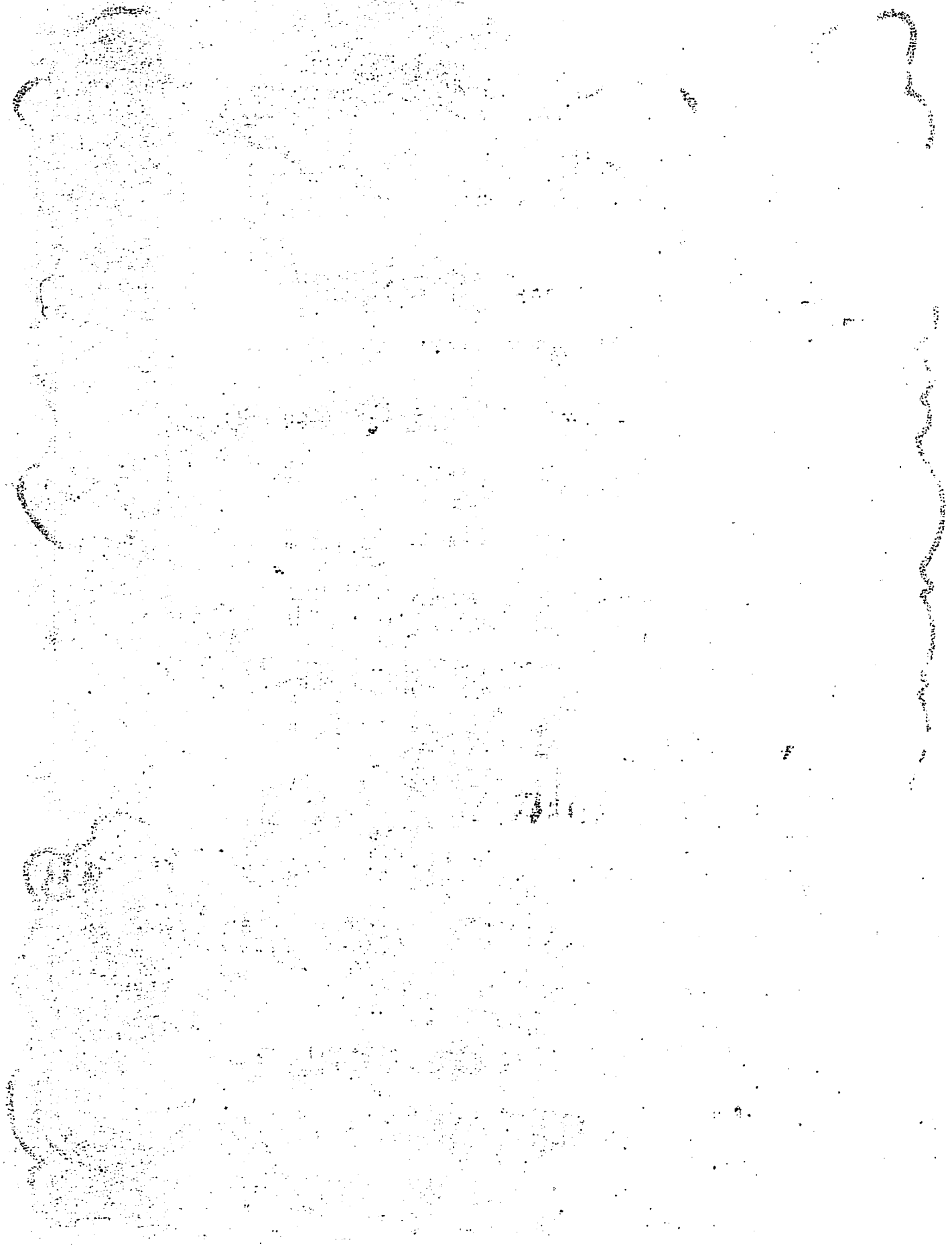


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ARTWORK

Jeff Kleiman - Front cover

Nancy Soellner-Federle --

Back cover

Stephen Leigh: 2, 9, 21

Lee Stevens: 4, 11-B, 13

Shari Lang: 27

Headings: Stephen Leigh

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getting familiar



Well, here I am, sitting at Bowers' borrowed selectric and thinking that maybe it will be easier this time... but it's really not. In fact, it's actually worse, even though I have a bit more self-confidence. You can slough off a great deal with a first issue...people won't be as tolerant with future efforts unless they're up to standard, whatever that is...

GRAYMALKIN made its debut at Midwestcon '78 and surprised a lot of people (Denise did a fanzine?), pleasantly, I hope. I felt uncomfortable walking up to people asking if they'd like a copy of my fanzine, more often than not just placing it in their hands and hurrying off, somewhat embarrassed. But I'll learn...

Midwestcon's still my favorite con...maybe because it was my first. The new site at the Holiday Inn was excellent, although the pool reeked of chlorine so I never got a chance to swim. The hotel people were amicable enough...especially the nightwatchman, who helped Tucker out in the S-M-O-O-T-H tradition and started the bidding at a fan auction...still wouldn't let us swim after hours, though.

Someone actually went up to Darrell Schweitzer and asked him to autograph the Barrell Switzer interview...and he did...enthusiastically, even. (I promised not to reveal the name of the fan who asked, even though she was put up to it.) Unfortunately I missed what I was told was the high point of the con...Mike Glicksohn shoved a piece of cake in Bowers' beard. (No, really, the con wasn't that boring...)

Oh, yes...I want to thank Mike Glicksohn for a wonderful time that Friday night in his room...Xenium was well worth the price. Bowers thought so too.

As you can see from the new address, Steve and I bought a house. What a scary proposition...closing on the day after Midwestcon, afraid at the last minute the bank would say no dice, we don't loan money to sf people, especially writers. But we're in, sort of, and the place is s-l-o-w-l-y beginning to look like home. Steve finally got a place to build his floor to ceiling bookcase and we even filled it, especially after the book-buying spree we went on at Rivercon. The neighborhood's quiet enough and there's plenty of parking space for CFG meetings, as long as it's not county fair week.

I'm still afraid to let my cats run free, though...too paranoid about losing losing them, I guess. Hell, I was panic-stricken the time Ali got locked inside a closet for two hours and I couldn't find her...sometimes I feel guilty about keeping the cats locked up inside, maybe they should be free to roam, but then I think of all the money I have invested in them and how I would feel if I lost

them. I think I'll just keep taking them out once a day and hope they don't get so used to it that they want to stay out all the time.

Anyhow, back to fanzine stuff. I think things are starting to shape up a bit. I'm beginning to know where this zine is going, although I won't commit myself by letting you know. (I learned that from the Bill Bowers School for Faneds.)

I really wasn't expecting any locs first issue, except maybe from a few friends. I have since found that most of my friends don't loc and was pleasantly surprised to receive letters from people I haven't met personally, so thanks everyone.

Also, I have to apologize for a typo made on Steve Federle's poem, "Sonata". The last line should have read: "The dark soil waiting for a plant". Makes better sense. Of course, Steve is convinced that I changed it to planet to make it fit in an sf fanzine. I really wouldn't do that, Steve...Bowers might, but I wouldn't dare. I'm even afraid to correct spelling errors in locs...

There were a lot of lesser typos, as Mike Glicksohn points out in his loc, but what do you expect from a professional typist? Okay, I'll be more careful...

...and onward to the serious side of this editorial. I think that I'm getting a reputation in fandom for being a flirt. An easy Leigh, so to speak. Well, I'm tired of this false image. Sure, I'm affectionate with people that I like, and I'll be the first to admit that I make friends quickly, if not lastingly. First impressions have usually been accurate, with some exceptions (I really do like you better now that I know you, Sid.) and I'm physical by nature (must be my hot Arab blood)...I like to touch. It makes me feel secure.

But I'm really not the aggressive person some would have you think. The flirting is usually a defense mechanism...it's acceptable for a female to flirt with a male, although when that female is happily married, people might tend to talk. And, although I wish it were otherwise, most of the women that I know were brought up to think that affection is usually not shared between people of the same sex, unless they happen to be relatives or long lost buddies. (I know, I should have said people rather than women.) So, consequently the only people I really can be affectionate with at cons are males, unless I wish to be known as a lesbian, which I am definitely not...although there have been times...

Being a product of an all-girl Catholic high school where I was taught to be affectionate with the other girls- hugging, kissing...just being friendly... I quickly found out that this was not the way to be outside. People would stare at you and call you queer. So now I'm conditioned to just be friendly to other women, unless they make the first move...too bad. I really think that what the world needs is more people who are willing to be physical. Not sexual...I mean physical. As a matter of fact I'm thinking of going to the worldcon with the idea of lobbying for the P.W.W.T.B.P. (People Who Want To Be Physical) movement. Move over Harlan.

