

"As a newszine, it is the Emperor's New Clothes," enthuses **File 770**, noticing this only 46 issues later than the rest of you... more transparency from DAVE LANGFORD, 94 LONDON ROAD, READING, BERKSHIRE, RG1 5AU, UK. Take heed: no further subscriptions will be accepted, har har, which isn't to say that **Ansible** will necessarily vanish after issue 50. Distribution will, however, be a hell of a lot more whimsical. US agents: Mary & Bill Burns, 23 Kensington Court, Hempstead, NY 11550. Oz agent: Irwin Hirsh, 2/416 Dandenong Rd, North Caulfield, Vic 3161. Language Lesson courtesy of Colin Fine. Art: Atom. Print run 600, but not for much longer. News swiped from all the usual uncredited sources: **SF Chronic**, **Shards of the Hague** and **Journal of the Daventry Institute of Caprine Studies**.

#### FAIRY GOLD DEPARTMENT

Somewhere in dusty cupboards, forgotten filing cabinets and the Great Upstairs Cardboard Box Mountain, I must have spare copies and carbons of everything I've ever published. This hoard probably doesn't represent vast wealth... but sometimes I wonder. Every few months I get a flyer about some US West Coast SF auction at which staggering prices will be raised by such memorabilia--plus, invariably, an edition of **Fahrenheit 451** with asbestos binding. There are either an awful lot of these, or one copy which keeps changing hands because people get cancer after incautiously breathing in while reading it. Similar delights ought to include the works of H.P. Lovecraft bound in gorgonzola, or John Norman bound in luxurious half-inch manila rope with many a piquant granny-knot.

And now, fresh from Los Angeles, here's the Barry R. Levin SF catalogue. Short rude story by Brian Aldiss ("Not for sale to minors."), dating all the way back to antiquarian 1986: \$600. Carbon and proofs of **Stand on Zanzibar**, \$2500. Unsigned Gollancz hardback of **Neuromancer**: \$150. 13 limericks by Damon Knight ("Two... [circa 1944] concern gentlemen named 'Tucker' and 'Bloch'... Not for sale to minors."): \$150. Ellison book in "antiqued Grimoire Box" with a lock to keep it under control: \$1200. All Keith Laumer's "Retief" manuscripts can be yours for little more than \$6000. The daftest item comprises four Silverberg "mock story openings", brief doodles written to test his word processor: to you, \$350.

Interestingly, most of these come with signed letters of provenance from the authors. One wonders whether said authors are deeply altruistic, and out of sheer love for Barry R. Levin provide the guarantees of authenticity (you know how many forged carbons and proofs of **Stand on Zanzibar** are going the rounds) which enable him to boost the price to sense-of-wonder levels. Or do the authors... get a cut? If the terms are good, dealers should note that I stand poised to write up to 800 fulsome letters of provenance, one for each copy of that rarity **War in 2080** still stockpiled here.

#### EASTERCON REPORT by Dav Garnett

[**Ansible**, notes Mr Garnett, is displaying a tendency to longer articles and older news. Thus he reports on his very first emergence from the closet: The BSFA Easter Convention held in Bristol on 24-26 March 1967.... DRL] Arrive at the Hawthorns Hotel just after six o'clock Friday, book in and go up to my room. What am I doing here? Don't know anyone. But can't hide forever. Go down and register. Pay another scrotum-tightening 10/- in addition to earlier 7/6 registration fee. For which get a name tag, programme booklet and two pens. Wander around, then back to room 261 to hide again. Finally, down to the con hall and bar. It's like a huge pub. Buy a drink and pretend to look for someone I know. Choose an empty table, also empty chair, and wait for programme to begin. Supposed to be eight o'clock, the Brian Aldiss show. Room begins to fill. Committee hope to break the 200 barrier over the weekend! People come and sit next to me: suddenly am no longer alone and begin talking.

