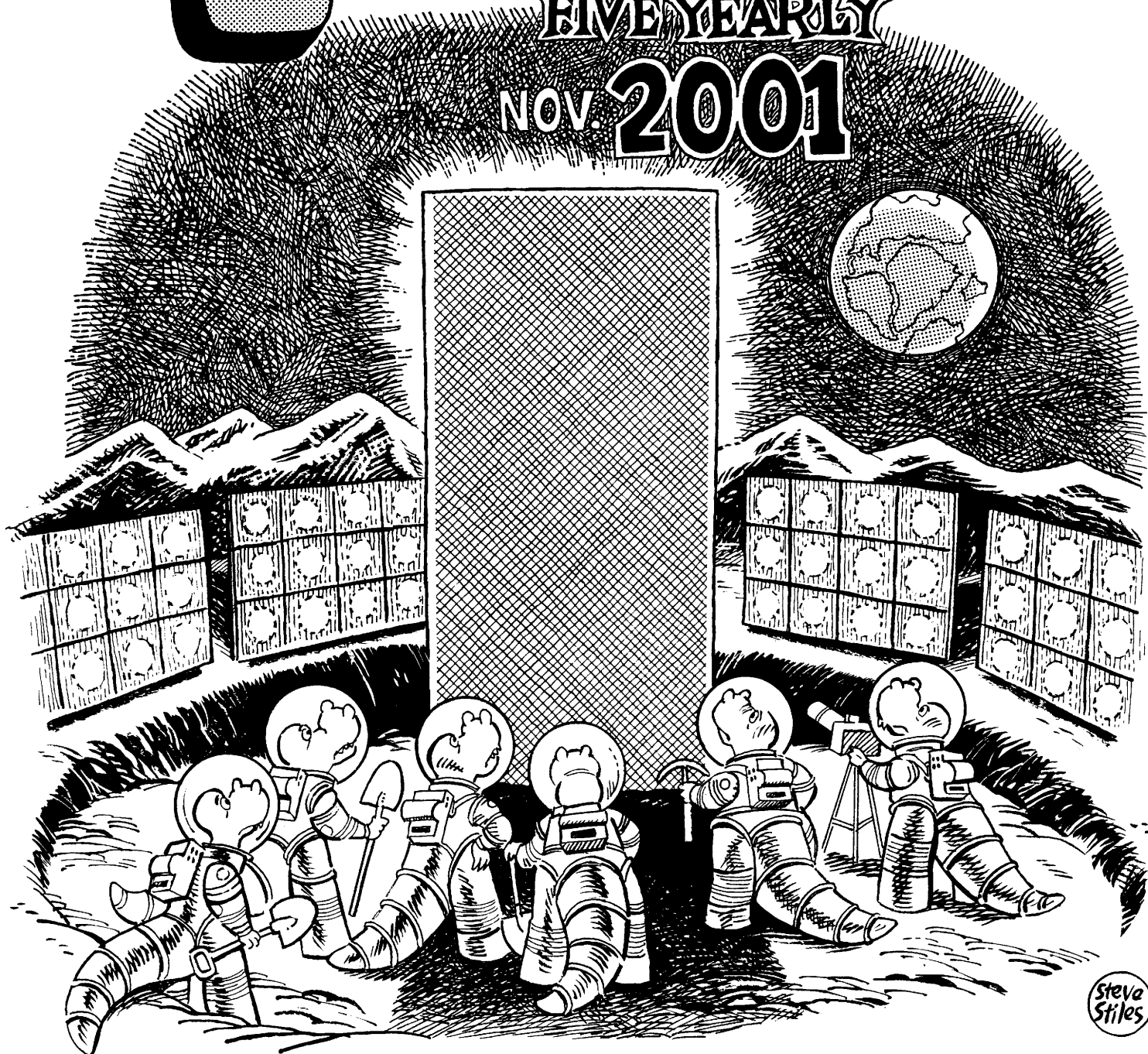


# SCIENCE FICTION

## FIVE YEARLY

NOV. 2001



Steve  
Stiles

In memory of Terry Hughes  
and in appreciation of  
his brother Craig.

# Science-Fiction Five-Yearly

Issue Number Eleven

November 2001



Lee Hoffman  
Founder, editor emeritus

Guest editor-publishers:  
Geri Sullivan, Jeff Schalles, & Terry Hughes

SFFY CD Scanning & HTML: Judy Bemis



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This eleventh issue of the lustrous SCIENCE-FICTION FIVE-YEARLY is being published fifty years after the first, but is not to be confused with Science-Fiction Fifty-Yearly, also due soon in a mailbox near you. You'll have to talk to Tucker about that one, but we'd love hearing from you in response to this one. We share letters, so one to any of the following will be enjoyed by all:

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Available for The Usual until we run out.

"Remember the eel with the big blue eyes."

# SFFY Semi-Centennial! Already?

*Editorial by Lee Hoffman*

Fifty years? That's not too many. Or is it?

It was for me. As you regular readers know, for half that time I've been faking my connection to SFFY, thanks to fans who have kept the tradition alive on my behalf, lo, this last quarter century.

Legend has it that the ancient fannish diety of duplication, GhuGhu, was born of a jelly pan, and the souls of all who worship at his shrine turn the brilliant indelible phurple of hektograph ink. Even the souls of those trufans who never touched a hektograph would turn phurple with longing to pub an ish of their own.

With the spread of mimeography, there came an upstart deity called FooFoo, whose followers claimed to rid the Ghuists of their phurple tiny by ripping out their souls and disposing of them altogether. But unless the soul was strong enough to immediately reassert itself, this operation left former Ghuists merely empty shells that soon crumbled into gafia.

Bereft of their original bodies, the separated phurple souls migrated to new bodies, filling them with the Spirit of Duplication, no matter what means of reproduction might come into their hands. In these occupied bodies Sixth Fandom lives.

Ghu be praised that in 1976, when circumstances precluded my pubbing my ish myself, Terry Hughes was there, a man of true Sixth Fandom sensibilities, to step into the breach. Had Terry not been willing to take on the tasks of editing and publishing the 1976 issue, there would have been no more SFFYs.

"So?" you ask with a yawn.

"Ah," I reply, "Had SFFY died in '76, what would have happened to the final chapters of Calvin Aaargh's serial, 'Stars of the Slave Giants' (at twenty five years, the longest running regularly-appearing serial in science fiction history) and Nalrah Nosille's welcome revival of '!Nissassa' in '96? What of those beautiful covers by Steve Stiles, Dan Steffan, Stu Shiffman, Ross Chamberlain, and Ray Nelson -- every one of them a classic? What of all the terrific articles by fine fannish minds too numerous to cite?"

It was with my retirement from all but a nominal position that the very best issues of SFFY came about. Dan Steffan, with Ted White, took the figurative helm in 1981. The lustrum after that, Patrick and Teresa Nielsen Hayden, with Stu Shiffman, hove to. Then Geri Sullivan and Jeff Schalles signed on and found themselves, like the Flying Dutchman, sailing on and on and on lustrum after lustrum without respite, hauling on rich brown, then Andy Hooper, and now the Old Original Terry Hughes Himself, to be tied to the masthead.

So Sixth Fandom lives. And I survive idly in the phurple ghlow of their efforts.

It certainly is a whonderful thing.

**NOW AVAILABLE!  
SFFY CD-ROM**

**COMING SOON!  
SFFY ON THE WEB**

Thanks to the heroic labors of Judy Bemis,  
back issues of *Science-Fiction Five-Yearly* are now available  
on CD-ROM and are coming soon to the FANAC website.

Judy scanned issues 1-8 from photocopies provided by Bruce Pelz,  
and typed HTML files for issues 1-10 from those copies and from PDFs  
of issues 9 & 10. (Those PDFs are also on the CD, as is the PDF of #11.)

The CD-ROM is readable on both Macs and PCs. For your very own copy,  
please send \$10 American to Geri Sullivan, Toad Hall, 3444 Blaisdell Ave S,  
Minneapolis, MN 55408-4315, USA. (Postage included in price.)  
Foreign currency? Email or write first; we'll work something out.

In the coming weeks and months, FANAC webmaster Jack Weaver will be  
putting all of the files up on the FANAC website: <http://www.fanac.org>

.....  
**Thanks . . .**

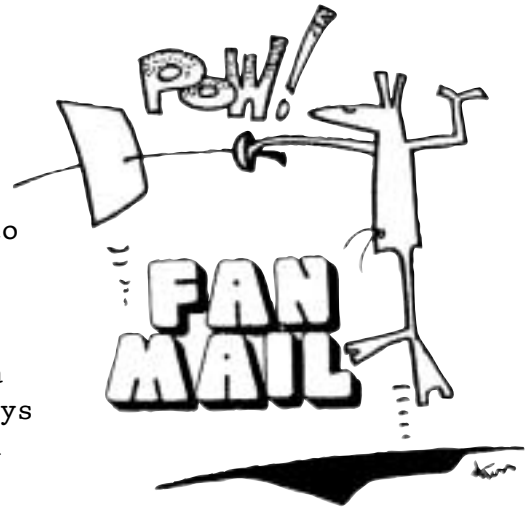
Compiled by Geri Sullivan

Linda Bushyager and Dave Rike contributed mimeo  
equipment and supplies used for this issue of  
*Science-Fiction Five-Yearly* as well as other  
fanzines published at the Toad Hall Champion  
Mimeo Center and Frog Preserve. The Minnesota  
Science Fiction Society's copyprinter saved days  
of printing time while preserving true stencil  
and ink reproduction of these pages.

Robert Lichtman, Teddy Harvia, Sir Arthur C.  
Clarke, Buck Coulson, Tom Foster, Peggy Dolan, Do & Jo Meisner, Mike & Linda  
McInerney, Sarah Clemens & Ray Worley, Lloyd Penney, William Breiding, Gary  
Labowitz, Steven Glennon, Harlan Ellison, Vijay Bowen, Don Fitch, Shelby  
Vick, Russ Chauvenet, the Beck, Jim Young, Frank Lunney, James White, Cy  
Chauvin, George Flynn, and Dave Langford sent comments to *SFFY* #10, thereby  
earning the chance to appear in one of the innovations introduced in this  
very issue of *Science-Fiction Five-Yearly*: a real letter column!

Eileen Lufkin, Toni Brust, Denny Lien, David Emerson, Barb Jensen, Mike  
Levin, David Dyer-Bennet, Elise Matthesent, Garth Danielson, Ken Fletcher,  
Mitch Pockrandt, Martin Schafer, Joe Wesson, Gionvanna Fregni, John Ladwig,  
Terry A. Garey, and Lydy Nickerson helped collate *SFFY* #10 and signed the  
Toad Hall Register so we'd remember the fact five years later. Some other  
people helped out, too, no doubt. Thanks to all, and to all who found  
themselves helping with the final touches on *SFFY* #11.

See you on the funway.



# The SF Family

By Kip Williams

(music: low strings and  
harpsichord, with finger snaps)

They're literate and cheerful,  
Considerate and tearful,  
They really are an earful,  
The SF Family.

Their houses are libraries,  
Their best friends, dictionaries,  
Their god, the ghod of queries,  
The SF Family.

(dah dah dah dah, snap) Keen!  
(dah dah dah dah, snap) Mean!  
(dah dah dah dah, dah dah dah dah, dah dah dah dah, snap)  
...obscene!

So put your badge, and pin on  
A button with a grin on,  
We're going to muscle in on  
The SF Family.



-- Tune by Vic Mizzy

# HOW TO WRITE A SCIENTIFIC PAPER

**Bea Realist**

Department of Arcane Abstrusities  
University of California, Irvine

## REFERENCES

1. "Professorial Pathology" by E.U. Rieka, A.B. Surd and I.M. Pedant, Journ. Academic Backstabbing Vol 3, 1980.
2. Explaining Asimov (Twelve Volumes) by The National Academy of Sciences, 1981.

## ABSTRACT

A new formulation of the traditional academic paper is considered. The way scholars really read scientific papers is discussed. This paper itself is written in the new method herein proposed. Studies among the author's friends indicate that reading time for most scientific literature can be reduced three-fold by use of this method. For some papers, reading time approaches zero.

## INTRODUCTION

Everyone knows that scientists write badly -- everybody, that is, except scientists. They think they're merely being precise and orderly, and everyone else on the planet is either (a) illiterate or (b) sloppy or (c) a humanist or (d) all of the above. (Ref. 1) In some cases, of course, the individual scientist is not well acquainted with the English language. (In the opinion of English scientists, this frequently explains the unintelligible papers of Americans.)

