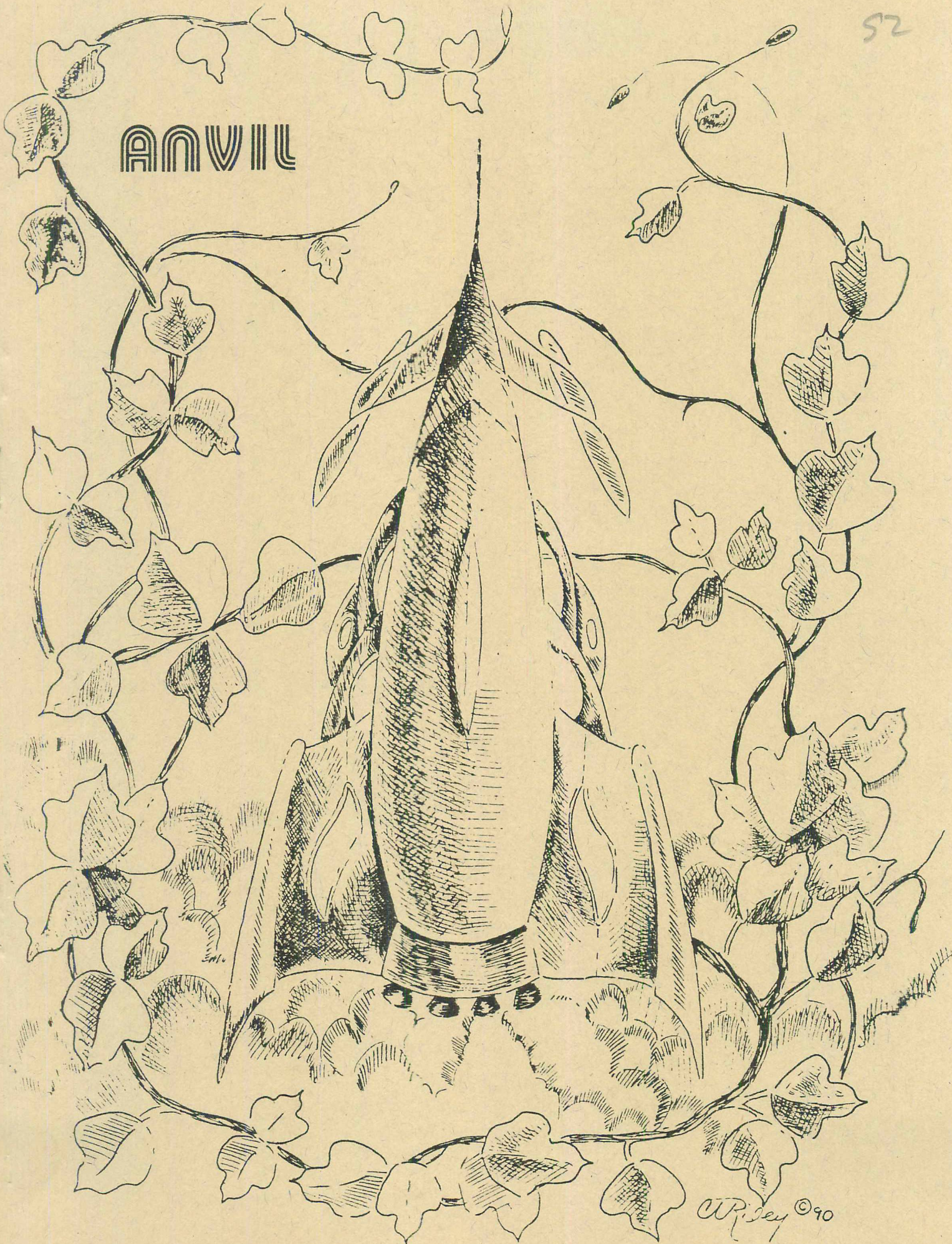


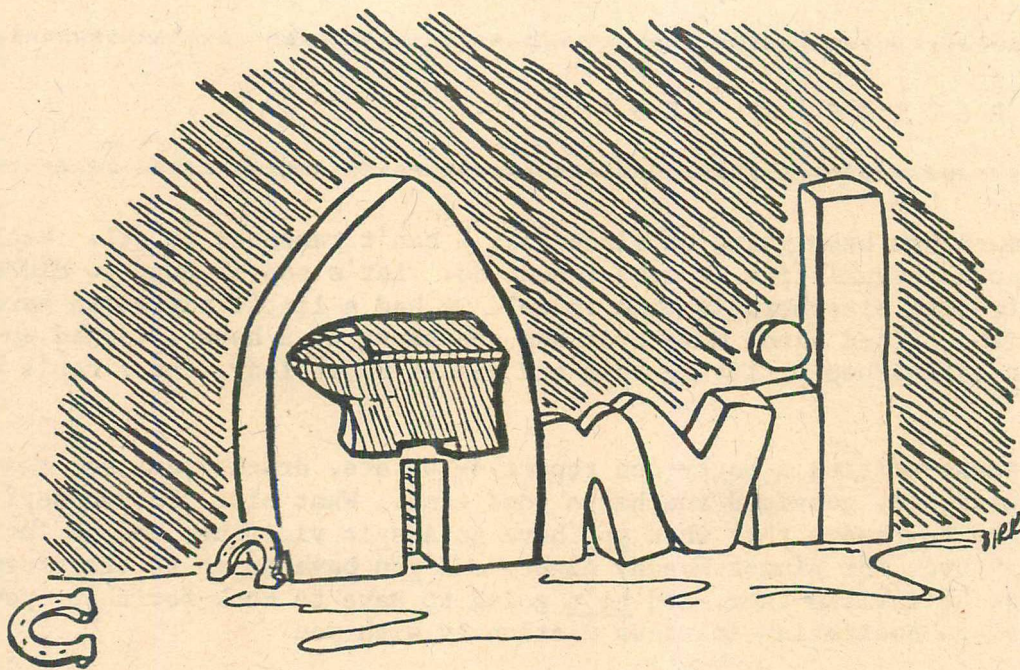
# ANVIL











Charlotte's Web	
Editorial Natter. . . . .	4
The Cook, The Thief, His Wife,	
and Dick Tracy. . . . .	7
Irish Fan visits Tennessee	
and Alabama... BoSh!. . . . .	10
DeepSouthCon GoH Speech	
June 9, 1990 . . . . .	14
Life is But a Raffle	
Bob Shaw . . . . .	17
The Old Ironmaster	
Looks at his own zine . . . .	20
Fanzine Reviews	
Roy G. Bivens . . . . .	22
Mystery Reviews	
Buck Coulson . . . . .	25
Hugo Winners Reviewed	
Patrick J. Gibbs. . . . .	27
Interview with	
Tom Clancy. . . . .	30
The ANVIL Chorus	
Letters from <u>you</u> . . . . .	33

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 \* CHARLOTTE ' S WEB \*  
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So much has been going on since #51, I can't remember it all. Really should keep a journal like so many faneds do. Let's see: I went to Midwest-Con, DSC (report elsewhere in this issue), we had a little party-con here with Greg Turkish, helped Linda move from her apartment to a house, ripped up the carpet and refinished my living room and dining room floor, and I don't know what all.

No sense writing a party-con report -- we ate, drank, partied, swam, danced, auctioned, gossiped and had a good time. What else can you say? But I would like to report that when you have an Aussie visiting, and he invites "everybody" over for dinner Monday night, and you have to go to the store with him because he invited them, and he's going to have to cook for them, you had better have an Australian-American dictionary with you.

To wit: Greg: "Where's the sultanas?" Me: "Sultanas?" Greg: "Yeh, sultanas." Me: "Er... what are sultanas?" Greg: "Well, you know, they're little, uh, dried... grapes." Me: "Oh! Raisins!"

Other things we needed an interpreter for: corn flour (cornstarch); tomato sauce (catsup); chutney made from fruit; and beef sausage, not hard sausage, but soft. Sorry, Greg, but here in the South, sausage is pork. The only pastry we could find (other than pie shells) was philo. Making do with what we could find, he made curried beef (made with sirloin, onions, tomatoes, bell peppers, bananas, sultanas, allspice, plum jam, chutney, curry powder and I don't know what all.) Sausage rolls (with catsup), French bread with garlic/parsley butter, bean salad and chopped fresh veggie condiment completed the menu. We ate like kings. Thanks, Greg.

Commercial Announcement: I'm happy to tell you that I have an assistant now -- Richard Spann. He said he would help me with ANVIL, and he does. As you other faneds know, there is a lot of detail work involving mailing lists, sorting the plethora of mail that comes in, editing letters, and so forth. I'm an old fan, and tired, and need a jump start, which Richard provides. Who knows, he may edit the locs, and if he does, this is my last chance to talk to you, so let me tell you what I did last week:

I went to see a movie -- a teen flick. PUMP UP THE VOLUME rates right up there with THE BOY WHO COULD FLY, BREAKFAST CLUB, and BREAKING AWAY. By the time you read this it will be long gone from the theaters, but will probably be available on tape. I had read about it and seen it recommended, and I recommend it to you.

The protagonist is a teenage boy (Mark, played admirably by Christian Slater) uprooted from the east coast where he grew up by his father's move to the midwest to be School Commissioner. I guess Mark suffers culture shock because as the movie opens we learn that he is not adapting to the change. The kids here are "different" he says, and Mark is afflicted with terminal shyness and a sense of separation from not only his parents but his peers. Mark's parents are aware of his difficulties, but the generation gap is in the way and any advice they try to give comes out as preachy platitudes. More frustration. The story is about teenagers, growing up, and bucking the



establishment. The teenagers come in all shapes and sizes: fat, nerdy, punk, jocks, black, white, Hispanic, loners, cheerleaders, studious, and misfits.

Mark copes by using the ham radio to talk to... himself, at first. His radio personality plays alternative music, talks about loneliness, about society's expectations, and jazzes things up when he catches himself being too serious by talking about sex. His handle is "Happy Harry Hard-on", and he goes on the air every night at 10 o'clock, for anywhere from five minutes to five hours. The kids in school discover this outrageous, dirty, just-as-confused-as-they-are DJ, and it's not long before he has a faithful following. The ones with cars congregate at the spot with the best reception. Others listen in their rooms at home... turning down the volume when a parent comes in. "Harry" has a post office box, and the kids write to him with their problems. "Don't ask me for advice about love," Harry tells them. "If I knew anything about love, I'd be out there making it... instead of in here talking to you." If they include a phone number, he calls them and puts them on the air. He even calls the school counselor at home and asks him to justify the expulsion of a pregnant student -- on the air. The kids tape the shows and play them back at lunch break. It drives the school administration up the wall. Harry is fast becoming a local folk hero. The kids know he goes to school with them, but his identity is unknown.

Remember Walter Mitty and his secret, brave and courageous, albeit imaginary, alter ego? And of course, Clark Kent/Superman and Bruce Wayne/Batman. But the closest comparison is, I think, is Dr. Jones/ Indiana Jones. In school Dr. Jones wore wire rim glasses and didn't make eye contact. Out of school, Jones takes off those glasses, grabs that whip, and watch out! Mark wears glasses, hunches his shoulders, looks at the ground, and is generally furtive-looking at school. Harry doffs those specs, grabs that mike, pumps up the volume, and opens up!

His hobby has become a fantastic ego boost on the air, but he still can't bring himself to relate in person. And while he may be sympathetic to others with problems like his, he's no psychologist, and as you may have seen coming, a situation arises wherein Harry feels inadequate and, ultimately, guilty for not saying the "right" thing.

After a classmate's suicide, which the establishment blames on Harry, he tells his audience, yeah, it's tough, but don't opt out, don't give up... if you've got to do something, do something crazy (to let off steam). Well, as you can imagine, all hell breaks loose. It's almost like inciting to riot. The fact that the teachers are upset, and a special parents' meeting is called, only spurs the kids to greater heights of rebellion. "So be it" and "Talk hard", Harry's by-words, show up in graffiti, and a tape player is hooked into the school's pa system. A girl is injured when she puts all the symbols of what her parents expect of her (Yale banner, pearls, makeup, hairspray, etc.) in the microwave. Ka-Boom!!!

The crises involve Mark's parents, the dictatorial principal, a sympathetic teacher, and the whole PTA. But the movie works best showing the interaction, via airwaves, of the kids. They relate to Harry, and he urges them to speak up. There is, as yet, no clear cut villain, although everyone knows "something" is wrong at the school. (When I saw the movie for the second time, I picked up on all the clues they dropped... there's a real



problem, a real threat.) One girl (Nora) who writes poetry to Harry cares enough to find out who Harry really is, and catches him at the post office box.

The FCC is called in. Mark may be young, but he's not stupid, and he knows when to quit. He's endangering not only his future, but his father's. (The School Commissioner, remember?) Nora, however, says he has a responsibility to his listeners, which he at first denies. After a rash of expulsions, and the firing of the "good" teacher, he has a change of heart and goes on the air again, mobile. Once the closing-in process begins, Harry has one close shave after another, and his cleverness is demonstrated when first his post office box and then his phone line is traced.

I enjoyed this film for many reasons, not the least of which is that Nora was portrayed as competent. She sticks with Mark/Harry to the bitter end and is instrumental in engineering a public denouement. No shrieking, falling down, or running away for her. It took three vans and a helicopter to get them. (Three vans and a helicopter! Remember WAR GAMES? In fact, Mark's father is played by the actor who was Joshua's father in WAR GAMES.) The dialog was witty, the teenage characters sympathetic, and the plot believable. And it was a good ending, without being a forced "happy" ending.

The movie is well-crafted, and avoids the pitfall of gratuitous sex one associates with teen-flicks. In the short and hectic time span of the movie, and the brief acquaintance of Mark and Nora, there is time for only two brief encounters. One was a beautiful "dance" between the two as they circle each other on the patio, when Mark can finally, slowly, raise his eyes to meet hers, and they begin to talk, only to be interrupted.

