

Disclave 1996



Bucconeer

The 56th Annual World Science Fiction Convention

Guests of Honor

C.J. Cherryh
Milton A. Rothman
Stanley Schmidt
Michael Whelan

Charles Sheffield, Toast Master

Baltimore Convention Center
Baltimore, MD USA

August 1998							
SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT	
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2	3	4	5	6	7	8	
9	10	11	12	13	14	15	
16	17	18	19	20	21	22	
23	24	25	26	27	28	29	
30	31						



Hannah M.G. Shapero © 1995

Membership Rates

(Until September 30, 1996)

Supporting: \$30.00

Attending: \$98.00

Children's: \$50.00

(4 to 12 years old on
August 5, 1998)

Bucconeer

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Annapolis Junction, MD 20701

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DISCLAVE 1996 May 24 - 27, 1996

Writer Guest of Honor: MICHAEL SWANWICK

Artist Guest of Honor: HANNAH M.G. SHAPERO

Hyatt Regency Washington on Capitol Hill



Hannah M.G. Shapero, *Eric on the Road*, unpublished illustration.

Other Disclave 1996 Guests:

Brick Barrientos	David Honigsburg	Peggy Rae Pavlat
Covert Beach	Jane Jewell	Evan Phillips
N. Taylor Blanchard	Janet Kagan	John Pomeranz
Michael Capobianco	Angela Kessler	Ray Ridenour
Jack L. Chalker	Tess Kissinger	J.F. Rivkin ("Ellen Foxxe")
Robert Chase	Janet Kofoed	Charles Ryan
Hal Clement	Karl Kofoed	Tom Schaad
Brenda W. Clough	Yoji Kondo ("Eric Kotani")	Darrell Schweitzer
Ann C. Crispin	Warren Lapine	Charles Sheffield
Keith R. A. DeCandido	Shariann Lewitt	Joseph Sherman
Michael Dirda	Lelia Loban	Susan Shwartz
Chuck Divine	Nikki Lynch	Dick Smith
Andy Duncan	Richard Lynch	Leah Zeldes Smith
Scott Edelman	Robert MacIntosh	Paul Sorton
John R. Ellis	Jim Mann, FN	Elaine Stiles
Jeri Freedman ("Ellen Foxxe")	Laurie Mann, FN	Steve Stiles
Gregory Frost	Bill Mayhew	Ted Stoecker
Marty Gear	Joe Mayhew, FN	Colleen Stumbaugh
Bobby Gear	Ron Miller	Tom Veal
Alexis Gilliland	Michael Nelson	Michael J. Walsh
Laura Ann Gilman	Mark Olson, FN	Bob Walters
Erica Ginter	Priscilla Olson, FN	Diane Weinstein
Peter Heck	Rebecca Ore	Ted White
Greg Hennessy	Lance Oszko	Kip Williams
Alexandra Honigsburg	Kathi Overton	Mike Zipser

**Cover Art: Hannah M.G. Shapero, "City of Dreams," 1993,
private commission from the collection of Howard and Jane Frank**

Photograph of Michael Swanwick on page 7 provided by M.C. Porter

Original letter artwork for Michael Swanwick's story, "An Abecedary of the Imagination,"
contributed by Fan Artist Hugo Award nominee Joe Mayhew

Artwork on page 32 contributed by Lynn Perkins

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The Washington Science Fiction Association (WSFA) is a nonprofit social club organized under section 501(c)(7) of the Internal Revenue Code (and we should know since two of our members are IRS lawyers, but please don't hold that against us). Disclave is the annual meeting of WSFA. A Disclave 96 membership is also an associate membership in WSFA for the period of one year. WSFA holds regularly scheduled meetings on the first and third Friday of each month. For more information, please speak to any Disclave committee member or visit the Disclave Information desk.

*Your humble editor thanks Wade Cappetta, Shirley Cappetta,
and all the people at Curry Printing in Alexandria, Virginia
for making his first program book look so good!*

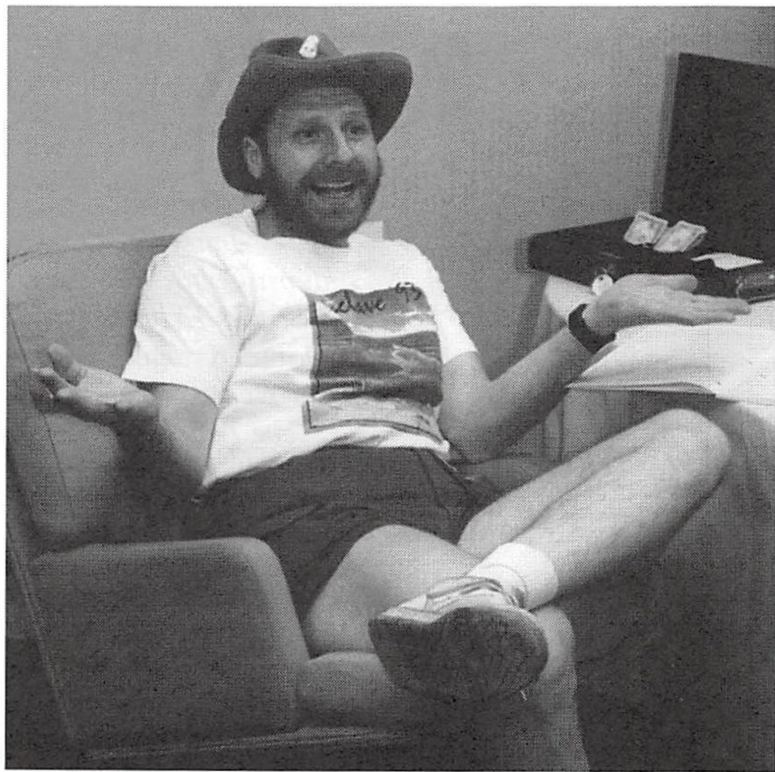
MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

Greetings,

Once again, DisClave is in a new hotel. With your assistance, we hope to stay here awhile. I ask your indulgence and your patience in dealing with the hotel. And please use some common sense. That is the Capitol Building off to the right from the front door. Use restraint in what you do and say.... You might attract attention you aren't really interested in getting.

Other than that combination plea and warning, **WELCOME!** I sincerely hope you enjoy yourself at this year's DisClave. I know I will. Please feel free to join in and help run the convention, and remember—the Mall and all of its attraction aren't that far away. We have a great set of guests, a fine Dealers' Room, and a great Art Show. The program is normal DisClave (not near as intense as many of the other regional conventions), and the parties. Well, you know if you have been here before. We aren't changing that. Including the ConSuite, which some have told me in the past that it was the best party of all.

Enjoy, and come on back next year.



Bob MacIntosh

Editor's Note:

As Bob's friend and an amateur photographer, I felt that I needed to place an embarrassing photograph of Bob on this page.

At first, I thought about using the sheep picture from last year's Lemming Tour of Great Britain but then I remembered that it had been me in that particular photo.

Then I thought about using the photograph of Bob committing an unnatural act with an ice cream maker at a WSFA Fourth of July picnic but why defame an innocent ice cream maker?

So I guess I'll just stick with a picture of Bob taken at Disclave '94, which shows him in his usual habitat, hanging around money.

HOW TO DISCLAVE: MISSION STATEMENT

Disclave is a four day weekend gathering for people who enjoy Science Fiction and Fantasy literature. Most of the programming is aimed at readers, writers, and others involved in the genre. It's a good place to hang out, meet old friends for the first time, hear authors read from their own work, learn something about the field, schmooze, dance, find some hard to locate books, etc. Relax, have a good time, be friendly, maybe even pitch in and help make it a better con.

Disclave is a function of the Washington Science Fiction Association (WSFA). We're throwing a party for our friends, which we hope, includes you.

DISCLAVE 96 COMMITTEE

Chair	<i>Robert MacIntosh</i>	Logistics	<i>Chris Holte</i>
Vice-Chair	<i>Michael Nelson</i>	Program Book & Pocket Program	<i>Michael Nelson</i>
Treasurer	<i>Peggy Rae Pavlat</i>	Art Show	<i>Judith Kindell</i>
Program Assistant	<i>Joe Mayhew</i>	Staff	<i>Bonnie Atwood</i>
Program Ops	<i>Samuel Lubell</i>		<i>Ted Atwood</i>
GoH Liaison	<i>Lance Oszko</i>		<i>Christine Chase</i>
Staff	<i>Denise Vincent</i>		<i>Joni Dashoff</i>
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	<i>Evans Phillips</i>		<i>Lynn Perkins</i>
	<i>Ronald Taylor</i>		<i>Donna Marie Ryan</i>
Fanzine Lounge	<i>Nikki Lynch</i>		<i>Andrea Senchey</i>
Staff	<i>Richard Lynch</i>		<i>Victoria Smith</i>
	<i>Kip Williams</i>		<i>Joan Wendland</i>
	<i>Cathy Doyle</i>		<i>Beth Zipser</i>
	<i>Sheryl Birkhead</i>		<i>Covert Beach</i>
Registration	<i>FL Ettlin</i>	Print Shop	<i>B. Shirley Avery</i>
Staff	<i>Deb Smith</i>	Sales	<i>Martin Deutsch</i>
Hotel Liaison	<i>Kitty Jensen</i>		<i>Mike Zipser</i>
DisCave	<i>David Grimm</i>	Auctioneers	<i>Sam Pierce</i>
Henchman	<i>Dan Burgess</i>		<i>Covert Beach</i>
Henchwomen	<i>Erica Ginter</i>	Parties	<i>Kitty Jensen</i>
DisCave Artist	<i>Christina Fatula</i>	Dances/LARP	<i>Jenn Cyber</i>
Bheermeister	<i>Dick Roepke</i>		<i>Charles Krieger</i>
Dealers' Room	<i>Scott & Jane Dennis</i>		<i>David Krieger</i>
Nice Night Ops	<i>Elspeth Burgess</i>		<i>Patrick Krieger</i>
Gophers	<i>Larry Schroeder</i>		<i>Steve Ledebur</i>
Information	<i>Dan Hoey</i>		<i>Wendy McCombie</i>
Staff	<i>Chris Callahan</i>		<i>Lisa Taylor</i>
	<i>Mike Taylor</i>		<i>Tim Taylor</i>
Restaurant Guide	<i>John Pomeranz</i>		<i>Ed Walker</i>

WEAPONS POLICY

WEAPONS: No weapons of any kind are permitted in the public areas at Disclave. Violators will have a choice of having the offending weapon confiscated for the duration of the convention, or surrendering their membership.

