

CAP'N RO'S

Whizz-bang

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CAP'N RO'S THORN

[A CONVENTIONAL THORN]
"It's hard to remember that your original purpose was to drain the swamp, when you are up to your ass in alligators."

-Famous Hungarian Proverb-

Somewhere it all fell apart. Nothing but the best ambitions and intentions had I. I hit both Marcon, a mellow, lost weekend, and Midwestcon, a frenzied and hectic passage of time, vowing in both cases that I'd cover them for CRWB.



Somehow it all fell apart. Somehow, those great quotes, those descriptive phrases, that pure and simple rush of images and ideas flee far too fast to go down in retrospect properly.

Hence, with the best of intentions, I purchased three four-by-six inch notebooks that fit comfortably in my back pocket; the purpose of said notebooks was to have been the recording of historic moments at Discon, the 32nd World Science Fiction Convention, held over the Labor Day weekend in Washington, D.C.. Ah! The follies we fancy!

Somewhere, about three hours into the convention, I had already fallen hopelessly behind in my notes. But, on the bus east and in those first few hours, a smattering of cohesion still existed. When I quote from those early semi-organized notes and from the later insomniac scratchings, I'll signify by a ¶ symbol. E.g.:

¶Has fandom gone corporate on us? Have the usual channels of communication grown so large, so bulky, that the "Happy Family of Fandom" will go, perhaps not gently, into that good night? Will I find fen walking around, saying "Jesus, I used to know three-quarters of the people at these things"?

¶Three to four thousand people, most fringies, are supposed to show up for this thing. Somehow, with all those people there, I get a feeling that I should steal Howard DeVore or someone, in the same way that tourists once stole Haight-Ashbury street signs, once that corner was immortalized by Life & Look magazines.

¶This convention has to be a crossroads for us. For example, place yourself in a pro's shoes for the nonce. "Gosh! Are you really Isaac Asimov?" repeated four thousand times could prove to be a bit tedious. "I want to tell you that I really enjoyed that novel you wrote, only for the life of me, I can't remember

the name. You know which one--the one with a robot in it." And saving the best for last, "Hey--I've had this storyline for months now and can't do a thing with it. Maybe we can write it together." No way you're going to be polite after the thousandth time. If you stay out in the open that long.

Fandom has lost its innocence.

Some will undoubtedly claim that this happened after L.A. Con, where all sorts of rumors about the handling of the con funds flew fast and furious. The problem there, apparently, was more one of the people running the affair than one of the people attending. Further, L.A. Con was followed by Torcon, which was able to pull together the right people for an enjoyable convention.

¶Columbus for '76 Person at Voting Booth: We're trying to get everyone to vote.

Cap'n Ro: But how many of the 4000 people here would know what they're voting for?

Columbus: That's why we have bidding parties.

Cap'n Ro: But this is Friday morning.

Columbus: We'll take the votes anyway.

See what I mean? If ever there was a time that the Secret Masters of Fandom could take over, it couldn't be any better than now. With over four thousand people in one place, there ought to be an incredible number of sheep and lemmings waiting to be pushed over the cliff.

The running of conventions, now that they are so large, are, and will continue to be, very attractive to monied individuals and businesses. An excellent example was the overkill that the KC in '76 people performed during Discon. In particular, the Hotel Muelbach paid for the KC bid suite and for all the booze during the con. Which in itself was no crime and did indeed show that Ken Keller, the KC chairman, and his group were very well organized.

However, it is entirely possible that Ken and his group have set, probably unintentionally, the lower limit for future successful convention bids. It's generally accepted that several thousand dollars went into both the KC and Columbus bids. What a waste; particularly when you consider that several years at the very least will pass before the nice and very capable people from Columbus will consider putting in another bid. Hell, it might be a couple of years before some of the backers recover from their investment. Not that anyone forced them into making a bid; rather, it is a shame that these people, who so desperately want to put on a good convention, may never have a chance again.

Does fandom have to be so ravenous? And so wasteful of people and money? We could try to impose an upper limit on money for biddings. The important word is try. It wouldn't work and even if it could, every year we'd have all manners of charges of one

group or another going over that limit. All that idea would give us are broken friendships and some superb headaches.

We could eliminate bidding during the world convention, with all the voting done before the worldcon. Thus, the only ways to advertise would be through the mail and at regionals. This idea is not as bad as the previous one, as it does eliminate some of the money involved in a bid. However, this plan creates bad advertising techniques in the sense, for example, that the KC people would have had to spend a fortune on traveling expenses to get to the various east coast conventions. Besides, perhaps the same money would be spent, after all, with more money going into each regional.

A third method is to only allow those people who have been to two or more regional conventions during the year to vote on worldcon sites. This really wouldn't lower the money spent, but probably would result in a more sophisticated vote overall. The natural objection to this idea is that many would think that it encourages the concept of SMOFdom. I really don't think that it would, and it would give support to regional cons.

obviously, there is no ideal solution to the problem. Fandom is going through its puberty, and with that puberty you have to accept the allegorical acne. (Yecch!)

I had some time to talk to Ken Keller on Saturday in the afternoon for a while about the bidding progress of both groups and plans he had for the convention if they won the bid. We both realized how large Discon was going to become at this point, so naturally a good deal of the conversation revolved around that aspect.

¶Ken Keller: Naturally we're worried about size limitations. One of the many possibilities we've kicked around is limitling comics. That way, up to 500 won't come, perhaps.We really weren't planning for Discon to break 4000nor did they, not until the last three months did they start worrying. If things get really crowded, we might broadcast events into the ballroom next door....



Fringe fandom is getting a lot larger and we view some of these changes as "survival". Another idea being kicked around is the charging of \$25 for at-the-door memberships.

Before we go further, let me add that at that time, Ken had had very little, if any, sleep and further, he prefaced just about everything with "This is only one of many ideas" or "A suggestion someone made". So none of the above are set policies, merely ideas in the hopper.

Ken went on to describe the format of the progress reports, which will be put out in 8.5" x 11" size. He plans to feature a lettercol in it, where various ideas, gripes and proposals can be aired. He is also looking into the possibility of the KC Philharmonic doing a two hour F & SF show during the convention. Oh yes, one more quote:

¶Ken Keller: I am a fringe fan.

Hoefully for the last time, let's return to Discon. The people and the parties were fantastic. The huckster room was 99 and 44/100 perfect. The art show was interesting, however the prices were outrageously higher than last year's. Yet the con itself almost didn't exist as far as organized programming was concerned. With the obvious exceptions of Roger Zelazny's speech, the banquet and the screening of "A Boy and His Dog", attendance at panels and other events was far lower than attendance at similar functions at Torcon last year. Maybe due to the large number of people there, everyone shied away from events that would result in being caught in the middle of the crunch. Or perhaps, it was just due to the nature of the people there. Either way, no one seemed to know what was on the program at any particular time, and most didn't seem to care.

This is not to say that the people were apathetic. This was evidenced Sunday night after the awards banquet. Two bizarre events occurred; one tragic, the other just more of the SOS (same old shit).

Perhaps no one enjoys a better reputation for good humor, kindness and intelligence in fandom particularly in the Midwest, than does Andy Offutt. Before Discon, we had a chance to catch Andy at both Marcon and Midwestcon. Before or since, I have yet to meet any 'Big Name' that has the same drive that Andy does to get involved on a personal level with fandom. Unlike most conspicuous pros, Andy exchews the concept of a 'public' personality.... the Andy you meet in public is the Andy you meet in private. He uses only slightly a 'Gosh, I'm only a Southern boy, ma'am' act, that is easily seen though and I'm sure that Andy knows it. But he quickly drops that solitary veil and proceeds with the business at hand. Over the years, he has built for himself an admirable reputation as speaker and toastmaster. He is easily one of the best after-banquet speakers around.

....with the obvious and painful exception of his performance at Discon. I don't know how he felt, but I crawled into a hole and pulled it in after me. Andy and the audience were obviously in

two completely different continuums that night. The vast majority of the audience would have had a hard time knowing what a neofan was. Andy apparently couldn't remember what one was. No, on second thought, I think that it was more than that. During his speech, which went on too long and was above the heads of most present, I got the feeling that this had meant so much to him that, perhaps, he rewrote or revised the speech one time too many. Either way, it wasn't the Andy offutt I know. And, either way, he did handle himself well throughout; even, amazingly, when fandom's own enfant terrible poked his coiffured head into the proceedings.

One of the unfortunate and unavoidable aspects of fandom, one supposes, is that the temptation to decry Harlan Ellison and his temperament always exists for the fanzine editor. So that I can cross that bridge and then promptly burn it, a statement is in order. Statement: Harlan Ellison is without a doubt one of the most impressive writers ever to write science fiction. Mr. Ellison



CAP'N RO!

(or his mother - we aren't sure)

probably bases his actions on the response he gets from fandom. Finally, he seems to have the self-destructive compulsion to prove his immaturity to as many people as possible. I hope some day Mr. Ellison will realize that people are in love with his writing, that his insecurity is groundless, and that he will grow up.

After all the festivities and fireworks from the awards banquet, the next two to three hours of fannish chatter centered around varying opinions on Andy's speech and on Harlan's interruptions of the speech. I saw Harlan later that night; he had just poked his head into a room long enough for a lady to say something that caused Harlan to retort "I don't like you either lady". Perhaps I chose the wrong time to talk to him, at least that's what he told me. Anyway,

as a result, I never found out what his version of the story was. When the Air Corps stopped by Andy's room, he said that he and Harlan made up the second time Harlan came up to the stage. Andy is a bigger person than most.

¶Harlan Ellison: Go ahead and make fun of a man without a penis.

The true convention action occurred during the parties. Meeting



Mae Strelkov, who is as vivacious in real life as in print. Meeting Susan Wood. (gosh wow) Meeting Bob Tucker. (who may be coming to Confusion) .. watching The Best of Lillie Kovacs at six in the morning with Linda Bushyager and Father John Curlovich. Doing a Hank Kimball imitation with Father John in front of Alvey Moore. Tom Clareson challenging Lloyd Biggle, Jr. to a debate at Confusion. Damon Knight exchanging name tags with me.

Someone asking me if I really was Damon Knight. Pointing out Damon Knight to that person. That person telling me that no, he knew that that was Joe Haldeman. That person insisting I was Damon Knight. Me returning Damon's name tag.

A few weeks after Discon, Lin and I travelled to Pittsburgh to catch PgHLANGE SIX, a capably and enjoyably organized con. Chaired by Frank Richards and worried-over by John Curlovich, this event was easily the best convention Lin and I have gone to this year. Joanna Russ, as GoH, performed admirably and was very outgoing. The show was stolen by the production of THE MIMEO MAN, A Faanish Musical, written by Moshe Feder with the Lyrics by Debbie Notkin, Eli Cohen and Moshe Feder. This effort had the audience rolling in the aisles as Abie Dick decides to con the residents of Nova City in the state of Gafia, U.S.A.. Songs such as "76 Genzines", "The Sadder but Wiser Fan" and "Pubalittle" kept the action brisk and the audience happy. It was announced that they would do a repeat performance at Boskone this year. If possible, catch it. If possible, catch PgHLANGE SEVEN next year as well.

