

This is Shoreline 10 and an Obsessive Press Publication (#59), written for C/Rapa by Jeanne Gomoll of 2018 Jenifer Street, Madison, Wisconsin 53704 (608-241-8445 eves, or 267-7483 days). All material copyrighted © by Jeanne Gomoll, 1980, unless otherwise credited. Obligatory colophone joke: What sound does a Japanese camera make? "Crick."

★ SHORELINE ★

Amazingly, I finished writing the mailing comments to the last Crapazine within days of receiving the collection (typing as I read). And I made copies of the con-report from *Gay Community News* about that same time. I warned Dennis that he might receive my mailing several weeks early. Well November turned out to be a bad month in a number of ways and all my plans did not work out. I certainly am glad though, that I did the mailing comments early. Need I say that as I type this the C/Rapa deadline is less than a week away? Well I think I'll make it, but I think I'll have to stop making foolish threats to OE's.

Included in this zine is the reprinted con-report (which will also appear in an edited-down version in *Janus* 18) and a copy of *A Guide to Campus Life*, which I mentioned here before as being a cartoon done by Richard Bruning (a Madison artist) and myself. In horror at the idea of distributing it ourselves, we gave it over to the University group that published it in a directory of campus services. They said they'd print it and sell it to Madison book stores. Well they seemed to have less of a horror at doing the practical sell-job and commercial leg-work involved, but in the end, weren't any more successful than we were at selling it. Ah well. In their case, the prob-

Man#1: *I was thinking,*
BEING A WHITE, UPPER-MIDDLE class, college educated male has given me a real edge but it's made me insensitive to the struggling masses. I'd really like to better myself, develop a global awareness, increase my perception of the human condition.

MAN #2: Have you considered taking a dead end job, a salary cut, moving to a low-income housing unit, learning a foreign language, and giving up your Maserati?

MAN #1: What? Are you kidding? I was thinking more in the lines of a recommended reading list.

—EDITOR'S NOTE—

lem was beaurocracy, in our's it was the lack of same. We still mumble about pushing it and distributing it at least locally, but I'm afraid now that neither of us has enough interest in it anymore. Both of us have gotten too involved in newer work. But in any case, here it is, just to show you that there really is a cartoon for all that talk.

I haven't allowed a whole lot of space for blithering, and a good thing too. But this is a brief catalog of some recent going-ons in my life: I am becoming addicted to learning about things Australian. I've just finished a two volume fictionalized history of the first 20 years of the English colony at Sydney by Eleanor Dark (*Timeless Land* and *Storm of Time*) and have started another by Kylie Tennant, called *Ride On Stranger*.

GUIDE TO CAMPUS LIFE



1. YOUNG TECHIE pounding it out while being paid by the University as an inspiring window display
2. FRAT PLEDGE being wild and crazy just prior to a near-fatal drunk
3. One of the NEAR-SACRED REGENTS, rising above the daily educational morass
4. MULTI-CAUSE RADICAL regretting having to give up his belt for the vegetarian creed
5. AG STUDENT trying to dismiss his hayseed image by, unsuccessfully, quoting Kant, Rousseau, and Gary Trudeau
6. STARRY-EYED SORORITY PLEDGE with princess syndrome totally oblivious to her surroundings
7. 60's NOSTALGIC BUFF (aka, hippie) discovers political truth from the mouth of a stoned gargoyle
8. GRUCHO MARXIST pickets for longer days, shorter skirts and a 10¢ cigar.
9. NEO-UNICYCLIST apprehensive about his immediate landing possibilities
10. PUNK-DADA-MARXIST pickets, considering the social significance of rusty razor blades
11. ROLLER-SKATING FADIST abruptly considering the value of a wheel-less world
12. ADVENTUROUS SKATE-BOARDER planning on majoring in law and minoring in personal collisions
13. CAMPUS FILM FREAK putting up his 10,000th poster for *Play It Again, Sam*
14. COMPULSIVE JOGGER working at his thesis on the run
15. CAMPUS' PREMIERE TANNER attempts the elusive, legendary permanent bronze
16. ZIPPY, the world-famous PINHEAD, as always, having fun
17. Two INDEPENDENT FRISBEES, believed by many on campus to be an unrecognized life form
18. CAMPUS WILDLIFE debating the meaning of the last two lines of Keats' *Ode to a Grecian Urn*
19. STRIDENT FEMINIST aggressively practicing a politically correct gait
20. UNDERCOVER CAMPUS COP concerned over his increasing appreciation of those "funny cigarettes"
21. GRADE OBSESSED STUDENT about to ask if the prof's incoherent rambling will be on the exam, and for advice on removing grass stains
22. One of the infamous PROFESSIONAL STUDENTS contemplating his 34th switch of major (to dental hygiene)
23. CAMPUS' FAVORITE CANINE successfully working toward the highest grade point average in its school
24. YOUNG PROFESSOR ANXIOUS ABOUT TENURE, writing on the side for *The Journal of Scholarly Rhetoric*
25. TENURED PROFESSOR slaving away on sabbatical in the Caribbean
26. YOU! Welcome to Campus Life!

MAILING COMMENTS

DOUGLAS FIR, OF COURSE Thank you for extending my membership. I had forgotten that I was behind a page when I decided that I'd have to miss that mailing, and worried (when I discovered the fact) that the new policy would put me on the wait list. I hoped that the postcard with the picture of the plastic pink flamingo migration would appease you.

RICH McALLISTER Since you included a Christmas party invitation with your comment to me, I'll use this opportunity to describe my end-of-the-year travel plans. I will be arriving in San Francisco on Christmas Eve day, spending the week in San Francisco and leaving for Seattle on New Year's Day, spending the weekend up there and returning on Tuesday for Madison (via San Francisco because excursion flights are apparently cheaper that way. Don't ask me why.) So I will certainly miss the December 19 Little Men's annual Christmas Party. You are invited though (along with any other C/Rapa members in the area) to a party that will be happening at my brother's house (where I will be staying while I'm in San Francisco). I don't know when that will be yet, but I'll let you know.

PAUL LEMON Love the exquisite illo.

