

# THE TEXAS SF INQUIRER #27



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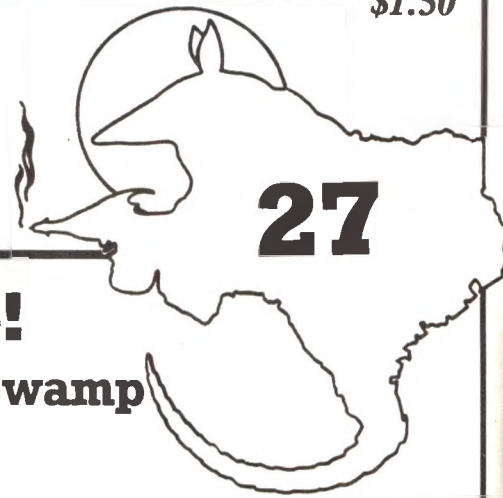
# THE TEXAS SF INQUIRER

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## Contents

A Masqued Man (Scott Merritt) . . .	3
Book Reviews . . . . .	16
<i>Soldier of the Mist</i> (Oscar Kirzner);	
<i>The Misplaced Legion</i> (OK); <i>Janisaries</i> (Manny Lieberman); <i>Cyteen</i> (Brad Sinor)	
Clubs Around Texas . . . . .	18
Convention Listings . . . . .	18
Fanzine Reviews . . . . .	17
<i>Bcsfazine</i> (Scott Merritt); <i>Cry Havoc!</i> (SM); <i>Cube</i> (SM); <i>Crime Times</i> (SM); <i>DASFAX</i> (SM; Alex Slate)	
Heads Up! The View from the Swamp (Monica Stephens) . . . . .	2
Hugo Nominating Ballot Rules . . .	6
Hugo Nominating Ballot . . . . .	8
Letters of Comment . . . . .	19
Masquerading Tips (Pierre and Sandy Pettinger) . . . . .	4
Midnight Excursions, Part III (and A Postscript) (Lawrence Person) . .	11
Nolacommunion (Samuel Mize) . .	10
Nolacommunion Masque Report (Pierre and Sandy Pettinger) . . . . .	3
Rostler's Rules for Masquerades . .	4

This Issue: *Letters of Comment* — Constance Ash, Buck Coulson, Chrys Thorsen. *Art* — Brad Foster, Jan Sherrell Gephardt, Sherlock, Phil Tortorici.

## Heads Up! The View from the Swamp

We're trying to keep our heads above water (and what-not) here. We may even make it. We wanted to get a couple of issues out at the end of last year, but we didn't receive all of the articles we had counted on. Finally, we have enough material for a couple of issues. So, we intend to produce two issues between now and the middle of March. That should just about catch us up to our schedule. That is, from the time we changed editorship (with #24, the May/June, 1988 issue) through January, we needed to produce five issues — through #28. Of course, after we get #28 out, we will need to produce the March issue post haste. I am hoping that issue will contain the results, in intelligible form, of the Questionnaire we sent last year. A lot depends on what comes in — more articles, reviews, etc., are always welcome, and usually in short supply. (Yes, this is a subtle hint.)

Readers may see some changes in the physical format of the *Inquirer* in the near future. We want to make each issue a bit easier to get out, plus we need to trim the publications committee's budget. So, I am going to explore some printing options. For the time being, we won't be using colored paper (which we started using last issue again). It's a little more expensive than plain white, and usually not quite as easy to read from. Issues will be 16-20 pages instead of 24-28. If a printer can be found who can produce *TSFI* with reasonable quality in a different format, we will probably go with them. I can't say that the *Inquirer* will be looking different . . . but I also can't promise that it won't.

A number of folks have said that

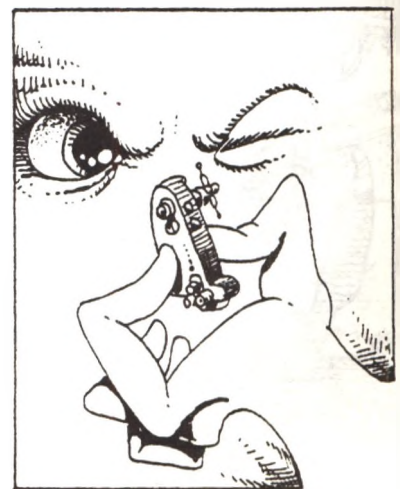
they like having covers on their zines. At the moment, we have a couple of cover illustrations; if we get more good cover art, we will use it. But we can't promise to get good art for every issue, and we don't intend to run bad art. (Another subtle hint.)

Another thing: We want to put a short questionnaire/comment card in each *Inquirer*. I am not sure that one will slip into this issue, but expect something soon. If anyone has any suggestions for what we should be asking (even obvious things — you never know what "obvious" question may be overlooked), you know where to find us.

Scott and I, and all of the other contributors to this fanzine, would like to thank everyone for the support you have shown us. Sometimes the work gets to be just that; we like being reminded occasionally of why we're doing it. Thanks.

— Monica Stephens

TAKING A CLOSER LOOK...



©brad w. foster 1988

# Nolacon Masque Report

by Pierre and Sandy Pettinger

The Nolacon II Masque — it's been several weeks now and maybe we've calmed down a bit. For such a screwed-up production, it's amazing how smoothly it seemed to run from the audience's point of view. Most will probably never appreciate what we went through to participate in this masquerade.

The lack of preplanning was appalling [and typical of Nolacon as a whole — Ed.]. I've never competed in a Worldcon Masquerade without a day-before meeting to answer questions and explain deadlines. One that caught us was that only the tech crew were going to be allowed into the auditorium at 10 a.m.; the general contestants could not come in until 1:30 or 2 p.m. When we got there, no check-in desk was evident. We had to find the wandering Drew Pearson, the Masquerade Director, and ask for our dressing room. He had apparently only pre-assigned the large groups. As a result, we wandered around for 30 minutes, picking up more contestants looking for rooms as we went. It had apparently never dawned on Drew to make up a map or organized list of dressing rooms so one could tell at a glance which were still available. Of course, at two in the afternoon, the Masquerade Director shouldn't be looking for dressing rooms; that was a job for the nonexistent check-in desk.

The progress reports had indicated a nice, modern facility loaded with dressing rooms. What we got was an old, filthy facility with lots of storage rooms being pressed into duty as dressing rooms. The filth and disrepair of the auditorium caused major damage to some of our costumes.

The room we finally got was not large enough to hold all seven of us in costume. It also had *no* chairs, mirrors, or running water. The restroom down the hall had no running water, either. Several of us were forced to change into costume in the hall. This wouldn't have been so bad except that

there was no security to keep non-participants out of the dressing areas. We were nearly ready to commandeer a restroom to apply makeup when Barb Schofield and Caroline Julian offered to let us use their room. Many thanks.

We also owe thanks to Gary Anderson and all those others who stepped in at the last minute to take over as the backstage tech crew. It wouldn't have happened without them, since apparently no one had been assigned to this duty.

Robert Silverberg was a disaster as MC. The man mumbled, would not talk into the mike, and made several snide remarks about some entries. There may still be award winners who don't know what they won, since they were unable to understand him. The ancient sound system didn't help any. Silverberg may always make a point of attending the masquerade, and that's great, but he just doesn't have the characteristics and skills of a good MC. Speaking of awards, it took well over a month for us to get our award certificates.

A masquerade program booklet is an obvious solution to a growing problem. Many of the larger groups have long lists of credits; listening to the MC read them can get boring. With a program, the MC need only read the names of those actually appearing on the stage. Having one was something [the only thing??] Nolacon did right; on the other hand . . . We had a large group of people who helped with our presentation, many of whom shed as much blood for these costumes as we did. Despite their reception of this information in ample time, none of these invaluable people were listed in the program. This also happened to others, I'm sure.

To make matters worse, I didn't know the names of the backdrop operators until the day before the Masque — they were last-minute recruitments

from Texas. We were not allowed to add their names to the credits for the MC to read. Those sheets had already been printed and we couldn't violate the sanctity of those sacred pages, could we?

This masquerade almost didn't happen due to a total lack of attention to priorities. Graphic representations of entry times, classes, or colors have negligible importance compared to pre-masquerade meetings, check-in desks, advance recruitment of tech crew, and clean facilities.

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## A Masqued Man by Scott Merritt

Nolacon was the first Worldcon Masquerade I've ever competed in (and most likely the last). And I have to admit that I had as big a case of pre-show jitters as possible. Being backstage and seeing all of these other marvelous costumes certainly didn't help. And I have to say that the costumes at this year's Masque were the best I've ever seen at a Worldcon or NASFiC.

I won't belabor the problems that Pierre and Sandy mention so eloquently in their report, but believe me, they understated the situation, if anything. However, there were good as well as bad points.

The Masque started and finished almost exactly on schedule, and visibility was generally good, though one could hardly understand Robert Silverberg's introductions of the presentations.

There were too many awards for the number of presentations. This made the few who didn't win anything feel absolutely terrible.

From the audience's standpoint, the Nolacon Masquerade was above average — not exceptional. From the viewpoint of the participants, it was barely tolerable.



# Masquerading Tips

by Pierre and Sandra Pettinger

There is no event at a science fiction/fantasy convention which attracts a larger audience than the masquerade. The pageant of representations from the literature we follow provides a vibrant visual image to complement the linguistic portrait the writers have portrayed. Many of us secretly wish we could create a costume which will impress an audience as much as the latest "Best in Show" winner. Conversely, we are daunted by the incredibly intricate creations on the stage. However, if you could see the first works of most master-class costumers, you would lose the awe. Many of

us often don't even admit to our first costumes.

Anyone can gain the necessary experience to create impressive costumes — just take the plunge and compete. Start at small masquerades. The field is usually small and the competition less intense. At larger masquerades, some form of division system is usual, so that entrants only compete against costumers of similar experience. That way, you won't be competing against a master costumer in your first masquerade.