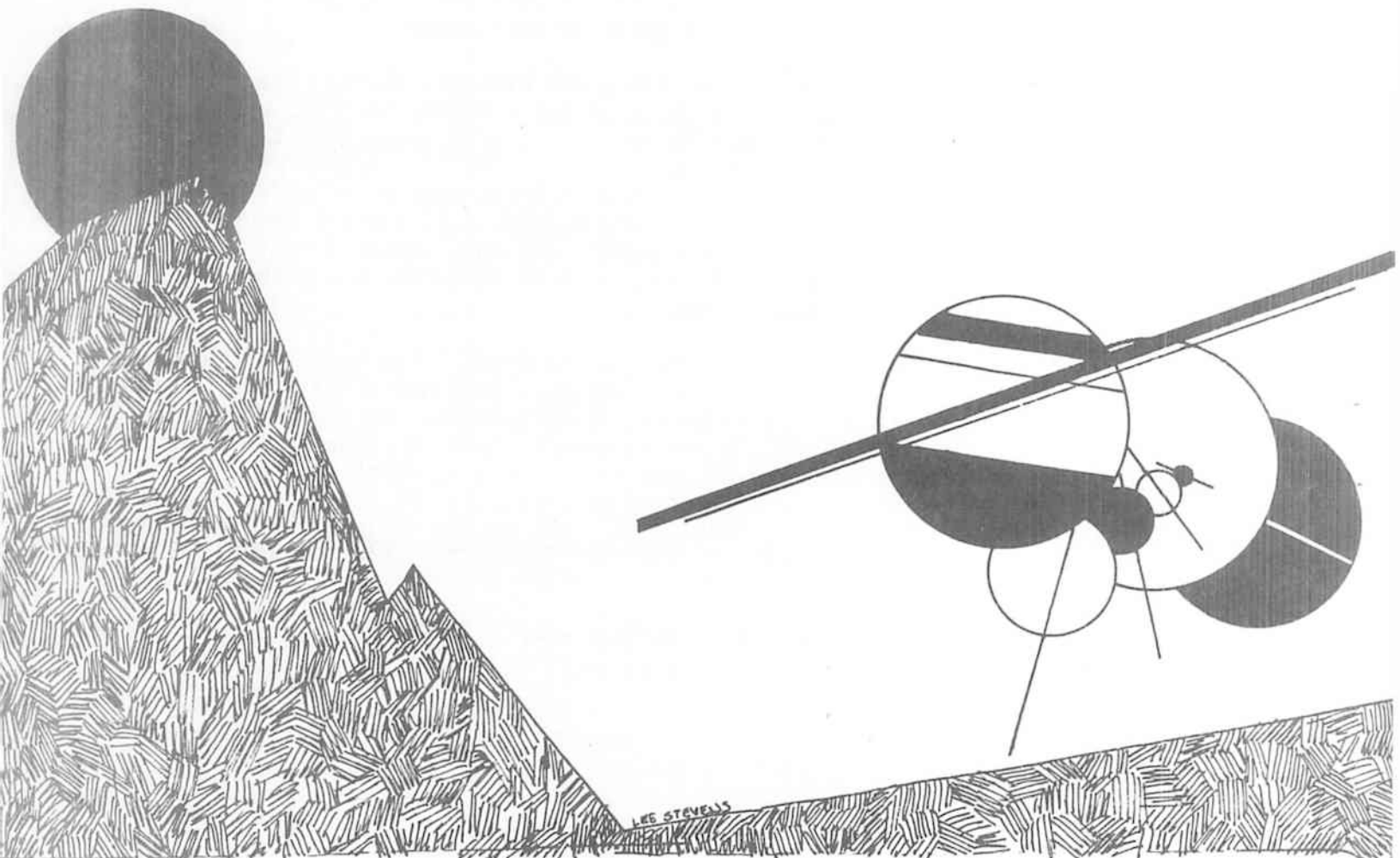
So if you see me at cons don't be afraid to come over...I promise I won't bite or try to put the make on you...I'll just try to be friendly.

I really do want to thank everyone who contributed to this issue...Bill Bowers, for the loan of his typewriter, and for helping me out by letting me publish his Autoclave speech. I know there were people waiting in line.

And I also want to thank Lee Stevens (He's really not Steve Leigh, you know.) for all of the interior artwork, and yes, even Steve Leigh, for his contributions and for proof reading the zine and making me retype so many pages...and for loving me in spite of the fact that I'm a big flirt...and anyone else I might have missed who helped out.

And while I'm on the subject of contributions...(Here's the pitch, folks!) anyone out there who would like to submit poetry, reviews, articles, artwork ...anything, really, that you think I might be interested in printing, will, I'm more than willing to look them over and if I like and can use them, I will. The only guarantee I make is to return what I can't use.

Well, I guess that's about it for now. I think I've got some interesting pieces this issue and I hope you like what I'm doing. If not, please feel free to have your opinions...and I'll have mine.



BILL BOWERS' THIRD IGUANACON PRACTICE SPEECH

...being notes toward a speech delivered at AUTOCLAVE 3, Sunday, July 23, 1978

...when, at MARCON, Leah asked me to make a speech to "break-up" the art auction, I said, "Sure...why not?". Sometimes "yes" is so easily said. But now, with AUTOCLAVE approaching next week...Still, my 2nd "Practice" speech was not written until much closer to its deadline...and we all know how well that one was received (particularly on the West Coast), don't we?

I do promise not to make a habit of this tardiness: I am happy to report to you that I *do* have the first page of my Worldcon Guest-of-Honor speech first-drafted. (Of course, a third of that was done three months ago...but I'm working on it.) As much as I'd like to, I just can't procrastinate this long on that one.

Real Soon Now.

Given the nature of AUTOCLAVE, one subject of necessity must be dealt with: fanzines. Given the timing of the delivery, another subject ties in aptly. So without further ado, what we have here (with apologies to Barry Gillam) is:

THE ART OF LIVING IN A FANZINE

Those with long memories, and Mike Glicksohn, will recall that at one time I had some familiarity with the concept of fanzines. No, children, it wasn't the glib extrovert that you see at conventions these days that necessitated these "practice" speeches. I still don't know *why* the Phoenix bidding committee chose me, but I have to believe that it has a lot to do with those many years when I was seldom seen (even at the cons I attended) -- but was often highly visible in your mailboxes.

And those days may well come again: OUTWORLDS has "rested" just about long enough.

Those who came upon OUTWORLDS during the mass-circulation "successful" years, probably have little idea of whence it came. Let me tell you a little bit about that...and the one factor I believe responsible for me being ~~stuck~~ up here this afternoon. More than the "names", the controversies, or the fact that I was (I think) the first to publish Jodie Offutt; more than the advertising or the unflagging promotion of small hairy people; more than any special gift or talent on my part, the one thing that made my fanzines stand out, was the art I (and my various co-editors) published.

I'm pretty certain of just why I'm visually oriented: The almost total lack of television, movies, comics and other essentially "visual" experiences until my late teens had to have created a void in my life that demanded filling. The fact that the deterioration of my eyesight was something I had to learn to live with from a very early age made me all the more determined to surround

myself with as much beauty as I possibly could. My choice of media may have changed in the past couple of years, but the goal remains the same.

I am not an artist. What I am is a draftsman with pretensions, who sometimes dabbles in doodles. Oh, I had the two years of high school art, and a teacher who loved my abstracts. But all I wanted to do was learn how to render realistically. "Anyone can do that," she said. But I couldn't.

Years later, when I was persuing commercial art in night school, I took one daytime "real" art course. One day, late into the quarter, after we'd played with the various media, I was sitting at the easel playing with a microscopic rapidiographic thingie, while the other students were doing wonderful things on a much vaster scale all around me. The teacher came, stood over me for awhile, and then, obviously puzzled, said something to the effect of: "All those exercises we did, and you still won't loosen up and let it flow...take a look at what Joe [or whoever] over there is doing..."

I told her that, indeed, what Joe-over-there was doing was fantastic, and that I admired immensely his ability to do it. But, I added, my admiration did not lead me to want to do work similiar to his: That was what *he* did. *This* is what *I* do...

Needless to say, I received a "C" out of that course...

Sure, I'd like to be able to create the wonderful worlds of Derek Carter, Grant Canfield, Tim Kirk, and so many others. And while there are those who say, in all sincerity, that I should de-emphasize the writing, the publishing (and I suppose the socializing) and concentrate on my "art", the fact remains that by doing what I did during the seven year OUTWORLDS-era, I was doing just that. Those 26 or 29 (depending on just how you count them) issues, those thousand plus pages, *are* my work-of-art. Whether I did them successfully or to your liking is beside the point: I did them for *me*, and I am pleased, even if never satisfied. For they are, indeed, only a prelude.. a rough sketch of the printed tapestry that I, with a lot of help from my very talented friends, *will* create before I die.

You are, with some justification, permitted to scoff, and to question the statement that there will probably be an OUTWORLDS 30 before the end of 1978.

The fact remains that I still believe, very much, that no matter how seldom it *is*, fanzine publishing *can* be a work-of-art.

When we started DOUBLE:BILL, in the post-CHICON enthusiasm of late 1962, neither Bill Mallardi nor I had ever *seen* a mimeograph before rushing out to buy one. True, I'd done a few fanzines before, but they were either run-off by others, or I did them on a hecktograph. (Yes, really!) But over the next seven years (there seems to be something about that number...) and 21 issues we worked at it, and while D:B was never quite the art-zine we wanted it to be, the artists we begged, cajoled, and flattered into submitting to us accounted in no small measure to D:B's success.

By the time I (with Joan's help) started OUTWORLDS in 1970, I had a pretty firm idea of what I wanted it to be: Something that flowed from issue to issue like a never-ending serial -- in other words, something that was greater than the sum total of its individual parts, or issues. No, I never accomplished that...but in a couple of stretches I think I came close.

The first two issues used up the backlog of left-over D:B material, and before OUTWORLDS started to attract its own contributors, with the fifth issue, well... The third issue was literally nothing but a short editorial, letters... and art. The fourth issue, offset in three colors on art stock (for a price I still can't believe) was editorial, letters, a Fabian portfolio, a Bowers "story" (there're quotes around that, folks!) profusely illustrated by Fabian...and more art.

The influence of those two issues, even though they were reviewed at the time as being all show and no content, helped shape OUTWORLDS more than any outsider could possibly realize.

Sure there has to be more than art, and to deny the appreciation I feel for the talented wordsmiths who have given me their creations would be both unseemly and untrue. Ironically, in that self-same art-dominated OUTWORLDS 4 there appeared a paragraph in a letter-of-comment that still, by and large, sums up what I believe to be a worthwhile philosophy of fanzine publishing:

The combining of art and written material into a consistent and cohesive unit is one of the most stimulating parts of fanzine publishing as far as I am concerned... Choosing the proper illos, placing them effectively, setting up the graphics, etc., are the only way an editor can really rise above the limits established by his contributors...

Those words were written, in 1970, by one Mike Glicksohn.

O.K., not everyone agrees with that basic concept of fanzine publishing. There is a philosophy that says that fanzines should be -- if not informal -- at least informal in appearance, citing any effort more than minimal at achieving layout, etc., as leading to that dread disease: pseudoprozineitis. Great writing is great writing, it is said, even if it is almost illegible.

Fine -- that's one of the continuing joys of fandom: there's room for almost everyone and for almost any possible form of communication, printed or otherwise.

And while I can and do admire the slickness of an Andy Porter, I can, and do, look with equal admiration on the graphic chaos of a Donn Brazier. You see, I can admire, and envy, what others do.

But I do what I do. And nobody else, even given the same material, can do it quite the way I do it. And, to me, that is the ultimate satisfaction of publishing a fanzine...and attaching my name to it.

I suppose I always knew that there was more to life than fanzines, but it took me one hell of a long time to break out from behind the shield of the typewriter and the printed page. And, over the past couple of years, as Bill Bowers-the-con-goer emerged from Bill Bowers-the-faned, I suppose I (ahem!) overdid it a bit. But that, too, is the way I do things.

What I want to say to you here today is this: No, I haven't forgotten from whence I came. ...and that in addition to providing me with uncountable hours of pleasure (and pain!) the fanzines I did, and lived, provided me not only with some degree of self-confidence in myself and my abilities -- but also, directly and indirectly, led me to finding the *people* I care for most: the ones I love, admire...and will even come to Detroit to see!

I have this theory that when I do resume publishing OUTWORLDS, or whatever, that the voyages of these past few years will be reflected therein to a noticable degree; that indeed what comes after 28/29 will be a direct continuance...but perhaps one step further along the road of my own self-discovery...than would have been the case if 30 would have come out when it "should" have. Do you know what I mean?

No matter where I go, or how long it takes me to get there -- I specialize in detours -- I will not forget that it was the world of fanzines that led me to the world of fandom that led me to the world of friends that led me to the (rather frightening) discovery that this tall, skinny, semi-blind body, and inhibited mind -- is, indeed, something of worth. Sure I still have my insecurities, my paranoias -- but what degree of self-assuredness I do possess today could not have been bought at any price, nor come from any self-improvement course. It came from my friends...those here today, those back in Cincinnati, those at "that other con" in Oklahoma...and those scattered over the world.

And, to collect these scattered thoughts into something resembling a conclusion:

Just once, I'd publically like to thank the more than 50 artists who contributed to OUTWORLDS: They never got their due in the letter columns (we all know the reasons why; we all have said that "Yes, I like that, but I don't know what else to say about it"), and all too often they are taken for granted, both by the readers and, unfortunately, the very editors who publish them. I'd just like to say to them that yes, they *are* appreciated and valued, and that the world of fanzines would be much the poorer and more drab without them.

And so would my world.

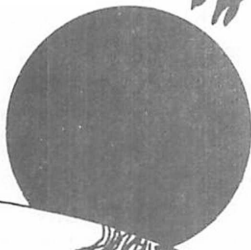
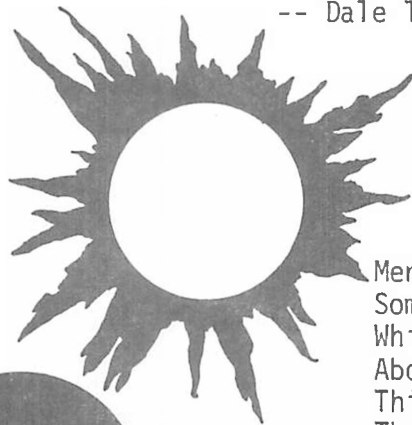
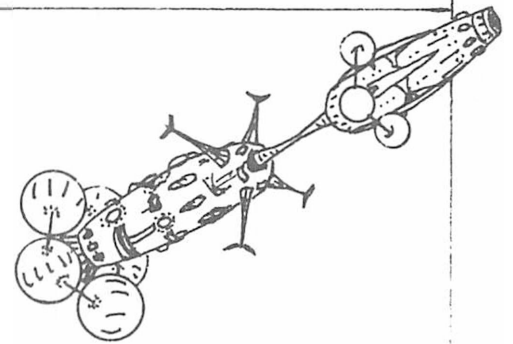
For, without them, I'm afraid we would have to say: "Fanzines, wherefore art thou!"

Bill Bowers (July 12, 13, & 15, 1978)

Invocation to the Infinite

The stars that seem so near and yet so far
Are calling now with all their distant charm
I wish I could, before I meet my fate,
Go seeking out the worlds that lie beyond.
Enchantment lies in the unknown and I wish for
One voyage in infinity,
That vastness where no earthly foot has pressed.
It may come with death.
Meanwhile I sit and dream of stars and space,
The glory of the cosmos, the immense
Celestial fires.
The juggernaut, infinity, I have made
An endless subject of my mind's desires.

-- Dale Tarr



On Desire

Men like to sit and tell of what they dream
Some want a cabin by a mountain stream
While others want no shelter but the skies
Above a small Pacific paradise.
This, then, is what I wish to know;
The dangerous lambent fire of alien eyes
The thunder of a monster as it dies
The rocket's flaming flow.
A frontier, like the future, far too great
For man to comprehend or consummate
Its exploration. So,
Give me the one and only girl, and I
Would wander with the rocket's flaming flow
To do and die.

-- Dale Tarr

SLeigh

Caterwauling

STEPHEN LEIGH

...yet I received a 4.0 last quarter, without any exertion but a last minute surge of finishing. Again my ability to over-awe with sheer verbage -- verbal garbage -- has stood the test of the Professors. Style

has once again emerged triumphant over content.

-- from a journal: March 25, 1974

I was not formed for the arts, in which I now work -- playing music, writing, occasionally sloughing off pieces of mediocre art. I was born to be a politician. Yes, scoff, ye skeptics. I could've been rich. But somewhere along the line I lost an ability -- more or less deliberately. That ability (some might preface that last word with dis-, considering the species to which I refer) is innate to every politico I've ever met. They can talk. They form gigantic and glowing circles and spirals in the air, lanced by wands of cerulan fire. The forms seem to burn and sear the atmosphere as they slowly rotate around the speaker. But the fire is a short duration, and cannot stand scrutiny. If examined, the fire is found to be phosphorescent paint, and the colors that shimmer there fade quickly, leaving a wash of raw umber.

I could do that, once. I could speak in public, I could argue great sophmoric subjects with others of my ilk. I don't do it anymore. I merely sound foolish to myself when I try.

In the eighth grade, that huge black and white monument to institutional insanity, Sister Rose Julie, insisted that I represent our school in a debate. She was, at the time, suffering from some malady of the mind common to those who wear tight veils and deal with children. She was later to insist to my parents that I desperately needed psychological counseling, as I was a "very troubled, if gifted, child." Huh. My parents, mildly curious, no doubt, as to the extent of my descent into "trouble", conferred with the principal, another nun who wore her veil less tightly than Rose Julie -- gives better circulation, y'unnerstan'. The principal informed them that they were not to pay any attention to SRJ. Rose Julie was herself removed from teaching duties the next year, reduced to knitting doily crucifixes in some back room of the nunnery -- probably with blunted knitting needles, lest she hurt herself. And yes, I did drift from the main subject in the last few sentences.

Fine. I did fairly well in the regional debate, though not spectacularly. I placed midway in the upper half of debators. All I remember of the debate was that I attempted to use one of the many words that I had read and understood, but had never spoken -- a situation which still occurs from time to time. "Coup." Which I pronounced phonetically, not being cognizant of its foreign origins. I was duly reprimanded by the judges, and, embarrassed, stumbled over the next few lines I tried to speak.

But I was a debator. As SRJ told me, speaking down from the swirling folds of black cloth, if you can write as well as I, you can speak well. As one never argues with God and those who speak with His voice, I didn't disagree.

It's odd -- as a vague memory tugs at my mind -- but I can remember watching a Disney movie in which a banshee, encased in howling winds and dressed all in constantly-moving black cloth, figured prominently. I first thought the banshee was a nun. But then, you never know about the damned devout Irish.

I can also recall (back on the subject, again) walking down Calhoun Street in the university section of town. One of the overly-sincere young, ahh, "Jesus Freaks" that were making their first (thankfully, brief) appearances before their main assault of the last few years, stopped me with a quote from his bible. That book, I remember, was covered with that odd and barely-decipherable script of the times, done in baby blue and orange. The letters never seemed to gain solidity. I was feeling expansive at the time, and willing to spend a few minutes talking, I answered. The minute turned into an hour, but during that time I twisted the poor fool unmercifully. It helped that he had a room temperature I.Q. I pointed out every inconsistency I knew in that particular book of myths he was holding, and he stutteringly tried to point out the error of my thinking. In time, he was only listening, nodding occasionally at my points, and even agreeing with the veracity of my words. Seeing this, I began playing Devil's Advocate with myself, as he tried to convince me that I was wrong. Ahh, he of little faith.

I can't do that anymore. I wouldn't.

As words typed on paper have become more and more important to me, the ability to verbalize (at least in any quick fashion) has atrophied. I was never what could be called a gregarious or extroverted personality -- and I hear that snickering from the sidelines, friends. But on subjects I felt strongly about -- and even those I didn't -- I was more than willing to match wits. Your choice of sides. Perhaps it was because I had just passed from Catholic to Agnostic, with the attendant inner conflict and debate. But as I became more involved in the stories I was writing (though they were stories for the drawer at the time -- I had no confidence to send them out) I became less intent on verbal battle.

...even at our most serious, Earl and I remained bantering, but there was an edge of bitterness. The arguments on whatever subjects were less important than the simple pleasure of verbal victory, the triumph of our respective mental quickness over the other, seeing who could fastest find the flaws in the other's words... we felt the aura of combat of conversation.

It becomes a matter of face, again; proving to the other that you possess the readiest mental facility and that he has chosen a fallacious line to defend. It relates to the blatant art of insult, but this is far more ego-destructive. Insults are coarse, and only demean the one insulted without exalting the accuser, who is at best "witty" but never intelligent. With insult, also, the insulter runs the risk of appearing mentally deficient, reduced to hurling garbage because he lacks the ability to do real damage to his enemy's stance... It is far more destructive to deflate one's full and immense tower of words and show it to be faulty in

logic-structure than to turn your back and cast doubts about the builder's parentage. The latter course does nothing about the tower -- it still remains in inflated majesty...

-- from the same journal, April 4, 1974

An odd thing just now -- a breeze snuck in the window and wafted the last page of this diatribe (in a perfect parabola) into the center of the wastebasket next to the desk. Is the massed karma of potential readers at work, or am I simply reading symbolism into coincidence?

Now, keeping a journal is *really* pretentious.

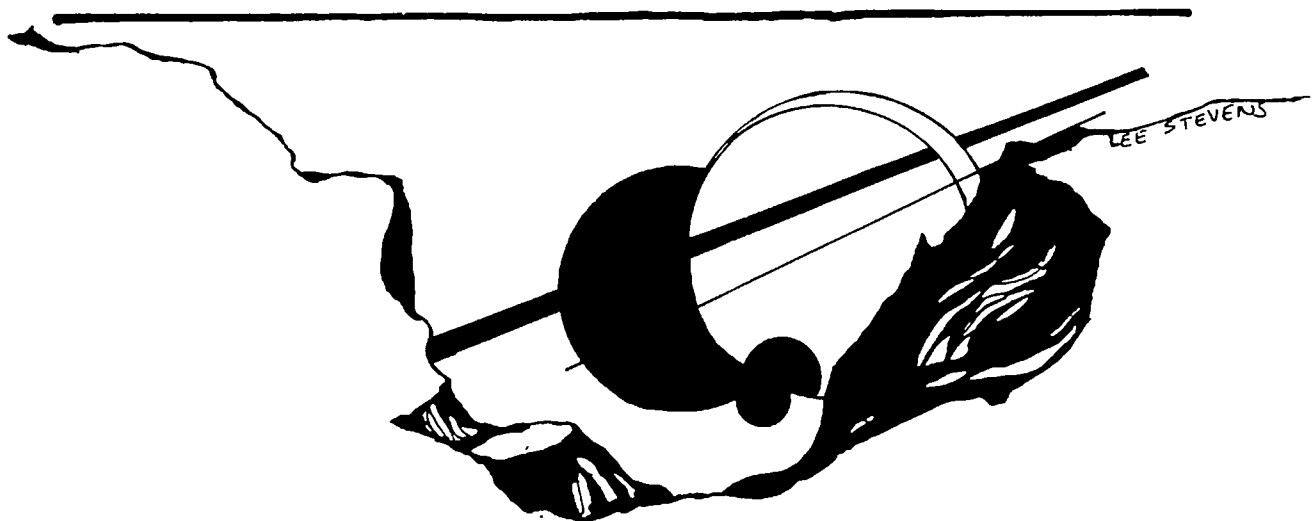
Hypothesis number one: all writers are essentially failed politicians, shouting up and down the streets "look, I have something funny/important/entertaining/philosophical to show you." Does this mean andy offutt is a sexier version of Abraham Lincoln?

Writers are able to monopolize your time. They get to show you worlds of which you might not be aware -- truths that are seemingly apparent only to them. The leaders of this country or any other not only get to tell you these universal truths, but they get to do unto you. How much more satisfying to make real people move than to maneuver fictional characters. Far more entertaining.

What! You actually thought I was out to make some valid point with this excess of words? Certainly not.

I think I began moving with certainty toward the written end of the spectrum when talking to a young lady, a classmate in college that I was trying very hard to impress -- not being an athlete, this meant I had to be "intellectual." We walked around campus, and I kept up a running commentary on life in general. I ranted with impassioned fervor, watching the rapture in her face. She never once took her eyes from me (I was holding them in my left hand, I believe): I was scornful, I was bitter, I was wittily sarcastic. The ghost of Samuel Johnson nodded maned head over my shoulder while behind the ghostly bulk some spectre Boswell took copious notes. As I finished with a grandeloquent display of verbal artillery, she turned to me, and with the most biting sarcasm I've yet to hear contained in the fragile vessel of the human voice, said: "Christ, you sound like the refuse of my philosophy prof's lecture."

And she was right.



2 reviews

LUCIFER'S HAMMER: Larry Niven and Jerry Pournelle; Fawcett Crest; 1977

A brief prelude before the review -- since both Steve and Denise have asked me to step out briefly and respond to numerous allegations and theories concerning myself -- a particularly useless waste of time, in my estimation. It seems that Dame Fate, in her game of Cosmic Coincidence, has once more dealt out an odd hand. For the doubters, be it noted here that Lee Stevens is not Stephen Leigh. We don't even care for the same music -- he (rather pretentiously, if truth must be told) prefers the Germanic Melodrama of Mahler and Wagner, while I lean toward the pleasant dissonances of medieval music. And if Leigh and Parsley Leigh have their way, I may well be convinced to enter the nether world of fandom at Iguanacon.

Crystal-clear, indeed. (He sniffs with offended dignity, waving a perfumed hand...)

So: LUCIFER'S HAMMER.

I hate books of this sort. They grab at you with jeweled claws as you pass the bookrack. Lights flicker in hypnotic fashion behind faceted ruby eyes, and you hear muffled laughter from beyond the cover, intimating at the great fun to be had inside.

And I, who doth protest that I only care for fiction with something beyond simple entertainment value, blush guiltily as I reach for my wallet.

I *did* have to have *something* to read at lunch.

It was, after all, a cut-and-dried proposition: a comet crashes into the earth. You take about a quarter of the book to lead up to the pending crisis, give a brief section describing the disaster, and then dwell on the survivor's attempts to pick themselves up by their proverbial bootstraps. Mix in a fair amount of sex and violence for those who can't stand their literature without an overabundance of spices, blend with a gigantic cast (can't have a movie without tons of stars), and -- voila! -- an instant best seller with (considering the current state of Hollywood) a nearly guaranteed movie sale. The Proper Disaster Novel, born of the twin parents British Disaster Novel and American Appetite For The Sensational: a bi-national hybrid, good looks but low intelligence.

It is, also, a natural *regression* progression from THE MOTE IN GOD'S EYE, the authors' last collaboration. MOTE had the same largeness of cast, the same breadth of scope, the same non-sequential style. When I read MOTE (a book I enjoyed immensely, by the way) I still felt that the authors should have focused more directly on fewer protagonists, rather than using the sawed-off shotgun method of characterization, which leads to a plethora of cardboard. Well, Niven and Pournelle have gone the other route, taking a large and clumsy hacksaw to the shotgun's barrel and amputating it somewhere east of the trigger. The truncated weapon spits out a virtual nation of characters for LUCIFER'S HAMMER, none of which receive a surplusage of attention from the authors. By necessity, the characters

stay one-dimensional, somewhat haphazardly motivated, moving in a world of semi-cliches. Harry Newcombe is your typical iconoclastic young person, Alim Nassor a stock black activist, Col. John Baker the Heroic Astronaut. Alas for plumbing the depths of a character. There are no depths here, only everlasting and transparent shallows.