The scientist is, by his reliance on the passive voice, hobbled, leading to sentences like this one, in which the subject, a lumpy noun, is acted upon by pallid adjectives and wan verbs, all without ever saying exactly who the action is done by, so that the sentences get longer and longer as you read and never seem to end, even when there is clearly nothing more to say in the sentence, at which point the reader sometimes gets a meager little semicolon; this gives him a rest, so that he can go on and read another long phrase without really learning anything more, because the writer's hand has kept on moving even though his brain is disengaged.

What to do? Straightening a scientist's syntax is like unsnarling week-old spaghetti, sticky and unappetizing. (There are exceptions; see Ref 2.) Far better, then, to change the overall packaging of the sentences. Scientific papers are written like elaborate lab reports -- first A, then B, on to C, plodding on to the conclusion like a dray horse. They assume

the reader is fascinated by the pearls of wisdom that ooze through the barnacle-laden sentences. Fruit buried beneath the aspic of gray rhetoric is seldom tasted. The sad truth is that hardly anybody ever reads a paper all the way through. A study by a British physics journal showed that the average number who get through the whole paper was 0.5 -- and that included the author! Apparently, most scientists can't bear to reread their own work.

In this paper a new scheme for paper-organizing is proposed. It does not rely on weaning scientists away from the passive-voice sentence, like that last one. Instead, we should recognize how scientists actually read.

Our calculations, statistics; and closely-reasoned analysis appears in the body of the main text. First we summarize our results with merciful brevity.

## CONCLUSIONS

While reading a scientific paper, scientists are led by two needs: (a) ego and (b) desire for information. Our research shows that Need (a) always dominates. Therefore, papers should be organized to satisfy this. The preferred scheme follows:

### 1. TITLE

Maximize buzz words, even if irrelevant. (Indeed, some will misread this non-connection as going over their heads.) Try to include many verbs that end in -ize.

### 2. AUTHOR'S NAME

Avoid initials. People remember actual names. Let your students be represented by their initials if they want; readers will assume they are nobodies.

### 3. REFERENCES

The most important part of the paper, yet the most neglected. References cited must contain a broad spectrum of sources, to insure the greatest probability of naming the reader. Use multi-author papers to maximize the number of people mentioned. Corral any paper even slightly related to your field; Nobel winners are preferred, no matter how thin the connection. A scientist will always give greater attention to colleagues who cite him, if only to find where in the text you mention him. Thus the best strategy is to cite everybody you can but place the citations in an unlikely place in the paper. Then they have to read carefully to find it, and might even discover what the paper is about. The highest-risk strategy is to cite someone in the list of references but not in the text. Then he will read the whole paper. The disadvantage, of course, is that he will be livid with rage and frustration by the time he finishes. But at least he will not forget you!



## 4. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Another important ego-feeding ground. Thank the big names in your field, even if your sole contact with them was schlepping coffee at a conference three years ago. The list should be lavish, implying close connections with all the movers and shakers. Avoid mentioning dead people; they can do you no more good, and their rivals are still around. If space permits, include those who actually helped you.

## 5. GRANT REFERENCE

Your grant monitoring officer will always look for this, so put it early. Others will want to know what agency got suckered into paying.

## 6. INTRODUCTION

Here you explain what you plan to do. Promise a lot. Few will reach the MAIN TEXT to see if you actually did it.

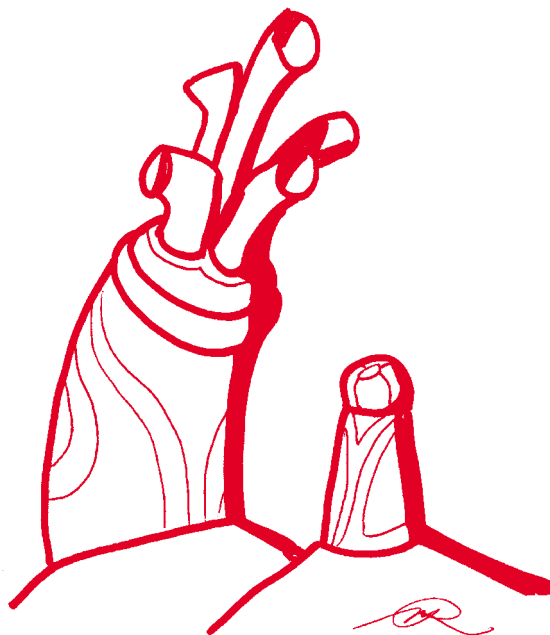
## 7. CONCLUSIONS

Always overstate your results. Claim certainty where you have vague suspicions. Graphs proudly showing agreement between theory and experiment should be prominent. Only in a footnote (tiny type!) should you explain that the theory has been scaled to the experiment in the first place, the coordinates multiplied by a fudge factor, or other artful dodges.

## 8. MAIN TEXT

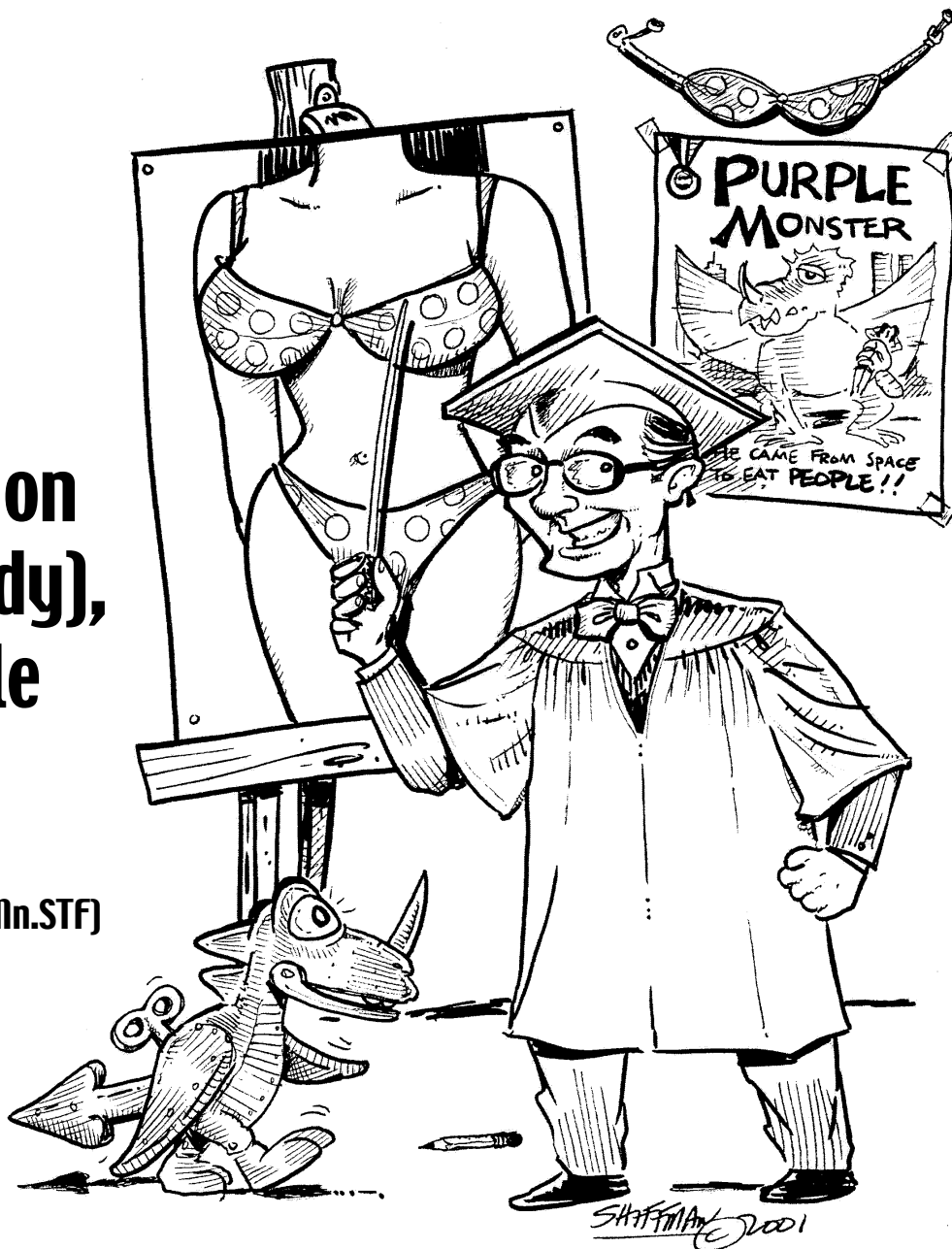
With any luck, there will be no need to actually write this section. Everyone will have turned to the next paper.

-- Greg Benford



# A Treatise on Dot.Com(edy), With Purple Prose

By Denny Lien  
(B.A., M.A., M.S.L.S., Mn.STF)



The Stumpers-L list <http://www.cuis.edu/~stumpers/> is intended mostly for reference librarians and such to pool their minds and resources on complex reference questions. Somehow, between the questions passed along from clients (some of which by chance will be Rather Silly) and the personalities of the list members (some of whom by design have at least spates of being Very Silly Indeed), the ambience bears very little resemblance to outsiders' views of what would be expected of a thousand or so librarians talking among themselves. The following, for instance --

In July 2000 someone posted to the list the following query:

"Does anyone know what the 'yellow' in the song "Itsy bitsy teeny weeny yellow polka dot bikini" refers to -- the color of the polka-dots or the color of the bikini? Several websites give song lyrics but without punctuation."

and received, among others, this reply:

"Similar to the "One-eyed, one-horned, flying purple eater," is it a people eater that's one-eyed, one horned, purple, and flies, or is it an eater of one-eyed, one-horned flying purple people? . . . I think the interpretation is meant to be in the mind of the listener."

And obviously I couldn't let so sweeping a statement pass. The following was the result:

\*\*\*\*\*

Bearing in mind Sir Thomas Browne's dictum that

"What song the Syrens sang, or what name Achilles assumed when he hid himself among women, although puzzling questions, are not beyond all conjecture,"

I make bold to think that my esteemed fellow lyrics scholar is confusing the issue here by asserting that the crux of Mr. Wooley's narrative is a locus classicus of uncertainty at the same complexity level as the ur-Bikinitext.

Within the context of "Itsy Bitsy Teeny Weeny Yellow Polka Dot Bikini," the inherent ambiguity of the received text and the lack of independent evidence of a substantive nature (see note 1) make a universally-accepted answer impossible. Does the "yellow" refer (a) to the bikini in toto or (b) merely to that bikini subset described as the "polka dot" segment?

The title can be parsed either way; the accompanying lyrics are ambiguous. It is likely, though even this is logically not determinable beyond a reasonable doubt, that the "itsy bitsy" refers to the bikini (im)proper rather than to the dots, as this assumption supports the usual interpretation that "she was afraid to come out of the water" because of a conflict between 1950s modesty mores and the self-perceived "itsy-bitsyness" of the specified attire. A minority opinion, however, might hold this as unproven and postulate instead that she finds the itsy bitsyness of the polka dots to be deeply offensive to her fashion sense and that she is, as it were, organizing a "sink-down strike" to protest polka-dot downsizing. The jury is out; the case is unproven and unprovable.

But surely this is *\*not\** the case with "One Eyed, One Horned Flying Purple People Eater," where a close analysis of the lyrics will prove far more fruitful. Notice what we learn in the very first verse:

Well I saw the thing comin' out of the sky  
It had the one long horn, one big eye.  
I commenced to shakin' and I said "ooh-eee"  
It looks like a purple people eater to me.

Thus (a) the Eater comes "out of the sky" (suggesting that it can indeed fly, and is indeed flying (see note 2), and (b) thus it does indeed have one horn and one eye. (A minority opinion again might argue that stating that it has *\*one\** horn does not preclude it having more than one, and that the same is true of eyes; but surely this is quibbling -- see note 3)

. . . . .  
"I don't want to get married anyway -- I want to buy a Gestetner."  
. . . . .

We can thus accept that the "one-eyed, one-horned, flyin' " part of the description, at least, applies to Entity A (the Eater) rather than to the postulated Entity B (the Eatee, or "People"). There remains the question: do which entity does the adjective "purple" pertain?

