



# VANDRO

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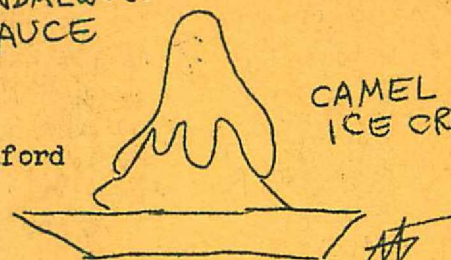
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SANDALWOOD  
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CAMEL  
ICE CREAM



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Write about what you know department:

"Some of the old cider they put in the cellar years ago has turned into applejack."  
....D. K. Findlay, "Big Spender From The West", SATURDAY EVENING POST, 1960

"They're seeds of a heretofore unheard of variety. They will grow on low bushes - and  
ordinary Lima Beans must be trained on poles, you know."

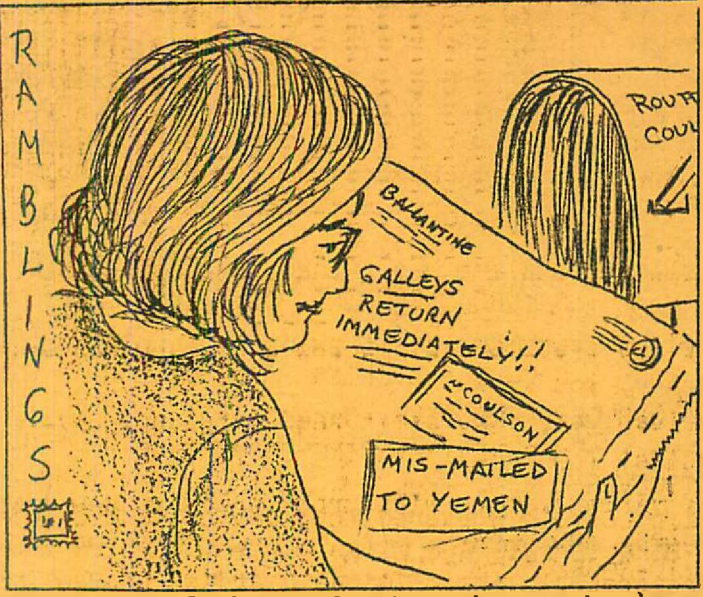
....Thomas Lamar, "Murder - In The Bag", 10-STORY DETECTIVE, March 1941

## A TOWERING DISCOVERY

Only recently, a few devoted antiquarians have discovered that in the land of Gondor there was, in addition to the towers Minas Morgil and Minas Tirith, a third tower, more ancient than either of the others and possibly the original guardian of the land. Little is known of it; only a few stones were left by Frodo's time. But diligent research has, at last, uncovered the name of this mysterious tower. It was known to the inhabitants of the land as The Tower of Silence, or Minas Muffler. RSC



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True, true -- it has been a loong time since the previous issue. That seems to be the way it is with old publishing-type fans. They may be subject to surges of former enthusiasm and emerge from hibernation now and then, sometimes even publishing on something close to schedules followed when we were all much younger. Or they keep plodding away, publishing when possible, apologizing for slipping schedules now and then -- or shrugging and saying what the hell. Or, sad to say, they gaffiate completely, or nearly so, perhaps surfacing on rare occasions at a con to play remember-when with their erstwhile cronies (who're likely to stare at them as if Marley's ghost has just ap-

peared out of the woodwork to haunt them). The varying stamina-cycles of fan publishing, it might be called. No doubt someone will write up a nice doctoral paper on the whole thing some day, and us old fans can sit around at a con poking needles in the academic's scholarship and snuffling in our bheer. - - -

All things considered, I suspect we'll pursue the middle-road of the three forms of fan-publishing aging. Doddering onward, shameless. Habits die hard.

Fandom in general is bound to change. Many elder fans aren't going to like the changes, and some of the younger fans may not either. Some changes that seemed like a good idea at the time will later go sour, even for the fans and con committees which inaugurated those changes. But it'll be difficult to put smoke -- or the genie -- back in the bottle. Just as it's now fantasy-land for younger fans to imagine cons without an art show, with auctions which featured almost nothing that hadn't been donated (for a cut) by the professional magazines (of which there were once a great many), a convention that had no movies, conventions that had no program items devoted to fandom, a fandom that could look forward to no more than three or four conventions -- total -- anywhere in the world, in a given year. Those things are historical notes if that to younger fans. Time marches on. Conventions where costuming was strictly limited to the masquerade, and that masquerade wasn't at all organized. Conventions where there was no need for rent-a-fuzz or other forms of security. Gone forever.

It interests me that in the past months a number of fanzines and active con-oriented fans in all sections of the US have come out with editorials, articles, or view-with-alarm statements on Whither Fandom. Some of these fans date back as far as Buck and I do or longer. Some are comparatively young fans, to us old fogeys. But all are displeased with the way things have been and are going and are asking rhetorically or with genuine hope of finding a solution -- What Are We Going To Do?

Probably, judging by fandom's past record in such matters, nothing. The changes the alarm-cryers are deploring will continue for an indefinite period. Then those, too, will begin to change. Into what I don't know. But I seriously doubt there's any way of stopping the flow and reversing it. All the clichés are in effect.

For my own part, I'm not as seriously upset with some current trends as certain older fans are -- nor do I remember the Good Old Days of fandom and cons as quite so rosy and unflawed as some claim. There are things I don't like about fandom and cons at present -- but there were things I didn't like in fandom or at cons ten or twenty years ago, either. Since I never have and never will been/be a member of a concom, for those agonizing over the trends in sf conventions I can only say, brace yourselves



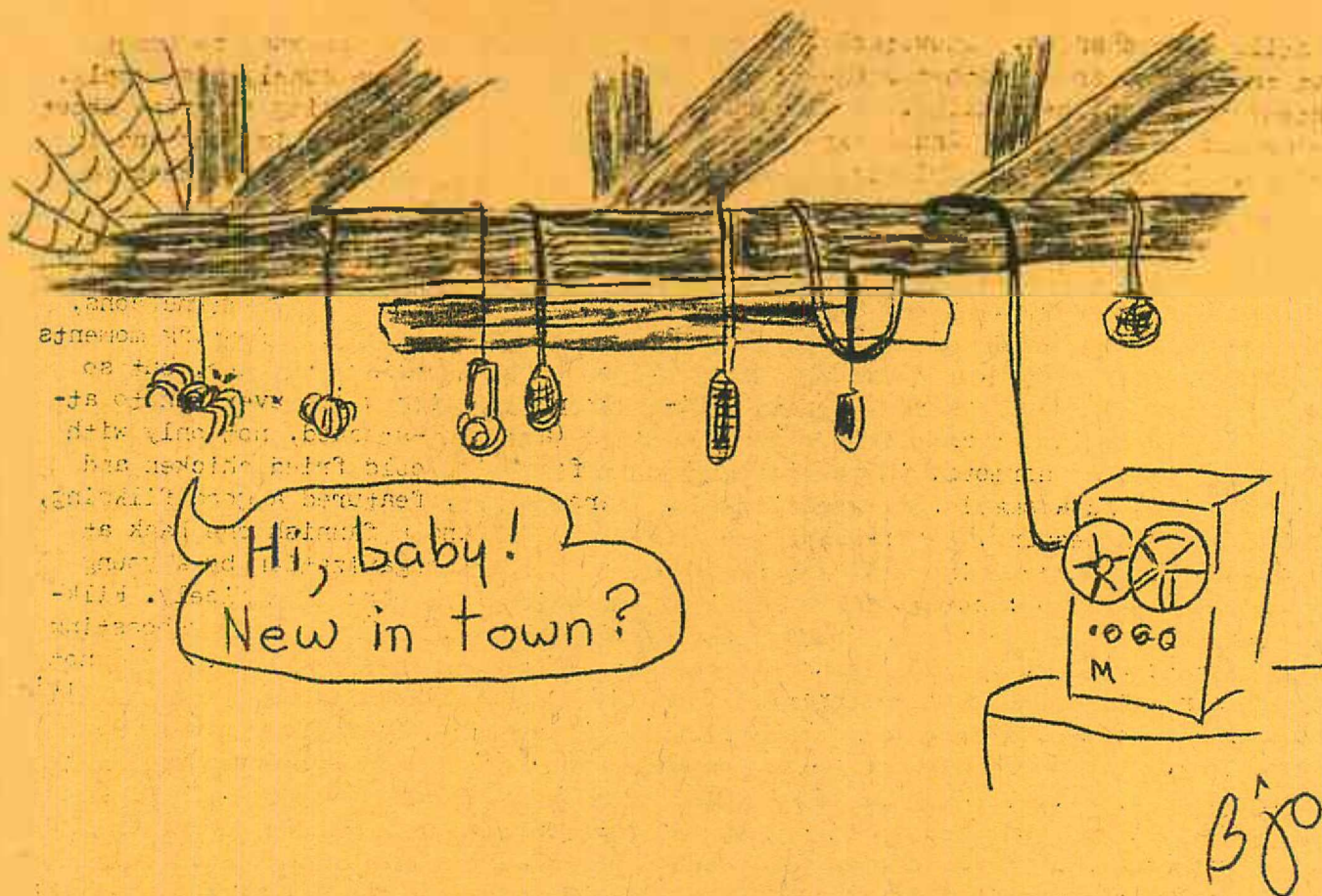
for still more changes. Inevitable. For the fanzine-oriented fans who are upset about the Fan Hugos and other subjects of dismay, the same advice surely must apply. I intend to adapt, personally. I expect to continue to find something to gripe about at cons and in fanzines. And I expect to continue to find pleasures in cons and in fanzines. I hope old fan friends as well as new ones will hang around and keep me company for years to come...

Buck describes, in *Rumblings*, some of our adventures in this, our year of cons. It's the year when some people were flattering enough to start paying us to attend cons, which is why we ended up going to so many. Each, so far, has had interesting moments and people worth meeting. (Plus the usual gripes about something or other, but so what?) Wiscon had some of the busiest multi-track programming we've ever run to attend, one of the tiniest and friendliest consites (and best-stocked, not only with drinks but with an enormous, impressive spread of food like cold fried chicken and vegetable dip) and a small but good filksing. Marcon, too, featured a good filksing, as well as a fan wedding, a for-real one (noted by Buck) and a fannish one back at the con hotel. Munchcon in W VA featured some of the best organization by a young concon we've ever seen; superlative planning and making the gears work nicely. Filkcon, naturally, was in effect a dandy paid vacation for us. It's always egoboosting to be asked to be GoH, and flying us to the West Coast was real baksheesh. (I'm not sure my poor guitar has yet recuperated from the tender ministrations of TWA, but it's in one piece, which is more than some filkers' guitars have been after a ride in the baggage hold.) The Trimbls put on a con under very trying circumstances and problems with hotel, et.al., and we had a grand time before during and after. Getting to meet so many famed West Coast filkers was a treat for me, and joining in the bardic circle technique was a new one as well, and a possible tool for some future filk elsewhere. We got to see the infamous LASFS clubhouse converted into a recording studio; for the sake of audio balance, the techies ended up stringing an upside-down garden of dangling mikes over the rafters above the filkers' heads -- prompting one in a series of hilarious Bjo cartoons. I took the liberty of reprinting one of them on the next page; I hope Bjo won't mind, but I thought that one summed up the easygoing and fun filled atmosphere of Filk Con West beautifully. As well as filking, we got to tour choice LA landmarks and yummy eateries, crawl fabric stores the like of which I'll never see in the Midwest, reminisce with the Grennells, hold a second mini-filk and hit some bargain-harboring garage sales and a fascinating Thai restaurant with Gary and Kay Anderson, and generally had a ball. Thanks everyone, especially to the Trimbls for honoring us with the GoH spot. To all Midwest filkers: The West Coast gang are definitely Our Sort. We all gotta get together at Chicon IV and sing the roof off the Hyatt, right?

In and around the fanning, there was also...pro-ing? Dirty pro-ing, even. I began to suspect that part of the schedule might turn out to be pretty busy this year, too, when Judy-Lynn del Rey asked me back in February or March if I had any objections to being interviewed for radio as part of the publicity for the upcoming sf series I'm writing for Del Rey Books. I certainly had no objections, but I honestly didn't anticipate anything would happen along those lines. Little did I know. The sensations are a bit like those of being scooped up and toted along by a steamroller going at top speed -- fun and somewhat dizzying. So far I've enjoyed a trip to NYC to make a half-hour tape, spoken to Frank Catalano of KMPS in Seattle and am supposed to chat with Al Rantell of WNWS in Miami later this week; I've done one TV talk show and will be doing another in a couple of weeks -- and had a small, friendly autographing session at the local library. So far it's all been very painless and enjoyable. I keep waiting for the shoes to drop -- on my head, cleats down. But until that happens, I'll cheerfully soak it up.

It wasn't easy getting the first book in the series launched, though. It took me an embarrassingly long time to finish the manuscript, for one thing. I've never attempted





a project so massive, and so heavy on the hard science. So I worried a lot about the hardware and background. Additionally, though each book in the series will stand alone and can be read without any need to have read the other books, they do have to coordinate and be consistent -- which meant that the first book, especially, had to include everything necessary in the groundwork in case a reader wants to check back on it when the subsequent books are published. But...TOMORROW'S HERITAGE was finally completed and on its way. I was waiting eagerly on galleys when I got a surprise call from Marion Bradley out in Berkley. She, too, was waiting for some galleys -- and received mine instead. Oh well. I don't mind a bit being confused with MZE in the mind of a mail room employee at Ballantine-Del Rey. That was straightened out. Then, when the book was printed, I received only part of my author's freebies. A few days later I got a couple of packages and a bemused note from Cliff Simak in Mpls -- because that time the mail room had sent the remainder of the books to him. Well, they're timing a bit closer each time. Now if they don't overshoot the next time. (I wonder if I should send them a map? I have this impression of a mail room clerk who believes anything west of the Hudson is unexplored territory and all alike.) It all helps keep me humble. The Ballantine mail room is -- probably unknowingly -- performing a necessary service; the unknown mis-mailer is the person standing behind me in the chariot and whispering in my ear: "Remember, thou art but a lowly fan who got lucky. Remember..."

I'll close on a personal, bittersweet note. Our cat Artie, namesake of the character Artemus Gordon of the WILD, WILD WEST, died of an embolism (slightly over two months after the actor who so charmingly brought the fictional character to life on the television screen died). Artie was an affectionate, intelligent, incredibly tolerant and forgiving furred friend. He died quite suddenly of a blood clotting disease, which the vet explained occurs mysteriously and with often tragic effect in cats as young as nine months. He will be very much missed and remembered with great fondness for the years he was with us. I'm glad I was able to enjoy his company and I hope he enjoyed mine.

JWC





A Modest Proposal Concerning The Handgun Problem. Obviously other people's ideas aren't going to work. Banning-handguns will be precisely as successful as banning alcohol or pot. (Tho it might stimulate the Canadian economy - but more likely the Columbian or Mexican economies.) Registering and licensing will be as successful as it is for automobiles, which cheerfully wipe out two or three hundred people every weekend. However, there is a solution. Guns, like fast cars, drinking, and drugs,

are considered macho. (No arguments that they're not really macho; we're discussing imagery, which has little to do with fact.) The way to cut down on firearms violence is to change the image. It wouldn't, of course, put a stop to anything, but it would certainly cut down on handgun use. So the problem becomes one of changing images, which any ad agency should solve. As a beginning, I'd suggest banning any movie showing firearms. Not, mind you, the showing of violence; only firearms violence. Put in all the knives, swords, crossbows, axes and singlesticks that you want - just no guns. There could even be exceptions; I don't know if there are any firearms in the Bruce Lee movies, never having seen one, but if so they could be exempted on the grounds that they show the palm as mightier than the Colt. Then you could play up muggings where knives or clubs were used, and if there aren't any cases where a knife artist slashed several police to a standstill the newspapers could make up a few - they seem to make up some of their stories anyway. Keep it up for a generation and you'd find firearms use falling off considerably. Presumably imagery experts could think of more ideas. (And for anyone who doubts the effects of imagery, consider fandom. Fans are supposed to be relatively immune to advertising manipulations. Yet Lynn Hickman and Bob Tucker, between them, promoted a mediocre bourbon whiskey named Jack Daniels to the status of a fannish symbol. Later Tucker dropped out of the partnership and, all by himself, switched fans over to, first, Jim Beam, and finally, Beam's Choice. All of the above are acceptable drinks if one likes bourbon, but how many fans really consider them superior? Aside from Tucker, of course, who obviously considers Beam's Choice superior to Jack Daniels. And even this was child's play compared to the fans who promoted the moose-piss going under the label of Coors to fannish status. Of course, their intent was elitism, and one doesn't hear as many paeans to Coors now as one did before it was more widely available. But the results were imagery, pure and - very - simple.)

Am I at all serious in my proposal? I seriously think it would work; I don't seriously think it will ever be tried. For one thing, liberals are notoriously quick to sacrifice other people's pleasures for the general good. They'll happily vote to ban guns because they don't like guns anyway, but they won't vote to ban movies because that's censorship and anyway they enjoy movies themselves.

After that, do I dare comment on my personality test? Of course! I mentioned last issue that I'd taken a free one; the scores came back with all sorts of results neatly indexed. Actually, my proudest moment came when my scores on word and number assessment came in considerably above the average for adults with four or more years of college. (I shouldn't be so pleased, but as a highschool graduate I'm a little defensive, still, about college degrees - which most of my friends have.) In fact, on word assessment I disagree with the test; officially I missed one word, out of 50, but I still say that "dull" is not a synonym for "insipid" - and the American Heritage Dictionary agrees with me - and so I told them. My answer on a multiple choice was "none of the above" and I still think it's correct. Anyway, my numbers results were only slightly above the 4-year-college people (but they were above). Bruce would have done better there, though. On the personality,



I'm considered somewhat cautious as opposed to adventurous, reserved (instead of outgoing), unorganized (orderly), and I'm extremely unconcerned (altruistic), lackadaisical (industrious) and relaxed (tense). I come within the average on nonscientific/analytical, insecure/confident, conventional/imaginative, impatient/patient, and soft-spoken/forceful. (So, according to my scores, I'm not really mellowing, Sandra; I just don't give a shit.) On the "vocationally-oriented scales" I'm averagely investigative, artistic, and conventional (?!), somewhat unrealistic and unenterprising, and anti-social to an extreme (almost off the chart). Which is why YANDRO isn't coming out as frequently, now that Juanita is busy? In other charts (they gave me the works) I'm averagely routine/flexible, slightly more cheerful than serious and reticent than persuasive and consistent (changeable), and considerably more reserved (sociable), attentive (distractable) and quiet (active). In the "reward values" chart I'm about averagely interested in most rewards but totally uninterested in leadership, social recognition and social service. The totals for the tests provide major contradictions in career choices (which wasn't news to me). My original psych test (mentioned last issue) listed optician, travel agent, or author-writer as job choices. My word score reinforces the "author" bit, along with various technical jobs (dental hygienist, librarian, engineer) and scientific careers, plus drafting (which I've actually done). Number scores reinforces drafting, plus computer programmer and accountant (but not engineer? That seems inconsistent.) But I'm less than averagely creative (maybe I'd better not switch to full-time writing). Well, I didn't try the test to find out about my job possibilities, but it was interesting to see the results. I think their computer analysis has a few bugs in it yet, but overall it wasn't a bad interpretation at all. (I particularly liked their polite way of saying, in the routine/flexible score, that I tend to set up schedules of jobs and then not follow them. Right on...) This was from Interpretive Scoring Systems, in case you don't recall last ish.

Well, folks, it's been a busy summer. Every year I say we'll have to go to fewer conventions next year, and every year we go to more. (Well, concons have undermined some of my good resolves this year by offering us money; I try to never turn down money.) Last issue mentioned Nova 6. Then we were fan GoH at Wiscon, which worked our butts off. (I got a free huckster table which I never had time to attend). 4 panels/speeches apiece. Generally enjoyable, though. Most enjoyable part was when the notables were introduced and the MC forgot us. I promptly scrunched down in my chair and tried to keep a straight face and remain unnoticed, but Denny Lien pointed us out. Later on, Dick Spelman ceremoniously introduced me to the MC, which horribly embarrassed him. I was still talking to Spelman when Gary Anderson walked in, grinning happily at having surprised the hell out of us once again. We got even later by kidding him about his complaints that it was cold; actually it was unseasonably warm for Wisconsin, but a bit colder than he was used to in Los Angeles area. Nice con; we may be back next year. (I kept hearing rumors that I was expected to tangle with the feminists on the ConCom; I don't know why. I'm not anti-feminist; I'm just pro-me.) I was a bit bemused by the dead-dog party at the feminist restaurant, where there were at least 40 people in the place and only one waitress; I didn't know if she was being oppressed or trying to prove something. (I didn't ask her, though.)

Next weekend was Marcon, where we saved money by staying with Bruce and Lori. Con was okay, but my major occupation there wasn't connected to it. On Saturday I performed my first marriage ceremony, uniting Jim and Jackie Greene in more or less holy matrimony. It must have been interesting for the relatives, since it was a terribly formal do; bridesmaids in formal gowns, groom and groomsmen in silver-gray tuxedos, and the minister in gray slacks, a black knit shirt, and a black velvet sport coat borrowed from Bruce. (Juanita said I only needed a black hat and a sixgun - I have both, but felt that would be a bit much.) Interesting wedding - performed in a room of the Franklin Conservatory. Also quite legal; I had acquired beforehand (tho not much beforehand) a document from the State of Ohio authorizing me to perform marriages in that state - and a copy of a short service from Judge Joe Hensley. All went off - not exactly as scheduled but acceptably, and I had no problems at all until the bride's stepmother wanted to know what the specific tenets of my religion were. Not having thought up any previously, I had to talk fast. (And she didn't believe a word of it.)

In April, we were GoH at Munchcon, in Huntington, WV. Strictly academic con - no parties at all. Nice people, though, and we were impressed by the efficient operation of a group putting on its first con. Reminiscent of the Louisville group, which was tops in first-time efficiency. We also worked hard at that one, but since it was in effect a job for us, we expected to. I got acquainted with Rick Conley and Val Stewart (and Harry Fischer. Yes.) I've seen Rick at other cons since; hope to see Val at a few. And I bought some art from Lydia Moon that I intend to turn into a bookplate.

End of May we were in Indianapolis for the Broad Ripple Art Fair and the Indy library sale. Bought a few books; nothing exciting. First of June I had my annual "review" at work, which consisted of me signing a blank review sheet which my boss promised to fill out later, and being offered a 10 $\frac{1}{2}$ % raise (which I took happily.) Next day we left for Los Angeles, to be GoH at Filkcon 3 and spend some vacation time visiting friends. We spent 5 nights with the Trimbles and one down in the southern suburbs with the Grennells. Then we were going back to the Trimbles, but L.A. staged a smog alert for us, and everyone deemed my asthmatic lungs unable to cope with it, so we went up to Ventura and Kay and Gary Anderson a day early. Spent another 5 nights with them. Must say LA does have spectacular smog; I'm not used to buildings 10 blocks away looming out of the murk. (A nice place to visit, but...) Also bemused by the huge permanent signs on the freeway that light up to warn of an alert. We did very little in the way of sightseeing, but had a great time. I bought enough books that the Andersons had to ship them back to us, though the most money I spent was at the philatelic window of the L.A. post office. Juanita and Bjo went fabric-shopping that day; I went along to the P.O. and then girl-watched for the rest of the trip. Filkcon was also lovely, since we hadn't encountered many of the west coast singers. Cindy McQuillan, Karen Wilson, Jordin Kare, and Robert & Cathy Cook were all well worth encountering. Got better acquainted with the Cooks than anyone else, since we sat across from them at one meal; they seem to be our sort. Maura Anderson is becoming almost human (which is what she gets for telling me my rhino belt buckle matched my figure as well as my personality.) Fallout from the trip came when my picture showed up in the Oct. GUN WORLD; Grennell and I went out to the range one morning and he took a camera as well as firearms.

Then came Midwestcon, where Hank Davis handed me a can of Burma Shave to prove that it hadn't died as I'd thought, and I got Bill Maraschiello over to our room for a private filksing and taping session. And a trip to Mentor, Ohio, to visit the Thompsons over July 4th weekend. And Spacecon. And Rivercon, where I evidently picked up some sort of virus that kept me feeling poorly for about 3 weeks.

See why YANDRO is late? Of course, we did a few other things. I'll let Juanita tell you about her books and her problems with the Ballantine Mail Room. I did an article (broken in two for publication) for FANTASY EMPIRE magazine, and one for The Dictionary of Literary Biography. Then in August, Juanita and I were lecturers at a writing seminar in Indianapolis promoted by Bob Adair. Another paid job. Juanita did most of the lecturing because I still had my virus and tended to start coughing if I talked very much, but I butted in now and then.

And I said this spring that I was going to finish up the chapters-and-outline of several novels this summer...oh well. This winter? The way Overhead Door sales are, I may have plenty of time this winter. Definitely more articles as soon as this Y is in the mail. (I haven't forgotten you, Maggie.)

Plus I did a few jobs for friends, like a bio of Denny Lien for an Australian con, and a biblio of Lee Hoffman for Chicon IV. (Assuming the concon accepts it.) I didn't realize Lee had written 22 novels, and I own 21 of them; that sort of thing sneaks up on you. My lousy 7 looks worse and worse....

Reminds me. In PONG, Ted White refers to the various faaans who made good professionally, as opposed to "sercon types who published their stories year after year in fanzines like YANDRO." He's right, of course. Our columnists have been such nonentities as Ted White, Marion Bradley, Bob Tucker, Michael Coney and sercon fans like Liz Fishman, Denny Lien and Dave Locke. Other items were mostly by Gene DeWeese and myself (hardly a score of novels between us) and people like George Scithers, Claude Hall (formerly of BILLBOARD and now editing CASINO & CABARET) and Joe Hensley. Ted, on the other hand, has edited two stf mags which SFWA refused to accept for membership credential purposes and now heads a fancy expensive comic book. No comparison.



COLUMN BY

# DIFUGALTY #29

DAVE LOCKE

## The Ones That Got Away, Part 2

As you will remember from the last installment, we were looking at some of the hangers-on that have remained in my idea-book for eons. Entries that I never got around to, yet never seemed to get weeded out in the occasional culling. The entries in this idea-book were building up to the point where they needed indexing to prevent locating an entry from appearing similar to trying to find someone you know at a Star Trek convention. However, that way lies madness, or excessive orderliness, and I'd rather peel onions. It somehow seemed a good idea to take an installment or three of DIFUGALTY and use it as a dumping ground for unfulfilled ideas and thoughts taken from my idea-book.

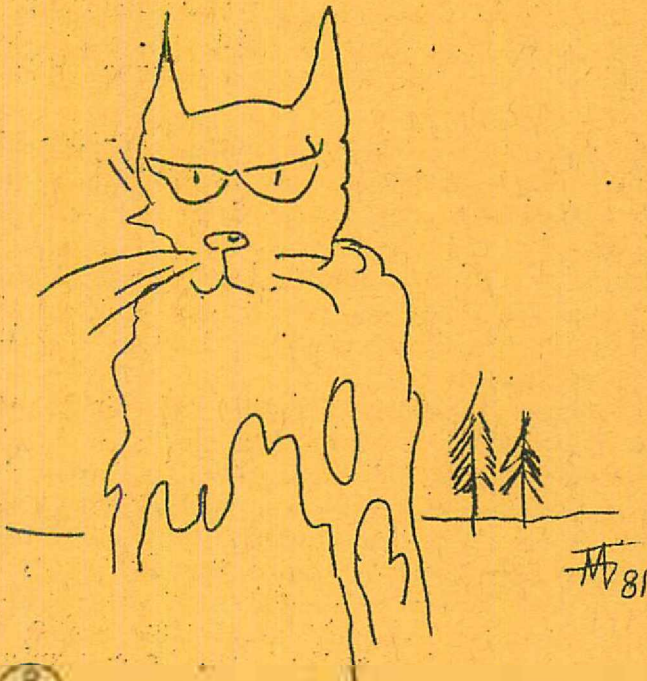
However, if you don't remember that this is what I did last time, don't worry about it. Worry is one of the unpleasant emotions that can serve a useful purpose if you don't use it before its time. And if you do remember that this is what I did in the last installment, don't worry about it then, either. This is going to be an entirely new selection. No better, true, but new.

