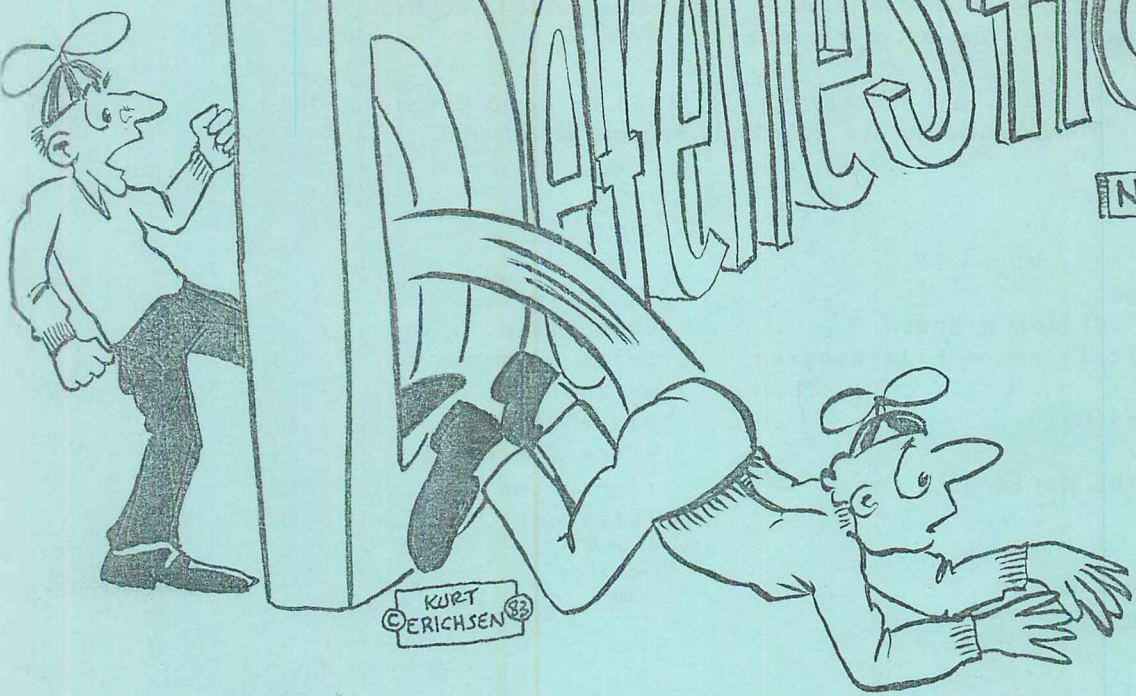


And stay out!

# Demonstration

NO.

5



Gala  
10th  
Annish!

This is Defenestration 5, from David Singer, 3271 NW 28th Terrace, Boca Raton, Florida 33434. Df is published quarterly, and is available for \$1, contribution, trade, artwork, LoC, or a convincing display of adoration.

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Words:

Editorial Droppings. . . . .	ye editor . . . . .	3
Confessions of a Worldcon Widow. . . . .	Edie Stern. . . . .	5
Peggy Sue, or Reflections on Filk Singing. . . . .	Sarah Clemens . . . . .	8
Mangle . . . . .	me again . . . . .	9
Who Was That Masked Man? . . . . .	Diane Goldman . . . . .	11
Why I Love Sci-Fi. . . . .	Vincent Miranda . . . . .	13
The Trouble with the Worldcon. . . . .	rich brown . . . . .	15
Out the Airlock. . . . .	lettercol . . . . .	19

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Gail Bennett . . . . .	4, 19
Gail Bennett and Phil Tortorici. . . . .	6
Phred (Carol Frederick) and Sarah Clemens. . . . .	12
Phil Tortorici . . . . .	Back Cover



Why You Got This:

You contributed words

X

You contributed art

\_\_\_\_\_

You used to contribute, way back when

\_\_\_\_\_

You might contribute (please?)

XXX

You suggested a trade

\_\_\_\_\_

I'm suggesting a trade

\_\_\_\_\_

Because it was the fannish thing to do

XXX

## Editorial Droppings

Welcome to this, the special "Conventions and Confessions" issue of Defenestration. I'll start things off with my own confession: This issue is (slightly) late. Nine years, if you want to be precise. Or two months, if you want to be generous. Or if you want to be really generous, it's two months early.

You see, I published the previous issue of Df in December, 1974, with a promise that the next issue (this one) would be out "by Boskone". There have been a few Boskones since then (I even attended two of them), but no issues of Df.

Apas are to blame -- apas and gafiation. Sometime in early 1975, I got heavily involved in apas (RAPs, APA-45, and MISHAP), and found that the instant (and incestuous) response of an apa was very gratifying. And, although I still intended to publish Df, I never really got around to working on it -- there was always an apa deadline just around the corner, while Df wasn't due until RealSoonNow. And after putting off publication for a year or so, I found it very easy to just forget about doing the zine at all.

Gafiation reared its head, too. I got engaged before leaving school, and my fiancée and I spent the first six months of our engagement 1500 miles away. All of my writing energy went to corresponding with her, and then, when she finished school and was able to move down to Florida, all of my free time went to her, too. And I gafiated.

Well, maybe not completely. We did attend part of SunCon -- Monday. And I kept up my subscription to File:770. And when Joe Siclari started a local fannish group, we attended the parties (oops... meetings). But I didn't publish anything.

Then MISHAP had its fifth anniversary, and Denise Brown (the OE at the time) put out a call for ex-members to return for the special mailing. I read about it in 770, and was intrigued. After all, I'd finally bought myself a Selectric, and this seemed like a perfect reason to use it. So I did a one-page memoryzine...and I was hooked again.

But still, I was only doing apazines. I did think about reviving Df once or twice -- I even typed out a line or two of the masthead once, but inertia won out, as it usually does.

Then came ConStellation, and the fanzine lounge. I'd spent a few minutes in the fanzine area at Chicon, but I didn't feel as though I belonged there any more. In Baltimore, though, things were different. I spent several hours in the fan area -- at one point, I even helped put out an issue of the newszine so that my Tropicon flyer could be the next thing to be printed. And the mimeo ink got back into my blood.

But no one thought that I'd really pub another issue -- nine years of inactivity is a powerful testament. So I set myself a deadline: October 31, 1983, and told everyone I saw that I'd publish by then.

