

AURORA

SPECULATIVE FEMINISM

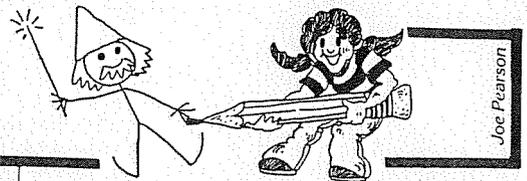
SF



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Brad Foster

CONTRIBUTORS' GALLERY



Sam S. Adkins (9785 Douglas Ln #204, Cleveland, OH 44102) is a freelance artist.

Margaret Key Biggs (Box 551, Port St Joseph, FL 32456) is still teaching, following the Yoda tradition. She has published two chapbooks of her poems, including the famous "Stern Warning".

Mary Bohdanowicz (36 Cleveland Av, Westfield MA 01085) runs her own art studio, specializing in pen and ink drawings. Her Big Loves are art, Star Trek, and the Beatles.

Jan Bogstad (Box 2056, Madison, WI 53701) is a doctoral candidate in Comparative Literature at the UW-Madison, specializing in 20th Century Anglo-American, French, and Chinese literature. She edits New Moon, a critical feminist journal.

Grant Canfield (28 Atalaya Ter, San Francisco, CA 94117) is a professional artist.

Cheryl Cline (1621 Detroit Av #23, Concord, CA 94520) is a freelance writer and world-rekowned expert on rubber stamps and mail art

Suzette Haden Elgin (Rt 4, Box 192E, Huntsville, AR 72740) is director of the Ozark Center for Language Studies, and formerly a psycholinguist at San Diego State Univ. SF's patron saint.

Barbara Emrys (1016 W Belden St, Chicago, IL 60614) is in her second decade of teaching and writing about women's studies. She has two chapbooks of short fiction in print, and is a member of the Feminist Writer's Guild.

Brad Foster (4109 Pleasant Run, Irving TX 75062) is an illustrator and cartoonist.

Steven Fox (239 Buckingham Pl, Philadelphia, PA 19104) is a student and freelance artist.

Jeanne Gomoll is a graphic artist and creative speller for the Wis Dept of Natural Resources. She lives without cats, claiming to find weight-lifting and swimming more relaxing.

Dennis Hackbart (312 Memphis St, Madison, WI 53704) is a Star Wars fan, and an excellent resource for electronic and media trivia.

Elissa [Hamilton] Malcolm (7 Franklin Pl, Woburn, MA 01801) is a poet.

Joan Hanke-Woods (1537 Fargo St, Chicago, IL 60626) is an artist, computer programmer, and backgammon master.

Teddy Harvia [pseud. for David Thayer] (7209 DeVillie Dr, Ft Worth, TX 76118) is a gafiated fannish artist.

Jini Kai (2125 Center Av #4, Madison, WI 53704) is a versatile multi-media artist. "Sometimes", says Jini, "I think life is just a series of fantasies."



CHERYL CLINE



Brad Foster



Steve Fox



Jeanne Gomoll



Joan Hanke-Woods



Teddy Harvia



Joe Pearson



Greg Rihn



RICHARD S. RUSSELL



Georgie Schnobrich



Stu Shiffman



Arlin Teeselink



David Vereschagin



Robert Whitaker

Fannie J. LeMoine (908 Van Hise Hall, UW-Madison, Madison, WI 53706) is a professor of Classics and Comparative Literature. An SF reader since childhood, she lives in a sprawling converted farmhouse with her husband, 2 children, 3 cats, and a dog named Sassafras.

Diane Martin (2621 Kendall Av, Madison, WI 53705) says that mysteriously her job as an office manager and her hobbies for MadSTF involve many of the same tasks: writing, photography, editing, and advertising. She lives with 2 humans and 4 cats.

Tom Murn (434 W Main St, Belleville, WI 53508) helped found the Madison Science Fiction Group in 1975. Then he and his wife moved out of town and had two children. Tom's hobby is studying the Wisconsin Wetlands.

Gayle N. Netzer (920 N. Rodney St, Helena, MT 59601) is a freelance writer.

Joe Pearson (7438 Jamieson Av, Reseda, CA 91335) is a freelance artist.

Greg Rihn (7529 W Madison St #4, West Allis, WI 53214) is an assistant city attorney, dungeon master, and humorist.

Bill Rotsler (2104 Walnut Av, Venice, CA 90291) is an artist, writer, photographer, movie-maker, and winner of fandom's Big Heart award.

Richard S. Russell (2621 Kendall Av, Madison, WI 53705) is a writer, bureaucrat, and procrastinator extraordinaire.

Albert Russo (B.P. 573, 75826 Paris Cedex 17, France) is an internationally-published writer.

Georgie Schnobrich (1343 E Johnson St, Madison, WI 53704) is an illustrator and confectionery artist, with a passion for opera.

Stu Shiffman (19 Broadway Ter #1D, New York, NY 10040) is an artist and former choir (not chair) of the famous Flushing worldcon.

Wally Smart (4450 Lakeshore Rd, Manistee MI 49660) is a videophile & social worker.

Arlin Teeselink (230 N Belmon St, Glendale, CA 91206) is a vegetarian, tropical fish hobbist and dwarf.

David Vereschagin (97 Walnut Av, Toronto, Ont M5V 2S1) is an artist and film-making student.

Robert Whitaker (Box 7709, Newark, DE 19711) contemplates his navel, works at the post office, and is allergic to cats.

Mel. White (302 E Purdue St #29, Lubbock, TX 79403) is a wonderful caricaturist discovered by SHE, our patron saint.

Attention contributors: Please send us a 1" x 1" self-portrait and a 25-words-or-less biography for inclusion in our ~~Rogues~~ Contributors' Gallery.

AURORA

SPECULATIVE FEMINISM

SF

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SF³
Box 1624
Madison, WI
53701-1624

Features

- | | | |
|----|-----------------------------------|-----------------|
| 1 | Contributors Gallery | themselves |
| 3 | All the News that Fi— | Rona Rocket |
| 5 | Letters | you folks |
| 14 | Other Doors • Small Press Reviews | Cheryl Cline |
| 31 | WisCon Photo Album | see art credits |
| 33 | Educational Funnies | see art credits |

Articles

- | | | |
|----|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| 10 | An Update on Láadan | Suzette Haden Elgin |
| 11 | Debating the Generic Pronoun | excerpted from <i>Sikander</i> |
| 18 | Memo | Richard S. Russell |
| 23 | A Student's Evaluation | Thomas J. Murn |
| 24 | Another Approach | Greg Rihn |
| 25 | Selected Bibliography | Jan Bogstad |
| 26 | Teaching SF as Women's Studies | Barbara Emrys |
| 28 | The Sword and the Cinema | Greg Rihn |

Interviews

- | | | |
|----|---|--------------|
| 21 | Teaching SF on Campus • Interview with Fannie LeMoine and Jan Bogstad | Diane Martin |
|----|---|--------------|

Fiction

- | | | |
|----|--------------|---------------------|
| 9 | The Musichor | Albert Russo |
| 17 | Course Notes | Suzette Haden Elgin |
| 17 | Dear God | Gayle N. Netzer |

Poetry

- | | | |
|----|---------------------------------|-----------------------|
| 20 | Total Lunar Eclipse | Elissa L. A. Hamilton |
| 25 | As for the Universal Translator | Suzette Haden Elgin |
| 30 | Starburst | Margaret Key Biggs |

Art

- | | |
|---------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| Sam Adkins: 25 | Joe Pearson: 1 |
| Mary Bohdanowicz: 20 | Greg Rihn: 33 |
| Grant Canfield: 6 | Bill Rotsler: 8, 30 |
| Brad Foster: FC, BC | Georgie Schnobrich: 6, 7, 9, 28, |
| Steve Fox: 7, 26, 27 | 33 |
| Jeanne Gomoll: 3, 18, 33 | Stu Shiffman: 29 |
| Joan Hanke-Woods: 5 | Wally Smart: (photos) 31-32 |
| Dennis Hackbart: (photos) 31-32 | Arlin Teeselink: 10 |
| Teddy Harvia: 33 | David Vereschagin: 8 |
| Diane Martin: (photos) 4, 12, | Robert Whitaker: 33 |
| 22, 31-32 | Mel White: 13 |

News All the that Fif

by Rona Rocket

Jeanne Gomoll '85

Jeanne Gomoll

Hello there fans! It's time, it's finally time for a news update on Madison fannish activities. I'll have you know that this is the second time this article was re-written on account of the inordinate delays on the part of the *Aurora* editors. I mean, really, if it wasn't one thing, it was another! People moving households, beastly summer heat, other commitments, worldcon, and let's not forget simple laziness.

You'd think, then that I'd have a shuttle load full of juicy gossip for you, considering all the time that's passed since the last issue. (Let's not even try to count up the months it's been since then!) Believe you me, I would have no qualms whatsoever, not a one, about reporting the most embarrassing hints of scandal had they been whispered into my good left ear. But as I told you once before, this is a dull group. And I'm here to tell you that they're getting even duller.

Seattle fan Jane Hawkins has a theory about local SF concons. She calls it the law of "'Concom Thermodynamics', which generally leads to entropic decay, and politicking is a symptom of it...NESFA conquered it through bureaucracy. But most concons suffer rapid decay." Well, the Madison group certainly isn't following the lead of the much more interesting kinds of groups like the ones in Michigan which are actually suing one another in courts of law. (Now I could really get my teeth into something like that in a gossip column!) Why, I can't recall the last time someone stomped out of an SF³ meeting in a snit. What's more, this group doesn't even seem to generate much in the way of amorous kinds of gossip either, at least not any that I know of. They don't even embarrass themselves by publishing revealing editorials in their personal zines. Lazer-blast them all! Most of them have never even published a personal zine! No, the Madison SF Group is definitely following the lead of those NESFA folks, and are choking out all the life from their group with a whole lot of bureaucratic nonsense. You should see their organizational charts!

Anyway, all this is leading up to an announcement of editorial policy change. Your very lazy editors have decided to stop masquerading as publishers of a tri-quarterly (three issues of *Aurora*, filled out by the WisCon publications). Issues will be welcomed into the world when they are finished: no Caesareans, no

twins. They will stop talking about this being a periodical, and a good thing too, since their noses were beginning to get in the way when they typed. Furthermore, this erratic schedule will make news updates in this column "not appropriate", shall we say. So, if you want news, you should subscribe to the group's bimonthly newsletter, *Cube*, which amazingly has been coming out every other month for a year now. So far, all it's included is up-coming events but from now on it will also report some news, too. Subscriptions cost \$3.00 (or free, if you're an SF³ member) and checks can be sent to SF³.

In the interim, I'll just summarize a few of the less boring events of the year passed, and then segue into a short discussion of this issue. In future issues, this column will be solely a personal, light, voiting essay connected to the issue's themes, written by various members of the *Aurora* publishing collective. So, I'll give you a little taste of the new regime. Then, I think I'll move to Michigan.

Since they don't organize wild dope parties or drunken orgies (at least none that I've been invited to), one of the highpoints of the Madison SF group's social calendar is going to movies, and rest assured that all of this year's SF releases were seen and furthermore, recorded, in Richard Russell's notes. A whole van full of them journeyed to Milwaukee in May to see *The Return of the Jedi* at a 70mm theater, on the way having to muzzle with heavy scarves and threats the impatient, younger Lucas fans who hadn't been able to resist reading about the movie's "secrets" in *Time* magazine.

Later on in the year, Peter Theron and Jeanne Gomoll shared their house-warming party with Richard Russell who wanted to throw a surprise 1/3-of-a-Century Birthday Party for his housemate, Diane Martin. Accustomed to the more sedate, predictable social life of Madison, Diane was so stunned that they are still having to speak softly and carefully around her, and reassure her at intervals that everything is all right. (She still warily checks the living room for singing gorillas wearing tu-tus.)

Several conventions drew Madison members away from their paperwork and meetings. There was X-Con at an Oconomowoc health spa, made memorable primarily by Jeanne and Peter's insanity which drove them to bicycle the 120-mile round trip, and then to claim, later, that it was "fun". And of course there was the worldcon,

Constellation, in Baltimore, MD, at which three members—Jan Bogstad, Phil Kaveny, and Jeanne Gomoll participated on the program. Diane Martin kept herself busy helping Hank Luttrell in the Hucksters Room and snapping photos for Charlie Brown's *Locus*. A few, smaller conventions these last couple months—Maxicon in St. Paul, Windycon in Chicago, the World Fantasy-Con in Chicago, and I-Con in Iowa City, were attended by enough fans to continue the tradition of WisCon parties at Midwest conventions.

Eric Larson briefly became a TV star when he and his *Star Wars* collection were featured on "PM Magazine" (NBC). Eric plugged his new *SF* fanzine, *The Whills*. Other performance news: *Etchings and Odysseys*, a fantasy magazine has been revived by Eric Carlson and John J. Koblas. Issues #2 and 3 are available (#1 is 10 years old and no longer in print.) from The Strange Co., Box 864, Madison, WI 53701-0864.///Jeanne Gomoll's perzine, *Whimsey* #2 is in the works//*New Moon* #3, Jan Bogstad's magazine is available through SF³/// Whether by chance or by effective advertising (using the word "sex" in the promo), the October monthly meeting, featuring a fascinating speech by Jan Bogstad entitled, "Sex and Gender in SF" was well attended and inspired conversation as passionate as it gets in this town.

Writer Mike Baron, artist Steve Rude, and editor Richard Bruning of Capital Publications, Inc., recently published the seventh issue of the comic book, *Nexus* (the fourth color issue). It's hard to believe this exciting book comes out of Madison, but I recommend it without reserve: the story is witty and imaginative (and far more interesting for women than most comics seem to be, even these days), and Rude's artwork and Les Dorscheid's coloring is nothing short of exquisite. To clear up a misunderstanding: Bruce Ayers (who owns Capital City Comics, a retail shop) does not publish *Nexus*.

Terry Garey, *Aurora's* associate poetry editor, moved to Minneapolis and was nominated for the Rhysling (SF poetry) Award. John Bartelt, whose more depraved inclinations long ago prompted him to move from Madison to the more congenial climate of Minneapolis, is moving again, this time to Stanford University, CA, where he has accepted a position as a high-energy physicist working at the accelerator there. And long-time Madison fans, genetic engineers, and DM's Carl Marrs and Julia Richards have moved with baby Adrain to that same University community where they will work on slightly slower moving and larger particles. Vicky Loebel moves with them to take classes at Stanford and trade nanny services for room and board. Congratulations to all of you for your commendable accomplishments and escapes from Madison. Let me know how the gossip is in your new homes. I'm not completely decided on Michigan after all.

I'll spare you an intermidable run-down of the minutes of recent meetings held by the group. To summarize, all 1982's board was rubber-stamped and reign again this year: Perri Corrick-West, president; Jan Bogstad, vice-president; Diane Martin, treasurer; Jeanne Gomoll, corresponding secretary; and Richard S. Russell, recording secretary. The WisCon 8

meetings have been convening regularly, and coordinator, Peter Theron asked me to issue an urgent request that anyone in the area (or anyone who wouldn't mind commuting) that wants to help out in the planning stages or at the actual convention, please contact him through the SF³ box office. Typically, the convention planning seems to be moving efficiently ahead with bureaucratic dullness: no feuds, murders, blackmailing attempts, and certainly no threatened lawsuits. No doubt it's going to be another smoothly-run WisCon, and this time (no lie) really under one roof, at one of Madison's largest hotels, the Concourse. (WisCon 8 will be held February 24-26, 1984.)

Lots of people moved this year, but that's hardly news, and Jeanne Gomoll should just stop complaining about it; it's a fannish fact of life. And it's the closest to gossip that we usually get in Madison. Jeanne brought out the new SF³ Directory in early November, accompanied by a couple coa's that arrived during the week after printing, much to her disgust. But her threats to transient members were hardly taken seriously this year since she herself was one of the movers.