ELI COHEN You are right! Absolutely right! What would we ever do without food advertizers! Who would tell us about frozen soufflés, pressurized cheese food, freeze dried soy that tastes like bacon, or chicken flavored (and shaped) crackers?? How would we know that we needed a more flavorful meat tenderizer or that there were more peanuty-flavored peanut butter than our own brand?!

DOUG BARBOUR Paragraphs! White space! But even more (my heart!) —your name spelled out with initial caps!! What will it be next?! Columns? Illustrations? Moderation, please!

I was horrified by the British convention camp vacation plan you describ-

ed. At first I wondered if this might not have been a "guilt trip" package. But no, you describe it more as a masochistic fantasy con...

If subversive art (recognized or not) is life-affirming, it seems important to think about what makes non-subversive art. Sad, big-eyed dolls painted on black velvet seem not so much death-affirming, as distracting and numbing to connective, constructive thinking. In connection to my ideas on art as I've tried to work them out: such art is dead end stuff when it comes to sparking more art, either in the form of new (physically present) pieces of art, or in the form of abstract, critical reactions. Subversive art catalyzes new art, new ideas and encourages all sorts of connections. Non-subversive art (like most TV) most often catalyzes unconsciousness and discourages the creation of new art by clogging and simplifying ideas and hiding the potential for connection-making.

I loved "I Owe You One," mostly for the tone—sort of a backwoodsy (or previous century) Erma Bombeck. "The two principles involved were consistency and perseverance." Or a homey advice cookbook.

DAVID BRATMAN Everyone who read it would be board and try to return the book to the pawn shop, claiming they'd been rooked. Now if you can get someone in there washing their hands of the whole mess with castle soap, the story would be complete.

No pseudonym. Loren MacGregor did write the story, somewhat in reaction to the conversation on art here in C/Rapa.

KEITH HAUER-LOWE Varley said that Robinson had come to him to talk to him after he'd realized the duplication (not intentional) and before *Stardancer* had been published. Varley seemed quite satisfied that there had been no plagerization and comfortable with the situation.

DENYS HOWARD I'm glad you included the post-campaign letter in C/Rapa. (You should have

collated it better though: it doesn't say good things about you as a ~~UNION~~ organizer, you know). Just kidding. What most impressed me as I read through was how much I admired you actualizing so much of your political beliefs in your daily life. Good luck to you and your co-workers. I hope that next year's campaign goes well and is successful.

LINDA McALLISTER With regard to your comments to Pauline on the differences between folk art and fine art: I thought your differentiation was an interesting one, i.e., full time (fine) arts *vs* part time (folk) arts. But I think that differentiation only hints at a much more broadly based differentiation between the so-called folk and and fine arts. I don't think that the culture's relative well-being (as a whole) is the stimulus to the creation of art. A wealthy society will support more artists than a subsistence level society, but that is not the point, I don't think. Rather, non-survival-supporting activities are participated in by those individuals who manipulate more power within the society (the wealthier the society, the more power there is to manipulate, and the more such individuals there are likely to be). Our value system, which makes full-time art better than part-time art, is an extension of sexist and racist and classist prejudices which favor those who wield power. Anyone who is supported by a society to the extent that they can devote all their time to art almost always is part of the power establishment at least insofar as they directly benefit from it. A part-time artist, or a "folk artist" makes products that are by definition less important because they are a lesser form. Often the reasons for this judgement are more tied to the preconception we have of the form (embroidery, quilting, water colors, etc.) than to an objective comparison of quality between this oil portrait and this carved table. I think that the distinction between fine arts and folk arts is becoming less hard-and-fast. (For instance, in Renaissance Europe it was economically impossible for any

one other than wealthy, white males to paint in oils. The mechanics of the institution of apprenticeship in the arts, but more importantly, the actual cost of the chemicals to make the pigments and of the other materials involved, made that activity out of reach for less fortunate classes and for all women except as uncredited aids to the great painters. Painting on large canvases became a great art because it could be socially restricted. Women's activities of the time (lace-making, embroidery), though no-less creative and difficult and beautiful, were lesser activities, were crafts, because of the roles of the creators.) That the boundaries between "fine" art and "folk" art are breaking down is less, I think, a result of people finally opening their minds and dispensing with prejudgements based on the material or tools used by the artist (canvas *vs* sketch paper; sable brush *vs* needle), as it is the mirrored image of a society whose sexually-based boundaries are changing. Women's power is increasing; our art grows in respectability. (For instance, you now see woven wall-hangings in museums; Judy Chicago's *A Dinner Party* accumulates a growing number of enthusiasts as does her famous *House* happening/art.) The annoying theme of women doing crafts and men doing fine art is carefully explored in *The Obstacle Race* by Germaine Greer, which I've mentioned before. Also useful, though dry, is *Women Artists of the Arts and Crafts Movement, 1870-1914* by Anthea Callen (Pantheon Press, 1979).

I don't know enough to support my theory in the area of sports, but I think the same thing must apply in that area too: certain sports being more important and more popular because of who participates in them (or perhaps, because of who profits from them). Tennis being the leisure sport of the wealthy. All men's sports being more "real" than women's, etc.

□□□□□□□□□□□□

Yes, a committee did put *Janus* 17 out on time and looks as if it's going to put number 18 out on time as well. I think that's less unusual than it might seem at first, though. I wonder how many

good zines are really put out (often) by only one or a couple of people. I think that the situation is often like it was in *Janus* for the last year and a half or so: the zine utterly dependant on the integrated effort of a group of people, but final credit going to two co-editors (Jan Bogstad and myself). I'd bet that most successful, and long-running zines depend much more than is generally known on a lot of help from their friends... We have just formally recognized that state of affairs in our colophone by listing all the people involved in the zine alphabetically rather than hierarchically. Now that may be the unusual thing. We're doing well, I think.

But changes are imminent. Superficial changes really, because the biggest thing was shedding the editors' veto power and making decision-making more accessible to everyone involved with the zine. But it's still a dramatic cosmetic change: NEWS FLASH!: Jan Bogstad has refused permission to SF³ to continue to use the title *Janus* for its zine. The title was one that she originated (thus her "ownership" of it). We haven't decided on what the new name of the zine will be after January 1981 (which was the limit of the year in which Jan extended temporary permission). She's still planning her zine *New Moon* as far as I know. After the publication of *Janus* 18 (in early December 1980), no Madison zine will bear that title for the time being. Ideas are welcome (for a new name), though by the time you read this, a new title will have been decided on probably.

