

T
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VOGON POETRY

It's January again, which means, time for our Hugo nominations -- for some of you, about as much fun as having Vogon poetry read to you. We'll be brief. In ALL THREE fan categories, people made the final ballot last year with as few as 23 nominations. D. West made it in "Fan Artist" with 17 nominations -- and SHERYL BIRKHEAD had 15! If our mailing list alone will just make the effort, we can get SHERYL nominated! The same applies to STEVE STILES. American faneds are missing a good thing in not asking SUE MASON for material -- hello, look at this cover! On the subject of overlooked fanartists, has PHIL TORTORICI ever been nominated? Maybe he should be.

It will come as no surprise that in the "Fanzine" class we're going to nominate TOM SADLER's Reluctant Famulus, CLAIRE BRIALEY & MARK PLUMMER'S Banana Wings, and GUY LILLIAN III's Challenger. A pattern is evident, our preference for substantial genzines. In different directions, we ought to choose one personalzine; we'll go with the subtle virtues of ARTHUR HLAVATY's Derogatory Reference. JULIE WALL's Southern Fandom Confederation Bulletin fills at least as useful a niche as other perennial nominee newszines, so it gets our nod. It's too soon to nominate Out Of The Kaje or Barmaid in this category, but keep an eye on them for the future.

For the Langford Award, er, that's officially the "Fan Writer" class, maybe a Hugo nomination would mellow out JOSEPH NICHOLAS. Or maybe not. YVONNE ROWSE is not a BNF yet but "Women Behaving Indecorously" deserves some sort of prize. (And she unapologetically puts her children's art on the cover of her fanzine.) Perennial letterhack LLOYD PENNEY is everywhere, and a good thing too. We should probably nominate at least one American: GENE STEWART does a column in TRF and long LOC's to many other zines.

At this writing we're still debating our final choices in a couple of places. We'll think of someone deserving -- preferably someone who has not been nominated before.

WHALE MILK

Okay, a little bit of a story to go with this cover. Regular readers will recall that we've had on the cover: an owl, a pig, a unicorn, a flitterkitty, fish, and

sundry women, aliens, and robots. However, only once has the cover shown a recognizable human male, and then as part of a greater design (#7, Margaret Simon). We also had in mind Sue Mason's remark (#13 lettercol) that she actually likes specific requests. So we fired off to Sue a couple of vague sentences, and she turned it into this! We are pleased to welcome some new voices in the lettercol. After due consideration, we chose not to extract from one of Lyn McConchie's letters as a Worldcon report, on the grounds she's already contributed more than her fair share to this fanzine. We thank TAFF administrator Ulrika O'Brien for her statement on that controversy.

We declare #17 the "writers' workshop" issue. Send your comments on workshops, private groups, critique-by-mail outfits, etc.; how it helped you (or why it didn't). Anything on this thankless hobby of writing and publishing fiction. ANY length -- a paragraph if that covers what you want to say. Material on other topics is welcome for later issues. We're open to doing collaborations; we'd like to do more audience-participation things (like "SF 102"); material about fandom is welcome. (We don't plan to lose our sercon edge; we just want to branch out a little.)

CONTRIBUTIONS GUIDELINES IN GENERAL

Available for "the usual" defined as:

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

* Relevant book or film 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, or mundane travelogues.

While art is welcome, at present we're overstocked, and at least the next few covers are more or less planned. Artists may check with us; or we can recommend other fanzines you could help.

In trade for other fanzines.

Editorial whim.

Welcome to Twink, a quarterly fanzine from Chaffinch Publications. Next issue: April 2000. Deadline for next issue: February 29, 2000. Available for "The Usual" -- see guidelines. Our main focus remains on SF, fantasy, and fandom. All material belongs to the contributors and all rights revert to them on publication. All letters received will be regarded as LOC's and considered for publication unless clearly marked "DNQ".

Mailing list policy: Anyone who writes, contributes, or trades regularly (defined as: every other issue) will stay on the mailing list. Anyone who is sent unsolicited copies of this fanzine, 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 unless you respond in some manner.

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POLITICAL CORRECTNESS RUN AMOK

SPECIAL GUEST EDITORIAL BY LYN MCCONCHIE



These days I can't help feeling that Political Correctness has gone past reality and into stupidity in a number of areas. But there is one in particular which affects me. On my last two visits to America and the U.K. I was several times referred to as "physically challenged". As I said very firmly in reply to that, I am crippled. My dictionary defines this as "person without the use of limb/s, lame, halting". This also defines me quite well. I am lame due to severe right leg damage in an accident.

While I have not completely lost the use of the damaged leg, it certainly doesn't work the way it did when undamaged, and yes, I am halting. From the Old English, to limp. What I am not, is physically challenged. A phrase I equate with someone halfway up Everest who has just discovered that the rope on which their life depends is badly fraying in a most undesirable way. Now they ARE physically challenged. And unless they can fly, they are shortly to be even more so.

(As a side-bar I can add that this nonsense seemed to annoy quite a number of people at a large Canadian convention I attended in 1991. I saw several people wearing badges which used an assortment of parodies of this phrase. "I'm not lost -- I'm just spacially challenged." "I'm not late -- I'm just temporally challenged", and so on. The number of these did suggest that not everyone wants to be Politically Correct, or alternatively, that not every one takes it too seriously. Which is as it should be. That's one of the functions of humor, to make others take a look at events and trends.)

I also went out before I wrote this article and asked a good number of disabled/crippled people how they felt about

being called the short harsh version of their problem. I found that all would rather be called as what they are -- deaf, blind, crippled or whatever and treated as people. In preference to being given a sickly ridiculous label and treated as if their problem automatically made them brain-damaged as well.

I know there are some who find the terms "cripple/crippled" derogatory. (Although few of them seem to be those who are.) Why? They're perfectly good words in the English language and are being used in the sense they have always been intended to be used. They describe a problem -- or a person with the problem. I can assure you that the problem won't go away just because you think of a nicer (or much longer) term for it. If it did that would be magic, a loaded word. Or a miracle which is even more loaded and I'm not getting into either of those right now.

There are three points about changing words to accomodate the way you think the world should be. One is that the result tends to become ugly and clumsy. "Physically challenged" or "differently abled" for instance. The second is that changing a word still doesn't change the problem as I've said, although I only wish it did and so I imagine do a great number of doctors.

But third and primarily there is transference effect. How long is it before the new term comes to be taken as a pejorative? How many years will it be before "differently abled" becomes a contemptuous comment on someone who appears to be clumsy or of lower intelligence? ("She's just a diffab!") Do we then sit about trying to sort out newer kindly words? What we need to alter is

our attitude, not perfectly good words in the language.

Many words are used by children as insults. "Ya big girl's blouse!" (And what do you change THAT one to?) "He's a moron!" Perhaps instead of worrying about changing the language we should be teaching the real meaning of words from the beginning. The question is, having grown up with this sort of belief: that to be anything to do with women is to be weak, that to have less intelligence is somehow your own fault. Will you alter this way of thinking by altering the words used? Or do you merely drive it underground unchanged?

In fact that is the whole problem in a nut-shell. I am half-Welsh by extraction. I daresay that a few hundred years back when the English regarded my forebears as ignorant and barbarian savages, "Welsh" was an insult. [[**]] Any word may be used as an insult if the user and insultee regard it as insulting. While one child is being referred to as a "moron" by his peers, another may be called a "swot". One child is being castigated for being too stupid, the other for being too intelligent.

Most of the words people are trying to change appear to be those which are seen primarily as indicating weakness or inferiority in some way. Those which denote physical or mental problems, feminine gender, or low status employment. Thus the garbage collector lobbies to be called something else, as does the caretaker, the factory worker, or the cleaner. But a change of employment title won't alter the work -- or the salary. And to a great extent the "weakness" of the title is not in the words but in those who see them that way. There is no shame in cleaning for a living, in being a factory worker, a caretaker, or in being a rubbish collector.

The weakness is in those who see the work in that light, and until you change that mindset you are wasting time changing the word. Ask yourself how many rapists will be taught not to rape by de-gendering the language. How many racists will alter their beliefs because you have banned certain words? How many people will cease to look down on someone who cleans for a living because you have given

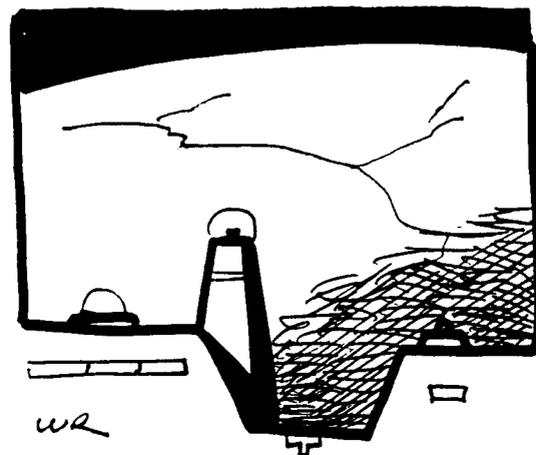
the position a nice new name?

Words have power. They can be used as insults or descriptions. But the point those who are trying to change the language don't seem to understand, is altering the language doesn't alter the problem or the people. I am crippled. All the different words won't fix that. I am a cripple and if there are those who see that as making me less of a person than those who are physically intact, then it's their belief which needs to be changed, not the word.

I am of the female gender, a woman. Do you think I should be called something else to alter sexism? I am fifty. Do you feel you should change the whole system of numbering to prevent ageism? I am a divorcee. Am I to be referred to as "differently married"? No! These words are convenience. I tick the boxes when filling out forms. I note that I am female, in such-and-such an age range. That I am in the single/divorced category.

So why should I be known as anything but what I am as well? A cripple. I go halt, lame and limping. But it doesn't stop me writing, farming, belonging to various groups and having an interesting, amusing and successful life with many friends. In just one more area that Defines me. It doesn't CONfine me any more than my age, my sex, or living alone do. Oh, and no, I'm not untidy. I'm just "chaotically challenged"!

[[**Editor's note: Our grandfather once said that in his youth, it was still common to see signs at businesses: "Help wanted. Irish need not apply."]]



Let's discuss emancipation, shall we?

In the usual American view, emancipation is about slavery, which is about race. One source says that well into the 20th Century, some black Americans still used the expression "before Abe" -- referring to the state of involuntary servitude suffered by many prior to January 1, 1863, the effective date of the Emancipation Proclamation issued by President Abraham Lincoln.

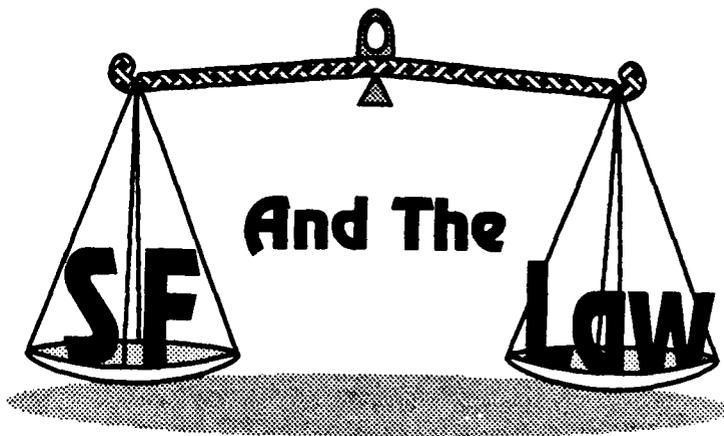
In fact, blacks were free -- at least in theory -- in the North; and there were free blacks even in slave states. In Maryland, by the 1830's, free blacks outnumbered slaves by a wide margin. Some were sharecroppers, a condition distinguishable from slavery only to a legalist; some were employed as domestics by whites; but many were free artisans: carpenters, blacksmiths, longshoremen.

But the fact is, "emancipation" is not about slavery. Emancipation is about legal competence.

Every society defines for itself what classes of residents are legally entitled to act for themselves, to vote, to make contracts, to hold public office. The United States defined women, as a group, as legal incompetents into the 20th Century (Wyoming being the exception), and still for the most part so defines children. That's not carved in stone. A child who has demonstrated the ability to support him- or herself and make reasonable decisions, can petition for emancipation: to be declared the legal equal of an adult and relieved from the supervision of parent or guardian. A recent example involved Olympic gymnast Dominique Moceanu who got a court to declare her free of domineering parents.

A science fiction example would be Betty in Heinlein's The Star Beast. Or in George O. Smith's The Fourth R, where a minor child is living independently behind the facade of an invented adult persona.

Legal competence is presumptive to most adults in our society, but can be lost in varying degrees. Persons who due to age or infirmity cannot protect their own



interests, may require guardians. Felons forfeit civil rights in large degree, and even when they have served out their sentences, may have to petition to recover something as basic as the right to vote. (Few bother, but...)

In the 1983 novel The Dragon Rises, Adrienne Martine-Barnes postulates a legal system which discourages wrongdoing by holding spouses and even minor children of criminals liable in their own persons. We would call this "guilt by association". When the actions of two politicians cause heavy loss of life, the offended parties claim the families of the two men as, in effect, personal chattels. This seems to have been suggested by the "right of withernam" under the old Anglo-Saxon law. In our legal system, generally a person is not held accountable unless mens rea (criminal intent) has been shown.

It has been noted before in this fanzine that the plot of H. Beam Piper's 1962 Little Fuzzy revolves about a trial to determine if Fuzzies are people. Jack Holloway's lawyer, Brannhard, insists on the right of Baby Fuzzy to be present even though, "he is both a minor child and an incompetent aborigine", on the grounds that Baby is de facto next of kin of the decedent.

Getting back to women: Although feminists may dispute it, laws which are now seen as oppressive, were originally intended to protect women. Marriage as a legal institution is intended to protect women when they are pregnant or have helpless small children. Consider Marion Zimmer Bradley's Darkover stories, a series popular largely among women. It's

about a society in which women are for the most part legally incompetent. But there are two escape valves built into the system.

Access to the Towers is limited to those with the gift -- laran in the casta actually means "gift" or "talent". Once accepted to a Tower, however, a woman enters a subset of an otherwise sexist society in which she is judged only on competence. In the original form (see in, e.g., The Forbidden Tower), a Tower-trained woman was exempted permanently from the existing legal system. When Callista wishes to give up her position and get married, her father is annoyed; but the old Keeper, Leonie Hastur, says firmly that it's no longer Dom Esteban's place to give or refuse consent. Leonie is Callista's Keeper: it is for her alone to decide if Callista is to be allowed to marry.

In a later period (viz The Heritage Of Hastur) the law has been changed, allowing either man or woman to serve only three years in a Tower. The intent of this seems to have been to return women to the control of their fathers to be married off.