Aldiss turns up late, hurrying in still wearing overcoat and claiming he's been waiting for us all in a hotel down the road. Introduces various authors and fans. Famous names suddenly become recognizable faces. Brunner and Bulmer, Disch and Merrill, Moorcock and Platt, Tubb and White. Aldiss runs a quiz, asking them to name a book or story which starts/ends with a certain line. They win paperbacks for being right. As



a consolation prize, they win paperbacks for being wrong.

After this, head to the bar. Suddenly find myself standing next to an author. Never met one before. Thomas M. Disch--the famous Thomas M. Disch. Got to say something. What? Enquire whether he is a fan of E.C. Tubb, as he knew the line Aldiss quoted him was from a Tubb story.

"No, Brian told me the answer first," he says.

More alcohol is consumed: the evening dissolves, blurs, fades. Wake up next a.m. in time to miss breakfast. First on today's programme is the professional panel: should have been titled the pessimism panel. After this, meet a guy called Duncan Lunan who will soon be joining the ranks of the pros--reveals how his first sf novel **No Ships From Earth** would have appeared in **Analog** if they weren't overstocked on novels.

Lunch, and two short films: the first, **Relativity**, almost makes lunch come up again. Then John Brunner's Guest of Honour speech. First he gives out the British Fantasy Award for Philip K. Dick's **Three Stigmata of Palmer Eldritch**. He isn't there, of course. Then a special award to Mike Moorcock, for being Mike Moorcock. He isn't there either.

Brunner starts off talking about his new novel **The Productions of Time** and how Signet made 55 editorial changes in the first chapter. Surely editors don't really do this?

A few drinks later, it's evening. During the Brian Aldiss show, Charles Platt told how he'd sold **Garbage World** to Berkeley (who also did Disch's first novel, **The Genocides**). Thinking of Brunner's speech, ask Platt whether he cares if the copy editor changes his book. He replies to the effect that they can do what they like. Confess I have writing ambitions and have had several **New Worlds** rejections. Maybe out of sympathy, he buys me a drink. At once Graham M. Hall and Christopher Priest join us. Two more famous **New Worlds** authors. I hope something will rub off.

Time to find a room party, they say. Rumour that there's one in 261. When we get there I realize it's my room. Doesn't seem to be a party, but Judith Merrill is having one. Go there instead. Moorcock is playing guitar and singing. Merrill locks the door "to keep the noise out", which at the time seems a perfectly valid reason. Whenever anyone else tries to get in, she tells them to go to room 261. Look around the room and remember my first thought on arriving: What am I doing here, I'm the only person I've never heard of. Sit on floor next to famous Tom Disch. He offers me a cigarette. Wonder if should take up smoking so can accept. Instead get him to autograph the packet: "Thomas M. Disch (The Famous)" it says.

Merrill complains that no one has asked her for her autograph, unlike at American cons. Ask Disch about this: he says he doesn't know, this is his first convention. Mine too. "I knew we must have something in common," he tells me. The drink flows like alcohol.

Somehow get back to room, because wake up there Sunday a.m. in time for breakfast. To save money, check out of hotel and take room in nearby bed and breakfast, which costs 12/6.

Afternoon brings the programme highlight: Moorcock's talk. Most important news is that **New Worlds** will continue, as of issue 173, in new large format. Disch's **Camp Concentration** will be serialized--"The best sf novel I have ever read," says Moorcock. He gives a marvellous performance during which he consumes most of a bottle of whisky, argues with the audience, announces that he's lost a page of his talk but no one has noticed. "I don't know what it means. You don't know what it means. But who the hell cares?"

After this, he runs an auction--selling off artwork and MSS, mostly from **New Worlds**. Without any other bids, someone offers and pays a pound for the script of Ballard's "Day of Forever"! Unable to raise 10/- for a rare 1940 American fanzine, Moorcock buys it himself. Then rips it up. Also sells autographed paperbacks--autographed by himself, eg. **Android Avenger** by "Ted G.White". In my inebriated enthusiasm, end up paying 10/6 for some old **Galaxy** artwork. Thought it was by Emsch (who under the stretched version of his name, Ed Emsch-willer, made **Relativity**), but turns out to be by Martinez. Whoever he was.

