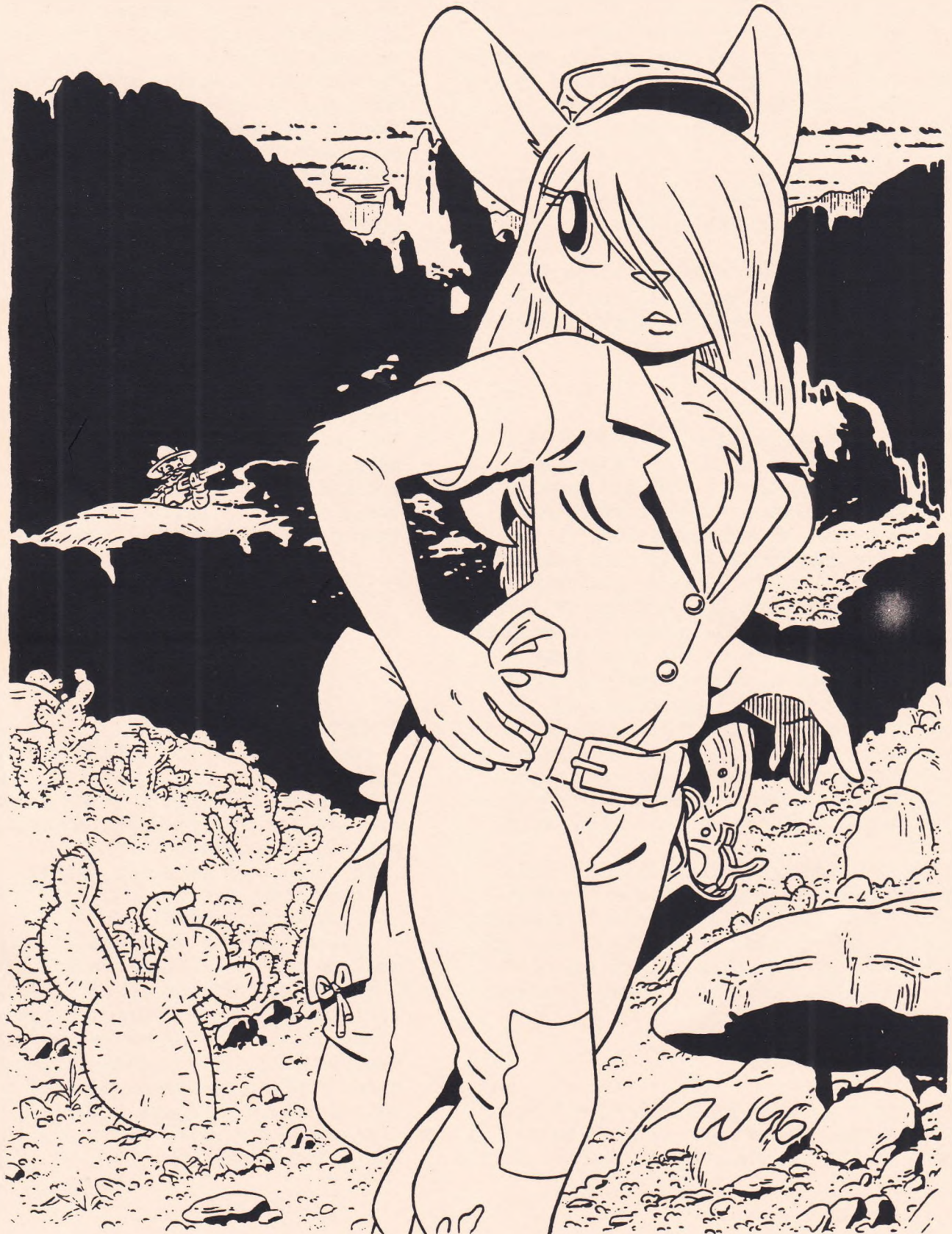


TWINK 14



PLEASE NOTE CHANGE OF ADDRESS!!

New postal regulations come into effect this year. The intent is to limit mail fraud and money-laundering; the practice makes it harder for a private citizen to use a commercial mail drop, and much more risky to do so using a pen name. As it was our intent to phase out the mail drop this year anyway, we are moving ahead now. Effective IMMEDIATELY, please update your mailing list/database to show, and mention and/or publish, the form below:

E.B. Frohvet
4716 Dorsey Hall Drive #506
Ellicott City MD 21042

We recommend you address things to "Frohvet", not to Twink. If you would feel more comfortable using our "real" name, feel free.

WHITHER WORLDCON?

We are concerned for the future of the Worldcon. New York, Boston, Washington D.C., Seattle, Louisville, all seem to be out of the picture. Other cities with strong fandom appear uninterested. Chicago won unopposed for 2000; the only extant bid for 2002 is in disarray and scrambling to relocate at the last minute. It takes no genius to anticipate that soon Worldcon will be restricted to the same five or six sites and unopposed bids will be the rule rather than the exception. If the cost of more variety in site selection is slightly downsizing the con to attract bids from second-tier sites, and eliminating (or at least de-emphasizing) some peripheral aspects, we could live with that.

Another aspect that troubles us is a tendency to re-invent the wheel every year. Each Worldcon is seen as a separate entity, and knowledge/experience are not consistently passed on. An efficient business does not make the same mistakes over and over.

COMING DETRACTIONS

There's no particular anecdote about this cover. We sent the zine to Taral, he sent us the drawing that's now the "Half

Naked One" logo, and this. We copied it down a trifle to fit. Taral is our first Canadian cover artist: we've now had seven different cover artists from four countries.

Robert Sabella analyzes the difference between SF and mainstream literature. Janine Stinson explains how she is adding to her fannish education. Steve Miller and Sharon Lee took time from their busy schedule to cooperate with an interview-by-snail-mail. Rodney Leighton gives us his take on some fantasy anthologies. Sheryl Birkhead and Trinlay Khadro and Sue Mason all went out of their way to do specific art pieces to our request. Where would we be without all our generous contributors? Just another crudzine...

In line for #15: We have (we hope we have) an agreement for another prestigious fanartist to do the cover. Content will include Part V of "We're All African Anyway" (yes, Part VI is in progress); Lyn McConchie dishes on the right and wrong ways to do theme anthologies; our reviews of, among others, Komarr and the "Honor Harrington" series. Options are being explored for future covers and additional content. You may safely assume there will be a lettercol -- all the better if you choose to contribute...

CONTRIBUTIONS GUIDELINES

Available for "the usual" defined as follows:

Articles. Check with us on anything over 2500 words. Some SF/fantasy/fandom content is preferred.

Relevant book or movie reviews.

Convention reports.

Letters of comment.

(All written material is subject to editing for length and content.)

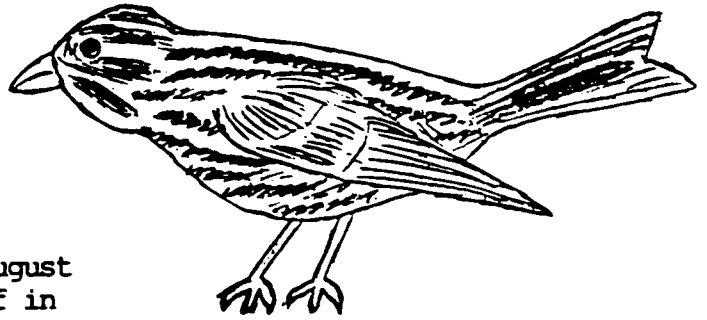
We are not interested in publishing: fiction, poetry, mundane travelogues.

Art is always welcome but we're pretty well stocked for interior illos at this time. Artists are encouraged to check with us about possible covers.

In trade for other fanzines.

Editorial whim.

Yeah, the finch is back. Like the Titanic T-shirt: "The boat sank. Get over it." Contrary to popular opinion, this is Twink #14, a quarterly fanzine from Chaffinch Publications. Next issue: October 1999. Deadline for next issue: August 31, 1999. Available for "The Usual" -- if in doubt, see the guidelines. Our main focus remains on SF, fantasy, and fandom. All letters received will be presumed to be LOC's and considered for publication unless clearly marked "DNQ". Unattributed material may be presumed to be by the editor.



Mailing list policy: Anyone who writes/contributes/trades regularly (defined as: every other issue) will stay on the mailing list. Anyone who is sent unsolicited copies, who does not respond after two issues, will be dropped from the mailing list without further notice. If this title page is highlighted in yellow, you may assume you will not receive further issues without responding in some manner.

This issue is dedicated to Orpheus, who made the sun rise, 'cause he knew how to play.

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ART CREDITS

Cover: Taral Wayne
Only Our Opinion logo: Margaret B. Simon
The Half Naked One logo: Taral Wayne
Rheaders' Rhevenge logo: Sheryl Birkhead
pp. 2,22: Sue Mason
pp. 4,7,10: William Rotsler
pp. 5,27: Margaret B. Simon
pp. 8,26,33: Sheryl Birkhead
p. 11: Angela Gradillas**
pp. 13,17,29: Trinlay Khadro
pp. 23,32: Teddy Harvia

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A while ago, someone in Tucson (we presume it was Wm. Breiding, the only one in that city on our mailing list) sent us a reprint of three related articles originally from Outworlds #17 back in 1973. The three pieces, by Bill Bowers, Larry McCombs, and Dave Locke, are in combination a sort of guide for neo fan-editors on how to produce a fanzine. As might be expected, the material is dated in places: advice on how to cut mimeo stencils seems particularly

quaint. But a lot of the information is timeless. We didn't have access to this when we started Twink, or we could have avoided a lot of stupid neo mistakes. But it was interesting to look back and see what we did wrong.

Bowers' advice on how to choose the type of fanzine one wants to do, is well considered, but superfluous in our case: Twink was intended from the outset as a genzine with a serconnish slant. (An initial role model, of a sort, was Lan's Lantern, though we hoped to avoid its egregious faults of clutter and scheduling.) Interesting, Messrs. Bowers and McCombs both recommend soliciting from mundane friends and relatives! We suppose that might work for some faned's, though our intent to remain genre-specific does limit the notion's usefulness to us. Thus for example, we politely sent back an interesting commentary on the mainstream movie The First Wives' Club.

Mr. Bowers suggested the new faned start with "...some material, a title that's a sure winner, and a basic idea of

what kind of fanzine yours is going to be." Well, one out of three isn't bad. On the plus side, we haven't done too badly with Mr. McCombs' advice to "adopt a general policy on style" and, "be consistent, and edit your contributions to match the style of the zine." Thus for example, we indent only two spaces at the beginning of a paragraph, and single-space rather than allowing the customary two spaces between sentences. Other than that, we try to conform to basic Strunk & White

MAKING EDITOR

ORANGE REVIS(IT)ED

by E.B. Frohvet

standards.

One area where Bowers and McCombs part company is on editing. The former sternly commands, "DON'T 'edit' the material without the permission of the writer." The latter, "It is the job of an editor to solicit and choose material... to revise the material to fit the standards of his publication..." We have leaned to the latter view. In one instance we did ask permission to extract from a long letter and reformat it as an article; telling the individual, "You'll just have to trust our editorial judgement." On another occasion, however, faced with a reader's request that part of a letter be printed in its entirety if it was to be extracted into an article, we chose to print the material in the letter column instead, editing as we saw fit.

In general, though, we're going to go with material submitted as articles or reviews, as nearly verbatim as possible. (Within format limitations: Elizabeth Osborne's report on Pennsic in #13 was trimmed a certain amount in order to fit

into five pages.) As many of you will be aware, the letter column is a different kettle of fish. McCombs asserts, "The most common fault of fannish letter columns is the inclusion of material which is of no possible interest to anyone but the writer and the editor... Use the red pencil liberally on the letters." That's not quite 100% congruent with our policy, but close. If the first four LOC's make about the same point on a particular topic, by the fifth one we're probably going to skim over it to another topic. And a page and a half, maybe a shade more, is close to the limit of what we're going to allot for one letter.

We try as much as possible to follow the advice of "holding your own comments on letters to a minimum" -- you may or may not have noticed that our typical editorial remark is by policy limited to ten lines, usually less. As to whether such interlineations should be put into the text, or summarized at the end of the LOC, that seems to be a matter of taste. FOSFAX and MSFire will insert editorial comments into the body of a letter, as we do; The Reluctant Famulus and PhiloSFy keep them for the end.

As for, "Don't announce schedules unless you are one of those unusual people who can stick to them": Hmm. We'd hardly pick "unusual" as an adjective either for ourself, or for someone who can stick to a schedule. Perhaps as well we didn't realize that was a bad idea until after we'd done it.

On the essence of being an editor, Dave Locke wrote, "The thing which really makes one fanzine different from another is the essence of personality with which you consciously or unconsciously imbue it... The reader must be able to identify you with your fanzine, and your fanzine with you, and this cannot be accomplished by -- for example -- having your fanzine consist of 5 articles instead of 4 articles and an editorial." We're not so sure that's carved in stone; one of the most successful and popular fanzines has almost no editorial personality. (Not our judgement, you've heard others say it.) Nor are we certain that writing editorials is the only ticket to evolve an editorial personality.

On the positive side -- at least in our view -- we have tried to follow Mr. Locke's advice: "Avoid discussing personal problems."

As to how we do the zine, well, practice helps, even starting from total ignorance. By the time an issue goes out, we usually like to have in place at least a cover and probably one article for the next issue. (At some point we'd like to be in the position of not having to write the lead article for every issue, but Bill Bowers wrote back in 1973: "Faneds are always in dire need of publishable material." Seems that not much has changed, at least for those of us down in the lower ranks of fandom.)

We tend not to start the book review section until at least the middle of the second month in our three-month cycle, to see what will come in from others. We also like to have a "drop-out page", a one-page item we can put in or drop out at the last minute to balance the page count. The personal/community survey that appeared in #10 was twice dropped out of previous issues.

On writing articles, our system is a combination of instinct and practice. Inspiration comes where you find it: a Rotsler 'toon, another faned's tossed-off phrase, something in the newspaper. We generally let an idea ferment, waiting to see if it develops critical mass and attracts cross-references. If that happens, we make notes on index cards or bits of scrap paper -- key words, ideas we want to develop, maybe even a sentence or two. From that point we write a first draft. In longhand, thank you, and sometimes in pencil if that's what is handy. Revisions can creep in at any point. This very article, for instance, was originally much different. At some point we recognized our original concept just wasn't working, scrapped it and started over.

What happens next depends on whether the article is intended for Twink, or to go somewhere else -- generally it's pretty clear which category an article falls into. In the latter group, an article may sit in longhand draft for months. Or if we have a specific fanzine in mind, it may go from concept to in-the-mail in a few days. Nowadays we're

doing book reviews mainly for our own consumption in Twink, so they generally don't get typed at all until we transcribe them into the zine.

(One example: We had sent a short piece to Peake Studies. The issue arrived on Saturday. There was a reproduction of a painting by Peake on the cover which we found interesting. Sunday morning we drafted -- in pencil -- a 2-page comment on the art; typed it that afternoon, and mailed it off Monday morning.)

In case you're interested, we do Twink on a correction-ribbon typewriter (Brother GX-6750, \$69.99 +tax at Staples) and deal with other typos with a bottle of White-Out. We wouldn't mind having access to numerous type fonts for, say, titles; but we can't justify the \$1500 expense of a computer for which we'd have no other use.