The other outlet for a woman on Darkover is similar to what we would call emancipation: the Free Amazons, or Renunciates. A woman -- even a married woman, presumed to be something of a chattel of her husband -- can renounce her intended legal protections, but gain a sort of legal competence denied to others. A Free Amazon is responsible for herself, makes her own living, relates to men on an equal footing, and in pregnancy has to depend on her Amazon sisters for support and protection (Thendara House, The Shattered Chain).

* * *

The classic science fiction novel of psychological warfare is Wasp by Eric Frank Russell. Earth, with better technology but lesser numbers, is at war with the Sirians. James Mowry is recruited to be a "wasp": he is dropped onto an alien planet and instructed to make trouble any way possible. (One method is to mail to local bigwigs, packages each containing a ticking clockwork and a note to

the effect that "This could have been a real bomb.") When Mowry shoots Major Sallana: legitimate act of war, or murder? These things depend on your perspective; the Sirians would have doubtless called it murder.

A similar but lesser known book is Sleeping Planet by William R. Burkett Jr. In this case the Terrans are fighting the "Llralans". The aliens have discovered a vegetable poison which induces a temporary coma in nearly all Terran life forms. (Interesting aside is that the drug's effect is semelincident; one coma to a customer and permanent immunity thereafter. Some disease organisms on Earth have this effect -- the virus which causes rubeola, for one. The vernacular is "measles".)

The enemy have planned a bold attack around this medical oddity. Seeding Terra, Mars, and Venus with this "Dust", the Llralans follow it with a full-scale invasion to hold the sleeping population of humanity's homeworlds hostage. Trusting the infallible effect of their secret weapon, the aliens expect no resistance. But there are a handful of "unaffected" Terrans. (Burkett goes to great lengths to rationalize this, ignoring the fact that in any population, there will be a smattering of natural immunes to nearly anything. As a child, we were immune to the commonest North American contact poison, Rhus toxicodendron: poison ivy.)

One of these unaffected Terrans is Donovan, a truck driver who has a gun, and uses it until he is captured. It is explicitly stated that Donovan is a civilian. He was refused military service because of a prosthesis. This is relevant to our point.

As a prisoner, Donovan is interrogated by a team of Llralan officers. Whether from a sense that he has nothing much to lose, or out of what our British friends might call sheer bloody-mindedness, Donovan boldly brags of the several alien soldiers he managed to shoot.

"You speak of killing men as one would speak of swatting veg," one of the aliens criticizes. The Terran, sure of his legal ground, fires back: "I speak of killing invaders... Those dead men have no kick coming -- they made themselves liable to death or maiming when they participated



in the landing." Even the Llralan commander fair-mindedly supports the human, telling his confrere, "He is right. You, a soldier, should know that."

In human jurisprudence, generally civilians are not supposed to participate directly in military actions, at least not to the extent of actually shooting someone. Treaty of Paris, 1859. Granted, this is a rule as much honored in the breach as in the observance -- see guerillas, terrorists, and nearly any civil war. Still, the principle is out there.

But, as often in legal matters, there's a loophole; and because of it, Donovan is right. The idea is called levy en masse: the right of a civilian population to take up arms in self defense without organizing according to the laws of war. (Look under: Warsaw, 1939.) The more military minded Heinlein fudged this point somewhat in Sixth Column by having people secretly sworn into the U.S. Army. But he could equally have armed civilians. The legal right is there.

Further, the levy en masse is a special case of the broader doctrine of necessary force: an attacked party, whether nation or individual, may use any force necessary in self defense.

An even quirkier subset of "necessary force" is that sometimes violence can be justified even in the absence of physical threat. If we publicly called your wife a "syphilitic whore", some courts might

find that you had been sufficiently provoked to punch us in the face: the so-called "fighting words" doctrine. Unless, of course, your wife actually was a syphilitic whore, in which case we'd be covered by the defense of "justification": broadly, if something is true, one is entitled to say it, however offensive. Or in other words, the truth is not actionable. Lawyers who work for celebrity-baiting tabloids are well versed in the nuances of this. Though we may have wandered a touch from the topic...

* * *

Inheritance is another area of the law that can be complicated. In Heinlein's Citizen Of The Galaxy, the principal character Thorby was about 4 Terran years old when he was kidnapped and his parents killed (actually there is no hard evidence of their deaths); and about 18 when he was returned to Earth. Yet he walks straight in to claim his parents' estate, fortune, home and title.

Heinlein was never one to pass up a good gimmick just because he'd used it before, and returned another teenage heir to Earth in Stranger In A Strange Land. The distinction is that Thor Rudbek was a lost heir, whereas Valentine Michael Smith was an heir whose very existence was not known.

He seems also to have been fathered by someone other than his mother's legal husband, which brings into play the whole "presumption of legitimacy" and the exceptions thereto. A child born to a married woman is presumed to be the child of her legal husband, absent some "clear and convincing" evidence to the contrary. ("Clear and convincing" is less than "beyond a reasonable doubt" but more than "a preponderance of the evidence".)

In an atypical moment of humor, the author has a reporter ask Michael what he knows about inheritance laws: he responds by parroting without understanding, several pages of a dense legal text on the subject he has read. (And, having perfect recall -- another recycled gimmick, from Max in Starman Jones -- memorized.)

In both instances we suspect the legal situation would have been muddier even

than Heinlein portrayed it. Specifically, since both cases involved a time lapse of about 14 years or longer, we find it puzzling that no other claimant has moved to have the estate declared vacant and himself declared heir. Or in both instances, since both cases involved substantial fortunes, the state could have done so: unclaimed estates revert to the state. In the U.K., we believe, titles which fall vacant with no heir revert to the Crown.

The law necessarily makes it difficult to establish death in the absence of a body; the old common law rule is seven years' unexplained absence, but again, loopholes. In the case of Valentine Michael Smith, it seems clear that his parents (whomever they were) could have been declared dead under the "common disaster" rule, which usually applies to such instances as ship sinkings or mine cave-ins, where it does not prove feasible to recover the bodies. In a recent case well publicized locally, the state of Delaware convicted a man of first-degree murder despite being unable to produce either a body or a murder weapon, both of which were allegedly dumped at sea. We expect both of those points to figure largely in the inevitable appeals.

(In the days before coroners and death certificates, the custom of displaying at length the corpse of the deceased served a sensible legal purpose: so that, if any legal question arose, a sufficient number of competent witnesses could testify, "Yes, old Fliegenger is dead, I saw the body with my own eyes." Personally, we feel the custom is grotesque, barbaric, and has long outlived its usefulness.)

Some legal systems require the designation of an heir. In the short story "The Menhir", L. Sprague deCamp tells of a French count who, having no children, has arranged to have the title pass to the husband of his wife's sister. The story is fiction; the incident has the ring of truth.

In Bradley's The Heritage Of Hastur, Regis recognizes that before going off on the dangerous trip to Aldaran, he has a legal obligation to provide an heir. Thus he adopts one of his sister's children, quipping to Javanne, "I have no time to

get one in the usual way, sister, even if I could find some woman to help me at such short notice."

Interesting also to note that the agreement is a nuncupative, or oral contract; and despite the competence-of-women issue, Bradley explicitly describes the witnesses as "four old men and two old women of the household." Even before they could vote or hold office, women could be witnesses at a trial -- as can children even now.

In Lois Bujold's The Warrior's Apprentice, the Felician paymaster is amazed that Miles has no written contract: "A verbal agreement is no contract!" Miles is astounded in turn: "A verbal agreement is the most binding of contracts! ...It's a recognized legal theory!" Well, so it is, Miles, but you're still better off protected by Frohvet's Sixth Law: "Get it in writing."

In Anne McCaffrey's Pern books, we see in Dragonriders the case where Robinton and other witnesses torment the dying Lord Meron until he declares an heir. Another such instance arises in Nerilka's Story, when Nerilka refuses to allow the grief-stricken Lord Alessan to suicide without an heir. It is her legal right to require her Lord Holder to leave the affairs of the Hold in reasonable order. (The Pern system is based on a principle that we Americans fought a couple of wars to be rid of -- the assumption that virtue and competence are hereditary -- but that's not really our point here.)



"NEW IDEAS:
Genuine Science Fiction"

by Gene R. Stewart

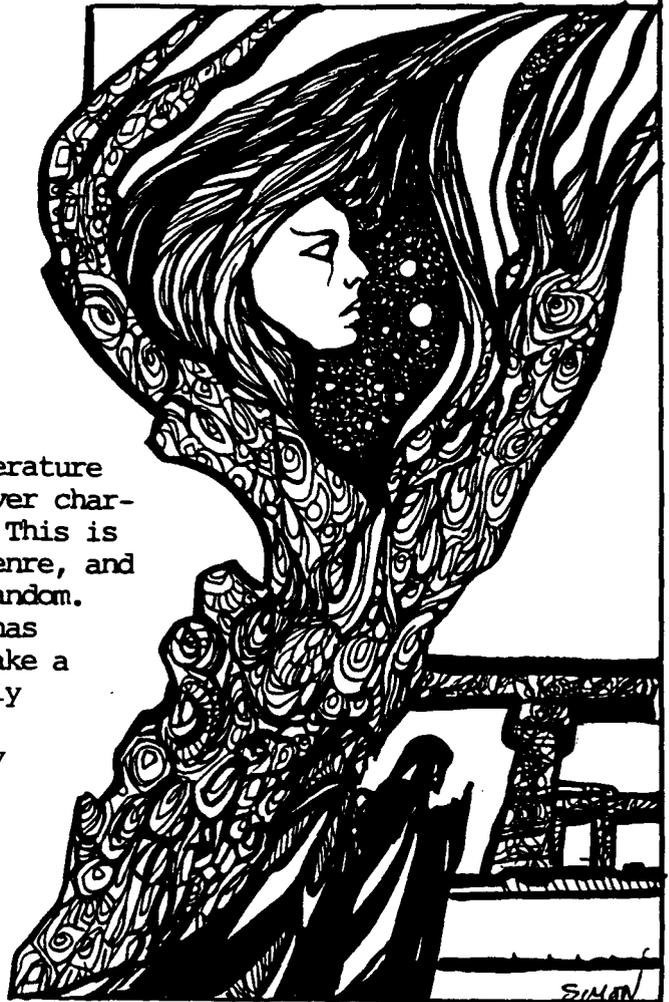
Science fiction is often called the literature of ideas. That means it emphasizes idea over character, plot, or other aspects of fiction. This is both its strength and its weakness as a genre, and has kept it from blossoming much beyond fandom.

The one arena in which science fiction has thrived is the Hollywood movie. The two make a good match. Both rely on novelty, both rely on big ideas and grand concepts, and both employ a minimum of other aspects of story telling. Presenting a sequence of scenes, whether on paper or celluloid, is the essence of fiction. If those scenes can jump from page to screen in bright colors and flashy futuristic set designs, all the better. If a grand scale comes as added value, all the better.

Arthur C. Clarke has said that science fiction is the only genre to deal with reality, and he cites science fiction's willingness to address how technology and science affect our lives as its main strength. Indeed, other genres, for all the attention they pay to the advance of technology, might just as well be pre-technological in origin, it often seems. For them the latest theories from quantum mechanics or chaos theory hold no interest and carry no weight, because such things simply don't affect the lives on which other genres focus.

For science fiction, on the other hand, how our lives change as a result of advanced technology is the crux of the matter. What kinds of lives and adventures might we have if this goes on? What if this or that comes about, what then? Such questions are science fiction's speculative core.

New ideas are generated by building on established facts. Add some quirky or off-angle observations, ask a question or two, and pretty soon speculation becomes science fiction. It's a genre that appeals to engineers, science buffs, and intellectuals. As the Good Doctor, Isaac Asimov, has said, science fiction requires more of both its writers and readers than any other form of fiction. It requires a working familiarity with science, technology, and the synergy between them and people. It requires special terms, even jargon. It requires a questioning nature, and a mind comfortable with doubt and willing to examine things from odd angles. Alarming implications and frightening ramifications not only fail to scatter science fiction aficionados, such things draw them. Writers and readers enjoy looking beyond the comfortable and secure. They actively seek out new wrinkles.



In short, they court and celebrate change, something most try hard to deny and claim they could do well without.

This makes science fiction something of a maverick literary genre. When the status quo becomes not the desired goal but merely a jumping-off point for a genre, it stands at odds with established norms and consensual reality.

Are science fiction folk rebels, then? In some sense, yes, but in other, more important ways, no.

Yes, because many of science fiction's most famous writers have gained their fame, and provoked much discussion, exactly by sweeping aside their contemporary versions of peace and plenty, in search of Utopia based in technological advances. Others even openly questioned the wisdom and validity of their contemporary surroundings by conjuring Dystopia based on extrapolated extremes.

And yet, no, science fiction folks aren't rebels, because they ultimately write from a position of hope. No matter how dark the Dystopia, the message is that there will be someone alive in those grim futures to fight against entropy and stand up for the good in things, scarce though it may be. This isn't rebellion, it's wanderlust, an urge for greener pastures.

This roots science fiction much more solidly in the pioneer spirit, and indeed much science fiction concerns the triumphs and perils of space colonization. We look ahead. We gaze into a future and wonder, with as much technological and scientific validity as we can bring to bear, what it might be like for us, in detail and in extremes and in all its wonderment. Like the first European explorers or the first settlers coming up over a rise and glimpsing for the first time the grandeur of a new world, limitless in its potential for what they might, through luck and hard work, accomplish, science fiction at its best renders us momentarily awed and forever after inspired.

A sense of wonder is key to science fiction. It's that feeling of awe one gets when encountering a marvel for the first time, and in science fiction, that usually means a new idea. New ideas can open our minds to vistas we would not have imagined before, and lets us try out

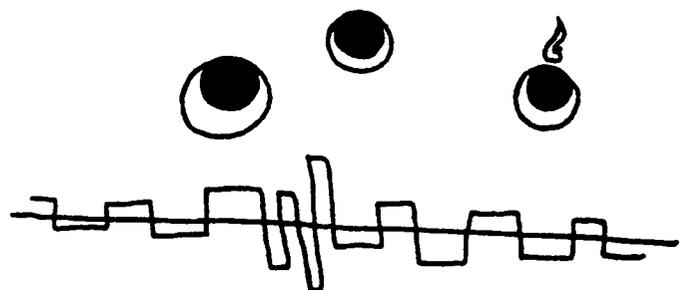
different roles in different types of societies, civilizations, and even galactic empires and interdimensional multiverses. It's all about freedom of choice, opportunity, and possibility.

Science fiction's new ideas are often not new at all, of course. They can be novel twists on themes as old as story telling itself, or startling combinations of common things, or even simply glimpses from viewpoints changed by an aggregate of subtle influences and everyday necessities.

