



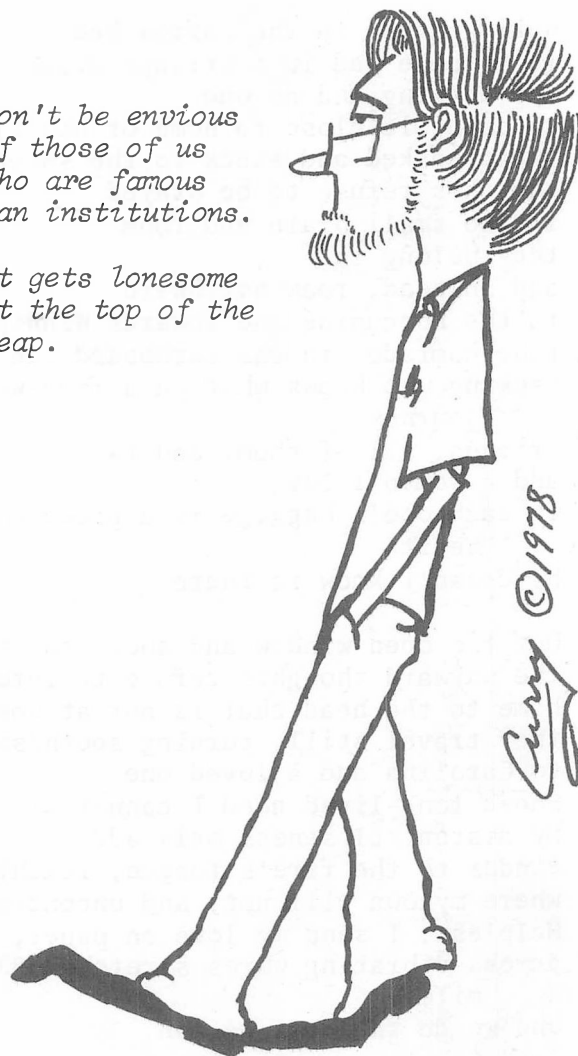
...but I kept falling  
in love with Princess  
Organa.

Considering the ratio of  
brain to size one can  
only believe that the  
thing towering above  
me is a dinosaur....

# Xenolith

...even though she pats me on the head, and tells me to 'be quiet'... this one is obviously for a friend-- PAT MUELLER; she makes me happy...

It gets lonesome  
at the top of the  
heap.



Curry ©1978

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AFTER A ROUGH NIGHT OF IT  
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*Leah Chodak Zeldes*

Waking alone in the narrow bed  
(a strange bed in a strange place)  
and nothing and no one  
to bring it close to home or heart),  
sweat-soaked and stuck to the sheets,  
thoughts refuse to be stayed  
in the small brain and room  
they belong in  
and instead, roam northward  
to the Porcupine and towards Winnipeg:  
Four comrades in one cardboard van  
seeking who knows what on a five-week  
journey--  
friends, all of them, and two men  
and a woman I love.  
In each one's baggage is a piece of  
heart  
he doesn't know is there.

Out the open window and above the trees  
the wayward thoughts refuse to return  
home to the head that is not at home;  
they travel still, turning south/southeast  
to Carolina and a loved one  
whose long-lived need I cannot aid.  
My distant closeness only adds  
tinder to the fire's tongue, reaching  
where my own will not, and uncontrolled.  
Helpless, I send my love on paper,  
across vibrating wires stretched 800  
miles,  
and we do the best we can.

With pain-filled haste  
and one tender backward glance,  
the spirit-thoughts leave one sufferer  
for another, coming west again to Michigan  
but once more passing me;  
they stay with one I left in pain:  
*psychosomatic*, he says, and is probably  
right--  
castration fear's a neuosis,  
and pains in the stomach  
travel up to the head.  
Having withdrawn before the climax,  
as it were  
(in fear, he says, and he knows  
his new self far better than I),  
he left behind no substance--  
only memory of all that filled  
its empty place before;  
and yet, somewhere below this new and  
troubled self  
I feel his need and still warm love.  
(If I am wrong, don't tell me.)

Straying thoughts back off to leave  
the platonic lover in his misery  
(buried, but not forgotten there)  
pressing far west to San Francisco--  
beloved bay and a man I've never seen.  
We have sent reams of paper  
"through the eye / of empty space,"  
sharing dreams and THE BOOK OF NIGHTMARES.  
(Kinnell is not the only one  
whose stranger friends have demon loves.)  
He lusts, and hunts the whorish Muse  
and in his fervor sometimes sends  
a kiss from her to me.

