



TWINK5

## GREETINGS

Welcome to Twink. The title is from the familiar nursery rhyme: "Starkle starkle little twink/How I wonder what I think." We would have used "starkle" but James H. Schmitz beat us out by thirty years or so. (See The Witches Of Karres, p. 256.)

## CONTRIBUTIONS POLICY

The lifeblood of any fanzine is reader participation. We actively encourage your contributions and feedback. WHAT WE WANT: Articles clearly about SF/fantasy/fandom/some clearly related topic. Brevity is a plus, but say what you need to say. Book/film reviews of SF/fantasy or related works. (We personally have no great interest in horror.) Again we encourage brevity. Art work to include cover art: we obviously have no talent in that area. One column-width or horizontal half-page size is most convenient. LOC's are actively solicited. WHAT WE DON'T WANT: If you wish to state your views on abortion, the Middle East, or the President, write your local newspaper. We do not want to get into the "what I did on my vacation" travelogue thing. Convention reports, if timely, are distinct from travelogues. No amateur fiction/no amateur poetry, please. All contributions are subject to editing for length and content. This does not mean we will censor controversy. We are all in favor of intelligent controversy; we're just not into ad hominem insults or gratuitous vulgarisms just to be offensive. Contributions represent the opinions of individuals and should not be construed as the opinion of Twink or its editorial staff. If you want your material returned, please send SASE. All letters will be presumed to be LOC's and considered for publication unless clearly marked "NFP". All fanzines received in trade will be subject to review herein. No floppy discs please. Thank you.

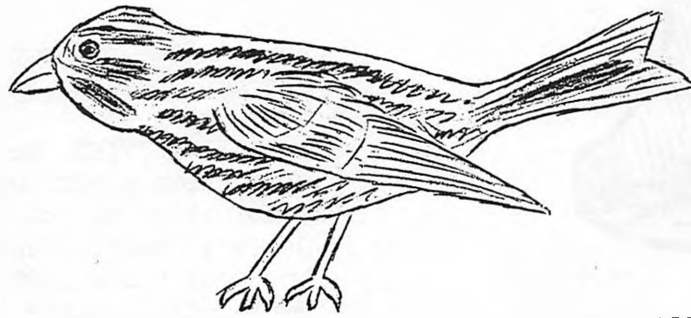
## CALIFORNIA DREAMIN'

Last issue, Ed Meskys expressed concern over a books-on-tape program operated out of Vacaville CA. Ed felt the program was cut back because Governor Wilson "doesn't want prisoners to do something useful..." We wrote to the Governor's office. In response we received a letter from Sharrell Blakeley, styling her(?)self "Assistant Director, Office of Community Resources". Blakeley states the program was reduced due to something called "Inmate Work Incentive Laws", which restrict the number of hours inmates are allowed to work on such projects. However, it is asserted the program will continue to operate, even in reduced form. We're not necessarily convinced of the wisdom of such a law -- what, the inmates have something more important to do? -- but there it is. If the situation calls for it in future, we may yet organize a letter-writing campaign among our readers.

## ZERT

So we were gonna write an editorial about how we'd like more contributions; and lately we've got another article from Kevin Welch, some book reviews from Patrick McGuire, and a promised convention report from Margaret Simon. Most or all of these will headline our next issue, in addition to some other things we're working on. Hey, this thing is really starting to come together. With help from Sheryl Birkhead, William Rotsler, and Margaret Simon, we're in pretty good shape for both cover and interior art for the next couple of issues. (Not that we wouldn't love to have other artists in the zine.)

We have said that a focus will remain on the SF literature, and we stand by that. It doesn't mean every word in the magazine has to be about written SF. The letter column has discussed architecture, hogs, and people named "Sex", and we're okay with that. We also reiterate that we will seriously consider someone doing a regular one-page column for Twink; under 600 words, send a sample column. If you know someone who might like to write for us who is not presently receiving the zine, please put us in touch. Thanks, and we'll see you again in July.



TWINK #5

APRIL, 1997

#### CONTENTS

- p. 1 Titles And Credits
- p. 2 So You Wanna Run A Worldcon (article)
- p. 4 We're All African Anyway (article)
- p. 6 Only Our Opinion (book/film reviews)
- p. 8 The Half Naked One On The Left (fanzine reviews)
- p. 10 Rheaders' Rhevenge (letter column)
- p. 22 Miscellany

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Twink is a fanzine published quarterly. Our next issue is scheduled for: July 1997. Our main focus is on SF/fantasy/fandom. Twink is available for contributions, LOC's, cookies, in trade for your fanzine, or by editorial whim. All contributions are greatly appreciated. We can't publish all of every letter, but we were certainly glad to hear from you. To clarify the mailing list policy: Anyone who writes/contributes/trades more or less regularly (e.g. every other issue) will stay on the mailing list. Anyone who does not respond at all after two or more issues in a row may be dropped from the mailing list without further notice.

#### Twink

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## SO YOU WANNA RUN A WORLDCON

by E.B. Frohvet

So you wanna run a Worldcon. Not necessarily as chair, at least not this time around; but you want a big, responsible committee job with authority. You want to be somebody.

The fact that you have absolutely no convention running experience is only a minor drawback.

Okay, the first thing you need is a city. If you live in West Hickenlooper Falls, Idaho, you have a problem. Jokes about the "permanent floating worldcon committee" notwithstanding, unless you have a major name as a con organizer, a Worldcon committee is not going to give you a major position. You will have to go to them.

Begin, therefore, by choosing a city. It need not be an extremely large city, but it can't be just anywhere either. It has to have the necessary facilities to host a Wordlcon; it has to have active, dedicated and organized fandom; and it has to have a reputation within fandom. As this is being written (late 1996), the upcoming Worldcons are: San Antonio, Baltimore, and Australia. It is a safe guess that all the good jobs for these have already been given out. Look elsewhere.

Here is a quick discussion of some possibilities in North America:

INEVITABLE. In this category are those cities with such a combination of track record and facilities that they host the Worldcon at relatively frequent intervals. The question mark about getting involved with one of these is that by definition they have such strong fannish organizations that it may be difficult to break through to an "insider" position in any reasonable length of time. In this group would be:

Boston (the presumptive favorite for 2001), Chicago, Los Angeles/Anaheim, and maybe Atlanta.

POSSIBILITIES. Here are those locations which seem superficially to have the combination of qualities needed: New Orleans (exotic reputation may balance the sour taste left by lackluster 1988 Worldcon); Seattle (a traditional hotbed of fandom); Louisville (surprise loser in the 1994 bid may be expected to return); Philadelphia (bidding for 2001, but in competition with fannish behemoth Boston).

DARK HORSES. Minneapolis (site of a well regarded regional can also draw on the assets of nearby Wisconsin fandom); Toronto (after a long interval between Canadian Worldcons, Toronto appears a natural possibility even in the tightly contested East region); Phoenix (the offbeat reputation of the last Phoenix Worldcon may actually be a plus).

LOSERS. Detroit (despite strong fandom, this city has been stomped on so many times by regional Big Brother Chicago they seem to have given up); New York (expense, city's bad-boy reputation, chronically fractured local fandom); Washington D.C. (limited facilities, bad memories of abruptly-folded 1992 bid, and -- again -- reputation).

Any city which hasn't been mentioned up to this point is welcome to write us extolling its virtues and why it ought to be in the running.

Okay, we have you comfortably ensconced in a suitable city. Got your feet up? Nice hot cup of herbal tea? Fine. Now we move on to getting you that coveted Worldcon committee job.

What's crucial at this point is that you are active in local fandom, that people know who you are and that you are reliable. (As everywhere else in life, some combination of charm and/or good looks will be helpful, but you either got those things or you don't.) Starting from scratch, it will take about three years to build the necessary reputation. Join the local group. Be helpful. Volunteer to work at every convention you attend, which should be at least three or four per year, including Worldcon if possible. Some areas have two or three local cons (Detroit for one, but...). Do what you're told. This

will inevitably involve a certain amount of drab scut-work (stuffing program books, setting up art shows) and boredom (guarding doors). That's how it is in fandom.

Without usurping authority, make clear that you are willing to take on more responsibility. Work as many different jobs as you can. Don't just do Registration every time: volunteer for the information booth, or be a gopher for the masquerade. Keep records; eventually you will turn this into a fannish resume'. In your local club, there will be things which need to be done before the con. Pick out a likely committee member and ask to help. A fan who is polite, reliable and persistent will move up to committee member on local/regional cons in three years or less.

During this period you should also be attending and working at Worldcons -- if not every one, as many as you can. The experience as such, is less valuable than the contacts you are making in national fandom. Remember the definition of a hero: someone who does something important while the general is watching.

If there is a bid already running in your adopted city, it's certainly advisable, though not mandatory, to get involved with it. Schlep beer kegs at bid parties. Always refer to "our" bid. By the time the voting takes place, the bid committee may well think you've been one of them all along. Waiting for the bid to win and then asking for a committee position is possible but carries a much higher risk factor.