□□□□□□□□□□□□□□

I agree with your abhorance for titles which change "—man" to "—person", when a neutral uncumbersome term already exists. Like speaker, chair or even actor or waiter—which have grown sex-identified only with the complimentary terms, actress, waitress. We no more need those antiquities than we need words like authoress, draftess, DJess (Jockess??), etcetera. What does one call a man who sews if there's got to be a seamstress? *sigh*

Wapman I'd rather do without though. Sounds like a vulgar term for Italian males.

NIEL KVERN Hi! How long are you going to be visiting with Richard? I'm hoping you'll be around in Seattle when I'm there.

RICHARD LABONTÉ I enjoyed your bus saga. All of my memories of bus travel are much less romantic than your's, probably because I've always gone straight through, never stopping except for those 45 minute bus breaks, sleeping on board, "eating" at bus terminals, and generally feeling grungier and grungier the longer the trip takes. If I ever do travel by bus again (doubtful, if I can help it), I'll try the stop-and-visit-along-the-way method.

The last time I traveled by bus was between San Francisco and Madison, and I did meet an interesting person along the way. He was a Japanese fellow who knew almost no English, only a few words. We communicated primarily by drawing pictures in my sketchbook (which he happily accepted as a gift from me when I switched buses from the transcontinental route to the stop-every-ten-minutes-or-every-town-whichever-comes-first route from Cedar Rapids, Iowa to Madison). He was traveling through the US on some special 16-day (?) pass going from Los Angeles to San Francisco to Chicago to New York to D.C. to Miami (where he got off for one day to visit with his brother) to New Orleans and back to Los Angeles. He was seeing the US almost entirely through bus windows and seemed to be enjoying it immensely, taking lots of snapshots as we traveled. He took several when we passed through some beautiful mountainous areas but really went crazy, snapping pictures every few minutes when we got out into the vast, empty, dull plains of South Dakota. I kept laughing, indicating I thought he was crazy, and he'd laugh, and stretch his arms out and say, "big! BIG!!!" But the funniest part was when we got to a little run-down ghost town. I don't know what its name was. My traveling partner, along with a group

of other Japanese tourists on the bus were gathered in the middle of a street junction (in a town in which there might have only been 3 or 4 such junctions) and oooohing and ahhhhing, pointing and smiling—looking like they were viewing one of the great wonders of the world. I couldn't resist; I had to go find out what they were looking at. All I saw though was an empty, dusty street, and a few teetery buildings that looked dangerous to walk inside of. A tumbleweed blew down the street. The foreign crowd oooooed. I started to understand. But then when they went crazy as a man with a cowboy hat on his head pushed his way through swinging doors from a tavern down the street, I was sure. Several of the Japanese tourists cried out "Matt Dillon!"

Again, thanks for sharing your bus memories with us in C/Rapa. I enjoyed the letter.

[Continued from page 1]

This last book is a sort of picaresque, female, Australian *Tom Jones*. Only not very risqué, though I suppose even mentioning that people who weren't married went to bed together was risqué for 1943. It's a fun book (and one of a list of feminist, Australian books given

to us by Joan Gordon in *A Women's Apa.*), but not exactly what I've been looking for (and mostly finding) in Australian books/films. The two books by Dark had it and most of the films coming out recently have it: the sense of an uncomfortable relationship between people and land (the land tending to have it over the people and threatening to do away with people all together). Anyway, I've been immediately seeing any Australian film that comes around (*My Brilliant Career*, *Picnic at Hanging Rock*, *Newsreel*, *The Last Wave*, *The Getting of Wisdom*, *The Chant of Jimmie Blacksmith*) and sending the library people off in search of the more obscure books on Joan's list. I haven't had time to take free books from the Madison Review of Books shelves.

Besides that reading (and viewing), I've been spending quite a few weeks up in Northern Wisconsin visiting my sister in Menomonie where she's just started

VERY FEW PEOPLE POSSESS TRUE artistic ability. It is therefore both unseemly and unproductive to irritate the situation by making an effort. If you have a burning, restless urge to write or paint; simply eat something sweet and the feeling will pass. Your life story would not make a good book. Do not even try.

—FRAN LEBOWITZ—METROPOLITAN LIFE

Notes to a landlord:

THE MOST IMPORTANT factor here is that you understand that a room is a matter of opinion. It is, after all, your building, and if you choose to designate a given amount of space as a room, then, indeed it is a room. Specifying the function of the room is also your responsibility, and tenants need frequently to be reminded of this as they will all too often display a tendency to call one of your rooms a closet. This is, of course, a laughable pretension, since few tenants have ever seen a closet. — Fran Lebowitz — *Metropolitan Life*

school at the University of Wisconsin-Stout. She's been having some bad times and I've been being a big sister and helping out. But that's tended to knock out a lot of my so-called spare time. I've got a lot of catching up to do these next few weeks before I leave for San Francisco. Hope I see most of you at one point or another while I'm in San Francisco and Seattle, at least the ones who live in those places. Happy holidays.

Joanne

When It Changed

Lesbians, Gay Men, and Science Fiction Fandom

By Pat M. Kuras and Rob Schmieder

It was Saturday afternoon of the Labor Day weekend and we met by a statue of a nude flying man. (He has no penis and he had nothing to do with the science fiction convention we were about to attend; he just happens to be a tacky landmark in Boston's Prudential Plaza.) Neither one of us had ever been to a gathering like this before.

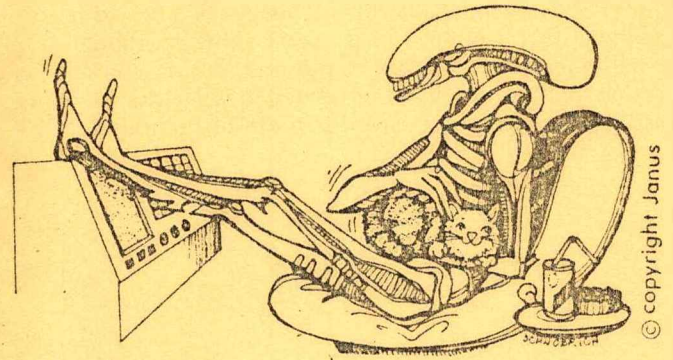
As it turns out, we spent three exhilarating days exploring science fiction, gays, lesbians and feminism. This article began as coverage of a single panel, but blossomed and snowballed into an amazing experience that had to be shared. Even if we had had a team of ten writers, we still could not have covered everything that took place at the 38th World Science Fiction Convention (Noreascon II).