The next is a collage of shots as they walk between classes, glancing at one another, away, and back again, with first one leading and then the other. The cameras are used to good effect and the sexual tension is palatable. The scene ends with a brief kiss, almost in passing, and certainly in promise, before we are plunged into the fast-paced, action-filled ending.

Talk hard, Harry!





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 \* ALL DRESSED UP WITH NO PLACE TO GO: \*  
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 \* THE COOK, THE THIEF, HIS WIFE, AND DICK TRACY \*  
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-- by Richard Gilliam

Two of the summer's potentially most interesting films--the much publicized Warren Beatty version of DICK TRACY and the controversial Miramax release THE COOK, THE THIEF, HIS WIFE, AND HER LOVER--have come and fizzled. No, not at the box office, though there's no doubt each could stand a few extra ticket sales, but at the often overlooked artistic and entertainment levels.

Though markedly different in objectives, each film fails for the same reasons while experiencing limited success in the same areas. These are films which value appearance over substance, achievements of marketing designed to obscure the lack of significance in each. And yet there is enough worthwhile to make each film more frustrating for their failures.

In DICK TRACY we have Beatty's vision of the venerable comic strip hero -- the square jawed defender of American ideals. On a technical level, this is film making of the highest quality. The art direction, set design, and cinematography are superior, but alas, there is no story worth telling, no viewpoint, no enlightenment -- a gorgeous film all dressed up with no place to go.

What's worse, the film has a reactionary attitude which chips away at the basic values it pretends to serve. Everyone, Police Detective Tracy (Beatty) included, considers themselves to be above the law. Tracy conducts illegal searches and wiretaps, makes improper arrests, conducts deceitful interrogations, coerces self-incrimination, and, along with his girlfriend Tess Trueheart (Gleanne Headley), ignores the child welfare laws. He does this with alacrity, with a conviction that he is in a better position to judge justice than the social systems imposed by society.

The problem is not, however, that the film's message is anti-civil liberties, but rather that absent an interesting plot, the film says nothing at all. We care little about the characters, each a stereotype with cardboard personalities defined by makeup and costume -- quite impressive makeup and costumes to be sure, but hardly a substitute for dialogue and engrossing conflict. Beatty is surprisingly bland as Tracy though his performance is certainly acceptable. As the director of the film he views Tracy, the character, as a catalyst around which denizens of screenland can react.

When interacting with torch singing temptress Breathless Mahoney (Madonna), this underplaying is effective, but mostly it is not. Crimelord Big Boy Caprice (Al Pacino) seems more inspired by Jimmy Durante than by Vito Corleone. Maybe that's for the best here. Regrettably, Pacino fails to reach the special scenery-chewing heights of Jack Nicholson's Joker in last summer's BATMAN. Fortunately, just when you're tiring of celebrity misfires, along comes Dustin Hoffman's Mumbles, an inspired self-parody that makes up for much of the story's tediousness.



Just as he did in BATMAN, Danny Elfman's score sets a dark undertone. But unlike BATMAN, Elfman doesn't have the futuristic film noir of Gotham City with which to interact. This is the Sunday comics section come to the screen, a fully accomplished motif which communicates more through analogy than realism.

In films of this type we know the ending before we enter the theater. We worry not that the hero will prevail, that evil will be conquered, or that love true and pure will win out. We only ask that the conclusion, ordained that it is, be reached in an interesting manner and that the climax have sufficient force to compel us. DICK TRACY limps to its end and then fails to elicit our emotions.

Just as empty heroics define the limitations of DICK TRACY, the empty morals of THE COOK, THE THIEF, HIS WIFE, AND HER LOVER abdicate any message that might be hidden within its decadence. This is a corrupt film, one whose disappointing conclusion degrades its audience. It is an unrated film, that is to say a nonpornographic film that avoided an "X" simply by not being submitted to the MPAA censors.

In the opening sixty seconds we are introduced to an elegantly dressed but boorish crimelord who beats his loan-sharking victim, smears him in excrement, and urinates onto his naked body. The dark colors and moody setting communicate this is an art film and we are to judge it as such. If we don't get the art film message easily, the repeated full frontal male nudity hammers home the concept. This is a film about decay, and if we have chosen to place ourselves within its influence, director Peter Greenaway lets us know it is our responsibility to ferret his thesis.

Sadly, there is no thesis. The crimelord, the thief of the title, at various times seems to symbolize Napoleon, at other times British imperialism, and yet at others the greed of the business community. The lover represents the intelligentsia, the wife a nation trampled upon by the powerful. There is little purpose in any of this — lots of style, but so very little of the structure matters.

The first hour of the film is a virtual monologue, as the crimelord entertains his underlings (but not the audience) at an elegant restaurant he has purchased. The second half of the film broadens its characterization, but it's too little, too late. The underlings, led by his wife (Helen Mirren), stage the restaurant's version of the French Revolution, forcing the crimelord to eat the body of his wife's lover, who the crimelord has brutally murdered.

Like DICK TRACY, the film's art direction and lighting are exceptional, creating a sumptuous visual effect. And also like DICK TRACY, there is no story worth telling. Are we surprised when the crimelord beats his wife? Not really. We'd have been surprised if he didn't. Are we surprised when his wife has an affair? Of course not. Even without the hint in the title we could have figured that one out. Are we surprised when the crimelord suffers humiliation at the end? How could we be surprised when the opening scene so unsubtly foreshadowed the conclusion? On reflection, the only surprise is that we sat through the entire film, which includes three scenes so disgusting that they evoke involuntary retching and gagging from the audience.



In the first, a young prostitute tells the crimelord of his wife's infidelity. He stabs the prostitute in the face with a fork. The scene is shocking, effective and disturbing. The embedded fork and the slight trickle of blood from her cheek form a more horrific image than any of the hack and slash bloodfests that dominate "R" category films. The crimelord has already despoiled her, sold her on the street, and now that she has told him the truth, he has taken the beauty from that truth.

In the second, the wife and her lover are discovered while making love. They run naked through the restaurant looking for a place to hide. The cook, who is compliant in the affair, hides them in a truckload of putrefied meat, among the maggots and the flies. If you're thinking corruption of the flesh, you're on the right track. It's a shame the film isn't.

The third is the finale, when the crimelord is presented with the lover's well basted corpse. Perhaps there's some social pathology we're supposed to care about, or perhaps we're just supposed to enjoy seeing the crimelord come to an ill end. We simply don't care. We are relieved the film is over. We've given it every chance to pay off, and it has mocked us with its arrogance. If this film were only a little more pretentious it could have been directed by Ken Russell.

And yet, there are parts worth the ordeal. Mirren's performance as the abused wife is both striking and complex. This is MARAT/SADE meets BLUE VELVET, and only Mirren seems up to the standards of those two classics. She is sensual in a film that repulses. Her well chosen wardrobe heightens her eroticness. Perhaps unintentionally, she is least sexy when she is naked, which is often, especially in the film's second half.

Despite only the slightest objective SF content, we have little trouble fitting DICK TRACY into our conventional understanding of what constitutes SF. THE COOK, THE THIEF, HIS WIFE AND HER LOVER fits less comfortably into any category. Like MARAT/SADE and BLUE VELVET this film is clearly rooted in unreality -- the restaurant forming the art film equivalent of an alternate world -- and yet there is no clearly established speculative element. Chalk it up as one of those films that might as well have been SF but wasn't quite.

More than DICK TRACY, this film elevates communication through analogy to the obscurity of symbolism -- with pompous and unnecessary pseudo-intellectualism. Just as in TRACY, the ending is ordained, taking us nowhere, enlightening us not at all.

Unlike DICK TRACY, this ending does evoke our emotions. We do care, though not about the characters. We care that failed though this effort is, that there are film makers who still dare to make serious films for adults. We care that there are local movie houses who are willing to run unrated, alternative films along with their more profitable commercial fare like DICK TRACY. And we care, in this case, that we get out of the theater as quickly as possible, away from THE COOK, THE THIEF, HIS WIFE, AND HER LOVER.



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 \* IRISH FAN VISITS THE SOUTH \*  
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-- Charlotte Proctor

The 28th DSC was held June 7-10, 1990, in Chattanooga, Tennessee, and Bob Shaw was Guest of Honor. He arrived Wednesday before the con and was taken out to dinner by the committee. He had never seen, much less been to, an all-you-can-eat restaurant, and he was really impressed. "It was first-class protein," he said. "For only \$5 you could get a variety of meats and vegetables, beans and peas, and something really good -- a kind of shredded, curried, pork." (BoSh discovers Barbecue.) The manager finally came up to him and said "That's all you can eat!" (Just kidding.)

Linda (Riley) and I arrived Thursday afternoon. Traversing the endless halls of the con venue that came to be known as The Hotel From Hell, we met a thirsty Bob, who offered to lead us to the front desk. By then, Bob had discovered the awful truth -- the hotel had no bar. In fact, the whole community was dry. We struck a bargain wherein Bob would help us get our things to our room, and we would reward him with a drop of whiskey. Rushing out to my car, Bob began to unload at top speed. "Which parcel contains the booze?"

Julie (Ackermann) arrived and joined us, as well as Bill (Zeilke) and, fortifying ourselves with one last drink, we went across the street for supper. As we were leaving the restaurant, a man at the next table said to Bob, "Where are you from?" Bob is well aware that his Irish accent gives him away, so he made a little joke and replied "How did you know I was not from here?"

"Well," the gentleman replied, pointing to me, "I saw her showing you okra."

"I'm from New Jersey," Bob told him.

Friday was a big day - I went to lunch with Toni Weisskopf and JoAnn Montabano (along with Bob, and Raymond Feist) at 12, had a shift in the con suite at 2, a panel at 4, dinner at 6 (Bill took Bob along to a place that served Margueritas), an interview at 8, and, of course, parties at 10. I looked in the con suite during the Atlanta in '95 tour of duty -- Don Cook was holding down the fort by himself. He got buttonholed by someone who wanted to talk about the bid, so I slid behind the bar and learned how to draw beer. The 4 o'clock panel included me, Ben Miller, Bob, and the late Dick Lynch -- it was a long drive for him and he came rushing in about 20 minutes after our informal little panel started. I was glad to see him. (I miss Dick & Nicki since they've moved away... think I'll go to SciCon again this year -- they are Fan Guests of Honor...) The 8 o'clock interview gave me the opportunity of a lifetime. I'll start at the beginning:

Several weeks before the con, program director Holly Hina called me to ask if I would, during Bob's scheduled hour on Friday evening, conduct an interview. I said "No." I went on to explain that I didn't think I would be comfortable in this situation, and would rather just introduce him and let him take it from there. Holly said that was fine. When I got to the convention, I looked in the little program book and there, at 8 o'clock on Friday evening, was scheduled "Charlotte Proctor Interviews Bob Shaw." Talking with Bob about



this I said, "Would it be all right if I just said 'Tell us about yourself, Bob,?' " He said "No."

He said I had to ask questions, and explained that if I asked one question, it would keep him going for 20 minutes, and that if I asked three, that would take care of the hour. For the next day and a half, we sat around scratching our heads, trying to compose three questions. We would sit down with our friends and ask them to think of questions. "Could I have a little drop of whiskey?" was the most frequently asked question, but that didn't seem appropriate to the interview. The time finally arrived, and I had three things scribbled down... One about sports, one about his early career, and one about something else, I don't remember what. I felt pretty good about it. So we went up and sat in front of the room and I asked the first question. Bob responded to the question for about ten minutes, and then he seemed to sort of run down. I looked at him inquiringly. He raised his eyebrows and said, "Your turn." So I asked him the second question, and he talked about it for another ten minutes. After the third question was answered, we had only used up half an hour. He had lied to me. I asked for questions from the floor. Several people glanced down around their feet, but didn't see any questions lying about on the floor. I was ready to panic when J.R. Madden raised his hand. J.R. had been to BoShCon I, back in 1982, and had heard some stories that he wanted to hear again, and asked about Bob's tenure as a newspaper sports reporter. Well, that's one of my favorite stories, too, so I sat back and enjoyed listening to him tell it again. He talked on for several minutes, making little jokes, and working his way through his career as a sports writer, unlikely as it was, and then he stopped. He looked at me and raised his eyebrows. I couldn't believe it. He had told the story and left out the best line... My options were clear: I could feed him a straight line that would lead into it..... or..... I turned to the audience and said, "... and the people who followed his sports stories in the paper said to one another..." It got a laugh, but not nearly so big a laugh as Bob's horrified reaction that not only had he forgotten the best line, but that I had taken immediate and shameless advantage of the situation! The "interview" was a success, from my point of view, anyway.

Saturday morning I spent in a zombie-like trance and remember nothing. But by time for Awards and Speeches at 3 p.m., I was up for it. Khen Moore was to give me the bird that didn't arrive in time for Kubla's awards ceremony (I was Fan GoH), and then there was Bob's speech to look forward to. When Khen gave me the little statuette of the Kubla Kondor, I held up my previous bird (a stuffed Kondor from an early Kubla) and said it was about time, as this one was getting pretty bedraggled.

DSC's awards were given next: Bob Tucker won the Phoenix, and Rusty Hevelin accepted for him. Shortly thereafter, this year's Rebel Award winner was announced. Khen turned to me, grinning, stood up, pulled me up out of my seat and pushed me toward the podium. I had won the Rebel. I felt hot... My ears were ringing, and my face was flushed. Embarrassed at this public display, I looked at the floor -- but I wanted to see. I looked up. The ringing in my ears was the applause, and the warmth on my face was the smiles of my friends. Southern Fandom stood and applauded me and, I hope, forgave my discomfiture. I cannot remember what happened next. I found things in my hands, mumbled my thanks for all that Southern Fandom had done for me, and rushed away. I had to be prompted to open the gift -- a lovely sterling silver locket, with my initials on one side and "Rebel Award 1990" on the



other. Sharon Webb came up to me and hugged me, and kissed me. I nearly cried.

After the Guest of Honor speeches, of which I heard not a word, I tried my best to hug everyone in the room. Previous Rebel and Phoenix winners came to me, hugged me, and congratulated me. Euphoria set in and my feet did not touch the ground the rest of the day.