Logically, in graphing purpleness relations, there are four possibilities:

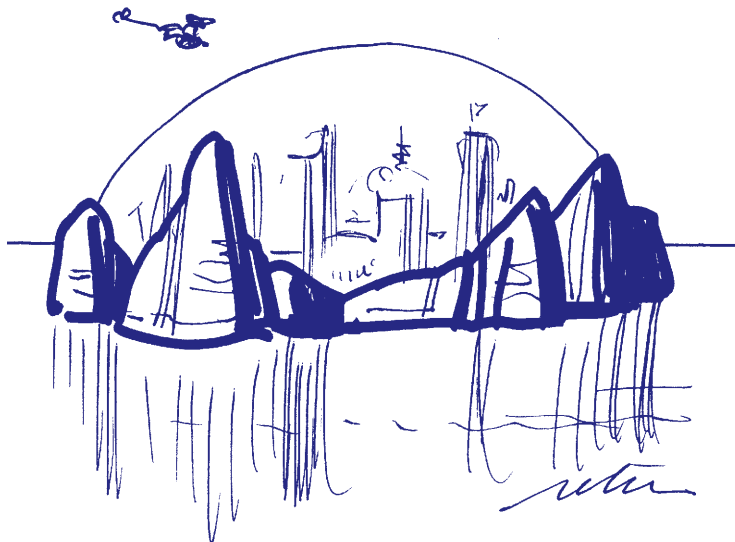
- (a) Neither Eater nor Eatee is Purple;
- (b) Eater is Purple; Eatee is not
- (c) Eatee is Purple; Eater is not
- (d) Both Eater and Eatee are Purple

The song itself clearly contradicts postulate (a), which can be discarded. Postulate (d), while not directly contradicted by anything in the song, is counterindicated by Occam's Razor: why multiple Purple Entities? (Arguably an even greater attack upon Fashion Sense.) We thus need only to distinguish between choices (b) and (c).

In support of (b) -- "Eater is Purple" -- we note that the narrator of the song identifies the Eater correctly while it is still distance away, "coming out of the sky." Since coloration is one of the major factors used by bird watchers to classify their finds, it seems likely that it would also be a major factor in classification and identification among freelance monster watchers, or whatever Mr. Wooley is; e.g., he describes it as "purple" because he sees (from a distance) that it *is* indeed purple. (See note 4). There is also the possibly significant datum that, so far as we know, Purple People do not exist; the significance of said datum is, however, compromised by the notation that, by the same token, so far as we know Purple People Eaters do not either.

We also note that Mr. Wooley expressed concern that the Eater might be inclined to eat him (e.g. Mr. Wooley, a presumptively non-Purple prospective meal), and the Eater explicitly denies any such intention, not on the basis of lack of appropriate Wooley pigmentation, but because of inappropriate Wooley texture:

Well he came down to earth and lit in a tree  
 I said Mr. Purple People Eater don't eat me  
 I heard him say in a voice so gruff  
 I wouldn't eat you 'cos you're so tough



It seems clear, then, neither Mr. Wooley nor the Eater are defining potential Eatees on the primary basis of coloration. Ergo, this supports postulate (b).

Postulate (c), on the other hand, has only one point of evidence in its favor, but that point is admittedly a strong one: the Eater himself claims Purpleitude to be the deciding factor in his gastronomic triage:

I said Mr. Purple People Eater, what's your line  
He said it's eatin' purple people and it sure is fine

Against this seemingly direct testimony, however, it should be noted that there is some reason to believe this a jape: he seems a rather genial sort of monster. The "gruff" voice is presumably a put-on attribute, since if genuine it would seem ill-sorted with the vocal demands of his impromptu audition and Mr. Wooley's apparent approbation thereof:

And then he swung from the tree and lit on the ground.  
He started to rock, really rockin' around  
It was a crazy little ditty with a swingin' tune  
(sing awop bop aloo bop lop bam boom)

Furthermore, it is well-known that in matters of food coloration, rock stars are more likely to concern themselves less with the Purpleitude of meat (an increasing number of them being vegetarians in any case) than with the presence or absence of blue M&Ms in their hotel rooms.

Quod erat awop bop aloo bop.

Ipso facto, bam boom.

Note 1: It has been asserted that the bikini of the song is based upon that once owned by the daughter of the composer. There's a dissertation topic in that for some lucky graduate student somewhere (probably in California).

Note 2: Technically, the fact that the Eater is "comin' out of the sky" does not necessarily mean that it is flying \*as such\*; we all remember the cautionary counterexample of the Monty Python sheep who do not so much fly as plummet. However, the subsequent relation that the Eater "came down to earth and lit in a tree" seems to indicate a matter of controlled flight (or, possibly, of uncontrolled pyromaniac tendencies).

Note 3: So nagging a quibble, indeed, that if this were a Talmudic text one might define the argument as "Purple Pilpul."

Note 4: Mr. Wooley's excellent eyesight is further attested to by the fact that, while the Eater in descent is described as "it," Wooley has identified same as "he" by the time the Eater achieves tree-lighting status. This is either somewhat or extremely impressive, depending on how tall the tree was (or how prominent the gender-differentiating Eater characteristic were). Both are unknown, and thus are possibly another dissertation topic. (Or two such topics.)

# Great Moments from Star Trek

By Arthur C. Clarke

We're doomed, Scotty!  
The starboard osculositor  
has fractulated!

Dinna worry, Cap'n. Give me five minutes  
and I'll trinculise the spare maculator,  
re-nitrify the omnitron, check them both out  
with the trimorposcope, and then polyplex  
them into the main perculometer.  
Nothing to it!



# The Secret History of



[more or less as delivered at Tropicon/FanHistoricon, November 2000, chaired by Joe Siclari]

by Dave Langford

Hello, everyone. Just for a change, instead of exciting scandal and cheap jokes, I'm giving a boring backward-looking talk about my fanzine *Ansible*, and it's all Joe Siclari's fault. Before I move on to telling any elaborate historical lies, I have to say it's great to be a guest at Tropicon, or FanHistoricon -- whichever one I'm talking to at the moment -- and I'm still pretty stunned to be here. I feel the way I did years ago when the committee of the British Science Fiction Association approached me and said ingratiatingly, "Dave, we can't find an important writer to give a speech at this month's London meeting, so will you do it instead?" When the BSFA meeting came around the fans were muttering "Who's this Dave Langford? What's he going to talk about?" and in a very loud voice a certain fan called Greg Pickersgill said: "HIMSELF. AS USUAL."

Unfortunately, Pickersgill was right. This autumn I realized with terror that it's 21 years since I started publishing *Ansible*, the fan newsletter best known for Chris Priest's famous insight that it's an anagram of "lesbian." On *Ansible*'s 21st birthday, it's clearly time for me to look back over its lurid history, moan a lot, and start making rapid excuses.

My main excuse is that it was all Peter Roberts's fault. Peter had been publishing Britain's previous fan newsletter *Checkpoint* on and off since 1971. In 1979, the year of my first British Worldcon, *Checkpoint* was coming up to its 100th issue and Peter reckoned that he was now an old fan and tired. He needed a break in which to finish his 1977 TransAtlantic Fan Fund trip report, which as we now know occupied all his fannish energies for the following 20 years. So Peter decided to retire *Checkpoint* and find some eager and energetic sucker to take over the subscription list. As he subtly put it to me, "Hello, Dave, you look young, gullible and easily led..."

Thus I made my first editorial mistake, which was to say Yes to Peter Roberts. The second mistake happened because I'd foolishly said Yes to Chris Priest when he told me that I was volunteering to be in on the ground floor of a new fan fund -- GUFF -- that would transport fans between Australia and Europe. Chris's visionary concept was that while he sprawled idly on a golden throne as the illustrious founder, I was hereby appointed first administrator and could do all the work. So in 1979 I was already busy producing GUFF newsletters, and for some now totally forgotten reason *Ansible* number one was stapled up with one of these. That is, with my rare talent for publicity, I launched a fan newsletter whose front cover appeared inside on page seven. At the very end of the text, this first *Ansible* also made one of those wild, rash promises which older and wiser newsletter editors have learned to avoid. "Future issues," it claimed, "will contain news."

*Checkpoint* was a pretty good role model, through. Peter liked to run bizarre and unlikely stories rather than boring old "Author Sells Book" listings. For example, a front-page item in *Checkpoint* number one, dated April 1971, was about the unmasking of the Rare SF Mail Order Company of New York, which had placed an ad in that year's British Eastercon programme book. The ad was a jigsaw which when you cut it out and put it together revealed a fan wearing a propellor beanie in the toilet, holding a copy of *Amazing* magazine and wiping his bottom with torn-out pages. Just a bit of fun at the expense of the puritanical con committee, explained the Rare SF Mail Order Company, which turned out to be British fandom's famous mischief-maker Charles Platt.

Meanwhile Ted White, who was the editor of *Amazing* in those days, was Not Amused. There was obviously a fannish tradition here, though, because 20 years early in his legendary fanzine *Slant* the great Walt Willis had printed a claim that from October 1951, "*Amazing* will be published on tissue paper, with a hole right through the top left-hand corner . . . for the convenience of readers." But I digress.

Another good thing about the Peter Roberts editorial style, which I struggled hard to imitate, was the way he'd liven up routine news items with nice turns of phrase. Walt Willis had already explained that if the letters people send to your fanzine aren't interesting or entertaining enough, you should damn well rewrite them until they are. When Peter had previously got tired of *Checkpoint* and let less witty fans like Ian Maule edit it for a while, it became increasingly dull until he made his comeback with a announcement that began: "Alerted by strange signs in the heavens and unnatural noises in the wardrobe, former CP editor Peter Roberts was able to unmask Ian Maule's miserable scheme to turn *Checkpoint* into an annual one-page listing of recent Perry Rhodan reprints."

I blame Peter's influence, and his habit of improving the news, for the fact when I had to type up a *Ansible* Hugo nominations list that included *Footfall* by Larry Niven and Jerry Pournelle, this title was accidentally misprinted as *Nuke 'Em Till They Glow, Then Shoot 'Em In The Dark*. A more recent award report seemed terminally boring until rearranged to read, "Greg Egan the Kurd Lasswitz Prize for *Distress*, as 1999's best foreign novel in German translation published, won."

Even the space left at the end of *Checkpoint* for the mailing label was worth looking at, since the return address would be introduced by some cryptic phrase or saying. "Kill the fatted beetroot!" it said on one issue, to the bafflement of fans who didn't know Peter was a vegetarian. Other examples were "Klaatu Borada Nikto! But never mind, here's CHECKPOINT 82." "Need help and advice? Tough. Here's CHECKPOINT 85." "Come out, Neville! It's CHECKPOINT 88." And of course, "The Gostak distims the Doshes! -- but we don't care, we've got CHECKPOINT 96." When, for reasons which even at the time seemed deeply stupid, I subtitled one of my own 70s fanzines "The Journal of Eschatological Morphology", *Checkpoint* responded by briefly becoming "*The Journal of Ecclesiastical Necrology* (incorporating *Dead Vicars' Monthly*)."

Of course I stole the idea of peculiar taglines, and the mailing label spaces in early *Ansibles* were decorated with all sorts of odd quotations like this gem of wisdom from British fandom's homespun philosopher Greg



Pickersgill: "Fandom is a damn sight better way of life than pushing peanuts up the Pennines with your penis." It's hard to argue with that.

After a while these quotations evolved into another deeply irrelevant *Ansible* department, "Hazel's Language Lessons." Besides being my wife, Hazel is a qualified Egyptologist who collects exotic dictionaries and used to sift through dozens of languages for useful words which *Ansible* readers needed to know about. My own favourite Language Lesson featured the Kikuyu word *komaria*, which according to the dictionary means "to touch someone reprovably or threateningly with a stick and say 'wee!'" This needs to become a fan tradition.

Another indispensable word comes from the Sesuto language: *malito*, "something which a person lets fall and which his cousin can pick up and keep if the owner does not say *ngaele*." I'm guessing that *ngaele* must be a pretty strong word, since it was too hot to be listed in the Sesuto dictionary. Then there was the very political Nupe language, with a phrase I won't even try to pronounce that's defined as a salutation for the rank of Prime Minister, with its literal meaning being "a bat's stomach." Sadly I never had a chance to try it on Margaret Thatcher.

Of course the Language Lessons have practically nothing to do with science fiction, although they might help some people understand C.J. Cherryh novels -- but it added variety, fans liked it, and it used to be Ursula Le Guin's favourite part of *Ansible*. Over the years, though, Hazel started running out of languages and found it hard to come up with new lessons. Instead, we have a much more science-fictional feature which is now Ursula Le Guin's favourite part of *Ansible*, Thog's Masterclass . . . our showcase for the wondrous sentences which sf and fantasy writers produce in their dogged yet somehow heartwarming attempts to write English.

