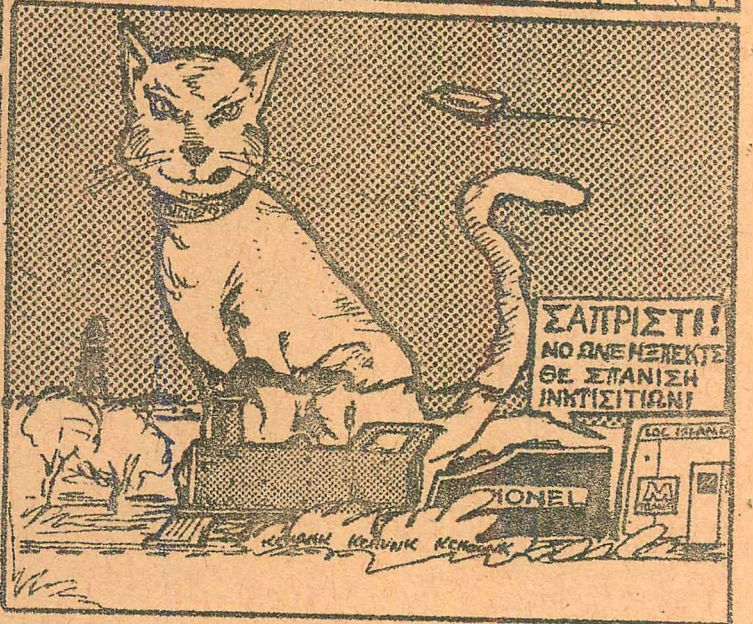
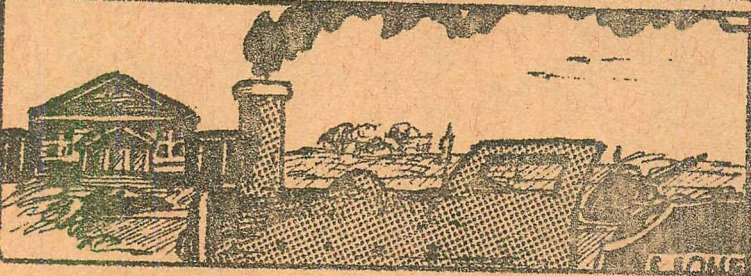
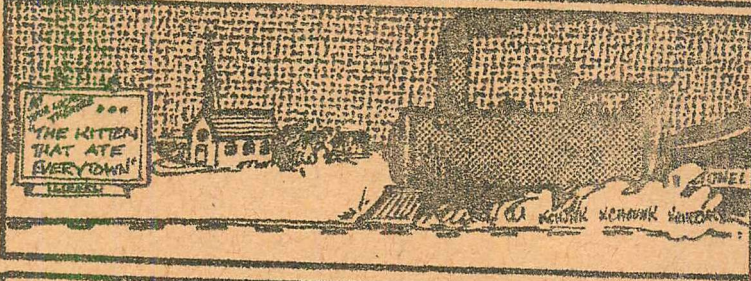
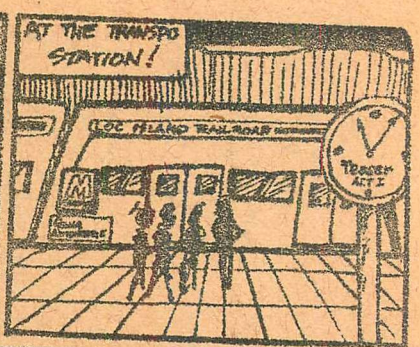
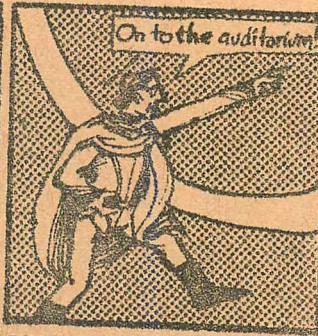
I choose his antithesis - Theodorian of Temple-Waters!

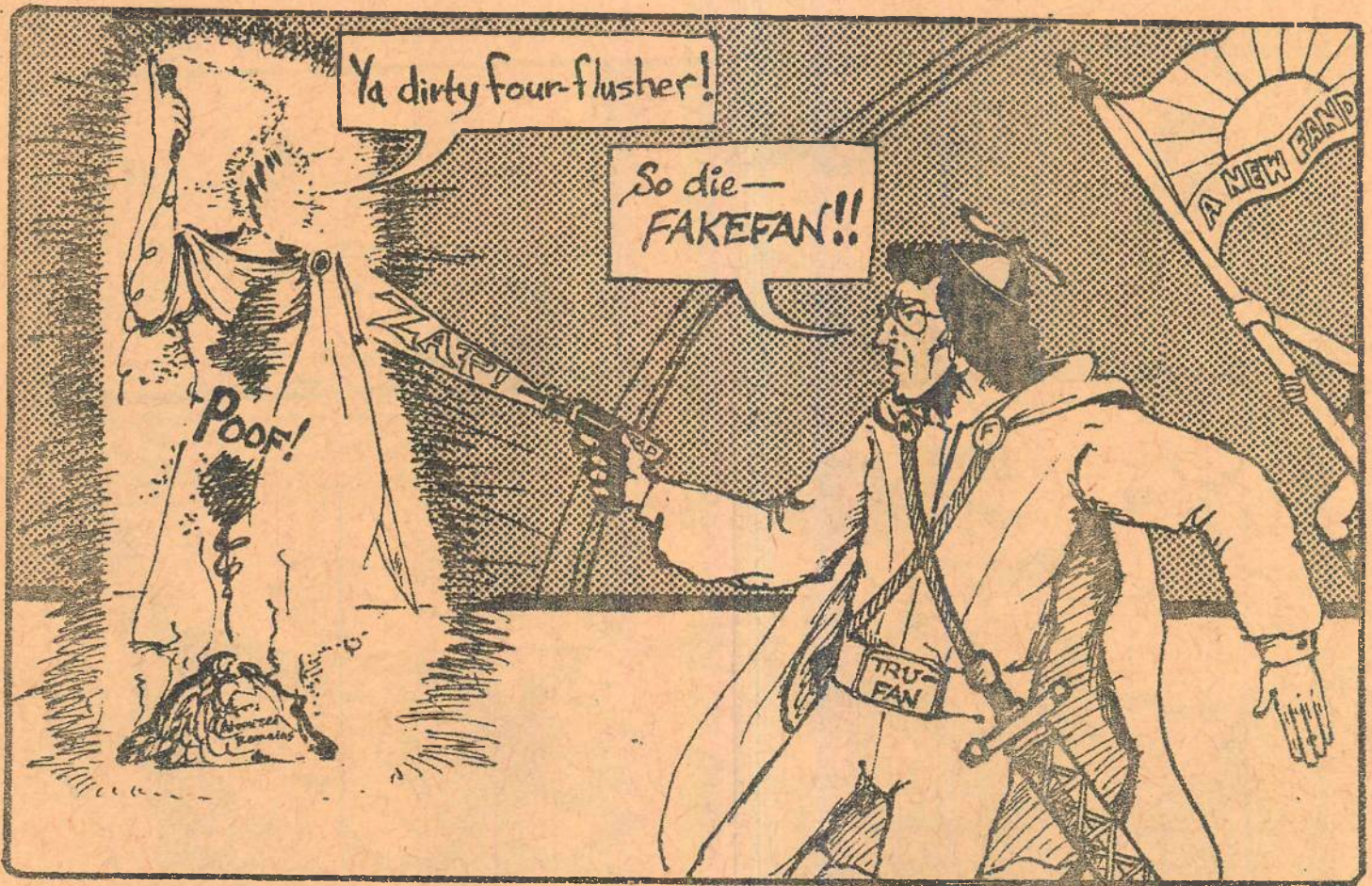


Stunned by CAESAR's choice - Feder and his lieutenants plan his assassination!!

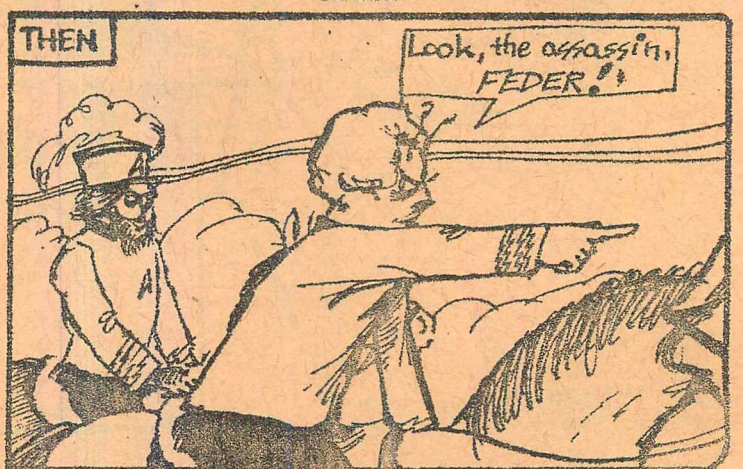
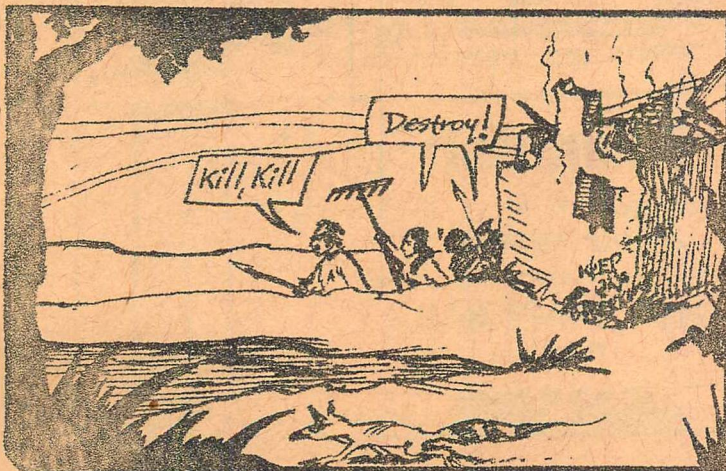
ΔΤ ΙΟΤ ΠΛΑΙ ΘΕ ΣΑΧΕΟΤΤΟΝΕ?