Still visiting pieces of given heart  
(and never mind the cost)  
pilgrim thoughts fare east to flat Ohio.  
A newer love is growing there--  
a healthy tree with deepening roots.  
How easy it is to depend on the dependable;  
the contrasts make it interesting  
and all the rest is safe.  
Cautious loving branches  
shield my cradle from a fall.

When finally moving thoughts come back,  
broken-winded and aghast  
that such large chunks of heart removed  
can still leave something there for  
pumping blood,  
it is morning once again  
and darkling rain-soaked air  
is pressed against my cooling skin.



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GRAVEL  
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I have, more than once, said that the only validity Marcons had for me was the fact that they were so damned close. (...a statement that has as much validity from the South, as it did from the North.) But, just recently I've begun to wonder if that statement is, perhaps, just a bit too flip. I wonder...

My records say I was at a Marcon in 1972, but I don't remember anything of that one. But I have been to the last five in a row, and of those Marcons I do have a few memories...

#9 -- 1974: The Saturday morning before the convention I was up at Ellet Graphic Arts, stapling and trimming copies of *Outworlds* 19. I was using a hand-cutter, but it was a large floor model with a cast iron bar/lever about two kilometers long, and weighing a fair approximation of pre-diet Ric Bergman. Given the unusual amount of graceful co-ordination with which I am blessed, I proceeded to whack myself soundly over the head with that lever. I didn't lose consciousness, but it definitely smarted.

I went home, and Joan asked me for a divorce. My mother never told me that there'd be days like that!

We agreed not to tell anyone, other than Glicksohn, until after the convention.

Friday evening we were to pick Mike up at Cleveland-Hopkins airport. I got home from work, and Joan took the car we were planning on using for all of this over to my sister's, to drop off the keys to the house. On the way back to Wadsworth, she was struck by a hit-and-run driver. She was quite shaken, but apparently unhurt, and the car seemed drivable, so we decided to proceed. We managed to make it up to get Mike, but metal was scraping the tire, so on the return we stopped and borrowed my sister's car to go to Columbus.

I don't remember too much of the specifics of the convention, but one incident still stands out: We were at a party, and I apparently made one of my unthinking cracks. Larry Propp replied, something to the effect of "Watch that...remember, I'm Joan's lawyer." I was convinced that she had told others of the impending divorce.

She hadn't. Paranoia 101.







...on Friday afternoon, April 14th, Marla and I left for Marcon 13. (Cavin was in Michigan, and the rest of Cincinnati fandom weren't going up until Saturday, if they were going at all.)

We arrived at my 60th convention in time for me to deliver, to a vast crowd of maybe thirty, my Second Practice IGUANACON Speech. (A year earlier, at my 50th--Marcon 12--I had delivered my "first"; but I somehow doubt, whether I make a speech or not, that when Marcon 14 rolls around next year, it will be as high as being my 70th convention...)

That out of the way [it appears in print in another fanzine starting with the same initial as this one...] I could relax and enjoy my first convention in six months.

And enjoy it I did...

Friday nite was spent greeting friends too long missed, and in general being, for me, "social": trying to spend time with more than just a handful of people, as is my wont. I do recall standing outside the con suite door for a while, talking with Pat Mueller, who was standing across the hallway...and watching with some astonishment as she demolished several cupfulls of ice cubes in quick succession.

...but since, as a result of a long phone call from a tall Chicago person, I'd had only 3 hours sleep the night before...I called it quits fairly early, for me, while the party was still going strong.

Saturday afternoon was spent mostly in the bar, with Al & Tanya, Marla, Sid, and Karen Persello...and others who wandered in and out. There was a flying visit by Denise ~~and groupies~~ and Cincinnati's cutest "couple"--Art and Don. Al, Tanya, Lou, Jr., Marla, Ric, & I went across the street to Bob Evans for supper. Cavin found us. (Strange, there is a Bob Evans across the street from the Midwestcon hotel; I'm not quite sure what that proves, but I'm sure I'll think of something, given time...)

Later, Ric, Tanya, Lou Jr., Marla and I went across the parking lot to the bowling alley to investigate the pinball machines. There we found the fabled "Ego" machine: I mean, when Marla rang up 400,000 points on the first ball, we knew that this was our kind of machine. [It had a few other quirks which lead me to suspect that its accuracy in scoring is matched only by the accuracy in reportage practiced by a certain Toronto-based newszine, whose title shall be *DNQ* for the moment...]