And in the hands of incompetents, the lurching monstrosity would have been everlastingly boring as it stumbled (wet around the ankles) from the swamp -- except, perhaps, for those simply out for an afternoon's reading amongst the cute little goldfish without fear of running into anything that might alarm, or especially educate, them. Unfortunately, Niven and Pournelle are not incompetent.

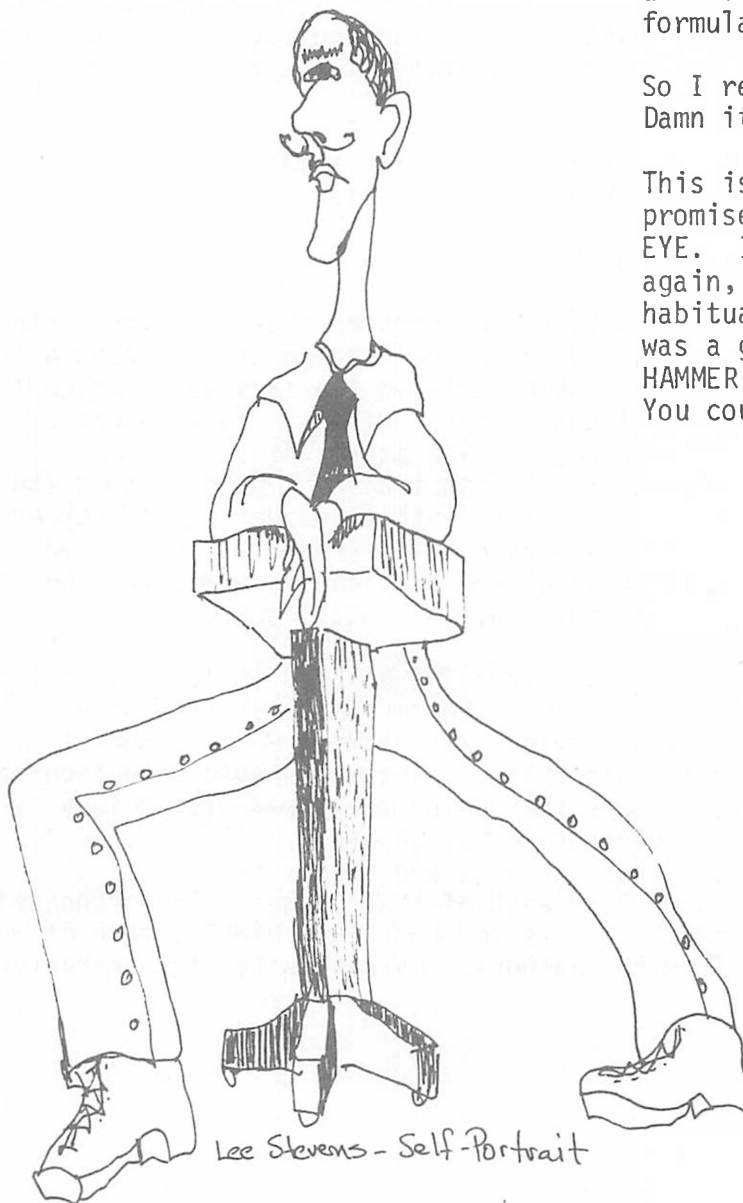
Damn it.

The book will sell. It is -- as a friend put it -- commercial as hell, and decently written to boot. It holds your interest, and the faults are all well-greased. They don't gig you with sharp hooks as you slide past them, merely prick you annoyingly. This might have been a very good book (as opposed to a Great book), and it is merely good because of its adherence to all the formulas for disaster books of recent vintage. Niven and Pournelle are writers of more than formula capability.

So I repeat, wailing against the winds:
Damn it!

This isn't the book that continued the promise I felt with THE MOTE IN GOD'S EYE. It isn't a book I'll ever read again, in all likelihood -- and I habitually re-read my favorites. But it was a good afternoon. Read LUCIFER'S HAMMER, with my hedging recommendation. You could do worse, I suppose.

-- Lee Stevens



Lee Stevens - Self-Portrait

STRANGE GLORY - AWAKENING MAN'S LATENT POWER: Edited by Gerry Goldberg; St. Martins Press; 1977, \$5.95

I ordered this, sight unseen, because I understood it to be an SF and fantasy art collection, boasting such names as Cartier, Finlay, Bok, and Fabian.

Let me just say that I am amazed that so much quality material can be brought together and blended with such a hodge-podge of miscellaneous junk that the format of the entire book can only be described as trash.

This is a book I am either going to give away to the first person who wants it or (more likely) let lay around until I get tired of seeing it and throw it away.

-- Arthur Metzger

A SWIFTLY TILTING PLANET: Madeleine L'Engle; Farrar, Straus, Giroux; 1978; \$7.95

A SWIFTLY TILTING PLANET is the third volume in the ongoing saga of the Murry children, dealing largely with Charles Wallace, the youngest, who has the special ability to "kyth" with his older sister, Meg. "Kything" is a lot like telepathy, although Charles Wallace can actually go "within", or become, the person he is "kything" with.

Plot synopsis: A mad dictator from South America, Madog Branzillo, has threatened to destroy the earth. Charles Wallace is given a Rune by Mrs. O'Keef, Meg's mother-in-law, to try to save the world. Along with a unicorn named Gaudior, Charles Wallace travels backwards in time to go "within" the person whose "might-have-been" could change the present.

Unicorn and child follow an old Welsh legend that a prince of Gwynedd named Madoc left Wales with his brother Gwydyr because they had no wish to fight for the throne. Supposedly they landed in the New World before the Vikings and dwelt with an Indian tribe, The Children of the Wind. After Gwydyr attempts to fight Madoc for the hand of the Indian princess, Zyll, he is expelled from the tribe. Thus, Gwydyr heads for South America and Madoc marries Zyll, splitting the line between the "good" (Madoc) and the "evil" (Gwydyr). The time traveling deals with Charles Wallace going "within" the descendants of Madoc, trying to find out how Madog Branzillo fits in so that he can prevent his birth from Gwydyr's line.

Lots of action and bits of magic make A SWIFTLY TILTING PLANET a good read, especially if you enjoyed L'Engle's previous books, A WRINKLE IN TIME and A WIND IN THE DOOR. She's a competent children's writer, and as the Murry children grow older L'Engle seems to be reaching for a larger age group, which is fine if you're a so-called adult like me who virtually thrives on children's fantasy.

-- DPL

FANZINE REVIEWS

Welcome to the first installment of a fanzine column of sorts. Not really a fanzine review column, because opinions expressed herein will be just that, opinions, totally subjective. Although the author of this column hopes these opinions will be taken as constructive criticism, which they are meant to be, he also realized that one or two people at whom this constructive criticism is aimed will, aside from being angered by it, let it go in one ear and out the other.

This particular column will discuss mainly locally published fanzines, though future installments may be more diversified.

To start, we will look at the oldest of Cincinnati's current crop of fanzines, QUANTUM. (But though it is Cincinnati's oldest fanzine, it is by no means as old as the cover of the current issue would have us believe, but the error is corrected in the editorial. QUANTUM is by far the most professional looking of Cincinnati's fanzines, beautifully laid out with press-typed titles and multi-typefaces. Unfortunately, looks are often deceiving, and this is beginning to be no exception. It's my feeling that the quality of contents, both written contributions and artwork, are on a decline. There is definitely something wrong when the editorials are the high point of the issue.

This particular issue features two pieces of fan fiction (as opposed to short stories) by someone named John Kelly, a name I'm not familiar with. The first is a very short piece titled "Uncle Marty's Utopia", as pointless a piece of writing as I've ever read. Later in the issue is another piece by Kelly titled "The Quark War", not quite as bad as the first but unfortunately longer.

Another unfamiliar name is Basil Shroppford Sloane, author of this issue's "Public Broadcasting: Calling in the Markers", a mildly amusing parody of PBS fund drives, attributing control of such publicly funded stations to the Mafia.

Artwork this issue varies widely from the excellent to the incredibly bad, or, if you wish, from Streff to Rodak. There is also a lovely piece by yet another unfamiliar name, C. L. Healy.

Next in the stack is GNOMENCLATURE #2, a personal fanzine from one of the editors of QUANTUM, Allen Curry. GNOMENCLATURE is like a smaller version of QUANTUM, which only proves that you can indeed get something from nothing. Mildly interesting letters, above average fannish cartoons by Curry, some nice artwork and not a whole lot else. I'm not quite sure I approve of charging for what is ostensibly a perzine.

THRU BLACK HOLES is the first issue of a new Cincinnati fanzine published by Michael Rodin. I will refrain from saying too much about it, since it is a first issue, but, going by what I like to see in a fanzine, I feel that there is a great deal of room for improvement. I can find nothing in the issue to latch onto,

and one tends to page through the whole thing and then forget it completely. It does have some nice artwork by the editor, though, certainly the best thing in the issue. Definitely not worth the dollar price tag.