I'll try not to say too much about Thog's Masterclass just now, since that's a whole nother programme item that I'm apparently doing tonight [and so it came to pass], but its roots go back to the fifth issue of *Ansible* dated December 1979. Under the much less snappy heading "Great Moments of SF Prose," I reverently quoted a moving poetic moment from Alan Dean Foster's novelization of *The Black Hole*: "Dimly they/it perceived the final annihilation of a minuscule agglutination of refined masses . . . "

Decades later, Thog still has a special fondness for authors who show us how to do science good like sci-fi should. One recent discovery was Desmond Wilcox's 1941 story *Into Existence*, whose brilliant inventor hero comes up with a new space drive: "Two years before, Brock had invented a perfect form of perpetual motion, and now he had invented a magnet which, filled with certain machinery and worked by electricity, would pull towards the nearest gravity with the force and speed of a rocket." It must be a bit difficult to launch one of these from Earth's surface, considering where the nearest gravity is. Next, for no apparent reason, a messenger arrives shouting "Jupiter's gone crazy!" and warning that this planet will soon collide with Earth. Our hero naturally says: "You did right in coming and telling me." Days later, as the doomsday impact approaches, Brock shows his cool by going to bed for a nice snooze. He wakes to find the morning mysteriously dark:

"Switching on the searchlight, Joseph Brock saw, caught in its brilliant beam, Jupiter. It was hovering a few thousand miles up. He had

reckoned that the planet would come with an extra rush as it drew within the gravity of the Earth, or vice-versa. But the gravities of both planets seemed ineffective."

Enough! I stole the idea of Thog's Masterclass from a wonderful 1930 poetry anthology called *The Stuffed Owl*, which collects ghastly lapses by poets, like this deeply solemn epitaph for Queen Victoria: "Dust to dust and ashes to ashes, Into the tomb the Great Queen dashes." Then I found that old-time Irish fan George Charters had been collecting Thoggisms long before me, in his 1960s fanzine *The Scarr* -- that's Scarr with two Rs, so the whole title is an anagram of Charters. He actually bought the legendary Badger Books as they came out, and quoted their awful prose with a kind of delighted horror, not knowing that all these dreadfully similar writers like Leo Brett, Pel Torro, Lionel Roberts, Karl Ziegfried and the rest were pseudonyms of Britain's supreme hack Lionel Fanthorpe -- the number one author in Thog's Hall of Fame.

You know, it does start to look as though the ingredients in the Langford recipe for cooking up a newsletter have one thing in common. They're all stolen. The word *Ansible*, of course, was boldly lifted from Ursula Le Guin's SF novels. Ever since the fourth issue, the general news round-up section has been titled "Infinitely Improbable," pinched from the title of a track on the LP version of *The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy*: a friend had insisted on playing this to me although in my deaf way I couldn't understand a word of it and ended up memorizing the record label. This phrase is in fact the part of *Ansible* that I stole twice. Since it's obviously deeply uncool to quote Douglas Adams, I've taken to claiming that the words are from one of Austin Freeman's 1920s crime stories, in which scientific detective Dr Thorndyke really does say about a bit of evidence, 'It seems infinitely improbable that we shall learn anything from it . . .' That seemed a highly suitable motto for *Ansible*.

In the same way I've annoyed my friend John Grant, whose fantasy novels first introduced barbarian hero Thog the Mighty, by tracing the name to James Thurber writing in the 1950s about not being able to tune his radio set, which kept going completely dead after first saying: "thog, thog, thog." I think it's important to spread confusion and muddy the waters of fan history like this, since our heroic fan historians like Rob Hansen and Joe Siclari could become bored or irritable if we make their work too easy.

Here is where I should quote another of *Ansible*'s mottoes, extracted from Philip E. High's sf novel *Come, Hunt an Earthman* and published as A Statement Of Editorial Policy. The High book was full of exotic weapons, including one called a Zine as in fanzine. I quote: "A Zine is classed as a terror weapon. It rends and distorts, twisting the structure of the target completely out of shape." Well, sometimes it's the only way to make a news story interesting . . . .

Another useful technique for keeping fan historians on their toes is to follow my example and publish 168 issues of a newsletter, numbered 1 to 160 but including one double issue and nine bonus issues with half numbers like *Ansible* 53-1/2 [figures correct in November 2000, but no longer]. I'd love to hear my explanation of how this happened, because it still baffles me. Lots of other editors have played tricks with numbering, of course. The George Charters fanzine I mentioned earlier helpfully changed its notation



to base 3 after the tenth issue and continued with 102, 110, 111 and so on. Kevin Smith did a fanzine called *Dot* and after publishing a number of issues produced a one-off whose title was *Ellipsis*; then *Dot* came back with an issue number that didn't make sense until you worked out that *Ellipsis* had been three *Dots*. The 1980s British fanzine *Second-Hand Wave* made it tough for bibliographers by numbering every single issue 42 . . . more proof of the baleful influence of Douglas Adams, and indeed Lewis Carroll. I've even heard faint rumours of a newszine whose every issue is numbered 770, but surely no one would be that silly.

Meanwhile another traditional part of *Ansible* that's been blatantly ripped off from elsewhere is the little bit in the masthead that says this fanzine is available for stamped addressed envelopes or for something else very peculiar and hard to find. One day I got tired of asking for boring old stamped addressed envelopes and remembered a fine American fanzine of the 70s, Terry Hughes's *Mota*, whose back page tended to claim that it was available wherever feminine hygiene products are sold and could be obtained for such things as nuclear weapons, rare ice cubes or -- after a certain famous space accident -- "pieces of Skylab that have been formed into boomerangs."

My imitation of Terry Hughes's gag started out by asking for easy trade goods which any true fan should recognize from our favourite literature, like ten-point steel, used sevagrams, or the ichor of the Sons of the Bird. Then slowly I began to realize I had a solemn duty to drive my readers insane, and started putting in more obscure literary references such as "the secret of the old custard" or "a strategy suit with a jelly pocket." I remember cackling evilly as I made one issue available for a COPE LIGHT device, which is the code name for an incredibly secret piece of electronics in John M. Ford's spy thriller *The Scholars of Night*. I was

prepared to bet that no one but Mike Ford himself would recognize it. Of course I immediately had e-mail from the general direction of the New England SF Association, saying roughly, "The official maintainer of the NESFA website's John M. Ford bibliography is amused by your pathetic attempt to baffle her."

One last way in which *Ansible* slavishly imitated *Checkpoint* was that the editor got bored and gave up for a while. Peter Roberts handed over to other editors after 46 issues and didn't make his comeback until number 72. Being made of sterner stuff than Roberts the mere vegetarian, I struggled on beyond 46 to *Ansible* 50, which came out at Conspiracy, the 1987 British Worldcon . . . after which the whole newsletter went into suspended animation for four years.

One problem, though it's not usually regarded as a big problem in fandom, was that *Ansible* had just won its first Fanzine Hugo, and I found myself simultaneously gloating and thinking "Oh God! This means more subscribers!"

Somehow, over eight years, what had started as a zippy little monthly newsletter had become a great lumbering thing that oozed steroids from every pore. The print run was up to 600 and the frequency had slipped badly -- indeed, Mike Glyer gleefully announced the statistic that *Ansible* was the first Hugo-winning newszine to publish only three issues in the year of its triumph. Because my old stencil duplicator had broken down, those last issues were all done in teensy reduced litho by a printer whose prices made my credit card wilt like one of Dali's soft watches. There was a lot to cram in: besides heaps of news, a vast letter column, and a long boring Langford editorial, issue 50 contained two complete convention guest speeches. One was by some unknown called Terry Pratchett, and I like to think I gave him his first big break.

So *Ansible* had become hard work, the very thing I'd gone freelance in 1980 to get away from. The last straw was that I didn't really fancy the obligatory chore of reporting the 1987 Worldcon, because of a rather embarrassing incident towards the end of the con. This needs a bit of background explanation:

Conspiracy '87, some aged fans will remember, was L. Ron Hubbard's Worldcon. There'd been a lot of muttering about the wall-to-wall Hubbard promotion and sponsorship at Conspiracy, starting with the *Mission Earth* cover artwork on the pocket programme book plus pages and pages of further ads inside. Some of us developed totally libellous theories about how Hubbard's novel *Black Genesis* had got on to the final ballot for the Hugo, which is supposed to be for good stuff rather than rejects from Thog's Masterclass. Many fans became more irritated when Algis Budrys came on stage at the start of the Hugo ceremony to hold things up by making some tedious and remarkably off-topic announcement about Writers of the Future. This is probably why, when Gene Wolfe read out "*Black Genesis* by L. Ron Hubbard" as a Best Novel nominee, a fair portion of the Hugo audience booed. "Shame on you," said Gene, but with a twinkle in his eye.

. . . . .  
                   "Heaven knows how long it will take  
                   for Ferdinand Feghoot to kill off SF completely."  
 . . . . .

When it was all over and I was clutching an unbelievable two Hugos and gibbering uncontrollably, another official announcement from the stage summoned Hugo winners to a photo call in the Brighton Conference Centre's Skyline Restaurant. So we all trotted dutifully upstairs, and there were muted cries of "Bloody hell!" as it turned out that as well as the cameras, the Skyline Restaurant contained the Scientology party. I'm sorry, I should have said the Author Services Inc. party. "My God," said Brian Aldiss, "we've just won the L. Ron Hubbard Awards, formerly the Hugos!"

Jokes like this didn't go down well with the Author Services people, who all seemed to have had their sense of humour removed along with the engrams. Years before, when I published a review of *Battlefield Earth* that made jokes about its awful science and worse prose, Fred Harris of Author Services had phoned all the way from Los Angeles to complain very earnestly that I'd failed to understand the book's intellectual subtleties. I couldn't imagine anybody else in the SF world being so weirdly excitable as to phone Britain from California just to denounce me -- but then, years later, *Ansible* published a snippet about Harlan Ellison, and the phone rang . . . .

Returning hastily to the 1979 Worldcon, I managed to make a polite escape from the L. Ron Hugo event. My downfall came on the following night at the SFWA party, where the big mistake wasn't so much drinking gin and tonic as trying to keep pace with Bob Shaw. Time passed and things got blurrier. Inevitably someone mentioned L. Ron Hubbard, and having heard quite enough of him during the con that was now finishing, I'm afraid I said fully and frankly, "Oh, expletive deleted L. Ron Hubbard." Instantly Fred Harris appeared, stamping his little feet in wrath! "YOU'RE ALL WASHED UP, LANGFORD," he cried. "YOU'LL NEVER WORK IN THIS FIELD AGAIN!" And he hurled the dregs of his drink over me, which was a tiny bit silly since he was wearing a lovely new white suit and by that time I was holding a pint of beer.

You can imagine the rest. I had to imagine the rest, because my memory wasn't working terribly well first thing next morning, and for a while I got quite worried about why British fandom was strewing rose-petals in my path and crowning me with wreaths of laurel.

After a while I came to two important realizations. The first was that I really didn't want to write up the sordid details of this Worldcon for *Ansible*, whose publication schedule became officially synchronized with *The Last Dangerous Visions*. The second was that on the whole, I'd probably blown my chances of becoming a well-paid judge for L. Ron Hubbard's Writers of the Future.

Over the next four years I wrote tons of book review columns, sold a few stories, and spent a lot of time hurting my brain by being the programming division of a small, doomed software company called Ansible Information. The sales and telephone support division consisted of Chris Priest. There weren't any other divisions, although we had a few imaginary employees named after dead SF authors like Captain S.P. Meek, who were there to get fired whenever a customer complained. "Your order was delivered late? Stanley G. Weinbaum of the packing department will suffer demotion for this!" It was all very distracting, but once in a while -- whenever a pig flew past my window by the light of a blue moon -- I thought about reviving *Ansible*.

It would have new ground rules, I fantasized. Every issue would be a single sheet of paper, eliminating all those hours of collating and stapling. The paper size would change to European A4, because the old British quarto standard that I'd inherited from *Checkpoint* had been officially abolished and was now maddeningly hard to find. Looking after tiny sums of subscription money had always been a nuisance, so under the new utopian system all those tiresome subscribers would be taken outside and shot . . . or perhaps, just perhaps, it would be easier to make *Ansible* a free newsletter. Ideally funded by an eccentric billionaire.

My eccentric billionaire failed to materialize, but *Ansible* Information Ltd must have made some money since one day I woke up and found I'd bought a laser printer. One thing led to another, and in October 1991, the crowds of fans at the monthly London Circle pub meeting were totally unmoved by the appearance of *Ansible* 51. Whose opening paragraph, mostly stolen from an older Langford fanzine, announced the comeback like this:

"Once again we live amid Signs and Portents. Something is stirring in British fandom, something ancient and very terrible, dimly remembered only by those wrinkled fans in convention bars who swap their wheezy reminiscences of the bad old days. From its grave the age-old horror rises, no longer a mere phantasm of darkness but a tangible form revealed in leprous morning light, a ghastly revenant whose existence can no longer be denied. Yes . . . we have another British Worldcon bid . . .