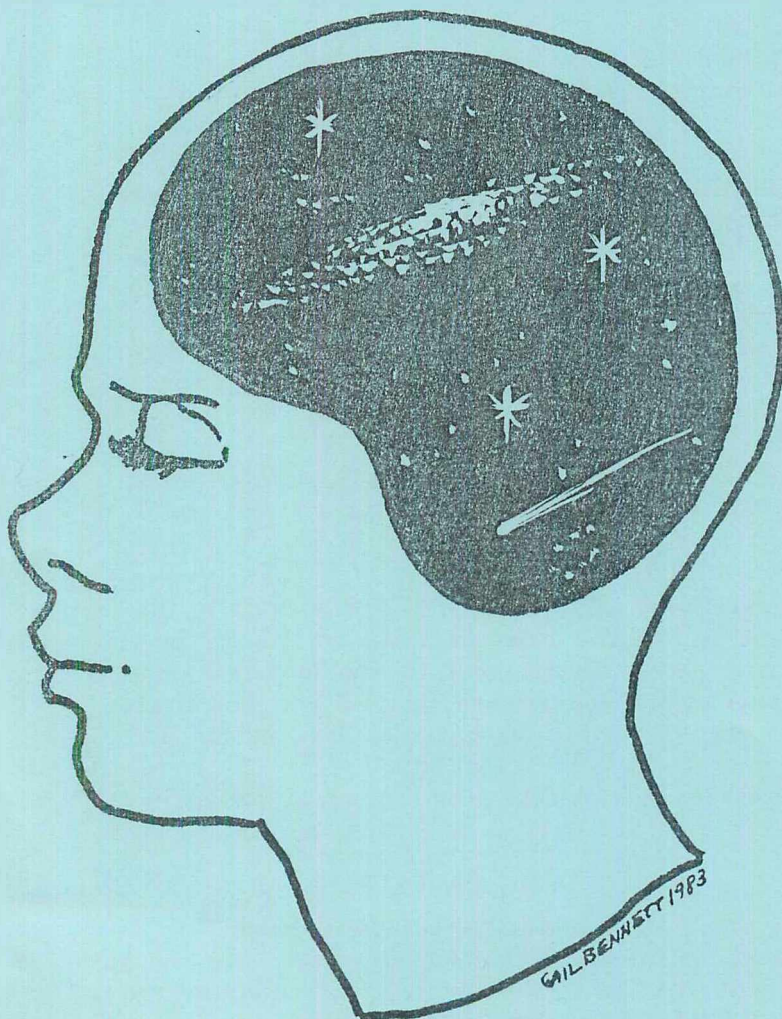
And I missed it. Mostly because I hadn't been aggressive enough at getting material, but that's no one's fault but my own. Now, it would have been easy enough to say, "Well, I missed it -- to hell with it." But by this time, I had convinced myself that I really was going to publish, so I started soliciting locally, and set another deadline: December 31, 1983, so this could be my 10th Annish. And here it is.

Now that I've gotten the ink flowing again, so to speak, I intend to publish a bit more regularly.\* I spend a lot of time procrastinating, so the closer I set the deadline for the next issue, the likelier I am to actually make it. On the other hand, if I set it too close, I won't have a chance to get responses on this issue, and that would be discouraging, too.

So I'll compromise, and set a quarterly schedule for myself. That puts the next publication date at March 31, 1984, just before my required contribution is due in APA-1040 -- that sounds pretty good to me.

I don't have a theme in mind for the next issue (truth to tell, I didn't have one in mind for this issue, either), but I'm generally looking for light, fannish writing and art. And, of course, I'm looking for letters on this issue -- I like long lettercols, but I couldn't indulge myself in that direction this time.

David



## Confessions of a Worldcon Widow

This is a story I never thought I'd have the courage to tell. I still can't believe that I could have done what I have done. It seems like a nightmare now. But, at last, it's over.

We were such a happy family, Sam and I, and little Danny. Sam and I had met at a Lunacon and Danny was conceived at a Novacon -- the usual fannish love story. The only odd thing about this one was that we lived in the same state to begin with, separated by less than thirty miles. In eight months, we were married.

I knew about Sam's dream, of course. You don't hide a thing like that from someone you love. The idea of doing a worldcon "right" was an obsession with him, and he'd talk about how good it was going to be in SMOF sessions at every con we hit. It fascinated him. Had he reacted that way to another woman, I would have felt threatened, but convention running seemed so wholesome and fannish. Little did I realize that the spectre of a worldcon would one day threaten our happiness.

