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LAN'S LANTERN #5

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ARTWORK

Tom Davis: cover, 18, 25, 31
Linden Jackson and Steve
Duncan: 5
Linden Jackson: 6
Steve Manuel: 10, 13
Lan: 16
F. Smedley: 34

The Science Fiction Club members

Reginald Adams, Charles Bingley, Randy
Burton, Tom Davis, Steve Duncan, Linden
Jackson, Steve Manuel, Connie Mauricio,
Vince Mosley, Mickey Northrop, Reginald
Raily, David Richard, Carl Sibert, Lisa
Sisco, April Spraggins.

A Special thanks to Joann Andrus.

DEDICATED The Science Fiction Classes in the HUB Program;
TO: Barry Levine, Joann Andrus, Ben Snyder and George Bibbs.

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FROM THE EDITOR:

RAMBLINGS 5

I am glad that this is over for another year. It was hectic trying to get all the students to turn in their stories, articles and reviews for final typing. As it was, not all the letters got into the issue published on Theme Day, that particular day on which the HUB (Horizons-Upward Bound) students' parents come to the Cranbrook campus to see what their children have been doing all summer (see the letter column for details on the nature of the HUB Program). In the six weeks that everyone in the class had to work on this project, the poorest job was done by those who chose to work on the letters that I received on the last fiction issue (LL #3) which contained HUB writings. Suffice it to say that I was extremely disappointed in their work.

Last year, when the program finished, and I decided to publish those fictional pieces, I swore that if I did it again, the whole thrust of the course would be directed towards that end. And that's what I did.

At the beginning of the course, each student was given an option as to what he or she wished to do. Tom Davis wanted to do some of the artwork. Linden Jackson and Reginald Raily wanted to write articles on superheroes, so I loaned out some books I had on that topic. The three girls, April Spraggins, Connie Mauricio and Lisa Sisco worked on the letters, and wanted to do some of the typing. They also typed up the addresses for the envelopes. Mickey Northrup and Randy Burton wanted to review some records I had of some short stories, so I supplied them with the original works which they read, then listened to the recordings. The rest wrote fiction.

I prepared myself to help my fiction writers this year by accepting Lloyd Biggle's invitation to join his workshop. I learned more from him than I could have on my own through books. It helped me, and I helped my students write better stories.

I had an assistant, Joan Andrus, a beautiful (in more ways than one) person with which to work. Although learning about science fiction herself, and learning about how to write fiction, she did a fantastic job in helping the students work through problems in their stories and articles, anything from mere mechanics of grammar and spelling, to intricate plot expansion into mood, character and setting. Joann also helped tremendously in typing up some of the final copy. I could not have handled this activity alone, and I publicly thank her. Thank you, Joann.

Finally I must thank Barry Levine who worked his class and submitted his three best stories for publication.

I must say that, as part of my Ramblings, this class was not the only one I taught this summer. I also taught Latin, Geometry and Algebra II, for which courses I had to write my own textbooks. The Geometry class was overloaded (20 students) for the type of individualized work that should go on in this program. As a result of all this, I have had a nervous, hectic, and not-very-enjoyable summer. (I also lifeguarded, took care of the AV equipment and showed the movies on Wednesday and/or Saturday). There were many good things that happened, but too many bad things happened for me to say that it was a good summer. I am glad that it's over.

Jan

THE OBSERVER

It was the sixth of June when the missiles came down on New York. People were panicking and running in the streets. Nuclear fallout filled the skies. It was horrible. Bodies lay decapitated in the streets.

I turned off my viewer screen in disgust. My name is Arkos Z-12, observer of the planet Earth. It was my duty to watch over Earth, and I had failed. I know that the Supreme Council will make a decision judged against me.

Suddenly my telecomputer started blinking wildly. I knew who it was: the Supreme Council. The presiding zymon was Arane Z-5-Q Javar. The Council transmitted their words to me:

"Arkos Z-12, Observer of Earth, you have been charged with neglect of duty, genocide, and failure to maintain peace."

I answered, "Your Greatness, I wish to be judged by my past record, not by my --- "

"Request denied!" roared the zymon. "You caused all life on Earth to be destroyed, and that is all we will consider now. What do you have to say about that?"

I replied, "I tried everything I could, Your Greatness."

"That's not good enough," snarled the judge.

"I tried placing a good influence among them."

"And what was that?"

I replied, "His name was John F. Kennedy."

The Council was startled. The zymon recovered quickly and said, "In view of the situation, your duties as an observer will be suspended. After all, we can't have an untrustworthy observer watching over planets."

I stood up and shouted, "That's a slanderous remark!! I think you owe me an apology, zymon."

"I owe you nothing of the kind, Z-12," replied the judge. "You should consider yourself lucky to get off with a light sentence."

I knew he was right, for the Supreme Council has been known to deal out harsh punishment. I went to bed that night feeling relieved, and fell into a deep sleep. Suddenly I felt I was being moved through time and space. I woke up and I could scarcely believe what I saw.

It was the sixth of June, and the missiles were coming down on New York.

Steve Johnson

A CHILD WAS HEARD

It all started about forty years ago in a small town called Minisville in Georgia. There was a family of four, but the sad part about this family was that the youngest child, a girl, was crippled from birth. She had to go to a special school called Leland. Her name was Bessie, but her friends called her Betsy.

Her family was very poor, and there was hardly any food in their house. They lived on a farm and Bessie's father worked the land, but that year the crops had been destroyed by locusts. Although her father had tried to do other work, there were very few jobs to be had.

One day it was raining hard outside. At the same time Bessie was ill and could not go to school. Everyone else had gone except Bessie and her mother. Her brother was off to his own school, and her father was out trying to find a job, or at least some kind of work.

Bessie's mother was having a difficult time trying to keep the house up, taking care of Bessie, and trying to scrounge up something for dinner. She was also in a bad mood since she and her husband had had an argument on the previous night, and he had left nothing for dinner, nor any money to get anything. He had woken up angry, and stomped out of the house. She was so angry at him that she could have done almost anything. And indeed she did.

The dinner problem was solved. It was cooking merrily on the stove when the boy came running home from school. The father was due in a few minutes. Bessie's brother went out to play in the front yard until father came home.

Soon, the boy ran into the house and right behind him was the father. He came in slowly, creeping up the stairs, walking heavily. He was very tired. He moaned softly when he entered the house, as if he were very old. When mother saw him, she asked him what the problem was. Father said nothing, but glared at her with a mean look. Then he walked over to the bathroom to get washed for dinner.

Mother went over to the stove and peeked into the pots. It was done so she called everyone to dinner. As soon as her son and husband were seated, the father realized that Bessie was not there. He thought for a minute that maybe she was playing outside, but he remembered that he hadn't seen her outside when he had come up the walk. So father asked, "Where's Bessie? Isn't she supposed to be in by now?"

Mother did not say anything for a few seconds, then answered, "Bessie is over to the neighbor's house. I'll be running over there to get her after while."

They all went on and ate. They were about half way through dinner when suddenly they heard a voice singing:

Mama kill me, Papa eat me,
Poor little brother sucked my bone,
And buried me around the true marble stone.

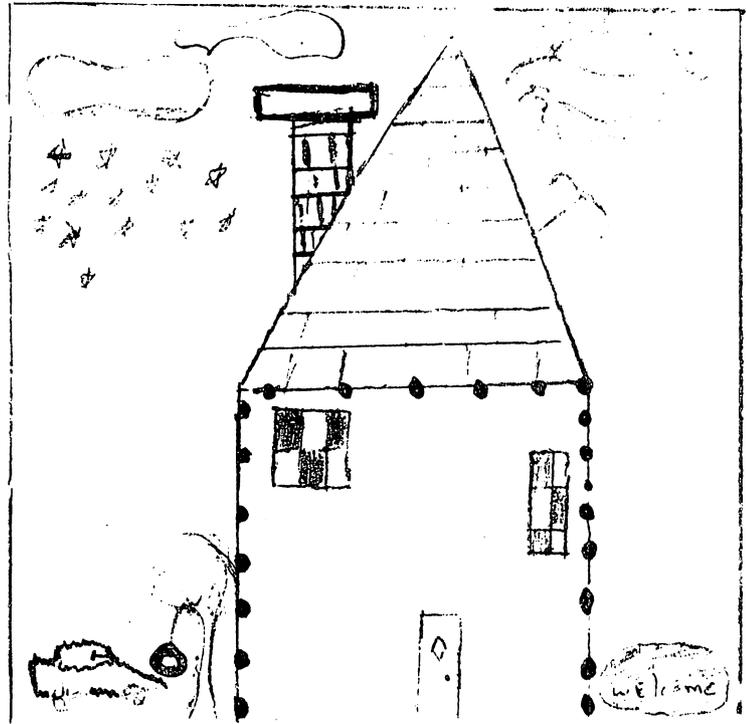
When they heard that, everyone was frightened. Father asked angrily, "What was that?" Mother knew what it was but she didn't say anything. After a few minutes they all calmed down enough and continued eating. Then again they heard the voice singing:

Mama kill me, Papa eat me,
Poor little brother sucked my bone,
And buried me around the true marble stone.

That time father got so upset that he cursed and demanded to know what that was. Mother said nothing this time either, because she knew that he had a very bad temper, and there was no telling what he might do. Father again demanded an explanation, so mother made some excuse that it might be coming from next door, and she ran outside to try and find out what it was.

By then father realized that something strange was going on. He figured out that she had killed Bessie, cut her body up and fed her to him and his son. It was her ghost crying out for revenge. The two of them jumped into the car and drove very slowly down the road. It was dark and misty, and the headlights did not shine very far into the darkness. They knew she was trying to get away, and they didn't want to miss her.

Suddenly a hand came out of the dark mist and pointed towards an intersection. They turned down that street and drove along slowly, until a shape formed in the mist. It was mother hurrying on the side of the road. Unexpectedly, father turned the wheel towards her and pushed the gas pedal to the floor.



It was over quickly. Her body thudded heavily against the car and was thrown to the side like a broken doll. They got out of the car, picked up the body, and put it in the trunk.

When they got home, they cut the body up, packed the pieces in the freezer, and went to bed. As you might expect, they were set for dinners for awhile. All they had to worry about was what to eat for breakfast and lunch.

Steve Duncan

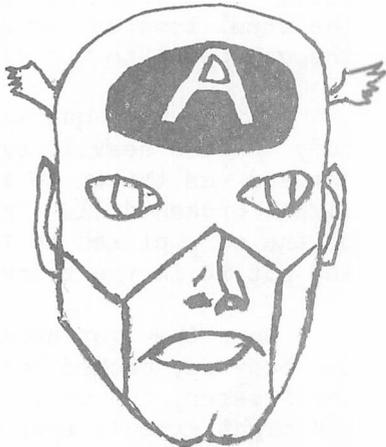
CAPTAIN AMERICA

In 1940 there were countries going against each other in war. In Washington DC a scientist had made a formula that would turn the U.S. Army into the strongest set of men in the world. But the scientist had to run some tests to find out if the formula would work on humans. A man by the name of Steve Rogers was chosen by the Army General to assist the scientist in these experiments. Steve had wanted to get into the Army but he didn't qualify because he was too skinny. The scientist gave Steve a shot in the arm and went behind a door to see what effect it would have. Suddenly muscle cells started growing all over his body. In about ten minutes the test was over. The scientist said the he would call Steve "Captain America".

Just then a bullet hit the scientist in the back, causing him to knock over the formula that could have stopped the war. Cap ran after the man who had shot the gun, and to Cap's amazement, he caught the man within ten seconds. Steve beat the man until he was unconscious, then took him to jail where he was convicted of murder and in the country illegally.

After awhile, Steve decided to get a secret identity so that if he ever had to go into enemy territory, he could go as two persons. Also, if anyone ever got the idea to hunt Captain America down for revenge, he could find out who it was as Steve Rogers. He also had a secret identity to divide his crime work from his army work. The General and the President knew about his identity. Later on the President was killed in office, and only the General knew that Captain America was Steve Rogers, until Cap took a boy scout on a camping trip as Steve Rogers.

As they settled down for the night, Steve was changing into Captain America just as the boy scout, Bucky, walked into his tent. Cap asked Bucky to be his partner in fighting crime and war when he got older. He also asked Bucky to keep his identity a secret.



During World War II, Captain America was sent on a mission to Germany to find out what kind of weapon Zemo was planning on using. He went as Steve Rogers, along with Bucky as a junior Army recruit. They were stationed in England at an U.S. Army base.

