

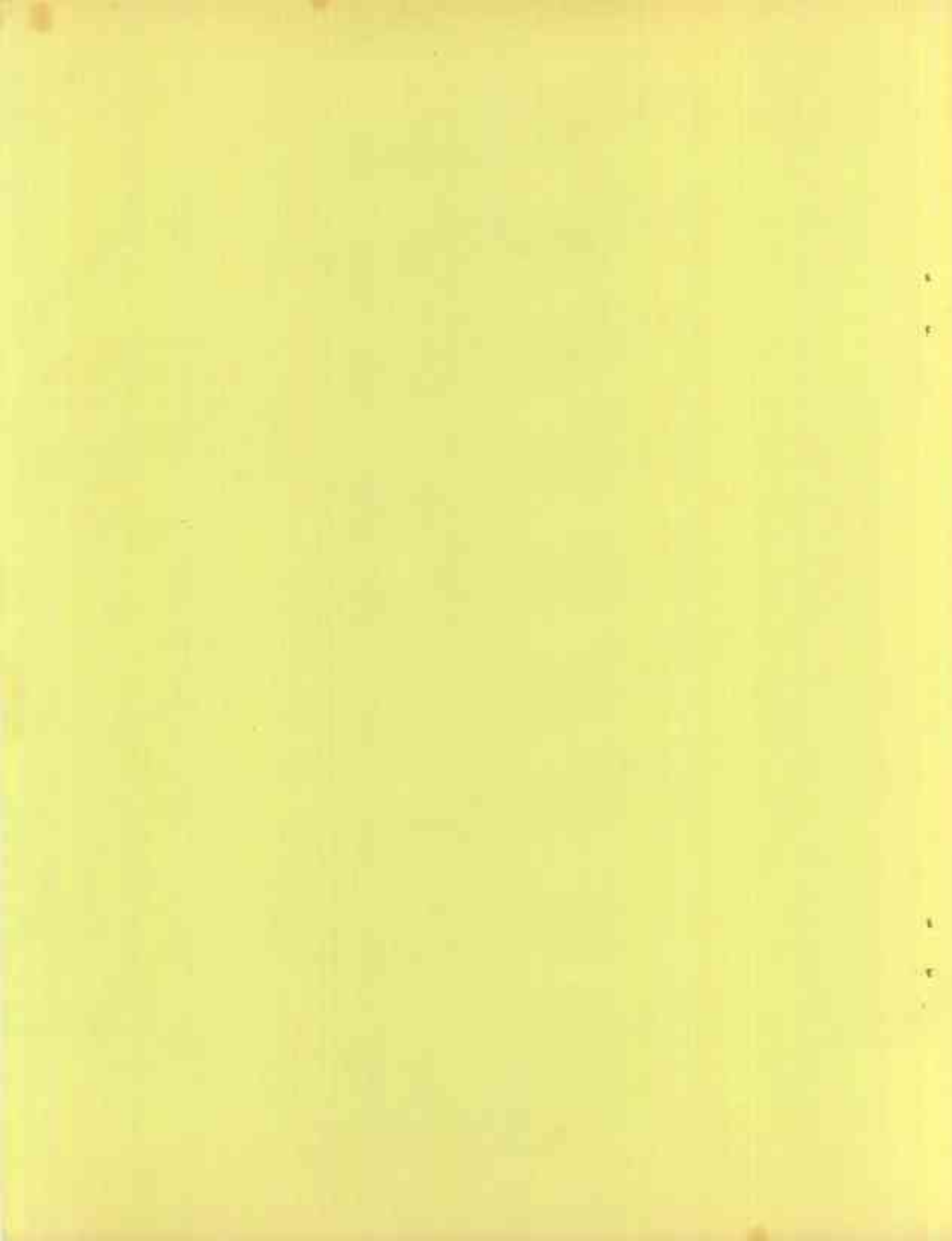
SCIENTI- FRICTION 9



I GUESS YOU'RE
RIGHT, DR. MOREAU...
STILL, YOU JUST
DON'T **SEE** THAT MANY
SEXY HIPPOS....



SCHIRM-77



Beware— **7** WARNING SIGNS OF LITERACY

1. DO YOU HAVE LITERATE DISCHARGES?
2. DO YOU 'HAVE FUN WITH DICK AND JANE'?
3. ARE THERE SUSPICIOUS LETTERS AFTER YOUR NAME, LIKE BA OR PHD?
4. HAVE YOU NOTICED A HARD LUMP OF BOOK REVIEWS IN YOUR FANZINE?
5. WHEN DID YOUR FORGET WHAT THE ABBREVIATION 'T.V.' MEANS?
6. DO YOU OCCASIONALLY OPEN THE BOOKS IN YOUR COLLECTION?
7. DO YOU DISAGREE WITH LESTER DEL REY'S REVIEWS?

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SCIENTIFRICTION 9

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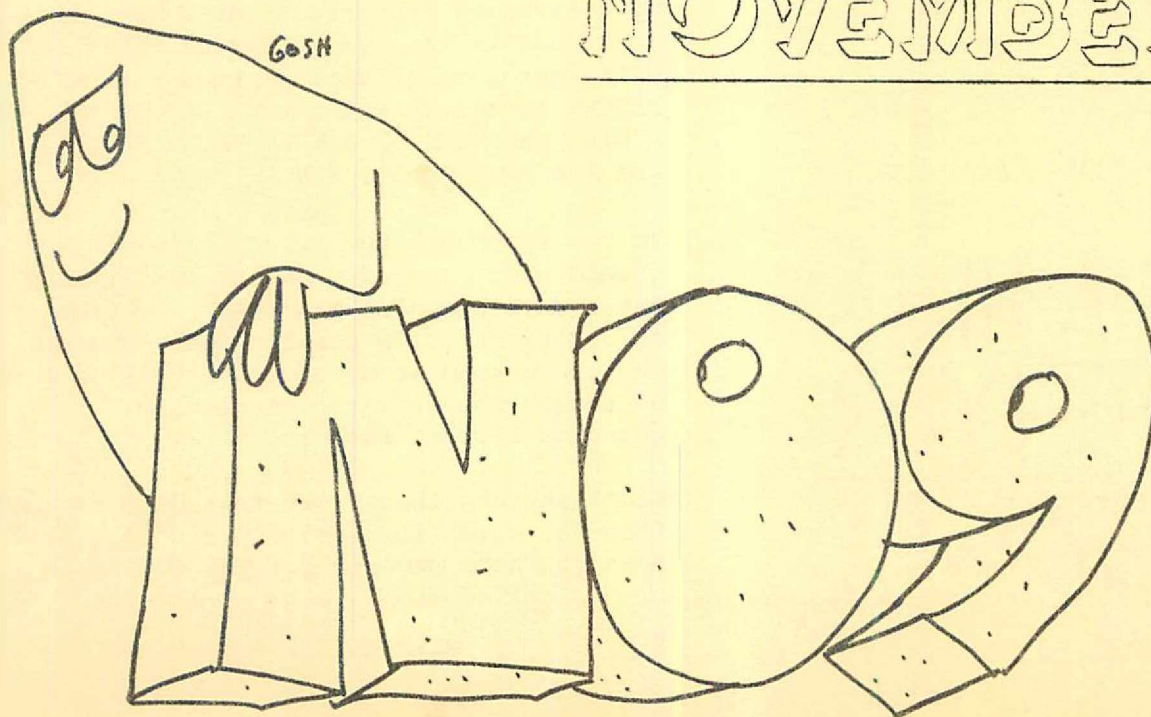
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NOVEMBER





MIKE
GLYER

PREFRICTION

1. The Six Who Are Boring

A well-known sercon-oriented genzine's publisher reaps a number of fringe benefits unavailable to most average fans. Not only are we privileged to discuss private legal dealings with writers ("let me remind you that you can be sued along with the author of libelous material published in your fanzine"), and receive advance news about artists' successes ("I can't do the illos I promised after all because I'm being paid \$25 to do a wall mural -- send the next issue of STFR to my Peking address") For our humble mimeoed efforts we also get lots of review copies of sf books. Unless it's to influence the Hugo results through fan publicity, I cannot understand some paperback publishers' willingness to give away product with an annual total value over \$100 (multiply this by three or four publishers, then tack on up to \$250 worth of hardbacks from various publishers added together). However as long as they're willing to send them I'm willing to review them.

One direct and pleasurable result is that I've received galley proofs from Flunt publishers and discovered how one of my literary obsessions, the Amber series, will conclude long before the rest of you. Actually I was shocked at the ending, but you can judge for yourself when Flunt brings it out for the Christmas trade.

The announced title, COURTS OF CHAOS, winds up a fivesome from Flunt (different titles were used in the Avon paper editions, also different novels) that started with NINE FENCES IN THE SLAMMER, THE GUNS OF ABBEY RENTS, THE SIGN OF A WELL-KNOWN GAFIATE, and THE HAND OF OBI-WAN.

As you remember, the Amber series is what ensued when Raymond Chandler was reincarnated as a baron of the SCA. The rest of the story is fully complicated, but you must have read it by now and await with baited breath the dramatic conclusion. So I'm going to let you have it.

Flunt insists that I can reproduce no more than 750 words for review purposes. So here you have page one of THE COURTS OF

CHAOS, picking up the conversation that ended on THE HAND OF OBI-WAN's last page.

Benedict and I regarded the trump, while Ganelon/Dad/Oberon smiled at our suspicion. All the puzzle pieces fell crashing together. "Good evening, Champion," said Dad.

"Gower?" I asked sarcastically, playing for time. On his shoulder something faintly meowing tried to break the tension. I had seen many cat creatures in Chaos, but this was the first black-and-white winged housecat I had noticed.

"Well," Dad answered, "I'm not surprised that you haven't recognized me, really. Though I've known all of you, only one remembered his whole horrible career."

Benedict stirred. "You mean Brand?" he wondered, mystified by Dad's allusion and concerned with defending his role in our brother's death minutes before.

"No," said Dad. "Brand simply grew too ambitious. A failure in breeding like Osric and Firndo. Here, take my hand and come through the trump."

"Follow me," I told Benedict, and reached through to Dad. Next I was standing in Ganelon's chambers, but Dad had broken the trump connections to Benedict. "What's this about?" I demanded, but he simply finished putting the trump away in the deck.

"Benedict hasn't posed the problems you have, Corwin. Tell me, you've never heard the initials 'J.C.' before?"

"Jesus Christ? Jimmy Carter? Jack Chalker?"

"Jhary a Conel's the name, Champion. My plans were much simpler when you were out of the picture."

"I thought you were my father, Oberon. What happened to him?"

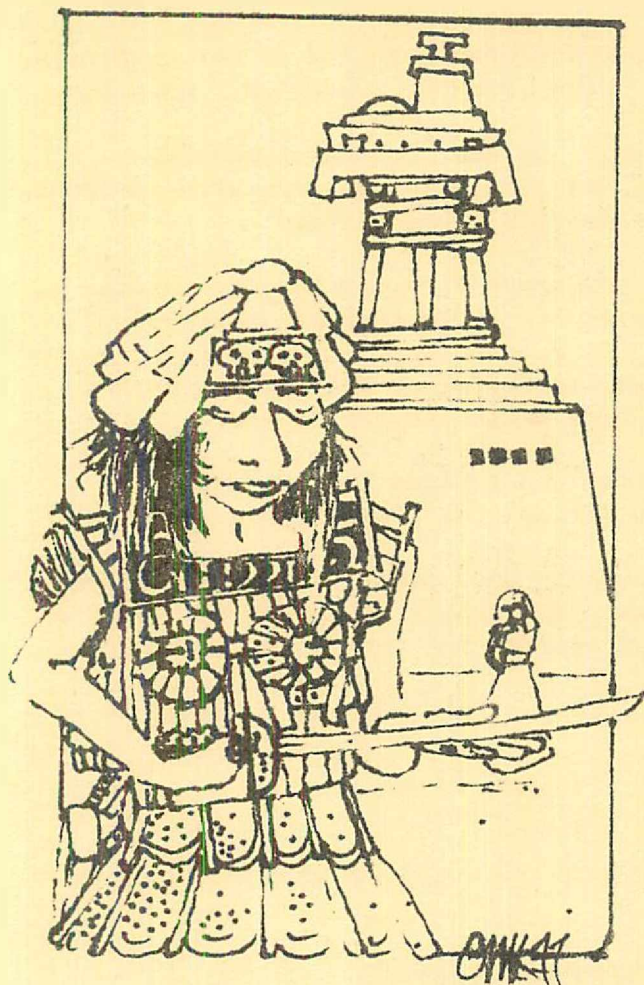
"Our infiltrators at Flunt got him blue-penciled before this series ever went to print. But it didn't stop Zelazny. He wrote the whole series around him and it became so popular that it cramped our conspiracy to take over the American market with our own stories. So we're taking this one over instead." Jhary looked into a corner of the room and snapped his fingers. A black-armored warrior, skin pale as death, stepped from behind a partition. He held an evil sword in his hand. Then I noticed something strange -- he had six heads.

"One of you will be the greatest hero in sword and sorcery and make me a ton of money in paperbacks. I care not which -- Corwin or the six manifestations of the Eternal Champion -- Urlik Skarsol, Erekoze, Corum, Hawkmoon, Aubec and Elric. Sic 'em boys."

Six-headed Elric and I circled each other, one holding soul-hungry Stormbringer, one wielding Grayswandir, forged on the steps of Tir-na Nog'th. Suddenly I realized that I was all that stood between paperback buyers and a flood of Moorcock re-prints. Catching me in thought, Elric slashed out, Stormbringer cleaving the air towards my head. I parried: two swords jarred together sparking unearthly fire.

I had strength on my side, but the albino Melnibonean sustained himself with sorcery and drugs, and he had the aid of five bladewise minds. He could also rely on his own weapon's appetite to pick a way through my defenses.

Cutting, thrusting, parrying and moving, we stepped back and forth through Ganelon's



chambers. Furniture was kicked aside, drapes torn down, as we threw each other off guard, but never long enough. Suddenly I stumbled backwards over a stuffed Norwegian blue parrot. Elric lunged and Stormbringer drove deep into me.

But it was Elric, not I, who staggered -- swept with nausea. Stormbringer dropped to the floor, moaning lowly. I clutched my wound and gasped, "What happened?"

"It's the first time Eater-of-Souls ever threw up," said the melancholy albino.

With my last strength I hurled Grayswandir into the Melnibonean, who rapidly became too weak to sustain himself on my plane -- he and his five brethren disappeared.

When Dad/Jhary a Conel saw what had happened he grabbed his chest and keeled over dead from a heart attack. Sometime later, as I lay at the edge of death, I saw the two swords on the floor and heard one whisper to the other -- so sorry, folks, but that's my 750 words.

(Yahh - and I bet somebody counts, too!)

2. The Usual

Mailing out a fanzine in the middle of the summer convention cycle seems to me a sure way to guarantee that it will draw few letters. As recently as five years ago summer was the very best season for a fanzine because the students who do so much of the letterhacking were all out of school with nothing but free time for postal fanac. Five years ago there were still few enough cons to leave some fans at home most of the summer -- which is also a way of observing that I've never found any segregation of con and fanzine fans. Though once the matter was much discussed, from experience I can assure you that any fan, regardless of origin, will happily take a copy of my fanzine with promises to write a loc, then vanish forever. No longer is this trait unique to self-proclaimed fanzine fans...

Currently so many summertime cons are competing for the interest of that minority of fans also interested in publishing that the season has become the nadir of the locwriters' year. In fact I have calculated that between cons and family holidays there is only a narrow window (as we say in the rocket biz) left through which to launch a genzine with any expectation of getting some letters -- between January 2 and February 28. Even then the con season encroaches, but a couple of weekends have been inadvertently left free.

After a surprisingly large response to STFR 7, the level of response to STFR 8 was patehtically tiny. Of course I say this every issue -- but then you can't let yourselves forget that my editorials are as tightly formulated as a Perry Mason episode, in my case consisting of one part comic fantasy, one part moral indigna-

tion, one part embarrassing self-revelation and one part creebing about the number of letters of comment I got on the last issue. At first I laid the blame for this to my own bad timing and the summer convention season. (Ideally my three issues per year should be published in December, January and February...) Then I became more humble, and blamed my lack of foresight in running no feature articles, or perhaps my bad taste in daring to contradict a feminist viewpoint in the lettercolumn. Given the political atmosphere of today's fandom, any dissent from the latest sermon on feminism is received quite as Humphrey liberalism was received in 60s fandom -- with disbelief and condescension.

But among the handful of letters and cards I received, quite the reverse seemed to be the explanation. At first it was only a hint: "Just reread and re-enjoyed SCIENTIFRICTION 8. But there is a problem: what does it mean when you enjoyed the editorial more than any other piece in the zine -- including the humorous one done by the dynamic duo Cagle and Locke? Surely I don't enjoy inconsequential nattering above entertainment. Well?"

Then it became a suspicion: "Er. Ah yes. In regards. In reply. Preceding are four openings from four locs in STFR #8. My point (which I never sharpen, to pencil borrowers' chagrin)? These are a superfluity, a fat you or the loc-er should cut from the lean, serving merely as a warmup. My secondary point? Your openings are professional, interest-arousing, no-nonsense. And they inevitably presage the quality of each and every sentence that follows. Are you taken for granted? Is an appreciation of the effort and quality you yourself pack into STFR overdue? I think maybe so. I was the only printed loc-er to praise your McDonald's tale, while Carl Bennett's inferior (though superior) piece on brain-blasting earned comparatively wide recognition. Nearly every soul jumped up and down for joy about Dave Locke's column. The guy's got a good head for the absurd, but he's not the writer you are. Does any soul ever remark on the perceptive witticisms that embellish the bottom margins? I guess editors are just traditionally bottom-drawered."

Finally I was convinced: "Yes, I know. I promised a loc on the last STFR. Allow me to humbly lick your boot as a token of my remorse over having failed a sacred trust. I believe I've found the reason bhind your difficulties with response to your zine....The problem is that your zine is *too good*. Your editorials in particular are written eloquently and with an eye towards all sides of the matter under discussion. Why, shortly after Westeroon I attempted to write you a letter arguing some point (minor to you, major to me) and was struck speechless with embarrassment when I discovered on rereading what you'd written (in preparation for a final draft) that you'd already covered my argument to my complete satisfaction. Now you know as well as I do that the cruddy 90% of fanwriting is almost entirely made up of lazy thinking, misreading, artless argument and a generally tawdry command of the English language. How is one with such a background to deal with the superior fmz? With the waving of arms in the air? With curses and poison-pen telegrams? With simple spittle? No, my friend; that vast silence you are confronting is motivated by actual dumbfounded delight (much like Steve Stiles' Actual Yellow) and real awe."

Ahem. Er. Immediately I want to deny believing any of this. I've seen Victoria (in SELDON'S PLAN) and Taral (in SIMULACRUM) tapdancing on Alyson Abramowitz' head for printing the same kind of stuff from her readers. I don't want the heel-marks from their lead-soled Keds on my skull too.

...Besides, terrific as ALGOL and MOTA are, their letterhacks generally manage to squeeze something of substance in between the paeans of ecstatic praise. So let's have no more of these copouts that STFR is too good to be locced. (Quick -- somebody look and see if Andy is still smiling.) Besides -- I'm willing to try any sort

of hype to run up the level of response. As a consequence one section of this editorial will be calculatedly written to be incomplete, question-begging, rank with prejudice, error and fuggheadedness. But just to protect myself I won't announce in advance which one it is -- I'd hate it if you guessed another one fitted the description.

To be momentarily serious (what, and spoil everything?) I'll happily trade these pages of flattery for a few pithy paragraphs about anything in the zine; in case you letter-writers hadn't thought of it, you need not comment on every item in the issue -- just do justice to come part of it. When you give me something concise and provocative to put in the lettercolumn then you're really doing me a favor. If I print a lot of bland compliments it'll put my readers to sleep, but when you share an insight with them I profit too for it stimulates them to write in with their own thoughts. I crave the action, not the reaction.

Getting back to sheer nonsense, I've made a study of what I need to publish in order to maximize comment. Going through all these fanzine lettercolumns one after another you wouldn't believe what triggers flurries of response. It looks like the ideal issue lineup would be Angus Taylor announcing that America sucks, Avedon Carol complaining that fandom doesn't suck, Jackie Causgrove sticking it to a worldconcom, John Curlovitch and John Alderson pretending that they know something about history, and Arthur D. Hlavaty writing about the first thing that comes into his head. Nor should you think I'm putting them all down -- three of the bunch I'd seriously like to see in STFR, unlikely as it is, though come to think of it Hlavaty has provided an LOC.



3. *Ala recherche du temps real soon now*

Awhile back in an apa where the discussion had turned towards the Vietnam War by way of the amnesty issue, I went back and examined the way my views about the war finally changed -- though almost to the end I was in support. In my schooldays I held a lot of conservative opinions, and realizing that set me wondering how to reconcile them with my youthful (1960) enthusiasm for John Kennedy.

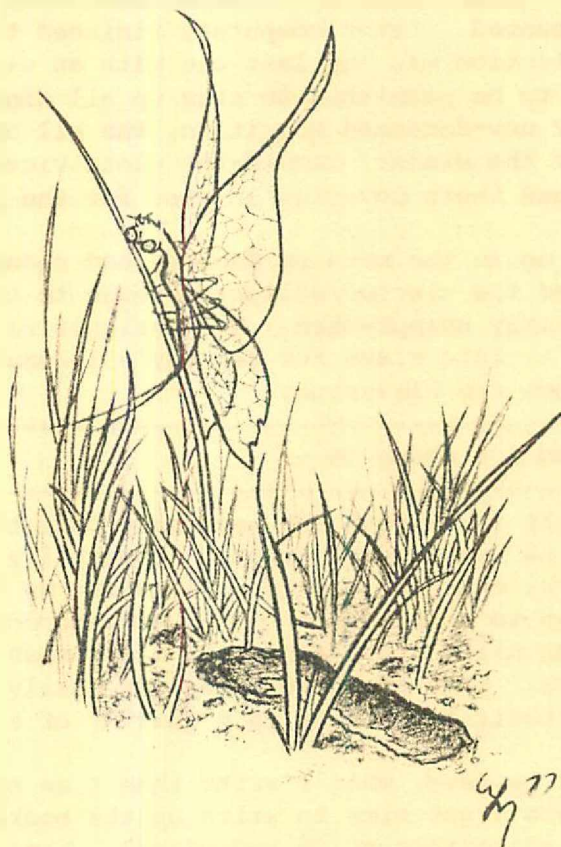
The paradox is only apparent, and comes from looking backwards in a day when Kennedy has been canonized by liberals for the spirit he brought to politics. In 1960 the differences in substance between liberals and conservatives was small, and still is considering how the term liberal has disappeared from the political lexicon. When Kennedy roused my enthusiasm, he played on quite the same ideas I believed when four years later I was a Goldwater enthusiast. Kennedy was a Cold Warrior who lived by the interventionist code (Laos, Vietnam, Cuba) and courted the political right. He supported a strong military, and as far as I can remember did nothing about civil rights initiatives. His positiveness and emphasis on surrounding himself with competent men was just a healthier guise for the accepted national security syndrome the country had endured since 1940.

During the summer of 1960 while my father ran a camera for NBC at a political con-

vention the rest of the family went ahead to visit my grandparents in Delaware. I recall that the bedroom they let me stay in included an I LIKE IKE button pinned to the drapes. "You like Ike, don't you?" my grandmother joked, though I didn't really know whether I did or not -- at the age of 7 I hadn't exactly been avidly following his administration.

After the convention my father flew east and took his vacation with us. This included a trip to Washington, DC, where my grandmother had a cousin especially interested in the city's tourist life (concerts, inaugurations, museums). After visiting her we did some rounds, the FBI, the Capitol Building, and the subway recently installed between the Old and New Senate Office Buildings. With some .45 casings in my pocket, souvenirs of the FBI tour, we went down the hall of the Old Senate Office Building, past Vice

President Nixon's office, no telling what was occurring behind its solemn hardwood door, and found Senator Kennedy's office standing open with two young, pretty and cheerful workers banging at typewriters. I hadn't the slightest idea what I'd say if he was in, but he was long gone on the campaign trail. Still I was a little impressed by this visit to high office.