"Meanwhile," the editorial went on, "it's been a long time since *Ansible* 50."

By the next issue I'd proudly discovered a whole new way to cheat, since *Ansible* was now twelve years old and could start pillaging its own past by reprinting quaint historical snippets from *Ansible* itself under imaginative headings like "Ten Years Ago." After stealing wholesale from *Checkpoint* and other sources, I couldn't work out whether it was more or less ethical to steal great mouldering lumps of my own stale news.

In 1991 the master plan was to produce twelve monthly issues and then check myself carefully for signs of bankruptcy, falling armpits or fur growing in the palms of my hands. Then something unexpected happened.

I was handing out *Ansible* at a publisher's launch party, enjoying the look of pain on John Clute's face as he peered into his review copy of Roberta Rogow's *Futurespeak: A Fan's Guide to the Language of SF* and muttered things like "This entry has more mistakes than words." He hadn't previously known that the term "slan" came from a series of SF stories beginning in 1925 with *Galactic Lensman*. John's fateful mission was to review this book for *Interzone* magazine, whose editor David Pringle emerged at that moment from the drunken party crowd and said: "Dave, why don't you do an *Ansible* news column for *Interzone*?" I said yes, reckoning I could give it up any time I liked, and I e-mailed him the 102nd column this month.



So a heavily disguised version of the eccentric billionaire had turned up after all: the British National Lottery makes millions of pounds, some of which goes to our Arts Council, which provides a tiny pittance to help support *Interzone*, whose extremely modest payment for my monthly news column based on *Ansible* just about covers the cost of photocopying the next *Ansible*. I feel as though I've invented a kind of perpetual motion machine. This arrangement is probably all terribly unfannish, and I'm trusting you nice people not to tell the Hugo voters.

Now that *Ansible* is old and almost respectable, fans have a nasty habit of asking about the most embarrassing episodes in all those years of erratic publication. This is where, in a spirit of total honesty and openness, I try hard to change the subject -- since the worst moment featured a very unfunny letter from some people we will identify only as the Attorneys of Witch World, and I'm still terrified that even mentioning what happened will cause lawyers to come from the woodwork out and shower me with writs.

The *second* worst trouble I got into was with Brian Aldiss. You probably know that his short story "Super-Toys Last All Summer Long" was optioned by Stanley Kubrick, who spent years and years trying to work it up into the script for a movie called *AI*, eventually taken over by some guy called Spielberg. At first Brian himself had worked on the script; then he got the boot and Bob Shaw moved in. The way Bob told it, Kubrick said very earnestly "You're the science fiction expert, Bob, and I want you to be completely frank about this story treatment. If it's rubbish, I want you to tell me." So Bob said, "Well, Stanley, I'm afraid it's rubbish," and Kubrick replied: "Right, you're fired."

The next writer drafted to work on the script was Ian Watson, who occasionally used to feud with Brian in the pages of *Ansible*. As a rule it was Brian Aldiss and Harry Harrison versus Ian Watson and John Brunner. As Ian wrote in *Ansible* 29: "Not so pleased to see Aldiss's court jester, the vulgarian of the universe, H.Harrison Esq, being abusive about the decent Mr Brunner . . . ." Brian Aldiss does not love Ian Watson. Hence the reported Aldiss quotation in *Ansible* 53, "Not only did that \*\*\*\*\* Kubrick fire me, he hired my enemy to adapt my story!"

Oh dear, I did get into trouble for printing that. Brian had sixteen tantrums all at once and informed me with considerable intensity that although Stanley Kubrick was a great and good friend, he would nevertheless have Brian killed by hired hitmen if he ever read those terrible words. Which is why that issue of *Ansible* was reprinted with cuts, and even now the website version is censored, as is the quotation above. Shameful, isn't it? Especially since the \*\*\*\*\* stands for a mild, almost affectionate epithet rather than the fiery oath one might imagine from all the fuss.

Fantasy author Robert Holdstock was also suitably embarrassed at being correctly quoted in *Ansible*. At a 1986 Christmas party in a London pub, the very attractive lady publisher Jo Fletcher presented him with his World Fantasy Award for *Mythago Wood*. This trophy is a rather grisly-looking head of H.P. Lovecraft. Rob stared at it for a timeless moment, and then blurted out, "This is going to be an amazing day to write up in my diary! Got up -- went to the pub -- had a great time -- was given head by Jo Fletcher . . . ."

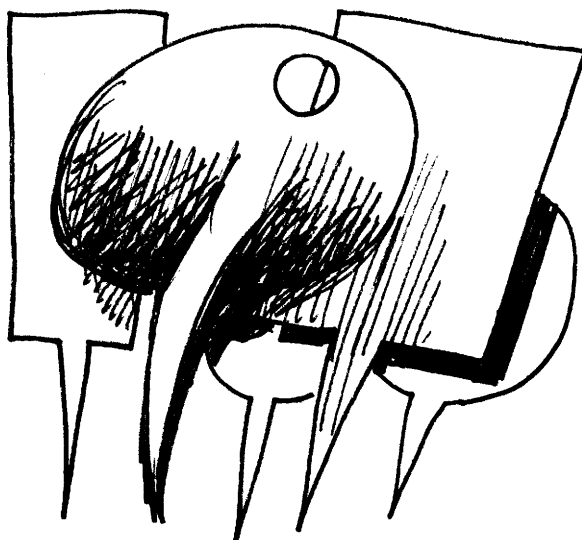
Which somehow reminds me of the small British convention last year whose chairman got all tongue-tied while thanking guests at the closing ceremony, and said very distinctly that he'd like to spank Stephen Baxter.

The *Ansible* piece I'm most pleased to have published wasn't news at all but a convention speech by our British critic Nick Lowe, titled "The Well-Tempered Plot Device." This introduced the idea of plot coupons, those things that fantasy characters have to collect from various far-off places on the map until after three volumes they have enough coupons to send off to the author for the ending.

Nick's talk also gave us Clench-Racing, an exciting action game designed to highlight Stephen Donaldson's vocabulary. Up to six people can play. The rules are simple: each player takes a different volume of the *Chronicles of Thomas Covenant*, opens it at random, and leafs feverishly through the text. You win by being first to find the word "clench," or "clenched," or "clenching" . . . It's a fast, furious sport, and a round rarely lasts a full minute. As Nick said, it's a great way to get thrown out of bookshops. When players become too skilled at locating "clench," Nick suggested switching to (and I quote) "other favourite Donaldson words like wince, flinch, gag, rasp, exigency, mendacity, articulate, macerate, mien, limn, vertigo, cynosure . . . "

Time's running out, though, and I ought to come up with a dazzling summary of all my babblings. One piece of advice to newszine editors that I really meant to include is: Always remember to cover the fan funds and their races, or the Spirit of Trufandom will punish you by transforming you into Charlie Brown. Otherwise, the *Ansible* formula seems to boil down to about three commandments, or at any rate guidelines, for newszine publishers: Steal ideas shamelessly. Keep it short by editing out the boring bits. And make the news funny if you can, but with careful exceptions, because not everyone appreciates a hilarious, rib-tickling obituary.

I think I've totally failed to keep this short or edit out the boring bits, so it's surely time to stop. Everything else you could possibly want to know about *Ansible* can be found in the complete set of back issues on the websites [see [www.ansible.co.uk](http://www.ansible.co.uk)] -- all my old embarrassments preserved forever, like flies in ointment. Thank you all for listening so long.





# CRIME STALKS THE FANWORLD

— Or —

## ABDUCTED BY SPACE-ALIENS

**By Ted White**

(dedicated to F. Lee Baldwin)

I was playing solitaire on my computer when my office door opened and a thin, hesitant man who was somewhere in the tail end of his middle age came in. He was gripping a hat in his hands. You don't see many hats these days.

I gestured him to the chair on the other side of my desk. "What can I do you for?" I asked.

He kept a death grip on the brim of his hat as he sat. I wondered how it would look, the next time he wore it. "You're a detective, aren't you?" he asked.

"That's what it says on the door," I agreed.

"I need a detective."

"Most of the people who walk through that door do," I pointed out helpfully. "What's your name?"

"My name?" he asked, as though startled by my question. "Oh, yes. I'm Barry Landfall." He looked like he was waiting for me to reach over my desk and shake his hand after that introduction, but I stayed seated and outwaited him.

"I run Landfall Funeral Home," he elaborated. A picture popped up in my mind of the Landfall Funeral Home, a small establishment located on the edge of what was becoming the industrial section of town, overdue a coat of paint by several years and with a 1977 Cadillac hearse parked on the side.

"How's business?" I asked.

"It could be better," Barry said, "but that's not why I'm here."

"Okay. Why are you here?"

He gestured at my computer. I glanced at the screen. The solitaire game was still running, racking up time, second after second, and a long way away from the finish. I closed the game with a muttered apology, but Landfall said, "It's my computer. I never wanted one, but I didn't have a choice. These days, you gotta have one to run a business. License renewal? 'Go to our website.' Getting the latest forms to be filed? You 'download' them."

I nodded. It was the same thing for detectives. Most of our work comes down to online searches these days.

"But naturally I couldn't leave it at that. No, I had to go use the damned thing for my personal enjoyment!" He said that with a self-condemning tone, as though disgusted with either the computer or himself -- or both.



"Easy to do," I said, shrugging. "I'm addicted to solitaire. I can't quit." I assumed he'd come across the ubiquitous porn sites.

"You probably think I'm talking about porn," he said, reading my mind. I nodded. "But you're wrong. It's not that at all."

"No?" I steepled my hands on my desk. I read about someone doing that once and I like doing it. I think it impresses the client. It impresses me.

"No, it's the newsgroups," he said.

"Newsgroups?" I echoed. "Um, what kinda news?"

"You aren't very hip to the internet, are you?" he said. That stung.

"They're, uh, they're an aspect of the internet," Barry said, explaining to me. "Like websites, like e-mail. But separate. They function like a bulletin board, sorta. You post messages to them, people respond. And there are hundreds, thousands of them. There's one for every possible subject of interest there is -- more than one!"

"Okay," I said. "What about them?"

"Well, I'm active in one of them. It's the rec.arts.sf.fandom list. Known as 'rasff.'"

"Uh huh," I said. "What happened? Suck up all your time? Meet somebody online?"

"I'm a science fiction fan," he said, pulling himself upright with a recovered dignity, as if in reproof. "I'm well known as a science fiction fan. I was Fan Guest of Honor at the 1978 Disclave. I've published a major fanzine."

"So what's that mean?" I asked him. "You're one of those Trekkie types?"

I thought he was going to turn purple and explode, but he hired me anyway.

\* \* \*

The woman who met me at her apartment door had purple spiked hair and at least twenty tiny earrings in each ear. I figured her for her early thirties. Her face was round in every sense, her chin and forehead and both wide cheeks receding from the prominence of her broad nose. She was short but rotund. She looked me up and down and grinned. "Barry said I'd like you," she said. "Come on in. You're a welcome change."

Her name was Ruth Polinsky, but Barry said she was known as Polly.

"A welcome change?" I asked. "From what?"

"From the usual geeky fan," she said. "Barry's an exception, you know."

"How's that?"

"Well, he's not bearded, he's not loud, and he's not really into computers," she said, and laughed loudly at the image she'd constructed. "He's older, too. Been around forever. That's all he talks about, you know -- how things used to be, back when first-class postage was three cents and you fanned your ack with a mimeograph." Well, I think that's what she said. Made no sense to me then.

She grinned at me again. "I like you better," she said. "You're not loud and bearded and nerdy -- and you're not a mortician, either. That's what Barry does, you know."

She was wearing a sort of wrap-around robe of shimmery material. She wriggled seductively and said, "Wanna fuck?" She did a quick twirl and wasn't wearing anything any more.

"On such short acquaintance?" I asked, gaping at her.

She laughed, and shrugged her garment back on. "You guys!" she said with a snort. "All talk and no action! You talk about pussy but you can't deal with it when it's really available!" I gathered I was no better now than the fans she knew. Maybe worse.

"Hey," I said. "I just want to talk with you."

She giggled. "All talk -- no action!"

\* \* \*

I was walking down the sidewalk when they came at me from out of the mouth of an alley. There were three of them, all big. Two were big and tall and one was shorter but just as big. They were holding computer cables and they tried to trap me with them, wrapping them around me, trying to pin my arms to my sides. But they got in each other's way, stepping on each other's feet and kicking each other as they tried to surround me.

. . . . .  
*"S. F. Five-Yearly isn't dead -- it's only half decade."*  
 . . . . .