The hours pass; so do the drinks. St Fantony party held in evening, its centre a bowl of lethal punch. Place is packed: with a couple of others, make mistake of stepping into corridor for a breath of air. There the manager pounces. Accuses us of being non-residents. True, although I stake my claim to room 261. He demands to see my key, which naturally enough can't produce. He threatens to call police. Is he serious?

Before we can find out, committee arrives to pacify him. Manager probably annoyed at not being invited to party. Politely we take our leave. One a.m. as we wander through the Bristol rain, wondering where our B&B has moved to.

Monday morning, only a few shillings left from ten quid. As expensive weekend, but more than worth it, never enjoyed myself so much before. But it's 360 days to the Manchester con. How can I survive that long? What will I do till then?

Maybe should write a novel and send it to Berkley.... [DG]

#### C.O.A.

HENRY BALEN, Flat 4, 8 West Ave, Walthamstow, London :: IAN BAMBRO, Ivy Cottage, Ivy Road, Gosforth, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE3 1DB :: PAUL & JUDY BEGG, 37 Vesper Gate Drive, Kirkstall, Leeds 5 :: TERRY BROOME\* (back home before his hospital COA appeared): 230 Hykeham Rd, Lincoln, LN6 8AR :: JOHN BROSNAN\*, Flat 2 ("You twit. You left my flat number off--I've been getting letters addressed to Chris Evans's old flat...."), 6 Lower Road, Harrow, Middlesex, HA2 0DA :: AVEDON CAROL & ROB HANSEN, 144 Plashet Grove, East Ham, London E.6 :: DAVID ELWORTHY, 19 Cavendish Road, Cambridge, CB1 3AE :: STEVE & ANN GREEN, 33 Scott Rd, Olton, Solihull, W.Midlands, B92 7LQ :: MARK GREENER, 38 Dunmow Rd, Bishops Stortford, Herts :: ALUN HARRIES, 399 Kingston Road, Raynes Park, London, SW20 8JS :: LEIGH KENNEDY\*, 78 High St, Pewsey, Wilts, SN9 5AQ :: PAUL MASON, Top Flat, 19 Rusholme Rd, Putney, London, SW15 3JX :: CAROLINE NEEDHAM, 68a Buxton Road, Disley, nr Stockport, Cheshire SK1 2HE :: MOIRA SHEARMAN, 5 Tipperlinn Road, Edinburgh, EH10 5ET :: PETER SMITH\*, 16 Tresta Walk, Woking, Surrey, GU21 4XF :: HELEN STARKRY, 35 Binstead House, Vermont Road, London, SW18 2AD :: \*Late entry: sorry.

#### EGGCON

Gosh, it was a fecund event: Conception, held in Leeds on 13-15 Feb to celebrate fifty fertile years of seminal SF cons. Little tadpole-like things writhed all over the convention badges (to Hazel's vast embarrassment), and even escaped to work their evil way with the inexplicable bubbles of the Con- trivance '89 bid posters. The Queens Hotel threw itself into the yeasty spirit of the occasion, with a Saturday notice-board offering successive delights in various suites: ENGAGEMENT PARTY. WEDDING RECEPTION. CONCEPTION.

(By a grim coincidence this also stuck in my mind as the convention at which British fandom and fanzines discovered AIDS. I'd assumed all these keen-eyed peerers into the future would have been clued-up long ago from years of **New Scientist** articles, but the Government campaign seemed to make a sudden splash in fannish awareness. Just an impression....)

Programme? I'm sure there was one somewhere, consisting almost entirely of panels starring Dave Wood, whose vocal chords had been insured by the committee for a sum so minute as to stagger comprehension. The only panel I remember began with an awesomely well-prepared Mal Ashworth introducing the panellists and covering the subject at master's-thesis level for half an hour before allowing the others to say a couple of words; after which, for the remaining 20 minutes, he triumphantly summed up the panel's conclusions.