Was that the moment that I lined up on the Kennedy side? I don't remember when I first realized that I had taken sides, but I do remember that I did so literally when Osceola Street Elementary School returned to session in the fall. The election fever was so intense that teams divided at recess according to the candidate they backed. I played volleyball for the Kennedy side, and we tried to justify our political opinion by defeating the deluded fools who opposed us.

There was a rhyme parroted at the time, which my memory can't supply in full, but I recall that the key words were elected and collected; one's candidate wound up in the White House and the other was carted off to the dump.

When Nixon and Kennedy staged their debates I watched. This was hot current events stuff, so for a change I read the clippings I brought into class, and discovered that one newsman claimed Kennedy had won the first debate. Somehow I had never before encountered the fact that debates could be won and lost.

Election Night was a fantastic television experience, watching Huntley and Brinkley (surely not Cronkite!) review the tote boards, scan the legislative races and for

the last time in the history of American television make a close election sound like a race. By the next election prediction by key precincts had become quite advanced but even if it had not Goldwater's defeat was obvious from the start. Goldwater fell behind after the first twelve votes from some tiny village in New Hampshire had been counted. Later computers finished the whole thing off in nothing flat. The 1960 election was the last one with an element of suspense. I wish I had been old enough to be permitted to stay up all night and watch the coverage -- for that was another now-deceased tradition, the all-night vigil. Now that I can wait til dawn to see the winner, candidates claim victory before the 11 o'clock news and networks suspend their coverage in time for the Tonight Show.

When I got up in the morning Kennedy had secured the necessary electoral votes. I recomposed the elected/collected verse to taunt the losing side at school. They looked suitably unimpressed. The assigned recess teams reformed, and apart from bringing a tv into class for Kennedy's inauguration, world politics were temporarily vanished from the classroom.

4. *The Read Are Among Us*

Unfortunately if I spent the necessary time to write everything I'd like to put in this issue it would never appear. Especially now that I have a daily job. If there were 29 hours in the day, I'd write my own fanzine review column, my own book reviews to supplement Stan's, a Westcon Report (I took about 15 pages of notes, after all), a contemplation of fannish feminism, and a satire on the Riverworld series. Some of these ideas can easily be saved over until next issue; they won't lose their topicality in a quarter of a year.

As for book reviews, when I write them I am not satisfied simply to pass an opinion. But who's got time to write up the books properly when there are stencils to be cut and editorials to be redrafted? Long reviews also consume space -- which could be more efficiently turned over to Burns' minireviews -- and that means so many more turns of the crank before the thing can go in the mail.

This is a compromise; not reviews, simply my reactions as a reader to the books I've been taking along to read on breaks at work.

THE DARK DESIGN: Philip Jose Farmer. Every once in awhile I find a book that shatters the bedrock of my tolerance and drives deep into the wellsprings of my prejudice. Something that will always do it is the discovery of a severely overpadded book. The other thing sure to do it is encountering a story which requires a 'given' (some concession by the reader to the author's unorthodox premise or technique -- nothing new to sf readers) whose author fails to prove its necessity to his story -- dangling it around self-indulgently. Farmer's third Riverworld novel suffered from both faults, which blasted my enjoyment of a sometimes exciting adventure.

I've already talked to readers of the third installment who happily plowed through all four hundred twelve pages, found them entertaining, and now raptly await the next book. So I concede that mine is a minority viewpoint. I picked up the book with no more resistance than they had to Farmer's assertion that the last novel was too big to fit in one volume. My reaction had nothing to do with DESIGN's failure to end the saga. Indeed, not only does Farmer explain publishing realities in his introduction, I'd already heard him at the '75 Rivercon announcing that the series would be tied up in a way that allowed sequels -- I expected loose ends. However nobody at Berkeley/Putnam's seems to have taken seriously the idea of publishing both halves of the novel in close succession.

(In fact some readers may know better than I when it's coming out, but I have seen the Putnam's catalog through next February and the book isn't on it, somewhat to my surprise.)

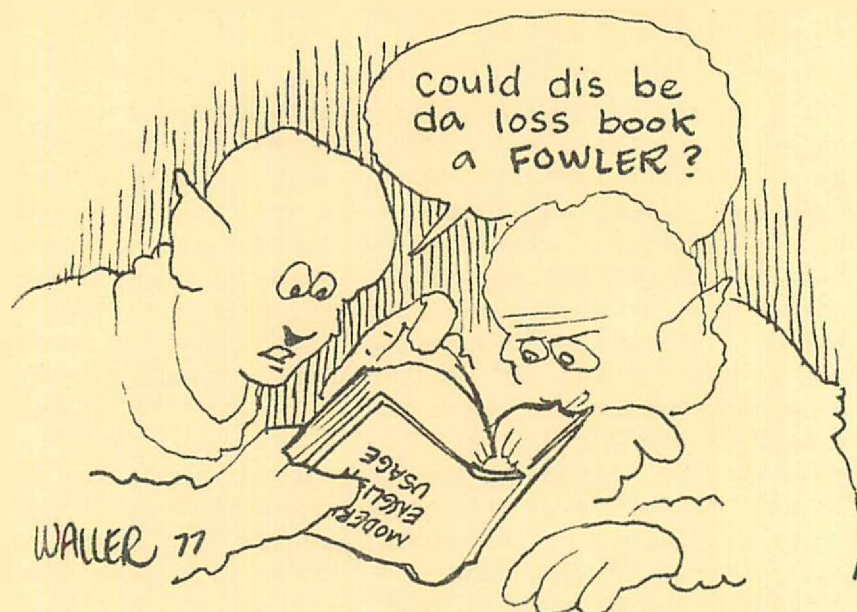
TO YOUR SCATTERED BODIES GO received my Hugo vote for Best Novel in 1972 because it was a sharply-written adventure using a delightful background concept to juxtapose historical characters (nonfiction favorites who usually had also written -- Clemens and Burton, de Bergerac and others) against a futuristic mystery. Unfortunately Farmer either forgot what made the series good, or decided that it wasn't important enough to suit his self-image: THE DARK DESIGN's adventure/mystery-solving element is constantly bogged down in unoriginal literary, historical and social observations. One more thing. I know that 'borrowing' is the norm in American fiction (calling it plagiarism is bad for business and would be excessively harsh on books like JAWS, given its nod-and-a-wink Moby Dick ending as Quint is dragged into the depths lashed to the back of the shark). And truly, the very 'given' in Farmer's series -- that everyone who ever lived has been recreated -- permits an endless re-examination of historical curiosities. But Farmer takes that as license, and loots the past like a man carrying away a tv set under each arm from a broken-windowed store. I got terminally disgusted upon reading Farmer's alter-ego (Peter Jairus Frigate) on pages 266-7 delivering as an internal monolog an unacknowledged paraphrase of the beginning pages in Clarence Darrow's autobiography.

Normally that discovery would have amused me, but my patience had been draining away for some time. Under the delusion that cliffhanger chapter endings sustain the reader's interest, Farmer repeatedly structured chapters to reintroduce old protagonists, or some new ones, land them in terrible jeopardy, and then jump from there into the next unrelated scene. Far from seeming a man who had trouble fitting his book into one volume (and reluctantly divided it into two), Farmer seemed to have trouble filling one with mainline story action. Farmer really does nothing to unravel the riddle of who made the Riverworld, and why. As if we were wolves, and the clues his relatives on a sleigh crossing the frozen tundra, Farmer only slowed occasionally to throw out another mysterious tidbit, hoping we would then go away and let him get back to his autobiography.

In his introduction he sounds more like he's running a waxworks than an adventure novel: "to be encountered in later volumes are da Vinci, Rousseau, Karl Marx, Rameses II, Nietzsche, Bakunin, Alcibiades, Eddy, Ben Jonson, Li Po, Nichiren Daison-in, Asoka, an Ice Age cavewife, Joan of Arc, Gilgamesh, Edwin Booth, Faust, et al." Thus my impatience: I had accepted the idea that historical characters must play an active part in the book, but after reading what Farmer did with them in THE DARK DESIGN I could only ask: "Why bother?"

The really interesting characters in THE DARK DESIGN are those Farmer created. Probably they are more interesting because they are less complicated -- Farmer doesn't seem able to handle the richly detailed lives of his historical protagonists in any way except chronicling them encyclopedia-fashion, then shunting them into obscurity. In his introduction Farmer actually confesses that the historical characters don't develop, without acknowledging that it's a shortcoming. He simply says that there wasn't room to develop them, but that there will be in the sequels. Jack London (could he truly have been so dull?), Tom Mix (a turkey in real life, or just in this book?), Nur ed-din el-Musafir, as well as returnees Sam Clemens, Richard Francis Burton and Cyrano de Bergerac supply the Britannica-entry names, but Milton Firebrass, Piscator, Jill Guilbarra and Farmer's original creations are the ones who move with arms and legs, emote, and generally keep from boring us.

By now many Riverworld dwellers have heard legends, or been informed directly by the



Mysterious Stranger, about the Giant Grail at the pole. By steamship and balloon several expeditions trek to the pole in hopes of unveiling the reasons they've been resurrected -- and perhaps the reason why permanent death has returned to haunt them. Most never make it, and those who do are only further confused. This is all you get -- the other 411½ pages are padding, deadend subplots, and Farmer's private impressions of literature, history and growing up in the midwest. They don't snuff King John, they don't find out who the Ethicals are, much less why they set up the Riverworld, they don't get inside the polar Grail, and they don't have any more meetings with the Mysterious Stranger. Wait for the fourth and 'final' book.

STAN LEE PRESENTS: THE AMAZING SPIDERMAN; STAN LEE PRESENTS THE FANTASTIC FOUR. These two Pocket Books are a fabulous service to an army of people who just want to read the famous 60s Marvel comics. As it turns out, I enjoyed all the wrong, out-of-it comics as a kid. Mainly I read them at barber shops or sometimes I'd bicycle down to the market and pick out a couple at a dime apiece. I read non-Carl-Barks Donald Duck strips, and bought Superman or Batman. Now I discover that every truly au courant collector fanatically followed Marvel's stuff, and considered funny animal strips as suitable primarily for lining birdcages. But do you think anybody who has a run of Fantastic Four is going to be dumb enough to loan it around? And I sure don't intend to pay collector's prices for reading copies. Luckily Stan Lee thought of this and had the clout to do something about it. They're fun.

A COFFIN FOR DIMITRIOS: A STATE OF SIEGE: THE SCHIRMER INHERITANCE: JUDGEMENT ON DELTCHEV by Eric Ambler. Ballentine is reprinting their line of Ambler suspense novels, which I've been picking up as review copies. I'd read all the raves about his work, and was surprised by the unevenness in quality from novel to novel. Part of this seems to be explainable in terms of the years he spent scriptwriting between intervals as a novelist. A COFFIN FOR DIMITRIOS is the ideal for intrigue, historical detail, characterization, and realism. But JUDGEMENT ON DELTCHEV, basically a story about a purge trial, seems pat, slow and full of poorly-concealed surprises. This may have been Ambler's first novel after his term in Hollywood. It was copyrighted 1951; the 1953 book THE SCHIRMER INHERITANCE goes right back to the recipe used in DIMITRIOS, a tale of tracing a missing person through dusty records and interviews with dangerous characters. And the 1956 STATE OF SIEGE was better yet

as a straight-up suspense novel -- rather than the protagonists backing into the dilemma through excess curiosity, the pair in STATE OF SIEGE are accidentally entrapped in a rather interesting coup-d'etat.

5. Galactic Jive Tales

The lettercolumn in EMPIRE, according to Dan Goodman, contained a fan's suggestion for a would-be fiction-writers APA. Dan asked, "Does that sound familiar?" It sounded familiar enough for me to offer the following memoir, embodying some criticism of the idea based on experience.

....I am handicapped because of my former vow to the League; for although this vow permits unrestricted communication of personal experiences, it forbids any disclosures about the League itself. And even though the League seems to have had no visible existence for a long time, and I have not seen any of its members again, no allurements or threat in the world would induce me to break my vow.... (JOURNEY TO THE EAST, Hermann Hesse, p4)

No one has greater confidence in his prospects for literary success than an unsold undergraduate on summer vacation. When he has had his mental pump primed by the freshman year's writing assignments, and finds himself in a writing mood but with no assignments forcing him to work in a given field, his thoughts turn to science fiction if he's a fan. The sale of a few thousand words to ANALOG beats working.

By the end of the summer of '72 I was tired of thrashing typewriter keys looking for a plot I liked enough to actually finish a story. Holding down a summer job as a clerk, I found few clerical chores and a lot of time on my hands spent in front of a typewriter. I'd been in LASFS almost a year. Elst Weinstein, Joe Minne and I were all attending USC. We had drifted into that state of mind which wants some outside force to make us pro writers: we weren't keen on hard work in front of a lonely typewriter. Was there any way we could show people our work in progress and get constructive criticism, as well as some egoboo? If we could be reassured that our writing interested readers it'd be that much easier to see the work through.

LASFS had no clubhouse in those days, therefore few people were likely to get together for a writer's workshop: it might mean missing part of each Thursday's meeting, or else getting together on a weekend. But we had lots of experience in APA L. We had lots of confidence in our ability to produce weekly apazines.

Somewhere in talks between Elst, Jack Harness, Dan Goodman, Joe Minne, Larry Nielson, Lee Gold, Mark Swanson and I developed a concept for a writer's workshop in print. Not only that. Our workshop-apa would be in part devoted to a common background called the Galactic League.

However when we described our scheme to fellow amateurs, the spectre of Coventry reared its ugly head. An early 1960s common-background fan fiction fad, Coventry reached out to influence LASFS politics and permanently poison some relationships. Said Harness in a Galactic League handout: "Coventry was a mixture of personal fantasy ideas forcibly jammed into a common framework that was improperly worked-out and not fully agreed upon by the participants. Picture a relatively



unknown group of Arctic (but warm and habitable) islands mounted on a starship platform; the inhabitants didn't know they were in space, but the Secret Rulers did. Except that, in another sense, it was really Pasadena and environs." People based masquerade costumes on their Coventry persona. Allegedly at one point the secret arbiter of Coventry, the Guardian, painted his symbol on the Trimble's driveway, an act received as one of terrorism. He went further and took upon himself the power to unilaterally exterminate participants' characters. Chaos ensued, exit Coventry. While no one would be compelled to address fiction to our Galactic League background, we hoped its communal history, pseudoscience and culture would draw members together even more strongly than the simple wish for professional fame and fortune.

Our first issue of the LENS appeared in August 1972. In the original scheme of things business and commentary was to have appeared on pink paper, but I ran my Official Collator/Table of Contents matter on the white ditto paper available in the office. Also, in the absence of a cover promised by Jack Harness I drew my own. The comment has often been made in fandom that I don't draw worth a damn, and as much was said of this cover. That has always caused me to wonder why my anonymous art is so well received....

Two refugees from LA's moribund fiction apas, PASSUPS, contributed to LENS 1, Robert Hollander doing CONTINUITY 1, Jack Harness running BEAUTIFUL PHLOIRISS. Harness' story resembled an ANALOG standard, with the tautological opening gambit: "The most beautiful music will pall after you've heard it fifty times. When it's broadcast four times a day, it gets irritating. And when you find yourself humming along with it, that means war." This two-page opening fragment backgrounded several of Harness' suggestions for the League: including an economic center called the Tally, with discretionary powers. Hollander's fragment was non-league, and his job left little time for writing, though he hung in for much of the LENS' existence. Meanwhile I pulled something out of the drawer called OLD TIME RELIGION, two years old but the best thing I'd written until then. It was a Laser book before its time.

LENS 1 had the biggest number of single contributors ever, as it turned out. Dan Goodman had in the first revelations about Hellsedge, the anarchosynidcalist world so rich in custom, eccentricity and detail that the task of creating its background eventually swallowed him up. But the fragments are still interesting to read. "The walls were covered with Ivy; rather, with portions of the computer that contained what was left of Ivy's brain tissue and all of her original personality. 'When you've lived for seven centuries or so, you begin to get delusions of immortality,' the Institute's director explained. 'Ivy serves to remind us that we can still die, altho she claims to be more alive now than ever. Those are sensory devices, mostly.' Kendrick Tamisar-Firstlanding looked a trifle uneasy."

Goodman, an admirer of Tom Digby's idea-playing, considered inventiveness primary to his story. So he came up with fine, original stuff, but never finished.

One of several who made their first and last appearance in LENS 1, Aljo Svoboda evidently had in mind a Jewish science fiction story. "I don't think I ever found out the Jew's name before he...before he left," it starts, and portentously ends, "so we decided to send him through the Gap." You would have been impressed to see how many of us amateurs had learned to use the formulas of sf stories, and knew how to pace the story, and write a narrative hook. However, truer to amateur form, some only remembered the sound of a prozine story without understanding why it was put together that way.

Mark Swanson, dividing his time between MIT and LASFS, wrote THE VERY BEST INVESTMENT ON AVALON in slightly stale Michael Moorcock prose, but he had the best structural sense of any Lens writer-aspirant. Rereading his first bit I was repelled by his style, but drawn in by the intriguing character he attempted to draw, the color-

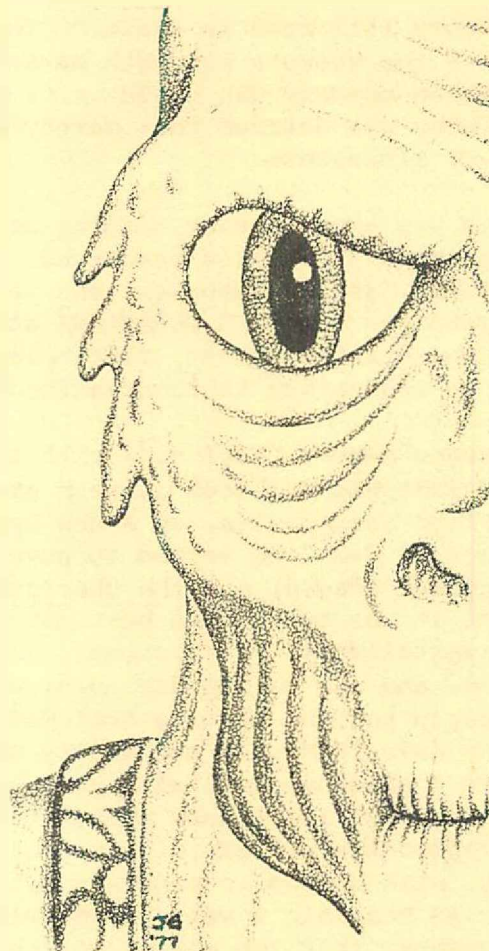
blind military hero Ran Da'Holdra, bred by his mother as an investment, now returning to his race, the Lenta, to claim its birthrights. Unfortunately Swanson hadn't outgrown the old wavish style of dimbulb sociology, "Few human leaders could look dignified while vainly trying to persuade their reprogrammed roomcomp that they were not a stupid, bratty six-year-old trying to avoid bedtime." On the other hand he invented good ideas: "The walls displayed the subtle, continually changing mind art patterns often used to conceal control messages."

Hugh Kramer and Brian Corber, two friends of Elst's, made one-shot entries into the LENS. Elst himself devoted fiction to Devonian, the empire of Oyven Roi, a touch of high schoolishness. But Elst was more important in his constitutional role of Chief Arbiter, theoretically prepared to adjudicate any disputes and guard the League against Coventrarian dissension. His secondary job became, in practice, the task he spent most of his time performing, a kind of superlibrarian accumulating data cards submitted by members to describe their fictional worlds and incorporate them into the common League background.

Finally, Dian Girard (currently Dian Crayne) entered LENS 1 doing a fanfiction take-off. Evidently the apa didn't interest her, since she never contributed again, but that may coincide with why she was the apa's only contributor to ever sell a story (to 2020 VISIONS).

At least 28 more issues followed the first -- quite an accomplishment for any apa, but a signal accomplishment for a fanfiction publication of any kind. What's more, you might doubt that the members would keep their interest in a common background for very long, but the apa's principal contributors took the idea seriously and employed it for most of the League's existence. They didn't dwell on the encyclopedically worked-out technology originated by Joe Minne, then rewritten by Nielson and Mark Swanson; nor the pseudo-Turner-Thesis League History compiled by me and revived by Dan Goodman. I imagine that those actually writing fiction instinctively realized that only a few details needed to be suggestively brushed into the story. In that way Harness, Lee Gold (who joined in the second issue), Dan Goodman and Swanson wove a good deal of each other's background into their stories. I did a bit of the same, rather less sensitively, and wound up tripping the emotional defenses they'd set around their writing. My reply, CORNERING THE MARKET ON USED BRICKS, was a bristling apology, weakly appealing to "what Harness wrote all the way back in Lens One (*four months ago*). That we shouldn't permit our stories, worlds, concepts to become so real/important to us that any infringement on them becomes a very personal affront."

In LENS #2, in a commentzine titled "Why Wait For The Disintegration Chamber -- Let's String Him Up Now Boys!" Jack Harness finished his analysis of one fiction contribution to the last issue by saying, "I've read it before, and if it's a



good story I'll read it again." In truth even the best Lens story would be derivative -- the group's strength as well as its shortcoming was its limited ambition -- to develop members who could write saleable sf. It was not a creative writing club, but nobody was deluded that merely selling a story was a high accomplishment in the world of literature.

Harness was excellent at keeping contributors feeling good about their writing, giving material a reader's reactions. Dan Goodman complemented him with an acerbic editor's sense, asking the questions we should have asked to start with: "Mike Glycer's background/in OLD TIME RELIGION/ sticks too closely to present-day Skid Row -- even including a reference to 'fifty-nine cent muscatel' which seems to be either a bloop or an indication that inflation will slow down and even reverse."

One League member, beginning with LENS 3, offered an exception to the rule of ASTOUNDING SF imitations. Does it seem pretentious to address someone who still hasn't sold, five years later, as a new Delany? Of course: but when Richard Wadholm started "Visions of Home" he seemed to have the fresh perspective, spare sentences evoking well-picked images, and the character-defining dialog customary in early Delany. Some of it was by far the best material written for the LENS. There were eventually eight installments of "Visions", including a cartooned chapter that I copied on a 3M machine, and now is rapidly turning brown. Though uneven, they often returned to that early polish, proving that Wadholm's talent was for real. Really. Even though in June 1973 (LENS 11) the Mighty Wad let on, "Ah, the moment of truth at last. You thought I had some idea of what I was doing, didn't you? You thought I had this all out in my head and I knew where it was going and how it was getting there, just like any respectable writer, didn't you?" The unenviable fact is that we all commenced stories with no end in mind and without exception failed to finish what we started, violating Heinlein's well-known axiom. Yet there should be no surprise in this, if you remember that the entire workshop apa resulted from our lack of self-discipline.

That same lack of discipline let official business stagger on, though the Lens soon proved to need what I, as Official Collator, had never wished to be: an officer eager to publicize and administer every detail of League background, prepared to debate constitutional issues, and ready to take technological criticism of stories seriously. But these demands were made on the office I held. The unlucky thirteenth issue of the LENS therefore came out bearing all the marks of a fan project in trouble: no ToC existed, nor any indication of its date or number. Compared to a meager 6 pages of fiction, there were 13 pages of constitutional revision, proposed business, and mailing comments. The bane of fandom, constitution hacks, had gotten at the LENS: John Robinson, Mark Swanson and Dan Goodman harped on League background rules. Robinson was dealt with by ignoring him. The office of Technical Advisor (vacant since before the LENS started publishing; Minne had held it) was unloaded on Swanson (here: hold this albatross). Finally Goodman took over from me as head of the apa, but that proved to be the best move of all.