WHITE

But they diverted my attention. And someone else slipped a clear plastic bag over my head, gripping it tightly over my face, suffocating me. Black spots appeared and swam all over everything until they merged into total blackness.

\* \* \*

When I woke up I was lying in a bed, naked under the covers. I was lying on my side and when I opened my eyes I found myself staring at Ruth Polinsky's right nipple.

"The funny thing," she said, "you know what the funny thing about him was?"

"No. What?"

"His smell. He didn't have any. I mean, I lived with the guy. And it was like he was made out of plastic. No smell."

"He showered a lot? Used deodorants?"

She frowned. "No, not much. I don't think I ever saw him use a deodorant. Listen, you don't get it. I kissed him, there was no odor on his breath. He rarely bathed, but no part of his body had any odor -- not even his feet. When he used the bathroom he left it odorless."

"So what are you saying?" I asked her. "What are you describing? Some sort of space-alien?"

"Oh, for God's sake! Just because you know I'm a fan, you think you can lay that sort of crap on me? Of course he wasn't a space-alien!" She snorted and then choked for a moment. "The most ordinary guy in the world." She snorted again. "Barry Landfall -- Space-alien!" She sucked greedily on her cigarette and blew the smoke in my face.

\* \* \*

The 1977 Cadillac hearse was still parked next to the Landfall Funeral Home and I parked my car beside it. When I got out of my car I touched the hearse's hood. It was warm although the day was cool and the hearse shaded.

I walked around the side and back of the building that housed the Landfall Funeral Home. It was obvious that it had in a previous life been a warehouse or small industrial building. In back the concrete blocks were obvious beneath several coats of whitewash. On the sides and in front the building had been faced with vinyl siding to give it a more "home-like" look, but it remained flat-roofed. When I got around to the front I paused to pull some small triangular burrs from my pants legs. I'd picked them up pushing through the knee-high weeds behind the place.

The front door opened into a vestibule which was dark with richly paneled wood and thick carpeting. I pushed through the inner door and found myself in what I at first mistook for a church chapel. As I was standing there, looking around the apparently empty room, someone behind me slipped a plastic bag over my head, gripping it tightly over my face, suffocating me. "Not again!" I thought. But it was completely different. This bag was dark, opaque, and I couldn't see the black spots when they appeared.

\* \* \*

This time I awoke to find myself sitting in and tied to a chair. Ruth and Barry were standing over me, staring at me.

"You're in this together, aren't you?" I said.

Ruth grinned at me. "You bet, lover."

"I don't get it," I said. "Why hire me?"

Barry gave me a solemn look. "It was an idea I had."

"He used to read books about detectives," Ruth explained. "He wanted to meet a real, live one. And he knew how much I'd enjoy meeting you...." She gave me a lewd wink.

"So the whole thing was a sham, a put-up job?" I demanded.

Ruth laughed. "That's it. You got it, Mr. Detective!"

"Then why am I tied up like this?"

"Geeze, I dunno. Barry? Barry?" She was looking around. "Where'd he go?"

Barry had vanished. Ruth gave every appearance of following him.

"Ruth -- wait! Untie me or something -- cut me loose!" I tried to stand, but my legs were lashed to the chair legs and I couldn't do more than rock the chair back and forth impatiently.

Ruth paused in her dash after Barry to look back at me. Emotions waged a tug of war across her face, but she turned back to me and began fumbling with the knots. "Stop pulling -- you're just making them tighter!" she admonished me. Once she had my hands free we could each work on one of my legs. She seemed to be enjoying the task more than might be expected -- if I hadn't already had a taste of her appetite for me.

Once I was on my feet she led me for a door in the rear of the chapel. This opened into a carpeted corridor which in turn led to a room of stainless steel counters and fixtures -- the embalming room, which I was glad to see was empty. The lights here were bright fluorescents in a contrast to the subdued and indirect lighting in the corridor and room beyond, and it took my eyes a moment to adjust and to be certain that Barry was not here either.

Another door took us into what must have been Barry's office. It was dignified and uncluttered and no doubt was where his clients signed their contracts with him. Two other doors led from this room.

Ruth headed straight for the one at the back of the room, behind the desk. It opened onto a smaller, very cluttered room. This room had filing cabinets, their drawers half open with unfiled papers sitting on top of files. There was another desk, this one holding a computer keyboard and monitor, the actual computer sitting on the floor next to it. A screen-saver was cycling geometrical designs on the monitor. Books, magazines and newspapers were stacked everywhere on every horizontal surface, covering the rest of the desktop and crowding the keyboard. There was actually a large soft-cover book sitting on top of the monitor. An office chair was lying on its side in front of the desk, blocking our way.

Ruth pulled and pushed at the chair, which remained in her way, then managed to climb over it, almost falling and catching herself on a filing cabinet. She was making for another door in the back corner of the room. I yanked the chair upright and pushed after her. I was right behind her when she yanked open the door.

\* \* \*

You know, looking back over this case I have to say that it's one I'll never turn into a book and sell to the movies. Too unbelievable. Too weird. I mean, who would've figured Barry Landfall for a genuine space-alien?

Ruth should have. She was the one who put me onto it, after all. But I suppose it was just too obvious and under her nose to occur to her. These sci-fi fans!

I visit her every week at the burn recovery center. It was her final bit of bad luck to be the one who opened that closet door when she did -- just as "Barry Landfall" was in the process of making his return to wherever it was he really came from. The light that came through the door when she opened it was as blindingly bright as it was searingly hot -- and she got the full blast of it. A second later the light was gone and all that was left was a charred closet.

We reported it as a flash fire when I took Ruth to the emergency room.

We still talk about "Barry Landfall." We speculate about whether he took over that identity or made it up. I favor the latter. "He read lots of books -- mostly mystery and science fiction," Ruth told me. "He was an active ess-eff fan but I hadn't realized how much of a mystery fan -- well, detective-story fan anyway -- he was. He hired you just to have the experience of walking into a seedy -- sorry! -- detective's office and going through that whole routine."

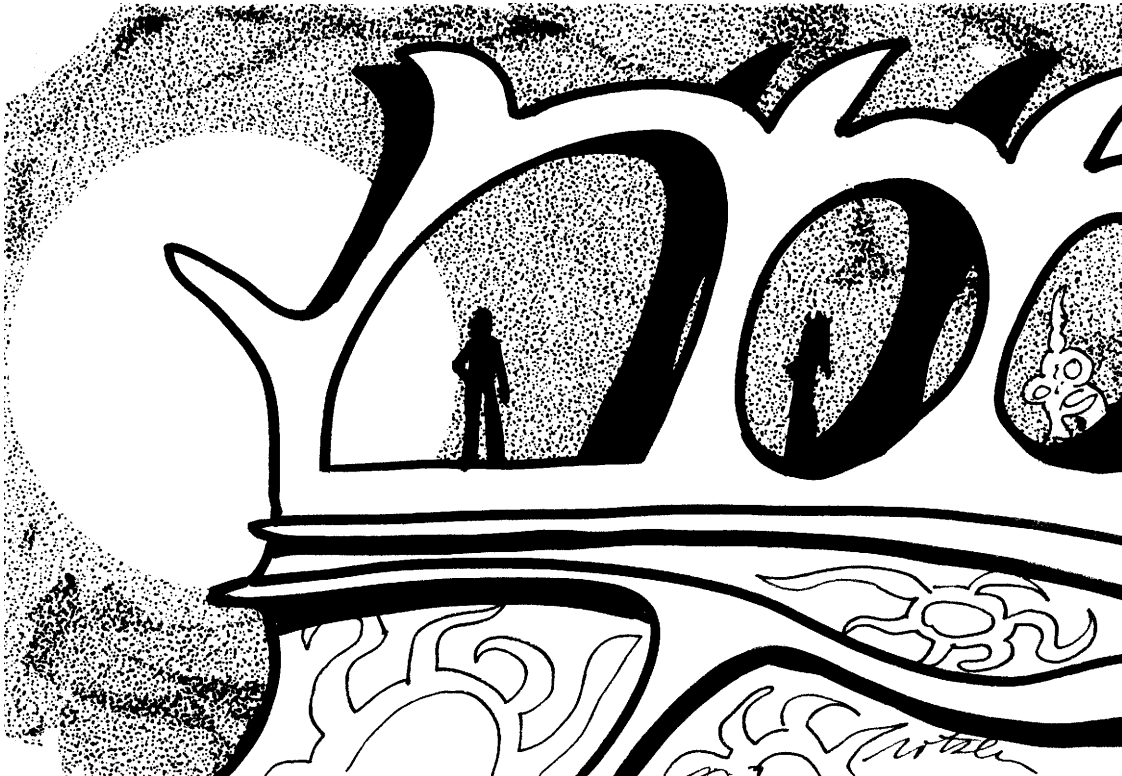
"You went along with it," I said.

"Well, I had no idea that he had a deadline."

"He tied me up."

"Umm, yeah. But I didn't know what he was really up to then."

But we both knew what she was really up to.



# Never Back Up

By Jeff Schalles

The Bell Telephone ladies were fun that night, I hung around for a second load and got three characters going to Duquesne Heights. They laughed and joked and included me in the fun. Not all of the night shift telephone operators Pittsburgh Yellow Cab took home were this entertaining. Usually the chatty ones tipped you something, too. They didn't have to, 15 percent was added into the flat rate, but it was nice when they did. It was one of those newly minted warm spring nights, still a touch of chill in the air and patches of snow and ice in the shadows, maybe it was Tuesday. That part's just a guess. This was twenty-five years ago.

I suppose it was probably one in the morning when I dropped the last passenger off. Duquesne Heights is the hilltop working class neighborhood just downstream from Mt. Washington, the better known historic and restaurant district. I was on some narrow little street, practically vertical, lined with old, solid, close together little houses, but no driveways, no alleys. This neighborhood was built to take advantage of the passenger inclines that used to run up the downtown side of the mountain. The original owners had neither horses nor automobiles.

I knew I was somewhere west of Grandview Avenue with its vast panorama of the three rivers meeting in the big bowl containing the West End, North Side, Hill District, Oakland, South Side, Downtown, and, far to the East, the Penn Hills. But I didn't know exactly where I was. The maps didn't always help at this point. They often showed streets jumping across gaps where there was no bridge, streets that were really old streetcar rights of way, streets that turned out to be city steps. So I kept going straight, up the hill. I wasn't concerned. At least none of my passengers had been carrying a vacuum cleaner.

One night the summer before, the last night of the month and a full moon. Early in the evening, a bit after dinner, a guy calls for a cab and he wants to stick a few things in my trunk and back seat, some boxes, a suitcase or two, couple of shopping bags, and a canister vacuum cleaner. Sure, why not, I'll at least get the 50 cent baggage surcharge. Cab rides cost 50 cents extra back then, on top of the meter, if the driver needed to get out and help with bags. That was in our union contract.

This was no big deal, people would transport stuff in our old Checkers all the time. The next ride took me back downtown from the West End. I was sent to an apartment, out came a wild-haired character, chattering away, jacket and tie in hand, wanted to sit up front. He was going downtown to Heinz Hall, the orchestra hall. He never stopped talking, made constant observations on anything and everything around us. I thought he was a few fries short of a happy meal, but he was ok. He also kept alluding to old money stuff and dropping Pittsburgh's wealthier family names. He hadn't put on his tie by the time we got downtown. I assumed he wanted the side entrance, but no, he wanted out in the limo zone. He tossed me a wad of bills, real nice tip, and jumped out into the crowd of top-hatted and

jeweled concert-goers, who immediately surrounded him, pounding him on the back, shaking his hand, genuinely happy to see him. Life is full of useful lessons.

I picked up a downtown fare going to Oakland, ended up in Shadyside again, took another call. This time the guy coming out of the apartment building was carrying 2 or 3 shirts on hangers . . . and an upright vacuum cleaner. He's moving, not far. Must be a minimalist. Now I'm in East Liberty, one of those mixed housing, urban renewal areas. Another radio call, up a dark street into a bit of a bad spot. A very young, slender, black woman comes to my window and hands me an infant wrapped in a blanket. "Hold my baby, I'm going back in for his things. If I'm not right back, call the police." She disappears inside before I can say anything. The baby is sleeping. I lock my doors, kill the lights, and watch. She comes back very quickly with a few parcels, we pull away without incident. I hate incidents.

Finally that night, late, I get a radio call and the dispatcher asks if I'm willing to help load furniture. Someone's moving. Sure, why not, I pull up and it turns out to be a retiring cab driver who I vaguely remember seeing around the garage. He and his wife are moving to Florida and they've offered all their extra stuff to these nice young church people who proceed to fill up my cab with it. I have to tie the trunk lid partly-shut. They want to stick a couch on the roof, I refuse, it gets left at the curb. There's lamps, toasters, small tables, winter clothes, boxes of dishes, and, of course, another vacuum cleaner.

