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COST EFFECTIVENESS

...is surely not the most attractive criterion on which to base publishing a fanzine. However, this is getting to be an expensive hobby. See the receipt above -- and that's just postage. And just our out-of-U.S. list postage! (Hint: 36 pp + cover = just under 4 ounces = US\$2.16 to Britain, US\$2.65 to Australia. 38 pp + cover = just over 4 oz. = US\$3.00 to U.K., US\$3.75 to Australia. See a pattern there? Want to guess how many pages there will be in this issue?)

We do not intend to parse the mailing list ruthlessly; regular contributors of long standing are in no immediate danger of being dropped. But we can no longer afford the luxury of carrying long-term those who believe a postcard once a year is a sufficient response. We may have to re-evaluate certain trades also. Worst case, trading a quarterly genzine for a once-a-year 6-pp personalzine, while it falls within the accepted meaning of "The Usual", does not strike us as equitable.

The alternative is substantially downsizing the zine, either by dropping a section, or cutting the letter column. Your input on this problem is welcome.

MASTER'S IN A SWIVET

It began as a joke in, probably, The Knarley Knews. Someone suggested that after the passing of Buck Coulson, the post of "Fandon's Resident Curmudgeon" was vacant. We joked that Henry Welch, better known and far more respected than us, should run the election. When he turned it down, we made the same offer to Robert Lichtman, who also declined. Well, someone has to do it, so we take it on ourself. Enclosed is your ballot. This ballot may be copied, however, an honor system prevails, one vote to a customer: couples may each vote separately if they wish. Vote "1" for the candidate you feel is best qualified, "2" for the next best choice, etc. Write-ins are allowed. This

will be scored on an inverse points system, a "1" vote is worth four points, etc. In case anyone writes in and thus has more than four candidates, "5" will be scored on a par with "4". The winner will be announced in the next issue.

YET ANOTHER FAREWELL

Robert Lichtman informs us of the sudden passing of Ken Cheslin. This is at least the fifth person we've lost from our list to death. As we recall, Ken sent us, out of the blue, one of his reprint zines of old British fannishness; we began sending him Twink, and we corresponded. Ken also sent us a whole bagful of "Celtic" style art he had clipped from some source; he modestly denied authorship thereof, but we told him we had to credit it to someone, and as we got it from him, he would have to take the credit! His letters often were not so much LOC's on the fanzine, but general comments and exchanges of views of things we had discussed. We recall that he drily disavowed credit for living on what we described as the "best street name" (Kestrel Road). Though we could not claim to have known him well, we will miss him.

VINGT-SEPT, ROUGE

By an odd coincidence -- even though it's the sort of thing we ask for -- all the articles by others this issue are sercon stuff about written SF, while ours could be called fannish! What are the odds? Lyn McConchie searches for identity among two sets of characters. Gene Stewart looks at why a particular John Brunner novel works for him, and Wm. Breiding deconstructs why a lot of post-Cordwainer-Smith SF doesn't work for him. We report on doings in the Windy City; with apologies in advance to advance to those fans we met (there's bound to be at least one) whose names did not get into our report. In honor of Lyn, we have sheep on the cover, courtesy of Margaret B. Simon.

Coming up: Another of those furry ladies from Hugo-nominated artist Taral Wayne graces the #20 cover. Inside, the first of at least two articles on religion in SF; regular contributor Lyn McConchie looks at and recommends ghost stories; our Fan Hugo nominations for next year; presumably the regular features, and whatever turns up between now and then.

If anyone is in doubt about the contributions guidelines, ask.

This is Twink #19, a quarterly fanzine from Chaffinch Publications. Next issue: January 2001. Deadline for next issue: November 30, 2000, but letters/contributions pushing the deadline may get delayed or may not be used. Available for "The Usual" -- anyone who is unclear what that means, or our specific guidelines, feel free to ask. Our main focus is on SF, fantasy, and fandom. All material belongs to the contributors and all rights thereto, reverts to them on publication. All letters and cards 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 roughly every other issue/six months) will stay on the mailing list. Anyone who is sent unsolicited copies, who does not respond, will be dropped from the mailing list without further notice. If this title page is highlighted in yellow, you will not receive further issues unless you respond in some manner.

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FROM BLUE MOON TO HAVEN.

(Or - Are Prince Rupert and Princess Julia also Hawk and Fisher?)

By Lyn McConchie.

Back in the early 1990's an author produced a six book series with two main characters, the axeman Hawk, and his wife and partner, Isobel Fisher. Then partway through the series another book appeared by the same author -- Blue Moon Rising. This was a brilliant parody of heroic fantasy which still managed to BE heroic fantasy as well. There were suggestions at the time that Prince Rupert and Princess Julia of Blue Moon Rising were also Hawk and Fisher, Guards of the city of Haven and main characters of the six book series. The question is, was that true?

The descriptions do match. In Blue Moon Rising Rupert is described as tall, dark and handsome. Over the course of the book he is scarred badly across one side of his face and right at the end of the novel, his right eye is destroyed. Hawk matches this. He is tall, dark, "no longer" handsome -- a clear suggestion that he once was -- and he too has a right eye missing and bad scars down one side of his face.

In Blue Moon Rising Julia is said to be blonde, handsome rather than pretty, a striking six feet in height, and a good swordswoman. Fisher is this precisely. So from the physical descriptions the two pairs could indeed be one. The age spread also matches. In Blue Moon Rising Rupert is said to be twenty-six, while Julia is "barely into her twenties". This would suggest she is twenty-one: a difference of five years. In the "Hawk & Fisher" series Hawk is said to be "just thirty" while Fisher is said to look "in her mid to late twenties". If she is in fact in her mid twenties then again there is a five year difference just as there is with Rupert and Julia.

So is there anything between the two pairs that is chronologically incorrect? Yes. Over the Hawk and Fisher series it is stated several times that they have been Guards in Haven for at least five years. There is also some suggestion that before they arrived in Haven they spent several years travelling and adventuring in other lands. Rupert and Julia set out with a Unicorn and a Dragon at the end of Blue Moon Rising. By the time Hawk and Fisher appear as Haven Guards, they are alone. But if Rupert was twenty-six at the beginning of Blue Moon Rising, he can't be Hawk.

If he were Hawk he would have to be at least thirty-two and most probably thirty-four or -five to allow for the wandering in other lands and the "loss" of the Unicorn and the Dragon. That is, if the author were consistent. However, during the whole of the Hawk & Fisher series the author becomes more and more inaccurate with ages. Despite the six books taking place over certainly more than a year and possibly two, Hawk is described in all of them as



being barely thirty. This suggests that the reader can forget external time. The only accurate time counted is the interval in years between the male and female characters in each book: that remains consistent.

In other words, the physical descriptions match. The age gap between them matches. What other evidence is there? Scattered throughout the books there are often short casual comments or replies to questions. From these we learn that Hawk and Fisher came from "The north, up around Hillsdown..." Rupert comes from the Forest Kingdom which borders Hillsdown, and Julia from Hillsdown itself. Hawk and Fisher are said to "know how to handle servants as if born to it", and to "have both had experience with court intrigues in the past."

Since Rupert and Julia are both Royalty they would have experienced court intrigues, and be used to handling servants. During an assignment, Hawk is made up facially so that his scars disappear: Fisher comments that she'd always wondered what he'd looked like before he was scarred. This also fits. In Blue Moon Rising, Rupert gained his facial scars on his quest to find and kill a dragon. It was when he found the dragon that he also found Julia, so she too had never seen him without scars.

Hawk is said to have been an excellent swordsman in his younger days -- with the implication that this was before he lost one eye. Rupert was an excellent swordsman, and after he loses his eye, discovers how his perceptions of depth and distance have altered. Hawk also mentions that his family objected to he and Fisher marrying. Rupert and Julia had this problem since Julia was actually betrothed to Rupert's brother Harald and their father was determined that Harald and Julia should marry. In the end Rupert and Julia run away together, and it is there that Blue Moon Rising ends.

One anomaly is the names. Blue Moon Rising features Prince Rupert and Princess Julia. The Haven duo are Hawk and Fisher. But Julia was a pawn in her father's plan to marry her to Rupert's older brother. Several times in Blue Moon Rising it is mentioned how stubborn and obstinate Julia's father is, and how set on this

plan. Since Rupert uses their departure from his home both to plunder the royal treasury and to punch out his older brother, now the King, it would be no more than very prudent to change names.

It might be prudent also since there are indications that Haven is within a reasonable travelling distance from Hillsdown and the Forest Kingdom. In one of the first Hawk & Fisher books, a noblewoman says that Hillsdown is known for its excellent orchards. The context suggests that she knows this because regular supplies of Hillsdown fruit reach the Haven markets. Considering medieval travel, it is likely that if the fruit reaching Haven after some travel is still of the best quality, then Hillsdown is not far away.

There are other indications of similarity between the pairs of characters. Both pairs are honest, committed to protecting the innocent. Both have similar tricks of speech such as Rupert referring to Julia as "Lass" more than once, just as Hawk addresses Fisher. Hawk once had a very nasty experience in a mine, as did Rupert. Hawk says that he once felt as if he didn't matter to anyone, until he found Fisher who believed in him. This is a good analysis of Rupert and Julia's relationship, and of Rupert's feelings as an unwanted second son.

But the strongest clues come in the last Hawk and Fisher book, The Bones Of Haven. In that Isobel says that, "We came close to dying many times in the Forest Kingdom, during the Long Night." Hawk says how dangerous teleporting can be, using almost exactly the same words and explanation of its dangers as the High Warlock gave Rupert in Blue Moon Rising.

We are then left with two couples. Both match physically. The age difference between each couple is at least very similar. Could it be coincidence? To decide, the best thing is to work out who Fisher and Hawk would have to be using the clues from the six books which feature them as Guards in Haven. They fought in the Forest Kingdom during the Long Night. And, it is clear, Rupert at least knew the High Warlock during that period. Since only two hundred fighters who sided the High Warlock survived, Hawk must be

one of these, as must Fisher since she says they fought side by side at that time.

If few survived that last battle, fewer still were women. The only other sword-woman mentioned is Jessica Flint, who is definitely not Fisher since Jessica became a ranger and is still serving as one at the time Fisher is a Guard in Haven. But in the mostly medieval society of Blue Moon Rising, each class knew its place. For Hawk and Fisher to be familiar both with court intrigues and with the ordering of servants, they must be at least of the nobility and have been used to living at that level during their childhoods.

Thus they are not only two from the two hundred survivors, they are nobles where most of the survivors were guards from the common classes. To quote from the High Warlock's own words on the dangers of teleportation, Hawk can only be Rupert, since those hearing the comments were Rupert, the King's Champion (who subsequently died in the last battle), and ten guards, all of lower birth and all of whom chose to remain at the castle when Rupert departed with Julia.

I am uncertain if the author ever expressly stated the two pairs were the same. But from the internal evidence it can be determined that they were.

This leaves one final set of questions about events. What were Rupert and Julia doing in the time between leaving the Forest Kingdom and arriving in Haven and enlisting as Guards? They must have married during that time for one thing. Rupert would have grown used to using an axe instead of a sword. Did they also redeem their promise to Breeze the unicorn, and find his herd so Breeze could return to them? In that interval did the dragon leave them or die?

Many of the characters in sword-and-sorcery or fantasy novels are cardboard. Those in Blue Moon Rising were very real. But -- perhaps surprisingly in view of the all too frequent lack of quality in sword-and-sorcery books -- so too were Hawk and Fisher. I liked them. I'd like to read more, to know what else they did. I'd like to know what happened to Breeze and the dragon. And that's real writer's art. To leave a reader so involved with

the characters they are unable to forget them. I just hope that Simon Green hasn't forgotten them either and that one day there WILL be more books.

Books referred to are: Blue Moon Rising and the Hawk & Fisher series:

Hawk And Fisher

H&F: Winner Takes All

H&F: The God Killer

H&F: Wolf In The Fold

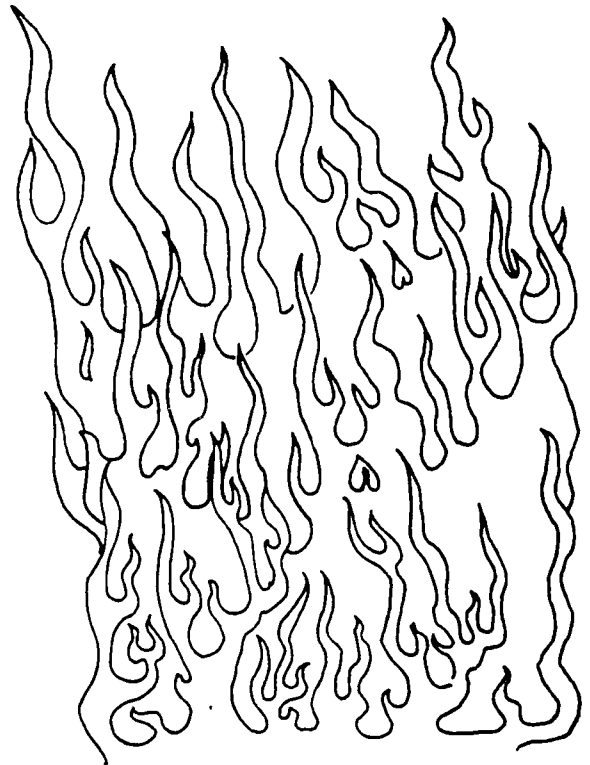
H&F: Guard Against Dishonor

H&F: The Bones Of Haven.

Other books not mentioning them but tied to the "World" are: Blood And Honor, and Down Among The Dead Men.

(I wrote this article because I was once told that Simon Green HAD said that Blue Moon Rising was a prequel to the Hawk & Fisher books, thus implying the two couples were the same. I wanted to see if this was provably so for my own amusement and out of pleasure in the books. I'd be interested to hear any other information about the characters or their author, Simon Green.)

* * *



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THURSDAY, AUGUST 31st: Resistance is Useless

Been on an airplane, right? Been on a shuttle bus? Fine. So, we arrived at the Worldcon...

Actually, we took a pick-you-up-at-your-door shuttle service at the Maryland end, also. We judged that the cost of the shuttle, compared to the cost of long term parking at the airport, balanced out; the tie was settled in favor of the lesser chance of something happening to our car in our own home parking lot.