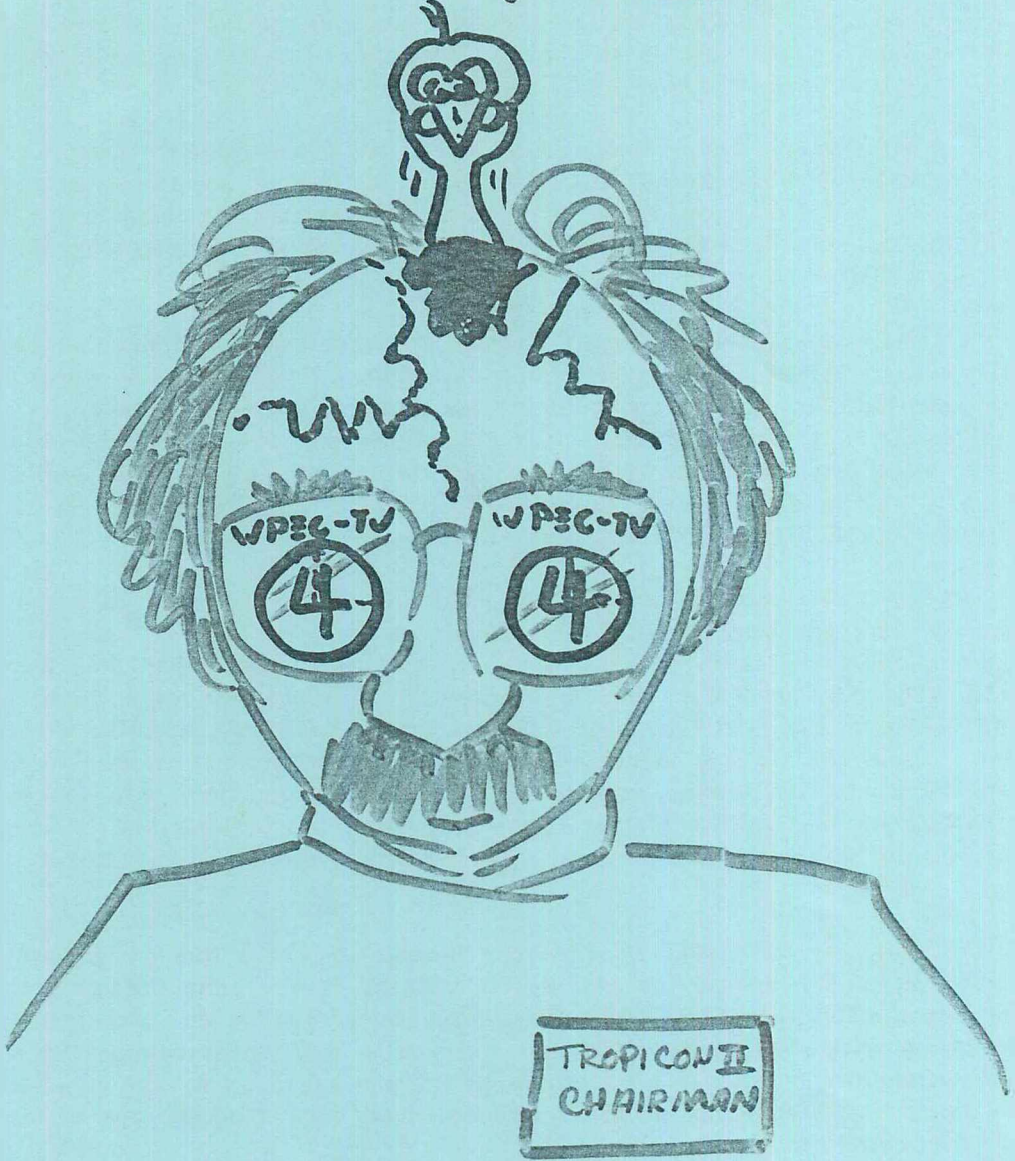
At every worldcon we went to, Sam worked. When Dan was six weeks old, and we were huckstering, he worked double shifts at Noreascon, leaving me to man the table and tend the baby too. When I remonstrated with him, he just said, "But they need me. This is important." Easy to say for someone who's not making change with one hand and cleaning up baby shit with the other. But I could see the joy in his eyes when they took on the far look, and the radio told him about some drunken fan brandishing a zap gun, or a broken escalator to the south. I should have suspected, but between the worldcon and the kid and the table and recovering from surgery, my cognitive faculties were only half there.

At work, my friend Pat was my only consolation. Pat was my gossip, in the old sense of the word -- a confidante, a friend, and a good listener. I raved for hours after Noreascon. And after Denvention. And so on. Pat kept calming me down, reminding me that Sam and I agreed so well in everything other than convention running that it was foolish to let one worldcon a year aggravate me so much. It made a lot of sense, and so, every year I agreed and settled back into domestic harmony.

And then at Chicon, it happened. Sam joined a bid committee. The balance of our household shifted. From equally sharing the household load, I seemed to get more and more of the drudgework. ("But I've got to get this ad copy done -- I'll wash the dishes/pay the bills/mow the yard tomorrow.") Money got tough. ("But I committed to running a bid party at the regional -- we've got to go to Oshkosh.") Phone calls interrupted everything, from dinner and little Danny's bath, to sex. ("Oh hi, Tom/Dick/Harry. You want to talk about hotel facilities?") Outgoing phone calls were worse. (See above -- "I'll wash the dishes/pay the bills/mow the yard tomorrow.")

But the worst was our lovemaking. Or should I say the lack of it? I'm not sure which was harder to take. Sometimes it was "not now, honey, I'm busy." Other times, it was "Boy, am I tired from working so hard on all this bid stuff." Most times, he just didn't come to bed till 2 AM. Were it not for the Ladies' Traveling Companion (electronic), I would have despaired completely.

MOMMY.



TROPICONT II  
CHAIRMAN

As it was, I complained. Audibly. We fought. Somehow, Sam thought that bid work was equivalent to real work. Everytime I came back from a business trip, he expected that I'd take care of house and child for a few weeks and let him be free to do what he wanted -- fanac. When you're suffering from jetlag and a plethora of 18-hour days, this is not a palatable assumption.

I don't know what I would have done without Pat. I'd known Pat for ten years, and without our bitch sessions I probably would have wound up getting divorced. I talked about everything -- about coming home from London and finding a notice from the city saying that the weeds were over three feet high and that they would start legal proceedings if they weren't cut within fifteen days. About being thousands of dollars in debt for convention travel bills. About little Danny having to do without a normal amount of fatherly attention. About my piss poor sex life and the temptations of a meaningless one night stand on the road.

Everything started coming to a head by Constellation. I knew it would end in divorce, murder, mafia, or something equally traumatic. Our home life was always quietly strained now -- only the sound of the mimeo, or e-stencil, or word processor to provide a counterpoint to little Danny's constant whine, "Can I watch a movie, Mommy?" Even the child sensed the tenseness.

At Constellation, Sam was working as shift supervisor. I sat in ops and watched him for a while. He was more fully alive than I'd ever seen him. There was an almost religious kind of power about him as he cracked jokes, gave orders, and solved problems before they became catastrophies. I looked at him, and something hard inside me melted.

The next day, I signed up to work rover duty. I know now that Sam needs to do this. I love him and I'll help him. After we got home, the first one I talked to was Pat. She agreed that if it was worth doing, it was worth putting 100% into it. So I'll help, even though it means doing all the housework, doing all the typing, taking care of the baby by myself, mowing the yard, writing his LoCs, and supporting him for the year before he chairs the worldcon. After all, I was a fan long before I met Sam, and fandom is a way of life.

I know now that Sam needs to do this. I love him, and I don't plan on leaving him. After we got home, the first one I talked to was Pat. For years, he'd been in love with me, but I hadn't been interested in anything but friendship. Now I knew I needed his love as well. We met discreetly, out of town, in out of the way motels, or in airplane restrooms. Sam hasn't noticed. I have the best of both worlds -- a happy marriage, and an active love life (not to mention the benefits of the Frequent Flyer program). Even my own fanac has picked up. Sam has his leisure activities, and I have mine. After all, fandom is just a goddam hobby.