And, in conclusion, Randy Bathurst, Howard DeVore, Lin Lutz, Freff, John Curlovich and I are proud to announce the event that fandom never imagined could be brought off. The concept that will put you on your heels in amazement. With great pride we announce:

MOIDER CITY WANTS YA!



DETROIT IN '84
could ya die.

DETENTION 2

1984

J.A.M. SESSION!

(AN INITIAL ATTEMPT)

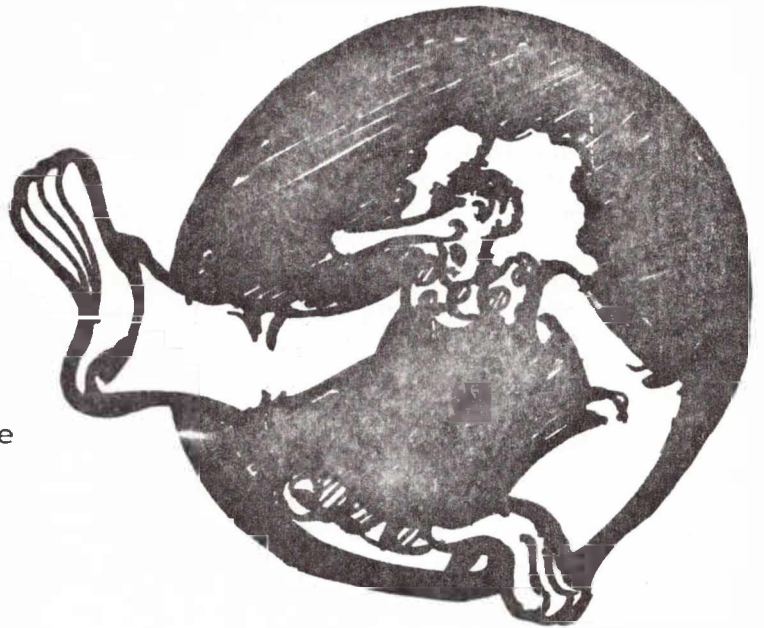
THE DISPOSSESSED, Ursula K. Le Guin
THE DESTRUCTION OF THE TEMPLE, Barry Malzberg
THE LIGHT THAT NEVER WAS, Lloyd Biggle
ANOTHER ROADSIDE ATTRACTION, Tom Robbins
CAN YOU FEEL ANYTHING WHEN I DO THIS?, Robert Sheckley
THE DAY THE SUN STOOD STILL, Anderson, Dickson, & Silverberg
THREE TRIPS IN TIME AND SPACE, Robert Silverberg, ed.
STAR RIDER, Doris Piserchia

Fear not. I do not intend to discuss each of the books listed above in excruciating detail (though I will go on at some length), lest my friend Cap'n Ro, Chairbeing of the Corps, not have room for the brilliance of others. There are two reasons for throwing so many books at you this time: (1) Vacation time gave me an opportunity to read a lot more books than I usually do; and (2) talking about more than one book makes it easier for me to step up on my soapbox and orate in slightly more general terms than in the one-book review.

The collection above represents a wide range of style, content, direction, and publishing dates. Highest marks over all would have to go to THE DISPOSSESSED. Having said that (and the magazine reviewers, no doubt, will say it too), let me also say that I see some danger signs in this book, even though it will undoubtedly be a Hugo and Nebula contender. The book has the typical skillful Le Guin development of the alienated yet dedicated protagonist. It has the typical Le Guin meticulous development of the society in which the character operates--as a matter of fact, in this case, two societies. The book has the typical Le Guin readability. And yet there are danger signs. Le Guin obviously likes one of the societies which she depicts very much. It might be characterized as a society based on enlightened anarchy, and a substantial part of the book is devoted to its description. Early in the book it is painted in tones a bit too rosy, though, to be fair, some of its seamier side is exposed later on. Nonetheless, the over-all impression is that of a book written more to push an idea than to paint a character or write a story. The tendency is slight--the book is good--but having seen such greats as Robert Heinlein run eagerly down the primrose path of preaching while writing, I feel concerned for the wellbeing of Le Guin's literary soul.

Incidentally, Darko Suvin, who is a Professor of English at McGill University and a vociferous academic sf critic, spoke thus on the dust jacket of THE DISPOSSESSED: "The Dispossessed breathes life into the utopian tradition for our ambiguous age of hope and terror, and masterfully raises science fiction to major humanistic literature. It speaks in an angry, compassionate, wise, beautiful voice. A synthesis for our times, a literary and cultural event of the first order." He has written other things like that, and I wish he would go away and stop embarrassing us. I also wish he would learn to use fewer modifiers.

And while I'm in a churlish mood, a few words about THE DESTRUCTION OF THE TEMPLE by Barry Malzberg. Harlan Ellison says of it, in a cover blurb, "There are perhaps a dozen genius writers in this genre and Barry is at least eight of them. ... This book is a killer! It makes what the rest of us do look like felonies." Comment: Harlan has about as much credibility as Darko Suvin or Richard Nixon. Fortunately his hyperbole is more comic than it is embarrassing, so I have learned simply to ignore the nice things that Ellison says about other authors instead of getting irritated at them.

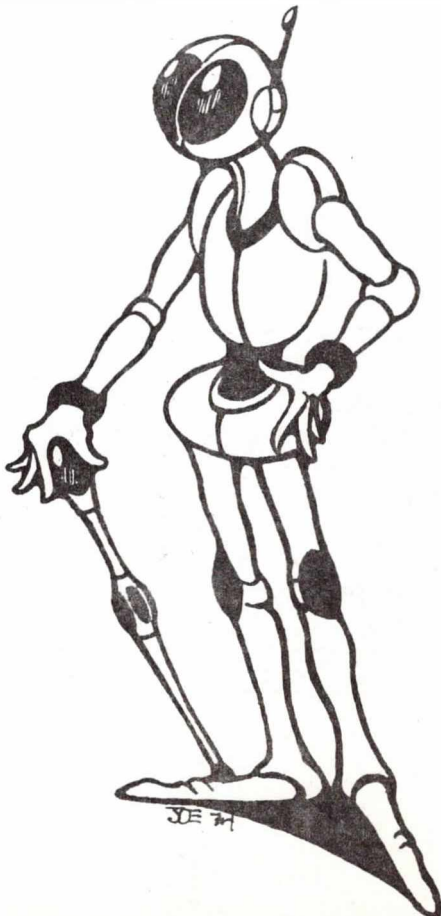


What's wrong with THE DESTRUCTION OF THE TEMPLE? It was written, to borrow Suvin's phrase, to be a literary event. Authors shouldn't write books to be literary events: they should write books that have bookish virtues, and hope that the books can thereby become literary events. But it always seems to show when the author tries to take a short-cut, skipping the quality and going after the pizzazz. And it doesn't work. DESTRUCTION is a murky, stream-of-consciousness meander through the assassinations of the 1960's: Kennedy, King, Malcolm X, Viola Liuzzo, etc. The narrator, who may be a student in a future institute run by a society that has abandoned the cities, is making a movie about the Kennedy assassination. He decides to make it in New York, using the "lumpen"--those who remained in the city--as his actors. All sorts of things go wrong as he displays his psychotic arrogance to the lumpen, whom he considers less than human. He then begins (without explanation)

to relive the assassinations of the 60's, sometimes as victim, sometimes as assassin. He goes through some of them more than once. He gets very tedious. I get very tired. But I know, when I have finished, that I have read a Literary Event. Trouble is, it just wasn't very good. It scorns the reader to show off the writer; it is narcissitic; it comes across like the writing of someone who has taken a freshman writing course, discovered stream of consciousness, and decided to make it his life's work. James Joyce could get away with it; Barry Malzberg cannot.

So as not to single out Barry Malzberg for such heavy censure, let me step unabashedly on my soapbox to draw a comparison between this kind of writing and the music that one can sometimes hear on the classical fm stations (just before another twist of the dial). The music I have in mind invariably involves at least one squeaking violin, assiduously producing a succession of notes bearing no apparent relationship to each other or to the notes being produced by the two or three other instruments. If you happen to catch the end of the piece, you will hear some polite applause and an announcement that the music you heard was performed recently at the something-or-other festival, recorded on tape for broadcast at this time. The music is rarely on records, because no one would buy it. If you keep turning the dial, you will soon come across a rock station playing music that may represent technical mayhem to the art of composition, but at least is not out of touch with the people. They buy it. Rule: With few exceptions, music should be listenable and writing should be readable. Why is there somewhat of a trend away from these things? Let me give capitalism a plug: when you have to make a living from writing or composing, you write or compose things that people can enjoy. When you are an academic composer

or a writer who is established enough not to have to try (e.g., Heinlein), you are freed from the prime discipline of art. I realize that the itch for money also produces some crap, but over all I would argue that it serves the prime discipline well. I also realize that they laughed at Stravinsky (actually they booed), but they also laughed at Harvey Schwartz, and the Harvey Schwartzes outnumber the Stravinskys by a substantial margin. I can't be sure (just as a person can't be sure he is sane, or that the world really exists), but I am willing to bet that The Firebird will last longer than DESTRUCTION OF THE TEMPLE. Off the soapbox (temporarily).





There are some honest critics. "Refreshingly different" says the cover blurb from Publishers Weekly about THE LIGHT THAT NEVER WAS by our own (almost) Lloyd Biggle. This is not a deep book, not a Hugo grabber. It will not haunt your dreams or move you to tears. Yet it is written with a great deal of gracefulness and wit, and with an unusual sense of bienséance--the villain, who must outrank Hitler twenty times over for his atrocities, is dispatched with a minimum of gore and then forgotten, so that the good guys may enjoy their relatively gentle victory. (They even feel sorry for the bad guy, who was obviously crazy.) The thing that makes this book work very well is the tight writing

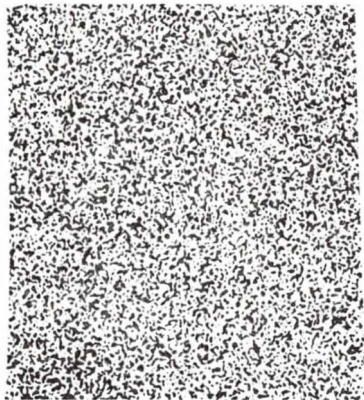
combined with good structure and the style of an author who simply refuses to suffer or anguish in front of his readers. Perhaps "good-natured" is the description I am searching for for the over-all feel of this delightful book.

ANOTHER ROADSIDE ATTRACTION isn't really sf, but our sneaky chairbeing induced me to read it with the assertion that it could be a strong Hugo or Nebula contender (but for its 1972 publication date, of course). I disagree. It defies categorization. It is certainly good enough so that we should be happy if it sits on the sf shelves, but sf it is not, despite elements toward the end of the book that I should not reveal, in fairness to future readers. The first ninety pages seem to ramble and get a bit tedious, but Robbins succeeds far better than Le Guin, in this instance, in painting another life-style. Perhaps he succeeds because he presents a variety of characters with wildly different attitudes toward the world, and lets them get along together, arguing only occasionally. Thus we are not taught or preached at--we observe and we appreciate. After the characters are firmly introduced the plot begins in earnest, and you will not find a more unusual "believable" plot in any other book you read. The ending was a bit dissatisfying, but only a bit.