If there is no active bid in your city, talk one up. You probably can't create a bid single-handed, but you can create a favorable climate of opinion. You can turn to your advantage the fannish maxim, "That's a good idea -- you do it."

If after two rotations/six years (this does take patience) you still haven't generated a bid attempt, all is not lost. Find another city. You will sacrifice something in terms of local contacts, but you take your experience and your now-impressive fannish resume' with you. You also have contacts at the national level by now, having kept in touch with all those department heads you worked for at the last several Worldcons. This setback can even be turned to your advantage, as in: "I tried to talk those lazy dweebs in

R\_\_\_\_\_ into bidding, but they couldn't be bothered. Now I know a bunch of bright, ambitious fans like y'all here..."

You are now affiliated with a winning bid. Bravo/brava as the case may be. Immediately after the balloting is announced (preferably at the victory party while people are drinking), you should corner the Chair, with whom you are now on a first-name basis. Naturally you have a prepared position for this moment, preferably in writing (typed, double spaced, keep a copy): the job you really want. You also have a fallback position: the second choice jobs you will accept.

"Congratulations, Jim [Debbie, Bob, whatever]! I know it's a little early to talk about committee assignments, but you might look this over." If the Chair, while slightly snookered, offers something you really want, grab it. In the event he has second thoughts after he sobers up, you can look desperately hurt and murmur, with just the slightest quiver in your voice, "But you said I could be in charge of Fan Programming..." If no first-choice position is immediately forthcoming, rest easy: you have laid the groundwork, which you will follow up at regular though discreet intervals.

All that's left now is the actual work; but you have three years in which to learn it, and a bright person like you can figure out how to do anything in three years, now can't you?

Finally, you will reach your personal Worldcon. Good for you; all that work has paid off. Revel in the status of that committee badge. Relax. If you have done your homework, your department should pretty much run itself.

Wasn't that fun? In another nine years you can be Chair. It was your idea, right?





WE'RE ALL AFRICAN ANYWAY  
by E.B. Frohvet

Here begins the first in an occasional series of articles about black characters in SF. In order to begin at the beginning, certain assumptions must be made about the work of SF's kindly old grandfather. Some of the writings of Jules Verne were extravagant but not really fantasy: Around The World In Eighty Days, for example. However, the major works for which Verne remains best known were clearly SF by the standards of the time: Twenty Thousand Leagues, Journey To The Center Of The Earth, From The Earth To The Moon, even The Hunt For The Meteor. We're going to use a generous definition here and include The Mysterious Island.

Island falls into that literary sub-genre called the "robinsonade", after the eponymous character of Defoe's book: cast away on a desert island stories. Substitute "planet" for "island" and you'll see that the form is still a staple of SF: Heinlein's

Tunnel In The Sky or Norton's The X Factor are among many examples.

We find it hard to imagine that any of Twink's readers have not read The Mysterious Island, but in case this fanzine falls into any ignorant hands, we'll summarize briefly. In March 1865, five prisoners are being held in besieged Richmond: Cyrus Harding, an engineer and Union officer; Neb, his black servant; Gideon Spillett, a New York reporter; Pencroft, a sailor; and Herbert Brown, Pencroft's ward, the son of his late captain. The Confederates have conceived the idea of passing a message out of the beleaguered city by a balloon. The five Northerners boldly steal the balloon, but taking off in a wild storm, are carried thousands of miles southwest, where they fall on a deserted island in the Pacific, destitute except for the clothes on their backs.

If you want to know what happens next, you should read the book. The purpose of this article is to focus on the black character, Neb.

As a preliminary comment it must be understood that the five main characters are, without exception, paragons of virtue. Neb is a character very much in the tradition of his literary predecessor, Friday, and his literary successor, Sam Gamgee: the perfect servant. (We know Verne read Defoe; it would be interesting to know if Tolkien read Verne.) Thus when Verne describes the black as "clever, intelligent, indefatigable, robust, with iron health", etc [Part I/chapter 13/ p. 93 of the Signet Classic Edition], we are supposed to understand this in the context of these being servantly virtues devotedly made available for the service of the beloved "master". While this may have a queasy ring for the modern reader, it is still not uncommon for white households to employ black domestics.

However, Neb is no shuffling "Stepin Fetchit" lackey, and a far more useful and productive citizen than the character in another story set in the same period who didn't know nothin' 'bout birthin' no babies. Obstetrics seems to be one of the few disciplines of which our five heroes are ignorant (just as well, there are no

female characters); but had they faced such a crisis, Neb would have been there, sturdily boiling water to assist "Doctor" Spillett.

From the very outset, Neb is confident enough to crack jokes at the expense of his white cohorts. On the second day or so, Neb and Pencroft are sent hunting, Harding having promised the skeptical sailor a fire even though they have no matches or tinderboxes among them. The first hour of hunting goes slowly; Neb tells Pencroft, "If this is all the game which you promised to bring back to my master, it won't need a large fire to roast it!" [Part I/chapter 9/p.63]

Note that throughout the book Neb does not speak in some debased "Yahss, Massa" dialect, but in ordinary vernacular English the same as the rest of the characters. In fact, not only does he speak like an educated man, he is one: Neb is literate, very unusual even for a free black in those days. [III/7/pp. 397-398, etc]

(One has the image of Verne pacing his study in Nantes: "Enfin, I have plotted myself into ze corner. However, voila! -- I can solve this by having ze colored servant be able to read and write! And if les Americains do not like it, they can baïse mon cul!" And Verne returns eagerly to his desk and resumes scribbling.)

It is true that Neb does seem to draw a disproportionate share of the cooking. However, this duty does not devolve upon Neb merely because he's black, but because he's a good cook and deservedly proud of his culinary skill. His "turtle soup, flavored with aromatic herbs" is a favorite dish praised by the others [II/8/p.232]. And when the duties of the kitchen require it, the black character even drafts the ex officio second in command of the white colonists, Spillett, to assist him. "To oblige you, Neb, I will," the older white man agrees, jokingly threatening to publish Neb's recipes. ("Receipts" is actually the word used.) [II/12/p. 260]

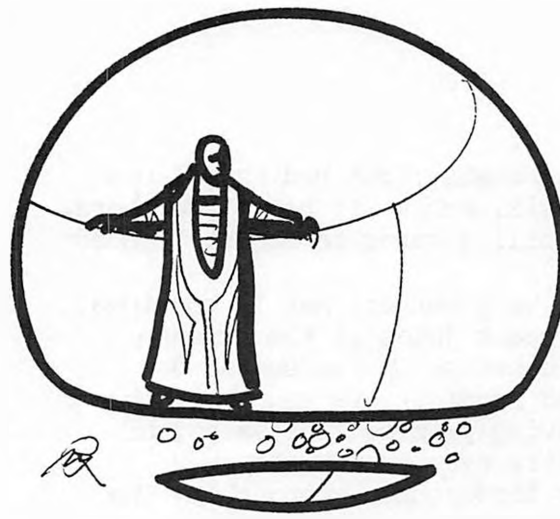
The translation of this edition is an old-fashioned one. This actually helps in reading the book as a period piece, though

describing Herbert's illness as "a malignant fever" is likely to be confusing to the modern reader who does not realize this is intended to mean "malaria" -- an example of what C.S. Lewis called "dangerous sense", a word whose meaning has changed so much that the original sense of the word is now confusing. Still, it is noteworthy that Neb is always referred to as one of the "colonists" or "companions", or even occasionally "friends". It is not four white guys and their servant facing the problems of life on the island, it's five together. (It is the white character Pencroft, rather than the black Neb, who serves for comic relief.) Neb is a full-fledged member of the community: a subordinate but an honorable and worthy subordinate.

On the whole, it's a substantially more sympathetic portrayal of a black character than even the most sternly abolitionist American might have written in the same time frame.



O N L Y  
O U R  
O P I N I O N



Loch Ness directed by: John Henderson 1996  
not rated: c. PG-13

We assume this was co-financed by American television, which would explain familiar TV face Ted Danson in the lead and its prompt release to broadcast TV. It will probably be available on videocassette by the time you read this. A disreputable American researcher goes to Scotland with state-of-the-art sonar and a bored interest in disproving the legend; but starts to get into the project -- and romances his innkeeper (Joely Richardson). Danson's performance is wooden for the first half, but when the fanatic light of true belief starts to burn in his weasel eyes, the film gathers momentum. And the special effects are pretty good, even if the plot will come as no surprise to anyone who's seen The Secret Of Roan Inish.

