

Good evening, and welcome to WARM CHAMPAGNE #5, produced for the 54th mailing of Anzapa by Susan Wood, Department of English, University of British Columbia, Vancouver V6T 1T6 and all that. No, the Canadian postal code doesn't make much sense to me, either. This side of the dateline, it's Sunday, Jan. 16, 1977, a dark and stormy night. I'm listening to Canadian music by Murray McLaughlan (a radio tape of a concert I went to last month) to cheer myself up after a bleak weekend of marking English 100 essays. Cheerfulness, perseverance, upliftment! (Gawd.) This fanzine is dedicated to Donovan Bangsund, because John thought he was being neglected; he wasn't, he was just hiding, probably inside the mimeo. : Lion's Gate Publication #12.

"Outside, the coastal mountains are shrouded in mist, fog, cloud and other atmospheric disturbances. Inside, my brain seems shrouded in mist, fog, etc. etc." So began Warm Champagne #2, Jan. 10, 1976. What's changed since, beyond the fact that I finally got my own dual-pitch Selectric and several typeface? (typefacets?) Well, this time around I haven't just come back from California, alas, and I don't have a cold, hoorah. In fact, the last time I saw my doctor, she agreed that I've probably adjusted to Vancouver, and stopped having throat problems as an allergic reaction to all the dampness. However, it's raining again, as is common for this time of year; and I feel depressed because I've been marking essays, as is common for my term-time weekends. Plus ça change, a comment I threw in merely to use my ç key.

My New Year's resolution this year was to live as if U.B.C. didn't own my soul for 24 hours daily, 7 days a week, during term-time. I decided I would, must in fact, take some time for ME, to do fanac, or just read. Or answer the mail. Every other Friday night, maybe? I managed to break that resolution today, of course, because I did spend most of it working. Here I am, thoggh, this evening, not reading a 250-page Canadian novel I have to teach come Tuesday, because I fear the wrath of the Official Bloody Editor (and I know I can talk fast enough to sound as if I've re-read the novel.) I've got to do something interesting to write about, after all, besides sitting home marking termpapers!

Exciting? Well, I went to a BCSEA meeting last night, and, when it came time to contribute to the club story, I put in an angry penguin just for Christine. I didn't talk about Ionesco, though, John Bangsund. We had a showing of FORBIDDEN PLANET which I had never seen, and afterwards several of the more intense members foregathered in a corner talking about Art. Yes, Art, with a capital A. Artiness, too. I went off in another corner and gossiped. I am an incorrigibly unsercon fan. (What Vancouver fandom needs, we've decided, is a social event comparable to Degraives', when we can all just get together to natter. First, however, we need a suitable pub. The closest seems to be in Seattle...)

I just made a typo in the course of correcting a typo. It's been one of those days. The rain, and the essays-to-mark, have given me a bad case of The Existential Blecchies, which are probably something like anomie and ennui. (I got a letter from Eric Lindsay, in which he quite casually used the term "anomie." I know my students wouldn't be able to do that, and I doubt most of my colleagues could either. I wanted to tie Eric hand and foot and keep him here to provide intelligent conversation, but he slipped away while I was upstairs, marking termpapers...

Term was just starting when last I contributed to Anzapa, as I recall. Well, it passed in a flurry of Australian visitors, not to mention termpapers, some 350 of them in 13 weeks, plus a couple of Canadian Literature Crises (I administer the 16 sections of the second-year Canadian lit survey, among other duties.) However, I was officially reappointed for another 2-year period (after which I come up

for tenure, I suppose.) Despite the fact I was teaching sf (or perhaps because the sf class pulled in a lot of warm breathing bodies to balance the 2 people taking the Dryden class), U.B.C. seems pleased with me. I had fun teaching sf, of course, and having various visitors to talk to the class: Harlan Ellison, Paul Williams (who wrote the ROLLING STONE profile on Phil Dick, and who writes that he's working on the Heinlein piece for RS, which he'll submit the day after they finally run his piece on Sturgeon), David Suzuki, and Terry Carr. Wonder what I'll do for an encore, if I get the class next year?

Suddenly, everyone was stringing the trees around here with coloured lights (a custom I gather is unknown in Australia-- just a little more of our conspicuous consumption, Kitty) and I had exams to mark. It was merry Christmas. I have trouble believing it's Christmas out here, with no snow; I'd be completely confused in Melbourne. In fact, on Christmas Day, John and I went for a walk, and saw roses and cherry trees in bloom. Then I called my Mum in Ottawa, who said it was 25°C BELOW zero; now, Carey, aren't you sorry you had to leave for home so soon?