That night's celebratory dinner party included the GoH (Bob), the Rebel winner (me!), Linda, Julie, and Bill, with Leon Hendee doing the honors as host. Leon drove my car. It's supposed to be a six person car. We found that the six should be good friends, and we are. Leon took us to a lovely restaurant overlooking the Tennessee River. We sat at a table with a bench behind it and chairs on the other side. Julie, on the bench, complained that the table was too far from her. Bill pushed and Leon pulled while Bob tried to keep his straw in place as the table (and his drink) slid away.

#### BoSh Does Birmingham

After years of ~~threatening~~ promising to come to Birmingham under his own steam, Bob finally made it. I left Chattanooga early Sunday to come home and get my house in order, and the guest room shipshape. Penny (Frierson) was to follow three hours later with Bob. But the convention kind of wound down and they left shortly after I did. Penny said Bob was tired from the rigors of the convention and dozed, off and on, as they were driving down the interstate. "It was interesting," she told me later. "He would say something, doze off, and then five or ten minutes later, would say something else -- on the same subject." Penny didn't want to arrive too early, so she took Bob on a tour of Little River Canyon in Northern Alabama. The narrow back roads, full of potholes, winding and twisting, had the desired effect. Bob woke right up. "There were gorges," Bob said, "with a little river down at the bottom. The road often seemed to be going right off a precipice, and I didn't want to go there...." They stopped at a scenic view area and Penny urged Bob to look over the edge. "But there are no rails," he protested, "and that sign over there says 'Danger'. There is a sheer drop-off of at least thousand feet. I'm not going near it." It was with a feeling of relief, and a certain sense of gratitude for having survived, that Bob arrived at my house.

Wade (Gilbreath) came over. Wade has become more wrapped up with his family and mundane life and less involved in fannish activities the last few years, but I can still pry him out of the house once in a while. Last year I called and told him that Mike Glicksohn was in my living room and five minutes later Wade was on my doorstep. This time, it was Bob Shaw's presence that did the trick. We sat around a couple of hours, rehashing the convention, and finishing off the booze. I told Wade my newest Bob Shaw story -- see above. We talked till midnight.

Monday morning, Bob went downtown with me when I went to work. He likes to walk around and look at a city by himself. Also, he had gone off and left his wallet (and only pair of long trousers) in the hotel room. (When she heard this, Penny said that she had thought he was old enough that she didn't have to say "Did you check your room? Look under the bed?") Bob went shopping -- he still had his American money in his pocket.



In the meantime, I made arrangements for Meade and Penny Frierson to meet us in the Tutwiler Pub for lunch. It was their 26th wedding anniversary. Bob continued his search for the perfect Marguerita. My boss caught on to the fact that I had company and let me go for the rest of the day.

After lunch, Meade took us to his new offices, on the 24th floor of Birmingham's newest building -- the Harbert Plaza -- which looks like Gotham City must have when it was new. We got the grand tour and marveled at the view.

Penny and I took Bob shopping for the rest of the day. He patronized every tobacconist's shop he went in. We worked up quite a thirst. At 5 p.m. we arrived at Rube Burrow's in Southside where BSFC was to meet for drinks and dinner. There we sampled various brands of the new "dry" beers, and afterward walked to the library meeting room for our meeting. We had a good turnout.

It's not every day we get Bob Shaw as our program. I had given Bob a meeting announcement at DSC, and thought he had read it. Well, I know he read part of it but I think he got stuck when he realized that the meeting was to be held in a library. "This is a joke, isn't it?" he said hopefully. "You don't really meet in a library?" Linda and I assured him that it was not the library proper, but a meeting room in the basement, with no stacks, no paneled walls and leather chairs. But it wasn't until we got to the part about bringing our own refreshments that he relaxed. He relaxed so much that he discarded the notice as of no importance and missed the next line that read "BoSh speaks to BSFC, informally -- shirt and shoes required." It was a bit of a surprise when Merlin (Odom) introduced the speaker. He wasn't really prepared, he said, but when I began to tell Bob Shaw stories about forgetting punch lines, he quickly regained his memory. He remembered too much, in my opinion, and got back at me by telling an awful story about a zit he once had -- a story I had heard earlier, at breakfast Sunday morning.

Tuesday, I had to work, and it was Bob's day out with the boys. Jerry, Frank, and Greg took Bob to the shooting range. They stayed all day and, from all accounts, had a good time. Bob sustained no injuries this time, no skin ripped from his hand by rough grips, no blood running down his face from flying brass. I was tired and cranky when I got home. When I discovered that they had had Bob (my guest) out all day and had not fed him lunch, it flew all over me. I slammed doors and stomped. I ended up in the kitchen blessing out Jerry. Bob was understandably uncomfortable, being the cause of all this trouble. He assured me it was all right. "No one ate," he said. "It's not as if they brought picnic baskets and ate sandwiches and things out of them and said, 'No, Bob, you can't have any.' We all went hungry."

Fortunately, Rebecca and Frank (Brayman) were having us over to dinner. We sat on the deck and sipped (what else?) Margueritas, while Rebecca prepared lasagna and pasta. The tales got taller and taller as the evening wore on -- we requested our favorite BoSh stories ("The Cat Who Ate Cornflakes" was one) -- and Bob was rewarded with a sight he had never before seen -- fireflies, like fairy lights, flitting through the tree branches near where we sat.

Come back to Birmingham, Bob, every chance you get. We love you.



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 \* B O S H S P E A K S T O D S C \*  
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I think it's only appropriate after having been introduced by Forrey Ackerman, that I should reveal some of my connections with the movie world. There's not many people that know about them.

When I'm at a good room party at a convention and the telephone rings, a dead silence usually falls over the whole room. So I'll say, "If that's Stanley Kubrick for me, tell him I'll call him back tomorrow." It was a nice joke, but after the first two or three times, they stopped laughing....

Then last year, sitting at home with a few fans around for a drink, with a noisy party going on, the telephone rang. I went to it and picked it up, and on the other end of the line was Stanley Kubrick.

I turned around to everybody and said, "Shhh! I've got Stanley Kubrick on the line here!" And they said, "Yes, Bob, yes... We've heard that one before!"

I was quite stunned by the whole business. He didn't want to make any of my stories into a screenplay, but he'd bought a Brian Aldiss short story and he wanted me to develop it with him. The original short story lasted three pages, and he wanted me to turn it into a one hundred twenty minute screen epic.

I realized it was a sticky wicket right away, but I took the job anyway. Kubrick has lived in England since he made Lolita, which has been a long time. He doesn't like flying and for some reason he doesn't like the States. When I went on to see him, a limousine picked me up at the railway station. I had to go through two sets of electrically controlled gates to get into his estate. He gave me a room to work in, about the size of this room, and there was a kitchen right next to the room.

The first thing he said to me was, "Do you like Chinese food?" I said, yes, so he waved his hand, a door opened, and people came in carrying plate after plate of steaming hot Chinese food, and set them all over the table. It made me quite dissatisfied with my lifestyle...

He said, "If we are going to work together, we'd better be real close. You've got to get used to that so when we talk together, if I say something that you think is stupid, you've got to be able to say, 'Kubrick, that's shit!'"

So I said, "All right, I'll try to work up to that state."

We kicked ideas around for week after week, and he kept turning down my good ideas and putting up his bad ideas. In the end, I decided to take his advice. When he came up with a really awful one I said to him, "Kubrick, that's shit!" And you know what he did? It was a revelation to me. He gave me the sack! So that was the end of my collaboration with Mr. Kubrick.

I wasn't sure if I really wanted to be in the movie business, anyway. There are far too many cliches in films.



In England, old timey science fiction films are largely made out of cliches. You've got these sort of movies set in a village in the south of England, in the 1920s or the 1930s, where something has happened. The local bobby comes up on his bike and finds a body on the side of the road, and there's a bag of cocaine -- about the size of a hot water bottle -- wrapped in a bag. There's always somebody there -- the village postmistress, the village idiot, someone you would find in 1920's rural England. And somebody always picks the bag up, cuts it with a knife, tastes some, and says, "Yes, that's cocaine, yeah, that's it! That's cocaine!" How do they know?

I like a good detective story. Sometimes I am fortunate enough to see a good play about crime. I don't see one often, I hardly ever attend because of the SFWA. When I see a crime I know immediately what it is. When something happens, I always know what it is. Nobody in the movies ever does, so they have to go stick their fingers in. And they say, "Yes, that's blood..."

I think the all time classic cliché is somebody gets killed... say, a policeman gets killed on duty. And somebody's got to take the news to his wife. Now they never do it the way a normal sensible person would do it. But say if Officer Jones has been killed on duty, wouldn't you just pick up the phone and say, "Hello? Widow Jones?..."

It's a matter of extremes. Say somebody's mother has been killed by a maniac, and chopped up, and boiled in a pot. Now that's a hard thing to break to someone. They say, well, first of all they always say, "Sit down." They don't impart this sort of news to anyone else unless they sit down first. And once they are sitting down, they don't want to lead up to it. They just say, "Your mother was chopped up by a maniac and stewed." Couldn't they could sidle up to it, and possibly start off by saying, "You know how your mother always wanted to make good stew?"

There is one film that's really criticized about its cliches and that was The Amityville Horror. I've been watching pictures like The Exorcist. I had a cliché in mind about the priest who would fight the devil to the very death. He just go in there and fight, and not ever give up. But the priest in The Amityville Horror was a man after my own heart. These people moved into this house and started having bad experiences, and they rang the priest. And he went round in his car, and he parked. He was walking up to the front of the house and he thought he heard something saying "Go away." So he went away....

The rest is about all the awful things that happened when he actually went back, all the supernatural appearances. One of them was the muffler fell off his car. When he got home he developed a rash on his hand, and he took a headcold. Obviously Satan was really at work here.

A masterpiece of cliches is Star Wars. One of my favorite scenes -- the big scene to me -- was the battle over the Death Star. What it boiled down to was that the Death Star was a sort of planet -- a huge planet-sized weapon. You always find in a science fiction super planet, that there's always a little porthole. There's always one somewhere. This one had one located at the end of a sort of metal canal about fifty miles long, it was right at the end of it. The plan was, if you could just go up there, and shoot a missile into the porthole, the Death Star would be destroyed. The entire planet was run by computer, and the computer on the Death Star analyzed the attack plan



and said it had merit. The attack plan was to get into this 50 mile long canal and fly along it all the way, and then shoot the torpedo into the converter.

I may be devious in my thinking, but to me a better plan would have been to just sort of fly around a little bit somewhere else, and then pop into this canal — sort of "here you are, stupid." To show you how stupid the computer on the Death Star was, you had this design, with all these hundreds of cannon defending this little hole, that goes down to... I don't know... the captain's toilet or something. It seems to me a more cost effective solution would be to put a metal grill over the hole. Luckily they didn't show the actual details of what happens. I can just imagine what would happen if it ends up in the captain's toilet. I just hope he wasn't sitting on it at the time.

And that's the main reason I'm not having anything more to do with Stanley Kubrick. And now I'll step down and let someone else tell a story or two. Thank you.

((Bob Shaw's Guest of Honor Speech at DSC, June 9, 1990. Transcribed and abridged by Dick Lynch, Charlotte Proctor, and Rebecca Brayman.))

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 \* LIFE IS BUT A RAFFLE \*  
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-- Bob Shaw

Life has its low points, but to make up for that there are times when the old cup runneth over.

My cup was definitely runneth over on the evening when my wife and I set off for Perth, Australia, where I was to be guest of honour at Swancon 14. Firstly, there was the fact of the trip itself. I entered fandom away back in 1950, and used to cycle over to Walt Willis's house three times a week to help with the work on SLANT and its successor HYPHEN. Doing so was a matter of pure fannish joy, and if an oracle had told me that I would some day travel the world as a direct result of it I might have died from a simple surfeit of happiness. So there I was in a nice aisle seat of a 747, starting my second trip to Australia, feeling so good that I could almost have looked at a picture of Margaret Thatcher without my stomach muscles clenching in the usual know.

Secondly, we had arranged a two-day stopover in Singapore and I had a grandiose scheme in mind. Scanning the map of Singapore provided by the travel agent, I had discovered that our hotel was only a block away from the famous Raffles Hotel. As well as the famous Long Bar, the Raffles has the legendary Writers' Bar, where generations of authors have signed their names on the ceiling. I had a copy of my latest book in my briefcase, with my photo on the back cover to prove authenticity, and I was prepared to bribe every barman in the place if necessary to let me inscribe my name up there along with Somerset Maugham and all the others. We were due to check into our hotel at 8:00 p.m., so the expedition to the Raffles would make a great start to our stay in Singapore.

Thirdly, there was the fact that our plane was leaving from Manchester. I live only 15-minutes' drive from Manchester airport, and thus was spared having to make my way down to one of the London airports. To anybody who knows England only as a speck on the globe, this may not seem much of a bonus, but in this country we have never become psychologically adjusted to time-consuming journeys. Motels are practically nonexistent in Britain because the scale of the country is such that, if one is really determined, even the longest journey can be completed in one grim-faced shot.

The 747 had taken aboard only a handful of passengers in Manchester, and was scheduled to land briefly in London to pick up the main load bound for the Far East. The 175-mile hop was nothing for the great silver bird, so all-in-all -- as we sat there listening to the Jumbo's engines stirring into life -- I was in one of those moods in which all prospects are pleasing to the eye.

When I say that all prospects were pleasing, I should mention one little cloud on the horizon in the form of a woman seated next to Sarah in our row of four central seats. She looked and sounded like the English actress Thora Hird, and was accompanied by her husband -- a geriatric hulk of about 300 lb., who was fast asleep in the aisle seat farthest from me. Thora had flown to Singapore once before and thus, quite naturally, was an expert on the design, construction and operation of long-range aircraft.