The first thing we did after checking in at the Hyatt (no problem with the reservation) was to call our mother, who is convinced that airplanes are dangerous. No point in arguing there are probably 10,000 commercial airplane flights a day in the United States and 9,999 of them land safely. Once an idea is set in our mother's head, it's settled. Airplanes are dangerous: it's a fact of nature, like the Second Law of Thermodynamics.

So we phoned our mother. Call us a wimp. We've been called worse.

Our first hour at the con felt really "out of it", notwithstanding the visual familiarity (too many large and/or grey-bearded people dressed far too casually). The first person who spoke to us was Susan Higgins, a friend of Guy Lillian and contributor to Challenger. We talked with her for a while and figured out where the dealers' room was (a long journey down several escalators to a sub-basement -- "below lake level" was one description).

A while later we heard someone say "Frohvet" and recognized Guy, who was going the other way, so we had to chase him up an escalator to meet him and his charming but quiet lady friend Rose Marie Donovan. While we were talking with them, Henry Welch came up and Guy introduced us; Henry was handing out hot-off-the-presses copies of the new Knarley Knews. We didn't have time to look at it until later.

Numerous times during the convention we ran into Steve &/or Elaine Stiles. We met Sharon Lee & Steve Miller in the elevator going up, dropped off some things in our room, and met them again in the elevator going back down!

At 2:30 we went to Guy's panel on "Focal Point Fanzines" with Andrew Porter, Moshe Feder, and Stephen Davies of Plokta. The panel mainly agreed fandom was too big for an FPF, and even if it were possible, no one can set out to do an FPF. Afterward we got to talk with Joseph Major and Stephen Davies, who reports that Alison Scott had a baby boy a week before Worldcon. We told him we mainly don't write to Plokta because we feel pressured to be witty and clever, which is not our style.

Incidentally, we graciously offer the suggestion that every male in fandom should be called "Steve", and have done with it. We're covered, under "Esteban".

Following a quick sandwich and a run through the dealers' room, we went to the 5:30 panel "Revamping the Hugos". We'd say at least 2/3rds of the discussion was about the "Dramatic Presentation" award. We brought up the Fan Hugos and the withdrawal issue; Evelyn Leeper, who wasn't even on the panel, jumped all over that like white on rice, and the panel ignored the question and went back to talking about what they wanted to talk about. Ms. Leeper spoke to us after the panel, civilly enough; it was apparent that we understood each other's positions but still disagreed.

At various times we talked with Leah Smith, Elizabeth Osborne, John Hertz, met Geri Sullivan who came over as we talked with John; saw "Orange Mike" Lowrey a couple of times briefly.

We passed by the "Meet the Pros" thing at the Fairmount but it was very crowded and there wasn't any pro there we desperately wanted to meet. Like, what do we have to say to Terry Pratchett? We did chat for a few

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minutes with DUFF delegate Cathy Cupitt, who said she was enjoying very much her first visit to the U.S.

Back to our room for a quick shower, after which we cruised for some parties and talked with numerous fans. Carolina-style barbecue (vinegar-based, not tomato-based) and beer at the Charlotte bid party; some snacks and a Moosehead at the Toronto party, but failed to encounter Lloyd Penney. We did meet Franz Miklis, with whom we conversed in a mixture of English and our halting German, which somewhat to our surprise was comprehensible to him.

After that we went to Sharon Lee and Steve Miller's Liaden suite. This was not actually intended to be a party room until Friday night, but other people showed up; it was turned into a brainstorming session on how to attract more attention to the Liaden books, and small press in general.

As generally happens our first night in a new place, we slept badly.

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 1st:
Hier gibt ein Frohvetten-
partie

Operating on too little sleep (c. 3 hours, the body was willing but the mind refused to go there) so if we were snoring during your panel, well, nothing personal. A shower and some coffee helped a little. There really ought to be more things (some things) for people to do at Worldcon at 8:00 in the morning.

We encountered David Weber, who talks as prolifically as he writes. Say what you will about his writing, he has planned that universe and his story arcs in great detail.

The dealers' room did not open until 11:00 (apparently the dealers' choice, on grounds the sales from 10:00 - 11:00 AM do not justify getting up an hour early). The art show was not officially open but we walked straight in and no one stopped us.

Went to the "No Award" panel but it was not what we expected or were interested in (evidently no one else was, there were

two other people in the "audience") so we said so and left. We did talk with Teddy Harvia at the Cancun bid table and, at various times, Elaine Stiles, Alexander Bouchard, Dave Kyle, Tim Lane, and Nicki Lynch in the fan lounge.

At 11:30 (all panels were on an hour-and-a-half schedule) we attended the "Law in Space" panel. The gist was that existing treaties on space do not recognize territorial or property rights in space and sooner or later this will clash with reality. After the first half hour the panel was basically repeating variants on this basic premise.

We did have a chance to talk with Tom Feller at the Charlotte bid table, and saw him several more times during the convention.

The 1:00 panel "The Ebony Age of SF" was of obvious interest to us although it approached the subject mainly via black writers in SF, our approach being about black characters. The discussion was lively and at times controversial, but it would take far too long to describe it in detail. You shoulda been there.

A while later we saw Connie Willis and asked her about the Multiple Connie Willis Theory. She seemed amused by the concept. She agreed she writes in a wide spectrum of voices, unlike (her comparison) F. Scott Fitzgerald. We said Bellwether was a special favorite of ours and Connie said that was probably her own truest voice -- she even hates bread pudding as the POV character does!

Wandered, got something to eat (by that point running way low on calories and sleep). The 5:30 panel on "Too Good to be Popular" was mainly about promoting books. We questioned about reviews and Mike Resnick said reviews in Publisher's Weekly and Kirkus Reviews matter, all other reviews do not affect sales and therefore are irrelevant.

Eventually 7:30 rolled around for "Frohvet Party 2000" ("Froshvet" in the con newsletter, sigh) and some people met in the hotel bar and had drinks and talked about fandom. Present included: Elizabeth Osborne, Steve & Elaine Stiles, Milt Stevens, Henry Welch, Ron Daskins (a friend of Henry's), Tim Lane, John Hertz, Julie Wall, Franz Miklis, Joseph & Lisa Major.



Yes, we did wear our pink shirt: Franz wore a pink shirt also. As we were fully prepared for no one to turn up, this must rate as a modest success.

Hit some of the parties, talked with Ed Meskys, some sleep. Not enough, but some.

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 2nd: Ballistic Re-entry

On further excavation, it was learned there actually was early programming.

"Startup Rituals" was amusing discussion of writers' habits. James van Pelt said he tries to write in stolen moments between job (teaching) and family responsibility, especially during his children's naps! Harry Turtledove does first draft longhand, black ink on lined paper, and edits with colored felt-tips!

Instead of saving the worst for last, the con had daily gripe sessions. We went on Saturday and mentioned that nowhere in any of the Progress Reprints did it say the Hugo Awards would be Saturday night. Other people had other minor problems. Con chair Tom Veal was amazingly composed; whether due to confidence in his system, or Valium, we can't say.

There was an "Alternate Histories" panel, of which we saw portions. Robert Charles Wilson defined the appeal of AH's with: "Science fiction people are like otters. We can't see a body of knowledge without wanting to play in it."

Our default mode at conventions is usually visiting the dealers' room, that's what we do when we have nothing else to do. This time we didn't buy much. Also we spent some time in the fan lounge -- we did find the formal con suite but spent a total of about two minutes there. At some point Tom Feller kindly brought Murray Moore over to meet us, Murray being one of the people we wanted to meet but had not encountered earlier.

Our schedule was arranged to encompass the FOSFAX dinner which we missed in 1998. About sixteen people went to a convenient area restaurant. We sat with Robert Kennedy, Milt Stevens, and Martin Morse Wooster. It also turned out we had come 1000 miles to meet Patrick McGuire who lives 20 miles from us.

The con newsletter discouraged people from attending the Hugo Awards. "There won't be room for everybody." So we accepted Tim Lane's generous offer and joined the group watching over closed-

circuit in his room, with Elizabeth Garrott, Patrick McGuire, and some other friends of theirs. Insert here customary rant about The Usual Suspects, we're too tired to repeat ourself. The highlight was the acceptance speech of Robert Gordon, screenwriter of Galaxy Quest, who seemed genuinely stoked to have won. And then walked off and left the Hugo on the podium...

Really the best part of the con for us was getting to spend time with people, such as Tim and Elizabeth, and Joseph Major, Milt Stevens, John Hertz, Tom Feller, insert your name here (even if we forgot your name we enjoyed talking).

Sadly, we never did meet Sue Mason. Assuming she's not fictitious. We don't have much luck with TAFF delegates.

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 3rd: This Way to the Great Egress

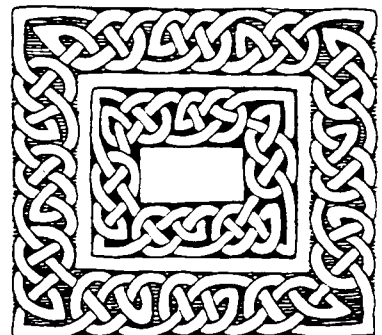
Toronto won for 2003 by a wide margin. We never did see Lloyd Penney.

Not much to write about Sunday, we had to catch the 11:05 (in practice 11:20) shuttle to O'Hare to be in plenty of time for our flight. Talked some more with Tim Lane in the fan lounge before leaving.

A routinely quiet journey home, in time to catch up on laundry and sleep.

Are we going to bust our chops to attend numerous Worldcons, or any cons, in the future? Don't wager the rent money. The number of events at Worldcon in which we have much interest is declining (the Hugo Awards no longer much of a factor, insert here obligatory rant). Since our role in conventions now is an essentially passive one, neither working nor participating in programming, there is less motivation to make the effort or spend the money. There's a con in Wisconsin in the spring we may get to, to meet Lyn McConchie. Beyond that, well, we'll see. Philadelphia maybe, San Jose probably not, Toronto too far off to predict if we'll be interested by then.

On the other hand, "Everything is Binjali."



Children of the Thunder

An examination of the John Brunner novel

by Gene R. Stewart

Some people are just naturally more persuasive. They inspire loyalty and prompt effort, they point out goals and spark the desire to reach them. Their way of looking at the world, and even their way of experiencing life, dominates those around them. Charismatic, we call them, as if that explains.

When such people are good, we bless them and label them saints, heroes, or role models. When they're bad, we look back in anguish and curse ourselves for ever having been duped.

But what if that power of persuasiveness exists apart from our consent, a distinct ability with which but a few are born?

It's an excellent premise for a novel, and John Brunner explores the implications in science fiction of many parts that avoids becoming just another list of marvels with a Gestalt ending. The plot? Children are born throughout the world, each with the ability to persuade those near them, to sway thinking. We and they are one, except they're slightly advanced, possessed of an extra talent. Proximity is a factor; the power of persuasion gets stronger as distance lessens, and vice versa. The children become aware of this strange new ability in different ways and to different ends, but all soon begin exploiting it. Wouldn't you?

Soon each child's character and circumstances begin determining how the power is used. It's fascinating to watch each child's development, and lesser writers would have let this parade of marvels suffice.

Brunner, however, stacks the separate parts of his story, connecting them at several points. We learn that the children very likely have a common father, even as we learn about the practices of sperm banks and fertility clinics, even as we find out that one of the main characters,



Peter Levin, had donated sperm. He's a science reporter and in an ideal position to gather scattered facts and combine them, revealing the larger, deeper story for us.

Just when the book starts to blossom for the reader depends on when certain hints are connected. It also hinges on interpretation. It's not a puzzle book, but alert readers get the thrill of discovery a bit earlier than casual scanners. The more one brings to the reading, the more one can find in the book. Brunner considers power as method and motive. He also admits that, sometimes, we fear our children too much to love them.

As a science fiction writer, Brunner's prime skill lies in creating complex, rational extrapolations of society. His mastery is milieu, and the backgrounds and environments of this novel offer further confirmation of his brilliance in this area.

As a social commentator, Brunner is respected and seasoned. He's been sensitive from the start to many issues other writers, of whatever category, ignore or exploit. No politically correct posturing for Brunner.

These strengths combine in Children Of The Thunder to give us portraits of real people, not only in the future of his imagination but in the present of his England, our world. He sees clearly how people get along, and emphasizes the universality of individual experiences. What is, in one era, an oppressed minority might, in another era, become the oppressive

majority. Brunner reminds us that things change. He also tells us that, when it comes to life, one size fits all.

None of this gets in the reader's way, though. Because TV is so integral a part of our lives, he writes in TV's bite-mode, which means we're never asked to stay with one subject, person, or viewpoint too long. You're actually watching TV, not reading at all, is how it feels.

The effect is reminiscent of Brunner's own Shockwave Rider, Stand On Zanzibar, and The Sheep Look Up in immediacy. A constant series of surprises big and small keep you guessing, too. Some of the techniques are borrowed from John Dos Passos's U.S.A. trilogy. Others are created even as we watch. The impact of slice/dice "bite" editing, for example, adds veracity by layering subtlety and bluntness, comedy and pathos, truth and lies.

And it's never confusing. We're used to accepting narrated film clips as real events, so Brunner uses short blips of newsreader's English to give us updates on each part of the story. The result? We hang on every word.

It's like learning a culture by channel-surfing. It's remote-control fiction, with Brunner fingering the buttons, a maestro in expert command of multimedia's basic concepts long before CD-ROM interactivity.

By playing to different levels of our attention all at once, Brunner shows how events of considerable complexity arise and how we receive them via media. He shows and tells both.

Yes, this is one of those books that keeps resonating in one's mind, keeps changing as new ideas about the book are tested and found to have been anticipated by Brunner's brilliant, quirky, and playful mind. An exegesis of this novel would provide material for several doctoral dissertations. Brunner casts his net wide, indeed, but never seems to be dragging in kitchen sinks. His catch feeds hungry minds without waste.

Read this novel as a race, if you will. The contestants are the children's individual stories, but the finish line is not drawn just beyond the last words of the book. In the reader's mind is where the best endings reveal themselves, and Brunner achieves a balance between horror and hilarity that carries the book far

past the moment a reader finishes it. A delayed delivery is made. For some it will be like stepping off a cliff, for others it will be like leaping into the joy of flight.

One of the most fascinating elements of the book is the suggested explanation of many mysterious things: Stonehenge, for example. Such thoughts will occur to readers for months after finishing the book.