At any rate, I finally woke up one day and realized I didn't have to go in to the office, since I'd cleared up the exams, the essays, and even some of the administering. Yes, it was Christmas! Had a nice, quiet day, cooking a turkey for John and myself, listening to music, and so on. Murmured "hey, let's call John and Sally" a couple of times, but didn't do anything serious about it. Thought of Leigh and Val heading north, and hoped Agatha would hold up. Wondered where Eric and Kitty were.

I've decided that, much as I complain about my work load, I am basically manic-compulsive. One day off was about as much as I could manage before undertaking my Christmas project. David Hartwell asked me at worldcon if I'd be willing to do some work for Gregg Press, the hardback reprint series he's involved with. Overcome by the hyper-fanac atmosphere of the SFWA suite, with everyone talking contract, I said "sure" and forgot about it til a letter came from David, in the middle of exams, asking me to do an introduction of 5,000 or so words for one of a list of books...the only one of which seemed feasible was Marion Zimmer Bradley's THE HERITAGE OF HASTUR, so I found myself, over Christmas, reading her entire Darkover series.

That was a strange experience. MZB is a very bad writer, to begin with. The later books, including HERITAGE, are competent enough, if 3 times longer than necessary and very confused, to say the least, in various of their assumptions (especially about women. IN DARKOVER LANDFALL, she has a lead character say-- in a way meant to be taken seriously-- that the women's liberation movement is a mental illness, a "pathological reaction" to overpopulation on earth-- she equates it with not wanting innumerable babies. However, whilst in Seattle I read part of her latest Darkover novel, which is a radical lesbian consciousness-raising session, basically. I wonder how Don Wollheim will react to a novel in which the heroine murders her pig husband and goes off with her lover, the man's former wife?) (But I digress.) ((But isn't sf getting interesting, these days?)) Anyway, the early Bradley books are pretty awful: badly written, full of clichés and stereotyped characters, contradictory. But. But. Maybe I'm just a sucker for series, but I had all sorts of fun putting together a historical-geographical-sociological survey of Darkover! Spent some time in Seattle over New Year's, going to parties, seeing people, looking for Bradley books, and buying the new Le Guin young-adult non sf book, a lovely thing. (US title is VERY FAR AWAY FROM ANYWHERE ELSE, British is A VERY LONG WAY AWAY FROM ANYWHERE ELSE, and it's a sort of non-fantasy Earthsea novel, about Growing Up and such. I identified strongly with the characters, too!--kids who are Strange Misfits because they read books and sometimes put two serious thoughts together.) Then I came home with my Bradleys, and started school and within a week had written 3 drafts of a 6,000 word introduction for David Hartwell. After that, my typing fingers wouldn't keep still, so I started catching up on the mail. I'm caught up through September 1976, in fact, so I should be writing to you soon, Bruce....

((Murray McLaughlan and The Silver Tractors-- or "Tractor" on the US printing-- are now singing "Train Song." I think there is a rule that, to be a musician in English Canada, you have to write one song about a train, or, preferably, building the CPR railway; one song about getting back to the land or appreciating farmers; and one song about how you hate Toronto-- or, possibly, love it despite its faults, as McLaughlan did, before redeeming himself by writing a Gordon Lightfoot song about how ugly Sudbury is. Writing a song about touring Canada and ending up in Vancouver where it is raining is optional. What's the Australian cultural-mythic equivalent, if any?)) ((Hey, he's just doing the Sudbury song. What a pure Lightfoot bass line.)) ((Leigh, have you ever thought of writing folkrock songs about wallabies? I thought not.))

The other exciting fannish thing I have been doing is clearing out that back room to paint it at last, oh my visitors. (That's why I found the copy of WC #2 I quoted.) It's been between -20°C and -35°C in exciting Regina, Saskatchewan, and Eli Cohen has decided that the information system he's in charge of establishing is, though a year or so behind schedule, well enough established that he can get the hell out of Regina (which is, after all, very far away from anyplace else.) So he's moving out here. Since the vacancy rate in Vancouver has gone up to something like .04%, he isn't even trying to find an apartment-- there aren't any-- and intends to move into my back room. Eli and I are very compatible room mates, it'll be nice to split the rent and the cooking, and I'll get my mimeo back (plus a slip-sheeter.) First, though, I have to paint that bedroom, at last. Real soon.

The only other item of local news which may interest you out there who have been following Our Blameless Heroine's struggle to keep a roof over her head is the fact that The Nasty Ripoff Developer who wants to tear down these houses declared bankruptcy late in 1976, miraculously recovered a couple of days ago, and renewed his option on the property here. It looks as if he'll go ahead with the demolition with the government's full approval, even though there's a moratorium on ANY development on the University Endowment Lands until the government-established commission on the UEL makes its report; preliminary report recommends no development at all, and the preservation of the entire area as a park, but our current government hasn't much use for trees, especially on valuable land like this. I intend to go ahead and paint the bedroom anyway.