Sheckley's CAN YOU FEEL ANYTHING WHEN I DO THIS? has three good stories (not all sf), one of which is brilliant ("Pas de Trois of the Chef and the Waiter and the Customer) and another of which is almost painfully funny. It lets you enjoy vicariously all the rotten things you wish you could do to people who have been rotten to you. (This second story is in the humor tradition of MINDSWAP, which is one of the all-time sf classics.)

Unfortunately there are several clinkers--some old stuff that Sheckley must have found at the bottom of his drawer, and some new stuff that should have been put there, but, as the cliché goes, the stories mentioned above are well worth the price of the book.

This column is already running on at excessive length, so briefly as possible the remaining books: *THE DAY THE SUN STOOD STILL* (which Barb Brackney lent me) consists of three novellas commissioned on the idea that the sun stands still in the sky for 24 hours, apparently in response to a prophet's call for a sign of divine presence. Poul Anderson's treatment is the most convincing for me. Silverberg's is competent Silverberg, which is very good, but it is not great. Gordon Dickson cheated a bit in the sense that his prime focus is on a character who has lived for a thousand years, and not on the astronomical event. Dickson creates the most interesting character in the process, but it would have been interesting to see him stick more closely to the game plan of the others. There ought to be more books like this, as long as the quality can be maintained. Their virtue lies in the fact that the authors know that they are competing with other authors, and do good work out of pride. We benefit from the resultant quality. We also get a fascinating look at authors handling similar material. How



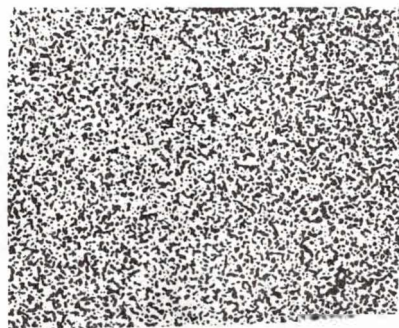
could we compare Silverberg's *DYING INSIDE* with Anderson's *TAU ZERO* or Dickson's *SPACEPAW*? In this format the externals are made uniform, and we get "laboratory conditions" for comparison. (Though in fairness, some situations are simply better for some authors than for others. Could Silverberg write a space opera?)

THREE TRIPS IN TIME AND SPACE has novellas by Niven, Brunner, and Vance on the theme of instantaneous worldwide transportation. Niven, as expected, milks the idea for its logical implications but doesn't quite come off--not enough theme for its length. Brunner (whom I usually admire) writes a frivolous and excessively long piece without a real ending (it should have been a two-pager in *Playboy*). Jack Vance plays with the idea more than the "rules" might allow and deals with alternate worlds in infinite numbers, past and present, so that each person can own his own earth if he wishes. The plot that is built on this premise could have fueled a *Nebula* and *Hugo* winner had it been much better

managed. As it is, the story is good but has loose threads hanging all over the place. Roger Zelazny in his heyday would have made this idea into a sparkler. Alas.

I left my first copy of STAR RIDER by Doris Piserchia in a laundromat in Yellowstone Park. It was not there the next morning, so presumably another camper or a bear enjoyed it. (I am tempted at this point to say that I bearily enjoyed it, but of course I won't.) STAR RIDER concerns an excessively cute young narrator, one of a race of descendants of human beings who, together with mutated dogs, can teleport at will around the Galaxy. Needless to say, the heroine can do it better than anyone else. It is not until the end that we are supposed to discover how much better, although the message is telegraphed rather clearly early on. The book concerns a Quest for a special planet and can be read at one level as an extended commentary on the need for new frontiers. All of these things are prime ingredients for a literary disaster, but STAR RIDER is not that. It can be irritating in its unanswered questions and its uneven pace, but Piserchia does have a knack for story-telling. That knack is at its wurst when, as here, it is undisciplined.

JAMES A. MARTIN



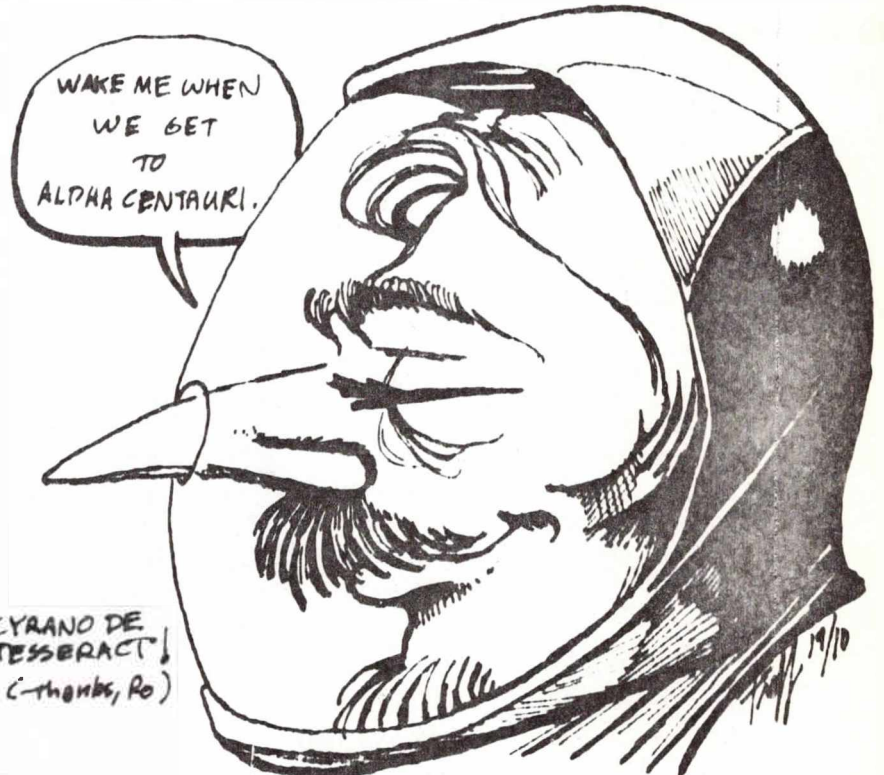
BARF AGAINST THE COSMOS (CONTINUED)

He was only a half-witted dwarf salesman
from Des Moines, Iowa...yet in his hands
lay the fate of seventy-two universes!

WHAT HAS GONE BEFORE

Napoleon Quasimodo Barf was only a typical half-witted dwarf insurance salesman of Des Moines, Iowa, until that fateful day he picked up the oddly-shaped object dropped from a cruising flying saucer. Abruptly, he found himself teleported far beyond the universe he had known, his soul implanted in the seven-limbed hulk of a pseudoped on a planet circling Halitosis Zed. Plunged into a planetary war over the last surviving female Halitosan, Barf finds hitherto unknown resources of pluck and cunning, and is soon elected (partly due to mistaken identity) admiral of the Halitosan battle fleet being sent to exterminate the inhabitants of the million-year enemy, the Aspidistra. The fleet arrives, exterminating the Aspidistra, no defense being met, as the Aspidistran fleet is off exterminating the Halitosans.

A Galactic Police ship arrives, called to the sector by the increasing havoc being raised on galactic lines of telepathic communication by Barf's uniquely powerful mind impulses. In a fit of boredom, the Galactic Patrolman, Lord Haisen, wipes out Barf's space fleet and all its crew, except, by chance, Barf himself, who escapes on an erratic asteroid. Here he finds Dona Relish, seemingly a human girl, who will not explain to him how she got there, or how she manages to survive on an airless asteroid. Barf woos her, forgetting his present body, but is accepted anyway. When the food runs



out, Barf gallantly eats Dona, first memorizing her every molecule and neuron so that she can be replicated if he ever finds a race capable of that accomplishment. Converting the asteroid into a Faster-Than-Light vessel on a principle he once noted in the only science-fiction book he has ever read, Barf follows the lines of galactic telepathy to the central suns of the galaxy. Here at Galactic Central he finds an imminent intergalactic conflict, personified in two men or creatures known only as Holdansier and Aronshield, over whether science-fiction magazines are to carry serials or not. Impersonating both leaders simultaneously, Barf manages to reconcile both factions temporarily, using techniques he vaguely remembers from that SF book (a Van Vogt). His disguise is pierced, however, by an entity of extreme tenuousness known as the Lone Radish, he is converted into a humanoid form by way of punishment, and incarcerated in the Central Zoo. At first disgusted by his new body, Barf eventually recognizes it as his own. Leaguings with the other Zoo humans, (Harlie Dons, Harold Sine, and nine indentically cloned females) Barf escapes during the confusion caused by the Central Sun falling into a Black Hole.

The cloned girls, on discovering that Barf has eaten Dona Relish, claim him in marriage on the ground that she was the tenth member of their clone. Barf becomes suspicious, however, and during a stop on a computerized planet, feeds their names (Lois Harden, Linda Shore, Hedi Larson, Lisa Herdon, Nora Shield, Hilda Rosen, Sheila Dorn, Rhea Dilson, and Dinah Sorel) to the computer. It confirms his suspicion that they have all been cloned from one I. Hadlerson, himself a clone from some as yet unknown entity who is well on the way to strewing the galaxy with his alter egos.

Disintegrating the girls for the time being, Barf continues back to Halitosis Zed, which he reaches, due to FTL time-reversal, concurrently with his first arrival. He tries to persuade himself to change his plans, but is unable to do so, inasmuch as he doesn't trust the shiftily look in his eyes. He therefore places himself in a sealed rocket-cell and transmits him into outer-cosmic space on an exponential orbit. However, the craft passes through a time-space region where the fabric of space, due to some rather intensive experimentation by local entities, is wearing quite thin, and the consequent reversal of universal natural laws enables Barf to make his escape. After a short scuffle with a sentient red giant star, which Barf cleverly lures into a near-by rather large matter-transmitter left over from the Andromedan wars, he recognizes a distant star, proceeds there, and finds it is indeed Alpha Centauri. He arrives at a time-space period during which the Centaurian worlds are being invaded by religious fanatics known as the Harlodines, who insist on all entities brushing their teeth, whether they have any or not. Spotting one of them, an old friend and toothpaste salesman named "Nail" Rhodes, Barf runs to greet him, falls down a staircase, breaks his neck, and dies.

Ten thousand years later, the now oppressed and conquered Centaurians develop time-travel secretly, send teams back to

prevent the invasion, and thus Barf is not killed after all. Instead he forms a symbiotic unit with an android spaceship named Ro H. Daniels, and they head for Earth, which they find has been clamped in a temporal stasis-field. His android-half says, "Too bad, Barf, but I guess that's it. There's never been a case of a world being released from a well-clamped stasis-field. I'm afraid your species has had it." Now read the exciting second installment of Barf Against the Cosmos....

Barf turned away from the televideoviser-screen. "I guess so, Ro.: He shrugged. "I never liked them very much, anyway. What say we head out to the Magellanic Clouds and see what's doing?"

35 days and 7800 parsecs later, they entered a time-space frame where, against all the known laws of physics, they perceived ahead a

-TED REYNOLDS



Tales From the Hooded Aardvark Inn

CONJURE WHICH?!

