

# ANVIL



greg a. West  
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AUGUST, 1987

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CHARLOTTE'S WEB

Buck Coulson said in his recent COMIC BUYER'S GUIDE review that ANVIL takes a "light-hearted" approach to our various subjects. Well, I can't argue with that, as that is what we aim to do. However, this editorial attitude can, occasionally, get me in hot water, or at least in an embarrassing position. To wit:

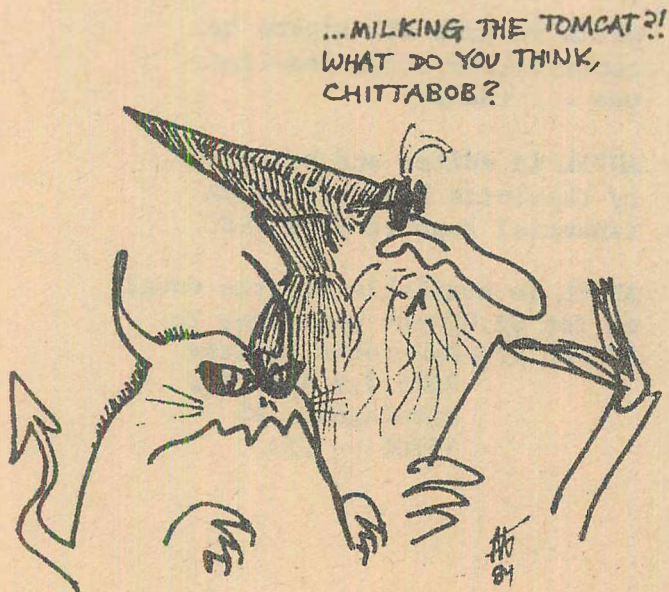
Last time I published a "rare telephone interview" with Bob Shaw and in it took a light-hearted approach to the problems he had had lately. Ever the gentleman, Bob send an article of his that was published in a national newspaper about same, leaving no doubt that it was no laughing matter. He graciously gave me permission to reprint "bits of it" if I wished.

To recap: I reported that Bob said he had not been able to write for six months due to a reaction to a certain drug he was taking--an appetite suppressant, to help him stay on his diet. The reply was some wisecrack about that being a new way to excuse writer's block. The article he sent, which is too lengthy to print in full here, tells of all the symptoms he had, without realizing they were symptoms and without realizing the relationship of the symptoms and the drug. They included extreme mood swings coupled with that anethema of writers, the complete inability to have a creative thought. It's a wonder he was able to finally reason it out, but he did and went straight to the pharmacist and asked what the side effects of that particular drug were. I'll let Bob finish telling the story:

"...(the pharmacist) produced a heavy book, located the right place and handed it to me. It was an eerie experience reading that passage--almost as if its author had been lurking around my house and making notes. It was all there, Every symptom I had listed, plus one I had not cottoned on to--powerful enhancement of alcohol... Now I had an explanation for all the mornings on which I had lurched about the house, mind too clouded for disciplined thought, moods swinging from rage to crushing depression. I don't think I could ever actually contemplate suicide, but I had begun -- in those bleak hours -- to see certain advantages in the state of being dead. (Bob describes a tapering-off process and withdrawal symptoms, then..)

One morning some days later I woke up to find that I felt lucid, energetic, keen to go to the typewriter and get on with my work. I was wonderfully competent again, easily able to write the daily three pages. The nightmare had ended."

So you see, I fell into the trap of always expecting this most amusing and entertaining man to be amusing and entertaining, and completely shut out the possibility that he, too, can have problems that cause anxiety and worry. I'm sorry, and I'll try to listen more closely from now on.





## ZINE REVIEWS? YOU WANT ZINE REVIEWS?

Sorry, I just can't handle zine reviews now. However, I would like to say something about a couple of zines in particular. First, in the August issue of THE NASFA SHUTTLE was a note from editor P.L. Caruthers-Montgomery. It said: "I regret to inform you that, after producing 22 consecutive issues of THE NASFA SHUTTLE, I feel compelled to resign as editor." This is sad. P.L. has done a wonderful job with The Shuttle, making it a clubzine to be emulated. While never neglecting the service features -- the club calendar, meeting minutes, local events, etc. -- it also incorporated zine reviews, an editorial, locs, worldcon news, DSC updates and more, and she published monthly! Now, about the only reason one "feels compelled to resign" is that other people (in the club) are not happy with the product and/or they start messing with the editor. As I say, this is sad, as P.L. was doing a fine job and I doubt her successor will find her editorship an easy act to follow. Unless, of course, the club decides to back-track and publish only service features, in which case no one outside the club will find anything of interest in The Shuttle anymore.

On the other hand -- maybe this is a blessing in disguise. P.L. is president of the Southern Fandom Confederation now, and if anyone can resurrect the SFC, P.L. can. For the uninitiated, the SFC was the child of Meade Frierson III for 12 years. He published lists (2000 strong) of southern fans, addresses and special interest of each -- he published bulletins telling of clubs, zines and news of interest to Southern Fandom, as well as an occasional Southern Fandom Handbook. It was a fine and comprehensive service, and took a lot of work. I have the utmost confidence in P.L. to carry on in the finest Frierson tradition. She also promises to loc every zine sent to her. Space prohibits my telling you more, but I urge you to contact P.L. at the following address: P.L. Caruthers-Montgomery, 2629 Norwood Avenue, Anniston AL 36201-2872.

FOSFAX, c/o FOSFA, P.O.Box 37281, Louisville, KY 40233-7281. This is one hell of a good fanzine. This is the sort of fanzine that makes me feel inferior. ANVIL was nominated for a Hugo in 1986, sure, and it was great fun, but FOSFAX should not only be nominated in the near future, but should win! FOSFAX is a modern fanzine. I take nothing from the fine, funny fanzines of yore when I say that the modern Fanzine Hugo (if "fanzine fandom" sees fit to retain such an honor) should go to the best of the modern fanzines. FOSFAX is a clubzine, with all the clubby stuff. It is also a fanzine with articles, reviews and con reports that even Buck Coulson would like ("What If They Gave A Con And Nobody Came?" --#116). Bruce Gardner does a column, "Railing At The Moon", which has addressed disbanding NASA, credibility gaps ("....Sagan talking about nuclear war is like Jim, Tammy and Oral lecturing on religion."), and the future of government. There is the occasional comic strip by Sargasso. The loc column includes replies from reviewed authors -- Poul Anderson, Alan Dean Foster, Brian Aldiss, Piers Anthony and R.A. McAvoy, to name a few. The lettercol has raging within its confines just now a conversation about discrimination and social injustice in all its forms, with input from Juanita Coulson, Lawrence Watt-Evans and Eve Ackerman. I'm not a good reviewer, and I feel as if I am damming with faint praise, and I don't mean to do that. You'll just have to trust me and know that I intend to say that this is a fine fanzine -- well-written, enjoyable, funny and stimulating -- else why would I be moved to say so?

And if you want zine reviews, read FOSFAX.



THE RAGGED ASTRONAUTS by Bob Shaw, Baen Books \$15.95  
Reviewed by Patrick J. Gibbs

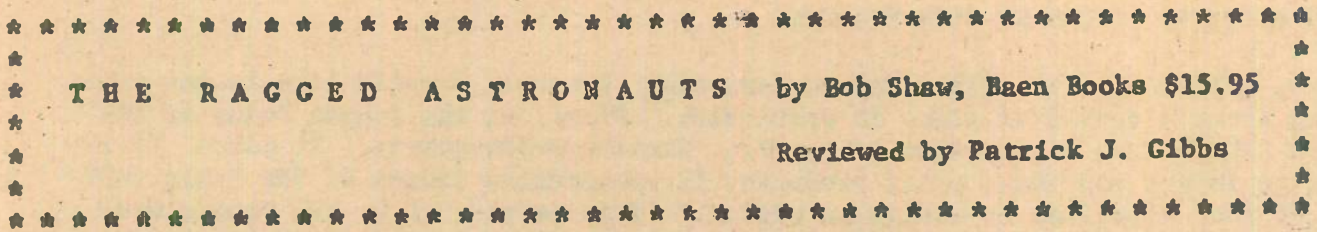
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\* A MOUSTACHE FOR NOMA LISA \*  
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--- Mike Goyer

"STAR TREK: The Next Generation" story editor, David Gerrold, has started handing out the series "bible" to selected writers -- the mold from which to strike their scripts. At the same time, Gerrold has been cranking the show's hype mill, running verbal miniature portraits of the new show's characters through STARLOG.

Star Trek fans remember the original series' optimistic vision of the future. Star Trek tried the best it could on network television to dramatize the value of tolerance, democracy, friendship, and respect for people who are different from ourselves. Fans of the reruns probably hope the new Star Trek series will do more of the same, advanced a few notches for an American audience matured by Vietnam and the civil rights movement.

What vision of the future can we expect to see, judging by the "Next Generation" crew?

Stand by for disappointment.

Having a white male and a green male as the two ranking officers must not have been sufficiently successful on the old series...so on "The Next Generation" both Captain and First Officer are white males. Another new wrinkle: Captain Julian Picard, fiftyish, isn't part of the Enterprise landing party. Only his captain-in-training, William Ryker, draws that assignment. In a small way, they correct a military weakness at the expense of a storytelling strength. Fans used to criticize the original Trek for routinely sending all the senior officers on scouting parties. After 20 years I think we finally gave into television's need to have the protagonists at the center of the action. This cosmetic change is really the least serious departure from the spirit of Star Trek. The others are more grating.

They needed a character different from but just as interesting as Spock. No cigar here. The new science officer is Lt. Commander Data, an android designed by an unknown alien race who has the appearance of a man in his thirties. "He would like to know if it's possible for an android to not simply simulate humanity, but to actually achieve it." Shades of Pinocchio. Why wouldn't that unknown alien race model its androids after 30 year old human men -- no problem there... We see at work once more the invidious conservatism that undermines the science fiction genre, sending a clear message that despite space exploration and relations with alien races -- it's NOT okay to be different, and anyone's highest aspiration is to be a white male.

Lt. Commander Data also poses fundamental problems from another viewpoint. Wouldn't you like to ask how a machine came to hold command rank? What about all those Star Trek episodes dedicated to the proposition that humans must never subordinate their will to computers?

(Pop trivia quiz: What successful recent science fiction movie included an android who looked like a white male in his thirties?)