SF³'s mascot, Liana Nash (pictured on this page) has now entered the "Terrible Two's" and spends most of her time rehearsing assertive behavior. "No, no, no", like that. The sentimental ninnies still think she's cute, but I've noticed her parents sometime say so through tight lips and grinding teeth.

* * * * *

Now, for this issue. This issue is on the theme of education and SF, a typically dry subject for this group, but they've managed to find some pretty interesting material to fill it out. Gayle Netzer's little story, "Dear God", for in-

Continued on p. 8.

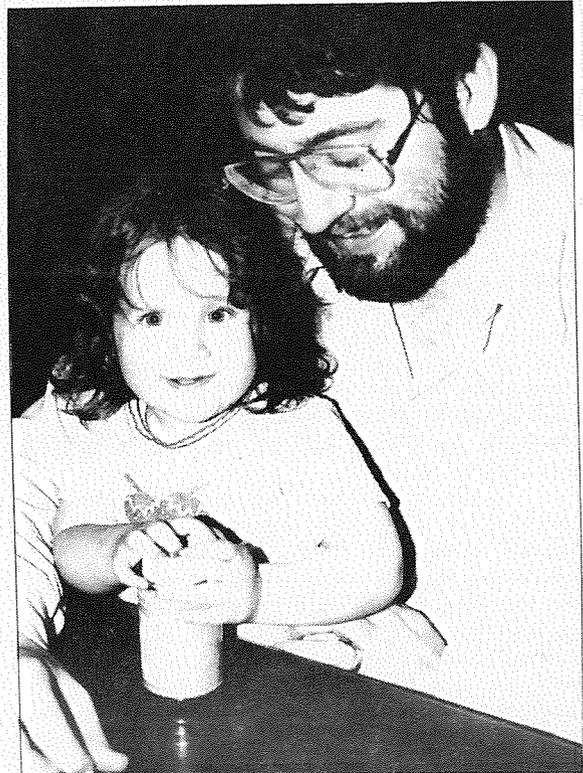
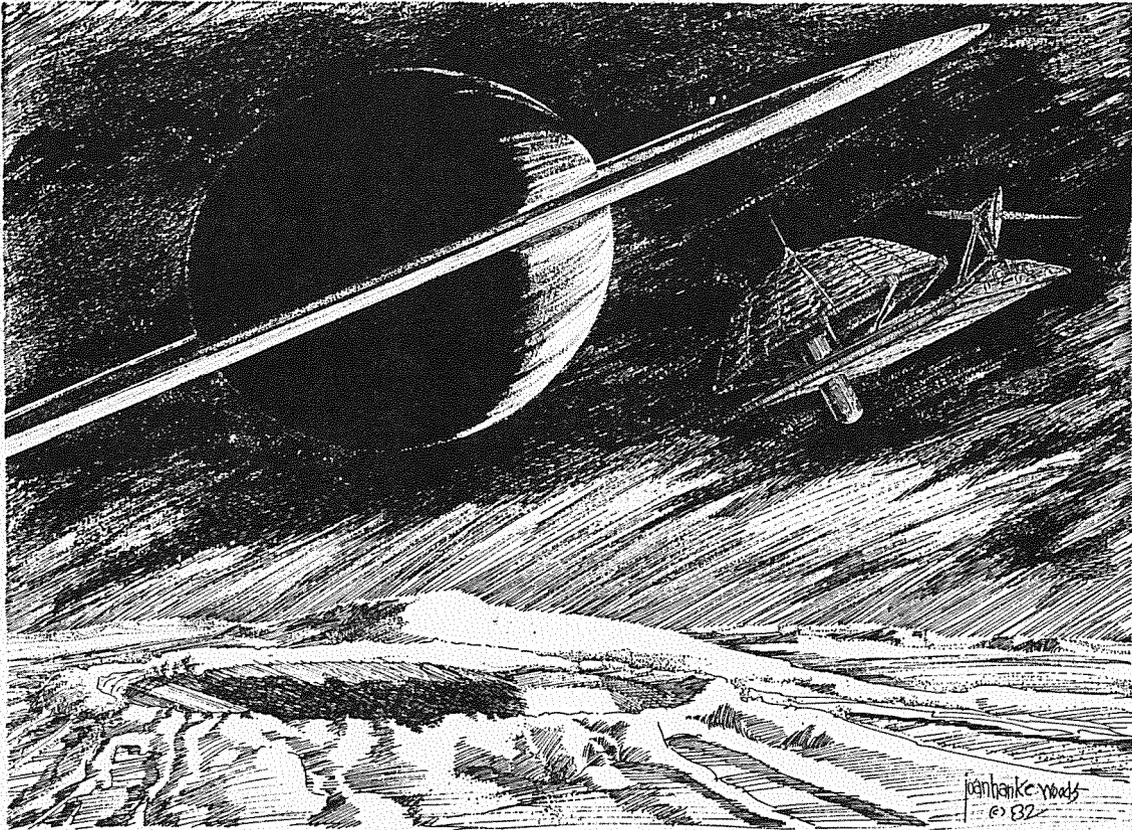


photo by Diane Martin

SF³ mascot, Lianna Nash, celebrating her admission to STC (the Society of the Terminally Cute)



Joan Hanke-Woods

LETTERS

Georgie Schnobrich
1343 E. Johnson St
Madison, WI 53703

Concerning rich brown's
letter in *Aurora* 22:
I sympathize with his
desire to share the

blame with women for the perpetuation of sexist attitudes, but I'm afraid it doesn't absolve men of their proportion of responsibility. As women, the "delusions of gender" that are learned "at our mother's knee" are often taught out of a maternal motive to protect daughters from the hardship and loss of status that can result from going against the existing power structure. Why would these women have to worry about being "un-feminine" if they weren't measuring themselves against an external, contrasting male standard, and one that had been made to matter very much? Women (and not only the Arab women brown referred to) have long oppressed younger women in body and spirit to make them acceptable to the prevailing taste of men, who might thereby provide them with a living, and by extension validate their efforts.

It is true that feminists do not always openly state that "Men are the Enemy", though they may sometimes feel so. Male cultural tradition, on the other hand, has been quite explicit in saying that "Woman is the Enemy", and has seldom felt the need to examine the underlying causes either, because the fact that women are not men has "spoken for itself". The first stages of women's search for self-respect may be read as counter-sexism, understandably, but it has to be worked through; and comparing it to indefensible attitudes like racism, or whatever, will not embarrass women into being nicer than we are ready to be.

mr. brown doesn't care for the taste of sauce-for-the-gander, and who can blame him? the goose hasn't liked it too much either. But it's on the menu. (There. I feel better for that.)

Jessica Amanda Salmonson
Box 29610
Seattle, WA 98102

The number of
ignored ♀ SF writ-
ters is so great
you'd have to

have a double-sized issue to even scrape the top of the barrel. There are a shocking number of women who've had only one book published, and never had another, and some women who have reached a modicum of success (Barbara Paul, Cherry Wilder, J. Sydney van Scyoc, Ansen Dibell, M. A. Lightner, the late Joan Hunter Holly...) who've been critically ignored despite their sales success.

I realize it isn't your focus, but I've always wished there was such a fanzine (and thought *Aurora* should be it) that looks critically at women's writing as a major (though not exclusive) focus, so that there would be one place at least where feminist-oriented and other fans would know the new ♀ writers coming down the line would get at least one critical analysis. The last two or three months alone have found the stands full of new and relatively new ♀ writers who've been for the most part ignored: Nancy Kress, Robin McKinley, Patricia Wrede, Megan Lindholm, Pauline Gedge, Pat Murphy. There are also long-ignored bad writers, Barbara Paul one, also Juanita Coulson, Sandra Miesel, Janet Morris, who get ignored. It might seem justified except that other bad writers like Julian May, Katherine Kurtz, and most recently Elizabeth Boyer, seem to get lots

of rather positive attention, and it makes me wonder how a few do get noticed since it has nothing to do with quality. (I've never seen more than a couple capsule reviews of Ardath Mayhar's interesting books, come to think of it.) Good, bad, or mediocre, it seems a valid idea to look especially at women's works if only because the greater percentage of them are overlooked everywhere else; as it stands, *Aurora* has tended to review the same books that'll be reviewed by everyone else. (Probably a lack of eclectic tastes coupled with everyone's tendency to read what they've heard about already.) I really look forward to the special issue on just this topic, but as I said, you can only make a tiny scrape on the outside of the bucket with a one-shot look at the topic of critically ignored ♀ SF writers.



Grant Canfield

[In "space ain't the Place (*Aurora* 22)] Ctein overlooks one major area of space exploitation which is not necessarily military and which will probably gain in credibility in the next very few years: electrical power generated from space by converting sunlight to microwave and converting microwave to energy on Earth. Nuclear power plants are proving short-range failures, but even had they been less asinine and worked out as planned, they were essentially planned to be obsolete in the near future anyway. The lifespan of those nuclear plants is surprisingly short in the best situation. Power industries have been working under the assumption that they can harness solar energy in the long run, and still remain monopolies. The fundamental usage of space stations will not be wholly military for as long as our need for electrical power on Earth is critical, and it is liable always to be critical.

There'll be microwave corridors of perhaps 200 mile widths, through which airplanes will not fly, even though it wouldn't be a danger to do so. People, will, of course, live inside those microwave areas, and government will make every effort to convince people it's perfectly safe, just as it's supposed to be perfectly safe to live on a chemical dump site

or next to various kinds of nuclear facilities. (Indeed, living in microwaves is probably a lot safer, and we're essentially already doing it. In Seattle, an expensive condominium was recently built mere yards away from a huge microwave dish.) There are health hazards, but that has never stopped a profitable venture. Whatever the long range results, the electrical power industries will provide some measure of "check" on the otherwise inevitable military monopoly of space. Yet this "check" will work out to military advantage.

The possibility of real space exploration—rather exploitation—is left open by the fact of the vulnerability of near-space satellites. We can piss with Soviet stations and we can piss with ours. The military, claiming the need for defense and the need to keep our energy sources going (Who wants to miss their favorite TV show because of a Soviet-induced brown-out, after all?) will explore further space for defensive and offensive positions.

To avoid backlash from Joe and Josephine Citizen, civilians will occasionally be allowed to visit the new stations in space and made to see them primarily as safe and efficient energy plants. They'll also be able to look through keen telescopes and see how much Real Science goes on up there. But by and large the backlash against space warfare will be fully checked by that mere fact that without strongly defended space stations, our television programs and hot baths will be more expensive, if not actually cut off from time to time.

In today's environment, every pro-space fan is really encouraging military and energy uses of space. Only the naive see anything else happening Out There. The energy companies are already scary, as anyone who knows the history of the Northwest's Bonneville Corporation knows too well. When they become partners with the military in space, there will no longer be a real distinction between civilian and military and our reliance on the military for daily comfort will have absolutely nothing to do with any legitimate national threat. It'll be the ultimate self-perpetuating bureaucracy, jam-packed with nuclear teeth with the actual goal of defending itself from the threat of peace.

The really stupid thing is that most of this was clear long before John Kennedy's time, and it is not a matter of our dreams going astray, but of our refusing to recognize what the national goals of space exploration were from the very start.



Georgie Schnobrich



rich brown
1632 19th St NW #2
Washington, DC 20009

Richard S. Russell's "Modes of Space Travel" [in *Aurora* 22] seems

to be attempting to date, at least approximately, the first STFnal usage of the concepts he mentions. He cites Arthur C. Clarke's "Sun-Jammer" (1965) for a "sunsail" which utilizes the pressure of light to move the ship, Vonda N. McIntyre's "Aztecs" (1977) for a heroine who's altered to withstand the disruption of remaining conscious during an interstellar trip as her passengers sleep. I would just point out that Cordwainer Smith's "The Lady who Sailed the *Soul*" (1960) utilizes both concepts. (McIntyre's heroine's heart has been cut out; Smith's heroine's been given drugs to slow her time sense for the same purpose.)

I assume this is an oversight, and not because Helen America, the protagonist/heroine of "The Lady Who Sailed the *Soul*", is described as being the daughter of a woman who "was a feminist beyond all proportion". It seems unlikely that Linebarger, who wrote the story more than 20 years ago, could have meant the same thing we mean today when we speak of "feminist"—and, in fact, especially compared to the largest number of his contemporaries, I believe few of his stories have anything which could be considered offensive from a feminist perspective.

Ethel Lindsay
69 Barry Road
Carnoustie, Angus
DD7 7QQ SCOTLAND

I really enjoyed the film reviews [in *Aurora* 22], except for the end where Sara Campbell equates "thought-pro-

voking" with "depressing". I have no doubt that she herself does not make this mistake, but so many people do. The opposite, of course, is just as bad: that if a story is "happy" it must be simple-minded.

I went to see *ET* and I think what gave me the biggest thrill was all the children in the audience applauding and cheering as the bicycles rose in the air. Unless children go on believing that something good can happen... my goodness, it never will!

I wonder what Sara would think of the BBC attitude to SF. They have been running the *Dr. Who* series for years, of course, but this is a children's programme and kept pretty firmly at that level.

Then, oddly enough, the BBC started a series called *Blake's 7* aimed at—well, I doubt if they thought of the audience as adult—but folks who liked that queer stuff. The series was billed as "devised by Terry Nation". Of course, it wasn't based on any original ideas. It was standard space opera. The "Federation" was the enemy and the characters had a space ship which took them from adventure to adventure. This went on for some time and began to gather the kind of fans who followed *Star Trek*. It suffered from being written by a lot of different writers. All were unknown to the SF field except Tanith Lee, who wrote some episodes with strong fantasy elements. Still, she was one of the few who tried to help the actors with some characterization.

The series came out in 13 weekly instalments to each set. Suddenly, last fall, in the last installment, the "Federation" overwhelmed all the charcters and they were all shot, presumably dead! This, we were told,



was the end of the series. There were a whole lot of loose ends left lying about, to say nothing of a lot of puzzled viewers. The oddest thing of all is no explanation from the BBC.

There are a few theories: One I heard was that the BBC did not want to pay Terry Nation, but that he insisted it was a series that he had devised. Shades of Van Vogt, and, if it comes to that, those Greek mythical voyages! A second theory runs from this—the BBC's chronic lack of money. You could come up with a third theory: that the subject of SF just frightens the BBC. No telling what political figure might take umbrage if the story line stays. Maybe thinking about the future, even at space-opera level, could be dangerous!

Now they are re-running the last series, and what baffled me was a children's programme showing them how to make a teleport bracelet. Imagine encouraging children to watch a series that kills off the characters.

The BBC is happiest when it does stories about the safe and dead past. They did a serial on Dicken's *Dombey and Son* and had the actor Paul Darrow, who is featured in *Blake's 7*, playing a part in it. One could feel some-one in the BBC figuring that was more like it!

My feeling is that even SF at space-opera level is treated in such a cavalier fashion, there is little hope of the BBC ever treating SF seriously.

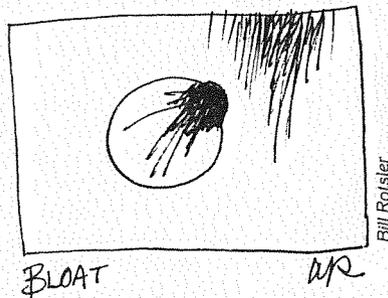
Which is a pity, isn't it?

Daniel Furst
65 Nagle Av #3A
New York, NY 10040

I won't argue with Ms. Campbell's assessment of *Blade Runner* [in *Aurora 22*]. I don't care for the movie, but that's not the reason I'm writing. My argument with Ms. Campbell is her statement that *Blade Runner* "will probably stand the test of time as a genuine classic". I have felt for some time now that appealing to an imagined posterity is the mark of a weak critic. Rather than relying on well-seasoned arguments to demonstrate the film's worth, the reviewer can stand back and say, "You don't understand now, but someday you'll see". This type of argument—or means of avoiding argument—bothers me no matter what object it is applied to, be it a film I don't like or a book I admire.