From the same person comes a very lovely portfolio of artwork in an illustrated envelope. This is a high quality production and both artwork and printing are excellent.

Less easy to forgive is CO-AX, a "fanzine", so to speak, published by someone who is fond of referring to himself as a professional writer. CO-AX is about as far as you can get from a professional looking magazine and still be between two covers. #3 is seven pages long -- that sounds short, but there's a lot less here than meets the eye.

The issue opens with the editorial -- explaining how editor Mike Banks will be starting yet another fanzine. Following this is a one-page article titled "Space, Inc." that I'm afraid I don't understand.

Next is a letter column, two letters...a news section telling you where you too can find Mike Banks in print...and fanzine reviews.

All in all, this looks very much like a high school production (very early high school), which it certainly should not, with the background boasted within.

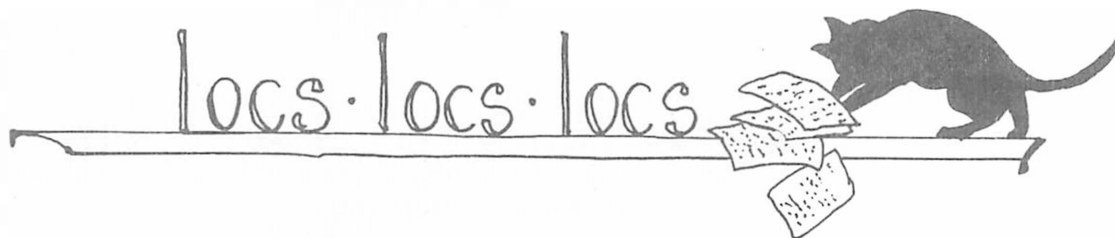
-- Arthur Metzger

QUANTUM: Edited by Allen Curry and Mike Streff, 3904 W. Liberty, Cinti., OH 45205,
\$1.00 or 6/\$5.00

GNOMENCLATURE: From the above address, but at \$.50 an issue

THRU BLACK HOLES: Edited by Michael Rodin, 982 White Oak Drive, Cinti., OH 45245
\$1.00

CO-AX: Edited by Michael Banks, P.O. Box 312, Milford, OH 45150, 4/\$2.00



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

I'm not at all sure I ought to be bothering myself with a fanzine that is not only named after a cat, is not only dedicated to two cats, but even comes with a picture of two ugly looking creatures of catlike appearance on the back cover. As Han Solo was wont to say, I've got a bad feline about this. But I'm damn sure that if I'm going to respond I'm not going to do it sober so if you'll excuse me...

There, that's better. Good scotch can even make cats temporarily tolerable and I suppose a fanzine that starts out with a picture of Goldie Hawn on the cover can't be all bad.

I congratulate you on your virgin venture into the field of fanzine publishing even while warning you of the possible consequences of your act. Remember that Bowers started out like this and look at him now! Is that a fate you'd want for even your worst enemy, let alone yourself? Why not quit now that you've proven you can do it and do it passingly well and take up needlepoint instead?

Seriously, this is a competent first issue; neatly produced, quite decent to look at, and with at least one very superior piece of writing. Speaking from experience I can assure you that being married to your star writer is a sure-fire way to gain fame, egoboo and Hugo nominations! Although you'll definitely have to drop out of the Bill Bowers School For Spelling And Typing On Stencil/Master if you want to go all the way to the top...*[[[But I'm trying, Mike... Bill just doesn't flunk too many people.]]]*

The serious part of your editorial remarks strikes a very empathic chord within me. Obviously I can't truly comprehend the sense of frustration you must feel being trapped in a dead end job you can't be happy at since I've been lucky enough to find a career that is rewarding in just about every sense of the word but I can definitely relate to your concerns about your own creativity. In fact, I started my first fanzine 8 and a half years ago for essentially the same reason you give here. I'd never done anything creative, I'd never had any talent, and for the previous two or three years I'd been associating with a lot of really talented people. I wanted to prove, to myself and to fandom, that I *did* have something to offer, even if it was only in the realm of secondary creativity, working with the creative output of the real talents in the field. It would be hard to say, from this vantage point, whether or not that was a wise choice on my part. By achieving a certain level of ability within fandom I've managed to satisfy the very low-key ambitions that lie within me but it's just possible that if I hadn't become so deeply involved in fanzines I might have gone on to do something *really* creative, such as writing as well as Steve does. Because I'm so

lazy, I'll probably never know but I can't honestly say I worry overly much about it. Fandom has been good to me and good for me and while I still admire enormously the many truly creative people I've come to know in the last nine years I've also realized that there are a couple of things I can do pretty well. When you add in an acceptance of the fact that not all of us can be world-shakers --even of pretty small worlds-- I guess publishing a fanzine was a pretty good decision on my part. I hope it will be equally so for you.

And one other thing: you have a talent, an ability that I know I envy and I gather Steve wishes he had it too. You may not believe that it's a creative thing, but I'd give a great deal to be able to do it, and it certainly establishes you as a very worthwhile person, and an appendage of no-one. I refer, of course, to that seemingly innate ability of yours to make friends and be at ease with strangers. You never seem to be shy, like Steve and I. Yes, he sighed, I'm shy too; I've just had twelve years in fandom to erect a facade of affability to hide behind. I often wish I had the sort of talent that you have for entering so quickly into groups of relative strangers. So be proud of yourself and who you are and what you can do: you've got every right to be. And I never once had to point out what an incredibly foxy lady you are, you'll notice...*[[[If this doesn't let up soon I'll have to get my wading boots out]]]* (One thing I've realized in years of associating with the greats, near-greats, averages and non-entities -- whether those be external or internal classifications -- is that no matter what you may think of yourself there is always someone else who admires the hell out of you and wishes they were like you. Do you suppose that "Be yourself" could actually be a viable way of living after all?)

Steve's First Contact story creates a great many different feelings in me. Foremost there is admiration for how well crafted it is; I'm not at all familiar with Steve's professional writing (except from the complimentary things various CFG people say but most of them like Bowers so how much credence can be given to their esthetic tastes?) but this is a fine example of fan writing and I certainly hope you can get him to write a regular column for you. When I think of my first contribution to a fanzine I wonder if maybe I should take up needlepoint!

Second there is a cold feeling of what amounts to shock when I realize how close we all came to missing out on your friendships. If Steve's first impressions had convinced Denise not to go we might all have been deprived of two very enjoyable and rewarding friendships. It's appalling to realize how serendipitous much of our lives can be. And I'm sure I'm only one of many who is delighted that Denise's nature was such that the two of you were made to feel more at home on your third swing at fandom.

And lastly I feel embarrassed by the treatment Steve got on his first sortie among fans. Embarrassed not only because it's that sort of treatment, deliberate or not, that creates the impression and the rumours that fandom is elitist as all hell and also because I strongly suspect that if I'd been one of the people Steve passed that day I probably would have acted much as those he describes did.

In the first place, I wouldn't have recognized his name since I don't read much sf and almost never read the prozines anymore. And not recognizing his name I probably wouldn't have engaged him in conversation, thereby adding to his feeling of alienation. This wouldn't have been because I'm a snob, or unfriendly, or cold though. Part of it would have been my preoccupation with finding all my friends whom I might not have seen for several weeks or even months but to an even larger extent it would have been because I'm *just as shy* as Steve is. I simply don't feel at ease with people I don't know; I'm not very good at casual conversation, and I don't really have very much to say to people, unless I happen to know them through fandom, of course. Put two people like Steve and I together and it isn't surprising that not much in the way of social interaction occurs. Anyway, I'm glad Steve didn't let his first impressions put him off completely and that now he's enjoying his fannish contacts. And who knows, maybe someday he and I will actually talk to each other...

I found the Switzer piece rather dull, I'm afraid. It's an amusing idea but hardly enough to justify three pages.

I don't know a great deal about the Betty Boop (who I suppose is the same as the "Betty Bpp!" who appears on page 16? Undoubtedly Bowers proofread that page) cartoons but the thing that I remember best about them was how well they were drawn and animated which Nancy doesn't go into. There was an almost surrealistic quality to the animation that makes most of today's Hanna-Barbara style rubbish look pathetic indeed. I also found it odd, and refreshingly so, that Nancy chose to discuss the Betty Boop films in terms of their sociological significance instead of pointing out their sexist qualities. Probably the lettercolumn in #2 will rectify that omission though.

I haven't read the books reviewed so I'll say nothing about the book reviews. And since that's the end of the fanzine I guess it's the end of this loc. I'm sorry I couldn't find anything to say but slim first issues don't inspire much comment usually. I'll try to do better next time...assuming there *is* a next time.

Have fun in your new career. And if you ever give gregariousness lessons I'll sign on for a full course! ...Did I *really* do or say anything Friday night of Midwestcon that I'll be embarrassed to find out about? I'd really like to know...

[[[Actually, Mike, you have nothing to be ashamed of...you performed quite well. But then only the three of us know the whole truth, and we'll never tell.]]]