Another officer in the crew is "Lt. Geordi La Forge: A twentyish black man, blind from birth. With the help of special prosthetics his vision now surpasses that of a regular human." Here is the only black character in the cast -- and by a marriage of 19th Century thinking to 23rd Century technology, we wind up with the cliché blind black man who can "see" on a higher level.

Speaking of handicaps, nobody ever said David Gerrold is deaf. He hears the criticisms, and replies, "If we were to approach the casting of this show as a kind of ethnic Mulligan Stew, we would be committing the very same kind of discrimination that we are trying to say will not exist in the future.... You can only make good television by portraying characters who are interesting to people because of their essential humanity inside." Right. So why isn't anyone on this show a good enough writer to create a rounded character from a minority background?

Instead we get Lieutenant "Macha" Hernandez, the ship's Security Chief. (Pop trivia quiz: what recent successful sf movie included an appealing female soldier from the barrios of Earth?) The mind reels at the image of Security being run as a street gang.

No bones about it, this Enterprise's chief medical officer is Dr. Beverly Crusher. She is joined by her boy, Elroy, er, Wesley.

In the Hollywood '80s you've got to have names dripping with hormones. "Ryker", "Macha" and "Crusher" -- are these good World Wrestling Federation names, or what?

We will also see "ship's psychologist, Lt. Deanna Troi, beautiful and part alien; because she is one-quarter Betazed, she shares some of the telepathic qualities of her species." We all know about sailors -- don't talk to me about "safe sex". And don't you simply marvel at the interfertility of humans with every intelligent race in space?

Discussing this character during a radio interview, Gerrold said one of their problems is how to show telepathy on television. There must be a way. Networks aren't allowed to broadcast the words Tommy Lasorda uses in the dugout, but somehow we know what he's saying.

One thing hasn't changed. The mission of the Enterprise is the same as of old: "...to explore strange new worlds" etc. Says Gerrold "As with the mission of the original Enterprise, the ship will be equipped for handling military circumstances-- but Starfleet is not primarily a military operation, and should the new Enterprise find itself in a military situation, it will be seen as a failure of the ship's diplomatic mission." Oh, sure. Goes without saying. "Hi, fellas, we're here to collect a few specimens. These popguns are here just in case the specimens say no."

Long forgotten -- like the Gulf of Tonkin and the Pueblo incident -- the gunboat diplomacy of the original Star Trek was one of its critical weaknesses. A story about peaceful science and cultural exchange can't be set on the deck of a battleship, why pretend otherwise?

In the first Star Trek they borrowed their rule about guns from top-rated Bonanza-- the hero doesn't fight until seriously provoked. And don't worry -- serious provocation will arrive before the end of the episode. I don't think we're going to see any different "rules of engagement" after twenty years. Wasn't it Raymond Chandler who said if a gun appears on the first page of a story, it had better go off by the last page?



BUBBLE AND LEAK

— Andrea Gilbreath

I drink beer but I don't drink as much as I would like to. I am haunted by two negative factors, two unavoidable facts that dog my steps to the kitchen and that convulse my hand as I reach into the beckoning interior of the fridge. Two undeniable truths flame in my mind even as my brew-seeking face is caressed by the coolness flowing out from my favorite appliance. Bent over in the genuflection of a Seeker of Sustenance, I consider the beer - the smooth curve of dark amber glass, the familiar labels, informative and appealing, the meniscus of the beer itself at the top of the bottle, reaching up as if to pull itself out and refresh me of its own accord. And yet, 5 times out of 7, my hand brings forth a pitiful substitute. Even as I write, my attractive, blue-and-white Gott snugglie embraces a diet A&W root beer. Yeeech! And why? Because of the Two Terrible Truths.

The first, of course, is the Land Whale aspect. Beer is a major source of fan obesity. Naturally, no one wants to accept this. "Oh, yes, beer is fattening," we say. But then we quickly turn the conversation to food, bemoaning the aggrandizing effects of Twinkies and M&Ms. Even if we reintroduce the "drinking beer makes you look like an elephant seal" theme, again we receive a chorus of "oh, yes, beer" then thoughts immediately return to the evils of sour cream or home baked yeast rolls with real butter. Some few may talk about the advantages of drinking light beer, but even this is never examined at length. We all know the truth about beer, but we never unburden our souls and discuss the nitty gritty because we just don't want to think about it. Is this a TABOO that everyone knows but no one truly shares? Understandable. Let's drop the subject, shall we?

The second Terrible Truth about beer is rather delicate. It concerns excretion. Even in this enlightened age, urination is not a popular subject for discussion. If a member of our conversational group at a party walks away, we shrink from asking them why. Now embarrassing to force them to admit that they have to go tinkle! And when, in the heat of an exciting argument about the quality of fan-zines, we feel the sudden undeniable urge to GO, how do we excuse ourselves gracefully without letting everyone else know where we're going? How I envy those crass individuals who simply mutter, "I have to go pee," and walk away scratching their armpit!

I resent having to go. I enjoy life, I enjoy my hobbies, I enjoy conversation, and I don't have time to fritter away in the toilet. At home "en famille," it's not so bad as long as I wear only underwear and a big, sloppy shirt long enough to cover my, er, self. But struggling with tight slacks or tight jeans (all my pants are tight due to the fact that I drink beer!) or with the dreaded pantyhose - well, it passes toleration. Other beverages cycle through, too, but it is well known that nothing else is processed with the rapidity of beer. Beer seems to have an expansive quality as well (in the excretory sense, I mean).

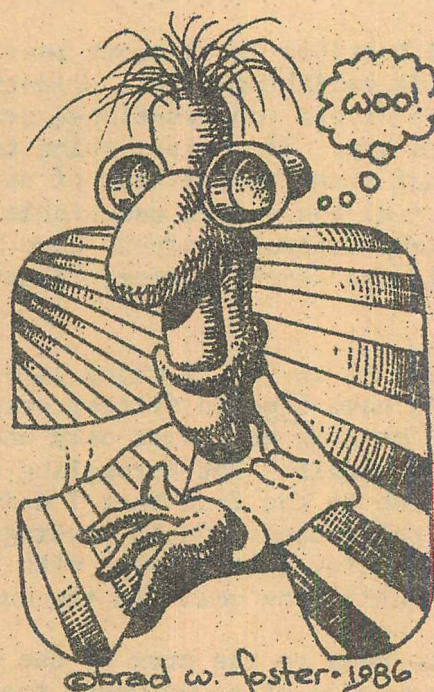
But here we come to the crux of the excretory matter. Beer has a strange effect on the perception of sound waves reaching the human ear. My research is inconclusive at this point as to whether the garbling occurs in the ear itself,



along the pathways leading to the brain (a neurotransmitter imbalance, perhaps?), or in the cortex. (Interested persons are invited to bring beer up to our room at the next con. Research funds are limited so I can't pay my experimental subjects, but I bet we have a damn good time.) The ingestion of as little as the equivalent of one bottle of beer causes normal household sounds to be interpreted by the brain as the sound of running water. The hum of the air conditioner sounds like the rush of a mountain stream, the whirring of the CRT resembles the soporific sound of a mall fountain, etc. Remember when your mom used to turn the faucet on to help you perform on the potty? Remember how well it worked? Umhum.

Difficult though it may be to resist the watery call of the household appliances, awareness of the problem often allows the sufferer to control the urge to evacuate before it is actually necessary. The true nemesis of every conversationally inclined beer drinker is the home aquarium. I understand the desire to have an aquarium. Back when I was intellectual, I had an aquarium myself. Fortunately for my social interactions, my fish kept dying. (After several had actually committed suicide by leaping through the small opening between the glass cover and the front of the aquarium, I discovered that I had been electrocuting them... but that's another story.) My fish all died and I gave the aquarium to my brothers who were too young to drink beer. I don't remember ever urinating when I was an intellectual so the aquarium didn't cause me any problems personally. Of course, I didn't drink much beer then, either. Now that years of consideration for poverty stricken dates who couldn't afford to buy me mixed drinks has given me love of and lust for beer, I can scarcely stay in the same room with an aquarium. I don't think the problem is caused by looking at the water. Watching the bubbles may exacerbate the condition, but I hesitate to seek further data because it seems too cruel an experiment to subject fellow beer lovers to hours of wearing ear plugs and watching bubbles. The real excretory culprit is probably the trickling sound caused by the water filter and/or the air stone. Inventors take note: I suspect there would be an active market for a trickle-less aquarium among the drinking thinking public. With the limitations of our current technology, the beer drinker is doomed to a guppy-less life. Linda Riley, for example, has a lovely empty aquarium in her apartment. (Linda doesn't drink beer herself, but with the empathy and compassion typical of brilliant, sensitive redheads, she populates it with dry rocks for the sake of her beer guzzling guests.) As cigarettes are anathema to asthmatics, so are aquariums contraindicated in the presence of beer drinkers.

After this (long) look at the Two Terrible Truths, I find myself in an existential dilemma, weighing values, reexamining decisions, and wondering "what is the good?" Thirsty work... let's have a beer and think about it.





\*\*\*\*\*  
\* THE SCIENTIFIC IRONMASTER \*  
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Robert Coulson

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Unlike my youthful interest in music, history, and firearms, I paid as little attention as possible to science until I reached highschool and encountered Chestern Chapple. This was before school consolidation in Indiana, so Silver Lake High School had less than 100 students, and generally managed one teacher per department. My own graduating class had 13 members. From conversations from other fans -- and with Juanita, whose graduating class of 512 was larger than the entire town of Silver Lake -- I've decided than on the average, my teachers were better than most. This is possibly because a good many of them in both grade and high school had gone to the school themselves, their families were there, and they didn't want to move to a better-paid position somewhere else. Chet had not only graduated from the school, but had helped construct the building when an older one was replaced. In addition to being the highschool science teacher, he was scoutmaster, Sunday School superintendent, town clerk, and took wedding photos in his spare time-- he liked to keep busy. I knew him better than I did most of my teachers, because I was in the Boy Scouts for several years, as well as running with a group of boys who included his son.

Chet got me interested in science and failed to get me interested in teaching, which might have been a mistake on my part. I would certainly have known less about the science half of science fiction without him. (He was the teacher who once announced that he expected his students to learn something new every day, whether or not it had anything to do with the day's lesson.) What I learned, especially in the science lab, was that science could be fun. You could see micro-organisms, make things with chemicals, watch things happening. Experiments occasionally went bang, and one student accidentally produced poison gas, necessitating our opening all the windows on a below-freezing day and outraging the school janitor, who came up to see what the bloody hell was going on. That was fun, too. In some book I had, either the textbook or a reference book, there was a formula for making nitroglycerine, but I was either too smart or too cowardly to try it.... anyway, I could always get black powder for explosions if I wanted any.