Of course, merely competing is not enough. You must learn from each costume, whether it is a winner or

not. Some novices will always be novices because they refuse to learn. If you want to learn, here are "suggestions" for costumers called *Rotsler's Rules for Masquerades*.

William Rotsler, "famous fan artist and ardent masquerade attendee," composed these guidelines for masquerade contestants. Many costumers consistently ignore these rules. They also consistently fail to win. These rules have expanded over the years to include new situations and observations. Following them will not guarantee you a successful costume, but they are 5/8 of the process.

## Rotsler's Rules for Masquerades

1. There should be a weight limit for the purchase of leotards.
2. Every contestant should first see him/herself from the rear.

Obviously, the purpose of these rules is to costume for your body type. There's little to be appreciated in a 250-pound dancing girl or a 95-pound Conan. It is possible to violate the intent here for comedic effect; just use caution.

3. Whether prince or pauper, act like it. Stay in character!

The most magnificent costume will not make a slouching, shuffling man or woman into a king or queen. Movement, gesture, and posture must complement the character you're portraying. Remember: to your character this is clothing, not a costume.

4. Speak distinctly, but not at length . . . or not at all.
5. Learn to use the microphone properly . . . or not at all.
6. Do not lecture your audience! You are not there to make protracted statements on your particular

philosophy, but to entertain. When in doubt, keep your mouth shut.

These rules are important at small masquerades without tape facilities. Fortunately, most large masquerades do not allow live speaking or mikes on stage. It is far too easy to lose yourself while trying to recite a script on stage. Using a tape or allowing the MC to perform your narration will be far more successful. Remember to always keep obscenity out of your narration.

7. No name tags or badges on costumes.

Name tags and other buttons distract the eye. Other necessary items are a room key, a little cash (or traveler's checks), perhaps a credit card. Keep them in your pocket or sleeve to be produced on demand. Boots are also a good "storage" place.

8. Parts of your costume should not be edible or smelly. Parts of your costume should not fall off accidentally.

9. Hand in a legible entry card, even to the point of writing out phonetically any difficult or unusual words.

10. If you have something for the narrator to read, keep it brief; eliminate unpronounceable, incomprehensible, made-up names. Eliminate any unnecessary narration. Do not duplicate on tape what the narrator has already said.

The audience is not interested in the 50,000 beads you sewed on by hand or that you have worked on your costume for five years. They are much more interested in the source of your costume.

11. If you are going to attempt a costume cliché, you must do it better than ever before, or have a good variation, preferably comic.

### Costume No-Nos

I have had people ask me what is a costume cliché. For answer, I'm going to quote from a list printed in Mike Resnic's magazine *Masquerade*. Those costumes we can do without: Barbarella, Vampirella, Mr.



Spock, any crew member of the U.S.S. Enterprise, Luke Skywalker, Han Solo, Darth Vader, Princess Leia, Wookies, anyone with a lightsaber, anyone from on, beneath, or in the general vicinity of The Planet of the Apes, Belly Dancers, Celtic warriors, cutesy-poo robots (whatever the source), Girls from Gor, Men from Gor, whips and chains from Gor, funny Superman costumes, unfunny Superman costumes, crew members from Aliens, The Black Hole, or Bat-

tlestar Galactica, the Amazing Spider-man.

12. Consider carefully before going nude or semi-nude.

"No Costume is No Costume!" Also, you do not wish to cause the convention problems with the local authorities. If in doubt, check with the masquerade director.



13. Thou shalt wear shoes to match thy costume.

Be careful to match all elements of your costume, from shoes to hair to makeup to accessories.

14. If you are thinking of doing something you intend to be amusing, try it out on an honest friend.

Remember, many masquerades do not allow live speeches from stage, and it is very difficult to lip-synch comedy.

15. If you have the slightest doubt, or even if you don't, that your costume — based on a cover or story description — might be unfamiliar to the judges, do not hesitate to supply them with a copy of the cover illustration or descriptive text.

16. Remember, some people can grow a beard and some cannot.

17. Presentation can make a mediocre costume and break a good one.

Simple presentations can be very effective, but a standard costume can often use a special presentation. Try to use the entire stage.

18. Keep all presentations short. Action is better than words.

19. Learn to manage your props, accessories and music.

Don't be dependent on anything other than yourself on stage. Cassettes can fail. The light crew can miss their cue. Carry on as if nothing is going wrong.

20. Do not commit the unforgivable sin: **Do Not Be Boring!**

21. Rehearse! Rehearse! Rehearse!

22. Those who think these rules do not apply to them are wrong!

If you follow these rules faithfully, and learn from every costume, yours *and* your competitors', you will soon find yourself creating the costumes that attract the "Aaaahhs!" from the audience.



# 1989 Hugo Nomination Ballot—Instructions

PLEASE READ THE FOLLOWING INSTRUCTIONS CAREFULLY BEFORE NOMINATING.

The accompanying ballot is the nomination ballot for the 1989 Science Fiction Achievement Awards (Hugos), for the best science fiction or fantasy works of 1988. To nominate, you must be a member of either Noreascon Three or Nolacon II (the 1988 Worldcon); only those Nolacon members who explicitly request ballots will receive them. Only Noreascon Three members will be entitled to vote on the final ballot. Please be sure to include the required information so that we can verify your membership. (Your membership number isn't required, but will make things a little easier for us; your name and address *are* required.) If you aren't a member yet, just fill out the required information and enclose the membership fee with your ballot. All nominations should be sent to **Noreascon Three; Box 46, MIT Branch PO; Cambridge, MA 02139**; and should be postmarked no later than **March 15, 1989** to be counted. (But we'll be counting the ballots about a week after that, so we recommend mailing earlier if you have any doubts about the speed of the mails; and if you're overseas, *please* use air mail.)

We're distributing these ballots early enough that most of you should get them a couple of months before the deadline. While we'd prefer that you not wait till the *very* last minute, we do hope that you'll take your time before voting. Don't nominate the first thing that comes to mind, but try to read as widely as possible. If you have a serious question about the interpretation of the rules, write to us and we'll try to answer it. (But don't ask us to count the words in a story for you; you can get a pretty good estimate by counting a typical page and multiplying.)

You may make up to five nominations in each category; but if you wish to make fewer nominations, or none at all in a given category, feel free to do so. (In fact, we recommend that you not nominate in any category you aren't familiar with.) The order of your nominations doesn't matter. Please don't waste a nomination on "No Award," which under the rules will automatically appear on the final ballot in each category. We've included spaces for "source" under the fiction categories; you don't have to fill these out, but you can do so if you think your nomination is one we might not recognize. (It's a good idea to look them up anyway, to make sure you've got the title right.) **PLEASE PRINT OR TYPE.**

The final Hugo ballot will contain the five nominees (more in the case of ties) that receive the most nomina-

tions in each category. It will be distributed to Noreascon Three members only, in a special mailing around May 1, 1989. The voting deadline will be July 15, 1989. As always, the winners will be announced at the Hugo Awards Ceremony at the Worldcon.

The rules governing the Hugos can be found in the World Science Fiction Society Constitution, printed elsewhere in this Progress Report. The explanations below are an expansion and clarification of these rules.

## General Rules:

Note that in spite of the official title (Science Fiction Achievement Awards), all the Hugos are for works of *either science fiction or fantasy*, however you may choose to define those two genres. The Noreascon Three committee is the sole judge of eligibility, but we believe in giving the voters the benefit of the doubt; in other words, anything that gets enough votes will be on the final ballot, unless it is clearly and unambiguously ineligible under the rules. If something is nominated in more than one category (a common occurrence), we also decide what category to put it in. All nominees will be notified of their nominations, and will have the opportunity to decline before the final ballot is printed.

## Year of Eligibility:

All the Hugos are for works that appeared for the first time in the calendar year 1988. (The Campbell Award, which is not a Hugo, is for authors first published in 1987 or 1988.) For a dated periodical, eligibility is determined only by the cover date; that is, a "January 1988" magazine is eligible this year even if it really appeared in October 1987 (as at least one did). For anything else, however, eligibility is governed by the "publication date." This is an arbitrary date designated by the publisher to define "the time when the concentrated selling effort begins" (to quote a recent court decision), and is commonly several weeks after a book has been shipped to bookstores and placed on sale. Thus books that were on sale in December, or even November, 1987 may have had 1988 publication dates and still be eligible for this year's Hugos; please keep this in mind when considering your nominations. The publication date is often, but not always, listed on a book's copyright page; the copyright date itself is not conclusive, but you can use it to identify the year if you have no other evidence. (Note that published lists of "the year's best books" or the like can not always be relied on in determining Hugo eligibility, since some

sources list books by date of receipt rather than publication date.)

Serialized stories are eligible this year if the final installment appeared in 1988. The same rule applies to serialized dramas, e.g., a miniseries or multi-part episode the last part of which was broadcast in 1988. But while a *serial* (a single story appearing in two or more parts) is eligible, a *series* (a collection of more or less related stories appearing under the same overall title or with the same characters, but each complete in itself) is not eligible as a whole. (For example, *Star Trek* was never eligible as such, but a lot of individual episodes were Hugo nominees.) We are of course the final judges of what constitutes a single story—or “single dramatic unit,” as stated in the rule for dramas.

### Category Definitions:

**BEST NOVEL:** A science fiction or fantasy story of 40,000 words or more, appearing for the first time during the calendar year 1988. (See above for rules governing date of “appearance” and serialization.) A novel originally published in a language other than English is eligible if *either* the original publication or the first English translation appeared in 1988.

