

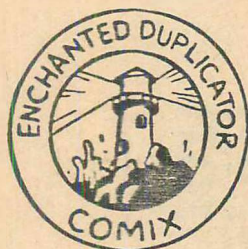


"GHOST READERS"









1989

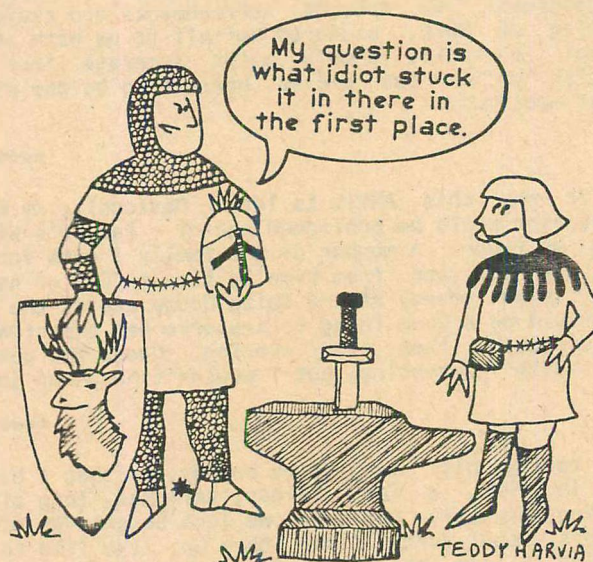
# ANVIL



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May 1, 1989

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# CHARLOTTE'S WEB

Birmingham's second annual Continuity was held in February, and for a con only two years old, was quite a success -- from my point of view, anyway. It really began for me the night before when Leonard Nimoy spoke at UAB. Between 2500 and 3000 rabid (but well-behaved) fans were on hand, and he told us what we wanted to hear. It was a set piece entitled "Confessions of a Trek Lover", but he delivered it with such sly good humor (he played the audience like a musical instrument), his stories and remarks seemed as spontaneous and full of life and love as our reaction to them. It was wonderful, and gratifying to a trekkie-at-heart, to be treated with respect, and told what we wanted to hear!

Getting back to Continuity: the minute I walked in the door and saw fans hanging around, I felt good about it. There were lots of people who said "this is my first convention" and I hope they had as good a time as I did. Dal Coger was a wonderful Toastmaster -- he and CoH Andy Offut put on quite a show at Opening Ceremonies. I heard the laughter upon laughter from the crowded room behind me but couldn't go in to see... Registration was busy the whole time. I met and made friends with some new and interesting people (Hi, Gwyn; Hi, Smithy; Hi, Kelly!) as well as seeing friends of long standing (Hi, Susan; Hi, George & Steven!). After working Registration Friday afternoon, I entertained the masses with Tarot readings. This was real popular, and I felt different from all other animals and much sought after by one in the morning. I had a terrible headache by this time and tried to beg off, but some people didn't want to wait. When I finally got through, I went home and threw up, took drugs and slept. The second day was not so horrific.

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So much has happened since I wrote the previous paragraphs two months ago, I have forgotten most of it. Continuity is old news and I'm going to Kubla this weekend. Well, so are a bunch of folks: Penny, Linda, Adrian, Kelly, Dan & Karen, Sarah, Scott, Jim Phillips, Conus and I don't know who all. // BSFC has reorganized, as much as it ever is organized. Our policy is to have no rules, because if you have rules, well, it can lead to complications. We did elect officers, just to make us feel more club-like, and I've reserved the library meeting room for the rest of the year. Debbie Rowan was elected vice president, Linda declared she was treasurer for life, and somehow she became secretary, too, and Gary Rowan who was talking about the importance of telephone contact was appointed telephone chairman. I was elected president.

Merlin is Program Chairman, again, and we discussed at length what kind of programs we are aiming for. Our local horror author, Robert McCammon, is high on the list. A Fannish Olympics was discussed, with events like (1) fanzine egoscan; (2) mailbox dash; (3) elevator cram, or alternatively, as we have no elevator, VolksWagen cram; (4) Fanspeak trivia. Any more suggestions? We brought refreshments and stayed until 10:30 or so. Cheryl Kiser, at her first meeting of BSFC, endeared herself to us with stories of another club's encounter with a therapy group! I really should print excerpts from Linda's minutes. She has always denied being a fannish writer but proved herself to be one with her outrageous (but factual) reportage of the first meeting.

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As to why this ANVIL is late: Obviously, my work load has increased, and I began to wonder if ANVIL ever would be published again! And it's kind of interesting the thing I am doing that cuts into my fanac. A member of the family I work for is Spokesperson for the U. S. State Department. You may see her from time to time on CNN or network news. She has been in government work for over seven years, at the White House and at the Treasury Department. In any event, she thought it would be a Good Thing to preserve her experiences for future generations of her family, so she is dictating them every evening. Guess who gets to transcribe? and edit? and rewrite? Right. It's quite interesting, but I wouldn't have her job for anything!

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The really big news, to me anyway, is that I have a new car. The last time we bought a new car was in 1966, a Ford Falcon, stripped, long since deceased. Since then while in the throes of raising expensive children, we just bought VWs off the side of the road for three or four hundred dollars, and Jerry fixed them up. (He like to work with his hands.) I've been talking about getting a new car for two or three years... always off in the future. "One day, I want a real car," I would say. Driving a VW is all very well and good in town, but the time comes when it is so old and decrepit you realize you are trapped in town, can't drive any further than you are able to walk back. I could have put several hundred dollars into engine work, but what would I have? A VW, that's what. So I shopped around, consulted the Consumer Reports Auto issue, and went to look at the Dodge Dynasty and Ford Taurus. A 3L V-6 medium sized car is what I was looking for, and I found it in the Taurus. They had scores of them on the lot and when I said what I wanted, they asked "What color?" The Dynasty could not compete price-wise, as the Taurus had \$3,000

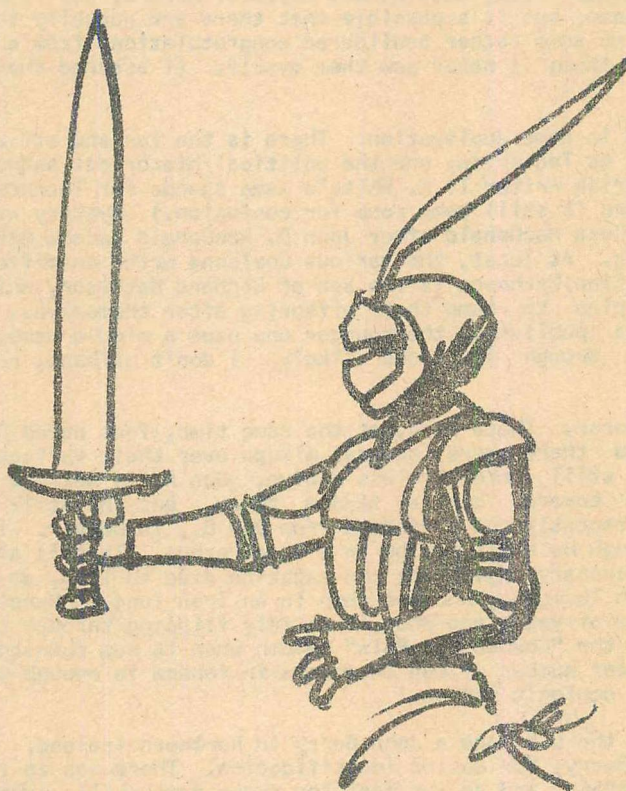


knocked off the list price. I test-drove a blue Taurus, then went home to do the rest of my homework. The insurance company quoted a price I could live with, and the bank practically threw money at me. What else could I do? I bought it. It's loaded: tilt steering wheel, cruise control, a great sound system, the whole nine yards. I can hardly stand so much luxury after years of deprivation. We drove to Georgia to visit Valerie on Sunday. I pulled into the driveway, honked the horn and watched the window-curtains twitch. Then she came out to see who was there. Big surprise! (Jerry Wayne had figured it out. He knew I was wanting a car, and I didn't often call to see if I could come over, but he didn't spill the beans to Valerie.) So there it is. The bank and I own a beautiful blue Taurus, and the bank lets me drive it.

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And now for a commercial announcement. ANVIL no longer accepts money. In fact, I've been sending back money this year, as I don't want to be obligated. Of course, I'll still add your name to the mailing list upon receipt of statement of desire to own an ANVIL of your very own. As you have probably figured out, after six or seven or however many years of this, I'm about to wind down. I hesitate to say there'll never be another ANVIL, because it is fun to do, when I have the time. I have had a good time with it, but it's time to go to other things. When I reach the end of one of these eras in my life, I never know what is going to fill the time next, and this time is no different. Who knows? Having my very own car may result in more non-fannish travel, vacations and such. Or then again, it may not if car payments keep me poor. But back to the commercial announcement. Inasmuch as I will not be publishing regularly, after this issue sees the light of day, and I can no longer acknowledge your trades, please strike me off your list. I feel guilty about not locating all those lovely zines, but I'm just not a loccer. And when we publish again, Roy Bivens who has his own fanzine supply, will do the review column. You know, it's really a shame, just when we have so many great letters and articles and a new columnist... Charlotte runs out of steam!

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# THE OLD IRONMASTER NAMES NAMES -- Buck Coulson

I recently borrowed a library copy of the book NO THANKS TO THE DUKE, a Crime Club mystery by Alastair Dunnett. It centers around a British boys' school, and I was a bit startled to see the headmaster identified as "Dr. Coulson". I seems to have a name common enough -- especially in England -- to be used in fiction occasionally, and unusual enough that I always get a bit of a jolt when I see it. Of course, I'm not so startled when it shows up in science fiction; there I know where it came from. Tucker has used it in a couple of his books, Joe Hensley has done the same in his mysteries, and Dean McLaughlin used it once. But the major user of the name has been British author Jack Mann, who wrote some fantasy, specialized in exotic adventure, and never heard of me. He did a whole series about one Rex Coulson. I own COULSON GOES SOUTH, thanks to Bob Briney. There are also COULSON HERE, DETECTIVE COULSON, and RECKLESS COULSON (which is the one I'd most like to own, of course.) Someone also gave me a copy of a religious booklet titled CHARLIE COULSON, THE DRUMMER BOY. (I put the donor's name in the booklet and I haven't seen either one since we moved last; it's undoubtedly still in a box somewhere.) Now and then I come across the name elsewhere, and I sometimes wonder if other fans ever see "themselves" in print, and are equally startled if they do.

Of course, with two other Robert Coulsons in the writing business, I shouldn't be too startled. There is a copy of HOW TO STAY OUT OF COURT, by Robert Coulson, up on our "brag shelf" as a joke; I picked up a remainder copy. This is the Robert Coulson who is a New York lawyer and writes about legal matters and yachting, which puts him a bit out of my league. I did write him a letter once, but never got an answer. There is, or was, a Robert E. Coulson who used to write hunting stories for the outdoor magazines in the 1930s, and a Robert Coulson who did a couple of articles on small-town politics for one of the prestige magazines circa 1960, when he was mayor of Aurora, IL. I'm assuming that these last two are the same, but it's possible that there are actually four of us. The political articles brought me some rather bewildered congratulations from a YANDRO reader, which is how I know about them; I never saw them myself. (I assured the reader that it wasn't me.)