Though the September 1973 issue (LENS 14) was a successive bad one, for the following seven issues the League returned to form. Goodman took a crucial step in #18 by scrapping the common background requirement. As of LENS 21, on the installment plan I had reached page 29 of STRANGER TO BLUE WATER, Harness hit page 72 of TROUBLE ON TONGMARI, and Lee Gold reached page 99 of CRISIS OF IDENTITY. Regrettably Lee never completed her novel of mystery set on a spacebound passenger liner: I think it would have been the apa's first pro success. Eventually the LENS ran at least 29 issues -- but after issue 22 Goodman abandoned the apa, and though Harness took over operations by then I had gone to Bowling Green, Weinstein left soon after for studies in Mexico, and insufficient new members came forth. The only star of those late issues was Kerstin Lange, a talented Inglewood woman, who had come in first the year I

placed second in the NFFF Short Story Contest.

CONCLUSION: The blind cannot lead the blind. Jack Harness, a very perceptive critic, seemed the only member able to understand the writers' problems with writing, not merely the mechanical flaws of unpublished manuscripts. But even if there had been five or ten equals of Jack Harness interested in providing critical essays to the LENS, they would no more have made the LENS a success than the LENS made its members successful writers. No critic or device for getting would-be science fictionists to produce copy can externally motivate people to write better or write more often sufficiently to make the difference between selling and not selling. Only if the person starts out with that need to write or willingness to squat down by the typewriter and push paper through the platen can he get the necessary practice to improve and turn out enough copy to give any commentator an adequate sample of his work to form a valid opinion. I also feel that criticism is only useful if one understands his own writing well enough to pick out of a critique the usable suggestions.

Probably the best that can be said about the LENS is that it raised its members' consciousness about writing. Briefly some fans' dormant writing ambitions came alive -- something slightly sad or even frightening considering how long ago those ambitions had been born, and how most of the people really had the potential to sell something -- as long ago as Coventry or their 60s fanzines. Perhaps not so sad -- none of the LENS contributors seemed to feel that a professional sale was required to validate their existence. As for recommending the idea -- I would think that the time spent typing stencils and running off stories could be more profitably devoted to actually writing, however much I enjoy rereading those back issues.

Just in case you feel like hitting the typewriter again, yourself, Neil Kvern wants it announced that:

I'm trying to get a yearly semiprofessional anthology series going (titled SUN CHARIOT). I'm not looking for specific genre works: I'm open to everything. I hope to receive fiction (any length, really; I'm serious) (well, no novels, I guess), poetry, and artwork (artists please write before sending material). Also, any bookstore owners out there who'd like to help me in distributing (selling the thing, basically) please drop me a card. It will be 100-200 pages long, quality paperback size (tentatively), unless I do something really weird like finding a publisher. Otherwise I'll be having the printing done myself, and I'm basically conscientious. I'm currently contacting Ursula LeGuin and Jerry Pournelle to see if they'd like to write a piece on writing. And I know Mrs. LeGuin has written poetry; if she'd like to do some for SC it'd be great. Payment right now is not determined -- I'll be giving as much as I can. I want SC to be a market for things that might not normally appear in pro magazines and anthologies -- poetry in particular, which has no professional and very few sf/f markets. Query first if you like: remember the SASE though. Any ideas you might have I'd like to hear. I'm optimistic.
Neil Kvern, Box 258, Cataldo ID 83810.

O. Howls of Orison

Perhaps this note will serve only to infuriate future collectors -- heh. The information on fanzines received and your status in the mailing list shall probably appear in MAJOR ARCANA, accompanying this zine. Spilling material over into MA permits one comfort -- I don't feel obligated to slipsheet it. Therefore any given page of material there takes only one fourth as long to produce. Fanzine reviews, additional Burns reviews, and late letters of comment may be found there.



HARRY WARNER, JR.

LAST OF MY YESTERDAYS

HOW do I write this article without sounding angry or bitter? What words can I choose to avoid the impression that I'm loftily granting a permission which isn't mine to give? Will I regret writing this, a year or two in the future, if I undergo a change of mind or outlook?

I compile miserable scores, when I test myself on those trivia quizzes which have been featured at cons and published in fanzines. So I certainly can't expect to find the answers for hard questions like those in the first paragraph. All I can do is to try to use plain language and give a candid summary of why I'm retiring from the portion of my fanac that has involved writing fan history.

I would leave my reasons unpublished and I wouldn't make a definite announcement about my discontinuing fan history projects if it weren't for a strange attitude that many fans seem to maintain. Some fans seem to think that I have somehow acquired a copyright on the act of writing lengthy fan histories. Several times, I've even been asked if I'd mind if this or that individual did a lot of research and wrote a long essay on some particular phase of fan history. I hope I haven't done or written anything to foster such a wildly false impression. But as long as it exists I feel I should make it very plain that I have no intention of doing any more big fan history writing projects. I committed myself a year ago to a series of brief articles on fan history for the 1978 worldcon progress reports, which I'll complete to avoid promise-breaking. I might do some reprinting in FAPA of the writings of former fans, because I think they're undeservedly forgotten today, not because I am thinking of their historical importance. Otherwise that's going to be it, and I hope anyone who feels ambitious enough to tackle a history of fandom in the 1960s will get to work on research immediately. I won't be doing it. A few articles on fan history may surface in fanzines during the next year or two, because I wrote several years ago which have never seen publication, but I plan to write no more in the future.

This decision has been building up for a

long time. There are many reasons for it, some of which may seem more valid to me than to the rest of fandom. I would be a hypocrite if I claimed that the difficulties I experienced with the manuscript of A WEALTH OF FABLE had nothing to do with the decision. But they aren't the biggest reason, just the most recent one.

To get the worst over with at this point, I should drop some brief hints to other prospective fan historians about publication troubles they may face if they tackle book-length manuscripts. ALL OUR YESTERDAYS began to see print in a fanzine. The intention was to publish it serially there, so corrections and added information could be incorporated in a revised manuscript for book publication. The fanzine editor got one installment published, didn't publish any more issues of his fanzine, and didn't want to relinquish the manuscript so someone else could take over. There was unpleasantness until Advent came to my rescue and published the manuscript. A WEALTH OF FABLE was to be published by Advent. But it became obvious that one of the people at Advent and I had too disparate outlooks on fandom. Once again I had to struggle for months to get back the manuscript. This time Joe Siclari came to the rescue, but he suffered a whole series of mundane problems, the entire manuscript didn't get published until almost a year after the date originally announced, and I suffered some of the blame for the delay from fans who thought I had a financial interest in the publication arrangements.

This is the tip of the iceberg, but I don't want to stir up more trouble by going into more details. I learned the hard way that the writer of a book-length fan history manuscript has trouble with people other than his publishers. There was one threat of lawsuit (over passages I had shown nobody, least of all the individual who imagined I was putting him in a bad light). There have been dismal episodes with fans who claimed that this or that statement was wrong, and upon investigation turned out to be suffering from bad memories. Several bound volumes of an important fanzine got lost in the mails when I returned them to the fan who had lent them to me, plunging me into a sense of guilt that didn't wear away for months.

Of course, the vast majority of fans have been very kind about my fan history efforts, providing me with all sorts of helpful information, giving the books mostly favorable reviews, and one of my fan writing Hugos would hardly have come my way if it weren't for ALL OUR YESTERDAYS. But I'm getting old, and petty annoyances that wouldn't have bothered me much a couple of decades ago are more harmful to my nerves nowadays. I've decided that the game just isn't worth the candle. Maybe the next person who indulges in large-scale fan history writing will have better luck than I've experienced or the new fan historians might be more competent than I've been in dealing with publication plans and such matters.

There are other reasons, entirely unconnected with the difficulties I had with the two big manuscripts. Much more forceful as a factor in my decision to retire from the fan history arena is the march of time. I'm only a few years away from retirement. It will be the only retirement I'll ever have and there are many things I'd like to do following retirement. I might never accomplish them, if I put them off for the sake of fan history. There's no way I could do the research and writing for a book about fandom in the 1960s before retirement unless I gafiated from all other forms of fanac. That decade will take two or three times as much work as the 1940s or 1950s because fandom grew so much, branched out so far, and subdivided so complexly. I enjoy writing locs, reading fanzines, engaging in correspondence, and several other forms of fanac more than I like fan history creativity. I want to continue them, instead of sacrificing them to yet another years-long fan history project.

I also feel that my health is wobbly enough to make another big fan history manu-



script a real gamble. I might drop dead before I'd finished it, or I might suffer a permanent incapacitation when work was only partly complete. I'd be gambling and if I lost I would have squandered a great deal of my time without creating anything fandom could enjoy and use.

Then there's the fact that fanac is done on a face-to-face basis today to a much greater extent than when I flourished. To handle the 1960s and later years properly, maybe the fan historian should be an individual who attends a couple dozen cons every year, belongs to a local fan club, and has a better grasp of today's fanac, instead of someone for whom fanac has been something that mostly comes and goes in the mails and piles up in the attic. I suspect, too, that beginning with the 1960s, fan history is such a complex matter that future sequels to my two books might be better written as group efforts. I hope I'm wrong, but I frankly doubt if there is anyone with a good knowledge of fandom who will be willing to sacrifice year after year of spare time to create a one-man history of another decade of fandom.

There is no particular reason why I shouldn't continue to write fan history articles for fanzines, except the impossibility of acceding to every request for them that I've been receiving. Simultaneously, I've been forced to do a lot of fan history work that never gets into print, hunting for information for this or that fan who writes me letters asking about a particular topic. Presumably, this drain on time will lessen if I stop writing published fan history stuff,

One last reason may be mostly my imagination. I feel as if my fan history work has been causing some loss of fannish identity for me. So far, I've not begun to live in the past, as some people do when they reach their mid-fifties. I rarely read old fanzines or an old prozine, I think fandom and fanzines are better today in most ways than they've ever been, I feel myself more sympathetic to the ways of thinking and doing of younger fans than to most members of my own generation, and I'm constantly finding new areas of interest. But some fans seem to consider me an individual who is totally immersed in the past. They ask me to write about fan history, not contemporary matters, for their fanzines. When they tell me about the latest con they've attended, the first thing they tell me about is the most ancient fans who showed up. Maybe if I retire from fan history, the real me and the apparent me will come closer to coinciding.

I've reversed direction on various matters in the past. So I reserve the right to change my mind about fan history some day. Maybe circumstances will do it; if I went deaf, for instance, I might decide to devote the time I now spend on music to fan history. If I became a semi-invalid, fan history work might prove the best way to get through the long hours from which anything strenuous would be banned. Or I might forget enough of the annoyances and problems which I've detailed above, in some future year, to impel me to resume work again. But as of now, fandom needs some new historians, and I promise not to duplicate any of the projects they're working on, if I should someday decide to re-enter the field.

Editor of the science fiction field's most successful magazine for nearly 35 years, John W. Campbell's influence on the modern sf genre is undisputed. Yet it is much less understood than it might be. Even in death it is still easy to make Campbell's acquaintance: in hundred of editorials and articles, in his fiction, his prefaces and italicized entries in *Brass Tacks*. Indirectly ASF itself is an index to his character if one traces recurring story themes, and the phrases he used to cue each one. Perhaps this very glut of public, accessible material explains why Campbell's editorial influence has not been dissected with all the finest available research tools.

An invaluable tool awaiting assembly and use is a collection of Campbell's letters to provide a self-written mosaic of the man's editorial methods, his teaching style, and the ways he brought out the best in the top talents of his day. Known as an unusually prolific letterwriter, Campbell poured into correspondence the same energy and lucid writing visible in his editorials.

Along these lines I asked for Mrs. Margaret Campbell's permission to develop a collection for publication, and received it. The work is complicated and depends heavily on letters that survived in the hands of their recipients. One writer, who provided 50 pages for xeroxing, said that was just a fraction of the material to pass through his hands. Two other writers must find the boxes where they stashed their letters while moving. A fourth writer, whose papers are held by a university, saved no correspondence until the Sixties. Obviously, most of these letters were written in an era when sf was of total disinterest to scholars, therefore all paperwork was disposed of as soon as it lost its business timeliness, except when of particular personal importance.

Had a file of carbon copies survived in an accessible form, the book no doubt would already have been done. Discovering no file to pick over (and eliminate the need to collect recipients' copies) others gave it up as too much work. Until I wrote to Ben Bova, nobody could even say for sure a file existed -- which he says has been jumbled away in the Conde Nast warehouse, and defied discovery when his secretary went looking for it last summer. Even the chance to ask for permission to go looking myself seems to depend on getting a contract for the project, though, so the effort continues as before, personally contacting people who corresponded with the late editor. Five publishers have expressed interest in the completed collection. If you have Campbell letters, or know someone who has, your help in copying (or loaning to me to be copied) such material would immensely help preserve an important historical source in the sf field.



Alan Dean Foster's first novel, *THE TAR-AIYM KRANG*, as it turned out was among the last works of science fiction directly influenced by John W. Campbell. Initially submitted to the editor of *ANALOG* in late 1969, the story sparked enough interest for Campbell to reply with nearly three pages of criticisms, suggestions and background ideas. In the next six months Foster rewrote and resubmitted the story several times. Said Foster, "Campbell died before I could submit the eventual final version to him, which is why it went to Ballantine. I like to think he would have bought it. He published my first story (though my second pro sale) in *ANALOG*." Readers of *THE TAR-AIYM KRANG* have an unusual opportunity for the following four letters actually document the influence Campbell had on a popular work of science fiction.

THE CAMPBELL LETTERS

FOOTNOTES FOR THE GOLDEN AGE OF SF

November 24, 1969

Dear Mr. Foster:

You have a good yarn here, for about 90% of the way...but then it falls apart in a way that invalidates the preceding part.

Flinx is introduced as a youngster with a Talent; it's expected that the author will carry through with that statement and make something of it.

You don't. His talent is used once, and only once, in the plot -- and that's when you demonstrate the proposition that he has one.

The whole set-up is such that by the time the Krang is found, it's obvious that Flinx will be the one who can activate it.

He doesn't. The minidrag does.

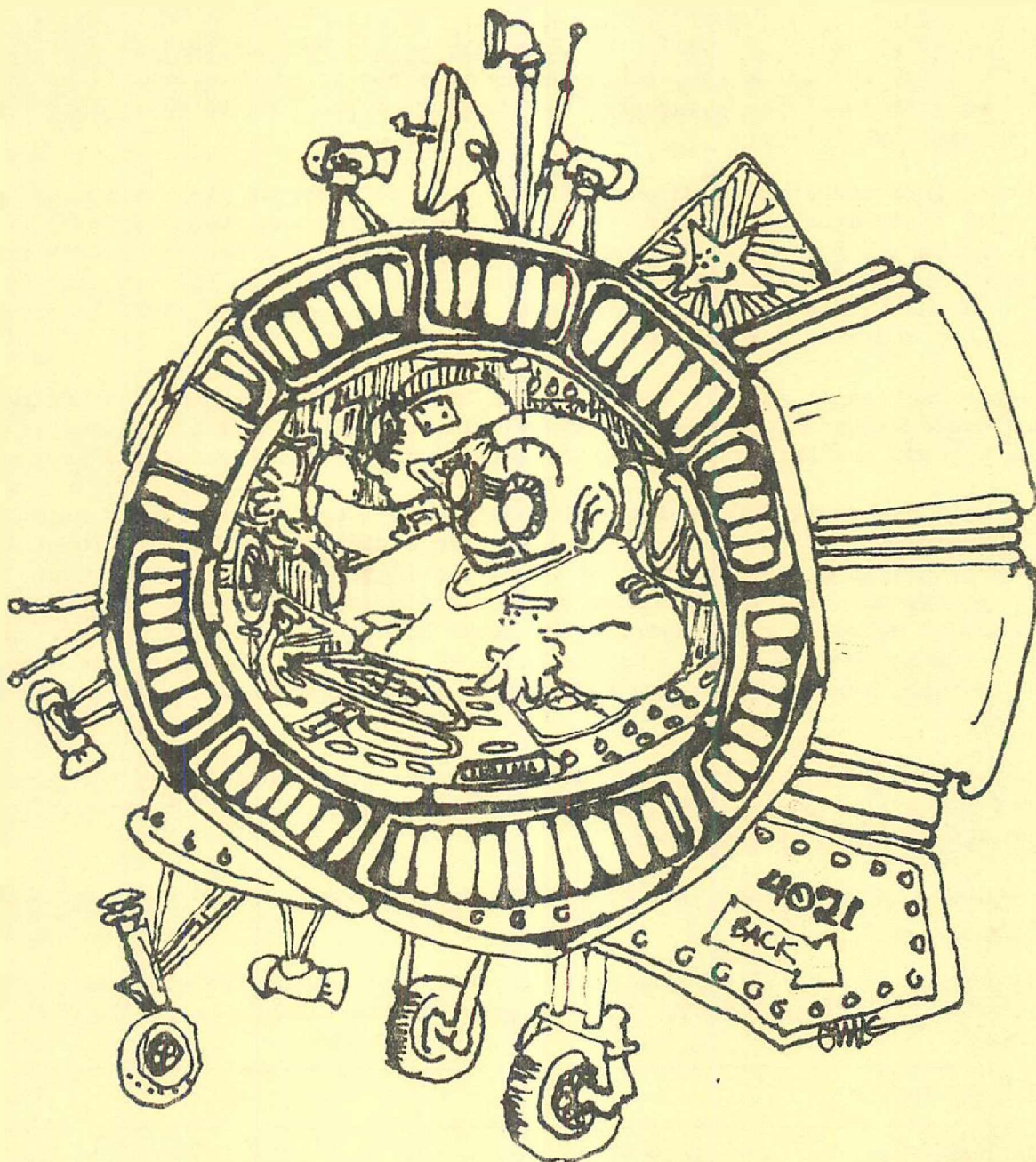
The one useful thing Flinx does, in the whole yarn, is to break up a cat-fight between the two girls.

Incidentally, you'd do better to steer far away from Poul Anderson's magnificent, and strongly established, Nikolas van Rijn. Your Captain Marr's language at times suggests van Rijn with his Dutch accent; the social setting has vague hints of van Rijn -- and while you're pretty good, you are not, at this stage, ready to challenge direct comparison with Ye Old Master, Poul Anderson!

Finally, it's Pip that activates the Krang, making 'em all look ridiculous.

And your Epilogue is totally meaningless; it does not give the reader any indication who the Unity was working through. Since Pip activated the gadget, the conclusion would seem to be that the Unity was using Pip as a vehicle. Is that what you meant? You sure didn't plant it, so it's completely illegitimate as a trick on the reader. I'd suggest you drop the whole epilogue business completely; stick to the characters you actually have and use.

(c) 1977: Mrs. Margaret Campbell



The first time Flinx tries to activate the Krang, he gets very slight results -- it's just an experiment.

But if he goes back after the enemy has the gang cornered -- he's scared. He has intense emotional involvement in the problem -- and that's the condition when ESP tends to turn on. Then his latent powers would really get a boot in the tail -- he'd really put out some psi force. (Witness the number of spontaneous instances of documented ESP under conditions of intense fear-emotion!)

How that Krang operator's set-up must have been a two-way system; an operator who doesn't get information from his tool, can't control the tool -- there's got to be a feedback.

Once turned on, the Krang would feed back all right! It'd blast the channels to that ESP talent of Flinx's open or spend a few gigawatts trying! There might be some wild ructions at first, with an incompetent, desperate, thoroughly scared and vio-

lently confused operator at the controls of something that potent.

As to what it does...? Well, the planetary screen between the two dust layers sounds O.K., but for a long-range weapon it's not so hot a system -- if you're dealing with super-gee attackers. It would take too long to manipulate the gold-dust twins into place.

Fitting into the story's science better would be a way of projecting the artificial gravity field at a selected focus point; the machine achieves a gravity field about one centimeter in diameter...that has the intensity of a neutron-star's field. It compresses -- by gravitational attraction -- any matter in the vicinity to a density of some 10 billion tons per cubic inch. In the process, the stuff is crushed to neutrons, and releases its nuclear energy.

Because the center is only 1 cm., at one kilometer the intensity has fallen off on the inverse square law to a relatively mild intensity. But if the center is focused near a ship, the ship rapidly -- instantaneously! -- collapses into it.

You might even have fun, and say it generates a 1 cm. Schwartzchild Discontinuity -- which same you can look up, if you like. In essence, if a gravitational field exceeds a certain intensity, a light wave, seeking to escape from it, would lose so much energy climbing against that gravity field, that not even light can escape! The result would be that anything the focus hit would simply, silently, unspectacularly, vanish out of space! No explosion -- because as the matter collapsed into the neutron-star stuff, the energy released couldn't escape the Schwartzchild Discontinuity.

That would fit your story's technology, because you've been using the KK-ships with their controlled gravity drives, and you've had them use a neutron-star to throw them out of reach of the enemy.

It would be a very final weapon; the would-be attackers would never be heard from again.

That set-up -- with Flinx activating the Krang -- would give you some problems as to how to tie off the story. But, at present, the wind-up is really quite unsatisfactory.

February 16, 1970

This comes back for a variety of reasons -- the most pressing of which is that, at the moment, I have novels enough on hand to schedule through June, 1971!

You can write a good piece of copy -- so how about writing some shorter ones in the meanwhile?

However, this one still needs further work. The idea of making Marr an African, and showing it, is a good one -- only do it all the way through, not just in the first installment! You've got him going back to his Dutch accent in the last half, or so, with no Swahili.

Item: On P.79 you use the Schwartzchild Discontinuity idea, but not too well. You missed the essential point of my suggestion: Gravity follows an inverse square law. The surface gravity of a single proton -- because of its infinitesimal diameter -- is, despite its tiny mass, equal to the surface gravity of Earth. Same applies to an individual neutron.

Now if you could artificially create a gravity field one centimeter in diameter with a surface gravity equal to that of a neutron star, its attractive force at a distance of one kilometer would be moderate because of the inverse square law effect and its 0.5 cm radius. One kilometer is 100,000 cms.; 10^5 cms. At 10^{-10} th or one four billionth that at the surface of the 1-cm. diameter field.

Thus a friendly ship one km. away would be hardly affected -- while the enemy ship would be sucked into a synthetic neutron star field -- and the added real mass would trigger it to a Schwartzchild Discontinuity.

You'd better have the thing flop completely out of the Universe by some mechanism that's unknown, but found true in practice when they discover the thing -- because otherwise a Schwartzchild Discontinuity just wanders around gobbling anything that ever comes near it, world without end!

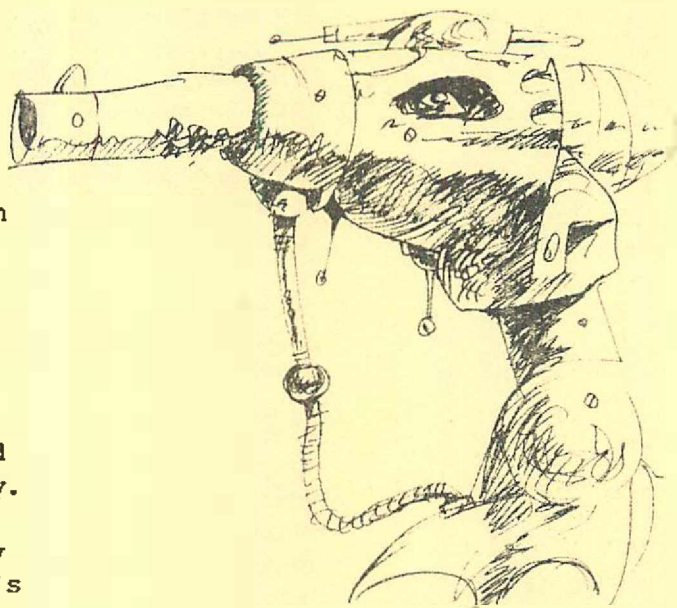
However -- I do not think a shipborne weapon could achieve that. I wouldn't believe it, because of the level of energy implied by a neutron-star field-density. Remember that a neutron star results from the explosion of a supernova; a supernova results when a star at least 10 times as massive as Sol -- and usually 15 to 60 times! -- goes into ultimate collapse and explosion. During the explosion, it releases more energy than all the other hundred billion stars in the galaxy together! The dense, collapsed core of the supergiant star is imploded, while the outer layers are exploded. The result is a crushed-in mass of anywhere from one to seven solar masses reduced to a diameter of about ten miles. The resultant lump is so hot that it radiates mostly in the X-ray region -- and the forces at the surface are so stupendous that that surface appears to be a "metallic" crust, crystalline even at those temperatures because of the gravity forces.