But Conception wasn't very programme-oriented. Instead there was a vast bar in which Rog Peyton furiously denied evil and unspecified rumours allegedly put about by the dirty tricks department of Another SF Distributor; George Airey and

Sid Barnes, palaeolithic fans who attended the 1937 Leeds con but lost touch in the War, studied the decadence to which 50 years had brought a once noble conception; Tom Shippey indignantly refused my demeaning offer of a free **Ansible**; Pam Wells stared shattered into space owing to the fact that all her fanzines in progress (including **Pulp**) had been nicked while still on disk, another first for Britain's electronic criminals; I looked for a toilet down a likely corridor and instead discovered to my terror a door marked STATE REGISTERED CHIROPODIST, which may have inspired Simon Ounsley when at a room party he fondled Lilian Edwards's sensuously green-stockinged foot and said with a misty light in his eyes, "Gosh, it's just like a green Durex."

The programme came into its own with two concluding items: Geoff Ryman's "Performance" performance, in which D.West's 36-page fanzine article became a word-perfect monologue delivered in a very strange accent (suggesting neither Geoff Ryman nor D.West), with intermittently type-cast supporting players--such as Linda Pickersgill heavily disguised in a borrowed nightie, as Linda Pickersgill. Vast applause and cries of "Author!" ensued, whereupon it was revealed that D. had hidden in a pub while Geoff performed. Greg Pickersgill got quite excited, jumping up and down with cries of "Every few years there's some event which really makes coming to all these bloody conventions worthwhile!" Judge for yourself when "Performance" opens for its revival season at Conspiracy '87.

At a final ceremony, the sense-shattering "Ova Awards" were presented: D. had returned in time for these and with some confidence brought a large carrier-bag marked (in very large letters) **AWARDS**. The Ovas all had eggy names whose significance appeared in the programme book but not the voting form, causing vast confusion as fans tried in the absence of the former to complete the latter. Simon Ounsley especially got votes in unlikely categories, such as "Best Eastercon":

BAD EGG AWARD (worst fannish thing): Simon Ounsley. GOOD EGG (best fannish thing): Linda James, chief Conception organizer. POACHED EGG (most imitated fan): D.West. PICKLED EGG (most drunk): D.West. HARD-BOILED EGG (longest-lasting): Ken Slater. FREE RANGE EGG (most health conscious): Graham James. EGG FLIP: (most sarcastic): Greg Pickersgill. GREEN EGG (best up-and-coming fan): Mike Christie. EGGHEAD (brightest): D. Langford, h'mm. EGG & CRESS (best fannish couple): Stan and Helen Eling. SCRAMBLED EGG (fan you most think should have a sex change): D.West. EASTER EGG (best Eastercon): Yorcon III, held in Leeds, what a coincidence. GOLDEN EGG (all-time best fanzine): **Hypfen**. ALL OVER THE CEILING AWARD (most over-the-top fan): Greg Pickersgill. FULL ENGLISH BREAKFAST (best all-round fan): Linda Pickersgill. SUNNY-SIDE UP (best American): Rochelle Dorey. PLATYPUS EGG (best Australian): Justin Ackroyd. GOLDEN LAY (fan you'd most like to wake up by): Sherry Francis. KEDGEREE (most indigestible fanzine): **Crystal Ship**, tch-tch. PHOENIX (best fan to rise from the ashes): Mal Ashworth, who I thought was busy sinking into them.

Fan Guest of Honour was also an elective post. The finger of democracy pointed at Viná Clarke: instead of the plastic egg received by other winners, he got a diabolically sticky confection (manufactured at seconds' notice by Hazel Ashworth) whose sugary malignity could tweak your fillings at 100 yards' range. He loved it. Other fans seemed happy too.

Hey, everyone, let's do it again in 2037?