David Vereschagin



WAHF

Brad Foster, Valerie Eads, and Lynne Ann Morse.

News *Continued from p. 4.*

stance, is practically a documentary view of the conditions in the so-called "Christian Academies" described in *Newsweek* (2/28/83) and other news stories. In fact, "Dear God" can be less truthfully called "fiction" than can be the honest-to-goodness state government memo that accompanies it, written by Richard S. Russell, the group's pet bureaucrat.

A letter from Art Widner (published in *Aurora 22*) inspired an article of a letter from the group's patron saint, Suzette Haden Elgin. So they published it as an article in this issue, along with a scary article/story by Suzette on the future of education. For all the fans who heard Suzette read excerpts from her novel, *Native Tongue*, I'm absolutely thrilled to announce to you that DAW has accepted the book and will be publishing it in July 1984. This is certainly exciting news to all of us that have been keeping track of Suzette's difficulties getting this very feminist SF book published. (Notice, however, that this is not Madison news: I've got to move.) It's a novel about the development of a women's language, and for some reason or other, not too many ~~the~~ publishing houses were interested...

As an inset to Suzette's letter *cum* article, there's some excerpts from an article from the Australian fanzine, *Sikander*, and from some excellent letters responding to the article. Unfortunately, there was room for only the most abbreviated quotations, and if you are interested in the gender debate ("manning" vs "staffing", for example), I recommend that you try to get hold of the original version. Then, every time

you get involved in the inevitable conversations which begin with some man saying that the word "man" means "woman" too, you can just hand him a copy of this material.

Fanny LeMoine and Jan Bogstad are featured in Diane Martin's lively interview and are debated in the sidebars by Thomas J. Murn and Greg Rihn about the best approach for an academic treatment of SF. For several Madison fans, Fanny's class was the first encounter with academic acceptance of SF, and so it is with many thanks that we welcome her to *Aurora's* pages. At that first class in that small room in Bascom Hall on the University of Wisconsin campus, Fanny was stunned to encounter 20 belligerent students (including both Jan Bogstad and Jeanne Gomoll) rebelling against her list of 50 novels and short stories (which she'd been planning to cut down somewhat for the final syllabus, depending on the class's interests). Instead, of wanting a shorter reading list, the class demanded that the list be expanded to include almost 90 novels and short stories. ("You can't leave out my favorite story!") Only one student balked at the reading list and dropped the course.

Cheryl Cline returns with a small press review slanted toward mail art, and toward the end of the issue, the long-lost photos from last year's WisCon appear. A lucky thing too, or they may have been confused with the 1984 pictures if they had been published any later. Think of it as a big ad for WisCon 8.

That's all folks. I'm done with this gossip-barren town. I'll send my coa through *Cube* when I find a "more appropriate" place to ply my trade!

The Musichor

by Albert Russo

The world, you see, has evolved into the Musichor. Languages—the source of countless evils—have long ceased to be used as tools of communication. True, the task of eradicating them was formidable and required several generations. But the conversion was vital, since aside from speaking their national languages and learning their neighbors', people would otherwise revert back to regional dialects like Gaelic, Basque, Flemish, Styrian, Burushastri, Lingala, Tamil...and the list would be endless, provoking linguistic and border clashes in a society which paradoxically was striving for a universal lingua franca.

The Chinese wanted to impose theirs, which was quite logical considering their numerical superiority. The Anglophones had a solid argument, but so did the Russians, the Spanish-speaking nations, the users of Hindi, Urdu and Bengali, the Arabs, the Brazilians, the Francophones...

After the usual sequence of sporadic wars and a nuclear incident which decimated a third billion people, triggering a miraculous world truce, the Council of Nations met for a Global Deliberation. Never had the desire for real peace rung so poignantly. It was in fact unanimous, for everyone, from the person on the street to the professional, from the scientist to the politician and the artist. Yes, everyone, even the hoodlum had had a taste of Doomsday.

The incident happened in Malta and affected the whole Mediterranean area, with fallouts around the Black Sea. It wreaked havoc indiscriminately. And in its wake it ironically destroyed class, racial, religious and ideological barriers. Prior to the incident, commuting between continents was already so commonplace that the moment it occurred, no nation of our planet could claim to be unvictimized. The whirlwind of annihilation had sucked in train-jet- and shiploads marked with all shades of flags. There were submarines too, and thousands upon thousands of indivehicles.

As a result of the Global Deliberation, two Fifteen-Year plans were devised, leading to our present-day MUSICHOR program. The Conversion met with tremendous obstacles, the most harrowing one being what was coined as the delingualizing process. It actually took more time than even the pessimists' forecast: a period spanning almost three generations. Progress and technology remained at a near stand-still for a while and every aspect of life had to be rethought in a new perspective. But if humanity were to survive,



Georgie Schnobrich

it had to undergo the changes. Nothing of the kind had ever been attempted, at least to humanity's knowledge. Aggressivity broke in fashions heretofore unknown, dismantling the very notion of psychiatric readjustments; to the extent that the psychiatrists themselves were gradually folding up. The more resilient among them became musicologists. Even the composers and musicians, who after all were the advisers par excellence, couldn't function without outside help. Electronic mensurizers had to be used, as well as telepathetic instruments so that the subjects could be tuned in and keep their wits about them. Throngs of musicians, in spite of their goodwill and intuitive qualities, abandoned their profession altogether, either out of disgust or sheer maladjustment. Where gang crimes all but disappeared, individual aggressions soared—many of which were aimed at friends or the next of kin—though the great majority were self-inflicted. You can thus well imagine how painstaking the endeavors proved to be in order to formulate, within such a complex set-up, a universally accepted musicodex.

For generations now, the world has been harmonized. Thanks to musication everyone is given the opportunity to study and use his/her favorite instrument. All manner of wording has been abolished. According to their inclination, people can choose the violin, the harpischord, or any of the current instruments available. They can choose their own voice if they so wish and have the talent. And then record their musicalia on a wrist-deck which is grafted under the skin as soon as they are born. Beethoven, Vivaldi, Messiaen, Ravi Shankar, and all the great composers of the past and the present are honored in this society. They represent the pillars of the codex and are naturally not singled out by their original names.

If someone wishes to utilize one of the Master's scores, whether it be for work or pleasure, he/she can do so. From the onset, each wrist-deck is provided with a memory of all the known compositions and sonic effects. It also automatically registers contemporary scores. But just as important are the individual's creative faculties. They allow him/her to forge his/her personality. Each rendition is then musiclated for those with whom the individual wishes to communicate. The Musichor is a way of life. You need it as you need water, food or love. It doesn't mean though that discordances no longer exist. But these are minimized and always reconcilable. One need only go to the Public Symphony and the problem

Continued on p. 30

An Update on Láadan

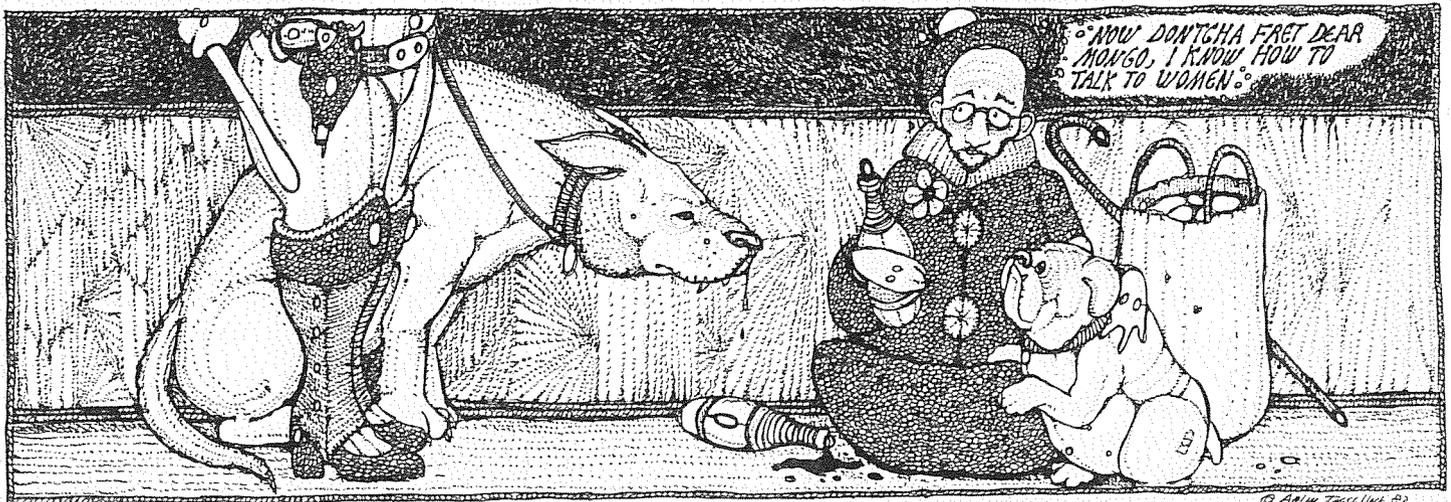
by Suzette Haden Elgin

I appreciate [Art] Widner's compliment [in the letter column of *Aurora* 22] on my article in *Aurora* 21, "Why a Woman is not like a Physicist". Because I prize clarity above all else except truth itself, he could not have said anything that would have pleased me more. I do try to be lucid, and I hope I manage it at least 50% of the time. He says, however, that he doesn't understand two things: (a) Why I claim that the only languages available to women are "constructed by men, shaped by men, and controlled by men..."; and (b) Why, if there isn't a women's language, we women don't just "make one up". Let me see what I can do to be lucid about these two matters.

Widner claims that there are women's languages in many pre-literate societies; I hear this claim a good deal, and expect its source is at least Jespersen and perhaps someone like Aristotle. It may even be true. But no one who makes it in my hearing (or reading) has ever produced any facts to support it; that is, no one can ever name the "pre-literate society" in question, or name the language, or give me a reference where I can look it up, or provide any other sort of corroboration. I hope I can make it clear that I would be absolutely delighted if my statement (which is not original with me, but is to be found everywhere in feminist literature) would be shown to be wrong. If Widner, or anyone else, can actually give me a citation for an existing women's language, so that I can quit spreading erroneous information, I will be extremely grateful. In the interim, so far as I know, there are no records of any such languages except in anecdotes. Usually what has been taken for a "women's language" turns out to be something like the set of sentential particles in Sioux that carry the meaning "I am a woman addressing a man", "I am a woman asking a question of a man", and so on. Or they are sets of pronouns used only by women, or honorifics. Or they are a small set of lexical items alleged to be used only by women, like

the English phrase, "dear little doily". A good source for documentation of the claim I made in the article is a book by Cheris Kramarae, called *Women and Men Speaking*, out in 1981 or thereabouts; here he will find ample references for the lack I describe.

Then there is Widner's claim that there are "wide variations in stress, pitch and juncture, non-verbal clues" and the like, in existing languages. If he is referring to physiological differences and their consequences, he is correct; it is true that the slightly different dimensions of the female vocal tract (in most women) will create slight phonetic differences in language, so that ordinarily you will not hear Charlton Heston's voice and think you're hearing a woman. But I doubt that is what he means. There was a good deal published research a few years ago about alleged characteristics of "women's speech" (in English) versus that of of males, and he is perhaps relying on that research. What has since been demonstrated by very careful investigation—and there's ample literature for him to look at, if he is interested—is that the set of characteristics originally thought to indicate "female" really indicate "subordinate", and that it was an accidental result of the overlap of "female+subordinate" in our society that created the confusion. For example, the set of allegedly "women's speech" characteristics pop up immediately in males if they are the subordinate in a discourse—a male crime suspect being interrogated by a female police officer, a male defendant being cross-examined by a female prosecuting attorney, a male illegal alien being questioned by a female border guard, even a male patient interacting with a female physician. It is easy to understand how the confusion arose, given the fact that the vast majority of language interactions investigated in language research would have had dominant males and subordinate females in them—but the fact that that research was picked up by the media and so widely dissem-



inated has made it very hard to get out the more accurate information. At the present time there is no evidence at all for anything representing "women's speech" in English; if there is evidence of it in any other language—excluding these peripheral items I have already discussed above—I am unaware of it. I would be most appreciative for any information, no matter how fragmentary, to the contrary.

Now to the second question, "If there isn't a different language for women, why isn't there? It would seem to be easy enough to make one up and very difficult for males to prevent it, assuming 'they' wanted to", Widner says. Any woman who manages to get across the reason why existing human languages are inadequate for women will face this question at once. And the only answer we have been able to offer is, "I don't know", which is annoying and frustrating. It's easy to point out that this is one of those questions like "Why is there no concerto for theramin and tuba written by a woman?" or some such thing....It's easy to point out that most of the work of women in our culture, from the beginning of history, has had to be guessed at from a scrap here and a clue there, because work done by women—in the sense of books and symphonies and paintings and mathematical theorems and human languages—has been ignored and trivialized and ripped off and lost forever. It is a peculiarly male question that Widner asks, and given that he is male it is not surprising. (It is surprising that the two examples he offers of vocabularies just as inflated as that for weapons are the vocabularies of cooking and tailoring—he must have forgotten that in many cultures, including many "post-literate" ones and contemporary ones, the elite in cooking and tailoring

are male. The top chefs, the top fashion designers...and of course most tailors, at whatever niche in the social ladder...are male. The associated vocabularies, like those of weapons, therefore, are very large.)

But those easy responses beg the real question, which is why right now there is no such language. Right now, when women do publish books and paint paintings and so on, however limited their opportunities to do so may be by comparison with those of men. Since I could not answer that question, and that question is the important one, I took almost an entire year away from the rest of my work to simply "make up" a women's language and thus provide an alternative answer. There is, now, an actual constructed women's language, called Láadan, begun on June 28, 1982, in Huntsville, Arkansas, and constructed by me. (Grammars are available for \$5 postpaid if anyone wants one.) At WisCon 1983 I had an opportunity to present and discuss that language, and I am grateful to the WisConners for that opportunity. I am also grateful to the journal, *Women and Language News*, published at the University of Illinois, which announced these facts—for the historical record, not as a way of publicizing me—in its Winter issue. There is now one answer to the question with facts and references and so on attached, as opposed to rumours and anecdotes.

Widner may find some explanation, some answer, to the "why" question from my own experience in this task. First, the construction of a language that is intended for communication—rather than a formal mathematical construction intended just for demonstration—is a long and laborious matter, even for a trained linguist with much experience in the prepara-

Debating the Generic Pronoun

Excerpted from "Speaking Personally"
by John J. Alderson, in *Sikander 6*, (1981 Sep):
edited and published by Irwin Hirsh, 279 Domain Rd, South Yarra, Victoria 3141, Australia.
Replies follow, from *Sikander 7* (1982, June).

Perhaps I am altogether wrong about it, but I do consider myself somewhat of a prose stylist. At all events I do my best to use the word which is the only one that approximates what I want to say....

Now there are words that are so misused that it makes me wince every time I hear them, and so much so that I would rather circumvent them than use them, except in their most absolute correct meaning....

The fact is that most people who use the word "person" haven't the faintest idea what they mean....

The word "person" is a weak sort of abstraction. To say, "I am a musical person", is a weak statement. To say, "I am musical", is a definite statement, and very precise, but it may not be quite what is meant, and it does mean differently from "I am a musical man". And to say "She is a beautiful person" is not

the same as saying "She is a beautiful woman". The secret of getting one's message across is to use as concrete and as definite a noun as is possible and to have the adjective qualify it exactly.

The word "person" is a noun, and only a noun. It is not a pronoun. Consequently it cannot substitute in words where a pronoun and a noun are combined to make a compound noun, such as, for example, "himself". It cannot be substituted for "one" or "man". The latter is most interesting. The crew man the ship. The officers do not, of course. Consequently, they are referred to as so many "officers and men", and if the ship gets lost at sea with all hands, then the officers and men would be added together as no many "souls". Naturally, if the crew contained women, as is sometimes the case in odd parts of the world, they still man the ship. They wouldn't possibly woman it, as "woman" is not a verb....

The verb "man" has thus no sex and it would be correct to refer to the complement as so many officers and men even though the "men" may be all females. So we get "seamen" but not "seawomen", because "woman" is not a pronoun and cannot make such a compound noun.



Photo by Diane Martin

Suzette Haden Elgin

tion of grammars and writing systems and so on for a wide variety of languages. To carry out this project I had to set aside everything but the work I absolutely could not avoid, I had to set aside the work that earns money for my family and keeps us approximately solvent; I could not spend much time in the writing that ordinarily supports my family. That sort of decision is typically made with relative ease by men, who run off to Tahiti and are supported by their mistresses while they Refuse To Compromise With The Demands Of Their Art/Science. (See Marie Curie's biography, any number of lives of male artists, etc.) I am a woman, and I did not find it an easy decision—it has cost my family, my friends, and many people who depend on me, a great deal of worry and deprivation. It was not a trivial matter for me. It could be taken for granted that I would not be able to find funding, either private or governmental, for the support of the project—I am experienced with "grantsmanship" and I knew it was out of the question. I did think it might be possible to find some support for it within science fiction, by writing a novel in which the creation of the language is a major plot

"...It makes no difference whatsoever if Laadan is a 'good' or a 'bad' attempt at construction of a woman's language...The only thing that is relevant is that it is a matter of historical fact that the language does exist, that its historical source can be proved...to be a woman...Now, when women are asked why no women ever made up a woman's language, they can say: 'As a matter of fact, there is one example of such a language on record...' and so on."

When "woman" does form a compound noun the meaning is quite different. A "sea-woman" would be a mermaid (the masculine being merman) whilst a seal-woman is a woman changed into a seal by enchantment but allowed at times to revert to her proper form....

The are not, and cannot be, therefore, any such words as "chairwoman" (unless the poor creature is part chair, part woman), "spokeswoman" or "axewoman" (unless perchance one is referring to an old battleaxe of a mother-in-law). And, of course, it follows too that one cannot have such monstrosities as "chairperson" or "spokesperson" or "axe-person". Those who use such non-words are ignorant of their own language.

Judith Hanna: [Never] have I ever heard "person" used as a verb or a pronoun—so I'm puzzled as to why John found it necessary to tell us all not to. And I'm even more puzzled by his de-sexing "man" when it's used as a verb—after all, there are a couple of inherently neuter verbs available for that purpose, namely "crew" and "staff", which do not either imply or connote any masculine provenance. And "man" as part of the compound "seaman" is of course not a pronoun, nor can I see any reason why the female equivalent shouldn't call her-

self a "seawoman", except that female and male can equally be hailed "Hello, sailor!".

John D. Berry: The use of "person" in place of "man" in all those forms [such as chairperson, etc.] does tend to draw attention to itself, which can harm the flow of the writing, but by doing so it draws attention to the assumptions behind the correct usage....

The verb "to man" embodies all the sexist implications of who does what and who doesn't, but it's all we've got; if you want to avoid using it, you've got to write your sentence in some entirely different way.

Paul David Novitski: Were I a girl child it might not immediately occur to me that I couldn't become a fireman, chairman, seaman, or congressman (other cultural influences aside) simply because girls become women and boys become men. What am I to make of a society in which the term specific for that other sex (until recently an uncrossable class line) is also generic for human beings? Freeing children to choose among all occupations and pursuits is, I believe, a healthy and necessary goal. John points out that we often witness "man" as a transitive verb, never "woman", but he doesn't seem to wonder why, or what effect that usage might have on the women and men who use it.★

element—those of you who heard me read chapters from that novel at WisCon 83 will remember that I was wrong; the novel has been promptly and frequently rejected, and no rejection yet has suggested that the reason was because it was badly written or uninteresting or amateurish. I felt that the construction of the language had to be done, because I could no longer face any more of those "why" questions of which Widner's is a classic example; and, to the best of my ability, I went ahead and did it. But the reasons for not doing it were vast in their scope—and would be at least as bad, if not worse, for women subject to such considerations as getting or keeping academic positions, being promoted, or getting tenure, etc. Let me make this very clear: The construction of an artificial language for women is not a respectable scholarly activity. It can only be done in the anticipation of contempt and ridicule from one's peers in the sciences; that is not pleasant. It is painful to feel obligated to carry out some task that will land you squarely in the camp of the lunatic fringe, in the eyes of your professional colleagues. (And presumably it is obvious to Widner that most women do not have the necessary training to construct a language, since most women have no reason to have had such training. A language cannot just be dashed off on the basis of one's enthusiasm, any more than a mathematical theorem or a symphony can be—training is required, and resources are needed.

Then there is the question of "what happened next?" It would be very nice to be able to report that the announcement of the construction of Láandan in *Women and Language News*—which goes to the entire community of feminism and women's studies—brought a flood of inquiries and support from the women who read about it. (Support from men was not anticipated, and that has nothing to do with any claim that they might try to "prevent" it; the structure of our society is such that they have no need to make any such attempt—they need only ignore it.) That did not happen. The announcement was made in January 1983, and as of April there has been only one inquiry; I answered it, with an offer of more information and materials, and the woman involved has not been interested enough to write for any of that. Total support from other women has come from the editors of *Women and Language News*—who deserve credit for their courage in publishing the announcement, since they were well aware of the "chariot of the gods" response it would evoke—and from within the science fiction community, where some precedent for such support exists primarily as a result of the activity surrounding Tolkien's

"...The set of characteristics originally thought to indicate 'female' really indicate 'subordinate', and it was an accidental result of the overlap of 'female + subordinate' in our society that created the confusion."

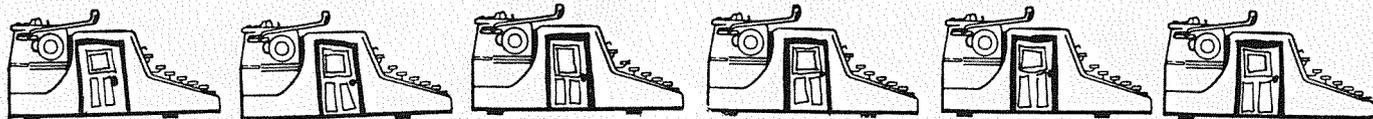


Elvish. Otherwise, women appear as entirely uninterested in Láandan as it is possible for them to be.

I am going into this in such detail not in an effort to get sympathy for myself, but in an effort to make him see "why" and see it clearly. From a scientific point of view, which is the view I try to take, it makes no difference whatsoever if Láandan is a "good" or "bad" attempt at construction of a women's language; it makes no difference whatsoever if it is greeted with a Nobel prize—Do not hold your breath, please—or with complete indifference or even outright contempt and abuse. That is entirely irrelevant. The only thing that is relevant is that it is a matter of historical fact that the language does exist, that its historical source can be proved (by the mechanisms of the media) to be a woman, that her name is known, that the dates of its construction are known, and so on. Those historical facts can be subjected to any amount of scientific ridicule, but—barring a post-nuclear Dark Ages that would mean the loss of history on a giant scale—they cannot be "lost" from the records. Now, when women are asked why no woman ever made up a woman's language, they can say: "As a matter of fact, there is one example of such a language on record..." and so on. If they choose to do so.***But if the scientific point of view is not the one taken—if you look instead at the personal cost of the project for the woman involved, and try to forget that it was me personally—it should go a long way toward explaining why it does not happen often.

I am very lucky. I have a doctorate, and people sometimes publish my writings. There was a way for me to get the language announced, no matter what happened thereafter. What on earth may have happened to the hundreds of other such languages, constructed painfully and without adequate training or resources, by women who were not fortunate enough to have any forum open to them at all we will never know. Does this make it any clearer? I hope? ★

OTHER DOORS BY CHERYL CLINE



The focus of this installment of "Other Doors" is on women in the arts. Now I warn you, my perspective on women's art is slightly skewed, tending towards "marginal" art like mail art, book art, postcard art, performance art...and you'll find the phrase "rubber stamps" used in this column rather more frequently than you would in your average essay on women artists. You can go to Germaine Greer to read about Berthe Morisot or Georgia O'Keefe, but does Ms. Greer say a word about Leavenworth Jackson or Ms. Pitts? Well?

Before we get to them, let me throw a couple of directories at you. (It won't hurt.) You can't live without these things, you know. They are the roadmaps of the women's movement, the baedekers of women's culture. The compilers of feminist directories know that someone looking for the address of her local NOW chapter will probably be able to find it listed in the phone book, but if she wants to find the address for *Celibate Woman* or *Big Apple Dyke News*, she's going to have some trouble. Say our hypothetical seeker after addresses doesn't even know *Big Apple Dyke News* exists, but is curious about radical lesbian publications. Her curiosity is not likely to be satisfied by letting her fingers do the walking through the yellow pages—unless it happens to be one of the many women's yellow pages.

To me, a feminist guide or directory or yellow pages is no mere listing of addresses: it's a wish book. Just knowing that there are so many women (and men) publishing books and magazines, playing music, making art, teaching, organizing, working, is a kind of gift. But making contact with the women's organizations—that's the real fun, the gift opened.

The inspiration for that little poetic flight is the **Guide to Women's Art Organizations and Directory for the Arts**, edited by Cynthia Navaretta and published by Midmarch Associates. Anyone who thinks the women's movement is dead should see this book:

174 densely-packed (but very readable) pages listing women artists' organizations, publications, presses, galleries,

bookstores, art centers such as the Women's Buildings in Los Angeles and San Francisco, artist colonies and information agencies, just for starters. Divided up into areas of interest, it covers the visual arts, dance, music,

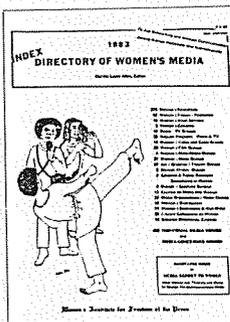
theatre, architecture, crafts, film, and electronic media and writing. It lists where to go to find out how to get grants and loans, where to study art abroad, where music festivals are held and when, what you can do about health hazards in the arts. There are listings of women's musical groups, writers' guilds, craft organizations, slide registries, theatre groups, recording and record-distributing companies, publishers, and lots more.

The aim of the *Guide* is not merely to document current activity, but to provide a historical context for women's art as well. In addition to listing current resources, it also lists defunct groups and cites historical events such as the building of the Woman's Building at the World's Columbian Exposition in Chicago in 1893 and the Woman's Pavilion at the Philadelphia Centennial Exposition in 1876.

The best thing about this book is that it's a handsomely printed cheap paperback that people can afford, not just libraries.

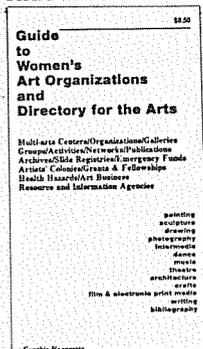
Midmarch Associates also publishes the quarterly newsletter **Women Artists News** (reviewed in *Aurora* #21), a beautifully produced publication containing news, information on exhibitions, galleries, and artists groups; reviews of books and publications; interviews and essays on art criticism and women's art history. Each issue also includes a national calendar of women's art events.

The **1983 Index/Directory of Women's Media** published by the Women's Institute for Freedom of the Press, has a slightly different slant. It's less comprehensive, but it lists only movement or woman-run media. (The *Guide* lists general art organizations as well as movement groups.) It is international in scope, giving listings for women's media



in England, Australia, Colombia, Denmark, Sri Lanka, and many other countries. Perhaps the most interesting feature of this directory is that it includes a long list of individual media women and media-concerned women. Any woman can be listed there; all you do is send your name and address and a short description. (Write for their form.) The deadline for being listed is October 1 of every year.

The Index/Directory covers all areas of women's media: periodicals, presses, news services, columns, radio and TV programs, film,

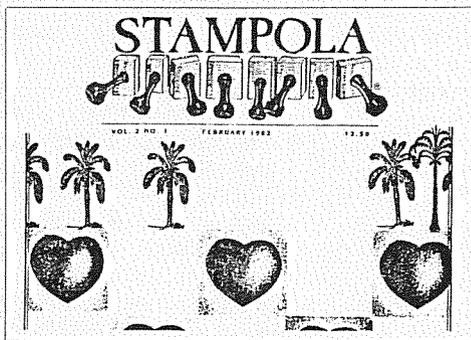


multi-media, music, art, writers' groups, speakers' bureaus, women's studies courses, bookstores, library collections, etc., etc. The "Index" referred to in the title is the index to **Media Report to Women**, a bi-monthly journal covering women's media.



Umbrella is a labor of love published by Judith Hoffberg, a woman of determined perseverance. A typical issue of *Umbrella* runs about 135 pages, and is for the most part written typeset, laid out, and published by the editor, who also (of course) edits and keeps track

of the mail and the subscriptions *does the dishes, and feeds the cat*. *Umbrella* is a reviewzine covering the arts: especially mail art, bookworks, and performance art. It includes reviews of artists' books, exhibition catalogs, and art publications; listings of art exhibitions, including mail art exhibition deadlines and performance art documentations; and art news. Hoffberg is also an umbrella aficionado, so each issue includes a bit of umbrella lore, perhaps photographs of umbrellas in usual and unusual places or umbrella artworks and artifacts. *Umbrella* is not specifically a women's artzine, but there is much information on women's art activities to be found in its pages, including those of its editor. Hoffberg travels a lot and reports on the artists, artist spaces and groups she visits in her travels around the world. She has written on the art scenes in Italy, Switzerland, Holland, Australia, New Zealand, and various parts of the US. She also writes an essay each year on the annual Interdada Festival held in Ukiah, CA, which draws mail and performance artists from all over the world.



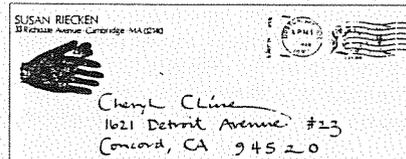
Stampola is a more specialized magazine. As you might guess from the title, *Stampola* is devoted to rubber stamp art. A quarterly newsprint tabloid edited by Geraldine Serpa, it includes news, reviews of books on rubber stamps and mail art, listings of rubber stamp companies, and how-to articles on everything from stamping on textiles to carving your own eraser stamps to making traditional valentines. Often an issue will include a profile of a rubber stamp or mail artist. In the past, *Stampola* has profiled Peggy Loudon, who makes rubber stamp ceramics; postcard artist Carioca (Carrie Carlton); and stamp artist Carol Law. Serpa is herself a stamp artist (AKA Ms. Pitts)

and graphic artist—she does all the design and paste-up for *Stampola*. She also puts out a rubber stamp catalog which features original designs by herself and other artists. She has also designed an official Ms. Pitts Graphics t-shirt! a tasteful illustration of a flying pink flamingo, white letters on blue background, printed on a black t-shirt.



Leavenworth Jackson is a rubber stamp artist whose work has appeared in *Mother Jones*, and *Wet Magazine* (a rubber stamp company); and an all around nice guy. She has published two rubber-stamped books: *This Is a BookBookBook*, now out of print, and *Do Not Bend*.

A Rubberstamped Romance, a tale of love and jealousy illustrated using a set of erotic Egyptian rubber stamps. She has published two rubber-stamped posters: "Perseverance Furthers", a surrealistic panel strip that explores the power of perseverance and the fact that certain multiples of alternating and direct current equal "Dada" when divided by the speed of light squared, and "Thank You For Not Smoking Thank You", another panel strip illustrating the hazards of smoking (and not just cigarette smoking). She has also illustrated a book of poetry by Judith Seeger, *Anything in Parentheses Can Be Ignored (The Jury Will Disregard that Last Statement)*, published by Cartismondua press. Her stamp art is charming and witty, barbed when need be and brilliantly executed. Everything except *This Is a BookBookBook* is currently in print, several things in new editions signed by the author; and they are all fairly inexpensive, in the \$3-\$5 range (the Judith Seeger book is \$5.50). Send for *Leavenworth Jackson Rubber Stamps*, her catalog of rubber stamps, stamping supplies, and "rubber publications."

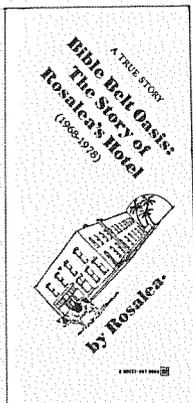


Another fine rubber stamp artist is **Susan Riecken**, known for her original hand-carved eraser stamps, which she

uses to produce note cards, stationery and a yearly calendar. *A Book for 1983* is a beautiful engagement calendar containing seasonally appropriate quotations from 18th and 19th Century letters, journals, diaries, and books on cookery and household management. (She includes a bibliography; among the writers she quotes are Thoreau and Mrs Beaton). The quotations, as well as the months and dates, are printed using eraser stamps carved by Riecken. Each quotation is accompanied by a hand-stamped, multi-colored design, originally hand-stamped

with hand-carved eraser stamps, then lithographed. When Riecken printed her first calendar, in an edition of 25, she individually hand-stamped each illustration. Her calendar has grown so popular that now, with a print run in the thousands, it's no longer possible for her to do this. However, the lithographed calendars retain the charm of the hand-stamped editions.

It's a little late in the year to get a calendar, but you can get ready to put in your order for 1984. In the meantime, you might want to get her cookie cookbook, which is no mere recipe book, but an artist's book. *A Baker's Dozen* reproduces 13 early American cookie shapes gathered from museum and private collections. They are printed in their original size on heavy stock, ready to be cut out and used to make cookie hares, pears, cats, birds, hearts and hands. There's a pocket in the back to keep them once you've used them. She also gives some early American baking lore, a history of cookie cutters, and a half-dozen recipes taken from old cookbooks and adapted to modern kitchens. This book, like her calendar, is illustrated with her distinctive eraser stamps and the text is stamped out with her eraser alphabet.



Rosalea's Hotel is a unique artists' hotel-retreat-vacation-resort, located in Harper, Kansas, and run by a feisty feminist artist named...Rosalea. Let me quote from her brochure:

In 1968 Rosalea purchased the old Patterson House Hotel on Main Street of her hometown, Harper, Kansas, for \$1,500 and renamed it Rosalea's Hotel. She hoped to sustain herself from room rentals while pursuing her artistic endeavors, but a regional newspaper story implying that she was a "hippie" who had returned to "turn on" her hometown quickly ruined all prospects for normal hotel management. When the story appeared, local citizens dubbed the tulip-red exterior "whorehouse red", ostracized Rosalea, began spreading vicious rumors (some of which persist today) and attempted to run her out of town. Some young rowdies even conspired to kill her. Rosalea persevered, slowly building business without community support or adequate financial backing from the male chauvinists who control financial institutions. She made the Hotel an "oasis" for those seeking sanctuary from the Bible Belt mentality.

Rosalea's Hotel is open from May 1 to October 31 each year. The rooms are inexpensive and decorated like no hotel rooms you've ever seen, using florist foils, collage, found objects and old furniture. Rosalea plans activities for your stay, or you can play it by ear.

To make a reservation at Rosalea's Hotel, you must be a member. Rosalea offers a sliding scale of memberships, from the standard seasonal membership for \$25, to life memberships, to "eternal life memberships". (The latter enti-

ties you to rent the entire hotel on a space-available basis throughout eternity.) Write to Rosalea for details on how to apply for membership. She has strict rules to follow for application, and certain restrictions. Problem drinkers, drug abusers, status seekers, do-gooders and most people from Harper County, Kansas need not apply. (About that last restriction: it seems Rosalea holds a grudge.)

If you don't think you'll ever make it out to Harper, Rosalea still has something to make your life worth living: *Thurds: From the Art of Rosalea's Hotel*. "This sensational new "magaling" (part magazine/part art mailing), is a witty, insightful and uplifting publication designed to help stamp out apathy and ignorance in America, and to give the members and fans of Rosalea's Hotel something to live for. It cannot offend anyone as its pages are unbound so anything offensive can be easily discarded." It's really delightful.

If you'd like to know more about Rosalea and her Hotel, you should get her autobiography, *Bible Belt Oasis: The Story of Rosalea's Hotel (1968-1978)*. This year Rosalea celebrates the 15th year of her hotel, as well as the 100th anniversary of the building, and to commemorate it she's offering an official 1983 Hotel T-shirt. Printed on the front is an old picture of the hotel circled by the words "Hotel of the Century". The legend below reads "Rosalea's Hotel 1883-1968-1983 'Making Herstory While Making History'"

Bibliography

- Guide to Women's Art Organizations and Directory for the Arts*, P.O. Box 3304, Grand Central Station, New York, NY 10163. \$8.95
- Jackson, Leavenworth, 175 Belvedere St., San Francisco, CA 94117.
- Media Report to Women*, 3306 Ross Place NW, Washington, D.C. 20008. Subscriptions \$20 a year, \$15 by personal check (by which I suppose they mean it's \$20 to institutions and \$15 to individuals).
- The 1983 Index/Directory of Women's Media*, Women's Institute for Freedom of the Press, 3306 Ross Place NW, Washington DC 20008. \$8.00.
- Riecken, Susan, 9 Vincent Street, Cambridge, MA 02140. *A Baker's Dozen* is \$3.95, the calendar \$9.95. Write for her brochure and get on her mailing list.
- Rosalea's Hotel, P.O. Box 121, Harper, KS 67058. *Thurds* is available for \$10 a year and is published "thurdly", in the Spring, Summer and Fall/Winter. *Bible Belt Oasis: The Story of Rosalea's Hotel (1968-1978)* sells for \$9.95 plus \$1.55 postage. The t-shirt is \$8.00 plus \$1.00 shipping.
- Stampola*, P.O. Box 1493, Eureka, CA 95501-1493. Subscriptions are \$10 a year (4 issues).
- Umbrella*, Judith Hoffberg, P.O. Box 3692, Glendale, CA 91201. Subscriptions are \$20 a year for individuals (\$22 overseas surface mail). T-shirts are \$8.95 plus \$1.25 for postage.
- Women Artists News*, P.O. Box 3304, Grand Central Station, New York, NY 10163. Subscriptions are \$8.50 a year (6 issues).★

COURSE NOTES

Introduction to the History Of Formal Education in America: II Education 103

PREREQUISITE ED 102

3 units/10 weeks

This course covers five major topics, and time is allowed for three cumulative examinations and one preliminary exam. A term paper is required. The topics are summarized briefly below.

1 A review of the system of formal education in America that was in place at the end of the twentieth century. *NOTE: It is assumed that students will know this material thoroughly from the prerequisite ED 102; therefore, only one week will be devoted to the review. Students failing the preliminary exam at the end of this week will not be allowed to continue in the course.*

2 The establishment of the standardized mass-education computer curriculum for every American student from kindergarten through 14th grade, through the joint efforts of the U.S. government and AT&T. (One class period will be devoted to the Teacher Riots which briefly accompanied this major change in American education.) The student should be prepared to examine in detail the rather drastic consequences of this change and to consider the following question. Given the very obvious manner in which this was accomplished (for example, the move from 'telephone' service to mass informational systems service by AT&T in the 1980's; the careful distribution and placement of videogame facilities nationwide to accustom young people to interaction with computers; the well-organized government campaign to demonstrate that the in-place system was failing, through the use of national standardized tests and a succession of investigatory commissions and task forces; and the installation of two-way computer facilities in every American home by 1990, with a federal subsidy for those unable to afford this new public utility)—given all this, how can it have happened

that the American public was taken completely by surprise? *NOTE: Term papers successfully challenging the alleged unawareness on the part of the public are always welcome.*

3 The gradual discovery by about 2004 that young people whose formal education was carried out exclusively through computer interaction demonstrated serious abnormalities in their emotional and social development, and particularly in their cultural integration; followed by the establishment of the Homeroom system requiring all students through Grade 10 to spend two hours daily Monday through Friday in an actual classroom with other students and a human teacher. Students should be prepared to debate in detail the merits of the Homeroom standardized curriculum (patriotic songs; readings from religious texts; arts-and-crafts related to traditional celebrations such as Valentine's Day and Reagan's Birthday; performing of skits and pageants incorporating recognized cultural constructs; memorization of archaic traditional poetry such as 'Hiawatha' and 'The First Lunar Colony'; wholesome group games and folk dancing, etc.)

4 Extension of the mass-ed computers through the BA/BS degree in 2025; followed by the establishment of the three American Multiversities for the MA/MS, Ph D, and other postgraduate degrees such as medicine and law. A week will be devoted to a discussion of the system of competitive examinations by which individuals secure one of the limited number of places available at the Multiversities. *NOTE: Term papers refuting the popular misconception that the system breeds elitism are always welcome. Term papers alleging that the government intends to eliminate the Multiversities in favor of postgraduate computer instruction waste the time of both professor and student; students are strongly advised not to request permission to write on this pseudotopic.*

5 The final week of ED 103 is devoted to the phenomenon of 'alternative education' in the United States, including (a) the inevitable attempts by some misguided parents to keep their children out

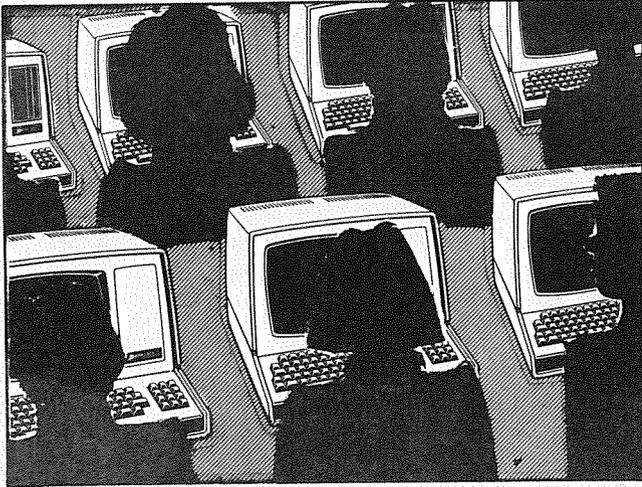
Dear God,

I wanted to, so here goes.

Me and Jason, he's my big brother, just started here this year. Before that we were at Public School called an essay, I suppose. I put up with it and Brother Johnson, he's our teacher, came over and said that Public School teaches the Devil's religion so Mom and Dad decided we were going to go to Public School. It costs a lot but Mom got a job, only now she has to quit because You're sending us another one. She and Dad don't like it much, even if they pretend they do. Dad's mad because he has to quit his job instead of gettin another one, and Mom cries sometimes when she doesn't think anybody's going to help us. We might get to go to Public School again like the littler kids do, but I guess Mom and Dad are better off than

It says in my Workbook I'm supposed to write You are the best. I was at Public School called an essay, I suppose. I put up with it and Brother Johnson, he's our teacher, came over and

Jeanne Connell



MEMO

DATE: 1983 February 14
 FILE REF:
 TO: Debbie Byars
 FROM: Richard S. Russell
 SUBJECT: Issues in Education, now to 2010

A memo from Brian Roherty to DPI management requested input on issues likely to arise in education in the next 10 to 25 years. I think, first of all, that just saying "25 years" isn't quite as striking as indicating the year 2010 as the end of that time span. We are now planning not just for the next century but for the next millenium. That realization sort of shakes loose a lot of the ties which still hold us down to extrapolations of the past.

However, we must begin by extrapolating from the past, and the surest way to do that is to state what's happened before is going to keep happening. With that in mind, here are some issues in education that aren't going to go away:

(1) **Church-state separation.** People representing religious groups are still going to try to get the public schools to advocate their religious philosophies.

(2) **Financial equity.** The children of the extremely wealthy will probably always have better educations than everybody else.

(3) **Individualized education.** What we are talking about here is whether education should be viewed as an assembly line turning out slightly customized but essentially interchangeable products or whether it should be seen as a hand-crafting process geared to the individualities of the raw materials.

(4) **Racial and cultural balance.** This issue will be especially important in the schools, if only because the schools are the most pervasive form of social interaction in the country, as well as the place where passions seem to become most inflamed.

(5) **Authoritarianism or discipline?** When do we cross the line from the appropriate realm of discipline into the inappropriate realm of authoritarianism?

(6) **Role stereotyping.** A couple of centuries of ingrained practice and tradition will not disappear without a long, hard effort.

Now I'd like to turn to the emerging issues—developments which are now in their infancy but which show promise of blooming in the years ahead:

(1) **Use of technology.** Any industry which wishes to become more productive must make better use of technology. Education is no exception. Why should teachers have to give the same presentations year after year? Why not videotape them, and free the teachers to answer individual questions? Why should kids have to attend school five days a week when television is available in virtually every home? We already know a bit about sleep learning, and we're likely to find out lots more in the near future. This kind of research will tie into developments in electroencephalography to start us on a brand-new type of learning: direct electrical assimilation by the brain.

(2) **An aging society.** High taxes to support the schools are not in the forefront of the priorities of most elderly people, and this fortends a decrease on support for the schools.

continued on next page

Given the very obvious manner in which this was accomplished. . . how can it have happened that the American public was taken completely by surprise?

of the national system, despite the imposition of very severe legal penalties for all such acts; and (b) the authorized network of education under the direction of established religious groups, which differs from mainstream formal education only in a stronger focus on religious themes and topics within the curriculum *NOTE: Since term papers must be submitted prior to the last week of the quarter, students are strongly urged not to choose a paper topic related to any substantial degree to this segment of the course.*

Any remaining questions regarding ED 103 should be referred to the Graduate Advisor in the student's major. Students are not to approach the Multiversity professors with such inquiries.

**OFFICIAL CATALOG/MULTIVERSITY TWO
ACADEMIC YEAR 2082/83**

Authorized by the Chancellor

© 1983 Suzette Haden Elgin

ter, what my teacher in
 e red flag beside my desk
 aid I could write whatever
 o Public School, only our
 ter come to this school. It
 ittle brother or sister.
 keep fixing our old car
 king. Jason and me thought
 are more afraid of the Devil
 Continued on next page

Dear God... Continued from p. 18

19

Brother Johnson just looked over my shoulder and said I'm not supposed to talk about things like that, just school and stuff. I know you don't mind God, but he looked kinda mean

Dear God,

I sort of like this school now even if I didn't at first. It was lonesome sitting by myself all day and I missed hearing the teacher and the other kids talking about different things. Here we don't talk at all, just fill in the blanks in our workbooks, and the teacher only comes when we put up our flags which we don't do very often because he gets mad if we bother him too much. The work is pretty easy, though, and we get to go as fast or as slow as we want to. I caught on real quick how to fill in the blanks. I just put down the answers that talk about You or have Bible verses in them. I get tired of the Bible sometimes but its a lot quicker when you don't have to stop and figure things out for yourself. I do sort of miss the fun stories we used to read in Public School. I don't read much here because everything is the same as what we hear in Church and Sunday School all the time and isn't very interesting. Of course I'm a girl so it doesn't matter, I'm just going to grow up and get married and have babies. Last Sunday our Preacher patted me on the head and said a pretty little girl like me would have lots of boys wanting to marry me, and that made me feel real good. I think Mom misses reading though, even

if she says she doesn't have time. I caught her reading an old magazine once and she made me promise not to tell anybody. What boys do is more important than girls anyway, at least people are always asking Jason what he wants to be when he grows up. They all say he's so smart he ought to be a preacher because preachers are the most important people in the whole world, but Jason says he used to want to go to college and study science stuff, only now he found out most everything the science people say isn't even true, so he's just going to finish his workbooks as fast as he can and get a job. I'm glad I'm a girl, I don't have to worry about things like that even if sometimes I just saw Brother Johnson walking around so I hurried and read this back and I don't think he'd like it either, besides he might show it to our Preacher or even Mom and Dad

Dear God,

I really like going to this school. Everything we learn is true because its what the Bible says, and its nice having a desk with walls on both sides because I can study without anybody bothering me or making noise. All the other kids are like me and really love You, and Mom and Dad don't have to worry about me hearing bad things and

Signed, Jane

By Gayle N. Netzer

memo Continued from p. 18

A countervailing trend, though, is the growing awareness in the middle-aged population of the need for continuing education. The success of the public schools as an institution is likely to turn on how well they succeed in addressing that need. This leads directly to:

(3) Education as a continuing right.