Chet was also the man who covered for me when I accidentally shot down the power lines during a New Year's Eve celebration... his son told me later that he'd talked learnedly of metal fatigue to the outraged homeowner who was without electric power.

After I got interested in science fiction, my initial interest in the science part was filled by L. Sprague de Camp and, mostly, by Willy Ley. Ley's science column in Galaxy even got my mother interested. He answered readers' questions, and Mom had one of hers published in the March 1953 issue, leading a few fans to believe that I was married, well before I actually was. In those days, it was unheard of for a fan's mother to have anything to do with anything as disreputable as science fiction. It was also Mom who got me a copy of Ley's Rockets, Missiles, and Space Travel, which was the book on space in those days. I got Ley's autograph on it at the 1953 Worldcon in Philadelphia. It's outdated now, of course, but still provides a good history of the early days of rockets and space experiments.



Ley was also interested in natural history, so I acquired copies of his Dragons In Amber, The Lungfish, The Dodo, And The Unicorn, Salamanders and Other Wonders, and Dawn of Zoology. He was a fascinating writer, and while his books have in some instances been outdated by newer discoveries, in general they're still well worth reading. He was also an optimist about unproven natural wonders; the Abominable Snowman, dinosaurs surviving in Africa, and so on; he always was careful to explain that material about them was only speculation, but wouldn't it be nice if it was true? He was occasionally ahead of his time; the kraken was a dubious speculation when he wrote; now it's a commonly known fact. I bought all of his books that I could find; Watchers of the Skies, Engineer's Dreams, Another Look at Atlantis (a collection of essays, the title one promoting Thera as the source of the Atlantis legend), The Drifting Continents (published in 1969, before plate tectonics was accepted), The Conquest of Space (his tour of the solar system with artist Chesley Bonestell), and his collaboration with de Camp, Lands Beyond, where I first encountered John Cleve Symmes, originator of the hollow earth theory. (We've since made a family outing, with Bruce and Lori, to Symmes' grave near Cincinnati, for the purpose of laying a doughnut on it, and also viewed Symmes' own hollow globe, which is now owned by the Smithsonian. A replica of it is on his tombstone.) Ley was the best of the popular science writers.

De Camp went in more for archaeology; Great Cities of the Ancient World, Ancient Ruins and Archaeology, and The Ancient Engineers. I particularly enjoyed his Lost Continents, the complete and cynical history of belief in Atlantis. I like his style, whatever he's writing.

Juanita and I both enjoy anthropology, paleontology, and the like; with archaeology, they're extensions of our interest in history. I don't always follow the currently popular theories; I've always preferred Robert Ardrey's frequently misquoted idea that human violence is inborn, and must be controlled rather than psychoanalyzed out of existence. (It obviously goes back to our beginnings, and before; there are now studies of chimpanzee "teen gangs" who go out and murder members of other tribes, and similar proofs that primates aren't the gentle vegetarians that pacifists would like them to be. When I was still a child, I was taken to visit the Michigan City zoo, and watched a Rhesus monkey snatch a sparrow out of the air -- incredible speed and coordination -- bite its head off and eat it; I haven't believed in the gentle vegetarian primate crap since.) In American prehistory, we have Louis Brennan's No Stone Unturned and American Dawn; he's pushing for much earlier occupation of America than most anthropologists will allow. Then there is Victor W. von Hagen's The Ancient Sun Kingdoms of America for early American civilizations, and a half-dozen Leonard Cottrell books on early European civilization, plus two of Barbara Mertz's books, Red Land, Black Land and Temples, Tombs, and Hieroglyphs, for Egypt. Mertz is better known for her pseudonyms, romance writers Elizabeth Peters and Barabara Michaels. Cottrell hasn't been published a lot in this country, as far as I know; most of his books that we have are Pan paperbacks from England. For the near east there is History Begins at Sumer, by Samuel Noah Kramer, and overall there is Gods, Graves, and Scholars, by C.W. Ceram.

The Dane, P.V. Glob, has two fascinating books on northern European pre-history in The Bog People and The Mound People. The first book details what has been learned from 2000-year-old mummies retrieved from Danish bogs; they were preserved by a natural tanning action. For the Australians, there is Down Among The Wild Men, by John Greenway, and I'd like to find more of his books.



For American paleontological history, there's an absolutely marvelous book, The Bone Hunters, by Uri Lanham, describing the extreme and sometimes comic rivalry among the men who first exploited the western dinosaur beds, feuded constantly, and occasionally hijacked each other's fossils. These days, scientists try to be respectable; they almost never berate one another in newspapers.

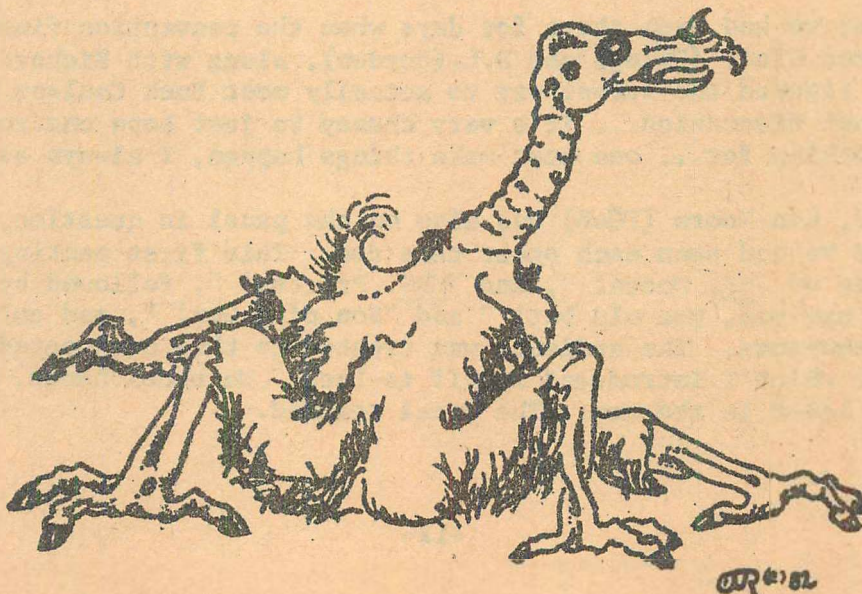
Of course, there are a lot of Asimov books; Ike has written a lot of books, and while I don't have nearly all of them I have a dozen or so of his science books, including Asimov's Guide To Science. There are some Arthur C. Clarke science books; he's written less than Asimov. Everyone has written less than Asimov. There are books such as The Hot-Blooded Dinosaurs, Scientists Confront Velikovsky, and James Burkes' Connections. Most of our science library seems to be natural history, paleontology, archaeology, and astronomy/space exploration. Physics and chemistry are slighted, though we do have books on both. Juanita has a large library of psychology books, but she refuses to accept it as a science, so I'll leave them out. (Her opinion is that a "science" in which researchers regularly decide on the answer they want before beginning the research, and eliminate data which doesn't promote that answer, doesn't deserve the name. Of course, psych isn't alone in using those methods, these days.)

I fell in love with Avebury on our trip to England, and have three books on British stone circles by Aubrey Burl (Prehistoric Avebury, Rings of Stone, and Stone Circles of the British Isles), plus a couple of other books on megalithic cultures in England and France. Similarly, we have some material on American Indian mounds, the most thorough being a two-volume boxed set, Angel Site. (The Angel Mounds, in southern Indiana, were named after a Mr. Angel, who once owned the land, and not because of any theory of celestial builders.) I got the last available copy at the site museum, though it may have been reprinted by now.

Ivan Sanderson, who did so much to promote flying saucers, also wrote some highly entertaining books about jungle flora and fauna, from his experiences as collector for a museum. After the saucer books, one wonders a bit about how much of his natural history to believe, but his stories are very enjoyable.

The science library isn't as large as our history library, but it fills a few bookcases, and we can usually find the references we need.

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 \* THE MAFIAETTES GO TO RIVERCON \*  
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Early Wednesday morning, Linda (Riley) and I (Charlotte you-know-who) set off for Louisville (pronounced Louavull), Kentucky. We had never arrived so early for a con -- Steve and Sue Francis, co-chairs, put us up for the evening. This naturally threw us directly into the pre-convention activities -- dinner, going to the airport to pick up the GoH, going home again, going back to the airport for the GoH (he finally escaped Chicago), talking till midnight, catching a few ZZZ's, and next morning helping load vans and cars for the trip to the hotel. The GoH (Bob Shaw) was not immune to the work load. His self-appointed task was to arrange in the most logical manner the boxes and cartons of art show material. Finally getting it to his satisfaction, he stepped back and said "Now, that's scientific, isn't it?" "Yes, Bob," I replied admiringly, "It's a work of art."

Safely ensconced in the Galt House, I made a tour to re-acquaint myself with the layout -- it had been three years since my last trip there. Ah! There's the pool (first things first, y'know). One of my main objectives at Rivercon was to make the personal acquaintance of ANVIL columnist, Buck Coulson, and his wife Juanita, so I spent most of the afternoon and evening asking if they were in yet. I had a sneaking suspicion they would be there, as Buck was listed in the program book as being on a panel.

The afore-mentioned GoH wanted to get his souvineer shopping out of the way early, before the con got into high gear, so several of us went out walking in search of downtown Louisville. We found City Hall, which quite satisfied the tourist in me, as the courtyard contained a statue of Thomas Jefferson and several plaques quoting Jeffersonian ideals. (The city of Louisville is in Jefferson County.) After this intellectual and patriotic interlude, we began looking for shops in earnest... as we couldn't find downtown Louavull. We weren't quite certain of the location of the Galleria, and Bob wondered if there were anyone we could ask for directions. Looking around we discovered, not 10 feet away, an information booth, conveniently located in space and time, and marvelled once again at the wonders of the world, that an information booth should appear just when one needed it.

It seemed to us we had been there for days when the convention finally began and other Mafiaettes Cindy (Riley) and D.L. (Burden), along with Richard (Hyde) arrived on Friday. I figured the surest way to actually meet Buck Coulson was to catch him on his panel discussion... it's very chancy to just hope one runs into whom-ever one is looking for... one must make things happen, I always say.