WHIPS: Whips, no matter how lovingly applied, are still weapons.

BOOM BOXES: Boom boxes may not be weapons, but their operation in public areas is banned.

DRINKING AGE

The legal drinking age in Washington, D.C. is twenty-one. Please be prepared to show photo identification when requested.

SMOKING POLICY

Smoking in the public and program areas of the convention is discouraged. Smoking is allowed in the Columbia Foyer area of the DisCave.

LATE NIGHT POLICY

Please help us break the Disclave Hotel Jinx. Each year, for the past five years, Disclave has had to move to a new hotel. This is the first year of a new two-year contract with the Hyatt Regency.

Be gentle, be smart. Don't freak the mundanes (some of them may be disgruntled postal workers).

Parties should start to close down at 2 a.m., and be quiet by 3 a.m. See the pocket program for scheduled late night events.

MAJOR DISCLAVE 96 EVENTS

- Mass Signing:** On Friday night, gather in the DisCave for an autographing party with the Disclave program participants.
- Friday Night Concert:** The *Don't Quit Your Day Job Players* featuring Keith R.A. DeCandido, Peter Heck, David Honigsberg, and friends.
- Rave Rant 'n' Rage:** *Dancing Ferret Productions* present **Rave Rant 'n' Rage**, a one night VAMPIRE THE MASQUERADE Live Action Roleplaying Game (LARP). The Plot: When clan Bruja gathers to settle its differences and vent its frustrations, the line between passion and violence grows thin. Registration is \$9.00.
- Saturday Night Dance:** DJ's Diva and Red Steve host **Dark Desires**, a danse macabre celebrating the shadowy depths of the human spirit. Starting at 9 p.m., prepare to surrender your soul to the power of your most sinister passions... your darkest desires....
- Sunday Night Dance:** *Cartoon Wars™* is a theme party where each person comes as their favorite cartoon character. While a dance occurs, toons join in a madcap scavenger hunt for pieces to the ultimate cartoon weapon. When all items have been found, the partiers will be supplied with safe foam rubber boffers with which they may wage war. Come in character, come in costume. Choose from over 200 cartoon characters or create your own. *Cartoon Wars™* is presented by *Walker Visions* with music and insanity provided by Whitey and the Visigoth.

ART SHOW HOURS

Friday	6:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.
Saturday	10:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m.
Sunday	10:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.
Auction	Sunday at 2:00 p.m.
Sunday Sales	2:30 p.m. to 4:30 p.m.

DISCAVE (CON SUITE)

The DisCave, located in the Regency and Columbia Foyers, is the social center of our convention. Our host, *David Grimm*, and his crew has worked hard to prepare the kind of con suite hospitality that has made Disclave famous.

Friday	4 p.m. to 2 a.m.
Saturday	10 a.m. to 2 a.m.
Sunday	10 a.m. to 2 a.m.
Monday	10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Local microbrewery beers will be served from 8 p.m. until 1:30 a.m. each evening. Photo IDs are required. We reserve the right to refuse service to **anyone** for **any** reason. Volunteers will be graciously welcomed.

DEALER ROOM HOURS

Friday	4:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.
Saturday	10:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.
Sunday	10:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.
Monday	11:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.

FANZINE LOUNGE

Dick and Nikki Lynch are running our fanzine lounge this year. Check the pocket program for information on their hours of operation and scheduled events.

WHATSIITS (KAFFEKLATCHES)

Sit and converse with Disclave program participants in the cozy DisCave. Check our pocket program for times and participants.

VOLUNTEERS

Disclave needs people to help during the convention. We will also need people to help pack up on Sunday afternoon and Monday, May 27th. Please see *Larry Schroeder* at the Gophers Table to volunteer.

FOLLOW THE STARS TO NOREASCON 4 BOSTON IN 2001

Watch
this
space!

MCFI, purveyors of fine
WorldCons for 21 years,
proudly bids for the
first WorldCon of
the 21st Century.
New century—
same old quality.

My toes twinkle
just thinking
about it.

My eyes
twinkle.

My whole body
twinkles.

We're
serious.

You're Polaris.
We're Sirius. I'm
Sirius A.

I'm Sirius B.

I'm the
Sirius I. Or am
I Sirius II?

Earthlings,
come home!

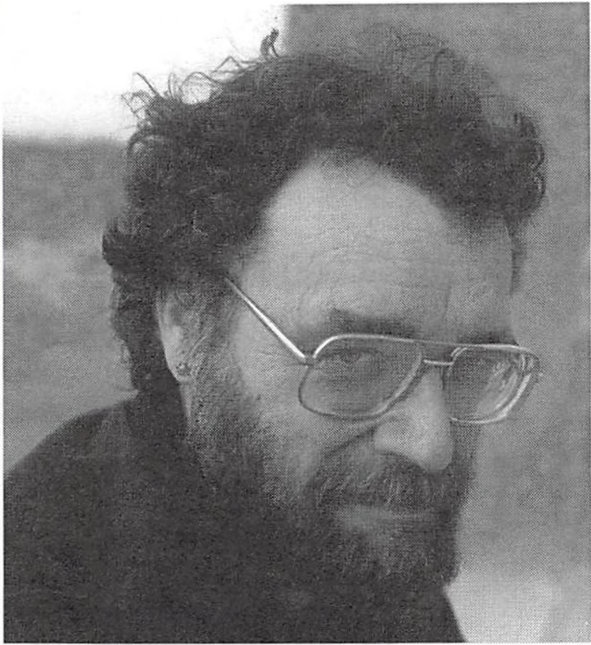
We give it four stars.

That's astrally
selfless of you.

Presupporting
memberships are
available for \$8 U.S.
& include a cloisonne
pin. Write us at:

Boston in 2001
P.O. Box 1010
Framingham, MA
01701-0205

Earthlings,
write home!



MICHAEL SWANWICK

by Kim Stanley Robinson

Michael Swanwick is a great writer. I first became aware of this while riding around the USA on Greyhound buses in the summer of 1981, when I picked up the special sf issue of *Tri-quarterly* and read with delight Michael's story "Ginungagap," which took an old sf idea and broke it down into its primary bits and beamed it across the universal mind and reconstituted it as something transformed. Since then I have read almost everything he has published. My special favorites include *Stations of the Tide*, one of the best sf novels ever, and "Griffin's Egg," one of the best sf novellas ever. I envy people who still get to read these for the first time, because they're what reading fiction is all about.

I know Michael mostly as a pen pal. We still carry on our correspondence by ordinary mail, which must make us members of a vanishing breed, but there are qualities to real letters

that e-mail does not have, and we both seem to like those qualities. It's a fun correspondence.

The roving village that is the society of science fiction has brought us together a few times, and we have had lots of fun talking, cruising bookstores, and walking Philadelphia. I hope for more of these encounters, but I'm a Californian, and Michael is a Philadelphian, and he's a hard man to get west of the Mississippi. So we'll have to keep taking what the roving village gives us in the way of meetings, and keep those letters going.

It was only recently, at one of these rare meetings, that I learned what a tremendous theatrical gift Michael has. Listen now: those of you who go to science fiction conventions are by and large *attending the wrong events*. Panels are well attended; author readings are not. Now of course I can see the attraction of panels—not only the spontaneity and the free play of ideas, but also the regular living proof that published writers are as silly and incoherent as anyone else, if not more so. And there is always the fascinating question of whether the pomposity meter will break this time or not. Yes, panels certainly provide these pleasures with soothing regularity; but meanwhile, at the same time, in other rooms, writers are reading their work aloud, usually to groups of three, or five, or ten.

Sometimes that's all they deserve. Some of us are hampered by voices and/or accents that render our attempts to read our work inadequate, or even ludicrous. But other writers are very, very good at it. At Armadillocon, for instance, they always give Howard Waldrop the final event on Sunday, and the entire convention population fills a hall, and he reads a story to them. They have formed this tradition because it forces Howard to finish stories, and because he is a wonderful reader, and deserves the audience and gives them a great time. But the truth is there are a lot of writers in this world who deserve that kind of audience just as much, who are still reading to groups of three or five or ten.

I go to lots of readings, and the rewards have been great. The act itself, of closing one's eyes and hearing a story told aloud, hearkens back to our deepest roots, to our childhood and beyond; this was what literature was for thousands of years, and our brain structures remember that. It's time travel, really, and so it's ironic that there are people marching around the hotel halls in furs or spacesuits obviously yearning for just this kind of experience, when all they have to do is sit down at a reading and close their eyes and they will be twenty thousand years away, with the group around the fire, and the bard going out of body to speak the story. I've felt this happen: I've seen John Kessel read "The Pure Product," I've seen Terry Bisson read "Bears Discover Fire," I have seen

Howard Waldrop read his Damon Runyon story, and Paul Park his Game of Life story. In another genre, I've seen great readings by the poets Gary Snyder, Robert Duncan, and W.S. Merwin. And last January I saw Michael Swanwick give a performance the equal of any of the above, reading a story that begins with the narrator running upside down along a telephone wire.

So listen, Disclave participants: go to Michael's reading and see what I mean. Close your eyes and let the shaman speak. This is the greatest courtesy you can do to your guest of honor, and it's also the greatest gift you can give yourself at this con. Ask him to read that story beginning with the run along the telephone wire, or trust him to pick another story just as good, and sit back and enjoy; and years later, when all your Disclaves have blurred together, that's the experience from this weekend that you'll remember and treasure.

