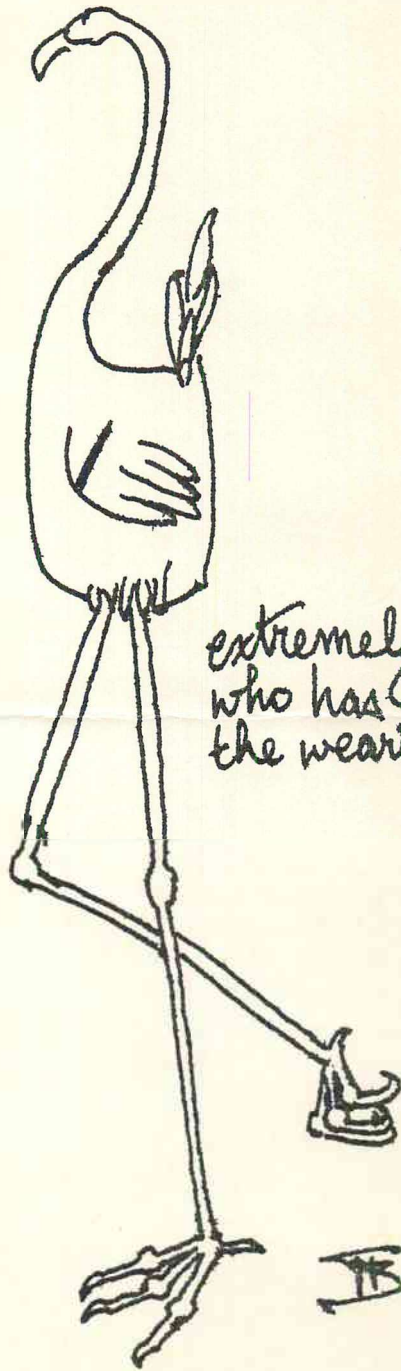


UF 6



extremely cool bird  
who has eschewed  
the wearing of bucklers.





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AS YOU MIGHT BE ABLE TO TELL, if you are still able to remember when it was that the last issue of this publication thrust itself into your letterbox, it's been the unfortunately usual quite A While since I've been visible.

I had hopes of being able to bring out a meaty, thick, genzine-style issue of UF, complete with articles and reviews and art folio and all the other good things one can get genzine-wise. Right. Now that 1981 has started, tho, I really feel it's about time I gave up on that particular pipedream.

Putting out a genzine requires, first, more free time than a simple personal zine requires; you have to think about layout, and title lettering, and where to put the artwork, and getting covers printed, and all sorts of whatever, and you have to do more of it than you would with most personalzines, even the simple onedraft writing of stencils. Second, it requires more of that free time in one lump; you have to build up momentum to get into all that work, and keep that momentum going until it's done. I remember when I was putting out GODLESS, most issues would go from first stencil into the typer to last copy stapled and addressed in about two weeks or less.

Well, I've finally admitted that I don't have that type of free time, nor am I likely to be able to get it anywhere in the foreseeable future. I haven't even been able to find enough free time to put out an issue like the last, where I had a whole, almost-uninterrupted day during which I typed the first stencil, the last stencil, and all the ones in between.

So...I've decided two things. The first is that I've made a New Year's resolution that I will, hell or high water, spend one hour per day in this study of mine at the typer. Not necessarily for typing of fanzines, tho. (More on this to come.) The other is that I'm going to be going back to the system I used when I was producing POWERMAD, my Army-days personalzine; I would type whenever I felt like it, with no set order to things, sticking in bits of chatter, reviews, letters of comment, etcetera, whenever they occurred. The one exception to that I'm going to make for this particular issue is that, back around Thanksgiving weekend, I did manage to get some of the stencils for the letter-column of the planned-for genzine issue typed up. Waste not, want not, so I'll use some of these hours-a-day to finish up the letter section and publish it at the back of this issue.

And now...I'll fill you in on some of the reasons why I haven't had much free time during the last six months:

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**THE FACE OF MORTALITY**      The most momentous moment of 1980 was the death of my father, David F. Arthurs, on Christmas Day. He had had a serious heart attack around the end of October and spent a week in the hospital recuperating. At the beginning of December, he went into St. Luke's hospital, which is the leading cardiological treatment unit in the city, for tests to determine how much damage had been done to his heart. A week later, he underwent open-heart surgery to bypass damaged valves, in the course of which he suffered another major attack. The next several weeks were a rollercoaster of emotions, as he went up and down in condition, seemingly improving one day and going downhill the next. He died, finally, about 7:30 in the evening on Christmas Day.



I am not, at this point, sure as to just what I can or should say about my Dad. I've tried, several times, to put something coherent down on paper, but the words either peter out or convolute themselves around their own verbiage. I can say, though, that I was very proud of him, and even prouder of the fight he put up to stay alive. He was a quiet, gentle and very strong man, and I would like to think that most of the qualities about myself that can be considered "good" came directly from his example.

I suppose in a way I was lucky when I got the phone call informing me of his death, because I was doped half out of my mind from my own little brush with mortality that same day. (Then again, perhaps it wasn't lucky, because I don't think I have yet fully accepted the fact that I will never, never, see him again, that I'll never go to my parents' place again to find him fallen asleep in front of the tv. I don't want to accept that.)

The reason I was doped half out of my mind was because I had succumbed to Type A Bangkok flu about five days earlier. I had been flat on my back for most of that time, but hadn't started the vomiting phase of the bug until Wednesday morning. The intensity made up for lost time, though, with even ginger ale refusing to stay down. A call to the doctor's had produced a prescription for a drug called Compazine, an anti-nauseant in suppository form.

I'd been using the drug for about 24 hours when, Thursday evening about six o'clock, I noticed that my throat seemed to be tightening up, and that it was becoming more difficult to breathe. This, I guarantee you, is one of the most mind-easing, non-alarming things that may ever happen to you, especially when it's followed a few moments later by the muscles on one side of your face drawing up, causing your teeth to grind together painfully, while your tongue also starts curling up of its own volition as if it were trying to thrust itself back down your throat. What fun. Even more fun, because of its immediacy, than that time shortly before Iggy when I seemed to be developing the beginning symptoms of a nice little brain tumor....

Hilde's mother, Edna, came on down and drove us to the emergency room at Doctors' Hospital where the doctor we'd called had directed us to go. I went thru the form-filling-out, mumbling the words thru my clenched teeth, then the wait out in the lobby, being directed into one of the examination rooms, waiting there, and finally seeing the doctor himself after about twenty minutes. He asked me what drugs I'd been taking, and when I mentioned the Compazine, exclaimed "AH HA!" and called for a hypodermic of Benadryl, a potent antihistamine. In a few minutes, my teeth unclenched, my tongue uncurled, my throat loosened and boy did I feel relieved that it had turned out to be easily remedied. (That brain tumor I mentioned above, incidentally, actually turned out to be low blood sugar, but it was a scary week or so until the tests came back.) The relief soon turned to sheer silly, babbling, melt-in-your-brainpan idiocy as the Benadryl's own potent side-effects took hold. So, in one of those ugly little coincidences that make life macabre, right about the time my Dad was taking his last breath, I was silly and giddy and happy as a clam. Edna drove Hilde and me home, and it was about ten minutes after that that my brother Gary's phone-call came thru. It was an...unusual...Christmas.

Earlier in the year, a similar momentous moment occurred when Hilde came back from a shopping trip with Paul Schauble with the news that it wasn't Wednesday. That was what she said, or at least it was what I thought she'd said. She repeated herself, and this time the words stayed true and didn't transmogrify themselves into some more suitable statement. What Hilde had actually said to me was "Susan Wood is dead." I wrote a...eulogy?...remembrance?...something anyway, later that night, but I don't think I'll print it after all. There really aren't any words suitable enough to say what a stupid goddamned waste her death was, how much of her potential she might have accomplished if she'd lived a normal lifespan.

Nineteen-eighty may not quite have been the Year of the Jackpot around here, but it'll do until something worse comes along.



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 MY TYPER IS HOT, MY STENCILS ARE DUSTY

That title is a bit of an exaggeration,  
 but it is referring to another reason

why it's been so long between issues.

Back about six, seven years ago, see, I wrote a story in response to a letter that had been published in Ted White's FANTASTIC, asking for more stories wherein "Captain Nucleus beats up half a dozen Venusian BEMs for breakfast and saves Uranus and Neptune for lunch." I didn't expect more than a chuckle from Ted White when I sent it to him, but the silly ass actually printed the story ("The Return of Captain Nucleus", February 1975 FANTASTIC, page 100, illo by Joe Staton). And paid for it! Before publication! (Which last fact has caused a few jaws to drop when I've mentioned it.)