The Greek goddess Peitho, whom the Romans called Suada, controlled persuasiveness and is said to have helped Theseus unite Greece under Athens. This myth infuses Brunner's novel, and the part of the narrative dealing with the children, their fates, reads like an heroic song in the making.

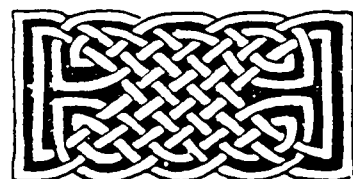
Written in a tone easy to read yet good at imparting images, Children Of The Thunder hearkens back to myth and manages a goodly amount of speculation besides. Can SF, or any other kind of writing, offer more?

Theories of history are dealt with, as whether men influence events or the reverse. Modern theories of quantum mechanics parallel certain of this novel's ideas by asserting that the observer determines the observed; is this not nature's persuasiveness? If not, then is it, perhaps, man's?

Doesn't it mean we're all, at least somewhat, children of the thunder?

John Brunner's novel answers yes, and prompts readers to consider the why's and how's of their lives. With artless elegance and aplomb, Brunner takes simple thoughts and poses simple questions, and constructs a complexity of fact and fiction equal to any mind it might, in its guise of readable, suspenseful SF novel, encounter and enthrall.

This novel shouldn't be ignored by any one who has ever gotten his own way a little bit too easily. Nor should it be passed over by those curious about life and the world, because it illuminates a host of details that writers, considered more realistic, never even notice.



Science Fiction and the Cranky Fan

By Wm. Breiding

Some years ago my friend Kent Johnson gave me two books for Christmas that he was absolutely crazy about. I failed to finish either of them. Neuromancer by William Gibson, and The Wild Shore by Kim Stanley Robinson. I made it three quarters of the way through Gibson's book before literally throwing it across the room in disgust. I had found it poorly written, pretentious, and not particularly original. Combine John Brunner with Michael Moorcock and you already have the father of cyberpunk. I had an even harder time with The Wild Shore. After a few false starts I managed to get past the first few uneventful pages and actually made it about halfway through the book before I lost interest, allowing it, without regret, to become buried beneath the other tomes at my bedside. Simply put, Robinson bored me. I found the writing, not bad, just workmanlike, which is fine if the plot/action moves; it did not in The Wild Shore. I had little interest in the post-hippie wayfaring-waif protagonists, and no patience at all with their Utopian misadventures. John Crowley's Engine Summer delineates this same picture with a more realistic precept and highly charged language. (To a lesser extent, so does much of Delaney.)

Ian Banks writes great. His mainstream/horror novels (The Wasp Factory, et al) are bizarre, wonderful books, but his science fiction sucks. Many fans absolutely adore Bank's SF. San Francisco gaffiate Rich Coad foisted upon me Banks' 600+ page monster, Consider Phlebus, as a modern, intelligent, stirring, sense of wonder producing space opera. I found it rather boring -- but I did finish it.

I recently read Asimov's The Gods Themselves. What a mistake. I kept reading it, hoping that it would somehow become transformed. This was supposed to be one of the "grand masters" of SF's best works, right? Wrong, wrong, wrong! This trite alternate universe story, featuring economics and aliens, was done better in the 40's and 50's by guys like Fred Pohl

and Lester delRey. This book won a Hugo Award? In 1973? Maybe I'm living in an alternate universe!

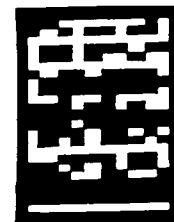
Of course it didn't help much that I'd just read mainstream books by Rick Bass and Richard Ford, men who have terse, supple styles, with simple vocabularies full of tension and emotion. Asimov's prose was like a white and purple grub, burrowed, blind and slightly distasteful.

Almost always I will go for style over content. Nabokov's Lolita got me pretty queasy in parts but the writing compelled me to continue. Frederick Exley's From A Cold Island had the same effect. I hated the man he was writing about, but loved the way he was writing. It is in this same way that I approach Gene Wolfe. He can be dreadfully incomprehensible, so caught up in playing games that I want to take him neck and wring it. He also gets just plain boring. But often enough the experimentation pays off.

Fan friend Tom Jackson, that master of parenthetical wit, mentioned that he hadn't realized I' read any SF since 1966 -- the year my hero Cordwainer Smith died -- and his point was well taken. I continue to read so much early science fiction because I am in search of that beauty and sense of wonder I found reading SF as a teen. And I generally find it: early pulp hacks were so wild it seldom bothers me that they were rotten writers. Sometimes it even feeds into the greatness of their stories. (I'm thinking of Murray Leinster, Edmund Hamilton, Stanley Coblentz, Van Vogt, maybe even James Blish.)

I do not mean for this to be a harangue about bad SF. Although I have less tolerance for science fiction now, I will always read it, warts, bad writing and all. For every clunker there is a Fredric Brown, Greg Benford, Damon Knight, and Clifford Simak. And for each one of these there is a Brian Aldiss, R.A. Lafferty, John Crowley, and Howard Waldrop.

Being capable of telling a good tale is its own art form. We have many masters of the form in science fiction -- even if the telling is a little rough.



Colour Of Dust A.C. Evans Stride Publications, 11 Sylvan Road, Exter, Devon, EX4 6EW, Great Britain £11.95 (no dollar price)

The author's Introduction speaks of his tension between "the fantastic and the realistic"; thus, though over half the poems and prose-poem "texts" here are "main-stream", well over 100 pages are, in his words, "visionary apocalyptic", "cosmological vision", "occult/esoteric", inspired by "anceint myths, legends, Books of the Dead", horror and science fiction. Although Stride Press' guidelines specifically say it is not open to SF, and that material for collections should have previously appeared in "reputable magazines", the impact of Evans' poetry has clearly persuaded the publisher to break those two rules; much here IS science fictional, much was first published in genre little magazines, hardly "reputable" to literary establishment eyes.

Of the handful of poems I have selected as indicative of the genre content, "Metacropolis" tells in just 11 lines -- Evans has a gift for condensing precision within his elegantly economical free verse -- of "an ark/of stone"; perhaps from some future civilisation, in which, alchemical-unionwise, "time/deepens out/of mind". Yet time-crossings are not salvations, as "Not Dead But Changed" makes clear. A rural prophetess two centuries back manages, so urgent is she to utter her painful warning visions, somehow to pierce the time veil. Yet Now is far too late; her "great pikes and lances" poised to "descend upon the ravaged earth" are mere reminders of wearily familiar horrors of aerial warfare.

This ironic poem also lets us sense a meta-theme of at least the "fantastic" portion of Colour Of Dust -- as the time-travelled visionary utters, her modern auditor muses: "To her I am a clinical,/detached observer./She cannot read my mind/.../ -- and the walls close in." It is as if, rather than Eliot's gap between will and action WITHIN the poet-individual, Evans seems haunted by a two-way gap BETWEEN intelligences. At most, we achieve awareness merely of our own failure to communicate, and of the equal failure of others, from our own time, place, space, or Elsewhere, to communicate meaningfully, healingly, with us. It is as if, to Evans, communication is only possible beyond possibility, in the places of the unimaginable that the author nevertheless



only our opinion....

manages to imagine.

But, even if attained, is not such impossible communication likely also to be one of utter dread? "Primal Scene Monster", another short poem, focusses on an entity that "lives in the gulfs of chaos", in "a void/within a void", its unsatisfiable "eternal hunger" recalling HPL's cosmic horrors. Yet the poem uneases on the human as well as macro scale, recalling how for Freud the "primal scene" was witness to parental sexual union, first perception of monstrous seeming two-backed beast.

And how can that beast seen at once more monstrous and more godlike than in the vastest of matings -- a transgressive parody, as it were, of the gloriously all-transfiguring Alchemical Marriage" -- or modern science's parallel quest for a unifying Theory of Everything -- that Evans/shows us in "Black Hole Binary (Phantom

Companion)", his limpid account of unimaginably vast astronomical phenomena, far above and beyond humanity, godlike in size and power but certainly not in caring, for us or indeed for any human-scale intelligence. Their lust for impossible union echoes alike mystic's visions and Gothic Romantics's longings, torn between love and death 'til tomb-bride conjoins opposites. Vonnegut in "Senator Rosewater" suggested a commonality between SF and pornography. Evans focusses the parallel; with his "glacial ecstasy" for "the two/gripped by radiant/indeterminate/mid-time/dense point", ghost star (al)lured by devouring gulf metaphors alike -- Sense of Wonder and that ultimate coupling which dissolves self irreversibly into universe.

REVIEW BY RACHEL RUSSELL

Heart Of Gold Sharon Shinn Ace 2000
\$14.95 tpb

BRILLIANT book. WOW. Okay, I love everything I've read by Sharon Shinn, but this is truly brilliant, amazing on every level. Shinn has a world with three types of people, Blueskins, Goldskins, and albinos. The Blueskin people are like Regency England except that it is women with all the power and education. Nolan, like any well brought up Blueskin man, is kind, considerate, and thoughtful. Unlike many, he is talented in math and science and was indulged in an education that, despite his engagement to the lovely and easy-going Leesa, has led him to the City and a job at the BioLab. He has ended up being a specialist in creating vaccines for the Guldern people, and has saved thousands of lives. Yet his family not only doesn't understand, they are somewhat embarrassed.

In the meantime Kit, whose late father was a lower caste man and whose mother, one of the Higher Hundred, is long dead, has to find a way to cope with life as well. Her strong-willed Grandmother wants her to become a proper daughter of the Higher Hundred. Kit spends a lot of time working at a charity trying to help the oppressed Goldskin women, and in the meantime her lover Jex, a Guldern, is in jail for civil disobedience. To Kit's horror, Jex is increasingly bent on violence against the Blueskins. Kit finds

it painful to admit, but he does not even seem to love her. Jex -- wild, strong, smart, daring, a real bad-boy, tough guy -- has been Kit's whole world. She has been crazy in love.

Into this world, torn more each day by racial violence, enters the new element of bioweapons. Suddenly Nolan and Kit will find themselves thrown together, forced to try to do the right thing, and increasingly aware of their feelings for each other.

It doesn't take a rocket scientist to know that I love the romance aspect of this novel! But it seems to me to be a very mature kind of romance. Nolan and Kit are involved with other people and have to deal with them, and figure out what they feel for them and what they want out of life. While I am sure they find each other forever at the end, they are more cautious. There are all sorts of fascinating minor characters, wicked villains, and manipulating politics. I thought this story was carefully woven and it held my interest completely.

REVIEWS BY E.B. FROHNET

The Lust Lizard Of Melancholy Cove
Christopher Moore 1999 SpikeBooks \$23.00

Somewhere near Monterey, south of San Francisco and north of L.A., is Pine Cove. In the summer it's a tourist trap; each September it retreats gratefully to being a small town populated entirely by nut jobs: the pot-smoking deputy, the schizo small-time actress, the guilty psychiatrist who has replaced everyone's Prozac with sugar pills. Oh yeah, and the shape-changing Sea Beast who comes ashore to hump anything that will hold still, which includes a Texaco truck.

Nova Express lists this as "slipstream", a term awkwardly defined something like "the non realistic fiction that's left over after subtracting out science fiction, fantasy, and horror". Imagine David Lynch with a sense of humor. If that's not too much a contradiction in terms. This surely has its moments of humor. ("As a psychiatrist, she'd tried to drop terms like 'full-blown batshit' from her vocabulary.") This book would make a snarkingly clever movie that would be very funny the first time you watched it; Woody Harrelson would play the deputy.

A Civil Campaign Lois McMaster Bujold
1999 Baen \$24.00 hc/\$7.99 pb

Love is endlessly amusing -- except to the participants. Miles' campaign for the fair hand of Ekaterin Vorsoisson has to be finely judged: not too fast to scare the recently widowed target, but fast enough to cut out the numerous other Barrayaran young men eager for brides. Mark's affair with Kareen Koudelka looks as if it may not survive their return to Barrayar from Beta Colony. Ivan is just getting tired of being alone; his latest plan to solve that dilemma is about to crash-and-burn dramatically. Emperor Gregor's wedding is taking up too much of everyone's time; an obscure Vor-lord is using offworld technology to replicate daughters; and Mark's imported friend is raising bugs in the basement of Vorkosigan House. The legal situation all around is not merely sticky, it's getting positively gummy.

On a previous occasion we speculated that the Vorkosigan books were getting steadily darker in tone (see Mirror Dance for example). Ms. Bujold solves that at one stroke: this is hilarious! The "dinner party from Hell" scene is alone worth the cost of the book. We giggled through this, except where we laughed out loud. Of course it presupposes that you have read, at a bare minimum, Memory and Komarr, and preferably the whole series, of which this is the 11th. That being the inescapable problem of long series. To anyone who has not read the Vorkosigan books, we can fairly say, you're missing a treat.

The Apocalypse Troll David Weber 1999
Baen \$22.00 hc/\$7.99 pb

No one was quite sure what happened on the other side of a Takeshita Transition -- no one had ever come back to report. Time travel was one theoretical possibility, as Col. Ludmilla Leonovna found. In a desperate running battle, the 25th Century officer realized the alien Kanga and their cyborged war-machines the Trolls planned to strike Earth in the past and cut off the threat of human galactic expansion at the source. The survivors of a brutal slugfest emerged over Earth in 2007 just in time to tangle with primitive

but effective local forces (read: U.S. Navy). But one Troll cyborg escaped -- and one was enough to threaten Earth.

Weber alters the formula of the Honor Harrington books by putting the big space battle at the beginning, not the end. Except for the last few chapters, this is closer to a near-future, Tom Clancy tech-thriller than SF. Most of the characters are sternly competent white Republican military officers. (The author's mindset appears to divide the entire human race into two categories: military and scum.) Weber fans, combat groupies, and those who dislike the state of North Carolina should enjoy it.