In the course of our reporting, we often ventured off alone. Yet this article speaks with the royal "we," as though we did everything together — it is a literary convenience to which we have succumbed. We have written in the form of a diary, a patchwork of everything we saw, did and heard. Fasten your seatbelts and enjoy the trip.

Noreascon II was a truly international gathering, with registrants from every state and dozens of foreign countries. Past conventions have been held in most large U.S. cities as well as in England, Germany, Australia and Canada. In addition to being a meeting ground for writers and fans from all over the world, the annual convention is the site of the presentation of the Hugo Award, one of the two most prestigious literary awards in the sf field (the other is the Nebula, awarded by the Science Fiction Writers of America).

This was our first Worldcon, and we were overwhelmed by the numbers: of fans, writers, and pieces of information. The Sheraton/Hynes complex where the convention was held resembled a huge living computer, where information about film programs, panels, discussion groups, merchandise, and personal messages were conveyed with amazing efficiency. The five-day convention produced a newsletter, *Lobster Tails*, which appeared twice a day as a source of general information. The attendance of about 6000 broke all previous records for these conventions, and we saw just about all of our favorite sf writers at some point in the weekend.

Our first impression of the convention participants was dominated by the flamboyant costumes that seemed to be everywhere. We saw members of the Fantastic Four, witches, and spacepeople — lots of weaponry — along with a few people in street dress. People seemed either to exaggerate or downplay their real selves. During the discussions that went on at the convention it became obvious that we were in the midst of a strange mix of people who had been drawn to science fiction for radically different reasons. Many of the costumes betrayed a sexist sensibility that for many years was at the heart of almost all sf, and this sensibility was still very much alive at Noreascon II.



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However, we also encountered many gay people, feminists and progressives of every stripe. These people were at the convention because present day science fiction has much to offer them. Science fiction is a fiction of ideas, and the ideas coming from the minds of the new writers more and more concern progressive analyses of social issues. Progressivism is now almost taken for granted among sf writers and fans alike. This is still a recent development, however, and we were surprised to see so much political debate within the organization of the convention and in the convention programming. Fans are looking at sf from a more political perspective, and publishing fanzines (fan-produced magazines) with strong political identities. One such fanzine (*Thrust*) says of itself: "We've built our reputation on never failing to take a close look at the most sensitive and controversial issues concerning science fiction."

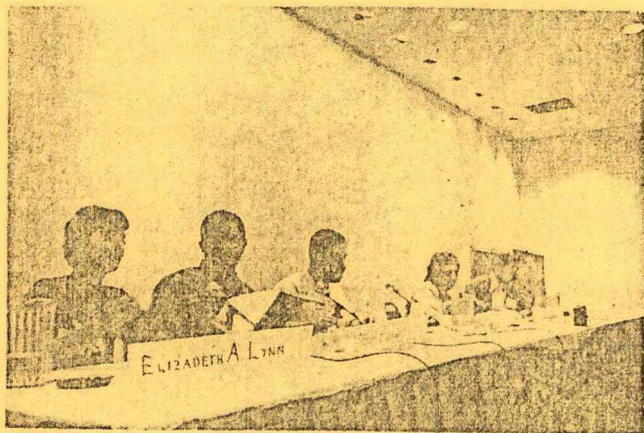
The progressive focus of this year's convention was perhaps best symbolized by its choice of Damon Knight and Kate Wilhelm as guests of honor. This pair have, in their separate fields, been trailblazers for forward-looking science fiction.

Knight was one of the first sf writers to insist on making the same aesthetic demands on sf that are made on mainstream fiction, while also demanding that this future-obsessed genre not perpetuate the problems of the past and present. In the '50s he started the first sf writers' workshop. In the '60s he founded the ORBIT series of original anthologies which introduced many of today's more progressive writers and opened the door to the many original anthologies currently being published. ORBIT and its followers were pivotal influences in sf's move from technology-dominated fiction and space westerns to the examination of biological, anthropological, social and sexual issues. Kate Wilhelm is a salient example of this change in sf, as her stories treat human relations with the same sort of speculative mind that made trips to distant stars imaginable in the '40s.

Saturday afternoon, we found our way to the press room, where we had our first encounter with homophobia in science fiction. The Tufts student making out our press passes said, "You don't really want me to put *Gay Community News* on these, do you?" To our retort, "Of course!" he responded with, "Well, if I were gay I sure wouldn't want to let anyone know about it." He then apologetically handed us a "special gift" along with our press kit — the 1980 "Fairies" desk calendar.

We realized that we had gotten into something much bigger than we had bargained for as we perused the bulging press kit and went over the packed schedule for the remaining three days of the convention. We noted with sadness that we were missing a scheduled autograph session with Thomas Disch, and would have to leave before his reading later that afternoon. Disch was the first sf writer we encountered who has a long-standing record of

successfully incorporating gay characters into his fiction. His novel *334* is remarkable for its images of both male and female gay couples in a more liberal, though materially bleaker, New York of the near future; and all his novels and stories have incorporated sexuality in a markedly more sophisticated way than run-of-the-mill sf.



Rob Schmieder

We hurried off to the hall where "The Closed Open Mind: Homophobia in Science Fiction Fantasy Stories" panel was scheduled to be held and grabbed seats near the front of the room. This panel was possibly the first with an openly gay topic to be held at a Worldcon. Around 200 fans attended the panel, more than attended most other small panels at the con. The participants in the panel were Elizabeth A. Lynn, Samuel R. Delany, Jerry Jacks, Norman Spinrad, and Frank M. Robinson.

Elizabeth A. Lynn is a young writer who has just come to prominence in recent years. Her writing is suffused with homoerotic relationships, especially her soon-to-be-completed *Chronicles of Tarnor* (see *GCN Book Review*, Vol. 8, No. 5). It is indicative of the current acceptability of homosexuality in sf that this has not hindered her success in any way. Introduced as a nominee for the prestigious John W. Campbell award (given to new writers), she jokingly corrected the moderator by saying she would rather not be a three-timeloser, as she was in fact a nominee in 1978 and 1979.

Samuel Delany has probably been out longer than any other sf writer, and has consistently used gay material in his books and stories. He has championed other gay sf writers as well: he wrote the introduction to Joanna Russ's collected *Alyx* stories, and is editor of a forthcoming collection of Thomas Disch stories, *Fundamental Disch*. His own works include the novels *Nova*, *Dhalgren* and *Triton*, and the recent visual-story collaboration with Howard Chaykin, *Empire*. He has also published a collection of essays on science fiction, *The Jewel-Hinged Jaw*, and a long essay on Disch's story *An American Shore*.

Jerry Jacks, moderator of the homophobia in SF panel, attended his first con in Chicago in 1962. He has chaired some of the Westercons and organized other smaller ones. As a gay man, he came out in college (1968) and was instrumental in forming the Gay Liberation Front at San Francisco State University. In 1971, he came out in fandom. Jerry says that "fandom has always been conservative about sexuality," but this attitude has been changing in the '70s.

Jerry mentioned that there were two nights of gay parties at Westercon '79, the SF con that took place at the Sheraton Palace Hotel in San Francisco, California. That con attracted about 2,500 people and Jerry says a good number of "gay, lesbian and sympathetic straights"

enjoyed the parties. At the parties, a mailing list was circulated for those interested in forming a gay/lesbian SF club. The Uranian Club (as it is called) got off to a wobbly start. There was a strong interest in having a club, but members were unable to find a meeting place. Rev. Michael Itkain of San Francisco's Metropolitan Community Church finally suggested they use MCC space and, as a result, the Uranian Club has been holding monthly meetings since November '79. The club has a mailing list of over 200 members, while an average of 30 people attend meetings. Earlier this year, the Uranian Club held its first social event, a picnic in Golden Gate Park, which was very successful. Club member Eric Garber is working on a slide show on gay and lesbian SF, while organizer Jacks admits to fantasies of having a science fiction float in San Francisco's Gay Freedom Day parade. The Uranian Club also issues a newsletter, keeping members informed of upcoming events.

Jerry distributed copies of a condensed version of a forthcoming bibliography of fantasy and science fiction books with "clear and positive gay and/or lesbian content." The bibliography, compiled by Eric Garber and Lyn Paleo, is entitled *Uranian Worlds*.

Norman Spinrad, the token straight on the panel, is the current president of Science Fiction Writers of America, and has a long track record as a science fiction writer. His novel *Bug Jack Barron*, loathed by feminists, at least has the distinction of having broken ground in treating sexuality in science fiction, a genre once distinguished by its almost complete asexuality. Though his lack of understanding of lesbian and gay issues made him poorly equipped to participate in the discussion, his presence on the panel gave it the cachet of approval from the straight sf establishment.

Frank Robinson's presence on the panel came as a pleasant surprise to us. The oldest member of the panel, he has a long involvement in the field and has also been involved in the sf-Hollywood connection. One of his best-known novels, *The Glass Inferno*, featured a very strong gay character (who never made it to *The Towering Inferno*, the Hollywood version). Robinson was full of stories of homophobic treatment of writers in the '40s and '50s. He alluded to his career as a speechwriter for Harvey Milk in explaining his commitment to improving the gay position in sf.

The panel began with introductory statements by all the panel members. Lynn led off by saying that she felt the problem with gay and lesbian images in sf was not that they were awful, but that there are so few of them; sf is dominated by straight male WASP characters, and the absence of gay characters is matched by a dearth of women and people of color in sf. Delaney disputed the notion that there are no awful characters, saying that there is, in fact, a long history of homophobic characterizations, and named as one of the more salient the Baron Harkenden in Frank Herbert's *Dune*.

Delany went on to discuss the notion of a dichotomy between allowing the writer full artistic freedom and the expectation that sf was a progressive genre of which one could demand a commitment to social and political responsibility. Spinrad came out in favor of "artistic freedom" in such a dichotomy, saying that "oppressed groups shouldn't tamper with freedom of expression, as they have more to lose than the majority in any clamp-down on such freedom" — a familiar liberal cliché. Robinson then attacked this position as being unrealistic, and cited the history of censorship of gay material by straight editors, and the crying need of gay people for positive images in fiction. Jacks reinforced Robinson with a short history of homosexuality in science fiction, and the two most widely used homosexual formulas: the monosexual culture, which eagerly embraces the arrival of a

*Disch's works are surveyed in the Aug. 27-Sept. 2 issue of the *Village Voice*.

member of the opposite sex; * and homosexuality used as a mark of villainy.

The ensuing discussion centered around the concepts of "freedom of expression," censorship, and the effect of mass media images on mass culture. Lynn pointed out that concepts of censorship and freedom of speech are relative and culture-bound; "culture sets up its own rules and freedom of the press is only for the man who owns one"; whatever freedom gays have to write sf is limited by our access to print.

She added that there are covert as well as overt rules for what may be written. Delany pursued this, saying that our cultural conditioning, which is heterosexist, determines the mind-set we bring to our writing, which is therefore straight, and that we can only break out of this by unrelentingly analyzing the unconscious, culture-conditioned components of our writing. In answer to a question about Ursula LeGuin's *The Left Hand of Darkness* (a novel which deals with relations between hermaphroditic beings), he took this one step further and analyzed the specific fictional clichés that are part of a self-perpetuating mass culture. He described *The Left Hand of Darkness* as an example of the "doomed homosexual relationship" plot, which ends with one of the lovers dying. "True artistic freedom," Delany said, "comes only with the abandonment of such clichés. . . . Narrative conventions victimize artists." Lynn echoed this sentiment with her insistence that the tension between the unconscious and the conscious must be explored by the writer of worthwhile fiction.

Frank M. Robinson and Thomas N. Scortia have written novels which are something like the Arthur Hailey thrillers. A good deal of factual research goes into their books but, unlike Hailey, their characters sometimes transcend stereotypes. *The Glass Inferno* is about a fire in a skyscraper (parts of this novel were incorporated into the film, *The Towering Inferno*.) The building in the novel, the Glass House, has both apartments and businesses, among them an interior decorating agency, whose supply room contributes to much of the fire. The owners of this business are gay male lovers. We only meet one of them in depth — a fat, middle-aged man.