Trust me. Michael Swanwick is a great reader.

MICHAEL SWANWICK BIO

Michael Swanwick's third novel, *Stations of the Tide*, was honored with the Nebula Award for best novel of 1991 by the Science Fiction and Fantasy Writers of America. It was also a nominee for the Hugo Award, as was his novella, "Griffin's Egg," and was nominated for the Arthur C. Clarke Award in Britain. His first two published sto-

ries, "The Feast of Saint Janis" and "Ginungagap," were both Nebula Award finalists for 1980. "Mummer Kiss" was a Nebula Award finalist for 1981 and was voted best science fiction novellette of the year in the *Science Fiction Chronicle* poll. "The Man Who Met Picasso" was a finalist for the World Fantasy Award in 1982.

Two stories that appeared in 1984 were Nebula Award finalists—"Trojan Horse," and "Marrow Death," which was an excerpt from his first novel. Two stories in 1985 were Nebula Award finalists: "The Gods of Mars," co-written with Gardner Dozois and Jack Dann, and "Dogfight," co-written with William Gibson (also nominated for a Hugo Award). "A Midwinter's Tale" won the *Isaac Asimov's Science Fiction Magazine* 1988 Reader's Award. "The Edge of the World," was awarded the Theodore Sturgeon Memorial Award in 1989 for best short story by the Center for the Study of Science Fiction at the University of Kansas. It was also nominated for the Hugo Award and the World Fantasy Award. "The Changeling's Tale" was nominated for the World Fantasy Award in 1995.

His stories have appeared in *Omni*, *Penthouse*, *Amazing*, *Isaac Asimov's Science Fiction Magazine*, *High Times*, *New Dimensions*, *Universe*, *Full Spectrum*, *Triquarterly* and elsewhere. Many have been reprinted in *Best of the Year* anthologies, and translated for Japanese, Dutch, Spanish, German, and French publications.

In The Drift, his first novel, was published by Ace Books in 1985. *Vacuum Flowers* was serialized in *Isaac Asimov's Science Fiction Magazine*, and published by Arbor House in 1987. It was a main selection of the Science Fiction Book Club. The paperback appeared from Ace Books in 1988. Translations have appeared in France, the Netherlands, Germany and Italy. *Stations of the Tide* was also serialized in *Isaac Asimov's Science Fiction Magazine*, and was published by William Morrow and Company in 1991. A novella, "Griffin's Egg," was published in hardcover format in England by Legend and by St. Martin's Press. A short story collection, *Gravity's Angels*, appeared in 1991 from Arkham House. *The Iron Dragon's Daughter*, his first novel-length fantasy, was published in 1992 by AvoNova.

He lives in Philadelphia with his wife, Marianne Porter, and their son, Sean. His next novel, *Jack Faust*, is an information-age reinterpretation of the medieval legend and is forthcoming from Avon in 1997.

We are very happy to introduce "An Abecedarly of the Imagination," a new story by Michael Swanwick, which starts on page 10.

A bibliography of his work is located on page 28.

2001: The Millennium Philcon®



The way these creatures eat, they must be fans! When you bring the worldcon to Philadelphia you will find an unprecedented variety and availability of food.

Directly under the Pennsylvania Convention Center is the Reading Terminal Market. This 100-year-old farmers market has a wealth of Amish vendors with goods ranging from farm produce to free-range geese. The market also includes ethnic eateries and groceries from Middle-Eastern to Cajun and is a great place to buy regular groceries, party food and snacks.

Right out the door of the Convention Center is Chinatown. Sixteen square blocks of restaurants serving authentic Chinese food from dim sum to Peking duck.

Nearby is every kind of ethnic and American restaurant, up to five-star quality, all within easy walking distance. And don't forget Philly cheesesteaks, hoagies and soft pretzels!

Our 2001 Worldcon will be in Philadelphia's new Pennsylvania Convention Center in the heart of the center city historic district and its abundant activities. The headquarters hotel is the Marriott, directly connected to the convention center.

Memberships

• Pre-Supporting	\$10.00
• <u>Pre-Opposing</u>	<u>+17.76</u>
• Presupposer	\$27.76
• Philkinder (child)	\$5.00
• Millennium Phil-Kin	\$40.00
• Delegate	\$76.00
• Phil-Anthropist	\$150.00

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Artwork by Carl Lundgren

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An Abecedary of the Imagination

by Michael Swanwick

A IS FOR ATLANTIS.

Contrary to what you may have heard, Atlantis never sank. The famous volcanic event, in fact, caused the lands to rise slightly. The waters receded from its shores and the harbors silted up. Reeds grew among the rotted hulls of fishing vessels, and then bayberry bushes, and then trees—willows, beeches, and finally oaks.

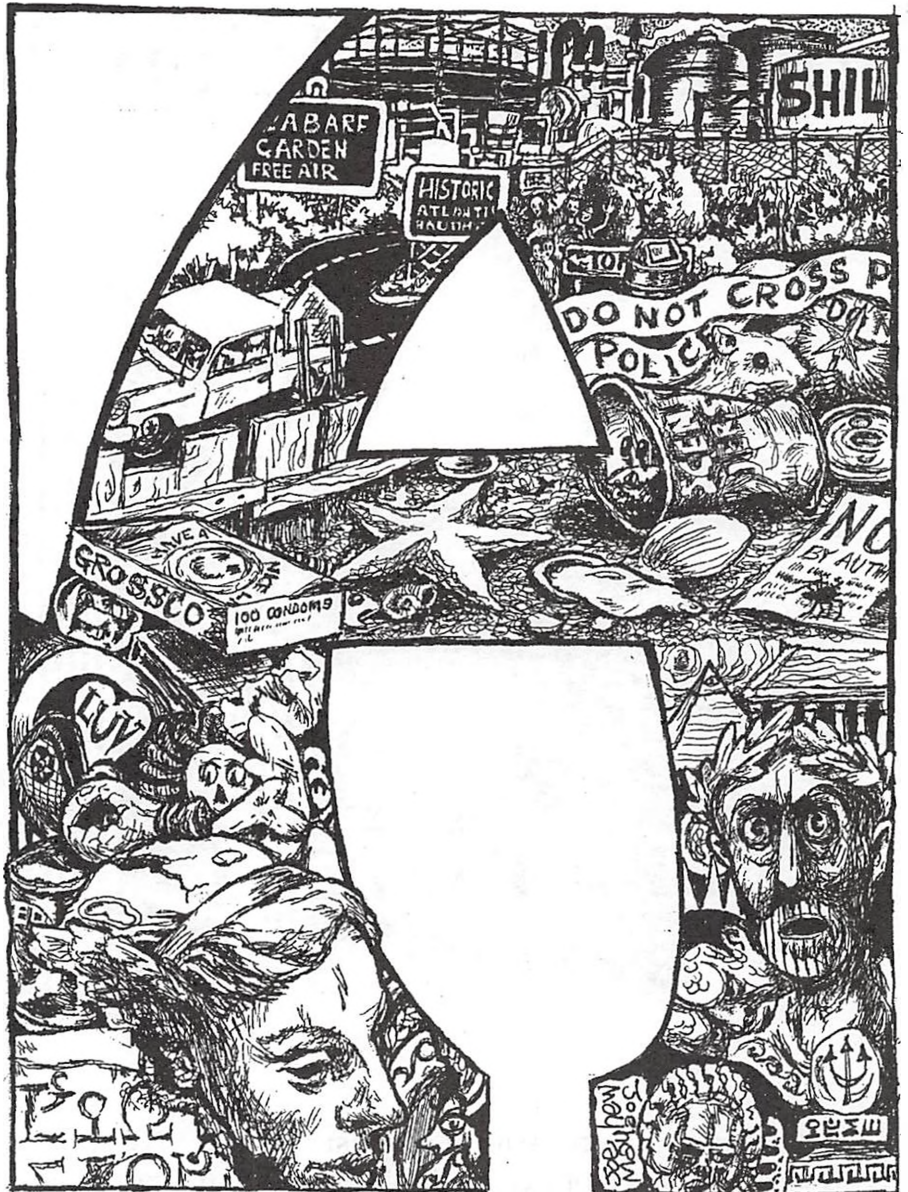
Things were just let go. The capital was never rebuilt after the earthquake. Little by little the pyramids and temples were mined for building stone. There was talk of extending the roads to the receding ocean, constructing new docks, investing in the infrastructure. But nothing ever came of it.

Currents shifted. One day the shore touched the continent at low tide. Atlantis became a peninsula, and then a subcontinent, and finally a part of the coast like any other. I drove through Atlantis on my way to a business meeting in New York the other day. For lunch I stopped off at a Bob's Big Boy. I had a roast beef sandwich, coffee, and fries. The smell from the refineries was pretty bad, but I bought a souvenir magnet to put on the refrigerator anyway.

B IS FOR BOOKS.

You've noticed the blank pages at the ends of books, and probably surmised it has something to do with the way the signatures are bound. Nice guess. But no, actually they're a message.

The message is phrased in Morse code. An odd number of pages at the end of a book is a dot. An even number is a dash. No blank pages means end of letter. You decode the message by arraying your books in strict Dewey decimal order and reading from left to right. Five blank pages followed by two blank pages followed by none is an A. And so on.



The message is simple. You needn't assemble every book there is to read it. Redundancy is built into the system. The message employs fractal scaling: Within the entire message there are twenty identical copies of the message each taking 5% of the message length. Each of the smaller messages contains eighteen copies of itself, and so on down the line. The minimum number of books required to read the message clear is seven factorial over pi—roughly 1,600 well chosen volumes.

If you have 1,600 books and still experience semiotic confusion, you've evidently introduced distortion by choosing an unrepresentative sampling of the written culture. Fortunately, there is a simple fix for this problem:

You need to buy more books.

C IS FOR CRITICS.