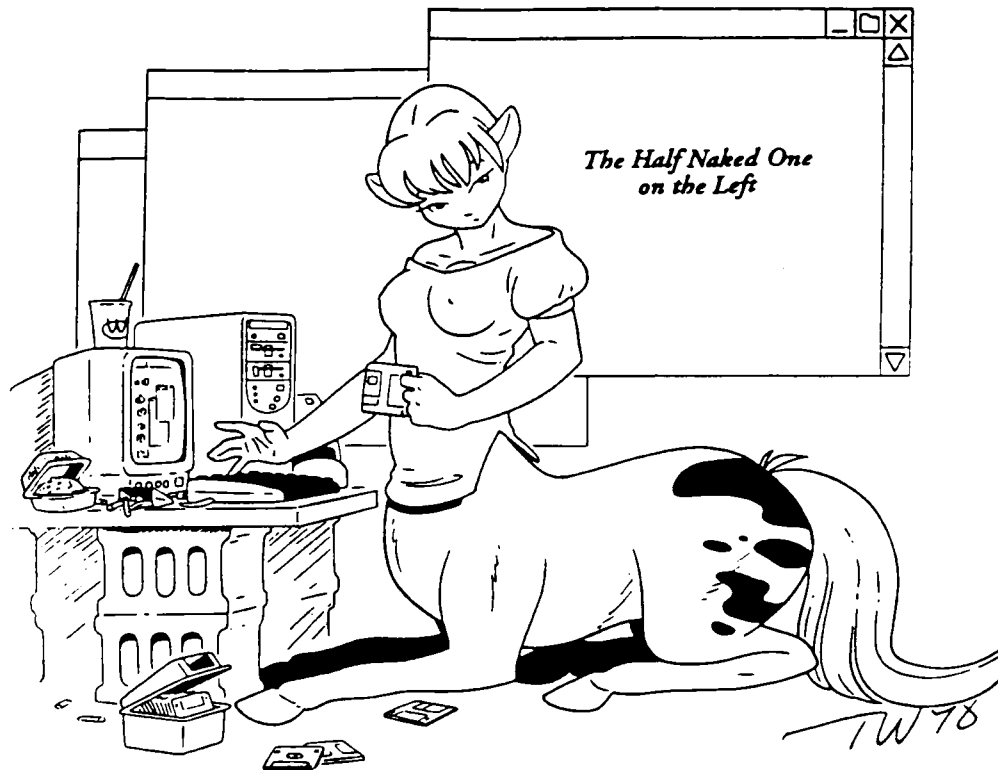
No Clock In The Forest Paul J. Willis
1991 Avonova \$4.50 cover

This walks a knife's edge between solemn fantasy and shameless parody without quite toppling over into either. It distantly reminded us of Richard Grant's glorious and much neglected Rumors Of Spring (the best fantasy novel of the 1980's, but don't get us started); except No Clock is edgier, more deliberately self-referential. It invites you to laugh at, rather than with, the characters. William, a foolishly solemn mountain climber, and Grace, a bratty teenager from Central Casting, are hiking in the same wilderness area. Though neither knows it, they are linked by old Garth, William's casual climbing companion who is also Grace's estranged uncle. Thus they are drawn into a strange morality play (dense with mosquitoes and marmot jokes) enacted among the rocks, woods, and bogs of the Three Queens region.

In a sense we can see how a book of this sort could pass unnoticed. It's neither fish nor fowl, not repetitive and obvious enough for the Piers Anthony groupies, too droll for the somber butt-down readers of, say, Charles deLint. Too bad.

The Well Favored Man Elizabeth Willey
1993 Tor \$23.95 hc

The first of a trilogy, is a routine vanilla fantasy with sorcerers and dragons. It has way more characters than needed for the plot and they all have names like "Gwydion" and "Marfisa". Generic Fantasy Product: we could not maintain interest.



Derogatory Reference #95
 Arthur D. Hlavaty
 206 Valentine Street
 Yonkers NY 10704

A somewhat irregular personalzine about whatever Hlavaty feels like writing on: slow recovery from his injury, the death of John Sladek, misunderstood song lyrics, the nature of conversation. The editor seems content to express what he feels, with little need for feedback.

Conferring With Earthquakes #5
 Brin-Marie McLaughlin
 247 19th Avenue #6
 San Francisco CA 94121

Most of the return of this personalzine is taken up with reflections on her life and health, and a meeting with a talk radio personality with whom McLaughlin has exchanged faxes for years. Fandom is a lesser concern.

Data Dump #49
 Steve Sneyd
 4 Nowell Place, Almondbury, Huddersfield
 W. Yorkshire, HD5 8PB, Great Britain

News and commentary on the SF-poetry zine, this time including a long and acid rebuttal by one "Michael Pendragon". (We

are not qualified to judge the dispute and thus stand neutral.) Typically hand-printed, sometimes with comments running up the margins, which diminishes its readability. Those interested in the topic should also refer to "Only Our Opinion" where Steve often reviews poetry books.

Vanaonde #'s 353-357
 John Hertz
 236 S. Coronado Street #409
 Los Angeles CA 90057

What we said last time? Yeah.

Banana Wings #15
 Claire Brialey & Mark Plummer
 26 Northampton Road, Croydon,
 Surrey, CR0 7HA, Great Britain

Resuming after nearly a year's absence (with the obligatory No Explanation), this eliminates, basically, everything in favor of a 50-page Australian travelogue and Worldcon report. (Reportedly, "some" of the letters in response to #14 will be held over for #16.) While we're all in favor of droll travelogues, which the British do far better than Americans, we know almost none of the principals -- at least in person -- which somewhat diminished the attraction of this for us. We rather liked BW as it used to be...

This Here #3
Nic Farey
P.O. Box 178
St. Leonard MD 20685

The acknowledgement that Farey is a Brit who relocated to the U.S. explains much. Herein he discusses his DWI conviction; tastes and distastes in music, wrestling, and insects; and responds briskly to some letters. A few zine reviews as well. This frequent personalzine is a worthwhile addition to fandom.

Bogus #4
Sandra Bond
46 Stirling Road, London
N22 5BP, Great Britain

An irregular personalzine to supplement Bond's genzine Quasiquote (reviewed last issue). Mostly devoted to analysis of The Performer, the editor's public alter ego who appears on convention panels. In an odd coincidence -- see above -- she also discusses music and bees.

Opuntia #45.1
Dale Speirs
Box 6830, Calgary, Alberta
T2P 2E7, Canada

Despite its unusual format and numbering this probably classes as a personalzine-with-a-few-LOC's. Except, just to confuse things, when it is devoted mainly to reviews of fanzines. (Speirs says he got 364 zines in 1999, though we suspect he's using a very wide definition.) Also an explanation of his Hugo votes.

FOSFAX #199
Timothy Lane & Elizabeth Garrott
P.O. Box 37281
Louisville KY 40233

As we've said repeatedly, there is worthwhile material here. The suggestion for an omnibus edition of Joseph Major's analyses of Heinlein is a fine idea. You just have to be willing to sort it out from the increasingly virulent ranting from both ends of the political spectrum. Sometimes the effort gets tiresome.

Visions Of Paradise #84
Robert Sabella
24 Cedar Manor Court
Budd Lake NJ 07828

"Basically an APazine", says the editor. Its most attractive feature is Sabella's journal of personal and family life. Also includes Fei Fei Li's "Letters From Tibet", an intriguing look into another and rather alien culture; the editor's reviews of often mainstream books, and a (separately collated) letter column. A fanzine that quietly makes you think.

The Wrong Leggings #5 (Down Under)
Lilian Edwards
39 Viewfort, Edinburgh, Scotland
EH10 4JE, Great Britain

As the subtitle suggests, mainly an account of Edwards' 3-month professional sabbatical in Sydney, with a sidebar on a fannish trip to Melbourne -- if she went to the Worldcon, however, she does not choose to discuss it. Also assesses where British fanzine fandom has gone in the 2+ years since her last issue. Nice Sue Mason cover and some photographs.

For The Clerisy #39
Brant Kresovich
P.O. Box 404
Getzville NY 14068

Digest personalzine, all text. ("You want images, go watch TV.") Internet addiction, men's concern with body image ("a secret epidemic"); the Prime Minister of Japan, political thrillers, and some fanzine reviews. The editor's interests are extensive; finding the overlap with ours is the problem.

Nova Express Vol. 5 #3
Lawrence Person
P.O. Box 27231
Austin TX 78755

It's really striking, how stubbornly Person clings to his identity as an "SF fanzine", when NE has all the hallmarks of a small-press lit-crit zine (dense, analytical, humorless, none of the contributors are elsewhere involved in fandom) and few characteristics of a fanzine. 10-

page interview with Neil Gaiman (and that's just Part One), Russell Blackford does 6 pages on "rational materialism" in the writings of Greg Egan, book reviews of bleak/slipstream/occasionally even SF.

Memphen #268
Michael Kingsley/rotating editors
P.O. Box 820534
Memphis TN 38182

Mostly book reviews from Barbara Gatewood; the minutes for the May 2000 meeting beginning "There really wasn't much of a meeting" says a lot. We really have no problem with small local, mainly social groups; it's just that no one here appears interested in fanzine fandom for its own sake.

Napartheid
"Sir D.sastre"
127 PK, Trintxerpe-Pasaia, Gipuzkoa 20110
"The Basque Country" (um, Spain)

A Basque-language comic book; the point of which (we assume, we can't read it) is to denounce Spanish jurisdiction over, ah, Spain. Since we're an assimilationist, we tend to disapprove on principle of ethnic isolationism (can you say "Bosnia"?)

The Knarley Knaws #82
Henry L. Welch
1525 16th Avenue
Grafton WI 53024

Joe Mayhew Memorial Issue, with cover and all art from the late master -- we specially liked the Catzilla ravaging Chicago on p. 3. Save for Alex Bouchard's faltering column and a few Charlotte Proctor book reviews, this is becoming primarily a letterzine.

Plokta Vol 5 #3
Steve Davies & Alison Scott
52 Westbourne Terrace, Reading,
Berkshire, RG30 2RP, Great Britain

This serving double duty as the program book of <plokta.con>. Patrick Nielsen Hayden appreciates GOH Ken MacLeod (SF discussed in Plokta! What's the world coming to?); Ken MacLeod on shelves; list of the con program (we're sorry to have missed the cleavage panel); lokta plokta letters, and an assortment of photographs

with witty if incoherent captions. They really seem to have fun with this zine, or put up a convincing front.

New Kind Of Neighborhood (no date or #)
Ylva Spangberg & Lennart Uhlin
Disponentg 3
S-112 62, Stockholm, Sweden

Apparently our existence is becoming known in some flar-fung corners. This English-language zine rates as a sort of Scandinavian Plokta, though we wonder if it's not a one-shot. Mainly devoted to a review of the mythic 2003 Stockholm Easter-con. We specially liked their choice of an Airedale terrier as PR director, and a program which begins, "Friday: We thought we might go for a drink somewhere." Also Spangberg's subtly incoherent analysis of the aesthetics of going for a walk. A fun effort, though the British influence is obvious.

Trap Door #20
Robert Lichtman
P.O. Box 30
Glen Ellen CA 95442

We're unsure if this annual event is intended as, or functions as, an APazine, but it gives that impression. Witty Steve Stiles cover; at the end of an editorial mostly about his accident, Lichtman drops almost in passing a mention of his recent wedding. Assorted, generally personal anecdotes, among which Greg Benford's denunciation of Hollywood film industry stupidity is redundant but amusing; the reprint of a 1973 Burbee article; letters. The editor numbers only those pages at the beginning of articles.

I'VE LOCKED ALL THE FANZINES NOW.
WHEN DO THEY SEND ME SOME MORE?



Steam Engine Time #1
Bruce Gillespie & Maureen Speller
60 Bournemouth Road, Folkestone,
Kent, CT19 5AZ, Great Britain

A very serious critical zine, more SF-specific than (obvious comparison) Nova Express, but also more past-oriented. David Seed on Cordwainer Smith, Gillespie analyzes Olaf Stapledon, Paul Kincaid on how British SF came to be distinct from (and lately lost that distinction) American SF, Elaine Cochrane on the work of R.A. Lafferty. See a pattern there? The focal point seems to be Densely Literary SF (DLSF being a "new" subgenre we've just labelled). Admirable but a little detached.

The Bibliofantasiac #18
C.F. Kennedy
39 Clarendon Avenue, Scarborough,
Ontario, M1N 3S1, Canada

Sent to us by Rodney Leighton, who has some book reviews herein, this is clearly a small-press literary zine, not an SF fanzine. Essays, poetry, some illos rammed in at odd angles, and some stuff we'll call "fiction" faute de mieux. Not precisely our thing.

South Florida SFS Shuttle #142
Peter "Mal" Barker/rotating editors
P.O. Box 70143
Fort Lauderdale FL 33307

This has now settled into a consistent, solid quarterly clubzine. Local news and previews (Tropicon, November 10-12; Snofcon, December 1-3); book reviews from assorted members; LOC's from here and there; nice cover by Ericka Barker.

Green Stuff #11 w/ Dinosaur Spit #'s 2-3
Murray Moore
1065 Henley Road, Mississauga,
Ontario, L4Y 1C8, Canada

Moore's APazines (FAPA and SAPS respectively). GS: mostly an account of a talk given by ex-Python, Michael Palin, about Hemingway. DS: about his house, family history, much concerning local and APA fan politics. Probably more immediate to members of the respective APA's.

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

Re-elected "by acclamation", Wall begins a new term as SFC president and Bulletin editor with a report of a trip to New York with Toni Weisskopf, and an appeal for art (artists take note); numerous reports on Southern conventions; fanzine reviews by Tom Feller, and some LOC's. Always informative, especially if you live in the South and/or are active in congoing.

GUFFaw #4
Paul Kincaid
60 Bournemouth Road, Folkestone,
Kent, CT19 5AZ, Great Britain

Fan fund support (GUFF is between U.K. and Australia). First notable English version of Czech fan Eva Hauser's 1992 report, early portion of Kincaid's last year report. Limited interest to U.S. fans.

Challenger #12
Guy Lillian III
P.O. Box 53092
New Orleans LA 70153

Swooping in on a short turnaround and a striking Teri Sanitoro cover, the Hugo nominee displays in 100 pages its eclectic mix of glory and pain. We like the way Lillian shifts things around -- the letter column is in the front half -- while maintaining dignity. Another look into legal failures; Janine Stinson goes serious on the works of C.J. Cherryh; the best zine review column in fandom. We could manage to live without Mike Resnick's self-congratulatory odes to his success; but on the whole, the best genzine going.

[[Vanished in the mist: International Revolutionary Gardener (May 1999), Out Of The Kaje (October 1999), Barnaid (November 1999). Bill Bowers says he plans to resume Outworlds. Eventually.]]

