

"KFN is at least the second-best diary-format personalzine in England today."

— MIKE GLICKSOHN.

# KNOCKERS FROM NEPTUNE

That, or  
Dracula's  
had that  
operation!



Good grief, Carruthers!!  
The tracks of the  
Abominable  
Knocker



SKA 7-6-75

One has to be specially wary  
Of vampires whose breasts are too hairy.  
One was asked "Do you vamp?"  
But it squeaked "No, I'm camp,  
Because Dracula made me a fairy."

# KNOWLEDGE FROM NEPTUNE

Let's see  
how much  
you know  
about  
the sea

What is the  
name of the  
largest  
ocean?



What is the  
name of the  
largest  
ocean?  
The Atlantic  
Ocean.  
What is the  
name of the  
largest  
ocean?  
The Atlantic  
Ocean.

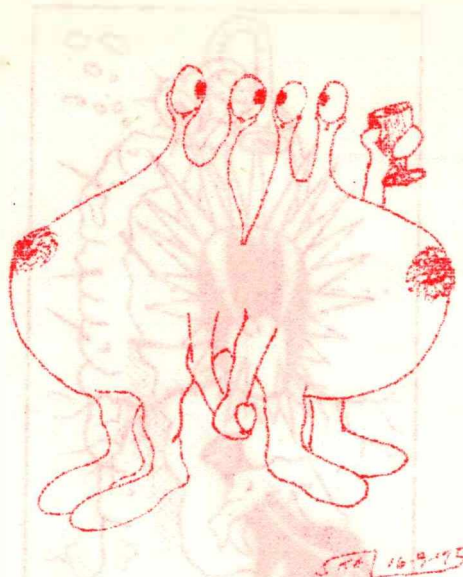
On the right we have a portrait of the editor at work, forcing down vast quantities of home-brew in an attempt to stimulate his flagging brain cell to produce another paragraph of immortal drivel not totally dissimilar to the one you're reading now. It's a hard life, being a faned. Don't try it. Unless you already have, in which case it's too late. And it's no use coming grovelling and whining round my front door; I've drunk it all.

This particular segment of the story of fanzine-producing folk may be called KNOCKERS FROM NEPTUNE 4, so long as you whisper it. Dated April 1976, its editor's flawless timing will enable many copies to be distributed at MANCON 5 (of which it probably will be said), thus depriving our Really Wonderful Postal Service of their rightful -117% profit, Male Capitalist Pig that I am. And who am I? According to this Encyclopaedia Britannica I'm holding, I am Mike Meara, of no fixed underwear but presently residing at 61 Borrowwash Road, Spondon, Derby DE2 7QH, England. Not forgetting my dear wife Pat, of course, who actually wrote something this time and who lives at the same address. Funny woman. This April publication (though it may be august by the time some of you receive it) is available for letter, agreed trade, or one U.S. dollar bill per copy. No other currencies accepted. Also for old fanzines. (I keep mentioning this although nobody has yet offered me any.) Print run this time is again 150, give or take a few cockups.



Back issue availability: there are no back issues of KFN available; a few copies of LURKS 2, 3, 4, 5 and 7 are still around; if you want any, you'll have to convince me. My apologies to Barry Kent Mackay for the non-appearance of his artwork in this issue; I have it all on stencil, and it will appear in the next issue if I can get an earlier start than I did this time. I have received a fanzine entitled FAN'S ZINE 7, with no other information other than that the editor's name appears to be Wally and that he lives in Columbus, Ohio. I should like to trade with this chap, careless though he may be, so I'd be grateful if any of you out there could tell me more of him and his address. Also, I am intrigued by the set of seven art studies which I received with my copy of TABEBULIAN 26: the subject is an attractively plump young lady, extremely well-favoured by Neptune, and one of them is in colour (the studies, not the endowments). Have all TABfans received such a supplement, or am I alone favoured because of my known proclivity for Neptunian substances? I am intrigued.

Art credits: Cover and bacover by Skel.  
Illo on pl42 supplied by Lesleigh Luttrell, copied by Pat.  
ppi and iii by Peter Wright.  
pii by Skel.



WANTED: a caption for the illo on the left, so I can use it on the front cover at some future date. The illo itself would seem to have great possibilities, but so far, after much thought, neither Skel nor I has been able to come up with anything suitably snappy and appropriate. Don't worry if your idea requires additional drawing - this can probably be arranged, or else redraw the whole thing to suit, if necessary. I will buy the winner the drink of his or her choice, next time we meet.

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 pl59 Film reviews  
 pl60 Book reviews

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C. ANDERSON/M. KURLAND	TEN YEARS TO DOOMSDAY	N	1964	5	55
Brian N. BALL	SUNDOG	N	1965	3C	26
Edward BELLAMY	LOOKING BACKWARD	N	1888	4D-4C	35
Ken BULMER -(ed.)	NEW WRITINGS IN SF 27*	C10	1975	8X	38
Robert A. HEINLEIN	THE DAY AFTER TOMORROW	N	1941	3C-8C	55
Frank HERBERT	THE BOOK OF...	C10	1973	8X	55
L. Ron HUBBARD	DEATH'S DEPUTY	N	1940	8E	24
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Fred SABERHAGEN	BERSERKER'S PLANET	N	1975	1B-3A-7C	54
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Clifford D. SIMAK	ENCHANTED PILGRIMAGE*	N	1975	6A	58
Jerry SOHL	COSTIGAN'S NEEDLE	N	1953	8C-3A	58
George R. STEWART	EARTH ABIDES	N	1950	4B	96
Walter TEVIS	THE MAN WHO FELL TO EARTH*	N	1963	1C	83
Manly Wade WELLMAN	WHO FEARS THE DEVIL?	C11	1963	6C	75

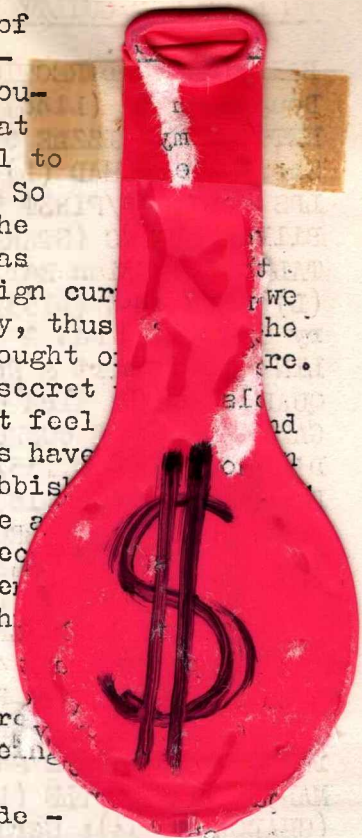
\* indicates a book submitted for review.

The two-digit code in the last column is the PPEN number for Gil Gaier. The contents of the previous column relate to Gil's subject classification scheme, detailed in GUYING GYRE 4.

WE NAME THE GUILTY FEN: Alyson ABRAMOWITZ (ALVEGA 2); Merf ADAMSON (F); John ALDERSON (CHAO 18 19); Bruce D. ARTHURS; Mike BAILEY (NEW DIRECTIONS 24); Frank BALAZS (L/PARENTHESIS 9 10); John BANGSUND; Doug BARBOUR (L146); Harry & Irene BELL (GRIMLING BOSCH 5); Carl Eugene BENNETT (DORK-PIZZLE 6 7/SCINTILLATION 8); Eric BENTCLIFFE (L140/TRIODE 22); Sheryl BIRKHEAD (L); Gray BOAK (L139); Pamela BOAL (L); Bill BOWERS (OUTWORLDS 25 26 27/FIRST 5 YEARS INDEX); Mike BRACKEN (F); Donn BRAZIER (FARRAGO 1); Bill BREIDING (STARFIRE 6); Ned BROOKS (ICITM 18 19); John BROSNAN (L/SCABBY TALES 2); Brian Earl BROWN (F); Linda BUSHYAGER (KARASS 19); Ian BUTTERWORTH (L); Ed CAGLE (L155/SHAMBLES 2); Mike CANUEL (REBIRTH 1); Larry CARMODY; Terry CARR (X); Pat & Graham CHARNOCK (VIBRATOR 4 5/WRINKLED SHREW 5); Ken CHESLIN (X); Stuart & Rosie CLARK; Ron & Sue CLARKE (FORERUNNER 36/FORERUNNER QUARTERLY 2); Rich COAD; Dave COCKFIELD (ATROPOS 2); Eli COHEN (L154/GOBRIN GAZETTE 2); Ed CONNOR (MOEBIUS TRIP 23/24); Tony CVETKO (DIEHARD 7); Don D'AMMASSA (L129,155/MYTHOLOGIES 7); Garth DANIELSON (BOOWATT 4 5 6); Frank DENTON (ASH-WING 18); Stephen DORNEMAN (L145); Ruth & Andrew DUNLOP (ARDEES 2); Martin EASTERBROOK; Kevin EASTHOPE (LOGO 1.76); Gary FARBER (assorted oneshots); Bryn FORTEY (X); Jackie FRANKE (TWIXT 2 3 4/DILEMMA 10); Keith FREEMAN; Gil GALER (L/PHOSPHENE 3); Bruce GILLESPIE (X); Mike GLICKSOHN (L 129,148); Mike GLYER (SCIENTIFRICTION 4); Roberta GRAY (L); Kevin HALL (X); Fred HASKELL (RUNE 45); Patrick HAYDEN (ORODRUIIN 46/THANGORODRIM! 26 27); Jackie HILLES (F); Paul HUDSON (GLIMPSE 3); Terry HUGHES (MOTA 13 14); Ben INDICK (L); Alan ISAACSON (NESFIG NEWSLETTER 9); Rob JACKSON (MAYA 10); Terry JEEVES; Dave & Mardee JENRETTE (TABEBUIAN 26); Keith JUSTICE; Jerry KAUFMAN; Leroy KETTLE (L150/TRUE RAT 7); Pete KNIFTON (XYLAC 2); Eric LARSEN (SHADOW 52 53); Gerald LAWRENCE (L); Denny LIEN; Eric LINDSAY (L130); Ethel LINDSAY; Jim & Marion LINWOOD (L144); Dave LOCKE (L156/AWRY 10); Sam LONG (L/GUNPUTTY 1 + photo supp.); Frank LUNNEY; Hank & Lesleigh LUTTRELL (L142/STARLING 32 33); Wayne MACDONALD (L131); Barry Kent MACKAY; Richard MACMAHON (INVERTED EAR TRUMPET 3); Don MARKSTEIN (TANDSTIKKERZEITUNG 9); Wayne MARTIN (F); Ian MAULE (CHECKPOINT 65 66); Jeff MAY (L133/BACKSIDE 1/KOSMIC CITY KAPERS 6); Eric MAYER (L147); Jim MEADOWS III (L131); Don MILLER (X); Tom MORLEY; Joseph NICHOLAS (L141); Will NORRIS; Jodie OFFUTT (L); Phil PAINE (CALCIUM LIGHT NIGHTS 2); Pauline PALMER (L137); Darroll & Ro PARDOE; Brian PARKER; Brad PARKS (F); Dick PATTEN; Roy PEACOCK (X); Bernie PEEK (K1); Bruce PELZ; Greg PICKERSGILL (STOP BREAKING DOWN 1); Dave PIPER (L); Graham POOLE (STARFLIGHT 1); Pete PRESFORD; Denis QUANE; Mary REED (L); Sandra RICHARDSON (L); Keith RICHMOND (UGLY DUCKLING 2/3 4); Geoff RIPPINGTON (L/TITAN 2); Peter ROBERTS (EGG 10); Tom ROBERTS (X); Dave ROWE (K2); Paul RYAN (L/ORION 2); Jostein SAAKVITNE; Jessica Amanda SALMONSON; Stu SHIFFMAN (POOR GHU'S ALMANAC); Al SIROIS (F); Paul & Cas SKELTON (L137/C/INFERNO 10); Jeff & Ann SMITH (KYBIEN 13); Norbert SPEHNER (REQUIEM 7 8 9); Andrew STEPHENSON (L); Philip STEVENSON-PAYNE (L); Alan & Elke STEWART; Mae STRELKOV (TONG 10.75); Roy TACKETT (DYNATRON 64); Don THOMPSON (DON-O-SAUR 43/GREAT EXPECTATIONS); Bruce TOWNLEY (F); Laurie D. TRASK (L); Bob TUCKER (LE ZOMBIE 67); Victoria VAYNE (L136/NON SEQUITUR 1/SIMULACRUM 2); Roger WADDINGTON (L135); Keith WALKER (FANZINE FANATIQUE 13 15 16); Harry WARNER Jr.; Bob WEBBER (PANTEKHNIKON 0 1); Art WESLEY (F); Robert WHITAKER; Laurine WHITE (F); Terry WHITTIER (ALTAIR 2); Janet WILD (L); Janice WILES (X); Ian WILLIAMS (SIDDHARTHA 7); Bob WILSON (SOOTLI 1); Susan WOOD (AMOR 8 9); Peter WRIGHT (L144/C); add Rich BARTUCCI (L).