Of course, I'm not alone in name duplication. There is the fan and stf author Theodore Edward White, better known as Ted White, and the political/historical author, Theodore H. White. (The "T" in Arthurian writer T. H. White's name stands for Terence, but since he uses strictly initials there is still some room for confusion.) Mystery writer John Ross MacDonald became simply Ross MacDonald after John D. MacDonald became making a name for himself as a mystery writer. At least, the various Coulsons write on different subjects. Of course, Richard Christian Matheson is the son of Richard Matheson, which should be a warning to authors who plan to name their offspring after themselves. There are two Robert Nathans with books published; the younger one uses a middle name, and I have no idea if they're related, though it seems likely. I don't offhand, recall any other professional duplications.

In fandom, it's sometimes worse. There were, at the same time, fans named Don A., Don B., and Don C. Thompson, and there were several mixups over their various activities by confused fans. Two are still more or less active. Don A. is editing COMICS BUYER'S GUIDE, and more oriented towards comics fandom today, but he still shows up at an occasional stf con, and I recently got a fanzine from Don C., in Denver. I haven't heard of Don B. for awhile, though he still may be in a local group. There's also a letter in an old IMAGINATION (unnecessary adjective; the magazine died in 1958, so all the issues are old) from a fourth Don Thompson, who was then in an iron lung in Muncie, Indiana. I only noticed it a couple of years ago when I was idly flipping through the magazine; I never paid any attention to the "Cosmic Pen Pals" column when it was running, and so never contacted him, but the sheer number of Don Thompsons in fandom is enough to give one the DT's. (Sorry about that; I couldn't resist.)

There is a John Berry in the U.S. and a John Berry in Northern Ireland. Eventually the U.S. Berry became John D. Berry, for easier identification. There was an Ian Macauley in St. Louis fandom in the 1950s, and an Ian MacAuley whose name still crops up in British fandom now and then. There was a Bob Jennings, who left fandom under somewhat of a cloud, and a totally different Bob Jennings who showed up some years later. For that matter, Gene DeWeese and I used the joint pseudonym of "Thomas Stratton" for both fan and professional writing, and a real Thomas Stratton showed up in fandom some years later, but while we were still using the name. (He dropped out quickly; the artificial may have ousted the real.)



Interestingly, for all its supposed ubiquitousness, I don't know of any concentration of John Smiths in either fandom or professional writing; maybe they all use pseudonyms. Nor does there seem to be much duplication of female names, possibly because there weren't as many women in fandom for a long time, and now that there's a more equal division, fandom has more local conventions and fewer fanzines, so names don't become universally known as quickly. There were two Kay Andersons in fandom at one time; they both seem to have dropped out. There was a Bev Clark in fandom in the 1950s, who married, changed her last name, and pretty well dropped out of fannish circles, and there is a Bev Clark in fandom today.

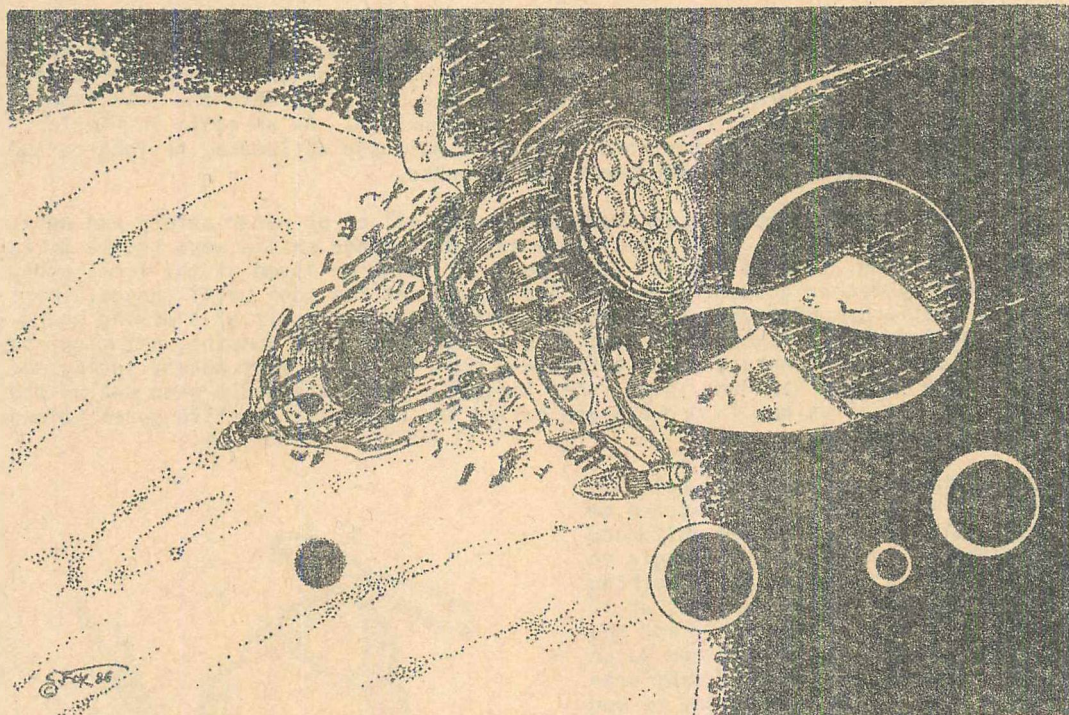
None of the duplicated names seem all that common. Is numerology less a fake than I've always believed and do certain combinations of letters really impel people into certain fields? ("The numbers impel, they do not compel." No, that's swiped from a different bunch of crackpots.) Doesn't seem too likely, somehow; more likely it's chance.

Have any ANVIL readers noticed their names showing up in books, and are you as startled as I am when it happens? Or do you have a name double in fandom or in the arts, and how do you feel about that?

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((Well, Buck, I'll just jump in here and say that the first time someone asked me, after reading my namebadgo, if I were kin to George, I gave my usual flip answer: "No, and neither is my husband." Later, in the dealers' room, I saw for the first time SF books by guess who? -- that's right, George Proctor. -- op))

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# SUMMER MEMORIES

-- Kathleen Gallagher

The warm weather has had my parents bring out the lawn sprinkler. With it, an education for my son Teddy, 5 years old, by his all knowing Grandpa, on the proper method of playing in the sprinkler. My father, Teddy's Grandpa, was fashionably dressed in Budweiser swim trunks and matching hat. Teddy was unsuitably attired in his Care Bear underwear. Lessons were conducted in the backyard in full view of the neighbors.

It brings back memories of my own childhood summers. I remember lying on my back looking into a cobalt blue sky, watching the stars rise one at a time, learning the names of the summer constellations and watching for falling stars and moving stars. (Remember weather balloons and low orbiting satellites?) My brother, Teddy, had a telescope we used to look at the planets through. I was especially fascinated by the canals of Mars and its two moons, Phobos and Deimos. I loved to fantasize about about ERB's Barsoom.

My girlfriend, Mary, and I used to ride our bikes to a little shopping center called Trolleytown. It was named after a tourist attraction, a trolley ride, that we never had enough money for. We often walked the length of the tracks and pretended we had seen the scenery through the windows. At a drugstore in the center itself, we bought our comic books and an ice cream soda from the fountain.

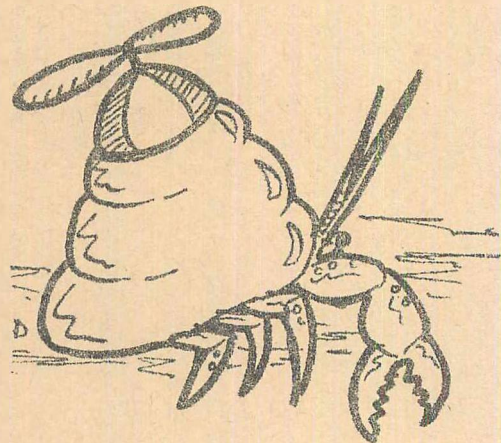
My mother worked as a lab technician in a local hospital. Back then pregnancy tests were conducted by injecting frogs with urine to see whether they reacted to the presence of certain hormones in the urine. Each frog was good for only one test. My mother used to bring them home. After dinner, we would take them to a lake near the house and release them. Sometimes we would see big bullfrogs sitting on the edge of the lake. We were sure they were there to welcome the new frogs. These days I think they must've eaten the newcomers.

We often spent a week with our cousins at a relative's summer home on Lake Erie. It was a great time for a group of kids. Every evening near sunset we'd be taken to a little park on the beach to swing and play until the sun, a flaming ball, set into the lake itself. Sometimes we could see a large freighter just on the horizon. As an adult in Florida I used to look for ships over the horizon. Sometimes we'd see sailboats, freighters and even Soviet spy ships bristling with equipment and antennae.

Both of my parents are excellent swimmers and taught all of us water safety and basic swimming at a very young age. More formal lessons and advanced skills were taught to us in Red Cross Swimming lessons at a local pool. I think we lived at the local pool, picnicking after my mother got off from work and staying at the pool until sunset. There were the usual challenges of trying to learn to jackknife properly off of a diving board, learning to dive from the 3 meter board head first, instead of just jumping, swimming the length of the pool under water, doing a thousand bobs in the 10 foot water, seeing who could lie on the bottom of the pool the longest. That was ended when one of the lifeguards thought one of us was in trouble and pulled the kid out. The life guard ruined a perfectly good contest!

When I was a teenager, my Uncle Ray sold his fishing boat to my parents. We listened to my mother tell us stories about her childhood fishing expeditions. For us, the magic in the boat was learning to water ski. Nothing matches being pulled behind a boat at 30 knots per hour, the wind in your hair and the shore line whizzing by. Nothing can match flying across the water, for pure exhilaration. Getting the wind knocked out of you and kicking yourself in the head with the water skis you were formerly whizzing along on, are parts that are better forgotten!

And nothing matches watching your child grow up, making his own memories.





# AMERICAN VACATION

-- Eva Hauser

I thought it might be interesting for you to hear our impressions of the U.S. In 1987, my husband and I spent our holidays on the East Coast. It was staggering! People seemed to us to be euphoric, as if they took some mood-elevating drug all the time. There was something simple, uncomplicated, in their joy of life, in their belief that they live in the best country in the world -- well, perhaps they really do. And they don't doubt it. I think that Europeans generally doubt more things.

I remember my impression from the EPCOT center in Florida of the exposition named Spaceship Earth. Big puppets of Pythagoras, Michelangelo, Edison... and... at the epitome of progress... an American family watching TV, an American manager overlooking a map of the USA on a huge display... music filled with pathos, lots of flickering lights... "America is the epitome of progress, the hope of mankind!" I almost wept, because I was touched by the overwhelming simplicity of all of this -- I have never seen this sort of propaganda, persuading the spectator so emotionally that he is the best, the most happy creature on earth...

My husband was deeply shaken by the shops, especially by those filled with vegetables, fruits, various sorts of bread, salads. I was also shaken, but in another way: such terrible waste! Why 50 sorts of vegetables? People will not buy 'it all and it will not stay fresh and they will finally throw it out! Horrible! Or: these enormously large cars, and everybody has his own; what waste! (We have no car at all, though most families do have one.) And this air-conditioning! On New York's Wall Street, the temperature was remarkably lowered by the cold air blowing from the doors of the offices... again unimaginable waste! Or in MacDonald's (which was our favorite): what an astonishing quantity of plastic plates and devices and paper napkins. People don't even use them and then throw everything away...