Anyway, being a feeble pro, sort of, was a heck of an egoboost at the time, and I mentioned in one of my fanzines that the experience had given me a strong faunch to write more stories, to be published again, and that I had all sorts of neat ideas swirling around in my head.

Well, as it turned out, I didn't write any more stories, then or for a number of years, what with spending so much of my time on, first, this sweet thing called fandom, and, later, on marriage and family.

It's been said, in innumerable peptalks published in WRITERS DIGEST and the ilk, that if you have to write, you will. Yeh. Putting out fanzines is one of the ways in which I occasionally exorcise my own have-to. But back about last March, I came up with a have-to that couldn't be expressed in any such direct way as talking about it in a fanzine.

So, I went through a box of old papers and found "Glorypain." That's the title of a story I began about eight years ago, while going thru a period of extreme depression and paranoia after some highly unpleasant experiences in the Army. I had never finished the story.

Now, however, I began the story again, keeping the opening scene, which I think is a real brainfucker, changing the storyline, adding some new characters, increasing the depth of characterization of the lead character (which was easier after I figured out who he actually was), made the background more complete, and to my everlasting surprise managing to get all the loose ends fairly well wrapped up at the story's end. Re-typed the whole thing into proper manuscript form, making a few minor changes in choice of wording and adding some minor details, and started sending it out.

So far, Terry Carr's sent it back unread from UNIVERSE (he filled the book before getting that far down the stack of manuscripts), Byron Preiss sent it back unread from WEIRD HEROES (which was canceled without my knowledge), Bob Sheckley sent back a form rejection from OMNI (which I rather expected, but I wanted to try for the money anyway), and it's currently with Ed Ferman at F&SF. Not sure where it'll go if it doesn't sell there; possibly BERKELEY SHOWCASE.

Even if it doesn't sell, however (and I think it's a good enough story that it will, eventually), it's more than been worthwhile because writing it helped exorcise a lot of paranoia and poisonous emotions left over from Iguacon, and enabled me to finally reach a satisfactory resolution of those feelings. (I should mention, I suppose, that there is no one-to-one correspondence between any of the characters or actions in "Glorypain" and the people and their actions involved with Iguacon.)

In the meantime, however, I've continued to write fiction occasionally. Not as much as I'd like, though; I've got three or four stories fully outlined and complete with beginnings, middles and endings up there in my head which I haven't had time to translate onto paper. That's yet another reason why I've made my hour-per-day resolution. I won't be spending all of my time running stencils through the typer, and I hope that at least some of those hours will be used to get those story ideas turned into actual stories.

I have gotten two other short (about 2,000 words each) stories written and making the rounds of the markets, besides the longer "Glorypain". One a humorous



bit of fluff that Hilde gave me the idea for, which I'd hoped would appeal to Ed Ferman but didn't, so it's presently off to ASIMOV'S. The other was a fantasy which I sent off to Terri Windling, who is putting together an anthology called HIGH FANTASY for Ace Books (thx to Andy Porter for mentioning this market in SF CHRONICLE); while the story doesn't have any particular fantasy elements, I have some hope that it will sell there. Ms. Windling is an artist (she did the illos for BASILISK, another fantasy anthology that came out a while back), and the story has a number of highly visual bits in it that I hope will appeal to her. We shall see.

As for the as yet unwritten stories, I know better than to talk about them. We all know that those stories never get written down on paper.

In our next issue of UNDULANT FEVER, we will have a guest article by Ian Williams, who will talk about his bloody goddamned novel.

#### OBLIGATORY GARDEN REPORT

As of today (which is now the 10th of January; it's been awhile since I've had a chance to get back to this stencil), I am officially a Long-Range Gardener.

By LRG I mean that I spent most of today and yesterday shopping at the nursery, digging holes and planting and watering fruit trees and grape vines and strawberry plants. The trees and the grape vines will take anywhere from two to three years before they start bearing fruit, which is considerably longer-range in thinking than any of the veggie gardening I've done so far; there, you keep the plants in maybe six months (a bit longer for things like peppers and such).

We've got three trees planted in the front yard already, a plum and two apricots; we are also expecting two dwarf peaches to arrive in the mail from Jackson-Perkins any day now and the holes are dug and waiting for those already. The grapevines, two Emperor and a Thompson Seedless, are planted along the edge of the carport. The strawberries are in a Mexican strawberry pot and a small patch in the back yard.

Eventually, we also plan to plant a fig tree in the back yard, some pomegranate bushes, and a berry patch. We're also planning to put in a fence around the front yard this coming year, and will have more berries growing along the sides; in front we'll be planting roses to discourage neighborhood kids from climbing over for a snack or to gather unripe ammo for a rumble.

As for the veggie garden itself, I've had varying degrees of success with it. The summer produced a long and sordid heat wave, which blated most of everything I'd planted. Teh corn did fairly well, and that was about the only thing that did. The beans got blasted by the heat, and I suppose I really should have known better than to plant them right next to a wall the sun would reflect off of. The watermelon never set fruit. And it seems the soil was loaded with a variety of pests that stunted or killed off most of the rest. Tomato worms got the tomato plants, and so dammed fast I barely realized they'd arrived before the platns were stripped bare. Only about half a dozen okra plants came up, and never got more than six inches high; the New Zealand spinach did even worse. And my zucchini died! (Jon Singer will never forgive me.)

When I planted the fall garden (onions, lettuce, broccoli, brussels sprouts, leeks, carrots, spinach, cauliflower, Romano beans, and snow/sugar snap/ & regular peas, plus the eggplants and peppers which did survive the summer but didn't set fruit until cooler weather had arrived), I had still more trouble with seeds not coming up. Part of this I can blame on the fact that I was trying something new; "Foot-square gardening", where you divide the garden into areas of that size and, depending on the size of the mature plant, insert one, four, nine or sixteen seeds into that square foot. The problem with this is that you plant only one seed in each spot where you want a plant. Supposedly this will save you the trouble of thinning out the garden after the seedlings come up.



In actuality, planting only one seed per spot brings a variant of Murphy's Law into effect, and you'll only have about half the seeds sprout. Which means you have to do most of that stooping and bending and planting over again. Which I did, again putting one seed in each spot. And half of those came up, so I was still left with only about 3/4ths of the number of plants I had wanted in the garden. By this time, tho, I'd learned my lesson and when I replanted again, I put two seeds into each hole; within a week, almost every damned seed was coming up like gangbusters.

The one exception to this was the Romano beans, of which none of the first planting came up. After waiting several weeks to see if they were merely late sprouters, I carefully dug up the spot where I'd planted the seeds...and dug up a pitiful remnant of a bean seed, with a batch of ugly little white worms chewing away on it. That brought some action from me; I mixed up a batch of Sevin solution (fortunately I don't send UNDULANT FEVER to Robert Rodale or he might stop sending me his fanzine) which seemed to stop the pests in their tracks. That wasn't the only problem to crop up, though; the eggplants succumbed to some sort of fungal root rot which I've tried to treat with a copper sulphate solution. I haven't replanted that area of the garden yet, so will have to wait awhile to see if it was effective. But the most irritating and aggravating thing so far has been the goddamned gophers.

I didn't even know there were gophers in Arizona. When I saw those cauliflower flowers sunk down into the ground, as if they'd been grabbed by the roots and pulled, it never crossed my mind that they had been grabbed by the roots and pulled! My curmudgeonly old mind immediately came to the conclusion that some neighborhood kid had sneaked into the garden and jammed the plants with a stick, driving them into the ground. It wasn't until I pulled one of the plants out, causing part of the tunnel underneath to collapse, that the obvious finally got through to me. I got a couple of gopher traps, and managed to catch one of the little beasties. I had hopes that there was only one, but a new tunnel soon appeared. This particular gopher, though, seems to be able to recognize what those strange steel-and-spring objects put down into her tunnel are, and merely turns around and throws dirt back over it until the trap is sprung on empty air.

That's about it for this issue's garden report. It's been an extraordinarily warm winter, which has been nice for the peppers (now if I can only teach the cats to stop rubbing up against and laying down on the branches and breaking them off). I am presently making plans for the spring garden, and have started seedlings for two types of tomatoes, more peppers and eggplants, and some chiles. More corn is definitely in order, and we'll give the okra another try, along with various other vegetables.

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THE INADVERTENT-BUT-ACCURATE TUCKERISM DEPT.