#### MORE BORING OLD AWARDS

1986 BSFA Awards will probably have been dished out by the time many of you see this, ie. at Easter; the shortlist is or was: **NOVEL Schismatrix** (Sterling), **The Ragged Astronauts** (Shaw), **Queen of the States** (Saxton), **Count Zero** (Gollancz), **Blood Music** (Bear). **SHORT** "Jingling Geordie's Hole" (Watson), "And He Not Busy Being Born" (Stableford), "Kaeti and the Hangman" (Roberts), "The Winter Market" (Gibson). **MEDIA Reanimator, Overdrawn at the Memory Bank, Mr Pye, Dr Who: Trial of a Timelord, Aliens**. **ART** "Screaming of the Beetle" (SMS), "The Clocktower Girl" (Roberts), and three **Interzone** covers: 15 (Lyon), 16 (Burns), 17 (Avon).

**Clarke Novel Award**: Chris Priest relates harrowing tales of trying to fix John Clute's word processor while downstairs came the crash of breaking glass and furniture as the award committee made its amicable decision between **The Handmaid's Tale** (Atwood), **Eon** (Bear), **Stars in My Pocket Like** etc. (Delany), **Escape Plans** (Jones -- "I'm still waiting for a critic

to have the courage to admit it's unreadable," said a jaded editor and Worldcon chair, **The Memory of Whiteness** (Robinson), **The Ragged Astronauts** (Shaw) and **Green Eyes** (Shepherd).

**Hugos:** "God how I hate the Hugos," writes impartial ballot counter Paul Kincaid. "Day after day ploughing through mountains of nominations for books I wouldn't give house room. Oh and how the crap floats to the top. I can already predict the way the final ballot will go, in all but a couple of the categories, and the thought is not inspiring." The world postal service duly cocked up ballot distribution, and heroic Conspirators have mailed several thousand extra nomination forms to be returned by an extended 1 May deadline. Will the new flood of response cheer Mr Kincaid and thwart the subversive Wellington-meeting activities of David "Write down the name of my story here and give this form to Kincaid" Garnett?

**Nebula** novel finalists include unexpectedly good stuff: **Count Zero** (Gibson), **Free Live Free** (Wolfe), **The Handmaid's Tale** (Atwood), **The Journal of Nicholas the American** (Kennedy) **Speaker for the Dead** (Card), **This is the Way the World Ends** (Morrow). Nice to see fame coming to Leigh Kennedy, who for some reason does not appreciate the remark "I suppose you'll be withdrawing it, of course?"

**Sturgeon Award:** another memorial award, this time for short stories; to be selected by committee and presented at the U of Kansas. Masterminds: Jayne Sturgeon, James Gunn.

#### A, B, C and other LETTERS

**Avedon Carol:** "Here's a piece of strange news: Since Judy-Lynn died, Lester Del Rey apparently has a new plan, called 'integrity'. He had the first option on Marion Bradley's new book, bound to be a big seller since it's the next book in the series of which the first book was a best seller, but he didn't like it so he didn't buy it. Naturally, the other publishers went nuts bidding for it and so Bradley picked up some serious money on it, but hey, Lester isn't interested in any more books he doesn't like."

**Mike Cobby,** Britain's Mr Cyberpunk, was incensed by Chris Evans's A48 speech: "Having insidiously isolated 'cyberpunk' from generally accepted literary values, he then tries hacking it to pieces... What Sterling, Gibson, Shirley etc. have in common is not an ideology. Rather it is a philosophical hands-on approach to exploring/explaining effects of technology on society and vice-versa, and the consequences of both. With its notable lack of technophobia (which is a long way from technolatriy) cyberpunk is a radical mode of expression the potential of which we have not even begun to realize."

There's more, eg. a charge that by not forming a Group to be a rallying-point, Messrs Evans, Priest et al caused the lack of new UK authors (tell that to Gwyneth Jones or Iain Banks); but the quoted bit is the core of Mike's letter. It sounds exactly like one of John W. Campbell's early puffs for Dianetics. Some critical reasoning meatier than this or Rudy Rucker's weird ideas of objective literary standards based on information density ("I read a great phone directory last week") is needed to refute Chris's mild suggestion that like "New Wave", "cyberpunk" is just a label slapped on a lot of independent--though in many cases traffic--authors. Plug: try Mike's **Shark Tactics**, a polemical SF broadsheet resembling a UK **Cheap Truth** (18 Athole Gdns, Hillhead, Glasgow, G12 9BA).