**BEST NOVELLA:** Same as Best Novel, except that the length must be between 17,500 and 40,000 words.

**BEST NOVELETTE:** Same as Best Novel, except that the length must be between 7500 and 17,500 words.

**BEST SHORT STORY:** Same as Best Novel, except that the length must be less than 7500 words.

**BEST NON-FICTION BOOK:** Any non-fictional work relating to science fiction, fantasy, or fandom, first published in book form during 1988. Both “non-fictional” and “relating to SF, etc.” have traditionally been interpreted loosely; past nominees have included works of history, biography, bibliography, criticism, art books (including graphic novels and other heavily illustrated fictions), pseudo-nonfictional “reference books,” books about science (both real and pseudo-), and a bound fanzine. Worldcon committees usually have an interesting time deciding eligibility in this category; as noted above, we expect to be liberal about it, but there *are* limits...

**BEST DRAMATIC PRESENTATION:** Any production, in any medium, of dramatized science fiction or fantasy, which was publicly presented for the first time in its present dramatic form during 1988. (See above for the rules on series and “dramatic units.”)

**BEST PROFESSIONAL EDITOR:** The editor of any professional publication devoted primarily to science fiction or fantasy during 1988. A “professional publication” is defined as one with an average press run of at least 10,000 copies per issue. Those eligible

include magazine editors, editors of anthologies, and book editors at publishing houses.

**BEST PROFESSIONAL ARTIST:** An illustrator whose work appeared in a professional publication (see above) of science fiction or fantasy during 1988. (Note that the award is supposed to be for art published during the year, not a career award.)

**BEST SEMIPROZINE and BEST FANZINE:** Both categories are for generally available non-professional publications (press run under 10,000) devoted to science fiction, fantasy, or (for fanzines) related subjects, which have published 4 or more issues, at least one of which appeared during 1988. In addition, a semiprozine is a publication which during 1988 met *at least two* of the following criteria: (1) had an average press run of at least 1000 copies per issue; (2) paid its contributors and/or staff in other than free copies; (3) provided at least half the income of any one person; (4) had at least 15% of its total space occupied by advertising; or (5) announced itself to be a semiprozine. Publications meeting fewer than two of these criteria are fanzines.

**BEST FAN WRITER:** Any person whose writing appeared in semiprozines or fanzines during 1988.

**BEST FAN ARTIST:** Any artist or cartoonist whose work appeared in semiprozines or fanzines or through other public display (e.g., convention art shows) during 1988. Note that no artist is allowed to appear on the final Hugo ballot in both Professional Artist and Fan Artist categories in the same year.

**JOHN W. CAMPBELL AWARD FOR BEST NEW WRITER** (*Not a Hugo*; sponsored by Davis Publications): Any writer whose first professionally published science fiction or fantasy story appeared during the calendar year 1987 or 1988. (Date of appearance is defined in the same manner as for the Hugos. “Professionally published,” as above, refers to a press run of at least 10,000.)

(Each Worldcon committee is entitled to add a special Hugo category to the ballot. The Noreascon Three committee has chosen not to use this option.)

### Committee Ineligibility:

No member of the Noreascon Three committee, nor any publication closely connected with a member of the committee, is eligible for a Hugo award. (In particular, *The Mad 3 Party*, published by the committee itself, is *not* eligible for Best Fanzine this year.) Note, however, that “committee” here refers to only the membership of Massachusetts Convention Fandom, Inc., the convention’s policy-making body, who are listed on page 1 of this progress report; all other members of the wider “committee” listed on pages 4 and 6 remain eligible.



# 1989 Hugo Nomination Ballot

PLEASE READ THE ACCOMPANYING INSTRUCTIONS CAREFULLY BEFORE NOMINATING.

## BEST NOVEL

(author and title)

(source)

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_

## BEST NOVELLA

(author and title)

(source)

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_

## BEST NOVELETTE

(author and title)

(source)

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_

## BEST SHORT STORY

(author and title)

(source)

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_

## BEST NON-FICTION BOOK

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_

## BEST DRAMATIC PRESENTATION

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_

## BEST PROFESSIONAL EDITOR

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_



**BEST PROFESSIONAL ARTIST**

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_

**BEST FAN WRITER**

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_

**BEST SEMIPROZINE**

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_

**BEST FAN ARTIST**

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_

**BEST FANZINE**

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_

**JOHN W. CAMPBELL AWARD (not a Hugo)**

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_

**THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION MUST BE INCLUDED:**

NAME \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

SIGNATURE \_\_\_\_\_

**PLEASE CHECK ONE:**

- ☐ I am a member of **Noreascon Three**. (Membership Number \_\_\_\_\_)
- ☐ I am not a member of Noreascon Three, but was a member of **Nolacon II**, the 1988 Worldcon. (Nolacon Membership Number \_\_\_\_\_)
- ☐ I enclose \$ \_\_\_\_\_ for a \_\_\_\_\_ membership in Noreascon Three.

(Supporting memberships in Noreascon Three cost \$20.00, entitling the member to all publications and the right to vote on the Hugos and on the site of the 1992 Worldcon. Attending memberships cost \$70.00 until March 15, 1989, \$80.00 thereafter, and also entitle the member to attend Noreascon Three. Make checks payable to Noreascon Three.)

**Send ballots to: Noreascon Three, Box 46, MIT Branch PO, Cambridge, Mass 02139, USA**

**Ballots must be mailed by March 15, 1989.**

Reproduction of this ballot is encouraged, provided it is reproduced verbatim (including the instructions) and includes the name of the person or publication reproducing it. We would appreciate receiving copies of all such reproductions, if possible before publication (so we can check for errors).



# Nolacommunion

by Samuel Mize

My first clue that I had attended the 1988 Worldcon was a note in the December *Texas SF Inquirer* that I had helped with the ASFA Suite. This surprised me, as I had sold my membership and (so far as I knew) not gone to New Orleans at all, let alone Nolacon. However, I have great faith in the accuracy of the *Inquirer*, so I investigated further.

Fortunately, a mutual friend introduced me to Whitney Strident, hypnotist to the stars (Sirius and Ceti Alpha). With her help, I recovered an amazing experience: I was a Nolacon UFO abduction attendee!

Our first clue was a mysterious "hole" in my memory of the Labor Day weekend. This hole began about 10:30 p.m. Friday night, and continued until about 8 a.m. Saturday morning. Prior to my hypnosis, my last memory before the start of this hole is of laying down on my bed in the dark. For some reason, the existence of this memory hole had not struck me as being odd. However, thanks to Ms. Strident's expertise in the new field of "suggestive recall enhancement," I relived the entire UFO abduction experience under her guidance.

I was lying on the bed, my face away from the window. At about 10:40 p.m., a greenish-gold glow filtered into my room. I heard the window open and three beings pulled themselves through. I was strangely unable to move, as if I were in a dream; however, as is clear to me now, I was not dreaming. The glow faded, leaving the room in shades of black and grey. The beings came around the bed, where I could see them. All were humanoid. One was tall, with a mass of tightly coiled fur on top of its head. The second was shorter and somewhat round, as if it were overweight. The third being was

topped by a straight, black mane cut into a stylized helmet pattern. I could see no color at all to them in this light.

The first being turned to the third and made a series of sounds. While I could not understand their language, I picked up mental sensations which I believe carried their meaning.

"This Earth creature is young. Are you sure it wrote *The Foundation Trilogy*?"

The third being (I think the leader) replied, "No, esteemed brother," (I am not quite sure of the mode of address), "that one is being collected by Zeta team, as has been explained to you before. This one is just a fan."

After this exchange, a ritual occurred. The third being made a ceremonial gesture ending in contact with the head of the shorter being, which had no visible hair. This being then pointed two digits at the third, and uttered a series of three yelps.

This completed, they gestured and I levitated roughly 14.215 inches above my bed. I then floated out the window and into their spaceship. This rectangular, dark brown object had something of the aspect of an unwrapped Hershey bar. I was still unable to move or speak. I

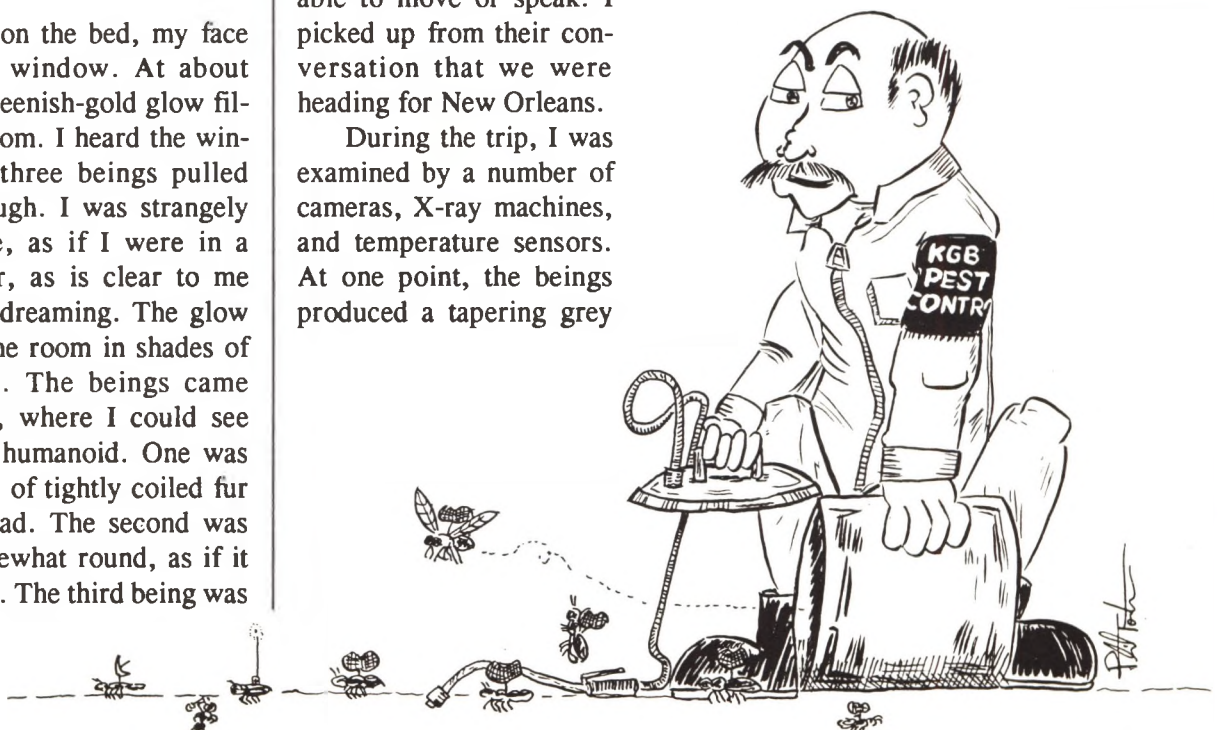
picked up from their conversation that we were heading for New Orleans.