-- Edie Stern

# Peggy Sue, or Reflections on Filk Singing

St. Louis. Archon. Saturday night.

The foyer of the hotel was one of those worn red velvet affairs, its days of true grandeur long past. The boisterousness of the convention, the ludicrousness of the costumes seemed like an intrusion on the quiet household of a dignified elder. And then, as we sat on the mezzanine, the doors to one of the ballrooms were pushed open and a hand lettered sign stating "Filk singing" slapped up.

"It's here," I confirmed from my program book. "Filk singing in the Flamingo Room."

Nick wouldn't sneer at such an activity, but I think moving to the bar probably crossed his mind. Still, the couches were so comfortable.

As Charlton Heston once said (though, alas, not to me), "Nothing is really the way you remember it." Still, though all the details have been lost in the shuffle of a memorable evening, the main gist of what happened about that time will stay with me always.

We started singing. There was one fellow there with a guitar, and Nick Yermakov is, among other things, a drummer. And I've never met a drummer yet who couldn't improvise a beat with nothing more than a Bic pen and a coffee table. So I don't remember how it started, but there we were, singing the songs of Buddy Holly outside the doors of the filk singing suite. It was a glorious time, one of those few times when it was wonderful as it occurred as well as in retrospect. And these fellows knew their songs. Yermakov has probably forgotten more than the editors of New Musical Express or Melody Maker ever knew; the lyrics flowed from us like a libation to those geniuses of yore. "Peggy Sue" came out like a primal moving force, its beat undeniable. "Why must I be a teenager in Love?" nearly brought us all to tears.

There was one little group that came out of the filking room long enough to begin a protest. Nick was in black leather pants with one of those wallets city bikers always wear, with the chain connecting it to the belt. The man on guitar was wearing denim that was pre-punk, but oddly prophetic. The protest organization was made up of several girls in polyester pseudo medieval garb, with one fellow in tow in the scallop sleeved garb of a troubadour. They didn't say a whole lot when they saw us, other than to look at each other and cluck, as if that would somehow convey their righteous disapproval. As they left us in the middle of "Peggy Sue, Peggy Sue, oh how I'm in love with you," I looked up to see the troubadour being towed away with heavy physical force by his handmaidens to the faltering strains of mandolins and tambourines, and I have perhaps never seen personified in a human face such a look of envy and misery.

-- Sarah Clemens



# Mangle

As has been my custom in Df, I will review nearly anything in Mangle; fanzines, restaurants, books, movies, shortwave programs, or whatever else happens to amuse me and that I think might amuse you. These little essays are reviews, not criticisms: I'm not in possession of the Higher Truth that critics seem to mainline; instead, I've got opinions, a desire to share them, and someone to share them with (you, I hope).

This time, I'm mostly going to concentrate on fanzines, since I have several at hand that I found interesting. They are mostly from Seattle; for some reason, I haven't fallen off of the combined Seattle mailing list, despite my near gafiation and despite my infrequent response to zines. I wish I knew why Seattle fandom didn't give up on me -- it's partially their fault that I'm doing this zine instead of retiring further into a comfortable ennui.

At any rate, the first zine that I want to discuss is Egoboodle 5, from Linda Blanchard, 23509 Hedlund Avenue, Mountlake Terrace, WA 98043. This issue marks Linda's transition from perzine to genzine -- but, as she says, the zine will still be mostly hers. If this issue is typical, Linda doesn't need to worry about losing control -- Egoboodle has a very definite personality -- it's a cheerful zine. Linda appears to enjoy life, and it rubs off on her zine.

Linda admits, right on the first page, to having trouble with peoples' names. This makes her OK in my book, since I have the same trouble; in fact, I milked a similar confession for two issues' worth of letters in Df's previous inpapyrusment. Though it's nine years later, I still have the same trouble -- earlier this week, I made phone calls for my college's Alumni fund, and it was rather irritating not to know if I knew the person on the other side of the phone or not.

Tatiana Keller contributes a long, thoughtful killer review of Return of the Jedi. I don't agree with everything she says (despite everything, I enjoyed the movie), but she is right when she claims that Jedi isn't the movie it should have been. Perhaps one of its problems is simple -- it should have been the fourth movie in the trilogy, because too many events in Jedi don't follow logically from Empire. But the third movie had to clean up the loose ends, so....

Tatiana's review sparked Brian Earl Brown to write a "revisionist history" of the Empire in his REHUPA and MISHAP zines; I don't know if he has copies available, but you could always ask him to reprint it in Sticky Quarters.

Linda ends the zine with the first part of her fictionalized autobiography, leaving us at what she claims is the beginning of the story.

Since I wrote the previous paragraphs, Egoboodle 6 has arrived, bearing a Stu Shiffman cover and a threat that I might be dropped from the mailing list if I don't do something. Linda also mentioned that Gary Farber is responsible for my receiving her zine (and, I guess, for other Seattle zines as well), so now you know who to blame for my zine.

#6 has more of Linda in it than #5, with a long editorial, a very long ConStellation and engagement report, and another installment of "Summer of '73". Fortunately, Linda's engagement report is more interesting than the one I wrote in MISHAP when Diane and I got engaged; possibly a worldcon provides a better background than the

Bicentennial did.

Linda says she'll be changing the title of her zine for the next issue, then moving to the East Coast for the following issue. But if you can find her and mention the right title, I think you'll enjoy Egoboodle.

Clifford Wind, 308 Summit E. #206, Seattle, WA 98102, is trying to revive the letterzine with his Rhetorical Device. Last issue, his editorial was on religion; he got more responses than I would have expected. And the responses were generally interesting, which amazes me, since I find religious discussions pretty boring.

Clifford's editorial this time is on "Moods and Manners", which should lead into another good discussion in next lettercol; the religious furor should continue, as well. RD could turn into a very dry zine if Clifford edits with too heavy a hand; so far, he doesn't seem to be in any danger.