As luck would have it, I was there at the Hooded Aardvark Inn the night Fomalhaut Foghorn blew in (surely you remember Foghorn; his patently fraudulent tales have been granted an overly credulous reception in the Magazine of Foolery & Stymied Friction). I should make it clear we more or less expected him, or at least someone like him; the mere fact such a place as the Inn exists guarantees a never-ending supply of blowhards eager for some small measure of renown, no matter how limited. Still, as I say, I happened to be there that night, and it's only fitting the events should be recorded--if only to serve as a warning to others of Foghorn's ilk.

It was the first night of a weekend which, aside from the time Foghorn was present, passed all too quickly. The pinball machine was pinging like a department store gone mad, the bar was doing a brisk trade, and the Archbishop of the First Church of the Inchoate Principle was lamenting his congregation's crisis of faith. This last was not too surprising; the Archbishop is the communion's sole adherent, and is usually in the midst of some crisis or other. And so it was that with the Archbishop at the peak of his weeping and wailing and gnashing of teeth, Foghorn entered the Inn with his valet, Friday, in tow. (Friday, a man of obvious taste and breeding, immediately detached himself from his employer, picked up a beer, and entered the challenge line at the pinball machine.)

Several of us eventually managed to reduce the Archbishop's lamentations to an occasional sob, and discovered the root of the problem; he had become convinced the God did not exist. It transpired that none of the others quite knew what to say, and though I of course could have marshalled any number of convincing arguments, it is an article of my own faith (Grand Union of Agnosticism, Reformed, if you must know) not to meddle in the religious affairs of another. The upshot was that Foghorn, a meddler of the first order, managed to inject himself into the conversation--what little of it there was.

It is not true that Nature abhors a vacuum; the two foremost examples of this fact are outer space, and Fomalhaut Foghorn's cranium. I don't believe I've ever met a man who had less to say, and took so long to say it. He rang in every imaginable cliché on the poor, bewildered Archbishop, only stopping short of "Don't give up the ship!" and "Damn the torpedoes, full speed ahead!" Finally, after this most lengthy and totally unnecessary prologue, he made his point, to wit:

"There exists an incantation which can bring about a manifestation of the Deity. I am familiar with it. I shall therefore perform the incantation, the manifestation will occur, and with this proof of God's existence your faith will be restored."

With this, he began the Incantation. He was well into it when Friday, whom we had all (except for the pinballers, out of whom he had been beating the hell for the last several games) pretty much forgotten, suddenly rushed to his employer's side--losing, we later discovered, an incredible 75,000 point ball--and whispered something to him rather urgently. Foghorn turned

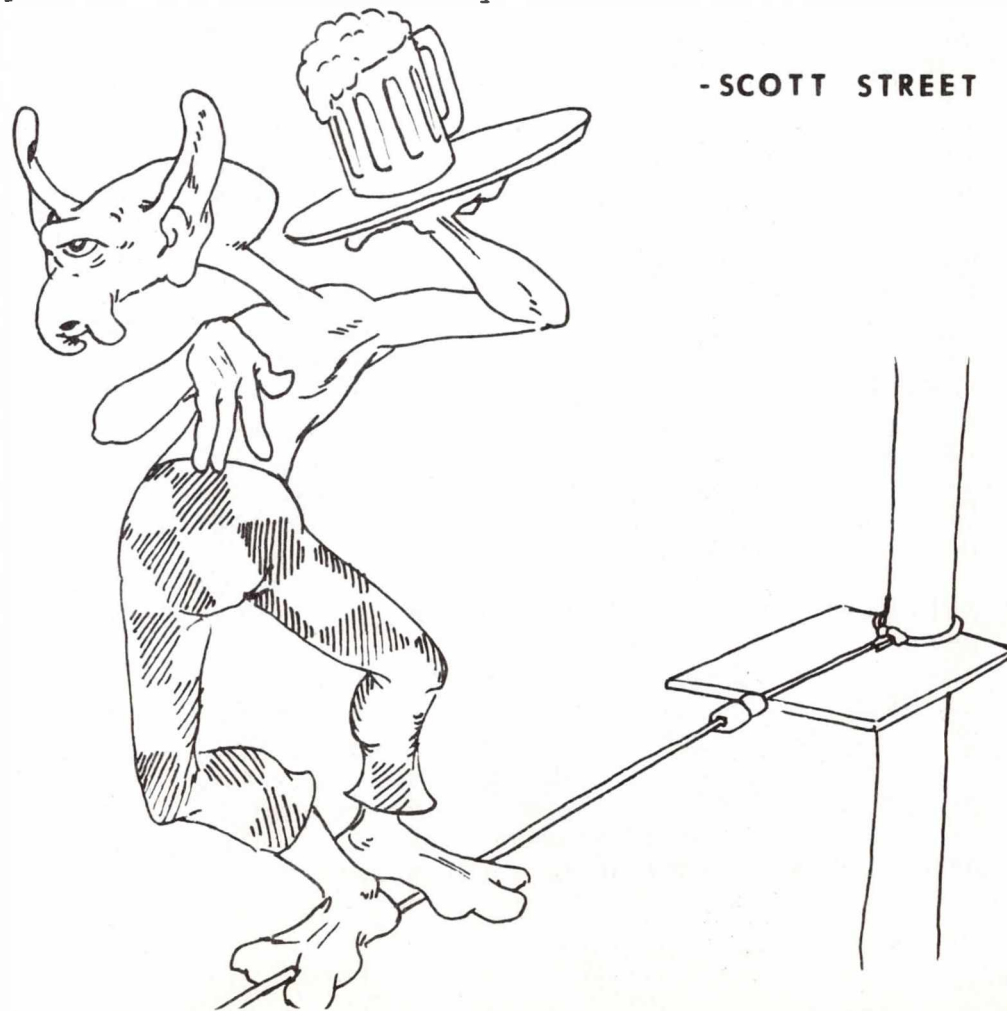
an almost pure white; he stuttered a bit, shaking visibly, and finally launched into a chant quite different from the one he had been working on prior to his valet's interruption.

But there's no need to bore you with the details. Let it suffice that Foghorn completed the incantation, the manifestation occurred, the Archbishop was ecstatic, and some of the newer and more naive patrons of the Inn looked upon Foghorn with something approaching awe. The latter could not, of course, be tolerated.

In all candor, I must point out that any of the other Hooded Aardvark regulars could have done what I did. As I said, it was the first night of the weekend, and the interplay between Friday and Foghorn had been such that only the most naive could fail to have grasped its true meaning. Still, I was in the right place at the right time, and so it fell to me to deliver the coup de grace.

"Do not think, Mr. Foghorn," I said, "that we fail to see through your facade. Without your valet's timely intrusion I've no doubt things would have gone quite badly; indeed, it is obvious that, had you completed that first incantation, the manifestation would have been of the Devil rather than the Deity. In short, sir you are an utter fraud!"

Foghorn seemed adequately deflated, and the Inn's newer patrons looked properly contrite, so I turned my attention toward the manifestation--which, by the way, is still there--and raised my glass. "Ladies and gentlemen," I called--the Hooded Aardvark harbors no taint of sexism--"a toast. To the real hero of the evening; let us all thank Friday it's God!"



- SCOTT STREET

JUICY TIDBITS

Ro Nagey wrote me a letter (yes, he does practice that arcane art occasionally), and after the man finished putting down my fanzine, he had the gall to ask me for a contribution, "preferably of a humorous nature."

"Oh my ghod," I thought, looking up at my statue of Mike Glicksohn for inspiration, "what the hell can I write for nagging Nagey?"

I sat there wishing I hadn't thrown away my Tucker instant formula humor machine, when suddenly the phone rang.

"Hello, Cy, this is Gene," said someone with a deep, raspy voice.

"Jean?" I said, "Jean who?"

"Gene Mierjewski, you dumbass. Don't you remember me, your co-editor?" Oh, that Gene. Ace reporter on a small metropolitan weekly. Faster than a speeding cockroach. Able to leap tall garbage cans with a single bound. Sure, I remembered that Gene... (Unfortunately.)

"Whadduya want?" I always try to keep my diction clear and simple when talking to Gene. "I got a hot item here that I havta write up for Nagey."

"I just wanted to tell you that a Post Office dumptruck delivered all the mail on the last issue of SELDON'S PLAN down here at the office. I'm buried alive in it and can't get out. You're lucky I was even able to call you; Mary Brenner's 50-page letter defending David Gerrold kept getting stuck in the telephone mouthpiece, and it's only been through great effort that I've been able to keep it aside."

"Damn it, Gene, have you no sense of priorities? What should I do first--save your worthless life, or write an article for Ro Nagey while inspiration is burning with blue-white intensity inside me?"

I slammed down the telephone. What the hell was I going to write for Ro Nagey?

To relieve my mind of this anxiety, I opened a letter I got in the same mail from Chris Sherman (notice how I've managed to slip in references to all the fannish greats in this article; watch the next paragraph for an esoteric allusion to those two bloodthirsty brothers, Warren Johnson and Mike Gorra). Chris said that he enjoyed the last SELDON'S PLAN, but complained that I left out all the REAL highlights of Minicon in my editorial-cum-conreport.

"I mean...(Chris said)...like the time we had a lecture on the nature of life and wimmen by that old drunk at MacDonald's, the restaurant game we played with Roger just after registering (oh, yes, that was one of the biggest points of the con, for me), Your Interview, the one shot we didn't do, and on and on... (By the way, did you know that Leah Zeldes keeps her copies of PERCEPTIONS and her other fanzines in a refrigerator made in Waterford, Conn.?)

Chris was right, I thought. I left out all sorts of good stuff; maybe I should write about Minicon for Ro. But I don't know if I should that drunk in my report; his techniques for vagina-stretching were pretty gross.

So I got about my typewriter, and was ready to begin be-
gating brilliance when I saw a note pinned to the typewriter
case. It was from Todd.

"I was very disappointed when you didn't mention
me at all in your column on the Wayne 3rd Foundation
in BANSHEE. VERY disappointed. I mean, every time
you mention me in one of your fanzine articles, some-
one is always kicking/banging up my groin. And I'm
getting kinda sore about it. I think you oughta write
a public apology in your next zine article. Or else
I'll be forced to publish a cartoon of you in a com-
promising situation in the next POLYVERSE."

Best,
Todd Bake

Gee, I thought, how can I squeeze in a public apology to
Todd in a humorous article on Minicon that doesn't mention
vagina-stretching techniques? It seemed as though I would have
to drastically rework the article; maybe I should cast Todd in
the role of Chris, change Minicon to Torcon, and turn the entire
article into a piece of fabulous fiction. Yes. The drunk could
be Mary Brenner at the Hugo Banquet.

YES! THAT WAS IT!

Still, I thought to myself, I wonder if I have the ability
to do this sort of thing; I've never written a piece of fab-
ulous faanish fiction in my life. Never.

Then I recalled what I did one time when I had a journalism
paper that I had to write and hand in within an hour. I didn't
have a story, I didn't have an idea; but I simply sat down at
my typewriter and pretended I was Robert Silverberg, and assumed
his brilliance.

I got an A on my paper.

Yes, that seemed the proper course. Only this time I
would be Barry Malzberg (I had just finished reading HEROVIT'S
WORLD, which was brilliant.).