You know, the most surprising thing for us was the comfort of life -- with every detail so pleasant; including jogging, other sports, and the non-smoking campaign. You can clearly see the different response of people to official propaganda (or advice): in the U.S. everybody stops smoking, but in Czechoslovakia they say: "In such polluted air as ours it's quite the same," and they smoke even more.

But the most important distinction probably is that competent and hard working people are appreciated in the U.S. and do achieve success. Everybody is proud to do his best in his job which is surprising and strange for me! So there is no waste of the potential of people's abilities. And this waste is really fatal, not only for economic growth, but also for a people's spirit, for their self-confidence and happiness.



# SEASON'S GREETINGS

MERRY CHRISTMAS for 1988/1989 -- on 14th March 1989

From Bob Shaw, President of the Christmas Should Be A Movable Feast Association, and co-founder of the More Reading On Christmas Cards Movement.

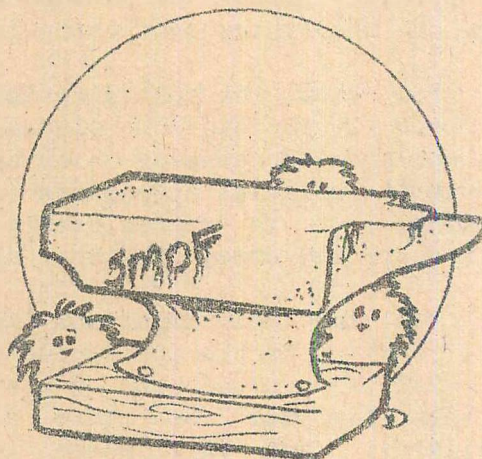
I hope you will have a lovely time on Christmas Day, which -- as you can see from the above -- falls on 14 March 1989. One of the reasons I founded the CSBAMFA is that I was pretty ill just before the old-fashioned fixed date for Christmas, and did not get round to sending out the conventional type of card. I came down with acute bronchitis, spent three weeks confined to bed and a further month convalescing. I used to think bronchitis meant having a bit of a cough, but thousands of people die from it every year and I have been given an insight into how they do it. On the few occasions when I dared look at the back of my throat it resembled crimson wallpaper closely covered with yellow polka dots. The dots were ulcers which hurt so much when solid food was going by that eating simply wasn't worth while. For almost a week I lived on ice cream. I ate it with a teaspoon, fashioning it into little canoe shapes which I then sent sailing down into the fiery furnace of my thorax. Each one expired in a satisfying puff of steam. Had it not been for my superb constitution -- carefully preserved by a life of clean living and moderate habits -- I might not be here today. I might be somewhere else -- Paris, Rio, Scunthorpe -- but enough of this introspection! On with the seasonal greetings...

As is only befitting on the occasion of a religious festival, I should pen a word or two about the great controversy of the day -- the Rushdie affair. It is important for the free-lance author to look out for new markets, so when I saw TV pictures of those zealots in Bradford burning a copy of SATANIC VERSES my commercial instincts were aroused. I wrote to the BBC, ITV and some local newspapers informing them that I had published a couple of dozen books which had made irreverent comments about practically every religion going. The books, I said, are printed on top-grade paper, are easily ignited and will give a satisfactory blaze right through to the last page. Leaders of religious groups wishing to carry out ceremonial burnings of my work, I went on, can obtain copies from all leading booksellers.

The humourless bastards who edit the letters in the local media totally ignored me, but -- although I was peeved at the time -- I have since become quite relieved. It is bad enough having hit men from the Stephen Donaldson Fan Club stalking me for remarks I made about his books without my having to go into hiding from a bunch of characters from the Arabian Nights.

On Christmas Eve (i.e. March 13th) I will be setting out on my second visit to Australia -- and I go numb with astonishment every time I think of it. If anybody has suggested, back in 1950 when I entered fandom, that I would some day travel the world as a consequence I would have dismissed the notion as purest fantasy. The work we did on fanzines in those days was a labour of love, with emphasis on the word "labour". In the absence of space-age reproduction technology, three of us -- Walt Willis, James White and I -- used to spend an entire evening setting up one page of a 50-page fanzine in lead type. But it was done with joy. We were among the handful of people in the known universe who were addicted to SF. The more scorn that was heaped on us by the mundane world -- and there was a lot of it -- the better we felt, because we knew we were the Star-begotten and we were nostalgic for the future. The future has arrived, and in many ways it is more rewarding than any of us expected, but those convivial evenings of a past in which we were materially less well off continue to have a special golden glow...

Bob Shaw, 66 Knutsford Road, Warrington,  
Cheshire, U.K. WA4 2PB





# WHAT DOES IT ALL MEAN?

-- Marie Rengstorff

This article was inspired by Charlotte's article on SF films in ANVIL #48. I am currently teaching a college course called "Psychology through Science Fiction" which uses several audio-visuals including SF movies and, would you believe, an old Star Trek episode. Of course, the students have to read as well. I assigned stories from four SF anthologies and a novel.

One lovely thing about SF readers/students; it takes no effort to get them to read the assignments. Before the second week, most of the students had read all the assignments for the quarter plus most of the unassigned stories in the anthologies. And ever time I went to check out the assigned films from the video stores, my students had beat me to them.

I had no trouble, however, finding SF films relevant to the class on psychology. As Charlotte said, early SF movies ranged from weak to pathetic, but the current market contains some "valid, legitimate Science Fiction films". Among the films I assigned for the class was Charlie. This neo-classic reveals at least three problems studied in developmental psychology. As Charlie moves from retarded to super-competent, we first see the problems of the retarded child. As Charlie recognizes that his pet mouse and fellow experimental subject has deteriorated mentally and died, Charlie knows this will also happen to him. Most viewers are struck by the problems of facing loss of mental function whether that loss is from brain-injury or senility.

There is an implied third theme in the story which is difficult to recognize, and may not have been intended by the author: the stages of growth-to-maturity-to-decline occur to some degree to most life-times.

Charlie also raises the issue of brain enhancement. In this particular class the science fiction of how surgery could increase intelligence inspired quite an interesting discussion on fetal brain transplants. The science fiction of this movie made 20 or so years ago (brain implants to cure brain injuries) has become the reality of the present. Although still in the experimental stage, and only partially successful, surgery has been done taking brain tissue from aborted embryos and transplanting it into injured brains. As I write this, I understand that there is a federal moratorium on this research.

Social-psychology principals appear in many SF films: Dune, Soylent Green, A Clock-Work Orange, Blade Runner, Fahrenheit 451. Actually there were too many films illustrating social problems for me to assign them all. But there is a common theme: take the current social/psychological problems, project them into the future, watch them intensify from bad to intolerable, and see if there are any ways to solve them.



The movie The Ninth Configuration attacks the field of psychology. From the moment of first dialog we are asked to discriminate between who is crazy and who is sane - not a question the world of psychology has answered at all well. In addition, the psychiatrist in the film does not know if his patients, Vietnam veterans suffering psychotic symptoms, are truly nuts, are acting crazy to avoid combat, or are acting crazy to keep from going crazy. The vets do not know themselves.

Survivor guilt, a common phenomenon of the Vietnam war, is portrayed in The Ninth Configuration. We are shown both (1) insidious forms -- nagging depression and feelings of loss of dead friends -- and (2) overwhelming forms which drive survivors to suicide. The futility of the war intensified these responses. If the soldier could not see any point in fighting the war to protect some American oil wells, he could see the point of keeping himself and his buddies alive. Many failed at one or the other of these survival goals. That hurts, whatever your political stand. But the guilt derived from pointless killing was the source of torment most clearly depicted in The Ninth Configuration.

To depict neurotic fears, I chose the film The Man Who Fell to Earth. I selected this over two "nicer" films with similar themes, Starman and E.T., because The Man Who Fell To Earth better illustrates the human fear of the strange and unknown and shows more ways this fear causes the rejected, anomic, isolated individual to suffer.

For interesting studies on mental illness try the Star Trek episode where Kirk is split into two personalities, a good and an aggressive self. In the end, the two halves must be reunited or the individual ceases to exist. I read somewhere, this episode is shown to mental patients. From my experience, this could have merit. Many people, as they recover from an emotional breakdown, try to become perfect, to reject all aspects of their negative nature. Part of recovery is accepting all-of-self. (But I swear, if I see that episode one more time, I'll go nuts.)

Creator illustrates the conflict between the right hemisphere type (the on-the-edge professor who pushes holistic, interactive logic, "the Big Picture") while his colleagues go for left hemisphere rules and linear logic. Again, the merging of the two aspects of self seem the final answer. Many theorists believe this is the key to creative thinking. If you do not have access to data and the use of linear logic (left hemisphere processes) you have nothing to create with. If you cannot loosen up, move away from the constraints of linear logic, and get the "Big Picture" (right hemisphere processes), you cannot create.

Well, my logic is almost gone, both from the right and left hemispheres. How did I manage to go on so long about movies? I think I'll go read a book. But on your recommendations, Charlotte, I promise to go rent/see The Hidden soon.





# FANZINE REVIEWS

by Roy G. Bivens

An inaugural column for any periodical is always hard to start. There's the inevitable inertia that has to be overcome, with readers not familiar with your subject material, your writing style, or even (for that matter) who you are. I had made the observation to my good friend Charlotte a while back that while a fanzine review column could be a good feature for ANVIL, just a listing plus a few throwaway comments for each fanzine received during the past two months or so was probably not worth wasting two pages on. Better to let a few more trees live a while longer. So, she invited me to put my keyboard where my mouth was, and the initial result is this commentary.

What I hope to accomplish here is not a comprehensive review of every fanzine that reaches my mailbox. Heaven forbid; the amount of paper needed to print a column that long could result in mass extinction of whole tropical rain forests, and who knows what would then happen with the Greenhouse Effect. Instead, I want to pick out about four recent fanzines that have piqued my interest, and take a closer look at them.

Since this is starting out to be an off-the-beaten-track review column, what better thing to do than start with a fanzine originating from an off-the-beaten-track location? In this case, that location is the State of Vermont, and the fanzine is Airglow 6, from Terry Bohman. Now, I hate to start a column by just gushing all over the first book (or in this case, fanzine) I review; it tends to make readers think that I only review things that I like, or that I'm best-buddies with the editor. Not so, people; a fair review column looks at a cross-section of what's going on, and deals with the good and the not-so-good. Besides, I haven't been to Vermont in over ten years. But in this case, I can't help being impressed by this enjoyable little zine; there's a lot to like about it.

Airglow is an example of the Personalzine. Or rather, what a Personalzine should be. It features good, competent writing by someone who has the flair for relating anecdotal stories in an interesting way. Bohman happens to be a paramedic by profession. Now I know of at least one other fireman/paramedic in fandom, so he's not unique, but it does give him a somewhat off-angle view of life around him. And, the paramedic profession provides a wealth of experience to write about. In issue 6, for example, there are some First-Day-on-the-Job (in paramedic lingo, "First Run") stories that besides being amusing, also have a convincingly gritty feel to them, no unlike a vignette from a M.A.S.H. episode. The format he chose for this issue is equally interesting, in that it's written as a descriptive narrative of an off-hours bull session at the Firehouse (or wherever it is that paramedics stay); we're allowed to eavesdrop in as various War Stories are being exchanged. At breaks in the narrative, there are the usual diary-type excerpts, letters of comment, and even a few fanzine reviews. This latter material is the usual stuff of Personalzines both good and bad. Here, even though these sections are well written and edited, they're of somewhat less interest than the writing they bracket; they're effectively placed to give the reader a change of pace, however, so that the fanzine doesn't get bogged down. All in all, I like Airglow a lot; I get lots of fanzines in the mail, but this is one that I really look forward to receiving.