Star Command directed by:? 1996 not  
rated: c. PG-13

This piece of derivative juvenile junk was written by Melinda Snodgrass, who has some small claim to being a "real" SF writer. Presumably she wasn't even under duress, either, since she also gets credited as "executive producer" for this low budget sci-fi flick made in Germany. Okay, she's watched a lot (read: way too much) Star Trek and Battlestar Galactica. A politically-correct group of six "Star Corps" cadets (three female/one black/one Asian) are assigned to a small craft going into a danger zone where a colony world is claimed by a rival power. The captain and exec (Chad Everett and Morgan Fairchild yawning through extended cameos) get offed

in the first encounter, and the kids are on their own. The good guys wear white -- the girls wear pleated cheerleader mini skirts, and all somehow manage to appear on camera in their underwear; the bad guys wear black-and-red. This is pretty silly even by the standards of its intended audience of 15-year-old boys.

The Faery Convention Brett Davis Baen  
1995 \$5.99

For Joe Cork, half-elvish special investigator for the Senate Supernatural Affairs Committee, the important thing is that nothing upset the Convention: the assembly of elves, trolls, faeries, and centaurs who are about to cut a deal with the U.S. government. But the unknown Shapechangers are working to louse up the treaty from one side; and the human-supremacist Wizards' Council has another plan in mind. It seems as if no one but Joe wants the Convention to succeed.

The "operative word", as our old professor would say, which keeps turning up in these reviews is: "derivative". In this instance, any literate SF reader who doesn't flash on Simak's The Goblin Reservation must be asleep. It is no insult to say that Davis is no Simak; who among us is? We have no complaint about this marginally adequate little fantasy. We just don't want Davis to get the impression that he's done something of merit here, because that's not the case.

Spacer Dreams Larry Segriff Baen  
1995 \$5.99

Brighthome Youth Center was a penal

colony for incorrigible teens, or for kids the authorities didn't know what else to do with. Tom fell into the latter group, having been rescued with no identity or memory. He day dreamed about being a Guardsman, but mainly he wanted to just serve out his time at Brighthelm and help his friends, including the new girl at the school, "Mikey".

Then the pirates showed up.

This is getting ridiculous. We keep chanting "Heinlein" as if it's some magical mantra. He was an old militarist sexist guy with some pretty strange notions about incest. Yet for good or ill -- we're beginning to wonder -- Heinlein remains the standard by which SF writers are judged. We've lost count of the books with veiled or blatant references to the old Master. Spacer Dreams is a fair imitation Heinlein juvenile written by someone who's read Citizen Of The Galaxy way too many times.

The Starlight Crystal "Christopher Pike"  
Archway/Pocket 1996 \$3.99

Paige gave up the love of her life to go on a space mission that was supposed to last 200 years. When she came back to Earth, billions of years had passed and the human race was destroyed. But Paige was destined to bring back humanity in a future so distant even she could not imagine it, before she moved on to a higher plane.

We take "Pike" to be what Vicki Rosenzweig calls a "house pseudonym" for whoever (probably several anonymous writers) churns out an endless string of juvenile books. Some of the stories are horror, some mainstream, a few sci-fi such as this. It would be unfair to say this rips off real SF writers -- the physics of the universe are in the public domain. Yet where Poul Anderson (Tau Zero) or Joe Haldeman ("Tricentennial") are writing real stories about these possibilities, "Pike" is concerned only with shoehorning every sci-fi gimmick he can think of into one short book, evidently making up the plot, such as it is, as he goes along.

The Rag Bone Man Charlotte Lawrence  
Llewellyn's Psi-Fi Series (sic...)  
1994 \$4.99

We didn't dislike this book because it's a mishmash of New Age fluff -- Celtic myth, goddess worship, ceremonial magick, Tarot. We disliked it because it's an execrable book. The author, who runs a New-Age-and-herbal bookstore, has a heroine who, quel surprise, runs a New-Age-and-herbal bookstore. The chronology is jumbled throughout, but especially in the first four chapters of needless backfill to bring the reader up to speed as to why the heroine runs a... Well, you get the picture. In worst amateur writer's info-dump mode, the characters stand around lecturing each other on things they ought to know already. There actually is a story in here, but it's just not worth your time to sort it out.

Footnote on the publisher: Llewellyn claims to be a long-time publisher of occultist non-fiction, now branching out. We'd offer them two pieces of advice. One, hire a competent proofreader: we counted 13 obvious typos in the first 21 pages. Two, find someone who can write.

Reclamation Sarah Zettel Warner/Aspect  
1996 \$5.99

This first novel displays two textbook first novel problems. The author is yet another C.J. Cherryh wannabe whose ambition runs way ahead of her narrative skills. Also, Zettel has invested so much time in creating a horde of characters, settings, and customs, she can't bear to leave any of them out. This gives the book a Byzantine complexity we simply couldn't be bothered to buy into. True, our personal taste leans toward books that focus on one story and one set of characters rather than umpteen of each. We gave up on this less than halfway through.



## *The Half Naked One on the Left*

### FOSFAX #183

Timothy Lane & Elizabeth Garrett  
P.O. Box 37281  
Louisville KY 40233

Editorials and columns; book reviews (some even of SF/fantasy) scattered randomly through the zine; article about Brazilian fandom by Roberto de Sousa Causo; three Worldcon reports (Johnny Carruthers, Taras Wolansky, Darrell Schweitzer; maybe someone will write one for us this year); sundry other articles; a long letter column. Also the usual amount of mundane political babble, but we've had our say about that, no need to flog the horse further. There's ample SF/fandom content in FOSFAX that we always find enough of interest. Maybe one of these years they'll win that Hugo.

### PhiloSFy #4

Alexander R. Slate  
8603 Shallow Ridge  
San Antonio TX 78239

As the title suggests, a genzine with a slant toward discussing moral issues: #4 contains longish articles about both war and death (on the whole, Slate isn't much in favor of either). However, there are also personal comments, an article about attractions in San Antonio, highly useful for prospective Worldcon-goers; some book reviews and a letter column. We found a lot of interesting things here and look forward to future issues. (Hint: the fanzine reviews might be more helpful if addresses were included.)

### Challenger #5

Guy H. Lillian III  
P.O. Box 53092  
New Orleans LA 70153

We're not sure if Lillian is more ambitious than we are, or just more successful. On only its fifth issue, Challenger weighs in at an awesome 106 pages. (This may be misleading; the zine uses a large type face and wide margins, and lots of space is taken up with art and photographs.) Lots of articles: the gender war (JoAnn Montalbano), caving (Binker Hughes), genre writing (E.R. Stewart), magic (Jerry Page), and the editor's Worldcon report. Also a lengthy lettercolumn featuring many familiar and unfamiliar names, and several pages of fanzine reviews (he evidently receives far more zines than we do). The publishing schedule is unclear, but on size and inclusiveness alone, we can see why some people are pushing Challenger for a Hugo nomination.

### Southern Fandom Confederation Bulletin

Volume 6, #6  
Tom Feller  
P.O. Box 13626  
Jackson MS 39236

Not quite a clubzine: SFC is an umbrella group and "information clearinghouse" for fangroups in the South. The editor's Worldcon report; another con report on "Crecent City Con" (um, isn't that New Orleans?); listings of Southern cons (by someone styling himself "Mad Dog"), of SF clubs and Southern fanzines, compiled by Feller (as yet Twink hasn't achieved a mention despite sending them our last few issues; perhaps they're still trying to

decide if we qualify as "Southern"); the usual letter column. The focus of SFCB is more on facts than on opinions; and thus it has a little less personality than some fanzines. However the quantity of fact makes it well worth having, especially if you're heavy into convention-going.

Apparatchik #73 & later issues  
Andy Hooper & Victor Gonzalez  
4228 Francis Avenue N, #103  
Seattle WA 98103

The Usual, on a tri-weekly basis. World travel by Christina Lake; Irwin Hirsh on the subject of his children; Lesley Reece on her fannish, or non-fannish, identity, a concept she seems to be struggling with still. The usual letter column and fanzine reviews; less TAFF/DUFF news this time around. We have to admit being pleasantly surprised with Andy's reviews of Twink #4 and FTT #21. He gets in the usual digs about our pen name and what he chooses to call "design confusion", but actually finds some marginally nice things to say about the zine. It also seems the Joseph Nicholas thing is strictly Victor's problem, as Andy fairly praises the FTT. Not to worry, dude: if Twink ever wins a Hugo (an event of very limited probability), we'll show up to collect it -- or send someone.

MSFire Volume 2 # 5 & 6  
Lloyd G. Daub  
P.O. Box 1637  
Milwaukee WI 53210

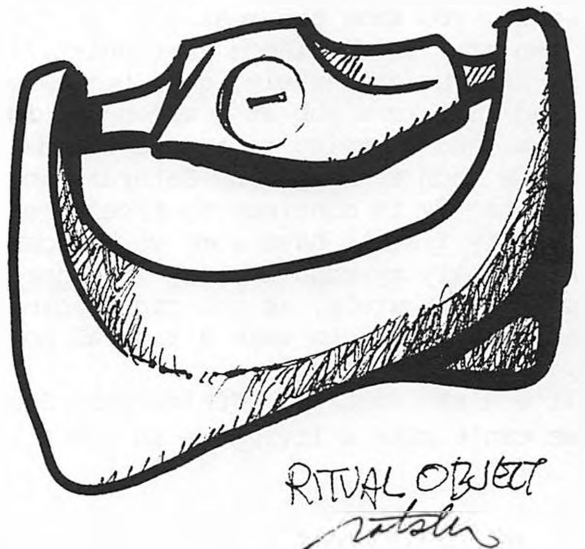
Well, this is a relief. The copy of Twink #4 we sent was returned, "No such name at this box number." We'll give it one more try, 'cause this little clubzine is one we could get to like. #5/6 is the poetry issue, and while we have reasons for not doing poetry, some of this is quite attractive in an amateur way. Also book reviews by Lisa Mason, assorted short articles (more on where to look for habitable planets by Peter Kokh, comments on real- and cyber-worlds by Oino Sakai); short letter column. We're going to send them something (in addition to Twink in trade); maybe it'll even get delivered this time!