Dear Mr. Nagey:

Your letter reminded me of how an unheralded
challenger would come into the ring against the
Kid: lots of moves, in and out, thread the needle
and going into the tenth the Kid (a little old, a
little dazed, not so many moves as you once had,
Kid) thinks he's winning the bout on points and then
WHAM! the challenger unloads the right cross ("Do
you think you could do an article, preferably hum-
orous, for my fanzine?") and down goes the Kid for
the count, into the ring comes seconds, pressmen,
etc., while the challenger, not even with a sweat
on him, slips deftly into a corridor and is gone...

To get back to the point of your letter (though
the praise for my work is appreciated), the answer
is no: I have five novels I have to finish before

next week Wednesday, two porn, three sf, I'm only
a poor pulp writer earning 3 cents a word, and
fanzines just confuse and distract me. Sorry.

Best regards,

Barry Malzberg

-CY CHAUVIN



ABBAC is the world's most sensitive computer, and its syndicated column in the press, DEAR ABBAC, is a constant source of help and inspiration to the confused, perplexed, and insane. The problems ABBAC is called to advise on are manifold and complex. For example:

Dear ABBAC;

I am the mother and the father of an illegitimate child. I can't stand myself any more, and I'm breaking up. My question is, who gets the kid. It's going to grow up to be me, and I don't want that me to have anything to do with bringing up my kid.

Dan/Dianne/Don/Donna

Dear ABBAC;

I've always wanted to marry a beautiful Martian princess, and last year attained my heart's desire. Well, now I'm confused. She just laid huge egg. I don't want to accuse my Dejah Thoris of anything, but I've got to know. Can it possibly be mine?

-Musclebound in Barsoom

Dear ABBAC;

Whenever we play cards, my other head cheats!

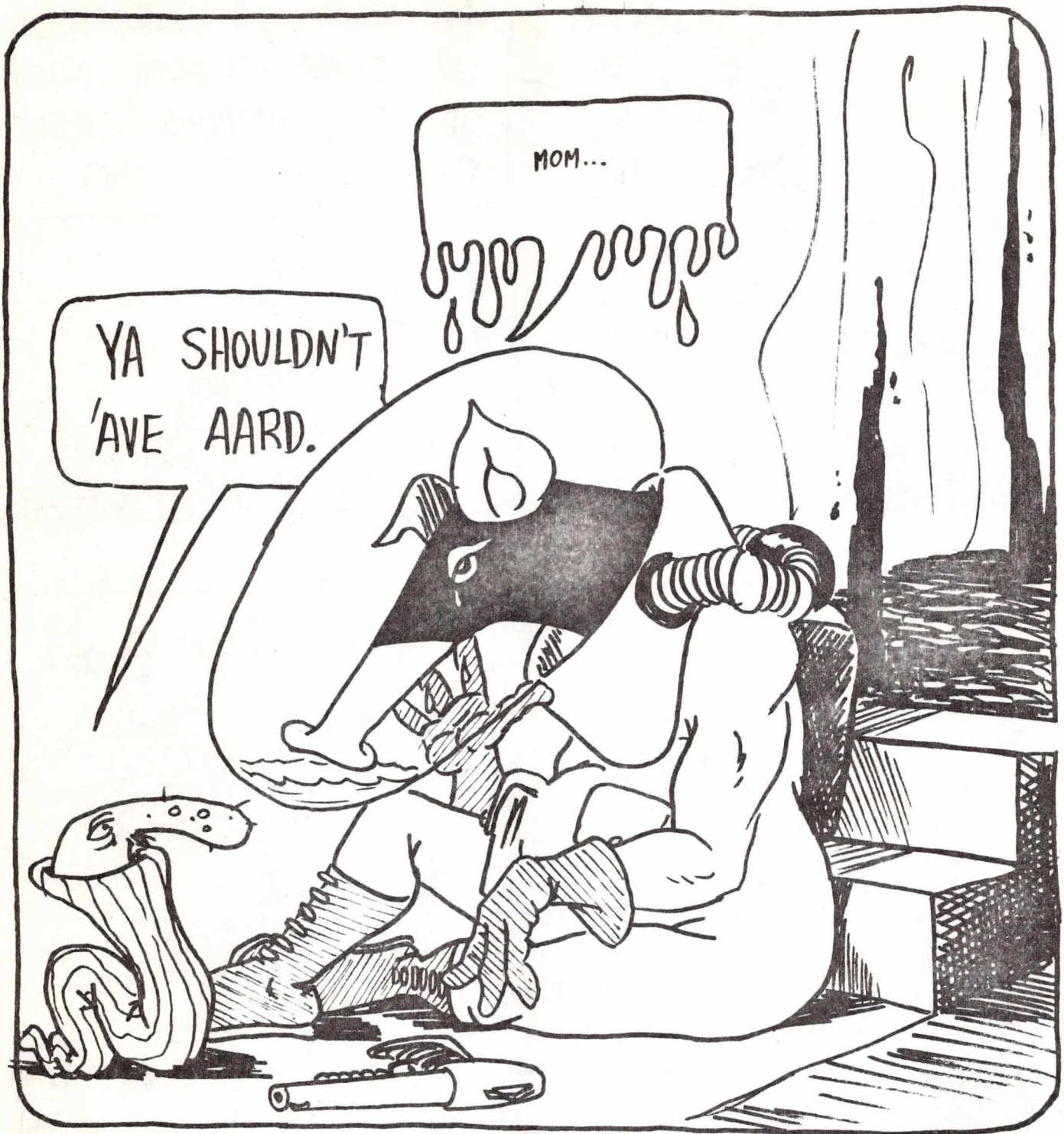
-Joe Gregory

I do not!!!

-Jim Gregory

Get the idea?

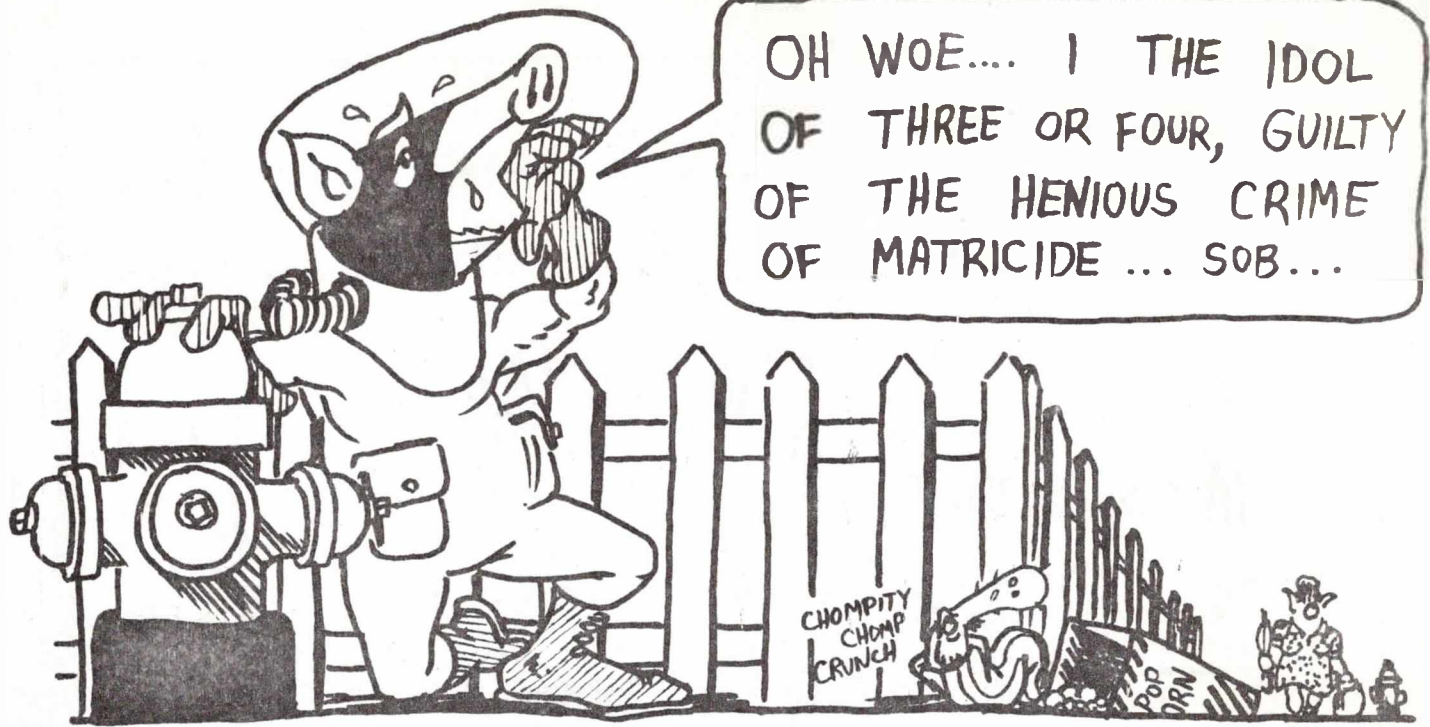




THE HOODED AARDVARK

BY LAMONTE LIZARD

LAST EPISODE, THE HOODED AARDVARK, IN A FIT OF FAGE, PULLED OUT HIS NUCLEAR WARHEAD DART GUN AND DISCHARGED IT AT HIS HOME, DESTROYING HIS MOTHER.



FIJAGH?

Don't let anyone ever tell you that it is an easy thing to own a substantial library. It isn't. When the SF collecting bug bit me at age 14, I contracted one of the worst cases of completion on record. Every cent I could beg, borrow or steal went to secondhand bookstores as I frantically sought for each and every paperback I had heard of.

I shared a small room with my brother at the time, and there were only two bookshelves. By my fifteenth birthday, the shelves, our closet, and the space under our beds were crowded with my collection of 1000 paperbacks. Undaunted by the lack of space, or the ominous glances from my parents, I persevered. By 16, I had 1500 books and had talked my father into building cabinets for me in the garage to house the overflow from the bedroom. I was now old enough for a summer job, unfortunately, so this coincided with a sharp increase in my purchasing power.

By age 17, I had 2500 books and the cabinets were full. We lived in a house with only a very tiny basement--already crowded with tools, off-season clothing, a washing machine, and other impedimenta. I was desperate, however, and attacked it headlong, eventually making enough space for a stack of book-crammed cartons. When I left for college at age 18, the space was completely filled, and I was well past 3000 volumes.

Nothing daunted, I continued my frenetic purchasing at school, mailing cartons of books home to my parents at a frightening rate. When I graduated in 1968, my 6000 volume library filled the basement, most of my old bedroom, the garage cabinets, and every nook and cranny that my parents were able to locate.

Sheila and I were married that same year and rented a two bedroom house, the big bedroom for us, the small bedroom for the books. It didn't work. Books bulged out the seams, fell off the shelves, and overflowed into the hall. One day Sheila gave up in dismay and moved the books into the master bedroom, and our furniture into the small. A temporary apartment and I went off to Vietnam.

Now one might think that this would put a severe crimp in my ability to add to the library. Untrue. First of all, I ordered every new sf title by mail, and had the packages delivered to my parents. Additionally, I had become interested in many other subjects, and was buying books from various other sources.

Eventually, my parents found themselves glutted once more, the 8000 books overflowing into the garage and basement and spare bedroom and attic. My father had some space cleared in the warehouse where he worked, and one Saturday moved the books there.