I know of a planet very much like this one, save only that the leeches have a weak form of sentience. The hunger for identity is to them as basic as the hunger for blood. When an individual picks up a leech it sucks not only nourishment from his blood, but also the illusion of life, for it tastes the chemical by-products of emotion, and so simple is its organization that it interprets these emotions as its own.

On this planet, the leeches are not only tolerated but actually considered fondly and in some cases even cherished. This is for an interesting reason: the leeches are poisoned by excessive concentrations of the very chemicals they crave, and thus cannot tolerate the blood of madmen, desolates or the intemperate. Hence, a fine healthy leech is a sign of mental stability and strength of character. It is for this reason that an upstanding citizen will often be seen with several leeches sprouting from his arms, and one a-waggle from each cheek. "Your leeches speak well of you," they say in exalted circles.

But there is an unpleasant aspect to this social symbiosis. The leeches must be removed before they have attained a certain growth of size somewhere between that of a thumb and a breakfast sausage. If the visit to the surgeon is put off too long, the connective opening into the bloodstream is permanent and the leech cannot be removed without killing its host.

When this happens, the leech proceeds to grow very rapidly, both in size and organization. As it comes to identify more and more with its host, its form alters, sprouting tiny arms, legs and other features. It trends toward the homuncular. And it is at this point that the host begins to lose weight. As the small manikin grows, so its partner dwindles. They will be seen in the sordid parts of town, walking unsteadily together, each leaning to one side to accommodate their mutual cheek or chest. In character the secondaries are dull and avaricious, for the creature's primitive appetite remains unchanged.

Eventually the host will shrivel all but entirely and its remains will be swallowed up by the now manlike leech. The brain in particular, since the leech has no independent means of thought, is carefully preserved deep within the fatty layers, somewhere near the stomach.

The successful parasite may well prosper, and will be seen about town with a garish number of leeches dangling from its extremities. It will be most careful to have these leeches pruned regularly. If not for its loud, bullying ways, it could now be mistaken for human.

D IS FOR DOE.

A young doe, her haunch still spotted, put on a mask in the form of a woman's face and a high-necked suit with a very short skirt, and went into town looking for love.

In a roadhouse she met Heinrich, a businessman traveling through from Hamburg. He was married, but she didn't know that and if she had, wouldn't have cared. She was a simple animal of the forest.

Their affair proceeded with fairy-tale inevitability. The doe became pregnant and when she told him, Heinrich demanded she have an abortion. There were tears. He struck her.

The blow knocked the mask from her face.

For the first time, Heinrich realized the enormity of what he'd done. Bestiality! He was ruined. His home, his business, everything he had ever worked for—gone!

He fled into the night.

Soon after, two police came into the bar. They took the doe out into the woods. They returned with blood on their hands. Had anyone asked, they would have explained that they owed the businessman for several favors. But really they did it for the sake of racial purity.

E IS FOR ETHER.

If you slide a page from a comic book into a shallow pan of ether, it does not as you would expect fade. Instead the colors intensify, growing more garish, and the outlines loosen, floated marginally above the page by the ether, and are exaggerated. A small nose disappears completely. A large nose swells. Loose clothing engulfs the character in tentlike folds. Muscles bulge.

I spent many a happy afternoon in my youth free-basing Wonder Woman.



F IS FOR FAIRIES.

We found the owl tree not half a mile from the Andorra Nature Center. It was a climax pine, with long white streaks down the bole of the tree, and similar splashes on the forest floor below. That's how you spot owls—by their droppings.

Cindy and I got down on our knees and scoured the area, looking for pellets.

Owls swallow their prey whole, bones, fur, claws and all. Then, after they've digested a number of (usually) voles or mice or (less often) whatever, they cough up a little bundle of everything their systems can't use. It sounds nasty, but isn't. The pellet is dry and compact, like felt. It's smaller than a butterfly cocoon, and light.

"I found four," Cindy said. "How about you?"

"Two."

I put the pellets in a pie tin we'd brought along for this purpose, and splashed in a little water from my canteen. Then, when they'd softened a bit, we got out our dental picks and, still kneeling, began to gently pick apart the fur and separate out the bones. The bones would tell us what the owl had been eating lately. By analyzing enough pellets from enough different owls, it was possible to get a fairly accurate picture of the strengths of various food populations in the wild.

I whistled.

"What is it?"

"Look."

There, as we'd hoped, was a tiny human skull, small and perfect, and no bigger than a vole's. I poked around a bit more and found the remains of a crossbow, a little glint of metal that was probably a hunting knife, and a nasty little barbed spear that looked to have been hammered from a number ten fish-hook.

"No surprises here," I commented, putting down my magnifying glass.

"Here's one." There was a funny edge to Cindy's voice. She held up something in a pair of tweezers. I took off my glasses and guided her hand close so I could get a good squint.

"Christ."

"It's what I think it is, isn't it?"

"Yeah," I said. "I'm afraid so."

It was a rifle.

In the sudden silence, I heard a crackling noise in the brush. All around us, the soft sound, like crickets, of safeties being flicked off.

G IS FOR GONDWANALAND.

Because I was a science fiction writer and thus partook of the enormous prestige America afforded both the arts and the sciences, I was the first civilian allowed back in time to the Ordovician. That was some four hundred million years ago, when there were two supercontinents, Gondwanaland in the south and Laurasia in the north. I chose Gondwanaland. There was a huge celebration. President Barbara Jordan herself was on hand to see me off.

The first thing I saw was a butterfly. And of course I stomped it. Hard.

Yes, it was stupid. But there shouldn't have been butterflies that long ago. Butterflies are an adaptation to flowering plants, right? Flowers wouldn't evolve for another three hundred fifty million years. I thought I'd inadvertently brought it back from the present. I killed it to prevent ecological contamination.

I screwed up big-time.

The present I returned to was a nightmare degradation of the one I had left. The art was dreary. The schools were a shambles, and there wasn't a single colony city on Mars. Tolerance and understanding had been replaced by bigotry and spite. There was talk of building a fence between the United States and Mexico. Somebody named Newt Gingrich was speaker of the House.

But there's still hope. I still have my time-machine. Maybe the evil I caused can be undone.

I'm going back to Gondwanaland next week. This time I'm going to step on a slug.

H IS FOR HEAVEN.

Heaven, it turns out, is in Manhattan. Everything is clean there; everyone is happy; the weather is perfect. I paid a visit the other day because a choir of angels was scheduled to fly down into Central Park to give a free concert and I was curious to hear their chops.

Afterwards, I strolled about the streets. People cheered as a van drove by, its driver flinging diamond bracelets. over a loudspeaker he urged everyone to come to Niemann-Marcus for free shopping.

Everywhere things were being given away with a maximum of flare and theater. At the free beer booth, a comic was pretending to be drunk. The onlookers laughed because, of course, in Heaven you're only as tipsy as you want to be, and you're never out of control. A lot of people were naked because—well, why not? It was comfortable, it was sexy, it was less trouble than getting dressed.

Before I left, I spoke to one of the angels who explained to me that the universe is run with a maximum of efficiency. Heaven is actually coincident with Earth. But its inhabitants are blissfully unaware of us, as we are of the denizens of Hell.

I IS FOR INVADERS.

We'd had our cat for—what?—eight, maybe nine years before we discovered he was actually a robot.

"Well, what did you expect?" he asked. "Idiot! Anybody with half a brain would've unmasked me in a week."

I wonderingly peeled back the loose flap of fur to get a better look at his innards: Pinprick lights like distant stars sunk in clear plastic, a manic cluster of clockwork gears, bright looping pipes of liquid helium. "It's beautiful!" I gasped. Then, "How could I have known?"

"By my fucking preternatural grace is how, you moron!" he snapped. "Animals can't move the way I do. Only multigyroscoped precision machinery can."

He was pretty surly, but I couldn't blame him. The truck had messed him up good. All four legs broken. Spine a mess. He could barely move.

"But all cats are grace—"

"So you figured that part out too, eh, Sherlock? Jeeze Louise! Two billion years of evolution to produce a dominant race of retards!" He caught hold of himself. "Well, that's neither here nor there. The first thing to do is to empty out your bank account—this is going to take a lot of money. Then I'll give you a number to call. They'll have to bring in a technician from Groombridge 34."

I was on the phone already. "I don't know why I'm doing this," I said. The cat smiled nastily, "I do."

J IS FOR JACK.

He's best known as the Ripper, but he's had plenty of other incarnations. As Andrew Jackson, as Joseph Stalin, as Pol Pot. The list goes on.

The thing about Jack is that he always has the best of reasons for his actions. Slum reform. Manifest destiny. The advancement of collectivization. Freedom from international economic tyranny. Whatever he does, it's always for your own good.

You don't want to meet him. He can be charming when he wants to be. But even then, there's a glint of sardonic amusement in his eye. He simply cannot hide his smug conviction that you—whoever you might be—are his moral inferior.

K IS FOR KOBOLD.

The reason kobolds are hard to find is that people look for them in all the wrong places: in caves and hollows, down wells and under bridges, in wild, romantic glens.

Forget it. Kobolds are pragmatists. They've adapted. They live in cities now and sell real estate and aluminum frame windows from small shabby offices with one naked bulb for light and a calendar with a naked fat lady posed coyly on the wall.

Kobolds are everywhere. They're easy to spot once you know the signs. They're always homely, usually a little short, often overweight. They have jowls and extra chins, beard stubble, purple rings beneath their eyes. They smoke fat cigars, even in elevators. They are always bald. In fact, every bald person is a kobold. There are no exceptions.

Kobolds lead unhappy lives. It's simply their nature. They have no ethnic pride at all, and likely as not by adulthood have entirely forgotten that they are kobolds.

So if your life is difficult. If you're short or heavy or homely or jowly. Above all, if you're bald: Well, *there's your problem.*

L IS FOR LUCKY STRIKES.

The hardest currency there is in the Land of the Dead is a pack of Lucky Strikes. Everybody there smokes—why not?—and the climate is wrong for to-

bacco. So a fistful of any brand of cigarettes will buy you a meal, a hotel room, or an evening's pleasant company. But status matters. Dorals are not as valued as Salems, nor Salems as valued as Marlboros. And nothing is worth more than Lucky Strikes.