Mailing comments: Rotsler for DUFF. Yes indeed.

JOHN FOYSTER: First I get a SCIENCE FICTION FIVE-YEARLY, then I get a BOY'S OWN FANZINE. My ghod, maybe Ted White'll revive EGOBOO. Seriously, an interesting issue, though about the only comment I can think of is "Oh, that's why Race Mathews was asked to open the con. Oh."

I'm afraid my interest in constitutional matters is very low (which may be the reason I forgot to tell Carey he'd been removed from Anzapa. I dunno. It wasn't a conspiracy, I just didn't think of it, I guess.) I mostly read the Official Bloody Organ to find out who's moved (everyone, I gather, except the people who live in post office boxes) and how many pages I owe.

JOHN BANGSUND: Sally is a Justice of the Peace? How marvellous. What does she do?:As a refugee from a civil service town and a civil service family, I agree that the only benefit of a civil service job is the security (well, no; in fact, the Ottawa cs now seems to pay an awful lot of money, if you can write jargon in English et français, and have a high tolerance for meaningless paper-shuffling.) The idea of civil servants being laid off is foreign to anything I can imagine... May Parergon Press flourish, I may call on you to sign Canada Council grant applications saying I'm a cultural resource... one of my colleagues just got to be sent to India for a month on a research-and-speaking tour.. Did you know that India is officially a non-drinking country?

Apparently, if you want to buy liquor in India, you either have to have a license which says you are a registered alcoholic (shades of Somerset Maugham!) or one which says you are a tourist. Said licenses can be obtained from the Indian High Commission office when you get your visa.

CATHERINE CIRCOSTA: The sf-definitions from your students were, um, yes, they were. So much for teaching sf to broaden the mental horizons. In fact, I think a lot of the hostility to sf teaching over here, on the part of pros and old-time fans, is that it's being taught in high schools to people who don't care about it (to trick them into reading) BY people who don't care. There are innumerable rip-off story anthologies, of "sociology through sf" and "American history through sf" and the like, with pretentious academic introductions, too... I'm planning to do one myself! Sf seems to have the role that historical fiction did when I was in high school-- "Give the kiddies something to read that'll maybe educate them too," so we found ourselves reading innumerable novels about Elizabethan England. I think Rosemary Sutcliff survived, so sf probably will too. I notice, too, that the sf sections of bookstores here seem to be expanding, edging into the territory once occupied by mysteries. "If you read too many sf stories you will end up in a mental asylum" indeed. But my English 100 students are terrified of thinking about anything unfamiliar, really scared, and therefore hostile. Maybe you're encountering something of the same reaction.

KEITH TAYLOR: If you do find out what to say to a depressed Bruce Gillespie, let me know. Telling him not to fall in love with inappropriate people is a start. I should learn not to do it myself. If you typed Kitty's thesis, you deserve a medal. (I mean, living with anyone's thesis is heroic. There ought to be special degrees for such services as typing and proofreading theses.)

MARC ORTLEIB: "A country which produced Joni Mitchell and Neil Young..." typical Canadians, they moved to California. One of these days I will either meet a nice Canadian, or finally marry a Californian and move to San Francisco just in time for the earthquake. I loved your folksong for Robin Johnson. I was told by a teacher when I was but a tad that I was tone-deaf, which (with a generally unculturally-interested family) left me with a massive inferiority complex as far as music was concerned. I got interested in folk music because I had a friend who was the daughter of a professional folk singer, because I was involved in leftist political stuff, and because the words were important-- and that slowly broke down my mental blocks. I still haven't had the time/determination to learn to play my pretty dulcimer, though.

KITTY VIGO: Your three weeks sounds hectic (what's a continent or two when you're on holiday?); next time, drop up to Vancouver, and we'll try to arrange to have the mountains out. As to collapsing in jelly like stupor, I did that too at the end of term: sheer exhaustion, I think. I am on the Ace books mailing list, which means that once a month the Ace mailroom people take a cardboard box and stuff as many of the month's paperback releases as they can fit, into it. I usually manage one sf book (2 if you count Perry Rhodans, which I trade for stuff I DO want from the local sf-used books store), 3 nurse novels, 4 Westerns, several softcore porn books, some CHARIOTS OF THE GODS type junk, and an assortment of Gothics. While I was marking exams, I read half a dozen gothics-- I'd come home, read a gothic, have a stiff drink, and try to convince myself that I really was teaching someone something maybe. It took three weeks to really wind down enough from term that I could start to write again. I don't have a tv, which is why I didn't watch soap operas instead.

ANDREW BROWN: The TORCON Hugo presentations were lovely, even if there were no Hugos. The rest of the evening was Weird, tho. It seems several lifetimes ago.

--minac, I regret: I must get back to school-type preparations: see you in #55, maybe: