

A LITERARY
LANTERN

SUGGESTIONS
FOR WRITERS

REVIEWS

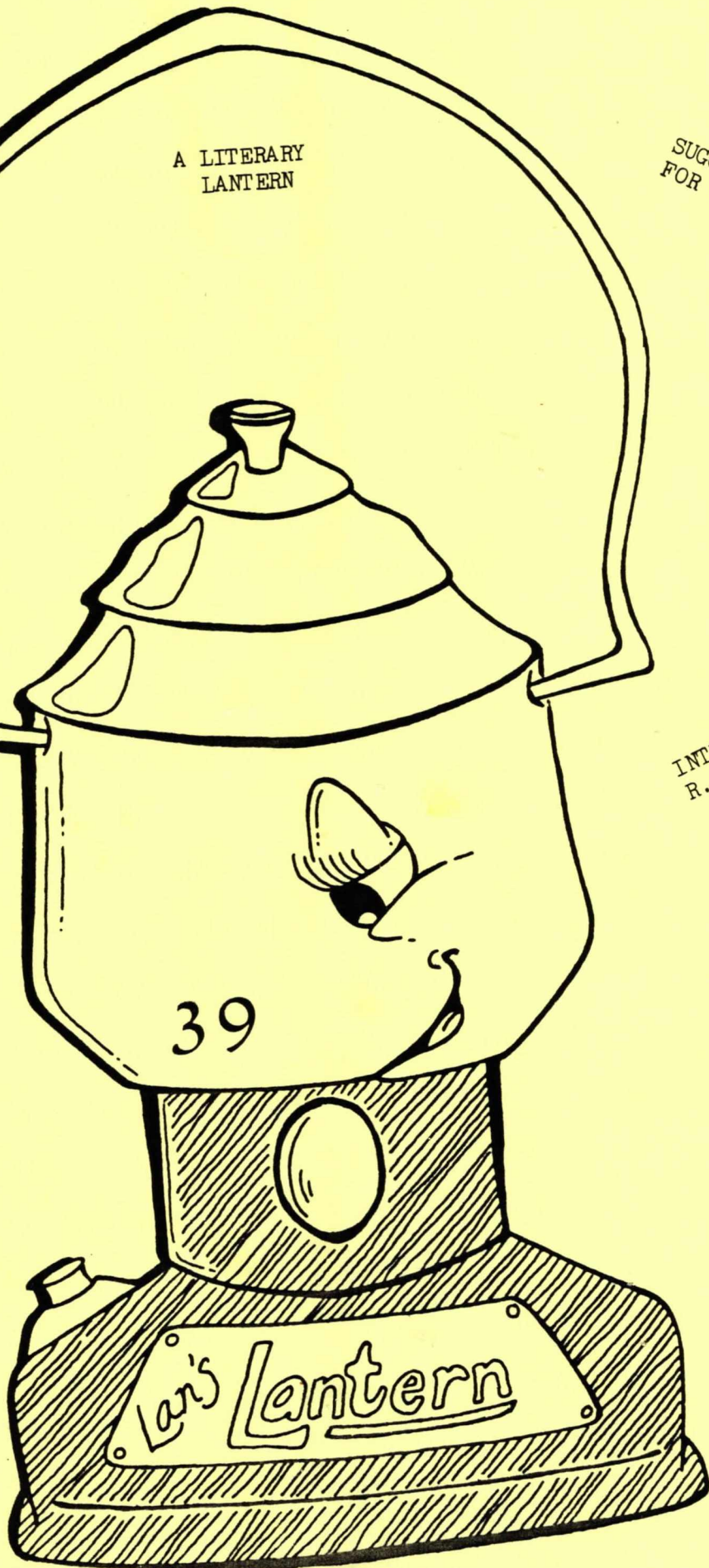
CONREPORTS

INTERVIEW WITH
R. A. LAFFERTY

TRAVELOGUES

39

FICTION



Lois's Lantern

From the Editor

by Lan

"What happened to #38?" I hear you cry. Well, I am still waiting on material for the Fritz Leiber Special, so that is delayed a bit. Meanwhile, I've been working on this issue, and it's completed. So why not hand it out?

As I write this, it is the end of June. I have not yet mailed out the Sturgeon and Van Vogt Special Issues yet. I do hope to do that soon. The final pages are not yet pasted up, and therefore there is still a lot left to get printed. I might have a few copies printed in time for INCONJUNCTION as I originally planned, although it looks like I will more likely be handing this issue out at other cons this summer.

Enough of that. What about this issue?

As you can see, it is a general issue, but smaller than the last general issue (though not by too much). I am trying to keep the number of pages down, and will continue to decrease the size so postage won't be as much.

Note also that the order is a little different. The lettercolumn is not at the back, as it has been for many years (and issues). It just happened that way. I wanted to include a couple more book reviews which meant holding off putting that section together. (There are still more reviews I would like to include, more books I would like to have read and reviewed, but the Hugo nominations list came out, and I found myself trying to read the four novels I hadn't read, and all the short fiction I missed, so I could vote intelligently.) I pasted up what I had on hand, and that was the fanzine reviews, the lettercolumn, and my trip reports and rambblings. What the hey, it's a nice change.

But on to the rest of the issue.

Why a "literary" issue?

It just happened that way.

Sometimes I get an article that I just can't put into the issue because I'm wrapping the current one up, or it doesn't seem to fit a theme that happens with the current material. Well, a number of articles passed through my mailbox in the past year and a half that all fell into the same category: sf literature and literary topics. So I gathered them into this issue, and the overall effect, I think, is quite nice. I think you will find the articles informative, interesting, humorous and serious. I did, which is why I published them.

The art is quite good this time around, with a couple new artists appearing for the first time anywhere in fandom. Let me know what you think.

In Future Issues

There are some activities that fans get into that are a little off the mainstream of SF and Fantasy, though in one way it is typically fannish for a fan to pursue such things. LL #40 has a few of those activities described in different ways.

There is also the Fritz Leiber Special, for which I am awaiting articles. If you have something to say about Fritz Leiber, send it as soon as possible. This Special was supposed to have been done at the end of 1989, in honor of his 50 years of writing SF and Fantasy. I'm only a little late, but will be working on that as soon as this one is completed.

I encourage letters of comments, art, articles, reviews, (no stories, please), and participation from all my readers. Read and enjoy.



Research is important in writing believable scenes. Mickey has some good advice--and caveats-- on this.

Real-Life Research

by Mickey Zucker Reichert

As a registered nonconformist, I've always hated the idea of agreeing with painfully overquoted advice. Unfortunately, for all its annoying, snide repetition, the phrase "write about what you know about" is, unlike most cliches, rooted in logic. Like it or not, only a person with experience can catch the tiny details that bring an object or situation to vivid life. Having taught far more than my share of writers, I can always tell which ones have spent their entire lives rooted in an armchair. Television watchers, avid readers, pseudoscience subscribers, it doesn't matter. What they have in common is an inability to capture life or action with the clarity necessary to draw in readers.

Naturally, I claim to have the solution.

It lies in Mickey's corollary to "write about what you know about" and that is: "If you don't know about it, DO it!" Have a character that climbs out on a fifth story ledge? Do it. Have a character that rides a donkey? DO it! Have a character that shoots a gun, wields a battle axe, hangs upside down by his ankles--do it, Do it, DO it!

Libraries are fine for historical detail. But nothing can compare with first hand experience. In the course of my research, I have climbed to the roofs of buildings, ridden broncos, allowed martial artists to use me as a punching bag, and driven a Porsche a hundred miles an hour through city streets with my lights turned off (I'll deny that last in any court of law). Once, while stymied during a beating scene, I went horseback riding to relax. While putting the saddle away, I accidentally conked myself in the head with a stirrup. In my last seconds of consciousness, I recall thinking, "That was the stupidest thing I've ever done in my life." I awoke to a dog licking my face.

Looking on the bright side, I drew upon the pain of that experience to write the most realistic beating I've ever done. The incident inspired author Tad Williams to comment:

... I admire your in-depth research on the effect of swinging objects on the human temple, but I hope you will consult me (or some other older, wiser type) before you embark on any gores-by-a-bull, boiling oil, or eaten-by-rabid-hamsters scenes in your upcoming fiction.

Which, of course, forces me to remind anyone out there as nuts as me to use a certain amount of discretion. I refuse to take responsibility for anyone who chooses to research committing suicide, murder or incest. Learning how it feels to jump out a five story building can be done, not quite as realistically, using an arcade ride. No one could fault you for that.

Of course, there are some few things that can't be researched first hand. Dying, for example. Or massive explosions. But a writer's obligations don't end there. Second-hand information is always better than book-stuff, which is, by definition, at least third-hand. As a physician, I've learned not to be afraid to ask anybody, any question at any time. I know what people feel like minutes before death. I know what it feels like to be shot or stabbed or to have a loved one die. My favorite story is about the time I wrote a story about a hitman. One of the scenes required me to sabotage an elevator. After researching the general layout of the control boxes, I called an elevator company. Explaining that I was writing a story, I asked for details on the safety features of their elevators. The representative told me in explicit detail, ending by reassuring me that I was in no danger on their elevators.

"But," I said, "you don't understand. I need to character to sabotage the elevator."

"Oh," he said. Then, without a pause, he went into explicit detail on how to sabotage an elevator! Several weeks later, I received a brochure with the areas of interest carefully marked.

Not all people are that easy to get information from, of course. I have a government security clearance, but that didn't stop them from bugging my phone after I asked too many detailed questions about a Naval Air Station. (Luckily, I was deemed safe, and they supplied the information some two months after I turned in the finished project.)

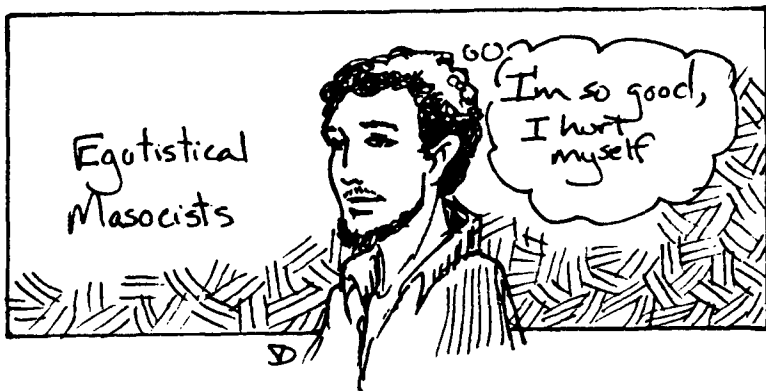
I'd like to leave you with one final story, the one situation where research back-fired on me. Knowing my emphasis on first hand research, other writers frequently call me for details of medical phenomena or injuries. Not all of them keep my hours. One night, I was awakened by a colleague.

"Mickey," he said with bounding energy and enthusiasm. "I'm on a roll, and I need help with a scene. Just tell me. How badly can you beat some-

one, you know, broken ribs, lung damage and stuff, without killing him?"

Trying to wake up enough to comprehend, I repeated the question. "How badly can you beat someone up without killing him?" Rolling, I glanced at the clock which read three AM. "You're about to find out."

I'd like to leave any of you considering a career in writing with one final thought. Everything you do, every excitement, every tragedy, is research and every person you meet a potential repository of knowledge you might use in the future. The finest writing comes from listening and doing. Don't ever be afraid to try or do anything. Even if it doesn't sell your writing, it's bound to make you a more interesting person. |*|



Forty Years On

by Terry Jeeves

In years to come the world will change,
From what we see today.
With food a-plenty, illness cured
Less work and longer play.
Travel to places near and far,
Within a moment's span,
Sights, sounds and places, vistas new
For rich or humble man.

Along with these, worldwide TV
To plague from morn till night.
With Babel-tongued presenters
And entertainment trite.
The marchers and the strikers,
Still "We come first" will bawl.
And taking out their spray cans
Will daub it on the wall.

In forty years, with all all gone
And coal departing fast,
Will every view present to you
Not beauty of the past
But as symbols of the future
Those environmental goals
A million ugly windmills on
A million ugly poles.

The EEC may prosper
As food mountains grow and grow
Whilst our representatives haggle,
Making progress very slow.
Common language, cash and markets
May sound fine upon the air,
But will each sovereign nation
Though debating loud and long,
Allow another country
To dictate the marching song?

No matter how times trundle
Down the road to Shangri La,
No matter what's discovered
Or what changes near and far,
The more things seem to alter
Or the cleverer we get,
Where the politicians waffle
With their views so firmly set,
There is one thing you can bank on
From Bangkok to Chandragar,
No matter what you fancy
Things will stay just as they are.

Jessica Amanda Salmonson tells things as they are, and her advice is sound. One might listen well to what she has to say.

Reflections On Heroic Fantasy Amazons

Jessica Amanda Salmonson

The swordswoman in heroic fantasy became the rule rather than the exception in the 1980s.

Commonly she is treated as an anomaly, even in her own fantasy world, as is the case of Lynn Abbey's Daughter of the Bright Moon, Elizabeth A. Lynn's Tarnor Trilogy. Occasionally she is a member of an anomalous cult, and though not the only swordswoman in the world, remains outside societal norms, as with Marion Zimmer Bradley's The Shattered Chain. Rarely the swordswoman is "the rule," as in Phyllis Ann Karr's Frostflower and Thorn, Lillian Stewart Carl's Sabazel, or Jane Yolen's Sister Light, Sister Dark. A curiously common subdivision is the woman from an amazon society electing to live in a patriarchal country, so that she may remain an anomaly though ostensibly not always having been one, Claudia J. Edwards' A Horsewoman in Godsland being one example. Sometimes she is a patently feminist heroine, as with Joanna Russ's Alyx or Mary Mackey's The Last Warrior Queen; or, conversely, an anti-feminist cipher as with Bradley's portrait of evil matriarchy in Ruins of Isis or early volumes of the Gor series in which amazons are "cured" once they learn the joys of bondage. The swordswoman may even be a ribald sex object as in Kirk Russell's Raven, Swordmistress of Chaos or as portrayed in certain sword and sorcery novels by such authors as Andrew J. Offutt and Lin Carter.

There's really nothing new about amazon heroines, except their present archly commercial status. The swordswoman has been in the storyteller's art from antiquity (Aethiopis), to classical literature (Aeneid), to historical tales (Tacitus' histories), to epic poetry (Jerusalem Delivered and The Faerie Queen) to modern literature (Virginia Wolfe's Orlando) and the pulps (C.L. Moore's Jirel of Joiry and Robert E. Howard's Dark Agnes, Belet and Valeria). Presently, however, we do seem to be in the midst of a veritable plague of fantasy amazons.

As with Regencies of the 1970s, Lady's Gothics of the 1960s, and Historical Romances ("bodice rippers"), the new state of amazon fantasy novels are predominantly but not exclusively the work of women writers. Indeed, there is an overlap among

authors in these genres, some having previously written Gothics and Regencies, turning to fantasy when temporary markets, such as the Regency Romance craze, came to their deserved end. Some of the youngest authors started as wargamers, Dungeons and Dragons players, or costumers at science fiction conventions, or, at best, long-time fans of such authors as Andre Norton, Marion Zimmer Bradley or C.J. Cherryh, with no greater ambition than to write in a similar vein. Only a few have a broad reading experience or eclectic interests and tastes of any sort, let alone talent and originality, whereas genius is nonexistent.

Insofar as any of the commercial genres can be interpreted as feminist simply because women are the targeted audience, amazon fantasy novels are more feminist than some. They show at the very least that the previously male-dominated field of fantasy and science fiction has achieved egalitarianism, if "separate but equally exploitable" audiences for "equally banal" product may be considered equality.

A critical look at the value of these novels in terms of stylishness, moodiness, intellectuality, and/or innovation finds them largely lacking. The chord they strike in the reader is not one of merit as literature, but of thrilling and romantic content. If this content is delivered in a workmanlike manner, we can only look at the typical Harlequin romance for a comparative view of how books of any given genre tend all to look exactly the same, to the eye of the non-devotee, whereas to the initiate, familiarity is welcome and slight deviations are construed as subtlety.

There definitely are curious variations in amazon heroic fantasies, but nothing that steps strictly outside the conventionality of midlist fantasy publishing: the prostitute-swordswoman exemplified by Janet E. Morris's Salistra series; the masochistic swordswoman of Sharon Green's Jalov series; the bisexual or partially lesbian swordswoman in novels by co-authors S. M. Stirling and Shirley Meier, Charlotte Stone, or the pseudonymous J.F. Rivkin. There is even the swordswoman-as-clown in Terry Pritchard's and others' comedies.

Nowadays, hardly a month passes that new amazon fantasy novels are not released by Ace, Tor, DAW, Baen, Signet, et al, by authors such as Andre Norton, Elizabeth Moon, C.J. Cherryh, P.C. Hodgell, Diane Duane, Susan Schwartz, Patricia C. Wrede, Marta Randall, Richard Lupoff, Joyce Bellou Gregorian, Jusith Tarr, Mercedes Lackey, Ru Emerson, Lee Killough, and dozens of others who pad out the mid-lists of archly commercial genre lines, not to mention the standard-issue amazons of various multi-authored shared-world anthologies.

No doubt, many if not most of these authors have certain artistic intent, but very few achieve any degree of artistry beyond the "chord" struck for various readers of whatever their favorite genre might be. We are still awaiting the amazon heroic fantasy novel that equals some of our non-amazonian classics, something as refined as Le Guin's Earthsea trilogy, as artfully decadent as Tanith Lee's first two Flat Earth novels, or as poetically resonant as Poul Anderson's The Broken Sword.

A complete checklist of amazon novels would number in the low hundreds during the 80s. They are occasionally competent thought rarely artful books, filling an apparent need for a segment of the paperback buying audience: young women, we may presume, much as it is young men who buy white-males-in-outer-space sci-fi novels and Man-As-Adjunct-to-Videogames cyberpunk. For love of storytelling, many of us wish these novels were more than they tend to be. Their limited nature is due to the realities of the publishing industry, not to limitations in the thematic material. Within the context of genre publishing, my feeling is that such books constitute a step upward and, viewed chiefly as young-adult reading, somewhat excusable in their immaturities. It may be viewed as excellent and extraordinary that the cliches of femininity have broadened to include swashbuckling mayhem.

When my award-winning anthology Amazons! appeared in 1979, it was widely received and treated as an innovation. It signaled the opening of a floodgate and proved the commercial viability of High Adventure with women filling the action role that had previously been reserved largely for Conan-types. A decade later, swordswomen have become for many a disparagible cliché. And it is true the majority of these novels read too much like slightly more feminist versions of bodice-ripper historical romance, increasingly so after 1985, by which time the product had stabilized into the sorts of predictable patterns that keep the publishers comfortable and the authors minor.

The present "standardization of product" is in keeping with the whole of the fantasy and science fiction fields' preference, and which are guaranteed to sell a certain number of copies even if they are as predictable as any two cans of Camp-

bell's soup, and which are guaranteed to sell a certain number of copies even if they are in no way promoted. Publishers fear anything artistic, unexpected, or in any manner commercially risky.

Where my own work may fit in all this is terrible to speculate. Certainly an awareness of the limitations of publishing within the rigidly commercial paperback genre is a necessary first step toward even a possibility of circumventing those limitations; many refuse even to admit the commercial restraints exist, and are perfectly happy to write in a conformist manner. But I am not satisfied with the typical genre product neither as a reader, nor as a writer, and I at least try for something more, or other.

When I wrote The Swordswoman, it was consciously to satirize many conventions of heroic fantasy, though not in any humorous manner. The masochistic female urge as portrayed in Gor novels, for example, became, in my restatement, a killer insect queen who demands to be whipped and may kill her lover if he isn't very good at it. The "John Carter of Mars" cliché of the Earthling (typically the author's nurdy alter-ego) who becomes an instant Super Hero when transposed to a planet of adventure (saving the green princess) is something I could never swallow; so in my vision, the sentiment is that if the Earthling (in this case, a woman with an amazon self-image, perhaps my own nurdy alter-ego) would adjust so slowly, and blunder so badly, even if somewhat prepared beforehand, that it would be impossible not to become a helpless outcast under a bridge.

Despite the thoughtfulness that went into reinterpreting several standard images and ideas that I found foolish in their more common developments, my ultimate sentiment about The Swordswoman is that it is nonetheless typical-of-kind. It could not be recommended to anyone not already sympathetic to amazon fantasy novels.

But the three novels of The Tomoe Gozen Saga are flawed only in their typography, the first volume having many annoying interpolations by editors, copyeditors and typesetters, chiefly the result of the hasty production schedules demanded by three-new-novels-a-week mass market programs. I hope someday to have The Tomoe Gozen Saga republished with definitive texts. These are otherwise, if I may judge, serious books what veer far from the "norms" of amazon heroic fantasy. That they were written at the beginning, rather than at the height of the current craze was helpful; I had no one to imitate, except several hundred years of epic poetry with which I was deeply familiar, and indeed selected my "fantasy" heroine from an historical epic, Heike Monogatari of medieval Japan.

I had an "overall plan" from the beginning, and I was not constructing an open-ended, meandering

series. I sought to show the maturation of a warrior, beginning as a starry-eyed young woman who thinks the system works, who believes violence and honor are compatible; then as an awakening, rebellious spirit questioning her society's mores and her own motivations, discovering that "heroism" is an illusion and "honor" merely a societal convention; and, finally, as a melancholic outsider resigned to the unchanging condition of her world as murderous and intolerant, not necessarily excluding herself.

The telling of Tomoe's adventure had many higher purposes philosophically and artistically. Though still struggling toward a barely imaginable and unobtainable perfection of my chosen art, I believe I achieved a degree of that nobler intent with Tomoe's story. However, many commercial authors feel the same way about their execrable novels; so I do fret at times that I have been published along side dozens of commonplace fantasy novels because mine are but a similar achievement, properly presented as disposable paperbacks printed on cheap, highacid content, short-lived paper.

What I can say with assurance is that I have a fondness for the theme of the amazon adventurer in a fantasy world; I cannot overlook mediocre writing enough to enjoy many of the extant books in this vein; and I strive in my own work to achieve something other than is typically encountered.

Feminist concerns are developed in Tomoe's adventures (menstrual ritual, birthing, children and childcare, interactions between women, varied sexualities, are all topics I've explored in these novels). But I am chiefly interested in the tragedy and terror of the shortness of human lives. The sword becomes not so much a symbol of power, but of life's transience and sorrow. In the hands of an amazon the sword loses some of its simple-minded machismo and takes on one of the mythological aspects of the cycle of fertility, specifically the winter aspect. Agricultural, sexual, and hearth goddesses of antiquity were invariably goddesses of death as well, as strikingly revealed in the example of Artemis, simultaneously a virgin amazon huntress, and the goddess of midwives. As the life cycle is far more than the act of giving birth, it is understandable that in ancient times "fertility" meant not only reproduction, but burial; not only spring planting and autumn harvest, but also the fallow, dark, cold, deathly winter. It is this latter aspect that I explore.

If, indeed, the average reader is seeking colorful adventure and escapism exclusively, then the seriousness, the gloominess, the symbolism, and the refusal to say "all this slaughter is merely for



fun" may make Tomoe's adventures pompous, difficult, or annoying; simpler writers with simpler visions may have the more satisfying product. Many authors say, "I write what pleases me." I probably fit that norm except that I'm pleased in perverse ways, and I write, in great part, that which disturbs me. And perhaps, in that closing moment, can be found the chief reason so much fantasy seems inferior; it does not disturb. And that which rises above the horde generally does have something disturbing about it. |*|

Greg Benford offers an anniversary for his own novel, Timescape. He also has some interesting comments to make about research and writing.

Timescape Plus 10

by Gregory Benford

I finished the manuscript on Timescape in the spring of 1979, and now a decade has slipped by. As the novel itself tries to show, time shapes perceptions. It seems very different to me now.

When I typed the last words for the final draft I was quite sure that I had written a novel which was quirky, self-indulgent and bound to have a marginal audience. After all, in it I had simply let go, pouring in detail about scientists, the way they think, how they live, and that hardest of subjects--the way it feels to do science, the oddly incommunicable sensation of discovering something strange and true and utterly new.

I did not think such matters interested many. Certainly I didn't expect that, since the novel would inevitably be released as science fiction, the usual science fiction audience would find it the fare they relished.

In truth, I am still rather surprised at the popularity of the book. It now has approximately a million copies in print, and won a fistful of awards when it appeared in 1980. Yet to me it seems the most private of my novels (with the possible exception of Against Infinity, written just after Timescape). I spun it out of fifteen years of thought and experience.

The novel began as a short story, "3:02 P.M., Oxford," published in If, September, 1970. I've never had the courage to reread this fledgling effort, concerned with an English laboratory where a time communicator is built. I never consulted it while writing the novel, but the notions are there --time and England. I tried another tack with "Cambridge, 1:58 A.M.," published in Epoch in 1975. Here major characters appeared and the English motif of the novel sprang fullblown into my mind as I wrote the story (by dictation; I was building an addition to my house and had little time). Only then did I have the scheme in full, and slugged away at the book for four more years, often with the help of my sister-in-law, Hilary Benford.

The underpinning of it all was a scientific paper on tachyons, particles which can travel faster than light, which I wrote with William Newcomb and David Book in 1970 ("The Tachyonic Antitelephone," Physical Review D 2, page 263). This idea and its causal problems intrigued me greatly and still does.

Still, when I finished the manuscript it seemed to me a dense work, filled with knotty philosophical problems and lots of observed facets of the scientific mind. Not a fast-moving, gripping thriller, no. It played on the Snow-called Two Cultures--the abyss that separates the scientific and humanist persuasions. I used my sabbatical leave time at Cambridge for color, and my years as a graduate student in La Jolla. In fact, my identical twin and I appear as characters in the novel at just the point where we begin graduate work. I also used a lot of my own life history in constructing Gregory Markham, who sometimes reflects my views in the text itself.

In the years of labor I had layered several other themes into the novel, lapidary imagery such as the varied use of waves in time, in oceans, in human affairs. I jokeed the chapters about to achieve a symmetry: the action cycles between 1962 and 1998, and the novel was published in 1980, halfbetween these two worlds. That was because I felt we were already halfway between these contrasting lands of light and darkness, but also for a further effect--the present acts like a lens in the novel, focusing events at the opposite time in a different fashion. And as with a true lens, the image is inverted from the original.

But I wonder if readers truly care about such matters; these are authors' satisfactions, after all. I've gotten many letters about the book, often asking me to write a similar novel. Someday I shall, though I doubt that I'll respond to requests to write a sequel. The looping structure and imagery of the novel preclude tacking on a new narrative.

In Timescape I discovered to my surprise how easily the realistic novelist can construct his realm. You simply observe closely and report back; much of the real-world context does your work for you in overcoming the reader's disbelief. But few science fiction works can so rigorously make use of this method, and even fewer have enough science in them to invoke the power of deep scientific imagery.

I'm usually described as a "hard" science fiction writer--not, I hope, because I'm difficult to get along with (though sometimes I wonder...). The term describes those of us who like to play the SF like a tennis game, with the net always up. Modern

science is a dense thicket of fact, theory and unspoken assumptions. Traversing the face of such a monolith requires care and daring...and homework.

There are degrees and kinds of hardness, of course. Descriptions of dramatic events aboard the US shuttle craft, for example, can be factual enough--but they're basically about technology, not science. Similarly, the techno-changes constantly churning about our urban landscape are the surface ripples of deeper forces, particularly the waves of scientific discoveries made some time ago. It takes at least a generation for a major scientific breakthrough to filter down through to the gritty end product, a new working device. So a lot of SF focuses on the more apparent, human-centered face of the modern--our gadgets.

Lying beneath those passing techno-ripples are the sea changes of our own worldviews. Science increasingly frames our very ideas about who we are and what it all means. (There's a sure sign of this. No business advertises its products with endorsements from the religious community, say, which a few centuries ago was the citadel of received wisdom. Nowadays we see actors in white lab coats telling us that some toothpaste is scientifically better.)

Writing about that is harder, particularly because the scale of science now dwarfs human affairs. Hard SF writers often must thrust their characters into bizarre environments to get at fundamental scientific matters. Thus outer space is a frequent easy landscape, because it divorces us from the details of the knotty present.

I returned to such science-fictional topics and manners after Timescape, concentrating through most of the 1980s on a long series about artificial minds on the galactic scale. This had begun with In the Ocean of Night in 1977 and continues with Across the Sea of Suns (1983), Great Sky River (1987) and Tides of Light (1989), with two more novels to go before I'll finish the protracted line of action.

But in between I again attempted to the semi-mainstream arena with Artifact (1985). It treats one of my hobbies, Greek archeology, using a suspense-intrigue plot structure. I wanted to create bizarre possibilities while sticking scrupulously to scientific fact, calling on current particle physics theory and real incidents between rival archeologists. The book has been about as popular as Timescape, though some took it to be a political statement. It occurs when NATO is breaking up and a Marxist regime controls Greece. My French and Spanish publishers objected to its assumptions and refused to publish it, apparently feeling that Marxist bad guys lay beyond the permissible horizon of speculative literature. Worse, my French publisher wrongly assumed I personally held antileft views,

and eventually forced me to move to another (and better) publisher.

So I learned that writing about the near future has unpredictable risks. Space and planets and aliens are safer subjects.

But less engaging, perhaps. I find that the characters in Timescape seem to stay with me, like people you knew in college and every now and then wonder how they turned out. My subconscious has already supplied detailed stories of what happened after the novel, and in fact I cut from the manuscript an alternative ending for the novel which continued their lives further. So to me Timescape is a continuing story, given life as well by the fact that people still encounter it and bring their own freshness to that world.

I'm quite grateful for that.

Gregory Benford
Jan 29, 1989*|



Lynn has been a friend for several years, and I have found her travelogues interesting. She has given permission for me to use them here. Enjoy her adventures as I have.

What I Did Last Summer

by Lynn Margosian

The summer of 1990 was one of the busiest that this fan has had. In a two month period, I went on a weekend camping trip, to a conference in Colorado, a trip to Washington DC, another to Chicago for a day, spent two weeks working overtime, and then again went travelling on vacation to Indianapolis, the Apostle Islands, and Virginia. Whew! Besides the fact that my cat doesn't know me anymore and my suitcases are wearing thin, it's been fun to go to these places and I want to tell you about them.

The weekend camping trip (June 1-3) was a reunion of people I worked with at Camp Roundelay in 1983 and 1984. We reserved 3 campsites at Willow River State Park in Wisconsin, just across the border from the Twin Cities proper. Two or three of the women got really ambitious and wrote or called (long distance) every other counselor they had information, information, or rumors on. All weekend long people came and went; one gal drove up from Chicago with her boyfriend; a dear friend who worked with me on waterfront flew all the way in from Vermont. Naturally, I showed up at the campsites first and picked out a tent site; people began rolling in shortly after that.

We had fine weather Friday night, perfect for a campfire and singing old songs (some of us had difficulty recalling the words). Unfortunately, this was cut short by the park rangers who came by at 11 pm and informed us that (a) we were being too loud and quiet time started at 11, (b) visitors had to leave (and one of our friends wasn't staying overnight, so she had to leave then), and (c) we had too many vehicles parked at our campsite. Sheesh.

Saturday started out nice, and breakfast became a joint effort, with everyone pitching in and donating food. I realized early however that I had lost my keys to the car the night before. An intensive search ensued, but when the keys couldn't be located, we called the ranger to jimmy the lock open on the car. The keys weren't in there either, or in the trunk. Finally, I looked again in my tent and found them under my sleeping bag. Breakfast was much more enjoyable once I knew I could get into the trunk for my food.

One woman brought a volley ball net and set it up as friends arrived to visit us for the day. A counselor who became a teacher after her stint as a counselor brought her four children--two she married into, and twins she'd had herself. It's pretty amazing to see after six years who's gotten married, had kids, etc. Also, the friend from Vermont, who had been engaged when we worked together, is now divorcing that same fellow. A volleyball game ensued, with new rules as one of the boys decided that he must catch the ball when it came to him, and the camp director's new 7-month old puppy chased the ball out of bounds frequently.

The weather turned bad after lunch; a storm front moved through, and we moved to a picnic shelter to play Hearts. I have never understood that game, so I kept score and tried to absorb the rules. After a while it looked like the front was going to clear out, and the sky even showed blue for a while. We went back to camp and I mopped up a few puddles in my tent, but as nothing had gotten overly wet, I figured things would be OK.



The it really rained.

We decided to bag cooking supper at the site and went to Pizza Hut in a nearby town. It rained continuously through dinner, and it was generally decided to bail out and either gather at Eu Claire at the camp director's house, or go home. I poured about a bucketful of water out of my tent when I broke it down that night; oddly enough, the ground beneath the tent and tarp was completely dry. Other friends decided to stay after all, as the canoe on their truck threatened to blow off in the high winds on the highway--their tent was still only damp, so they were OK. I made it home at 10 that night and left unpacking the car for the morning.

I spent Sunday cleaning the mud off my tent, putting my equipment away, and packing for the trip to Colorado. That was the same Sunday Mikhail Gorbachev and his wife came to the Twin Cities to meet with business people. "Gorby-mania" was in evidence everywhere; the news media covered his every move throughout the day; people lined the motorcade routes, waving "Gorbachiefs" and cheering; t-shirts were selling like hotcakes. *snort* Gorbachev had a dinner of walleye at the Governor's mansion, then toured the Summit Avenue mansion, met with business leaders, and Data Control Corp. people who are making new computer monitoring systems for the Soviet nuclear power plants. Raisa visited a family in south Minneapolis while Gorby was doing business. She was late because the motocade stopped at a fast food place so she could get a cup of coffee and sit down and talk with some folks in the restaurant. Just off the top of her head! I bet those people were flabbergasted. The two of them made a point of stopping and shaking hands and making contact with the crowds, and I think folks were very taken with them as celebrities.

Monday morning, of course, was a clear, cool, SUNNY morning *heavy sigh* and even better because I got on a plane and headed out to Denver (June 4-10). Deb Southworth, a friend of mine from work in the Division of Refuges, and Mary Mitchell, a biologist from Minnesota Valley Refuge, were on the same plane. Deb and I had plans to attend the Geographic Information Systems conference, and then head up to Rocky Mountain National Park afterward, so we rented a car and the three of us drove up to Fort Collins for the conference.

I have a Geographic Information System (GIS) on my desk--it's a software program that takes maps of different things (like the vegetation or the wetlands of a given area) and puts them together for analysis purposes. So far, because I have other, more pressing duties, I've only managed to get the digitizing tablet to hook up to the IBM and enter data properly. So I attended this conference with only the two weeks of training (done previously) and three months of putzing with disk organization.

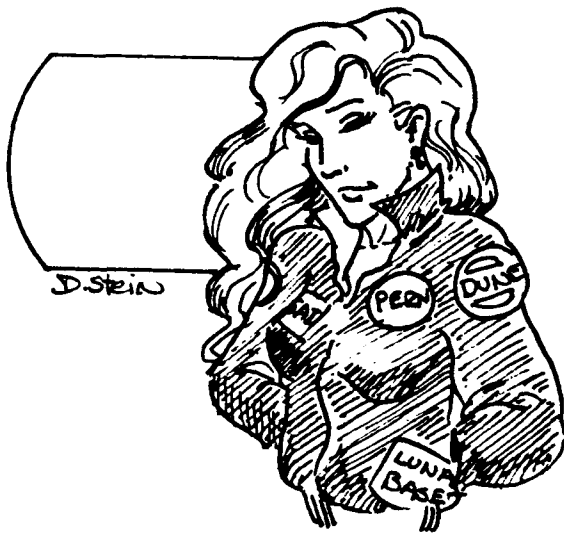
The papers presented ranged from the use of such systems for wildlife tracking to plans to use them and observations on using them. I learned a lot more than I thought I would, and at least got to hob-nob with some people who speak the same language that I do. Toward the end of the conference the attendees went through a workshop to make up a draft strategy for GIS use in the Fish and Wildlife Service--something we needed badly because most regions and stations have gone their own way with their own systems and support. While we can't, say, go to a uniform system, we can set up a task force to address national issues, establish a central support office to do technical things for average Joes like myself, etc. I think it was a positive conference for having taken that step.

The conference wasn't all work. Monday night there was a get-together in the bar, so people could meet and talk. Tuesday night Deb, Mary and I drove up a canyon in the foothills to do some hiking. We found a trail up a ways, about three miles long, that climbed to the top of a foothill (elevation change: 2000 feet). We didn't all make it to the top: Mary is a little thing, but she climbs like a mountain goat, and she made it to the top. Deb has several problems with her back and knees, and needed to stop more often to catch her breath. I could keep up with Mary for the most part, but hung back with Deb because I know it's a drag to get left behind. When Deb decided to wuit, I went to catch up with Mary and never quite did; I found a rock outcrop about ten minutes from the top with views into the valleys, and waited there until Mary came back down. We saw all kinds of wildflowers, and the Western bluebirds were out singing. We also saw a mountain tanager.

Wednesday night, the conference organizers held a barbeque (with very excellent ribs) and the entertainment was a cowboy poet who also sang and yodelled. He had a dog who could "yodel" (howl) with him, which was quite amusing.

The conference ended Thursday afternoon, and with our work done, Deb and I headed up to Estes Park outside Rocky Mountain National Park to play. I thought the foothills around Ft. Collins were impressive, but they were nothing compared to snow-capped peaks rising above us at 14,000 feet. Deb got reservations at a motel not far from the main entrance to the park and, after checking in, we went up to the park to look around.

The "thing" for hikers at RMNP is to hike as many different trails as you can. Each has its own name, and in town you could even buy patches with the trail names on them to sew on your backpack. For this reason I will explain my various treks by the names of the trails, and if you ever go (or have been there before), you can keep track of where I've been.



On Thursday night, we had enough time before supper to wander down into the Moraine Park area, see the museum there, and then take a hike up the Fern Lake Trail to "The Pool." That area is crossed by a river which has been dammed by beavers over decades--as the ponds fill with sediment, the beaver move upstream and the pond becomes a park-like meadow. Here and almost nowhere else (that I've encountered) the valley meadows are called "parks," and in early June they were covered with golden banner, blue flag, and flowering blackberry bushes. The Fern Lake Trail rose mildly into pine and aspen forest, where all kinds of woodland flowers were blooming. Deb knew some western plants, and I had practice identifying eastern woodland plants, so between the two of us we managed to figure out what to call many of the flowers we came upon. We reached "The Pool," a short waterfall carving out a round bowl of rock; we intended to go farther, by I got us lost at a branching trail and we decided it was time to go back and locate some supper. Hiking in the mountains makes a person hungry, but getting lost while hiking in the mountains makes a person famished! (And I'm the cartographer between the two of us!)

Friday we found an early breakfast--at least it was relatively early, although no one in Estes Park seemed to get up before seven--and took the car along Trail Ridge Road into the mountains. The road parallels the route taken by Ute and other Native American tribes when travelling across the range before the white man came; entire tribes with all their possessions walked along the ridge across the alpine tundra each summer. The road itself climbs up to the main pass across the range, then drops down into lower country and crosses the continental divide at a saddle in the range. The route is dotted with overlooks, where we stopped to take in incredible views of mountain ranges covered with forests. In early morning the rivers snaking along the valley floors reflected the sunlight, glowing with

gold and turning the mist pale yellow. Eventually we left the tree line and crossed the tundra ourselves. Piles of snow fifteen feet high flanked the road at times, as Park maintenance had only cleared the road Memorial Day weekend. Our next overlook was reached by a paved trail similarly plowed--the snow was piled about a foot over my head--and we got our first look at the tundra. At each overlook there were chipmunks, ground squirrels, and camp-robbler jays begging for food, but at this overlook I got my first look at yellow-bellied marmots as they eyed us speculatively as a food source.

The road eventually crossed the continental divide at Milner pass and dropped into the Colorado River basin. Our trail for the day, called the Lulu City Trail, struck north and upstream along the river. Lulu City was established in the late 1800s for the purpose of exploring several mining claims; named after a pretty girl, the town boomed and busted in only seven years, and silver was never found there. I'm not entirely certain Deb and I ever found the site itself--the maps were vague as to the location of the town, there were signs but no directions, and we eventually wound up exploring a meadow with only one broken-down log cabin, but otherwise found no signs of settlement. Disappointed because I had my heart set on seeing a real ghost town, we had lunch and headed back the four miles to the car. (And I'm certain I could have located the place if I'd had an air photo, although this is probably only an indication that I spend too much time interpreting the fool things at work anyways.)

We stopped in the Alpine Visitor's Center and toured by car back to the tundra. It was about a week too early to see any flowers in bloom along the Tundra Trail, and in fact the paved interpretive trail was buried under up to six inches of water from melting snow. The marmots didn't really mind, however, and they could be seen romping through rock and snow like it was a meadow of fine grass. The wind was so strong that afternoon that I wasn't certain it wasn't going to carry me away--and that was the first time in my life I've had to calculate "wind chill factor" on June 8th. And we were only at 12,000 feet....

It was much warmer in Estes Park; Deb and I went shopping and had some supper. I'd been beamed in the jaw by a throw to first from third in a softball game about two weeks before this trip, and I was still having problems biting and chewing at that time. Deb was accommodating and we found a place that served something chewable--like past. We checked out our sunburns too--up there, there's less air between you and the sun and it's quick and easy to burn.

Saturday we went horseback riding in the Moraine Park--I got an apaloosa who decided I was incompetent because I'm a lightweight, and frequently

stopped of his own accord to munch grass--and then we worked out the kinks acquired in the two hour ride by hiking up the Old Falls River Road. The road goes to the top of the pass like the Trail Ridge Road, but takes a more scenic route. It wasn't open to cars yet (it was still blocked by snow near the top) so it was a comfortable hike. A few miles up the road we came upon Chasm Falls, where the shooting stars had colonized the bare rock. In the evening we drove down to the Sheep Lakes to look for wildlife. We'd come within 25 feet of grazing bighorns while on the Lulu City Trail the day before, and bighorn were normally common sights at the lakes. None showed themselves that particular night, but we didn't mind as dozens of mule deer and velvet-antlered elk were roaming there instead.

We had a flight out of Denver late Sunday, so there was plenty of time in the morning to hike up the St. Vrain Creek Trail, from Wild Basin Trailhead to the Calypso Cascades and Ouzel Falls. Deb fed the last of her peanuts to a jay, and then we drove back to Denver via the scenic route through the mountains. It must have been a rally day for the motorcycle owners of Colorado, because we came upon groups of up to a hundred at a time all the way back; at one point, a group turning left held up traffic for ten minutes. It didn't keep us from making our flight out, though, and I was home by 8 that night.

Four hours is all you need on a Sunday night to unpack your mountain clothes, do laundry, and repack your business suits so you can fly out the next morning for Washington, D.C. I know this because I managed to pull it off. On June 11-15 the Realty office in DC held training for anyone in the regions who worked for Realty--it was a comprehensive type of visit where we got a couple of days of speeches (How You Fit Into The Big Picture), tours around the city, and visits to Capitol Hill Senate and House committee meetings. It was really fascinating to see bills being debated in the committee chambers and watch the witnesses testify and how the true politics of the whole thing works (the news doesn't tell you everything, you have to listen to the rumors on the Hill). At the time, the Senate was debating the proposed Amendment to the Constitution banning flag burning, and we saw Dole and Simon in the Senate Chamber during our brief visit there.

As for the tours, I had been on a class trip to Washington in eighth grade, so I was pretty familiar with most of the things I saw; they were still impressive, though, and the most stirring for me was the Vietnam Veterans' Memorial which I hadn't seen before. It is truly an amazing place; while the memorial to the First World War stands empty on

the other side of the mall, people flock to the Vietnam Memorial. People interact with the slabs of black stone, touching names, leaving little tokens stuck in the cracks in the pavements, making rubbings of the names they'd found of a friend or family member. And while people were rude and uncaring in the rest of the city, they are reverent and respectful of others there: while I took a picture for the sake of art, people on the sidewalk stayed out of the way until I was finished, thinking I was photographing a name. I know of no one in my family who was in the war (my father missed going in '61 by a year), but I looked up my last name to see if there were any others with that name on the wall (there were none).

On this trip I also got a chance to meet my new boss, who at the time worked in the Washington office and has just recently moved to Minnesota to replace Wayne, the man who has been my boss for the last two and a half years. I left Washington with a new insight about my job and a fervent wish that the Twin Cities had a subway system as slick as the DC Metro.

The next two weeks I spent working overtime on an environmental document for a new wildlife refuge; went on a day-long canoe trip on the St. Croix River; went to a Twins game with a friend who knows Gary Gaetti (she gets 17th row behind home plate when he has extra tickets--not too shabby); and continued playing for my softball team (trying not to duck as I crossed first base). Then it was back to travelling as I headed out of town for a science fiction convention in Indianapolis called INCON-JUNCTION (June 29-July 1).

The joke I tell everyone these days is that Indy is the "home of the best time there ever was." To my regular friends I appear to have lost some marbles, but I go to this convention every year, and every year I have the best time of all the conventions I go to. This year was no exception. There were lots of good panels on a wide variety of topics, including one on why the Hubble telescope was and was not working as planned, and the fourth annual Alien Sex Panel, which discussed why it is that the Shaggy BEMs prefer Earth Bimbos. This is the one convention I allow myself to wear some sort of costume in the halls--usually I have little time to prepare a costume even for this con, so I make certain I work on something in the year between. This year I copped out and dressed up as a western scout or a pony express rider (depending on who asked) simply by putting on boots and the fringed leather jacket I acquired last winter, and a hat. I also brought along the dress I made for Easter, which is inappropriate for work but good for things like weddings and SF cons. Saturday night I helped out with the masquerade as usual--there is a guy

from the con committee who runs the show every year, and this year while trying to keep the unruly Klingons down to a dull roar, we both looked at each other and asked ourselves why we keep doing this every year!! I got some good deals on books in the dealers' rooms, and met an author who likes fringed leather jackets and checks them out by picking the person wearing them up! (But he didn't knock my hat off, so there was nothing to worry about.)

The drive back on Sunday took me to my parents' house, and then the last leg of the drive through Wisconsin took part of Monday. I got back to the Cities with about four hours to repack and pick up my friends, Becky Halbe and Tom Doran, so the three of us could trek up to Bayfield Wisconsin where our rented sailboat and additional crew waited for our sail around the Apostle Islands National Lakeshore (July 3-5). We met the crews for our boat, and the other five passengers going with us on the package deal in town, and then slept on the boat overnight. On the morning of the third we set sail for the islands and any adventure we could find.

Our boat, Andrea, was a 38.5-foot Pearson, and near as we could tell the best of the group. We had two captains aboard, but Tim did most of the sailing and navigating while Bob helped us get the hang of handling a big boat. I got a shot at sailing the boat on that day, and played the other two days. The first day was mostly spent going from Bayfield to several other islands and ending at Stockton Island for the evening. The six boats rafted together for supper, which had been supplied as part of the package deal. While the others hopped from ship to ship, I baked the prepared lasagna and made salad--the boat had a galley complete with cooler and stove. Most of our food consisted of baked dishes all that week, and it was all really good (nobody starved). When the raft broke up to moor in different places around the bay, Tim docked us on the National Park Service landing so we could go ashore if we wanted that evening.

Day 2, the Fourth of July. Perfect warm weather and sunny, and our wandering took us over to Devil's Island. The shore of the island is elevated above the lake level, and beneath it the sedimentary rock has been carved out into caves that can be

explored by dinghy. Tom rowed the three women all over those caves that afternoon--some of the caves were so low you could touch the roof--and then we went ashore at a beach at lake level and toured the lighthouse on the island. I saw lady slippers on the paths; funny how I had to go to Wisconsin to see the Minnesota state flower. It was really warm inland, so I decided to swim back to the boat instead of taking the dinghy back. WOOF! That water is so cold that it knocks the breath right out of you. I had to remind my lungs to breathe, but I made it back to the boat easily. When the others came back, we all went swimming in the lake off the boat, throwing ourselves in and then coming back out to warm up in the sun. I ended up napping on the deck in the sun after a while; somehow Beck and Tom managed to snorkel for more than five minutes (like about 40) before they'd had enough cold. It was one of the best days of all of them this summer.

A birthday party occurred during that evening's raft, and later Bob, Beck, Tom and I sat on the deck and watched the moon come up. That night the waves began to swell while we were sleeping, and we had to move the boat about 12:30 or so. Although I was kind of enjoying the ride, it was difficult to sleep, so it was just as well. Tim's girlfriend Jane unfortunately got sick from the wave motion, the only case of seasickness that weekend and well justified, the way we were rolling.

It was cloudy and windy the next day (our last), and we spent the time heading back to Bayfield via the Raspberry Island Lighthouse and the Manitou Island Fish Camp. Tom and Beck and I decided once we hit shore that we were having too much fun to go back to the Twin Cities, so we drove up the lakeshore to the Porcupine Mountain State Park in upper peninsula Michigan. We camped overnight there and went hiking the next day; the forest there is very old and there are huge trees with little undergrowth higher than your knees covering beautiful rolling hills, and rivers with waterfalls.

I finally got a weekend to catch up, and the next week or two of work was spent on the next refuge project, a place in Iowa that has little real wildlife value in and of itself but which a Congressman appropriated a ton of money for. The catch



was that the money had to be spent by the end of the year, and no environmental documentation had been done on it yet, so our entire office and individuals from a dozen others were put on it to get the work done as fast as possible. The document finally got approved in early August, which gave us a little over a month to spend that money on land acquisition.

I had taken vacation time to go up to Virginia to help fix houses for the needy way back before anyone had ever heard of the project in Iowa, and so I was allowed to escape during the middle of the whole mess (July 14-22). The Methodists run the Appalachian Service Project all summer long, and groups from churches all over the east and midwest come for a week to help repair rundown houses. They have a center in each county in Virginia, Kentucky, Tennessee, and North Carolina that falls within the Appalachians and has people with some need for the services. The waiting list for the services is apparently so long at this point that they do not take people on the waiting list anymore. In addition to repairs to existing houses, the Project also builds new houses and sells them at cost for low or no interest to people who qualify.

The Appalachians themselves are very pretty, but the economy is bad. There you are either poor or rich; if you can afford a house with bricks, you're rich, and if your house is made of wood or aluminum, you're not. The area's main resource is coal, and you either own a mine or work in one. One of my favorite musicians, Bruce Hornsby, has many songs about this difference in class and I didn't really understand it until I'd gone to the area and saw just how much this affects the people who live there. Conversely, his music helped me to understand a lot of what I saw there and how to deal with it.

Our church sent two groups, and the group I was in was assigned to a house with a roof that leaked so badly that in the two rooms beneath the leak the walls had fallen apart and the floor had caved in to the bare dirt beneath. Groups before us had repaired the floor and walls and ceiling, so it was up to us to repair the roof (why they didn't repair the roof first, I have no idea). We had to pull the old tin roof off, nail plywood to the frame, roll tar paper over the plywood, and tack roll roofing over the top of that. In a week of 90 degree weather and little rain, we managed to get half the roof done, the part that was leaking. It felt really good to hear from the owners that the roof had held up under a thunderstorm that Wednesday night after we'd gotten through repairing it. (The owners of the house were the Napiers. When I asked a staff person if it was pronounced nay-pee-ay or nay-pee-er, she told me that if they were rich, it'd be nay-pee-ay, but because they aren't, it's pronounced napper. Huh?!)

You would think that in such a setting the camaraderie among the participants would be quite good. However, the people from my church, and from my workgroup in particular, were quite un-Christian-like in their behavior. The student-aged kids all knew each other and excluded me as a grown-up; the adults thought I was just a kid. With the exception of the Lind family, who took me under their wing by the end of the trip, there were few people willing to get to know me, and sometimes the way they behaved made me wish I didn't have to get to know them either. The saving grace was that the three groups from Pennsylvania sharing the work camp with us were quite friendly--there were some real odd-balls in those groups, but they were far more real than the people from my group who were so concerned about their appearances.

After a day of working on the roof, it was a distinct pleasure to come back and scrub all the dirt off your hide, have some supper, and take part in the evening program. There were a couple of campfire gatherings which reminded me of camp; one night they invited a local singer who grew up in the Appalachians and told stories and sang songs about his experiences in the mines and living there; one evening we drove out to Kentucky (go over two mountains and hang a left) to a reservoir for swimming and a picnic. It was beautiful to go swimming in the mountains when the sun is setting and the water was wonderful. Each evening ended in an excursion to Fodi's, an ice cream place named after the owner's daughter's three-year-old interpretation of the name Fido. Home of the best peanut butter malts you ever had.

I got back to the Cities that Sunday (July 22) just in time to make the Don Henley concert with Becky. We had a great time; it was the last concert of the tour, and he preformed songs from both his own albums and some of the Eagles'. It happened to be his 43rd birthday that night, so the audience sang Happy Birthday to him.

The Iowa project was still there when I got back, but I didn't work on it much that following week because my friend from Michigan came to visit me for a week. "Lan" (not his real name, but a science fiction nickname based on the Green Lantern comic books) is a friend of mine from the SF conventions, and I usually see him at INCONJUNCTION (and I just had, too). His wife had kicked him out of the house, so he decided to come and see his friends in the Cities. I took a couple days off during the week so we could do things like check out the bookstores in town, hike some state park trails, and see Arachnophobia (HORRIBLE movie-don't even bother!!!).

I had reservations for campsites in a couple of state parks on August 2-5, and since we'd had so much fun camping at the Porcupine Mountains, I in-

vited Becky and Tom to go with. Becky couldn't go, but Tom agreed and the two of us drove up to Jay Cooke State Park Thursday night. Jay Cooke happened to be one of Tom's favorite places; the park surrounds the St. Louis river where it had carved its way through upheaved shale. We went hiking Friday morning around the waterfalls and over the Civilian Conservation Corps suspension bridge. The trails eventually left the river for a while, and they were somewhat disappointing--besides being soaked with dew--until they came back to the river. Even then, the trail went along the ridge and little could be seen of the river, so we climbed onto the rocks to try to follow that for a while. Somewhere along the way we got it into our heads to try and cross the river on the rocks, but when we got about halfway across we began to see this would be no easy task. It took some jumping where the river was wide and careful stepping on slimy rocks, and the scramble up the far bank took us through some thorns and poison ivy (and I had shorts on!) but we finally hit the main road and walked back to camp. Quite an adventure.

The rest of the weekend I had reserved a spot at Bear Head Lake State Park near Ely, so we drove to Duluth and then up the north shore to take Highway 1. Tom insisted on stopping at Betty's Pies, a little mom operation on the north shore that makes really good pies; we also stopped at Gooseberry Falls State Park to go climbing on the rock formations which comprised the falls. Then there were 20 miles of construction on Highway 1, so by the time we got to Ely, all that rock climbing and driving had taken its toll; we were quite punchy trying to arrange for our campsite in the park office.

Saturday was equally busy. After breakfast we took a hike on the trails--got lost once on a deer trail--that took us around Becky Lake. For the most part it was a nice trip, but in one area for some reason the deerflies were horrendous. I stopped counting the number of flies I pulled out of my hair at 60 (!) and threw my jacket over my head for the duration of our hike through the area. Near the park is another state park, the Sudan Iron Mine.

They hold tours of the 27th level of the mine, at 600 feet below sea level (that's 2200 feet below the surface)... It was a really fascinating tour about mining techniques, and told by a man who used to work in the mine in the 1960s when it was still open. After supper we rented a canoe from the park and paddled around Bear Head Lake. It was windy on the lake, so we paddled into a lot of the bays and corners. The lily pads were blooming in the north end of the lake, and there were other little yellow flowers growing in the shallows near the cattails; we saw beaver munching on aspen, and one swam along with us no farther than 20 feet away while we followed the shoreline. Around another bend to the south we came upon a shallow where a whole field of horsetail were growing up out of the water. (Horsetail is one of my favorite plants because it has such an ancient heritage, and I always like to come upon whole forests of them in wooded areas--the water 'tails were a surprise.) They were easy to paddle through and yet we could stop paddling and the canoe would stay put without drifting, making it easy to rest and watch the setting sun on the other side of the lake.

Sunday we left for home early because my parents were arriving in the Cities late in the day, and I needed time to pick up the house and put away my gear and get some laundry done. My parents drove up by going a few hours, then stopping to golf, etc., so a trip that normally takes me five and a half hours took them a couple of days as they enjoyed the golfing. They hadn't been to visit if a while, so the apartment looked quite different to them since I had added more furniture (mostly bookcases!). I took them to Baker's Square for dinner, which they liked so much that we went again Monday night to try other thing on the menu.

They were just up to visit on that Monday, so I took them to see where I work, and then over to Fort Snelling, an historic site where the docents dress up as people who might have lived there in 1827 and act the parts. In the afternoon we took the paddleboat cruise up to the Fort from downtown St. Paul and got the guided tour from the boat,



complete with dixieland music. My folks started back for Eu Claire after dinner.

After that things calmed down a bit. Softball season ended on a down note--my team didn't have enough players to go to playoffs because of vacations, so we quit after the last regular season game. That gave me time to go and cheer on the Fish and Wildlife Service team, which I have played on in the past years and which Becky still plays for, called the Coot and Carp Team; and the Rude Dogs, the team in the same league which Tom plays on. The Minnesota State Fair was held in town and Beck and I worked the FWS booth, and the following week went to the Bonnie Raitt and Jeff Healy concert, just after that helicopter crash in Alpine Valley which killed Stevie Ray Vaughn. The concert that night was very emotional, and though I never saw her visibly upset (there are big screens at the State Fair concerts so you can see the artists' faces), Bonnie Raitt kept apologizing for being down about the death of her friend. Both artists at the concert knew Vaughn and dedicated songs to him.

And my brother Dave was up to work on a bookstore opening in town, so I got to visit with him for a week.

That was not quite the end of my Summer Activities. Becky, Tom, a fellow from the Rude Dogs named Dave, and I had one more trip planned before the summer ended. This trip promised to be a good one, with maybe a surprise, since the first snow-in date for Minnesota was September 15th!

In Northern Minnesota, a section of the Superior National Forest is designated as the Boundary Waters Canoe Area, a forested region dotted with lakes connected by portages. The theory is to canoe across a lake, then carry it and all of your belongings (if you're smart, they're lightweight belongings) across to the next lake, and so on, camping at night and moving on the next day, for about a week. I heard about it within a month of moving here eight years ago and have dreamed of going since. My friend Tom had gone last year and decided he had to go again this year, in the middle of September, and tried to organize it so both Becky and I, and his friend Dave, could all go. His method was to canoe into the area for a day, find a good campsite, and then hang out for three days, which was fine with me. Becky had to bail out at the last minute, so it was me and two guys (in one big canvas tent) in the Boundary Waters. I liked that arrangement....

We put our various equipment and food together at Dave's house the night before leaving, and stayed overnight so we could all leave bright and early Tuesday morning (September 11). It was a six hour drive to Sawbill, north of Tofte on Lake Su-

perior, and I dozed most of the way up. At Sawbill there were outfitters who rent canoes, we got two: one big one for the guys, and one little 32 pound fiberglass solo canoe for me, so I could carry it at the portages. Both the guys were gentlemen, but I wasn't about to let them do all the work just cuz I'm a girl--a fact I had to enforce because both of them were raised with the idea that women had to be cared for. This is horsehockey to me.... We had to fight against the wind on the second lake and I eventually had to give up and hand the solo over to Tom (I said I'd do my share, but it was getting late and near dark, and I may be crazy, but I'm not stupid). But we found a great place on Beth Lake, the third lake in, and set up camp while it was still light, and had steaks and potatoes and corn on the cob over an open campfire. Yum!

It rained during the night--and for most of the trip between 5 PM and 5 AM--and Wednesday morning dawned silvery misted. After breakfast the guys fished off the shore while I nipped down the path out of their sight to take a bath in the lake. The rest of the morning I read a book on the shore while the guys fished. They were even catching bass...

...when Tom turned around and shouted as a bear made off with our food pack! Yes, the thing snuck into camp so quietly that three people not talking or moving could not hear it, laid jaws on the dry goods, which was down from the tree for the morning so we could graze on the goodies, and all I saw was a black furry rump retreating around the tent corner. Well, we'd had warning--the rangers at Tofte station had told us a bear had been sitting at the portage between Beth and Grace Lakes (Grace is the fourth in line) and waiting until the people portaged their goods away before moving in and snatching whole food packs. The portage in question was a good quarter mile away from our camp, certainly within a bear's range, but we had no idea it would come within 20 feet of Tom in broad daylight to get one! The rangers also told us that if there was bear trouble to shout and bang pans and throw rocks, to give the bear a negative association with human food. Heh, heh, heh.

Well, I think Tom is crazy, but so am I! When he saw that bear and shouted that it had our food pack, he dropped his fishing pole, grabbed a spare tent pole for the flap, and ran into the woods



after it yelling away. I dropped my book and picked up a couple of rocks and went after them! (Dave was smart and stayed in camp to guard the cooler.) I ran up the latrine path hoping to cut off the bear's escape, but never saw it, and after a while I heard the guys yelling at me to come back to camp, so I did. Dave was still stunned and Tom was livid, and after regrouping, I suggested we try tracking the bear as it would probably stop soon to eat the goodies. So Dave stayed and, armed with tent pole and rocks, Tom and I went in search of our food. We soon came upon scattered packets of hot cocoa and followed the trail straight to the pack abandoned in the woods. Damage survey revealed a two inch rip in the pack, and a bag of my home-made pretzels gone, but everything else present and accounted for. While we gathered our food I looked up ... and spied the bear not 20 feet away, hardly visible in the foliage and black tree trunks it resembled. Tom chased it off again and we went back to camp with our retrieved goods.

The guys decided right away to put the food back up in the trees. While they did, I prowled nervously around the campsite with a rock in each hand. Good thing--I came around the bend and the bear had returned! I ran at that thing and shouted until I got close enough to spit at it--and stopped, because I am maybe not that crazy--and it didn't move! Fortunately it ran off when I threw the rocks at it or I would have had to retreat; I chased it a little ways into the woods and then came back to find Dave had run up from the food cache to make sure I was all right. The bear came back again one more time, trying to climb the trees we had cached the food in, and Tom scared it enough that time that it fell out of the tree and hurt itself on some branches. It didn't come back after that.



There was no way we were going to stay there with that bear nearby, so we broke camp and canoed north for the portage to Ella Lake (Grace Lake was west). You can bet we guarded the food until the portage was completed and we had found a new campsite a good mile from the bear's range. Ella was a shallower and smaller lake than Beth, so fish did not survive the winter and loons didn't fish there. Though the guys fished again--often--during the rest of the trip, they caught nothing (and com-

plained the whole time. By the end of Thursday morning we had summed up our new campsite: No Fish, No Loons...and No Bears!) By the time we had relocated Wednesday night, there was only enough time and light to make chili for supper (Tom's specialty); it started raining again and we hit the hay right after dark.

On Thursday we had chocolate chip pancakes for breakfast (mmmmmm!). They went out fishing from the canoe while I read on the shore and sewed. I'd made myself a fanny pack for day hikes and had time to sew on a logo design with embroidery thread. It was cool out but nice and the sun came back out. I enjoyed the time to myself and the chance to just sit and not worry about anything.

When the guys came back in (empty-handed), Tom suggested a hike out to a lookout near Beth Lake, but we changed the plan to a hike on the rocks around Ella Lake when looked like we might get lost on the way to Beth Lake. Dave stayed behind and we began our trek. We made it about a third of the way around when thunder and lightning came out of the blue--a shower deluged the lake, coming from over the treetops where we couldn't see it. Tom and I let out whistles for Dave to come and get us in a canoe. We hid under a group of pines and Dave waited at our camp (probably in the tent--wise individual) until after the rain and lightning were over and it was safe for him to come and get us.

I was hot from climbing around and the rain felt good. The amazing thing about the wait for Dave was Tom's disbelief in how I was taking everything so calmly--the bear, the rain, etc. He was used to female friends who couldn't do anything for themselves, were unused to uncivilized or rough living conditions, and certainly wouldn't have gone camping, much less put up with bears and rain. He was so used to women like that that he was surprised that there were people like Becky and myself. It never occurred to me that the way I am would come as a surprise to anyone in this day and age--don't a lot of women go camping? Aren't there women who can/will/(insist on) carry a canoe across a portage? I'm sure there are....

Dave came in the canoe to rescue us after the rain quit and the sun came back out. As long as we were wet, we decided to go swimming. Since Ella Lake was very shallow, it was better to take a canoe out to the deep part and jump ship than to swim off-shore. Being the Girl Scout that I am, I of course knew how to get in and out of canoes without dumping them...but Tom didn't, so he had to be taught (and we both fell in by accident once, trying to balance that little solo canoe!).

Supper: Spaghetti, very bland (Tom makes good chili but lousy spaghetti). It started raining again right on schedule, and continued through the next day--we were all very glad for my little camper stove instead of having to start a fire from wet

wood in the rain. I made us sausage rolls for breakfast Friday (my day to cook, I guess) and then we retreated back into the tent to play cribbage for the morning. The sun came out in the afternoon after lunch, and all three of us hiked (with rain gear) to the portage between Ella and Grace Lakes. We found a neat overlook on the far side of Ella from which you could see our campsite. Very picturesque. I made my famous pizza for supper, and Dave dubbed the camp "Mamma Margosi's Pizzeria" for the evening.

It had been chilly all day, but when the sun set and the cold front moved in, it was downright cold. I went to bed early while the guys did some stargazing. When they came in later, they were very kind to throw an extra blanket apiece over me before settling down to either side of me in their own bags and blankets. (I enjoyed that protected status all week, but it was especially nice that night.)

Saturday we broke camp and canoed back to Sawbill, grabbed a hot shower, and drove back to the Cities. For me it would not be rest, because I had to pack and move to a new apartment (and another story), but this trip was one of the best adventures of my summer.



CONTACT VII

CULTURES OF THE IMAGINATION

by Nancy Hayes

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Ideas come in various forms and in various ways. Nancy Hayes offers a description where a writer can go for inspiration. Here is her report on CONTACT VII.

The CONTACT conference happened March 2-4 in Phoenix, Arizona.

In a three-day intensive conference, participants construct an alien ecosystem, from planet core out, harboring an intelligent race, and allow that culture to meet human civilization propagated in time to a preset CONTACT date. Another group meets in parallel to resolve the problems of the Bateson Project, SOLSYS: the Solar system in 2050, when there are settlements on the Moon, Mars, and Lagrange Point 5. The SOLSYS Council creates a

working inter-planetary community via the BIX computer network (an on-line service of BYTE magazine), and meets once a year at CONTACT to maintain peace, clarify objectives, and facilitate technology transfer in the Solar System.

Jim Funaro initiated this series of meetings in 1983. He is an anthropology instructor at Cabrillo College in Aptos, California, where he teaches courses in future studies using the classic science fiction elements: world building, culture construction, conflict in outer space, interstellar migration, and, of course, contact with alien cultures--

all advised by scientific principles--to get a perspective on today's cultures here, and prepare for what's coming next. Other schools are instituting similar courses.

Scientists, science fiction writers, and artists meet at CONTACT; emphasis is on interaction of art and science. The worlds developed are depicted by the artists. Some art is computer generated, and videotaped. PBS produced a documentary on the CONTACT IV scenarios.

The conference has four aspects: COTI, SOLSYS Council-The Bateson Project, informal presentations, and workshops. The events are concurrent.

COTI is the acronym for Cultures Of The Imagination. The two teams make their constructs in isolation. They learn something of one another at a daily presentation before the conference. They make CONTACT at conference end, after two days of work involving extensive modelling. Maps are drawn, aliens get their portraits done.

Team facilitators provide the basic scenario and background. Karen Anderson was one of the facilitators this year. She is a science fiction writer who is well-versed in ancient history and mythology.

The Solar System Council is named after Gregory Bateson, an anthropologist and University of California Regent, mentor to Jim Funaro. Participants in SOLSYS have backgrounds in anthropology, physics, letters, management, and politics. Bateson did not reference his conclusions to any one discipline.

The informal presentations were given around three themes: Near Future Missions in Space, Future Simulations and Projections, and Aliens--Inside and Outside.

The workshops supported COTI and SOLSYS. They were in Computer Graphics, Futures Research, and Human/Machine Language.

The date is 2050 A.D., and there are human settlements on the Moon, Mars, and at the L-5 point. History, economics, social interactions, technology and politics are developed on BIX, and the SOLSYS Council meets at CONTACT to resolve the year's crises. The Earth Team, Luna Team, Mars Team, and a representative from L-5 were present. In this role-playing scenario, the team members adopt personas and function in character. The Luna Team, for example, consisted of the directors of the Soviet Settlement, United States Settlement, and an international pure science research settlement on the dark side of the Moon. The teams communicate with one another through videotaped messages.

This year's crises included a bomb threat aboard the tourist liner, Subaru Maru, enroute to Mars, the diversion of an asteroid bound for the L-4 point (asteroids are being mined for minerals, ores) by some clandestine organization, and a terrorist attack on the Mars settlement. The Solar System is jumping. Problems were resolved (more or less) by end-conference, however.

Several presentations were given around the theme, "Aliens--Inside and Outside".

Mary Woodson is an exotic animal trainer. For the past seven years, she has worked with dolphins, whales, and seals. She talked about the techniques that have been developed to communicate with intelligent marine mammals--techniques that are, in fact, cross cultural, and must be primarily non-verbal in nature. Jim Funaro became a dolphin. Mary Woodson managed to initiate communication with him, and get him to execute a command.

Joel Hagen, a member of the International Association of Astronomical Artists, also sculpts extraterrestrial fossils, skulls. He noted that people tend to anthropomorphize computers, especially the PCs that require a lot of interaction with the user. He also observed that there appears to be an increase in the perception of alienness, strangeness, when the entity confronted is similar to oneself, but not quite the same. Perhaps the expectation of familiarity exaggerates a deviation from it.

Jim Funaro, anthropologist, considered terrestrial cross-cultural communication, and how attitudes taken toward other cultures here would influence our reactions to an alien race.

He said that believing in one's own culture constitutes sanity for many people. This might explain why many of the extraterrestrial contact movies are, in effect, horror films--the alien is portrayed as being perverse.

The Computer Graphics Lab was equipped with five Amiga PCs. People were in this room working (or playing) all day and much of the night. Paint programs were used to portray COTI's worlds. Joel Hagen led the Graphics Workshop. A mouse instead of a paintbrush is used to make pictures that can be edited and saved somewhat in the manner a word processing program handles text. Smithsonian Magazine and NASA/PBS have reported on Hagen's alien constructions.

The Office of Interdisciplinary Studies of the Smithsonian Institution awarded a grant to CONTACT to fund a COTI project in the Fairfax County, Virginia, junior high schools. This pilot program will clarify the manner in which the COTI adventure can be introduced in schools.

In space, we will encounter a new set of environmental conditions. We will gain new abilities, yet lose others. Human culture will have to adapt to this. Creative speculation now can prepare us for the inevitable.

Science fiction writers are concerned not only with propagating today's technology into future settings, but with the motivations of people living in those future worlds.

Anthropologists, and other social scientists, advised by experiences with cultures here that were foreign to them, design ethical approaches in extraterrestrial contact. One never knows when they might have to be appleid....

When the "hard" scientists and engineers review the scientific method and technology from a non-Western (perhaps non-terrestrial) viewpoint, new perspective is attained, new insight.

They all come together at CONTACT.

CONTACT: Cultures of the Imagination is a non-profit educational and scientific corporation. The Central Arizona Speculative Fiction Society hosted this year's conference.

If you'd like to attend the next CONTACT conference, get a copy of the Proceedings, or receive the Newsletter, write to:

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Nancy Hayes[*]

Is what is being written today Real Science Fiction? Marc Ortlieb looks at one example.

Some Real Science Fiction

by Marc Ortlieb

Whatever happened to the good old science fiction, where scientists made real discoveries and the story examined the consequences? I had begun to suspect that it had been overhauled by that most ancient of science fiction's nemeses science fact. Why only last Tuesday a local science television show, Beyond Two Thousand, featured a Scottish inventor who had worked out a reaction-free drive that converted rotary motion into linear motion. He was talking about using it as a space drive too. If only John W. Campbell had lived to see it. (I wonder if Norman Dean's patent has expired yet.)

Fortunately one can occasionally discover real science fiction. The November 1989 issue of The Magazine of Fantasy and Science Fiction features a novelet called "Divergence" by Jennifer Swift. Its protagonist, Jewel Meeks, is a young biologist who has been infiltrated into a major university's biology department by a group of creation scientists. Her father, who works for the creation science foundation, is designing models to show that the flood really would have deposited more primitive creatures deep in the rock strata and advanced creatures higher in the strata. Jewel, in the course of her studies, has become a convert to evolutionary theory but hasn't the heart to tell her father, a cancer-sufferer in remission, for fear that her apostasy might destroy his will to live. She then discovers a bacterium that does not follow the standard genetic code. This is certainly a key discovery--of the magnitude of the discovery of an anti-gravity device--but Swift is far more interested in the interactions between her characters than she is in the discovery itself.

To complicate the situation, Jewel's supervisor, Candace, is a vehement anti-creationist who watched her scientific idol die of a heart attack after a debate with Jewel's father--a twist on the Scopes trial situation. Candace is, at first, not convinced by Jewel's discovery and, when she discovers who Jewel's father is, the potential is established for some real melodrama. Will Jewel's revelation that she is an evolutionist kill her father, paying him back for the death of Candace's mentor? Will Jewel's discovery undermine the foundations of evolutionary science? Will father be converted from

his false path by his daughter's discoveries?

To Swift's credit, she doesn't fall into any of these cliches. Her low-key approach to the discovery suggests a real understanding of the nature of science. Jewel's discovery, radical as it is, is seen as another part of the scientific process--as potentially important as Fleming's discovery that bacteria didn't like living near mould, but a part of the body of scientific knowledge. She also presents a balanced view of the conflict between evolutionists and creationists, with a slight leaning to the scientists' cause. The scientists don't come out as the sole guardians of TRUTH though. Swift has Jewel's father show an understanding of the separation between scientific and religious truth that should be noted by some of our more dogmatic theologians and scientists.

"...God doesn't allow us to prove anything for certain, not even his own existence, so we have to consider what ways of looking at the world are useful and what they're useful for. Your way is useful for science; mine for religion and morality."

The one problem with the story is that it doesn't feel like science fiction. Certainly it has the trappings of SF. Swift's story relies on a new scientific discovery and she is free with her use of scientific jargon--words such as DNA, Cytoplasm, electrophoresis, cytochrome, and e. coli are used without explanation but, apart from that, it would not seem out of place in any collection of short fiction that didn't mind having scientists as protagonists. I suspect that anyone looking for "real science fiction" might be put off by the lack of "gosh-wow." It isn't a story that engenders the sense of wonder and, to understand it, an understanding of current biology helps. "Divergence is a well crafted story about the effects on three lives of a scientific discovery. It is a story of real science fiction."

Marc Ortlieb is a well-known Australian fan, former editor of Tigger, the Australian National Fan Association newsletter, and a perceptive reader of SF.

LeGuin is a very important writer in the history of our field. Dennis Fischer examines the contrasting main characters of some her major works: Tenar from The Tombs of Atuan, Genly Ai from The Left Hand of Darkness, and Shevek from The Dispossessed.

The Binary Worlds of Ursula K. LeGuin

by Dennis K. Fischer

As an artist, Ursula K. LeGuin is possessed of a particularly dialectical frame of mind. Again and again her fiction turns on points of thesis, anti-thesis, and synthesis, and her conflicts center around the dialectical tension surrounding two interacting forces or elements. In her works of fantasy and science fiction, she uses this binary pattern to contrast psychological and philosophical extremes with the wholeness that results from the balance of extremes.

LeGuin is the daughter of Dr. Alfred Kroeber and Theodora Kroeber, the former a famed anthropologist and author of the classic anthropological study Ishi in Two Worlds (Nicholls, 364). LeGuin's background is very heavily influenced by anthropology, and many of her heroes are like Ishi, caught between two very different worlds and seeking a sense of self. She is also influenced by Jung's ideas of myth and individuation, by existentialism, Taoism, and anarchism. According to John H. Crow and Richard D. Erlich, "Regardless of the conceptual framework LeGuin uses, however, she returns again and again to the primacy of the individual...." (223).

Peter Brigg has traced LeGuin's use of the archetype of the journey in LeGuin's fiction, noting how her heroes are on quests for specific goals, that they are presented with a problem more complex than they realize, and that LeGuin shapes her landscapes to provide a context in which to clarify the goal itself. (36-63).

The hero on a quest is possibly the most traditional of fantasy plots, but LeGuin uses it in a most untraditional manner. Much of fantasy is based on wish-fulfillment in which powerful heroes are able to overcome dreadful and fearsome forces, usually with the help of some magical talisman or sword plus the advice of the handy wise old man who is a staple in the genre. It focuses on the exterior storyline for symbols and meaning.

LeGuin, on the other hand, is

"chiefly concerned with the 'inner realm,' the arena of the psyche. A familiar science fiction scenario portrays an individual who sets out to change the world--to conquer it or shape it--for his own survival or for the survival of the group to which he belongs. LeGuin allows her characters to enter an inner world--often one of pain and mental angu-

ish--to achieve wholeness, an almost mystical union, with the universe."

(Olander and Greenberg, 12-13)

According to LeGuin herself in her introduction to her story "Vaster than Empires and More Slow" in The Wind's Twelve Quarters, "Unless physical action reflects psychic action, unless the deeds express the person, I get very bored with adventure stories; often it seems that the more action there is, the less happens. Obviously my interest is in what goes on inside."