"You're a brave lad," he said,  
"and I hope you'll soon be better. Now try a cup of soup and some bread. 'Tis very light, baked special for you by Hilde in the kitchen, and if you like it not she'll cut off your head and use it in the meat pie!" -- from The Book of Suns by Nancy Springer.

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WORDS IN PACKAGES

I had had the thought that I really hadn't been able to get too much reading done since the last UF, but when I sat down and made a list, I surprised myself by coming up with almost two dozen. Which ain't all that much compared to what I'd like to have the time to read, but it's better than I'd realized I'd done.

One of the books which I finally got around to reading was George Martin's first novel, Dying of the Light. I thought it had a lot of nice imagery in it, and a lot of emotional sturmung and dranging on the part of the characters. Unfortunately, one of the consequences of all this s&d was that the plot sometimes got shaky because otherwise the characters wouldn't have been able to drang so sturmily. There was one particular howler of this sort that almost had me flinging the book against the nearest wall: At one point, Vikary, one of the major



non-Terran characters (and I would be more certain of spelling and names except I don't have the volume handy to refer to), has had his "wife" (one of the interesting things in the book is the bizarrely misogynist sociology of Vikary's home world) foully struck before his very eyes by one of his fellow-worlders. What the rules of his society would allow him to do at this point is challenge the fellow to a duel. Instead, in a raging fury, he tells the fellow "You... will...not...duel!", punctuating each word with a shot from his laser pistol.

However...it has been pointed out previously in the book that these laser pistols take fifteen seconds to recharge between each shot. So that means there is at least forty-five seconds transpiring between the first and last shot. Also, the woman-hitter's friends, who are all on rotten terms with Vikary anyway, are supposed to be standing around agog with incredulity while this is going on.

Right. Uh-huh. They just stand around, maybe play a hand of pinochle or something, for the entire forty-five seconds, while their comrade is being slowly zapped by Vikary. Sorry, George, but there went my willing suspension of disbelief right out the window. Vikary would have been a Swiss cheese from their laser pistols a couple of seconds after his first shot.

Nevertheless, this is a neat book. I came across scene after scene in it that made me wish more fervently than usual that I was at least a passable artist, because I'd love to see some of those scenes visualized. I think Martin's major problem was that he wasn't used to working at such length and worked himself into corners like that shootout where he had to try and keep things moving so fast that hopefully no one would notice it wasn't particularly logical. I'm fully expectant that Martin's future works in the novel length will show better and tighter plotting as he becomes more comfortable with projects of such magnitude.

Another book I'd read where I also had problems with willing suspension of disbelief was Philip Jose Farmer's Jesus On Mars. Now, I'm not particularly impressed with the persona of Jesus Christ as he's presented nowadays. I figure that after nearly two thousand years of people slanting, distorting, lying about and misunderstanding the original person, plus the people who hear those slants, distortions, lies and misunderstandings and go on to further slant, etc...that Jesus Christ as he's popularly presented today probably only has a bit more reality to him than Hansel and Gretel, if that.

Nevertheless, I really couldn't bring myself to believe in Farmer's Jesus as a Jesus. It seemed to me that he was setting up a straw-man, something that -- purporting that this was the real Jesus -- was itself so distorted away from the traditional Jesus that it bore no relation other than the name. It was a character built for the purposes of the action of the story, and no more. The ending was also unsatisfactory for me. (Altho I did have the thought that maybe Farmer would write a sequel wherein Jesus' Martian troops fight to establish the True Religion on Earth, maybe titled Jesus Goes To War. And then he could finish off the trilogy with a final volume where Jesus is defeated and is sent to the island of St. Helena to live out the rest of his life on a disabled veteran's pension. The title of that book, of course, would be Christ On A Crutch.)

A couple of Nevil Shute books, No Highway and The Far Country, got sandwiched in there somewhere. No Highway got made into a movie with Jimmy Stewart terribly miscast as the hero; if I were making it today I'd have that part played by Professor Honeydew off The Muppet Show. The Far Country was one of Shute's early Australian novels, set approximately in 1950, and about how and why Australia got a heavy influx of new citizens from Europe. There was one scene in there where a character is talking about a forest fire that had taken place in a great eucalyptus forest some years previously, describing how the summer had been so hot and still that the eucalyptus oil had baked out of the trees and hung suspended in the air. When the fire had started, the flames had heated the surrounding air to the critical point and \*FLASH\* an entire mile or more of the forest would simultaneously ignite.

When I read that, I was literally sitting there with my mouth hanging open. Holy shit, people, that sort of mind-blowing Sensawunda stuff is what you're



supposed to find in science fiction, fer christ's sake!

I read Silverberg's Lord Valentine's Castle over the summer. I enjoyed it, but I wasn't particularly impressed. Well, no, yes I was. LVC seemed to me like what you'd get if you took someone's outline for an old Ace Double novel and handed it to someone who was one hell of a skillful writer to complete. It was entertaining to read, and judging from some comments Silverberg has made in his FAPazine it was enjoyable to write as well, but there wasn't anything in it to compare with the depth shown in gloomy & poor-selling but more lasting works like Dying Inside or The Book of Skulls. Maybe "Ace Double novel" isn't quite accurate; perhaps I can say that it reminded me of some of Jack Vance's work, but without the unique style & depth that Vance brings to his own work.

Now a book that really had an old Ace Double style plot was Max Daniel's Offworld. Here, a martial arts master who just doesn't "fit in" with the high-technology future of Earth (he goes around committing robberies because otherwise there's no challenge to life) gets shoved into a matter transmitter that sends him off to a low-tech, semi-medieval world. He promptly impresses the hell out of a local tribe of mercenaries (one of three sentient species, all basically human with different colors of skin and scales). On their behalf, he sneaks into a city ruled by a baddie who'd double-crossed the mercenaries and just about wiped them out, where he has to rescue the merc's princess who is being held captive by the baddie. A lot of boring and totally predictable adventures later, the baddie is killed and the princess takes up with our hero. The one saving grace of the book is the sequence when our hero leads a group of the mercs in a commando raid against the baddie's huge, Gormenghast-like castle; the writing there is taut & suspenseful and pretty damn well-done. (The probable reason for this is that Max Daniels is actually a pen-name for Roberts Gellis, who has written a number of swords-and-lords medieval romances -- which Hilde tells me are very good, and which she rereads frequently -- and can probably be considered a fair expert in medieval fighting and warfare methods.) This book isn't recommended, but Hilde does say that The Space Guardian, also by Daniels, is a much better book.

A couple of Stephen King novels, Carrie and The Dead Zone. Having read King's later novels previously, I found Carrie rather disappointing. A first novel, it lurches and stutters in spots and, worse, bores. The Dead Zone shows the continuous improvement King has shown (disregarding the overlong and over-ambitious The Stand) in his career, each book becoming more carefully crafted, the characterization more vivid and real.

Speaking of another book that bores...I barely finished Patricia McKillip's Riddle-Master of Hed and feel no inclination to move on the rest of the trilogy. The main reason for this reaction on my part is that McKillip filled in the background and history of her world so-o-o-o slowly, bit by slow bit wrenched painfully from the narrative, that I spent much of the book without too much of an idea what the characters had done, were doing, or why they were doing it.

Yet another unsatisfactory (sure seems to have been a lot of them, haven't there?) book was Roger Zelazny's Changeling. Trivial fluff, with a very predictable plot. Actually it might have been much better if Zelazny had gotten George Martin to collaborate with him, because Changeling needed some of the stunning & dranging highly-emotional confrontations that Martin put into works like Dying of the Light. As it is, the most sympathetic character in Changeling is the dragon, and he's merely amusing. (Or was it a she-dragon?)

Another writer's books that I've been finding flawed, but still damned exciting, have been James Hogan's Inherit the Stars, The Gentle Giants of Ganymede, and The Genesis Machine. This is hard-science SF...sort of. The reason I say "sort of" is that a lot of the science he uses is based on outre' theories of high-energy physics; Hogan presumes that these will be found to be true sometime in the twenty to fifty years, and then proceeds to try and develop what the results and ramifications of these discoveries will be on all sorts of levels and what new discoveries and processes they will lead to. It's like watching



CONNECTIONS, only being broadcast from the future. Speaking of which, Hogan's best book is one I haven't mentioned, Thrice Upon A Time. His earlier books are flawed by shallow & cardboard characterization (or, in The Genesis Machine, stilted mouthpieces for freedom-of-the-scientist propaganda), but TUAT shows a remarkable growth in the believability and humanness of his characters. Plus the extrapolary ability that enables him to regularly come up with mind-blowing concepts and ideas. The extrapolatory process he uses frequently shows the Writer at work behind the scenes, manipulating the characters and events to proceed along the lines he wants them to go, but part of the fun is trying to figure out just what the man will come up with next. It's almost like reading a good mystery book and trying to guess who and why and how the murderer was, only the murderer is actually a high-energy physicist and the how is a sub-nuclear particle.