I returned from Vietnam and was reassigned to Oklahoma. Sheila and I moved out there, but naturally didn't take the books with us. But we kept on buying them and shipping more and more cartons to my parents, which they then transferred to the warehouse. By the time the Army had had enough of me and I was discharged, we were approaching 9000.

When we went househunting again, the foremost thought in our minds was: Where do we put 9000 books? We eventually settled on a three bedroom house (one bedroom for David, our son) and moved in. The books were planned to go into the other bedroom, much larger than the one we had used previously. No way.

We began panelling the basement, lining the walls with bookshelves, but wood products increased in cost and we only got a small section done. We purchased several prefabricated metal shelving units and put them up. Then we began moving the books downstairs. Before we had gotten them all downstairs, we had reached 9500, and our original estimate of shelf space was understated. We bought more, and moved things around. The basement was by now beginning to look distinctly crowded.

Finally they were all in place, but there were 500 new arrivals upstairs. We bought more shelving and put it up, as the total passed 10,000. Finally we breathed a sigh of relief. All of the books were shelved except the 1000 or so I haven't had time to read yet. The total collection was, for the first time in years, ready to hand.

But we still have problems. Now, mind you, I don't really mind the meter reader who comes up from the basement and says to my wife: "Jesus, lady, do you read all them books?" And I don't really mind the aunt who suggests to Sheila that she throw some of them out when I'm not looking because I'll never know. And I don't really mind the neighbors who shake their heads and look at me strangely. But what does upset me is the fact that already in 1974 we've increased the collection to 10,700 and it's still growing. Where are we going to put all the new arrivals?

DON D'AMMASSA

THE WIZARD OF OZONE'S CROSSWORD PUZZLE

ACROSS

1. Wrote Jewels of Apor.
6. _____ Del Rey.
10. Ese see, _____ (2 words).
11. To do is to be--Hegel.
To be is to do--Kant.
Do _____ do be do--Sinatra.
12. Traditional Cobbler helper.
14. Problem in inter-space communications.
15. Early U.S. satellite.
20. The Flight _____ the Horse.
21. "We're out of fuel. Anybody got _____ in his luggage?" (2 words).
23. Hindu illusion of reality.
25. Department of Health, Insects, and Andirons (abbr.)
26. How much does H.P. Lovecraft like ichor?
27. You might find one of these in an oarhouse.
29. North by North Out (abbr.) (galactic directions).
31. "So you're a Capellan, eh? Well, _____ a Denebian. Take that!"
33. Where thionite comes from.
36. "Where did you spend shore leave?" "Oh, _____ Space-lady Lil's." (2 words)
38. Klingons' Anonymous (abbr.)
39. Able Earthman (abbr.).
40. Egyptian goddess.
43. One frequently encounters Martians riding in _____ saucers.
45. Play in which the word, "robot", is introduced.
47. Norse god.
48. Type of pickle used to menace Rocky Rococo. (2 words.)
49. Saint Street. (abbr.)
51. Reality Distorting Device. (abbr.)
53. Plural of Mukl.
56. Comment from Scotty after a near-miss from a Klingon phaser blast.

DOWN

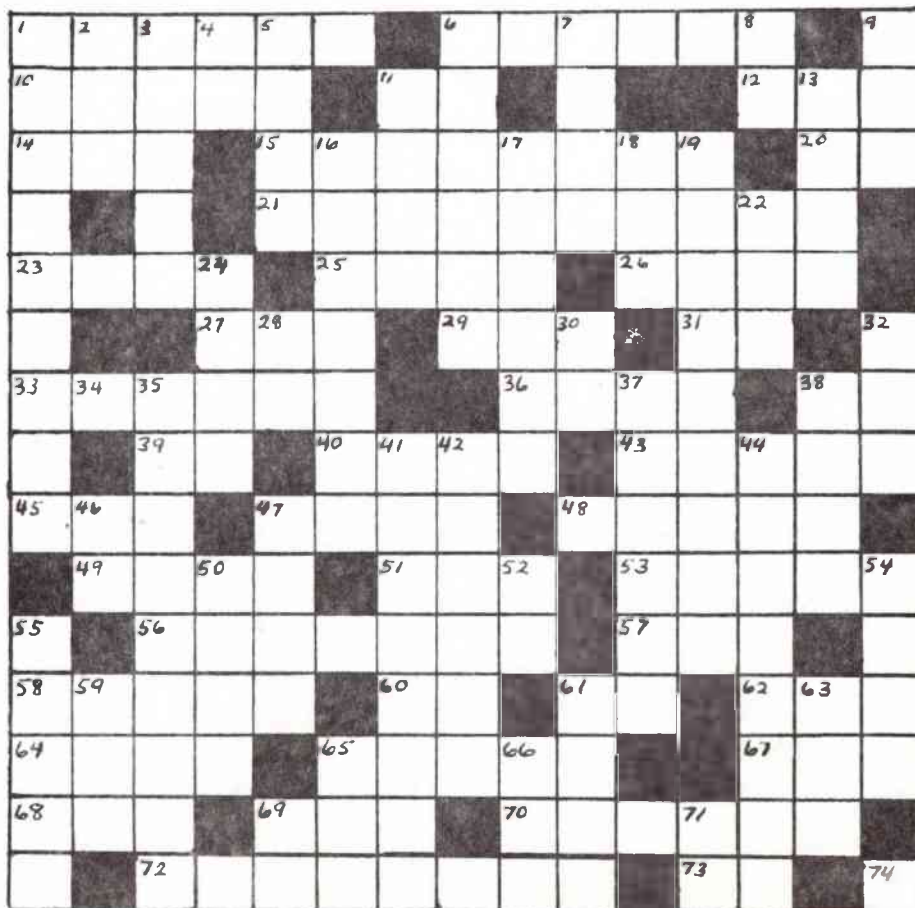
1. A lensman's best friend (after, of course, his lens) is his _____
2. Enclave of Solvent Arthropods (abbr.)
3. Type of communications officers favored in fleet ships.
4. After Delaney (abbr.) (where you find books by Ellison).
5. Death of a star.
6. Ursula _____ (2 words)
7. Society for the Prevention of Animosity to Androids. (abbr.)
8. Concerning (Latin)
9. Fantasy Farm Federation (abbr.)
11. Big Name Yolk Holder (abbr.)
13. League of Muddled Tailors (abbr)
16. Anthropomorphic Servomechanism
17. Jocular space expression of disbelief.
18. The memory chemical.
19. If you snort this, you'd better lock the airlock doors beforehand and hide the key.
22. Large Midwestern seat of learning, noted for football, medicine and dope. (abbr.)
24. "_____ and a-two..."
28. Opposite of D.C.
30. Off-planet (abbr.)
32. A radio telescope is sometimes known as a big _____.
35. "_____ Burden".
37. Type of toothbrush of the future.
38. What monsters occasionally do to those they encounter.
41. A good way to leave the presence of a hung-over galactic overlord.
42. Mothra is a giant _____.
44. Quick-draw McGraw is his secret identity.
46. Because it's them or _____.
47. Odd Take-off and landing. (abbr.)
50. When the saucers will land and take over.
52. Displaced Earthperson (abbr.)
54. "That's the biggest turnip I've ever _____. Do you think it's dangerous?"
55. When someone accidentally turns the gravity back on, crews usually fall on their _____.

ACROSS

- 57. Intra-molecular Antipathy. (abbr.)
- 58. Sanitary Engineering Module (open, lift) (abbr.)
- 60. No Capellans (abbr.) (sign outside racist Denebian bathhouse).
- 61. Leg Coupler. (abbr.)
- 62. Bug-Eyed Entity. (abbr.)
- 64. Most fans secretly believe themselves to be this.
- 65. "Looks like you had a nice breakfast Caesar. Eat any eggs?"
- 67. Sequel to Omnivore.
- 68. Enemy Klingon Nodule. (abbr)
- 69. The hero's ___ is usually abducted.
- 70. A good thing to be doing while negotiating with Klingons.
- 72. Russian for Hood.
- 73. Inventor of fire.
- 74. A number between 1 and 100.

DOWN

- 59. In northern Michigan, invading martians sometimes disguise themselves as ____.
- 61. First name of Superman's Mermaid girlfriend.
- 63. Unit of energy.
- 65. Ending at landing. (abbr.)
- 66. The writer of this fancies himself something of a ____.
- 69. Governmental Intelligence. (abbr.)
- 71. Moon of Jupiter.



LINIMENT

September 18, 74

Ro Nagey
240 Michigan Union
University of Michigan
Ann Arbor, MI 48104

Dear Ms. Nagey,

I enclose a copy of my current epic on DISCON. I thought y'all would be interested, because the Stilyagi Air Corps shows up in it somewhere. Yes, page 10, Col. 1.

Are you the delightful young lady in T-shirt and jeans who was so generous with that damn bourbon Saturday night? If so, thank you very much. I wouldn't have remained for all the odd films and amazing parties--including your laser light show--if I hadn't been too drunk to walk, much less drive home. Ah, the writer's life! Instant lush.

It would really be nice to hear your comments on the enclosure. For one thing, I have not yet heard how people who unexpectedly get mentioned in print react. For another (if I recall correctly), it would be a downright shame to lose contact with someone so pleasant.

Oh, yes...I found your name & address in some fanzine the remainder of which I put in the Paper Recycling Bin.

Hope to hear from you soon.

Sincerely,

Wayne Keyser
Richmond, VA

* * * * *

Enclosed was an article from The Richmond Mercury entitled: "Science Fiction, the Cult That Would Not Die", by Wayne Keyser.

Drat! I've been discovered! Here I was priding myself on pulling off the faanish fraud of the decade, and now I've been caught in my own web. All that careful planning--where did I slip up? I have it. I must have revealed it at that Saturday nite party about which I unfortunately remember so very little. Until now, no one in fandom knew my secret identity. No one realized that Ro Nagey was merely my alter-ego. I might as well 'fess up voluntarily and retire "Cap'n Ro"--useful as he was--from the roster of super-fen. After all, no one will believe Lin Lutz as a 6'4", 200 lb, bearded smof, or Ro Nagey as "a delightful young lady". And what really hurts is that I was foiled by a non-fan--a reporter, even.

Although I have admitted to being Ro Nagey, I'm afraid I can't vouch for being generous with the bourbon for anyone but myself. Other than that I am afraid my recollection of our party Saturday nite is rather vague. Besides, there were other parties later on that I don't remember either. I must have had a good time.

I hope Mr. Keyser will accept this column in lieu of a personal letter (Ro gets insanely jealous--you understand how alter-ego's are). I read the article and, as those sort of articles go, it wasn't too bad. Only about a half-dozen errors--and that's damned high praise from a fan. Only one other comment, Mr. Keyser: the "inexplicably named Stilyagi Air Corps" is not inexplicably named at all. The reference is a very well known SF novel by an extremely well known SF writer... whose name escapes me at the moment. I am terribly sorry, however, that we have a policy of not revealing that reference to anyone who doesn't already know it. No offence intended. And, oh yes... we decided to send Mr. Keyser a copy of this zine in spite of the likelihood of it ending up in the "Paper Recycling Bin". It will be worth it if he enjoys reading it only half as much as Ro and I enjoyed his letter. And we did appreciate the consideration--Thank you.