Covert Communications From Zeta Corvi #6
Andrew C. Murdoch
508-6800 Westminster Hwy, Richmond,
British Columbia, V7C 1C5, Canada

An agreeable little 16-page genzine of many parts: zine reviews, award and fan fund updates, its best feature an upbeat V-Con report; some book reviews and LOC's. If this has a question mark, it's maybe a lack of focus; Murdoch seems so glad to be doing a fanzine, he hasn't yet decided what fanzine he wishes to do.

Aztec Blue #1
Murray Moore
1065 Henley Road, Mississauga,
Ontario, L4Y 1C8, Canada

The much-awaited genzine takes a promising debut, and proposes a quarterly schedule. Red-and-black Rotsler cover; Mike Glicksohn on the nature of fandom; Joyce Scrivner examines her life, part I of a John Berry trip to Albania. Neat formatting, well-chosen art -- far better than our own first crudzine. We anticipate the future of this zine.

Ansible #157
Dave Langford
94 London Road, Reading, Berkshire
RG1 5 AU, Great Britain

Apparently everyone in fandom except us regards this (which we receive through the kindness of American agent Janice Murray -- if you need her address ask us) as indispensable. It's informative, especially for British fandom, but we could live without it if we had to. Is any actual description really necessary?

Fanzine Fanatique (no date or #)
Keith Walker
6 Vine Street, Lancaster
LA1 4UF, Great Britain

Four pages of brief reviews, including some SF fanzines but also small press, poetry and music zines -- quite an assortment. Walker rates Ansible as "the perfect SF newszine", a viewpoint we understand (thud! pardon us while we hit our head against the wall) but also likes Knarley

Knews and Challenger. The Twink reviewed was #16, the editor agrees with Lyn on "Political Correctness".

The Rhizome Factor Vol. 1 #4
Cathy Cupitt
P.O. Box 915, Nedlands, Western Aust.,
6909, Australia

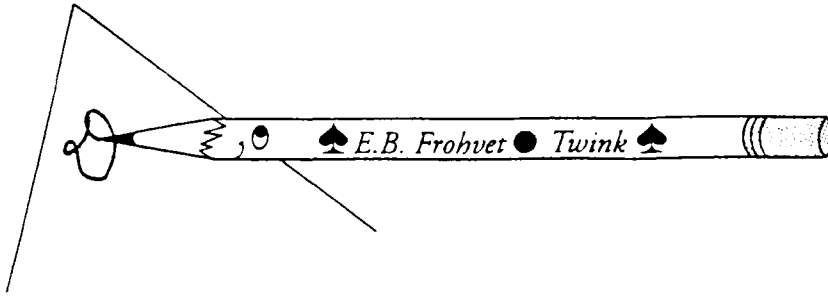
Given to us by the editor at Worldcon; dated September 1999, which makes you wonder about its schedule. Cupitt and numerous friends approach fandom through "critical essays, fiction, art, reviews, articles of general interest": in practice this amounts to several short stories and a few comments and news items. The editor disavows "amateurish" for the fiction. Yes, well... As a fanzine this reminds us most nearly of Probe in its air of being from an isolated group without sufficient contact with the rest of fandom.

scopus:3007 #10
Alexander & Megan Bouchard
P.O. Box 573
Hazel Park MI 48030

Also received from the editor at Chicon, the return of this personalzine after two years (almost to the day) of silence. The editors have suffered numerous personal and health problems, which they tell about with perhaps a shade more detail than some readers might find comfortable. Actually a quite creditable zine review column, and nice appreciations of Joe Mayhew.

[[Editor's note: Yes, we told a few people we would not be able to review their zines this. And as a rule we don't intend this section to go five pages. In lieu of putting off reviews until they were too late to be useful, we shuffled some things to make space here. It's a poor faned who stubbornly refuses to change according to the needs of the situation.]]





Rheaders Rhevenge

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

WILLIAM BREIDING
150 Gratton #4
San Francisco CA 94117
[note change of address]

As to Twink #18 -- it was nice and hefty. The major comment hook for me was the continuing conversation about TAFF. Although I don't think it's "elite", TAFF has been and always will be a fund that is dedicated to bringing friends together. Beyond that, much like the Hugos, it is a popularity contest. What else could it possibly be? Since the day they started the Willis fund, TAFF has been these two things... and there is nothing wrong with that.

The Hugos -- both pro and fan -- are much the same, "the people's vote" -- nothing wrong with that. Fannish Hugos are dominated by the large mailing list zines. Thus you have Langford and Charlie Brown winning until it no longer matters or means anything. Mimosa won... simply to give Dave's mantle a break, a brief nod to the little guy. Having Challenger or Stet #9 would be astounding.

I just read the first two volumes of The Hugo Winners and was mildly disgusted at the generally dull nature of the stories. All of the awards and fan funds should be laid to rest.

[[Part of the problem is that as the disenfranchised get disgusted and stop nominating and voting, it makes it that much easier for The Usual Suspects to run these things as their private fief.]]

If my books weren't packed and already in storage I'd photocopy the relevant

pages from Harry's book about the Staple Wars. As it is, I'll let someone else do the job of explaining. By the way, who was it that sawed Courtney's Boat?

Please excuse the handwriting. We are in the middle of an electrical storm and that's bad ju-ju for the computer.

[[We get handwritten notes/letters from several people. In fact, William, your handwriting is very similar to our brother's so we had no difficulty with it.]]

STEVE SNEYD
4 Nowell Place, Almondbury, Huddersfield
West Yorkshire HD5 8PB, Great Britain

Know three folk who prefer to be addressed by initials, not name, so find nothing odd about your usage -- but as Alsace Germanic, if you prefer actual names, will go for Ekkeh and Bruno. (Or, Egon.)

[[Maybe we should consider reviving the "name that editor" thing which we dropped long ago for lack of interest?]]

Many thanks for using the reviews -- must hold my hands up over the "Heinlein (sic)" -- Kinsella credited the quote to Handbook Of Robotics, 56th edition, I, Robot, no author named. The mental glitch of null-Asimoving it is entirely my own culpa.

Synchronicity, your mentioning Beta 2 in Delany article, as just been reading, part of ongoing spadework for article on NEP's (Novels Embedding Poetry), of which Ballad Of Beta 2 a particularly interesting e.g. as the ballad is the actual McGuffin, whereas usually the poems are ornament, cubist-style alternative view, or in Scott Green's phrase, "inserted to give the characters something to utter when words fail them", not directly plot-germane.

Will deffo have to buy an American dictionary -- Zamboni driver sounds great, but what is it, a pretty low grade of wheels in the Mob, or? (Another wonderful e.g. of two peoples divided by a single language is Dale Speirs' "Did a TAFF delegate come in 1994?" Here'd mean, "Did a TD achieve orgasm in '94?")

[[The Zamboni -- we assume that's a trademark -- is the machine that resurfaces the ice rink at skating shows and hockey games. As it's the only thing to watch during intermission, usually the driver gets applauded as he leaves the ice.]]

Had just seen Who Shaped Science Fiction? quoted from/praised in Pablo Lennis, so very interested to read the Robert Sabella account of the road that led to the book. Another instance of the cliched conclusion that Clarion workshops produce the best critics?

(Probably symbolic, that just as wrote those words, scab fell off my scalp that'd formed when got stabbed by tree branch outside Prudhoe Castle in Northumberland couple weeks back. As consolation, got in castle free, no charge as that day was some sort of postmodernist tribute to Mr. Toad going on there, "Toad Hall" in flowers over inner door, scarecrow in the ruined mill, yellow 20's tourer parked on bakery foundations, etc. Suitable place for evening's launch of anthology of poems triggered by Star Trek. Plug: Star Trek -- The Poems, ed. Valerie Laws, \$12 incl surface ppd from Iron Press, 5 Marden Terrace, North Shields, NE30 4PD, England.)

Lots of other things thish tempted to respond to/comment on, but either none of my business, like TAFF, or far too big a topic, like creative writing workshops, to comment manageably.

[[Even if you didn't vote this year, Steve, we'd hardly say TAFF was "none of your business". Perhaps you'll vote next year, or support TAFF at an auction, or petition to disband it. Something useful.]]

JOSEPH T. MAJOR
1409 Christy Avenue
Louisville KY 40204

Hugo votes: Usually, these have been posted on the Internet. I look for how many nominations I got. At least I beat some of the people I wanted to beat.

"We're All African Anyway Part VI": Is it fair to believe that Part VII will be about the LATE works of Samuel R. Delany?

[[As stated in "Miscellany" in #18, Part VII is about Dhalgren, and will not be published here in Twink.]]

"Aye, And Gomorrah" is one of the stories in Dangerous Visions that is still dangerous, and a full-fledged SF story to boot. The story is fundamentally based on its scientific content -- the need to physically desexualize space workers. At the same time Delany has taken an experience from his own life, the gay sexual hustler subculture, and mapped it onto this scientific change, as if to remind us that some aspects of human nature adapt quite readily, without changing.

It is a common assumption that radiation will cause exotic mutations. The number of superheroes doing deeds of derring-do around Hiroshima and Nagasaki should be considered in that context. The majority of "mutations" are nonfunctional.

[[A lot of 60's SF assumed that if there were enough radiation to effect the entire gene pool of the human species, a large number of mutations would result, some of which would prove adaptive.]]

"Clarion West": The final paragraphs of the original item impress me with the feeling that Clarion West was not so much a means for teaching potential writers how to write, as it was a selection course for writers who would adhere to a certain world-view. Let me give you a more explicit presentation of this theme. There was a Baen Books panel at a convention I was at. Baen fantasy editor Toni Weiskopf was explaining their procedure of mentoring. An established writer would collaborate on one or several novels with a promising newcomer. Once the newcomer was established, she (for some reason all the writers involved were women) would pick up the cycle by collaborating with a promising newcomer.

Ms. Weiskopf explained this was a means for expanding the field. I objected that it seemed more a means for creating writers who would write to a specific model, while expunging any originality they might have.

"Only Our Opinion" -- review of Sex And Rockets: When someone drops a bottle of an explosive liquid and it, well, explodes, that is hardly a mystery.

"Rheaders' Rhevenge": Michael W. Waite asks, "What Canadian film... tells the story of a highly dysfunctional boy who fantasizes about his mother being impregnated by a tomato?" The Internet Movie Database (www.imdb.com) says Leolo, 1992, written and directed by Jean-Claude Lauzon. As Julie Wall says, "This is information the Web can give you almost immediately."

Mike Deckinger: Pointless fan lawsuits are an old tradition. One of the reasons the Futurians broke up was lawsuits, even though at the time none of them had enough money to pay a lawyer.

Lyn McConchie mentions finishing an unfinished Andre Norton series. That happened: I remember reading the Zero Stone books and being intensely annoyed when the protagonist's little animal friend turned into a beautiful woman -- at the end of the book, and I never found out what happened next.

Hearing screams of "Get out of my face!" are fairly common around our place. C'Mell, our lynx-point Siamese (she is very quiet, I have never heard her even mew, so perhaps she is only part-Siamese) climbs up on Lisa when she is trying to work at the computer. "Get out of my face!" is actually the mildest comment I have heard. Sometimes C'Mell digs in.

Lyn McConchie: If you are looking for a convention to go to in April/May, may I recommend Kubla Khan in Nashville TN at the end of April 2001? It is a small but congenial con, with parties, a variety of features, and even some programming...

Steve Jeffery: Myself, I prefer the "Connica Willinsky" theory, which posits that a person from another world who grew up being the girl in the class who will say anything stupid as long as it gets a laugh, popped in to replace Connie Willis.

JULIE WALL
470 Ridge Road
Birmingham AL 35206

It looks like I might be able to meet you at Worldcon. I also have a membership and a room reservation at the Hyatt (with Gary & Debbie Rowan). I also have a paid up airline reservation. No ticket, it's the Southwest ticketless travel.

[["We don't need no steenking tickets!"]]

Robert Sabella's experience at Clarion West certainly seems to have been pretty horrible. I admire his persistence. I

tend to agree with Brant Kresovich that a Zamboni driver workshop would be better -- and what fun!

[[If we're getting into unfulfilled personal fantasies, we'd love to fly in the Goodyear blimp some day.]]

I agree that short fanzine reviews are better than none at all. I vote they stay.

Regarding the quote from Alice's Restaurant Cookbook: sounds like my brother. He is a very good cook (people are always exhorting him to open a restaurant), but he puts a lot of garlic in most things. Everyone in my immediate family is a good cook, but my brother is the best of us. And he's not shy about it either. When asked if his girlfriend ever cooks for the two of them, he replied, "She can cook. But I am better."

[[Sounds like a man after our own heart. We can cook passably.]]

Another good issue, just not a whole lot that caused me comment.

GENE STEWART
1710 Dianne Avenue
Bellevue NE 68005

Not sure what I'm seeing on your cover. Looks like a woman saying, "Moi?" or making a come-hither gesture in the gondola of a hot-air balloon traversing an ET landscape. Which raises the question of POV -- where are we? Hovering mid-air, I'd guess.



And that explains it nicely; we TWINKers never let our feet touch the ground. Any chance this is Dejah Thoris on Barsoom?

Nice chaffinch on p. 1.

[[Strictly, that's a female American house finch; the chaffinch is a related European species.]]

"We're All African Anyway" VI provoked some memories and nods of agreement... Delany was an early favorite of mine. I enjoyed the challenge of his prose and the gusto of his creations, the sweep and, yes, the personal scope to which he limited his explorations. I find it particularly telling that his work holds up precisely because he focussed more on people and less on technology...

Bob Sabella's look inside Clarion West provided delightful reading and sobering implications. His portraits are concise and telling, his reporting is vivid, and his experiences instructional for anyone considering either writing, or a workshop of this sort. Glad to see, too, that Har lived up to his fire-breathing rep.

The 1974 and 2000 afterwords provide the kind of perspective rare for this sort of article... While I certainly understand Bob's abiding focus on fiction, his non-fiction showcases his strengths as a writer. We can all learn from this. And yes, Bob, you should get going on the sequel to Who Shaped Science Fiction? before the research grows too cold.

"Only Our Opinion" contained some interesting books I might otherwise not have heard of or considered. This alone suffices to justify such a review column, by the way...

Your own review of Earth Made Of Glass by John Barnes surprises me. My impression of his work rests largely on Kaleidoscope Century, which was almost too frenetic with action, as I recall. Also, isn't he black?