During the trip, I was examined by a number of cameras, X-ray machines, and temperature sensors. At one point, the beings produced a tapering grey

probe, triangular in cross section, about two feet long. Readers familiar with *Communion* will understand my feelings on seeing this. This particular probe ended with a harlequin head. Fortunately, the leader decided that, since I was not a paying member of Nolacon, I would not be subjected to this treatment. From the reports I have read and heard, I believe that many Nolacon attendees and staff may have hypnotically suppressed memories of an encounter with this device. The concom may have helped to administer these examinations.

We arrived in New Orleans, where I am sure I helped with the ASFA Suite as reported. I have vivid memories of serving munchies and Guava cola to John W. Campbell, Jr., L. Ron Hubbard, and J.R.R. Tolkien. I recall being told someone wished Jerry Pournelle could attend under similar circumstances.

All too soon, a familiar radiance filled the room, and I was once again unable to move. No one noticed as I levitated out the ASFA Suite window; after all, this was Worldcon. The voyage home was uneventful.





# Midnight Excursions

## On The Persistence of the Small Press and Other Periodic Horrors – Part III

by Lawrence Person

*The final installment on small-press horror.*

A very different kind of zine is *GAS*, the newsletter for the non-existent Gross Americans' Society, edited by Jeannette M. Hopper. Casting caution (and good taste) to the wind, *GAS* promises to bring its readers the grossest and most disgusting articles and fiction in the entire horror field. Filled with a number of departments, both odd ("Grandma Retcher's Kitchen") and useful ("Horror Writer's Notebook"), it is aimed almost entirely at the humorous end of the gross-out spectrum. The issue received (#3) contained a few moderately amusing stories (Emily Newland's vignette "Ecchstasy," Wayne Allen Sallee's "Ghoul Days," and J.N. Williamson's "The Customary Manner"), plus "Plastic Promises," a truly wretched pun story by Annette Crouch. I should say right off that the humor in *GAS* is just a bit too sophomoric for my tastes. However, in this case, that's like saying that lemons are too sour ("They're supposed to be sour, you ninny!"). But what is really most disappointing about this venture is that the no-holds-barred approach to horror (or semi-no-holds-barred; Hopper sent a list of taboos to *The Nightmare Express* [see below]) could make it an outlet for the intense, hard-core horror stories that used to fill the pages of *Night Cry* (or, in the small press, *New Blood*). As it stands, *GAS* is an interesting anomaly. There is something to admire about a magazine that devotes two pages to discussing flatulence as a dying art form, but I'm not sure what. All in all, it's rather like rat flambé — definitely an acquired taste, and not one that all aspire to. If it's your sort of thing, however, \$2.50 is not much to risk, even for something a bit on the skimpy side (24 pages). Subscriptions are also avail-



able, at \$9.00 for four issues. (*GAS*, P.O. Box 397, Marina, CA 93933.)



Now, at the opposite end of the spectrum from *GAS*, we find *Gothic*, a lit-crit magazine dedicated to discussing Gothic elements in classic and modern horror fiction and edited by Gary William Crawford. Originally an 8½x11" magazine (back in 1979 and 1980), *Gothic*'s current incarnation is a thin (22 pages) digest format. For the most part, this is pretty dry stuff, consisting entirely of scholarly literary articles (the first of which, "The Artist as Demon in Mary Shelley, Stevenson, Walpole, Stoker, and King," strikes this reviewer as a bit of a stretch even for a literary paper), and reviews of literary books on horror fiction. Considering the relatively high cost of this publication (subscriptions are \$6.00 for two issues), it really can't be recommended except for hard-core Gothic addicts and, possibly, English teachers. In fact, its old incarnation (which not only contained a great deal more material but also

featured fiction, bibliographies, and translated reprints of classic works) was a much more interesting magazine; a return to the old format might be in order. (Gary William Crawford, P.O. Box 80051, Baton Rouge, LA 70898.)

## Poetry, Too

The next digest to look at here in specialty land (and another Crawford publication) offers the opportunity to discuss two features of the small press. Since the small press is a world constantly in flux, publications appear and disappear with distressing regularity. An example of an extreme case is *Supernatural Poetry*, a magazine whose first issue was also its last. Though containing a better-than-average selection of horror verse (more on that below), *Supernatural Poetry* (at \$4 an issue) was extremely overpriced for a 12-page booklet. As such, the news (delivered via *Scavenger's Newsletter* — see below), that Crawford was merging *SP* into *Supernatural Horror Fiction* was not surprising.

Now, don't think this means the end of horror poetry — far from it! However, *SP*'s demise does underscore the position of poetry in the small press. Quite bluntly, in most cases poetry serves the purpose of literary filler. This is not to denigrate it, as a great deal of the poetry published in the small press is quite good. This is simply a market reality — prose works will always be more lucrative and widely read than poetry. To illustrate this point, we need only consider the fact that there is not (to this reviewer's knowledge) a single person out there making a living as a poet unless they are subsidized at the taxpayers' expense. Still, poets will be poets, and we are all enriched by their crazy persistence.



Of the magazines mentioned so far, all but *Gothic* and *Dark Regions* carry poetry. Among the best works seen in the magazines viewed are "Walls" by Dwight E. Humphries, "In a Cave (New Mexico)" by Glenn Sheldon, "A Poem for the 4th Dimension" by Annette S. Crouch, and "Through Ghost Glass" by Billy Wolfenburger, all in *Supernatural Poetry*; the dark "Second Thoughts" by Wayne Allen Sallee in *Grue* #5 and "Beyond the Reef" by Jessica Amanda Salmonson in *Grue* #6; John Gray's simple but joyously twisted "Sisterly Love" in *GAS* #3; Don Herron's short but amusing "Curiosity" and Thomas M. Egan's evocative Tolkien homage "Shelob's Dreme," both in *Eldritch Tales* #13; Chasen Gaver's "Decades" in *New Blood* #2; "The Steppenwolf" and the slyly humorous "The Prospect," both by Bruce Boston and both in *Twisted* #3; and Sue Marra's "Blood Junkie" in *2AM* #6. Also good is "Death is a Dialogue" in *Fantasy and Terror* #7 — but, then again, what do

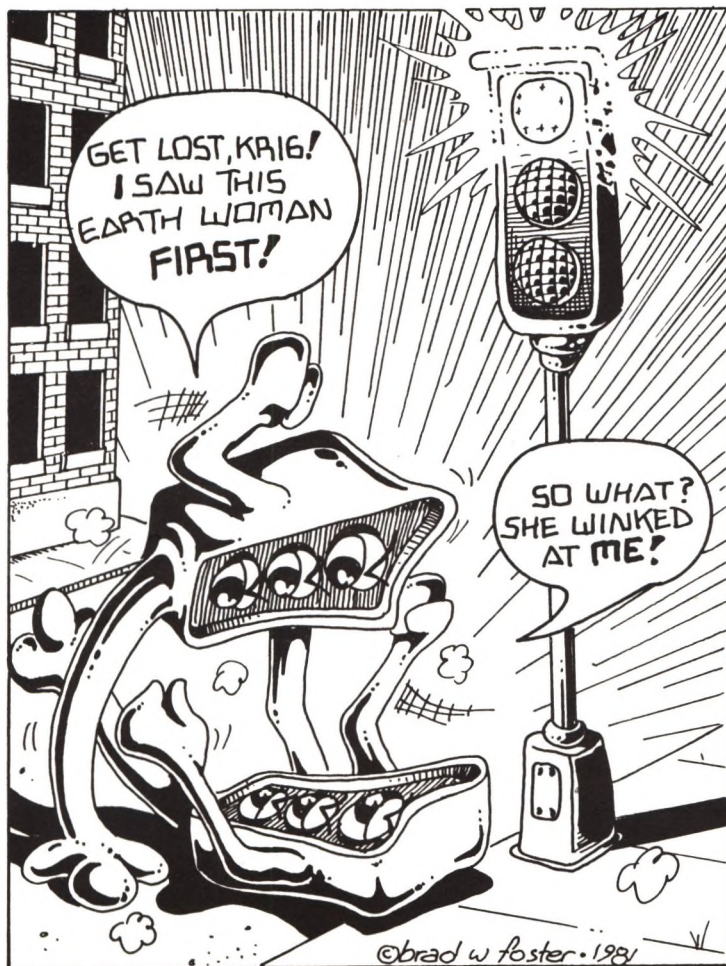
you expect from Emily Dickinson? Though you wouldn't care to compare them to T.S. Elliott or W.B. Yeats (or even Ray Bradbury), a number of the poems found here are solid works, and the small press is probably the only place where you can find any dark poetry these days.

