THINGS THAT GO BUMP IN THE MAILBOX

LAURINE WHITE sends a clipping about Ellen Cooperman, who changed her name legally to Cooperson. She's quoted as saying "I think the issue of sexist language is very serious." (If she really thought that, she could have changed her name to Cooper just as easily. But of course that wouldn't have automatically told everyone how much of a feminist she was.)//For any back-to-nature lovers in the audience, Laurine also included an item, dateline Maine, about 3 AWOL soldiers (2 male, 1 female) who were living "like hermits" (?? monks, maybe, but hermits?) in an abandoned bear's den. They were arrested for illegal possession of moose meat. The long arm of the law reaches even unto the wilderness, these days.//And one practical item: a Montana wrecking service which was advertising to tow you home after your New Year's revelry.//JOHN & SANDRA MIESEL send an ad for Mike & Carol Resnick's kennel in Cincinnati. Boarding, grooming, classes in show handling, and apparently sale of purebred show collies.//Miesels also offer a clipping from Pennsylvania; a judge in Blair Co. has ruled that a cat is not a domestic animal, and therefore can't be owned, or stolen. I foresee a furor over that....I can see his point, but it sort of depends on the cat, really.//ALAN DODD and MAYDENE CRGSBY both sent clippings about the voice that broke in on British TV recently to announce that the Intergalactic Association is watching us and if we don't learn to live together in peace we will be destroyed. Somebody saw "Day The Earth Stood Still" once too often, I suspect. Interestingly, Maydene's US columnist suggested a "pirate" transmitter, while Alan's British one thought that someone had cut in on a land line (cable, to you), since the interference was only in one area. Nobody seems to have any real clues yet.//BOB BRINEY sends an ad for the "Key West Pirate & Torture Museum". Just the thing for the kiddies.//MARY SCHAUB sends an ad for a "Sicilian donkey cart" appraised at $25,000. For the Mafioso who has everything?//Mary also sends an article on the production problems of Hong Kong eggroll rollers and the difficulties of designing a machine to do the job; and another article on clam poaching in New Jersey. (Theft, not a cooking method.) The legal clam diggers are fighting back; one suspected poacher's boat mysteriously burned to the waterline and another's car was dumped into the ocean.//DEREK NELSON took umbrage at my comment about all my Canadian friends being liberals or some such, and sent a long Canadian editorial about Cuba.//DENNY LIEN sent me a whole batch of Minneapolis headlines: "Unusual Weather Is Blamed On Nature", "Alien Population Is Growing In US" (some of them members of the Intergalactic Association, no doubt), "Rosebud Group Leaves D.C. Unsure Of Aid" (what sort of aid, Tucker?) and "When Maker Says 'Cheese' He May Really Mean Analog" (which would make Ben Bova the Big Cheese himself, I suppose).//SANDRA MIESEL sends a column by one David Mannweiler, who is writing about Mannweiler village, in Germany. Seemed that someone was buying up old mills in the area and nobody could figure out why, until it was finally learned that a Munich doglover was turning them into kennels. So that now, around Mannweiler, the mills are alive with the hounds of Munich. (That is the sort of thing I have to put up with from my friends, so you're going to have to put up with it from me.)//GEORGE FERGUS sends a charitable request he received from The American Horse Protection Association.//The Franklin Mint is now selling "The 100 Greatest Recordings Of All Time". As usual in these things, you find out what the music is after you get it. Who are you to argue with an Advisory Panel, you creeps? They tell you it's great music, you believe it.//ALAN DODD sends an item mentioning that Sherlock Holmes has received over 20,000 letters since 1945, most of them asking his help on a detective case. Makes you wonder about human intelligence.//To make you really wonder, PAULA SMITH sent an item; the International Peace Research Institute in Stockholm has predicted that a nuclear war is "inevitable" within 9 years. Survival courses, anyone? (The Institute didn't say the US or Russia would be involved; they said there would be 35 nations with nuclear capability by then.)//FRED JACOBCIC sends a clipping on the banning of Slaughterhouse Five from the Rochester (Michigan) public schools, and Vonnegut's predictable outrage over the fact. It was being used in a literature course. (Vonnegut said that the Constitution upheld his right to say what he wanted. And it upholds the school's right to not use your book, too, Charley. It was a court case; I think the judge was wrong, but I think Vonnegut's quoted statements were asinine, too.)

RSC
Price, US: 75¢, 5 for $1.00, 10 for $5.00 - Britain: 40¢, 5 for £1.50, 10 for £2.20
(And I wish the dollar/pound conversion would stay put for awhile.) Publication schedule, highly irregular.

CONTENTS

| Ramblings (editorial)                      | JWC | 2 |
| Ramblings (editorial)                      | RSC | 4 |
| The Dying Traveller (article)              | John J. Alderson | 6 |
| Golden Minutes (book reviews)               | RSC | 9 |
| Grumblings (letters)                       | RSC | 22 |
| Strange Fruit (fanzine reviews)            | RSC | 37 |

ARTWORK

COVER - Things That Go Bump In The Mailbox, by RSC and the readers. (That's not art, you say? But doesn't it have to be, if it's on the cover? We wanted to do something different for our 25th Anniversary Issue.....

Page 1 - --------------  Al Sirois
Page 23 - (artist unknown; from Alan Dodd's files)

Page 2 - --------------  JWC
Page 26 - --------------  Fred Jackson, III

Page 4 - --------------  Jann Frank
Page 31 - --------------  Dave Rowe

Page 6 - --------------  Alan Lankin
Page 27 - --------------  Jann Frank

Page 7 - --------------  Alan Lankin
Page 30 - --------------  Alan Lankin

Page 22 - --------------  Alan Lankin
Page 37 - --------------  Richard Delap

(I really screwed up the artist list; sorry)

After stencilling the book reviews, Juanita was looking at Gil Gaier's explanation of his rating system and pointed out to me that he says not to use numbers ending in 1, 9, or 0. Which I did....well, move the 1's up and the 9's down, and flip a coin for any zeros. Someone asked for an explanation of the system. As follows.

95 - "One of the best books I've read"
75 - "good/enjoyable/recommended"
55 - "average/satisfactory/readable"
35 - "poor/weak"
15 - "I couldn't finish reading it"

Raising or lowering the last number can slightly modify the judgment. Note that these are totally subjective assessments, and were designed for a highschool English class. They aren't especially suited to my judgment of books (there are no books that I can't finish reading, and a lot that I don't finish, for one minor point - and I finish some that are worse than the ones I put down because I find them unintentionally funny.) I'm using the ratings mostly as a favor to Gil. If other people like them, fine; if they don't, maybe I'll quit using them. If you're interested in Gaier's project - he would like ratings from as many fans on as many books as possible - write him. Gil Gaier, 1016 Beech Ave., Torrance, Ca 90501.
Let's see. In our last installment, our hardy protagonists were buried under snow and well on their ways to shivering thru a little ice age. That hasn't changed a bit (a fact I'm sure all you warm-climate dwellers learn with malicious glee). One of the local media weathermen has a glittery device of predicting the number of snow which will fall, basing his predictions on some arcane lore he refuses to divulge and draping this bomb of info in late October or November every year. In '77 he cheerfully pulled back the curtains and announced our region would have thirty-nine snows this winter -- then picked himself up from the pelting of mikes and clipboards and sundry other missiles hurled by the other unhappy members of the news staff. It all seemed rather far fetched, then. So far we're watching him merrily chalk off each new snow. He's down to eighteen...not nearly enough to make anyone but skiers pleased. And January isn't over yet.

About three years ago we topped off a joyous Year End visit to the lake area by a well-satisfying visit with the Passovys. The weather was terrible and they were much impressed with Moby Dick's muscle when the poor car took off with minimal grinding after one of those wind-chill -39 nights. Shortly after we made it back home that time, the car's battery gave up and we had to buy a new one. This year the same thing happened. We're beginning to suspect not only is Chicago's frigid wind a bane but maybe its pollution eats car batteries. Ours, anyway.

At least there is one benefit to enduring such weather out in this rural setting -- its beauty. This morning, after a night of zero or below temperatures and unusually high humidity, we awakened to the spectacle of frozen fog clinging to trees and wires and bushes. At first I was afraid it was ice, but it crumbled at a touch and had almost no substance. Eerily condensed humidity. We have a lot of snow cover like everyone else in the northern states, but ours remains rather pristine. Yesterday the sun came out from behind a week of overcast and created spectacular shadows and lights on the landscape. On the flat and harvested fields (those snowmobilers haven't yet invaded) the snow lies in an unbroken sea, and since the sky was open and cloudless and the sun shining brilliantly, the effect was a peculiar grey-blue blanket. Along the road, where the plows and vehicles had broken the snow fall, the glazed surface lay stirred up and shone blinding white. An artist would have a ball trying to catch all the varying lights of this sort of scene. I can only assume the grey-blue fields look that way because they're reflecting some of the sky glow. And since we're coming up on a full moon this week, last night gave us a fairy-tale glimmer off the breast of both the new-fallen snow and stuff that's been lying there for a month or more. It might well resemble something from an alien world to a city denizen who'd never witnessed it. (And a bit like a horror-fantasy when all the dogs in the neighborhood start howling at the moon.) You can peer out a window -- if you can find one which isn't frosted over solidly -- and see a spooky moonlit white ocean broken by moon shadows of trees and fencerows and now and then a night bird that hasn't the sense to go into hiding in this wretched weather. Pretty to look at, but if you go on tour, be sure to bring your thermals and boots.

When you get over a page to Buck's ramblings, you'll get into his comments on my upcoming trip to NYC. If I'd been going this last week, the whole thing might have been canceled, since NYC got a dose of what we have, but with no open fields for the snow to spread out in...save for places like the airports, where it really seemed to accumulate in heaps. The forecast for the coming week, though, is for fair and
warming, which means there shall be no act-of-God excuses for not taking my first commercial plane trip. The prospect fills me with mixed childish anticipation and stark terror. I have been fascinated with planes ever since I can remember, collecting junior spotter cards during WWII and gawking like a rube when jets first started making their contrails across the Midwestern sky. When I was about fourteen, I took an exhillrating bouncy trip up in a Piper Cub, reveling in every roaring moment of it. Not long ago, Michigan fan Sue Ward detoured to Hartford City from a fly-in at Wabash and gave us a ride in a more recent private plane; and except for the inevit able problem with my perpetually annoying sinuses, that was a delight, too. So I really hope I can hang onto the same attitude on a commercial plane.