#### CONDOM: some updates only

**Koancon '87** (31 July - 2 Aug, Coventry Polytechnic): fannish games con. £22 residential, £7 non-res to Top Flat, 19 Rusholme Rd, London, SW15 3JX. GoH Paul "Warhammer" Cockburn.

**Conspiracy '87** (45th Worldcon, 27 Aug - 2 Sept, Brighton) now costs £38/\$65 att, to 31 July (no postal bookings after then); day membership £10/\$15 per day in advance, £15+ at the door. Which famous skiffy editors complained bitterly about not receiving booking forms, only for a grovelling committee to find they hadn't bought memberships? I name no names, not even B\*va or W\*llheim.

**Eurocon '87** has been hopping about wildly, to the dismay of French fans: after skipping from July in Perpignan to May in Montpellier, it's bounced back to 29 Oct - 1 Nov, same town. Details: 112 de Toulouse, F-34000 Montpellier, France.

**Novacon 17** (30 Oct - 1 Nov, Royal Anguish Hotel, Brum): GoH Iain Banks, mundane alias of new space-opera author Iain M. Banks. £8 to end of Eastercon, £10 to 29 Oct, to 7 Grove Ave, Acocks Green, Birmingham, B27 7UY. This special offer of

a con is open to the first 350 applicants only.

**1989 Eastercon:** Contrivance (63 Duke Road, Chessington, Surrey) whose venue is the Hotel de France, Jersey, seems to be the only bid despite the fleeting appearance of flyers for Yorcon 4 at the Queens Hotel, Leeds.

#### OBIT.

**Terry Carr** died on 7 April, with shocking unexpectedness: his fiftieth birthday was only this February. (Diabetes seems to have been a major part of the problem.) I'd just been reading his fine fanwriting collection **Fandom Harvest...** but the pro scene too suddenly looks a lot bleaker without the man who wrote **Cirque** plus those few exemplary short stories, waded fearlessly through garbage to collect the most reliable of Year's Best SF anthologies, and redirected modern SF with his two series of Ace Specials. Even through long-range contact via occasional fanzines and rejection slips, Terry was unmistakably one of the Good Guys. There are so few.

Also: **Theodore Cogswell** of "Wall Around The World" fame (3 Feb, aged 68). **John D. MacDonald**, who died at 70 on 28 Dec, may not have written a lot of SF (though the Thorne Smithish novel **The Girl, The Gold Watch and Everything** is deservedly popular)... but hordes of fans confessed addiction to his colourful "Travis McGee" thrillers: top-class adventure fiction needs no genre labels. Steve Green writes "Just heard that **Patrick Troughton** died over the weekend (28/29 March) whilst at a Dr Who con in the States. It wasn't so much the loss to the thespian community which struck me, but the sudden mental image of all those Who fans standing around the corpse, wondering whether he'd manage to metamorphose into his new body in time for the GoH speech." Outraged letters may be directed to Steve's new address: see COA.

#### STAR TREK IV: The Film Review (Andrew Stephenson)

The fourth Trek film, ingeniously titled **Star Trek IV** for hyper-numerate US cine-goers but renamed **The Voyage Home** for us word-bound Limeys, opened in London on 10 April. So the average **Ansible** reader will already have decided the virtues of its 1 hour 59 minutes, if Uncle Dave keeps to his usual publishing schedule: I'll minimize the consumer advice in favour of philosophical generalities.

When reviewing **The Wrath of Khan** for A28, I speculated on Paramount's plans for the Trek universe. Though not too far off on the whole, I did go badly adrift in suggesting that **TWOK** would be "the last of the old-style stories" and that cast changes were imminent. Ignoring me entirely, the old-style storyline forged ahead in **The Search for Spock** and now continues where that left off--even to the extent of a "story so far" sequence. Moreover, the main characters persist, long after some ought to have hung up their uniforms, while minor characters once suspected of being groomed for prominence play little real part.