What science fiction seeks in its new ideas is a sense of breaking new ground, of exploring unmapped territories -- of the cosmos or the spirit. Science fiction is an outward urge, itchy feet, and a can-do competence.

Strengths and weaknesses are often the same things viewed from different angles. Science fiction's reliance on new ideas is often cited as its prime weakness, and yet, without that emphasis, it might remain just another descriptive genre. Instead, by embracing new ideas, science fiction demands imaginative writers and readers. Yes, some science fiction gets by on superficial novelty or the charm of a fresh coat of paint, but at its core, at its finest, science fiction lets us participate in a grand thought experiment rooted in tool use and focussed on literally touching the stars. It's the kind of thinking that inspired Homer, as Arthur C. Clarke has made obvious with at least one of his most famous titles. What other set of genre aspects and goals could be as noble?

So next time you're bored by another reread franchise novel, media tie-in, or umpteenth sequel, ask yourself what's the big idea and remember to look for something new. If you can't find it, you're not reading genuine science fiction.





only our opinion....

REVIEWS BY GENE R. STEWART

The Night Man K.W. Jeter Onyx pb
1990 \$3.95 cover

The Night Man by K.W. Jeter was sold as horror, but it's actually a compelling psychological portrait of a small boy's abused life and his way of coping, which is to imagine a faceless man in a dark car who wreaks revenge upon those who torment him. The horror part comes very late in the book when the imagined revenge begins to become real in physical terms. This, incidentally, horrifies the boy, who is not conjuring these images consciously; a brilliant psychological insight into how the id can bubble up in us. Crimes are committed, awful murders of those who have tortured this kid, and only he knows that it's what he calls the Night Man.

Except that the Night Man also refers to an adult who works the night shift at the juvenile detention hall. He takes an interest in the tormented undersized kid and tries to help. He identifies with the boy because of his own past as a bullied kid. And it is he who ends up arrested for the crimes, even as the reader is left wondering if this is true, or if the man's

and the boy's psychologies have somehow meshed to create a real force that overrides their natural restraints.

It's brilliant stuff, many cuts above the usual horror or revenge crap. The aspect to note, though, is Jeter's detestation of the jock mentality. It is the local high school football squad who swill beer, watch porn tapes, and mercilessly bully the little kid, who hasn't got an advantage in his life at all. His mother's an alcoholic mess who hates him, his sister's a whore who trades sex for status with the football team captain, and he lives in poverty, always hungry and never protected.

Jeter attacks and deconstructs the jocks without pity, without remorse, and without sparing a detail. He deals with the macho types who are secretly gay, he deals with the sadomasochists, and he deals with the big dumb assholes who just follow along. He's been there and knows, and his hatred for jocks is palpable. And what's best, he broadens this view to show a coarse world in which the jock mentality has infected and degraded everything. It's social criticism without the fancy words, and it stings on the personal level.

All the lives shown in The Night Man are ugly, but damned accurate. We all know losers like these, people just trying to cope, battered and broken by life, and they know themselves, perhaps all too well, and the truth doesn't set them free even an inch. And despite the occasional eerie scene, nothing in the book is supernatural unless you choose to see it that way, and Jeter makes it clear that such a choice is a cop-out.

Philip K. Dick "discovered" Jeter and trumpeted how good he is, but the SF community was long past taking PKD seriously, so they let Jeter play a bit, then shoved him aside. He's proven to be a survivor by writing books in other genres and even doing a pair of Bladerunner tie-in novels that, true to Jeter's form, rise above media hackwork and are excellent on their own terms.

Jeter's a playful, devastating mind doing serious work in popular form, just like PKD.

Although many readers will take it on

a mundane level and see nothing more in it than a decent diversion, Jeter's work deserves serious attention from anyone intelligent enough to see things as they are and still give a damn. It's worth seeking out.

Neverwhere Neil Gaiman Avon \$6.99

A sardonic tone, reminiscent of Hitchcock, helps greatly when dealing out horror as comedy. Eisner and World Fantasy Award winner Neil Gaiman, writer of the text portion of the smash hit "graphic novel" The Sandman; writer of the BBC TV series Neverwhere; writer of the novels Neverwhere and Stardust and the short story collection Smoke And Mirrors; brings this perennial truth freshly to life. His writing talks to the reader, confides, in fact, in a likable familiar tone. While not entirely colloquial, it employs many slangs and argots even as it maintains generally an older-fashioned tenor. Hitchcock did this, too.

As above, so below? Not exactly. Gaiman's book is a fantasy about London Below, a realm of mad magic into which go all who fall through society's cracks. This includes buildings, environments, even fogs and times past. Wonderful conceit, if not entirely original, and it allows Gaiman to romp through sewage with manic glee and sling blood and gore in an almost innocent celebration. He's able to do this because he's writing in a comedic mode, the literary equivalent, perhaps, to Hitchcock's use of black-and-white to keep the blood in Psycho under control.

Comedy, not humor, mind you. While he does indulge in occasional pratfalls and exaggeration, his comedy is of the deadpan sort. All's well that ends well, and all that. His winks and nudges are subtle when he's at his most outrageous, and wildly obvious when he's slipping huge things past you unnoticed. Like a stage magician, his is as much an art of misdirection as it is of acquired skills and masterful planning.

If one took exactly scenes from Neverwhere and wrote them as serious melodrama, as Thomas Harris might in Silence Of The Lambs, then it would seem grotesquely foul, aputrescence, the stuff often labelled "the pornography of violence".

In a droll tone, however, it all becomes easily dealt with, and even somewhat charming. A light touch redeems, as it did with Hitchcock, where a heavy hand only crushes, as in so many contemporary "serial killer" novels.

Remember that Hitch stood there in the box in people's living rooms, in the 50's, telling them rather bluntly that they could trust neither their neighbors nor their families, any of whom might well be the most dire of criminals: murderers, rapists, thieves, and scum. In fact, he even told them they might not be able to trust themselves, yet people loved him, because he did it with a droll irony that kept things detached, polite, even urbane. In other words he charmed them with style and manner. No sugar coating ever worked so well, perhaps.

Gaiman obviously learned this lesson. Where King Stephen and Clive Barker met with opposition, book bannings and burnings, and controversy, all focussed upon their blunt handling of taboo subjects and frightening implications, Gaiman meets with happy children and delighted adults who find his work compelling, fun, and utterly irresistible, because he's insouciant, offhand, and never somber. That they're obviously mistaking style for substance merely deepens the jest of Gaiman's obvious sanity. He grinds no axe, and therefore can enjoy the beauty of the sparks flying off his particular grindstone, even as he hones his edge.

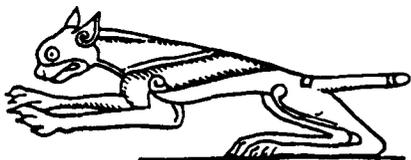
Such irony wears well, as long as it doesn't descend into the silly, and Gaiman is careful to add a dash of harsh reality or a bracing dose of bitter truth now and then to keep things balanced. His novel is more impressive after one has finished it, after the narrative spell is broken and one's reality is returned, the worse for wear. That's when one begins to realize the layers, levels, and leaps of logic he's brought one through so effortlessly. He's the sort of fellow who could ride the wildest roller coaster while sipping champagne from a beautiful woman's navel and never spill a drop. For starters.

In essence, the book is simple. Richard Mayhew, a Scot, goes to London to find a job and a life. An act of charity, however, starts him on a journey away from the everyday world, into what becomes

a quest through London Below, where almost nothing is as one might expect. Mayhew must face situations and beings he's never prepared for, and in so doing he is changed and for the better.

He finally learns who he is, and where he belongs.

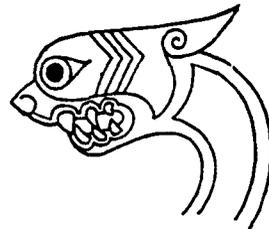
Along the way he meets the Lady Door, a scruffy girl in an oversized leather jacket whose family heritage is the ability to open anything and everything; the Marquis de Carabas, a mysterious entity who seems to work only for himself and who keeps a precious part of himself in a silver box; Old Bailey, with his feathered clothes and his collection of birds, who lives on the roofs of London Above and sells birds and information at the legendary floating Market; Mr. Croup and Mr. Vandemar, a pair of creatures condensed from a world's nightmares; and the angel Islington, a creature of light, if not quite of life. All these and many other characters enrich Mayhew's journey and keep the novel both real and bizarre.



It's the many fillips, gratuitous details, and lapidary squibs that keep the reader alert, alive to wonder, and open to any surprise. It's the attention to character that deepens the story and leaves the reader with the resonance of another world, a world so fully realized yet so casually presented that it must be real and true, and still quite magical. It's Gaiman's concise, focussed writing that serves up this convoluted confection with splendid flair.

What's best about Neverwhere is that it finds its readers ready to be whisked away and comes to them fully formed, confident and artful. It's a book to disappoint only those utterly lacking in imagination and a sense of wonder. Call it dark fantasy, droll conceit, call it old fashioned, call it anything -- it's one of those books, like Gibson and Sterling's The Difference Engine, or The Anubis Gates by Tim Powers, or Caleb Carr's The Alienist, or An Instance Of The Fingerprint by Iain Pears, that prove

categories don't matter when the story telling is superb. Read this book and learn how much bigger one's world can be.



REVIEWS BY E.B. FROHNET

Finity's End C.J. Cherryh Warner/Aspect
1997 \$6.50

Fletcher Neihart was a nobody, an orphan and perennial problem for Pell Station's legal system and stationmaster Elene Quen. He fit in nowhere and liked no one, except the gentle Downers. But he was kin to the Neiharts, the influential merchant clan of the great starship Finity's End. And they wanted him back. Whether he wanted to go was not relevant. Every try to fit him into the Finity crew backfired, until he was ready to leave the ship, despite Jeremy, the almost-younger, almost-cousin he almost liked. Meanwhile Senior Captain James Robert Neihart was driving hard bargains with stations and merchanters that might strengthen the Alliance in the long run.

We commented before that Downbelow Station is the focal point of Cherryh's great saga of Union/Alliance space; with Cyteen, Rimrunners, Merchanter's Luck and Tripoint in fairly close orbit and other books at greater distances. Finity's End is most nearly the direct sequel to Downbelow, the gritty politics of Alliance come home to roost after 17 years. In personal terms this is familiar Cherryh territory, one outsider's struggle to fit into an unfamiliar society. However well done, which it is, we had the sense of having read this story before, most obviously in Tripoint.

Star Child James P. Hogan Baen 1997
\$5.99

For Taya, there was only Merkon, which was the world, and which was made of metal. There was also Kort, her only companion, also made of metal. Kort said that Merkon was moving toward a star (though it never seemed to get closer), but he did not know why. Eventually, Kort took Taya to see the rest of the biolife experiments being run by the meclife

intelligences of Merkon: Taya herself being the first fruits of that experiment. Thus begins what you might call either four sequential novellas, or an episodic novel.

This is a good solid effort, if a little heavy-handed in places where Hogan/Kort get stuck on recapitulating the (still unsolved, probably unsolvable) dichotomy between science and religion. Worth considering for the younger reader. If it suffers in comparison to, say, Gene Wolfe's Book Of The Long Sun, well, who doesn't?

Men At Arms Terry Pratchett Harper/Prism
1993 \$6.50

This, we fear, illustrates the danger of writing a really long series. The deeper into it you get, the more the dedicated reader can take for granted the background and the in-jokes, the harder it becomes to attract the casual reader who hasn't been along from the outset. We know that "Discworld" is a highly popular series with many devoted readers. This volume, randomly selected at the library, struck us as generic parody of generic fantasy. It was mildly amusing here and there; and also had jokes on which Pratchett went to the well way too often. The one about not having the troll constable salute was funny once; by the seventh time the author used it in the first 70 pages, the joke wore thin. Are we going to invest the time to read eight or ten volumes of this sort of thing? No. (The same is probably true of Jordan's "Wheel Of Time" and Modesitt's "Recluce" series: we're so far behind now, we probably just won't bother.)

The Drylands Mary Rosenblum Del Rey
"Discovery" 1993 \$4.50

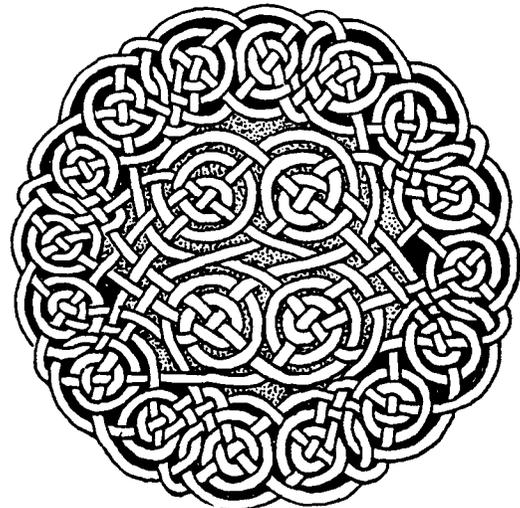
The world is racked by drought. In the U.S., the real power is the Water Policy Committee, and its practical arm, the Corps (nee Army Corps of Engineers). For Colonel Carter Voltaire (why do we get the awful feeling the author thought that character name was clever?), assigned to guard a pipeline in Oregon, it means a fine line between orders from above, and sympathy for local farmers. To Nita Montoya, a refugee with a freak empath talent and an infant child, the problem is why she's how she is, and what it means in future.