The problem is, I'm a victim of too much knowledge. Almost as long as I have been a fan of flight, I've been morbidly intrigued by disasters, both natural and man-made/caused/involving, including air disasters. One branch of our library is an ever-expanding shelf or several of horrendous material on all the things that can go wrong...wrong...wrong, with appropriate numbers of plane crash research. This is not a case where ignorance is bliss. Reading probably cause examinations into why all the fail-safes fail and two planes collide, or the compass goes haywire, or any of the other myriad things that can misfire do is not the best bon voyage background for a first-time plane passenger. I can't forget. I can only try to encourage myself with all the near-miss material also included in those disaster books; all the almost crashes that were averted, and all the statistics assuring me the risk is minimal.

But to borrow from Bob Gibson's skiing songs and other sources, tell me who's counting when one of them's you.

I'll probably end up sitting by a window and watching the wing tip wiggle and rubber necking at the countryside so far down below and hoping it stays that way until we're back rolling down it properly on landing. After all, it's the closest I'm ever going to get to a ride in a space shuttle or further out. But I'm afraid I don't have the inner fortitude. I'll remain an armchair astronaut in spirit as well as reality, probably.

Last issue I mentioned a fantasy manuscript I'd turned into Ballantine just before Chambanacon, though I didn't know its fate. It ran longer than calculated and will need to be trimmed before publication, but Lester del Rey is accepting it and has generously told me so in the pleasant, bank-book sort of way. At this writing, the title is WEB OF WIZARDRY, but I have no idea when it will be published. Sometime this year, I imagine. Like Marion Zimmer Bradley's Darkover and the fictional worlds of many another writer, this one is an outgrowth of a childhood dream universe. I never expected it to be anything but that, but with Marion's insistence, I tried to put one of the stories into commercial form over a decade ago, and it got derailed along the way. This is the eventual result, and having it accepted professionally still has a feel of unreality to it. Maybe I'll get used to that eventually. It doesn't seem possible a childhood solace could become profitable. At least I know I'm a member of a not-small club of fellow childhood imaginers and concocters. May they all crawl out of the woodwork as happily as I have...

Having all but grown up with half my waking hours (it seemed) spent in movies, it was inescapable I'd be visually oriented. Movies are inaccessible to me now, except on tv. And when I say movies, I include all the things that used to accompany the movies, including the educational films and newsreels, and those, too, are now supplied by tv. It's popular to brag about never watching that media and never missing it, but I'm afraid I have only puzzlement for that attitude. I would miss that medium as much as I would print and I learn as much if not more from visual sources like PBS, not to mention the enjoyment and pure escapism offered. And to alleviate any lapse into routine habits, Ft. Wayne just acquired a new independent station specializing in movies -- some great, some incredible, and some awful. They don't have enough money for TVGuide or newspaper listings, so the only way to learn what's on, and whether it's watchable, is to...watch. At least your average fanzine tries to provide a table of contents. Until I taxi safely back down the runway and type our next table of contents... JWC
In keeping with our usual sloppy attitudes, this 25th Anniversary Issue is smaller than the two or three preceding it. Well, we never made all that much out of Annishes (they get monotonous after awhile, you know). We'll try to come out a bit more frequently this year than we did last--and probably with a trifle smaller issues. (The big issue is a vicious circle. It's a lot of work, so you feel like resting awhile, and then you're behind again and need another big issue to catch up.)

I'm hoping we get this one out before Juanita's New York trip. She's getting to be a Big Name Writer, with editorial conferences with Ballantine and fancy stuff like that. Lunch with one's editor, the symphony with another editor; high class stuff like that. By the time she gets back she probably won't feel like doing anything at all for a couple of weeks and then she'll have to start work on all the contracts she will have signed while she was there. (Well, you might as well think big....)

We got interviewed by the Ft. Wayne Journal-Gazette awhile back and the article came out in the Sunday, Jan. 15 paper. Just under one about a spinner of tall tales - bit of subtle editorializing there, perhaps. Pretty good job, considering the writer had enough notes for 4 articles that size. Someone turned Yandro's 300-plus subscribers into 3,000, but it's easy to misplace a zero, and 300 doesn't sound very impressive to a newspaper reader; I suspect a simple typo, but one never knows. And I got Sturgeon's Law attributed to me; I gave Sturgeon credit, but he got lost in the translation. And a few minor details got garbled, but not enough to make any difference to a newspaper reader - or to me, for that matter. And writer Sherman Goldenberg never once asked us about flying saucers, which I appreciate. (I remember your story about the Indianapolis show, Mark - though I forget whether it was radio or tv. Fort Wayne residents are more intelligent than Naptof ones; they know there is a difference between stf fans and flying saucer nuts. Or at least, Goldenberg did.) All in all, a pretty good article.

He said to let him know if anything of interest occurred here. Next time you come out, Devra, you want to be interviewed as a "Star Trek" convention organizer? Otherwise, not all that much has happened since last issue. We visited the DeWeeses in Milwaukee and the Passovoys in Chicago over New Year's. Gene took us out to this huge record store, Peaches. Only store of that kind I've been in where they had a map of the store and what types of records were where, facing you as you entered. And they needed it. We spent more money than we should have, and generally enjoyed ourselves. The Passovoys mentioned that plans for a Passovy-Coulson-Aspin-Simmons-Middleton-whoever (Al? Murray? Moonwolf? Marty?) recording are coming along well, and recording session will be this spring. We shall see; we're mildly opti-mistic, but there have been enough false starts on this thing to make us cautious.

Sandra Miesel, Jim Cunningham, and Suzie Tompkins stopped in briefly on their way back from Confusion. Which was not one of the better cons, I gathered; comments about cold hotels and the like. Of course, it's the people who make good or bad conventions, but annoying surroundings can hurt a lot. I hated to miss Jackie and Dave Locke (assuming Dave was there), but it sounds like we were better off at home.

Awhile back I mentioned in regard to something or other that the greatest loss of life in a maritime disaster occurred on the Mississippi River. I was thinking of the Sultana, of course. Then someone asked for particulars and I hauled out my trusty WORLD ALMANAC and it said there were 1400 people lost on the Sultana and 1517 on the Titanic and I stood there with egg on my face. Then, for Christmas this
year, Juanita was given DARKEST HOURS, which is a sort of one-volume encyclopedia of disasters. And it says 1547 lost on the Sultana and 1917 on the Titanic. I guess the moral of that is that it pays to pick your reference works carefully before making statements. (Naturally, I take the DARKEST HOURS figures as correct.)

I must say that DARKEST HOURS is a thorough book. In the back is a sort of disaster checklist, divided by type; fire, flood, explosion, etc. There are three coal-mine disasters listed for my birthplace of Sullivan, Indiana, and one of them I'd never heard of before. Anybody with morbid interests should look it over.

It figures. I thought of a brilliant paragraph for this editorial, some weeks ago. I've become too clever to rely on my memory, so I wrote it all down, and put the sheet of paper up where I'd be sure to find it while doing this issue. Yes, indeed. Well, maybe I'll find it by next issue. 1984?

Rather surprisingly, to me at least, one of the best articles to appear on "Star Wars" was in ROLLING STONE. I don't happen to get that journal, but Summer Miller loaned me her copy (along with a lot of scurrilous information about Joe Hensley that appeared in the I.U. Law Journal - learned jurist sinks to debauchery and novel-writing and suchlike). Interesting background detail on SW.

Never believe all you're told. I was informed that our landlord's German shepherd was gun-shy, so when I set out to sight in a new pistol I decided that even though the dog was around, it would be safe to sit down and get a good solid rest. Deke likes me - he likes everyone - but he wouldn't be trying to lick me in the face while I was shooting. Ha, I finished my target practice standing up, with Deke sitting on my feet while I fired a .38 snubnose revolver over his head. Sure he's gun-shy. (I tried to entice him along the last time I went rabbit hunting, but he thought it would be more fun to stay behind and bark at the pigs.)

Christmas was not all bright and cheerful this year. The DeWeeses were down, and Bruce came home for the holiday, and everything was fine until they all left. Bruce headed back on the afternoon of Christmas day, and about 5:00 PM we got a call from him; his car had quit, and he was in Celina, Ohio. We drove over with a tow chain. In one of my less brilliant performances, I didn't recall until we were in Celina that the unit-body construction of Rambler's doesn't provide any place to hook a tow chain. After ripping loose part of our bumper and breaking one of Bruce's headlights, we tried pushing. His car would run, a little, and we alternated pushing him at 20 mph and following him while he sputtered down the road at 5 mph. By the time we got to the road junction outside of Bryant, Indiana, we were ready to quit. It was cold that night, and Bruce was slowly congealing into a popsicle. We had made it halfway, so we all piled into Hoby Dick and came home. Next day we came back with the Chevy and towed Bruce into the Chevy garage at Montpeller (where the head mechanic got a jolt on Tuesday when he was told he was expected to work on a Renault). Bruce didn't get away for a couple more days. Tuesday morning I set off for work, got five feet, and realized I had a flat tire. I told Bruce to change it and went in in the other car. Bruce couldn't get one lug nut off, so I did that when I came home from work - and then I discovered that the jack was jammed, with the car on top of it. All in all, I've had better Christmases. (Bruce was lucky, though. He got to the only business that was open in Celina - a Clark filling station - and got hold of us. Juanita talked to another boy who was at the station in the same fix, except his parents weren't home and he didn't know if they'd get home before the station closed at 11:00 PM. At which time he'd be out in the cold - and it was extremely cold that night - because he'd already tried all the motels in town and none of them were open. One of those little human interest stories where you never find out the answer - did he eventually contact his parents, or did the police find his frozen body in the parking lot the next morning?)

As I write this editorial - 7:30 AM, Jan. 17 - we're snowed in again, for the first time this year but the second time this winter. Should be temporary; I think a sustained effort can get us out, but not until it's light enough to see what we are doing. In our previous blizzard, we were totally cut off from the time I got home from work on Dec. 8 (after leaving early, at 2:30 PM) until 8:00 PM Dec. 10, when two snowplows working in tandem finally broke through the drifts. In the interim, one snowplow was stuck a quarter-mile south of our place for 4 hours on Dec. 9, eventually being extricated and going away. Enjoy California, Jackie. RSC
THE DYING TRAVELLER

article by JOHN J ALDERSON

During the recent Air Controller's Strike one thing became apparent to the more astute amongst us: The only way in or out of Australia now, is by air. The occasional announcement over the years that such-and-such a boat was being retired from this or that particular "run", leaving us without that particular service, hadn't really sunk in. Not even the fact that considerable "industrial action" was needed recently to keep the sea-route to Tasmania open. The last ship to New Zealand ceased some years ago, and now it seems all the passenger boats left on the water are operating "cruises".