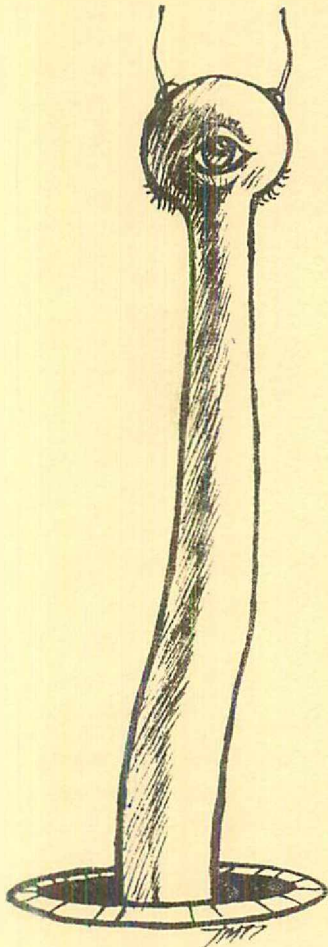
Now clearly the energies involved in creating a neutron-star type gravity well are not going to be available on a mobile base, such as a ship. Not by about six orders of magnitude.

The Krang alone is big enough to handle such a job. Any ideally designed weapon installation would have (1) a defensive screen so the installation itself would be able to survive, and (2) an offensive weapon of range adequate to do the job -- in this case, swat down interstellar ships.

Since the Krang uses the planetary structure itself as a power-supply system, obviously there has to be a defensive screen that protects the entire planet. But with that big a projector, and that power base, the Krang could, believably, project Discontinuity fields.

The stingship weapons could be as you had them -- or simply fusion bombs with gravity-field seekers. I.e., a gadget that turned on an artificial gravity field in the bomb after a predetermined time of flight. The computer launches the thing toward an enemy, and after the thing has traveled say two thirds of the way to the enemy, the field turns on -- which attracts it to the enemy, no matter how he seeks





to dodge.

Who needs more than a fusion bomb to swat a spaceship? Since it's a nuclear reactor running absolutely uncontrolled, for its exceedingly limited lifetime, it can outpower any possible controlled nuclear reactor a ship could carry. Screens to the contrary notwithstanding, it'd smash through by sheer, raw, brute power.

Flinx needs more development as a Talent. F'rinstance, there's no reason why Flinx can't answer Marr's question when Marr asks him about pursuing ships.

But -- that last paragraph you'd better chop off! Some forty years ago I was writing super-science space-opera myself -- Doc Smith and I used to have a sort of unacknowledged competition for the Biggest and Bestest and Ultraest devices. And one thing we both learned was that on that escalation system, you presently would up with a hero with so much stuff, and such powers, that you couldn't use him any more. No adequate opposition!

At the end of this one, you've got Flinx amusing himself creating stars. Believe me, at that point you can't do a thing with him!

Tame him down to manageable size, and you'll have a character capable of development in further yarns. He's then a kid with a high-power talent -- but he's still a kid, with all the limitations that implies. One of the deadliest is that, being able to read a mind for sincerity and truth-telling, he can be sucked in by a sincere, truth-as-he-sees-it type of crackpot.

Because the adolescent is apt to be sold on the idea that sincerity and true beliefs are necessarily Right Answers.

In fact, such Sure Beliefs are almost guaranteed to be 100% certainly wrong answers. No truly wise and understanding individual can believe in the complete Truth and Absolute Justice of anything -- the Universe is too complex, situations too multi-faceted, for any Answer to be The One Right Way.

Being a mind-reader would protect him from the crook who knew he was a crook -- but not from a fanatic who believed in his ideas completely. Heil Hitler! he knew he was right! So did Oliver Cromwell and Genghis Khan. But a man like Winston Churchill is always full of doubts and uncertainties.

It would be far easier to live under a government run by Al Capone, than under Hitler or Cromwell; with Capone you could always make a deal, reach a workable compromise. And Capone believed that human beings needed some fun and games.

Want to try that with the greatest Puritan of them all?

March 18, 1970

Rewriting is, I feel, entirely up to the author -- if he thinks that my comments make sense, O.K., he can use'em. If he doesn't -- that's certainly his right and privilege.

But there is always the question of what is "better" in any given context. Is champagne better than engine oil? Well...it makes a hell of a poor lubricant. And while passenger wheel studs are all right-hand threaded, John Q. Public being predictably dopey, the studs on heavy-duty professional equipment are left-hand thread on one side of the vehicle, and right hand on the other. And just try making a turn-buckle work with both ends having right-hand threads.

So which is better, right or left-hand threads?

A large part of the answer is that if you've got a left-hand stud, unarguably the best nut is also left-threaded.

When you've got an established medium, such as a magazine -- it's not just what the editor likes. It's what the guy who slaps his cash on the counter to buy it expects to get that counts. I like good fantasies -- that was why I started the old Unknown. But Analog is not allowed -- by the readers! -- to publish fantasy, because they expect science fiction, and that's what they paid for.

It may seem to a writer that it's the editor's whim that decides the story-type he buys. An editor has some latitude -- but it's the guy with-the-cash-on-the-counter that's the ultimate and absolute dictator!

Ask any ex-editor of a defunct magazine!

May 4, 1970

I hope you kept the original version of the opening of this yarn -- it was much better than your rewrite, I'm afraid!

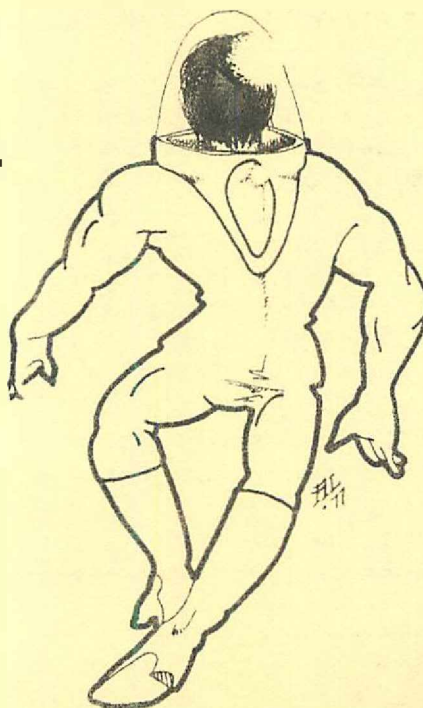
This new opening is about three times too long -- nothing happens for pages and pages, so the reader isn't involved in the story early enough to keep him reading -- and its lush growth of adjectives needs heavy pruning. It's severely over-written.

When I'm doing my usual high-speed low-accuracy typing, I do considerable misspelling and produce some remarkable typos myself -- but you've got a tendency to do a sort of goof-off I haven't encountered before that can be harder for the editor to catch every time. In one place you have "could" where you obviously mean "good"; this sort of slip can make things confusing when the exact nature of the slip isn't so clear. Better check over your manuscript before sending it in.

However -- your story now hangs together pretty well; it's definitely salable.

The one real remaining difficulty is -- we're stocked up on novels through Sept. 1971. We could buy another one, in other words, about one year hence -- but not sooner!

This makes for a sort of difficult situation all around -- so I have to return your yarn at this time.



URBAN BLITZ

LOU STATHIS



I think that anyone who seriously contemplates becoming an sf writer should, at some early point in his/her career, ride herd on the slushpile of a professional sf magazine. At best, the experience can be instructive and sometimes a bit humorous (in a sad and often pathetic way), and at worst it can destroy your ability to write without crippling self-consciousness for the rest of your life.

I did my time at the slushpile from January 1975 to about June 1976, and that year-and-a-half turned out in my case to be a bit too long. My job was reading the Ultimate slushpile, and the fully intended pun of that statement is no joke, it's the horrible truth. The New York office slushpile for AMAZING and FANTASTIC contains, I think, only the worst of the putrified sediment that sinks to the bottom of the science fiction puddle. You might think perhaps that this is an exaggeration, or at the very least an unkind remark. Nasty though the statement may be, it is most certainly the truth.

Consider this: anyone who has (A) ever sold a story to Ted White, (B) received one of his rejection slips, (C) known Ted personally or professionally, or (D) belonged to SFWA, knows that the place to send a story for publication in either of the magazines is to the editor himself in Falls Church, not to the publisher's office in New York. However, the first-time writer hunting for the address to which he should mail his story finds in the usual place on each magazine's table of contents page its publisher's post office box. No convoluted chain of logic is required to deduce that with few exceptions the bulk of the material handled through Sol Cohen's office is, to be charitable, highly amateurish. The good stuff either doesn't

go to Ultimate at all (they are, after all, the lowest paying market of the seven generally-available prozines) or else goes directly to Ted in Virginia. You might ask, however, why the Falls Church post office box appears only in the lettercolumns of the magazines, and not on the editorial pages where it belongs? The reason for that, dear friends, is known only to the publisher, who is personally responsible for the magazines' paste-ups, and appears deaf to Ted's requests when he chooses.

The conclusion that I arrived at, drawn from vague statements made to me by the publisher, was that Sol doesn't trust Ted to handle all the manuscripts properly and responsibly. Cohen has reasoned, I surmise, that if most of the manuscripts go through his office/home he can keep close control of them, sending down bundles carefully labelled by the helpful assistant editor indicating which magazine each story would be most suitable for. At the same time he would also have some small influence on what would be published in his magazines (a thought never far from his mind, even though he doesn't read sf and has a quite low opinion of it). This sort of reasoning, the resulting actions, and its just-a-bit-sneaky method of execution, are typical of the Sol Cohen modus operandi. The strain of dealing with this sort of behavior (and some much worse), and my inability to continue reading slush without suffering severe abdominal distress, were the major reasons I quit the job.

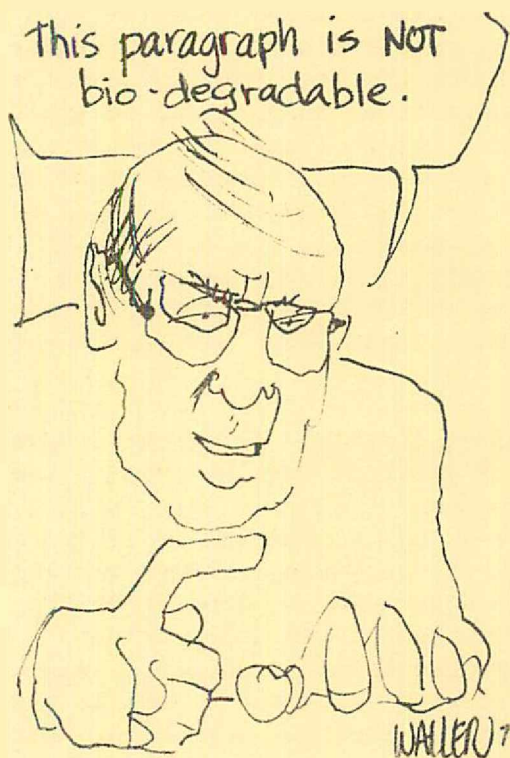
In late 1974 Moshe Feder was the NY Assistant Editor (slushpile reader) for AMAZING and FANTASTIC. I inherited the job from him when his relationship with Sol deteriorated, his case of "Slush Fatigue" became terminal, and his personal conflict with Ted worsened. On Moshe's recommendation I took over, inheriting the weekly visits from Sol Cohen (who had me meet him in the street, being too scared of my neighborhood to get out of his car), where he dumped off a carton of about 50 godawful science fiction manuscripts. The stuff came in three separate piles, rubber-banded by Sol and his wife (whose name appears on the magazines' colophons as "Subscription Manager") into three portions, one for "Pros" (those who mentioned a previous sale in their covering letter, or those with names that Sol recognized), one for "slush" (those who'd never sold and also included the 25¢ readers fee, absence of which caused immediate return of the ms.), and one pile consisting of Sword and Sorcery -- Sol was hot on the stuff then because a recent issue with a Conan story had done phenomenally well.

My first task was to write my own rejection slip, modeled closely after the sample of Ted's that Sol had provided me with. For those of you that have never received one of these jolly things, it is an 8 1/2 x 11 inch sized sheet mimeoed with an explanation of how a manuscript should be properly submitted, and a description of the type of material sought for publication, plus a checklist of the dozen most common reasons a story is found unsuitable for publication. In the absence of a paid, full-time staff, I think this is the best bounce notice that I've seen. It enables the slushpile sifter to dispose of a large number of manuscripts in a reasonably short period of time. Without taking the time necessary to write each one a letter, the reader is still able to indicate to the writer exactly what he/she did wrong. After changing Ted's slip very slightly and running off a ream's worth, I settled in and started to pull envelopes from the pile.

The first observation I made is how uniformly stinko slushpile manuscripts were, and how soon into the story I was able to determine this fact. Sometimes you can tell in the first page, occasionally the opening sentence is the giveaway, and sometimes you need not look past the illegibly scrawled address on the outside of the envelope. But since I too was a not-yet-successful writer I was sympathetic, and forced myself to finish every one, giving the guy the benefit of the doubt. In addition I could now give the hapless sap some additional specific advice not contained in the checklist. The 'good' slushpile reader reads something only up until he is convinced

that the story is an obvious loser, whereupon he indicates the offense on the slip and dumps the thing into the return envelope. He then wipes his mind clean and digs for the next story. But somehow, I just couldn't work that way. I felt compelled to remain there until the last awful word, and be encouraging to the poor slob who really didn't know any better. If the stories showed promise I told them so, then outlined what I thought they should do in the next story they attempted in order to improve their chances of being published. This way I felt that I had earned my quarter, and at the same time I helped solidify in my head my ideas about good writing and storytelling.

In no time at all I was bogged down. The boxes of manuscripts sat in my room and started to pile up. Because of the amount of time I was spending on each one (also because I'm pretty lazy) the stuff was not being taken care of as quickly as it should have been. Sol became upset, but he felt that he couldn't very well complain too loudly in view of what he was paying me. His dumping runs became less frequent, but his phone calls became more strident and harassing. Sol really has quite an endearing manner over the phone, as both Ted White and Mike Hinge can attest. On his frequent phone calls to me his voice would start babbling even before I got the phone to my ear. I found it too easy to be so fucking demoralized by the things that I couldn't for days or weeks drag myself to the pile. I simply couldn't believe how painfully awful some of the things were. Can people, supposedly mature adults among



them, really be so blind about their own writing? Did those dorks really believe that their feeble, barely literate attempts at fiction were as good as those published in the magazines? Did that philosophy professor really think that his ridiculous tale of butterfly-shaped aliens who convince a young boy to murder his parents was as good as those by "that other professor here at B.U." (Asimov, obviously)? Then that hopeless technical writer from Wisconsin, whose stories (at least one per week) were impeccably typed with an IBM Selectric on stationery that listed his credits and degrees on the left-hand side, did he really entertain the notion that someone would pay wholesome American dollars to read his inept mash of plot stolen from Vargo Statten and characterization that would embarrass the Bowery Boys? Or that kid from Pittsburgh, whose sword and sorcery was merely terrible, thereby the best I'd seen in weeks. Prompted by my overly charitable letter of encouragement he proceeded to engage me in a tempestuous one-sided correspondence that saw him open with confessions about his personal problems, suddenly burst into a fit of spurned-lover indignation over the return of one of his

manuscripts (courtesy of Sol's ever-vigilant quarter-spotting patrol) and conclude in his last letter with a groveling apology. All this in five letters over a two-week period.

Of course I read these things all at once when Sol handed them to me as a group. I was destroyed. I felt awful and helpless before the kid's deeply neurotic temperament. I put the kid's stories aside because I couldn't bear to look at them, and let them sit for months. How could I respond? Of course I felt horribly guilty, but I couldn't bring myself to do anything about it.

Things in general worsened and soon the cartons from Sol included notes from people wondering about the fate of their manuscripts. I then devoted more time to writing apology letters than I did to plowing through a box of stories. I felt crappy, but reading mind-twistingly awful sf and fantasy made me feel crappier. I don't think I will ever be able to read Robert E. Howard again (never one of my favorites) thanks to the endless parade of mindless sword-swinging he unwittingly inspired when in 1929 he single-handedly created the modern heroic fantasy story.

To be perfectly honest, I could say that there were many more indifferent stories than there were wrist-slashingly bad ones. Those are the stories that just sort of sit there and allow you to read through them without undue comfort to the end. When you realize that the story actually ended there, the first question to cross your mind is "So what?" The story has made absolutely no point, and you marvel at the energy used to write such pointless triviality. You check the line on the rejection slip that says "Your ambitions for this story appear to exceed your ability to bring it off." You resist the temptation to add something like "Have you tried self-abuse? It's much more rewarding." Spaced between the mediocrities are hand-scratched ones from twelve-year-olds, ones typed with a ribbon unchanged since the beginning of the century, ones on paper that crumbles in your hands, ones typed on onionskin, single-spaced without punctuation, ones that say they'll be glad to send you the other thirteen stories that form this series along with maps, charts and background material that they've developed, ones who plead for any advice you'd be kind enough to give in order to help them become writers, and ones who include their phone numbers in the honest belief that you will wish to call them and congratulate them on their story and ask for more. I found the most saddening ones to be the people who seemed completely out of touch with reality and their position in it. It depressed me greatly. The rewards were quite few, much less than those possible with, say, the GALAXY slush-pile which Jim Baen mined so successfully. (He filled in most of the issues he edited with unknowns and neopros thanks to the peculiar bookkeeping techniques of UPD, but he did thereby discover John Varley and "Raccoona Sheldon.")

The only worthwhile story I can remember passing through my hands was "The Incredible Umbrella" by Marvin Kaye, a literate, snappily-written humorous fantasy in the Pratt-De Camp vein (published in the February 1976 FANTASTIC). More often I was faced with such unpleasantness as the time Sol tossed a story into my face with the words "I just bought this, tell me if it's any good." Luckily "The Dark Destroyer" by Jack Williamson was publishable, but by no means near to what Williamson is capable of producing.

Further aggravating an already trying situation were obstacles encountered in dealing with the publisher, a man without ethics, social grace, consideration or understanding for his fellow human beings. I came up against the same difficulty that Moshe had faced in trying to communicate with Ted through Sol, but as I communicated directly with Ted I had firsthand knowledge of the way Sol twisted and sometimes completely fabricated transmissions that passed through him. To this day Ted and Moshe both believe things about each other based on untruths passed to each of them by the publisher.

My inability to deal with this sort of shit coupled with a complete evaporation of my desire to read another manuscript led me to start farming out more and more of the things to my friends, eventually arriving at a point where I told Sol that I just couldn't do it anymore. I think he was genuinely happy to be rid of me. My last communication with him was a phone call a number of months later in which he insulted me for about five minutes without breaking to breathe, let alone allow me to answer him. He accused me of throwing away manuscripts and leaving them behind in my old apartment, a practice of some of my predecessors (most assuredly not Moshe). Both charges were completely untrue. He then violently hung up the phone. That

disturbed me of course, and my life will be a lot happier if I don't ever have to deal with Sol Cohen again.

The actual experience wasn't a total loss, though. It did retard my willingness to write for more time than I care to think about. I had learned only too well how not to write -- reading the same mistakes repeated in myriad different ways does that much for you. The knowledge that these people out there could be so unperceptive about their own writing introduced the unshakable gnawing in my gut that may I, too, was blind to my own words. It seemed only too possible that my fiction could be just as shitty. On good days, though, I was able to think, "Just look at all the horrible writing going on, it really shouldn't be too difficult to get published." And it isn't, it's really quite easy. All you've got to do is sit down and finish what you start (an old piece of Heinlein advice), a discipline that I've lacked for over 5 years now. If you are reasonably competent (the manuscripts from fans were generally on a higher level than those from non-fans), you should be able to hit eventually.

Apart from the writing lessons, which are disproportionate to the amount of time and ulcer-energy spent, I did learn the reality of dealing with a publisher who is typical of many of the people involved in this industry. Disheartening as this might be, I think that it was probably the most important thing I learned.