Formatting and inserting art is a whole lot easier than it must have been in mimeo days. We draw column lines in copy-invisible-blue Berol Prismacolor pencil (thanks again, Elizabeth Garrott) and type to fit. Smaller pieces of art are used as-is; we just tape them in with invisible tape. Occasional larger pieces have to be downsized, or a special outline blue-pencilled and typed around.

Take for instance Bob Sabella's article in this issue. It was obvious from a preliminary word count that it wouldn't fit in two pages but wouldn't fill up three. Therefore, we formatted the first page to give a nice appearance with a Margaret B. Simon drawing (you've probably noticed that we're experimenting with full-width rather than two-column pages here and there). We filled the second page with solid text; counted the number of lines remaining in Bob's original draft, divided by two, and split the text to fit on what is now p. 7, and filled in with a nice large Rotsler (of which we still have an ample supply). We think it turned out pretty well.

For articles especially, and to some degree elsewhere, we try to have the art show some connection to the subject matter. But, no, we don't especially commission art for particular pieces. Exception to the rule -- the lead illo for this article (we did specifically ask Sue Mason for an orange tree) does tie in, because the title

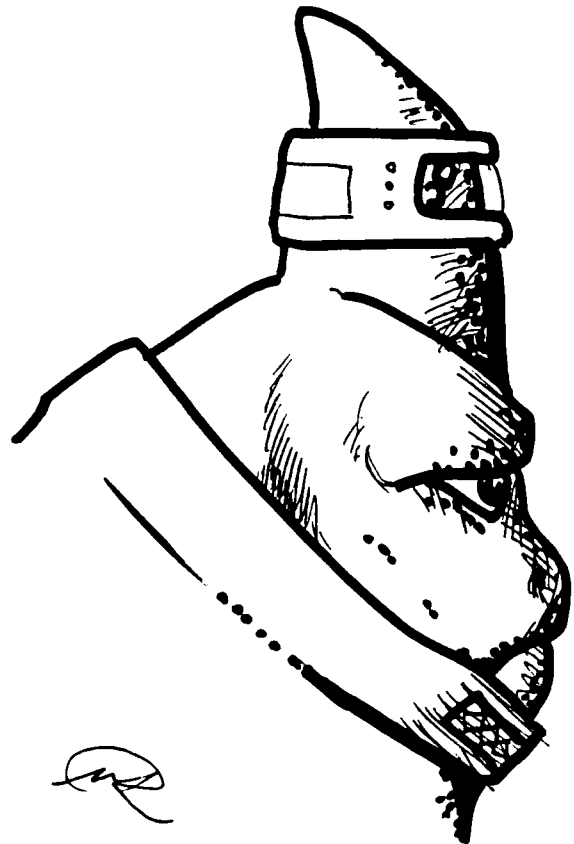
of one of the original articles which inspired us to write this was something about "comparing apples with oranges".

As you may have noticed, rather than using six illustrations by one artist, we prefer to use two or three pieces each from several artists. When we're done formatting articles for an issue, we'll delve through our art envelope, as in, "Let's see, we've only used one Phil Tortorici drawing so far, let's find one to fit into the letter column."

As to why we do this fanzine, that's a whole other subject. We don't qualify for the Novas (British), Rebels (South), or Aurora Awards (Canadian); we're not nearly fannish enough to draw votes for the FAAN Awards, and we don't have the circulation, among other shortcomings, to contend for a Hugo.

What's left? It gives us a platform for opinions we want to express, sure. It gives us some level of social interaction. Mostly, though, we're doing it because we want to. It's a hobby from which we derive some modest pleasure.

Isn't that the point?



ROBERT MICHAEL SABELLA



ROBERT MICHAEL SABELLA

I think I speak for many rabid science fiction fans when I confess that my background in literature is fairly weak. I read all the required books in high school and during the two semesters of college when I was required to take literature courses. But I was a math major, so most of my time was spent with vectors space and abelian rings, leaving little time for humanities courses.

I have been an avid reader almost my entire life, as far back as grammar school when I walked to the local library to take out books on a regular basis. Very quickly I realized that I preferred the books with the little rocketship stickers on their spines. The Oz books. Tom Swift, Jr. Something called The Light At The End Of The Tunnel. At age 15 I discovered Worlds Of IF and Galaxy Magazine and for the next thirty years virtually all my pleasure reading fell under the broad umbrella of science fiction. Some fantasy occasionally, perhaps a small bit of horror, but mundane fiction? Never. And literature? Definitely not! My mind still rebelled at those books I was forced in high school. Like most students I found them boring and resented being forced to read Charles Dickens and William Shakespeare when I much preferred Clifford D. Simak and Roger Zelazny!

Science fiction was fun. Its sense of wonder lifted me out of the boring, slightly depressing, not-too-happy real world into considerably more fascinating and more hopeful worlds. And that basic incentive never changed for thirty years.

What did evolve steadily as I grew older was my taste in science fiction. As a 14-year-old I liked nothing better than the Martian odysseys of Edgar Rice Burroughs and the Foundation Trilogy of Isaac Asimov. By the time I graduated college my favorite writers were Roger Zelazny, Samuel R. Delany, and Robert Silverberg. Sense of wonder? Sure. This Immortal, Nova, and Dying Inside were full of it. But they also had more depth than either Burroughs or Asimov ever imagined. Rather than cardboard figures like John Carter jumping mindlessly from adventure to adventure, "New Wave" science fiction was concerned with real people whose lives mattered. And since their lives matter-

ed, I developed an emotional stake in the outcome of the events they were involved in. I cared what happened to Rydra Wong and Conrad Nimikos and David Selig in a way similar to, if considerably less intense than, the way I cared about the lives of the students I now devoted much of my life to. And the more I cared about the characters in a story, the deeper grew my emotional involvement, and consequently, the greater became my enjoyment of the story as well!

Between the late 1960's and early 1990's I found myself more and more attracted to science fiction that involved me emotionally in the lives of the characters while still providing me with sense of wonder. Stories by such writers as Michael Bishop, Kim Stanley Robinson, Ursula K. LeGuin, George R.R. Martin, C.J. Cherryh, John Varley, Lucius Shepard, Orson Scott Card, and Sheri S. Tepper. I read a lot of fine science fiction written by those writers, most of it satisfying my twin needs for emotional involvement and sense of wonder. I was thrilled to have found such a marvellous genre as science fiction, probably the only genre that could possibly satisfy both cravings so well.

The only genre? And how many other genres did I sample sufficiently to be able to make such a definitive statement? And since my preference was definitely leaning toward the literary end of the science fiction spectrum, didn't it make sense to try reading some non-speculative literature as well?

Besides reading science fiction faithfully for thirty years, I was also fairly closely involved in fannish writing as well. And much fannish writing echoed my own high school-influenced views of literature. Literature? You mean a bunch of overbearing neurotics examining their navels for three hundred pages?

Even when the topic of literary science fiction was raised, it often induced derogatory comments as well. Why the hell do you want to do away with all the sense of wonder and write a futuristic Portnoy's Complaint with an alien psychiatrist analyzing a 30th Century Momma's Boy?

That twin onslaught -- bad high school memories and fannish snobbery -- kept my own opinion of literature on a distasteful

level, an opinion totally uncorrupted by any adult reading of my own! But a half dozen years ago I was fortunate enough to develop a friendship with somebody who loves literature with the same passion that I love science fiction. And she began recommending titles for me to read, encouraging me to give them a try. This from a person whose opinions and views are very similar to my own, a person whose outlook on life I trust implicitly. Shouldn't I trust her judgement enough to at least give literature a try?

So in the past several years I have read enough literature that I am now in the beginning stages of formulating my own opinion of the genre. And while I am certainly not yet well read enough for that opinion to be definitive, there are certain facts that my opinion will most likely incorporate.

One, literature is as much a genre as science fiction, fantasy, horror, historical fiction, mysteries, thrillers, westerns, etc. And being a genre, its works must all have some identifying trademark. Fantasy must have a foundation that is impossible in the world as we know it. Mystery fiction involves an attempt to solve a crime. Science fiction involves some extrapolation from the real world as we know it.

So what aspect defines literature? According to Webster it is writings expressing ideas of permanent or universal interest. My own layman's definition would be fairly close to that: literature is fiction about important human concerns. That certainly agrees with the literature I've read in the past few years. Steinbeck's The Grapes Of Wrath is about the struggle for survival during the Great Depression. Bronte's Wuthering Heights concerns coping with a dysfunctional family. Andrea Barrett's recent Voyage Of The Narwhal is about living with failure and lack of self-esteem.

But wait a second! Ursula K. LeGuin's The Left Hand Of Darkness is about love and acceptance between two races which are thoroughly alien to each other. Kim Stanley Robinson's The Wild Shore examines coming-of-age in the aftermath of a limited nuclear war. Aren't they important human concerns as well?

Yes, they are. Because the more literature I've read the more I've realized that just as there is a common misconception about the nature of literature^{of SF} in the eyes of many mainstream critics, there is also a common misconception about the nature of literature in the eyes of many rabid science fiction fans. Literature is definitely not the small sub-genre of literature currently touted by some members of the literary establishment. What they consider literature is often formless exercises in plotless writing. Stories whose focus is limited to, well, a bunch of overbearing neurotics examining their navels for three hundred pages.

That small sub-genre of literature has scared a lot of science fiction fans away from the breadth and depth of literature in much the same way that B-movies have scared a lot of potential readers away from the breadth and depth of science fiction. Which brings me to the second fact that my eventual opinion of literature will likely incorporate: both science fiction and literature are equally subject to Sturgeon's Law: 90% of everything is crap! Certainly not every would-be artist who attempts expressing ideas of permanent or universal interest succeeds at it. There is as much bad literature as there is bad science fiction.

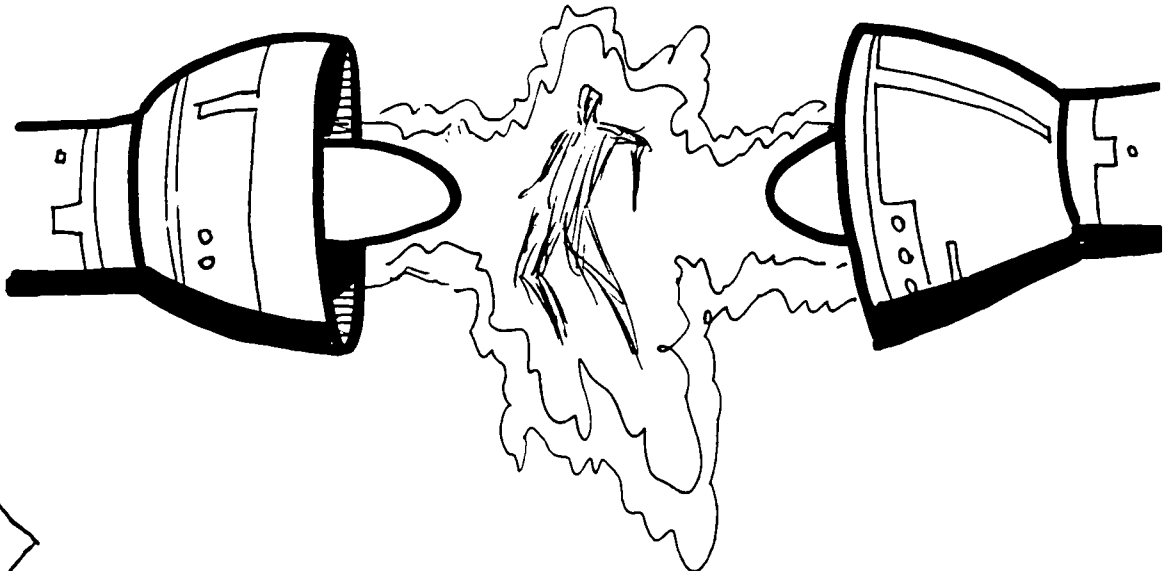
While a longtime hardcore SF fan such as myself would never reject the entire SF genre because of the 90% of it that is bad, it is equally foolish to reject the entire literature genre because of the

90% of it that is bad. Yet that has been the popular bias of many rabid science fiction fans ever since the so-called "Golden Age".

It is time for all lovers of great fiction to open their minds to the world of great literature, and realize that much of it is as truly wondrous and provocative as the best science fiction. I'll even make some recommendations that have moved me in the past few years: Toni Morrison's Beloved (a true ghost story even!); Steinbeck's touching Of Mice And Men and The Grapes Of Wrath; Salmon Rushdie's Midnight's Children and The Moor's Last Sigh; the five-volume Chinese classic The Dream Of The Red Chamber; Jung Chang's incredibly moving Wild Swans; Milan Kundera's The Incredible Lightness Of Being; ANYTHING by the aforementioned Andrea Barrett, including The Middle Kingdom and Ship Fever.

There is such an incredible wealth of literature out there just waiting to be read. And it is such a damned shame that many science fiction fans reject it because of reverse snobbishness. That is every bit as narrowminded as all those literateurs casting aspersions on science fiction without ever bothering to read it! Sure 90% of science fiction is crap, but I love it for the 10% that rises above the morass. Surely literature should not be held to a higher standard than that!

-- Robert Michael Sabella




An Interview With

Sharon
Lee



And

Steve
Miller



E.B. FROHVET: The two of you reportedly met through fandom. Were you both already writing SF at that time? How difficult did you find it to mesh your styles? And do you cooperate on everything now, or do you still work independently?

SHARON LEE: Actually, we met because I entered a short story contest and Steve, who was already a Real Writer, was one of the judges for the contest. This would have been (counting quickly on fingers, toes and elbows) Balticon 10. As it happened, I won. My prize was free membership to the con, \$25 Cold Hard Cash and I got to meet Isaac Asimov. The con was my first and I liked it so well that I went again the next year, the dealers' room quickly recovered my \$25, and Isaac Asimov was charming. I also met, in passing, a fellow named Steve, about my own age, who said nice things about my story. I met him again, a couple of months later, when I finally managed to get to a BSFS meeting. And again, a little while after that, at school.

As time goes on, we do tend, I think, to collaborate more -- it seems more natural now to bring a story idea to the table, so to speak, than just go it alone. That said, I have two singleton short stories due out sometime this year, "Passionato" in Dreams Of Decadence, and "The Big Ice" in Catfantastic V.

STEVE MILLER: We didn't get all that much time to talk at Balticon 10 -- perhaps 25 minutes or so spread over an initial meeting and a couple of random pass-bys in the dealers' room. Then Sharon came out to one of the BSFS meetings held in the backroom of a hamburger joint in Owings Mills. My youngest brother, Ron,

was with me that night and she figured he was my son... and said maybe five or ten words to me. In any case we both had gone back to college at UMBC and we both took a writing course as easy credits -- luckily the same one. We were the only two SF-oriented people in the class, and the oldest, and the most experienced writers, so we became a sort of automatic power bloc, or collective, or at least a duo.

The meshing of styles is a funny thing because I think we absolutely don't think about it. This isn't to say that we write exactly the same, but rather that when we work together the voice we write with is the story's voice and not mine or Sharon's. The first story we did together was a Kinzel story that sold to Fantasy Book; that happened because Sharon started the story while in the "opportunity pool" and then got called to work in a law firm in Baltimore. She left poor Kinzel stuck on a stairway waiting for his master -- that's Madog -- to administer a lesson for Kinzel's latest screw-up, and I couldn't just let him hang there. With her permission I finished it and then the second Kinzel was done and by then Sharon had written the first sentence of Agent Of Change. By the way, Kinzel himself came from a joke advertisement we worked on together when I was editing The Star Swarm News -- so we'd actually collaborated a bit earlier.