In fact I seemed to have caused a bit of a flurry a couple of years back when I announced that if I won DUFF I wished to go by sea, and Robin Johnson, who handles the travelling arrangements, was doubtful if it were possible and required as much time as possible to make arrangements. Another friend of mine whose long service leave is due shortly and who wishes to take his wife on a sea-trip to Europe so far has not been able to find a single ship taking passengers and the Tourist Bureau assures him that he will have to fly. He is at present checking the more obscure Continental lines.

I had previously thought of going by either cargo boat or tanker, all of which, at one time, took a few passengers, possibly so the Captain would have someone to eat with. For one thing, I wanted to enjoy the trip, not have to pander to someone's warped ideas that everybody should be kept happy and occupied playing deck games. I remember with pleasure, the reading of that wonderful novel VANITY FAIR, one of these great books that needs and deserves to be read carefully and thoroughly, a book, I feel, every male should read. I remember too the short stories I wrote on the return journey, stories I confess sadly that I am still working on, but the book of which I drafted on that trip. Now it seems even cargo boats don't carry passengers.

I realize that there is the time element, that that sea-trip will take nine weeks of my friend's six months. But he thinks it is worth it, for like myself he has travelled by ship before. So do I. Being somewhere is a fraction of the joy of getting there, and I can only echo, with W.H. Davies: "What is this life, if full of care,

We have no time to stand and stare."

I would suggest, that if that is the case, we have become poor indeed. It is all right for the executive, or the politician, streaking to London or New York or Bali (using our money to pay for the trip) to go from one place to another without stopping between, and certainly not wanting time to think. They could do the same job just as efficiently using the telephone, and if they wanted to see the other bloke's dial they could insist on the visiphone being installed; we've had the technology since at least as early as 1938 for that. But for those who want to travel, it is not possible. Now there is a vast difference be-
tween being in another place and travelling. I know one girl who goes 200 miles per week (she goes by train to work), but doesn't travel a yard; she doesn't see or hear anything. I know a man, making an identical trip from the same station, who travels every foot of the way; he hears, sees, and experiences everything.

The vast bulk of journeying back and forth is pointless and needless. The business transacted as a result could be just as easily done by letter or phone, but no, it only costs an extra thousand or so dollars (of our money) to fly to the ends of the earth instead. So we have men who gad around the Earth fifty times and have seen nothing. Like the local factory manager who flies to America every year and who firmly believes that every American has a private swimming pool in his backyard! Met a Canadian who had travelled extensively in the States and whose observation was that half of them didn't have a bath.

These are things that one cannot learn from books or tv. One has to see for themselves from the stern of a ship. Kipling's: "...the blazing tropic night when the wake's a welt of light, and the scared whale flutes in flame," or Coleridge's:

"Beyond the shadow of the ship, I watched the water-snakes; They moved in tracks of shining white, And when they reared, the elfish light Fell off in hoary flakes."

And those who come back telling of "many a strange far land I saw, and gaudy foreign city" will not have "travelled" by jet. All the latter see are international airports, all designed by the same architect though a thousand different men have been paid for that same monstrosity.

Travelling is an end in itself. It is not the getting there or rather being there that is the thing -- it's what happens on the way. So Robert Louis Stevenson took off a few days of his life to travel by donkey from one obscure place to another equally obscure place, but he wrote a book on it, TRAVELS WITH A DONKEY. He had trouble with that donkey. The conversation with another traveller at one stage went something like this:

"Have you indeed come a long way?"
"No."
"Perhaps your donkey is very old?"
"No."
"Perhaps you are not used of donkeys."
"No."
"Ahh!"

Whereupon the other disappeared into the bushes to return with a stick of stout proportions with which he proceeded to belabour Stevenson's donkey. Whereat the donkey promptly began moving off at a very smart pace. If one travels by donkey one may save their legs, but will truly develop a broad chest and strong arms. But this is the essence of travel, you learn.

I willingly admit that I am entranced by the sight,

"White handkerchiefs wave on the short black pier
As the ship glides to the grand old sea..."

and I have personally felt the truth of the world receding as

"The heart forgets in a week at sea
The troubles of years ashore."

and this is not what is going to happen in a three day flight to London with the know-
ledge that in a few days time the trip will be reversed; and although you have been
half the world away, and a fortnight away, yet you will not really have been away; or
perhaps more importantly to be anywhere long enough to get to know anyone.

There was a fine old Gaelic custom, summed up in a proverb which runs something
like, "One story from the host and the rest of the night to the guest," for they knew
that a traveller would have something to tell and it would be worth listening to.
Allied to that was another formula. The guest, if the matter had been omitted, would
say, "A drink is quicker than a tale," for no teller of tales wishes to go hoarse in
the middle of a yarn and to break into his narrative to ask for a drink. And this is
a point, one travels to see, to observe, to learn, and to share his new wisdom when
he returns. Otherwise one may as well heed the advertisement which I noticed a few
years ago which said, "Why bother going to the Holy Land when you can buy our set of
slides for only $59?" Why indeed!

My brother-in-law, who is a pessimistic sort of fellow (this is relative; he be-
lieves he is an optimist), demanded of me recently, that in view of the energy short-
age and that jets can still run on power alcohol, if men would still be able to fly
by jet though if may take a thousand acres of wheat puffed up into the stratosphere
as a contrail to get him to London. I confidently said they would. And they will,
even though that wheat could otherwise have fed hundreds of people for a year, and
they will, if we let them, rushing here and there, at our expense, doing what they
could easily do by telephone and not gaining one bit out of it themselves.

Whereas I, who wish to travel by boat, propelled by common old coal, or, if that
runs out, red-gum logs, or if that is in short supply, blown along by the winds, am
denied that right. It stinks!

But of course there is more in this than just travelling by ship. Even internal
travel in Australia by anything other than plane (or private car) is frowned upon.
All government employees and private enterprise employees (of the executive class and
over) are expected to travel by air, and even if they are prepared to travel in their
own time by train, have a great struggle on their hands to be allowed to do so. Every-
one is being forced to travel by air. Perhaps it being a Government monopoly (for
all intents and purposes) has something to do with this. Worse still, only too many
of our roads are becoming freeways where one may not travel by horse, donkey, bullock
wagon, or bicycle, only by car, with a minimum speed of fifty mph around the corner.

One's travels are likely soon to be over.

It does not therefore come as a surprise that travel books are becoming a rarity.
American ones are almost non-existent (I have read some, some good ones), and Austra-
lians still write them, but they are an incorrigible lot of unfortunates descended
from convicts and know no better. But we are having no travellers. It is only a
matter of time when some new Marco Polo comes on the scene telling of worlds beyond
the international airports, rambling about "millions of people, millions of ducats,"
and

"Around you cape, of lion-shape,
That meets the wave with lion-brow,
A ship sails in from lands unknown;
Romance stands shining on her prow."

---

Seen in the local A&P (and I am not making this up) seafood department: "Better-
dipped cod pieces." (from Bob Briney, so "local presumably means Salem, MA. The
whole thing sounds very messy. RSC)

"After over 2 years in fandom, and one incredulous glance from you upon finding that
I didn't wear contacts, I have 'arrived' as a fan. As I type this, I am wearing
glasses, acquired the 7th. of January." -Carolyn Doyle (all trufans wear glasses)

"Hensley was wrong about Playboy. They don't send bunnies to their authors, just
cards." -Gene DeWeese (Maybe it depends on the author. RSC)

Sidelights to history - from an article in COINS magazine. The Hutt River Province
seceded unilaterally from Australia in 1970, and has been issuing coins, currency,
and stamps, some of them bearing the bust of the ruler, Prince Leonard Casley.
Golden Minutes

FRANK KELLY FREAS: THE ART OF SCIENCE FICTION [The Donning Co., 253 West Bute St., Norfolk VA 23510 - hardcover $29.95, paperback $7.95] For the extra money, the hardcover provides you with a numbered, limited edition, a personal inscription by Freas, an outstanding job of binding, and a slipcase. That (and the idea that the value will probably increase over the years) was enough to make me order the hardcover. (So did a lot of other people; I got #221 out of 1000.) I assume the contents are the same in both editions. There are numerous Freas covers and interiors represented (someone gave a figure, but I don't recall it) and the printing and color work are excellent. Not all of them are my favorite or even paintings that I like very well, but getting an 8 1/2 x 11 reproduction of the cover for THE WHENABOUTS OF BURR is worth considerable to me; I tried to buy the original, but the author beat me to it. In addition, Kelly is a very good writer. The text sandwiches illustrative anecdotes in between his firm opinions on the illustrative art, and he does it very well. (And I tend to agree with his ideas, which I suppose helps.) I've heard comments that he is a bit overenthusiastic in his praise for Laser books, but on the whole I think he's right even there. (On quality, he says Laser was "well above that of any previous line...that attempted to reach a similar audience." Anybody want to argue that the Winston Juveniles were really that good? And, "comparable, in its later stages, to that of any science fiction line of equal volume." Which sort of cuts it down to a comparison between Laser and Ace at Ace's most prolific period, and they certainly were "comparable". Ace had a better editor, but Laser paid better, and the results weren't all that much in Ace's favor.) Overall, I think the text is very good and the artwork is outstanding.

THE ANNOTATED DRACULA, by Leonard Wolf [Ballantine, $5.95] Annotations by Wolf, that is. Stoker's novel is represented by what seems to be a photocopy of the first edition. The annotations are thorough -- sometimes to the point of amusement. Wolf notes "razor" as "A straight razor, one need hardly add," (Then why did one add it?) And on page 9 and 10 he translates an entire series of Transylvanian words into English, rather ignoring the fact that Stoker did the same thing in the text. There are lots of geographical notes and maps. I found most of them unnecessary -- I know where the Carpathian Mountains are, for heaven's sake -- but I suppose there are readers who don't. I did appreciate Wolf's translations of the Latin and North Riding quotations, as Stoker doesn't translate those. (I suppose technically the North Riding quotes are in dialect, but it might as well be a separate language.) As far as I can check, the annotations are accurate, and if they're wordier than I like in some cases, why, too thorough an explanation is better than too skimpy a one. Wolf comes a cropper only occasionally in his explanations of rural idiom: he ain't no farmer, obviously. "...the bench outside the door -- which they call by a name meaning 'word-bearer'..." throws him utterly, as he admits. "None of my Romanian correspondents can identify the name of this bench." None of your Romanian correspondents came from small villages, obviously -- and equally obviously, the name is the Transylvanian equivalent of 'Liar's Bench.' But then, there aren't that many rural terms to be annotated. As Wolf points out, "Curiously enough, we will never meet a working-class vampire in this book." It's a very thorough job, and tells one a remarkable amount about facts and places that have no direct bearing on the story except to be mentioned in it. I'm not at all sure that it gave me any deeper understanding of the story itself than I had before I read it, but possibly it did. Worth getting if you're interested in the obscure byways of classic novels, certainly.
THE STRAYED SHEEP OF CHARUN, by John Maddox Roberts [Doubleday, $6.96] Bendra Miesel should review this, since it's very involved with Catholic history and beliefs, past and future. As such, I found it interesting -- but the author brought a peculiarly naive Catholic viewpoint to it at times. Sexual relations "would be futile in such a place, where nobody's life expectancy extended past tomorrow". All very proper for one who believes that the only permissible use of sex is for procreation -- but Roberts is describing a gang of heathen pirates who have been captured and sold as gladiators. It's a moderately intriguing book, mostly because of the author's rather alien viewpoint. (Alien to me, anyway.) Not particularly recommended as exciting adventure fiction.

