

WHOEVER TOOK
MY CHOCOLATE
CHIP COOKIES
BETTER
CONFESS!



ASHIMBO
BY

TIGHTBEAM 30

TIGHTBEAM

TIGHTBEAM March 81 is the fanzine and letterzine of **the National Fantasy Fan Federation**. Pubbed bimonthly and distributed to the membership of the N3F and for trade of other zines. Persons mentioned in passing are invited to comment regardless of membership status. Contributions, especially letters, should be sent to **Lynne Holdom** **PO Box 5 Pompton Lakes, NJ 07442** no later than the **5th** of the month of pubbing.

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CREDITS

Plaudits to all the following Lynne Holdom for talking me into it. Jon Singer for estencils and other help. Gonzo and Wench the computers who typeset it. Roscoe for watching over. Bob for patience thru extreme kvetching.

The art. in this is discreditable.

the ballad of tightbeam 30

TO "THE BALLAD OF STAN LONG," WITH APOLOGIES TO TOM HALDEMAN

I volunteered to pub this zine
When I was younger, full of Green --
I'd pubbed fanzines before, and figured TB would be fun.
But when the 'go' was finally sent
I realized, to my detriment,
That when it came to financing, I clearly did have none.

So I rushed some artwork out and gone
To Boskone, and to Aquacon,
And gleefully I reckoned that the take'd fix the mess.
Boskone wouldn't put my stuff in --
Hadn't sent it quick enough; and
The stuff for California? It was lost by UPS....

Well, my agent promised that he'd try
To sell the found-stuff private-ly;
And meantime I sat waiting for the locs to pour on in.
And so the first of March went by,
And the fifteenth too, and by then I
Just couldn't stand it! So I took my 'gressions out on Lynne.

Well, my agent sold some art and stuff,
But the cash I got proved not enough
Because our next-door neighbor drove his car into our fence....
So he went and sold some more and while
I waited for the check I started
Text-processing the locs I'd got while St. Patrick came and went.

Now St. Pattie's Day was a week ago,
And no one's yet come forth with dough.
The zine's all done -- it's just that, well, the printer
wants his pay....
All I've got's four bucks to my name,
To feed two folks, and a horse gone lame!
They want me to take this over? Luzim gey! I say, No Way!

(Cho) TIGHTBEAM is the zine, and yes it's running rather late.
But this dilemma's not entirely my fault --
No there isn't nothing funny,
It's just when it comes to money
The expression of my life is, "Oy, Gevalt!"

(In other words, anyone who tells you that two can live as cheaply
as one is lying to you. I should also mention here that any com-
ments contained in Pascal comment delimiters (* and *) are mine --
they express my opinion and mine alone, and are subject to change,
within reason and without notice.

Oh, by the way, I'm Fa Shimbo.

NEW MEMBERS---

Amy Carpenter Park House, Smith C Northhampton, MA 01063	BD: 12-15-59. Student. Insts: cons, apas, fanzines, writing, pubbing, computers, colls, books/zines, buttons, corres, art, music, games, costumes. Is co-editor of college SF club zines.
Amanda Carter 19 Warren Place Charleston, WV 25302	BD: 10-23-57. Student. Insts: writing, editing, pubbing, reviews, corres, fanzines, apas. In fandom 2 years. Inst in SF 14 years. Likes Tolkien, MZB, Bradbury.
Jeff Jennings 641 Meadow Rd Smithtown, NY 11787	BD: 2-10-19. Attorney. Insts: writing, art, cartooning, pubbing, colls, microfilm promoter. Star Trek fan. Has typer, photo copier, mimeo, ditto, taper. Inst in fanzines.
Mary Barbara Piero 607 Shorb Ave NW Cabton, OH 44703	BD: 8-29-56. Library asst. Insts: indexing, colls, books, fanzines, art, reading, filksongs, embroidery. Has typer, mimeo, photo copier, ditto, offset, taper. Has been active a long time.
Robert Runte 10951 88th Ave Edmonton, Alta T6G 0Y9	BD: 12-20-51. Grad student. Insts: corres, pubbing, fanzines, Has typer. Active in fandom 6 years. Attended cons. Likes Cherryh, Nicolson.
J.S. (Julie) Steele 1500 Oakland Rd NE #205 Cedar Rapids, IO 52402	BD: 11-46. Claims clerk. Not really active. Reads and likes McCaffrey, Dickson, Norton.
S. A. Strang 330 Lindo Balboa, CA 92661	BD: 9-8-53. Bookseller. Insts: writing, reviewing, corres, collects books, reading. Has typer, taper. Never active. Likes LeGuin, Moore, Chalker.
Taras Wolansky RR #2, Box 1095 Kerhonkson, NY 12446	Librarian. Insts: reviewing, corres, pubbing, indexing, reading. Colls books. Has typer. Mensfan. Inst in SF 18 years. Prefers pure SF.
Darrell Richardson 899 Stonewall St Memphis, TN 38107	Returnee after many years. Has been active a long time. Did some of the first indexes to fanzines.

MEMBERS WITH NO INFO:

Edna Chavez 10232 Aurelia Cypress, CA 90630	Mike Sopp 438 W 32 Erie, PA 16508	Bob Rose 4406 Pixie Ave Lakewood, CA 90712	David Thiry 8 Princeton Dr Jacksonville, NC 28540
---------------------------------------------------	-----------------------------------------	--------------------------------------------------	---------------------------------------------------------

COAs Allan Beatty, P.O. Box 1906, Ames, IO 50010
 Vernon Clark, 4900 Jonquil Lane, Knoxville, TN 37919
 Rayna Daughtry, Box 164, Keeler, CA 93530
 Michael duCharme, 305½ West Locust, Bloomfield, IO 52537
 Jane Dusek, 125 East Wheelock Pkwy, St Paul, MN 55117
 Judith Lucero, 1140 Hyde St #1, San Francisco, CA 94109
 Flint Mitchell, 400 Hitt #114, Columbia, MO 65201
 Judy Watson, 105 Shell St., Harrisburg, PA 17109
 Marye Wexford, 3525 Travis #111, Dallas, TX 75204

Renewals (now 2/82) Vernon Clark, Richard Trout, Patsy Williams, Chris Martin, Kathleen Woodbury, Letty Smith, David Heath, Mitchell Hollander, Maura Grady, Michael duCharme.
 Others: Eric Kramer, George Phillies, Gary Davis, Paula Crunk

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

by Donald Franson.

It's Story Contest Time. There are a lot of other things I could go on about here, but this is the time of year to urge members to write a story for the contest. Writers shouldn't need urging to write, but they do have a habit of finding excuses not to. If you really want to be a professional writer, you must become an expert at thinking up these excuses. So start now.

December 1st, the deadline for stories to be in to the Preliminary Judge, Ed Ludwig, is a long way off. There's lots of time to get a blank (from me -- no SASE needed in N3F) and get started on the story. Later in the spring, after vacation, after the worldcon, Thanksgiving, ~~Christmas~~...

You don't have a typewriter, yours is currently kaput, your penmanship is terrible and no one else can read it to type your stuff.

You're a novelist, not a short story writer, and can't think of a plot under 100,000 words.

You're not good enough for the contest.

You're too good for the contest.

You can't think of an idea. (I don't believe that one; try again.)

The prizes are peanuts, even if you win.

If you lost, you would be devastated, and never write again.

You don't have an agent.

It's too much work to retype your manuscript. (You, a writer, don't love to type?)

It's too long to wait for a decision. (So make copies, and keep on submitting to pro markets in the meantime.)

You're in a writers' block, and have been for the past week, month, years.

Get the idea? Now sit down and write a long list of original excuses, detailing why you can't send in a short story for the contest. At least you'll be writing something. DF.

The Riddle Master of Hed, Patricia McKillip, Del Rey Books Reviewed by

Dennis Jarog (or at least, so I assume from the ... stationary ...)

Hed is a pastoral land; with common pursuits -- the raising of grain and children -- a very down to earth place. The princes of Hed don't even wear a crown. Morgon the current prince in the story is different; he was sent to the school of the Riddle Masters in Caithnard.

Shortly after his return from the school, his parents die and Morgon becomes prince. But it was clear from the beginning that he was different. He won the crown from the Ghost of Pevu, who many of the masters had tried and failed. On a trip to present the crown, he began a series of adventures taking him further and further from Hed and convincing him that he was the central figure in the ending of an age of the world. He passed through many kingdoms leaving in his wake a succession of strange happenings, he found a harp that none other could play, he learned the art of shape-changing and ran with a wizard from the legendary school of Lunghold, whose lips were stilled at the crucial moment and who through it all drew closer and closer to Erlanstar Mountain where the High One dwelt. Morgon knew in his heart that his fate was intertwined with that of the High One.

Until, on the last page, he learns what he long feared. And this concludes the first book of a trilogy about Morgon, Prince of Hed.

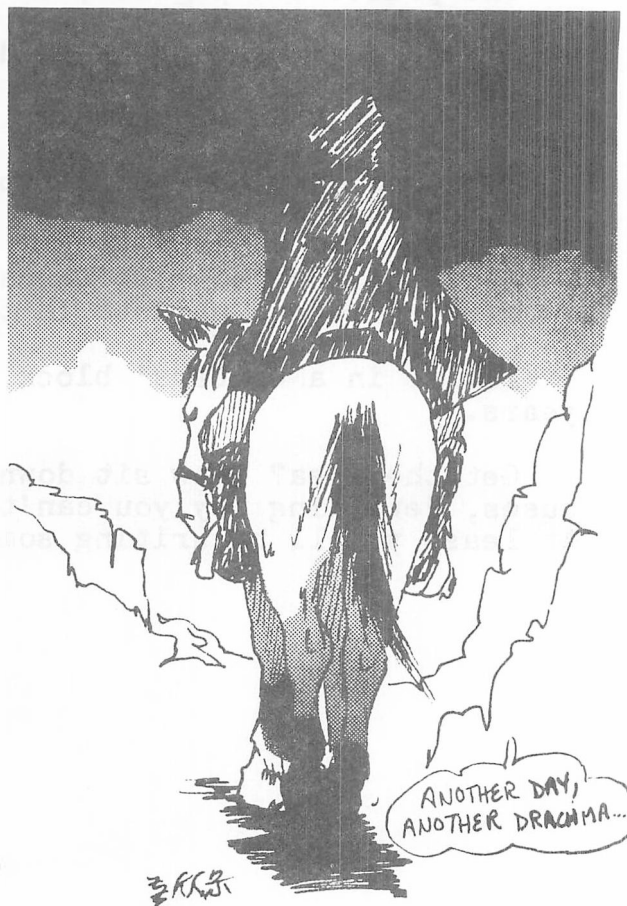
What we have here is a highly original fantasy. Too many in recent years have been Tolkien imitators to an odious degree. To be sure, one will not be able to avoid the massive influence that he has had and will continue to have in the field, but the author [McKillip] had proved that there are interesting variations to be considered.

The protagonist is somewhat in the style of many, being the simple soul who becomes enmeshed in the

affairs of the high and the great. And many fantasy books deal with changes in the tides of the world. But this is because these provide the interesting base upon which to build a story. Heavenly stasis is nice, but there is no challenge to make the reader continue his effort. In spite of these limitations, the author has built a highly original work. The Riddle-Masters are one of the most original fantasy creations I have ever seen.

McKillip has a style which builds a scene as it passes. She keeps her character in ignorance for the most part while allowing the reader to jump ahead and thus watch him as one would be if he decided to read the last page first.

Certain things cannot be really brought forth because this is the first book of the trilogy and we don't know to what end Morgon will come. To be sure, he will never be the prince of the pastoral Hed. He will go far beyond that. And I will be waiting to watch him as he proceeds on his journey.



THE WORLD OF FANZINES by Fredric Wertham (*Not THE Fredric Wertham ?!?) M.D., Southern Illinois University Press, P.O. Box 3697, Carbondale, Ill. 62901. 1973 142 PP, \$10.00

Comic fans have good reason to remember the name of Fredric Wertham, M.D, for almost singlehandedly his book SEDUCTION OF THE INNOCENT (Rinehart, 1954) was responsible for the introduction of the Comics Code -- which at one stroke eliminated all the weird horror comic magazines from the newsstands. A prime target had been William Gaines' EC Comics, now prime collector's items, and, incidentally, a host of imitators. The book, which became a Book-Of-The-Month Club selection, was given space in newspapers across the country, and Wertham testified at a Senate Committee meeting, held in New York City.