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THE BEST OF LEIGH BRACKETT edited by Edmond Hamilton
Ballantine 25954 1977 \$1.95

Collection edited by Edmond Hamilton of some of his wife's most colorful stories. Brackett is very good at creating backgrounds, and her characterization was ahead of its time in the Forties and Fifties. Current knowledge of Mars and the other planets spoil some of her colorful creations -- it would be much more romantic if the worlds of space were like she created them. Contents "The Jewel of Bas", "The Vanishing Venusians", "The Veil of Astellar", "The Moon That Vanished", "Enchantress of Venus", "The Woman From Altair", "The Last Days of Shandakor", "Shannach - The Last", "The Tweener", and "The Queer Ones". This collection belongs on every collector's bookshelf. The stories may be dated but they are fun to read. *Rating: Good.*

HALF A LIFE AND OTHER STORIES by Kirill Bulychev
Macmillan 1977 \$7.95

Eight bucks for 142 pages is, in my opinion, overpriced. These stories from a noted Russian sf writer, translated by Helen Saltz Jacobson and introduced by Theodore Sturgeon, unlike their American counterparts contain no central characters. The narrative dips into each person in the story as it progresses, but there are no central protagonists for the reader to identify with. This makes for an interesting change of pace, though I doubt if I would want to read this type of story much. Because of the price, I'd recommend you wait for the paperback. *Rating: Above Avg.*

THE CRYSTAL SHIP edited by Robert Silverberg
Pocket Books 1976/7 \$1.50

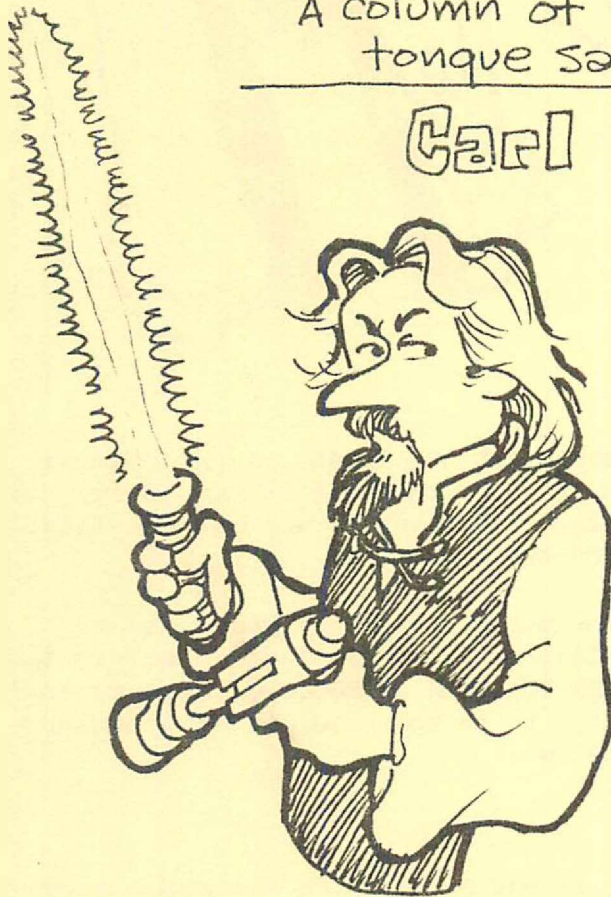
Three novelettes "The Crystal Ship" by Joan D. Vinge, "Megan's World" by Marta Randall, and "Screwtop" by Vonda McIntyre. "Ship" is a depressing story about the drugged remains of humanity orbiting a planet with a young and expanding race. "World" is a New Wave human-helps-aliens-exploited-by-evil-men story that reads like a rejected Bionic Woman script. "Screwtop" is about a group of weird prisoners on a horrible prison planet. "Screwtop" is the best, but none are anything to write home to mother about. *RATING: Average*

The Whiz Kids of
Antarctica present

GROWING UP IS LEARNING HOW TO SCREAM CIVILLY

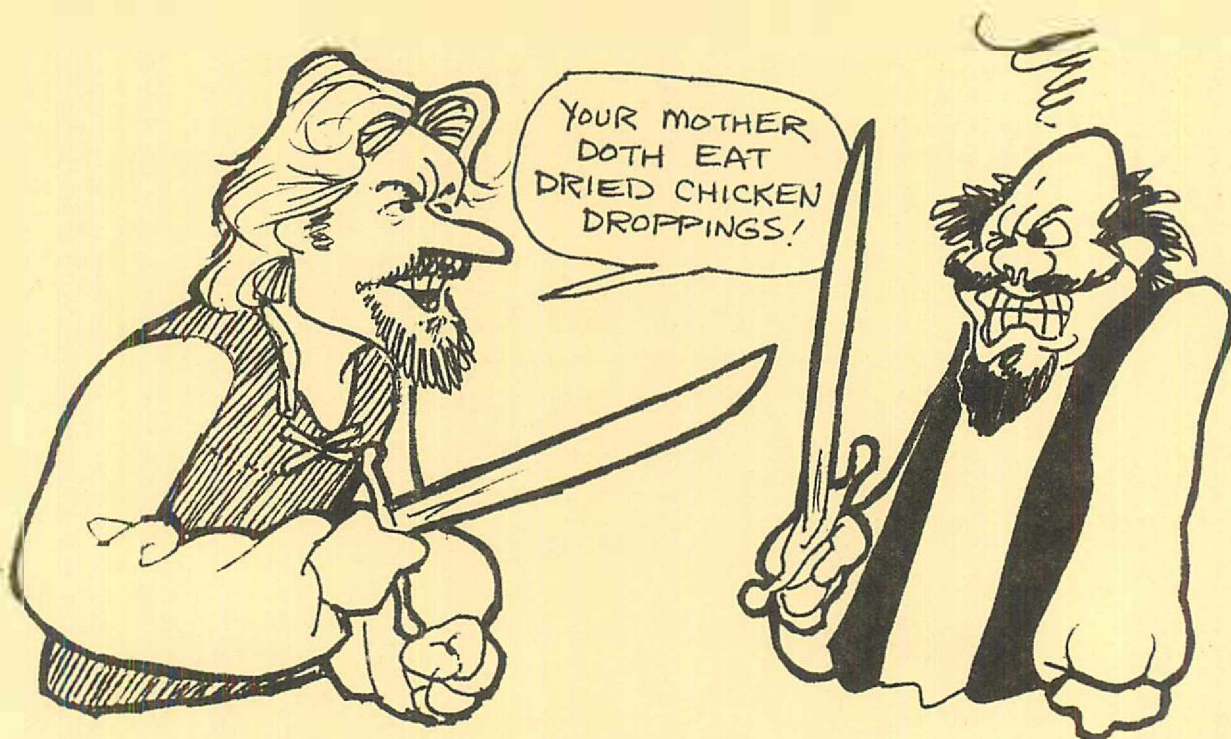
A column of photo-animated
tonque sandwiches by

Carl Bennett†



There aren't many people who know that besides being a state-licensed pervert and acknowledged no-wing electrical activist, I am a scholar of Elizabethan Literature. True, I have spent many years of my life now studying the plays of William Shakespeare and Ben Jonson, but I have a tender spot in my heart for obscure Elizabethan prose. Twice, I have been called to Oxford to lecture on the lost works of Rutherford, Kenne, Aldiss and Harrison. And just last year I delivered a paper orally at a seminar at Cornell on the anonymous works of the 16th century entitled "I've Got Bar-Maids in the Pantry, Tax-collectors at My Door, and Shellfish in My Comode; What Should I Do?"

Only recently have I and my compatriot scholar-friend from Lincoln, Nebraska, Dr. Harold ("Giggles") Carey, uncovered the following important anonymous Elizabethan prose document. We discovered the heretofore unknown manuscript among the literary



artifacts of a Mr. Herpes Zoster, an English immigrant who landed in New Hampshire sometime between 1714 and 1953. For perhaps a century, the lost library of Mr. Zoster has rested in the dilapidated barn of a Missouri chicken farmer where we discovered it among old, moldy copies of NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC MAGAZINE.

The manuscript transcribed below was perhaps the most interesting prose work we found among the other poetic and pornographic Elizabethan works there. We also found a quarto-printed wrapper-bound copy of THE HENNY YOUNGMAN JOKEBOOK (which goes to show how old those gags are!) The story, written to be spoken aloud by an obscure English Duke, we are led to believe, was as follows:

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Good evening. My name is Duke Fairlane. I trust you have had an enjoyable night so far. I come here before you not to dance or sing or cite funny poems. I have come here to tell you a true story. A story of love, and hate, and what happens when geese smoke cigars.

It is one of my favorite stories because it is the story of how I won the love and devotion of the fair Princess Electra over the evil Count Monte Carlo.

Three years ago, when I used to dwell in the township of Austin, America, there was a young and beautiful princess whose father had died. Full of a vile mixture of Ale and Port, her father cut off his nose while slicing bread and bled to death in the company of a disgusting scab of a scoundrel who made his living selling magazine subscriptions for POPULAR MECHANICS to members of the Underclasses. The Princess acquired her father's modest fortune. By his strict Will, however, she was to find the most perfect of husbands; marry, have children, and help comanage her father's olive oil importing business.

Over the period of two months, the worthy men, through physical contest, had been

singled down to just two Noblemen, the corrupt Count Monte Cristo and myself.

The depraved Count had heard of the fortune awaiting the man who proved to be the most worthy in all the kingdom, and he did his very vilest to gain that honor. Yet I, out of sheer love for the Princess, had beaten every contender I had met. Then it came: the afternoon of the deciding duel. It was to be a Nobleman's duel, blade to blade.

As I exited my dressing tent, I cahnced to see a Skylark fly overhead. *An omen of good luck*, I thought to myself. I surveyed the scene before me. First I saw the lovely Princess Electra sitting on her miniature throne positioned to observe the match. She acknowledged my eyes with a bare regal nod. Next, I saw him: Monte Carlo. Already warming up, his muscles confessed years of fencing experience. I, for the most part of my life, had been a rambler; not staying in any singular place very long. I learned swordplay during road pillages in my early days. My years of Fording were with me still. The masses who had gathered to watch the match stood anticipating the outcome.

A young Kadet from the university was to oversee the match. As he stepped forward, he blew a signal shrilly from his pipe, and the Count withdrew his Cutlass and I my Le Sabre. The duel was on!

The Count lunged toward me. I narrowly had time to Dodge. The Count intended to make short work of me, thinking of me as a mere Bug in his path to Shangri-La. He bade me "Surrender this game whilst thou still may!"

I Valiantly replied, "Fie! Fie! thou wily obscene Gremlin. I shall fight for my Luv to the end of my life. Avant-Garde!"

"Gesundheit!"

I then came on with the power of a Tempest, giving all my life force to my sword arm. Yet all my speed could not save me from the Fury of the Count's blade. In one well-aimed swipe, he did badly wound my left arm. I swung away from him as I heard women Saab in the crowd. I saw, through dancing Firebirds in my brain, a friend of mine in the crowd. Painfully did I address him, "By Gcd, in Cincinnati! Pain doth



Sting, Ray!" An overwhelming light filled my eyes. A light, bright as a Nova. The brilliance faded to reveal the Galaxie. Stars, infinite stars! I heard a voice speaking through them. I recognized the voice of Father Cordoba, an Austrian minister. He asked me, "Are you villing to accept de Son as your saviour?"

I asked, "What son?"

He raised his finger to the sky and replied, "Dat Son!"

Before I could speak the Count pushed the man aside and was standing over me, ready to deliver his final thrust. When suddenly, a black Falcon swooped over his head, distracting the Count long enough for me to run home a Charger right through his heart!

The Princess and I had a nice life until I found I would have been better off to have married the Count. We had domestic problems; we divorced. We had no children, and we sold the olive oil business to some nice people with tiny moustathes and gold teeth.

There is, of course, a moral to every story. The moral of this story is: Never use a refrigerator for a hat.

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PASSING FOR HUMAN by Jody Scott

DAW UW1330 1977 \$1.50

This novel reminds me very much of the work of Arthur Byron Cover. Like Cover, Scott uses real people or characters from popular sources (Emma Peel, Brenda Starr, plus many richard nixons) to add a grotesque and oftentimes humorous note to her story line. In this case an alien athropologist, along with the rest of her crew, using disposable human bodies, try to recruit humanity (affectionately known as 'bushmen') to their way of thinking before humanity falls under the spell of an evil alien force. The aliens are so childlike and conceited, however, that the evil force seems to be a more acceptable form to humanity. While Scott relates this rather skimpy plotline, she manages to take humorous and telling potshots at many forms of human conceit and behavior. This novel is not the 'classic' that Barry Malzberg claims in his introduction, but is is entertaining and at times enlightening. Rating: Above Avg.

THE BLUE HAWK by Peter Dickinson

Ballantine 25759 1976/7 \$1.96

Once a year the Priests ritually consecrate the King, sacrificing a blue hawk to the gods to give the King an additional year's reign. Tron, a novice in service to one of the gods, is chosen on the day of the ceremony as 'goat boy', one who wears a white stone around his neck and given immunity to perform any action that day. Tron, hearing the calling of the gods, takes the blue hawk -- dooming the king to death by the prësts. Tron becomes a political pawn, and escapes in the old King's coffin to the outer regions. There he discovers that the barbarians threaten to invade the kingdom, and the King must break the power of the priests to raise an army to fight the barbarians.

Dickinson has written an interesting fantasy, rich with background, as he follows Tron on his journey not only through the kingdom, but also on the road of his own personal growth toward an unsuspected maturity. The novel does suffer, however, from Dickinson's prose style, rather dull, doing nothing to enliven the reading. But the real hero of this noevl is its fantasy background, and here Dickinson succeeds admirably. Rating: Good

Did you ever wake after a long, sound sleep and discover that all your once-familiar surroundings had taken a new look about them? That, although everything was in its usual place, things seemed subtly different? Well, that's about what I feel like now that I'm in SCIENTIFRICTION... I'm still writing for an audience that is appreciative of sf art, but the audience is, of course, different.

Be that as it may. In my articles for Geis' SFR I wrote and rewrote until my fingers were stubby shadows of their former selves; the reviews came out precise, correct, and often a bit stuffy. I thought this was The Way To Do It. Now I'm not so sure, and unless corrected by Mike or you, will try a bit less formal approach to science fiction illustration.

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Did you ever stop to think that the Hugo award for the best artists in the pro and fan categories do not tell one which artists are the "best"? They merely tell which artists are the most popular. The "best" artist is not necessarily the most popular and vice-versa, as I'm sure you already

JON GUSTAFSON ULTERIOR DESIGNS

* *Hugo time:*
Barr vs. Di Fate vs. Fabian
vs. Sternbach vs. No Award

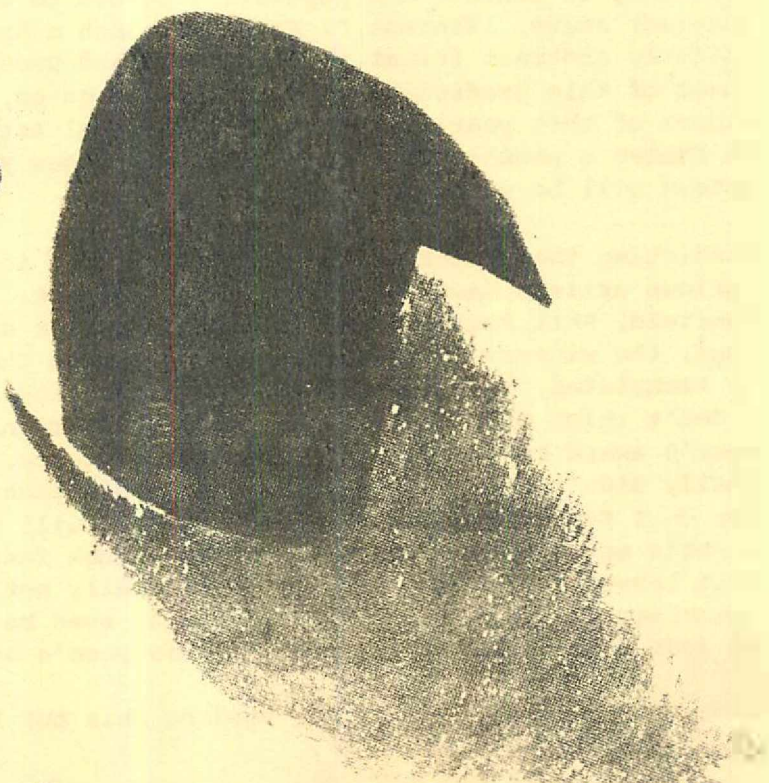
* *Canfield, Foglio, Kirk,*
Rotsler and Shull

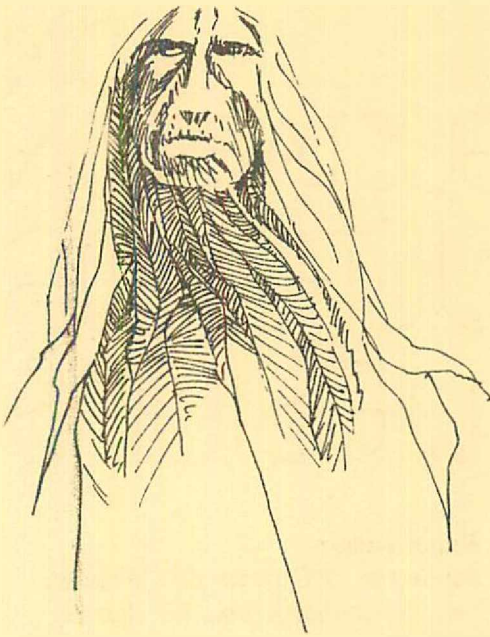
* *SF Calendars for 1978*

* *Freas Cover Reproductions*

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FRANK HERBERT'S DUNE CALENDAR 1978





realize. But really, this is all immaterial for art is so subjective that terms like "best" are as useful as handles on fog.

Naturally this makes my job, art critic, rather difficult at times. Not everybody likes the art I do, or for the same reasons; this makes for some very interesting discussions on occasion. But I think I can speak with a bit of authority as far as the aesthetic aspects of sf illustration, the processes used to create the works, and to print them, and the mechanics of art (balance, color harmony, etc.) These are the essential ingredients of art and the ones I've been trained in. Although I'm not doing professional sf illustration (no matter how good an artist is, there is always a 'knack' that is necessary for each genre) I am making a living as a professional illustrator.

Back to the Hugo awards for a moment. As predictions are not my forte, you may feel free to take my next predictions with a pound or two of salt. The nominated artists in the Best Professional category are (*ed note: parts of this column were written in August, before the results were known*) George Barr, Vincent Di Fate, Steve Fabian, Rick Sternbach and No Award. (I really don't think that No Award stands much of a chance this year -- his colors are much too muted.) Historically, the artist with the brightest colors and the most realistic scenes has won the award. These are two of the reasons that Ed Emshwiller and Frank Kelly Freas have won fourteen -- yes, fourteen -- Hugos between them. This would tend to point towards Steve Fabian or Rick Sternbach as the 1977 winner. Personally I feel that George Barr is the "best" ..make that Best...artist in this year's running, but his colors are too quiet, too delicate, to achieve the popularity needed to win this coveted (and yes, it is coveted) award. Vincent Di Fate, although a highly talented artist, tends to use a slightly abstract format in his scenes and uses colors that are too dark (for purposes of this prediction). With this to go on, I will predict Steve Fabian as the winner of this year's Hugo for Professional Artist. I think the deciding factor will be Fabian's penchant for depicting voluptuous young women (since the majority of voters will be young males....)

Predicting the winner of the Fan Artist Hugo is a bit tougher, as the work of the various artists have gotten far less exposure. The nominees this year are: Grant Canfield, Phil Foglio, Tim Kirk, Bill Rotsler and Jim Shull. With only a few exceptions, the winners in this category have been the ones who entertain the best; roughly translated, this means that this award tends to favor the cartoonist/humorist. I don't think Tim Kirk will win this year, mainly because of his statements at last year's award ceremony: he thanked the audience, then stated that, in his opinion, he really didn't deserve the award due to his lack of participation in the fan field. Nor do I feel Jim Shull or Grant Canfield will win, though they are fine artists; Grant's art simply doesn't appear in enough fanzines and Jim's work is too "serious." That leaves Foglio and Rotsler. I'm really not too sure which of these brilliant humorists will win (or indeed if I will even be close as to who wins) but I'm tending to lean towards Phil Foglio to be this year's Best Fan Artist.

I don't know when you will be reading this but I want to assure you that I'm writing

this before Suncon -- just in case I accidentally turn out to have correctly picked this year's winners. (Update follows.)

It is now late September and the art Hugos are history. I've managed to find out who the two winners were this year and feel somewhat mitigated by the relative accuracy of my guesses. Rick Sternbach won the Pro art Hugo (though I thought Fabian would win due to his wide exposure in a number of pro markets and fanzines, and the portfolio of his art which received wide acclaim) and to him I say "Hearty Congratulations" Incidentally, Rick, whom I was fortunate enough to meet at last year's MAC, was one of the instigators of the Association of Science Fiction Artists (ASFA) which has the potential, at least, of doing something genuinely good for the field. The Fan Art Hugo was won by -- taa daa! -- Phil Foglio. I think his cartooning for the MAC fliers, Program Book and whatnot had much to do with his success. He shows a lot of promise in his cartooning and has a brilliant sense of humor; I don't think this will be his last Hugo.

* * * * *

I've received a number of excellent products recently that I think might be of interest to those who love sf art as I do...wake up out there --these are my reviews! The first is *FRANK HERBERT'S DUNE CALENDAR* for 1978 from Berkeley. The paintings from *DUNE* are done by the only man qualified to do them, John Schoenherr. Beginning with the impressive cover, "Fremen Mounting a Sandworm," Schoenherr brings Arrakis to life as no other has. From the somber darkness of "Alone on Arrakis" to the incredible portrait of "Baron Vladimir Harkonnen" to the awesome "Desert Nightmare" (which is perhaps the ultimate portrayal of the power and savagery of a sandworm) to the final illustration, "The Defeat of the Sardaukar", John Schoenherr paints Herbert's visions as if somewhere in the Universe Arrakis really exists.

John Schoenherr impresses the bloody hell out of me. He is a painter's painter; Jack Gaughan calls him "the only true artist in illustration" -- which may be a little extreme but not by much. He is able, through his loose brush technique and brilliant choice of colors, to obtain a vastness and scope in his paintings of Arrakis that is totally unmatched. Nothing in his paintings is ever static; nothing ever just "sits" there. He often uses odd points of view in his art to create interest or drama; it is common for the ground to be tilted slightly, as if the viewer is in the process of moving (up, down, sideways, whatever).

There are a couple of other calendars that may well be of interest to fans. One is of course the *STAR WARS* calendar from, I believe, Ballantine. Nor do I have a copy on hand to check its cost, but they are going to sell a bundle of them whatever they charge. It is what you would imagine: a dozen enlarged photos of C3PO, R2D2, Han Solo, Chewbacca (he doesn't) and all the rest. The one thing I particularly found interesting about the calendar was that the photos were not the publicity stills that you so often see; they appeared to be directly from the film itself, to have a more immediate impact on the people who have seen the movie. Which seems to be just about everyone in the country so far. I don't think I have to recommend this to anyone, but I will. It's excellent.



The Hildebrandt Tolkien Calendar is also from Ballantine, the latest of the series.

I have recently noticed a trait of the Hildebrandts' style, which is their tendency to make everything into a still-life. Even the action scenes are frozen solid. Not only doesn't anything "move" in them, but they are as stiff and stilted as the proverbial "purple prose". However their skill is superb, and the thing that bugs me will not be especially noticed by the majority of people who love their work. Am I spitting into the wind? Maybe. If you like Tolkien, you'll love this calendar.

The last subject is really a series of items. I attended a small Seattle Star Trek con last January and talked to Kelly Freas for several hours over the two days of the con. He was displaying and selling a series of posters and large postcards (of his own work, naturally) that are quite possibly the highest quality color reproductions on the market today. While some of the paintings chosen are not, in my opinion, the best representations of Kelly's work, they are representative of his distinctive style. Included in these prints are a number of ASTOUNDING and ANALOG covers, plus portraits of the principle characters of Star Trek. The colors in these prints are the closest you will ever get to the true colors of his originals, so if you want to view the vivid reds of his "The Sins of the Fathers" ANALOG cover (which is the best portrait of an alien ever painted) or the blues and delicate greens of CONSCIENCE INTERPLANETARY (a DAW cover) these are posters you will want to obtain.

The Freas prints can be ordered from a brochure available from Frank Kell Freas, Rt. 4, Box 4056A, Virginia Beach VA 23457; the prices vary according to what you want so I'm not going to list them here (they are very reasonable.)

In my next column/whatever I'll get into book and magazine covers, picking a couple of good ones to praise and a couple of bad ones to criticize. See you then.

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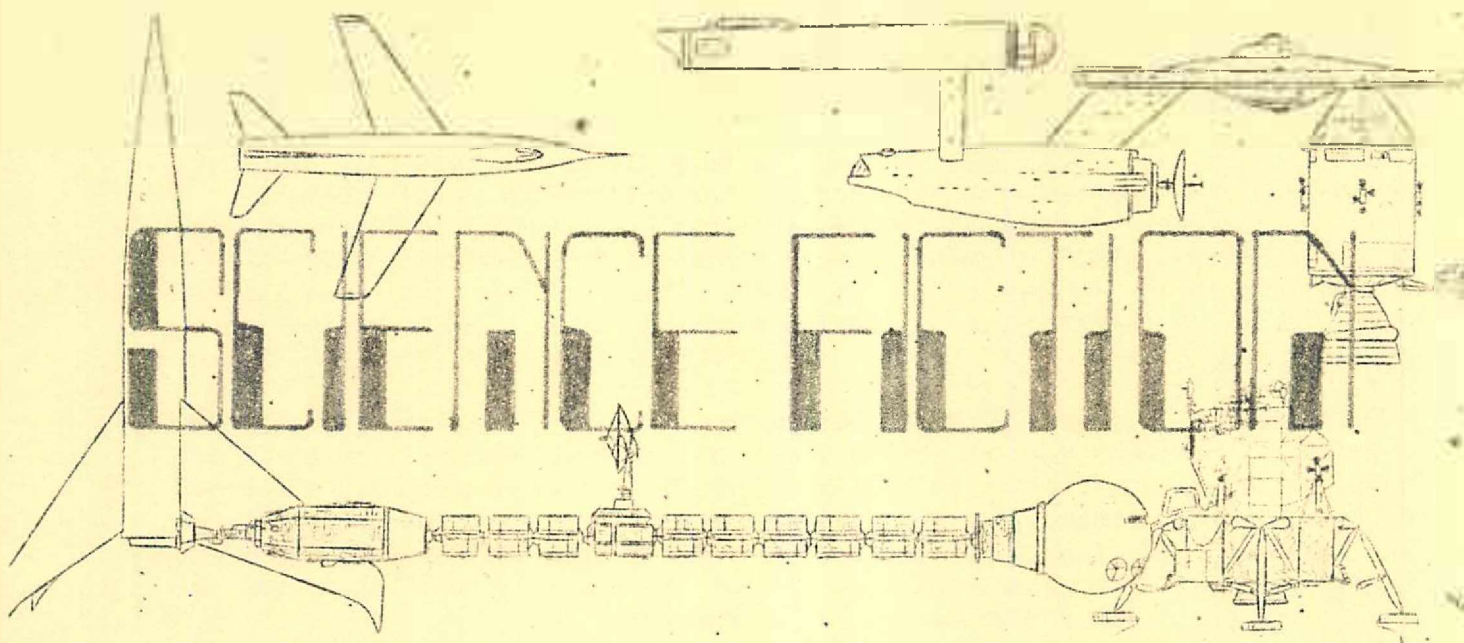
DRAGONSONG by Anne McCaffrey
Bantam 10300-8 1976/7 \$1.75

Menolly wanted to be a Harper, a verbal keeper of the myths and legends of Pern. She had studied under the old Harper, but after his death her father had forbidden her to sing, Harpers being males. An unfortunate accident disabled her hand, so thwarted by her parents and by injury, she runs away from her father's sea hold during the time of the Thread. She comes upon a clutch of fire lizards, small relatives of the great Dragons that sweep the Thread from Pern's sky, and manages to 'impress' nine of them to her mind.