TOMORROW'S SON, by Robert Hoskins [Doubleday, $6.95] Somewhat more like it. Hoskins' main flaw is that both protagonists, father and son, are basically inept characters who constantly must be saved by their subordinates, and personally I dislike that sort of plotting. Son is a new agent on an alien planet, and logically he has to be helped along by people who know more than he does -- but he never does accomplish anything on his own, and my major sense of wonder was why Garlan bothers with him. The climax proves that the father was a dupe all the way. I don't insist on invincible heroes, but I like them to be a little smarter than the rest of the people in the book.

BLACK GOD'S SHADOW, by C.L. Moore [Don Grant, Publisher, West Kingston RI 02892 -$15] The complete Jirel of Joiry series (at least, until someone comes up with an unpublished manuscript). "Black God's Kiss," "Black God's Shadow," "Jirel Meets Magic," "The Dark Land," and "Hellsgarde". Five tipped-in color illustrations, one double-page spread, dust-jacket, and endpapers by Alicia Austin, and excellently done. The stories are well above average, as swords and sorcery go, and have an added advantage in this feminist age that Jirel is a female warrior. A nice job all around.

SILENCE IS DEADLY, by Lloyd Biggle, Jr. [Doubleday, $6.95] One of his Jan Darzek series. I have a prejudice against series, so I didn't finish it, but it seems acceptable secret-agent stuff.

CREATURES OF THE COSMOS, edited by Catherine Crook de Camp [Westminster, $7.95] Seems a lot for a 150-page book, but children's books seem to be priced that way. A collection for younger children, age 8 to 12, say, depending on the kid's sophistication in regard to stif and to reading in general. Includes "The Bear Who Saved the World," by L. Sprague de Camp and Catherine C. de Camp (a cut-down version of one of de Camp's "Johnny Black" stories , "The Command"), "Old Man Henderson," by Kris Neville (the generation gap, very well done), "The Million Dollar Pup," by the editor (girl's hobby solves family problem), "The Smallest Dragonboy," by Anne McCaffrey (pluck wins out, fairly well told), "The Large Ant," by Howard Fast (alien contact), "Dead Man's Chest," by Sprague de Camp (a Lovecraft pastiche for the younger set, believe it or not -- not bad, either), "Socrates," by John Cristopher (lovely exposition of a really alien mentality -- an intelligent dog), and "Horse Show," by the editor (poor boy finds championship animal). I'm not sure what the Neville and Christopher stories are doing with the rest; I'd think they would be for older children. (But I might possibly be wrong...just barely.) All of the rest seem quite satisfactory for children, but not particularly recommended for adults.

COSMIC KALEIDOSCOPE, by Bob Shaw [Doubleday, $6.95] A collection of short stories; "Skirmish On a Summer Morning," "Unreasonable Facsimile," "A Full Member of the Club," "The Silent Partners," "Element of Chance," "The Gloconda Caper," "An Uncomic Book Horror Story," "Deflation 2001," "Waltz of the Bodysnatchers," and "A Little Night Flying". Most are reprints, but "$Skirmish" doesn't list previous publication and "Partners" was published in 1959 in Nebula, and while I was a British magazine collector back then I doubt if most Vandro readers were. It's too bad that there is such a
small market for short stories these days because while I find Shaw a mediocre novelist most of the time, he writes excellent shorts. He comes up with occasionally fascinating ideas (I loved "The Giocunda Caper," which I note is another one with no previous publication listed), handles them well, and uses the precise amount of wordage necessary. A fine book.

THE ARTS & BEYOND, edited by Thomas Monteleone [Doubleday, $7.95] A theme anthology. Since it concerns art, an added gimmick is a set of illustrations for the stories, done by a group of new young artists and mostly very bad. Stories are "Black Charlie," by Gordon Dickson (primitive art), "The Masterpiece," by J. J. Russ (the spark of genius), "A Museum Piece," by Roger Zelazny (life imitates art), "Telepathos," by Ronald Cain (direct rendering of emotion), "Stella Blue," by Grant Carrington (emotion and the artist), "Ultimate Melody," by Arthur C. Clarke (the effects of music), "Eldorado," by Charles Grant (robot emotions), "The Ghost Writer," by George Alec Effinger (creativity), "Camera Obscura," by the editor — whatever happened to the idea that an editor didn't publish his own stories? It seems to have died with Campbell and Carnell — (reality, introspection, and Great Truths), "Patron of the Arts," by William Rotsler (a future technological art), "With These Hands," by C. M. Kornbluth (creativity again), and "Shoppe Keeper," by Harlan Ellison (the arts of magic, and collecting). The Dickson, Cain, and Rotsler are excellent; Zelazny and Clarke are good (but almost demand comparison to better stories by John Collier and Henry Kuttner respectively); the rest is more or less acceptable. Shaw's "Giocunda Caper" is a better art story than anything in here.


WHISPERS, edited by Stuart Davis Schiff [Doubleday, $7.95] I think this one is a first: a hardcover anthology collected entirely from a fanzine. This also has artwork, generally better art than that provided for ARTS & BEYOND. (And the Tim Kirk dustjacket is the best jacket on any Doubleday stf book that I've ever seen.) It's all horror fiction; there are 20 stories here in a bit over 200 pages. I won't list them all because if you don't get Whispers you haven't heard of any of them. Authors include Fritz Leiber, Robert Bloch, B. H. Cave, Ray Russell, Brian Lumley, Joseph Payne Brennan, Manly Wade Wellman, Ramsey Campbell, Robert Aickman, and lesser lights. Stories range from good (Brennan's "The Willow Platform," Bloch's "The Closer of the Way," and perhaps "Goat," by David Campton) down through fairly entertaining to poor, but overall it's a readable enough collection if you like horror stories.

FIRST WORLD FANTASY AWARDS, edited by Gahan Wilson [Doubleday, $8.95] The title explains it. Includes all of the nominated short fiction — "Pages From a Young Girl's Journal" by Robert Aickman, "The Events at Poroth Farm" by T. E. D. Klein, and "A Father's Tale" by Sterling Lanier, plus a short essay by Aickman. There is an excerpt from the winning novel, THE FORGOTTEN BEASTS OF ELD by Patricia McKillip, which is even less informative than most excerpts. There is the British Fantasy Award, which went to "Sticks" by Karl Edward Wagner. "Single Author Collection or Anthology"
went to Wellman's WORSE THINGS WAITING, and "Come Into My Parlor" and "Fearful Rock" are included from that collection. "Life Achievement" went to Robert Bloch, and Wilson has selected "the Bat Is My Brother" and "Beatles" as representative of Bloch's work, plus including his acceptance speech. There is a short article on the Ballantines, who won a special award, and a selection of artwork by Lee Brown Coye, who won the "Best Artist" category. Plus material about the awards and the winners -- and for some reason, a map of Providence, Rhode Island -- by the editor. The book closes with a 50-page selection of material from Whispers, the winning fanzine. I suppose the anthology is fine if you like horror fiction. I enjoyed the Aickman and Lanier stories, and Wellman's "Fearful Rock," and that's about it. (I fully agree with the award to Bloch, but not for those two stories; he's done a lot better than that.)

LITERARY SWORDSMEN AND SORCERERS, by L. Sprague de Camp [Arkham House, $10.00] Most of the material in here has appeared in one or another magazine, but after some debate I decided it was worth having in hard covers, even at that price. The book includes biographical articles on William Morris, Lord Dunsany, H.P. Lovecraft, E.R. Eddison, Robert E. Howard, Fletcher Pratt, Clark Ashton Smith, J.R.R. Tolkien, and T.H. White, plus an introductory chapter on heroic fantasy in general and a concluding one on some of the lesser writers (in quantity, not quality) of the genre: C.L. Moore, Leslie Barringer, Nictzin Dyalhis, Henry Kuttner, Norvell Page, etc. It's a generally interesting book, even if you don't like swords and sorcery (and I don't, generally).

THE BEGINNING AND THE END, by Isaac Asimov [Doubleday, $8.50] Another collection of Asimov's articles, this time selected from such magazines as TV Guide, Natural History, Mainliner, International Wildlife, and various industrial publications and symposiums. I not only haven't read all these articles previously, a good share of them came from publications I never heard of before. On the other hand, most of them are aimed at mass markets and are much more superficial than his F&SF columns. As usual, there is no appendix, and Asimov's cute titles don't help anyone trying to find specific material, so you can't look up things you might want to know later; it's strictly for immediate enjoyment. It serves very well in that respect. It's not really worth buying for yourself, but make sure that your library gets a copy.

THE MAKING OF THE TREK CONVENTIONS, by Joan Winston [Doubleday, $7.95] ST is now big enough that you can sell anything connected with it, apparently. It's a fairly good humorous account of what it's like to run a convention, mixed in with the obligatory ST trivia and name-dropping. (After all, the bulk of the readers couldn't care less about Joan Winston, but they'll pay money for anecdotes about William Shatner or Michelle Nichols.) Lots of photos. (Majel Barrett is quite attractive in her own dark hair; I was always repelled by her in that damned blonde wig.) What I'd really like is for Bob Asprin to do a book on ST conventions, but I don't suppose he'd dare to put most of his experiences in print -- not until everyone is safely dead, at any rate. So if you're really interested in the ST phenomenon, this is as close as you're going to get. For her audience -- which is not me -- Winston does a very good job.