## All the Blood That's Fit to Print

Finally, there are the newszines. No field would be complete without its mailborne messengers carrying the latest tidbit of news to the information-hungry masses. And, like *Locus* or *Science Fiction Chronicle* for the SF genre, horror has three non-fiction magazines of its own. However, of those, two (*Nightmare Express* and *Scavenger's Newsletter*) are really market reports, and the third is just getting off the ground.

*Scavenger's Newsletter* is just what its name says: a newsletter. A xeroxed "marketing cooperative"

edited by Janet Fox, *SN* is dedicated to bringing its readers all the small press news that can be crammed into a 16-page, 7x8½" format. If you want to be published in the small press, this is the place to turn. To that end, this newsletter contains a lot of useful features, including "Scroungings," in-depth reports on various markets; "Flea Market," a listing of the latest offerings of the small press; "Slim Pickins," a compilation of various tidbits of market news; and a good, interactive "junkmail" section. This, in addition to generally insightful articles on writing and submitting work and the state of the small press, makes this a fairly attractive package for an aspiring small-press writer. In fact, the only bad feature in the lot is T. Winter-Damon's stream of consciousness, oh-so-hip column on the surreal, non-genre publications that thrive in the counter-culture world of xerox art. Winter-Damon's style is all but unreadable, and the material of only marginal interest to most genre readers. Despite this, and the lack of more information on professional markets, *SN* provides a valuable tool for those interested in small press markets. Plus, it's difficult to go wrong at \$8 for 12 monthly issues. (Janet Fox, 519 Ellinwood, Osage City, KS 66523-1329.)



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A bit more professional-looking than *Scavenger's*, *The Nightmare Express* (edited by Donald L. Miller) places less emphasis on the small press and, as a general rule, features less (but more in-depth) market news. Each issue contains five or six specific market reports, plus a number of eclectic features. *NE* usually has some poetry (generally on the short — and sometimes light — side), a "Horrorfieds" section featuring a selection of the latest offerings from the small press, "Cooking with Auntie Bel-lum," a feature similar to (and as dumb as) the "Grandma Retcher's Kitchen" column in *GAS* (which is not surprising, considering that they were both written by Ree Young), and



"Bloodlore," a purported "Review and Source Column" by Tom Lee which, lacking the earlier parts of the series, this reviewer is not exactly sure about. One of the most valuable features in *NE* is "The Write Track," a section where an aspiring writer's work is dissected and its problems pointed out. This provides good lessons for beginners on some basic submission no-nos. *NE* also occasionally carries fiction, not much of which is memorable. All in all, *Express* is more attractive and professionally oriented than *Scavenger's Newsletter*, but is also more expensive and carries less news. Still, \$1.50 per issue is not that steep, and it's certainly worth looking into for an aspiring horror writer. A subscription is also available, at \$8 for six issues. (*The Nightmare Express*, Donald L. Miller, 262 Sherburne #2, St. Paul, MN 55103.)

There is one feature that both of these magazines could add that would make me recommend them without qualification, and that is a yearly, comprehensive market report for the horror field, similar to what *SFC* does ever six months or so, with a listing of all the markets that accept horror fiction, their payment rates, circulation, etc. It is possible that either of these publications occasionally has such a feature, but none of the review issues contained one.



The last magazine we look at is a borderline professional publication that may not stay within the confines of the small press for long. *Horrorstruck*, edited by Paul F. Olson, seeks to be the *Locus* or *Science Fiction Chronicle* of the horror field — a professional-quality, general-interest publication covering all aspects of the genre. And, taking a look at the first few issues, it looks like Olson and company are well on their way to achieving that goal.

With a masthead chock full of professionals as contributing editors (including Dean R. Koontz, J.K. Potter, and Gene Wolf), *Horrorstruck*

has a number of interesting and thought-provoking features, including a strong column on the nuts and bolts of the publishing process by Melissa Ann Singer, a good video/film column by Stanley Wiater, a list of recently published books and magazines, and a host of other goodies (though their lack of a book review column remains a significant oversight). In addition to numerous interesting non-fiction articles (such as a classic author's checklist, a piece on a reader survey that asked what people look for the most in a good horror book, etc.), *Horrorstruck* profiles a different author in every issue (Robert R. McCammon and George R.R. Martin had the honors in the first two issues). This is a good segment, but the addition of a complete bibliography would make it even better.

Two things it doesn't publish (or want to publish) are fiction and poetry, a logical format for a genre news magazine. Other than that, however, *Horrorstruck* has all the features to fill a "horrorhead's" heart with joy, and is a high-quality venture to boot. Highly recommended to those who want not only to read horror, but to read about it as well. Single issues are \$2.95, and six bimonthly issues cost \$15.00. (Carruth Bay Press, 155 Surrey Drive-E, Glen Ellyn, IL 60137.)

## The Authors

Now we know what to look for, but what about who to look for? One of the thrills of reading the small press is being able to point at the latest horror superstar's name on the *New York Times* Bestseller list, dragging out your old, dog-eared copy of *Twisted* or *Grue*, and showing your friends his first published work . . . and telling them smugly that you read Clive King way back when. Not only that, but just imagine what those old magazines will be worth if someone in them does turn out to be (he said, getting ready to drop The Phrase) *the next Stephen King!*

(Hey, sorry about that, but I have to mention Clive Barker and Stephen

King at least once in every column. It's in my contract.)

First of all, I don't think anyone in the small press really wants to be "the next Stephen King" or "the next Clive Barker." (Though a few still seem to be shooting for "the next H.P. Lovecraft.") They all want to be the first Wayne Allen Sallee, or the first Annette Crouch. The ones who are turning out the best work in these zines are far too busy developing their own style to imitate anyone else.



Secondly, fame is a fickle thing. Although success is almost always the result of years of hard work, literary superstardom is more random than not. Horror fiction is lucky in that its two current superstars pretty much deserve all the acclaim they're getting. However, many other fine, published horror writers are still waiting for that "big break." Though horror fiction has existed as a separate marketing sub-genre for only a short time, the annals of science fiction are full of examples of great writers who wrote in almost total obscurity for decades (Philip K. Dick being perhaps the best-known example). Even now, Parke Godwin is perhaps the finest fantasist in the field and the winner of two World Fantasy Awards, yet he still remains relatively unknown.

So the question is not Who's going to be a superstar, but Who's



going to be a regularly published professional five years from now. Some regular contributors to the small press (A.N. Morlan, Janet Fox, William Relling, Jr.) already have. It's an uncertain proposition, but here are a few educated guesses:

**Gary A. Braunbeck** — Although technically not an amateur anymore (he sold to *Night Cry* before that magazine's untimely demise), Braunbeck's stories in *Eldritch Tales* have consistently been among the best fiction published in the entire small press. Though, again, it is disingenuous to call anyone "the next Stephen King," Braunbeck's strengths (an excellent grasp of characterization and an artist's eye for the rich texture of everyday American life) are the same as King's. His work already shows a polished maturity, and I would be greatly surprised if Braunbeck is not as well known in five years as, say, Steve Rasnic Tem or Mort Castle are now. Definitely a man to watch.

**Wayne Allen Sallee** — Again, it is hard to call someone an amateur or an unknown when his work has appeared in a Best of the Year collection, but (to this reviewer's knowledge) Sallee's work has never appeared in a professional magazine. He writes with a distinct, hard-edged, angry style. Though Sallee might be numbered among the ever-growing ranks of the "splatter punk" movement, his work is quite different from that of Barker and his imitators. Whereas most splatter-punk writers take a tone of cool, clinical — some would say forensic — detachment in viewing the dismemberment of their characters, Sallee's work is infused with an angry passion more reminiscent of Harlan Ellison's work than anything else. Look for Sallee to be mentioned in the same breath as Ray Gorton and the Skipp/Spector combo in the not-so-distant future.

**Ron Leming** — Though still developing his style, Leming is already a powerful visionary. His works appear infrequently in the small press (perhaps because he,

along with a number of his small-press brethren, is an artist as well as a writer), but when they do, they are generally well worth the wait.

**Thomas Ligotti** — A highly articulate writer, with a subtle style and a masterful grasp of the English language. He writes some of the most polished prose in the small press, though his work sometimes tends toward the rarified (a flaw he shares with Ramsey Campbell).

**Albert Manchino** — A bizarre, original author. The two works seen in this batch of publications were both good, both strange, and completely different from each other.

**David Starkey** — Though his work occasionally tends toward the oblique, Starkey is quite skillful at evoking dark and striking images, and has a fairly good grasp of characterization.

**Dan Crawford** — Small-press horror's Clown Prince. His stories are bizarre, original, and very amusing. Now, if only we could see more of them . . .

**David Bruce** — If anyone ever starts a magazine entitled *Weird Sex Tales*, David Bruce is going to be one of their biggest contributors; he seems to write almost nothing but weird sex tales. Appearing mostly in *Twisted* and *New Blood*, Bruce turns in some powerful (if not fully developed) work. Not for the easily offended, or the faint of heart.

In addition, there are several writers (Jeannette M. Hopper, Charlotte Brown Hammond, Collen Drippé, Anke Kriske, Bobby Warner, Joe Clifford Faust, Annette Crouch and Billy Wolfenburger among them), who constantly turn work that is, if not exceptional, at least of solid, competent quality. And, should they continue to write and appear as frequently as they have over the past few years, their work cannot but improve.

## The Artists

Just as the small press has its own universe of writers, so does it contain its own solar system of artists. Among the most prominent and frequent contributors in this category are Allen Koszowski, John Borkowski, Alfred Klosterman, and Alan Jude Summa. If you have a small-press magazine and you can't get one of these guys to do artwork for you, you must be doing something wrong.

Borkowski (whose bold, streaking, "whipped-line" style of drawing is perhaps the most distinctive in the entire small press) was the featured illustrator in *2AM* #5, and Summa did the honors for #6. Koszowski drew the extremely striking cover for *Dark Regions* #2, and Klosterman is everywhere. There are many others, but perhaps it is best to leave that subject to someone with a more skilled artistic eye.