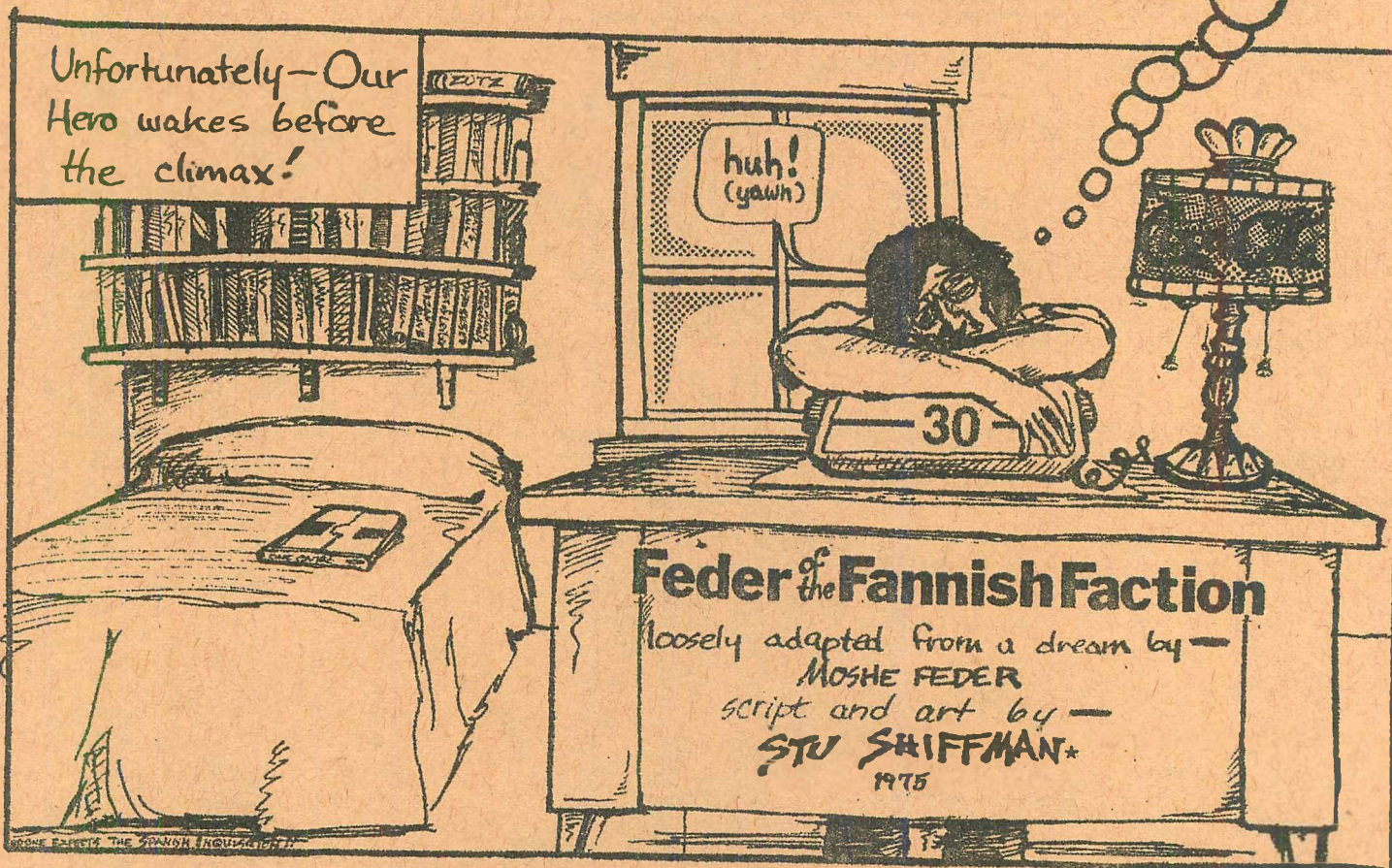
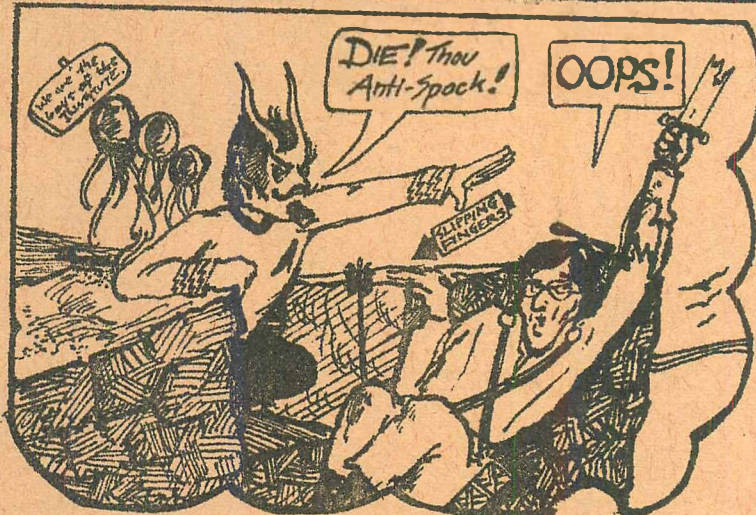
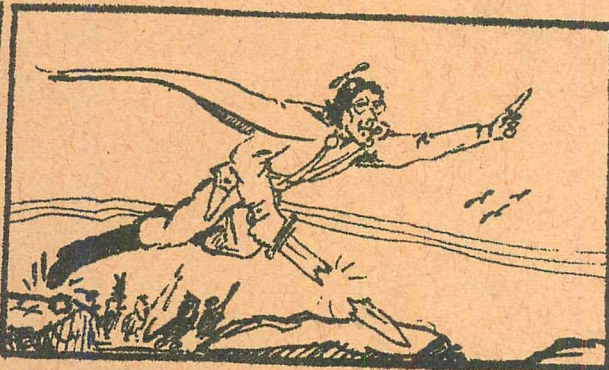
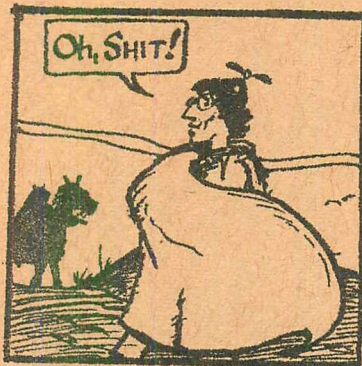






CAESAR's mindslaves — STAR TREK fans and other fiendish Chinese types — go on a mad, destructive rampage upon learning of HIS assassination by Commander FEDER!





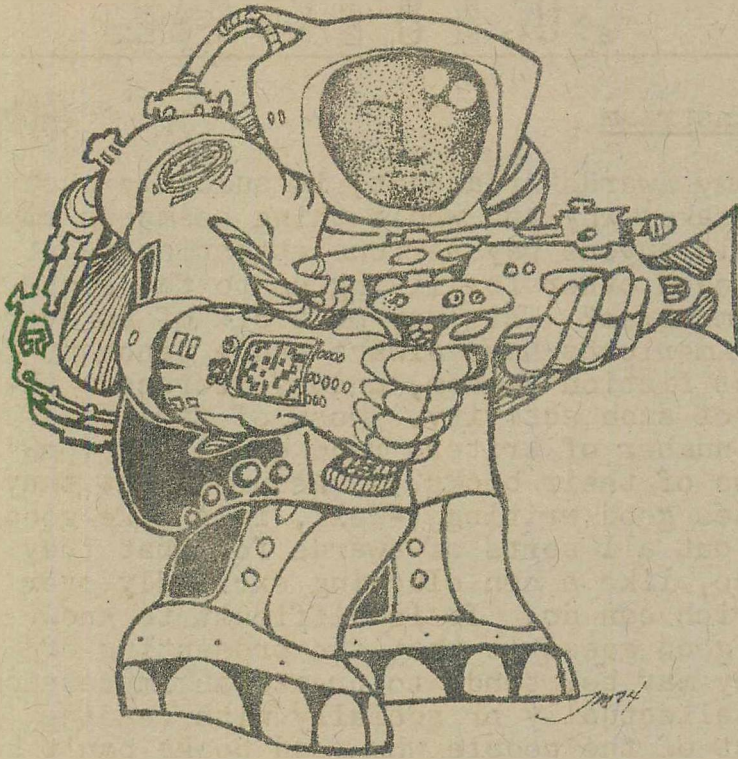
CLOSE TO CRITICAL

Some thoughts on us and the mainstream

While watching the recent Academy Awards broadcast, it suddenly occurred to me (I'm a bit slow on the uptake) why the whole thing seems as empty as it invariably does: why should anyone pay serious attention to a bunch of people congratulating each other for living up to the loose standards they have set for themselves? This may be a bit of an overstatement, but it is true that Americans have always had a penchant for self-congratulation; and science fiction fandom, uneasy microcosm that it is, has more than its share of such activity. Most sf fans read little else, and a distressing number of writers read even less (how else account for the shallowness of their books?). Assured that they nonetheless know what constitutes good writing ("Well, it's like good for me, you know?"), they give out all sorts of awards for what they naively suppose to be excellence, like a hen clucking excitedly over her eggs, unaware what the ostrich can do. It is difficult to know how to account for this, but a good guess is that the presenting of awards, however meaningless they may be, tends to create an impression that there is nothing wrong intellectually or socially with reading nothing but sf, even though most of the people who read books can't be bothered with the stuff. Awards, I suspect, are a means of shouting at the mainstream, "We are important, too!" The mainstream never listens, of course, but since most fans don't really pay it any attention that hardly matters.

Stephen Crane once wrote a poem in which a man, presumably but not explicitly typical, announces to the universe that he exists. The somber response of the universe is, "The fact has not created in me a sense of obligation." For better or worse, this is an apt characterization of relations between the sf community and the mainstream. ("Mainstream" is a fine word. By it can be meant anything from the Times bestseller list to the whole of the mundane world. A very serviceable noun.) They know we are here, but don't care. The general feeling of people in fandom is that they should. But why? To be sure, sf has produced a handful of gifted writers, and the non-sf world has been foolish to ignore them. But is sf in any capitalized way Important? The reaction of "mundanes" is more likely to be that it is laughable. And why is this so? At least part of the answer is our tendency to be chummy, smug and self-congratulatory, ignoring all measures of achievement but our own. Two years ago, not only the sf fans but the writers themselves told the world that The Gods Themselves, a poor novel by a poor writer, was praiseworthy beyond anything else in the field: "I exist." How could a serious observer be anything but amused?

Yet there is also in sf circles a sort of guarded hostility toward the mainstream (reminding one of those unhappy sado-masochists who can never decide which role they want to play). If any writer from outside our tight little circle dares try his hand at sf, he is sure to be denounced as presumptuous in every book review column in the field. This happened to The Andromeda Strain, for instance, even though that book is



at least as good as anything Frank Herbert, say, has written. John Barth's Chimera, a National Book Award winner and the best fantasy novel in twenty years, has been almost universally ignored in the fanzines. The attitude runs something like, "They are not from among us, so they could not know how to write our kind of fiction perceptively.", that most of our own writers can't write well either seems not to matter. The mainstream writer, often barely tolerated while on his own side of the street, becomes actively suspect when he treads on ours, like a honky walking through Watts. Unlike America's blacks, however, science fiction fans have been the architects of their own ghetto. As sad as this is in one sense, to an outsider it must appear horribly ludicrous.

Let us pause to consider a recent example of the ghetto mentality at work. It is Ray Bradbury's introduction to The Best of Henry Kuttner. From the outset, Bradbury emphatically rejects any attempt to prove his assertion that Kuttner was "a master." "This introduction to Henry Kuttner," he writes, "must be personal or it will be meaningless." Why? If I wanted to prove a writer was a master, I'd be tempted to provide at least a little evidence of it. But not Bradbury; he is content to tell us how old he was when he met Kuttner; the names of their respective fanzines; which authors Kuttner recommended to him; that Kuttner's first story was "an instant classic," whatever that is; etc, etc. He even tells us that Kuttner once told him to shut up, an altogether praiseworthy action on that man's part. Now all of this would be fine in a piece titled "My Friend Henry Kuttner," but Bradbury asserts that Kuttner is "A Forgotten Master," and he has no idea at all how to prove it except through cheap innuendo. Along the way several cheap shots are taken at mainstream writers; there are also several kindly explanations of "what the world needs." This includes fewer writers like Mailer and Solzhenitsyn (Mailer is too political; Solzhenitsyn's faults are never clearly explained) and "far more Kuttners." Why does Bradbury feel the need to overstate his case so badly, and to weaken it with all this gratuitous nonsense? Again, it is to create an illusion of legitimacy. Kuttner was a good writer, nothing more. The years will not remember this Henry alongside Fielding and James. If nothing else the tone of his prose was monotonous; whether he was writing broad comedy or downbeat suspense his tone never changed,

hardly the mark of a master. But we ghetto dwellers have to make ourselves feel important.

Still, despite our insularity, we have not escaped a certain amount of "contamination" from the mainstream. Those familiar with the criticism of Mary McCarthy, for instance, will recall how ruthlessly she attacked what she called "ambition," by which she meant the attempts of certain writers to make their work appear more important than it is--the literary equivalent of social climbing. Science fiction, sad to say, has seen a good deal of this sort of ambition lately. One young writer admits to forcing as many arty effects as he can into his stories, hopeful this will persuade his colleagues to award him a Nebula. Another, more established writer affects a dense, pseudo-poetic, metaphysical style which, in the words of one of his admirers, "elevates his thought into Art." This is a disturbing trend. Andre Gide believed that the one thing fatal to an author is falseness of tone, writing in a voice not his own. This is true and, unfortunately, it is what many sf writers are doing as they aspire toward Literature. It is difficult to think anything but that the SFWA is at least partly to blame for this: our young writers are writing to impress one another, rather than trying to be genuine in their fiction. Nor are the veteran writers free of this self-serving pretention. Consider, for example, Harry Harrison's recent Astounding:

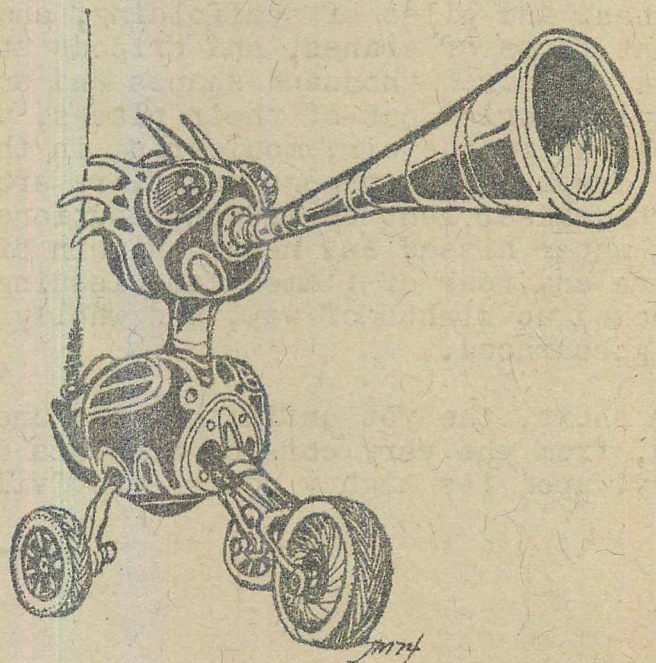
Major premise: Campbell was the best editor the field has seen.

Minor premise: We were his writers.

Conclusion (unstated but clearly implicit): We are the best writers the field has seen.

I can't say that it was the only motivation behind the book, but this oily self-congratulation oozes from every page. Our writers are resorting to cheap tricks in their efforts to impress, and this is cause for at least a bit of alarm.