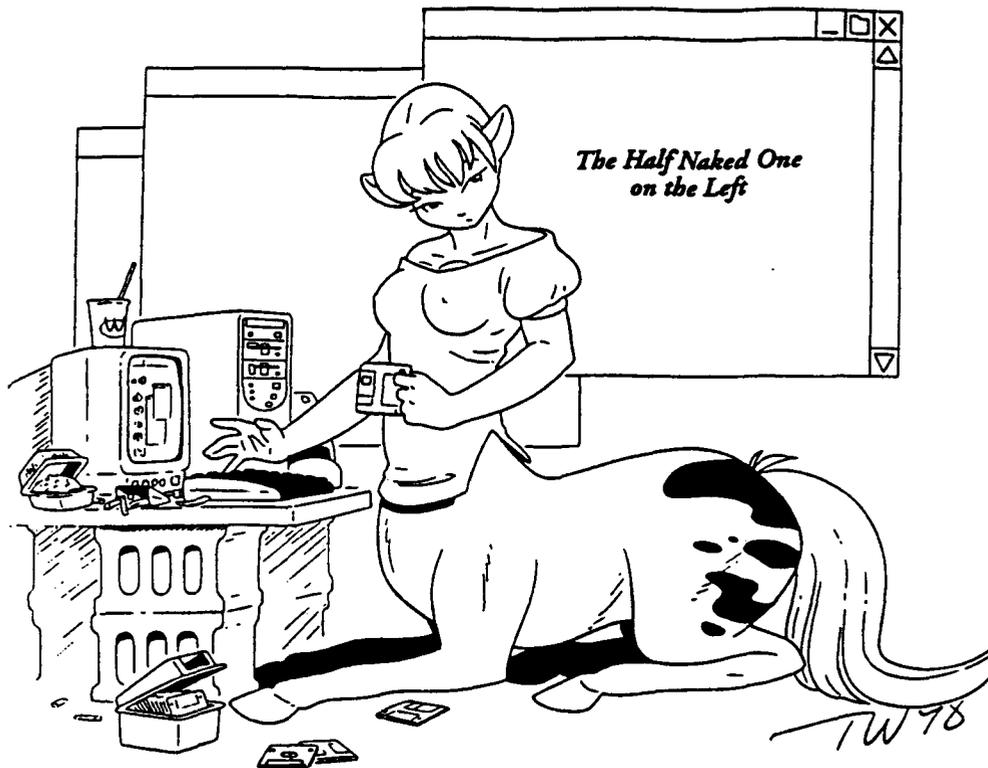
One, what is it with SF and drought? (Dune, The Dispossessed, also Wilhelm's Juniper Time, L. Dean James' Summerland.) Hasn't the ecological disaster thing been done? Two, every 8-10 years some publisher re-invents the "discovery" series and gambles a few bucks on first novels by unknowns. It rarely if ever works: what you get are adequate journeyman books like this, or worse. In spite of which, we may say that Drylands held our interest a shade better than some books by well known writers.

The Masterharper Of Pern Anne McCaffrey
Del Rey 1998 \$6.99

The story begins with the birth of a son to singer Merelan and composer Petiron at Harper Hall. It ends -- well, jeez, if you don't know where it ends, go back to Dragonflight and start over. McCaffrey still has her touch for sympathetic characters and high, if rather operatic, drama. That will suffice for most readers. The bad news, like influenza, comes in several strains. Masterharper suffers the inevitable flaw of prequels, you know how it comes out; any major surprise is eliminated. Also, the book's sense of mortality becomes oppressive. The author has painted herself into a position that can only be achieved by axeing a grim succession of major characters. In addition, this is the what?, fourteenth Pern novel? There are numerous entire scenes that seem to have been recycled wholesale from earlier books. (Specifically? Okay, Master Gennell's speech at Robinton's promotion is almost verbatim the one Robinton gave when Menolly "walked the tables" at the end of Dragonsinger.)

Pern has had a great run as a popular and successful fantasy series. It may be time to let it go and say goodbye.





FOSFAX #196

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

About half the 86 pages are lettercol, mainly sociopolitical blather from a right/libertarian perspective. (Good rule of thumb: any LOC over one page.) The rest does occasionally overlap with SF/fannish material, with brief con reports and book reviews. Unfortunately you get the sense that this is an afterthought and the politics are the intrinsic purpose of the zine.

Fanzine Fanatique (not numbered, July 99)

Keith Walker
6 Vine Street, Lancaster,
LA1 4UF, United Kingdom

A small (4 pp.) but apparently fairly regular zine consisting of short reviews of other zines, including SF fanzines but also literary small-press. We mostly agreed with those we also receive, which suggests our taste is vaguely compatible with Walker's: if that's any help.

Derogatory Reference #93

Arthur D. Hlavaty
206 Valentine Street
Yonkers NY 10704

A regular quarterly small (6 pp.) personalzine which seems so self-reliant as not to require external comment. The editor discusses his new job (similar to his old job, copy-editing for a technical publisher); politics, publishing tricks, evolution, Ayn Rand and absolutist philosophy, rats, occasionally even SF.

Memphen #259

Greg Bridges/rotating editors
P.O. Box 820534
Memphis TN 38182

A typical clubzine with local news, reviews of Fred Saberhagen books by Barbara Gatewood (in anticipation of his being GOH at a local con), a few LOC's, etc. Memphen strikes us as a shade provincial, but that's a forgivable flaw in a clubzine.

Plokta Vol. 4 #3

Steve Davies & Alison Scott
52 Westbourne Terrace, Reading,
Berks, RG30 2RP, United Kingdom

The Cabal that produce this Hugo nominated zine seem more relaxed this time, under less self-imposed pressure to be desperately cute. Giulia DeCesare riffs on asparagus, Scott describes a trip to France to see an eclipse, lots of LOKs. (Their joke, the lettercol is "Lokta Plokta".) SF is even mentioned, however minimally! We liked the mellower version; some will say they've lost their edge.

Trash Barrel (September 99)

Donald Franson
6543 Babcock Avenue
North Hollywood CA 91606

A 4 pp. zine consisting of brief and rather noncommittal reviews of fanzines. We're trying to be more specific about what we like or don't like.

Vanamonde #'s 318-322

John Hertz
236 S. Coronado Street #409
Los Angeles CA 90057

A single-page APA zine, weekly, and distributed in batches of five. This lot ran almost entirely to APA responses, which is like listening to one side of a phone conversation; but we generally find something of interest, e.g., whether The Hunt For Red October is SF. (Our vote goes to "no", but...)

Dataphile (Fall 99)

Jacqueline P. Baker
Viking Union 202 Box V-1
Bellingham WA 98226

Clubzine of the Western Washington U. SF & Fantasy Club. Contains local news, amateur fiction, two reviews of The Blair Witch Project (one liked it, one hated it), and a "buy one get one free" ad for a local coffee shop. Also a plug for their con (VikingCon, August 2000).

Bento #10

David Levine & Kate Yule
1905 SE 43rd Avenue
Portland OR 97215

This teeny tiny (4"x5") zine seems to be once a year coinciding with Worldcon. The editors discourse on bagels, airline

stupidity, the Bradbury Building in L.A., Volkswagens, excerpts from Yule's diary, and their private language. Also some short LOC's. They seem personable enough, which leaves us feeling a little crass to wonder why anyone would do a zine this small on that kind of schedule.

PhiloSFy #13

Alexander R. Slate
8603 Shallow Ridge Drive
San Antonio TX 78239

It's no secret that we enjoy this small zine. It has more personal material about the editor and his life and family, but then his life is more interesting than ours. Also contains discussions of ethics in government and medicine, some brief fanzine and book reviews, and lettercol. An underappreciated fanzine which deserves more support.

The Mongolian Jird (May-August 99)

Alan Sullivan
30 Ash Road, Stratford, London
E15 1HL, United Kingdom

A monthly, single-sheet item which is either the clubzine of something called "ZZ9" (Britfans will doubtless snicker at our ignorance) or Sullivan's descriptions of same. The group's activities seem to consist of drinking, partying, and more drinking. Amusing, though we probably missed most of the in-jokes.

Opuntia #'s 42.5, 43, & 43.1A

Dale Speirs
P.O. Box 6830
Calgary, Alberta, T2P 2E7, Canada

Opuntia has a distinctive format (digest rotated 90°) and a unique numbering system (whole-numbered issues are sercon, .1 are reviews, .2 are indexes, .5 are personal-zines). We'd describe them all as perzines though varying slightly in focus as described. #42.5 is about Speirs' life and job, #43 mainly a detailed report on the local con, #43.1 discusses books and fanzines. A distinctly Canadian slant is evident throughout.

Gegenschein #84

Eric Lindsay

P.O. Box 640, Airlie Beach, Queensland
4802, Australia

Belatedly retrieved from the old mail drop (readers, please update your lists, the people at the mail drop have been very nice about holding stuff for us but there's a limit), this e-zine resumes paper form only when Lindsay can find a cheap copy-shop. Personal news, short book reviews and some LOC's. Worth reading if just for delightfully goofy Aussie place names ("Woolgoolwa").

Balderdash #2

Gary Deindorfer

465 Greenwood Avenue #1104
Trenton NJ 08609

Typical 8-pp. apazine (this intended for FAPA). Divided about equally into mailing comments, and Deindorfer's writing exercises, distinguished for cleverness more so than actual content.

Probe #108

Deirdre Byrne

P.O. Box 781401
Sandton 2146, South Africa

A somewhat more interesting issue of SF South Africa's clubzine, due in the main to throttling back on the amateur fiction. Neville Cutler on the risks of virtual reality being mistaken for the real thing; an e-mail travelogue from two locals travelling in North America (describes San Francisco as "full of weirdos"); some book and fanzine reviews.

Out Of The Kaje #5

Karen Johnson

35 Mariana Avenue, South Croydon,
Victoria 3136, Australia

Rapidly becoming a zine whose arrival we look forward to. Kaje has a clean presentation, a good mix of fannish and sercon material, and -- its best asset -- a friendly open personality. #5 features numerous readers on what they would take to Mars, articles on time travel, letters, and part 2 of a fannish glossary. Nice.

The Knarley Knews #78

Henry L. Welch

1525 16th Avenue
Grafton WI 53024

A very consistent bimonthly genzine, moderate in both size and scope. Welch reports on the decline of convention fandom in Milwaukee, he and Charlotte Proctor review a few books, a fairly extensive lettercol. Although Welch admits that he prefers "the calm and well-reasoned", and in general we agree, TKK might benefit from a touch more passion/enthusiasm.

Visions Of Paradise #82

Robert M. Sabella

24 Cedar Manor Court
Budd Lake NJ 07828

Graced with a dramatic Franz Miklis cover, VOP like Gaul is divided into three parts: Sabella's personal/family journal, discussion of books (with an eye to Dan Simmons' Hyperion saga this time), and a letter column. Much like PhilosFy, this is a zine with which we feel comfortable; but which would benefit from further outside contributions.

Southern Fandom Conf. Bulletin Vol 7 #5

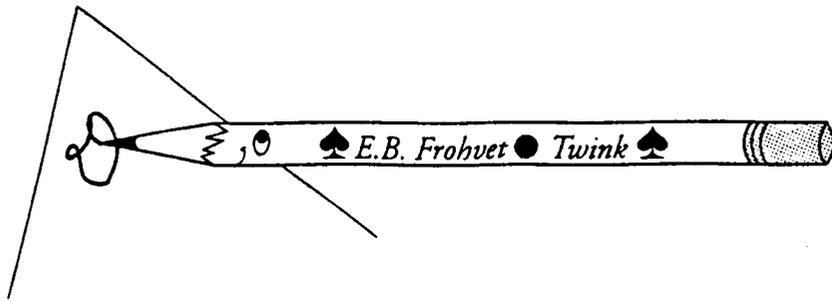
Julie Wall

470 Ridge Road
Birmingham AL 35206

Highlights of the Southern newszine are Sheryl Birkhead's cover, and Steve & Sue Francis' long Australian travelogue (and incidental Worldcon report) in which their genuine enjoyment shines through a rather prosaic style. Also other con reports, fanzine reviews, Southern news, & letters. We think this compares favorably with, say, File 770 -- hence our editorial.

Vanished in the mists Dept.: Snufkin's Bum (April 1998); Freethinker (7/98); Outworlds (9/98); Nova Express (12/98); Reluctant Famulus (3/99); Thyme (5/99).

Arriving after we had used up the space allotted for fanzine reviews: Barmaid #8



Rheaders Rhevenge

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

HARRY WARNER JR.
423 Summit Avenue
Hagerstown MD 21740

With every confidence that I have once again evaded the deadline to appear in your letter column, I offer my usual apologies for being late with response to Twink. I had two spells of illness during July and August, one of them quite lengthy and wretched, and I still haven't quite recovered my strength and the weight I lost over the summer from this cause and from the Turkish bath into which the heat turned this house.

I begin with the fact that I feel almost cheered by the depletion of Worldcon potential sites. This results from the fact that it's one of the few fannish problems that I don't need to worry about, thanks to my decades-long abstention from conventions large and small...

I feel it is good to write articles about how popular and famous fanzines got that way, and to provide tips on how to avoid common fanzine publishing mistakes for the benefit of neofans who are about to publish their first fanzines. The only thing I ask of such articles is that they don't go on to tell their readers that they must follow these instructions... Fanzines have always been distinctive for the fact that their editors can do whatever they wish... It would take all the fun out of it if the neofan were led to believe that he must follow the examples of the past and present instead of obeying his own instincts...

[[As we said at the time, it would have been helpful to us to have had advice, instead of just jumping in clumsily with both feet. But one has to start somewhere. It's the tendency of many neos to do one or two issues, then disappear, that troubles us.]]

Two persons in the letter column express admiration for "The Cold Equations". That story happens to be my bete noire of SF. I've raised a storm in two APA's with my criticism of its illogicalities which might be forgiven in a space opera that doesn't claim to be based on the inexorable laws of physics and math.

I would choose Weinbaum's "A Martian Odyssey" as my favorite short SF story. It might not be the greatest in literary quality or breathtaking concepts or characterization. But I have read it at least a half dozen times by now and I never find anything in it that seems less than superb...

[[We re-read it recently and the piece seemed pretty dated to us. A classic of its time, of course, but the literature of SF has moved on since then.]]

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

Much thanks for the Twink #15. I see what you mean about the features in the Peake drawing of Fuchsia that you publish, but though I have read the books several times it never occurred to me to wonder about her race. She is Titus' sister after all, and I don't remember race being mentioned at all in Titus Groan or Gormenghast, so that one assumes everyone

at Gormenghast is of the same race -- whatever it is. In general I would say that Peake's pictures, while exaggerated, fall more or less in the European mold; note that while he grew up in China, none of these people look at all Oriental, though he did draw Oriental features elsewhere, as in Quest For Sita. But in the caption to the picture you use, which I think first appeared in the Eyre & Spottiswoode edition of 1968, Peake says specifically, "She was... in a sense, ugly of face..." -- an odd comment in light of the other women in the book, who are all much worse looking than Fuchsia in Peake's drawings. However they are all much older as well. In my opinion Peake never intended anything about Fuchsia's looks except that she was not conventionally beautiful.

[[Precisely because the other characters are clearly white/European, we find the fact that Fuchsia seems to belong to a quite different ethnic type mysterious. Though as far as we're aware, there is no Peake drawing of her father.]]

I had never heard before about Patricia Russo's assertion that the Marx Brothers' father was an Alsatian (meaning not the breed of dog, but a native of Alsace-Lorraine) named Marris -- but I see that one of the big Marx websites confirms it. Sam Marris is said to have changed his name to Marx to "sound more German" in hopes of getting a job.

I love Sharon Lee's story about the stapled cat!

CHARLOTTE PROCTOR
8325 7th Avenue S.
Birmingham AL 35206

The highlited paragraphs on p. 1 jumped out at me and I knew I had to DO SOMETHING! I never knew why I began receiving Twink in the first place unless it was because my column began running in The Knarley Knews -- after being absent from the fanzine scene for 6 years. No matter; thanks for Twink #15. It was the highlight of today's mail drop. It's good to hear from and about old friends in your lettercol.