She engaged Sarah in conversation and immediately endeared herself to me by saying it was a good job that I had been placed at the opposite end of the row from her husband because it would help to balance the aircraft. I have never been of a build that one might describe as willowy or lissome, but I felt the comment was quite uncalled for and I decided to ignore her for the rest of the flight. Unfortunately she had one of those razor-edged, George Formby, Lancashire voices -- the aural equivalent of a laser beam -- which can effortlessly slice through the roar of a football crowd, and ignoring her proved to be quite impossible.

Everything she said about the aircraft was wrong, but somehow she managed to impress Sarah with her "knowledge". That was rather galling for me, especially as I had worked as an aircraft designer, so I was forced to try calming Sarah down as she reacted uneasily to the flood of alarming pronouncements which came forth.

The irritation started almost at once. As soon as the engines got going in the confined space of the loading fingers some of the exhaust, as always happens, was picked up by the air intakes and recirculated through the cabin.

Thora shot bolt upright, nose twitching like that of a gopher, and she said, "There's something wrong with the engines -- I can smell fuel!"

Sarah gripped my arm. "There's something wrong with the engines!"

"Nonsense," I said. "I'm a qualified engineer and I'm telling you the engines are just fine."

"Are you sure?"

"Trust me." I managed to calm Sarah down in spite of Thora's continued claims that her finely attuned senses had diagnosed serious trouble, and the plane took off on the little flip down to London. We got there in a matter of minutes, the main load of passengers came on board, the engines revved up and then -- unexpectedly -- fell silent again.

"I'm sorry, ladies and gentlemen," the captain announced, "but our departure has to be delayed because we are having a little engine trouble."

Thora sat up straighter, directing a triumphant I-told-you-so look at everyone in the vicinity.

The captain went on to explain that a gearbox on one of the engines had begun to leak some oil, and that it would have to be replaced before the flight could continue. The odds against that fault developing in such a short flight were astronomical, and of course it could have had absolutely no effect on the burning of fuel -- but the damage had been done. Sarah now regarded Thora as an aircraft faultfinding genius.

We had to disembark, and we spent two hours in the Heathrow snack bar, during which I drank the awful free beer and tried to convince Sarah that it had all been a coincidence and that Thora was a total idiot. Eventually we were allowed on board again, and to my chagrin the whole miserable, infuriating process started all over! The engines started up, some exhaust came in



through the ventilation system, Thora shot upright -- and by now I could almost see the gopher whiskers sticking out on each side of her snout -- and said, "The engines still aren't right -- I can smell fuel!"

I told Sarah to pay no attention or I might be forced to kill her; we taxied out to the runway; we lined up -- and then we turned back. The captain announced that our departure had to be delayed because one of the hydraulic pressure warning lights on the control deck was giving what appeared to be a false reading.

Thora almost stood up and took a bow.

I, in turn, almost went down on my knees and pleaded with Sarah to listen to me, to believe that it was all a ghastly fluke, that Thora was a cretin...

To cut a long story short, as they say, I can relate that we finally became airborne four hours later than scheduled. The lost time was not made up, and when we checked into our hotel in Singapore the time was midnight instead of 8 p.m. It was too late for the planned excursion to the Raffles, and we were tired out in any case, so I decided to be philosophical. We'll pop into the Writers' Bar in the morning, I decided. It'll be quieter at that time of day. The mood will be more reflective...

On the following morning, immediately after breakfast, we nipped around the corner to the Raffles. I was clutching my book, and looking forward to ordering a sinfully early Singapore Sling and coyly introducing myself to the head barman.

But things didn't work out that way.

Before we got within fifty yards of the Raffles' main entrance we saw that it was the centre of a mob of tourists, all of whom were unsuccessfully trying to get in. Some were trying to bribe their way in, others to fight their way in, and they were being repelled by an army of native defenders, some dressed as waiters, others as workmen. It transpired that the Raffles was being closed for six months of renovation -- and can you guess the exact moment at which the doors were shut?

You've got it!

Midnight on the previous day, just as Sarah and I were checking into our hotel four hours behind schedule!

It is, of course, important to adopt the cosmic view point in matters like this, but it still churns me up every time I remember that a little oil seal springing a leak over Sutton Coldfield robbed me of my chances of immortality in Singapore.

Sometimes I suspect that that Thora woman had something to do with it...



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 \* THE OLD IRONMASTER LOOKS \*  
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 \* INTO HIS OWN FANZINE \*  
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-- Buck Coulson

As I was reading ANVIL's 51st issue, I looked to see what YANDRO's 51st issue was like. This was the April, 1957, issue, and YANDRO was appearing "relentlessly monthly" as some reader said, and contents varied quite a bit from issue to issue, depending on what was on hand. (For only one issue did we specifically ask anyone to contribute, which also added to the variety.) The previous issue, #50, had been our one coordinated issue, devoted to TAFF. Along with a not too successful photo cover by me, it included histories of TAFF by Walt Willis for the British view and Don Ford for the American, and promotional pieces for all eight candidates. (Yes, eight; TAFF was a much bigger deal in those early days when few Americans ever made it to a European con on their own.) The candidates were Stuart Hoffman, a Wisconsin collector and masquerade enthusiast; George Nims Raybin, a New York lawyer who later accompanied the Freedom Marchers in their attempt to get southern black voters registered; Ed McNulty, fanzine editor and known primarily in the midwest; old-time fans Robert A. Madle and Forrest J. Ackerman; Canadian Boyd Raeburn (the Mike Glicksohn of his day); Dick Ellington, who later held the posts of secretary of the San Francisco Symphony and the local I.W.W. cell; and Richard Eney, editor of the Fancyclopedia. (Ackerman later withdrew from the race, Madle won, and Hoffman placed second.)

The 51st YANDRO was much less inspired. I was preparing to change jobs, which would entail driving 20 miles to another town. (We moved in September, without missing an issue, thanks to Juanita. Of course, in late October she had a baby, and the November issue came out right on time; no problem at all.) Also the typewriter wasn't working right, appliances were falling apart, I didn't feel like doing a fanzine, and we didn't have a lot of brilliant material on hand. In her editorial, Juanita said she had no sympathy for people who complained that they had no time to publish a fanzine while they were in college; she'd had a lot more time in college than she'd had since.

There were two pieces of fan fiction: Bennett Gordon's humorous one and a more serious attempt by Neal F. Wilgus. We still exchange Christmas cards with Gordon, now a respectable New England lawyer; haven't heard of Wilgus for awhile. "Thomas Stratton" dissected "The Great Curucu", a movie that should at least be on the short list for most unintentionally funny. "Now, cross country! Through some of the crossiest country I have ever seen.... Hardly a yard goes by without their being attacked by some kind of stuffed animal (with at least one shot of the party in full technicolor and the attacking animals in black and white...)."

Marion Zimmer Bradley opened her column by saying that several fans had complained to her about her intent to discuss science books in her column. This drew a note from me at the end of the column that if I ever found that someone had done that again, his or her subscription would be ended summarily. (I was much less tolerant of the behavior of my fellow fans in those days; the Miesels told me a couple of years ago that I'd "mellowed shamefully" in recent years.) Marion did comment on science books in future installments of her column, and if anyone complained, I didn't hear about it.



An article by Ed Wood took two pages to refute a paragraph by John W. Campbell, Jr. in ASTOUNDING. (After YANDRO won a Hugo, Ed saw me at a con, gave me a hearty congratulations on the win, said "Now I can go read a good fanzine," and dropped entirely out of communication.)

Alan Dodd's "Doddering Column" reflected on what disadvantages the "gift" of super powers might be to an individual, as evinced in an Ed Hamilton story and an episode of a British TV series. I still correspond regularly with Alan, who was YANDRO's British agent for nearly 30 years.

There was a poem by Ray Schaffer, and a very short letter column. Not at all an inspiring issue; I expect Charlotte to do better. Of course, in those days, YANDRO was 20 pages per month, no exceptions, not a lot of room for brilliance.

It wasn't until issue #54, in July, that we had a fairly all-star cast of contributors: pro editor Raymond A. Palmer, small-time pro author James R. Adams, and future pros Richard Lupoff and Thomas Stratton. I don't know if Lupoff was looking forward to professional writing and editing back then; I'm pretty sure he wasn't considering founding comics fandom then, however. I'm not even sure he considered doing it during the time that he was doing it. I can guarantee that Thomas Stratton wasn't even thinking about pro writing, though his two halves had each thought of it previously and were to consider it again. Gene DeWeese, by the way, has been the much more successful half of "Stratton," but I've sold a few things on my own. I wonder how many of ANVIL's current contributors and letterhacks will write professionally in future years?

YANDRO had the one advantage of continuity. Fans who sent contributions were almost certain of getting them published, eventually. It wasn't until issue 255, some 25 years later, that we could open our letter column with letters from Jaan Kangilaski, Susan Shwartz, John Brunner, Joe L. Hensley, Gene Wolfe, and Lee Hoffman, all of them writing about their novels or some other aspect of the pro world. All things come to him who waits... (Make a note of that, Charlotte.)





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 \* FANZINE REVIEWS \*  
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-- by Roy G. Bivens

Well, I see from a reminder that came in the mail today from my good friend Charlotte that I've been procrastinating again, and it's time to dust off the keyboard for another fanzine review column. In my defense, though, I did attempt to get started on it before this, but it's been difficult to concentrate on writing with all the noisy parties going on next door, just about every night this summer. Let me tell you, not only is all that damned noise distracting, but coming back home from over there after downing a six pack or two makes you not even want to think about writing! Anyway, I can get started now, because the latest party ended early when it was discovered that somebody absconded with the keg of beer that was accidentally left outside. No, it wasn't me, but it did remind me of a long-ago time way back during my college days, when bottles of homebrew beer a roommate left outside our dorm room window to chill overnight kept getting stolen. We never did find out who did it, but it stopped in a hurry when the thief made off with two beer bottles we put out there that we filled with urine instead of brew. Sort of gives new meaning to telling someone to piss off.

But we're supposed to be talking about fanzines, aren't we. First up, then, is Proper Boskonian, a fanzine that by all means does not piss me off, but still seems pretty much a mixed bag with some interesting articles and features, plus a few not-so-interesting ones as well.

The issue I've managed to get hold of is number 27, dated May 1990. I had never seen an issue of PB before, even though it's apparently been published on an irregular schedule since the 1960s. This issue was widely distributed at the fanzine fans' convention Corflu, which I guess was the start of the round-about route this copy took before finally arriving at my door. In any event, it's a nice looking production (as you'd expect from any publication sponsored by NESFA, the New England SF Association), composed using page description software and printed with a laser printer. Besides the layout, paging through the issue, I'm struck (and impressed) by the large amount of fanart, most drawn specifically to complement the fanarticles published in the issue. It's the kind of fanzine, in construct and appearance at least, I might want to do if I was into fan publishing.

There were two articles I really liked in this issue of PB. The first was a wonderfully done cartoon feature by fanartist Joe Mayhew called "Redesigning the Hugos to Suit the Winners," subtitled "Let the Hugo Fit the Crime." No text to go with the cartoons here, but in two pages Joe has humorously captured what the award perhaps should look like for certain authors or categories. It's the best cartoon feature I've seen in a fanzine in a long time. The other article that stands out is Leslie Turek's "My Life as a Faned," a nicely written narrative about Boston-area fandom that's really two articles in one. The first half anecdotally describes Boston fandom of the mid 1960s -- the MIT Science Fiction Society and editing the MITSFS clubzine The Twi light Zine and the genesis of Locus, that multiple Hugo winning magazine whose first issues originated from Boston. The second part of the article is more straightforward and perhaps a little less interesting, with a behind-the-scenes look at The Mad 3 Party, the fanzine devoted to planning and running Worldcons. I say "less interesting" here because while



the entertaining first half of the article was written by Leslie Turek, noted fanwriter, the second half reads like it was written by Leslie Turek, NESFA and Noreascon committee member (no perjoratives intended).

Unfortunately, the rest of the issue is a more than a little up-and-down, quality wise. The issue's first article, by Jon Singer about great sushi chefs he knows, seems at best of marginal interest and the writing, while competent, doesn't really make it stand out. Certainly it's not an article I'd lead off the issue with. Later in the issue, The Kurt Baty Roast is of even less interest, since it's a transcript of his professional co-workers (most of whom aren't even part of fandom, as one roaster's reference to "sci-fi" implies) at a going-away party for him. Unless you're a techie and are familiar with all the latest advances in computer hardware engineering, the "humor" in this article will quite likely leave you cold.

Two other articles, by multiple contributors about neglected science fiction authors and personal views of Noreascon 3, are collective reprints from APA:NESFA and the USENET computer bulletin board, respectively. The quality of these are also uneven. For example, Mark Olson's summary of James Schmitz and his fiction was pretty interesting, and I found out some things about Schmitz that might allow me to enjoy his work better. On the other hand, Ben Yalow's quick half-page look at John Campbell was way too short to do any justice to him or his work, and as a result didn't add anything at all to my knowledge or appreciation of him. The same applies to the collective Noreascon reviews -- Evelyn Leeper's review, while too short, was well written and gave a pretty good flavor of what the convention must have been like. Richard Newsome's review, on the other hand, was little more than a collection of "then I met so-and-so"s.

I guess what I'm saying here is that Proper Boskonian, back after years of hiatus, needs to be edited with a sharper blue pencil. Too much of the issue seems to be filler, that could easily be omitted if better contributions were available to publish. This is the first issue of its revival, though, so I'd expect subsequent issues to be steadily better, as the word spreads that NESFA is once again sponsoring a genzine. But for now, PB isn't nearly the fanzine that it could be or should be, given the resources of the sponsoring club.

Besides NESFA, another club that sponsors fanzine publications is the Madison, Wisconsin-based Society for the Furtherance and Study of Fantasy and Science Fiction, or SF3. This club has always had a well-deserved reputation as the home of notable fanzines and fanwriters, including Jeanne Gomoll's Whimsey, whom and which I consider the very best fanwriter and fanzine (except that both seem to have gone into hibernation for the past couple of years). Anyway, the fanzine most readily identified with SF3 has been Aurora, a fanzine of speculative feminism, which under its previous title Janus in the late 1970s received two Hugo award nominations. It's nice to see that Aurora has resurfaced once again after a three year absence, but unfortunately this issue (#26, Summer 1990) is its last issue.