A book I seem to recall picking up out of a 10¢ box at a used book store was David Gerrold's With A Finger In My I, a short story collection. It was published fairly near the beginning of his writing career, and most of the stories included had never been published before, which wasn't very common at the time. Having read the stories, though, I can understand why most of them had never been published before, and can only wonder why they were in this book. Such affectation, such straining to be literary and experientnal (err, experimental) and Not Damn Arty! "In The Deadlands" is only the most blatant of the bunch. Thankfully, I can state from having read The Man Who Folded Himself a few years back that Gerrold has improved as a writer and judging from various reviews of his work I've read since then he's continued that improvement. (With the exception of that execrable introduction to Diane Duane's Door Into Fire.)

Another writer who's shown continued improvement throughout her career is Marion Zimmer Bradley. The most prominent thing about her style, to me at least, is the slow and careful building of her character's desires and motivations. She's one of the best in the field, or out of it, at such characterization; her characters aren't always flashy or exciting, but their motivations for their various actions are as solid as the Rock of Gibraltar. The Catch Trap, a mainstream novel of a pair of lovers against the background of a family of circus flyers, trapeze artists, in the late 1940s and early 50s, is an example of MZB at her best.

Let's see, what's left on the list: Phil Dick's Counter-Clock World is the first book by Dick I've read in four or five years, after pigging out on a dozen or so almost one right after another. A little of him goes a long way, and I expect it'll be another year or two before I go on to another of his books. Anyway, Counter-Clock World has some, ahh, interesting concepts of a world where time and natural processes have reversed themselves, but consciousness continues forward. You apparently (that's an important word when describing Dick's work) keep your thoughts and memories up until the point when your body has de-aged to the point where your brain capacity isn't large enough anymore. You can also still be "killed" in this world, having your body's functions disrupted to the point where it can no longer continue to de-age; only there's no afterlife (a very important part of the plot) to go to, because that's where you've already come from when you returned from the dead the first time. And the villians...the villians are Librarians, who go about wiping out knowledge whose time of origin has re-come! Beeeeeeeeeezarre....

Arthur Klavaty recommended Barrington Bayley's The Fall of Chronopolis, but I wasn't impressed. I've read better novels of "Empires of Time" before, both better written and better thought out. (Laumer's Dinosaur Beach comes to mind immediately.)

A book I bought mainly for the George Barr cover was David Lake's Right Hand of Dextra. If you like Barr's artwork, you should buy this book. As for the words inside...well, it's a nice story, competently enough written to use as a time-passer, but there's nothing outstanding about it.

In What Dreams May Come, Richard Matheson tried his hand at writing a



"realistic novel" of the Afterlife. At the back of the book is a long list of references which he used as research, and from which he attempted to draw a common picture of what life after death would really be like. It's quite well written, and some of the concepts he presents are very intriguing and thought-provoking.

Marta Randall's Dangerous Games is the sequel to Journey, with a third book, Mish, due to be published soon. What she's doing is the sfnal equivalent of all the family-line-thru-history series that have been crowding the bookstands. Randall's a better writer than most of those I've read, though, with her characters less stereotyped, more carefully fleshed in and motivated. Some of the hard science in these books is pretty soft (a superconducting wire made from plant sap? Luther Burbank would be proud), but not so often or so badly as to spoil the enjoyment of Randall's description of the changing and evolving relationships between the (large) cast of characters. I'll even step out on a limb and state that I thought her presentation of Spider was one of the best representations of a telepath I've seen.

The last novel on the list is The Floating Admiral. This was a round-robin mystery written by various members of the British Detection Club (Dorothy Sayers, R. Austin Freeman, Chesterton, etc.) back in the 30's. It is amazing how the writer of each successive chapter fails to pick up on the clues left by the previous writers and evolves a sometimes radically different theory of how and why the murder took place. It's rather good fun, and the central mystery is a rather good one. The major problem with the constant change in authorship is in the characterization. Some of the writers made the police detective smart, perceptive and dedicated, while others make him seem almost like a buffoon who can barely tie his shoes in the morning; it gets a bit disconcerting at times.

And the last two books on the list are original anthologies, Chrysalis 6 edited by Roy Torgeson, and Basilisk, edited by Ellen...kushner? (Again, I don't have the books handy to refer to.) Oddly, except for an out-of-the-trunk story by M. John Harrison that later got rewritten as part of The Pastel City, I don't remember anything specific from Basilisk. Whoops, now that I think about it a bit more, I do remember a fantasy story by Joan Vinge. Unfortunately, while it was good writing, it was also obviously the first chapter of a novel, which is poor editing on Kushner's part.

As for Chrysalis 6...I will give an unreserved recommendation for Jim Corrick's story "Who Calls Me Villain?" Possibly this is because I know Jim (not well enough) personally, and also possibly because I may be reading more into the story than he intended to be there. (I would love to know just when it was first written.) Regardless of any personal prejudice on my part, though, I think I can safely say that it's a powerfully crafted, tragic and gut-wrenching story.

What I am presently reading, twenty or thirty pages at lunch each day, is Tom Pynchon's Gravity's Rainbow. I can understand why various people have been recommending it so highly. I'm fair to have the book boggle my croggle right off of the tracks.

And what I will next be reading is Ellis Peter's new mystery, One Corpse Too Many. Last issue I mentioned in passing her A Morbid Taste For Bones, a mystery set in medieval England and featuring Brother Cadfael, a professional soldier who has retired into the monastery, as the detective. Cadfael was one of the neatest and most sympathetic characters I've seen in detective fiction, all too many of which seem to think that characterization is putting a funny hat or a silly accent or bizarre mannerisms onto the characters. One Corpse Too Many is the new Brother Cadfael book, and from all reports (a review in a local paper, and Hilde's enjoyment of it) is even better than Bones.

And after that, the new Vance Bourjaily novel, A Game Men Play, which I finally found at the library, oddly, in the Mystery section. I say "oddly" because he has a general reputation of being a solid "mainstream" writer who doesn't delve into genres. Whatever, I'm sure I'll enjoy it.

And now I think it's about time to move on to the letter section:



## LETTER OF THE ISM

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((To put it simply, "DNO", to me, consists of the letters D, N, and O strung together. At one time, they did indeed mean "Do Not Quote." However, they have lost this meaning for a number of reasons. Not least is the fact that when many people use "DNO", what they actually mean is "When you repeat this to somebody else, don't tell them you heard it from me." My level of tolerance for bullshit has gone down markedly in the last several years, and I feel no obligation to protect people from their own gossip and bullshitting. If you've got some piece of information that will hurt or upset other people, why tell that information to me? Why pass that ammunition to me? I don't want it, if it's something that can't be made public without hurting people.

((Now the particular piece of information you got upset over, \*\*\*\*, wasn't something I considered particularly harmful, either to the person mentioned, or to you for having that opinion mentioned in public. In fact, I've seen that person make statements in two different magazines that indicate that he would actually agree with what you said, at the time you said it. Also, your statement was not only similar to what other people have said, but was also one of the occupational hazards that that person can expect in his chosen line of work. So I saw nothing harmful about printing it. If you disagree, think twice next time.

((I got two other letters this ish with sections noted as "DNQ". The one I haven't printed because, first, the supposition in that letter would be harmful to the person mentioned and I've seen no evidence to back it up, and, second, I'm fairly certain I remember seeing that piece of info published in a zine a month or two after getting the letter. The second DNQ I received simply wasn't that interesting.))



Dave Szurek, 4417 Second, Apt. B-15,  
Detroit, MI 48201

According to scientific principle, it's obvious that you've experienced a king's share of luck with barking dogs. Eye-to-eye contact is allegedly taken as a challenge to canines. If a dog is just farting around, chances are that a sign his victim isn't going to back down will work as discouragement. But if he/she/it is serious, such behavior could provoke an attack, as it would with a human. It's like this --- eye-to-eye contact is a fighting stance, a statement of "C'mon, mother-fucker, I'm ready for you!", not a warning like "Don't fuck with me or you'll live to regret it!". Dependent on the recipient's resolve, overt threats can serve as either a deterrent or a spur to particularly ardent action. Of course, if your technique has worked for you so far, I'd advice you to stick with it. Don't get ripped to shreds by a vicious dog, now.