We both still do write separately; I had a new story out in Chariot To The Stars and will be showing off an excerpt from my fantasy WIP in an upcoming chap-book.

FROHVET: Where did the Liaden Universe come from? Did you start with Val Con and Miri and create the story around them? Or did the universe come first and the characters after?

LEE: I've known Val Con for many, many years and Miri for almost as long. They told me -- and are still telling us -- about the universe they live in.

MILLER: And they've had lots of help along the way from Daav, Er Thom, Edger, and etc!

FROHVET: The three original books are to be re-issued by Meisha Merlin Publishing (P.O. Box 7, Decatur GA 30031). When will that be available, and what comes after that?

LEE: Partners In Necessity -- the omnibus including Agent Of Change, Conflict Of Honors and Carpe Diem -- will be available in trade paperback from Meisha Merlin in February 2000. We expect that MM will do a limited run of signed hardcovers by subscription, as was done for Plan B, but we don't know yet when they'll start taking orders. Pilot's Choice, a two novel omnibus including never-before-published prequels Local Custom and Scout's Progress will be released in trade in February 2001 -- again, we assume hardcovers will be available by pre-order. I Dare, the sequel to Plan B, will be released in February 2002.

MILLER: Also in the "after that" realm is the possibility of a Clutch-centric Liaden book or two; since this was suggested by the publisher I guess we'll have to consider it real hard once I Dare is finished. Absolute Magnitude has bought a couple of Liaden short stories and one -- "Balance Of Trade" is due out just about now and that may well be the start of a longer work if there's room in Stephe's schedule at some point.

FROHVET: As a corollary to the above, we had the sense that Agent Of Change was a little more Steve's book, and Conflict Of Honors was more Sharon's book. True, false, or somewhere in between?

LEE: Um. Yes. Or at least... Conflict was supposed to have been a short story. I got interested in the character of Val Con's foster brother during the writing of Agent Of Change; and after Agent was finished and sent off to earn its first rejection slip, I just started to, you know, fool around with the story a little, just as a character-exploration kind of thing, really. And when I next looked up, I'd written about 100,000 words, met not only Shan yos'Galan but Priscilla Delacroix y Mendoza, Lina Faaldom, Rusty Morgenstern, Master Frodo, and all the rest of the varied crew of Dutiful Passage.

MILLER: Also, when Sharon brought the first sentence from Agent to me and said "I think I have a novel here" we took a major step back and talked about it for about an hour and then I plotted Agent (and vague portions of Carpe Diem and even I Dare for that matter) out overnight. Conflict happened as a way for Sharon to work out some background -- except it kept insisting it was a real book, and happened to be done just at a time that Del Rey had a hole in the publishing line-up.

FROHVET: Did anything in particular inspire the Clutch? We loved the scene where Edger is standing in the lobby of a burning building, admiring the fire as an art form.

LEE: In the way back, when I first met Val Con, he had some adventures with some very long-lived aliens simply called The Green People. When we were working out the plot of Agent Of Change, I told Steve about The Green People, and he not only understood what I was talking about, but he knew some of them.

MILLER: Actually, Edger is a fairly logical follow-on to one of my characters from an as yet unpublished novel. That character -- Honest John -- had some of the size and some of the [talking with hands for about two minutes here!] the other-worldly sense of reality that Edger, Sheather, and etc. display. The fire scene -- from the setting of the fire to the exeunt omnes stage right -- was



loads of fun to write.

FROHVET: We kind of missed Zhenia Trelu (i.e. in reading Plan B). And her dog. Any chance that Miri and Val Con will ever get back to Vandar?

LEE: [Laughing] Vandar hopes not!

MILLER: Sigh -- and alas I'd written several starts to a follow-on book set on Vandar when it became obvious that Vandar would not be ready to a follow-on to Val Con for some years. If ever.

FROHVET: Any hard feelings against Del Rey, who axed the series?

MILLER: Well, really, we always thought they'd made a mistake, but the longer we went without reselling the books, or selling any more, the more concerned we were that someone there had made the right decision after all. Even after Stephie Pagel came to us looking to reprint the books we were afraid that they'd been right. I think we got to put all that behind us in one particular hour, though. That was the hour we were given to do a signing at Bucky -- the Worldcon in Baltimore -- and we expected to be talking with a couple of members of the Friends of Liad mailing list and watching the Worldcon go by the whole time. Instead, we started off with a line thirty or forty people long waiting patiently, respectfully even, to get 7-, 8-, or 10-year-old books signed. More, the line renewed itself as we signed, so every time we looked up someone else was waiting. Whatever had happened before,

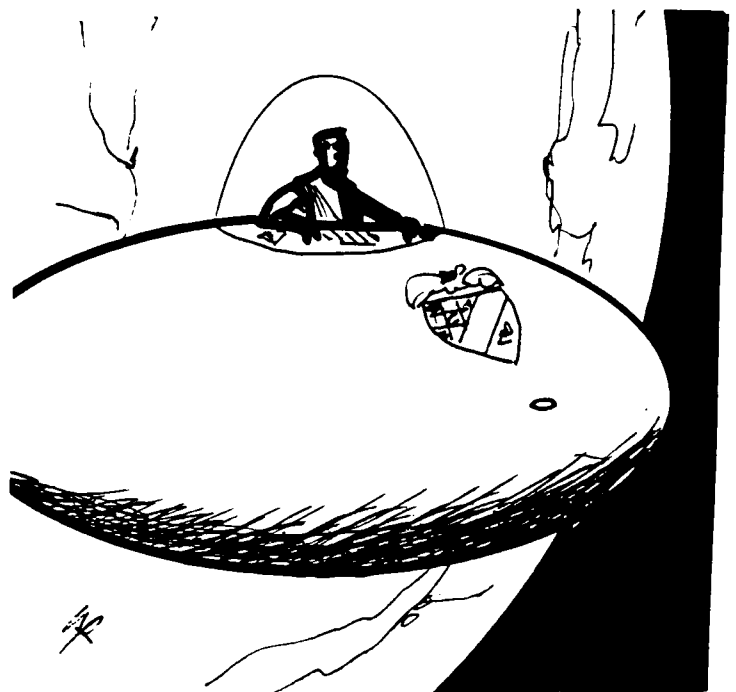
we knew that we were in the right place.

FROHVET: Is there some source that has a lot of your non-Liaden fiction?

MILLER: Right now? Sort of. Us. We started SRM, Publisher (P.O. Box 179, Unity, Maine 04988) to put out Two Tales Of Korval at Christmas time in 1995 but the Friends of Liad kept asking for more. What we had more of at the time was non-Liaden stories, so we published Sharon's chapbook Variations Three in 1996, and in 1997 we published Chariot To The Stars with five of my stories. Then we reprinted The Naming Of Kinzel in spring of 1998, and to keep up with the Friends of Liad we added Fellow Travellers with three joint non-Korval Liaden stories at Christmas of 1998. As I type this we're working on Quiet Magic -- a chapbook with a Sharon story, a Steve story, and a Lee/Miller story -- for June. A Liaden chapbook will follow at Christmas.

FROHVET: A little off the subject: Sharon, you are Executive Director of SFWA, a position you've described as "an employee, not an officer". Was that a position you actively sought, or was it something that just fell into your lap, so to speak? Tell us a little bit about the job and what duties it involves.

LEE: It's Tom Easton's fault that I'm



SFWA's Executive Director.

I had a job -- two jobs. No, wait -- three jobs. I had been office manager/woman-of-all-work for a small business in Waterville for about five years; that was basically 20 hours a week. And I was a correspondent for the Town Line, a weekly newspaper out of China, Maine. And Steve and I were sharing an SF/F book review column called "The Outer Edge" -- the column ran two Sundays a month in the central Maine newspapers. Oh, and I'd also been under temporary contract with the State of Maine Department of Agriculture, as a database consultant and webmaster. That's four jobs. And we were writing fiction. Five jobs.

In any case, life was burbling right along when Tom called one evening to say that SFWA was looking for a full time Executive Director, and would I be interested in seeing the job description. I hadn't been a member of SFWA for years, but I said, sure, what the heck, and he e-mailed the thing to me next morning.

Well, it was just impossible. No one could do everything the ad called for and have a life, much less stay sane; so I threw the message out and wrote back to Tom to thank him for thinking of me.

Life went on. Then another e-mail from Tom showed up in the in-box. Seems SFWA had modified its want list somewhat, and the new job description looked not only doable, but interesting. So I applied, then forgot about it. Couple months later, the phone rang -- the President of SFWA -- who was at that point Michael Capobianco -- had settled on three possibles for the job, and I was one, was I still interested and when could he call me for an interview?

I was hired in August 1997, and my first official duty was to fly out to San Antonio for Worldcon. I fly reluctantly, at best, so Worldcon passed in a kind of surreal haze at the end of which was another flight. Thank ghod I was able to take the train to Bucky.

My basic day-to-day duties are to keep the membership database error-

free and a bunch of other record-keeping and clerical functions, serve as an interface between the Board of Directors and the membership, maintain accurate files so that SFWA may Remember Rightly, process membership applications, collect dues, compile the annual directory, and the ever-popular Other Duties As Assigned.

FROHVET: Thank you!

[[Editor's note: Readers are also directed to "Only Our Opinion", wherein we review Plan B, the long-awaited new Liaden novel, in this issue.]]



Four For Fandom! or How To
by J.G.

4

Improve Your Faned In 4 EZ Steps
Stinson

Making Book, by Teresa Nielsen Hayden (NESFA Press, 1994)
The Silence Of The Langford, by Dave Langford (NESFA Press, 1996)
Age Of Wonders, by David Hartwell (Walker, 1984)
Science Fiction Fandom, by Joe Siclari (Greenwood Press, 1994)

In the race to catch up on fan history (a lost cause, I know, but at least I'll never run out of reading material), I have been pelting my local librarians with as many InterLibrary Loan request slips as they will accept. I used the ILL to obtain all four books listed in this article. I had little familiarity with any of the authors beyond name recognition. This is not my normal book selection method. Hoo boy, did I ever get lucky.

Making Book is a charming, intelligent, witty collection of essays on a number of fannish topics. The two I found most intriguing were Hayden's recounting of how she was tossed out of the Mormon religion, and how she deals with being a narcoleptic. (Easy: just don't drive, and fall asleep only when necessary. Well, maybe not THAT easy.) I found myself wishing I'd lived through her early fandom days in parallel with her, since she obviously had so much fun. Her sterling and effective defense of her husband Patrick's peace of mind against a newt-brained stranger was ... oh, I'll go ahead and say it, awesome.

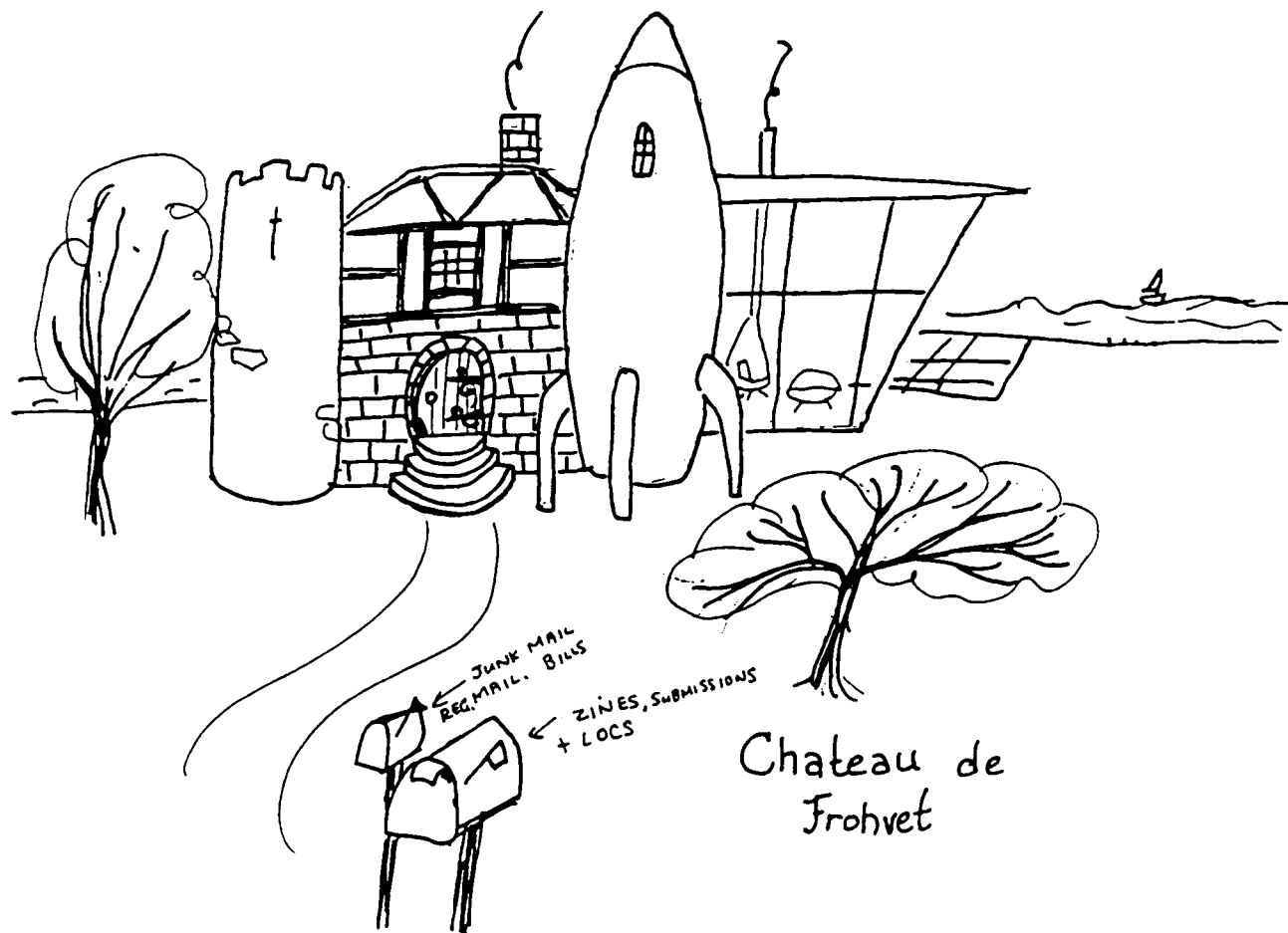
I had heard Dave Langford was so funny that he made rooms full of SF fans fall off their chairs in heaps of guffaws and chortles. I had trouble believing anyone could be that funny. Having read The Silence Of The Langford, I no longer have that problem. Langford is, to steal a phrase, a scream. Even when I don't know who the heck he's talking about, he's still funny. After reading this book, it's no wonder concorns want to latch onto him at every opportunity to deliver another gut-achingly funny chat for 500 or so of

their closest pals. No one is spared the lash of his wit in his book reviews, for which he claims to have gotten himself in trouble numerous times. Quelle surprise! It may not be a smart thing to have former physicists running about doing the things Langford does, but the world would be a poorer place if he wasn't doing those things. Boogie on, Dave.

David Hartwell's Age Of Wonders is, as he remarks in the introduction, intended for the reader who has no idea what fandom is or what it does. If, like me, one has dipped at least a toe or two into that vast pool of fanlore, then this book can seem repetitious. I did enjoy his recounting of taking an editor new to the SF branch of a publishing company to her first SF convention. Now that's a baptism by fire if I ever heard of one.

The final entry, Science Fiction Fandom, does editor Joe Siclari proud by displaying some fine writing talents as well as a wide variety of topics. Not only are the history of U.S. fandom and its type of publications covered, but there's an entire section devoted to fandom in other areas of the world. It has a piece on SF collecting by Howard DeVore, and an excellent piece on what things look like behind all the fun stuff at a convention, by Tom Whitmore and Debbie Notkin, which was my personal favorite. I'm still a con virgin, so I like to know what I hope to some day get myself into. Oooh, was that a mangle, or what?

It's a good thing the librarians like me; I'll be doing that ILL thing again soon. Being a volunteer helps a lot, I think.



T. Khadro for E.B. Frohvet 1998

Trinlay Khadro's drawing doesn't look much like either the "French country manor" of our fantasy, or the reality of our ordinary suburban condo, but we like it. We started an article to go with it, a parody tour of the "manor", but after a couple of pages we recognized it just wasn't funny. Parody is a tough form to sustain, and one for which we have no noticeable talent. (Our "Visit To Grundtharian Fandom" in Lan's Lantern #41, which we still think rather amusing, must be regarded as a fluke. An intended sequel was a casualty of the fact that, toward the end, the time lag between sending an article to LL, and actually seeing it in print, was two years or longer.)

Hence, this article, on the principle that a dull factual article is merely dull, whereas a dull parody is intolerable. This at least has the redeeming virtue of being true.

Bonjour. Bienvenu. Welcome to your tour of Chateau de Frohvet.

On the right, as you enter, you will notice the television cart. We assembled it from a kit, with our own hands, a screwdriver, and the big pair of heavy wire-cutting pliers we got so long ago we don't quite remember where, and which we use in lieu of a hammer when the b.f.h. method is indicated.

The cart has -- duh -- a TV (soon to be replaced) and VCR. The bottom cabinet is stuffed with videotapes: commercially recorded movies (Leaving Normal, Cannery Row, Housesitter); figure skating (we have the Olympics where Lloyd Eisler can be heard to comment audibly about the scoring, "I don't give a rat's ass."); episodes of Northern Exposure; and -- we admit this freely and without shame -- episodes of Friends, including the infamous "Lesbian Wedding" one ("There's more alcohol, right?").

On top of the TV we keep sunglasses and, in winter, gloves. In summer you will see our tennis racquets leaning against the wall, and probably our bike helmet on the floor.

In the corner is the fireplace. Although as a friend has pointed out, it's not really the most efficient design for heating the room, we regard our fireplace as basically recreational. We always wanted a fireplace. On lonely winter evenings, we unplug the telephone, get a little brandy, and sit in the rocking chair, staring into the flames.

The rest of the living room has furniture -- an old black vinyl sofa, the sturdy Mexican oak coffee table where we do most of our typing; plants, and the door to the patio.

On the left you will observe the dining nook, which contains, ummm, a table and two chairs. And in the summer, against the back wall, our bicycle: there's really no other convenient place to put it. Oh yeah, and hanging on the wall, a piece of polished redwood our brother sent us from California. Call it an objet-trouve if that makes you happy.

The kitchen is pretty much a kitchen. The black loose-leaf notebook behind the toaster is our recipe stash. (We make a bitchin' Chicken Normandy if we say so ourself. You can ask -- no, come to think of it, you can't ask Steve & Elaine Stiles. They've been here, but we've never made Chicken Normandy for them.) One cupboard has been pre-empted for duty as our liquor cabinet, where we keep the Basic Necessities: wine, Scotch, brandy, Benedictine, and -- our only original contribution to the arts culinary -- "lemon surprise". To date, no one has guessed the secret ingredient by taste alone. You're welcome to try; a little advance notice of your visit would be helpful. Like Bilbo, we like guests, but prefer to know about them before they start hanging up their best party hoods in the hall.

On the "pass-through" counter are: a potted plant, a picture of our niece, a pair of old teak bookends our father bought in Kentucky, a fishbowl half full of wine corks, and an origami dragon.

If you will now follow us down the hall, mesdames et messieurs... Merci.

On the left is our room, of which the distinguishing characteristics other than the usual are an old guitar that doesn't get played as much as it used to, a print of Paul Johnson's "Walled City", and two boxes of fanzines on the floor.

Yes, the Facilities are straight through there. The black towels are for guests,

if you please.

Around the corner, please, to the den. Other than the dwarf orange tree, the feature you will probably notice most immediately is the billiard table. This is an Ohlhausen "Drake" model, and yes, much like the orange tree, smaller than the usual. Dealers generally do not keep 6-foot tables in stock; this had to be custom-ordered from the factory in California, brought in in pieces, and assembled on the spot. And yes, the only way we'll get it out is to have it dismantled. This is what the Yellow Pages are for.

For its intended purpose of being a social attraction, this has been a dismal failure. We really should not be surprised that our fantasy of happy groups taking turns at 8-ball failed to materialize. Every attempt we've ever made at throwing a party has been a disaster, or very nearly. It's a talent, you got it or you don't. On the plus side, we did once run the table in 12 shots.

You may also notice the bookcases, which are double-shelved to accommodate our main or working collection of SF books. Among the stuff cluttering up the closet are several boxes of "Keepers", books we don't especially want to read again, but don't want to throw away either.

Are you really the sort who browses through other people's closets? Indulge yourself, nothing incriminating there: boxes of non-SF books (including two Bibles -- no, three); unused flowerpots; out-of-season clothing; a box of coins our father collected somewhere. (A 1942 King George VI two-shilling piece: from its weight we judge it to be silver.) Oh yeah, our bowling ball is back there somewhere too. Also rarely used. In college a group of us used to go bowling almost every week.

We hope you have enjoyed your tour of Chateau de Frohvet. Coffee and wine will now be served on the veranda. Please visit the gift shop before you leave. No, madame, THAT is not for sale...



Once Upon A Crime edited by Ed Gorman & Martin H. Greenberg Berkley Publishing 1998

This 416 page hardcover contains 24 short stories. They are fairy tales gone modern, with intriguing twists. Most contain a strong fantasy element. It should be mentioned that many of these tales are suspense, mystery, or even horror, or close to it. The final story, by Sharyn McCrumb (is it safe to mention her in an SF fanzine?) is almost all of these, as a Danish lady must rescue her friend from the Snow Queen. Not the Snow Queen of childhood, oh no. This one is a drug dealer. I read every one of the 24 tales, although one was not very good and a couple, written as though they came out of the mouth of a Brooklyn hood of 50 years ago, were kind of hard to get through. But most are good to excellent.

"Snow White and the Eleven Dwarves" by Edward D. Hoch is an obvious take-off on you know what fairy tale and while it is a basic murder, crime of greed story, it is a good one with the cute twist of the fairy tale quality. I have no idea what fairy tale "Of The Fog" by Ed Gorman is based on. It's an excellent story of quick tempered red-necks, a girl with loose morals who tells a story which gets way out of hand and who pays for it, eventually. Kind of a psychological suspense story. Surely the editor wouldn't buy a story from himself unless it fit the theme of the anthology. Would he? There are about 4 stories based on the Cinderella fable, all good, all different. I think there are 2 or perhaps 3 Rapunzel tales, of which "Rapunzel's Revenge" will be greatly appreciated by computer lovers.

There is not a lot in the way of SF or fantasy in this book and thus is perhaps not within the purview of Twink. However, since it is such a good book, and since fairy tales are the ultimate fantasy, I recommend it.

Did You Say Chicks? edited by Esther Friesner Baen 1998

Another anthology I read recently falls completely under the Twink banner. An anthology of fantasy short stories very well edited by Esther Friesner, the paperback edition has 308 pages and 19 stories. Along with a cool intro and a mostly informative section on the authors (except the exotic Ms. Friesner).

The final selection by Adam-Troy Castro is less than a page long and hardly qualifies as a story in my view. And "La Difference" by Harry Turtledove is a sci-fi type thing which is badly out of place in this otherwise fabulous collection of humorous fantastic tales with a strong feminist slant. Other than those two quibbles, Ms. Friesner did an incredible job. The story she sold herself, "A Big Hand For The Little Lady", pretty well epitomizes the anthology: a story in which the female

BOOK REVIEW SECTION



only our opinion....

is stronger, smarter, and all around better than the guys, and in which males are basically merely drones or stupid or sex playthings for the women.

Mrs. Turtledove AKA Laura Frankos proved the old adage of "the better half" at least in this instance and in this writer's prejudiced view, with her fabulous tale "Slue-Foot Sue And The Witch In The Woods", an hilarious story of a western gal, a pet snake, a sharper-than-any-razor Bowie knife and a travelling chicken house. I think my next favourite is "Tales From The Slushpile" by Margaret Ball, a story of a woman warrior at an SF con, which combines tons of irony with some shots at various aspects of sfandom, and a flat out swords and slashing story with a mystery.

Hey, it was fun. I loved this book. Highly recommended.

REVIEWS BY E.B. FROHVET

Plan B Sharon Lee & Steve Miller 1998
Meisha Merlin Publishing autographed
hardcover limited first edition \$30.00
available only from the publisher;
trade paperback \$14.00

Humanity, like Gaul, is divided into three: Terran, Liaden, and the predatory Yxtrang. Val Con yos'Phelium, Clan Korval, has been pilot, scout, and agent of change for the Liaden-supremacist Department of Interior. But Val Con has done things no agent is permitted: he has blown off the Department's deep conditioning and mission and taken as lifemate the ex-mercenary Miri Robertson, who calls herself Terran. There, that brings you roughly up to speed on Agent Of Change, Conflict Of Honors, and Carpe Diem (1988-89) before this series was mercilessly dumped by Del Rey's bean counters.

The Department will not give up one of its own; but neither will Clan Korval. Sensing the menace, Val Con's siblings have kicked in Plan B, an emergency near-war contingency. Meanwhile, Miri has discovered that she is part Liaden, which raises the awkward question of whether Clan Erob will accept this changeling cousin. The newlyweds arrive on Lytaxin just in time to be trapped by the Yxtrang invasion. Meanwhile, Val Con's other siblings, the alien Edger and his brethren

(did we mention the Clutch?) are negotiating with the Juntavas Syndicate -- though the Clutch's idea of negotiating tends to a very polite version of "Take it or leave it." Meanwhile...

Okay, if you were desperate for a label, you could call this "space opera". You could say the same about Lois McMaster Bujold's "Vorkosigan" stories. In neither case would that label begin to convey the intrinsic charm of these character-intensive stories. As Bob Sabella says, these characters matter. You should all run out and order Plan B, preferably through Barnes & Noble so it's on their computer, and these nice respected writers can sell lots of books.

Acorna (The Unicorn Girl) Anne McCaffrey
& Margaret Ball 1997 Harper/Prism
\$6.50

For three asteroid miners, the contents of the life-pod were strange. The little girl was almost human, except for her unusual hands and feet, silver hair -- and the little horn growing out of her forehead. They soon discovered her odd talent for purifying air and water. But when the company which had bought out their contracts planned stupid experiments on her, the miners took their ship and their foundling, and fled. After all, Rafik's Uncle Hafiz could fix anything: for a price.

We can see McCaffrey's agent pitching this to the publisher: "Three Men And A Baby in outer space!" Okay, that's facile, and with McCaffrey's sales, it was probably more like the publishers lining up to throw money at the agent. Still, one gets the sense that McCaffrey provided a rough (very rough) outline, and Ball got carried away with the actual writing. It works better if you think of it as a comedy, though that may not have been the original intent.

Primary Inversion Catherine Asaro 1995
Tor \$5.99

Sauscony Valdoria was a Jagernaut, one of the cyberwarriors who protected the Skolian Imperialate against its arch-rival, the Eubian Empire. More than that, she was a Rhon, one of the handful who could access the Skol-Net, the computer

network that existed beyond time and space. She was also the half-sister of the Emperor. But the only man in the galaxy who was her true mate, was also her enemy; and Sauscony had to defend him from her brother and her society.

The first part of this is dense techno-babble: maybe it even makes sense. We can see how people who admire that sort of thing might enjoy it (see the cover blurb by Stanley Schmidt). The second part tries -- unsuccessfully in our view -- to establish the protagonist as a sympathetic character. Part Star Wars, a dash of Robocop, a pinch of Delany's Nova, this works after its fashion. We just didn't care at any point about the characters or the story.

Kirinyaga Mike Resnick 1998 Ballantine
\$25.00 hardcover

Joseph Nicholas objects to our publishing reviews of books we ditched in under 50 pages. We'll just have to bear up under his disapproval, because we want to tell you explicitly why we loathed this book. It's the story of a man who discards everything to revert to a society which glorifies provincialism, ignorance, and the ritual abuse and murder of children. (Note carefully, we don't accuse Mr. Resnick of glorifying these things. He may well have intended this as a bleak dystopian vision: we certainly hope so.) When we got to the point where the protagonist is talking to a girl "too young for circumcision", and he tells her that tribal law forbids women to learn to read, it was a choice of ditching the book or retching. We chose the first option.

Yes, there are many things wrong with Western "civilization" and technology. You will have a hard time selling us the notion that more ignorance, more petty tribalism and balkanization, are the solution. The human race has tried that, endlessly, and it never works. Tell us we completely missed the point of this book, we can live with that. But we found it offensive beyond merely unreadable.

Island In The Sea Of Time S.M. Stirling
1998 Roc \$6.99

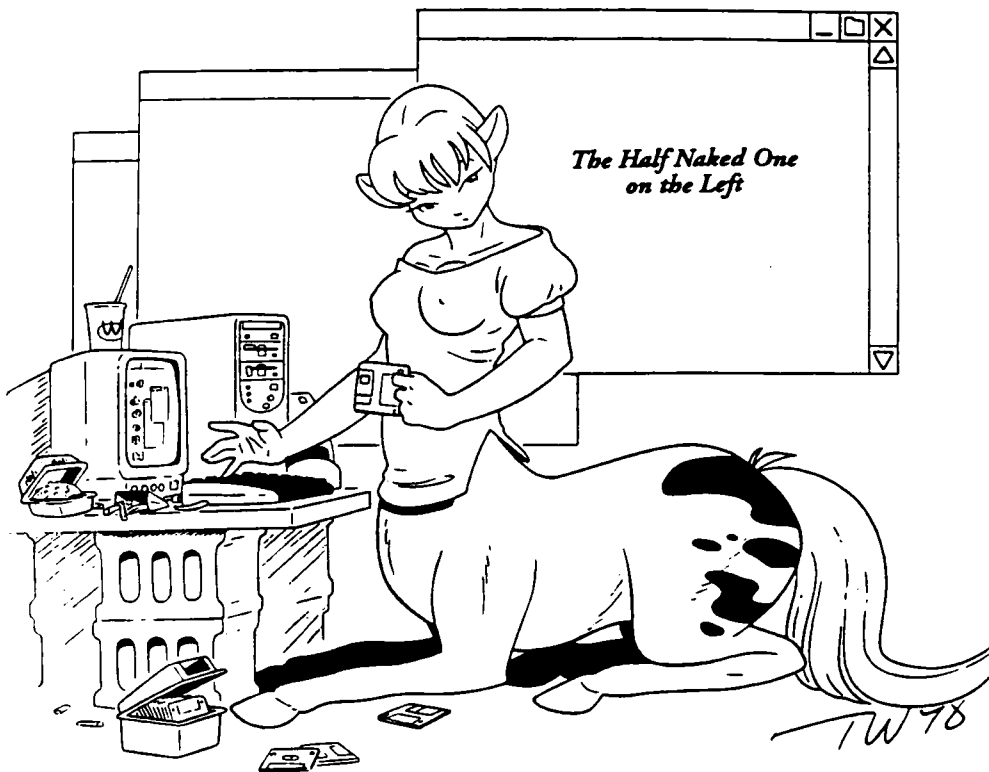
Bang: Nantucket Island is suddenly transported back to 1250 B.C. Instantly concluding there is no going back, the islanders in a spirit of cliché novaglian self-reliance, begin setting up a sustainable low-tech community. By a fortunate chance, the Coast Guard tall ship Eagle is available; and to look on the bright side, there are plenty of cod and whales to eat. But of course there are the obligatory assholes, who see any emergency as a road to the unrestrained abuse of power. And/or the author needed an excuse to get in lots of killing.