Such a view is quite opposed to the traditional conception of science fiction and fantasy where physical action and ideas take precedence. LeGuin uses the traditional modes of creating an fantastic world, but for different purposes. As she explains in her collection of critical essays, The Language of the Night, she uses these genres to describe "certain aspects of psychological reality in the novelist's way, which is by inventing elaborately circumstantial lies." (158)

It is typical of her binary thinking that she conceives of all novelists as liars who tell psychological truths via symbols and metaphors. Lies and truth are dichotomous opposites, by her view, which receive their transcendent synthesis via fiction, a made-up story which presents a metaphoric reality.

LeGuin's fiction has the same goal that M.H. Abrams describes for constructionism in his Glossary of Literary Terms: "to make explicit the implicit structure, features, and rules of the underlying signifying system...." (242). As with structuralism, LeGuin is not interested in writing mimetically (that is, portraying an exact imitation of reality), but rather in writing expressively (that is, expressing the feelings or temperament or creative imagination of the author) (243).

Unlike most fantasists, LeGuin is interested in creating real, complex human characters and uses her fantastic settings to explore these characters' inner psyches. Through the use of fantasy, she amplifies their ways of thinking, the things they think are important, the choices they must make which both help create and define them as persons. To show how she uses her binary technique to do this, let us examine three major characters from three of LeGuin's major novels: Tenar from The

Tombs of Atuan; Genly Ai from The Left Hand of Darkness; and Shevek from The Dispossessed.

According to Robert Scholes and Eric S. Rabkin, LeGuin's work is rich in images of a poetic or even visionary kind. "LeGuin concentrates on integration and transcendence." (75-6) According to them, LeGuin's great gift is to offer a perspective in which realism and fantasy are not opposed,

"because the supernatural is naturalized--not merely postulated but regulated, systematized, made part of the Great Equilibrium itself. And of course, this is also art, in which the sounds of individual sentences are as cunningly balanced as the whole design, in which a great allegory of the destructive power of science unleashed, and a little allegory of an individual seeking to conquer his own chaotic impulses, come together as neatly as the feathers of a dove's tail."

--(78)

Note how, in Scholes' and Rabkin's description they neatly assign everything in paired opposites, picking up on the way LeGuin arranges her stories and her worlds to reflect these opposites. Additionally, she enriches her concepts by using details and structural extrapolation to flesh out her alien societies and advance her theses. In addition to these paired opposites, LeGuin is very interested in balance, equilibrium, but especially change, which paradoxically she sees as perhaps the single constant of our world.

The characters of Tenar, Genly Ai, and Shevek make for interesting contrasts. Tenar is a little girl whom we see grow to sexual maturity in the course of Tombs. Her quest is to break away from the shadowy, sterile society that she is trapped in. Genly Ai is an emissary who is sent to the planet Gethen to win the trust of the natives there. Eventually, he comes to realize that his real goal lies "within the context of human-to-Gethenian contact on a personal level" (Brigg, 38). Shevek, because of his training in Odonian philosophy, is the most self-actualized of the characters. At the start of The Dispossessed, he already realizes that the only goal one may have is to remain open to change, though he is on a quest to achieve three things: "the creation of a General Temporal Theory; the unification of Anarres and Urras; and a goal that is common to every Odonian--preserving a society in which there is an ongoing revolution." (39) Yet part of LeGuin's framework in this latter work is to contrast the "present time" storyline with details from Shevek's past to show how they have shaped his character and influenced his perceptions and decisions, in short, his path to becoming the self-actualized being that he has become.

The Tombs of Atuan is the middle book of what is known as the Earthsea Trilogy. The first book, A Wizard of Earthsea, concerned a young boy named Ged who is growing up and studying to be a magician. The plot concerned how Ged came to realize the importance of balance in life, how he learned about taking responsibilities for his actions, and how he came to terms with his "shadow" self, that is, his super-ego filled with unacknowledged desires and primitive longings (Esmonde, 16-7). The story takes place in the sunny lands of Earthsea.

For this second book, LeGuin relates another coming-of-age story, only this time the protagonist is Tenar, a 16-year old girl. While Ged was dark-skinned, Tenar has white skin. Where Ged came from a healthy society, Tenar comes from an unhealthy one. The setting this time is the shadowy world of Atuan, to which Ged comes midway through the book. Instead of a wizard, Tenar is in training to be a priestess. As such, as opposed to Ged's openness, she is trapped in a remote and sterile location, surrounded by women, and engulfed in ritual.

As Charlotte Spivack observes,

Her training is thus the opposite of Ged's. Whereas Ged attended a college for wizards and gained much knowledge about the nature of the world, Tenar learns only about rituals and the unexplored world of dark tombs where no light ever appears. Furthermore, while Ged erred in the direction of too much consciousness, Tenar's problem is that of almost total unconsciousness. (33)

Significantly, she is renamed Arha and forced into an identity which is not hers, and that identity brings with it a series of prescribed and habitual religious duties.

LeGuin obviously intends this as a metaphor for the lot befalling many women, who upon marriage are renamed and are given duties that come from the expectations of previous women, falling back before their great-grandmother's age. While more true in the late 60s when the book was written than now, women by and large were not encouraged to get an education and explore the outside world, but rather were taught, as Tenar is, traditional womanly skills like spinning and weaving, etc.

As George Edward Slusser observes, Tenar's world

...is one that has sunk into ignorance and perversion. The proper balance of light and darkness, death and life, has been upset. Tenar is a person of great natural strength and imagination, but the priestesses guide her to darkness and denial of life. (40)

Tenar first realizes the sterility of her world when Penthe, an unwilling novice, shows up with a

fresh, whole apple to contrast with the dried up ones taken from the orchard of the Place of the Tombs. The apple is significant, not only for the connotations of Eve's apple, which symbolized knowledge, but also because it is a fruit sacred to the goddess Aphrodite. In his The Uses of Enchantment, Bruno Bettelheim points out that, in myth and fairy tales, the apple represents love and sex in both their benevolent and dangerous aspects. In religious iconography, Bettelheim says, the apple also symbolizes the mother's breast, while, in European literature, it is a symbol of consummation as well as immortality. (212-3)

In the book, Tenar must make a choice to leave her withered world and to choose knowledge and sexuality over her continued obedience to her sect. However, Tenar's choice comes at a price: she must sacrifice the security, prestige and immortality of her One Priestess and learn the burden of freedom. (Esmonde, 22)

Her first act as priestess is to execute three male prisoners by denying them food and water, which can be seen as a perversion of the accepted female role as nourisher and preserver of life. Tormented by what she has been forced to do, Tenar spends more time in the labyrinth and finds pleasure in isolation and darkness.

All of LeGuin's protagonists become isolated in some way. Genly Ai is a human emissary to an androgynous world and is totally cut off from other of his kind. Shevek comes to Anarres to develop as a physicist and perhaps provide a needed bridge between his world and it, but with his Odonian orientation, he too has difficulty in relating to the inhabitants of the world he visits.

Finally, into Tenar's world comes Ged carrying a wizard's staff (obviously a phallic symbol) which casts light (an obvious symbol of knowledge). Ged violates Tenar's world because he has half of the ring of Erreth-Abke and is seeking the other, complementary half. Tenar becomes curious about him which represents the beginning of her sexual awakening. A symbolic courtship ensues. She comes to see the life of a priestess as "a secret brangle of jealousies, and miseries and small ambitions and wasted passions..." (TA, "Great Treasure").

However, while a woman physically, she fears the intellectual and emotional demands of her new-found womanhood. When she asks Ged to demonstrate his magic, he clothes her in a beautiful gown, explaining, "You told me to show you something worth seeing. I show you yourself." (TA, "Great Treasure") However, Tenar is not ready to accept her emerging self yet and orders him away. Still, she saves Ged by hiding him and in return he gives her back her true name (Esmonde, 24).

Like Ged, Tenar has difficulty dealing with the dark side of human experience. In a powerful speech

Ged outlines the paradox of human existence and, consequently, LeGuin's own binary view of the world:

The Earth is beautiful, and bright, and kindly, but that is not all. The Earth is also terrible, and dark, and cruel. The rabbit shrieks dying in the green meadows. The mountains clench their great hands full of hidden fire. There are sharks in the sea, and there is cruelty in men's eyes. And where men worship these things and abase themselves before them, there evil breeds; there places are made in the world where darkness gathers, places given over wholly to the Ones whom we call Nameless, the ancient and holy Powers of the Earth before the Light, the powers of the dark, of ruin, of madness.... They exist. But they are not you Masters. They never were. You are free, Tenar. You were taught to be a slave, but you have broken free. (TA, "Ring")

Tenar's affection for Ged brings her to an important emotional crossroads, just as Genly Ai's relationship with Estravan brings him to a similar turning point. Genly Ai is a human being who is a representative from a group of worlds known as the Ekumen who have made contact with the planet Gethen on which lives a race of androgynous people, who are both male and female. Keeping the basic dualistic pattern, Genly meets people who are truly alien to him while he is the alien in their midst.

LeGuin uses the novel as a metamorphic consideration of human sexuality, and of the "ways that their male and female attributes make men and women perpetually foreign to one another." (Scholes and Rabkin, 226) The Gethenians are sexually neutral most of the time, entering into a cycle of kemmer for a few days once a month in which they can be either male or female and pair off in heterosexual couples. Each Gethenian has attributes of what our society would consider male and female attributes.

The novel is told largely in the first person by Genly, but contains some chapters written in third person and others written from other points of view which have been arranged by Ai. One of the most significant portions of the novel is a report written by a female investigator who secretly observed the planet in preparation for Genly's going there. She explains why dealing with the Gethenians can be tricky and why doing so makes humans uncomfortable:

When you meet a Gethenian you cannot and must not do what a bisexual naturally does, which is to cast him in the role of Man or Woman, while adopting towards him a corresponding role dependent on your expectations of the patterned or possible interactions be-



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tween persons of the same or the opposite sex. Our entire pattern of socio-sexual interaction is non-existent here. They cannot play the game. They do not see one another as men or women. This is almost impossible for our imagination to grasp. What is the first question we ask about a new-born baby?

The First Mobile, if one is sent, must be warned that unless he is very self-assured, or senile, his pride will suffer. A man wants his virility regarded, a woman wants her femininity appreciated, however indirect and subtle the indications of regard and appreciation. On Winter they will not exist. One is respected and judged only as a human being. It is an appalling experience.

(LHD, Chapter 7)

LeGuin herself addresses the idea directly in her essay "American SF and The Other" in Language of the Night:

If you deny any affinity with another person or kind of person, if you declare it to be wholly different from yourself--as men have done to women, and class has done to class, and nation has done to nation--you may hate it, or deify it; but in either case you have denied its spiritual equality, and its human reality. You have made it into a thing, to which the only possible relationship is a power relationship. And thus you have fatally impoverished your own reality. You have, in fact, alienated yourself. (99)

It is this problem of "otherness" which plagues Genly Ai through the early portions of Left Hand of Darkness. Here LeGuin sets up the problem of what happens when a person sees things dichotomously as only self and other. Through the course of the novel, Genly must constantly correct misperceptions that have arisen from his cultural biases and which endanger his basic mission.

Estraven, the person who becomes the most important to him in the course of the novel, is disliked by Ai because he perceives Estraven as being too "womanly" and consequently lacking in "substance." What Genly must learn is to get beyond his prejudices and to accept the differences as well as the humanity of those beings different from himself and his cultural orientation. The point is not to deny the alien, either by admitting it as part of the self, or by divorcing it from the self. Although the alien remains the other, once its otherness is admitted and understood, it can come into creative tension with the self, and from this tension, a new wholeness can emerge. (Hayles, 100)

By extension, LeGuin calls into question how men have treated women as a different race and the tra-

gic alienation and results of that treatment. Placed in this context of otherness, women can only be worshipped (i.e., placed on a pedestal) or subjugated, or a combination of both.

LeGuin expands upon this duality by presenting some other ones. Gethen, also known as Winter because of the extreme cold that suffuses the planet, is divided into two main states, Karhide and Orgoreyn, both of which have contrasting, even opposing, political and religious systems. LeGuin carries on the metaphor by having Genly leave Karhide and visit Orgoreyn, where he sees a kind of order that he initially finds preferable to the messiness of Karhide's politics.

However, he comes to discover that Orgoreyn is run by a totalitarian socialist system which is predicated on denying the humanity of the individual who is subsumed as part of the collective whole. Genly discovers the dark underside of Orgoreyn when the Orgota police seize and imprison him and take him to a work camp ironically called a "Voluntary Farm."

LeGuin postulates that because of the Gethenians' sexuality there would be an absence of male aggression and hence there has been no war on Gethen. However, the Orgotans represent a society out of balance which is imposing a disruptive organization and teaching its members that they should obey and submit to a group purpose, thereby laying the groundwork for there to be war. (Spivack, 51)

Reasons for the differences between the two societies can be traced to their religious thinking, which is quite different. The religion of Karhide is called Handdara, and theirs is a holistic vision in which darkness is emphasized over light and things are known in terms of their opposites (for example, Estraven thinks of Orgoreyn as his "uncountry"). (Spivack, 51-2) The Karhidans accept that "Light is the left hand of darkness" and for there to be one, there must be the other.

Contrastingly, the Orgotans possess a view that lacks this duality of opposites. They are committed to the proposition that truth comes only from the light, thereby denying the wholeness of life. This leaves them quite capable of political treachery and impersonal cruelty, the darkness they refuse to admit and which Genly is cast into. (Spivack, 52) As Hayles points out in his essay "Androgyny, Ambivalence, and Assimilation in The Left Hand of Darkness," "In Orgoreyn, darkness is a source not of strength but horror." (102)

Similarly LeGuin breaks things down into two different political and thought systems in The Dispossessed. Anarres is a dry, barren world which had been set up as an anarchistic Utopia, while Urras is meant to be seen as an extension of our world. There are three primary continents: a capitalistic one, a communistic one, and a "third world" nation that is the scene of constant meddling and military

interventions on the part of both superpowers. (Slusser, 48)

LeGuin's dialectic here is between the people of Anarres and the people of the capitalistic state of Io-A on Urras. (Shevek, the Anarrestian physicist who comes to Urras rejects the communistic continent because their totalitarian system of government is profoundly opposed by Anarrestian belief in freedom as a basic principle.) While both cultures believe in freedom, in fact both are founded on a demand for freedom; for Urreans, it is freedom to acquire and possess, for the Anarrestian, it is freedom to fulfill oneself in work and life. To someone from Urras, freedom means "survival of the fittest" (Slusser, 51), while to someone from Anarres it means the freedom to choose to help one another through mutual aid.

LeGuin postulates that there are two drives behind mankind as a social animal--the will to mutual aid and the will to dominance. (Smith, 86) LeGuin recognizes that the true anarchist must always be on his guard against the aggressive and authoritarian aspects of mankind's nature.

Her main character in The Dispossessed, Shevek, has been trained from birth in the philosophy of Odo (from the Greek word for path, just as Tao is the Chinese word for path) whose philosophy is a combination of anarchy and Taoism. Through Shevek's eyes, we come to see the limitations of both societies.

Their fundamental difference lies in the concept of property. The Anarrestian are the "dispossessed," that is, they have no property and must share everything in common. Anarres has "no government, no law, no class distinction, no large cities, and no money." (Spivack, 79) On the other hand, the goal of social harmony creates problems for the individual as interest in personal achievement is discouraged. As a result, an exceptional individual like Shevek finds little support to further his work in physics. When a food crisis hits Anarres, he is forced to work in the field along with everyone else. There is no social support system to nurture the individual and societal focus is on conformity. (Spivack, 79-80)

Additionally, Shevek is plagued by the jealousy of Sabul, who is given control over him and will only allow his papers to be published if he is listed as co-author. Sabul knows how to play the public opinion game and has an unacknowledged will to "ego-ize." Shevek knows that Odo intended her anarchistic society to be open to constant change and perceives the dangers of being hemmed in by "laws of conventional behavior" and by a burgeoning bureaucracy. (Spivack, 80 and Slusser, 51)

As Philip E. Smith II emphasizes in his essay, "Unbuilding Walls: Human Nature and the Nature of Evolutionary and Political Theory in The Dispos-

essed," LeGuin constantly returns to the imagery of the walls society creates and how individuals have to knock them down. The book begins with a description of a wall designed to keep the space-ships from Anarres from infecting Urrean society, but the Urreans don't acknowledge that a wall has two sides--it is also keeping Anarrestian society hemmed in. (87-96) Shevek learns how he must knock down those walls when he ignores social pressure to take the trip to Urras and see things for himself first hand.

Initially, Shevek sees the good side of Urras, where an individual can receive special attention and get ahead. Urras is a rich world with plentiful resources. His preconceptions of it are shattered and he is temporarily lulled into a state of acceptance. But then he realizes that he is not being shown all of the world or Urras and so strikes out on his own to discover the world's underclass who live lives of unfulfilling drudgery that makes the upper class position possible. Shevek suddenly perceives that the Urreans fear him because he embodies a dangerous concept, that of workable anarchism, and that he has thus far failed to communicate his Odonian ideals to the people of Urras, which he does at a miners' strike which results in his seeking refuge in the Terran ambassador's consulate. (In this future, LeGuin postulates that Terra or Earth has had an ecological disaster that Urras has somehow avoided, so that the Terrans perceive Urras as some kind of paradise and are perplexed when Shevek comes to regard it as intolerable.)

By coming to Urras, Shevek is able to give up the false ideal of certainty and, through exposure to the attempts at a Unified Field Theory by a Terran scientist (Einstein), he succeeds in creating his General Temporal Theory, which allows for the creation of the ansible, a device which can send messages instantaneously anywhere in the galaxy. As Slusser points out, "It is Shevek's ultimate acceptance of both worlds, rather than a choice between them or denial of both, which permits him to see the pattern, to complete his theory, and opt for Anarres." (53)

Thus, while LeGuin gives us carefully defined dualities, her ultimate message is one of synthesis, of recognizing and accepting opposites to achieve a balance and a better life. Shevek sees that the Urreans' problem is that they "do not believe in change, in chance, in evolution. You would destroy us rather than admit our reality, rather than admit that there is hope! We cannot come to you. We can only wait for you to come to us." (TD, Chapter XI)

Over and over again, LeGuin has emphasized acceptance, communication, love, and trust. It is important to see things as they really are and not

to ignore unpleasant problems. Shevek sees that while Anarres might put him at a disadvantage in furthering the frontiers of knowledge, its system is better for the majority of people in a way that the Urrean system isn't.

However, if he fails in his goal to bring Urras and Anarres together, he does at least open up the possibility of real communication between the two societies. He also transmits his discovery so that everyone can benefit from it, rather than letting one side use it as a weapon against others. As Smith points out, "Shevek learns that he must recognize and accept, as related aspects of life, his own personal creativity and responsibility for social action" (95), breaking down the wall that represents the growing stultification of Anarresti society. Shevek believes in a common ground, a brotherhood of mankind, based on the universally experienced phenomenon of pain, and the hope that mankind might be driven to mutually aid itself as the best approach to alleviating that pain.

So too, Tenar experiences pain when she takes on the burden of freedom and commits to loving Ged, uniting the two halves of the ring of Erreth-Akbe which becomes a symbolic wedding ring. She makes the difficult choice of leaving Atuan for the more healthful climes of Havnor. As Esmonde points out,

"When Tenar asks Ged if he will stay with her when they reach Havnor, and he promises to do so only so long as she needs him, her love for him quickly turns to feelings of betrayal and abandonment. He has made her afraid, and she wants to punish him for it. In short, she cannot yet accept the full responsibility for her actions. For the last time, Tenar faces the choice between death and life [S]he chooses life--with all its uncertainty and pain." (26-7)

The key here is that Tenar is aware that life holds uncertainty, difficulties, and change, and that to deal with it successfully, she must fully accept herself. Finally she is able to progress from darkness and guilt to freedom and light, making her own choices and being Ged's equal rather than remaining in bondage to a useless role.

Genly Ai makes the break-through when Estraven helps him to escape the prison in Orgoreyn and takes him on a perilous journey across a glacier. As the pair struggle together, Genly learns to accept Estraven as another person regardless of his sexuality. Genly realizes with regard to Estraven that:

...I had rejected him, refused him his own reality. He has been quite right to say that he, the only person on Gethen who trusted me,

was the only Gethen I distrusted. For he was the only one to accept me as a human being: who had liked me personally and given me entire personal loyalty: and who had therefore demanded of me an equal degree of recognition and acceptance. I had not been willing to give it. I had not wanted to give my trust, my friendship to a man who was a woman, a woman who was a man. (LHD, Chapter 18)

Many commentators have noted that Genly's last name could be interpreted as either "I" or "eye," that is, someone who separates into "I and Thou" or "eye" as in the viewpoint from which the story is told. (cf. Slusser, 27-8; Spivack, 58-9) But it can also be interpreted as "aiee," a cry of pain, which is indicated when Estraven tells him that the only truthful thing about Ai is his name.

That they have shared a pain and struggles together has caused this pair to accept each other and respect each other. Genly Ai comes to realize that he cannot solve the problem of bringing the Gethenians into the Ekuman on a planetary level, but must relate to them on an individual level, that he must "let Gethen come to him." (Brigg, 49) It is only when he is isolated, as Tenar was in her underground labyrinth and Shevek was on Urras, that he can perceive the split that separates the halves and shores them up.

The isolation gives these characters perspectives as individuals, and once they have grown to know who they are, they can then cooperate with others and achieve understanding. The Left Hand of Darkness has the most tragic ending. While Tenar must permanently leave her world behind to go off with Ged, she at least realizes the possibilities of true fulfillment rather than living by ritual and rote; and while Shevek fails to bring the separated Anarresti and Urreans together, having at last come to full knowledge, he can return to his loved one Takver whom he has had to leave behind to complete his physical and psychological journey; Left Hand of Darkness ends with Estraven sacrificing himself to bring the worlds of the Ekumen and Gethen together. Genly's emotional barriers have been stripped away and he is truly a part of Gethen. However, the reader must then question whether the goal was worth the cost, but clearly to Estraven it was, who ironically sees the need for contact more sharply than Genly himself does.

The ultimate goal of the binary worlds of Ursula K. LeGuin is one of synthesis, of acceptance, of love, of communication, of lives lived in freedom and in balance with nature and other beings around them. When cultures refuse to acknowledge opposites, the result is unbalanced lives, evil and decay. If one refuses to see both the yin and the yang of things, what is ignored becomes the driving

force that makes the choices. Instead, LeGuin insists on the primacy of the individual who must acknowledge the possibilities and is ultimately the one responsible for making choices. Tenar must choose to live freely and accept Ged as he is; Genly Ai must choose to accept Estraven as a fellow human creature despite his obvious otherness; Shevek must accept that Odo was right when she said that "revolution was an on-going process" and so continue to revolt against those aspects of society which would set up walls to block otherness out.

LeGuin's appeal lies in that she is willing to deal with fundamental conflicts which cannot always be resolved neatly but which can always be better understood, especially when presented from a fresh perspective such as the ones which writing in fantasy or science fiction allow her. Her characters experience contrasts between light and shadow, good and evil, male and female, capitalist and anarchist, freedom and repression, the familiar and the unfamiliar, the ego and the superego, the individual and society, being and non-being, mutual aid and dominance, Social Darwinism and cooperation, pain and pleasure, the inner self (often referred to as the tur name) and the outer self (societal role), and ultimately life and death. LeGuin postulates in her fiction that recognition of both halves are essential for maturation and culminate in self-integration. As such, her works represent powerful myths that speak to our times.

LeGuin uses her binary structure to present in a sustained allegory the conflicting forces or modes of thought which can influence an individual and how these forces, both positive and negative, can teach him or her about what is essential and important in life. Her work is influenced and somewhat patterned after the "allegory of ideas" form of such fantasists as Spenser (Faerie Queen) and Bunyan (Pilgrim's Progress) but with a crucial difference: LeGuin is equally concerned with creating fully-developed characters after the patterns of modern fiction while allegorists such as Bunyan and Spenser used characters only as stick figures to serve as Everymen who are instructed by the representational figures that they meet.

Love is an important theme in LeGuin's work and labors to resolve the conflicts that she presents. Paradoxically, it is in loving and giving herself to Ged that Tenar finds her freedom, along with the knowledge that love brings with it uncertainty. It is Genly Ai's love for Estraven which allows him finally to overcome his prejudice and accept the alien Gethenians, thereby enabling him to succeed in his ethnographic mission on behalf of the Ekumen. Finally, for Shevek, it is not only love for Takver but for all mankind that inspires him to try to bring the positive message of Odonian philosophy (i.e., all men are brothers and should help each

other; possessions make prisoners of the owners) to other cultures (the on-going revolution) as well as seeing the need to keep it alive in his own culture where it is being threatened by the burgeoning bureaucracy, which is changing the Anarresti anarchy into a form of communism, and by a social reluctance to break taboos that are becoming entrenched in the social fabric.

In a very obvious sense, The Tombs of Atuan and The Left Hand of Darkness are allegories about the difficulties men and women have in relating to each other, the difficulty of not accepting diversity and differences, and in not being confined to roles that are rigidly defined by social and other expectations. All of LeGuin's works have a deeply religious level related to living in harmony with nature and one's self based on Taoist philosophy. It is apparent that LeGuin is a mystic and believes that acceptance of one's "shadow self" is vital to individuation, to live in natural balance. Finally much of her work carries an obvious political level as well. She is opposed to any social system which emphasizes the whole at the expense of the individual, seeing them as repressive and out-of-balance. If The Dispossessed's Anarresti society is taken as an ideal, she seems to be in favor of an organized anarchic society where everyone is free-including being free to starve if they do not work. She is obviously influenced by Kropotkin's ideas (cf. Mutual Aid), but realizes that given the propensities of human beings, certain safeguards must be maintained so that the social revolution is an ongoing one and does not become mired down in the limitations of current social conventions.

Her basic message is one favoring knowledge of all aspects of a particular question and acceptance of same. Opposites must by definition deal with the same subject and therefore have a point at which they meet--a balancing of yin and yang so-to-speak. LeGuin's fiction allegorically counsels that that point of equilibrium must be found and maintained, despite the burden it presents, to live a free and fulfilling life. It is a message which any reader in the 20th century with all its difficulties and paradoxes and searches for fulfillment can relate to, and LeGuin's dialectical raising and resolving these dualities gives her works special significance and interest. While entertaining, it is this thoughtfulness in her works which make them particularly linger on in our memories and make the re-reading and mulling over the moral questions that LeGuin raises an especially rewarding experience.

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Everyday places and happenings can be the makings of a story. It all depends on the point of view...

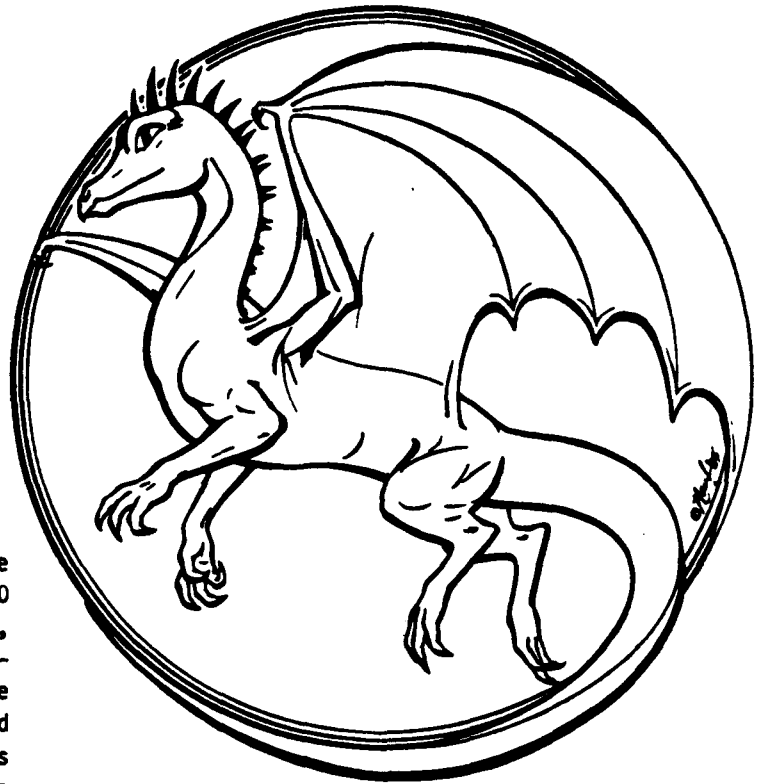
Magic Caves

by Dave Yoder

What, if any, potential for entertainment can be found in some bare trees, a mixed flock of about 50 to 60 birds, a large brush pile, two bare gardens, and a couple of run-down barns? The trees are pretty uninteresting, the naked branches not even able to create that delicate tracery so often associated with them against the grey winter sky which serves as a backdrop to this whole scene. Such diversion as they are able to provide is completely dependent on their passive role as perching areas for all those birds.

As for the birds, they're a pretty ordinary bunch today. This crowd would be all right on a bright, sunny day with a fresh, thick layer of snow --or even without the sun--but all there is at the moment is yellowing grass and a lot of dead leaves all partially covered by a slowly growing coat of soggy seed hulls. Of course, on a snowy day there would be a much greater variety--more color, more action, more noise--and the sun could not help but improve the shabby appearance of even this unpretentious bunch. The few titmice and their antics can't quite offset the dreary conventionality that surrounds them (except for that one fellow who, for some reason, is trying to cope with a peanut). On a good day the squabbling of the finches provides a fair amount of amusement but under the circumstances it's merely annoying, sort of like static or people talking in a library.

The gardens are another one of those sights which would be enormously improved by being covered with snow. Under those circumstances the only evidence of their existence is a few bare twigs projecting their fragile lengths through the snow and often adorned by birds who have chosen this right-angled perch for one of those odd birdie reasons like that which sends them whooshing off in large flocks for no discernable reason. As it is they are areas of brown, matted vegetation mocking their glory of the summer and abundance of the fall. Come spring the sight of the early risers poking their heads through this mess will be the cause of re-



joicing but right now it is the middle of January and spring is a very long way off--spiritually, if not by the calendar.

The brush pile is a fairly recent addition to this scene, being the remains of an immense old apple tree that had to be cut down before it fell down (a shame nonetheless) and a couple of years worth of scrub that had grown up at the back of the yard and finally got large enough to be a nuisance. It has the advantage of being something new and different but is not in convenient line of sight and is far enough away that binoculars are required for inspection close enough to reveal interesting detail. However, it does have its uses, such as providing a staging area for flocks of birds entering and leaving the more open or exposed parts of the yard and hiding the rather unattractive modular home that sits along the highway just beyond this property. Come summer, 'something is going to have to be done' since it is a bit unsightly and piled up against the older barn thus presenting an even greater fire hazard than either of them separately. Fire is not, under the circumstances, all that great a threat (except to the aforementioned modular eyesore) but it could get very annoying as the well is located just where the putative fire would most likely break out; the well would probably be safe inside its concrete enclosure but if something happened--what a bitch.

[Speaking of which, there's one missing from the prospect. Lucy died yesterday night. Her shaggy, lean, tan form will no longer be seen rolling and lazing in front of her doghouse. The small hours of

the morning are no longer going to be split with her shrill voice warning of the approach of a strange person or rabbit. While her daughter, Rickie, carries on, her overabundance of youthful enthusiasm and energy is poor substitute for the dignity and pride with which her mother carried out her duties: looking after the neighborhood and its children.]

So this leaves a couple of ramshackled old barns or, rather, one ramshackled and one merely dilapidated) to serve as grist for the mill. As these structures have been here for some time they ought to be able to muster enough history to provide some flights of fancy. Unfortunately, they look a lot just like a couple of old barns. Given the right conditions they can appear haunted, or mysterious, or even beautiful, but generally speaking they're these hulks, one skeletal, one dumpy, and neither completely whole. Two remnants of another age they sit, their days of being needed or useful so far in the past that only the oldest inhabitants of the village remember them, and time heavy on their sagging timbers. They are waiting out the balance of their years like an old couple who have managed to salvage neither fortune nor dignity from the past and fade into their waning time as pathetic targets of ridicule and gossip.

And yet...

It might be well to remember that these are often the people credited with the ability to curse, or cast the evil eye, or, in this area, with the power to hex or pow-wow for good or ill. And that, while 90+% of these claims are nonsense, some of it is true.

You see...

There are dragons out there in the yard, sitting high on their perches, eyes hooded, red and yellow and black and gold, awaiting the opportunity for the next mad rush through the countryside. When the snow lies fresh on the ground their tracks can be seen crisscrossing the walks and backlots and it is often possible to hear them roar going down the village street at night. They've made their den in the barn and reside ther with the divers and other strange and eldritch beasts and a steadily growing hoard of items beautiful and bizarre, worthless and wonderful. Magical and fearsome, the great creatures and their human familiars terrorize or sustain, bedevil or aid (according to their whim), the local population.

Many a hero has gone out to do battle as they parade their menacing presence and sound their challenges in that peculiar voice which is half growl, half whine, but none has yet found success in this perilous venture. It has been known to happen that, by approaching through those Men who ally

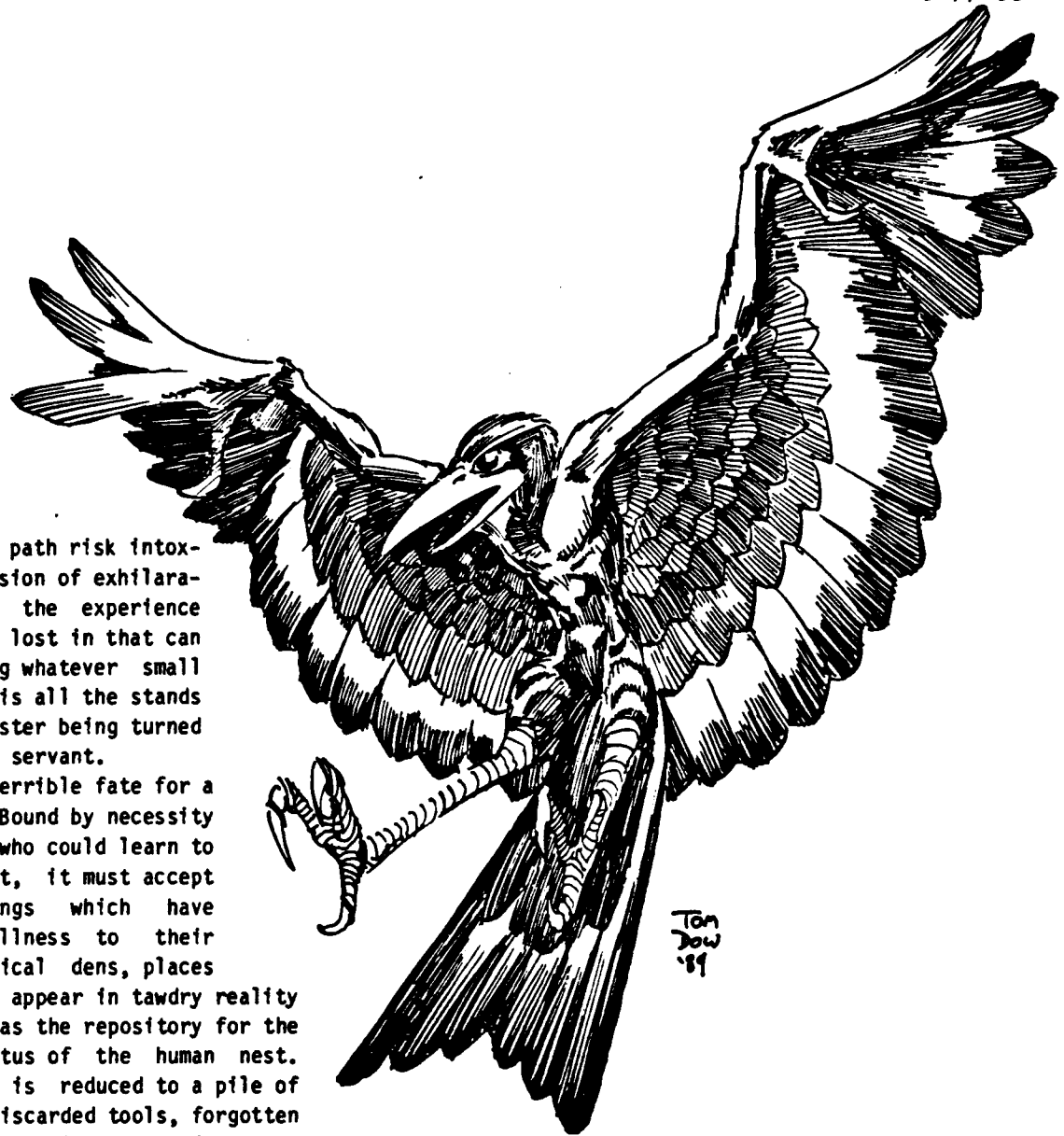
themselves with these dark powers, some of the worst of the excesses of behavior can be temporarily curtailed, but they soon return to their ancient habits. Those who reside in this area--both human and otherwise--have reached a truce; while often startled or annoyed, people have no more fear and have reached that level of acceptance where even awe begins to fade.

As the fear and awe decrease, so does the sense of magic which surrounds the dragons and they appear more and more to be just pests, like squirrels or skunks, creatures to be driven from the presence of man. While this stage has not yet been reached, it seems only a matter of time and it is likely that only the limited service they can be broken to provide has long delayed their being put out. Soon they will be driven into the hills to join their summer cousins, less fearsome but more dangerous, and only their cries echoing from the hillsides will remain, or an occasional wistful approach to the village raising the memories of the days when they stalked where they would and did not cower from civilization.

Their great weakness is that they need us. Without their human familiars they are unable to be fully alive and will sicken and die within a very few years when deprived of this attention. So they suffer themselves to be ridden and allow themselves to be constrained to provide service to those weaker beings upon whom, to their shame, they depend.

Their power is that they appeal to the beast in man. Astride one of these powerful backs, exercising a minimal control is a heady experience for a creature who, dismounted, is more apt to be prey.





Those who follow that path risk intoxication from the passion of exhilaration and thrill that the experience engenders. Becoming lost in that can quickly lead to losing whatever small control it is which is all that stands in the way of the master being turned upon by the resentful servant.

It is a sad and terrible fate for a creature of power. Bound by necessity to the one species who could learn to despise and enslave it, it must accept residence in buildings which have passed beyond usefulness to their builders. Those mystical dens, places of wonders and magic, appear in tawdry reality as hulks which serve as the repository for the great or greasy detritus of the human nest. The fabulous hoard is reduced to a pile of broken bicycles and discarded tools, forgotten and rusting away in the silence of a forgotten place. The magnificence legendary to it all is coated, to human eyes, with a layer of oil and grime that denies any value.

And herein lies cunning of these most crafty of all fabled creatures. Man, bound to the earth and a creature of reality, is blind to the illusion woven by entities which may be bound to him but who have their greater being on a plane unknown and unknowable to him. Whence came the tales of the glittering lairs and treasures and the fearsome beauty of the dragon himself but from the perception of some person bemused to a hazing of the distinction between the worlds who stumbled into stable or shed or storehouse and caught a glimpse of that other world? The very nature of their incursion into our lives misleads our conception of what they are. How could we conceive of something so used as being in many ways an equal or even superior?

Housed in conditions which most of man's servants would find insulting at least, and intolerable most probably, these creatures are safely cam-

ouflaged. In the privacy of these retreats they can amass their hoards and dream those mystic waking dreams which are their greater truth. Shut away for the greater part of the year from the sight and mind of even those men with whom they regularly associate, it is possible to put aside the memory of those humiliations which nature requires of them. Barred for that time from our world they roam their own, twitching and rumbling in their seeming sleep as a hound will when chasing rabbits in its dreams.

So the barns I looked to for mystery contain instead magic. Perhaps this is why, despite the toll of years, they stand, seeming frail yet strangely solid. The unexpected residents appear, revealed as in a mist to one who will gaze and dream, disassociated with that commonality of human thought which denies their existence. A treasure trove I expected --but of curiosities, not of wonders.]*

Happy 50th Anniversary, Arkham House

A personal account by Ben P. Indick

This account is a little late seeing publication, but a Golden Anniversary is still Fifty Years of accomplishment. Besides, this fits in well with my last rounds of Special Issues---late. Here's to fifty more years of Arkham House.

Back in 1941 I left the easy comfort of high school and entered college, not as easy, I was to learn--the hard way. (But that is something else.) One thing new to me was buying hardcover textbooks. In the past I had to think twice before springing a nickel or a dime for a coverless pulp at back issue stores (dear forgotten places, fragrant with old paper). Stuck with dull texts, I also found time for my first fiction hardcover purchase, not a bad one: The Outsider and Others. I could only wish I had shown such excellent business acumen all my life, but it really was only chance.

My favorite pulp magazine then and for all time was Famous Fantastic Mysteries, which reprinted stories from Argosy and other Munsey magazines. I fell in love with already old classics by A. Merritt and Austin Hall. One issue, however, featured a reprint of a story not from a Munsey source by from Weird Tales, which was then still a very viable magazine, a shadow of its greatness, but still publishing regularly. The story, superbly illustrated by Virgil Finley, was "The Colour Out of Space" by an author I did not know (being too timid to read WT), H.P. Lovecraft. And the issue contained as well an advertisement for a volume that offered more stories by "the late, great" author. August Derleth, co-founder with Donald Wandrei in 1939 of the fledgling Arkham House, had of course gotten the story printed to help sales of his omnibus edition, which, even at \$5.00 a copy--\$3.50 prepublication--was moving its copies very slowly.

I loved the story--I still do, and think it the best extraterrestrial science fiction story to date --and after much deliberation and delay, even obtaining a brochure from Arkham House, sent my \$5.00. In due time I received the copy, which began a lifelong association with House, publisher and that remarkable author. (There was a lengthy period when I dropped out of fantasy, but otherwise, it has been a continuing relationship.) Although the initial purpose of Arkham House had been to put the writings of Lovecraft into print, Derleth began to conceive of it in larger terms. When he printed his own stories in Someone in the Dark, then Clark Ash-

ton Smith's Out of Space and Time, and a second omnibus HPL volume, I was happy to order them as well. Military service brought my book buying to an end, but I carried my Outsider with me through basic camps, and only left it at home when I went overseas.

After the war I returned to college, still not knowing what I wanted, but certain I did want Arkham House books. I discovered that one could buy the books at 40% off by ordering five copies at a time. I had to promise Augie that I would only sell them at retail, but, alas, I lied. I had gotten together a few guys and bought for all of us. I never admitted my perfidy to him, but he perhaps realized, and forgave.

I had missed several titles, but did not care. Completism was hardly in my mind. Then, as I indicated above, early in the 1950s I lost interest in fantasy/SF. I liked my old favorites but sought no new ones. I did not return for fifteen years, during which time Arkham kept putting out its books, then, as now, perhaps three or four titles a year, more in its middle years. I returned in the late 60s, impelled first by the stunning effect of Tolkien, and then by a stay in the hospital for a heart attack, during which Augie sent me as a gift the first volume of H.P. Lovecraft's letters. The love of those early years surged over me and I was to be permanently hooked.

I looked over my shelf of Arkham House titles, perhaps 2/3 complete at that time, and began taking steps to fill it in, although I had given up my "dealer" buying. I discovered that certain titles

would not be easy--or cheap. However, in time, I completed the run. For this, I have a good friend to thank, who sacrificed to me his fine copies of A Hornbook for Witches, The Shunned House, and Jumbee for a mere \$1100. I was offered more for them then, so I did not resent him making a decent market value, although I believe he had always been annoyed that I failed to grant him the pleasure of a great killing. Well, he did not do badly. He bought them at list! I have, of course, continued to buy each

Arkham House book as it appeared, directly from the House, as Derleth used to plead with his readers to do, a tradition maintained by the present editor. The set occupies many shelves now. I love each book, although I must admit many remain unread.

It is a long time since The Outsider, with its enormous word count, at \$5, the almost dainty Someone in the Dark, at \$2, and numerous regular editions at \$3 a copy. Not for many years did Derleth gradually increase prices, and he would probably envy the present and very capable editor, Jim Turner, who has not hesitated to tack on prices in high double digits. Augie ran it as a hobby, poured his own funds into it, issued fine and scholarly magazines until they cost him too dearly to continue, jealously guarded his firm's name and gave to fantasy the single greatest publisher it has ever had or conceivably ever will have. Under his aegis, forgotten authors from the pages of Weird Tales, some of them old friends of his, received first appearances in hardcover books, beautifully written tales saved from oblivion. Not only Lovecraft, whose climb to eminence might never have occurred without the zealous attention given him by Derleth, but such splendid craftsmen as Carl Jacobi, Henry Whitehead, Donald Wandrei, Frank Long, and more. Ray Bradbury, Ramsey Campbell, and Brian Lumley are a few of the writers later to achieve fame who were first published in book form from Arkham House.

Furthermore, he brought to his readers' attention some of the finest classic ghost and weird story writers from England, including H. Russell Whitehead, L.P. Hartley, and William Hope Hodgson. He issued anthologies of original stories, but Arkham House itself was an anthology, of all the great writers of supernatural and horror fiction. The volumes were well crafted, and their limited edition number, type of paper and binding cloth were carefully detailed in colophons.

Derleth edited a number of science fiction anthologies for other publishers, but his heart really was not in that field, and Arkham House published little SF. However, it was the first publisher of A. E. Van Vogt's classic Slan, and the collections of Donald Wandrei and Frank Long had some excellent SF. He somewhat reluctantly issued an omnibus of Robert E. Howard, disliking the bloody content, and regularly promised an omnibus of A. Merritt's fantasies, but, like SF, fantasy was not his metier, and little straight fantasy would appear under the imprint of the quivering house, the logo he adopted, perhaps in parody of the Random House logo, yet distinctive in itself.

With Derleth's death, it appeared very likely that the House would go on. However, under the editorship of James Turner, it has not only continued but prospered. Turner has paid some attention to the House's past, and has reissued the necessary

collections of Lovecraft stories, but carefully corrected to original sources by S.T. Joshi. He also edited the final two volumes of Lovecraft letters, with more candour, not excising sections less acceptable today, such as his racism. The most obviously new style in Arkham House under Turner has been the attention to science fiction, which now perhaps forms the majority of the titles he has issued. The books themselves no longer carry the familiar colophons, and limitation numbers appear to be a deep secret; one trusts that somewhere in a corner of his desk Jim has a list. New books are now nearly all handsomely illustrated, in a contemporary manner, and, something Derleth would surely have marveled at, tend to sell out quickly, sometimes going into second printings.

The House has not been without problems. For all that Derleth did for the name of Lovecraft, some of his actions were less noble. He was convinced he alone had executor title to all the writings, edited them sometimes carelessly and without proper insight, and restrained the research which would blossom later. Prior to his death, the co-founder, Donald Wandrei, bitter that he had been squeezed out of the company during his absence in World War II service, carried on a years-long campaign, railing in self-published broadsides against this alleged injustice. For admirers of this fine writer and gentleman as well as Derleth and the company, the altercation was especially unfortunate. His death closed the final page. There have been forgeries of Arkham House books, for one of which, Someone in the Dark, Derleth may at the least have shared responsibility.

Arkham House goes quietly into its second half-century, continuing to publish books of acknowledged quality. Something of the old fun of pulp stories from Weird Tales is gone now, but in general the best of that source has already seen reprinting. In concentrating on presenting the best of current writers, Arkham House continues to function in its self-created tradition.

Bravo and long life!

Ben Indick[*]



Mike has appeared in these pages before with tales of his travels in Africa. Here is his latest trip.

Illustrated by Diana Harlan Stein

Between the Sunlight and the Thunder

by Mike Resnick

August 28, 1990: Between the bright sunlight of East Africa's safari countries, and the ominous thunder coming out of the Republic of South Africa, there exist four nations: Zimbabwe, Mozambique, Malawi, and Botswana. We had originally hoped to visit all four on this extended safari, but Mozambique is in the throes of a brutal civil war, so we confined ourselves to the other three countries, where I would be researching Purgatory and Ophir, a pair of novels I'll be writing in the next couple of years, and hopefully coming up with some more ideas.

This was a unique safari for us, in that we did not arrange to go with a single guide, as we always do in Kenya, nor did we care to join a package tour. Instead, we made a list of all the locations we wanted to see in all three countries, then hunted up a travel agency (we found it, finally, in York, England) that was able to arrange our itinerary.

The first step, as always, was the 8-hour flight to London, during which time I did my best not to feel bitter over losing the Hugo after leading for the first five ballots. I didn't quite pull it off.

August 29, 1990: We landed at Gatwick at seven in the morning, took a bus to Heathrow after clearing customs, and waited around the airport for almost 12 hours for our 10-hour flight to Zimbabwe to take off. I love Africa; it's the process of getting there that I hate.

August 30, 1990: We landed in Harare (formerly Salisbury), the capital of Zimbabwe (formerly Rhodesia), and dragged our exhausted (formerly energetic) bodies to Meikles Hotel, a large, luxury hotel in the

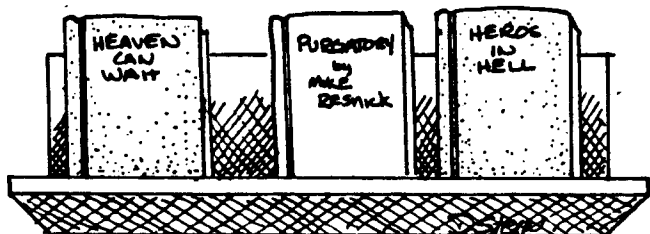
city center right across from Cecil Square. While Carol took a nap, I went out walking, and found that there is an enormous difference between Harare and its Kenyan counterpart, Nairobi. One gets the feeling that if the tourist industry vanished, 98% of the people you see in Nairobi would find themselves out of work; whereas if it vanished from Harare, no one would know the difference. Which is a roundabout way of saying that Harare is a working city, with very little to interest the casual tourist.

In fact, we soon came to realize that Zimbabwe is a working country. President Robert Mugabe continually gives lip service to communism, but it's a capitalist country from top to bottom...and unlike most African countries, it works. The roads are all paved, the electricity works around the clock, the water is safe to drink, there are schools every couple of miles throughout the countryside, poachers have made almost no inroads in most of the game parks, and unemployment doesn't seem to be much of a problem. In fact, I would say that Zimbabwe is as well-developed, and runs as smoothly, as most Eastern European nations. I realize that doesn't sound like much, but when you compare it to Kenya or Tanzania or Zambia, it's a quantum leap forward.

I signed copies of Ivory and Paradise in a local bookstore, then returned to Meikles and changed for dinner. We ate at the Bagatelle, a 5-star dining room in the hotel, where, in a delightful twist, the proprietors were black and the piano player was white.

August 31: When I checked out in the morning, I presented Meikles with a paid voucher -- which they refused to accept. Evidently they had been paid in Zimbabwean dollars, and because the country is so starved for hard currency, they have a law stating that all foreign travelers must pay in their own currency. So I very begrudgingly paid for my room for a second time, and made a mental note to bill the travel agency.

We had decided to begin our safari in Botswana (formerly Bechuanaland)...but, because we would be flying around the country in 5-seaters with severe weight limitations, we first flew to the Victoria



Falls Hotel, where we left some of our luggage. The hotel itself is an old colonial structure that reminded me of some of the better British hotels in the Brighton area.

We had seen a sign in the Victoria Falls airport telling us that we must report at least an hour early for international flights or run the risk of having our seats sold. Our flight to Botswana was due to leave at 2:30 in the afternoon, and the bus from the hotel didn't leave until 1:30. A number of people who were taking the flight panicked, and began offering up to \$100 to anyone who would drive them to the airport and get them there by 1:30. Since the flight is scheduled three times a week, we figured that the hotel hadn't received any complaints about it, and waited for the bus. It got us there at about 2:00, and the Botswana plane didn't show up for another two hours (par for the course, the flight attendant later admitted.)

The flight to Maun, Botswana took perhaps an hour, and shortly thereafter we were ensconced in Riley's Hotel, which has a long and colorful history from colonial times, but has become a rather dull hostelry in the middle of a rather dull town.

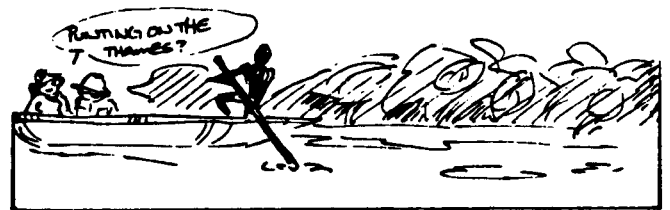


September 1: When I stopped by the desk to hand in my voucher, they announced that they had no record of a previous payment, and I would have to pay for the room. At this point I hit the roof, FAXed the travel agency in York, and raised bloody hell. They assured me that we would have no further problems with our vouchers, and they were right (which is not to say that we had no further problems in other areas.)

We went to the airport -- Maun consists of nothing but the airport, three gift shops, a few houses, a few huts, and Riley's -- and took our chartered 5-seater to Jedibe Island Camp, in the heart of the Okavango Delta, where, after more than 4 days, we finally stopped traveling and started vacationing.

Jedibe is a small island, with ten tents, two ablution blocks (a euphemism for bathrooms, which consist of a toilet and a shower, surrounded by a rather shakey reed fence and no roof), a bar, and a dining tent. It's run by Tony and Pam, a second-generation Kenyan and Zambian, respectively, who migrated down to Okavango when their own countries got too civilized, and there was only one other guest there when we arrived.

If there is a better way to decompress after a long trip than riding in a mokoro, I don't know what it is. The mokoro is a dugout canoe, and while you sit up front and watch the Okavango go by, a strong young man



stands at the back and poles you along. We went out in mokoros in mid-morning, and stayed out until dinnertime. Carol, the bird expert in the family, tells me it was the best single day of bird-watching she's ever experienced.

The Okavango Delta is some 1,600 square miles of swamp, with about 200,000 miles of very narrow, winding channels. By the time we were twenty minutes out from camp, I figured that, left to my own devices, I might, with luck, be able to find my way back in something less than eight months...yet our polers always seemed to know exactly where they were, and you got the feeling you could set them down anywhere in the Okavango and they'd be able to find their way home with no problem. I remarked about that to Pam, who agreed that they were death and taxes in the Okavango, but added that three of them went to Johannesburg for Christmas and got hopelessly lost in half an hour.

September 2: We went out on a powerboat in order to see more of the swamp (mokoros are many things, but fast isn't one of them), packed a box lunch which we ate on a totally uninhabited island, and returned to camp in time to meet Franco and Masimo, a pair of Italians who work for Mondedori, my Italian publisher, and were making a documentary film about the Okavango. Masimo, a perfectionist, had wanted an overhead shot of the Delta, and refused to photograph it through the window of the plane...so they opened the door and he and his camera hung out, upside down, while Franco held onto his feet. The result: exceptional footage and an exceptional inner-ear infection.

They also wanted footage of a fish eagle swooping down and snaring a fish out of the water. Tony had trained a local fish eagle to do just that when baited, and we went along while the fish eagle went through his paces about a dozen times and we all got some fabulous footage.

That night I went to the ablution block at about midnight. While I was there, a hippo came out of the swamp and began rubbing his sides against the reed wall. Hippos have killed more tourists in Africa during the past quarter century than any other animal, and the reason is simple: they panic when they are cut off from water...and



the very best time to photograph a hippo is when he goes inland to eat, as otherwise all you're likely to see are his eyes, ears, and nostrils. (They stay in the water to protect their sensitive skins from the sun all day, but at night they leave the water and consume up to 300 pounds of vegetation.) Stand between a hippo and water and his first inclination is to run through -- not around -- you to get back to the safety of his pond or river.

Now, Jedibe is a very small island, perhaps 300 yards in diameter. So I reasoned it out and concluded that if I left the ablution block, all the hippo had to do was turn around and he could make a beeline to the water. Then I got to thinking, and decided that if he was an exceptionally stupid hippo, then no matter where I stood, he would conclude that I was between him and the water (and in a way, he'd be right). So I stayed another half hour until he went away, and promptly bumped into a bushbuck on the way back to the tent. Bushbucks are much more intelligent than hippos; he took one look and me and ran like hell.

September 3: Our bush pilot, Lee, picked us up in mid-morning and flew us to Tsaro Lodge in the Moremi Reserve. (Pam remarked that Lee had stuck it out much longer than most bush pilots -- something like seven years now -- because he liked the social life in Maun. I am still mulling over this remark, because to my way of thinking, Maun is the kind of place you leave in order to have a social life. Oh, well...)

Tsaro is a luxurious camp nestled on the Khwai River, composed of eight large, spotlessly-clean chalets, each equipped with beds, chairs, couches, fireplaces, tiled bathrooms, and electricity -- all rarities in the bush. The current manager, Jack, used to be a game warden in Zimbabwe, and I gather the place has undergone massive renovations since he arrived. There were three couples from Cape Town there when we arrived, and they turned out to be the friendliest and most interesting people we met on the entire safari; in fact, when we go to South Africa, which we plan to do in a couple of years, each of them has insisted that we stay with them and let them show us around.

We took a game run (a three-hour drive through the reserve in a 4-wheel-drive vehicle) in the afternoon, and were actually charged by an irate cow elephant, a hell of an exciting ten seconds that I managed to capture on videotape.

September 4: After a morning game run, Carol and I and two of our Cape Town friends decided to take a walk through the hunting concession that borders the reserve. We saw some birds, and a herd of red lewche, and some bushbuck -- and then we walked around a heavy stand of trees and damned near bumped into a lone elephant. It's difficult to say who was more surprised; it is not difficult to say who retreated more rapidly.

A German couple showed up in late afternoon. It turns out that this was their 25th wedding anniversary, and they had brought along champagne for the whole camp. It's amazing what you can have in the bush if your timing is right.

September 5: We took a morning game run, then got picked up by our social lion pilot and flown to the Linyanti Channel, where we were met and driven to Linyanti Camp, another primitive bush camp with tents and outdoor bathrooms. This one was run by Ron, a devoted birder, and his wife, Hillary. They had a 6-month-old baby who was so quiet we didn't know he was there until bedtime, when Ron picked up his rifle and led the way to his rather distant cabin, while Hillary followed him, pushing a baby carriage. Not quite your everyday African sight.

We arrived just as a large party (well, as large a party as a seven-tent camp can handle, anyway) was leaving, and had the camp all to ourselves for a day. In the afternoon we went out on the channel in a double-decker pontoon, drifted into Namibia for an hour, and saw a bunch of birds and a handful of elephants. Still, the Linyanti area was a disappointment: the camp backs up to the river, and is surrounded on three sides by a hunting concession, and the place is pretty much shot out. The top of the food chain, both in mammals and birds, was gone; there was just nothing left for them to eat.

At dinnertime we were joined by Derek Joubert, a National Geographic filmmaker who had a permanent camp a few miles away. I have a couple of his documentaries on videotape, which pleased him no end, and I remarked on the similarity of his name to that of Keith Joubert, a renowned wildlife artist whose prints of the "Big Five" Carol had bought me for my birthday last March. It turned out that they were brothers, and that Keith, the only man ever to paint a portrait of the Kilimanjaro Elephant (which he did from the figures in Rowland Ward's record book, the elephant itself having died almost a century ago) had read and enjoyed Ivory, which is based on the elephant.

September 6: We had a very disappointing game run in the morning -- not much is still alive and moving in Linyanti -- but I made up for it by coming up with a couple of short story ideas that I'll be writing in the next few months.

In the afternoon some more guests showed up, including a rather adventuresome American girl who works for a bank with international connections, and has spent time representing them in Peru, Chile, Poland, and Hong Kong. (How adventuresome? Well, this spring she flew to Antarctica for a week as a guest of the Chilean Air Force.) We also met the ultimate Ugly American, a



New York lady who didn't stop talking for the next six hours, had nothing good to say about anyone or anything, and made us realize why so many people intensely dislike Americans. Fortunately, she came down with a sore throat at dinnertime, and we didn't have to listen to her the rest of the night.

September 7: After a 3-hour walk in search of game that simply didn't exist, we happily took our leave of Linyanti, and went next to the most luxurious hostelry in Africa. (Yeah, I know I've said in print that that honor belongs to the Mount Kenya Safari Club. So sue me: I was wrong. The Chobe Game Lodge has it beat all hollow.)

Chobe National Park is the crown jewel of Botswana's parks. It possesses 30,000 elephants, almost three times the total that remain in all of Kenya. It has 150,000 buffalo, in herds of up to 5,000. It has hundreds of lions. It also has the Chobe Game Lodge.

We had arranged to stay in the same suite where Richard Burton and Liz Taylor honeymooned after their second marriage (Suite 210, for anyone who wishes to experience it themselves.) It was immense, elegant, air-conditioned...and it had a 75-foot terrace and its own private swimming pool -- so private, in fact, that we never bothered with our swimsuits. After all those days of tents and outdoor bathrooms, it was so luxurious that it took a real effort of will power to leave long enough to look at animals.

The food was on a par with the accommodations. Our first night there, dinner consisted of Eggs Florentine as an appetizer, ragout of impala (the best game meal we've ever had) as a main course, and trifle with custard sauce for dessert. Lunch was a buffet that covered five tables, with so many delicacies that you could go on tilt trying to pick and choose from among them. There were numerous lounges and bars, a fabulous outdoor dining terrace, the best gift shop we'd seen in the country, and there was even a room with a large-screen TV and a selection of videotapes, each a documentary on some aspect of Botswana and its wildlife.

The Chobe Lodge is much the largest lodge in Botswana, though it holds less than 100 people and is at best medium-sized by East African standards. The reason for this is that Botswana, which is 87% Kalahari Desert and which nobody seemed to want -- not Britain, not South Africa, not anybody -- suddenly discovered the world's two largest diamond mines in the early 1980s. As a result, they have more money than they need, and have decided to keep their tourist industry small rather than ecologically degrade their parks by running too many cars and tourists through them.

We took a boat out on the Chobe River in the afternoon and watched as hundreds of elephants and thousands of buffalo came down to drink, then picked our way among the hippos and crocs and returned to our suite, wondering why we had bothered with all those other locations when we could have spent the entire Botswana section of our safari right here.

September 8: Another day of luxury, punctuated with a pair of game runs. In the morning, we managed to find a pride of lions on a kill, and to see some cheetahs, which are quite rare in these parts. In the afternoon, we saw literally thousands of elephants, as well as 30 or 40 other species of mammals (as well as one of the lions from the morning, carrying a buffalo leg in her mouth as proudly as a puppy carries a toy). It's a damned good thing we did, too, as I deeply resented any time spent away from that suite. Dinner was freshly-caught bream, kudu in cream sauce, and good old hot fudge sundaes. I'm a teetotaler, but Carol tells me the wine was superb.

September 9: Another morning game run, and the elephant and buffalo were so numerous that I was beginning to feel jaded. Then we got into a van and were driven some 50 miles to the Victoria Falls Hotel in Zimbabwe, where we picked up the luggage we had stored there, checked into a room, and promptly slept the afternoon away. (All that luxury exhausted our systems, I guess.) We woke up just in time for their nightly spectacular, a lavish pageant of native dances, which turned out to be more authentic and less tourist-oriented than we had feared.

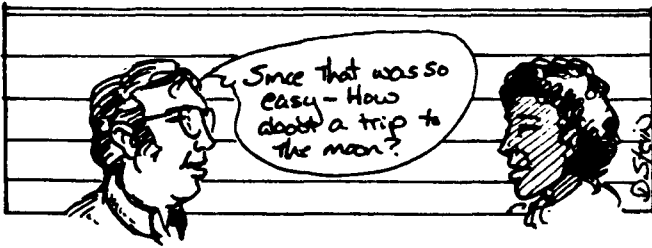
September 10: We stopped by a native crafts village, not knowing quite what to expect, and were pleasantly surprised to find that it, too, was more educational than tourist-oriented. From there we went to the Falls, truly one of the wonders of the world. The Zambezi River was the lowest it's been in 40 years, which actually was to our benefit, as when the river is high the Falls create such a spray that you can't make out the features, let alone photograph them.

We took the much-hyped Sundowner Cruise in the afternoon. Very disappointing, if you're not heavily into booze. The boat never got near the Falls (or anything else worth seeing), and most of the passengers were three sheets to the wind before the cruise even started.

September 11: We took a noontime flight to Hwange National Park, where we were escorted to the Hwange Game Lodge, perhaps half a star down in luxury from the Chobe Game Lodge. Though we had requested a room, we were given an enormous suite at no extra cost. (Upon leaving I asked the manager why; he replied that it was empty, he had recognized my name on the guest list, he had read Ivory and Paradise and Adventures, and since I was obviously on a research trip, he hoped that I would remember him kindly when I got around to writing a novel about Zimbabwe.)

Our guide was a young man named Mark, who asked what we would like to see that afternoon. Well, I said, giving him what I thought would be a totally impossible task, we haven't yet seen sable, roan, kudu, or rhino. Within 45 minutes we had seen them all, plus a couple of hundred elephants and some exceptionally rare eagles.

This is some park, this Hwange. It's the largest in Zimbabwe, and has just about



every species of mammal you could wish for. It's also paved -- something that I thought existed nowhere outside of South Africa's Kruger National Park -- and the rangers have created a number of huge, artificial water holes, so that the game doesn't migrate. The park is immaculate -- you would swear they mow and rake it every day -- and except for Tanzania's Ngorongoro Crater, we have never seen such a large number and variety of animals in one place.

Dinner (eland and impala is exquisite sauces) was superb, as were all the various services provided by the lodge, and it is our conclusion that as luxurious as the Block lodges in Kenya are, the Sun chain in Zimbabwe -- consisting of Hwange, the Victoria Falls Hotel, the Monomatapa, the Montclair, the Troutbeck Inn, and half a dozen others -- is even moreso. The staffs are courteous and expertly-trained, the food is world-class, and the accommodations are usually equal to anything you can find in New York or London. For those of you who want to see Africa in absolute luxury, where the words "rough it" do not exist, just mosey down to Zimbabwe and make the circuit of Sun hotels.

September 12: Two more fabulous game runs, three more fabulous meals, and a lot of loafing in our suite. After dinner we walked out to a spotlighted waterhole about a quarter-mile away, climbed up to a bar that was perched on stilts overlooking it, and spent the next couple of hours watching and photographing an endless procession of animals as they came down to drink.

September 13: We took a morning game run, then stayed around the lodge until our midafternoon flight to Lake Kariba.

Kariba is a man-made lake, more than 100 miles long, 30 miles wide, and (in places) 1500 feet deep. When it was created some 30 years ago, it literally put a dent in the earth...but unlike most projects of this type, it didn't foul up the ecosystem. It not only provides power for most of Zimbabwe and Zambia, it is also the biggest damned reservoir you ever saw, as well as a huge vacation area bringing in all kinds of hard currency. They also stocked the lake with fish, left them alone for a few years while they grew fruitful and multiplied, and now pull some eight tons of fish per day out of it.

We knew all this before we got there -- but until you fly over the lake, until you look out both windows of your plane and see that water extending almost to infinity, you can't begin to appreciate the magnitude of the project. If the Victoria Falls are an awe-inspiring work of God (or Whoever), Lake Kariba is an equally awe-inspiring work of Man.

We arrived at the Caribbea Bay Hotel, probably the least impressive member of the Sun chain, in late afternoon, and while Carol was unpacking, I scouted around to find us a restaurant -- and came up with Pedro's in the basement of the hotel, an authentic Mexican restaurant in the heart of Africa.

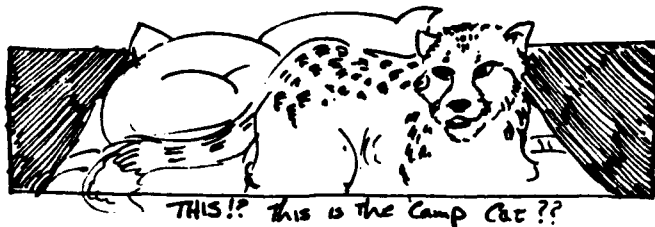
September 14: In the morning we took a ferry to the Sanyati Lodge, on the far side of the lake. The landscape, far from being the flat land that usually leads up to a lakeshore, was formerly the tops of some mountains (remember: this is a man-made lake), and we climbed about 150 steps up to our cabin, which had a gorgeous view of the Sanyati Gorge, a channel between two mountain tops that rose up out of the water.

Our hosts were Hans, a former farmer who Carol declares is the best birder she's even met, and his new bride, Diana. We asked Diana to radio ahead and find out what time we had to catch a charter plane to our next destination, Chikwenya Camp in the Mana Pools Reserve; she did so, and reported that because of some foul-up we had been scheduled to arrive at Mana Pools on August 16, not September 16, and that Chikwenya was sold out. We told her to tell them we had paid vouchers and planned to show up anyway, and it was their job to find someplace to put us. They reluctantly agreed, and Diana mentioned in passing that Sanyati had been unable to reconfirm our arrival but since they had been paid in advance she had simply set aside our cabin and assumed we were coming.

(I just love making travel arrangements in the Third World.)

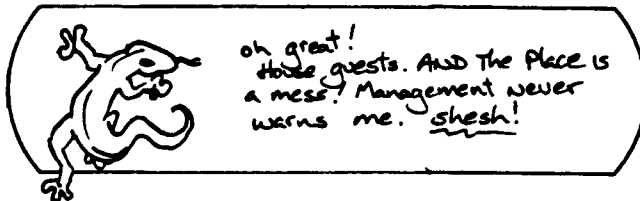
Since Sanyati is a mountaintop surrounded on all sides by water, game drives and walks were out of the question, and we selected from among a number of boats that Hans had. The seascape was positively unearthly: tops of thousands of trees poked up out of the water, and because it was in the mid-90s, the evaporation caused a haze that obscured the horizon; certainly no alien world could appear more exotic than this, and I will find a way to appropriate it for one of my books.

We went along the coast of the Matusadona National Park and saw thousands of animals drinking and walking along the shoreline, then went back and climbed all those damned stairs again. I had just gotten to sleep when Wellington, the camp cat, decided he would enjoy mousing my toes, a process that continued all night; since my own cats, Nick and Nora, find endless fascination in keeping me awake, I felt right at home.



September 15: We took two rides in a pootoon: a morning ride into the Sanyati Gorge itself, an afternoon ride to Matusadona, where we got within ten yards of five bull elephants who spent almost an hour bathing and frolicking in the water. Wellington felt deserted and bit harder than usual during the night.

September 16: We flew up to Mana Pools in the Zambezi Valley, where we were driven to Chikwenya Camp and found out that two couples who were arriving by canoe had run up against a hard current and would be two days late, which meant that we got our accomodation after all. This was a bush camp to end all bush camps: elephants felt free to wander through it at all times of the day and night, and while we have frequently had small lizards in our tents (actually a beneficial circumstance, since they eat insects), this was the first time we ever shared our quarters with a snake. (I don't know if he ate insects, but he certainly ate lizards.)



Our hosts were Jeff and Veronica Stutchbury. Jeff is quite famous in these parts, having been the very first game warden at the South Luangwa Valley National Park in Zambia, and has had numerous articles and photographs published in wildlife journals. Their three sons also make a living from wildlife, one as a photographer, one as a painter, and one as a documentary filmmaker.

Jeff was probably the most knowledgeable guide we've ever been out with; he was unquestionably the most eccentric. He found beauty in every living thing, knew the natural history of everything we saw, and had the attention span of a 9-week-old puppy. Some game runs never got more than 500 yards from camp, as Jeff would find an exotic tree and explain its workings for hours; others would take us far afield and run for four or five hours, driving Veronica and her kitchen staff crazy. Jeff and his associate, David, never went anywhere without their rifles, which, they explained, were never used against game but were reserved for poachers. (Mana Pools is the park where most of the Rhino Wars have occurred: so far they've killed over 150 Zambian poachers in two years. Unfortunately, they're breaking about even: one poacher per lost rhino. Since they've only got about 2,000 black rhinos left in the whole country, and there are ten million hungry Zambians across the Zambezi River, the mathematics of the situation don't look promising.)

September 17: We took a boat down the Zambezi to the one sight Carol has always wanted to see: a colony of nesting carmine bee-eaters. Even I, a non-birder, couldn't help but be impressed by 10,000 colorful

birds flocking and nesting in thousands of holes along the high banks of the river. Then, when it was time to return for breakfast, Jeff decided to take a little walk. Around an island. A 5-mile-in-circumference island. We ran into buffalo and kudu and elephant, and got home just before noon. I thought Veronica was going to kill him, although he does this every three or four days and she really ought to be used to it by now. (In the States, he'd be the kind of guy who walked down the driveway to fetch the paper, disappeared for three weeks, and couldn't understand why everyone was so upset when he finally showed up.)

One of the guests was an elderly lady from Texas, who had come to Zimbabwe to judge a cattle show, and decided to see a little of the country before leaving. If she was interested in anything beside cattle and barbeque sauce, she kept it a secret. She continually walked away from camp on her own (and this camp was surrounded by more wild animals than any within memory), she wore sweaters and panty-hose in 98-degree weather, and she complained non-stop. Finally her long-suffering companion simply locked her in her cabin for the afternoon, and a golden silence descended upon the rest of Chikwenya.

September 18: We were a little late arriving at the landing strip -- elephants blocked our way for half an hour -- but the plane waited for us, dropped us off at Lake Kariba, and from there we caught a flight back to Harare, where this time Meikles Hotel honored our voucher. It had been exactly three weeks since we were there, and the change was electrifying: all the jacarandas were in bloom, and the whole city was a riot of spring color. (Yes, spring: this is south of the Equator.)

I celebrated getting away from our snake and our outdoor plumbing by taking two showers, donning a coat and tie, and having Lobster Thermidor at the Bagatelle.



September 19: This morning we picked up a car and driver for the remainder of our stay in Zimbabwe. The car was a semi-new Mitsubishi; the driver was Lazarus, a somber type who could find something depressing about winning the Irish Sweepstakes.

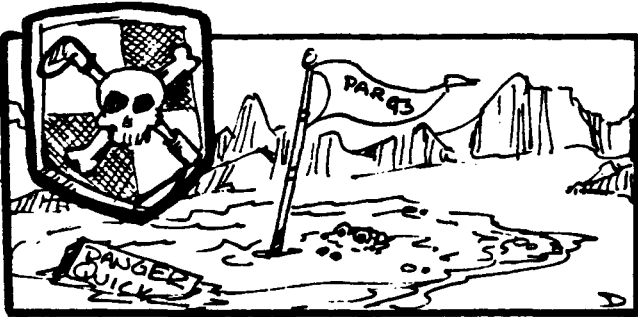
We drove from Harare to the Inyanga Mountains in the east of the country, and as we began ascending them the fog closed in around us to the point where we could barely see ten yards ahead. We finally reached the Montclair Hotel at about noon, checked in, and decided to spend the rest of the day loafing and reading rather than driving on

narrow, winding mountain roads with almost no visibility.

The Montclair is an elegant English-style hotel, with a dart room, a billiard room, a gambling casino, a riding stable, tennis courts, a swimming pool, two fine restaurants (I recommend the Topside), and the strangest-looking staff you'd ever want to see. Each of them -- and there were a hell of a lot of them -- was bald and bearded; when we asked about it, Lazarus explained that they were members of a Pentecostal sect that thought shaving their heads but not their faces brought them a bit closer to heaven.

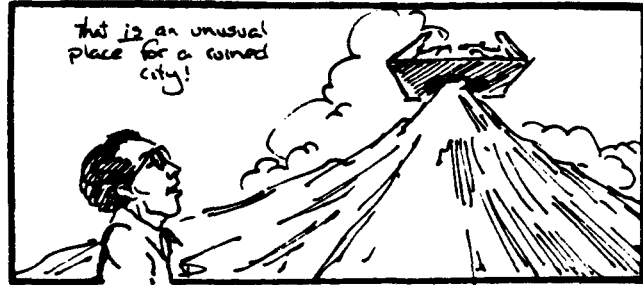
September 20: We were still socked in with fog when I awoke, but I didn't feel like spending another day doing nothing -- even a high-quality nothing such as the hotel offered -- so I told Lazarus to meet me at 10:30 and we'd try to drive around a bit; Carol took one look out the window and told me that she was staying inside. When we got two miles away from the Montclair the air became crystal clear, and we realized that the mountains weren't covered by fog after all: what had happened was that a cloud had come to rest exactly atop the Montclair. We drove back, got Carol, and spent the rest of the day sightseeing in the mountains.

We saw Cecil Rhodes' mountain home, and the Rhodes Museum, and World's View, and a reconstruction of an ancient village, and one of the world's more dangerous golf courses (hit the ball in the water and you get eaten by crocs; hit it in the trees and you get eaten by leopards; overshoot the green and you fall 11,000 feet to your death). We ate lunch at the Troutbeck Inn, then drove to some waterfalls where we had to climb part of a mountain and walk out on a very precarious ledge to see them (Lazarus pointed the way, then locked himself in the car and waited for us, convinced we would fall off the precipice), and finally returned to the hotel, which was still surrounded by its very own cloud.



September 21: We left the Montclair and its cloud behind, and drove down the eastern side of the country to Mutare, easily the prettiest African city we've seen. Once there we turned off and went to La Rochelle, the magnificent estate of Lord and Lady Courtauld, who had willed it to Zimbabwe. It contains fourteen acres of the most beautiful gardens I've ever seen, with numerous little streams and wooden bridges connecting the various sections. From there

we drove to a tiny colonial hotel, the White Horse Inn, for lunch, then stopped by the Vumba Gardens, some 98 hectares worth of meticulously-kept flowers and greenery. Then we headed south for Masvingo and the Great Zimbabwe ruins, picking up a flat tire along the way; we drove the final 100 kilometers with no spare, and got a second flat just as we were pulling into the Great Zimbabwe Hotel. While Carol and I slept the sleep of the innocent, Lazarus earned his salary by hunting up some friends, finding an all-night gas station (unheard-of in all other African countries), and getting the car in shape before breakfast.