Interestingly, the gradual dilution of the format, painfully evident in later TV episodes (eg. Spock's greater emotionalism), has been corrected quite savagely here and there. Have Paramount decided to revert to the older format? If so, how will they reconcile the style of later films with the new TV series, of which one hears grim tales, such as that it will hearken back to the very earliest concept of **ST** as **Wagon Train** in space? Gossip suggests a fifth film coming, with perhaps more to follow. The USS **Enterprise** is with us again, Kirk's in his commander's chair, the Klingons are seething and all's right with the world.

The implications for screened SF could be good or bad, depending on what Paramount's moguls decide to do with their product. If they choose quality storytelling, one hopes the consequent success will encourage other producers to revive TV SF. If they go for the soft option of the lowest common denominator, it won't be long before yet another production company has dismissed screened SF as unprofitable. Frankly, I'm not hopeful, recalling the past witless behaviour of so many media decision makers.

What of this particular story? Fresh from rescuing the renewed Spock from the Genesis planet, Kirk and friends head for Earth in their captured Klingon ship to face a court martial. Happily--and no reason other than plot convenience is ever really offered--an alien probe of immense power (a common hazard in the **ST** universe) has chosen this moment to arrive in Earth orbit and stir up the atmosphere in a manner

liable to cause serious unhappiness at Lloyd's. Before long it transpires that it wants a chat with Earth's hump-backed whales and is unaware of these side-effects produced by its means of communication....

The snag is, the last hump-backed whale was exterminated by humans some considerable time ago, so it seems the visitor will continue its fruitless attempts at gossip, wiping out Earth's human life in turn. Well, do you need me to tell you that Kirk & Co are equal to the job? Heck, no. They pile in with a will, travel back in time to San Francisco of the late 20th century, and manage to work something out.

Most of this is great fun and consistent with the tone of the TV series, even down to the embarrassing moral lectures. If you can cope with lapses into bathos and a few weirdly obtrusive cultural references, there's much to enjoy: Spock masquerading as an ageing hippie; Scottie getting to grips with a manually driven computer; McCoy driven to distraction by the medical barbarities of our time; Chekov innocently asking a suspicious traffic cop for directions to the nearest nuclear warship, his "Russian" accent thick enough to spread on bread; and so on. The fans will love it.

A strong comedy element pervades TVH; the scripting holds several delights. Nimoy's direction is businesslike, extracting competent performances from a good cast, though a slight dullness of visual imagination is evident. Certain scenes and characters are included just for series continuity. And the old crew continues to age, some more gracefully than others, while the producers show few signs of recruiting a new shift to take over the command deck.... Not a bad film. I may even go to see it again, paying honest coin this time. [AMS]

#### INFINITELY IMPROBABLE

**Dept. of I Never Thought They Really Said It:** "It [Aldiss's **Enemies of the System**] contrives to be rich, allusive, full of real people, and unfaillingly interesting. It is not, then, real SF." (Anthony Burgess, **Homage to QWERT YUIOP**)

**Fan Funds:** Jeanne Gomoll, to whom congratulations, won TAFF after savage hand-to-hand struggle by administrators G. Pickersgill (UK) and P&T Nielsen Hayden (US). The first count went Gomoll 132, Glicksohn 77, Lichtman 46, Bowers 31, Brown 28 and Hold Over Funds 3. After the weird intricacies of the modified Australian ballot, this settled down to Gomoll 202, Glicksohn 112, No Further Preference 5. Jeanne thus attends Conspiracy as revered TAFF delegate, but (every silver lining has its cloud) also takes over the US administration for an exciting two years of fund-raising and letters from Puerto Rico. Her address: Box 1443, Madison, WI 53701-1443, USA. The Nielsen Haydens leave us with this awesome question: "What cosmically-attuned mental processes enabled dozens of fans to take scissors in hand and detach the bottom third of the TAFF ballot before sending it to us, carefully following the dotted line just above the words **Send the entire ballot—do not detach?**" Meanwhile, **GUFF:** Irwin and Wendy Hirsh are trying to make new contacts with UK and (especially) Continental fans