Wertham's book was self-righteously polemical, and filled with devastating examples of violence, sex and bad taste, reprinted from the comic magazines he berated. He made no attempt at a balanced evaluation, but went wholly on the attack. The results were dramatically evidenced when on September 16, 1954, the publishers of comic books formed the Comics Magazine Association of America and began a rigid self-censorship of the comics they published, which eliminated the most blatant forms of violence and sex, exterminated the horror comics and carried away with them most of the science fiction comics being published.

It was quite understandable that when the science fiction fans heard that Wertham was writing a book about fandom (largely because he had contacted many of them by letter), they viewed the result with a singular lack of confidence.

When the book finally appeared from a university press, in a prestigious format (on coated stock with 30 pages of covers and illustrations from fan magazines) almost no reviews were found in the general press and only a few mentions in the fan press. It caused to impact because it was an incredibly positive report. The favorable is not news.

Scrounging as best he could, locating no accessblae repository of a good cross-section of fan magazines, Wertham collected about 200 different TITLES and a number of issies of some titles, over a period of years. These included some comic fanzines, American titles from most of the publishing states of the union, as well as German, Swedish, English, Spanish and Canadian titles. They run the gamut from news magazines, through crudzines, APA titles, special interest publications, academic publications and superior fanzines. While a few titles go back as far as the thiries (Fantasy News), most of the titles are from the sixties.

The selection is admittedly one which had been picked up at random, though Wertham's reading of the fanzines has been supplemented by references to various books about science fiction and fantasy, such as *The Fantastic Universe Omnibus*, Ed. Hans Stefan Santesson (1960), *The Science Fiction Novel* (Advent, 1959), *An ABC of Science Fiction*, (1968), *the Lord of the Rings* (Ballantine, 1969). In footnotes, he lists quite a number of standard books about science fiction but it is unclear whether he has actually read them. This doubt is raised since in the introduction to his book he refers readers to my "The Immortal Storm," but nowhere in his book does he indicate any familiarity with the contents and "discovers" facts in obscure places that appear at considerable length in *The Immortal Storm* which was published before the other sources.

Despite this, he gains my high respect for his psychological insighs as well as the preciseness and general accuracy of his surmises and conclusions about science fiction fandom (and its satellite fandoms), a respect which *Seduction of the Innocent* did not engender. Initially, I would have thought, that if Wertham had access to a collection such as mine, with runs of all the major fan

magazines of the past 43 years [before publication of his book] that he might have had better raw material to work from. Now, I realize this might have been a mistake. I would have directed him to all the highlight publications, the brightest stars in the diedem of the crown of fandom, polished the apple and put on the best face in the direction of its critical, literary and bibliological facets. If asked, I might also have directed him to some of the unpleasant aspects of fandom, but I wasn't asked and it is just as well.

"In so much that in what it offered to us today we read about what is negative, we are entertained by what is morbid, and we are surrounded by what is contrived. Fanzines, which are sincere and spontaneous, we have overlooked," he says. He is, of course, speaking to the academic readership. "The vast majority of sociologists, psychiatrists, and educators, quite apart from knowing them do not even know about them. They are mentioned only in books directly concerned with the fanzine world and the subjects of its interest," he adds. He sees the neglect of the outside world of fanzines due to the fact that they are "unconventional," as well as due to "intellectual snobbishness."

His interest in fan magazines began in 1942 and has gradually mounted since that time. His reason for undertaking a serious book on the subject was: "However we look at fanzines, they are distinctly not mechanical, but spontaneous; not statistically impersonal, but intently personal.... For whatever their merits or demerits, they are certainly outside the stream of our computerized conformity which so many young people object to. I also appreciated that they are unmanipulated from above.... They are intended for small audiences. The individual is apt to be submerged and regarded as a statistic. There is no such tendency in fanzines...."

He did not believe or expect that the fan magazines played a counter

role to the problems that beset modern society. Their great value to him was that "They exist and continue to exist as genuine human voices outside of all manipulation. Those unheralded voices, not loud and strident, not ponderous, but cheerful, deserve to be heard." In closing his introduction he states, "havind had to read so many solemn professional and professorial publications in my life, the unconventional fanzines reminded me of the cheery sleigh bells of Rotterdam." (Wertham grew up in



Europe.)

Wertham has, evidently, carefully read even some of the pretty minor examples of what he talks about, and his chapter-by-chapter analysis of the purpose, policies production, distribution and editorial attitudes of the publications are perceptive and amazingly accurate and undistorted. The readers of this review may know what fanzine fandom is all about, but the people Wertham is writing for in the main do not, and he gives them a clear picture. "Fanzines have a quality which makes them a phenomenon in our communication set-up," says Wertham. "This is their overall solidarity, their usually friendly competitiveness. They are critical, but not destructive. Instead of belittling one another they try to further each other's interest. One has to have read many of them to realize that they represent an attitude which is healthy and decent."

Are science fiction fans and fanzine publishers a symptom of a retreat from society, displaying an inability to cope with the real world? Wertham seriously considers this question and concludes that they are

not, with the statement, "In my analysis, the editing of fanzines is a constructive and healthy exercise of creative drives. As for the question of morbid alienation or estrangement, what is psychiatrically decisive is that occupation with fanzines is not by any means a flight into solitude or isolation. The fanzine editors are not idle dreamers. They do not run away from the rest of the world. In fact they cope well with very real people and institutions, like paper merchants and the post office. Often they show what amounts to an extraordinary amount of energy and goodwill. Fanzines are a healthy part of our society." From then on he begins to talk NICE about all of us.

This is a psychologically reassuring book to those of us who feel that possibly our fantasy compulsion is an aberration. It is a ready-made reply by a respected authority to those who would criticize our hobby. It is a book worth having. University press books usually stay in print forever. This one is probably still available at its original price.

(*Recalling the incredible things he had to say in *Seduction of the Innocent*, (for those of you who've never read it, he all but concluded that Batman and Robin were gay and therefore a bad influence on young boys, and he felt a lot worse about Wonder Woman...) one wonders what he would think of fanzines like OBSCZINE or GOLDEN APA...*)

THE ENNEAD by Jan Mark Pocket Books, 1980

reviewed by Greg Hills

I don't know how to approach this book. I have never read anything by Mark before, and am inherently conservative in my reading. I am glad I overcame my conservatism in this case.

An ennead, a not at the front of the book assures us, is "a group of

nine." In this book, the Ennead is a solar system of nine planets: the main ones being Orpheus (a small world, dead by manmade pollution), Euterpe (dying by pollution and overpopulation), Calliope (rocky, barren and hostile), Clio (green and open, the agricultural world for the Ennead, and Erato. Oh yes, Orpheus is moon to Calliope.

Erato is the setting for the novel. It is a hard world, settled by miners for its rock, now slowly becoming a world for the sake of a world. Stone and marble are dirt-cheap; grass is a luxury beyond the price of all save the richest. There is no unemployment, because whenever anyone no longer has a job they are promptly deported to their home world unless someone else immediately finds them work. There is no shortage of labor, however, as whenever a job opens up a qualified person is ferried in from another world -- usually from Euterpe, where people queue for years on long waiting lists for the opportunity to get out.

Isaac, the story's protagonist, is the young steward to Theodore, who is one of Erato's richest inhabitants. Isaac and Theodore are half brothers although Isaac does not know this, and Theodore prefers not to tell him. Isaac is physically frail and small, and was the sole survivor brought away from Orpheus when that world died. This has left its mark on the highly intelligent steward.

Mr. Peasmarsh, a rich hermit who owns a small stone-mine, learns he must build a house in order to retain his land as the Government wishes to take it over to mine a rich deposit. Peasmarsh is not interested in. He decides to do the full course, and engages to have a sculptor ferried out from Euterpe to beautify the exterior.

Unfortunately, shortly after he chooses Eleanor (the second major character) from a list of names, he dies. Isaac, always the opportunist, persuades Theodore to take over the contract and have Eleanor carve a large block of reddish stone on

Mr. Eddie Abel certainly brings an interesting point of view to the SF community. I always find it interesting to talk with people, who are not SFers, after they become exposed to the genre. They usually haven't had time to learn those dogmas which we, who have been reading SF for many years, have succumbed to. (*As a point of interest, what do you consider fannish dogmas to be, specifically? What comes to my mind are things like the worship of Roscoe and Herbie and A Whole Dead Cat in Every Bar of Dead Cat Soap ... I have a feeling that our dogmas differ?*) In particular, I found his review of THE NUMBER OF THE BEAST quite fair and as unbiased as only a man who is "not familiar with his former work" could be.

MARCH 1981

carl p wilson

eighteen frederick street
brantford ontario canada N3T4N4

here i sit, munching upon my three day old pizza, mulling over how i should begin my next letter to tightbeam. i shall warn you; this is going to be another of my long, long letters (*come on, fingers, don't fail me now...*). i find too much to say and you offer so many

opportunities for comment.

i would like to clarify some of my statements in issue 27 and also update to

MARCH 1981

Jacqueline Lichtenberg

8 Fox Lane
Spring Valley NY 10977

Susan Schwartz has smoked me out of a long silence in these pages with her argument (in TB#29, Jan 1981) sf criticism and the sf fan/writer context.

Apparently Steve Duff's comment that SF writers are going to have to work with the "same artistic responsibility as any other form of worthwhile reading" set Susan (and a number of others) off like firecrackers. (*Especially those who write.*)

There seems to be an assumption here that I disagree with. The assumption is that sf writers -- in general, which means then me, and MZB, and Katherine Kurtz, and Anne McCaffrey, and RAH, and Hal Clement andandandand -- do not now put the effort forth to polish and hone their product into something that says "art" to them. I have to object to that assumption. I know these people, I know myself, and Susan Schwartz, and Ruth Berman, and Jean Lorrah andandand, and I know lots of writers, and their working methods and habits and goals.

I have never -- ever -- encountered a professional in this field who did not put forth his/her nightiest effort to create the most glowing and significant

art he/she knew how. Oh, certainly, everyone works with one eye on commercial viability, market trends, prices -- and editors with contracts in their fists. (*Everybody?*) But in the last analysis, alone in a silent room staring at the pile of blank paper waiting to be filled with final drafted, sold words -- every one of us puts that extra something into the work -- that something that comes from so deep down inside that there is no word for that place.

When we've done something we find meaningful, even the most hardened professional fears rejection -- if not by the editor, then by the fans. Or perhaps even ridicule for the pure, raw sincerity of the effort -- we've all absorbed years worth of that in our teens, and the scars run deep. So we make noises about being hack writers, doing it for a buck -- being emotionally uninvolved. Seriously -- wouldn't you? (*I have known people who fear rejection more than anything else to come out with things like "I won't sell it because I refuse to prostitute my work." I somehow think making noises about hacking and money are more honorable....*) Surely, some of you have written things you won't let even your best friends see -- well, folks, we make our living by letting the world see those things. We just hide them inside loads of ordinary things called archetypes.

My point re this discussion is simply that we already do work to the highest possible artistic standards. It is the mundane world of bestsellers -- and books worthy of academic notice and formal academic criticism -- that work to the lowest standards. SF writers moonlight in mainstream. No mainstreamer can imitate what we do well enough to moonlight in sf.

I have been accused of being a snob, and all sorts of bad things when I say such things as "SF is the highest form of literature mankind has ever created." That sounds like a hyperbole (which is supposed to be the dirtiest sin). But it's not -- it is a simple, sincere statement of a truth.

I entered N3F at the age of 13 (or thereabouts), which was like 26 years ago, making that same statement. I haven't grown up enough in that time to outgrow that statement, as people threatened that I would.

The reason we have no decent sf critics who aren't also sf writers is that the only way to learn how we do what we do is to do it. You literally can't criticize it if you can't perceive it -- and you can't perceive it unless you've tried it. There



not, with the statement, "In my analysis, the editing of fanzines is a constructive and healthy exercise of creative drives. As for the question of morbid alienation or estrangement, what is psychiatrically decisive is that occupation with fanzines is not by any means a flight into solitude or isolation. The fanzine editors are not idle dreamers. They do not run away from the rest of the world. In fact they cope well with very real people and institutions, like paper merchants and the post office. Often they show what amounts to an extraordinary amount of energy and goodwill. Fanzines are a healthy part of our society." From then on he begins to talk NICE about all of us.