McCaffrey is an excellent writer, and this superior juvenile aptly demonstrates her maturing talents. The characterization is excellent, and the writing is good. She isn't the field's best stylist, but is far from being its worst. The book is engrossing; once you start reading you will find it hard to put down. It also has a good cover illustration and a useful map inside. A superior science fiction novel on all levels. Rating: Excellent. Highly Recommended.

THE BEST OF EDMOND HAMILTON edited by Leigh Brackett
Ballantine 25900 1977 \$1.95

A collection of stories by Hamilton, edited by his wife, spanning his almost fifty-year career. These stories give an indication of Hamilton's talent, especially for the "crashing suns" type of story. I wish they had included the old novel THE SUN SMASHER -- a truly fine space opera, which parallels STAR WARS to an extent, but was of course written twenty years before Lucas ever thought of the movie. While the literary worth of these stories is debatable, there is no denying that reading them was a lot of fun. Rating: Good



THE 1977 ANNUAL WORLD'S BEST SF edited by Donald A. Wollheim
DAW 1977 \$1.75

CONTENTS: "Appearance of Life" by Brian W. Aldiss. A haunting tale of a man exploring a museum, who happens across the life recordings of two people -- one made while he was younger, and just after he leaves for space, and one she made years later. These recordings are like audiovisual records that contain elements of the recorder's personality, and the searcher leaves the cubes together so they can conduct a conversation over the years. This story, straightforward sf, is a departure for Aldiss, and with it he proves that he can still write effectively in the genre he seems to have outgrown.

"Overdrawn at the Memory Bank" by John Varley. A man has gone to a "disneyland" to have himself recorded, and then have his consciousness placed in a lion to get rid of emotional stress, but something

goes wrong and he has to be temporarily placed in a computer while they find his body, which has been misplaced. He lives through months of subjective time while the search goes on, and the doctors are afraid his personality will break down before they can re-insert it in his body. I found this story somewhat overwritten, and was bogged down in the middle of it for over a week. I think it would be more effective if shortened by half.

"Those Good Old Days of Liquid Fuel" by Michael G. Coney. Nostalgic Tale of a man that revisits an old launching place of chemically fueled rockets he used to hang out in as a kid, and reflects upon the changes that have occurred since then. I was impressed with this story -- the first Coney story I found that I actually liked. Coney manages to hit just the right mood -- not too sentimental, yet affecting.

STAN

BURNS BOOK REVIEWS

"The Hertford Manuscript" by Richard Cowper. Continues the story of Wells's main character from THE TIME MACHINE, only this time he goes back into time, and has his machine break in the time of the Black Death. He tries to get the part rebuilt before he catches the plague. Excellent capturing of the feeling of Wells' novel, with good characterization and a fine rendering of Wells' style.

"Natural Advantage" by Lester Del Rey. A very Clarke-ish tale of a small ship of aliens who come across Earth just before a neutrino front causes the sun to go nova. While an interesting, readable story, it lacks the grandeur of Clarke's "Rescue Party." "The Bicentennial Man" by Isaac Asimov. Asimov's Nebula-winning story about a robot who will go to any lengths to become human. While it is not the most literate story of the year, it is effective -- and for those who loved I ROBOT stories, quite an emotional experience.

"The Cabinet of Oliver Naylor" by Barrington J. Bayley. Man struggles to find his identity -- at least I think that's what this story is about. I found it barely readable. Wollheim does insist in filling his BEST collection from his stable of sf writers. A poor story. "My Boat" by Joanna Russ. A story about three friends -- two who can make their fantasies come to life, and the one they leave behind. This is one of the most approachable of Russ' recent stories -- tender and loving, without any of the political screaming she has become prone to.

"Houston, Houston, Do You Read?" by James Piptree, Jr. Three astronauts are catapulted into a future where a plague has wiped out all the males and the females reproduce by cloning. Story studies the personality conflicts and adjustments that the men have to make to the female crew that rescues them. This story also won a Nebula. Personally I found it repellent. Not so much that I resented her killing off my half of the human race -- more for the fact that the three men she represents are hopeless stereotypes. If their equivalent female cardboard counterparts had been used, feminists would scream down the house. Last three men in the world: one tries to fuck all the women, another tries to take over with a gun, and the third, a female stereotype, seems unable to take any action or make any decision regarding how to conduct his own life. As a humanist I can only decry such a manipulative story that widens, rather than bridges, gulfs.

"I See You" by Damon Knight. A true Campbell type story that examines all the consequences in human terms of what would happen if a machine were invented that allowed you to see what happened anywhere at any time. While the story is sketchy, it does contain some interesting speculations.

This is a better collection than Wollheim's last two annuals. I found I enjoyed the stories much more than in preceding years. I wish only that Wollheim would take a little more effort not to include so many marginal stories from his stable of authors at DAW, like Bayley. Overall Rating: Good.

THE BEST SCIENCE FICTION OF THE YEAR '76 edited by Terry Carr
Ballantine 25758 1977 \$1.95

I have always found that Carr's BEST selections are more to my taste than Wollheim's, and this year proved to be no exception. This collection used two stories also contained in Wollheim's BEST: Knight's "I See You" and Asimov's "The Bicentennial Man" in addition to the following titles.

"The Phantom of Kansas" by John Varley. An artist on the moon who works in weather -- creating cyclones, etc. for audiences in vast domed craters -- awakens in a new body to discover she has been murdered three times previously, but after the time of the 'life recording' from which she is successively recreated. She must find the person.

responsible, but she must also top the artistic creation of a former duplicate. This is the best Varley story I've read so far -- fast paced, smoothly flowing, with an interesting background yet with characters in a human enough situation that it is easy to identify with them.

"Seeing" by Harlan Ellison. A prostitute in an anything-goes starport is chased by a rich woman who wants her eyes 'that saw wonders.' Somehow I feel uncomfortable with Harlan's "straight" sf as opposed to his fantasy. Maybe the power in his stories is brought out more by having his real people become involved in a fantastic situation rather than by contrasting fantastic characters against a realistic background. "The Death of Princes" by Fritz Leiber. The narrator looks back on the lives of a group of people who congregate around the powerful personality of one of their friends from college in the 20s. Nostalgic, with effective writing and powerful characterization, this is one of the best Leiber stories to come out in the past few years. Excellent.

"The Psychologist Who Wouldn't Do Awful Things To Rats" by James Tiptree. Unsettling story about an experimental psychologist who discovers that the rats he 'tortures' in his experiments have banded together to discover a new dimension of perception, which he finds he cannot follow. Being a psychology major, I found that this call for humane treatment of experimental animals was guilt-inspiring -- also powerfully told, though the conclusion seemed somewhat muddled and the point of the story was lost on me. "The Eyeflash Miracles" by Gene Wolfe. The more I read of Wolfe's fiction, the more impressed I am by the total brilliance of his writing. The present story involves a blind boy in the near future who can, almost without knowing it, perform miracles; and how he searches for Sugarland -- his fantasy world of perfection.

"An Infinite Summer" by Christopher Priest. A man from the turn of the century wanders London during the blitz, waiting for his lover to be 'unfrozen' from the stasis field the 'freezers' had projected about them years ago; he was released early than she. A highly stylistic story, and sentimental. "The Highest Dive" by Jack Williamson. The major fault with this story of the exploration of a huge low gravity planet is that it reads more like a plot summary than a complete novelette. I think it would be much improved if expanded.

"Meathouse Man" by George R. R. Martin. Another of Martin's "corpse" stories -- stories which are well written but which leave me emotionally cold. This one examines a man's love affair, and how its ending drives him to the "meathouse" where corpse women respond to the men in their embrace, but fulfill no emotional needs. "Custer's Last Jump" by Steven Utley and Howard Waldrop. A humorous story in which Custer and his men are paratroopers in an alternate earth. While the execution is at times poor, the bibliography the authors include at the end is brilliant. Collection also contains a recommended reading list, and an article on "The Science Fiction Year" by LOCUS' Charlie Brown. Overall Rating: Good.

WHISPERS edited by Stuart David Schiff
Doubleday 1977 \$7.95

The first thing that strikes the eye about this collection of horror stories from Schiff's magazine WHISPERS is the excellent wraparound dustjacket by Tim Kirk. I can only wonder at how Schiff slipped this masterpiece through the wasteland of inept cover art at Doubleday. The book contains six interior illustrations by Kirk, Fabian, Coye, Barr, Garcia and Utpatel -- ranging from fair to good. The book itself features stories by Leiber, Wellman, Noland, Bloch, Ray Russell, John Crowley and Brian Lumley, among others. Horror and fantasy fans will want this unique book for their collections. Rating: Good.

THE FUTURIANS by Damon Knight
John Day 1977 \$10.95

"The Futurian Society was founded in 1938 by thirteen science fiction fans; it never numbered more than twenty, including wives, girl friends, and hangers-on; yet out of this small group came seven of the most famous names in science fiction: Isaac Asimov, James Blish, Cyril Kornbluth, Damon Knight, Judith Merrill, Frederik Pohl and Donald A. Wellheim." So says the jacket blurb, anyway. What Knight has done is try and recapture those days for himself and for the reader -- at times not quite successfully since the non-fan might find many of the references and some of the happenings described confusing. Still, Knight manages to write this narrative with skill and quite a bit of humor -- take this description of Kornbluth: "He had a deep voice, Tartar eyes, and a sullen expression. He rarely smiled, and when he did, did not expose his teeth. The reason for this may have been that he never brushed them, and they were green." Personally I found this book, and its history of New York fandom in the 30s and 40s, fascinating reading. But those with little or no interest in fandom might find it difficult going. Rating: Good.

A SPELL FOR CHAMELEON by Piers Anthony
Ballantine 1977 \$1.95

Xanth is a land where magic works, cut off from the rest of humanity. Every human, to remain, must display some magic talent by his 21st birthday. Bink has no magic, so he goes off on a dangerous journey to the Good Magician Humfrey to find out if he has magic, and what his talent is. Humfrey discovers he has powerful magic, but cannot discover what it is for. The king of Xanth does not accept Bink's magic because it cannot be demonstrated, so Bink is exiled into the world of Mundania. There he falls prisoner. There is a lot of interesting background material in this adventure, but there is also a lot of cheap material (small, hard red bombs that grow on trees and are called cherry bombs, etc.) There is also a lot of overwriting -- the novel would be better-paced if about 50 pages were omitted. In this form it isn't completely successful. I also can't help wondering how much better it would have been in the hands of a more imaginative fantasy writer such as De Camp.

INHERIT THE STARS by James P. Hogan
Del Rey Books 25704 1977 \$1.50

Books that start out well, and then fizzle and fail in the last fifty pages abound in sf, and unhappily, this novel is one of them. Fifty years into the future the body of a spaceman is found on the Moon. Checking its age, it is found to be the remains of a 50,000 mummified man. Where did he come from? Was there a previous civilization on Earth that achieved spaceflight? Hogan follows two scientists on their quest to solve the mystery.

The background of the novel is well worked-out, but Hogan ignores several recent discoveries, like the intense radiation field around Jupiter, in presenting his case. That leads to difficulties in suspending disbelief. The main thrust of the novel -- where the body, called Charlie, came from, and how it got on the moon -- is, I'm afraid, poorly handled. When the mystery finally is solved I found that it confirmed my guesses of 75 pages earlier. When the reader is that far ahead of the protagonists, that is definitely a sign of poor plotting. The last third of the book needs work -- extraneous plot threads to throw off the reader, etc. While the book is interesting and adequately written, in the end a potentially excellent novel comes off merely fair.

THE FORBIDDEN TOWER by Marion Zimmer Bradley
DAW UJ1323 1977 \$1.95

Marion Zimmer Bradley's latest Darkover novel is fascinating, if flawed. In it she continues the story of the love affair between Andrew Carr, earthman, and Callista, Keeper of the towers, master of the mighty esper matrices that are the lifeblood of Darkover 'magic' -- and how she must fight the conditioning against all sexual contact with men instilled in her (for her workers' and her own protection when working with the frightening powers of the matrices.) For even though she has shared her mind and her love with Andrew, this conditioning keeps them physically apart, and the very act of love could kill them both.

Bradley, unfortunately, takes the first 250 pages of this novel to elaborate the struggle over and over again; far too much effort is expended to establish a point that could have been made without harming the pace of the story. When, in the final 100 pages, she picks up the action again, the previous slow sections make it seem hurried and incomplete. There are also stylistic flaws, but whether these are printing or writing errors is not apparent. She does things like having Andrew say variations of "How can they do this to a woman" so many times that it becomes embarrassing. Still, this is a far more completely worked-out character study than the previous Darkover book, THE SPELL SWORD. If the action and pacing drag, the characterization is still superior -- fully realized people whom the reader can easily identify with and come to care for. I'm not saying this is in any way a bad novel, but prudent trimming of the first two third would have made it a better one. Rating: Good.

SKIRMISH: THE GREAT SHORT FICTION OF CLIFFORD D. SIMAK
Berkeley/Putnam 1977 \$3.95

The best way I can think of to describe Simak's fiction is like an old shoe -- scruffy, dingy, worn-out, but it feels so good when you put it on. This collection contains "Huddling Place" and "Desertion" -- two of his excellent "City" stories. "Skirmish" is about the encounter between man and alien machines who wish to free their earthly brethren. In "Good Night, Mister James" a duplicate tries to take the place of his 'original'. "The Sitters" are aliens who have come to a small town in the future to guard childhood. "The Big Front Yard" tells a glorious story about a simple man who discovers his front yard is the gate to an alien planet. "All the Traps of Earth" -- how a powerful robot flees Earth, only to discover he needs to serve. Other titles: "The Thing in the Stone", "The Autumn Land", and "The Ghost of A Model T". Comfortable, undemanding stories that are sure to entertain, with a strong flavor of the peaceful midwest, and a striking emotional content. Rating: Good.

KAMPUS by James E. Gunn
Bantam 1977 \$1.75

This is a novel that, again, suffers on the believability front. In the future colleges have turned into armed camps -- more like a prison than a place of higher education (excuse the pun). Here children are sent to complete their 'education', professors hawking their courses in a carnival atmosphere, where drugs abound and radicalism and violence are the stories of the day. One student, thrown out of a campus, seeks knowledge of the outside world to understand what happened. If this novel had come out 7 or 8 years ago it would have been far more plausible. With Campus life today returning to the placidity of the 50s, it seems out of place. Also, the 'hero' is far too naive for one who has been on campus so long -- the reader figures out what is going on fifty pages before he does. Still Gunn's style is adequate, the plotting is an attempt to break out of usual molds. A decade ago the theme might have made you think about what was then going on; now, unfortunately the most likely response is "So what?"

There is a territoriality in fandom which parallels what you might find in most any group. Sometimes it gets to the point where we emulate certain characteristics of the lower life forms on this planet. Any day now you might even see some fans urinating around the perimeters of their domain.

But more often this territoriality is displayed by some variation of the wordage: "Our group is better than your group." Competition, and pride in one's group. Fandom is so big a pie, apparently, that we must slice it up and compare one piece against another.

Convention fandom might be a good illustration, provided it's drawn by Bruce Townley while he's not sober. For example, the fans on the west coast, or some of them anyway, and the fans on the midwest, or some of them anyway, do not often agree on what makes a good convention.

Until recent times any convention on the west coast was quite large. They were all big mothers. The westcoasters didn't go in much for small, informal relaxicons. Let's have the big extravaganza. Put on the big show. Something for everybody. It's there; look for it.

In the midwest, small conventions are the order of the day. Poolside parties. So little programming that you might not even notice it if you paused to take a sip of your drink or dallied too long at snogging.

A lot of people like both kinds of conventions. Some prefer one or the other, but attend both kinds anyway. And then there are those who wrap themselves in the cloak of territoriality and say: "Our conventions are better than your conventions."



DAVE LOCKE

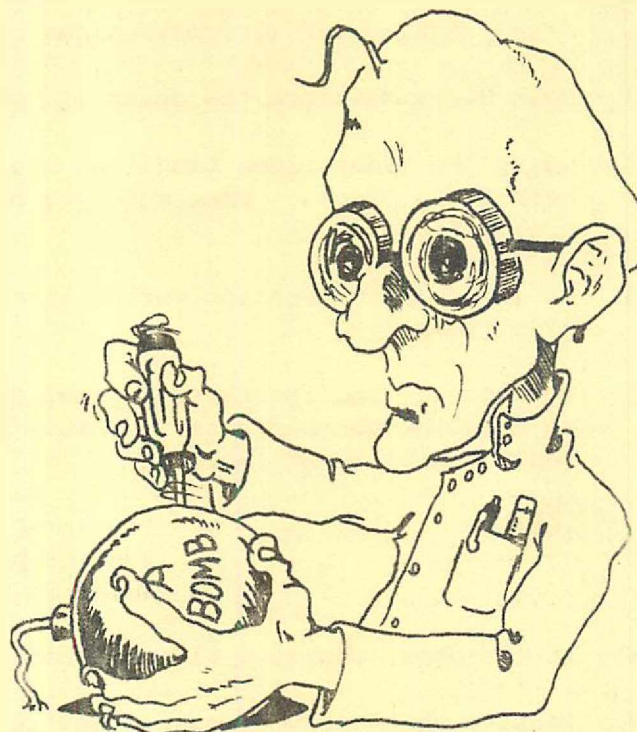
BEYOND THE SHIFTKEY

Anybody who goes to our conventions has to notice the superiority of it all. You will be transformed into a trufan if your are made of material sturdy enough to allow you to see the Light."

This is called territoriality. Tunnel vision, even.

There is another word which floats around, but upon which we can achieve the laying-on of hands. The word is clique. One's clique is obviously the clique to be in. Obviously. You don't see anyone promoting a clique they're not in. Clique. Territoriality. Tunnel vision. Where I'm at is where it's all at. Them and us. We and they. My father can beat up your father. We are all slans, but some of us are more slannish than others.

Not being a midwest fan due to geographical considerations, and not being a west coast fan due to choice (I dislike geographical labels which purport to represent a type of person or mentality; if anything I like to consider myself a mundane dabbling around in an amusing hobby), I feel myself duty-bound to provide counsel to both camps. There are so many things they are missing, you see.



To the west coast fans, who like the large conventions, I would suggest the following ideas in an effort to boost attendance at any conventions which they might be holding in the future.

1. After the start of a convention, make a last-minute announcement via the mediums of radio, television and newspapers, to the effect that all walk-in memberships are free of charge.
2. Subsidize the hotel coffeeshop, and then promote the fact that cheeseburgers are for sale to convention members for a nickel each.
3. Inform the hotel that all rooms will be taken, but that each room will be accomodating eighty-seven fans who will sleep in shifts.
4. Because you are putting on a GargantuCon, you will have a larger base upon which you can draw for your cash flow. All TruFan memberships can be sold at 50¢ each. Most TruFans don't have more than 50¢ anyway.
5. Hold the convention someplace convenient to all fans. Book the entire chain of Hyatt House hotels. On second thought, let's make it the Motel 6 chain.
6. Schedule no less than twenty-five concurrent program items at any given moment.
7. Have a separate guest of honor for each one hundred attendees. Pick someone who is schizophrenic.

To the midwest fans, who like small conventions, I would suggest the following ideas in an effort to ensmall any convention which they might be holding in the future.

1. Have a maximum of ten conventions per month. Hold them all on the same weekend.
2. Make Barry Malzberg the guest of honor at all of them.
3. Carry the MidAmeriCon tradition one step further, and issue toe-tags instead of membership badges. Make sure you book into a hotel where going barefooted is prohibited.
4. Schedule the convention during Lent, so that some fans might feel moved to give it up.
5. Develop new and interesting panel discussion, when you have panel discussions, to draw the non-hardcore fans away from the partying. Some great new ideas for panel topics would include:
 - a. Sex in SF
 - b. Fanzine panel
 - c. Women in SF
6. At the door, charge a \$10 membership fee and a \$200 bar deposit.
7. Require that everyone pass a qualifications test before being allowed to join the convention. At the registration desk ask everyone these three questions:
 - a. Does the term "science fiction mean anything to you?
 - b. Is LOCUS the only fanzine you read?
 - c. Did you ever sign a petition to resurrect STAR TREK?

A person must answer "no" to all three questions before qualifying to join.

It feels good to help people out like that. I'm sure they'll see the merit of these suggestions.

Of course, as an alternative to each group pursuing bigger and better or smaller and better conventions, you might listen to an idea which I have developed over the last few years.

If you were to grab hold of any convention fan at random, and conduct sort of a convention-fan-on-the-street interview, you would likely find a most overwhelming number of such people endorsing, even embracing, the belief that the best part of any convention is the room parties.

Can you dig that? The room parties. Ah, yes. But if you can't dig that, then my next suggestion won't mean anything to you. Go at once to the book reviews, and read no further from this column.

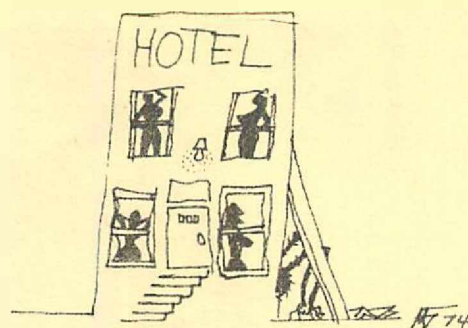
Okay, just us room party fans are left.

Let's abolish all conventions.

Conventions are unnecessary. On the west coast they surround the room parties with an awful lot of trash. Things like panels, and banquets, and masquerades, and art shows, and people selling Spock ears, and all-night movies, and SFWA rooms, and con suites, and all that horseshit. Things you have to wade through to get to a good

room party. In the midwest they surround their room parties with such folderol as poolside loungefests, private showings of DEEP THROAT, toastmasters, hotel reservation desks, and all that other hoseshit. All these decorations. Unnecessary. All we really need, you see, are the room parties.

I've been holding, or going to, room parties for years. "Hey, let's get six or thirty fans together and throw a room party." You don't see us bidding for them. We don't go shopping around for hotels. No one tries to sell you a pair of Spock ears. In fact, room parties take so little planning that we sometimes have them as quickly as we conceive of the idea. Of course we don't call them room parties. We call them parties. But room parties are what they are.



By we I refer, of course, to the clique that I travel around with. We don't hold conventions. We just hold room parties. "Joe Fan and Matilda Trufan are going to be in town next week; let's hold a room party." "No one new is going to be in town next week? Let's hold a room party!" How easy it all is. Cut away the decorations, and get right to the heart of the room parties.

Obviously ours in a superior way of handling things. Where we're at is where it's all at. You will be transformed to a trufan if only you are made of material sturdy enough to allow you to see the wisdom of our position. Excuse me now, however. I have to go and deal with the suggestion that we have a topic for discussion at our next room party. If such a thing were to happen, there's no telling where it might lead.