Starting with page one, or what is currently page one in this notebook (I used up the earlier page one at the beginning of my last column), I have this Don Westlake quote from his novel WAX APPLE: "Life is 10% carrot and 90% stick." Now, I didn't write this down just to preserve an amusing quotation. It triggered an idea for a fanzine article, and as such the quote served as a tickler notation.

The idea was to explore the subject of motivation as it moves various people to do various things within what we call "fandom." Even better was the follow-on idea to explore the subject of motivation as it moves various people to do various things within fandom. There's more difference there than just quotation marks. The former is slightly more serious in intent and more difficult in execution, though this has never stopped me from writing substandard material. The latter would result in a more easy-going arkle, tossing away the overview of fandom and joshing through the inner-view.

Okay, I'll make that clearer. Has everyone seen or at least heard about Dave Vereschagin's cartoon instructions on how to drown a cat, and recall the great variety of reaction and re-reaction that resulted from it? No? Okay, forget it. Yes? Well, if you do, you must grant that it is an obvious study in motivations. A psychiatrist would have had a field day if he had dropped into fandom and observed the great array of questionable behavior that began with Vereschagin and quickly became even

DEAD CAT JOKES?  
HAH? WAIT TILL  
THE MOON IS ~~WAX~~ FULL





more astonishing. A humorist could make devastating capital out of it all, especially considering that everything which took place isn't yet firmly placed as being in the past. The issue is still with us, and may even live for years with such things as Dead Cat Fandom.

Anyway, a discourse upon the scope and incredulousness of this phenomenon would take in a lot of ground to be done right. So much ground that the perimeters of fandom could be seen in passing. But it's something that could be done with a lot of work (except for those who can do it without thinking), and maybe even worthy of the doing.

On the other hand, we have five fingers and a cold drink and a basic inherent laziness, all of which could lead us to believe that there are amusing but less extenuating methods to handle the topic.

For instance, the comic punch. In an apazine I was telling Joni Stopa that I enjoyed her cat stories, "but now I've got to hold off on my own cat stories for a couple of mailings at least. Don't want to overload the troops, you know. Everytime I think it's safe to reach for the cat stories, you or John or Becky or Ed or whatstheirface come along, and I put the stories back in my mental files. One of these days. I'm also considering a special cover for the issue that will contain all of these jewels. It will be a multi-panel series of cartoons illustrating the correct procedure for stuffing Dave Vereschagin into a sack and drowning him in Beaverhill Lake."

Now, when I said that this was a tickler notation, I meant it in the purest sense of the meaning. If you'll cast your frontal lobes backward for a moment, you'll recall that a Westlake quote about carrots and sticks led me to thinking of an arkle on motivations in fandom, which led me to think about the Dave Vereschagin Incident, which focused down to a throwaway line in an apazine where I have Dave Vereschagin in a sack trying to swim upstream. Definitely, I am getting further away from the main thought.

But there was more. I then thought of actually writing a fanzine freely woven with cat stories and trying to slick-talk Jackie Causgrove into drawing me a multi-panel series of cartoons illustrating the correct procedure for stuffing Dave Vereschagin into a sack and drowning him in Beaverhill Lake. And then even mailing it out to people. And maybe even to Dave Vereschagin.

As you can tell, at this stage in my thinking I had been sipping scotch for a much longer period of time. This may go far toward explaining why I often start out for Canada and wind up in Fiji. But this is really where I wound up after starting with carrots and sticks, and as this too was a project of more magnitude than my ambition, you can understand why a Don Westlake quotation has sat undisturbed in my idea-book for some years now.

At last it can go to its rest, and lie there facing in whatever direction its fancy chooses. Out of the notebook it goes.

Rip.

Unfortunately there is a page behind the one that just got shitcanned. And, god-dam, it's another Westlake quote. No, this one is from DANCING AZTECS (highly recommended to anybody who likes to be amused and involved at the same time) and says: "His letters of response were marvels of erudition, insight, bullshit, and weird linkages."

I think that anyone with me could easily name six fans whose letters fit that description.

As long as we're on book quotations, let's not stop now. As many know, Stephen

No way, I'm not  
admitting a thing



I'll take the  
fifth commandment.



King has a marvelous way with words. He also has a nice way with horror fiction, a field I don't particularly care for, but then the reason I haven't been fond of it is because it hasn't had writers of this caliber (.375 magnum). Anyway, King is excellent at what he does, and while reading THE STAND I ran across this little jewel of a view on New York City: "In this light, in this drizzle...New York looked like a dead whore."

I've always thought so, haven't you?

Here's an oldie. This two-word entry is in quasi-quotes, which means it may not actually be what was said but supposedly represents the gist of it. Why I couldn't transcribe two words correctly, I don't know. I also don't know who Calman, the author of the two possible words I attribute as coming from his mouth or pen, is, so as you can see the whole thing gets vague. Let's not worry about it right now. The two words are: "Aroused Apathy."

I guess I wrote that down because I liked it. Aroused apathy. Mine gets that way frequently, doesn't yours?

And, just to be done with quotations for the moment, here's one from Kurt Vonnegut's GOODBYE BLUE MONDAY! "He had a penis eight hundred miles long and two hundred and ten miles in diameter, but practically all of it was in the fourth dimension."

I suppose I just wanted to use it someplace.

Here's a two-word tickler notation: "tracking radioactivity." I wrote this down shortly after Three Mile Island and the resultant anti-nuke publicity.

I used to work at a division of Knolls Atomic Power Laboratory, and K.A.P.L. itself was a division of General Electric. This place, originally called West Milton Site and later renamed Kesselring Site in honor of an overworked G.E. executive who dropped dead one day, was where they trained naval personnel in the use of an atomic submarine or an atomic destroyer. They had one of each on site, though neither one looked like a sub or a destroyer.

It was a tough course. You had just a few weeks to learn every station on either the sub or the destroyer. The stations on the destroyer were just that: stations, all housed within a giant black sphere. The AEC set down policy, the Navy provided the instructors and the students, and General Electric provided support personnel such as me. At one point I was working third shift in the library, unfortunately the night they had a spill. I can remember my boss coming in and asking me to go out to the destroyer area and see if I could see any radioactive leaks.

I can remember thinking about that instruction as I watched him walk out of the library. I had no idea what a radioactive leak would look like, though the terminology made sense enough: If you have a spill, you might well be subject to a leak. Especially if the spill is near a crack, I suppose. I didn't suppose, though, that I would have any idea of what I was doing if I were to leave the library and go looking for radioactive leaks. Would they glow in the dark? Should I take a flashlight?

I finally decided that I was a librarian (at that time), and stayed where I was. Before that transfer to West Milton, I worked at K.A.P.L. I was a mailboy. Got to push a big grocery cart down the aisles and deliver and pick up mail. The pay was terrible but the work was easy. It grew more difficult the day I first had to fill-in for the fellow who delivered the "confidential" mail to the labs where they worked with radioactive materials.

The first thing I did wrong was to enter a lab where it was plainly marked that you shouldn't wear a watch inside. I figured, hell, I was going to be in and out in five seconds. I came out while looking at my watch as it finished winding itself backwards three hours. This stopped as soon as I was out in the hall. So did my watch, and it never ran again.

At one point it was required that I stop my cart in the hall, enter a room to the right, and put on a pair of rubbers. I then took the cart directly across the hall and through another door, which led to a corridor. The whole idea was to not track radioactivity all around the place. When I would finish the run I'd tromp back across the main hallway to the room where I'd take off my radioactive rubbers. Hundreds of times a day people in radioactive rubbers would tromp across that hallway, no doubt

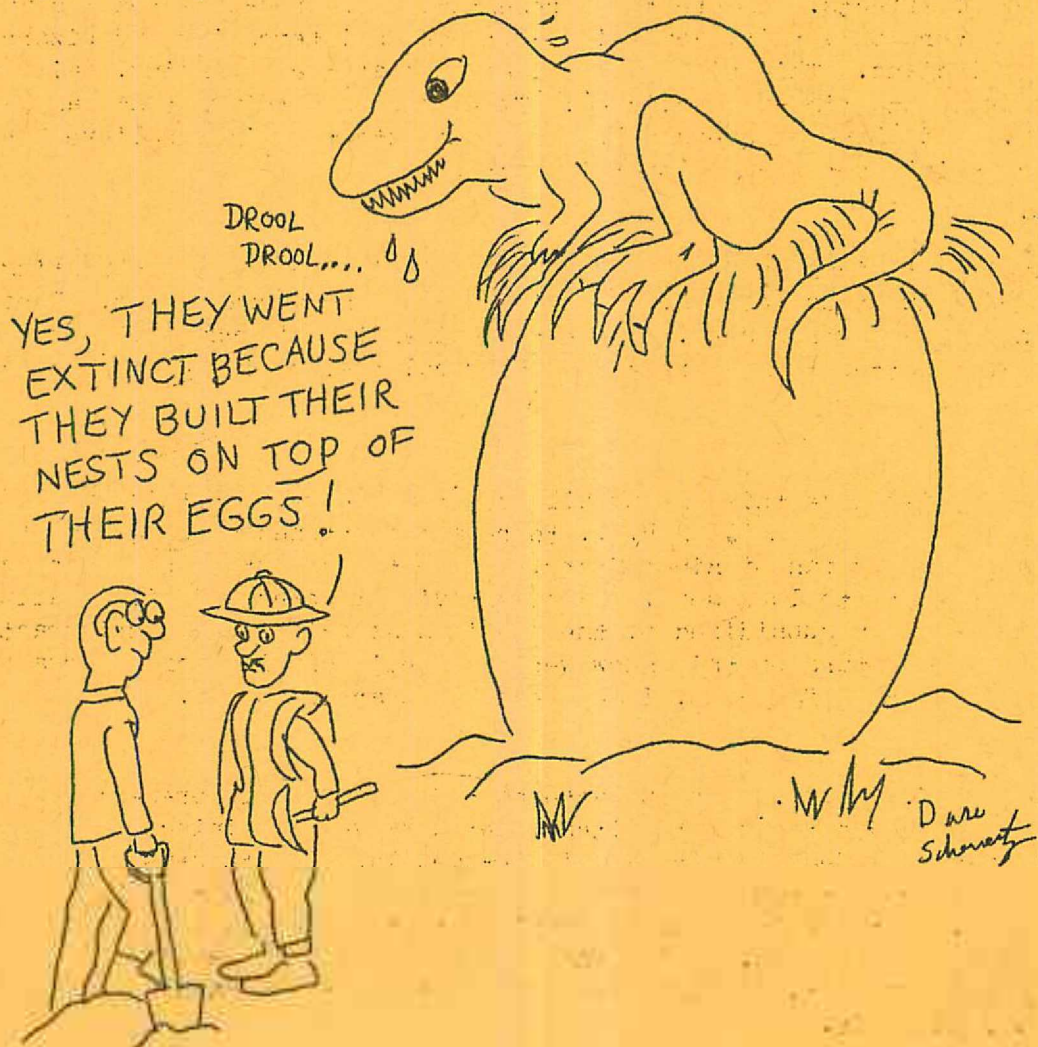
depositing all kinds of trouble which would then be picked up on the feet of whoever used that hall. I can remember commenting upon this to a fellow mailboy, suggesting that it might be more reasonable to have the rubber room inside the radioactive corridor instead of on the other side of the hall. His comment was that the people in charge must know more about it than we did, although it didn't make any sense to him, either.

In fact, it made so little sense that the incident came to mind the night I was asked to go out and look for radioactive leaks. Until I stopped giving idle consideration to the idea of moseying around in the dark (very idle, believe me), I wondered where I could go to find a pair of rubbers.

After deciding to stay where I was, I went back to reading a confidential document entitled THE SR-1 INCIDENT, about an atomic power plant where something went wrong and several people died. It was rather dry reading. Stephen King could have done it better.

Well, that's enough for now. Perhaps next time we'll take a look at the meaning of such idea-book notations as "humped on unicycle," "worth squat," and "Black widow poodles."

Then again, maybe not.





# FILM REVIEWS

BY ROBERT ADAIR

## Galaxina \* 1/2

Playboy bunny Dorothy R. Stratten is the main attraction in this soft-core pornography spoof. It proves it is difficult to satirize what is already ridiculous. Even in satire, it would have been helpful if script writers actually knew what a galaxy is. Womens libbers will probably not be turned on by this one. Nice spaceship -- too bad they didn't do something interesting with it. So-so special effects otherwise. I hope this was a low budget film. I would hate to think of anyone spending money on this.

## Altered States \*1/2

Excellent special effects. Interesting presentation of drug-oriented Indian religious cult, and of Eastern university academics -- to me as interesting and bizarre a sub-culture as the Indians. This picture promises much at the beginning, fails to deliver. It dissolves into time-worn clichés: "There are some things that man was not meant to know," and "Love conquers all." To some extent I might believe both of those things, but certainly not because of this picture.

## Alligator \*\*1/2

Though basically a typical grade B monster film, it is genuinely interesting and entertaining. Good humorous touches, good wisecracks, and visual jokes. Depicts interesting, enjoyable sewer system. Presents a dimension of urban life that people seldom see. Much better than average psychological realism in people's reaction to monster.

## Cave Man \*\*1/2

Offbeat, silly movies like this one usually don't amuse me, but this one is funny. Essentially a spoof of One Million B.C., there are overtones of 2001 and of Conan, the Conqueror. I am no fan of Ringo Starr, but he turned out to be a good comedian. Barbara Bach was there to look sexy. Excellent visual jokes and filmic allusions. This film may have been subsidized by the American Association of Chriopractors, or whatever. Among the stars of this show were the delightfully goofy dinosaurs. If the Tyrannosaur starts a fan club, I may become a charter member.

## Outland \*\*\*

Way above average S.F. film. Serious attempt to realistically present life in a mining colony on one of Jupiter's satellites. Set work very reminiscent of Alien. Excellent performance by Sean Connery as middle-aged lawman with sense of duty. Good performance by Frances Sternhagen. While generally an excellent film, it is not without its problems. I think it is highly dubious that bodies explode like punctured balloons in zero air pressure. While the atmosphere of grim realism is necessary for the High Noon type of plot, it also makes the picture itself rather unrelievably grim. Nevertheless, I liked it.



THE MANY-COLORED LAND, by Julian May [Houghton-Mifflin, \$12.95] First volume in "The Saga of Pliocene Exile." I was intrigued by this; Julian May (actually Judy May Dikty) is (a) the author of one of my all-time favorite stf stories, "Dune Roller," and (b) has had nothing published since the 1950s and has no previous stf novels. The novel is an excellent adventure story. I think the author wastes most of the Pliocene background; instead of time travel, our characters could be on an alien planet or suffering an alien invasion in the near future without changing the story. Because they do suffer an alien invasion, in the Pliocene Era where they have gone as time travelers because they're misfits in their current society. And the book is about their problems in overthrowing the aliens and their interactions with each other. For what it is, it's very well done. It's not a complete story, but a good beginning to one (publisher doesn't specify how many volumes it will take to complete it). Worth picking up in pb, or checking out at your friendly local library.

THE CLAW OF THE CONCILIATOR, by Gene Wolfe [Timescape, \$12.95] Second volume in "The Book of the New Sun." This one you'll want in hard covers if you're any sort of fan at all. It's an adventure story and an exercise in psychology, and while I'm not at all sure what some of Gene's symbolism means I'm quite sure that it will provide plenty of fan discussions. The far future -- Gene's version of THE DYING EARTH and the only volume of the type that I've read that surpasses the original. Severian, the protagonist, is an itinerant torturer, who as he makes his way from village to village becomes involved with all manner of strange people, revolutions, and an enigmatic Emperor. There are hints as to Severian's future status, but since Gene is an expert at pulling the rug out from under his readers I don't count too much on them. Highly recommended; read this one if you don't get anything else.

THE DRAGON LORD, by David Drake [Putnam] But I got mine, remaindered, at Midwestcon, for \$2.49. It didn't make much of a splash when it appeared in 1979, but it's an excellent adventure fantasy. Two mercenary swordsmen, an Irishman and a Dane, are enlisted/impressed into Arthur Pendragon's army, with which the slightly crazed but



militarily brilliant Arthur plans to oust the Saxons from England and take the country -- and as much else as he can get -- for himself. Arthur needs a super-weapon to enhance the power of his well-trained by small army, so he orders Merlin to get him a dragon -- and Merlin produces one, despite warnings from various other characters that he can't control it once he gets it. The Arthurian background reminds me more of Henry Treece than anyone else; grimly and grimly realistic, and the characters are quite believable. I suppose fans of the classical Arthur will dislike the treatment of him here -- but I found it far more interesting than the traditional one. Recommended.

REMEMBER THE ALAMO?, by Kevin D. Randle and Robert Charles Cornett [TA Publications, P.O. Box 582, Cedar Rapids IA 52406 -- \$4.94] A trade pb. I got mine off Dick Spelman, largely because even if it was fan fiction it was likely to be a collector's item in the future. Well, it's not fan fiction, and if the authors ever submitted it to a professional publisher I'm surprised that it wasn't accepted. Changing history via time travel is a popular sf theme; the classics in the genre being Ray Bradbury's "A Sound of Thunder" and Ward Moore's BRING THE JUBILEE. (This one isn't quite up to either of those.) In this, an oil company executive tries to acquire some of the northern Mexican oilfields by sending a group of mercenaries with modern weapons to the Alamo in 1836. It's an idiotic idea -- if either Texas or the U.S. had wanted more of Mexico, they could have taken it at the time. But it might well be considered by an oil executive who doesn't know much history to begin with and is willing to try anything. A flaw is what at first looks like a good move: having the mercenaries become the reinforcements from Gonzales. George MacDonald Fraser did the same thing in turning Flashman into "the second messenger" at Balaclava. But there's a difference; nobody today knows who that "second messenger" really was, while the Gonzales volunteers are known and historically documented. A minor flaw is having one of the characters say that what went on at the siege is fully known because of surviving records. Records survived but interpretations vary. (For just one example, John Greenway estimates the final Mexican charge as lasting 15 minutes, while Lon Tinkle says it was 3 hours.) Of course, the book is written from the viewpoint of an alternate world -- but then why keep the names identical to the ones in our world? Still, flaws and all, this is much more entertaining than the majority of sf novels on the stands. Recommended, especially to anyone who has any nostalgia for the pulp mags. I enjoyed it tremendously, even while I was nit-picking. Don't expect a classic, and it will be great fun.

GENE WOLFE'S BOOK OF DAYS [Doubleday, \$9.95] A collection of 18 (or 19?) stories, each one more or less connected with a holiday. Included are "How The Whip Came Back," "Of Relays and Roses," "Paul's Treehouse," "St. Brandon," "Beautyland," "Car Sinister," "The Blue Mouse," "How I Lost the Second World War...", "The Adopted Father," "Forlesen," "An Article About Hunting," "The Changeling," "Many Mansions," "Against The Lafayette Escadrille," "Three Million Square Miles," "The War Beneath The Tree," "La Befana," and "Melting." I had read nearly all of them before, but they're worth re-reading. (A few of them require re-reading, in fact...) The book is highly recommended; "The War Beneath the Tree" is worth the price all by itself. (Gene has a strange imagination.) Oh, the possible 19th story? That's all explained in the introduction.

LOST DORSAL, by Gordon R. Dickson [Ace, \$4.95] A trade pb, illustrated profusely and not very well by Fernando. Book includes the title story (a shorter version of which appeared in DESTINIES last year), the short story "Warrior," an article on Dickson by Sandra Miesel, and an excerpt from the forthcoming FINAL ENCYCLOPEDIA. Title story is good (and has the currently popular moral, "To Thine Ownself Be True"). Short story is an incident in Ian Graeme's career; a reasonably good gimmick in itself, enhanced by being about Ian. Sandra's article is very good and explains quite a bit about Gordy, and his writing. Excerpt I could easily have done without. Basically I don't see any particular need for the book; the shorter version of the title story was just as good as this one, Sandra's article concerns Gordy's "Childe Cycle" and not just one book, and I had already enjoyed "Warrior" in Analog. But the book is



recommended to Dickson fans and people who don't read magazines; both stories and the article are well worth reading.

TIME AND THE RIDDLE, by Howard Fast [Houghton-Mifflin, \$6.95]. Subtitled "31 Zen Stories," which is presumably the author's or the publisher's idea for getting more sales than the "science fiction" tag will produce. There's even an academic introduction that tells the reader that this really isn't science fiction, because it's good. (Maybe the academic interest in the field hasn't reached as far as I thought. Frank Campenni seems to be a Ph.D. from UWM, and not as brilliant as he thinks he is. But Louis Untermeyer does a much better job in the Foreword.) There's also an Afterword, presumably by Fast, in which he begins by saying too much has already been written about Zen, and then proceeds to write several pages more. Well, the stories themselves are interesting enough, whatever the quality of the extraneous (very) material. They're generally quite short -- 31 stories in 479 pages. Mostly, they have the trappings of science fiction but the explanations of fantasy, and they generally have an obvious moral attached. (Actually, I find his thought-provoking ideas either overly obvious or wrong -- or both -- a fair share of the time; I keep getting this image of Fast hunched over the typewriter saying "I'm going to make those little bastards out there think, if it kills me.") Nevertheless, they're highly entertaining stories and I heartily recommend the book because whether I agree with him or not, Fast is an outstanding writer. The stories might be better without so much Zenness, but they're good as it is. Most of them have appeared in previous collections as well as in the magazines, but it's nice to have them all in one volume.

THE SHROUDED PLANET, by Robert Silverberg and Randall Garrett [Starblaze, \$4.95] Originally published as by "Robert Randall," first in Astounding and then from Gnome Press in 1957. In an Afterword, Silverberg says they were never reprinted after that, but since I own a British pb edition, I assume he means "in this country." At any rate, they've languished in obscurity for 20 years. The story isn't bad; the problems of "civilizing" a backward people, and the questions -- more unusual in 1957 than today -- of whether it should be done at all. Neither is the story particularly good, but it's acceptable. Barclay Shaw does a poor cover and some quite good interior illustrations.

MASTERS OF EVERON, by Gordon R. Dickson [Ace, \$4.95, \$2.25] A novel rather reminiscent of Andre Norton -- the young man and the young alien, finding a solution for the two species despite opposition from the adult humans, and even the moral that we must fit into the cosmic scheme instead of fighting it. Enjoyable but not outstanding.

THE ANALOG ANTHOLOGY #1, edited by Stanley Schmidt [Davis Publications, \$2.95] The size of a trade pb and with 380 pages, this reprints 23 stories with original publications from 1934 to 1979. A good many of them are items I recall pleasantly: "Twilight," by "Don A. Stuart," "Language for Time Travelers" by L. Sprague de Camp, "And He Built a Crooked House" by Heinlein, "Far Centaurus" by van Vogt, the first thiotimoline "article" by Asimov, "The Longest Voyage" by Anderson, "Computers Don't Argue" by Dickson. (On checking closer, I see that two of the 23 items are not stories but Campbell editorials -- which were quite often as interesting as the fiction, anyway.) Other items are less memorable but none are bad. Most haven't been reprinted that often (if at all). All in all, a bargain for new readers and nostalgia for old ones.

IT, by Theodore Sturgeon [Misfit Press, \$2.00] One of my favorite Sturgeon stories, produced as a booklet by Howard Devore, with illustrations by Joan Hanke-Woods. Limited edition. An oddity which I picked up because I'm so fond of the story.

THE BEST OF THOMAS N. SCORTIA, edited by George Zebrowski [Doubleday, \$11.95] Short story collection, with original publication dates from 1954 to 1973. Stories are good (and somewhat forgettable, so that I enjoyed re-reading them). No prize-winners, but an enjoyable book. Introduction by Frank Herbert, Afterword by Doc Lowndes, and comments on the stories and his life in general by the author. The whole provides a good look into what science fiction was like in the 1950s and later. Stories include "The Prodigy," "The Shores of Night," "One Small Room," "A Walk In The Snow," "John



Robert and the Dragon's Egg," "The Stunning Science Fiction Caper," "Broken Image," "When You Hear The Tone," "Woman's Rib," "By The Time I Get To Phoenix," and "The Weariest River," plus the article "Science Fiction As The Imaginary Experiment."

THEY CAME FROM OUTER SPACE, edited by Jim Wynorski [Doubleday, \$11.95] A collection of science fiction stories that were made into movies, illustrated with movie stills. An interesting idea; generally a good collection of stories (though a fair number of turkeys are also included). Stories are "Dr. Cyclops" by Kuttner, "Who Goes There?" by Campbell, "Farewell To The Master" by Harry Bates, "The Fog Horn" by Bradbury, "Deadly City" by Ivar Jorgenson (whoever Jorgenson was that time around), "The Alien Machine" by Raymond F. Jones, "The Cosmic Frame" by Paul Fairman, "The Fly" by George Langelaan, "The Seventh Victim" by Sheckley, "The Sentinel" by Clarke, "The Racer" by Ib Melchior, and "A Boy And His Dog" by Ellison. (Quick now: what were the titles of the movies?) In at least one case -- the Fairman -- the movie was a vast improvement over the story. (In most cases, it wasn't.) Useful for media students; enjoyable for movie fans. Not all that interesting to the general run of stf fans.

JOURNEYS OF FRODO, by Barbara Strachey [Ballantine, \$7.95] An atlas of THE LORD OF THE RINGS. The maps are quite clear and accurate, and presumably Tolkien fans will buy anything. To be sure, these maps are much clearer than the ones in the original books -- but since I found the originals quite adequate I see no need for clarification. For anyone who does, this volume certainly provides it. Swords and sorcery readers do seem devoted to maps -- and they don't normally get any this detailed.

GREAT BALLS OF FIRE!, by Harry Harrison [remaindered, \$1.96] Subtitled "An Illustrated History of Sex in Science Fiction." Well, more or less. Harry's interpretations are that of a Good Old Boy who has read some popular psychology (meaning it's mostly nonsense). On the other hand, Harry was working in the field throughout the times covered here, and his notes from his working experience are both entertaining and historically interesting. All artwork is credited in the back, for any non-macho types who want to do more than drool over the pictures. On the whole, it's not much of a book, but it's funny enough -- not always intentionally -- to be worth the remainder price.

HANDS OF GLORY, by Jaan Kangilaski [Del Rey, \$2.25] With two books -- and a series at that! -- Kangilaski has become one of my favorite authors. This is an earlier segment in the life of the Seeking Sword -- in the Baltic area in the 16th Century. It's utterly fascinating; without any fantasy at all it would have been a marvelous historical novel. (And for anyone who didn't like THE SEEKING SWORD, this is nothing like the first book in the series, in plot, setting, characterization, or style.) I'd like to know what Algis Pädrys thought of it; since I'm weak on history of that area and era I can't judge the book's accuracy. But it certainly feels right, and produces a marvelously graphic background for the story. It ought to be an award-winner (but probably won't be; none of the books I really like ever are). Put down this fanzine, go get a copy of the book, and read it.

THE SUNDERED REALM, by Bob Vardeman and Victor Milan [Playboy, \$2.25] The first three THE CITY IN THE GLACIER, "" "" "" "" "" "" \$2.25] books in the THE DESTINY STONE, "" "" "" "" "" "" \$2.25] "War of Powers" series. They show the problems of padding. REALM is an excellent sword-swinging adventure; I don't know Milan, but Vardeman loved Planet Stories as I did, and it shows. It even has a sort of conclusion, with our hero and heroine having defeated their enemies and looking forward to greater triumphs. GLACIER is still good, and would have had a rouser of a conclusion if someone (the editor?) hadn't tacked on an extra chapter which not only kills the authors' ending but changes a series into a serial. STONE is just marking time; nothing at all really happens because there are going to be more books and you can't move the plot along too fast. I think maybe it was that last chapter in GLACIER that turned me off, but nothing in STONE turned me back on and I may not bother to read the rest of the story. Plot is fairly typical; palace intrigue sends a princess out to pick up allies, and she meets this tough mercenary type and...the authors handle it very well, at least through the first two books.