[[Every issue, we send the zine to four or five people whose addresses we got from other fanzines. (Yes, we probably

got your address from Knarley Knews.) The response rate on these continues to run at less than 25%.]]

After umpteen weeks of drought in the South, we finally had a good thunderstorm and rain last night. I was reminded of the big thunderstorm in '86 when Bob & Sadie Shaw were our houseguests. They were scared to death, they said, by the close and consistent lightning and thunder. It was a big storm -- you could read by the lightning, but I pretended otherwise: "What's the matter? Don't you have thunderstorms in England?"

MARTY CANTOR
11825 Gilmore Street #105
North Hollywood CA 91606

The mailbox Twinked at me today, and for that I thank you. This time around, I have not many comments to make, but make them I shall... Part of my problem was work-related insofar as, after 40+ years of working full time, I had an absolute belly-full of spending more of my dwindlingsupply of time on this mortal coil doing any more of what I was more and more considering to be something up with which I no longer wanted to put. So I retired.

Starting with Tom Feller's comment Lloyd & Yvonne Penney running for TAFF. Succinctly, I am against it, but not for any reasons of unworthiness on the part of the Penney's. TAFF can only have one North American winner every other year, and there are more candidates who would make worthy winners than can possibly win the race. The Penney's have already won their race (in CUFF) so I feel they should leave the field for others. Now that I am retired, I would have no problem finding the time to take another fanfund trip; however, as a previous DUFF winner, I do not feel that I should obstruct another candidate from winning... I have been to both Australia and England (once each) and I would love to pay a return visit to either place... But I have had my (wonderful) fanfund trip, administered the fund for two years, pubbed my trip report, and am willing to let others enjoy the same experience whilst I can savour my memories.

[[Bravo! We think your position on this is admirably gracious and fair.]]

Competition in Courier Services

Patrick McGuire writes about me revisiting the question of whether there are enough fan writers to go around. I stand by my comments. My previous zine, Holier Than Thou, was nominated for the Best Fanzine Hugo in '84, '85, and '86. It was monster sized with lots and lots of contributors. I have been back from gaffiation for three years and my current zine, No Award, has had enough issues that the word of my "market" should be well known by now. Still, the issues of the zine are delayed mostly by me waiting for contributions to materialize. Of course, when one has contributors like Mike Glycer, Milt Stevens, and Joseph Major, it is hard not to want them in every issue. I must say this for Joseph -- he is always early with his contributions.

[[Our original intent with Twink was to edit and do some reviews: clearly it has not worked out quite that way.]]

Lyn McConchie writes about being a speed reader and having 6000+ books. I do not have as many books in my collection -- and I have read most of them many times over. I used to be a speed reader but I eventually slowed down because I found it more comfortable to read at a slower (but not molasses) pace. The reason I do not have 6000+ books is the lack of funds to buy same.

You ask, who is Jack Speer? In the mundane world I believe he has been a Congressman and a judge. Last I heard he was still in FAPA -- and has been there from issue #1. But as Robert Lichtman brought up his name (and probably knows Jack better than I do), I think he should clarify for you Jack's fannish credentials and explain his reputation.

PATRICIA RUSSO
341 73rd Street
North Bergen NJ 07047

Congrats on publication in Lower Than The Angels! Is this the ice-skater story? (Sorry, the title has slipped my porous memory.) Now, doesn't this encourage you to keep on with Story Project, Part Deux? Hey, did you publish it under "Frohvet", or your birth name?

[[The story was published under "Frohvet". Yes and no: yes, it was the figure-skating story you read; no, it does not particularly encourage us to run



"We now offer delivery by -yesterday-!"

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around sending out lots of stories.]]

As to Vampire Dan's "send another" -- I always take such comments as sincere, as editors are swamped with stories, most of them bad, so why encourage future submissions from a writer you thought sucked?

CATHERINE MINTZ
1810 S. Rittenhouse Square #1708
Philadelphia PA 19103

It was the various comments on TAFF that caught my attention first. As I understand it, and unless they've been taking money from me under false pretenses for years, the idea goes like this. Several worthy, convivial fans declare candidacy and one is voted into being the TAFF delegate by all of the contributors. I think the minimum contribution is \$2. No, you don't get more votes if you give more.

The collected fund is turned over to the winner. Usually the takings are about enough for airfare, both ways. The victorious contestant has to make up the difference out of pocket, helped along by hosts who provide chocolate bars, meals, floors and blankets, beds, hotel rooms, transportation by every known means of local travel, and the like.

The winner, having had an adventurous trip -- and they always do have an adventurous trip -- returns home and is supposed to publish a trip report. Many actually have. Others have been dining out at conventions for years by spinning out their stories one by one. In any case the returned winner then takes on the responsibility of raising the funds for the next winner and running the election

between the declared candidates.

...So a TAFF winner can expect to spend some of their own money and help raise funds for the next trip. However, they normally do spend the fund... Else, what would the point be? The whole point is to help fans travel and get to know one another.

[[In theory, there seems to be a pretty clear concensus about how TAFF is supposed to work. In practice, perhaps it's not so simple.]]

SF and race. By the time we really get into interstellar space most of us are going to be tan, with dark hair and brown eyes. We will have big and small noses, full and thin lips, and angular or round faces combined pretty much at random. That is, there aren't going to be any blacks wandering through space -- and no whites either.

So this is a non-issue unless you argue special circumstances in your stories. I admit writers might hint at this more often, and in fact I suspect most of them are writing white characters, but the truth is it's generally possible to read most recent fiction without assuming everyone is white.

In a similar vein, I had a friend who complained that SF characters always spoke "white" English. I pointed out they weren't speaking anything like English once you got beyond a few thousand years. So writing in Modern English was as good a translation as one was likely to produce. I enjoy books which at least hint at the language being different, but most editors will refuse anything with more than one or two strange words.

[[C.J. Cherryh does that as well as any SF writer; but early in her career we found Hunter Of Worlds tedious precisely because it had dozens of invented words, many superficially similar.]]

JOSEPH T. MAJOR
1409 Christy Avenue
Louisville KY 40204

Johnny Carruthers was representing FOSFAX at the Hugo Awards ceremony in 1993. He suggested, and it is unfortunate that the suggestion was not taken up, that when the "Best Fanzine" award was announced, all the nominees should go up and examine

the award, just in case.

The reason that Enfandin is dropped "halfway through the book" is that Bring The Jubilee shifts its scene to the Hagershaven community. There was no reasonable justification for having the Haitian consul there.

[[But the character Hodge Backmaker admits that for years after he made no effort to follow up on the injury to his "only friend", and is even called on this by one of the other characters.]]

Does Lyn McConchie remember Roger Elwood? In the early 1970's, Elwood took the SF world by storm, signing contracts to produce no less than 80 original anthologies over a 3-year period. It was considered worrisome that one person should be responsible for what was then a substantial part of the total SF market. Worse yet were Elwood's attitudes. Elwood was a fundamentalist Christian, a belief hardly held in respect among SF people. Somewhat more to the point, the works he edited had to adhere to these beliefs. If a writer wrote a story for him and he rejected it, there were few other markets available. (It often seems nowadays that editors solve this problem by accepting all commissioned stories, regardless of their quality -- as Lyn observes.)

...There was no such parallel concern over Martin H. Greenberg, whose proportional dominance of the anthology field is far greater than Elwood ever had. Indeed the biggest concern up to now had been ensuring that Martin H. Greenberg is not Martin Greenberg, publisher of the ill fated Gnome Press.

I gave up on the Honor Harrington novels because they all seemed to have variants on one plot: Honor is assigned to a new post; the admiral distrusts her; the crew is insolent and undisciplined; introduce some personal element here; Honor whips things into shape; THE BIG BATTLE: the Havenites get their prats whipped, but almost everyone on Honor's ship is killed in the process.

Now I may not be much of a connoisseur of naval fiction, but it seems to me that junior officers, petty officers, etc. just might be spreading the word that, "Assigned to Harrington? Make your will and kiss your ass goodbye."

[[Seems to us that if you sign up in a

military outfit, the possibility of being killed in action is inherent in the process. "Give me a fast ship, for I intend to go in harm's way." (John Paul Jones?)]]

REG was flattered at the comparison ("You could call [The Geis Letter] a mini-FOSFAX if you were so inclined."), but he has been at it longer... As Martin Morse Wooster once told me, he has been reading Geis's predictions of imminent economic doom for 25 years.

I read Catherine Mintz's description of her domicile ("Here we have a very full bookcase.") to Lisa. She agreed that it described ours very well.



Minicon is indeed trying to slenderize. They have problems such as a strange sort of pseudo-military group that holds its annual meeting at the con. Reports on their success have not been widespread.

The Delta Clipper had the problem of the pro-space community in general. It looked like it might succeed, so all its would-be supporters promptly turned to promising if underdeveloped technologies while its opponents remained opposed. When the test vehicle crashed, no one wanted to go any further with it.

Fannish mavens have been hailing the inevitable victory of Charlotte in 2004 since the "Nieuw Amsterdam in 2004" bid was announced. Even without the chairmanship of Robert Sacks, this New York bid bids fair to follow the path of the last few New York bids.

The Social Security Death Index lists two Frazar Wildes (no middle initials given); one died in May 1985 and he was about 90, born in 1895; the other died in January 1973 and as he had been born in 1918 he seems a more likely candidate.

STEVE SNEYD

4 Nowell Place, Almondbury, Huddersfield West Yorkshire, HD5 8PB, U.K.

Better a realtime poc than a vaporware LOC?

Labyrinths in churches a return, not a new thing. Early Middle Ages hijacked into churches as representations of journeys of pilgrims to Earthly Jerusalem/souls to Heavenly Jerusalem. Greek myth tries to explain pre-extant Minoan reality, effect not cause. Scandinavian stone labyrinths, NE England turf equivalents just possibly influenced by Greek/Mediterranean myth, but likelier from ideas of spiral journey of dead (parallel to Celtic "spiral castle" of underworld). A vast subject -- enter the meaning maze with care! Robert Holdstock's Mythago Wood and Lavendyss bear tangentially at least on this (and many other matters), and Robert Graves' non-fiction White Goddess a very rich database.

[[It's evident that many pre-Christian "pagan" customs have been co-opted -- among many, "Yule" log, "Advent" wreath, the sexual symbolism of mistletoe. These things come and go in fashion; but the whole subject is, as you say, too extensive for us to survey.]]

Suspect "jobation" was British school boy slang about a century back, not in my day anyhow.

ALAN SULLIVAN

30 Ash Road, Stratford, London, E15 1HL, U.K.



Hello! How are things? I thought I'd write, before I forget ... Er... Well, having forgotten, and only just now remembering again, thanks for Twink #14. Lessee, now.

[[Editor's note: Mr. Sullivan's LOC, dated ambiguously "September 1999", was clearly sent before #15 could have reached him.]]

"Making Editor Orange": It is indeed a shame that there don't seem to be many real "Guides for Faneds" around. That said, I suppose it would be a bit awkward to get them circulated... Unless, of course, a specific fanzine was produced, aimed at would-be faneds... A better method would be to set this sort of thing up as a web-page, with a downloadable set of hints and guidelines...

[[We wonder if the market of aspiring would-be faneds is simply too small to justify the effort involved?]]

"An Interview With Lee & Miller": A worthy and readable interview, too. Well done.

"Four For Fandom"(Janine Stinson): Sadly, I have only read one of the items mentioned here -- Silence Of The Langford -- so I can't comment on the other three. Dave Langford is very funny...

Well, going by the picture, Chateau de Frohvet (Schloss Frohvet, perhaps?) is certainly a mix of styles (I personally like the classic modern "raygun gothic" type, but that's me). I'm pleased to see that you have a sensible arrangement of mail boxes though.

"The Half Naked One": Left of centaur attraction, eh? (Sorry, couldn't resist it...) Nice big lot of fanzines, and some tidy little capsule reviews, too. Some of these I shall have to get hold of.

"Rheaders' Rhevenge": A well packed letter column! Always a good sign of a healthy, thriving fanzine.

Sorry this letter is a bit short. Have some Jirds. I just hope they don't breed on you (or anyone else for that matter).

WILLIAM BREIDING
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#15, with the cool Teddy cover, just in yesterday. Keep on asking our beloved fanartists for their much, much appreciated work.

I suggest that you run right out and buy St. Harry's books A Wealth Of Fable and All Our Yesterdays. This issue of Twink finds you sadly admitting ignorance of fan history (who's Jack Speer and Joe Sanders? among other things). Although you proclaim to find fan history of negligible interest, I think it would behoove you to have a working knowledge of fanzine fandom's history. Because, (1): you are publishing a fanzine, and (2): You won't look like a ninny responding in the lettercol to folks like Ed Meskys, Robert Lichtman, Ned Brooks, Steve Sneyd, and Vicki Rosenzweig.

[[What? And deprive you experts of the opportunity to instruct us? Hey, we've been called much worse than "nanny"...]]

Do you suffer from White Guilt? I've been enjoying your series "We're All African Anyway" up until now. Well, let me rephrase that. I enjoyed this installment as well, just found myself wondering why you were harping so hard on the absence of "color" in SF & fantasy. Writers are compelled to write about what interests and fascinates them. Just because these writers make futuristic extrapolations doesn't mean that they are obligated to tell the story of blacks and other non-whites if this isn't what captures their imagination. I will be looking forward to Delany, who often seemed not to give a rat's ass about ethnic background, or it was so mixed up it didn't matter. (I admit, hastily, that I've not read Dhalgren or anything beyond.)

[[We never said writers were obligated to write about race; we just wonder why they have chosen not to consider the subject at all. / Ah, good ol' Liberal White Guilt Syndrome: no, not us.]]

TRINLAY KHADRO
P.O. Box 240934
Brown Deer WI 53224

Re: "We're All African Anyway" V is that over the years of reading SF/fantasy I'd perceived the sci-fi world as much more racially mixed. Maybe my own mind is stirring up the gene pools I'm reading about. Ursula LeGuin (sci-fi or not?) always seemed, at least in her tech-advanced worlds and short stories, to have a mixed group of people in the stories...

[[Perhaps this is an apt moment to point out that our survey of the topic has not yet gotten out of the 1970's. It is certainly fair to say that SF of the 1980's/90's is more diverse -- we just haven't worked up to it yet.]]

In some cases, various short stories mostly, I think I've perceived the characters based on nuances and cultural traits -- sometimes seeing "black" or at least "non-white" based on subtle clues. I'm particularly recalling a short story (author & title lost in my wetware) where a wizardress/assassin with a desert snake familiar was the main character, never quite described, but I saw her as black.

[[Unless you're talking about Vonda

McIntyre's "Of Mist, Grass And Sand", which became the novel Dreamsnake, we're at a loss. But the character Snake was a healer, not an assassin! Anyone?]]