Cap and Bucky went to Zemo's headquarters, broke through an aerodrome window and attacked Zemo until his android came to defend him. With one punch the android knocked Bucky to the other side of the room, stunning him. Cap was distracted by concern for Bucky's welfare, and the android delivered an unexpected punch to Cap's jaw that knocked him out.

Zemo dressed both Bucky and Captain America with American army uni-

forms over their familiar costumes, and ordered hi android to tie them to the wing of a rocketplane. They got loose just as Zemo sent the craft flying off to explode. They chased the plane to see if they could turn it back or

deactivate the bomb, and caught up to the plane before it took off. Bucky left aboard the plane with Cap right behind. Cap fell off the plane somewhere in the North Sea, but Bucky was still with the plane when it exploded. There was no sight of either one thereafter.

In 1966 in Alaska, there was a big block of ice with a human form inside it. The eskimoes thought this was some kind of god. The eskimoes worshipped this figure until the Submariner came along and threw it into the waters of the Pacific. The ice eventually melted and the human form was released.

The Avenger's submarine was patrolling the area, looking for the Submariner, and rescued the human figure. Inside the submarine they found that the figure was still alive, and under the old W.W. II uniform the Avengers found the red, white and blue uniform of Captain America, along with his shield. He was in suspended animation in that block of ice and had not aged.

Linden Jackson

PLASTIC MAN

Plastic Man is a great super hero. Like all other heroes, Plastic Man has special powers, a secret identity and fights against crime. Plastic Man has the power to stretch a mile long. He can turn himself into rugs, chairs, tables and many other objects. The reason he has a secret identity is so that the people he used to work with and the police wouldn't find out who he was.

Plastic man had a bad background. He grew up as a criminal and ran around with the wrong people. But all of that ended when, during a robbery in a chemical plant, he fell into a vat of acid and his friends left him behind. He got out and wandered into the woods and lost consciousness. When he woke up he was lying in bed.

Later a short man in a robe came in. The old man gave Plastic Man, known as Eel, something to eat, and told him why he had saved him from the police. When the old man found Eel, he had acid all over him, and he took pity on him. The old man also sensed that he was basically a good man.

When Eel stretched, he suddenly found out that his arms stretched from wall to wall. Soon he realized that the acid caused him to have his amazing power. Because of what the old man told him, Eel decided to go from bank-robbing to a good and honest life, and use his power to fight against crime.

Plastic Man has fought and beaten many criminals that lurk about the city of New York. I feel that Plastic Man is a good superhero, but not as popular as Superman and Batman. He is different in that he only fights gang leaders and crooks, while others fight outerspace beings and super-powered enemies. He is like Batman, but has super powers. His secret identity is as a crook.

Reginald Raily

THE NEW MAN

PROLOGUE:

The solar system was dead. All that survived were people who were captured and taken away to become slaves. For centuries mankind was tortured, almost beyond endurance, hoping without hope that someday their last secret weapon would strike havoc into the heart of the Caspetian Empire.

No one knew who or what the secret weapon was. They just knew that before the Caspians mercilessly killed most of the population, the best scientists of Earth had created the last and most powerful weapon of all.

PART I

Gabrial Carter was deep in thought as he labored in the uranium pits. The main thing that bothered him was his difficulty in remembering his childhood. "Who am I?" he thought to himself. "How did I manage to get into a nightmare in which good strong men let cowards rule over them like cattle?"

His thoughts were interrupted by a sharp pain across his back. He knew what it was right away. The guard stood looking at him with a superiority that made Gabrial want to break his neck. But he knew that it would be hopeless because there were 350 other guards about. "They are just like wolves," Gabe thought to himself. "They won't strike unless the odds are 12 to 1 in their favor."

"Get back to work, slave," rasped the guard with an evil leer. Not having much choice in the matter, Gabrial quietly obeyed without a word.

Later, when all the work for the day was completed and everybody was in their quarters, Gabrial still couldn't help but feel that something was different about him. But he couldn't find what it was. Like all men, women and children he hated the Caspians with all his heart. A night wouldn't go by that he didn't spend part of it planning death to them all.

Again his thoughts were interrupted, but this time it was for a friendlier reason. Carl and Gwen entered, talking very softly with smiles and laughter.

"Hiya, Gabe," bellowed Carl Norton. "Guess what. Me and Gwen are going to get married."

"Best of luck!" he said. Then he became serious. "But what are you doing here? You know how the Casps deal with violations of the curfew!"

Carl looked at Gabe with disappointment. "How can you say that? They are not that inhuman. There was a time when man enslaved man. If they finally came to their senses and at least half-way accepted each other, could not the Casps, given sufficient time, accept us?"

Gabe couldn't believe what he was hearing. Here was a man he thought he knew inside out, but now he wasn't so sure.

"They must have brain-washed you. You know what they did to mankind."

Gwen, who hadn't said a word, finally decided to get in on the argument. "Carl is right and you know it, Mister Gabrial Carter. You are just too stubborn to admit it."

Gabe felt sorry for these nice people. He knew Carl and how he holds fast to his opinions, but he didn't want to argue with him all night. So he merely nodded and changed topics.

A short time later, Carl and Gwen were about to leave when suddenly the front door was shattered open. Gwen was killed instantly, and Carl was struck down by a laser. The attackers were Caspian Guardsmen. Five were crowded in the doorway carrying small but effective hand lasers. Instantly Gabe picked up a huge rock-slab bench and threw it at them, killing all five.

When Gabriel picked up his friend, he found Carl barely alive. "Well, I guess this wraps up our argument," sputtered Carl, choking on his blood.

"I'm sorry, Carl ---," began Gabriel.

"No, I'm sorry. Not you, Gabe. I'm the one that thought everyone was human and had a heart. Even the Caps." Carl died while Gabe was holding him up.

Carl was dead. That was all he could think of. His best friend had faith in them, and they killed him. He laid the body gently on the floor, and getting up he shouted, "By all that is Holy, I ---."

He didn't have a chance to finish. A laser bolt from one of the guardsmen outside killed him. In walked Qual Vandark with additional troops who were backing up the original attack team.

"Is he dead, sir?" asked Qanti, the second in command.

"Yes," replied Qual Vandark with a smile. He rose from his crouched position after examining the body. "He is nothing more than a corpse now."

"Look at him. I still can't believe he killed five men at once."

"Looks can be deceiving, Qanti." He turned to the other guardsmen.

"What are you waiting for? Throw him in the water pits," Qual Vandark ordered. "He deserves that much since he bested five superior men."

The men dragged Gabriel Carter's body to the edge of the vast pools called the water pits. Down went his weighted body to unfathomable depths.

"That takes care of that, wouldn't you say, Qanti?" chuckled Qual.

"I would indeed, sir. These Terrans are strong, but they are no match for our more superior intelligence."

With this they left, little realizing that the chemicals in the ancient water pits were reacting with unique chemicals in Gabriel Carter's body. Around the outside of the man the Caspians so ruthlessly killed was forming a golden glittering cocoon.

PART II

It was five years after the killing of Gabriel Carter. A-Sire Quaf Norn was worried. He couldn't find an explanation for the strange light that had been glowing in the water pits. It could have been nothing, but there was an ominous feeling about it. If something evil resulted, he did not want to be the person blamed. Desperately he sought a scape-goat.

At last he smiled. "Guards, bring me T-Meyer Qual Vandark."

He nodded, pleased with himself. Qual was headmaster at the water pits. He should know what's going on, and if he didn't, he would be the one to blame.

Upon entering the room Qual Vandark met Quaf's glare.

"What is going on at the pits?" rasped the A-Sire.

"I don't know, A-Sire," replied Qual evenly. "I've been thinking about it all night and finally decided to order a squad of divers to go down and check it out."

"What?" screamed Quaf. "How dare you give such a stupid order? You know that the pit will suck those men in."

"Forgive me, A-Sire," said Qual, a bit shaken. "How about if we send a scanning device down there and pull up whatever it is that's causing that glow?"

Quaf was satisfied with the suggestion, and asked when this would be put into effect.

"As soon as you give the word, Sire."

"Granted," he said.

It took nearly four hundred Terrans to pull the viewer into the pit. Of course the guards were 1500 strong. The Terrans knew that they were outnumbered and had to obey.

The viewer descended to the bottom of the pit. Those controlling its movements maneuvered the viewer into position so that the mechanical arms could grasp the ob-

ject that was emitting the strange glow. It took two minutes and thirty nine seconds to bring the glowing object to the surface.

Everyone was amazed at what they saw. It was a golden cocoon glittering like fire. They could hardly believe it. The guardsmen quickly got the Terrans out of the area. There was a danger of them using the cocoon as a diversion and they might start attacking.

Vandark was afraid of this object. "How did it get here?" he asked himself. "We had scanned the bottom of the pits before and there was nothing there. Where did it come from?"

He decided to call A-Squire and tell him what they found. When Quaf heard the report, he at once called an emergency meeting of the Sires.

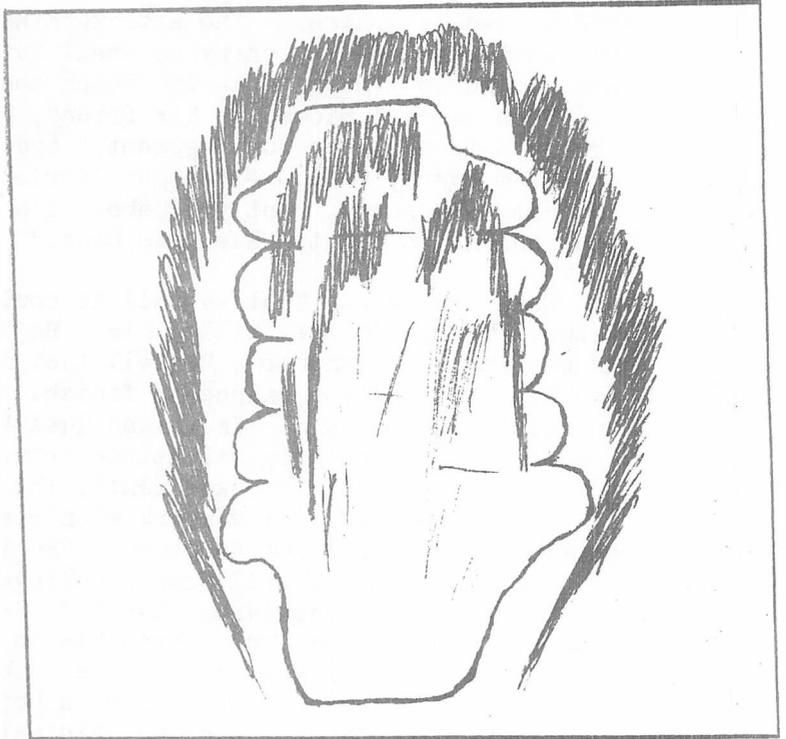
There were nine Sires at the meeting. These were the men who ran the planet Zoron. In all of the Caspetian Empire, the richest uranium mines were on this planet, and this was where most of the surviving Terrans were kept as slaves to mine the uranium.

"What do you think it is, Quv?" asked C-Sire.

I-Sire shrugged his shoulders. "It's a cocoon, I guess, though not at all like the ones from which we were born. It's different."

"If it's different," growled D-Sire, "then it must be inferior. And if it's inferior, it must be destroyed."

A-Sire stood up and quelled all talking by raising his hand. "Gentle Caspians, as A-Sire I am in charge of this planet. On Zoron now is an object that we know nothing of. It is a problem that we are not able to solve at this time. If this continues, we may be considered inferior, which could mean that we would all be replaced. There is also a danger of a Terran uprising. I want your consensus to use every weapon possible to destroy this cocoon."



There was no need for any discussion. None of the Sires wished to be replaced. Everyone raised his hand in assent.

Every single weapon known to Caspian technology was used, but none could pierce the super hard cocoon. At last they decided to use the Taf-Boom, their most powerful weapon. Just as the bomb was exploding, a tiny crack appeared in the shell and the bomb was nullified. It fell to the ground, drained of power.

Gabrial was slowly reviving. He looked around him and was surprised to see that he was inside some kind of hollow shell. Furthermore he felt power in his veins, power he had never dreamed of. He remembered the death of his friends, the slime at the bottom of the pits, and he was aware of what the Casps were doing at that moment. With a fraction of his power he opened a crack in his cocoon and drained the bomb of energy. Then he focused his power and exploded the cocoon.