There's always been a lot to appreciate in Aurora, though this last issue is quite a bit thinner in content than previous issues; the professional-looking appearance of the fanzine is second only to Tony Ubelhor's Pulsar!, and the writing accompanying interior artwork has been usually much superior to most other contemporary fanzines. This is still true



with the current issue; the graphics and layout remain as good and as crisp as ever, the writing remains competent, and the fine interior artwork by Georgie Schnobrich adds greatly to the two short stories. But, there's an obvious sense of rust around the edges you expect to see when any ongoing project creaks to a halt. The content of this issue is mostly two works of fiction, plus a rehashing with somewhat dated letters of comment on the previous issue's article concerning "The 'Me' Decade and Feminist Science Fiction." I get the feeling that the editor wanted to put out one more issue to tie up loose ends from previous issues, and also to print any remaining manuscripts and articles that have been rattling around in the file cabinet for the past couple of years. The result is that this last issue of Aurora will probably be remembered as one of the least memorable issues.

I'm a bit hesitant to delve too much farther into this issue, because I don't feel all that competent to comment on feminist-related issues that permeate the content of this and for that matter, all previous issues of Aurora; I'm not and I've never been labeled a feminist, or an anti-feminist either for that matter. (There are plenty of other things I have been called from time to time, but we won't go into that here.) I will mention that after reading the issue twice, I'm struck by its dead seriousness throughout and general overall lack of lightness; it's not as if feminist issues are supposed to be trivial bits of fluff or anything like that, but nowhere in the issue was there even a hint of humor or wit, which for me is one of the things that makes a fanzine memorable and entertaining to read.

So am I going to miss Aurora? Sure I will. As I said, this fanzine always has had a lot to appreciate in it. But I think its time is probably past. It was a product of the late 1970s, when new domestic causes like the feminist movement and ERA were replacing war protests. I don't think there's any less interest in feminist issues today, but today there are so many other things going on, both within and outside of fandom, that compete for attention and time.

Speaking of time, I'm almost out of it, but before I go I want to mention one more club-sponsored fanzine. This one's called Poutník, which means "pilgrim" in Czech, and it's an English language fanzine from the Jules Verne science fiction club of Prague, Czechoslovakia. The issue I've got here is dated January 1988; according to my sources, a more recent issue surfaced at the recent Netherlands Worldcon, indicating the club is still alive and well, and interested in interacting with English-speaking fans.

This early 1988 issue seems pretty ordinary on a quick scan, with a few pieces of short fiction accounting for over half of the pagecount. But when you stop to think about it, the very existence of an Iron Curtain era English-language fanzine like this is downright amazing; it was produced before the Velvet Revolution toppled the Czechoslovakian communist government, back when possession of a mimeograph was probably illegal and use of one was heavily restricted. I can't even begin to imagine the obstacles and roadblocks that had to be overcome to make this zine happen.

Anyway, it turns out that there's a lot to like in this issue. The fiction is pretty ordinary and even cliched by Western standards, but the interior illustration to one of the stories is first rate. It and the cover look like they were drawn by the same, alas, unnamed artist; whoever he or



she is, his (or her) artwork is on par with many of the better-known fan artists in this land, and I definitely would like to see more from him/her.

Another thing worth mentioning is the editorial comments, which describes the Jules Verne club and the state of science fiction in Czechoslovakia, and following it, the article by Zdenek Rampas on the history of Czech fandom. Taken together, they open a valuable window onto Czech fandom that makes this fanzine worth the effort of acquiring. This is a fanzine I hope to receive more issues of.

Issues Reviewed: Proper Boskonian (Issue #27 /May 1989/ reviewed), from NESFA (Laurie Mann, editor), Box G, MIT Branch Post Office, Cambridge, Massachusetts 02139; available for \$2.00, contribution, letter of comment, fanzine trade, or editorial whim. Aurora (Issue #26 /Summer 1990/ reviewed), from SF3 (Diane Martin, editor), Box 1624, Madison, Wisconsin 53701-1624; availability not listed, but write. Poutnik (Issue number not listed /"Special '88"/ reviewed); availability not listed (but will probably send a copy in trade for your fanzine) from Jules Verne Club, c/o Miroslav Martan (chairman), Pocatecka 12, 140 00 Praha 4, Czechoslovakia (or) c/o Egon Cierny (secretary), Matechova 14, 140 00 Praha 4, Czechoslovakia.

((Ed. note: Mr. Bivens isn't always this ingratiating; whoever said that a six-pack of liquid refreshment can work wonders was right. With the beer tax going up soon, though, he should be dried out and back to his surly self before very much longer. And yes, he'll be back again with more fanzine reviews next issue.))

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\* MYSTERY REVIEWS \*  
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-- by Buck Coulson

A GRAVE MUST BE DEEP by Theodore Roscoe, Starmont, \$9.95

This was originally a serial in ARGOSY, and is facsimile printed, including the original illustrations and all the synopses of previous installments. There's a pen and ink portrait of Roscoe also included, from the New York Sun of 1934. Date of the story isn't given, but 1934 would be a good guess. Since the book is somewhat smaller in size than the magazine was, the print is reduced, but it's adequately clear. The reduction probably helped the artwork, which needs all the help it can get. It's a short novel; the book has 120 trade-paperback-sized pages. I bought a copy from Rusty Hevelin at Chambanacn because I'll buy almost anything by Roscoe, who wrote some excellent fantasies as well as two of the best non-fiction World War II books ever produced.

This one isn't a fantasy, though it's set in Haiti and includes voodoo; the occult is explained away in the conclusion. This requires some ingenuity, since the zombie in question is a man the protagonist has seen buried 10 feet



deep and the grave filled up. At one point, the police open the grave to make sure the body is still there, and it is.

The protagonist is an artist, and his current model is called to Haiti for the reading of the will of an old friend of her family, who may have left her something. The protagonist goes along -- in 1934, nice girls didn't dash off to Haiti on their own. The will is one of those that leaves the fortune to a series of people, providing they obey certain instructions, including remaining in the decedent's home for 24 hours. If the first person named obeys all the instructions, he gets the money, if not, the bequest goes down the line to the first person on the list who does obey them. The girl is 8th and last. So of course everyone stays, and the murders begin. Peculiar wills were mainstays of pulp mysteries and occult<sup>3</sup>horror stories.

Interestingly, it's the girl who solves the mystery; all the protagonist does is bumble around and get in trouble. It's a very modern conclusion for the time it was written, especially since the girl also has to rescue the protagonist at one point, when he's been buried alive. (And for any modern feminists, the term "girl" is quite suitable for a character in a 1930s novel, so there.)

MIND'S EYE

by "Ainslie Skinner," Pan Books, 1981

(I asked Buck to explain a reference in his last column, and it resulted in the following book review. -- cp)

I'm told there was a US hardcover edition, but no paperback. The author is actually mystery writer Paula Gosling. She says that her publisher didn't think it was "her sort of book", and wanted an alias, so she picked the names of her lead characters in her mystery novel, THE ZERO TRAP. (Also well worth reading. In fact, I have yet to find one of her books that I haven't liked. Her latest mystery is in hardcover in the US and I'm waiting for it to become a paperback, since I don't think I have a prayer of getting a mystery publisher to send me a freebie.)

This one is based on psi powers. Philip Elliot is the director of a British establishment doing psi research for the government. Elliot had used his own psi powers to make enough money to start the research, as much to find some people like himself as anything else, but ran out of money and short of time, and had to let the government in. While investigating an alleged "haunted house," he finds a girl who is an incredibly powerful telepath, telekinetic, tele-everything, but who doesn't speak and has no real knowledge of humanity. He convinces her to come and be studied, and the rest of the story pits the psi researchers against their own government contact, who wants to use the powers for his own benefit, and a Russian agent with the same ideas. The plot is fairly typical espionage, with interlocked conspiracies. What makes it worth reading are the characters; I could actually care what happened to them, which seems to me to be a rare quality in espionage fiction -- or psi stories, for that matter.



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 \* 1990 HUGO WINNERS \*  
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-- Patrick J. Gibbs  
 Critic in Residence

The Hugo Winners are the choices of the members of the World Science Fiction Convention as the best stories of the previous calendar year. The winners from 1989's crop were selected by the members of CONFICTION, the first WorldCon held in The Hague, Netherlands. It was a very mixed bag. I see a very ambitious first volume of a two volume novel, an excellent story from Robert Silverberg and then two stories from our adolescence.

Out of a sense of order I will start with the short story category. "Boobs" by Suzy McKee Charnas (IASFM, Jul 89) is the best of times and the worst of times, namely adolescence. The heroine, and narrator of the story, is a 13 year old girl who returns from summer vacation to learn that she is the most physically developed girl in her class. When the class clown decides to saddle her with the sobriquet of "Boobs", it looks like it will be a bad year. Now we get into the reason why this story did not appear in any of the best SF of the year anthologies. It's fantasy! Kelsey is a werewolf (a fact she was unaware of) and goes through her first shapechange at the first full moon after her first menses. Wish-fulfillment, anyone?

I have read several of Ms. Charnas' novels in the past. She is expert at capturing the voice of the young adolescent in her point of view characters. She is a damn good writer and this is a good story. But it did not deserve a Hugo. I have long believed that the Hugo should be given to science fiction stories as opposed to fantasy. This is especially appropriate since the World Fantasy Convention gives its annual award for the best fantasy of the year.

I can see why "Boobs" won the Hugo. The story appeals to the "outsider looking in" feeling that many SF fans experienced during their adolescence. If you are one of the few students reading books because you like them, it is not easy to fit in with the crowd. Norman Spinrad made a similar accusation against ENDER'S GAME by Orson Scott Card alleging that the Hugo voters were vicariously reliving their own alienated childhoods through ENDER'S GAME. I did not find any of the transcendence in "Boobs" that I found in Card's masterwork. It was well done, but come on folks -- let's stick to SF.

Robert Silverberg was definitely writing Science Fiction in "Enter a Soldier. Later: Enter Another" (IASFM June 89), which won the Hugo for Best Novelette. He posits further progress in computerized artificial intelligence to the point where the writings of and about a famous man can be fed into a program and it will generate an artificial personality of that historical person in an apparently accurate fashion. The breakthrough occurs with the conqueror of half of the Western Hemisphere, Francisco Pizzaro.

From that 'what if', Silverberg embroiders a story that is wonderfully told and challenging. But be forewarned that there is not much action in this story. What would you expect from a tale dealing with history and the importance of ideas? And when was the last time you read a story with Socrates as a principal character? Silverberg's career, and this story, are vivid proof that SF is a literature constantly reinventing itself.



Best Novella went to "The Mountains of Mourning" by Lois McMaster Bujold and appears in BORDERS OF INFINITY (Baen Books, 1989, \$3.95). It was originally published in ANALOG in May, 1989. ASIMOV'S did not manage to totally sweep the short fiction awards this year. I see a resemblance between this story and "Boobs". The hero of "Mountains of Mourning" is young Count Miles Vorkosigan, a member of the ruling class of the Barrayan Empire, which appears to be an interstellar human empire set in the far future when Earth is simply a planet that just happened to be home once.

Humanity has not changed much. There is war and peace, plots and counterplots, wealth and poverty, education and ignorance. Young Miles, a brand-new ensign from the Imperial Academy, has already been victimized by such strife. A chemical attack during his mother's pregnancy resulted in his being born to become a short, brittle-boned man. On a world that is almost superstitiously fearful of mutants he is an outsider who must fight for acceptance.

The story is structured as a murder mystery. A young peasant woman arrives at the castle of Miles' father, the ruler of the district, demanding justice for the murder of her infant child, who was born with a hare-lip and labelled as mutant by ignorant villagers. The main suspect is her husband. Miles is dispatched to act as his father's representative and to dispense justice on the person guilty of infanticide. There is no great effort in solving the murder when a super truth serum can be dispensed without any legal or practical restrictions. The not very subtle point of the story is the importance of recognizing the worth of the individual underneath all those handicaps.

I thought the story was very professional, worth reading, but not deserving of a Hugo. Dealing with serious topics does not make a story important, or serious. The entire feel of the story was of Poul Anderson's Flandry of Terra series. It was almost as good as the Flandry saga, but a variation on a theme by Anderson should not win a Hugo. The award should go to something that takes chances while advancing the genre.

Which brings us to why HYPERION by Dan Simmons (Doubleday/Bantam \$4.95), is a winner of the Best Novel Hugo. Dan Simmons took quite a chance in writing a novel that is structured like Chaucer's Canterbury Tales. A group of Terrans are on a pilgrimage to the planet Hyperion, where the mysterious alien creature called the Shrike lives in the Valley of the Time Tombs. Hyperion is a closed planet on which only a few visitors are allowed to visit the Time Tombs, structures that move backwards in time.