Beyond this, a more direct form of self-indulgence has crept into the field. Back in the Twenties, Ernest Hemingway discovered the simple, vital fact that in an age of total publicity it is personality and not talent that matters in a writer. Papa is gone now, of course, but Norman Mailer is carrying on the tradition, and so are a number of well-known sf writers. Isaac Asimov's posturings and buffooneries at



conventions have earned him a place in fandom's heart that his fiction alone would never have merited. Ellison, Harrison, offutt..... an incredible number of our writers have turned into entertainers, monsters or clowns. Many fans eat this up, of course, but that doesn't make the trend any less unhappy. I tend to think Horace had the right attitude: "I stayed home and wrote."

Let me end this on a personal note. I am aware that many will find these comments harsh. But that harshness, largely, is deserved. Petronius wrote that civilization is based on the pursuit of the triple pleasures of the flesh, of conversation, and of art. SF fandom is the only place in my experience where these can be found with any real abundance or frequency. When something threatens that, my urge is to lash at it as fiercely as I can. For if fandom continues to absorb only the bad qualities of the mainstream world, we all will be the worse for what we lose, and I for one will be profoundly sad.

--John Curlovich.

"The first shock of a great earthquake had, just at that period, rent the whole neighbourhood to its centre. Traces of its course were visible on every side. Houses were knocked down; streets broken through and stopped; deep pits and trenches dug in the ground; enormous heaps of earth and clay thrown up; buildings that were undermined and shaking, propped by great beams of wood. Here, a chaos of carts, overthrown and jumbled together, lay topsy-turvy at the bottom of a steep unnatural hill; there, confused treasures of iron soaked and rusted in something that had accidentally become a pond. Everywhere were bridges that led nowhere; thoroughfares that were wholly impassable; Babel towers of chimneys, wanting half their height; temporary wooden houses and enclosures, in the most unlikely situations; carcasses of ragged tenements, and fragments of unfinished walls and arches, and piles of scaffolding, and wildernesses of bricks, and giant forms of cranes, and tripods straddling above nothing. There were a hundred thousand shapes and substances of incompleteness, wildly mingled out of their places, upside down, burrowing in the earth, aspiring in the air, mouldering in the water, and unintelligible as any dream. Hot springs and fiery eruptions, the usual attendants upon earthquakes, lent their contributions of confusion to the scene. Boiling water hissed and heaved within dilapidated walls, whence, also, the glare and roar of flames came issuing forth; and mounds of ashes blocked up rights of way, and wholly changed the law and custom of the neighbourhood.

"In short, the yet unfinished and unopened Railroad was in progress, and, from the very core of all this dire disorder, trailed smoothly away, upon its mighty course of civilization and improvement."

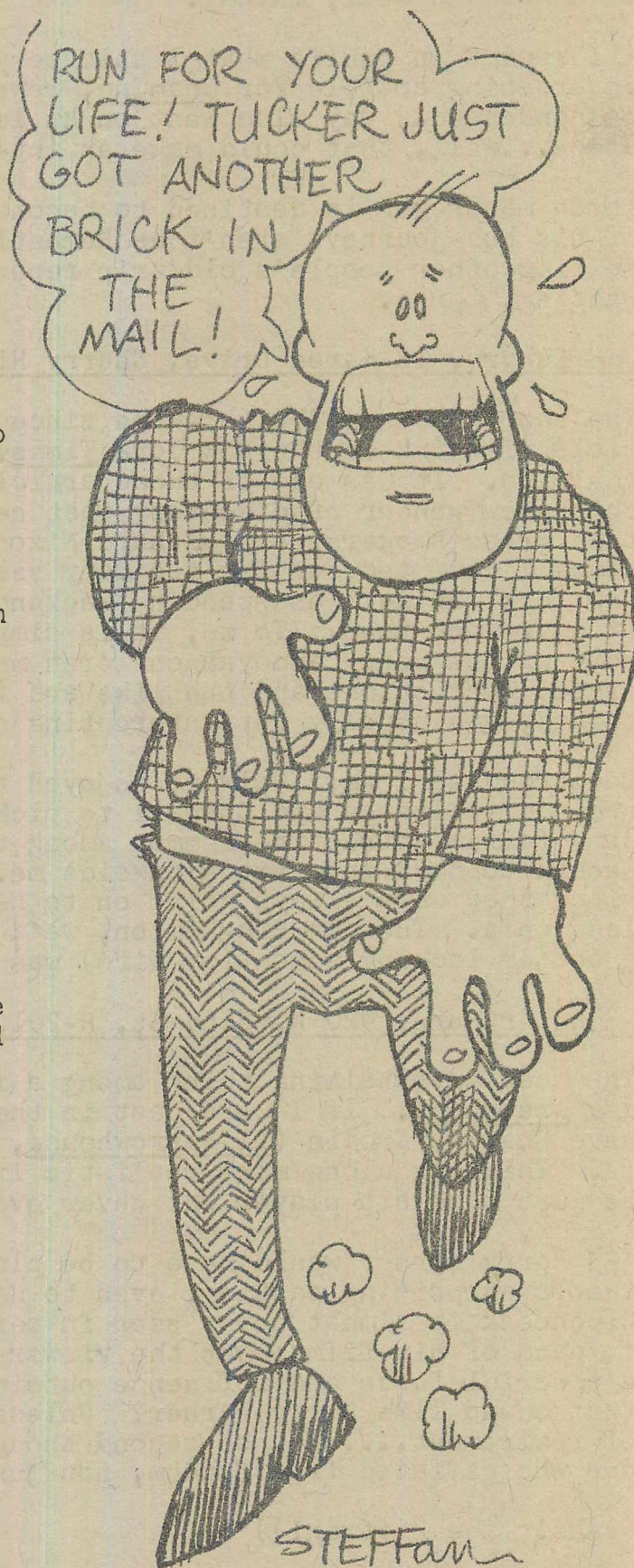
--Charles Dickens, Dombey and Son,
1846-1848

((This is Jerry, conducting the lettercol. I will not be initialling my responses, but Suzle will, if she has any. We start out with some late letters on #3.))

Jay Cornell, 1420 Cambridge Rd.
Ann Arbor, Mi 48104

It is strange to type "1975." It is due, I think, to the fact that I first remember becoming conscious of the year as a date in a series of such back in the early and middle sixties. Anything past 1970 is The Future, when we were to have atomic cars and disposable clothes and supersonic transports and 3-D tv and all. Well, so much for that...It all seems pretty silly in retrospect, doesn't it? I sometimes miss the blind optimism in technology and industry, which was a great comfort to me then (and was one of the reasons I got into sf), and I especially loved the Artist's conceptions of all those wondrous things that were always in the paper and the magazines.

One of my classes last term was an oddity called Philosophy of Technology, and one of the subjects was Paolo Soleri, who designs large one-piece cities and has many valid points supporting them buried in a murky expansion of the philosophy of Teilhard de Chardin. Anyway, I think his arcologies are an excellent idea, and with another guy in the class I wrote a 20 page paper on them. I knew this would be difficult considering that the professor seemed to know the subject well, and only when we were well into it did we discover that he (Prof. Skolimowski) and Soleri are great friends and in fact Skolimowski is the Resident Philosopher at Arcosanti, the small arcology which Soleri is building in Arizona with volunteer labor. So our choice of topic was pretty stupid considering this, but I



think we did well, anyway.

((I repeat in public what I said to you in private: this would make an interesting article for SpanInq, rewritten for a fan audience and maybe condensed. Jay also went on at length about Gravity's Rainbow, but space...well, that could make an interesting article, too, Jay.))

Loren MacGregor is destined to become fandom's own Jack Kerouac, and if his bus-journeys aren't as Romantic, they are funnier. Instead of selling other people's old trip reports, he should write his own. I'm waiting, Loren.

Don Lundry, 18 Karen Drive, Cherry Hill, NJ 08003

The short note on 37¢ threw me since I'd just finished reading an article (I think in the New York Times) about how WONDERFUL travel by bus could be. It was one of those articles written with only the kind of shiny-new wonder of discovery that comes to religious zealots, first time grass smokers, and Richard Nixon diehards. It left me rather cold since I commuted for far too many years by bus an hour each way into New York, as well as spending weekends coming home from Rochester, N.Y. (8 hours) on them. To me, it is simply a means of transportation and some of the petty annoyances Loren mentions like closed terminals, missed connections and the like are fairly normal. I must admit, though, you usually get interesting conversation.

Lecherous as I am, I always enjoyed the trip from Rochester since we stopped at Ithaca and Cornell to pick up students. There were usually some fairly attractive femmes among them, and I was generally lucky enough to have them sit alongside me. The romance never lasted long since they were always going on to New York and I was heading for Philadelphia. Thus at Binghamton, we'd always split. *sigh* Of course, a better looking woman (my wife) was waiting for me at home.

Bruce Arthurs, 920 N. 82nd St, H-201, Scottsdale, Ariz 85257

The most entertaining thing among a large bunch of entertaining things was Wretched!. If I were cast in the thing, wishful thinking would have Charles Grodin (ll Harrowhouse, not The Heartbreak Kid) playing me. Thinking along more realistic lines, though, it would probably be just some bit player who never even got his name in the credits.

And Harry Warner would have to be played by Alfred Hitchcock. No doubt that's surprising casting, even to Harry; but consider for a moment: Hitchcock is almost never seen in person, and only for a few seconds in each of his films; yet the viewer knows that his presence is there, a powerful force and influence outside the camera's viewpoint. Doesn't that sound like Harry Warner? Unless you get Greta Garbo to come out of retirement..... No, on second thought, Garbo would have to play someone who gafiated from fandom, not just secluded from it.

((Aha! Lee Hoffman!))

Pauline Palmer, 2510 48th St, Bellingham, Wash 98225

Nostalgia is strange. But I think there's a lot more to it these days than simple nostalgia. For one thing, people are tired, and a bit

frightened, of everything being, literally or figuratively, plastic. And worsening the situation are all the current and projected shortages of materials so that you don't actually know that being able to get something today means that you'll be able to get it tomorrow or the day after. In fact, people are becoming downright paranoid about shortages. We've now actually accelerated to the point where this year's glass jar is virtually a collector's item. Have you started counting how many grocery or drugstore items that you regularly buy have gone from glass to plastic containers in the past year or so? We recently met a man who says he buys anything he can in a glass bottle or jar--his family uses the contents and then he takes the empty container down to the Old Town "antique" shops here and sells it, usually for at least half what he paid for it originally.

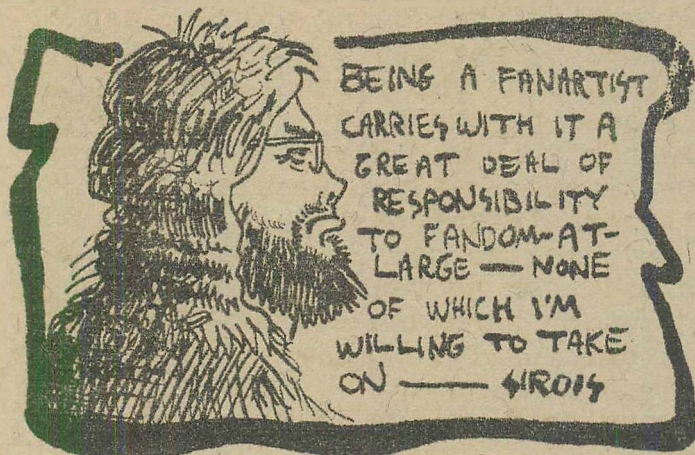
And a bumper sticker I saw the other day said, "Live in the past, it's cheaper!"

Several years ago our local tv station had a cartoon package that contained a large number of Mighty Mouse cartoons. We divided them into three distinctly different periods of creation--the modern ones, which weren't very good; the middle period, which was pretty well done; and the old J. McDonald/N.Eddy operetta spoofs with MM singing, "I'M COMING" as he flies through the air to rescue PP who all the time is singing "Carry Me Back to Old Virginia" while the train or buzz saw or whatever else Oil Can Harry had going that particular time comes nearer and nearer. These were, of course, by far the very best of all. Ah, many the morning we were all late to work because we'd been glued to the tv watching one of our favorite episodes... But alas they sent back that package in exchange for a far inferior one containing, among other things, copious dull Dick Tracys. So we changed channels and are now on a George of the Jungle kick ("Aren't you going to rescue Ursula now, George?" "Who Ursula?" "Your mate, George." "Oh, you mean funny little guy, long hair, never shaves?"). On mornings they show Tom Slick instead we're all a little bit grumpier than usual.

The Binghamton Broom-Dusters sound like they should be a curling team, not hockey. And speaking of team names, our rugby team here is called the Chuckanut Geoducks. Ever see a geoduck? I think they're trying to tell us something...(another bumper sticker reads, "It takes leather balls to play rugby").