As the smoke cleared, all Vandark could see was a golden Terran shouting, "I have returned, you Mazards, and I will destroy the Caspetian Empire inch by inch."

Vandark gasped in horror and died from fright when he recognized who the Terran was. More Casps died as the news spread across the planet. All of mankind on Zoron was rebelling, and it didn't take long before the Terrans had control of the planet.

Every man, woman and child rejoiced as they realized the victory they had won. The Terrans felt content to rest with it, but Gabriel said, "Terrans of the planet Zoron, I am glad that the Caspian threat is over on this planet. But you must prepare yourselves to fight to keep what you've won. The Casps are in all the surrounding star-systems, and I won't rest until I have finally destroyed them."

The crowd cheered. They had found a hero who would battle their enemy until they could build up their strength. The ship they gave Gabriel was named Flier. It was the best in the Caspian fleet. It could travel at Mark Warp 130 without strain.

As Gabriel bid his last farewells to the people, he remembered his awareness of being different from the normal Terran, but smiling he just threw the thought away. After all, he was a new and more advanced man.

PART III

DATA LOG 109 -- recording; position from Earth, 2 light-years; speed of Flier at Mark Warp 2; ready -----

I destroyed a colony of Casps on the planet Sangu. The people cheered as they rebelled against their masters. Only I was more pleased than they. It was a great victory, but I know that I still have a lot to do.

DATA LOG 109 -- continued -----

I have reached Earth and everybody greeted me with cheers, calling me "The Warlord". I couldn't help but to feel as if I had wiped out the evil empire in one swipe. As I left for my quarters I remembered my main reason for coming back to this planet, which has increased its technology since I led them to victory over the Casps who

had repopulated the planet with their men and Terran slaves. I must find Earth's secret weapon. It is the only thing that will bring full victory over the Caspians, whose leader is all powerful.

The next day found Gabriel searching through the Science Hall of Records which was restored five years after he left. A man named Hallow had hidden the records in underground chambers when the Caspian victory seemed certain. He had hoped that they would be used later by Terrans to overthrow the Caspian Empire.

For hours he looked through thousands upon thousands of microcards. He couldn't believe that mankind had advanced, and was continuing to advance, so rapidly. In a way the Casps saved mankind by making them slaves. It taught them brotherhood. All prejudice was eliminated.

Gabe's advanced mind read the records with a speed that was far outside that of a normal human, but nothing turned up. The only thing his photographic mind remembered of close importance was an experiment in 1982 which involved the strengthening of genes. Several scientific figures were on the records.

After he reviewed it, Gabe thought that it just might be what he was looking for. The one thing that confused him was the record: in 1987 it recorded only two successful experiments. One was to a man named Hal Carter, and the other was to a woman named Leila Melshell. Could this man and woman in some way have had something to do with Gabe's heritage? He thought it was possible, but he had other matters to contend with.

Where was the record of that super weapon?

A week passed and Gabe still couldn't find the answer to the question of the secret weapon, nor of the question that had bothered him before he died: What was his origin? Who was he? What made him different?

He felt he was wasting time, so he stopped his search and headed for Sangu. Pulling the steering rod back to Warp 2, Gabe looked at the stars shooting past his silver ship. They were endless, he thought, but not eternal. He smiled. That reminded him of a poem he had heard as a child, but he could not have quite grasped what it meant until now.

He was so wrapped up in his thoughts that he was not aware of the approach of the seven Caspian ships until they were almost on top of him. When he finally became aware of them, they had him surrounded.

"Who are you?" came a voice from his transceiver.

He replied, "You should know me well. If you don't, ask the survivors of the planets Zoron, Sangu and Earth." He was pleased when he heard a gasp from the Caspian ships.

T-Meyer Qanti was horrified. He couldn't believe that he was this close to the Warlord of Zoron. What a splendid feather in his cap if he could take this devil in. "Surrender, Warlord. We have you surrounded."

All Qanti could hear was inhuman laughter as Gabe destroyed his two bodyguards as they stood next to him.

"You are a coward!" Qanti screamed. "You are afraid to come aboard and fight like a man."

Gabe could not believe his ears. This was the man who had killed him before by shooting him in the back. How dare he accuse anybody of cowardly acts. It was this remark that made him transport himself into Qanti's ship.

Immediately a dozen men jumped on his back. He was so enraged that he threw all of them across the room with such speed he killed them. As he

turned to attack Qanti, who was busy searching for a laser gun, two dozen more Casps rushed at Gabe with longswords. They would have attacked with lasers, but they could easily puncture the hull and kill everybody, so they were not allowed to be carried on board.

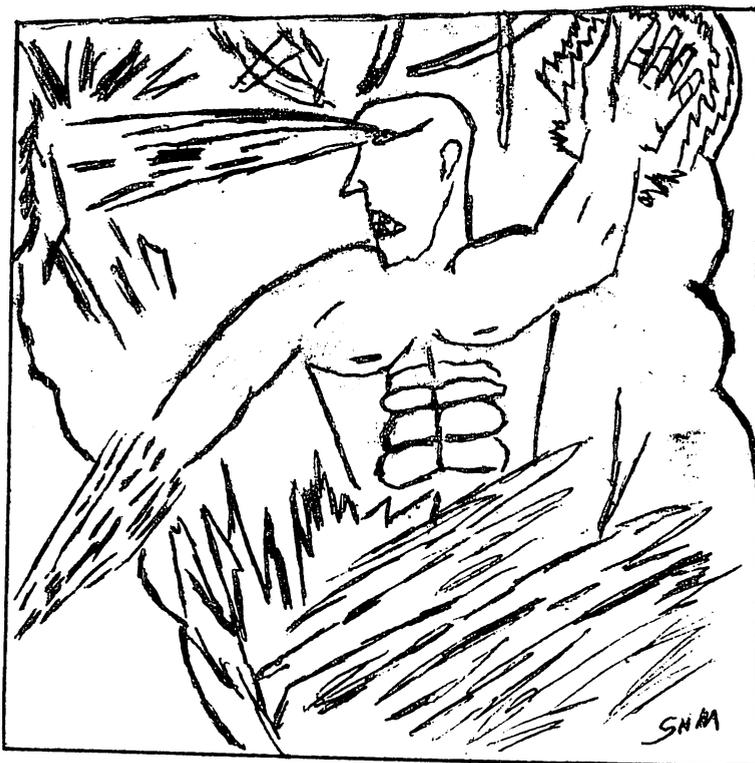
Gabe parried the first man with a mental blast, grabbed his sword and lunged at the rest. He cut them to pieces. Blood and gore were everywhere.

This was too much for Qanti. He found a heavy laser in his cabinet and fired at Gabe. Before any of his men could shout a warning, the blast tore through the engine and the ship exploded. Everyone was instantly killed except Gabe. He managed to protect himself somewhat, but he was fatally injured.

With the remains of that ship Gabe floated to an airless moon where he died. One of the other ships of the squad that had surprised him landed there and confirmed the death of The Warlord. They reported it to the Sires and there was much rejoicing among the people of the Caspetian Empire. The people of the three planets that formed the beginning of the New Terran Empire were filled with grief.

The Terrans increased their efforts against the Caspetian Empire. They wanted revenge for the death of their Warlord. But without their Warlord, the Terrans were no match for the countless numbers of Casps on eighty worlds. They knew this, but they did not give up.

During the ensuing war, the moon on which Gabriel's body lay was forgotten. Had the Caspian ship stayed a while longer, the Casps would have seen the cells of the dead body beginning to spin a cocoon. But they didn't. As the last Terran resistance was broken, and the Casps walked triumphantly down the streets of Zoron, Sangu and finally Earth, the cocoon began to shimmer with a golden glow. Over the period of a few days the light increased in strength until, when the Casps felt secure with their regained empire, the cocoon opened.



PART IV

Again, for the second time in his existence, Gabe opened his eyes to find that he was in a hollow shell. Only this time his power was unlimited, beyond all imagination. With a blast that shook the cosmos, he shattered the shell. He stood invincible on the airless world. He no longer needed life-supporting oxygen. He no longer needed a ship. Gabriel was different from before. His new powers were infinite.

He launched himself into space, and with the speed of thought, headed for Earth.

At that time, all the head Sires from across the Caspetian

Empire were gathered on Earth. It was a time of great celebration. The Casps had annihilated the entire human race. There were no more Terrans left alive, and they were going to dedicate a statue, a monument of their victory over the Terrans. Everyone was happy, and toasting their victory, gazing with pride at the statue which depicted a Caspian warrior standing atop the body of a defeated Terran, when suddenly a blinding glare streaked across the sky. It landed at the monument.

Panic hit the crowd of Casps as they recognized the wrathful figure.

"I am back, dogs," roared Gabriel. His voice resounded across the planet, across the entire Empire. His power was sufficient enough so that only a fraction of it was used to perform this miracle. This time your race will die. You destroyed my race. I will destroy yours."

Gabe concentrated. Using his power he devastated the galaxy. Not only were all the Casps killed, but all life, every sun and planet in the galaxy was annihilated. The only beings that he didn't kill were the Sires, who turned out to be manifestations of one evil being. He created a place for this evil being and sealed him up in it forever.

Then his immortal eyes beheld what he had done, and he was sad. How could he have let his rage and grief cause him to make such destruction? He was thankful that he had not reached across to the other galaxies to extinguish them also.

He was sad without other beings about him.

So before he spun another shell in which he would sleep until he became the Perfect Being, he put life back into the universe.

He created the galaxy once more, in six days. After expending so much energy he rested on the seventh day and beheld his work, and knew it was good.

He spun his cocoon and entered the shell with a knowledge of his power, and that he was man's super weapon against evil.

He looked at his handiwork, and in particular Earth. With sadness he thought of the future. Would man be able to rebuild themselves without war? He hoped so, but doubted that they could.

With that he closed his cocoon and slept.

Steve Manuel

STRANGE MYSTERY

It was July ninth, and the place was in a little suburban city called Bloomfield Hills at a school named Cranbrook. A scream came out from behind Stevenson Hall.

There she was, lying on the ground with flies around her and blood covering her whole body. It looked like something strange had started to cut up her body into small pieces. Flesh was distributed in a path going down into the woods. Her legs were laying in the middle of the path. Her arms were next to what looked like her face; it was difficult to tell because the flesh was completely mutilated.

It was the same modus operandi used on the other ladies who were killed six days ago. We had reported it, and the police came to investigate. Unfortunately no weapons or clues were found at the scene of the killings. The hunt had gone on for almost a week without any clues or evidence showing up. There seemed to be no motive for the killings.

That same night more strange sounds came out of the woods. My friend Vince and I ran from in front of Stevenson Hall around to the back. There it was, kneeling over another victim, starting to attack her. We started yelling and running towards it, and when we got there, it was almost too late. She was lying there bleeding severely, so I stayed to help her.

Vince started chasing after the creature. It had jumped over some bushes when we yelled, and that slowed him down a bit in trying to get around them. Vince soon found himself down in the lower fields. He searched the area but couldn't find any clues or tracks. He returned to see if the girl was all right. "Is she going to make it?" he asked.

"Yes, she is," I replied, "but she will have to have stitches in her arms."

The next day two investigators came to our room to ask some questions about what we had seen. One investigator wore a short coat and a black hat with a feather on top. The other one had on long, pointed shoes and a dress jacket.

"Did you see what it looked like, son?" asked Feather-hat.

"No, sir," I replied. "I stayed to help the girl. But Vince ran after it."

Pointed-shoes asked, "Vince, can you tell us anything?"

"Yes, sir," said Vince. "I got a good look at it when it jumped over the bushes. The moonlight caught it just right."

"Well, tell us everything."

Vince paused for a moment, thinking, then said, "It was about six foot seven and weighed about 210. It had claws that were about two inches long, and it had a mark on its head that came down the middle of its face."

"Is that all, Vince?"

"Yes, sir."

They looked at him as if they didn't believe him, but his description was the only thing they had to go on.

The people of Bloomfield Hills were getting very scared and impatient with the police because they hadn't found any clues, and were nowhere near to finding the killer. The Women's Club decided to take matters into their own hands and put up a reward for any clues supplied to the police about the killing.



Later on that night when the investigators had left, Vince and I were sitting out in the Quad talking quietly.

"I think it thrives on blood," I told Vince confidentially.

"Why do you say that?"