Societal expectations are now such that most people can expect some sort of subsidized—if not yet completely free—post-secondary education, whether at a college or a trade school. This trend will probably continue, and the next quarter-century may see the day when four years of post-secondary education at public expense is viewed as being just as much an individual right as high school is today.

(4) Metrics. I certainly hope that, by 2010, the United States will have stopped dithering around and completed its conversion to the metric system, thereby matching the remaining 94% of the world's population. Education should play a leadership role in this area.

(5) Space. By 2010, we should be preparing a substantial portion of our children to live at least part of their lives in a space environment. A thousand years from now, the great majority of the human race will live in space. The advance planning we do now for space education in the early parts of the next century

will determine much of the future for the rest of human history.

Lastly, there are the things we can't really anticipate, because many of them haven't happened yet. Suppose we have a really serious ecological crisis, for reasons which can't currently be foreseen? Suppose there's a nuclear exchange which stops short of complete devastation? Suppose, on the brighter side, that world tensions cool down and nations really do begin to beat their swords into plowshares? Suppose some bright person develops a sure-fire way of supplying cheap energy to anyone who wants it? Suppose international corporations begin to replace nation-states?

But beyond even this, there are things which can't possibly be foreseen, because we don't have the necessary facts or imagination. How does education respond to these things? By teaching people to think.

In the last century, education taught facts. In this century, it began to teach how to use and assemble facts into theories and processes. In the next century, education must teach people how to educate themselves. Many educators would protest that we are trying to do that very thing today. But we are not doing it as the major goal of the educational process, we are doing it as a byproduct. What we need is meta-education.★

1. First Contact

This night
I, too, cast a shadow on your orbit,
swaddling you
in the rock of my heartbeat.
This is a night
of soft lightning
and secret thunder
and there is nothing between us.

Your lips against my hair, you fill the hours
drawing to yourself the winey glow
shed from my world of soft grass and molten
core.
We share a column of dark rose light
pulled across the sky
by your slow arcing roll,
by my small turns
on the worn
balls of my feet.

2. Second Contact

Thirty miles away
my mother asks her nurse
to open blinds,
to lay clear passage
for the glistening off your cheeks
scrubbed to ruddy sheen.
For her, your face reflects in mist
off the dew by hospital parking lots
or lies masked in the mirrors of chrome.

There, through you, she and I
touch over distance, hold one another
over distance and time, lingering
in a last wash of bloodlight.
Behind me,
my father twists hard in his sleep,
battling the death that would take her.
3. Totality

Like a spirit
you do not show on film
yet I see you.
Moon mother, you
appear, disappear,
you return
shocking, and brilliant.
Earth mother
balances between us,
casts double skeins of shadow.
I can feel her weaving us,
tying my heart to your footprinted side.

Mother of blood, flesh,
sleeps quietly
as you circle her.
Even now
I am drawn to shadows, drawn to hospitals
by gravity, by magnetism.
There is a pull in the small
of my back,
small muscles, pulling
like pudgy fingers,
scattering planets until they find her.

Total Lunar Eclipse

(July 6, 1982) by
Elissa L.A. Hamilton

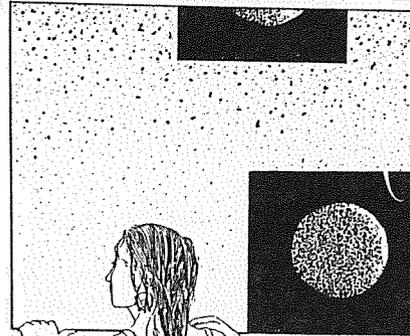
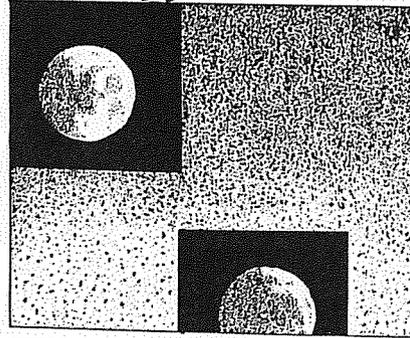


Illustration & calligraphy
by
Mary J.J. Bohdanowicz

Mary Bohdanowicz

Completely covered,
you are hidden from crickets,
from prowling cats fallen
silent until you emerge rekindled;
but we keep company.
You glide through the dark of my planet
spilling the stars in your wake.
You open the sky
and the Milky Way stipples out bands of black
that I draw to pale shoulders, around me.
This is a night
where there is nothing between us,
where the sky bends down
and lifts my hands to my face.

I count sporadic meteors
to determine the age of my dreams.

--Elissa L. A. Hamilton

Teaching SF on Campus

An Interview with Fannie LeMoine and Jan Bogstad

by Diane Martin

DM: How does the correspondence course you're working on now compare with the course you've been teaching at the UW-Madison campus for the past 12 years?

FL: A lot of the material that will be in the correspondence course is taken from lectures given in the campus course. But there are some aspects that are different, and certain perspectives that Jan has added.

JB: One of the major differences is that we had to limit the books we could use, because a correspondence course is often taken by people who don't have as much access to books as people do in a college town like Madison. So we've used anthologies instead of whole books for some sections, especially the historical introductions.

FL: The course is also limited by the way in which the lessons have to be structured. We found that on some topics we had more to say than we had page limits in which to say it, and on other topics we were a bit constrained to fill out the entire section.

JB: One of the ways that constraint expressed itself is that we had to divide material that might otherwise have been put together. To talk about the structure a little bit, we've got three lessons on *Extraordinary Voyages*, and we also try to introduce the history of science fiction in that section. We also have three lessons on *Alien Encounters*. But some of those stories could also be called *Extraordinary Voyages*.

FL: Then we have three lessons on *Utopian and Dystopian Visions*. It's rather hard and somewhat arbitrary to make decisions on where to place the stories.

JB: Another thing we're doing differently is just using the final chapter (of 12) to talk about non-print SF, like radio, TV, and movies. As it's taught on campus, that's usually interspersed throughout the course.

DM: Whose idea was it to do a correspondence course?

FL: Basically, it was George Hartung's idea. [Hartung was a professor of English at the UW-Extension. He retired in June of 1983.] As you know, he's been interested in science fiction for a quite a long time. About eight years ago he said to me, "I think a science fiction

course by correspondence would be an ideal way to attract readers and other people interested in science fiction." And I would have to say he has made his interest more profound by involving Jan in the project, and by encouraging us to bring it to a conclusion.

DM: Is this course your retirement gift to George?

FL: Right! (laughter)

JB: A little overdue! (laughter) This may be why he decided to retire early.

DM: What kind of people do you think would take this course?

FL: First of all, I assume, people who are interested in fantasy and science fiction, perhaps those who've read a little bit and would like to explore it in both a critical and literary framework. Some people, I expect, will just take it because it sounds more interesting than a correspondence course on just one author. And I'm sure some will have practical concerns, like acquiring literature credits.

DM: What are the prerequisites for taking the course?

FL: You have to have junior standing or two semesters of literature (or special permission, but that's rare) to take the course on campus. I think the correspondence course may be handled a little bit differently, but they're supposed to be fairly comparable.

DM: What kind of changes have you noticed in the way the university looks at science fiction now from when you first started teaching it?

FL: When I first started to teach it, science fiction was not looked on with great favor. But this year I lectured on *Alien Encounters* during the alumni lecture series. It's clear that many people who had a rather negative, even perjorative, attitude to science fiction 12 years ago have at some point revised their opinions.

My own attitudes have changed a great deal too, as the course has evolved. When I first taught it, it was taught as a senior colloquium, to about 25 people (Jan was one of the students.), and it had a very strong historical focus. Since then it's shifted from a historical to a thematic focus. Around 1975 or 76, I began to teach certain commonly accepted ways of read-



photo by Diane Martin

Fannie LeMoine and Jan Bogstad

ing a text--literary criticism--as an integral part of the course.

JB: I've heard various TA's [teaching assistants] who've worked with the course on campus talk about the resistance they've encountered in the students with attempts to teach them how and why they respond to a text in certain ways, basic critical things like why is this third person narrator more effective here than a first person narrator. You also still get a lot of people who take this course thinking that it's going to be an easy three credits.

FL: I see far fewer now than I used to. One of the things that happens when you teach a course over and over again is a process of self-selection by the students. Students that take the course are likely to have heard something about it from someone else, so they have a much better idea of what they're getting themselves into.

DM: How would you compare the way you teach your course on science fiction with, say, a comparable course on non-science fiction literature?

FL: There are, of course, advantages and disadvantages. On the one hand, I think most of the students are much more willing to do the reading. In other words, they won't just go out and get Cliff's Notes.

There is, however, precisely the problem Jan mentioned, that if you're talking about Homer, or Dante, they will be willing to listen to statements about point of view or objective narration, and not be bothered by it. But people tend to be much more bothered when you look at the reading they do for pleasure and entertainment in the same way--reading they feel very much involved with. Some people find it unpleasant to look at it as literature.

JB: I think the resistance to this kind of analysis is a resistance to science fiction, in a lot of cases. I think that a lot of people read science fiction as if it's fantasy, as if it's describing an ideal place, someplace that you can go off to and come back from, giving you a certain amount of pleasure.

To be more specific, there's a story called "The Cold Equations" [by Tom Godwin]. It was very popular when it first came out [1954], because it intimated, over the process of the

story, that human beings always had to come up against a natural selection process, and that human beings were very insignificant in the face of these natural laws. But when you analyze the story closely, you realize that "natural laws" in this case are being equated with science and with how men are operate in the world, as opposed to how women operate. The author equates his female character with earth and warmth and friendliness.

Where have we heard that before?

DM: We know that there are many more science fiction courses springing up all over the country [over 550]. Why has academia become more able to accept science fiction as literature now? Is science fiction suddenly intrinsically more worthwhile than it was before?

FL: Part of it is that the old distinctions setting off science fiction as a special genre are giving way. The realistic novel and science fiction are beginning to look more and more alike. It's very clear that many so-called mainstream writers are finding that what they have to say can be said easily and best with certain fantasy and science fiction conventions. I find this optimistic.

There is another development, one that causes me to be somewhat pessimistic: I feel that many science fiction courses are devices that people who are involved in teaching literature come to out of a sense of desperation. They are increasingly aware that they have students who don't like to read, who find reading novels by Dickens a real chore. Therefore they try to use science fiction or fantasy courses as a way of meeting the needs of these students who are expected to have some literature but are not eager or even interested in taking a course out of the ordinary canon. I think that's unfortunate. Science fiction is worth reading and studying for its own merits, and Homer and Dante for theirs.

Even in my course on fantasy and science fiction, where I consider maybe 75% of the literature easy reading, I find people complaining that it's too hard, that the reading list is too long. Well, it's perfectly obvious that certain science fiction and fantasy works are harder to read than others....

DM: I notice you don't have *Dhalgren* on this reading list.

JB & FL: Yes! (Laughter) It would be a two-semester course.

JB: Let me give you an example. When I took the beginning courses in comp lit 207 & 208 as a sophomore in 1969 & 70, I was required to write eight papers per semester. Now, I think they have a hard time persuading students of the need to write one or two. It's particularly difficult because many people for some reason don't perceive that they need to know how to read and write. This is evident from the shaky quality of some scientific writing appearing in journals today. Quite a few of the people who take the science fiction course are in computer science, engineering, or some other field and they don't perceive a need to read, write, or be critical.

FL: One of the things I've been very pleased

A Student's Evaluation

by Thomas J. Murn

...Many professors prefer, when considering SF as a part of literature as a whole, to identify and discuss "themes" which have long been present in SF: these "themes" range from Overpopulation and Ecology to such flowery and all-encompassing terms as the Extraordinary Voyage and the Unknown Land, the Key to Knowledge, the Era of Good Feeling. That literature exists which falls neatly into these categories is not debatable; but these terms have very little to do with mature speculative fiction, with its range of subject, format, and content....

Most SF authors writing today are involved in the utilization of ideas more than themes, working with specific concepts rather than hazily identified and generalized principles and inventions....

This passage of concepts is independent of any broader philosophical intents. Indeed, I know of no other field of literature where philosophical, moral, and ethical principles portrayed in the writings are so completely unconnected to their author's structurings. The base from which SF authors draw their inspirations is far too broad for direct interchange and development of philosophical ideas....

In a field as vast and tiered as contemporary SF, it makes little sense to discuss philosophical intent of the authors of various works in a systematized fashion, or to discuss only ideas of the authors which function on classical levels of content, symbolism, and implied statement.

Since the setting construction in an SF novel or short story is more essential to the nature of the story itself than mainstream works set in the present, what happens in an SF story should be evaluated in a totally different light. The roles of each facet of the SF story—plot, setting, and characterization—must be examined on several different levels. The interaction of these three elements is frequently more important in an SF story than in a mainstream work. Above all, it should be made apparent that generalizations are extremely difficult to make, and comparisons can only be made in the most certain cases....

I believe that it is possible for SF to exist in the classroom, with new approaches and modes of teaching. But the impetus for change must come from inside academia itself—and that might be too much to ask. There is more of a chance that SF will intelligently flourish in the free schools and informal discussion groups where SF is more comfortable and less confined.

[Excerpted from "The Academic Reaction to SF", originally published in *Noumenon* 38 (a New Zealand fanzine), July 1980.]★

with during the past couple of years, was that although some people will complain that they don't want to learn how to analyze the text, and that they are not interested in looking at the quality of the narrative voice, many people are interested. And they mention that at the end of the course. People also find it valuable to do a creative project, such as a short story, to test reactions to their creative work.

DM: What sort of lessons will you have in the correspondence course? Will students be assigned a creative project?

FL: They'll have a choice of essay questions to respond to. They'll be graded in terms of their mechanical as well as inspirational qualities. Being able to spell, punctuate, and express yourself in whole sentences and complete paragraphs is important. But it's also helpful to have a few good ideas.

I would like to include a short story as one of the projects. You learn an enormous amount about what science fiction actually is if you have to try to reproduce it yourself. You get a sense of the nitty gritty problems involved in constructing an alternate world.

JB: Since this is a correspondence course, you're not under the same kind of time pressure as you are in the campus course. There are 12 lessons. For the first 11, you have as much time as you want and you can use the books. The final exam would have to be administered by someone.

DM: Is there anything else you want to comment on?

FL: Yes, something I feel is a major part of the course, even though it's not officially stated and lectured on: It is definitely my concern to make myself and everyone who takes the course more critical consumers of popular culture, to be more aware of the ways in which we are influenced, and to be aware that every text makes a statement. There is no text that is just for entertainment. I find that some of the most interesting discussions in the course arise out of people's sudden recognition of the implications of something we've accepted as commonplace in our popular culture.

JB: Something else that deserves to be mentioned is that a course like this gives people access to aspects of science fiction that they might not otherwise have. In preparing this course, I learned an awful lot about science fiction criticism and its place in making the texts more accessible.

One of the influences on the existence of more science fiction courses in university settings has been the Science Fiction Research Association. They made it possible to find criticism, and to get in touch with other people doing similar things. They also publish journals, so you can find out about other people's teaching and text selection methods. Articles often appear in journals like *Science Fiction Studies* and *Extrapolation* concerning teaching methods, as well as critical approaches to SF and fantasy.