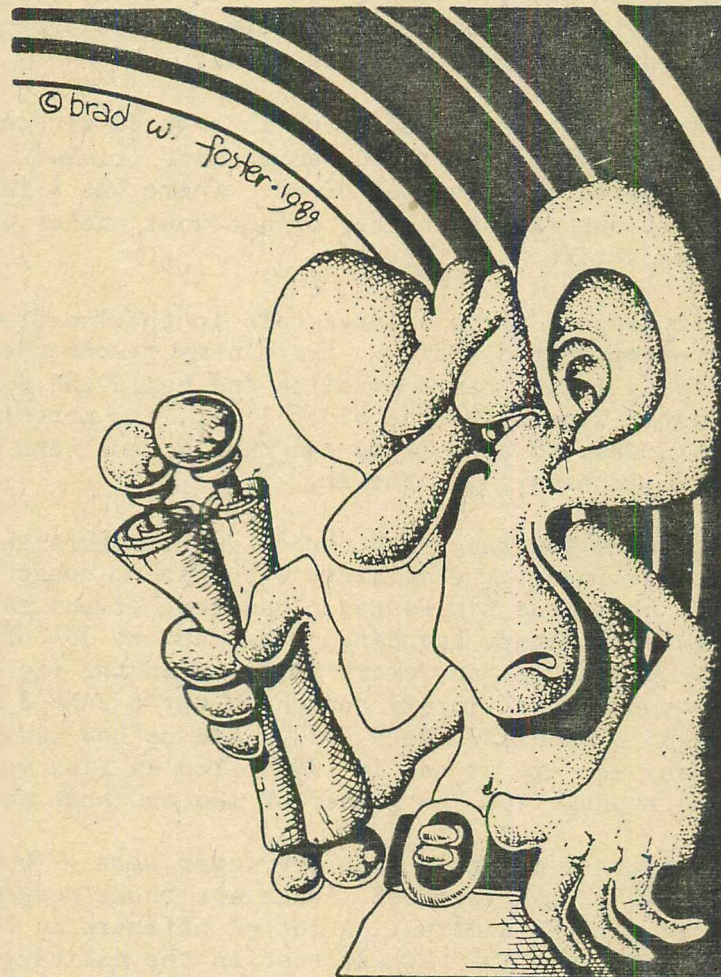
HYPERION is an intimidating book at a length of 482 pages. Even more daunting is the thought that the narrative is not concluded at its end. A second novel, THE FALL OF HYPERION, now out in hardcover and trade paperback has the conclusion (except for those copies that were printed without the page containing the climactic scene). This is really a novel published in two volumes, similar to how THE LORD OF THE RINGS was a novel published in three volumes. With its humongous size, it will probably be one of the most unread popular SF novels in years. I do not yet have THE FALL OF HYPERION. When I do, I would like to read the two books back to back. So far, I would say that Simmons has a powerful imagination and a great storytelling ability. Whether it will all be worth it remains to be seen.



I cannot leave without giving my annual plug for THE YEAR'S BEST SCIENCE FICTION, Edited by Gardner Dozois (St. Martin's Press). It is available in both hardcover and trade paperback. For those of us who cannot keep up with the three major SF magazines, much less the several good short story collections published during the year (e.g. FULL SPECTRUM), this volume is indispensable. No science fiction library is complete without this book. One could easily make the argument that Gardner Dozois' selections are better (or at least as good) as any Hugo winner or nominee. Interestingly, only the Silverberg story is in THE YEAR'S BEST. It is well worth the money to put this book on your shelf.

Last year was not a good one for SF, if you measure it by the quality of the novels. Maybe the solution is to pay more attention to the short fiction. There could be treasures out there and only the regular readers of the ANALOG, IASFM, F&SF, and THE YEAR'S BEST will know about them. If 1990 is any indication, the voters for the Hugos are not doing a good job of finding them. Only the Silverberg has a truly golden quality. The other two short pieces are silver quality - good now, but over the years we'll see some tarnish on them. I wax metaphorical. The point is that all of us should be reading more of the short fiction being published.

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\* INTERVIEW WITH TOM CLANCY \*  
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-- Richard Gilliam

An internationally best selling author calling for the abolishment of ballistic missiles, sweeping cuts in defense spending, and the broad support of personal civil liberties? Gore Vidal or Tom Wolfe maybe? Nope. Not even close. What's the world coming to when cold war specialist Tom Clancy gets wrapped up in Glasnost?

"The world has made a fundamental change," says Clancy, who, thanks to such best sellers as THE HUNT FOR RED OCTOBER and CLEAR AND PRESENT DANGER, sold more books than any other author in the eighties. "This is the first time in human history when anybody can ever say that there is a possibility that we can end war entirely.

"If the United States and the Soviet Union make peace who else is going to make war? If we both turn off the spare parts there won't be any war in ten years. Wouldn't that be wonderful? I'm sorry for all those war gamers who'll have to find an honest hobby. At least there's still Dungeons and Dragons."

This coming from a man who has pushed the world to the brink of destruction in five consecutive best sellers? Absolutely. Tom Clancy would be glad if there were no more threats of war to write about.

"I've got four kids. They are growing up in a world without the threats that I had to worry about. Remember the Cuban missile crisis? I was a sophomore in High School. Scared the crap out of me. There was a form at St. Matthew's we had to fill out saying whether or not your mother would pick you up in case of a nuclear strike."

Fear of ballistic weapons plays a large role in the Tom Clancy vision for world peace and a stronger United States. "Here's my recommendation," he says. "We do away with all land based missiles and build the B-2 bomber instead. Those ballistic weapons -- the older I get, the more scared I am of them. They're too damn easy to use. If we can make a deal with Gorby to eliminate all ballistic launchers I'm for it."

Despite being rejected for the armed forces due to nearsightedness, Clancy has become the darling of the military with his no nonsense view of world order. Even so, he's made his Pentagon buddies nervous more than once with his call for reduced military spending. "We can cut 30% off the defense budget and keep every ship at sea and every division in the field if its done intelligently. Go to your local library and check out a JANE'S FIGHTING SHIPS 1965 and then get a JANE'S FIGHTING SHIPS 1990. Add up how many men were at sea in 1965 and how many men are at sea in 1990. You'll find we have roughly half as many ships and roughly 40% the number of men on those ships.

"The ships are easier to maintain than they ever were -- but we have just as many sailors as in 1965. Ask yourself, 'What are those people doing?' They're fetching coffee for the admiral. A lot of officers in the Pentagon are trying to avoid sea duty. "The biggest cost in the military are manpower costs. Every time we talk about saving money in the Pentagon we talk about



cutting weapons systems or cutting divisions. We can trim down staffs and surplus personnel and save a heck of a lot more money than needs to be saved."

Surprising talk for a staunch Republican who does fund raisers for such friends as Minority Whip Newt Gingrich (R-GA). "I disagree with Newt on a lot of things, but I consider him to be one of the more intellectual members of congress. I certainly don't agree with him on the need for a flag burning amendment. "I like what Louisiana did -- if anybody burnt the flag, to beat up on them is a battery with a \$25.00 fine. Flag burning is not a major threat to the nation, certainly not enough to justify changing the constitution."

Clancy, in fact, supports George Bush on none of the five constitutional amendments the President has called for (1: anti-flag burning, 2: anti-abortion, 3: line item veto, 4: balanced budget, 5: school prayer) though he has much praise for Bush otherwise. "Probably the best crises handler we've had in the history of our country. Extraordinarily competent as a manager."

Even so, Clancy cautions against national overconfidence. "Why do we assume that the president is competent? That everybody is competent and rational? I look at history and it wasn't that way in 1914 or in 1861 -- it's never been that way -- and now they've got nukes on ballistic launchers. This is scary stuff. That's why I support the Strategic Defense Initiative. As a backstop if somebody screws up.

"There are eighteen nations that either have or are developing ballistic launchers. SDI could stop one medium sized madman or an accidental launch -- say 100 inbound. We can do that, particularly if they are primitive weapons. To stop the whole thing from coming in, that'll never happen. If somebody makes a conscious decision to end the world it'll be kinda hard to stop them."

Clancy feels the breakup of the Soviet Union is likely, but hopes it can occur by plebiscite rather than conflict. "You don't want a civil war in a country that has 10,000 nuclear warheads poised atop ballistic launchers. Gone, the Baltic republics can be trading partners. Still attached they're subjects. Better to have a good trading partner than a surly vassal.

"At least once a day somebody calls from the White House and asks the CIA 'how long has Gorby got?' Gorby doesn't know. How do you predict the actions of a nation who doesn't know what it's doing? It's like predicting the actions of a two year old. That's where the Russians are right now. They're trying to figure democracy out."

There are several personal myths about him Clancy would like to debunk. "I'm not a war gamer, but war games played a role for me. When I was doing HUNT FOR RED OCTOBER and RED STORM RISING, I counted on Larry Bond's "Harpoon" as the ideal data base. You got \$5000 worth of reference books and it only cost you fifteen bucks. Larry has fewer mistakes than JANE'S. "I met Larry at a gaming convention in 1982. It worked out well. He's now godfather to my son, and of course we collaborated on RED STORM RISING." As to the film version of THE HUNT FOR RED OCTOBER, Clancy calls the film "true to the spirit" of the book and is especially fond of the film's star Sean Connery.

"If you want to know what the real Sean Connery is like see him in the movie THE WIND AND THE LION. I found him to be a quintessential gentleman and I liked him a lot. I thought he did Ramius very well except the average Lithuanian does not have a Scottish accent.



"PATRIOT GAMES will be the next film adaptation. Then CLEAR AND PRESENT DANGER. I just signed the contracts and I'm waiting on the checks. PATRIOT GAMES is my favorite of my books, although one white haired lady called me a traitor to my Irish Catholic background for portraying the Irish Republican Army for the scum that they are."

What authors does Tom Clancy read? John Varley is at the top of the list. "He has narrative skills that make any author envious. There's the damnest thing in WIZARD -- he has a guy fall in love with a centaur -- and you not only believe it, you worry whether or not it's going to work out. It's unreasonable anybody should have that much talent."

He calls THE PERSISTENCE OF VISION, a decidedly non-techno story about severely handicapped people living self sufficiently in the desert, "the most haunting story I've ever read in my life. It's a shame Varley's wasted some of his best years writing screenplays. (1989's MILLENNIUM, adapted by Varley from his novel, took ten years to be filmed and then proved both artistically and commercially unsuccessful.) He really ought to get back to what he's best at."

Also coming in for praise is A. J. Quinnell, whose novel MAN ON FIRE coincidentally mirrored Clancy's unpublished and unfinished WITHOUT REMORSE, prompting Clancy to defer it's completion for what is now more than a decade.

Clancy has a consistent, straightforward view of the world, decrying the "free lunch" attitude and placing emphasis on both personal freedom and personal responsibility. "I have a simple test to tell the good guys of the world from the bad guys. If a nation has 'one man, one vote,' then they are the good guys. If they don't, then they are the bad guys. The United States should only support those nations who have 'one man, one vote.'"

"Until recently I had thought Nelson Mandela was turning out to be a person of great depth, but after he said nice things about the PLO and Castro, I was disappointed. "Assuming Mandela represents 'one man, one vote,' I support him in that. It's not really a question of what person we support, but what principals we support."

"Prejudices in America are founded more on fashion than on principal and I think that is a mistake. Blaming Columbia for the drug problem is cowardly impotence. The drug problem has done more damage to Columbia than is has to us. We have to solve our problems right here. "If there is anything America has proven to the world it's that race is unimportant, and religion is not terribly important. What really matters is the human soul. "A person who puts on a uniform swears to preserve and protect the constitution of the United States -- not the flag or the congress or the president, but the constitution."

"Read the constitution. Those are the values that got us here. Freedom, self determination, the ability to say what you think, the ability to read from a free press, the ability to go to whatever church you want or none at all, the right to vote, the right to a fair trial, the right against self incrimination. Those are the ideas that got us here. America herself has drifted away from them even as the rest of the world is coming towards them. All we have to do now is get ourself in sync with ourselves. That's the mission for the nineties. If we do that, the world will follow us."

((Interview conducted June 28 - July 1, 1990, Atlanta, Georgia.))



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 \* THE ANVIL CHORUS \*  
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Hello, my name is Richard Spann and beginning with this issue of ANVIL I will be editing the CHORUS. Of course, since editing is a creative process, my style will be different than Charlotte's, but the goal of this section has not changed. Some of you may be familiar with my past credits like INFLUX, SILK STARSHIP or SLAVE GEISHA.

Don't worry because Charlotte has explained clearly what she wants done here and THE ANVIL CHORUS will continue to be a forum for letters of comment. One thing I can promise, though: I won't be making as many comments about the letters as Charlotte did. After all, this is your chance to speak, right? So sit back, get comfortable, blaze up a cigar, pour a drink or whatever and enjoy.

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Sheryl Birkhead 23629 Woodfield Rd. Gaithersburg, MD 20882

I devoutly wish ANVIL would be even more regular -- but I'll settle for what I can get. The Harvia cover (#51) is a study in economy of line -- yet is so exquisitely an evocation of pain -- only blood red for the cover might have been a tad too much. Greg sounds interesting and I assume by the time you get this, the race will be decided or close thereto. Roy G. Bivens... uh, how many recall the mnemonic for remembering the colors of the spectrum? Roy G. Biv (for those who don't -- red, orange, yellow, green, red, indigo, violet). Now, it is only a very short step to the conclusion that Roy G. Bivens is truly a mnemonic -- now if I could only remember what for? ((Editor's note: Are you sure? Roy says his middle name is Greg. The other Greg mentioned above is Greg Turkish, winner of the 1990 DUFF and GoH at Con on a Hot Tin Roof, held in Birmingham by BSFC back in August. Yes, he plays the bagpipes.))

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Kathleen Gallagher POB 42, Worthington, OH 43085

The Mafiaette Reunion sounded like so much fun. I prefer fast men to fast cars, but I'll settle for good conversation and fine spirits. I do envy you girl friends in fandom. More of my fannish friends are men. More of my mundane friends are women. Gee, what are the chances that you and I could get acquainted and have so much fun together?

Eva Hauser's article on the changes in her country remind us all too much how limited and fragile our freedom can be.