"The autopsies performed on all the victims' bodies showed that there was a low amount of blood, much less than could be accounted for by the murder itself."

* * * *

After three days there were no more reports of any killings. Vince and I decided to go down to the lagoon in the lower fields to fish. Suddenly we heard strange sounds com-

ing out of the white shack which was no more than three feet away from where we were fishing. Peeking through the cracked boards, we saw it sleeping in the middle of the floor. There was very little sunlight coming in, but there was enough for us to see the creature clearly.

Vince and I ran back to the dorm and called the police. We sat out in the Quad and waited for them to come. They arrived in about twenty minutes. We all started walking down through the woods, while Vince and I told the police what we had seen. When we got to the shack we showed them the crack we had looked through. The creature was there, just as we had said.

One of the officers called in for some back-up. It took only a short time for them to get there. When they arrived on the scene, they were all packing heavy weapons. The officers surrounded the shack and then opened the doors. The creature came out slowly, growling and making other strange sounds, which frightened everybody, even the police. They opened fire and kept shooting until it fell flat on its face.

By that time the news people were on the scene. Vince and I were on TV and our picture was in the papers. We told everyone what had happened. After it was all over we went back to our room. We were heroes, and there was talk about us for days afterwards.

After a while all the talk died down, and the murders were forgotten. We had a dance in the gym a few nights later, and there were people wandering around the grounds.

Suddenly there was a scream from behind Stevenson Hall where two girls had been walking. One of them came running back to the gym screaming that a monster had jumped out of the bushes and attacked her friend. So Vince and I ran back to Stevenson Hall and we saw it running down into the woods.

We realized that we hadn't killed the real monster after all.

Carl Sibert

REVIEWS

NIGHTFALL by Isaac Asimov. Dramatization on ANALOG Records.

The story "Nightfall" was about two scientists, Aton 77 and Beenay 25 who found out that there was going to be an eclipse, and it was going to be fourteen hours long, of total darkness. If this happened, if there were fourteen hours of total darkness with no light at all, people would start fires so they could have light. They would burn the whole civilization down to ashes. They would go crazy, out of their minds. This reaction to total darkness is called nyctophobia.

The story takes place on a planet in the middle of the Milky Way galaxy, called Lagosh. Aton 77 knows that everybody on Lagosh will go insane if they don't have light. They will also lose their immortal souls. Aton 77 and Beenay also discover that Lagosh is being pulled by an invisible moon somewhere in space, which will soon eclipse the suns of Lagosh. This will cause the darkness.

Beenay pays a visit to the Cult, a religious group, which has some scrolls that are over hundreds and thousands of years old, that he wants to look at. In the Cult temple, when he reads one of the scrolls, Beenay discovers that it is about the Great Darkness (eclipse) which comes about every 2,050 years. The Darkness is overcome by the stars. There are millions of stars, small dots of light, that will make it light again.

I felt that the story was fairly good, but I didn't understand it very well. The words were hard and

I couldn't comprehend some of them. I liked the record better. It was more exciting. I felt as though I was

right there in the story. Different voices, music and the dramatization made the

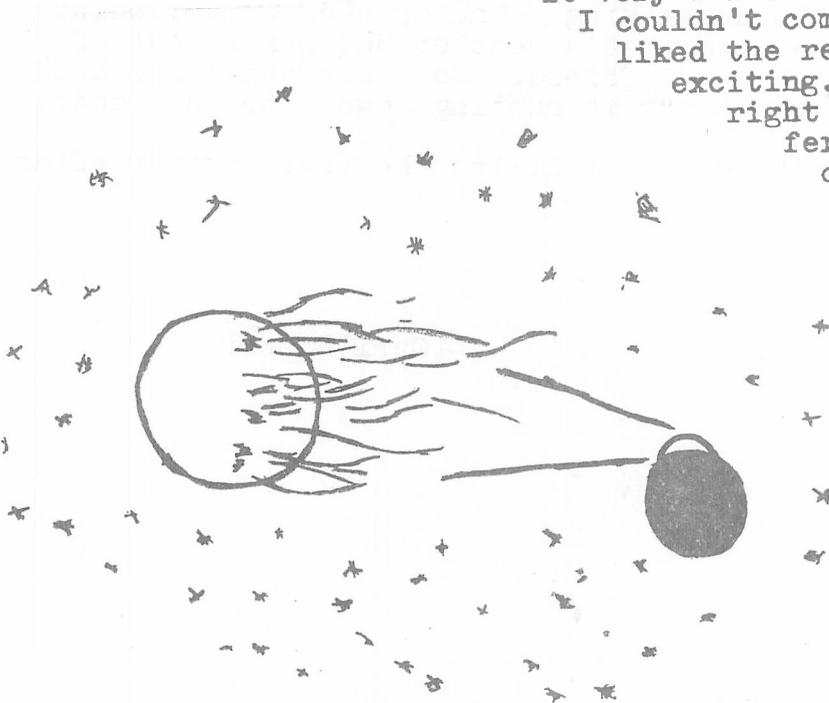
story seem like it was happening right in

front of me. At first the record

was not very exciting, but as it went

on, it got better.

Mickey Northrop



"The Veldt" and "Marionettes, Inc." by Ray Bradbury. Read by Leonard Nimoy,
Caedmon Records TC 1479

As I read the story, "The Veldt," I came to realize that it was good. It was enjoyable and pleasurable to read. It was filled with suspense and excitement. As I was listening to the record, I felt that it had a lot of suspense also. The narrator told the story so real that it didn't sound like he was reading it. The story told how things could be in the future, what people do and how they act to get a lot of money, and how spoiled kids act.

I also read the short-story "Marionettes, Inc.," which was about human-looking robots. A robot could be produced to do almost everything a human could do. The story had it set up so that the robot had in its mind to kill the man in the first place. On the record, Leonard Nimoy told the story just right, with a little bit of spookiness so as I was listening, he had me a little scared. It sounded very real and I couldn't believe it. Whether listening to the record or reading the words, I think the stories were pretty good.

by Randy Burton

"Mimsy Were the Borogoves" by Henry Kuttner. Read by William Shatner,
Caedmon Records TC 1509

The story started off with a man named Unthahorsten who did not live on earth, even though the story made it seem like it. This man made a time machine and after he had turned it on, he remembered that he hadn't put anything in it. So he put some of his son's toys in the box, but the box never came back. So he made another one, and sent it out with the same results.

One of Unthahorsten's time machines went to earth. A boy named Scott Paridine found it. He took the box home, and after dinner he took out an abacus. His father looked at the strange toy and gave it back to him. Scott and his two-year-old sister Emma played with the abacus for a long time. When they were done, Scott and Emma started to disappear. They learned how to disappear from the abacus. When Scott would move a bead in a certain way it would disappear. By playing with the abacus so much Scott and Emma learned how to disappear into time.

I think that if I have to pick one, the record or the book, it would have to be the record. Listening to it was better than reading it. The record followed the book word for word. There were words in the short story that I didn't understand, or know how to pronounce, which I did look up. It was easy to get the pronunciation of the words when William Shatner was reading the story on the record.

by Micky Northrop

LIFE STYLES FROM AFAR

My name is Hector Vandon, science's most daring scientist. My mission is to travel thirty-six years back into time to World War 2. I am observing the social conflict between German and Jewish people. The two groups of people have developed a prejudice attitude toward each other. I've done plenty of research and interviewed a lot of people, Germans as well as Jews. From my research I hope to obtain an insight as to how this racial discrimination began or what was it's high point. But somehow I feel that something is missing from my research. I think that I could never really get a clear picture of what the camps are like unless...unless I actually go there myself. Therefore, with the help of other scientist's, I created a pocket sized time traveler.

I arrived in the past in July, 1941. As I walked along the street I noticed some people wearing the star of David on their clothes. Like myself I knew they were Jewish. One man began to take an interest in my attire. I then realized that I wasn't wearing the proper clothing for that particular time.

We introduced ourselves to one another. His name was Jacques then warned me that I could be arrested for not wearing the Star of David. He also told me that if the Green Police saw me dressed as I was I might be mistaken as a spy. I mase up a story and told him how I had no place to stay, because my home was burned down. Jacques then suggested that I come to his place. This was a wild experience for me. Not only was I reliving World War 2 live, I was also reliving the 1940's. I knew that he would put me up, for at helping each other.

After we arrived at Jacques place we had a long discussion. I found out that Jacques was a scientist as I am. We began talking about the relationship between the Germans and the Jews and waht brought the situation about. He explained how Hitler came to power and acquired his dictatship, and how he used his power to express his own personal hatred of the Jews.

During this time I was comparing my knowledge of the war with Jacques'. Hid resources were much more adequate than mine but after all, Jacques was a living primary source. I jotted down notes after Jacques was asleep. If he knew I was taking notes he might wonder if I had met him by accident or not. In my journal I wrote about the things Jacques told me, and about the things I would see everyday involving the people in the people in the streets.

Weeks had gone by and the situation between the Germans and the Jews had worsened. Word had spread that about a dozen Jews, composed of women and children as well as men, were lined up and brutally shot down. As time went on, more and more Jews were either slain or put in concentration camps. Children were being kidnapped from schools. Families were captured from their homes. The Jewish people then started hiding out, trying to find some type of shelter.

With the help of a German (there were some Germans against Hitler) Jacques and I were able to find a place for ourselves. The hide-out wasn't much more than a prison; we had to stay in at all times. Our German friend Paul would run errands for us and bring food. We had to be very quiet during the daytime for fear that someone outside would hear us.

During the time I spent at the hide-out I adjusted to the lifestyle of the past. I had to be very careful that I did everything Jacques did, otherwise he would suspect that I was from the future world. Jacques and I remained at the hide-out until the war was over.

When it came to an end, I realized that it was time for me to return to my own time. Soon I had to depart. Jacques and I had become good friends. I thought to myself that maybe someday he could come into the future and live in my world for awhile, in order, maybe, to advance his.

Gary Patterson

STRANGE JOURNEY

On the fifth day of August in the year 2157, four men were to be launched into space for travel to Centaurus. Because of the length of the journey, they would have to be put into suspended animation. The names of the four men were Kenneth Peters, David Marshall, Willie Davis and Randy Thompson.

Their ship, a saucer, was on a platform in the launching field. The men were inside readying for take-off. This was to be an important trip, so important that they had brought back a robot, the first since they had been banned from earth nearly a century ago.

The men were ready for take-off. Using a levitation device, the loading crew placed on board the vessel a robot that had been specially equipped for this particular mission. The robot just stood where it had been placed, lifeless.

This ship was equipped with the most sophisticated weaponry in the world. This included a secret weapon of unimaginable power.

David Marshall activated the robot. It came to life instantly. David pushed a few buttons inside the robot's hidden panel, and programmed it to take over the launching of the craft. David got back into his place and the two of them, man and machine took control of the ship. The robot's name was Centron, and it performed its duties well. It scanned the weather charts and checked the position of the planets, moons and stars, and calculated the proper course. This was the first time a robot had taken control of a ship in a century. If there was one mistake, one false move, the ship would self-destruct.

There was a flash of light from the super-galactic warp engines. The saucer shot into the air like a shooting star. The men were put into suspended animation as soon as they cleared the atmosphere and set course for Centaurus. Once in that star-system, Centron would release the men from suspended animation. So with Centron as the pilot, the ship went into hyper warp and sped at an incredible speed to Centaurus.

David Marshall quickly took command after they had been released from suspended animation by Centron after they had gotten to the Centauran system.

"All right, men. Get in your places and be alert at all times," he ordered. All these specially trained men were brought together for one special reason: to get the serum from the planet Solar Cinder. A flu had been brought back by astronauts, and if Earth didn't get the serum, everyone would die. The flu would kill everyone on Earth.

David was controlling the ship when Ken spotted three objects on the radar screen.

"Three objects approaching. Course: 0.541; speed: warp four," Ken announced to the crew.

David put the other men on red-alert. Centron put up our deflector sheilds, and we held them off for a little while. Then we ran. Then we fought again, and ran. Then David turned on our invisibility sheilds and we escaped.

We were not far from Solar Cindar, but we decided to land on a nearby planet just to make routine checks and repair minor damage. We thought that we should check around camp, so Dacid and Randy broke out the hover car and sometime later when we radioed, there was no answer.

Well, David and Randy had been attacked by some civilized beings. They had blast guns and lots of other weapons. Energy blasts were zooming past our heads. We didn't have any protection, but we had our blast guns and jet packs. We defeated the people easily with one solar gernade.