MINIREVIEWSMINIREVIEWSMINIREVIEWS/BY STAN BURNS/MINIREVIEWSMINIREVIEWS

THE BEGINNING AND THE END by Isaac Asimov
Doubleday 1977 \$8.50

Latest collection of Asimov's science essays from F&SF. They are informative and entertaining, thought a bit much when read all at once rather than one per month. These essays deal with astronomy, history, biography, our disastrous future, and other subjects of interest. *Rating: Good*

ECOPTOPIA by Ernest Callenbach
Bantam 1975/7 \$1.95

In 1999, twenty years after Washington, Oregon and northern California have seceded from the US, a lone reporter is let within its borders to discover what changes twenty years of separation have produced. Basically this is a Utopia novel with strong ecological backgrounding first published by a small press in the northwest. It contains many good ideas, and a lot of stupid ones also (I doubt very much if people would move *into* the skyscrapers in San Francisco after a major earthquake. I doubt any would be inhabitable, nor that anyone would want to live there.) As a Utopia this novel is faintly interesting, as sf it is a disaster. *Rating: Fair*



CAT VERSUS DOG

*(c) by Mike Farkash as he
dives coourageously into
the most violent fan con-
troversy of all times*

Since the dawn, or at least the midmorning, of history, men and some women have had a need for pets. The first wolf which failed to carry off a Neanderthal child from the campfire was probably clubbed senseless. Hanging around the camp while its wounds healed, stealing stray bits of meat, the wolf may actually have become a pet. (Actually 'pet' is considered by some to be a corruption of the word 'pest'.)

Cats, too, cute as a pup when young, were kept around for sentimental and possibly food value until they grew into jaguars, lions or tigers. Mankind, through trial and painful error, soon learned to distinguish the housecat (*felinus supercilious*) from other more dangerous jungle cats.

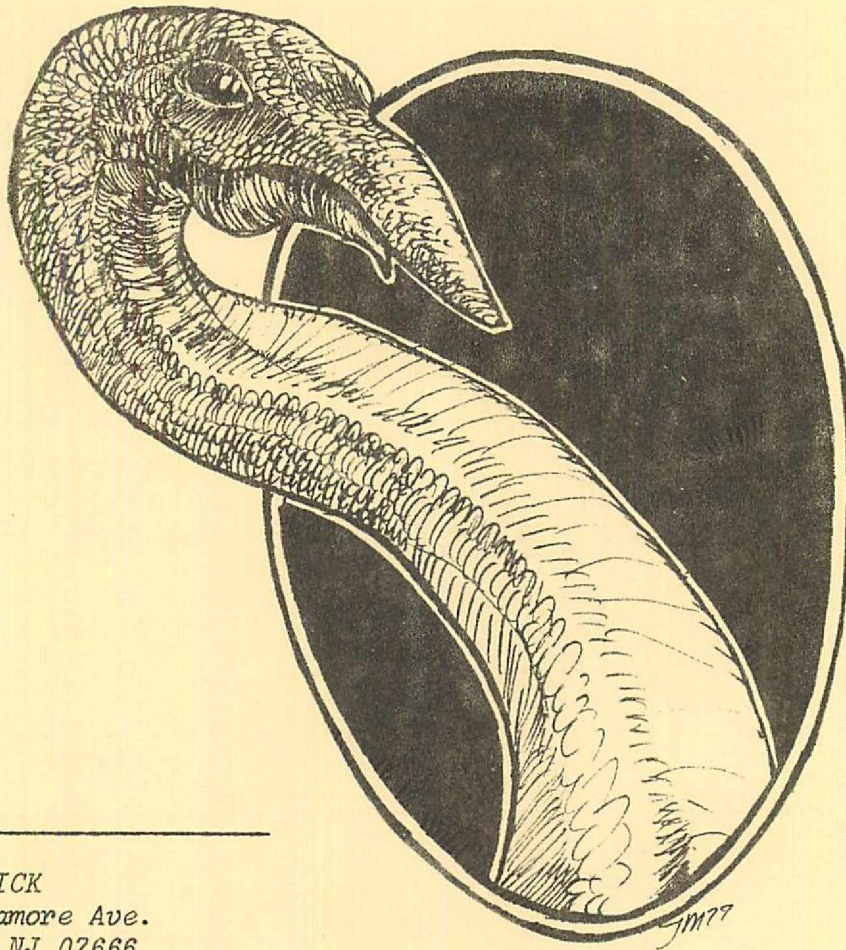
Unfortunately, the population boom in American pets has become critical. Many cats and dogs are neutered, or at least forced to swear oaths of chastity. Some of these mournful creatures can be seen yowling or whining on the back fences of parking lots of singles bars, trying to make the patrons feel guilty.

Now fans, their apartments overrun with dogs and cats, must make a choice. Proponents of each pet can be read in fanzines making all kinds of prejudicial remarks, cat owners sneering at dog-owners, dog owners shouting down cat owners. I have made an unbiased examination of the merits of each pet, to clear the air of rhetoric and mayhem. Using it you can make a sound choice as to which pet you will keep.

MERITS	CATS	DOGS
SLOBBERS	NO	YES
SNEAKY IN THE DARK	YES	TRIES, BUT UN- SUCCESSFUL
BITES HEADS OFF CHICKENS	RARELY	MORE OFTEN

MERITS	CATS	DOGS
BREEDING RATE	LIKE MINKS	LONG ENGAGEMENTS
"GOD" SPELLED BACKWARDS	NO	YES
INDEPENDENT	89.7 PERCENT	43.2 PERCENT
STEALS HUBCAPS	YES	PEES ON THEM
DISPOSES OF FECES PROPERLY	YES	HIDES FOR LATER USE
IS CUTE AS A PUP	NO	YES
WILL JUMP THROUGH FIRE	IF THROWN	YES, IF GIVEN BISCUIT
EFFECTIVE IN HERDING SHEEP	BITES HEADS OFF	GOOD
SEES IN DARK	YES	WITH FLASHLIGHT
DISPLAYS OF GRATITUDE AND AFFECTION	WILL ALLOW LIGHT PETTING IN EXCHANGE FOR BRIBES OF FOOD AND/OR TRAVELER'S CHECKS	SLOBBERS
BRINGS GIFTS	YES, DEAD ANIMALS	YES, STICKS, BALLS WALLETS
CLEANLINESS	WASHES IN CAT SPIT	ROLLS IN MUD
FINICKY	WILL EAT FROM CANS	WILL EAT MORRIS
OPENS DOORKNOBS	WILL NOT TRY	GETS CAUGHT IN MOUTH
SMARTER THAN DOG	YES	NO
SMARTER THAN CAT	NO	S.A.T. SCORES VARY
EATS DEAD PEOPLE	BETWEEN MEALS	IF STARVING
PLAYS PIANO	WALKS ON KEYS	PEES ON PEDALS
MUSICAL APPLICATIONS	MAKE GOOD GUITAR STRINGS	CLAWS CAN BE USED AS GUITAR PICKS
SAVES CAVALRY FORTS	RARELY	YES, IF STAR OF OF OWN SYNDICATED TV SHOW

THE FANIVORE



BEN INDICK
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I took a bus into work today (we are still operating out of our cubicle; a small air conditioner makes it bearable -- no more) while up the street the locals continue breaking into the bare box of my former store. This time they hopes to remove 10 wall air conditioners! They were too heavy even for these super-primate subhumans. ((Ben's pharmacy was looted during the recent New York power outage, to update those who hadn't heard.)) Incidentally, my bitterness is not just at the loss of a store. I once lost one as poor business; this cubicle we nearly closed likewise. Fire, boiler bust -- one could take them -- but -- to have some (yes, the scummier) of one's own customers wantonly, maniacally destroy him is unforgiveable. I choose not to forgive.

Anyway, for the bus I took along STFR and was not disappointed. The Cagle/Locke dialogue was funny, altho too dependent on scat words (one does finally cease being shocked. Except knowing old pickle-puss I realize it is all very properly part of him.) And your quiz show editorial was enlightening, amusing and touching (a great

combo for a film! why not write it up? A quiz freak -- heck, you're right next to Hollywood!)

I am less enthusiastic about the merits of the Del Rey team than yourself. The ballyhoo with which they created a huge success from a pig's bladder like SHANNARA is evidence of their attitude in re quality vs. sales potential. I have seen them at cons also, and, if humility be some sort of virtue, it be not theirs. On the other hand, I must admit through Ballantine they have published much good new stuff, have worked with monthly mailings to make the fans feel closer. And there is no gainsaying Lester's position in SF history. If only they hadn't published that bullshit novel! Malzberg does come over as arrogant and abrasive but I assure you that it is not quite the truth of the man. He is relentlessly honest to his beliefs and they are not irresponsible. Although he is capable -- and then some! -- of taking care of himself, I wish the fans would get off his back. The man can write -- even if HERVOVITS WORLD is no Pollyanna view of fandom, it is powerful, intense -- an excellent and mordant book. ((If the fans are on Malzberg's back, it's the very place he invited them to stand. Personally I interpret his raging against the dying of the light in fanzines like SFR to be the undiluted prejudices of a man who thinks he no longer has anything to lose by honestly venting his emotional and intellectual reactions to the sf scene. Unfortunately, one can be honestly full of it. And what kind of favor would it be for us to verbally pat him on the head and say "He's just upset -- he doesn't mean it." Nor do I hold HERVOVIT's WORLD against him -- mainly because I didn't bother to read it when I saw what it was. // Back to Del Rey Books -- I thought over the editorial since last issue, and have been waiting for someone to blow it out of the water. You came closest, without much trying. On reconsideration, I was praising the record of the Ballantines -- the record since the Del Reys took over has been a print list overloaded with reissues, commercial crap like SHANNARA, and a meager handful of originals from writers they either inherited, or had made friends with in years past. The record of discovering talent is gone.))

I've held myself back long enough. BRAVO for the wonderful Carl Eugene Bennett! The text is good and a worthy accompaniment to the illos -- but the art!! a loving, adoring recreation of the greatest of comic artists, Windsor McCay. Everything -- the broad flat appearance in b/w, the frieze, the lettering (this is too good, actually), the perspective lines, even the goofy pickle-eating awakening from sleep (altho in an editor's chair instead of a bed!) Thanks! You cheered me up!

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Thank you for SCIENTIFRICTION 8 -- a most enjoyable issue. I laughed something fierce at the KRAP Report.

Malzberg/Del Rey: I think that the personal insults that have been hurled in this discussion (Malzberg's comments on Del Rey & yours on Malzberg) have obscured the main question. (Personal insults have a way of doing that.) I do not presume to judge Del Rey's integrity, but I believe that his position is hopelessly compromised. No matter how honest Del Rey is, I cannot help suspecting anyone who reviews books his wife edits, especially when he himself is an employee of the same company, and I would guess that other readers will feel the same way. Moreover, Del Rey's apparent conflict of interest cannot help giving aid and comfort to those who believe that sf is manipulated by a small, closed conspiracy of like-minded insiders. ((Your opening argument answers itself -- if you are so completely prejudiced, it matters very little what evidence is produced. As to the latter, I would humbly submit that a small group of insiders does manipulate sf. Only nobody notices because there's so little available to be manipulated.

As evidence I would submit the very recent episode of musical chairs as Jim Baen, Sharon Jarvis and Pat LoBrutto jumped into new jobs as the result of only one original vacancy at Playboy. This is slim evidence, but I just wanted to show that some existed. For the real Gordian knot is, if sf is manipulated by a small group, is sf any worse off than if it weren't, can business be done any other way in such a limited genre, and who, if anyone, is being shortchanged. DANGEROUS VISIONS resulted at the end of one era of conservative repression, but now we find mediocre sf being written about a wide range of subjects instead. If there were more good sf floating around, surely it would turn up. I think that disposes of the question of whether quality literature is being aced out. The remaining question to mull over is whether, among the commercial writers, any are suffering from the existence of a close-knit community. Piers Anthony would emphatically say yes. I would say I don't know, but see some evidence to support that point of view.))

Perhaps I should admit my own prejudices in this matter. I like a lot of the sort of literary-effete-snob sf Del Rey despises, and I do not share his reverence for "story values" & "pulp virtues." In addition, I feel that his recent obiter dicta (like his attack on what he considers excessive background detail) promote an overly restricted view of the potentialities of sf. Still, I don't think that these prejudices determine my views of Del Rey's current role. For one thing, I suspect that if he does leave ANALOG, he will be replaced by someone of similar critical views. ((There are hundreds of little literary magazines in America coming out three or four times a year full of aborted attempts at literature, and a few successful ones. I have never understood why bad literary writing is regarded as having more worth than run-of-the-mill genre literature, since you can easily prove that both have flaws, both are derivative, and both are published to titillate the reading tastes of specialized audiences. But I do know that a hell of a lot more people are willing to put cash-on-the-line for genre writing. Does the taint of feeble lucre automatically deprive that audience of the right to have spokesmen defending what it considers the virtues of readable/good fiction? There are 100,000 people a month buying ANALOG, and if Del Rey articulates their tastes in sf, more power to him. Del Rey Books is not the only shop in town. You say Del Rey's remarks "promote an overly restricted view of the potentialities of sf." That view already exists for a large part of the audience. One man's potentiality is another man's affectation. The point is that Del Rey only "promotes" -- he doesn't decree. Anyone who disagrees can buy F&SF, or original anthologies edited by Silverberg and Carr, the line of Bantam paperbacks selected by Fred Pohl, the recent spate of Wilhelm and LeGuin books, etc. etc.))

I would love to see Stan Burns specify the "objective criteria" for Nebula Awards. I don't believe that there are objective standards of literary merit, only the more or less informed opinions of critics, reviewers, teachers, etc. Nor do I believe that there are objective standards which can determine with absolute certainty whether or not a given work is sf. Some would include anything which uses sf concepts; others might say that a book like THE STARCROSSED is essentially a translation, and thus not really sf. Who would decide ("objectively") which standards to use?

DON D'AMASSA
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I agree for the most part with your comments on Geis vs. Del Rey, but don't believe Balantine has the best SF line anymore.

Except for their reprints, anyway. DAW and Berkeley have at least as good average qual-

ity now, and DAW has greater quantity. But up until recently I'd have said you were right.

Also want to agree with Roy Tackett on CARRIE and THE KILLING GIFT (the latter of which has some of the most gruesome and convincing psi murders ever). They're definitely sf, the packaging to the contrary. One novel that does defy easy classification is King's new, excellent THE SHINING. There is telepathy and other psi powers, but there is also an animate hotel, which is apparently supernatural.

I don't agree with Stan Burns all that often. "Time Deer" by Strete definitely does belong in NEBULA 11. I don't see why he is prejudiced against neo-mythology as fantasy. And while "Home is The Hangman" is not top quality Zelazny, there really isn't a tremendous amount of competition.

Stan might be interested in knowing that DAW has apparently bought reprint rights to the first three Star King Novels, and Vance will be writing the final two for them as well.

I agree for the most part with you in your comments to Ken Amos on the classic nature of sf. Although the following are not necessarily the people I would pick as classics, the writers I expect to find among the most highly regarded a few decades from now are LeGuin, Dick, Ballard, Bunch, Sturgeon, Aldiss and Ellison, and there are a number of younger, newer writers who might well fit into the same category. There's just no way of telling in advance, though.

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"THE K.R.A.P. Report" was typical skin-deep TV journalism. The interview with Ben Franklin especially offered a fine opportunity for in-depth probing. But Cagle and Locke confined it to the who-

what-where. Typical.. There was none of the elaboration, follow-up and detail I look for in any interview, informal though it may be. The interviewers' intrusive comments were very distracting, and they obviously edited this version to a morose level. Mr. Franklin's accent is totally out of era. In sincerity, these two goons have given us decadent humor almost as funny as a pile of rectal fruit in our most hated villain's puss.

Roy Tackett says we need the 800 million people in China who represent the biggest market in the world. Unhappily, I doubt the Chinese feel the need in reciprocal fashion. They have a healthy hate of the US business combine. Healthy because for over two centuries European powers and the US exploited them with our corrupt business combine. We refused to submit to port regulations, imported opium illegally, and even won a war for the right to, produced a giant trade deficit, stole Hong Kong, and were general saps. ((Are you simply a British citizen, or is this willingness to assume guilt for events over a century before you were born merely a case of generosity? While America's relationship with China has had some shady moments -- like, did you know that the USSR was aiding the Chinese against the Japanese in the wars of the 1930s four years before the US started? -- three out of the five cases you mention America had no part in.)) Tackett also notes that some of the Soviet's wealth of raw material would be nice for good old us to have. But we interfered on the White's side during their revolution. I don't think Tackett could ever feel comfortable with either nationality. Our cultures are incompatible, China more so than the USSR. We've been conditioned to distrust them, the USSR more so than China. For sure it won't be like the colonies and Great Britain making up. ((Times do change. Even the best relations won't persuade the USSR to invite us over to scarf up their natural resources, but America's expeditionary force against the Bolsheviks didn't seem to come up in the conversation when the USSR wanted to buy American wheat.))

One thing about Carl Bennett's symbolical 'through the pickle jar' puzzles me. Who is the native, Dyck, supposed to represent? If it weren't for the obvious misproportioned face of Dick Geis also included I would suspect it was him. After all, the symbols seem to be assigned to single personages in every other case. But if Dyck represents a group several possibilities present: fans in whole, stupid fans, academia, ignorants on the outside. Or is he Mike Glicksohn? (*Bennett tells me it was Phillip K. Dick. Others in the satire were Asimov, Haldeman, Silverberg and Niven.*))

MIKE GLICKSOHN
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STFR 8 is a visually impressive issue (not exactly SIMULACRUM quality but certainly something to admire) but I found it curiously lacking in things of interest to me.

(*Wailing and gnashing of teeth.*)) Book

reviews and arguments about science fiction and the role of the writer are quite daringly innovative topics for a fanzine: you may well have started a trend here, Mike. If people pick up on this I can envision disappointed neofans in a little while picking up "fanzines" and bitterly complaining that they're filled with writing about science fiction and there's just nothing about the drinking habits, sexual aberrations or vocational troubles of the editor. Is this what they call "New Wave"?

Not having a car saves me from losing stuff by putting it on the top of said vehicle and driving off absent-mindedly contemplating how many fuggheads can stand on the head of a neo. On the other hand I do have an apartment and the number of things that have simply disappeared in the last four years is positively unbelievable. (*Oh I can believe it. I read where Derek Carter moved in with you -- try not to misplace him 'til he send those illos he offered, okay?*)) I'm almost at the point of accepting that while I'm out working some nefarious imp sneaks in here and deliberately steals stuff just to drive me crazy. Either that or there's an intermittent interdimensional gate that pops up now and then and drags letter-openers, drawings, books, check stubs and other personal kipple out of mortal ken. Just last night I spent an hour ransacking the whole place for some drawings I know were here when I passed through for four hours on my way from England to Florida (I've also got a lousy sense of direction) and they've simply disappeared. Either I'm going crazy or my landlady has developed a taste for science fictional artwork!

I heard that ALGOL wasn't on the ballot because it didn't get enough votes, but that was probably because Andy had the integrity to declare himself ineligible in his editorial so most of the ALGOL supporters wouldn't have nominated him. It'd be nice if some of the other mass-circulation, profit-oriented business magazines would follow Andy's lead and let a real fanzine take the award. (*Bowers stopped publishing, does that count...?*))

Guess I'm getting jaded. The Locke-Cagle piece had a few smiles but nary a chuckle let alone a belly-laugh. Maybe I shouldn't have given up drinking? (*Say it isn't so, Joe*)) It's probably hilarious after half a bottle of scotch or six martinis.

It's a good thing I read these amateur publications so carefully or I might have missed your exhortation for your readers to write in telling you about their favorite pizza places, sub stores and bars. Pizzas and subs being solid food I couldn't really care less where they come from as long as someone else is paying, but bars are another matter. Whoever it was who said "Iron prisms do not a bar make" knew whereof he spoke and even though I do most of my drinking ("did" most of my drinking; I've given all that up now, of course) in private homes or hotel rooms there are one or two places I have fond memories of. "Sloppy Joe's" down in Key West has a great

ambiance (cheap, too, especially during Happy Hour) while the bartender at the Quality Inn in Cincinnati learned how to make a Spayed Gerbil after only one lesson and so endeared himself to me forever. And for Dingiest Bar Run By Surly Spanish Speaking Waiters Trained to Ignore English Speaking Patrons no one will ever hold a candle to the bar at the Fountainbleau. Although it'd be a damn good idea if someone did!

I'd imagine that narwhale sperm is quite rare and probably rather expensive so Neil Kvern is probably saying that sex without love can be quite rewarding. I agree, of course. Although it's completely different from sex with love in terms of emotional content of the act, the physical pleasure to be derived from two people engaged in sex and trying to achieve mutual satisfaction is not to be derided. The popular mode of gainsaying sex for its own sake seems decidedly unrealistic to me. What are the myriads of people who go through their whole lives without ever "falling in love" (whatever that may mean) supposed to do? Remain celibate because it's au courant nowadays to say that sex-without-love is sexist or unrewarding or less than it should be? Bullshit. It would be like saying "Well, if I can't have filet mignon I'm just not going to eat at all." Sex without love may not be as satisfying as sex with love but on the other hand it beats the other hand.

((Surely Mike you've noticed that since "sex without love" has started getting put down not for puritan reasons but for reasons of 'liberation', people who find the need to excuse their lust with sophistry have simply redefined love.))

That brings me to Jennifer's letter. In an absolutely unusual departure from my normal locking habits I've actually spent some time and dug out STFR 7 so I could see exactly what it was I said that concerned her so. *((Didn't the parakeet try and bite you when you reached into its cage?))* But before we get to that, let's talk about sex again. Regardless of whether or not it will get me pilloried by feminists I go on record as seeing absolutely nothing wrong in finding sexual satisfaction with strangers. If two adults decide they are mutually sexually attracted and



act on that attraction and both achieve physical satisfaction from the act I see nothing wrong with that at all, whatever the sex of the two may be. Surely there is one hell of a difference between "treating women as sex-objects" and at a certain time under certain circumstances reacting to a woman's sexuality with her freely-given consent? Since I'm not in love with anyone right now every sexual act I engage in is with someone I don't love. (With at most one or two exceptions, though, they've been with people I know and like so I'm really arguing a more or less theoretical stand here.) But sex drives do exist and they're perfectly natural and so, it seems to me, is the act of satisfying them as long as it is done with consideration for one's partner. And that doesn't necessarily require a long-standing friendship, just a little basic decency. If that's a sexist attitude, okay, I'm a sexist.

Having reread that passage Jennifer objected to I nowhere find myself saying I'm against feminist criticism of sf. What I wrote indicated I find intolerant feminist criticism, which often practices a reverse sexism, unfortunate. I agree with Jennifer's assertions about the validity of analyzing fiction for its sexist content and the desirability of attracting women writers to the field but Mike puts his finger neatly on what I was getting at when he mentions how this literary criticism often runs over into a political power trip.