Robinson gave this quick description of his gay character, quickly pointing to the stereotype he had used. However, rather than keep his character a cardboard figure, Robinson has him grow throughout the story. The gay man becomes one of the novel's heroes — courageous, poignant and quite unforgettable.

Spinrad's assertion that homophobia in publishing attitudes is a thing of the past was generally conceded to be true, but the long history of censorship was not forgotten. All of the panel members recalled examples of censorship or homophobic rewrites of gay material. Very few examples could be conjured up of positive images dating any earlier than the past decade.

Stereotyping, like hackneyed writing, is something that should be overcome. However, as some of the panelists pointed out, there is at least one instance where stereotypes may have been an advantage. This occurred in a Charles Beaumont story, *The Crooked Man*. The story (which was written in the '50s) concerns a society in which homosexuality is the normally-accepted lifestyle while heterosexuality is seen as a heinous perversion. The plot concerns two heterosexual lovers who sneak around to meet; by the end of the story, the two lovers have been scooped up by vice squad officers and are on their way to be "cured," a process involving electro-shock and glandular operations. In Beaumont's story, although gays are considered the norm, there is nothing attractive about

them. They're monstrous and grotesque. However, the story serves as a neat, allegorical horror story. With its switcheroo theme, it gives straights a taste of oppression and, perhaps, may set some to consider their own prejudices and ignorance.

A constant problem in covering the con was deciding on what to do — should we attend the feminist fairy tales panel and miss out on the Star Trek episode, *City On The Edge of Forever*? The scheduling always left us gnashing our teeth. In addition to the art shows and dealers' room, there were two screening rooms showing separate movies while the 75 or so different panels were in full-swing. Also during the course of the con, there were 20 autograph sessions involving over 90 top-name personalities. In other words, there were always at least five different and exciting things happening at once.

The screening rooms ran films all day and well into the night. In addition to the feature films (such as *Star Wars*, *Alien*, *Watership Down* and *Wizards*), there were cartoons (Bugs Bunny in *Hareway To The Stars*) and selected shorts. While waiting for *The Seventh Seal* to begin, we yawned through a dry piece on thermonuclear fission, but applauded the next short — a bizarre little film called *Screentest*. *Screentest* lasts about twenty minutes and the convention's film notes claimed that it was "highly experimental and hard to describe." Imagine how delighted we were to chance upon a gay film! *Screentest* has no plot. There is a voice-over narration, a jumble of party sounds and meaningless voices. (Near the end of the film, one male voice clearly asks, "Isn't it about time we threw in a story line?" — it's hysterical.) The visual part of the film is a flurry of lightning quick editing — campy gay men changing in and out of different costumes, many dresses, hats, capes, fans. They pose and pose and pose, and that is the essence of the film — it's their *screentests*.



An illustration by Alicia Austin

Sunday afternoon we visited the Art Show, which took up most of a large hall on the upper floor of Hynes Auditorium. Going through the thousands of paintings, drawings, sculptures and artworks in other media was exhausting and not very rewarding. Most of the artists

*Joanna Russ's *When It Changed*, a landmark gay sf story, deals with this very cliché.

exhibiting were amateurs, and will likely remain so; and amateurs and professionals alike showed little imaginative range. Spacemen, moonscapes, unicorns and armored characters abounded; art that deviated from the iconographic and conceptual clichés of standard sf illustrations were rare.

Many paintings featured Playboy-style female nudes in fantasy or space settings; this represents the pandering to a certain part of its straight male audience that has always been present in sf. The most extreme example of this kind of illustration was a lavish oil painting by Jane MacKenzie and Philip Hagopian (who also collaborated on the program book cover painting), called "Young Ladies Should Not Walk Alone." The painting showed a young woman being assaulted by a male centaur in Central Park; he has begun to tear off her shirt, and her breasts are exposed. For the most part the works including nude figures did not show sexual activity. One exception, however, was professional illustrator Alicia Austin's exhibit, which included her eight-drawing *Erotica Portfolio*. Her compositions in these drawings show the influence of Beardsley that is also very noticeable in her early work; they are more fluid and less phallogocentric than most erotic art produced by straight men. Tim Hammell's exhibit featured "Mandragora: The first folio of male fantasy nudes." The men in this series ranged from a hairy barbarian to an androgynous star-creature, and were clearly designed to appeal to men.

Also on Sunday afternoon, we attended a discussion on "Post-Holocaust Themes in Feminist SF." The panelists included Elizabeth A. Lynn, Jeanne Gomoll, Chelsea Quinn Yarbro and Suzy McKee Charnas. (The panel ran overtime, causing about two dozen women and men to join the panelists in a continuation room, where the discussion lasted another half-hour. In the continuation room, Samuel Delaney joined in the talk.)

The panel discussion itself was quite animated and jumped from real holocausts to fictional ones. Chelsea Quinn Yarbro remarked that "history teaches us that if you have a holocaust, any small rights you had are gone." To illustrate her point, she maintained that two thousand years ago, the women of ancient Rome had more rights and control of their bodies than modern women do. To tear down civilization, she claimed, "is a Pyrrhic victory." In fiction, the holocaust metaphor is a way of wiping the slate clean; it is a way of vanquishing patriarchal structures and experimenting with alternatives. Yarbro further stated that to use "holocausts as a real response [to alleviating society's problems] is crazy," but holocausts can be used as literary devices to imagine new futures.

By way of the "Post-Holocaust" panel, we met Jeanne Gomoll, a fan from Madison, Wisconsin, and contributor to *Janus*. *Janus* is a fanzine of the serious variety ("serious and constructive" for you mundane readers), but it is not without humor. The cartoons are funny and the writers quite clever. (A very educational, yet readable, piece on time travel is titled "Let's Do The Time Warp Again.") The summer 1980 issue of *Janus* has book and fanzine reviews, movie reviews, poetry, comics and an extensive letters section. This particular issue also includes a lengthy pro-con debate on SF fans' proposed ERA boycott of Chicago.