LIN LUTZ



CAP'N RO'S WHIZ-BAG

There are few people in fandom who can send me to quivering in my boots. John isn't one of them....

Ro my friend,

July 1

I'm writing this in the immediate and warm afterglow of the con [Midwestcon], so forgive me if the polished cynicism that is my hallmark is not too much in evidence. I've never been very enthusiastic about the human race, but somehow fans seem to be considerably better folk than the mundanes, who as a rule do nothing but invent new ways of being uncivilized. Petronius wrote that civilization is based upon the pursuit of the pleasures of the flesh, of conversation, and of art. I'm not certain if anyone has ever tried briefly to characterize an sf con, but it's unlikely a more apt description than this could be found. The Romans knew everything....

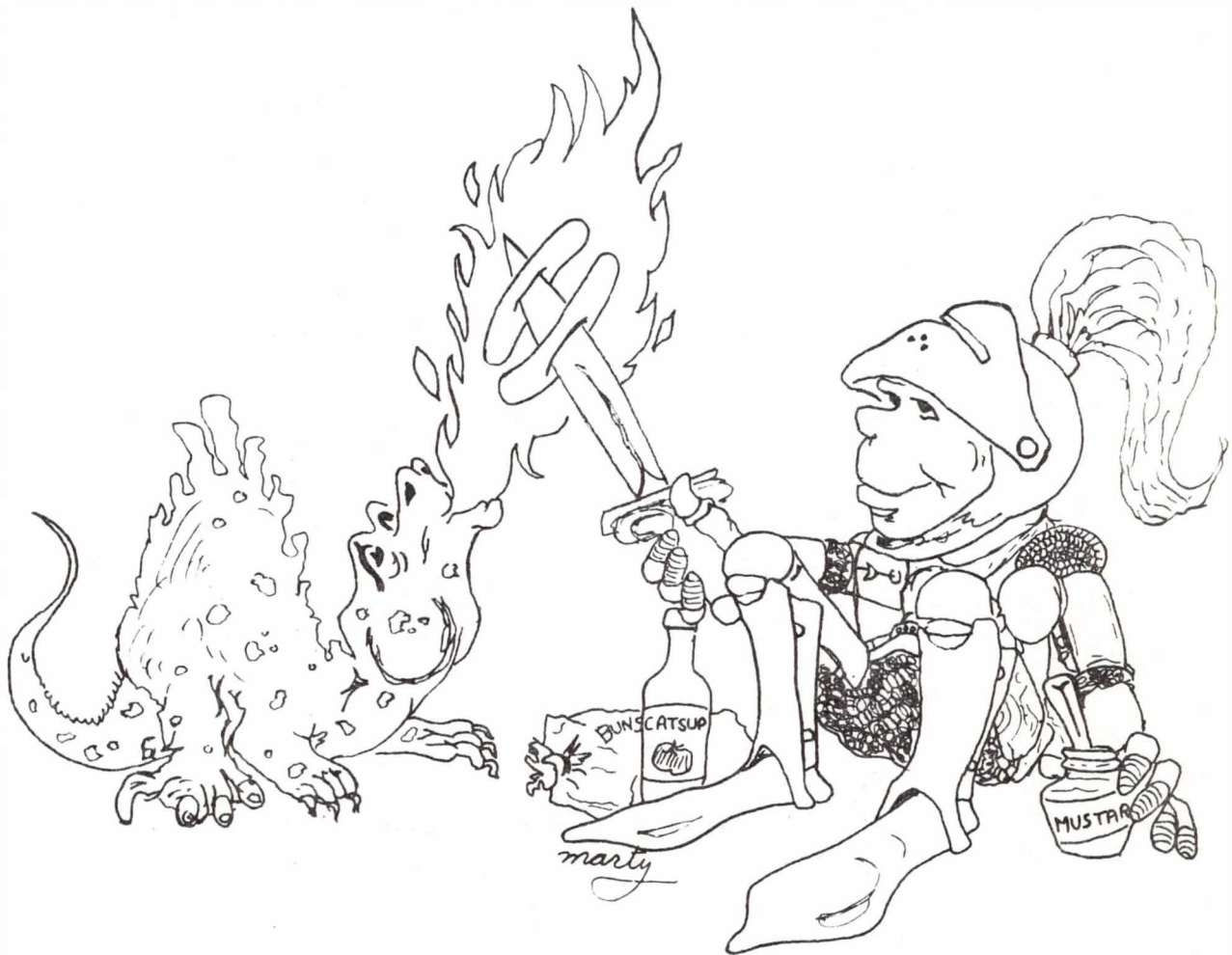
....except possibly about fanzines. I enjoyed CRWB, and not only because I got it free. I'm not sure what plans, if any, you have for the zine, but I think it's got considerable potential. I would like to see a bit more depth, I think, and a bit less emphasis on glib inside jokes. This sort of thing is to some degree inescapable in a clubzine--what exactly does "sponsored in part" mean? --but I really think if you'd try to be more yourself, more natural and less zany ol' Cap'n Ro (or whoever), the zine will develop into a really good product. The genuinely personal has always been the emblem of the best fan writing and pubbing. I hope, by the way, that you spent at least a little time at Midwestcon extorting articles from people. A convention with people like Tucker, Sandra Miesel, Buck Coulson and all them other BNF's and writers might more aptly be called Faned's Heaven.

I was fascinated by Jim Martin's defense of Zardoz in the Whiz-Bang. Not only did he fail to affect my negative reaction to the film, but he seems himself to have misunderstood parts of it. The rusticality, for instance, the trees and home-made bread and so on, were Boorman's glib way of telling us--or trying to, at least--that the society under study is decadent. This is no surprise; cinematic futures are nearly always decadent. But the fact that (at least) one of the film's admirers failed to pick this up is a good indication of the obtuseness and sloppiness which characterize the entire production.

My flesh began to crawl when I read, a year or so ago, that we were to get another science-fictionalized version of the Wizard of Oz. (Remember The Wizard of Mars with

John Carradine? Forry Ackerman was that film's "technical advisor", which accounts for a lot.) But when I read that it was John Boorman who was making it, I became reassured. The man who made Deliverance could be counted on to give us lots of glibness disguised as profundity, and thus to place high on the list of directors who have tried and failed to follow in Kubrick's footsteps.

The film is a terrible hodge-podge of "borrowed" commonplaces from Huxley, Orwell, Nelson Bond and numerous others. It is typical of Boorman that he took only the tritest from each of his unacknowledged sources, and equally so that none of the story elements thus acquired fits easily into Boorman's plot. His failings as a scenarist are perhaps worse than his directorial muddlings; those "awful lines" Connery mouths are Boorman's own, a fact of which Jim seems unaware. Characters and even situations are ill-defined, and the pace is horribly slow. Boorman seems blithely unaware, for example, that there is a limit to the time an intelligent audience will sit and watch an unexpressive actor staring at himself in lots of mirrors. It is much to Kubrick's credit that he realized he was working someone else's



corner when he made 2001, and called in Clarke to collaborate. Like Bccrman, Kubrick fell unceremoniously on his face when he tried to go it alone.

I was also interested by Lin's piece on the current sf boom, though I can't say I'm as optimistic as she seems to be. As Dick Lupoff has pointed out, there have been a number of similar booms in the last few decades, and they have all petered out and come to nothing. The thing that disturbs me about the current rise in our collective stock is that it seems to be centered largely upon the campuses. College students, as we all know, are looking for the meaning of life or something, and they are notoriously fickle about where they search for it. Religion--by which I mean the Galilean death cult--is currently fashionable; but people still like to be told that real soon now everything will be just fine. A few years ago, Tolkien's elves were telling us all that there is no death, just a boat ride to the true west. These days it is Vonnegut's aliens who tell us, not dissimilarly, that death is nothing more than purple light. Lovecraft seemed about to take his turn as the spiritual father of us all for a time, but he never offers much in the way fo real hope and so did not catch on. Who the next contender will be remains to be seen. But I'll bet you fifty cents it won't be an sf writer.

Maybe I'd feel a bit better about this whole situation if it seemed that the kids were really trying to get into sf. They are not. They read Vonnegut, then Childhoods End, maybe Leibowitz, maybe some LeGuin, the Foundation series; that's it. Without discussing the relative merits of these, each is capable of being interpreted in a slap-dashedly simple way by an uncritical reader which, I suspect, is the sort of beast that composes our new audience. They are not in any serious sense sf readers, only dilettantes. If I thought they were paying attention to Gene Wolfe, to Cordwainer Smith, to Edgar Pangborn... Ah, but I fondly dream.

(I hope no one in the corps takes umbrage at that little tirade. Obviously, you are fans first and foremost, college students only second, if that. Aren't you?)

Guy Snyder's piece wasn't half bad. If he can persuade himself not to use words like "depthy" he may turn into a good writer...

And finally, Ro my friend, I am aghast at the title you boast as ringmaster of ConFusion. No trufan would have anything to do with an actual god. I'ts ghods that fans worship, my boy, ghods! I suggest you adjust the spelling of your title at once, lest you be accused of being Claude Degler's bastard son. Or worse.

Yours in Jesus,
John Curlovich
108 Montville St.
Pittsburgh, PA 15214

....but Leah is.

Dearest Ro,

24 July 1974

CRWB looked okay thish but I was disappointed by several things: The lack of artwork, especially the lack of a cover drawing (although the Reynolds poem was very nice and I thoroughly enjoyed it, but you could have put that on the inside just as easily), the breif (or brief, if you can spell) editorail (oh well, you know what I mean) --only about two pages of actual Nagey stuff; more, more! Good editorials make good zines. Put more of your personality into it--you won't lose too many readers. I was also diappointed by the lack of a regular lettercol--that and the editorial are my favorite parts of most zines--and am glad to see that you're going to have one next ish. CRWB #1-4 also felt awfully thin; fatten it up a bit if you can.

Passionately,
Leah Zeldes
21961 Parklawn
Oak Park, Mi. 48237

Lin and I had a chance to spend a great deal of time with Ross Pavlac, of Columbus in '76 fame, at Pghlange.

Dear mr capn ro sir:

October 2, 1974

YOU RAT! After digging my vln4 Whiz-Bang out of the mountain of fanzines which contain unfinished or never-started locs by me, I re-read the zine to refresh my memory and discover that you were backing Kansas City! AAAauuggggghhhhhh!!! Oh, well, let bygones be bygones...

I loved the Sturgeon's Law poem, although it was not particularly eye-catching. I mumble lines of it to myself occasionally; usually while watching television.

Hey, you made the Amazing lettercol! Congratulations! --altho I notice you've been demoted from chairgod back to chairperson. One more demotion and you'll be a chair.

Please plug: Columbus fandom will be holding Marcon Ten on March 21-23, 1975 at the Neil House Motor Hotel. For information: Larry Smith, 194 East Tulane Rd., Columbus, Ohio 43202. Marcon Ten will be larger and more structured than previous marcons. There will be lots of panels, a 12-15 hour film program (assembled by yours truly), and art show. Not to mention the usual banquet, hucksters' room, and (of course) parties.

I did not get a copy of vln3. Could I obtain a copy of the recipe for Kool Ade Fizz? Have you heard of a Frosted Aardvark: into a tall glass of ice cubes pour scotch and root beer (50/50).