Centerrifical Tales #3  
Kevin W. Welch  
P.O. Box 2195  
Madison WI 53701

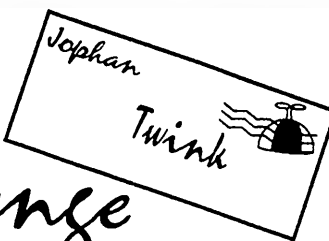
This personalzine is subtitled, "A Journal of Speculative Autobiography", which about sums it up. What Welch writes tells you more about Welch than about Dhalgren, or Jackie Gleason, or mainstream/surreal/bleak movies. There's a dark side to Welch's eclectic taste that overlaps with ours by, we guess, less than half. Hey, anyone who can denounce the re-release of Star Wars in nine well-chosen words gets a salute from us.

Gradient #15  
Visions Of Paradise # 71  
Robert Sabella  
24 Cedar Manor Court  
Budd Lake NJ 07828

Sabella now distributes his personalzine to everyone on the Gradient mailing list. Visions is strongly reminiscent of the column George Laskowski used to do in Lan's Lantern: Sabella is also a math teacher who tends to socialize with his students. His heavy interest in things Chinese leads one to wonder how he gets on with, say, black students. The more genzine Gradient includes Steve Carper's dissection of TV's Lois & Clark; a talk Sabella gave at a teachers' conference about instilling "sense of wonder" in students; comments on books and translations; letter column. Gradient is the more successful in spanning the personal-interest barrier, at least for those who don't know Sabella personally.



# Rheaders Rhevenge



[[Editorial comments appear in the customary double brackets.]]

STEVE STILES  
8631 Lucerne Road  
Randallstown MD 21133

Happy New Year! Just a quick note (it's 11:11 PM, I just got your fnz today and quick-scanned it before we went out to-night), but your letter reminded me that I never got back to you on the location of the Visionary Art Museum: it's next to Federal Hill, and diagonally opposite the Science Center. Unfortunately, the entrance itself isn't on Key Highway, just the back of the building which looks completely nondescript. The front features an amazingly large wind-wheel. I hope this helps.

Anyway, I'm pleased at the way my cover reproduced and think that grey is the right color. Also glad that you got rid of the vertical lines, although I am of the small minority in fandom that believes that the straight across use of copy is superior looking to the 2-3 columns that most fanzines use. (Never mind that my last fnz, Skosh, used multi-columns. Consistency is ... well, you know the rest.)

My own art, or freelance cartoonist, career has, unfortunately, gone belly-up. I've had to take a job at a warehouse in Columbia, and am going to try to spend the few hours each evening, and Saturday and Sunday, to try to continue to freelance. Fortunately I still have some work I can do, especially my annual story in Xenozoic Tales. Unfortunately, as you can imagine, my fanac will have to take a radical nose-dive.

[[It's a sad state of affairs when Steve Stiles can't make a living as an artist.

Of course Twink like most fanzines will never be a paying market. Let us reiterate our gratitude, not only for the fine cover you did for us, but for many other pieces we've admired in other fanzines.]]

At any rate, best wishes, and if you ever decide to reveal your identity perhaps we can get together socially.

[[When our readers figure out who we "really" are -- a subject to be discussed at greater length in future Twink's -- you people are gonna be so disappointed...]]

CATHERINE MINTZ  
1810 South Rittenhouse Square #1708  
Philadelphia PA 19103

Dear Pseudonym [[sic]],

Who George Sand was, was hardly a secret, and most articles on rappers give their real names. ("Rappin' Boy was born Charles Edward Sugarson in 1976, and his mother says he was singing before he could walk ...") I'm not sure anonymity does any good, but it probably does no harm either.

The nigger-brown sweater in the Bond Street shop: It's hard to gauge how offensive certain terms are when you're out of your own cultural context. This is made more complicated by the fact that a term may be abhorrent to the people being described and yet be used by another social group in a rather naive way. As for consciousness raising, a foreigner had better know what he's talking about before he tries anything of the kind. Maybe someone who lives in the U.K. can give us some insight? Just how offensive is "nigger"? Should I have stomped out in high dudgeon?

[[Our best guess is that "nigger" used by a white person would be offensive in

any English-speaking country, except maybe in a very private context between friends. We've cracked racial jokes with black friends but carefully avoided that word. Do any of our English readers want to comment on the use of the N-word in U.K.??]

Atom was Arthur Thompson, a British fan artist, who illustrated, among many other things, the exceedingly politically incorrect adventures of a fannish detective in a slouch hat and dirty trench coat. Some of these have been re-issued by Ken Cheslin as The Bleary Eyes.

[[As we transcribe this, we have two more LOC's in hand, both correctly identifying Mr. Thompson. Sorry, we just didn't know. Our serious involvement in fandom dates from the 1980's; and we've already expressed that we have no large interest in fan history of decades before -- a subject we'll discuss further as needed.]]

And now for some SF. I read the two articles on Dhalgren with considerable interest, especially your comments on anarchism. Much as I enjoy LeGuin's work, I don't think The Dispossessed is as arresting a portrayal of such a society as Cecilia Holland's Floating Worlds, a fine piece of writing, flawed at the end by the heroine being marooned in an improbable refuge.

" 'All this grass is making oxygen.' He waved his hand toward the island. On the dunes blades of sawgrass sprouted out of the loose sand. 'But it's only this stretch. Twenty miles that way the air's foul again. Ten or twelve miles the other. Three miles inland. There's sweet water, and if you work, you can find enough food to live.' "

No consideration for the fact that breathable air could vanish with a good stiff breeze. The error is annoying, for aside from these final paragraphs, which are the sort of thing an alert editor would have corrected, Floating Worlds is filled with sharp character studies and gritty detail about what it would be like to live in an anarchist society. A book worth seeking out, particularly if you like Dhalgren and A Scanner Darkly.

[[We haven't read Floating Worlds, but thanks for the suggestion.]]

Steve Stiles' "Unicorn Beset By Wolves" is wonderful.



CUYLER WARNELL "NED" BROOKS JR.  
713 Paul Street  
Newport News VA 23605

Thanks for the #4. I was amazed to see that sort of cover art by my old friend Steve Stiles!

I am only four years older than Delany, but I never could read Dhalgren, though I remember when it was being discussed and probably still have the pb. Oddly enough, though I like most of LeGuin's work, I never could get very far with The Dispossessed either. It was too political for me, and all the characters interested in nothing but politics. To me, politics should be like plumbing, something you only have to think about on the rare occasion that it goes wrong.

[[We suspect Dhalgren is the sort of book you either like a lot or hate a lot; there's not much middle ground. / It's "rare" that the American political system goes wrong? We admire your confidence.]]

Interesting reviews. I never saw Fluke because from the promotion I guessed it was too cute for me. I might yet see it on the boob tube, of course. I never even heard of Galaxies Are Colliding, though it doesn't sound like I missed a lot. While in Atlanta last week I watched The Convent (Catherine Deneuve and John Malkovich) on a rented video because the plot sounded interesting -- but it was a bad print of a badly directed movie. They had gone to Portugal to research his theory that Shakespeare was really a Spanish Jew named Jacques Perez, and wound up in an old convent apparently run by satanists. Certainly something could have been done

with the idea.

[[Why is it so hard for people to accept that Shakespeare was Shakespeare?]]

I see Hlavaty's Derogatory Reference in SFPA -- there may not be that much mention of SF as such, but the commentary is from a fannish viewpoint.

I'm not sure what you mean by calling the history of fandom "brief" -- while it's true that fandom as we know it can hardly be said to have existed before the 1930's, the subject is so rich that the few existing published histories can hardly be said to have scratched the surface.

[[The history of human culture covers over 5000 years; of our own (Anglo-American) culture, nearly 2000. English literature covers nearly 1000 years. Fandom's 60-odd years pale in comparison.

/ As our focus indicates, we got into fandom via books. It's cool that other people are interested in other aspects of fandom; it doesn't mean we have to fake an interest in -- as we said before -- people we don't know and events we never heard of.]]