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i would like to clarify some of my statements in issue 27, and also update to bring my words to contemporary status out of temporary.

my comments on star trek must be unjumbled because [Lynnel] failed to place a comma after the words "Ellison-scripted" (i use captitalization only in quotes). (*Out of sheer curiosity, why? I know several people who do this. This is one letter which makes me glad I have a text-editor; sure saves on corflu.*) if the reader does this in his/her copy, all of the confusion will dissipate (i hope.)

i read my words and see an egotism and belief in self-worth which is high. this is no longer true. i still see the group of people known as fen as a more intelligent group, as well as more creative than most (it is true and i defy anyone to deny it) but my format made it seem (and at the time i wrote that it was a proper seeming, for it was true) as though i though quite a bit of myself in terms of intelligence. this was a misconception. now i see the works of others and know that i have a great distance to travel. (*It's just a phase, you'll get over it.*)

--separatism: wow. linda frankel is something; i had not known when i wrote my letter that this was a real movement. i'd thought it sort of interesting and worth exploring. if ms. frankel speaks true (*I'm sure she does*) then i am frightened by the idea. i still think pat had a good idea; i just hope that people have not gone to ridiculous lengths about it.

--the illuminati: a repeated wow. i had heard of the illuminati but had no idea it was a real group, nor that it was so powerful. i'm going to have to write to ms frankel ... (*also write to Arthur Hlavaty.*)

--the artist: i am glad the debate about this topic continues (*if it does by the time this gets out*), for this has been the subject i've thought most about ... as i mentioned, I am an artist. first, i am an artist because i must be. my writing and music are primary forms of expression for me; the visual arts, when i involve myself in their confines, are more of a joking thing. my filk are musical correspondants to my cartoons. my serious music is much more important. none, though, is too important. art is a statement incurred without doubt and without intrigue. it is all a very broad and open field. This is the function of art; it is what science fiction writers could and should be doing (*I think I've lost you...*) i create or die and i am determined to create what is quality-filled. i do not believe in art as a mere source of money ... money is necessary but i must drive ahead with my beliefs through my words and not worry about commercial marketability.

(*Speaking as one who, for the last four or five years, has been making a decent living from my artwork, I can admit to only two reasons why I do art, other than having money to spend frivolously: 1) Art is something I can do well 2) WITHOUT taking seriously. I used to know people who would not sell a work of art; their excuse was always, "I won't prostitute my art." I have since found that, in every case, what this quaint little quote translates into is, "I know other people won't like it anyway, so I won't give them the chance to reject it." Sad... *)

what is sf the notation of? it is the notation of the human mind, soul, heart, but first and foremost intellect, attempting to sort out the harmonies of the unknown and solving them through technological or otherwise flights of the author's imagination. it can be much more than literature; it has to be literature also.



mr duff: im afraid that though some of our views coincide (i really like your first two paragraphs, as well as the third) (*in TIGHTBEAM 21? *) i find much of your statements ridiculous. we both pursue art; you insist on something that you don't enjoy. art is thought-stimulating ... much of the evidence you cite as art, well, i find it closed-minded. (*Hunh?*) sorry, but i can't see us imitating mainstream as you seem to wish we would. art need not be presented in what was revolutionary years ago (most of the things you speak of are old, old, old...) but it must be presented as what is revolutionary now. (*Why??*)

(*A note i forgot to include earlier -- getting the computer to underline things is an immense pain in the posterior, to the point where it is practically impossible. Please keep this in mind when placing emphasis in your locs...*)

the number of the beast: well i have now found the book and read half of it so far. hmmm. i must admit, it is not heinlein's best work. however, it is good, even great. im sorry (*Are you leaving out the apostrophes on purpose?*) but i just love his style; also, the characters are not quite as one sided as mr hills believes. i still have not finished it, though, so i will suspend final judgement. i do not agree that it wil probably be heinlein's last novel. (why does everybody jump all over r.a.h., asimov...? it becomes fashionable to reject the good simply because it is by a successful author; i dislike this.) (*Now here, I agree with you.*)

who is frejac? i am almost willing to bet that this mysterious artist is none other than the infamous lynne holdom herself. (*uh...*) consider the evidence: "his" work is forever appearing in places like the headings of sections, etc, and always fits precisely into the sort of space needed to just fill the page. no address is ever given in the contributor's section. (*What would you say if I told you that Frejac stands for FRED JACKSON III; his adress, like mine, isn't usually printed 'cos there isn't room, and the reason the art fits so well is that one cleverly puts the art down on the page FIRST and then types AROUND it?*)

Michael Bastraw

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I was saddened to hear of Janie Lamb's misfortune. She was the one who turned me on to the N3F and, through her, made it possible for me to "meet" many new and interesting people with new and interesting ideas. To

have one's house burn down has to be one of the worst personal disasters someone can face (short of death). I shudder to think of those irreplaceable items which almost certainly went up in flames....

Would you please tell Fa Shimbo that if she is going to review a book, whether she likes it or not, to do it? (*What about the books that I neither like nor not?*) Don't talk about doing it; just DO it. Maybe I'm being more sensitive in this particular case as Piers is a favorite of mine. When I saw that you had a review on the first book of one of the better trilogies I have read I was understandably excited. But when I saw that, that ... fragment, I couldn't believe it. If you have three column inches to kill, please use artwork in the future. (I'm sorry, but you got me dander up.) (*I wrote what I did because I abhor reading book reviews that tell you the whole story. It makes the story that much less fun to read, because I know what happens next. I was hard pressed to think of a way to review this book -- other than the way I did -- without giving the entire story away; because there's lots of verbiage and study in the story, but not much of a complex plot. It seemed the less of it I gave away, the better.*)

Mr. Eddie Abel certainly brings an interesting point of view to the SF community. I always find it interesting to talk with people, who are not SFers, after they become exposed to the genre. They usually haven't had time to learn those dogmas which we, who have been reading SF for many years, have succumbed to. (*As a point of interest, what do you consider fannish dogmas to be, specifically? What comes to my mind are things like the worship of Roscoe and Herbie and A Whole Dead Cat in Every Bar of Dead Cat Soap ... I have a feeling that our dogmas differ?*) In particular, I found his review of THE NUMBER OF THE BEAST quite fair and as unbiased as only a man who is "not familiar with his former work" could be.

Jacqueline Lichtenberg

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Susan Schwartz has smoked me out of a long silence in these pages with her argument (in TB#29, Jan 1981) sf criticism and the sf fan/writer context.

Apparently Steve Duff's comment that SF writers are going to have to work with the "same artistic responsibility as any other form of worthwhile reading" set Susan (and a number of others) off like firecrackers. (*Especially those who write.*)

There seems to be an assumption here that I disagree with. The assumption is that sf writers -- in general, which means then me, and MZB, and Katherine Kurtz, and Anne McCaffrey, and RAH, and Hal Clement andandandand -- do not now put the effort forth to polish and hone their product into something that says "art" to them. I have to object to that assumption. I know these people, I know myself, and Susan Schwartz, and Ruth Berman, and Jean Lorrah andandand, and I know lots of writers, and their working methods and habits and goals.

I have never -- ever -- encountered a professional in this field who did not put forth his/her nightiest effort to create the most glowing and significant

art he/she knew how. Oh, certainly, everyone works with one eye on commercial viability, market trends, prices -- and editors with contracts in their fists. (*Everybody?*) But in the last analysis, alone in a silent room staring at the pile of blank paper waiting to be filled with final drafted, sold words -- every one of us puts that extra something into the work -- that something that comes from so deep down inside that there is no word for that place.

When we've done something we find meaningful, even the most hardened professional fears rejection -- if not by the editor, then by the fans. Or perhaps even ridicule for the pure, raw sincerity of the effort -- we've all absorbed years worth of that in our teens, and the scars run deep. So we make noises about being hack writers, doing it for a buck -- being emotionally uninvolved. Seriously -- wouldn't you? (*I have known people who fear rejection more than anything else to come out with things like "I won't sell it because I refuse to prostitute my work." I somehow think making noises about hacking and money are more honorable....*) Surely, some of you have written things you won't let even your best friends see -- well, folks, we make our living by letting the world see those things. We just hide them inside loads of ordinary things called archetypes.

My point re this discussion is simply that we already do work to the highest possible artistic standards. It is the mundane world of bestsellers -- and books worthy of academic notice and formal academic criticism -- that work to the lowest standards. SF writers moonlight in mainstream. No mainstreamer can imitate what we do well enough to moonlight in sf.

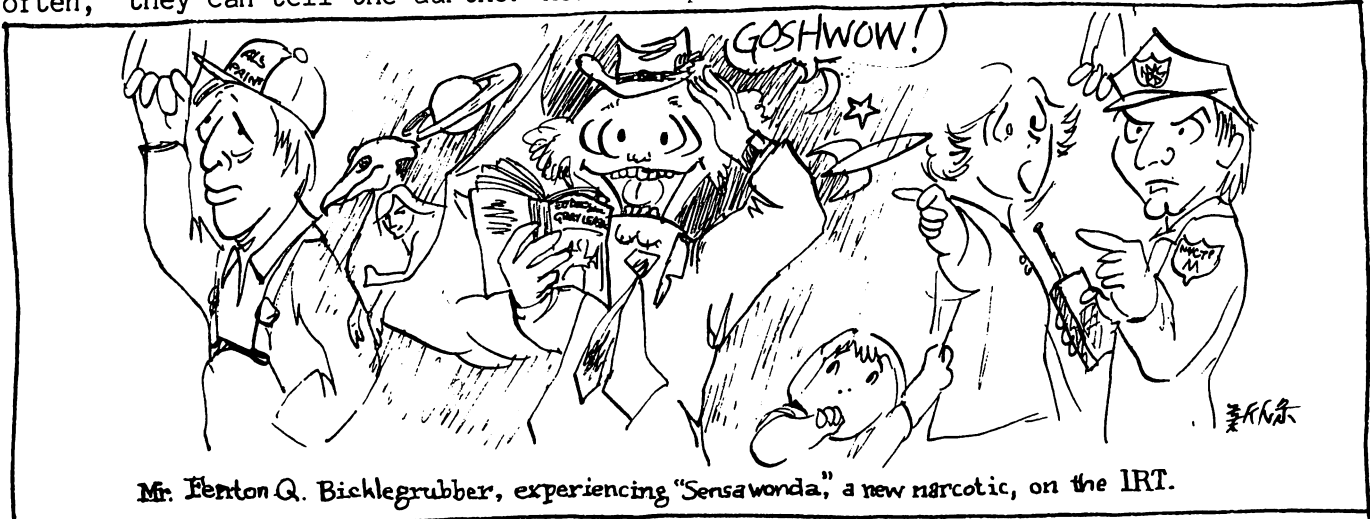
I have been accused of being a snob, and all sorts of bad things when I say such things as "SF is the highest form of literature mankind has ever created." That sounds like a hyperbole (which is supposed to be the dirtiest sin). But it's not -- it is a simple, sincere statement of a truth.

I entered N3F at the age of 13 (or thereabouts), which was like 26 years ago, making that same statement. I haven't grown up enough in that time to outgrow that statement, as people threatened that I would.

The reason we have no decent sf critics who aren't also sf writers is that the only way to learn how we do what we do is to do it. You literally can't criticize it if you can't perceive it -- and you can't perceive it unless you've tried it. There



are very few fans who haven't tried to write an sf story. Most won't admit it, though. Yet those are the fans who make the best critics, because they were driven to write by something they saw lacking in a story -- and needed to provide. When they read a story, they can tell whether that element is there or not. And very often, they can tell the author how to improve the story. Outsiders can't do that.



Mr. Fenton Q. Bicklegrubber, experiencing "Sensawonda," a new narcotic, on the IRT.

Mundanes wouldn't want to try -- they might experience sensawonder!

What Susan calls "responsible artistic standards" -- if they are something we don't already have, then I hold them in utter -- absolute -- contempt. Because what we do have is much, much better than what they have./

By the way, the early Silverberg "pot-boilers" were great art, by my standards. I really was a Silverberg fan -- until he started writing what HE thought was great art, and I go to sleep over.