SPENCER HOLST STORIES, by Spencer Holst [Berkley Windhover, $2.95] Subtitled TWENTY-IEITH CENTURY FABLES. This is a skinny book which includes 19 vignettes and a section of story beginnings. One of the back cover blurbs says they are "Beautiful little fables that continually catch the reader off guard," which is the nicest way of saying that they have little internal consistency, the leastest that I've ever read. Holst is trying to be a highbrow version of R.A. Lafferty, and he doesn't make it. This is sophistication with nothing behind it.
THE CAMP OF THE SAINTS, by Jean Raspail [Ace, $1.95]  
THE CHILDREN OF SHINY MOUNTAIN, by David Dworkin [Pocket Books, $1.75]  
Two polemics masquerading as novels, both science-fictional in that they're set in the future. CAMP is right-wing and CHILDREN is left-wing, but otherwise they're quite similar in idea (warning the world against disaster) and writing skills (almost none). Possibly I'm being unfair to Raspail, since he's being translated; it might have read better in the original. In CAMP, the starving Third World -- encouraged by fuzzy-minded idealists and envious Wogs -- overthrows civilization by sheer force of numbers, overrunning westerners who are too chicken-hearted to shoot refugees. (No, I am not exaggerating; that's the tone of the entire book.) CHILDREN is a future confrontation between a greedy, wasteful capitalism and Noble Savages that even Thoreau and Rousseau might find extreme. Dworkin has all the myths at hand ("All of these people bore the marks of a robust outdoor life -- men and women were equally vigorous and healthy.") That's a fair sample of his science, too; either he never read any anthropology or he doesn't believe in it. Save your money. (25 each)  

THE RIGHT HAND OF DEXTRA, by David J. Lake [DAW #239, $1.50] Two books of what I THE WILDINGS OF WESTRON, by David J. Lake [DAW #247, $1.50] hope doesn't become an endless series. So far, they're moderately interesting. Lake has set up an alien planet which is gradually being cleared out of native life (useless to humans because of different DNA) and planted with Terrestrial. In DEXTRA, a biologist finds what had been thought nonexistent: intelligent native life. And then has to decide what to do about it. Fairly common plot; interesting background detail. WILDINGS takes place years later, when humanity on the planet has descended to feudalism for no believable reason, and the persecuted human-alien mixture comes into its own. (53 each)  

THE DARK ON THE OTHER SIDE, by Barbara Michaels [Secondhand] Normally, I don't care much for gothics. (Elsie Lee says it's because I'm a mere male and don't understand women, and Juanita agrees with her. But anyway, they're as poorly written as Westerns -- though no worse -- and not as interesting to the male as Westerns.) Occasionally I find a good women's-romance writer: Georgette Heyer, Florence Stevenson, Elsie Lee, Joan Aiken, and now Barbara Michaels. (I got this solely because there is a Barbara Michaels in our office, and I was going to give her the book as a joke; but now I think I'll keep it.) It's well plotted, characters if not brilliantly drawn are acceptable, and it's a genuine fantasy. If you see a used copy, try it. (71)  

MILLENNIUM, by Ben Bova [Ballantine/Del Rey, $1.95] World tensions in the near future. Protagonist is the commander of the American moon base, watching the world drift closer to war and unable to prevent it. Of course, he finds that he can intervene, with the help of the Russian base. Competent, straightforward novel. (59)  

RED SHIFT, by Alan Garner [Collins-Lions 45p] Three intertwined stories; a modern or slightly future pair of teenagers, a peasant couple sometime in the Middle Ages, and a pair of Britons at some time during the dissolution of Roman power. They're held together by a particular locality and a few symbols such as a stone axe. None of them are particularly bright, though the modern couple speaks the current British form of pseudo-psychological jargon, all of them are somewhat mystical, and I have no idea what the whole thing is supposed to mean. (Though, since it's Garner, I assume that it's supposed to mean something.) Everything is dialogue; there is almost no description. (Which is an additional handicap to an American reader, since one must stop occasionally to figure out what is being said.) I tended to despise the modern protagonist -- who complains about his parents' interference in his affairs but would rather let them support him than try to make it on his own -- and that rather put me off the entire book. But it's interesting -- not too intelligible, but interesting.  

LAVENDER-GREEN MAGIC, by Andre Norton [Ace, $1.75] An excellent juvenile for the younger group; 12 or 13-year old mundanes or slightly younger fan kids. Sophisticated
black city kids must go live with relatives in the rural South. Along with adjust-
ment, they find an old mystery and a pair of timeless witches.

EATRCHILT, by Doris Piserchia [DAW #241, $1.50] A strange novel, of a girl who sur-
vives the (more or less natural) destruction of Earth by intervention of a deus ex
biologica. It's a thoroughly fascinating series of adventures, considering that the
entire cast consists of one human, two aliens, and a few spear-carriers. Odd, but
recommended. (61)

CLOUD CHAMBER, by Howard L. Myers [Popular Library, $1.50] Far-future adventure,
with lots of magical gimmicks. Main trouble, for me, was that the protagonist wasn't
very interesting, so I didn't care much what happened to him, and the gimmicks bored
me rather than arousing my interest as they were supposed to do. So I didn't read
all that much of the book.

THE MAGICIAN OUT OF MANCHURIA, by Charles G. Finney [Panther, 50p] But I bought it
here, so I paid an inflated $1.95, but I don't recall an American edition. Hardback
only, perhaps. The magician of the title is an earthier counterpart of the more
celebrated Dr. Lao; his magic being somewhat less, he is willing to stoop to an occa-
sional swindle to sustain himself, his assistant, and his traveling companion,
the Lustful Queen of La. An amusing book, much in the same vein as CIRCUS OF DR. LAC.
(Possibly not as good as the former book, but enjoyable and well worth your money.)
(83)

NONE BUT MAN, by Gordon Dickson [DAW #266, $1.75] Interplanetary politics and human
chauvinism threaten human's relations with an intelligent alien race. A reasonably
good plot, lots of action, characters that are cardboard but still somewhat sympa-
thetic. Worth your money as an interplanetary adventure. It runs 240 pages, which
seems to be the coming thing; most readers seem to want long books. I don't, but
I've read enough of them to know how to skip the padding by now. (55)

OUT OF THEIR MINDS, by Clifford D. Simak [Berkley, $1.25] A man finds a way into a
world where the human imagination is made real; dragons, comic-strip characters, and
characters from all of fiction exist. And from that world, the Devil is plotting
against this one. Generally enjoyable; the plot is fairly standard but the idea is
amusing and the characters acceptable. (61)

A TORRENT OF FACES, by James Blish and Norman L. Knight [Ace, $1.50] Future overpop-
ulation, a crisis, and a solution of sorts. Fairly standard action-adventure. The
authors have chosen a much higher future-population level than most; the average
story of this sort infers a breakdown at a much lower level, and the gadgetry that
keeps that size population more or less alive is interesting. The plot isn't all
that great, nor are the characters. (51)

EMPIRE OF THE ANTS, novelized by Lindsay West [Ace, $1.95] If the author is smart,
he used a pseudonym. Novelizations are always limited by the quality of the material
being novelized, and that's a pretty severe limit on this one. But the quality of the
writing is eminently suitable for the quality of the movie. About the time I ran
across the phrase "she sardonicked" I started wondering if the author wasn't some
California fan having fun at the expense of the publisher. But I'm also willing to
believe that it was done seriously; it's that sort of book. (22)

SOLO KILL, by S. Kye Boult [Berkley, $1.50] The Drak stories from Analog, assembled
into a novel. I always enjoyed the series; they were good alien-planet adventure
stories and never pretended to be anything more, and the postulated societies were
interesting. The plot is of course a trifle episodic -- a necessity, considering
the original publication -- but it is competently worked out and is sufficient to
keep the story moving. Nice, lightweight adventure. (66)
THE FINAL CIRCLE OF PARADISE, by Arkadi & Boris Strugatski [DAW #218, $1.25] As far as I can tell, the Strugatskis are the best of the Communist-country science fiction writers, but even their Russian philosophy gets to be a bit much at times. This is a flawed Utopia which is a satire on certain trends in society. (It looks a lot like an extrapolated US society viewed through Russian-tinted glasses, but I gather there are similar trends in the USSR these days, though somewhat more repressed than ours.) I even agree pretty much with the authors' philosophy, but I still had a hard time getting through this particular book.

CALLAHAN'S CROSSTIME SALOON, by Spider Robinson [Ace, $1.50] Barroom stories have a particular fascination for sf writers -- and readers -- which I've never quite understood. (Possibly for any readers, considering the popularity of various mundane fictions concerning literary bars of one sort or another.) Never having thought highly of bars as a source of social life -- so far, I've never been that desperate for conversation -- I suppose I'm prejudiced against that sort of story. As the genre goes, however, Robinson does a competent if not inspiring job. If you didn't read the stories in Analog, they're entertaining and well worth your money. (If you did -- and I did -- I wouldn't recommend re-reading.)

POISON OF NIGHT, by E.C. Tubb [DAW #272, $1.50] Dumbest story #17. If you're following the series, this one is now available. I'm not following it.

TIME OF THE FOURTH HORSEMAN, by Chelsea Quinn Yarbro [Ace, $1.50] I reviewed the hardcover a while back. I didn't like the science then, and on re-reading -- or re-skimming -- I don't even like the plot or the characters.

THE VISIBLE MAN, by Gardner Dozois [Berkley, $1.75] I don't read Dozois; if you do, this is a collection of short stories. Twelve of them, all of them reprinted from various original-story anthologies, mostly Orbit.

BEST SCIENCE FICTION STORIES OF THE YEAR, edited by Lester del Rey [Ace, $1.79] Interesting; Ace put out two of these, 7 months apart, This one includes "The Bitter Bread" by Poul Anderson (a scientific "Flying Dutchman"), "Mail Supremacy" by Hayford Pierce (what does a Galactic Federation do?), "Child of All Ages" by P.J. Plauger (immortality in a child's body -- and the problems therein), "Tree of Life" by Phyllis Eisenstein (the problems of selecting the proper alien host), "Helment Four" by Stephen Robinett (saving Earth in spite of itself), "Pop Goes the Weasel" by Bob Haskins (robot inflexibility), "The Book Learners" by Liz Hufford (the problem of controlling a literal-minded people), "High Yield Bondage" by Hayford Pierce (soup up the native technology to get your ship repaired), "Senior Citizen" by Clifford Simak (extrapolating the boredom of the retired), and "The Peddler's Apprentice" by Joan D. and Vernor Vinge (guiding the barbarians). A fair assortment; Plauger is outstanding, Anderson, Eisenstein, and Vinge are good, and most of the rest are entertaining.