As it happened, Ken Moore (FGoH) was also on the panel in question, and this was the first time we had seen each other this con. This first meeting always entails rapturous cries of "MR. Moore!", and "MRS. Proctor!", followed by such endearments as "How are you, you old bat!" and "Son of a Gun!", and culminating in enthusiastic embraces. The audience was treated to this unexpected and unusual display, after which I introduced myself to Buck. We shook hands, promising to meet and talk later in the con. The panel resumed.



Saturday was a busy day, with the major panels as well as banquet, art auction and masquerade. Bob had gotten all his gifts but the tobacco which he always buys for his son-in-law. (His abortive attempt to buy tobacco from a convenience store saddled him with a brand he said he would take home to give to someone he didn't like.) Between his panels, Sue Phillips took Bob in her car to a real tobacco shop. Richard and I went along for the ride.

There was a little time between the last panel of the day and the banquet so it seemed a good time for Bob to get together with his friends from the South... Jim Gilpatrick, who along with Wade Gilbreath was responsible for bringing Bob to Alabama in the first place... more about that later... and Jim's wife Lydia, Dick and Nicki Lynch, Bill Zeilke, Sue Phillips, J.J. Johnson, who brought his tape-player so Bob could finally see the Confederation tape, Linda and myself, made up the party. We had no sooner gotten settled in than Bob announced he had to go be interviewed, but for us to stay and have a good time. We did.

It was during this interval that Dick Lynch began to explore the alternate universe in which we live and how we got here. It all goes back to 1980... that was the focal point, the time at which our lives were re-directed. No one can speculate upon the influence Jack Vance might have had upon Birmingham, and Southern Fandom, had he been Goh at B'hamacon II, 1981. But there is no doubt that Bob Shaw has changed our lives. Wade Gilbreath came up with a replacement when Vance cancelled out -- Bob Shaw. "Who?" I asked. "You know," Wade said, "Slow Glass." "Oh, yes... great!" Jim called to invite Bob and the die was cast.

From this decision, ripples spread. Colin Fine from the U.K. came to B'hamacon II, as did Marc Ortlieb from Australia, both long-standing Bob Shaw fans, and were included in our dead-dog parties. The Ortlieb Connection resulted in Southern Fandom being acquainted with the most Southern Fandom of all, Aussie Fandom. Colin became European agent for Atlanta in '86. Bob Shaw was brought back for BoShcon I. ANVIL began trading with Aussie fanzines. Bob was invited to be toastmaster at Confederation. There Steve Francis asked Bob to be Goh at Rivercon '87. And it all came down to the here and now -- if Jack Vance had not cancelled, we would not be here, now, sitting in this room together. Awesome!

When Bob rejoined his party, the crush of people in the room had sent the temperature up, and he began fiddling with the thermostat. When the temperature did not immediately drop 10 degrees, he turned it the other way. The unit, confused, began to knock and bang, causing Bill who was sitting on it to spill his drink. We all ganged up on Bob to make him leave it alone before it blew up or worse, we spilled some more liquor.

That night at the banquet, Bob gave his little talk. I was determined this time to remember some of the things he said, to report to you. But as usual, I just enjoyed the moment, and afterward could only remember that we all laughed a lot. But I noticed, lying beside the podium, some pieces of paper...which turned out to be Bob's notes for his talk! Now I can really tell you some of the famous Bob Shaw jokes... are you ready? Here they are: "Pub Landlord and Leap Year Theory." "Irish Coffee". "Bermuda Triangle mystery -- ships full of books -- absorbent paper..." What? You're not laughing? I guess you had to have been there. All I know is that we were as pleased with him and his talk as if the Mars Lander had dug up positive proof of the existence of Ray Bradbury.



Sunday morning Linda said we MUST eat Sunday Brunch at the Flagship Restaurant, high atop the Galt House (25th floor), and revolving to boot. This was my first experience with a revolving restaurant and I stopped by Cindy and D.L.'s table on the way back to mine to say that I wished I were sitting by a wall as they were, as the slow progression of Louisville out the window was making me sort of seasick. "Charlotte," Cindy pointed out, "our table was by the window a few minutes ago... your's will be by this wall soon." "Oh."

Sunday afternoon I just HAD to ride the riverboat, the Belle of Louisville. Other fans made this mistake, too. Toastmaster Michael Banks' wife Rosa reported that when she had told her friends they were going on the cruise, they said "You don't want to do that!" She assured them that she did, but now, when it was too late, and we were all trapped for two hours in the 105 degree heat on a boat that doesn't sell alcohol, she realizes they were right.

Returning to the hotel, the pool was the place to be. Linda did her limpet mine imitation. Bob and Michael compared freckles. "I'll show you mine if you'll show me yours," Bob said. During a cupped-hand whale-spout competition, Rosa observed that men always act like children when they get in a pool. On bouyancy, Michael noted that women have better floatation devices.

That evening, Linda and I had dinner with Steve and Sue Francis. We had come full circle, and tomorrow meant an early start back to Birmingham. It was a quiet meal, with an after-the-successful-con feeling of satisfaction. Ken Moore was there, as was Bob Shaw, and I think this con was Ken's first exposure to Bob. "You're funny," Ken kept saying. "You're really a funny man!"

\*\*\*\*\*

#### MAD DOGS AND ENGLISHMEN...

and Charlotte Proctor... go out in the noonday sun. Whew! There I was, minding my own business, virtuously typing away on ANVIL. This is my vacation, after all, and I had spent the first three weeks in such frivolous activities as attending Rivercon (see above), visiting grandma, and going to the ocean with Penny Frierson (humm, The Mafiaettes go to Panama City Beach and Learn the True Meaning of Stinging Rain... I think there's a story there...). These next two weeks were to be spent in the serious pursuit of fanac. That is, until Jerry caught me in the kitchen refilling my iced tea and informed me that the lovely creeper covering the chimney and southwest walls of the house was... Poison Sumac! He is dangerously allergic to it, and I am immune. Well, I saw my duty and I did it. In the noonday sun. Runners, naturally, had spread 10 to 15 feet through the bushes. I thrashed around, pulling and tugging and digging until I had a giant pile of Sumac on the street for the trashmen. Finally, sweat dripping from my nose, covered with garden loam and sumac sap, I came into the house, stripped and scrubbed. (While I am immune, I am not stupid.) Jerry just came in and said he wasn't touching me until I had had two more baths. Good. Now maybe I can finish ANVIL.

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P.S. I just got a package with a note from Gary Farber, and lots and lots of books! Thank you thank you thank you!!



THE IDES OF TEXAS ARE UPON YOU

A Feghoot, by Merlin Odom

President Lilith Cohen-St. James of the New Texas-Israeli Confederacy was calmly assessing her position. She had, against almost impossible odds, led her System to victory in the War of Separation.

A Pyrrhic victory, for the enemy had rendered her System's sun subtly unstable. At almost any moment it could go nova, collapse, or turn into the galaxy's biggest used-car lot. We must evacuate, she thought, but to where?

A commotion in the outer office roused her from her reverie, and Thomas "Panda" St. James burst through the office door.

"I trust there is an explanation for your precipitious arrival, Cousin", Lilith said.

"Great news!" bubbled Panda. "Listen. The Krotharii are going to commit racial hara-kiri! They've offered us their whole stellar system... with a 99 million year lease, in case they evolve again. Class M, but marginal -- not unlike old Texas."

"And...?" Lilith asked...

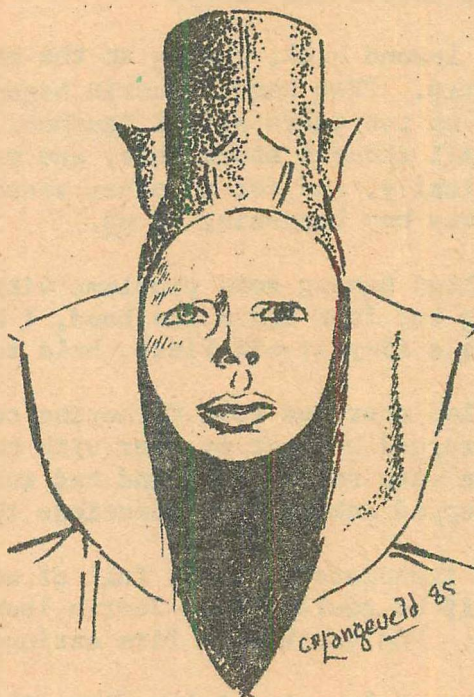
"Well..." Panda equivocated...

"Out with it. I know you. There's a catch."

"I get to name it! I've got the perfect name..."

Lilith saw it coming but couldn't get out of the way in time.

"How about calling it 'The Loaned-Star State?'"





\*\*\*\*\*  
 \* CARS THAT GO DOOM IN THE NIGHT . . . or, \*  
 \* SON-OF-A-MAFIAETTE! -- Charlotte Proctor \*  
 \*\*\*\*\*

Cast of Characters: my son Justin, his fiancée (now wife) Catherine, three morticians, two policemen, a wrecker and assorted firemen.

\*\*\*\*\*

It was the sort of phone call we all dread, and the sort of ESP we all have felt at one time or another. I knew something was wrong--they were long overdue-- and I answered the phone with a sinking feeling.

"Come pick us up, Mom" Justin said crisply. "The car just burned up at the Airport Exit."

Mom-like, I began to blither, asking inane questions about exactly where they were located. "Just come on down here," Justin interrupted, "... you can't miss it. It's the only car on fire."

It was the wee hours of the morning before I got home again, with Justin and Catherine and her fricassied luggage (he had picked her up at the airport), but no one had gone to bed. Now that the dust had settled, so to speak, we were waiting for... The Story.

Justin leaned back, gazing at the ceiling, pipe in hand. We leaned forward expectantly. "You know," Justin began meditatively, "when my friend Tim's car burned up two years ago, I laughed... I thought it was funny." There was a pause as we all thought about this, and marveled at how a person's attitude can change so radically, and for no other reason than what we had previously thought was funny was now happening to us.

"I've been having some problems with the carburetor, and when I saw little flames licking out from under the hood, I knew we had big trouble," he went on. (The car was a 15-year-old Pinto, held together with baling wire and chewing gum.)

"I pulled over and told Catherine to get out. Of course, she said 'Why?' so I just dragged her out my door with me. This was not the time to explain. By the time we were safely away and had turned around, the flames were clearly visible. She stopped asking dumb questions then."

Almost immediately, a car full of men came up the ramp, stopped, and the driver asked if he could help. Justin looked at the flaming Pinto, and then at the driver. "Do you have a fire extinguisher?"