September 22: Carol and I walked a mile from the hotel to Great Zimbabwe, the oldest and most impressive ruins in all of sub-Saharan Africa, and the structure that gave Southern Rhodesia its new name. This was a gold-trading society that existed about a millenium ago, and built a fortress with walls some 40 feet high. I spent about two hours photographing it and taking notes, as it will figure prominently in one of the books I'll be writing next year.

Then, when I thought we were through, Lazarus showed up and told us that there was an equally impressive ruin we hadn't seen yet. Where, I asked. Up there, he said, pointing to a nearby mountain. So we spent another hour climbing up to the second ruin, and once I caught my breath I had to admit he was right: it's every bit as impressive as the one most people photograph (the so-called Great Enclosure), perhaps even moreso, considering that every one of its million or so stones had to be carried up the mountain.

We drove back to Harare in the afternoon, checked into Meikles again (they weren't so sure about taking my voucher this time, but eventually they relented), and we spent our final night in Zimbabwe pigging out on a huge tray of food we ordered from room service.

September 23: We drove to the airport in early afternoon and caught a plane to Lilongwe, the new capital of Malawi (formerly Nyasaland.) Upon arriving, we found the representative from Soche Tours, which had subcontracted the Malawi portion of our safari.

"You'd better hurry," she said. "Your flight to Blantyre is about to leave."

"We're not flying there," I said, showing her our itinerary and voucher. "You're supplying us with a car and driver, so we can see some of the countryside."

"We are?" she said, as the Blantyre plane began coasting down the runway. "Nobody told me."

Eventually the lady's boyfriend volunteered to drive us the three and one-half hours to Blantyre. It was dark before we left Lilongwe; so much for sightseeing.

As we were driving, we noticed that there were absolutely no lights on the right side of the road, and asked Joey, our driver, about it. The answer was chilling in its simplicity: the road was the border between Malawi and Mozambique, and if you so much as lit a match on the right side of the road, you were likely to get your head blown off by a rebel before you could bring it up to your cigarette.

So for two hours we hugged the left-hand side of the road and hoped nobody felt like shooting a car. You can't imagine the relief we felt when we turned east and finally saw lights on both sides of the road.

Joey left us off at the Mount Soche Hotel. Our room was on the fourth of its five floors -- which turned out to be the only floor the idiosyncratic elevator didn't stop at. Not the most auspicious beginning.

September 24: Soche Tours got its act together long enough to introduce us to Mike Makwakwa, a young man who would be our driver for the rest of the safari. We decided to start with a little tour around Blantyre. As we drove through the city, we noted that a number of buildings were decorated with red stars. Mike explained that each star marked the home or business of an Indian, and that they had been slated for destruction or renovation. We also found out that all the Indians, who form the merchant class in almost every sub-Saharan country, had been forcibly relocated in just three Malawian cities: Blantyre, Lilongwe, and Zomba.

Most of the buildings with red stars were in far better condition than those without, and I couldn't help remembering what happened the last time a government decided to mark buildings owned by an ethnic minority with stars. The only difference was the color: yellow then, red now. I would not want to be an Indian living in Malawi in the coming months and years.

Malawi, by the way, is ruled by a dictator who bears the title of President For Life Hastings Kamuzu Banda. Banda left the country as a child, spent more than a half century in England and the U.S.A., and was called back in 1958 when independence seemed imminent, as he was the only Malawian with a college degree and they needed a figurehead president. They drafted a model constitution, and assumed that once they got the hang of self-government, Banda would step down in a couple of years, if he hadn't already died of old age.

All that was a quarter of a century ago. Banda killed and jailed his enemies, had himself proclaimed President For Life, made sure no foreign entity could start a business in Malawi unless he, Banda, owned 51% of the stock, and developed what are considered to be the most efficient death squads south of the Sahara. He is 91 years old, speaks no language but English (and has an interpreter for his three-hour orations), and has become a hideous caricature of The Man Who Came To Dinner. In other words, he ain't leaving.

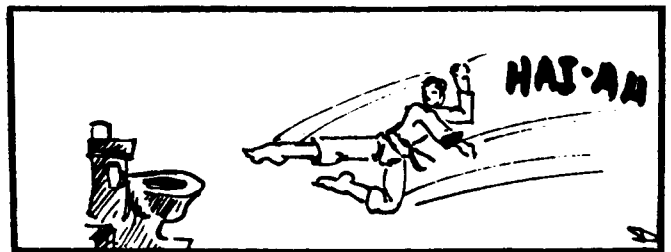
That having been said, I must also point out that tourists are treated with enormous courtesy and deference (to the very uncomfortable point of being called "Master" by most of the waiters and porters), since we represent a source of hard currency, and every effort is made to shield us from what is really going on there. (I had been warned not to mention I was a writer. The government does not differentiate between fiction writers and journalists, and in Banda's opinion the only good journalist is a journalist who is rotting in a Malawi prison.)

The press is as thoroughly controlled as any I've ever seen. Each day's newspaper is the same: the front page has two long articles praising Banda, the next five pages consist of 20 quarter-page ads by major businesses proclaiming "Long Live Kamuzu!", and if you're lucky, you can find a paragraph or two about Iraq and South Africa somewhere on page 7. This is followed by another dozen pages of ads thanking God for President Banda.

The country is physically the most beautiful of all the African nations we've visited, and the people are the sweetest and friendliest. Most of them literally worship Banda -- but that stands to reason: 80% of them are under 25 years of age, which means they've been subjected to his propoganda every day of their lives.

After touring the city, we drove through the tea country (most of it owned by Banda) to Mount Mulanje, the tallest mountain in Malawi, and drove almost to the top, stopping along the way to look at a couple of waterfalls. In the afternoon we stopped by the city's zoo (which seemed to specialize in American turtles), and the Museum of Malawi, which had some interesting relics from the nation's recent and distant history. The museum's guide believes devoutly in witchcraft, but that little idiosyncrasy aside, gave us a thorough and fascinating private tour.

We returned to the Mount Soche Hotel for dinner in their upscale penthouse restaurant, then returned to our room. The bathroom was unique: most toilets in the world operate by levers; this one required you to push a button with about 400 foot-pounds of force. (Carol's comment: "Flushing that damned toilet is the most exercise I've had all week.")



September 25: We drove to the city of Zomba, the former colonial capital (Lilongwe is a brand-new city, with huge, impressive buildings erected with foreign aid that was thrown at Banda for opposing communism -- an easy thing to do, since there isn't a communist in the entire country), then drove up a long, winding road to the top of the Zomba Plateau, from which one could see

practically the entire country.

Then it was off to the Shire River (pronounced "Shirry") and a pontoon ride through the Liwonde National Park. Finally we drove to Club Makakola, a beach resort on Lake Malawi where we would be spending the next two nights...and where we were informed that our voucher from Soche Tours was for the nearby (and much lower-rated) Nkopola Lodge.

I saw a bunch of keys on the wall, and asked if they had any empty rondovals. Lots, they said. Do you want our money, I asked. Sure, they said. Then get those bastards at Soche Tours on the phone and let me yell at them for 30 seconds, I said. They did so, and 30 seconds later Soche Tours transferred our money from Nkopola to Club Makakola. (Everyone in the African travel industry is friendly and polite, but efficiency is not their long and strong suit -- especially in seldom-visited Malawi.)

September 26: Club Makakola was very much like a Caribbean beach resort, but with different (and more) bird life. In the morning, Carol and I rented a catamaran and its crew, and spent the next three hours on Lake Malawi. We visited the aptly-named Bird Island, stopped by some fishing villages, and cruised by the American embassy's super-luxury beach house, then spent the rest of the day loafing on the beach.

September 27: We drove through the highlands, stopping here and there to take pictures and talk to the locals, passed through Lilongwe at noon, and headed north to our final destination, the Lifupa Lodge at Kusungu National Park. Just before reaching it we passed by a fairy-tale palace, a glistening white building which could easily accomodate a worldcon; it turned out to be Banda's newest home, which overlooked a few hundred mud huts occupied by his loyal subjects.

Kasungu was sad. The park, which as recently as two years ago possessed a truly magnificent selection of game, has been almost totally poached out. The elephant population, estimated at 1,800 in 1987, is less than 100; there are no rhinos left; and while the Zambian poachers were busy collecting ivory and rhino horns, the hungry hordes of Malawians who surround the park poached most of the other animals for meat. The death knell was sounding while we were there: a crew of six international tsetse fly abatement experts were busy eradicating the last flies from the park -- at which time nothing on earth will stop the local subsistence farmers and cattle herders from

encroaching on the park's boundaries. I'd be surprised if it still exists ten years from now.

September 28: We took two game runs, hiring a local ranger and a four-wheel-drive vehicle (and making a note to bill Soche Tours for it, since we had already paid for it months earlier, a fact that no one except Carol and I seemed aware of). In six hours with a guide who knew the park inside out, we saw one large herd of buffalo, a few roan antelope, small herds of impala and zebra, and a lone elephant -- less than we might expect to see five minutes into a game drive in Hwange, Chobe, Mana Pools, or Moremi.

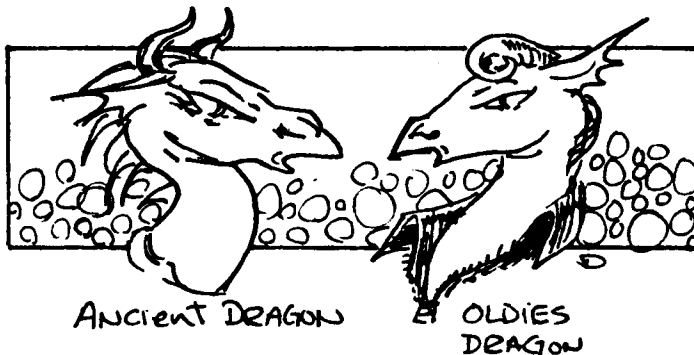
Our rondoval was quite large, and absolutely immaculate -- until we inspected the shower, which was so filthy that we elected to remain dirty until we reached London.

September 29: We spent the morning watching hippos and birds from the porch of our rondoval (which faced a small lake), then got into the car and drove to Lilongwe, where we had lunch at the Capital Hotel -- the only world-class accomodation in the country -- and went to the airport, where we were (politely) frisked and our luggage was (politely) searched. The airport bookstore had a huge display of Santiago and Ivory. I was about to mention that I was the author, and ask the proprietor if he wanted any copies autographed; then I remembered where I was, and thought better of it.

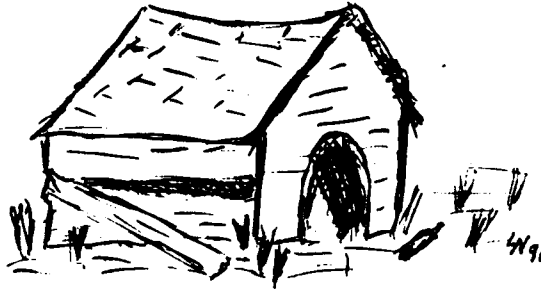
Still, for all its problems (or, more likely, because of them), Malawi proved to be more fertile ground for story ideas than Zimbabwe and Botswana, and bits and pieces of it will be turning up in my books and stories for some years to come. Which is not to imply that we didn't both breathe hearty sighs of relief as the plane took off.

September 30: We landed at Heathrow, took a bus to Gatwick, and checked into the Gatwick Hilton, where we spend the rest of the day alternately showering and sleeping.

October 1: We landed in Cincinnati in mid-afternoon, and I immediately bought a newspaper and turned to the sports section. The Reds had just clinched the National League West, and the Bengals were unbeaten in their first three games. (The Reds promptly dropped 3 games in the next 48 hours, and the Bengals lost their first game of the year that night. As I write this, I am waiting for the management of both teams to phone me and offer to pay my way back to Africa so they can start winning again. I can hardly wait to take them up on it.) !



With apologies to Charles Schulz.



by H. E. Mercier-Davis

The night was dark and stormy. Sitting on the roof of a run-down dog house, typing on a rusted manual typewriter that had been thrown at the cat once too often, was a rangy beagle who had seen better days. Beside him was a reminder of the only friend he had ever had--at least since fortune and master had left him--a single, wilted, yellow feather.

Slowly, agonizingly, he typed out word after word, the keys striking the rain-soaked paper with thick thucks. It was useless, he knew--a word was no sooner completed than the ink would run, trails of black tears coursing down the yellowed paper. Already the first line of purple-black prose had dissolved into a smeary bruise that flowed into the underlying sentences.

With an angry bark he ripped the paper from the platen and wadded it into a soggy mess. He tossed it over his shoulder, expecting it to land in the waterdish with the other drafts; instead it bounced off the edge and fell limply into the overgrown grass that was clotted with thatch and fallen leaves. The dog scratched at a crust of ringworm and reached under the eaves for his last bottle of root beer.

His very last bottle. The one he had been saving for a "special" occasion--such as his first sale, or his first date. Well, this occasion was certainly special, he thought bitterly while lightning ripped across the sky and was hosed by bone shaking booms. This was it, the end, the very last. He was a failure, and might as well consign his soul to the clouds that scuttled across the churning sky. He pried off the bottlecap with his teeth, then consumed the root beer in great breathless gulps.

The world swirled around him, a combination of the wind and root beer. When it settled he felt a great flash of anger, as bright and hot as the lightning, and he smashed the bottle across his typewriter. Shards of glass flew up and around him in a crystalline cloud, then settled like small, deadly knives across the rooftop and the grass

A DARK and STORMY NIGHT

beyond. Before him huddled the typewriter, its keys bent and broken, its casing dented by the blow. He picked it up and threw it as hard as he could into the birdbath where it sank without a whimper.

Then, with sudden realization, he saw what he had done. He had flung away all hope of his success; he had trapped himself with his despair. But then, hadn't he already seen his failure and given up? If he were to leave the doghouse, here would he go? Exhausted and drunk, he sank into a muddled heap, and slept. His last thought was that the rain might wash away him along with all the black marks he had left upon his life.

* * *

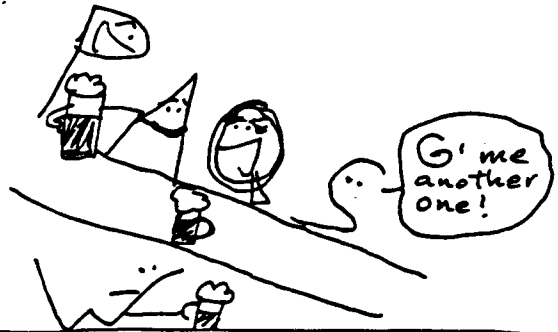
He awoke the next morning with the sun bright and harsh upon his headache. Most of the glass had been washed off the roof by the storm and the larger pieces were easily visible in the grass. The smaller ones--well, those he would find one by painful one. Such was fate, which cannot be changed.

He climbed off the roof and dumped the paper wads out of the waterdish--someone would be around, sometime, to fill it with clean water. He went over to the birdbath and fished out the typewriter. It would be fine once the keys were unbent and it had dried out. It had seen worse.

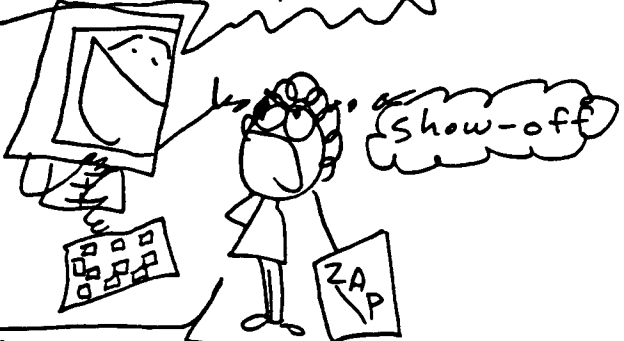
Worse. What was worse? he wondered--his addiction to the root beer, or his driving need to write coupled with the fact that he could only write during thunderstorms, and that keyboards are made for fingers, not paws?

Nola Frame offers creativity on a different level....

Nola vs the Computer

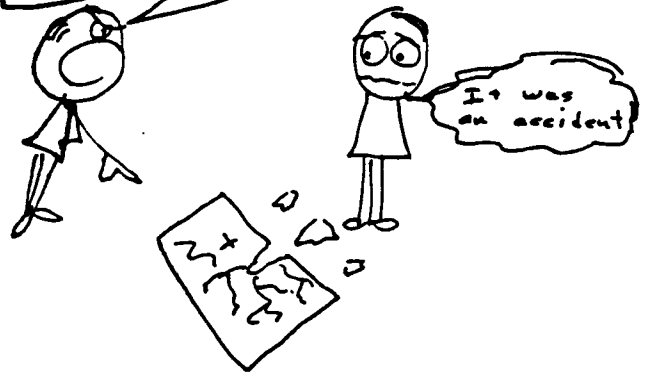


I may look like an IBM-PC, but I'm new! I'm improved!



Draft Print Quality

You dropped your paper!



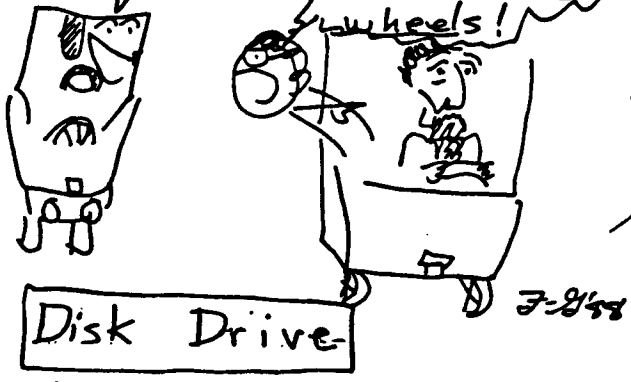
Shut up! Or I'll pour this box of soap flakes into your disk drive!

Frame-Gray 488

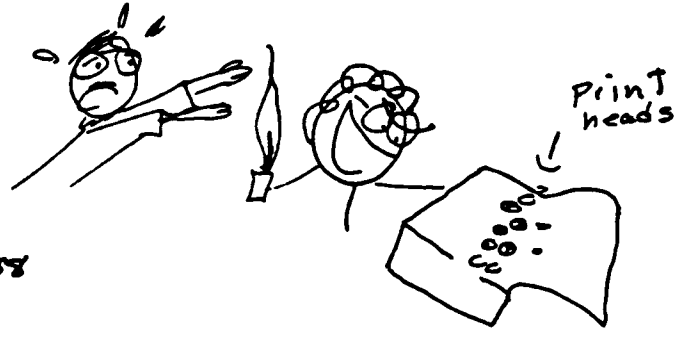
Page Break

Hey babe, Wanna drag?

Don't ask me! He's the one with the wheels!

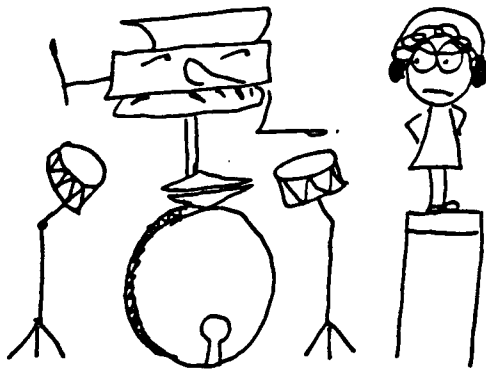
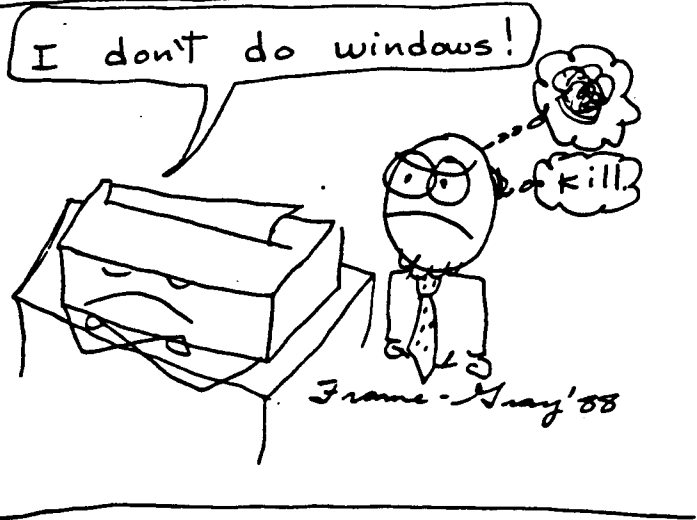


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Daisy wheels Printers
cannot print out graphics



Frame - May '88

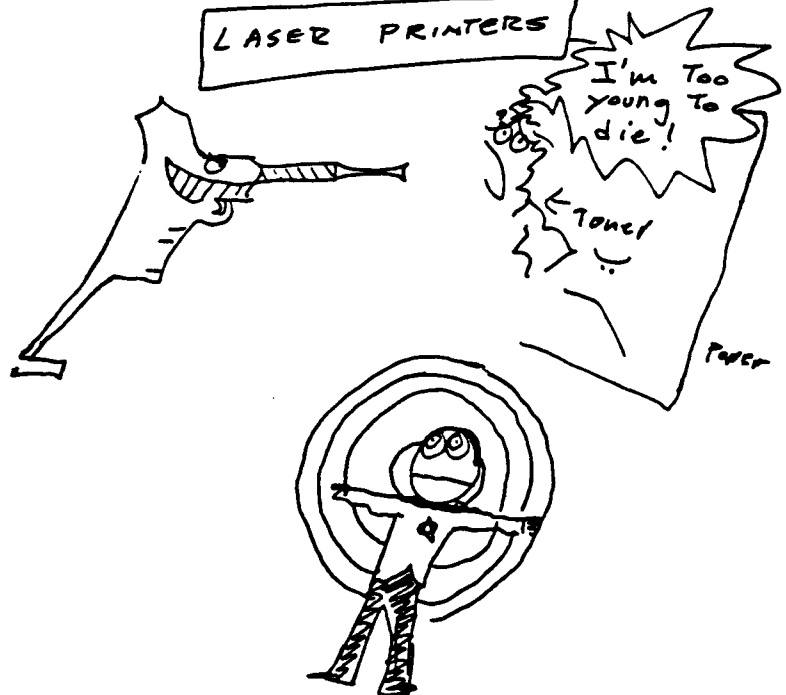
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LASER PRINTERS



Firing up The Print Heads (Ver. 2)



FOUND IN A 2035 REPRINT OF THE TIME MACHINE WHICH SUDDENLY
APPEARED IN FRONT OF A CROWD AT NorthAmeriCon 1988! IT IS NOW
DECLARED TO BE IN PUBLIC DOMAIN:

A Song to commemorate Every Year
that Seneator Wm. Proxmire Does Not Run Again:

The Proxmire Anthem

by and for:
All the Future Generations
of Spacefaring NASA Employees

(Sung to the tune of the 20th century
Mickey Mouse Fan Club Theme)

In Background: Bum Bum Bum Bum...Bum Bum Bum Bum...
(This also is a description of the senator
by space program supporters)

Group Leader: Who's the leader of Mundanes who vexes you and me?

Everybody: P-R-O-X-M-I-R-E, SENATOR WILLIE!

Group Leader: Willie Prox-

Everybody: MUCK and MIRE!!!

Group Leader: Willie Prox-

Everybody: MUCK and MIRE!!!
FOREVER LET US TAKE HIS NAME IN VAIN:
(loudly): BOO! HISS! BAH!

Who Felled Skylab and killed Moon flights,
And did it with a glee?
P-R-O-X-M-I-R-E, SENATOR WILLIE!
Willie Prox - MUCK and MIRE!!!
Willie Prox - MUCK and MIRE!!!
FOREVER LET US TAKE HIS NAME IN VAIN: BOO! HISS! BAH!

Everybody: Now it's time to say goodbye to anti-tech-nol-ogy...
(slowly) P-R-O-X:

Group Leader: He crossed off the space budget whenever he could...

Everybody: M-I-R-E:

Group Leader: Tried to bog down our future in this stuff.

Everybody: (loudly, and as off-key as humanly possible)
SENATOR WILLEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEE!!!!!!!!!!!!

(applaud yourselves)

An Interview with R. A. Lafferty

by Tom Jackson

C.J. Cherryh is Oklahoma's most popular science fiction author, but R.A. Lafferty has the most tenacious cult following. We Lafferty fans have been waiting for years for the literary world outside SF to discover Lafferty and make him wealthy and famous. We're still waiting, but our loyalty has persuaded several small presses to come out with previously unpublished novels and short story collections in recent years despite the fact that Lafferty has virtually ceased writing.

Lafferty was born November 7, 1914, in Neola Iowa, but has lived in Tulsa, Oklahoma, since age four, with the exception of a stint in the South Pacific during World War II. Lafferty published his first story in 1959; his first SF story was published in 1960. His short story "Eurema's Dam" won the Hugo Award in 1973, in a tie with Frederik Pohl's and Cyril Kornbluth's "The Meeting." Lafferty's work is noted for its humor, imagination and originality; much of it seems much more akin to magic realism than traditional science fiction. Many of his stories are set in Tulsa or northeast Oklahoma.

Lafferty tends to be a shy man of few words when interviewed in person; I chose to interview him by sending questions in the mail.

* * * * *

What are some of your short stories and novels that you especially like? Are there any which you think have been overlooked?

Short stories of mine that I particularly like are: "Selenium Ghosts of the 1870's," "You Can't Go Back," "Continued on Next Rock," "All Pieces of a River Shore," "Narrow Valley," "Configuration of the North Shore," "Golden Gate," "Old Foot Forgot," "Rainbird," "Faith Sufficient," "Bird-Master," "One-Eyed Mockingbird," "Great Tom Fool or the Cunnundrum of the Calais Custom-House Coffers," "Snuffles."

Novels of mine that I particularly like are: Okla Hannali, The Fall of Rome, Half a Sky, Archipelago (none of those four is science fiction), Past Master, Reefs of Earth, Space Chantey, Fourth Mansions, Arrive at Easterwine, The Three Armageddons of Enniscorthy Sweeny. The most overlooked of the novels is The Three Armageddons. It was published as the second novel of a two novel book Apocalypses, and it may have been that many readers stopped

after the first novel and never got back to the second one. The most neglected of my favorite short stories is "BirdMaster." The reason for this was probably that it was published in a Chris Drumm booklet which reached maybe 500 readers, whereas many of the other stories published in magazines reached one hundred times as many readers.

Have some of your novels been inspired by books of theology or philosophy? Haven't some of your novels been inspired by the works of writers such as Thomas Aquinas and St. Teresa of Avila?

Several of my novels have counterparts to specific works of theology, yes. The book Aurelia (Dawning-Starblaze Books, 1982) has parallels with the Summa Theological of Thomas Aquinas. The fourteen-year-old girl student Aurelia (in the bottom half of her classes) is completing her tenth form schooling. The last item of her tenth form is

"World Government" in which the students must literally go out from their "Golden World Cultus" to an inferior world and take control of it and govern it for a period. If a student should fail to master and govern a world, that student would die, of course, and would also fail the course. Aurelia comes down (more by accident than by competent navigation) on the world Gaea (sometimes confused with Earth). There she quickly becomes a cult figure, believed by some to be a girl messiah. She does give striking and reasoned homilies or orations or sermons that make her sound a little like a messiah. In fact, they form a mini-outline of the great (3011 double column pages in my edition) Summa of Aquinas. But it is only coincidence that the balanced sanity of the "Golden World-Cultus" of Aurelia's home world should parallel the Summa of the Angelic Doctor. Aurelia was no messiah, but she was a very nice girl and I regret that my story line required her failure and death.

And then there is the book Fourth Mansions (Ace, 1969) which I worked into the context of Las Morada (The Mansions) of Teresa of Avila (the English version is usually called The Interior Castle). There are seven sets of Mansions or steps to perfection, but the Fourth Mansions is the perilous step, the midpoints where the devil and his principalities counter-attack with all their fury. And that counter-attack, really the scenario of today's world, is the theme of my book.

I noticed that the ending of "Old Halloweens on the Guna Slopes" is different in the original magazine version from the reprints in your anthologies. Did you revise it after publication, or did the magazine editor change it? Have you made changes in other stories between first publication and reprinting in your anthologies. Have editors changed your stories very often?

I revised "Old Halloweens" after the first publication and before its printing in the anthology Austro and the Men Who Knew Everything. I revised it to give a little more zoom to it, and no editor had anything to do with it. I have made minor changes in other of my stories between first printing and anthology printing, but editors haven't been involved. The only editor who changed many of my stories was Pohl, and none of his changes was fatal. He just had a fetish of leaving his mark on every story he edited.

Terry Carr bought several of your early books. What effect did he have on your writing? How much of a

voice did he have in selecting which stories would be published in Nine Hundred Grandmothers, your first collection?

Terry Carr taught me that a story must begin with a bang. As a consequence, the first book of mine he edited and published, Past Master has in its first paragraph:

...There was a clattering thunder in the street outside...the clashing thunder of mechanical killers, raving and raging. They shook the building and were on the verge of pulling it down. They required the life and blood of one of the three men...now...within the minute.

Well, maybe all stories don't have to begin with a bang, but all Terry Carr stories had to begin with a bang of some sort. Terry also told me that 'You can lose a reader, completely and forever, in fifteen seconds. Never leave him even a fifteen-second interval without a hook to jerk him back.' Anything else Terry told me is contained in those two very good pieces of advice.

On Nine Hundred Grandmothers, Terry gave me his preferences of the stories to go in the book, and asked me if I wanted to make any changes. They were all good stories, and I didn't make any changes.

Who are your favorite editors? Who do you think have been the most perceptive critics of your work?

My favorite editors were Horace Gold of Galaxy, Terry Carr of Ace and of his Universe series, and Damon Knight with his Orbit series. They are my favorite editors because they bought more of my stories than any other editors did. I guess it's a quirk of my make-up that I remember the least perceptive of my critics (those who panned me) more than the most perceptive of my critics (those who praised me). The best perceptive of my panners were James Blish, Christopher Priest (in England), Thomas Monteleone, and Spider Robinson. I got back at the Spider a tad in an obscure booklet (True Believers by United Mythologies Press) with the stanza:

He cannot write nor yet apprise,
He ladles with a rusty ladle,
He's neither talented nor wise.
But spider bites are seldom fadle.

What was it like winning the Hugo Award for

"Eurema's Dam"? What effect did it have on your career?

Winning the Hugo Award for "Eurema's Dam" puzzled me completely, and I'm still puzzled by it. It was a pleasant little story, but I had four or five better stories published that year. And moreover it was tied by a story by Fred Pohl, which out of common decency I will not name, which was one of the worst stories ever written by anybody, anywhere. Still, I was glad to have a Hugo. I don't believe it had much effect on my career. I think the effect of Hugos is greatly exaggerated. And I've heard four or five different writers express puzzlement over winning Hugos with stories that were pretty ordinary and being passed over on stories which they really believed were earth-shaking.

Chris Drumm's An R. A. Lafferty Checklist indicates that you published four stories in 1972: "Eurema's Dam," "Rangle Dang Kaloof," "Dorg," and "A Special Condition in Summit City." Can you clarify which stories you thought were better than "Eurema's Dam"?

My memory was confused about stories published in 1972, and about everything else of 1972, which was probably the worst year of my life. I was sick that year, and I did not write anything at all in 1972. Some good things were published that year (Okla Hannali, for instance), but they were written and sold earlier. I had only one short story published for the first time that year, other than those you name. "Once on Aranea," in the book Stange Doings, had never been published before. But it, and "A Special Condition in Summit City," were my only stories published that year that were better than anything. What I had in my mind, I guess, was the spate of really good stories which I had published in 1970 and 1971, the best run of good stories I ever did, that didn't attract any notice at all. Seventeen of them, in that two year period, were quite a bit better than "Eurema's Dam," and were better than almost anything else around: "Ride a Tin Can," "About a Secret Crocodile," "Been a Long Long Time," "Entire and Perfect Chrysolite," "Continued on Next Rock," "Old Foot Forgot," "All Pieces of a River Shore," "Interurban Queen," "Frog on the Mountain," "The Man Underneath," "Encased in Ancient Rind," "Boomer Flats," "Bubbles When They Burst," "Groaning Hinges of the World," "Ishmael into the Barrens," "Nor Limestone Islands," and "Sky."

"Eurema's Dam" (which was written in 1964 and bounced around to all the markets) simply wasn't in it with this group, although it was a nice little comic story. I cancelled out on the 1972 Worldcon

in Los Angeles, although I had fallen in love with the Worldcons with my first two (St. Louis in 1969, and Boston in 1971), but I wasn't able to travel in 1972. When I began to write again in 1973 I gradually began to write some pretty good stories again: "And Walk Now Gently Through the Fire," "Mud Violet," "The World as Will and Wallpaper," "By the Sea Shore," but I never again put together a consistent string of superior stories as I had done in 1970 and 1971. At the Toronto Worldcon in 1973, which gave the awards on stories published in 1972, I was well again, and felt it ironic that I won a Hugo with "Eurema's Dam."

Do you read much science fiction these days? Did you ever read much? Are there any current SF writers you especially like?

No, I don't read much science fiction these days. I never did read very much except for about a four month period when I read several hundred of what were supposed to be the best science fiction books ever. This was when I first decided to major in science fiction, as it was selling for me and other things weren't. Well, it was a good crash course and I am glad that I absorbed it. And I read quite a bit of science fiction during several of the golden ages or "little golden ages". But the present time is not a "little golden age" and I do not read much science fiction.

Of the current SF writers I probably like Gene Wolfe the best. And Gregory Benford, David Brin, Greg Bear (the three busy bees), John Shirley (I don't like his opinions or the movements he attaches himself to, but he can write), Madeleine L'Engle, Robert Bloch (he's been doing it for more than fifty years, but he's still good), James Hogan (I think of him as a young writer, but he's forty-eight), Michael Bishop, Ed Bryant. And Ray Bradbury who is still at the top of whatever it is that he writes. I have no idea why so many writers on this short list have names beginning with "B". I had nothing to do with naming them.

Do you think you should be getting more attention from mainstream book reviewers?

No, I don't think I should be getting more attention from mainstream book reviewers. I've never written any mainstream books, and I'm always surprised when the mainstreamers notice me at all.

What do you think of the artwork publishers have put on your books? Are there any book covers you especially liked? or hated?

The only covers of my books I really hated were those on Arrive at Easterwine (Ballantine Books 1971), and on East of Laughter (Morrigan Publishing, 1988). One I especially liked was on The Devil Is Dead (Avon Books, 1971).

I liked the cover for The Devil Is Dead too, but I couldn't tell by looking at the book who the cover artist was. Can you help me?

No, I don't know who was the artist of the cover of the Avon edition of The Devil Is Dead. I have wondered too, but I never found out.

Is Bertigrew Bagley in the novel Fourth Mansions a self-portrait of yourself?

No, Bertigrew Bagley, the Patrick of Tulsa, is not a self-portrait, not consciously at least. But quite a few people have asked me if he wasn't myself, so I must have some resemblance at least to that shabby old bum.

Some of your stories include dream sequences. Would you describe some of your writing as Surrealist?

I don't regard myself as a Surrealist in the sense of the Surrealist Manifesto published by Andre Breton in 1924. To me, that Manifesto is somewhat dated, being a recoil from World War I, and being too heavily Freudian. My own unconscious is more Jungian than Freudian. But if Breton hadn't staked claim to the name, I would probably call myself a Surrealist in the "Remembrance of Things Within" sense, but not in the "world of dream and fantasy joined to the everyday rational world, becoming 'an absolute reality, a surreality'." I suppose that I believe in another sort of surreality or super-reality, but it would have to be on a wider basis than the encounters of myself and me. As often as not, it is my subconscious that supplies the rational element, and the exterior world that supplies the dream and fantasy feeling.

Is it true that you have retired from writing? When a baseball player retires, he is usually asked what

his biggest thrill was. What's been your biggest thrill as a writer?

Yes, it's true that I've retired from writing, except for a little bit of revision when old and unsold books finally push themselves into the "accepted" category.

Yes, when a baseball player retires he is usually asked what his biggest thrill was. But most of them are uncomfortable with the question, unless they have won the seventh game of a World Series with a homer. And I've never done that. I am reasonably happy with what I have written and with the reception it has had. But I can't think of any work or event that makes it to the "greatest thrill" category. It's a little bit like asking a man who has loved his breakfast eggs for sixty years to name the most thrilling egg he ever ate. He might hesitate a bit and come out with something no better than:

Oh, there was a really superior egg on June 9 of 1932, and another on February 8 of 1947. And in 1951 (it was either April 4 or April 5) I had two absolutely perfect eggs. But no, it would be presumptuous of me to name the most thrilling egg I ever ate. They were all so good!

* * * * *

BOOKS BY R.A. LAFFERTY

Novels

<u>Archipelago*</u>	<u>Arrive at Easterwine</u>
<u>Not to Mention Camels</u>	<u>Past Master*</u>
<u>Okla Hannali*</u>	<u>The Reefs of Earth*</u>
<u>The Devil Is Dead*</u>	<u>Annal of Klepsis</u>
<u>Fourth Mansions*</u>	<u>Space Chantey*</u>
<u>Where Have You Been,</u>	<u>The Three Armageddons of</u>
<u>Sandaliotis?</u>	<u>Enniscorthy Sweeney*</u>
<u>Aurelia</u>	<u>East of Laughter</u>
<u>The Flame Is Green</u>	<u>Sinbad, the 13th Voyage</u>
<u>My Heart Leaps Up</u>	<u>Half a Sky</u>
<u>The Fall of Rome</u>	<u>Serpent's Egg</u>

*Major Works

Short Story Collections

Nine Hundred Grandmothers*
Strange Doings*
Does Anyone Else Have Something Further to Add*
Golden Gate and Other Stories*
Through Elegant Eyes
Ringin' Changes

*Especially recommended

NOTE: Compiling a list of Lafferty's published books is difficult. I believe I've listed all of the works put out by major publishers, but much of Lafferty's work has been brought out in small press editions in recent years, and I may have missed

some titles. Also, quite a bit of material has been published in booklets and chapbooks which I haven't attempted to list here. Lafferty collectors should contact Chris Drumm Books, PO Box 445, Polk City, IA 50226.]*|

Virtues and Walls

by David M. Shea

I have recently encountered several articles in the fannish press along the lines of "How I broke through" (by newly published writers) or "Why I'm still trying to break through" (by, shall we say, still unpublished writers). Without exception these individuals have extolled the merits of persistence, of continuing the struggle to be a published writer. Keep one's shoulder to the wheel, one's nose to the grindstone, etc. (There would appear to be some potential for humor in creating similar anatomically improbable metaphors, but let's save that for another occasion.)

It takes no great genius to predict that if everyone is for something, Shea will probably be against it. Allow me therefore to suggest: Persistence is a virtue, but beating your head against the wall is merely stupid.

At a convention some while ago, I attended one of those panels on "Getting Started" or "How To Get Published"--one or the other of those generic titles. During the question and answer portion, I brought up the point that there is some middle ground between selling a story, on the one extreme, and the form rejection letter on the other extreme. My question was, "How do you get past the form letter and get the editor to comment on your story?"

And a member of the panel peered down her fat nose at me and responded, in what I took to be a snotty and condescending manner, "Well, if all you get are form rejection letters, maybe you're not a good writer."

I recount this ineluctably true anecdote not to elicit your sympathy. Well, not primarily to elicit your sympathy. I suggest that, however egregiously rude this shrew may have been, she may, in fact, have had a point. Not everyone is cut out to be a fiction writer. Over the years I have myself encountered, through workshops and fanzines, a considerable body of amateur fiction, much of it execrable, nearly all of it derivative. Inevitably the question arises as to why people who are manifestly unqualified to be writers, persist in devoting their time and genuine, if misguided, efforts to this subtle art.

For be it from me to discourage anyone from writing. Literacy is such a vanishing art--less so perhaps in fandom than in mundania--that it should be encouraged. If you enjoy the writing process itself, or find it useful (e.g., for catharsis), by all means, write. You may find it sufficient to gather your stories in a drawer and read them yourself. Perhaps you will be satisfied at receiving praise from your friends, or getting a story in some fanzine. (Any publication which "pays" in "contributor copies" is a fanzine.) There's nothing wrong with that, if your ambitions run no higher.

If you have any notion of being published professionally and getting paid real money for it, lock all the friends and fanzines in the closet, and take a heavy dose of reality.

The reality of the situation is that the odds are overwhelmingly against you. Some markets (OMNI, Thieve's World, Star Trek) will not even look at unsolicited manuscripts. Asimov's receives several hundred slush-pile manuscripts per month; of those, they may buy one, more likely none. Theoretically, all submissions are actually read. This may even be true. In practice, for a story out of the slush-pile to be published, it must be extraordinary. A bad story from a "name" writer is more salable than any story from an unknown. (I know only one editor in the SF field--Tom Doherty--who is honest enough to admit this).

True, the chances are slightly better in the novel field. Many publishers are contractually committed to produce X number of new titles per year. If they have only X-minus-three decent manuscripts on hand, they will coolly publish three bad books and minimize their losses. If you can string 80,000 words in a row and have it make even rudimentary sense, and shop around persistently, you have at least some chance that sooner or later you will find someone to publish it.

Given that your chances are miniscule, still there are things which can be done. Probably the first step is some ruthless self-analysis. Do you have the basic tools? It really isn't an editor's responsibility to tell you that every pronoun re-

quires an real or implied antecedent, or that a declarative sentence in dialogue followed by an attributive phrase is punctuated with a comma. You're supposed to know these things. (In Roger Zelazny's The Graveyard Heart, there's a 386 word sentence. Pablo Picasso put it this way: "First, you must know what the rules are. Then you break them!")

Assuming you are reasonably familiar with basic grammar, punctuation, and syntax, you still must face up to this question: Do you really have something to write about? (Yes, I know, I ended a sentence with a preposition. See Picasso's Rule, above.) A pretty collection of pretty words about pretty faeries and pretty unicorns dancing in the pretty moonlight, does not a story make. Stories are about something. Specifically, stories are about conflict. While there are only three subjects worth writing about (in descending order of importance: death, sex, and politics), the possibilities are nearly unlimited. You can write funny stories about death, or serious stories about politics, or seriocomic stories about the politics of sex. Whatever.

Another essential element is finding someone who will give you honest criticism. This excludes immediately family and friends, who almost certainly will not be impartial (even assuming they have any critical skills), and professional editors who with few exceptions cannot be bothered. Surprisingly, there are still possibilites. Other writers can be helpful. Since they are highly motivated to discourage you, thus reducing the competition, their criticism can be stringent. Perhaps you can find a writer's workshop of so-op in your area. The most prestifious wrokshop in the SF field, if you have six weeks and a few thousand dollars to spare, is Clarion, in the Seattle area. Sheila Finch runs a week-long intensive workshop in California every summer. Many conventions hold workshops, or perhaps you could work with your local convention to start one up. A couple of hints: most workshops are by pre-arrangement only; don't expect just to walk in. Also, it would be prudent to attend a few first and get some pointers before setting up your own.

(Another possibility is a creative writing course at your local college, if your interest is primarily in writing SF/fantasy, these may be of limited use, since they are taught by--and virtually all of your classmates will be--mundanes, who don't understand the ground rules of SF. If you write mainstream fiction as well as SF, the idea might be worth looking into, at least.)

The science fiction field is unique in that readers actually have regular access to the writers. This is an asset which can, with some caution, be exploited. You probably should not go up to a pro to whom you are a total stranger and ask her to read your novel. If you are on friendly terms with a particular pro, you might ask him to look over a

story in which you have special confidence. (If he trashes it, don't whine: remember, you asked.) As to the middle ground between these two hypothetical situations, there is a grey zone. Err on the side of caution. No pro is obligated to help you.

A little elementary common sense applied to marketing tactics is also advisable. Everyone knows what an Analog story looks like. SF Eye leans heavily to cyberpunk. It's common knowledge that Lester del Rey hates books written in first person, and Jim Baen favors war stories, or at least stories with lots of physical action. (Alas, any attempt to analyze editorial taste at Asimov's breaks down in confusion--they seem to select stories with a dart board--but then attempting to make a sale to Asimov's, for a writer with no professional track record, is so abysmally improbable that I wonder why anyone sends them stories at all.) Almost any publication will send you their guidelines for the cost of a SASE (Self Addressed Stamped Envelope), and you can probably find Writer's Market in any public library.

So. You've done it all. You know all about how to do a word count, and that you should always number your pages in the upper right hand corner, and why not to do simultaneous submissions. Half a dozen pro writers have separately assured you that you have talent, and that you are writing good salable stories. And you keep sending those same stories out, and you keep getting ... for rejection letters. (Stop me when this begins to sound familiar.) Then what?

Well, it isn't for me to tell you to quit. It does seem, however, as if a little realistic self-analysis is in order. Is what you're getting out of writing justifying the time, effort, and money you're putting in? It appears to me that if you have given it a reasonable shot for a reasonable period of time, perhaps you should have some second thoughts. (What's a reasonable period of time? Okay: three years.)

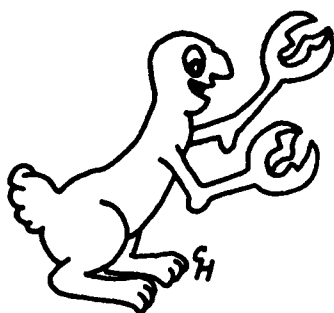
But don't let me discourage you. If you have a high threshold of frustration, you can go on banging your head against the wall until you have a flat forehead. The borderline between persistence and stupidity is a judgement call.

Good luck.

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Postscript, written several months after writing the article:

As it happened, I recently sold a story. I mention this not to elicit your admiration. Well, not primarily to elicit your admiration. Certinally the story would not have sold had it not been sent out. If you wanted to describe my sending out stories after the arbitrary time limit suggested in the article as demonstrating "persistence", so be it; I



won't argue. The point of the article remains valid: persistence by itself isn't goo enough. Persistence is a factor; luck is a factor; some degree of talent is probably a factor. The largest single factor in determining whether anyone gets published, is still editorial whim. That's just how it is in the real world.]*|

Joe's storie hits near and dear to all math teaches, which includes me. I wonder if that line would have worked years ago when I needed it?

I Have No Math and I Must Scheme

by Joe Patrouch

"A Math major, huh? That sounds interesting."

But she sounded more bored than interested, so I got defensive.

"Yeah, Math," I insisted. "What's the matter? Not any good at it?"

She stifled a yawn, probably because it was three in the morning and the party had been going on since eight or so. But I took her attitude personally.

"You know," I went on, "a lot of people who can't do something themselves look down on people who can. What grades do you pull in Math?"

Her gaze, which had been drifting around the room, suddenly swung steady onto me. She chewed the left side of her lower lip while she thought. Then she smiled. Only she seemed to be smiling more to herself than to me.

"A's and B's," she said. "A's when I decided to go ahead and play the game. B's when it wasn't worth it."

I knew a challenge when I heard one. "Game? Whattaya mean, game?" The beer surely had something to do with my diction.

"That's all math is," she said reasonably and sweetly. "A game. It entertains people who like it. Same as golf or chess. A game." She lifted her sharp shoulders, held them up a moment, then let them fall.

"A game?" I protested wittily. "Why, civilization as we know it depends on mathematics. You couldn't get in and out of a grocery store without math. You'd---"

"The problem with math," she interrupted calmly, "is that it's all so theoretical. It overlaps the real world so seldom that you might as well say it's never useful in real life."

"Wait a minute," I protested again. "Try balancing your checkbook without math. Try---"

But she went blithely on. "Two plus two, for example, is almost never four, you know."

"No, I don't know. And neither do you. Two plus two is always four."

"You're wrong, hotshot. It's only four in theory. It's almost never four in practice."

"You have really gone off the deep end, you know that lady. You are crazy." Her dark eyes narrowed. Somehow I got the impression of a shark's fin circling, circling, on the edge of our conversation.

"All right." She nodded quickly. "I'll prove it to you."

She looked around for a moment, then set her pair of sandals on the floor in front of us. Along side them she set two beer cans from among the many I'd accumulated as the party wore along. Then she looked right at me.

"O.k. Here we have two shoes and two beer cans, agreed?"

"No. Those aren't shoes. They're sandals." I told you I was feeling defensive.

"Two sandals. Two beer cans," she said patiently.

I nodded.

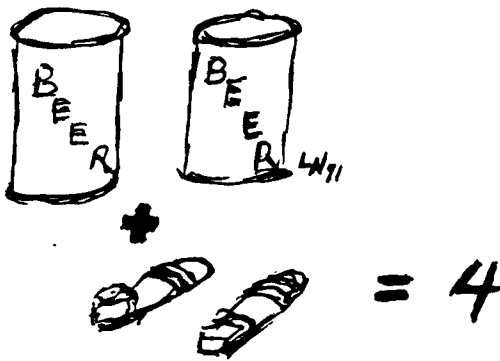
She scooted them together.

"Now"--she looked across the pile--"do we have four sandals or four beer cans?"

"Oh, come on," I said. "You've still got two of each."

She leaned back against the wall and grinned. An awfully beautiful grin. A grin a guy could get used to living with day after day.

"So you admit that two plus two doesn't equal four? All it equals is two plus two? Of what use is that? All you're saying is that a thing is equal to itself. Big deal."



I couldn't let her get away with that.

"There are four items here," I insisted. I touched each of them in turn and counted as I went. Left sandal: "One." Right sandal: "Two." Right beer can: "Three." Left beer can: "Four." Then I sat smugly. "See? Two plus two does equal four."

"Four what?" she asked. "Four sandals or four beer cans? Come on, we're talking real world here, not theory."

"Four...uh, four items," was the best I could do.

You know, silent laughter is even more annoying than the noisy kind.

"Let's see if I got this straight," she said finally. "You're seriously telling me that two sandals plus two beer cans equal four items?"

I nodded, but I didn't like it.

"That word item," she went on remorselessly. "Is a sofa an item? Is a lamp an item? Is a magazine rack an item?" And each time she pointed to an example of the...the item.

"Well, sure, but--"

"Then you're saying that two sandals plus two beer cans can equal four of anything. A sofa and a lamp and a magazine rack and...and you! Which item are you? A sandal or a magazine rack?"

This time she laughed out loud. Two couples across the room turned to look at us. I ignored them. How had I let her fould me up so badly?

"Wait a minute," I said. "That's not fair. Two sandals plus two sandals equals four sandals. You have to add two of the same things."

Let's see you twist that around.

She shook her head disdainfully. "That's exactly what I meant at the very beginning. You have to put such restrictions on it to make it work that two plus two is almost never four in the real world."

"That you'll have to convince me of," I challenged.

She indicated the other couples around the room. "Let's say we asked each person here to name two of any item. How many two-of-the-same-things do you think would be named? Honestly now."

We both saw the futility of any of them to actually run the test.

"Probably none," I admitted. "But that's not the point."

"Why isn't it? You say two plus two equals four only if you're adding the same kinds of things. And I'm saying that in the real world there are so many different kinds of things you'd almost never want to add two of the same kinds together. Two plus two equals four so seldom you might as well say it doesn't work...except theoretically."

I was silent long enough to rip open another can of beer. There were an almost infinite number of different kinds of things. What were the odds of ever wanting to combine only similar ones? Good heavens, she had me doing it!

"But...but..." I sputtered, "people automatically choose the categories in which they want to add things together. No one would ever want to add two sandals and two beer cans a expect to get four of anything."

The grin resurfaced, quick as a shark's fin.

"What do you get when you add two apples and two oranges," she asked.

I refused to answer. It had to be a trick question.

"One fruit salad," she laughed. "You see: sometimes in the real world two plus two equals one."

I ground my teeth, but I had to smile at the same time.

"There's money." I flung out in desperation.

"What?"

"The grocery store. The check book. Money. Everyone has to be able to add money. We all limit the kinds of things we add in that category."

"You mean, two nickels plus two dimes equals four items?" She was making fun of me again.

"It's thirty cents, and you know it."

"Then why aren't two sandals and two beer cans thirty sofas?"

I put my head in my hands and said without looking up, "Because you can only add things that are the same."

"Like nickels and dimes?"

"You know what I mean."

She nodded. I couldn't believe it. "You mean, you're done pulling my leg?"

She looked thoughtful. "Let's say for the sake of argument that you can only add things in the same category."

It was my turn to grin.

"With the proviso that it happens so seldom--" she began.

"--that you might as well say it never happens in the real world," I finished. "Still, admit that, and you've admitted that math can be useful."

I waited. Was that a shark's fin circling in her eyes?

She spoke again. "All right. Let's consider adding similar things. Take a two-mile-high column of

water, and put it alongside another two-mile-high column of water."

"Impossible," I quibbled. "How thick are the columns? What are the containers?"

She looked annoyed. "I thought a mathematician would be able to do some abstract thinking," she complained.

"O.K.," I said magnanimously. "Two two-mile-high columns of water. Now what?"

"Add them together."

"Huh?" I've always had a way with words.

"Stack one on top of the other. How tall a column will you get?"

"Two miles plus two miles equals four miles," I replied complacently.

"Wrong," she chimed, folding her arms and again settling back against the wall. "The water will compress. Two miles plus two miles will equal equal three point nine nine miles...in the real world. It's only be four miles in the CloudCuckooLand of mathematical theory."

I gaped at her.

"Or let's take two ounces of bourbon and two ounces of water, surely an example closer to your life experience." She got me. "Put them together, and how many ounces of liquid would you have in the glass?"

I knew better than to say four, so I just waited.

"Right," she agreed. "Three point nine nine etc. The alcohol will interpenetrate the water. Once again, in the real world two plus two does not equal four."

I looked at her speculatively. "Will you marry me?" I asked.

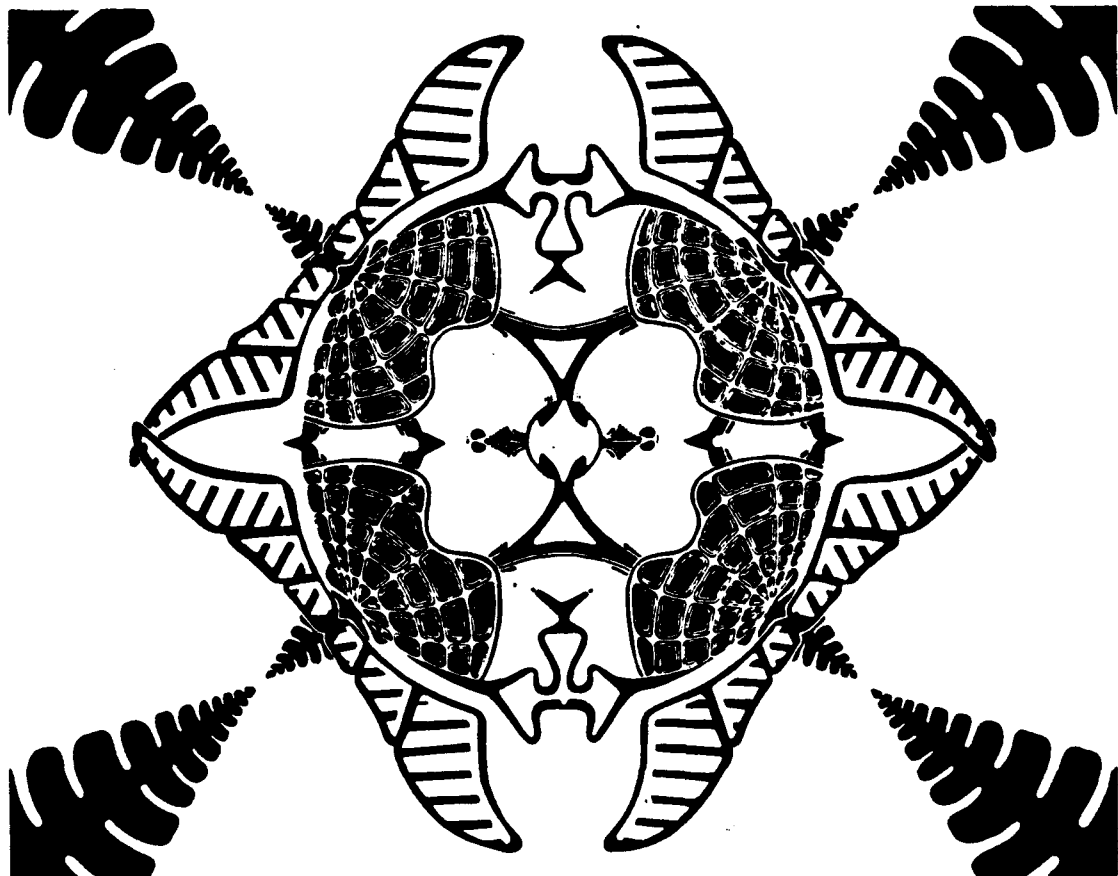
"What?"

"You've convinced me I can't add."

It was her turn to wait.

"Now I'd like to try multiplying."

Joe Patrouch[*]



Fanzines

Reviewed by Ian

It has been more than a year since I last put this column together (16 months, if I go by the number of monthly NASFA Shuttles or De Profundi, or bimonthly Reluctant Famili I have in the pile). I kept the fanzines that arrived in one place, first a single pile, then two when one became too shaky to maintain equilibrium. Then I got the bright idea of trying to review them as they came in. That worked for a while until I got too busy in the summer with the garden and all the other things going on, and school starting in the fall. Anyway, I don't know how inches of fanzines I received during those 16 months or so, but there have been a lot of 'em. And now I scramble to list them and make some comments. Don't expect much. I'm very busy doing about ten things at once, but I'll do what I can. All are available for the usual unless otherwise noted. Please make checks out to the editor, not the name of the zine. (Finished 21 April 91)

A & A #125-32. Frances Valery, 11 rue des Vignerons, 33800 BORDEAUX, FRANCE. This is a publication of l'ACADEMIE DE L'ESPACE; 100 francs for 8 issues. A very nice looking fanzine from France. The covers and interior art (when there is any) is very interesting, and the print is clean. I was hoping to meet Francis at the Worldcon in Holland, but he did not show up. Even though I don't read French, I manage to decipher enough via my Latin background and a French/English dictionary to get the essence of some of the articles.

Airglow #8. Terry L. Bohman, Box 14, East Thetford, Vermont 05043 USA. \$1/2 issues. I continue to hold up Terry's personalzine as one of the more interesting ones that have passed my eyes. I grab a coke, sit and read about Terry's experiences. Excellent writing.

Andruschak-zines. Harry Andruschak, PO Box 5309, Torrance, CA 90510-5309 USA. Harry sends several zines from his apa output, including ones which cover his operation to correct his sleeping/snoring problem, and his trip to Africa, and his other activities.

Anvil #51-52. ANVIL, Charlotte Proctor, 8325 7th Avenue So., Birmingham, AL 35206. The usual or \$6 per year. The usual pleasant issue of writing by Buck Coulson, Charlotte herself, and a host of others. I probably should respond to Patrick Gibb's comments about the Hugo winners for this year in #52 (I agree with most of his assessments) but I would have preferred seeing Resnick win over Silverberg in the Novelette category. I may still send a loc if I have time(!).

Apple of Discord #3. David Palter, 55 Yarmouth Road (Basement), Toronto, Ontario, M6G 1X1 CANADA. An essay about God and evil. Interesting, and NOT a fanzine, as David has gaffiated from them. Interesting, nevertheless.

Bardic Runes #2. Michael McKenny, editor. 424 Cambridge St. S., Ottawa, Ontario, CANADA K1S 4H5. A Canadian fanzine devoted to printing traditional and high fantasy. \$3.50 to Cathy Woodgold at this address. Payment 1/2 cent/word on acceptance for stories 3,500 words or less. Some creative stuff here.

Ben's Beat. Ben Indick, 428 Sagamore Avenue, Teaneck, NY 07666 USA. This is Ben's FAPAzine which includes his Theatre Beat. Good and interesting stuff. (I'm sure I got one or two in the last 9 months; can't locate it/them at present.)

Black Hole #29, 30. Ian Creasey, ed., c/o Luu SF Society, Leeds University Union, PO Box 157, LEEDS LS1 1UH, UNITED KINGDOM. The usual or 40p a copy. The editor has put together another marvelous assortment of articles, news, fiction and poetry in these issues of Black Hole. Excellent art in #29. Some good reading.

Books Are Everything, Sales list #24. R.C. & Elwanda Holland, 302 Martin Dr., Richmond, KY 40475 USA. Free if you ask for it, continued free if you order books. They have a large selection.

Brunch Shot. A one-shot by Bill Hoffman of Portland Oregon.

Bruzzfuzzel News #61-67. Baton Rouge Science Fiction League, PO Box 14238, Baton Rouge, LA 70898-4238, USA. A clubzine with occasionally exceptional reviews, some good art and locs. Unfortunately, the zine is suspending publication, precipitated by the resignation of long-time editor Clay Fourrier. Their PO Box will be closing soon, at which time all mail should go to Ray LePine, c/o FS Software, 7940 Jefferson Highway, Suite 100, Baton Rouge, LA 70809-1209.

The Centaur Gatherum Newsletter #2-10, 21, 22. Ed Pegg, Jr., POB 10216, Colorado Springs, CO 80932,



USA. \$1/issue. A fanzine/newsletter about centaurs -- art, stories, et al. I picked up the earlier issues from Dave Alway for the art. Some very nice stuff. #21 has two issues: a silly and serious one.

Chris Drumm Books, Book catalogues #39-53. PO Box 445, Polk City, IA 50226, USA. Catalogues, obviously; Chris also puts out his own line of little books which are well worth looking at.

C(h)ube #46. Produced by Andrew Hooper and Kim Nash. CHUBE, Box 1624, Madison, WI 53701-1624. Available for the price of an SF3 membership.

Cleveland Ansible. #5-10. Julie E. Washington, editor and staff. PO Box 14841, Cleveland, OH 44114. This fanzine gives news about Cleveland SF & F fandom. Some interesting reading. There are frequent interviews with authors and the ST:TNG stars.

Con News #12, 13. Claude N. Warren, Jr., 7735 Osceola Street, Westminster, CO 80030. \$6/year, bimonthly. Put together as a newspaper, Claude and his staff hope to get submissions and ads about SF and related conventions, and establish Con News as the newszine of the convention world. Looks good, and the articles/ads are informative.

Concentration #4. Jonathon Cowie, editor, 44 Brook St., Erith, Kent, DA8, 1JQ ENGLAND. A free publication (semi-prozine) with news, reviews, and interviews. Slick production, which I picked up at CONFICTION.

Convention Log #56-60. R Lorraine Tutinasi, Katnip Manor, 5876 Bowcroft Street #4, Los Angeles, CA 90016, USA. Whim. Lorraine's diary/personal-zine; has some reviews and conreports, locs; summarizes her life and feelings.

Critical Wave #18-20. Steve Green, editor, 33 Sott Rd., Olton, Solihull. B92 7LQ. American subscriptions (\$15/year) payable to Mary Burns, 23 Kensington Court, Hampstead, NY 11550 USA. Bi-monthly. This is a fanzine of European SF news. The features are interesting reading, and the news is fairly fresh (with a bi-monthly schedule it is easy to do); I enjoyed it.

Dag Productions. A newsletter about DAG products and items they handle--primarily filk tapes and books. 5800 Century #88011, Los Angeles, CA 90009.

Dark Fantasy Catalogue. J & I Kennelly, PO Box 5230, Lakeland, FL 33807. Mail order catalogue for books.

De Profundis #215-230. Los Angeles Science Fiction Society, 11513 Burbank Blvd., North Hollywood, CA 91601. The official newsletter of LASFS, filled with con and fan information, reviews, minutes, etc.

Desert Sun #8. Craig Chrissinger, 840 Orti SE, #1, Albuquerque, NM 87108, USA. \$2/copy. A zine filled with poetry, art (some excellent), articles, reviews, cartoons, etc. Pleasant reading, and Craig would love contributions.

Don-o-Saur #57-60. Don C. Thompson, 3735 W. 81st place, Westminster, CO 80030. These are the last we'll see of Don's writings. His death in December was a blow to fandom, particularly to his wife Carolyn and all of Denver fans. There may still be one more issue--a letters issue compiled by his wife and Thea Hutchison.

Dreamhaven Books Catalogues. 1300 4th St. SE, Minneapolis, MN 55414 USA. Phone (612) 379-8924. Fax number: (612) 379-0657.

8-1/2 X 11 zine, #6 7/8. David Thayer, PO Box 905, Euless, TX 76039 USA. A personalzine from David which tells of the the changes going on in his life.

Eldritch Science, Dec 1989. George Phillies, editor. 87-6 Park Avenue, Worcester, MA 01605 USA. Published semiannually, \$10/4 issues. A zine seeking tales of SF & Fantasy, poems and art. Editor is looking for good stories with satisfying conclusions in the 1-15,000 word range. Stories this issue are reasonably good with excellent art. Good, interesting reading.

Erq, #109-113. Terry Jeeves, 56 Red Scar Drive, Scarborough YO12 5RQ, E. Yorkshire UNITED KINGDOM. LOC, \$5/6 issues in US bills (not check --

costs too much to process). Terry celebrated his 68th birthday on October 1, 1990. He continues to produce these zines which are extremely interesting. They are filled with his personal life and thoughts, evocative essays, short book reviews, and his wonderful art. He unfortunately is cutting back to a different format now, owing to broadening interests and rising postage costs. #113 features "Fun with Photography," one of Terry's passions, more about fighter planes (that failed), a crossword puzzle, and an article on pulp era artist Marchionni. Highly recommended

Ethel the Aardvark #33. Melbourne SF Club, PO Box 212, World Trade Center, Melbourne, 3005, Victoria AUSTRALIA. Nice clubzine with news, reviews, and the usual stuff.

European Trash Cinema #7-10. Vol 2: 1-2. Craig Ledbetter, Box 5367, Kingwood, TX 77325 USA. Craig continues his excellent coverage of Grade-B foreign horror films and videos, and asking for such material. There is no dearth of people interested in this subgenre of the horror film. If you are interested, send him \$3 for a copy, \$10 for four.

Fantasy Collector, The, #225. Camille "Caz" Cazessus, Jr., 7080 Highland Road/ Bayou Fontaine, Baton Rouge, Louisiana 70808 USA. \$18/year (12 issues). If you are interested in pulps, get this fanzine. It has articles and ads, and nicely reproduced pulp covers.

FILE:770, #85-88. Mike Glycer, 5828 Woodman Ave., #2, Van Nuys, CA 91401, USA. 5/\$5 The premiere fannish newsletter. Lots of interesting writing. And he's gotten a new DTP program!! It looks nice.

Filking Times, The #16, 17, 21, 25. Rick & Deborah Weiss, eds., 13261 Donegal Drive, Garden Grove, CA 92644-2304. A very chatty newszine about filking; has interviews, news, reviews. Rick and Deborah keep looking for material, so, filkers, send news and information to them. I got a call from Deborah asking if she could use my reviews from LL #35. Naturally I said yes. The first of those appears in #25. We talked for over an hour after I called her back; she is an interesting and nice person to talk to. \$7/12 issues.

Firebird Arts & Music, Summer 1990. PO Box 14785, Portland, OR 97214. A catalogue of various tapes, art, music books and records in the filk and folk vein.

Folly #1-6. Arnie Katz, 330 S. Decatur, Suite 152, Las Vegas, NV 89107. The Usual. Arnie gaffated

from fandom just before I got in, so I know little about him. But he is now back and publishing. Some very interesting writing, particularly in #5. Imagine my surprise when, in an article called "Gaffation", author Joe Walcott refers to something from Lan's Lantern. As I read through the Joe's piece, I kept trying to recall what he could be talking about, until I see the reference to a piece "tucked between the fanzine reviews and con reports on pages 273 to 275." I knew then that it was a put-on (my largest single issue was #35, 178 pages), but it had me wondering for a bit. The most interesting feature of #6 is Arnie's description of his cataract operation, the life events leading up to it and its aftermath.

Fosfax #147-154. Fosfa, PO Box 37281, Louisville, KY 40233-7281, USA. A fairly large, consistently produced bimonthly clubzine filled with reviews, commentary and locs. The lettercolumn is lively with many authors participating. The page count keeps going up. Soon each issue will have a mailing half the size of my fanzine. Does the editor, Tim Lane, ever sleep? Recent issues have interesting commentaries, even though the format has become rather tedious. Recommended.

Gasbag #170-176. The Gilbert and Sullivan Boys and Girls newsletter, funded and published by FUMGASS (Friends of the University of Michigan Gilbert and Sullivan Society). Jean Lynn Barnard, 1810 Charlton Ave., Ann Arbor, MI 48103. Membership in FUMGASS range from \$10-\$50 per year, and Gasbag comes with membership. Lots of interesting tidbits about G&S.

Gegenschein #57-59. Eric Lindsey, 7 Nicoll Avenue, Ryde, NSW 2112, AUSTRALIA. Irregular, but interesting commentary about life, books, and fandom by Eric.

Generic Fandom News #18-21. Brian Youmans, 27R Albion St., #2, Somerville, MA 02143, USA. This is filled with all the sorts of things: fannish news, reviews, conreports, and Brian's personal journal. Quite interesting. #20 has a long trip report on Brian's travels to England and the Worldcon in Holland, which is concluded in #21.

Gradient #2, 3. Robert Sabella, 2 Natalie Drive, Budd Lake, NJ 07828. This little fanzine is a collection of essays and commentary that Bob has written over the past few years.

Hardware Magazine #2. Jimm Gall, editor, 710 Adeline Street, Trenton, NJ 08611 USA. \$4/issue by mail, \$10/3 issues. A fanzine devoted to fiction and poetry, with concentration on hard SF.

Hardwired Hinterland #7. Richard Jervis, PO Box 743, Notre Dame, IN 46556 USA. News and reviews of SF.

Harpings #21-#26. The Filk Foundation, 34 Barbara Drive, Little Rock AR 72204. USA. Available to Filk Foundation members, contribution of news, and editorial whim. Contains news of interest to filkers and those who enjoy filking and con-reports of the recent Filkcons held around the country.

Hickman's Zines. Lynn Hickman, 413 Ottokee St., Wauseon, OH 43657. This time Lynn has sent a number of different zines in trade for LL. Wauseon Wonder Stories #17 (his MYRIADzine), Old & New #10 (his KAPAZine), and Flip Flap #18 & #20 (his zine for FLAP). Interesting stuff about Lynn's past and present life in fandom.

Ibid #68. Ben Indick, 428 Sagamore Avenue, Teaneck, NJ, 07666 USA. Ben's zine for The Esoteric Order of Dagon.

It Goes on the Shelf, #7. Ned Brooks, Sign of the Purple Mouth, 713 Paul Street, Newport News, VA 23605. Interesting zine mixing book reviews with letters received. Ned continues to request strong line art that will xerox/thermofax well. He has some nice art this issue.

It's My Dance, #11-14. Joel Zakem, 2091 Sherwood, Apt. #2, Louisville, KY 40205 USA. Joel's zine for ALPS. Joel gives these to me in trade, and they are rather interesting. I have an interest in music, so I am happy to get the information about recordings and concerts from him.

Knarley Knews, The, #20-26. Henry L Welch, 5538 N. Shasta Dr., Glendale, WI 53209 USA. Henry Welch (aka Knarley) has put together a little zine which is mostly a personalzine, although he welcomes contributions. In the combined #23/24, Knarley tells of how he came to move from Troy NY to Wisconsin. In #25 he tells his readers about buying his house.

Lollygagging #21 & 23. Chuck Conner, Sildan House, Chediston Road, Wisset near Halesworth, Suffolk, IP19 0NF ENGLAND. #21 is a tape, that I still haven't worked up the nerve (let alone find the time) to pop it into a player and hear.

LOOP GAROU #5. Guest editor: Raja Thiagarajan, 4423 E. Trailridge Rd, Bloomington, IN 47408-9653. This issue is a small one with two fiction pieces and two essays, put out by the Science Fiction Loop, a SF club in Bloomington.



Low Orbit #44 & 45. R'ykandar Korra'ti, editor. 252 East Loudon, Lexington, KY 40505-3636 USA. An excellently produced zine. There is a good mix of different types of articles, features, locs and reviews. #44 features a conference with George Alec Effinger, and an interview with Jack Chalker; #45 has an interview with Timothy Zahn and a conference with artist Rick Sternback who now works on Star Trek: The Next Generation.

Mainstream 13. Jerry Kaufman & Suzanne Tompkins, 8738 1st Avenue NW, Seattle WA 98117 USA. A "Special *Strange Trips* Issue" as the editors typed at the bottom of the ToC page. Some very interesting reading, and comments about the places which authors like Andrew Hooper visited.

Marvin - the Lehti #9. Ari Veintie, Harjukatu 6 A 2 A, 00500 Helsinki, FINLAND. This is the clubzine of the Helsinki University Science Fiction Club. #9 was put together for distribution at CONFIC-TION, although it was mailed in June. It has an interesting collection of articles reviews, and a couple of fiction pieces. The art is very nice.

Memphen #153. Gregory Bridges, 266 Garland Place, Memphis, TN 38104. This is the semi-official publication of the Memphis SF Association. Mostly information about Southern Fandom awards, upcoming conventions, and club news.

Mentor, The, #65-69 (August 1989). Ron Clarke, 6 Bellevue Road, Falconbridge, NSW 2776, AUSTRALIA. A mixture of articles, locs and fiction. Good, pleasant reading, with a variety of articles (one by Buck Coulson), reviews, a short story, poetry and locs. Some excellent art by Steve Fox, Peggy Ranson, Joseph Szerkeres, and Marc McLeod very well re-produced.

Metcalf Zines, Norm. PO Box 1368, Boulder Colorado 80306 USA. In return for issues of Lan's Lantern, Norm sent me various zines from the different apas he's in: The Devil's Work (Vol 2, #17-21) for FAPA, Resin (Vol 2, #5, 16-19) for SAPS, Sulph (Vol 1, #8-11) for PEAPS, and Tyndallite

(Vol 1, #24, 27-31) for SFGA. Norm has been around fandom for a long time and has lots of information about SF, authors, and books. Although these are mailing comments to various people in the area, the information is still interesting. There is also one copy of CFS Review (Vol 2, #1) for both FAPA and SFGA, which comments on the "feud" started between Sam Moskowitz and David Kyle over the 1941 Worldcon bid, and the related information and misinformation which followed for more than 50 years (some of which appeared in Mimosa, edited by Nicki and Dick Lynch).

Mimosa #9. Dick & Nicki Lynch, PO Box 1270, Germantown, MD 20874 USA. An excellent zine, with lots of different articles to appeal to most people's tastes. Some very good artwork, especially the stuff by Joe Mayhew, Kurt Erichsen, Charlie Williams, and others. And since the Lynchs are doing fan programming at CHICON V, they are soliciting ideas and suggestions and volunteers for said programming.

Munich Round Up #158 & 159. Waldemar Kummig, Engadiner Str. 24/II, D 8000 Munchen 71, GERMANY. US agent is Andy Porter, PO Box 2730, Brooklyn, NY 112020056 USA. (\$1.75/issue, \$5/3 issues.) Contains conreports, fiction, reviews, etc.

NASFA Shuttle (Jan 1990-Apr 1991). NASFA, PO Box 4857, Huntsville, AL 35815-4857, USA. Current Editor: Nelda Kathleen Kennedy, 7907 Charlotte Drive SW, Huntsville, AL 35802 USA. The newsletter of the North Alabama Science Fiction Association. Locs, reviews, meeting & club news, etc. It continues to be interesting, and downright frustrating because it comes out monthly on schedule (like the now bi-monthly FOSFAX and The Reluctant Famulus). The Feb. 1990 issue was the 100th NASFA Shuttle, and had an expanded page count, fiction, and some very nice art pieces. The most recent (April 1991) has an article by Richard Gilliam on the recommended (and not recommended) films of 1989 and 1990. Keep up the good work, Nelda!

National Fantasy Fan, The (TNFF), Dec 1989, August 1990. Donald Franson, 6543 Babcock Ave., N. Hollywood, CA 91606 USA. Comes with membership in N3F. The official newsletter of the National Fantasy Fan Federation (N3F).

Neology Vol. 15 #3, Vol. 16, #1. Catherine Girzyc ESFACAS Box 4071 PSSE, Edmonton, Alberta T6E 4S8. \$12/year, quarterly. The Edmonton Science Fiction And Comic Arts Society clubzine. Some good articles and reviews, active loccol, and club news. Superb artwork.

Nekas #41a, 41b, & 42. Edmund R. Meskys, RFD 2, Box 63, Center Harbor, NH 03226-9729 USA. A nicely put together fanzine full of excellent commentary and reviews. Hugo winner in 1967; nominated again for 1989 (lost to File:770 as I did). #41a and #41b are special issues and oddly shaped (8-1/2 by 11 folded lengthwise); 41a has poems by Anthony Magistrale and art by Robert H. Knox. #41b has essays about Ray Bradbury by James Anderson, with art by Larry Dickison. #42 is back to the usual format and series of reviews, articles, and so on.

NOTA. Vol 1, #2-4. Louisville Free Public Library, Valley Branch Library 6505 Bethany Lane, Louisville, KY 40272-3757. A newsletter with notes about events and SF happening at the library. Staff includes Johnny Carruthers, Linda Wyatt, and Susan Baugh.