## Wrapping It Up

Well, that's it for this whirlwind tour. There are many other small-press publications; unfortunately, some of them never responded to my queries for review copies (David Silva's well-regarded *The Horror Show* and Scott C. Virtes' *Sycophant* among them), so they are, for the time being, left out in the cold.

Before I let you go, I would like to put in a plug for a magazine from the not-small press, the aforementioned *Weird Tales*. Currently edited and published by the triumvirate of George H. Scithers, Darrell Schweitzer and John Betancourt, this latest incarnation is a high-quality quarterly digest. As I noted in my introduction, professional horror magazines are few and far between, so this venture deserves all the support it can get. Buy an issue while the newsstands still have them — it's a true bargain for a mere \$3.50. Or you can send \$18.00 for six issues to *Weird Tales*, P.O. Box 13418, Philadelphia, PA 19101.

# A Postscript

## To the Small-Press Horror Review

by Lawrence Person

And now, after all has been said and done, a story.

The gargantuan survey you have just finished reading was actually completed just over a year ago, and begun even earlier than that. As originally planned, this piece was supposed to have been finished in time to make it into the *TSFI* out for ArmadilloCon — the 1987 ArmadilloCon. As that date approached, it became apparent that this was not to be, mainly because the *first* installment of the Midnight Excursions series had not been published. Actually, this delay was more blessing than curse since it allowed me to include some publications that I otherwise would have missed. For those editors who rushed their magazines to me because of the early deadline I gave them, *mea culpa*.

After it was turned in, I waited for the article to appear. And waited. And waited. Then the manuscript seemed to have been lost in the editorial shuffle. So I had to send Scott a new copy — and Scott, worried about the usual space constraints (“Yes, it’s the *All Lawrence Person Issue* of the *Inquirer*”), had to break it into three chunks (the better for you to digest, my dear).

The cumulative effect has resulted in an article intended to be a snapshot of the evolving genre but which turned into (in many cases) very old news. So, listed below are some changes, updates, and addenda to the review.

As predicted, *Supernatural Poetry* was too thin to survive. *Horror Show*, too, has ceased publication, that fine magazine proving too expensive for its publishers to support as a money-making venture. (A non-fiction magazine for horror aficionados was not a bad idea, merely ahead of its time. Look for the same idea to resurface as a profitable venture five or ten years down the road.) Last word on

John Benson’s *Doppelganger* was that it was being suspended, though his *Not One of Us* still appears to be going strong.

Both *Grue* and *Eldritch Tales* have continued to put out issues, the latter having increased its frequency because of the previously mentioned purchase of a Mac and laser printer. *Crypt of Cthulhu* continues to roll along, and *Tales of Lovecraftian Horror* has put out a second issue.

By the way, a lot of this information is culled from Janet Fox’s *Scavenger’s Newsletter*. The more I read this little gem, the more I like it; it provides a valuable clearinghouse for news and information on the small-press market. Rates are currently \$9 a year from the address given in the article. Oh, yes, *Scavenger* also publishes a comprehensive market listing called *Scavenger’s Scrapbook* for \$2.50.

Another good place to look for small-press horror magazines is in the catalogs issued by national mail-order booksellers. Among them are

Mark Ziesing, P.O. Box 806, Wil-  
limantic, CT 06226

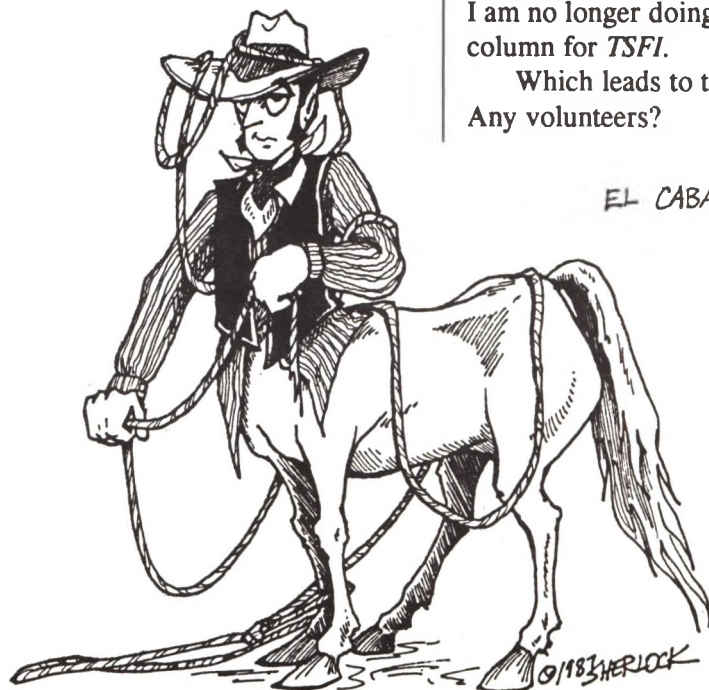
Nicholas Certo, P.O. Box 322,  
Circleville, NY 10919

Robert Weinberg, 15145 Oxford  
Drive, Oak Forest, IL 60452

Finally, there is good old *Factsheet Five*, Mike Gunderloy’s monumental reviewzine of small press publications of all kinds — hundreds every month. *Factsheet Five*, 6 Arizona Ave., Rensselaer, NY 12144-4502.

Well, that’s pretty much it, for both the article and *Midnight Excursions*. Your humble narrator’s situation is quite different than it was when I started writing this column more than a year and a half ago. Between writing for *Nova Express* and publications that actually pay money (a most strange and enjoyable sensation, to be sure), I now find myself quite pressed for time. Although I may pop in now and again for an occasional piece, or whenever Scott or Monica twist my arm (okay, guys, it’s almost finished; could you let go now . . .), as of now I am no longer doing a regular horror column for *TSFI*.

Which leads to the next question: Any volunteers?



EL CABALLERO



# The Printed Word

## *Soldier of the Mist*

by Gene Wolfe — TOR Books  
\$15.95

reviewed by Oscar Kirzner

Gene Wolfe's books frequently send his readers running and screaming to the largest, heaviest dictionaries they can find.

This time, he has written a book wherein you can follow and enjoy the story on one level while, if you wish, you can see the meanings at another level. Indeed, whereas he has written it as historical fiction, it functions as a fantasy novel.

The book is dedicated to Herodotus of Halicarnassos and is supposedly based on events of 479 B.C. There is a map of ancient Hellas (Greece) in this book but don't expect to recognize any of the place names.

Wolfe uses a heretofore unknown, recently translated ancient manuscript to set up his story. The manuscript begins, "Read this every day." It has been written down by Latro, a soldier who suffered a head wound in a battle. Consequently, he cannot remember anything that happened the day before. A physician has provided him with a blank scroll and a lead stylus so that, at the end of each day, he may write down everything that happened to him during that day and what people tell him he did during the days he missed.

The first thing he knows is that he is part of the Great King's army, which is in retreat after the battle of Fennel Field. In the course of his travels, he meets humans and gods while he seeks his original companions in the army and to find his home.

During this journey, Latro meets Pindar, who likes to write verse and listens to people discuss the Battle of Peace. He becomes a bouncer in a brothel in the city of Thought. Later, he meets one of the kings of the city of Rope who rules over the Silent Country, and his travels also take him to a

siege of a city where he encounters one of his companions.

This story can be enjoyed simply as a fantasy but it can also send you running and screaming to the history books and your nearest English/Ancient Greek dictionary. Hint: an inscription near the burial site of Leonidas and the 300 Elders at Hot Gates reads, "Stranger, tell the people of the Silent Country that we remain here obedient to their edict."

## *The Misplaced Legion*

by Harry Turtledove — Del Rey  
Fantasy, paper, \$2.95

reviewed by Oscar Kirzner

This book is represented as "Book One of The Videssos Cycle." I think the publisher must have meddled with the title because less than one third of a legion gets lost and provides the Roman characters in this story.

I was a little bit irked at the author about an eighth of the way into the book when I realized he had taken the Byzantine Empire of the tenth century and run it into an East-West mirror, without allowing for some of the heavy Roman cultural background it had. I had previously read some of Turtledove's stories in *Analog* and I thought that if he was going to do another alternate Byzantine history, then let him. If he was planning to create a fantasy world, then do that. But to just flip the map over and use Videssos for Constantinople, Haloga for Varangian, Vaspurakan for Armenia, etc., seemed a bit like cheating. On the other hand, there's the old saying about writing-what-you-know-about (he has a degree in Byzantine history). If he wants to make Hagia Sophia into the High Temple of Phos, I guess it's his artistic privilege. Besides, I decided that he still writes a good story and I should enjoy it instead of feeling cheated.

And he does write a good story. If you can overlook or don't know about certain close similarities to Byzantine history or geography (or the Gallic chieftain who gives a great impression of a carousing Irishman), you have a story well worth reading. It was good enough for me to buy the sequel.

## *Janissaries III — Storms of Victory* by Jerry Pournelle and Roland Green

reviewed by Manny Lieberman

Like a charge of heavy armored cavalry, *Janissaries III* begins with an almost plodding slowness. It gathers momentum as plot lines are defined, gaining speed with battles, intrigue, sub-plots and character conflicts. It only reaches full power at the final battle scene, breaking into a great clash of glory that wipes away all before it.

Pournelle and Green have taken the "Janissaries" series through its first major storm and gotten it back on course with unexpected aplomb.

It's slow at first; the characters go through almost soap-opera motions of suspicion, self-recriminations, and tantalizing hints of what's to come.

Students of military warfare get two great battles. The first is where the story really picks up. From there on, an overlying tension seems to cover the storyline, from Agzaral's dealings with the alien Shalnuksis, to Tylara's suspicions of her Lord Rick's possible liaison with Lady Gwen.