Darroll Pardoe, 24 Othello Close, Hartford, Huntingdon PE18 7SU, UK

The Washington Zoo sounds as though it is very much like the London Zoo--your description could quite easily have been talking about the London one instead. For one thing, London has an aviary that people can walk through and see the birds flying about quite freely. An umbrella is a recommended piece of equipment for such a walk, though; you never know what might hit you. And London, too, now has a pair of pandas (as of last year). As you can imagine, these pandas are just about the most popular creatures in the zoo. Last time we were there we could hardly get anywhere near the panda cage, there were such throngs of people crowding around watching their playful antics. Eventually we managed to fight our way to the front, whereupon the pandas stopped playing and settled down to eat their bamboo shoots, or whatever it is that pandas eat. I suppose the popularity of pandas is because they are the exact replicas of what most people's conception of a furry, cuddly animal



should look and behave like.

Our favorite part of the London Zoo is the nocturnal small mammal house. This is a building without any windows, where the lights are turned on at night and off during the day, so that the animals inside (being nocturnal) are most active when the zoo is open to visitors. There's a rather boisterous armadillo we always look out for when we're there. They also have an old, very sedate wombat.

((Darroll also goes on about a Spanish movie called The Spirit of the Beehive, which he says is very good, and which I've seen mentioned other places recently.))

Sandra Miesel, 8744 N. Pennsylvania, Indianapolis, Ind 46240

Ginger's "game" is a fascinating idea. (Why don't we ask Moshe Feder to produce it?) But I had not the slightest difficulty thinking of an actress to portray me: Dorothy Tutin who was Anne Boleyn in the Six Wives of Henry VIII. Now if the question had arisen many years ago when I was in high school, I would have said Susan Kohner. This young lady, long since vanished into obscurity, was a virtual double. You can check this for yourself if you ever watch Imitation of Life, The Last Wagon, or To Hell and Back on the late show. On the other hand, Buck Coulson claims I resemble Gale Sondergaard, an old-time star of cheap horror movies who obviously relished villainess roles.

My college friends and I had a similar project. We managed to work some 90 associates into an open-ended medieval fantasy. (This was pre-McLuhan, remember.) One plotline centered on the unrequited love of the Red Witch of Logres (me) for the King of the Sapphire Country (a Notre Dame guy who didn't know I existed). There was something very satisfying about depicting one's friends and foes exactly the way one saw them. eg: Michael the Valiant, Prince of Loras vs. the Vile Ogre Despair.

((I saw Dorothy Tutin in Savage Messiah, and agree that she could very well play you. She has an inner strength...by the way, we've been poking through five-to-ten-year-old fanzines, and are amazed to find ourselves and others referring to you as "Sandy." I cannot now remember ever calling you that, but there it was in print. Sandy Miesel.))

Tony Isabella, 224 W 49th St, Hotel Consulate, NY, NY 10019

I've been reading The Spanish Inquisition #3 on and off since you gave me a copy at Infinitycon. I enjoyed it. Lots of good writing and a maturity I'd always hoped I'd see in the comics fanzines I used to contribute to by the dozens. The comics fans seldom went beyond the hobby, it seems. You couldn't really say you knew some comic fan until you met him or her. Sometimes, not even then. The comics fanzines, at

their rare best, were an outlet for discussion of the medium. Today, they aren't even that.

doug barbour, 10808 75th ave, edmonton, alberta t6e 1k2, canada

john curlovich is new to me. but in two days two fanzines have had pieces by him that i found damn interesting. good, good. i like people who still like to talk about sf in a fanzine, & when they can do so with clarity & intelligence i'm delighted. i'd like to see him do some more thinking on paper about clarke; i suspect he could tell us a great deal. meanwhile, he has increased my respect for the author & the story, & entertained me as only good critical writing can in the process. that's good secon, surely.

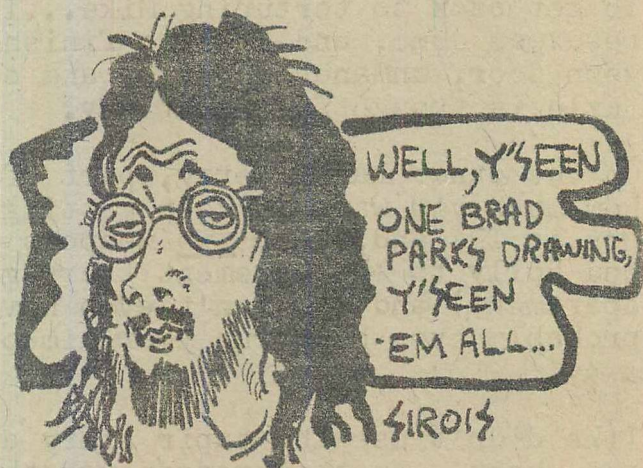
i was interested in your remarks on silverberg's recent stuff. you're treading into dangerous waters when you start getting close to what really amounts to a form of psychoanalysis of the author, i believe. & once again, trust the work, not the writer. i have just read silverberg's very fine "Schwartz Between the Galaxies" in Stellar 1, & it seems to be dealing with some of the same themes as the stories you mention, but coming at them from a slightly different angle. for one thing, there are a number of good reasons for schwartz to feel as he does, & the ending is symbollically right, & in that way seems to fulfill the story, as perhaps the endings of the Born with the Dead novellas do not (see joanna russ on this in F&SF).

also enjoyed "suzlecol". i can sympathize with both sides when it comes to fanguage. but i've begun to figure it all out--i think--so am not as bothered as i was at first by the special lingo found in all zines and fangatherings.

((We also heard from Tim Kyger, who spread egoboo freely and expressed his liking for Zardoz: "The film DIDN'T insult sf, sf's conventions, or the intelligence of the audience." Now, on to the current letters, beginning with the following surprise.))

Bill Bowers, Box 2521, North Canton, Ohio 44720

I have one comment...and this concerns the very effective but totally inaccurate cover. Obviously Ross has chosen to exaggerate...but this is ridiculous! I mean, to those of your readers who haven't had the ~~mis~~...err...good fortune to meet both JK & MG, this pictorial rendition would lead them to suspect that Michael Glicksohn is actually taller than Jerry Kaufman. This, I state simply but firmly, is a total falsehood. For it is well known that while Jerry Kaufman towers to such heights as to very nearly approach the level of my kneecap, it is equally well known that Michael Glicksohn, on the rare occasions he has been seen sans hat, is



not all that much taller than a bottle of IPA, himself.

Obviously, Kaufman, as you did once before with those grossly exaggerated stories of my supposed advanced age...you are once again (with the aid of your cover artist) setting out to create deliberate and totally unwarranted false myths. As the self-proclaimed keeper of Fannish Integrity, I must of necessity, no matter what the cost in terms of personal sacrifice to myself, expose this dastardly deed on your part.

Consider yourself exposed.

(Besides, such a big deal about two very, very short subjects!)

((You must have been feeling your Geritol the day you wrote this, Bill. I never spread any stories about your age. I only said you had a lot in common with Bloch and Tucker...same brand of ear trumpet, same nurse, etc.))

Dr. Susan Wood, Dept. of English, University of BC, Vancouver, BC V6T 1W

Kaufman, you fiend!

I can only be grateful that Ross Chamberlain revealed the Inquisitorial soul so cleverly hidden behind that inquisitive, fuzzy exterior!

Our main weapon is IPA?

Well, I suppose (though I must Disapprove) that the Torture (you Fiend in Faned's hide!) was Worth It. Mike's has to be one of his best locs ever (and that old typer of mine, which by rights should've fallen apart somewhere in the middle of Energumen 2, has seen a lot of good locs pass through its rollers.)

If I'd been the faned, I'd've cut out the Incident of the Tumid Tapir, and made it into a separate article. It is something of a tribute to the excellence of the actual articles you do get, AND a tribute to your respect for the loccers, that you printed the letter as a letter. (And left Elizabeth Buchan Kimmerly's intact. She is, indeed, organic; something with both wide, embracing branches and bright flowers, to do a Sandra Miesel-type sensie.)

To get back to torturing Mike...I'm sure that, as soon as the Evil Deed was done, and the loc finished, that kindly Suzle opened the dungeon door, unmanacled Mike, and scoured New York for cases of IPA. Suzle is thoughtful, that way.

On the other hand, Jerry, part of me is a faned too; part of me knows how much you want to keep getting locs like that. So: our main weapon is IPA and...Our two weapons are IPA and CATS!! Just add Shaw(n) and Holly to the basement there(gee, I never saw that part of your apartment) and you won't even have to manacle the Boy Wonder! He'll probably even help run your mimeo for you, if you take the comfy cats away!

((We didn't use the tapir story as a separate article because it was too short. Another reason was that we never thought of it.))

A trivia note to add to Elizabeth's letter and Ginger's column: in Canada, the Princess on Howdy Doody was played by Christelot Hansen, who went on to become a member of the Canadian Olympic Equestrian team, and wrote a book about it. Her mother, whose name I won't attempt to spell, teaches Thai dancing in Toronto, and has written an excellent exercise book.

Which leads me into a basic comment on how I differ from females of My Generation (class of '48). We didn't get a tv til I was 10 or so. I vaguely remember Howdy Doody, and certainly Barbara Hamilton's role as Willow the Witch, a very funny and strong character. But by and large, tv bored me then, and still does. I bought what looks like a 1951 experimental model for \$3 from some students of mine who were going to Morocco: in six months, I've seen Nixon resign, I've seen Rhoda and Mary Tyler Moore once each (the latter when I had menstrual cramps and couldn't study; the character of Sue Anne made the cramps worse) and an utterly marvelous BBC version of Alice in Wonderland, with Peter Sellers as the March Hare, Dudley Moore as the Dormouse, and Spike Milligan as the Gryphon, among others. Otherwise, the tv holds up my plants, blank-eyed.

But I digress. The point is, instead of growing up looking at tv and knowing I'd grow up to be "either Lassie's mother or a dippy wife," I read. Everything. Soupcan labels. Shakespeare, precociously. The Ronald Hambleton bushpilot series--Canlit, which inspired me a strong urge to move to Abitibi and learn to fly a light plane, an ambition I hold to this day. I read sf, and still remember the utter incomprehension with which I faced the library clerk who took away Lucky Starr and the Moons of Venus and The Rolling Stones from me (I was 8 at the time; that was the year the local library opened, and I entered paradise). "You can't read those, dear," she said. "They're boys' books." Which says alot both about rolemodels and sf! And I took them out anyway.

Mostly, though, I read English books, having an English Mum and an English Granddad who sent me books, and books, and books for Christmas and birthdays. And listen, Ginger, when you get that \$10 thou advance, pick up one for me, too, ok? Because the images of women in British children's books seem to me to be quite different from those in US books (at least until the recent spate of Norma Klein type "relevance"). (And always with the exception of the Laura Inglis Wilder books.) English children's books seem to have a lot of strong, role-model type heroines. They also tend to feature families of children having adventures together--usually with an older-brother leader, but with the females having strong roles, right there centre-stage. I remember with particular affection Captain Nancy (her real name was Ruth, but she wanted to be a pirate, and pirates were supposed to be ruthless) of the Arthur Ransome series. She could sail, build campfires, climb up ivy-covered walls to sneak in her bedroom window, and pitch a tent with the best of them. And since I liked doing all these things, too... There's a particularly lovely episode in one of the later books (maybe Pigeon Post, but I don't remember) in which Nancy falls ill for several weeks. Her younger sister Peggy--up til now your typical submissive female follower--takes over, using Nancy's expressions ("Shiver my timbers!") and generally becoming a strong leader-type...to everyone's delight, especially her own.

The series books also (I'm thinking here of Ransome and Enid Blyton in particular) tended to contain an imaginative-younger-sister figure, very creative and empathic, usually clearly destined to be a writer.

Of course, both the Ransome books and the Narnia series featured an older sister named Susan who was a total drag. Ransome's Susan in particular was a mother-figure, forever staying behind to stir the soup over the campfire, and nagging Roger (the adventurous-little-brother) to put on his rubbers. *Sigh*

The other books I loved, and re-read and re-read, were the Canadian L.M.Montgomery books: Anne of Green Gables, a whole Anne series, and several others, all with very strong female heroines. I particularly liked Emily of New Moon and sequels, about a girl who knows, from age 8 or so, that she is a writer.

Not someone's future girlfriend, or someone's present whiny kid sister, left out of the fun, or someone's future mother mopping floors in all those commercials.

Shit la merde, this was going to be a short note, and here Ginger's taking me down the path to selfhood...

Anyway: the point that Ginger, and I, and a lot of women are making is that our self-images and self-expectations are formed by the role-models we are offered. I do not think my students, who grew up watching tv pap and now cannot construct a single coherent sentence, got good role-models--because the male stereotypes are just as limiting as the female ones.

I think I did get some pretty good models from the books I read (like other women I've talked to, when I read, oh, a fantasy novel with a male character, I just mentally tailored his adventures to fit my fantasies. I was never the princess in the tower combing her hair; I was always out on my horse with my magic sword.)