A little less off-the-beaten-track is the reviewzine OtherRealms #23, from Chuq Von Rospach, who is demonstrating that someone else in Los Angeles fandom besides Mike Glycer and Marty Cantor is capable of producing a competent fanzine. Only, is it really a fanzine at all? What we see is a 32 page laser-printed, expertly typeset, offset reproduced publication that sells for two dollars and eighty-five cents -- a pretty unusual price for a fanzine. Inside, there are copyright notices everywhere, and in his editorial, Von Rospach informs us that each quarterly issue costs him approximately \$1,500 to print and mail. Fifteen hundred dollars! Not only that, we see that "OtherRealms is available on a returnable basis to bookstores." So, the question logically arises: exactly for what audience is this zine being published?

In any event, excepting Science Fiction Review (which I'm not 100 percent sure was actually a fanzine at all) I'd thought the pure reviewzine had become extinct way back in the later '70s with the passing of Future Retrospective. That zine's format was the individual review -- scads and scads of them, in an attempt to blanket every new and reissue book in the science fiction field. The result was, for the most part, disjointed and uneven issues, depending on what books were issued in any publication period, and what kind of day the various reviewers were having when they wrote their review. With OtherRealms, there's obviously been an attempt at structure; much of the zine is taken up by "theme" columns by various reviewers who provide continuity when proceeding from one book to the next. And the result is, for the most part, a very readable fanzine. In issue



#23, the best writing is in Rick Kleffels' "The Agony Column," which appears to deal exclusively with the Horror genre; another interesting column was by Von Rospach himself, where he "Review[ed] the Reviewers" in the professional SF magazines and a few smaller circulation zines. Other columns are also interestingly written, even on genres that I don't personally find particularly interesting. There's an underlying zippiness and sense of energy here that you're forced to admire.

But after reading, then thinking about OtherRealms for a few days, I find that there are some things about it that seem less desirable. For one thing, it seems to try to be all things to all people -- like Future Retrospective and even Locus, it attempts to completely blanket the entire SF-related genre. As a result, you end up with lists throwing out vague one-liners instead like "Recommended for anyone serious about SF" (for Locus) and, "Some of the most interesting fanzine writing I've seen recently" (for Mimosa). That's the type of review listing that instigated this very column! And speaking of fanzines, the fan press unfortunately gets short shrift here; outside the quarter-page listing of fanzines received and the brief mention of fanzine reviewers in Von Rospach's column, there's very little here than indicates Von Rospach is even interested in the fan community. Even the letter column is mostly comments from SF professionals. So, again I wonder: exactly who is this publication meant for?

Regardless, OtherRealms provides a good, large-circulation outlet for talented artists like Teddy Harvia, Brad Foster, Sheryl ("Sheila") Birkhead to mention three. All are very competent at what they do, and all are still pretty much ignored outside the fanzine ghetto their work gets featured in. In fact, this publication seems to be a missing link between quote-unquote true fanzines and the slicker large volume magazines like Locus. I'm not sure it fills a niche that isn't already better filled by the likes of Locus, but it seems to try harder, at least.

And speaking of trying harder, the microcomputer revolution that's hit fanzine fandom like a storm is resulting in a lot of slickly-produced fan publication that have made their way to my doorstep in the past two years. Personal computers have been pretty affordable for several years, but now even desktop publishing programs and laser printers are coming down in price to where your financially better-off fan publishers can afford them (or better yet, have free after-hours access to them through their employers). And then there are the new desktop copiers that are getting so inexpensive that mimeography (and worse yet, mimeo paper) is becoming an endangered species. It all adds up to the conclusion that publishing an aesthetically attractive zine is no longer the chore and major expense that it once was. It's not difficult to "try harder" anymore to publish a good-looking zine.

But maybe it should be. One insidious danger with the computer revolution is that GIGO (Garbage In - Garbage Out) is so much easier to get away with. It's like the old story of the boss who naively accepts without question conclusions from some ill-conceived undertaking, because the results were printed by a computer. While "GIGO" is perhaps an inapt comparison when reviewing fan publication, it does seem that too many fan publishers are spending their resources making their fanzine look as slick as possible at the expense of content.

A case in point is Torus 4, from Lloyd Penny, Mike Wallis, and Keith Soltys. This is a really nice-looking fanzine, with professional-looking typeset multi-column layout and crisp reproduction on good quality paper. The editors obviously don't have the budget of an OtherRealms, but they've done a pretty good job and Torus in fact compares quite well with OtherRealms in appearance. The contents, however, strike me as quite sterile. For instance, the lead-off article is a reprint from a local general circulation magazine that warns us that passage of an anti-pornography bill under consideration by the Canadian parliament will have undesirable and perhaps repressive implications to writers and publishers. While well written and I suppose of service to the science fiction community, it wasn't of much fan interest; writers and publishers would have in fact been better served if a Locus or a SFWA publication had run it.

Other example abound. There was a moderately interesting interview with Orson Scott Card, which unfortunately didn't get much beyond the obligatory "How I became a writer and what my influences were" type of questions and answers; I would have really liked to have found more about Card as a person than I did here, and as a result the interview seemed somewhat superficial. There was also an article about the benefits and pitfalls of belonging to a writers group that could have been brisk and pleasant at about three pages; however, it was written from a somewhat dry instructional point of view and went on for seven long pages. I found out much more than I ever needed (or wanted) to know about writers groups; this would also have been better off in a less fannish publication.

Then we have a four-page "portfolio" of Taral's artwork, which might have been more interesting if it wasn't the same Japanimation-inspired metalloid she-creature done over and over again. Including the cover, there were five full-page drawings by Taral in this issue; four of them were the same piece, with only slight variations. Actually, though, running fanartist portfolios is a good idea, and I hope they do more in future issues, only with a little more diversity on the pieces selected for publication. And speaking of artwork, I really liked the amusing illos by Skeet, whoever he (she?) is; this is the only



place I've seen his work so far, and I hope he gets wider exposure in other fanzines.

I guess I can sum up my feelings about Torus by saying that it still seems to be searching for what it wants to be, which isn't all that unusual for a publication that has only seen four issues so far. Right now there isn't any theme or personality to the fanzine, and as a result the published articles aren't very memorable. The editors should therefore decide what kind of fanzine they want in content as well as appearance, rather than just publishing whatever finds its way to their mailbox. In the fourth issue's letters column, Mike Glicksohn writes, "... the material [you publish] still lacks that spark that makes a fanzine really interesting to me. Perhaps a little more editorial personality ... would give Torus more pizzazz..." I can only agree.

Issues Reviewed: Airglow 6, from Terry Bohman, Box 14, East Thetford, VT 05043-0014; available for "the usual" or two issues for a buck. OtherRealms #23, from Chuq Von Rospach, 35111-F Newark Blvd., Suite 255, Newark, CA 94560; available in print for \$2.85 per issue or 4 for \$11, and electronically on USENET, Delphi, and CIS (write him for details). Torus 4, from The Kamikaze Editorial Collective, P. O. Box 186, Station M, Toronto, Ontario M6S 4T3, Canada; available by editorial whim and by trade (no price listed).

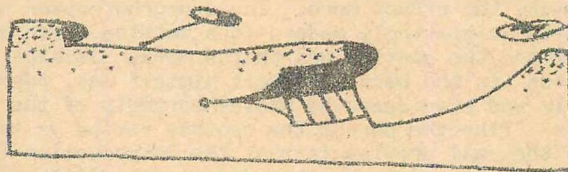
Well, I didn't make my self-imposed quota of four zine reviews, but there's still a little room for some mini-reviews:

I guess I like Thyme, the Australian fannish newszine, even if it is pretty skimpy (six pages plus covers) and there isn't a hell of a lot of news in it (in issue #71, there was only three pages of news, and one-third of that was convention listings). Not a very good window on what's going on Down Under. Also, it seemed that the feature articles stopped just as the writers were getting to the point of their essays. Nevertheless, finding out at least something about what Aussie fans are doing is nice, and makes Thyme worth getting for me at least. [Thyme #71, from LynC and Peter Burns, P.O. Box 4024, University of Melbourne, Victoria 3052, Australia (The North American agent is Mike Glycer). Ten issues for \$10.]

Much better is Trapdoor 8, from Robert Lichtman. This once and perhaps future Hugo nominated fanzine always features good writing and is very enjoyable to read. The articles range from homey (Robert's reminisces on living at The Farm), to travel (Jeff Schalles' camping trips on the Appalachian Trail), to humor (rich brown's idea of the ultimate comic book hero and Jan S. Kauffman's query on why everyone in the [TV] universe speaks English), to interesting dialogue in the lettercol. Definitely worth getting. [Trapdoor 8, from Robert Lichtman, P.O. Box 30, Glen Ellen, CA 95442. Available for \$3 per issue, fanzine trades, and the fannish "usual."]

Of slightly less interest is YHOS, from Art Widner. The layout of this zine is quite often a mess, but the fannish content more than makes up for it. Once you get used to the abundance of abbreviated vowel-less words and non-standard English spellings (which is also discussed in the lettercol), YHOS is a delight to read. This issue was filled with Art's observations on the current state of fandom, and two articles -- Andi Shechter's fan culture shock on moving to Boston and Mark Manning's explanation of how he got his "sexy" scar. The lettercol is also consistently one of the more lively and interesting I've seen. YHOS is worth the time of fanzine fans to get and LOC. [YHOS 45 from Art Widner, 231 Courtney Lane, Orinda, CA 94563. Available through the apas FAPA and SAPS, and for fanzine trades and the fannish "usual."]

((Ed. note: Mr. Bivens has been a fanzine fan, writer, and publisher for, as he puts it, "years and years and years." Like weather in Florida, he says that if you don't like his opinions, wait a while and maybe they'll change. And watch out! He might be back again next issue.))





# THE ANVIL CHORUS

Welcome to The ANVIL Chorus. If you've read the editorial natter you will have figured out by now that this issue has been real hard to get out. You may have suspected something when it didn't appear in your mailbox for months and months. One thing, tho, about being late is that you get all your overseas locs in. I'm having trouble deciding what to put in and what to leave out from all the many letters... to tell the truth I'm getting kind of tired of the political discussion. A year is long enough. So, without further ado, here it is, in no particular order, the Complete ANVIL Chorus.

Brian Earl Brown, 11675 Beaconsfield, Detroit, MI 48224 -- I'm in a hand/postcard-writing mood this last week of the year so this will be short. First of all congratulations on 10 years and 48 issues of publishing. Not many zines make it that far. I've been going at it for 14 years but kept changing titles so that I still haven't gotten out of the teens with any.

The new reduced typeface will surely give you more zine in less space. The electrosten-ciling is clean and crisp -- something I wish I could say about my old and ailing Bestafax 455. I would suggest switching to a two column format--these long rows of tiny print aren't easy to read.

I always thought 'media fan' was reserved for those people who only watch one or two TV-SF programs or defined their fannish existence around those one or two shows - a limited life compared to people who read and watch SF TV and movies. However, I feel that most of the recent SF films have been poor SF because they're primarily about other things--mostly about graphic displays of death and destruction. The Hidden has more in common with Diehard than with 2001 or 2010.