Nova Express, Vol. III, #2-3. Michael Sombera, ed., 301 East 35th St., Austin, TX 78705 USA. \$8/year inside USA, other rates apply. Nice layout and production values abound in this fanzine. These issues have some good articles. #2 has a Pat Murphy interview and an overview of the works of Jonathan Carroll. #4 has a nice interview with Pamela Sargent, and a bibliography of her work.

Novoid #7, #8. Colin Hinz, #3-349 West Street N., Orillia, Ontario CANADA L3V 5E1. #8 has no artwork, and is thus sub-titled "The Art Strike Issue." Some interesting articles about war.

Odd #3-4.5. David R. Haugh, 556 N 3rd Street, Woodburn, OR 97071 USA. An odd little zine. Dave has an alphabet of his robot art in #3. Other strange things and art in #4 and #4.5.

OtherRealms #26 - 29. Chuq Von Rospach, 35111-F Newark Blvd., Suite 255, Newark, CA 94560, USA. Still one of the best reviewzines around, with an active lettercol.

Penguin Dip #31-43. Stephen H. Dorneman, 94 Eastern Ave #1, Malden MA 02148 USA. \$15/year (10 issues). Various articles about SF, zine reviews, comics, and gaming. Nice writing by Lawrence Watt-Evans on Comics, and an active lettercol. Steve has some beautiful covers by Ruth Thompson and Peggy Ranson.

Pigs Might Fly. Marc Ortlieb, PO Box 215, Forest Hills, Victoria 3131 AUSTRALIA. Marc's ANZAPazine sent in trade for LL (along with an article which sees light in this issue of the Lantern). He makes some interesting comments on being a new parent.

Perspex Parrot. Bob Shaw, 66 Knutsford Rd., Grappenhall, Warrington, Cheshire WA4 2PB, England. A somewhat personalzine by author Bob Shaw, who still likes to do fannish writing.

Pirate Jenny #4. Pat Mueller, 618 Westridge, Duncanville, TX 75116, USA. \$3/issue. A very good issue. It has an excellent, funny article called "SF According to Me" by Dennis Virzi. With this issue Pat became eligible for the Hugo, and she did indeed get on the ballot.

Poutnik/Pilgrim. Special 1990 issue. Put out by the J.V. Club, Miroslav Martan, Chairman, Pocatecka 12, 140 00 Praha 4, CZECHOSLAVAKIA. An English version of the clubzine. Art, fiction.

Probe #80, 81. Neil van Niekerk, SFSA, PO Box 2538, Primrose 1416 UNION OF SOUTH AFRICA. A clubzine of SFSA, filled with various stories, poetry, reviews and locs. Interesting perspective.

Proper Boskonian. Nesfa, Box G, MIT Branch PO, Cambridge, MA 02139. Semiannual. Well-produced clubzine--articles about cons, reviews, letter-column, etc. Some excellent art.

Protoculture Addicts. IANVS PUBLICATIONS, 33 Prince Street, Suite 243, Montreal, Qc., CANADA H3C 2M7. Bimonthly. US\$18/year, Canadian\$21/year. A zine about Anime and Manga.

Pulphouse Publishing. Various catalogues about the various publications of Pulphouse Magazine, Author's Choice Monthly, and Axolotl Press

Specials. PO Box 1227, Eugene, OR 97440.

Pulsar #15. A. E. Ubelhor, PO Box 886, Evansville, IN 47706-0886 USA. \$9/year (6 issues). A magazine size fanzine, filled with reviews, locs, articles, and fiction. This issue includes an interview with Forrest J. Ackerman, lots of beautiful art scattered throughout, some good fiction, a short story by Mike Resnick, and more.

Q36I, June 1990. Marc Ortlieb, PO Box 215, Forest Hill, Victoria 3131 AUSTRALIA. A personalzine by Marc.

Quantum #36-38. Thrust Publications, 8217 Langport Terrace, Gaithersburg, MD 20877. \$9/4 issues (one year subscription) in US, \$12 elsewhere; \$16/8 issues (2-year subscription) in US, \$22 elsewhere. Interesting articles about writers and SF, and reviews.

Radio Free Thulcandra, #22-24. Marty Helgesen, 11 Lawrence Avenue, Malverne, NY 11565-1406. A fanzine of Christian fandom, which is "an interdenominational fellowship of Christians and Science Fiction Fans interested in the courteous and accurate representation of Christian viewpoints in the fannish community." Lively discussions, though not quite my interest. I have not read this closely, so I have not participated in any of the discussions.

Redback, #5-8. John D. Berry, 525 19th Avenue East, Seattle, WA 98112. The newsletter of DUFF, the Down Under Fan Fund. The reigns now are handed over to Art Widner, the newest winner of this prestigious honor.



Reluctant Famulus, The. #8-15. Tom Sadler, 422 W. Maple Ave., Adrian, MI 49221. Bimonthly. A fanzine with some reviews, but mostly personal observations on SF, fandom and conventions. More than very pleasant reading. TRF is becoming an excellent personalzine, with some features of genzines that I enjoy reading. Tom is looking for submissions of art, articles and reviews. He is in the middle of his third year of publishing, and is continuing with a regular schedule that very few fans have equalled.

The Rivendell Review. Vol 11, #3. Renee (Arwen) Alper, 730F Northland Rd., Forest Park, OH 45240 USA. Phone: (513) 742-4384. Quarterly; \$6/year. The Rivendell Review is the newsletter of The American Hobbit Association. The newsletter contains news (obviously), poems, stories, and other items of interest to Tolkien and fantasy fans.

Robots and RoadRunners, Vol. 4, #4, Vol. 5. #1-4, Vol. 6, #1. Lynn Garcia, URSA MAJOR, PO Box 691448, San Antonio, TX 78629-1448 USA. \$1.50/issue, quarterly. The clubzine/newszine of Ursa Major, the San Antonio SF Club. Some enlightening articles about club members, some good book and fanzine reviews, and even an interesting piece of fiction or two.

Al Salyer's Zines. Al Salyer, PO Box 1551, Royal Oak, MI 48068-1551. Al sent a couple of his zines of artwork: "Babes in Arms" or females with guns (\$.50), and "Guitar Frenzy"--ladies with guitars in various positions (\$.75). For mature readers.

SGLODIAN, #2. David Langford, 94 London Rd, Reading, Berkshire, ENGLAND, RG1 5AU. In this issue Dave recounts his troubles with Whitley Streiber over Streiber's use of Dave's fictional account of an ancestral UFO sighting in the 19th century. Dave wrote An Account of a Meeting with the Denizens of Another World, 1871 as a tongue-in-cheek Victorian farce, and Streiber took it to be a true account. Other happenings happened, reported in Dave's own inimitable way, and his friend Jenny Randles winds up being sued by Stanton Friedman, US UFOlogist, over statements she made which were distorted in a news article. He is asking for money for her defense.

SF Commentary, #69-70. Bruce Gillespie, GPO 5195AA, Melbourne, Victoria, 3001 AUSTRALIA. US\$30/5 issues. Some very detailed and excellent reviews and insights on books from the Australian viewpoint. Of interest to readers of SF.

Samizdat, #17 & 18. Philippe Gauthier, 197 Du Bearn, Saint-Lambert, Quebec J4S 1L2 CANADA, and Claude J. Pelletier, 20 Chemin du Mistral, Iles Laval,

Laval, Quebec H7Y 1S1. \$3/issue. A genzine for French-Canadian fans, written in French. It has cartoons, pro and fan reviews, interviews, locs, etc.

Seldon's Plan, #49.1, 49.2. Seldon's Plan, PO Box 441822, Detroit, MI 48224-1822. Bill Waldrup and Cy Chauvin, co-editors. An attempted revival of the Wayne Third Foundation clubzine. They are looking for material.

Shipyard Blues, #3-5. John D. Owen, 4 Highfield Close, Newport Pagnell, Bucks., MK16 9AZ UNITED KINGDOM. A beautifully produced zine with a focus on fun and more timely articles. The reproduction is excellent, and the artwork impeccable. Great reading and response.

Shuttle, The SFSFS, #58, 63-73. PO Box 70143, Ft. Lauderdale, FL 33307 USA. "Official Newszine of the South Florida SF Society." Typical clubzine with news and reviews.

Solaris #88 - 94. Luc Pomerleau, Case Postale 25, Succursale A, Hull, Quebec, J8Y 6M7 CANADA. \$3.50/issue. This is the semiprozine of French-speaking Canada. This is a nicely produced zine with reviews, stories, interviews, and lavish illustrations. Since it is written in French, I have trouble reading it, but Maia can make some of it out and says it's nicely done. The French teachers at school continue to marvel at its quality.

Southern Fandom Confederation Bulletin, The, #6-8. SFC, P. L. Caruthers-Montgomery, 2629 Norwood Avenue, Anniston, AL 36201-2871, USA. A well laid-out zine filled with news, convention listings, club roster, fanzine guide and some nice art from Southern fans. PLCM's calligraphy adds to the issue. In #8, PL tells of her eye-opening experiences being confined to a wheelchair while at CON*STELLATION.

Spanish Armadillo, #2. Terry Broome, 101 Malham Drive, Lakeside Park, Lincoln, LN6 0XD UNITED KINGDOM is the mailing address. The editors are Geogre Bondar, 33 Ragstone Road, Slough, SL1 2PP UK, and Chuck Conner, Sildan House, Chediston Road, Wisset near Halesworth, Suffolk, IP19 0NF ENGLAND. Some interesting articles, including Geogre's trip to Australia.

Spektra, #38, 39. Lars-Arne Karlsson, Ekas Gallared, 310 60 Ullared, SWEDEN. Issues in trade for LL.

Spent Brass, #1-4. Andy Hooper and Carol Root, 315 N. Ingersoll, Madison, WI 53703. \$1/2 issues. A

small genzine/personalzine with some interesting commentary on life and things fannish.

STET. Leah Zeldes Smith, 17 Kerry Lane, Wheeling, IL 60090-6415. A personalzine from Leah, in which she describes her and her husband Dick's trip to the Worldcon in Holland, buying a house, and being burglarized, and their car stolen... not a dull life they lead!

Sticky Carpet Digest #4 & 5. Tom Deja, Unstable Gables, 86 Willow Street, Floral Park, NY 11001. Subtitles, "Journal of the Ongoing Weird," the zine fulfills that description admirably. Like Craig Ledbetter and his European Trash Cinema, Tom Deja and his crew review films and videos, particularly grade B horror. Some funny and occasionally, uh, inspiring comments.

Strange Plasma, #3. Steve Pasechnick, Edgewood Press, PO Box 264, Cambridge, MA 02238. A fiction zine well produced, with stories by some professional authors. Impressive.

Strings #1. John Weston, 97 St. Peter's Way, Warrington, Cheshire, WA2 7BL, UK. A strange zine with plasticized covers, a plastic molded binding, and art, fiction and poetry on the interior pages (not plasticized).

SUMMA NULLA, #1. Tony Ubelhor, PO Box 886, Evansville, IN 47706-0886. Tony put this together as a joke to show "Trufen" that he can produce a fanzine like theirs. He failed. Like his zine Pulsar!, this is a class act. The material is good, but the repro surpasses what such "Trufen" would do with their mimeographs. Good job, Tony!

Sweetness and Light, #4 & 5. Jack R. Herman, Box 272, Wentworth Building, University of Sydney, AUSTRALIA 2006. A newszine of Australian fandom, with reviews, conreports, travelogues, and so on.

Tales of the Unanticipated #8. Eric Heideman, PO Box 8036, Lake Street Station, Minneapolis, MN 55407. US\$10/4 issues; back issues available. A magazine of the Minnesota SF Society that publishes articles, fiction and poetry which are augmented by artwork. There is some good reading between the covers of this issue, by authors such as Peg Kerr, Chuck Rothman, John Heigenberger, John Sladek, and Laurel Winter.

Terronauts, The #8. Dennis K. Fischer, 366 Spaulding Ave. #12, Los Angeles, CA 90036 USA. Whim, or \$10/4 issues. A wonderful review of sf/horror films and TV in the US. This is the last issue, as Dennis is returning to grad school.

Texas SF Inquirer #30, 31, 33-37. Alexander R. Slate, 1847 Babcock #406, San Antonio, TX 78229 USA, and Dale Denton, 2016 Ravinia Circle, Arlington, TX 76012. The newszine and magazine of Central Texas. There has been some positive steps taken to improve the quality of the production, and therefore the artwork looks better. Great, in fact. Lots of reviews and such.

Thor Records. PO Box 40312, Downey, CA 90239-1312. Catalogues of products available from the company, which includes some tapes from other sources. Thor Records jackets are also available.

Thyme #79-81. LynC, PO Box 4024, University of Melbourne, Victoria 3052 AUSTRALIA. Another news magazine of Australian Fandom and SF. Has some convention reports, reviews, and news.

Torus #7 & 8. Lloyd Penney, Keith Soltys, Michael Dennis Skeet & Michael Wallis. PO Box 186, Station M, Toronto, Ontario M6S 4T3 CANADA. Two good issues, which are slowly starting to increase in size. Be warned, guys, that's how it started with me. Now I publish phone books.

Trapdoor, #9 & 10. Robert Lichtman, PO Box 30, Glen Ellen, CA 95442. One of the best little fanzines around. Robert gets a lot of nice interesting articles.

Uncle Hugo's SF Bookstore / Uncle Edgar's Mystery Bookstore. Newsletter #4-8. A newsletter (obviously) of books published, received and for sale at these two stores owned by Don Blyly. There are some reviews included, both short and a little longer.

Wail Songs, Mid-year 1990, and 1991 Catalogues. Wail Songs, PO Box 29888, Oakland, CA 94604, USA. A catalogue for filk tapes produced by Wail Songs. Prices for tapes range from \$8-\$11 and filk books are also available.

Weber Woman's Wrevenge, Vol 6, #3-6. Jean Weber, 6 Hillcrest Avenue, Faulconbridge, NSW 2776, Australia. Wonderfully written, feminist oriented (though not exclusively) fanzine. I enjoy it immensely. In #3 Jean finishes up her trip to North America, though in #4 she adds a few more comments.

Xenophile, #4. Con-Version, PO Box 1088, Station M, Calgary, Alberta T2P 2K9 CANADA. A clubzine with beautiful artwork, reviews, and serious articles on science, society, and fandom.

Xenophilia, #1. Joy Oestreicher, 904 Old Town Court, Cupertino, CA 95014. \$5/year (2 issues). This new small press production published poetry (and one short-short story) based on xenology, visions of future human development, weird/alien cultures, humans from an alien's point of view, et., with sensual and exotic emphasis. There is a small section on the theme of "Exploration". Future issues will include themes as "Vegetable Grace" (#2), and "Blade Dancing" (#3). Artwork is commissioned.

Xenium #14. Mike Glicksohn, 508 Windermere Avenue, Toronto, Ontario CANADA M6S 3L6. A personal zine wherein Mike doesn't get too personal about himself, but allows others to get personal about themselves.

Xenolith #33-35. Bill Bowers, PO Box 58174, Cincinnati, OH 45258-0174. A personal zine wherein Bill talks a lot about himself, and lets other talk about themselves and about him in their own photocopied letters. Bill has just rejoined fandom after a hiatus of several years, and a messy divorce which precipitated his return (the marriage caused the fannation).

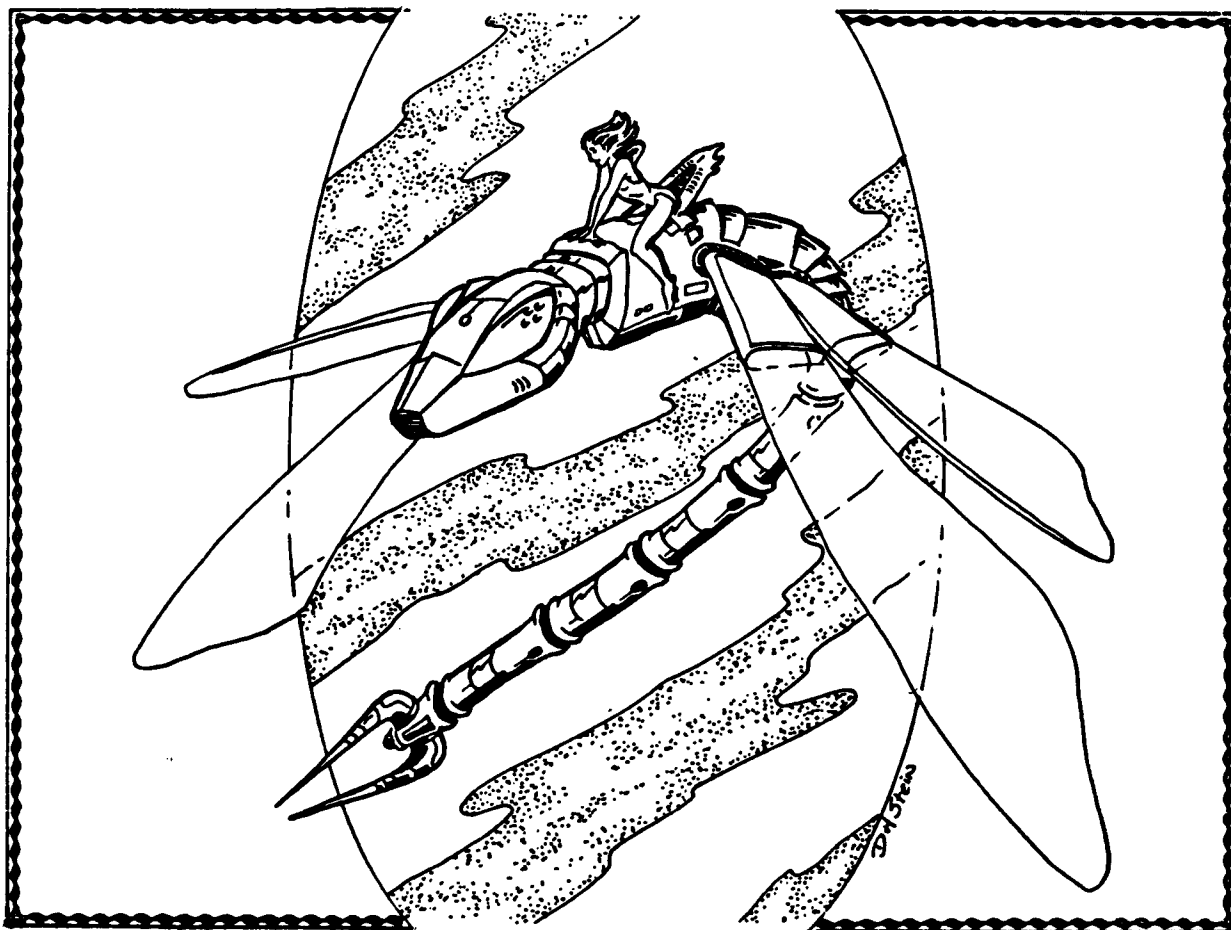
Xyster #15 & 16. Dave Wood, 1 Fairy Close, Marine Hill, Clevedon, Avon BS21 7QA UNITED KINGDOM. A

mostly personal zine with other writers participating. In #15, Dave prints David Langford's Goh speech from ORYCON 11.

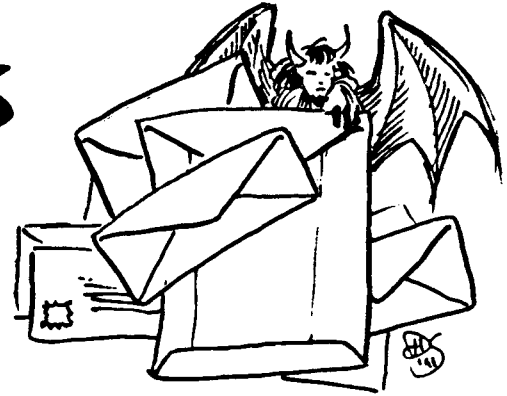
Yandro #259. Robert & Juanita Coulson, 2677W-500N, Hartford City, IN 47348-9575. \$1/copy. The colophon reads Feb. 1986, though it is really post-marked March, 1991. No, not the Post Office's fault; Buck's heart attack in '86 was the main reason, along with the scarcity of twilltone paper and being laid off work. Anyway, this is the final issue of Yandro.

YHOS #49-50. Art Widner, 231 Courtney Lane, Orinda, CA 94563, USA. As Art's FAPAzine, he does a remarkable fanzine. The articles are interesting and thoughtful, and not just by him. He has an irregular column by rich brown, and presents fan news and gossip on all fronts.

Zineth #1. Doug Roemer, 674 Newbridge Ct, Arnold, MD 21012. A wonderful zine dedicated to works of Mike Resnick. The complete list of available editions of Mike's works makes this a collector's item, but the illustrated version of "The Destroyers" (from Birthright: The Book of Man) by Leesuh Allen adds value to this issue, I can't wait to see what Doug will do next.



Post Scriptings



Letters from the readers.

Patricia Shaw Mathews 12899 Central N.E. #174 Albuquerque, NM 87123	I loved the articles by Susan Shwartz on Lawrence of Arabia and on Mrs. Brown--the Female
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Hero in issue #32.

As for Shea's article on "Future Sex", his opinion is probably valid, but science fiction has to explore as many alternatives as we want. Who knows, some of the most ridiculous predictions may come true. Cases in point: A Poul Anderson story in which a homecoming spacer discovers (among other things) that the latest sex symbol is a scrawny 10-year-old. Disgusting? Yes. Improbably? Ask Jodie Foster. Case 2: A Fritz Leiber humorous piece in which the latest fashion for female office workers is the dress of male executives of a generation ago. Thank you, Annie Hall.

Laura Todd's campaign for using recycled paper is emotionally appealing, but I used such paper in one ecologically correct office. It jammed in the printer more than the usual kind, thus wasting more. Oh, well, back to the drawing board.

I read Stirling's letter on the statistics of who is and is not of the professional classes in his Draka society, then read Taras Wolansky's answer. Taras finds Stirling's statistics "playful" because he excludes women, minorities, and the economically disadvantaged.

Up until the late 60s, these groups were systematically excluded on the very simple notion that we were unfit for higher things, and that if we did indulge in them, we would be unfitted for our more usual functions. For historical references, look up and good history of labor in the post World War II years. But Wolansky is right that a caste society is at a disadvantage compared to a technologically minded society that makes every effort to uncover and use its human resources.

(Ugh. I hate being referred to as "resources" or worse, "human capital". Of course, I'm about 2/3 depreciated by the standards of "human" capital and almost totally by standards of "female" capital. But better to be seen as a resource than as a liability, right?)

As for whether or not women whose children are reared by nannies will have more children than others, or lessm depends on what historical period you are looking at. Industrial age women have been hav-

ing fewer children. The long, accomplished, and very dominant families of the aristocracy from the Dark Ages through the Victorian Era were borne to women who had nannies, nurserymaids, and all sorts of live-in domestic help. Is this the effects of reliable and safe birth control? Or are there other cultural factors involved?

re ct on making fun of politicians: do you really equate Patricia Shroeder and Dan Quayle? I acquit you of woman-hating; you need glasses!

William Goodson: As a former female of the NERD species, I appreciate your comments no end!

Steve Jackson: re disillusionment with the GOP: depends on whether you're a Conservative or a Libertarian. Take heart: Quayle is Bush's assassination insurance. Remember the Heinlein story in which a president, for the same reason, makes a popular actress (modeled on Lena Horne, I think) as his running mate--and the country is shocked when she becomes president? And delighted, this being a Heinlein story.

ALL: I am starting a Lois McMaster Bujold fanzine called Samizdat Barrayar. Issue #1 is out already. Subsequent copies are \$5 each. Issue #2 has a speech by Lois herself and several letters of comment. Issue #3 will have a short piece of fan fiction and that's all so far. Contributions welcome. Art, fiction, commentary, poetry, book reviews, etc....send to address above. Include SASE if you want the stuff back.

Maureen S. O'Brien 3801 Lujon Drive Beavercreek, OH 45431	I agree with Robert Sabella and his Guest Editorial. We need more hardcore SF! I like reading fantasy and
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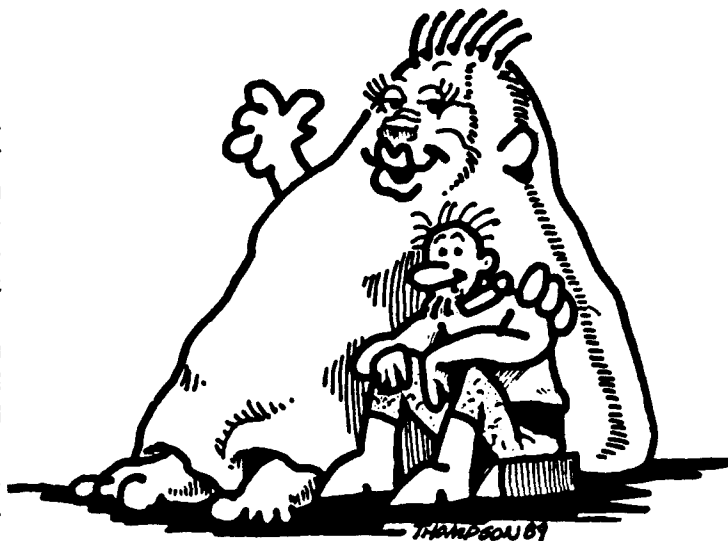
alternate world stuff, but I like it most when it is most like science fiction. I think part of the problem is that the genre is trying to "fit in". Editors of novels are wary yo take risks when the SF line is more than just a tax write-off. Also, many of the old high-SF writers have either converted to fantasy (like most of Andre Norton recent stuff), stopped writing, or written relatively dorky new stuff (like Heinlein in his last few books).

Many new writers are wordy, intensely depressing, sex-ridden, or unimaginative in their SF offerings. After reading their books, a new fan would naturally decide that they don't want to read this sort of thing. Cherryh, for example, can be more depressing than Dostoevsky. Both get away with it among experienced readers because experienced readers can appreciate their wonderful writing. But it doesn't attract newer readers who just want a good story.

The biggest reason that high-SF is not being bought and thus extensively written and published is that there is no real avenue for elementary and junior high kids to get such high-SF. Magazines? I don't know about you, but my grocery store doesn't have Analog in the magazine rack. Children's magazines rarely publish any SF, though fantasy sometimes appears. Also, while there are many good new fantasy novels for children and young adults, there are very few SF juveniles now being published. I would like to know why. Do today's writers feel that what was good enough for Heinlein is unacceptable for them? Why is SF for children left to non-genre writers?

Now would be an ideal time for writers to do something about it. Kids want SF. They like SF movies. They like space. They watch ST: The Next Generation. But all of this vast audience is largely left to fantasy novels from TSR Books. (And if writers are worried about sales, they should think about the large loyal audience they can build by grabbing 'em young.)

I also liked Susan Shwartz' "Welcom to the Starship, Mrs. Brown." My own personal addition to her comments is this--stop using rape as an origin technique! I am sick of reading about female heroes getting raped. The last straw was Sharon Green's Diadem. Aleytys, her heroine, must have gotten raped at least 30 times per book. So I ask--is this rape stuff really necessary? James Bond never got raped. Han Solo never had to wear a skimpy bikini for some evil Imperial space princess. And please--this does not mean I want equal opportunity rape, a la Lawrence of Arabia. I mean, don't use sexual torture in books unless it is really necessary. And if it is necessary, don't show it. (Myself, I like the solution used by Peter O'Donnell in the Modesty Blaise books. Whenever the villain starts using physical, mental, or sexual torture, Modesty simply goes semi-conscious and the chapter ends. If you must have torture, that's a non-exploitative way to do it.) I wish I could declare a moratorium on all physical and sexual torture in SF/Fantasy. Any villain in a future far advanced beyond ours should be able to extort information, force people to do things against their will, and/or get their kicks in some more original ways than raping and racking. (That's what psi, weird drugs, and nasty-looking machines are for.)



In connection with "Future Sex," it was interesting to watch Sally Jesse Raphael one morning. People were supportive of the 72-year-old woman getting married to a 22-year-old (though they were worried he might be a golddigger). They were also quite supportive of a man in love with a man who is getting a sex change. What offended people was a heterosexual couple who did husband/wife swapping as a couple. Fidelity, total commitment and true love are more important to Americans today than what sexual preference a person has. People don't want to be free to hop around from lover to lover. They want to fall in love and get married. Or so this show would seem to indicate. Personally, I think the only reason that the omniseual futures of writers seem to work is that they never present what happens to people who can't even get a date! Is nobody homely in such worlds? Is nobody shy? Or is there an organization which provides a "mercy lay" hotline? I mean, please. Not even Callahan's Lady could cater a universe full of the unattractive. Maybe that's all been weeded out eugenically. Maybe the future consists of row on row of gorgeous people. (Now there's a dystopia for you. SF writers take note!) Realistically, I doubt sexual behavior will change much in the future. Not even AIDS has had much of an effect. If fear of death won't change us, nothing much will.

Finally, on the Strange Omens of the Millennium list, I would like to announce that a Futuristic Romances line has just been introduced. A handsome spaceman meets a beautiful psychic virgin priestess from a far-away planet. Or so I divine from the blurb. (Call me a snob. Call me a miser. But I refuse to buy a romance novel, and I am not going to stand around at Kroger's reading one. Let this task be left to those brave than I.)

It is probably a trashy novel, and those who follow it probably will be too. However, this may be a blessing in disguise for the genre. People who have never read anything of an SF nature may discover that they like strange new worlds. And when

you consider that most romance readers read at least one or two novels a week, you can see that they could really help out sales.

There is a new fantasy genre romance line too! It is called Dreamscape and none of the novels that I looked at seemed to be breaking new ground--they looked like remakes of Robert Nathan books to me.

Taras Wolansky 100 Montgomery St., #24-H Jersey City, NJ 07302	Michael Kube-McDowell's "A Few Words about Sex" was pretty typical, as defenses of free speech
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go. It's as if defenders of First Amendment absolutism don't trust their hearers--not such advanced thinkers as they--to agree to this particular reading of the Bill of Rights if they tell the whole truth. For example, 2 Live Crew may indeed "sing, in ... earthy street language, about the joys of sex." Trouble is, among those "joys" is the joy of raping women in such a way as to do physical damage.

Similarly, Robert Mapplethorpe may indeed have taken sexually explicit photographs of "himself and his friends". Trouble is, some of this "friends" were children.

Is it really only "conservative white middle-class values" that are in conflict with such things? If so, then let's hear it for "conservative white middle-class values"!

"Looking squarely at the constitution" we can plainly see that, for example, the Second Amendment protects the right to bear arms against infringement (that is, even temporary curtailment); whereas the First protects speech merely against abridgment (that is, permanent curtailment). Yet the Second Amendment is a dead letter; I have never heard of the courts striking down any law on the basis of it. (Liberals treat the Bill of Rights as a menu: "I'll have most of the First Amendment; most of the Fifth, Sixth, Seventh and Eighth; but hold parts of those, and hold all of the Second, Ninth and Tenth!" I'd put a lot more faith in their defense of the Bill of Rights if they defended the whole thing.)

"The very patterns of human culture--the taboos we observe, the rituals we perform, the values we hold--seem to be intimately bound up with [the sex drive]." If sexuality and sexual mores are really this powerful and fundamental, then how does one justify a government policy of laissez faire toward sexual speech? The libertarian can easily, because he believes in laissez faire across the board; but the liberal, who basically wants the government to regulate everything else, here must justify making a special exception for speech.

There is, of course, the suspicion that the self-styled defender of free speech merely approves of (or is indifferent about) the speech he is de-

fending. In the universities, for example, some erstwhile defenders of Communists' freedom of speech are now busily banning speech that is "politically incorrect."

Bear in mind that my purpose is to show the inadequacy of the liberal defense of free speech, as exemplified by Kube-McDowell, not to make a case for censorship. I believe a coherent defense of absolute free speech is possible, but only as part of a fullfledged defense of individual liberty.

I was going to praise S. M. Stirling for attacking the African practice of female "circumcision". ("Conservative white middle-class values", again!) Then it occurred to me how bizarre it is that such a statement should be singular enough to deserve praise. We really have gone a long way down the road to cultural relativism. (Perhaps we should call these customs "earthy", too!)

Setting all other points aside, one error is central to Stirling's "Draka" universe: the notion that a caste society can successfully compete against meritocratic ones. True, a reading of history may suggest that meritocracy is improbable and, in a sense, unnatural. (Movements against meritocracy are under way all over the world; in the U.S., under names "civil rights", "affirmative action", and "redistribution".) However, once meritocracy, by whatever historical accidents, takes root in a society, that society almost invariably begins to outstrip its neighbors. Thus history gives us the edifying spectacle of tiny Holland becoming a major world power; and little England virtually ruling the world. [*]

Fred Jakobcic 113 W. Ohio, Apt. #4 Marquette MI 49855	I only heard about Don C. Thompson's passing in <u>Locus</u> a few months ago, too late to do or say anything about
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it. His death is sad. I, like others, enjoyed Don mostly through Don-o-Saur, and only met him once at Autoclave 2. I talked to him in the huckster room, gave him some doodles, and that was it, except for DoS.

RE: "Fear and Loathing...", by Joseph Patrick Conat (not Conan?)...I don't think that the problems and situations, which Conat writes of, are singular to Fandom, but symptomatic of Civilization, our world, our times, and in the United States because of our unwillingness to do what is necessary to curb these problems, or eliminate them entirely. I agree with Conat when he writes, "... why aren't the other people at cons stopping them?" Apathy? Fear? Which can be many things to many people and not necessarily meaning cowardliness. It could be the fear of being the Authority, of being or looking like a person out of steps with others' wishes. At work I am often called a "crab", or am said to be in a "bad mood", simply because I do

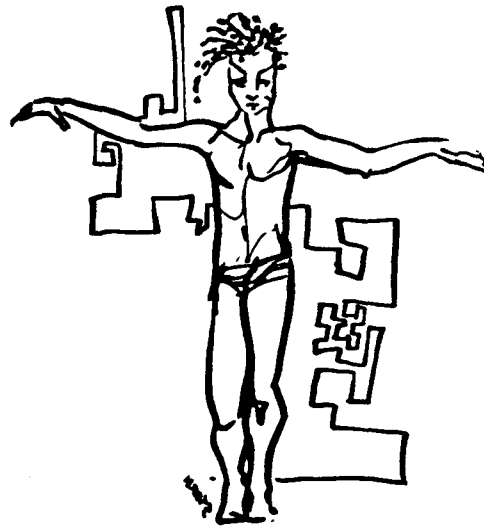
not let things pass--like when a worker does a job poorly, or bring up the fact that they forgot something.

Paul Dean's piece, "Was Science Fiction Novel Gern of Computer Virus," comes under the title of what will happen will happen, and why blame it on something like a science fiction story or novel. Something or nothing at all is going to set somebody to do something, and to assign a "blame" to that is not justified.

Liked the line from the Joe Patrouch article where he says, "Thinking's what we as a race are supposed to be good at." Doubt that the human race knows what the word "thinking" means, or even how to use it. We think with our hearts, our glands and every other part of our body but our brain. Why do we have all this ethnic hatred one sees around in the world? Why do we have all these religions, and war and hatred? Why is England still in Northern Ireland? The British Empire still exists--in N. Ireland--or am I the only person who thinks so? Is the situation any worse than it was fifteen years ago? There is the conflict between Lebanon and Israel, the ethnic differences in Russia, between the Greek and Turkish people, our own racial strife, and on and on. Read a book called Blood in the Face by James Ridgeway and see what I mean.

A few words about "A Few Words About Sex" by Michael P. Kube-McDowell: It would be nice if the U.S. Supreme Court had the same principles as the ACLU. I know Reagan and Bush don't, nor do most religions. Why is sex a crime? It still boggles my mind that the military can get away with its actions against gays and lesbians that are in the Armed Forces; there's also the U.S. Supreme Court ruling on homosexuality in, I believe, the state of Georgia, involving the homosexual act between consenting adults. Whatever happened to consenting adults? Jesse Helms must have loved that ruling! Things are happening in today's world that did not exist in the days of our Founding Fathers, or at least to the extent that they do today. In our more "open" society, more is revealed. The "closet" door is open and there are those who are trying to close it. Some forms of sex are only unnatural according to certain interpretations of some books, by some people. All forms of sex existed a long time ago, way before the so-called creation by a so-called Master of the Universe, aka God(?). Who's to say that some other master race created the entire thing we now have to live with? There are so many interpretations of the teachings of Christ that one cannot know what to believe or not believe.

As Mike says, "...our sexuality is a fundamental part of what we are, and an important motivator in what we do." How can a certain kind of teaching say it is not so? Homo and hetero sex existed before the birth of Christ and his disciples.



Along the same lines:

To Harry Warner: That catch-phrase, "traditional standards"--as determined by who, whom, what, how, and why? Sex has always been with the human race; it perpetuates the human race and because of that some think it is the only kind of sex allowed. If not needed, then would straight sex, too, be frowned upon? Sex serves a necessary function, beyond the need to help keep the human race going. It serves as an outlet for certain desires basic to the human animal, beyond that of the so-called "lower" forms of life. Sex is also to be enjoyed just for the sake of enjoying the sexual pleasure of others of the same or opposite sex. It should be up to the individual to make the choice, not outsiders who differ in choice, who want to deny others the freedom and the right of choice. As I see it, this is largely the religious community, although maybe not entirely, but what other basis would anybody have to object to sex? Is there any other book subjected to more different interpretations than the Bible?

Ruth Berman: Sex in science fiction is just that: sex in science fiction, not a prediction of what will be. Also, for the future of sex, I wonder if the person favoring ordinary straight sex will come to be frowned upon by those favoring bisexual encounters, the point of disfavor, that being straight would be looked upon as much as homosexual has been (and largely still is)?

Buck Coulson: I like Buck, and I wonder too about children who don't have much of a chance to make choices as to their upbringing, and to know what to think. From the word go they are "brain-washed" by parents, teachers, and society alike. It is a wonder to grow up with any opinions at all. I especially apply that to religion. I think the environment may have something to do with it. I did not face a lot of the brain-washing associated with religion, nor did I grow up with blacks, but I feel I have a better understanding, developed a better understanding, than those who have. I see a lot

wrong with religions, and I have had no trouble accepting blacks or other minorities. I deal with people as people, only distinguished for the purpose of identification.

Taras Wolansky: I do not consider myself an atheist, nor anti-religious; I just do not care for, need, or am religious. I feel that I am more tolerant than a lot of religious people. I do not care if a Catholic weds a Jew, or a Jew wed a Protestant, or any other combination. What of it? Let those involved decide how they shall live their lives. For outsiders it is none of their business. Fundamentalists are the least tolerant of all, or so it seems to me. They can find more ways to twist and turn and interpret just about anything as being "...anti-religious in essence." To properly reply to fundamentalism I will have to do more study of the fundamentalists and their beliefs. But sex education is necessary and is a non-religious topic. Sex is a part of life, and to make it a religious issue is stretching the interpretations of religious teachings way beyond the scope of the Bible and its teachings, and does not belong to those who are afraid to learn about sex nor teach the subject. [*]

[Don D'Amassa
| 323 Dodge Street
| E. Providence, RI 02914]

I was very sorry to hear about Don Thompson's death. Don's early personalzine, Donosaur Coprolites, was directly responsible for my starting Mythologies; I enjoyed his work so much, I wanted to create something similar. I only actually met him twice, but it always seemed like we'd been old friends.

Found Joseph Patrouch's article on teaching SF very entertaining. Once or twice in the past I have taught classes on the subject, most recently a couple of lectures at a local private school that wanted coaching for the SF portion of the academic decathlon. One of the more interesting remarks I heard was "Delany's writing is too old fashioned" (referring to Nova).

Michael Kube-McDowell's speech hit a sensitive area here. I've recently been active on the Prodigy bulletin board, and the number of pro-censorship people there is appalling. And it's not just sex. One woman objects to books or films with female victims; she isn't upset by male victims because "males aren't being victimized by society". A self-proclaimed psychologist asserts that publishers and authors should voluntarily stop writing about unpleasant subjects because reading about such acts causes compulsions to re-enact them. (I would like to see his credentials.) A bookstore clerk hides controversial titles so they won't be bought, and is rude to customers who request them. A mother wants books labelled so she'll know in advance that

they contain "naughty" words. Another man wants films that present untraditional interpretations of the life of Christ prohibited from public view because they are "slanderous". The anti-Mapplethorpe people are so vehement, half their bulletins get rejected by the board administrators. And now I read that there is a proposal to change the movie rating system so that every town would assign its own ratings to films shown within its borders. It's a frightening world we live in, and if people don't wake up to this encroachment on their personal freedom, they'll wake up some day without it.

I think I disagree with Evelyn Leeper about the "Kirinyaga" stories. It doesn't appear to me that Resnick takes either side in either story, that he tries to present a different cultural viewpoint, one which our tradition finds repulsive and inhumane, then uses strong characterization so that we can attempt to understand the mindset that underlies such a radical departure from our own belief system. I also admire The World Beyond the Hill. Among other things, it gave me a fresh perspective on the "classics" such as Edward E. Smith, for whom I now have a freshened respect. I found the Pan-shins' book more gripping than many novels I have read.

I am moved to praise Brian Youmans' taste in fantasy, which corresponds very closely to my own. Let me recommend to him (and to anyone else interested) Tigana by Guy Gavriel Kay, the Kai Lung books by Ernest Bramah, and the forthcoming King of Morning, Queen of Day by Ian McDonald, the best new fantasy I've read in years.

The controversy over the state of modern SF is amusing. I've been around fandom enough years now to know that this same argument is raised in one form or another every five years or so, which means I've been through five cycles, and my delving into SF history has unearthed several previous incarnations. Obviously the field does evolve somewhat, but what people don't seem to realize is that only a handful of titles from any period stand out. Try reading the short fiction published in Super Science Stories, Future, Dynamic, Tops, Rocket, and so on, and you'll find scores, hundreds of stories that don't fit the definition of "high SF", whatever that is. There are mediocre years from time to time, but in general, the quality of writing has increased, the inventiveness is no worse, and the number of titles has broadened so much that it is now more difficult to pick out the ones that are truly worthwhile. [*]

[Ruth Berman | Joseph Patrick Conant's
| 2809 Drew Ave South | "Fear and Loathing in (and
| Minneapolis, MN 55416 | of) Fandom"--I suspect that
he'd find the same problem
of loutish propositioners any time there are a

large number of adults and some adolescents in combination. Fandom is no worse than other groups in such matters (perhaps better than most?). What to do about it is a more difficult question. He suggests two possibilities: that the (reputable) congoers should keep an eye out for youngsters, and that the louts should be barred from the con once a complaint has been made. The first may be unworkable--it is not necessarily obvious to a stranger not especially on watch for the problem, that an unwelcome proposition is unwelcome, or even that a proposition is being made. The second sounds as if it might be workable; his article doesn't indicate if he (or the youngsters) tried complaining to the con committee and what their response was.

I was startled by your comment "The Leroux novel is really a very good one" followed by "And I hope to read it one of these days." I don't think you quite said what you meant? I haven't seen the musical (saw a scenes from it on the award telecast the year it was a Tony nominee, and thought the music was boring, so I haven't tried to see it), but have read the novel. Actually, it's a quite dreadful novel, with too much space given over to the cardboard problems of the cardboard hero and heroine. But Eric is a haunting figure, and it's not surprising that people keep trying to turn it into a play so that someone can star in the role. Every time the Phantom shows up, the story takes fire. I wasn't sorry I read it, but I'm not sure I'd have kept going if I hadn't been doing it for a particular project.

[[Correct, that's not what I meant; I meant the I had HEARD it was a good novel. I still hope to read it one of these days.]]

Taras Wolansky's comments about anti-religious bigotry don't seem to reflect accurately what objections are made to the ultra religious. Lockhart's jibe about doubting that fundamentalists read is an exaggeration and not literally correct, but there is a large element of truth underlying the exaggeration, for fundamentalists in many cases avoid reading anything that might make them doubt the Bible. It's "not a bad piece of literature to learn on," but it has certain obvious defects; it is a poor introduction to biology, geology, astronomy, etc. It is also a poor introduction to the moral needs of life in a pluralistic society, for it is weak on the moral importance of tolerance. (Blessed be he who takes a Babylonian baby and bashes its head out on a stone, as the Psalm puts it, may be a useful message for an enslaved people, but it lacks something as a guide for our time.) Then religious leaders object to having their followers be told that homosexuality is an "alternative life-style", they are acting on the belief that their followers will believe that any alterna-

tive that exists is an acceptable alternative. It is the religious leaders' job to convince their followers that some alternatives are not acceptable, if they honestly believe that to be the case. The public schools still have a responsibility to point out (a) that alternatives exist, and (b) that there is much disagreement as to which alternatives are acceptable.

Wolansky suggests that public schools should be abandoned as unworkable, and (apparently?) that every religion (or, for the non-religious, school-of-philosophy?) should set up its own schools. The theory has a certain amount of appeal, but--well--not very much. Societies without public schools don't do a very good job of preparing children to live in a pluralistic society, which is what we have (see comments above on Bible, weakness of, moral guide, as, pluralistic society, in). Michael P. Kube-McDowell, in the speech printed in the issue, "A Few Words about Sex," points out the war on free speech from the perspective of erotic art (which is under special attack); his comments could apply also to the war on the teaching of evolution, which was Lockhart's subject.]*

[Kelly Fitzpatrick] I wholeheartedly agree with J. [809 Clover Lane | P. Conat's opinions concerning [Kokomo, IN 46901 | the tastelessness and obscenity that seems to be taking over some cons. I also have been subjected to barbaric come-ons and so I do not doubt his examples. This behavior would not be tolerated outside of a convention and people should not be encouraged to think that they are behind closed doors in the middle of the consuite. Arguments that "she asked for it" due to her dress (or lack thereof) are no more acceptable at a con than they are on the street.

This type of conduct is why I do not attend as many cons as I would like. I cannot justify bringing my 6-year-old daughter or my NON-fan husband into an atmosphere where this behavior is considered "normal." These activities instead give my husband rounds of ammunition against fandom.

Excessive drunkenness is an issue that all of us fan must address. Many cons are refusing to serve even beer in order to curtail the problem. Bartenders will stop serving customers when they've had enough (to avoid lawsuits); I cannot understand why consoms will not be as responsible.

Curtailling consumption of alcohol is not the only step we need to take. Some of the molestations are committed not by drunks, but are instead the actions of perfectly sober individuals with questionable morals who believe that a convention is a no-holds-barred chaotic anarchy. Freedom of expression is one "right" we prize dearly at cons; freedom to act in a less inhibited manner is another. However, when people, especially children, are being accosted and molested, and when "less inhib-

ited" means "free sex with whomever you can catch", we've gone too far.

I'm certain that there are SF or Fantasy novels that promote these actions; I won't claim to have read everything, but I have yet to see one. Frankly, I'm not sure I want to. If we, the few, cannot police ourselves, and we are forced to allow the mundane police to do it for us, then we will also be forced to give up the privileges of less shameful behavior that we currently enjoy.

We hold ourselves apart from the mundanes, and, at least to a small degree, believe we are more tolerant and accepting. But when we tolerate and accept attacks on our own people, by our own people, we prove ourselves to be less than they are--incapable of protecting ourselves or our children.

I was, for many years, proud to be part of the family called fan. Now I am ashamed, deeply embarrassed, not only by the incestuous behavior of those I once considered brothers and sisters, but also by those of us who know better, who stand by and watch it happen and make no comment. I hope that Conat's article brings us all up short and causes us to examine ourselves and decide how many crimes we will allow to go unpunished in the name of "freedom." I have the freedom to be raped anywhere. It is at conventions where I expect to remain untouched.]*

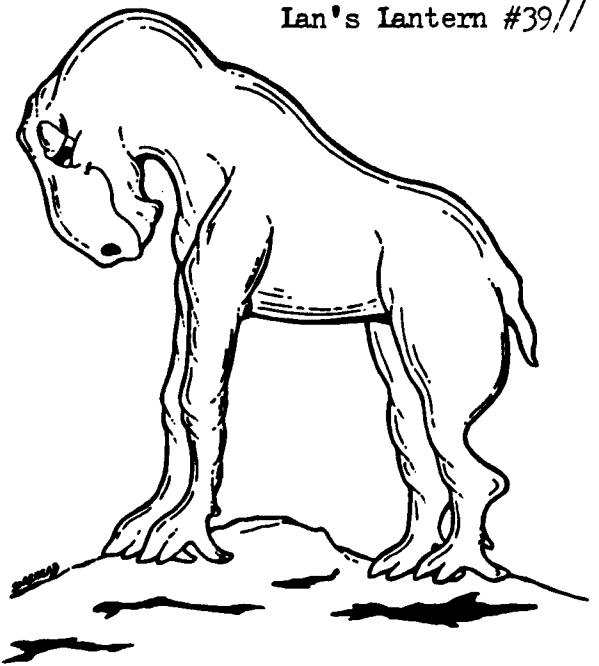
[Elizabeth Ann Osborne
415 Landings Blvd
Inverness, FL 32650]

I was very interested in Joseph Patrick Conat's article, "Fear and Loathing in (and of) Fandom." I am

sorry that he had a bad time but his experiences are his own and not everybody's. This summer will make the 12th year that I have been going to cons (usually at least three a year). I can say that in all that time, I have experienced something like he did only once. This includes media, fantasy, gaming, and the run-of-the-mill Science Fiction conventions. On the other hand, I have experienced several bad events at ballgames with the result that I avoid large sporting events. It all comes down to your own personal experiences.

I think fandom, especially con-running fandom, is far from being organized enough to start banning people by their reputation alone. Also, you open yourself up to lawsuits and such if you do this. (I know this because there once was talk of this in a town about a certain fan and the local SF con.) One may be able to stop a few people from coming to cons, but there is nothing to stop them from going to one in the next city, the next state, etc.

One thing I would like to ask Mr. Conat is where was con security? Did he bother to tell anyone on the staff that this was happening, or had happened? True, con professionalism often leaves much to be desired but they can't do anything if they don't know what is going on. If they can't, or won't, do



something, there is someone known as hotel security that will. Also, nothing will get a con committee's attention quicker than an unhappy hotel management.

One of the joys of fandom is its acceptance of less-than-competent social skills. I for one would have never made it if fandom had been only for the witty and quick. I was someone who never spoke to a stranger, much less sat down in a full-blown discussion about any subject. What Mr. Conat seems to have the most trouble with though is not the lack of good social skills but the lack of good manners. Have you taken a good look at society lately? I'm not talking about the "which fork do you use?" stuff, but the common courtesy stuff, like using "please" and "thank you" and "you don't throw up on people you don't know". There seems to have developed a brand of leisure behavior which seems to be everywhere: at spring break outings, weddings, parties, sports events, bars, dances, and even cons. This attitude, which I call the "Animal House outlook", is that you have to get drunk to have a good time. Now I can remember the "I'm only here for the beer" attitudes of the early 80's fandom--they have not changed and developed a new approach to partying. It just seems that a real lack of concern for other people has set in. I don't know what to do about the situation. Some cons have banned room parties, others have dry consites. Some have worked, some have not.

Personally, I really don't care what the average mundane thinks about SF fans. Mundanes shouldn't be attacked in the hallways, of course, or be threatened by fur-wearing barbarians with metal (or any other kind of) swords, but such mundanes see us as nerds and flakes outside of fandom anyway. That's the reason why so many people joined fandom in the first place. We didn't fit in with the people who could only think about the next paycheck, the next sports games, and what the next meal was. In editorial in a Canadian fanzine addressed the issue of

the media and their coverage of conventions very well. The result of the article was the question: Conventions are not going to get "respect" unless they make major changes (make them more mundane), but do we want that?

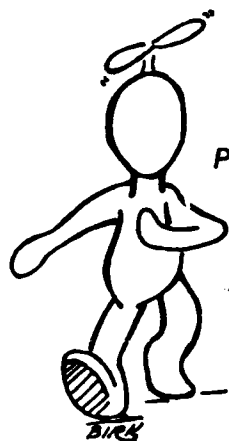
The trip report about Tunisia was enough to make me stay in the First World. Somehow I am not impressed when people tell me that they want to travel through India or South America by foot.

One last item: I sold an article to The Best of Trek #16, my "Children in Star Trek" article. Got all of \$25 for it, so now I'm a paid author.[*]

[Lisa Leutheuser | I was interested in Joe
|313 E. Kingsley #A1 | Conat's essay, "Fear and
|Ann Arbor, MI 48104-1279| Loathing in (and of)
Fandom." While I've personally never had any problems at cons (that I couldn't handle), I could see how a person who is overly persistent and even rude could scare someone who is not prepared to handle the situation. I hope that fans will take this message to heart, and consider the effects of their actions on others. My own personal philosophy is, if you're not being received positively then it's time to bug off.

I recently had a chance to talk to a few people who had just attended their first con within the last year. The general reaction from the women was one of mild paranoia of cons, but willing to give it another try (same way I felt three years ago). The reaction of the males tended to be more enthusiastic. This is not a unique observation, but it did seem to confirm for me that cons are in general a friendlier place for males than females. You've probably heard this a thousand times before, but I thought I'd become number 1001.

[[Unfortunately, the people who need to hear the message the most are the ones who won't hear it, not even listen if they are told, unless confronted directly. Which means we all need to pay a little more attention to what is going on around us at conventions.]]



Put THAT in your fanzine and pub it!

[Thomas D. Sadler | 178 pages. Let's see...178 divided by, say, 24 equals 7.416
|422 W. Maple Ave. | --Ghod (or Ghu)! That's more
|Adrian, MI 49221| that a year's worth of The Reluctant Famul! You wouldn't have to publish another issue for the rest of the year. But I sure hope you do. (For me, fanzines are almost like drugs: I couldn't get along without a periodic "fix.") Slimmer LLs on a more frequent schedule may be desirable to some, but your zine has established a reputation of being huge and so must continue to live up to that reputation. Watching you carrying a stack of LLs unaided is most impressive.

I very much appreciate your reminiscence of Don C. Thompson, a very fine gentleman even though I never met him and only knew him through his fanzine.

Regarding "Fear and Loathing in (and of) Fandom": I remember attending the con Mr. Conat mentions and watching the skits that were performed. They were quite enjoyable and showed a lot of promise. If what Mr. Conat says is true, I'm appalled by the behavior of those older fans and ashamed that so-called mature people would act that way. Even worse is the fact that Mr. Conat has become scared of cons. (I guess there are advantages to being a middle-aged--or "older"--guy. No one at that con made any improper advances toward me. But then I'm not young and female, or just young.)

Perhaps in time Mr. Conat's attitude will change and he'll start going to conventions again. He really should give them a chance. Not all older fans are as bad as he portrayed those.

I am still impressed by the number of reviews you include in each issue of the Lantern. They give me a good idea of what I miss as far as books and movies are concerned.

Joseph Majors' letter was certainly long and rambling wasn't it? He seems to enjoy displaying his erudition when it comes to warfare and history, especially that of WW II. I think, however, Joe could have made his point a lot sooner than he did with a lot less obfuscation. But that's my personal opinion and it certainly didn't spoil my enjoyment of the zine.

Lawrence Watt-Evans' letter, on the other hand, was particularly interesting and gratifying. I'm tempted to post certain excerpts of it where I can frequently be reminded of what it's like to be a writer. (As if I'm not aware of that already and continue to be.) Critics abound in all areas of literature, and it's much too easy to second-guess what a writer did or did not intend both in what he or she wrote and why he or she wrote it. I know I try to write the best short story I can and hope that, somehow, what I write becomes a little better as I go along. So I pretty much agree with all that Lawrence wrote in his letter and hope that people out there will pay serious attention to what he said.

Your comment to "Rose Baby" suggests maybe for future issues of LL you should merely punch holes in the pages to fit a standard three-ring binder. That would certainly save on staples or the strain on the stapler and the operator. (But then it occurs to me using a paper punch on all those zines could become a real job.)

I am still in awe of the ability of Mike Glicksohn and Harry Warner, Jr. to turn out such high quality locs. It almost makes me want to travel to Hagerstown and Toronto to study with those locsmiths. Well, there's Terry Jeeves, too, but it doesn't look as if I'll ever be fortunate enough to go there.

Finally, although there were many other very good locs that deserve comment, a thought or two on Joan Panichella's letter and your reply. Specifically, "sense of wonder." Thanks for the brief exchange. [*]

Lloyd Penney	Joe Conat's article deserves
412-4 Lisa St.	much thought. The first thing
Brampton, Ontario	to say is...he's absolutely
CANADA L6T 4B6	right in his description of

fannish behavior, but only in a minority. It's his misfortune that he's had to encounter members of fandom's worst part, the equivalent of the computer industry's geekish hackers. Fandom has a much thicker lunatic fringe than most other groups, and too many fans look sraggly, or smell like they haven't bathed in years, or go to cons for a quick drunk, or in hopes of getting lucky and laid. However, these people lack one thing: participation. You won't find these turkeys pubbing their ish, or running or working a con, or producing costumes of quality, or really taking part in anything fannish deserving of effort. Achievement means nothing to them. We all like to party, but often party is all they do. They have little else in their lives. Part of the problem is the lack of social skills, having never had lessons at home, probably, but another part is little interaction with others through lack of practice. Social skills come through being social, unsurprisingly. They're probably friendless, and hitting upon young women at a convention is antisocial, to say the least. Joe, give us another chance. You know who the decent folks are in fandom. They are in organization. Pursue a higher level of involvement; the people who give enough of a damn to get involved and work on something worthwhile don't get there by being assholes. Leave the geeks to puke their guts in the consuite. I try my best to ignore the turkeys I encounter, and they usually wind up with the ignominy they deserve. I wish it were possible to screen these jerks, but you can't, and their money provides the good times as much as anyone else's. Just as a postscript, you mention that when it comes time to meeting the opposite sex, you

choose your targets well. I'll put this down to an unfortunate choice of words, for the geeks you encountered also targeted on the opposite sex.

What little cyberpunk I've read hasn't impressed me too much...it's almost technology for technology's sake. I'm no Luddite, but I know of too many people who would use their laptops to write their grocery lists. This is technology overkill, and cyberpunk makes me think of the same thing. Interesting that Gibson used SIN numbers in his fiction; all Canadians have SIN numbers. In our case, it stands for Social Insurance Number, the same as the American Social Security Number, but the ultimate end is the same...we're all numbers in someone's database.

Interesting Tunisian trip piece...do the Resnicks migrate to Africa the same way the swallows go to San Capistrano? It doesn't look like you had a good time there at all, Laura; your temper appeared to be frayed most of the time and your voice rising to many of the locals, but then as badly as Germans, French, Italians and the rest may get treated, many people in the worldwide hotel and tourism industry reserve their worst treatment and behavior for American tourists.

I dare say that the Soviet Union would be more to my liking, even with conditions as primitive as they are; they're far better than they used to be, at any rate. My mother-in-law toured Moscow, Kiev, Georgia, and Leningrad, and we still have some of the souvenirs she brought home...the black tea is long gone, and much enjoyed. I have a couple of 3-ruble notes in my banknote collection, plus some small change. I gather from the Soviet fans now in communication with Western fandom that the ruble is devaluing nearly as fast as the Mexican peso, which will make tourism one of the USSR's greatest resources once the restructuring is complete. It sounds like Jack enjoyed himself on the trip with the help of the guides, even with the hectic itinerary and minor illness on the trip. Take me there tomorrow! [Even though it's distant, I received a letter from Sevastopol in the Crimea, asking about SF writing markets "in the Canada" (his words).] Enjoying just such a trip depends on how organized you want to be (solo or with a tour), and how flexible you can be in terms of food, customs, etc. After all, when in Rome...it's a good policy, and makes you friends that can smooth over rough spots during your trip.

The Leepers' African trip was interesting to read, too...this one sounds enjoyable. Three large countries would be too much for me, though. The 11 days I spent in Holland for Worldcon were fine for me, and I couldn't wait to sleep in my own bed. It's nice to go away, and nice to come back, too.

Science fiction is literature designed to stretch your imagination. Once reality catches up with science fiction, we will live in a truly won-

drous age, but will we dream? Will we have any more unreachable starts to reach for? One criticism of science fiction is that it displays a grey, sterile age. Should reality match SF, will that grey age arrive? What will stretch our imaginations then? Let us try to improve the writing and the idea work in SF so that we will always have some stretching to do.

Toronto fandom still mourns the passing of Elizabeth Pearse. Elizabeth's amazing level of organization lives on in many art show teams that have been seeded by her original group. [*]

Mike Glicksohn	Only a letterhack who was re-
508 Windermere Ave	tired and independently weal-
Toronto, Ontario	thy would face the task of re-
CANADA M6S 3L6	acting to LL #35 without in-
	tense trepidation. And only a

complete idiot would even think of trying to respond to its phonebook-sized awesomeness. (What sort of person it took to publish it in the first place is best left to the imagination.) In fact, there is but one way to even consider approaching a loc to it and that is to roll in a piece of paper, read the issue and type the reply until you reach the end of the page you're typing on, and then stop. Right in the middle of a word if necessary. And go and do something else, like work, or eat, or sleep. The next time there's enough spare time to type a page, repeat the process. Continue until the issue ends, the Earth is destroyed by an ice age and a glacier pushes you away from the typewriter (probably flowing around LL rather than trying to move it), or you go on to a better world (preferably one in which the Fanzine Police monitor every faned and shut down all production systems after the 40th page is done). So that is how this missive will be produced, and you may well become known as the fan who brought about the necessity of dating a loc at the beginning and at the end!

Don Thompson will most certainly be missed for the quality of his writing, his thinking, his editing, and his friendship. I still plan on nominating both Don and Don-o-Saur for Hugos this year even though it is too late for Don to enjoy the recognition. I think it's important that fandom recognizes those of its members who excell, and Don certainly did that. I feel privileged to have crossed his path and to have been, if only for a brief time, close to him.

[[I too have nominated Don and Don-o-Saur for the Hugos. We'll see what happens when the ballot comes out (it will have done so by the time this sees print).]]

It's extremely unfortunate that Joseph Conat had such an unfortunate experience at a con but we all known that this does happen on occasion. I'm sure

that among the three of us (myself, Lan and Mafa) we've lost count on the number of panels we've done about how to act in an acceptable fashion at a con but these incidents will still happen. When they are observed and recognized by most fans, they are stopped, but so much hugging and touching goes on at cons because people want it that way that in a crowded party it is not always evident to an outsider that someone is in an uncomfortable position and wants to be rescued. I also like to think that Joseph exaggerates the amount of such behaviour that occurs at cons but I can understand how his intense reaction to the incident might colour his judgement on that issue.

Reading Laura's trip report was a fascinating combination of amusement and second hand annoyance and frustration. I can't help but wonder what Mike, with all his expertise and his ability to get nothing but the absolute best out of a trip, must have thought about this trip/article? However, I'm delighted that you published it, grateful that Laura wrote it, and thankful that I read it. Now I shall know never to go to Tunisia unless I can win the lottery and get Mike Resnick to book the tour for me!

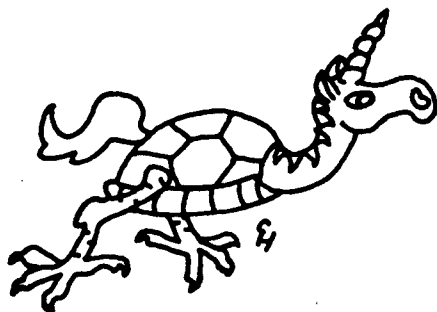
The Laska column, albeit bizarre fanzine fare to my mind, seems very well done and was interesting in spots. But I'm not sure it's a good idea to encourage fans to increase their intellectual laziness by offering them an easy out to doing their own research. Next thing you know they'll be watching SI:TNG instead of loocing Lan's Lantern!

Interesting that Jack Williamson visited Russia in 1965, 1977 and 1989: let's hope he remains hearty enough to celebrate 2001 there also! His report was interesting although a little too obviously aimed at a newspaper audience. Still, it conveyed one important piece of advice, should I ever have the time, money and inclination to perform one of these trips myself: always carry more paperbacks than you can possibly read because you'll always have more time to read than you can possibly imagine.

I miss going to MINICONS but the 25th seems to have been a pretty darn good con. So why the editorial disclaimer? (Or was that an authorial disclaimer? The set-up makes it a tad hard to tell.)

[[It was an authorial disclaimer--Lynn put it at the end of her article; and it was true, I did not go to that MINICON.]]

Another thing 178 page fanzines apparently do is cause formerly reliable IBM typewriters to self-destruct in abject terror at the thought of a future never-ending servitude, thereby necessitating the purchase of a back-up key-style electric Smith-Corona at expense which while not vast is more than one might otherwise have wished. So it goes, and so



the IBM Selectric went. I do hope you can sleep at night, knowing that you're the direct cause of massive trauma in an entire generation of fannish typewriters!

[[Mike, you know I won't lose sleep over this; I don't sleep anyway!]]

It seems that the problems teachers encounter are more or less universal. Every now and then my administration fouls up my pre-established testing schedule by springing a surprise assembly on us, and the problem of kids missing classes and tests because of field trips in other subjects has been a major area of tension at my school for the entire 19 years I've been there. (I'm not as nice as you, but I can't afford to be: I teach the same lesson I would have taught if there hadn't been a field trip and the absent kids just have to make up things as best they can. If I didn't do that I'd never be able to finish my core content.)

You and I mark the same way and share the same dedication to getting the task over with as quickly (but as thoroughly) as possible. Over the last couple of years I've started to allow myself the luxury of not finishing a set of exams on the day I get them, but for many years I'd stay up until four in the morning (from noon the day before) if that was what it took to finish the marking. It's anally retentive as all hell, of course, but it frees up lots of time for writing locs and reading fanzines!

When I was RIVERCON Toastmaster they gave me one of those lovely Pegasus statues and I treasure it still, but they did not make me an Honorary Kentucky Colonel. Before I take umbrage, though, I do want to know one thing: just how often each week to you have to eat the chicken to maintain your rank?

[[You don't have to eat the Colonel's chicken to maintain your rank; eating the chicken diminishes the smell, so you *want* to eat it. Then there's the Chicken MPs....]]

Say, Joseph, why stop at banning school sports because they discriminate against the physically challenged? Surely the only logical conclusion to that sort of thinking (which I realize you are not a proponent of) is to ban school entirely because it discriminates against the intellectually disadvantaged.

I was surprised to read that Ruth Berman, who I think of as a former fanzine editor and contributor to many 'zines, has so lost track of her fannish roots as to require a speaker's fee to attend a con. Surely this is not the way to ensure that old copies of T-Negative become rare and valued collector's items.

[[I think you misunderstood; Ruth doesn't charge for her own attendance and participation at SF cons, but she understands why some authors do. And she has paid speakers for them to speak at her Library Conventions.]]

Lawrence Watt-Evans deserves considerable praise for his honest evaluation of what he sees as his own writing talents. Even in the SF field, where writers are probably more honest with their readers than in most other areas of writing (if only because they get far more opportunities to be so) I doubt you'll find too many willing to say what he said here. I've only read one of his books so I'm not qualified to say whether or not he's being overly judgemental but it is a very refreshing attitude and one that increases my respect for Mr. Watt-Evans considerably.

[[If you want to talk to him, he will be the Guest of Honor at CONCLAVE in the fall of 1991.]]

While I'm not very involved in running conventions I note a fundamental difference in attitude between Lloyd Penney and myself on that front. Lloyd suggests finding out what your audience wants and providing them with it. If I ever ran another con I'd provide what I wanted in a con and try to attract the sort of attendees who shared my view of what a good con should be. [[Poker tables in every room?]] Of course, I'd not be in it to run a big money-making con which is what Lloyd is really talking about so his advice is perfectly reasonable in context.

Lloyd's also correct that we should try to show new and essentially media-oriented fans the joys of literary fandom but I'm not sure that's all that easy to do. The sort of person who has already chosen visual SF over written SF has essentially already rejected the experiences we enjoy. I'd venture to guess that the percentage who may yet be turned on to the joys of reading is very small indeed, although I don't suggest we refuse to try just because the chances of success are minimal. Those best suited for creating readers, of course, are the parents of small children. If they aren't interested in reading, or fail to pass their interest along to their children, I suspect it is largely too late for us to change much once the video addiction had claimed them for its own.

The letter from Stell Nemeth could be used as a



text in a course on how to write decent locs to fanzines. First rate stuff!

Interesting that nobody talked to Harry A about his drinking problem even if it was a few years ago. My friends have expressed their concerns about my own drinking habits for much longer than Harry has been recovering from his problems. Maybe it was some sort of California thing, to do with tolerating oddball and even self-destructive behaviour?

I'm not sure Harry Warner is right when he talks about the "enormous increase" in the percentage of the population that is homosexual (it may well just be that more people are admitting their homosexuality nowadays) but if there is any truth in that suggestion, I'd seriously doubt that it's because being gay is in any way trendy. In fact, I'd guess that most gays would find such a suggestion comical at best. Steps may have been made in raising public awareness as to the nature of homosexuality but a distressingly large percentage of the population is still homophobic to an alarming degree.

I don't understand why someone like Mike Waite should get so upset at the existence of special editions. Nobody compels him to buy one and the existence of a fancy expensive edition probably means the regular editions are cheaper than they might otherwise have been. So what's to get your knickers in a knot about?[*]

[Clifton Amsbury | Joe Patrouch indeed shed much
| 768 Amador Street | light on our subject (though
| Richmond, CA 94805 | using a lamp as well as your
| | Lantern). On p. 20 I find an
ambiguous statement: "after tears of use" might well be a simple statement of fact. I very much agree with his final sentence. For jote de vivre as course content. That's what I tried to do with anthropology courses, and inevitably a few students each term catch on. Fortunately that also solves my problem with the institution: they insist on grades, but the students who do catch the spirit also usually make the grades, too.

When Jack Williamson says Moscow was the first city in Russia you have to take that literally. Kiev was founded over 1500 years ago, Novgorod the Great about the same time and they were capitals of the original Rus kingdom, later divided up. The Greek cities along the Black Sea have a few still there--some in places now part of Russia (RSFSR). I don't know how strict enforcement is against selling black rubles, but some of the "sellers" are agents testing foreigners, so when they accuse someone of buying black rubles, believe it. A friend of mine who told off the men who offered him some, was surprised at how happy that made them. So don't believe that "Not KGB" button Stein's character is wearing.

"We" heard plenty about the great destruction of the Tashkent earthquake, but "our" papers didn't print much about it because Tass was the news source. At that time our "capitalist" reporters were pretty restricted in travel and Tass is not sensationalist. "Just the facts." Well, mostly.

As to John America, I can answer what "reading this stuff" for so many years has gotten me. One year younger than Jack Williamson, just as I was when I started. And don't let Isaac Asimov hear what John said about "the first Science Fiction story." He'd want to start revising his autobiography so he could believe the new version. As for Phil Dick, John's too late. Or too early. Maybe in another life they'll meet again.

As to Kube-McDowell's Complaint, sometimes three little dots are much more eloquent than three little words. And often the best way to make sense of something is to look at all of it, see what it says, and maybe sniff the odor. (Anthro claims to be a holistic science.) So let's examine those three little dots after "Congress shall make no law . . ." They expand to "restricting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the government for a redress of grievances."

These are rights of religious and political choice; nothing is said about sexual choice or expression. The states (except Pennsylvania and Rhode Island) all had establishments of religion, but they often differed, so Congress couldn't have one. And there was a political establishment, but in colonial times the right of the people and publishers to express dissent had already been nailed down. And about 1870 the Catholics (established only in Maryland) noted the possibilities in paragraph two of the first article of the 14th Amendment and things have never been the same since. As Mike's piece shows, we're still arguing over it. But don't blame the First Amendment. Blame number 14.

As for Starfarers, I take each book for itself

and I liked this story despite my usual distaste for detailed suffering. I had the same reaction to Exile Waiting and Dreamsnake, where there was much more. Vonda also projects care, compassion and involvement.

On page 96 Hitler Victorious is suggested as possibly "the definitive anthology in this area." My comments on that book have already been published, including the observation that some of its stories are not about Hitler being victorious. Norman Spinrad in the introduction to it (p.1-2) comments on those who see the grand course as inevitable and on those who believe "a stray bumping of an assassin's hand can save a nation." (or destroy it?) (Sort of reminded me of Battles that Changed History. All but one of the examples (and maybe that one) simply attest that history had already been changed.)

The whole point is that "history" (human history) proceeds not in spite of what people can do, but according to what people DO do. Mostly what lots of people do, but sometimes by the way one or a few influence the acts of others.

Laura Todd's conclusions about A Different Flesh (bottom of page 99) remind us to keep in mind that monkeys and apes do not "seem so human", but that humans along with them are primates and share much of their natures.

And if Dale Skran thinks Tea with the Black Dragon is too bland, he should try Twisting the Rope. It may be a little less relaxing.

Much of what S.M. Stirling wrote was justified, but saying the Russians were beaten in 1942 is far from it. The drive to take Leningrad, Moscow and Kiev began June 22, 1941. It ended in December (bogged down since October) and January, 1942; my 1945 Britanica says, "the Russians were on the offensive all along a snowbound battlefront 2000 miles long." The German transportation system had broken down about October. The Soviets advanced till March and about June the Germans renewed attacks, mostly in the South. This lasted till October with great advances to the North Caucasus and was stopped at the cities of Stalingrad and Voronezh.

Churchill had at one point complained that the Soviets were not sharing information with "the West." Stalin reported that they had discovered that any information given the British was known in Berlin the next day. In November several new "secret" Soviet armies were moved from their training areas between Moscow and the Urals, enveloped the German siege forces at Stalingrad and Voronezh and counterattacked in the North Caucasus. By March 1943 they had retaken 185,000 square miles. Not exactly the act of a defeated people, especially considering over 90% of the American Lend Lease material was delivered after the liberation of Stalingrad.

July 1943 the Germans at Orel tried a counterattack which failed and developed into the Battle of Kursk, just south of Orel. Each side employed vast forces and more armor than both sides ever used on the Western Front. All in all, that was the greatest battle ever fought in any war. After that the Soviet advance continued, but took almost two years to reach Berlin. Remember that the infantry had to walk. They could go to the front by truck and train, but then had to walk, fighting all the way. There was not a masonry building left in all of Byelorussia.

I must comment on Joe Major's statement that "World War I heroes were not automatic successes in their line of work in World War Two." I have had plenty of occasion to recall that "the military is always ready--for the last (previous) war." In 1941 "the last war" to the American military was not the war against the Central Powers which ended in 1918, but the intervention in Russia which began in 1918, or the interventions in China later. And the history of events from 1944 to 1989 showed that they never forgave us for the war we had them fight in 1941. Many of them still hold that grudge. It's the heart of The Vietnam Syndrome they grouse about. |*|

|Sally A. Sryjala| Don Thompson is one who will be
|PO Box 149 | missed. I only received a couple
|Centerville | of his zines, but appreciated
|MA 02632 | each one for the substance and
humanity they contained. He had
a way of putting every day life into the pages of his zine and they were the type that grabbed your interest from the first word. There are few enough editors of quality fanzines and it is a shame to have lost one of the most talented. One hopes his soul is at peace.

Joe Conat's article was most interesting and needs to be read by con organizers to be sure that events such as he related do not occur again. A person should not feel as if they are in danger of being accosted at a con. These are places where a person should be able to relax and enjoy themselves without feeling the need to "handle situations." Getting away from such things is one reason I would cite for attending a con. Take that away and you start to take out the enjoyment factor. I hope what he described were isolated incidents and not something that is the norm.

The book and movie reviews were as interesting as usual. The price of movie attendance has gotten too high around these parts. Seeing I have taken a \$15,000 pay cut from this time last year, such prices affect us when and if we go to films. One of the few seen was Total Recall. It felt as if it were based on a Philip K. Dick novel. The questioning of what is real and what is merely thought of as being real was very much in evident and I liked that. I also liked the fact that Arnie's character

came to know that the person he could really trust was himself and his own feelings. All else might not be true. He had to learn to trust his own inner reactions and beliefs and not swallow the propaganda that was tried to be fed to him.

The reading of fiction has not been something I have been able to do as much as I would like lately, owing to going back to school. However, I did find one of the books I managed to read in the review section: Patricia Geary's Strange Toys.

I think I like books that are difficult, if not impossible to describe. If you could put the essence of a book into a couple of sentences or a paragraph or two, then shouldn't that suffice for reading the book? Strange Toys plays with mood and mythos. It also speaks of learning to accept yourself and all that constitutes. I, too, found it to be an excellent book.

H. Rider Haggard is one of my favorite authors. I search out his books, along with those of Sax Rohmer, at used book stores. Just recently I found a copy of Virgin of the Sun which I look forward to finding time to read. Haggard dealt with themes of reincarnation in many, if not the majority, of his books. Lost loves who would be tied together for eternity in life after life. If he had a tragedy in which there could not be a "happy ever after" love theme in the tale of the book, it would make it clear that in a future life the duo would once more be reunited and find happiness. His works were cyclic. This is brought to the fore in a passage from Virgin of the Sun. The main character is musing over his fate. At this point he was a fisherman who had just met "with wonderful fortune since by three in the morning the big boat was full of every kind of fish. Never before, indeed, had we made so large a haul."

He looks back on these events and says,

"Looking back at that great catch, as here in this far land it is my habit to do upon everything, however small, that happened to me in my youth before I became a wanderer and an exile, I seem to see in it an omen. For has it not always been my lot in life to be kissed of fortune and to gather great store, and then of a sudden to lose it all as I was to lose that rich multitude of fishes?"