Brian Earl Brown's Sticky Quarters 7 seems to be missing at the moment, which is a problem caused by the teeny-tiny format that he uses. On the other hand, he is able to fit quite a few words into a one ounce zine, and it looks better than it would if he published the same sized zine on normal paper. The latest issue doesn't look like one of Brian's zines, since it's mostly typed on his new correcting typewriter, instead of his old, square, non-correcting model.

Now that I've found it (Ghu knows what else might be hiding in the pile I rescued SQ from -- it's about time to clean up, I think), I can continue. There are two major articles in this issue: one from Brian's mother-in-law about her tubal ligation, and one from Taral, "puncturing the Pong mythos." Since I've never had a tubal ligation nor read an issue of Pong, I can't really compare either essay to reality -- I will say that I'd rather read Pong than have a tubal ligation.

SQ isn't a major fanzine; I don't think Brian wants it to be. It provides a few minutes of enjoyable reading, though, with a little controversy thrown in. And the price is right: 25 cents, from Brian, at 20101 W. Chicago #201, Detroit, MI, 48228.

Back to Seattle, now (I've gotten a Seattle zine in both mail deliveries this week -- this is getting serious!), for Mainstream #9, edited by Jerry Kaufman and Suzanne Tompkins, at 4326 Winslow Place N., Seattle, WA 98103. It seems like I've been reading zines from Jerry and Suzle forever (well, as long as I've been in fandom, anyway), but that the intervals between successive zines are too long. If I have any fannish ambitions (and I do), they include publishing a zine as good as, and as friendly as, Mainstream. This issue doesn't have a Jon (no relation) Singer column in it, but is otherwise up to Suzle and Jerry's normally high standards. To make up for Jon's absence, they've got part of Dave Langford's TAFF report, columns from Bertie MacAvoy and Terry Garey, an article from Steven Bryan Bieler, and a long lettercol. No letter from me, but that's probably because I haven't written a LoC on the previous issue.

Leaving Seattle (in more ways than one), we find Patrick and Teresa Nielsen Hayden publishing Izzard #7 from a new address, 22 Albert Franck Place, Toronto, Ontario M5A 4B4. They've moved (again) because of Teresa's narcolepsy, and this issue of Izzard contains several pieces which were intended for the late, lamented Telos. It's a fannish fanzine (you were expecting, maybe, another Locust?), but science fiction has crept into a couple of columns; perhaps fandom will come full circle and return to its roots some day.

## Who Was That Masked Man?

How can I get excited about a detective who lived 1300 years ago in the Tang dynasty? I don't know where to begin. Shall I tell you about the ghosts, were-tigers, (sound more dangerous than were-wolves) and dreams that hold the answers? Or the "brothers of the green woods" (sort of a Chinese band of merry men), a reformed swindler who remembers all the tricks, and the respectable, clever judge they work for?

How about the dancing girls, acrobats, actors, students, merchants, and doctors? Or the Arabs, Mongolians, and Koreans? And the lecherous monks, the city thugs, and country murderers?

All in books with illustrations by the author, most of which have at least one young, attractive, naked female running around?

What am I babbling about? Well, it's Judge Dee, one of the cleverest, wisest and most competent Chinese magistrates. Back in those days, the judges not only tried cases, they acted as detectives too, to find out what really happened, whether the accused really did it, and if not, who did. We would not look favorably on this system, for the judge often questioned suspects under torture. In Chinese law, a person could not be punished unless he or she confessed. But if an innocent person died under torture, the judge and all his officials would be given the same punishment (usually death in some form) that he intended for the accused.

Judge Dee was a real person. Robert van Gulik, a Dutch scholar of Chinese language, culture and law wrote a series of novels based on Judge Dee's cases. He wrote mainly in the form of the Chinese detective story, but made some concessions to Western readers--fewer characters (only about 10 per story) and no philosophical interludes that have nothing to do with the story. He also softened the role of the supernatural and cut out most of the torture and execution scenes (although the murders are appropriately grisly).

The result is a series of novels: The Chinese "X" Murders (where "X" is Gold, Lake, Bell, Maze, or Nail) in which Dee is the new judge in town and solves three devilishly clever mysteries (judges worked on more than one case at a time) and novels with more oriental names -- The Lacquer Screen, The Emperor's Pearl, The Haunted Monastery (remember those lecherous monks!), The Willow Pattern, the Monkey and the Tiger, The Phantom of the Temple, Murder in Canton (read this one last), Necklace and Calabash, Poets and Murder, and the one I haven't been able to find, The Red Pavilion. Plus some short stories and a chronology of the Dee novels -- Judge Dee at Work.

Not only are these mysteries clever, they show much about the Chinese culture. One of my favorite images is the judge angrily swinging his sleeves (yes, sleeves) as he leaves. Don't get in his way -- sleeves were like pockets. He has put in things like the abacus belonging to a dead clerk, documents and a frog (which he later used to trick the bad guy into confessing).

So if you enjoy intellectual mysteries (or gory ones) and you happen to find yourself in the V's or G's in the mystery section of your favorite bookstore and you pick up a paper back with a lurid cover, give it a try. You may be hooked, too!

-- Diane Goldman



LITTLE TING-LING IS DYING OF T.C.\*  
PLEASE GIVE GIVE  
GENEROUSLY

\* TERMINAL CUTENESS

# Why I love Sci-Fi

Those of you who know and love me need not read this; life, after all, is much too short to waste one's time in such manner. Naturally, some of those who know me will continue to read out of stubbornness, thinking that this is yet one more of my machinations, and it is. I'm out for information, not for this year's Conference on the Fantastic, but for the 1985 gathering, and what I want are confessions.

Some of the several hundreds of scholars involved in research on the fantastic are specialists whose interests are in Blake, or Gothic influences, Renaissance miracle plays, or pre-Judeo-Christian creation myths. The opinions of such scholars on the fantastic are irrelevant and meaningless to most of us, but a good chunk of the real scholarship out there is being done by fans. People who got their Eng. Lit. degree in spite of the fact that they had a "Fantastic Four" comic stuck in their notebook, or were paying more attention to a Heinlein than the lecture they were attending.

Now, some of my colleagues and I want to do a paper session on how people become fans in the first place, and the best way for me to express what I need is to do it myself.