It all comes together beautifully in the final battle where the adage, "A little knowledge can be more dangerous than none at all," is born out by Wanax Ganton's attempt to use Napoleonic tactics without the detailed formations necessary to carry them out.

We are left with brilliant strategy, shining courage, last-second rescues, a spontaneous solution, and a final victory that left me laughing at its cleverness — all while setting us up for the next installment. Let the gray gulls fly, and charge!

### **Cyteen**

by C.J. Cherryh — Warner, 680 pp., \$18.95

reviewed by Brad Sinor

It hardly seems like a dozen years ago that I stopped at a bookstore in search of a book, and discovered a new writer by the name of C.J. Cherryh. Yeah, it has been. Now I see her work covering more than two-thirds of one of my bookshelves. A healthy chunk of her work is set against her Union/Alliance future history. The latest in that series is the massive, hard-science-fiction novel *Cyteen*.

Picking up approximately a half-century after the events of *Downbelow Station* and *40,000 In Gehenna*, this is

the story of one woman, Ariane Emory, in two incarnations. The first Ariane, at age 120, is a shrewd scientist, mistress of the organization that creates the azi clones so essential to Union, as well as being a political wheeler-dealer without match. When she is murdered, complete with a political cover-up, her allies realize that they still need her. So they create a clone of the original and set out to give her the same experiences and life as her predecessor.

The majority of this novel deals with young Ari, from birth to approximately the age of twenty. Like most Cherryh protagonists, Ari is unaware of the reasons for many of the things

that happen to her, which makes her struggle all the harder. Only gradually does she become aware of the gravity of the life that is hers.

*Cyteen* is a large novel, both in content and size (680 pages). It is not the sort of book that can be read in a single night. Yet in entertainment value and intensity, it definitely repays the time invested.

Oh, consumer note: I know that many people prefer to wait for paperback editions. Be warned — at the publisher's (and probably printer's) decision, *Cyteen* in paperback will not be one book but three. Knowing the price of paperbacks nowadays, the hardcover will be the better deal.

## **Fanzine Reviews**

*Unless otherwise noted, reviews are by SM.*

### **Bcsfazine, #179**

This is the monthly newsletter of the British Columbia SF Association. The reduced typeface on yellow paper was distracting, but the contents almost make up for it. We have an area calendar of events, an editorial dealing with the usual problems of putting out a zine, "Ask Mr. Science," an amusing humor column, a movie review of *Surf Nazis Must Die!*, assorted book reviews, a ballot for the 1988 Canadian SF&F Achievement Awards (CASPER), and part six of a continuing series of fannish travels. There were also some delicious recipes for con munchies, an article on the Canadian Space program, an assortment of letters, and ads from local businesses. Available from BCSFA, Box 35577, Stn E., Vancouver, B.C. V6M 4G9.

### **Cry Havoc!, March 1988**

*Cry Havoc!* is the official newsletter of the National Association for Science Fiction, of New Zealand. This provides an interesting look at fandom outside the US. The March issue contains info on Converge (including the entirety of Progress

Report 2) and Confusion '88, notes on what's happening to fens of note in that area, book reviews, news, and obituaries. The print is typewriter reduced, repro by Xerox, the cover illo is cute but all the interior illos (mainly book covers to go with the reviews) should have been screened first. Available from NASF, Box 6655, Wellington, New Zealand.

### **Cube, 31**

*Cube* is the zine produced by SF3, the SF club in Madison, Wisconsin. This issue had a WisCon report, area calendar, some zine reviews, letters, news, and some nifty illos. The layout was generally good, but the repro was spotty in places. Available from SF3, Box 1624, Madison, WI 53701.

### **Crime Times, May/June, 1988**

This isn't really a zine, but I wanted to make you aware of it. This is to Waldenbook's mystery readers what *Xignals* is for their SF readers. Lots of reviews, interviews, and other interesting articles. Available free at any Waldenbooks.

### **DASFax V.20, #5**

One has to be impressed by a clubzine in its twentieth year. Especially when it has a fabulous Brad

Foster cover. *DASFax* isn't the most thrilling reading for those not from the Denver area, but it is consistent in what it gives. This month, we have a complete DASFA membership listing, a pair of editorials, club resolutions, a long filksong, obituaries on Heinlein and Simak, locs, some short book reviews, and info on MileHigh-Con XX. Available from DASFax, c/o Don Thompson, 3735 W. 81st Pl., Westminster, CO 80030.

*DASFax*, Vol. 20, #8 (August, 1988) reviewed by Alex Slate

*DASFax* is the monthly newszine of the Denver Area Science Fiction Association. It is edited by Don C. Thompson. Number 8 features a Brad Foster cover, but then every issue this year has featured a Foster cover. The contents are a mixture of club news, book reviews, and locs. The writing (particularly the news) has a chatty flavor to it which some will like and some won't. The book reviews are sparse. The layout is simple, no attempt at anything fancy. The type is clear and dark, reproduction is good. Rating:

Contents: 7.0.

Technical: 7.5.

Interest: 7.0.



# The Fannish Connection

**Concave 10** (March 3-5) Park Mammoth Resort, Park City, KY. Info: Box 24, Franklin, KY 42134-0024, (502) 586-3366.

**Bayfilk 5** (March 3-5) Oakland Airport Hyatt, Oakland, CA. GoH: Joe Haldeman. LGoH: Ann Sharp. SGoH: Buck & Juanita Coulson. Info: Firebird Arts & Music, Box 453, El Cerrito, CA 94530.

**Kollectorama '89** (March 10-12) Forum 303 Mall, Arlington, TX. GoH: Real Musgrave. Art show, teddy bear & doll show, model contest & show, miniature painting contest, costume contest, filking, dealers, SCA, more. Info: Collector's Corner, Forum 303 Mall, Arlington, TX 76010, (817) 640-8576.

**Lunacon** (March 10-12) Westchester Marriott Hotel, Tarrytown, NY. Guests: Roger Zelazny, Ron Walotsky, David Kyle, David Hartwell. Art show/auction, dealers, masquerade, book exhibit & raffle, autographing, panels, discussions, gaming, japanimation, more. Memb: \$20 to 2/20, then \$22. Info: Box 338, New York, NY 10150-0338, (609) 261-8316.

**10th International Conference on the Fantastic in the Arts** (March 15-19) Airport Hilton, Ft. Lauderdale, FL. \$65/single, \$80/double. Guests: Doris Lessing, Suzanne Benton, C.N. Manlove, Robert Silverberg, Brian W. Aldiss, Orson Scott Card, Joe Haldeman. Memb: \$60. Awards Banquet: \$25. GoH Luncheon: \$12. Checks to Donald Palumbo, Treasurer, English Dept., Shippensburg University, Shippensburg, PA 17257. Info & Proposals for papers: Marshall Tymms, IAFSA Pres., 721 Cornell, Ypsilanti, MI 48197, (313) 482-5151.

**CoastCon XII** (March 17-19) Guests: Joel Rosenberg, Steven Sechi, P.D. Breeding-Black, John Levene. Memb: \$20. Info: Box 1423, Biloxi, MS 39533.

**Congenial** (March 17-19) Sheraton Racine, Racine, WI. Mercedes Lackey, Reed Waller, Kate Worley, Andy Hooper. Info: Box 129, Wilmette, IL 60091.

**Magnum Opus Con 4** (March 17-19) Hyatt Regency, Greenville, SC. Guests: Ricardo Montalban, Michael Dorn, Larry Niven, Philip José Farmer, Sharon Green, Steven Barnes, Doug Chaffee, Ingrid Neilson, Randy Fennel, Patrick Stewart, Sylvester McCoy, Jerry Pournelle, Robert Adams, Brad Strickland, Mary Hanson-Roberts, David Miller, more. Art show/auction, filking, dance, parties, gaming, dealers, whodunit, more. Info: 4315 Pio Nono Ave., Macon, GA 31206, (912) 781-6110.

**Millennicon** (March 17-19) Dayton Airport Hotel, Dayton, OH. Guests: Lois McMaster Bujold, Wilson Tucker, more. Info: Box 636, Dayton, OH 45405.

**Balticon 23** (March 24-26) Omni Hotel, Baltimore, MD. C.J. Cherryh, Stephan Hickman, Steve Stiles, more. Info: Box 686, Baltimore, MD 21203.

**Contrivance '89** (March 24-27) Hotel de France, St. Helier, Jersey, Channel Islands, U.K. Guests: Anne McCaffrey, M. John Harrison, Avedon Carol, Rob Harrison, more. Memb: \$35. Info: 63 Drake Road, Chessington, Surrey, U.K.

**Minicon 24** (March 24-26) Minneapolis, MN. Guests: Harry Harrison, Fritz Leiber, George Laskowski, Freeman Dyson, more. Info: Box 8297, Lake St. Station, Minneapolis, MN 55408.

**Nova XIV** (March 25-26) Oakland University, Rochester, MI. GoH: Michael P. Kube-McDowell. Info: Order of Leibowitz, 64 Oakland Center, Oakland University, Rochester, MI 48309-4401.

**Aggiecon XX** (March 30-April 2) Memorial Student Center, Texas A&M University, College Station, TX. Guests: Kerry O'Quinn, Richard Arnold, Real Musgrave, more. Art show, dealers, panels, videos, costume contest, Warren Norwood Fund Auction, more. Memb: \$12 to 3/1, then \$15. Info: MSC Cepheid

Variable, TAMU, Box J-1 — MSC, College Station, TX 77844.

**I-Con VIII** (March 31-April 2) State Univ. of NY, Stony Brook, NY. Guests: Joe Haldeman, Sylvester McCoy, George Zebrowski, Pamela Sargent, more. Info: Box 550, Stony Brook, NY 11790.