And I KNOW I grew up knowing I would be a Something. I know because my mother still has a poem I wrote in Grade 4, when I was 8 (skipped a grade, y'see). We were asked to write about what we wanted to be When We Grew Up. The little girls were puzzled, and most (including my best friend) talked about being wives and mothers. My poem says maybe I'll be a teacher,

"But then I read a lot

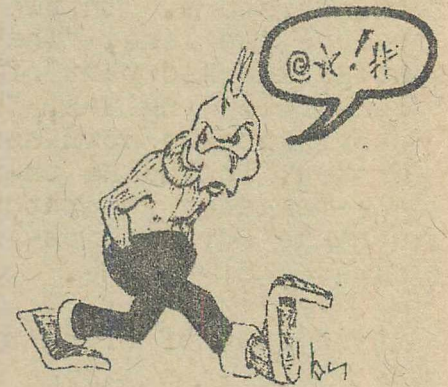
I'd read even in a pot

Being cooked for a cannibal's stew"
so maybe I'd like to be a librarian
that lasted through ten years and
jobs at three libraries, until I
got into grad school...and here I
am a teacher.

I didn't play with dolls much,
either.



Speaking of tv, when I was living with my surrogate-family in Regina last year, their daughter faithfully watched Bonanza re-runs. Ginger mentions westerns...imagine, now there's a whole new generation growing up watching Paw Cartwright; with his three conveniently-dead wives, rescuing his sons from Involvements with Females (dumb females) and riding off into a machismo sunset...all us He-men together. Shit la merde.



To wrap this up: Ginger really got me wondering what I missed, by having a book-childhood, instead of a tv-childhood. Missed? I may just owe my own strong self-image, not to mention my Fabulous New Job, to my mother who encouraged me to read, and Granddad who sent me books. Not to mention the Carnegie Library.

((Ginger had a similar book-childhood, too. I seem to recall her library stories as being very much like Susan's. Most fans surely have been this route. SVT))

Frank Balazs, 2261 Indian Quad, SUNYA, Albany, NY 12222

I don't care what you two or Cardinals Biggles and Fang think, but SpanInq wasn't much of a surprise--at least, not its arrival. However, I had no idae, Jerry, that you had such a cruel streak. Taunting a former famed faned with his ~~peculiar~~ particular elixir seems a bit low. I suppose the satchel is full of such dire weapons as the banana and the bunch of grapes. I cannot help but note a withered hand poking out of some bars in the background. Offhand, I would venture to say that that is no one other than poor Eli Cohen. How I am able to make this deduction I shan't say except that (not being above other people's jokes) it is pretty damn clever interspersing editorial with quotes.

((That is actually Ross' basement, where Ross keeps Q, his favorite model, locked up. Q (who normally appears on the covers of Katzzines) hadn't appeared in so long that I asked Ross to show his skeleton, with hat and cane, in the back ground, but Ross still believes Q will again see action, and has kept him alive. In deference to Arnie and Joyce, Ross only used Q's arm.))

Well, I have a couple of gripes about the issue and I may as well spill them right here near the beginning of this loc. Your policy of continuing articles onto non-ajacent pages is annoying--most especially when it is to a preceding page. I've never felt an acute fondness for the practice under any condition, but if you must (or feel you must), avoid continuing onto an earlier page.

((You think we planned it so? It couldn't be helped, Meyer, though we hated to do it. You'll notice we didn't do it this issue. Didn't you notice that? Frank's second beef, once he remembered it, was that Rick Bryant's column was vague, insubstantial and superfluous.))

Well, Suzle, the local Shakespeare Festival launched a production of HMS Pinafore one summer and the night I went to see it there was a thunderstorm. In two instances the thunder came on cue such as just before the line, "What was that?" A short time later, some idiot back-stage knocked part of the set over (a cabin, I believe) and, again, the line following was, "What was that?" "It was the cat." Later, the storm knocked down several power lines, causing a blackout in much of Croton, including the high school auditorium. Luckily, the school had an emergency generator for some lighting. All in all, it was a pretty strange performance--with so much going against it, the acting was superb, of course.

((The rest of Frank's fine letter is on page 83.))

daniel kuya-hoja muerta, gral ricardos, 70, madrid-19, spain

dears hello i love you

& i'm writing to ask you to give

me yr things andlove

i hope you'll send me one
copy of the spanish inquisition today

come come

with me i need you

let me eat of yr word

Roberta MacAvoy, 310 W. 106th St, 14-c, NY, NY 10025

You published a review of Gerrold's anthology Emphasis in #4--a review written by one John Curlovich. Oh yes you did. I'm writing in reply to the article because I'm feeling cantankerous and opinionated and I didn't like the review very much at all.

...I am writing in defense of a story that impressed me more than any I've read (in the field) in six months, and that is Cain's "Telepathos." I read the story last spring, let it sit for three months and read it again and was still struck by the soundness and order it contained. A few weeks ago I reread it, determined not to be intimidated, but to pin down the inevitable flaws and superficialities in the story.

Now I like it more than ever.

Many stories are created to be eaten. Or smelled. Or looked at when stoned. An example of the first is found in the Tales of the White Hart by Clarke. Over the years I've forgotten the plots of some of these goodies, but I remember they felt so good in my head when I digested them. And a short by Delany; such as "Aye, and Gomorrah," is total sense input--eyes, ears, nose, gonads all leap to follow his music. I mean no insult to him. God no.

But a story can be a framework bigger than the soul can easily consume. It can be something to be walked around in rather than something to make a part of one's self. I think that's the kind of story Ron Cain wrote here.

J.C. calls it slow and uneventful. I say it made me want to take the

time to read it slowly. He calls the main character bland. Certainly he is not idiosyncratic, but I found nothing bland about a man who was systematically organizing his whole character (down to that nameless yellow point) into a consistent whole--into something so accepting and strong that he can make an honorable peace with death. Maybe I found something in this last sentence, when I used the word "systematically." Ron Cain is working in systems as he is writing this story.

You see, it's a Deutscher story, done in the German fashion by a 22-year-old programming student in California who somehow reflects the German mind more than any writer I've read since Heinrich Boll. Like Mann's, in Der Zauberberg, Cain's prose is a fabric woven of interior events, ideas, sensations, all presented with the dry directness of journalism. The Germans do not leave a topic until they have exhausted what they want to say about it, whether the topic is plot, character, or the background of the props.

One can understandably not dig this kind of presentation. In that case, one can always try an Italian (Calvino's Invisible Cities). But I myself enjoy to meet a strong story by Boll, Mann, or Cain. I just make sure I have the afternoon free to give to it.

Things are talked about by Cain in "Telepathos" that have not been talked about much in the field before (I say "much" because somebody will inevitably drag out something from Wierd Tales dated '34...)

- I. Art as diarrhea of the soul vs. art as cold thought and hard labor. Where in sf has this dichotomy been used as a point of stress?
- II. The ultimate science--the analysis of the private self's basic input. All the "sciences" are circles drawn, with the subscription: "all outside is chaos." Cain uses the tools of hard science to take apart his own state of being. I know I'm turning to vapor under your eyes when I talk like this, but if I were trying to be exact I'd have to write "Telepathos" all over again.
- III. An extrapolation of Heidegger's turn-of-the-century introspective methods to cover and eliminate the jangles of hate and fear. (Heidegger was a Name in psychology until the British decided it was useless to include the word "thought" in the vocabulary of psychology because thoughts could not be manipulated experimentally nor proved to exist. I am not sure the concept of "thought" is therefore beyond study, and neither is Cain.

I think I got my Dollahquartah for the book in this story alone.

Doug Hoylman, 190 Franklin St, Morristown, NJ 07960

Thing that has not undergone a price increase: a ride on the Staten Island ferry. Things that have decreased in price: pocket calculators. Of course, there are certain problems in printing a fanzine on either of those, especially the former.

"...an arthur's work..." in Mike Glicksohn's comments on Clarke--beautiful typo. Yours or his?

((It was Mike's, and knowing him, it was deliberate. Doug also asks what IPA (as featured on our last cover) is. India Pale Ale, a Ballentine brew.))

James Shull, 5454 Sylmar Ave, Van Nuys, Ca 91401

I was glad to see a review of the study of one of the foremost people of our age, Scrooge McDuck. He is my hero, I collect all reports of his doings. I study his actions. I read of his activities. I am searching out a red coat now to wear to see if his abilities might in some part come to me. Very good, very good.

Laurine White, 5408 Leader Ave, Sacramento, Cal 95841

Jackie Franke says the current question being asked in fandom now is: "How far do you get into Dhalgren?" I reached page 287. Did you actually read the whole thing, to quote from it?

((Gee, thanks for asking. Yes, I did read the whole thing, and in another year or so I'll go back and read it again. I will admit to a certain degree of prejudice: I am a great fan of Delany's and have been since 1966. I have not liked every word he's written, but on the whole I think he is brilliant, and find Dhalgren to be his best work yet published. I like some of it because I find things I recognize as Chip's little idiosyncrasies, I like some of it because it is about writing and writers (not about how they get good contracts, but how they feel and think, and how put words together), I like the sex which is more real than any sex Chip has written about before, I like the flurries of emotion the kid passes through, I like the shifting of the city as the characters change their relationships. (I dislike one or things in it, but I'm not going into them here. I also do not understand things in it that may allow of no logical explanation, anyway.) I find myself eager to kick idiotic reviews like those in Wyknot, but I usually shrug when faced with people who couldn't finish the book. It is a minority taste, at least in fandom. But I couldn't pass this opportunity by, and I think I've made myself clear. I'm on the side of Dhalgren.))

Your zine has the first Harry Warner letter since I encountered the following short in the San Francisco Chronicle: (headline)"HARRY WARNER IS 100 YEARS OLD. Columbus, Ohio. Harry S. Warner, author of seven books on welfare, social and alcoholic problems, celebrated his 100th birthday yesterday at his residence here. Warner, a native of Wooster, does not wear glasses or a hearing aid. He still does his own typing."

((Laurine also had much egoboo for artists: Stu Shiffman for his Mars drawings, Rick Bryant for clouds, Harry Bell, Gary Goldstein on rabbit.))

Barry Gillam, 4283 Katonah Ave, Bronx, NY 10470

Your conjectures about Silverberg make very interesting reading. The points you make are so sharp that I wish you were considering more of his work.

I agree that he is a cold writer and certainly far from the best of sf authors, but Silverberg is still a major figure in the field and one

whose work is worthy of consideration.

Your statement in SpanInq 3 about the recent work celebrating emotional numbness seems more accurate than what you say in SpanInq 4--that the search for meaning and peace is shown in the work since 1967.

Silverberg has been investigating the theme of individual consciousness and empathy since at least 1958. In what I've read of the early fiction, the characters are propelled out of their own private concerns into those of another person (The Silent Invaders) or of the world at large (Recalled to Life). As late as the 1967 Those Who Watch, aliens and the earthmen they encounter form ideal relationships in which one perfectly complements the other. I jotted a note in my copy: "Irony of the title: one cannot remain uninvolved in Silverberg's universe." (See also "To See the Invisible Man.")

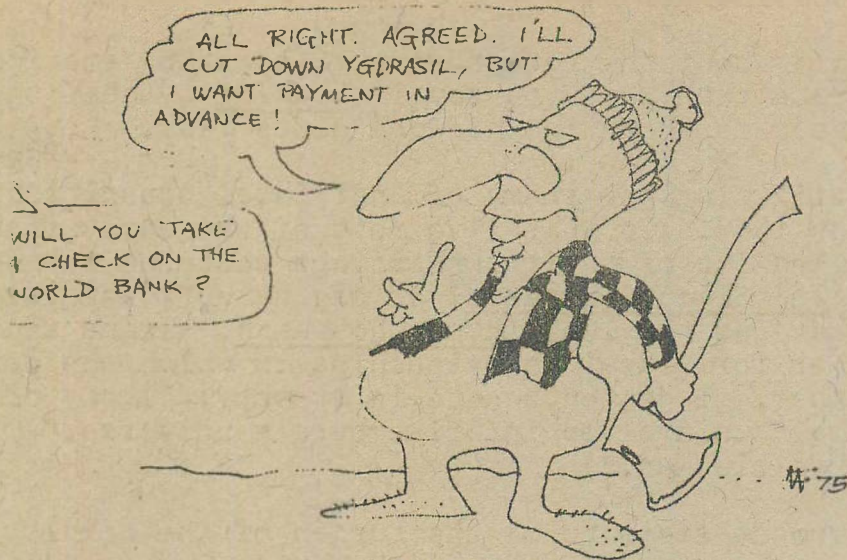
The manner of that involvement seems to me the burden of the novels written after 1967. I see two major themes, each having as its center the experience of communication with other minds. In the first theme (that of definition) one mind impinges on another, thus sharpening the sense of individuality. The minds are "swapped" (Tower of Glass), co-exist in one mind (To Live Again, Time of Changes) or one overcomes the other ("Passengers"). In the second theme (that of dissolution) one mind yields its individuality and becomes part of a larger, more diffuse consciousness. This ecstatic sense of merging with the "all" can be seen in the android rites of Tower of Glass and the nirvana-directed palliatives of "Sundance," Downward to the Earth and Son of Man.