THE YEAR'S BEST HORROR STORIES, edited by Jerry Page [DAW #250, $1.50] "The Service" by Jerry Sohl, "Long Hollow Swamp" by Joseph Payne Brennan, "Sing a Last Song of Valdase" by Karl Edward Wagner, "Harold's Blues" by Glen Singer, "The Well" by H. Warner Munn, "A Most Unusual Murder" by Robert Bloch, "Huddra" by Tanith Lee, "Shatterday" by Harlan Ellison, "Children of the Forest" by David Drake, "The Day It Rained Lizards" by Arthur Byron Cover, "Followers of the Dark Star" by Robert Edmond Alter, "When All the Children Call My Name" by C.L. Grant, "Belsen Express" by Fritz Leiber, and "Where the Woodbine Twineth" by Manly Wade Wellman. This is the original publication of the Munn, Lee, Cover, and Grant stories, which gives you an idea of the state of horror-fiction writing. The Grant, Singer, and Brennan stories are good; the Munn and Drake stories are equally good but not at all horrifying. The rest run from mediocre to awful.
THE YEAR'S BEST FANTASY STORIES, edited by Lin Carter [DAW #267, $ .50] A lot of worthwhile stories: "Budoric's Unicorn" by L. Sprague de Camp, "Shadow of a Demon" by Gardner Fox, "King of Black Stone" by Pat McIntosh, "The Lonely Songs of Laren Dorr" by George R. R. Martin, "Two Suns Setting" by Karl Edward Wagner, "The Stairs in the Crypt" by Clark Ashton Smith, "The Robbin Blade" by Raul Garcia Capella, "The Dark King" by C.J. Cherryh, "Black Moonlight" by Lin Carter, "The Snout in the Alcove" by Gary Myers, and "The Pool of the Moon" by Charles R. Saunders. This is the original publication of the de Camp, Cherryh, Myers, and Capella stories. The best stories of the year can't even get published prior to selection? That makes more of a mockery of "best" anthologies than even the proliferation of titles does. Putting "best" on a DAW anthology seems to be a marketing device and nothing else. (Though at least Wollheim is being honest about it, one might say...) De Camp, Martin, McIntosh, Cherryh, and Saunders are fair; the rest are best ignored. (Any "best" anthology that includes Gardner Fox -- or Lin Carter -- is suspect from the start.) (35)

THE BEST FROM THE REST OF THE WORLD, edited by Don Wollheim [DAW #268, $1.75] I reviewed the hardcover some months back and was generally unimpressed. Fourteen stories from western Europe, in 316 pages. Four of the 14 are worth reading. (35)

THE THREE PALLADINS, by Harold Lamb [Don Grant, $12.00] A more or less mythical account of how Genghis Khan's major officers -- Chepe Nayou, Subotai, and Ye Lui Kutsai Mingan -- joined his standards. Originally a pulp serial, so the history is subordinated to the adventure and the exotic Asian background. A good story by pulp standards; not all that great in comparison to what Lamb did later. Lightweight but moderately entertaining. Artwork by Cathy Hill; not all that great, though I like the desert scene. (59)

SWORDS AGAINST DARKNESS II, edited by Andy Offutt [Zebra, $1.95] Original-story anthology. "Sword of Unbelief" by Andre Norton (part of a novel rather than a story, but her usual excellent background), "The Changer of Names" by Ramsey Campbell (mercenary swordsmen versus magic; adequate but uninspiring), "The Dweller in the Temple" by Manly Wade Wellman (a fairly original variant on the wandering swordsman plot), "The Coming Age in Zamora" by David H. Harris (the problems of exercising droit du seigneur when you're getting old), "The Scroll of Thoth" by Richard Tierney (Egyptian magic in Rome; also reading more like part of a novel than an individual story), "Odds Against the Gods" by Tanith Lee (a humorous episode; best item in the book), "On Skellig Michael" by Dennis More (tricking the self-righteous), and "Last Quest" by the editor (a fair adventure story with a nice ending). Overall, about average for swords and sorcery. If you like s&s, you'll enjoy the book; if you don't, you won't. Personally, I don't. (44)

ALPHA B, edited by Robert Silverberg [Berkley, $1.50] "A Dusk of Idols" by James Blish, "The Human Operators" by Ellison and van Vogt, "Think Only This of Me" by Michael Kurland, "The Short Ones" by Raymond E. Banks, "Warm" by Robert Shockey, "When the Change-Winds Blow" by Fritz Leiber, "One-Face" by Larry Niven, "The Man Who Lost the Sea" by Theodore Sturgeon, "The Happiest Creature" by Jack Williamson, "Klysterman's Silent Violin" by Michael Rogers, and "The New Reality" by Charles Harness. I read all of them when they first appeared, and most of them I totally forgot between then and now. And I can think of more enjoyable things than being reminded of them, for that matter. Some are good enough if unmemorable; most are long on symbolism and short on story. (34)

PEREGRINE: PRIMUS, by Avram Davidson [Ace, $1.50] Maybe pb publication will inspire Avram to write Peregrine: Secundus, and get this series moving. As it is, it's a fascinating account of how Peregrine's father, "the last pagan king in lower Europe," starts Peregrine off to seek his fortune. ("Always a wench, you know, sending off me bastard sons like this.") As it stands, however, just as Peregrine gets himself well
involved in an Adventure, the book ends. It's lovely as far as it goes, but it doesn't provide an ending. (67)

SECRET OF SCORPIO, by Alan Burt Akers [DAW #269, $1.50] This series has by now gone on long enough to bore me completely, but it's a fair enough sample of Burroughs-type adventures on barbaric planets, if you care for that sort of thing. Features cover an interiors by Josh Kirby.

FOTONOVEL #3: THE TROUBLE WITH TRIBBLES [Bantam, $1.95] Third in the series of "Star Trek" fumetti. The full-color photos make it a good memento of the installment. I enjoyed it, though I certainly don't expect to buy every volume in the series. (The Trekkies will, though.)

PERRY RHODAN: MENACE OF ATOMICEDDON/ATLAN: FLIGHT FROM TARKIHL [Ace, $1.75] This is the second of the Atlan series; doesn't say what number Rhodan it is. The two series are not related, except by being more or less the same authors (and both being interminable open-ended series).

PERRY RHODAN: ATLAN #4 and 5 [Ace, $1.75] Atlan is on its own with this book, the Perry Rhodan name being kept on the cover for reader identification. According to a note in the back of this volume, Ace is dropping Rhodan (it wasn't put quite that way) and another publisher will issue it "by subscription only". Same unnamed publisher (FPCL, perhaps?) will start the s&s series, DRAGON, by the same authors, and apparently ATLAN is being kept "on trial" by Ace. I'll venture a guess that it doesn't last long.

THE STARCHILD TRILOGY, by Frederik Pohl and Jack Williamson [Pocket Books, $1.95] "The Reefs of Space," "Starchild," and "Rogue Star," reprinted in one 440-page volume. It's a nice, complicated adventure story which I have never quite been able to finish, a problem I often have with Pohl's novels. (Which is odd, because I know he's a good writer and I like his shorter works.)

PAST MASTER, by R.A. Lafferty [Ace, $1.50] Reprint of the novel which made Lafferty's reputation in the fan world. (Predictably, I didn't like it as well as I have all his other work.) Basically, Lafferty is being philosophical and terribly serious -- serious for him, that is -- and I like his less restrained material much better. (56)

THE KING IN YELLOW, by Robert W. Chambers [Ace, $1.50] Contains 10 stories; 5 fantasies and 5 war stories (Franco-Prussian War). The fantasies -- "The Repairer of Reputations," "The Mask," "In the Court of the Dragon," "The Yellow Sign," and "The Demoiselle D'Ys," are excellent. (So are the war stories, for that matter, but fewer fans will be interested in them.) They are not -- despite the cover blurb -- "Notable heights of cosmic fear"; they range from rather gentle fantasy to a couple of quite ghastly items. But they're well worth reading, if you haven't already done so. (74)

DR. CYCLOPS, by Will Garth [Centaur Books, $1.50] I reviewed the hardcover a while back. "Garth" is a pseudonym for Henry Kuttner (yes it is; let's not start that again) and the story was made into a notable horror movie back in the good old days. (Or, to be more accurate, the book is a novelisation of the movie.) Despite this secondrate start, it's a good adventure novel, with people shrunk to the size of chipmunks attempting to destroy the Mad Scientist who shrunk them. (71)

THE MASK OF CIRCE, by Henry Kuttner [Ace, $1.50] A modern man is thrown back into a Greek myth; this sort of thing used to be very popular in the pulps. (It saved a lot of energy in thinking up plot and background.) Kuttner does one of the better jobs, with characters that are at least moderately interesting. Some nice Alicia Austin artwork, though it's underinked in places. (61)
AFTER THINGS FELL APART, by Ron Goulart [Ace, $1.50] One of Goulart's typical looks at a fragmented -- and malfunctioning -- future, where data boxes bark at you instead of supplying information, recording machines make snide remarks about people doing the recording, and a feminist organization is out to wipe out the males in the more or less sovereign nation of San Francisco.

THE COSMIC RAPE, by Theodore Sturgeon [Pocket Books, $1.50] Not one of Sturgeon's better efforts, but acceptable. Ostensibly a story of Mankind faced with a Cosmic Menace, it is, like most of Sturgeon's work, a look at what makes people tick. For once, though, the characters seemed artificial; interacting more like a mechanical toy than like Sturgeon's usual all-too-human people. Still interesting -- but not outstanding.

CONJURE WIFE, by Fritz Leiber [Ace, $1.95] Nice to see some of the stf writers getting the fancy covers and best-seller packaging. This is a novel that I've never been able to get interested in, despite the fact that all my friends including Juanita insist that it's a very good book. Obviously, the fault here is in me, not in the writing. The plot concerns black magic on campus, the revelation is somewhat more startling than in the current wave of Satanist novels (this one is 25 years old) and the characters are a better grade of cardboard than most. If you haven't read it at some time in the past 25 years, by all means try a copy. (After all, Juanita has better taste than I do...)

OUT OF THE DEEPS, by John Wyndham [Ballantine/Del Rey, $1.75] Copyrighted the same year as the Leiber up there. One of the classic British disaster novels; our heroes must survive in the face of alien assaults and human squabbles over the ruins. They do, of course. Fairly simple plot and background, handled effectively.

OUR FRIENDS FROM FROLIX 8, by Philip K. Dick [Ace, $1.50] By the time this came along, I had pretty well lost interest in Dick's writing; he tends to worry at certain ideas like reality, over and over, without coming to any conclusion, or even illuminating the subject. This is of course philosophic, from the viewpoint that emotions are superior to logic -- particularly good emotions like love and compassion. It's received some very good reviews; I never did finish it, but don't let that stop you from trying it for yourself.

STURGEON IS ALIVE AND WELL, by Theodore Sturgeon [Pocket Books, $1.50] Reprint of one of the better collections of Sturgeon short stories. "To Here and the Easel" combines rather fascinating philosophy with some of the worst puns I've ever encountered. "Slow Sculpture" was a Hugo winner in 1960, and deservedly so. The other 10 are considerably lesser items, but generally worth reading, and the first two are worth the price of the book anyway. One small cavil; I would like more pages and larger print, even if it requires a higher price. This thing is hard to read.