**Starfest '89** (March 31-April 2) Regency Inn, Denver, CO. Guests: William Shatner, Harve Bennett. Info: Box 24937, Denver, CO 80244, (303) 671-8735.

**StellarCon XIV** (March 31-April 2) Elliot University Center, UNC, Greensboro, NC. Info: SF3, Box 4, EUC, UNCG, Greensboro, NC 27412.

**St. Louis Fantasy Fan Fair** (March 31-April 2) Breckenridge Frontenac Hotel, St. Louis, MO. \$58 single/double. Memb: \$35 to 2/15, \$40/door. Info: Box 4302, Chesterfield, MO 63006.

**Technicon 6** (March 31-April 2) Donaldson Brown Center, Blacksburg, VA. Box 256, Blacksburg, VA 24063-0256.

**Concatennation** (April 7-9) Quality Inn West, Knoxville, TN. Guests: Mercedes Lackey, Jean Elizabeth Martin, Mike & Nelda Kennedy, Andrew Offutt, John Cleve, Tom Dietz, Charles Williams, Gerald R. Page, Carol Gathings, more. Memb: \$18 to 3/31, then \$20. Info: 1028 Valley Ave., Knoxville, TN 37920, (615) 579-3202.

## Clubs Around Texas

Austin Science Fiction Society — P.O. Box 1651, Cedar Park, TX 78613. 512-267-4307.

Blake's Several — P.O. Box 1766, Belaire, TX 77401. \$10/year.

Cepheid Variable — Box J-1, Memorial Student Center, College Station, TX 77844. 409-845-1515. \$5/year.

Earth Defense Command — P.O. Box 515942, Dallas, TX 75251-5942.

Eternacon — P.O. Box 18269, Austin, TX 78760. 512-447-5577.

The 1st Bangalore Pioneers — c/o Pat Elrod, Quartermistress, 4800 Kilpatrick Dr., Ft. Worth, TX 76107.

The Gallifrey Connection — c/o Karen Robertson, 6111 Abrams Rd. #1000, Dallas, TX 75231. \$5/year. For a sample newsletter, send SASE to Kat Nickell, 215 E. Park Pl., Lancaster, TX 75134.

Gallifrey Legation — P.O. Box 1485, Hurst, TX 76053. 817-268-6140.

Lonestar, NCC 2121/03 — c/o Lt. Cmdr. Yolanda Contreras, Wilma

Bass Hall, 3616 Worth, Dallas, TX 75246. 214-414-2745.

Lucas' Film Fan Club — P.O. Box 111000, Aurora, CO 80011. \$8/year.

The Nonpareil Club Of Ft. Worth — c/o Susan Beasley, 3712 Venice, Fort Worth, TX. 817-589-2386.

O\*R\*A\*C (Organized Response to Avon's Call) — P.O. Box 566123, Dallas, TX 75366. \$7/year.

SDF Fort Worth — 4928 El Campo #215, Ft. Worth, TX 76107. 817-731-7388.

Spotlight Starman — P.O. Box 273440, Houston, TX 77277-3440.

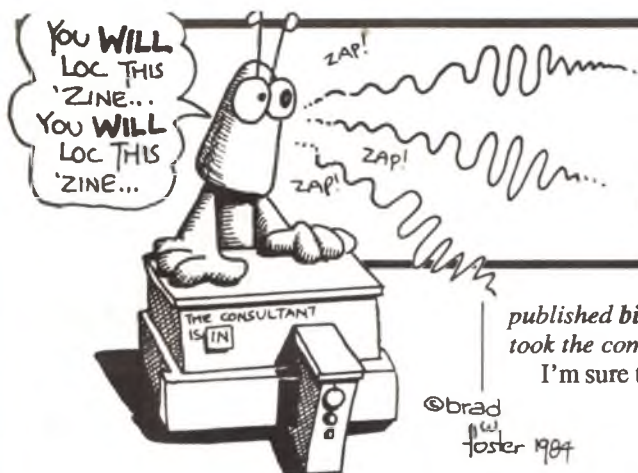
United Earth Space Probe Agency — P.O. Box 1485, Hurst, TX 76053. 817-268-6140.

Ursa Major, PO Box 691448, San Antonio, TX 78250.

Vortex — 2211 Lawnmont #221, Austin, TX 78756. 512-451-4976.

Vulstar/Pegasus — Box 150471, Arlington, TX 76015-6471. 817-572-5547.





# Letters of Comment

October 27, 1988

Dear *Texas SF Inquirer*,

All summer I looked forward to ArmadilloCon. However, though I was registered, the old story of best laid plans, etc., got in the way. To help make up for my considerable disappointment, the publication party for my first book, *The Horsegirl* (one of the Ace Fantasy Specials), was held October 19 at the Lone Star Cafe.

The Lone Star's owners are Texans, and so are a lot of the people who work there. Joe Ely, Brave Combo, Asleep at the Wheel, and numbers of Austin bands play there frequently, and so does my husband's band. The Lone Star's within walking distance of our apartment, so I've spent so much time hanging out at there, it feels like my own living room. Struggling writers and musicians need a living room outside their apartments in NYC, since most of us don't have enough room to have one at home.

By all accounts, *Horsegirl's* party was a good one. Even the Ace staff thought so, and in my experience the only people who out-party musicians are SF and Fantasy people. I was too busy greeting to hide off to the side and do my usual spy/observer role, which as a writer I always want to be doing, to testify on my own. But I do know the Lone Star went out of its way to give everyone a good time.

But I'm still sorry I missed ArmadilloCon.

All the best to the *Inquirer* and to F.A.C.T.

Constance Ash  
80 Thompson St. #5  
New York, NY 10012

November 18, 1988

Dear Scott,

I guess I can only manage a postcard of comment (a poc?) on the *Texas SF Inquirer* I received at Windycon. I note that the zine is "ostensibly" published by FACT. Who is it *actually* published by? And is "ostensibly" correct, or did someone use the wrong word? [*Ostensibly is correct. This zine is ostensibly*

*published bimonthly, by FACT. Gremlins took the comma out of your copy. — Ed.]*

I'm sure that Ghu and Roscoe wouldn't approve of Shirley's locs . . . I do hope such an amusing neo isn't forced into gafia-tion . . .

Obviously, Roy Tacett isn't a rank neo. Rank, maybe, but . . . Anyway, I agree fully with his comments. Of course I nearly always do . . .

I think Lillian ought to be ashamed of being one of four women ganging up on one lone, anti-fantasy male . . . let's have fair play, here! At *least* two male writers to one woman. Female SF&F writers are dangerous.

Buck Coulson  
2677W-500N  
Hartford City, IN 47348

November 20, 1988

Dear *TX SF Inquirer*:

Just a few notes from a producer's desk. Here in Tinsel Town Hollywood, I'm bombarded every day with requests to produce local projects. Some of our more recent and dubious accomplishments include Junkyard's demo (haven't heard of them yet? You'll find them some day in the same alley as Guns 'n' Roses). Let's see . . . a country album, a double showcase to MCA by a terrific singer/songwriter pair . . . oh yeah, let's not forget "Body Shop" that Rappin' Rudy performed on the Gong Show (Dweezil Zappa loved it). And, of course, the incomparable "976" dial-a-porn slot for Spanish TV (El amor . . . El amor . . .)

Sometimes, I really wonder about what I do for a dollar. So when a friend dragged me along to a filk one night, I felt like I'd been born again. There were a bunch of people sitting around a living room, some performing excellently, some singing very badly. Some guy (Eric Gerds of DAG) was selling tapes out of his briefcase on the back porch. What immediately struck me was the sense of wonder and magic these people shared. They had an innocent, sheer love for their art that seduced me at once. They weren't jaded like the commercial musicians I deal with. And I couldn't help but think, "If someone pushed these people in the right way, a few of them could be outstanding . . ."

So THOR Records entered filk. As

Janice Moore in *Fosfax* #133 said: "Most filkers have more imagination than polish . . ." In my letter to *Fosfax*, I responded with: "Polish, fortunately, is far, far easier to develop than imagination or songwriting ability. A major reason I produce filk is for the satisfaction of helping fine songwriters and performers hone and refine their skills." I do like to make a buck, too, so filk isn't the only thing I produce. But it is certainly the most enjoyable. As I mentioned to someone else, in filk, I can do a real producer's job: getting the best out of an artist, rather than compromising budgets and mediating egos.

There has been an amazing amount of slander and false rumor about my company, my motives and practices. This can be traced back to people with their own axe to grind. No doubt you've heard some of it. Despite what jealous or misinformed people may say, THOR is here to help build filking on a grass-roots level. We'd love to have your readers call or write to us. We're busy, but if they can catch us on the phone or at a con, we'd love to hear their artistic dreams. We're hoping to take the better filk into more mainstream, crossover markets. We want to make the rest of the music community aware of this fascinating indigenous artform that is hidden in pockets around the country. We push filkers to exceed their hopes and expectations, raising a greater sense of pride in craftsmanship and gaining new respect for their work by others.

You can get other opinions of us by reading *Queen's Own* Vol. 1, #7 and #8, or *Fosfax* #132 and #133. You can also get personal comments from the artists and associates who have worked with us: Kathy Mar, Michael P. Kube-McDowell, DAG Productions, Cynthia McQuillin, Bill and Brenda Sutton, Peter Thiesen, Mary Ellen Wessels, Gwen Zak, the list goes on . . . Filkers are great people to work with. They have become my dearest friends, as well as a great challenge professionally. As for the rumors, well, that's showbiz. When you're talked about, you're hot, and when you're hot, you sell. Now *that's* a Hollywood attitude.

Chrys Thorsen  
Thor Records  
P.O. Box 40312  
Downey, CA 90241



# **The Texas SF Inquirer**

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