Good zine. The pages look much better without the line borders, and the double column layout is probably the best option as long as you are using a typewriter. If you used a computer, it would be easy to do double-columns-justified -- at least, I suppose it would be easy with modern desktop-publishing software.

JOSEPH T. MAJOR  
1409 Christy Avenue  
Louisville KY 40204

A: The speed of light, the center of the sun, page 80 of Dhalgren.

"We do not want to get into the 'what I did on my vacation' travelogue thing," which choice of content will never get you on the Great White List in the Seattle-Vegas-Falls Church Triangle. And a fanzine without ad hominem insults would not be much of a fanzine, or so experience will have it.

Firehand by P.M. Griffin based on characters and situations created by Andre Norton [the perceptive reviewer will be eternally grateful to George Lucas for bringing to the public notice a sure-fire way for designating books written on behalf of some Big Name Writer] suffers

from the recurring problem of such continuations. "Griffin now revives the series with a miraculous time-rescue never contemplated in the original", like most continuators, flatly contradicting the original. This became horridly apparent with Nicholas Meyer's The Seven Percent Solution which declared "The Final Problem", "The Empty House", and The Valley Of Fear to be, well, made-up.

Darrell Schweitzer had a review of Dhalgren in which he argued, among other things, that it might not even be an SF book. He had a rather different slant on that from the editor's and Kevin Welch's approaches to that idea.

An End To Bugling would have been thought fantasy even then, and one would think that fans of 1963, not yet overwhelmed by Processed Fantasy Product, starved for any kind of speculative work, ought to have taken it up. I have no idea why they did not.

"Umbrage". "Frivolous theory". Nice euphemisms for malicious mischief.

[[The incident predates our involvement with FOSFAX, but as we understand it, the joke was that "Joseph Major" must be a FOSFA house pseudonym because you read and wrote so much. That sounds to us like a compliment, if a little backhanded. To call such a joke "malicious mischief", a term which has a specific meaning in law, seems to us an overreaction.]]

Catherine Mintz and Harry Warner had better dig out their copies of Childhood's End and find the Clarkean prediction of the simple term by which people of color will be called under the Overlords. The reader finds the book's prediction of a post-racial society at extreme variance with its prediction that the more melanistic members of said society will be called "niggers".

[[A lot of older SF was written at a time when certain attitudes were more common -- Heinlein's The Day After Tomorrow for one. There was a time when being a member of the Klan or the White Citizens' Council was as acceptable as being an Elk. Those days are long gone, and properly so.]]

Running Phone Disk uncovers one person with the family name "Sex" in Ohio, two in Illinois, and two in Missouri. None of them being "Bruce E. Sex". Since Phone Disk even

lists Forrest W. Gump in Indiana, one has to assume a certain breadth of coverage thereof.

[[We're still willing to bet the fan with that name on his badge at Worldcon was not using his "real" name.]]

"There were some very good reasons Ray Bradbury could never sell a story to John Campbell," says Kevin W. Welch, running roughshod right over the September 1943 issue of Astounding which shows that Bradbury somehow managed to do exactly that.

There were actually six Heinlein movies, with a seventh on the way. Ed Meskys remembers Destination Moon (1950) and "Robert Heinlein's The Puppet Masters" (1994). The third movie he vaguely remembers might be one of: Project Moonbase (1953), The Brain Eaters (1956), Starship Troopers (198?), or "Robert A. Heinlein's Red Planet" (1994). Some explanation is in order.

Project Moonbase began as a RAH screen treatment for a series based on the stories of his Second Future History, the stories written in the late 1940's, published in magazines outside the SF field, and collected in The Green Hills Of Earth. The pilot episode was an entirely original episode entitled "Ring Around The Moon". This was filmed at length suitable for a half-hour TV slot, but then expanded by 25 minutes for theatrical release to cash in on the brief 50's movie boom. Apparently Heinlein did not care for the result.

The Brain Eaters was a ripoff of The Puppet Masters and Heinlein sued and got it re-edited. After the disembowling, any resemblance to the original is marginal.

[[Andre Norton sold film rights to The Beast Master, and after seeing the result insisted her name be taken off it.]]

Starship Troopers is a Japanimation rip-off, in the spirit of the Japanimation ripoff of the Lensman series. "Robert A. Heinlein's Red Planet" is a very loose adaptation, and from what I hear not all that good either. I nearly saw it.

Which brings us to 1997, which will also bring us (unless we duck pretty quickly) "Robert A. Heinlein's Starship Troopers", produced by James Cameron with screenplay by Paul Verhoeven. All reports are that the movie discards almost all of the book (e.g. the hero is a big handsome blond hunk, which I think is a rather rare type

among Filipinos) for mindless action.

Credit is due to James A. Giffard, who collected much of this information for his Robert A. Heinlein FAQ, kept on his Web page. Any errors are mine.

[[Thanks to Mr. Giffard for the information, most of which was new to us.]]

Thanks for the note about mercury and multiple sclerosis. I will tell my longest-term (I met her the month before my wife was born) friend, who has MS, about this, in the unlikely circumstance that she does not already know of it.

[[We too are close to someone with MS. If we get any more information about the illness we'll pass it on.]]

Q: Name three things mankind will never reach.



ROBERT "BUCK" COULSON  
2677 W 500 N  
Hartford City IN 47348

Good article by Welch. I didn't like Dhalgren, but a lot of other people did. I ended up reading as much of the opening as I could take, reading the ending, muttering "Oh, a circular novel" and putting the book away.

My apologies to Lois for perpetuating the "Trek novel" origin of Shards, but I thought the Columbus fan who told me the story knew what he was talking about.

Yeah, an editor of a new fanzine needs to be able to do his or her own material to fill out issues; Taras is quite correct. Juanita was lucky when she started YANDRO

as a club newsletter; she didn't need a lot of material besides the date and location of the next meeting. Then Gene DeWeese and I, budding authors both (we hoped), began filling issues with parodies and other forms of humor, and eventually other fans began contributing, until the 4-page news letter increased to 40 pages of material by fans and pros both. The club disappeared somewhere along the line, but the fanzine continued.

[[Contributions to Twink are still slow, but, we hope, picking up. Certainly we're in much better shape regarding interior art and layout.]]

Of course the assumption is that the U.S. will initiate space travel; SF is basically a U.S. invention. Authors of other countries wrote "scientific romances" as they were called initially, but even Jules Verne put his Moon-launch in Florida. Rather prescient of him, don't you think? The U.S. had the first SF magazines, which were mostly read by U.S. citizens, so of course the space ventures described in them set off from U.S. bases, and there are still more U.S. SF readers than any other country. If any one country can do it, that is...

[[It is interesting that Verne clearly understood there were sound reasons of orbital mechanics whereby launching from a low latitude was advantageous.]]

I've always thought The Star Kings was fun, Ed. In fact, I enjoy most of Edmond Hamilton's writings. It isn't profound, but it's enjoyable. (Though the writing of his wife, Leigh Brackett, was even more enjoyable, to me.)

Harry is right, that a lot of the possible comments about SF have already been made, repeatedly. On the other hand, a lot of the newer fans haven't heard them. I try not to repeat myself too much on convention programs, but a lot of new fans have never heard any of my old comments, so it doesn't matter much. Our home when I was young didn't have rats in the walls, but we did have wasps in the privy one summer.

[[Probably many general comments about SF as a genre hold up with time; but new SF is constantly being published, so there's a steady supply of new aspects of SF to talk about. Isn't there?]]

I love the idea of shooting tourists, except when I am one. But we seldom see

any out here; I've probably seen more deer than tourists. "Editorial plural": what's wrong with "editors"?

[[Ah, no, what we meant was... Oh, okay, we get it. / If we're going to be "loyal" to our new community, we could say: "What is there to see in Indiana anyway?" For our readers ignorant of the reason for the interstate hostility: some folks in Maryland still haven't forgiven the "theft" of the Colts football team. We don't doubt there are things to see and do in any state.]]



TEDDY "DAVID THAYER" HARVIA  
701 Regency Drive  
Hurst TX 76054

Steve Stiles' cover art reminds me of our train ride through the enchanted New Forest in the south of England. One could almost imagine seeing wolves, unicorns, or other mythical beasts among the ancient trees.

[[Run that one by us again? If the New Forest is ancient, how old is the Old Forest?]]

I love your stationery. Somewhere in

my boxes in the closet I too have a few leftover 3 x 5 note cards.



MARGARET B. SIMON  
1412 NE 35th Street  
Ocala FL 34479

Thanks for sending a contributor's copy of Twink! It appears (on a scanning) full of interesting items. If you need some more art, let me see what I can do...

I'd like to PLEASE correct something I wrote to you (published in your letter-col). The publication I was thinking of was not Beyond, but Galaxy. I see I went "beyond" my senses in those anecdotes and I wonder if any of your readers will write in to say, "What planet is she on, anyway?" Also, in your reprint of my letter I appear to say that, "I'm by any means a fanzine artist." I think you omitted the word NOT. However, since you have used my work in your fanzine, I guess I am one such, if you wish to niggle with that idea.