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Catherine Mintz 1810 South Rittenhouse Sq. 1708, Philadelphia, PA 19103-5837

I was disappointed the Fandom Elves magicked away Mark Manning's copy of CYTEEN, since I would have liked to read his comments. I was looking through some old books and found a copy of an earlier novel of Cherry's, SERPENT'S REACH. Because it was sitting in my bookshelf and I read everything I buy, or at least everything I buy and keep, I know I must have read it, but I don't remember it. It bears a resemblance to CYTEEN. A shorter CYTEEN, written in an old-fashioned style -- you know, the funny SF names, Thon, Kontrin, and so forth -- the all-powerful, near-immortal bad guys dealing



with alien powers, etc., etc. But it is the story of a young girl dealing with growing into a position of great power. There's a lot of violence, but it is all rather stylized. People die, but the heroine doesn't react much -- partially from being in shock and partially from accepting the mores that dictate the deaths. But Cherryh's latest (RIMRUNNERS), and Barbara Hambly's, too, seem to have a distinct trend toward close up and personal sex and violence, rape and one on one murder and revenge. They don't make for light, pleasant reading, and, while they are technically good, better written than either author's early novels, they may not be good enough to carry the burden. In particular, Hambly's THE DARK HAND OF MAGIC provides a jolt. We've had two volumes of the series which have tidily dodged around the issue of just how violent the life of a mercenary captain must really be, and now comes a third which shows it. It is not unrealistic for the character to come to see his surroundings more clearly, but Hambly does not deal adequately with the question of how the Sun Wolf sees himself. He's acquiring powers which he must control, so the question of his inner balance can't go begging. If you're going to turn serious with this kind of stuff then you have an obligation to produce a resolution or admit the character's world has just fallen apart. Otherwise the sex and violence just function for shock value, and tend to tear the story apart, introducing a considerable change of tone from the first two books without a clear gain. Better to start something new if Hambly felt compelled to turn realistic. In RIMRUNNERS at least Cherryh sets the tone early and unambiguously and goes on to deal with how the heroine survives, mentally and physically. It'll be interesting to see if the two manage to work their increasing realism into their next works more successfully. It's a real risk. But of course, if they don't take risks then they'll never grow. And that would be boring for all of us.

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Michael D. Glicksohn 508 Windermere Ave. Toronto, ONT M6S 3L6

Marc's article was extremely evocative, but mostly about the feelings of a beer-filled bladder and the desperate search for a place to unfill it while heading home from a party. Marc should be thankful he had such a long walk home because the opportunities for blissful release were evidently bountiful. I'm just four blocks from the closest public transport stop but all four blocks are along brightly lit commercial or residential streets and even here in the Colonies most merchants and home-owners frown on your using their property as a dumping ground for any form of bodily waste. And have you ever noticed how certain parts of the body seem to have built-in distance detectors? It's as if a special part of the brain suddenly notices where the rest of the body is and suddenly it's "Oboy, oboy, we're just three blocks from home! Okay, sphincter, loosen up. Bladder, start releasing! We're going home!!" If I hadn't discovered the neighbours at the beginning of the block who have an outdoor litter box for their cats I don't know what I'd have done on certain occasions. The other part of Marc's epic tale that struck a chord was the bit about the police interrogation. It reminded me of a day in 1979 when I took a healthy five mile walk through the environs of Stockport in Cheshire to have lunch with incredibly famous and talented British fan Paul Skelton. (He pays me to write those sort of things to prepare for his forthcoming first-ever trip to North America just in case he can find a groupie or two.) Within sight of Paul's place of employment, I was stopped by a small police vehicle and one of the two officers asked me my name. I told him who I was. His com-



panion said, "Yup, he's the one," and they asked for some I.D. A few squawks of the radio later they returned my I.D. and apologized. My curiosity somewhat piqued I asked what it had been all about and somewhat sheepishly they explained they were investigating reports of a youth with long hair and a beard who'd run away from home! I suppose I should have been flattered since I was 33 at the time!

Your Scicon report was excellent in that it made me wish I'd been at the con too. We may all attend a different convention even if it's in the same place and at the same time but the basic nature of the shared joy is the same, regardless of how different the reasons for that joy might be.

I've never had a cat or a dog, although a woman I lived with for five years had two cats. I've always preferred snakes, tortoises and various rodents to cats. I love dogs, but I'm not responsible enough to ever actually own one. Right now I just have two rats, Gregory and Leroy, although I do feed the cat next door when he jumps up and sits on the ledge outside my kitchen window. He sits and stares avidly at the cage containing Gregory and Leroy which is just inches on the other side of the window and I figure it's easier and safer to throw a little soft cat food his way every now and then than to come home and find a kamikaze cat hurling himself through my kitchen window!

Roy's reviews are once again thoughtful and intelligent but I happen to disagree with him on the merits of PIRATE JENNY #4. I thought it one of the best fanzines of the year with some of the finest writing of the year, most notably the piece by Dennis himself. It is indeed on the Hugo ballot and I won't mind at all if it wins the award. It is certainly more worthy of the rocket than the other publications I'm aware of on the ballot.

Was Roy serious about taking in Spring Training games down in Florida, or was that just a gimmick to frame the column around? And I wonder if he gets NINE INNINGS, the Andy Hopper fanzine that uses baseball as a platform for some very good personal writing indeed? There aren't all that many of us baseball nuts in fandom, so it's always good to encounter a new member of the elite. With the regular season opening tomorrow and with 60 Blue Jays games being broadcast on TV this season I sense an imminent decrease in the amount of time spent loccing fanzines. (No cheering in the cheap seats, please.)

Say, I like Walt's idea of increased status for letterhacks. If, as has often been said, egoboo is the fannish coin of the realm then those of us who toil long and hard to disseminate that coin are surely the fannish equivalent of The Mint and as such deserve to get something for our efforts other than calloused fingertips and a sore bum. Now that conventions have Artists Guests of Honour and even Scientist Guest of Honour, surely it's time for the Letterhack Guest of Honour? Too early, you say? Pity. Guess I won't give up my day job just yet...

The Canadian Peter Roberts doesn't write novels so this must be a third person. And CUFF already exists but not between the US and Czechoslovakia, but within Canada: it's the Canadian Unity Fan Fund and has been running for quite a few years now.



Roy Tackett 915 Green Valley Rd. NW, Albuquerque, NM 87107

Read Eva Hauser's all too brief comments on the events in Czechoslovakia with much interest and only wish she had written more. We can read/hear about all this on radio TV newspaper but getting a fannish viewpoint on it puts it on a more personal subjective level and helps us get a better picture of what is going on. I've been reading the fanzine reviews by, and comments about, your colorful reviewer and am curious as to who is hiding behind the pseudonym because I don't for a minute believe in the existence of "Roy G. Bivens." "Roy G. Biv" is, after all, the mnemonic for the spectrum (red, orange, yellow, green, blue, indigo, violet) so you will, I'm sure, pardon my suspicions. Keep clanging that anvil.

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Buck Coulson 2677W 500N Hartford City, IN 47348

Ortlieb's column is very reminiscent of a story Arthur C. Clarke tells in ASTOUNDING DAYS; he was stopped by two policemen while he was carrying, in two packages, the complete run of an issue of the BRITISH INTERPLANETARY SOCIETY. His cops were looking for Irish terrorists carrying bombs. (In wrapped up paper parcels? Well, possibly...) Police just don't understand fans, I guess. I forgot to mention, in my column (The Ironmaster has Pets, #51), that we lived about a mile from town if one followed the roads maybe half that if one cut through the cemetery which bordered our property. (Yes, I cut through the cemetery frequently, especially when I was going to Boy Scout meetings on Monday nights. What the hell, I'd been appointed caretaker of the place when I was 13.) Anyway, one winter, I delighted in hitching our two Cocker Spaniels up to my sled. (For you Southerners, a sled slides on runners, over the snow. Snow is... oh, never mind.) Then we'd go to town and pick up groceries for mom. I had a cardboard box tied on top of the sled, and the dogs seemed to enjoy the outing as much as I did. (Though they may have been pretending to keep the kid happy.) Roy is right, time does speed up the older one gets. There's even a song about the phenomenon: "When I was a young boy, time traveled slow, Couldn't wait 'till school 'us out, couldn't wait to go..." And the last verse:

"Now I am an old man, waitin' fer to die; Settin' in my rockin' chair.  
Time just flies. Winter come early, summer don't last..."

When I first heard it, I thought it was amusing; forty years later, I know it's true. Well, thirty years later, anyway; I have it on a 78 rpm record. On your answer to Garth Spencer: we'd send YANDRO to anyone who asked for it who also enclosed money. The cash signified an appropriate interest. Those were the days of "sticky quarters" (I don't recall who originated that phrase to describe quarters taped to letters for the purchase of fanzines, but I'm sure Glicksohn or Willis will.) I never wondered what fanzine fans expected of YANDRO; we published what we wanted to, and anyone who disliked it was free to avoid it. Most of the intense fanzine fans did avoid it, since it was aimed at fringe fans or even non fans who shared our interests. (I don't believe Mike Glicksohn ever got a copy from us; certainly not all that many.)

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Keeping up the theme of knowing people, I was pleasantly surprised to see a lead article in ANVIL 7 by Marc Ortlieb on the perils of late night walking in the suburban streets of Melbourne. I know the feeling which he is attempting to convey throughout "The Long Walk Home" but it is mainly recently a second hand one caused by our 5 year old daughter's insistence on finding a toilet (bathroom to Americans) at the most ill conceived time. Actually one of these occasions of bathroom need occurred for Maria at a meeting (our first) of some of the very same people mentioned by Marc at the beginning of his article. You see we would occasionally go into the city of Melbourne on a Friday evening at supper time and get together with those Melbourne types such as Roger Weddall, Justin and Jenny Ackroyd and that pseudo Aussie Mark Linneman; the main reason for doing this was to actually meet some of these people who had just been names for so long. Roger Weddall had been in that category, for example, but Marc Ortlieb was definitely not. I had first met Marc back in 1975 at the first Melbourne World Con. It was... But I seem to be straying from the point of all this. I had just gotten to meet these people (and others) at our very first time at the Friday night dinner when Maria (remember, our small daughter!) decided that she needed to explore the possibility of avoiding wetting her pants. For some reason I found myself rather than Sue taking her away from the eating area in search of a toilet. If it had not been this country we probably would not have had to look far, but in Australia the "outhouse" can be very obscurely located. In fact we never did find a public restroom. Catastrophe and many tears were narrowly avoided when an employee in one of the shops in the small mall adjacent to the eatery where we were all ensconced took pity on Maria and I (well, probably just on a small cute red head) and told us we could use the employee private toilet. Now this actually was convenient because it meant that I was able to avoid that ever delicate question of having either to take Maria into the men's toilet or... Well, of course there is no other choice. This is why we usually have Sue do these duties, although I know it doesn't seem fair that the female spousal unit should have to shoulder this particular responsibility so much of the time.

What a strange experience it must be for people living in Eastern Europe these days with all of the political upheaval. Eva Hauser writes intensely on the incredible events of Prague last November. I am reminded of all people Frank Zappa when I read in ANVIL 51 about Czechoslovakia, and the link is a photo I saw in a newspaper a couple of months ago showing Zappa meeting with President Havel. Could any near future European scenario dreamed up by the science fiction writers only a couple of years ago be as thoroughly bizarre as this reality?! I have to wonder what sort of fiction will arise from the ruins of communism in Eastern Europe.

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Lloyd Penney 412 4 Lisa St. Brampton, ONT L6T 4B6

Hello! Good, another ANVIL in the mail! I'm glad the gaffiation didn't take. There's more fun than frustration to fandom, and I do like getting ANVIL. I like loccing them, too. In Canada, we've got our own version of DUFF. Keith Soltys (editor of TORUS) and Paul Valcour (editor of the new Canadian newszine CANADIAN SF QUARTERLY, and winner of a fan Casper last year) are running for CUFF, the Canadian Unity Fan Fund (not the Czechoslovakia United States Fan Fund Mark Manning would like to see). The CUFF winner will go to the 1990 CanVention in Calgary next month. I know them both well, and it's a tough choice to make.



Most of the fans I know who have pets have cats, which may be a reflection of character: finicky, particular, quick to retaliate for something unknown, and quirky in behavior. No dogs at all! Some have mice or rats, but the rest have cats. The odd snake or tarantula or ferret shows up at a friend's house, and that's all. There are exotic pet bylaws in some parts of Toronto which prohibit the stranger pets. Gerbils are about as exotic as the bylaws allow, and if you're caught with an exotic animal (per the bylaws' definition), there's a hefty fine, and you must dispose of the animal ASAP. It isn't fair, but after all the reports of pythons slithering out from under houses, or tarantulas appearing in kitchen cupboards, you can see some justification. Besides, too many fans use their exotic pets to show their peers just how \*\*\*FANNISH!\*\*\* they are, rather than obtain them because they like and want that kind of pet.

Eva Hauser had something similar to her article in the latest FOSFAX about the new kind of life in Czechoslovakia, but I will repeat myself a bit. It must be a wonderful feeling to see your country go through some amazing transformations towards a better life for all in it, especially for a country as down-trodden by the Communist Party as Czechoslovakia was. Eva's future must look wondrous and bright.

I agree with Harry Warner... I don't mean to criticize Roy Bivens on this point, but some fanzine editors must feel like they're tied to a rope and set swinging above an alligator pit. The best intentions and efforts go into a fanzine, just to have the local fanzine critic shred it. I still believe in publishing what you want, damn the critics, full speed ahead, but they know what power the press has, and people will believe what they read, in spite of common sense. Too often, the review snarks at the deficiencies of the fanzine, without any constructive criticism. The people who complain about the death of fanzine fandom may be the ones who are killing it with negative attitudes. Too many faneds are saying screw it. We must support our own fanzines. Or am I being too damned negative again? As Catherine Mintz was when she wrote her loc, I'm reading CYTEEN. I'm finding the story a riveting one, but as Catherine says, it's tough to find a character to identify and empathize with. They're psyching, Working or Getting one another, trying to second-, third- and fourth-guess each other. It's a far better story than soap opera, but the constant hostile interactions (very soapish) bug me. There are no characters with genuine honest emotions; all are hard bitten, or are emotionally-restricted azi. While I am into the story deeply, I find myself an azi-like observer, and I suspect that when I am done with the book, I'll say it was a good book, but I won't really care about it. I like my SF to be more positive.

To Harry Bond: I suspect that Peter Roberts of Guelph, Ontario may be confused, but he did tell me that he used to get fannish mail addressed to Peter Roberts in Brum. Maybe Peter Weston was fielding mail for Peter Roberts, I don't know. The Peter Roberts here was at one time heavily into fanzines; he's largely gafiated now.