((I got my first real dog bite, as opposed to near misses, a couple of months ago. But first a few words about dogs and mailmen in general:

((Most dogs are pure, absolute, unflinching cowards. The barking and growling is all for show, and they'd no sooner bite someone than I would. (I might bite back.) That's a Stage 1 dog, and what most of the brainless things are.

((A Stage 2 dog will bite a person, but only when it's safe. "Safe" is defined as when a person's back is turned.

((And Stage 3 is the growling, foaming, lunging, stark raving bonkers prototypical Mad Dog of legend, who would undoubtedly knee one in the groin if only it could. (I am reminded of one carrier who showed off his latest logbite scar. If it had been two inches higher, he could have been charged with indecent exposure for showing it off, except that if it had been two inches higher, there wouldn't have been anything indecent left to expose.)

((And the dog who bit me was a Stage 3. I'd seen him once be-

fore, staked and chained in the front yard, and had been in the house or back yard at all other times. This day, tho', his owner had him on his leash (a length of heavy chain) to put him into the car for a trip to the vet's. At the same time, I was coming up the street with the day's mail.

((The owner and dog come up to me for their mail. The dog's a big, black-coated German Shepherd, so I know better than to make any sudden moves. I stand still, the mail in one hand, letting the dog sniff at my hand and arm and see that I'm friendly. Right. The dog sniffs, then starts to turn away distractedly. Everything's OK, I think, so I start to bring my hand up to give the mail to the owner...

((...and with a growl and a lunge, the dog jerks forward and grabs my forearm between his teeth, followed a fraction of a second later by the owner pulling the dog back and away, followed by my saying something along the lines of "You...idiot!" while gazing appreciatively at the circle of broken skin on my arm.))

The incongruity of a male with a full beard being asked if he's trying to look like a girl has always been amusing, and I know it quite well. Back during "the counterculture's heyday" it happened like clockwork. I even recall one naive teenager posing the question to a couple of bikers. I doubt that you need being told that he'd just opened himself for a surprise.

One time, two of us, both bearded, were asked the same thing by a woman who insisted that we "prove our manhood." My companion took her up on the offer, and I've no idea why she got all bent out of shape. Nowadays, I think the practice is called flashing. The stupid woman made such a fuss that we had to get the hell out of there before police arrived.

Joseph M. Woodard, 521 Wenonah Avenue,  
Oak Park, IL 60304

I am flattered that after these seven long years you would still send me your magazine. Reading of your accomplishments caused me to feel young for



the first time in a long spell. I do not mean 'young' in a positive way as youthful and virile, but 'Young' with perjorative connotation of callow, immature, of less worth than an adult. The reason for that is that your writing reminded me that so many of my contemporaries now have degrees, spouses, children, houses that they are paying for and the trappings of Responsible Adulthood, whereas I have none of the above. It causes me shame. There is also a tinge of fear in my emotions. It is a fear that the world is getting so far ahead of me that I shall never catch up. I believe that there are other things than the above that are worth having and may exclude or preclude having the above. But I cannot see that I have them either.

My fanac in the last few years has been practically nil. No cons, no clubs, no fanzines. I have continued to read fantasy and science fiction but they do not form now as large a proportion of what I read as they once did because I now read more non-fiction and westerns. Life is a breadloaf and one's effort is a pat of butter. One can just spread it over so many slices. The more slices one spreads it over the thinner it must be on each slice.

During the past year and a quarter I have engaged in an activity somewhat similar to fanac. I am involved with a folk music club. This kind of group is fairly common in the British Isles but it is rare in the United States and I think it is unique in downstate Illinois. This group is in Champaign, Illinois and meets every Friday night in a saloon starting about eight in the evening and continuing until closing time at one in the morning. They place chairs in a rough circle and those wishing to participate sit in the circle and play and/or sing in turns. People do several kinds of folk music and some popular music but the emphasis is on Irish folk music. In addition to the weekly meetings the group has imported musicians from out of town to do concerts and has played for pay at several places in the area. One of the members has compiled and had printed a song-book. He is working on a second edition.

I see science fiction fandom as akin to the folk music clubs in this way: Both are groups of people with a

great enthusiasm for a style of art scorned by the populace at large. Where fandom has convention folk music has music festivals and fiddlers' gatherings. Where fandom has the pros, folk music has a small core of musicians who make a living by music. Where fandom has fanzines folk music has the small print-run, staple-bound songbook. If one wanted to stretch a point one would say that SING OUT magazine was the SCIENCE FICTION REVIEW of folk music and say that folk music has fanzines. Both form clubs. I think that each one satisfies similar needs for the participants, to wit, egoboo and the reassurance and camaraderie of meeting with people of similar tastes. In sum, I think SF fandom is unique but not unparalleled.

Tim Marion, c/o Leibowitz, 2032 Cross Bronx Expwy., #3-D, Bronx, NY 10472

Much thanks for UNDULANT FEVER 5; it's fast becoming one of my favorite fanzines. I only wish it came out faster.

But but but... A Swiftly Tilting Planet is written by one of my favorite writers of all time, whose name happens to be Madeleine L'Engle, not Sylvia Engdahl, who wrote stuff like Enchantress From The Stars. No doubt half a dozen people will be writing to point this out, but I just can't let this slander of one of my favorite writers go by unchallenged.

((Uhhh...oops.))

George Beahm, Heresy Press, 713 Paul Street, Newport News, VA 23605

This may come as a surprise to you, but UNDULANT FEVER is the only fanzine I now receive. (I'm getting too tired...old...pant...pant...to loc fanzines forever.)

Hah, there you are, Bruce: settled down. Married to another fan. One of the landed gentry. A civil servant (are you civil?). Long hair. Memories of boot camp, the Army, and its evils far behind you. Fort Lee, a fading memory. A noxious blast from the past. Fanacing. Pubbing UNDULANT FEVER.

\$520 a month for house payments -- sheeyit!

As one friend of mine said, after he bought his first house: "It's remark-



able what you can do without when you've got to make that house payment. And it's terrible what you have to do without, for the same reasons."

Norm Hollyn, 178 Spring St., New York, NY 10012

Having just moved I sympathize with your house-finding stories. Of course, getting a new apartment is hardly as complex as getting a house (and a mortgage and a plumber and a real estate agent and...etc.). But I can begin to sympathize with even that. When Janet and I first went looking for a place to move into together we pooled our money and decided to look for a co-op apartment. Co-ops are like condos except not really. All tenants rent from the co-op agency of which they own a certain number of shares, proportional to their share of the total rents in the structure.

So, we figure, great! Let's get some equity for this hard-earned cash.

Unfortunately, life and reality intervened.

We went to see one place after another that were so overprice for so little space that we despaired of ever finding a good place for us. Suddenly all of our riches seemed truly meager.

One day, we stumbled across a newly built co-op. High ceilings. Generous floor space. Nice area. Great view. The price? Well, the monthly maintenance fee (to hire a super, pay taxes, keep up the grounds, etc.) was about \$400.

True. But in New York, that's not bad.

The cost of the place: \$120,000!! The mortgage was  $8\frac{1}{2}\%$ . We did some quick figuring:  $120,000 \times 8\frac{1}{2}\% = \$10,200$  plus  $120,000$  equals  $\$130,200$  divided by 25 years and 12 months is  $\$434$  plus  $\$400 = \$834$  per month. Very expensive, but worth it.

Unfortunately, as you may have deduced, we made a slight mathematical miscalculation. Or, actually, an actuarial miscalculation. It isn't  $8\frac{1}{2}\%$  divided over 25 years. It's  $8\frac{1}{2}\%$  every year for 25 years. Which put the monthly money flow at about \$1300 outwards.

Now, we had no idea of this startlingly stupid error when we approached the agent to fill out an application. So she handed us the form and it was

then that I realized that there were circles that I was never going to enter. They listed categories of salary to check off. Janet's wasn't even listed, it was too low. I managed to just make it on. They wanted to know who our real estate lawyer was. Real estate lawyer!?! We put down a friend of Janet's who had once been to law school. Assets!? Janet's father has some money which, for tax purposes, he's put in her name. She made it inot the bottom category. I couldn't list my stereo system, so I was forced to admit to having 2 shares of Ogden corporation stock which I got for my Bar Mitzvah. Total value - \$230.

They wanted to know my financial advisor. Well, I do have a guy who does my income taxes every year. His name went down there.

Well, needless to say, we ended up "withdrawing our bid" as they say. But it was a real brush with another culture.