We finally got back to the ship, but time was running out. David put the ship on hyper warp, to last until we reached the planet Solar Cindar.

We saw a big castle on the viser screen. It was the only place on this whole planet that was inhabited. We split up. David held off the guards, while Ken, who was on invisible power, went into the 72 inch thick galactic steel vault. Ken opened the vault with a galactic drill.

Meanwhile Ken and David escaped and Randy led the guards on a wild goose chase. He finally got back to the ship and we took off immediately. David had no doubt that he would have to use the secret weapon.

"Men, everyone strap down and brace yourselves."

David deactivated Centron. He put the ship into hyper-hyper warp. The ship went so fast that they got back in about five hours.

When they landed, David got up and said, "Who am I? Who am I?"

Charles Bingley

THE ART GALLERY

"Well, you see, Marsha, it is sort of difficult for me to explain the entire story to you, but I will do my best."

It all began one night in October. A young handsome fellow came to my house to ask for directions to the Art Gallery Shop. At first this did not bother me. There were always people stopping by who had no idea where the Gallery is. Two days passed before I heard the same rapping at my door. The knock was different from the other knocks.

"Can you direct me to the Art Gallery?" asked the young man.

"Just a few more paces," I replied. The young man scurried off in the direction in which I had pointed. The face was one that was not familiar in our town.

One day the young man returned to my house. I was at the town meeting but my lovely daughter, Caroline, had stayed at home to cook dinner. The young fellow knocked at the door. Caroline opened the door and instantly they looked directly into each others eyes. Caroline directed him towards the Gallery. Later she told me of how she felt when their eyes met. She said that it felt warm, but as if they were far apart from each other.

Several days passed before he came again. It was a Monday evening and the young man asked if Caroline would like to go to the Art Gallery with him. I didn't think it strange so I consented. She returned from the Gallery alone. What kind of man would not escort a lady to the door? I asked myself. Caroline walked starry-eyed up the stairs.

The next day the fellow returned. "May I see Caroline?" he asked.

"Yes," I replied, "but first I would like to know more about you. Where are you from?"

"I come from Salem, sir."

"Why didn't you walk Caroline to the door?"

"The Gallery was closed by that time."

"What does this have to do with walking her home?" I asked.

"You see, sir, I am in a portrait in the Gallery."

"What?"

"I am in a painting on the wall. I can transport my entire being back and forth from the painting."

"This is impossible! Young man," I cried, "I am a very highly respected gentleman, and when you start talking nonsense to me --- "

"I am doing nothing of the sort," he broke in.

I thought for a minute. He seemed very sincere. "What does this painting look like?"

"Well," he said, "it is a painting of a scene which takes place in Salem. The scene is of figures surrounding a witch being burned at the stake. I am the man who stands in the lower right-hand corner. My face has much more lines in it than it does now."

"Young man, you are either insane or an excellent story-teller," I replied, as Caroline came down the stairs. She ran into his arms and they kissed. Then she turned, gave me a kiss, and they left and walked towards the Gallery.

Several hours passed by. Suddenly there was a knock at the door. It was Hansbrough, the young man.

He stammered, "Mr. Johnson, your...uh...daughter...is --- "

"What are you trying to say, man? Where's Caroline?"

"She's dead," he said in a strong voice. She was burned to death."

"How?"

"That, sir, is what you will find out." With that he turned and left before I could stop him. I grabbed my coat and went to the Gallery to see if the owner had seen Hansbrough and Caroline and Caroline earlier that day. He said that he did not know anyone by that name, but he had seen Caroline in the company of a young man.

I began to think about what he had said: witch, burning at a stake. I asked the watchman to show me the painting of the Salem witch burning.

I saw it. The witch was my lovely daughter Caroline. I glared into the eyes of the man who was in the lower right hand corner. It was him.

I turned and grabbed a vase, but before I could strike the painting the face vanished. I turned and saw him standing next to me.

"You see, sir, I had to have her with me."

"But if you love her, why do you have to put her through so much agony?"

"She doesn't feel the fire," he replied quietly, "but she can hear the yells of the people. If you destroy the painting, you destroy her."

As he said this his figure vanished and reappeared in the painting. I stood staring at the picture of my girl on the burning stake in Salem.

Michael Davis



THE EXPLORERS OF TOMORROW

by
Reginald
Adams

It is Earth, the 26th century. It is a time of prosperity and advancement in science. Man has totally cleansed the Earth of her pollution. Their power centers are totally dependent upon solar energy and nuclear fusion plants. Man decided not to destroy the land by living on it but rather to occupy bubblish-like spheroids supported by plastic rods so not to disrupt the Earth.

Yes, Earth is quite beautiful now, but man's scientific knowledge isn't the only thing that has advanced. Man's medical technology has progressed beyond recognition also. Scientists can do all types of transplants with the human body. They have even gone so far as to transplant the human brain.

Most scientific discoveries happen at the research buildings of S.O.S. Scientific Observation Stations are all over the world. One of these was in the middle of the Pacific Ocean. It was a man-made island constructed of crete, a combination of aluminum, foam rubber and a hard plastic.

The island was powered by a nuclear fusion reactor located in the center of the island. The island was round and had three levels. The first level was where all offices, sleeping quarters and the auditorium were located. The second level held the laboratories, computers, generators and main control room. The third level housed the reactor and the space ship shuttle.

On this island one of the most incredible experiments known to mankind would occur. Three of the greatest minds on Earth would attempt to prove the Brainstein theory. This theory dealt with the mind and its electrical thought wave patterns. The hypotheses was that if you were able to change the wave or add waves, you could control the mind. The scientist intended to enter the dreams, the conscious and subconscious and suspend the train of thought.

The device to be used was called the Mind Byboggler. It worked by having the subject lay down on a table and placing a metal band about the skull. The band was connected to electrodes specially designed for thought wave patterns. The wave is extracted by the Byboggler and sent to a hypograph which decodes the pattern for the computer. The computer prints the waves as words.

The three scientists on this project were Dr. Mark Dalton, Dr. Bambi Russel and Professor Richardson, a well known expert on the Brainstein theory.

"Well, doctors, are you prepared for Operation Mind Probe?" asked Richardson.

"Yes, Professor, I believe we are." replied Bambi.

"When do we start?" added Mark.

"We start next week unless the C.O.S.R., the Committee of Scientific Research gives us the green light for this week."

The T.V. monitor rose out of a panel on a nearby desk and a voice was heard.

"Will the Mind Probe team please report to auditorium."

Everyone else connected with Mind Probe were there when the three scientists arrived. The technicians, computer men and the three scientists sat in a circle around the delegate table of the C.O.S.R.

"Ladies and gentlemen the C.O.S.R. has made a decision on project Mind Probe. It has been cancelled," announced the chairman. Immediately, there was an outburst of arguing. The three scientists demanded to be heard.

"You can't do this!" exclaimed Bambi.

"What in the hell! We have done a lot of work on this. Well, let me tell you..." shouted Mark.

Richards broke in, "May I be heard?" The room was immediately quiet. Everyone respected Richards' opinions. "Thank you. I have studied the Einstein theory for the last twenty years. And I know that I am correct in assuming that the waves of the brain can be reached and controlled. I ask that we carry on the project. Do you realize the advantages for mankind if we..."

"That's enough, Professor. We are aware of your reputation, and since you say the experiment will work, we will let you carry it on. But if anything goes wrong, it shall be immediately cancelled."

The next day, the three scientists were discussing who would be the patient for the experiment.

"Well, Mark, who shall it be?" inquired Bambi.

"Yes, who shall it be? Any volunteers, Professor?" asked Mark.

"There shall be no volunteers. Since I'm chief of this project, I'm going to be the human guinea pig." said Richardson.

After a brief discussion they decided to start the next day. The first experiment was a success. They found that the mind was very easy to read and control while linked up. The next experiment was to control the subconscious. They started by letting Richardson sleep and reading his dreams. Then they tried placing thoughts that they wanted him to dream about into his mind.

They caused Richardson to dream that he was on a desert island with a lovely woman, and both spent their time avoiding a dragon that could fly and breathe fire and smoke.

The doctors then tried to see if the mind could retain information given to it through the Byboggler. They took the theory of cosmic energy from the computer bank library.

"Okay, Richardson," said Bambi. "We're going to try to program your mind like a computer bank." Switches, dials and knobs were turned and flicked while a bright black light made it possible for the electric waves to be picked up by the brain without shock. The ultra violet light was of a special intensity so as not to do harm to the patient or the doctors nearby. The band extracted the waves flowing from his brain.

"Alright, Richardson. Tell me the theory of cosmic energy."

Richardson could hardly believe it, but as the words were being spoken, he realized that he knew all that there was to know about cosmic energy. He spoke like a Shakespearean actor on stage.

That night they wanted to continue their work, so Richardson slept while the computer monitored his dreams. But something went wrong.

Although the machine was infallible, the over-exposure to it had side-effects on the human beings. The doctors thought that since the light was of a special brilliance, it would not harm the patient. But when gamma rays and electric current over 150 u.'s get together for more than four and a half hours, something is bound to go wrong. Instead of the electrodes picking up the waves, they reacted in the opposite manner; they projected the waves and turned them into images with electrofying force.

Mark woke up to get something to drink. When he walked to the door it wouldn't open. The door had a safety lock, but it is only activated in case of fire, flood or a loss of power. He knew something was wrong.

He used the escape exit and landed in the emergency exit chamber. He climbed a ladder back up to the first level. There he found Bambi, the chairman of C.O.S.R., and several security guards.

"Mark, something must be wrong with the Reactor," suggested Bambi.

"Not the Reactor. It's a computer run device. It's got to be the master computer on the blink," countered Mark.

"I and half of security will go check the computer room. Mr. Chairman, why don't you go back to your room? We'll report back to you," said Bambi.

"Thank you. Will you find out what the difficulty is, please?"

"We will go to the reaction chamber and check it for a possible loss of power," said Mark. The three groups separated.

In the computer room Bambi and the guards noticed a gorilla tampering with the computer.

"Hey, you! Monkey! Get away from that machine!" said Bambi. The beast as though startled. Then he charged swiftly, knocking down Bambi and the guards.

"Shoot him!" ordered the sergeant with a roar. The gorilla exploded with an electrical charge.

"Sergeant, did you notice anything funny about that ape?"

"Yeah. It just exploded into a million pieces!"

"Besides that. Did any one you notice an electrical charge when he knocked us down?" said Bambi. Everyone let out low yes's. "My guess is that that gorilla was some sort of energy force creature—"

Meanwhile, Mark had reached the reactor chamber.

"What the hell is that!?" asked Mark. Inside there was a gargoyle flying around, making a whining noise.

"How in the world did that get in here, Mr. Dalton?" asked a guard.

"I don't know how it got in, but... Hey! Look out! It's diving for us." The gargoyle dove at a guard and with two blows of its fists subdued him.

"Kill that thing," yelled Mark. The guards got a point blank range on the gargoyle. When they shot, a burst of electric force exploded and the thing was destroyed.

"I just don't understand it. How could some..." Mark began. The T.V. monitor interrupted him.

"Mark, are you there? Mark, listen. We were just in the computer room and there was a gorilla in there."

"A gorilla?"

"Yeah, a gorilla. And check this: when security shot it, it exploded."

"Like an electric charge?"

"Yeah." replied Bambi.

"Something strange is going on around here," said Mark.

"Hey! What about Richardson? I wonder how this is affecting him." said Bambi.

"I and my men will meet you there in the corridor to the lab," said Mark.

"Alright! On our way," replied Bambi.

The two groups met on the second level facing the corridor of lab #12 where Richardson was located. Walking down the corridor, they noticed very odd happenings and heard strange noises. Suddenly, there was a tree growing out of the floor. When Mark went to touch it, he got a shock. A guard hit it with a grenade and an electric explosion commenced. A ghost floated toward them, booing and yelling. A guard shot again. 'BOOM' went the ghost. Then a lion, some mini tanks, and a swordsman out of The Three Musketeers came out of nowhere in front of and behind them. The result was a mass of electrical explosion when the guards fired.

When they made it to lab #12, the door would not open. The guards lasered the door to the ground. Inside the lab, they saw images coming straight from Richardson's head and going out through the walls.

"Richardson, wake up, man!" cried Mark.

"What's wrong with him?" asked Bambi.