...after the parties began, and at the urging of my former friend Tanya (thought I'd forgotten about the rope trick, eh?), I at last joined the ranks of caftan fandom. And, once I got rid of the boots--what was I to know?--the reaction was quite favorable. With one notable exception:

"I like my men in pants." Copyright 1978 by Leah Zeldes.

[I will say that, after attempting to go to the john in the damn thing, I have a much greater appreciation of what women have gone through... Other than that, it's the most comfortable "public" garment I've found since my sack shirt; I like it.]

At some point close to midnight, I ended up in the con suite, and eventually carved a niche out on the couch. And eventually the spot to my side became vacant...

...in issue 7 of Father William's MISHAPventures, in a mailing comment to Janet Small written in January 1977, I said: (...one thing) that I've noticed is this: of the (still) handful of people I consider close friends, none achieved that "status" overnight--even tho it sometimes seemed so. More often than not, it was someone whom I'd seen at 3 or 4 cons...someone I knew the name of and not much more...and then, suddenly, for no apparent reason, at a particular con, something clicked. It's happened several times over the past year...and it continues to amaze me. And intrigue me.

I don't know: I'm not into mysticism and I don't really believe in predetermination, but sometimes... Are these things really accidental, dependent on a fluke of fate?

...and what a difference a mere couple of minutes may have made!

What if Pat had come into the con suite a minute earlier when someone was sitting beside me? Or what if she had come in a few minutes later, and someone else had filled the vacuum? Or what if, even coming in at precisely the moment she did, I had not had the nerve to ask: "Why don't you sit here?"? Idle speculation...yes. Or maybe not. I wonder.







\*\*\*\*\* PERDLES \*\*\*\*\*

DENISE PARSLEY LEIGH I hope you're satisfied. You're probably also in the emergency room of Cincinnati General being treated for shock, or some other tall people's ailment, but it's your own fault. You challenged me and I ~~never~~ rarely turn down a challenge. Just wait till Paula publishes *Pisteria*, ~~but about now you're~~.

I was very disappointed to note that *Xenolith 4* contained no Gravel section. Since it's so rare that I see you anymore I was looking forward to finding out what was new with you. I am glad to know that your disease is clearing up. Maybe that's what happens when you get too tall. You really should come down to my level once in a while. I never have that problem.

I promise as soon as MASH stops having reruns we'll be over regularly again. Like it or not, we still love you and miss seeing you. Of course, you could come to the east side of town once in a while, other than when you pick up Marla at my place. Well, I suppose a fleeting glimpse of your retreating back ~~is~~ is better than nothing.

Bergman and Cavin had better get off their asses and write a loc because even I beat them. No more disparaging remarks, please.

Take care and remember I love you.

[4/18/78]

...not fair, Denise! Don't you know the Rules...that you're supposed to reply to insults with more insults? I don't think I've ever been more deflated (and I'm thin enough!) than when I opened the envelope with your letter....but I do appreciate it. You and Steve are two of the most important reasons I can still say that coming to Cinti was the best move I ever made in my life (tho we remember certain times when I wasn't too sure of that, don't we?) and two of the more important reasons for staying here. And, if your house deal goes thru, at last you'll be on the right side (going South on I-75) of town at last, which will be nice. ## And now that I've managed to extract the Very First LoCs out of both you and Steve...don't let them be the last!

DAVE LOCKE Thankee for *Xenolith 4*, the lettercolumn which you mailed off as a fanzine.

It's great to know that you've finally discovered your niche in the fan-publishing field. I think I passed mine when I stopped publishing the N3F Welcomittee newsletter back in 1961; everything I've done since then has been very close to anticlimactic.

I have four pieces of information to pass along to you, and I will sequence them in the same way that they occurred to me. Additionally, because I am a fanwriter, I will embellish them so that they will appear to be more interesting than they actually are, and hopefully as a resultant byproduct of this effort you will feel moved to classify this missive as a LoC. If such is accomplished, this may serve to maintain my name on your mailing list.

[To prove that, indeed, I'm an "Editor", I have deleted Dave's first "point". Bill]

The second thing I wanted to impart to you is the great disappointment I experience every time I read *Xenolith*. This is not to say that *Xenolith* is a bad fanzine. I would never say that because, as you may know, I have never been much of a crowd follower. I take great pride in my contrariness and general perversity. And, even beyond that, I've enjoyed parts of your fanzine. No, my disappointment has to do with the fact that I never find what I'm seeking when I read a Bowers fanzine lately.