## How I Won My Propellor Beanie

Age 6 or 7? "Barbar," a world inhabited by elephants. Wow! I didn't understand it, but I loved it. Somewhere about the same time The Wind in the Willows (the book) and the magic of "A Christmas Carol" (Alistair Sim). Comic books: ducks courtesy of Carl Barks, "Superman", "Batman", "Wonder Woman", and my favorites the "Challengers of the Unknown". Then came "Superman" on TV. Then, when I was 9 or 10, I got copies of Great Tales of Terror and the Supernatural and Adventures in Time and Space, its companion volume. Here I got hooked into the literature. Lovecraft and Poe, Heinlein and Asimov, Van Vogt, John Campbell.

Now, I was lucky at this point, for I lived right downtown (West Palm Beach, Florida), and there were 5 movie houses within a three or four block radius and I saw everything that played. I had a truly wonderful Grandfather who turned me loose every Saturday with a couple of bucks. The movies that really stuck were "Godzilla" (it scared the shit out of me), "Them" (they had the poster up for a month and I almost went crazy waiting), "The Beast from 20,000 Fathoms" (I loved it), "Kronos" (this one really scared me; villains, even the worst, have their weaknesses, but this machine was programmed to do what it did and it could not be coerced to stop), the Hammer Frankenstein, Dracula, and Mummy films, "Mr. Sardonicus", and, oh, the headache watching "The Creature from the Black Lagoon" in 3-D. And then there was "The Forbidden Planet" -- I don't know how many times I saw that.

Ace doubles, 2 books for the price of one, and oh, what grabbers those covers were. Sax Rohmer, I think it was Pyramid who first came out with a copy of The Insidious Dr. Fu Manchu. Rohmer attracted me to the older writers: Wells and Verne, Burroughs and Otis Adelbert Kline, H. Ryder Haggard and Arthur Conan Doyle. This is where I became interested in scholarship, for I met someone whose father had a Bleiler's Checklist of Fantastic Literature. I first started collecting somewhere in here, the late Fifties. I was 13 or 14 and worked to make money to buy books. I didn't care about anything else. I had gotten my own Bleiler, and I had a great bookstore which had a service that hunted down old books for me. I have a collection and research library

valued at 50,000+ dollars today because I was lucky enough to start collecting these works in the Fifties when they were a fraction of their present value. I blanch when I look at the prices in huckster rooms today; I could never replace them today. I collected Burroughs, Wells, Verne, Haggard, Heinlein, anything that caught my eye in the Bleiler book, plus whatever came out in paperback.

Now, you may note that I list no fannish activities. This is because I did not read the magazines. In the magazines, stories were SERIALIZED! Stories spread out over months. You sat down, read for 20 minutes, then waited thirty days for the next chunk. Screw it! I never gave the magazines a second glance.

I knew nothing about fans and their activities even in the late Sixties and early Seventies when I bought bulk lots of old magazines in second-hand stores. I never looked at the letter pages and editorial pages; I read the stories in between work and school and a nearly fanatical drive to get laid. Sex was of the utmost importance at this time, far more so than normal, for by the time I was 15 several of my friends were dead. One of a heart attack (he was 18, for godsake). One disappeared with his father's 18-foot power boat while roaring around somewhere outside the inlet in the Atlantic (to this day no trace) -- 15 years old. Another electrocuted, yet another of scarlet fever.

At one of the funerals, someone brought up the fact that they had never even gotten laid, and for some reason this fired all our fears, and we all became obsessed with at least achieving some semblance of manhood before whoever was next bought the farm. Once most of my bunch had achieved our goal, we discovered that we liked it, and perhaps the only thing more fun than sex was sex in the balcony while listening to a good Sci-Fi movie. If I had known of fandom at this point, I probably wouldn't have given a damn. I had my sources of supply. I had "Famous Monsters," which more or less kept me up to date with what was coming, and I had my friends who at least loved the movies and who, I guess, were my own private fandom.

Only in my late 20's did I discover that there was a fandom when I had begun to write professionally and had met a few authors who wondered why they hadn't seen me at this or that con (what the hell's a con?). Or who looked at me in shock when I called it "Sci-Fi," which I still do now and then, except around Harlan, who can, on occasion, make me feel shame.

So, who's willing to let me know how they came unto the sacred flock? If you're a Trekkie, tell me -- after all, I'll admit I love all those hokey Godzilla sequels and Burt Gordon movies. What first twisted your head and made you fall in love with Scientifiction/Sci-Fi/Speculative Literature? I'd really like to know.

-- Vincent Miranda

# The Trouble with the Worldcon

The trouble with the worldcon is it's too damned big -- and the trouble with it being too damned big, quite aside from other considerations, is that this makes the worldcon more costly than it needs to be.

I summarize my thrust boldly, in part because I believe it to be true and in part because I have a predilection towards wordiness, a tendency to proselytize and a feeling at times that I may be a bit too presumptuous when I get talking about fannish topics. The summary helps alleviate problems one and two, if not precisely problem three.

My Problems have little to do with the thrust of this piece. As far as they go, I fear Shelby Vick may have had the right of it; some years back, with what I thought an admiring twinkle in his eye, he said to me, "rich, I have to hand it to you -- you rush in where even an angel might fear to tread." I was so slow on the uptake, I thanked him for the compliment -- it wasn't until a few days later that it occurred to me just how the phrase is usually used, just what sort of person is said to "rush in where angels fear to tread", and I fell over in a heap of laughter. But that was, as I say, some years back -- and while I recognized the truth of the satire then, I can't say it cured my predilection. Perhaps this is because the only tendency I really regret is the presumptuousness; from time to time, seeing myself prose on at Considerable Length on the Right or Wrong of some aspect of fandom, I share a desire first expressed by Holden Caulfield, the protagonist of The Catcher in the Rye -- namely, a wish to go into some movie theatre I might be attending, sneak up to reach over the back of the seat and, safe in that darkness from any witness, throttle myself. Otherwise, I rather enjoy the role of Boring Old Fart.

There are few fans who will not agree (although with some variance in the terms of agreement) that the worldcon today is too damned big. Where the argument would seem to exist is over what (if anything) is to be done about it. At the core of this is another argument, over the meaning of two words -- specifically, "world" and "literary."

To my mind, the word "world" in "world sf convention" means it is more than a national convention. Provisions in our rules allow it to be held in virtually any country in the world. But to some people, and apparently to a large number of those who run worldcons, it would seem to mean "anything in the world even remotely related to or connected with science fiction."