[[John Barnes is black? That's news to us, if so. We didn't come away with that sense of everything-defined-in-terms-of-race that seems so common with black writers, e.g. Nalo Hopkinson.]]

"Rheaders Rhevenge", no apostrophe pending:

Catherine Mintz: A shelf of books can weigh several hundred pounds, and several of them could indeed threaten a floor. Rather than asking if your downstairs neighbors read a lot, I'd ask if they're often home or often wear helmets.

Michael W. Waite: My favorite Canadian film is Cube.

Julie Wall: Writing's like juggling. The better you get, the easier to toss into the air characters that aren't strictly necessary. Poe advised no more than three per short story... It's the number most boil things down to by trial-and-error, but of course you're right, the unimportant and sidereal are often the most entertaining. Still, best learn to handle three first.

Steve Sneyd: Did it ever occur to anyone that this standard aversion to messages is directed against "preaching" and in fact is contradicted if one considers the work of H.G. Wells? Wells wrote polemical socialist tracts in fiction form, but did it so well that his work is readable and fresh even today... So it's really more how one goes about it than the actual practice itself we abhor.

Janine G. Stinson: Way to go, getting onto Page One. I wholeheartedly agree that mild, nice criticism is almost worse than none, and doesn't do the good harsh, honest criticism can do.

Patrick McGuire: Interesting, about the actress being able to read well enough to mask inadequacies in her prose. The reverse must have been true also, though; a reader so bad nothing good could survive it.

Marty Cantor: Bravo for storytelling. A good story well told in vivid scenes is what appeals across the board... However, doing it with some style is not amiss, as Frohvet's examples of Zelazny, Ellison, Delany, and Spinrad attest... It's when style supercedes substance that we end up with crashing New Waves...

See? Told you we basically agree. Alert the media.

Trinlay Khadro: I'll ask my Spiritualist friends to clear away any bad energies or curses surrounding you, yours, and/or Arthur and his. Will that do?

[[We suggested that Trinlay might get one of those blessings that Jews put on their doors -- is mezuzah the correct Hebrew word? We've seen them offered for sale to gentiles at craft shows.]]

Brant Kresovich: I think feeling strongly about something forces one to concentrate on getting it across, which encourages not only concision but efficiency in plotting, narration, exposition.

A prime example currently on the fan scene is Guy H. Lillian III and his

Challenger. He exudes motivation, enthusiasm, and compassion.

Lloyd Penney: Asimov's a favorite of mine, too, but I met him only once, after a lecture. Nice guy.

Why, though, the perception among so many blacks that SF is a whitefolk concern? Has your pal Wayne Brown ever said any thing about this?

Joseph T. Major: Whoa, Joe. Whazzup witchoo and teens? You seeth contempt for teenagers; did one bite you? My own 14-year-old would certainly recognize Frederick Douglass...

Seriously, the teenagers I've met have been a decent, smart bunch of kids. You're way too hard on them as a subspecies.

Steve Jeffery: Care to sign up for the Gene Stewart Inspirational Verbal Flogging Course? It's only \$1000 and you're guaranteed to be reduced to tears, or your money cheerfully recounted.

Go Wildside Press. Great set of writers to revive.

JOY V. SMITH
8925 Selph Road
Lakeland FL 33810

I like the cover on Twink #18, but I can't figure out what kind of vehicle she's in.

[[You're the second to make that observation. Perhaps the artist will enlighten us?]]

I enjoyed "Were All African Anyway" Part VI, and I would like the chapbook. I've only read a few of Delany's books, but I've always liked Babel-17. You did a thorough job of examining the characters and relationships!

I really loved Robert Sabella's Clarion West report and updates. I confess I don't have the guts to have any of my stories critiqued by Harlan Ellison!

Good book and zine reviews. Larry Blezak's SF poetry chapbook sounds intriguing, and I do want to read more Liaden books by Steve Miller and Sharon Lee.

I always enjoy "Rheaders Rhevenge". Thanks for the editorial insert that Sheryl has found a new home. (I've been worrying.) I look forward to Lyn McConchie's Beastmaster (Andre Norton)

sequels. (Interesting story idea in her letter about icy cat paws...) And I like your art fillos too.

MARK PLUMMER
14 Northway Road, Croydon, Surrey
CR0 6JE, Great Britain

You know, I was just thinking the other day that I should really get on and finish that letter I'd started in response to Twink #17. And now, having just opened another obviously Twink-bearing envelope, I'm conscious that I have -- at least so far as you're concerned -- been ignoring you and your fanzine ever since you started to send it to me and that maybe I should do something to redress this.

My original reason for writing was to answer some of Rodney Leighton's questions as posed in #17 but I see that Nic Farey has said pretty much everything I intended to say... But you say there is one question which remains unanswered:

TIME
ENOUGH
FOR

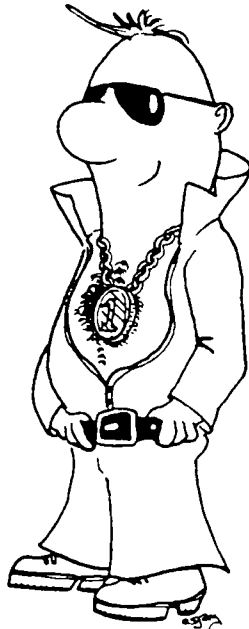
LURVE

Did a TAFF delegate attend the 1994 Worldcon? The short answer is no. The race had been Europe-to-North-America in 1993 so the 1994 TAFF race would have been

North-America-to-Europe anyway, but the administrators decided to skip a year so that the next eastbound race would coincide with the 1995 Worldcon in Glasgow...

And sorry, but I'm with Marty Cantor over the question of Maureen Speller and Paul Kincaid and their consecutive TAFF/GUFF trips. They each stood, and won, as individuals. Yes, Paul was in the U.S. for part of Maureen's trip and Maureen went with Paul to Australia last year; but so far as I'm aware the Fund only paid for the actual winner... The fact that Paul won does rather suggest that enough people saw nothing inappropriate or "cliquey".

...You say, "We've heard it argued that both TAFF and the Fan Hugos should be abolished as no longer relevant. We suspect that neither of these is at all likely so fans must live with the abuses of the present system." Well, no, they don't



have to at all. TAFF continues to exist because people stand, vote, and give money. If people feel the administration can't be trusted after the Abi Frost affair, that the whole system is unfair to Canadians, or that the fan funds have been taken over by an all-powerful fannish dynasty... they can stop supporting it. Presumably the fact that it continues indicates that enough people are at least broadly satisfied with the system currently in place.

[[If we reiterate the theory that making some feel unwelcome makes it easier for a small group to retain control, this should NOT be construed as a personal criticism of Paul and Maureen, against whom we have no personal grievance -- just as you say, they're using the existing system, just as politicians do everywhere.]]

You invite somebody to advance a theory why seven fanzines to Canada generate as many LOC's (three) as sixteen to Britain. Well, quickly scanning, I count seven British names -- Hanna, Jeffery and Sneyd in the main column and Baker, Nicholas, Cheslin and Sullivan in WAHF. But is it perhaps the case that a fairly high percentage of your British copies go in trade? [[Yes.]] But it's weird -- as I was writing this it suddenly dawned on me that the computer file name for this document was FROHVE02.DOC, a subtle little code of nine -- go on, see if you can crack it -- which carries lurking the hinted existence of FROHVE01.DOC, a letter which I vaguely recall... On checking it turns out this was in fact another unfinished letter to you, prompted by your letter to me of <gulp> 30 August 1999...

I guess we've always known that there's a lot of dead wood -- at least in response terms -- on the U.K. mailing list... people who maintain that they do want to be on the mailing list but seem unwilling to do anything to justify it...

And then my abortive letter from October last year ground to a halt with the paragraph:

'Now you'll have to take my word for it that it wasn't your veiled comment that "I am disappointed with the response from British fans to my fanzine" which has inspired me to say a few words on Twink #14.'

[[Since we vented our spleen on this topic on the luckless Lilian Edwards --

again, nothing personal -- we think this subject can be allowed to lapse.]]

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

Thanks for the Twink. It arrived the same day as The Knarley Knews. Or maybe it didn't. I'd just gotten home from a retreat to find these in my P.O. box.

[[We always get Knarley Knews and Plokta on the same day! Coincidence?]]

I am gradually recovering from everything. The chiropractor is working wonders but I think my post-op paunch is here to stay. I'm trying to rebuild and maintain my activity and exercise level and it's coming slowly. My dear friend Bob has kindly suggested that I'm "voluptuous" rather than "plump". What a sweetie.

[["Zaftig"?]]

My dreams have been interesting of late reflecting all sorts of themes encountered recently. Last night's involved sarongs, Africa, and interplanetary travel. What tied it all together? I dunno. It is good to be able to sleep soundly again.

I recently enjoyed reading The Blind Knight (it went on vacation with Thapkey so I don't have the author's name at hand), written from the POV of the blind main character -- and very little of the descriptions of people or places are based on visuals. Interesting idea.

Bob Sabella: I'm wondering if one of the "secrets" of writing fiction is the being "on fire" with the story... As for the one assignment ("illness" and "wine" pulled from a hat). Once a friend had taken up home brewing. He'd done a batch of sake when it was discovered that he had diabetes. He couldn't taste his own work.

I was relieved to see that Battlefield Earth was widely panned. Though why I'm so relived sort of mystifies me. On the one hand there's rarely adequate media play of SF themes, but I'm also glad that the particular author hasn't come to represent fandom to the masses.

[[Other way round, we'd guess. That is the mainstream view of SF, and mundanes (and mainstream critics) reacted with, "See, we told you it was all that silly Buck Rogers trash."]]

I am pleased to see the Harry Potter

hoopla. The craziness is a bit silly, but IMHO it seems likely that young "Harry" fans are likely to seek out similar reading material, perhaps even raising a new generation of fans.

Judith: Could it be that Mrs.'s comments and thoughts are sometimes included in Mr.'s LOC? Or, "Since he's sending his LOC I'll get to read his copy." I don't own a home: thus no garden to putter in. I do get some great catalogues and I find that I ooh and ahh over some odd plants.

"Yonks" strikes me as a fantastically useful term.

Steve: In some places (parts of Asia come to mind) families may be nomadic on a seasonal basis, living in towns/farms for the "off season".

Patrick: Yes, a skilled reader (like my daughter) can make trash sound like literature. Imagine the grocery list or day's weather spoken by James Earl Jones or Patrick Stewart.

Yes! Keep the fanzine section; that's how some of us newbies discover some of these other zines.

Sheryl! Congrats on the new home!

Joseph M.: I think you underestimate young folks. I'll have to toss Up From Slavery to Thapkey and then report. However, from discussions I've had with her and her peers, they're pretty sharp for their years.

Lyn McConchie: It might be said that even the slaveowners are enslaved by their roles.

LLOYD PENNEY

1706-24 Eva Road, Etobicoke,
Ontario, M9C 2B2, Canada

Thank you kindly for Twink #18. The hurrieder I go, the behinder I get, it seems. The drought of fanzines I had complained about is apparently over, and flood conditions are threatening.

We'll be at the Chicago Worldcon, too. We should be getting in to the Hyatt some time late Tuesday... We plan a small party for earlybirds on the Wednesday, and I and Hope Liebowitz are in charge of the parties the Toronto in 2003 bid plans to hold... I do intend to make a trip to the fanzine lounge.

I had some hopes to make the Hugo ballot this year, so I was a little disappointed ... but there's always Philadelphia. I am

pleasantly surprised that Taral Wayne made it on to the ballot. Taral had not been a Hugo nominee in some time.

I met Samuel R. Delany earlier this spring. In fact, he purchased a pre-support from us for Toronto in 2003. He was a guest at Eeriecon, the annual SF/horror convention held in Niagara Falls NY. Delany is a visiting professor of English at a Buffalo university, so for this year he's living in the Buffalo area.

I have taken a shot at SF writing... I have heard that Clarion is a great training ground for SF writers, and I'd also heard it was horrible for the ego, and actually teaches little except how to think up myriad ways to murder your instructors. I hear the latter more often.

James Stoddard's The High House was a freebie distributed at the Baltimore Worldcon... If this was his first novel, it was an excellent attempt. I quite enjoyed the adventure of an infinite house with hallways and rooms that form frontiers and other countries.

[[Really? No one offered us a free copy.]]

Another excellent zine list. I do get most of them... I'm finally back in touch with Tom Sadler. I've had a lot of fanzines lately, and I've a lot more coming. I can jump ahead and say continue with the fanzine reviews... I agree with Rodney Leighton about the Smiths' Stet 9. It went onto my reference shelf.

Janine Stinson was pleased to see Christopher Lee cast as Flay in Gornen-ghast. I wonder how she'll feel about the news I heard earlier today. Lee has another acting gig to work on: he's been added to the cast of Star Wars: Episode II.

Steve Jeffery's letter about Connie Willis sounds very good. Connie is the Pro GOH at our own convention in Toronto next February. I've heard she's a sweetheart, and lots of people are looking forward to her appearance.

GARTH SPENCER

P.O. Box 15335, VMPO, Vancouver,
British Columbia, V6B 5B1, Canada

Lots of people have written about the nature of intelligence. Isaac Asimov, for one. An emerging outlook is that "intelligence" is not in fact one thing, as English and other languages seem to define

SAY, LOOK!
A LOC FROM
SOMEBODY WHO
ACTUALLY READ



THE
LAST
ISSUE!

it, but several things lumped together. Do we mistake sheer knowledge, or trained skills, or vast memory, or quick thinking for intelligence? Or do we mean original, creative thought? Actually, we mean any and all of these things, and shift back and forth without marking our transitions.

If I wanted to be utterly depressing I could construct an argument that we're still evolving intelligence, as a species, on the grounds that we're still developing the ability to develop concepts, when we need them...

Robert Sabella's article on Clarion West did not incline me to take part in this exercise. If I ever get serious about writing, let alone fiction writing, I doubt I'll get much of value from a feeding frenzy, which is what his experience sounds like. I would rather get someone telling me, "This is what it takes to make your story saleable, or at least a complete story", rather than a pack of people telling me I've made mistakes. Abuse like that I can get for free.

Well, Your reply to Catherine Mintz shows me that you've got a more balanced view of writers' workshops than I have.

[[Everyone agrees that criticism is a necessary part of the learning process. It's the difference between civil, if stringent criticism, and, as you aptly put it, abuse.]]