[[[Oh, yes, and if you get much longer in your letters, assuming you'll write again, I'll have to up the cost of the zine to cover the extra plates...thanks for the kind words, and they were "kind"...I appreciate it.]]]

Finally!

The true story of a Friday night at Midwestcon... in a hairy fan's room ... and what happened there!

THIS FALL IN XENIUM BOOKS.
WATCH FOR IT !!!

(Better than lime jello!)

An epic of perverted sex and terror
"AND THEN THEY WERE THREE"

Eric Lindsay -- from somewhere in the US of A:

You may not have seen John Bergrand's advice on how to loc first editors of fanzines. It goes: "write 'thank you for your fanzine' or if you don't appreciate getting the thing, use some elegant variation such as 'I have received your fanzine.'" Thank you for giving me GRAYMALKIN at Rivercon, and for making me an offer I couldn't refuse (does Steve get to read your fan mail?) *[[[Yes -- Steve]]]*. Question for Steve the writer -- when closing a parantheses, thus -- ? how do you also indicate the end of a paragraph? I gave up on that. I asked this question instead. Oh, well, writing is not my strongest subject.

[[[Steve again: Nor is it mine. Ask anyone who has read one of my stories.]]]

Don't believe Bowers -- when I first met him, back in '73 *[[[18 or 19?]]]* he was a timid individual. Since then he has had his cats attack changed as a means of getting introductions to pretty women sitting by swimming pools.

The Midwest is the best place for cons (says he, having tried them on three continents) if you like a relaxed and informal atmosphere. The CFG people must be about the heights (depths? slumps?) of relaxed fandom. Bill Bowers has been so relaxed that for two years no one has heard from him (if you exclude xenophiles).

I went on to work from school, and have worked diligently for 10 these long years, and all I have to show for it all is a penchant for taking long holidays and writing long, boring, and badly written letters. Also hanging on to jobs I don't particularly like because of security needs (just wait until I get to be a millionaire, then I'll be more adventurous and like that).

[[[I probably shouldn't have been so emphatic about hating my job... really, the people are very nice and the job's not bad, as jobs go...but in the back of my mind there's still occasionally a thought about how it might have been.]]]

Steve's con report is very nice -- he is indeed a writer. My con reports are a real drag, although I have the solace of telling myself. His picture of the shy fan saying "to hell with these in-groupish people" is perfect, but how have you left him in that state with a year of cons behind him. Get to work and invert the wallflower. Get him to act like a famous loud-mouthed pro (on second thoughts, let's not go too far, one Jerry Pournelle in fandom is all it can take) or at least wear a bright and big name tag. *[[[watch for Steve Leigh's coming out party at Iggycon]]]* And, yes, indeed you will be damned on involving yourself with fandom.

Loved the interview. Great stuff.

Reviews -- is Lee Stevens for real? Reasonable reviews, both, but of books I doubt I will ever read, unless I chance upon the Franz Werfel novel.

Hope to see you all at Iquanacon or at Windycon or Octocon or somewhere.



SLEIGH

Reed Andrus, 1651 E. Paulista Way, Sandy, Utah 84070:

What's wrong with wanting to see a copy of your zine? I ain't *that* provincial! Besides, Arthur said you were a foxy lady, *[[[Arthur lied.]]]* and I wanted to see how that manifested itself in a zine, chauvinist that I am. And of course, I'd loc, because you are Arthur's friend and because it is a first effort (I generally try to support first efforts, remembering the fears and trepidation caused when I sent my first issue out into the cold cruel world). But Jesu X. Diety! What is with this "famous Reed Andrus" bit in your note? Coming from the lady of a publishing pro, that leaves me a bit stunned, and not a little suspicious of what kind of information Arthur has been passing around the group back there. Arthur passes around a lot of things, especially out, and I'd check with my doctor before going to the WorldCon -- you may need an inoculation or two. *[[[Arthur must have lied again.]]]*

Nah, can't make the biggie in Phoenix, citing money probs as the usual reason. It's a bit frustrating. This is probably the closest the WorldCon's ever gonna come to SLC for a millenia or two. My only con this year will be MileHiCon in Denver at the end of October. It's a western version of Midwestcon in that it's fairly unstructured, low key, and a helluva lot of fun. This year will be my third time. I keep saying that I'm gonna get back for a Middie, but it doesn't ever seem to work out. Art keeps pushing Lou to get me as a fan GoH, but Lou doesn't remember who I am, and I don't really blame him.

[[[Art and I will be starting a campaign to bring you to next year's Midwestcon, just so that I get a chance to meet you. Watch it, tho...if you don't come up with another fanzine soon you'll be known as Utah's Bill Bowers.]]]

But...getting to your zine. The cover was nice; the girl has the faraway look of a witch fixing on an intended victim with the title sitting just behind her shoulder as a familiar would. *[[[The artist, Earl House, is a good friend and I'm literally begging him for more material. But he seems to be kept quite busy in Dallas doing free lance artwork. Maybe now he'll take the hint.]]]* You do know that Graymalkin was the name of the familiar in Fritz Leiber's GATHER, DARKNESS? Or was it? I forget. Anyway, effective introductory cover.

Staying with the art for a minute, I think I recognize the Rotsler illo on page four. *[[[Yes, Arthur was cleaning out his files and came across some HARBINGER leftovers. Thanks, Reed.]]]*

Don't be so deprecatory about your writing/editorial. There's nothing wrong with it. You come on a tad defensive about the assertion part, however, and then quit. I'd like to see more of you in the zine. I get the impression you don't really know where the zine is going, but that's all right because it's the first issue. If you find you like pubbing, the zine will structure itself. I found that out with HARBINGER. My advice (unsolicited, of course) would be to drop other contributors and keep the zine to yourself and Steve, with the bulk of the writing falling to you. The zine would be your observations, reviews if possible, and letters. It all depends on how serious you are. And, naturally, if there is

anything I can do to help, be it locking, contribing, or general nit-picking, feel free to ask. One day we'll meet and we can compare first issues and laugh over the lack of self-confidence that was such a huge worry at the time.

It strikes me that you might be passing through Salt Lake on your way to WorldCon, so may I extend an invitation to crash with us or at least share a meal or two and see the sights if you have the time and are so inclined.

[[[Thanks for the advice, Reed. I like the idea of having other contributors because I think the zine could get too biased. Also, I'm not confident enough with my own writing style to let it stand alone. Steve has very little time to work on a fanzine, especially if he is going to sell. This is my zine, and if Steve has time to do an article or review once in a while I'll be very satisfied. Sorry, we can't stop in SLC on the way to Iggycon as we're flying to Phoenix and then on to sunny California. Maybe next time...and I extend an invitation to you and yours to visit us anytime.]]]

Allen Curry, 3904 West Liberty, Cincinnati, OH 45205:

Nice first issue: artwork, poetry, articles and everything. Really enjoyable.

As far as your personal comments, I must say I'm highly insulted by Steve's suspicions concerning you being alone with several males from the CFG. Cavin (the Bland Bomber) is, as you mentioned, safe enough. Bowers' safety quotient is a thing of national record. Ric Bergman is always too busy cutting his thumb on his battle axe to try anything untoward upon your delectable form. Of course, you've no reason whatsoever to doubt my innocence. You must realize that my drooling in my beard and pawing at your body was nothing more than my own quaint way of getting acquainted.

Don't be jealous Steve. You're still cuter in a bearded sort of way, you husky sailor, you.

I see Barrell Switzer is back to his old practices. And after reading the interview it's truly gratifying to realize he has not lost his touch with insanity.

Steve's comments on your first con were great. Reminded me a lot of my own feelings at the '74 Midwestcon. However, he at least had the advantage of having talked to a couple of people on the phone. I knew no one at all with the exception of Mike Streff, and he knew almost no one himself. Most of my time was spent wandering about being lost and confused.

I disagree to a great extent with Lee Stevens in his/her (?) review of Donaldson's LORD FOUL'S BANE, but that's **not** particularly important. As far as I'm concerned, Donaldson far surpasses most fantasy writers in his capability for imagery, his characterization, etc., etc. If this is his first effort, what will he turn out after he's matured a bit more?

The UNBELIEVER TRILOGY was one of the most unusual series I've ever read in one specific way. Never before have I been confronted by a protagonist for whom I could feel nothing but contempt. It's a valid technique, of course, but it really threw me for a loop at first. For a while I found myself hoping someone...anyone...would take that friggin' white gold out of his incompetent hands so he could be killed off and get on with the serious progress of the tale. Suddenly I realized that Donaldson had sucked me into the exact position he wanted for me, and I was hooked.

Nancy Soellner-Federle is interesting, bringing up things I had never considered about Betty Boop cartoons...at least never on a conscious level. But no matter how good N.S-F.'s analysis of Ms. Boop, I can't help but bring up a question I always have with post-mortem analysis. How much is valid analysis, and how much is convenient paralleling from the (dis)advantage of hindsight and blue-sky-literary-vivisection? Oh well.

Again, I say it was a nice first issue. Be proud. Now, when's the next coming out?

[[[...and the word was made flesh...bet you thought this was a one-shot. Thanks for your comments and for all of the entertaining evenings at Hap's. So when's the next QUANTUM coming out?]]]