Dying Inside is the ultimate novel of definition in that the protagonist's sense of self is so acute and yet, under the continual telepathic input, so close to being submerged. He is unable to make emotional contact with others because he is in too direct a telepathic link with the rest of the world. The result is that the protagonist must stand back from the world to see it properly. Selig is only one of a series of outsiders in Silverberg's recent fiction: "In the Group," "Caliban," "Ishmael in Love," etc.

I see "Born with the Dead" as an offshoot of the theme of dissolution. Instead of merging with others though, the identity simply submerges itself in mystical detachment. I don't find this as sinister as you do, Jerry. It's a progression that now seems inevitable, given the other variations on the theme of empathy and ego that Silverberg has explored. And I would note that "Born with the Dead" solves one problem that has often hurt Silverberg's works of dissolution: the inadequacy of his language in describing the transcendent experience. In "Born with the Dead" he deals in understatement and lets the very word "dead" reverberate through the story without unnecessary embellishment.

((I agree that Silverberg is worth talking about. He has a natural talent which he has been developing as he goes along, and he has set himself real tasks to perform. I believe that self-exploration is his main task. These are what makes him worth reading for me, though he is not always satisfying. Of course, you and I agree about the themes of his work--when I said "meaning" it matched with your "identity" and my "peace" equals your "dissolution."))

Mike Glicksohn, 141
High Park Ave, Toron-
to, Ont M6P 2S3, Can.



SpanInq 4 is here. The arrival of the issue makes sense out of a comment Susan made in a letter to me some time ago. She said something to the effect of "The new SpanInq arrived. Ah, what egoboo." At the time, naturally, I didn't know whereof she spoke. But now I do. It is indeed

an egoboosting thing to be featured on the cover of a fanzine: especially a fanzine of the distinctly superior quality of a SpanInq: doubly especially when the cover is by a cover artist as legendary as Ross Chamberlain. I don't know if you suggested the idea to Ross or if he conceived it himself, but I am more than slightly touched by the fame and glory. Thank you. The only thing is, who is the clown hanging chained to the wall?

((Now that we are far enough along into the lettercol, and have lost the attention of a certain bigtime editor in Ohio (who is still back there admiring his own letter) I can reveal that the tall thin man on our cover was...Bowers himself! That really wasn't IPA, it was San Miguel.))

Excuse me while I get my fourth Black Russian. And please don't report me to the House Unfannish Activities Committee. Had I an IPA on hand (montage of Grand Canyon, Iwo Jima statue, White House, Old Glory, apple pie, man eating hot dog in Jersey City, Eternal Flame at Arlington, Babe Ruth hitting home run, while in background "The Star-Spangled Banner" echoes softly...sung by Robert Goulet) I'd consume an American true-blue drink with your American true-black-and-gray fanzine but, alas, 'tis not possible...

Ro is/was/will be writing up the Patia Performance for Outworlds. I heard the tail-end (so to speak) of his verbal description of the incident, and he was positively brilliant. I hope it eventually sees print. Which is sort of an aside to the main fact that I enjoyed Jerry's remarks about the various cons he's attended and his reactions to them. Jerry's Pghlange sounds like my Confusion: where his was pre- and post-performance, mine was pre-speech (hysteria) and post-speech (catatonia). There has to be an easier way to earn a reputation for inanity. Know any good ghost-writers? I've got this little commitment in Australia...

Excellent column by Curlovich, although I disagree with his evaluation of David Gerrold. I haven't read the anthology in question, but I think it's a little bit of ancient history to connect David so strongly

with Star Trek. He started out that way, admittedly, but in the last two or three years he has been establishing his reputation as a serious sf writer. Regardless of his origins, his ego, or his reputation, I think we owe it to him to judge him on what he's doing now, not what he did six years ago. Or whenever it may have been. Other than that, the column was most enjoyable reading and John writes in a highly entertaining and skillful fashion. Good stuff indeed.



Rick Bryant has some interesting ideas, and I look forward to seeing his column as a regular feature, but somehow his description of doing an illustration does not quite jell with what Jack Gaughan has told me of stories read to him over the phone while he sketched illos for them to be sent back the very next day. I suspect the difference between the full time pro and the occasional is more profound than Rick is aware of.

((Rick is a full time artist, Mike, but he is only breaking into the pro world. I'm sure with time he'll find himself in as much trouble as Jack ever was. Rick has been doing things for Marvel and has recently sold to Analog..))

You may tell Laura that I for one could easily resist the "soft rumble" and "silken luxury" of her feline friend. Unless of course I was hungry. With chinese noodles and a few crisp vegetables they make a delicious snack. I might also question the assumption that most men are antagonistic towards women of superior intelligence and ability. Maybe I've just known a whole lot of very talented women but it seems to me that it's both futile and destructive to resent the superiorites of other people, be they male, female or of indeterminate gender. I can't offhand think of anyone I know who can't do at least one thing much better than I can. I'd be a damn fool to feel bitter about it, though.

((Most women seem to take it for granted that most men fear and avoid intelligent women. This may be from experience. You have not been in typical surroundings. Fandom is not normal. Neither is college. And many people do resent and mistrust those of any sex who are superior..))

Mike Gorra's amusing (and revealing!) article fails to bring back many memories. As an underaged kid, and it still holds, I was damned if I'd spend a buck and a quarter in a bar for a drink I could get at home for about 40 cents. Or pay out seventy-five cents for a twenty-three

cent bottle of beer. So I've few similar tales to relate. (I do recall my first hangover though: it was Christmas day when I was twelve years old, and I'd been to a party with my parents the night before and gotten stoned on rum and coke. I doubt I've ever felt so miserable in my life and I walked the snow-covered streets for hours swearing that I'd never touch another drop of alcohol as long as I lived. That's a vow I've maintained until this very day, I might point out....)

The first time I was ever carded was in New York State when I happened to be eighteen, working as a pipe-fitter for the summer and we got sent to Niagara for a job, so crossed into "Here There Be Dragons" Land just for the thrill of it. In my naivete, when I was asked for my draft card, I assumed they meant a card that allowed me to drink draft beer and I tried to explain that I was a Canadian and didn't have one. I've learned a lot since then.

I still rankle at states like Massachusetts and others of similar ilk which require a state-issued license to drink and won't accept your obvious antiquity or a passport or a driver's license as evidence of the fact that you're really 28 and don't require a note from home to have a beer. The drinking laws in Canada may be antediluvian, but at least they are relatively reasonable and consistent.

I really don't belong in the pages of SpanInq. I keep getting Oliver and Rex Reed confused, for example.

I note a definite Canadian flavour (a cross between maple syrup, bacon and beaver--no comments, please--) to this lettercol. You must be doing something right!

I'm appalled at the thought of your having to explain Dwight Frye to a fannish audience. And I also take umbrage (it's raining here) at the description that he played "twisted little men" in horror movies. Fie on thee, you celluloid phony you! He played ordinary people driven insane by exposure to extraordinary circumstances, that's what! And if you got and read as many fanzines as I do, you'd understand my mental empathy with the man... (I'm also intrigued by the number of people who started their comments with "I'm not into movies but...")

Anyone who criticizes the appearance of this issue is going to have to be a Grade A Number One Nitpicker...now where did I put my union card? No. It looks very good for a couple of inexperienced neos working with a hectograph and a cauldron of alligator bones from the sewers of New York. Know what I mean, nudge nudge, wink wink?)

Arlene Lo, 17 Sherman Ave, Plainview, NY 11803

Read Ginjer's article with particular interest. When I was at that impressionable age, I didn't notice a dearth of female characters, strong or otherwise. It doesn't seem to have affected me adversely; I've even survived the legendary Dick, Jane and Sally, and years of Lois Lane. Irish McCalla's Sheena, Queen of the Jungle was the only heroine on television I really liked. Even if she wasn't cultured ("Shake a spear?"), she did do interesting things. Has anyone written about female characters in sf films? They weren't always tripping in the paths of unspeakable horrors, or screeching, "What are we going to

do?" Nine times out of ten, yes, but there have been exceptions, notably the scientist played by Faith Domergue in It Came from Beneath the Sea.

Bridget Dziedzic, Box 890, Wesleyan Station, Middletown, Conn. 06457

It bothered me when I noticed during Alfred "Call Me Alfie" Bester's Philcon GOH speech that all the women were 1) his earth mother wife who takes care of him, 2) chicks out with their men, and 3) whores. Shit! Another hero caught picking his nose.

The Stiles cartoons, pages 10 and 11, are fantastic--well--they're worlds of if, if you catch my meaning. Great self-portrait of Rick Bryant.

Ginger's article is as good as her articles always are. That's why I always think of myself (identify with) as a man. As soon as they give me a woman who's a person then maybe I'll be able to identify with women (in pop culture) too.

Steve Miller, 22L Richmar Rd, Owings Mills, Md 21117

The cover, to begin with, was very fine. Ross Chamberlain seems to have a fine touch for humour...and he manages to catch the essence of the real you. Rick Bryant's work was nice--I thought that the saucer came out relatively well, all things considered.

Although I'm not really a dream freak I thought Peter Roberts' column was interesting. I have had a few convention dreams lately, but rather than being nightmares of super-small conventions they usually seem to be Discon at twice its real size, being held in Baltimore's Memorial Stadium rather than at the Sheraton. The last time I was actually in Memorial Stadium I was there with a lot of the local soccer fiends to see Pele play in what was supposed to be his last North American appearance. The weather that day was really strange--there were a series of super thunderstorms and reports of local tornadoes; the sky took on a basic deep green color which hung on well into the evening, shading the players, the people, and the stadium with a spooky greenish tinge. So when I dream of the "Super Discon" it invariably contains overtones of the last time I attended an event at the stadium.

((Do you think this dream is in any way prophetic of the worldcon you Baltifen want to host?))

I'm not familiar enough with Elgin's work to comment on anything but the readability of Laura Haney's article, which was excellent.

Ginger Buchanan's "Blueberries" provides food for thought. I wonder how many of the boys watching the various shows really found a hero in the supposed main character. I found more in common with Fury than Joey (except in the episode where Joey and his friend build model rockets which they use for communication in an emergency), and somehow good ole Rinty had a lot more going for him than Rusty (or Timmy of the renowned Lassie). Tad, of Annie Oakley fame, Corky of the elephants, and Howdy Doodie surely could not be considered figures to emulate, even if the various cereal company sponsors thought otherwise. I will admit that the

Maverick brothers were my favorites by Warner Bros., they nearly started me on poker at a very early age. I'll be looking forward to future installments of "Blueberries."

Elyse Alkoff, 1367 East 5th St, Brooklyn, NY 11230

As I began reading SpanInq, the first thing that came to my mind was that here is something that was not only totally candid, but that it worked! Unfortunately, my life has been anything but candid, so that until recently, I saw people as being either perfect or not worth the bother. Now that I'm beginning to color things a little, I can tell myself that candidness is more of a natural thing than an art, and that the next time I let this buzz in my ears mix with "It Ain't Necessarily So" for more than two minutes, I must be doing something wrong!

I could best identify with "The Comfy Chair," having been a prolific dreamer. Fortunately, I know what it's like to take a dream and create a plot from it. Unfortunately, I am also an avid fan (tho not a believer) of Freud's, to the point where whenever I see anything in threes, I'm inclined to give a "Hmm!" (at the same time remembering a teacher's advice that "...sometimes, a cigar is a cigar!"). In any case, whenever my imagination demands a break, I can refer to a record of dreams that I've had from the past four years and go on from there.

As for "The Peripatetic Trivialist," I was gratified to hear of David Gerrold's deviation from Star Trek at last, and was even more thankful to see in black-and-white terms that I wasn't the only writer to have a long, long way to go and that maybe, just maybe, I could get somewhere. (Upon being introduced to fandom such as this, I've discovered that my sophistication in such matters is not what I thought it might be, and that for the first time in my life I'll just have to use my own courage --which had been dormant for all of my sixteen years--and play this whole thing by ear. Lord, it's so frightening that it's marvelous!)

Drawing by me is a hobby. Upon reading "The Saucer's Apprentice", I said to myself: here is a serious artist who explains his specialty in simpler terms than I would use in describing a hobby which I take to maybe five times a year. As for me, I would back myself into a corner with a speech about the relationship, in its entirety, between a drawing and my inner psyche. (Before now, the only layman's language I'd read was Dr. Eric Berne's Layman's Guide to Psychiatry and Psychoanalysis... which means that I'm currently under the wrong assumption that I can outwit my shrink.)

Which brings me to "A Handful of Blueberries." It is a frustrating feeling to know that you folks have something which I do not: the fifties. At least you had grade school and stickball--I had wet diapers and doting relatives. The only memory I have from the fifties is that of two dreams and plinking out tunes from "Krazy Kat" on the piano (in my wet diapers and in front of my doting relatives.)

Besides being entertaining, "Rummy!" left me with the idea that I've either missed an awful lot of life or I'm going to miss it (which I'm determined not to, but...) Seeing that I'm only beginning to crack my shell, the prospect of college is the hope of my own rebirth, which gives me the feeling of being a foreigner here, seeing you on the other

side of the fence.