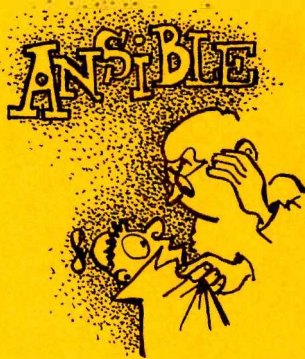
for their coming visit here. See masthead for address.

**Group Gropes:** (1) **Kimota**, a newsletter, nervously prints nothing about who edits it, where he lives, or which local group is involved. Try 1 Northgate, Goosnargh, nr. Preston. (2) Waltham Forest & District fan meetings: consult Henry Balen, 01 509 2331 or as COA. (3) Staffen, St Albans group, meets at Shires Pub, St Pancreas Station, 2nd Monday each month (8pm or so).

**Serious & Constructive....** **Samuel Delany** says **The Splendour And Misery of Bodies, of Cities** (sequel to **Stars in My Pocket Like Bodily Fluids**) is "in the publication process", ie. he's delivered it, a couple of years overdue. But Avedon Carol warns: "The two biggest booksellers in the US (60% of the market, together) are not carrying any new books by Delany. Why? He's writing **gay content** now." I understand one of those chains is also refusing any work from Tanith Lee and Barbara Hambly." Same alleged reason, but in Hambly you have to search bloody hard.... **David Pringle** is now SF consultant to Simon & Schuster UK, whose next 100 SF novel choices are thus assured.... **Fantasy Review** tempts potential customers (me) with glowing promises of its wonderfulness and offers of a no-strings-attached free copy which (I am assured) will so blow my little scientific mind as to make me a devoted subscriber. "Goshwow," I wrote, "rush me my free ticket to lifelong addiction at once!" Quick as a flash they responded with... an invoice for \$27.95 worth of subscription. **Jonathan Wylie**, the author of yet another "compelling fantasy trilogy" from Corgi, turns out to be a husband-and-wife team of professional SF/fantasy editors at (guess where?) Corgi.... The most interesting aspect of **Clive Barker's** £500,000 deal (in which Collins poached him from Sphere) was listening to Malcolm Edwards morbidly calculating the likelihood of such an advance being recouped, his probability estimate being a breakthrough in the mathematics of the infinitesimal....

**Vile Misrepresentation!** A coveringly anonymous source near the One Tun bar demands eye-witness correction of the shock horror item reported last issue: "It wasn't so much the arm round the shoulder as his tongue down his boyfriend's throat that clinched it. I mean, bloody hell, they were French kissing at the bar for half a subjective hour...." Updates on the Wellington move: Hitcher fans will be following when the date outstrips their pre-advertised Tun meetings, but erstwhile tutelary spirit Frank Arnold is staying put (with a select few pals), being annoyed that the decision to move was unilaterally taken by everyone else in his absence (he'd gone home). Mould-breaking Bernie Peek has started a new visitors' book for the Welly. Advice for the easily confused: when trying to find the Wellington on the first Thursday evening of each month, do not head north, south, east, or west from the main British Rail concourse at Waterloo. The true path leads downward, into a hole in the middle of the station....

**"Why Is Ansible 49 So Thin?"** Hsps the puling reader. My energies were drained by preparing a collection of Langford fanwriting for the Worldcon, running to 38,000 words... argh!



REMEMBER  
to use the  
POST CODE



OK to issue 51

Dave Piper  
7 Cranley Avenue  
Ruislip  
Middlesex  
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**HAZEL'S LANGUAGE LESSONS:** Klamath (for the Masquerade)  
sawyasga, puts a long object in front of one's genitals  
...a common response to  
**ANSIBLE 49, from 94 London Road, Reading, UK, RG1 5AD**