A cover blurb by Robert J. Sawyer calls this "the definitive novel about castaways in time". That leads us to wonder how well read Mr. Sawyer is in SF: we could name half a dozen books with more claim to that title, beginning with L. Sprague deCamp's Lest Darkness Fall. Stirling's book is a good solid example of the sub-genre, but nothing new or original. And if we felt that having the ship captain be a black lesbian woman was both unlikely on all three counts, and blatant tokenism as well; or that Stirling gets way too carried away with the italics, well, that's just what we think. Take out 150 pages of casual slaughter and brutality, and this would be an attractive read.

WHO NEEDS DRUGS?
WE'VE GOT
SCIENCE FICTION!

FANTASY FICTION
RPGS FAN FIC FANDOM
POP CULTURE

It's a Fandom die roll...



The Knarley Knews #74
Henry L. Welch
1525 16th Avenue
Grafton WI 53024

As befits its engineer editor, a very neatly presented and regularly scheduled small genzine. Don Pattenden wraps up his epic round-Australia trip; Charlotte Proctor ties her book review column into a talk on women warriors; lots of LOC's.

Thyme #125
Alan Stewart
P.O. Box 222, World Trade Center, Melbourne, Victoria 8005, Australia

Southern Fandom Conf. Bulletin Vol 7 #2
Julie Wall
470 Ridge Road
Birmingham AL 35206

Officially quarterly, in practice more like 3/year; the newszine of Southern fandom. Wall on Y2K; convention reports; Laura Haywood discusses the history of fandom in Chapel Hill NC; fanzine reviews by ex-editor Tom Feller. (We assume he still has the bulk mailing permit, as this is still posted from Nashville.) Also club and convention listings and LOC's. A very useful source of news and views.

Memphen #253
Greg Bridges
P.O. Box 820534
Memphis TN 38182

Obviously a transitional issue, as ex-editors Tim & Barbara Gatewood have moved on, and a rotating editorship led by Bridges are not up to speed yet. Bridges discusses the changes; a Capricorn XIX report by Leigh Kimmel; club news. This has been one of the better clubzines we get, and we assume it will be back at that level shortly.

The major newszine of Australian fandom. Part 2 of an interview with David Gemell; articles on Star Trek (Rose Mitchell) and writing (Lyn McConchie); listings of Australian clubs, social events, and cons. This is a lot like SFCB, now that we think of it. We're not going to define Australian SF News as a separate zine (though it may have been once); we regard it as the book review section of Thyme.

Vanamonde #'s 298-302
John Hertz
236 S. Coronado Street #409
Los Angeles CA 90057

A one-sheet APA-L zine, roughly weekly, mailed in batches of 5 (5 being the most pages you can send for one first-class stamp) to non-members such as us. Lots of talk about Worldcon; responses to other APA's, often cryptic to outsiders; brief portions of letters; whatever else Hertz feels like discussing. (Food is mentioned fairly often.) Parts of this are always interesting.

South Florida SFS Shuttle #137
"Mal" Barker/rotating editors
P.O. Box 70143
Fort Lauderdale FL 33307

This theoretically bimonthly clubzine, we have to admit, fluctuates some in schedule and quality. (SFSFS does a lot of other fanac; the club is their priority, as it should be.) Club news, the belated remainder of George Peterson's Worldcon report, a bunch of letters this time out. Improved from the last issue, but more progress is possible.

Zine / Day #'s 1-14

Lise T. Eisenberg
Bowling Green Station, P.O. Box 1886
New York NY 10274

This evades easy classification, though "personalzine" comes close. An assembly of 1-page personal reflections ("a snapshot of my fleeting thoughts at the moment") written over 14 consecutive days. Fandom, mouse-hunting, depression, food, and ranting. We're unsure of the motive by which it was sent to us, but this is agreeably fannish in a non sequitur way.

The Reluctant Famulus #54

Tom Sadler
422 W. Maple Avenue
Adrian MI 49221

A spectacular full-color cover from Peggy Ranson for the 10th-anniversary ish! Highlights include the editor's reflection on the fanhistory crisis, Robert Sabella's analysis of St. Leibowitz And The Wild Horse Woman, a several page folio of art by Terry Jeeves, and Sadler's fanfictional account of an adventure with George "Lan" Laskowski. Unfortunately there is no letter column this time, often the best part of TRF; still it remains among our favorite zines and way overdue for a Hugo nomination.

No Award #5

Marty Cantor
11825 Gilmore Street #105
North Hollywood CA 91606

Tongue firmly in cheek, Cantor urges you to vote for "No Award" in this roughly twice-a-year genzine. Excellent cover by "Schirm" (Marc Schirmeister). The highlight for us was Milt Stevens' article on Zen letterhacking; Len Moffatt on California fan history; Joseph T. Major's fanzine

review this time is devoted to the worthy Reluctant Famulus. We can admire the merit of a zine like this even though it's not the zine we would do.

Quipu #10

Vicki Rosenzweig
33 Indian Road, #6-R
New York NY 10034

An irregular 6-page personalzine in which Rosenzweig mentions a fire in her building (no one was hurt), why cough medicine is red, and the real way the Three Laws of Robotics would work.

Out Of The Kaje #3

Karen Johnson
35 Mariana Avenue, South Croydon,
Victoria 3136, Australia

This smallish genzine is actually not unlike Twink, though more cheerful/less serious in tone. Tributes to Ian Gunn; the editor's take on the Elizabeth Billinger article about what to take to Mars; a look at fannish nomenclature; poetry, and some LOC's. Who says there aren't any new younger fanzine fans coming along?

Derogatory Reference #92

Arthur D. Hlavaty
206 Valentine Street
Yonkers NY 10704

Departing somewhat from his usual focus on mainly personal matters and opinions, Hlavaty devotes most of this issue to the annual International Conference on the Fantastic in the Arts. This title is evidently sufficiently flexible to allow of papers on Phantom Of The Opera. (Thus allowing Hlavaty the opportunity to get off such one-liners as, "Post-modernism is a circle whose margins are everywhere and whose center is nowhere.") Sounds fascinating, if a little much for us.

The Leighton Look (not numbered)

Rodney Leighton
RR 3, Tatamagouche, Nova Scotia,
B0K 1V0, Canada

Rodney sends these out every once in a while, typically 4 (2 double-sided) pages of plain text. Much of it consists of

comments on fanzines he's received, including but not confined to SFandom; but also intriguing asides into his life ("I had emu for supper"). The free, if not always PC, expression of the editor's views is the strength of this personalzine.

Barmaid #6

Yvonne Rowse
Evergreen, Halls Farm Lane, Trimpley,
Worcs, DY12 1NP, United Kingdom

A more usual variant of the personalzine, this is not quite subtitled "The Life & Times of Y. Rowse, Esq." but ought to be. She disses modern management theory as it has screwed up her job at the pub, explains about her family, and sternly edits LOC's by topic. The rather simple format of Barmaid could be improved, but we can't fault the lively content.

International Revolutionary Gardener #2

Judith Hanna & Joseph Nicholas
15 Jansons Road, South Tottenham,
London, N15 4JU, United Kingdom

This annual event really is a gardening & permaculture fanzine, with occasional diversions into fandom. We find Judith's humanist style a little more accessible than Joseph's stern jobations: humor is never going to be their long suit, though Judith admits to taping Teletubbies.

Mainstream #17

Jerry Kaufman & Suzanne Tompkins
3522 NE. 123rd Street
Seattle WA 98125

A pity this handsome (Harvia double cover on blue-green cardstock, lots of Stiles art) genzine came and went before we got to know it: #17, the return from four years' gafia, is also the last issue. Most of the content is personal anecdotes: Terry Garey's piece on practical crafting was the most enjoyable to us. We hope these people stay active in fanzines even if no longer pubbing their own ish.

Challenger #9

Guy Lillian III
P.O. Box 53092
New Orleans LA 70153

Diana Sharples' "Elvish Musicians" cover tells you right off this is going to be

another fine issue. Eve Ackerman's account of mono is livened by witty Charlie Williams drawings, typical of the good assorted art. Though the personal articles are interesting, the 40-page lettercol is the heart and soul of this fanzine. How can you say this is not Hugo material?

Banana Wings #13

Claire Briailey & Mark Plummer
14 Northway Road, Croydon,
Surrey, CR0 6JE, United Kingdom

How many fanzines would let their house reviewer not only review them, but point out weaknesses? Paul Kincaid is right, the focus on British fan-politics is a touch narrow; but Kincaid's own insights into fanzines, Maureen Speller's regular column on SF, and a frequently witty lettercol make this genzine a standout. It could use a little more art.

FOSFAX #195

Timothy Lane & Elizabeth Garrott
P.O. Box 37281
Louisville KY 40233

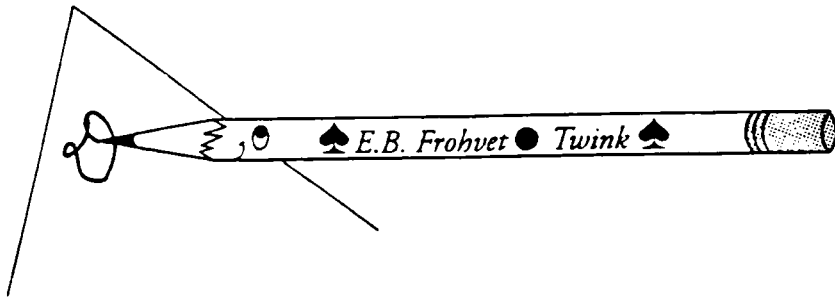
Reading FOSFAX is like mining for gold: there are nuggets to be found, you just have to sort through a certain amount of gravel. The fact that everything outside the lettercol is written in-house by about five people (several of whom are probably Joseph T. Major under various pen names) tends to limit its focus; but within that range it is consistent and informative.

Probe #107

Deirdre Byrne
P.O. Box 781401
Sandton 2146, South Africa

SF South Africa is a group so small and isolated that they don't even seem to have club news; their clubzine is padded out with local-talent fiction. Standing out like the Ace of Swords among all this fribble is Gerhard Hope's detailed, critical analysis of the bleak TV series Millenium. Mr. Hope has the makings of a fine fan reviewer.

Arriving after we had used up all the space allotted to fanzine reviews this issue: PhiloSFy #12, Plokta Vol 3 #3½ & Vol 4 #1, Trap Door #19, It Goes On The Shelf #20.



Rheaders Rhevenge

[[Editorial comments appear in the customary double brackets.]]

SHERYL BIRKHEAD
23629 Woodfield Road
Gaithersburg MD 20882

The news of Buck's death was a total surprise to me. Bill Bowers was nice enough to call and let me know (since I'm not on line). Unfortunately, since it wasn't a holiday, I had a suspicion that something had happened, but it still took him a few minutes to get around to the call's reason.

Any yelling to have been done over nominations is a done deal now -- have no idea who/what will make the ballot. I will be curious to see how many Aussies and their literature make the ballot. I know that, in general, quite a few countries (when the Worldcon is out of the U.S.) forget just how few nominations it takes ... and they bypass their own.

I noticed that Nova Express has started running LOC's and, I think, fan art -- I see that on the contributors' info, Teddy Harvia is mentioned as having had art in Twink. Aha -- a mention -- you can't pay for advertising like that!

[[We get the sense that most of the people involved in NE aren't much into fanzine fandom as a general thing. But they have started pubbing a few LOC's.]]

I really like Taral's critters and the one for your heading was interesting -- the centaur's left "half" is apparently the human half and appears clothed -- the right "half" is the more equine portion and is naked!

[[It does fit the title; which is odd, because as far as we know it wasn't drawn

specifically for the purpose, it was just something Taral had on hand. Hope you enjoy the cover.]]

I can only find one response to "crottled greeps" and I expected to see the letter column overrun. I bow to Harry's explanation -- it was a term I sort of accepted (much as I did "the usual" and "blog") when I first got into fandom...

The latest Bujold book has a long waiting list at the library so I haven't had a chance to read it yet.

Yes -- there won't be any more LOC's from Buck, RIP.

Aha -- so Maori law is similar to Jewish law about claiming "citizenship". (Uh -- ignore that -- the reference would probably be lost on other than locals...)

[[Short version: A man wanted for murder in Maryland, fled to Israel, claimed derivative "citizenship" there, and Israel has refused to extradite him to the U.S.; but will try him in an Israeli court.]]

I tried (but not very hard) to raise black currants, but never had much return. "When" I move I'm vowing to do better by nature and plant AND TAKE CARE OF fruit trees etc.

[[April 30th is Arbor Day. We encourage readers to plant trees. If you don't have land (as we don't) you can probably get permission to plant a tree in a local park.]]

JOSEPH T. MAJOR
1409 Christy Avenue
Louisville KY 40204

"A Trip To War": If 10,000 people come to Pennsic, then the "child" has outgrown the "parent". Perhaps they have better organizational skills, too; a Worldcon

with 10,000 attendees would almost certainly collapse. And from her account Pennsic was very well organized -- and it seems to be on good terms with the locals. And of course, Pennsic War XXVII was up against Bucconeer -- but then, Pennsic lasting two weeks would mean that someone could go to both.

"SF 102": Talking about "a book hugely popular in its time", I am surprised that no one mentioned A.E. vanVogt, much less his The World Of Null-A. It would, however, fall under Patricia Russo's demurrer of significant but badly written books. But then, I once lent The World Of Null-A to someone in my church choir. He thought it was wonderful, a really great surrealistic novel. (Gossey getting gunned down on Earth at the end of chapter 6 and waking up under a tree on Venus at the beginning of chapter 7 did it for him.)

"Only Our Opinion": When Kim Stanley Robinson makes as gross a lapse of internal logic as he does in the first pages of Antarctica, having expeditions over the melted-away Ross Ice Shelf, the suspension of disbelief needed to follow along with a story suffers a serious, if not fatal shock.