SPECIMENS, by Fred Saberhagen [Ace, \$2.25] Saberhagen has taken the old pulp cover cliché of the alien carrying off a human female, mixed it with the modern "possession" novel, and come up with a quite fascinating sf/horror story. It's even logical, which is more than one could say for the old covers or for most possession novels. Good fun.

HORN CROWN, by Andre Norton [DAW #440, \$2.95] A Witch World novel which goes back in time to the original settlement of High Halleck. It's also interesting in that it's a specifically feminist novel with a male protagonist -- and for once I don't object to Norton's recent addiction to sorcery-only novels. The Powers seem much more real here than they usually do. (Because they're personified? Quite probably, given my prejudices.) One of the best of the recent Nortons, and definitely recommended.

WAR GAMES, by Karl Hansen [Playboy, \$2.50] On the cover, Ed Bryant is quoted as saying "Makes Heinlein's STARSHIP TROOPERS look like a pack of cub scouts." A nice salable quote, and about as accurate as I expect from Bryant. TROOPERS had a philosophical idea behind it -- an unpopular one, but an idea. This is just Viet Nam moved into space; the only philosophy here is "War is hell," which is by now a cliché. However, for what the book is -- a bitter war novel in a vaguely science fictional setting -- it's very well done. Characterization is good, action is predictable but fast, the plot a pulp standard but handled well. If not particularly thought-provoking, it's slick and entertaining; all in all a much better book than I expected from reading the blurbs. If you like action-adventure, this is for you.

CIRCLE, CRESCENT, STAR, by Ansen Dibell [DAW #425, \$2.25] A sequel to PURSUIT OF THE SCREAMER, which I considered one of the best sf-adventure novels I'd read in some time. As usual, the sequel isn't as interesting as the first book, but it has its points. For one thing, it's not really a novel, but three connected novelets -- and the novelet is usually the best length for this sort of story. There are aspects of Dibell's world which were only hinted at in SCREAMER, so there is room for more stories (and plans for them as well, I suspect). As a reader I wish she'd do something different instead of more of the same -- but at least it's a pretty good "same."

TOO LONG A SACRIFICE, by Mildred Downey Broxon [Dell, \$2.50] Two Irish from the early Christian period are cursed, spend a time with the Little People, and emerge in modern terrorist-ridden Ireland. It's an interesting idea, but the old gods and the old festivals just don't mix with machineguns and Provisionals, and Broxon can't quite make them fit; the final confrontation totally fails to suspend my disbelief. The writing is good, as Broxon's always is; but the story fails anyway.

THE SUNBOUND, by Cynthia Felice [Dell, \$2.50] The background is star-roving; the story is of two women, loving the same (dead) man, hating each other, and forced to work together. 360 pages seemed overly long to me; the pace is slower than I like and I kept skimming and jumping ahead (which is not the best way to read a book). Aside from that, it's a well-told story and far better than the idiotic cover would have you believe. (If ever a cover was designed to turn off potential readers, this is the one. Felice deserves better.)

THE ROBOT IN THE CLOSET, by Ron Goulart [DAW #439, \$1.95] Goulart's stories are generally fluff; this one is fluffier than usual. Still moderately funny, but somehow the humor all seems more routine this time around. Not one of Goulart's best. It all revolves around a robot time machine and a fortune squirreled away by the heroine's squirrely ancestors and doesn't manage to be terribly interesting to anyone including the author.

THE REVOLUTION FROM ROSINANTE, by Alex Gilliland [Del Rey, \$2.25] Considering Alex's fan reputation as a humorist I certainly didn't expect his first novel to be a serious intrigue-in-space book with the problem-solving concerned with hard science and technology. But it is, and it's a good book. As in much of George O. Smith's stuff, technology is the real hero, but Gilliland's characters are far better drawn than Smith's ever were. Recommended.



NIGHTFLYERS, by George R. R. Martin / TRUE NAMES, by Vernor Vinge [Dell Binary Star 5 \$2.50] I'd been wondering what happened to Vernor Vinge; here he is, with a fascinating extrapolation of a blend of computers and role-playing games, the combination allowing players to really live their parts. And the plot centers not on the usual wargame fantasy but on efforts to identify the culprit who is lousing up the system. Very good. Martin also has a culprit lousing up the system; in his story, the system is a spaceship of scientists studying an alien life-form. Both stories are good enough; neither is exceptional.

DRAGONSLAYER, by Wayland Drew [Del Rey, \$2.75] The novelization of the movie. To be honest, I skimmed the book, enough to tell that it is a novel, with explanations of several things the movie only hinted at, and a fleshing out of several of the characters. Rather surprisingly, it's a very good novelization of a very good movie (usually one or the other is godawful, generally because it's not adapted correctly). I may well have missed something here, but it seems to be a pretty fair fantasy novel in its own right. Illustrated with photos from the movie.

THE WALKER IN SHADOWS, by Barbara Michaels [Dodd, Mead - \$8.95] But I borrowed mine from the Marion IN library; I'll buy the paperback. Two families are involved with a malevolent spirit from the Civil War era. My first reaction was that the author was reworking her earlier AMMIE, COME HOME, but when I checked the earlier book I found fewer similarities than I thought. The overall plot is quite similar, but the details are mostly different -- and I like this book better than I did AMMIE. It's a good ghost story (which are hard to come by). The menace is understated, which is a relief after the generally hysterical melodrama of the average "possession" novel. Recommended.

THE RING OF FIRE, by Shirley Rousseau Murphy [Avon, \$1.75] Subtitled "The First Book About the Children of Ynell." (The second book in the series is THE WOLF BELL, which I reviewed here in hardcover; I wouldn't have guessed them to be part of the same series, which is all to the good from my point of view.) This is a fairly standard juvenile fantasy, with the boy, the girl, the old wizard, and the Menace. It's reasonably well done and I enjoyed it.

PLAYERS AT THE GAME OF PEOPLE, by John Brunner [Del Rey, \$2.25] The Beautiful People, who can have anything they want, and never worry about payday -- until it arrives. Brunner is taking another crack at power and privilege. I don't see that his conclusion is as "obvious" as he claims, but it's certainly possible and it's an interesting idea. The book is flawed, for me, in that the idea is the whole thing; none of the characters are interesting or even very well fleshed-out. The protagonist never does anything except boast or occasionally whine -- I suppose that could be an adequate portrayal of one type of individual, but certainly not a type I can become interested in. The idea is enough to keep me reading but not enough to make this one of my favorite books. Recommended with reservations; readers who like gimmicks will enjoy it.

TIME OUT OF MIND, by Richard Cowper [Pocket Books, \$2.25] One of those highly involved time-travel stories that I don't much like. This one involves super-drugs, psi powers (or are they?) and our hero who goes back in time to remove a World Menace before it becomes menacing. Well done if you like that sort of thing; not well enough done to tempt me to read all of it.

YEARWOOD, by Paul Hazel [Timescape, \$2.50] By the end of Chapter 1 our protagonist has encountered a tree the size of a mountain, lost an eye, and acquired a pair of ravens. I didn't read all that much further, though I suppose there's a giant serpent in there somewhere; if there is, I didn't want to know about it. All these Norse borrowings are blended not too well with Celtic traditions and the whole didn't enthrall me, especially when I looked at the end and discovered that this is just the first book of a series. Style is a tedious blend of mythological ponderousness and normal story-telling, and it turned me off as much as the plot did.

GLINDA OF OZ, by L. Frank Baum [Del Rey, \$2.25] #14 in the Del Rey reprints of Oz. Recommended as nostalgia for adults or entertainment for children.

LOVE NOT HUMAN, by Gordon R. Dickson [Ace, \$2.50] Stories include "Black Charlie," "Moon, June, Spoon, Croon," "The Summer Visitors," "Listen," "Graveyard," "Fido," "The Breaking of Jerry McCloud," "Love Me True," "The Christmas Present," "It Hardly Seems Fair," and "The Monster and the Maiden." Original publication from 1953 thru 1976. The title covers it: love of human for alien, and vice versa, and in one instance love of computer for computer. The final novelet, with its reversal of clichés, is marvelous; "Black Charlie" was popular enough to have been reworked into a novel; and the rest vary from moderately to remarkably interesting.

FIREFLOOD AND OTHER STORIES, by Vonda McIntyre [Timescape, \$2.75] Includes the title story, "Of Mist, and Grass, and Sand," "Spectra," "Wings," "The Mountains of Sunset, The Mountains of Dawn," "The End's Beginning," "Screwtop," "Only At Night," "Recourse, Inc.," "The Genius Freaks," and "Aztecs." McIntyre's stories are basically emotional. Occasionally -- when she combines emotion with a plot and characters -- I enjoy them very much; I thought "Fireflood" was great (even if somewhat stickily sentimental). Mostly I think they're stickily sentimental without being very interesting, and I don't like them.

THE CITY OF THE SINGING FLAME, by Clark Ashton Smith [Timescape, \$2.95] Smith is revered by fans who equate a big vocabulary and sonorous prose with brilliance. Opening the book at random, I find: "...with strange austral songs in his heart, and the umber of high and heavy suns on his face." That's Smith, and a little of that sort of prose goes a long way with me; a book full of it is way too much. If you like poetic fancies spiced with words like "candent," "cachinnation," and "fluctuant," then Smith is the best there is. If you don't, then you won't like this one.

STELLAR 6, edited by Judy-Lynn del Rey [Del Rey, \$2.25] All original material. Includes "5980 A.D.," a remarkably unoriginal idea embodied in a poem by Robert Zend; "Till Death Us Do Part;" by James P. Hogan (the start of story Ambrose Bierce would have written if he was alive today); "...All Ye Who Enter Here" by Jack Williamson (a story that might have come out of a 1932 Wonder Stories); "A Gift of Space," by Margaret C. Hewitt (the urge to do a particular job, whatever the cost), "The Deregulated Jumping Frog of Calaveras III" by Martha Dodson and Robert L. Forward (a more or less humorous account of alien zoology), "Cinderella Switch" by Anne McCaffrey (fairly thin romance; the gimmickry doesn't sustain it); "Byte Your Tongue!" by Cliff Simak (gossipy robots? well, why not?); "Grandfather Clause" by L. Neil Smith (time-travel and an original but unbelievable solution to the paradox); and "The Slow-Death Corridor" by Mark J. McGarry (a study of an unpleasant future which I couldn't get interested in). On the whole, not nearly as good as previous volumes in the series, though Hogan, Hewitt, and Simak are good enough.

TALES FROM THE VULGAR UNICORN, edited by Robert Asprin [Ace, \$2.25] A second volume of stories about the residents of "Thieves World." Stories here are "Spiders of the Purple Mage" by Phil Farmer (who else would think up a pun like that?), "Goddess" by David Drake, "The Fruit of Enlibar" by Lynn Abbey, "The Dream of the Sorceress" by A.E. van Vogt, "Vashanka's Minion" by Janet Morris, "Shadow's Pawn" by Andy Offutt, and "To Guard the Guardians" by Asprin. The stories fit well together -- rather as though their authors had read one another's work while it was being written. All are adequate; none is really outstanding. Interestingly, the two women writers, Abbey and Morris, have slightly the best of it (though the difference in quality between stories is very slight). One problem all the authors face is making any of the citizens of Sanctuary seem at all sympathetic; they all do solve it, more or less. Moderately recommended.

THE GREAT SF STORIES, edited by Isaac Asimov and Martin H. Greenberg [DAW, \$2.75] This volume covers the year 1943, and we have "The Cave" by P. Schuyler Miller, "The Halfling" by Leigh Brackett, "Mimsy Were The Borogroves" by "Lewis Padgett," "Q.U.R." by Anthony Boucher, "Clash Dy Night" by "Lawrence O'Donnell," "Exile" by Ed Hamilton,



"Daymare" by Fredric Brown, "Doorway Into Time" by C.L. Moore, "The Storm" by A.E. van Vogt, "The Proud Robot" by "Lewis Padgett," "Symbiotica" by Eric Frank Russell, and "The Iron Standard" by "Lewis Padgett." A good year for the Kuttners; 3 stories under the Padgett byline and 1 by "O'Donnell," plus one by Moore. Not quite as good as previous volumes; I only recall 5 of the stories as helping create my love of science fiction. (I had never heard of science fiction in 1943, but when I did hear of it I bought back-issue magazines as rapidly as I could afford them.) Still, "Mimsy Were The Borogroves," "The Halfling," "Q.U.R.," "The Proud Robot," and "Symbiotica" are worth the price of the book, and the other stories are good -- just not brilliant. This volume of the series is still highly recommended.

NON -STF

PARTY GAMES, by Hans Hellmut Kirst (remaindered) Another of Kirst's novels of the shrewd manipulator opposing the Nazis. Behind the humor there is a serious point: that when the chips are down, humans do what they must to survive. (Not all of them, perhaps, but most.) Basically, however, it's an amusing book, especially for the cynical reader.

OUTCASTS, by Joe L. Hensley [Crime Club, \$9.95] Possibly it is a coincidence that Joe spent some time at a writing seminar in French Lick, Indiana, and that the background here includes an enormous resort hotel. Possibly... (Certainly the rest of the background bears no more obvious resemblance to French Lick than it does to any other Indiana resort town; I grew up in a resort area, and "Avalon" could be any of the towns I knew.) Story involves Joe's regular protagonist, lawyer Robak, a murder, big-time gambling, and Hoosier politics. A very enjoyable mystery; possibly not quite as good as the last couple Joe did.

101 USES FOR A DEAD CAT, by Simon Bond [Clarkson N. Potter, Inc. -- \$2.95] A straight cartoon book; not even captions. Bond's imagination is, to say the least, gross -- and the book has been enthusiastically received by every fan I've encountered who has read it. More than a trifle disgusting, and very funny.

UNSEEN FACES, by Jeff Gough [California Living Books, \$3.50] But mine was marked down to \$1.49. Not precisely a cartoon book; these are short stories or one-liners illustrated by cartoon characters. Some of it is impenetrable to non-Californians, or to this non-Californian, anyway -- but "Are We There Yet?" should be highly appreciated by anyone who has taken children on any sort of outing. Parts of it hilarious; parts not. Cautiously recommended.

THE GREAT UNITED STATES EXPLORING EXPEDITION, by William Stanton [remaindered, \$5.98] A long, detailed book about the Wilkes Expedition of 1838-1842, which charted Pacific Islands, discovered new parts of Antarctica, explored the American northwest, and brought back enough specimens to swamp existing facilities. The facts are fascinating, from the character of the commander (who seems to have been a sort of Utter Bastard who got things done in spite of being hated by most of his subordinates) to the clashes with Pacific islanders to the politicking before, during, and after the expedition. (Which is just as well, since Stanton's writing is pedestrian.) From its origins -- it was originally pushed by John Cleve Symmes as a means of exploring his hollow earth -- to the aftermath with the then-new Smithsonian Institute trying desperately to avoid having to accept its specimens -- it was a weird undertaking, quite symptomatic of the national urges of the time. I enjoyed it, despite feeling now and then that it was overly long.

MR. KIPLING'S ARMY, by Byron Farwell [Norton, \$13.95] But I believe I got a discount from one of the book clubs. An absolutely fascinating account of the British Victorian army; its organization (or lack of one), lifestyle of both officers and men, living conditions, religion, eccentricities -- all the things that made up the "thin red line." The eccentricities are sometimes highly eccentric: for example, the British officer who wrote to an aunt that "Man shooting is the finest sport of all" yet was

nauseated by the sight of raw meat and could barely manage to walk by a butcher shop. (He became a general.) One of the best books I've read all year.

THE DEVIL'S HORSEMEN, by James Chambers [Atheneum, \$11.95] But mine was a gift. This is about the Mongol invasion of Europe. The author emphasizes the brilliance of Mongol tactics, mentioning that both Patton and Rommel studied and admired the campaigns of Subedei. They were not a "horde"; they were generally outnumbered by their opponents. They won by "getting there fustest with the mostest," to paraphrase another brilliant cavalry officer. Excellent book.

AIRSHIPWRECK, by Len Deighton & Arnold Schwartzman [Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, \$10.95] But our copy was remaindered for \$4.98. The title covers it; it's a large but thin book detailing a few of the cruises and the end of every dirigible ever manufactured. A lot of them, of course, have been covered in more detail than this book does; the Hindenburg, the Shenandoah, the R-101, etc. Others I'd never encountered before; the L55, which set an altitude record of 7.5 kilometers while avoiding British airplanes (without a pressurized cabin or heaters); the Italia, which reached the North Pole; the L53, shot down by a WWI British airplane which took off from a floating platform towed behind a destroyer. There are a good many photos; some common and some very unusual, as the one showing the Graf Zeppelin being repaired in flight by workers standing on top of the dirigible. (Not for me, thanks.) I enjoyed it.

THE MICRO MILLENNIUM, by Christopher Evans [Washington Square Press, \$3.50] The coming revolution in computers. Evans has produced a book that's interesting to the casual reader + a must for the writers of near-future (or far-future, for that matter) science fiction. Highly recommended.

LAYING WASTE, by Michael Brown [Washington Square Press, \$3.50] Primarily the story of Love Canal, but with comments on other toxic waste dumps around the country. Brown is good at depicting the grisly results of a national problem that we have, as yet, no solution for. Also recommended.

PEASANTS INTO FRENCHMEN, by Eugen Weber [Stanford University Press, \$8.95] But I borrowed my copy from Sandra Miesel, mainly because neither she nor I could find another copy that I could buy. This is an excellent assessment of what the author calls "The Modernization of Rural France, 1870 - 1914." Modernization is right -- everything including language had to be improved. (In 1870, a majority of the population of France couldn't speak French; communication was in local dialects.) Villages in the 1880s included such medieval professions as molecatchers, snake-finders, "rebilhous" who called the hours during the night and at midnight went to the cemetery to tell time to the dead, "cendrousos" who collected ashes and sold them for making soap, and the men whose job it was to suck the overfull breasts of women who had lost their babies. Roads were impassable, schools primitive, justice either at the village level or resented by everyone because it wasn't. Civilization finally arrived in rural France shortly before and during World War I -- often because of World War I -- when peasants were drafted into the army, forced to learn French, and given the sight of areas beyond their villages. The book is somewhat horrifying, particularly the food section. French cuisine? How about bread in which the loaves could be poked up and carried by the straws sticking out of them? (Or, conversely, rye bread which could be thrown at the side of a building and would stick there like glue?) Or peasants who "subsisted on chestnuts and potatoes"? All in all, a perfectly fascinating account, even if it does have a slight tendency to tell you more about the subject than you really want to know (especially some subjects...). Recommended, if you can find a copy.

FAMOUS CURSES, by Daniel Cohen [Archway, \$1.75] A slim little volume of curses -- King Tut's and similar historical ones, not descriptions of how to make up your own. Cohen, being a nice logical individual, points out that the Tutankhamen Curse "has no evidence to support it," but will be repeated anyway because the public likes the idea. Same for the story of the Hope Diamond, which "has a lot of holes in it." The book is aimed at juveniles, so the language is simplified (and Cohen somehow manages to sound patronizing about it), but is still interesting. Some curses were familiar,



others, like Peter Rugg and the Three Sisters, I hadn't encountered before.

ACT OF PIRACY, by Frank O'Brian [used pb] This is basically a mediocre historical novel, but an afterword states that the background is true; that a Hudson River paddlewheeler went around the Horn in 1850 and was used for several years on the Sacramento River. (That's the sort of thing I'd like to see in a non-fictional account some time.) The voyage would indeed have been an epic.

THE BALLAD OF T. RANTULA, by Kit Reed [Fawcett Juniper, \$1.95] A boy (grade school? Junior high?) facing the breakup of his world. His parents are separating and talking divorce, his friends are growing up and in different directions from him, and his friends' parents are strange. The background is a small university society; I assume that Reed must have taught at one, because an outsider couldn't be that brilliant and bitter about the relationships. "...how could people who know so much be so bad at life?" Excellent book.

SAVAGE KEY, by Georgia York [Fawcett, \$1.95] I asked Lee Hoffman if she minded if I exposed her pseudonym, and she said no. Said she had decided on a pseudonym based on places she'd lived, and "Georgia York" sounded better than "Charlotte Chicago." I hadn't even realized Lee wrote romances; I thought she stuck to Westerns and an occasional sf novel. This is one of those steamy, passionate thrillers -- though hardly as steamy as some, I should think. Setting is one of the islands off the Gulf Coast of Florida in the 1870s. Characters -- Lee has always enjoyed the challenge of making sympathetic a character who isn't too bright, and I must say the Savage family offers her plenty of scope. Heroine, of course, is secretly (so secretly even she doesn't know it) in love with the moodiest, most ruthless individual of the lot.

MOONLIGHT VARIATIONS, by Florence Stevenson [Jove, \$2.50] Florence has a thing about vampires; this one is treated seriously. Story is actually two; the center section tells of the heroine's ancestor who fell in love with a vampire. Heroine is in love with someone she thinks is a vampire -- but is he? I must say that I totally reject the two assumptions the book is based on -- reincarnation and love at first sight -- but it was rather fun anyway. Though not as much fun as if I could have suspended my contempt for the two gimmicks. (The other basic, classical music, I have only a mild appreciation for.)

Last winter I entered a letter-writing contest in Plant Engineering magazine. The idea was to write about the product which would be of most interest to plant engineers during the 1980s. I picked computers, and won the prize, which was 3 books. Since they weren't science fiction, weren't sent for review, and probably wouldn't be of interest to most Yandro readers, I didn't review them last issue. At which point I got a note from Plant Engineering editor Gene Wolfe, wanting to know why I hadn't reviewed them. Well, that's why, but since I've had a request...

FLAYDERMAN'S GUIDE TO ANTIQUE AMERICAN FIREARMS, 2nd Edition, by Norm Flayderman [DBI Books, \$15.95] Like everything else, old gun prices are going up too fast for anyone to really keep up with them, but this at least tells what most of them were in 1980. Not everything can be covered, even in 600 pages, but the author lists the most popular companies and models from the beginning of the country up to about WWI.

BANNERMAN CATALOG OF MILITARY GOODS -- 1927 [DBI Books, \$12.95] Reproduction of the 1927 catalog of the legendary war-surplus company. Bannerman sold everything. A Civil War 12-pounder Napoleon cannon was \$1000 in 1927, while an "ancient ornamental bronze cannon" was only \$75. A muzzle-loading elephant rifle made by Botha in South Africa was \$10. A Mexican War army uniform was \$3.85 for the coat and \$2.00 for the trousers. A helmet used by Cromwell's army was \$40, but a native-made Abyssinian shield was only \$12. A British constable's helmet was \$1185. Then there were drum majors' uniforms, Gatling guns, saddles, a paperweight made from the hull plates of the "Merrimac," keys, antique daggers, medals, horse hobbles, suits of armor, crossbows, hammocks, and... If I could only time-travel...

GUN DIGEST, 1981 Edition, edited by Ken Warner [DBI Books, \$10.95] A listing of most modern American-made firearms, plus articles on various aspects of the field; history, handloading, gunstocks, various specific weapons and cartridges, plus directories of gunsmiths, firearms associations, book publishers, etc. Approximately 450 pages.

I enjoyed all of the above; they aren't precisely books to read through, but to dip into for information, and I've done that frequently already. (Now then, was anyone besides Gene interested in the reviews?)

Reprints, starting with PROTECTOR, by Larry Niven [Del Rey, \$2.25] A different sort of alien menace, and a definitely different human response.

SNOW QUEEN, by Joan D. Vinge [Dell, \$3.25] Not quite a great book of alien cultures, but a very good one; well worth reading. Inspector Palathion is a remarkable character.

THE PASTEL CITY, by M. John Harrison [Timescape, \$2.25] Nice cover. Story is swords and sorcery with occasional delusions of significance, and I never liked it much.

UP THE LINE, by Robert Silverberg [Del Rey, \$2.50] A popular time-travel epic that I never liked.

THE SHADOW OF THE TORTURER, by Gene Wolfe [Timescape, \$2.50] First volume in what is probably the best science-fantasy series of all time. Buy it.

GOLEM <sup>100</sup>, by Alfred Bester [Timescape, \$2.95] Despite Al Sirois' objections, I think it's an excellent psychological novel.

THE WOUNDED LAND, by Stephen R. Donaldson [Del Rey, \$2.95] From the blurb, I'd guess that Donaldson is writing the first series over again, changing a few names to protect his reputation. But I don't really think Del Rey would accept that, so... Anyway, I didn't like his first series and I'm not reading this one.

THE MIND CAGE, by A.E. van Vogt [Timescape, \$2.25] One of the author's lesser works; the preaching is more obvious and less logical than usual.

HOUSE OF ZEOR, by Jacqueline Lichtenberg [Playboy Paperbacks, \$1.25] First in her series.

THE ALIENS AMONG US, by James White, [Del Rey, \$2.25] A collection of "Sector General" stories; not precisely brilliant, but I find them enjoyable and well worth reading.

OF MEN AND MONSTERS, by William Tenn [Del Rey, \$2.50] Far future, with humans being "the rats in the walls" to gigantic aliens. Tenn's final revelation of Man's Destiny is worth the price of the book all by itself; logical, funny, and so cynical that I stand in awe of it. By all means get this one if you don't have an earlier edition.

MY NAME IS LEGION, by Roger Zelazny [Del Rey, \$2.25] Secret agents and psychology.

RINGWORLD, by Larry Niven [Del Rey, \$2.50] A recognized classic.

CYCLE OF FIRE, by Hal Clement [Del Rey, \$2.25] Human/alien confrontation; not one of Clement's best, but worth reading.

THE SHEEP LOOK UP, by John Brunner [Del Rey, \$2.95] Brunner's ecological disaster novel of the near future. Not at all likely to happen that way -- but only Damon Knight could make a story out of "Not With A Bang." Violence is necessary to the modern novelist. Still an excellent book.

MORE THAN HUMAN, by Theodore Sturgeon [Del Rey, \$2.25] Sturgeon's classic novel of the next stage of creation. A must.

RETRIEF OF THE CDT, by Keith Laumer [Timescape, \$2.25] A collection of humorous stories of intergalactic diplomacy. Rowena Morrill's cover looks like it was designed for a different book; it certainly has nothing to do with this one.



FLOW MY TEARS, THE POLICEMAN SAID, by Philip K. Dick [DAW #438, \$2.25] One of Dick's psychological, symbolic, and somewhat silly novels. Not nearly as relevant as Dick thought it was.

THE FALLIBLE FIEND, by L. Sprague de Camp [Del Rey, \$1.95] Even de Camp's demons are businesslike -- though not always successful at it. Somewhat of a satire of swords and sorcery and of the summoning of demons in general. I thoroughly enjoyed it.

THE VOYAGE OF THE SPACE BEAGLE, by A.E. van Vogt [Timescape \$2.50] A couple of novelets and a short story, as I recall, turned into an episodic novel. The stories are among van Vogt's best, particularly "Black Destroyer," which opens the book. Interesting cover; it's not quite my idea of Coeurl, but a reasonable try. Recommended.

THE LONG RESULT, by John Brunner [Del Rey, \$2.25] Alien contact and xenophobic plots; a good enough adventure novel.

MERLIN'S RING, by H. Warner Munn [Del Rey, \$2.95] Sequel to MERLIN'S GODSON. Personally, I think Munn should have quit while he was ahead (with the first half of GODSON). The sequels are highly imaginative but, somehow, not very interesting. Even for the quite accurate history included, the characters just don't hold my attention.

TWENTY THOUSAND LEAGUES UNDER THE SEA, by Jules Verne [Timescape, \$2.50] A new and allegedly more accurate translation of the classic. Everyone has of course heard about the book, but have you actually read it? It's a good enough story, even today.

THE SPACE MERCHANTS, by Frederik Pohl and C.M. Kornbluth [Del Rey, \$2.50] The classic novel of advertising greed. It seems a bit simplistic now, but it was a great book at the time, and spawned a host of excruciatingly bad imitations. It's still entertaining, though not quite the great warning it was 30 years ago.

NIGHTWORLD, by David Bischoff [Del Rey, \$1.75] Robot dragons; it never caught my interest.

ELIDOR, by Alan Garner [Del Rey, \$1.95] This concerns children, but it's not really a child's book; it's a bit stark and symbolic for that (though I think fan kids would like it). Sort of a more intelligent version of Narnia. Recommended.