I haven't read F&SF in a while--has Ellison mentioned the plagiarism suit by Kate Wilhelm against the makers of Desperately Seeking Susan? Wilhelm's book Oh, Susannah appears to have contributed a lot of motifs and incidents to the movie.

Gilliam's "Early Ellison" was a fountain of surprises. Writing for EC!!!! //////////////// I've heard that John Holmes delighted in lying during interviews so that 14,000 women, which seems so unlikely probably is... unlikely. // Mike G. mentions a friend serving time for child porn and I've got a brother-in-law who was untruthfully charged with child abuse. The common point is that these charges are easy to bring and hard to defend against. I don't deny that child abuse exists but there's something of a witchhunt atmosphere to some of these cases, too. // Interesting note from Irv Koch who I never would have thought of as a bookseller -- romance or otherwise. I enjoyed, without comment, Buck and Pat's columns and wish to thank Valerie for her kind words on SQ 18. Someday I'll figure out how not to pub an ugly zine.

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Catherine Mintz, 1810 S. Rittenhouse Square, 1708, Philadelphia, PA 19103-5837

I think the cover expresses the feeling perfectly: the little robot, mind blown, staggering knock-kneed under the weight of the tenth anniversary cake. I was trying to figure out where I came in. I originally got ANVIL in trade for a fanzine of mine, ILLUSIONS, and since that was published in '79, '80 and '81 I must have gotten some of the earlier issues. They'd probably be worth a fannish fortune if I still had them...

I enjoyed your article on movies and media fans. I have found, myself, that my opinion on some movies has been radically changed by seeing them on a VCR rather than in a theater, and one that I found came out better on the small screen (and in the TV version) was DUNE. Some of this is just that, with the opportunity to go back and look at the settings and the scenes you can appreciate the effect more. The non-oriothopter was a disappointment, and I found the troop uniforms gratingly modern in a setting which was baroque futurist, but a lot of the detail and the casting was on the mark. Jessica, for example, really looks like the description in the book. Herbert himself was, reportedly, very pleased with the look of the film and even approved wholeheartedly of the changes in the story line, form the detail -- like the phrase the mentats recite -- to the addition of the weirding modules. I guess the real problem is that the introduction is a real turn-off -- cheap and even sloppy-looking. I wonder why they didn't use stills of costumed actors for the recitation. The starscape is less convincing than the one that introduces NIGHTLINE. But when you watch the story on a VCR, the coarse detail is reduced enough to be less distracting and, of course, since you know the setting, you can fast-forward through the beginning and get to the good parts.



The real difference, however, is that the film becomes more like a book where you can pick it up and read a favorite passage, flip through some boring description, and continue with the action, if you choose. It puts the experience more in the control of the consumer, unlike the theater where they throw it at you and control the pacing. I speculate that part of the reason for the growth of media fans is not the decline of reading but that the media has moved into the area of personally controlled experience formerly exclusively that of the reader. Maybe people are still going for the same things, just using different means to get there???

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Eva Hauser, Na cihadle 55, 160 00 Praha 6, Czechoslovakia

I am very happy that I got my copy of ANVIL ((containing her Parcon report)); I read it thoroughly and found its style extremely inspiring - I mean that I try to achieve something like that in my articles which I write for our fanzins (sometimes I consider them wonderfully humorous, but the people treated by them don't share my opinion...)

It's natural that Bruno Ogorelec's articles about "Hammer and Sickle" attracted me most of all. I didn't get the second part which was probably the most controversial. As for the first and third part, I would like to discuss two topics:

1. Bruno says that poor (feudal) countries would have to wait five hundred years to get to socialism by the "Swedish" way, if their development wouldn't be accelerated by socialist revolution. I doubt it. Why 500 years? He derives it from the interval between Middle Ages and 20th century. If it is correct, then poor people in Greece are 500 years backwards in comparison with poor people in Yugoslavia and poor people in Southern Korea are 500 years backwards in comparison with poor people in Northern Korea.

2. He gives quite a good idea about life in communist countries but he indicates that the ineffectiveness of the system is its necessary characteristic, sort of a stigma, consequence of kindness, welfare, tolerance of lazy and inefficient people. This is strongly against the original Marxist theory. One of Marx's axioms is that after bourgeoisie is liquidated the economy will burst in unprecedented development and growth as people will "work for themselves". Also the morality of the people will radically change as they will work for themselves and rule themselves. This axiom wasn't created by Stalin! But it's very voluntaristic and nowadays is discredited. Anyway, the headlines of our newspapers still express naive hope that suddenly somehow somewhere a new socialist, collectivist morality will arrive and save our economy. These tragicomic slogans! "Everything depends on people!" "Mistake is in people!" "People are the failure!"

I hope Gorbachev doesn't think that people are the failure as it sound really desperate. And I also hope that he got over this axiom of "Automatic Unprecedented Growth in Socialism" (as I think that Khrushchev failed as he relied on it).

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Ladislav Peska, Na dolikach 503, 274 01 Slany, Czechoslovakia -- Many thanks for ANVIL 48. In addition I congratulate you on your anniversary. I liked ANVIL 48 very much. (It's a pity that I can't say that about ANVIL 47. I never received a copy.)

I read your article MOVIE TIME with great interest. As for films you are writing about, I saw DUNE and ROBOCOP. DUNE isn't very popular here in Czechoslovakia. It is, without knowledge of novel action, very complicated or even incomprehensible for spectators. The novel DUNE will be reprinted in Czechoslovakia next year. I like movies like ROBOCOP. The first in my heart is TERMINATOR, one of my first "video" movies. Recently we made a list of our favorite movies shown last year in our club:

1. INDIANA JONES  
5. HIGHLANDER  
17. MAD MAX II

2. ALIENS  
6. BLADERUNNER

3. SEXMISE (Poland)  
11. STARMAN

I read the article by Richard Gilliam, Early Ellison, and Patrick J. Gibbs Autumn's Books with great interest.

It's a pity that very small informations are about socialist countries in the USA. I read views on Bruno Ogorelec's article in ANVIL 48 with great interest. I think the Americans can hardly imagine the life in our countries. We have quite other problems, other laws, other living style. Many things which aren't a problem in the USA are a problem in our country and the other way around. AIDS, drugs or unemployment aren't a problem in our country. But we have big economy problems. Maybe the most of Americans think that "human rights" are our biggest problem. It is trash! It is the problem of several political adventures and maybe president of the USA. Not mine! I have other troubles.

I think that people in Czechoslovakia know life in the USA more and better than Americans know life in socialist countries. Why? For example, I saw about 500 movies which show the life in the USA. How many movies from socialist countries have you seen?

ANVIL does very good work for understanding between people from different countries.



Buck Coulson, 2677W-500N, Hartford City, IN 47348 -- The reduced type is a lovely way to handle expanded wordage without expanded work on copying. We could have used that on YANDRO, if we'd had it. Quite legible, at least on my copy. Watch your margins though. Some of them, particularly the second page of the editorial, ran out into the staples.

The P.O. does screw up now and then. I recall getting a letter returned - "No Such Person At This Address". Now, I'd visited the person at that address two weeks before, so I knew he was there, and informed the postmaster of this in no uncertain terms. I got a feeble apology from the local post office concerned and a claim that he hadn't put up a postal box. He had, and I'd seen it. I've also written letters to the head of the Postal Service about our regional center in Muncie screwing up my mail; it may not do any good, but it makes me feel better, and the regional center did shape up a bit afterwards. If the postman makes you feel stupid, complain to his boss, and keep going up the line as needed. Mostly, we get pretty good service out here in the sticks, at least from the locals. The problems are usually somewhere up the chain of command. The president of Sears Roebuck once incautiously had his name put in one of their catalogs, so I wrote him about a problem I was having in getting a hand-truck that they'd listed as on sale and then denied having. I got the hand-truck next week, at the sale price. But I don't bother quibbling about minor details. If we get other people's mail, I just put it back in the box for the route carrier to pick up, and hope others do the same by me.

A good column by Ogorelec. What might not be realized in Europe is that the US has a sort of capitalist socialism. The power of the manufacturers and businesses is balanced by the power of the labor unions, with first one side and then the other gaining advantages. The problem -- and it's certainly pertinent to the USSR and maybe to the other East European countries -- is that when an organization reaches a certain size, it's very difficult for the rank and file members to control it, and this is just as true of labor unions and socialist governments as it is for the capitalists. Control comes from the leadership, and it doesn't matter a bit whether those leaders are "men of the people" or men of the aristocracy; they have the same percentage of people of good will, and the same tendency for the control to pass into the hands of the schemers. Over here, we're supposed to be able to vote out the scoundrels, but it's not all that frequently that we manage it, or even identify the scoundrels we need to get rid of. The best protection is a free press, which we sort of have; without it, there's no way to know which decisions are best. Even with it, there's argument. Even after the fact, there is no real consensus on the Vietnam War; most of fandom agrees that we were in the wrong, but most of my neighbors believe that we were right. With a controlled press, which most of the rest of the world has, decisions are impossible. (For those who object to the term "capitalistic socialism" -- read the campaign promises of Norman Thomas and other Socialist presidential candidates of the 1920s and 1930s. Damned near every Socialist program is now in effect. A good many of them were put into effect by FDR, before World War II.)

Meade Frierson must not know of the popularity of muzzle-loading shoots, or he wouldn't say that powder and muskets have no place in today's world. Not the same place, I grant you, but I'd bet that there are more people in the US today who own and use muzzle loading muskets and other arms than there were in 1820 when those were the only kind available. I own seven myself, four of them modern-made replicas.

Heinlein did indeed write other stories than science fiction, but as far as I know, all of it was under pseudonyms that he never revealed. Didn't I read somewhere that a book of his short mysteries is coming out from someone before long? But Harry is right, John D. MacDonald didn't start with science fiction; I was wrong.

Lawrence Watt-Evans neatly documents the difference between the US and Russia. The Russians can obtain only what the government wants them to have. We can get anything we want -- but we can't afford it. As a capsule commentary on Communism and Capitalism, it can hardly be bettered.

Note to Toni Jerrman; I think that Phil Dick and Alfred Bester are a long way from the "best SF authors in America", with Dick farther from the pinnacle than Bester. I quite reading Dick years ago, so I haven't read any of his mainstream novels, and I don't intend to.

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Harry Warner, Jr., 423 Summit Avenue, Hagerstown, Maryland 21740 -- The anniversary issues of ANVIL is a fine one, even though the portrait on the colophon page really doesn't do you justice. Curiously, it came on the same day I decided there's no longer any possibility that I'll publish an annish of my first fanzine this year. I could have become the first fanzine editor in history to publish a 50th anniversary issue and I actually thought of doing such a thing before all sorts of problems began to pile up toward the end of 1988.

The history of ANVIL was very useful and interesting. Odd: I loosed just yesterday the latest Neology which also came in a brown paper bag and also contained a history of its publication from start to present. Alas, I couldn't figure out just when I went on your mailing list as I was tentatively able to do with Neology because of my memory of one



editor. ((Well, Harry, I don't know when you went on the mailing list, but I well remember Wade Gilbreath, the first editor, at the end of his first (and only) year of publication receiving a loc from you and being so overwhelmed that he gave the job to someone else. Wade is like that. This was at the time you began loccing again after a hiatus, and he rather felt that he would quit while he was ahead.))