"I don't know but he doesn't want to wake up. Look out, here comes an eagle!"

"Maybe if you turn off the Byboggler, he'll wake up," suggested Bambi. Mark ran over to the machine and tried to turn it off, but he got a shock.

"Are you alright, Mark?" asked Bambi.

"Yeah. It seems that there is an electrical field around the machine."

"Okay, pardner. Why don't you mosey away from this here machine," said a cowboy projection from Richardson's mind. A guard shot the cowboy. This time the explosion was greater than before. The shock of it knocked all of them unconscious.

Ten minutes later they awoke.

"Power to the reactor is too low and has triggered the self-destruct mechanism," noted Mark, pointing to the power guage in the lab. "We have to turn his mind off or we're doomed. Unless we can get to the computer to cancel self-destruct or return power to the reactor, this place is going to blow!"

"We can't turn off the Byboggler because his mind is hooked up to the master computer and his creatures are keeping us from reaching the computer room and reaction chamber," said Bambi.

"Then the only thing to do is to evacuate the Island," said Mark. He walked over to an emergency panel found in every room and pushed a button to sound the general alarm. Then, grabbing the mike, he said, "All personnel of S.O.S. please evacuate. This is a G-D-one emergency."

The message was repeated by a recorder while an alarm like a fire drill signal rang. Then suddenly the G-D alarm went off.

"Hey, we've got to get the hell out of here!" said Bambi. "In five minutes the island is going to blow!"

They ran to the escape chamber on the third level and saw panic among the people of S.O.S. They finally got to their ship.

"Let's get out of here!" said the captain of their ship. The escape hatch opened and the ship exited. They were about 200,000 feet up when the island started to blow into a million pieces. A giant cloud of smoke rose over the island.

"Captain, could you fly back over the island once? We'd like to say our final farewells to the Professor," said Mark.

"You know, Mark, maybe the chairman was right about this project. I mean, Richardson lost his life because of it," said Bambi.

"Yeah, I know what you mean. Maybe man shouldn't explore the human brain," said Mark.

They flew over the island and saw its final explosion before it sank into the sea. The ship turned and headed toward home.

CONSPIRACY

It all started on a night in October, 1985, on which rain had been threatening. The Hines were going on a camping trip, and they were getting a late start.

"Hey, hey," shouted Carolyn when they finally got going. "We're on our way, finally."

Just then lightening crackled and a peal of thunder was heard. Rain-drops splattered across the windshield of the car. "Oh no," cried Sylvia. "It's starting to rain. It just had to rain!"

The group traveled for awhile with relative safety until their directions took them down a dirt road. As they went further, the road got worse until it was almost washed out. But they continued on. Suddenly the car lurched and settled into a mudhole.

"Damn, what happened?" Joe shrieked.

"The back wheels are stuck in a mudhole," Mike quickly replied.

"Well rock it out, 'cause I ain't about to get out in all that mud and rain," Carolyn announced.

Joe and Mike got out to push, and Pat, Joe's girlfriend, got behind the wheel and held the peddle all the way down to the floor. The wheels spun around and got mud all over Mike's pants. After a few minutes all they had succeeded in doing was getting the car stuck further.

"It's not working," Joe hollared over the rain, thunder, and the whine of the engine. "Mike and I will have to walk to a phone."

"But wait a minute, one of you has to stay here with us," Sylvia begged. "I mean, Mike, you stay, and let Carolyn or Pat go with Joe."

"Shut up," Pat commanded. "I'm sick and tired of you complaining."

"Alright," Joe told them. "Settle down. Lock the doors and wait. We will be back in about an hour." They left, retracing their steps up the road they had driven down.

Although Joe and Mike were gone only about a half hour, it seemed like hours to the girls waiting. They were getting impatient. They decided to try to get the car out themselves. Sylvia got in the driver's seat while Carolyn and Pat rocked the car side-to-side. After a couple minutes the car finally pulled free.

Mike and Joe had been walking for about thirty or forty minutes when Mike spotted an old house hidden behind some thick trees. On one side towards the back he could see a burned out clearing where a bonfire might have burned out of control for awhile, but arrested before it reached the forest or the house.

As they approached the house, they could see rain running from the broken gutters onto the windows. There was a large wooden door with a huge claw on it. Next to the door was a large doorbell over a broken window. Joe pushed the bell twice, but there was no answer. He knocked loudly on the door.

A little girl answer the door. She hid half behind it as if scared. "What do you want?" she asked timidly.

"We would like to use your phone, if possible," said Joe, smiling.

"One minute, please," the small girl replied. She closed the door and they could hear her running hollowly through the old mansion. Seconds later heavier footfalls were heard and a tall boy opened the door.

"Yes, may I help you?" he asked rapidly.

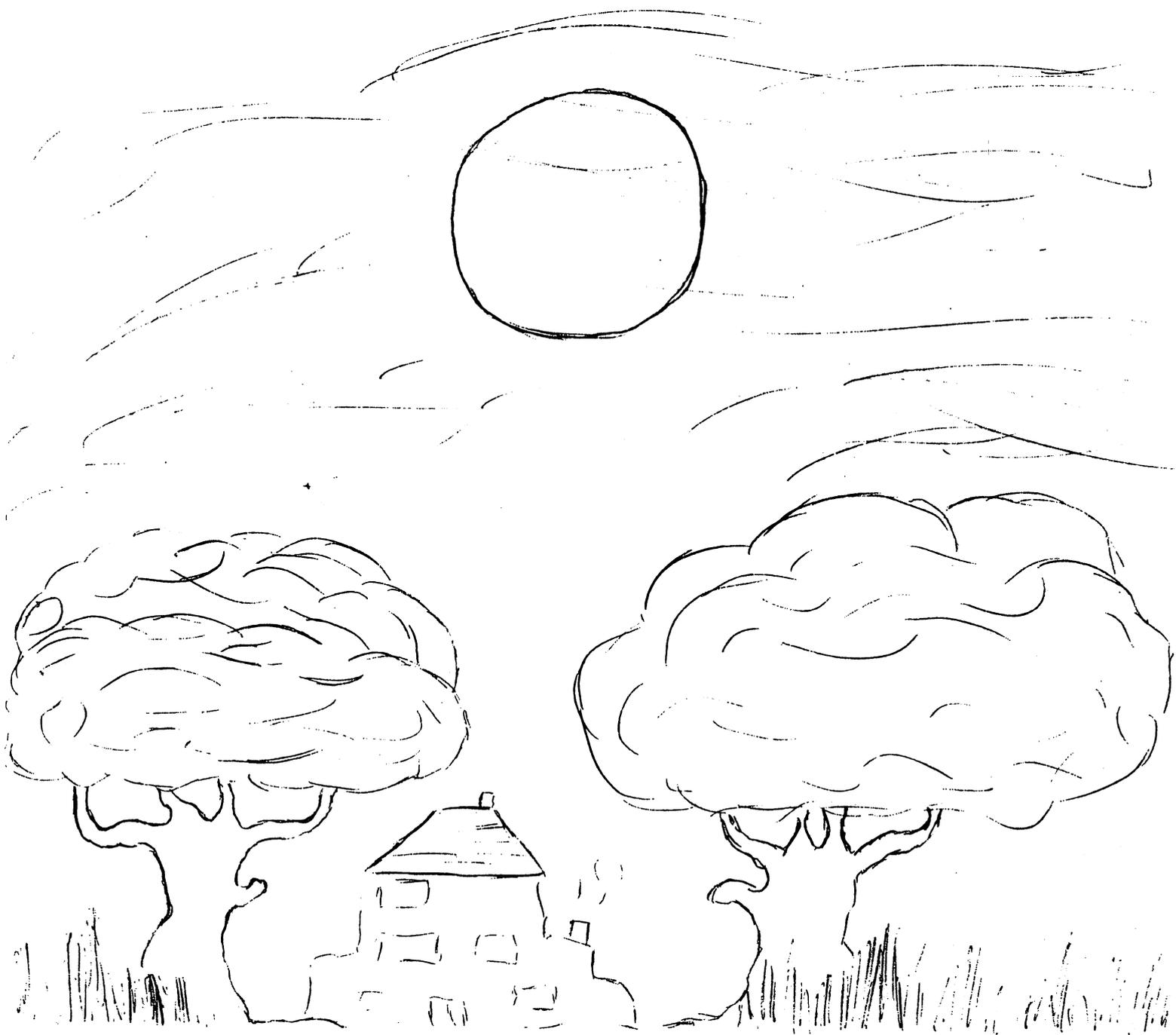
"Can we use the phone?" Joe asked.

The tall boy hesitated. He seemed to be evaluating the idea in his head. Then he nodded, and opened the door wide to admit the two men. He led them to where the phone was.

"I'm Timothy. That's my brother Ricky, and that's my sister Rhonda." He pointed respectively to a boy a little smaller than Mike, and then to the girl who had opened the door. Both Mike and Joe nodded and murmured words of greeting. A feeling of uneasiness was settling about them. There was something in the house that seemed very oppressive.

Joe made his way to where the phone was placed, a small alcove off the living room. He put a call through to the AAA, but there was no answer. He hung up and tried again, but there was still no answer.

Suddenly a woman's voice shrieked, "Who's out there?"



"We have company, mother," Timothy yelled.

"Who is it?" the woman's voice shrieked again. A tall striking woman with gray hair walked out. "Oh! Hello, how are you? I'm Mrs. Simmons."

"Nice to know you, Mrs. Simmons," replied Mike.

"What's going on?" she asked. Quickly they told her what had happened.

"Why don't you spend the night here?" she invited.

"Oh, no. We couldn't," replied Mike as if he were scared.

"But you must," added Mrs. Simmons.

"But we have people down the road in a car waiting for us," Joe replied.

"That's all right," Timothy said swiftly. "I'll drive one of you down there to get you companions."

"Okay," said Joe, hesitantly. "I'll go."

Joe and Timothy drove along the road for about ten minutes before they came to the spot where they had left the car. "Stop the car," Joe yelled.

"What's wrong, Joe?" Timothy asked.

"The car's gone," Joe replied, as they both jumped out of the car.

"What do you mean?"

"This is where we left the car," Joe said with fear creeping into his voice. Timothy was showing fear also, but not for the same reason. He was frightened that the girls had gone to the house. He pulled out a metal rod and shot Joe, then put the body in the back seat. When he drove back to the house, there was a car parked in front.

"How did you get here?" Asked Mike surprised.

"We got the car out of the hole and drove past the house thinking that no one lived here. Then we saw a light in the top window, so we turned around and drove back here," said Pat.

Just then Timothy came into the house. "Where's Joe?" asked Mike.

"He went out on foot to look for the car," replied Timothy quickly. "He said that if he has not returned in an hour, not to worry. He'll walk to town and you can pick him up there in the morning."

Sylvia, Carolyn, Pat and Mike were a little puzzled, but nodded in understanding. "I'll show you to your rooms now."

"Well, okay," said Carolyn. "I guess we could all use some rest. We'll get started early tomorrow."

They were asleep for about fifteen minutes when a strange sound woke them up. It was Sylvia screaming.

"Where is Sylvia?" yelled Carolyn. "Go get Mike, Pat. Hurry, go get Mike," she screamed again.

Pat ran to the next room, and came back screaming, "Oh no, Carolyn. Mike's gone. Mike's gone. Oh my God, what's going on?" she cried. "I can't stand it!" Pat ran to her room yelling and crying. She threw herself on her bed and eventually cried herself to sleep.

The next morning Pat awoke before everyone else. She went looking around the house in hopes of finding the others. She went to a big door, thinking that it opened into a room. She opened it and found an opening down the middle of the back wall. She looked closer and saw little else. She looked around and saw a button. Pat pressed it and the walls spread apart. She walked in and found herself inside an elevator. She pushed the knob, and down she went.

When the doors opened, she was in a control room of some sort. She walked forward, and heard the doors close behind her. Turning to her right,

She saw a room full of beds. She walked to the doorway and peered in. She couldn't believe her eyes. Mike and Sylvia were on the beds. Upon closer examination, Pat found them to be dead. She ran out of that room and into another, crying. She sank down into a soft sofa with her head buried in her lap.

Her sobs subsided and, wiping her eyes, rose to see where she was at. It was an office. She looked around and saw some folders on a desk. She picked one up to see what was inside. It was some kind of file. She read the contents, but didn't quite understand it.