THE OWL SERVICE, by Alan Garner [Del Rey, \$1.95] Another not-quite-juvenile; Garner's children were a bit ahead of their time in 1967; they fit better now. Also recommended.

THE HOUSE BETWEEN THE WORLDS, by Marion Zimmer Bradley [Del Rey, \$2.50] Interesting fantasy-adventure of multiple worlds.

THE WOODEN STAR, by William Tenn [Del Rey, \$2.25] Collection of short stories; Tenn's cynicism is exceptionally well displayed in "Brooklyn Project" and "Null-P," but all of the others are good.

A FEAST UNKNOWN, by Philip José Farmer [Playboy, \$2.25] Combat between a somewhat disguised Tarzan and an equally disguised Doc Savage. Originally produced for a porno publisher and turned into an underground classic; for once the cover blurb is correct. I never liked it much, but then I never cared much for the out-and-out superman of the pulps and comics -- with or without a sex life.

MARTIAN TIME-SLIP, by Philip K. Dick [Del Rey, \$2.25] Cover quote says it's about schizophrenia and life and the fragility of shared assumptions that hold society together. Well; about Dick's version of them, anyway. I rather enjoyed it despite disbelieving most of the premises, or at least that's the way I recall it. (I didn't recall enjoying it enough to re-read it this time around.)

MAJOR OPERATION, by James White [Del Rey, \$2.25] Sector General, again, and again a collection of interesting stories.

Back to some original material.

THE MUMMIES OF GUANAJUATO, by Ray Bradbury and Archie Lieberman [Harry N. Abrams, Inc] Probably out of print by now; I got my copy from Ken Amos at Rivercon. The publisher has coupled Bradbury's story "The Next In Line" with Lieberman's photos of the mummies Bradbury described. Book is 9 1/2" x 12", which produces a rather amusingly large-print edition of the story but shows off the photos to ghastly perfection. I must say it's the first time in 40 years that anything in a book has left me with an uneasy feeling. (The last time was when I read Dunsany's "The Two Bottles of Relish" as a child.)

SURVEY SHIP, by Marion Zimmer Bradley [Ace, \$6.95] Interesting book, and for a change the illustrator is Fabian instead of one of Ace's generally inept artists. However... first, it reads more like the opening of a novel than it does a complete story; and leads me to the suspicion that sequels will be forthcoming. Second, it's basically a juvenile with the typical juvenile moral that we must learn to get along together and understand one another. There's a fair amount of both sex and psychology in it, but neither changed my impression that I was reading a very preachy juvenile; the moral is hammered home too repeatedly to be acceptable in an adult novel. Very little actually happens beyond the characters explaining themselves to one another and to the readers. Not one of Marion's best, by a long shot.

I LIKE BEARS, by Thomas Burnett Swann [Golden Quill] Also out of print; I got a copy from Bob Roehm at Rivercon. (Bob is the world's #1 Swann fan; I suppose I rate somewhere in the top 10.) A very small book of juvenile verse. As a children's poet, Swann wasn't up to X. J. Kennedy, but as a Swann fan I liked the book anyway.

FORERUNNER, by Andre Norton [Tor, \$2.50] I couldn't pass up a Norton book illustrated by Barbi Johnson. The story is typical Norton; the unwanted child who grows up to be more important than anyone dreamed. It's done well and is one of Andre's better recent books. The Johnson illos are also very good; Barbi tends to make her males slightly effeminate, but her heroine and various aliens are excellent. Recommended.

CONAN'S WORLD AND ROBERT E. HOWARD, by Darrell Schweitzer [Borgo Press, \$2.45] A reasonably good look at the Conan series by a critic who understands (as many fail to do) that authors write for money and that some otherwise obscure passage may be there because an editor wanted it there, and that sex and sadism may appear in a work in order to sell it instead of as a symbol of the writer's suppressed desires. Darrell is more of a reviewer than a critic, but he does a very good job here.

LIGHTNING FROM A CLEAR SKY, by Richard Mathews [Borgo Press, \$2.45] Another look at Tolkien. I think Mathews now only gets more out of Tolkien's work than the author put there, he manages to get more out of the C.S. Lewis quote he uses as a title than Lewis intended. (He works so hard to explain the symbolism of lightning that he totally misses the obvious: that the Tolkien stories were both brilliant and unexpected.) This is the classic type of criticism (the sort that I loathe) and is undoubtedly appropriate to Tolkien, who possibly did intend at least most of the symbolism that Mathews extracts from the works. (I doubt that anyone could have intended all of it.) An excellent book of its type.

THE LAND OF LEYS, by L.P. Davis [Drime Club, 1979] Davies is my favorite British fantasy writer -- and about the only English mystery writer that I read at all, since it's often difficult to tell his mysteries from his fantasies until one reaches the last page. (Davies is an expert at building up a perfectly rationalized explanation, and then shooting it out from under the reader on the next-to-last page.) This is a mystery-fantasy; are the occult happenings all due to a clever con-man with a supply of hallucinogens, or is someone literally raising the Devil? And if the latter, then who's doing it? An excellent novel that I wish I'd known about a couple of years ago.

INVASION: 2200 A.D., by Howard Goldsmith [Doubleday Signal, \$7.95] This line is designed for retarded readers (or whatever euphemism is currently popular). Lots of action is expected; a very basic vocabulary is required. It should, I think, make it



quite difficult to write a book that is also entertaining to science fiction fans -- it obviously makes it impossible for Goldsmith to do it. If you know any street kids who enjoy stf but can't read very well, this might be what they're looking for. Anyone else should give it a wide berth. The alien invasion provides plenty of action, but characterization, background, and internal logic get the heave-ho.

A CLASH OF SYMBOLS, by Brian Stableford [Borgo Press, \$2.95] I think this is the first thing I've read by Stableford that I liked. In general, I think he does an excellent analysis of Blish's work (including a very polite phrasing of the fact that Blish couldn't write characterization for shit). He misses the point that NIGHT SHAPES is a parody of the typical jungle novel/movie, but then so did most reviewers of the time. (Blish, however, agreed with my review of it as a parody and even pointed out a few clichés that I'd overlooked.) Few fans gave Blish credit for much of a sense of humor because nearly all of his writing was deadly serious -- but not quite all of it was. (I mean, a jungle hero with a 25-foot python for a sidekick? Come on!) Anyway, I think that, overall, this is one of the best books in Borgo's "Milford" series.

OCTAGON, by Fred Saberhagen [Ace, \$2.75] In the last few years, Saberhagen has developed from a competent writer into a brilliant one. This one is an excellent story of near-future computer technology, wargaming, and a series of murders. It does get a bit melodramatic near the end, but the conclusion is one of the few possible ones. Recommended.

FOLLOW THE DRUM, by Andre Norton [Fawcett, \$2.25] Original copyright here is 1942. I never saw the book before, but then I don't have a complete list of Norton's non-stf works. It reads much like an early Norton juvenile; as a historical romance, it's long on history and short on romance, though the latter is there...barely. The writing style seems more geared to juveniles, if that sort of thing bothers you. A goodly amount of accurate history of London and Maryland in 1661 and 1662 is included. Gorgeous cover by somebody.

THE WORLD SHUFFLER, by Keith Laumer [Ace, \$2.25] One of the Lafayette O'Leary series. I assume it's a reprint since original copyright is 1970, but I was never an O'Leary fan, so I wouldn't know. If you are an O'Leary fan, here he is.

PARATIME, by H. Beam Piper [Ace, \$2.75] Oddly enough, the first Astounding that I read had the first Paratime story in it -- I had no idea what was going on, but it fascinated me. And, coincidentally, the first Astounding that Juanita read -- different issue -- also had a Paratime story included. There are, apparently, only 4 of the series altogether; "Police Operation," "Last Enemy," "Time Crime," and "Temple Trouble." The book is filled out by adding a different alternate-worlds story, "He Walked Around the Horses." (Which is fine with me, since I believe it is my all-time favorite Piper story. It is a marvelous alternate world, depicted brilliantly, and given as the solution to a genuine unexplained mystery of our own world. I suppose enjoying it requires a fair knowledge of history; I can think of several fans who wouldn't understand the kicker at the end.) Overall, I'm too biased in favor of "Horses" and the Paratime stories to give a critical judgment -- but I certainly recommend the book.

SHADOWS 2, edited by Charles L. Grant [Doubleday \$8.95] Original horror stories. #2 SHADOWS 3, edited by Charles L. Grant [Doubleday, \$9.95] includes "Saturday's Shadow" by William F. Nolan, "Night Visions" by Jack Dann, "The Spring" by Manly Wade Wellman, "Valentine" by Janet Fox, "Mackintosh Willy" by Ramsey Campbell, "Dragon Sunday" by Ruth Berman, "The White King's Dream" by Elizabeth Lynn, "The Chair" by Alan Dean Foster and Jane Cozart, "Clocks" by Barry Malzberg and Bill Pronzini, "Holly, Don't Tell" by Juleen Brantingham, "The Old Man's Will" by Lee Wells, "The Closing Off Of Old Doors" by Peter D. Pautz, "Dead End" by Richard Christian Matheson, "Seasons of Belief" by Michael Bishop, and "Petey" by T.E.D. Klein. Most of them neither suspend my disbelief nor rouse my interest, though I did at least finish reading all of them. Wellman has a typical mountain story that I rather liked, Berman's dragons are cute,

Fox provides a minor shudder, Campbell has a well-crafted and interesting story, and Lynn has a quite different sort of horror. Mostly, however, the stories are moderately slick and forgettable. #3 has "The Brown Recluse" by David Grubb, "To See You With, My Dear" by Bruce Francis, "Avenging Angel" by Ray Russell, "The Ghost Who Limped" by R. Chetwynd-Hayes, "Janey's Smile" by Juleen Brantingham, "Opening a Vein" by Malzberg and Pronzini, "The Partnership" by William F. Nolan, "Wish Hound" by Pat Murphy, "Ant" by Peter D. Pautz, "Tell Mommy What Happened" by Alan Ryan, "At The Bureau" by Steve Rasnic Tem, and "Cabin 33" by Chelsea Quinn Yarbro. A considerably better assortment than #2. Yarbro's vampires are entertaining, Grubb's story is fascinating, if never believable and Russell, Chetwynd-Hayes, and Brantingham are well enough done. (Maybe it's better because there are fewer stories; about the same number of good ones and fewer poor ones. Though Yarbro is better than anyone else in either book.) Overall, #3 is readable; you aren't missing much by skipping #2.

WHISPERS II, edited by Stuart Schiff [Doubleday, \$8.95] 1979 publication; I'm a bit behind. This is a bit more like it as a horror anthology, though. Includes "Under-tow" by Karl Edward Wagner, "Berryhill" by R.A. Lafferty, "The King's Shadow Has No Limits" by Avram Davidson, "Conversation Piece" by Richard C. Matheson, "The Storm-song Runner" by Jack Chalker, "They Will Not Hush" by James Sallis and David Lunde, "Lex Talionis" by Russell Kirk, "Marianne" by Joseph Payne Brennan, "From the Lower Deep" by Hugh B. Cave, "The Fourth Musketeer" by Charles L. Grant, "Ghost of a Chance" by Ray Russell, "The Elcar Special" by Carl Jacobi, "The Box" by Lee Weinstein, "We Have All Been Here Before" by Dennis Etchison, "Archie and the Scylla of Hades Hole" by Ken Wisman, "Trill Coster's Burden" by Manly Wade Wellman, "Conversation Piece" by Ward Moore "The Bait" by Fritz Leiber, "Above the World" by Ramsey Campbell, "The Red Leer" by David Drake, and "At the Bottom of the Garden" by David Compton, plus some mediocre interior art and a nice dust jacket by Tim Kirk. (Anything but incredibly bad dust jackets being very rare on Doubleday Books.) Several of these I had read previously in THE YEAR'S BEST HORROR STORIES. All of these are short; several are vignettes (and generally the poorest of the lot). The Wellman, Davison, Kirk, Cave, and Compton are excellent; Drake and Moore are good; Wagner is good enough if you like his Kane stories, which, I don't. Overall, the book is well worth reading.

THE WATER OF THOUGHT, by Fred Saberhagen [Tor, \$2.50] Advertised as the "first complete publication." If a shorter version was published in 1965, it wasn't at all memorable. This is a good adventure story -- nothing too memorable about this version either, come to think of it. But it was enjoyable to read. Illustrations by Janet Aulisio are somewhat below Janet's average, but not bad. The depiction of the harm that can be done by a humanitarian with the wrong theory is interesting, certainly, and Saberhagen's primitive aliens are well depicted.

WYRLDMAKER, by Terry Bisson [Timescape, \$2.25] It's an original type fantasy, but somehow I couldn't get interested in it. I think it was the somewhat cutesy phrasing; that and the involved plot that never seemed to make a lot of sense (and I was never convinced that the author was going to bring it all together believably -- in fact, from skipping ahead to the ending, I don't think he did). Anyway, our Hero is adventuring in a world that's vaguely reminiscent of Farmer's World of Tiers and also of Vance's Big Planet, if you can imagine a combination of the two.

THE BEST SCIENCE FICTION OF THE YEAR: 10, edited by Terry Carr [Timescape, \$3.50]  
THE 1981 ANNUAL WORLD'S BEST SF, edited by Don Wollheim with Art Saha [DAW #432, \$2.50]  
As usual, the Carr book is bigger: 12 stories, 430 pages, with Wollheim providing 10 stories and 252 pages. Both books include "Nightflyers" by George R.R. Martin, "The Ugly Chickens" by Howard Waldrop, "Window" by Bob Leman, and "Beatnik Bayou" by John Varley. The Waldrop is certainly one of my favorites of the year, and the Leman is enjoyable. I didn't care that much for the other two, but they're okay. In addition, Carr includes "Grotto of the Dancing Deer" by Simak, "Scorched Supper on New Niger" by Suzy McKee Charnas, "Ginungagap" by Michael Swamwick, "Frozen Journey" by Philip K. Dick, "Tell Us A Story" by Zenna Henderson, "Le Crois (The Cross)" by Barry Malzbergh, "Martian Walkabout" by F. Gwynplaine MacIntyre, and "Slow Music" by James



Tiptree, Jr. The Simak and Henderson are predictable -- but good, as usual. Charnas is heavy on the feminist propaganda but with a good story under it all; Swanwick couples nasty people with a good story. The Tiptree is, as usual, an interesting story about interrelationships (with a totally unbelievable background). The rest I could do without. Wollheim includes "Variation On a Theme from Beethoven" by Sharon Webb, "Elbow Room" by Marion Zimmer Bradley, "Prime Time" by Norman Spinrad, "A Spaceship Built of Stone" by Lisa Tuttle, "The Summer Sleet, the Winter Wild" by Michael Coney, and "Achronos" by Lee Killough. The Coney is outstanding; the best story in either volume. Killough is shuddery, and Bradley provides a quick shiver. The rest are acceptable but not all that thrilling. On the whole, both collections are good; this time I think Wollheim has a bit the best of it.

MAGIC TIME, by Kit Reed [Berkley, \$2.25] All the world's a stage and all that. I can't say I really liked this adventure in a super and sinister Disneyland; mainly I loathed the shifting around of viewpoints. (Though at least Reed had four different characters, unlike the last Heinlein that had one character with four different names). But it was fascinating enough for me to read it to the conclusion -- which is not your everyday happy ending, for sure. An excellent book, even if I didn't find it all that enjoyable.

TOMORROW'S HERITAGE, by Juanita Coulson [Del Rey, \$2.75] The first book in her science fictional family saga. Moderately near-future world, not too far advanced over ours because of war and natural disaster. (She was particularly gleeful about putting a 6th Great Lake on the site of New Madrid -- and St. Louis.) The family is one of wheeler-dealers, who came to power on the inventions of the father (deceased before the book begins). One son is heading for the top job on the planet (in a sort of super-U.N. put together after the wars), the other son is a big wheel in satellite communications, and the daughter is an executive on the first working space station. (There is one space station with people living on it, a small military outpost on the Moon, and various communication satellites, some large enough to house a staff.) The mother runs the rest of the family business and makes political deals favorable to the politician-son. And of course -- de rigueur in family sagas -- there is a fair amount of intra-family disputes, double-crosses, and general sibling rivalry. All complicated by discovery of an alien probe headed into the Solar System. The book starts slow, though when I was halfway through I was surprised at how far I'd come; it reads fast enough. There is enough action in the conclusion to satisfy anyone, I should think. I'm prejudiced, of course, but I enjoyed it.

SHRINKLITS, by Maurice Sagoff [Workman Publishing, \$3.95] A slim little book of verse...sort of. This does for literary classics what folksingers have been doing for stf, turns them into humorous (usually) verse. A fair amount of the humor is puns:

"Monster Grendel's tastes are plainish.

Breakfast? Just a couple Danish."

Or a line from the author's version of THE GREAT GATSBY: "Champagne pals shun watery bier." THE HOBBIT gets two verses -- one pro, one con. To keep both types of critics happy, or because the author couldn't make up his mind? I think most of the fans I know will enjoy this volume.

#### REPRINTS:

THE ELEVENTH COMMAND, by Lester del Rey [Del Rey, \$2.50] I still don't like the ending, but except for that it's an excellent stf novel.

NOW WAIT FOR LAST YEAR, by Philip K. Dick [DAW #450, \$2.50] One of Dick's satires. It's 15 years old, which means it's better written than what he's doing now, but I never actually liked it very much. Probably the English-major contingent of stf does, however.

THE WEIRDSTONE OF BRISINGAMEN, by Alan Garner [Del Rey, \$1.95] Juveniles, and the  
THE MOON OF GOMRATH, by Alan Garner [Del Rey, \$1.95] only Tolkien imitations I've read which really catch the idea of the original. Highly recommended.

WILD SEED, by Octavia Butler [Pocket Books, \$2.75] Two different types of immortal in love and conflict.

KINDRED, by Octavia Butler [Pocket Books, \$2.75] Time-travel to 1819 Maryland and slavery. Well written.

SECOND GAME, by Charles V. de Vet & Katherine MacLean [DAW #435, \$2.25] Interplanetary conquest, intrigue, and psychology; a reasonably good mixture. A shorter version was published in 1962; no reprints since that I know of.

THE REPAIRMEN OF CYCLOPS, by John Brunner [DAW #443, \$2.25] Medical marvels and misuses.

DEADLY LITTER, by James White [Del Rey, \$2.25] Interplanetary medicine; interesting.

SHADOWS, edited by Charles Grant [Playboy, \$2.25] Collection of horror stories. Some of them are quite entertaining the first time around; not one did I recall from reading the hardcover two years ago. But they're pleasant time-wasters.

THE CHILDREN OF SHINY MOUNTAIN, by David Dworkin [Timescape, \$2.50] Couldn't finish it the first time around.

RADON OF ANCIENT OPAR, by Philip José Farmer [DAW #442, \$2.50] Not quite imitation Burroughs; sort of an attempt to make a logical story from a Burroughs foundation.

KING OF ARGENT, by John T. Phillifent [DAW #447, \$2.25] Exploring a planet of monsters.

THE CHAMPION OF GARATHORN, by Michael Moorcock [Dell, \$2.25] Second and third vol-

THE QUEST FOR TANELORN, by Michael Moorcock [Dell, \$2.25]umes in the "Chronicles of Count Brass" -- pretentious swords and sorcery, in other words.

The following books have been published. They are not going to be reviewed.

NIGHT SCREAMS, by Bill Pronzini and Barry Malzberg [Playboy, \$2.75]

HORROR HOUSE, by J.N. Williamson [Playboy, \$2.95]

LIMB TO LIMB, by John Russo [Pocket Books, \$2.75]

PIN, by Andrew Neiderman [Pocket Books, \$2.50]

SATYR, by Linda Crockett Gray [Playboy, \$2.50]

THE DESECRATION OF SUSAN BROWNING, by Russell Martin [Playboy, \$2.50]

MASKS OF THE ILLUMINATI, by Robert Anton Wilson [Timescape, \$2.95]

SCHRODINGER'S CAT II, by Robert Anton Wilson [Pocket Books, \$2.50]

SCHRODINGER'S CAT III, by Robert Anton Wilson [Pocket Books, \$2.50]

ROGUE OF GOR, by John Norman [DAW #424, \$2.50]

DARYA OF THE BRONZE AGE, by Lin Carter [DAW #451, \$1.95]

LEGIONS OF ANTARES, by Dray Prescott [DAW #446, \$2.25]

MANHOUNDS & ARENA OF ANTARES, by Dray Prescott [DAW, \$2.75] Reprint of #6 and 7 in the the series in one volume.

VAMPIRES OF NIGHTWORLD, by David Bischoff [Del Rey, \$2.25]

AN INFINITE SUMMER, by Christopher Priest [Dell, \$2.75] Short story collection.

KINSMAN, by Ben Bova [Dell, \$2.95]

NECTAR OF HEAVEN, by E.C. Tubb [DAW #431, \$1.95] Dumarest #24.

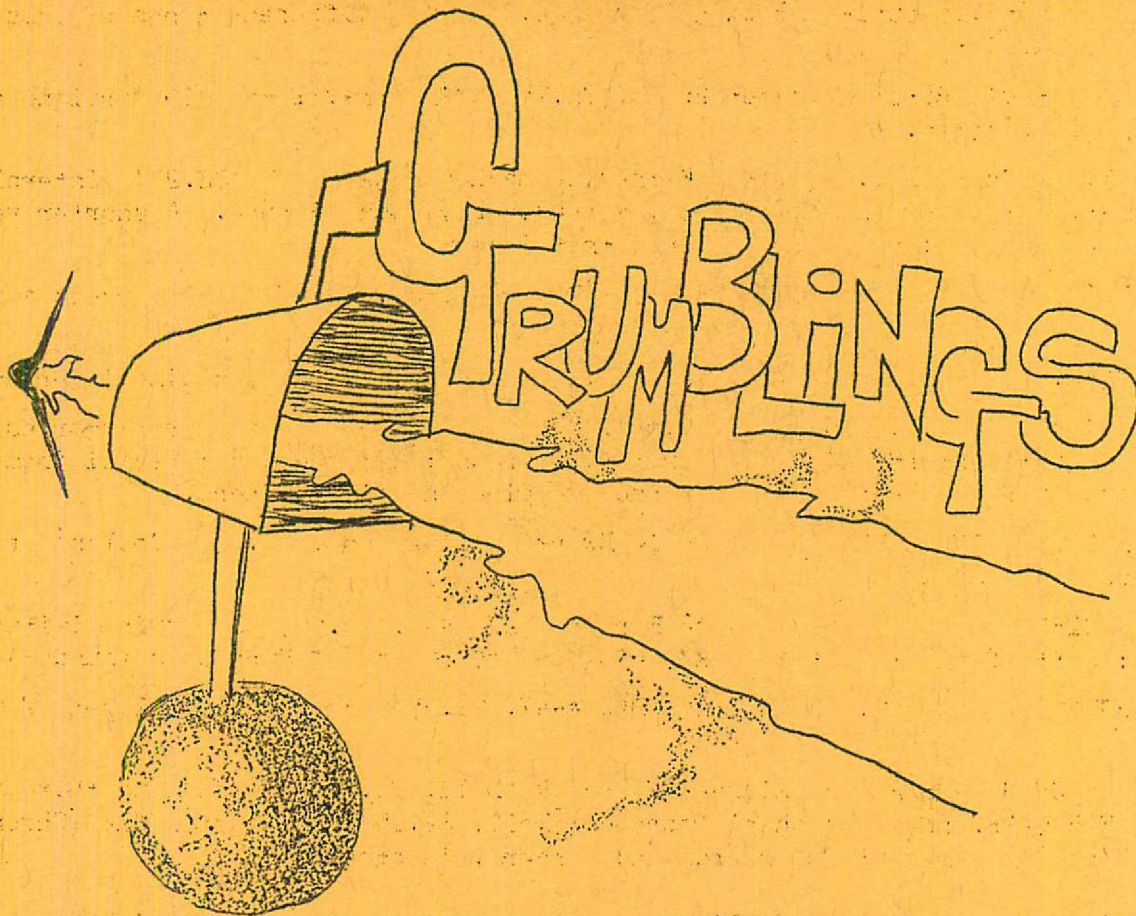
THE ANARCH LORDS, by A. Bertram Chandler [DAW #449, \$2.25] Grimes # GodKnowsWhat.

TIMESCAPE, by Greg Benford [Pocket Books, \$2.95]

THE ENTROPY EFFECT, by Vonda McIntyre [Timescape, \$2.50] "Star Trek" novel.

And finish off with another new one -- NOTES TO A SCIENCE FICTION WRITER, by Ben Bova [Houghton Mifflin -- \$5.95] Actually I see this is a reprint, also, but I never read the original. It's a very comprehensive, lucid account, aimed at the well-read amateur, of how to write science-fiction short stories. Bova's own fiction isn't brilliant, but it's craftsmanlike, and he uses his own stories to show how it's done. Recommended.





A 7-month delay in publishing really lets the letters pile up. I'll prune ruthlessly and still have a big column.

Avram Davidson

It is easy enough to write Fantasy, if Fantasy be merely conceived as that which takes place in a castle full of people saying "My Lord" and "My Lady," as well as white-bearded wizards waving wands. A pseudomedieval structure is not sufficient, particularly when it is not realized that such simple stuff does not make a world, does not set up a society, and certainly does not even suspend disbelief in the castle itself, which -- besides My Lord and My Lady and the white-bearded wizards -- must also be realized to contain fleas in the beds, lice in the body, lots and lots of very essential people neither Lord nor Lady, witchcrafts in the privies hanging over the moat, piddle in the corners of the pavements, and the "fact" that the white-bearded wizard was not always white-bearded and often, very often indeed, did more with his wand than merely wave it about.

I am not addressing myself to any particular person or persons. If the unenchanted buskins fit, they may wear them whoso will.

[[Dated March; I feel a bit as though I should tug my forelock and apologize for not publishing sooner. (But I won't.) RSC]]

Michael G. Coney, 2082 Neptune Rd., R.R. 3, Sidney B.C., Canada V8L 3X9

Daphne and I enjoyed your account of England, particularly those odd customs you mention -- which, because we've been away for so long, seem odd to us too, now. It's sad to think I may never go back to England again. It's been a number of years now, and the people we knew have moved away from where we used to live -- in fact, some of them have come to Canada. But there are too many things wrong with England now for

me ever to want to go back permanently.

I'm writing a non-fiction book at present and a guy named John Paynter is doing some research for me. He is an Englishman of the old school, late fifties, an up-right solid citizen who clings dearly to the old values and loves wooden boats. In fact he's building a steam launch. In spite of all the above he has a helluva sense of humour.

The day after John Lennon was shot a lot of us were feeling low, and it chanced that I ran into John Paynter during the morning; he'd just come from having coffee with some people. He was grinning. He said: "I've just been subjected to the ultimate put-down and I desire to share it with you, Mike." He talks like that.

Apparently conversation at coffee had dealt with the death of Lennon and a few of the guys were pretty unhappy about it and were discussing the loss to music; one fellow of about Lennon's age was particularly vocal. This annoyed John Paynter and when finally the conversation began to irk him beyond endurance he sounded off. He described Lennon as a failed hippie who happened to have been born at the right time, and he castigated the Lennon fan as a dupe of the personality cult. "I can't understand all the fuss about this long-haired Liverpool freak," he said.

And the Lennon fan replied, "Well, Mr. Paynter, just ask yourself how you'd feel if Lawrence Welk had been shot."

Neat, huh?

[[Well, actually, in my case I'd be pretty much indifferent to both, so while I understand the humor it doesn't really hit me. Lennon's death was unpleasant, but the latest rape-murder in the daily paper is moreso. RSC]]

Gene Wolfe, Box 69, Barrington IL 60010

I'm still glad you liked "A Criminal Proceeding."

Since you pubbed Marian Lois Turner's poem, you may be interested in hearing that I am now president of the Science Fiction Poetry Association. My job is much like Reagan's -- I'm a figurehead. But SFPA does good stuff, including putting out Star Line, a six-times-a-year newsletter full of sf poetry and talk about it. Yandro readers who want to join can send \$6 to Maureen Kaplan, 1722 N. Mariposa Ave #1, Los Angeles CA 90027.

So you've been reading "The Lower Case."  
If you can, try to get ahold of SQUAD HELPS DOG BITE VICTIM; I thought it was even funnier than THE (INCOMPLETE) BOOK OF FAILURES, although I agree heartily with your recommendation of that.