Janus is unusual in that it is a fanzine with a definite feminist leaning. It has been in existence for five years and, more than once, has been nominated for a Hugo Award. *Janus* is cleverly and professionally produced. Its feminist attitude places it several notches above other fanzines, and gay and lesbian readers will appreciate the sensibility shown in much of its writing, articles which are written by both women and men.

Sunday night the presentation of the Hugo awards, one of the two highest honors given to science fiction works, took place in Hynes Auditorium. We got there early in order to get a good seat, and were rewarded with a ringside seat for the procession of famous writers who quickly filled the reserved section. The awards ceremony itself disappointed our expectations. Master of Ceremonies was Robert Silverberg, a writer we have long respected both for the brilliance of his writing and his long dedication to using unusual cultures, including gay culture, in his fiction.*

Silverberg came out with a barrage of racist and sexist Bob Hope-style jokes and insults that led tortuously to the presentation of awards. The high point of the awards presentation was the novel award, which was presented by Isaac Asimov. Asimov, who makes a point of being obnoxious on every possible occasion, grabbed both woman attendants standing by the stairs to the stage; as he walked onto the stage a third woman, seeing him coming, backed away and knocked over a screen which ran along the back of the stage, revealing the other attendants. Undeterred, Asimov went on to kiss his final victim. Asimov's ridiculous behavior earned him guffaws from the audience which by this point had put up with enough bullshit.

One of the more hotly contested awards was that for best fanzine. The winner, Boston's *Locus*, was booed by a large segment of the audience; there is widespread sentiment that the publication can no longer be considered an amateur production. *Janus* and *Thrust* were also nominees.

We were disappointed that Disch's *On Wings of Song* did not win the novel award; but at least it was a nominee. The award was given to Arthur C. Clarke's *The Fountains of Paradise*.



FIGHTING WOMAN NEWS

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*Robert Silverberg captures pure emotion in his characters; his stories are often poignant, exciting and realistic. To a large degree, Silverberg has drawn on minority characters in his work. His short story *Sundance* is remarkable; in it, a biologist of Native American descent is psychologically tortured as he witnesses a race of creatures being destroyed, just as his own Sioux ancestors were almost totally wiped out in the 1800s.

Sometimes, however, Silverberg's use of minorities is questionable. He relies on cartoon figures. In the novel *Dying Inside*, he has a gang of five-talking black basketball players beat a man unconscious. Another novel, *The Book Of Skulls*, has a gay character, Ned, who is purely vicious and evil. Ned triggers the suicides of three other gay men, who all happened to have loved him. With this book, Silverberg is whipping gays with a double whammy — we're shown as being either horrible, self-centered monsters or death-wishing sadsacks.

On one hand, Silverberg's use of minority characters can be almost called commendable — he is showing us that we do not live in an all-male, Anglo-Saxon, lily-white world. However, the manner in which he uses minorities raises many suspicions.

The gay party (announced in *Lobster Tails* as being for "gay men, lesbian women, and friends of the preceding [sic]"), took place in a two-bedroom suite. The bathtub, filled with ice, served as refrigerator and, as it was Sunday night and the liquor stores were closed, our refreshments consisted of Tab and Coca-Cola. About fifty people attended the party in the time we were there. A straight man, claiming to be an AP photographer, stood in the doorway (afraid of contamination?) and took pictures as gay and lesbian SF fans chatted with writers and fan organizers.

At the party, we discussed the ERA with Denys Howard of Seattle. Denys explained that SF fans from different cities place bids to host the world conventions. (The conventions generally move across the country. In 1982, the worldcon is due to be held in the Midwest.) There was a controversy surrounding the proposed locations — Chicago and Detroit were both bidding. (As we learned at the party, Detroit lost its bid.) The controversy stemmed from the ERA — Illinois (Chicago's state) has not ratified the amendment, while Michigan (Detroit's state) has. Many SF fans (men, as well as women) felt this was just cause to boycott Chicago while others argued that it was unimportant.

A San Francisco-based group called Fans for the ERA placed a full-page ad in the program book which outlined Illinois' non-ratification of the ERA and went on to endorse the Chicago boycott: "SF literature, the heart of fandom, consistently addresses political and social issues. We consider human rights and gender roles in fannish writings, readings, and conversations — why not when fan action would affect the world we live in? . . . The rights of over 100 million Americans' entire lives can't be outweighed by the disappointment of some dozen people who can't run a con in a specific year. . . . The boycott is pure economics, intended to include us. We *are* big business — the '82 Worldcon attendees will spend over \$1,000,000. We'd be one of the ten largest groups honoring the boycott, just behind the Democratic National Committee."

With Denys, we shared our pleasure in seeing so many lesbians and gay men at the convention. There is a kind of merging point between gays and SF fans — we're both considered odd, outcasts from society at large. Also the press has a knack for bringing the two groups together by way of some insensitive oppression. Denys said that SF fans usually distrust reporters, who have a tendency to misunderstand fandom and focus on its more "bizarre" aspects. Indeed, earlier that day *The Boston Globe* had run an article on the convention, one that stressed the masquerade of the night before and failed to mention all the other events (films, panels, etc.). The fans were disappointed. There's an interesting parallel in these media misrepresentations: how many times have we been equally disappointed by lack of coverage at gay pride week activities, coverage that usually consists only of brief, filmed footage of drag queens?

Some years ago, Denys published a fanzine entitled *Women And Men*. Its emphasis was on material of interest to lesbians and gay men. After seeing such an amazing turnout at the gay party, and at the feminist and homophobia panels, Denys expressed a willingness to print his fanzine once again.

The people we had seen at the homophobia panel resurfaced at the party, along with a few surprises. Elizabeth Lynn, whom we had seen an hour earlier at the Hugo Awards in a lavender backless gown, typical "lady writer"

drag for such events, showed up at the party in T-shirt and jeans. Marion Zimmer Bradley talked about the new paperback edition of her non-sf gay novel, *The Catch Trap*, which she reported is selling well in this "less closeted" edition. (Publicity for the hardcover edition was subdued and avoided mention of the dominant gay theme, whereas the paperback deals straightforwardly with the gay material both in the jacket illustrations and the blurbs.) She also spoke to us about gay life in the thirties and forties (one of the outstanding features of the novel was her convincing rendition of this era) and her involvement in the early *Daughters of Bilitis* journal, *The Ladder*, dating from that time. Marion, unlike most *Ladder* contributors, wrote lesbian short stories under her own name.