FL: You find an enormous variety of science fiction courses across the country. A large number of them are far more oriented toward English and American literature than my course is. I feel that it's very important to present other traditions.

JB: We use not only English and American, but also Greek, Roman, French, Polish, Russian, Italian, and Spanish texts in the course.

DM: Are science fiction courses taught in, say, France or Italy?

FL: Yes. In 1977 I was asked to give a guest lecture at the French Comparative Literature Society in Limoges. They had an entire conference on science fiction. I got to meet a number of people who were very interested in science fiction in France, and got a sense of the directions they were taking.

There's quite a lot of fantasy and sci-

ence fiction written in languages other than English. In the French syllabi, for example, [Jules] Verne plays a larger role, and [J. A.] Rosny. They are likely to be influenced by certain techniques of the new novel. Michel Butor's work has had some impact upon the structure of contemporary French SF. They are also likely to include Italian or Spanish fantasy writing.

JB: French classes may also talk about the fantastic as a genre. They make less of a distinction between fantasy and other literature. Italian science fiction is sometimes quite political, as is German. Of course, translations of British and American SF are widespread and popular.

There's also an organization called World SF, with maybe 100 members, which makes its business the maintenance of contacts between SF scholars all over the world. Their members include Western and Eastern Europeans, scholars

Another Approach: A Suggested Syllabus

by Greg Rihn

The second problem in organizing a science fiction studies program is laying out a basic course format. The first problem, of course, is convincing the curriculum committee that such a thing should exist in the first place.

There are a number of popular approaches to organizing the SF course. One of the more popular consists of a historical overview, in which one follows the development of SF in a chronological fashion. There are also more formal approaches, in which SF literature is analysed along classical lines, making use of the applicable forms, such as allegory, satire, epic, etc. Then there are more thematic approaches, in which science fiction can be spoken of in terms of the ideas that have always been intrinsic to it. These include humanity's first contact with nonhuman beings, our adaptation to the conditions of space travel, the possibilities of travel in time, the future of society on Earth, our biological future. Ideally, a number of these themes should be covered in the survey course, giving a broad introduction to a broad subject.

For more variety, I would have the most basic course begin with the short stories and novelets that are found in the forums that have shaped so much of modern science fiction: the magazine and—increasingly—the original anthology. There are numerous useful and readily available anthologies of both classic and avant-garde works.

The second level of surveys would deal in important novels and series. Science Fiction 2 would be able, once a groundwork had been laid in the short fiction course, to deal with items such as the *Foundation* trilogy, *Stranger in a Strange Land*, *Dune* and its sequels, *Cities in Flight*, and other works too weighty to

be crammed into a course intended to sample the entire body of speculative fiction.

SF 2's twin, the fantasy novel course, would be able to approach C. S. Lewis's "space" trilogy, *The Worm Ouroboros*, Mervyn Peake, White's *Once and Future King*, and possibly, depending on the courage of the instructor, even *The Lord of the Rings*. (In my opinion, a most desirable book to teach, considering its scholarly source, the large volume of readily available critical work, and the fact that it reads easily, in spite of its formidable length.)

From this point on, my speculations follow the general structure of courses in the English department here at the UW-Madison, the most familiar ground for me. Course titles would then be "Science Fiction, [date] to [date]", "A Theme [or Selected Themes] in Science Fiction", or "An Author [or Authors] in Science Fiction".

Now that we have a department of Science Fiction Studies firmly entrenched, we might well add courses on the Frontiers of Science, or Future Shock. We can co-opt the Cinema department to aid us in producing an SF in Cinema course. We begin to study some of our antecedents, such as The Gothic Tradition...This course would be unique, since we could not only study the rise of a style, but also its demise.)

And on and on. Soon we will have subsumed the entire educational establishment into a "Nexial Studies System" (*a la* Van Vogt)—and from there?

—the Universe!

[NOTE: Rihn's optimistic speculations were originally made in 1976, in a short paper of the same title done for Professor LeMoine's SF course at the University of Wisconsin-Madison]

in many Eastern and Far Eastern countries, as well as people from the Americas. These contacts are very valuable if you want to keep in touch with SF as a worldwide phenomena.

Selected Bibliography

compiled by Jan Bogstad

The following are a few resources on teaching science fiction, though by no means the sum of scholarship on the subject. (Various publishers of paperback science fiction also offer teaching guides to go with their particular books. These are not very complete, but are free.)

Banks, Michael A. *Understanding Science Fiction*. Morristown, NJ: Silver Burdett Pub., 1983. This is a teacher's guide.

Gunn, James. *The Road to Science Fiction*, vols. 1-4. (#1: *From Gilgamesh to Wells*, #2: *From Wells to Heinlein*, #3: *From Heinlein to Here*, #4: *From Here to Forever*.) New York: Mentor/New American Library, 1982. Annotated anthology which combines biographical, historical, and critical introductions (compressed into 2-5 pages) on each story. Includes translations of classical fantastic stories, but all modern (post-1900) stories are Anglo-American.

Nichols, Peter, ed. *The Science Fiction Encyclopedia*. New York: Doubleday/Dolphin, 1979. Entries organized by subject, author, and theme. This book is a "must have".

Parrinder, Patrick. *Science Fiction: its Criticism and Teaching*. New York: Methuen, 1980. Collection of essays. Highly recommended.

Slusser, George E; Guffey, George; and Rose, Mark; eds. *Bridges to Science Fiction*. (Alternatives Series). Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1980. Another collection of essays.

Tymn, Marshall B. *A Teacher's Guide to Fantastic Literature* (rev. ed.). Boca Raton: Florida Atlantic University, 1982. This is a resource manual to assist one in teaching SF and fantasy at the high school and college levels.

Williamson, Jack, ed. *Teaching Science Fiction: Education for Tomorrow*. Philadelphia: Owsick Press, 1980. Essays on the history of science fiction, its relationship to literature in general, and science fiction as taught in other disciplines. Edited by a long-established writer in the field.

Wolfe, Gary, ed. *Science Fiction Dialogs*. Chicago: Academy Chicago, 1983. Essays in all areas of science fiction scholarship, along with bibliographic information for further reading. It has a section on teaching SF from which some of this bibliography above was drawn.

There are also many resources available to the teacher of science fiction in the form of critical studies of many of the more well-known authors, books of criticism, and historical studies. These latter range from personal memoirs by older, well-known writers to histories of the genre taking it back to historical times. These studies are listed in a more complete fashion in my upcoming article in *Collection Building* (a journal published by Neal-Schuman Co.). This article, "Balancing Your Science Fiction Collection", updates libraries on the fictional and non-fictional resources in science fiction.★

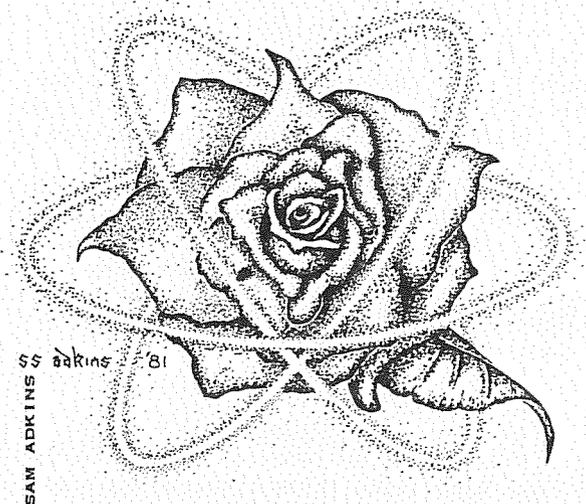
As for the Universal Translator

by Suzette Haden Elgin

"How do you assemble a rose window
in a universe
which has no curving surfaces?"
(Oh, poor sharp rose that is all thorns
nested within thorns--
what can you be a symbol of??)

Students! That is a visiting professor!
She is trying to translate.
True, she is unseemly in that she is not
properly angular--
there is no word, exactly, for what her thighs do--
that, however, is the fault of her Administration.
So to speak must be embarrassingly...
relativistic.
Stop taking notes! Would you stare
at some poor cripple who had no antler?

"How do you assemble a rose window
in a universe
which has no principle of symmetry?"
(Oh, poor lopsided ugly rose that is all deficits
nested within deficits--
what can you be a hunger for?)



SS Adkins '81
SAM ADKINS

Teaching Science Fiction as Women's Studies

by Barbara Emrys

Teaching science fiction as part of a class in some other subject requires different choices of materials and different perspectives than teaching it in a course that's about science fiction. The book or story chosen has to do multiple duty as not only a representative sample of science fiction, but as a general subject, an example of style, and so on. Teaching science fiction in women's studies produces its own choices in material and presentation. I've taught a variety of SF in "women-in" survey courses - women in society; in literature; and recently, women in art, music, and literature. This context has gradually shown me how to teach science fiction itself as women's studies.

Most of the women's studies students in the private arts college where I frequently teach are female, aged 19-23, still living at home, and about half of them are white. Their reading skills vary widely. Usually one or two out of 25 students have previously read science fiction. These students have read only one or two books and haven't gone on reading it. A typical comment is, "I just didn't like it," or "I didn't get it." The students typically have not been in all- or mostly-women groups and each may feel compelled to declare that she (once in awhile he) is not a "women's libber". My job then is one of continual introduction. I need to choose readings that will work for readers who are unfamiliar with both realistic writing about women's lives and anything-goes speculative material, and who may be nervous about either.

One of the first things I learned in teaching women's studies to tentative readers was to avoid a long, depressing curriculum of unrelieved oppression stories. No matter how true or well-written they are, even I end up wanting to go home and read something escapist instead. I don't conduct studies into the oppression that has been and is present in women's lives. I do conduct skill training in collecting and analyzing information useful for women. To do that I need material that shocks consciousness, but I also need material that provides models.

There's a wealth of writing available to open the student's eyes, and there are also excellent articles, essays, and poems that offer examples of clear thinking and independent living. Mainstream fiction, however, is as short on positive images of women as it is long on understanding and depicting their oppression. Jane Eyre married, aided by her abused predecessor. Kate Chopin's painter killed herself at the turn of the next century. Contemporary women characters seem to be still contemplating- or rejecting - one or the other solution. It's



Steve Fox

no accident that *The Female Hero* (Carol Pearson and Katherine Pope, 1981), a comprehensive study of female protagonists in modern fiction, devotes its chapter on successful resolution to science fiction. Science fiction is my best source of portraits of strong women engaged in active, self-directed, satisfying lives.

Not all science fiction, of course, does so. That's one reason the few students who've tried it haven't liked it. Most of them are pleasantly surprised at having future options displayed for them in science fiction work. A recent issue of *Ms.* featured interviews with "young feminists". One of the women interviewed lamented the lack of specific examples to follow. Being told you can do anything, she said, is too vague, and results in "the lack of a springboard, the lack of a clear idea of what new kind of women is to be." (*Ms.* April 1983, p. 43) Nor, I'd add, is anyone selling fame, fortune, or eternal happiness of one kind or another for wearing the scarlet "F". Nobody's going to - those are the Cinderella cons - but I think young women are quite right to ask feminism and women's studies, "What's in it for me?" Science fiction can help answer that through its fully realized characterizations of achieving women.

even by the standards of *Dungeons and Dragons*[™], and you'll get a hint of the character of this film.

More serious, but not quite as successful, **The Beast Master**, should not be confused with Andre Norton's novel of the same name, although I have a feeling that the few similarities that do exist may be more than coincidental. The film's hero is the last survivor of a poor-but-honest village that gets wiped out by the Evil Wizard and a band of bloodthirsty barbarians. (Sounds like the beginning of *Conan*, doesn't it? Oh, well, so many of these themes are common in the genre—the "last avenger" theme is in *Star Wars*, too, both in Luke and Leia. Used well, we call these "archetypes". Used crudely, "cliches".) On his quest to get even with the Wizard, he "impresess" an eagle, a black tiger (!), and two black-footed ferrets. (Norton fans read "meerkats".) On the way, he acquired the assistance of a wandering warrior (a physically impressive performance by John Amos) and conceives an infatuation for a dispossessed princess/slave girl/sacrifice-to-be. His eagle companion wins him the awe and "friendship" of a race of winged creatures, ghoulishly effective man-eaters, who are the film's *deus ex machina*. Former he-man actor Rip Torn is believably evil as the wizard, though his patent-ly false hooked nose looks somewhat grotesque. The rabidly dangerous berserkers he creates with mind-destroying drugs are a chilling concept, though not as well handled as might have been.

The Bent Sword Award for Worst Sword and Sorcery committed on film goes to the puzzlingly titled **The Sorceress**. Why it got this title I can't tell, as the only sorceress in the film is a second-string villain who has little to do. There's this Evil Wizard, see, who, as the film opens is bent on sacrificing his first-born child (a daughter, one of twins) to his repellent serpent goddess, in the hope that he will thereby become immortal and all-powerful. A Good Wizard whose powers seem chiefly to be a sort of electric kung-fu intervenes in time to save the newborn children (but not their mother, who is messily murdered in a manner that is one of the film's lowest points). The Evil Wizard is killed, only to return in the second of three incarnations he has coming. Meanwhile, the Good Wizard entrusts the twin girls to a farmer with instructions to raise them "as boys" for their own protection. Years later we see the heroines—each of whom physically resembles a Boris Vallejo cover-model—in "male" disguise that would not fool anyone. They supposedly do not even know they are women, even though they have an adoptive sister their own age. This farmstead is very isolated, and presumably none of them ever takes off any of their clothes. In coming to warn them of the Evil Wizard's reincarnation, the Good Wizard *becomes one with the Force* is killed by the bad guys, but not before passing on the secrets of the heroines' parentage and his magical martial art. Naturally, the bad guys are meanwhile burning the farm and killing their "father", "mother", and "sister" in best storm-trooper style. In the course of

seeking escape/vengeance, the twins pick up a ne'er do well handsome prince and an improbable Norseman with a satyr sidekick (!). (An interesting approach to the obligatory cute non-human.) Of course they get captured, escape, get captured, fight, and nearly get sacrificed before triumphing. The film's climax is a monument to poor scripting, bad editing, cheap special effects, and just plain lousy timing. The film's good god (a leonine centaur with wings) appears and sits around doing nothing for a good five minutes before deciding to zap the serpent goddess (a disembodied head resembling the Gorgon from *Clash of the Titans*—but not as good.) The best thing about this film is the army of zombies animated by the evil power. The rest—fooeey.

The Dark Crystal was inarguably one of the most innovative films to appear this year, and definitely fantasy, although it may fit more into the sword-and-planet subclass, rather than straight sword and sorcery. In fact, there are precious few swords in the film—and precious little sorcery either, which is part of the film's biggest flaw. The extremely simple quest plot can be forgiven, considering the remarkably difficult task of animating the puppet characters. What cannot be so easily forgiven is the lack of action that is otherwise needed to add meat in the absence of plot. This is due to the inherent limitations of the mechanical characters. When you have several humans going to animate one "creature" and it takes hours to coordinate movements for even the simplest shots, it is understandable that *The Dark Crystal* does not have many of the swashbuckling-sword-fight-up-and-down-the-stair-leap-off-the-balcony-and-grab-the-chandelier scenes that make this kind of picture. This is most troublesome in the Skexis, who have supposedly subjugated the entire world. When dueling for power, they chop hunks off a big piece of metal instead of each other—an interesting alien concept, but not very exciting. When actually confronted with a gelfling (their prophetic nemesis, small elfen beings) these supposed world-beaters act like a lot of old women with a mouse in the room. Granted, the skexis are sinking into senile decrepitude, and the mechanics of things make it impossible for them to actively chase the gelflings around the room, but couldn't at least one of them muster up a magic bolt, or something!?