Unable to help put out the fire, the men in the car offered "the little lady" shelter. Catherine was standing aside huddled in her coat, shivering as much from shock as from the cold. She gratefully accepted, leaving Justin to deal with the squad car which was just pulling up.



"They were very nice men," Catherine told us. "They were ... morticians... and were on their way home from a social evening... but they were very nice." Inasmuch as it was midnight and they had just left 'Yesterdays', the lounge at the Ramada Inn Airport, it sounded more like a night on the town, but no matter. Any port in a storm.

Meanwhile, the cops had called the fire department. Justin was watching the fire-truck try to find the entrance ramp. "If it had come straight to us, we might have saved the luggage," he said, "but they seemed to be having trouble getting to the right side of the freeway." By the time they arrived, things had reached the inferno stage.

Lights flashing, bells ringing, the engine squealed to a halt, and shed its firemen like leaves. They clumped together, and looked the situation over. "Yep," said one, "...it's burning." "Not far," said another.

The concensus was that it posed no danger to anything, and would soon burn itself out, so why fool with it? They backed their truck off a ways in case the gas tank blew (this is the car that had such a bad reputation for that sort of thing, remember?), and settled in to wait it out.

It must have been a dull night otherwise, as the policemen were in no hurry to go -- yet. The three of them stood around, Justin said, telling stories and just generally passing the time. They called for a wrecker.

"It was almost like a party," Justin recalled, "and when I checked in on Catherine and the morticians, you'd have thought they had known each other all their lives!"

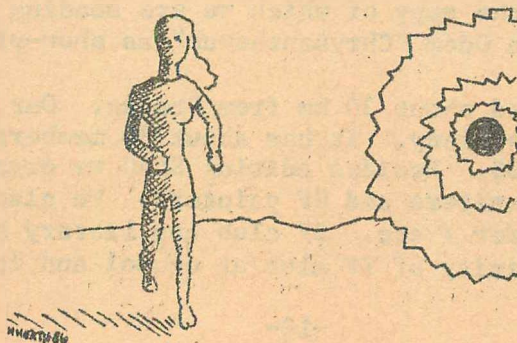
The raging inferno reached its peak. Between the superheated air in the tires and the melting rubber, the tires began to blow... and Birmingham's Finest suddenly had somewhere else to be!

"Uh, well, guess we better be going now," one said. "Yeah, we better be moving on," his partner agreed, and off they trotted to their car and sped away.

Another tire blew... Boom!

"Come back, you cowards!" shouted Justin shaking his fist in the air. "Come back and die like men!"

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 \* THE ANVIL CHORUS \*  
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We have received so many interesting letters... there is NO WAY we can print them all, or in their entirety, but we'll do our best. // I sent 20 letters overseas, asking if the recipients still wanted to receive ANVIL. The post awful returned one saying it wasn't properly prepared for overseas mail -- it was going to Canada-- and have had replies from Australia, Finland, the U.K. and New Zealand. So I know some of them made it out of the country but have no idea how many the P.O. trashed. We'll begin this lettercol with some of the replies, and a wild card from Czechoslovakia.

\*\*\*\*\*

Toni Jerzman HEI!!! I'd very much like to get ANVIL also in the future. I must Viljelijantie admit that I have been very lazy in writing to you. I don't have 4-6 D 103 any really good reasons why I haven't sent you LoCs, just the usual 00410 Helsinki one, so much to do but so little time.  
 FINLAND

Although there have been some difficulties in getting ANVIL lately. I moved about a year ago and after that only one number have got through to me. I think they have been lost in space (what does this movie lack? and mean?)

If you keep sending me ANVIL I am very grateful, I like to read them, but I can't promise that I can change my bad habit of not LoCing. Of course I could send you money, which of course would be the right thing to do, but there's one problem-- I'm quite short of money. So I'm sending here to you two copies of Tahtivaeltaja (which aren't any good to you because you don't understand the language - I'm sorry). And then there's one thing I can promise: as soon as we get our fanzine "Feast of Friends" out (it will be in English) I will send you a copy of it. I hope that satisfies you. So, now I am at your mercy. Hope to see ANVIL again.

((You got it, Toni! Thanks for the copies of Tahtivaeltaja (what does that mean?). Folks, these zines have to be seen to be believed! They are beautiful... what we would call semi-prozines, or even prozines. They have slick two-color covers, Brad Foster illos (are you surprised?), and one seems to be show-casing Philip K. Dick, and the other Mad Max Beyond... Wish I could read them, and am looking forward to "Feast of Friends"... is that anything like "How to Serve Man" ???)

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Ladislav Peska We got to know (the) fanzin of your club - ANVIL, thank to Zdenek Na dolikach 503 Rampas, last weeks. Your fanzin pleased us very much. We prepared the article about your fanzin that we printed in our fanzin SLAN, the copy of which we are sending you. We printed in this copy the tale by Merlin Odom "Chrysanthemum" as show-piece from your fanzin.

The town of Slany is situated about 30 km from Prague. Our SF club was established in 1984 at grammar school in Slany. It has about 30 members in this time. We have edited fanzin SLAN since 1985. Besides editing SLAN we organize discussion group with well know(n) Czech SF writers and SF painters. We also organize projecting of SF films / on videorecorder / etc. SF club has library and several noticeboards, which serve as publicity of SF club at school and in the town.



We would like to know more about American fandom, about your ESFC and about SF in the U.S.A. We would like to open up intercourses with some members of your club who would like to contribute to our fanzin.

((Now! What a great zine! It looks like early American and British zines, with on-stencil illos and hand-lettered titles... all those skills I missed developing because I came into fanzine publishing too late. It is really quite nostalgic and admirable because I have some little idea of how difficult it is to publish a zine "from scratch" so to speak -- without the little niceties of electrostencil and xeroxed covers. Merlin's reprinted article -- a Peghoot about a female bio-comp -- has a neat little illo of a computer keyboard out of which is growing a very female-looking plant stalk topped by a flower-face with pouty lips. Digital tendrils complete the "bio-comp". I think I've located, through the Red Cross, a Czech translator so I can read the ANVIL article/review. Thanks so much, and you can be sure of receiving ANVIL in the future.))

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Tim Jones            I've just received your "Dear Sir, Unless..." letter, so am re-  
20 Gillespie St. plying post-haste. I enjoy ANVIL, particularly the issues from  
Dunedin            #41 onwards, but my problem in writing you worthwhile locs are  
New Zealand        illustrated by the fact that I received A43 today, and yet accord-  
                     ing to your letter #44 has already been produced! However, a  
few comments on #43: Another Great Brad W. Foster cover. If I could draw like  
that guy, I... would. Andrea Gilbreath's article rang true insofar as I've read  
the writers she mentions, except that I wasn't much impressed with David Eddings' female characters -- with the exception of Polgara, they manipulated their way to what they wanted, whilst Polgara turned to jelly in the final scenes. But, not being a woman, I'm ill-placed to comment on the realism as opposed to the value of such behavior.

Heartily agree with Harry Andruschak re payload launch methods. This obsession with and dependency on the shuttle has held up lots of fascinating astronomy/exploration missions, and viewed from this far away the concentration on the shuttle seems much more designed to please the politicians and the military than further the cause of space science.

So, thanks for writing, Charlotte. You've stirred me into action, which is no bad thing. I hope you enjoy TIMBRE #4, still published from the address above, and I look forward to reading more issues of ANVIL. ((And thanks for writing, Tim. You deserve a plug for your fine zine for doing so, and here it is. -- cp))

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Lloyd Penney        We were almost adopted by a cat... the difficult fact in this  
412-22 Riverwood Pky. situation is that the cat belonged to someone else who lived  
Toronto, Ontario    in our apartment building. The cat was a black one named  
CANADA M8Y 4E1       Ninja, and Ninja would often prowl around outside, until  
                     someone let him back in the building, and he'd prowl around  
inside. When he wanted to get past a door leading from the hallway to the stair-  
well and vice-versa, he would start to wail, and his voice would change gradually,  
until the wail sounded like someone calling "Haillooo"! Usually, someone would  
crawl out of their apartment to let the cat in the stairwell or hallway.



Thank you for devoting some time to interests other than those of fanzine fans. Filkers and costume fans are fans, too. Re article by Buck Coulson -- Interesting history. I had heard a long time ago that the origin of the word 'filk' was based in the programme book of a Trekcon, and hadn't heard any different until now. I'll take Buck's word on it any day. Filk fandom is having a renaissance in the Toronto area... there have been a large number of fans from elsewhere, and neofans, too, and a good number of them have either brought their love of filk with them, or have discovered filking with great enthusiasm. We're lucky to have Bill Sutton contribute to our local apa, and we find out what's happening out there filk-wise.

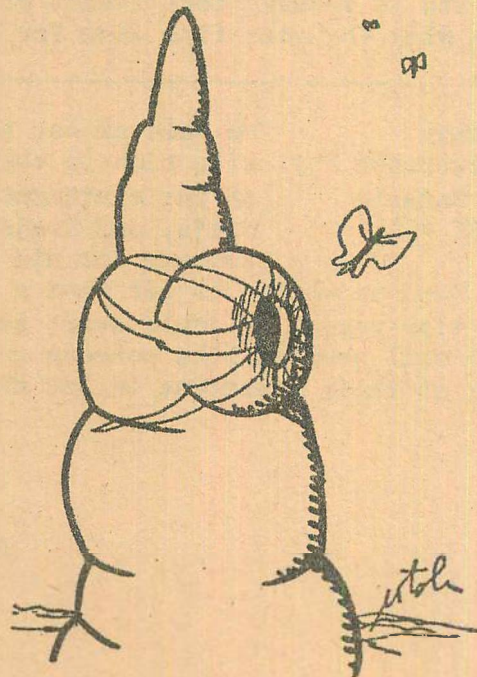
Re Finite Fat -- Once fat takes root, it's hard as hell to get out. Given what Richard Hyde says at the end about smofs being susceptible to fat transference, perhaps this explains the preponderance of 400-pound fans at Worldcons. I've got about 25 pounds to lose, but when I'm at Worldcon, I feel absolutely thin & tiny.

---

Milt Stevens            I had the same problem you described with an older female cat  
7234 Capps Ave.        hiding under the sink after the arrival of a new cat. It's hard  
Reseda, CA 91335      to understand why a full grown cat would become terrified of an  
                         aggressive fluff ball a third her size. The situation with the  
cat living under the sink lasted for about a year until I traded the older cat to  
another fan. I didn't think that a cat could be very happy living under a sink,  
and the new home let the older cat go back to being a single cat.