To go with that Lafferty quote on p 15, I'll pass along one from Mike Royko of the Chicago Sun-Times.

"If working's so great, how come they have to pay you to do it?" Sums up my feelings





of 25 years.

[[My stf poetry generally gets published in Kantele and the Filk Foundation -- or Yandro (or sometimes in Dell Books); but Marian might well be interested in the SFPA. RSC]]

Manly Wade Wellman, Box 744, Chapel Hill NC 27514.

Thanks for sending me the latest Yandro, and thanks to Juanita Coulson for liking my book AFTER DARK.

If she can't think where she heard about the Shenokins, that's because she wasn't born far enough back. In the 1940's and 1950's, these creatures appeared in stories about John Thunstone in lamented WT. I thought I'd dreamed them up until I began to get letters from readers who told about hearing Shenokin rumors in upstate New York, up in the northern Midwest, down in Arkansas.

There's lots of coincidence, long-armed here and there. For instance, I must plead not guilty to any "takeoff" of any song by Hoyt Axton, whose songs I've never heard. And John was called John the Balladeer more than 20 years ago. If Axton recorded "Vandy," I wonder where he got the tune, or if he made one up himself. The real one is strangely melodious and melodiously strange -- to an archaic scale that sounds minor until you find you can play it mostly on the white keys.

As to Yandro, I mean the cabin of that name on a ledge of Walnut Mountain in Madison County NC, I haven't been up there for five years, not since I broke a leg and find it hard to run those ridges and hollows. But I'm going this May, about the time serviceberry and cow's tongue get into bloom.

[[No, no; I (Buck) am the book reviewer on Y. As I recall, the song in your book could easily be sung to Axton's "The Balladeer" and has somewhat similar ideas. Great minds run in the same channels? I sent you a tape of the Axton version of "Vandy" some years back; you didn't like it. (But it's the only recorded version I know about, so it's the tune used for the song at filksings. Which are stf fandom's version of folksings, if anyone cares.) RSC]]

Darrell Schweitzer, 113 Deepdale Rd., Strafford PA 19087

Some random comments on the last Yandro. To answer Don D'Amassa's question, THE BOOK OF THE DUN COW got all that attention because WATERSHIP DOWN made so much money. Animal stories are 'in' just now. I am waiting to see some major fantasy novel blurb-ed "does for humans what WATERSHIP DOWN did for rabbits!" Maybe someone will do a horror novel about lampreys...

I notice that DUN COW doesn't seem to be around much anymore, which tells me that it probably did not earn out its enormous paperback advance, which means disaster for somebody. Editors have been put out to sell apples on streetcorners for less. The attention came from the amount of money paid. I am beginning to learn that many SF pros are far more impressed by how much money a book made than how good it is. The resentment directed toward the book comes, I suspect, partly from envy, and mostly because of that American Book Award win which was, I must agree, entirely stupid. The book has nothing whatever to do with science fiction. It probably doesn't appeal to the same audience.

But I understand why it was published. It is a very good specimen of what it is. The attention will probably do it harm in the long run, the same way all the attention hurt Cabell. He was popular for the wrong reasons, and when those reasons ran out, he was dismissed as a has-been. THE BOOK OF THE DUN COW is simply a very good beast fable, written to medieval models. This sort of thing was very popular in the 14th Century. Chaucer did a couple of good ones. I've met people whose knowledge of medieval literature far exceeds my own, who are great admirers of DUN COW. I suspect the book's audience is quite small, and it's only unfortunate that it was dragged out into an inappropriate limelight. However, Wagnerin is probably crying about it all the way to the bank.

Dave Locke's problems with the Post Office could probably be solved by going to

another P.O., if he is in a region where several are close by. Interpretations of the Postal Manual by people who haven't read it are probably as widespread and varied as interpretations of the Bible by people who haven't read it. Therefore, the trick is either to find a tame clerk, who can be made to accept your interpretation, or go to another P.O. and get a more favorable ruling. Sometimes you find that you must mail fanzines at one office, books at another, manuscripts at a third, because each gives the best terms for those particular items. Small branch offices with only one clerk manning them usually give better service, because someone entrusted to run a P.O. by himself is probably more intelligent than the average postal worker. The prize idiots are usually reserved for the mail post offices.

One important difference between conditions now, and all those those times in the past when fans have been predicting the death of the science fiction magazine, is that nowadays there is an alternative. There are more short story markets today than, say, the early 60's, even though there were more magazines then. The market is diversifying through hordes of one-shot and short run anthologies, small press magazines (a whole category which didn't exist prior to about 1973), gaming magazines, and of course things like Omni and Ad Astra which are only a small percentage fiction. (I understand there's one going in Australia called Omega, but it isn't the End of the phenomenon.) I see two long-range effects of this: 1) as the market diversifies, Best of the Year anthologies will be more important, because they will draw from sources that most readers have not seen. (This is already true in the horror and fantasy fields.) 2) It will be harder for new writers to break in. You usually have to be closer to the pulse of the field to find out about an original anthology before it closes, whereas the magazines are always there and always open. A corollary of this is that the few magazines which publish a lot of new writers will have a long-range influence out of proportion to all else. I suspect that Asimov's will slowly and insidiously take over SFWA by stuffing the membership rolls with more new writers than anybody else. How many careers have been launched in Omni lately?

Your comment on allegory being only of interest to literature students makes me feel that most people do not know how to read allegory anymore. I think the appeal of a deftly done allegory (which must dovetail back into the plot, not dominate it) is emotional, not something to perform an autopsy on. Suddenly a larger pattern is visible, and you understand something that couldn't be expressed any other way. Think of the guy who discovered the benzene ring in a dream. A good allegory is a device for planting hunches. Too many people think of it in terms of the really heavy-handed stuff, like EVERYMAN: (Which survives as a specimen of its type only. I don't think anybody reads it for enjoyment, and they prefer to leave other examples alone. But people still do read the medieval romances, like GAWAIN, where the allegorical elements are better handled.)

[[But who wants to run all over town to mail stuff? Not to mention travel costs exceeding postal costs in most cases. One could also move to a small town where the service is better, for that matter. // Either I've never read any good allegories or my mind is strange, because they never made me understand anything any better than I did before. Mostly I just got irritated at the characters in them for being idiots. Of course, I'm not noted for being emotional... RSC]]

Joe L. Hensley, 2315 Blackmore, Madison IN 47250

Have been doing short stories, all suspense, the past month or so. Finished a Robak-Senator short yesterday called "Fifty Chinese."

Glad you liked OUTCASTS. The first copies came the day before I went to French Lick for that "do" there and so I took copies along. The two gentlemen who ran the hotel seemed very good sports about it, but there may be a contract out on me. On the way back Char and I stopped past the ski lodge at Paoli Peaks. There were hundreds of skiers about. We were about to raise enough courage when one of those snowmobiles came up the hill carrying a kid with a broken leg. That did it and we left quietly.

Six weeks and we'll be off on the Vistafjord with John D. MacDonald, Don Westlake,



Dilys Winn, and others as "staff" for a mystery cruise to, eventually, Italy. Char and I are going up to Switzerland for a while and then fly back from Paris.

[[Nice to be a world-traveling author. (This letter was written in March, so I assume Joe is back by now, even if he didn't show up at Rivercon.) RSC]]

Roy Tackett, 915 Green Valley Road NW, Albuquerque NM 87107

It appears that you publish Yandro about on the same schedule I do Dynatron. A disgusting state of affairs for both of us. Mention of the postal increase...here we are only a week away from it and the only thing the people at the Albuquerque post office know for sure is that first class will be 18¢. I have been attempting to find out the new third class schedule in order to decide what I am going to do with D but nobody knows what the rate will be. Ah, well. I found out the hard way that the international rates went up in January. All the copies of D bound for overseas ended up back in my mail box with a demand for 13¢ additional postage. Overseas rates are set by a different board than domestic rates. The way things are going I guess the only safe thing to do is to check on the price of postage before mailing out each issue.

We seem to have a house full of those aliens who take off with meaningless objects. Things disappear at an alarming rate: pencils, packets of seeds, other commonplace things. I have thwarted them in their attempts to steal my spectacles, though. Those have been left alone ever since I got a second pair. Hmmm. Maybe it is a plot on the part of some fiendish multi-national cartel to force us to buy two of everything. I'll have to check with Hlavaty on that.

A guru for science? Sure. Why not? "Science" seems to be becoming as rigidly molded as religion anyway. Vague recollections of sf stories about a fully organized scientific religion are tickling my brain but I haven't paid enough attention to bring them up. May have to do that. Use my ordination credentials to establish a branch of the Albuquerque Church of Science.

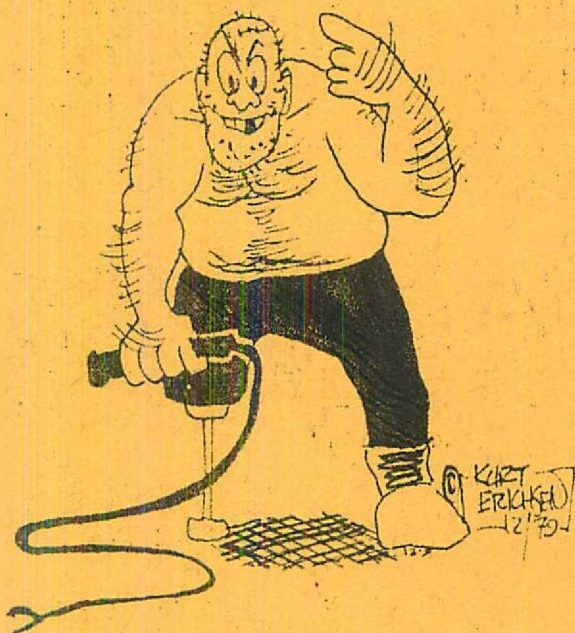
Sagan...he say...it all begin with a big bang and we whimper about the end. Amen.

Flying hyphen, eh? A new phrase to use in fandom. Go take a flying hyphen at the moon.

I applied Locke's numerology to my names. I found that my name comes out with a 3, my legal name comes to a 5, the name given me at birth comes to an 8 and the sum of those three comes to a 7. Hmmm. I have a couple of more names I could throw in for the hell of it. Hell with it.

Golden Minutes...mixing with the hard-nosed bastards who make up the Albuquerque SF Society I sometimes forget about fandom's more liberal wing. Those poor fen would be utterly shattered if they spent a few hours with the likes of Vardeman, Kring, Virzzi, DiMaria, & co. Speer sometimes blanches at the discussions that go on. Not a conservative group, mind you, just one that calls a spade a spade. Well, actually, they call it a fucking shovel.

INTERFACES. I never got past the first page that told me Science Fiction comes of Age. I took it to last night's book swap. Brought it home, too. Could not even get rid of it when I offered a quarter to anybody who would take it. ASFS is sometimes an unkind group. I thought surely Pat



YOU WILL ENJOY THIS FANZINE.  
WE HAVE WAYS OF MAKING YOU  
ENJOY THIS FANZINE.

Mathews would grab it up. Even she took one look and said "Yecch."

I note that Dear Abby or her twin, having consulted three network weather readers, has declared that Hoosiers are not Easterners. She obviously did not include the view from the Rio Grande.

["Midwest: A cultural and historical region of the United States extending roughly from Ohio westward through Iowa, and from the Ohio and Missouri rivers northward through the Great Lakes." (AMERICAN HERITAGE DICTIONARY.)

-Coined at some point after the Lewis & Clark expedition, and probably around 1849 when people

were leaving for the Far West.//Presumably you found out the postal rates and plan to send Dynatron via first class mail. RSC!]



Lee Hoffman, 350 N.W. Harbor Blvd., Port Charlotte FL 33952

Juanita, after reading your Ramblings in Y252, I wonder if maybe saying Rabbit Rabbit would help. Better to get scissors in a rabbit's foot than in your own.

Buck, I agree wholeheartedly with you about the value of COSMOS. I suppose that out there in the American Heartland you are aware, as we are here in the Heartland of Retired America, of the increase in publicity for anti-intellectualism in this country. The view is different from here than from more urbane urban areas. In NYC I had no idea that there were really still a mass of people in the U.S. who believed the Genesis story of creation over the theory of evolution, and like that. Well, ours has always been essentially an anti-intellectual culture, despite the lip service (and taxes) we pay education. It is a bloody shame there aren't more evangelistic scientists like Carl Sagan out there preaching the word to the masses. Ivory Towers fall easily to an onslaught from a mob.

Dave Locke's exposition on numerology either demonstrates the marvelous accuracy of the system or the marvelous versatility of interpretation, depending on one's point of view, eh?

I didn't see THE SHINING. I rarely see fillums, except on TV. But I've read lots of reviews of it. People who go to movies must be Different from people who watch TV if, as Darrell Schweitzer implies, the audience for THE SHINING was generally disapproving on the grounds that the plot didn't make any sense. "It violates quite a few obvious storytelling rules, such as the need for internal consistency and motivation." Or perhaps it is only the Nielsen families who don't give a damn about internal consistency and motivation, and the rest of the people who've got their sets turned on are asleep or in the john.

Juanita: I hope you get a reply to your comment to Tony Strelkov's letter in Y251. I, too, was under the impression that species do not breed faster at the edge of extinction.

Have I written since I got into monitoring the local sheriff's dept? It is great fun. Way better than most TV. I only have a multi-band portable, not a scanner, so I'm limited in what I get. Just the main PL channel, but I get some good stuff. Like the other day.

I turned it on around 5:30 P.M., just in time to hear a deputy asking just where this lost person was supposed to be. The dispatcher replied that he had come out of Rotunda Airport and gotten lost somewhere in that vicinity. Now, you may have heard of Rotunda, either in connection with pot drops or land development scandals. It's made the news for both. It is a partially developed community in the middle of a



vast nowhere of sand, muck, palmetto, and pine that was once the property of the Vanderbilts. Ranch land. Rotunda International Airport is an open space with a shed or two and a magnificent getaway.

Well, the story unfolded slowly. It seems a reporter for Fort Myers' (in the next county) Channel 11, WINK-TV (referred to by the dispatcher as "The WINK Man") had been to Rotunda Airport for some reason, had got off the State Road somehow, and didn't know where he was or how to get back to civilization. He was in touch with the TV station by radio from his station wagon, and the station was in touch with the dispatcher by phone and the dispatcher was relaying messages to the deputy by radio. The WINK man had a scanner and could monitor, but couldn't send on a police frequency.

In answer to the deputy's questions, the dispatcher relayed the WINK man's replies: No, he didn't know how often he had turned, or in which directions. He couldn't recall whether he had crossed the railroad tracks. He couldn't see a radio tower from where he was. He couldn't see anything but a lake. (Did that help? No, there are lakes (mudholes) all over that section.)

It was growing late. Coming twilight. The cheerfully optimistic deputy was certain that another twenty minutes of cruising and he'd have the WINK man spotted, but a decision was made to send up a plane (our helicopter was out of service at the time). Well, after a few passes, the plane spotted the WINK man a long long way from Rotunda Airport. A long long way from the State Road. A long long way from anything and everything, in an area called the Sand Flats. An area in which the county map shows no roads at all.

So the spotter in the plane began directing the deputy in on him. On and on into the wilderness. The spotter told the deputy to turn onto that track just ahead. The deputy expressed some reluctance, but did so. There was a brief silence. The spotter asked, "Are you stuck?" The deputy replied, "Yes!" Some discussion about the most convenient four-wheel drive vehicle available ensued. The spotter asked if the WINK man was stuck too or just lost. The deputy quickly advised the spotter not to direct him out that way. "You've put me in the middle of a pond," he said. "I'm in two feet of mud." "It looks solid from here," the spotter replied. The dispatcher advised that the WINK man was not only lost but stuck as well. It was getting dark. The spotter asked if the deputy on the ground had visual contact with the WINK man. No. The deputy asked how far away he was. The spotter advised about a mile and a half. The deputy said it was okay for the plane to go on in -- once the four-wheel got there, he was sure he'd be able to get in to the WINK man. So I figured that was that. I'd been listening for about an hour and a half and had other things to do.

It was after nine thirty before I turned on again. The first thing I heard was the dispatcher advising the deputy to look for firelight. The WINK man had a fire under his car. (I learned later he'd been rocking the car, trying to free it, and his catalytic converter had set fire to the saw grass.) Well, the WINK man managed to put out the fire, and the deputy with a four-wheel drive wrecker known as Big Foot was proceeding on in his search.

About ten o'clock they put the plane up again.

By eleven o'clock, the spotter in the plane was advising the deputy that he was getting closer -- closer -- no, too far, got to get more to the right.

Just before twelve midnight, the spotter radioed in to the dispatcher 10-98. Assignment completed. How much longer it took them to get the WINK Man out, I do not know. I gave up and went to bed.

I watched WINK news after that. They never mentioned the incident. But their rival channel in Ft. Myers found time to give the story gleeful coverage.

From a later letter: Again I find myself writing an instant reply. It would appear that something is malfunctioning in my Genuine Automatic Procrastinator \* (Pat. Pending). Some one of these days I will have to take it down and see if I can get it working again -- when I get around to it.

Anyway, on to your letter. I am shocked at myself. Didn't I tell you I was into Historical Romances? Poosh! Where is my sense of publicity? (Proolly jammed up in the malfunctioning Procrastinator\*). It is two years since the first one came out.

You are right: It was under a penname. I have wanted for a long time to have a penname. When I was trying (unsuccessfully) to get together a contemporary suspense novel, I wanted to use C.H. Revere (C.H. for Corner Harbor.) ((Yes, I live on the corner of Harbor & Revere.)) When I switched over to the female viewpoint, I decided to have a female penname. Something appropriate-sounding. So I picked Georgia York, based on a couple of the various places I have lived. (I thought it had a nicer ring than Charlotte Chicago.)

My second HisRom is set in Savannah during the Civil War. I always wanted to write a Civil War novel, but this isn't the one. I really want to write one of the kind that were flooding the market in the mid-sixties (for the Centennial of the War). Something more on the order of my Westerns. Some common slobbs caught up in events beyond their control. Something I could use some gun lore and hand-to-hand fighting in, and dabble at showing various points of view -- how people on both sides felt Right and Justified and like that.

I meant to thank you for the shipment of books. It and the rain arrived on the same day. Now I've got your letter of the 29th, and I find it wasn't you who sent the rain after all. I wonder if it wasn't meant for me at all. Like, maybe whoever sent it, sent it by U.S.P.O., and it was delivered to the wrong address.

Wherever it came from, it was quite a shipment. A lot that I suspect had been backordered for months. Properly distributed it would have been a month's supply. Almost three inches came down in a very brief time. That is not how we need our rain around here.

Somehow some of it did the plants some good and some even sneaked into the aquifers, though bedamned if I know how it did it. We have a kind of water-repellent sand here that puts Scotchgard and ducks' backs to shame. You can go out after having the sprinkler on for an hour, turn back the moist upper eighth of an inch of ground and find pristine-dry sand under it. You can dig moats around plants and fill them with water, watch it disappear as if it is soaking in, then peel back the top layer and find similarly bone-dry sand. When installing bushes and trees and the like, I have struggled to prepare moist earth for their roots. I have dug five-dollar holes, filled them with water and waited in vain for it to disappear. It would sit there as if in a copper kettle. Finally I would begin scooping back in the sand I had scooped out to make the hole in the first place. Sprinkled on the surface of the water, the sand floats without breaking surface tension. Forced under it displaces the water out of the hole without getting itself wet. The only way I've found to actually convert this stuff to mud is to pour it slowly back into the water-filled hole, all the while mixing and blending as if making a cake (a mud-pie?) batter.

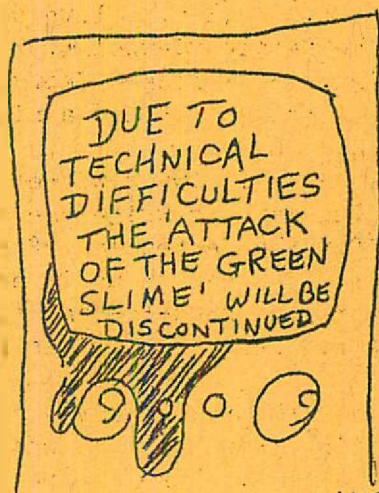
But short of a flood, any rain in a drought is better than no rain at all. Unfortunately since that deluge, that's what we've been having here -- no rain at all.

Our rainy season has actually started, and the afternoon showers have begun all around us. Lake Okechobee is slowly regaining strength and water is gushing back into the underground caves reducing the sinkhole hazard, and Swiftmud (that's the South-West Florida Water Management District) is relaxing its bans on lawn sprinkling and car washing. There's rain to the right of us and rain to the left of us. But none here yet.

A damned shame we can't really ship our rain and sunshine around to each other. We'd all eat better.

Speaking of mosquitoes, I heard somewhere that some aspect of the Vitamin B complex helps repel them. Speaking from experience as a health food nut, it is not an absolute preventative. However, I do seem to be bothered less by them than a number of my acquaintances are. As I understand it, whatever part of the B-complex it is that is supposed to do the job gives some kind of odor to the skin that the mosquitoes dislike. Then again, I was reading this manuscript by a new acquaintance who is a Treasure Hunter trying to break into fiction writing, and in it he says that lime juice (or was it lemon) rubbed on the skin is an excellent repellent. (Of course, the local Indians went in for rancid fat rubbed all over. This repelled everything but other Indians and the Spaniards, who didn't smell so good in those days themselves.)





[[I almost turned the scanner story into a column but decided it was more snobbish to leave it as a letter. (We have better letters than other fanzines do columns.) The more I hear about Florida... The hurricanes and brushfires I knew about, but waterproof sand? Don't seem quite like my kind of state. Especially since it seems to be full of people. (I still have cravings for a life in northern Canada, but fewer of them now that I'm older and dislike cold more. To think that mere warmth is eroding my passion for seclusion...) RSC]]

Marty Helgesen, 11 Lawrence Avenue, Malverne  
NY 11565

I am quietly proud that Beth Friedman and I were responsible for bringing Eileen Aitken and Juanita together at Seacon.

Another friend at work once told me that when she was at Brighton she saw a group of

English holiday makers sitting on the beach in the rain, wearing plastic raincoats, and making tea over a spirit lamp.

Elitist film buffs will not say that SHOGUN should have used full subtitles. Contrariwise, Elitist film buffs oppose all subtitles, even for films entirely in a foreign language. They say that subtitles intrude on the artist/film maker's visual composition. They also oppose dubbing. According to press accounts when SHOGUN is shown in Japan it will be dubbed into Japanese. Incidentally, R Lauraine Tutihasi wrote in MINNEAPA that her mother told her that the samurai in SHOGUN were speaking archaic, aristocratic Japanese which even she couldn't completely understand.

As a grizzled old fan it was nice to see an allusion to the old "Boyd Raeburn has an English accent" bit. Since I've never met Boyd I have no idea if it's true, but I remember the line from old fmz. I've heard people in England say "40 pee" for 40 pence. I think the usage came in with decimalization to distinguish the new pence from the old. With new pence the abbreviation "p" was used instead of the old "d". Look at prices on British publications to confirm this.

Didn't London fans of some years ago refer to fans in northern England as "bloody provincials," instead of "bloody colonials" as Tucker said?

Some years ago I worked with someone from Tennessee who said that she said, "Rabbit, Rabbit" as soon as she woke up on the first day of a month. It was supposed to bring good luck. I said it once on August 1, 1963, and it snowed in New York City that day. At least it was snowing outside the 25th floor office where I was working. The snow probably changed to rain before it reached street level. I never said it again. And a few months ago I heard a female DJ say on the radio, "It's the first of the month today -- a rabbit, rabbit day." She didn't explain the remark, apparently assuming that everyone would understand it, but if it hadn't been for the girl I used to work with I wouldn't have understood it.

[[I know the abbreviation changed from "d" to "p," but that doesn't really tell much about the pronunciation -- especially in England. (As the "d" actually stood for "denarius" it was about time they changed.) // We thank you -- and Beth Friedman -- for getting us together with Eileen. RSC]]

#### Florence Stevenson

This has been a rather difficult summer. July is a month I choose to forget. At the beginning of it, I was running for a cab, and my foot wiggled in my shoe and broke. Up until then I had never thought of broken feet. Toes, yes; feet, no. You learn

something new every day. New and expensive. Then -- later in the month -- I looked up at the sky and found it full of galaxies of spots. My eye had hemorrhaged. That was expensive too. I have recouped a little since I did a shopping column for Opera News about all sorts of expensive items to be mentioned in a special insert in the program for opening night. One of the items was a diamond necklace studded with emeralds that costs \$750,000 -- just think of 3/4 of a million for one necklace -- for the sheikh who has everything. Also, when visiting a jewelry store, I noted a shaving set -- at least a brush, toothbrush, and razor -- in gold and lapis for about \$1000. They also had them in onyx, etc. I used to do shopping columns all the time for The Metropolitan Opera Program and the Avery Fisher Hall Program -- until Saturday Review stopped publishing them.

Yesterday I got a very polite obscene phone call: It went like this:

Obscene caller: Hello, would you like an obscene phone call?

Me: No. (But I thought it was a joke because he had been so polite and he sounded cultured.).

He: !&\$%#&\$&+ -

Me: (In kind) -- drop dead and go to hell.

He: &+&\$%#\*

Me: I hung up.

That will teach me to have my name in the phone book. But I really have only had about three of these epics since I have had the telephone.

I see that swords and sorcery are doing well in the movies. I saw EXCALIBUR, which I thought was interesting though less than memorable. DRAGONSLAYER got very good notices, but I saw the coming attractions and it looked like the pits to me acting wise. I don't know. I also saw OUTLAND, which I liked a lot. I wish I could write s&s novels. I used to love fairy stories, and that's how they seem to me. But I don't seem to have the knack for either.

[[Considering your output of romances, plays, musical articles, and what have you, you also don't have time for s&s. Actually, DRAGONSLAYER had very good acting by most of the characters. The protagonist was the character of a callow youth being played by a callow youth, so I don't know if that was acting or not. It also had a plot, putting it above most movie fantasy.// Geez, and I thought I got catalogs of expensive gifts. I'm not in the league that even gets notified about \$1000 shaving sets. RSC]]

Maia, 1801 S. 18th Street, Columbus OH 43206

Browsing through items of interest in Yan...I agree with Denny Lien that it's aliens who are stealing socks from washing machines. I suspect "socks" because of the concentration of sweat, therefore pheromones; it's a cheap ~~and dirty~~ method of learning about humans' chemical makeup. It worries me a bit that I've never lost a sock to a washing machine. Could be They know something about me I don't.

Leafing through the book reviews reminds me of a delightful story I finally read (after seeing it reviewed in IAsfm): BUNNICULA, by Deborah & James Howe. In it, a family adopts a baby bunny which their cat, Chester, suspects is -- you're way ahead of me -- a vampire. Their dog, Harold, suspects that Chester has finally gone over the edge. This is one of those children's books that can best be appreciated by adults. And the illustrations are amazing. Read it.

Have I thought of PHEROMONES OF GOR? Well,

I CAN SEE THIS  
ISN'T GOING TO  
WORK!





the books do have a noticeable odor -- sort of abandoned locker room. (Incidentally, did you see the Dr. -- excuse me, Doctor -- Who fan-couple wandering around Marcon with one long scarf between them, each end wrapped around one neck? All I could think of is "Whofans of Dor." It boggles the mind.

And Dave Locke should have included one more Objective. Locwriters: To send something to a faned in return for the fanzine, whether they have anything useful to say or not.

[[No, no; -usefulness is immaterial. The quest is for humorousness.RSC]]

Roger Waddington, 4 Commercial Street, Norton, Melton, North Yorkshire YO17 9ES, England.

Many thanks for Y 252; in fact, I was surprised to see it arrive at all!

Well, I'm beginning to suspect that all's not well with the postal system; whether it's due to the current unrest in the Civil Service and the resulting strikes at airports and seaports or some deeper unease I don't know; but what used to take a leisurely month on the sea crossing now takes two, and there doesn't seem to be any end to it. It first came up when I noticed the postmark on an N3F fanzine that had taken just seven days short of two months on the journey; and when the next issue took exactly two months, even I could see there was something strange afoot.