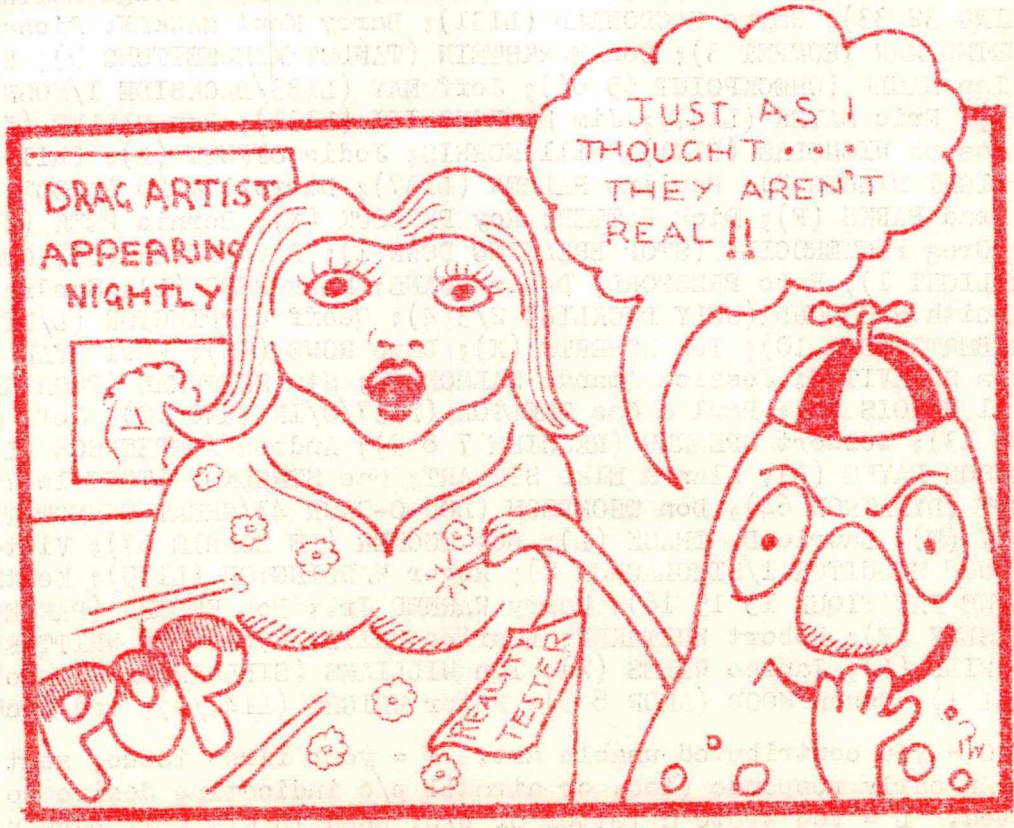
KEY: C = you contributed usable art. F = your first issue, sent 'on spec'.  
 An early response (loc, or airmail p/c indicating desire to trade) appreciated. L = you wrote a letter or p/c, used in KFN 4 if page no. shown.  
 X = your last issue unless you respond.

Owing to the prevailing economic situation, the quality of our free gift (right) has of necessity been reduced. However, my spies have got wind (probably due to all that Southern beer) of a revolutionary new government plan to beat inflation by playing it at its own game. Inflation is all to do with blowing things up and making them bigger, right? So in future, apparently, all our currency, right down to the 1p, will be replaced by specially printed balloons. So, as the value of the £ continues to get smaller against foreign currencies we can offset this by inflating our balloons proportionately, thus making the £ bigger again. It's so simple I'm surprised nobody's thought of it. Readers are invited to test the principle with our free secret model. (American, Canadian and Australian readers needn't feel in this breakthrough in economic thinking: their balloons have them.) Of course, if you think economics is a load of rubbish, entitled to his opinion, however strange it may be) there are other uses to which you can put this issue's free gift. Especially if you got one of those long squiggly ones (balloons). They haven't got B.S. whateveritis, but go right ahead: I know the real truth about inflation being what it is.



This issue's cover limerick supplied by Bobbie Gray's husband Bill. Bobbie herself contributed the one on the right:

\* There was a young vampire  
 \* Who cried "How I hate being  
 \* I can never be rude  
 \* And appear in the nude -  
 \* It would make would-be victims too wary."



.....which is that there may well be a distinct lack of person in this issue of my personalzine. As you will see, there's barely a month to go before the deadline, and I've only just started typing. Next week is right out, fanac-wise, as I'll be away on company business and working a twelve-hour day to boot. That doesn't leave me very much time in which to get this backlog of letters typed up, does it? Not when my wpm can be beaten by the average spastic snail with one feeler tied behind its back, anyway. (If 1 million snails used 1 million busted Smith-Corona portables three hours a day for six years, they'd probably write the complete works of Volsted Gridban.....or was it DHALGREN?)

But enough of this high-powered literary criticism. Let us move on to a letter from fandom's only string- and elastic-powered fan:

MIKE GLICKSOHN, 141 High Park Avenue, Toronto, Ontario, M6P 2S3, Canada:

"Most of the English fanzines I get have a sizeable percentage of overseas participants (mostly in the lettercolumn I admit) which tends to negate Eric ((Bentcliffe))'s comments on their inward-looking nature. But then I only get the English zines that strive for such an international makeup, and perhaps that's a small percentage of currently published English fanzines. The English personalzines I see, such as the chef-d'oeuvres of Mssrs Kettle, Brosnan et al., are naturally concerned with English fans and fanzines and fandom, but that's inherent in the nature of that sort of publication and is duplicated by numerous equivalent North American endeavours. Genzines like MAYA and ZIMRI and diaryzines like yours and the Skeltons' effort cut across purely nationalistic boundaries to produce perfectly enjoyable fannish fanzines. What more could Eric ask for?"

I dunno, but I'm sure he'll get around to it in due course. I tend to agree with you that there's not too much wrong with the British fanzine scene at present. Any lack of transatlantic involvement that there may be, in either direction, must be because nobody's actually got around to asking/trying, rather than a positive lack of interest. Lack of time may have something to do with it too: Stephen Dorneman, who edits a fairly new U.S. zine called WELTANSCHAUUNG, has asked me to do him a review column on British fanzines. I'd like to, but.....I don't want to accept if I can't deliver the goods on time. But if I decide to turn him down I'll certainly suggest that he ask a few other U.K. fen. I'd rather see Skel, for instance, expending his energies in that direction than on his new, neither-nowt-nor-summat THE ZINE THAT HAS NO NAME.

Some of the newer, possibly S.F. MONTHLY-inspired Britzines are maybe still too young to have acquired much international flavour.....though I did see a letter in ORION 2...some chap name of Glicksohn...any relation?

DON D'AMMASSA, 19 Angell Drive, East Providence, Rhode Island 02914, U.S.A.:

"In your discussion of the GEGENSCHWEIN Canada vs. U.S. bit, you may have been unaware of the cyclic revulsion in Canada to the depth of

U.S. influence in their country. It is probably unfortunate that the vigor of U.S. industry and the cultural effects that accompany it frequently overlap into Canada, swamping to a great extent, Canada's own industries. Unfortunate, but understandable. It is also understandable that this will periodically cause a wave of anti-Americanism. Eric has recently printed a piece by Australian John Alderson, which similarly attacks the U.S., and includes several outright falsehoods, which, I'm told, John gathered by interpreting between the lines of imported tv programs, no less. Eric and I have argued a bit over the propriety of printing articles he knows to be factually wrong, with no result.

"MAN OF EARTH is Budrys' second novel, not his first. His first was FALSE NIGHT."

Correspondence in various fanzines, which I came across after reading the GEGENSCHWEIN article and writing my response to it, has certainly made me aware of a situation I didn't know existed. From my personal point of view though - which admittedly is some three thousand miles away - I still think the whole thing is damn stupid, and I'm not too keen on receiving any further correspondence on the matter unless you really think you've got something worth saying. (That being a general 'you', of course, not aimed specifically at you, Don.)

John Alderson has the reputation of being a controversial writer. Maybe this is a style he adopts and cultivates deliberately. Certainly he is a good person to have as a contributor if you wish to generate a good deal of animated response. I don't see much wrong in printing articles containing known factual errors, providing that the editor makes it his business to point them out, or at least those that his letterhacks may miss.

FALSE NIGHT? Never heard of it. Hasty references to Tuck's encyclopaedia showed it to be the original publication, somewhat editorially mangled, of a novel which was issued a few years later as SOME WILL NOT DIE, which I remember enjoying greatly. About time it was reissued over here. Okay, you're right, but in my defence I must say that I didn't have Tuck to refer to when I wrote the review.

ERIC LINDSAY, 6 Hillcrest Avenue, Faulconbridge, NSW 2776, Australia:

"There are some comments on GEG on p55, but I want to look up exactly what I said in reply to Harry Warner - I gather that I took exception to his phrase that we are "creatures with a thin veneer of civilisation covering a jungle inheritance", which he presumably got from people like Conrad Lorenz or Desmond Morris Robert Ardley - well, I've read their books too, and they are persuasive of such, but I was probably thinking of the people whom the "third force" psychology people like Victor Frankle (sp?) or Abraham Maslow refer to as self-actualising, where they appear to have managed to avoid behaviour suggested as typical of a "veneer". It is Maslow's idea that the essential nature of human beings is good rather than brutish (I say brutish rather than animal, because animals very rarely indulge in actions that are considered reprehensible by our laws - very rarely kill within their own species and so on).



"On your comment about the veneer self-destructing, I fear that there won't be a chance for it to grow back, because if I'm pushed far enough to get involved in a fight I wouldn't limit myself at all in my response. I can see this happening for example if certain laws affect me - if conscripted for example, I would resist by force."

The basic goodness of human nature is one of the themes in Edward Bellamy's utopian novel LOOKING BACKWARD, which I've just finished reading and which I'll comment on later. (I know I said no more book reviews, but this one is too interesting to let pass without mention.) I'm rather surprised that no-one else took up this 'veneer' business: maybe if I stir the pot a little more in my book comments, something juicy will eventually emerge.

WAYNE MACDONALD, 1284 York Mills Rd., Apt. 410, Don Mills, Ontario M3A 1Z2:

"You English have strange paper sizes. The smaller size, like KFN is printed on is alright, but the larger ZIMRI and MAYA sizes can drive a North American collector out of his mind. How does he make it fit the box with the rest of his fanzines? Clip off the ends? Fold it? Keep it in a separate box; where does he find an off-size box? Perverse people, you Islanders are."

Well, you could certainly clip the ends off a ZIMRI without affecting the readability too much, but I don't recommend it as a general principle, since A4 and all the other ghastly unaesthetic paper sizes are being foisted on us by some non-fannish Committee or other, probably as a result of metrification or the E.E.C. or some other damn thing, and will eventually be the only ones available. At which time I shall resort to printing my fanzines one-sided on sheets of bog-paper, and will then have the only fanzine that's both metricated and medicated. Just the thing to hang up in the smallest room.

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Cheese in SF: 'THE LACTIC POT HEALER'

(Andrew Stephenson)

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Keerist, Jim, your six-page locs which are 90% printable give me a severe case of the editorial migraine. However, in this respect I am a masochist. Hope you don't disapprove too much of the cuts and summaries I've made:

JIM MEADOWS III, 31 Apple Court, Park Forest, IL60466, U.S.A.:

((The first part of the letter deals with Jim's possible over-reaction to a mildly anti-sf article which appeared in NEWSWEEK magazine. He continues:))

"All of which got me to thinking - how open-minded am I concerning science fiction? After all, my reading in 'mainstream' fiction is even spottier than my sf reading, and if other literature on the whole is superior to sf, I might very well be unable to know it.

"My view on the whole thing is that science fiction is a somewhat arbitrary category of fiction, which requires certain disciplines not needed in other genres, and which can do certain things that other types of

fiction can't do.; that brilliant writing is as possible in science fiction as in other types of fiction, brilliant due to the properties exclusive to science fiction; and finally that such brilliant writing has appeared and will appear. There are sf fans who say this is not so, that so far, there are no writers who have written sf as great as certain other works of fiction, or, as Ray Bradbury says, science fiction is the mainstream, that the best fiction of the present and future is being and will be written within the sf genre. I am no longer sure who is right, if any of us are. Comments?

I'd agree with you up to the point where you say brilliant writing is equally possible in sf, but there's not much I'd care to offer as evidence on this point. I can only think of two writers presently working in sf who have any claim to real literary merit: Silverberg and LeGuin. (And in view of Silverberg's 'retirement', the figure drops to  $1\frac{1}{2}$ .) I'd certainly exclude Delany, Russ, Vonnegut, Lem and other such highly-rated figures from my personal Hall of Greatness. I'm not sure what you mean by 'properties exclusive to sf': scientific ingenuity? That alone doesn't make a great novel, as Asimov, Clarke, Niven and others have shown. Nor does a good plot sense or good characterisation. What is needed to link all these elements together is a skill, an artistry, a 'way with words'. Asimov, Clarke, Heinlein are merely competent in this respect; their work is merely good. Silverberg and LeGuin have a little bit extra in that department, and their work is much closer to greatness. Nevertheless, I have to agree with Bradbury if he said that sf is now the mainstream; what we need are a few more authors capable of making full use of this favourable situation.

"I found Ray Nelson's quote on modern music to be rather one-sided. Nelson has the advantage when he calls modern music inferior to music written, say in the 19th. century. Most of the bad music of the 19th. century is out of print and forgotten. The bad music of today is continually being written, and it won't be until the mid-21st. century that we forget all of it. I might agree with him that there is not much I care for in so-called 'serious' music, the stuff continuing on the lines of baroque-classical-romantic-impressionist and so, making use of traditional orchestral arrangements and the 'trained' singing voice; but this generalization is violated often (two off-the-top-of-my-head examples: the music of Benjamin Britten and G. C. Menotti, whose music docs work well as theatre, and which can be sung and danced to.) At the same time, Nelson makes an ignorant generalization in allowing glitter rock to include every type of music which is not in the 'serious' music tradition - and that included jazz, folk, blues, gospel music, other types of rock, and the traditional folk music which still exists in a pure form in many parts of the world.