I'm probably in a somewhat different position than Andrea Gilbreath in regard to book buying. For one thing, I already own more science fiction than I could read in several lifetimes. If I were to experience another attack of completist collecting, I would soon be sleeping in the back yard. This fact is a moderating influence on my behavior. I still buy all the prozines. I've continued to do that because I can keep reasonably current on short fiction, while keeping up on all the novels being published is totally hopeless. I buy novels on a case-by-case basis. My interest in a particular writer or series, award nominations, favorable mentions in fanzines, and talk at LASFS can all be factors in my book buying. For instance, "The Moon Goddess and the Son" by Kingsbury is favorably mentioned in this issue of ANVIL. I really liked "Courtship Rite," so I'll buy a copy of his second novel when I see it.

Richard Hyde repeats the common belief that Smofs are overweight. I had an idea for Jane's Fighting Smofs in connection with that. Along with the other data that Jane's Fighting Ships provides, they publish the silhouettes of various classes of ships. This is useful if you want to be sure that you're shooting at one of them rather than one of us. Well, the same sort of thing can apply to Smofs. The correct attribution of convention blithering depends on accurate Smof identification.





Tony Alsobrook-Renner      Coincidentally enough, I read your cat-tale while I was at  
2340 S. 39th, Apt. C      the vet waiting to pick up two of our cats following their  
St. Louis, MO 63110      being spayed. We have three other cats, and one of them--  
                                 Ludovic, a gray tabby female -- decided to live behind the  
refrigerator for about six months after we added the fifth cat. All in all, they  
get along together pretty well although somebody is usually smacking somebody else  
in the face for getting too close.

I'd love to listen to a Buck Coulson programmed radio show. It'd be a real hoot to  
hear Weburn followed by John Jacob Niles followed by some filksinger.

One thing to keep in mind when considering the lack of new SF fanzines being pub-  
lished by young fans is that there are a lot of different kinds of fanzines being  
published now. Just consider the number of punkrock fanzines coming out right  
now. There are dozens of zines coming out, some of them semi-pro, some of them  
crudzines, and I've got to think that a lot of those same kids would've gravitated  
towards SF in years past.

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Janice M. Eisen                      This is the first issue of ANVIL I've seen, and I enjoyed  
157 Pleasant St. #308      it a great deal, particularly the lively lettercol. And  
Malden, MA 02148              the Ninja Cookies recipe.

I was very interested in Buck Coulson's article about the origins of filk fandom.  
I've recently developed an interest in filking and am learning to play the guitar,  
and I never knew before why Eastern filkers were so isolated from the rest of the  
country. Oh, and by the way, it was the HopSFA Hymnal -- Johns Hopkins SF Assn. --  
which seems in the article to have been blended with Hofstra, which is a university  
in New York.

I've noticed a disturbing trend in filking, which resembles similar trends in cos-  
tuming: a sort of professionalization, with an emphasis on listening to perfor-  
mances rather than participating. At the two cons I've been to where well-known  
filkers attended, they seemed to be totally uninterested in being in a filksing  
with anyone who wasn't quite up to their level of performance. Both times they  
left small sings I was in and went to larger rooms where almost everyone was con-  
tent just to listen to them. Now, I'll be the first to admit I'm no Julia Ecklar,  
but I've got a pretty good voice and have started writing my own songs -- and I  
would like to listen to, learn from, and perform for some of the filkers I admire.  
The snobbish attitude, which other would-be filkers have noticed as well, was  
made worse by an absolute rejection of bardic circles in favor of chaos. Bardic  
circles make it much easier for nervous neo-filkers to get involved, since they  
don't have to actively push themselves into the performance order.

Thanks to Richard Hyde's article, I now know why I have so much trouble losing  
weight: not only is my husband naturally skinny, he's been known to forget to eat.  
Obviously, I absorb the calories from all the meals he skips.

I was surprised by P.L.'s comments on The Pride of Chanur. The book doesn't finish  
with a cliff-hanger: the main plot is fully resolved, but the future remains open-  
ended, like real life. Nobody is left in a perilous situation; Tully has been saved  
and returned to his people, and humans have begun contact with the races of the  
Compact. In fact, while I've read -- and mostly enjoyed -- all four of the Chanur  
books, I think the first book was terrific on its own and kind of wish she hadn't  
felt compelled to turn it into a series.



Craig Ledbetter      What a nice surprise to receive a copy of ANVIL in the mail.  
P. O. Box 5367      I'll sound like a broken record, but every time I read a  
Kingwood TX 77325      review of ANVIL in the fan press I intended to send for a copy  
but never did. ((I'm telepathic.)) I'll enclose a copy of  
my lowly newsletter with this letter.

The mention of Bob Shaw in your natter brought back fond memories of his Slow Glass series of stories. Truly that was SCIENCE fiction at its peak. Loved those stories.

So nice to read a book column that touches on the nuts and bolts of book buying etc. Andrea Gilbreath's three part process echoes mine somewhat. Your fanzine overall strikes me as a gathering place/forum for some talented people to put into words either experiences or opinions tangentially related to SF fandom. A nice mixture.

Since this is my first issue I'm kinda in the dark on a lot of the (letter column) comments. Sounds like I've missed some good stuff. Reading thru the letters makes me realize I don't read fiction. I only read non-fiction. I'd rather read about SF, horror, films, comics, than actually read (or see) them. I quit reading Stephen King after Firestarter, yet I keep reading books about him. Very strange.

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Ben Schilling      I did read a copy of The Ragged Astronauts, and, while it  
45605 Fox Lane E.      is on the Hugo ballot, I really don't think that it's one  
Utica, MI 48087-4228      of the five best books of 1986. Of course, I don't see  
how Black Genesis ever got one nomination, let alone  
enough to put it on the ballot...

I tend to natter about books to anyone who will listen while I'm in the "science-fictionandfantasysection." I've discovered quite a few very good books I'd never have bothered trying to read that way. Of course I've also drawn some very strange looks from people and some of them have decided that I must work for the book store, but it can become a way to introduce readers into fandom.

---

Dick Lynch      I particularly liked the story (in A44) of how Linda tried  
4207 Davis Lane      to break into her own apartment. Luckily, that hasn't  
Chattanooga TN 37416      happened to me yet, but it's been close a couple of times!

Of more interest, though, was the short article on Bob Shaw. You mention that many of Bob's books are based on a "...new and different, distinctive and never-been-done-before IDEA." I don't know if I quite agree on the novelty of all the ideas Bob uses, but I am impressed by the freshness of his plots, which almost always invoke the proverbial 'sense of wonder' in me. I wasn't quite as impressed by his latest book, The Ragged Astronauts, as you were, but it was quite readable and interesting; The Ceres Solution is still my favorite by him.

Anyway, one of the things about Bob Shaw that perhaps deserves some discussion is that quite often his fan writing (and being a fan personality) overshadows his fiction. In fact, he's been such a well known and loved fan writer that I think he (like Bob Tucker) is still a largely undiscovered talent. I don't normally think much of Award Campaigns, but the Baen Books campaign to get Bob a Hugo nomination for The Ragged Astronauts (even if it fails) will bring his writing talent the attention it deserves.



Buck Coulson  
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The break-in reminds me of  
a possibly apocryphal story  
of a bank robbery. The  
robbers cased the bank  
the day before, to work

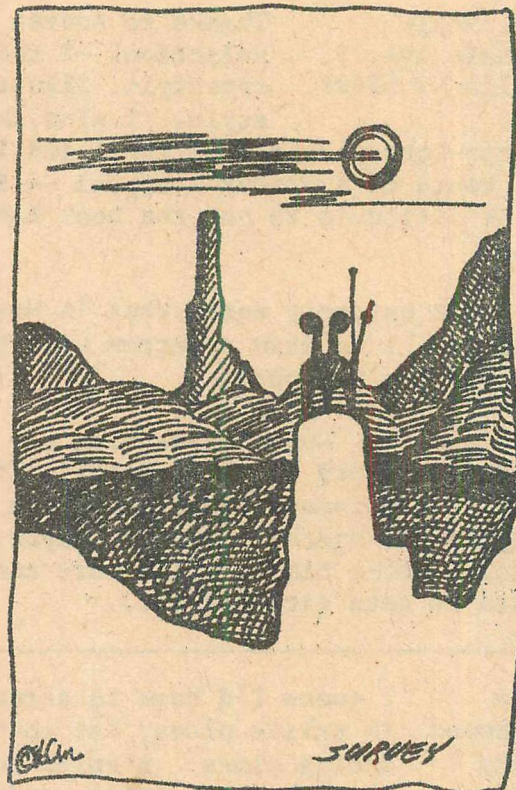
out their plans, but failed to discover  
that the bank was having counter-to-  
ceiling plate glass installed over all  
the teller's windows that night. So the  
next morning they come into the bank,  
one man herds the customers to one side,  
while the other, as planned, vaults over  
the counter -- and hits the glass and  
knocks himself cold. His partner is  
trying to drag him out with one hand  
while covering the customers with his  
gun in the other hand, when the police  
arrive.

Andrea's book-buying method would seem to  
be one of the better ones, for fiction.  
I don't buy much fiction any more, though  
I suppose if I don't find another regular  
reviewing job I'll have to start even-  
tually. But my reading choice is fre-  
quently determined by author, friend's  
recommendation, cover blurb, cover art.

I've found that the cover picture too often has little to do with the story, but an  
attractive one still gets me to look at the book, which is what it's supposed to do.  
The cover blurb is often inaccurate, but provides something to go on, as do the  
quotes from other authors, if there are any. Not because of anything the other  
authors say, but because of who they are. A Sharon Baker pb has a cover quote from  
Gene Wolfe, which makes me more interested in reading it than I would be anyway; a  
Craig Shaw Gardner book has a quote from Spider Robinson, which makes me less in-  
terested in reading it, and a horror novel has a quote from Dean R. Koontz which  
means I probably won't read it. One book has a quote from John Varley, which doesn't  
enthuse me, but otherwise it looks pretty good, so I'll try it. For awhile I knew  
enough about the major authors to know which ones I wanted to read, and I always  
gave a dog one bite; I read the first book of a newcomer. These days, there are  
too many newcomers; I can't do it, so I have to pick and choose.