[[Hey, you can be on any planet you want to be on. / Although we suspect most readers derived the intended meaning from your letter, "I'm by any means a fanzine artist" was what you wrote. We can send a photocopy of your letter if you wish. We frequently edit LOC's and omit things, but we try not to change the obvious meanings of statements by readers. / But you were in NIEKAS first.]]

P.S. Enjoyed Ed Meskys' input too! Third Rock is my only sitcom fave other than those on PBS (Brit comedies). I'm in love with "Harry" on Third Rock.

[[We used to enjoy a Britcom about a

couple who gave up their mundane jobs, raised beans and pigs in the back yard, and feuded with the pompous twits next door. It was called Good Neighbors, or something of the sort. Haven't seen it in a long time.]]

ARTHUR D. HLAVATY  
206 Valentine Street  
Yonkers NY 10704

Thanks for the latest Twink. Twenty years ago, when I got into zines, I was one of those boring sercon types who actually wrote about SF. Now, as you point out, I seem to have gone over to the other side. As a matter of fact, my next issue has a con report and some SF book reviews, but I see your point. After 40 years of reading the stuff, I've got something of a case of reader's block. (Horrible example: I have yet to read any fiction by the obviously interesting and talented Lois McMaster Bujold.) A few writers, like Greg Egan, can still titillate my sense of wonder, but these days I'm more likely to turn to mysteries. I've just finished James Ellroy's brilliant L.A. Quartet.

[[We're trying not to be boring, and in the library 90% of our time is spent reading non-fiction and periodicals. But we still reserve the right to review and talk about written SF. / Think of it as a plus. You get to read the Bujold stories in the correct chronological order: first Shards Of Honor, then Barrayer...]]

I enjoyed the reviews of Dhalgren. I'm more willing to see A Scanner Darkly as its twin (evil or otherwise) than The Dispossessed. By the way, Delany wrote an excellent critique of The Dispossessed. I think it's in Starboard Wine. Kevin Welch makes an excellent point that we are much more in the world of A Scanner Darkly than that of Dhalgren.

[[In its own twisted way, Dhalgren is actually a very upbeat sort of book.]]

I can't accept the theory that "Joseph Major" is a FOSFAX house name. To me, he writes distinctively, and much better than the rest of the crew. He's just a guy who reads and writes a whole lot; Don D'Amassa was like that in the 70's.

[[Our understanding was that it was intended to be a joke from the outset.]]

No, I wouldn't call Babel-17 an exotic genre-breaking book. I think of it as an extremely good example of a classic SF approach: the thorough and imaginative exploration of a science (in this case, linguistics).

[[As a young and impressionable reader we jumped straight from Andre Norton and Robert Heinlein juveniles, to The Martian Chronicles, to Babel-17, in a short period. Those two books dramatically rearranged our perception of the genre: broke the narrow borders we had ignorantly perceived around SF, if you will. (The same false borders most mundanes still see about SF.)]]

Joseph Nicholas: There are times when I think that the British don't do humor any better than they spell it. I can remember taking a big pile of Punch's and trying in vain to find something funny in them. Then I think of Monty Python and Blackadder or in our own field Bob Shaw and Dave Langford, and realize I was mistaken.

JANICE MURRAY FOR DUFF.

EDMUND R. MESKYS  
RR #2, Box 63 (322 Whittier Hwy)  
Center Harbor NH 03226

Thanks very much for writing to California about the cutbacks at Vacaville. I too wrote Governor Wilson but got no answer. I keep getting contradictory stories from Vacaville on what the problem is, but it was ten weeks from when I got one recorded book back from them to when I got the next. They are not even keeping up with a book every second month. I just got a newsletter saying they had shut down for a while while they replaced their equipment. Maybe things will pick up now. Also, the newsletter thanked all who wrote concerned letters, said things were safe for now, but might need more letters later

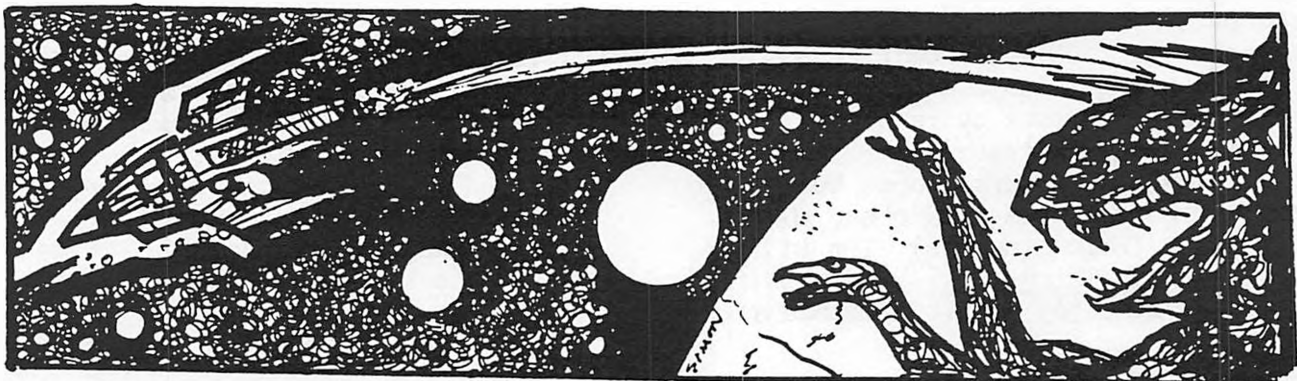
to save the program.

[[See our editorial. We would be willing to write again if that would be helpful, but since it's a matter of state law, the impact of out-of-state letters is probably marginal. We could ask our brother to write, as he lives in California...]]

It is now Monday the 13th. This morning I scanned the entire issue, which took about a half hour. Then I turned on the OCR function and left the computer to do its thing while I washed and dressed, and fed and took out my guide dog. The computer took about 70 minutes to convert it all to ASCII and I have now listened to your editorial and the two pieces on Dhalgren. I understood all but a few sentences and that was enough to get the meanings of the pieces as a whole.

While I know Delany I had not gotten around to reading any of his books. Fred Lerner is a great fan of Delany's and I recently asked him to recommend a few books to try. One he mentioned was Babel-17, which is available on tape from the Library of Congress, and I have just received it. I am now in the middle of Forward's hard-SF novel Camelot 30K and have a few other books in line to read in the order received but should get to it in a month or so. Over the years in fandom I heard many cracks about Dhalgren, such as not being able to stay awake past page 70, and while it was long available from the TB library I have never requested it. I do want to read several of Delany's more accessible books before I tackle Dhalgren... I just phoned the library and found they also have Ballad Of Beta 2 and Stars In My Pocket Like Grains Of Sand. I had hoped for other more accessible works like The Einstein Intersection but ordered these two.

[[Beta 2 is pretty accessible but rather



simplistic -- Delany was about 17 when he wrote it! We'd also recommend Einstein Intersection and Nova among his earlier works, and of course Babel-17. Sadly, we felt about Stars In My Pocket much as several of our readers have felt about Dhalgren, i.e., just couldn't get into it.]]

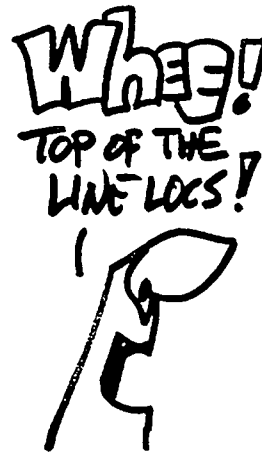
Thursday evening. I finished reading your movie, book and fanzine reviews. I rarely watch or listen to movies and the second one sounded marginally interesting but not enough to look it up. I did mark down on my "books wanted" list the Norton & Griffin Firehand. I read Key Out Of Time about ten years ago and am curious to follow it up. A year ago I read the much later written "Solar Queen" book about using catnip to make a deal with a felinoid race. I did enjoy that.

[[That would be Plague Ship, in our opinion the best of the "Solar Queen" stories. Like many fans we're a cat person and specially like the Salariki. For readers' information, Salariki characters also appear in Eye Of The Monster and Android At Arms.]]

I did read Chicks In Chainmail and did find a few stories amusing and worthwhile. I found even more good ones in Alien Pregnant By Elvis. My son reads all the Man-Kzin Wars books and obviously likes them. I enjoyed the first one but not enough to read the others. Reading books on tape, even with compression, still takes so long that I can read only a small fraction of what I want. Right now I am reading Chanur's Legacy. Also, by when I read a book it is pretty old. I did like Niven's collection Neutron Star and the first two Ringworld books. I am looking forward to the third. I did note for my wife the book about the horse turned human.

[[We liked Ringworld the first time we read it, but after a couple of re-readings it didn't hold our interest too well.]]

Well, I will end for now. Early Saturday Sandy and I are leaving for a week at an "elder hostel" in Alabama, and I have a lot to wrap up before going. I have the rest on my hard drive and will try to get back to it when I get home.