I've given up calling music 'good' or 'bad'.....or at least, if I do, I really mean 'I like it' or 'I don't like it' respectively. Nothing anybody can say will affect in any way my feelings towards music I know I already like (though if anybody with similar musical tastes to my own recommends a particular LP or whatever, I certainly take note of it.) I like what I like, and I respect other people's rights to do the same, which is why I find it difficult not to get annoyed at the blatant musical snobbery displayed by, for example, Graham Charnock in his VIBRATOR.

"Enjoyed Paul Skelton's reaction to certain American cartoons. The ((Rocky/Bullwinkle)) show is running in Chicago again, and the last time I saw it (Thanksgiving) Boris, Natasha and their boss, Fearless Leader were using Rocky and Bullwinkle as dupes in their search for the Kirwood Derby (a pun on Durwood Kirby, an American tv personality and mediocrity of the time), a hat which brought supreme intelligence to the wearer. When I left for college again, Bullwinkle had found the hat, but his brain could not stand up to the strain of intelligence for more than a few minutes.

Actually Jim, you seem to know such a hell of a lot about cartoons that I'm surprised that, f'rinstance, the Luttrells haven't asked you to do an article for STARLING. Judging by the correspondence I've received there seem to be plenty of cartoon-freaks in fandom, and an article in the right zine, taking more space than I can afford to use here, with mebbe a few nice Canfield illos, would be well-received I think.

You mention your discovery that THE SILVER LOCUSTS, which I reviewed in KFN 2, was originally called THE MARTIAN CHRONICLES. I thought everybody knew that! To my mind TSL is a better, more evocative title, hinting at the rapacious nature of the exploring Earthmen in their silvery spaceships.

"I don't know why I nit on this, but contrary to p83, Monty Python is not carried on the Public Broadcasting System. There is no TV network carrying the show here. Time-Life Films is responsible for syndicating the show (that is, mailing out the videotapes) to a hundred or so stations. All but one of these stations are public stations, because (1) public tv is in love with the BBC and (2) Time-Life will not allow the show to be cut to make room for commercials. The one commercial station that runs it, does so in a 35-40 minute late night time slot, so that no cutting is needed. ABC, a commercial net, has put together a 90-minute Python Special out of old stuff, and has another one set for the day after Christmas ((letter dated 23.12.75)), but the Python people are trying to stop it, after they saw how ABC cut up the material to rearrange it into 90 minutes with commercials. Nothing new for ABC: a few years back they took a Marty Feldman series from the UK, thought some of the skits were too long, butchered the tapes and padded in the gaps with their own production of low grade singers and third-rate comics."

Must have been the COMEDY MACHINE series? I think I still have some of that stuff on tape somewhere. I seem to have been reading quite a lot about American tv in various recent fanzines, and it'll be one of the things I'll be anxious to study at first hand (in small doses) when we get over in '77. Ta for the 'knocker' quote - look out for it on the front cover sometime soon.

JEFF MAY, Box 68, Liberty, MO 64068, USA:

"Gray Boak says "I don't think that any truly intelligent person could get too heavily involved with fandom..." Well, I happen to be an intelligent person, and I am heavily involved with fandom. All my close friends, nearly all my social life, and most of my hobbies tie into

fandom. I don't feel I'm too heavily involved; instead, I like it here. More or less I've been in fandom going on 9 years, and I expect I'm here to stay. Perhaps that proves to Gray that I'm not truly intelligent. If so then he can go to hell... For my part, I don't think it's possible to be too heavily involved in fandom.

That's it - your last sentence is the perfect answer to Gray's statement. I find myself in the same situation you describe, not through any deliberate choice, but simply because most of the interesting people who come into my life are involved/interested in sf or fandom in some way or other. Most of my workmates, for instance, don't seem to read much, and limit their discussions to last night's/next week's football match. I think I've argued myself into a neat circle there.

"I wish you luck on your travel plans. It's rather a pity you couldn't try and come in 1976. After all, Florida has little to recommend it but alligators. Missouri is much more interesting. Unless you have a thing for alligators, I suppose, or unless you'd like to be present for the site selection.

Site selection is the reason a bunch of us are coming over in '77, obviously. Vernon Brown is organising the travel arrangements, though some people, the Gannets for instance, may be able to get cheaper charter rates through their unions. We discussed tentative plans during FaanCon I (about which more later), Vernon suggesting we time our arrival in New York some days before the con begins, possibly travelling down by rail, since it's apparently possible to get a month's unlimited rail travel pass for only £20 more than the New York-Florida return air fare. I'm in favour of this, since by the time I get to New York I'll have seen all the aeroplanes I need for some considerable time. My only hope of surviving the flight is to take in sufficient duty-free scotch so I'll be flying under my own power. I've flown several times before, but never for more than two or three hours at a stretch, and I've never particularly relished the experience.

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"If thoats had wings and could glide through the air, and they were a hazard to crops, and if you were trying to keep them away from your fields, would you be looking for a soar thout remedy?"

JEFF MAY

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"Like Jackie Franke, I don't think typing this is going too badly at all. My electric typer is at my apartment 180 miles away, and I'm using the 20-year-old manual portable whereon I typed all my fanac for 7½ years. It's never been cleaned or repaired in all that time, which is a hell of a better record than my electric. Now if I could just get used to the sensation that I'm typing in molasses..."

I used a Selectric for the first time about ten days ago! Goshwow, senseoftypos! The ManCon 5 committee have hired one to do the programme booklet on, so Skel and I used it to type the logos on the FaanCon I commemorative dirty postcards (about which more later). An interesting experience, to be sure, but I remember reading somewhere that they only last for about seven years, so I might reconsider about that down-payment.

ROGER WADDINGTON, 4 Commercial Street, Norton, Malton, N. Yorks. YO17 9ES:

"As to what I've been doing before; well, cutting it down to something less than article length, I've been trying out the life of a mundane again, to see how it fitted; glued to the tele for 'Crossroads' and 'Coronation Street', borrowed the obligatory Harold Robbins and Hammond Innes from the library, complained about the price of peas and the state of the world, in that order; but somehow, my heart was never really in it! Oh, it's maybe true that fandom has come to breed equally stereotyped cliches and happenstances, but they're ones I feel more at home with, ones I've grown accustomed to using; and fandom does seem to have that hope for the future that mundania can never aspire to!

Does it really? Shades of Degler! I'm a pessimist myself, and believe the world will end two days before I'm due to begin collecting my pension.

"Though it's a fiery baptism that I'm having to undergo, to join the fannish ranks again; I was sent a copy of INFERNO first, by Mary Reed, and had quite a bit of trouble trying to relate to its pages, ending up with an inane loc. Just before he went to mundane sleep, this Rip van Winkle remembered fanzines that had a beginning and an end, articles arrayed in order, with plenty of spots to take a breath in between; but if this is typical of the new breed of fanzines, then I can foresee some bouts of indigestion before I get to grips with the technique!

No, it's not typical of the present fanzine scene as a whole, as you've no doubt discovered by now; but it is typical of a branch of fanzine publishing which has probably grown somewhat since you gafiated.

"And a volte-face for me, since my previous incarnation, in that I can see personalzines being more justified in the pages of fandom; editors really are engaged in creation, and not just playing at being the editor of the NEW STATESMAN! Oh, it's maybe kinder to fandom to paste up an article here, insert an illo there, fill in with a quote, but an effort like this is more of a creative outburst, and thus more true to the spirit of fandom (though who am I to judge this!) I've still got a nagging doubt that this form of fanzine is much to the benefit of the fannish reader; but editors are fans, as well!"

I think that's rather harsh, since there's as much or more editorial creativity, albeit of a somewhat different kind, involved in the production of a good genzine like MAYA as there is in the production of KfN. I'm sure that Rob and I have the same basic aims - receiving good letters, good fanzines, making and cementing friendships, putting out a product we're each reasonably satisfied with; it's just that we go about it in different ways, suitable to our different personalities. I'm convinced that reviewers like Piggott in CHECKPOINT, Williams in SPI and Freeman in VECTOR just don't understand this.

"True to the spirit of fandom"? The only spirit of fandom I'm aware of is verguzz (and what happened to that? I haven't seen any around for a year or two.) Though for casual drinking, any decent single malt will do. Do you see fandom as some sort of super-Boy-Scout group, Roger?

VICTORIA WAYNE, P.O. Box 156, Stn. D, Toronto, Ontario M6P 3J8, Canada:

"I think I already mentioned to the Skeltons that your joint mailing scheme which works so well for you would never work in Toronto - too many widely differing mailing schedules, and little overlap in the mailing lists, in some cases.

I'm surprised by your second reason. Are there really so many fcn who'll regularly respond to fanzines? I'd have thought that 200 copies would have covered the big majority of them, and the smaller the print run the bigger the overlap, obviously. I know that Skel, with a print run of about 100 on INTERNO last issue, only sent to about half a dozen people not on my list. I wish a few more faneds would publish their mailing lists; they're interesting reading, and make the selection of worthwhile new recipients easier.

"Why not extend the Laws of Murphy to fannishness?

- 1) The electrostencil that tears and leaks is the one of the piece by the BNF fanartist that has already been sent back.
- 2) Despite the Gestetner holes, the stencil will somehow end up on the machine backwards.
- 3) The page that is printed upside down will turn out to have used up the last ream of paper.
- 4) There are ten too few offset cover copies for the number of mimeographed copies printed.
- 5) The promised article that was advertised as the feature in the last issue turns up in the mail after the next issue is collated.
- 6) The duplicator will break down on Saturday after the repair depot has closed.
- 7) The weight of the zine is a tiny bit over the boundary between expensive mailing rates and really out-of-this-world ones.
- 8) The postal service will go on strike the week the issue is supposed to come out.
- 9) In mailing issues from New York state, the border guard will confiscate all the copies.
- 10) Half the copies will come back address unknown; the other half will come back for insufficient postage.

I have had 1, 4, 6, 7 and 8 happen to me during SIMULACRUM. And also...

- 11) Harry Warner Jr. doesn't loc.

"Also, thanks for the kind words on SIMULACRUM. I wonder if you could mention to British readers that with issue 3 (April 76) SIM will no longer be available for money, but only for 'the usual'. If there are British fans who would like to get onto my mailing list, all they have to do is make me aware of their existence and I'll be happy to send a sample. As it is, I send less than 15 copies to England; and British fandom as I have seen it is interesting - it would be nice to have more contacts."

See, Eric?

PAULINE PALMER, 2510 48th., Bellingham, WA 98225, U.S.A.:

"The summary of what Jim Meadows III wrote about cartoons was quite fascinating and makes me wish you'd been able to print his whole (albeit lengthy) comment. GEORGE OF THE JUNGLE is one of my favorite cartoons but I do wish the station we watch them on would make an effort to get a new selection....the ones they have we all know by heart, so that we go about the house weekday mornings shouting the dialog at one another in unison. Another favorite is FOGHORN LEGHORN, which has made us late leaving for work more than once. In fact, just this morning ...

"I've become quite a newspaper comic strip fan these days as there seem to be more and more new, good ones. One of the Seattle dailys has just begun carrying an sf (of sorts) humor strip titled THE GREAT ATOMIC AFTERMATH & FRESH FRUIT FESTIVAL, featuring Fred who thinks he's the last man left on Earth (but isn't). So far it's been mildly amusing (such as when Fred is gleefully shouting "It's mine! It's all mine!" about the Earth and an income tax agent steps up to him and says "I've been wanting to talk to you about that."), but so far the only stefnal element has been the setting rather than any of the humor.

"My favorite review of SPACE: 1999 was when one reviewer pointed out that during the first episode Landau himself gave the perfect capsule description of the show when he said, "We're sitting on the biggest bomb in the universe."

"(But I read just recently that they were getting ready to produce another season's worth of shows ... )"

Yeah. I gather it's not been too successful in England, but Jim Meadows mentioned that it was going down well in the States, in comparison to the rival shows of the companies who turned the series down. In an effort to boost the English ratings, the new series will have added sex, in the form of a beautiful female alien. By building in one of the worst aspects of STAR TREK in this way, looks like the new series'll be even worse than the first, a thing I honestly wouldn't have thought possible.

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Rubber stamp on junk mail envelope: "If you throw this in your wastebasket unopened, a capsule of water inside will break spilling onto a dehydrated gorrilla ((sic)). He will then jump out of the envelope and hug you to death." (photostat supplied by BEN INDICK)

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PAUL 'SCOTCHY SUBSTANCES' SKELTON, 25 Bowland Close, Offerton, Stockport:

"Got the latest FANZINE FANATIQUE today ((6.1.76)). Aren't I the lucky sod? I see the cretin ran his first two stencils off in a sideways-centre-stapled manner, then ran the rest off vertically as usual. If Eamon Andrews ever says, "Keith Walker, this is your life." he won't be able to get the words out for laughing his guts up. If Keith was a millipede I reckon he'd still only have four feet not in his mouth. Odd, but I'm beginning to develop a real, genuine liking for the guy. Nobody can be such a pillock without being lovable.

Agreed. Actually I feel that Keith is slowly becoming something of an institution on the British fan scene, in his own quiet way: first Walt Willis, then Brian Burgess, now Keith. Hmmm.....