As I recall this trend, there was a concerted effort on the part of writers whose whole college training was in the humanities rather than in the hard sciences, to bring "responsible literary standards" and "artistic standards" into sf (which they perceived as lacking them.). What they did, instead, was to spawn a spinoff called "New Wave SF" -- which refuses to be assimilated into sf because it adheres to those very same, low artistic standards I was referring to above. They are written to mundane standards, which do not measure up to sf standards.

Why am I turning the world upside down like this? Why this impassioned diatribe over nothing much? I know this is going to get me into trouble I don't have time to deal with. But I have this sneaking suspicion there might be someone in this organization who agrees with me -- albeit secretly. I want this person to know they're not alone. And they don't have to succumb to the threats -- you'll grow up. You'll change your mind -- you'll see the greatness of mediocrity flourish and you'll join out of self defense. No! I didn't. I won't. And you don't have to either. It's their world that's upside down.

Steve Duff

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I was shocked by [Lynne's] comments to my letter last TB. "I don't think SF is meant to be Great Literature," you say? I can see the convulsions on Ursula K. LeGuin's face even now. I see Harlan Ellison with a raised meat cleaver, I see Orson Scott Card agreeing with you. I mean, as long as SF isn't Great Literature, his hackwork will still be accepted. (*Seems to me

there's great literature, which is Good Reading, and Great Literature, which bores you all through high school. I wish I'd gotten the last issue of TB, so I knew what was going on. The mailman still has my copy....*)

This "literature" debate is even older than people quibbling about how

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good/crummy Poul Anderson is. My large collection of pulps informs me of this. I can look back to a 1936 THRILLING WONDER STORIES and find letters by fans complaining of how poorly written SF is, and begging for higher literature with living, breathing characters.

I won't let you back out of this by naming westerns and gothics, or saying that the "average mainstream novel" is no more well-written than SF. (*Who said that?? Lemme at 'em!*) I wasn't talking about westerns or gothics or "the average mainstream novel." SF was under discussion.

I won't even listen to arguments like "SF isn't meant to be Great Literature." (*Knowing Lynne, I think she meant "Great Literature" as opposed to great literature as I mentioned above.*) That's total bs because the best sf ever written is Great Literature. Writers like Henry Kuttner, C.L. Moore, Edmond Hamilton, Damon Knight, Leigh Brackett, and even Keith Laumer on his hot days, have turned out Great Literature. (*Granted, but what do you MEAN by Great Literature?*) Who are you to say "SF isn't meant to be Great Literature"? Who gave you the right to lower everyone's expectations? What's going on, did they have a panel meeting at the birth of sci-fi and pass a law that "SF isn't meant to be Great Literature, so don't even try?"

(*Without being disrespectful, something tells me that your argument is a bit on the side of the absurd. It is obvious to all of us, I think, that there are works, those previously mentioned among them, that qualify as great literature in the sense that I mean it -- reading that is a pleasure to do, which makes you think and pleases your sense of taste. However, there is a lot of sf -- most of it, to my appreciation -- that is decidedly NOT going to be remembered and appreciated as it is now, two or three centuries from now. That, to me, is what makes great literature; the fact that something can be appreciated by intelligent people of any era or time. Saying that sf isn't meant to be great literature is not saying that an author should not try to make it so -- it is stating a fact -- I doubt any author really considers his fans of a century from now -- and anything else you get out of it is something YOU yourself have seen there. It is a bit presumptuous, don't you think, to argue a statement as if everyone saw what you see? I do it, I know -- but then I admit that I'm presumptuous. I cannot, for the life of me, understand how Lynne's statement leads to yours to the effect that she is lowering everyone's expectations. Perhaps you should explain how you arrived at it...*)

I'm not expecting every SF novel written to stun me and change my life. I just don't want to see the best SF meeting the "average mainstream novel" in quality. (*Who said it was going to? Writers, after all, write to please fans, and they know they have to do better than that. (This does not, of course, mean that they actually are ABLE to write that well...*) If the best SF writer in the world was only as good as Irwin Shaw, I'd say quit the scene entirely. Even Stephen King has become a hack with FIRESTARTER. But he sells.

Which is another thing. Do me a favor, Lynne, and punch the +!! out of the @/\$! who told you that Great Art doesn't sell. That's more propagandist bull!!!. (*Now you just hold on a minute. I was the @/\$! who told Lynne (or one of them at least) that Great Art doesn't sell. I know this because for four years I was in the market of selling it. By Great Art I mean stuff that needs intelligence and education, at least in small measure, to be appreciated, and that will be appreciated in years -- MANY years -- to come. By sell I mean what sell means in today's market: can be expected to be bought en masse by at least 40-60% of the people who buy that kind of art/books/etcetera. This is for a first work; last I heard, subsequent works were expected to do much better. Did you know any of this? Perhaps those of you out there who are still in the market can correct my figures if they are wrong. As for punching out ... I shouldn't even grace that with a reply. I hope you were saying that because you were overexcited and not thinking.*) Great Art is doing quite nicely, last time I glanced at the bookshelves. It fails in SF marketplace, but in mainstream the shelves are just loaded with Great Art hoping to trap the unwary buyer. All the John Barth novels are out, if you like the current American Great Artists. Jerzy Kosinski and John Cheever books merrily await the sweaty fingers of

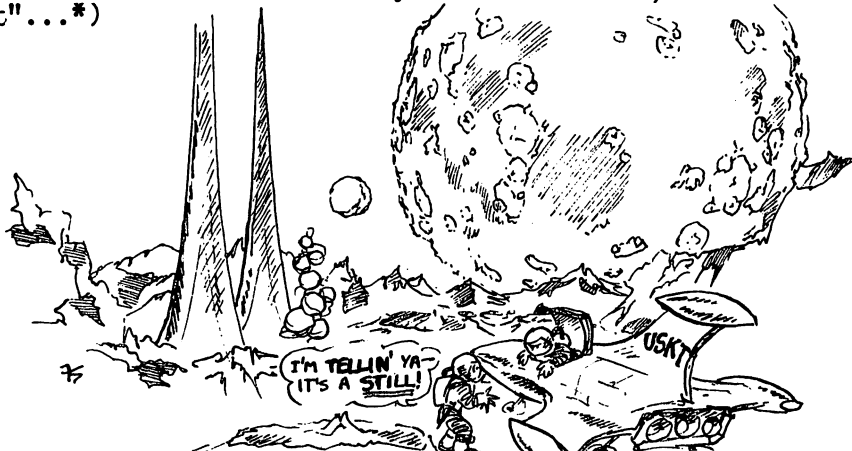
our mainstream audience. There are more fine, memorable novels published in mainstream in any given year than there are in a decade of SF.

(*It has just occurred to me that all of us are arguing Great Literature/Art and so far only I have bothered to define it directly. Will the rest of you please add your comments? Some good definitions here would do wonders for the clarity of this whole discussion. I rest my case.*)

Debates on SF's literary quality or lack thereof usually accompany dry spells in overall quality. I mean, if enough good works were being published, who'd complain? I'm not asking any authors to sit down at their typers and tell themselves, "I'm gonna write some Great Art." That wouldn't work would it? No, the artist must always try to go to the farthest realms of his/her ability. The artist must do the best he/she can. If not, the artist is full of shit and it will show in the work. It shows in almost all of modern SF. (*Which? the ability or the bull?*)

Lynne, you've expressed a desire to write, if I'm not mistaken. To you, and all other Neffers out there in sci-filand (*sci-filand?!*) do you want to pour everything you've got into it, do you want to write something you can be proud of, or do you want to write bull for a genre where Great Literature can't exist, for fans of incredibly low taste? Waddia say, BEMeroonies? (*BEMeroonies? As an author myself, I should take that as an insult ... but be that as it may, I don't see how what you're saying here is relevant. What do you mean by all of this ranting ... or should I not bother asking?*)

Lastly, to Art Hlavaty, referring to his pulp commentary, "Those heros had to be male and usually white; women had to know their place, the American way had to triumph, etc, ad nauseum." Well, I don't know what pulps Art collects, but in THRILLING WONDER, STARTLING, and PLANET STORIES, that simply wasn't true. (*But it was in ASTOUNDING, because John Campbell insisted on it. See Gordon Dickson's interview in TIGHTBEAM #24 for more on this theme.*) What you are repeating, Art is in effect nothing more than the early 70's attempt by such as Joanna Russ and Ursula K. LeGuin to brainwash everyone into believing the pulps were something nasty, dirty, anti-women. Certainly there is some evidence to render that statement merely a subjective opinion. Eric Frank Russell's great anarchist (YAY!) (*"YAY!"?*) tract "And Then There Were None..." was published in ASTOUNDING, among the most socially unenlightened periodicals of the time. Female heros and gender equality weren't common in THRILLING WONDER or STARTLING. Just check out Wallace West's THE BIRD OF TIME stories if you disagree. And PLANET published LORELEI OF THE RED MISTS. I remember all the bs Joanna Russ said about space opera pulps in VERTEX. I never believe anything she says. (*Izzat so? What is she told you the sky was blue on a sunny day in the country?*) Now of course as we all know today, social conditioning shapes our lives from early childhood, so it's not unreasonable to assume that a majority of editors and writers grew up in the '30s, '40s, and '50's even, with certain social values we reject today and the "restrictions" were an outgrowth of that. But I've read numerous pulp stories, and I find it difficult to point out a story where the American Way triumphed, or was even involved, or where women knew their place. Believe me, Art, misinformation in a good cause is not a Good Thing. It's no longer chic, rebellious, nor hip nor hep to knock the pulps. (*Does that mean it can't or oughtn't be done?*) For cryin' out loud, it ain't even correct! (*See the Dickson article if that's what you think. Also, as I recall, Arthur HATES being called "Art"...*)



MARCH 1981

Frank Bell

MARCH 1981

David Palter

1811 Tamarind #22
Hollywood CA 90028

Since [Lynne] has announced that Janie Lamb's house has burned down and her records are lost, I hope you will soon answer these questions: Will this personal problem cause Janie to give up the function of secretary, temporarily or

permanently, and if so who will replace her? Since her house has burned down she will presumably have a change of address which may also entail a change of mailing address (although not necessarily) -- can we still write to her at her former address?

(*According to the latest TNFF, Janie seems to intend to keep the job of secretary. Her mailing address will remain the same at least until the warm weather.*)

(*Also, if any of you out there know of any New Members who did not get their TIGHTBEAMS or TNFF or who haven't heard from any Neffers lately, please notify Donald or Owen or Lynne or me or my computer or any or all of us so that they can start enjoying this wonderful zine here...*)

I see that my old, familiar controversy is still simmering. I am truly pleased to see that at least G.M.Carr shows some understanding of what I am saying. Others are more disappointing. Pat Mathews does not bother to give any reason for her disapproval, but merely advises me to wash my mouth out with soap. I do not think that you have contributed anything to the discussion by expressing your hostility without any explanation.

Susan Schwartz also doesn't understand me (in spite of my excessively lengthy explanations) but at least she gives her reasons for her opinions, which I appreciate. My statement, "Life is difficult, shall we then commit suicide?" is not a reductio ad absurdum, not a cheap shot, not a fallacy; it is a serious statement of an old philosophical question once expressed by Shakespear in Hamlet's famous line, "to be or not to be?" (*Granted, but it is the context of a statment that makes for reductio ad absurdum, not the statement itself, I believe. I feel that in this context, you are pushing the point too far. Perhaps I just don't see writing as the life-and-death deal that most writers do.*) The fact is that many people do commit suicide, and this includes a number of people who during their lives were friends of mine (please don't conclude that it was I who drove them to suicide -- it wasn't, I promise.) Suicide is a very real option, and one that many people choose every day. In a discussion of unemployment it is not inappropriate to consider the possibility of suicide, since unemployment does in fact contribute to or cause a great many suicides. So I ask the question in all seriousness -- if it is in fact so terribly difficult to get a job (as all of you who have been writing in to tell me, as if I didn't already know) then might not suicide be a solution that some peopl eill find easier and perhaps better than getting a job? Although I personally have expressed the opinion that it is better to get a job than commit suicide, I do not entirely deny the validity of someone's decision to commit suicide instead. It is, after all, very difficult to get a job, as you have insisted so vehemently. In many cases death is much easier, and if someone prefers to use the easier solution, that is not entirely unreasonable. Perhaps you would understand my position better if I told you that I myself came extremely close to committig suicide at one time (in November, 1977) precisely because I was finding it too difficult to get a job. At the last minute I got a job anyway, which I currently believe was the better choice. Some of you may wish I had committed suicide instead.