Then it hit her what it was. They were plans. "These are plans, plans to take over the world," she said to herself. "But how can this be?" She grabbed the whole stack and ran to the elevators.

Returning to the floor from which she had boarded the elevator, Pat took the files to show to Carolyn. After Carolyn saw them, they got some of their things together and hastened to depart. They wanted to take the plans to the police. On their way down the stairs, Pat accidentally knocked down a lamp.

The crash awok the Simmons. Pat gave the files to Carolyn and told her to run, and run fast.

"Stop, Stop," yelled Timothy. Pat stopped. He grabbed her and took the girl down the stairs. Meanwhile, Carolyn was trying to call the police.

Mrs. Simmons hit Pat and started yelling, "You had to come here, didn't you? Well now you will pay as you know your friends have."

"Who are you?" Pat screamed. "What are you? Why are you doing this?"

"Questions?" shrieked the old woman. "And you want answers. Well, I will tell you. For years your planet has been stronger than ours, richer in minerals and in power. We have watched you grow while we slowly died. This has been planned for ten long years, and now we will take control."

"But how?" Pat yelled.

"Simple, my child. We have our people take all the information from all the top people in the world. And the method we use kills that person, but it also enables us to take their place."

"Just what do you mean, TOP people?"

"Just what I said, top people, such as Presidents, Kings, wealthy people and so forth."

"But we are none of those," Pat cried.

"Right, but you did come to the house and no one was supposed to know that we were here." She presses a knob and Pat is quickly electrocuted.

Carolyn noticed that the lights died down a little, then come back on, as she is still trying to call the police on the phone. Shortly She gets them and tries to explain what has happened, but no one believed her.

"Please help. They are going to kill us. Help," Carolyn cried.

"Lady, what have you been drinking?" asked the police operator.

Since the police would not believe her, she called the FBI. She saw Joe coming into the room just as she finished dialing the last digit. "Oh Joe, I thought you'd never come back," Carolyn jabbered. "So much has happened. Hold on a minute. I'm trying to call the FBI."

Joe started to reach for her neck. "Joe, what's wrong?" Carolyn cried in a frightened voice. She looked into his eyes. He just stared ahead and said nothing. He grabbed her neck and choked her.

"No, Joe...Joe...no...no. Please stop, Joe. JOE, JO--"

"Hello, hello? Who is this? Hello? What's going on? ..."

LETTERS ON LAN'S LANTERN #3

These are the letters which were received on the stories which appeared in LAN'S LANTERN #3, the fiction issue which carried the stories written by the Horizons-Upward Bound students last summer. Some of the students were back again this past summer, read the comments, and tried harder with their writing this year. I am sorry to say that the first page of Martin Canter's letter was lost, somewhere in the time that the girls who organized and typed up the letters for the issue for Theme Day (when the parents visited and found out what their children were doing all summer), and in returning all the materials used to my apartment.

So here are the letters: as usual, my comments are in the double parentheses -- (()).

Paula Gold
Box 51-A
RR #2
Beecher, IL 60401

LAN'S LANTERN #3 arrived, but I'm not too sure of what to make of the short stories. Perhaps you should have started off with a description of the class and students.

((I think that a general description of the HUB program will give you an idea of the type of student that I had in the class. Horizons-Upward Bound (HUB) is a program sponsored by both federal and private monies, which takes boys and (this year) girls from low-income families, who have average intelligence and a desire to go on to higher education, and gives them an extra push in that direction. During a six week session at Cranbrook (where I work during the regular school year) the students follow a rigorous schedule of classes whose emphasis is on reading, writing, English and math, and a competitive sports program. The students stay at the school for six weeks, are housed and fed (three meals per day), and most study like crazy. Going through the program with good reports helps the students when they apply to colleges. There is also an opportunity for three students every year to win a scholarship to attend Cranbrook during the regular school year.

((The students in last year's class had an interest in SF which was not very well developed. Together we hit upon an idea of writing stories, and in a flash of inspiration I thought of publishing them and sending them to my readership. The stories were, I thought, imaginative, although the presentation wasn't very professional. I also did not have much experience with any form of creative writing myself, other than the stories I had written. This year was a little different, and I was much better prepared. See the editorial for those details.))

John Curlovich
108 Montville St
Pittsburgh, PA 15214

Thanks for the LANTERN. I can not say I think much of the stories, though Bryson may have a future as a soft-core porn-

ographer. ((I thought much the same as you about Laurence Bryson's story.))

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

The third LAN'S LANTERN was certainly different from most fanzines. You will probably hear some grumbling in locs on

it for the type of material you decided to feature. ((I have indeed, as well as comments in person.)) But I rather enjoyed reading it. Nobody is going to contend that any of the fiction is really first-rate, but it was interesting to see what sort of fiction a bunch of non-fans with an interest in science fiction can turn out for school purposes.

If your reference to the "Horizon-Upward Bound Program" means that these are problem students, then the quality of the fiction seems more impressive. If they're just run-of-the-mine students, then I merely think back to the kind of fiction I wrote when I was in my early teens and attempting for the first time to write stories, and suddenly I don't feel like saying

anything sarcastic or nasty about your material. ((No, the students weren't "problem students", although this year I did have trouble with a few who didn't want to do anything. They were mostly regular students who had an interest in SF and a desire to be creative in writing. I just gave them a little help, and a chance for some exposure to an audience.))

Stephen Manuel's story that concludes the issue seems to be the best of the contributions. He seems to understand the difference between an incident and a story, and he has a fair grasp of narrative technique.

But maybe the trouble with most of the other stories is their extreme shortness. In all the history of science fiction, only one pro, Fredric Brown, has been able to write consistently fine stories in the short-short length. So it's really not fair to expect a beginner to do his best in this most difficult of all types of fiction.

If there's one thing that impresses me about the contents of LAN'S LANTERN's third issue, it's the quantities of gore and destruction that most of the stories feature. Without making a scientific comparison, I don't even think crime dramas on television are as consistently violent as most of this fiction. ((I've noticed this past year that the playtime of the HUB students is centered mostly around noise and rough, very rough, play. Some of it I've seen borders on out-and-out violence, apparently commonplace in their own environment.)) "Joe Cool in Space" was a little more than an excuse for sexual fantasizing, and yet it seemed nice to read it, because all the massacring was finished before the story began and wasn't mentioned after the first few lines.

All in all, then, an interesting experiment, a pleasure to read as an isolated example, although I would not want to be deluged with fanzines containing the first fictional efforts of every class that has a science fiction course in the nation.

Rich Bartucci
2105 Independence Ave.
Kansas City, MO 64124

I am presently in receipt of LAN'S LANTERN #3, and, for the life of me, I cannot think why I got it. Did I loc the last

issue? Did I contribute, or subscribe, or say something nice about you? Damn me, but I can't recall anything of the sort. I must be getting senile. ((No, you're not getting senile. You got the copy of #3 because you're on my mailing list.))

The stories were pretty bad, and wading through them was almost as unpleasant as digging into the stories I wrote when I was a young adolescent. The most tragic thing about them was the fact that, buried in the clumsy dialogue and the piss-poor plotting were some really imaginative ideas. The notion of John F. Kennedy as a bastard extraterrestrial wasn't bad at all, and the elegant solution to the problem of discipline in the classroom postulated by Christopher Loving in "The Teacher's Pet" was downright lovely. You might find that young man a copy of H. Beam Piper's NULL-ABC and give him a chance to know that he's not alone in

his contempt for "...the hard heady and naughty kids."
 ((I've been unable to find that particular story. Do you have any idea where I could pick it up?))

Nuts. I've got work to do and there's not much more I can say about LL#3. As usual, the physical product was finest kind, wanting only better repro quality on the inside illos. I'm looking forward to the fourth LANTERN.

((The interior art was done mostly in pencil, which was a mistake for offset reproduction. With a little luck, this issue will come out better. I know #4 did. Hope you got your copy of #4 alright.))

Dennis Jarog
 7325 W. Howard
 Chicago, IL 60648

Thank for the copy of LANTERN #3. I won't critique the students' stories; that's your job, not mine. But as I was reading

them, I was impressed by a couple. "A Tale in Time" is an effective use of the dateline, even if the story line is time-worn. "Teacher's Pet" is a lovely variation on an old idea and probably will be viewed as desirable by a lot of teachers. The most effective story as such is the final one ((A Struggle to Survive by Steve Manuel)), and if any of them become writers, it will be him. Interesting.

Brendan DuBois
 283 Dover Point Rd.
 Dover, NH 03820

Hey, thanks for sending me your fanzine. I found it pretty interesting here and there, and the cover was pretty decent.

'Specially liked the way you printed "Lan's Lantern" on the side. Neat. ((That was the cover artist, Greg Frederick, who did that.)) Now, onto quickie reviews of the fiction that you printed:

Lyle Gardner's story was all right, and he was pretty good at describing how the vampire could feel his insides shrink. Preston Smart's story suffered from the using of the date 1965, unless he was writing uchronia. David Richard's story's science was laughable; nothing will "burst into flames" at a temperature of 193 degrees. However, the ending was nice. Michael Seldon's story was a cliché, but he managed to pull it off pretty good. Vincent Mosley's piece was hilarious, since he started his with that famous cliché: "It was a dark and stormy night." Was it intentional? ((I don't think so.)) Jamie Collins' story wasn't that bad. Mike Parizon's story wasn't that great. "Big-Foot, the mad rapist of Detroit?!" Alfonz Parker's piece reads like something one might find in WHISPERS. Christopher Loving's piece seemed like it was going to be bad, but I liked the ending. Laurence Bryson's story was dumb. Stephen Manuel's piece was strange: "Brainwave Station?"

All in all, while most of the stories were pretty awful, some of the writers do show promise. Wouldn't it be something if a couple of them actually do become SF pros, and then you can show a copy of this fanzine to ~~the~~ amaze them with? Hmmm...

Most of the artwork thish was pretty illegible; something must have been wrong with your printing. ((Pencil and offset do not mix.))

Well, thanks again for sending me your fanzine. It managed to amuse me for awhile, and you did a pretty good job.

W. H. Pugmire
 5115 South Mead Street
 Seattle, WA 98118

Many thanks for the fiction issue of your publication, whut I enjoyed quite a bit.

I am also happy finally to hear from some of the SF fen editors to whom I sent back issues of my publications (out of sixteen, I've heard from four). ((Glad to return the favor.))

I must say at the start of this loc that I found all of the yarns in the zine amateurish; but this is not to say they were poor (rather, they needed more work, and the authors needed a bit more practice with turning phrases and grammar and punctuation).

"Rage" amused me at the outset because it was a wampyr tale, and I am a wampyr. It was, unfortunately, one of the poorer yarns in the issue. Why, for instance, did the wampyr start writing about his being an Undead after so many years? Writing about it at the beginning of his existence in the undead state would have seemed more logical. Two very bad things about the story is the lack of anything original and the lack of build-up. Things happen like that (he snaps his fingers), without any preparation. And the things that happen are typical of any wampyr film. Nothing unique about the tale. Too, how could the youngster write the tale if he was killed at the end of it? Did he write as he ran with rage?

"Vampire" ((by Jamie Collins)) also suffers from a hackneyed plot, and uneven writing. What so many young authors do not realize is that this is a theme that has been handled by thousands of authors in as many ways. It not only has to behalf-way original, but extremely well-composed to make it today. SALEM'S LOT has been a successful example, although I found the book impossible to get interested in. Here again we have a wampyr who is telling his story, and yet he gets killed at the yarn's conclusion. If such endings are required, the tale should be told in third person, not first. Also, there is evidence in both these two wampyr yarns that the plot is most important to the writers, not atmosphere or characterization. They are empty wee summaries of what happened, but not actually built-up, moody, exciting yarns. With a wee bit o' work, they could have been far better.

"Within the Shells" I really enjoyed; it had a pretty original idea, and with some more work and length could have been a first-rate tale. This is true of most of the rest of the tales. They needed polish and length, more work on characterization, etc., but all were enjoyable. If this is the work of junior high or high school kids, then they show a lot of promise in some places.

I thought it very decent on your part to publish the yarns of your students; I know a lot of Fan editors who wouldn't have done such a thing, knowing that the tales were first stories, and that they would suffer. Very unselfish of you.

((That I was going to publish them was good incentive for my students to do a good job with their stories. It really wasn't so much that the students would suffer at the hands of the fans, but the editor. Those who did loc, mostly gave helpful hints as well as criticism. Some fen approached me and said that if that was what I printed, they didn't want my zine. I half expected that reaction, so I followed #3 with a good, strong #4, beautiful cover, and a lot of good, interior artwork. Wait till you see #6, which will follow this issue shortly!))