Skel also noticed a few worthwhile points in WHEN DINOSAURS RULED THE EARTH:

"All the women were fucking nubbly of course, dressed only in these strange, primitive prehistoric bras and panties. The former were loose enough to permit much dangling of sweaty substances when said nubblies bent down, which seemed to be 74.8% of the time, but were such marvels of engineering that when the heroine fell into the storm-swept sea at gale-force fifty-zillion, the buggers never flopped out. Not only did this support the heroine, unbelievably, but it also gives credence to the Von Daniken supporters. What other knowledge have we lost along with the ability to build the perfect bra? Of course, dinosaur hide did give that extra 'cross-your-heart' strength.

"Now that you mention it, 'Meara' is a bit of an odd name. There is something vaguely 'Italian' about it. Anglo-Saxon it isn't: ('Skeltum': Son of the one who sucks bat-manure on alternate Woden's-day feasts). Shit, how come I have not realised this before? Where does this name of yours come from? (If you say "My father" you do not pass 'Go' and you do not collect £200. I will, however, fart all over your feet next time we meet. (Don't risk it - I haven't shit for a fortnight.))

This is what comes of sucking Bat-manure....sorry, bat-manure. (There is a difference.)

Your guess may be pretty accurate: I've done a bit of research, and the nearest I can get is the Latin 'mereor', meaning 'I am served', showing that we Mearas have been on top of the heap since Roman times at least. Our critics have occasionally made uncalled-for remarks about the precise nature of the heap (ref. Latin 'merda' = dung). There may also be a derivation from the Latin 'merum' meaning 'wine', indicating that my ancestors, like myself, were natural connoisseurs of the boozy substances.

Turning to the French (much safer than turning away from them) we find the most likely source to be 'meilleur', meaning 'better', or 'best'. Need I say more? From Germanic sources there are two related possible roots: 'mehrere', meaning 'several' (indicating the multiplicity of our talents as a family); and the more likely 'mehr' (= more). (Thus 'mehr-er' = one who has more of). In my case, this would apply not only to such attributes as intelligence, wit, charm, good looks and general sexual ability, but also unfortunately to undesirables like body weight, foot perspiration and dandruff. Truly, we Mearas are the Men Who Have Everything (but could do without some of it.)

Incidentally, I think the derivation you give for your own surname must be inaccurate. More likely yours is also from the Latin (ref. Scelus = scoundrel.)

"I will not question why Eric Mayer leans towards English bands, nor will I go into what the English bands have to say about this practice



of 'leaning' which is affecting their live performances and getting lots of young men locked up, not to mention deferment from call-up in the U.S. armed forces.

"A good collective noun for a grouping of carved fingers. Why Mike, that's a fist, you fool, a 'fist'. I don't know about tastelessness but one of those things would be 'de rigueur' in my den, if I had such an animal. This would be great for waving at such persons who come in demanding that I help take down or put up the Christmas decorations.

"Ed Cagle's remarks re porno films tie in with something I read in SIMULACRUM 2. What are porno films and books for? I read porn in order to get a hard on. There is something about having a hard on. In many ways it is better to have a hard on than to get it off. I know that laying with Cas, cuddling, is better with a hard on. The hard cuddle is better than the screw which almost invariably follows. I say 'almost' because, being drunk sometimes, I sometimes fall asleep no matter what is in the offing. Besides which, cuddling is sometimes more fun, and always less effort, than screwing. To me, to lie there with the woman you love in your arms, at peace with the world, content, snug....beats screwing any day. Well, most days anyway. What is this 'machismo' thing where it seems like being a 'fairy' not to admit that one prongs every aperture one sees over  $\frac{1}{2}$ " diameter. And what is this about Peter Roberts' being the biggest in the country? Whow!!"

Your usage of porn seems somewhat different, in that it is a means of generating sexual tension rather than relieving it. I would have thought the latter was more common. I see nothing wrong in porn, apart from the fact that some people make vast profits out of it. It has a useful function in society, and when prostitution is legalised, porn-dealing in its various forms should be too. Then those who snigger at the old men with coats on laps in the back rows of the grope-opera houses might have to find some other target for their infantile humour.

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"After the GODFATHER films, if any fan gets rubbed out won't he be said to have gone MAFIA (Murdered Away From It All)?" (Skel)

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Now a couple of views of the Great Lyrics/Music Controversy. First:

GRAY BOAK, 2 Cecil Court, Cecil St., Lytham, Lancs. FY8 5NN:

"I do think that you are a little harsh on 'lyrics or music which cannot stand on their own'. You do realise that this rules out all sea-shanties, to name but one class of song? No doubt the finest of all songs do have words and music with independent lives, but the overall effect is greater when they are brought together. Different words can be put to one tune, or the same words sung to different music. The final effects can differ markedly. Witness Tommy Armstrong's TRIMDON GRANGE EXPLOSION; the original tune is somewhat over-sentimental for modern tastes. The final effect on the listener, in his time, is/was presumably identical, the means of getting it across varies with the audience.

"It is probably trite to say so, but music has effects on the emotions. It can produce emotions in the listener, but this is pretty vague and undirectional. Words give direction, but are usually unemotional. Bringing the two together allows precise control of power and purpose. The balance between the two depends on the purpose of the piece. A mood piece to wallow in for an hour or so will necessarily be instrumental, a fine hearty sing-along will have vague and unpoetic words, a committed protest song will use very precise language and phrasing. They all have their place.

Having said that, my own favourites have always been songs with strong lyrics and (preferably) an attractive melody. Most of the more technical achievements of the classical masters (and almost all jazz) leave me cold."

After some thought, I must admit that your argument about the relationship between words and music is sound (damn! Trouble with English, it's too easy to make puns when none are intended.) to a point. But it doesn't go far enough to explain the attractions of purely instrumental music, for instance the jazz you say you dislike. One person who does share my liking for jazz is

ERIC BENTCLIFFE, 17 Riverside Crescent, Holmes Chapel, Cheshire CW4 7NR:

"Now then....dare I say it (?!?)...I disagree with you regarding a statement on p116, regarding your assertion that you prefer lyrics to melody (if pushed) in 'modern-music'. But, let me say immediately, that this is purely a matter of very personal choice, and you aren't expected to agree with me - this time!

"Now, I'm not quite sure what you mean by 'modern-music' so it's probably my turn to have to agree later that you are right...but whilst I consider that good and clever lyrics are extremely important, I have to plump for the actual melody-line ('the TUNE') being the more important of the two. If the melody isn't there in the first place there's nothing for the arranger to arrange, the soloist to build and improvise upon successfully. Okay, a clever arranger/soloist can often make something of even the most banal tune, but he's usually got to graft on whole new stanzas. For a song/tune/melody to last it has to have a good basic interesting musical notation.

"Er....right? (Wish I had a small ? to put there!)

"The composers of what I like in 'modern-music' do put the melody first, and it pays off. I'm talking of people like Michel Legrand and Antonio Carlos Jobim. That may not be the type of modern-music you had in mind, but I suggest that it will outlast most else being written today.

"And further to my words on the difficulty of writing about music...it could be, you know, difficult to talk about even. For instance, if you happened to hop a time-machine back to the early part of this century, visited New Orleans and suggested to a comely maid that you felt like a spot of jazz....well you could get more than you expected. Miscogen-

ation, even!

"And if you happened to be talking to the wrong person about a riff.... well, he could be envisioning a camel-borne Bedouin whose only thoughts are most unmusical. Which brings to mind an idle thought that the Arabs are probably the most unmusical race on this planet. Other than for snake-charming they appear to have little talent for melody; of course, when you consider how dry it is out there this is perhaps understandable....their only rivals, the Esquimaux, are equally bedevilled by the restraints of having frozen lips which is why they make such lousy trumpet-players."

Jobim I like - he's written some beautiful 'tunes'. In his case the melody-line more or less assumes premier importance by default, since we English have to depend on translations for the meanings of the lyrics. The same applies to Legrand I suppose, though what little of his stuff I've heard I've found rather too wishy-washy for my taste. The trouble is, Eric, that you're looking at the situation from the jazzman's point of view, where the melody-line and chord-sequence are naturally of great importance, delineating as they do the 'improvisability' of the piece. (At least, they're important in the kind of jazz I like....and I'd guess that you don't care for Ornette Coleman or Albert Ayler any more than I do.) Other than in 'scat' singing (a dubious practice at best) the human voice doesn't play much part in jazz. So what does an instrumental (in more general terms) piece do for you that a song can't do better? More views wanted on this, please.

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At least once a year everybody is a genius.

(G. C. Lichtenburg)

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JOSEPH M. NICHOLAS, 2 Wilmot Way, Camberley, Surrey, GU15 1JA:

"Page 98 then, and THE TOWERING INFERNO. What I'm going to ask you about was where the intermission came. I've seen the movie twice - in the first case the intermission came just after Newman had stopped falling and was hanging on for dear life at the bottom end of the railing after the gas explosion on the emergency staircase (real cliffhanger stuff!), and in the second case after he'd climbed back up to the top to get the little girl. In the first case the intermission was justified, in the second case it wasn't, although both cinemas were unusually full."

Dave Rowe, I think it was, mentioned noticing the same thing. In my case the break came at the high-tension point, with Newman dangling from the railing. I think the alternative you and Dave mentioned, timing the break after the resolution of that particular sequence, is the better one. Cliffhanger-type breaks a la FLASH GORDON are okay if the interval is a long one, such as the week-long gap between episodes of a serial, but pointless in the extreme if you've only got long enough to get an ice-cream down your neck and go for a pee. If it's necessary to have an interval at all in these longer-than-average films, then it should come at some natural break in the story-line.

Mary Reed, writing about her recent stay in America, says: "Incidentally (p124) the local paper in Sam ((Long))'s area is a Gannett Publication. They get in everywhere, don't they?"

LESLIEGH LUTTRELL, 525 W. Main St., Madison, WI 53703, U.S.A.:

"After reading your exciting experiences with North Wales Sea-Badgers, I thought you might enjoy seeing a picture of an American badger, peculiar to the state of Wisconsin, to wit, one Bucky Badger, picture here enclosed. I understand English badgers are quite different from American badgers, except that both tend to live in the ground. (American badgers are large, striped and very mean.) So I suppose it's not surprising that Bucky bears little resemblance to your sea-badger. However, you're probably wondering how this particular beast got to be called 'Bucky', why he is wearing a W on his chest, and why his picture is on a piece of wax-coated cardboard. It's a long story.



"The badger happens to be the state animal of Wisconsin. A good many of the 50 states in the USofA have state animals (and birds, and flowers and insects, etc.), not all of which live in the state they supposedly represent (but then neither do all beauty queens or Olympic athletes.) Somehow, Wisconsin chose the badger as their animal, not because of any obvious over-abundance of badgers in the state, but because some of the first white settlers in this part of the country were lead-miners who came to be called 'badgers' because of their propensity for digging in the ground. Somehow this got translated into the badger becoming a symbol of Wisconsin.

"Not only do all the states have their own particular animal and vegetable representatives, but every school over here must choose some sort of creature (animal, vegetable or mythical) as its 'mascot'. Badgers, just naturally, had an advantage over other animals at the U. of Wisconsin, so Bucky Badger (mascots, after all, should have first names) came to represent the University, and all the sports teams here are known as Badgers. And Bucky has his picture spread all over town. Not being any kind of sports enthusiast, I wouldn't run into Bucky Badger too much, except for one thing. His picture is on all the milk, ice cream and yogurt produced by the University dairy farms. And since this is the dairy state, these are some of the best dairy products you can buy. So, enclosed find one picture of Bucky Badger taken from a carton of "Bucky Badger milk" sold in all buildings on the University campus.

"Did you know there is a fanzine coming out of Minneapolis now known as NOCHRES? I've only seen one issue, but I understand it's somewhat pornographic (featuring nude pictures of some local fans). But I doubt that anyone will ever confuse it with your Knockers. . .

Great idea! It could never work over here, though - not enough femmefen. Though I suppose PLAYFEN might catch on. Imagine.....a centrefold of a nude Greg Pickersgill, clad only in a strategically-draped scarf; or a centrefold/fold/fold/fold/fold of Brian Burgess; or a pull-out supplement of Ian Williams.....if you can find it.

"Why do you think Americans don't understand MONTY PYTHON? I realise a lot of the humour is very British, since it satirizes British institutions, but I think most Americans are at least somewhat familiar with such things as BBC and government ministers. Sometimes when I'm watching the show, I think "that would be even funnier if I had to watch BBC all the time" or something similar, but that doesn't mean I don't understand the joke (more-or-less) and don't appreciate it. And I don't think it takes any special background to appreciate the crazier aspects of MONTY PYTHON. Still, when you think about it, it's not surprising that Americans should appreciate Monty Python so much -- after all, we read lots of the same books, see the same movies, the same sorts of television shows, and have a pretty similar system of government as you do in Britain. What I'd like to know is what do British fans think of Firesign Theater? Or have you heard them? (They do mainly records, and their humor is basically insane satire of American institutions, like freeways, used car dealers and Richard Nixon.)"

I've not heard them, or even of them - unfortunately, because anything that satirises Nixon can't be bad at all. (Is the Spike Milligan/Peter Sellers LP "He's Innocent of Watergate, or, Dick's Last Stand" available in the States?) Does any British fan know of them, and whether any of their material is available in this country?

I said what I did about the Americans and MP on the basis of comparison of the TV comedy output of Britain with the American material shown over here. Skel's piece about the evolution of MP, in the latest INFERNO, is correct in principle if not in detail, but I can't remember an American series comparable to any of the shows he mentions. Since MP is being shown in the States it can't be a matter of censorship, of rejection of the concept by your all-powerful networks, so I assumed there was something different about the American sense of humour.