Professionalism at cons... at Wiscon, Avon Books had a party and gave away books.  
I dropped in, simply because there was an open door and a party going on, and of  
course took my share of books once I found out what it was. Dick Spelman was  
standing, holding his books when I came in, and asked me, "Does this mean I have  
to read them, or can I just put them on my table?" (I told him he ought to at  
least skim through them first.) In my case, I put the books I got there into my  
library, and put the ones that were already in the library on my table... More  
honorable that way... (For those who don't know Dick, that comment was a joke,  
not a statement of intent.)

As usual, the artwork is very good -- I particularly like Cindy Riley's cartoons.





Jeanne M. Nealy  
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Thanks to Andrea Gilbreath for sharing her method of book selection. I too judge a book partially by its cover, typestyle, illustrations (if any) as well as the author's style. I also skip through a book gathering clues as to style (page-long paragraphs, ick!) and layout (no white space, ack). I have less tangible tests of a writer's appeal -- if I laugh out loud in the store/library, or find it difficult to put the book back on the shelf, I'll come away with it in the end.

While I don't entirely agree that 'A Woman's Place is in the Mall' (there ARE other places to go), I do have a button with the caption "Institute for Advanced Shopping" (Shoppus Til You Droppus).

The "Hyde and Seek Weight-Loss Plan" -- hey, this guy is dangerous, and you let him have a pen to record these ravings?! This acknowledgement of "kinetic fat" migration is a revolutionary breakthrough in today's fat flux. The information could well cripple the snack industry! Maybe you should employ a tried-and-true method of control. Force him to write more and more. (If we're lucky, we'll get a bookful before he gets tired of it...

Janet Fox  
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Ks 66523

I guess I'd have to agree that the death of fanzines-as-we-knew them is taking place, but that doesn't mean the yoot of today aren't producing zines. A quick scan of Mike Gunderloy's Factsheet Five shows that what are being produced are punkzines--many, but all of them oriented to music. I've made no attempt to investigate this phenomenon, but the few zines I've seen had titles like "Murder Can Be Fun", art which consisted of collage cut-outs of various unsavory stuff and reasonably bad poetry (punk lyric?) My point isn't that young people are going to hell in a handbasket (as good a way to go as any), but that print media is alive and... well(?) in that sector.

Personally, I can't imagine how anybody could institute a hobby based on printing things up and sending them to as many people as possible--gratis. (Of course, I can't imagine running a zine, either, so maybe that's why). Clubzines are proliferating and there are billyums and billyums of little poetry and writing newsletters springing up (and tumbling down). The demise of print has been somewhat exaggerated. After a stint as a public school teacher, I had the impression that literacy was definitely on the decline overall, but maybe that's a matter of being too close to the problem, since SCAVERGER'S NEWSLETTER is a going concern and I don't see how it could be if small press weren't also on the upswing.

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England

((Skel has the Last Word on the Fan Hugo argument.))  
I would love to see the Fan Hugos given the elbow, providing something more suitable replaced them, but I honestly thought I was merely expressing an idiosyncratic personal opinion, and I never dreamt the groundswell of feeling and support for a 'Die, Hugo, Die' campaign - here's Don (d'Annassa in A43)

himself saying he'd like the chance to kill the fanzine Hugo entirely, Mike Glicksohn saying he'd support such a motion, and Patrick Nielsen Hayden writing that perhaps the time has really and truly come to get rid of it. All this note, in the LoCol of one of the Hugo-nominated fanzines. There is a tide.....

Could this be our finest Hour?



Brian Earl Brown  
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Like ANVIL 44, thought I'd keep this short. Actually, while #44 runs to 24pp, it seemed longer than that, perhaps because of the tight margins and few interior illos -- hope you'll have that over-inking problem licked by next issue. ((Ha!

I just knew you fanzine-publishers would notice! Actually, I had a major inkspill during production, as well as the initial over-inking. Wish there was a dip-stick in the drum so one could tell if one actually needed to add ink. During the clean-up process I discovered that the household cleaner, Fantastik, is a fine mimeo-ink solvent. You know, that Christmas tree tinsel that each page goes over after it is printed to relieve it of its static electricity charge so it will float down, drying all the while, before landing on the previously printed page? (This explanation of tinsel is for all you non-mimeo publishers.) Well, it was soppy wet with ink, but after a good bath in Fantastik it was as good as new. -- cp))

I use much the same method as Andrea Gilbreath to pick books to read. First I start with authors I've liked in the past. In their absence, I look for covers and/or titles which sound/look interesting, then I read the blurb and if not put off, sample the writing, something in the middle, sometimes the first page. And sometimes this process works and sometimes it doesn't. Jo Clayton's Skeen's Leap had a great cover, interesting blurb and seemed readable but actually failed quite badly at being pastiche Leigh Brackett.

So Juanita Coulson is responsible (among others) for filking -- and I like her! I dislike filking about as much as Buck dislikes conreports. This may be because the two local conventions are always naming unknowns as their fan guests of honor -- an oxymoron in my eyes. Generally it turns out that these non-entities are big-time filkers. But they're still non-entities to me.

I'm turning into a real grouch in my old age -- can't help wondering if it has something to do with being born a Hoosier, like Buck.

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Lawrence Watt-Evans  
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The situation with the Audi 5000 series is not quite as Brian Earl Brown describes it. AUDI (which, contrary to explanations I've seen elsewhere ranging from the almost-logical to the claim that it was named for Ferdinand

Porsche's dog, stands for Auto Union Deutsches Industries) admits that there may be a design flaw in the 5000 series, but that it's nothing so esoteric as linkages; it's that the pedals, which are not differentiated by shape as well as in most cars these days, are set further to the left than usual, so that the accelerator is where the brake is in most cars, and the brake where the clutch would be if there were a clutch.

There had been about 800 incidents reported, not "thousands", the last time I read anything on the matter, and virtually all of those involved people who had owned the car less than three months, or were not the vehicle's usual driver. A good many were trying to make a sudden, unexpected stop. By no means all of them involved shifting out of PARK. That they could all result from people stepping on a misplaced accelerator doesn't surprise me in the least, and if it surprises Mr. Brown then in my opinion he's obviously underestimating human stupidity.

Which is not to say that I disagree with his basic argument against turning the space program over to private industry. Industry and government are both capable



of screwing things up royally. The big differences are that industry does it through mismanagement and under-spending alone, while government does it through mismanagement, bureaucratic bungling, under-spending, over-spending, and changing direction according to the political winds; and that industry tries to either buy its way out of trouble or simply folds up in the face of disaster, while government tries to hide the problems, lie about them, or use them as an excuse to start all over with new management and less money. All in all, I think I'd prefer a space program that won't fold up completely in the face of economic setbacks, and that means government. Government agencies never die. Companies do.

Oh, yeah, one thing about Mr. Brown's argument: He's quite right that corporate America these days relies far too heavily on short-term gains, but I think he over-estimates the far-sightedness of government, which generally looks only as far as the next election or two, and which has a long tradition of evaluating programs on the basis of how they can be presented as political issues, rather than whether they work or are accomplishing anything worthwhile. This means that every so often the space program is going to have to survive hostile administrations, which will slow it down drastically. Private industry would run a much faster program, but one that might die suddenly and horribly, and that would pay far less attention to details like pure science.

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Patrick Nielsen Hayden I seem to have missed an issue of ANVIL along the way somewhere, so maybe there's something contextual that I don't understand about Mike Glicksohn's loc in #44. Be that as it may, I can't leave uncorrected his reference to "the fact that...there is no formal commitment for the DUFF winner to write a trip report" -- true enough -- "whereas that obligation is clearly stated in the TAFF rules." Absolutely wrong, and I can't imagine where Mike got the idea. Carefully examining my collection of TAFF ballots going back to the first race in 1954, I find such an obligation to be neither "clearly stated" nor obliquely implied on any of them. For one thing, how would such a rule be enforced? You can't repossess a trip.

My understanding of the general theory behind TAFF reports is this: that they're nice when they happen, but essentially they're icing on the cake, and if fandom would take a more relaxed and less confrontational attitude toward the whole issue they'd probably get more enjoyable fanac out of returned TAFF winners, instead of guilt followed by gaffiation. As I remarked in the last TAFFLUVIA, a simple experiment will demonstrate the truth of this proposition: sit down at a typewriter, clear your head, and type atop a piece of paper "THIS IS MY TAFF REPORT, AN IMMORTAL AND LASTING PIECE OF BLOCKBUSTER FANWRITING IN THE TRADITION OF THE HARP STATESIDE, ATOM ABROAD, AND THE TRANSATLANTIC HEARING AID." Then keep typing. Mike observes that more DUFF winners, proportionately, have produced trip reports than have their TAFF-winning counterparts; this probably has a lot to do with the fact that no single DUFF report has been extraordinarily good. (Another factor in the situation is the way that DUFF winners have, on average, tended to be people with less time put in as active fans; TAFF winners, on the other hand, have often been people so honored just after they pass the peak of their fannish energy.) In any case, not only is Mike wrong about their being such an obligation established anywhere in TAFF's official documentation, but I would strongly argue against any effort to establish such a rule. For that matter I think it's a mistake to promise any such thing in one's ballot platform, but I learned that the hard way. Despite that (and in answer to your next question) our own TAFF report is pootling along, and a largish chunk of it will appear in HYPHEN number 37, to be published this summer or early fall.



Joan Hanke-Woods  
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I am into fan-ish artwork again, after having some sense beaten into me at the karate dojo. Lately my work has been media-oriented due to the encouragement of a friend who is more into the "media" fandom that true-blue, honest to ghu, sf fandom that we all love and exploit. This preference for media work is temporary, but it is doing a splendid job of 'getting-me-to-it' and exploring new techniques. Soon enough I shall be investigating the fantasy and sf I love best.

Why is it called ANVIL? ((Birmingham is not a tourist mecca--in fact, our only 'point of interest' is a statue of Vulcan, atop Red Mountain, overlooking the city and which is reminiscent of the days when steel was our #1 industry. Vulcan's arm is raised high above his head, holding a hammer (it actually looks like a pop-cicle), and ANVIL is named after the anvil in front of him. Vulcan wears only a leather apron and his bare buttocks shine down on Homewood, Alabama. I guess we could have called it MOON OVER HOMEWOOD, but you would still be asking "Why is it called... -- cp))

Garth Spenser  
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Canada V8V 3E1

Do you realize ANVIL 44 mentioned three different SF and fantasy authors from Canada, all in one issue? I thought it was illegal or something to notice so many at once. While we're committing felonies against statistics I'll identify them as Canadians, or at least landed immigrants.