I've kept records since then and all those fanzines since have taken the long way round, with that same delay; in fact one of them must be wondering what happened to me, for what was sent on February 25th (Niekas 25, to be precise) didn't arrive till May 8th.

Which might actually suit the more leisurely schedule of a Yandro editor, but I have the nagging thought that the rest of fandom might expect something more from me; and thanks to the Post Office, they're waiting in vain. In fact, I've been thinking in terms of drawing down the shutters on my fannish career and waiting it out until these surely exceptional circumstances come to an end. Certainly the way things are at the moment, it isn't fair to either sender or recipient with such a time lag.

And it hasn't only been applying to fanzines, either; I know it's the usual practice to have magazines on sale a month before their cover date so I can discount those, but up till about a week ago, I'd yet to see all the March issues of the New Yorker; and now I'm only expecting them when they arrive. Though it hasn't all been without benefit; I had a very dog-eared copy of the National Lampoon come via the National Library no less with a note saying 'delivered in error,' and then my subscription copy arrived. Certainly, it's a doubtful privilege to be able to read two copies of the same Lampoon even if you could get through one; but what I want to know is, how did they know where to send it? Paranoia resurgens...

[[British and American postal services have obviously received orders to eliminate the educated segment of the populace (who stir up trouble by writing letters to legislators, newspapers, etc.) by disrupting the transmission of writing. RSC]]

Susan Schwartz, 409 East 88 St. 5A, New York NY 10028

Spent last night rereading EARTH ABIDES. It is not very encouraging to realize that Stewart's claim that people like myself, sophisticated and over-specialized, are not survivors; I've always thought of myself as a survivor, but, I guess, only in certain environments. That is one hell of a story.

Book sales. God: one day Merlin and I are going to have to move out of this place and leave it to the books. And do you know how hard it is to find suitable slum-housing in Manhattan? There's a joke: First person: So-and-so was murdered last week. Second person: Really? What's happening to his apartment? So realtors, incredible cockroaches wearing Italian polyester shirts and gold chains (even the chain-snatchers don't mess with these bastards) flourish and try to rip off the unwary. I had the happy opportunity to report one firm for trying to extract an extra month's

security deposit and did so. Found my own place the only real way to find an apartment in the neighborhood you want: get put there and start ringing doorbells. It amazes me to realize that what is appallingly pushy anyplace else passes in this city as simple -- and fairly reticent -- behavior. It's a liberation; I find out that I'm always asking people, you mean I not only get to do that nervy thing, I have to? Trouble is, so is everyone else.

Lit'ry SF...some of it isn't bad, but how far from the norm can you go and still have SF? I mean here are all these people who are writing SF while still trying to convince people that they are oh-so-lit'ry. Sooner or later they are going to have a name for such people: mainstream writers. I don't think that the academic types have ever quite reconciled the fact that A. they like it and B. they're writing it with C. the assumption that people like them shouldn't like such crap. Mind you, I'm not saying it's crap, but their caste is. The problem is that there's no zest in a lot of what they do; too much neurosis and not enough glee.

For example, a writer WHO SHALL BE NAMELESS recently got a grant for SF from a very prestigious national foundation. (I've gotten a grant from another part of same foundation, the National Endowment for the Humanities, but that was when I was still making noises like a professor.) Now, anyone who can figure out how to get free money to support his or her writing habit is going to get a letter from me. So I did. Got answered nicely, with the helpful hint that I might do better to send the NEH stuff that wasn't obviously science fiction-y. I know that the writer meant well, but this kind of attitude, either on the part of writers, funders, editors, or the SFRA reminds me of sorority house virginity -- as long as you spend part of the night in your own bed, you still are. Regardless of what else you've been doing.

I think I am becoming a curmudgeon.

Ms. is a real problem for everyone, since it has come to mean "unmarried female of left-wing persuasion." I prefer it, since the other titles, reflecting marital status, are none of anyone's damned business unless I choose to make it so. But for those people who get all huffy about it, I have an alternative solution: get a doctorate. Which is what I told my sword-snitching cousin's mother when she was doing the consciousness-lowering routine on me. (You aren't familiar with consciousness-lowering? Happens in middleclass Jewish families to daughters. The aunts get them and try to teach them to lower their uppity heads.) She asked me what I would use for a title if I got married. I answered "professor." Or Dr. She never asked that one again.

Two weeks ago THE WARLORD was on. Have you and Juanita seen it? I love it, but I must suspect that whoever they got as a medieval expert must have been having a riot with the mythology. There are some mistakes that are too funny to be anything but someone getting away with murder, like a Welsh fosterling in a Saxon village menaced by Frisians who look like Vikings and who fight with Normans. Eleventh century, sure, but all in one place? And then to add Druids, and a fairly patriarchal system at that. Mistletoe grows on Thor's oak and is cut by a sickle, which is pretty Druidic.

Have I told you about fenzuin? It's a rude, Darkovan plural for the sort of fan (male) who comes up to someone at a con and makes himself completely obnoxious by being bumptious. Saw Joan Vinge at Noreascon and she had just been insulted by someone like that. She has such a lovely disposition and there she was, having to wear a "If you don't have anything nice to say about anyone, don't talk to me," badge because this creep had aggravated her. What IS it in fandom that makes some guys think that the way to be well-known is to be obnoxious?

Bantam books just sent me one of their NEW AGE series called MYSTICISM AND THE NEW PHYSICS by someone named Michael Talbot. Schrodinger's cat and the chakras, Einstein and Carlos Castaneda, all jumbled together with Tantric yoga made simple for the Aquarian simple-minded, Lord help us. I HATE pop-mysticism. Oh, and I forgot, black holes, white holes, wormholes, tachyons -- and Himalayan lamas who dry freezing sheets on their bodies. What ever happened to skepticism? Seems to be overused these days in connection with science while mysticism gets gulped like sugar cubes.



WE'VE GOT LUCAS  
DOING OUR SPECIAL  
EFFECTS.

HEY, MAN, THIS  
SCRIPT CALLS FOR  
MY HORSE TO BURST  
INTO FLAME AND  
EXPLODE



Not that I have anything against mystics, but I detest this watery-eyed pietism about it. Medieval mystics are at least systematic

thinkers; the modern, pop version seems to regard the aphorism as a substitute for any thought.

I friend was upset that I was encouraging amateurs to break into writing by doing book reviews. Look, I think it's a good idea. It teaches them to look at books critically, with an eye toward construction (I always thought it did), it gets their names known, and gives them a few credit lines, and it's practice writing. My friend was thinking, probably, of some of the awfulnesses in some of the zines.

I blame a good deal of that attitude on what I call the fact that a hell of a lot of fen are in revolt from the way they were taught. Guys especially...there's a species of fan who, if you look at his stuff, will tell you why you're dumb if you don't instinctively understand and appreciate every last word. The women seem a lot less sure, a lot more willing to work collectively, though I've met a few of those too. Maybe it's that the guys have one hell of a hard time listening to women...but I'm damned sick of weird-fen trying to flirt by saying, "Aha, I bet you hate Conan and Gor." or -- even better -- "I'm sick of all this feminism getting into SF."

I don't approve of banning handguns, but I do approve of extremely strict licensing. People who have been convicted of felonies probably lose the right to bear arms. People who have been in psychiatric hospitals, or even under a psychiatrist's care, should probably require references or some sort of provisional licensing. And all people should have to take tests on guns, and pay insurance. Why can't they manage guns like they do cars? Is it because cars kill so many more people a year? And the penalties for illegal possession should be extremely tough.

I'm speaking at Empiricon on Neopaganism in fantasy and science fiction. I think I'm the token non-pagan, which reminds me that at Balticon or Disclave, one of them, a bunch of Jesus freaks had a table that was handing out literature. Apparently, Dungeons and Dragons is an invention of the devil because it encourages people to get into magic. Reminds me of my secretary at Ithaca, who was distressed about my anthology on witches. By the way, that's coming out in early 1982. I just hope I don't get hassled. I hate hassle, and I hate being rude. At the same time, I dislike stupidity and looking as if I've taken a beating. Mostly I manage to avoid it all.

Lately, I've been so eager for good stuff to read that I've read what's out, and had to fall back on the used bookstore. Stock was so thin that I actually bought Frances Parkinson Keyes, who is a pain in the ass. She has a way of talking about women, love, and children that makes celibacy sound marvelous, because at least it's hard for her to drivel over that. (She does manage.) Taylor Caldwell is another. Miss Caldwell has decided that Jesus doesn't want women to vote. Thank God, she disenfranchised herself first. At least these creatures can plot. Barbara Cartland can't...and I don't...think...that she thinks either. On a good day she puts on mascara. I don't like anyone today.



There's an interesting book out from Bantam: THE TECHNO/PEASANT SURVIVAL MANUAL. Very nice and without a lot of funkylisms to muss up the descriptions of neat lasers and tomahawks. They do give some "techno-warnings" about military applications, but that's only for people who can't do their own extrapolations.

There's just one thing about the chic-er than thou cult, and that's the people who decide that popular fads are neat, meaningful, authentic, and all those other words. So you have the abomination of redneck chic, in which people from Great Neck start talking country and longing for pet armadillos and the range...the urban cowboy syndrome for men, and among women, it takes even weirder forms, with silly people gushing about populism at parties. I mean they like neat things -- like STAR WARS and RAIDERS -- but for all the wrong reasons. You feel as if you're being patronized and praised simultaneously. It's the "Oh, this is so quaint" mentality. Give me drama-mine any day.

I used to have magnificent New Left credentials, which promptly fizzled every time I opened my makeup case or my closet. I lack radical chic, you see, and will spare you my description of it. That's why teaching at Ithaca was so awful. All the atavisms took their radical chic there and sat around eating tofu and nursing it.

[[I've never managed any sort of chic (I've come close to the pure redneck at times, but never redneck chic), so naturally I agree fully with you.// I guess there is something to be said for review books, moon huckster rooms, and the Indianapolis Library Sale; it's been 30 years since I had to fall back on the like of Keyes, Caldwell, or Cartland for reading.

(Mine, of course, were the male equivalents: Zane Grey, Frank Yerby, and John Russell Fearn.)// I'm with you on shooter's licenses -- in Indiana, former felons and mental patients are denied handguns (legally, at least). Of course, in New York almost everyone is legally denied a handgun, and how much good does that do?// Book reviewing is a far more effective way to learn writing than the traditional one of writing fan fiction.// The really shocking thing is to consider that I may be too civilized to be a survivor in an EARTH ABIDES situation. Though I'd give it a hell of a try...//

Note: the above was excerpted from 59pp of letters; if it seems to leap from subject to subject, that's why. On the two following letters, Sandra's section is excerpted from 42pp, and Mary's from 61pp.

(These were the top correspondents by a wide margin; next come Lee Hoffman with 20pp and Dave Locke with 16. Of course, Juanita got more than any of these from



Armed with my trusty blaster,  
nobody can hurt me!



Kay Anderson, but I don't have those to tally.) RSC]]

Sandra Miesel, 8744 N. Pennsylvania St., Indianapolis IN 46240

I've coined an epigram: "The outre isn't where it used to be."

That's the only possible reaction to reading Gene Wolfe's SHADOW OF THE TORTURER. A quasi-Byzantine culture on the site of Buenos Aires?

I've actually slogged all the way through a horribly esoteric tome called THE ART OF MEMORY, on medieval and Renaissance occult applications of memory techniques. The only redeeming feature is an occasional aside from the author, "I don't understand this any better than you do, folks." But it does usefully counteract the common impression of the Renaissance as an era of sweet reason and light. Also shows that the modern taste in nut cults and enlightenment is considerably debased. People seem easier to impress now. Controversies over the validity of the various systems led to the usual fierce pamphleteering, including a classically silly title, DR. FEUDD'S ANSWER UNTO M. FOSTER, OR THE SQUEESING OF PARSON FOSTER'S SPONGE ORDAINED FOR HIM BY THE WIPING AWAY OF THE WOUND-SALVE. There was also ADMONITION TO A DICSON ON THE VANITY OF HIS ARTIFICIAL MEMORY. Something to be hung over Gordy's computer?

We tried to explain about the Planet Stories mystique to the kids (who thought them both gross and absurd -- "The ladies run around in nothing but those itty bitty bikinis; don't they get cold on a spaceship?" asked Mite). How the stories had to have pulpish titles even against the author's wishes.

"For instance, THE WAR-MAID OF MARS was supposed to be THE BIG HUNT!"

"What," asked Mite, "THE BIG CUNT?"

We declined to explain why this malaprop was so funny. "That's the trouble with being a kid: the grownups never tell you anything."

Mite has given up her ambition to be a murderous book reviewer because she fears people will point her out at conventions. "That little girl writes killer reviews," and no one will speak to her. But we said that hadn't interfered with Buck's socializing in the least.

Seeing SWEETMEATS, don't you want to authorize a BEST OF YANDRO collection? You could call it the YANTHOLOGY.

The first step in the installation of my braces was hideous. They've wound tiny brass wires around my molars to spread them apart so they can get the bands to go on. It's really all for the best, but... I made the dental techs very self-conscious by telling them about SHADOW OF THE TORTURER. (Do you suppose Gene has some dental work that inspired the book?) Got to get them a copy. Next week they tighten the bands (with pliers, yet) another notah. Dental garrottes.

I checked on the heraldry of Coulson and indeed there is a set of arms recorded exactly as in your blazon. Family comes from Northumberland, the village of Jesmond, which would fit your theory of ultimate Scandinavian origins. Several other Coulsons of the same area, including one whose founder obviously married a more important heiress. But one additional detail: there is a crest, a pelican in her piety, which seems comically inappropriate for Buck. However, the book I've been reading on English art mentions an example of the exasperated pelican biting the head off a pesky chick in a carving in Lincoln cathedral. That would've fit.

Note on a friend's Christmas card said that Dell now has a policy of forbidding generic use of the male pronoun, even for God. His MS was ruthlessly copyedited. Dell must be trying to court the radlib branch of prodom, but boy, nothing like artistic freedom, is there? I suppose all the guy can do is get so important he can demand a no copyediting clause in his contracts.

Yesterday's trip to the library produced the additional data on the Coulson arms. The arms that you have blazoned are the "basic" Coulson ones, presumably the design as originally granted. This has the pelican crest described previously but no motto. (But one doesn't need anyone's permission to use a motto.) The motto you quoted to me goes with the arms of John Blenkinsopp-Coulson and is properly in French: "Je mourrai pour ceux j'aime." "I would die for those I love." It appears that some enterprising Coulson married the heiress to Castle Blenkinsopp in Northumbria and was so proud of his achievement that he marshals the wife's arms on his own shield and

hyphenated his name. So it's possible that your line also used the motto but it didn't get recorded as being theirs.

In reading up on Mithra, I was reminded that his original identity was as the god of Contracts -- he spent his nights racing around the world in his chariot, bashing contract-breakers with his mace, assisted by the god of Victory, who used the form of a pig with an iron body. Now if SFWA wants to really solve their problems with publishers and unfair contracts, perhaps reinstituting sacrifices to Mithra would be in order. I daresay few members would object to offering and consuming hooma, which is cannabis extracted in milk.

[[No, killer reviews haven't hurt my socializing. Of course, they have hurt my chances of getting a professional reviewing job...editors are faint-hearted sorts. RSC]]

Mary Long, 1338 Crestview Drive, Springfield IL 62702

Re on item in Yandro's commentary -- if it's double-entendres you want, I refer you to the following, all of them genuinely innocent in context, from Life Chez Long Over the Last Four Days:

"I had something today that I haven't had for years."

"I told you there was a big one coming."

"Don't put it on the table when we're eating; it puts me off."

"Well, if you go on stretching it, it won't go back to its normal length."

"Even when he leans over sideways, it doesn't touch the ground."

On other matters, I was very interested in a Yank's Eye View of the old country, for, of course, it's so interesting to compare views, especially when they are of places/people whom you know yourself. You might be interested to know that I just spoke to Pam Bull (Storeybods, for folks with long memories), who is in St. Louis with her family, on the way back from Dubai to England the long way round (via Ceylon and Singapore). And she says that the US is 'big' and loves your hamburgers. The latter you, having tasted the English version, doubtless understand. But significantly the English folk I've spoken to about the USA have all said the same, and in almost every case, they all spoke of the hugeness of the US first. The thing is, I said exactly the same thing myself, when I were but a ~~lad~~ tourist, way back in the time lost in the mists of whatnot.

I was positively tickled by your account of the visit to Stonehenge. When I first saw it, before the rabbit-fence went up, we drove over the hill and saw it, and I said, crumbs, it's not so big as I thought, is it? Then we drove on about five miles and it still didn't seem much bigger, until we'd driven about ten, or whatever, and it loomed above us. But it is an amazing thing. One senses history, whatever it was, therein. Pity you weren't there on Midsummer Day; you'd have seen the Druidical ceremony, or (rather like the present day tartans) a reconstruction of it.

While you were returning from Stonehenge, you didn't, I suppose, happen to stop off at either Winchester, or Cloud's Hill, or Watership Down? All of them places we did, in our grand tour before I left the country. The first mentioned has several good things, except it poured all day. The cathedral has the grave of Jane Austen (for Regency fans), and also the bones of various Anglo-Saxon kings and ecclesiastics (in mortuary chests on top of the choir-stall walls), including Canute and Ethelred and several A-S queens. It, the town, or I should say city, also boasts a round table said to have been King Arthur's (the experts dispute it, though admitting it's from the right time period), but we were not able to see it, as the hall was in use for (of course) a one-day conference, and we wouldn't be back that way again. There are some interesting bits of the old city walls, including a museum in, if I recall right, the old jail, with armour, etc.

And lastly, Watership Down is just like the drawing on the cover of the UK pb. Saw it not long after I was married, on a cloudless, sunny day, with the roads quite clear of traffic, and Elgar on the car radio. A treasured memory.

Agree entirely ref your comments ref the roles -- especially the folk in soaps, have you noticed? Read several times of folk being abused in the supermarket when





they had been particularly nasty to their fellow soapers (as you mention) the week before. But I never really understood two things about the adoring public and their idols. One is their lack of allowing privacy -- something, privacy, I mean, which I truly value. Gad, imagine not even being able to go down to the shops without folk pointing at you or trying to kiss you or some such. And the other is the way the minds work of the folk called groupies...with the very young, I can see it; well, you know, swept off feet by glamour of performer, etc., etc. But some of them are much older, and even so, never could I see why one would want to boast that one slept with so & so last week or whatever. Reflected glory? The only time anyone said such a thing to me I said 'so what.' Strange, strange, how humans work!

Interesting too to see signs of groupyism in fandom now. Never used to be, in the UK at least, I mean, when I were a young 'un. However, I don't think this is the coming trend, really. Always seems a bit pathetic. I wonder what the objects of the adoration think about it? Must get to be an awful drag.

Yandro arrived here a few days before your letter, and the following a few comments. Socks: what is even more sinister is how you find odd ones of different colours,

when you know you put in matched pairs! This is as nothing, however, compared to the horror of finding an extra load of someone else's washing in yours (when you've got it back at your flat), because someone forgot to take theirs out of the dryer! (Fortunately, the woman lived right downstairs...)

So I've been flying hyphens all these years and never knew it? Well, they say you can recognise an ML letter at ten paces by its ... and ( ) and its -- so I'm wondering what the technical terms are for ... and ( )...(see what I mean?).

Well, if everyone else is complaining about Sagan, my gripe was the constant close-ups of him looking soulful/awed/wistful, or whatever. But what really gets my goat (a curious expression; I wonder whence it came?) is something that happens most times in news broadcasts -- where the cameras show, not the actual person in question, or the item being talked about, but the reporter asking the question, or even worse (and a favourite trick of one of our local channels), the film-crews of other stations filming the item in question! Cor, makes me really mad, it does! But on Sagan. What I wanted to know about his 'red shift' programme (which was fascinating) was, how did they know? (Like, how did they know pigeons see in black & white, which was another subject of conversation recently here.)

Speaking of darkest East Ham, I guess you've seen the rioting from Brixton? (Hitherto only famous for its prison and for it being the home area of Elton John.) I was amazed, and somewhat distressed. Riots are relatively unusual, for England, I mean.

One of the chaps on the news intoned that there were 1500 or so teenagers (mostly black) in the area, out of work, and never had a job. So what? My nephew is in exactly the same boat, in an area with just as much unemployment and bad housing, and he's not out in the streets throwing bricks. The bit I thought was 'very English' was the bit about the five bobbies barricaded into a restaurant and defending themselves with truncheons and dustbin lids.

[[But can you have a reconstruction of a Druid ceremony that probably never happened in reality? // Well, it would depend on who was trying to kiss me..for any would-be groupies in the crowd I can state that I was once kissed by Andy Offutt and it didn't do a thing for me... RSC]]

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

Okay, you're a lazy elitist. From your platform of what you would do if you weren't lazy and ruled fandom, you make me sorrowfully wistful that you weren't lazy and don't rule fandom. Hell, I'd vote for you, and then support you when you did away with voting. I presume of course that there are many more things that could be added to your action platform. I always liked Cagle's idea that a fanzine's repro should match its content, even to the point of varying methods of repro within a particular issue. This would mean that the MONTHLY MONTHLY would have to be done on hektograph, and DNQ with finger-paints, for example. How about requiring that fanzines containing convention reports not be mailed unless someone writes and says it's okay to send a copy to them? Zines that use Bruce Townly covers could be required to go via air mail, so the smell doesn't get too bad and build up unnecessarily in the mailing envelope. Fan publishers would be prohibited from publishing Joe Nicholas' polemics unless they edit out all adjectives and print only every third sentence up to a maximum of three total pages of final published copy. Serious wordwhipping on how wonderful fandom is would not be allowed unless the author can talk Bill Danner into publishing it first. Serious criticism of science fiction and fantasy would be welcomed if the writer can pass a test proving that they can hit their ass with either hand. All Jay Kinney cartoons would have to be recaptioned, by someone with a recognizable sense of humor, before being acceptable for publication. The NJF would have to fold, or justify their existence by getting Damon Knight to voluntarily join. Convention panels having less than 15 people show up would have to be aborted, and whoever thought up the title for the panel would have to discourse on the topic for 45 minutes while held at gunpoint in an empty room. I'll have to cease on this paragraph; I'm getting carried away.

How come you can get away with calling Jackie primarily a con fan, and I can't? It's because I live with her? That's what I thought...

Well, I did indulge in childhood, but mine started late. My first full year of school was the fifth grade. I tried hard to make up for lost time. Did pretty well at it, too. Also, my childhood ended relatively early, too. I may have a second one just to make up for getting shortchanged. I suspect it may be too late, though.

As a consequence of your not being at the recent Windycon, I heard good stories about you. Well, just one, actually. It was divulged that you had incurred an interesting correspondent who turned out to be a turkey in the flesh, which some Midwest fans found disgruntling because it was you who recommended a convention to her. As a consequence, upon discovering a promising correspondent named Jackie Franke you decided to meet her in person before suggesting a convention to her. Once burned, as they say. Well, it was an amusing story. I think the reason I found it particularly amusing was because of my difficulty in imagining anyone turning out so bad (after corroboration that proved unrevealing) that such a mixed-bag as fandom couldn't fit them in anyway. What's more more turkey, after all?

When it comes right down to it, I suppose most people prefer private gatherings. You're correct that cons are about the only place people so widely spread





apart are likely to be encountered. If you're not willing to put up with all that shit I guess you're not going to meet those people too often. I guess I'm not going to meet those people too often.

Come the next depression, presuming the current tax advantage of being single (though I hear that legislation is proposed to eliminate that), ain't nobody much gonna bother getting married. Now, if I could use my Universal Life credentials to perform divorces... You know, make a ceremony out of it. Have the husband and wife stand together and then, after the final disavowal, turn and punch each other on the mouth. I'll bet I could write a good marriage disavowal. No, that's alright -- I won't submit it to YANDRO.

Spent a day in Elgin and a day in Oak Lawn on business Monday & Tuesday following Midwestcon. All the typical little things that normally happen around me, happened. Like, I xeroxed the page from the 1981 Standex directory showing me how to move my rental car from O'Hare to Williams Mfg. Co. in Elgin, but from the airport I drove around for half an hour looking for route 194 before stopping to learn that it had been renumbered route 90 three years before. At the hotel they placed me on the third floor, farthest from the elevator, and there wasn't anyone else on the third floor. When I got to the hotel that night, in the midst of a thunderstorm, I found the electric had been knocked out, and I had to use my cigarette lighter to find my room from a pitch-black hallway. I walked inside and fell flat on my face because the rug had a big hump in it just inside the doorway. Later the electric came on, and then faded to a brownout which lasted all night. In the morning I had to face a cold shower, which is not one of my favorite things. So it goes, so it goes.

Sorry, it's not allowed for people to be caught up on correspondence. My last letter to you was the vanguard of an effort to catch up, a project which carried me into the weekend. And now it's Monday, and I have a reply from you in the mail. Why should I let you get caught up?

Lloyd Biggle once told me that he caught up on all his correo just before a vacation -- tons of stuff, some of it going back for several months -- and returned only to find responses to most of what he'd written. Net effect: zero. The backlog was just about as big as before he had left.

Right. It took Man thousands of years to learn that food tasted good when it was cooked over a fire, and some people still eat it like savages. Well, actually I can enjoy steak cooked almost any whichway (except tartar), and often do, but my usual is well-done and still strikes my taste buds as the best way to cook it (actually, too, the best way is flash-fried; char on the outside and pink in the middle, but to get it that way you've usually got to do it yourself). I can't recall ever getting a steak reduced to a cinder as a consequence of asking for well-done -- usually I get just the reverse, and any return trips to such restaurants result in my asking to have it "cremated," which gets the waitresses' attention enough that I can get it across that I mean well-done and not medium.

[[You left out a few items in your proposals to improve fandom. Like, anyone carrying a sword or sheath knife at a con must also have a certificate proving he/she has defeated Bob Asprin or Jerry Pournelle in single combat. Logan's Runners must be required to run in a straight line -- no turns at all, especially none that would enable them to get back to the hotel. Anyone carrying a real gun to a con will be immediately reported to the local fuzz. Also, at the banquet, the hotel chef be required to sit at the head table and clean up his plate. And, anyone wearing a costume will not be allowed into any convention function except the masquerade.// Oh, my nonappearance had nothing to do with people telling about the fan I inadvertently inflicted on Chifandom. Joni Stopa reminds me of my error at regular intervals; her own project for keeping me humble, I believe. (It doesn't work, but it's a nice try.) They probably didn't tell you that they got even by inflicting a certain Chifan on our picnics.

Bob Briney, 4 Forest Avenue, Salem MA 01970

Y252 also arrived today. A most enjoyable issue, as usual. I especially appre-

ciated Gary Anderson's reactions to Boston. He errs in one small point: the term 'Combat Zone' does not refer to the entire downtown area, but to a specific two-block-square area where most of the porno bookstores and movie houses and nude-show night-clubs are located. Conveniently located right next to Chinatown and the theater district, and across the street from the Tufts University Medical School. However, the downtown business district certainly is a combat zone, both for pedestrians and for drivers (on those few streets where they are still allowed), and for store-owners, who lately have been plagued by a large number of smash-and-grab raids by teen-agers, in broad daylight.

Dave Locke makes a good story out of the returned postal card (like a minnow tossed back because it was too small...). The real villain is the Postal Service's ineptness at publicizing such changes. In the Boston area, the change in postal card size was announced by front-page newspaper stories and by posters in P.O. lobbies. But I remember my sister in Michigan telling me at the time that she saw no mention of the change in her local papers or in the P.O. itself. There was a grace period (90 days, I think) during which you could exchange the small-size postal cards for the equivalent value in the new size. I attempted to use up my stock instead -- I think you got one of my three-card letters at the time -- but didn't quite succeed.

If you ever feel the urge to read some humorous mysteries, I recommend *REST YOU MERRY* and *THE LUCK RUNS OUT* by Charlotte MacLeod, both available as Avon paperbacks. These are set on the campus of a Massachusetts agricultural college, and are very funny, as well as being good mysteries.

In the area of far-out ideas for books, have you seen the Tower series about Spectros, "a master magician in the old West?" There are at least four titles in the series so far; I found one in a local supermarket, got another from Bob Weinberg, and will try to get the other two directly from the publisher. Not that they're any good, but the craziness of the idea exerts its own fascination.