After reading Jim Martin's response to a Zardoz review, I'm pretty sure that I could write that review--it sounds so much like many that I have seen. Most film critics seem to have never heard of suspension of disbelief and those that have apply it only to non-sf. The movie had an awful lot of nice touches in it; I was very impressed when I saw it. Since then, my initial elation has worn off and I have been able to look at the film more soberly. It needed a little more length and some advice from a person with more experience with sf than Boorman has. Ellison? Maybe. Matheson? Possibly. There's so much good sf that could be made into first-rate movies with budgets comparable to Zardoz; I wish film producers would do it rather than hiring hacks or making up their own goshwow plots....

I'm not sure about sf, but worldcon attendance began to skyrocket as soon as two things happened--Star Trek and the fact that the space program really got rolling. One of the reasons for its popularity in colleges is that it's a brand new topic to write dissertations on. By the time NASA's budget dropped the momentum of sf growth was too late to stop.

Most college sf courses are next to worthless. I

would rather have no sf courses at all than the number of very bad ones that seem to have sprung up.

It's too late at night right now for me to go into a more structured talk on sf popularity; if Lin comments on it in the next issue some more, I'll try again...

If the Tale from the Hooded Aardvark Inn in this issue was representative, I find it difficult to see how you would want to do any drinking at all in a place like that--you wouldn't be able to hold it down for any length of time. Gllakkk!! The next time you ask Lin for some corflu, I hope she says "Gezundheit!"

Ross Pavlac
Apt. B-10
4654 Tamarack Blvd.
Columbus, OH 43229



Not all of our mail comes across as being coherent...

From: Scott Street; Commander, Vidkun Quisling Memorial Force

To: Ro Nagey; Captain, Stilyagi Air Corps, and Editor CRWB

Greetings! Now that the Martians have consolidated their beachheads, they will be able to turn their attention to the establishment of an enlightened government in those areas under their control. Rather than fiddling about with such outmoded and cumbersome institutions as "one man, one vote", or other systems employing the democratic fallacy, the Martians will decide what is to be done and you will do it. Such decisions will be relayed to the population at large by the VQMF....

Actually, it was the merest chance that I managed to get hold of a copy of CRWB (I/iv) at all. Sunday afternoon of the Midwestcon I found one copy, lone and forelorn, lying on a table in the main hucksters' room, Realizing on an instinctive level that the only good fanzine is a read fanzine, I took it home and read it.

And imagine my surprise! After that deprecatory (sorry about those big words) intro, I found a veritable fount of good stuff the deeper I went--and, I might add, the deeper into the fount of good stuff I got, the more veritable it became! Zowie!

Well, well...Let's run through the table of contents and see what kind of water over the bridge got left to lay where Jesus flang it.

Sturgeon's Law is Sturgeon's Law, no matter in what form it may be cast. It is naturally satisfying to admit to someone who puts sf in the same class as "penny dreadfuls" and dime novels that 90% of it is crap--and then to shaft him by pointing out that 90% of everything else is, too. But this may begin to pall after a while, and so for the jaded sf freak Ted Reynolds' form comes as a pleasant surprise.

Ro's Thorn is not entirely intelligible to me, since I missed the previous three issues; guess that's what comes of not "watching this space", or whatever. Still, it's fun reading something that doesn't make a whole lot of sense (to me, at least) and trying to get some real meaning out of it. But I do agree; Chairthing indeed! The things one can get away with when one is a Big Name are astounding--which is, of course, the reason why in our heart of hearts we each wish to become a Big Name.

The Zardoz review was airtight, though it didn't exactly make me want to run right out to the nearesest theatre. But really, now; that crack about wooden dialogue and linear script in 2001 was uncalled for. In a primarily visual

medium, it was an ocular extravaganza. Naturally, what dialogue there was comes off badly in comparison. And as far as that "linear script" goes; well, jeez, we can't all be hipper than tomorrow. Flashbacks, intercutting, etc., have their place, but they were neither necessary nor desirable in 2001....

"There But For..." Not bad; I used to daydream that kind of stuff all the time, though, and somehow it seemed like those one-column half-inch high fillers that get run in local papers. Don't misunderstand me--I liked 'em, but they just didn't seem to fit in with the rest of the zine's contents.

"The Hooded Aardvark" damn well better be continued; jeez, I'm on the edge of my seat with suspense. I can hardly stand it. Gosharootie!

Now we get to "Liniment"--something I can really get into. The increase in the amount and availability of sf does not especially surprise me--we all knew it would "catch on", right?--but it does scare me; it indicates that sf is now "an idea whose time has come". The only problem there is that an idea whose time has come eventually becomes an idea whose time has gone. We're riding high right now on the boom, but what are we going to do when the bust hits, as it almost certainly will?

And what is this about a "new respectability"? Science fiction never even had an old respectability! Aside from that, though, the effect was predictable; ideas whose times have come tend to take on respectability as a matter of course--especially in an academic atmosphere. But the bust will come, and when it does the bottom drops out of college sf; after all, an idea whose time has gone can hardly be respectable.

And about that new wave of sf films--everybody knows someone who went to see 2001 because, "Jeez, I really got off on that light show! What a rush!" Hard-core sf people like us tend to forget that the average movie-goer gets something entirely different out of an sf flick than we do. We see the movie as 1) entertainment, 2) whatever our sf prejudices let us read into it, and 3) an actual, physically possible--though perhaps not very probable--future (I'm speaking of the more literate films, you understand-- not "Godzilla", etc.), while the non-fan sees it as 1) entertainment, 2) entertainment, and 3) entertainment. Fortunately, film-makers are beginning to realize that an sf movie is still a movie, and can be judged on artistic criteria just like any other movie, and so are beginning to make sf movies that can stand up to such critical judgements. Thanks to artistic integrity--and that increased interest in sf--we're getting good sf on film despite mass tastes....

I wrote this letter yesterday (July 18) and am retyping it today (July 19), on the fifth anniversary of our moon-landing. It has been more than two years since we gave up the adventure of lunar exploration for the more mundane (although, I admit, equally useful) Skylab. And I wish someone would tell me why we should settle for a stagnant space program when it could be a vital and inspirational enterprise. A country that can field such a program can obviously turn itself around in the areas it needs to; but we have, by our withdrawal from space, tacitly acknowledged the fact that we no longer have the necessary vitality.

Yours,

Scott Street
1952 Lehigh Ave.
Cincinnati, Ohio 45230

and not all of it is unreservedly enthusiastic:

Dear Ro:

16 July, 1974

First off, let me cite for recognition some of the better items in volume one, number four:

Jim Martin has continued to maintain a good level of quality in his reviews. I thought his view of Zardoz! was most interesting, particularly his comment on the role of women in the movie. Though I still can not agree with some of his enthusiasm, it did give me pause to think about the picture again and restructure a few of my opinions...I still think Zardoz was a bomb, but more of the firecracker variety instead of thermonuclear.

I like Liniment. It's the type of column I enjoy reading in a fanzine, where a fan presents opinion and observations in a warm and honest manner, without a heavy dose of egoboo. My only criticism, albeit nit-picking, is that I wish Lin had gone into depth on some of the issues she raised. The column seemed a little too general for my tastes...Still, it was relaxing and somewhat thought provoking.

I also enjoyed Ted Reynolds' There But For..., though it was a second reading of the piece for me, since he let me peek at his original manuscript.

Now for a few unfavorable criticisms which I hope you'll accept as being honest and well meaning:

I did not like the editing job you did on Sturgeon's Law. While you didn't harm the meaning of the work, you mised up the meter of some of the lines and made the poet appear to be unschooled the soon to be Dr. Reynolds is certainly not that....

I detested your abridgement of letters I think you should ren them in their entirety. Letter columns can make or break a fanzine. I suggest you take a look at the letter columns of the last issue of Seldon's

Plan for a decent example of how a letter column should be presented. As you're currently doing it, the column highlights to a very excessive degree the stunning personality of Ro Nagey, whereas it should be an exhibit of the thoughts and opinions of the stunning people who read the Whiz-Bang....

One additional bitch--I'll be damned if I ever turn into a "gentle reader!"

So, Ro, there you have it. I wish I could have toned it down a bit but I know what you really want is my honest reaction. I don't want to discourage you or depress you--if I've done so, you have my apologies-- I just think the last issue of the Whiz-Bang set a new low in quality. Taken by itself, it really wasn't too bad, but you've done much better work and I expect much better work in the future.

You tried. You tried hard. I can't fault someone who tries. Keep slugging way at it and you'll come out with a truly fine issue someday.

Sincerely,

Guy Snyder
17920 Redfern
Detroit, Michigan 48219

When Mike Glicksohn came back from England this summer, he found his apartment taken over by four hundred unruly fanzines; hence he had only this to say,

Dear Ro:

One of the purposes of this postcard is to shamefully admit that I've nothing to say about the issues of CRWB you kindly sent me. In V 1, N 4, the only comment hooks I see would be to disagree slightly with the comments about ZARDOZ (I found it lsoopy, poorly conceived, and rather dull) and to perhaps nod along with Lin. However, without intending and insult, the topics she touches on are old ones, and I just can't generate the necessary energy to re-enter the discussions at this time. Forgive me my apathy, I'm an old fan and tired at this moment....

Best wishes for now,

Mike Glicksohn
141 High Park Ave.
Toronto, Ont., M6P 2S3

We also heard from Cy Caubin, editor of 'Seldon's Plan' published at Wayne State University.

Dear Ro,

July 23, 1974

Your method of combining your editorial with your lettercol is an excellent one--Bruce Gillespie, who

edits SF COMMENTARY, which has been nominated twice for a Hugo, does this, and well, just devote a little more space to your letters--I mean, don't you like to get letters-of-comment? A lettercol always provokes more locs, as I'm sure you've noticed from other fms. Locs are the best part about zine pubbing.

I really dug Randy's cartoon strip, by the way, and I'm faunching for more.

Yrs.,
Cy Chauvin
17829 Peterc
Roseville, Mi.

And, finally, we heard from Don D'Amassa,

Ro:

Well, I finally got around to reading CRWB, and had a few comments to make.

Jim Martin could do more than suggest that "Bridge" is the first Spindizzy story--he could have just stated it as fact. "Bridge" is part of THEY SHALL HAVE STARS, the first novel in the series, and was previously published in ASTOUNDING as the first in the series.

Ted Reynolds' alternate histories were very good, probably the best thing in the issue.

Lin Lutz wonders why NASA's decline in popularity coincides with the rise in interest in SF. Two reasons occur to me. First, NASA de-romanticized space travel. The astronauts were so devoid of personality, the space trips so lacklustre and pedantic, the moon was portrayed as such a dull place, that I think people lost interest and turned to SF for a more romantic view. This doesn't mean that the real moon is such a dull place, but the bureaucratic and administrative outlook of the people running the space project, along with the essentially middle class outlook of the military personnel involved combined to make the moon no more attractive than any other military maneuver.

The other reason for SF surviving NASA's decline is simply that SF deals with more than space exploration, and the latter has declined in popularity as subject matter even within the field. People seem more interested in social developments than space travel nowadays.

peace, don

19 Angell Drive
E. Prov., RI 02914