To continue on this same subject, although it may not seem like it at first, your fanartists should note that it might not be smart to build too large a backlog of Bill Bowers "tall" cartoons and sketches. This is because, you see, Bill Bowers will be much shorter if he doesn't show at Midwestcon and Wilcon with his letterfile of LoCs on the Fanwriter Symposium issue of *Outworlds*.

Now you know why I'm disappointed each time I read one of your fanzines. I want my egoboo. Makes me angry. Makes me want to make other people short, too. Take them off at the knees. Spent a lot of time on that Symposium. Want to see the fucking response to



it. Placate me. Bring your file to those conventions. I'll be at one or the other. May Ghod help you if you forget. If you remember, though, I'll buy a drink. Or maybe two.

And speaking of short people brings me to my third and fourth points, both of which concern Mike Glicksohn and the two letters of his which you published in this.

There was a reason why I sent Mike a recording of Randy Newman's *Short People*. I never do anything without a reason. This is a habit which I have stuck to for a good fourteen or fifteen years now. Prior to that I used to do things without having any reasons, all the time. Found it too hard to justify them afterwards, though, which in itself is the reason I finally stopped operating that way. Yes, I had a reason for sending that recording to Mike. I sent it because it seemed like a good idea at the time. Plus I'd been drinking.

As for my last point, I have never (not now, not ever, never) said that Glicksohn was taller than I am. This is a lie. This is a lie, I know, because quite frankly I don't believe that he's taller than I am, and if I don't believe it I sure as shit wouldn't say something like that.

There are two factors bearing on the subject of which of us is taller. On my side I have the sworn statements of approximately a dozen Midwest fans who have met the both of us, separately. Each time a new name gets added to the list, my reassurance grows. It's unfortunate that I don't, but those are the breaks.

On Mike's side is a door in Beecher which has two height marks bearing our names, and his mark is one eighth of an inch higher than mine. My mark was placed on that door by someone shorter than I am, and they put a yardstick on top of my head and by eyeball tried to line it up perpendicular to the door before making the pencil mark. They were also drunk. Ghu knows the conditions in effect at the time that Mike's height was pencilled in. Additionally, at that time the hair on my head matted down to about the width of one hair. Mike's couldn't have been pushed down any more than the thickness of a doormat.

It gives us something to write about, anyway.

[4/27/78]

ERIC LINDSAY [...on X1] *Xenolith* is virtually unreadable, due to your utterly silly choice of paper color (billious green), and the rocky lithography that is most evident on the rear cover. Is Jimmy Carter related to this Derek Carter character?...

Whatever. I enjoyed the front cover--the black ant hills are of course a symbolic representation of civilization, while the gas bags are indicative of the hot air of democratic debate, puffing away at the sails of the ship of state (in the foreground), while a ramshackle building, showing man's technology, perches precariously on the sides of the ant heaps.

It is apparent that the only way I can get *Outworlds* is to visit you and see it presented "live", in the manner pioneered by The Spanish Inquisition (which is a drunken inquisition).

[4/4/78]

[...on X3] How come almost all the letters you get are from pretty girls? I'll rephrase that, how come almost all the letters you publish are from... on second thoughts, I withdraw the question.

Jodie is in fine form, but how in the hell is a fan to have time for other hobbies, says he, wondering when he can get to the pistol club next, or to the tech to bind some more books, or...

Can't understand how you manage to stay away from cons for a lengthy period, and then, just coincidentally get all sorts of letters from people in con withdrawal. telling you they have managed to survive such deprivation--I think you wrote the letters yourself.

[5/30/78]

It will be good to see Eric at Midwestcon and thru the summer; one of these days we'll figure out a way of keeping him up here for good!

DAVE ROWE [...on X3] First the grumble... You have simply got to do better than that. Your own pieces were well below par, you're no Walt Willis but you're good when you try. Your prose in X3 read very much like a first draft, and as much as I love hearing about what fen have got up to, I do feel it fair that the reader receives more



than just the bland bare bones. O.K. ALREADY, yours had a bit of gristle here and there but one could hardly call it body. Also...there simply weren't enough commet hooks. Well, I mean if you want us to influence your whims, then you've got to influence our influences. Is this statement fluent enough for you?