Right now it is muggy and hot in New York City. I'm sitting in my new apartment (which is not air-conditioned) and thinking of all of the money I've saved by not moving in to that expensive, air-conditioned co-op.

Hah! Take that, Rockefeller pigs! Eat it, Lee Iaccoca! Take your excesses away from me (and shove them where I won't see them).

Pardon me while I go make another mint julep.

Brett Cox, PO Box 542, Tabor City, NC 28463

Glad to see that you and Hilde are settling into your new home. I'll envy you those floor-to-ceiling bookshelves if you ever get them up. I've been buying even more books than usual recently, and while formerly my room was merely crowded, now it's bloody well overflowing with books, and I am in desperate need of bookshelves. With all the built-in closets, shelves, drawers, cabinets and so forth that we have in the house, though, it's difficult to lay anything out in a uniform pattern, including bookshelves. I'd hoped to avoid having to resort to cinderblocks and plywood, but I may have to. Either that, or restrain myself from buying books that I don't really need simply because



they're cheap. (Can't help myself. I don't care if it's Hindustani Home Cooking, if I can get an eight-dollar book for fifty cents -- as I have a couple of times recently -- I'll buy it.)

((Say, Brett, I've got some extra copies of a b-ok called Seeds of Change....))

I can sympathize with your visit to the emergency room, although I can't for the life of me understand why they didn't spray a topical anesthetic on the area before they injected the main item. When I was eight years old I got hit in the head with a spear (no shit, really -- I had just gotten back from a visit to the Cherokee Indian reservation in the mountains upstate and had acquired a boomerang and a blunt-tipped spear at one of the souvenir shops. Naturally, when I got home my best friend and I immediately started throwing them at each other, and his aim was slightly better than mine. It didn't seem so unusual at the time, but many years later when I told an acquaintance that I'd once been hit by a spear, she gave me an odd look and asked, "In which incarnation?"), after which I required several stitches in my scalp. I remember very clearly that the doctor sprayed something on the skin before injecting the anesthetic, and it didn't hurt a bit. Come to think of it, it didn't hurt when the accident took place either. Maybe all those people who've accused me of having a thick skull were right.

I couldn't help but be amused at Tim's abhorrence of epic simile. If it turns him off that much, I'd suggest he avoid anything by Homer as well as Victor Hugo. Epic similes can get tiresome, especially when the author repeats them incessantly -- after reading the Odyssey, I was prepared to spit in the face of anyone who dared ever again to refer to Dawn spreading her fingertips of rose. Mike Kring's loc makes me more anxious than ever to read some Pynchon, although there's a hell of a lot of other stuff I need to read first. As long as we're recommending authors, though, permit me to commend the works of Tom Robbins to your attention. I'm sure you've heard of both his novels (Another Roadside

Attraction and Even Cowgirls Get The Blues), and while they're flawed, naive, and often just too much to take, they're still very entertaining. Also very strange -- Robbins reminds me of R.A. Lafferty in some respects. You might want to take a look at The Bushwhacked Piano by Thomas McGuane, who is even stranger than Robbins. And if you get tired of strange, try All My Friends Are Going To Be Strangers, an absolutely outstanding "straight" mainstream novel by Larry McMurtry. And if none of it suits you, do what I do -- go re-read your Uncle Scrooge comics.

((EDITORIAL INTERRUPTION TIME -- Since getting the previous stencils of the lettercolumn typed, I received as one of my Xmas gifts a replacement for a typeball of mine that had been broken previously. So, from this point on, editorial remarks will be in Courier Italic like this.))

Al Siros, 550 Dixwell Ave., New Haven, CT 06511

I guess that if you can publish every-so-often, the least I in the midst of my gaffiation can do is respond e-s-o. Besides, there was a fair amount of stuff in UF #5 I was able to relate to, and that doesn't happen often these days between me and fanzines.

There was a time, not very many years ago, when I would have answered each and every zine the day I got it. This sort of letterhacking takes its toll...it did on me, anyway. I used to loc a lot.

These days, when I get a fanzine I feel guilty. I know that's silly -- after all, I really do have many more important concerns in my life. I have, this very day, almost exactly six hours ago, finished the first draft of a book I began seven months and one week ago. I started with the goal of 400 pages, and I typed "The End" today on page 397.

Needless to say, this novel has been eating up large chunks of my time. Then there is my VOOTIE minac. It's the only apa I'm in, and if I wasn't a member I'd never do any drawing. I do a smidgin of fanart, usually a batch of six to eight cartoons in one sitting every two or three months. As I have gotten better



at cartooning, I no longer allow half-assed drawings to get by. Well, not many.... God I used to do some real drivel...and you crazy fan-ed's would print the stuff...ha ha ha! (No, I'm kidding...lots of times a good piece of art would take hours to plan and execute.) I think that what most fans don't realize is that the fanartists spend every bit as much time, some of them/us, on a piece of fanart as the fanwriters do on their own work. Marc Schirmeister and I have griped about this to each other. I got a letter from him today that you wouldn't believe...it's a two-page comic strip. This is how he gets himself out of low moods when the Muse isn't at his beck and call; he forces out a long profusely illustrated letter in one draft. Really, the thing is amazing. It must have taken him several hours to do it.

Marc has the same sort of problem that you mention in UF5, with respect to your writing...not simply finishing, but compulsively going back before the sucker is completely drafted and refining details. I used to do this myself, and I find that it still happens occasionally, in art and writing. This is a very dangerous tendency, as I'm sure you're aware.

I for one would care to hear a great deal more about the workshop. My wife runs one here, which has been going on for 4 years and is currently being rather radically restructured to meet changing needs of the participants. We range from pros to strict amateurs, and I do mean full-time live-off-the-sf pros; Mark J. McGarry and Kevin O'Donnell Jr. One member just had a book out from Del Rey (Still Forms On Foxfield), one has had a cover story on IASFM, I've been in FANTASTIC and sold some other stuff here and there, and others have done articles and what have you. We found that the workshop went thru several definite phases. At first, there were 4-5 of us, and it was more of a social event. More people joined, and we stayed fairly social, loose, and were too nice to each other. This precipitated a crisis, and we went thru a year-long phase of cutting each other to bloody shreds...but still more or less on the basis of personal reactions to the stories as opposed to reactions based on literary considerations. This is what we

are changing now. We pick up stories at one meeting, read them, and critique these at the next meeting two weeks later. There's a bit more to it than that, naturally, but what this does is eliminate the time spent actually reading and sitting around waiting for someone else to finish...or for the reader to finish reading aloud. We're also trying to cut down on repetitive comments.

"We." Ha. They. I have quit. Not out of malice or spite or anything...it's simply that I feel that I can't get what I personally need from the workshop. The true ideas and commitments and change have to come from inside. This seems to be a growth process. I rarely read sf, and never current sf, and the book I finished could be considered sf but I will not let my agent market it as such. At this point in my life I don't want the label. I'd rather start off with a non-sf book. Besides, the next one I write has to be the one that my wife and I started about 3 years ago. The agent has the first third of this and an outline. If the thing hasn't sold by now, it won't, at least not in partial form. So I'll polish that off, and move on to another solo book.

Meanwhile, the second draft of the book I just completed, titled An End To Housework, probably won't be done till December. Ghack. It's tough to keep something like that alive for a year...

((The Phoenix Science Fiction Writers Workshop went defunct after about seven months. There was some good work going thru it; Jerry Cole had a fairly good story in there and Curt Stubbs had some well-done beginnings to several stories and this is yet another reminder to him to get those damn things finished! and I like to think that the things of my own I read weren't bad.

((However...both Curt and Jerry were not able to attend regularly, and the rest of the people who attended, well, they were young, and their idea of peachy keen sci-fi was a bit limited. (Stan Lee and George Lucas will have a lot to answer for someday....))

((There were other problems. The More is Better Syndrome, for instance. One person had a character who, he insisted, could operate under a force of three hundred gravities. I pointed out to him that his character was human in



shape, and while I might be able to believe in a humanoid character operating under 4 or five Gs, a character in a 300G environment would most likely have the shape of a blanket. Did the guy change the character or the story to make it more believable? Nope.

((And of course there were plenty of those who loved to plan stories, filling pages and pages, loose-leaf notebooks full of notes, and charts, and lists, and drawings and so on, but never actually getting a story written.

((At any rate, the number of people at the meetings dwindled, and finally the fellow who was supposed to be having the October meeting at his home got called in to work and simply didn't inform anyone else of this. A few people showed up one by one, found there was no meeting, and went home. I never bothered to try and arrange another one.