The problem here is one of short-sightedness. Yes, it is great to see all those mechanical creatures doing all those incredible things—but that's not all it needs. A lot of screaming and arm-waving may be sufficient to suggest action, confusion, and desperation on *The Muppet Show*, but not on the big screen.

So long as the gelfings *et al.* can be out-swashbuckled by a human in makeup, or even by a stop-motion skeleton *a la* Harryhausen, they won't replace them.

One of the remaining pieces snuck upon the scene with no advance warning that I noticed, probably as a consequence of its Japanese origin; this was **The Last Unicorn**, produced by Rankin-Gass, (in)famous for *The Hobbit*. *The Last Unicorn* is not a bad adaptation of Peter Beagle's novel; at least, it is true to the plot and idea. Many film to novel adaptations have been much worse. The film does not succumb to terminal cuteness, and many of the characters were very well conceived both vocally and visually. The film fails in two critical areas, however. First, it fails to capture the glistening dark spirit Beagle intricately threaded into the work, the feeling of impending doom for the faerie world. The script adopts Beagle's strange anomalous bits—the scat-singing butterfly, scruffy bandits who eat "tacos" around the fire—but misses the wild mystery of his more formal prose. The second main flaw is the unicorn itself, which is too damn cute—a pretty horsie with a horn. Oh well.

The end result is that Beagle's fey novel ends up as a homogenized fairy tale, too slow for children, yet not deep enough for adults.

If there was a flawless fantasy in 1982, it was **The Secret of NIMH**, an animated film done by a bunch of Disney renegades and others dedicated to the proposition that truly quality animation shall not perish from the earth. Although the premise about intelligent rats and mice may seem childish, believe me it is not: the plots and conflicts are the most sophisticated of any of the films mentioned in this article. It has magic, technology, swordplay, conflict, intrigue, and gripping suspense. My only quibble is the use of Dom De Luise as the voice of the idiot crow. While he's good in the role, I can't help visualising his voice as belonging to a pudgy man, rather than a

crow—a problem I didn't have with the roles spoken by John Huston, John Carradine, or Hermione Baddelley—although those people kind of resemble the characters, also.



In 1983, we have many more sword-and-sorcery and fantasy films looming on the horizon. We can hope that some of the directors and producers will, perhaps, manage to combine the literacy of *Secret of NIMH*, the sincerity of *The Beast Master*, the sense of fun of *The Sword and the Sorcerer*, the sense of wonder and invention of *The Dark Crystal* and the budget and production values of *Conan*. 'Tis a consummation devoutly to be wished. Too bad they've already ~~butchered~~ done *Lord of the Rings*.

Unfortunately, it's much more likely that we'll see new exercises for costume extras in motley mashes of ancient-to-medieval armor. I hope I'm wrong. (Sigh.)★

Starburst

by Margaret Key Biggs

*they stilled her
with the confines of culture,*

*bound her
with the thick ropes of tradition,*

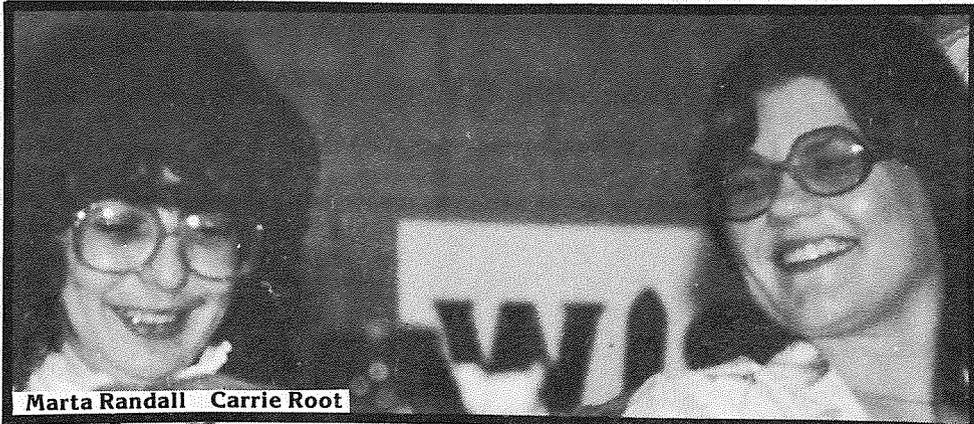
*incarcerated her
with the iron bars of custom*

*until a star
flung from her creative soul
burst into a scintillation*

*that could not be held
by time, dimension, nor space.*



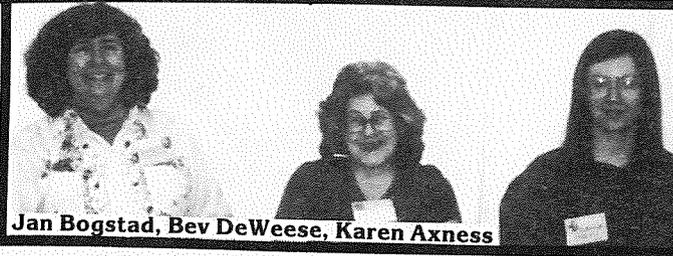
WisCon



Marta Randall Carrie Root



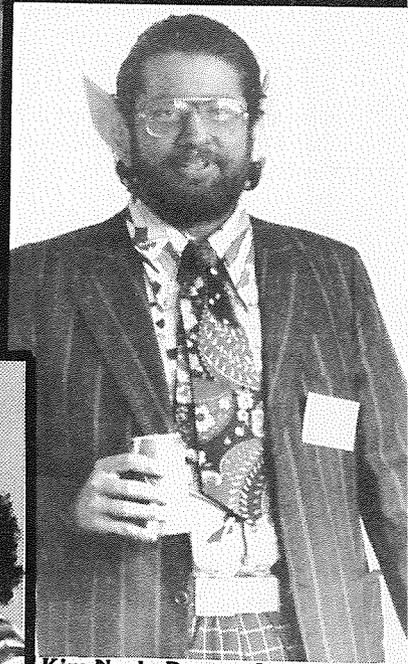
Suzette Haden Elgin



Jan Bogstad, Bev DeWeese, Karen Axness



Lee Killough



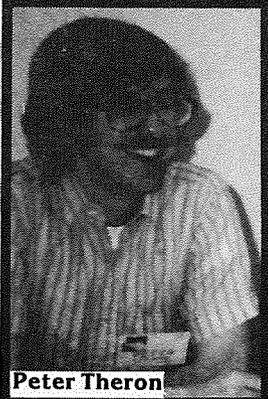
Kim Nash, Dapper Leprechaun



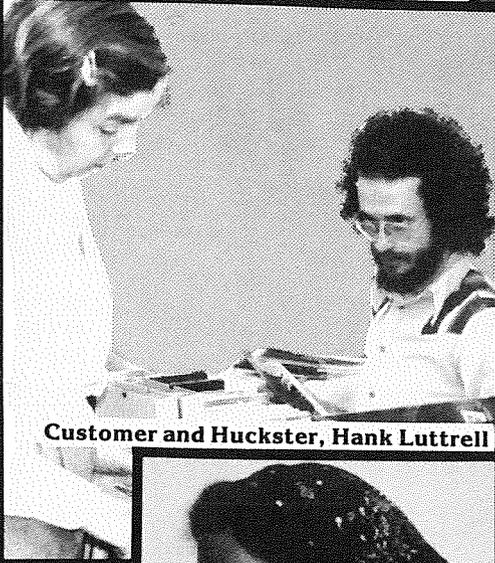
Marta



Suzette



Peter Theron



Customer and Huckster, Hank Luttrell



Diane Martin



Marta

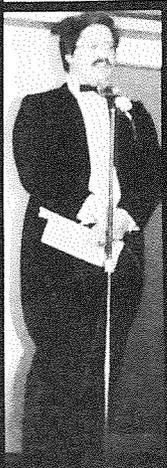


Glen Boettcher and Mike Stutzman

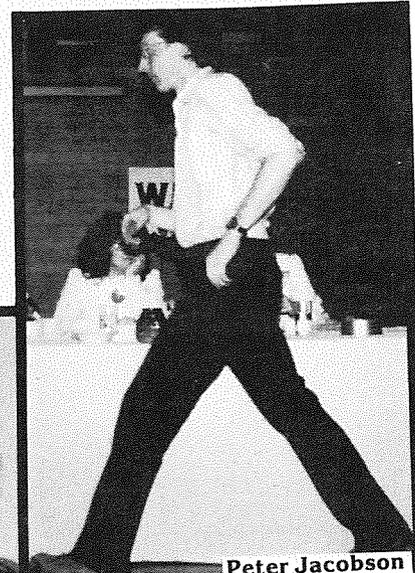
Photo Album

Photographs by Diane Martin, Wally Smart and Dennis Hackbart

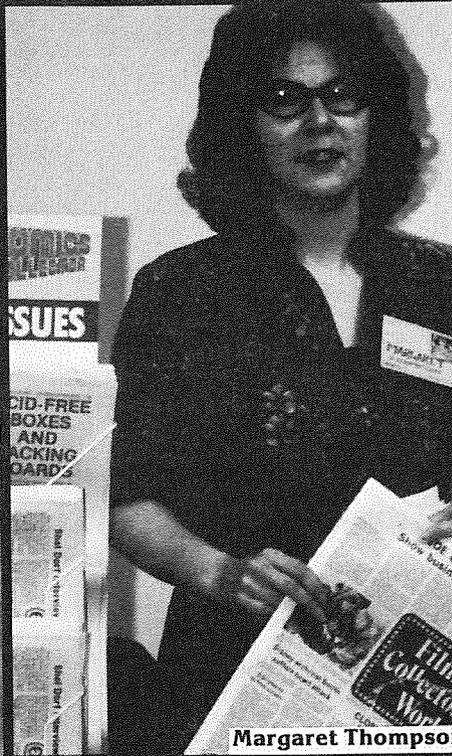
"Little green man invades Sci Fi Conference"



Greg Rihn



Peter Jacobson



Margaret Thompson



Don Senzig, Cathy Gilligan



Lee



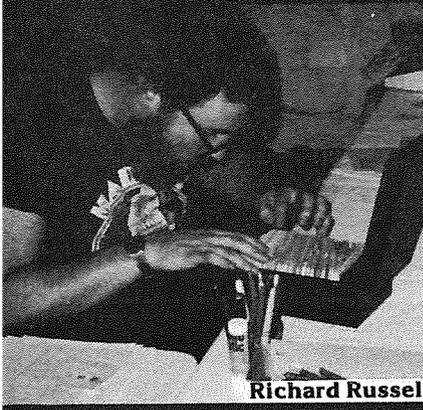
Jeanne Gomoll



Pat Killough



LIFE 2



Richard Russell



George Hartung



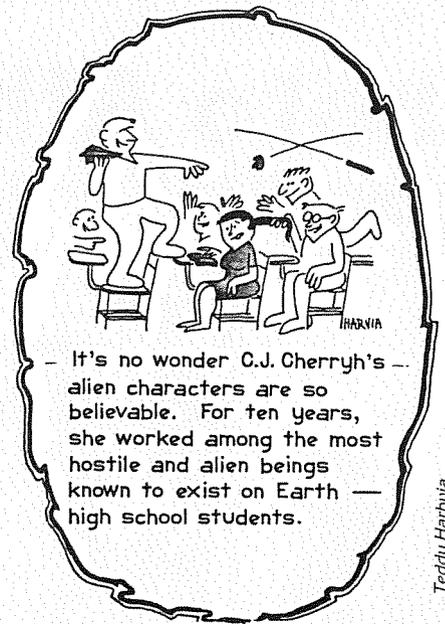
Lee, Patty Lucas, Marta, Dick Russell



EDUCATIONAL FUNNIES

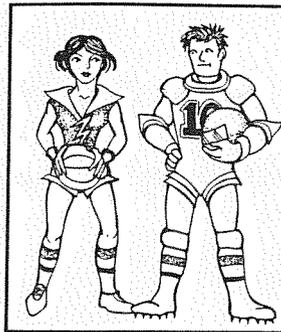
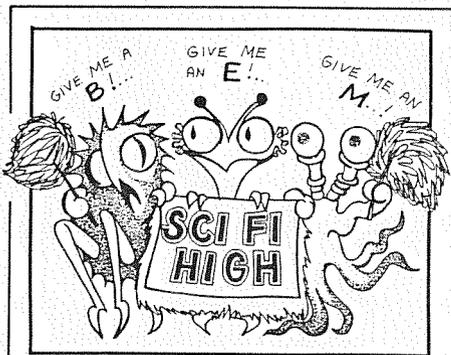
Jeanne Cornoll 83

Jeanne Cornoll



It's no wonder C.J. Cherryh's alien characters are so believable. For ten years, she worked among the most hostile and alien beings known to exist on Earth — high school students.

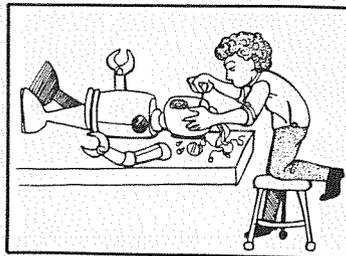
Teddy Harbula



Basketball & Football



Biology Lab - Creation 101



"Shop"

Georgie Schnobrich



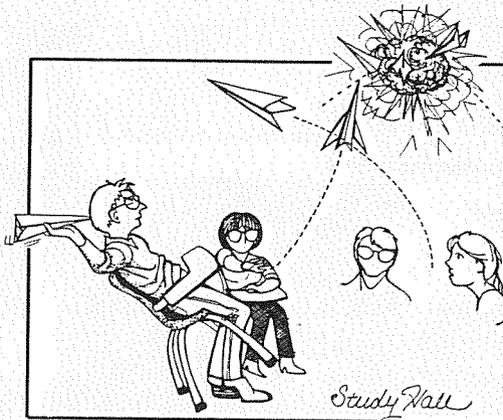
Robert 3-83

Robert Whitaker

My paper is on the Jungian psychological archetypes involved in invoking awe, or, the Gosh-Wow-Boy-O-Boy Effect.



American Lit Final Exam

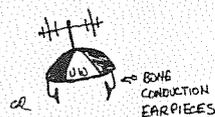


Study Hall

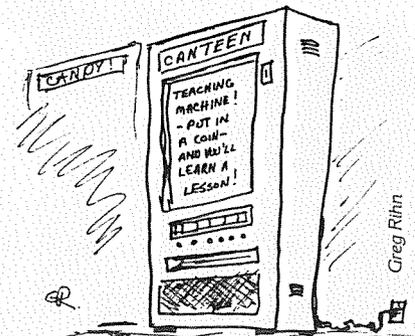
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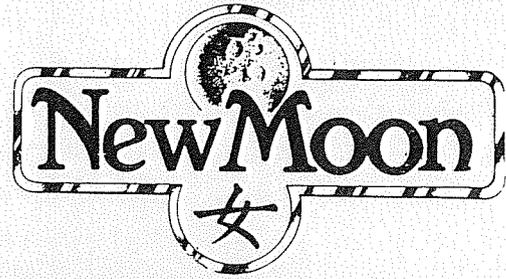


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MIRIAM ALLEN DEFORD PHYLLIS ANN KARR ANSEN DIBEL BARBARA HAMBLY



cover by Steve Fox

INVISIBLE WOMEN

Under-Appreciated Women SF Writers

Stemming in part from the oft-repeated Wis-Con panel, "Women Writers You've Never Heard of", this upcoming issue of *Aurora* will focus on women SF and fantasy writers who have been critically neglected, ghettoized, or otherwise ignored.

We're looking for articles, book reviews, fiction, poetry, line drawings, cartoons, and photographs that illustrate this theme. Send us a SASE for our guidelines if you need them.

PS #1: We already have two articles on Andre Norton.
 PS #2: Please don't send us material about over-appreciated writers like Bradley, Cherryh, Le Guin, or Russ.

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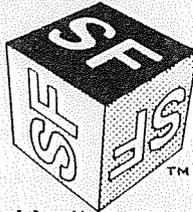
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