I wonder if ANVIL was the most appropriate place for publishing Hammer & Sickle's newest installment. The things I've been reading in newspapers about unrest in a half-dozen Russian areas and satellite nations makes me think that this paean to the Communist way of life might have been useful in soothing the ruffled tempers of all those mundanes in Europe. Come to think of it, you could offer reprint rights to Pravda in return of an all-expenses luxury vacation in the USSR that would take the place of the TAFF victory circumstance have prevented you from enjoying.

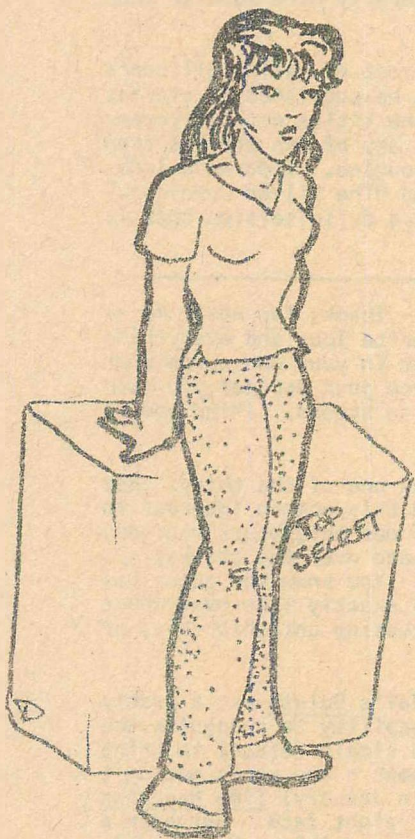
Fandom: TNG was hilarious, a little masterpiece. I can imagine other fans conceiving and carrying out this idea in amusing manner but I wonder if anyone except Mark Manning could have done it in just one page to such good effect.

I'm glad to find Dave Gorecki giving Doc Lowndes his due in the loc section. You are probable on the Outworlds mailing list, but maybe Dave isn't; in Bill Bowers' fanzine, we've been treated to a lot of extended articles by Lowndes containing all sorts of fascinating sidelights on his early years as a fan and as a pro.

The faintest possible stirring in a decomposing memory cell tells me that the alchemist word you and Brian Earl Brown were hunting started out phlog, rather than philog. It might have been something like phlogistom, but I don't have a large dictionary in this house so I can't check to be sure.

Irv Koch's loc about romance writers supplements nicely a novel I read a while back in a Detective Book Club volume, about a murder at a con of romance writers. I wish I could remember the title and the name of the author, because it was hilarious and the characters and events might have come from a SFWA gettogether. ((Was it Die for Love by Elizabeth Peters, or Barbara Michaels, whichever pseudonym Barbara Mertz uses for her romantic comedy?))

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Milt Stevens, 7234 Capps Avenue, Reseda, CA 91335 -- December of '88 proved to be a not very good month for fanac. In addition to the holidays, I got called for jury duty. I never did get on a jury, but I still have to spend most of the month hanging around a courthouse. This served to disrupt my schedule completely. I could have told them that I was never going to get on a jury before I even started. After eighteen years with the Los Angeles Police Department, I am suspected to have a certain amount of bias in criminal cases. Muttering "To The Callows With All of Them" a few times may have also contributed to that impression. ((Penny Frierson was called for jury duty last month, too, but she only had to hang around the courthouse a week. She, too, was never selected to sit on a jury. "If I ever have to stand trial," she told me later, "I'll waive my right to a "jury of my peers." It's obvious I have no peers..."))

Many people join fandom to meet people and have interesting experiences. I'm sure you'll be very interested the next time you read a headline like, "Crazed Killer Escapes." However, if this miscreant did escape and commit axe murder upon your person, he would be dealt with harshly in the fannish press. Invective would flow like invective. It would almost be as bad as if he had been caught mucking about with TAFF.

Speaking of meeting people, I recall one guy I met at a LASFS meeting back in 1960. He said he had a garage full of old SF magazines that he was willing to sell cheap. He had already sold another fan a Volume 1, #1 of Amazing for \$4. This gained my complete attention. I promptly got his address and phone number. Later that evening, two other fans told me the guy had just been released from a mental hospital. (The Amazing for \$4 probably should have been a clue.) Apparently, the guy had decided his former boss was the source of total evil, and so he tried to kill him. That's why he was in the mental hospital. While I was a dedicated collector back in those days, I decided I didn't want to become suicidal about it.

From reading your review of "The Hidden," I'm beginning to suspect that science fiction police procedurals may be a trend. While I didn't see "The Hidden," I did see "Alien Nation." "Alien Nation" really wasn't very good as either a police procedural or as science fiction. (Aliens who found sea water highly corrosive wouldn't be able to survive on Earth.) However, the movie did have some amusing elements. The idea that aliens from outer space would naturally move to Los Angeles where we would naturally hire some of them on the LAPD is the sort of thing that would amuse me in particular.

Since I was reading a lot of prozines in the late fifties, I read most of Harlan Ellison's early short stories. By checking the MIT Index, I found that he published 57 stories under his own name between 1956 and 1959. I remember many of the titles without remembering the stories which were attached to them. I don't recall any of his stories from this period as being notably bad, but most of them were rather routine. I do have independent recollection of two of his stories, "Lifehutch," and "The Silver Corridor." Having favorable memories of a short story after thirty years is a definite sign that it was a superior story.

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Avedon Carol, 144 Plashet Grove, East Ham, London E6 1 AB, U.K. -- Thanks for ANVIL 48 -- it actually inspired me to sit down and answer my mail and write locs and everything today. I wonder what causes this ... Anyway, I'm glad you put in your own words what your situation was with TAFF - CRITICAL WAVE made it sound like you just decided you were going to run and the hell with which convention you were expected to attend. (Mind you, I never believe anything Steve Green says...)

Say what you will about snooty literary-type fans, I still think one of the things that used to make fandom wonderful and different was that we all shared this common interest in the dark and unsavoury shadow-world of reading. You know, one of our neighbours accidentally noticed one of our bookcases (a small one made to use the space over the stairs) and started referring to Rob and "the Professor" - I mean, wow, books. You know the questions - "Do you actually read all those?" Sometimes now, fandom feels exactly like everywhere else - I mean, people here actually make fun of people for dressing unfashionably, or being overweight! It's just like high school.

I disagree with Brian Earl Brown! For one thing, I thought Vidal's Duluth was a pretty hilarious book. But mainly, I'm astonished at Brian's apparent inability to recognize the way news is managed in the US. Bias? how about a pure and simple refusal to print anything that might give the game away! No, not by the government - the press wouldn't have that; they'd much rather censor themselves. And they do. (In January) Time Magazine referred to the Beirut night-club bombing by Libya. With a straight face. Not even a hint that there may have been some doubt about whether Libya was responsible. Now, surely Time Magazine, for goddsakes, knows that the headline news throughout the world after investigations of the night-club bombing were completed was that the bombing was not a Libyan operation at all, but a Syrian operation. Now, given that the President of the United States had whipped himself up into a loud and towering rage at Libya to the extent that he caused an international incident by bombing Libya, supposedly in retaliation for that night-club bombing, you'd think someone would consider it news that he'd bombed the wrong country, wouldn't you? You'd think they'd stop referring to it as a Libyan



operation once this news was headlined all over the world, wouldn't you?

In the face of things like this, you have to assume that either the media have turned themselves into a propaganda machine, or that unbeknownst to us, the government is meddling after all. How else could the election have worked the way it did?

Oh, individual articles may be okay - even seemingly liberal. But look at the general tenor of what gets printed and aired, and the pattern looks downright sinister. It was the press that gave Bush's pledge-of-allegiance nonsense credibility, it was the press that failed to react to the scandalous news that George Bush had chosen as his running-mate a John Birchler (Christ! They're just a cut above the KKK!) It is also the press which has continually failed to give much coverage to the Christic Institute's findings about the CIA, La Penca, and the Reagan/Bush arrangement to delay freeing the American hostages in Iran until after the Carter/Reagan election. A responsible press would have seen that scandal topple the remains of the Reagan administration and Bush's campaign as well.

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Teddy Harvia, 7209 Deville Drive, NRH, TX 76180-8257 -- ((this postcard picturing dinosaurs was addressed to "Charlotte Proctor or Current Resident" with a little guy drawn underneath the address saying "IF UNDELIVERABLE, deliver it anyway!"). A subsequent letter was addressed to "The Immoveable Charlotte Proctor... --cp)) Fanzines may be dinosaurs, but they'll never become extinct as long as fans enjoy holding reading material in their hands that they can absorb at their own pace.

So the post office lumped my postcard in with the mail from rapists and mass murders. My only question is how did they know to do that??? While waiting for you to respond, those cartoons (I was going to send you) misbehaved and were sent to a cartoon correctional facility. You know how unconventional my humor is. But I'm hoping for their early release so I can finally send them on to you.

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Lawrence Watt-Evans, 5 Solitaire Court, Gaithersburg, MD 20878-4119 -- Regarding the postal service screw-up, while I agree that all common sense is on your side, the letter of the postal regulations is on theirs. When something is addressed "c/o" someone, the postal people don't give a damn about anything before the c/o; something addressed to Ronnie Holland c/o Charlotte Proctor is technically addressed to Charlotte Proctor, and it's entirely your problem to get it to Ronnie Holland! That's what "care of" means, and why people should be very careful about how they use it. Of course, nobody knows this except a few officious postal clerks and trivia buffs like me. The proper thing to do when you receive something addressed c/o you which you can't or won't deliver is to throw it out, not return or refuse it. It's not your problem, and you're not legally liable. Neither is the postal service; once they get it to you, they've done their job.

Regarding Buck's comments on plagiarism, unconscious plagiarism is a very real phenomenon that he should have mentioned. I once wrote a story called "Alterations" that I was very pleased with. I sent it to my agent, and he sent it to F&SF, and I thought I might finally sell that mag something. Then I re-read William Tenn's "Brooklyn Project" for the first time in almost twenty years and had an attack of panic and rushed to withdraw the story before anyone read it, because without meaning to I had rewritten "Brooklyn Project" from long-buried memories. Another story called "W Have What You Need" didn't make it that far; I was still polishing it when I found the original (which I've now lost again, and I can't name title or author).

There's an episode in The Book of Silence that I originally wrote as a short story called "The Dragon of Orgul" that felt as if it might be something I'd read somewhere--but nobody's every located the source if it is, so I went ahead and included it in the novel, and nobody's called me on it yet.

I'm not alone in this; Stephen King's The Running Man (written as by Richard Bachman) is an unconscious swipe from Sheckley's "The Prize of Peril." King and Sheckley know this and have reached an agreement, I understand. King also re-did Lovecraft's "The Rats in the Walls," but I assume that was intentional, an homage. (I forget King's title, but it's in Night Shift.)

I was pleased to see that Richard Gilliam got everything right in his piece on the early Ellison; when I saw that title I made a bet with myself that he'd ignore the sale to WEIRD SCIENCE-FANTASY. I was happy to lose that one.

Meade Frierson goes too far in his letter in dismissing the piano and human voice as archaic--assuming he's serious, which is sometimes hard to tell in such fora as these. I'll concede that the orchestra is no longer cost effective in any rational way, and that the piano may be on the way out, but the human voice? Not likely. We're human, and voices hold a special appeal. At least so far, it's much easier and more interesting to use natural ones than to synthesize them.