MOONDUST, by Thomas Burnett Swann [Ace, $1.50] A pair of good books with singularly non-cover artists to be used with Swann. The books are fantasies based on mythology; Roman and Etruscan in WEIRWOODS, Jewish in MOONDUST. They're rather quietly pleasant stories; Swann's writing is closer to Robert Nathan than it is to any other well-known-to-the-general-public writer. I thoroughly enjoyed them both. Of the two, WEIRWOODS is a trifle better.

HAVE SPACE SUIT -- WILL TRAVEL, by Robert A. Heinlein [Ballantine/Del Rey $1.75] I wonder how many of today's fans know where that title came from? One of the Master's better juveniles; one of Heinlein's specialties is taking a silly, overworked plot and writing it so that you not only suspend your disbelief in the plot but get emotionally involved with the characters. This book is a prime example; kidnapped by
space pirates, for heaven's sake? But it works, once you're past the initial shock. Not really top quality adult science fiction, but ideal for mundane teenagers or fans in the early teens, or a trifle younger.

A PRIVATE COSMOS, by Philip José Farmer [Ace, $1.50] The third and fourth books in BEHIND THE WALLS OF TERRA, by Philip José Farmer [Ace, $1.50] the author's "world of tiers" series. COSMOS was always my favorite of the lot; Kickaha is a more entertaining character than Farmer's first protagonist, Wolff. TERRA is not only part of a series; it's part of a continued story that quits at a cliffhangers, in the best traditions of pulp serials. (It quit there in 1970, and even though the next book is now on the stands I've lost all of what enthusiasm I had for reading it. But I'll try to at least skim it by the next issue; title is THE LAVALITE WORLD.) Anyway, TERRA is sadly disappointing; I think that setting it on Earth was a mistake. Take away the exotic background and you have left a very ordinary adventure story. COSMOS (72) TERRA (51)

DAMNATION ALLEY, by Roger Zelazny [Berkley, $1.75] A reprint, illustrated with scenes from the movie. (Which aren't going to make much sense in the context of the book, because a lot of changes were made between book and movie. All of them for the worse, according to friends who have seen the movie version.) The book is a long way from Zelazny's best material, but it's a fair lightweight adventure story; a little more gruesome than most. Futuristic motorcycle gangs. (55)

THE PLANET WIZARD, by John Jakes [Ace, $1.50] Being a big-name writer has one rather double-edged advantage: all your old stories are suddenly in demand as reprints — and all your new readers can then see what a lousy writer you were when you were first published. Actually, this is about an average account of intrigues in a culture where superscience is regarded as magic. Characters, like the plot, are stock, but it's an enjoyable enough time-waster. Nice cover by Alex Ebel, and I'm glad to see him back doing sf artwork. (44)

STORMBRINGER, by Mike Moorcock [DAW #264, $1.50] Sixth in the authorized version of the Elric series. My reactions are mixed; I recall enjoying this thoroughly when I first read it in the magazines (in 1964, it says), but since then I have read too much Elric (and too much Moorcock in general) to care about re-reading it. Once was quite enough. So I recommend it without making any specific comments. In general, this is swords and sorcery plotted like Greek (or Irish) tragedy; our Hero is doomed, and whatever he does he cannot escape his fate. And his actions often serve to unintentionally doom his comrades. A great innovation in s&s, back in 1964, but a trifle monotonous after 13 years and six volumes of the same stuff. (57)

CONAN THE USURPER, by Robert E. Howard & L. Sprague de Camp [Ace, $1.95] These are CONAN THE AVENGER, by Howard, de Camp, and Björn Nyberg [Ace, $1.95] #8 and 10 in the Conans series (the two books I couldn't locate when I reviewed the other 8 volumes last issue). Conan is the first and probably the best of the sword-and-sorcery series, which isn't saying all that much. The books are sort of fun, if they're not taken seriously and read at the rate of not more than one per week. (28)

ALMURIC, by Robert E. Howard [Berkley, $1.95] This is probably the worst novel Howard ever wrote. If you approach it with the correct attitude, it can be hysterically if unintentionally funny — otherwise, it's just dull. Unlike Conan, Eau Cairn is so much larger than life that he's ridiculous. Interesting art — why is a "full color foldout poster" made up of two different pictures with an obvious juncture line down the middle of it? At that, it's better than the text. (28)

BRASK VS. THE SORCERESS, by John Jakes [Pocket Books, $1.50] Brak isn't really a name; it's a reaction to the writing in here. I suppose Jakes wasn't the poorest of the
Conan imitators -- Gardner Fox and Robert Moore Williams lead the competition for that dubious honor -- but he was well down there. Brak is a sort of poor man's Conan, moving through the same sort of adventures without any of the sincerity that Howard managed to get into his creation. Conan, silly as he was, had a strange believability; Brak is just one more piece of cardboard.

**THE BRADBURY CHRONICLES,** by George Edgar Slusser [Borgo Press, PO Box 7589, Van Nuys CA 91409 - $1.95] A 60-pp critical essay on Bradbury. I'm not expert on critical essays, but this seems mostly good enough. A couple of nits to pick; at one point the author says "...we should not call him a fantasy writer either, for rarely in his stories the machinery of fantasy exist for its own sake." (The definition of fantasy depends on whether or not the machinery is present, not on what it's used for. This comes perilously close to the old mundane reasoning that science fiction can't be any good because anything that's good can't be science fiction.) And he says that many of Bradbury's forces are natural rather than fantastic, though "he finds his answers not in new laws of nature, but in old ones like original sin." I suppose that depends on whether or not you regard original sin as a fantasy -- I do, but presumably Slusser doesn't. But overall, the essay makes its points and supports them well enough and I won't argue against them.

**HARLAN ELLISON: UNREPENTANT HARLEQUIN,** by George Edgar Slusser [Borgo Press, $1.95] Another 60 pages. I know Harlan personally, but I've never really read much of his work. (Yes, that happens to be cause and effect.) Slusser's comments agree very well with what I know of Harlan, but I don't know enough to be much of a critic. I did like one sentence: "Ellison's journalism is not objective; rather it is opinionated and impassioned." Right on! (I'm equally opinionated but less impassioned, if you were wondering.) Slusser feels that Harlan's egotism is simply a literary image, adopted consciously as a method of enlarging the impact of his writing. Possible -- but how many image-makers eventually come to believe their own creations? (Personally, I doubt that whole line of reasoning. I think the personality which is constantly "on" -- in stage terms -- is part of the real person.) However, Harlan is certainly enough of a "name" to demand inclusion in Borgo's critical series, and essay itself seems accurate enough, as far as my limited knowledge of the subject goes. I'd guess that Harlan wouldn't like it, but I wouldn't bet money on my guess.

**FANTASTIC FOUR,** by Stan Lee [Pocket Books, $1.95] The first 6 issues of the comic, reduced in size to standard pb format. If you're really desperate to read these early installments, I suppose it might be worth the price. Cheaper than trying to buy the originals, anyway.

**THE DEVIL IN A FOREST,** by Gene Wolfe [Ace, $1.50] I reviewed the hardcover a while back, A more or less juvenile-oriented historical novel. (Not "historical romance").

Ace blurbs it as a fantasy, but it isn't; it's a grimly accurate story of medieval peasant life -- and an excellent book. Pass up a fantasy and buy it.

by the man Gunn feels is the father of science fiction, "The Star," by H.G.Wells. There is editorial commentary on each story, placing it as to type and location within the history. It's a good solid background. In general I dislike excerpts, but too many of the early items here, are too long to be included in their entirety -- and most of them would have bored me beyond measure before I finished them, anyway. Besides, this is an informative anthology, not an entertaining one, and the excerpts are sufficient to provide the information required. Recommended to anyone studying the field.

I AM NOT SPOCK, by Leonard Nimoy [Ballantine, $1.75] A sort of biographical history of Nimoy's acting career, with of course the accent on the role that made him famous. Seems to be quite well done. (I note that he disliked the third season of ST; he doesn't go quite so far as to say that Freiberger killed off the show -- I'll go that far, however -- but he points out that something killed off all the ideas and originality that made thousands of people write to the networks to save it after the first two years.) The book will mostly be bought by Trekkies, but it's a fair depiction of the acting career in general.

STAR TREK 12, by James Blish with J.A. Lawrence [Bantam, $1.75] Five more episodes adapted to short story form. Blish was never all that great at the adaptations, but this series is somewhat of a classic by now. Nostalgia.

THE ANCIENT MAGIC OF THE PYRAMIDS, by Ken Johnson [Pocket Books, $1.75] Through some truly grandiose leaping to conclusions ("For if, as I have demonstrated, the Egyptians were so advanced in astronomy and mathematics, is it not likely that they were similarly accomplished in metallurgical skills and that there was more than trickery to the original art of alchemy?") the author "proves" that the pyramids are a "focus" for psychic energies. This can be funny, if you're in the right mood. The fact that a given pyramid "contained no sarcophagus" is given as part of the proof that it was not designed as a tomb; but the fact that "no such columns [as are required by his theory] have been discovered at the Khuuf pyramid" is waved away as of no consequence. Like most occultists, he knows the truth and won't be distracted by inconvenient facts. (However, if you consider the sales of this sort of crap, you might want to cry instead of laugh.)

WEIRD AND TRAGIC SHORES, by Chauncey Loomis [remaindered] I've had this around for years, but the days when we were snowed in seemed a good opportunity to read up on polar exploration. This is a biography of Charles Francis Hall, who tried for the North Pole, got farther north than anyone before him, and died on his third expedition in 1871. (Of arsenic poisoning, which lends another mystery to his story. In a weird postscript to his life, the poisoning was authenticated by an autopsy performed in 1968; the remains were still frozen into the soil.) A thoroughly fascinating account of early Polar exploration. There was a paperback some years ago, and a Short TV special made from the book.

THE FLIGHT OF THE EAGLE, by Per olof Sundman [gift] The story of S.A. Andree, who attempted to fly over the north Pole in a balloon in 1897 -- and who also died mysteriously. The author suspects trichinosis from polar bear meat, since there is evidence to show that he didn't starve or freeze, or suffocate from fumes in his tent. I would prefer a straight historical account to the author's novelization, but it's still an interesting story of a completely bizarre episode in Polar expeditions.

WINNER LOSE ALL, by Hugh Eames [remaindered] The author is trying to vindicate the memory of Dr. Cook, and show that he probably did reach the North Pole a year ahead of Peary. It's more a political than a polar history, but it's interesting. I tend to favor Cook (but then I tend to like Benedict Arnold, too). Certainly the author shows Peary as an unmitigated bastard, but that's rather beside the point. There are definite points in Cook's favor, but it's one of those things which will probably never be decided.
CRUMBLINGS

Chris Walker, 447 Belmont, #30, Chicago IL 60657

Dave Locke's column is hilarious, as usual. Also scary. Actually hospitals seem to be great sources for stories of the inept, the incomprehensible, the unlikely, and the grotesque. All of my friends who work in hospitals have on-the-job stories that would raise the hair on your head. I have a friend who works a trauma center in another city. Most of their patients are accident/violence victims, or else disease referrals that other hospitals can't handle. She has some stories that are almost incredible. If you didn't hear similar stories about other hospitals they would be incredible.