Robin Johnson, a member of the Gay Information collective in New South Wales, Australia, talked to us about the problems of being gay in fandom, speaking from long experience. He characterized fandom as a clannish subculture of people who feel alienated from society; a description he sees as applying to the gay subculture as well. Despite this connection between fandom and the gay experience, however, he saw gay sf fans as being almost invisible. He felt disappointed that, despite a long involvement in fandom, he had no encounter with other gay fans until three years ago.

When Samuel Delany made his way into the room we immediately cornered him and found him more than willing to answer our questions. Though he has been conspicuous as a gay sf writer for years, we were unaware that he is also a father and has been active in a gay parents' group. He acknowledged that there is no formal support network for lesbian and gay sf writers, but it became clear in the course of our conversation that gay sf writers are aware of one another and that the underground links exist. Dropping names of sf writers of varying degrees of closetedness would be pointless; but we began to realize that the gay presence in sf is much greater than we had thought, and this leaves room for the hope that gay themes will continue to emerge in the writing of both the established and newer writers.

Delany followed up on some of the ideas he had tossed out at the homophobia panel. We talked about Ursula LeGuin's treatment of gay characters: in addition to

the no-win plot of *The Left Hand of Darkness*, she included in her major novel, *The Dispossessed*, a gay character who was remarkable for embodying all the most depressing stereotypes of gay "pathology," and who, everyone agreed, was best forgotten. Delany made the interesting point that the main reason most gay characters in sf are failures is that there is usually only one of them in any given work. Shown outside of the context of relationships with other gay characters, it is impossible to show them as fully developed people, and obviously a gay surrounded by straight characters is going to be a mess. This is paralleled by the traditional treatment of women in sf; a succession of female characters relating to one man does not equal a series of female characters, but rather one male character.

We also spoke briefly to one of the "friends of the preceding," Val Eads. We were familiar with Eads's work due to her brief stint as a comic book writer; her strongly pacifist and feminist war stories stood out among the morass of mediocre comics writing. She is currently editor of a women's martial arts magazine called *Fighting Woman News*, and spoke of her relief at escaping the overwhelmingly sexist atmosphere of the male-dominated fantasy business.

The themes of the social impact of sf and the cultural determinants of sf plots which had emerged at the homophobia panel and were touched on lightly at Sunday's panel on "The Craft of Writing SF" were the sole topics of discussion at Monday afternoon's panel entitled "Fairy Tales, Myths, and Feminism." This was the most exciting panel we attended; the debate was lively and informed, with extensive and enthusiastic audience participation. Continuation rooms had been provided to allow panels to tie up loose ends after the hour allotted to them; this panel crowded an overflow audience into its continuation room and went on for an extra hour, winding down only as panelists left one by one to catch planes out of Boston.

The panel was moderated by Sandra Miesel, a fantasy/sf editor for Berkeley/Putnam. Panel members included writers Patricia McKillip, Melissa Ann Singer, Anne Laurie Logan (an editor of *Harlot*, a feminist fanzine); Ellen Kushner, an editor recently turned writer (her feminist fantasy anthology *Basilisk* is due to be published this month); and Anna

Vargo, a convention worker who also happens to be very widely read in the field.

Miesel asked the panelists to define the difference between myth and fairy tale. Although the semantic issue was never resolved, the distinguishing criteria used by the different panelists reappeared as critical factors in all subsequent discussion. One distinction involved the difference between archetypal material drawn from the past and concerned with power relationships (myth), and the self-conscious use of this material to create a work of art imbued with hope for beneficial uses of power (fairy tale). This distinction can be seen as a dichotomy between unconscious and conscious, or culture-bound and countercultural, re-generations of archetypal material.

Implicit in the discussion was that, though most fiction contains plots based on mythic archetypes, this is much more obvious in science fiction and fantasy, which bear a closer superficial resemblance to the myths upon which they build and the fairy tales from which they are historically descended.

As this was a statedly feminist panel, one of the goals of the discussion was to find ways in which sf can serve feminism. It was generally agreed that it is impossible to create new archetypes (this is not the same as saying fiction cannot explore in new directions; it means that there are no new plots under the sun). Therefore, it was proposed that writers search for archetypes containing feminist values in cultures other than the "egocentric, adolescent, Christian, Medieval, European value system" (Kushner) that has produced most of our fairy tales.

The panelists were pressed to come up with examples of sf and fantasy writers who have broken out of this mold. An oral reading list ensued, but the name that was reverted to again and again was that of the prolific but neglected writer Andre Norton. Norton's most famous novel, *Daybreak 2250 AD* uses Native American myths. Native American, Asian and African myths — with strong women, emphasis on emotional and social relations, and de-emphasis of male dominance and power-wielding — appear throughout the body of Norton's work.

Though it was agreed that archetype is a cultural given and cannot be manufactured, some realistic criticisms of this constricting fact were offered. Kushner noted that even the most positive archetype have little to offer some oppressed segments of the population — an implicit reference to the fact that there are few homoerotic myths. Unfortunately this was not pursued. McKillip said that although gender-role reversal was ultimately a counterproductive ploy, at the present time it is socially useful. It is simply social reality that strong women have had to identify with strong male

archetypes, and transforming these male archetypes into female characters in fiction can be beneficial. Such a mechanical device is also a useful spur to the writer to examine the myths she is using; McKillip concluded that when one is a woman there is "nothing more lovely than the pronoun SHE."*

We were left with the feeling that, if all sf and fantasy writers were as conscious of the materials they are dealing with as were the six panelists, there would be considerable hope for sf to act more and more as a medium for progressive social values. The question of how homosexuality can be treated seems still to find its best answer in Delany's earlier assertion that only by the questioning and even abandonment of archetype — which in his case has meant the abandonment of traditional plot — can we break through to an understanding and portrayal of ourselves that is truly free.

*This brings to mind another criticism of *The Left Hand of Darkness*, that the female/male characters are referred to throughout as "he" rather than "she" or any of the many other alternatives — a criticism to which LeGuin has never satisfactorily responded.



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