A couple of spinoffs from MP, which you should watch out for in case they ever appear in the States, are FAWLTY TOWERS (which Skel mentioned, a show which made its impact only on its repeat showing, and is being followed up with a further series; John Cleese in his best all-round performance yet as actor, funny man and loony) and RUTLAND WEEKEND TELEVISION (which he unaccountably missed, a short series which apparently died the death and hasn't been repeated to date. The show was similar to MP in format, featuring only Eric Idle from the original MP cast, along with Neil Innes (ex-Bonzos) and some relative unknowns. A fair copy of MP, but lacking that vital spark, though it did have its moments - the beauty queen farmer, the regiment missing for 29 years on the Isle of Wight who refuse to believe that WWII is over, and others too way-out even to hint at.)

Can anyone who's heard CHEECH AND CHONG tell me anything about them?

MARION LINWOOD, 125 Twickenham Road, Isleworth, Middlesex:

"I liked your fanzine BALLS FROM BETELGEUSE which you kindly sent Jhim for him to read all that egoboo from his old kitten mate, Dave Rowe. Does this mean lettuce leaves at twenty paces?

So that's what 'this' means. I'd often wondered. (Old GOON SHOW joke.)

"It was nice to see almost forgotten books like SEETEE SHIP and WORLD OUT OF MIND mentioned in GOOLIES FROM GANYMEDE. I have a special affection for the first few SF books I ever read, but I'm almost afraid to re-read them because the magic may have worn off. I get very depressed about the poor selection of SF in our local library; the only really good 'new' book is Michael Crichton's THE TERMINAL MAN...it makes you feel like a brilliant brain surgeon when reading it.

I've just finished Hubbard's DEATH'S DEPUTY.....made me feel like a brilliant sf writer when reading it.

"I liked the back cover of CASTRATO FROM CALLISTO... Although the title of BOLLOCKS FROM POLLUX reminds me of the fabled pulp stories of the golden age, the word 'knockers' is a nasty cheap put-down word for breasts; specially considering that the larger sort are held up with sellotape in nudie pics."

That's one way of making your point, I suppose. You're a rotten illusion-shatterer, Marion - LATE NIGHT EXTRA will never seem the same again. And what d'you mean, 'cheap'? That word cost me £2.95 - I had to buy a copy of the O.E.D. to check the spelling.

And a P.S. from Jhim:

"Apart from Eleanor the only other person to read her copy of the Piccolo Book of Jokes is Dave Rowe who, when he honours us with his presence, sits in the corner, giggling hysterically, as he reads extracts from it aloud like the big hairy nurg he is. I hereby challenge Dave to offer in comparison two of his jokes against two of mine... KFN readers can then judge who is the superior wit. As for his ridiculous claim that he once earned a four-figure sum for one of his jokes...."

Since when has £0.00.5p not been a four-figure sum? Anyway, I accept your challenge on Dave's behalf. (You can't back out now, Dave, 'cos if you don't submit any jokes I'll pick a couple of real shockers for you.) Get your entries to me by June 1st., and you can have a page to yourselves to do battle on in KFN 5.

PETER J. WRIGHT, 233 Cinderhill Road, Bulwell, Nottingham:

"I still can't decide whether the diary format is a good idea or a bad one. The main drawback from a reader's point of view with this kind of fanzine is the difficulty of referring back to particular sections at a later date (that is, if you re-read fanzines like I sometimes do.)

I'm finding this a problem too, when searching for a particular section referred to in a loc. I might do some sort of index in a future issue, though it'll be mainly for my own benefit; some people seem to have trouble getting through KfN once, let alone re-reading it.

STEPHEN H. DORNEMAN, 221 S. Gill St., State College, PA 16801, U.S.A.:

"I agree with you that cutting the book reviews will definitely improve the zine. Or at least include them as happenings in the stream of consciousness, and then only if the book was exceptional in some way. The way you have them now sounds rather forced, a "Well, I've read these five turkeys, and I'd better get the reviews down before I forget them completely" attitude. And especially drop them if you plan to continue taking shots at A. B. Chandler, whose 'sailor in the sky' stories first awakened my sensavunder.

You're not the only one to have a go at me for panning THE COILS OF TIME. SPARTAN PLANET, the alternative you recommend, doesn't sound familiar at all, but some of the titles Don D'Ammassa mentioned should be available over here. I'll try to get one or two, and will comment on them in these pages. As expected, loc-opinion has been divided over the abandonment of book comments. I'm beginning to see something in the view that 'if you can't say anything good, don't say anything'. As you suggest, I'll still mention books that I find exceptionally interesting - but there are only two or three per quarter which fall into that category.

"I'll bet every paranoid faned is busily engaged in writing you nasty letters as to how you could write such a mean review about their zine that you had to censor it yourself. Of course, you could never have been referring to WELTANSCHAUUNG. You weren't, were you?

No. You'd win the bet, though the letters weren't nasty.

"The illo on plo2 looks to me like an ad. for a new, improved, industrial-strength douche (a number of which we in the States have had on TV lately).

Well, it's different. Most readers merely suggested she was having a crap. Unimaginative sods. I much prefer your imaginative suds.

"DUNGEONS AND DRAGONS IS ALMOST BETTER THAN MONOPOLY! A new convert to the game myself, now every Saturday afternoon and Sunday evening I sally forth in the guise of Fabulon Frigidaire, 'The Stander in Doorways', amateur Elf wizard, with the intelligence of 16, the strength of 12, and the charisma of 6 (well, two out of three...)

Almost? Very definitely, I'd say. Funnily enough, most of my characters seem to have low charisma, which is why they're always 'volunteering' to investigate rooms and meeting assorted horrible but ingenious deaths which invariably await them. Have you noticed how a particular dungeon reflects aspects of its designer's personality?

"I wrote Sam Long, explaining to him that one can measure fanatic by the

numbers of defunct photo-news journals one possesses. For after all, Pandom Is A Weigh Of LIFE.

"Glad to see another fan also enjoyed DOC SALVAGE, MAN OF SCRAP IRON, or whatever it was."

doug barbour, 10808 75th. Avenue, Edmonton, Alberta, T6E 1K2, Canada:

"i did enjoy the zine ((KfN 3)), & only thought to argue one time, when you were beginning to deride yr instructor in the sf course. i felt with him a bit you see cos i once taught such a course, & a number of the people in it thought very differently than i did about what it should be about & were disappointed i didnt have more ANALOG-type fiction on. actually, tho, i disagree almost entirely with his approach, as i was interested in good (as well as fun) writing: as, to wit, my book choices: BEST SF 1969, & in something like this order, Asimov's FOUNDATION trilogy, Blish's CITIES IN FLIGHT tetralogy, then onto DUNE, THIS IMMORTAL, PAST MASTER, BABEL-17, EINSTEIN INTERSECTION, THE LEFT HAND OF DARKNESS & PICNIC ON PARADISE. i luvd the course, & a few of the people who hadnt read such well written sf before & found they could take it, rather enjoyed it too. i admit, i'm interested in formal criticism, & not thematic. & i was trying to show how sf had moved from science fiction to speculative fiction. but it was sort of fun, & not really like what yr bloke is up to. besides i had read most of the earlier golden-age stuff in my teens. i did know something of the field.

ah well, maybe youve gotten yr fellow converted to the real stuff by now. i wouldnt put it past a bunch like you guys."

You and 'our bloke' Murphy have one thing in common, namely that you're both interested in reading, studying and presenting well-written sf, an admirable aim with which I have no quarrel. However, I consider Murphy's approach doomed to failure, since he is examining the field from the point of view of mainstream literature, with little or no previous background knowledge of sf to aid him, hence he is looking for qualities in sf which are not there, generally speaking, and is missing out on many of the strengths and virtues unique to sf.

The course works like this: each week we all read a number of selected works of fiction, and the following week, previously selected individuals present their views on the pieces chosen by or assigned to them, after which there is a free-for-all discussion. This is good - sooner or later, everybody who wants to has a chance to 'hold the floor'. Ideally, the person who has gone to the trouble to prepare an exposition, carefully worked out to the best of his ability, should be allowed to present it without interruption. Unfortunately Murphy has the habit of leaping in every so often with his own views, a practice which I find both distracting and irritating, and I think most of the others do too.

A more important objection relates to the choice of material: firstly with respect to length, since we aim to cover some fifty short stories but only three novels during the course. I realise that this emphasis on shorter material is dictated by the amount of photocopying permitted by the WEA - ob-



viously it is easier to provide copies of three short stories than the same number of copies of a full-length novel. However, the short story is now a medium almost unique to sf, and though some excellent material has been and is being written at this length, it should not be over-emphasised to this extent. In my view, if the course-members are really interested, they would be willing to buy a study-novel every other week or so (presuming they hadn't already got it in their collections), filling in the schedule with selections from suitable anthologies, such as Asimov's BEFORE THE GOLDEN AGE, the SFWA HALL OF FAME series, Ellison's DANGEROUS VISIONS collections, a BEST SF OF 19xx (as you suggested, doug) or a recent issue of a prozine. This brings me to the second half of the objection: because of Murphy's aforementioned lack of stefnal background, the course has no pattern; he is simply presenting material which he considers suitable from his own random reading in the field. As much by chance as anything, he's coming up with some acknowledged 'classics' (e.g. Heinlein's ALL YOU ZOMBIES which we're doing next week) and a fair proportion of other good material, but this is not enough. Again, in my view, the only way in which an introductory course of this nature should be presented is in a form which logically portrays the history and literary development of the genre. If this were so, it would no longer be necessary to explain why 'Doc' Smith is irrelevant today, and why his stuff should be avoided like the plague. Whoever masterminded Panther's 'Lensman' reissue series should be shot at dawn, if not sooner.

Ah well. No point in giving myself high blood pressure. Suffice it to say that my realisation of the deficiencies of the WEA course have prompted me to give serious consideration to the organisation of some sort of informal sf discussion group in Derby. If I can rouse myself out of my customary lethargy I might even do something about it. Stay tuned, as they used to say.

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Suitable collective names for carved fingers:

A gesticulation of hands	(Mary Reed)
A pointing of fingers	(Pamela Boal)
An indication of indices	(Pamela Boal)

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ERIC MAYER, RD 1, Box 147, Falls, PA 18615, U.S.A.:

"Those wine labels are amusing and very well executed. Are they mimood or what?"

Skel will like that. I'd taken the electrostencils Skelwards in order to take advantage of his multicolour production facility (or blue and green Roneo drums, as they're known to their friends). However, in the event I was 97% incapacitated by diseases of a flu-type nature, so he had to run the damn things off as well as providing the ink. Your comment will doubtless convince him the effort was all worth while. Hopefully I and this quintuple scotch can fan his warm egoboo-glow into the white heat of creativity, and persuade him to do me some more cover-illos.

"The trouble with discussing any kind of art is that at some point, everything comes down to personal taste. If I knew what it was in any

form of art that truly attracted me, I suppose I'd be writing best-sellers. I can feel it, but I can't identify it. What color do you like better? Red or blue? We all have our preferences. I might try to explain why I like blue better, but it would be stupid for me to try and argue that blue is somehow superior to red. I think this attitude gets in the way of a lot of criticism. Instead of trying to explain why he likes a certain style of music or writing (and thus, perhaps, help someone else to like it more) the critic too often attempts to prove why the style of his choice is 'better'. Where this diatribe came from, I'm not sure. It was waiting in ambush apparently and sprang out unexpectedly when I started typing.

A typical behaviour pattern of the diatribe, a particularly nasty Red Indian sub-group of Welsh origin. There's a lot in what you say about criticism, which is why I generally steer clear of it. However, if one approaches criticism with the right attitude - total scepticism - some of it can be quite entertaining reading. Some, like the Panshins' work, is deadly dull.

"Harry Warner's suggestion about putting fanzines on microfiche is practical but so excruciating aesthetically speaking. Books are crude. 100 years behind the times. And I love them for it. You have to touch them. They have weight, and texture, and smell. They're real, palpable, mechanical - you have to turn the pages instead of using a remote control knob.

Yeah. Nothing can match the bittersweet agony of the weighty volume of CHEMICAL ABSTRACTS you've just dropped landing caressingly on your ingrowing toenail. But on the other hand, what can compare with the exquisite thrill of touching the 'live' casing of a wrongly-wired microfiche projector? Yes, there's something to be said for technology, even if it is only "Yeeceowch! Fucking stupid electricians!"

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Only two months to the con? But that means it's almost over! (Mary Reed)

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And now, a few words from Our Man ~~IA~~ From Japan (it says here):

MIKE GLICK-SAN, 141 Hai Pak Avenue, To Ron To, On Tah Yo, M6P 2S3, Can Da:

"I must take umbrage at the highly cavalier fashion in which you treat me in this third set of KNOCKERS. Not only do you reproduce one of my crammed-to-absolute-fullness postcards in all its unesthetic splendour, you interrupt me twice while doing so, fail to mention my evident state of total inebriation thereby giving the impression I write like that all the time, and in addition don't get my loc on KfN 2 in time for the issue. Were this not enough, you have the colossal gall to suggest that I am made of cardboard! Cardboard!! I ask you. (But not much and not often.) Plastic, sir! One hundred percent, genuine imitation Japanese plastic! None of this cheap paper stuff in me, all the real artificial article, with the rough edges and mould marks sanded smooth in most places that show to the public. I can safely be immersed in water and most other fluids, scotch being the preferred choice. I resist winds of

up to fifteen miles an hour without cracking and do not bend in the hands of small children or cripples. (Let's see your cheap pommy paperboard make a claim like that!) I am even non-toxic in small enough doses and can be easily put together by infants, women, foreigners and even fans that are smarter than Pete Presford. In addition I come with a one day warranty and several fascinating spare parts and accessories, which you must be eighteen or over to order. (Specify 'Adult Model'.) Many minutes of fun not-quite-guaranteed but a bargain nevertheless. So kindly keep your scurrilous accusations of shoddy cardboard to yourself, sir!