Jenny Rosten knew this and so, when she killed herself, she arranged to take three cartons along with her.

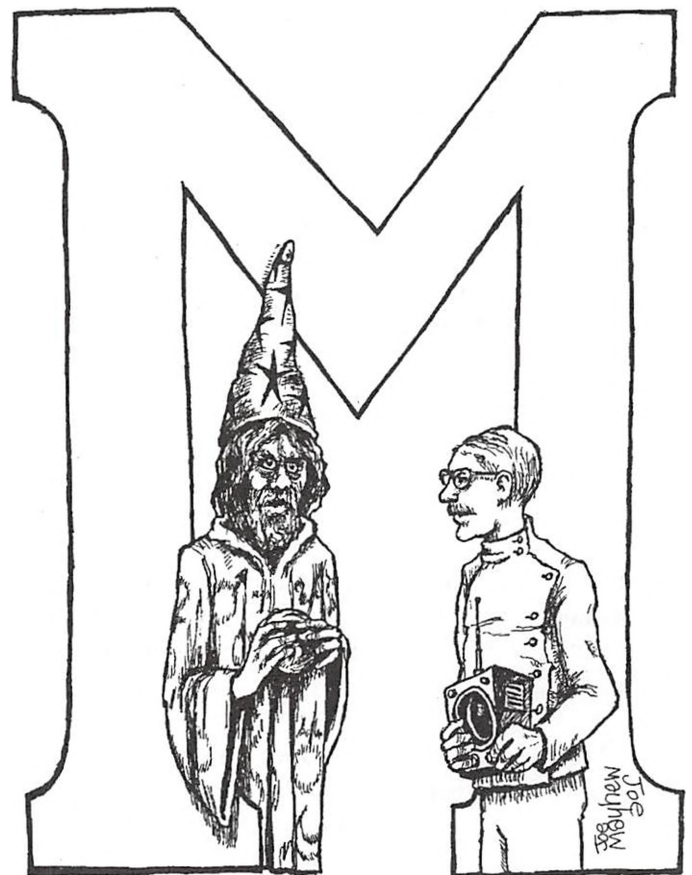
She arrived at night. The first pack went to bribe a taxi driver to take her to residence of Lucifer himself. He lived in an exact replica of Trump Towers, which he had re-named after himself. The next nineteen bought her way up to his penthouse office.

Lucifer smiled when she entered, accepted the final carton, graciously proffered a chair, and said, "I know who your principals are. Make your pitch."

"It's think-big time. I've got the Eurodollars, and you've got the locale—let's synergies Let's mega. I'm not going to beat around the bush. It's here, it's now, it's hotter than hot! In a word—"

"Yes?"

"DisneyHell!"



M IS FOR MAGICK.

Magick spelled with a 'K' is the invention of Aleister Crowley who wanted to distinguish the rigorously logical exploration of occult power from the airy-fairy stuff, from superstition and wishful thinking. Magick-with-a-K is the real thing—quantifiable, reproducible, and patentable.

Industrial magick came into its own in the year 2024, when Dr. Steven Matuchek discovered how to de-gauss iron. A society that had almost run out of natural resources accepted its benefits gladly. Alchemy is taught in every school now, and the Tantra practiced in every bedroom. So what if critics find it unromantic, soulless, alienating? our prosperity is based on it.

The New Agers these days gather in candle-lit rooms to mingle chemicals in test-tubes and practice science.

N IS FOR NIXON.

He came to see me last night. He looked jowlier than ever, and that dark aura of need that hovered about him in life was only intensified by death.

"I've come back to clear my name," he said.

"Why me? I'm nobody. I never even met you. I voted for McGovern."

"I'm visiting everybody. One by one."

What choice did I have? I listened for over an hour to his sweaty, rambling, impassioned, and illogical arguments. Finally, I said, "Look. It's hopeless, okay? You did what you did, and people's opinions are what they are. You can't change anything. Not now. You just have to learn to accept."

"I'm sorry to hear you say that," he said. "But somebody has to take responsibility. Somebody has to see that justice is done."

It was only then, as he raised his hand, that I realized he was holding a hammer.

O IS FOR OREO.

His wife assured him it had only been a dream, but Tony Bierce knew better. Held been lost among the parallel realities for almost a week. It was a miracle held found his way back. "What's your middle

name?" he asked. "How many children do we have? Who was my second-grade teacher?"

"Louise. One. I don't know. Tony, you're scaring me."

"You're scared? I thought I'd go mad." He flipped through the family photo album. "You can't stay in the wrong reality for more than twenty-four hours. If you try it—" He shuddered. "Who's this behind your mother?"

"You remember my cousin Jeff."

"Oh yeah." Distractedly, he went through the dresser drawers and the bookshelves, and started to inventory the linen closet. Then he stopped. "I dropped a cuff link yesterday. It fell behind the radiator, and I was too tired to look for it. If it's there..." He knelt, fished around in the gloom, stood. There was a gleam of gold in his hand, a tear in one eye.

"Yes!" he cried. "Oh yes, yes. I'm home." He unwrapped what looked like a cross between a circuit board and a snake from around his waist, and smashed it underfoot. "I won't need this anymore. I'm never leaving my home reality again." There was fear in his wife's eyes, but he laughed and hugged her and kissed her until she felt better.

All that afternoon he wandered about the house, cherishing all the old familiar things. Stroking the top of the recliner as if it were a cat, holding the flatware up to the light to admire its shape and sheen.

Even the cookie jar was the same, garishly painted ceramic in the form of Garfield the Cat. Impulsively, he reached in and pulled out a cookie, an Oreo with cream filling. It was bright orange.

P IS FOR PICASSO.

There were flowers in Picasso's garden such as grew nowhere else in Europe: hallucinatory blossoms from African marshes that no white man had ever seen, thorny meat-eaters from Ophir and the sunken continent of Mu, strangler vines from the steamy jungles of Venus that stalked, paralyzed, and digested their prey in a slow and hypnotic manner that can only be described as erotic.

After the first month, Picasso's landlady forbade him to ever again put out saucers of milk for the stray cats.

Q IS FOR QUEEN.

We disguised it to look like an automobile. A half billion dollars of technology—three billion if you count the R&D—crammed into the body of a white Ford Taurus station wagon. The wagon looked worn but not battered, a year or two past its prime but not quite ready to be traded in yet.

There were two door dings in the left side and one on the right. They cost a hundred thousand each. Peanuts, really. A bargain when you consider the counterweighting required for them to be time-neutral across eight dimensions in runs that might stretch a million years in either direction.

We chose the Taurus because it has good storage capacity and because the back seat folds down in a 60/40 configuration, so you can seat three, two, or one in the back, depending on the size and nature of the load.

This trip, we were not anticipating any special problems. Our load consisted of a dozen chestnut saplings and a young woman, Elizabeth of the House of Tudor, heir to the throne of England.

It was going to play havoc with the time-lines, but we didn't have any choice. Japan was winning battle after battle; our sponsor was facing total destruction. IBM needed leadership.

R IS FOR ROCK.

You ask me why I'm such a good storyteller. Well, I ought to be. I learned how from the Storyteller Rock himself.

The Storyteller Rock is as old as the hills, and he started telling stories before there were any ears to hear them with. He invented storytelling. He told the first story there ever was. Over the years, he made up all the stories there ever will or ever will be. He told them all. He told them over and over to himself until they reached their final forms.

Every story you've ever heard, he told it first. And he told it best.

I met the Storyteller Rock when I was a boy in Winooski, Vermont. There was a field out in the woods, and there he sat, just a little in from the edge, old and rounded and powdered white with lichens.

Down low to one side were three little holes, just big enough to stick your little finger into. If you brought him a cigarette, lit it and stuck it in the bottom-most hole, held smoke it down to ash and then held tell you a story.

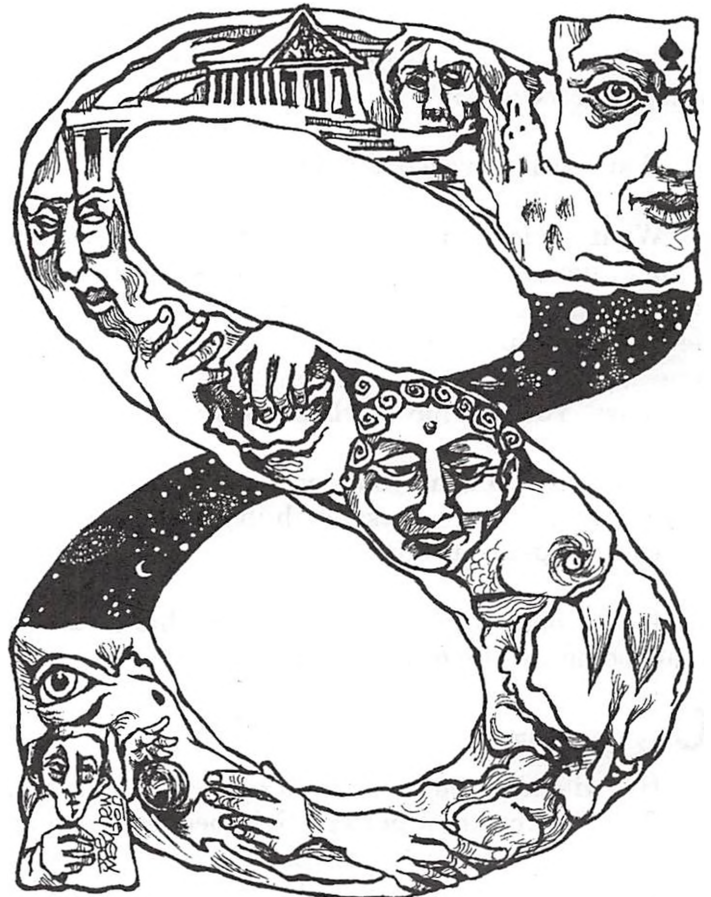
I stole a pack of my mother's Chesterfields from her purse and fed them to him one by one, a story a smoke. When it was gone, I waited my chance and stole another.