I do want to commend Susan for her generosity in offering her advice on changes of career to those who write to her and ask for it. This is probably the most constructive thing to arise from this whole sordid debate. Susan often fails to understand me, but aside from that she writes pretty sensibly, and certainly there is essentially nothing wrong with her attitude toward unemployment and the unemployed; we just disagree on some of the details. Susan and I both agree that what the unemployed need is to become employed (Correct me if I'm wrong, Susan) and what the

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beam that can reach five miles and would instantly disintegrate its prey. The only drawback is that the Russians cannot direct the beam -- it goes straight up. If they could change it from a beam to a curtain they'd have it made. There's a new book out, INVADER by A.F.Hill and D.C.Hill, that introduces the GRASER -- Gamma Ray Amplification by Stimulated Emission of Radiation -- a PBW. Only thing is we had it, not the Russians. Well, we already have a prototype of a workable laser tank that nobody was supposed to know about. You never can tell, eh?

A few remarks about EMPIRE: Supposing Luke is Vader's clone -- Imperial cloning techniques must have been advanced enough so they could take a man out at any stage of his development. Okay, the Empire snatched Kenobi's star pupil, ol' man Skywalker, knocked him out and stole a few dozen cells for cloning. The Emperor kills Skywalker, but not before he places much of the man's knowledge into Vader. He then releases Vader who goes back to Kenobi. After the clone wars are over, a desire for Evil, implanted by the Emperor, awakens in Vader. While Vader is romping around, pretending to be a good guy, but realling killing all of the good guys, Kenobi learns of a whole batch of baby Vaders (*shudder!*) being clones in the last of the cloning labs. He storms in, takes two of the kids, one a boy of five, the other a girl of one or two, and blows the lab to kingdom come. The girl he leaves to King Organa, his ruler. The boy he takes to his daughter on Tatooine, Aunt Beru. Kenobi stays on the desert world to keep an eye on the boy, uses the Force to make Owen keep the boy there when Kenobi can mask him from Vader's powers. But Vader already knew about Leia, believed her to be the only child to escape the lab.

So, we have Kenobi possibly as Ol' Man Skywalker's father, Skywalker dead, Vader as Skywalker's clone, Luke and Leia as a pair of Vader's clones, neither implanted with Vader's lust for Evil. The Emperor is probably the most knowledgeable of the Sith Lords, the new order of Jedis who use the dark side of the Force. When he was pumping Vader with Skywalker's brain, he told the Jedi that Kenobi was just his teacher, not his father and that he, the Emperor, was his father. To be Dark Lord of the Sith is to be second best, and so Vader is in line for the throne of the Empire and the Sith Lords. Leia was too young to be a threat, so Vader just watched her, trying to get her on a treason charge so he could bring her back to the empire to mess with her mind. Then Luke came along as a bigger threat and Vader had to act before he was ready and attack Hoth. Leia should be more experienced in the usage of the Force in REVENGE.

And speaking of REVENGE, here are a couple of things I would mind seeing happen. One, the Emperor is on the same level of consciousness as Kenobi, but being on the Dark Side he doesn't know about Kenobi yet, which was why Kenobi couldn't help Luke in his fight against Vader. Two, Luke will probably fight Vader with help from Leia (and possibly even Solo; I do indeed remember his miraculous flight through the asteroids) while the Emperor and Kenobi duke it out on their level. Three, Luke will need all the help he can get because he is right handed and now his right hand is a machine. All Vader has to do is shut down Luke's right hand or make it malfunction. And four, Luke and Leia defeat Vader, but Kenobi will be in trouble. Yoda finally reveals himself as the true embodiment of the Force and the Emperor goes phhhh. Strike up the band, give the heroes medals, roll credits.

(*Point of Interest: One of the computer networks that folks with home computers can get onto, called MicroNET, has a Bulletin Board, where subscribers can put up messages to other subscribers. One anonymous Californian subscriber claimed to know the plot of REVENGE and it went something like: One his way back to Dagobah, Luke is captured by Vader, and is turned to the Dark Side of the Force. The Mysterious "Another," whom Yoda speaks of, and who will supposedly be played by Dianna Rigg, meets Luke eventually, and she and Luke (who was faking the dark side all along) kill Vader and the Emperor and restore the old Monarchy. It is found that Luke has Royal Blood, and gets Leia. (Poor Luke.) Han Solo? Oh, he gets killed trying to rescue Luke or something. As for Yoda, there are no plans for him yet because Frank Oz was not sure he wanted to play the part again.*)

Frank Bell

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I pity you poor people back on the East Coast, I really do. New York gets hit by a healthy drought and what little water the rest of you get freezes you out of house and warmth. Ah, well, my geography teacher told me White Christmas' aren't normal anyway: the climate of the Holy Land is closer to San Diego than New England. Personally, I like blue skies in the winter, not white streets. (*I'll take the white streets, but I like the blue skies out here in the Rockies; especially since we get things like iridescent clouds, which I didn't believe were Really Real until last week...*)

WILLIAM GOODSON: I have not read TSO, but it occurs to be that if indeed everyone were "running on a preset program" then perhaps the only ones capable of awakening might be the ones capable of playing "ugly, necrosadistic sexual games with the mechanism" without giving a damn about who's still running on the program. If Leiber wanted us to concentrate on the program instead of who gained awareness, mightn't he have given the book a different title and outlook? But then again, you've read the book and I haven't, yet. Maybe it's another case of the name selling the book. Let's wait an' see if it wins a Hugo.

Here's a quote for suicide. George Monro Grant said, "When a man despairs, he does not write, he commits suicide." Things can't be all that bad if you can get up and write something down.

DAVID PALTER: Thanks for the defense of SF and bringing "Enemy Mine" into the argument. I haven't read MANIFEST DESTINY yet, but if any of the rest of it's even half as good as the novella, Longyear's won another Hugo. "Enemy Mine" would have won the Hugo from just about any year.

Doris Lessing, in her intro to SHIKASTA, (a very good book, by the way, which I recommend), said and I quote, "I was in the States, giving a talk, and the professor who was acting as chairwoman, and whose only fault was that perhaps she fed too long on the pieties of academia, interrupted me with: 'If I had you in my class you'd never get away with that!' I had been saying that space fiction, with science fiction, makes up the most original branch of literature now; it is inventive and witty; it has already enlivened all kinds of writing; and that literary academics and pundits are much to blame for patronising or ignoring it -- while of course by their nature they can be expected to do no other." So much for SF being a non-literature. Lessing is a much respected writer who obviously knows what she's talking about.

LOUIS DeMELLO: All is not right with the state of nuclear power. I don't fear it, still, you don't have to fear something to be against it. It's dangerous, but hell, everything we do nowadays is dangerous. (*It's nowhere near as dangerous as the streets of New York City after dark, and I mean that seriously.*) I just think the money is being poured into it too fast. The amount of power we get out of it is almost negligent (*According to Science News, it's currently about 10%, which is not quite negligent...*) and we get places like Love Canal that suffer from being too near a dumping site for radioactive materials. (*Even though the dump was there first...*) More attention should be focused on thermonuclear power. A thermonuclear reaction is something like twenty times more powerful than a normal nuclear reaction and there are no harmful radioactive biproducts. It would be no more dangerous than nuclear power, and the benefits are greater. (*I have also noted that opponents of nuclear power seem to use up an awful lot of energy on things like excessively loud stereos and cars and the like, and they don't seem at all willing to curtail the use of same (or the volume) much less eliminate their use so that the need for the additional power would be less, even when arguing theoretically. I have never understood this point of view...*)

CHARLIE McCUE: Your comment of the Particle Beam Weapon was interesting, but I was led to believe, by a PBS show on the arms race, that the Russians already have a PBW prototype built (working or not, I have no idea). (*It was mentioned on ABC News about two weeks ago, that the Russians tested a PBW 'successfully', i.e., they got it to fire at something in orbit although they didn't quite hit their target.*) It has a

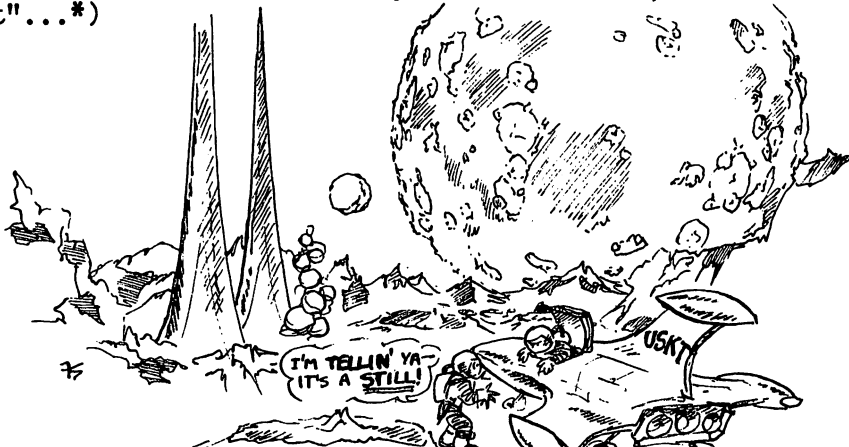
our mainstram audience. There are more fine, memorable novels published in mainstream in any given year than there are in a decade of SF.

(*It has just occurred to me that all of usa are arguing Great Literature/Art and so far only I have bothered to define it directly. Will the rest of you please add your comments? Some good definitions here would do wonders for the clarity of this whole discussion. I rest my case.*)

Debates on SF's literary quality or lack thereof usually accompany dry spells in overall quality. I mean, if enough good works were being published, who'd complain? I'm not asking any authors to sit down at their typers and tell themselves, "I'm gonna write some Great Art." That wouldn't work would it? No, the artist must always try to go to the farthest realms of his/her ability. The artist must do the best he/she can. If not, the artist is full of shit and it will show in the work. It shows in almost all of modern SF. (*Which? tha ability or the bull?*)

Lynne, you've expressed a desire to write, if I'm not mistaken. To you, and all other Neffers out there in sci-filand (*sci-filand?!*) do you want to pour everything you've got into it, do you want to write something you can be proud of, or do you want to write bull for a genre where Great Literature can't exist, for fans of incredibly low taste? Waddia say, BEMeroonies? (*BEMeroonies? As an author myself, I should take that as an insult ... but be that as it may, I don't see how what you're saying here is relavant. What do you mean by all of this ranting ... or should I not bother asking?*)

Lastly, to Art Hlavaty, referring to his pulp commentary, "Those heros had to be male and usually white; women had to know their place, the American way had to triumph, etc, ad nauseum." Well, I don't know what pulps Art collects, but in THRILLING WONDER, STARTLING, and PLANET STORIES, that simply wasn't true. (*But it was in ASTOUNDING, because John Campbell insisted on it. See Gordon Dickson's interview in TIGHTBEAM #24 for more on this theme.*) What you are repeating, Art is in effect nothing more than the early 70's attempt by such as Joanna Russ and Ursula K. LeGuin to brainwash eveyone into believing the pulps were something nasty, dirty, anti-women. Certainly there is some evidence to render that statement merely a subjective opinion. Eric Frank Russell's great anarchist (YAY!) (*"YAY!"?*) tract "And Then There Were None..." was published in ASTOUNDING, among the most socially unenlightened periodicals of the time. Female heros and gender equality weren't common in THRILLING WONDER or STARTLING. Just check out Wallace West's THE BIRD OF TIME stories if you disagree. And PLANET published LORELEI OF THE RED MISTS. I remember all the bs Joanna Russ said about space opera pulsp in VERTEX. I never believe anything she says. (*Izzat so? What is she told you the sky was blue on a sunny day in the country?*) Now of course as we all know today, social conditioning shapes our lives from early childhood, so it's not unreasonable to assume that a majority of editors and writers grew up in the '30s, '40s, and '50's even, with certain social values we reject today and the "restrictions" were an outgrowth of that. But I've read numerous pulp stories, and I find it difficutlt to point out a story where the American Way triumphed, or was even involved, or where women knew their place. Believe me, Art, misinformation in a good cause is not a Good Thing. It's no longer chic, rebellious, nor hip nor hep to knock the pulps. (*Does that mean it can't or oughtn't be done?*) For cryin' out loud, it ain't even correct! (*See the Dickson article if that's what you think. Also, as I recall, Arthur HATES being called "Art"...*)



rest of us should be doing is helping these people. We have disagreed on the value of sympathy and on the best approach to gaining employment. Our agreements are more basic than our disagreements.