Since H.G. Wells' legitimate sons seem not to have doubted the paternity of Rebecca West's son Anthony -- he participated in H.G.'s funeral along with them, for example -- perhaps we can take their word and deed as confirmation?

[[Willingly on our part; but it is clear from West's book that Wells did not fill a paternal role toward him, and West's persistent use of "my father" seems misplaced.]]

"The Half Naked One On The Left": The people at Nova Express seem to suffer from a certain style-deafness. In 1997, they publicized what they themselves called a shameless campaign for the Best Fanzine Hugo, offering a free copy to any member of LSC2. Now this might have been acceptable, as a joshingly overblown publicity measure. However, they did the same thing for Bucconeer. This time they did not get on the ballot.

[[We thought it was well established that that was a joke: see Twink #8, pp. 17-18.]]

Noting the attitude of "a fandom operating in a vacuum", remember that all the Good and the Beautiful shunned South Africans.

[[For a reason.]]

Sir Fred Hoyle, as in A For Andromeda, and as in the Steady State Theorem (a scientist who writes SF), seems to have abandoned those fields for epidemiology. Specifically, a theory that many diseases are actually of extraterrestrial origin. The 1918 influenza pandemic is one of those examples he gives.

I tried to get my Hugo ballot in, but I think I nominated at least one inelegible novel. I did, however, nominate Dr. Birkhead for Best Fan Artist.

Yes, the Seattle 2002 Worldcon bid has collapsed. San Francisco 2002 still has opposition, though... There is a bid for San Diego in 2002. Run by the San Francisco 2002 committee ... And ConFiasco II, er, San Francisco in 2002, in a case of history repeating itself, has been unable to get the Marriott Hotel opposite the Convention Center...

[[Is it too late to vote for "Hold Over Funds"?]]

ALEXANDER (@) BOUCHARD
P.O. Box 573
Hazel Park MI 48030

Ready when you are, E.B.!

(I apologize. I couldn't resist.)

I received Twink #13 today, and I read it today. I therefore need to write this LOC today, or else I'll not get to it anytime soon. (Bad habit. Bad, bad habit!) The same way, I might add, that I didn't get to LOC'ing #12.

As of this writing, the only thing I haven't read straight through is the Pennsic War article. I'll get to it, but the shorter stuff got my attention first, since I was reading it in fits and starts between classes today. Again, as I have with past issues, I think you've done

quite a commendable job with this number.

A piece of a piece that caught my eye was the comment in the review of Kerles #2; if I may quote, "...the very fannish Squib is much praised, the more general Banana Wings generates much less enthusiasm." I feel the need to comment -- on the attitude, not of the reviewer (which, because there is no byline, I assume is yourself) [[yes]], but of the person who is publishing this zine to begin with.

I think it's divisive to rate fanzines solely on how "fannish" they are; there is enough division of fan from fan in the world. The fannish zines... sometimes seem that they want you to see them as "too hip for the room"... They still want to justify positions on feuds of the past, like the one about "Topic A". (I've been in fandom for twenty years, and I still don't know what it is.)

"Fannish" zines (which I do read, and enjoy), are not the only kind out there ... Twink, as an example, is fannish and fan-friendly without being cliquish and snobby. IMHO, of course.

I started out in fanzines... writing for Lan's Lantern, which is derided as "unfannish", as I understand it, because of Lan's attitude, expressed often enough throughout the years I've known him, that "Hey, this is fun!"...

[[Yes, we do the fanzine reviews. The judgement that Kerles assessed zines on "how fannish they are" is our judgement (but no one has disputed it). People will divide up into "us/them" on any pretext: black/white, Christian/Muslim, fannish/unfannish... These are just excuses for the natural impulse to be exclusionary.]]

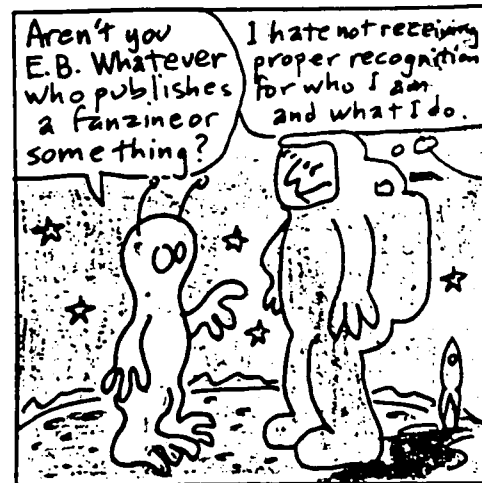
The cover of #13 is quite cute; is the background music, by chance, The Artist Formerly Known As Frohvet, singing "Little Red Froh-Vette"?

[[No, "Indigo Rain".]]

The '98 FAAn Awards can probably be gotten from Victor Gonzalez' Squib website at <http://www.galaxy-7.net/squib>.

I kind of regret that we never ran across each other at Bucconeer; I had heard you were there, and talked to a few people who met you, but I never got to it. Ah well, maybe in Chicago.

Sad news about Disclave going down; yes, it would probably affect future Worldcon and/or Corflu bids for the D.C. area...



D.C. would have about as much chance, it seems, of getting a major bid as Detroit would. (Can't do a Worldcon here. Not enough hotel rooms. No mass transit. Parking sucks. Nobody who's able to make it happen is willing to bid...)

Ah well, such is the way of things.

[[Detroit bid in the past ('82 as we recall?). How about a joint Detroit & Windsor bid? The first truly international Worldcon!]]

CATHERINE MINTZ

1810 S. Rittenhouse Square #1708
Philadelphia PA 19103

I see the cover is Frohvet Pink. You actually own a shirt in this shade and dare to wear it with white pants? I thought that was limited to the people who vacation on Martha's Vineyard. No, don't tell me about the green golfing slacks with cute little sailboats on them, or the admiral's cap. You must look very dapper indeed, since most of us settle for jeans, T-shirts, and propellor beanies.

[[The shirt is actually a little deeper pink, with black and white pinstripes -- Ned Brooks has seen it. And yes, we wear it with white jeans. The way fans dress is part of fandom's public image problem.]]

While I am aware of the rather dubious hors d'oeuvre passed off as "crottled greeps", my own version begins with shrimp in the shell and proceeds from there. If you can get crawfish -- mud bugs to the

cognoscenti -- they do well also. The result is a dangerously whiskery-looking bowl of delicacies in, now that I come to think of it, Frohvet Pink. This may be significant in the cosmic scheme...

[[Someone in Chicago want to lend Catherine the use of their kitchen? Fine, that takes care of munchies for the party, now all we need is liquor...]]

I got a rueful smile out of Lyn McConchie's quote from her friend about heaving half a brick at a stranger. In one rural backwater of the U.S. the locals sent lost travellers through an unmarked train crossing just as the lumberyard special was due. We were only badly scared, but others were not so fortunate...

Tourists are just varmints everywhere.

JOY V. SMITH
8925 Selph Road
Lakeland FL 33810

I love the Chicago 2000 Frohvet party cover on Twink #13!

I really enjoyed Elizabeth Osborne's SCA article. I've seen a few SCA demos over the years, and it was fascinating reading about what goes on behind the scenes.

"SF 102" was a great roundup on choosing 15 SF books to teach in a course for mundanes. I liked your selections, btw, and then there were all those other great suggestions! There are so many books to choose from! And choosing just one of an author's books is hard too. Re: Zelazny. My favorite of his is Lord Of Light, but it's not a book I'd start someone off with.

[[Perhaps the collection Four For Tomorrow, which includes the awesome "A Rose For Ecclesiastes".]]

Re: the E.E. Smith book that teacher chose (that Patricia Russo mentioned). I wonder which one it was. I enjoyed the "Skylark" series, and I still have Galaxy Primes. But I don't think I'd choose any of them for the course. These should be books that most people will enjoy!

Good book reviews. I'd like to check some of them out if I ever get the time. I also enjoyed the zine reviews and LOC's. Interesting info from Lyn McConchie on Podkayne Of Mars re: Pod's Maori blood. Is that covered in the book? I also enjoyed her anecdote about her walk through the graveyard... And be sure to ask Sue Mason what "twee" means.

[[It is specifically mentioned in Podkayne that the heroine claims to be part-Maori, yes.]]

CUYLER "NED" BROOKS JR.
4817 Dean Lane
Lilburn GA 30047

Thanks for the Twink #13. The cover reminds me of Chuck Rein's old filk version of "The Universal Soldier". I think it was called "The Universal Bean" and included the lines: "He'll come from Venus and from Mars/And someday from the stars."

I don't know what ever happened to Rein. He lived in the [Maryland] area and the last time I saw him he had started using "Jason" instead of "Chuck". He was a good singer...

I had no idea the SCA gatherings had gotten so large. One of the first fans I met in Philadelphia was Don Studebaker, who later changed his name to John DeCles, moved to the west coast, and founded the SCA. And one of the first southern fans I knew was Hank Reinhardt, who later became Ulric of Wolfhaven, Lord of the Southern Marches... I never was much tempted to join myself, it looked too structured and noisy for me.

Good to see Taral's centaur illo, it's been a while since I saw anything of his in a zine. Recently I came across the question of whether centaurs (who seem to have been all male in Greek mythology) would have had both a human and an equine heart.

[[A while since we read it, but were there not female centaurs in Kuttner's Mask Of Circe? Of course John Varley's "Titanides" don't make a lot of biological sense either.]]

I love the ad for Twink fabric dye. They were probably aniline dyes. Mae Strelkov in Argentina wants to resume hecto painting and the inks are no longer available; but I have the formulas for them, and the dyes available in supermarkets for dyeing cloth are apparently the same aniline dyes that were used in those inks.

PATRICIA RUSSO
341 73rd Street
North Bergen NJ 07047

Thanks for including that B&N commercial-disguised-as-a-review/interview [[from the Barnes & Noble SF newsletter]] with

Twink #13. That person said she was going to gush about Stardust, and by God, gush she did. I still don't think there was a lot to gush about in that book... To be fair to Gaiman, I recently read his collection Smoke And Mirrors as well, and found more substance in it than in his novel -- there were fluff pieces, true, but several of the stories had some actual content as well as cleverness to recommend them.

You ask for comments/discussion on the nature of book reviewing -- I think there's room for both Joseph Nicholas's in-depth, at-length approach, and for your own quick takes. Not every book merits a full-page review; a paragraph of comment still might be helpful to those (like me) who read reviews to see what's out there that they don't know about. A review that says "This was so lame I didn't finish it" certainly does tell you something about that book... It's good to know what to avoid, as well as what to rush out and buy.

"SF 102" -- of course not many people picked The Lord Of The Rings -- that's for "Fantasy 102" -- so how about it, as a follow-up piece?

[["That's a good idea, you do it!" Ack -- where have we heard that before?]]

Anybody with a whole drawer full of unsold stories clearly is serious about writing. If you really want my opinions/critiques on any of them, go ahead and send me copies... I've found that I've learned more by critiquing than through receiving critiques... I'd be glad to look at it, and maybe we'd both get something out of the experience.

[[Perhaps you have overlooked the possibility that "anybody with a whole drawer full of unsold stories" may simply not be a publishable writer. Or may have just given up on it.]]

Oh, I almost forgot! Hello, Steve Jeffery!

LYN McCONCHIE
Farside Farm, Ngamoko Road
R.D. Norsewood 5491, New Zealand

Although I see that the secret is out and in reality you aren't not only "E.B." or the tall slender dark-haired female I envisage when I write, but a [[deleted]].

Ansible gave that away... Sigh. Someone always has to spill the beans. There is no mystery in the world any longer. I hope this won't prevent you from continuing with Twink. I like the zine, I'd be sorry to see it disappear.

[[We anticipate both Twink and "Frohvet" will be around a while longer. Readers may define "a while" as they see fit.]]

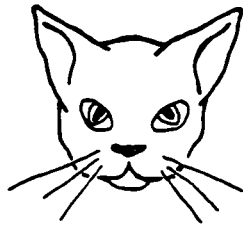
Fluff is delighted that the hay is in. Once the barn starts emptying and there's more room to climb, the hens take over. But right now Fluff is the only one who can jump high enough up the sheer face of the bales to get in. Once there she can sprawl comfortably on the top looking like Queen of the Harem and twice as satisfied. The hens have stamped off in high dudgeon. I be egg-hunting for weeks now.

Farmers don't need to go to casinos. Life on a farm is one constant gamble even when one only has a small place like Farside...

You may remember the Tiger episode a year or so when he almost pulled my publisher's pants down. Well, he did some thing similar to me this week. Sharman (my Canadian friend who teaches ESL in Seoul) when she stayed mid-June brought me a sarong from Korea. Since this summer has been miserably hot I've often switched to it in the later evening. On Wednesday when it was muggy and unbearably hot I changed early, tucking the ends in like a towel and sitting to complete a letter. When I finished typing I stood up and wandered off to get something to drink... Tiger immediately appeared, squawking loudly as soon as I left the chair. If I was having a break, cuddling him was more important than chilled orange. To make sure I fully understood this he reared up, hooked his claws into the sarong at lower thigh level and HAULED! The sarong, only tucked in, promptly gave way and Tiger found himself under a couple of yards of fabric, while I posed nude and with the startled expression of one hit unexpectedly in the face by a wet fish... September morn in person. I'm only glad that Dean who appeared ten minutes later to use the phone hadn't been ten minutes earlier.

[[There's an evocative image! Does any artist want to draw it for us?]]

...I had an unwanted visitor. Some wretched woman selling items I didn't want, couldn't afford, and I was busy anyway. Unfortunately she knew someone I know and mentioned their name. Drat! So I allowed her in and sat to listen. At which point, hearing a strange voice, Tiger appeared joyously. A human, one he hadn't met before. Joy unconfined! Tiger too was unconfined and leapt up beside the saleslady. She shied back. I hid an evil smile. Either she was allergic to cats or plain didn't like them. Shame about that. It wasn't going to get her anywhere with Tiger who climbed into her arms, standing against her chest, trampling her samples, and beaming at her, their noses so close he was squinting. He craned his neck, bit her ear gently and assured her with an ocisquawk that she was charming. The feeling didn't appear mutual. NOT a cat lover apparently. She gathered her items and departed posthaste. Tiger howled after her. Was she SURE she wouldn't like to stay and cuddle him for a while? ... I'm sorry for people who genuinely dislike cats. But there are times when it -- and Tiger -- come in handy.



reenactment groups, but seem to be of actual history -- our civil war, Vikings, Romans, etc. Don't know of any that do imagined/alternate history, as SCA sounds to do.

[[We have real-history reenactors here, too -- mainly U.S. Civil War of 1861-65, also American Revolution of 1776-81.]]

Jeff Noon is a big name in modern SF here -- Pollen etc. Didn't know he was known in the States, would've thought his stories set in a future Manchester too specifically Brit to travel "without subtitles". Surprised no Brian Aldiss or indeed not more P.K. Dick nominations; but as I didn't make any suggestions, am in a poor position to comment. In a sense, I think the exercise worked back to front, i.e. would be more manageable to start with key themes -- dystopia, time travel, alien contact, alternate history, humanity-tampering, whatever, work out how many you could cover given the length of course (not given -- 1 semester? ??) and find examples to fit, given you're attempting an overview.