((I think the main problem the PSFW<sup>2</sup> had was that it didn't have enough members who seriously wanted to write. To most, it seemed to be something purely for fun, to entertain themselves, and when it became a matter of work, to entertain or at least gain the attention of other people, it just wasn't worth that much effort.

((I noticed at a recent CASFS meeting, at which for a program item I'd presented an SF scenario for people to ideatrip off of, the the meeting seemdd to break up into groups of 3 or 4 people, each discussing the scenario separately. This leads me to think that possibly, instead of the group of 8-12 people I was aiming for with the PSFW<sup>2</sup>, a more effective size might be a group of 3 or four people who are serious about wanting to write. The bugaboo, as usual is time. Not just mine, but also Curt and Jerry's (who I would want to participate), both of whom also tend to have horrendously crowded or inconvenient schedules.

((I'm basically talking off the top of my head at the moment, and we shall have to wait and see what, if anything, actually gets done about this.))

I don't get the thrill from fanzines and cons that you seem to. Well, from zines, anyway!! I like fanzines. I got lots of 'em. It's just, I guess, that my priorities lie more in the line of developing my art and writing. I suppose you could say that the developmental processes truly began in fanzines, and I

would say that was true. Now, however, my own ideas seem to have taken me out of a fannish context...out of locs and fanart. I still have-at-'em occasionally (witness this, my longest loc in months), but I spend more and more time drawing for myself --- comics and paintings, and writing short stories and trying to become a novelist.

Okay, attending cons...I haven't been to one in over a year. I have no plans to attend Noreascon II, in Boston, very close by, as these things go. Why? The idea of so many thousands of douchebags and assholes fills me with cooties. There are more than a few worthwhile people in fandom, as I well know, but I find large cons -- cons in general -- frustrating because I never really get to talk or communicate with these people. Too many games being played. True, a lot of time I have spent at cons has been tense because I was sweating out bids on my art in the art shows...trying to be a pro. (Games, games....) Well, I've pretty much given up on that idea. Now, however, after spending so much time with editors and publishers, the rest of the con seems like something of a letdown. This is unfair, I know. It's something I'll have to grow out of. So, no worldcon for me. Maybe next time.

The other thing I was interested in was your house. (Also I really felt bad for Eric Mayer....) Linda and I are trying to buy a house now, ourselves. We only have \$4000 or so, though, so we will need financing. Even so, this puts our uppermost limit at \$40,000, and there aren't many good houses around here for that. This house is being eaten by carpenter ants (we rent the first floor apartment in a 3-family structure built in the second decade of this century... nice but a little rickety here and there...), and it is very poorly insulated. As you know, we can get some cold weather here. This past winter we were lucky...but still, we were still paying the gas bill from '78 this year. Over \$700! Horrible, horrible! The only thing which saved us was that my grandmother died, leaving me enough money to pay off all my bills (even including my fucking student loan)...which is why we have some spare money to buy a house. Otherwise we'd never be able to do it! I know just how Eric feels...and I am very well aware of how lucky we are.



Needless to say, my grandmother's death was very much an occasion of mixed feelings.

I hate the fucking utility companies. But that's another story...because one week to the day after we paid that whopping bill, the assholes at the gas company came along and TURNED THE GAS OFF! I couldn't believe it. I think it's funny, now, but my wife doesn't... she was livid. Usually I'm the one to flip out, but this time she beat me to it and I was too cowed by her rage to lose my own temper. (They turned off the gas on us because my landlord, who lives in the apartment above, owed them money too...which we didn't know. So, due to some half-assed foul-up, they turned off ours, too. Linda went down there the next day...and the fuckers didn't even apologize. Mumbled something about "a mistake" and slunk back here to turn on the gas that same afternoon.)

Anyway, like I say, I really enjoyed reading about your hassles and joys dealing with your house. Maybe it's because eventually I'll be doing the same sort of mundane stuff. I like gardening, though. I have a small flower garden behind this house, which keeps me amused. I like flowers, but with prices what they are, when we get our own place, I'll put in veggies.

Marc Ortlieb, 70 Hamblin Rd., Elizabeth Downs, SA 5113 AUSTRALIA

Hah! Homeownership! You're welcome. What with supporting a genzine and six apazine, plus trying to learn guitar, and watching a hell of a lot of tv, I have no time for the onerous duties of home ownership. I like rented places, because if the landlord feels that three feet is an overabundance for lawn, he gets it cut. The only time I visit the back yard is to hang my washing out. Friends tell me I have orange and lemon trees out the back plus a rhubarb patch. I'm willing to take their word for it.

The same applies to veggie growing. For me, food is something that interrupts more interesting things, and it is no accident that half my fanzine collection has food stains. I read while eating. Helps rid me of the feeling that I'm completely wasting my time. As a matter of fact, that's why I took up

reading Marvel comics again. It doesn't really matter if I spill wheatbix on comics, whereas I doubt that a first edition Dragonsong with tomato sauce would sell particularly well. The only time this place has seen any signs of cultivation was when Linda was living here and decided to dig up a part of the lawn to grow herbs and strawberries. The parsley is still going fine, but the strawberries died. Pity really, as I like strawberries, but am not particularly fond of parsley. I guess that's life. It is, however, interesting to note which of Linda's plants survive. The mandarin trees, for instance, which I wouldn't have given a hope in hell seen to be hanging on. One of these days, when hanging out my washing, I'm going to feel sorry for the things and water them.

As for con problems, I'm in full agreement. Having had my one experience with running a con, never again. True, we didn't have any hotel hassles, but then with a pais up membership of sixty, you don't expect to. However, as I suppose applies to you, I find fanzines a much more rewarding form of activity than cons. I'm not even sure I enjoy going to the things at present, much less running them.

Harry Warner, Jr., 423 Summit Avenue, Hagerstown, MD 21740

The new UNDULANT FEVER was particularly welcome for its heretical expressions on the relative value of cons and fanzines. I don't feel quite as different and lonely as I did until reading this issue. Who knows? Next month or next year may bring yet another recruit to our miniscule little company.

But, pessimist as I normally am, I had been calculating for a while how much longer it would be until there are more cons than general circulation fanzines and until the typical fan receives fewer fanzines than the number of cons he attends. If circumstances had gone unchanged that time might have been only a few years in the future. Now the problems you mention for cons seem likely to delay the awful moment when the balance shifts. I have my doubts about an indefinite postponement of that moment, though. It looks as if postal rates will again rise, the cost of paper is



shooting out of sight, and the number of fanzines reaching me is dwindling faster than can be attributed to the editors who are dropping me from mailing lists for failure to write locs regularly enough.

Wouldn't it be strange if these outside forces became so severe by the end of the 1980's that fans will find themselves again as frustrated and inarticulate as they were back in the 1920's before they began to contact one another through prozine letter columns? The only difference might be the fact that there will be vast numbers of fans in this situation as a result of inability to afford postage stamps and gasoline, instead of the handful of solitary fans just before the invention of loc hacking and fanzines and the Science Fiction League.

Ned Brooks, 713 Paul St., Newport News, VA 23605

I had nor heard about the damage to the Iggycon hotel, what a depressing thought, that there are such vandals among us. What sort of damage was it? Real vandalism or accidents or what the hotel should have just put down to normal wear? I scribbled on a hall mirror in greasepencil once, with Roy Krenkel and some other lunatics, but that is about as vandalistic as I ever got.

((To the best of my knowledge, the vandalism at Iggy was mianly of the writing-on-walls type. I have also heard that the major "vandalism" the Hyatt claimed was for one of the escalators that broek down from overuse. At Phringecon, a media-con held last summer in the Adams hotel in Phx, however, there was at least one smoke bomb set off, every lightbulb in the hallways and stairwells was removed, and rocks and firecrackers were being thrown from the hotel roof. All of these activies appear to have been done by one or another of the "Sandmen" and other costumed guntoters at the con. I find myself in the odd position of actually agreeing with Mike Glycer for once; let's keep weapons, even play ones, out of conventions, and if need be, keep out the fourth-grade mentalities who seem to wear them.))

((This editorial remark here is for the sole purpose of filling up some space.))

Gary S. Mattingly, PO Box 6907, San Francisco, CA 94101

Too bad about Leprecon. On the West-con bid and conventions in general, it is true that many con chairmans and other people that work on the con get very little recggnition and are soon forgotten. Many crudzine wditors get remembered longer than con committees. I'm still reading, although usually not science fiction, but haven't been doing any fanzines, except for a few sporadic apazines, if that counts. Even dropped out of two apas recently. I'm not exactly trying to spend more time with people, just trying to spend more time out, seeing movies, going to concerts, going outside, walking in the countryside, in the city, and primarily doing things with Patty (Peters). Right now the relationship comes first. I'm having a great time at it too.