I rather enjoyed Yarrow, by Charles de Lint, as Andrea Gilbreath did. De Lint has made this practice of writing adult, modern fantasy, and mixing up mundane reality with the Otherworld, usually in Ottawa and environs. I've been following Greg Bear's exercise in the same kind of fantasy -- The Infinity Concerto, The Serpent Mage -- only set in several Otherworlds and downtown Los Angeles. What I'm waiting for is a de Lint novel in which some reason for the invasion of wonder appears, and some ultimate effect on mundane reality. Donald Kingsbury taught at McGill University in Montreal until recently, when he retired to go into writing full-time. I have never yet read a Kingsbury story that has any local colour. Maybe if I save up ~~my allowance~~ I can obtain The Moon Goddess and the Son. Maybe the local library will get some copies... five years from now.

Someone mentioned the Fionavar trilogy... yeah, I guess it is a bit derivative; still, an original handling of used ideas. To a great extent original ideas and original handling of used ideas are not greatly different. But perhaps I'm judging these things by feel. You mention Bob Shaw's originality, and I think that he takes anything -- Bermuda Triangle apocrypha, ley-line speculations -- and runs with them in the most unexpected directions. I could not honestly say that Guy Gavriel Kay gives the feel of blazing an original trail. Perhaps that still lies ahead of him, and ahead of Charles de Lint.

After a year or two of editing The Maple Leaf Rag I found myself both presenting market news to Canadian pros and presenting news about the pros to Canadian fans. There seemed to be an idea going around that you couldn't write SF or fantasy in Canada, or get published in Canada, or something. I hear that SFWA members effectively killed a proposed Canadian SF magazine this year because they wouldn't contribute to a Canadian magazine (must have thought it was automatically a small magazine. Bastards). This only strengthens the idea that you can't publish SF in Canada. Well, we make progress slowly.



P.L. Caruthers-Montgomery  
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Anniston AL 36201-2372

Spending money on reading material? Must be a pleasant dilemma. Alas, the money tree does not grow well on Montgomery lands. I never, never rely on reviews. My tastes are too weirdly diverse for such guidance to be of use. But I find I am seldom disappointed by previously-read authors. When I go into the local BookLand, I scan through the alphabetical montage of colorful covers in search of new books by previously-enjoyed writers first.

Then, if I happen to have a gift certificate to splurge, I do much like Andrea (Hi, Andy!); first I read the cover blurb -- with a grain of salt, as blurbs are often infuriatingly misleading. I often examine the first page, but NEVER look further into the book. Dipping into a book leaves too much danger of learning something you don't want to know until you reach that point.

Selecting books at the local Book Rack is another matter. There I'm much more likely to take a chance on a book; I have a lot less to lose. (Particularly since I have almost \$100 in credit left from trading over 500 paperback sf books my sister had accumulated. 500 was all I could afford to ship back from California. Some 75 books reside on a shelf waiting to be read or re-read.)

My third method of selection is use of esp. That's not very useful to other readers as it is an inborn talent, but I find it works quite well for me. And I always buy the latest Star Trek novel. No hesitation at all.

Re Brian Earl Brown's remarks on the decline of print (fanzine) fandom... Socializing at cons is all well and good, but where else than in fanzines can one find egoboo in black&white (or whatever color-contrast scheme prevails), egoboo one can look back on when the ego fires burn lowest? I want it all.

Murray Moore  
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I wasn't going to write a letter. I was going to send \$6 for 4 more ANVILs. I thought I should loc but decided against it. My problem for a number of years has not being able to keep up with the reading of everything that I want to read. The battle is to keep up the pretence that I am holding my ground. The latest impediment is my near-one-year-old son. I don't do any serious reading, beyond a newspaper, while he is awake.

But he is the reason why I am typing this letter of comment. Since I can't do any seriour reading, because he is very much awake, and his mother is otherwise occupied, doing good work, I decided I might as well use the time to do this. I had to wait for him to play with the keys of the typewriter. He has gone away to unplug the television and the VCR.

One of the activities I am not doing while typing this loc is trying to finish Ancient of Days. Reading Ancient of Days isn't a chore, understand. Finding time when I have the energy is the problem. I mention it only because it is set in Georgia and is the only sf novel I can bring to mind having read set in the U.S. South. I have wasted some time because of Michael Bishop, though. I rarely reread, because of all that I have yet to read once. But I read the first third of Ancient of Days, Her Habiline Husband, in its original appearance, in an anthology (Carr, I imagine), and now a third time. I almost didn't buy Ancient of Days because I had read the first of it twice. But (now) I have read "Her Habiline Husband" a third time. Last night I finished "His Heroic Heart" -- "Heritor's Home" to go.



Shailla Strickland  
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Oh, it has been a long time since I've written. I can't excuse myself on grounds of ill health as Harry Warner, Jr. or pressure of other fanish activity as Marc Ortlieb. It's probably due to being out of work -- I have so much free time I can't

get anything done.

Filk fandom is one of those areas I keep thinking I might yet get involved in. Right now it's more a lack of opportunity -- I'm only seeing it at the larger cons I attend and then there's so much else to distract me. Anyone care to predict when the first filk video comes out?

Buck Coulson is doing a good job of widening horizons for me. I read a couple of his recommended Barbara Mertz books on archaeology and have passed on the recommendations. I missed out on World History while I was in school so it's nice to have some guidance as to what's good and what's well-written.

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Linda Pickersgill Argh - how frustrating! I had a loc 3/4 finished on A43 along  
7A Lawrence Road with some bowing and scraping about please keeping me on your  
South Ealing, mailing list - and it's gone! Consumed by the other masses of  
London W5 4XJ U.K. paper on my table, almost all of which is Conspiracy matter.  
It's as I expected -- Conspiracy has literally taken over my  
life, my home, my table. Try thinking back to a year ago today with Confederation  
about to happen -- that's how I am now. Just waiting to get on with something I've  
been planning for over two years -- sort of like an elephant's pregnancy.

I'm going to have to whip this into an envelope and post it now or I'll never make your 'heard from' deadline date -- you're a tough cookie, Miz Proctor. As a quickie though--I enjoyed the thought-provoking editorial and lettercol and we hope to get a good panel debate along similar lines going at our Conspiracy fan program. I was also entertained, surprisingly so, by Buck Coulson's article. God forbid that he and Greg ever get together -- Greg's similar interest in history is on the brink of obsessive, and we can't afford another obsessive hobby. And I love the Cindy Riley illos. ((end of first letter, just arrived, the second -- cp))

Damn, woman! You don't fool around, do you. I finally get my finger out and loc A43 for fear of being dropped from your mailing list and before I breathe again there's ANVIL 44 on my doorstep.

I have to say that what struck me most wasn't what was in A44 but what was left out and that being the response to your editorial of A43. You wrote a hard-hitting piece there and I was looking forward to what I hoped would be a healthy engaging lettercol in ANVIL for months to come about a topic that is relevant to any of us who care and are interested in the fanzine sub-culture. Instead I feel like a door has been closed in my face. Believe me, I can well appreciate that feeling of being sick to death of a subject to the point of wishing it would all go away and with that in mind, I believe you did the right thing for yourself. For myself, it's a subject I haven't fully discussed either in print or in person and I'm hoping I'll get a chance at Conspiracy to talk to people from all fanzine producing countries and listen to their ideas and opinions. Oh, hell, I feel myself falling into a trap here -- the natural extension of the thinking is that if someone else won't or doesn't produce the kind of material you want to read, then produce it yourself. Gak -- I feel a fanzine coming on.



I was surprised by Andrea Gilbreath's article. I suppose it's because I never believed that anyone actually bought a book because of the cover. This is despite the fact that book dealers, distributors, publishers and writers have been telling me differently for years. I still don't believe it. The vast majority of covers are so dull and repetitive that they turn me off of buying anything. I've quit going into SF bookshops because I take one look at the walls lined with those same repetitive covers and my mind goes blank. Please pass on to Andrea that there are many many other ways of finding out about good books without relying on something as random as cover art. I find that friends are the best source of good books. Surely Andrea must come into contact with enough fans to be able to ask the age-old "read any good books lately" question. I've found that I'm lucky living in London where I get to rub elbows with dealers, critics and people in publishing who are quite pleased to tell me about their latest favorites. But if you're not rubbing elbows with other SF readers, then there are loads of publications that review books, from the columns in F&SF and LOCUS and their kind down to club and university fanzines and sercon zine reviews. The trick here, of course, is to find a reviewer whose opinions and tastes you trust and agree with. Hell, tell Andrea to ask me -- I'll tell her what good books I've read lately.

I have a similar theory to Richard Hyde about fat redistribution, only mine is about yat redistribution. Living in London these past 8 years (8 years, my God!) I've learned to tone down my natural New Orleans/Southern accent and blend in with my environment. Last visit back home I visited that prince of a fellow, Dennis Doibear, who made some comment about my vague English accent. A week or so later we were standing about talking and he pointed out that I was talking with a definite Nawlins accent now, or "yat" as it's called (as in "where y'at, Bubba!"). This led to the theory that much like fat cells which will expand on contact depending on how much fat is in the body, all natives to N.O. are born with "yat" cells which will expand on contact, depending on the amount of Dixie beer, Barg's or good old Mississippi water is in the system at any given time. That's why it takes a couple of days consumption New Orleans style before I lose the soft English tones and start drawling with the best of 'em. This in turn, drives Greg crazy when I return to London and greet him with a big "Where y'at, Sweetheart!"

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WE ALSO HEARD FROM: Bob Shaw, Martin Tudor, Eric Lindsay, Jean Weber, Pam Wells, Merlin Odom, Harry Andruschak, Grag A. West, Vytautas J. Vitkauskas, Donald J. Roy, Mark Watson, Daniel A. Dias, Nancy Delia, Harry Bond, Elizabeth Richardson, Lisa Jenkins, Don Lee Jr., and Nigel Rowe.

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THE LAST WORD: Last stencil typed August 21, 1987, about two weeks later than I had planned, but vacations will do that to you. Since you won't be receiving this until early September, or later, in order to allow turn-around time for overseas loccers, the next issue will come out in January, 1988. Deadline for submitted material is 1/1/88.

These stencils were proof-read (before printing, for a change) by Linda Riley and D.L. Burden, as part of our continuing Search for Excellence. Speaking of excellence, next time we'll talk about Art Widner's genzine YHOS, a zine of the old school. We also hope to have Richard Hyde's thoughts on zero-gravity six.....

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN: The apparent over-inking is caused by my old Selectric typing too hard on my new 'daisy-wheel' stencils.