Haggard's heroes do tend to be exiles and those who search for the "true" meaning of their souls. He is one of whom I shall never tire of reading.

Lord Dunsany is another favorite of mine. His words are also rather poetic. They are almost a chant with the meter needed to lure you into an enchanted land.

Another of my favorite authors is Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, though not for Sherlock Holmes, but rather Professor Challenger. That was a fascinating



series of a time and a people who could fit into no other time than that in which they were created.

Books from this time period have a majesty and a feeling that cannot be matched today.

These are not the only authors I like. William Gibson with his mythic land of cyberspace is also one of those whom I seek out. Too, Lucius Shepard and Connie Willis seem to have a style that transcends the mere words that are used to create their works. Those words are woven into a fabric that glimmers and has a magic quality all its own.

Robert Holdstock's allegorical tales (Mythago Wood and Lavondyss) also fit into this vision quest scenario that I like so much to read. One might not first think of W. P. Kinsella as a fantasy author, yet Shoeless Joe (known to filmgoers as Field of Dreams) and The Iowa Baseball Confederacy are most certainly in this realm of vision questing faith. There are so many good writers that it is difficult to keep up with them all. There is not time enough or money enough to seek out all their works.

The libraries are getting rid of the older fiction and I find this lamentable. How else will future readers get a chance to sample the works of Haggard en masse? The used ones are getting very expensive and the world of ideas and dreams should not be controlled by such a crass medium as cash currency. They should be open to all who would seek out their landscape. Unfortunately, it is getting harder and harder to find these books, and that is a great loss. [*]

Martin Morse Wooster PO Box 8093 Silver Spring, MD 20907	I enjoyed Evelyn Leeper's report of her African trip; she appears to have had a better time on her package tour than her husband did. But why should she be bothered by an admission price to the Egyptian Museum that she thought was absurdly low? What would she have thought if there was a sign posted that said:
--	--

ADMISSION
 EGYPTIANS: One Pound
 RICH WESTERNERS: Five Pounds

Presumably the museum sets a price that everyone can afford. Certainly there must be some ways to contribute if she felt she should pay more than she did.

As for Kevin Langdon's comment, certainly tourists are killed in Kenya; that also die on the New York subways. I suspect that correlating death rate statistics with tourist-visit data would show that the possibility of dying on the streets of Nairobi was as much as on the streets of any of the more dangerous American or European cities. Jean Weber's approach to travel is much more sensible; spontaneity and a sense of adventure can lead to much more fun than being forced to stay in lounges and listen to Egyptian bands play "Tequila."

Michael Kube-McDowell reminds us that eternal vigilance is necessary against the censor and the bluenose. But I think his concerns are misplaced. Since the Lady Chatterly's Lover trial of 1960, censors have been reluctant to attack print-based sexual material. If you publish Saucy Cheerleaders from Space, few people will complain; if it is turned into a film, they may well boycott it. I think it far more likely that violent "splatter-punk" novels or "Satanist" dungeons-and-dragons material will be attacked than will novels with explicit sexual content. What writers should worry about are not the censors, but editors who may ask authors to remove racy scenes on the grounds that someone might complain. Certainly this sort of preemptive censorship has happened frequently in the comics industry.

Michael Waite will be please to know that a new edition of Robert Bloch's The Eighth Stage of Fandom is scheduled to be published in July by The Wildside Press, 37 Fillmore Street, Newark, NJ 07105. Publisher John Betancourt says that the book will combine a reprint with several articles about Bloch. This is an excellent idea; I've always wanted to read this book, but I've never seen a copy for sale in all my years in fandom. (I have been told that some dealers are selling the paperback of Eighth Stage for \$90!) [*]

[Jessica Amanda Salmonson PO Box 20610 Seattle, WA 98102]	This is a cool issue full of the kinds of discussions and commentaries that made me in-
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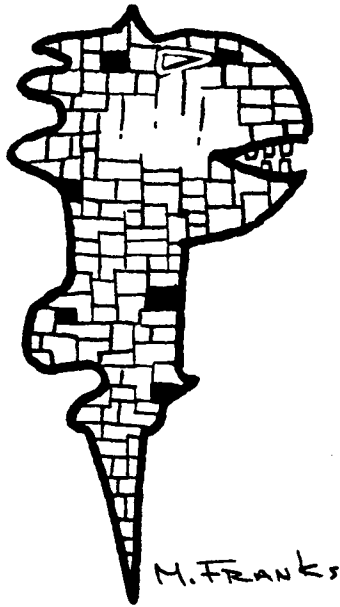
terested in fanzines in the 1970s, and which is almost never encountered anymore: big, varied, and often intelligent. Laura Resnick's portrait of her Tunisia stay was bold and captivating. Kube-McDowell's editorializing was important. Yet I find myself focusing on a little review of Sword of Doom as inciting commentary. It's quite a negative review of a film I consider influential in my life. I've seen it perhaps ten times. I've seen somewhere over 1000 samurai films in my life (for years I saw

two to four Japanese films a week, a high percentage of them period films) and this one stands out of the horde. This film is greatly entwined with my short story "Samurai Fugue" (in A Silver Thread of Madness from Ace Books a couple years ago), wherein it proves its significance to my semi-autobiographical heroine's nihilistic life.

Okamoto as a director burst onto the scene in the 1950s as a bright young star ("young" when one realizes most directors had been around since the silent era). His best films were satiric antiwar pieces not well known in the West. He didn't have the authority to continue making the films he wanted to, and in the 1960s he was stuck with making commercial samurai films. He always put something in them beyond the norm, and they're mostly artfully gloomy. I met him in the 1970s--he could speak almost no English so it wasn't much of a conversation, but he managed to say "when you're number 2, you try harder." That was a reference to Kurosawa. Well, it was a very egotistical statement, because if there was a "number 2" at the time, it was Kobayashi (Kwaidon, Harakiri, Samurai Rebellion), not Okamoto. Yet he must be considered an important director of the type of film not intended for the international audience, giving a better sense of what a purely "Japanese" film really means.

Sword of Doom is his best known work in the USA, though his archly commercial Zatoich vs. Yojimbo had an American revival not many years ago, to good reviews (though it is far from the best Zatoichi episode). Sword of Doom has had regular revivals in major cities and universities at regular intervals since it was first imported way back in the heyday of Kurosawa, Kobayashi, and Inagaki popularity on the international and American film festival circuit. It is far superior to Inagaki's famous Samurai Trilogy, but that's not saying much because it's among the worst things Inagaki ever made, and its lasting popularity must have annoyed him (his last film Wolves was an artistically nostalgic silent film seen by almost no one). The real value of Sword of Doom is in showing us what "standard" nihilistic swordplay movies were like at their best. The Japanese film industry is now dead and the "standing movie villages" that each studio maintained have been torn down for the sake of modern development; so films of this type will never be made again. The sets alone would cost billions to reproduce, and I do not exaggerate. These were the days when even a B-grade director couldn't fail; those standing villages, begun in the silent era and added to year by year, assured verisimilitude even in the silliest "singing samurai" film, seemingly shot "on location" by means of a time machine.

The nihilistic samurai made his appearance in Japanese cinema in the mid-1920s, and became a



standard genre character until the 1970s. He is not a psychopath as you reviewer felt. Nakadai's character is in fact tragic and bizarrely moral. His horrible relationship with his girlfriend, who he feels responsible for, is in many ways against genre norms, for in most such films the hero (even good boys, not just nihilists) would have no trouble dumping girlfriends (even good ones, not just tragic dead weight such as burdens Tsukue). But he found himself committed to her, and though it was a mutually destructive affair, he stayed committed. An even worse commitment was to a sword style that was deceptive and cruel, and was bound to turn him into something similar.

The real theme of this story is that an evil sword style affects the soul of the swordsman. A pure soul cannot be sustained by a fouled sword. This is an elegantly simple theme well known to samurai film fans, but rarely spelled out in ABC terms for the novice who knows diddly-squat about Japanese martial philosophy. The antihero Tsukue always wins because he looks away from his opponent; he pretends he isn't ready; and this baits his opponent into an attack that the antihero counters from underneath, drawing its energy from hell. The sword style becomes the doom of this man's soul, though he proudly refuses to believe he has created an evil form. It is important that his first victim was really victimized by his own mistaken sense of honor, and Tsukue had no intention of killing him but for the necessity of self-defense. But from the moment an evil style was used to kill he was unable to veer from his chosen path, and so descended into a hellish world of endless and ignoble slaughter.

There are several cinematic versions of this epic, which is usually developed as a trilogy (Raizo Ichikawa starred in a color three-part remake of the pre-war classic, but Okamoto's remake is far better). Whether Okamoto ever intended to make two

more films to complete the story is uncertain. The first third of the story is best, and he may never had intended to continue the story. There is a fascinating value to the "no-ending" of this segment of the epic, for the film's final frame leaves our nihilist locked in a perpetual bloodbath that we know, from the "loose ends", can never end. But to the Japanese, there is never a sense that a film like this has no ending. Even the famous (but awful) Samurai Trilogy feels disjointed to American audiences because much is intentionally left out. It is really a series of "highlights" from a popular pulp story, a gigantic novel presently in print in English in three huge paperbacks. It is well known to the Japanese as Moby Dick is to Americans. Sword of Doom is also a gigantic pulp novel, and the film versions feel no need to develop every scene.

Unlike Americans, there is no sense with a Japanese director that his audience will be illiterate dweebs unfamiliar with the written version of a filmed book. Every Japanese viewer knew that the antihero survived that climactic one-against-all encounter; that he later survived a similar battle in which he was wounded by guns; that later still he lost his eyesight but was still unconquerable because the nature of his swordstyle was to appear helpless; and he even survived a fall from a mountain top to continue killing because by then his hellish power made him a true demon. A great many Japanese films have the "problem" for American viewers that a well-known story which needs only parts of it to be told to the Japanese is utterly alien to a non-Japanese viewer unable to fill in the cracks. Yet the meandering Samurai Trilogy has long held American appeal, so the structure of Sword of Doom, which is vastly superior to Inagaki's film, should be sufficient.

Sword of Doom also has the performance of Nakadai, who is his most beautiful in this film. His enormous eyes never looked more miraculous on celluloid. It is a spectacular performance, outdone only by the ronin he created in Kabayashi's gut-wrenchingly violent ballet, Harakiri. In each of these films (and in several others) Nakadai creates cinematic swordstyles that are utterly original and, though not really preactical, are attractive and photogenic. He had a genius for visually stunning swordstyles, and I confess I have imitated them with my own swords when no one was around to giggle at my imitations of "chambara" or movie-style swordplay.

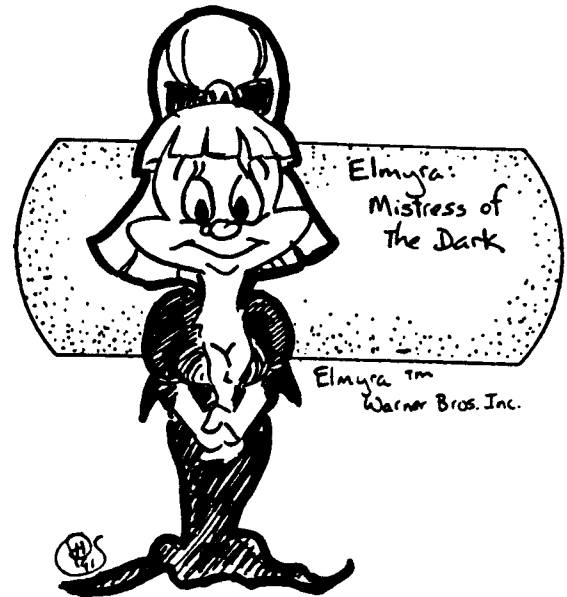
I've dumped on Samurai Trilogy, but Inagaki was in other films a genius of the genre. His nihilistic entry is called Hikken, or Young Swordsman. Like Sword of Doom, it regards a young man who develops an evil style (he defeats his opponents by cutting off their thumbs). He thinks his style is humane, as he doesn't have to kill to win. But his idealis-

tic stance slowly deteriorates as the evil style affects his spirit. In this regard, these are supernatural films. The style cannot be overcome, and he is only defeated when an opponent adopts the same style; though the challenger dies in the encounter, he claims victory in his last breath, for he has cut off our antihero's thumbs, revealing to him the horror of what he had been doing.

I must comment on Sprague's letter suggesting that Mrs. Burton was a Victorian prude. She was not. She was a sensual wildwoman who often shocked her peers, showing up at one party, for instance, in a French period costume that left her boobs hanging out for everyone to oggle. She seems really to have been a charming little weirdo and Burton was lucky to have met her. The popular portrait of her is an inaccurate but understandable myth, born of one overwhelming error in judgement immediately after Burton's death, while she was grieving, and convincing herself that she must safeguard his always precarious reputation. Thus she destroyed Burton's letters, diaries, and the annotated translation of Arabian erotica about which enough is known for us to safely say it was a masterpiece that would have greatly overshadowed his Arabian Nights work. The book he translated included scores of homosexual stories, and in other of Burton's footnote writings (which often extended to essay lengths) he is credited with writing the first scholar's study of homosexuality. The innuendo in the film Mountains of the Moons that Burton had homosexual relationships is really not an issue of debate. Burton knew he was dying as he finished his exhaustive footnotes, and it is probably that he wrote rather too much regarding subjects that even a woman who loved him dearly thought was going a bit too far, and may well have been made the personal nature of his subject completely clear.

She admitted that she was aware that she would be demonized by her act. But she honestly felt she was protecting her husband's reputation. She disregarded her own reputation and acted, after a fashion, heroically, though the outcome of her heroism must be regarded as a crime against art and humanity. Much of what Burton had learned of Arabian sexual history was founded on knowledge that he, as a well-traveled convert to Islam, had sought out and experienced first-hand. Burton was the only one in his life who could have written on these topics authoritatively in English. Supposing a genius of his caliber, and with his interests, undertook this work today, it could not have been done, for Burton lived in the last generation of traditional ways of life that have since been annihilated by incessant wars, western taint, and various degrees of modernization.

The loss is inestimable, and Mrs. Burton probably deserves to be recalled as a malignant prude for this one act. She was punished, even in her own



life, as she died as a pariah not long afterward, months of cancer pain without a single friend left to her. Still, when I read about her, I'm struck by her having been a very vibrant and daring character, by no means a virgin on her wedding night. She was indeed Catholic; she did indeed talk Burton into restraining himself in much of his writings (though in mutual dialogue and the final decision was his); and she did publish a bowdlerized version of Arabian Nights devoid of her husband's bawdy footnotes and sans the racier tales. (Her version was unpopular. She sought not to censor the definitive edition, but to provide a concurrent and alternative edition that "the good and upper crust" could read without offense. The upper crust, however, preferred the nasty parts intact, the whole concept of Victorian prudery being 95% fiction.) Obviously she could not have equalled Burton in eccentricity, genius, or sexual outlawry. But she loved that perverted, brilliant convert to Islam precisely because of who he was, not despite who he was, and this alone cannot support the idea of ghastly prudery. If she had manifested such a character, Burton would have arranged elsewhere for his papers, but nothing in her character could have led him to believe she would burn the substance of his life. [*]

|L. Sprague de Camp | Thanks for No. 35. I can
|3453 Hearst Castle Way| add to my comments on The
Plano, TX 75025-3605 | Mountains of the Moon. The
movie had other fictitious

details. Speke's rescuing Burton from an attacking lion was fictional, as far as I can tell by reading several biographies. So was Burton's capture by a native chief and his emotion over the death of the fictitious black he had rescued from lions, also fictitiously. Burton was in fact rather contemptuous of blacks.

A more realistic Burton was shown in the TV

series (I think of the 1960s) The Discovery of the Nile. This also slipped; in the later meeting of Burton and Stanley, Burton offends Stanley by treating him in a rude, contemptuous manner. Actually, Burton was old and failing in health at the time, but he and Stanley got on fine and threw a little party. Stanley called Burton "a grand man," if only he weren't so cynical.

About Laura Resnick's Tunisian misadventure, in 1967 I was there with Alan Nourse and his wife. We did all right; but we had some advantages. I am fluent in French and used to know a little Arabic; and we were shown around Carthage by a friend, Bou-baker ben-Yahya, a professor at the University of Tunisia, with a French lady dentist wife and a baby daughter. Since the Nourses spoke no French and the ben-Yahyas no English, I was kept busy as a lightning translator.

On the way in from the airport, I rode in front and chatted with the driver in French. There had been a drought, but now it poured. When I complained of being harried around the Mediterranean, on a photographic expedition, by rain and overcast, Charbti Tahar said: "Ah, monsieur, il faut que Dieu vous aime!" (God must love you.)

I can also add an anecdote about T. E. Lawrence. When I was an undergrad at California Tech in the 1920s, our Econ prof was Graham Lang, who told of an experience of a couple he knew in England, who lived in the country. One day, when these people were out, Lawrence showed up on his motorcycle, without warning or prearrangement. Learning that the owners were absent, he cornered the maid, lectured her for two hours on Arabia, and rode off. He came again a couple of weeks later when the people were out and went through exactly the same routine. A biographer of Lawrence to whom I wrote replied that yes, Lawrence did that sort of thing. [*]

[David Gorecki | I'd love to see some com-
| 9129 167th St. | ments on the idea (cf. Law-
| Tinley Park, IL 60477 | rence Watt-Evans' letter)
| | of writing "market smart"

and whether it's possible to tell from a book itself how deliberately geared it is, to either an editor's (or presumed reading public's) tastes.

There's no doubt in my mind that writing for readers (rather than from any inner need or artistic urge) goes back to the days of Edgar Rice Burroughs, at least; and I doubt that anyone would deny that Perry Rhodan sprang from the need for cold cash rather than the heat of inspiration. And on a less blatant plane, Dean Koontz's work (from his early Ace Double days to the present) shows a canny analysis of the market and what it buys, from his ersatz-New Wavery through Donald Westlake-style crime novels to more recent Stephen King imitations. (If you doubt this last, read his Writing Popular Fiction textbook from the 70s.)

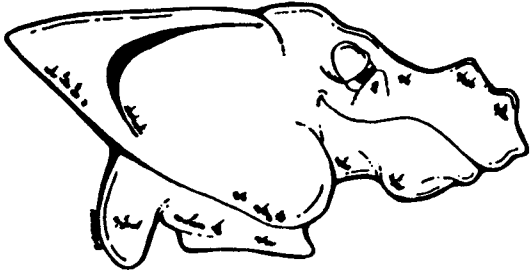
Outside this rather cynical pandering, it seems that those writers who do well are those of limited ability, who actually do write to the best of that ability and just happen to be tuned in to the current tastes (a la Jacqueline Susann). Mr. Watt-Evans doesn't fall into this category...and I'm willing to bet that when he gets off the "plateau" he seems to feel he's on he'll produce the type of work that will meet the approval of his toughest critic, himself.

I thought Buck Coulson's comment on current good stories was unfortunately accurate: you do have to look harder for them [the good hard SF stories] than you would have in the good old days.

What good old days? As an experiment, I reached into my collection of old digests, ranging from the forties through the sixties. Here's what I found, strictly at random: Worlds Beyond, issue #2, January 1951: stories include "Survival Ship" by Judith Merril; "Tree of Wrath", John Christopher; "Null-P", William Tenn, plus others by Cleve Cartmill, E. B. White, and a totally forgotten name, one Bob Tucker (interestingly, not as Wilson Tucker). The next issue at hand, F&SF for September 1956. Stories by Ward Moore, Idris Seabright, Reg. Bretnor, Bob Bloch, plus the cover novelet by Poul Anderson, "Operation Afreet". Finally, a Science Fiction Adventures with three novelets, by Silverberg, Blish and Ellison. Some classics, a lot of readable material, a few duds: most, I would dare say, have been reprinted...the fact is, I find about 75% of a fifties issue of any of these titles eminently readable. Today, I doubt that figure would be 33%; and on top of that, consider the fact that magazines today don't have the competition for material that editors faced in the fifties (6-8 pro titles now vs. upwards of 40 then!). I don't think this reflects well on today's pro editors.

Finally, congratulations on the stamina to sit through the Batman serial. Someday, you just have to see the 1940 Green Archer.

[[I agree with you about the number of interesting and readable stories in the current magazines. Some, the editors may claim, are more "literary", but if they don't entertain, don't tell a story, or are not understandable, why waste the readers' time and money (and the magazine space) with them? With the limited market, every story in every issue of a magazine should be better than average, which is not the case. // You should try watching The Phantom (1943) without cracking up, or the 1935 (?) The Undersea Kingdom with Ray "Crash" Corrigan ("Nothing is safe with Crash Corrigan around," says the villain at one point). Actually, the Batman serial isn't too bad; it's the second serial, Batman and Robin, which is somewhat uncomprehensible.]]



[Tom Jackson | Since you are always careful a-
|1109 Cherry | bout matching your drawings with
|Lawton, OK 73507| your articles, I was amazed when
I opened up Lan's Lantern #35
and saw that you used a drawing of a naked woman
riding a shark to illustrate Laura Resnick's arti-
cle on her trip to Tunisia. That must have been
SOME vacation...

Richard Brandt, commenting on my article on the
Aelita Award, given to Soviet science fiction writ-
ers, wonders why individual works are cited if it's
an award for lifetime achievement. That's a reason-
able question, but unfortunately I don't have an
answer. My source for contending that the award
recognize a career, even though individual works
are cited, is Polish fan Richard Jakinski, who has
attended Soviet SF conventions and used to cover
the Eastern Europe SF scene for Science Fiction
Chronicle. Unfortunately, Mr. Jasinski seems to
have gaffiated and I've lost contact with him. I
doubt I'll be able to write a better article until
I learn more Russian and can travel to the Soviet
Union to research this question and other questions
that I have. There is very little information
available in English on the Aelita.

Elsewhere in the lettercolumn, I noticed that
several people commented on the Analog vs. Asimov's
debate. I certainly didn't mean to wound Arlan
Andrews when I talked about new writers associated
with Analog: I didn't say that Andrews (or anyone
else on the list) is a bad writer, and only meant
to argue that Analog has not been a prestigious
publication under Stanley Schmidt's stewardship.
Andrews also complains that he wasn't discovered by
Schmidt. I drew my list from Lan's "Conreports and
Ramblings," never dreaming that anyone would ques-
tion such an unimpeachable source!

Brandt says that Analog is "boring," complains
about the "sameness of all those issues," that he
has to read "pretty much the same story issue after
issue" and so on. Obviously I tend to agree with
him, but what amazes me is that Brandt says to you,
"I still read every issue of Analog, which is more
than you can say about the competition." Imagine
how avidly this guy reads the stuff he actually
likes, if he makes himself read every insipid story
issue after issue, of a magazine he finds insuffer-
ably dull. Brandt also implies that you, Lan, have
an obligation to read every issue of Asimov's, even
if you don't like the magazine very much. I hope

this business of reading dull literature out of a
sense of duty doesn't become a mass movement. I'd
hate to be forced by peer pressure to read the col-
lected works of James Fenimore Cooper, for example.
I'd rather read every issue of Analog.

Joseph Patrick Conat's article describes some
unpleasant incidents at CONTRAPTION and then says
that any adult who seeks sex from a minor should be
expelled from the convention. I agree. So what did
the con committee do? Conat says that "One com-
plaint is all it should take." OK, did Conat com-
plain to the con officials, and if so, how did they
respond? It might have been a good idea to show
Conat's article to a CONTRAPTION official and ask
for comment. It's hard to form an opinion without
hearing the rest of the story.

[[I do read stories in Asimov's, as well as in
F&SF, Amazing, Omni and Aboriginal SF and any
other SF magazine I get. If a story doesn't grab
me in the first few pages (or it's another boring
Lucius Shepard war story, or a Connie Willis
"comedy"), I go on to the next. I do this more
often with Asimov's than with the others. //
From what I understand, Joe Conat did not inform
the concommittee about the incident until after
the convention, which does weaken his complaint,
but not the issue he was presenting.]]

[Richard Brandt | Some good artwork again
|4740 N. Mesa, Apt. 111| this issue. High marks
|El Paso TX 79912| have to go to April Lee's
illustrations for Evelyn

Leeper's Egyptian travelogue; the style is eye-
catching and appropriate. As for the article it-
self, well, deja vu. It's just as well you didn't
publish this in the same issue as Mike's and Mark's
articles...I'm not sure how much we saw differently
from Evelyn's point of view; I have to confess,
though, that personally I enjoyed another armchair
visit to the Dark Continent. With enough reading I
might start to believe I'm prepared for a visit my-
self. (While it's still there, as my ma would say.)

Laura Resnick's article, now, was the real
thing. Maybe you just need enough horror stories to
flesh out a really striking travel piece. As Lau-
ra's experiences make plain to the unenlightened,
Franz Kafka's descriptions of encounters with in-
transigent bureaucrats are not the exaggerations of
satirical fiction we in other cultures might as-
sume; he was a simple documentary realist! Since
Jack Williamson encountered in Russia much the same
indifference from the service professions, one won-
ders how much of this attitude is culturally in-
grained rather than the result of their economic
system.

(There's a wonderful bit in an otherwise stupid
movie, Real Men, where two Americans are trapped
under a hail of gunfire from KGB agents. All of a

sudden the Russians stop shooting and go away, because it's their lunch hour. "They're not as dedicated as us," explained the macho CIA agent. "They've got no incentive, no motivation.")

In his review of Handmaid's Tale, Mark Leeper says director Volker Schlöndorff used to make After-School Specials. Really? The same Volker Schlöndorff from Germany who directed A Free Woman, The Lost Honor of Katarina Blum, and The Tin Drum?[*]

[Buck Coulson] Joseph Conat's account was moder-
[2677W - 700N] ately appalling. Can't say I've
[Hartford City] seen anything like it. I was at a
[Indiana 47348] con or two with Rotten Robert, but
got to the major scene after several large fans had, I was told, taken him out behind the hotel and persuaded him to alter his methods. Of course, I don't believe I've ever been to CON-TRAPTION.... I don't believe this sort of thing is particularly common at conventions, though. Or maybe I'm just getting out of things; talk too much to the people I already know.

Laura Resnick makes me glad that my only extended foreign tours have been in Canada and England. Jack Williamson's Russian tour was interesting. The historical comments I already knew about, but it was a good eyewitness account of what the country is like today.

Evelyn Leeper's travel article--this is your travel issue, right?--reminded me of one thing I've always wondered. Much is made of Tutankhamen's tomb (and I saw a good many of those objects when they were on display in Chicago), but what about all the other kings' tombs which were robbed? The contents weren't destroyed, they were stolen--so where are they now? There doesn't seem to be enough Egyptian material in museums and collections to account for them, so what happened to them? Tut was a minor ruler, so his tomb would have been less magnificent than most. I suppose there might be more stuff in private collections than I realize, but I do wonder.

I pretty much agree with Kube-McDowell on the necessity of free speech and writing, but I refuse to get worked up over attacks on sexual expression, because I can remember farther back than he can. The attacks are being made because the amount of discussion and exploitation of sex today wouldn't have been considered 40 years ago. The conservatives are agonized simply because sexual topics are wider-ranging now than they have been at least since the early 1800s, and quite possibly there is more freedom to discuss sex today than there has ever been before. The conservatives are winning some battles, but the trend of the times is against them.

Mark Bernstein is quite tight about people not being able to compel respect--for anything. Most US citizens are bored with any sort of history (which

is part of what's wrong with the country, but that's not pertinent to this discussion). I'm one of the oddballs who likes history in general, including fan history, despite the way it's often presented. Historians, in and out of fandom, seem to have this compulsion toward nitpicking accuracy and extreme dullness; only a few can make history entertaining to anyone not already interested in it. (That's why Barbara Tuchman became a best-selling author; she could write history entertainingly.) Since fandom doesn't have that many historians to begin with, the interesting writers are very scarce.

I'll argue with Mark over Suzette Haden Elgin, though. Her women's books--Native Tongue and The Judas Rose--are excellent, and she's marvelous personally, but I found her Ozark Trilogy considerably too cutesy, though some of her Ozark short stories are very good.

One way to find compatible roommates for a convention is to raise your own; our roommates in recent years have been son Bruce and his various friends, and his taste in friends is quite similar to ours. (For CHICON V, the present plan is for us to be in a group of 8 in a suite; all of the others around Bruce's age.) But we've also managed to have friends who are good roommates; the DeWeeses, Don and Maggie Thompson, the Miesels, Barb Riedel and Rose Eierman, etc. Only once when we shared with a couple we didn't know very well did we have any problems at all.

Enjoyed and agreed with S.M. Stirling's letter, though I think there's a question of whether Mongol domination of Europe would have lasted very long even if they'd won initially; their government wasn't equipped to handle an empire and would probably have broken up fairly quickly even if Ogday had lived. As I recall, they lasted only about a hundred years in China, much closer to their home base and with a readymade bureaucracy to implement their rule, which European countries didn't have.

I was around in the 1960s and I don't believe that Star Trek fandom was "pushed out" of general fandom. A lot of Star Trek fans that I knew became fans of science fiction in general, and Star Trek conventions began because ST fans wanted conventions that were entirely about Star Trek. Science fiction fans didn't go to those conventions because they weren't that interested and wanted more variety. Some cons may have refused to have any ST panels at all, but most of the ones I went to had some mention of ST along with the rest of the field. Star Trek material appeared in general fanzines--Juanita's and mine, for one--but the general fanzines refused to turn over entire issues to ST, so ST fans started their own. Same way comics fandom split off from science fiction fandom; there was discussion of comics in science fiction fanzines, but not enough of it to satisfy the comics fans.

Science fiction fans provided the initial forums for both comics and ST fandoms; Richard Lupoff and Don A. Thompson for comics and Bjo Trimble for ST.

Joe Napolitano doesn't seem to think that age should slow down famous writers. He'll learn.... Asimov and Clarke both were fans before that were writers, so I doubt if it's irrelevant to them, but fandom as a whole is pretty small potatoes to any major writer because it makes up a very small fraction of their sales. Fans would like to think that their opinions are important in the field. What the hell, I'd like to think that my opinions on national policy are important to George Bush, but I know better.

As a matter of fact, Piers Anthony's first books were published by Berkley, Ace, Avon, Paperback Library, and (one whole book) by Ballantine. And of course the editor he really hated--with good reason--was Roger Elwood of Laser. Otherwise, Wooster seems to regard editors and publishers as identical; Lester del Rey was definitely the junior partner at Del Rey books until Judy-Lynn died. The company was named for her, not for Lester, and she was the one who was vice-president of Ballantine, not Lester. As for Ballantine and Del Rey being "different"; Del Rey is part of Ballantine, and always has been. Negating one book by an author doesn't negate his whole output; I doubt if Farnham's Freehold will be read in 20 years, either, but some of Heinlein will be. Robert Moore Williams has several stories in anthologies and I'm not going to name them all; they may be read in the future and they may not. Authors can be resurrected years after their stories have disappeared from view; look at Burroughs, Howard, and so on. You don't appear to know much about the publishing industry, Martin.

Roadside Picnic is indeed well worth reading, but all the MacMillan and Collier editions of the Strugatsky books were published in the 1970s and I haven't seen a used copy of any of them for years. (Except in our library, of course.)[*]

[Lynn Margosian | I read through your con
|1560 Willis Ave., Apt 3D| reports and ramblings
|S. St. Paul, MN 55075| and found myself misun-
derstood on a technical
point, which I'm sure many people found and are
ready to correct me on. You wrote that I had said
that there is no LANDSAT coverage for South Ameri-
can countries like Venezuela. That is incorrect:
LANDSAT can take pictures of anyplace on Earth be-
cause of its orbital pattern. However, I was taught
in college that it is difficult to get LANDSAT im-
agery and high-altitude air photos of the rainfor-
est areas because the forests are frequently cov-
ered by rain clouds. If I recall correctly, the
imagery used in the film was supposed to be recent-
ly acquired, a questionable detail since available
imagery was probably quite a bit older than they

were suggesting, and probably less available than other places on Earth. All this is really a moot point, since the whole movie Arachnophobia was ridic-
ulously loose in its interpretation of spiders' malice toward people and their ability to chase and recognize their enemies.][*]

[Teddy Harvia | I am not averse to nudity and
|PO Box 905 | implicit sex in science fiction
|Euless, TX 76039| art. What would it be without
them? But Allen Darnell Salyer's
bestial illustration "Lioneses" is too much. The
woman's clothing seems forcefully pulled aside to
reveal her breasts, her spread-legged pose seems
calculated to appeal to pure animal lust, and
lion's paw on her shoulder seem condescending. Am I
missing something? Is it a spoof of "Beauty and the
Beast"? Perhaps I am too chauvinistic to accept
animal dominance, even in art.

[[Others have has similar averse reactions to that particular piece of art and expressed that to me verbally, although I have also seen people raise their eyebrows and smile slightly too. I guess it is all a personal thing.]]

[John W. Thiel | The "Now, about your last LOC"
|30 North 19th | illo seems appropriate to me.
|Lafayette IN 47904| I've had people show up saying
that. Greg Teetsell showed up
one time in behalf of Shadow of the Monolith and
explained the South to me, on the basis of my LoC
comments. Once ISFA showed up in town discussing
several of my letter of comment with me (the only
one that was definitely talking about something
else was Buck Coulson). Gregg Trend and others in
Detroit swore on the phone that they would raid my
city, but I haven't seen them; they must have never
gotten around to it. Those aren't the only ones who
have shown up, and I'd say there might be more to a
letter column than meets the eye; those loccers are
real, not print-out machines. So thanks for the
warning.

Where are the fanzine reviews?

[[I didn't have room for them in #35, but there are several pages of them in this issue.]]

I have to agree with Michael Kube-McDowell's Goh remarks that Puritanism is a prevailing idea today. I think there's a split image of Puritans--they are the central figures of Thanksgiving due to its association with the Mayflower, and these are fine ways to emulate; but they are also the villains of the Salem Witch Trials, and this outlook and approach ought to be shunned. Hugh Hefner, who is the original crusader and exposé of Puritanism, overlooked some of these points in doing his research, and thus left a viewpoint not fully developed

floating around. Lately his magazine sounds like it's edited by Puritans, so I guess he's said all he's going to say. One must take one's research to the end if it becomes of vital interest. SF has had many stories on sexual themes, but it seems between them an attitude had by editors of science-over-all relegates sex to a form of extraterrestrial behavior; in fact that's an after-effect of some of the stories, too.

James R. Black | Robert Sabella's guest editorial
RD #1 Box 351A | al in #32 really hit home. I
Bedford, PA 15522 | prefer the old style science
fiction. In addition to the
writers he listed, I also enjoy Mike Resnick, Orson
Scott Card, R. M. Meluch, Joe Haldeman, to name a
few.

Susan Schwartz did a nice job on her article about writing. Some day I have to find the time to read Heritage of Flight.

I enjoyed the fanzine and book reviews. Science fiction is not popular in this area, so I like to read other people's comments on books. I read Warbirds on the strength of your review. 3 nights in a row I stayed up late and read it. Rebecca is one of the better "new" writers. I am eagerly looking forward to reading her other books. I would like to read about the first Erde/Tannia war.

Mark R. Leeper | Jean Weber is correct that in
80 Lakeridge Dr | Africa (and generally when we
Matawan NJ 07747 | travel) we would sometimes
choose the uncomfortable solution to the comfortable one. Comfortable moments rarely make for good adventure. The trick is to choose the uncomfortable moments wisely. Pick the hotel where they are not quite sure how Westerners like things, that sort of thing. I think the one most memorable scene from our Southeastern Asia trip is in the Cathay Hotel of Penang--a beautiful old building that at one time was a real showplace. It looked a lot like something out of an old Charlie Chaplin film. And at 3 AM we would generally awake to some family of nocturnal animals (cats? rats?) fighting in the ceiling above our head. Actually I may agree more with Mike than Jean that doing homework is valuable, but not to avoid discomfort. It is to choose your discomfort wisely and also to understand things when you see them. Many, perhaps most, cats in Thailand and Malaysia have their tails docked. We noticed it and pretty much figured it was just a different aesthetic. It was well into the trip before we found a reference why. It seems Kitty needs its tail to jump over a dead man. You don't want Kitty to jump over a dead man because then the dead man gets up and starts walking around. One thing that transcends the culture



barrier is nobody wants dead people getting up and walking around. You generally miss details like that unless you read about them. Of course travel without having done the homework is pretty good also, but not quite as good.

Mike Glicksohn is right that some of the choices (but not all) that we make on the trip is for reasons of keeping prices down. Most are really to get a better feel of territory. If my log convinced Mike that he didn't want to be a tourist in Africa that was probably a failure in my writing. Evelyn and I have seen a lot of parts of the world and there was only one trip we were sorry we took. (Worst flooding in Spain in 50 years.) Mike is right--well, sort of--about the log not really being written to be published. Actually it is a reaction to a father and brother who take cameras on trips and then spend an inordinate amount of time of what should be sightseeing time setting up pictures. I decided early on that my own record for trips would be a verbal one that can be written in off-hours, on busses and in bedrooms. At least originally they were not intended for publication or even showing people. I broke that intention when a friend was going to London and I lent her a copy of my first London log, just to give her an idea of what we saw. Before I knew it she was lending it out to other people. What I write remains a personal record, though it is with some expectation that others will be reading over my shoulder.

Richard Brandt is correct that I probably should have mentioned the source novel Shoeless Joe when I wrote about Field of Dreams. I was concentrating more on the film than in how it got to the screen. As for Dave Palter's saying that he disagrees with my reviews but still enjoys them, that is fine by me. My tastes may well be odd. I occasionally run into someone who says that my tastes are very well correlated to his or hers, but more people say that they have different tastes. I try to give a little background on the film while not going enough plot

detail to detract from the enjoyment of the film. That is really what I want from other reviewers I read.

Joe Major politely takes me to task on The Abyss, a film that I enjoyed more than most of the public. My usual disclaimer is that my reviews represent my reaction to the film on one viewing. They may change in time, though I have to say that they did not change much on a second viewing of The Abyss. I am not sure I agree that the characters are all that stereotypical, but it is not an important point. I feel the film's strong suit is the Alistair MacLean-like action. As for the innocent, beautiful aliens, we are not given much reason to believe they are or are not innocent. Our two cultures are very different so it is hardly surprising we do not see very much depth to their culture. How often in our own world have explorers wrongly thought that new cultures they have discovered are simple? I mean it is hardly likely that the first things that the aliens are going to communicate is: "Gee, we are still arguing amongst ourselves how much technology we should let on to your culture. We are going up the bureaucratic structure to have the decision made on a high level." It is far more likely that the first communication will be something like "Friend!" And as for the alien's beauty, consider how much of the really deep undersea life we have discovered really do look beautiful to us even now. I was more interested in their technology than in their physical appearance. They obviously had a highly-developed technology that allowed them to control the motions of fluids and gasses. We see some remarkable examples of that technology, so we know they have it. Given that, it is really not hard to believe that they have the knowledge of what pressure changes will do to liquids and the technology to keep gasses dissolved in those liquids, including human blood. That is no more remarkable than a lot of other things they did in a similar vein. And the characters noted that something of the sort must have happened. That means the writers thought of it and essentially explained their way out. [*]

[Evelyn C. Leeper | Mike Glicksohn is right when he
|80 Lakeridge Dr | says our logs appear to have
| Matawan NJ 07747 | been hastily written and not
edited. We write them 1) for
ourselves as a diary, 2) for our family and friends
who seem to want to read them (and have probably
learned to skim selectively), and 3) for anyone
else who's interested. For the last category, the
deal is that you get them "as is"--we haven't the
time (or the inclination) to do a lot of rewrites,
though major gaffes are usually caught as they are
being typed afterwards. If I include a lot of minu-
tiae, it's because some people seem to use them as
guides to planning their own trips, and actually

wonder what a railroad ticket or a meal will cost. It's a pity the logs have convinced him he doesn't want to be a tourist in Africa, but it does indicate that we communicated something of the hardships--several of the people on our tour clearly expected a much higher level of comfort than they got, and would have been better off knowing ahead of time what it was like.

S. M. Stirling referred to Stephen Jay Gould's It's a Wonderful Life--an understandable slip, but it's simply Wonderful Life.

To Richard Brandt: When I bought What Might Have Been, Volume 1, many of the stories hadn't appeared yet in the magazines. I like having all these alternate history stories in one volume, but agree that it may not be such a good deal for others who subscribe to IASFM (which I do, by the way).

Ben Bova was kind enough to fill in some of the details about Cyberbooks. The answer to my question of why Tor would publish a book about how stupid the publishing industry is is that the editor there has a sense of humor--which I had suspected (as per my comments about the mudeaters). It was either that, or (as I had suggested) the editor was so stupid he didn't realize what he was doing--and Tom Doherty is most definitely not stupid, and I didn't mean to imply so. (A similar phenomenon occurred in Hollywood with the film Hollywood Boulevard, which Roger Corman financed and released; it was about how cheaply and quickly a producer very much like Corman makes films.) And the descriptions of New York, while similar to those in Bonfire of the Vanities, were totally unconnected to that book. I guess it's just too inviting a target. [*]

[Ben P. Indick | I almost apologize to note that
|428 Sagamore Ave| my belated discovery of cyber-
|Teaneck NJ 07666| punk science fiction may already
be obsolete! (Didn't I say that
SF was "fragile"?) Lewis Shiner has already--in an
article featured on the New York Times opinion/edi-
torial page--foresworn it! And William Gibson's
latest book takes place in the mid-1800's! Well,
what will be next? A fusion of science fiction and
"splatterpunk"? Heaven forbid!

Anyway, I read some novels by P. K. Dick since writing the article (as Three Stigmata of Palmer Eldritch) and in his own way he does anticipate Gibson et al. As some of your reviewers also note, George Alec Effinger in his Budayeen stories beautifully incorporates elements of the genre (although he says it is not intended to be part of any movement).

Several of your folks also discuss Dan Simmons' Phases of Gravity. It was published as superior SF but, as noted, is in no way fantastic. It is, however, a splendid and moving novel. I shall be sending you Ben's Beat 21 in which I review, mostly briefly, a number of books and I give further par-

particulars on why I liked this novel. I am a fan of Simmons and have liked nearly everything of his I have read. The only qualification is Carrion Comfort, of whose enormous length I have only read one-fifth. It is clearly derived from the style of Stephen King and appears to be a mixture of ambition and commercialism. Maybe it will grab me soon! [[Dale Skran had problems with the novel too; see his review in this issue.]]

One of the correspondents listed favorite novels --I forget in what context. [[A list of the best Fantasy novels.]] I like to consider the small trunkful to be swamped on some desert island with. As I recall, he left out one of my beloved favorites! My #2 all time beloved is T.H. White's The Once and Future King, a mandatory #2!! Number 1, of course, is the greatest fantasy of all. Lord of the Rings. Then? Well, let's see: #3, The Gormenghast Trilogy (really just volumes one and two; the third was not quite completed nor revised, and leaves the world of the others).

#4, Islandia--not precisely a fantasy by definition, more a fantastic adventure in an imaginary

land, but a love story too).

#5, The Outsider and others--this gives me a lot of Lovecraft--and while it went to no islands, it accompanied me in 1944 to many posts prior to shipping abroad--and leaving the book at home).

#6, The Shining--I've read King's dazzling book three times, with more pleasure each time. Yet in some ways I prefer The Eye of the Dragon, and volume one (only) of The Dark Tower. Still, The Shining is a special favorite.

#7, The Collected Short Stories of H. G. Wells--again a sort of fink, because not only does my edition include a treasury of great stories, it also has The Time Machine, still the greatest SF novel.

#8, A. Merrit's The Dwellers in the Mirage--How could I survive without a representative piece of the beloved writer of my youth? "Ai Lur! Ai Era-lee!"

#9, Watership Down--Richard Adams' books could be construed as non-fantasy too, I guess, but it is for me, and is wondrous.

Etc., etc.--I'm busy. I want all my beloveds--ALL!!!![*]

I also heard from the following people -- at cons, over the phone, quick notes and postcards, letters not published, etc. And I've probably missed a few people too. My apologies. Lan[*]

David Alway, Clifton Amsbury, Arlan Andrews, Doug Andrews, John Annas, Tom & Tara Barber, Ray Beam, Martha Beck, Rose Beetem, Gary Bernstein, Sheryl Birkhead, Jim Black, Donn Brazier, Dr. William C. Bruer, Jack Brooks, Lois McMaster Bujold, Bruce Burdick, TJ & Mitchell Burnside-Clapp, PL Caruthers-Mongomery, Ann Cecil, Cy Chauvin, Barry & Sally Childs-Heltons, Craig Chrissinger, Chris Clayton, Fred Cleaver, Kathleen Conat, Glen Cook, Wendy Council, Bob Cowie, Barbara Delaplace, Scott & Jane Dennis, Alan Dormire, Julia Ecklar, Janice M. Eisen, Jim & June Enlow, Gary Ferguson, Carl C. Fields, Dennis Fischer, Cliff Flynt, Steve & Sue Francis, Don Franson, Gil Gaier, Jo Anselm Gehm, Mike Glicksohn, Alan Greenberg, Bob Greene, Art Greena, Liz Gross, Mick Hamblen, Dr. Halina Harding, James Harris, Terry Harris, Teddy Harvia, Eric Heideman, Rusty Hevelin, Lynn Hickman, Margaret Hilt, Arthur Hlavaty, Cathy Howard, Steve Hudson, Tanya Huff, Thea Hutcheson, Ben Indick, Mary Kay Jackson, Tom Jackson, Fred Jakobic, Jordan Kare, Mike Kennedy, R'ykandar Korra'ti, Allen Koszowski, Michael Kube-McDowell, Pat M. Kuras, Rich Lamb, Kevin Langdon, Gary Laskowski, George Laskowski Sr, Sophie Laskowski, Roy Lavender, Steve Leigh, Becca Levin, Gregory Lichtfeld, Mary Lou Lockhart, Mary & Sam Long, Dick & Nicki Lynch, Carol Lynn, Joseph T. Major, Mary Manchester, Jim & Laurie Mann, David

Margosian, Kathy Mar, Vonda McIntyre, Jamie McQuinn, Jeanne Mealy, Linda Melnick, Margaret Middleton, Anne Moore, Perry Glenn Moore, Janice Morningstar, Stella Nemeth, Frank Norton, Terry O'Brien, Anna O'Connell, Frank Olynyk, Elizabeth Osborne, Joan Panichella, Naomi & Randy Pardue, Joe Patrouch, Ross Pavlac, Bruce Pelz, Sharon Porath, Mitch & Joann Radelt, Peggy Ranson, Laura Resnick, Mike & Carol Resnick, Ted Reynolds, Peter Roberts, Paula Robinson, Bob Rodgers, Doug Roemer, Jan & Tim Rotarius, Fred Roth, Tom Sadler, Ben Schilling, David Shea, Anne Schneider, Bruce Schaefer, Sandy Schreiber, David Shea, Susan Schwartz, Pat & Roger Sims, Mike & Krista Sinclair, Michael Skeet, Wally Smart, Jill Smethells, Tom Smith, Mary Southworth, Dale Speirs, Dick Spelman, Pam Spurlock, David Stein, Diana Stein, John E. Stith, Bill & Brenda Sutton, Gale Tang, Sylvus Tarn, Charlie Terry, David Thayer, John Thiel, Ruth Thompson, Phil Torricci, Richard Tuchoika, Larry Tucker, R Laurraffe Tutihasi, Vito Vitauskas, Elisabeth Vonarburg, Harry Warner, Jr., Larry Warner, Julie Washington, Eric & Vickie Webb, Henry Welch, Don Wenzel, Denis & Judy Wilemski, Hanfa Wojtowicz, Taras Wolansky, Ruth Woodring, Martin Morse Wooster, David & Carol Yoder, Brian Youmans, Tim & Anna Zahn, and Joe Zimny. [*]

ENGLAND

and the WORLD CON

by LAN

We left for England on Friday, August 17, 1990, taking an overnight flight to Gatwick. It had been three years since our first trip there (for the Brighton Worldcon), and we were very anxious to see the country again. Our neighbors, Ed and Linda Van Dam, took us to the airport (and would pick us up when we returned). We got very little sleep on the plane, but were really keyed up for ENGLAND, so we didn't get to bed until after midnight on Saturday ...but there's a story that goes with it.

We left for England on Friday, taking an overnight flight to Gatwick. Our neighbors took us to the airport (and would pick us up when we returned). We got very little sleep on the plane, but were really keyed up for ENGLAND, so we didn't get to bed until after midnight on Saturday ...but there's a story that goes with it.

After taking the Gatwick Express (train) to Victoria Station in London, picking up our underground and rail passes, we found our way to South Ealing where our B&B was going to be for the next six days. But it wasn't--at least not for the first night. Tess Reilly was overbooked for Saturday night (a group was there for a wedding and had brought a couple extra people with them). We went to a pub down the street for lunch, walked around in the neighborhood and took pictures in Lammas Park. We passed another underground station, Northfields, which we would use from time to time, instead of the South Ealing station. Meanwhile, since Tess' phone was on the fritz (calls came in, but none could be made out) she eventually got in touch with her sister Greta. When we returned, she took us over to her sister's place. Greta lived in neighboring Greenford.

Since it was still early afternoon, we went to London via the coach and underground, and saw St. Paul's Cathedral. (We would also see it on our last day there, which sort of framed the trip quite nicely.) The Cathedral closed at 5:30, so we headed to Hyde Park to walk around before heading back. As night fell, earlier than we had thought it would, we headed directly to the tube station and the end of one part of the District Line, Ealing Broadway. There we picked up a bus which was to take us to Cuckoo Lane. Then the fun started to happen. We took the E1 bus instead of the E2, and none of the

landmarks I had memorized came into view. We rode to the end of the line, and the bus driver gave us some instructions on how to get to another bus that was going back. He was returning too, but after a 20 minute lay-over. We got mixed up on the directions, and ended back with the same bus driver. He let us off at Cuckoo Lane, which didn't look familiar, but we figured we were on the other end of the road. So we walked down until it changed names. Nothing looked familiar. So we went back to where the bus had dropped us off.

There was no telephone in sight. We asked someone where a phone was, and she told us it was a long ways down the road (about a 5 minute walk --no trouble really), but there were two teenage girls in the booth. They finally let us use the phone when Maia got visibly upset and said that we were lost and had only one phone number to call, and if Tess wasn't there we would be totally lost. We didn't have Greta's number.

Maia hates to carry change around. I don't mind, which was fortunate since we barely had enough to make one call. Tess was there (had we called 5 minutes later she would have been gone), and she gave us directions on how to get to Cuckoo Avenue (right name, wrong street designation), and gave us Greta's phone number. Since we didn't have money for another call, and Tess couldn't call out from her phone, we walked. The teens asked us if we knew where we were, and where we were going. We did, and about 45 minutes later we were in familiar surroundings, and climbed up to Greta's first floor flat just after 11 pm.

The first day, and we already had an adventure! (How much more of this could we stand?)

Sunday was wet; actually it rained when we got off the plane, but stopped by the time we made London, although it remained overcast. We didn't mind too much, since it broke a 2-month drought. After Tess picked us up and took us back to her place, where we would stay until Friday, we went in search of a place called The Light Fantastic, a hologram museum. We thought it was in a building called the Trocadero, which is an indoor mall (apparently a new concept in England). It wasn't there. Checking the brochure again, it said Covent Gardens, so that's where we went. And eventually

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found it (it was not well marked). Maia bought her first souvenir there. I refrained, although I did consider a couple of items.

Eventually we found our way to the British Museum, which a lot of other people decided to visit too. It was humid and crowded, but we managed to see a lot of the sections we hadn't seen before. And this time I actually touched the Rosetta Stone.

We had dinner at the Sitar, a Tandoori restaurant near the B&B, which had excellent food, and made an early night of it. Well, Maia went to bed early, and I stayed up to read for an hour or so before turning in.

Monday was sunny, so we went to Regents Park and the Zoo. On our way to the underground we picked up sandwiches and fruit, which we ate for lunch at the zoo. As I wrote you, they had some excellent exhibits, particularly for the nocturnal animals. These were in cages underground with low lighting simulating moonlight. That way people could actually see them moving around and not just sleeping. The large animal exhibits were nice too, especially the lions, and the zoo had a superb aviary.

We noticed during lunch that there were camel rides--which were mostly for children, but we wanted one ourselves. So we got tickets, took separate places in line so that we could each get a picture of the other riding the camel. Well, after seeing Susan Schwartz's picture on a camel in Locus, how could we resist getting one ourselves?

While in the zoo, we saw the Regents Canal, which is part of the Grand Union Canal, and decided to take a canal ride from the Camden locks to Little Venice (near Paddington Station). We walked from the zoo to the locks, and were accosted on the way by panhandlers who I tried to ignore. We found the boat launch without any trouble, but the last ride had left a half hour before we got there. However, in a small landing a bit west of the locks was another company that gave rides, so we went there. We looked through the windows of a number of small shops which were in that area. Most of them were closed, which was disappointing. I would have

liked to have looked in the puzzles shop and the stain glass window place.

The ride was interesting. The canal boats we saw (and the one we rode in) were long and narrow. Many of the boats we passed looked as though they were inhabited, which I found out later they were. There is a whole different subculture of Londoners who live on the canal. And it was fascinating to see how the basic design of the boats was altered and decorated to reflect personal tastes. The places we passed along the way were mostly well-kept. There were a few stretches that were dirty, and under one bridge I saw a mattress, blanket and clothes where someone was living/sleeping. Occasionally through the undergrowth I saw other camping places. It tarnished the image I had of the London mystique, but it seems that no large city is without its homeless.

Little Venice is what the name implies. It's a boat city--a pond with an island, surrounded by boats on the shore and island. And the canal goes on from there. I became intrigued by the canal and got a larger map of London to see how far it stretched. I found it started at the Thames in East London proper, and extended off the map. When we took the boattrip to Greenwich on Thursday I found out that the canal went all the way to Birmingham, some 200 miles or so distance. It was used for inland transport until the railways were built. When we went to Oxford on Tuesday, the rail followed some parts of the canal, and I saw "boat-people" there as well. In one of the guide books I had a small map of Birmingham, and it showed the Grand Union Canal entering the city, and hooking up with the Birmingham Canal which goes off further into the interior again. Fascinating.

Camden Lock

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LONDON WATERBUS COMPANY

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PLEASE RETAIN YOUR TICKET

Maia and I headed back to the B&B to rest a little and pick up our tickets for the evening play. Once we arrived in the theatre district and found the Cambridge Theatre, we got dinner at a nearby Eastern European restaurant. The food was delicious, and we were fortified for our trip: The Return to the Forbidden Planet.

The play Return to the Forbidden Planet is billed as "Shakespeare's long lost rock musical." As you know, the film Forbidden Planet is based on William Shakespeare's The Tempest. Bob Carlton, the author of Return, decided that he would put together a truer version of the science fiction work of Shakespeare, and concocted this musical which borrows from several different works of The Bard. All the dialogue is in blank verse, and the music comes from 1950's and 1960's rock music hits. The people in the audience are passengers on the flight, and before things start we are given safety instructions, etc. Blast-off is to the music of "Wipe-Out" -- two crew members play the drum solo on twin drum sets on stage in perfect synchronization. As is typical of 50's sci-fi films, they go through a meteor shower, and sing "Great Balls of Fire." When Miranda, the young daughter of the scientist Prospero, sees Captain Tempest, she immediately falls in love with him...and sings "Why Must I Be a Teenager in Love." Captain Tempest replies with "Young Girl, get out of my mind...." The whole play is set up that way--using rock songs that fit into the story. And Shakespeare is mangled a bit as well: "Hark, what light through yonder airlock breaks?" Or the best/worst one: "Beware the ids that march!"

This production is so full of energy that people were dancing in their seats at the end. I bought a tape and t-shirt at intermission. I didn't regret it. The actors must have a background in Shakespearean drama and acting, be able to sing and dance, and play at least four different instruments at the professional level.

We rose early on Tuesday, to get a good start to Paddington Station and our train to Oxford. Along the way, aside from the sight of the Canal and the farm land, we passed through several small industrial towns, which makes sense. The railway was the means by which industrial goods were transported, so it seemed only logical that we saw lots of factories. At one point we saw a nuclear power plant. Across the aisle from us was a family from Terra Haute, Indiana; we got into a conversation about the Persian Gulf crisis. They had been touring Europe for two months by this time, and were going to headed home soon.

In Oxford, we visited many of the colleges, climbed to the top of Carfax Tower and St. Mary's Church steeple (where we had breath-taking views of the city), strolled through the botanical gardens and the markets, and had tea in Shiner's, the pub

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Musical Director **Kate Edgar**
Musical Staging **Carole Todd**
Set Design **Rodney Ford**
Costume Design **Adrian Rees and
Adrian Gurillym**
Special Effects **Gerry Anderson**
Lighting **Benny Bell**
Sound Design **Bobby Aitken for Autograph**

First performance at the Cambridge Theatre on Monday 18th September 1989
First performance at the Belgrade Theatre Coventry on Thursday 6th April 1989
We are grateful to Turner Entertainment Co. for permission to use Forbidden Planet in the title of this musical.



On a stormy night way back in the winter of 2009, mad scientist Doctor Prospero worked late in his laboratory, aided only by his wife Gloria as he developed the elusive formula* with which he would change the world. The apparently faithful Gloria, however, duped him and sent him off into hyperspace in an old spacecraft. Unknown to Gloria her infant daughter Miranda slumbered peacefully in the craft, and was now catapulted light years into the future in her father's company.

Fifteen years later, a routine survey flight under the command of chisel-jawed Captain Tempest leaves earth's orbit with a new Science Officer aboard -- a hard and bitter woman. As a shower of meteorites hits the ship, the Science officer flees, and the craft is pulled inexorably towards the planet D'Illyria: the Forbidden Planet. The adventure begins....

* A brief history of telegenesis

From
TELE - (prefix), at a distance
and
GENESIS (noun), creation, origin or beginning

The elusive formula, later known as telegenesis, was an attempt by Prospero Laboratories to create matter, both good and evil, from brainpower alone, using bio-chemical or mechanical sources.

Although partially successful, such research would remain in the realms of cheap, pulp science fiction, until Prospero could find a method of opening up the nine tenths of the brain never used by the average human being -- the X factor.

The search for the missing X factor continued, until the mysterious disappearance of Doctor Prospero, when the entire project was closed down and all existing material destroyed by governmental order. Here the story of telegenesis would have ended, but for Captain Tempest and his crew.



THE OXFORD STORY

A MAJOR
NEW
FAMILY
ATTRACTION

- * In which college did Charles I live during the Civil War?
- * How is the White Rabbit connected with Oxford University?
- * The Sheldonian Theatre is a part of which famous London landmark?
- * Which burning issue was concluded in Broad Street in 1556?

THESE AND MANY
OTHER FASCINATING
QUESTIONS ARE
ANSWERED AT

THE OXFORD STORY

- the history of the
University brought to life
through sights, sounds
and smells.

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS:

1. Christ Church
2. Arthur Charles Dodgson (Lewis Carroll) was on Oxford Street
3. St Paul's Cathedral
4. Execution of Cromwell

attached to the Earl's Gate Hotel. Mafra's feet began to bother her a lot, so we searched for different shoes and found a pair that made her more comfortable. However, I did insist on stopping at Blackwell's Bookstore, the major outlet for Oxford University Press books, and a neat place besides. I picked up a copy of Robert Louis Stevenson's The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde. The ride back to London was uneventful, and we had dinner at The Champagne, a Chinese restaurant near the Northfields station in Ealing.

We slept until we woke up on Wednesday, which was about 8 AM. We had breakfast, picked up sandwiches and fruit for lunch on the way to the tube station, and headed for Hyde Park and Kensington Gardens. It was fun wandering through the park at a leisurely pace. We stopped at a building that looked like a bus station (there was no sign indicating what it was), and explored the Serpentine Gallery. After lunch we wandered toward the Museum of Mankind, passing through Brewer Street (which is filled with pornographic bookstores and movie houses and other sorts of houses) and by Half Moon Street (which is the title of a Sigourney Weaver film). We stopped at a small place called Tarte Julie, a coffee and sweets shop WHICH HAD A NON-SMOKING SECTION!! When we got to the Museum (which is a branch of the British Museum), we found there was a display of clothing from Palestine from the early part of this century, and some exhibits of contemporary "Rickshaw Art" from China.

We also took a quick run out to the Liverpool Street Station off the tube to see where we would have to go to catch the train for Harwich on Friday night for our trip to Holland. Then back to the theatre district for dinner at the Presto (Italian) Restaurant, and the show, The Mousetrap. This time we were smart and carried our tickets with us so we didn't have to go back to our B&B to pick them up. The play was marvelous, and we are not to tell anyone the ending.

On Thursday, after changing some pounds to guilders for Friday's trip to Holland (we tried at the 22B Baker Street bank, but they referred us to their main branch), we went back to the Tower of London to finish the tour of that monument that we started three years ago. It had been raining then, and with Mafra's leg in a cast we did not spend much time there. The tour of the Instruments of Torture exhibit (which we thought might have been part of the "Bloody Tower") was saved by the interesting construction of the walls and the staircases into the lower torture rooms. The Wall Walk was more interesting, and we took pleasure in seeing the various other towers that make up the "Tower of London" monument. I overheard one of the Beefeater guards taking to a tourist: the guards actually do live on the premises with their families, currently 47 of them.

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We had a good time (took lots of pictures), and had most of the afternoon left to do something else, so I suggested a boat ride down the Thames to Greenwich. The captain of the ship gave a guided tour, although not really part of the payment for the trip, and pointed out a lot of the sites (and sights) along the river. It was here that I found out how far the Grand Union Canal stretched, and saw a lot of the docks which are now unused. There were pubs and restaurants which dated back to the 1600s, and a place called the Mayflower which is where the people on the ship of the same name departed on their journey to the New World. One high point was seeing where Michael Crawford's flat was.

In Greenwich itself we walked around various shops and looked at the Naval Academy from outside the gates. We bypassed the museum in favor of just walking around. The masted ship Cutty Sark was in permanent drydock and with a price of almost 2 pounds per person to tour it, we decided it looked pretty good from the outside.

We headed back to our B&B via Victoria Station, ate at Grandma's again, and then made an early night of it.

On Friday we paid Tess for our stay at her B&B, took our luggage to Victoria Station to leave it while we did more site-seeing. Sir John Soane's Museum was a marvelous place. It was recommended to us by friends, and it was wonderful. John Soane was a civil servant and architect who collected things. He had pieces of the Parthenon, a mummy, various bas relief stone plaques from monuments all over the world. It reminded me of what Forrey Ackerman's mansion must look like, with collections of everything from all over the world.

After lunch, we headed back to Tess' because I had forgotten to leave the key. She was pleased to get it back because it meant she did not have to get a copy made. From there we visited Westminster Abbey and St. Mary's Church, and back to Victoria Station to get our bags and check train schedules for a trip to London from Dover/Folkestone for the following Saturday. When we found out how early we would have to leave on Saturday morning to get to Victoria Station to catch the Gatwick Express to Gatwick Airport for our flight home, we decided to come back to London on Friday. We gave Tess a call, and reserved a place for the following Friday night.

From there we tubed it to Liverpool Street Station, and waited in line until the train left. It was just by chance that we had picked a train car to board that had our reserved seats in it. It was non-smoking (which we wanted) and we both had window seats. It was really too dark to see much, so we both read until we got to Harwich. Customs wasn't bad, but getting our room assignment took a little time. The problem apparently was that we had second class tickets with first class accommoda-

tions. We were willing to pay the extra money, but no one ever came to collect.

After we cast off and watched the lights on shore disappear in the darkness and fog, we had a snack, browsed through the duty-free store on board, then turned in. The cabin was small and compact, but comfortable. The shower worked well and the water was drinkable. The Konigin Beatrix, which was the name of our ship, was more like an ocean liner than what we had expected. Actually, we weren't sure what to expect. A lot of people were on board with no sleeping quarters, and I saw a lot of underaged kids buying alcohol and drinking themselves into a stupor. We encountered an occasional sleeping person stretched out in the halls when we got up for breakfast the next morning. By 8 AM we were in Holland and going through customs.

Eventually we found the correct train to take us to Den Haag. That was a rather dismal trip. We were in a non-smoking, non-drinking car, and most of the people smoked. There was an elderly British bloke who acted like some of the worst stereotypes of American rednecks; he smoked, drank, and goaded his younger buddies and family members with off-color conversation. We got off at the wrong station (West Haag instead of Central), which was just as well, since we got away from the obnoxious fellow. We picked up the next inter-station train and found Pat and Roger Sims and Rusty Hevelin there making arrangements to take a day trip out of the city. We finally found the tourist information center, got a weekend travel bus/tram pass, and found out how to get to our B&B, the Hotel Sebel.

Of course, the room wasn't ready (it was just after 10 AM), so we were able to leave our bags, and headed for the Congressbouw, the Congress Center where the Worldcon was being held. We got into the registration area at 10 minutes to 11, and the latest program information (that I got two days before we left the States) said I had a panel at 11 AM. I was rushed through registration, to the green room and to the panel, and I made it by 11! However, it really started at 10:30, so Amy Thompson, Dave Schlosser and a couple of other panel members carried on for a half hour without me. The problem was that the computer program that the Con-programming person was using didn't accept the 1/2 hour times and would randomly truncate or round up. Mine was rounded up from 10:30 to 11. Anyway, the panel was about apas, how to run them, how to build/shorten the membership, credit for mailings, etc. Among the other things discussed were using computers to do the zines, keep records, and so on. I amused everyone by revealing that Tim Kirby and Mary Kestenbaum use a Cray computer to do their zines.

We ran into several people we knew, including Evelyn Leeper and eventually Mark, who the night

before had written in his notebook that I was definitely not at the con. And in the Huckster Room we met several fans, and saw lots of books in many different languages. I was wearing my Return to the Forbidden Planet t-shirt, and a young lady stopped to chat about the play. It turned out that she was the person who wrote the article for Starlog Magazine which I had read and further prompted me to see the show. We did take a trip back to the hotel to check in, and we were ushered into a beautiful, huge room with floor to ceiling windows, and an internal bathroom. As soon as we got settled, we went back to the Worldcon in time for my 5:30 panel.

This time I was on time. Mike Glycer, Diane Duane, Fran Skene, Terry Pratchett and myself were on this one with a moderator whom I didn't know. The topic was "The Uses of Alien Artifacts." The moderator (the person I didn't know) had a box full of strange objects and devices; the rest of the panel were archaeologists who were to interpret these devices and try to come up with some picture on what the natives called Humans were like. It was hilarious. There was a shotgun shell loader, a screw-type nut cracker, a small sewing kit, a pattern marker, a sashwindow weight, and other things. It was all extemporaneous, since none of us know what the moderator was going to pull out of the box.

Mafia and I made a quick trip back to the hotel, came back for dinner and the Hugo Ceremonies. They were fun, even though I didn't win... again. Nor did Evelyn Leeper, or Stan Schmidt. (Insert harangue against Gardner Dozois as a magazine editor here.) The American ambassador to the Netherlands, C. Howard Wilkins, was there as a special speaker, and we all expected him to have some bland, media SF-oriented speech. He surprised us by saying that he was a closet fan, that he has read SF for years, and made references to various books like Where Late the Sweet Birds Sang by Kate Wilhelm. At the end, when he was to hand out the Hugo for the Best Novel, he revealed that his code name for access to secret information has been "Noah Ward", so he felt that he had been a part of every nomination on the ballot.

Arthur Hlavaty had mentioned that in the non-fiction Hugo award, he had heard people express the opinion that the feud between Heinlein and the Panshins was continuing after Heinlein's death. The non-fiction category had both Heinlein's Grumbles from the Grave and Panshins' history of SF, The World Beyond the Hill. Speculation was that Heinlein would win. Wrong. The Panshins got the Hugo. And Hyperion won in the Novel category, in spite of the novel not being finished in that volume. (I was really pulling for Sheri S. Tepper's Grass.) And "Boobs" by Suzy McKee Charras won for Short Story.

Resnick lost to Silverberg in Novelette, and Lois McMaster Bujold picked up the Novella Hugo. Now she has to find a place for both Nebulas and the rocket. (I don't think she'll have any trouble!)

The Worldcon in 1993 will be in San Francisco, called CONFRANCISCO, with Larry Niven as the GoH, Tom Digby as Fan GoH.

It wasn't until I was on the plane back to the U.S. that I recalled not having seen Don C. Thompson at the Worldcon.

Maia and I went to the Hugo Loser's party, and talked to more fans there. All the losers got a coaster with a Hugo rocket needlepointed on it. I got a picture of Bob Silverberg with his Hugo. That evening we also attended the Louisville in '94 party. We did not stay too late. The smoking in Holland is worse than in England, and Maia was getting a migraine from it, so we went to the hotel to shower and sleep.

Sunday morning we found out at breakfast that Frank Olynyk was staying at the same place. We "dined" together, then headed for the tram stop to go to the Congressbouw. The tram came earlier than the schedule said, and so we missed it by a couple of minutes, and by the time we got the next one, we were late getting to the Congress Center. We were not late for our 10 AM panel, but Tom Locke (from Germany) and Bob Shaw thought that they were going to have to do the panel on Desk Top Publishing alone. We had just seated ourselves when they came in from the Green Room. Bob had either just gotten up and wasn't fully awake, or he had not yet been to bed and was just slowing down, but he was not his usual witty self. Oh, he was very funny, but he did not jump in as often as he usually does. However, we managed to talk about using word processors and DTP programs for doing fanzines. The key thing that remains the same, no matter what methods you choose for publishing a fanzine: be sure it's readable, use restraint with any special features (fonts, etc.), and proofread your stuff (don't trust to spelling checkers; they do not check context).

After that I spent a couple of hours talking with Steve Green, a British fan whose reviews I have published, and who edits a zine called Critical Wave. For most of Sunday I spent a lot of time talking to different people. I stopped in the Green Room to get some refreshments, and met Mark and Evelyn Leeper there. We got into a conversation with another fan, Brian Burgess, who is very well known in British convention fandom. Until his stroke several years ago, he was active in setting up and helping out at cons.

While there, Mark left to sit at another table to get ready for his upcoming panel. A very beautiful redhead came in, smiled at me and I almost said hello, then saw the group at Mark's table and headed there. I continued to talk with Evelyn until

Mark's group left for the panel. We followed. I sat near the door since I would have to leave halfway through to meet Maia to go to dinner. I found out that the beautiful redhaired woman was Melinda Snodgrass. And I came sooo close to talking to her. I never did see her again at the convention. I wanted to thank her for the wonderful job she had done to make Star Trek: The Next Generation into the interesting series it has become.

Maia and I had decided to go out for Chinese, and tried to follow the maps to where the restaurant was supposed to be. We sort of got lost. Instead of sticking to a sidewalk, we took a path through a wooded area, but we could still see the road through the trees. We had a lovely walk, but somehow the road had changed names, and we could not find out exactly where we were. Street signs were very sparse, and so we walked back to a street that was on the map, and headed in what seemed to be the direction of the restaurant, but the street names changed again, and we could not find where we were on the map. So we decided to go back to the con area, and on the way we passed a Greek restaurant. We figured, whatthehell, and went in. The waitress seated us and brought us English menus, and we had a wonderful meal.

Just as we were finishing, in walks a group of fans. We would have known they were fans just by looking at them, even if two hadn't been wearing their worldcon name badges; besides, David Langford was among them. We said hello on our way out and I congratulated Dave on his Hugo for Fan Writer. He introduced us, and we found out that one of the women was Eileen Gunn. I told her I was impressed with some of her writing, that I found it...interesting. Dave piped up, "That's a polite way of saying it's weird!" We left them to ordering their dinner, and headed back to the Hotel Sebel.

Maia had had enough of the cigarette smoke, so she decided that she was going to make an early night of it. Since we only had one key, we went back to the room, and I left her there. I stayed until almost midnight talking to various fans. At one table were all the Worldcon Bid people had been hawking their cons, a group of fans from Manchester were putting up a hoax bid for Manchester. We got on the topic of cities, and I mentioned that there was a Manchester in Ohio. For the British fans, there is only one London, and whenever they hear some foreigner say "London, England," it cracks them up. I mentioned there was a London in Ohio, and a lot of other cities from all over the world in Ohio. We got great mileage out of that joke. Eventually as things wound down, I pulled out a t-shirt and asked if anyone of them wanted it. I had brought seven t-shirts to give to Boris Zavgorodny, a Russian fan, who was supposed to be at the Worldcon. I had not found him, so I figured I would give the shirts away. The t-shirt was the

"Science Fiction Fan" one, with a space ship and a rotary fan on it. One of the chaps asked his wife if she wanted it, and she said sure, after making sure it was free. The husband thanked me for letting him have his shirt back. He had picked one up at a convention in Great Britain, but his wife was the one who always borrowed it. Now they each had one. I tried to give away the other six, but the others begged off, saying they had too many already.

I ran into Bruce Burdick, and we went to the Atlanta party, where I introduced Frank Olynyk to Rebecca Meluch, which is an interesting story. Frank is a historian of WW II, particularly of the aircraft and pilots who fought in that war. One of the things he was doing in Europe this time was researching some articles, and interviewing pilots who were still alive and living in Europe. Rebecca Meluch, and her fiancée Jim, are both avid WW II airplane buffs. Both fly. Frank and Rebecca live in the Cleveland suburbs, have both been to several conventions together, and had never been introduced, and did not know about the other's passion for flying and history.

Rebecca and Jim were in the hall outside the party, and Frank was nearby when we saw them. I asked Bruce if he had ever met Rebecca. He said no, so I introduced them to each other. Then I mentioned to Frank that I had read Rebecca's first novel, Sovereign over the summer. He said it wasn't her first one, and Jim concurred. Jim said it was the Wind Dancer series. I said that I was sure it was Sovereign. Frank said that we did have an expert here, and we asked Rebecca. I was right, which made her fiancée blush with embarrassment. I then asked Frank if he had ever met Rebecca before, and he said he had never been introduced to her, though he knew of her. So I introduced them, and turned to Bruce and said, "I'm going to change the topic and cut us out of the conversation for the next several hours." I told them about their common interest in WW II planes and history, and that did it. When I left a couple of hours later, they were still talking.


Bruce and I went into the Atlanta party, had a couple of beers, some snacks, and I finally encountered a Soviet fan, Viktor, and his friend (the translator) Anotaly. I asked if they knew Boris, and they did, and through gestures, writing and speaking slowly (Anotaly was not that good verbally), we arranged for them to take the shirts to Boris. I told them they could each have one themselves and send the rest to Boris. Bruce had mentioned that the Soviet fans he talked to were barely scraping by; the ruble was the lowest on the exchange rate, so it was a struggle to get something to eat. Fortunately, the parties were serving food, so they managed all right. I asked if they needed money, and they said no; they had sold enough of

the shirts they brought with them to get by. And the food at the parties helped.

Eventually I left to catch the last tram to the hotel, and had a good night's sleep.

Maia and I got up early on Monday morning for breakfast, then took the tram to the train station and found out that we needed to go to the West End station, and there was a train leaving in seconds. We ran, and Maia got in the train ahead of me, and the doors started to close as I approached the car. I just barely got in, but my suitcase (soft-sided, and slung over my head) didn't; I had a half minute of panic as I and a couple other passengers struggled with the door to get it open enough so I could slip the suitcase inside. Fortunately, the train didn't move until after the doors opened once again, and closed.

At the West Station, we stood on the proper platform as a couple of other trains went through, disgorging and picking up passengers. Tony Parker and Judy Bemis waited with us until their train to Paris came in, and about a half hour later ours showed up. At least the train was there at the time is said on our tickets. Maia consulted with one of the conductors, and she told her that yes, this was

Jetfoil	
Oostende - Dover 111121os	
Inschepingskaart · Hoofddek · Niet Rokers (Zie ommezijde voor belangrijke mededeling)	
Carte d'embarquement · Pont Principal · Non Fumeurs (Avis important au verso)	
Einschiffungskarte · Hauptdeck · Nicht Raucher (Wichtige Mitteilung auf der Rückseite)	
Boarding Card · Maindeck · Non Smoking (For important notice, see back)	
RMT/RTM	

11 Wearbay Road
East Cliff
Folkestone, Kent

The Shamrock 
Guest House

Prop: Rosaleen Pluckrose

BED AND BREAKFAST

☎ 0303 57486

our train, but we were supposed to change trains in Roosendaal to get the one to Oostend. We hadn't been told that. I'm glad she is overly cautious in that area of travel and is not afraid to ask for directions.

Several stops up the line we came to Roosendaal, carried our luggage to the other train at the station, and settled in for a ride to the coast in Belgium. But were we on the right train? We didn't see a conductor the entire time, although after each stop, the speakers would broadcast in almost understandable Dutch a list of the upcoming stops, and at the end was Oostend. Still, we had an uncomfortable feeling the entire ride until we saw the sea, and the signs for our destination.

The train pulled up just about 50 yards from the Sealink ferry, hovercraft and jetfoil terminal. Within seven minutes we were through customs and filing on board our jetfoil for the trip across the Channel to Dover. The ride was very smooth, and Maia spent the last of our Guilders on Dutch and Belgium chocolate. Behind us sat a couple from the States who had also been at the Worldcon. They were headed for Scotland.

The approach to Dover was spectacular, as you might expect. The "White" cliffs are an off-white, described by friends as a "dirty snow" color. They grew in height as we got closer until they towered over the jetfoil. After landing and getting through customs, we found we had missed the train from the port station to Dover Priory station by a couple of minutes, but the platform manager said, "If you go back to the street and get a taxi, you can be at Dover Priory in three minutes. The Train to Folkestone leaves in seven." So we ran back up the stairs dragging our luggage, out to the street to the line of taxis.