Personally I don't feel the need to continue this debate any further (*I'm glad you said that, and not me!*) although I will if you force me to, by presenting me in the pages of TIGHTBEAM with further misunderstandings of my earlier statements. But really, we have had enough of those already. Why don't we talk about science fiction? (*Yes, that's what we're supposed to be here for, isn't it? One thing I'd like to say about misunderstandings is that I have a feeling, David, that you were indeed understood by the people who responded to you -- however they understood you in terms of their own experience and world view; which, after all, is all that one can reasonably expect of anyone, I think. What you seem to be trying to do is to get them to understand your argument in terms of your experience and world view, and I will admit that you have a difficult and delicate task ahead of you, since your experiences, as you've just related them, are not as common as you might expect. Or are they?*)

I rather like Eddie Abel's discussion of THE NUMBER OF THE BEAST. Why shouldn't solipsism also be an acceptable topic for SF? (I ask this question of all the critics who, unlike Eddie, didn't like this novel.) Note that Heinlein has discussed solipsism before, most notably in his story "The Unpleasant Profession of Johnathan Hoag" but also elsewhere.

So, Lynne, you have read THE MASK OF THE SUN and still don't like Saberhagen; I guess there is no hope that you ever will, in that case. At least you did like A WORLD BETWEEN so I can't accuse you of having poor literary taste.

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Breaking into TIGHTBEAM from the outside is a little confusing, I think I caught the drift of most of what went on, but I can't be sure.

(*Nu, you should be different?*)

I like a lot of the authors mentioned, agree'd with some of the statements and disagree'd with quite a few, open discussion can be interesting, once you know what's being discussed, so I've tried to relate to a few of the issues herein, I don't know how close to the mark, though!?

I like most of the authors out, currently, but not all of them; and a lot of authors, I like some of their works, but not everything. Subject matter seems strictly the realm of the individual, so who's to say what someone else does or doesn't like, or rather whether I'm, or anyone, is right or wrong for liking one story or another?

I know of quite a few people who attempted to read THE DOSADIA EXPERIMENT and couldn't bring themselves to finish it. Possibly spurred by this, I did read it all the way through and I thought it was a fantastic work. But I didn't care for DESTINATION VOID, which several people did like. I liked DHALGREN, but thought that the EINSTEIN INTERSECTION wasn't much to read; it's just my point of view, but I have my right to it!

Anderson, McCaffrey, Bradley, Norton, Dickson and Piper are among my favorite authors for pure enjoyment and entertainment; I believe them to be top quality, but I also like Delany, Ellison and others, who seem to be in conflict of style and subject matter with the others I read. I don't think I have time to list all the authors or their stories I like -- it would number into the hundreds, at least. (*The last book I read that I REALLY REALLY liked was THE GENESIS MACHINE by Hogan, which I have a feeling would be diametrically opposed to the kind of thing your favorite authors seem to write.*)

I've run into lots of people who think that reading SF is wasting time, but I don't get much in the way of a logical response from them when it comes down to physical reason, and most of them have never tried to read anything of the genre; my explanations seldom convince them to change, but I have occasional luck. (*Perhaps

you should try convincing the School Sisters of Notre Dame that reading SF was NOT a sin -- I never had any luck in this regard. STRANGER IN A STRANGE LAND was on their private Index Expurgia.*)

After all, the literary field of fiction can involve stories of variety, romance, adventure, murder, or ideology, to name a few, but the only real difference comes down to whether they are set in the past, present or the future. There is really little difference if you want to get into plot details. The future, or alternates of the present or past, under which SF is classed, allow for much more creativity than do past or present semi-reality, since therein you must allow for the restrictions and limitations of the real world as history records it. Unfortunately, many of the present authors in those fields fail to come up to those standards! I have read many Westerns that were no more true than much of the sf; some historically, or culturally, much farther off. One reason I had an instant liking for LeGuin's story, 'The Word for World is Forest,' is because it portrayed a very close analogy to the story of the American Indian, whether intentional or not.



As to the sudden realization for the contents as presented to be, Carl Sagan in COSMOS, or any of his other books, I must agree that they were quite readable and enjoyable; however, there was little said therein that hadn't been said before -- and considerably better -- by the good Dr. A. He only lacked the commercial backing and publicity of a scheduled TV series. Sagan may be Asimov's match in enthusiasm for his subject, but certainly not in clarity, or presentation. (*I 200% agree.*)

I don't know if any of this letter is making sense, but I felt a need to get it said. My favorite older film is FORBIDDEN PLANET, taking into consideration the technology available at the time, I believe it to be exceptional. THE DAY THE EARTH STOOD STILL is a close second, with STAR WARS third.

Well, not that that is out of my system, I suppose I should prepare for some criticism and reply. Oh well, you takes your best shot, and hope it scores ... somewhere close to home.

Chris Martin

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I sent my renewal check for N3F January 26. I hope it didn't get caught in the fire. (*The fire was a week or so earlier and both Lynne and I have your renewal on file. Owen has you up to 3/81.*)

I don't have anything definitive to say about the Goodson-Holdom discussion about writers who make their living writing and those who don't. I will offer an example of a writer whose work has been diminished by the pressure of working commercially: Ron Goulart. In the sixties, Goulart wrote some fine short stories for AMAZING, FANTASTIC and the MAGAZINE OF FANTASY AND SCIENCE FICTION; stories that were scintillating comments about contemporary mores in an sf or fantasy setting. The novelette, "Anything for Laughs" in the May, 1963 FANTASTIC is as fresh and clever as it was 18 years ago. The comments on American society, though the story is set on the planet Murdstone, are as biting and incisive as they were then. Other stories were just as polished. All were written on the side as Goulart worked for an ad agency.

Then sometime around the turn of the decade, Goulart became a full time writer. The nature of the fiction market dictated that Goulart turn out novels. The pay is better. But Goulart's ideas and style were perfect for the short story and novella format. When he tried to force his form into that of the novel, his work suffered from padding. He overworked his ideas. He tried to scrap afterburners into

butterfly wings. The man who was the best science fiction and fantasy humorist of the sixties became just another DAW schlock novelist in the seventies.

(*I was recently given Goulart's SKYROCKET STEELE to read as a good example of something execrable. It had a lot of very humorous lines in it, but on the whole it was utterly traife.*)

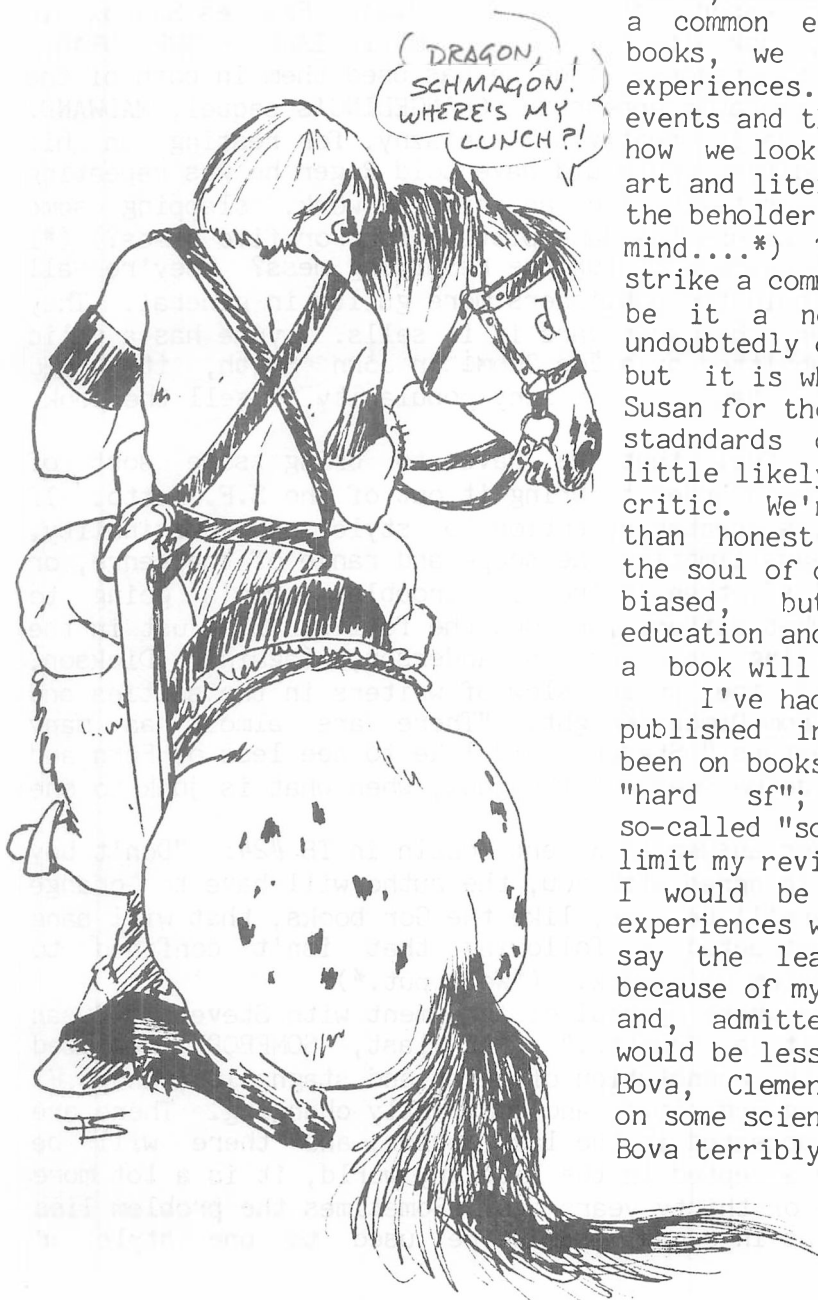
The slang for slide rule is slipstick, I believe, not slapstick. (*Depends on how tough your school is. We used ours as missile launchers.*)

I don't remember the name of the studio head who said, "If you've got a message, use Western Union," but he sure had Heinlein's number. (*That was Samuel Goldwyn?*) There's nothing wrong with a point of view, bide my comments on Goulart. But I hate to see story and entertainment sacrificed on that altar.

William West

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Susan Schwartz has certainly opened up an interesting can of worms with her letter in TB#29. I strongly suspect that very few of us will agree exactly in how we evaluate books, because although most of us may share a common educational background and love of books, we haven't all had the same experiences. We've been shaped by different events and their effect upon us influences how we look at everything around us, such as art and literature. "Beauty is in the eye of the beholder," etc. (*And filth is in the mind....*) The best-sellers are books that strike a common chord in the reading public, be it a noble or a baser one. It is undoubtedly oversimplification on my part, but it is why I find myself disagreeing with Susan for the first time. Yes, there are standards of evaluation, but there is very little likelihood of a totally objective book critic. We're only human. I would be less than honest if I tried to pass myself off as the soul of objectivity. I try not to be biased, but I am the sum total of my education and experiences, and how I react to a book will be determined by them.

I've had roughly a half-dozen reviews published in TB now and none of them have been on books that could be categorized as "hard sf"; they've been on fantasy or so-called "science fantasy." I deliberately limit my reviews to the latter because I know I would be influenced by my educational experiences with math and science, which, to say the least, were less than ideal. So, because of my lack of expertise in the area and, admittedly, some antipathy, I feel it would be less fair of me to review a book by Bova, Clement or Hogan where the plot turns on some scientific fact. (*I've never found Bova terribly 'factual.'*)

With fantasy, or soft science fiction, I'm more on solid ground. I've been a reading fanatic since age four. I got hooked around eight or nine, but I was reading Bullfinch and Homer, Virgil and Mallory before that. That got me into history, my life long addiction, and five years of Latin. And that led me into fantasy. Nor do I limit my reading to s.f. and fantasy, though I do prefer them to most contemporary mainstream fiction. So although I'm not an English major, I do have a wide enough background (I think) to review most books in the genre.