[[Locally, the change of size was publicized, but not that you could turn in your old postcards. I believe I used all of mine up except for those in the collection. Magicians in the Old West. Well, it's no sillier than Kung Fu masters in the Old West. (Probably no sillier than the average cowboy novel, if it comes to that.) ]]

Gary Anderson, 8386 Hollister, Ventura CA 93004

I have to prepare these briefings for the Washington higherups who are visiting us this week. I finally got tired of the silly routine of making up presentation charts by hand, so I set my computer to doing it. I just fed in all the relevant data, and wrote a few programs to extract and graph various things. Then all I have to do is to update the data, select the program preset, and punch "start". The machine can generate more goo and dribble than even a bureaucrat can read, and it even seems to make sense. One of the favorite tricks of the HQ people, when faced with a request to do something, is to study it to death. The method, of course, is to keep asking for more data. They keep looking for some ridiculous possibility which hasn't been addressed, and then asking for a position paper on it. What I have done is to bury them in mountains of data, and then write a summary paragraph at the end saying, in bureaucratic language, that any moron could see from the above data that whatever it was that I wanted to prove had been proved, all possibilities covered, no matter how ridiculous, and that any bureaucrat who couldn't understand that was a cretin on the face of it. Works good. Nobody in the bureaucracy wants to admit that he doesn't understand something, and most of the technical people won't fink on each other. They'll come up with some counter to this, but until they do, I have gotten some things done.

Simon Green, 37, St. Laurence Rd., Bradford-On-Avon, Wilts., England

I thought you might be interested on how Seacon seemed to someone on his first visit to an SF con.

I had a feeling things might not be getting off to a good start when I saw my hotel. Since I'd left it a bit late to book, I was shunted off into one of the over-





flow hotels; my room was a fire exit. I'm not kidding; when I climbed the four flights of stairs to my room, I found this large notice pinned to my door proclaiming FIRE EXIT, and there was this dinky little hammer attached to the door by a chain so that desperate escapists could smash my lock during an emergency. Little did they know that every night I jammed a chair up against the door...

Seacon wasn't the first con I'd been to, but I was used to the (much) smaller cons put on by the British Fantasy Society. As a result, I found Seacon not a little confusing.

One of the most startling aspects had to be the many costumed fans. I remember sitting in a greasy spoon on the seafront eating a greaseburger and chips, when these four Vik-

ings walked in. They had the lot: a hearthrug with a hole cut in it for the head to go through and belted at the waist, the horned helmet and a long-handled axe. So they sit themselves at a table, casually ignoring the wide-eyed stares from everyone else, and summoned the waitress. She came up, shivering in every limb, to serve these four obviously demented neanderthal men, clearly wondering whether they were going to read the menu or eat it. They studied the menus for a while, and then the hairiest looked up and growled, "Pot of tea for four, and have you any scones?" Collapse of everybody; There was laughter. There was mass leg wetting.

Actually some of the funniest moments happened in those strange little cafes off the front; I was sitting in one watching the rain come down (in Brighton during the off season, this is considered exciting), when suddenly this Ark went past the window. I ambled outside to find this long procession of carnival floats bravely wending its way down the road, smiling determinedly to hide the fact that their costumes were slowly disintegrating under the driving rain. They were all part of the Radio One Road Show, a curious part of BBC radio, during which a well-known dj introduces programmes from various locations around Britain. Unfortunately, the lead van broke down, and within seconds there was a two-mile long traffic jam. I left them to it; for all I know they're still there.

I don't know if you ate at the Metropole; I found the food appalling; I bought what they assured me was curry; by the time I'd got it back to my table, it was cold. Have you ever eaten cold curry? You've missed nothing.

I also didn't think much of the bar prices; I drink cider and they were charging more for a half pint than I usually pay for a pint; as a result I was slightly more sober than I cared to be at the end of each evening. Walking back to my hotel required a little Dutch courage, as every night I could hear large groups of hard cases wandering around looking for trouble. (Brighton that week was also hosting a Gay Lib conference, so that the bigots were out in force.) More than once I had to resort to some fancy foot work to avoid confrontations. I spent three years as a student in the East End of London, and long-haired students in that area have to be either Bruce Lee or three-minute milers. I'd got it down to about 3:47 by the time I left.

Getting back to the con; I didn't attend many of the programmed events; I found that if I stayed by the bar, most of the people I wanted to meet would turn up sooner or later. However, I did go to the meet-the-celebs party. Like you, I got VERY annoyed over the noisy band, and left early, but not before I'd managed to totally mystify Bob Silverberg. A mate of mine is a big autograph freak, and he was rushing around forcing his programme book on the celebs. He showed me his long list of Big Name signatures, so just for a laugh, I nicked his pen and signed my name at the bottom. So Silverberg takes the book, and runs his eye down the names. "Ah, you've got de Camp, Niven, Shaw, Aldiss, Simon R. Green...who the hell's Simon R. Green?" "He is," says my mate. "Hi, Bob," I said, hurrying off. Apparently, Bob Silverberg became convinced I must be some new British author he'd not heard of, and went around

demanding of everybody "Who the hell's Simon R. Green?" Apparently nobody had the heart to disillusion him.

I did go to the masquerade and found it fun, but rather too long. The nude winged lady at the beginning was a good show starter. "That's a good costume," said a friend. "Good," I said, "considering that's a fella, it's a bloody amazing costume." I swear for a moment he thought I was serious.

Like you, I had problems trying to get home from the con; basically because I live in a small town in the Southwest countryside, and any SF & F that gets this far is either escaped from somewhere or years out of date, so that I spent a lot of time amidst the Hucksters, and indeed spent my money not wisely but too well. Come the day of returning I had to carry one suitcase, one haversack, and four plastic bags all packed to bursting seams with books, magazines, etc. It was literally a case of walk five minutes rest five minutes, walk three minutes rest ten minutes. By the time I reached the Rail station I was so bent over I looked like Quasimodo on a bad day.

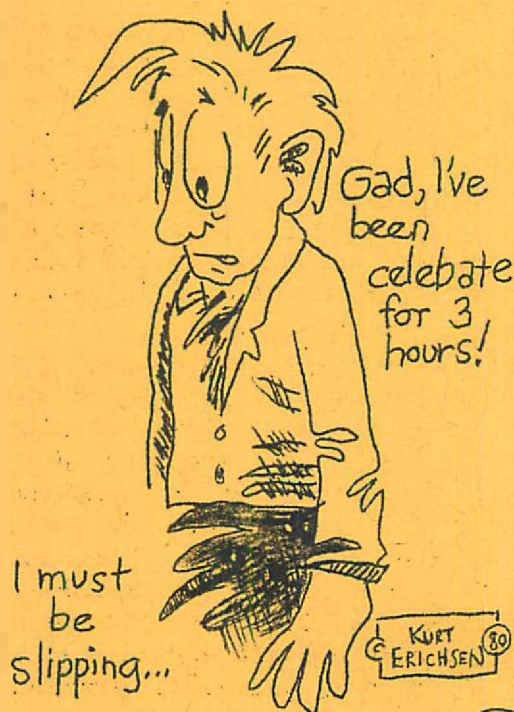
[[I think the worst aspect of your buying all that stuff from the hucksters is that you so depleted Ken Slater's stock and increased his bankroll that he hasn't bothered to send me a catalog since. (Though I suppose it could be because I took his photo...) I'm certainly happy to know what that parade was all about. At least, I assume it was the same parade we saw; there couldn't have been two of them.]]

Mary Schaub, 306 West Chatham St., Apex NC 27502

I got a copy of Diana Wynne Jones's *CHARMED LIFE* after reading a review of it, and it is a delightful book. It reminded me of *MISTRESS MASHAM'S REPOSE* in some ways. The blurb on the back cover of the Pocket Books edition is just about as misleading as you can get (or else they don't want to admit it's neatly humorous instead of grimly gothic.). Devra Langsam sent me one of Jones's earlier titles a while back, but I haven't sampled it yet. This one stands by itself, and very entertaining it is. A bit of the plot drags on too long, but the details make up for it.

I was consulting my "Britain's Heritage" guide to 2000+ places of interest in the Isles to refresh my wits on a certain stone circle I encountered in a most curious supposedly children's book (the violence and general confusion of the plot would suit it for no child I know), *SUAINE AND THE CROW-GOD* by Stuart Gordon; the stones are the Callanish Standing Stones on the Isle of Lewis in the Outer Hebrides. There were once perhaps 75 stones, but now are only 48. The book is partly mythic (but wildly convoluted in time), and there is a tantalizing little blurb at the end in which the author says he wasn't all that impressed by the stones to start with until he tried staying overnight amid them. Seems people who try that often get curious reactions, like an electric shock effect from touching the stones. Callanish is so relatively unvisited that it apparently retains any psychic ring it had, for those sensitive to such things.

I can reliably inform you that the author of the Seeking Sword books is a female. I had thought it was a male, too, until I ran across a blurb for the 2nd book, and they ascribed it to a woman. I was most unfavorably impressed by *SEEKING SWORD*, so I hadn't considered bothering to try *THE GLORY HAND*. If it is set entirely in the Baltic area in the 1500's, it may be more bearable than its predecessor (I must also say that I find coarse language unbecoming, and particularly so from women, so the discovery that





Jaan was female didn't improve my opinion of the author). I agree that the historical background, such as it was, was the strong suit for the 1st book -- if only she hadn't felt obliged to throw in trendy contemporary politics and sex and sex and foul language.

When a new fast-food restaurant opened near here a year or so ago, we decided to try the fried chicken. It was a Roy Rogers outlet, and they greeted all comers with a hearty "Howdy, Pardner!" (in fact, when I called on the phone to check on their hours, I was nearly bellowed off the line by the "Howdy, Pardner!"). Unfortunately, the chicken plucking must have been mostly overlooked by the Pardner in charge of that chore; for the finished product still had considerable stubble. We have let them go their way since, feathers and all.

I do recommend with cries of appreciative wit the (what else?) first of another trilogy, Randall Garrett's and his wife's new book THE STEEL OF RATHSKAR, which is well worth the sampling. No murky philosophy and/or mysticism here, just good solid adventure (oh, well, you could claim a bit of philosophizing by the bodily-displaced hero, but it fits the thrust of the plot, and there is a nifty cat who communicates to its rider -- the hero, an Earth human, gets popped into an alien humanoid body, and finds that he also has acquired a high-ranked father, the aforementioned cat ((big as a horse)), and a fiancée, not to mention suspicion of murder and theft of the renowned Jewel of the City.) Good promising book. I think you'd enjoy it.

[[But us Good Old Boys out hyer in the Wayest don't make no nevermind over a passle of pinfeathers. Thayut way, weuns can clean out teeth whilst we eat.// Well, male or female, Kangileski is the best new writer I've encountered in some time. I liked both the books, though I believe the second one was better (another surprise). RSC]]

Gary Deindorfer, 447 Bellevue Ave., #9-B, Trenton NJ 08618

You mention talking to Terry Hughes a couple of times. Terry is, I guess, one of my best friends in fandom. You discovered, I think, what many of us have: that when it comes to the social graces of light, amiable conversation, Terry is light-years ahead of many fans. He really excels in that area. It is only when you listen to him closely that you catch some of the sharp points he makes about human frailty. Maybe you two hit it off because you are both midwesterners. He's a Missouri lad, as I guess you know.

Amusing that some of your British friends thought it was so amazing that you drove to Stonehenge and back, Juanita. As you may know, I correspond with the Longs. Mary has mentioned this same thing in a slightly different context: how British fans underestimate American distances. She had somebody tell her, I think, by mail, that they'd try to drop in on Sam and Mary after Noreascon. Apparently they had no idea at all how far Illinois is from Boston, Massachusetts.

Jim Turner writes a hard hitting, funny loc. You'd be lucky to get an article or, better, a regular column from him. He's a damned good writer, no doubt about it, and outspoken as hell. I'd hate to tangle with him in an argument. I have a feeling I'd get slaughtered.

Funny, I'd always assumed that you firstdraft the book reviews directly on stencil. And yet Buck says, Juanita, that you do most of the production work. Well, maybe you type the book reviews, fanzine reviews, and your editorial, Buck, and you type all the rest of the stencils, Juanita.

If I ever meet Steve McDonald face to face I'll feel like Jonah about to be swallowed by the whale. I'm not all that small: 5'9" and overweight at 195 lbs. But next to the leviathan Mr. McDonald I'd still feel like Jonah faced with that giant whale, from what you say about his vast bulk and height.

My real literary discovery is thanks to Arthur Hlavaty. In a recent DR, Arthur had some concise comments to make about John Barth. "This guy sounds like somebody right up my alley," I thought. Went down to visit my cousin Ted in Pennsylvania last week (with no spare money to go shopping in Philadelphia bookstores for some of the sf books I wanted). He has books lying all over the house. He buys books compulsive-

ly, and then gets around to reading maybe one book out of ten. "Have any Barth?" I asked. He dumped a real windfall on me: THE FLOATING OPERA and THE END OF THE ROAD (two early novels), the gigantic GILES GOAT-BOY (760 pb pages) and a short story collection, LOST IN THE FUNHOUSE. I am a couple hundred pages into GILES GOAT-BOY and, I must say, it is quite a revelation. Barth seems to be some kinda genius or something. GOAT-BOY has the sweep and all-inclusiveness that I associate with what little I've read of Rabelais. In a way, he uses a quasi-sf premise: the whole world and its history is reinterpreted in terms of the world being one big college campus: God is the Founder, the Devil is the Dean o' Flunks, etc. The alternate title of the book is THE REVISED NEW SYLLABUS. It is a retelling of the New Testament, with the Goat-Boy the Christ savior figure. What is most remarkable about Barth is his sheer intelligence and the richness of his ideas -- this puts him head and shoulders above most fiction writers, sf, fantasy, or mainstream. I don't know whether either one of you would like Barth, but for me he's a real discovery, thanks to Hlavaty's mentioning his work in DR. Maybe all knowledge is found in fanzines after all.

Hmm, the aliens among us, taking our spare socks. Juanita, let me tell you a story about a Monopoly deed. One time in my high school years I was sitting by myself in the basement, which had been turned into (choice of one): a den, a rumpus room, a playroom. I was playing solitaire Monopoly. Pretty introverted and out of it, to play solitaire Monopoly, right? I'm afraid so. Anyway, one of the deeds got out of my hands somehow and kind of flipped away from me. I searched for a long time and never found it. Days after, continuing to search, I still didn't find it. I asked my parents to watch for it, and told them which deed it was, though now I forget which deed it was. They never found it. Did that deed flip into another dimension? I don't know, but in years to come every time I saw the deed I had handdrawn in India ink on a piece of white cardboard, I was reminded of the Missing Monopoly Deed.

[[Yes, I got acquainted with Terry when he was part of Columbia MO fandom, mainly because I already knew Hank Luttrell and the Couches. That group was about the only fan group with which I had nothing in common and still liked everyone in it. (Jim Turner was the only one with a really mutual interest; I recall one con where we stood around in the bathroom -- where the beer was -- discussing history for what must have been a couple of hours.) I'd love to get a column from Turner; he doesn't seem to love the idea of writing one.// I used to first-draft my reviews on stencil; now I first-draft them onto paper and Juanita stencils the results. She doesn't like my typewriter's stencil-cutting abilities and I don't much like our stencil-cutting typewriter.// Well, McDonald is taller and wider than I am, though he'd lost weight when I saw him at Filkoon. He was never quite as large as Jim Turner, though.// I used to have a touristy-type dagger I used for a letter-opener. One day I couldn't find it. Figured it would turn up. It didn't. A year or so later, we moved, and I figured it would definitely turn up somewhere then; we cleaned the place to the walls. It didn't. Unless one of the rats made off with it, I have no ideas. (We've had stuff stolen by fans, but the timing was wrong for them to have stolen the dagger.) ASC]] [[ Read Barth's THE SOT-WEED FACTOR yet? I think it makes CANDIDE resemble a Sunday supplement attempt at deriding rose-colored attitudes. JWC]]

Gene DeWeese, 2718 N. Prospect Ave., Milwaukee WI 53211

Windyoon. As Bruce no doubt told you, when he stopped on his way home from the con, the hotel was a total disaster. Two towers, molasses-style elevators, a garage where they leave the car unlocked and the only way you can get to it is to walk down the ramp past a gauntlet of screaming attendants and just hope one of them doesn't run you over while he's parking someone else's car. They drive a lot faster than the elevators, and all they do is honk as they whiz around the circular ramp and past all the intersections. Con itself wasn't all that bad. A bit better than I'd expected in one way, since the first thing I discovered was that they had me scheduled for two things simultaneously Saturday afternoon. Lucky. That meant I got out of doing the



one that I hadn't really wanted to do anyway (reading "Midnight Bicyclist") and was just on a panel with Budrys, Sheekley, and Wolfe (Gary? An academic, anyway). I think I sorta held my own, surprisingly, even though I didn't have any stories about collaborating with Harlan or about Del Rey's methods of writing. Stopa did the moderating and the crowd was fairly large. And they even had THE WANTING FACTOR on sale, at least at Spelman's table. Spent a fair amount of time that evening with Tucker, for a change, since he was at a couple of parties where the cigar smoke wasn't as thick as usual.

[[And that's the hotel for the 1982 Worldcon, folks...]]

Alan Dodd, 77 Stanstead Road, Hoddesdon, Herts., England

The petrol companies have increased their prices three times since you wrote last. The first excuse was they were not selling enough petrol in the glut of it (because the price is too high), and so they put the price up. The second increase was due to the American government increasing their interest rates, attracting all the foreign investors and making the value of everyone else's currency go down in comparison because petrol is bought on a dollar basis. And the third increase has also been put down to the "falling value of the pound" against the international currency juggling. The days of the cheap trips to Miami are over. I couldn't afford them even when they were "cheap" but...

[[I was appalled by British prices when we were there; I was even more appalled when the British fans started telling me how much more expensive it's been since we were there. RSC]]

Ethel Lindsay, 69 Barry Road, Carnoustie, Angus DD7 7QQ Scotland

I know all about those aliens who pinch things that are annoying Juanita. What they want with a pair of gold earrings I'll never know! When I lived in one room I would be searching high and low for at least one of the half dozen scissors I owned and would wonder how I would manage when I had more than one room. Well, now I know. For instance something keeps stealing the very book I want; I have been hunting Emma Lathan's COME TO DUST for months now and am resigned to never seeing it again.

It is a poor Y that doesn't have me laugh out loud at least once and this time I got caught with the thought of a waterbed filled with petrol. I wonder if that could be tried out in Spain, bringing the waterbed back filled with brandy? What a lovely thought! Your 'cuttings' column always does fascinate me. You ought to be getting some beauties soon about the Royal Wedding. Right now on tv they are showing how to make a jigsaw puzzle out of a photograph of Prince Charles.

I have just had to pay out £ 84 to make my car fit for the yearly certificate of fitness to drive that we call the MOT test. The government not only insists we have this certificate, we have to pay to get it. Just as all we ordinary folk had got accustomed to the idea that everyone should have a car, they are prying us out of it again. Come the end of the century it may be back to only the wealthy having a car. This will cause, no doubt, a great many people to have a nervous breakdown and up will go the costs of the National Health Service. Sometimes I see all that sf coming true and that would give anyone a nightmare!

[[Dodd also mentioned the auto tax. Seems excessive. Of course, we pay an annual excise tax (in Indiana, anyway) based on the value of the car, but the average fee would be less than half of yours. RSC]]

Michael Bastraw, 70 Webster St., Laconia NH 03246

JWC: In re: aliens making off with various items from our world for no apparent reason. I wonder if this might not be some sort of natural phenomenon. This is a theory which I hold to as I have been a victim of it in many forms. One of the more embarrassing aspects of this causes people to criticize me for typos I allegedly leave in NIEKAS.

My copy typing is ~~impeccable~~ impeccable, but somehow those errors just seem to rise out of the paper. No matter how many times the proofs are read, typos creep forth to sully my spotless reputation. There are obviously still things in nature that Man Was Not Meant To Know.

As for being parannid, Juanita, remember: you are only paranoid if no one is really after you. Take heart.

Dave Locke: Your subjective list of objectives left me in need of medical attention. Do you know how much they charge to stitch up your sides?

[[I want to stress that the Aliens Are Packrats Who Are Swiping Our Property theory was originally put forward by Denny Lien. In other words: It's Not My Fault (Interject defensive whining); It's All Denny's Fault. JWC]]

Andrew Zerbe, 1524-D South 16th St., Birmingham AL 35205

Juanita may call it Beaumont Egg. To me it's the Titanic syndrome. Curious isn't it how in spite of the thousands of years man has been going to sea and all the disasters there have been in those years, nothing much was done to ensure the safety of the passengers aboard ship until the Titanic went down with all those VIP's aboard.

If you liked SUMMER OF THE DRAGON, be on the lookout for LAST ACT by Joan Aiken Hodge, also from Fawcett. I'm a fan of Ms. Hodge and buy everything by her that is published, but probably would have bought this one no matter who wrote it just because of the disclaimer at the beginning. LAST ACT revives the Ruritanian romance. Not only that, the plot is a cross between an updated version of The Student Prince and Camille (hope I got that last title right). Anyway, it's thoroughly enjoyable and lots of fun.

Every once in a while I find myself buying a book just for the dedication or note or whatnot at the beginning. Sometimes, as in the case of LAST ACT, the book lives up to it. Most of the time it doesn't. Made up my mind to buy a copy of Louis Tracy's THE FINAL WAR as soon as I read the dedication, even before I realized that it was one of those future war novels so popular around the turn of the century. It goes: This Book Is Dedicated

As an expression of the author's high regard and appreciation  
to

PRIVATE THOMAS ATKINS

Wonder just how many readers got that one. Unfortunately, the book doesn't live up to it.

[[Being cynics, whenever we run across a new stop sign or light at an intersection that never had one before, we wonder who got killed there. (And while I'm not superstitious about ladders, I don't think I want to walk under any hotel catwalks for a while.))// Jane Aiken Hodge; Joan Aiken is her sister. While I generally buy Joan's books, I don't think I've read any of Jane's. RSC]]

Doug Faunt, PO Box 11142A, Palo Alto CA 94036

I believe that I am the unknown between Eileen Aitken and Gregg Palmer in the picture of the big Filksing. The quality of the picture is such that I can't be sure, but I was there. Perhaps you will have the original photographs at some convention that all of us are attending and I could, perhaps, verify that.

The sign in the Tube requesting people not to cross the tracks because it would take hours to untangle was an advertising poster that was very funny.

One of the local several-movies-in-one place has two or three showings of ROCKY HORROR every Saturday with one of the showings set aside for people who want to see the movie, not participate in it.

Roy Tackett, address above

Enjoyed the trip report and note that we both went after the same things while in Britain...stone age ruins and Roman ruins. Well, not stone age. I guess Stonehenge is actually Bronze Age. It could still be entered while we were visiting and stand-



ing in the middle of that 4000 year old circle was...awe-inspiring...yes. We caught our Roman ruins at Bath, though, and they were interesting. Probably the closest I'll get to Rome although I'd like to prowls the Forum some day.

Vardebob is also Nick Carter...among other people.

Item in tonight's paper that the army's new 155 artillery piece is sending the gunners to the hospital with various physical ailments due to back blast. Latest effort correct the problem is to use a 25-foot long lanyard to fire it.

I think we're in trouble.

[[If you position the piece so that the gunner is standing behind a tree...?]]

Dave Piper

Congratulations on the sales, especially to Juanita. I don't think I mentioned this before (if I did please excuse and put it down to my increasing age) but I was looking through a few books that one of my gang on the Section had a few weeks ago and there was one of Juanita's Ballantine books (Gothic, I think). Anyway (Name-Dropper at the drop of the hat is me!) I just, casually, turned to Jenny (the owner of the book) and, casually, mentioned in a blasé, casual, sorta way 'Mmmmm, writer of that book slept in my bed a couple of years ago.' Jenny was suitably impressed and I glowed...sorta, casually.

Kay Anderson, 8386 Hollister, Ventura CA 93004

While we were driving up to Sacto for Westcon, we stopped in Berkeley. It's like stepping into a time machine and coming out in 1967. There may be nice parts of town, but near the university it's scuzzy and run-down. The students are still in full furor...still banning the bomb, no-nuking, saving the whales, singing protest songs on corners for donated change, cadging for spare change, babbling seriously about karma and vibes and wearing rags and ethnic costumes. They also smell pretty ripe. We went down to Telegraph Ave and shopped from the street vendors. One gave me the whole story of crystals as I selected a clear quartz crystal. This is the Age of Aquarius, you see, and the crystals are the symbol of Aquarius. There are crystals in digital watches and computers and all that stuff. Crystals are tuned to your vibes and your karma. If you have liver troubles you should buy red crystals, and violet ones are good for mental troubles, and clear ones boost your love-life.

Westcon was pleasantly low-key. The Red Lion hotel was terrific. Hotels have been known to be enthusiastic about accepting a con's up-front money but then deciding the people, once they start arriving, are not Their Kind. Red Lion loved us. Never heard a complaint about them, and they went far beyond the call of duty. The rooms were \$32, no matter how many people you crammed in, and some groups were sure cramming. One bunch went to the desk and asked for five additional keys to go with the two they already had, and the desk asked them to come back in two hours because they'd have to have the keys made. Cops, local, CHP, security, plain-clothes, etc., kept dropping in to see the weird people, especially on the costume nights. I overheard one waitress saying that no, some of the fans were just dressed like bikers, but they were really very mellow and lots of fun. One of the pleasures Saturday night was watching the mundanes there for the nightlife in the cocktail lounges watching the fans. I voted for San Jose in '83 just because they're using another of the Red Lion chain of hotels.

A friend showed me some bumperstickers the growers in the Stanislaus Valley had made up: Save the Medfly, Spray Gov. Brown.

SHORT NOTES: Roger Sjölander said that the fanzine I commented on the price being low was from 1958. Comes from not knowing enough Swedish (and not remembering what Roger said when he mailed them). And I owe Al Sirois a big apology, because he sent a long letter tearing apart GOLEM 100 and I seem to have lost it. (I have the letter in which he continued the argument, but it doesn't make enough sense to an outsider without the original.) I'm still hunting for it; it might show up as a short article, if I find it. RSC



HUNTRESS, V1#1 [Richard Davis Box 1327, Harlan KY 40831 -- quarterly -- \$3.00] A beautifully produced "Avengers" fanzine, with slick paper, lots of well-reproduced photos, several reasonably good articles, both on the TV series and other things the actors have done -- and godawful proofreading. Worth the money if you're that much of a fan or McNee and Rigg (I'm almost that much of a fan of Rigg, and I appreciated the fact that most of the photos seemed to come from her movie "The Assassination Bureau".)

HOLLIER THAN THOU #10 [Marty Cantor, 5263 Riverton Ave., Apt. 1, North Hollywood CA 91601 -- or for fanzine-sized mail, c/o The Smoker's Den, 117 W. Wilson Avenue, Glendale CA 91203 -- quadrimestrial -- \$1.50] Generally serious, with arguments over the fan Hugos and stf criticism (though I must admit the articles on pig-German and unicorns didn't strike me as unduly serious). Fairly thick fanzine, long letter column, good repro, a variety of artwork (style and quality both). Rating.....6

PSFQ #5 [Michael Ward, Box 1496, Cupertino CA 95015 -- quarterly -- 4 for \$6] A printed magazine devoted to the more serious aspects of stf. An interview of Silverberg, article on speculative verse, a rather good article on future personal weaponry, reviews, letters, etc. For the serious fan. Rating.....7

NIEKAS Feb. & May 1981 [Subs to 106 School Street, Laconia NH 03246; trades and locs to RFD 1 Box 63, Centre Harbor NH 03226 -- quarterly -- 4 for \$6.50] Also serious, but not quite as relentlessly so as PSFQ. There seems to be a continuing discussion of religion and science fiction in these issues (oh lord; again?), along with reviews, critiques, science, and argumentative letters. Repro is good; a bit light in spots, but certainly readable. February issue sports a 3-color screen-printed cover; striking. On the whole, I find NIEKAS one of the most enjoyable fanzines I receive. Rating.....8

THE LOOKING GLASS, Winter/Spring 1981 & Summer 1981 [Ben Fulves, 25 Parkway, Montclair NJ 07042 -- quarterly? -- 50¢] This is the official publication of the Stellar Fantasy Society, which also offers members an adzine, limited edition art, a short story contest, and an apa for \$5 per year membership. Latest issue of TLG offers an article on the perils of hazardous waste, a reprint of "The Unquiet Grave" (this is new to their readers?), fan fiction, and reviews of small-press magazines. The earlier issue has letters and SFS news, a two-way discussion of Donaldson's books, fiction, and a rebuttal to Thomas Disch. Artwork is fair-to-good. Fiction is about fan average (but they do pay for material, making this a prozine by my standards). Repro is good. Overall, not bad if you want a sercon zine -- but there are better ones around, too. Rating.....4

SCIENCE FICTION CHRONICLE V2 #11 & 12 [P.O. Box 4175, New York, NY 10163 -- monthly -- \$1.25] Newsletter, running to 24 pages and including reviews, ads, a market report, convention listing, and an occasional article. Good reproduction, lots of photos. Recommended: I subscribe myself.