I suppose Jodie was supposed to provide the hooks, but I haven't yet taken to plants and sewing isn't really my bag. The trouble here is a personal one; of late my hobbies apart from socialising and pottery (well, socialising costs money and takes up a lot of your spare time, doesn't it?) has been reading.

So what of Pottery? Pottery is to masocists what a gustard-filled sock is to sadists. Great, as long as you're not really looking for any real hurt. You see you have to wedge and knead clay to get rid of the air (yes, I know you do it to bread-dough to get air in, but somehow clay has got stuck in reverse gear) and this is very important as air in clay expands in the kiln, trying to push the surrounding clay out of the way, but clay being inert simply wishes to remain where it is and won't give an inch, the result like so many similar confrontations is a sudden explosion with the unrelenting clay in little pieces and a lot of hot air dispursed all over the place. Unfortunately when the clay goes to pieces it tends to take several other items in the kiln to the same destination. This does not help you stay on good terms with your fellow clay-workers--whose items they were--or advance your chances of becoming *Ceramic Review's* Pottery of the Month Centrespread.

Now the only time I get to make with the stoneware is at night school (where there are nice little optional extras like potter's wheels and kilns and stuff like that) so about half the time there is spent wedging and kneading the clay. Many is the time the other half has been spent with a previously fired piece finding a) the glaze is too thick and needs to be carefully scraped off, b) the glaze is too thin and won't go on and therefore needs to be carefully remixed, c) there is no glaze. All the exercises in the retification of these matters takes up just enough of the second half to leave you just enough time to place your painstakingly wedged and kneaded clay back in the bin to be wedged and kneaded next week.

I would come out with some parting line like "with all the fen getting married over here I might as well too, it'll save feeling out of things", only I said that to Gil Gaier once, and I think he thought I was being serious. So much for the British sense of humour.

MIKE GLICKSOHN After the Cavin-like speed with which you responded to the last fanzine I sent you, I thought it only proper that I loc *Xenolith* 4 the first day after the convention at which you handed it to me. Unfortunately you aren't Jewish so I'm probably not going to have much luck in engendering any guilt feelings in you but I can try!

Oddly enough, until Al's cover on this issue of *Xenolith* (I refuse to shorten it to 'X' since I used that for my own fanzine several years before the dictionary fell on your head and landed open on the floor at the page with your new fanzine title on it), I hadn't noticed the similarity of his style to that of Trudeau. He not only draws in a fashion reminiscent of Trudeau's but also the structure and writing of his strips is quite Donnesbury-like. Al could well become the Gilliland of the Midwest: a cartoonist who is competent but hardly in the class of a Kirk or Carter but one whose wit makes his work much in demand. Most of his cartoons in this issue are really fine: his Rob Jackson, for example, is just beautiful, and he does a fine rendition of Wally, Paula and you. (He isn't perfect, though: the latest *Quantum*, for example, has a centerfold Al did that only vaguely resembles Ben Zuhl...)

Dave Rowe has a few good suggestions to offer but I find much of his complaining irrelevant. *Xenolith* is obviously going to be quite esoteric since it's a very personal personalzine and refers to events that are common experiences of many of the people on the mailing list. Relative outsiders like Dave are obviously going to be a little lost. Would anyone not at Confusion understand Kitty Lyons reference, for example? Of course not, so they'd find that an uninteresting letter. To those of us in the know, though, it's an amusing joke and your placing my letter after it was delightful! (Of course, who can much attention to a man who writes about "detachness" in a fanzine? That's just a minor



criticism, of course.) (And that's an esoteric reference only friends of Dave Rowe's will understand: Equal Time For Underprivileged Englishmen, I say!)

I disagree with Dave Vereschagin too. He implies--jestingly--that *Xenolith* isn't "classy" but fancy offset covers don't make for class (they may add to it, as with *Xenium*, of course...); class comes from the whole manner in which the man (or woman) behind the magazine conceives and executes it and any Bowers fanzine has class. I also disagree with his rather silly comments on CE: I'd say using a French speaking scientist in a key role was quite a reasonable idea; to suggest that everyone in the world does or should speak English is chauvinism of the most blatant kind.

You touch on an interesting facet of fandom when you mention the tendency some of us have to fall back on glibness and mock insults as a form of communication. It points out the relative isolation many of us live in, that in groups especially we find it easier to be acid than to be candid. I'm as prone to this sort of bantering as anyone, of course, but like you I'd like to be capable of better communication. Still, I'm getting better on a one-to-one basis so there's hope for us all I guess.