Speaking of Catherine, I have to assure her that postage in other countries can indeed run as high as Lyn McConchie reports. Did it occur to her that Lyn is sending a package... from New Zealand, and in NZ currency? I would add that Lyn is probably being overcharged for photo-copying, though I have to check this with her.

Your question whether a TAFF delegate detoured to visit Canada seems to have elicited a good deal of comment. Were you referring to a specific time period? Fan groups or individual fans tend to be a bit more thinly scattered in Canada than in the States, although there have always been well-known fans here...

[[Specifically, the Calgary Worldcon of 1994 (Mark Plummer says "no"); but on the evidence to date it appears NO European TAFF delegate has ever visited Canada as part of her/his official trip... We think this topic has been covered.]]

ELIZABETH A. OSBORNE
851 N. Elizabeth Street
Lima OH 45801

I am sorry that I have not been writing regularly but I recently came down with pneumonia. I am better now but my illness didn't stop my fanac, just my ability to take part in the new world of home upkeep. I didn't have the breath or energy to mow the grass or clean the gutters as planned, so instead I read and read... As I recover, one of my cats came down with an upper respiratory infection so we are both on antibiotics. Keeping all the bottles straight is a hoot.

[[Tough year for a lot of our readers. All of our spiritually inclined readers who have been saying blessings for Trinlay and Arthur, can add Elizabeth and her cat to their list of prayers.]]

I loved the "We're All African Anyway". I started out very well but Part VII has turned into discussion of Dhalgren. There are other black SF writers and I disagree about your view on Octavia Butler. Of course you did a huge amount of reading for the zine (more than I could have done) and I can't fault you for missing something.

[[Some writers' work will resonate for one reader and not for another. Butler's work is widely praised but it just does not click with us.]]

I rarely attend writer's workshops as I am not really interested in writing for profit. Besides the afternoon long events at conventions take just too much of a bite out of the weekend. What are the requirements to be in a workshop, just to show up? In truth, that's the whole point of the piece, workshops are only as good as the people in them.

Rereading some of my older zines, I found several articles about writing. The best advice came from The Hell's Half-Acre Herald which I recommend, especially the article on the writer's life which came out last summer.

<http://www.hpoo.com>

Your cover by Steve Stiles looks like something out of Starship Troopers.

Recently got a copy of Ansible. It escapes me why this zine is considered so well or why Dave Langford so great a fan writer. He's not bad, I just wonder why he's been getting the Hugo for the last ten years.

[[At this writing (still prior to the 2000 Worldcon), 11 years in a row, 13 overall as "Fan Writer". Ansible is widely distributed. We suspect in the case of some voters it's the only zine they see.]]

MIKE DECKINGER
649 16th Avenue
San Francisco CA 94118

"Would anyone care to advance a theory as to why we sent 7 copies of #17 to Canada and received 3 LOC's; whereas we sent 16 copies to Britain and got 3 LOC's?"

The Law of Diminishing Returns. If you had sent 100 copies, you'd have received 1 LOC. If you sent 200 copies, you'd receive no LOC's, but 4 requests to respond to their fanzines.

[[We'd actually like to get some feedback from those who receive our zine mainly as a trade. Is it read at all, or do some feel stuck in a trade they're not really interested in by the customs of fandom?]]

You state Delany was living as "straight, married to the white poet, Marilyn Hacker ..." According to his biographical account of that time period, he was actively involved with males, to the extent there was once a threesome, in which he and his wife were both participants. More precisely, he was probably living a closeted bisexual lifestyle at the time.

"Jean Harlow was an archetypal pouty bleach blond movie star of the period of Delany's childhood and youth..."

Harlow made most of her films in the 1930's and 40's. It's doubtful that youngsters growing up in the 50's had much knowledge of Jean Harlow. Marilyn Monroe was the most visible glamour symbol of that era. Monroe was open and overt -- Harlow projected a coiled, concealed sensuality. Both were quite beautiful, but projected thoroughly disparate mystiques.

[["Jean Harlow? Christ, Orpheus, Billy the Kid, those three I can understand. But what's a young spade writer like you doing all caught up with the Great White Bitch? Of course I guess it's pretty obvious. -- Gregory Corso, in conversation." The Einstein Intersection, p. 107 of the Ace paperback edition.]]

Even though typewriters have almost gone the way of the dodo, I'm glad to see a passing reference to re-inking ribbons. In my more active days, it was quite common to batter typewriter ribbons into illegibility, and then resuscitate them. I used a formula someone had sent to me; the process commenced "painting" the ribbons, allowing the liquid to dry, and then lo, I had a ribbon with a more robust impression than when first purchased.

You mentioned Weinbaum's "A Martian Odyssey". Earlier in the day I was browsing through the Borders SF section and encountered a book of interviews with the early pioneers of the genre, including Weinbaum's widow (who died shortly after the interview was conducted). She was most gracious in recounting events that happened 50 years ago and more and offered some fascinating insights into Weinbaum's craft. Wish I could recall the title.

In the mid 1960's when I lived in New Jersey with my parents, I resided on a street just two blocks from the ultimate fan address: "Fanning Street". I begged, cajoled, pleaded, implored, and beseeched, but to no avail. I simply could not convince my father of the virtues of pulling up stakes and resettling two blocks away on hallowed "Fanning Street".

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

As for the States-side con, a decision has been reached. I shall attend WISCON

at the end of May in Madison WI. A) I'n told that it's an excellent con to go to, B) I think a number of friends and acquaintances will be there, and C) it's only an hour or so by car/bus from Milwaukee where my agent resides. He may be at the con, if not I can probably take a bus over to do lunch and discuss itens of business. My pal who comes here each winter is hoping to be able to meet up with me at the con which would be a real bonus.

[[We will certainly look into it. To those others of you whom we encouraged to send info on your local cons to Lyn, well, thanks anyway.]]

On MZBFM. Rachel Holmen has been editing it for some time now. As for the novels, yes, I believe Adrienne Martine-Barnes has been doing the last few but also Misty Lackey and Lisa. In a way it was just as well. The last two MZB actually wrote herself were completely unreadable. I had then, Heirs Of Hammerfell and either the one before or after. First works of hers I've purchased and then dumped without being able to get all the way through... Like you though I'n only surprised that the name wasn't sold on to be like "V.C. Andrews" [[TM registered trademark, the author died after writing three or four of the thirty-some books published under her name]].

Here the tail end of May was busy. Between printing out The Duke's Ballad in hard copy and making a disk I was being driven completely mad by lambs... Farning renders you really fluent in the more descriptive forms of Anglo-Saxon English.

Inside is also keeping me occupied. The cleaner arrived, found I needed a new cleaning sponge for the kitchen and dug one out of the drawer where I keep such things in waiting. To both our surprise it was missing a corner which looked exactly as if someone had taken a bite out of it. I'd guess it was Tiger -- if there's anything going on odd around here it's 99% likely to be him -- but Tiger isn't that silly either. I can only surmise I had a mouse, who is now foam-rubber-stuffed. I wondered WHY even a mouse would want to eat rubber, was the taste pleasant? So I excavated another new one, opened the plastic bag and bit. Nope. It doesn't taste of anything much except rubbery. I'n still wondering

about the mouse. Ginger who walked in unexpectedly to find me in the kitchen chewing a cleaning sponge is wondering about ME rather harder.

[["Pica: a craving for the eating of unnatural substances, as chalk or dirt". Seen in some pregnant women and some mental disorders. You could let Ginger draw her own conclusions...]]

The third month in a row to start with great good fortune for me. I received a stack of paperwork from my pension people, blinked a couple of times and re-read it. It seems someone feeling they didn't have enough work on their desk set out to double-check my financial records. They obtained my IRS stuff and sat down to interface both lots. Seems that far from me cheating them -- they'd been cheating me. For 4½ years and in quite a big way. When the flurry of activity died down the ACC owed me something over \$10,500! They hadn't paid COL/inflation rises in the pension for 4½ years, AND when they'd taken large sums off me because of the book sale money they hadn't taken my expenses into account.

I vanished to our Nation SF Con clutching more money than usual... I returned to a still-warm house, an unpainted cat, and with a suitcase (owing to books bought) wich weighed as if I'd taken to investing in lead and carried my stock with me.



HENRY L. WELCH
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Grafton WI 53024

RODNEY LEIGHTON
RR #3, Tatamagouche, Nova Scotia
B0K 1V0, Canada

Your continuing series on ethnicity in SF is interesting. I would agree with your choice of the primary African-American writers, but wonder whether Stephen Barnes might also qualify on a slightly lower tier. I was wondering if you'd considered him (or even knew of him) and then I saw the book review. For many, Dream Park was an influential novel, and certainly his later contributions to the cyberpunk sub-genre can't be entirely dismissed.

[[We're aware of John Barnes, though the possibility of his being black had not occurred to us until recently the subject was raised. Are you thinking of him or someone else?]]

The variations in Clarion experiences show that everyone views things differently. Of potential interest to you might be Andy Hooper's article on the topic published a few years back. (I don't recall where and don't have the energy to track it down.)

So, you find my zine, The Knarley Knews, both boring and banal? If you feel the zine lacks controversy (you've clearly missed my past feuds with Ted White and Piers Anthony) then how about putting your money where your mouth is and spicing things up a bit by sending me an article or two.

[[We never said "boring and banal", exactly. At this writing we've written to Henry suggesting some pieces we have on hand. Stay tuned.]]

As far as the short zine reviews go, please keep them. You do a better job than I do with the capsule reviews. I list the zines I receive... to allow others who read my zine leads to find more of what they might like.

[[There seems to be a concensus that our zine reviews, despite shortcomings, serve a modestly useful purpose. Thus they will continue for the time being.]]

If you're looking for a good trivia question, you might try: "What did Mr. Moose trick Captain Kangaroo into saying to cause all the ping pong balls to fall?" Don't ask me, I can't remember.

I'd never even considered making up names to go with the E. initial. E.B. was fine for Mr. White, so I don't have a problem if Mr. Frohvet chooses to do the same.

Thanks for Twink #18. Are the fingerprints on the cover part of the design or specific to my copy?

[[Not part of the design that we're aware of. Was the envelope still sealed when it reached you?]]

Given my beliefs re: TAFF, Sue Mason does not need congratulations for becoming this year's delegate. I am happy that she is, since she wants to be. I was happy for Maureen when she was... Christ, I hope she doesn't take me seriously and actually come to Nova Scotia.

I vote for you to continue the fanzine reviews. While succinct, I have often found useful information in them. I often find something listed I think I probably should have received but have not... I usually find some statement to give me pause for thought. I invariably find some statement in your review column which causes gales of laughter. Usually in the FOSFAX review...

Anyway, this issue had a number of good points from my view. Your comment about the lack of a regular zine review column in FOSFAX caused me to ponder offering one. I was amused at your comments re: Squiggledy Hoy #4. My copy was fine. Anyway, I hope you don't drop the column.

[[So what do the readers feel about continuing/discontinuing the book review section?]]

Robbery With Violets is fiction based on reality. John used to be a cop. I hope the true events which prompted the stories have been embellished for the sake of fiction.

According to Stet, there was no TAFF race in 1994. Fodder for my claim, perhaps. Rather than have anyone suffer the indignity of travelling to Canada, they simply did not have any delegate that year... I will mention that it was 1993 when Abi Frost embezzled the funds and thus there was no money available... Thanks to those folks who answered my question.

[[Unless someone brings up some dramatic new revelation on the subject, here endeth the discussion of TAFF Past. TAFF Future is still available for discussion.]]

Well, obviously all your British recipients were busy getting drunk, being drunk, being hung-over or getting over being hung-over. I would suspect it's

because many of them are fanzine editors some of whom do not know how to write letters. By the way, you print LOC's from 3 Canadians and WAHF Garth Spencer. I suppose he sent something not considered a LOC?

[[WAHF includes LOC's we choose not to publish for one reason or another; private correspondence not pertaining to the fanzine; postcards or notes too brief to merit inclusion; and so forth.]]

Well, there's a little something. Perhaps enough to keep Steve Jeffery from writing to you complaining about me. Perhaps I should de-croggle that guy.

MILT STEVENS
6325 Keystone Street
Simi Valley CA 93063

In Twink #18, you discuss Samuel R. Delany. The impression I have of Delany is of a writer who was both stylish and odd. The 60's seem to have been the decade for oddity in SF. Writers such as J.G. Ballard and Cordwainer Smith were getting a lot of attention during that period. I think Delany is better remembered than Ballard but not as well as Smith. Delany's style tended to overshadow his stories.

Dhalgren was probably the ultimate example of something-or-other. It was a novel that asked the eternal question, "Huh?" Theodore Sturgeon loved it, and very few other people managed to finish reading it. I have a copy, but I've never tried reading it. I'll probably read it when I need a topic for a fanzine article. I also have a copy of Onslaught Of The Druid Girls which I'm keeping for a similar purpose.

[[Nice to know we're in good company with the likes of Theodore Sturgeon, even if in one small thing.]]

From what I've heard, Delany was also sort of odd in person in an absent minded professor way. I've heard BayArea con runners say he was very difficult to schedule. If Delany ever made it to the right hotel, he'd be there on the wrong date. If he had the date right, he would be at the wrong hotel.

Robert Sabella's account of Clarion doesn't make it sound like a whole bunch of fun. I don't know if Clarion is even

still around... Some people felt that the Clarion emphasis was on grinding out stories on demand, and they didn't think that was a good idea. Others felt Clarion was the product of the Milford Mafia (Damon Knight and associated new wave-icles), and the Milford Mafia was a bad idea in and of itself.

Clarion might be an interesting idea for a reality based TV series. Imagine the stark terror as students face the Harlan Ellison Week. Would you rather eat a rat or have Harlan Ellison tell you what he really thought of your writing?

[[Having a pretty good idea of what Ellison would think of our writing, we'd vote None Of The Above. Though in fact Harlan was quite civil on the one or two occasions on which we met him.]]

I remember the convention where Harlan Ellison used the idea of selecting two words which had to be included in a short story. The right to choose the two words was auctioned off, and Harlan would write a story on the spot. Larry Niven bought the right to choose the words and chose "polyp" and (I think) "pterodactyl". Harlan's comment was something in the order of "You're a swine, Niven."

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

I am looking at the covers of Twink's #14 through 18. Fanzine fandon's better artists trust you to make their art look good, and to publish their work in a timely manner. They like you, E.B., they really like you.