WALDO #6 [Eric Bentcliffe, 17 Riverside Crescent, Holmes Chapel, Cheshire CW4 7NR England -- irregular -- no price listed] As a vacation from all the above serconishness -- Eric describes a damp vacation in Vancouver and environs, John Berry relates a tranquil domestic scene, and letter-writers discuss their discoveries of science fiction and cats. Artwork by Atom, Cawthorn, and Rotsler, and you don't hardly get that kind no more. Repro good, and if you expect me to quote any of the puns, forget it. Go ask Eric for a copy for yourself. Rating.....8

AURORA #19 [SF<sup>3</sup>, Box 1624, Madison WI 53701 -- irregular -- \$2.00] Formerly JANUS. A serious journal of speculative feminism. There are non-sexist articles included -- linguistics and communication in general, in t is issue -- but much commentary on the female in science fiction. Reproduction is excellent. Artwork varies (one artist seems to have confused Susan Wood with Joanne Wood in an alleged portrait). Overall, I dislike reviewers who rate books by the acceptability of the ideas included, but otherwise it's an enjoyable zine. Rating.....7

OTHERGATES #2 [Unique Graphics, 1025 55th Street, Oakland CA 94608 -- semi-annual -- \$3.00] Strictly a market report; some 40 pages of stf magazines, pro and fan, with listings of requirements, pay (if any), frequency of publication, circulation, etc. For the fan who wants to know where to send his material (or the fan editor who wants to get a listing so he/she can receive some material). Or, for the hell of it, which is why YANDRO is listed.

PONG [Ted White, 1014 N. Tuckahoe Street, Falls Church VA 22046 -- co-editor, Dan Steffan -- biweekly, for loc, trade, or 18¢ stamps] The latest small fanzine of faan faanishness. 4 to 6 pages of determinedly fannish news, views, and humor. I don't know; I was never all that fond of this sort of thing back in the 1950s and 1960s; maybe now that it's less popular I'll enjoy it more. (But I wouldn't bet on it.) There's a certain attitude of forced lightheartedness here, it seems to me. But try a copy and see for yourself; what else can you get for an 18¢ stamp? Rating.....4

CHUNDERI V3 #10 thru V5 #1 [John Foyster, 21 Shakespeare Grove, St. Kilda, Victoria 3182, Australia -- "four or five times a year" -- trade, contrib, loc, or \$1A] As I recall, the whole lot came in one package, probably because of (a) YANDRO's spotty schedule recently, (b) my lack of response to fanzines recently, and (c) postal rates. Generally serious fanzine, with lots of discussions about how to find and identify quality in science fiction (and elsewhere). John's account of trying to locate the hotel into which he had been booked in London, however, is obviously an Australian version of the tall tale...surely not even Qantas could be that inefficient... Enjoyable, partly at least because the discussions are about Australian stf, and thus the arguments are slightly different from the ones in the US. Rating.....6

EMU TRACKS OVER AMERICA [Leigh Edmonds, P.O. Box 74, Balaclava, Victoria 3183, Australia -- one-shot -- \$2.50A] I have no idea what the Australian dollar is worth compared to ours at present; try tacking on an extra 50¢. This is Leigh's Trip Report of the 1974 DUFF trip; he points out that since he spent 7 weeks on the trip, the report has to be somewhat condensed -- he has over 100 pages in the booklet as it is. An interesting look at the US and US fandom, and worth your money.

KANTELE #7, 8 [The Filk Foundation, P.O. Box 9911, Little Rock AR 72219 -- quarterly -- \$1.00] The filksinger's fanzine. About 3/4 of each issue is devoted to filksong lyrics -- and music, if the tune isn't a common one. The rest is letters, mention of Foundation business, notes on and by singers, etc. I recommend it highly (but then, I'm president of the Foundation, so...)

AMRA #69 [Terminus, Owlswick & Ft. Mudge Electric Railway Gazette, Box 8243, Philadelphia PA 19101 -- irregular -- \$2] Actually, the price listed is for the next issue; back issues, including this one, cost #1 per copy plus \$1 per order for shipping. Also next issue -- assuming there is one, of course -- the size will be increased and payment will be made for material. It's nice to see the original Conan fanzine again anyway -- despite the fact that I dislike Conan only a bit less than I do most of the

other swords-and-sorcery heroes. (Conan is generally a bore, but AMRA is fun.) Material this round is mostly serious; articles on real and imaginary swordsmen. Generally the mag has a fair amount of humor (which I approve of because I find it hard to take the genre seriously).  
Rating.....9

FANHISTORICA #3 [Joe D Siclari 4599 NW 5 Ave, Boca Raton FL 33431 -- irregular -- \$1.50] I find it hard to take fan history seriously, too, but what the hell. This seems to be a Francis T. Laney issue -- Laney is a Fannish Legend among people who mistake boorishness for iconoclasm. (When Dick Eney reprinted the Laney classic, AH, SWEET IDIOCY, in FAPA, some years ago, my reaction was "This is what the shouting is about?" Old-time FAPAns said, well, you had to have been there. Personally, I'm glad I wasn't.) Anyway, if you're around real old-time fans (older-time than me, that is) or fans who think fan history is important, you'll hear Laney talked about; this is a good place to get the background.  
Special Interest

SCIENCE FICTION REVIEW #39 [P.O. Box 11408, Portland OR 97211 -- quarterly -- \$2.00] Primarily reviews, as per the title -- so there's a lot of it that I don't read. (I seldom read other people's reviews, and almost never when there are a dozen or so reviewers per issue.) There are, however, letters, interviews (mostly, I don't read them, either, but since this one was with Gene Wolfe...), and editorial comments. If you're looking for reviews plus commentary and don't object to multiple reviewers, this is a good place to find them.  
Rating.....8

LAN'S LANTERN #10 [George Laskowski, 47 Valley Way, Bloomfield Hills MI 48013 -- \$1.00 -- irregular] This one seems to be mostly reviews, long and short reviews of books and movies by a variety of people. Also a long lettercolumn and a large number of very short con reports. Repro good; artwork good to excellent. A fairly thick one for your money, and small print, too.  
Rating.....8

WAHF\*FUL #1 thru 5 [Jack R. Herman, 1/67 Fletcher St., Bondi, NSW, 2026, Australia -- quarterly -- 4 for \$3A -- make it \$3.50 US] Somewhat of a personalzine, but with outside contributors. Editorial and especially lettercolumn take up a good share of space. Generally enjoyable, and the somewhat left-liberal bias (by US Standards; by Australian ones it's probably dead center) gives me lots of things to argue with. Text repro good, art repro fair, Artwork generally good, though some of it is too dim too tell much.  
Rating.....6

FISSION CHIPS #1 [Tom Cardy, 137 Richardson St., Dunedin, New Zealand -- quarterly? -- 50¢ NZ -- go ask your bank how that translates into US money] Not often that a fanzine editor is an artist (well, a cartoonist, anyway). Mostly reviews; books, movies, fanzines. Minor fan fiction. Art and reproduction both generally good. Not a bad beginning. We'll see how it goes from here.  
Rating.....3

GENRE PLAT #4 [Allyn Cadogan, 251 Ashbury St. #4, San Francisco CA 94117 -- irregular -- #1] Basically humorous, which I approve of. Some of the humor is so terribly fannish that I'm bored by it, but then there's the article about the Ellison interview, and the Unexplained Phenomenon, and some interesting reprinted items. All electrostencilling; some very nice art.  
Rating.....7

MAINSTREAM #5 [Suzanne Tompkins & Jerry Kaufman, 4326 Winslow Place North, Seattle WA 98103 -- irregular -- 75¢] Everything from how to prepare cactus for mescaline ingestion (talk about something being more trouble than it's worth!) to a serious article on the history and mythos of the beaver cult. Plus lots of letters, a con report. Good art and repro.  
Rating.....6

DYNATRON #74 [Roy Tackett, 915 Green Valley Road NW, Albuquerque NM 87107 -- irregular -- 50¢] Smaller issue than usual, and Roy seems a trifle discouraged about the whole thing. Send him some humorous material and get your copies now while they're still available. One of my favorite fanzines, though this issue really isn't up to par; Roy is generally much funnier, and nastier.  
Rating.....5



ATARANTES #46, 48, 49 [Cliff Biggers, 6045 Summit Wood Drive, Kennesaw GA 30144 -- monthly? -- 12 for \$6] Official publication of the Atlanta SF Club. Local news, some general news, columns, letters. Generally only 12 pages. Generally good art and repro. A nice way to get in touch with southern fandom. Rating.....5

UNDULANT FEVER #6 [Bruce D. Arthurs, 3421 W. Poinsettia, Phoenix AZ 85029 -- irregular -- by editorial whim] Strictly the editor and letter-writers. One's reaction to a personalzine depends entirely on whether or not one likes the personality involved (or at least finds it interesting), and there's no way to tell that except by trying it. I usually like Bruce's personality, and as a rule find the letters interesting, so I like the fanzine. Comments are as likely to be about the state of the garden or the price of an apartment in New York as they are about science fiction.

SIKANDER #3, 4 [Irwin Hirsch, 279 Domain Road, South Yarra, Victoria 3141, Australia -- quarterly? -- \$1A; try \$1.25 US] Editorial, a variety of articles, and letters; all stuffed into 20 pages or so. Wide range of material, very little of it about science fiction. Good repro; very little art, but what's there is okay. Rating.....5

RUNE 61, 62, 63 [Minnesota Science Fiction Society, P.O. Box 2128, Loop Station, MN Minneapolis MN 55402 -- quarterly -- \$2 per year] New editor John Bartelt is experimenting with layout (#63 is 11 x 8 1/2" rather than 8 1/2 x 11"), fancy covers, etc. Reminds me somewhat of Bill Bowers on a bad day. Contents -- once you find them, which isn't always easy in #63 -- are the usual variety. Humor about fandom, seriousness about science fiction, vice versa, and a few items that don't quite make it either way. RUNE has generally been a lively fanzine; these issues seem livelier than usual. Rating.....6

THE ALDAB KALLE ANKA #1, 2 [Anders Bellis, Vanadisvagen 13, 113 46 Stockholm, Sweden -- irregular? -- for trade] A 4-pager, in English. News, a con report, editorial chatter, etc. Anders is the faaanish type fan and presumably would like to get US fanzines of that type -- PONG, for example. Probably wouldn't mind getting a few letters, either.

ZOZMA #16 [Steve George, 94 Brock Street, Winnipeg, Manitoba R3N 0Y4, Canada -- monthly -- \$1, which I hear is only 80¢ US these days; sorry, Steve, but it's nice to find someone's dollar that's worth less than ours, for a change.] This one is almost entirely reviews and letters. Reviews are okay; letters are occasionally hilarious. And occasionally not. Small issue, 16 pages. Good repro, fair art. Rating.....4

WEBER WOMAN'S WREVENGE #1 [Jean Weber, 13 Myall St., O'Connor, ACT 2601, Australia -- 75¢ US -- no schedule listed] Personalzine; this one is almost entirely a trip report, with a few letters added in. Reasonably good trip report if you care for that sort of thing. (I'm not all that fond of it, but found this one at least acceptable.)

The next two items should probably be in with the book reviews, but I had some extra space here. I obtained both the following items from Margaret Middleton at Rivercon.

CHILDREN OF THE FUTURE, by Karen Willson [Hourglass cassette, \$6.00] A 60-minute of filk songs. I'm not sure what happened; I've reviewed Hourglass's interview tapes and while the fidelity wasn't great it was acceptable. But this is, in a word, god-awful. I heard Karen at Filkcon 3 (because I wasn't going to buy the tape until I did hear her) and she's got an excellent voice. Whoever recorded this one didn't know how. There are inappropriate acoustical tricks, plus the whole thing is recorded on the edge of overloading, giving it an unpleasant sound. (Either that, or the tape recorder was grossly inadequate for the job.) Save your money.

CRYSTAL SINGER, by Cynthia McQuillan [Off Centaur Publications, \$7.50] A marked contrast in tape quality; this one is excellent. I also heard Cindy at Filkcon 3, and I like her voice better than I do Karen's to begin with, but that's because she's a contralto. If you don't like deep voices, I suppose you won't like the tape. I fell in love with it; I don't even like half the stuff she's singing, but I'll listen to it blissfully. And the tape is sharp and clear and very professional in quality. Highly recommended.

## THINGS THAT GO BUMP! IN THE MAILBOX

by RSC

Since we helped publicize the census, the Dept of Commerce has been bombarding us with bulletins interpreting the census. A few highlights: 2.7% of the U.S. population lives on farms. (I didn't know we were in that small a minority.) Interestingly, while the farm population has declined steadily since 1920 when it was 30%, farm residents have proportionally "more whites, more males, more married couples, and higher fertility" than the nonfarm population. (Must be true what they say about farm boys.) The average U.S. household contains 2.75 persons, and about 1/3 of those households received "major public noncash benefits in 1979." (School lunches, food stamps, Medicare, subsidized housing, etc.) Indiana ranks 33rd in number of Indian residents, 21st in number of blacks, 23rd in number of Asians. Indianapolis is the 12th largest city in the country (but only the 32nd largest "Urban Area"). The American Indian population was over 1,000,000 for the first time since the census began counting them separately in 1890. (I told you so...) // The new Treasurer of the Democratic Party tells me that "The support you gave us -- both spiritually and financially -- at that vulnerable time made an enormous difference. Thanks to you and people like you, the Democratic Party is now firmly on the upswing." (They must have really needed that five bucks...) // MAGGIE & DON THOMPSON send more excerpts from "The Lower Case": "Iraqi head seeks arms" (it's a start...). "Jacksonville pornography free, officials say." "New breast detection machine" (I think I work with that one). // A bulletin received (in error) at work advertises a "Fugitive Dust Hearing" in Indianapolis. // DON FRANSON sends new NBF lists. Inquiries (or \$8 per year fee) to Sally A. Syrjala, P.O. Box 149, Centerville MA 02632. There's also a short story contest, open to all amateurs, whether members or not, as long as they have not sold more than two stories professionally. Manuscripts and entry fees (\$1 for members, \$2 for non-members) go to Edward W. Ludwig, 16540 Camellia Terrace, Los Gatos CA 95030. // The June-July 1981 issue of American Heritage magazine includes a painting of the Iwo Jima landing by Chesley Bonestell. (With visions of stacks of unpublished Bonestell military paintings, I began writing letters, but eventually the Navy Department assured me that this was the only Bonestell military painting they knew of -- it was done from official Marine Corps photos of the landing, in 1945 or 1946.) // The MIESELS send an article about a Harlequin publicity team (including an author) who visited Indianapolis to promote their romances. // ROGER WADDINGTON sent an account of British entrepreneursmanship: British firms sell hot-water bottles to Nigeria; sunlamps to Bahrain, Swiss rolls in Switzerland, vodka to Russian satellite countries, and pasta to Italy. Now, that's salesmanship! // MARY SCHAUH sent a clipping explaining why weather forecasts in China are classified information. And a clipping on a minister (Universal Life, of course) who operated a computer programmed for marriage ceremonies; the Rev. Apple. It asks the traditional questions and you punch in your responses. Said he was working on a divorce program (which I hope was just the reporter having fun, since churches can't grant divorces, by computer or any other way.) // KAY ANDERSON relayed an ad for SPEACA, "The Society for the Promulgation and Encouragement of Amazon Conduct & Attitude. An international membership society for women who wish to reach their true position of leadership. (Open to men who support the concept of Female Ascendancy.)" Jessica strikes again? I must admit that I'm not that much of a feminist. // DEAN GRENNELL sends an account of a witch trial in Los Angeles (the witch was convicted of fortunetelling, a misdemeanor in L.A. unless "done by a religious leader"...) The defendant had threatened to cast a spell and "make the trial go away" but didn't. // RON SALOMAN sends a couple of weird ads from the Boston Phoenix. They're confusingly written, but apparently claim that Johann Goethe optics (whatever they are) will enable you to see and photograph flying saucers and their inhabitants, not to mention giving them big hugs and big handshakes.



## THINGS THAT GO BUMP IN THE MAILBOX

### PART TWO

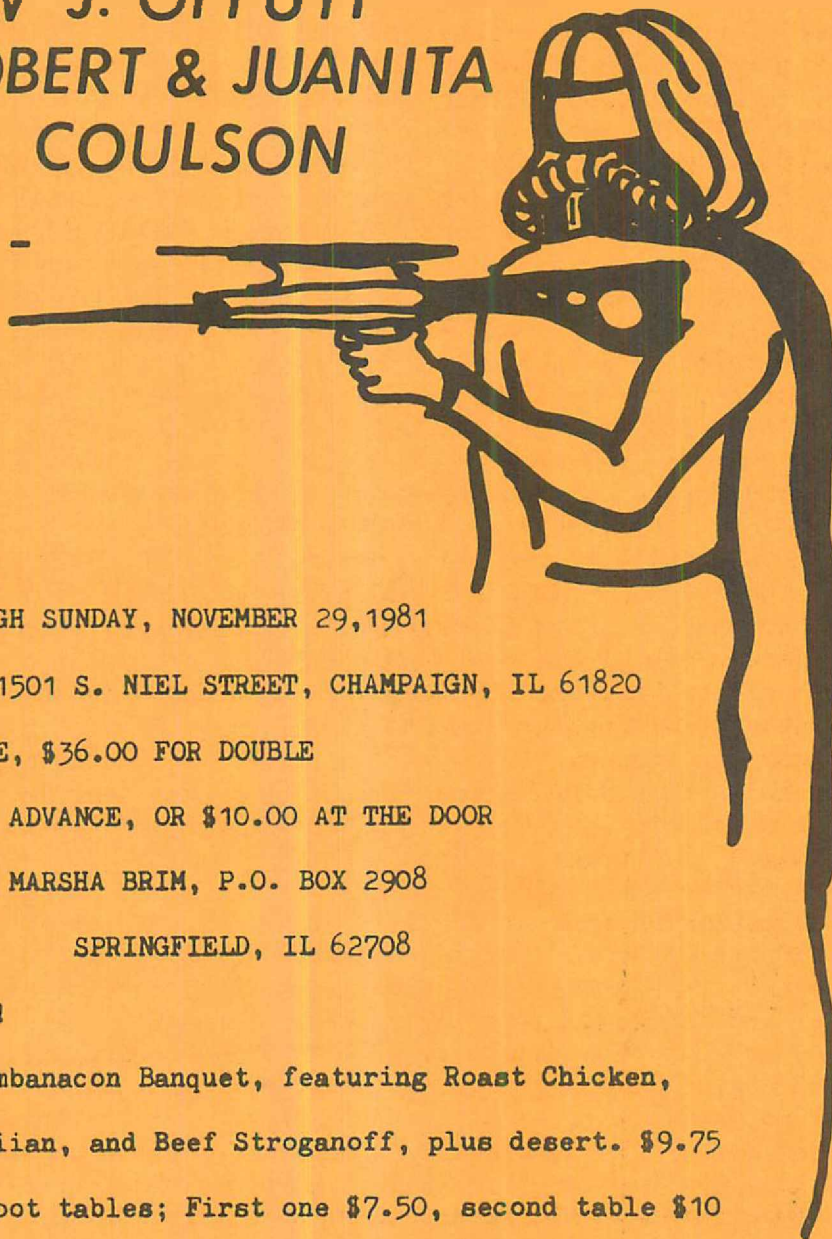
NED BROOKS contributes a news item from Seattle. An attorney and his girlfriend were drinking early morning coffee when he told her to close her eyes and he'd give her a surprise. Then he hit her over the head with an axe handle. The item says both people told the same story, and she refused to press charges. Must have been really lousy coffee.// The scientific method: "If chlorine shows up in a supposed 16th Century painting, it is most likely a fraud because chlorine wasn't even discovered until much later." SANDRA MIESEL sent that one, which originally appeared in a Berkeley newspaper and was reprinted for laughs in a chemistry journal. Same journal reported a magazine headline about a "computer program that stimulates oil reservoirs."// Newspaper headlining: "Syrians Shoot To Halt Fighting" (if they shoot straight enough...)// MARY LONG sent an item about the increase in cattle rustling in Indiana, which matches a local item about frog rustling in Alabama.// MARY LONG also sent the story about St. Urbo's Day (March 16), when loyal Finns dress in purple and green and pay homage to the man who drove the grasshoppers from Finland. (A few Irishmen have taken offense at the celebration, but the Irish are notoriously touchy.)// TIME/LIFE Books offers me a volume titled THE OLD WEST which I thought about until I read the part of the ad wherein Belle Starr is referred to as "a liquid-eyed, black-haired siren." (Judging from photos, the phrase "a face that would stop a clock" was coined for Belle.) They also refer to John Wesley Hardin as having "44 notches" on his gun. (Even the wildest romancers -- up till now -- only credited him with 10 killings.)// MARY LONG also sent a review of the ENCYCLOPEDIA OF WESTERN GUNFIGHTERS from University of Oklahoma, which sticks to the facts and allows Hardin 11 killings, which still makes him one of the most dangerous men of his era.// DEREK NELSON relayed a clipping from Toronto about the censoring of the "Dr. Who" TV series there because it's "racist."// Today's paper has an item about the Canadian customs arresting 13 Baptist ministers for carrying handguns across the border. (They were attending a convention in Detroit, which I guess is an explanation.) // Tartan Book Sales awhile back was handling "A witty, candid guide for women who want to become mistresses; includes where to find the man and how to keep him." I suppose I'm an old fogey, but...// ANDY ZERBE sends one about the U.S. Passport office in Birmingham refusing to accept U.S. currency; they only take checks.// The automatic fear of the Law; I can guarantee that getting a letter with the return address of Sheriff, Macon County, Tuskegee, Alabama, gives one a shock. (My initial reaction was "But I've never been in Alabama; must be someone suing me." Turned out he was thanking me for my contributions to the Southern Poverty Law Center, but it gave me a nasty few minutes.) // THE MIESELS contributed a note about book-eating insects have color preferences; blue or green bindings attract them; orange or red repel. (So, naturally, most reference books that are intended for some permanence have dark bindings.)// LAURINE WHITE sends a clipping about an 81-year old woman accused of beating her husband to death.// A book club offered me a copy of STRAIGHT TALK -- "A new way to get closer to others by saying what you really mean." Somehow I don't think I need it. // DEREK NELSON sent along an account concerning an "experimental robot" in Florida "running amok" and destroying itself. Derek captioned it, "Third Law, anyone?"// ALAN DODD has a cutting about a man tried for stealing 13,603 books from Brighton and Hove public libraries, plus 420 lp records and "14 road lamps from the Gas Board." Trying to make Guinness?// DAVE LOCKE sends an item about "cord lice" which live in telephone switchboards and their relatives, "cable lice," which thrive in computers. Telephone and computer operators complain about being bitten. (The U.S. Public Health Service says they're actually pieces of fiberglass insulation, but what does it know? From handling pieces of scrap from work, I will say that getting broken bits of fiberglass inside your clothing is a miserable experience.// The Ft. Wayne paper printed a story about a man refusing to pay his income tax because Ohio was not officially a state until 1953 (it proclaimed its own statehood in 1803, but Congress was even more dilatory than usual), therefore William Howard Taft was not a citizen and not legally President when the income tax amendment was passed, the Senate was illegally in session and the state ratification (which included Ohio) was invalid. (Technically, he's undoubtedly correct, but I doubt if that will help him.)

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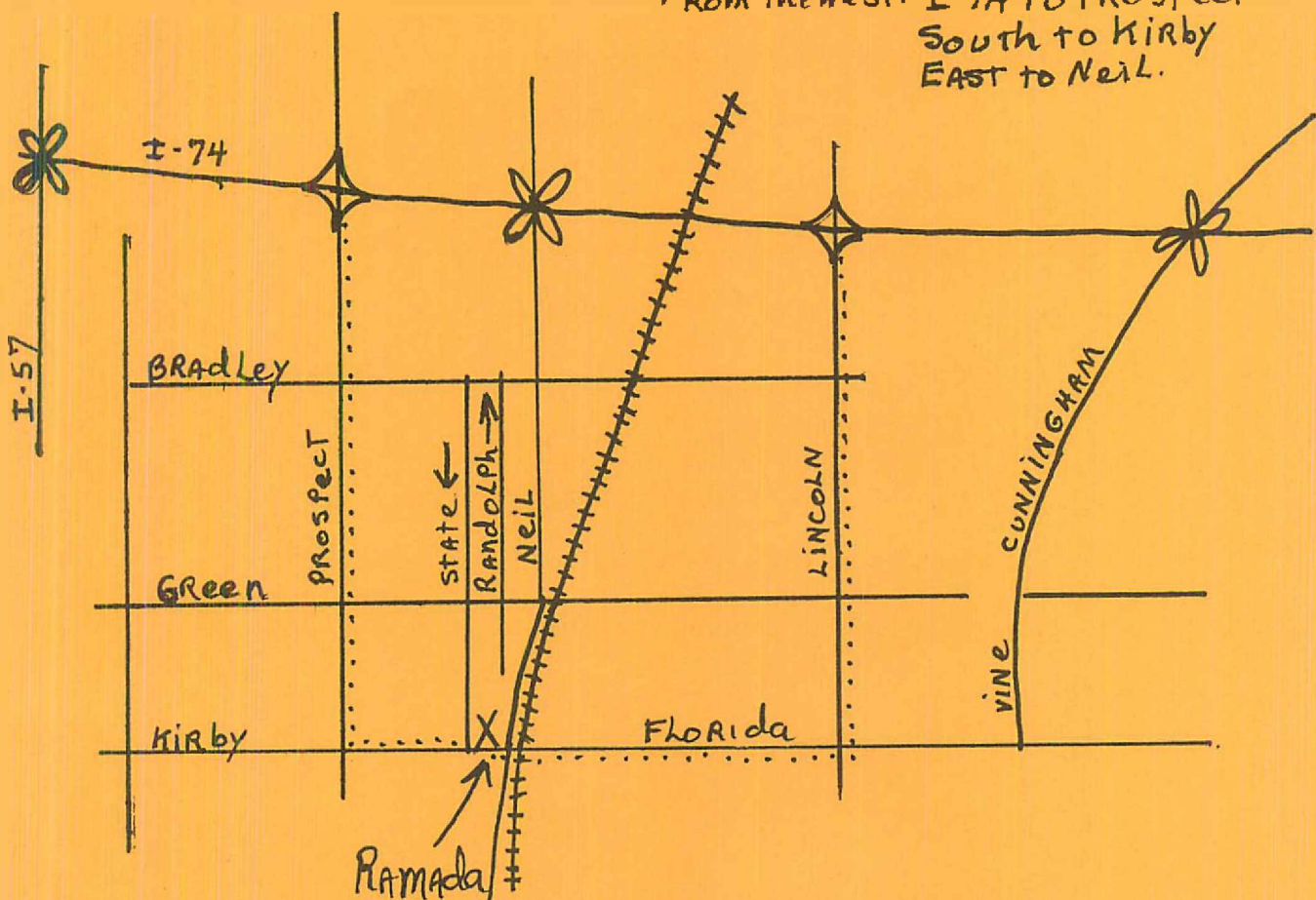




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She is still very active with her latest Dr. Willing Novel, Burn This,  
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