All in all, SpanInq gave me a good introduction to at least a part of fandom. Having been the only "science fiction buff" of the block, it gives me an idea of how much I don't know, and I am flabbergasted! I feel like a salmon swimming upstream!

I just hope I make it.

Ro Nagey, 111 S. Granger, Ann Arbor, MI 48104

Ross Pavlac challenged you to ask Silverberg to verify whether the stories are personal statements. Over the years, I have met about three or four English professors and teachers at one con or another. I always thought the cons would be a professional nirvana for them, as they could go up to the pros and get the straight poop from the horse's mouth. (Or am I mixing metaphors?) Without fail, I have yet to catch one of them drawing a pro aside for a confrontation. The obvious answer to this phenomenon is that the teachers don't want to have their version of what the author meant (which each student desiring an A must carefully memorize) jeopardized. You mention that you're too shy (guffaw) and that the authors have been known to evade or lie. The latter is probably true and even if the author does tell the truth, what he says often has little, if any, connection with the reader's experience. Still, the answer is another piece of the puzzle that one can use to speculate, regardless of its veracity.



((I tried the "Go over and ask" method on Gordon Dickson, and discovered another reason why it might not work. I caught Gordie during a break in a filksinging session several conventions ago, and asked a thing or two about the Dorsai series (which is part of a larger series.) He began to tell me when the filksinging started again. I couldn't hear him, and tried to say so, but he was caught up in his explanation and didn't stop. Fortunately, he repeated some of his explanation from the podium at the Disclave.))

Father John Curlovich discussed the meanings of names in Clarke's stories. Trivia query: some time ago Analog carried a story of the future history variety in which one scholar writes another whose research has uncovered something called World War II. The scholar reproves the researcher for thinking that it could possibly have been a real event based on the meanings of the names of the people involved.

The Allies all have "good" names and the Axis all have "bad" names. I forget the title and who wrote it. (And I'm too lazy to look it up.) Does John remember?

Mike Gorra's ramblings bring me to mention an observation that I think is valid for at least Ann Arbor and probably for a lot of other places as well. When I transferred from Purdue to Michigan, I actually knew several people who had claimed to have smoked marijuana. I had even once seen a joint, by Ghod! At Michigan, however, my virginity with such drugs went up in smoke (as it were) my first night there. This was the high point of drug experimentation in this part of the country. Also the nicest point. A friend was just as likely to turn you on to weed or acid as he was to loan you a buck for beer. These were the halcyon days before PCP, your friendly horse tranquilizer, reared its ugly head along with the various other bad trips that are all so common today.

Though my personal experience with drugs was (and is) minor, I got an excellent opportunity to see the effects when I started working in the pinball arcade in town. There were more than one, but the others were cut and dried rip-off joints. This place was run by one of the few businessmen in Ann Arbor with a feeling for the counter-culture. One didn't go into Pinball Alley to play pinball; one went into this shabby and dark edifice to BECOME pinball! Most psychogenic drugs have a way of encouraging this effect, and hence, in my day I have seen the full spectrum of drug use and abuse by the patrons of the pinball palace. All in all, it was a bizarre, happy and fun place to work. For one, you never knew when some drug-twisted guy would confuse the machine for his girl.

There were o.d.s and people who were vegetables in the place. But try as I might, I'll be damned if I can think of over one or two people who walked into that place wired that weren't healthily over 18.

Things sure have changed in the last few years. Fifteen year old girls, still in the throes of puberty, amble in the doorway with their glitter rock costumes and Alice Cooper make-up on, stoned on grass, and ask if there is any acid in town and where they can get any. Or fifteen year old boys in beaten weather-breakers and Ann Arbor Blues and Jazz Festival T-shirts smoking Camels and finding out that the reason one of their friends wasn't cutting classes and playing pinball today stemmed from the fact that he had gotten hold of something that someone claimed was pure crystal THC only to find out at the hospital that the drug he ingested is also used to put gorillas to sleep. One of the kids sympathizes and talks about the time a similar experience happened to him with some scag, but that a year and a half of psychiatry has got him back in shape, so the other guy shouldn't have it so bad.

Innocuous experience with beer and wine is one thing. These kids, however, are more experienced with drugs than 99% of the people five to ten years their seniors have even thought about. The drugs are robbing these kids of their childhood. The guys are schizo-paranoids with a tenuous grip on reality and the girls are generally worried if they are allergic to penicillin this month. (Having re-read this I realize its "downer" slant--obviously the majority of kids are not like this--no way--but each one that it like this really tears through you.)

When you mentioned the ill-fated potted palm tree, Suzle, I thought of two first-rate nightmares. To wit:

I was cast as Shadow in Anderson's Winterset (I believe that was the title) and at one point, after being shot by the lead, I staggered out on stage and confronted him. I was supposed to ask him why he had shot me when, after all, the doctor had told him he had only seven months to live. I staggered out, popped the blood capsule in my mouth and asked, in agonizing fashion, "Why?...Why?...After all, the doc gave you only seventy more years to live." The feigned terror that he showed when I came out shot, bleeding and wet from being thrown in the river, rapidly became real, hysteric terror. I forget how, but we got out of that some way or another.

Shortly after that nightmare, I put together a small show that put on shows to raise money for charity. We were asked to perform at a mental institution. I explained that I did a fire-eating act and that perhaps some judicial weeding-out of the pyromaniacs was in order. The show went quite well and the audience seemed to understand most, if not all, of what went on. Since I was the MC, I had someone else introduce me and explain, carefully, that fire-eating took a long time to learn and that it was very dangerous in the hands of people who weren't trained properly. I came out, making appropriate flourishes, and said, "Good evening, Ladies and GentleJohn!" Out in the audience was John _____, a former good friend of mine who had disappeared mysteriously from school and hadn't been heard of since. Sitting out there. In the audience. As a patient. Playing with a cigarette lighter. That was probably the most selfconscious performance that I have ever given. (Sick aside: I've heard of friendships going up in flames before, but...)

Laura Haney, 26 W. 95th St, Apt 3, New York, NY 10025

After a night of feverish dreams (there was this dream I couldn't shake. I was in your apartment; Suzle had given her job as whip-cracker to Moshe Feder, who stood over everyone and said, "Uncollate! Uncollate!" And we did!) I came downstairs to find that Davis had opened a window, and the house was freezing.

So I plugged in the heater and curled up on the couch with the comforter and SpanInq. It was a thoroughly good read. I kept turning the pages and looking for more. The test of good is not whether you enjoyed it the first time, but whether you would read it again.

And the letter column...I don't know if you just have a more literate and inventive class of fans writing to you or if you patiently sit down and edit out dumb comments and duplicate statements. I have tried to read too many lettercols where there were 23 letters all commenting on the very same things not to appreciate the stellar quality of your lettercol.

((It's both, really. Great letterwriters and cruel cutting. For instance, the following letter was six pages long (in longhand. Before reading it, Gentle Fans, note that the "extra material" in Laurie's article was in the form of a cover letter and an aside to us, and we chose to use it because we liked it. At the time, I thought to add a more persoanl touch. Make her our answer to Sheryl Smith, I thought.

No, I don't mean to say that Laura Haney is anything like Sheryl Smith, only that she was another highly personal critic that we hoped would make a strong impact and be a permanent fixture. Anyway, here is the Smith herself.))

Sheryl Smith, 1346 W. Howard St., Chicago, Ill 60626

Laura Haney makes an interesting stab at gonzo critique in her piece on Suzette Haden Elgin--but perhaps it would have been better if she'd paid less attention to her cat and more to her writing, since the critique, when it's not missing the boat completely, is shallow. True, Ms. Elgin is not one of the profound writers of our time, but Ms. Haney is prone to misread her nonetheless. The character of Ms. Elgin's who bears the singularly ill-fitting name of Coyote Jones may not be the most scintillating man in fiction, but to call him a "sexist boob" involves, I think, gross misunderstanding. Coyote Jones seems more like Ms. Elgin's idea of a feminist sympathizer than an example of macho cloddishness, and he also seems to represent an attempt to cast a real, fallible person in a role usually allotted to supermen of the Kimball Kinnison variety. (Now if only he were half as fascinating as Lord Peter Wimsey...)



It would have been nice also if Ms. Haney had noticed and mentioned the common fault in Ms. Elgin's work, namely, that she stacks the deck. She concentrates almost entirely on primitive societies, contrived so the lot of minorities (women and telepaths) is as bad as it can be--i.e., much worse than it is in perhaps the whole 20th century world, and possibly worse than it ever was. Thus Ms. Elgin makes "society" wholly bad, and the intelligent women who are its victims are wholly good, and not responsible for their own often-wretched fates. This just ain't the way it is, gang; human relations, particularly in the relationship of the individual to society, aren't all that simple, and one would think an attentive critic could've caught this. Certainly Ms. Elgin has no distracting complexities to mislead one.

((Coyote Jones is a poor excuse for a plot, that's what he is. It seems as though Ms. Elgin had these interesting societies...and needed something to make them into novels. The Communipaths seemed to suffer least from this, and At the Seventh Level most. Jones is real and fallible indeed, but largely irrelevant. Your second point I leave. Sheryl also liked (no, check that "also"), Mike Gorra and Ginger Buchanan but was confused by Mike's story of the tapir. No, dear, Mike was in England when he espied Tumid Tapir, not at the Discon. An attentive critic woulda caught this. (Just a friendly tweak.) As soon as we can obtain your photo, we will forward it to Ross. Watch upcoming covers.))

Jodie Offutt, Funny Farm, Haldeman, Ky 40329

Enjoyed Peter Roberts' column. I think it's great that he remembers his dreams. Everytime I've gotten into interpreting dreams (Freud, Jung and, more recently, Fritz Perls) I promptly stop remembering anything I

dream. Children have the most vivid dreams. (I sometimes suspect mine of embellishment, but why not? They're their dreams.) It's a marvelous way to converse with children--ask them about their dreams.

Mike Gorra's article: All things are relative. Some of my fondest memories are the few times in recent years when I have been asked for an ID. (As late as at the 1973 Philcon! andy leaned across the bar and kissed that woman. She giggled. So did I.)

Al Sirois, 533 Chapel St, First Floor East, New Haven, Ct 06511

to wound the autumnal faned.

I found the Weber quotation interesting, especially in light of the fact that I ran across a very similar one a couple of years ago, something to the effect that "the transference of energy throughout the universe resembles that in a brain." The context was a comic book, an underground (obviously) called The Balloon Vender by Fred Schrier. As far as I know it's one of the few metaphysical comic books around, and it sure as hell is one of the best drawn and best scripted undergrounds I have ever seen. I really can't recommend it highly enough; I was quite impressed with it. If you crossed Firesign Theater with M.C. Escher, you might get an idea of what Schrier is like.

Peter Roberts' interesting dream thingie prompts a few comments of a peripheral nature. I occasionally happens that I, too, am able to remember a particular dream. Like Peter, I try to record them if possible, tho solely by dragging a pen across a piece of paper. The completed dream "episode" then goes into my files and as often as not later turns up in a story. This has happened several times, now. In fact, you may be interested to know that the story I have in the current Fantastic, titled "The Woman Machine," was inspired by a dream. At one point early in the story, the narrator watches his father's car pull up before their house, and from out of the car rises a humanoid robot, with a mirror-like surface which catches and reflects the sunlight blindingly. This image of the shining humanoid rising from the car, blazing with light, is lifted directly from a dream I had...One other vivid dream which I have written down (and which is also being worked into a story, albeit slightly revised) is one in which I am at a bar, at night, surrounded with the usual bar people, drinking a beer. Suddenly I'm accosted by a large goon who brandishes a telephone receiver in my face, slices it apart with a switchblade, and then threatens to cut me with the sharp edges of the mutilated phone! What does this mean, Sigmund? Do I have an overpowering desire to fuck my phone?



Gorra's article didn't do a hell of a lot for me. (Sorry, Mike.) Maybe because that time of my life is one I'd just as soon forget. I mean, hell, I did all that sort of thing, too; in Connecticut, it's a Favorite Adolescent Pastime. I've been there and done it, and my immediate reaction is "So what, Gorra? What the hell is so neat about sneaking a drink?" At the same time, it was cool, I guess. Forbidden fruit and all that. I guess I'd rather read about something I haven't done, like pop hubcaps of spit in the Vatican.

((Not only have I never done it myself, but I'm not certain what it is. Sounds exceedingly vulgar, though.))

Dammit, Kaufman, I was reading Elizabeth Buchanan-Kimmerly's (I hope, if she is going to be an actfan, she gets a shorter nickname!) loc about Howdy Doody, and I was saying to myself, "Boy, I can write in and say that Timber Tom was Robert Goulet, and blow some minds!" and you blew it for me. Hell.

If there is a female Hunter Thompson, it is Susan Wood. I wish it had been me instead of her whom (her who..he her..hoo ha) thought of that comparison. I think it's pretty funny. But then, I like the Bonzo Dog Band, too.