Unfortunately, we had miscalculated our spending money, and the fact that when we would return to

England, the banks would be closed for the Bank Holiday. We had only a few pounds between us. We still had lots of travelers checks--but nowhere to cash them. We found out that it would only cost £2.50 for the ride to the other station, and after asking the driver if he took travelers checks (and he laughed), we decided just to pay cash and take our chances on eating later.

We got to Dover Priory in time to catch the train, but with not enough time to validate our BritRail passes. Because the train was leaving momentarily, the officials waved us through and told us to validate our tickets when we got to Folkestone. This was repeated to us, after we explained our situation, by the conductor who asked to see our tickets.

The twenty-one mile ride to Folkestone followed the coast most of the way. It was lovely scenery, and we went through some tunnels and between hills which at times blocked the view of the countryside. We had a spectacular sight of Folkestone when we emerged from the hills over the town, and we knew immediately that we would enjoy our stay there.

At Folkestone Central we had our tickets validated, and sat to wait for Joan Temple, who was to meet us. I had dressed in my Phantom of the Opera t-shirt, which was to be the sign for her to know who were. After about fifteen minutes Maia decided to call Joan and found out that she had called the station earlier, and asked about when we would be arriving. The people said that because of the schedules and connections, we could not arrive from Oostend before 5 PM. It was just after 3.

Joan showed up in a matter of minutes, and paid for a taxi to take us to her flat. It was wonderful to see her, after corresponding with her, and her late husband William F. Temple, for so long. She had a large place filled with books and plants,



which kept her busy with the cleaning and maintaining, as did going through Bill's papers and notes. Joan fed us lunch, and we talked for about an hour before Joan said that we should probably get to our B&B and get settled. She was a dear to loan us money for another taxi ride to The Shamrock, after we explained our situation. She was willing to give us more for dinner, but we assured her that we had enough for that, but not for both food and the taxi. (And, this lovely woman refused to take our money when we tried to pay it back. But we would find an indirect way of thanking her generosity!)

At The Shamrock we met Rose Pluckrose who showed us a lovely room with a view out the window that overlooked Folkestone Harbour. The place was on Wer Bay Road, on the East Cliffs of Folkestone. There were no buildings from Wer Bay Road to the water, so we had an uninterrupted view of the Channel, and off in the distance we could see Calais, France, across the water.

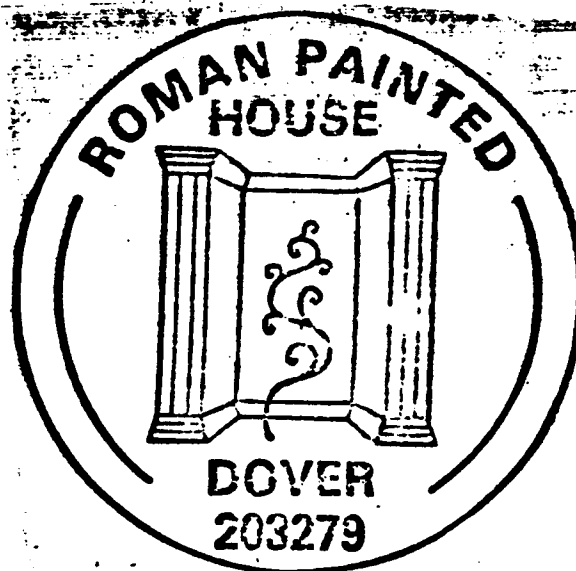
Rose is a darling person, and Irishwoman who has won awards for her guest house. She made us feel quite welcome, and the place was beautiful. She introduced us to another of her guests, Marietta, whose husband was there from South Africa to work on the Chunnel--the Channel Tunnel from England to France. They had just purchased a 1400 acre estate, and were waiting for everything to be finalized before moving in.

After we put our bags in the room and settled in, we walked around Folkestone, the Harbour Centre area and coast roads. We got a map from the tourist information center and were able to pinpoint where we were, where Joan lived, and routes around to other places. Unfortunately, the town was very hilly, so to go from one place to another involved a lot of up- and down-hill walking, usually down to Harbour Centre then up to the other side of Folkestone.

We eventually decided to eat at the Folkestone Pavilion, a nice restaurant which overlooked the Harbour, which also took travelers checks. After dinner, we walked around a bit. We were stopped briefly by a gentleman and his young son. I still had my Phantom t-shirt on, and the night before the BBC had shown the NBC Special version of the story. The man said it was a very moving performance, and enjoyed it very much, as had his son. He was hoping to one day see the Andrew Lloyd Webber musical.

Soon after that we walked back to The Shamrock and turned in. It had been a long day, and we were both tired.

On Tuesday morning we headed to the Tourist Information Center after breakfast to get tickets for a trip to Leeds Castle on Wednesday, and a map of the Dover/Folkestone area. We walked up the hill from Harbour Centre where the TIC was, through the Town Centre where we stopped at a Lloyd's Bank to cash some travelers checks and dropped off a role



of film for processing. The camera I was using for pictures was new, purchased a few days before we left for the trip, and I wanted to make sure that it was working properly. So I decided to get a roll developed to see if we would have to rely on Mata's camera alone.

We also located the bus station where we would pick up our tour bus for the Leeds Castle trip. From there we walked to the train station, Folkestone Central, and headed by rail to Dover. From Dover Priory, the Castle was easy to spot. Getting there however, was a little work, since we had decided to walk. But our route took us by the Painted Roman House, and of course we stopped in to have a look.

The House was found while the buildings over it were taken down to make room for a bypass and a parking garage for the expansion of the Town Centre. Rescued from total destruction, the site has been preserved as an archaeological find for Dover. The House itself seemed to have been an inn for travelers. It was attached to the wall of an old Roman fort, and seemingly was used to house special visitors. It had a hypocaust for heating the floors and walls, and the wall paintings restored from fragments were really breathtaking.

From there we continued our trek to Dover Castle. We toured St. Mary's church, went through the ruins of St. James church, and found the stairway that led to the Castle. We climbed all the way up, stopping at intervals to catch our breath. At this point of the trip we were quite used to walking, but this climb was quite taxing. When we finally got to the Castle grounds, we found that the limb was worth it. Everywhere we turned was another photograph we had to take. We walked completely around the grounds, through another St. Mary's church, an old Roman/Saxon lighthouse/tower, the Castle itself, and some of the underground passages that have recently been opened up.



We walked back down from the cliffs of Dover Castle via the road this time, through Dover and to Dover Priory station, where we caught the train back to Folkestone. From Folkestone Central we walked around the west and central parts of town, looking for a place to take Joan Temple out to dinner. We found a lovely place, the Garden House Hotel Restaurant, which was a place that Bill used to meet some friends frequently to talk books and science fiction. We had a lovely time, and stayed up talking with Joan a bit later than we had expected. She insisted that we come to dinner at her flat on Thursday evening, after we got back from our day trip to Cranbrook. Of course we accepted her invitation.

We both got up before the alarm went off, and dressed leisurely. One of the nice things about

Rose's B&B is that she has coffee and tea supplies in the rooms. We relaxed drinking warm potables until breakfast, after which we headed for Town Centre to do laundry. I stayed with the clothes in the Lantern Launderette (with a name like that, how could I resist doing the washing there?), and read while Maia browsed among the shops looking for gifts and souvenirs.

After dropping the clothes off at our room, we wandered back to Old High Street, through Town Centre, and picked up the pictures. We looked through them (they came out quite nicely, though the prints were larger than we were used to) while waiting for the bus to Leeds Castle which was 12 minutes late. We were beginning to panic, since this was the first time our British transportation was so much off schedule. Our ride out to the castle took us through the towns of Sandgate, Hythe, and Ashford where we picked up a few more passengers, and then on to Leeds Castle.

Built on two islands in the middle of a large meadow, Leeds Castle is advertised as the world's prettiest castle. It is beautiful, I have to admit, but I preferred Arundel Castle as my favorite. As we approached the castle site, we caught glimpses of it through the trees. After parking, the driver told us the time to meet for the return trip, and turned us loose on the castle grounds. It was a long walk to the castle proper, through the duckery and gardens, but it was quite pleasant. We took pictures of the fowl and some lovely black swans.

The tour through Leeds Castle was quite controlled. There were reasons to want to travel off the paths you were directed; some of the roped off areas invited further study and closer attention. But those places were clearly designated as off limits, and no one tested those limits. We were not



permitted to take any pictures in some of the areas, but allowed to do so in others. Strange rules which we abided by. However, the shops naturally had a lot of postcards and tour books with lots of nice photographs of the castle rooms.

After the castle tour, we found a spot for lunch, then walked through the gardens and aviary to the maze. The maze isn't completed yet. Well, the maze itself is done, but the bushes are not full grown yet. That will take several more years. The bushes are trellised so the outline of the maze is there, and thus those running through the maze cannot step over the growing plants. The advantage is that you can see through to the other pathways in the maze. I managed to get to the center of the maze before Maia, even though she had the map of it. I took several pictures from the top of the grotto before Maia arrived. (I think she has forgiven me by now for beating her to the center.) Then we walked down the stairs and ramp into the grotto.

To put it simply, it was gorgeous.

The grotto under the maze was filled with beautiful (man-made) rock formations, tessellated paintings, colorful combinations of shells and stones which formed various (apparent) fossils. The "bones" of ancient creatures jutted from the tunnel walls, and helped support the ceiling. We took lots of pictures, but none have done justice to the actual sights. If we return to the area, I may want to go through the maze once more just to see the grotto again.

On our way back to the bus, we spent a more leisurely time walking through the aviary, taking pictures and trying to get some of the birds to say something. We haunted the shops for a bit, looking for gifts and souvenirs. We got to the bus in plenty of time, and waited for the rest of our group to arrive so we could head back to Folkestone.

The drive back was quiet. Most everyone was tired. I did a little reading, and watched the scenery slide by. The highway we traveled seemed almost too narrow for the bus, but there were no accidents, and we arrived about 6 PM, just about the right time for dinner. First, however, we walked to the train station to check on the times for the train to Staplehurst, where we would catch the bus to Cranbrook. From there we walked once again through Towne Center, and stopped for dinner at a pub/restaurant called Muswell's. The service was a bit slow, but we didn't mind. The night was turning rather cool, and there was only one waitress on duty. Eventually we got our meal, and ate slowly, talking about the day. We went directly back to our B&B and made a early night of it.

We spent part of Thursday morning walking along the East Cliffe beach. Shoes off and pants rolled up, we waded in the water, and I conceded that it

would have been a bit too cold for me to swim there. We strolled along the jetty and Folkestone Harbour, seeing several boats beached at low tide. After wandering through Harbour Centre, we headed up Old High Street again, stopped at the Lloyd's Bank to cash the rest of the travellers checks, and walked to the Leas.

The Leas used to be the ritzy section of Folkestone. It still is, though the sense of the elite upper class living there seems to be gone. The beach at the base of the cliffs there is in disrepair, but we saw heavy equipment in the area. The city seems to be working on restoring the beaches to their former glory. We walked down to the beach along a "zig-zag" path that seemed not to be used much. After snapping a few photos, we took a cable lift back to the Leas. We knew that we would be walking a lot around Cranbrook, so we didn't want to tire ourselves out too much beforehand.

The train ride to Staplehurst was uneventful. In the small town we found the bus stop, and soon a doubledecker came by and we boarded for the trip to Cranbrook. Maia asked the driver to let us know when we got to the town, and he told us we couldn't miss it. He was right. We passed through a few small villages, but when we hit Cranbrook, we knew we were there. I mean, aside from the signs, and the buildings with "Cranbrook School" on them.

Our first stop was the tourist information centre. We purchased a couple of pamphlets about the town and school, and got a map of the area. St. Dunstan's church was right around the corner from the information centre, so we started there. The church itself was not open then, so we walked south of the building and followed a footpath past Cranbrook lower school, past several sports playing fields, through someone's cow pasture, and out to the main road where we came in via bus. We followed





the road back into town and came to Cranbrook School. The school office was clearly marked, so we walked in and talked to the secretary. Very few people were there. The school was between terms, and only a few of the teachers who lived nearby were on the grounds, using the school's outdoor pool. I left a note for Tony Gunn, a teacher who had come to teach at Cranbrook Kingswood in the States for a year as part of the teacher-exchange program. He stayed next door to us, while the Van Dam family (remember them? They drove us to the airport!) spent a year at this school. We were given permission to walk around the grounds, and took a lot of pictures of the place.

The school was a little disappointing. We were expecting a lot older buildings for a school that was 400 years old. As with cities and towns, old buildings are torn down and replaced. As with castles, construction can take years, and buildings can be in a constant state of renovation. When we finished our walk there, we saw St. Dunstan's church behind the administration building. Had we walked around to the north side of the church, we would have come onto the school grounds much sooner. But we didn't mind.

The Church is very old. It too has had renovations, and some of the stain glass had been replaced. The cemetery around it had lots of standing headstones, many of which were too weathered to read. Eventually we got inside the church to see the magnificent altars, stained glass windows, and the physical evidence of history. We were quite impressed.

Lunch was at the White Horse Pub, close to the church and information centre. From there we walked along the streets to see the Cranbrook Windmill, a

landmark seen from miles away. Unfortunately it was closed, but we got some nice shots from the outside. After exploring a few areas on the east side of Cranbrook, we stopped at the St. George Inn for tea, but there didn't seem to be anyone around to serve us. So we hiked up the street to Woody's, which seemed just right for a hangout for the teens of the area. The waitress who served us had gone to the school, and knew Ed Van Dam as one of the teachers. So we talked with Catherine Stearns, and promised to give her regards to Ed and Linda. Catherine, though, was sure that Ed would not remember her (he did), but would more remember her brother Eddie who was in his class for the whole year. When we finished our snack, tea and conversation, we walked to the south end of town to pass the time until our bus arrived to take us to Staplehurst. From there we had another uneventful ride back to Folkestone.

We got back too early just to go straightaway to Joan's for dinner, so we tried a different route back to the Shamrock where I read while Maia napped. About 6 we walked again through the Harbour Centre, up Old High Street, and over to Grimstone Gardens.

Joan was a marvelous host. The food was delicious, the wine good, and the conversation was wonderful. We talked about Bill, about his work, about the Phantom. It was past 9:30 PM when we reluctantly took our leave. In parting, Joan gave me a copy of Bill's last novel, The Fleshpots of Sansato, which I still have not read. I'm saving it for a special occasion. We would have loved to stay and talked longer, but we had to get up early to make our train to London.

The next morning, after a somewhat restless night of dreaming about all the places we had seen, we said goodbye to Rose, our wonderful hostess at the Shamrock, and left via taxi to the train station. From Folkestone Center to London we watched the land slip by, enjoying the scenery and our last look at the English countryside. We finally arrived in London at the Charing Cross station, purchased single day passes for the underground, and headed for South Ealing and Tess' place. She was delighted to see us, and gave us our former room. After dropping our things off there, we headed back to London and St. Paul's, mainly to see the rest of the Cathedral that we missed on our first night there. We got into the lower levels, saw the monuments to Lawrence and other famous people. We also stopped at Covent Gardens again to pick up more gifts: coffee and chocolates, and some English jams as a special gift for my friend Lynn. Eventually wandered back to South Ealing where we had dinner in a Greek restaurant called the Parthenon.

We didn't stay up late that night. We had to get up early the next morning to get to Gatwick for our flight home. Tess was up with us; she made us

breakfast and sent us on our way. She looked tired, so I suspect she went back to sleep as soon as the door closed behind us.

Things move briskly after that. We bought oneway tickets to Victoria Station, which cost quite a bit. Figuring how much we paid for the week pass to ride the underground, and the number of times we used it, the pass is a real bargain. From Victoria we took the Gatwick express to the airport, found our check-in point and let them know we were there, and headed for the duty free shop. There we spent most of the rest of our money. By the time we purchased cigars (for my father), hard liquor and chocolate, I had 15 pence left in my pocket.

The flight was late in taking off, though it was not the charter flight's fault. Two people who had checked in were a half hour late boarding. By that time we had lost our place in line on the runway, and had to wait another 20 minutes or so until we were cleared to leave the gate. We made a stop in Iceland to refuel, I think. It was bleak out, dismally raining. Once back above the clouds, we had sunshine all the way over the tip of Greenland (I got a poor picture of the mountains poking up through the clouds), over Canada, and across Michigan. I finished reading a Clifford Simak anthology on the flight, and stayed awake the whole time. I

was not tired, though Maia tried to nap.

We arrived pretty much on time, and made our way through the international terminal at Detroit Metro Airport to customs. Fortunately we had all our paperwork in order. When we got to the final checkpoint, the three people in front of us had to step aside and fill out their forms correctly. Maia showed them ours, and the guard waved us on through --I think he was just relieved to see someone who could follow directions.

Linda was waiting for us in the terminal, and guided us right to the car. We didn't stop talking until we got home. As we had done with the Van Dams, they had some food prepared for us to eat so we didn't have to cook. In addition to home-made bread, there was a vegetarian soup, made by their daughter Jane, which was delicious. We sorted the mail and newspapers, and eventually wound down enough to be tired. I checked the garden while Maia called our families to let them know we arrived home safely, and we crashed comfortably in our own bed.

NOTE: We do have three volumes of pictures, which we will show to people if they ask--or we may ask our friends if they was to see them. We plan to have room parties at the next few conventions so we can show off the pictures.

CONREPORTS and RAMBLINGS

by Ilan

RAMBLINGS 39.1: School Starts

It was quite hectic after we got back from England. The garden wasn't quite a jungle, since my parents came by and weeded and picked lots of the produce. I had spent about 4 hours preparing things for putting the dorm duty schedule together prior to leaving overseas, and so I was ready for the opening meetings with the faculty. Or so I thought.

One person had a major complaint/suggestion which didn't negate my work, but added to it, like about another 2 hours. I was upset with him, and with myself for not handing the job over to him at that point. He wanted to have three people on duty on Sunday nights, which is his regular duty night. Previously, there were two faculty people, a House Advisor (who lives in the dorm), and another person with a strange schedule that lets him or her (a male and female share this duty) go home at 10 pm, while the rest stay until 11:30. He thought this was grossly unfair, and wanted a third person for Sunday night, and suggested (strongly, throwing things into his briefcase and slamming it shut) that the Monday people who have an extra person

(because a faculty member sits on Dorm Council and stays until 11:30), use the DC person as their third. Since Esmeralda, head of the Kingswood Dorm, said that we would try it like that, I conceded. Then he wanted to move the Dorm Council meeting to Sunday night, which I flatly refused, since too many other changes would have had to be made (since the House Advisor who moderates DC works Monday night--she would have to change with the Sunday person, and I didn't think either person would like that; besides, neither person was there to say yea or nay).

Anyway, we only had a half hour to work out who was to sign up for what special duties (long weekends, special assignments, duty night, etc), so I had time to let the situation steam, and tried to figure out how to adapt what I originally prepared to this new situation. What I should have done was hand over the sign-up sheets to my colleague and say, "It's all yours."

It took me only an hour to re-configure the calendar, but a little longer to juggle things around so that everyone who needed certain weekends off were given them, and those who were on weekends had

their weeknight duty before or after the weekend taken by one of the three "swing" people. I finished it all, ran off copies for everyone by late the next afternoon (5 PM).

There were other minor complaints--some people were already put on the schedule for weeknights, through administrative requests, and a couple of people complained about that. Because of the change only two people could sign up for Monday night, since the Dorm Council person would be the third, and someone put her name on Monday. I had to put her on Sunday, with the one who caused all the problems, both prospects not sitting well with her. But I compensated her by adhering to her requests for weekend duties.

(It later turned out that using the faculty Dorm Council representative as the third person on Monday nights was untenable; with that person, and the House Advisor in a Dorm Council meeting, that left two people available to handle 90+ girls, which was not quite enough. So Esmeralda switched people around to the way they originally were set up.)

There was one other negative note. Lillian Bauder, President of Cranbrook Educational Community and acting Director of Schools, told everyone that the Schools division had a huge deficit accumulated over the past two years. She told us that we, the faculty, should continue to do what we do best: teach, coach and advise. She would work something out with the administrators and her financial people.

After that, the rest of the week went much better. The Geometry book did not change, and the pre-calculus text was not as forbidding as I first thought. I sailed into the first day of classes (Friday) without much trouble, but I sure was tired by the end of the day, and when Maia got home, we got in the car and drove to Toronto for a wedding.

RAMBLINGS 39.2: Tanya and Fiona Get Married

I mentioned before that Tanya Huff (a good new fantasy writer) and Fiona Patton were getting married. They did, and it was a lovely ceremony. We stayed with Mike Glicksohn, who was in good spirits and as usual a pleasant host. We visited other fans, Ray and Doris, while we were there, and, of course, attended the wedding, driving Mike with us to the church.

Tanya and Fiona made a lovely couple. Tanya opted to wear a dress and Fiona a tuxedo, but that was, I believe, more a concession to convention than anything else. All I saw were two women deeply in love with each other, taking a bold step in this uncertain, and many times intolerant, world to express that love. I got a few pictures of the reception afterward, and only one of the ceremony itself. During the reception I got to talk to Steve Stirling (author of Marching Through Georgia), and several



other of the Canadian fans. I also talked to Drew Post, who sang a lovely song in the ceremony that sounded familiar to me, but I could not place it. He said, "It's from A Picasso Summer..." "Which," I finished for him, "was a made-for-TV movie in the mid-70s." As soon as he mentioned the name I remembered the film and how impressed I had been with it, particularly the music.

We left later on Sunday that we had wanted, but got back in time to do a few things before retiring for the evening.

RAMBLINGS 39.3: Hectic Weeks

Normally I take the first weekend duty of the year. Experienced people are needed, and it gets one out of the way for me. However, this year, because of Tanya and Fiona's wedding, I couldn't. So I put myself on the second weekend of the school year, Sept 15-17. Things weren't too bad, though learning the names of all the new students in the dorm, along with the names of the new students in my classes, left me a little dizzy. Eventually I got most of them straight, though getting the names mixed up is common for the first month or so.

The first week of classes wasn't too bad. I may have made a mistake in telling my Precalculus classes that I had not taught the class before, so we would be suffering through the material together, and I heard from other sources that some of the students interpreted it that I had never had the material before. Of course, that is not true. There were only a few topics that I had not seen in the

past 20 years, when I had them in college, which is longer than any of my students have been alive. Still, the students seemed quite willing to work. What helped was that several of them were with me in Geometry the previous year.

On September 23, the family came over to celebrate my parents' 49th wedding anniversary and my father's birthday. We had our pictures from England and Holland in photo albums by then, with captions (all thanks to Maia who worked hard on putting them together, with some assistance from me), and instead of trying to cram all fifteen of us into our small apartment, Maia and I rented the Cranbrook Cabin. It had a fireplace, lots of room with two floors, and plenty of seating space. It had a stove which didn't work, so I brought our microwave over to heat up the food, and my older sister Judy brought her coffee urn for hot water; we had instant coffee, tea, and hot chocolate for those who wanted them. It was cold and windy, so the fireplace was put to good use, and we had a good time.

It was also my birthday, and I received several nice gifts. The big surprise was a Green Lantern ring which Maia had commissioned from a local jeweler. Made of sterling silver, the design was backed with chrysoprase, which added the green color. The other surprise gift was a pair of tickets to see Sarah Brightman and a traveling troupe singing the music of Andrew Lloyd Webber in October. Since she got two tickets, I asked if she wanted to come along. And fended off the thrown pillow.

CONTEXT III

The following weekend, Sept 28-30, we attended CONTEXT, a serious SF convention in Columbus, Ohio. Maia had intended also to visit her father in Asheville as well, but she had a cold, and did not want to take any sort of respiratory ailment into a house where someone is suffering from emphysema. So we stayed in Columbus at the convention hotel, except for Saturday night, when Dennis McKiernan arranged for a group to have dinner at a local restaurant.

The Guest of Honor was Charles Sheffield whose novels are indeed "hard" SF. Hal Clement was also there, Dennis McKiernan and as special guest, Susan Schwartz. Susan was the real reason we wanted to attend, but seeing many of our friends after a couple of months hiatus was also a factor. And I found that Sheffield is a remarkably witty man. Our conversation at dinner was quite pleasant, and his GoH speech very amusing.

We showed off our pictures from England, and Susan brought hers from her trip to Turkey. There was filking, with Mary Ellen Wessels O'Caín showing off her voice, Tom Smith having a good time with his parodies, and Renee Alper (and others) showing considerable talent.

BEST LIMERICK CONTEST at CONTEXT III

At CONTEXT III, the committee held a limerick contest, and I agreed to publish the winners in Lan's Lantern. I published the winning entries in the last issue, and am publishing them again along with my conreport on the convention.

Best Limerick by Dave Taylor

There once was a fusion technician
Whose plasma refused all ignition.
He tried matches and lasers
And all sorts of blazers,
Till at least he gave up and went fission.

Honorable Mention by Julia Aman

Terminator

There once was a girl, Sarah Conner,
Who had a death sentence upon her.
Her future son's friend
Came back from the end
And fathered that son, John, upon her.

I did show off my Green Lantern ring, which several people would have liked to own themselves. I had not brought my GL outfit, but the ring was impressive by itself.

Saturday night I stayed up late talking to Tom Sadler and his daughter Jennifer. The conversation ranged over several topics. He mentioned that he had already seen the season opener of Star Trek: The Next Generation (the finale of the Borg incident); because of where he lives Tom gets the earlier broadcast from Toledo. He did not tell me what happened. We had our VCR set to record it on that Saturday evening. Sandy Taylor also dropped in on the conversation. She is originally from North Dakota, and had all sorts of humorous stories from her neck of the woods.

On Sunday morning, there was an interesting incident in the lobby outside the hucksters' room. Tom's two daughters had string puppets, two-legged "aliens" which they operated with a fair amount of skill. Hal Clement was in the lobby with his video camera, taping the interactions of the "aliens" and some of the children at the con. (I think one was his grandchild.) Dave Taylor asked Hal what sort of environment was necessary for that sort of life form to evolve, and Hal replied, "I would have to make some calculations, and do some research..."

He then pulled a device out of his shoulder bag that looked remarkably like a tricorder from Star Trek and started fooling around with it. Dave and I

both looked a little startled, thinking that Hal had some new information device, and we approached him to see what he was doing. It turned out to be a small monitor for his camcorder and he was checking out how the taping was going. Dave was brave enough to voice the thought: "Hal, I thought you had a tricorder in there!"

The trip home was uneventful, after we circumvented the traffic jam on the main road outside the hotel.

RAMBLINGS 39.4:

Parents' Weekend, Duty, and Sarah Brightman

Parents' Weekend was the next one, Oct 5-7. Since I had to be on campus for that, I scheduled myself for duty that weekend. The meetings with the parents went very well. I was very frank with them about their sons and daughters, and received frankness in return. Duty went well that weekend. There were no real problems, except parents wanting to keep their daughters out past curfew times.

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EVENT CODE	SECTION/BOX	ROW	SEAT	Adm. Taxes Incl. if Applicable	
25.00	MAINFL	SEC	3	ADM.	8
PRICE & ALL TAXES INCL.					
CL4.00	HKBD TU-50 PRESENTS				
F3	THE MUSIC OF				
SECTION/BOX	* * *				
AC 15	ANDREW LLOYD WEBBER				
00 313	THE FOX THEATRE				
ROW SEAT	TUE OCT 9, 1990 8:00PM				
4621650					
A29SEP					

On Oct 9 Maia and I went to the Fox Theatre near downtown Detroit to see Sarah Brightman. The concert was magnificent. We sat about three-quarters of the way back from the stage, but with binoculars I was up on stage watching the show. The troupe began with selections from various musicals written by Andrew Lloyd Webber: Joseph and the Technicolor Dreamcoat, Jesus Christ Superstar, Song and Dance, Evita, Cats, Starlight Express. Then Sarah Brightman appeared and sang many songs from these shows, Phantom of the Opera, and Requiem. Everything was wonderful except for the two priests sitting next to us, and two guys behind us, who at times would sing along (and not very well). It seemed that they didn't know that they were supposed to be quiet during this sort of concert; they probably have gone to too many rock concerts where no one goes to hear the "music"--they go to experience the crowd and see the stars (so they have little or no self-discipline in keeping quiet).

Even though I had been on duty the previous weekend, I scheduled myself for the next weekend, the 3-day Heads' Holiday Weekend (Oct 12-15). As part of the dorm duty, we are scheduled for 5 week-

ends and one long weekend which I have faculty choose. Some didn't get a chance to choose, and my original choice I gave up in trying to put the schedule together, and put myself on this particular weekend. Everything worked out better this way. But my duties were split between Saturday and Monday, and that caused a slight problem with something else I had wanted to do.

Paul Skelton (Skel) and his wife Caz were visiting from England and were staying with Mike Glicksohn in Toronto. When I found out about this (back in September when we were in Toronto for Tanya's and Fiona's wedding), I thought I could make the trip to Toronto on Sunday morning, stay a few hours visiting, then come home Sunday evening in time for duty on Monday. By Saturday evening, I knew I would be dead tired Sunday morning, and would not be able to make the drive safely. So I called Mike to let him know that I would not be up, and asked him to relay my good wishes to Skel and Caz, and the others who were there that weekend: Brian and Denise Brown. Mike said that they would be at DITTO and at OCTOCON, but I wasn't going to make it to either of those conventions.

So I missed my chance to meet Skel. Maybe the next time he and Caz come over....

On Tuesday (Oct 16) we went to the first play of the 1990/91 season at Meadowbrook Theatre: the musical Cabaret. The cast was wonderful, except that at times the MC faded. His voice was very good, but not always strong enough to fill the theatre. It was a good opening to the season, and we looked forward to the other shows.

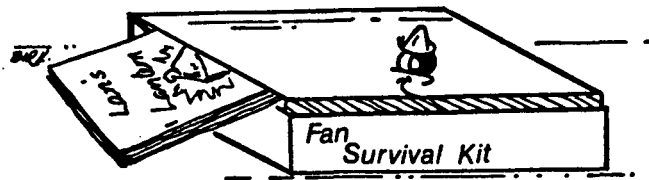
CONCLAVE

CONCLAVE with Stanley Schmidt happened on the next weekend (Oct 19-21). The Fan Guests of Honor were Bill Higgins and Barry Gehm, and special music guests were Bill and Brenda Sutton.

A lot of Friday night was a blur. I recall talking to a lot of people, including all the Guests. Opening ceremonies were fun, and the Marty Burke concert afterwards was a nice touch. The folk after that was slow in getting started, so I crashed early.

Saturday was much better. I attended a panel on "Selling to Magazines" with Stan, Julia Ecklar and Ted Reynolds on it. They all gave practical advice on the topic, and many anecdotes. From the audience came stories by neo-pro Julie Dean Smith, and old-pro Gene Wolfe. Gene suggested that if one is going to write short stories, one should read short stories; if one is going to write a novel, one should read novels. Evidence from the panelists and writers in the room seemed to bear that out.

In the afternoon I heard a new-to-CONCLAVE item: "Story Telling". Jean Jambas is a librarian and story teller. She, her husband Marshall Muller and



their friend Dean Atkins talked about the art of telling stories, how to go about relating, in particular, horror stories. Each then told a horror story. It was strange to get chills in the middle of the afternoon with the warm sun shining through the windows.

After that was a panel entitled "Reading Challenge." Usually the piece of work that is chosen is "The Eye of Aragorn" which is a difficult piece to read aloud because of spelling, grammar construction, word usage, and just plain silly plot. The object is to read until you make a mistake, or crack up that you can't read any more. For this reading challenge, programming was going to provide the book, so Paula Robinson, who has brought "The Eye of Aragorn" to many conventions, did not bring it. However, the person who was supposed to have brought Guy Snyder's Testament XXI didn't. So the head of programming walked into the huckster's room and bought a likely looking bad sci-fi novel. It was, to the point that I've forgotten the title.

The speeches were in the afternoon, which then freed up the room for practice for Moebius Theatre. The organized dinner expedition became rapidly too large and it was difficult to find seating for everyone. We were split into two groups, and I sat with Bill & Brenda and their daughter Katie, Katherine Cook, Don Wenzel and Kathleen Conat, Jamie McQuinn and Halina Harding and their daughter Kaylyn. Mafa sat with Jean and Marshall, Jim Landis, and a bunch of others. We did, however, make it back in time for the Moebius Theatre production.

I spent more time talking to people including Carol Lynn, Paula Robinson, Gale Tang, and many other people.

The Sunday panels I attended were really good. Julia and others talked about "Sequelitis" and what we can try to do about it (stop buying the books, and let the publishers know why!). In "No Purple Crayon, Please," the panelists talked about the various non-writing aspects of selling--appearance does count, as does spelling, and a host of other things.

I was on duty Sunday evening, so I could not stay for the dead dog party, but I had a good time.

OVFF

OHIO VALLEY FILK FEST was the following weekend. It was not a financially sound one for me, as I got a speeding ticket on the way down. Not an auspicious beginning to the the convention. However,



once there, the rooms were filled with beautiful singing. Technical Difficulties was supposed to have been the Guest of Honor, but Linda Melnick was the only one who could confirm that she would definitely be there. Sheila Willis shattered her ankle and could not attend, and TJ Burnside-Clapp was pregnant up until about two weeks before the con, so she could not confirm in advance. She did show up, with baby and Husband (Mitchell), and it was nice to see her.

The Guest instead was a group called Musical Chairs, with Linda Melnick as the organizer. They were very good, with some room for improvement. The one-shot concerts were fun, and the song contest, whose songs were written on the theme "aliens", had some serious and humorous entries. Tom Smith won again, for a love song based on the movies Alien and Aliens. (You've got to hear it to believe it. And what may be more amazing is that he finished writing it a few minutes before he was to sing it!)

At the open filk, Renee Alper zinged Tom with a song, and before she was finished he was busy writing a rebuttal. Tom completed the song within five minutes after Renee finished, but she had left the room before he could sing his retort. I never did get to hear it.

Mafa was too tired to stay up for the midnight brunch, so I sat and ate with Barry and Sally Childs-Helton, Iain and MEW O'Caïn, and other filkers. The Pegasus Awards were handed out, and then the singing started again.

We left early Sunday morning because of a family commitment.

RMABLINGS 39.5:

Mom's Birthday; Other Activities

My Mother's Birthday was October 28. She was going to be 70, so my father decided to have a big

party for her. We left OVFF about 7 AM and drove home, changed clothes and picked up the things we were supposed to bring, then drove to my sister's place in Oxford, Michigan. All of my siblings were there; we each brought something for the meal, and all of my mother's siblings were invited. As a surprise, mom's youngest brother, Joe, who was in Louisville with his wife Alice babysitting their grandchildren, showed up. They live in California, and were travelling around the country during their first year of retirement together. Just before dessert, we kids all said something about growing up with mom, and even her sisters and brother got into it and said a few things.

Joe, noticing that the four kids were missing, went downstairs to find them. He was amazed and pleased that they were all playing together nicely. For him it was an amazing different from his own grandchildren (who apparently fight all the time and are rarely quiet). Joe and Alice hurried back to Louisville, though they said that they would rather have stayed around a few more days. They would be back for the Thanksgiving holidays.

The first quarter ended on the last day of October--a fitting day for such an event: Hollowe'en. That meant writing comments on all my students over the weekend of Nov 2-4. Well, that's what most of the teachers were doing. I had mine finished Thursday evening, even though I had gone to the Galactic Cartographer's meeting the night before. As I've said before, three things help me in getting them done quickly: I use the computer, I prepare everything as much as possible in advance of the last graded work (program in names, dates, standard paragraphs, etc), and I have no trouble composing at the keyboard. In this last thing I am probably indebted to years of apahacking. But that left me free for the weekend, and I think I either slept in, or (more likely) did work on the Lantern or one of my apas.

On Wednesday of the following week (Nov 7) Maia and I went to see the traveling production of Starlight Express. The singers were terrific, the dancing (on rollerskates) was phenomenal, and the effects spectacular. The only problems were these: the stage was set up differently from the London production (understandable--it would cost too much to run ramps into the first and second balconies), and the plot was "dumbed" for the American audience. The whole subplot of racial discrimination was obliterated, lyrics were changed so that the lyrics were more easily understood (like "gravel and sand" for "aggregates", and "red caboose" every time "CB" was used in the original!), and it was made very clear that this was a story made up by a little boy playing with his train set. Americans have no imagination, so it seems to those who produced the show here in the US.

Those who had seen the original in London were

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EVENT CODE	SECTION/BOX	ROW	SEAT
32.50	MAIN FL	AISLE	2*
CC3.25	TICKETS & ALL TAXES INCL		
10	STARLIGHT EXPRESS		
AC 14	MASONIC TEMPLE THEATRE		
E 11	MED NOV 7, 1990 8:00PM		
4601438	INCL 1.50 RESTORATION FE		
F220CT0			

disappointed; those who were seeing it for the first time really liked it. I have to admit that I enjoyed seeing it because of the singing, dancing and effects. The actors/skaters were wonderful and did a good job with what they were given. (But it is difficult to believe that a little boy would come up with all those sexual innuendos!)

The next evening I was involved with the grade review meeting--talking about all the students whose grades were low, and who could be in serious trouble. It did not go as late as I thought it might, so I was home in time to see David Suchet as Hercule Poirot on Mystery.

We did not have regular classes on Friday. In the morning the Juniors and Seniors went through a session of Career Day. The Sophomores spent time in a seminar about drugs and alcohol, and the Freshmen helped people set up for one of the annual fundraisers, Giftorama. I helped out with Career Day by hosting two lawyers for two of the four sessions. My partner who was the other host let me have those first two--it worked out better for both of us if he could take the two later sessions. That was fine with me. As soon as my obligation was done, I jumped into the car and headed for WINDYCON.

WINDYCON

WINDYCON was held at its usual place, the Hyatt Woodfield in Schaumburg, a suburb of Chicago, on November 9-11. I wanted to go to see several people I only see at this convention, or rarely see anywhere else. Although I couldn't persuade Lynn Margosian to change her mind and come in from St. Paul, there were others I wanted to see just as much. Jeanne Mealy and John Stanley were there, as were Jean and Marshall, Ruth Thompson, Mike Resnick, Bob Eggleton, Kathy Nerat, Jill Smethells, and many, many others.

Bob Eggleton's art was a knockout, and I picked up a print of his cover for The Snows of Jaspre, Mary Caraker's novel. I was on panels, as usual, talking about fanzines, fannish language and legends. A surprise was seeing Charlotte Proctor up from Alabama--she was hosting an Atlanta in 95 bid party. I bounced back and forth between that and the Louisville in 93 party.

Saturday evening I went to dinner with John and Jeanne; we had a good time at a small Mediterranean restaurant.

On Sunday, I offered to drive a few fans to Midway Airport, thus saving them another \$80 cab fare. They did not know how far away from the hotel Midway was until they landed. It was on the way home for me, so I did not mind having a few extra passengers for a few miles.

It was particularly nice seeing Jill again. I tried to convince her to come home to Michigan for CONFUSION, but she said that she would be starting classes around then at Northwestern.

RAMBLINGS 39.6:

A Play, a Wedding, and Thanksgiving

On Tuesday, November 13, we saw the second of the series of plays at Meadowbrook Theatre, The Mousetrap. With the exception of the forced British accent, the performance was as good as the one we saw in London. There were slightly different interpretations of some of the characters, but those were valid interpretations.

I was originally scheduled to be on Dorm Duty the weekend of November 16, but Larry Kestenbaum's wedding, and another family affair, sent me scurrying to switch weekends with someone. I ended up on duty the first weekend of December, which wasn't too bad, since I did take some kids to a Mall, and got some Christmas shopping done.

The wedding was very nice. Larry is a member of MISHAP, one of the other apas I'm in, who recently complete post-graduate studies at Cornell, and is living in Ypsilanti, MI. He was the main person who, when one of the computer viruses hit on Friday, October 13 (1989, or was that 1988?), deciphered the code and found out what it was. Janice Guetfreund is a lovely woman and very obviously in love with Larry. I wish them all the luck. The wedding took place at the Chapel on the campus of Michigan State University, with the reception in one of the campus halls. The catered affair was lovely, and Maia and I sat with several fans: Alan Dormire, Robin Nakkula, David Alway, John Filpus, Mike Grimm and others. Tim Kirby and Mary Kestenbaum were in from Minneapolis, and they announced their engagement, so it looked like another summer trip to the twin cities was in the offing.



On Sunday we went to my youngest sister's (Janice) place to celebrate her son's birthday. We had a pleasant time. I showed my father a book that a colleague loaned me to read about the Saturday afternoon movie serials, and he got so engrossed in looking at the pictures and reading it that he almost missed eating. I mentioned that I had a couple of serials...and he wanted to borrow them.

Thanksgiving

For Thanksgiving, we originally were going to attend a family reunion (on my Mother's side) in Lansing, but Maia's father went into the hospital and was being prepped for surgery, so we went to Columbus, Ohio, instead. Her dad seemed fairly strong and ready for the operation. Since he has emphysema, he could not be put on a general anaesthetic. He would have to undergo a colostomy with a local anaesthetic. Also, the doctors were afraid to put him on a respirator, since the automatic system tends to shut down when a machine starts doing the breathing for you, and sometimes cannot be started again. Instead, the doctors used a new machine called a ventilator, which is a computer-controlled machine that assists breathing; it does not breathe for the patient but supplies the oxygen as the person breathes, and adjusts for abnormal patterns of breathing. We saw Norb on Thanksgiving day in the hospital. On the previous Monday he had been on the ventilator for 5 hours, had a little trouble breathing by himself when the doctors took him off it, but was all right. On Wednesday, they had him on the machine for an hour and a half and he came off it with little trouble. The operation would last only an hour, as would the local anaesthetic. His surgery was on Friday (the day after Thanksgiving), and he came out of it very well. In fact, the doctors are amazed he has recovered so fast. Norb is supposed to be home on Friday, December 7.

We had the Thanksgiving dinner at friends of her sister, Joy, which was quite pleasant. Then we headed to Champaign, Illinois for CHAMBANACON.

CHAMBANACON

The con was lots of fun. Lynn Margosian from St. Paul was there, and enjoyed herself, although she didn't quite realize that the con was a relaxacon. She brought her friend Becky, who was curious about conventions, and definitely not a fan. I had some wonderful and interesting conversations with them, although not enough of them. We had our traditional lasagna dinner with Tim and Anna Zahn, and showed them our pictures from England.

The previous year, Tim had told us about a project he was working on, but swore us to secrecy until official word was released from Lucasfilms.

That was supposed to have been in January of 1990. At the end of 1990, still no announcement had officially been made. It wasn't until April of 1991 that fandom and the world in general learned that Tim Zahn was writing a trilogy of novels in the Star Wars universe, which take place 5 years after the end of Return of the Jedi. We read Tim's original outline for the Clone Wars that proposed to write, but that was nixed by Lucasfilms. George Lucas was seriously considering doing the Clone Wars trilogy, shooting all three movies at once a la Back to the Future II & III, but releasing the films over three years. Only recently we found out that this will be happening.

Mafa and I shared a room with Ruth Woodring and Ian Ingle, good friends whom we do not see enough of. My major disappointment was not getting to talk with Penny Tegen. She and her husband Al were chairmen of CHAMBANACON 4, my very first con 16 years ago. They have been living in Colorado Springs for the past 12 years or so, and were back to attend the con only a couple of times before, the last being about 5 years ago as the Fen GoH.

When we got home, Mafa called Joy to find out about their father, and the news was good. He was still in the hospital recovering, but doing very well.

RAMBLINGS 39.7: CEC and Finances

On another news front, the Cranbrook Education Community, Schools Division, was in financial trouble. We were running on a deficit budget of over \$1 million, and things were starting to look bleak. There was a declining student population, down considerably from 8 years ago (when Dr. Lillian Bauder the president of CEC, and and currently acting Director of Schools, came on board). Dr. Bauder said at the beginning of the school year that everyone was going to have to pull together to cut costs. In spite of that, people were going to be cut from faculty and staff--and we would know before Christmas break whose contracts would not be renewed for the 1991/92 school year. A wonderful holiday present. There would be a placement service on campus for those people to help them find other schools for employment.

My emotions were mixed about this. Yes, I could be cut from the faculty, in spite of my 15 years seniority. I don't coach, but I do perform a lot of little duties which makes life easier for others (like taking care of the copy machine and ordering supplies for it, ordering coffee supplies, doing the Snow-Emergency phone list, putting together the Dorm Duty list, etc.) I also teach 1/8 of the students in the high school taking math, and I am 1/13 of the math department.

Although this was the Schools Division problem,



the other parts of the community were affected. The Science Institute and Art Academy are healthy financially (a vast turn-around of the situation 10 years ago and more when they were in trouble and the Schools helped them out), but they seem to have no interest in helping us this time. However, anyone outside CEC does not know the corporate structure that has been in place since Lillian Bauder took over 8 years ago (yeah, this is treated as a corporation instead of a school). And so when Lillian spends a thousand for a cellular phone for her car, and the Science Institute begins to build an additional access road into the community, and teachers are being fired (or the contracts are not being renewed, the polite way of saying that) and kitchen staff let go, the outside minions will scratch their collective heads and wonder what is going on.

Ultimately, whatever happened to get us into this financial mess, Lillian is at fault. No one at

my level in the community knows the whole story, but something serious was going on, and I think the upper level administrators (the corporate vice-presidents) were panicking. The main problem was that there was a drop in enrollment (in addition to the deficit) from where we were ten years ago, and after an extremely high student body from 5 years ago. So admissions was targeted as the main area of concern (blame?).

Related to admissions was college counseling, where the issue of competency was raised. Supposedly students were not getting into the prestigious colleges and universities, and parents were unhappy with that. Well, it's true that not all of our kids can go to Harvard (who would want to? The undergrad program at Harvard is not very good). But the staff was very good at matching the students with the schools which were right for them, despite the exaggerated expectations of parents. Lillian and the board ignored the statistics compiled by the college counseling staff and judged by hearsay from parents.

Although the faculty were instructed to do what we did best--teach, coach, and advise--we were almost literally pressed into service to help admissions get students. We were strongly requested to make follow-up phone calls to inquiries, and attend receptions both during the school year in the evenings and while on vacation (if we happened to be in an area where a reception for prospective students was given). We, however, along with the kitchen service, were to bear the brunt of the problem. There would be a change of food service in the kitchens; faculty would be let go. The administrators would get salary cuts, but would be able to keep their jobs.

I was not optimistic about getting my contract renewed. Mafa and I could survive on her paycheck alone, but that would mean a drastic change in our lifestyle. I will have to say goodbye to conventions (except the local ones), the fanzine (probably), and maintaining the book and video collections.

RAMBLINGS 39.8

Mafa, Norb, and EDS;

More on CEC; Christmas & Holidays

December was a month of mixed emotions, mostly depressing. The food service was changed, and starting in January the Marriott Food Service would be in charge, and they were going to negotiate with the current workers about hiring them on after the end of January. The shady side of that deal was that the kitchen managers were instructed to turn over all their books and records to the competing companies for review. Talk about stacking the deck against the people who have faithfully served the faculty and students for so many years!



On Sunday, December 9, Mafa got a call from Joy; their father had been rushed to the hospital again and it looked bleak. Mafa decided to drive down on Monday, after clearing things out at work (Electronic Data Systems (EDS)). She was going to leave at noon, so imagine my surprise when I came home during my break to find her there, with her two supervisors. She told me that they weren't going to let her drive down to Columbus to visit her father. Instead, the company would pay for a plane ticket for her to fly down, and rent her a car while she was there. This cemented Mafa's loyalty to EDS, or at least to her supervisors. They were going to take her to the airport, but had to drop her car off first.

EDS has gained a reputation of being loyal to its workers, but very demanding of them. Most of the stories people hear are about employees going to great lengths to get the job completed--like missing weddings, birthings, funerals, etc. That was several years ago, but things have changed a little since then. In Mafa's department, the team works as a team, they communicate well, and the job gets done. Their ratings have been at the top ever since the group was put together two and a half years ago. It has become an excellent company to work for.

Mafa's father came out all right. It was a scare for the family, but a portent of things to come. Mafa got a chance to talk to her father alone for a couple of hours, and it was a good father to daughter talk about life, death and dying. Norb knew his time was limited, but was not about to give up. He would hang on as well as he could.

Mafa came home in a fairly good mood, glad to have made the trip, though not for the reason why.

RAMBLINGS 39.9

More on CEC; Christmas & Holidays

The meeting with Lillian Bauder on the 13th of December was dismal. She told us what changes were going to be made, the changes were irrevocable, and we would know whose contracts would not be renewed, or who would be cut from full time to part time, on Friday the 14th. Essentially, at least one member from each department was to be let go (or at least cut to part time). Some administrators were to leave. Apparently no one in Lillian's office was going.

This naturally did not sit well with a lot of people. Some tried to tell Lillian that we faculty would rather forego salary increases (another of her irrevocable decisions) so to keep our friends and colleagues, but she would not listen.

A further complication in this whole affair was that the Science Institute, a separate division at CEC was selling off 50 acres of undeveloped land, most of which was given to the Institute as a nature preserve. It's on Orchard Lake, and developers would love to get their hands on it. CIS was trying to negotiate a deal with the city of Orchard Lake to have them buy it and preserve it. In itself, this was not a bad thing, but it betrayed the trust that the Ward family, who donated the land to CIS, had placed in the Cranbrook Institute of Science in keeping it as a nature preserve. Coupled with that was going on in the schools (again, the people outside CEC see this as ONE place), people had started to wonder what was going on with Cranbrook.

The adverse publicity would not be good for CEC, and whether that penetrated Lillian's mind, I don't know. Some people tried to tell her that. She was not listening, and I was waiting for the ax to fall.

On December 14, there was a tense atmosphere in the school. By the end of the day, there was still some tension, but many sighs of relief. I had not been called in for a meeting with Arlyce, which meant that I would have a contract for next school year. Then someone said, "What if this was only the first round of cuts?" Vacation would not be a pleasant time.

Meanwhile, I got the phone call on Saturday afternoon, December 15, from Fred Cleaver. We were supposed to be in Toronto for an anniversary celebration that weekend, but we were both a little under the weather with a virus. Fred Cleaver is the editor of D'APA. His message was short, but the emotion he felt came through: Don C. Thompson died. Don was ill with cancer, and the doctors had given him 4 to 6 months to live in November but the cancer spread rapidly through his system. I spent the next 2 hours calling others about it, taking one other call from Thea Hutchison, a close friend of Don's in Denver. I will miss him, and so will all

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THE FISHER THEATRE
PRESENTS
LES MISERABLES
DECEMBER 19, 1990
WEDNESDAY AT 8:00PM

of fandom, Denver fandom in particular.

We saw A Christmas Carol and Les Miserables the following week on successive nights (Tuesday and Wednesday). In the final scene of Les Miserables, when Jean Valjean dies, all I could think of was Don. It was good catharsis.

The last day of school before vacation was Thursday, and I handed out another of my "number" games to all my classes: name the 7 Dwarfs, the 3 Fates, the 7 Sisters (colleges), the Colleges of the Big 10, the 12 Signs of the Zodiac, etc. And in typical teacher fashion, I didn't come down with a relapse of my cold virus until Thursday night.

The Holidays

We drove to Columbus to visit with Maia's sister Joy, and her two other sisters who flew in for the holidays, Christina (the eldest) and Roberta (second eldest). The noise was not as bad as when my sisters and mother get together, and Christina was even restrained in some of her comments, which surprised me. She tried to engage in some one-ups-manship with us regarding cons and people/authors she's met, but we refrained from playing that game. Christina gave her niece Jennifer the first three Deryni books of Katherine Kurtz, autographed by Katherine herself. Our only comment was that Katherine was the reason we met and got married (Maia went to the MARCON at which Katherine was the GoH, and I was the first fan she met in the hucksters room Saturday morning, and the rest is history). Maia gave Jennifer three of Lois McMaster Bujold's novels, autographed by Lois, of course. We had stopped to see Lois and John and the family on our way down to Columbus, and asked her to autograph the books for Jennifer. We didn't tell Christina that, although I did mention it to Roberta later, and she wanted to drive up to Marion to visit Lois. Roberta likes her work too.

Maia and Roberta visited their father on Sunday afternoon, which was a very pleasant visit. She then took Roberta to the airport to catch her plane back to Phoenix. Jennifer and Denise, their two nieces, went with them. I stayed at Joy and Dale's; I didn't want to take my cold to Maia's dad.

On Monday, the day before Christmas, we drove

back Home, with a long delay in Toledo. I was driving, hit some snow, lost control and slammed into the center barrier. We were bruised and shaken, but essentially all right. We both had sore ribs, and I had a burn on my neck from the shoulder harness, but we both decided that these minor injuries were much better than pulling glass out of our foreheads. It was strange watching the car head for the barrier and knowing that there wasn't a thing I could do about it. The police cited me (what else could they do?) but since no other cars were involved, it was a small fine. After we got towed to a garage, the people there made arrangements for us to get a rental. By this time it was close to 2 PM, and it seemed that most places were shutting down for the holiday. The people at Snappy Rental held their place open until one of the workers drove us over there to get the car. All in all we were very impressed with the garage, Pro Automotive, and Snappy. And Mafa loved the cruise control on the rental.

Once we got home, I had one last gift to buy, some money to pull out of the back for the "family gift" for my parents (it was my turn this year to think of a creative way of presenting them with money to put toward a down-payment on a new car), and some bread to make. We both took it easy, and went to bed at a reasonable time.

We awoke stiff and sore the next morning, but happy for a pleasant Christmas. I gave Mafa some videos, a couple of books, a remote control for the VCR, and matching amethyst tear-shaped earrings and pendant. From her I got a book about the history of stained glass windows, a tape by Eric Wollendeimer, a M.C. Escher calendar, a framed picture of Data as Sherlock Holmes (the picture had been given to me by Mary Frost-Pferson at RIVERCON as a personal gift for being the Fan GoH, which now hangs in my classroom), a new mug with a Far Side cartoon on it which depicted a classroom scene and a student saying: "Mr. Osborne, may I be excused? My brain is full," and a new toy: a TI-81 graphing calculator. I had a great time learning how to use it.

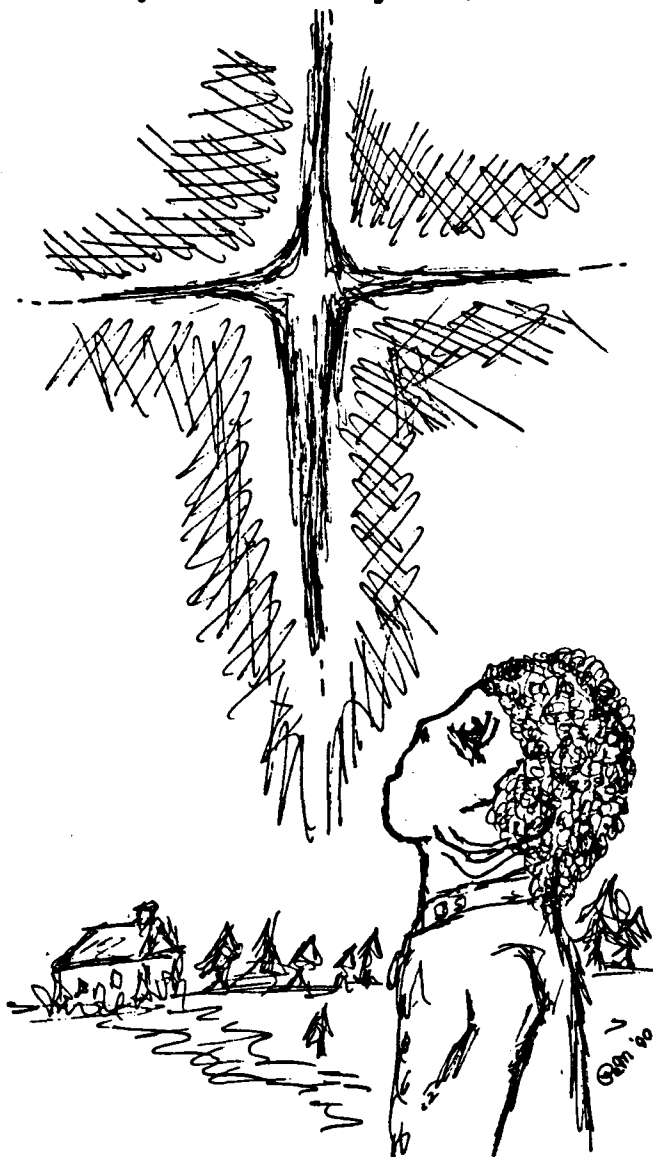
About 11 we left for my parents' place to meet with the rest of my family, have our gift exchange, and celebrate with a Christmas dinner. So not to cast a morbid pall on the holiday, we declined to mention anything about the accident. My nephews and niece made out well, as usual. We gave them all books of some sort, my two oldest nephews getting some Burroughs and Heinlein. From my godchild I got a t-shirt that read: "So many books, so little time," and a gift certificate for a bookstore. I had chosen my brother-in-law Jim's name, and I got him a lot of books (he reads SF too), some clothes, CDs, a flask, and some Glenlivet Scotch to put in it. You should have seen my sister June's face when he unwrapped the Scotch!

June had pulled my name, and I got some clothes, blank videos, and a pitchfork (hey, I had asked for the pitchfork--I needed it for the garden!)

Mafa had pulled her out-law Tim's name, and got him a number of things on his list, including a wallet and wood chisels. Tim had pulled her name and gave her some things I can't recall, but the big gift was a stained-glass jewelry box that he had made himself. It is beautiful.

On Wednesday we called our Allstate insurance agent about the accident, and he assured us that we were "in good hands"! However, we were to go back to Toledo, return our rental, and get a loaner car from the place that would be doing the repair work on the Toyota, a Chrysler/Jeep/Eagle dealership. Allstate had the car towed from Pro Automotive. The new loaner was a Jeep Cherokee Laredo, four-door with four wheel drive. Again, Mafa had fun playing with the cruise control, "driving with my fingers," as she put it.

Classes were not to start again until January 7, so I had a lot of time to spend working on Lan's Lantern. I wanted (finally) to get the issue done and hand out copies at CONFUSION, so I spent long hours in my classroom working on it.



RAMBLINGS 39.10
The New Year: 1991

We spent our New Year's eve as usual at a party hosted by Chris Clayton and Becky Price. There was lots of people, lots of food, and a good time. Since Chris and Becky live outside of Ann Arbor in the country, and it was icy that night, we were glad for the four-wheel drive and extra security the Laredo provided.

School began on Monday January 7, 1991. I taught regular class for four days, tested in all my classes on Friday, and spent the four teaching days of the following week reviewing for the exam. Most of the students were good about keeping up with the review schedule, and asked lots of questions. There were a few who did not do much work and blew off the time, and they were mostly the ones who did poorly on the exam.

The play for January at Meadowbrook Theatre was What I Did Last Summer, about American teens from New York who spend their last summer in Canada. One in particular becomes enamored of a recluse who teaches him what life is about (no, not sex), how to look at things from an artist's perspective even though he has little artistic talent. It was both amusing and sad, and a good production.

I was on duty in the library one night, and brought in a video to watch while some of the students came in to study, do research, etc. It was a serial, Undersea Kingdom, starring Crash Corrigan. It is amazing how the plot turned on the stupidity of the characters, whether it be the good or bad guys. I managed to watch most of it during the three hours I was monitoring the library.

We also picked up our car from Toledo, turning in the gas guzzling Jeep Cherokee Laredo. Amazing-



ly, I had seen a lot of these "cars" on the road, and they have EPA ratings of 15 mpg in the city, and 20 mpg for highway driving. The Toyota ran fine, though we were a little nervous about it for the first few miles.

As we normally would have exams, the first day would have fallen on Martin Luther King Day. As a community committed to diversity, this would not have been acceptable, so we began exams on the Friday before, and had a special assembly honoring Martin Luther King in the morning of Monday, January 21, with study sessions for those students who wanted them in the afternoon. The assembly was one put together by the black students and the AAAA (the African American Awareness Association) group at school. The members put on skits, had speakers, and did a fine job in honoring Dr. King. I had a few students show up in my room in the afternoon. The Math exams were on the last day of testing, Thursday, January 26, which left me pretty much free to catch up on a lot of other things, like collating the Lantern, entering some material on the special issues that were supposed to have been out in 1989, reading, writing letters, preparing for second semester classes, and thinking about CONFUSION on the last weekend of January.

In the space of about 24 hours, I gave exams, corrected and graded them, and figured out semester grades. I would have had all the comments I had to write finished before leaving for the convention, but around noon I discovered I had not one but two flat tires. After I took care of that, I had to get home to pack and leave for CONFUSION. However, as before I did not need to curve the Geometry exams (I've used the same one for the past 4 or 5 years, and I've found it to be a good measure of the material covered), but the Precalculus exam was a bit more difficult; this was the first time I taught the course, and thus the first exam in that class for me. After a curve was applied, the exam grades came pretty close to how the kids had done during the semester.

IMMACULATE CONFUSION

The convention was not that well run; starting/ending times were extremely flexible; there was heavy programming on Friday when few people were around, and very little on Sunday. Still, almost everyone I talked to had a good time. The mix of attendees was good. Several people who had not attended CONFUSION for several years were there, which is what made it so enjoyable. I handed out 123 copies of the Lantern, and there were still more people who should have gotten one.

Esther Freisner was the Guest of Honor, and she was marvelous. She is a really funny woman, and I think I will have to read some of her novels. Maia had been asked to write the biography for the pro-

gram book two weeks before the convention--another indication of the organization of the con. (I was asked to do a write-up for Mike Resnick for BOSKONE; I got the call at the beginning of December and due by Christmas for the convention in February--of course, that was NESFA). She called up Esther's good friend Susan Schwartz and asked for some help (since Maia did not have time to read a large quantity of Esther's stuff to do a literary bio and we had only met Esther once), and Susan suggested she call Esther and ask what she might like in her write-up. A half hour conversation gave Maia more than enough material, and a desire to spend time with her at the con.

I spent time with the filkers--my interest in music was again on the upswing and so made time to listen to tapes and attend filking. Since Joey Shoji was in attendance from California (representing and selling Mail Songs tapes), the high quality of the filking was raised even more. I talked to a lot of fans I had not seen since CONCLAVE, the last local con. And I met Michael Franks, a fan artist just starting out, who had sent me some work in the mail.

I was on two panels. The first was a fanzine panel, chaired by Leah Zeldes Smith (with whom I've been on panels before), which started late and ended early. I didn't mind the short time it lasted, since my panels were back-to-back. The second was on "Urban Fannish Legends", which was more about some of the legendary stories in fandom, at the center of many were Bob Tucker and Harlan Ellison. I related one in which I was personally involved--how I got a T-shirt with the name "Assghod" on the back, and how I was auctioned off at the art auction (for TAFF) for \$22 (the bidding stalled at \$8 until it was announced that reproduction rights were included--talk about prostituting oneself!).

RAMBLINGS 39.11

Second Semester Begins; A Trip to Asheville

Back at school, I went over the exams with all my classes, handed out the paper topics (due at the end of the third quarter) and talked to the English teacher who was handling the Genres class this year. I did a science fiction section again, this time for three weeks. Again, I used Ender's Game by Orson Scott Card, and Wollheim's current Annual Best SF (for 1990). Conveniently, I was able to have the students meet in my room, which I decorated along SF lines (more so that it already was). Meanwhile, I continued with the math classes, and enjoyed my students.

At the end of January, we got word that Maia's father was in the hospital again, trouble with breathing, and was to undergo a tracheotomy. Her sister Joy kept us informed as to what was going on (since she lives in Columbus--Norb's wife Mary,

Maia's stepmother, was busy taking care of Norb, but has had little to do with any of Norb's daughters since before she and Norb got married 27 years ago. Christina came in a couple of times too. On February 3, Norb had a series of seizures and lapsed into a coma. Maia and I were making contingency plans for a trip down there if the CAT Scan on Monday showed no brain activity (in which case they would turn off the ventilator). Norb regained consciousness, and was able to communicate by writing. But we knew it was only a matter of time.

I also found out that my mother had a mild case of emphysema--she did smoke a little (I remember that when I was mere tyke) but I don't think that's the cause; it most probably is from second-hand smoke and the combination of chemicals in the new house (the doctor suggested this--all the new things like scotch-guard, materials in the drywall, cleaners, etc). Basically she needed to be in well-ventilated areas. And, since it was mild, there was no real need to worry, but seeing what was happening with Maia's father, I did worry. (As a side note: All three of my sisters smoked, as did their husbands, but were smart enough to read the reports about the dangers and all quit!--except for one brother-in-law and my father who occasionally smoke cigars which are not as bad as cigarettes, but have their own dangers. Neither is allowed to smoke them in any of the houses of my sisters or parents.)

Saturday (February 9) about 1 AM we got the call from Joy. Maia was out of town at WinterStar and called in to get the messages on the answering machine. I was on duty in the Dorm that weekend. She eventually called me back and we made tentative plans for the week. When Maia got home on Sunday afternoon, she made arrangements for an evening flight, talked her sister Roberta out of flying in from Phoenix for the funeral (she had a severe ear infection, and Monday morning went into the hospital emergency room with a severe migraine, so it was fortunate she didn't come in), and I took her to the airport. On Monday I drove down to Columbus after classes were over, and we attended the funeral Mass on Tuesday morning.

Things were happening in Maia's family that I thought were only made up for TV, movies, and books. The obituary did not mention Maia's mother at all, i.e., that in addition to being pre-deceased by his parents and brothers, there was no word about Norbert Cowan being married to someone before his present wife Mary. At the funeral home, Mary did not acknowledge that Joy, Dale, Jennifer & Denise, and Maia were there at all. At the funeral or the reception afterward she didn't say a word to Maia or me. She finally had to talk to Joy when Joy introduced a good friend who had shown up for the funeral. But other than that, we all got the cold shoulder. The only one of Norb's first wife's children that Mary would talk to was the oldest, Chris-



tina, the Navy Lieutenant (who wore dress-blacks to the funeral home and ceremony). Of course Christina stayed at Mary's house, and also drove her to the church and cemetery.

Joy, Roberta and Mafa had no clue as to what Mary was thinking, or what had happened to Christina. When Norb got married the second time, Mary outright told the kids that she loved him and not them. Norb accepted her family as his, but Mary never accepted Norb's family as hers. Christina was the most vociferous of the four sisters in her outrage and indignation of Mary's attitude and behavior, but now she was siding with Mary. (There are a lot of other things I could say about Mary and Christina, but I won't bore you with all of them; suffice it to say that Christina was hypocritical in her beliefs and quite abrasive in her behavior.)

The Church in Circleville, Ohio, where the ceremony took place was St. Joseph's Catholic Church, which from the outside reminded me of some English churches. It was made of cut stone, had a belfrey, and stain glass windows. On the inside the walls were painted blue with white and gold trim, and there was lots of beautiful stained glass windows, more than I thought from the outside. The ceiling was high, vaulted arches and a beautifully decorated nave. Fr. Ralph Huntzinger presided. He was Norb's cousin, and had already buried Norb's brother, father, and several other relatives. Father Ralph had a tough time with the service, stumbling over the words, and obviously emotional about it, though his voice didn't crack. He was twelve days older than Norb. The unfortunate thing was that he did not talk about how Norb loved life, and loved a good joke, or how pleasant he was to talk to. Instead he talked about what a rough life he had, and

how he was no longer suffering. Mafa was disappointed in his presentation, as was I after we talked about it.

After the lunch/reception in Mary's Methodist church in Ashville (where she and Norb lived), we said goodbye and left for home, taking our time. Mafa cried on and off in the car, but was rational about the situation. She spent the rest of the evening on the phone talking to friends and family. She stayed home from work on Wednesday while I went in to teach my classes. Thursday she went back to work. I mentioned before how thoughtful and caring EDS has been; her boss also called her on Tuesday morning in Columbus to offer condolences and say that everyone was thinking of her. It's difficult to get company loyalty like that.

I had no trouble getting the day off for the funeral; one colleague suggested that I should have taken two, but I do have a commitment to my classes (had it been two years ago with those troublesome classes I would have). On Monday one math teacher was out sick, another was out with a back injury, and I tell Herb Snitz (my department chairman) that I would not be in on Tuesday. Fortunately, I didn't need coverage for my classes, since I just told them all to work on their math papers. (That's a nice "out" that I have in third quarter; if I get ill I don't need a substitute.) And Mafa said that it was nice to just sit and talk with her sister Joy about how Mary was acting, and everything else, without having to worry about me being bored by it all.

Very few faculty knew why I was not in class on Tuesday, and none of my kids. I just told them that I would have to be out of town. I suspected that word got out eventually. Arlyce offered her condol-

ances to us, as did several other faculty members.

We had seasons tickets to Meadowbrook Theatre, and the one play that Maia wanted to see was Shakespeare's Midsummer Night's Dream, which was (as you might have guessed) Tuesday night. Although we were back in time to go to the theatre (barely), we had decided beforehand just to give the tickets away--to the Drama director and his wife. (We asked a few others, but it seems too many of my colleagues do not stay up past 10 PM on weeknights. Either they are much older than I thought, or I still think I'm still young and energetic. I wonder if I'll be like that when I reach 50!)

Father's visiting day was on Friday, February 15, and turned out to be the coldest day this winter, with wind chills down to -40. And Arlyce, the head of the upper school, got very concerned about the kids not following the special dress code for that day (boys in ties and coats, girls in skirts or dresses). She came to my classroom to talk to me personally about it.

RAMBLINGS 39.12 CEC Troubles; Genres

More problems occurred in the community. With the proposed sale of the Nature Sanctuary land by the Science Institute division of Cranbrook Educational Community, people have decided that Cranbrook is not living up to its philosophy and have stopped giving donations. Why am I not surprised? (I had mentioned that this was what would happen to several of my colleagues, back in November?)

As a result, the Board of Governors/Trustees mandated that the schools division have a balanced budget for next year, which includes a partial recoup of the losses from the deficit, based on enrollment projections. This meant that faculty would be opening their veins to make it up--not just a freeze in salary, but a cut. According to one of proposed plans, contracts would be issued to all those who are to return, WITHOUT a salary written in, the salary to be determined later dependent on enrollment. I knew I couldn't sign such a contract.

The problem was the dichotomy I feel over what was being said and what I know to be true. Lillian said we are in financial trouble, yet we have assets close to \$90 million. Something was not right here. But more later.

I became enmeshed in the SF section of Genres, and it went much better than I thought it would. Georgiale Scott, the teacher in charge of the course, is an excellent teacher and she helped guide the discussions on the stories so that they lasted almost the entire class period. When the kids in my Genres class started reading Ender's Game, the reaction, as happened before, was quite good. Even Georgiale was enjoying the novel. I was particularly pleased about that. She has had little

contact with written SF, and enjoyed learning about the genre along with the kids.

However, I was swamped with much more work than I expected, mostly because of the time of year.

All my math classes were in difficult sections. The annual Wilderness Expedition was getting ready to leave and I needed to write out what I would be doing in my classes for the two weeks before Spring Break so I could tell those going what they have to make up. I needed to get the Lantern mailing done. And one student was in a lot of trouble.

Robyn was out for two weeks because of a combination of bronchitis and flu, and was so far behind that it would be very difficult for her to catch up. My recommendation that she drop the class and pick up something that was more along the lines in her interests (theatre) was rejected by the registrar, and now no one else could do anything to put my recommendation into effect. In the mid-quarter comment I wrote, said as much, but the academic dean who proofread the comments said that I had to rewrite it because I'm not supposed to make such recommendations in a comment; I'm supposed to say things which will help the student. (Yes, I saw the contradiction; the academic dean who proofread the comment apparently didn't.)

So, Robyn and I worked together to catch her up, but we had two problems. 1) She was student-directing a play which had rehearsals after school and in the evening, and the play was two weeks before Spring Break. 2) We had no common free periods until after Spring Break because of the Genres class. Both Robyn and I were upset about this, as was her advisor, but Robyn was used to dealing with this sort of adversity and was resigned to working with me when she could to catch up. I told her that if she does indeed put forth the effort, she wouldn't fail the class. Robyn was a survivor in the best sense. And I admired her greatly for that.

Robyn and I had a couple of study sessions and she took the first test for the quarter. She got an A on it!! We then started on the more difficult stuff, and just after Spring Break she took that test, and got a low B-. Then she was at the point where those who left on the Wilderness Expedition were, and all of them worked together to catch up on the material. Robyn did not feel so far behind then.

On Tuesday, March 12, we saw the next play in the season at Meadowbrook: Barefoot in the Park. Shirleyann Kaladjian was wonderful as Corie, the female lead, and Alexander Webb was pretty good as Paul, the male lead. (I remember seeing the film with Jane Fonda and Robert Redford, which colored my judgement of this performance--Shirleyann compared favorably, while Alex not so well.) Both had worked together in the previous production of What I Did Last Summer. It was a funny, Neil Simon comedy about two lovers, recently married, trying to adapt to, and live with, each other.

The faculty had a meeting prior to Spring Break, with Lillian telling us what the status of the schools was going to be. It was a strange meeting, wherein Lillian gave us an incoherent summary of the Community's past, then said that we should forget about the past and look forward. She announced that all who were supposed to be hired for next year would receive contracts by April 15, with a 4% raise. If we did not meet enrollment projections in the fall, we would go through what we did this past fall, that is, cut back on faculty and services for the following (1992/93) school year.

I was puzzled by this whole thing. Several of us found out later that Lillian had had a meeting with the Boards of Governors and Trustees an hour before she met with the faculty, and apparently things were said that made her change what she originally wanted to tell us, which was why things were so incoherent.

On Friday, March 15 (the Ides of March), a group from EDS (Maia's work group) had a Mystery Party. Everyone who was there participated in a murder mystery, and it was up to the people there to figure out who did the murder. Each person was given a part to play. It was a lot of fun, and I had the role of the actual murderer. The people who put the party together decided that I could probably keep my lies straight (I was the only one who could lie; everyone else had to be truthful). I must have been somewhat successful because only 4 out of 15 people picked me as the murderer. We had a good time, and after it was over, sang Tom Lehrer songs.

For most of Spring Break, I was embroiled in working on the the special issues of Lan's Lantern, and #39, almost to the exclusion of everything else. I did, however, take a break for MILLENNICON and MINICON.

MILLENNICON

Maia and I got a late start since she had to work late, and we arrived at the convention after the wedding of Richard and Elaine had taken place. But we got the details from Mary Frost-Pierson and others as the evening wound to a close. I spent a lot of time talking with Tom Sadler and his daughter Jennifer. I even gave Jennifer some help with her trigonometry.

I was on several panels, one of which was a follow-up from last year's convention: Education for a Space-faring Society. The moderator was Fan GoH Joe Patrouch (see his story on page 55), and other panelists included Joe Ellis, Phyllis Breuer (wife of Science GoH Bill Breuer--see his article on page 48) and myself. One of the themes we all picked up on was that of cooperation being essential for survival. I pushed the idea of being careful and fastidious. Outer space is not very forgiving of mis-

takes; forget to fasten one seal on your spacesuit, and your life hangs in the balance.

On Sunday, just before we left, Maia, Tom Sadler, Juanita Coulson, and GoH C. J. Cherryh were on a panel about future society. We all agreed that the idea of a cooperative family, like the neighborhoods we experienced while growing up, would be the best, particularly on a colony ship, or a colony. One person is not good at teaching all age levels of kids. Maia loves the babies, Januifa the ages from two till about 7, Tom from 8 till 12, I like the high school level or higher, and CJ 16 and older. We had our child-care colony set up right there! The idea was that parents could not do it all. In the olden days before things got too hectic and expensive for the ideal family (dad worked, mom stayed at home with the kids), neighborhoods worked in this way--some mothers took on several kids at a time which left the others free to do shopping, etc. The job rotated and everyone looked out for all the other kids. Raising children was a community effort, as was the education of them. In the evening and on weekends the dads got into it and helped (mostly) the boys with mechanics, yard-work, and sports. The discussion went well past the time limit, and another group was coming in, but we were all left with thinking about setting up an organized colony with an educational system set up along these lines.

The Dealers' Room was well-stocked. Since I was working on the Special issues of LL, I spent time looking for books on A.E. Van Vogt and Fritz Leiber (I had everything done for the Sturgeon issue at that point), and found a couple of things. I also picked up a serial--The Phantom--from Bob Hillis and Liz Gross; they had several other serials on sale, but I couldn't afford to get them at that time. Renee Alper had copies of her new (first!) tape--Four on the Floor--which Maia bought (see review in the review section). Mary the Mystery Lady also had a couple of things (Avengers-related) which I picked up. In fact, since the Arts & Entertainment channel on cable-TV has been running the old Avenger shows--the ones with Honor Blackman--Tom Sadler asked if there was some guide to the shows. I dragged him over to Mary's table and pointed out several alternative selections (Dave Rogers' books, John Peel's series, and Epi-Log) from which he could choose.

I had conversations with lots of people, like Larry Smith, Bill Cavin, Ann Cecil, Buck Coulson, Joe and Terry Ellis (and their new child, who wasn't up to conversing much), Rebecca Meluch, Elaine Richards (formerly Roberts), Joe Patrouch, Sandy Taylor, and many others.

The ride home was uneventful, and I got back to work on the Lantern some more, and get ready for MINICON.