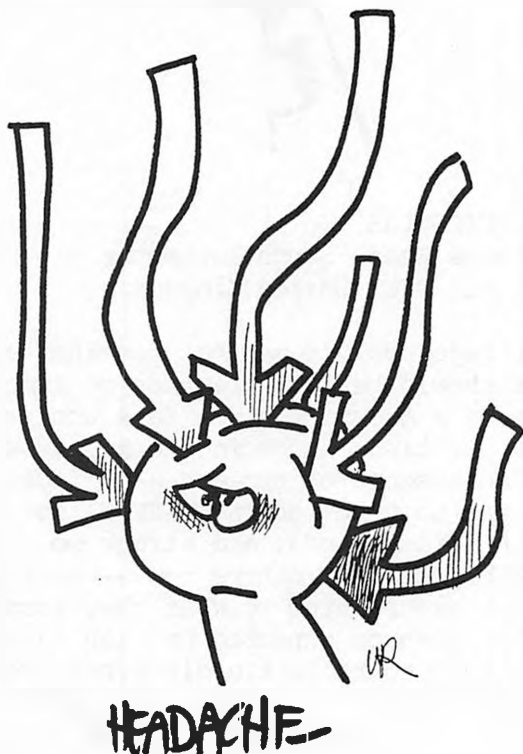
JOSEPH NICHOLAS

15 Jansons Road, South Tottenham  
London N15 4JU, United Kingdom

Your rejoinder to me that fanzines and fandom should be "fun" reminds me immediately of a group of older fans who re-entered British fandom in the mid-80's after an absence of two-and-a-half decades. They were soon dubbed the BAFF's (for "Born Again Fifties Fans"), and struck me -- and presumably several others too -- as being somewhat disoriented by what they found. They had perhaps expected British fandom of the 80's to be little different from the one they'd left in the late 50's/early 60's; instead they found a fandom splintered into a number of different interest groups, in which fanzines were no longer the dominant mode of fanac, in which people would routinely engage in serious discussion about the nature of fandom itself. Their response often resembled a perverse attempt to turn the clock back: to argue that the fanac and fanzines and fandom they remember was the quintessence of it all, and that everyone else should abandon what they were about and sign up forthwith for a journey into the past.

It was a wholly intolerant demand, of course, and was doomed to failure. But while I'm not about to accuse you of displaying the same intolerance, I do think that your assertion that we're in fandom for "fun" betrays a similar failure to grasp that it is possible to have "fun" in as many ways as there are fans. You obviously derive pleasure from publishing a fanzine devoted to discussion of SF. Timothy Lane and his cohorts obviously derive pleasure from publishing a fanzine

jammed with rambling columns about the minutiae of U.S. domestic politics. Judith and I derive pleasure from publishing a fanzine which reflects our varying interests and activities. And other fans do not publish fanzines at all, but help run conventions, compose folk songs, make fantasy costumes, etc...



[[...Sigh. (Picture us going for an aspirin.) If we left the impression that our brand of fanac is the only "fun" kind, that's obviously not correct, and we apologize. Yes, we do Twink because we enjoy it. Still, it's our fanzine, and we feel as if we have a right to keep some focus on areas of interest. We don't find much pleasure in discussing toxic waste or the bombing of abortion clinics. We try to do things about them -- though we've learned to choose our battles -- but we don't enjoy talking about such things.]]

Turning to other parts of the fanzine, I read the two articles, by yourself and Kevin Welch, about Delany's Dhalgren with some interest even though it's around two decades since I last attempted to read the novel -- one which I never finished, which bored me utterly, and to which I am unlikely to ever return. However, Welch's article, discussing the particular cultural milieu in which it was written, suggests one

reason why it never engaged my attention, and why I have never since felt an urge to pick it up and try again: because it is a specifically American novel, aimed at a specifically American audience, which addresses the concerns of a specific American era. By definition, therefore, it is not and can never be congruent to the tastes and concerns of others...

[[Mmmm... It's a fair criticism that Dhalgren is a specifically American book. But we've read a lot of Wells and Wyndham and Clarke and Keith Roberts, specifically British in setting and slant, and found them interesting and relevant. Your suggestion that Dhalgren "by definition" can't stand outside a particular audience suggests a reckless leap from the personal (you didn't like it) to an unjustified generalization (no one in Britain could like it). Just out of curiosity, we wonder how many copies it sold in the U.K.]]

[[Editor's note: Joseph's letter went on to discuss space exploration, with reference to Kevin Welch's LOC in #4. In correspondence, we advised Joseph that while we agreed with much of what he had to say, we had to edit that portion of the letter down. He replied that he would prefer that if that part of the letter were not published in full, it should not be published at all. Reluctantly, we've had to go with the latter option. Partly that was due to content: although we agreed with much of it, we felt it would take up more space than was justified. Partly it was an editorial problem. As you know, we do the zine onto paper with a typewriter. To remove that portion would entail re-editing the entire letter column from that point on. If any of our readers wish to discuss this subject in detail with Joseph, we encourage you to write to him.]]

As to the Royal Family, well, who fucking cares about the Royal Family, basically. They seem to fascinate Americans... I would be quite happy to see the whole lot of them beaten to death with pick-axe handles and buried in an unmarked mass grave (and you can quote me on that).

[[The children too?]]



ALEXANDER R. SLATE  
8603 Shallow Ridge Drive  
San Antonio TX 78239

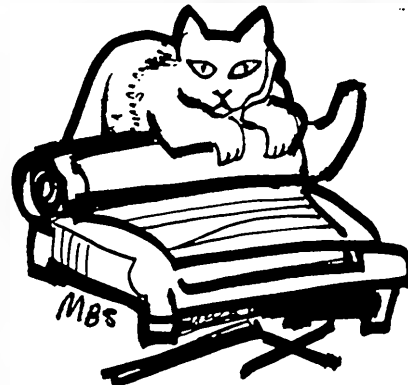
Thanks for Twink #4. Yes, this issue looks much better. But in your response to Taras Wolansky you said, "Very few magazines, pro or fan, don't use columns." True, but those that do justify their type both left and right. Believe it or not, there is a psychological art having to do with proper column widths. It relates to human attention span. A column that is too short makes it hard for people to focus and follow the track of the article. If a column is too long, people will begin to get bored and start skipping words. That's why paperbacks are a single column (as well as my digest-sized zine) and magazines use two or more. Hardbacks get away with a single column because they use a larger typeface than magazines.

But into the meat of the zine. Nice discussion of Dhalgren by Kevin Welch. When I first read Dhalgren I was in my mid teens. Besides being too young to understand it, I was not into analyzing what I read all

that much back then. What I enjoyed about Dhalgren was the feeling of the book. And like Kevin, the book crept its way into my dreams, though I cannot remember any of them with any clarity whatsoever.

As to never finding another book like it. Properly, I think that Dhalgren was too much different from the SF/F of the time to be widely imitated. It's also not a book that lends itself to imitation. It's a terribly complicated structure. But I don't think that there aren't others whose work had the same feel. Certainly Dick, as Kevin mentioned. Also J.G. Ballard's work, and a little later Ed Bryant. In terms of style and tone, I think it is easier to find similar books in mainstream literature. One well-known book of the period that I would compare to Dhalgren is Heller's Catch-22.

[[Our comparison to The Dispossessed was based on content, not style. On style, certainly Dick and Ballard. We can see a vague similarity to Ed Bryant, though it's not a comparison that would have occurred to us. Ned Brooks suggested Frederick Turner's A Double Shadow. We really can't quite see the similarity to Catch-22, which is sarcastic gallows humor about the insanity of what was supposed to be an ordered, or at least organized, situation.]]



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Thanks for sending me Twink's #3 and 4 and for your letter, it's interesting that you use a pseudonym, no doubt it would all become clear if we knew who you were but that's hardly the point, is it! I use a different name at conventions ("Bug"),

partly because it seemed the fannish thing to do at the time (not that I knew anything about what was fannish back then), partly because I'm not terribly keen on my given name, and partly because it's so much shorter, and easier to fit on badges, and different. There is one other Bridget (Wilkinson) I know of in fandom, she has been around for a lot longer than I have, and I found it quite confusing at the London pub meetings when people would call out, "Bridget!" Could be worse though, I could have been called Dave.

[[If we were making up a nickname for myself, as distinct from a nom de plume, "Bug" would not have been at the top of our list; but if it makes you happy... / Here's a thought for our readers: Go ask your mother what name she had picked out for you if you had been born the other gender than what you are.]]

I liked the cover of #3, with its bold pink chirpy-looking pig, and Steve Stiles' cover for #4, on sophisticated grey paper. I look forward to your future covers, they're more imaginative than just plain white paper.