At first the Storyteller Rock found it hard to focus on me. He had the long view. He kept confusing me with the last kid to give him tobacco, and telling the stories in Iroquois. But as the years went by, we got to know each other better, and he taught me a lot. He was a good teacher, but tough. He didn't take any gruff.

I remember how he said, "Boy. You'll never be a first-rate storyteller until you learn to stop being so God-damned sincere."

Well... I listened to him.

And now I'm not.



S IS FOR STORY.

You already know this story. Yes, you do. It's happened to you a hundred, a thousand, countless times before. Dying at Thermopylae, it was a major part of your last coherent thoughts. Reborn in Languedoc, it was the basis of a long and (I thought then) unnecessarily erotic poem you took great pride in reciting at the courts of every French noble who'd let you in. During the Great Depression, you traded two of your three best fighting cocks for a minor detail that was all that stood between you and total comprehension. You've known it, heard it, lived it countless times before, and you've forgotten it every damn time. You'll forget it this time too. The instant you stop reading this, you'll forget it all except for this prologue.

I don't know why I keep telling you it. I don't know why I bother.

T IS FOR THEORY.

Theory is a small town in Illinois. It has a population of 19,974, is located on the Tennessee River, north of Birmingham, and was founded in 1820. Since the demise of steel its major industries are textiles, timber, fertilizer, and foodstuffs.

Someday I'm going to move to Theory. Everything works there.

U IS FOR UNICORN.

The free-range unicorn has a tough, dry meat, and therefore it's best braised. Begin by boning your haunch of unicorn. Then brown it in a quick oven. Cover the browned haunch with a thin layer of pork fat. Add garlic, rosemary, and roasted sweet peppers. Place it in a slow oven and roast, covered, for about four hours.

Feeds eight. Tastes best served with sliced elf.

V IS FOR VACANT.

Lord vacant stands in the Library of Extinctions. one long, slender hand rests languidly on a history of the Oligocene bound in mastodon hide. Beneath it is an Audubon elephant folio bound in the skins of the last fifty dodo birds ever.

His eyes are empty.

His librarians are mindless golems molded out of white clay. Whatever he asks for, they bring him. It might take them a while, but they are infinitely patient. They never grow tired.

Now Lord Vacant experiences a rare restlessness. His eyes move slowly from shelf to shelf. It is almost time for him to go to bed, and he wishes for something special to read, something involving. He snaps his fingers. A librarian appears before him.

"Bring me," says Lord Vacant, "a history of the human race."

W IS FOR WEREWOLF.

A werewolf almost ran over the old man. He was driving a black BMW and talking on his cellular phone, and it was a miracle he didn't sideswipe any cars. The BMW kept drifting over the yellow line, he was paying so little attention.

He was driving way under the speed limit.

The old man was just starting to cross the street when he saw the car, and stopped well short of mid-way to let it go by. But then something whoever it was on the phone said made the werewolf gesture wildly, sending the car straight at him.

"Hey!" the old man shouted, dancing backwards, almost falling over. Because nobody can ever think of the right obscenity at the time.

The werewolf put down the phone for a second and glanced over his shoulder. He turned on his victim a glare that was all malevolent triumph: Gotcha! it said.

It was in that instant that the old man decided that the werewolf and all his kind were going to die. He wasn't as young as he once was. He was supposed to be retired. The hell with that, he thought.

There was a public phone not far away. The old man put in a quarter. He punched a number he hadn't called for dog's years. "Tonto," he said, "get out the silver bullets."



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X IS FOR XEROX.

In upper Amazona, the headhunters refer to reproductive retinal burn as "the Green Blindness," and believe that the Xerox machine slowly leeches away men's souls. They cannot be induced to photocopy anything. Green-eyed Caucasians are feared, for it is held that these are drinkers of the mechanically-stolen souls.

My office manager taught me this story, just before he was captured by headhunters and downsized.

Y IS FOR YOUTH.

You can recognize them by their disdain. They despise the music that's playing on the jukebox. They hate the shows you watch, the books you read, the things you do for fun. They don't want to know your thoughts. They don't like your face. They don't like men at all.

They are arrogant beyond telling, these old, *old* women in their perfect young bodies that properly belong to someone else. Because their stolen flesh is sweet and succulent. Because they know exactly how much such flesh is worth. They've gone over the figures with their accountants.

Behind each of them, someone is withering with age or easing into senility in one of the very best of retirement homes. Bought off and warehoused, usually to pay off a family debt.

They come to the bars expecting to be courted and unwilling to flirt, refusing even to smile, and of course the young men come and the young men go. None of them stay very long. So they sit, these evil women, nursing their spritzers and growing grimmer with each passing hour.

Oh yes, they are easy to spot.

I don't come for them until half an hour before closing time. I wait until they're desperate and a little panicked, ready to accept any man who makes an offer, just so they won't have to go home alone.

They don't ask many questions that late at night.

I walked into the Milk Bar and there she was: Blonde hair, perfect complexion, perky breasts, and an expression that would curdle milk. I closed a hand about her shoulder in a way that made her shiver.

She looked up. She liked what she saw.

Usually, this is the point at which I say, *I like to think of myself as a lesbian in the body of a gay man, how about you?* Just to get the mind-games started, But not this time. Because this wasn't just any expensive face. This was the face of someone who had died of old age a good sixty years early, and for no better reason than wanting to leave a fortune to the woman she loved. It was Stephanie's face.

Get set for the ride of your life, I thought.

"Hello, beautiful," I said.

Z IS FOR ZYGOTE.

If you stand up top of a tall building and look down at the people below, they lose all individuality. They're just swarming little specks, less than insects, restlessly seeking . . . something.

Go down to the street and talk with them. You'll discover how empty they all are. Every one of them is eaten from within. Some chase after money, some after power, and others after sex. some few are pursuing God. They're all seekers.

It's all the same hunger, and none of them know what it is.

But life evolved with a purpose. A destiny that has nothing to with human hopes and aspirations. All our history, culture, and works, our lumber yards and auto shops, deconstructionism, Road Runner cartoons, The Red Badge of Courage, bingo nights, prize fights, the Cathedral of Notre Dame at Chartres—all these are incidental.

There's intelligent life within the atmosphere of Jupiter. We wouldn't be here if there weren't. Because it's our destiny someday to send an astronaut there—male or female, it doesn't matter—who will unite with one of their number. To become a zygote, the seed of a new and incomprehensibly superior form of life.

When that happens, our job will be done. Both Terran and Jovian life will wither away and die, and all our works with us. Nature is profligate. There's no use complaining. It's just the way things are.

It's a pity about Chartres, though.

MEETING HANNAH M.G. SHAPERO

BY KIT MASON

The first time I saw Hannah Shapero, I didn't really see her. I sort of saw a blur going past me dashing through the Art Exhibit to make sure all her paintings were arranged properly—"you mean they weren't crooked," says the voice at my shoulder. "What you have to say is that I'm really pretentious, and that I come from Boston."

No, no, she's not really pretentious. Honest. Even with the graduate degree in Ancient Greek and Latin from Harvard. Even when she can sight-translate almost anything in those languages without prior warning. Even though her father is a world-renowned composer and her mother is a modern artist.

Hannah planned to be an academic, "a boring professor," when she went to Boston '77 and the world of art won out over the world of The Classics. Ever since then she has been a full-time artist—and sold her first cover to DAW in 1980, "Sharra's Exile," a Darkover book by Marion Zimmer Bradley. She went on to do covers for three more of Marion's Darkover books, "Sword of Chaos," "Hawkmistress," and "Thendara House," then moved on to do more covers for Baen, Tor and Arbor House.

(For many years I thought the cover of "Hawkmistress" was a self-portrait, and wondered how Hannah managed to hold the bird with one hand and paint the picture with the other...)

In 1988 she moved from Cambridge, Massachusetts, to the Washington, D.C. area. She spent two years working for an architectural illustration firm doing pictures of houses for the real-estate market—starting with a blueprint and

ending with a picture of how the house will look when it's built, complete with landscaping.

Since that time, Hannah has broadened her art to include portraits, landscapes, astronomical art, computer humor, Internet-related sketches, botanical and floral art, and religious art of various kinds including futuristic icons.

She still does lots of science fiction and fantasy art.

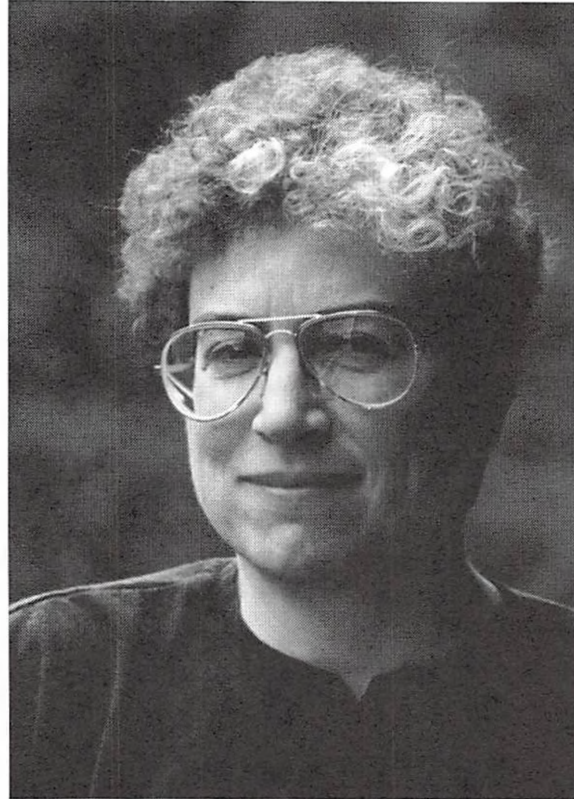
And what does Hannah do when she's not doing art?