Ben Indick
 428 Sagamore Avenue
 Teaneck, NJ 07666

It is a nice issue of LL(3) you have sent, although some of your interior stencils betrayed their art content. The perils of the machine! Soon technology will grind to a halt anyway, and if one can afford the enormous postage, he can send out individually hand-written, hand-drawn copies of his zine here and there!

On to LL #3, with blessings on your head for its peacable legibility (interior art, alas, excluded). On to the students:

Lyle Gardner's "Rage" isn't bad, although I always worry about how dead people, whether or not vampires, can still tell a story. Or is it that the person to whom they are telling it --- me --- is also dead, and --- horrors! --- perhaps like them, also marked by the vampire?!

Preston Smart has fun with the paradoxes of time travel stories. However, if Maximal were alive at all in 3226, then earth had to have survived in 1965. If he did return to an empty world, it is an alternate world, and the other still continues to exist without him. Actually he should, in the course of time travel forward, have died in the appropriate year, even as his machine flashed by. What the hell is all this ---?

I suggest that David Richard read Shiels' THE PURPLE CLOUD to see how his theme can be handled.

I would urge Michael Seldon to consider what he uses as a "clever" idea. It is a matter of sensibilities, not to mention logic. Might he not have more wisely chosen a fearful figure? --- Hitler? --- Napoleon? ((Mike had the best and smoothest writing styles in the class --- but I could not get a finished story from him until this one. I was delighted to print it as it was. (And I was less experienced back then in critiquing students' creative work.)))

Vincent Mosley started off like Snoopy! "It was a dark and stormy night." Lan, get your blue pencil ready for such things. Vincent's idea, ultimately, isn't bad, but I rather question his third wish; more likely he'd grumble "Drop dead" at his caller (with the natural consequence). If he really did wish as he did, I fear he wanted it subconsciously --- and got what he deserved.

Your students seem to be vampire conscious, thirsty devils! and have end-of-the-worldism. I fear you've been assigning subjects! Come on, Lan --- give the kids their heads. ((When we stumbled upon the idea of writing the stories for publication for Theme Day, we had been discussing end-of-the-world possibilities, so the first assignment for everyone was to write as if he was the last man on earth (which left it open for there being a last woman). After that it was open for anything, but many were having trouble getting ideas. So I wrote up a list of about ten different situations and they could choose, or think up their own. One of the situations was: you are a vampire in a city, how do you survive without giving yourself away? Another was: you are the only survivor of a space ship accident, and you are found by an alien race who have never seen earthmen before, and they put you back together. Other than the specific situation, they were left on their own, to develop the story any way they wanted.))

Some of the kids write in a fairly rudimentary manner; others are quite sophisticated. Is this the work of different age levels? ((Yes. There were a couple seniors in the class, along with freshmen and sophomores. However age and grade level had little to do with the writing level. Steve Manuel was going into ninth grade last year, yet his writing level is closer to Mike Seldon's, who was a senior. Steve reads alot.))

On the whole, the youngsters are a gloomy bunch, but clearly excited by the potential in SF. I encourage them, through you, to expand their horizons within the field, to consider using SF not for gimmicks or trick endings, but for character development.

Very good, Lan! I congratulate every one of your students, as well as their leader.
((Thanks. We needed that.))

Martin Cantor ((Again I apologize to Marty
Gourmet Tobacco for having lost part of his
11965 Ventura Blvd. letter. He wrote a critique
Studio City, CA 91604 of every story in issue #3,
and I only wish that the ones
not printed here could have been read by the respective
authors, for Marty's comments are extremely helpful
criticism.))

"The Teacher's Pet" by Christopher Loving.

In reading this story I get the feeling that Mr. Loving has had some experience in observing that phenomenon known as "teacher's pet." And he is giving us a little wishful thinking in a two-edged way --- either getting back at his taunters from the viewpoint of a "teacher's pet" or a reductio ad absurdum to show how bad the teacher's pet situation is from the viewpoint of somebody who is not a teacher's pet.

Anyway, what Mr. Loving has written is an allegory, not a proper science fiction story. He was written a nice allegory, but a science fiction story would be somehow solving the problem of this "everything-eating" monster that was on the loose. And would have at least mentioned from whence came this beast, instead of just placing it in the middle of the story. As I said, it was a nice allegory.

"A Tale in Time" by Preston Smart.

This story uses a diary format to carry the reader through a period of 126 1/2 years, though all but the last entry concern themselves with what happens during the course of four months. Whilst a diary format (or, more exactly, selected entries from a journal, in this instance) is a good device for easily carrying the reader over a period of time that would otherwise take much more exposition on the part of the author, I find that the otherwise effect that such a format gives in a story this short is one of disjointedness.

I don't expect that a story of this length will give me any characterization, and I am not disappointed --- there is none. We are given a sort of typical scientist and his deformed assistant. This is such a camp setting that it is too bad that the author did not turn it into a farce.

This author makes a mistake common to many learning writers, and that is having a character change his persona in mid-plot without giving any justifiable reasons for such a change. And not only did the assistant change his persona, he even changed his appearance. This may be acceptable in a fantasy setting, but it seems obvious that the author was trying to write science fiction, not fantasy. In writing science fiction it is obligatory that the ground rules be adhered to. It is acceptable to posit weird sciences (and even to write science fiction about a universe where magic can happen) --- in each instance, when actions occur that are never explainable in the physical laws of that universe, or where such happenings are not scientifically or logically explained away by the author as rational happenings within the laws of that universe or of the weird science that he has developed, what he is writing is no longer science fiction.

Mr. Smart has obtruded fantasy into a science fiction story, and the note is jarring.

"A Star Fell" by David Richard.

"One day science professors all over the world predicted that a star was entering the solar system on a collision course with Earth." Thus we have the first sentence of this story.

Grammatically, there is a problem with this sentence. The professors predicted that a star was entering the solar system? The professors would predict that a star was going to enter the solar system, or would state (not predict) that a star was entering the solar sys-

tem. When you are mentioning something that is already happening, that is not a prediction.

There are other things wrong with that sentence (example: are there really that many science professors all over the world who are also observing astronomers who had telescope time at the right time, and who also observing in that area of space from whence was coming the star?). In short, there are too many unexplained, dangling plot problems and other simplistic assumptions in that first sentence. These are common mistakes with learning writers.

I would recommend to the author that he learn some basic physics and astronomy before writing this kind of story. Any but a dark star would be noticeable long before it approached the solar system, and the gravitational stresses set up in the solar system by an approaching star would make it noticeable before it reached the limits of our system. Naturally such gravitational stresses would seriously disrupt the orbits of the planets of our system, and the inhabitability of the surface of the Earth would be gone before the Earth fell either into the sun, or the approaching star (or disintegrated).

A star could not hit the Earth and have the protagonist live on for several years on the surface of the Earth. "A Star Fell...and he died." Oh dear. That is awful.

"Conference Room" by Michael Seldon.

A science fictional account of how John F. Kennedy was assassinated? Or at least an account of how a conspiracy came about (or by whom). As such, it is no more novel than any of the other conspiracy theories that have been put forth.

The author shows a nice grasp of timing; and as such, his punch-line at the end of the story really is a zinger. However, the body of the story being an account of the Centaurians position on Earth detracts from the building up to the punch-line. It would be better handled if the facts about the Centaurians were written in an expository manner, rather than in quotes. If the surviving Centaurians are as powerful as the author would like us to believe that they are, there is no reason for one of them to repeat to the others the why's and wherefore's of their being on Earth. Just stating the facts (rather than a speech) would be much more effective.

This was an interesting vignette, but I have my doubts that it is really science fiction.

"The Last Survivors" by Mike Parizon.

Are there any adolescents (or grown-ups too, for that matter) who have not fantasized about being stranded on some desert island with somebody else whom they liked (opposite-sex-type-somebody-elses usually preferred)? Surviving a disaster of a science fiction type is just a variation on this fantasy.

But really now, the only survivors are this boy, his girlfriend from another city and some sort of (human?) monster? In the case of the first two, that is straining coincidence way out of recognizable shape. "Bigfoot, the mad rapist of Detroit" is so gross a concept in so short a story as to be totally out of place.

"I got so mad that I grabbed my hunting gun to go after him. As I was going out the front door, there he was, standing on the steps. When he turned around, I blew one of his legs off. He fell to the ground. As I was cocking the gun he reached over and ripped my right arm off. I reacted quickly, shooting his head off."

Well, hunting guns use penetrating ammunition, not explosive charges, so how can penetrating bullets blow off the leg or the head of a man? Or are ele-

phant guns kept in Detroit? And I am assuming that the rapist was a man; otherwise, why was a beast raping a human female? Also, if the rapist was a man, it is inconceivable that he could rip the arm off a man (especially after being wounded at close range with a hunting gun). Blow a leg off of a man and he will go into immediate shock --- he will be in no condition to tear the arm off of anybody. Also, a gun that could hold a charge big enough to blow the head off a man would be armed with ammunition powerful enough to blow a person hit at such close range (the protagonist in the doorway with the rapist on the steps) down the stairs. Therefore, if the rapist was blown down the stairs ("he fell to the ground") he would need very long arms of tremendous strength to be able to pull off the protagonist's arm.

The author is very careless in his details. ((Thanks for the critiques. They were helpful to me also. I'm paying much more attention to detail now.))

Anna Schoppenhorst
4621 E. 16th
Indianapolis, IN 46218

Thanks muchly for sending me
LAN'S LANTERN #3. I enjoyed
it.

Now for the story by story dissection. "Rage" sounds like an Ellisesque New Wave piece. The writing is fair, and it could get alot better, but the story idea is rather a tired one.

Just to interject, none of these stories were lousy, though I didn't enjoy some of them. And you must have a very fine class of potential writers on your hands. All of the stories, even the more mediocre ones, represent some good writing ability, that perhaps, in some cases, just needs to be worked on some more, polished. ((The editor cleaned up the grammar and made sure that there were complete sentences, rather than type them as they were written.))

"A Tale in Time" is lovely. The idea, or what is done with it, is relatively new. The writing could be a bit more detailed, but then that's a personal preference.

"A Star Fell" has a nice title, but that's about all one can say about it.

My favorites were "Conference Room" and "A Struggle to Survive." Both were very well written, I thought. The twist at the end of Mike Seldon's story was what made it outstanding amongst the rest. I've always enjoyed stories that had unusual wrap-ups, within the last few paragraphs or lines. A very good story, something I'd wager my creative writing teacher wished she saw more of. "A Struggle to Survive" was beautifully written, easily showing the most talent of the lot. One thing which bothered me about it is the hole that seems to exist about the cause of the explosion. The reason for the blast is never mentioned in the story, though from the introductory lines one can deduce that it has some connection with World War III. The hit about the suspended animation gas was hokey, obviously a *deus ex machinā*, but for a piece its length, I thought it was handled very well by Manuel. As for the originality of the thing, well, remember the premise for Buck Coulson's TO RENEW THE AGES. Not terribly innovative, but handled in a way so as to make it one of the most readable and entertaining books Lazer published in its short attack upon the genre. Same applies with "Struggle."

"Teacher's Pet" was cute. An indication of how things are done at Cranbrook, perhaps?

"Within the Shells" and "Vampire" were well-written, but didn't appeal to me personally.

The remaining three stories, "Joe Cool in Space," "A Foolish Wish," and "The Last Survivors" weren't terribly readable or interesting. The authors glossed o-

ver too much in the telling of the tale. "First we did this and then we did this and then we talked about this and the story ends here."

This is a good idea, printing a zine of fiction by your students. It gives them a bit of incentive to do something exceptional, and gives you a chance to show what sort of kids you have to put up with, and whether they signed up for yours and Barry Levine's classes just to get out of health or not.

I realize that I am not very good at dissecting at all. I've never been terribly apt at criticism, fearing too much the possibility that I will hurt someone's feelings. Cowardice, I believe it's called, and ineptitude. Anyways, I hope this letter will benefit someone, even if it be your cat.

I ALSO HEARD FROM: Ken Adams, Tina Klein-Lebbink, Michael Sestak, Melissa Everett, Ben Zuhl, most of the members of the Wayne Third Foundation, and a few other fen whose names I don't remember, off-hand.