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Harry Andruschak POB 5309 Torrance, CA 90510-5309

Well, for starters I would never have the guts to walk around the Los Angeles area after nightfall. In fact, there are many parts of LA I would not walk around in daylight. South LA is one of those areas, but by bad luck that is where I work. So my hat is off to Marc Ortlieb, obviously. On to pets! Most



fans have pets. And yes, in LASFS we have our snake fanciers. Myself, I have just one cat. Well, actually I am living in a three bedroom house. Trish owns the house, so strictly speaking it is her cat. Yet for the most part the cat prefers that I pet her, wants to sleep on my bed at night, and in general regards me with favour. We don't let her out of the house, as this is an area with lots of stray dogs, speeding cars, and a constant parade of dead cats and dogs on the highways. Rather sad, actually.

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Irv Koch 5465 N. Morgan St. #106 Alexandria, VA 22312

Buck Coulson may be right about mystery writers not getting fan mail but I know that romance writers get it and even encourage same in the backs of their books. They also put out their own newsletters and while their version of fandom is truly "alien," it does exist. The mystery writer's cons, tho, seem to be run by SF fen...

I call Roy Tackett's memory to TriCon (Cleveland '66 Worldcon) and possibly to the 1979 Nasfic (our Northamericon) which had some sort of masquerade dances. I've heard of other cons that had them too and I seem to have one at Disclave this year (billed as a masqued prom). While masqued balls are rare indeed next to costume or hall-costume events, they are not unheard of. Then there are the Regency Dances as SF cons... I see you got Chuq Von Rospach into the letter-col; you realize his successors on the SF "nets" (computer replacements for zines or at least portions thereof) will be there when there is neither an ANVIL nor a successor to it.

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Taras Wolansky 100 Montgomery St. #24 H Jersey City, NJ 07302

Scott Lee Spence is on to something when he talks about buying "one pound of fanzines." The fanzine sales table at conventions should be arranged to look like a supermarket meat department, the seller dressed in an apron and a little hat as he weighs out the zines. Using a paper slicer to make the weights come out even might be going a bit too far, though.

Reading Eva Hauser's contributions, I can't help making this sober and judicious comment: HAHAHA I WAS RIGHT ALL ALONG! The only reason communist governments remained in power in Eastern Europe was the threat of Soviet tanks. Living conditions were even worse than anti communists suspected. On the one hand the statistics on economic growth were even more fraudulent; on the other, the ruination of nature was almost perfectly covered up. The people who insisted both capitalism and communism have their good and bad points were only 75% right: communism has no good points.

I don't understand all the fuss about whether young people have heard of Gypsy Rose Lee and Sally Rand. The 1962 movie, GYPSY, starring Natalie Wood, frequently turns up on TV, and I believe it is currently a hit musical on Broadway. Sally Rand makes a notable appearance (played by somebody else, of course) in another, more recent film: THE RIGHT STUFF.

It took a bit of digging to figure out what hapless comment of mine Mike Glicksohn, the Cid of lite fandom, was attacking. It turns out to be from a postcard reprinted in ANVIL 50 (to my surprise; I considered it too obviously



a trivial matter of personal business to bother marking it NFP). I expressed a certain regret that a loc of mine responding to Bruno Ogorelec's defense of communism would never see the light of day. I still do regret it because, boy, did I have the situation nailed! As the succeeding fourteen months have shown.

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Cathy Doyle 26 D Copeland Ln. Newport News, VA 23601

The folk music at the Sci con dance came about because a group was appearing at a local folk music shop Friday night. The owner, who also plays at Sci con quite a bit, said they'd love to come and play for a while in return for a room. The offer was too good to pass up, anyway, I thought Julie would dance to just about anything!

We started out with a replacement cat for one that needed to be put to sleep due to illness. Kip went to visit a friend one evening and found a small kitten on said friend's back doorstep. The mother and siblings had been removed to the SPCA by the friend some time ago, leaving the little two week old kitten all alone in the world, which she managed to survive in for about two weeks until she found her way back to Mitch's and was promptly fed, as he felt real guilty for leaving her behind. She climbed slowly up the stairs to get petted by Kip and he ran home to tell me about her. So we picked her up on Saturday and took her to the vet right away. Turns out she had flea anemia from the fleas sucking all her blood and about a billion fleas on her. However, she's grown well and healthy from there, and is quite a pleasing little house cat. Gee, I can hear the anti-animal lobby now, "Another boring cat story, why don't we gas them all?"

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Brian Earl Brown 11675 Beaconsfield, Detroit, MI 48224

I enjoyed the punnish Harvia cover. And Marc Ortlieb's article/story was very nice in that hard to comment on sort of way. There's nothing especially unusual about his walk home but he tells it in a fine fashion; nice writing. Given the hour and everything I'd have resented the police's questions far more than Marc appeared to. Guess at heart I'm very anti-social. The Scicon conreport was well done, too, covering the basics in a manner that kept it interesting. Buck, likewise was entertaining about the host of pets he's had at his house. And if pythons are common at Chambanacons, all the more reason to miss the con, in my herpaphobial opinion. Roy G. Bivens, more colorful than the unknown fan-critic, hits the staples right on the crease with his reviews of THEN and PIRATE JENNY. Rob Hansen has done an outstanding piece of research and can't be praised enough. Pat Mueller does a very good fanzine that does seem to be occasionally over-designed. SWEETNESS & LIGHT I've not seen but it does sound like Jack Herman, who never kept his opinions to himself and seems interested in getting others to talk about their opinions.

Moving on to the lettercol-- Roy Tackett's rhetorical question: "How many of today's fen even know what a burleyque is?" probably underestimates the generational differences because the burlesques (burleyque) were not the same thing as today's topless bars, which is what I imagine most young fen think of when they think of burlesque. I'm glad to see someone speaking up for the American League. It's down right embarrassing to see a player with a batting average under .100, but that's what happens when pitchers are required to bat.



The designated player makes for a much more interesting game. As for Astro-ptui!-turf, I don't know how anyone can take Astro-ptui!-turf serious after seeing ball players dribbling a baseball on that stuff as if they held a basketball. If God had meant for man to play on plastic, he wouldn't have made grass green.

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Ben Schilling 45605 Fox Lane East #206 Utica, MI 48317

Re: Roy Tackett's letter-- Confusion, one of the Ann Arbor/Detroit conventions, has had a costume dance since at least 1982 (when I discovered fandom) so his idea has been tried and used in this area.

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Harry Warner, Jr. 423 Summit Ave. Hagerstown, MD 21740

The cover reminded me irresistably of what's coming up in June, the climax of the first act of SIEGFRIED, when the hero forges the sword anew, during the PBS telecasts of the Met's RING CYCLE. I have heard of previous productions of SIEGFRIED where the sword slipped and went flying through the orchestra, when the anvil split before Siegfried struck it, when the anvil refused to split, but I don't believe any heldentenor has ever missed the sword and hit his thumb in this manner.

Marc Ortlieb is a callow youth when compared to me. So I think I'm justified in tsktsking over the flabbiness of modern youth, to get so excited about a mere walk of perhaps three miles during the early morning hours. I walked nearly that far between my home and my place of work for the first quarter-century of my journalistic career, usually two or three times a day, and after 2 A. M. on the frequent nights when I didn't get finished in time to catch the last bus home at midnight. The trek was through a tough part of town, too. Police never stopped me, perhaps because I was so thin in that era that I vanished altogether at night unless viewed from a direct frontal point of vantage. That was in the years when I was forced to stop dead still for several seconds before entering stores with automatic door openers; if I walked up to them in the normal manner I was past the electric eye before it could register the presence of a customer.

Mafiaette Reunion is useful in one specialized, highly personal way. I can remember it as a consolation every time I read about a group of fans whom I've never heard of before. If you, as a veteran congoer, knew hardly anyone at the Virginia Beach event, a stay-at-home like me should be pardoned for finding all the names strange in a conreport or an account of a local fanclub meeting.

Hagerstown once had a catastrophe like the one Bill Zielke's friend suffered in the encounter with the grackles. Huge quantities of starlings were roosting in the downtown area, creating problems with their droppings. City officials decided to scare them away. Newspapers gave big publicity to the fact that this would happen, so humans wouldn't be frightened, and radio stations also publicized the date and time for the same reason. Came the fateful evening, when just around dusk city workers detonated almost simultaneously a barrage of large firecrackers all through the shopping district. The birds flew away in fright all right, but every pedestrian and motor vehicle driver in a four-block area suffered the same fate that befell Bill's friend. The star-



lings came back a few minutes later but some humans still refuse to do any shopping in downtown Hagerstown after all these years.

W. C. Fields must be disgusted if he's able to know about Buck Coulson's disclosure in his column. No decent misogynist likes dogs, so obviously, Buck has been concealing some of the humane aspects of his personality all these years.

I wish Eva Hauser had expanded her description of how it has been to live in Czechoslovakia in recent months. Over and beyond the natural joy I feel in knowing that its residents have been freed from the worst excesses of communism, I have found an unexpected personal application of the anti-Russia movement that has been sweeping over Europe. For the first time since I was in my twenties, I can listen to the operettas of fine composers like Strauss, Kalman, Straus and Lehar without having some of my enjoyment diluted by knowledge that the kind of life depicted in the operetta books has been replaced by an inhumane, repressive and deadening form of government. Similarly, the operas of Smetana seem suddenly gayer and more realistic since the events of 1989.

No objections this time to Roy G. Biven's fanzine reviews. The critical portions aren't sever enough to be really discouraging. And he has picked excellent fanzines to review this time. One of the worst things about Astro-turf and its competitors is the increased confusion in the English language that has resulted. Media people have taken to referring to any artificial playing surface as turf, even though turf means real dirt and grass. Apparently it started when someone wanted to shorten the word Astroturf, so now the broadcasters and writers must use some roundabout term like "natural playing surface" to refer to a non-artificial field.

As one of the most prolific loccers, I can bear witness to the fact that I don't receive nearly all the "traditional" fanzines. I'd estimate I get perhaps 2/3rds or 3/4ths of them, judging by large scale listings of fanzines received. On the other hand, I don't think I saw in such lists during 1989 any listing at all for fanzines I receive like NOTES from Bob Peterson and STEF, or FANTASY COMMENTATOR which comes in FAPA but would probably arrive if I weren't in that APA because of long standing friendship with its editor. Fanzine fandom is fragmented, too.

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Steve Antczak, 926-C Waverly Way NE, Atlanta, GA 30307

... Here's a short TV review for you: The Flash, Pilot Episode

I was pleasnatly surprised to discover a non-Fox TV show (besides "Twin Peaks") that was intelligent and well-produced. The special FX were quite well done, the acting was competent all round, and the story (while hokey) was strong. There were a few flaws, one which stands out as being ridiculous: when the Flash, running at around 300 MPH scoops up the Amanda Page's character without causing her any injury. Otherwise, thee was humor, there was drama, there was action, there was a hint of sex, and there's even a likeable token black character. Also, I understand they intend to make use of super villians as well as average Joe villians. I give it a tentative thumbs up, but let's see if they can keep it up!



Sheila Strickland Rt. 5, Box 386 B, Baker, LA 70714

Marc Ortlieb may have thought he was living in a Ray Bradbury story, but I've been living in a Murray Leinster one of late. Specifically, "Sideways in Time," where the people keep finding themselves in alternate universes. What led me to this realization was that shortly before Easter, I received a zine from Bruno Ogorelec, a sort of last word on his articles for ANVIL on communism and socialism and the locs in reaction. I read it through quickly and stuck it on top of my desk where I wouldn't forget about it and could go back to re-read it carefully and loc it. I went digging for the relevant ANVILs and could find only one. Odd, I thought. They should be here. Where else could they be?

Yesterday, I had a day off and a few hours to spare; so I got ready to prop up and read Bruno's zine and write my loc improvising where I couldn't refer to the originals. No Bruno zine! It should be here! Where else could it be?! Check this stack of zines and make sure it didn't get stuffed in with them. No zine, but surprise! The missing ANVILs, in a stack I knew I had looked through. It was then the insight came. I was evidently slipping between alternate universes, in some of which I had lost those ANVILs forever, in this one the ANVILs were here, but I had never received Bruno's zine. I slipped into yet another one last night when I found the missing zine. I haven't checked to see if all the ANVILs are still there, but if they are I guess I'd best write that loc real soon now. Now if only I'd slip into that universe that has the photo I just know I had in my purse.

I'm glad ANVIL is continuing, in this or any other universe. I've been reading it for years, and I can't really think of anything I really dislike about it. The articles are readable and entertaining, sometimes even educational. The letter column may contain disagreements, but manages to avoid rancor. I like your style! Keep it up?

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WE ALSO HEARD FROM: Damir Coklin, who sent a postcard -- Penny saw Damir in Holland and he said he was immigrating to Australia; Udo Emmerich sent a postcard from ConFiction in Holland; an anonymous postcard from Suburban, MD with good wishes for Kubla.. thanks; Toni Weisskopf sent a postcard, Baen books for the Atlanta bid, and SFPA zines; a Postcard from Teddy Harvia; Eva Hauser, who sent the first issue of her club's first prozine in newly free-press Czechoslovakia; Roger Weddall (does your t-shirt fit?); Greg Turkish with pick-up instructions; A note from Rickey Sheppard; No less than five letters from Bob Shaw first about arrangements to come to Birmingham, then about things he left in Chattanooga, and finally a thank you note saying "I got everything that was coming to me..."; and Hawk, who reports that he HAS A JOB in Hotlanta...

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THE LAST WORD: Hi, this is Charlotte again. Richard was kind enough to not only edit the locs, but to type them into his computer. I have an IBM system, (both at work and at home) with 3 1/2" drives, so all he had to do was store it in ASCII and give it to me on disk. It certainly saved me a lot of typing. If anyone's interested, I also have a FAX number: 205/328-1007. <sup>33</sup> The mimeo died, and I had to photocopy the last 16 pages; next time, offset. 10/15/90.