Well, for one thing, she's one of the most dedicated gardeners I know (even when living in an apartment), who brings plants for my garden every year and makes sure my flowers are happy all summer long. ("Don't eat the Lobelia," she tells me, right after it's planted in my herb garden...) She is deeply interested in researching Zoroastrianism, the ancient religion of Iran, and is respected for her research by those who still practice that faith. She is an avid bird-watcher ("That was a gold-

finch. Per-CHICK-ory. I can identify any tweet from the East.")

She's an Internet fiend, an independent thinker, a member of the Order of St. Michael, a devout Christian who attends the Byzantine Catholic Melchite Church. And she likes to come over for dinner. Any dinner. And to sit around and talk about whatever comes up, and giggle, and gossip, and sketch whatever and whoever will hold still long enough.

She's not a bore. Hope you have as much fun meeting Hannah as I've had.





Vashti, Rejected Queen of Persia from the Collected Poems of Charles Butler, work in progress.



Deryni in Crypt, Deryni Archives fanzine.



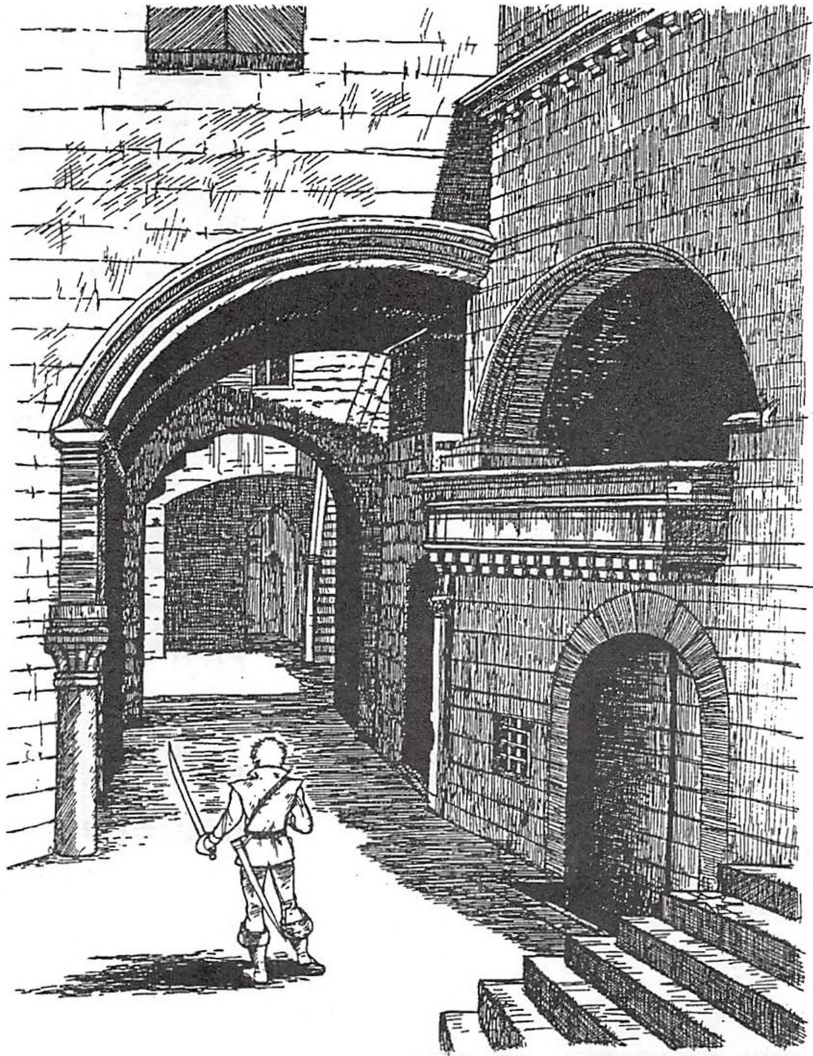
Utopian Scene, from the philosophical works of Maurice Daniel.



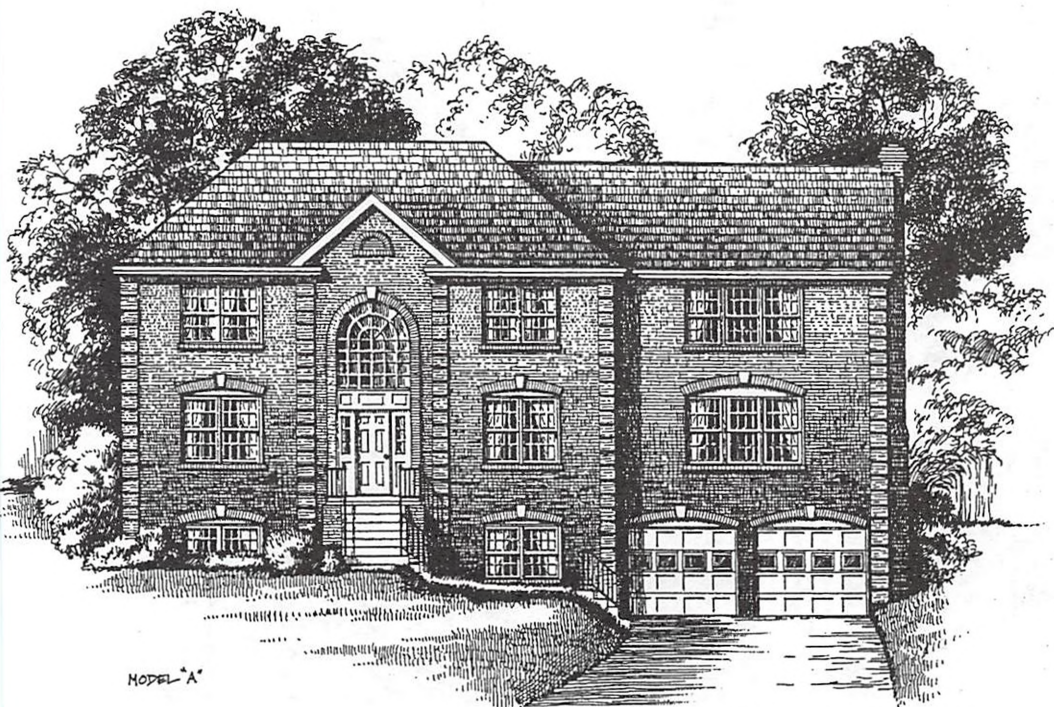
From the illustrated edition of *Boxmaster* by Jacqueline Lichtenberg.



Mad Alchemist's Chamber, Mayfair Games illustration.



Darkover Scene, 1988 DarkoverCon Program Book Cover.