I left on Wednesday (March 27) morning and drove through to St. Paul where I had a wonderful time staying with Lynn Margosian. She had offered me crash space so I didn't have to spend money on a hotel room. Mafa did not want to make the 11-13 hour trip, and flying would have been too expensive, so she stayed home.

The trip to the Twin Cities was an adventure in itself. I drove the Alliance, which had over a hundred thousand miles on it, and it made the trip all right, except for the rain. It doesn't like wet weather. What would happen is that the distributor cap would get wet and the car would misfire, thus slowing down. This caused other cars to pass me, cutting in front and sending a spray of water into the front grill, which would make the distributor cap wetter--a vicious cycle. All I had to do was pull off to the side for a couple of minutes until the heat of the engine dried out the cap, and then continue. This worked well until I stopped one time and the engine died; it took me several minutes to get it started again, and I decided not to stop until I parked in front of Lynn's apartment.

Then it started to snow, 73 miles east of the Minnesota border, which stopped about the time I passed out of Wisconsin. Then the sun broke through the clouds, and right into my eyes. It was near sunset, and I had trouble reading the signs and where I was to get off I-94 to get to Lynn's. I made it eventually, only about 15 minutes after my proposed ETA. I called Mafa to let her know I arrived safely.

I didn't mention the tornadoes, mostly because they missed me. As I was driving through a portion of Wisconsin around Madison, I saw the "egg-carton effect," a cloud formation that looks like the bottom of an egg carton, and knew that this portended tornadoes. Fortunately I was heading away from it, and into some sunlight, so I just kept driving. While I watched the news at Lynn's, I saw that a couple of tornadoes had touched down where I had been. I later found out how the winds I had been driving against had cut across lower Michigan and cause considerable damage to property.

The next morning Lynn went to work, and I found an auto parts store that carried parts for the Alliance. Since the car was driving without trouble, I did not replace the distributor or rotor, but I had them in case something happened. I called Nate Bucklin to talk to him, and get directions to Uncle Hugo's Bookstore, bought a map of the Minneapolis-St. Paul area so I could keep my directions straight, and drove out to the store.

Scott Imes was on duty, and we had a long, broken (because of customers in the store) conversation about books and what each has been doing for the



past few years. He would be at the convention, hopefully in time to catch my first panel on Friday, "Good Books You Might Have Missed." The panel was organized by Mike Levy, who had called me earlier to make sure that I would be ready, and asked that I bring copies of the books I would recommend reading. The whole idea was to suggest books that may have gotten lost in the shuffle of the superstars in the past couple of years. Scott did make it to the panel about half-way through.

That evening was the pre-con party, and I went to talk with people, some of whom I had not seen in a couple of years. When pre-registration opened up, I went to pick up my badge, and they didn't have one for me. The person in charge of registration and I talked, and he called Eric Heideman to clear up the problem. Eric asked if the letter had stated I was to have membership reimbursement, and it didn't.

"I thought that was part of the deal; I'm on six panels," I said. I thought about having to spend \$50 for registration, which would not have left much for food, though I could probably have gotten by. And I also thought about not doing the panels if I had to pay registration. Maybe I have been somewhat spoiled by the other parts of the Midwest where reimbursement for working on panels is free attendance to the convention, but being on six panels is more than most people do at a Worldcon, let alone a regional.

Fortunately, Eric took it upon himself to authorize my registration. Part of the problem was

that (Eric said) the concom was parsimonious with its freebies for registration; Eric would like to have given all his program participants free passes to the convention. He had to limit those to professionals. Since I was an educator, I fell into that category.

The list of people I talked to would be a roster of Minneapolis fandom. Of the others, I would include Sue Francis, Mike Mallis, Chris Drumm (from whom I ordered a copy of The Leiber Chronicles), Fred Robinson, John Lussmeier, Guy Wicker, Lee Pelton, Giovanna Fregni, David Cherry, Sherry Portigal, Karen Wehrstein, Mickey Zucker Reichert, and many others. I spent a good portion of time with Hal Hintze, a fan I met at this con who is the editor of a semi-professional magazine that he just started, called Atopos. Of the few stories I've read so far, it's excellent. (3 issues, \$14.00; from ATOPOS, 233 Lutz Acre Road, Wausau, WI 54401.)

I also spent some time with Lynn, though not at the convention. She was busy with other things, particularly with church functions; she sings in the choir, and this was Easter weekend. But we had some good talks in her apartment.

My first panel on Saturday morning was: "Has Burbank Taken Over?", about how references to SF works now seem to be in terms of films, rather than books. I related the experiences I had teaching the Genres class, having to refer to films as examples of stories, rather than books themselves. This was at 10 AM, and people were actually awake for this. One question from the audience was very thought-provoking. Could one compare the translation of books to film to the transition of oral to written traditions? I heard the jaws of my fellow panelists drop on the table. I fielded the question, pointing out that there were both good and bad things that happened in both cases. The bad thing about the written tradition was that the embellishments and personal interpretations of the bards were lost; the good thing was that people weren't dependent on the bards to tell the story--they could read it for themselves. Another minus was the loss of memory power, but knowing where it was written down meant that it was an "accurate" description of the events.

In the books versus film argument, the plus is that a person can see the effects, that the story (usually) becomes the main focus and the superfluous material is cut out. The minus is that the story is all you get in the film, and the additional background material is cut out. There are things that film does better than books: Scenes can be taken in at a glance, whereas books would take pages to describe it all. Action can be summarized in a few words, whereas the same thing could take minutes of film. As a small example, take the phrase, "The dog jumped out of the window and ran down the beach." It takes a couple of seconds to read it. In

film time, it would take a lot longer.

In the panel, "Other Conventions, Myths and Legends", fan GoHs Jerry Kaufman and Suzle Tompkins, along with Bob Tucker and Jon Singer and myself, talked about cons in other parts of the US, and some of the stories that are related to them. I spent a fascinating half-hour talking with Karen Wehrstein before our panel on "How to Write SF: Rhetorical Snake Oil Manuals." The panel itself wasn't too bad, and we concluded that most of the "how to write SF" books say pretty much the same thing.

My last panel for Saturday happened at Midnight, and it was mostly a self-indulgent one for its moderator Tom Winterstein. He wanted to find out about books which approach "literary" merit, so I talked about those I recommend to "that" crowd of friends. He seemed to have missed a major point that a lot of books are meant to be entertaining, not analyzed.

The Sunday panel was "Alienation in Fandom", which Maia had been asked to moderate, which I took over since she was not there. And Lisa Freitag, who was the organizer of the panel, was on duty that day in the hospital, so she wasn't there either. But among Jerry Kaufman, Jon Singer and myself we managed to talk a lot about how fans are different, what some of those differences are, why we choose to associate with fans rather than non-fans, and so on. There was active audience participation, which made it a fun panel.

Lynn's brother Dave was also at the con, and staying with her. He is a nice guy who is talented in comedy. I watched a video tape of his lip-sync routines for which he has received awards. This year for the costume contest at MINICON he came as Marvin the Martian (Warner Bros cartoons), and won two awards. The two of us had a great time passing cartoon dialog between us, much to Lynn's amusement.

My basic "planning ahead" paid off on Saturday night. It had rained/sleeted while I was finishing my last panel. Dave waited around for me to drive us back to Lynn's apartment. When we got out to the car, it wouldn't start. It turned over, but nothing would catch. I didn't have a flashlight, but I knew the engine well enough so I could work by feel. I replaced the rotor and distributor cap, and the car started immediately.

Sunday, after my last panel, I turned the apartment keys back to Lynn, thanked her for her hospitality, and bid her and Dave a fond farewell. I wish I could have stayed longer, but I had a long drive, and needed some sleep before the meetings at school on Monday morning. In spite of all the problems, I had a good time. I just wish I could have talked more with Lynn. But there was INCONJUNCTION in July (and Dave would be sharing the room with us too). So I had that to look forward to. !

fannish news

New Fans Appear on the Scene

Janice M. Eisen and Ken Meltsner were delighted to announce the birth of their son, William Gregory Meltsner, on February 15, 1991.

On March 3, 1991, David Steven was born, and by March 21, made his way across state lines to the home of his new parents, Chris Clayton and Becky Price, in Whitmore Lake, Michigan. Adoption proceedings are nearing finality.

Kira Marie Christiansen was born on April 25, 1991 (just five dates after her mother's birthdate) to Annette and Gary. She showed up on Saturday, May 4th, at CONTRAPTION in the arms of her parents, stoutly protected by her brother Danny. She has appeared at numerous fan activities, including the many Bar Meetings of Waldo & Magic, Inc. Although slightly prejudiced, her father Gary asserts that Kira grows cuter daily.

Raisa Alisanne Harper was born to proud parents Mike Harper and Salma on May 14, 1991. She was the darling hit of the annual MIKECON held in Toronto over the American Memorial Day Weekend (the last weekend in May). No one was sure if the sun shone that weekend, due to the lustre of pride beaming from the faces of Raisa's parents.

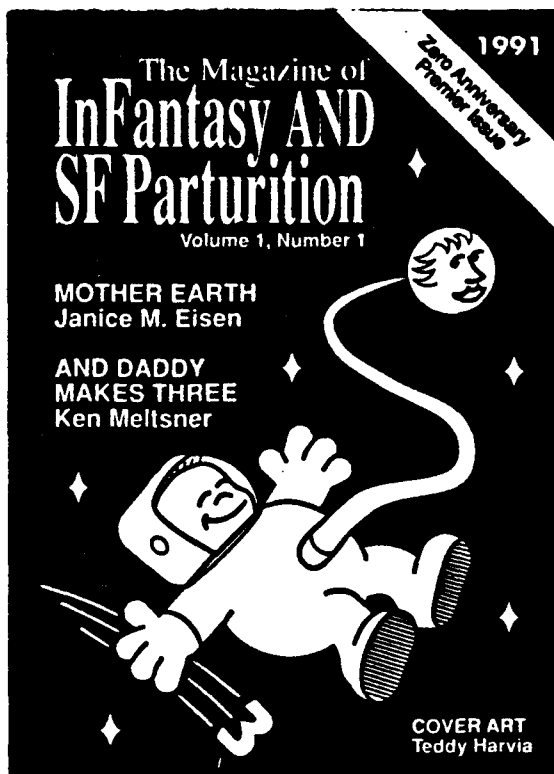
TAFF VOTING

Pam Wells won the 1991 Trans-Atlantic Fan Fund. She will be at the Chicago Worldcon over Labor Day Weekend (August 29-September 2). Beyond that, her plans are very flexible, but she plans "to be in the U.S. much of September."

The Forthcoming 1992 TAFF election will select a North American fan to travel to the 43rd British National Science Fiction convention (EASTERCON) next April at the Norbreck Castle in Blackpool on the west coast of Northern England. Here is the schedule for that race:

Nominations open:	June 15, 1991
Nominations close:	August 15, 1991
Ballots available:	September 6, 1991
Voting deadline:	December 31, 1991
Eastercon:	April 17-20, 1992

To be eligible, a prospective candidate must obtain five nominators (three from North America, two



from Europe/U.K.), provide a platform for the ballot of not more than 100 words (which need not be self-authored), furnish a \$20 bond, agree to take the trip if elected (barring acts of Ghod), and--finally but importantly--administer the North American half of the fund through two elections until a successor is selected.

Nominations may be sent to either administrator, but bonds and platforms should be sent to the North American one only: Robert Lichtman, PO Box 30, Glen Ellen CA 95442 USA.

Information from TAFF DOOR #3
Robert Lichtman editor.

Writers of the Future Award

(Hollywood, March 25, 1991) Michael Paul Meltzer, of Livermore, California, won first place in the current quarter of L. Ron Hubbard's Writers of the Future Contest. His prize was \$1,000, and his story will be eligible for the annual Grand Prize of \$4,000.

Other winners include: Larry Ferrill from Westport, Indiana (second place, \$750.00), C. Marfa Plieger of Prince George, British Columbia, Canada (third place, \$500.00). All three also win a trip to the Hubbard Awards event next spring.

Those wishing to enter the Contest can obtain a set of rules by sending a self-addressed, stamped envelop to: L. Ron Hubbard's Writers of the Future Contest, PO Box 1630, Los Angeles, CA 90078.

**Mark and Sharon Wed
Another Engagement Happens at Celebration**

On a bright, sunny day on Saturday, June 8, Mark Bernstein and Sharon Brevoort exchanged vows and became the most important person in each others' lives (not that they weren't before). Another important person was part of the ceremony, Mark's son Allen, who made the family complete. A concert by Our Lady's Madrigals (of which Sharon is a singer) followed the ceremony, after which general merriment and eating and drinking ensued.

After the cake had been cut, most of the food gone, and people settling down for siesta, Sharon had the traditional "throwing of the bouquet" activity, which was snared by Gwen Zak. Her significant other, Michael P. Kube-McDowell, overcome by the emotion of the moment, and not wanting to let a fortuitous chance slip by, proposed on the spot. Gwen accepted, much to the delight of her friends--and Michael. Plans for the wedding have yet to be determined.

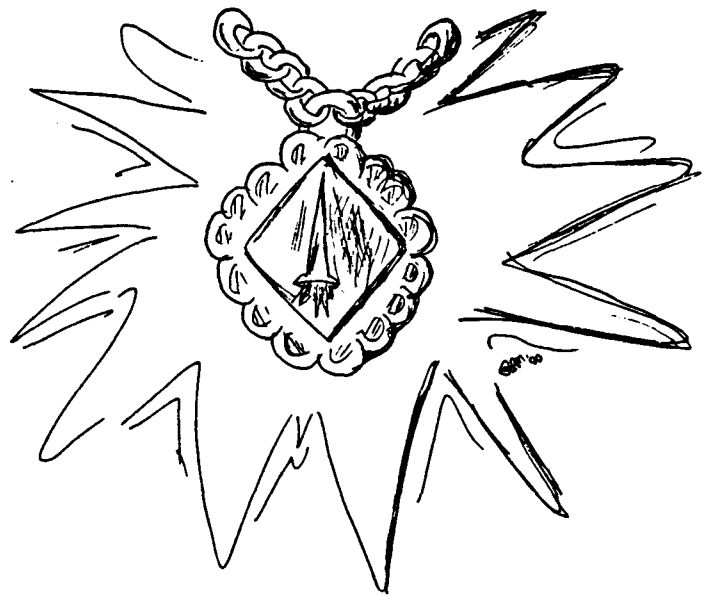
Three Michigan People on Hugo Ballot

Soon after the Hugo nominations closed, those who secured places on the final ballot were informed via phone and letter. Lan's Lantern, and editor George "Lan" Laskowski, received their sixth nomination for this prestigious award in the Best Fanzine category. They won once before in 1986 at

CONFEDERATION, the Atlanta Worldcon, the first time they were nominated.

One new name from Michigan appeared this time. Michael P. Kube-McDowell in the Best Novel category with his book, The Quiet Pools. Michael's other novels have received critical acclaim from critics and reviewers. His reviews, and occasional Guest of Honor speeches from conventions, have appeared in Lan's Lantern.

Diana Harlan Stein appears for the first time in the Best Fan Artist category. Her work has appeared in many different sorts of fannish publication, including Elfquest related material, and many times in Lan's Lantern. Author Mike Resnick picks her as the artist to illustrate his travelogues. See examples this issue (pages 36-44).



Norbert W. Cowan, father of Midwest fan Maia Cowan and father-in-law of fanzine editor George Laskowski, died February 9, 1991, after a long illness. He was 66 years old.

Mr. Cowan's life was a model of triumph over adversity. He was orphaned while a small boy. His younger brother died as a young adult, and he lost his older brother less than six months before his own death. He raised four daughters almost single-handedly after the death of his first wife in 1960. Although his formal education ended with a high-school diploma earned in night school, he worked as an engineer for Rockwell International in Columbus, Ohio, until diagnosed with emphysema.

Generous and outgoing, Mr. Cowan was involved in church and community activities until his illness confined him to his home. He was notorious for his sense of humor and dislike of pretension: he successfully denied for more than 20 years that it was he who ran red lace underwear up a neighbor's flagpole; only after his death did his co-conspirator reveal that he was indeed the culprit.

Mr. Cowan is survived by four daughters, three sons-in-law, his wife, her son and nephew, eight grandchildren, and numerous "adopted" children and grandchildren.

Pulp & Celluloid

Book, film, tape, graphic novel, comic, theatre and record reviews by: Dennis K. Fischer, Ann Green, Steve Green, Lan, Evelyn C. Leeper, Mark R. Leeper, Maia, Maureen S. O'Brien, Robert Sabella, David M. Shea, Dale L. Skran, Sally A. Syrjala, Laura Todd, and Taras Wolansky.

BOOKS, GRAPHIC NOVELS, COMICS

- Allingham, Margery.....The Mind Readers [MO'B] 157
 Anderson, Kevin J. & Doug Beason..Lifeline [DLS] 126
 Asimov, Isaac & Robert Silverberg.....Nightfall
 [Lan] 148
 Barton, William & Michael Capobianco.....Iris
 [DLS] 125
 Bishop, Michael.....No Enemy But Time [ECL] 141
 Bishop, Michael.....The Secret Ascension [ECL] 135
 Bisson, Terry.....Voyage to the Red Planet [Lan] 148
 Bova, Ben.....Orion in the Dying Time [Lan] 146
 Bova, Ben.....Voyagers III: Starbrothers [Lan] 146
 Bujold, Lois McMaster..Borders of Infinity [DMS] 144
 Bujold, Lois McMaster.....Barrayar [Maia] 158
 Cadnum, Michael.....Nightlight [Lan] 146
 Capobianco, Michael.....Burster [DLS] 125
 Crispin, A.C. and Kathleen O'Malley.....Silent
Dances: StarBridge, Book 2 [MO'B] 156
 Disch, Thomas M. & John Sladek.....Black Alice
 [ECL] 141
 Eklund, Gordon.....A Thunder on Neptune [Lan] 152
 Feeley, Gregory.....The Oxygen Barons [ECL] 135
 Flynn, Michael.....In the Country of the Blind
 [DLS] 127
 Fowler, Christopher.....Roofworld [MO'B] 157
 Kandel, Michael.....In Between Dragons [ECL] 136
 Koja, Kathe.....The Cipher [Lan] 150
 Koontz, Dean.....Cold Fire [AG] 158
 McAllister, Angus...The Canongate Strangler [SG] 157
 McCaffrey, Anne & Elizabeth Moon..Sassinak [DMS] 144
 Meluch, R. M.....Chicago Red [DLS] 126
 Moon, Elizabeth.....Surrender None [DLS] 127
 Morris, Mark.....Toady [AG] 158
 Morrow, James...Author's Choice Monthly #8 [ECL] 136
 Park, Paul.....The Sugar Festival [RS] 154
 Pohl, Frederik.....Homegoing [Lan] 148
 Pournelle, Jerry.....Death's Head Rebellion: War
World Volume II [DLS] 127
 Reeves-Stevens, Garfield.....Dark Matter [Lan] 149
 Resnick, Mike.....Bully [Lan] 145
 Resnick, Mike.....Bwana [Lan] 145
 Resnick, Mike.....Oracle [Lan] 151
 Resnick, Mike.....Soothsayer [Lan] 151
 Resnick, Mike...Stalking the Wild Resnick [Lan] 152
 Rucker, Rudy.....The Hollow Earth [TW] 155
 Schenck, Hilbert.....Steam Bird [ECL] 138
 Sherman, Josepha.....The Shining Falcon [DMS] 143
 Silverberg, Robert.....Time Gate [DMS] 143
 Simmons, Dan.....Carrión Comfort [DLS] 126
 Snodgrass, Melinda.....Circuit Breaker [Lan] 152
 Snodgrass, Melinda.....The Tears of the Singers
 [Lan] 153
 Stith, John E.....Redshift Rendezvous [ECL] 142
 Sullivan, Tom.....Born Burning [Lan] 145
 Tilley, Patrick.....Cloud Warrior [DMS] 143
 Waldrop, Howard.....Strange Things in Close Up
 [ECL] 136
 Williamson, Jack.....Mazeway [Lan] 147
 Wilson, Robert Charles.....Gypsies [ECL] 140
 Wilson, Robert Charles.....A Hidden Place [ECL] 138
 Wilson, Robert Charles.....Memory Wire [ECL] 140
 Womack, Jack.....Terraplane [ECL] 141



RECORDS, TAPES and SONGBOOKS

Alper, Renee (Arwen).....	<u>Four on the Floor</u>	[Lan]	150
Clement, Dave.....	<u>Music after Midnight</u>	[Lan]	153
Grubbs, Pete.....	<u>Face the Flame</u>	[Lan]	150
Pardue, Naomi...	<u>For All My Closest Friends</u>	[Lan]	154
Robinson, Dr Jane...	<u>Dr Jane's Fossil Fever</u>	[Lan]	153
<u>Rocky Horror Picture Show, The</u>		[DKF]	133
Smith, Tom.....	<u>Who Let Him in Here?</u>	[Lan]	149
<u>Spellbound</u>		[DKF]	134
<u>They Live</u>		[DKF]	134

FILMS, VIDEOS and THEATRE

<u>Arachnophobia</u>	[MRL]	132
<u>Awakenings</u>	[MRL]	128
<u>Dances with Wolves</u>	[MRL]	130
<u>Darkman</u>	[MRL]	130
<u>Ghost</u>	[MRL]	128
<u>Jacob's Ladder</u>	[MRL]	129
<u>Red Dwarf</u>	[DMS]	144
<u>Witches, The</u>	[MRL]	131

Book Reviews by Dale L Skran

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IRIS

by William Barton and Michael Capobianco
Bantam Spectra, 1991, \$4.95

This book caught my eye with its striking cover and a blurb from Science Fiction Eye describing it as "a virtually perfect blend of diamondhard scientific extrapolation and stylistically brilliant narrative." Having been bumped around for my glowing review of Neverness (LL #32, p. 98), I shall be more restrained. However, Iris is a very significant SF novel--a bold attempt to write about real people at the nether edge of the future that can be reasonably written about--the year 2097. Unlike in some novels (Queen of Angels), the technology for once seems to match the year--very significantly advanced over what we have, but not so far as to be completely magical--and consistent throughout. Iris is definitely "post-Gibsonian" SF--it fully includes the possibilities of cyberspace, but this is only a part of its technosphere.

A wealthy performing artist gathers a small crew and flies toward Neptune with the intention of founding an independent colony. I leave to your imagination the sort of technology that is both believable and capable of supporting this enterprise--but the authors make the expedition quite plausible. On the way they discover an interesting object--"Iris"--which eventually turns out to conceal an ancient secret. This rather shopworn plot is not the main point, however. The story deals relentlessly with the efforts of the colonists to find meaning in their lives. The prudes are warned that there are definitely sex scenes here, even *gasp* gay sex (10% of the crew is gay--one man--closely fitting the Kinsey survey), but inner space--and

outer space--provide the real adventure.

Unfortunately, Iris is unlikely to find the wide audience that Earth and Queen of Angels will. In some ways it is a bit rough compared to these two certain Hugo contenders, but it is a worthy effort. Recommended.

BURSTER

by Michael Capobianco
Bantam/Spectra, 1990, \$4.95

This book first came out in 1990, but I missed it. I actually read Iris first and was impressed enough to seek out Capobianco's earlier work. Burster is certainly a solid first novel, smoothly handled, with many interesting ideas and characters--not a Hugo class novel, but an excellent first effort.

Peter Zolotín is an isolated teenager on a world ship sent forth by a future Asian society steeped in "Scientific Capitalism"--obviously derived from a Japan-dominated society. Apparently the "West" has turned inward and used cybernetics in vaguely described but forbidden ways to create an increasingly inhuman (to the Asians) society. The world ship is an attempt to unite the "Eastern" nations in a meaningful project. A few scientific bases exist on Mars, but humanity is falling slowly into decadence.

Just as the ship arrives at Epsilon Indi, contact with Earth is cut off and a tremendous burst of radiation is observed coming from that sector of space. Peter Zolotín is selected to enter "stasis" and return to Earth in an effort to find out what has happened. There is a lot to the plot--scientists revolt, details of the world ship social

structure, artificial intelligences, unusual alien worlds, and more--enough to keep the pages turning. My major complaint is that the technology is a little too advanced--the stasis field especially provides an easy way out of many situations. Directed Virtuality is just another mumbo-jumbo space drive. Still, an excellent first effort.

Recommended.

LIFELINE

by Kevin J. Anderson and Doug Beason
Bantam/Spectra, 1990, \$4.95

I've just realized that these first three books I'm reviewing are "Bantam Spectra" editions. I'm certainly going to look a lot more closely at this line in the future. Lifeline is definitely the least of the three volumes. It takes place in a less than plausible near future where computers and biotech are only somewhat more advanced than we have today, but where *three* space colonies occupy cis-lunar space. Kibalchich is Soviet (a Stanford Torus), Orbitech I is American (a double Torus), and the Philippine Auginaldo is an O'Neil Sunflower. Via fairly unlikely circumstances the Philippines have purchased the Sunflower as cut-rate and colonized it. Overall, I found the background unconvincing.

A nuclear war breaks out, and *surprise*--the colonists must learn to overcome their differences and work together to survive. I forgot to mention it, but there is also a mining colony on the moon. The interesting aspect of this scenario (and it is more a scenario than a novel) is that it illustrates quite well the difficulty of surviving an Earth-destroying accident in the early stages of the colonization of space. Only interstellar dispersion is likely to really up the odds of our long-term survival. Some novel ideas of low-cost intercolony travel are presented, but the characters are flat and the plot only mildly interesting.

I'll be looking for future works from Anderson and Beason, but I hope they read Iris before they write another novel.

CHICAGO RED

by R.M. Meluch
ROC, 1990, \$4.95

One of my areas of greatest interest in SF is post-nuclear war fiction. Although all-out nuclear war seems to be drifting toward the event horizon (thank heavens!) with the coming of Glasnost, a couple of books are contributed to the sub-genre every year. Wiping out the whole world and starting over, albeit with a few selected pieces of the old,

is a great temptation to an author.

In Chicago Red Meluch creates a very "American" post-war tale, at once readable without being striking in any way. A plausible yet suitably convoluted tale of revolution is told without interference from bogus mutants or other fixtures of bad post-nuclear fiction. Other than a more or less seamless intermixing of gay and straight relationships the plot had the feel of Star Wars with a "gutsy woman," a bad guy who isn't all bad, a priest with a secret, a brave prince, etc.

Recommended, I guess.

CARRION COMFORT

by Dan Simmons
Warner, 1990 (1989c), \$5.95

After Hyperion was nominated for the Hugo, I read it and the other nominees. It didn't take all that long to decide to vote Hyperion #1. At the convention, I heard a panel where it was said that Simmons wrote three (3!) Hugo-class novels in 1989: Hyperion, Phases of Gravity, and Carrion Comfort. Thus I was looking forward to Carrion Comfort quite a bit. Thus was fortunate indeed, since at 884 pages, Carrion Comfort takes a lot of impetus to get through. It is well written, and the plot is engaging. There is only one problem: at 884 pages Carrion



on Comfort is simply too long and too much to too little effect.

Mainly, Carrion Comfort traces the efforts of Saul, a Jewish concentration camp survivor, to find Herr Oberst, a Nazi with a difference--the power to control humans to their deaths and derive psychic satisfaction from the process. Eventually the trail leads to other "Vampires" and other victims. Ultimately, Saul leads a small band in a suicide assault on "The Island," a place where the Vampires gather annually to stage "The Most Dangerous Game" using human pawns.

Carrion Comfort has considerable narrative strength (otherwise I would never have gotten to page 700, or even page 500!), but as a shorter, more concise novel it would have been a rip-roaring blockbuster. In its current bloated form it wears the eyes. This is not to say that there are long dull passages, just that not enough really happens to justify the length of the novel. Also, did I mention that Carrion Comfort seems written for the screen? Carrion Comfort is similar in many ways to Brian Lumley's "Necroscope" series, although at once better written and less interesting.

Recommended to those who like this sort of thing. Not Hugo material.

SURRENDER NONE:
THE LEGACY OF THE GIRL

by Elizabeth Moon
Baen, 1990, \$4.50

Elizabeth Moon is best known for the "Deed of Paksenarrion" trilogy, a sword-and-sorcery epic concerning a sheepfarmer's daughter who becomes first a mercenary and then a paladin. The series features more realistic combat than most and is certainly readable. Surrender None is a prequel to the trilogy that tells the tale of how "Gird," a god-like figure in the trilogy, came into his reputation.

Once again there is extensive focus on realistic combat and especially on training for combat and the logistics of combat. Magic actually plays a very minor role in the story. Overall, readable and even enjoyable, but not a great work.

DEATH'S HEAD REBELLION:
WAR WORLD Volume II

created by Jerry Pournelle
edited by John F. Carr and Roland Green
Baen, 1990, \$4.95

This "mosaic" story continues the threads of the John Christian Falkenberg universe into a new period. The "Saurons" have come--genetically engineered to be perfect soldiers--they attempt to conquer and fail in an all-destroying battle. Though the Empire of Man destroys the Sauron homeworld, one ship survives and finds its way to Haven, an isolated colony world where they seek to establish themselves anew. The catch is that Haven is a lot like Harrison's Pyrrus--not a place you really want to live--and the humans who already live there plan on having something to say about the future of the Saurons.

With authors like Larry Niven and Harry Turtledove it is hard to go too far wrong. Unfortunately, the Saurons are portrayed as being too much like a combination of Nazis and Spartans to be believable. There are many unanswered questions in this universe--why is genetic engineering only used to produce super-soldiers? Why is technology so little advanced beyond our own in 2673? The best story is "Brenda" (by Niven). It concerns a Sauron woman who crashes on an Earth colony (not Haven) and ultimately passes herself off as human.

Overall, this series is interesting reading, but no more fundamentally believable than Buck Rogers.

IN THE COUNTRY OF THE BLIND

by Michael Flynn
Baen, 1990, \$3.95

This is the first book I've read by Flynn, and I admit to being sucked in by the intriguing jacket blurb, which reads: "What if there really were a secret conspiracy running things behind the scenes ...and they were incompetent?" The story begins with a young reporter finding a warehouse full of old but workable Babbage mechanical computers sometime in the late 1990s. It takes a bit, but eventually she realizes that not only is the history we have been taught an incredible shell obscuring a terrible reality, but that there is *more than one* group seeking to manipulate history for their own ends. Unfortunately, the technology they are using is less than perfect. However, in the land of the blind the one-eyed man is King ... unless someone kills the King.

Although certainly readable, Flynn is not a brilliant stylist, and the book reads like many a best-selling thriller, albeit with a more interesting premise. This volume contains many interesting historical speculations, although the characterization is a bit on the weak side. I look forward to hearing more from Flynn in the future. !

Film Reviews by Mark R. Leeper

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GHOST

CAPSULE REVIEW: Patrick Swayze as a yuppie sort of ghost trying to save the life of his girlfriend (Demi Moore) with the help of a not-so-fake medium (Whoopi Goldberg). This is a slick film with a few nice moments, but not a great ghost story. Rating: +1.

Things were going really well for Sam Wheat (played by Patrick Swayze). He had a great new yuppie apartment reclaimed from a really ugly building. He had a live-in roommate who would have looked like Demi Moore if she would only have let her hair grow a little. She is Molly Jensen (played by Demi Moore). He had a high-paying job as some sort of funds executive at a major bank. His only problem was that he had a stupid name like "Sam Wheat." Then it all sours when he is killed by a hood on the street and has to get used to being dead. You know, it is not all pranks and chains being a ghost. First of all, there are very few people who can hear ghosts and who want to admit they can hear ghosts. Then you have a really hard time interacting with matter. Generally you go right through matter: walls, tables, doors, subway trains ... it makes no difference. Floors seem to stop you, but hey, who wants to invest in a film about a dead bank executive falling to the center of the Earth, right? Anyway, there is more to Wheat's killing than meets the eye and his ghost wants to find out what it is. His first big break is finding a kooky spiritualist medium who thinks she is a fake until she starts hearing the voice of one real ghost. Oda Mae Brown (played by Whoopi Goldberg) wants nothing to do with Sam and her newly found powers.

Bruce Joel Rubin's script in the hands of Jerry Zucker (who co-wrote Kentucky Fried Movie and co-directed Airplane! and The Naked Gun) has some nice shifts in mood. These shifts from somber to funny have been criticized by some critics, but given the subject matter are not unbelievable until the last five minutes or so. The ending is saccharine, not unexpectedly, but up to that point the film's tone follows Wheat's emotions at being dead and, let's face it, finding yourself dead is one of life's more difficult moments. Zucker did not have many somber moments in his previous films but he handles them well. There is also a nice erotic scene with some clay sculpture. There is another love scene that might have broken new ground for a major re-

lease film had Zucker not copped out (much to the indignation of the audience). There is also a rather unexpected and nice scene involving a grungy subway rider.

Ghost is not really very good as a ghost story. There is maybe one decent chilling scene in the film. Next to Lady in White or The Uninvited it pales considerably. But it is reasonable as a slick Hollywood production with (of course) effects by Industrial Light and Magic. I rate it a +1.

AWAKENINGS

CAPSULE REVIEW: What is it like to wake up after having slept for decades? What is it like to discover the means to wake such people up? Robin Williams and Robert DeNiro star in one of the most intriguing films of the year. Rating: +2.

With the possible exception of The Godfather, Part III, the most avidly awaited film of the winter season is probably Penny Marshall's Awakenings. Robin Williams stars in the fictionalized telling of a modern medical miracle performed by neurologist Oliver Sacks. In the role of Dr. Sacks--whose name has been changed to Dr. Malcolm Sayer--is Robin Williams. Whatever Williams is doing to improve his acting, it is working very well; his acting noticeably improves with each succeeding film he makes. His Malcolm Sayer is a real departure. Rather than his usual self-assured characters, Sayer is painfully introverted but caught up in an idea that becomes a dream and then a reality.

The film begins with a prologue in 1932. Young Leonard Lowe is having occasional fits of shaking in his right arm. As time passes, the fits are getting worse and Leonard is becoming seriously fright-



PANTORICA

tened by them. Flash forward thirty-seven years to 1969. Malcolm Sayer, a researcher in neurology, has spent the last five years working with earthworms in a project that failed. Now he is looking for work and is hired to care for the incurably ill at a Bronx hospital, a job he finds unnerving until his curiosity is aroused by several patients who appear to be living vegetables, but who show odd signs of consciousness. The common belief is that there cannot be any mental activity but only because the alternative is too agonizing to contemplate. Sayer thinks that the symptoms he is seeing may be an extreme form of the same symptoms caused by an unrelated disease, Parkinson's disease. The drug L-DOPA alleviates Parkinson's symptoms and Sayer thinks it may work on these patients. The guess turns out to be correct and people who have been mental vegetables for three decades or more begin to wake up. The film then becomes the dual story of Dr. Sayer and the awakening patients, particularly Leonard Lowe (now played by Robert DeNiro).

Rarely does a film really bring home the value of being free to do what most of the world takes for granted. In Yentl it was the right to learn. Charly was a paean to the ability to think. Awakenings is about the ability to experience life at all, to see the world around us. DeNiro does a fine job playing the afflicted Lowe grasping for life when he can. Julie Kavner is also notable as a nurse with faith in Sayer. She is a fine character actress. Disappointingly, however, the film never explores the question it raised so fervently: How conscious are Sayer's patients? What was their consciousness like in the vegetable state? These questions are never satisfactorily answered.

Awakenings is not a great film. At times it is too pat. At 121 minutes, it is too short to do justice to the story of both the doctor and the patients. My rating then is +2 on the -4 to +4 scale.

JACOB'S LADDER

CAPSULE REVIEW: Eerie Gordian knot of a horror film requires a lot of thought, but finally pays off in the car on the way home from the theater. Give it a chance to sink in. Murky photography used to even better advantage than in Flatliners. (Do not read the spoiler at the end of this review if you have not seen the film.) Rating: +2.

Within the space of a few short months Bruce Joel Rubin has had two films he has written and released. Each deals with death. Ghost had a few heavy horror moments but they were counter-acted by a lot of lighter and more pleasant moments. "Pleasant," however, is not a term applicable to any single sequence in Jacob's Ladder. While it probably

has the more intelligent and demanding story, Jacob's Ladder is a Gordian knot of unpleasant concepts. It is a story of disturbing horror requiring some effort and detective work to come to any consistent interpretation and then open to multiple interpretations. This is one weird movie.

It is October 6, 1971, and a company of American soldiers in Vietnam is getting read to move into battle. Suddenly something is going very wrong. Some of the men are convulsing; others are running around fighting as if an enemy, whom we do not see, is right there on top of them. One of the soldiers, Jacob (played by Tim Robbins), is bayoneted in the stomach and left for dead. Flash forward several years and Jacob is a postman living in a surrealistically squalid New York City. Sights that the audience finds ugly or even terrifying seem commonplace in Jacob's everyday existence. But things are happening that are not commonplace for Jacob. Something is stalking Jacob, or perhaps someone who can call up faceless demons. And, as if that were not enough, the world seems to be deteriorating and people are mutating in some mysterious ways that only Jacob sees. Jacob is even a little unstuck in time as images from the past flood in on him as if they are the present.

This is an unpleasant and uncomfortable horror film to sit through, be warned. It improves a great deal on thinking about it afterward. Just as is true with many individual scenes of this film, so too when the entire film is over we are tantalizingly unsure of exactly what we have seen and how it is to be interpreted. Adrian Lyne, who directed Flashdance, Fatal Attraction, and 9½ Weeks, photographed this film in murky, muted colors, much as Flatliners was photographed, but his visual style picks out the squalid and the disturbing. Murky colors are an intelligent ploy to get around audience insistence on color photography but still have mood effects that one usually can get only with monochrome. I rated this film a low +1 leaving the theatre, but it improves greatly on reflection, and at this point I would rate it a +2.

Spoiler Alert

Heavy Spoiler Warning

ONLY FOR THOSE WHO HAVE SEEN THE FILM

As early as when Jacob is dropped off at the locked subway station, I started thinking this was a reworking of Ambrose Bierce's "Occurrence at Owl Creek Bridge." I left the theatre assuming that was correct. However, that would imply that the entire future is fictional. But Jacob's entire knowledge of The Ladder is from the future. Yet Jacob has already seen the convulsions that are explained only by The Ladder. If the convulsions are real, we must interpret The Ladder as real. If The Ladder is

real, then some of the future is really happening also. Suddenly the story is less like the Bierce and much more like Carnival of Souls, where the soul survives and assumes it is still alive and the living take it for a living soul. The faceless demons could even be a direct borrowing of the carnival dead in Carnival of Souls. Well, if you're going to borrow, borrow from the best.

DANCES WITH WOLVES

CAPSULE REVIEW: Epic portrait of Sioux tribal life as seen through the eyes of a Civil War officer. American Indians have rarely or never been portrayed so believably and sympathetically. Its biggest flaw is that the White Man does not seem as realistically portrayed. The film resembles White Dawn and Farewell to the King in plot and spirit. Rating: high +2.

I suspect that of all the films of 1989, the one that will be best remembered will be Glory. It may not be the best film of 1989, but it has a sort of timeless quality that will hold up for many years. This year (1990) I think we have an even better film which has that same timeless quality. There have been films in the past that have tried to give sympathetic views of the American Indian. It is not hard to be more sympathetic than films like Fort Apache. Little Big Man, unaccountably popular, attempted to be sympathetic but gave the impression that the writers knew nothing about American Indians. (I do not know if the novel was as bad or not.) Other films such as Cheyenne Autumn tried to speak of injustices done to the Indians, but they too never got into the minds of native Americans. Perhaps Dances with Wolves, based on the novel by Michael Blake, is no more authentic than is Little Big Man, but it certainly feels like the most authentic film ever made about American Indian culture.

Kevin Costner directs and stars as John Dunbar, who is to have his leg amputated due to wounds in a Civil War battle. Not having the courage to face his future, he attempts suicide and in doing so accidentally makes himself a hero. This not only wins him medical care sufficient to save his leg, he is also given his choice of posting. Wishing to see the Western frontier before it is overrun by the white man, he requests a posting to an isolated and deserted fort far out on the frontier. His thoughts about facing hostile animals and more hostile Sioux are overcome by his curiosity and his willingness to accept and appreciate that which is alien to him. The film picks up his enthusiasm to meet, understand, and befriend the very alien culture of the neighboring Sioux. He must first overcome their distrust. There the storyteller somewhat unrealis-

tically contrives circumstances in Dunbar's favor. This is a long film and each stage of his acceptance by the Sioux is shown and overly glossed over. In particular, language problems are quite believably difficult and eventually overcome by another contrivance. Eventually Dunbar is accepted into the Sioux society and Costner can show us how Sioux lived and thought.

If the film has a major weakness it is that it exaggerates the stupidity and strangeness (even if not the cruelty) of the hordes of invading white men. The positive view of the Sioux would be more believable if the view of the White Man had more credibility. There is a love story of Dunbar with a white woman who has been Sioux since she was captured as a child. This subtopic could have been a distraction from showing us the Sioux lifestyle, but if so it was only a minor one. Mary McDonnell, familiar from Matewan, plays Dunbar's lover interest, Stands with a Fist.

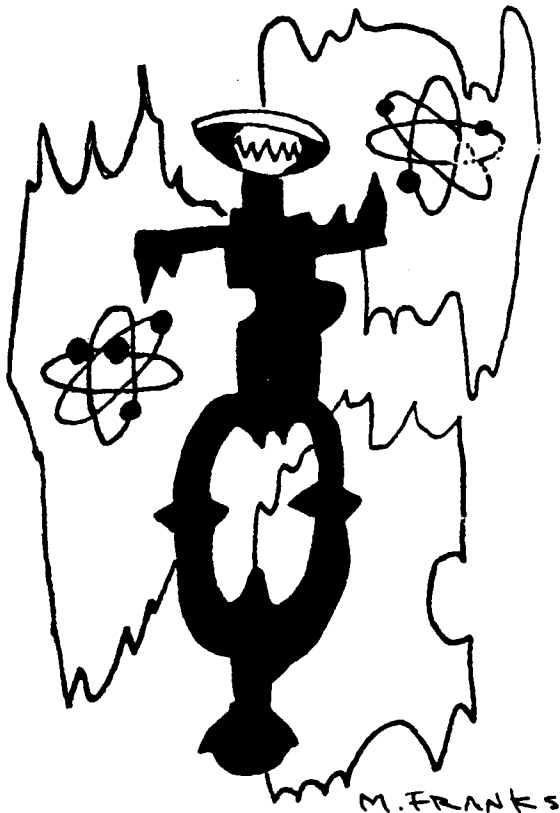
Dances with Wolves is told with grace and humor that keeps the viewer constantly entertained through its nearly three-hour length. Costner is to be congratulated for creating such an unorthodox film (about a quarter is in Lakota, the Sioux language, and subtitled), and at the same time so enjoyable a film his first time directing. I give it a high +2.

DARKMAN

CAPSULE REVIEW: This film does not have gaps in its logic, it has gorges. Sam Raimi's transition from horror to science fiction shows up as serious problems in his plotting. Five people wrote the screenplay, but it plays as if it were ten. And a bigger budget is pushing Raimi's visual sense to the pretentious. A sad disappointment after his Evil Dead II. Rating: -1.

Sam Raimi is a director who came from out of nowhere to become a major name in the horror film genre. His film, Evil Dead (1983), produced on a shoestring, was nonetheless a very impressive debut. He had a lot of novel variations on what was basically a zombie film. Raimi's second film, Evil Dead II (1987), proved to be a terrifically inventive horror film with an amazing array of weird twists and visual playing. You have little idea watching Evil Dead II what is likely to happen next but you can be fairly sure it will further twist the horror film cliches into a knot. With Darkman Raimi is taking on the comic book superhero film and trying to twist it the way he twisted the zombie film in his previous efforts.

With Darkman, however, Raimi is telling a more complex story than before and it shows up weaknesses in his story-telling abilities. In fact, by mak-



ing the short trip from horror/fantasy to what is basically science fiction, Raimi has managed to turn his greatest virtue into his greatest flaw. What was good about the Evil Dead films, particularly the sequel, was the feeling that just about anything could happen. That is the same feeling with Darkman, but it is a fault. As a fantasy, the Evil Dead films take place in a world of the supernatural. Darkman occurs in the world of the rational and it has a much more complex plot. With a rational film you have the right to observe that something does not make sense.

Liam Neeson plays Dr. Westlake, a scientist working on a synthetic flesh ala 1932's Dr. X. His girlfriend, Julie Hastings (played by Frances McDormand) runs afoul of some particularly sadistic heavies and they horribly disfigure Westlake in an attempt to kill him. To treat Westlake, his doctors cut his pain sensors, a standard procedure operation that leaves Westlake with great strength and also makes him a little mentally unbalanced. As his doctor (Jenny Agutter in a cameo) explains, this is pretty generally what the operation does. The first questions to ask is why there are not a bunch of very strong people walking around. Even if, as the doctor suggests, the vast majority of people who have the operation do not survive, wouldn't the few who do have the Darkman's strength?

Westlake, disfigured, then escapes and hides in sewers with perhaps more than just a slight tip of the hat to the 1943 Phantom of the Opera. Eventually he finds a place and stocks it with very ad-

vanced scientific equipment. (How does he find such a nice place that is just abandoned? Where does he get the equipment? Who knows?) He uses his synthetic flesh to make computer generated masks that are perfect replicas of people using only the information in a single photograph. (Bosh--he could not possibly get all the information he needs from so few photographs.) When he puts on the mask he can look so much like the other person as to fool even close associates. (How does he get the right voice? Assume the right posture?) Apparently after having built this laboratory with his own hands he suddenly discovers that all along his hands have been as badly destroyed as his face. (How could he do as much as he did without realizing the state of his hands?) The logic of Darkman is not just bad, it is shockingly bad.

The technical credits are somewhat better. The score by Danny Elfman is somewhat in his Batman style but stands fairly well on its own. With his first real budget, Raimi has managed a number of nice visual effects though at times he almost borders on being pretentious. One such touch has Hastings watching the death of her lover. First the background fades to a graveyard, then her clothing fades to a black mourning dress. A number of visual touches seem to be borrowed from Altered States. But there are also surprising visual gaffes such as shots shown in mirror image with tell-tale backward lettering. At one point we see a truck with a clown smile face on it destroyed and seconds later we see it miraculously undestroyed. The tone of the film abruptly shifts to tongue-in-cheek toward the end, damaging the feeling.

Darkman has been getting some very favorable comments from critics. And I tried to turn my mind off and just enjoy the film. But I have to say Darkman did not do very much for me. I give it a -1 rating.

THE WITCHES

CAPSULE REVIEW: Jim Henson's last film is a charming modern fairy tale of a boy foiling a plot by the witches of England. It captures some of the fun horror of traditional fairy tales. Unfortunately, it loses some of its inspiration about mid-film. The story would be ideally suited to animation and doing it in live action is an impressive if not altogether necessary feat. Rating: low +2.

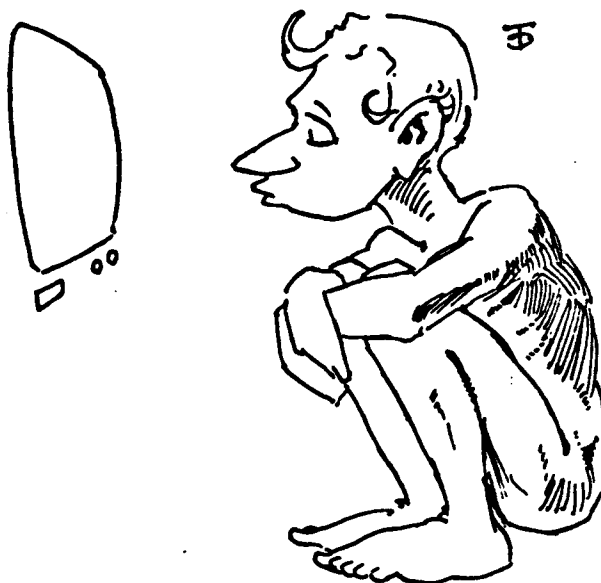
The perfect medium for showing imaginative images visually is animation. With animation, if you can visualize it, you can put it on a screen. 1973's Fantastic Planet, while lacking in story values, may well be the most visually imaginative science fiction film ever made. Unfortunately for animated fantasy, Star Wars came out four years

later and showed that imaginative live action was coming of age and animated fantasy became a side-show. Only the Japanese seem to recognize the possibilities of animation as a medium for fantasy, and even in Japan fantastic animation is falling short of the real potential of the medium. In the United States and Europe audiences want live action even if it is at the expense of imagination. Films such as Batman and Dick Tracy are trying to impress the world with how well they can overcome problems that would not even arise with animation. Dick Tracy was able to make some expensive box office stars really look much like the comic strip characters. Batman was less successful visually in making Jack Nicholson look like the Joker. Both of these films could have had better stories and looked absolutely perfect had they been animated, but they would have died at the box office. Audiences really want live action and are quite willing to sacrifice story values and imagination for the thrill of seeing things done in live action.

The Witches is a fine new live-action fantasy film that almost matches in imagination and charm what Walt Disney was able to do with animation back in the 1940s.

Fairy tales are not all sweetness and fun, and they are not just for children. Most fairy tales are horror stories told on a level that all ages can appreciate them. And that is just what The Witches is. From the very beginning this film lays down some blood-curdling folklore about witches. Some of it is really the stuff paranoia is made of. Witches can live right next door, they smell children from great distances, they have no toes. Take note, those of you who feel children must be protected from the sort of scary stories that children have been raised on from time immemorial. The stories are told to young Luke (played by Jason Fisher) by his Norwegian grandmother (played by Swedish actor/director Mai Zetterling) and it is a good thing she told him. He shortly has to fight a convocation of the witches of England in their plot to turn all English children into mice. And shortly is how he has to fight them, since he is one of the first two children turned into a mouse.

Jim Henson used his Muppet technology to portray the mouse Luke when he does something non-mouse-like. When a trained mouse can be used, it is. The problem there is that the Muppet mouse has a cute face that the real mouse apparently found very difficult to mimic. The combining of realistic mouse movements with a humanlike personality for the mouse would be, of course, much simpler for Disney to do in animation than it was for Henson to do in live action, and the result would have been much more successful. The make-up for the witches is similarly nicely executed. Anjelica Huston's Grand High Witch make-up fails to convince totally that



this is really the face of a living being, but it is well-detailed.

The Witches is, and is likely to remain, Nicholas Roeg's only children's film. (He claims he made it for his newly-born child.) Allan Scott's script, based on the novel by Roald Dahl, raises some gooseflesh early on, but loses much of its power to chill once Luke is a cute mouse and the story concentrates more on his mission than on the horror of the witches. Scott also manages to throw in some double entendres clearly not intended for the younger audience. In smaller roles there is Rowan Atkinson (television's Black Adder) as a hotel manager clearly of the Basil Fawley style. Bill Peterson (Dickie Bird in Bill Forsythe's Comfort and Joy) plays the father of a mouse who once was a gluttonous child.

It would be unfair to down-rate this film because it is not doing anything to advance animated film. The film as it stands is charming and works (at least generally) in live action. It is a nice fantasy and deserves some credit for not aiming specifically at a youth or teenage market. It is just a decent fantasy film that is there for whatever audience finds it. I rate it a low +2.

ARACHNOPHOBIA

CAPSULE REVIEW: This film has a plot that has been done to death in the past and occasionally better. Still, my spider sense tells me that it may do well with a new generation of viewers who may not be so familiar with its predecessors. Rating: +1.

One tends to expect new ideas in films from Steven Spielberg's Amblin Entertainment. And with Disney Enterprises starting a new film branch, Hollywood Pictures, you would expect something fairly original to inaugurate the new label. That makes it

all the more puzzling that this collaboration between Amblin Entertainment and Hollywood Pictures would be a plot that was already old when Spielberg made Close Encounters of the Third Kind. There have already been so many "Invasion of the Killer Vermin" films that one more is no novelty. In other films we have seen people threatened by infestations of spiders, ants, birds, slugs, rats, bats, feral dogs, bears, even frogs. (Don't ask me how you make a threat out of a frog; I saw the film and still don't know. You have to be pretty desperate for phobias to make a film about killer frogs!) However well a new film of this type is done, and Arachnophobia was nicely executed, there is not much new you can put into a film about a small town threatened by an infestation of deadly spiders.

The idea of the film is that there is a prehistoric breed of spider--one with a very different social structure from what modern spiders have--living isolated in the jungles of Venezuela. This breed of spider has a "king" and a bunch of drones, much like bees have with a queen and drones. That is something of a stretch since spiders are much more closely related to sea crustaceans than they are to insects. A plot device that could have been devised by Rube Goldberg takes the king spider and drops him (quite literally) into the backyard of a new doctor in a small California town. Dr. Ross Jennings (played by Jeff Daniels) has a bugaboo about spiders and the fact that he has a barn full of them is only one of the many problems he is facing as a result of moving to Canama, California, from San Francisco. There are, in fact, many elements of the plot that executive producer Steven

Spielberg might have found extremely familiar. We have one lone man, who is not really accepted by his town, who has to convince disbelieving officials that they have a problem. He has his own phobias to overcome, but the love of his family, charmingly portrayed, convinces him that he has to overcome his fears and see that the problem gets solved. Luckily he has a knowledgeable expert he can call on to help him out and to explain to the audience how scary the situation really is. Surely all this must have rung a bell somewhere in Spielberg's memory.

What is nice about the film is that it takes time to develop characters so that the audience has some understanding and empathy invested in them. That too makes the film seem as if it were really a 1970s film. The viewer gets to know people who are threatened by the spiders--not as well as you get to know the Brodie family in Jaws, but far better than you know anyone in most current horror films. Nobody follows the new popular formula of being introduced and making vacuous or stereotyped conversation, then being quickly dispatched to nobody's regret.

The effects work usually is believable, though occasionally a spider just does not scramble right. A fair number of live spiders were also used and unfortunately the film bears no endorsement of the filming practices by any humane society.

Arachnophobia is entertaining and has some genuinely creepy moments, but lacks anything that really distinguishes it from other films with very similar plots and approaches. I give it a +1.*|

Reviews by *Dennis K Fischer*

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THE ROCKY HORROR PICTURE SHOW 15TH ANNIVERSARY COLLECTION

Ode/Rhino Records, \$38-50, 4 CDs or Cassettes
(2225 Colorado Ave., Santa Monica, CA 90404-3555)

I fell in love with the music to The Rocky Horror Picture Show long before I saw the movie, which in midnight screenings has grossed over \$150 million, making it the most popular science fiction musical of all time (not that there's much competition in this limited field. I heard the opening number, "Science Fiction Double Feature on Barrett 'Dr. Demento' Hansen's 'Dr. Demento' show and flipped for it. Here was a rock'n'roll song that sang about things I knew and loved--Claude Rains in The Invisible Man, Anne Francis in Forbidden Plan-

et, Dana Andrews in Curse of the Demon. I just had to get the record.

To make a long story short, I found an import copy in the local Music Plus, and English pressing which sounded better than the later American re-releases, and enjoyed the rest of the album, composed by Richard O'Brien, as well. When I eventually saw the movie, it proved to be a bit of a disappointment--it wasn't nearly as funny or outrageous as I'd imagine, though I've come to love it for Tim Curry's full-throttle performance of the bisexual, alien mad scientist Frank N. Furter; for Jim Sharmon's cluttered Mise-en-scene; for Richard O'Brien's B-movie cliché dialogue (Say goodbye to all this and hello...to oblivion!); but most especially for the toe-tapping, music.

So for Rocky fans, this 4-CD set is something of

an event, but what are you getting for those big bucks? Well, there is a booklet profusely illustrated with color photographs before and behind the cameras of the movie with a few shots of the Roxy Cast version thrown in. Each CD contains about 45 minutes of music. The first is the famous Roxy version of the stage show with Tim Curry, Meat Loaf as both Eddie and Dr. Scott, Abigale Harness and B. Miller as Janet and Brad. Compared with the movie soundtrack, this has a different version of "Science Fiction Double Feature" which was originally sung by an usherette (Jamie Donnelly) who would later play Magenta in the play. The song "Over at the Frankenstein Place" has an additional lyric for Brad, the Roxy version of the "Time Warp" contains the tap sequence; it also has the best version of Rocky's "Sword of Damocles" song plus the cuts "Once in a While" (Brad's ballad which was cut from the film) and "Planet Schmanet Janet" which were also omitted from the soundtrack. The Roxy version lacks the reprise of "Science Fiction Double Feature."

The next CD is the original soundtrack with two additional tracks added. One is an extended version of "The Time Warp" (Remix 1989 extended version) which is really horrible, extending the dance time for the song by making echoing repeats of the lyrics. The other "bonus" track is the basic musical track of "The Time Warp" minus any vocals whatsoever, a purely instrumental version that wasn't intended to be.

So where are the songs in the film that were cut from the soundtrack? They appear on the third CD "Rocky Horror International" and include the film versions of "Sword of Damocles," "Once in a While," and "Planet Schmanet Janet." Additionally, there is "Eddie's Teddy" from the out-of-print Audience Participation album which was a record of the entire soundtrack of the film plus Sal Piro's famous audience's straight lines from the weekly New York midnight screen rituals.

The CD also contains the original versions of "The Time Warp," "Sweet Transvestite," "Floor Show," and "I'm Going Home" (in which an overwhelmed Curry claims he can't go on and finish the song) from the rare Original London Cast album (which had Curry and O'Brien playing with Christopher Malcolm as Brad and Belinda Sinclair as Janet). These cuts show how these numbers were reworked and improved in subsequent editions.

Plus, to fill out the CD, there are cuts from the Mexican, New Zealand, Norwegian, and Australian casts of the play. The recordings of the Mexican cast are full of surface noise and sound as if they had been mastered from a record copy rather than the master tapes. (There's no representation of the West German cast.) These tunes are in the appropriate language of their countries.

The last CD is "Songs From the Vaults: A Collection of Rocky Horror Rarities." These rarities include the film's original movie trailer soundtrack, two commercials O'Brien did for the film, four cuts from an aborted Tim Curry album; four little Nell songs from various singles she put out; "Denton U. S.A." and "Little Black Dress" from Shock Treatment, the forgotten sequel to Rocky Horror, plus O'Brien's single version of "Shock Treatment" left off of the original soundtrack album now long out of print. As a last tidbit, there is the Laker Band playing an instrumental version of "The Time Warp," Rocky Horror's most popular number which occasionally was heard during breaks in basketball games.

If I had been putting this collection together, I would have done things a little bit differently. I would have put the songs cut from the soundtrack into the soundtrack CD, removed the awful dance remix, put an extended (with tap dance) version of "The Time Warp" on, perhaps added the still unreleased "Zen Room Music," and given the three songs that make up the "Floor Show" different track numbers like they have on the French CD. Instead of just bits and pieces, I would have made the third CD the hard-to-get London Cast version with the fourth being the still unavailable Shock Treatment soundtrack (poor film, but great soundtrack if you like O'Brien's music) with the O'Brien single version as a bonus cut. Additionally, there is still room enough on a CD (which can run a maximum of 78½ minutes) to include some of the other obscurities as well as O'Brien's unreleased tunes for The Return of Captain Invincible.

Still, this is more Rocky Horror than anyone other than a dedicated fan would be interested in. The CD packaging of the Roxy soundtrack omits the lyric sheet that came with the original (how typical an economy move) and the faces of the two new CDs are given an ugly design, though I suppose the booklet makes up for that. If you are in doubt as to whether to buy any of the configurations, you can at least now rent the video and preview what all the fuss is about, but warning, it's for lovers of cheap 50s science fiction and driving rhythm & blues only.

THE CUT-OUT BIN:

SPELLBOUND (Stanyon) and THEY LIVE (Enigma)

A cut-out is a record, tape, or CD that was overpressed and is now being remaindered. Remaindered CDs are a new phenomenon, but there are getting to be more of them, and once in a while you can get a really good buy very cheaply before it disappears, perhaps forever.

Stanyon is Rod McKuen's record company, which is manufactured and distributed by Dunhill Compact Classics Inc. The score for Spellbound is especial-

ly interesting, not only for being one of the best films scores of Miklos Rosza (whose other scores include The Best Years of Our Lives, Thief of Bagdad (1940), Ben Hur, and Time After Time), but also because it effectively employed the theremin, an electronic instrument that is used to make very eerie and otherworldly sounds. Between Rosza's lush orchestral arrangements are some lovely theremin themes which remind one of the score to Hawks and Nyby's The Thing and the old Outer Limits TV series whenever something alien is encountered. The movie itself was a psychological thriller starring and extremely attractive Ingrid Bergman (she was in better films, but she never looked better) and featuring some weird surreal dreams designed by Salvador Dali.

The score is conducted by Ray Heindorf using the Warner Bros. Studio Orchestra who do a fine, atmospheric job. As a bonus, McKuen throws in some

themes he wrote for Joanna and The Borrowers plus Elmer Redwine conducting the Cinema Soundstage's rendition of the roadshow overture to Around the World in Eighty Days.

While Spellbound sounds like a science fiction film and is not, They Live is a science fiction film soundtrack but doesn't sound like one. Director John Carpenter has scored all of his movies (with help from Alan Howarth on several and Ennio Morricone on one), and this time he composes a minimalist blues score that thuds along. This score makes you appreciate just how good Angelo Badalamenti really is, as Carpenter's musical work remains primitive, but enjoyable, on a flunky undemanding level. The bass guitar, saxophone, harmonica and percussion sounds were all created using synthesized keyboards--ain't technology wonderful? They Live captures the sound of the soul of a machine. [*]

Book Reviews by *Evelyn C Leeper*

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THE SECRET ASCENSION

by Michael Bishop
Tor, 1989 (1987), \$4.50

This book is actually titled The Secret Ascension or, Philip K. Dick Is Dead, Alas. And it is a tribute to Dick in more ways than one. In the world of The Secret Ascension (which is, to state it up front, an alternate world), Dick has achieved a far greater fame than he did in our world. Yet he has also become known as a subversive author in this world of totalitarian government. We never find out just where things changed, but it was nothing obvious. There are many minor changes (instead of Ted Turner, this world has Tod Turner, for example) that indicate that something happened much further back than the major changes would indicate.

But in addition to using Dick as a character, The Secret Ascension also uses Dick's technique of playing with reality and levels of reality and of asking "What is reality?" The result is unusual, and not quite describable. The best I can do is to say I recommend this novel even if you're not a Philip K. Dick fan (if you are, this recommendation is superfluous anyway).

THE OXYGEN BARONS

by Gregory Feeley
Ace, 1990, \$3.95

If the subtitle to The Secret Ascension is "Philip K. Dick Is Dead, Alas," then the subtitle to the Ace Science Fiction Specials should probably be "Terry Carr Is Dead, Alas." Under his guidance, the original series produced recognized classics too numerous to be listed here; the current series showcased such works as Neuromancer and Green Eyes. In contrast, of the 1975-1976 series, which was not edited by him, the only memorable two are Lem's The Invincible and Shaw's Orbitsville. And now that the current series has passed from his hands, the quality seems to have fallen off considerably. I have no desire to be harsh on Damon Knight, who has taken on the unenviable task of following Carr, but Knight's talents in editing seem to run to the shorter works--his "Orbit" books are excellent--rather than to the novel-length.

As you may have guessed from these prefatory comments, I did not like The Oxygen Barons. Perhaps more to the point in a review, I thought it needed some editing--perhaps parts were deliberately obscure, but I found myself frequently groping for something beyond the elements of Heinlein and military action novel that formed the primary layer. The basis for the plot--various groups struggling to control oxygen on the moon--is not exactly new to science fiction, though the nanotechnological elements are of more recent vintage than, say, The Moon Is a Harsh Mistress.

I can't be entirely negative on The Oxygen Barons. It is the sort of hard-science novel that many

people seem to be crying for these days, and for that reason many people will be drawn to it. It is not badly written, and Feeley shows promise. I just wish it had had the benefit of Carr's editing skills.

AUTHOR'S CHOICE MONTHLY #8

by James Morrow
Pulphouse Publishing, 1990, \$4.95
(PO Box 1227, Eugene, OR 97440)

Pulphouse Publishing is issuing a series of "Author's Choice" books, stories selected by the author rather than by an editor. This slim volume contains seven of Morrow's short stories, including one never before published ("Bible Stories for Adults, No. 20: The Tower"). The other six are "The Assemblage of Kristin," "Bible Stories for Adults, No. 17: The Deluge," "The Eye That Never Blinks," "The Confessions of Ebenezer Scrooge," "Bible Stories for Adults, No. 31: The Covenant," and "Spelling God with the Wrong Blocks"; there is also an introduction by Morrow.

What the stories have in common (besides being selected by Morrow) is that they are all religious in nature (some might be irreligious). Of course, this is true of much of Morrow's writing, and certainly of his latest novel, Only Begotten Daughter. Still, the trend is not so obvious until one sees the pieces collected in one volume. Morrow may question the traditional religions, and certainly his "Bible Stories for Adults" do that, but his works also display a more deeply religious tone than do many whose religion is more conventional.

This is not to say there aren't logical problems in some of the stories. In "Bible Stories for Adults, No. 31: The Covenant," Morrow postulates an alternate world in which Moses couldn't get a replacement set of tablets for the ones he smashed on the golden calf, so the world proceeded without the Ten Commandments. Morrow then sets up a scenario where the tablets are reconstructed by one computer, but another computer claims that these commandments will be mis-interpreted to lead to, well, our world. For example, "Thou shalt not kill" will be interpreted to first say, "Thou shalt not kill unnecessarily" and so on until it eventually leads to a weapons race, to which the first asks, "What are weapons?" Morrow overlooks that many civilizations who had never heard of the Ten Commandments seem to have had weapons (and weapons races). (And also that the original Hebrew of the commandment is better translated "murder" than "kill," which means the "unnecessarily" is already there.)

But perhaps in the context of these stories this is an unreasonable quibble. And the story I picked is the one with the largest holes in it. Though he

plans some day to produce an entire book of "Bible Stories for Adults," don't wait--buy this now. (For those of you interested in the physical look and feel of a book as well as its contents, I recommend Pulphouse books; they have a wonderful parchment-like cover and cream-colored pages which are a joy to hold as well as to read. And the cost is the same as your usual cheap paperback. Your local bookstore almost definitely won't carry this, and there is no ISBN, so you can order direct from Pulphouse Publishing, P. O. Box 1227, Eugene, OR 97440.)

IN BETWEEN DRAGONS

by Michael Kandel
Bantam Spectra, 1991, \$3.95

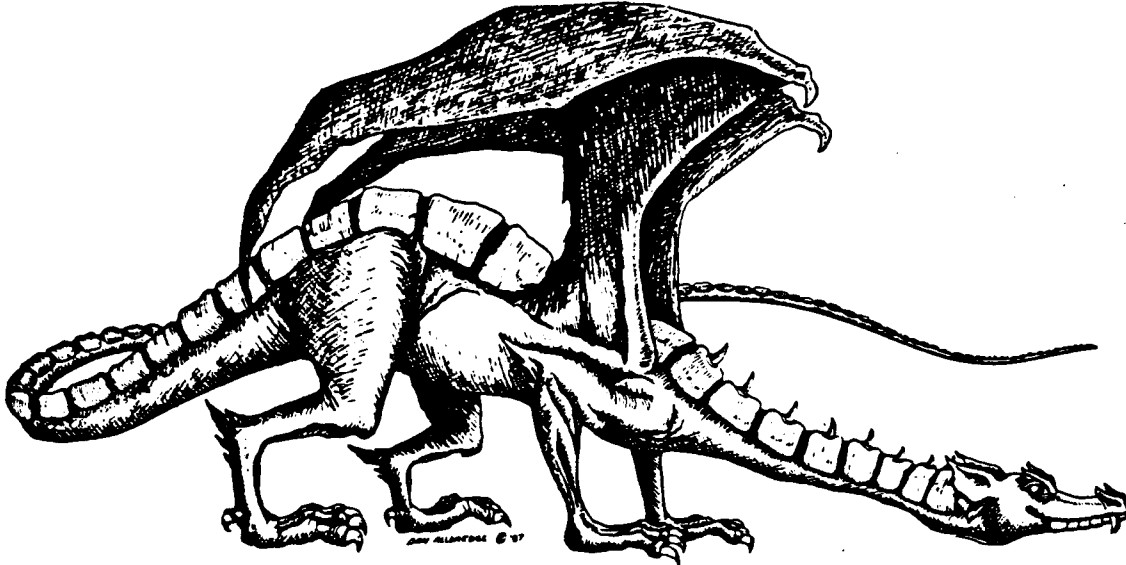
In Between Dragons is Michael Kandel's second novel, his first being Strange Invasion. (Before setting off on his own auctorial career, he was best known as the translator of Stanislaw Lem's works into English.) In Between Dragons to some extent is similar to Strange Invasion in that both deal with heroes attempting to save the universe, or at least the world, from some terrible menace. Both also deal with the question of "what is reality?" But where the main character of Strange Invasion is a schizophrenic, the main character of In Between Dragons, Sherman Potts, is a teenage boy who travels to the worlds in the books he reads in Mr. McGulvey's library. The choice of Sherman as the hero's first name is perhaps unfortunate, given the publicity about The Bonfires of the Vanities which talks about its "hero," Sherman McCoy, leading to possible confusion in the public's mind. But in many ways Sherman Potts is more a "Master of the Universe" than Sherman McCoy, so who knows? For all I know, it could be intentional. Anyway, Sherman travels to worlds full of dragons, psychic enemies, and disappearing food. All this isn't enough for him, though, and his attempt to travel to the world of the "Lust Kittens" makes the whole structure start to unravel.

Having never been an adolescent boy, I can't say how accurately Kandel has portrayed one, though one does have the inkling that Kandel may have been one himself. While I thought this was not up to Strange Invasion, other readers may disagree, but in any case, it is certainly an interesting perspective on adolescence.

STRANGE THINGS IN CLOSE UP

by Howard Waldrop
Legend, 1990, L4.50

This long-awaited collection of Howard Waldrop's



work is, alas, almost impossible to find in the United States. Since the original publication of most of the stories were also hard to find (Waldrop explains in one of his introductions why he has the reputation of selling to the lowest bidder), this is a double whammy. So far as I can tell, this is an omnibus volume which includes Howard Who? (Doubleday, 1986) and All About Strange Monsters of the Recent Past (Ursus Imprints, 1987). Lots of luck finding those either. However, large specialty stores will probably have a limited supply of Strange Things in Close Up, or try your favorite mail order house. Is it worth all that effort? Yes.

Howard Who? comprises the first twelve stories in Strange Things Close Up. The first is "The Ugly Chickens." If you know only one Howard Waldrop story, chances are this is it. You will get two things from reading this story: and encyclopedic (well, almost) knowledge of the dodo, and an inkling of what makes Waldrop's stories so unique.

"Der Untergang Abendlandesmenschen" has Bronco Billy and William S. Hart helping Hermann Goering fight a vampire in a typical Waldrop "alternate history" where unlikely people get together and do unlikely things. The "split point" of these universes--the event that causes them to differ from ours--seems to be some time when the ancient Israelites threw some peyote mushrooms in with their burnt offering and God got more than just a "sweet savour." Certainly no rational explanation will suffice.

"Ike at the Mike" is another alternate history: Dwight David Eisenhower is a rock star and Elvis Aaron Presley a successful politician. A whole bunch of other famous people turn out differently too. But I'm not a big rock music fan and so found this less involving than some of Waldrop's other works, even though this did win a Hugo.

If you like old horror movies (and by old I mean 1940s, not Evil Dead I or even Carrie), you will

appreciate "Dr. Hudson's Secret Gorilla," an old story told from a new point of view. (If the names Rondo Hatton and George Zucco ring no bells, however, you may react as I did to "Ike at the Mike.")

Once, scientists believed in phlogiston. A hundred years later it was just another crackpot idea. But what if it wasn't? Well, "The World as We Know't" gives us one look at what might have happened. As with many of Waldrop's stories, it's not a pleasant look--one problem with describing a Waldrop story is that its bizarreness makes it sound like a fun romp when frequently it's quite the opposite.

"Heirs of the Perisphere" shows more of Waldrop's fascination with popular culture (an oxymoron?). This reminded me of Arthur C. Clarke's "Expedition," but of course Waldrop goes in an entirely different direction than Clarke did.

The remaining seven stories formed All About Strange Monsters of the Recent Past. Where "Dr. Hudson's Secret Gorilla" is an ode to the horror films of the 1940s, the title story of this section is an unabashed copy of the monster films of the 1950s--all of them.

"Helpless, Helpless" is an undating of the plague to our modern, mechanized, computerized society. I think Waldrop overlooks (or glosses over) a lot of what would happen in a mechanical plague, and find his ending somewhat overly rosy. (It is interesting to note that, while I usually compose my reviews directly onto the computer, this one, is being written long-hand, albeit with a mechanical pencil. Of course, before you see it, it will be typed in, run through the spelling and punctuation checker, and automatically formatted. In fifty years, will Christie's be auctioning off Stephen King's original floppy disks for The Dark Half?) In any case, this story seems a trifle on the Luddite side--and Waldrop admits to not owning a word processor, or even an electric typewriter.

Even Waldrop acknowledges "Fair Game" may represent some ultimate minimalist approach to literary criticism, or at least that's how I read his introductory comments. Certainly no one can go further in this direction than he does with Hemingway in this story. (Free idea to any anthologist: The Science Fictional Hemingway. Lead off with Joe Haldeman's "Hemingway Hoax," follow with "Fair Game," and then--well, I can't do all the work for you!)

It has been said that art imitates life. It has also been said that life imitates art. One of these--perhaps both--would seem to be the case in "What Makes Hieronymous Run?" If you haven't studied or at least been exposed to the works of Hieronymous Bosch or Peter Brueghel the Elder, this story probably won't make much sense. If you have, this will open a whole new way of looking at them. (Another idea for an anthology: classic works of art and literature inspired by them. W.H. Auden's "Musée de Beaux Arts" is certainly one obvious choice. Another science-fictional example, though by no means great literature, is Hal Clement's Ocean on Top, inspired by a cover painting for Analog which happened to be sitting upside down on the floor when he came into their office one day. Most inspiration seems to go in the other direction, so this would be an interesting twist.) There is an undercurrent in this story that ties into one in "Horror, We Got": the idea that maybe our view of history is totally out of whack with "reality" (whatever that is).

"The Lions Are Asleep This Night" is a more conventional alternate history, this one set in Africa. It predates Robert Silverberg's "Lion Time in Timbuktu" but I doubt there is any connection. Maybe it's just time for more science fiction with African themes and settings--Mike Resnick is making quite a name for himself with his Kirinyaga series set in a future recreation of pre-colonial Kenya and his novel Ivory. As usual, though, Waldrop's entry in this African renaissance is different, more subtle--so subtle, in fact, that Ellen Datlow insisted that he had to rewrite it to explain more to an audience who didn't know history. Even so, I think it still assumes a lot on the part of the reader.

"Flying Saucer Rock and Roll" is yet another story that I failed to appreciate due to my ignorance of rock and roll music and history. But since I am probably exceptional in the extent of my ignorance, you may enjoy it more. Certainly Waldrop's need to substitute phonemes for real rock lyrics (which would have cost a fortune in royalties), didn't help matters.

The final story, "He-We-Await," is described by Waldrop in his introduction to it as "original to this collection." In this case, that meant original to All about Strange Monsters of the Recent Past,

not Strange Things in Close Up. Another story set in Africa (it is, you know), this shows some influence from the horror films of the 1930s--the Mummy series in particular. Or maybe it's just the similarity of theme, and I'm applying Waldrop's penchant for pop culture to my reading of it. At any rate, this story ends the books on a suitably apocalyptic note.

Also included are an introductory essay by George R.R. Martin, some closing words by Lewis Shiner, and introductions to each of the stories by Waldrop himself. Not included, unfortunately, are "Night of the Cooters" (a story nominated for a Hugo several years ago that I still have been unable to find), not "Custer's Last Jump," nor "The Passing of the Western." I suppose these were written after 1987, the copyright date of the most recent of the two component parts of this collection, but I still miss them. I am annoyed at the subtling of this volume as "The Nearly Complete Howard Waldrop" when it is missing not just his most recent work (which is expected), but also older works, such as "Billy Big Eyes," "Black as a Pit, from Pole to Pole," "My Sweet Lady Jo," "Sic Transit...? A Shaggy Hairless Dog Story," "Sun Up," "Unsleeping Beauty and the Beast," and "A Voice and a Bitter Weeping." I bought this expecting to find all (or almost all) of Waldrop's stories; it turned out not to be so.

The cover is wonderfully Waldropian (Waldropesque?) in that nothing is what it first seems to be. If only they had credited the artists I could tell you who s/he was.

There are a few odd things I noted in the books. Capitalization varies among the copyright page, the table of contents, the introduction headers, the story headers, and the page headers. Trivial, perhaps, but disconcerting nonetheless. It's almost as if the British have different rules for capitalization in titles, but even there it's inconsistent, and in any case they didn't Briticize the spelling.

As you might have suspected from the sheer length of this review, I recommend this book. This article is as long as it is because you can't group Waldrop's stories into categories and discuss them in bunches. Each one is an individual and insists on being treated as one. It won't be easy for most of you to find this--make the effort.

STEAM BIRD

by Hilbert Schenck
Tor, 1988, \$3.50

First of all, "Steam Bird" is only 148 pages of this book, with "Hurricane Claude" filling in the rest of the 213-page total. Still, that is novel length, so I suppose I can't complain too much



about deceptive packaging. And after all, "Hurricane Claude" is the same whiz-bang-old-technology-brought-up-to-date sort of story, though steam-powered airplanes do not appear.