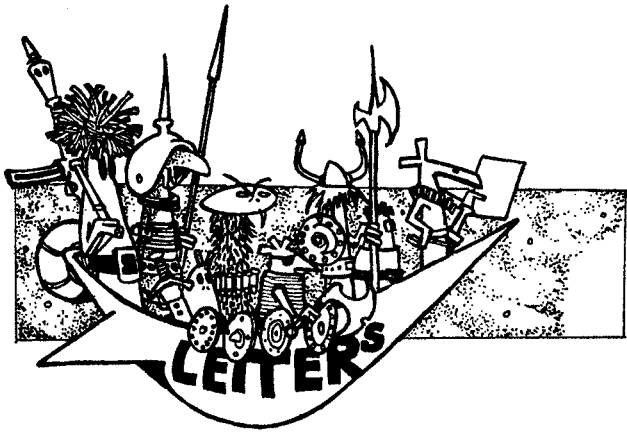
The kids, five or six of them maybe, clamber in around their stuff, they're all skinny and very clean cut. Squeezed in next to me is a very pretty young girl. Very pretty, very big breasts, very big breasts pressed up against my big strong cab driver right arm. She's rubbing against me, appears to be coming on to me, I'm shoved up against my door. It's not far, some back street in Oakland. "Have you ever heard of Reverend Moon and the Unification Church?" she asks brightly. Yes I have, actually, and the big free vegetarian dinner suddenly sounds like less of good thing. But maybe I can sit next to this nice young lady?

But, shudder, no. I didn't take that fork in the road. Instead, a few months later, I drove off a cliff. Probably a better deal.

Backed off, actually. I got to the head of the street in Duquesne Heights to find it dead ending with a right turn into a dirt lane. Nice view of the Ohio River valley to the East. Grandview Avenue somewhere below. I pulled part way into the lane, blocked by a pile of gravel. Pulled in, then backed slowly out with the wheel cranked hard over. Suddenly the back of the cab jerked a bit and quickly rolled back. I jammed on the brakes as the frame went clunk on the gravel. Putting it in gear did nothing, the wheels were spinning. I opened my door, gingerly looked down, saw dirt. Whew. But my back wheels were out in space. It was a great spot for the cab radio to transmit, I got the company tow truck up there pretty fast. The driver, an elderly black gentleman, growled at me as he dragged the cab back from the precipice: "Son, let me tell you something. Don't you ever, ever, ever . . . back up."

. . . . .  
*"What's all this about sexy potatoes?"*  
 . . . . .





Robert Lichtman  
PO Box 30  
Glen Ellen CA 95442

With a publishing schedule as demanding and precise as *Science Fiction Five Yearly* it's a wonder the zine has survived to see a tenth issue. Still, I never doubted for a decade, or even briefer periods of time, that you'd manage to pull it off. "If anyone, LeeH!" I would say in moments when my enthusiasm bubbled over into incoherent utterances. You may have taken on a crew over the years to assist you, but it's clear from your editorial that you're still the captain of this ship. Er, so to speak. (I'd better change paragraphs before I drown in metaphor.)

Between Jeff Schalles' lists of Gestetners on hand and their sources and F. M. Busby's reminiscences about the good ol' Crydays and the joys of collective publishing -- and this issue itself, I feel like I've time-traveled to the past repro-wise. It's a rare but wonderful thing to have a fanzine printed on limp paper in more than one color, these days, and don't think it isn't appreciated. I've used all primary methods of reproduction available to fen in my own checkered fanpubbing career: ditto with my first genzine title, mimeo with my second, and photocopy with the present one. Each has its own pluses and minuses, but on balance I think I preferred ditto for the ability to easily do multicolor work. I used to solicit exotic color ditto masters from European fans back in the late '50s and early '60s and often had half a dozen (±) colors all on the same page. I know this is now possible with color inkjet printers, but there was something charmingly low-tech about ditto that today's printechology (latter-day Ackermanese, here) can't, er, duplicate.

Went back and reread the entirety of "The Purple Fields of Fanac," an enjoyable task -- but when I was done, I was somewhat befuddled. Ted wrote at the end of the first installment, "To think that the fate of the whole of humanity rested upon convincing this one man that he lived more than fifty years in the past!" But I couldn't find a reference in any of the prior installments explaining just how and why the continued existence of James Oldfan is important, and it isn't revealed here, either. Fun reading, though.

Vijay Bowen certainly lives a different, though very interesting, life from most of us. I can't imagine wearing clothes so tight that the next day one is "useless, living on ibuprofen and tea," but I guess it was worth it for the praise Vijay got when the photos taken appeared at that "big East Coast fetish extravaganza." And Vijay, egoboo is egoboo no matter how you get it -- from rubberwear or a good fanzine.

I once lived in an apartment in San Francisco just as weird, in its own way, as your basement place on East 7th. It also was a basement apartment, and above lived my landlady, 88-year-old widow Carmela Barbaria. The apartment's layout was best described as central kitchen plan. One walked in the front door and found oneself in the kitchen. Everything else was reached through the kitchen, which was around 9 feet wide and at least 25 feet deep. This was during the period I lived with Margo Newkom, who reported that Carmela was always telling her to "fatten him up," occasionally laying quantities of her home-made Italian sausage on us, or a pan of lasagna. She also gave us carte blanche to harvest from her backyard garden, and what a cornucopia that was: besides a variety of vegetables and fruit trees, one side wall was covered with boysenberry vines. At \$85 a month in 1965, which includes gas, electric and water, it was a great deal. Unfortunately, we outgrew it in a few months and moved on. But I can still remember the taste of Carmela Barbaria's homemade sausage.

Ghod, I love photo sections! This is a delicious one, too, particularly that picture of Walt in the cab of an obviously beat-up old pick-up truck in 1952. If I didn't know the particulars of this shot, I'd think it was a still

## LETTERS

from *Grapes of Wrath* or some such movie. Walt's eyes are piercing, man, piercing, and that look! His eyes are still piercing in the 1995 photo later on, but his expression so much more mellow -- almost beatific. Also like Fern & Bob Tucker making eyes at one another in such a loving way in that scene in Bloch's kitchen. And our bhoys Steve Stiles, Dan Steffan and Terry Hughes at their most longhairedness! And Jeff behind his drums -- and atop the lumberpile! Harlan in skivvies! Far out!

Victor's piece sort of meanders, but has its moments. I remember seeing the movement of the earth out in the horizon when I lived in rural Tennessee in the '70s. One could walk to a clearing in the woods and spread a blanket down on the weeds and grass, lay there and watch the sky. Sometimes there would be meteor showers, and always if one focused long enough in one place -- and I mean long enough -- one could see the edge of the universe emerging or receding (depending on direction of gaze) before you. In the background, the sound of a stream -- not of imagined urine from a young woman caught by magnification, but an actual fresh water creek. Fandom would be completely absent from my mind during such nocturnal gazing, replaced by a true appreciation of one's microscopic self's minuteness in the universe.

I remembered Bloch's piece from its original appearance, and also from *Out of My Head*, the 1986 collection of his work done by NESFA Press for Confederation. A most enjoyable article, wherever encountered, and a pleasure to read again.

My favorite part of Dan Steffan's "The Last Corflu" was Caspar's comment, "We went from invulnerable to incontinent overnight." Nicely drawn cartoonery.

Andy Hooper's thoughts, observations, and adventures while walking reminded me that I used to walk (and bike) around Glen Ellen a lot in the past, and I don't anymore. The main things that happened are that the roads got more crowded and dangerous, which took me off my bike, and my main walking place got gated. That was a road that wound up a hill and ended after nearly three miles at the gates of a private campground. Some sections ascended gently, while others were steep. At various points on the way up, you could look off in the distance and see much of the Sonoma Valley below. Go even farther up and far-off exotic Mt. Diablo, some 40 miles away in Contra Costa county, could be seen, at least on a clear day. I used to go about halfway up in the evening a couple times a week. But the homes up there were on large acreages, owned by rich people, and the road was an easement -- a private street. Towards the end of the '80s it was gated and the pleasures of walking it came to an abrupt end. There is no comparable walk around here without traveling some distance to get to it, alas.

Something rather auspicious, or perhaps foreboding, about the resumption of Harlan's serial in SFFY after such a long lapse. Could this mean *The Final Dangerous Visions* might also soon appear?

Best wishes,



Cy Chauvin  
14248 Wilfred  
Detroit MI 48213

Thank-you for SF-5 Yearly. Oddly, it doesn't seem that long since the last issue. I remember when monthly fanzines were considered frequent, and now a quarterly would seem hectic. And apparently a five-yearly fanzine doesn't seem that long between issues.

The photo section is very nice. My favorite photo: Bob Tucker, Bob Bloch & etc. playing Scrabble. It looks so 1950's homey, everyone so young and it



sort of radiates a kind of happiness you don't often see. The biggest surprise: I didn't recognize Gary Farber in the Nashville Corflu photo (with Patrick Nielsen Hayden). I thought it was Alan Bostick!

Victor's article could provoke a long reply. A longing to "get back to nature" so often is taken to mean that someone wishes to abolish all technology, or freeze development at a certain stage or time. But that's not true. It's just that nearly every wonderful thing we have invented has been taken to such an extreme: take the auto. Sure, it's wonderful not to have to walk miles. But now suburbs are being built where there no other option than driving, there is no planning for walking. Think of the cons you've been to like that. So let's not abolish technology, but let's control it. I know that not a popular idea in this Republican era, or among anarchistic fandom. But it's definitely not an either/or question, in my opinion (and if I'm simplifying Victor's article, I'm sorry).

Lee's article is my favorite, perhaps because I've lived in some odd places like the one she describes. Actually, I suppose only one was really odd, and I only lived there about six months. Dave Romm, Steve Trout and another person or two shared it with me. There was a hole under the tub there, too. But since the hole lead to the living room, and they were artists, a poster of a big eye was pasted over the hole on the living room ceiling, instead of sheet metal. Black & silver cloth was hung down the stairway like drapes. Pages from comic books wallpapered the bathroom. My bedroom (taken over from someone else who had moved away) was painted black with stars on the ceiling. (Cy, this isn't you at all! said Leah Zeldes at the time.) Discipline was pretty slack. I remember refusing to do the dishes any more until (ugh!) I discovered insects growing on the plates. But I'm not describing it as entertainingly as Lee, perhaps I don't want to remember my eventful post-college life, circa 1978, too clearly!

Best,  
Cy

**James White**

5 January 1997

Dear LeeH, Andy, Geri, Jeff but excluding Uncle Tom Cobley who is a fakefan, and all,

Realising that the tenth issue of a five-yearly fanzine has just come in is a sobering thought, more so when one is already sober, and it has the effect of bringing back the arrival of Issue One and dumping me suddenly into the bright, leafy opening stretches of memory lane. At that time the major personal medical problem of incised lino-cutting fingers has since cleared up but, as has happened with most of us, a few new ones have appeared. Oh, well.

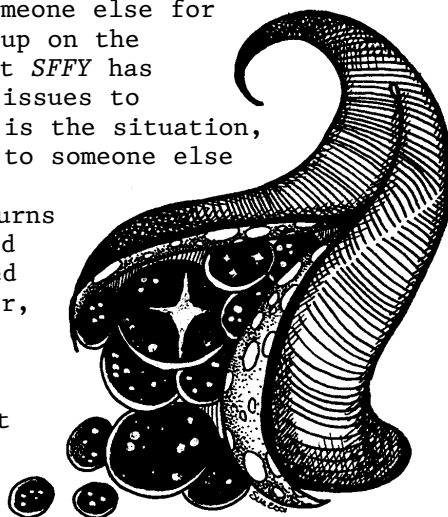
This was a really nice, well-balanced and designed issue, with the longer, serious (but not always) articles seeded with little nuggets of shorter stuff like humorous anti-personnel devices. All the artists did themselves proud, too, but I particularly liked the refinement undreamed-of in the early SFFYs, that lovely photo supplement. The supplement was lovely, I mean, not necessarily all of the subjects. But it was terrific seeing so many of the young/old fans as they were/are. I especially liked Jeff's picture showing Hope Leibowitz, Moshe Feder and Patrick and Teresa Nielsen Hayden Disclaving/skyscraping in 1984-86. Teresa looked like Audrey Hepburn then and now she looks like Gillian Anderson -- apart from her narcolepsy and stuff, some people seem to get all the luck.