I have this vision: The East Mashed Potato Falls, Idaho, Marching Band & SF Society decides to attend en masse; naturally, our worldcon committee immediately raises membership fees to pay the city whatever it might charge to let this group march down the streets. Another vision has those fees being raised to purchase a rocket and launching pad because members of some rocket group suddenly decide they, too, are fans.

This might seem far-fetched, but I don't see it as an illogical extension of the present-day situation, where worldcon committees feel we must program and have space for Trekkies, Star Warriors, D&D (and other game) players, L-5ers & the like. The bare bone of my contention is that the first rule in our by-laws defines the world science fiction society -- the name under which each committee puts on the worldcon -- as a "literary" society. I would assume that anyone capable of reading and understanding a competent dictionary could see this does not include movies, television programs or

gaming -- either implicitly or explicitly -- so I will try not to belabor the point. (At least, not at this juncture.)

But the fact is, since worldcons do program and provide space for these people, instead of drawing a few hundred or a thousand fans, our worldcon is attended by between six and seven thousand people. And the more we program for these people, the more those numbers expand.

Once -- in "the G. O. days", as we BOFs tend to put it -- a worldcon could be held in any reasonable-sized city. We were of a size that our world convention was a plum over which major hotels vied competitively. We were rather large for a convention, even then, and while we may have had our share of "nut" cases, we were known to be considerably better behaved than, say, the Shriners. So our committees were wined and dined by hotel management and could pick and choose the hotel which offered the best and/or most concessions. "The Sheraton has offered us reduced room rates and a large convention hall for the duration of the convention -- what can you offer that's better?" "The Hyatt has offered us reduced room rates, a large convention hall and free space for our huxter room. What can you do for us?"

This has all changed as a direct result of the fact that we now regularly program and provide space for media fans and gamers. There are, thanks to this swelling of our ranks, only a few major cities which can accommodate our numbers -- which would seem to defeat my idea, at least, of the meaning of "world" in "world sf convention" -- and to do that we must book all or most of the hotels those cities have to offer.

The people who run these hotels are, of course, well aware of this -- which is why we must now pay, in cold cash and in advance, for items we once got free. In economic terms, we have gone from a "buyer's" to a "seller's" market. Rumor has it that several hotels reneged on verbal promises made to the ConStellation Committee to provide rooms at a special convention rate because the committee could not just pack up and move to a hotel down the street and the hotels damned well knew it. Leaving aside for the moment the advisability of having such commitments in writing, if the thrust of the rumor is true -- I can only verify that the Sheraton had no special convention room rates -- it serves to underscore my point. If untrue, it nonetheless remains a possibility we may have to face in the future.

\* \* \* \* \*

Since I've addressed this topic before, some of you may see nothing really "new" in this. It gathers together in one place, for the first time, several things I've written about in fanzines and said at conventions for years.

Having some experience on the subject, I would like to forestall what has become an inevitable question by saying I really have nothing against Trekkies, Star Warriors, and Gamers as people. Sure, there are a number of dorks who are Trekkies, Star Warriors, and Gamers -- there are also a number of dorks who are fans of the written form of sf. So? In any event, I am not a hypocrite -- or at least try not to be. I enjoyed the first segment of Star Wars as a "tribute" to the action-adventure sf of the 1940s; it's full of logical holes so big you could drive a starship through them, it sacrifices thoughtfulness to sensawonder and literary pretenses to an action-oriented story line -- but much the same could be said of the written sf which appeared in Startling, TWS, and Planet Stories. I did not care for either of the Star Trek movies or most of the TV episodes, but I have seen them all and there are a handful of the latter which I would not mind seeing again. And, on close to a weekly basis, I've been



playing D&D since the middle of 1980....

One of the reasons I go to conventions is to talk to other sf fans; there are few people in the mundane with whom I have so much in common. If I were to say to a group of sf readers, "X is about as realistic as a Heinlein female", I would get an argument from some and a chuckle from others -- as opposed to the blank-faced stares this remark is likely to occasion among those who are only fans of Star Wars, Star Trek, gamers, or mundanes. But I would be the first to concede that this is, at worst, only a minor annoyance, and certainly not a justification to "exclude" fans of non-literary forms of sf from our conventions.

In fairness, I could even make a slight case in favor of their attendance. For one thing, to be perfectly truthful about those "good old days" when worldcons were smaller, we often found ourselves double-booked with other conventions or gatherings -- anything from CPAs to Shriners to a reunion of a Marine Corps Battalion or a Catholic Girls' Seminary. In that light, even the worst things which might be dredged up against Trekkies, Star Warriors, and/or Gamers, either individually or as a group, must be put in the shade.

Furthermore, even if I truly despised these things, I would be forced to say that, for many people, they have been stepping stones to an appreciation for written sf. I watched Space Cadet and Space Patrol on TV and read comics before I cracked my first sf book, and somewhat later preferred Amazing and Imagination to Astounding and F&SF; I suspect this is the natural course of things, and with that in mind it is even possible to argue (howevermuch it might infuriate some critics) that for sf to continue to attract readers, there is or should be a place in the genre for "poor" or "minimal" quality sf.

\* \* \* \* \*

Well then, you might well say, what is my point? Simply: the trouble with the worldcon is it's too damned big -- and the trouble with this is it makes the worldcon more expensive than it needs to be.

Despite any argument that media fans and gamers may very well be perfectly nice people, the point remains that the same could be said of CPAs, Shriners, and perhaps even members of Marine Corps Battalions and Catholic Girls' Seminaries.

But if only because these people all have their own gatherings and conventions, I have yet to see the logic in our programming for their specific interests. They certainly don't program for ours. The only thing their attendance does is to increase our numbers, diminish the number of cities/hotels which can accommodate our convention, force us to pay for what we once were given as concessions, narrow the likelihood of our being able to bargain for reduced room rates, and increase the kind and number of function spaces which are among the things our inflated membership fees must pay for in advance. If we obtain any corresponding benefit from their attendance, besides the rather minor one I mentioned above, it has thus far escaped me.