Yes boss. Sorry boss. Er...this 'umbrage' which you seem to have a strange irresistible urge to consume...it wouldn't be the rare 'Not a Drappie Sold Till It's Three Weeks Old' Glen Umbrage, that most singular of single malts, would it? Only 83p a bottle, under the counter, no questions asked? If so, I fear inflation is hitting the colonies as well. Don't worry about the body-rash, by the way - it wears off after the third bottle. I was also interested to read that you 'come' with a one-day warranty. Is this some new form of perversion? Guarantee-fetishism? If so, I've got some pretty horny guarantee-cards I can let you have, fairly cheap. Transistor radios, spin-driers, coffee-percolators...sorry, didn't mean to be rude. Let me know, anyway.

"I read the whole issue through, although not quite at one sitting. (I haven't been constipated lately so most fanzines take several trips.) And I didn't find it boring. There were parts I'll not be able to comment on (all the books and movies you've read and seen while I've been trying to get the fanzines caught up, for example, and all the remarks about music, a subject I share Roytac's feelings on) but I enjoyed it nonetheless. To be honest, I think I enjoyed SFD a little more, probably because of Paul's more fannish bent, but KFN is at least the second best diary-format personalzine in England today, take my word for it. (My word today is 'horsepuckey' although yesterday it was 'superfluous' and tomorrow it's 'eclectic': what it will be by the time the offer reaches you is anybody's guess.)

My word for today is 'Saturday', which is pretty stupid seeing as how it's Monday. Wishful thinking, I guess. Why do you think Paul's is bent more fannishly than mine, when I have a B.S.F.A. certificate to the contrary? And what business is it of yours anyway?

"55p for a bottle of beer (and how do I wish our department stores had liquor departments like yours and the decadent Americans!) is pretty expensive but in a bar at a con hotel in the U.S. an ordinary bottle of absolute piss will cost at least 65p. Any tippling Anglofen contemplating a visit Stateside ought to either plan for that or plan to buy and drink their own, as I do most of the time.

Here's one tippling Anglofan who's just tippled right over from shock. Okay, I can take it: how much is a bottle of absolute piss bought outside the hotel? And how much for piss of a lower proof? I presume, incidentally, that U.S. hotels are equally if not more snotty 'n' stroppy than U.K. hotels if and when they catch residents drinking their own booze?

"A fellow teacher who knows I'm a sci-fi guy but doesn't read it herself showed me the prize-winning Gollancz short story and asked my opinion. I read it, thought it dated, trite and inadequate in most respects and told her that. She was quite relieved because she'd found it rotten too and was worried that that was what science fiction was like. They either had some pretty poor judges, a total dearth of entries, or a little hanky-panky on the side.

The judges were Brian Aldiss, Kingsley Amis and John Bush, who's boss or whatever of Gollancz. As I recall, Arthur Clarke should also have been on the panel, but had to back out. A pity, since I hardly think he would have let such a poor story go through uncontested. I suspect that the irrepressible Brian more or less bullied the others into agreement with his choice; not only did he give the preamble to the award-presenting at Tynescon, but he also wrote the introduction to the Gollancz collection of stories from the competition, in which he rather gave the game away by pointing out the similarities between the winning story and 'Not For An Age', his own prize-winning story from a similar competition in the fifties. (Sorry if I'm misjudging you, Brian old boy, but that's how it looks from here.) Having read the aforementioned Gollancz book, I think that the majority of the stories included are much better than the chosen winner, only the two by Daphne Castell (Tokenwoman strikes again!) and the shorter of Chris Morgan's efforts coming anywhere near the same low standard.

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Recommended reading: LOST CONTINENCE by I. L. Spray de Camp. (FILLER)

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LEROY KETTLE, 43 Chesholm Road, London N.16:

"See the lovely new address. Write down the lovely new address. Use the lovely new address.

"Well, Mike, incredible as it may seem here's a loc to your favourite fanzine. Chris and I have recently moved houses and we occasionally wander back to the old adobe to look at old bills and new fanzines. Sometimes the festering inhabitants take it upon themselves to look after my mail. This consists of placing it carefully under the largest smelliest pile of slimy waste they can find in their bedrooms so that when I come to pick it up from the little table in the hall it's somewhere I can easily get at it. This means that final demands turn into threats of legal action, MOTA 11 suddenly turns out to be MOTA 13, and I get birthday cards at Christmas. As it happens I only had to wait weeks for KFN and INFERNO, and I ran out of steam (ran out of steam -- Kettle -- get it? Save you the trouble.) after losing Skel so you've had to wait.

"You mention three things in KFN in which I have some vague personal interest. 1) You say that Ratfandom rarely locs (well, Mauler said it but you agreed) 2) You say you want locs not reviews 3) You deleted some nasty comments about nasty comments on pl01 and, for various reasons, I assume some of them were about TR6. The comments that follow are valid even if I'm wrong about that

"Firstly, Ratfandom rarely does write locs except for Pat Charnock, Roberts, Brosnan, Piggott, Edwards and some others who might be peripheral Rats. To the best of my knowledge this reputation for not locating probably derives from the fact that Greg and I seldom write. Not many of us are Harry Warners or Dave Rowes or (perish the thought) Mike Glicksohns, but somehow a fair amount of locating appears to be seen as no locating. For instance, I am now one letter up on both you and Skel. OK, this is recent, but I don't think you receive many fewer letters from down here than we do from up there. Maule is merely a little bit right about verbal locs taking over in London. The only fanzines to suffer are Ratzines. It's not a case of us discussing every fanzine until it's pointless writing to the editor about it, it's merely that local fanzines tend to have their editors talking to each other about them, thereby losing possible locs. The fact that Maule has never discussed TRUE RAT with me except at no length has never prevented him from not locating it at all. So much for the value of his comments. Further, I reckon Ratzines may not be frequent, but to suggest they 'appear rarely if at all' (because we're all having fun) is peculiar. EGG, TRUE RAT, SCABBY TALES, WRINKLED SHREW, VIBRATOR.... Finally, on this topic, Maule suggests that 'the whole idea of fandom is communication by letter and fanzine'. This appears to be the view of a socially unsuccessful fan - or, at least, of one who thinks that his preferences rule out other possibilities. Surely fanzines and locs started primarily to enable communication to take place between people who lived apart. If you don't live a million miles away from everyone then fanzines and locs lose some of their purpose -- and quite validly so. Not all of their purpose, just some.

I don't wish to nitpick, but apart from Roberts who's fairly prolific, your other examples haven't exactly taken the lettercols of the world by storm. Certainly I can't remember when I last saw Piggott or Edwards represented therein. Maybe my memory's bad, or maybe they don't write memorable locs, or maybe both.

I think you missed Maule's point a little, though his argument wasn't too well phrased. I took it as read that when he wrote 'communication' the idea of separation was implied. What he was driving at (I think) was that in a situation of high fan-density, some people (e.g. himself) find that all their fannish energy and creativity becomes channeled inwards, those outside the group getting neglected. I think that's a valid argument, for some people. Unfortunately Maule made it sound like a generalised statement of fact rather than the personal feeling and opinion it undoubtedly was.

On reflection I agree he was wrong about the infrequency of Ratzines.... though there was a time recently, before the Charnoxines got started, and whilst EGG was temporarily in limbo, that Ratzines were pretty thin on the ground. In fact they were pretty thin wherever you put them. Do carry on:

"Secondly, you say you want locs not reviews. Sort of Right On, bruvver. I want both actually -- I'd prefer good locs to good reviews, good reviews to bad locs and bad locs to breadcrumbs under the foreskin (which comes from abusing your loaf.) By good reviews I don't mean favourable reviews. By bad locs I do mean locs consisting of nothing writ small.

If someone's happier commenting briefly or at length on fanzines in their own publications than they are writing dozens of locs, then that's OK by me. There are some subjects that aren't particularly suitable in locs to individual editors (such as comparisons of fanzines) and some things which are useless in reviews (like pages of personal chat.)

"This brings me to the third point. Apparently what I said annoyed you. I assume it was what I said about LURK 7. Your annoyance is understandable as I wasn't particularly complimentary considering the amount of work you put into LURK (and I was a bit offhand too) but then again effort is no substitute for talent. I'm not being personal here, just generalising. If I'd had time or space I'd have gone on in TR6 to say how much better KFN was than LURK 7. There are, as far as I'm concerned, flaws in KFN but not as many as in LURK 7. At least you stand or fall on your own, instead of apparently publishing inadequate material by friends on the possible basis that if they went to the trouble of writing it, someone should publish it (Hark, do I hear Audrey Walton nodding in the breeze?) -- or maybe you actually liked the articles. Here's the all too obvious crux. Our tastes and standards are different. Wow -- revelation. I'm well aware that I publish stuff that Greg, for instance, reckons is rubbish. If he thinks so he's entitled to say so -- at whatever length wherever he wants. Once I've sent somebody a fanzine it's theirs to do with as they wish except that I expect a credit in the unlikely event of reprints.

I wish I'd either kept my mouth shut about my second thoughts, or at least kept the offending bits of stencil so I could quote exactly what I said. However. Three fanzines were reviewed in that particular section: two of them I said nasty, unconsidered, second-thought-worthy things about; the other was TR6. I did not object to your comments on LURK 7 because they constituted an honest personal opinion rather than a review. (Besides, none of your criticism was aimed at any of my own work, only at my editorial judgement. That's okay - I don't have all that much anyway, would rather publish a merely average piece than risk offending a friend by asking for a revision. You have to be fairly Dedicated to publish a good genzine, which is why I gave it up. To publish a good personalzine you only have to be Drunk. More expensive but less effort. I would say, though, that the general standard of the contents of LURK 7 was about the same as in previous issues, in my opinion. End of long parenthetical statement.)

"KFN is your fanzine (yep, I noticed) but if you're going to send it to me and I'm going to do fanzine reviews then I intend to review it. Obviously you want locs, but I want material too. As a compromise, if you state you want locs not reviews, then if I intend to do a review I'll send a loc as well. If I got the impression that, like Darroll, you had a fanzine you wanted to restrict to friends then I wouldn't mention it. But I won't just put in addresses without comments. In fact, I didn't put any addresses at all in TR6 as I've a very small circulation and most everyone knows most everyone else and I forgot anyway. If you choose not to send me KFN on the basis that I might review it then that's my loss. I like KFN -- I prefer INFERNO as it happens, but that may well be because KFN is too long and not selective enough yet (as you may possibly agree if I read your comments on page ii correctly) --

and I'd be sorry not to get it any more. But how many people do you think are going to be prejudiced in any direction by what I say -- and if they are, are they worth sending fanzines to anyway? My Christ, no-one would dare open his mouth if he was worried about the possibility of prejudicing someone in some way. Occasionally I find myself looking at a book, or the possible purchase of a book, in a different way after I've read a review, but that's only because over a period of time I've found myself frequently agreeing with the views of the reviewer. I don't do this with your book reviews at the moment, nor do I expect anyone to be particularly affected by anything I say. I don't even write reviews really. Perhaps I should play like Graham Greene and call them entertainments.

"Bloody hell says Peter Poot, you've got me justifying something I should be able to do without a second thought. If you're going to pub your ish you've got to expect that it will be reviewed or commented on in other fanzines. You're at liberty to comment on those comments just as you are to comment on locs. Are you going to withdraw KFN from the Nova Awards, the Checkpoint Fan Poll, mentions in someone else's lettercolumn, discussion except when you're present, usage as toilet paper? These are all 'reviews' by another name -- if obliquely so.

"It's a proud and lonely thing to be proud and lonely. Don't stop sending me the new slim KFN -- unless you feel you have to."

You're the first and so far the only person to make any sort of comment at all on my request for no reviews. Possibly the others didn't even notice it, or didn't think I was serious. My reasons for doing this were a) firstly and most important, I'd just read a couple of reviews by persons who confessed their bias against personalzines, then went right ahead and reviewed KfN anyway. This pissed me off much more than the relative avalanche of good reviews from the States, **later**, made me feel good, because b) you can, on the evidence available so far, talk about KfN-type zines only in generalities anyway (Mike is a great/average/rotten writer; the repro is good/adequate/poor; I liked the funny bits/the other bits/all of it/none of it; the lack of artwork was regrettable/irrelevant/bad for the electro-stencil trade, etc.), unless you resort to pages of personal chat which, as you say, are useless in reviews (but ideal for a KfN-type lettercol.) All this doesn't really conflict with the third reason, which is c) that I want to restrict the circulation of KfN to 150, for reasons of time and money, those 150 being ideally the 150 most responsive people in fandom at the time I'm compiling my mailing list. 'Response' covers a multitude of ~~sin~~ things, but from my point of view as the editor of a personalzine, a good, quotable, reaction-inducing letter comes first; tradzines may be anything from a nose to several lengths behind, tradzines-including-reviews having little advantage over tradzines-without-reviews. Hell, this seems a long-winded argument over a minor point: sure, loc+trade+review is marginally preferable to loc+trade, so long as your review aims a little higher than 'I dislike personalzines, but I'll review one anyway'. Yes, of course, I am at liberty to comment on fanzine reviews (though I never have before, because ~~the~~ idea never really struck me before) and I may just jump on any review of the above type, if I'm in the mood. I can feel you faneds trembling from here.