I think Julie Ackermann slipped up; Heinlein's books got worse after The Moon Is A Harsh Mistress, not Stranger In A Strange Land, and the decline wasn't steady, but erratic. There were bright spots, like the few few chapters of The Cat Who Walked Through Walls, all through, but they never lasted for an entire story.

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Walt Willis, 32 Warren Road, Donaghadee, N. Ireland BT21 OPD -- I was interested in Mark Manning's remark that Bruno's article on Marxism couldn't have been printed in Quandry in 1951. I doubt that. My own column in Quandry that year had installments of a series on "The Other Science Fiction, about sf in the Soviet Union, and the only reason I discontinued it was that the humorous bits attracted more comment. A pity, I remember thinking at the time: that serious stuff was so easy to write.

Brian Earl Brown's lost inflammable substance given off by burning objects was "phlogiston". I keep expecting it to make some sort of a comeback, like digitalis; it seems so very plausible.

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Mike Glicksohn, 508 Windermere AV, Toronto Ontario M6S 3L6, Canada -- Holy micro-elite, Bat-Fan, what are you trying to do to us! Are you trying to drive Harry and me into gaffiation? I needed glasses to get through that teeny tiny print in ANVIL 48. Luckily I had glasses at hand... and some good ten year old whiskey to pour into them to make wading through those acres of mini-words almost ((Almost??)) worthwhile. Just how much can you save on postage by making the print that small anyway? Is it really worth the knowledge that people will be inclined to skip over articles on topics of less than burning interest to them whereas they might have started them -- and perhaps found wellsprings of inspiration therein -- had they been of a size that was less intimidating to read? Oh well, I'm probably over-reacting but sometimes that's my role in life... ((Actually, what I find most intimidating is a 100+ page zine. --cp))

I couldn't help but notice that in your editorial history of ANVIL when it got to the part where ANVIL was gaining international recognition we saw specific fans mentioned in Australia and Britain -- as if anyone would know who this Bob Ortlieb and Marc Shaw were anyway -- but when it came to loccers -- supposedly the lifeblood of the fanzine -- there's only mention of "The Netherlands, Finland, Canada", and I'm sure their respective ambassadors to the US appreciated the egoboo. So tell me, Charlotte: it's all because I signed that "Vote No Award" announcement, isn't it? You'll forgive me for that about the same time the last Southerner abandons resentment of the Civil War, right? And I bet you don't call me "cute" anymore either! Sigh.... ((I can't win for losing, can I? I thought you would understand, Mike, that if I named names like Kees Van Toorn, Toni Jerrman and Mike Glicksohn, I would be accused of name-dropping, and currying favor, and worse! --cp))

The word BEB was thinking of was "phlogiston" as I'm sure thousands of more timely letter-hacks have already told you. It's in the OED, by the way. ((No, only three fans wrote in with the answer, wait a minute, let me check the postmarks... And the winner is... Harry Warner, Jr., with a letter mailed on December 5, 1988. But no, what's this? He didn't have a large enough dictionary and his faulty memory came up with "phlogiston". Sorry about that, Harry. The real, honest-to-god winner of the BEB spell-off is....  
\*\*\*MIKE GLICKSOHN\*\*\*, with a letter postmarked December 11, 1988!!! The other contestants were Walt Willis, who received his copy of ANVIL 48 on December 1, 1988 (it was hand delivered at Tropicon), and his letter is postmarked January 17., and Lloyd Penney, with a letter dated December 20. -- cp))

I smiled over your depiction of anti-mediafen fans as "holier-than-thou" and I'm sure the reference was not lost on many other ANVIL readers but I think you've slightly missed the point there. It's perfectly possible for a fan to be strongly negative towards what he or she sees as the negative attributes of (if there is such a thing) the "typical media fan" while still watching and enjoying the many areas of visually-depicted science fiction. I love lots of sf films and watch some of the sf that airs on TV but I agree with the opinion that suggests that some media fen are lacking in general imagination and are too tightly bound into a purely non-creative form of simple escapism. I'd even go so far as to suggest that people who spend their whole convention dressed up as a character from a TV show or a film are, by and large, less likely to be of interest to me than fans who read books and read and write for fanzines. But I loved "Robocop" too so I'm not anti-media. (I also doubt that the space race created the climate that made the current glut of sf spectaculars possible but I've no hard evidence either way. To me it's obvious that Lucas and STAR WARS paved the way for everything that followed but what gave Lucas the idea that the time was ripe for a science fictional special effects extravaganza I can't say. The space race must have been a contributing factor but there must also have been a great many other serendipitous factors involved.)

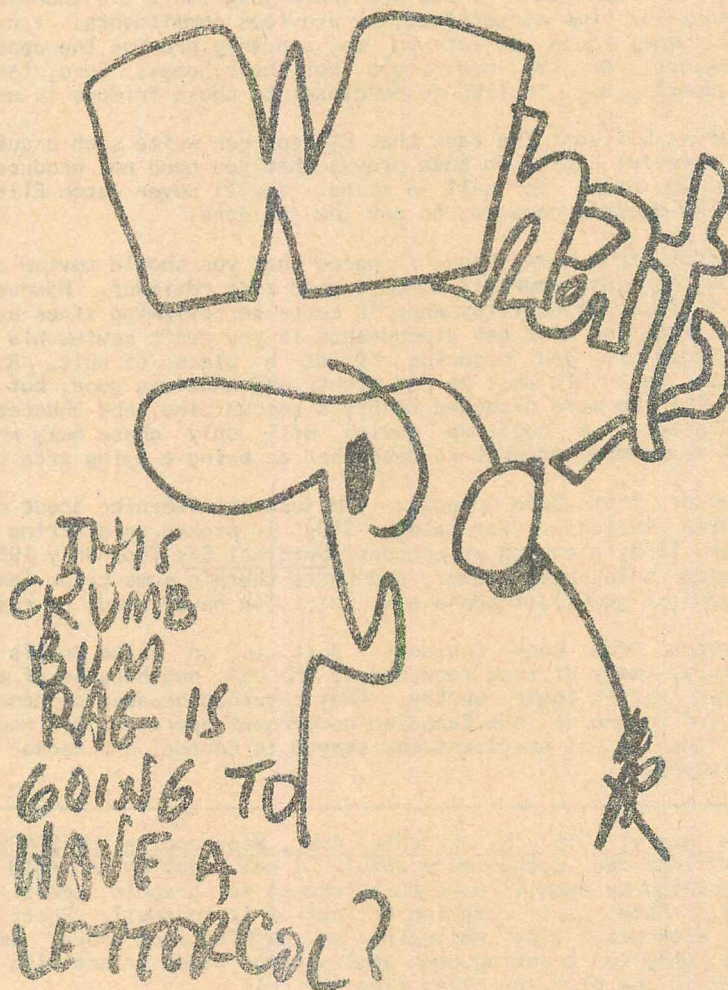


Damir Coklin, Progradska 4, 41000 Zagreb, Yugoslavia -- Thanks for the photograph (taken at Nolacon II). With such a heavily sunburned face in sharp contrast to my snow-white (native Yugoslav) costume I look more like a American Indian than a lucky Yugoslav who happened, by chance, to attend the worldcon. I had a good time at the con, and learned the true meaning of cons -- getting to know hundreds of dear and interesting people. You and the rest of the Mafiaettes were a real tower of strength, giving moral support and helping at our "1993 Worldcon in Yu" bidding table.

The present state of our worldcon bid is apparently dormant. ((as of November, 1988--cp)) Krsto, as Chairman and only complete connoisseur of worldcon matter in Yugoslavia, still holds everything in his hands, although he slowly relieves his burden to others and at the same time dexterously lures young and inexperienced fans into fandom and worldcon muddy waters. I hold the job of secretary and maintain the membership database. Heaven knows when I will tour abroad again on our bid assignment for we're at the mercy of our sponsors.

WE ALSO HEARD FROM: Teddy Harvia (again); Art Hlavaty & Bernadette Bosky (thanks for the Xmas Card); Roger Weddall sent a New Year's card; Rickey Sheppard; Diana & Dave Stein (another Xmas card!); Kathleen Gallagher; Irvin Koch sent a check for two year's subscription which I sent back to him -- see Web for details; Gary Ferguson wondering what became of the check he sent me (beats me!); Pascal J. Thomas with a change of address: 7 rue des Saules, 31400 Toulouse, France; Tony Cvetko, who lost his copy of #48; Irwin Hirst, GUFF administrator; Holly Hina; Kevin McVeigh who got hold of Martin Tudor's copy of ANVIL; Taras Wolansky, Mark Watson, Sally Syrjala and Chris, all of whom want to be added to the mailing list. So be it. Well, actually, I sent Taras a copy of #48, and he wrote me a long letter back on Bruno's article, but as he said, he struck while the iron was cold. I had two letters from Skel, the second also reacting to Bruno's article... guess I'll just send these on to Bruno. Skel also wishes to thank Mark for the egoboo. "That's the great thing about egoboo" he says, "... even if undeserved it still satisfies." Ah, come on, Skel, you deserve it. I received a few late, late locs but they are over at Linda's having their addresses checked against the mailing list. So if I missed anybody, I'm sorry. Keep those cards and letters coming, they are what inspire to publish....

Murray Moore, 377 Manly Street, Midland Ontario Canada L4R 3E2 -- I have before me four issues of ANVIL, plus what I insist on telling myself is a fan letter from Michael Bishop. The Bishop letter turned up in the same day's mail as ANVIL 45 and the excerpt of my loc in which I mentioned being so fond of Her Habiline Husband that I read it three times: in its original appearance, in a Carr Best of the Year anthology, and a third time when it appeared as the first third of Ancient of Days. Either you passed my loc to Bishop, or he received his copy of ANVIL before I did, nevertheless it was a very nice surprise. ((You just don't know what a nice surprise it was! I've been sending Michael Bishop ANVIL for forever, and wondered if it were going into the Black Hole of the Post Office. Now that I know he not only receives it and, if not reads, at least egoscans it, it's all worthwhile. -- cp))





Lloyd Penney, 412-22 Riverwood Parkway, Toronto, Ontario, Canada M8Y 4E1 -- Thanks for ANVIL 48. I hope you received my previous letter... it originally came back to me, stamped that you were no longer at your address. I waited for someone to come up with a new address, and when that failed, I simply sent it to the address it originally was sent to. The Post Office works in mysterious ways, and none of them make any sense.

Re Web: Quite a history behind this zine. We've come under criticism for producing TORUS as a team, but this is how many clubzines are produced... why not genzines? The care in producing a good product is there, and with the fanac levels of the people behind TORUS, a team effort gets the job done without anyone drastically changing their lives or ignoring other obligations. ... Ah, so that's why my last loc came back. The good old Posterior Orifice.

Re Parcon report: It's great to see reports about foreign fandom these days... I haven't seen a copy of Roelof Goudriaan's Shards of Babel in quite a while (it might be inactive, I don't know), so it must be gratifying that Eurofandom is sending such reports to you for ANVIL.