Of course, there remains the argument of the Traditionalists: Because we've done this sort of programming at our worldcons for such a long time, we are obligated to continue to do so until the sun grows cold. Frankly, I don't see why. I was a member of the 1967 NyCon Committee; to the best of my knowledge, we were the first to have "all night" film programs. Yet I don't believe any of the people responsible for this beginning believe it is an indispensable tradition, despite its continuation for

over 15 years. It seemed a good idea at the time, if only because it gave the younger element something to do besides crash parties, drink to excess, and throw up all over their hosts' hotel rooms. But the idea has clearly outlived its usefulness if it draws in an extra thousand who are fans only of media sf and who therefore also must be programmed for during the regular course of the worldcon at attendant extra cost.

I return so frequently to the "expense" caused by the attendance of and programming for non-literary sf fans, I really must make one final point: I have not paid to attend a worldcon since 1972. Actually, it goes back further if you allow me to stretch my point -- I "paid" to attend the LACon but my membership was refunded. I was on the program. I've been on the program, or performed some other service, at most of the other worldcons I have attended in that interval and as a result have not had to buy a membership. As for the worldcons at which I have not been on the program and have not been able to provide a service, I have simply avoided attending any program items whatsoever -- since it's really the "counter-convention" which attracts me.

Chuck Harris tells an amusing story about his stay in the British Army which seems somewhat relevant at this point. "Change-step, march" is a command which a drill sergeant will direct at a soldier who is marching out of step with others in his group. The soldier addressed is supposed to kick the back of one foot with the other, rather than bringing the foot forward, thus placing him "in step" with the rest. Chuck said he had this command directed at him so frequently that, one day, his drill sergeant became so exasperated he called out, "Everyone but Harris, change-step, march!"

Like the co-editor of Hyphen, I realize it isn't every day that everyone will be told to get in step with me. And, while the solution to this problem is so simple I started applying it myself about a decade back, I am also well aware that I may simply march to the beat of a different drum. If others -- specifically, the rest of you reading this -- perhaps out of some sense of egalitarianism or maybe because you actually find some enjoyment in these non-literary events, feel obligated to pay whatever outrageous amount it takes, I just want to let you know that that's fine with me. It's just that, as a matter of principle, I refuse to pay for someone else's good time. How you choose to spend your money, and the results you may obtain from doing so, is entirely your affair; it would be presumptuous of me to think otherwise. Shelby Vick, back when he made that remark about rushing in where angels fear to tread, was in part addressing this particular defect in my personality -- and if it's a fact that I have yet to deal with it successfully, well, at least I'm still working on it.

*-- rich brown*

# Out the Airlock

For some reason, I don't have too many LoCs this time. I had had more a few years ago, but they got misplaced when I thought I had gafiated, and they probably wouldn't be relevant even if I could still find them.

However, I recently received this LoC, and, rather than publish a zine without a lettercol, I decided to use it...even though the writer has misremembered a few things.

N. Flynn-Smith It was not a drunken party at that con. At least, what I can remember of it. All conventions have fans crawling around doing Harlan Ellison imitations and snorting Roach Pruf, don't they?

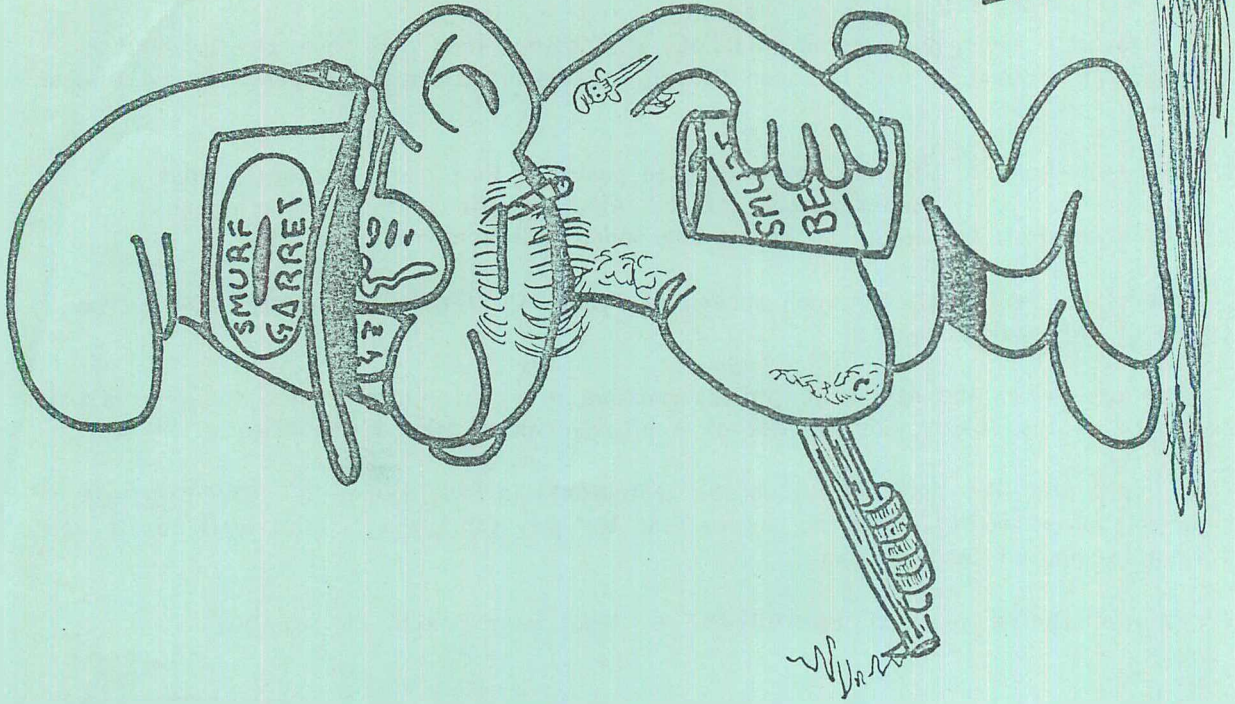
I applaud the article on open season on Trekkies. I have personally vaporized a dozen of the pesky buggers.

The article on the new I-95 pinball machine was really informative, though I'm not too sure of the action you can get on a pinball shaped like a Chevette.

I really did like that article on the restaurants in Providence, RI. The Concrete Kimono sounded really appealing, as well as the Gay Caballero. Can't wait to fly up for an evening of haut cuisine.

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