As for my usage of that cliched adjective "shrill", well I'm sorry but it seems to me that, like most cliches, there is some slight basis in fact for its existence. Feminism is such an emotionally supercharged issue that some supporters of the cause see sexism everywhere (whereupon three dozen readers of STFR chorus "That's because it is everywhere, you cretin" which is something we'll have to decide for ourselves) and in everyone, seemingly believing that there does not exist a single male on the planet who isn't an unmitigated sexist. (Okay, okay, I exaggerate, but so do some feminists, I think.) I doubt there's ever been a cause yet that didn't have its extremist faction...which occasionally goes a bit too far and earns the cause some unfortunate publicity.... *((Having perhaps less substance to contribute to the topic than I might like, I have been considering the form of the arguments and comparing them to past controversies. You say feminism is an emotionally supercharged issue, but seem to expect some minimum standard of cool rationality in the prose of its proponents. I would have to say that in large extent the emotion is the content, not the by-product, of feminism. Instigated by rage, feminism is the instrument to remove the causes of rage -- lapses in justice and decency apparently built-into society on a sex-determined basis. Emotion is the content that articulates the effect of such social lapses. Anybody can figure out the legal/equality aspects of feminism. One couldn't say that much for the Vietnam war, or Civil Rights, where the causes of rage and protest were so easily ignored if one desired. But the personal-level, everyday transgressions inflicted on women by the insensitive -- sometimes of both sexes -- unlike the constitutional issues can be dismissed by rhetorical tricks unless that genuine emotional feeling is expressed. For example when you make that broad bifurcative argument about 'a single man on the planet who isn't an unmitigated sexist' you have established rhetorical grounds to dismiss feminism just by finding a single nonsexist male. It's a theatrical cheap trick, and is unexcused when you use it to cover a less provocative, but gratuitous generalization about some feminists. And to erase this cool rationality, and substitute some emotion-charged realism, I don't worry about your views on sexual mores, nor have I seen anyone deny the right of two consenting adults to do as they please. What I can't figure out is where you stand -- all propaganda about you being a sexist aside. How about fessing up?))*

I really can't say enough about Carl Bennett's brilliant tribute to Winsor McCay. They're exceptionally fine drawings and capture McCay's style beautifully. Carl

is one of fandom's more underrated cartoonists and it's about time people started to realize just how good he is and let him get a little of the egoboo he deserves. Even a stfnal dilettante such as myself can pick out most of the people he refers to in the story (a hairy hat?) although he did lose me a bit towards the end. (Never was much for this heavy symbolism and new wave stuff.) This is really a delightful piece of work and easily my personal favorite for the issue. Carl definitely deserves an award nomination next year for SCINTILLATION and this piece shows he's closing in on formal recognition as an artist and writer as well.



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I'm afraid that your zine suffers from an embarrassment of riches in the art department. So much so that I can't single out one particular illo as superior to the rest. So instead I'll talk about several of them. I was definitely stuck by Taral's opening illo on the arts credit page. Excellent craftsmanship on his part. My eyes returned again and again to the deep rich shading of the standing female figure. The shading lent an almost photographic realism to her. I enjoyed Taral's illo on page seven for its simple, clean cartoonist style which is exactly opposite the realistic style employed by Taral on page three. It reminded me of the art of C.C. Beck who drew CAPT. MARVEL comics in the 40s and 50s. Well done, Taral. ((Taral's versatility is well worth underscoring. That particular shading effect, however, could not have been translated into my mimeo format without the craftsmanlike electrostenciling work of Victoria Vayne; the success of that page in STFR was a combined effort. To preempt a question you asked later in your loc, I imagine the reason this zine gets pretty good artwork to run is three-fold. First, most of it comes from artists I've personally known, rather than had contact with solely by mail. Artists like to protect themselves if possible by keeping tabs on who's got their work and when it's being run. The other two factors are that STFR does come out three or four times yearly, and that it's competently printed. I imagine if I met more artists I'd get even more good art, but I'm not able to say why -- I've never been accused of being charismatic.))

I loved Schirm's bacover cartoon in #8. It is another example of the man's unfailing unique wit combined with that "grand old style" of cartooning that Schirm excels at. ((Schirm is terrific. He's got a good command of his unique style, and he's a perfectionist in matters of composition and execution. He's been doing fmz material a bit longer than I first thought -- if you look in old AMRAS and RIVERSIDE QUARTERLIES some of his earliest stuff will pop up. Now he's even sold a cartoon or two to ASIMOV's -- editor George Scithers. What I may someday try is to assemble a folio just of his APA I covers -- a mine of full-page Schirm artwork that deserves wider circulation. That depends, of course, on whether Schirm will go for it and whether I can lay my hands on the art.))

What can I say about Bell and Bathurst, that bats-in-the-belfry duo who obviously transport their art in from another dimension? Their stuff is great. I can never



get enough of Bell. I wish his stuff appeared more often on this side of the Atlantic. Hmm. Larson's stuff looks exactly like Bathurst's stuff. That's ok, I guess, but it seems that if Marty is that accomplished an artist he should favor us with art done in his own style. I bet it's pretty good. ((Try as I may I can never seem to exterminate this opinion that Larson and Bathurst turn out the same kind of stuff. A simple comparison will prove they don't. Bathurst uses a broad pen, exaggerated strokes, bulky characters in formless clothing, and shadowing that does not necessarily have any relevance to the cast of light in the illo. Larson is much more anatomically correct and uses proportioned caricatures. His point is fine and the clothing worn by his characters is usually form-fitting. Larson's illos have tight compositions, and Bathurst's compositions are free-form. The actual content of their humor is similar, but then so is that of Kirk and Bathurst, whose styles are actually much more similar -- but you never hear anyone confusing them.)) Carl Bennett's art

for Little Carl is nothing short of sensational. For a second there I thought it was the Real Thing and not someone copying The Master.

Overall, SCIENTIFRICTION has some of the consistently best art I've ever seen in a fanzine. You must be doing something right to get such good work from your artists. I wonder what it is? OOPS! I almost forgot to mention the cover. It's quite good. Maybe too good. Which is why I deliberately tried to forget its existence. Yes. You See, the two characters on the cover strike me as somewhat sinister. Especially the joker with the big head. I get the creeps every time I look at the cover. As a result I usually keep this issue face down on the coffee table. I Kid You Not.

ERIC BENTCLIFFE

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"The KRAP Report" takes top honors and it's one of the funniest things I've read in a fanzine this year. A clever idea and a great blending of the Locke and Cagle talents. These two bid fair

to go down in history along with other famous double-acts such as Hope & Crosby, Burns & Allen, Burke & Hare (*Sodom and Gomorrah...*)

Enjoyed your editorializing, too; particularly with regard to SFR and Malzberg (The Man Who Keeps Saying Goodbye But Won't Go Away!) I usually thoroughly enjoy Dick Geis' zine but occasionally the rabble-rousing by authors who are apparently unable to write good sf, but who are so able in defining the faults of others, tends to stick in the craw. Obviously Dick lets it all happen to "entertain" his readership and it helps to "sell" his magazine, but that doesn't make me like it any more. The same sort of petulant -- often pointless -- author feuding used to mar OUTWORLDS for me too. You think all us enlightened moderates should leap upon them and clobber? (*Extremism in the defense of moderation is no vice...*)

FRANZ ZRILICH
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that everybody in fandom has got stacks of unfinished manuscripts -- or 'to be finished real soon now' stories. So I'll excuse the rest of you for yawning while I answer the question... I've started lots of stories; long enough ago for some to have been bounced by Campbell. I've written thousands of words for The Lens apa which never got finished or submitted. Now I have 12,000 words of what may turn out to be a fantasy novel. Of course I have to find the other 40,000 words first.))

And whathell does the editor of SCIENTIFRICTION do for a job? ((He types invoices at a brassiere factory and curses the day he ever majored in liberal arts.))

Finally, forgive my naivete, but I am not a professional fan. Whathell is a WAHF-ster? I noticed that I am identified as such on page 50. If this is another code to insiders that Franz Zrilich is to be dealt with by the dark glasses and black trenchcoat set, I have moved from the Falklands to South Georgia island.

ALAN BOSTICK
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Your tale of your search for Free Money was rather amusing. I too have often wished that I could be on a quiz show, but I sometimes get the cynical impression that I wouldn't be allowed to appear on one -- I

mean, doesn't it sometimes seem like those shows screen their contestants so that only the stupid ones get on? I started to lose interest in the things when I began to notice how often it was that the contestants would miss ridiculously simple questions.

Do you suppose you'd mind explaining why the Joe Pearson illo on page 15 also appeared in the latest Westercon 31 progress report? It's a very good illo, but I think it would be appropriate if you had put a credit line either in the pr or here saying where it appeared 'first'. Also, come to think of it, the bacover looks rather familiar to me. I have the distinct impression that I've seen it somewhere before. Otherwise the artwork in this is just fine, or would be if so much of it wasn't Bathurst stuff (you do it just to annoy me, don't you Mike!) ((Possibly. I ran it because I enjoy it; whether I enjoy annoying you, too, may be something to consider. The Schirm art is first-run so far as I know. The dual appearance of the Pearson illo is just another of my routine abuses of power as publications stooge for Westercon. I needed a good illo fast, rather than having time to commission it.))



Sorry to say it, but the Cagle & Locke piece didn't strike me as very funny. In fact, I didn't think very much of it at all. It was too self-indulgent for my taste. I know that both Ed and Dave can do much better than this, so the piece disappointed me extremely.

Gee, my letter makes me look rather fuggheaded. I mean, look at all the nasty things that I said in it. Is that why you put the Harry Bell illo where you did? For that matter, did you print my loc because you wanted to be nice to me or because you wanted to be nasty? I'm onto you now, Glycer! First you stick in lots of Bathurst artwork to get on my nerves, and then you print my loc to make me look like a fugghead. Well I'll have you know that your efforts to discredit me won't work! By the time you receive this loc, my revenge will have begun. Watch out for one of Charles Platt's hitmen bearing banana cream pies. Anyway I'd like to say that I'm not really so nasty, only a little grouchy when I haven't had enough to drink before writing a loc.

ROY TACKETT
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Stan Burns, in his review of NEBULA STORIES 11 reopens the question of the relationship of science fiction and fantasy. I suppose it is normal for dyed-in-the-poly-ester stf buffs to try to make some dis-

tinction between the two although in earlier days, even after Gernsback created a separate genre for science fiction, the argument remained unresolved. Farnsworth Wright, when he got around to printing SF in WEIRD TALES steadfastly maintained it was simply a different type of fantasy (although it must be admitted that Wright was steadfastly stuck in the XIX Century, or before, and didn't believe in all this science stuff.) Coming a bit more up to date, though, Anthony Boucher always defined science fiction as simply a branch of fantasy fiction. On the whole I tend to agree. 99% of what we call science fiction is science fantasy with no more reality than any sword-and-sorcery or supernatural or middle-earth type tale. Conan and Kinnison are different only in the background of the stories. Simply because the authors set their stories a thousand years in the future and on another world does not make them any less fantasy than Frodo charging around after that silly ring.

Let's skip over to Ken Amos' letter which is, somewhat, in the same vein. His comments here sort of summarize the argument that has been going on ever since stf was discovered by academe. I think he is wrong in some of his conclusions but you answered them effectively. Point is that if one is to look at SF as literature then one must admit that much of it is bad. And that is not because it is a young field as Amos would have it, because it isn't and because storytelling is storytelling regardless of the trappings, but because the field contains a vast number of bad writers. *((Also consider the speciousness of another element in this argument. Invariably sf is compared to good literature, not all literature, nor do those drawing the comparison and demanding "more literate" sf even read any contemporary literature. I think a lot of people who equate realism and naturalism with modern literature should be advised that both movements began over a half a century ago.))*

But...ah, yes...there happen to be vast numbers of SF readers (and I am one of them) who really don't give a damn about SF as literature. These are the people who read SF not because the stories are particularly great but because the ideas in the stories are great. Even after all these years I can get a charge out of the Lens saga. Objectively I will admit that Doc Smith was no great shakes as a writer. The literary types can -- and have -- pick him to pieces. But, ah, what a picture he paints. His technique may have been crude but few can match his scope. And that, I think, is where most of the argument lies. From my point of view the stories

hailed as great literary achievements (in SF, that is) are dull and drab. Classics in SF? Who can say? Someone in other fanzine declared that a classic is one that is still being read 50 or more years after it was written. Yes. That describes the works of Edgar Rice Burroughs. Classics? *((Perhaps, considering that the ghastly truth is America's level of reading achievement has declined drastically in fifty years.))*

And then there's Neil Kvern... Yes. I think the only thing I will take umbrage to is his use of the word "sailor" as derogatory. Men have been going down to the sea for thousands of years; sailing is a profession that is considerably more ancient and useful and honorable than that of literary critic. Given a choice between the company of sailors and that of literary critics I would unhesitatingly pick the sailors; their conversation is far more interesting and intelligent than that of the literary critic. See Mike, I'm mellowing in my old age. Think of the fun I would have had with this turkey a few years ago,

HARRY J. N. ANDRUSCHAK
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Here we go with that LoC on STFR 8 as promised. Thanks to you I'm missing the downline from Orbiter 1 to get this out of the way. Now about your Lasfapa zine... Re Malzberg vs. Del Rey, I for

one vote with my pocketbook. I buy Del Rey's books and those he recommends. I no longer buy Malzberg or any book he recommends. Enough said? *((I will certainly attest that Harry has read Malzberg books, the point being that he has based his decision on experience, not prejudice, whether you agree with him or not.))*

If I had the power to kill with my mind, I'd walk streets at night and kill gang members who tried to mug me. This would rapidly settle a lot of problems including juvenile delinquency.

Next, a heart-to-heart talk with Patrick Hayden about his bad habit of slandering people behind their backs. Then a visit to Northern Ireland, as an agnostic. (Protestant or Catholic agnostic?) Gee whiz this is getting fun! Power trip fantasies are fun! Anyhow, I got a little list; Anita Bryant, Idi Amin, Arafat, mafia leaders, genzine editors who make me write locs, and so on and so forth until the graveyards are full. Bloodthirsty, ain't I?

DON AYRES
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((Loc on STFR 7)) Your point about the Chicago oversight is well-taken and an accurate reflection; NY and LA are the world because of their media concentrations -- even if they are nothing but

schizos to the rest of the country. Admit it: don't you ever get tired of every goddamn thing on tv being CA or NY?

As for the Cubs, have you ever attended a game in Wrigley Field? I've been in half a dozen stadiums (mostly NL) but that's the one that is the most striking. That's the type of setting where baseball's meant to be played! During the year of the great pennant run I remember Wally Philips of WGN radio being a bit derisive of the fact that TIME ran a cover of Seaver that April or May. Today it may seem like backbiting but Seaver and the Mets were nothing to be reckoned with at the time; his records hadn't been that impressive and the Cubs were off to a flying start. Most people don't remember that in the last year of nondivisional play the Cubs were never out of first place until September. It was a crazy year, but the thing I re-

member most clearly was that Santo leaped into the air and clicked his heels to celebrate a victory -- and that the out-of-town papers declared it "bush". Oh maybe it's the ending that counts, but I really wonder how many pennant winners held that sort of lead from the first. If somebody had to beat the Cubs, better the Mets than anybody else; get the underdogs on top for a bit. The year before those two teams set a record for homeruns in a single game, which I guess still stands, but I've no way to check it. *((I may be wrong, but I think this past season Boston was in a game where that record was broken.))*

Your neighborhood SWAT teams idea was fun -- and scary. As I recall, the concern and ethical basis of our legal system is supposed to be (whether it is or not is something else) the rights of the accused. Obviously if someone fires a weapon at an offender, they take the role of the entire legal system upon themselves. I'm not sure I have enough confidence in the legal law enforcement officers in such cases, and I sure as hell don't have it in the "guy next door". (Wasn't that what the Magna Carta you tried to read was all about?)

NAUGHTY BITS

Mike Glicksohn 141 High Park Ave., Toronto ONT M6P 2D3 CANADA ((on STFR 7))

I really must congratulate you on the sheer physical impressiveness of STFR 7. It has the solidity and the class of a really top-notch fanzine; probably one of the top two or three mimeo fanzines of the year, or recent years, for that matter. The heavier paper, the attention to layout and design, the care with mimeography, all add to that atmosphere. I still wish you would settle on an elite typewriter for the whole issue, but even with varying typefaces it is an admirably fine-looking issue. (Much good artwork, too; highlighted by Harry Bell's always delightful creatures....) *((I couldn't resist printing this except from Mike's comments on STFR 7 after his lukewarm indictment of STFR 8 printed earlier in this issue. I'm in a daze trying to figure out how #7 could be one of the best zines in years, and #8, a ton better than #7, could be so disappointing...))* I see you have a fanzine review column from Mike Glicksohn. The real reason for this letter is to pass along a message to you. I was there when Glicksohn was crushed beneath the Guinness barrel, and with his last breath he managed to force out some painful words. He told me "Tell...Glyer...he'll...need...a...new...fanzine...reviewer." Then his fingers tightened on the barrel and he was gone, with a smile on his lips. I'm sure you'll understand. *((How fortunate that this tragedy did not simultaneously rob Donn Brazier's TITLE of its fanzine reviewer, also named Mike Glicksohn.))*

Terry Jeeves 230 Bammerdale Rd., Sheffield S11 9FE UNITED KINGDOM

Enjoyed /Stan Burns/ book reviews. But how can one say more than that except maybe to add that they were just the right length and style to suit me. Namely, they tell you what gives and shut up. Too many current would-be reviewers fancy they have to be erudite (a rude word meaning 'clever buggers').... Me, I like to know what the book is about. Keep 'em coming.

Roger L. Dutcher 1537 Washburn Ave., Beloit WI 53511

My encounter with sf in Academia was an unfortunate one, but none the less the topic interests me. There must be people who are capable of doing a worthwhile class, one that is both fun and challenging. In mine I had to put up with Trekkies, UFOs and some some guy who claimed to have read every science fiction book there was, and when asked if he liked Delany said, "Who?" We also had the guy who turned out to be a leader of the Nazi party in the area. And if anyone had ever wanted to convince me that there was any sense to their "philosophies" this nut wasn't the one. I'd hate to see the guys who elected him.

Buck Coulson Route 3, Hartford City IN 47348

For all my disinterest in SFWA, it was never as bad as Perry Chapdelaine says. So he wasn't offered editorship of the Nebula books. Neither was I, and so what? The editorship isn't a reward for virtuous membership, it's a job -- a moderately well-paid job -- designed to bring money into the organization. Necessary money; the dues haven't paid for SFWA operations for years, if they ever did. And if Perry thinks that his name -- or mine -- on the cover of a book would bring in as much money as Isaac Asimov's did, then he has rocks in his head. One could of course argue that a lot of the SFWA operations are unnecessary and their expenses could be dispensed with, but that's beside the point being argued. The point is that publicity counts, and you can't get publicity with names like Chapdelaine, Morressy, Schaub, and the rest. You can with Asimov, Knight, Blish, Anderson, Zelazny and so on, because they're the names prospective readers have heard of.

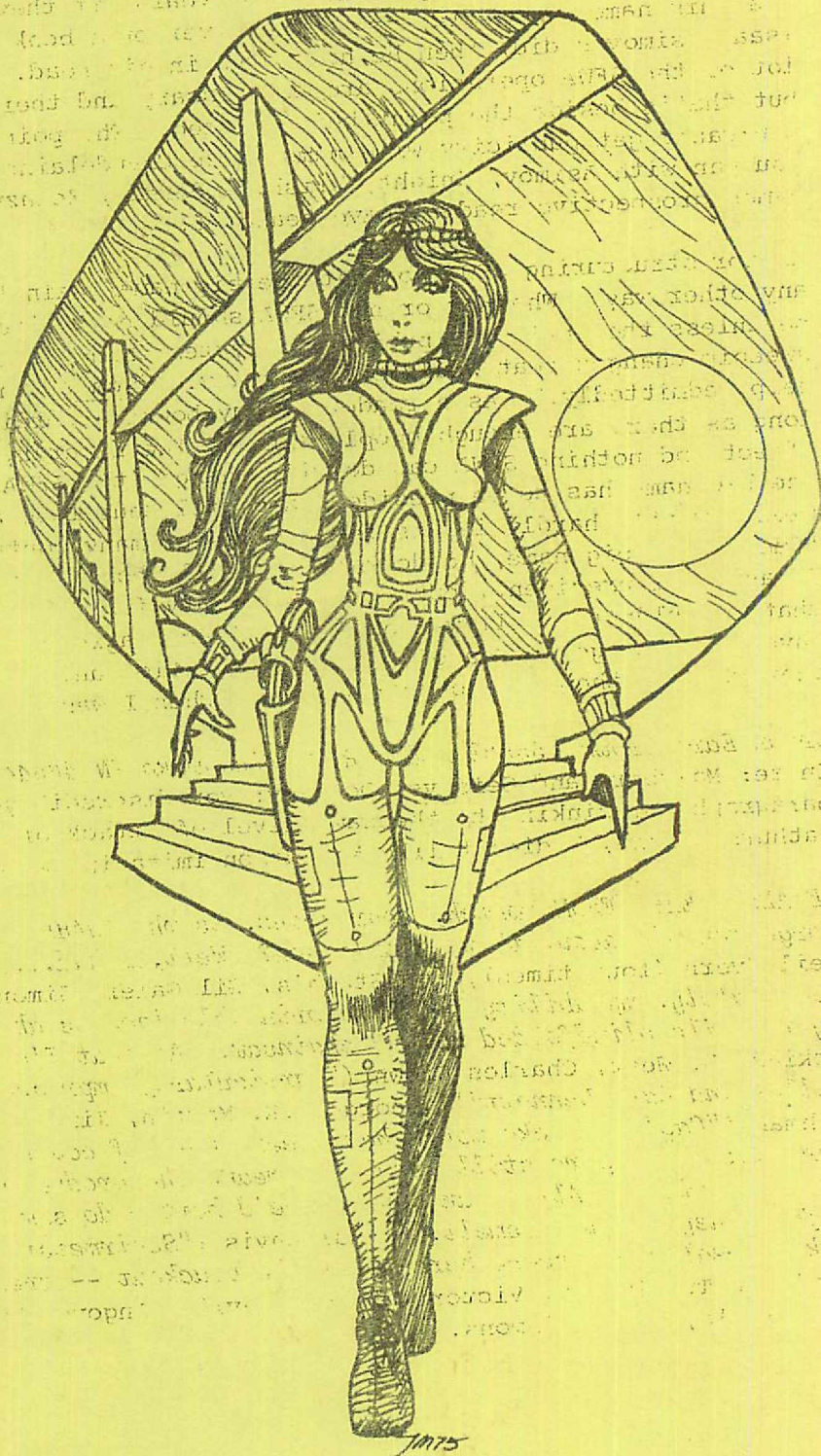
As for structuring SFWA so that the big names gain the most, try and structure it any other way. Whether or not SFWA should be a literary commune, it's not going to be unless the entire US publishing system changes, and I for one wouldn't want the sweeping changes that would be necessary. (Some changes in publishing would be a big help, admittedly.) As a reader, I buy books according to who wrote them, and as long as there are enough people like me the literary 'star' system will stay in effect and nothing SFWA can do will change it. SFWA is structured so that at least one big name has to be president and will thus lose about a year's worth of writing time. That's hardly in his favor, however many contacts he may make. (And by the time he's a big name, he doesn't need all those contacts anyway; he already has them.) I was never president, but I was secretary for two terms -- and was once jokingly told that I wouldn't be allowed back in unless I agreed to be secretary again -- so I have a pretty good idea of the amount of time any officer's job takes. (Assuming they work at them, of course; they did when I was a member.)

Brian Earl Brown 55521 Elder Rd., Mishawaka IN 46544

In re: Malzberg and Geis vs. Del Rey: you discredit your argument in the last two paragraphs by sinking to the same level of attack of Malzberg and Geis. // I like Bathurst's art, I didn't like M. Larson imitating Randy B. ((Aaargh+++))

WE ALSO HEARD FROM (which, dear Franz, is what WAHF stands for -- thought I had forgotten all about that, didn't you? Well, I had...) -- Dr. A.D. Wallace, Neil Kvern (four times), Lou Stathis, Gil Gaier, Simon Agree, Mike Bracken ("Unfortunately, my ability to write printable locs is about equal to my ability to trim my toenails blindfolded with a chainsaw. At that I'm still practicing."), Lon Atkins, D. West, Charles Brown ("Particularly impressed by the interiors of Linda Miller and Carl Bennett"), George R.R. Martin, Jim Meadows III, Rich Mann, T. L. Bohman ("Cagle & Locke would have been shot, of course, for omitting the third commercial; if they're still around it means the producer was drunker than they were. And the editor? All I can say is, he'd better do something with those corncobs before they start to smell."), Hal Davis ("Schirmeister's JAWS holdup sketch looked like a real streetscene here after the blackout -- great drawing.") J. Owen Hanner, Marianne Turlington, Victoria Vayne, Neville Angove, Wayne Hooks, Tim Kyger, Sally A. Syrjala, Steve Simmons.

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cover by Jim McLeod