Re Movietime: You are absolutely right... the book fans go to those movies, too. The bubble of pretension and hypocrisy has been burst! The fans who complain about "Those damned media fans" are often the ones who can talk you under the table, usually about Star Trek. I got my start in media fandom, I cheerfully admit, and I've been on the receiving end of such abuse. I have expanded my fanac horizons, but I still retain some involvement in local media fandom, to their benefit, I believe, and mine. The movies have gotten better, true. Unfortunately, the utter drek that is also released brings down the quality overall. I wasn't happy with Alien Nation because the sf and the aliens were gratuitous... the story could have been told without either. Speaking of Ray Bradbury... his Ray Bradbury Theater has not been shown yet in the Toronto area. Guess where it was made? Yes, in Toronto. Also, more Twilight Zone episodes are being shot here and the movie version of Varley's Millennium was finished here this past summer. Short Circuit 2 was shot here, as were most of the Police Academy movies. Toronto is disguised as New York in about three or four movies every year.

Re Ironmaster At Large: I agree with Thoreau... I have many friends that I would like to see more often than I do, and there just isn't the chance to see them more, because of geography or time constraints, or previous commitments. I want to see those friends more because they mean a lot to me, and they provide the opportunity for special times at conventions, or the odd visit to their homes. Sure, fandom is friendly when we meet infrequently, but I'd like to be closer to those friends in more ways than one.

Re Early Ellison: The fact that Ellison can write such exquisite small stories that have such powerful tales in them proves that you need not produce a fluffy three or four book series in order to tell a story. You'll never catch Ellison writing anything of that size. He doesn't need to, to get the job done.

Re letter from Harry Bond: I agree that you should review all the fanzines you receive, if you consider yourself to be a good zine reviewer. However, I think it's best to lose just a little objectivity when it comes to reviewing zines by newcomers. Harry is right; Little Fred Fan will get discouraged if you don't review his zine, but he'll be even more discouraged if you describe it as a piece of shit. Rather than describe its fecal content, tell him what he did right, and what was good, but could have been done better. Fred will be more disposed to try a second zine, and chances are his next effort will be much better. A negative review will only chase away what could have been a new and beneficial member of what is described as being a dying area of fanac.

Re letter from Dave Corecki: I'm just now learning about more of the old pulps and the treasures inside... for about \$10, I picked up a string of Galaxys from June 1961 to October 1965, a string of Lowndes' Original SFs from July 1956 to May 1960, plus a couple of Gamma this past summer, and while there's some tripe (easily called such by late 80s standards, I guess), there's gems that I've never read, or read in anthologies years ago.

Re letter from Buck Coulson: Just as an aside to his comments on draft dodgers... certainly, many of them returned to the USA, not because of anything wrong with Canada... it just wasn't their country. They returned because of homesickness, or an inability to get used to the way the Canadian government operated. It would be interesting to talk to the thousands of Americans who stayed in Canada, and became Canadians... to find out why they stayed.

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Jeanne Mealy, 4157 S. Lyndale Ave., Minneapolis, MN 55409 -- I agree, the Star Trek / "Alien"-inspired scenes were awful. I sat right up and said "That's not Star Trek!", and then covered my eyes (I have NO tolerance for graphic scenes like that -- PG13 is my usual limit). About their reaction or lack of it to smell: Reactions seem limited to the more basic elements, like shivering or coughing from smoke. Smells don't seem to register, unless they're tracking down some strange alien or smelling flowers. ((Right, it has to be part of the plot, or story line. -- cp))



Mark Manning, 1400 East Mercer #19, Seattle, WA 98112 -- I read, just before bedtime, about your problems with mail being returned to sender, and woke up next morning with the memory of a dream vision:

The great hammer gasped out steam between blows against the fused-glass ground. Every ten blows or so, Dr. Adamsix--the only person on-site wearing that veritable symbol of authority, a suit-of-lights--ordered the mechanics to stop the huge machine, and ordered her white-coated assistant, Dr. Foxnine, to re-check near-surface seismics.

Foxnine would then pick his way out onto the broken surface of glass, re-position the sensors, and clip light headphones into his ears to listen again for any changes in the air pocket below. All day, despite hundreds of massive punches, the steam hammer hadn't begun to open a way down. Foxnine counted, waiting for the seismic echo to return from bedrock--one-twenty, one-twenty-five, one-thir...

And that was when the upwelling wave of sound brought back with it a distinctly new timbre. "We've cracked into the bubble!" he shouted over the hiss of escaping steam from the hammer.

Foxnine knew that, while the hammer was storming down that first crack, his superior kept whispering, "Lightly!" thought no one could hear for the racket. "Gently!" He knew this because he'd seen the day's page, already recorded in advance, in her ever-publicity conscious journal. It annoyed him, more than a little, but--damn!--they needed all the funding publicity could bring.

After a few dozen blows, a more-or-less round hole cracked through into the subterranean bubble, nearly fifty meters down. Adamsix had Foxnine check for radiation (the Geiger counter showed normal activity), then determine the nature of the bubble (the video showed the interior of a stone-walled room), then climb inside to explore.

Foxnine clambered slowly down a long rope-ladder, and into the little room. The two hundred year old air smelt of paper and canvas, yet nothing seemed to have been stored in the space at all. "Such a pity for this room to have been empty," Foxnine thought, as he began to scan the room. "Even the linoleum here survived the firestorm."

A beam from his flashlight showed a slab of fallen stone leaning against a wall a few feet behind him. Under the stone, Foxnine found ancient treasure: A canvas bag stencilled "U.S. Postal Service," obviously containing old letters of some kind.

That evening, after the Press had photographed Adamsix and gone, and the steam hammer had rumbled away to the city, Foxnine sat in an on-site tent, cataloguing the haul. Inside the bag were fanzines, all addressed to Charlotte Proctor, ANVIL, Birmingham, Alabama, all stamped "Not at This Address, Return to Sender."

Most of the fanzines had little notes inserted between the cover and the colophon page, saying, "Dear Charlotte, so sorry to have missed Loccing your last ish," or something similar. Foxnine wondered what kind of person this Charlotte had been; maybe, he thought, the zines in the bag could give him some clues.

The first one out of the bag, entitled First One Out the Limo came from Charlie Mack in some no-longer existing place named Oakland. The centerpiece of the zine was a long tribute to something called the Ewajo series, which drew a blank on Foxnine's late-20th century datascan. The zine's departments had weird titles, Foxnine thought: Doings around the editor's place were entitled "We Just Housin'," LoCs were headed "Hey, Pepper!," and a list of upcoming cons Mack planned to attend was called "Hercules Says Jack." None of this correlated to anything in database.

Next was a San Francisco zine, Friend of Dorothy's, which mostly consisted of LoCs on Samuel Delany's autobiography and one bit reprinted from something called Boy's Own APA on new Marvel superheroes. The only thing that database could find on any of this was a rock band, Toto, called up by the zine's title, and three names connected with 'superheros': Bob Kane, The Spectre, and Eclipse. Foxnine began to realize how much new ground the find had uncovered.

From someplace called Portland, there was an issued of Panjandrum, a zine which listed different editors for each month of the upcoming year. The issue in the canvas bag contained a letter from California on 'RoseCon' (no cross reference in database) and examples of art done blindfolded by various editors. One piece was labeled 'robot,' another 'spaceship,' a third 'werewolf,' and a fourth 'unicorn.' These words from ancient mythology were familiar to every schoolchild of Foxnine's day; had Panjandrum been a religious journal?

Next, Foxnine examined a one-page zine called Borborigmus, sent by an editor self-described as 'the voice of Oregon Coast foodfandom.' The only real article told of meeting Ronald McDonald in Coos Bay -- yet more evidence of religious mythology!



A still-lovely Medieval Stories and Verse from Portland confused Foxnine, as it had a blackened chunk of the faned's new daughter's umbilical cord glued to the editorial page. Otherwise, it had rather delicate stories on all aspects of late 20th Century daily life (why, then, was the zine called Medieval?), the whole hand-illustrated.

Brandex from Myrtle Creek, OR, featured reviews of L'Amour's Haunted Mesa, a sercon piece about the influence of Owen Wister on the Galaxy writers of the 50s, and some publicity stills of Chuck Conners, whom the faned seemed to idolize. A poem dominated the colophon:

"Just one fan resides here in Myrtle Creek  
but, My God, he reads Zane Grey!  
Brandex, scorned as 'that Westerns man.'  
Whatever he does for the rest of his life,  
he must prove he's a fan!

Fortunately, thanks to a huge cache of Westerns recovered from near the ancient site of Houston, everything but the material on Galaxy had ample references in database. Thank Sedaka for small favors, Foxnine thought.

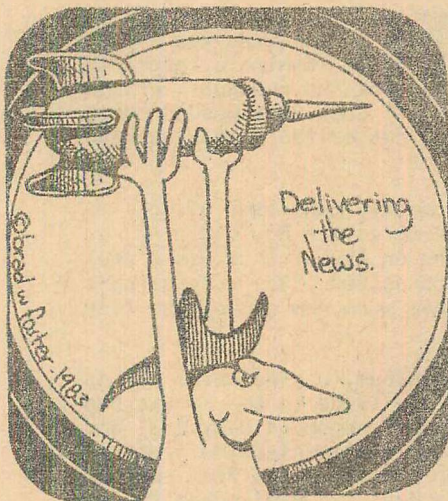
He stared at the ancient zines until long, long into the night, then pulled out a word processor. For the first time in two hundred years, someone headed a sheet of paper with the words, "Dear Charlotte, so sorry to have missed LoCcing your last ish..."

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Garth Spencer, #3 - 4313 Watson Street, Vancouver, B.C., Canada V5V 3S2 -- I have this problem. Five or more years ago I was a sweet young faned who never said an unkind word to anyone. Or about anyone, either. Now, after several fanzine titles, and 3 1/2 years of doing a newzine, I have no patience, and a hair-trigger sense of contempt; my remarks in Basic English can blister paint three metres away, and I eat sweet young things for breakfast. (No, not that way. Or, well, uh, er...)

So I read about your hassles with the post office, and wonder why you didn't tear a bleeding gory strip off the postmaster.. with three measured words... over the phone? ((I used to have a temper... and such a temper! I slammed doors, talked to ceilings, ranted and raved. I found out, too late, that the children were terrified, even though my anger was not directed at them. I have since learned how to express my feelings in more direct and less damaging ways. Adopting the 'Cosmic View' doesn't hurt, either: In a million years or so, it (whatever it is) won't matter, anyway. People who have only known me for the past ten years have a hard time believing the descriptions of my temper fits, which Vesuvius would be hard put to match. -- cp))

About Richard Gilliam's and the Ironmaster's mentions of Harlan Ellison: both tactfully ignore Ellison's ongoing Problem (The Last Dangerous Visions). I suggest Ellison set up a new SF monthly, to be called either Dangerous Visions or Harlan Ellison's Contractual Obligations Magazine, and run the stories he's had piling up.



History like Harry Warner brings up every so often makes me feel so ignorant. If asked I wouldn't even have known which century Shostakovich lived in, or what he composed, let alone how his government treated him. ((My thoughts exactly, Garth. How brave of you to voice them! I think Harry does this deliberately, just to keep us young upstarts from thinking we know everything... -- cp))

Julie Ackermann -- actually, I think the entire Midwest/South is not unlike the B.C. Interior. Lots of places where you find people who have more than just one year's life experience, repeated 45 times -- but they're dots in a vast plain. That's my image. I think the whole planet is like that, any people or groups who have ever learned anything are vastly outnumbered by the determinedly ignorant.