Suzle, I used to do a smattering of play-acting and other theatrical thingies back in school, too. I remember once during a production of I Remember Mama (what can I say? I think it's tacky, now, and I thought it stunk, then...absense makes the heart grow fonder...also lamer) there was a scene when we, the intrepid Stage Crew, had a thirty-second blackout, no curtain being down, and in that time we had to change a scene from a living room to a restaurant (or something). The reason this is applicable is that there was this potted plant, see...and I was the guy who had to run like hell across stage from stage right, grab that fucking palm without stopping and charge off into the wings at stage left, where I had to stop Real Fast to avoid impaling myself on the levers of the light board, and also avoid impaling myself on the guy running the light board. Not a well-laid-out stage, but what the hell? I slammed into him, once, and the results were insane...dirt all over the actors in the wings, all over the light board, all over me...leaves and shit flying through the air...and all this in the dark, mind you...

Waiting here, away from the terrifying mundanery, out of the halls of vapor and light, beyond newhaven and into the longislandsound, I have come to

((Al, I really hated cutting your letter to bits, as I have done. You folks at home ain't seeing above half of what came in, y'know, and less than that of some letters, like Al's. Maybe I should set up a traveling exhibition?))

Pauline Palmer, 2510 48th, Bellingham, Wash 98225

Peter Roberts' talk of dreams is interesting; I have a similar fascination with their non-symbolic function/nature. About fever dreams: Brian Aldiss put forth a very curious theory in a book several years ago...as I recall he felt that most dreams actually are like fever dreams, but that we (our subconsciouses) normally tend to polish, refine,

gloss them into more agreeable forms.

My early childhood wasn't influenced at all by tv--my family didn't get one until I was 15, and I never had a chance to watch it at all until we finally moved next door to some people who had one when I was 11. (And even then our area had only one channel, which didn't offer us much variety in programming. I never did see a Mickey Mouse Club or a Howdy Doody episode.) Anyway, we'd mostly go over to the neighbor's to watch such marvelous things as The Bob Cummings Show (the women weren't the only ones who got dippy roles in those days), Topper (the dog got most of the good lines as I remember, but it was fun to watch) and the fights (boxing, not the neighbors'). Wrestling, sometimes, too. (Whatever became of Gorgeous George?) No, when I was Young and Impressionable, I was into radio shows. I liked the westerns and the comedies best (mysteries were all right if I didn't have anything else to do), and as I remember it, the females were for the most part epitomized by a sweet, awe-filled voice saying, "Who was that masked man, anyhow?" or--worse yet--by Our Miss Brooks.

((I do believe the dog you are thinking of is Cleo of The People's Choice. George of Topper drank to excess, but never spoke. As for Gorgeous George, perhaps Arnie and/or Joyce Katz can tell us.))

Jeff Schalles, 173 McClellan Dr, Pittsburgh, Pa 15236

You can't imagine how long I've been waiting for this fanzine to occur. I don't particularly mean this to say (or say this to mean. What I mean to say is) that I was actually waiting for you two to publish a fanzine with this name; no, I was merely waiting for the rebirth of the archetypical fanzine, the white glowing inner heart of faanish furry-papared fanzines. Sure, there's been a minor breakthrough here and there throughout the past year or three, but the airwaves have pretty much been dead as far as I'm concerned. Kratophany has nice material, as does Awry and one or two others, but they aren't printed on fuzzy paper. I'm sorry, but a fanzine just doesn't feel warm and friendly in my hands when printed on anything else.

((Thank you, Jeff, but I'm sure you've confused our fanzine with a cat.))

Don D'Ammassa, 19 Angell Dr, East Providence, RI 02914

John Curlovich's annoyance with the reading and writing ability of those educated (?) in our public school system is undoubtedly going to become more pronounced. A leading textbook producer recently announced that henceforth all college texts it produces will be written on an eighth grade reading level, because college students cannot handle more difficult material as a rule. This leads to two obvious questions. What does that mean to the quality of college graduates in the next few years, and what kind of reading level are eighth grade texts going to be revised down to? Third grade. "See Tom split the atom. See the protons and neutrons go flying about. Split, Tom. Fly protons and neutrons."

Laura Haney's piece on Elgin was good enough that I can add nothing.

Ginjer Buchanan missed one of my own pet peeves. When they produced

87th Precinct for tv, the actress who played the deafmute wife became so popular, she received more mail than the male lead, who threatened to leave the show as a result. So she suddenly found herself cast in far less major roles in the series, which was then cancelled. I was told that the same thing happened to "Yeoman Rand" in Star Trek, but the latter may be apocryphal, as I never noticed anything particularly fascinating in her case. Things do seem to be improving, though. Rhoda; for example, is far more competent and aggressive than her tv husband, who surprisingly enough is willing to do dishes and bow to his wife's wishes. There's even been a change in All in the Family; Edith has begun to put her foot down, even when she doesn't it becomes apparent that she isn't all that dumb after all, and often gets what she wants, usually by outsmarting Archie. Gloria now comes across as brighter, more competent, and better adapted to the world than Mike, and her earlier dippy broad role seems to have gone completely. Loretta Swit seems to be fleshing in the character she plays on M.A.S.H. too.

((Don goes on in his letter to express displeasure with Mike Gorra. He feels that breaking the law is nothing to brag about. And Don also continues our discussion about Silverberg, seeing "Born with the Dead" to be downbeat, but Dying Inside to be rather mixed. This has been an Announced Cut.))

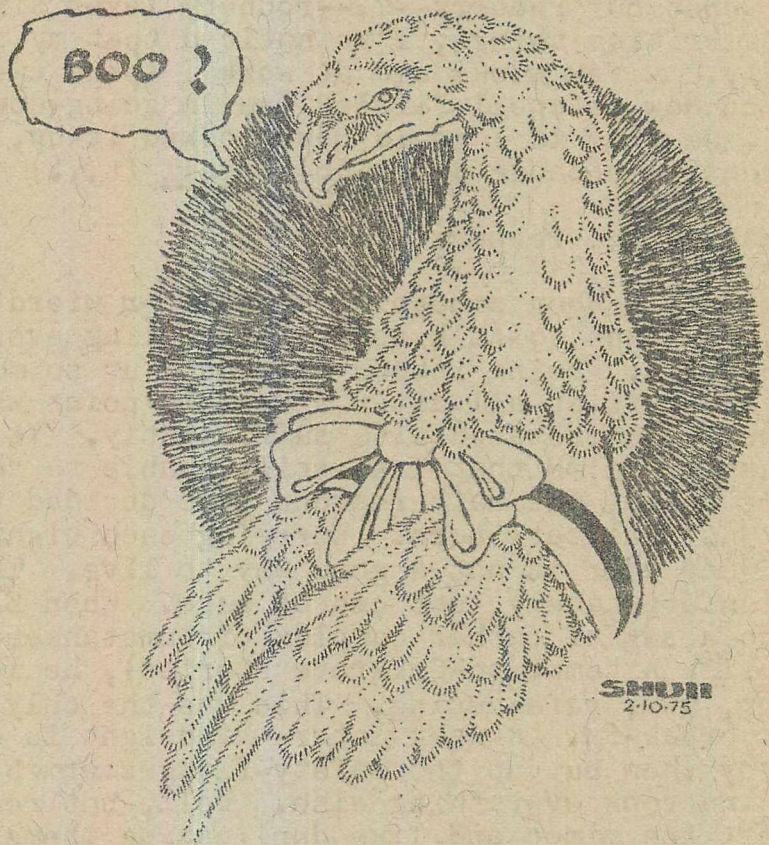
((We Also Heard From: a number of people who wrote us absolutely fabulous letters, but we have just realized that we will be Short of Paper if we don't stop this right away since our source is Linda Bushyager, we can't get any more in time. And I am devilishly tired. This is quite a long lettercol. But in the interests of our loccers, here are those whose letters were on the bottom of the pile: Darrell Schweitzer (No, Darrell, we're not aeons ahead of everyone in New York, but they are in Toronto--Mike Glicksohn turned us on to Monty Python years ago); Jan Appelbaum (who wrote 4½ pages, including copying out a review of SpanInq in Scientifriction 1 we never saw--Jan's address is 5836 W. 25½ St, St. Louis Park, Mn 55416--send him a copy of your fanzine today, and I'm sure you'll get an excellent letter back from him, and croggle him into the bargain); Darroll Pardoe (who talks about getting into the cinema when underage, and who alludes to cockroaches); Tim Kyger (who made some valid criticisms of our layout, and who wants to know if a color-blind person dreams in color--if he did, Tim, how could he tell anybody about it?); Lesleigh Luttrell (she went on at interesting length about dreams, and said, "Now this is a switch, the editor of Starling writing a loc to Jerry Kaufman!"); Terry Hughes (who praised and panned variously); Hal Davis (who wrote on his postcard, "If you can read this, you're too close"--I couldn't read it at all; I'm depending on the translation Haney gave us); Norm Hochberg (daring us not to print his letter); Hope Leibowitz; Don Lundry; Sue Nice; Gil Gaier; Harry Bell; and Rob Jackson.)

((And that, he said with an air of crashing finality, is that. Of course, the editorials and the table of contents have yet to be done but you'll pretend you didn't hear that. I could babble on to the end of the page. I won't. Use the space below to rest your eyes.

SUZLECOL

"Go ye therefore and write Suzlecol!" a little small voice in my head repeats over and over.

"Listen, little small voice," say I, "you go write the damned thing; I'm much too busy rehearsing for Mimeo Man and proofing stencils and going to cons and having a nervous breakdown. And Jerry's 39 stencils ahead of me, so all the hand work has yet to be done and when we edited the lettercol the other day, it turned out to be 78 million pages (well, 30 or so, anyway) long. Maybe you could talk someone else into writing it by telepathy, I'm not at home just now."



Things have been sort of hectic.

Well, for one thing I'm moving out of New York at the end of July but I don't exactly know where, but, wherever it is, I have to go there because my apartment is rented to someone else starting August 1st. We've been too busy working on the fanzine for me even to thin about it, let alone make definite plans. As Jerry mentions, by next issue I will have a definite address, so until then, he'll take my mail (after July 31st) at his address.

This will be a short column, although I've thought of tons of things I could write about, like the Mimeo Man production (one of the highlights of which for me was sitting next to Elliot Shorter at our pre-entrance positions just after the curtain "went up" (so to speak; we didn't have a real stage, let alone a curtain), and hearing him whisper to me, "My shoes are on the other side...my shoes are on the other side!", and watching him do his performance stocking-footed), because I haven't been able to get into the right mood to write. As I dislike it intensely, lots of energy and self-control are needed to make me put things down on paper. Haven't been able to muster either in some time.

This might be just as well, since yesterday in the midst of running off Spaning, we calculated that we don't have enough paper to finish, maybe. Thus, I have two pages. Maybe. Volunteering to cut out "Suzlecol" did no good, since Jerry insisted that if it were listed in the colophon, I had to do it.

Now, about our robbery--??--robbery (ever since leaving college, speaking of writing things, I've noticed that my spelling is going downhill rapidly. A few weeks ago at work I spent twenty minutes trying to figure out how to spell "aisle" (as in going-down-the). It would've taken much less time if I could have looked it up, I couldn't find it in the dictionary, because I couldn't spell it...)

NOW, about the robbery...

Occasionally when something unusual or wierd or even frightening happens, you want to talk about it, telling everyone who will listen all the details. Being robbed depressed us so much that we didn't want to talk about it at all after a certain point when we had told close friends and were commiserated with sufficiently. It developed an underlying depression in me that I am still unable to shake completely. I think that's one of the main reasons I've decided to leave New York rather than just relocate here. Worrying each night about coming home to find your door ajar is not a good way to live. The most valuable item taken was, unfortunately, not one of ours. When Eli Cohen moved to Regina, due to a set of rather complex circumstances (see recent Kratophanies for Eli's Attempt-to-Emigrate stories), he left his stereo system with us for, uhm, safekeeping. This was the only thing taken during the first break-in. A week later--hindsight is a wonderful thing; we should have by then put up the safety-flanges we now have--the same thief came back and took everything else. Well, not really. We were very lucky--he left the mimeo and like duplicating items; he took my tv, but left it on the roof; the cats weren't harmed; there wasn't even much of a mess. In fact, I doubt I shall miss my broken hairdryer much at all. But my coin collection and only good jewelry, the radios and tape recorder, Jerry's toolbox, etc, will be. Some of these things will be slowly replaced, but others can't be. The loss of Eli's stereo will always bother me the most.

Sorry about that. Depressing, wasn't it?

* * * * *

When Jerry and I edited the lettercol, I couldn't think of anything terribly interesting to say when I had comments to make so I decided to leave well enough alone. But I did have one short comment that didn't make it in--WAKE UP, ALL YOU TRIVIA FANS--in Don D'Ammassa's letter, he mentions the television program 87th Precinct, referring to "the actress who played the deaf-mute wife." When it was on, I was about 11 or so and adored it specifically for Teddy Carella, who was played marvellously by Gena Rowlands.

* * * * *

A lack of paper is creeping up on me, so this is it for now. Be sure to tune in next time for the exciting adventures of "Suzle's move to _____!" (Fill in blank later.)