I did detect, however, a touch of (editorial?) dithering regarding policy on your gripping, exotic, and several dodgier words, serials. Is someone for continuing them fearlessly into the bright immensities of the unknown future, and someone else for wrapping them up on the assumption that SFFY has not many more issues to run? If that is the situation, all I can say to someone else is for shame.

As Robert Burns would have said if he had lived a century later, 'Lang may your life-support systems reek.'

All the Best

*James*



## LETTERS

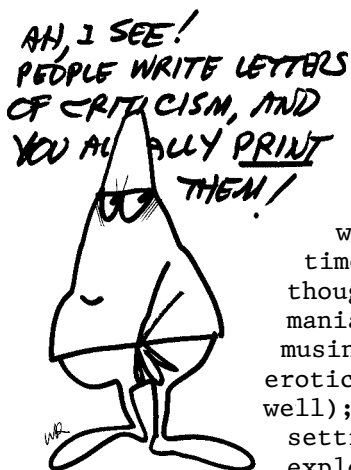
**William Breiding**  
14248 Wilfred  
Detroit MI 48213

Since my arrival in fandom in 1973 I've been hearing and reading about Lee (hi there) and *Science Fiction Five Yearly*; twenty-three years later it was an unexpected surprise (an eye-brow raiser, actually) to find myself on its mailing list.

I have been vaguely irritated by fannish sexual exploits into the realm of "kink" that have lately cropped up in Fanzines. I'm not absolutely sure why this is, and the closest I can get to it is that it's the tone of these essays. And my intimate knowledge of just how tweeby most fans tend to be. There's a sense of exploitation, a "gee, look at me" kind of flirtation, like the old one-eyed king in the land of the blind. I'm far from being a prude, so it's not that; I question its intent, why it was written, like Luke McGuff's piece on nipple piercing, and his ever-changing, sensitive sexuality, that ran in *Spent Brass*. At least Vijay Bowen's piece was transparent titillation, shiny as a well rubbed latex covered ass surface and superfluous; nothing like warm flesh, without the fetish. I have nothing against this kind of thing, indeed I find it fascinating. It's the tone and intent that I'm holding up by the scruff of the neck, like the aforementioned McGuff piece, and finding questionable. What was Luke doing, and how sincere? Was it just the flash and rush of show and tell? The giddiness of exposing his sex in public? I'm sure these folks are nice enough, were I to meet them; I wouldn't hesitate to lay my hands around Vijay's cinched waist, and maybe pull on Luke's hoops, but, where does it goes from there, eh? I suppose it's good that fandom has finally discovered it can write about its predilections, especially those that are so non-scientific.

F. M. Busby's piece was a delight. I can say little more than that. It was nostalgic in its content and faint feel. I was positive I was reading a reprint until I got below those asterisks.

The sheer technique of Dan Steffan's strip was awesome. I studied it for a long time, especially that first panel.



Victor and Andy pull in with some fine moody meditations. Through Andy's piece I kept thinking of Bradbury's *The Whole Town Is Sleeping*. Remember that little gem, written and published in a time when few Americans had thoughts of random violence, or maniacs. I envy Victor's moony musings (here an admitting to erotic underpinning, and handled well); the SanJuan's, the rustic setting. A place I have yet to explore. Someday.

*William*

**Don Fitch**  
3908 Frijo  
Covina CA 91722

Rather nice paper, and the three sturdy staples, well-aligned, are excellent touches. That's not quite enough to sear it in my mind as an outstanding candidate for next year's Fanzine Hugo, though -- other factors do that.

Look as hard as I might, I can't find anything in or about it that isn't absolutely Top Quality. (Well . . . excepting the probability that the paper isn't acid-free and won't last more than about 50 years . . . and that'll make Issue #20 look better by comparison.)

The Quality I so admire isn't only that of the writing & artwork & layout (though these are all major factors). What strikes me particularly is the way the material all manages to be extremely fannish without ever falling into the "Look how faanish I can be" trap. One can well apply to it the statement which, despite some modification by me, seems to be about what Charles Burbee meant -- "The best fanstuff can be appreciated by the reasonably literate and intelligent non-fan who lives across the street". It's impossible to be sure about such things, but I don't think my knowledge of the context of fannish history and lore significantly increases my appreciation of this material; the text stands solidly on its own feet. (The illustrations, being illustrations rather than "High Art" (insert oblig. non-disclaimer of dope reference

innuendo), seem to have a trifle more historico-emotional overlay, but not enough to be really significant; mostly, they just add a bit to the text, which is precisely what they should do.)

I was favorably impressed by the neat ways you observed Fannish Propriety and treated all the contributors (editors, writers, & artists) purely as fans, even though more than half of them have Professional Publication credits, and several are outright /F/i/l/t/h/y/ Pros -- and the (arguably) most famous of these is here (lightly) veiled by a pseudonym ("Nalrah Nosille").

Also strikingly appealing (to me) is the careful balance between Old and New (authors, reprints, modern topics, and artwork) -- the combination works marvelously well. Actually, I might not nominate *SFFY* for the Fanzine Hugo next year, but only because I hold the somewhat free interpretation of "Best Fanzine" to imply "Best for fandom", and frequent publication pulls some weight there.

I do hope you got permission from the contributors, and have some intention of putting *SFFY* #10 up on a Web Page (the Smith-Graham one would seem to be the best bet) -- it really deserves to be read by lots of fans (far more than an affordable postal Mailing List could practically include), and by as many proto-fans as possible.

<FitchDonS@aol.com>

*Better late than never on putting SFFY on the Web, I hope, especially as -- thanks in particular to Judy Bemis -- \*all 11\* issues will be up on the FANAC website shortly. -- gfs*

**Teddy Harvia:** I was only mildly amused by the papal cartoon by Bill Rotsler and Shelby Vick until I realized those were not hand puppets. I came completely unzipped.

**Lloyd Penney:** Mah heartstrings went \*twang\* reading the first half of Ted White's article. For, this is the way I feel...I really enjoy getting mail, and writing, and sending mail. This is the life cycle of a letterhack, I guess, but I do enjoy it.

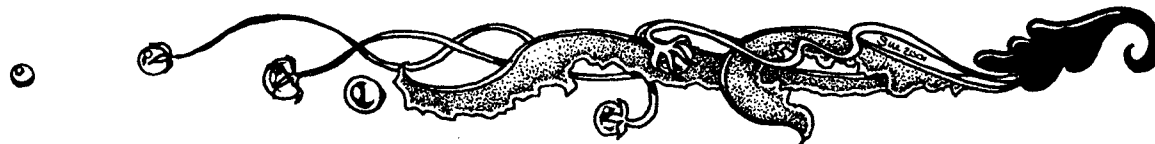
**Bruce Pelz:** In the photographs, there is one of Harlan and Poul, which is identified as being at a Midwestcon. 'Tain't true . . . .

The picture was taken at Westercon 19 in San Diego -- the notorious "Bouncing Potatoes" Westercon -- by the pool mentioned in the last verse of Poul's filk. Jeff has a copy of the photo because the original owner, Gail Whiskin, brought it (and some others) to Magicon to give to me as Historical Mementos (which they are). Gail (originally Joey Knuth, then Gail Daniels, then Gail Thompson, before moving to Florida and becoming Gail Whiskin) was an L.A. fan in the '60s, and the picture was taken either by her or by a previous husband, Dik Daniels.

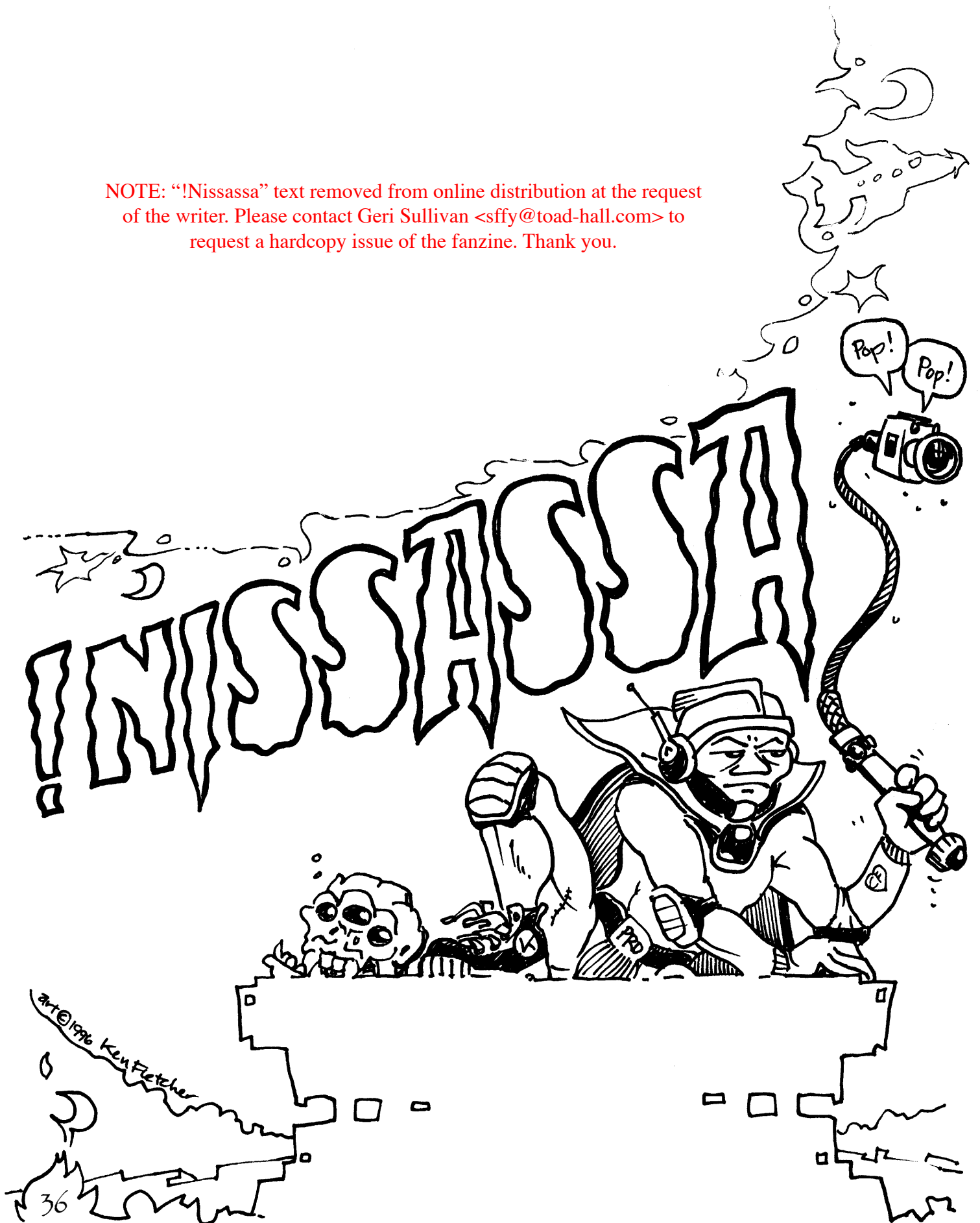
I wanted to put a copy of the Long-and-Short-of-SF-Prodrom shot of Poul and Harlan into the time capsule, but Jeff reminded me that a 1966 color photo would fade into nothingness in 50 years, so we decided to copy it. I bought a new roll of film, Jeff re-shot the photo (several times) and used up the rest on whatever was handy. One of the re-shot copies went into the capsule.

**Jim Young:** What a fine, faanish institution *SFFY* is. But as I was turning the pages, I kept asking myself, "What's gonna happen when the Twilltone runs out?" Will we have to establish it as an ethnic artifact that NGO's like the Sierra Club can start campaigns to preserve? Who will be the Twilltone poster child? These are the burning questions for 1997, if you ask me.

**Harlan Ellison:** Silverberg pointed out that apart from all of the other major awards that I have won -- lifetime achievement awards and Pen awards and Writer's Guild awards & Grammy nomi... and all that shit. All of them pale into insignificance before the singular fact that I am now the author of the longest running serial in the history of science fiction. It's been going since 1956 and, as we all know, that's 40 years! Now you show me anyone else who's got a serial that has run 40 years. I thought you might like to include this in the magazine in some small way.



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!N!S!S!A!S!S!A!

# *All in the SF Family*

*By Kip Williams*

Ghu, the way Bob Heinlein wrote --  
Stuff that's in my .sig line quote --  
New Wave writers missed the boat.  
Those were the days.

SF was what we read then.  
Girls were scarce, and fen were men.  
Mister, we could use a fan like L. R\*n H\*bb\*rd again.

Didn't have no Cyberpunk;  
We'd have called that 'wire head junk.'  
Chip Delany's *Dhalgren* stunk.  
Those were the days!

(tune by Charles Strouse)