Many societies also enslaved members of their own ethnic groups, as well as others -- debt bondage, etc.

Tuthill is an interesting name -- it will have originated somewhere with an actual Tuthill (variants Touthill, Toot-hill), i.e. a lookout hill. "Tout" is an old word for lookout, survives as racing touts who give tips on races, and in Northern Ireland as a word for an informer.

Lloyd Penney comment reminds me of Chandler's lovely description of a Hollywood starlet: "She was as exclusive as a mailbox."

Why do Brits not put return addresses on envelopes? One practical reason to be wary is that if you have a typed/printed return address, unless you remember to clearly label it as "FROM", OCR machines in mechanical sorting may read postal code from it and send letter back to sender rather than destination, which is maddening -- I've had it happen several times. On the same point, why do so many Americans only put return address on the envelope, not on the letter inside? This is maddening, as by the time letter gets dealt with, envelope has long since been disposed of. It seems a crazily dis-

I win this argument...
handily!



STEVE SNEYD
4 Nowell Place, Almondbury, Huddersfield
West Yorkshire, HD5 8PB, United Kingdom

"Frohvet" sounds like a real world word in some European language -- as you give the clue, Alsatian? Is that dialect, or Yiddish? Anyway, leave that trail to the real wordhunters to follow thru.

[[Not Yiddish that we're aware of.]]

Interesting to have an idea of an SCA event. In this country there are a lot of

connected habit -- any idea of how it arose?

[[Touche on that one, Steve. We tend to figure that anyone with whom we correspond regularly has our address recorded. (Which gives us another chance to plug our change -- see the editorial.) In the U.S., anything in the upper left hand corner of the envelope is taken to be a return address.]]

TRINLAY KHADRO
P.O. Box 24708
Brown Deer WI 53224

Greetings from bizarro land... Apologies to everyone out there awaiting Dewachen; I've got plenty of stuff, just no time and no money due to a personal court case.

I really enjoyed the Pennsic report, went there years ago (about 10!) and we had a great time.

We're impatiently (my daughter and I) awaiting Phantom Menace, after all this hype it may be hard not to be disappointed.

I enjoyed the book reviews and "SF 102" looks like too heavy an assignment for me. The new "Half Naked" logoette is adorable. (Is that a pink shirt?)

[[Ummm... Yeah, okay. It does look actually to be in the same general range as her skin tone...]]

What seems to be more depressing (IMHO) than the school admin. believing in witchcraft; is that the student had been singled out for trouble by her peers because of being a witch. It could just as easily have been harassment/accusation of a student of another minority religion.

[[Exactly. It's the tendency to equate anything outside a very narrow range with "devil worship" that troubles us.]]

As for Rachel; I've been pondering; and it seems that while I've never been comfortable with plot lines that put young children in danger, it was

more intense (like unbearably) when my daughter was small. Though this also seems to have varied as I've aged... When my daughter was tiny I was also more likely to need hankies for sentimental movies... The Pepsi commercial with the little boy playing with the puppies had me sniffing as if it were Love Story. So I'll second Lois's theory about hormones.

Lyn! My family has a story on a similar theme. Great-grandad, back in the Old Country, was travelling on foot and as twilight approached was hopeful of getting a lift from a cart or someone on horseback. He put his ear to the ground near a crossroad to listen for hoofbeats and hearing a wagon coming he lept up waving his arms and calling out. The driver was startled and mistook him for another being; and set the horses off at a gallop calling to them, "Run! It's the Devil!"

I wonder if there's a family with a story about Great-grandad who met the devil at a crossroad.

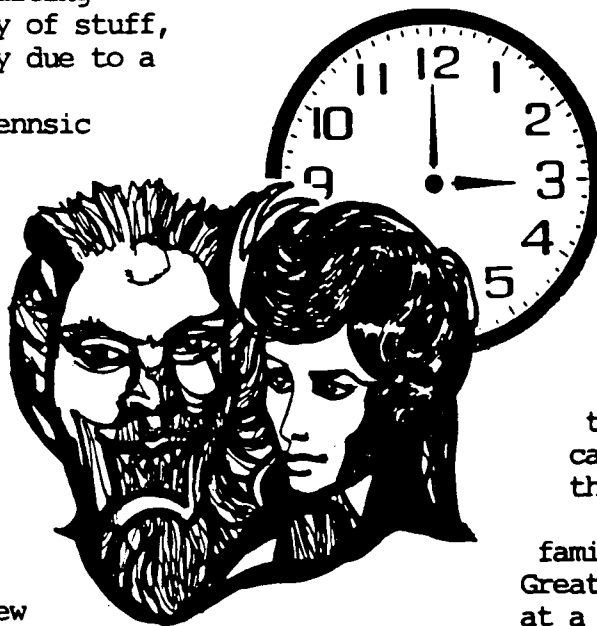
[[Crossroads had a bad reputation in the Middle Ages. Suicides were traditionally buried at crossroads.]]

Pokemon mania has hit our household. My daughter LEAPS out of bed at 6:00 AM... I don't believe it! Is this occurring anywhere else?

ROBERT LICHTMAN
P.O. Box 30
Glen Ellen CA 95442

I'm breaking my long silence to LOC Twink #13, which arrived Monday before last and unlike the previous issue has been read in timely fashion. The previous one ended up unread for quite a long time... That's the danger facing letterhacks in keeping up with a quarterly fanzine...

That is a most whimsical cover from Franz Miklis, even though not intended as one. Also whimsical was your use of pink paper



as cover stock, presumably to go along with your mention of pink shirts.

[[We think you can safely assume some element of whimsy in Franz's intent.]]

Elizabeth Osborne's account of the SCA convention started out most promising, but when it bogged down in the minutiae of her moment to moment experiences of the con and away from the broader overview and historical background of such events it lost its early promise, at least for me. She uses the term "a gentle" several times, but never explains what that means in SCA terminology... One final note: the "Berkeley CA Worldcon of the early 1970s" was actually the Baycon of 1968. I was there and saw some of the SCA demonstrations.

I didn't respond to the call for input on the 15 books which will give a class in SF an overview of the field, but I'm fantisted by the responses. Although my primary SF reading days are far enough behind me that I've not read 6 of your 15 choices, I definitely agree with the ones you selected with which I'm familiar and I'm particularly pleased with your inclusion of Simak's City, which I really should reread some day... Gibson simply didn't suck me into his dystopia. I was glad to see Phil Dick's Man In The High Castle got some votes... I've always had a soft spot for Game Players Of Titan. I was surprised that, other than one of his many anthologies, Bob Silverberg got no votes. I would opt for Nightwings... I guess it's because his books are so completely out of print in these latter days, but I would vote for Fredric Brown's What Mad Universe and Martians Go Home.

Joseph Nicholas' book reviews were quite good; you should get him to write more for you...

As per your plaint in Miscellany, enclosed are the results of the 1998 FAAN Awards. Your source is correct that Twink got three votes for best fanzine, but neglected to inform you that you came in tenth for best new fanzine fan.

[[Fanzine: Idea. Fanwriter: Christina Lake. Fanartist: D. West. Letterhack: Harry Warner Jr. New Fanzine Fan: Lesley Reece. Deservedly, Trap Door was third in the fanzine standings, and Robert was fourth in letterhacks. Steve Stiles was fourth in the fanartist vote.]]

Harry Warner is correct that the

editorial "we" was common in 40's fanzines and Lee Hoffman used it in the legendary Quandry as well.

KAREN JOHNSON

35 Mariana Avenue, South Croydon,
Victoria 3136, Australia

Are you psychic, or am I? About a week ago I sent out the last few copies of my fanzine Out Of The Kaje #3 that I had on hand, including one to yourself. The very same day I posted it, Twink #13 arrived in my letterbox! Thank you for sending it to me.

[[We and Karen sent our zines to each other and they crossed in the mail; then we sent LOC's to each other, and those crossed in the mail! Any Alsatian in your lineage, Karen? We suspect you may be another long-lost cousin, like Alex Slate.]]

An extremely interesting article on the SCA Pennsic War from Elizabeth Osborne. While I had a vague awareness such things occurred, I'd never thought about all the practicalities involved in managing 10,000 people in the middle of nowhere. A few weeks ago the Melbourne newspaper The Age had an article about the SCA in Australia which was quite interesting even though it did take the "guys with swords" approach...

I'm almost ashamed to say it, but there are a lot of books in your "SF 102" list that I've never read. I'll have to see what I can do to fix that. There's only one problem with the task of choosing 15 "representative" books -- which SF do you want to represent? The early days gosh-wow space operas of E.E. Doc Smith? The technology-is-God school of hard SF? The SF as philosophy school of Ursula K. LeGuin? Post-Armageddon culture? Alien worlds? SF as young people's literature? I could go on all day, but you get the idea. There is no such thing as one definition of SF that covers it all...

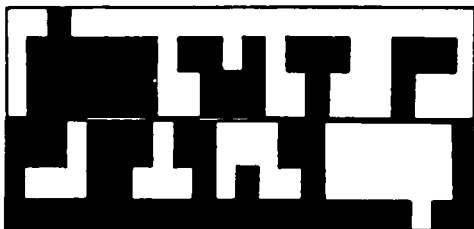
[[Agreed. But the point of the exercise was a course for mundanes, and one has to start somewhere.]]

Book reviews: Corrupting Dr. Nice sounds like an intriguing book -- I'll have to see if the library's got a copy. I've just started reading books by Kim Stanley Robinson. Antarctica was the first I got hold of, and so extremely impressive and well written that I went out looking

for more. I'm now 2/3 of the way through his Mars trilogy, and again I'm impressed. Robinson writes doorstoppers, but none of them are wasted space... Summon The Keeper sounds quite interesting (I like Buffy) but Nameless Magery sounds a bit ho hum.

Interesting to look at your lengthy column of zine reviews and see how many of them I've got my hands on/tried to get my hands on. As is to be expected when you're largely an unknown, some people whom I've approached for trades just haven't been interested. I like zines though, so it's annoying to know there are some highly regarded and generally considered important fanzines that I've never read.

So that's where "Crottled Greeps" came from! I had been curious. I know what interlineations and quote cards are, Harry Warner, or I think I do anyway. Aren't "interlineations" the lines of text, usually quotes, jokes, or what-have-you, that are put into a zine to help break up the pages? Please tell me if I'm wrong, because that's another phrase I should include in my Fannish Glossary (only up to Part 2 so far). By the way, that may be why you wrote A Wealth Of Fable, but there are people who've never been privileged to see it.



FRANZ MIKLIS
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Austria

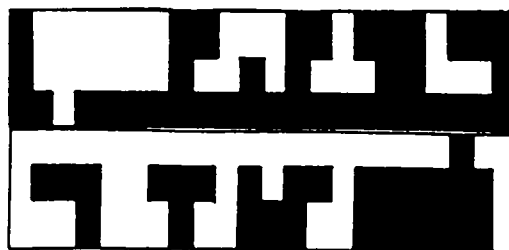
You are undoubtedly the master of surprise in fanzine fandom. I was curious about the cover of #13 but I never, never thought in my wildest dreams that you use this drawing of mine (or I wouldn't have done it in this scale and format) -- but, well, that's the freedom of fanac, and I can tell people really get curious when they find this zine on the table somewhere in the bureau, dominating all other papers with its pink weirdity. So thanks

a lot for giving me funny times. By the way, I've created a new word in this course. Most people thought of me talking about a finezine (as they don't know the term fanzine) which isn't that bad as definition of a zine I really like, so herewith I declare a good, nice zine one loves to receive as a FINEZINE -- like yours.

A delightful and no less insightful reading was Elizabeth Osborne's "A Trip To War" report. I must tell I never heard of that gatherings, but I'm sure she would enjoy a similar but quite small gathering held in our Burg Finstergrün meetings where about once a year some forty or fifty fans come together in the medieval castle Burg Finstergrün in Salzburg's Alps and have a weekend playing RPG's, knightly contests, and listening to the bards in the knights court. This familiar festival is a fine adventure for our kids who prefer playing Elfs and hunting ghosts in the long arcades and numerous halls of the castle.

[[We can imagine North American SCA-types turning green at the prospect of holding an event in an actual castle.]]

Keep on running and excel the wolves.



WM. BREIDING
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No sooner did I send a note about Twink #12 when #13 arrives. You do publish in a timely manner. I don't know that I have anything specific to say. Unlike an APA-zine you can't just go on ignoring fanzines and continue receiving them. Probably the most surprising aspect of #13 was the LOC and illo from Taral. You must be doing something right. I enjoy Twink but I am at best a lame LOC-hack.

[[Those who respond with any sort of regularity are unlikely to be dropped

from our mailing list. If you like Taral's art, hopefully you will enjoy this issue's cover.]]

Perhaps if I had indulged in your little fantasy of "SF 102" I would have influenced things. I think I would have suggested Way Station by Simak as a representative work; probably the entire Blue Champagne by Varley, probably Nova by Delany. Without a doubt a collection of "Golden Age" stories that included folks like Ross Rocklyn, Leinster, Hamilton, Van Vogt, etc. And for the serious student one of SaM's non-fiction works, maybe Explorers Of The Infinite. On an objective level I would have to include many of the "deans" of the genre, even though I don't have a taste for them, like Asimov and Heinlein. Instead, maybe someone like John Wyndham. And don't let's forget that rousing teller of space operettas from Down Under, A. Bertram Chandler.

[[Kuttner's Robots Have No Tails, a collection of C.L. Moore, Emergence by Palmer, overlooked writers such as Alan Nourse and Lloyd Biggle Jr. -- One could easily add another dozen to any list.]]

I fear that I prefer the sound of "Fro-vay" rather than "Fro-vette", but then "Elmer" is a good bet to go with "Fro-vette".

[["Fro-vay" may have been the original French version, and "Fro-vette" the German form. Alsace changed hands so often, you know, the schools taught both languages so students would be prepared to cope with either nation.]]

LLOYD PENNEY
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Etobicoke, Ontario M9C 2B2, Canada

I've never been to the Pennsic Wars before, but I certainly know of them, with lots of local fans and SCAdians having attended any time in the past 10 years. They've told me this huge campground literally turns into a small town. Many medievalists with cell phones, learning to spin flax, and lots of information about SCA on their various websites. Now, if all that isn't creative anachronism, I don't know what is.

I never took part in the project to name 15 books most representative of SF. It might be just a little too subjective

for me. I don't think we've forgotten past masters like Clifford Simak or Poul Anderson, but there are so many good authors to read... George Laskowski's recent tribute issue of Lan's Lantern to Poul Anderson may bring that great author back into the fannish public eye... I did receive the above-stated Anderson tribute zine from George Laskowski. The best thing about that zine is George himself. He's battling back, making good his recovery.

One of our reasons for running for CUFF was gaining experience in fan fund management that could help towards running for a bigger fund, like TAFF. However, I have been told to my face that I am an unsuitable candidate, so this Canadian won't be running for TAFF... (Reasons I'm unsuitable: not rich enough to do the trip without dipping into the fund itself, relatively unknown in Britain, and I never developed a taste for beer.) We're pretty busy with the Toronto Worldcon bid, so perhaps it's just as well.

[[We thought TAFF was explicitly for fans who could not afford the trip! If persons who would use Fund money are defined as "unsuitable", what's the point of having the Fund? Do the current TAFF administrators wish to respond to this?]]