[[On behalf of the artists (Sheryl Birkhead for the pig), thanks. So it costs a few dollars extra to do the cover on colored paper; we think it's worth it. Wait 'til you see the #7 cover! (Yes, we already have the art in hand.) ]]

"Diagnosis Of A Killer" could have done with a longer intro explaining who Bothari was for those unfamiliar with him. As a result the piece didn't grab me, and I didn't care about your hypotheses. If I hadn't heard friends talking about Lois McMaster Bujold books I'd have been totally lost! ...I read the article with the idea of art in mind, and it's bloody difficult to illustrate! What had you in mind? General fillos, or realistic renditions of scenes from the books (with all the problems that entails with readers having different mental pictures of how the characters look)? Perhaps Bothari lying on a couch, with Freud saying, "Bothari, tell me about your mother."

[[Cool! Brits really do say "bloody"! / As for your suggestion, why not? The books specifically say Bothari was in therapy, he was illegitimate, and his mother was a whore. We can visualize it, we just don't have the ability to draw it.]]

I found your fanzine reviews interesting, there is very little overlap between the fanzines we both receive. I also enjoyed your letter column, it's good to see some SF discussed for a change (even though I'm feeble and haven't read any Bujold). My favorite portmanteau words, like "scienti-fiction", are in the Lewis Carroll poem Jabberwocky. Well, I remeber looking at the poem at school many years ago and being introduced to the idea of portmanteau words (though we were only 10, so they didn't tell us they were called that), and trying to work out what "brillig" and "slithy" may have been made up from. I can't see it now at all, we must have been on something pretty strange back then. Maybe it was something they put in the milk.

I've read lots about Dhalgren, possibly as many words as there are in the book, but I've never read Dhalgren itself. Maybe I should read it and form my own opinions! I've always had a vague feeling that it would be an important piece of my sftnal education but Kevin Welch's piece has done more to persuade me to read it than anything else I've read on the subject. One friend's opinion is that he'd rather lie down drunk in the gutter than read Dhalgren. I'm now interested in reading it with some knowledge about its historical context (I do like a nice bit of context).

[[We assume Bujold's books are in print in the U.K., right? If you did read Dhalgren, we'd be interested in the feedback of someone reading it for the first time now, out of the context of 1974 when it was first published. Your friend is entitled to his opinion of the book: he's wrong, but he's entitled to his opinion.]]

Lord Of The Rings was one of the cult books when I was at university a half dozen years ago, it wasn't just SF fans that had read it, but most of the undergraduates I knew. The Hitchhiker's Guide To The Galaxy was another of those books.



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Issue #4 represents a dramatic improvement over issue #3, both in format and content. I am impressed by the progress you've made (with the help of your contributors, of course). I enclose at least one short review ... I may enclose others or send them on later. (I have the messy habit of reading many books at the same time, and may or may not get more SF books finished and reviewed by the time this goes out.)

[[Thanks for the kind words. Patrick did in fact enclose two reviews, which due to factors of timing and page count, will lead off the review section next issue.]]

Page 100 of Dhalgren is one of the three places that humankind will never reach, according to the old joke. I applaud Kevin Welch and the editor for their heroic perseverance, and I suppose I can very dimly comprehend what they see in Delany -- I often enjoy reading articles about books that I would not enjoy reading myself. By contrast, I liked the other work that Frohvet discusses, LeGuin's The Dispossessed, and have re-read it several times. But since I can't intelligently comment on an article comparing it with Dhalgren, I pass over it here.

Reviews: Norton's "Time Traders" series was my introduction to adult SF (well, to SF not explicitly labelled "juvenile"). Around here somewhere I still have the copy of Galactic Derelict that my father brought home for me when he happened to see it on a bookstand in Chicago's Union Station sometime in the Kennedy administration. I had missed the word that the series has now been sharecropped (Firehand). I don't suppose this will do significant harm, but even so, somehow it seems a pity.

[[That was pretty much our reaction.]]

I've actually read three of the books in your short reviews this time around. I share your opinion of Willis & Felice's Light Raid and of the anthology Chicks In Chainmail -- both are very lightweight, but mildly amusing. I think I liked Tanner's You Don't Understand more than you did, but the question arises as to why in the first place you are reviewing

in Twink a work of popular psychology not falling within your own contributions policy of "SF/fantasy/fandom/some clearly related topic". I grant that you, as the editor and publisher, don't really have to follow your own policy, but that sort of self-indulgence sets a bad example for the troops.

[[If anything, we've gotten the sense that many readers find our "SF/fantasy/fandom" focus too narrow and restrictive. We've written material well outside our own guidelines and sent it to other, less-specific fanzines, such as FTT.]]

As for the Editor's comments on my own letter, no, I have never communicated with Apparatchik, and indeed have seen only a few pass-on issues. Either some Outsider has penetrated Columbia MD (easily enough done), or someone just has access to maps and directories -- a lot of that sort of thing is on disk and online nowadays, so it could even have been accomplished from Seattle. Speaking of Columbia, did you know that there is a brief reference to it in The Forever War? Martin Wooster let me know it actually appears onstage (renamed Old Columbia) in a considerably more obscure SF novel, whose name I withhold here as a challenge to the Editor and readership.

[[We'll have to dig up our copy of The Forever War and look for it. As to the other, we draw a blank at the moment. Of course it could have been something we read before moving here.]]

The Editor asks if I wouldn't consider four novels to be "exotic genre-breaking" ones: Babel-17, The Left Hand Of Darkness, Dune, and Neuromancer. No, I think all of them were clearly perceived even when they came out as lying with the existing genre boundaries. Each of them was popular in its day, but the only one that I personally much liked, and the only one I would consider to be "genre-lifting", as defined in my last LOC, was Left Hand.

[[We're beginning to think the difference between our expressed views is more semantic than real.]]

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# MISCELLANY

We know it wasn't the original plan, to hold the 1998 Worldcon in early August; and we assume future Worldcons, in the usual dull obeisance to "tradition", will revert to Labor Day Weekend. To be honest, though, we can see some advantages to having Worldcon in early to mid-August. E.g., for parents with school-age children.

Speaking of "Bucconeer", yes, barring some unforeseen development, we plan to be there. Our membership has already been confirmed. If any of our readers would like to meet us, drop a line, and we'll arrange a time and place to meet. First round is on us.

As for being involved with the con at any other level than attending -- on staff, or in programming -- we haven't volunteered and no one has asked.

Does anybody have Connie Willis's address? We could use it. Thanks.

Melissa Scott, The Kindly Ones, page 51: "Rohin gestured to the seat beside him, and I nodded, tossing my carryall into the rack above." Less than two pages later: "I fumbled beneath my seat for my carryall." Hello, Baen Books: doesn't anyone proofread this stuff?

We had the pleasure of seeing guitarist Domenic Gaudious perform locally. The ads said, "the new age Leo Kottke." We'd call him more an amplified Robbie Basho. He plays amp'ed acoustic with lots of reverb, allowing effects you can't get on a normal acoustic or electric guitar. Wonderful! The CD is Where I Stand; if it's not to be found in your local music store, try: Pulse Productions, PO Box 190905, Atlanta GA 31119.

## QUOTE OF THE DAY

"I, for my part, consider such things as pretty enough, but as the province of a very curious, painstaking, and not very happy man, and for no other reason than that he must set us right as to the form of the Hippocentaurs, and then as to that of the Chimaera; besides, there pours in upon us a crowd of similar monsters, Gorgons and Pegasuses, and other monstrous

creatures, incredible in number and absurdity, which if anyone were to disbelieve and endeavour to reconcile each with probability, employing for the purpose a sort of vulgar cleverness, he will stand in need of abundant liesure."

-- Socrates, letter to Phaedrus; apparently the first written criticism of the fantasy genre.

As an amusement for our readers, we've made up a list of about fifteen paying short-SF markets. (Anything which "pays" in "contributor copies" is a fanzine.) The list does not include OMNI, Analog, or Asimov's, because there is no meaningful chance of an unknown writer selling a story to them. We've picked one of our stories, which we genuinely consider a salable quality story; and we'll work down the list, sending it to one market after another, until someone buys it, we get to the end of the list, or we lose interest in the project. We will keep you posted as the rejection slips pile up.

Thought We'd Seen It All Department: Star Trek Ken & Barbie, in little Trekkie uniforms: she in little red miniskirt a la Rand, he in black pants and gold velour shirt. No, honest, we're not making this up; saw it at Wal-Mart.

Speaking of Trek; the poster for the First Contact movie has across the top: "Resistance is Futile!" We suspect that's a joke that 99 out of 100 Trekkies will miss completely. Nice to think that someone at Paramount has a sense of humor...

We wonder about questions like: Do black angels have white wings? And if so, why?

Notice to other fanzine editors: As glad as we are to have William Rotsler's art grace our modest pages, he keeps sending us more bulging bundles of art! In accordance with Mr. Rotsler's policy, which asks faned's to pass on what they don't need: If you want some Rotsler art, let us know and we'll pick you out an assortment. Mr. Rotsler asks for quality reproduction and a copy of the magazine. And thanks again to the artist for his support, not only of Twink, but many other fanzines.