Harry Warner, Jr., 423 Summit Avenue, Hagerstown, MD 21740;

Despite your confidence that you did things wrong when you produced the first GRAYMALKIN, the only real fault I can find is in the address you wrote on the envelope of the copy meant for me. There was some confusion a while back over the Maryland-Pennsylvania border's exact location, and Hagerstown is close enough to the boundary to have caused suspicions it might be in Pennsylvania, as you still believe. But just before I began writing locs, a couple of men came over from England without even the help of a TAFF campaign. Mason and Dixon settled the exact location of the border, leaving Hagerstown about five miles south of it in Maryland. Someone in the postal service scratched out the state in my address, penciled "Try MD" on it, and GRAYMALKIN arrived just seven days after the date on its postmark. It probably would have required three weeks for the trip if you'd gotten the address right. (My house number was wrong in the address, too, but the mailman in this block automatically leaves any large flat envelopes in my mailbox because so many fanzines are in his bag.) *[[[Sorry about that. I got the address from Art Metzger. He has since corrected his files.]]]*

I enjoyed the issue very much for its good assortment of material and for the fact that it was small enough to be read in a few spare minutes. Some fanzines are growing so large they must be put aside until the next three-day weekend to be read. One of the nicest things about GRAYMALKIN is the fact that it has been emitted by someone who began in fandom by going to cons. I keep worrying about the danger that fanzines may become obsolete because fans find so much pleasure in attending three or four cons each month. It's encouraging to find some fans venturing into publishing after starting by con going.

The differences between your account and Steve's description of your first experiences at fan gatherings were edifying. I can marvel at your adventures in a detached sort of way, as something that happens to people or vice versa, but I can feel deep empathy with his soul-searching and introspection because that's the way I am in unfamiliar surroundings. I suspect that his doubts and hesitations at the Midwestcon that Friday are similar to those that many other fans have experienced without having the frankness to write about them later. Normally it's the neofans who mix instantly and perfectly who describe their wonderful first con in fanzines, and this must compound the problem for some individuals who are fanzine fans first, then start going to cons. Some of them must imagine that their difficult first hours at a con are unique and a serious symptom of a personality problem, since the initial embarrassments are so seldom confessed in print.

Now, me, I was lucky at my first con, I think. I'd been in fandom so long without going to a con that I'd acquired a reputation for that circumstance. So when I finally went to a con I was known but most of the other fans thought I was sick or the victim of a split personality's sudden flareup or something even more serious, because I was behaving out of character by being present, and I got a lot of attention for this reason.

The article on Betty Boop was excellent and badly needed, because I don't recall anything extensive about this creation in the nostalgia fanzines. It runs in my mind that Betty Boop also appeared in a comic strip for a while. But Nancy Soellner-Federle does seem to succumb occasionally to the temptation to read too much significance into things. Betty Boop was just one of the many flighty images of a young girl, like Etta Kett and the heroine in Priscilla's Pop, and I don't quite see how the creators could have been concerned with a "middle class myth" when the middle class as portrayed in the cartoons and comic strips was quite similar to the very real middle class as it then existed in the United States. Why shouldn't the glimpses of Mickey Mouse and Pluto in one cartoon have been just another of the many in-group jokes that often crept into Hollywood films, rather than an attack on the American culture? (In *His Girl Friday*, Cary Grant refers to a news story about some awful crime committed by Archie Leach. This was his real name; is this evidence that Grant was a deteriorating victim of an all-powerful guilt complex?) I have some doubts about the influence of Mae West on Betty. Mae wasn't very well known in 1929 except to theater-goers, aside from references to her in news stories about her censorship problems. She didn't make her first feature films until three or four years later.

My general reaction to LORD FOUL'S BANE was much the same as that of Lee Stevens (whom I suspect to be a crystalclear transparent disguise for a person with a similar name starting from the other end). I read it to the end, but the novel seems to be too divided between cliché elements and original stuff to jell properly. But I do think we should give the author the benefit of the doubt in some ways, on the theory that the next two books in the series might make certain elements in the first one seem more understandable or necessary. I read *Star of the Unborn* too long ago to remember much about it, and this review makes me want to dig it out again. But I could have sworn I read it before 1946.

The interview is superior to most of the paradises of this type which have been appearing in fanzines, because it contains an idea which is funny in itself, that of reducing the quantity of space which must be explored. I wish someone could work this idea into a serious vein and get it published in a mundane place, to see what proportion of the readers would consider it a good way to reduce taxes.

[[[You'll be pleased to know that Barrell Switzer is thinking of working up this theory with Dr. Dotardd to submit to Readers Digest... I'll believe it when I see it.]]]

Andy Porter, P.O. Box 4175, New York, N.Y. 10017:

Right -- you are not Leah Zeldes. *[[[There was some confusion at Midwestcon.]]]* In fact, I think this is one of the funniest first issues I've ever seen.

It was also fascinating to me to put together you and your husband, who I've got to class as a neopro -- "Gee! Nice to meet you, Mr. Haldeman, sir!" "Nice to meet you too. Here, have a beer." ...his conreport was hysterical.

I am in the midst of The Book of Ellison (soon to be sold out at your local SF bookstore) and so will cut this short, here. Very nice to get your zine, and now I have you fixed in the amber of my memory as a Person.

Jodie Offutt, Funny Farm, Haldeman, KY 40329:

Without going into a lot of boring details, please believe that I understand and empathize with your feelings of inadequacy and questioning of where you are and where you're going. (Insignificance may be a better word than inadequacy.)

Had it not been for Rusty Hevlin who took me by the hand and led me through my first few cons, introducing me, answering questions, I'm sure I'd never stayed in fandom, nor love it all as much as I do. Good issue and good luck.

[[[I've been very fortunate in having a friend like Bill Bowers to show me the ways of fandom, for good or ill...I'll forever be as much in his debt as he claims he is in mine(This is his typewriter, after all.). He is also partly to blame for GRAYMALKIN, whether he admits it or not.]]]

Robert A. Bloch, 2111 Sunset Crest Drive, Los Angeles, CA 90046:

Look, honey, you've got no reason to be scared. GRAYMALKIN is a very good first issue -- and both you and your husband are very good writers -- which puts you right up there in the top brackets of fandom and prodom. (Iforgot the backcover: your husband's a good artist, too). So you really have it made, both of you! Just do more of the same. And thank you so very much for letting me see this!

[[[When friends told me that a pro like Robert Bloch actually read fanzines and locced them, I didn't really believe them. Well...thanks so much for the comments. I had the pleasure of meeting you at Rivercon, tho I doubt you'll remember me. (I was the one who practically tripped over her chair trying to get your autograph at the con.)]]]

Box 69, Barrington, IL 60010:

7/1978

Dear DPL: Thank you. As you seem to know already, we have formed a committee to review these things. "X-100" does covers, "Running Dear" staples, "Wednesday" slip-sheeting, &c. I am in charge of page numbers.

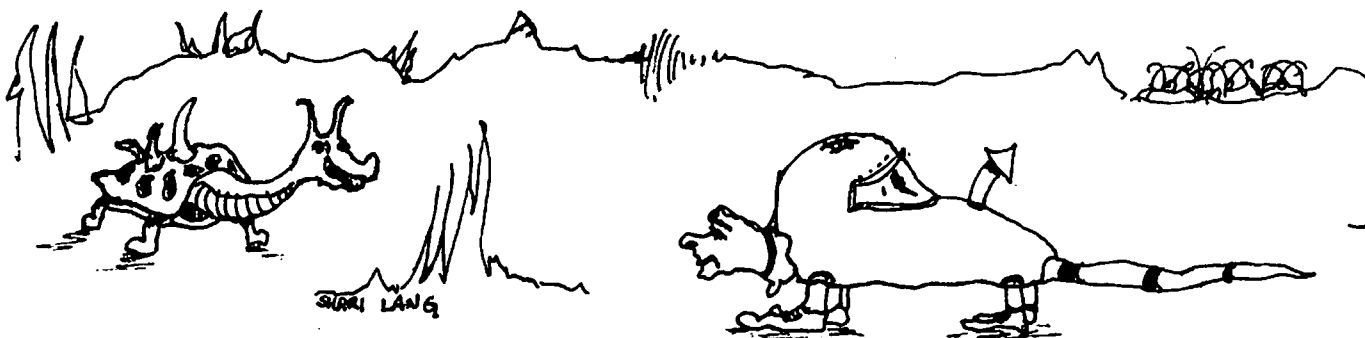
You have them. that's good right there. But you could increase the size of ~~GRAYWALKER~~ by 20% just by numbering the covers. (No one need ever know!) The lady becomes 1, the cats 24.

Now it is my none-too-pleasant duty to tell you that p 11 has filed a grievance. The Board will set a date and you will be notified.

SCARECROW, REX OZ

8L6/

[[[I received this postcard from the above address. It appears to be a wolfe in sheeps clothing. Anyone knowing the identity of Scarecrow, Rex Oz should please advise as I wish to advise him that the grievance filed by page 11 has been settled out of court. You will note that there are two page 11's in this issue.]]]



WAHF: Sally Sellers, Gil Gaier, Michael Banks, and several verbals which I appreciated.