I would certainly agree with Walter Mosley. SF is definitely for the disenfranchised. Just this past weekend I attended Eeriecon I, a new horror/dark fantasy/SF convention in Niagara Falls, and we talked with Wayne Brown, one of the busier fans in Rochester NY. Wayne has chaired an occasional con called Astronomicon, and next February, Wayne intends to give his next con an all-black GOH list...like Samuel R. Delany, Octavia Butler, Charles Saunders, and Nalo Hopkinson.

[[We'll stick to what we said before: simple observation appears to argue that there is not much interest in SF in the black community as a whole. Observe any convention: how many non-white faces do you see?]]

LYN McCONCHIE
address previously shown

I see you'll be at Chicon next year. Silly sod. Why didn't you book for Worldcon in Melbourne THIS year, then we could

have coffeehoused all con. Quite a number of kiwis are going including my writer pal Cherry Wilder... Oh, well. It's probably money. I KNOW what it costs to go to the other side of the world...

Now: LOC on Twink #13. Had to chuckle over the cover. And I should say too that I like the look of Twink. It was the look that got me to read it, then the quality inside which convinced me to start responding. Now I seize each issue with enthusiasm as it arrives.

On the short stories to interest someone in SF, there's a doozy by a chap named Tom Godwin who wrote very little but what he did write was quality. I recommend his short story "The Cold Equations". It's brilliant, heart-wrenchingly effective, and beautifully written. I think it was made into a movie too at some stage... What about quietly persuading a neo into the genre with humor -- just about all of Eric Frank Russell, with Next Of Kin top of the list, Blue Moon Rising by Simon Green, Sprague de Camp's "Enchanter" books, Clifford Simak's The Goblin Reservation, Patricia Wrede's Mairelon The Magician, and most of the Retief books of course.

I also reject the idea indignantly that "winged cats are an American phenomenon". Kindly note the letterhead I use which derives from the name of my very small press, PEGAPUSSPRESS. It's true I had the logo done in the USA (while at Westercon in Vancouver in '91) but the idea and instructions were mine.

I see that Lois McMaster Bujold plans a stand-alone book next. I've always thought it would be fun to see a Miles one which incorporates cats. As in: his ship finds a stowed-away kitten which proceeds to get into everything; or a baby alien kitten which he must care for or risk the aliens not being very pleased...

[[Offhand we can't recall any cats in Bujold's writings. Horses, yes. Newts (in Ethan Of Athos). No cats.]]

...I had a friend drop in and took her out to the cat park to pick a couple of lovely big juicy tomatoes for her. She eyed them with pleasure but was surprised that they have no peck marks from birds. I had to explain that two assiduous furred guards make certain that doesn't happen. Now the red currants have all been picked, white butterfly season is almost gone, my

feline associates have turned to guarding the tomatoes. The starlings may hire an assassin soon, and who could blame them.

TARAL WAYNE
245 Dunn Avenue #2111
Toronto, Ontario, M6K 1S6, Canada

Just got back from L.A. Confurence 10 was Easter weekend, but I usually stay over a couple fo weeks after, to see people. Mainly artists and illustrators -- the only SF type on my itinerary was Mike Glyer, an old friend. CF10 is a specifically "furry" con -- I show in the art show but mainly hang out at my own table in the dealers' room, selling prints, sketches, folios and whatnot. I actually make good money! Better than egoboo, really.

How about some buff or sandy colored paper for the cover? It would be most appropriate for a desert scene. The ambushed rabbit is named "Dixie" by the way... At one point I planned an entire graphic novel for Dix, but so far all I've managed is a one-page ditty called "Check Your Guns At The Door"...

[[In accordance with our policy that we will defer to artist's choice if a cover artist expresses a preference on paper color, buff or tan it shall be.]]

RACHEL RUSSELL
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Hello! First of course a big "thank you" to all you who suggested books to read. Wow!

What is actually quite nice is that I am slowly able to read again. That old "falling into the book" sensation and everything is back, at least sometimes. I've been reading Patricia Wrede's "Lyra" books, loaned to me by a friend, and they are extremely good fantasy -- especially The Twisted Tower... In that book, the main character is a sorceress/swordwoman AND a mother. Her concern for her children, including practical mundane things like clothes, shoes, money, is as richly depicted as the battle between good and evil...

I have also been very busy reading

George R.R. Martin's A Clash Of Kings, the second in his mega saga begun with A Game Of Thrones. The first book was utterly splendid, the second didn't disappoint. But it is probably not giving anything away to say that things don't look good for the good guys: I'm not even totally sure who the good guys are!

I wish I could write you a longer letter but I'm battling the flu, just survived the baby's first flu and his first birthday... The article about Pennsic was fascinating because I've hear about this but know nothing. As for "what 15 books would represent SF in a class"-- I agree with the concensus of Heinlein, Bradbury, Le Guin, and short stuff. I personally thing Neil Stephenson's Snow Crash is brilliant, and Steel Beach by John Varley. I've never had the patience to read Dune.

[[Happy birthday to baby Teddy, and welcome back to SF readership to his Mom. Your remark about not knowing who the good guys are reminds us of a really awful joke...]]

MICHAEL W. WAITE
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"SF 102" contained a lot of surprises and a few disappointments. As a followup, SF 202 seems to be in order. Followed by SF 303 and SF 404. After that we could continue on to grad school... (My M.F.A. classes stopped at the 900 level.) For the more adventuresome, a Ph.D. program could follow. Be aware that you would have to read, and probably publish, all the dissertations.

[[Actually, this is what the International Conference on the Fantastic in the Arts is for -- Arthur Hlavaty's address is available in the fanzine review section for those who want to pursue that angle. We bailed on "criticism" after being snottily told we weren't "qualified" to write it. (Not by the ICFA...)]]

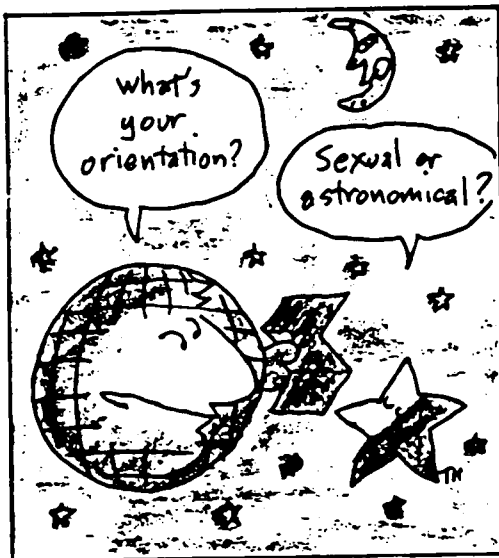
I have enclosed a copy of My Favorite

Science Fiction Story, edited by Martin H. Greenberg, for your reading pleasure. What SF short story would you submit to fandom's version of My Favorite SF Story? My choice, without hesitation, would be Tom Godwin's "Cold Equations".

[[Just one? That's tough. "A Rose For Ecclesiastes" would be on our short list, Clarke's "The Star", Delany's "Time Considered As A Helix", Spinrad's "Carcinoma Angels", any of several by Varley -- "Bagatelle" or "Press Enter", Leiber's "The Bazaar Of The Bizarre"...]]

STEVE JEFFERY

44 White Way, Kidlington,
Oxon, OX5 2XA, U.K.



Many thanks for Twink #13, which I am remiss in not LOC'ing in the giddy social whirl (cough) that is life in Inception Towers, probably scraping the deadline for the next issue, and/or danger of falling foul of the one-in-three mailing list cull.

[[We were not close to dropping you, Steve; but we dropped two fans in U.K. from the mailing list for non response with #12, two more with #13, and will yellow-flag three

more with this issue. Readers may draw their own conclusions.]]

Yes, it is sad to see the report of the death of Buck Coulson, fellow denizen of countless lettercols over what seems practically my whole sojourn in fanzine fandom...

The SCA is not quite the counterpart of our own "Sealed Knot", whose counterpart is probably the Civil War re-enactment societies. As you say, there is a broad fannish appeal, and I believe Sue Mason may be foudn in costume at some of the U.K. enactments, as a camp follower...

Millenium Publishers have pretty much set their own solution to the problem you set in the SF reading list project... So far I cannot find fault with any of their selections for a run of reprint SF Masterworks. We could quibble about others

that we might want to see, but I'd be hard put to argue any of the titles so far from Delany, Dick, Bester, Haldeman, Wolfe, Zelazny, Blish, Stapledon, don't deserve their classic status. Re-reading a batch of these has been instructive, especially noting in a number of them a shared, almost consensual concern with the question of identity and what it means to be human...

Of course, the moment you do this exercise, everybody else mentions titles that you feel you really ought to have included. I'm intrigued that Patricia Russo and I (hi Patricia!) had six titles in common, but wonder, if that's the maximum overlap you found, what this says about the overall consensus...

Nova Express is the title of another magazine I was trying to remember recently, answering an inquiry from a student. Not being able to find a copy of the zine in my, er, very individual fanzine filing system, I assume I must have had it on loan. I do remember reading Clute's gleeful demolition of the Melbourne University Press Encyclopaedia of Australian SF... Are we seeing a return of sercon KTF reviewing?

Vastly amused by Steve Sneyd's sending of an advert for a product called Twink, and your reproduction of same in the lettercol. The text at the bottom has a bit about "before Tupperware"... I've always been amused that you also have an equivalent line of plastic domestic products that glory under the name "Rubber Maid", which conjures rather more exotic visions of what might go on at those sort of sales parties...

Ha, that's foxed you. Steve Sneyd's later comment on the possible pink shirt homage to Pink Fairies has you flummoxed, I can tell. Twink Adler, as I remember, was the drummer and vocalist for an underground band called The Pink Fairies back in the late 60's/early 70's.

[[No, we were totally blank on that one. Another real-world "Twink"! But we're still waiting on a real-world "Frohvet".]]

GEORGE "LAN" LASKOWSKI
2466 Valleyview Drive
Troy MI 48098

Elizabeth Osborne's recount of the Pennsic War

brings back memories of all the stories I heard about that marvellous gathering of SCA people from my friends who have been actively involved in it. Filksongs and legends were born at the War, and I feel somewhat fortunate in having heard about many of them, told by the people who made or participated in them. I am glad that Elizabeth had a good time at the gathering; I never made it to one myself.

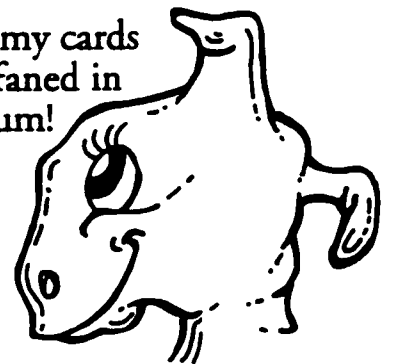
"SF 102" was a project I wish I had been able to participate in. There are lots of books I would recommend, many on the list already, some I feel are better. Tau Zero by Poul Anderson and Ender's Game by Orson Scott Card would definitely be on my list. I had taught a 2-week section of SF as part of an English course at my high school called "Genres". I used Ender's Game, and invariably the students finished the novel over the weekend I had assigned 150 pages to read. They said they wanted to find out what happened.

I am becoming more intrigued by the work of Gordon Dickson as I read more, so I will probably choose a book of his to be on the list. As for Clifford Simak, I think he is becoming lost in the shuffle of authors who have died. Still, City, Time Is The Simplest Thing, Way Station, and others are really good, humanistic SF.

[[We had input from Patricia Russo who had actually taken such a class; now we get feedback from someone who has taught one! Tau Zero is as good a hard-SF book as you'll find. We read one or two books by Mr. Card and they just didn't do much for us: taste varies.]]

[[WAHF: Harry Warner Jr., Ken Cheslin, Guy Lillian III, Michael King, Joseph Nicholas, Teddy Harvia, Janice Murray, Edmund Meskys, Steve Stiles, & Henry Welch ("We took our second child to the Winnipeg Worldcon when he was five days old...")]]

...and if I play my cards right...I'll be faned in a millenium!



M

ISCELLANY

Decline of littrussy department: "We no longer except the Discovery Card" (sign at a local store); "...under the sercomstances..." (letter from our niece). Sigh.

Something you don't want and have no use for is no bargain at any price.

QUOTE OF THE DAY

"The earliest Latin document anywhere that is known to be in a female hand... is a Roman letter from about 100 A.D., found near Hadrian's Wall in Great Britain, inviting the recipient to a birthday party."

-- Cullen Murphy, Wilson Quarterly
Vol XXII #3

So what's up with those supposed Martian meteorite bacteria? Sky & Telescope says the jury is still out. There's no one aspect of the specimen that can't be explained in inorganic terms; the total picture is suspiciously lifelike, but still inconclusive.

The same issue offers a best-case scenario for a manned landing on Mars: summer of 2014. That would take an "aggressive" program starting, well, now. Our advice: Don't wager the rent money on it.

Article in the Baltimore Sun: Based largely on the presence of a single in-laid labyrinth at 12th-Century Chartres Cathedral in France, Christianity is now trying to pre-empt the labyrinth system. A brick one has been built at a Catholic spiritual center in Marriottsville MD, and some area churches are using canvas ones indoors. We'd guess it's more a case of a pre-existing pagan custom having been drafted bodily into Christianity, like the Yule fire or Saint Brigit. Not a word was said about Christianity at the labyrinth workshop we attended in September '97 (Twink #8), and at least one of the participants therein was an avowed Wiccan.

Should anybody want one, we have a few leftover copies of #10, #11, and #13.

Received, unsolicited, anonymously (postmarked Tulsa OK -- we don't know any one in Tulsa): a pocsard blurbing a new Baen release, Black On Black by one "K.D. Wentworth". Seems to be a shapechanger story? The art, assuming that's the cover, shows much cleavage. Well, K.D., we're open to review copies.

Catherine Mintz has a novel in progress and has an agent, so we figure her chances of selling it are pretty good. Patricia Russo has had stories in MZBFM and other places. At this writing, Robert Sabella's Who Shaped Science Fiction? has not yet arrived, though the publisher took our check. Joy Smith has a novella in Once Upon A World, The Magazine of Multi-dimensional Worlds: \$10 from Emily Alward, 646 W. Fleming Drive, Nineveh IN 46164.

Classic Airplanes says: The DC-1, prototype of the hugely successful Douglas DC-3, was first shown to the press on July 1, 1933 at Santa Monica CA. One reporter thought it was too pretty to be a real aircraft and wondered aloud if it was a prop for a "futuristic science fiction movie"!

The bad news is that we went 0-for-the-world in Fan Hugo nominations. Not one of our nominees made the ballot. The good news on this topic is... ummm... give us a moment, now... (In practice, we can find some good news in the nominations of Teddy Harvia and Thyme.)

Send us your insights and references (please include publication dates) on this topic, to be integrated into an upcoming article: Consider the ubiquitous unconsciousness weapon of SF, the "stunner". (1) Who invented it? (2) How does it work?

We wonder if there actually is a new Star Wars movie, or if there's just this humoungous merchandising campaign with nothing at the center of it?

A senior citizen of our acquaintance has no problem reconciling evolution with her religion (because God caused it to happen that way). However she does not believe in extraterrestrial aliens because, she says, God would not have bothered to create any. Our response: "Oh."