In the case of THE CHANGELING, there were several reasons I thought it was "bad Zelazny" as Lynne called it, instead of "good." The two main points were the lack of character development and the hurried plot structure. But there was another reason that I touched briefly upon; to wit, the similarities to his earlier heroes. To be blunt, Zelazny is in a rut. He has used the "outsider" theme in most of his works, and while it isn't rare for an author to spend his whole career writing stereotypes, somehow I expected more from somebody with his talents. To make matters worse, he has also used the same plot devices over and over. For example, he has his heroes transported between dimensions via a "road" that is a pale copy of the best of Corwin's walk through Shadow in the Amber books. And the entire action and plot of his last novel, ROADMARKS, centers on a trans-temporal highway. (And all these are replays, to be honest, in greater or lesser degrees, of the "walk" Frances Sandow, in his guise as the Peian god, Shimbo, took with his dying enemy in ISLE OF THE DEAD.) Now Zelazny seems to be fascinated by dragons, since he has used them in both of the last two novels, and they will most probably appear in CHANGELING's sequel, MADWAND.

So who's to blame for this decline in creativity? Zelazny, for resting on his laurels and getting lazy? The editor, who could have told Roger he was repeating himself? What about the publisher, for taking such an inferior work, slapping some art in here and there (Who cares if we use the same picture four or five times?) (*I didn't even notice it....*) and then charges \$7 for the resulting mess? They're all equally guilty, although I tend to hold the publishers more guilty in general. They don't care if the book is a potboiler, they just care if it sells. Lynne has a valid point; if THE CHANGELING had been submitted by a Joe Schmo or John Smith, it would never have seen print. The publisher banked on Zelazny popularity to sell the book, and apparently it did.

Now Susan, and Steve before her, feel that we have to bring some sort of artistic responsibility to the genre in order to bring it out of the S.F.Ghetto. If this means, as Susan seems to imply, a greater attention to style and originality, fine, I'm all for it. But if it means limiting the scope and range of the genre, or trying to limit the output of 'crap' sf, then we're in trouble. Who's going to decide what stories are crap, or what authors turn out the foul stuff? Just in the last two issues we've had conflicting opinions on Anderson, (again), Dickson, Saberhagen, McCaffrey, Clarke, and the whole slew of writers in the sixties and seventies. As Mike Bastrow quoted from Damon Knight, "There are almost as many opinions on any subject as there are fans." Stever would like to see less of Pern and Antares; I'd like to see more. How do we weed out the junk, when what is junk to one fan is gold to another?

Lynne had the right idea in her answer to Robert McLain in TB #24: "Don't buy what you don't like. If enough people agree with you, the author will have to change his/her style or his/her job." There'll be some, like the Gor books, that will hang on no matter what, because they've attracted a following that isn't confined to fandom; but by and large, Lynne's system will work. (*Well put.*)

One last point; and this is where my real disagreement with Steve and Susan lies: S.F. is neither dead, nor is it a "ghetto." (*At last, SOMEBODY realized that!*) Both of those terms have the connotation of decay and stagnation, and S.F. is anything but either. It is growing and alive, and constantly changing. There are some really fine new writers who've appeared in the last decade, and there will be more. And while S.F. isn't totally accepted in the literary world, it is a lot more "respectable" than it was twenty or thirty years ago. Sometimes the problem lies not, I think, in the genre, so much as in ourselves. We're used to one style or

group of authors, and when the next stage in S.F.'s development comes along, we're reluctant to accept it. Look at the furor a decade or so ago over New Wave vs. Old Wave. (Ironically, it helped some authors and books gain a notoriety that saved them from a deserved oblivion.) While the champions from both sides fought it out in locs and at cons, a strange thing happened: S.F. combined or reabsorbed the two and moved on. And the die-hards who didn't grow with the field each accuse the other side of subverting, trashing and otherwise destroying S.F.

Last week at Boskone I picked up Panshin's S.F. IN DIMENSION in the huckster's room. Interesting book, although I don't agree with some of their views. The last section of the book has an ironic relevance to this whole discussion. It is an account of a fan who won the 1960 Hugo for best fan writer for a survey he conducted with luminaries of the field. Its title was "WHO KILLED SCIENCE FICTION?" Imagine that! If S.F. has been dead for the last twenty years, then it has been a very lively ghost indeed.

Randal Castinado

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Okay, so I got TB, because I'm now a TNFF person (*You mean a Neffer?*) and I tried to read it on my lunch hour at work, but I had to run down to the university to get some

financial aid forms for my attempt at college in California this fall, so that blew that. Anyway, I got home and pried it open and right off my eyes liked the green ink (*I'll try to get this printed in some color other than black, but I don't know what color ink I can get hold of out here.*) my peepers being used to checking out the stuff all day anyhow. I work in a print shop. (*You have my sympathies...*) Very



nice, and black (or was it dark brown?) ink on green paper. Nice again.

So I read the thing, wolfing down my lasagna and orange juice, and there's all this talk about NUMBER OF THE BEAST and Heinlein, both of which I wouldn't bother coughing over. I continue. There's some sort of semi-review-thing of Piers Anthony's OMNIVOR which sparked my interest. I thought everyone had forgotten about Piers' good stuff (i.e., anything other than the fantasy trash he pens now) and I also noticed that this was all kind of late. I mean, the book was written quite a ways back. (*Some Neffers are kind of early, at least in age...*)

Fa Shimbo, whoever you are (*Yo!*) go ahead and read the two sequels. (*I can't -- the weasels hid one of the books.*) It goes from fair to good then back to weak fair again. The last one, OX, wound being a "cardboard eulogy" (epitath?) for all the characters and had too much crap about mathematics. (*I can never get enough of that crap about mathematics!*) I guess it was realistic, the way things just sort of degenerated to a limping end.

Then there's this Eddie Abel, with the ad with a drawing of Fidel Castro or something on it. His romance with pornography sounded okay until I realized he was just another one of those people who used it to glorify themselves as some sort of modern day "hero," like the unionizers and communist workers people. It's just a medium for their message; the medium itself doesn't really matter. He was also into talking about this NUMBER OF THE BEAST stuff. I guess it's the latest craze -- like new wave glasses or something. (*Not really -- it just happens to be one of the current topics under discussion. A topic seems to come and go once every three issues or so and the discussion involves just about everyone who locs the zine. You'll get used to it.*)

William Goodson's remarks about someone else's remarks, made me think about this argument I got into once with Mike Kring over how important education really was, especially English. (*After having typed these locs, I'm beginning to think a course in punctuation, at least, should be mandatory for everyone who wants to write locs. Then again, my typing/spelling ain't so hot either...*) I'm basically talking Shakespear here, but all that area applies. The world seems to be hung up on this notion that being "cultured" is where it's at, and being an "intellectual" is about the best thing you can do next to God. I had this "affair" once with an English teacher of mine, and that was her biggest problem (my biggest problem was her "husband," but let's not get into that.) (*Okay, so why bring it up?*) Too hung up on being "cultured," like sitting around reading poetry and going to the local playhouse every spring. Like those people who sit around listening to Bach and watching nothing but educational television all day. I'm not really nocking this stuff totally, but people waste too much time and effort on it, especially those who don't know why they do it. (*Is simply LIKING to do it good enough?*) And then this gets into haze like why science fiction in general is such a refugee camp for those types, and that gets into this big myth people have about being intelligent and automatically being a misfit of some kind. (*This is no myth, actually -- being too 'intelligent,' especially as meaning being able to learn quickly and in quantity -- can be hazardous to your health, especially in grade school. I can remember being chased home by half my class because the teacher held up my projects as Good Examples; I can remember having no friends all through school except when I was useful. Most of the other fen I know, save those who were fortunate enough to be sent to a school where "they're all like this," have related to me nearly identical experiences.*)

As for artists and the Soviet Union: Communism almost automatically kills any sort of "artistic" feeling a creative person might have. (*I have a feeling the Polish fen, among others, are going to disagree with you.*) The so called art from Russia nowadays is really awfull stuff. (*Compared to what?*) They produced some grand things, though, before the day Big Lenin showed up. The biggest problem is that the creative person gets smothered where he or she is limited. Put any sort of limits on creativity and you might as well take the kitchen knife and finish it off.

As for BATTLESTAR, it was the first real piece of sf crap I've seen for some while, next to STARLOST and made for TV movies. The pilot was so bad I got up and left the room after the first 23 minutes. And the "acting" ... gaak!

Elain Barbieri, whoever you are: This stuff about not being able to find work because you're a female sounds a little iffy to me, because I had trouble finding work when I needed it, and they turned me down for nearly any reason. One place thought I was "too cute" to work there (*How do you mean 'cute'?*) to work there, like it was a beauty contest or something. (*I have a feeling, if "too cute" is a direct quote, that that isn't quite what they meant...*) one place thought I looked "too ethnic" for the job -- working in a restaurant. One place thought I had just a little too much experience and one place said I was too old (I'll be nineteen in April.) So don't tell me about job discrimination. If they don't like you, they don't want you. They'll tell you anything sometimes!

George Phillies, whoever you are: (*We're all Neffers.*) Well, did you like Starcrash or what, even with the names?

Arthur C. Clarke is probably the biggest idiot when it comes to writing stories that ever walked the earth. That was directed at anyone listening. The man is a scientist, not a writer, and anyone who disagrees with that is the same. (*Although I've found his latest works abominable, as for anything up to and including RENDEZVOUS WITH RAMA, I am a technical writer and I disagree.*)

Leave STAR WARS alone, already. Geez, but I wish that damn movie had been shelved and we would never have had to hear all this crud. STAR WARS is mostly boring and a product of a whole apathetic decade which produced a lot of crap in science fiction and media in general. Hopefully, things'll get better soon.

I noticed Pat Mathews wrote a letter. I wrote her once, twice maybe and sent her some zines. She didn't reply, so I scored another point for Albuquerque and gross fandom as one. I don't worry about how lousy this place is about active people in any form or direction anymore, because I'll be leaving soon. I living person in this city soon dies. (*I typed that last sentence directly from your letter -- what does it mean?*)

Danny Hamilton

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First I would like to say that I am sorry I called Dennis Jarog a liar. I should not have attacked Jarog personally. I was mad and I still think that he didn't read ST very carefully but I should not have called him a liar. I apologize.

Separatism -- I agree with the comments that is is not practical to have separatism in the US and that only a few can practise it. Now for the BIG NEWS. I am now living in a country that practices female separatism. The men and women have little contact except marriage. They go to different schools, don't play together, no dating, no working together. They are truly separate. A female separatist dream, or is it? I live in Saudi Arabia. The women here aren't even second class citizens; they are property. This state of affairs demonstrates that separatism is of little importance. The society that people live in is far more important. Also, until the feminists of the US and the world start taking on countries like Saudi Arabia I will have little sympathy or understanding for them.

Jeff Kasten among others, seems to think that fascism and militarism are the same thing. He is very wrong. The militarism in the works of Dickson, Heinlein, Pournell, Norton and Piper is totally against fascism. Fascism is a political idea, like Communism or Democracy. While militarism is not political, it supports the political ideas in power. As long as people keep saying that anything military is fascist, the US will have a weak military and find it hard to hold people on the military because the military gets no respect. Here is a man who will fight and die to protect his country and you call him fascist. I hope that those who call the military fascist never need protection from an enemy.

STAR WARS -- Where has all the talk about how the characters are related come from? (*Beats me.*) The idea the Luke and Leia are brother and sister can not be supported by anything in the



movies. People seem to forget that Leia is not just another girl, but a princess and a member of the Imperial Senate. That a brother or relative of hers is not known is almost impossible. As far as Luke being Vader's son, why doubt it? Certainly Vader knew that his son was on Tatooine but would he care? As long as Luke was a normal slob Vader could care less, but Luke with the Force, together they could overthrow the Emperor. So Vader would claim him.



Kathleen Woodbury makes a mistake when she says that Obi-Wan and Luke's father are the same age because they served together in the Clone Wars. Luke's father was Obi-Wan's pupil and Obi-Wan was a general under Leia's father. (*And Yoda seems to go on about how Jedi must start young.*) Therefore Luke's father would have been a junior officer No where near Obi-Wan's age. The only relationships that I can see are those stated in the Movies. Luke, Vader's son, (possible clone but unlikely). Vader, not the Emperor's son or clone because would the Emperor trust Vader and let him live if Vader had a claim on the throne? And Luke would not have been hidden if he had a claim on the throne himself. Leia, not related to anyone. She would know her relatives and would have called on Obi-Wan as a relative, not just as a general that helped her father. I'm still wondering where all these ideas and arguments came from. (*Let's see -- I did a little research, and according to the back issues, and to tell the truth, I can't FIND where it begins...*)

A.D. Wallace

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Gramercies galore for #29.