I cut my hair, my beard, and mustache. New styles, you know. I've seen too many burned out hippies walking the Haight. There are lots of fans that still maintain this style, nothing wrong with it. I personally thought it was time for a change for me. There are even some long-haired types that get down on punks, that are red necks.

At present (you were talking about your reading) I'm reading a book of stories by Charles Bukowski, most of which are particularly sexually gross, also various perverse tales of drunkenness and living in a state removed from most people's reality. I find it very entertaining reading although I don't particularly like his description of horse betting. I have no knowledge of it and at present wish to have no knowledge of it. ((Is it as gross as the line Barry Malzberg once came up with to describe sex with women: "You beat off inside 'em."?)) Course I am also fairly certain I wouldn't want to live his life either. Course he was a postman for a number of years. The years I wouldn't like are the ones when he didn't have a job and was an alcoholic. That part I could do without. Admittedly working every day can be a little mundane, a little boring, but I don't have too much of a desire to vomit blood on any type of a regular basis. He does make that life seem a little amusing, though.

((Same readon as the one there to the left.



Dann Grannell, Box DG, Dana Point, CA  
92629

Of course you know you're encroaching shamelessly into Dave Locke's private purview in doing fanzine copy about personal pain? Actually, you twanged a chord of personal nostalgia with your account and I'm darned if I know how to thank you properly. It was February of 1963 and we had finally made the great bugout from Fond du Lac to Milwaukee (both in Wisconsin) amid incredible trauma and travail. Mayflower Van Lines had ravished us shamelessly, but we were in the new house, along with our surviving possessions, all camouflaged in myriad upon myriads of Mayflower packing cases (called "barrels"), each about the size of an old-fashioned orange crate. No slightest clue as to the contents of any given barrel. Just cardboard cartons, filling all the space available.

So it was an endless treasure hunt. Grab a box, peel it open and see what you'd lucked onto. Empty the box and try to find a place for it, meanwhile, take the empty box out in back for trash pickup, later the week.

I made a grievous strategic error. I was wearing my carpet slippers that Saturday morn in late Feb '63 as I went out the the 3-4" of coarse-grained old snow with a further armload of emptied Mayflower barrels (cartons). So I was walking along and I put my left foot down onto a jagged, bayonet-like shard of broken pop bottle, souvenir of the previous tenants, which had frozen into the ice very firmly. The point of it, I learned later, went between two of the metatarsals and came out through the top of the foot. What does one do in such a case? Well, I yanked the left foot up sharply, slipped on the icy footing and came back down on top of it, hearing a brittle snap as I did so.

I had cracked one the bones in my left ankle during all that, besides impaling the foot like a prize butterfly on a mounting needle. This led to a visit to the emergency ward at Columbia Hospital and getting acquainted with a 6'2" Filippino doctor blessed with the gentlest hands I've ever encountered on a fellow human. It also led to a plaster cast on the left shin and grinding weeks getting about with crutches. At

work, I'd just put a knee to a castored chair and go whizzing blithely about. Once I got into the family auto, an Olds with auto shift, I could get about as well as anyone, being as I still had an undamaged right foot.

My employer of that time, for a brief and hectic bit, whose wife's name was well known in fannish circles of the era, spared me no slightest sympathy, but favored me with his candid comment: "According to my Wonderful Religion, you broke that ankle on purpose!"

For 17 years prior to that, I'd worked for relatives and found it heavily onerous. It was during that brief interlude that I discovered that working for people you'd regarded as friends doesn't work either. My next employer was a total stranger and I worked for him nearly three years and for the current stranger the next 14 and a bit. With our "friends," I lasted from mid-February to late March and was more or less able to limp about without crutches by the time I reported for the next job.

As for conventions and attending same, color me less than enthusiastic. For most of the years since early 1946, I've had to attend conventions in line of duty and I've come to dread, detest, despise, hate and abominate it. Dislike it? That too. Conventions involve people in large masses. Even if the large masses consist entirely of science-fiction fans, for my part, thanks but no thanks. It is true that one encounters good friends at a s-f con. It is probably true that encountering them at such an affair is preferable to encountering them in adjoining cells on death row; by a damned thin margin, imho. You see a friend, you start to talk, they see someone else, mumble "Excuse me," and take off, leaving you to try making interesting palaver with someone else who immediately spots someone else and takes off after the first one. Conventions? Color me green for jaded. The last one I went to was the Westercon of '76. I devoutly hope I never get sucked into going to another.

((I remember talking to you at that Westercon for a few moments, Dean. Then I saw someone else I wanted to talk to and...))

((Where's a Dave Locke lino when needed?))



Dave Locke, 4215 Romaine Drive #22, Cincinnati, OH 45209

Someone was trying to disrupt a Leprecon meeting, you say, and you fell for it and felt chagrin because you almost punched him out. I dunno, Bruce. It probably would have been for the best if you'd gone ahead and done it. Look at it this way: apparently this fellow achieved his objective. If he'd also achieved a facial rearrangement, he'd likely have been less pleased with the accomplishment. Might have cause to think several times about shooting for disruption if the opportunity presents itself again. People do learn valuable

lessons this way, you know. You'd be amazed how a good shot in the mouth can boost people over what would otherwise be a steep learning curve.

((I think if I had done that, this fellow's particular set of political beliefs would have had him calling the cops on me. His beliefs? "Anarchist," of course.))

It's okay if you try to slow down the collapse of general fanzine fandom. Though it has already collapsed, it's not necessary for you to believe this. Ignore anyone who would tell you otherwise, and just keep publishing.

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End of the letter column. WAF, before I forget: Alexis Gilliland, Darryl Wilkinson, Harry Andruschak, Jon Singer (quick note to you, Jon: I've found that M.F.K. Fisher's The Art of Eating, an omnibus collection of her books, is available as a Vintage paperback), Teresa Nielsen Hayden, Bill Kunkel, Leigh Edmonds, Sheryl Birkhead, Doris (Elder Goddess) Beetem (and thank you for the book), and probably one or two others whom I've mislaid their locs. Copies of the last issue sent to Denys Howard and Jeff Frane were returned as undeliverable; anyone have an up-to-date address for them? I did not hear from Mike Glicksohn; shame, shame on Mikey.  
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23 Jan 81 And so we come to the end of another UNDULANT FEVER. I will be trying to get these stencils run off, collated, addressed, and all that rot by the weekend so I can get it into the mail before the postage hike goes into effect. This may be dependent on how well I can get the paper feed on my mimeo to working; lately it's been worse than ever and I've had to feed paper in one sheet at a time. Lessee, twenty stencils at about 200 copies each...uh uh, no way.

Actually, the feed used to work fine, until I sent the machine to the shop a few years ago for reconditioning. Part of the reconditioning was replacement of the feed wheels that pushed each sheet of paper into the machine. Previously the machine had had ridged pink rubber wheels that pushed the paper thru just fine. When it came back from the shop, the new wheels were this grungy yellowish-brown with only little tiny ridges on them. And I soon found out that these new wheels would quickly wear down to smoothness, plus pick up dust and grime from the paper, giving the wheels' working surface an actual polish! Guess what? They didn't push paper thru very well when they were smooth and polished. I've tried cutting new grooves in the wheels with a steak knife, but that only worked for a while. So what I'll be trying next is taking a Glu-STik and going over the wheels to give them a tackier surface.

In any event, between hikes in postage and repro problems, I've been considering going to offset printing and bulk-rate mailings. Each issue of UF presently costs about \$35 to produce. But if I run the send list up over 200, use the Price Club's el cheapo printing, and if CASFS, the local club, finally gets the last of its non-profit paperwork thru and is able to get a non-profit mailing permit, I should be able to send out up to 500 copies for about \$100. Do I want to send out that many copies? Well, if Bruce Dane can teach me how to use his computer to store and print out address labels...maybe. Wait and see.

And I'll use the last few lines for a quick up-date: My brother Gary got married February 14th. We had a party here last Saturday; saw a lot of people we don't usually anymore. Finished One Corpse Too Many (it is good), still working on A Game Men Play. My finished manuscripts got sent out again, and two have come back again, \*sigh\*. And every man, woman and child in Phoenix has had, has, or is getting, a cough, cold or flu.

End zine.





Caer Ananda  
3421 W Poinsettia  
Phoenix, AZ 85029



THIRD CLASS

Jackie Causgrove  
4215 Romaine Dr., #22  
Cincinnati, OH 45209