Whether you like it or not, Leroy, relative neos are influenced by any fanzine reviews they might see (and even some fairly well established U.S. fans might be neos as far as British fanzines are concerned.) So any review which deters a fan from writing for his own free copy, to evaluate for himself, is bad in my terms. The more I expound this argument, the more holes I see in it, but whatthehell. Don't bother to tell me.

I'm glad you mentioned the Nova award: I consider it incompetent, irrelevant and immaterial (as somebody used to say), and would probably withdraw KFN out of sheer perversity, in the unlikely event of it being nominated. (I recall mentioning to Skel that it might be fun to nominate FANZINE FANATIQUE: this idea has even more appeal if, as I've heard rumoured, a whole year's output can be considered instead of just a single issue.) Personally, I give myself an award every time I get a good letter or tradezine. Even the fanzine Hugo is pretty unrelated to fandom nowadays. How about an award for the Most Irrelevant Award?

Okay, I get your point, Leroy: your nine-pound hammer is a little too heavy. Obviously I can't prevent people reviewing KFN if they really want to (even John Piggott, who didn't get a copy direct), but I'd prefer a personal response from anyone who feels strongly enough, one way or the other. If it's interesting enough, I'll print it, never fear.

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BACHELOR: One who is foot-loose and fiancée-free.

(from FILLER)

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ELI COHEN, 2920 Victoria Ave., Apt. 12, Regina, Sask., S4T 1K7, Canada:

"I feel I should comment on the matter of isolated fans vs. living in the middle of a fannish centre, since I went from a New York slum shack to the only fan in the province of Saskatchewan (though Andy Porter claims to have an ALGOL subscriber somewhere in this city). Obviously, it depends on the person, but I found there was more stimulation and reason to publish in New York -- it was easier to get material (both in the sense of outside contributions and anecdotes for my own writing), it was a hell of a lot easier to get supplies, and there's always the small matter of collators.... Here, I find I expend a lot of effort keeping in touch with close friends, and I find there's more reason to publish letter-substitutes to keep in touch with people I know, than to do a genzine to meet new ones. Actually, I think the optimum situation is a small group of isolated fans, who can provide the necessary internal pressure, but are not large enough to swallow all the fannish energy among themselves.

"Actually, thinking back on it, I was pretty slovenly about getting my zine out in NY too.

"Yeah, guess you're right. If you've got the Urge to Publish it doesn't matter where you are -- there are always fans out of talking distance to communicate with."

Another opinion, that agrees a bit with, and disagrees a bit with, and adds a few touches to what's already been said. It's really amazing how different



people can have different opinions on the same subject. Well, quite amazing. Certainly more amazing than different people having different opinions on different subjects. That's not very amazing at all. Quite the norm, in fact. So it wouldn't really be difficult or unlikely for something else to be more amazing. See? It all seems so simple after a few glasses of Scotch.

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I would be internally grateful if you would stop those abdominal puns!

- - - - G. W. Kincannon.

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Abdominal puns? I don't know any abdominal puns. Abdominal buns, yes. (Well, you've heard of a bun in the oven, haven't you?)

DON D'AMMASSA, 19 Angell Drive, East Providence, Rhode Island 02914, U.S.A.:

"I find of some interest the fact that you were so upset at Jessica's avowed dislike of men and attitude that they should be subservient, but elsewhere in KFN I get the distinct impression that you feel pretty much the same way about the female sex. Possibly this is a misapprehension on my part."

Possibly, possibly. That was a real bellypuncher of a comment to tack on to the end of an innocuous letter about books, Don. (Incidentally, WORLD OF CHANCE/SOLAR LOTTERY did come out before the book version of TIME PAWN, but after the magazine version.)

Now, let me be sure I understand this: somewhere in KFN 3 I said something that made you think I was, in effect, a male chauvinist pig...right? I certainly can't recall consciously saying anything of that nature, so it must be my subconscious (The Real Me, as it likes to call itself) playing tricks again. When I've had a few it likes to sneak out and take over my typing finger. I shall have to be more vigilant. Or drink less. No, more vigilant.

Seriously, I'd be glad if you could point to some specific examples of what you mean. Certainly I used to be more of an MCP, all down to the old childhood conditioning. (Dad wasn't noticeably MCP-ish, but Mum is the sort of female the libbers loathe and despise.) Recently, though, I have seen the error of my ways, and did think I was doing quite well in the battle for new thought patterns. Now your comment makes me think I might have been deluding myself.

ED CAGLE, Star Rt. South, Box 80, Locust Grove, OK 74352, U.S.A.:

"Mearii: Just got started reading your latest effort, and will probably have more to say once I finish, but I found it impossible to continue before dropping one small pearl of wisdom on you. You were discussing being 'grossed out' with Jessica Salmonson. I presume you understand the term quite well, from your reply, but to add to your store of (vaguely) Yank slang, a perfect example of being grossed out would be to be four bites into a peanut butter sandwich when your host would appear with two containers. One would contain peanut butter, which the host would proceed to dump into a mixing bowl, turning to you, munching

happily, and remark, "I think I'll mix this batch a little heavier on the peanut butter." Said host would then scoop 4 pounds of shit into the common bowl and begin to knead it into one great viscous mass. That's grossing someone out, folks.

Anybody else care to submit their idea of the ultimate gross-out? Just being four bites into a peanut butter sandwich would do it for me, never mind the complications.

"The illo on plC2 is not of a lady, but of a long-haired, thick-lipped, lardassed farm lad who is holding a sheep that is struggling mightily. If the lad is shearing or shafting the sheep is a matter of preference, but from the amount of wool torn loose I should think the answer is obvious. Additional drawing would aid in determining the sheep's reaction.

Skcl?

"I wish you had provided a talk-back-to-the-book to the quote on pl18. "She's wearing an electric jockstrap, right?" is all I can come up with at first flash. Lack of practice, you see. There is also a possibility that I did better on my BACKTALKING THE BOOK schtick in KWAL because I usually made up the quotes.

"What 'plant' are you operating? A marigold manipulator, yet... 'Torturing the tulips again, eh, Mike?'"

Nope. Depolymerising the daffodils. They can't touch you for it. If only daffodils had arms, the whole course of western industrial development might have been radically changed, bringing a whole new meaning to 'flower power'. Not to mention a new generation of monster movies. Instead of Rodan .....RHODODENDRON!! Invasion of the POPPY Snatchers!! SPRINGS to Come? The THYME Machine? Destination BLOOM? 20,000 LEEKS Under the Sea? Dr. FOXGLOVE?

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"Peckerwood peckin'  
The chips a-flyin'  
The old folks a-fuckin'  
And the kids a-cryin'."

(Old Oklahoma folk ballad)

---

Must be an interesting place, Oklahoma. I've always wanted to see a flying chip.

DAVE LOCKE, 819 Edie Drive, Duarte, CA 91010, U.S.A.:

"For some reason I seem to be missing the first 96 pages of your fanzine. Don't tell me that this was deliberate, because no one starts off a zinc with a letter from Mike Glicksohn, not even if they pretend that page 97 is really the first page. Glicksohn locs should always be placed in the WAHF section, even if you print every word he writes. We have to try and keep him humble.

"Of course not. Why should a cartoon of a woman taking a douche 'provoke nausea' in me? I was really impressed. Got to hand it to you guys --

these British fanzines have so much class.

"Dean Grennell, a long long time ago, said that "'Fandom is a way of life' is a saying that should never be spoonerized." Sam Long, of course, had to forge right ahead and spoonerize it anyhow. Sam has a lot of class. Reminds me of British fanzines.

"Ed Cagle is being sued by the World Organisation Of Fanhumorists for divulging, within the pages of your fanzine, one of the most closely-held secrets of W.O.O.F. We were all highly outraged that he came right out and told everyone to "try lying occasionally to embellish the normal flow of everyday matters." Good Lord, is nothing sacred to this man? Any day now he'll shout out the windows and tell the peons that if embellishment doesn't do the job, to make the story up out of whole cloth. Oh shit, now he's got me doing it.

"Your response to Jessica Amanda Salmonson ("You must really have been through a lot of bad scenes with men to hate them so much") somehow leads me to believe that you are not overly familiar with the nature of her evolution. Since it is all very confusing, I sympathize with your befuddlement. Let me try and set you straight, or at least bring you to the point of confusion where I currently reside.

"Jessica, you see, used to be someone called Amos Salmonson. Amos wore pants and had a cod in them just like you and I (not you, Pat). Then, it seems, Amos decided to wear a dress when he visited the local draft board, and for some reason or other they decided that he was not ideal barracks-type material. Amos liked it all so much that he never went back to pants. However, he found that ladies' undergarments created too much pressure and consequently gave him headaches, so he went to the hospital and had them saw off the old cod, and they threw out the prunes at no extra charge.

"Jessica, who used to be Amos before all this happened, is presently saving her money for some vaginoplasty work (I have heard rumors, probably false, that her gynecologist keeps fainting dead away at the sight of her present under-leg condition). For a while there Jessica couldn't seem to make up her mind whether she wanted to sleep with men or women, though the source of all this indecision is probably understandable, so in her fanwriting she divulged to us that she became part of a menage a trois and slept with one of each.

"Lately, however, she seems to have taken up the cause of the lesbian. A sex-change case who became a lesbian. You just don't encounter people like this every day. It's a strange world out there, Jasper.

"I've enjoyed your knockers, and hope that you will soon bust loose with another one. I don't normally drop low-grade puns like that, but Mike Glicksohn has a heavy backlog right at the moment and might not be able to LoC your latest issue, so I thought I'd help him out."

Eek! It's one hour and nineteen minutes into the second quarter of the year and I've still got the record, book, film and contents pages to do. Stoppppp

KFN Sound Archives

RANDY NEWMAN - 'Good Old Boys' (Reprise K54022 £2.99): Dry, bitter humour with a voice to match. This LP is built around the theme of the Deep South, and I'm not sure I understand all the references, but there's plenty left to enjoy. Newman arranges his own stuff well, and gets good musicians, like Ry Cooder for example, to help him out. As enjoyable as his previous LPs.

JONI MITCHELL - 'The Hissing of Summer Lawns' (Asylum SYLA8763 £2.80 disc.): More complex than any previous album, this may be very clever and deep but it lacks the striking simplicity, the perfect union of words and music that characterised 'Blue' and 'For the Roses'. It's an evolution that's leaving me behind, and I feel sad. It's more together than 'Court and Spark', though, which in retrospect appears a transitional album.

DON McLEAN - 'Homeless Brother' (UnArt UAG29646 £2.99): Very disappointing. Compared to his first three albums, the song themes are trivial and the tunes flat. He's run out of steam, temporarily at least.

SECRET OYSTER - 'Sea Son' (CBS 80489 £2.23 disc.): The first album, to be available here anyway, by a Danish group. The rest of the LP is a bit of a let-down after 'Paella', the track they played on TOGWT and which made me get the LP, but it's all pleasant instrumental stuff, a bit like SANTANA without the rhythm, and the occasional use of jazz techniques like swapping fours works well.

PETER SKELLERN - 'Hard Times' (Island ILPS9352 £2.39 disc.) and 'Hold on to Love' (Decca SKL5211 £1.99 sale): The former is his first LP for his new company, the latter looks like a rehash of what Decca had left in the can. Both are pretty good, and show this Northern singer/songwriter's talent for matching creative piano tunes with straightforward, sometimes even banal, lyrics, and coming up with a memorable, often beautiful whole which is much more than the sum of its parts. Much use is made of multitracking, which suits very well his rather throaty voice. You just wouldn't believe how right a backing vocal line that goes "guggy-duggy-dung, guggy-duggy-dung-gung-gung" can sound. Would you?

MIKE OLDFIELD - 'Ommadawn' (Virgin V2043 £2.39 disc.): Better than 'Hergest Ridge', which was structured but hard to listen to, but not as coherent as 'Tubular Bells' side one, still his best work to date. His approach on all three LPs is alarmingly similar, but this one is saved, if that's not putting it too strongly, by some of the most strikingly beautiful melody/tone colour combinations he's yet produced. Those Northumbrian bagpipes.....

LEO KOTTKE - 'Chewing Pine' (Capitol EST11446 £2.39 disc.): A guitarist of the love-'em-or-hate-'em John Fahey school, Kottke has on previous LPs produced some of the most amazing solo guitar instrumental pieces I've ever heard. This one's a bit uninspired, though, with too much vocal work (though he can sing quite well), certainly not worth the £3.50 my local EMI shop is asking for it.

BOB DYLAN - 'Blood on the Tracks' (CBS 69097 £2.39 disc.): Why all the fuss?  
DUANE & GREG ALLMAN (Polydor 2310235 £1.55 s/h): Early stuff, not together.  
CHET ATKINS - 'Superpickers' (RCA APL10329 £1.50 s/h): Bloody brilliant!  
TOM PAXTON - 'Ramblin' Boy' (Elektra EKL277 £1.40 s/h): What I bin missing?  
ROY BUCHANAN - 'That's What I am Here For' (Polydor 2391114 75p s/h): Ruined by Mr. Billy Price, who suffers under the delusion that he can sing.

FROM OUR MAN IN THE UPPER CIRCLE WITH THE HEARING AID, THE ELECTRIC BLANKET  
AND THE EMPTY WALLET....