In any case, the general perception in Mundania of sci-fi worlds is racially mixed and multi-cultural. I wonder how much of that is from Star Trek's mixed crew. On the other hand, despite my knowing otherwise, a black co-worker has very firmly stated that, "Black folks don't read sci-fi!"

Oooh! R.A. MacAvoy did a medieval fantasy series that I very much enjoyed years ago. In one of the books a "Black Berber" woman, D'joura, is a major character with a voice in the story lines.

On Thapkey's reading plate has been the Narnia Chronicles by C.S. Lewis. She devoured it in about a week, and asked, "Isn't there any more?"

We've also enjoyed Charmed. I particularly like the dynamics of the relationships among the sisters. Actually, I think there is a bit of a gap between the Judeo and the Christian take on "witchcraft". But maybe the gap is in what's perceived as "witchcraft".

[[We're forced to disagree. Most bigots have no trouble agreeing on the Judeo-Christian text of Exodus 22:18 -- "Thou shalt not suffer a witch to live."]]

Murray: Canada, in my limited experience is lovely and wonderful! My parents took me camping in Quebec semi-regularly throughout my childhood. I particularly recall the chant of, "Thunderbay's not far away, we'll be there almost any day!" And digging up amethysts in a small pit mine there.

Teddy H: Great cover! More! More!

Steve's unifrog on p. 15 is a hoot as well!

Steve Sneyd: I was calling my doodles "binary glyphs" and was sort of imagining them as "alien inscriptions" in a binary (black & white as 1,0). My inspiration was terrifically mundane; I work for a courier service; and one of my duties at one point involved charting certain drivers' behavior from day to day... and I discovered beautiful patters appearing in my charts!

Catherine & E.B.: OK you two. After all this chitchat about the ancient lady's letter you'll have to publish the text of

it for us! I suppose this is also a proof of female literacy in ancient times.

Gene: Around here POKEMON is popular with both genders and the boys & girls will play and trade the cards together. However it seems limited to upper elementary grades and middle schoolers. The rage is so out-of-hand the cards have been banned from school...

Sharon: Like Archie, I was stapled after my recent appendectomy. How d'ya like that, shut with office equipment. My daughter got a kick out of it: "I could have used my Pikachu stapler!"

Lyn M: I love your LOC's and bits of country life. My mom got a kick out of the pigfood story as well. More stories!

I think Lloyd should run for TAFF.

Elizabeth: On the downside of the same people running things year after year is that if one year someone who ALWAYS does it can't, what happens?

Wilde Lake sounds a bit like Lake Monona in Madison. It's one of the major city parks there and a great place for a picnic. The raccoons took the buns one year though.

JOY V. SMITH
8925 Selph Road
Lakeland FL 33810

Cute Teddy Harvia cover on Twink #15.

Congratulations on the success of your "story project"! That happens now and then. Out of the blue you get a contributor's copy, and occasionally a check. Have they given you any flyers for the book? I'd like to see one.

I enjoyed the latest chapter in your series on black and other non-white characters in SF. (Remember Recoil, by the way?) I hope you'll publish these all together some day. And then people will write in with all the books and characters you left out, and you'll have to publish a second edition...

[[We recall that the book Recoil has been mentioned; we still haven't seen it. / We are considering doing an omnibus edition of "We're All African". However, we make no pretense that this is any definitive review of the subject.]]

Re: Stories with white characters written by white writers. I've written stories with a variety of characters, influenced, I'm sure, by Andre Norton and

my upbringing. (My mother, along with us little kids, was riding in the back of buses before it was fashionable.)

Good article on SF anthologies by Lyn McConchie. I love a good theme anthology. My favorites include the Catfantastic series, Don't Forget Your Spacesuit, Dear, and War Of The Worlds: Global Dispatches. I haven't read most of the ones she mentions, but will keep an eye out for them. The Monsters From Memphis horror/SF anthologies edited by Beecher Smith are good too.

Thanks for the TV, zine and book reviews. I recently ordered Bujold's Komarr and the sequel A Civil Campaign from the SF Book Club.

I also enjoyed the artwork and 'toons. Speaking of Roswell I watched the Roswell pilot on the WB channel last night -- interesting premise and attractive cast.

Thanks for the FAAN Awards list. I'll have to check and see who I voted for.

GARY DEINDORFER
Trent Center West
465 Greenwood Avenue #1104
Trenton NJ 08609

Thanks for sending me your fanzine. For the past few years or so I'd been reading your LOC's and articles and made a note in my tiny and tired mind that you were a potentially interesting person. Now I discover that your name might be a pseudonym for a "well known fan". Might I... suggest that you might be old-time Maryland fan Dick Eney? That's my guess, I don't know if it's a very good one.

[[It's a fine guess. It just doesn't happen to be a correct one. "Well known fan" indeed! Who gave you that nonsense? We are precisely no one, and content in our obscurity.]]

Anyway, Twink! #15 is a good, solid,

meaty fanzine. Harvia is not only inimitable; he's becoming quite prolific. He's appearing all over the place. What is remarkable about his work is that he is so consistently excellent, and some of his gags are pretty good, too. Like the gag on your cover.

[[Umm, the exclamation point was added by Teddy's femme-bot, it's not inherent in the title.]]

I received a few issues of Lan's Lantern and had a longish LOC published in one issue. But that is the extent to which I knew George Laskowski. I get the strong impression that "Lan" was one of those people who make fandom a better place to be around.

[[Yes.]]

You are probably right that black people have been slighted as characters appearing in SF stories and novels. Maybe this will change if we get a new generation of less white bread writers. I hope so. In the meantime, as a black writer, Octavia Butler definitely stands out with The Parable Of The Sower, which is the only thing I have read by her so far.

It probably isn't easy to edit a really good, selective SF anthology. Groff Conklin's anthologies were wondrous:

they initiated me in the late 1950's to the world of SF. I will also say that the late Terry Carr did a good job with his anthologies.

I must remind myself to try out some of Lois McMaster Bujold's "Miles Vorkosigan" books. I think I would like them. I enjoyed The Spirit Ring, and found little Fiametta delightful.

A year ago I wrote a note to the editors of Plokta asking for a copy. They never sent me one... So it goes.

...No comment after all on the letter column except to say that Steve Jeffery is right to name John Crowley's Little,



Big as a great work of fantasy. It is a true masterpiece of our time.

[[We have not read it yet. So many books, so little time...]]

JOSEPH NICHOLAS
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London, N15 4JU, U.K.

Many thanks for Twink #15. Can I say in response to Murray Moore's request that you pry more reviews out of me, that while in theory I'd write more, in practice I'm limited by time and inclination? Time in particular: I wish I could read more, but there are only so many hours in the day, so many demands on my time -- work, for instance. Never mind how far behind I fell... in the 80's, or what I know to be my average reading speed assessed against my current age and the average lifespan of middle class males... There's lots I'm never going to read, because I don't think I can spare the life -- meaning lots of reviews I'll never write either!

[[We understand completely. Some will doubtless think our priorities misplaced, but we worry about things like: How come you live in SOUTH Tottenham, but your postal code starts with "N" for North?]]

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

Strange but nicely wrought cover by Teddy Harvia on Twink #15. It provides a classy beginning for the issue.

I found that I had no comment on this issue's installment of "We're All African Anyway", except to wonder if you will ever mention Ray Nelson's "Turn Off The Sky" (F&SF August 1963) in which the lead character is not only black, but sort of a proto-hippie. Ray never expanded this into a novel, although the original ms. was considerably longer than what appears in print. It was collected once, in Asimov & Greenberg's The Great SF Stories 25.

[[Mainly we're going to discuss the material we've actually read, which we can fairly say is extensive -- though as said before, we make no claim that our discussion of the topic is inclusive.]]

Your comments at the end of Lyn

McConchie's article on anthologies were interesting. You definitely are in a different category of SF reader than me. When I arrived on the scene, I was first quite taken by anthologies -- I joined the SF Book Club and got as one of my initial selections the huge Groff Conklin Omnibus Of Science Fiction and then went out and bought the Modern Library edition of Adventures In Time And Space... By the way, Martin H. Greenberg does exist.

Sorry to have mystified you with my reference to Jack Speer and his "Investigation In Newcastle". You ask who is Jack Speer: he's been in fandom since the mid-30's and is the only remaining charter member of FAPA (has been in the group ever since its founding in 1937). He wrote an early history of fandom, Up To Now... He also was the author of the first Fancylopedia. "Investigation In Newcastle" was his account of a trip to a town of that name in Indiana to investigate Claude Degler, who at the time was publishing rather strange fanzines under a variety of pseudonyms as well as his own name. Speer interviewed neighbors and family, and presented his findings in a special issue of his fanzine in 1944. This is mentioned on pp. 147 and 190 of Warner's All Our Yesterdays.

[[Younger readers, take notes: in 20 years it may be your responsibility to explain to ignorant neos "Who is Robert Lichtman?" or "Who is Joseph Nicholas?" We'll reiterate our view that no one will bother to investigate us...]]

In the lettercol, you mention the film Crossroads (and are correct that it's from 1986) quite favorably. Without getting into details, I want to agree with you. A most enjoyable movie.

EDMUND R. MESKYS
RR #2 Box 63
Center Harbor NH 03226

Hi -- Had part of #15 read to me yesterday and I want to respond while it is fresh. I had a number of thoughts inspired by "We're All African Anyway". I certainly do agree that Andre Norton was unusual for her time by including blacks as major characters early on. I recently read Night Of Masks (Ballantine, 1964) and the hero/point of view character was not only

black but disfigured. He was not considered remarkable for his race, but only for the disfigurement he suffered in the attack which had killed his parents... I assume it had an original hardcover edition which had been marketed to schools and libraries. It had been published at the beginning of the Johnson presidency, a time of civil rights activism... I wonder if that had anything to do with the choice of hero, and how it had been marketed to school and public libraries.

[[That's one on us, Ed! We have read the book, and remember vividly the boy with the terrible facial scars -- but we didn't perceive him as black. All the more credit to Miss Norton, then.]]

I read Bring The Jubilee when it was first published 44 years ago and thought nothing of the

black character, but wonder if the use of "Sambo" as a derogatory term was anachronistic. I recently started reading Kipling and learned that the Brits referred to natives of India as black, and that the "Little Black Sambo" story re-

ferred to an Indian situation... The predator was an Indian tiger, not an African lion. Does anyone know how the story made the transition from India to Africa, and when?

As can be read from your whole seier of articles, until recently you really had to hunt to find the rare black character in the genre. I think this reflected the attitudes of most middle class people of my generation. I was born in 1936. Growing up in the Sunset Park neighborhood of Brooklyn I never saw a black in my school, church (Catholic) or streets. My neighbors were WASP, Irish, Scandinavian, Jewish. When in 6th grade I joined a Brooklyn-only organization called the "Bluejackets Guards", something like the Sea Scouts. The next three summers I went to their camp in the Catskills in Glenford... There were many blacks in this organization, perhaps close to 50%, but from

other chapters in other neighborhoods in Brooklyn. None of us had any aversion or fear of the blacks in the group and mixed freely with them...

[[Idle curiosity, but was the camp's dining hall integrated? We were in Cub Scouts, which at the time was largely divided by churches, and our church and Scout Troop were entirely white.]]

Lyn McConchie made some interesting points about what makes a good anthology. Today Greenberg participates in almost every anthology published... Anne Braude had two stories in Greenberg assembled books, one edited by Andre Norton, the other by Bruce D. Arthurs. The way she understood it, the editor selected all the stories, and Greenberg was the facilitator: doing all the work of clearing copyright, copyediting, getting the checks to the authors, etc.

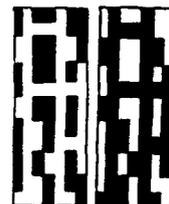
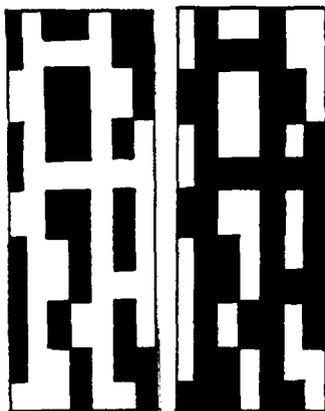
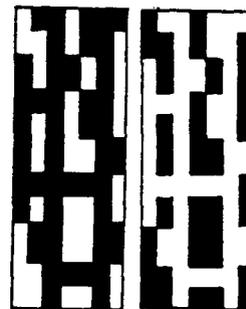
I have only read the Catfantastic anthology with Anne Braude's story (#4), and was disappointed with many of the stories. Half seemed to "star" the authors' own pets and were cutesy poo and gushy about them. I thought Anne's story was excellent...

ERIC LINDSAY
P.O. Box 640, Airlie Beach,
Queensland 4802, Australia

I have belatedly realised that I was going to send you a letter back in April and apparently never did more than put a date on paper.

As you may have noticed, I have managed to send out a few fanzines... after I killed off Gegenschein. This has been because on different visits to the Big City, I could get to an Office Works and get 6¢ photocopying. The latest issues are #'s 85 and 86 which were copied in Melbourne during Aussiecon Three.

Regarding Twink #13. While I have absolutely nothing to do with the Society for Creative Anachronism, subject of Elizabeth Osborne's article, I am blamed (credited) by



people here with starting the SCA in Australia. It appears that during the dim and distant past (either 1973 or 1976) I brought back to Australia various SCA publications such as "A Guide To The (Current) Middle Ages" and handed them around. I find it amusing that SCA members can now sign up for a war on a website, and find it even more amusing to hear that cell phones and video cameras are now an essential item of SCA life. I was also amused to learn of food supplies including donuts and cold soda.

[[Well, it can be difficult to roast a whole ox under field conditions. Fresh venison, now... We wonder if that part of Pennsylvania allows bowhunting?]]

Harry Warner Jr. comments adversely on "fiction that depends on nasty events to make its effect". On the basis that advertising has an effect through repetition, and that corporations should be legally required to be socially responsible (having no heart or soul, corporations also have no conscience), I have been agitating for a ban on companies depicting in any media any event that would be illegal if actually done.

[[That would put an end to Bruce Willis's career... Seriously, interesting idea, but "illegal" according to what standard? By that you could show boxing, WWF wrestling, and shooting Bambi's mother, but a picture of someone blazing up a doobie would get the director arrested!]]

The "black boy calling father" event in L. Sprague deCamp's Lest Darkness Fall appears in various texts on how to win at politics.

I find it hard to believe you think the practice of giving prize money has disappeared (your comments on David Weber's "Honor Harrington" stories). Isn't that exactly what the laws on drug dealers' property seizure now do?

I have heard rather indirectly that the Minicon downsizing was accompanied by much feuding and fighting, which is pretty much what I would expect.