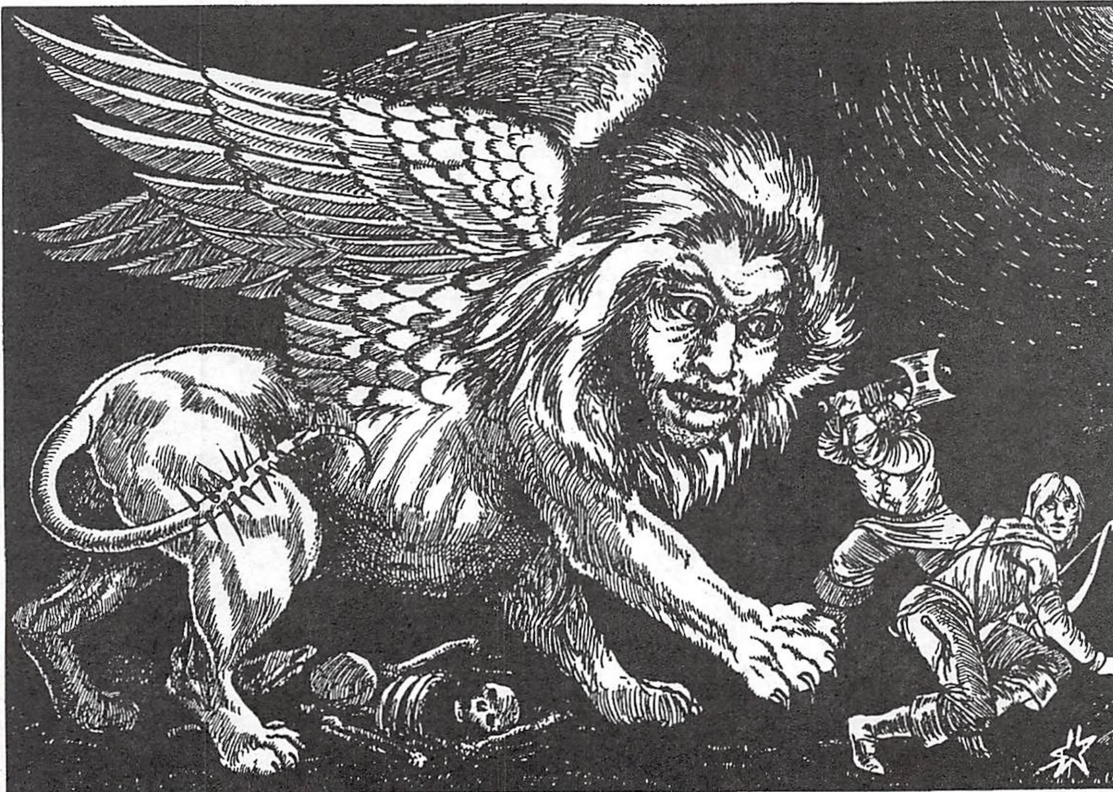


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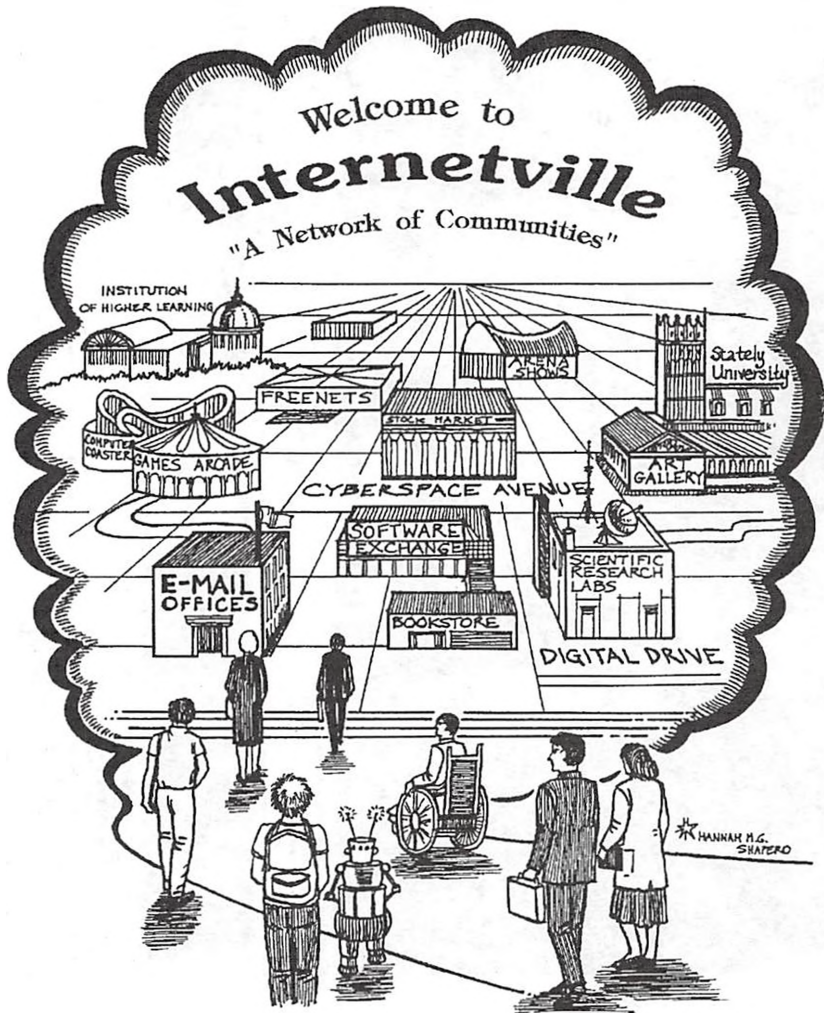
Architectural rendering.



Lythande, Marion Zimmer Bradley's *Fantasy Magazine*, Issue #14, Fall 1991.



Manticore for Mayfair Games illustration.



From the *Internet Guide for New Users* by Daniel Dern, 1993.



Portrait of Kathleen Supové – Avant-garde pianist.



Jewish Wizard, fanzine publication.

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Revised January 1996

THE DISCLAVE '95 CON SUITE

by Michael Nelson

[*Editor's Note: Well... I had just one last page to fill. I could have just left it blank and placed the word, "Autographs," on top. Or I could indulge myself and print an article I did for The WSFA Journal last year. Hmmmmm, tough call.*]

OK, I have a confession to make. The only reason why Bob MacIntosh and I ran the Disclave '95 Con Suite was because we knew the Great Wall would be back. Those of you who have attended Disclaves at the New Carrollton Pit know that the Great Wall was the pegboard structure dividing the DisCave from the Dealer's Room. When we saw the space allotted for this year's Con Suite, all we could think about was pegboard and power tools.

Of course, it's Bob who's really obsessed with power tools. He has gone as far as naming our two big electric screwdrivers "George" and "Gracie."

Have you read Dave Barry's new book about guys? He was writing about Bob and me. We started working with absolutely no written plans or drawings. And I'll tell you, no amount of hand waving or statements like, "We'll put a wall over there," could convey our grand but extremely nebulous scheme to any of our poor assistants. We sincerely thank Chris Holte, George Shaner, Keith Marshall, Dave Grimm, Ron Taylor, and everyone else who helped us build the Con Suite even though we wouldn't share the power tools or our plans. In spite of ourselves, the Con Suite looked good (the large string of balloons "borrowed" from the prom next door was a nice touch).

Fortunately our quartermaster, Erica Ginter, understands guys since she happens to be married to one. So she promptly ignored Bob's vague instructions about what food to buy and made up her own shopping list. Without Erica, the food at the Con Suite would have been guy food like beef jerky or pork rinds.

Feeding the masses went smoothly after our food prep people carefully explained to us that fruits and vegetables really did need to be washed and cut up before being served. I'm still not convinced that those brown ovally objects with the spiky leaves were pineapples. Pineapples come in cans and are yellow ring thingies like big squishy Lifesavers candy.

For some reason, all our major problems were with beverages. The faithful Disclave soda dispenser moistly stopped functioning late Friday night. Keith Marshall and Evan Phillips managed to revive it on Saturday afternoon but even they can't explain how.

All the *Pete's Wicked* beers came in half kegs with outmoded screw taps and couldn't be served until our Bheermeister, Dick Roepke, tracked down a hand tap. Even with the correct taps and lots of experimenting, we served more foam than beer.

The hotel was asked to get five half kegs of *Old Dominion* root beer. They got one, which ran out early on Saturday. But wait! They did give us one case each of *Hard Times Cafe* root beer and *Diet Coke* to make it all better.

We were told that the hotel would provide their own beer servers. That got screwed up and we ended up trying to find enough responsible adults on the committee to serve the beer. I was even allowed to serve beer until I started singing the theme from *The Brady Bunch*.

Having the smokers and gamers share the same space did not work well. We had more smokers than we had expected and in the evenings their air pollution invaded the whole Con Suite (plus no one was willing to enter their toxic space to clean up and the area got really gross).

Beside our problems with liquids—did I mention the water leak in the ceiling and the soggy ceiling tile that fell down on Monday?—I think things ran well. We had some fans who are not house-broken yet but most of our patrons were gentlefen. I particularly enjoyed the impromptu music provided by Peter Heck and Keith DeCandido on Saturday night. It was also nice seeing our guests of honor hang out there rather than some private room party.

With much help from our friends, we upheld Disclave's tradition of hospitality.



Disclave 1997

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ARTIST GUEST OF HONOR: Lissanne Lake

FAN GUEST OF HONOR: Peggy Rae Pavlat

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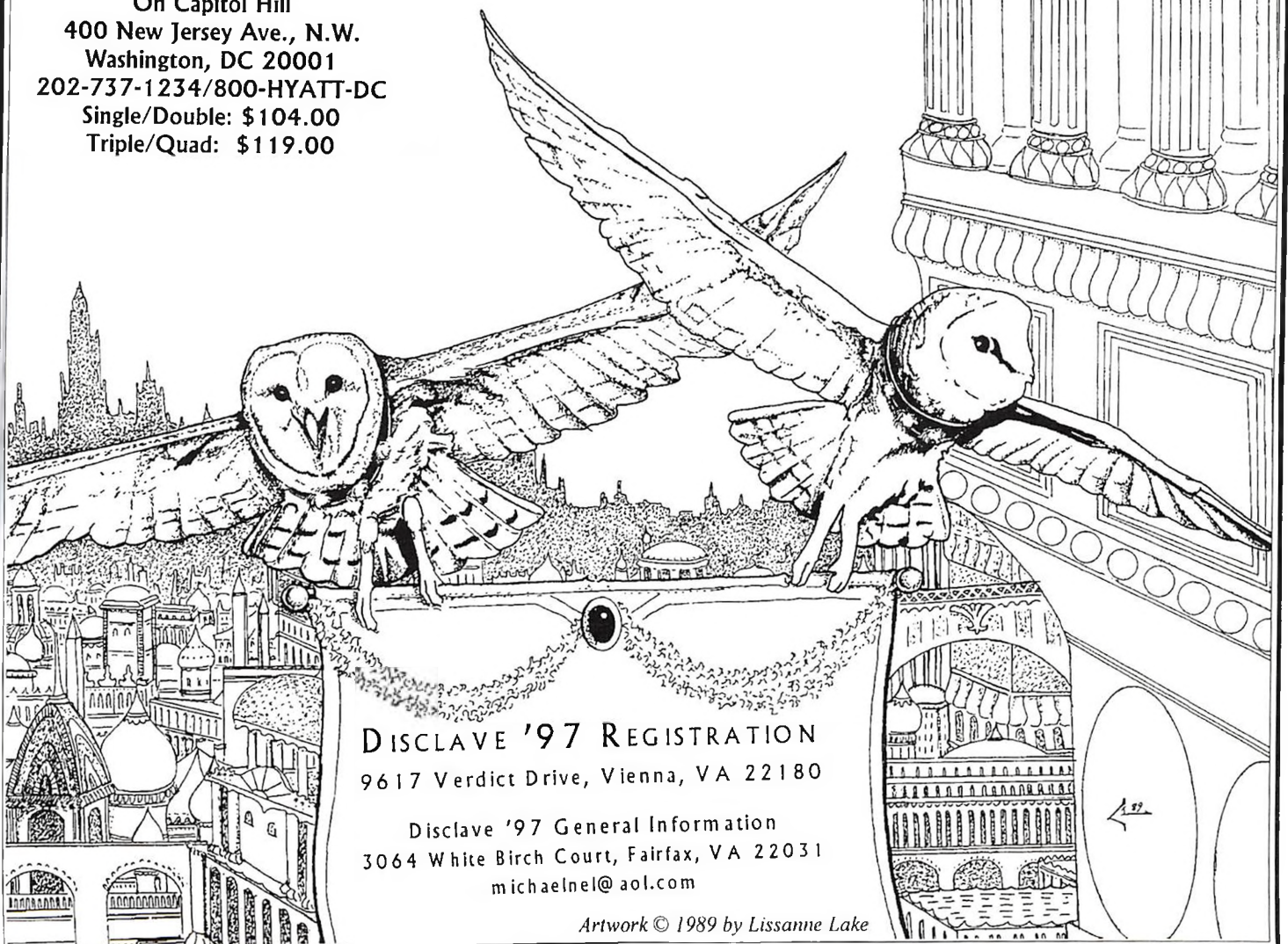
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