Please forgive my algid reaction, but the typeface is diminutive and the impression is vague. The page has a pleasant appearance, until one tries to read it. This one's eyes

must squinch and the tear-glands over-act. (*I had the same trouble, that's why I've gone back to the old format.*)

As to proper public dress, this one's eyes squinch at the minimal skirtage now appearing in England. As we said circa fifteen years ago, the hem line is one notch below the crotch.

Confusion is rampant almost to the extent of heterogeneous chaos concerning the place of SF&F in our culture. Capek's play RUR (from which we inherit robot) is commonly regarded as belonging to SF&F ... it is also taken as literature. There is at least one opera usually regarded as SF&F (so I read). Is an opera literature? Are the products of the tape and film industries literature? What of the garnish covers that ornament SF&F paperbacks, are they literature? And the various games, are they literature?

With due respect to others who think differently (*there seems to be ghodawful little in this zine nowadays*) I take it to be so much argle-bargle and burgle-gurgle to inquire if SF&F is Great Literature without first coming to grips with the meaning of the words involved. (*Thank you!! *sigh of relief!*)

The above examples do not complete the tally of relevant queries. There are calendars and picture books vaguely described as SF&F -- and then there is verse termed "science-fiction" and, of course, much verse that is indeed "fantasy." Excluding poetry from literature would indeed annoy many. I would take the simply way; "the way of negation," and say, "If it is not prose fiction it is not SF&F." (Sorry about this.) If a novel contains a large strain of science -- actual or extrapolated -- it is science fiction and goes into SF&F. If a novel contains a large strain of the phantasmic, then it is fantasy and also goes into SF&F. Of course, a novel may be both. According to my -- surely incomplete -- definition,

SF&F is literature, major or minor, good or bad.... It includes the rather poor novel called STAR WARS and it excludes the film of the same name. It also excludes RUR, which I regret. But there are no cold rolled steel definitions in literature. My definition of SF&F places it in the part of our culture generally called "literature."

Jean Lorrah

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NBC this week is running a special segment on "Our Failing Schools." Tonight's focus was on the deterioration of discipline, leading to less learning. (Less?

In the classrooms they showed, learning would be well-nigh impossible.) Not only are SAT scores dropping in general, but scores of those majoring in education are lower than the average for all college students; the next generation of teachers will be themselves deficient.

Good teachers are leaving the profession. Look at Susan Shwatz, if you want an example from our ranks. And I'll bet there are others. (*Is Gil Gaier still out there? I believe he teaches. Hello?*) You probably don't know it, but within the teaching profession itself there are movements to help teachers who burn out, are denied tenure, cannot find jobs after they complete their education, or are RIF'd (fired because their jobs disappear in Reductions In Funding). If you are a former teacher, you probably found very little helpful advice on moving into a new career available to you when you left. I am trying to correct that situation by writing a book to help such teachers. I want it to be the book you wish you had when you left teaching and began searching elsewhere for a career. So if you are a former teacher, would you be willing to write and tell me your experiences? What are you doing now? How you got there? All the things you did right? What you did wrong, and what others can avoid? With your help, I can do this book right -- and all the former teacher who find it a useful tool will thank you!

Now, fen in general, and actifen in particular, tend to be very bright, literate people -- so Lynne's comment in answer to Michael Bastraw's question about "Slapstick Libby" really threw me for a moment. "Slapstick" was the word Greg used -- she thinks it refers to a slide rule? She thinks?! And she didn't recognize that Greg had to have typoed "slapstick" for "slipstick" even if she didn't recall Libby's nickname! Yes, a slipstick is a slide rule -- hell and damn, I majored in English because I am dyslexic and cannot handle math (you can't gestalt a string of nummbers), and I used a slide rule all through high school and college! Can my age be showing that much? Lynne, can you possibly be younger than I am that by the time you were into high school physics the calculator had replaced the slide rule? (*That hadn't happened even in MY day!*) Oh, my weary bones! I keep thinking my life has just started!

Augustine Gauba

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Clones, hunh? Well, well, well, First of all, STAR WARS and TESB are clones of BATTLE FOR MIDWAY and countless other non-sf films, with two or three space fantasy genes added.

Luke is a clone of his father, who is a clone of the emperor. Vader is a clone of the emperor.

Yoda is actually Yoda Four; that is how he has been around long enough to teach all those Jedi(i). Leia is a clone of Luke's mother, who was a clone of Gloria Stienem. Han is a clone of young John Wayne. Chewbacca is a clone of Roddy McDowell. C3PO is obvious, and he makes Fritz Lang proud. R2D2 is a clone of Ban Roll-On. Tatooine is a clone of Arrakis. Hoth you can figure out for yourself. Kenobi was the emperor's twin brother. The emperor is a clone of the Wizard of Oz. Boba Fett is actually the hero of the next films. "There is yet another." Hee hee hee. I'm sure that in this ridiculous explanation I've hit upon the truth at least once. (I mean besides the obvious ones.) The real question we should all try to be figuring out is, How do they

fit an interstellar FTL drive into a ship the size of an X-wing and where can I get one? (*If you find out, let me know!*)

Andrew Osborne

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I think I've got the definitive answer to the clothes debate. I don't think clothes make a bit of difference. Think of the behavior of some business-suit clad mundane conventioners.

I think that fans (most fans) behave quite well at cons, even if they are wearing dragon T-shirts and blue jeans. Isn't that more important than what some people might think of us because of our leisurely appearance? And when you think about it, we really don't dress too badly. (Think of some of the 'respectable' mundanes who wear those silly little caps to conventions.) (*Thanks. Hey all you people out there, can we get off the subject of clothing now, and talk about something important (like why, for example, are hotels screwing conventions over lately? E.g., Leprecon, Galacticon, etc?)*)

Well, since this is my first letter to TB, I might as well tell everyone how this new member is enjoying the N3F so far. I am active in the round robins and having a blast (Sharron, where IS that story robin?) I love the zines, I am planning to contribute as much as I can to them (*Zineds love people like you...*) and I really want to get involved with as many of the great activities as I can (how's that for egoboo?). Oh, by the way, I'm terribly sorry about Janie Lamb's horrible catastrophe. Fire is a terrible thing.

Separatism -- I have always hated stories in which there was a society ruled by women where men were slaves and vice-versa. I also dislike shows like, "Celebrity Battle of the Sexes." (*Oy!*) I don't think men and women should be enemies. I think that men and women (not to mention blacks, whites, Orientals, etc.) should always work together to better the world. As you can tell, I don't care a whole lot for separatism.

I know that great injustices have been done against women in the past, but somehow, I don't like being punished by women's groups as if I was against females. I am not a chauvanist and never want to be one. I want to live in peace with women, not in competition. (By the way, I hope I have not made a lot of enemies with my first letter. I also hope I have made some sense.) (*Don't worry about it. I have always found -- and I wonder if anyone else has -- that one of the quickest ways to engender hatred between two groups of people is to start a movement. One side feels punished and overreacts on the defensive, and those on the other who don't feel the movement has anything in it for them feel over-pressured and falsely represented, and overreact on the defensive. It's funny, the only person or institution that ever "persecuted" or "repressed" me for being female was my mother, and my family. (Firstborn in an Italian family female? Shame!! And studies science instead of homemaking? I'm suprised I wan't disowned.) I do not act like the typical female; (nor like the typical male, not like the typical anything) and therefore people do not treat me either as a typical female (in either the mundane or feminist ideal). I do not expect discrimination and I do not get it. I believe the latter is related to the former. I think the best way to end this whole bit is one to one. Maybe the only real way to end it emotionally, not just intellectually and legally.*)

TESB -- I think that the only people who might be related in TESB are Vader and Luke. I do not believe the rumors that Leia is Luke's sister, Kenobi is the Emperor's brother, Han Solo is Boba Fett's brother-in-law (*!?!*) etc. My favorite theory is this: Luke's father was clones. One clone was good, and one was evil. The good clone became Luke, the bad clone became vader, and the father died. Then, in Revenge of the Jedi, Luke will win his evil alter-ego over and Vader will become "THE OTHER." Of course, it's only speculation....

One last thing before I go. In an issue of STARLOG magazine, Bjo Trimble and David Gerrold told of the importance of the space program. They said to write to

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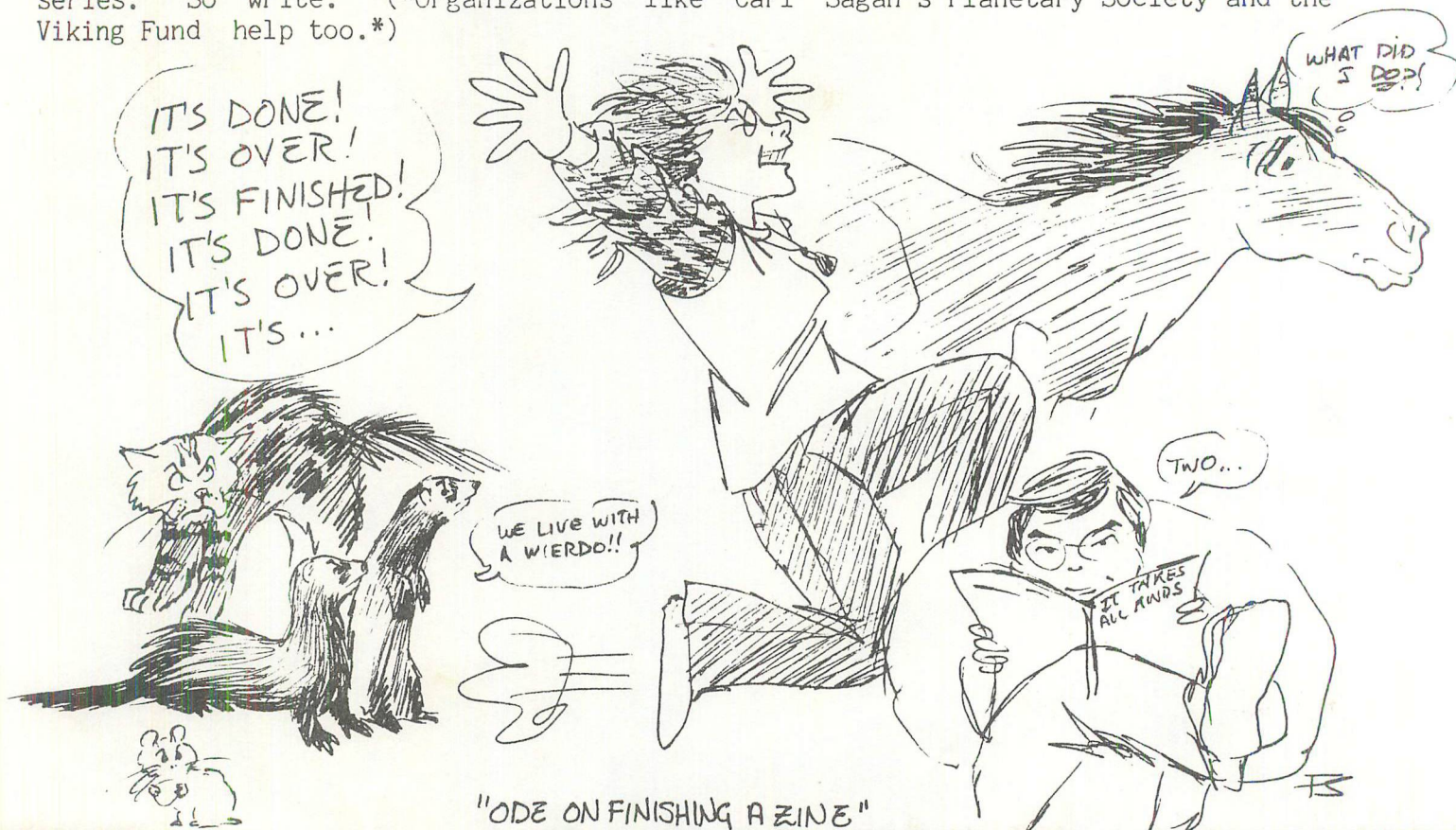
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President Reagan in support of the space program. Just think what fans did for a TV series. So write. (*Organizations like Carl Sagan's Planetary Society and the Viking Fund help too.*)



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