While reading and writing is an effective way of communicating, the widespread existence of telephone, answering machines, voice message services, and text-to-speech translators means that fewer and fewer people actually need to be able to read. I see universal literacy

as being very much a transitory event in society...

[[All of those are useful supplements to literacy; they are not substitutes for literacy.]]

STEVE JEFFERY

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

You've stunned me. (Just as I was waking up.) It's never occurred to me that Fuchsia was black, certainly not on the evidence of Peake's shaded pencil sketches... Dark, swarthy, yes, perhaps even a little gypsy-ish, but I've always taken the drawings (essentially, caricatures) as revealing something about personality as much as appearance, like Flay's knees or Swelter's grossness or Irma Prunesquallor's neck. Fuchsia is dark, but it's the darkness of a sullen melancholy rather than anything to do with racial origin.

[[Granted that some element of metaphor is intended, still it seems to us the drawing used in #15 bears a striking resemblance to the black actress Thandie Newton (played, e.g., Sally Hemings in Jefferson In Paris).]]

Similarly, the question of colour in the very far future has never really occurred to me. I sort of assumed... that extreme racial differences would gradually fade out -- like the line in the Blue Mink song "Melting Pot" -- so that a sort of coffee colour would become the norm. Idealistic (or unrealistic) perhaps, when writers like John Barnes suggest an alternative scenario when the lebensraum of a million settled worlds would go the other way, with racial and cultural differences (and prejudices) being even more strongly identified and preserved... A pan-cultural Galaxy, but one that takes the form of a mosaic, rather than a melding of cultures.

[[On performance to date, we'd have to guess the Barnes scenario is the more likely.]]

I read Lyn McConchie's article on theme anthologies with interest, having just finished reading one of the best and most nicely realised theme/shared-world anthologies I've come across. This is Terri Windling & Delia Sherman's The

Essential Bordertown. It works because it is a shared world for which all the participants have an obvious enthusiasm, while at the same time the scenario (a border town between the mundane world and Faerie, where technology and magic both work, sort of, sometimes, and populated by the dispossessed and disenchanting of both sides) is open enough to allow a fair degree of playfulness. And between the stories, Terri Windling threads various "Guidebook" entries, a sort of Baedeker on etiquette, customs, crash space, music, where and what to eat, and who not to offend.

There have been other theme anthologies, more or less successful: Digital Dreams, Alien Sex, When The Music's Over, Heaven Sent, Book Of Dreams... Those work, I suspect, because the participants might have a reasonable expectation of where the other stories are coming from... and how theirs will sit alongside some of these, in style and tone. Inevitably, though, some theme anthologies, like those Lyn cites, are going to be a hodgepodge of barely related stories thrown together... As she points out, it's the mark of a poor editor...

Incidentally, you mentioned a film, Crossroads, and a guitar duel featuring Steve Vai as the devil's fretman ... which reminds me there was supposed to be a genre anthology of that name, based around the blues and John Lee Hooker. Does anyone know more about this?

There's a strange coincidence. I've just read John Kessel's "Faustfeathers" which you mention in reply to (I mite hav guessed) Patricia Russo (er, hi) in Kessel's new collection The Pure Product. Not having seen many of the Marx Brothers' movies, I'm sure there must be lots of jokes I'm missing...

LYN McCONCHIE
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I had a publisher meeting. That's the majestic name we give to happy little get-togethers with Mike of Stone Press, our Troll book publisher, and me, and Judy the artist. We meet at the local tearooms, drink tea and natter. The nattering this time was very promising. The project of doing "teacher resource sets" from the books and a lesson

booklet is proceeding well. AND Mike says that if we sell another 1000 books by the end of the year he'll take two more of my works...

The meeting was followed by a couple of talks I'd been asked to make to groups. One bunch I see most years. They adore me to read them a story and pay off in chocolate-iced banana cake. Which reminds me of a time several years ago when I was chatting to my local IRS branch to check out an item I wasn't sure about claiming on expenses. They assured me I could, then asked if I ever gave talks to groups. I said I did. Then did said groups ever pay me a fee, if so they'd never seen it declared? I said that I was paid a sort of fee but had never been sure quite how to declare it. AH HA. Why not? Because, I explained, I feel that talking to local groups is PR rather than something to be charged. My "fee" is door to door transport, and if they wish to give me a small thank-you gift, home baking is most acceptable. (Most know of my preference for banana cake.) So how, I queried the IRS chap, am I to pay them 19.85% of door to door transport and a chocolate-iced banana cake? I could hear him relaying this to his office and the gales of resulting laughter. In the end he came back to say that transport was "expenses", so no one owed anyone anything. The home baking was a donation, not a fee, so that too didn't apply. But if I was ever passing their office, they'd happily share the latest cake. I must do that if I ever do a talk in Palmerston North, where their office is.

My friend Sharman was staying, and I'd taken her to a Guild luncheon. She listened to my talk and on the way home informed me that we were lesbians. If we were it was news to me, but apparently not to one of the Guild. During my talk I'd said at one point ... that if you wrote mysteries, mostly no one assumed you were a serial killer. That if you wrote SF no one assumed you were just back from Sirius IV. But if you wrote any thing at all connected with sex, readers always assumed you'd done that personally. I'd added that I'd written several stories with gay characters and I wasn't gay though no doubt some readers assumed I was because of those stories. It seemed that someone THERE certainly had. After the talk she'd

got Sharman to one side and told her what a lovely couple we made. Along with some light chat indicating that she wasn't prejudiced even if others were. Sigh. People really DON'T listen! She seemed to have heard the one word "gay" and that was it. Nothing else registered.

...Inside I was contending with breeding bookcases. I joke that I moved from my last home because I ran out of shelving for my books. It's only half a joke... but moving into a place where I could up the shelving footage by 30% certainly was a plus. Where I'd been I was starting to accumulate books in corners of the library room. Very annoying. So I settled joyously into Farside, put up all the original shelves, added another stack and smirked happily at a whole row of empty shelves. Of course even with the price of books they didn't stay that way. I'd moved in 1989. By 1997 the shelves had filled. So I dug out a bookcase I'd brought with me. It tucked away in the spare bedroom -- and filled by the end of the year. Hummm. Ginger at this stage decided to buy a huge beautiful new bookcase and didn't want her old bookcase. I paid \$20 and added it behind the door of my bedroom. By the start of this year the overflow was starting to show again; until Ginger ended up with another spare bookcase. I swapped hay for that one. Next time the bookcases breed, I have places for two more. After that, I may have to move again. Or start adding on an extension.

To Trinlay Khadro: ryco sarongs from Korea. Yes, they do usually come from places like Bali and Indonesia. But mine is definitely a sarong, not just a piece of material. It is fringed down both sides and Sharman says it was sold to her as a sarong. Maybe the Koreans have taken to the idea. The item is very comfortable.

HARRY WARNER JR.
address previously given

Just four hours remain for me to achieve the goal of responding to an issue of Twink in the month of its arrival. I've finally made some progress on my efforts to catch up on LOC responsibilities after the long silence in mid summer caused by heat and illness.

[[You have no "responsibility" to us, sir, but we're always honored to hear from you; and glad to know you're feeling better.]]

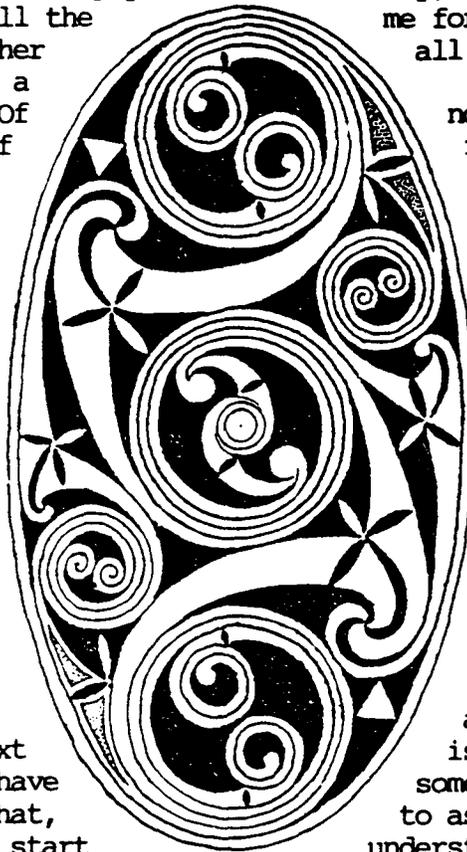
I enjoyed very much the latest in your series of articles about minorities in science fiction, more I believe than I will enjoy the forthcoming one on Samuel R. Delany, a writer who doesn't appeal to me for reasons that have nothing at all to do with race.

Maybe an anthology that does not work properly suffers less from the editor than it does from the theme. A collection of stories about Armageddon might disappoint the reader because thinking about that topic too much can be depressing. Additionally, the editor may be handicapped by inability to get reprint rights to a couple of stories that would have greatly improved the collection, or by the accident that several of the best stories on his theme are too long to fit in the average anthology.

The fanzine review section covers a good mix of sercon and fannish publications. But isn't the LOC section in Mimosa somewhat too large to be referred to as a "smattering"? Or do I misunderstand the meaning of that word?

[[Well, let's see. Mimosa #24 is 50 pages not counting covers. The lettercol is 7 pages = 14%. (The lettercol is 40-50% of the zine in, say, FOSFAX or Challenger.) Mimosa #24 published 15 LOC's, several of those one or two paragraphs -- and listed 47 WAHF's. We'll stand by our description.]]

Tom Feller writes about the fact that he doesn't like some characters in mainstream fiction and so doesn't like to read the books in which they figure. That reminds me of the problem I've worried



about from time to time. I love certain comedians I've seen on the screen or heard on the radio, and I also have enjoyed reading about the antics of some funny individuals invented by the authors of fiction... In almost every case, even those for whom I feel real affection would be impossible to endure if they lived next door, or called me on the telephone every day, or worked at the next desk to mine. Imagine that Laurel & Hardy in their movie characters really entered your life every day, or that Mr. Dick (the one in David Copperfield, not the equally eccentric one who wrote SF) boarded at your home and lived in the spare bedroom... Why do we enjoy reading about them or seeing them but can't bear to think of having them around in actuality?

Thomas Mann novels have enchanted me ever since I plowed through The Magic Mountain as ateen-ager. The translations are more stilted than the original German text, as far as I can determine...

Hagerstown has a lake, just like Columbia. It was formed almost a century ago when city officials paid to have a swamp drained... and turned the resulting area into a park with a lake... Visitors to the city marvel over how nice it is to have a large park and lake so close to downtown, but if another city with a swamp of its own tried to do the same today, environmentalists would be in meltdown over the threat to wetlands and a half dozen government agencies would prevent the destruction of all that beautiful mud and mosquito spawning grounds...

[[Editor's note: Mr. Warner also compares our assessment of Weinbaum's "A Martian Odyssey" to the fellow who objected that Hamlet was "too full of famous quotations"...]]

LLOYD PENNEY
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Ontario, M9C 2B2, Canada

I sincerely hope the number of fannish deaths we must report on during the past year or so does not dull the shock we feel when each one happens... I honestly thought that George was recovering from the cancer and chemotherapy. In his writing he sounded positive and looking forward to teaching again.

[[It was typical of George Laskowski that he always looked for the best-case scenario. Only toward the very end did we get the sense he was resigned to his fate.]]

Lyn McConchie's article about Martin Greenberg contains some smart points. I started my SF reading career with anthologies, and the Carr, Gold, and Wollheim series were among my first books... They are samplers, and not necessarily a theme collection... Perhaps I did the right thing by taking them out from the library. If I do buy, I buy second-hand or remaindered. The Chapters and Indigo mega-chains in Canada make book-buying easier, but not cheaper. I also know that when every one of these big stores opens, a small bookstore goes under. The best thing I can do for myself and the SF community is to buy at my local SF bookstore.

[[The only SF specialty bookstore we knew of in this area (and most of an hour's drive from us) closed early this year. We pay retail only for books we're sure we want; otherwise we do much as you do, libraries and used-book stores.]]

Murray Moore reacts to the idea of a Canadian running for TAFF. Well, I don't think it will be us. We ran for CUFF in 1998, won, went to CanVention, and are working on our trip report. I had thought we might go for DUFF or TAFF, but for every person who suggested us, or who we asked about the fund, another has told me personally why we'd be unsuitable candidates... CUFF has been an experience, full of the usual disagreeable politics, and I suspect that TAFF would be more of the same... I know the fund exists so that the winner can get to the British Eastercon, usually... We were told by several fans I won't name that the TAFF winner would be expected to keep the fund healthy by financing the trip him/herself, and that anyone using the fund itself for the trip would be looked down upon... One even went so far as to say that TAFF was a British/American fund, and Canadian participation would be unwelcome. I know it's all garbage, but if this is a hint of the politics inherent in TAFF, I'd just as soon not run... This can't be actual fan fund policy.

[[We understand your decision, though you and Yvonne would have made excellent

delegates. And judging from our mailing list, your candidacy would be supported.]]

Gene Stewart's letter on the Pokemon craze shows how smart kids can be. Lots of kids like the Pokemons, but most see it for what it is: a transparent (more transparent than most) marketing ploy to sell merchandise. Most toy/cartoon sets have between 6 and 10 characters... When the Pokemon shows said there were 150 monsters to collect? ...Most kids weren't fooled by this.

Ah, lemon surprise... sounds good. Alcoholic lemonades have been very popular in Toronto this summer, with more than a dozen brands available. I was in Montreal recently, and not only are these lemonades popular, but so is an alcoholic orangeade.

The Worldcon bid continues. After good showings in Australia and Anaheim, the bid now stands at about 1400 presupporters... On the personal front, Yvonne and I have been asked to be FanGOH's at V-Con 25 in Vancouver in May 2000. Seeing I used to live out there, I look forward to it.

[[Congratulations. With a little luck (see editorial page) who knows, you might even go as a Hugo nominee?]]

MURRAY MOORE

1065 Henley Road, Mississauga,
Ontario, L4Y 1C8, Canada

I am still alive. I have been FAFIA (forced away from it all) since July. The main reason is printed above: our new address. We have moved.

...The last time we moved, November 1982, we went into a house from a one-bedroom apartment. At the time, I was overwhelmed. I thought, "We will rattle around in this house forever." Of course, before we moved from that house, in June of 1998, we had filled it.

Most of our possessions -- okay, the majority of which are my possessions, paper in various forms: fanzines, paperbacks, hardcovers, comics, magazines -- went into long term storage. Mary Ellen, Russell, now 13, Dennis, now 10, and I moved in with my widowed mother-in-law ... until September 1999. During that same period I finished my one year Information Technology course (October 1998), became employed (January 1999). We bought this house (April 1999).