That out of the way, what about the stories. Well, I haven't decided. (Okay, you're asking yourself, why is she reviewing a book that she hasn't made up her mind on? Well, maybe my comments will help you decide whether you think you'd like the book.) "Steam Bird" is about a nuclear-powered steam attack bomber. Were I a fan of steam locomotives, I'm sure I would have enjoyed this more. As it is, however, the concept of a steam attack bomber wasn't enough to carry the story for me. In addition, the characters all seemed as if they had been lifted from Dr. Strangelove, complete with National Security Advisor Andrezot! Bzggnartsky (whose dialect Schenck renders impossible to read without reading it aloud) and a general who says things like, "The wing is ready, sir. We will not fail the country, Mr. President. Nor the world of steam!"

"Hurricane Claude" also has "old-fashioned" science, this time an ionized column of air used to break up hurricanes, and the usual plucky people who have a dream of doing this against all that the bureaucrats can throw at them.

One of the strangest things --to me, anyway-- about these stories is Schenck's unusual--one might almost say bizarre--way of introducing homosexuality and/or gay characters. In "Steam Bird" there are no gay characters (that I noticed) but there is an emphatically homophobic President; in "Hurricane Claude" there are two gay characters, a plane named "Gay Enola," and a raving homophobe who, it turns out, is really repressing his own homosexual urges and comes around to right-thinking by the end of the story. While this is all very fascinating as something not often seen in science fiction, I'm

not sure that it really works in the context of telling a story with real characters. Then again, maybe Schenck isn't trying to do that.

Schenck's characters are so extreme that I can't help but feel he is aiming for something other than realism. I might almost call it a "cult book," much as Dr. Strangelove, Rocky Horror Picture Show, and Repo Man are "cult films." While I'm not sure I enjoy this sort of humor in a literary form as much as in a film, you might want to give it a try. I suppose on the whole this constitutes a recommendation. (And if you're a steam locomotive fan, I suspect you'd appreciate "Steam Bird" considerably more than I did, at least the technical parts.)

A HIDDEN PLACE

by Robert Charles Wilson

Bantam Spectra, 1989 (1986c), \$3.95

A hobo camp during the Depression may not seem the most auspicious opening scene for a fantasy novel, but at least one has to agree that it has not been over-used and that, more likely, the book it begins is not just another Tolkien rip-off. And A Hidden Place is most definitely a different sort of fantasy.

From the very first scene, which introduces Bone, who seems to be a cross between a psychotic and a mental defective, the reader finds herself (or himself, but hey, I'm the reviewer so I should at least get top billing) involved in a most unlikely set of characters. There's Bone, of course, but there's Travis Fisher, who drifts into town to live with his Puritanical, Bible-Belt-religious relatives after his less-than-Puritanical mother has died. And there's Anna Blaise, a strange young woman who lives in the attic of his relative's house and affects everyone's lives most unexpectedly.

These characters soon find themselves swept up in the bigotry and narrow-mindedness of the times, or for that matter of any time. To say what develops from this, how the characters interact, and how it is resolved, would of course be giving away too much, and I wouldn't want to do that, because (as you might have guessed) I'm going to recommend that you read this book. It probably isn't a spoiler to say that Anna and Bone are as much symbols for aspects of our own humanity as they are characters, and that this is perhaps paradoxically what makes them in turn the fleshed-out characters they are.

This is not to say that sometimes the prose isn't, well, overripe. For example, this sentence (on page 14) made me feel as if I had fallen into the Bulwer-Lytton Fiction Contest:

Haute Montagne ("where the railroad meets

the wheatfield") might once have wanted to be a city, but that ambition had died--or at least had been set aside, like the hope chest of a young woman destined for spinsterhood--in the Depression that had come like a bad cold and stayed to become something worse, some lingering if not fatal disease.

(For those of you who don't know, the Bulwer-Lytton Fiction Contest is a contest for the worst starting sentence of a novel.) Maybe the fact that I just read the third volume of winners (?) in that contest influenced me here. On the other hand, one wonders if bad writing is not sometimes in the eye of the beholder and if some of the "bad" beginnings were presented as good beginning sentences, we wouldn't believe that as well. But now I'm drifting off into my regular rant against the Kirk Poland Memorial Bad Prose Competition....

But overly florid writing notwithstanding, (or perhaps even contributing), A Hidden Place is a book well worth seeking out.

MEMORY WIRE

by Robert Charles Wilson
Bantam Spectra, 1990 (1988c), \$3.95

Where Wilson's first novel, A Hidden Place, is a fantasy, this is science fiction. Yet both cross the boundaries between the two: A Hidden Place has elements of science fiction (especially towards the end) and Memory Wire, for all its high-tech beginning, draws on the idea of dreams and visions as part of life.



The main character in Memory Wire, Raymond Keller, has implanted in his head electronics that make him the perfect reporter: they record everything he sees and hears perfectly. He is sent to Brazil, where "they" ("they" being the usual corporate and governmental baddies) have discovered an alien artifact that may contain the total knowledge of the aliens and hence give the holder limitless power. The fact that it also can bring out eidetic memories makes it valuable to anyone who wants to remember or relive their past. Most of the novel is spent with characters chasing and being chased, though while this is going on we do get to see Wilson's vision of the 21st Century.

The major weakness of this novel is the ending--all the villains are too easily defeated or give up. And, needless to say, the end is very predictable. The strengths are Wilson's descriptions of 21st Century life and of the dreamlike states of his characters. On the whole I found this a disappointment after Wilson's promising beginning with A Hidden Place, but not enough so that I would totally give up on him. Rather, I would hope that he would concentrate where his strength is, on fantasy rather than on science fiction.

GYPSIES

by Robert Charles Wilson
Bantam Spectra, 1989, \$4.50

In Gypsies, Wilson's third novel, he returns to the realm of fantasy in our current world without totally abandoning science fiction. Karen discovers at a very young age that she can "sidestep" into other worlds, opening a window or a door into them by force of will. But it's not only she, but her brothers also who have this talent. Where did it come from? What does it mean? And what is the meaning of the Gray Man whom she sees in these other worlds?

As in Memory Wire, his second novel, Wilson eventually has the military trying to exploit these talents, and this is what Wilson uses to create the major tension at the end of the book, but that is not what I found the most memorable aspect of the novel. (In fact, in many ways the end of the novel was fairly predictable.) Rather it is his description of Karen's gradual discoveries about herself and her talents that make this a worthwhile work. Gypsies has the same almost-mystical quality that made his first novel, A Hidden Place, a memorable debut. The prose style of Gypsies is more polished than that of A Hidden Place, and as I have with Wilson's previous two books, I give this a strong recommendation.

TERRAPLANE

by Jack Womack
Tor, 1990 (1988c), \$3.95

This starts out as a futuristic science spy type of novel. But when the main characters try to escape from the Soviet Union in an airplane, they trigger a device which catapults them into an alternate world--or more accurately, a parallel world. Why the latter rather than the former? Well, they find themselves not in the 21st Century, but in 1939, which they attribute to the rate of history being different in the second world. This idea of a similar (or not so similar) world just a step away from ours is more in line with the parallel universe assumption, even though the use of a break-point to build a different world than our own is more an alternate history convention.

And there is a break-point, though to reveal it would take much of the enjoyment out of the novel, since part of Womack's skill is in gradually showing this world what it is. It is not a "steampunk" world, though the cover with its hightech look around a 1930s car might give you that impression. The technology in universe #2's 1939 has minor differences from our own, but there are no amazing steam-driven spaceships or anything.

Womack also does a good job in showing life in universe #2 from the point of view of the blacks. Too often, scientists who travel to an alternate universe meet scientists in that universe, travel in comfortable circles, and don't have to deal with any class problems. The other variant, of course, is they find themselves a black scientist in an America where slavery still exists or some such. But in Terraplane Womack draws something partway between these two extremes, and does it well.

The weaknesses of the novel are minor. The claim of differing rates of time to explain how the protagonists end up in 1939 is, I think, not really convincing. (Is it that some critical event such as the first multi-celled being occurred 60 years later on one universe, or is it that everything in universe #2 happens at the speed of life of universe #1 minus 60 years, all divided by the life of universe #1?) Some explanation of how traveling between universes sometimes results in a time-slip might have served better. A couple of the subplots could have been eliminated, but don't really detract greatly. A more annoying distraction is the future lingo that the characters speak--evidently the next major resource crisis is that all the verbs are used up and nouns and some adjectives must serve instead. So the characters talk about how someone needs to be hospitalized, or how that curbsided their car. After a while the reader is annoyed by this, and wants to wallslam the book.

Luckily, for most of the book the characters normal-language rather than future-speak, so it is bearable.

BLACK ALICE

by Thomas M. Disch & John Sladek
Carroll & Graff, 1989 (1968c), \$3.95

The Tanniel-like illustrations on the cover of this book notwithstanding, Black Alice has little if any connection to Alice's Adventures in Wonderland or Through the Looking Glass. The plot of this mystery novel involves the kidnapping of a young girl named Alice who converses with an imaginary companion named Dinah. She is held for ransom in a warehouse and, to be sure she isn't recognized, the kidnapers give her a pill that turns her black (not entirely unrealistic--that's how the author of Black Like Me did his research). While the mystery proceeds--not even so much who did the kidnapping, or even why, but some of the history and motivation behind the whole sequence of events--we see how Alice, having previously led a life of comfort and even luxury, must learn to live as a black child. While I would not claim this is primarily a biting commentary on race relations, I would say that one feature of the story is its demonstration that outsiders' perceptions are frequently more important than one's own feelings about one's place in society. William Blake may have said, "A sincere belief that anything is so will make it so," but he didn't say whether he was referring to a long-term transformation or the more immediate problem of convincing the policeman at a race riot that you as a black person just happened to be walking by on your way to the store. One suspects it was more the former.

While no one aspect of this book is outstanding, they are all well-done: the plot has a reasonable level of complication, the characterization results in interesting yet believable characters, the social commentary is there yet subtle. Fans of Disch or Sladek will be interested in this, of course, but even for those who are not, I would give this a mild recommendation.

NO ENEMY BUT TIME

by Michael Bishop
Timescape, 1983 (1982c), \$3.50

John Monegal has dreams of roaming prehistoric Africa, so a scientific research group decides to send him back in time (somehow using his dreams) to determine which of two theories of the origins of humanity is accurate. And right away, I have a problem with this. If they are dreams, why do they

have any validity as far as science goes? To the best of my knowledge, "racial memory" is not considered supporting evidence for scientific theories. Even if they are precognitive dreams of Monegal's future when he travels to the past, they aren't more valid as dreams, so why does Bishop spend so much time presenting them as memories rather than precognition?

So Monegal finds himself in the past, but how can he prove it's the past rather than a dream? Well, Bishop pulls a bit of a deus ex machina out of the hat for this, just the sort of thing that the planners couldn't have predicted. Because of this, I found the whole concept of the scientific effort unconvincing. And because the reader spends so much time trying to figure out if they are seeing something real, or just Monegal's dream of what he thinks prehistory is like, I would have to say this book seems to have inspired the "holodeck syndrome" of Star Trek: The Next Generation.

Maybe I'm being too picky as far as the science goes. It's true that the childhood of Monegal is interesting, and even the period spent in the past has some interest value, but still I have to say that as an overall history of the character it is not enthralling.

[This book has recently been re-issued in the Bantam Spectra Special Edition series.]

REDSHIFT RENDEZVOUS

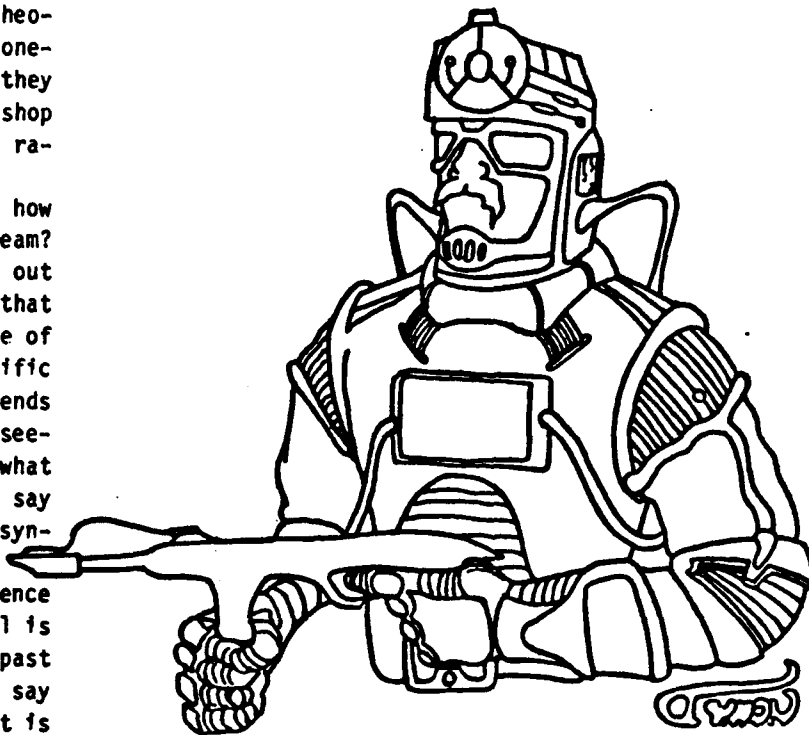
by John E. Stith
Ace, 1990, \$3.95

Some of us are sick of ... insanely improbable solar systems set up to show how clever the author's celestial mechanics are.

--Dan'l Danehy-Oakes

True enough, but still ... I enjoyed Redshift Rendezvous. At least, I enjoyed the part that was the insanely improbable environment; unfortunately, there wasn't enough of it.

The Redshift is a ship in which space is warped somehow so that the speed of light is much slower than in the "real" universe--ranging from 1750 meters/second to 5,360,000 meters/second. (The "real" speed of light is 300,000,000 meters/second.) Stith plays a lot of games with the ramifications of this, and this is the fun part. Unfortunately, partway into the novel the action is moved to Xanahalla, a planet in normal space where there is an evil religious empire and a bunch of thieves who are trying to loot the treasury, and the plot is reduced to that of a super-spy novel. One of the key elements to the resolution of the plot is the result of an extremely unlikely artistic decision on the part of the villains (this will make sense



if you read the book), and of course much turns on people misunderstanding the effects of the "redshift phenomenon."

The real point of the novel can be found in Stith's own comments in his afterword, "Inventing the Redshift." (The existence of this afterword, a figure, three tables, and an appendix "Phenomena Aboard the Redshift" merely enforces the idea that the insanely improbable environment was the point.) Stith says:

I know what you're saying. You're saying, "You can't fool me. He just made up all that stuff. There isn't really a Xanahalla, is there, Virginia?"

Maybe, maybe not. But I didn't invite you here to talk about Xanahalla. Let's talk about the Redshift.

It appears that Stith himself agrees that the main point of the book is the Redshift itself--all the rest is frills. And as a nifty exercise in "what if?" it is certainly enjoyable, though Stith doesn't seem to deal with that the change in speed of light would do to Einstein's equation. If energy is directly proportional to the square of the speed of light, then dropping the speed of light should drop the innate energy as well. He does, however, deal with neural transmissions. If you're looking for something more than this sort of scientific game, you will probably be disappointed.]*]

Reviews by *David M Shea*

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CLOUD WARRIOR

by Partick Tilley
Macmillan, 1984, \$14.95

A thousand years or so after the war: Cadillac M'Call is a respected figure among the Mute tribesfolk of the northern plains. He's a wordsmith, dedicated to memorizing the history of his people since the Old Time. Perhaps, someday, he may become a Talisman--the messiah who will lead his people to a better life. Steve Brickman is a top gun, the best cadet at the Federation flight academy beneath the southern desert. If he doesn't die in combat or a crash, he can expect radiation-induced cancers to kill him by his early thirties. The paths of these two heroes are fated to cross.

The "after the nuclear holocaust" novel was a staple of the 1950s. Some were even readable. (The example most cited is Miller's A Canticle for Liebowitz, but see also Norton's Daybreak: 2250 AD or Wyndham's Re-Birth.) For some reason, the ATNH novel is making a modest comeback in the 1980s. Among the new crop, Cloud Warrior is certainly readable; it's a crisp adventure written in a clean if obvious style. That's about the limit of its virtues. It has nothing new to say about the subject, no ethical perspective, it's just a good story. Dropping cobalt bombs on one another is Not A Good Thing, our grandchildren will suffer. Wow, quel insight. This is a few hours' light reading and no more.

TIME GATE

Created by Robert Silverberg
Baen, 1989, \$3.95

Suppose you could enter into a computer all known facts about an historical figure. Suppose you created a computer-simulacrum of that person so real that it became more than the sum of its input. Suppose it stood up and asserted itself....

In Robert Silverberg's "Enter a Soldier. Later: Enter Another", programmers encourage a dialogue between Socrates and the conquistador Pizarro. If the point is that Sixteenth Century Christianity wasn't logical, gee, I could have figured that out myself. Robert Sheckley's "The Resurrection Machine" involves orator Cicero and anarchist Michael Bakunin. (Sheckley also defines the period May 1851 to March 1857 as "almost seven years". How's that

again?) In Poul Anderson's "Statesmen", a European consortium recruits the shade of Frederick the Great as a tactical consultant. Guess who the Brazilians resurrect to counter him? (I guessed in about 8 pages.) Gregory Benford's "The Rose and the Scalpel" has opposing French politicians bring back Joan of Arc and Voltaire to debate faith versus reason. Pardon me, but didn't we settle that back in the Silverberg story? Pat Murphy's "How I Spent My Summer Vacation" starts out crisply, but slows drastically when Bakunin (again) encounters Queen Victoria.

There is precedent for the use of historical figures in SF (Farmer's Riverworld for one); and there have been a plethora of AI stories (Heinlein's The Moon Is a Harsh Mistress perhaps the most noted). Since combining the two is no great innovation, the book stands or falls on the writing. On those terms, mostly it falls. The Anderson story is the only one which transcends "talking heads syndrome." (Murphy's story could have been better had more attention been paid to its lively first-person viewpoint character.) The Silverberg story has been nominated for both the Hugo and the Nebula. Since the balloting will be decided before this review sees print, I can indulge myself and say that it doesn't strike me as award material.

THE SHINING FALCON

by Josepha Sherman
Avon, 1989, \$3.95

Maria is the daughter of a nobleman, but when her father is falsely accused of treason, she and her family dare face the magic of the Old Forest as they flee for their lives. Finist, the magically talented prince of a distant city, turns to the Old Forest to avoid the treacherous plots of his cousin Ljuba. They seem fated to be lovers--except that Maria has been taught all her life to hate and fear the magic which Finist uses as naturally as breathing.

This book won the Compton Crook Award for Best First Novel of 1989. It's an easy book to like. Starting from Eleventh Century Russian folklore (though she also includes such Tolkienesque touches as the riddle-game), the author spins a charming light fantasy--a "romance" in both senses. The characters are engaging if a trifle shallow, the style bright and attractive. This novel is quite entertaining. Recommended for the fantasy reader.

BORDERS OF INFINITY

by Lois McMaster Bujold
Baen, 1989, \$3.95

Here we have three novellas concerning the further adventures of the author's favorite character, Lord Miles Vorkosigan, AKA "Admiral Naismith", mercenary commander and secret intelligence officer. In "The Mountains of Mourning", young Miles--his own body twisted and stunted by pre-natal poisoning --is sent into the hills of Barrayar to investigate the murder of a deformed infant. In "Labyrinth", another mission of the Dendarii Mercenaries comes unglued, leaving Miles holding the bag and single-handedly rescuing a rather unusual girl from durance vile. In the title story, the hero must use every means at his disposal to re-instill discipline in a mob of dispirited POWs. In each case, Miles must rely on his intelligence rather than his fragile body to save the day.

It would be gratifying to report that, "Ms. Bujold has written another wonderfully entertaining book" --which is true-- and leave it at that. However, it seems to me there's a larger question here. Is every human life worth preserving at any cost? For better or for worse, our society has decided, "yes". (This is the line of reasoning which leads responsible adults to agonize over whether society has a moral right to rid itself of such vermin as serial killer Ted Bundy.) Ms. Bujold has bought whole-heartedly into the stock "yes, every life is worth preserving" position. I'm not saying she's wrong, I'm just saying there are two sides to the question. In reading Borders of Infinity, I felt for the first time that the author's zealous defense of her position detracted from the reading experience.

SASSINAK

by Anne McCaffrey and Elizabeth Moon
Baen, 1990, \$4.95

When Sassinak was twelve, they raided her colony planet, killed her family, and sold her into slavery. She vowed to escape, and did. She also vowed to pay "them" back, and made a start on that too, as a "Fleet" officer dedicated to the suppression of the slave trade.

This book is eventually congruent with McCaffrey's Dinosaur Planet books, and aimed at roughly the same market. Not quite a perfect match to McCaffrey's usual style (for one thing it's less overtly emotional), Sassinak still adheres firmly to her tried-and-true formula of injustice/rebellion/redemption/rededication. This is a fine example of "cheer for the brave boys and girls in uniform"

space opera. As long as you don't expect more, you'll probably enjoy it.

RED DWARF

A television series review.

Three million years in the future, the mining vessel Red Dwarf wanders the galaxy aimlessly. The crew have long since died off--as, presumably have the rest of the human race. The sole survivors are gutter-mouthed mechanic Lister (Craig Charles), who was in suspended animation for three million years, and a hologram-simulation of his pompous and long-dead roommate Rimmer (Chris Barrie), whom the ship's computer (Norman Lovett) has generated to keep Lister company.

This British comedy (shown in my area on PBS; you may have to search for it where you live) is not so much into storytelling as it is a vehicle for the characters to get off one-liners. Lister, having created a hologram fried-egg-chili-&-chutney sandwich for Rimmer, urges him to eat it "before the bread dissolves". Rimmer mournfully recalls a sexual encounter which last a total of twelve minutes, "...and that included the time it took to eat the pizza." Both the humor and the language are intermittently funny, though occasionally my American ear loses out to a Britishism. Charles, a semi-dreadlocked black who gives the impression of having started as a stand-up comic, in particular speaks with a glutinous Ringo-ish accent which sometimes opaques out on me.

On the whole, though, this is good light fun. If you see someone at a convention with a silver "H" on their forehead, it means the person is a hologram-simulation. So now you know. [*]



Tape & Book Reviews by Lan

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BWANA/BULLY!

by Mike Resnick
Tor, 1991, \$3.99

Special Edition of Bully!
Axolotl Press, 1990, \$10.00 (Trade pb)
(PO Box 1227, Eugene, OR 97449)

Bwana is a novella in the Kirinyaga series of Mike Resnick, the third in the set of short stories set on that planetoid in orbit around Earth (NOT on another planet as is written in the backcover blurb). The Kikuyu are suffering because the hyenas are getting bolder and attacking domestic animals and children. Koriba, the mundumugu (witch doctor) knows that they attacks will disappear as the balance of game returns, but his people are not as certain as he, so they send for a hunter to take care of the problem. The Hunter is a Maasai, who decides to stay and create his own utopia after killing many of the hyenas and other game. Bwana eventually becomes a greater nuisance than the hyena (just as the mundumugu predicted), upsetting the Kikuyu social system and way of life. In a battle of wits and trickery, Koriba "arranges" for the Hunter, Bwana, to leave.

In this installment of the Kirinyaga stories, Mike shows how one man can upset a society, and the dangers of asking someone with a different set of values and cultural background to take care of problems you can/could take care of yourself. The immediate or easiest solution is not necessarily the best one, and although at first ignored by his people in this matter, Koriba is still the mundumugu and helps them in his own Kikuyu way. It's an effective story with a lesson for everyone.

Bully! is an alternate history novella in which Teddy Roosevelt attempts to bring Americanism and Democracy to the tribes of central Africa. I know very little about early 20th Century American history, so I can't say where the actual branching point in time is to make this an alternate history. Still, my lack of historical knowledge did not detract from my enjoyment of the story.

Roosevelt enters Africa as a hunter and statesman, uses the ivory poachers as an "army" escort to make contacts with various tribes in the Congo, and organizes a loose federation of them to wrest control of the territory from the Belgian government. Everything seems to be going well, as far as Teddy is concerned, but his concept of Democracy and the

natives' concept are quite different, and the resulting conflicts are intriguing.

Mike once again comes up with a good idea, executed it superbly, and shows his understanding of the African natives.

BORN BURNING

by Thomas Sullivan
Dutton, 1989, \$18.95

A chair, carved from the heart of an ancient teak tree in China before the birth of Christ is the central figure in this story. Handed down from generation to generation for centuries, its origins became shrouded in obscurity and new "origins" took their place. It finally ended up as a family heirloom, a symbol of patriarchal succession for the family business of auto parts manufacturing in the Detroit area. Succession of designation of heir occurred on the 7th birthday of the eldest-born male, and all seemed well until Joey Whitehall sat in it and couldn't stop screaming.

Joey's fears of the chair were not groundless, although they seemed that way to his parents, and his uncle Lucien. Joey did feel say when his stepbrother, who was older, was given the honor, but Chip disappeared, and then it was Joey's "honor".



It should have been his all along, since he was the natural heir, but Joey's sensitivity to the chair and its memories caused him fear and anguish.

Then his father dies mysteriously, and his mother invites his father's brother, Uncle Lucian, an artist and Joey's father's younger brother, to share their home, and Luce becomes a surrogate parent, forcing Joey to face up to his fears and the chair itself. From Joey's eyes, it seems that he is being set up to be killed....

The story is told with skill and amazing imagery. The words flow smoothly and create strange pictures. An added point of enjoyment for me is that many of the scenes are local, which made the reading more pleasant. Since Thomas Sullivan lives locally, that made a lot of sense. (Additionally, Tom used to be my swim coach, which made me look forward to reading this novel; I am quite pleased with his work.) I recommend this to horror fans, and people who enjoy strong imagery.

NIGHTLIGHT

by Michael Cadnum
St. Martin's Press, 1989, 15.95

Ever since author Ed Bryant and book reviewer, the late Don C. Thompson, recommended this book to read, I looked for it. After I found a copy, it was on my "to-be-read-soon" shelf for a few months before I had the time to get to it. I should not have waited; with those two strong recommendations I should have set time aside immediately.

Paul Wright is a restaurant reviewer for a small paper in San Francisco, and his Aunt Mary calls him about her son, Paul's cousin Len (an artist and photographer). Len has disappeared, and the reason might be something to do with Len's hobby of trying to photograph ghosts, which could cause family embarrassment should she go to the police. Mary implores Paul to find her son, to which he agrees. With his girlfriend Lise, Paul heads for the Parker Cabin, a place that Len had rented, and his last known whereabouts. The cabin sits on an island and there while the bridge is swept away, strange and chilling things begin to happen. Where is Len? Why did he leave his camera and recording equipment behind? And what about the same terrible dream that Paul, Lise and Mary all had?

Like the Tom Sullivan book (above), the words flow smoothly and call up strange images. While Born Burning delights in expanded pictures and images, Nightlight uses a condensed poetical language, and more meaning is packed into each word and phrase. Michael Cadnum is a poet, and has published a couple of books of poetry, so he draws on his power over words to create a fast-moving story which reaches a thrilling climax. Like Sullivan,

Cadnum concentrates more on the psychological horror than the wet, explicit images of a Clive Barker or Richard Laymon. I highly recommend this novel, and I look forward to Cadnum's next one.

ORION IN THE DYING TIME

by Ben Bova
Tor, 1990, \$18.95

Orion was created by an advanced future human race and sent through time to help the early human race through various important points in history. This time Orion ends up guiding early man through prehistoric times, and fighting an advanced reptilian race which wants Earth for itself. The creatures had already seeded the Earth with its own animal life (dinosaurs), and prepares to eliminate humans and overruns of the primitive life so that their people can move in. Their star-sun, a dim red dwarf companion to Sol, is unstable and beginning to contract. The survival of their race depends on moving to Earth. And Orion works to prevent that.

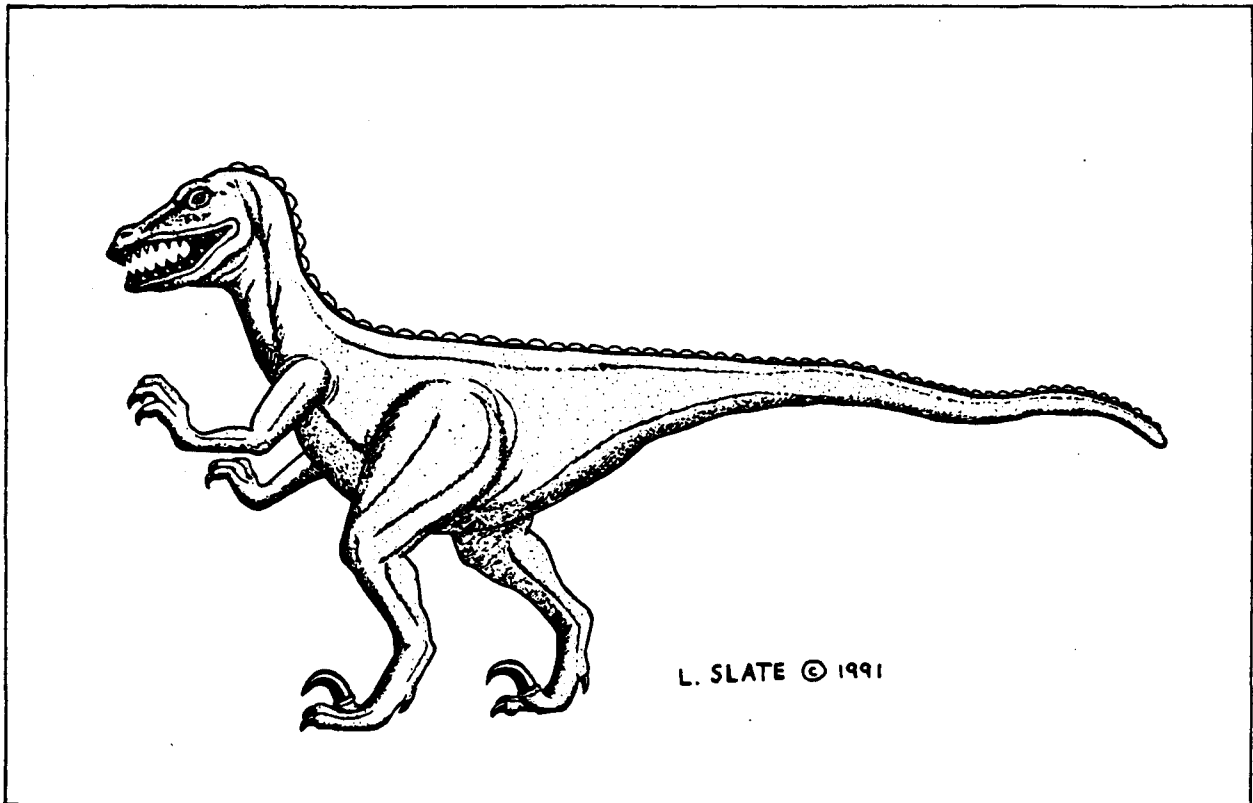
As usual, Bova's story-telling hooked me from page one and carried me through in a fast-paced adventure. His interweaving of many plots and themes, and a science fictional story of why things developed as they did reminds me of the power and reasons behind myths. Bova is creating his own mythology of the origins of the human race through these Orion stories, and I'm left begging for more. Fortunately, he writes in the afterword that he is far from finished telling us about Orion. To that I can only say, "Good!"

VOYAGERS III: STARBROTHERS

by Ben Bova
Tor Hardcover, 1990, \$18.95

Keith Stoner was the astronaut who boarded the alien vessel which entered our star system with the ultimate message: we are not alone. In the first novel of this trilogy, Voyagers, Keith chose to die in that spaceship. In the second novel, The Alien Within, Keith is revived. When he exposed himself to the vacuum of space, it was more like going into cryogenic suspension, and his lover Jo Camerata launched a major technological offensive to rescue his body, and revive him.

Now in Starbrothers, Keith is trying to complete the mission imposed upon him by the alien residing within his body. The biotechnology which has kept Keith young, alive, in more-than-human physical condition, and endowed him with near telepathic powers, would be available to the human race, provided they are prepared to accept such technology. Keith's alien brother shows him two possibilities,



examples of what had happened to other races who were to use nanotechnology: one destroyed itself; the other overpopulated their planet so that it could no longer support its people.

Keith, with the help of his alien starbrother, has been working to prepare the human race to strike a balance between the two: understand the dangers of overpopulation, and that we are indeed a global community, with responsibilities toward each other. However, there are still selfish people in the world who want personal power over all other considerations, and these pose threats not only to Keith and Jo and their family, but the human race.

Corporate and political intrigue combine with the wonders of SF in a fascinating story about one of the possible futures of the human race. And Starbrothers nicely wraps up Bova's trilogy (although I do see room for another novel, but I'm not sure what direction it would take). Each of the three novels stands alone, but they would best be read in order.

MAZEWAY

by Jack Williamson
Del Rey, 1990, \$17.95

In this sequel to Lifeburst, Jack Williamson shows the aftermath of the collapse of the Web, the elevator system to space orbit around Earth. The Eldren, the ancient spacfarang race that has been living in the Oort cloud outside the orbit of Plu-

to, has been watching the human race, shaking their collective head in dismay over its primitive and violent nature. Some humans who were in space, even in the Oort cloud, have tried to learn the Edren way of life, a non-violent philosophy of cooperation, with the help of "younger" ancient races who still remember their primitive past.

Benn Dain heard of the test, the Game of Blade and Stone, which, if passed, could gain favor with the Eldren, and show that the Human Race was worthy of being helped in the aftermath of the Collapse. Other humans, from Earth, go to the Game, with the intention of gaining favor from the Eldren, so that the planet can be opened up for exploitation of its resources for other alien races, over which Roxane Kwan and Diego Bolivar would preside. Which would win? And who would have the ultimate control of Earth?

To complicate matters, the Eldren are under attack, and they seem completely oblivious to the violence being wreaked on them. Will their millennia of peaceful living be their downfall?

Although slow in a few spots, Jack Williamson shows an understanding of a world in decay, and captures the alienness of creatures different from humans. He portrays well the character of Benn, who has spent most of his life among aliens, and the frustrating, amusing and uncomfortable feelings Benn has when he meets and says he loves Roxane (the first human female other than his mother he has ever met).

Jack Williamson continues to write interesting

and exciting science fiction in his 6th decade as an author. And I continue to enjoy reading his work. I hope he writes for another few decades.

VOYAGE TO THE RED PLANET

by Terry Bisson
Morrow, 1990, \$16.95

This is the first Bisson novel I've read, and I found it a very pleasant experience. Of course, this is not a serious novel, but a story most definitely told tongue-in-cheek.

At one point in Earth's future history, a ship was made to make a trip to Mars, but when the US went bankrupt, it sold many of its "subsidiaries" to private industries. NASA was bought by Disney, and the proposed Mars Mission was halted. The public and Disney thought that little had been done before the demise of the mission, but shrouded in secrecy (and hidden by space junk) was the Mary Poppins, the ship stocked and ready for its Martian odyssey.

A Movie executive gathers some of the proposed crew who had been sworn to secrecy, hires a couple of actors, salvages the ship, and the group heads for Mars for an on-location movie shoot.

Bisson satirizes the corporations, the government and bureaucracy, as well as Hollywood and the American way of life. His off-the-cuff comments through either the narration or his characters are incisive cuts into many of today's customs and mores. In a way, some of his proposed extrapolations for the future of the world seem all too chillingly appropriate.

Voyage to the Red Planet is fun to read, and can even be thought-provoking when you think more seriously about it.

HOME GOING

by Frederik Pohl
DelRey, 1989, \$16.95

Sandy Washington is an Earthman. Unfortunately, he was raised in space in 1.32 Earth gravity by aliens, the Hakh'hli, who had rescued him as an unborn child from his parents, a human couple who were stranded in space while the nations of Earth had a war. And he is now returning home, to an Earth which seems to have stopped transmitting, and to all indications of the aliens, is dead.

Earth, however, is far from dead, and is anxiously awaiting the return of its lost son. But having been raised by aliens, is Sandy human or alien in loyalty?

Fred Pohl does a wonderful job and showing both the alien culture and the transformed human one. He



throws in little humorous touches which make the novel a delightful read. Since all Sandy knows about Earth is from the radio and TV transmissions which the Hakh'hli have recorded, he has no practical experience meeting members of the opposite sex, eating rituals, the purpose of bathing and changing clothes, etc. This sets him up for some humorous situations.

This is a good, fun read.

NIGHTFALL

by Isaac Asimov and Robert Silverberg
Doubleday/Foundation/SFBC, 1990, \$??.

I admit to approaching this novel with trepidation. Most novels which are expanded from shorter works do not approach the quality of novels that were conceived as such from their inception. There are exceptions: Greg Bear's Blood Music and Orson Scott Card's Ender's Game are two well-known ones. But I was not sure that the Good Doctor and Bob Silverberg could expand Asimov's short story "Nightfall" into a novel that could compare with Dean McLaughlin's version, Dawn. I would say they

pulled it off quite differently than McLaughlin's rendition, and thus the two "novelizations" of the short story are on an equal footing.

Asimov and Silverberg begin their story about a year before the actual eclipse is to occur. Two things mentioned in the short story--the amusement park ride "Tunnel of Darkness" and the excavations

of earlier civilizations destroyed by fire--are expanded upon and add to the interest of the story. Tension is built up to the event itself, and lots of description of the effects of the eclipse is added. A long denouement follows, showing how various groups attempt to hold civilization together afterwards.

Overall, I can say I enjoyed the novel immensely, much more than I thought I would, and I highly recommend it.

DARK MATTER

by Garfield Reeves-Stevens
Doubleday, 1990, \$19.95

The more novels of Garfield Reeves-Stevens that I read, the more impressed I am with his writing. He has the ability to write stories which cross genre lines. In Nighteyes he took the standard UFO abduction plot and mixed it with a viable SF storyline. In Children of the Shroud, he mixed SF, horror and televangelism. In Dark Matter, a good SF theme is intertwined with horror, mystery, and a serial killer.

Anthony Cross is a genius, a research scientist who is searching for complete understanding of quantum physics. His team is funded by a consortium of businesses which takes his discoveries and turns them into saleable products. In return Anthony and his people can do research to their hearts' content. As soon as the SHARP research labs becomes associated with a series of brutal murders, most of the team begins to squabble--more so than before--but Cross continues to out-think and leap ahead of his colleagues. As I said, he's a genius.

Katherine Duvall is a detective who is not assigned to the case of the serial killings. She became involved, and though on a forced vacation, continued to investigate until she gets caught in such complex events that she herself is accused of being the serial killer.

The science, mystery, the horror of the killings, and the complex characters who investigate, cover up and commit the crimes, are all so well done that the reader is pulled through the novel at a breakneck pace. It is one of the better books I've read in the past few months, and I recommend it very highly.

WHO LET HIM IN HERE?

by Tom Smith
Dodeka Records, Ltd., 1991, \$11.00
(1724 Oakton St., Evanston, IL 60202)

This long-awaited tape was not disappointing. Tom Smith has regaled and baffled filkers and



listeners as filksings for several years now, and finally he has a tape out so that others who have not heard him before can hear his insanity. Bill Roper, who produced the tape, tracked Tom through several conventions to get the songs taped, and so this is essentially an "in concert" performance. Thus, the minor glitches and the occasional off-key note can be easily forgiven (in fact, they aren't much noticeable unless you've heard the tape as much as I have!).

The opening track is "I Want to be Peter Lorre," which had a colleague of mine asking at what coffee house Tom performed. His Peter Lorre voice is extremely good, not to mention the lyrics. His other original music and lyric songs are excellent: "Hellraiser" (based on the Clive Barker film), "307 Ale" (a drinking song much in the style of Irish/Scottish/English/Australian drinking songs), "A Boy and His Frog" (a tribute to Jim Hensen, recorded at its premiere performance, MARCON, 1990), "Walking Along the Beach..." (a bright song worthy of being categorized as "-ose"), "The Return of the King, Uh-huh" (his only Tolkien song), "Superman's Sex Life Boogie" (probably his first very successful filksong), "My Unicorn Song" (which twists the idea of the unicorn story as only Tom can), and "PQR (You Ain't Seen Nothing Yet)" (based on Clive Barker's Nightbreed). These songs are a mixture of the humorous and the serious, but each one seems to be in a category of its own.

Along with these are a few others. "Curmudgeon's Song" is a rewrite of the lyrics of "Johnny Be Fair" by Buffy St. Marie, with humorous results. "Crystal Gale Killed Frank Herbert" parodies "Don't It Make My Brown Eyes Blue" with the Dune saga. "Rotten Robin" takes the Boy Wonder from the Batman Comics and does strange things to him to the music of "Rockin' Robin". "The Worst Job There Is" parodies Julia Ecklar's "Crane Dance", and in the nar-

native, "The Serial Killer", Tom does in the Thomas Covenant Nonalogy, but assures the listener than all serials can fit into it.

There really is no way to adequately describe what Tom Smith can do in his parodies, in his humorous or serious stuff. You've got to listen to him to believe it. We in the Midwest have the advantage of being able to pop in on him at a filk. Elsewhere, they listeners have to rely on home-made tapes, or if they were lucky to be at CONCONANCE last year, he was performing live there. Now the filking community at large can become acquainted with his work, be amused, saddened, uplifted, and just plain weirded out by his stuff. I know I've done my part to push his tape. Buy it; you won't regret it.

THE CIPHER

by Kathe Koja
Dell/Abyss, 1991, \$4.50

Reading books written by people you know can be difficult. You don't want to tell them it's bad if you didn't like it, nor do you want to gush over it if the novel is very good. And worse, you do not want to tell them you enjoyed it if you didn't. The most part situation, however, is if the novel is both--not just an okay read, but something between real good and real bad. Which is the case here.

Nicholas Reid and Nikota discover a "hole-to-someplace" in the basement of Nick's apartment building. Insects and rodents die horribly if they enter the hole. They get a video of what's inside, which keeps changing each time it is played, and at one point, while preventing Nikota from entering it, Nick's arm slips into the "Funhole" (as they have named it), and a miniature hole appears on his hand. It oozes liquid, it exudes an odor anywhere from sickening sweet to a gagging stench. And soon a cult of artists grows up around Nick, all looking for something "new" to experience. There is no explanation for the funhole, nor does there seem to be much of a direction for the novel to go, other than figuring out just when Nikota or Nick will enter the hole itself.

This is a disturbing novel. Neither of the main characters are decent people, and it is difficult to identify with them. Neither Nick nor Nakota are inherently evil, just disgusting in the way they treat each other and other people. They are not nice, and there is little focus on the nicer characters in the book, except how they are used and abused by these two. It is also written in the first person singular point of view, that of Nick, in a stream of consciousness style which slows down reading. It reminded me somewhat of David Palmer's Emergence, but his novel was more a shorthand diary

method than this stream of consciousness. It also showed some aspects of Elmore Leonard's style, and though this is a mystery of sorts, nothing is ever resolved. As a story, as a horror novel, as a mystery (what is the funhole?), this failed with me. There were passages that stretched over vast lengths of (internal) time with nothing going on, thus becoming tedious.

On the other hand, Kathe displays some wonderful strengths in here. She has a strong grasp of prose and description. This novel is certainly something new in the horror field, which may send the field in new directions. Observing and experiencing the disintegration of a mind was fascinating (if a little boring at times). One wonders how such a pretty woman (and Kathe is very pretty) came to write such stomach-turning stuff (then I ask myself that about a number of nice authors I know who do the same!).

There is hidden power here, and Kathe has not yet explored her own writing skills completely. She has a lot to offer in her writing, so I do look forward to what she'll be doing next. She will have two more books out through Abyss.

FACE THE FLAME

by Pete Grubbs
Wail Songs, 1987, \$11.00
(PO Box 29888, Oakland, CA 94604)

To be direct, I was a little disappointed in this tape. I have met Pete, heard him sing in a number of filks, concert slots, and so on, and have enjoyed his light country style. He is much better in person, on stage, and at this point in his singing career than on this recording. When I looked at the copyright date, I found out why. In the 3-4 years since the tape was recorded he has improved tremendously, and I was comparing Pete to himself at different ability levels. Upon hearing the tape again, with this in mind, it's not too bad. It has some of the characteristics of a new singer (the impression of trying to be perfect and good, but a bit of nervousness apparent on the tape). As an introduction to Pete Grubbs' work, it is a good tape. But I think it's time for another one which will show what Pete can do now.

FOUR ON THE FLOOR

by Renee (Arwen) Aiper
(Privately produced), 1991, \$5.00

Renee has four songs on this tape (thus inspiring the title), which showcase her abilities in voice, writing and arranging. She is helped by others, of course, who are given prominent credit on the j-card.

Side one starts with "Ballad of the Tin Man," written by Phil Textor and Renee, and arranged by her and Stan Logan. It is a science fictional story about a robot. "(Beethoven)9" is a humorous song using the choral melody from the last movement of Beethoven's 9th Symphony.

The second side opens with the humorous "Mr. Oseman", a parody of the 60's rock song "Mr. Postman." Renee and Stan worked on the arrangement of this song. The final track is a serious song written by Renee and arranged by Ray Nacarrf, "Object on Display." It's a song written from the heart, which talks about people who have problems: someone confined to a wheelchair, a person who is overweight, and a man who is gay whose family doesn't understand him.

The production quality is very good, and the arrangements matching well with the songs. The original ones by Renee and friends are more memorable over the long run, particularly "Object on Display," which I found running through my head at odd times for weeks after hearing it. Renee seems to be more noted for her humorous parodies, but this shows her skill in writing serious works as well. I hope to see a full tape with her work on it soon.

SOOTHSAYER

by Mike Resnick
Ace, 1991, \$4.95

Penelope Bailey seemed like a nice but frightened little girl. When Mouse rescued her from the alien who kidnapped her, she found out that several bounty hunters, two governments, and other organizations were out to find Penelope. That's why she seemed frightened. But the reason for her pursuit was Penelope's ability to see futures, and to choose which she would want to happen. For a child about 8 years old, this is a dangerous ability as well as profitable. And thus she has become the center of a manhunt unparalleled since the pursuit of Santiago. Using her abilities, Penelope manipulates the Yankee Clipper, the Iceman, the Forever Kid, and the Mock Turtle to save herself. Even Mouse, who loves her like the daughter she never had, is uncertain if Penelope is using her. But the ability is real, and the possible results most dangerous.

Mike Resnick again brings together a cast of colorful and memorable characters in this the first book of his Oracle trilogy. We visit exotic, and not-so-exotic places, as Mouse and Penelope try to out-distance, or at least outwit, their pursuers. Mike further builds the setting for most of his novels by delving deeper into the Inner Frontier, and ties this book into that background with references to characters and places from other novels.

The story is attractive, by which I mean there is tension and interest pulling the reader from one chapter to the next. I stayed up late to finish it, two hours later than when I had wanted to put it down and retire. Mike has another winner as an individual novel, and a good start to his trilogy.

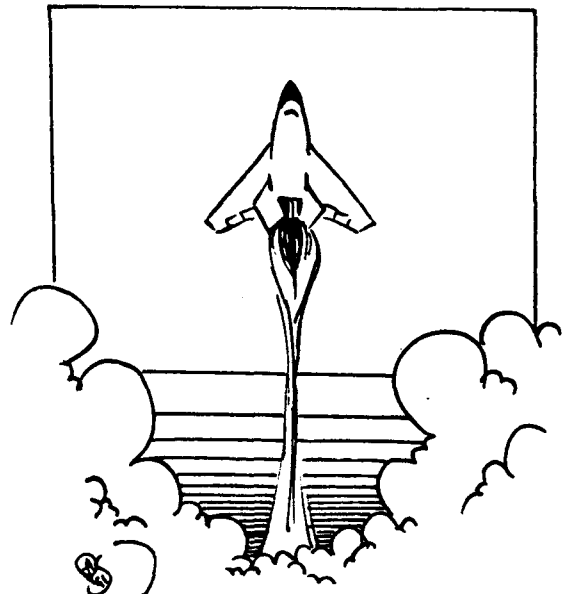
ORACLE

by Mike Resnick
Ace, 1991, \$??.??

In this second book of the Oracle trilogy, Mike picks up the story begun in Soothsayer. It is fourteen years later, Penelope has grown into a woman, but no one seems to know where she is. The Democracy of Man suspects that she is guiding the aliens of the Alpha Crepella system so that they do not enter an alliance with the democracy. All agents who have been sent to rescue/kill her have never returned. The Iceman is hired, who in turn hires the Whistler to investigate the planet of the Blue Devils. Meanwhile, 32, the head of the search for Penelope, engages the Injun (offering a full pardon for the crimes that had sent him to prison this time) to go to the Alpha Crepella system, and kill Penelope (and anyone else who stands in the way).

All along the way, as each agent draws nearer to the place the Oracle is kept, the thought that their actions are not their own bothers them. The reader is sure that the Oracle is Penelope, but the speculations of 32, the Injun and Whistler, add to the suspense, making this another taut, action-filled novel. The Iceman also arrives in the system and eventually confronts the Oracle, which makes the reader wonder how powerful the Oracle is.

As before, there are colorful characters and exotic backgrounds (although there seems to be nothing too exotic about Hades, the planet on which the Oracle resides, well-named because of its high



temperature--the moons are more exotic). This sequel, Oracle, is about as good as its predecessor, Soothsayer. I am anxiously awaiting the third book of the trilogy.

CIRCUIT BREAKER

by Melinda Snodgrass
Berkley, 1987, \$2.95

This is the second book of a trilogy, and I do not have the third (I picked up the first book after I finished this one). The first couple of chapters introduce the characters and the background of the first novel, Circuit. With those foundations laid, Melinda launches into a story about illegal practices of the US government against the Martian colonists (who happen to be Mormon--which in itself sets up some minor subplots and conflicts). Cabot Huntington is a justice whose Circuit Court includes Mars and the asteroids. (Ha! Bet you thought (as I did) that "Circuit" in the title meant something electronic!) Melinda draws on her years as a lawyer, as well as her readings in SF, for the background of the novel.

The Jared colony wants to terraform Mars, and pay for it by the sale of diamonds from the mines of Mars (which are dangerous to work in, so their first purchase of equipment will be mining equipment). Gemetics, the largest manufacturer of synthetic diamonds, doesn't want more competition, so the company contacts the Chief of Staff of the US President, Lis Varllis, and she sets up a legal situation with Protectors of Worlds, OSHA, and the EPA, which Justice Huntington will have to untangle. The underhanded dealings, the spy leaking information from Mars about the colonists' plans, the help of the independent asteroid miners, and the discovery of an "artifact" which was left by aliens some 5,000,000 years ago by scientists working on Mars, all intertwine to make for an interesting novel.

Melinda juggles a lot of plots and she almost resolves all of them; she drops a couple of them, which, I suppose, are picked up in the next novel of the trilogy. The writing is good, although slow in spots. When she gets the action scenes moving, there's no putting the book down. The characters are well defined, even the minor ones, and being a woman, she can certainly portray them accurately in print. From Jennifer McBride, Cabot's significant other, to Jeane Hudson, wife of Darnell Hudson, president of the Jared colony on Mars (and Prophet of the Mormon Church there), to the sexy Amadea Kim Nu, Melinda shows the variety of fully developed characters and motivations for each.

I originally decided to read the book because Melinda Snodgrass was the Special Guest at MARCON

(she was also going to be one of the Guests of Honor last year, but family matters intervened and prevented her from showing up; I also missed talking to her at the Worldcon in Holland [see my trip report]), and I wanted to say something to Melinda, when I finally met her, about her writing and not just the work she did with Star Trek: The Next Generation. [She is a wonderful person; I had a few brief but interesting conversations with her at MARCON.] But what started out as a topic for conversation has turned into another author whose books I'll be looking for. I need to find Final Circuit, and anything else she has written.

STALKING THE WILD RESNICK

by Mike Resnick
NESFA Press, 1991, \$???.??
(Box G, MIT Branch P.O., Cambridge, MA 02139-0910)

Like Through Darkest Resnick with Gun and Camera, this is a collection of essays, articles, stories and a travelogue (which you can read here on page 36, with illustrations). Mike writes some interesting commentaries on his African stories, particularly the Kirinyaga series, as well as presenting a new episode in that series. Some of the pieces have been printed elsewhere, but the story "Song of a Dry River" has only been published in this book. So send to NESFA for your copy, or see if one of the major booksellers at your favorite con has copies for sale. It's well worth the price they're asking.

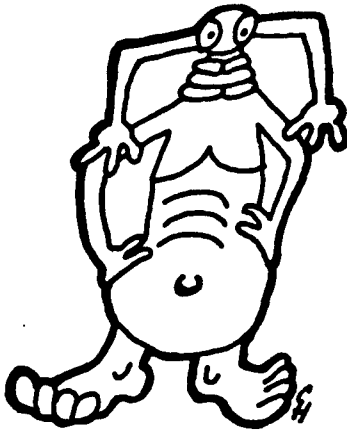
A THUNDER ON NEPTUNE

by Gordon Eklund
Morrow/SFBC, 1989, \$?.??

For those looking for an "old-fashion" SF novel with trips to other planets, aliens, and a sense of wonder, this is that novel. Gordon Eklund pays tribute to a number of authors I remember reading while growing up: Wollheim, Heinlein, Simak and Clarke. Different parts and aspects of A Thunder on Neptune reminded me of each of these authors. Yet, the story is a combination of elements which Eklund brings together and makes his own.

Danny Hawkins was a young lad who wanted to be a scientist like his father, and was recruited for a secret project: being transformed into *something* which can survive the conditions on the surface of Neptune. An additional incentive was that he might find his father, presumed dead after being transformed in the same way to explore Neptune's surface and not returning. And the possibility of indigenous life was suspected.

Characterization for most of the players here is



minimal, though Dr. Samuel Globe, his assistant Eileen Kinugasa, and Danny are fairly well developed. The story is the main focus of the book, and the mystery of what is happening on the planet, and why people are insane when they return. The theory is that an adult mind cannot adapt to the change involved and they go mad from the experience, which is why Danny and other children are used. Still, Eklund throws out bits of the background which indicate a larger world beyond the thrust of the story.

The novel is a page-turner, so get a copy and enjoy it.

MUSIC AFTER MIDNIGHT

by Decadent Dave Clement
Dodeka Records, 1991, \$11.00
(1724 Oakton St., Evanston, IL 60202)

This is not actually a folk tape. Dave Clement does not write his own music, but sings pieces written by others, particularly Stan Rogers and other folk singers, particularly Canadian. His voice is strong, clear, and versatile. He sings better than Stan Rogers or Pete Seeger, though he reminds me of both; seeing him in concert is a treat, since he has Seeger's mannerisms while singing. But listen to Dave's voice, and you know he's better.

He loves to have people sing along, which is a problem with the tape, as this was recorded live at MINICON and CONGENIAL, and you can hear too much of the audience in some of the songs. Still, there is no mistaking the quality of Dave's voice, nor of excellence of his performances. He brings new life to Stan Rogers' "Fogarty's Cove," "Watching the Apples Grow," "The Idiot," "The Field Behind the Plow," and "Northwest Passage," and tearful sympathy to "45 Years." In the introduction to "Princes of the Clouds" Dave gives tribute to its writer Tony Kaduck, then proceeds to enthrall the listener of the wonders of flight. Dave does a good job with the other tracks on the tape: "No Expectations,"

"Sassafras," "San Francisco Bay Blues," "Boom Gone to Bust," and "Casey Jones." The wrap-up song, Jimmy Webb's "The Highwayman", gives a good strong finish to an excellent tape.

In the final analysis, one wonders why Dave Clement isn't singing professionally.

DR. JANE'S FOSSIL FEVER

by Dr. Jane Robinson
Thor, 1990, \$11.00
Also available on compact disc: \$XX.00
(PO Box 40312, Downey, CA 90239-1312)

Dr. Jane continues the intellectual sarcasm and madness she began in Wackademia in this her newest tape. Concentrating primarily on paleontology, Dr. Jane offers a number of songs that approach science in a humorous, and often satirical way. In particular, "Plesiosaurinthology" describes how the study of the plesiosaur was so thoroughly stacked in favor of "rowing" as the means of locomotion that no one has done further study on the creature.

The arrangements stand out on this tape--they all fit the songs in one way or another. "Graviportal Polka" is a polka, "Tyrannosaur's Lullaby" is a lullaby, though there is tension between the gentle tune and the lyrics (which adds to the humor). "The Preacher and the Prof" has the same sort of tension as the Preacher promotes the Bible with an organ background, and the Prof promotes scientific reasoning with more modern instrumentation (pun intended). A blues arrangement backs "Disappearin' Archosaur Blues" and "Labyinthodont's Lament." In a song about the joys of uncovering and discovering dinosaur bones, "Digga Bigga Bone," the style is country/western, while a dixieland/barbershop arrangement is found in "The Great Cretaceous Hadrosaur Quartet." Anyone who has worked in a museum, or a department store where displays keep changing, will sympathize with "Movin' the Bones."

Dr. Jane applies her imagination to all of these songs, which will be evident as you listen to them. A couple which stand out are "Out of the Clear Blue Sky" and "Ambition." In the former a tortoise tries to warn his fellow saurians that a comet is going to hit the Earth and cause massive destruction, whose admonitions are totally ignored. "Ambition" relates the story of the first lizard to attain flight.

If you have any interest in science, or in varied musical styles, this is a good tape to get. Thor records, and Dr. Jane, have put out another winner (and I'd say Jane's best to date!).

THE TEARS OF THE SINGERS
(Star Trek novel #19)

by Melinda Snodgrass

Pocket, 1984 (third printing), \$4.50

Since I only read Star Trek novels that have been recommended by friends, I have not been disappointed by any of them. This one was not recommended by anyone, but considering what I knew about Melinda's writing from an interview in Starlog, and reading Circuit Breaker (see review above), I was happy to give this one a go.

The seal-like inhabitants of the planet Taygeta are killed for their tears which solidify into jewels upon death. In the same area as the planet, a space/time warp appears, and is expanding rapidly. It already swallowed a spaceship, and threatens both Klingon and Federation space. Spock is convinced that there is a connection between the singers of Taygeta and the warp.

In The Tears of the Singers, Melinda Snodgrass concentrates on Uhurah, rather than the "big three" of the Star Trek universe. She fills out Uhurah's character with little details, although some of the relational situations with the musician Maslin seem rather contrived. Better drawn in characterization are the Klingons, Commander Kor and his wife Kali, who are there with three ships to investigate the matter. Kor, having matched wits and might with Kirk before, has a healthy respect for the Federation Captain, and a truce is struck while the investigation ensues. The solution is somewhat obvious, though slightly different than I expected.

Melinda draws on her power with character and dialogue to make this an entertaining novel. Her background in music and opera also serves her well here. Although not as satisfying as Circuit Breaker this is a pleasant, and sometimes intensely emotional, read.

FOR ALL MY CLOSEST FRIENDS

by Naomi Pardue

Wall Songs, 1991, \$11.00

(PO Box 29888, Oakland, CA 94604)

Naomi has been a friend for a long time. I've enjoyed her quiet, gentle voice, and the wonderful lyrics of the songs she writes. Any time she appears on a folk tape, however, one can barely hear her. The recordings are usually made from live folk songs, and Naomi's voice doesn't carry very far to the microphones, particularly when there is other noise in the room.

Now, finally, Naomi has her own tape. Her voice is easy to hear, and her lyrics easy to understand. As a songwriter, Naomi is quite versatile. Her songs range from serious to humorous, from sad to happy, from disenchantment to contentment. The only drawback is that a lot of them have the same beat. There is only one cut in which the arrangement calls attention to itself: in "Everything Possible" the clarinet is overpowering.

Listening to the songs, however, one can feel the power of Naomi's lyrics. She has brought fans to tears with the lead song, "My Thousand Closest Friends," and the tragic lament in "All Summer in a Day," based on the Ray Bradbury story of the same name. Other "heart strummers" include "Rob's Guitar," "To Walk Beside," "Soul of a Pioneer," and "Complacency" (about the Challenger disaster).

Her humorous songs are effective, as they sneak up on you. "Ain't It Tragic" tickles the funnybone of English Lit majors; "Zucchini Song" has much (humorous) truth for gardeners; "Ad Astra" and "Irwin Allen" end with clever punchlines.

This is a tape for easy-listening. Enjoy it.

More Book Reviews

THE SUGAR FESTIVAL

by Paul Park

SFBC, 1989, \$7.??

A book review by Robert Sabella

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First novels are not necessarily subject to the same criteria as later novels in an author's career. A later novel must be judged by such objective criteria as: Does it achieve its goals? Is the plotting adequate? The denouement? Characterization? Basic premise? But a first novel may be judged on more subjective criteria such as: Does the writer have anything new to offer? How much

promise does he/she show? Is there room for improvement?

Actually, these are Park's first two novels since, for marketing reasons (I assume), they were published originally as Soldier of Paradise (in 1987) and Sugar Rain (in 1989). But like so many series nowadays, it is actually one complete novel that reads much better together than separately.

Park is a very inventive writer indeed. He has devised a world based on our own Earth yet so marvelously twisted as to be almost unrecognizable at times. Some of the differences are rather drastic ones, and Park wastes no time justifying them (such as the sugar rain which dominates most of the second volume). Yet he has the knack of writing his way around and through the differences so that

their exoticism adds to the flavor of the book rather than detracting from it with their lack of justification and occasional filmsiness. And some of the little changes he unobtrusively drops in (such as an occasional mention of horses' beaks or people's tails) are so delightful I almost clapped with joy!

The basic premise is similar to Brian W. Aldiss' Helliconia trilogy, that of a world whose seasonal year lasts several centuries. Like Aldiss, Park assumes that society will undergo drastic upheavals during the seasonal transitions. But where Helliconia's seasonal changes destroy civilization altogether, Park's merely cause a drastic restructuring of society.

Basically this is a political story of the changes caused by impending springtime. The city of Charn has been under the grip of a dictatorial religion dominated by a privileged ruling class. But now the seeds of revolution are stirring, and I am giving nothing away by saying that planetwide chaos is inevitable.

The main concern of the book is the people involved in the impending revolution, and quite a varied cast they are! The childlike bishop of Charn, her autocratic secretary, the eccentric Prince, his sister a sheltered wife/property, his cousin a skeptical doctor, the radical leader of the revolution, the general of Charn's armies, and the list goes on. The characters alone show evidence of Park's very fertile imagination.

Like many first novels, there are weaknesses. Park is a good storyteller, but not a top-notch plotter. Almost every event that happens is telegraphed far in advance, although the actions and



reactions of the characters still make the events interesting.

The entire book is overcast with a pallor of depression. These are depressing times, and few, if any, of the characters are happy. But eventually the same feeling of depression afflicting the characters affects the reader who grows tired of feeling depressed.

But overall, Park is definitely a talent to watch. His imagination is second to none, and his ability to make you feel a part of a truly exotic world is phenomenal. If he learns to plot better and handle the overall feel of his writing better, he has the potential to turn out a saga on the level of Aldiss' Helliconia series or, dare I say it, Herbert's Dune series.]*]

THE HOLLOW EARTH:
THE NARRATIVE OF MASON ALGIERS REYNOLDS
OF VIRGINIA

Edited and with a note by Rudy Rucker
Morrow, 1990, \$18.95

A book review by Taras Wolansky

At a recent science fiction convention, a book dealer assured me that the sub-genre of "steampunk", so called, was dead at birth. The Hollow Earth gives me no grounds to contradict this opinion.

The story briefly. In 1836, on an alternative Earth much like ours, a fifteen-year-old Virginia farmboy and his slave, Otha, accompany Edgar Allan Poe on a balloon expedition to the hanging jungles and floating islands inside the hollow Earth.

Rucker's hollow Earth fantasies are exotic and entertaining, even if they cannot be taken seriously at any level. However, that only accounts for about one-third of the book. The rest takes place in one version or another of the antebellum American South. Thus, the book's problems with anachronism are particularly damaging.

The white protagonist's thoughts about blacks and about the institution of slavery will not ring true to anyone familiar with Huckleberry Finn. As Twain showed us, white Southerners did not question slavery, and more than anything tended to disregard blacks. (When Huck Finn is asked if anyone was injured in a steamship explosion, he answers, No... Two blacks were killed, he adds as an afterthought.)

Yet slavery rarely seems far from the mind of Rucker's fifteen-year-old hero. Sitting in church, when he should be preoccupied by the horrible discovery that he was robbed of all the money entrusted him, Mason spends about a page (33) thinking about slavery and a possible slave rebellion: "Maybe

we should free them first," he ruminates. (The robbery scenario is itself very implausible, but I won't go into it here.)

Not long afterward (p. 72) he hears that a runaway slave he met has been recaptured; Mason reflects on "a human spirit's innocent desire to be free." (Huck Finn was always thinking about turning in his friend Jim, the runaway, and to the end felt guilty about helping steal someone's property.)

Still later, (p. 154 and elsewhere) Mason recalls how his father had once gotten drunk and "raped" their slave housekeeper; that's not the word a slave-owner would use. And towards the end (p. 242) he remembers the good times he and Otha had had, growing up together: "The sickness of thinking him an inferior slave had not come over me until puberty. 'I'm sorry,' I told Otha... 'I was wrong.'"

During his visit to the inner Earth, Mason is exposed to radiation that turns his skin black temporarily. One might expect this to be the author's heavy-handed way of teaching Mason an obvious lesson. But giving Mason remarkably enlightened views on slavery ahead of time makes this a useless feature of the story.

Mason's anachronistic views are not confined to the issue of slavery. Aboard the ship taking the expedition to Antarctic waters he witnesses several seal hunts. And just as I'm congratulating the author for not putting 1990 opinions in the mouth of his 1836 protagonist, for once, he comes out with (p. 117): "It seems strange and cruel for men to come all this way and slaughter wantonly. ...what if those inside the Hollow Earth were to come out and treat us the way we treated seals?" A little later (p. 131) Mason further demonstrates his ecological conscience: "The creatures in this small volcanic bay were unique, and it was disturbing to think that two or three ships like the *Wasp* might wholly annihilate them."

Mason also knows things he shouldn't know. Here's what he thinks about his friend Eddie Poe (p. 87): "Poe, the poor, half-educated orphan posing as an American man of letters; Poe, the sham priest of our nonexistent culture." If Rucker wants to put in remarks like this, he should have made Mason fifty-one, not fifteen!

Mason psychoanalyzes Poe (p. 104), a neat trick for a fifteen-year-old boy in 1836, especially considering that Freud was born twenty years later: "His fears of eyes, of mouths, of cats, of whirlpools ... suggested that he had a horror of a woman's most private part."

Free-falling through the passage to the inner world, Mason instantly comprehends his new environment (p. 160): "I threw [the rock] as hard as I could, in the hope it would drive us closer to the cliff." Considering how many people, a century la-

ter, thought space travel impossible because "there's nothing to push against", this is rather clever of him.

True, the one-third of The Hollow Earth that actually takes place inside the hollow Earth is inventive, if unexciting. But the other two thirds, the historical part of this historical fantasy, is seriously flawed, as we have seen; and I have by no means exhausted the book's implausibilities.

I must add that I would be very pleased to read Rucker's responses to my points. Perhaps there really were prodigies like Mason Reynolds wandering around Virginia in 1836.

Regarded purely as entertainment, The Hollow Earth also has problems. In Edgar Rice Burroughs' paradigmatic hollow Earth tales, the protagonists get to Pellucidar on about page ten, and are immediately embroiled in desperate adventures which incidentally serve to show off the countryside and its denizens. By contrast, it takes Rucker more than half the book to get inside the Earth, and once we finally get there we are treated to what amounts to a plotless sightseeing tour.

SILENT DANCES: STARBRIDGE Book 2

by A.C. Crispin and Kathleen O'Malley
Ace, 1990, \$3.95

A book review by Maureen S. O'Brien

Silent Dances is the second book of A. C. Crispin's new StarBridge series. This series is apparently going to be about the adventures of graduates of StarBridge Academy as they conduct diplomatic relations with newly encountered sentient aliens. The first novel, StarBridge, was rather disappointing. It reminded me of nothing so much as a third-rate Andre Norton novel.

I was relieved to find that the second book was far better. Silent Dances tells the story of Tesa, a Native American who is deaf and a StarBridge trainee. Tesa's first assignment is to negotiate a treaty with the Grus, a race of intelligent, crane-like avians. Their high-alarm cries will burst human eardrums. Tesa, however, has no eardrums and thus is safe. Her experience with ASL also gives her an edge on using the Grus' language, which is composed of signs and movements.

However, not everyone wants the treaty. Some of the people who discovered the planet are disappointed that it cannot be developed as a colony. And someone is selling Grus skins. Tesa also learns that many of the Grus do not think the humans are civilized beings and want them off the planet. Tesa, however, has a chance to prove that she--and hence all humans--are worthy beings by helping a Grus leader, Taller, raising his new chick from

hatching to adolescence.

Silent Dances is a truly beautiful piece of work. Unlike most novels with young main characters, it presents Tesa as a complex character. Both her deafness and her heritage are important to her and to the story. Her relationship to the planet survey team, the anthropologists studying the Grus, her family, and the various Grus people are well-drawn and believable. Every character, including every Grus, has his or her own individual personality. The mystery of the Grus skins is actually mysterious. And Dorfan Vallejo's cover is beautiful beyond belief.

Silent Dances' verisimilitude is largely due to Kathleen O'Malley's knowledge of cranes, eagles, deaf cultures, and Native Americans. I look forward to reading other books by O'Malley, including the sequel to Silent Dances.[*]

THE MIND READERS

by Margery Allingham
Avon, 19?? (1965c), \$3.95

A book review by Maureen S. O'Brien

Ever since Mystery showed the Campion stories (with a perfectly cast Peter Davison in the title role), reprints of the Albert Campion mysteries have been showing up everywhere. They're very strange novels. They give you the feeling that something strange and mythic is going to happen any moment. Events that seem small have astonishing consequences. Oddly good and strangely evil characters abound. But in The Mind Readers, Allingham runs into science fiction territory. It was written in 1965, and it is the best novel about telepathy that I've read since The Demolished Man.

As the novel begins, scientists on both sides of the Iron Curtain are struggling to develop a device for telepathic communication and for mind reading. Then two schoolboys are found using such a device. Both the British and Soviet intelligence agencies swing into action, but neither can find what is going on. Meanwhile, the owner of an electronics empire is trying to get or destroy the device, and to obtain one of the boys for questioning. But Albert Campion happens to be related to one of the boys, so he has to find out what everyone else is doing while trying to protect them.

This novel has perhaps the greatest number of characters and the most tangled plot of all her books. The telepathic instrument is not used merely as a plot device, either. Its effects and impact on society are beautifully worked out. Its mechanism is intentionally ironic. Finally, the children who used the device are not merely pawns of fate and the Powers That Be. They manage to outwit hostile

forces--and the plan they use to do it is a wholly believable one.

So if you want to find out what a wonderful SF/Fantasy writer we lost because Allingham concentrated on mysteries, try The Mind Readers. If you like Campion and company, you may decide that her mysteries are good enough to console you for the loss.[*]

ROOFWORLD

by Christopher Fowler
Del Rey, 1990, \$4.95

A book review by Maureen S. O'Brien

A hundred years ago, London's dreamers and dereflects built a secret system of cables. Suspended from it by harnesses, people could travel from roof to roof across London, swiftly and unnoticed. Those initiated into the secret could find a new life of adventure. But now the Roofworld has been taken over by a clever and crazy leader and his band of skinheads. Only 15 remain to face them, for the rest of the Roofworld's people have fled or been killed. Their leader is discouraged and waiting for death.

In these last days, two people meet. Both have seen people running the roofs, and are determined to find out what's going on. When they finally do, Rose and Robert decide that, despite their fear and inexperience, they will help the people of the Roofworld fight their foes.

This is a difficult novel to classify: kind of a mystery, sort of a thriller, and SF in a way. It starts fast, slows down for about 40 pages, and then rushes full blast toward the end. It was really very good. If you can find it, read it![*]

THE CANONGATE STRANGLER

by Angus McAllister
Dog & Bone Press, 19??, L5.00
(175 Queen Victoria Drive, Glasgow, SCOTLAND)

A book review by Steve Green

It's appropriate that McAllister should set this parapsychological thriller in the heart of Edinburgh, considering its clear parallel with Stevenson's Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde; indeed, he has the novel's protagonist meet his nemesis in Deacon Brodie's Tavern, a popular hostelry named after the very scoundrel whose exploits inspired Stevenson's landmark work.

Whereas the book's examination of subjective morality was conducted within its central character's psyche, McAllister anthropomorphises his con-

flict by linking mild-mannered lawyer Edward Middleton telepathically to his "other", the sociopath Henry Cunningham. But even Middleton is not wholly innocent, growing to savour the adrenalin rush of murder whilst claiming to be horrified by his dopelganger's bloodlust.

It is this exploration of the tale's moral ambiguity which proves its strongest element, making up for a plot with few real surprises and a workmanlike style which places Middleton's dilemma at once removed from its readership. That said, The Canon-gate Strangler is a refreshing alternative to the superficial stalk'n'slash melodramas which currently proliferate the horror genre.

COLD FIRE

by Dean Koontz
Headline, 1991, £13.95
Putnam, 1991, \$22.95

TOADY

by Mark Morris
Corgi, 1991, £4.99

Book reviews by Ann Green

When I began reading Koontz's work, I thought he was wonderful. I read Lightning right through in bed one night; I kept Strangers in my bag and read it at bus stops, so engrossed in it that I almost missed my bus on two occasions.

So I knew there was something wrong with his latest offering when it took me a month of pick-ups and put-downs to finish it. Why? The suspense is just not there, the characters are bland, the plotting contrived and developments are telegraphed way ahead. There was none of the menace and intrigue of Stranger, little of the warmth of Watchers. What WERE, there were the silly character names which grated in The Bad Place ("Holly Thorne", for god's sake...).

Okay, nobody expects great literature from Koontz, but he CAN be a wonderfully entertaining storyteller, he IS able to write Stephen King into a cocked hat when he wants to. I feel Koontz didn't TRY very hard with this book--and that is a great shame.

Toady, on the other hand, succeeds in every respect where Cold Fire fails. It's the first novel by this young British writer and it is absolutely delicious.

The plot revolves around the adolescent members of a Horror Club, a common enough vehicle in fantasy, except that with Morris at the wheel, the road is far from familiar. The budding horror fans are naturally and truthfully drawn--so naive, so

real, and therefore all the more vulnerable to the evil unleashed at a seance organised by Toady, himself a sympathetically drawn teenage social outcast.

Morris' relative youth is apparent throughout the text. He remembers what it's like to be the clever kid picked on by the local creepzoids; he has not lost the sense of urgency and importance attached to the simplest and seemingly insignificant aspects of school life and politics; he remembers being scared shitless by his own overactive imagination. When he describes the sleepy seaside town of Starmouth, memories of cold, rainy seashores spring to life--and the gulls, the salt on dry lips, the pleasure and relief of a warm fire, and...

Look, this guy is good, very, very good. But don't take my word for it--go buy this book now. Dark fantasy as a genre contains so much utter dross and this book is a jewel, a much-needed breath of fresh sea air--liberally tainted with brimstone, that is....

BARRAYAR

by Lois McMaster Bujold
Baen, 1991, \$4.95

A book review by Mafa Cowan

Have you ever wondered why Miles is the way he is?

Well, yes, some things are obvious. Put a smarter-than-average child who's also considerably smaller and weaker than average in a world where brawn is prized over brain, and he'll overcompensate. Give him a suitable prenatal dose of nerve toxins, and it's very likely to make him more than a little twitchy. But that doesn't explain the full intricacy of his personality: the perverse delight in raising righteous hell, the compulsion to Do Something about every injustice (or do I repeat myself?), the wry insights into his own psyche, the runaway sense of humor, the strokes of genius that get him into quite as much trouble as they get him out of.

Barrayar provides the explanation. Miles is unmistakably his mother's son. You can do a lot worse than be a mama's boy if your mother happens to be Cordelia Naismith, Lady Vorkosigan.

Barrayar's story begins just after Miles' father, Admiral Aral Vorkosigan (Ret.) has agreed to become prime minister for the dying Emperor--which means prime minister for and major influence over his young son. It also means that not a few people assume he has ambitions--or could be persuaded--to sit on the throne instead of standing behind it.

This puts Cordelia into an awkward position.

She's not only not a Barrayaran; she's a citizen of Beta, which is the diametric opposite of Barrayar's militaristic, sexist, stratified, straightlaced society--and which just beat Barrayaran imperialism to a standstill. She has to learn to be a politician's wife while she's still struggling with the role of submissive Barrayar matron, and with the suspicion attached to a former enemy. Much of Barrayar politics and culture still baffle her and most of the rest outrages her. Any number of people are trying to kill her husband, her unborn son's survival depends on a dubious experimental procedure, and civil war is breaking out. What does she do?

She more or less adopts the motto, "It's you and me against the world. When do we attack?" Sound familiar?

Many of this book's details will be familiar to Bujold's faithful readers. It has political complexities, a romantic subplot, highly individual characters, thoughtful considerations counterpointing the action, and a rousing climax that might be improbable except that by the time we get there, we're convinced that all those people would do exactly what Bujold has them do. Barrayar is familiar the way the taste of chocolate is familiar --it was so good the last time, you just have to have another taste. And if you don't know how good it is, it's past time you found out.]*]

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