I'm pretty damn sure I didn't write something like "anyone small has their his/her" in order to be reasonably grammatical." A more suspicious person than I might think you'd added the word "their" in there just to render it even more ungrammatical than the original version but that would probably be giving you credit for more editorial perspicacity than is deserved! And as long as you've got members of the CFG proofreading your stencils then you perhaps should use a paraphrase of Gold's famous quotation as part of the masthead: "You'll never see it in *Xenolith*!" Referring, of course, to correct English usage...

[4/17/78]

Oh--I suppose I should express my gratitude at your attempt to make me famous. I'm pleased with Al's caricature of me, it's a very good likeness. The one of Wally is exceptionally good.

editorials (well, it would be a nifty change of policy).  
In case you're wondering about the figuring over on the right, I just counted every word & set of numbers that you contributed to this issue. Tsk Tsk. You didn't break the 1000 word mark. (The count includes page numbers, return address & my own address.) [She came up with 956...] The reason I did all this counting (beside the fact it was a slow night) is because you started off with "Let's start off with letters..." & that's all that was in this issue.



You'll notice that I've written this in longhand. It's called that because it takes up more space than typing the same amount of words, which comes in handy when you want to give the illusion of writing a lot of neat stuff, which comes in handy when you really haven't got much to say.

Seriously, I liked it; I've liked all the *Xenoliths* (even Wally reads 'em). 5/10/78

TERRY HUGHES    Fanzines which are available solely by editorial whim fall into two categories: those which are interesting/entertaining and those which are anything but. *Xenolith* definitely falls into the former category and, therefore, I expect there are any number of people trying to curry your whim. (Curried whim is one of my favorite Indian dishes.)

Fanzines need letters of comment to fuel the energy drive chambers of the editors. You know this, I know this, fanzine editors in general know this very well. Yet... This past year (June 1977-June 1978) has been one filled with lots of fanzine reading, but very little letter of comment writing for me. There are a number of a-ok fanzines like *Xenolith* that I have read and enjoyed, but somehow never got around to commenting on. There must be some sort of Cosmic Force that causes *Xenolith* to arrive on days when I feel like reading but during weeks when the energy I would normally expend writing letters of comment is instead spent searching for uranium in my back yard. (So far I have unearthed 23 slugs, 14 spiders, 2 squirrels, and a partridge in a pear tree. But no uranium. Perhaps if I were to use a geiger counter...) Anyway, I wanted to take time out and send you my thanks for sending me your enjoyable fanzine.

My only gripe is that some times there are too many letters and not enough Bowers. Watch this, Bill. Try to keep a proper balance and don't let your ying overload your yang. (Fannish worry #87). 6/9/78

...I know the feeling: Mota is one of the few fanzines I consistently enjoy, but while many's the letter written in my head, getting them down on paper seems... \*Sigh\*...

TERRY MATZ Now, Bill, I thought I had been very patient and gracious about accepting a fanzine instead of a letter. At least, I thought, I will find out what he is doing with himself and maybe I can snare him at the next con... Well, I guess if someone gives you an inch you take a foot. And I certainly can't spare the inch, just as you don't need the extra foot. I did read everyone's letter and I think they are all fascinating people--even the ones I don't know--yet. But Bill, what are you doing--besides reading letters of course?

Ken says to tell you he's reviving *Trumpet* to replace *Michelodeon* after this next issue in memory and respect of Tom and tells you to publish *Outworlds*. I think you are just trying to avoid winning a Hugo but... 5/5/78

BRIAN EARL BROWN ...On the other hand I realized that if I sent you another lengthy loc, and if dozens of your other friends continue to send you lengthy and thought-provoking locs you'll be tempted into doing yet another all-letters issue of X. So perhaps I shouldn't loc this issue at all, beyond saying that I continue to enjoy getting X and look forward to your next issue. Which at the rate things are going will be the next time we meet. (We've got to stop meeting like this...)

Larry Downes feeling old at 19? Lend me some of your Geritol, Bill.

And in an effort to get you from printing nothing but letters next time. This is absolutely it from me. Let's hear a little more from you. 5/16/71

*I Also Heard From:* PATTY PETERS, MICHAEL HARPER, RANDY MOHR, GEORGE FLYNN, and DOUG BARBOUR: "i think youre going to have to watch that Curry character(-assassin). certainly your readers will continue to watch & watch for his work." ...see, I can do an issue with less than half of it letters! Thanks for writing...



AMBITION

Don't let me lose you this time...

FIRST CLASS MAIL