As we had the luxury of moving when we wanted to move, we renovated. Carpenters did interior structural improvements... Mary Ellen and I spent most of our time refinishing the oak floors. The house is 50 years



old. We took up the wall-to-wall carpet... We are experts. I had no idea of the many stages to sanding, staining and varathaning. The floors look great. We never would have refinished the floors after we moved in. I'm pleased.

Now, of course, we are rebuilding our environment. Finding places to put stuff. One of the virtues of this house, is its many large closets, and the cupboards in the basement. I took the opportunity to have the carpenters build a book closet in the former dining room...

[[Sounds like a very nice house, and we hope your family will be happy there. Maybe you should send your notes to Lyn McConchie: having/finding/making places to store one's books seems to be a chronic problem of fans!]]

My catching up with LOC's owed for all recent fanzines is not realistic. I did receive them; I am reading them. Keep them coming. I am getting back into the letter-writing groove. I also am working on a genzine, yclept Aztec Blue.

E.B., I have a membership for Chicon. I hope to meet you there. Toronto in 2003, and update my address in your records please.

JANINE G. STINSON

P.O. Box 430314
Big Pine Key FL 33043

Once again, a great cover. What did you have to do to get Teddy Harvia to send it to you? (Hint, hint, Mr. H.)

[[We could make the obligatory jokes about sacrificing virgins and promising our firstborn; but the simple fact is, we asked.]]

Re: "We're All African Anyway" Part V: C.J. Cherryh does have at least one other black character in her works, that of

Shepherd pilot Sal Aboujib in Hellburner. Sal is described as "dark skinned... with a headful of metal-capped braids..."

[[We have a whole shelf of Cherryh books, but not that one. Of course the author might well say she is writing at a point so far in the future that racial differences among humans are a minor matter. Still...]]

Lyn McConchie's anthology article was greatly appreciated, since I like to read anthos and can use a bit of pre-read information. I get most of the anthos I've read in the last few years from the library... I've been buying only the Dozois yearly collections for four years or so, as well as the Datlow/Windling anthologies, since I like the overview of the field that these books provide...

Thanks to Cuyler W. Brooks for noting the Sanders/Siclari confusion which I created. I meant to reference Sanders at the end of the article but typed "Siclari" by mistake. My apologies to all concerned.

Thanks also to Vicki Rosenzweig for pointing out my faux pas in using Teresa Nielsen Hayden's name. I had no idea, truly. Now that I know the Nielsen Haydens have a website, I will likely go look at it soon. "More stuph, more stuph!" As for getting some local con experience, I am working on getting myself to Tropicon 18 in Fort Lauderdale for at least one day.

Sharon Lee's story of Archie the cat and the insurance salesman was an "I about fell out of my chair laughing" kind of story. So good it hurts -- ouch!

Michael Waite's reading suggestions have been noted for future use -- thanks, Michael! If anyone else has suggestions, I'd welcome them as well.

Patrick McGuire notes that, "I seem to have less time to write than I used to..." I've noticed this in my own life very recently, and have consequently resigned from several volunteer positions... I hope to see a change in my life's pace to the slower end.

GENE STEWART
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BLATANT TRUMPETING: My story "Up The Hill" appears in the current issue of Talebones. Rave reviews welcome.

Great Harvia cover on Twink #15. It captures the very essence of modern commu-

nications clash and sexual battlefields yet to be found or built. Round and square indeed.

[[Was there not a Fritz Leiber story in which robots had electronic "sex" by plugging into each other's sockets?]]

Bit blowy out there today. Hugeness on the move around us, suitable to lament the loss of Ian and others from our flock. May their spirits fly free.

Did Lite Circle Books promise payment in the announcement to which you responded when you sent the story in? If so, sue. Letting publishers use material without recompense is condoning theft...

[[We don't really recall; but it's not a matter to justify a lawsuit. We did go to the reading, met the editor, everyone seemed to have an okay time. No harm, no foul.]]

"In Absentia", Part V of "We're All African", was the best installment yet, and elegantly written, too. And yes, some writers tend to write what they know. Also, some may shy away from characters with cultural or ethnic roots the writer doesn't share, in fear of backlash or of getting something egregiously wrong.

Lyn McConchie's "Will The Real Martin H. Greenberg Please Stand Up" makes excellent points and I agree, theme anthologies are an art fraught with subtle pitfalls and traps. And yes, many of the more recent ones have utterly lacked TLC, or for that matter, any sensitivity to such subtleties as Lyn mentions.

Nice round-up of zines in "The Half Naked One On The Left", as usual. Also, a different mix from the other zine round-ups I tend to see, so I'm glad for the variety.

Catherine Mintz -- I shall check out your alien story forthwith. Or is it hithertofore?

Tom Feller -- Dostoevsky's Notes From Underground is in part satirical and intended to evoke repulsion for the narrator, of course, but yes, it's quite a dose, isn't it?

Patrick McGuire -- I read books, period. Don't care about genre, category, cover, or any of that. If they're good, I like them, and if they're not, I don't...

EBF -- Stan Schmidt and God aren't interchangeable in my sub-reality, either, but there are probably a few where they are.

How do Roman Catholic theologians justify changing something that has been called divinely inspired unquestionable revealed truth? I'm reminded of Mel Brooks in History Of The World Part One in which he portrays Moses, who carries down three tablets and begins announcing, "These fifteen--" and then he drops a tablet, thinks a second, and says, "these TEN commandments..." More truth in that than a thousand theological books.

[[We can top that. Channel-surfing, we came across a film where archeologists are digging up the original Tablets of the Law -- and they're in English.]]

Hooray for J.S. Bach & Sons, Musicians/ Composers for All Millenia, and also for elegant glyphs. Have you read, then, Douglas Hofstadter's wonderful book Gödel, Escher, Bach: An Eternal Golden Braid?

Patricia Russo -- My wife is of Alsatian stock. Also part Cherokee. Our kids are beautiful.

Isn't ENF another way of saying a sturgeon in a goldfish bowl?

Janine Stinson: Heavy Weather and Mother Of Storms were two recent SF novels using weather quite effectively; and if weather as a weapon and its potential ecologically disastrous effects interest you, try Fred Hoyle's Last Gasp. If you dare.

[[Now that we think of it, John Varley's "The Phantom Of Kansas" and Hilbert Schenck's "Hurricane Claude". Mm, there's a lot of weather in Schenck: try "The Morphology Of The Kirkham Wreck" also.]]

"Columbia/Ellicott City Sketches: Wilde Lake" -- D'accord, mon ami, a person could have a much worse memorial than a lake.

And so this Twink is twinkled.

Be as One and tschusz wisely.

ROBERT M. SABELLA
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Budd Lake NJ 07828

Here is the latest issue of VOP. In my usual unorthodox way, I have separated the zine proper from the letter column... Quite frankly, I have always felt that lettercols should be separate from the zines themselves, since they really serve a completely different function. Zines should be for the readers' sense of wonder and generate subsequent discussions... The letters are those thought processes in written form. Thus they are results of the zine, not aspects of the zine itself.

[[We might make a case for the articles

and the letters being distinct but related aspects of the same dialogue; but hey, Visions is your zine, so you should do it as you deem proper.]]

Re; Twink #15: My antenna immediately perked up at your statement that you are "open to someone writing a regular one page/c. 600 word column", but I realized that I am already stretched too thin to commit myself... But I am weak sometimes, so I was very happy when you stated, "preference will be given to someone who doesn't already have a regular forum."

"We're All African Anyway" was the highlight of the issue. I highlighted your statement that, "We find it both interesting and, frankly, a little disquieting that many writers have managed successful careers in the genre without mentioning a substantial portion of the human race ..." I tend to look for Asian characters in the fiction I read, and like you I am always disappointed at "lily white" stories... Except for a few stories set in Asia itself (which tend to be stereotypical for the most part, with the notable exception of Maureen McHugh's China Mountain Zhang), Asians are also ignored in science fiction.

Lyn McConchie's article was most interesting for the statement, "I was startled and disappointed. I went back and re-read the anthology, just before I had to return it. Nope. Same result." With such a huge quantity of books out there waiting to be read, why would anybody re-read a disappointing anthology merely in hopes that her first opinion was erroneous? I find that incredibly time-wasting...

[[Your system works -- if you are absolutely confident that your first judgement will always be correct. We keep in mind LeGuin's The Lathe Of Heaven, a book that puzzled us on first reading -- but a year later we picked it up again and it made sense.]]

MILT STEVENS
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Simi Valley CA 93063

You know, you're the only person in fandom who refers to me as "Mr." You may be the only person in fandom who refers to anyone as "Mr." Does this reflect a seriously held position, or is it just something you do?

[[We were taught to be deferential to our elders, or to those in positions of expertise, rank, or status. You probably qualify on at least two of those...]]

Lyn McConchie discusses theme anthologies. My first question in regard to theme anthologies is, why have them at all? What advantages do they have over general new material anthologies such as Star, Universe, Orbit, or Stellar? While these four titles are defunct (as are two of their editors), they had a good following when they were being published. I suppose a general new material anthology sells largely on the name of its editor. If you know of the editor(s) and like their taste, then buying the anthology seems like a good idea. So theme anthologies are a way of selling anthologies when the editor is not well known. Roger Elwood probably started editing theme anthologies for this reason...

If the theme identifies with a particular sub-genre, you have a better chance of selling to that portion of the market. Titles such as Guys In Spacesuits Doin' Stuff or Zombie Axe Murderers Of Hagerstown would appeal to some parts of the market.

Being too specific is a definite disadvantage for theme anthologies. Over in FAPA, there was a brief discussion of bodily functions in science fiction. It was mentioned that bathrooms are almost never mentioned in SF. I observed that if bathrooms were mentioned there would already be an anthology titled Great Science Fiction About Bathrooms.

[[Careful, you'll give some editor an idea... We guess it might be difficult to establish "sense of wonder" about bodily functions with which everyone is quite familiar.]]

You ask, "Who's Jack Speer?" He is one of the ancient named ones who performed fanac in the long ago days of hekto. Dark reports say he still resides in the elephant's graveyard of FAPA. Beware if you ever encounter Jack Speer, for it is said, "By glare of day or dark of night/ Not a single nit evades his sight."

ULRIKA O'BRIEN
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I'm happy to provide a public response regarding Lloyd Penney's letter. But I don't receive Twink, so all I know of this

current discussion you mention is from the letter I have from you, and the excerpt from Lloyd's letter. If you wouldn't mind mentioning that fact to your readers, so what context I am responding from, I'd very much appreciate it... I wanted to check with several former administrators to see if they had ever heard of such a thing...

As to the claims made to Lloyd, I'm afraid they're the most arrant sort of nonsense. No current or former administrator would offer such a pronouncement. I have never heard of a TAFF winner being expected not to spend the fund money on

BUT THE FANZINE
ENDS IN TWO
PAGES!

WILL
YOUR
LOC
FIT?



TAFF travel, nor had any of the previous administrators I contacted. (One remarked that the very idea was like being suddenly transported to the Bizarro Earth.) Being spent to finance the transatlantic trip is what the fund is for. There is no official expectation that TAFF winners pay for their trips out of pocket, nor any unstated customary expectation to that effect that any of us had ever come across. TAFF was never meant to provide a luxurious trip with all paid amenities, it's true. The fund is supposed to pay for a peanut-butter-and-jelly trip, not a

caviar and champagne trip. It is certainly always very nice if the TAFF winner can afford to cover some of the expenses of travel and wishes to do so. But that's all. it's nice. Just as it's nice if TAFF voters elect to donate more than the minimum voting donation when they vote... All donations are voluntary, not obligatory nor secretly expected. What is expected is that the administrator will take an active hand in raising funds for TAFF by auctions, widely circulating ballots, promoting trip report and T-shirt sales, and turning in a completed trip report. This expectation is something that a potential candidate may want to consider before deciding to stand.

Nor is there any truth whatever to the suggestion that non-US/British candidates are unwelcome in TAFF. For instance, one of the candidates currently expected to stand in the upcoming race is Irish. Past TAFF races have included candidates such as Thomas Schluck of Germany, Bo Stenfors of Sweden, Mario Bosniak from Italy, Per Insulander of Sweden, and Mike Glicksohn and Taral Wayne, both Canadians. I don't know of any Canadians who have won, but I take that to be an accident of history, not any indication of Canadians being somehow persona non grata in TAFF... To quote from the TAFF ballot (the only formal rule TAFF has): "The Trans-Atlantic Fan Fund was created in 1953 for the purpose of providing funds to bring well known and popular fans familiar to those on both sides of the ocean across the Atlantic. Since that time TAFF has regularly brought North American fans to European conventions and European fans to North American conventions."

...That's it. Anything you hear to the contrary is either just plain mistaken, or at most a matter of individual voters' preferences as to how to rank candidates, and their personal beliefs about what an ideal TAFF delegate should be like. These of course will vary from fan to fan and can't be controlled by the fund or its administrators. It may well be that some fans are prejudiced against Canadians standing for TAFF. I've certainly heard of voters who were prejudiced against female candidates... This hasn't prevented women from standing in and winning TAFF races, you may notice.

I'm sorry to hear that your opinion of TAFF as an institution has been adversely

affected by silly, idle and ill-informed gossip, in which category I would place the information that Lloyd Penney was given. I'm sorry he was given it. It must be awful to feel you were secretly ineligible and undesirable, and that every one knew it but you... Unfortunately, I don't know of any institution that is proof to misinformation being spread by third parties, and TAFF in particular has long been the focus of a great deal of high fannish feeling, some of it less benevolent, articulate, and informed than one might wish... I appreciate your checking with me. I hope that other fans will elect to do likewise, as I prefer to set people straight before they are turned off by negative rumors about the fund that aren't even true.

[[Thank you for that clear statement. We hope that in future, ignorant or mean-spirited clots will keep quiet, and each fan can decide for him/herself whether running for TAFF is something they want.]]

SHERYL BIRKHEAD
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Congrats on getting a cover from Teddy. James White... and Walt Willis -- Irish fandom's stalwarts, have both moved on -- they will both be missed. James White had kindly told me to go ahead and mail one of my "Sector General" books to him and he would autograph it (after I couldn't find him at a Worldcon)... Walt Willis always replied to my inane questions about Bob Shaw -- Willis was always willing to help any way he could... I will miss both...

Sharon: staples in veterinary medicine are common. I have never used them since they were just becoming common when I stopped doing surgery... Personally, I prefer sutures -- but staples can be put in FAST.

It seems that a lot of British zines don't have a masthead and the address usually seems to be at the end of the zine. I also have problems finding art credits in a lot of zines.

[[Editor's note: Sheryl asks that anyone who can help her with a reasonably complete Ben Bova bibliography, please contact her ASAP.]]