I am the most enthusiastic about Steve Stiles' large piece of art adorning the cover of #17. "Another good cover" and "interesting" were two of the reactions to it published in #18. If I was the publisher of Twink #17, I would have followed my wife and our two sons around the house saying, "Look at this! Isn't this great? Goshwowboyoboy!"

[[We have said numerous times that we consider the covers one of the assets of the zine, and how amazed we still are at the casual generosity of fan artists. However, if you wish to lend us your family, we'll be glad to annoy them for you... (That's a joke, people!)]]

You mailed 7 copies of Twink #17 to Canada and did not receive a LOC from me because I have been bad. But I finally, finally, after 13 months, have met all of the requirements to receive a technical writing certificate. I am catching up: first The Knarley Knews, because I received the dreaded "0 issues left in your subscription" note; next Twink. And I am working on Aztec Blue... issue #1 includes the first part of a John Berry trip report to Albania, illustrated by the nimble fingers of Steve Jeffery, most recently seen in the Moore household in the pages of Twink. Steve J's "Squid Hat" cartoon to me resonated with the spirit of Sergio Aragones, specifically his "Groo the Wanderer".



Don't drop the book reviews or the fanzine reviews. They are good now. They can be better. You will improve, with practice, or someone will submit reviews that will make you goshwowboyoboy.

But what impressed me most of all is the implication, the suggestion, that you, E.B., indeed that anyone, has read Samuel R. Delany's Dhalgren. It is famous for being unfinishable.

[[We're getting a little tired of this "unfinishable" thing. How much of that is fair literary criticism, and how much is self-fulfilling prophecy? Yes, we've finished the book, several times! Milt Stevens says Theodore Sturgeon loved it, so it can't be just us. Maybe the critics should read it before they judge it?]]

Seriously, while reading your analysis of Delany I felt the urge to read Delany again and to read unread Delany.

I have never tried to write fiction. I always have to be different... I can share with you the story of how Charles deLint made his first sale. He didn't mention workshops during the open air reading he and Robert J. Sawyer gave on the U/Toronto campus in late June.

DeLint, urban fantasist, author of 40-plus books, wrote for seven years before his first book was published. He attended a World Fantasy Con in Providence RI to network, and did so -- badly. He spent his

time during an Ace Books-sponsored party talking to an artist named Ray and his girlfriend instead of to his target, editor Terri Windling. The next day Windling thanked deLint for talking to the couple. DeLint soon afterward sold two books to Windling, and two more books to another editor.



DALE SPEIRS
P.O. Box 6830, Calgary,
Alberta, T2P 2E7, Canada

Re: library stacking of books. I have two rooms in my house on the main floor done like this. The floor joints are exposed in the basement, and I've never seen any beam failures after 20 years. The living room also has bookshelves but they line the walls. My house was built in the 1950's when a woman's place was in the kitchen, so it has far more cabinets than I'll ever need, so I converted half of them to book storage as well. This startles the occasional house guest looking for a tumbler or dinner plate and instead finding a run of The Colophon.

[["When a woman's place was in the kitchen..." Uh, we'll just stand off to the side here, Dale, while the ladies throw bricks through your windows.]]

Next time you see Harlan Ellison, ask when his book At Last, Dangerous Visions will be published. Seriously though, if he has too much wordage to publish it as a book, then why not as a CD-ROM. This assumes that he has clearances from the estates of the writers who sold him their first stories for TLDV and have since died of old age.

Zine reviews: In my zine Opuntia I call them "Zine Listings" rather than reviews. While it would be nice if each zine could have a 1/4-page in-depth review, no one has the time to write them and few have the time to read them. I follow the most common method, which is to list details and a brief summary of the contents.



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

You ask us readers to "advance a theory" regarding why you get a higher rate of response on your Canadian copies than your British ones. In my own experience, I've found that British fans are more likely to trade fanzines than to write LOC's... Few Canadian fans on my list publish fanzines, so must rely on LOC's as their currency. It's also possible that more British fans can't relate to your fanzine -- too serious or something -- and thus don't respond.

[[We'd be interested to get some feedback on the "too serious" theory. If fans in U.K. "can't relate" to Twink, let them say so, and we'll drop them from the mailing list with no hard feelings.]]

Having read none of Samuel R. Delany's fiction, I'm not really qualified to comment on the latest installment of "We're All African Anyway". But having read his autobiographical book The Motion Of Light In Water, I would venture to say you're probably right when you say that he "principally viewed himself as an intellectual among intellectuals, not as a black among whites."

Sabella's Clarion tales were like a continuation of the workshopping articles you ran in the previous issue, and had their moments. I can understand his frustration at not having succeeded in selling his fiction, but suggest that the sale and publication of Who Shaped Science Fiction? and his editorship of Nanking 1937, about which I've read extensively in his own fanzine, indicate he's wrong when he castigates himself by saying, "I will probably never be a particularly good writer, or a successful writer." Perhaps fiction is simply not his forte.

Regarding Catherine Mintz's observation/complaint that editors "never return your postage even when they accept your book", I recall that when I was helping clean out Terry Carr's basement office in 1987 I ran across a clutch of unused return envelopes, postage affixed, from a variety of writers. That being a more impoverished time in my own life, they came in handy over the next few years for sending out my own mail. Thanks to all the long-forgotten writers.

Sheryl Birkhead remembers Geri Sullivan's

partner's name incorrectly, referring to him as "Jim". He is actually Jeff Schalles who has the lead article in the new issue of Trap Door, and in my fannish universe he and Geri are on equal footing. Neither is the "main fan".

[[In a story we wrote, a couple living together but not legally married debate the correct term for such a relationship, rejecting "partner" because it has a specific meaning in civil law. The best they came up with was "consort".]]

The rejection slip you got from MZBFM where the signature was not the same as MZB's on a book you once got autographed was, I'll venture to guess, probably signed by Rachel Holman.

FRANZ H. MIKLIS
A-5151 Nussdorf 179
Austria

Greetings to all, the brandnew rosy cheeks of Twink #18 invited to be read, what has been done with great pleasure. With care you guide us through the traditional pages and well written columns. Again I had the opportunity to hear more about those mystic Clarion workshops. For me as far away outsider this has always been a book with seven seals, but all in all it would be the hell for me. I had similar experiences at local Art Fairs, where I tried well motivated to bring new life and fine SF art to the traditional Arts Scene, just to realize there is no place for this "weird UFO paintings" at the present arts scene.

As a little addition to your geophrophical musings I think my address is the shortest of all: letters surely arrive at my home with minimum "F.H. Miklis, A-5151 Nussdorf" (that's all).

By the way, I'm desperately searching for the proper dress for Chicon: pink shirt and white jean! See you in the next Chicago bar.

[[Don't wait until you arrive in the U.S. By the end of August, summer clothes will be gone and the stores will be full of heavy winter woolens.]]

ALEXANDER R. SLATE
8603 Shallow Ridge Drive
San Antonio TX 78239

Well, I've forgotten who the evil twin is supposed to be, you or me. Either way, one of us is going to be taking a hiatus from publishing. Oh yeah, that part is me. The next issue of PhilosFy will be the last for a while.

I have sort of lost the drive. The sheer volume of stuff at work has something to do with it, but that isn't the whole story.

I will be locking zines more than I have the past couple of years and I might even be talked into contributing some stuff for other fanzines from time to time.

[[We assume many thoughtful fans will join us in regretting the absence of PhilosFy, one of our favorite fanzines. Hopefully we can all encourage Alex to stay active as a letterhack until such time as he takes up publishing again!]]

I have, and still do enjoy Twink. It has been fun seeing it progress from a very crude zine (in terms of presentation only) to where you are today. The writing has always been the strong point.

[[Thank you, sir, we value your opinion -- and your honesty.]]

I am glad you are printing "We're All African Anyway" in an omnibus edition. It is a piece of writing that deserves it.

SEAN RUSSELL FRIEND

P.O. Box 2757, Brighton, East Sussex
BN2 1NT, Great Britain

Okay, so poetry wasn't a very good opening gambit! It seems that the demand for poems these days is very small, and shrinking by the minute. I opted to send things to the States because small press activity in England has virtually disappeared, possibly because of the Internet -- which in my case I have not got!

Thank you muchlike for Twink #18 -- I wasn't expecting to get a reply, let alone a free copy! Am I the only one who thinks editors are less reliable than they used to be? In '97 I averaged 2 of 3 replies/ 1 out of 3 acceptances, but in '99 only 1 in 8 replied... I consider myself active and obliging when it comes to supporting independent presses. Hell, maybe everyone just thinks I'm a wanker.

[[We respond to almost everyone who writes to us unless they seem majorly weird -- it has to be pretty weird to turn us off, but some have managed it!]]

I enjoyed the letter pages very much even though some of the fan-speak is a tad mystifying. The workshops debate in interesting -- it's always been a personal raw nerve. As a rule, I think workshops are destructive rather than constructive. Novice poets, in particular, need one-to-one. There's nothing worse than a raw beginner being torn apart letter by letter by some jumped-up pseudo-academic who thinks long words and never-ending sentences are the true hallmark of good writing. This sort of attitude can completely destroy the beginner's self-confidence. Quite a few never write again.

...In response to Steve's letter: I saw old Golgonooza only the other day. Ironically, I haven't seen Steve for yonks!

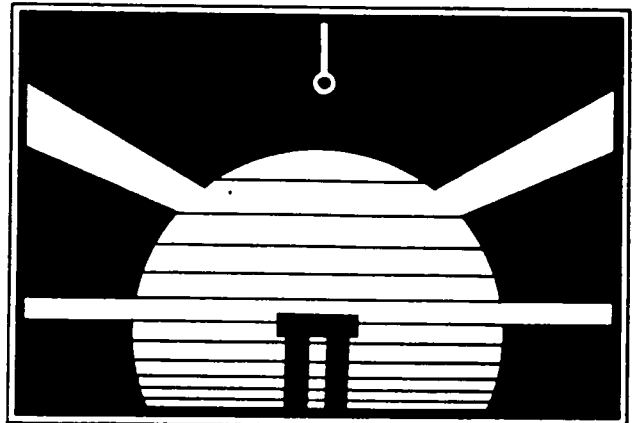
The word "vanilla" has another use entirely in Ireland (my motherland) -- it's used to describe a particular type of creamy mountaintop snow. Comes from a line by Yeats.

I would like to say that it's conceivable that all human intelligence and culture developed from a lost civilisation that grew in what we now call Egypt, which then dispersed around the Earth. I'm talking about 10,000 BCE. So, unless you go for Von Daniken, we are all African, right?

[[Well. That's not quite the way we understood it, but we can't rule it out.]]

Actually, I would like to say something about the character/story importance debate: neither makes any difference unless the writer has a distinctive style. It's this style which makes the work stand out from the crowd... What's the use of having good ideas, fab characters or an excellent plot if the execution is drab and unexciting?

WAHF: Ken Cheslin, alas; Mark Proskey; Teddy Harvia (COA 12341 Band Box Place, Dallas TX 75244); Maureen Speller; Gary Deindorfer; Robert Sabelliz.





i s c e l l a n y

In Wizard, John Varley uses the word "necropolitan". We looked it up: yes, the Oxford English Dictionary gives this as the derived adjective from "necropolis".

QUOTE OF THE DAY

"A career in sculpture requires a white-collar education (preferably with advanced degrees) to perform essentially blue-collar labor for fast-food wages."

-- artist Richard Zandler, artist's notes from an exhibition at Howard County Center for the Arts

Ansible reports, via Claire Brialey, that the 2000 Eastercon was widely seen as a failure and that, "support for the UK05 Worldcon bid, which shares several personnel with 2Kon, may have diminished as a result..." May be a difference that makes no difference, as we are not aware of any competing bid for 2005.

Back in #17, the estimable Harry Warner Jr. said that no member of Congress had a connection to fandom. We recalled that then-Rep. Newt Gingrich attended at least the opening ceremonies of the '86 Atlanta Worldcon, and asked for confirmation. Anyone? You'd think there would be a record of something like that...

Speaking of Claire Brialey, she and co-editor Mark Plummer of Banana Wings fame are Fan GOH's at the 2001 Eastercon in Britain.

Amusing to note that being gay is now more socially acceptable than being a science fiction fan: "Gaylaxicon", the gay fandom convention, thrives in the DC area, while no hotel will touch "Disclave", the "regular" con of the Washington SF group. The king is dead, long live the, er, queen. ...While we're on the subject, "Balticon" has indeed shifted to the Memorial Day weekend freed up by the demise of "Disclave". John Hertz, of Vanamonde and other fame, will be FanGOH at "Lunacon", March, Rye Brook NY. We found out about "Balticon" through the perennial "reliable sources", as the con did not condescend to reply to our inquiry on the subject...

Lately a couple of people have, out of the blue, sent us poetry -- one cited our "ad in the review section of Matrix". Huh? We suspect the border between SF fanzines and small-press lit zines is getting a little hazy.

Our mother was looking for a book bag to carry books back and forth from the library. We dug around in storage and came up with a book bag we got at some con, possibly a World Fantasy Con. It has a tentacled monster climbing over the words, "A Lovecraft Centenary". Mother says it works fine, but she's afraid she will be asked to explain the logo.

Robert Lichtman sent us some stuff to explain the Staple War. Seems pretty silly to us. Even by fannish standards. Even by 1934 fannish standards.

Received, Progress Report for Potlatch 10, an intimate sercon convention, Ramada Plaza, San Francisco; February 23-25, 2001. Contact: Mary Kay Kare, P.O. Box 3042, San Ramon CA 94583. Actually sounds nice (San Francisco is always worth visiting, even in February) but we make no promises.

Received, courtesy of Joy Smith, a copy of Recoil, a 1971 Ace Double by Claude & Rhoda Nunes. Notable for its Kelly Freas cover of an unmistakably black character, who actually appears in the book, though chiefly in the first few chapters.

Yo, lady: we are not looking at your breasts. We are looking at your name badge. If you don't like where we're looking, wear your badge someplace else.

Somebody gave us a disk (or "diskette", is there a difference?) with the title Dream Sequence, by one "Steve Lazarowitz". We can't read it, but suspect it may be amateur soft-porn. Anyone want it? First one who asks can have it.

Franz Miklis says the #18 cover is a scene from a Jack Vance story and she's riding in a cable car/ski lift sort of thing.

Jeez, fandom: buy a necktie, willya?