...and the alarming inability to think up short snappy titles for columns about films. The above does sum up my feelings about Derby's two cinematic entertainment emporia, though: one is so cold that they've recently started selling coffee at 10p a cup, and both manage to produce the most appalling sound quality from what is presumably quite modern equipment. And for this delightful prospect they have the nerve to charge 85p....no, tell a lie, only 80p if you don't mind sitting half a mile away from the screen in the upper circle. By contrast, there's a small independent twin cinema quite locally, which specialises in re-runs, managing to get perfect quality from equipment that's at least thirty-five years old, and charging only 50p per nice warm comfy seat. This is the place where I just saw

DIARY OF A SPACE VIRGIN, which is absolutely not a sexed-up version of Naomi Mitchison's MEMOIRS OF A SPACEWOMAN. In fact I doubt if it's a sexed-up version of anything. But of course I didn't go to see it for that. Course not. Stop sounding so disappointed Meara. I'd realised that I'd be failing in my duty as a normal, green-blooded sf fan were I to pass up the chance of reviewing this masterpiece of stefnic sensuosity for KfN. First off, I should say that the special effects are nothing to write home about. Save the paper for something more useful. The aliens land on Earth, you see, in a spaceship resembling in size and shape nothing so much as a spherical steel friction elimination device. However, although it may have saved the producers a lot of money, this ball has little bearing on the rest of the film, except that the nubbly female explorer carries it around with her as she gets into a number of compromising positions with various randy men, one of whom enjoys getting his rocks off in a room filled with balloons. Moral: never land your miniature spaceship in the back yard of a Soho massage parlour. Nubbly female explorer? Whence the nubbly female explorer? Ah well, the aliens have this gadget which can create nubbly humanoid females out of almost nothing at all. This would undoubtedly be a useful thing to have. Anyway, they finally discover that the reason she's making such a cock-up of the exploring bit is that the alien technicians forgot to equip their ~~ship~~ simulacrum with any sensory input. As soon as this is rectified, she really gets the hots for this Nice Young Man who's looking after her, eventually getting pissed off with the continual reproving mental backchat from the ship's commander, and threatening to drop him and his ship into the water of the bath she and the NYM are having at the time. Eventually she gets so hooked on the life of a real live Earth gal that she refuses to detransmogrify as instructed and return to base. The final exchange, conducted as the NYM is busily engaged in (quote) 'refueling' her with his (quote) 'probe', goes somewhat like this:

SHE: I'm comingg!

COMMANDER: Well, that's good. I'm glad you've finally decided to see sense.

SHE: I wasn't.....talking.....to you!

Genuinely funny in places, which is all wrong for a film that's supposed to be porn. All of which means I've much less room than I intended to leave for the other films. ROLLERBALL was a disappointment. The violence made me sick. Read Andrew Tidmarsh's review in VECTOR. LOVE AND DEATH is a very funny prod by Woody Allen at the 'War and Peace' bit. RETURN OF THE PINK PANTHER and SHERLOCK HOLMES' SMARTER BROTHER - disappointing followups. \*nudge nudge.

5th April

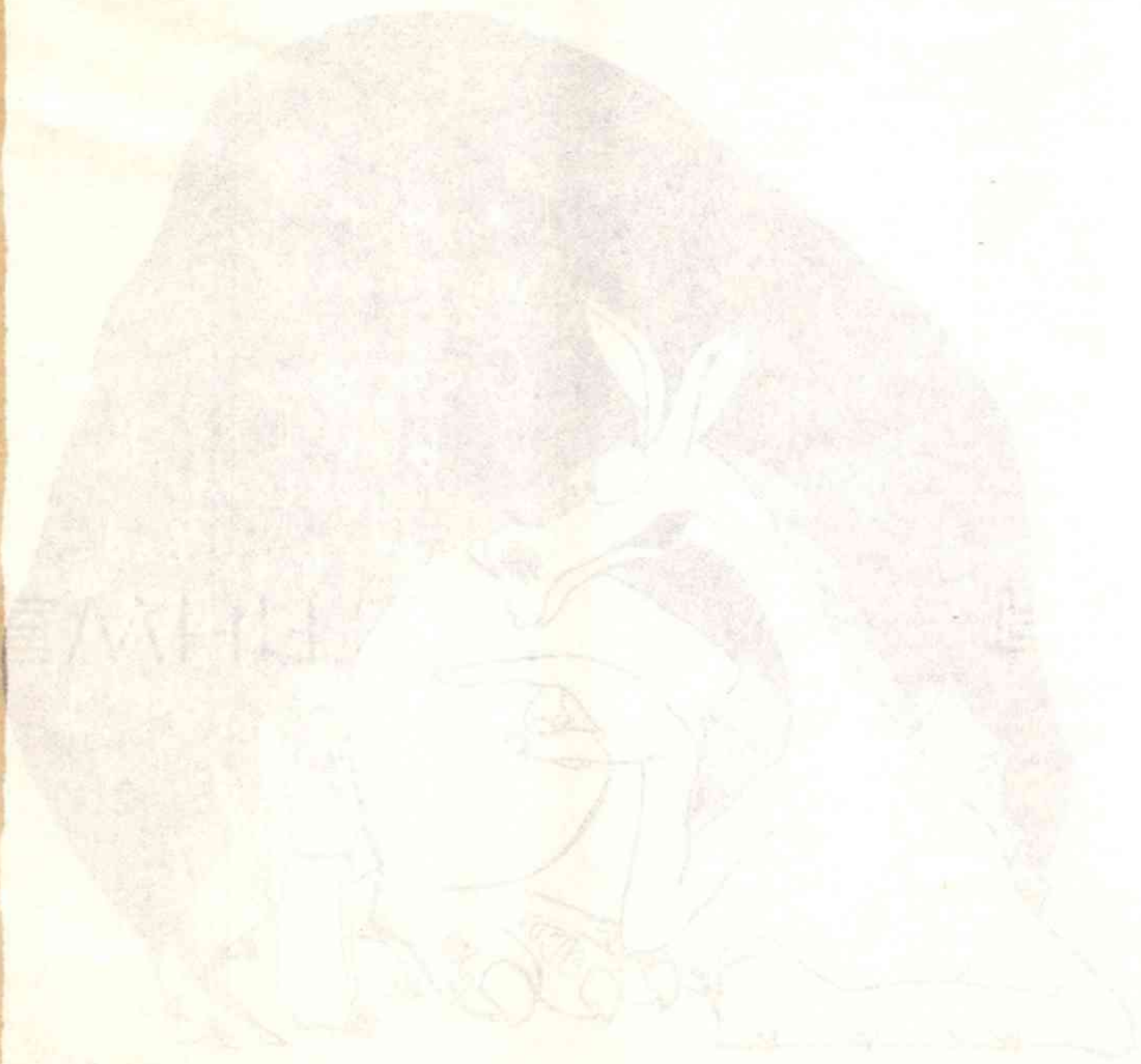
ENCHANTED PILGRIMAGE is Clifford Simak's latest from Sidgwick & Jackson, at £3.50. It's a blend of sf and fantasy rather reminiscent of HIERO'S JOURNEY, though not up to the same standard. Mark Cornwall, a young scholar in an alternate present in which the Church is still dominant, discovers a reference to an Elder civilisation in a half-forgotten book in the university library, and together with a motley band of goblins, gnomes and others, sets off into the Wastelands to find them and learn their secret. He does that all right, but the matter of the Wastelands and the strange creatures to be found therein is resolved in a vague and woolly way which I found unsatisfactory. A pleasant enough read, but definitely only a minor novel.

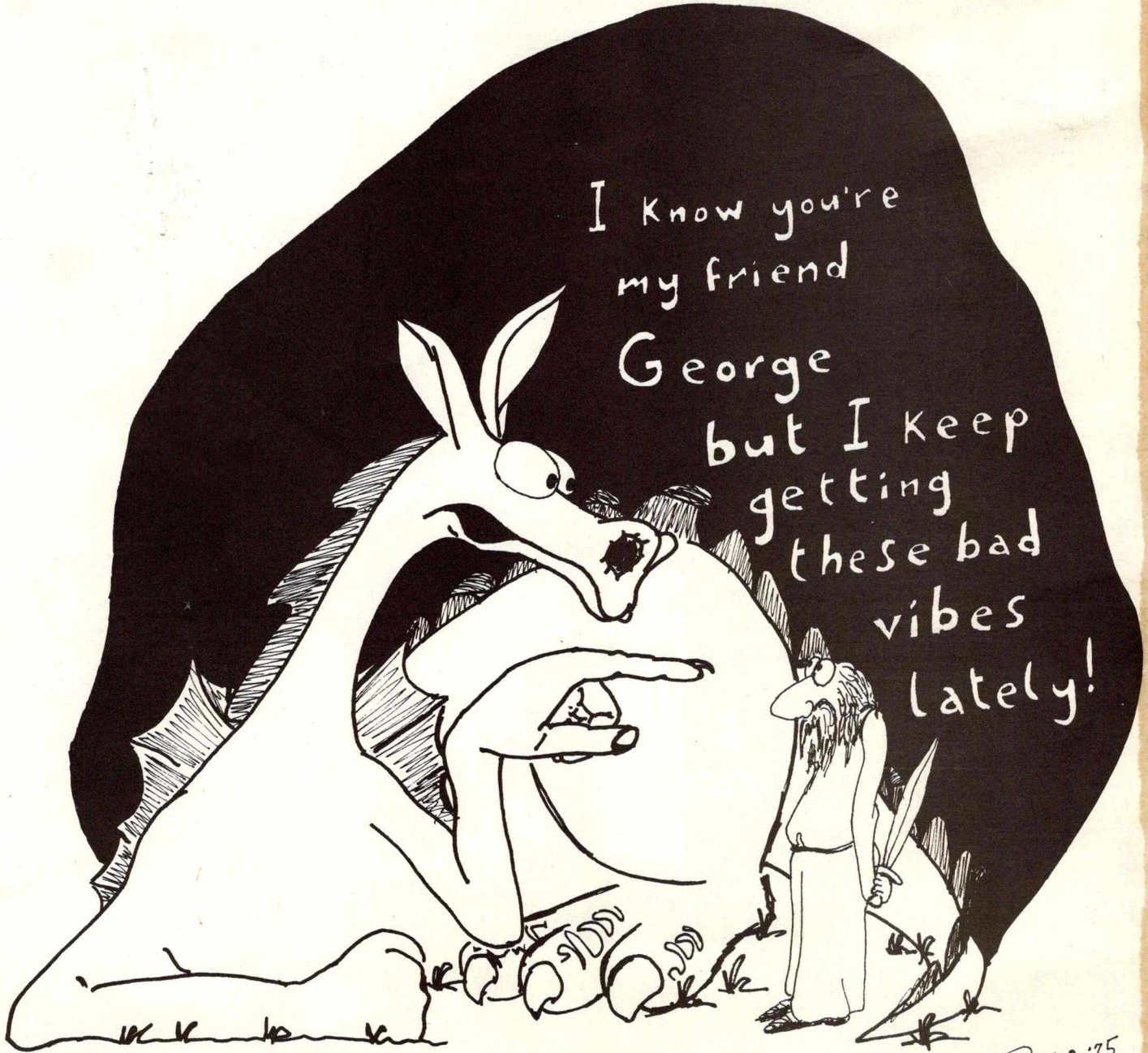
Having ploughed my way through the indifferent writing, poor plotting, often non-existent characterisation which fill the pages of NEW WRITINGS IN SF 27 (also from S & J at £3.95), and suffered the occasional presence of the spectre of arty clever-cleverness, it was like a deep breath of fresh air to come to the last, longest and definitely the best story in the collection, 'Cassius and the Mind-Junt' by Colin Kapp. Kapp is a good, unpretentious writer with all the basic skills, and although the ending of the present story, about a bloke who prowls unwillingly through a three-dimensional world-model in his friend's mind ostensibly to discover a vital piece of information, is a little weak and implausible, nevertheless the characters and the basic idea are strong enough to form the basis of a good novel. To be fair, there are a couple of other worthwhile pieces in the book, notably David Langford's 'Heatwave', about the attempts to explain away a message from the Lunar Observatory that the sun is going nova. But it's easy to take the piss out of computers, and the humour here is merely farcical, whereas a Sheckley could probably have added more depth. But, who in his right mind would pay nearly four quid for a collection of this quality?

Also from S & J are FUTURE GLITTER, another unreadable chunk of indigestion from Van Vogt (£3.50) and Asimov's FOUNDATION TRILOGY, which at £4.95 is much more of a bargain, even though it's the actual Doubleday Book Club edition disguised in a slightly modified dust-jacket.

From Pan we have the first two in Brian Stableford's 'Grainger' series, at 50p each, about which Pat (yes, yes, it really is her) has this to say:

'These are the first adventures of star-pilot Grainger and his articulated spaceship 'The Hooded Swan'. THE HALCYON DRIFT tells of the search for a spaceship with a legendary treasure lost in the Halcyon Drift - a region of radiation-filled distorted space. RHAPSODY IN BLACK describes Grainger's adventures trying to discover the secret unearthed by a society of religious fanatics which can destroy civilisation. I found both books quite enjoyable adventure stories. The plots are ordinary, but there are a couple of inventions which make them entertaining reading. One is the articulated spaceship which the pilot flies by feel. The other is the alien mind parasite which Grainger 'catches' when marooned on a hostile planet. Stableford's handling of them is not always believable, nevertheless both books can be enjoyed on the undemanding adventure level.'





I know you're  
my friend  
George  
but I keep  
getting  
these bad  
vibes  
lately!

SKL 16-9-'75