She told me a couple of years ago they had a fire on her floor. Not a terribly damaging fire, but it took a long time to put it out and there were a lot of smoldering materials; I think she said the laundry room was involved. Anyway, it wasn't until after the blaze itself was extinguished that the real damage was established. It seems their super-efficient ventilations system had sucked up all the smoke, circulated it in some mysterious manner through the building, and then released it. Into the burn ward.

Pandemonium. You can imagine. They get really bad burn victims at this hospital. A few people came out of comas when the smell started escaping from the ventilators. Several people attempted to escape, frantic with the vividly revived memories of the fires that had put them in the burn ward in the first place. A couple of people went out windows. Sixth floor windows.

One of her other stories also involved a fire, this time just a small lab fire. My friend was in the room where it started, and, being a person who acts in a crisis and gets excited afterwards, attempted to put it out with a chemical extinguisher that was handy. Unfortunately the extinguisher burst in her hand. Liquid CO2. In the emergency room when they were bandaging her up she began to laugh hysterically -- after all, how many people can manage to get frostbitten in a fire?

[[We edited your letter slightly, Chris. I don't know how that hospital feels about being named, but I knew how I feel about unnecessary libel suits...RSC]]

Derek Nelson, 30 Denton Avenue
PH 1, Scarboro, Ontario, MIL 4P2
Went to Frobisher Bay June 25 on overnight charter. You fly out of Toronto about 8 p.m., arrive at 19:30 p.m. (?) or whatever, wander around through pool rooms, walk on tundra, and ice flows, see local artwork, etc. Fly back at 3 a.m. Half of a trip. It was worth the $200. Theory is you get to see the midnight sun and cross the Arctic circle before doubling back to Frobisher.
Personally I found northern Fin-
land more fun, but it fascinates me that James Bay, pn June 25, on a latitude south of Edmonton or Den-
mark, ice flows covered the deeper waters. I know I'm a Canadian and it's cold here, and ice takes
a long time to melt, etc., but damn it...

[[After reading 1 books on polar explora-
tion, your overnight charter sort
of emphasized the technological changes in the last hundred
years. RSC]]

Jackie Causgrove, 3650 Newton St
#15, Torrance CA 90505

Slowly but surely I'm get-
ting accustomed to So Cal. This
all looks/feels like a huge suburb
to suburban-hating me, but the
area we're in now, as well as the
person who's here too, makes up for
a lot. We've driven into the mountains
(1 hour), to the ocean (15 minutes), to
several botanical gardens (10 minutes and 1 1/2 hours), all sorts of shopping malls
and several fans' homes (Pelz's, Brennels', Lavender's, Hulan's, Atkins', and Cy Con-
dra's) as well as seeing Martha Beck while she was out here (she's back in Gary now,
for good, methinks), and Tucker and Mari Beth during his visit. I've visited and been
visited by my brother -- who lives in Orange County also -- and my Mom while she vaca-
tioned here. Even went to a con, of sorts, for a couple hours. (Saw Don Ayres and
By Chauvin there, midwest people gravitate towards each other in situations like that.)
Been over to Gil Gaier's (well.) for an evening too. All in all, I've seen quite a
bit of the area. Spud (my brother) drove my all over Orange County once and yester-
day Dave, his boy Brian, and I skipped along the LA County shoreline for a couple of
hours. Love the ocean. Love the mountains. Haven't seen much desert, though quite
a bit of scrublands, which I don't mind either.

[[A few more winters like this, and we may be out there with you. (Of all
the places I've visited, I like Canada the best -- somewhere in the Iron
Bridge/Blind River area -- but then, I've never visited there in the
winter and I'm getting older and more interested in warmth. RSC]]

Gene DeWeese, 2718 N. Prospect Ave., Milwaukee WI 53211

Guess you should be in the middle of Chambanacon right now. Fun, I assume. Bev
and I ended up driving Delany over to Madison for the afternoon and evening Friday.
Very nice guy, despite HALGREN. He's currently scripting a comic book strip called
EMPIRE, which features a couple of heroines that sound vaguely like civilized versions
of ours in GATES. A female Batman and Robin is how he described them once. About
future galactic ray guns and lizards and foundations and Darth Vaders sort of thing.
Supposed to be serialized in Heavy Metal and then issued as a fancy paperback.

Guess the Playboy Press thing is "really" official now. Got the signed contract
last weekend. Now I have only to wait for the first check. And then write the damned
thing. Not as long as they originally said -- only 85-115,000 words. And not due
till August. Now to find out when Sharon Carter at Doubleday really wants that next
gothic. She amended the contract to slip it a year, from April '77 to May '78, but
I'm not sure she wants it even then, really, since NIGHTMARE (the one I sent them
roughly a year ago) will not be out till next fall, if then.
Denny Liem, 2408 S. Dupont Ave., Apt. #1, Minneapolis MN 55405

1237: Having grown up on a farm (and disliking it), I certainly have no wish for such a "simpler" life.

"I can't get too excited over the problems of porno publishers." I might note that I suspect few people could get too excited over the problems of Laser Books hacks either... I might note that, but I won't. The Freedom to Read Foundation is almost the only organization that I went out of my way to pay money to join without even being asked first.

I share your lack of interest in "getting ahead", I turned down a promotion a couple of months ago and chance to possibly go full time (I'm 3/4) a couple of months before that. (At least I presume it was a promotion, as indicated by the fact that it would have been more work and more frustration and I would have got to supervise people. More money, maybe not...)

I do recommend Priest's THE INVERTED WORLD to you -- manipulating symbols or not, the situation is fascinating enough to make it well worth reading -- in spite of an eventual explanation which nobody I know has been able to believe for an instant.

Chicago Smokers' Court reported by local columnist Will Jones to deal with a suspiciously large number of blacks and other non-establishment types; he was not impressed (and considering how Will Jones hates smokers -- he makes me look like a moderate -- it must be disappointing.). The Minnesota Clean Air Act is not being exactly universally taken seriously either. I scowl and bitch a lot, which doesn't do my ulcer much good and rarely seems to affect the illegal smokers much either. I have fantasies about running around with a seltzer bottle.

Part of the boost in fannish telephonicism is probably due to the number of fen who have access (at work or whatever) to a WATS line. That well-known fen, Name Suppressed, has called me several times from East Coast on days when the Minn-Stf meeting was being held at my place and chatted with us all in turn. Must be nice.

If you want to pull the Introduce New Hampshire fandom to each other stunt again, you might want to tell Roger Waddington that if there is another fan in North Yorkshire: Al Fitzpatrick, 36 Hersfield, Barlby, Selby, N. Yorkshire, U.K.

[(A somewhat elderly letter (sorry, Denny), so I excerpted any parts that didn't seem impossibly dated. Considering my initial impression of Al Fitzpatrick, I'm not sure I want to introduce any of my acquaintances to him, but perhaps he improves on closer acquaintance, or when he's sober. (I don't intend to expend any time finding out, certainly.) RSC)]

Derek Nelson, address above

"All my Canadian friends keep telling me how noble and upright the Canadian govt is in comparison to the US." you said in last letter in connection with the Taiwan thing. All? Me? Those turkeys in Ottawa never had my respect when our PM stands at Norilk in Russia on the graves of a half-million slaves and says Canadians can learn from Moscow how to build in the North, or our PM toasts Viva Cuba with The Bearded One while Fidel's soldiers slaughter their way through Angola, or how our international CEC radio service changed its programming when the Russian ambassador told it to, or how Chilean refugees are aided to come here but Vietnamese and white Rhodesians are told distinctly they're unwelcome and won't receive aid, or...but why go on? I for one am literally almost sick about the way Ivan Head and his buddies determine our approach to foreign affairs. Taiwan and the Olympics was just the last straw in a long line of almost Evil actions.

Your comment about antiques from your father's place reminds me of a wine jug (160 ml) I saw on sale at a flea market near here. Price tag was $5 and the guy said he wouldn't go under $4. Fine. Then three weeks later I was in Montreal in their liquor stores and there is the identical jug -- with 160 ml of wine in it -- for $3.60 (or $4.20, I forget which). Yeah, I think people are gullible about "antiques". If it doesn't exist locally you can always claim it's old.

Our school books up here are being purged of "objectionable" material, that in
the eyes of the critics shows, for example, the Muslim rise in the Middle East in Western eyes. What really upsets me about that (above and beyond the obvious — that it's censorship) is that why shouldn't a textbook in Canada show things from a Western bias. It beats the hell out of it having a Muslim bias.

Juanita's observations about yearning for the Good Old Days strikes me as accurate, with perhaps one exception. While farming or smithing or whatever isn't my love by any stretch, I am attracted by any physical kind of job in a way I never can be by others, even writing. There's just something so satisfying about seeing a house demolished to its component timber, etc., or seeing the top line for a forest fire, or chopping wood, or whatever (to use examples I've participated in).

[Flea markets are chancier than "genuine" antique sales. They used to have some bargains; now they have mostly traps for suckers looking for bargains. I saw one battered old knife priced at $6.00, picked it up to check the make, and put it down again hastily. Same knife, brand new, is selling at local hardware stores for $3.25.// This was also an older letter that I thought still had some items of interest in it. RSC]]

Alice Hopf

I enclose a few clippings. The big one is about the pollution that has started up again around our "Farm". I believe I may have told you about the dreadful man who dumped chemicals into our stream (on his land) a couple of years ago, and polluted the whole neighborhood. (Some of our biggest and most beautiful trees have died since, and I suspect the polluted water, but I guess it would be hard to prove.) After various court injunctions, etc., he has supposedly stopped dumping. But now there has been another spill, which caused a poisonous cloud to settle on the area and required evacuation of the people. Did not get to us. But the Mrs. Paetzell mentioned in the clipping is our next neighbor. She really lives on Birch Road, which is our road, and runs into Lonely Cottage Road, where this public-spirited gent lives. It is all inconceivable to me how they can let such things go on. But apparently it must be handled at the local level. Ernest and Chris went to the Supervisors Meeting last Monday and joined in the complaints. It seems there is one law on the books that might cover this, but the fine that goes with it is... ten bucks! So they are getting a lawyer to draw up a new, tougher law. When you think of all the new zoning laws that they do have, this situation is amazing.

Eric Lindsay, 6 Hillcrest Ave., Paulconbridge NSW Australia 2778

I have a correction to my last letter. The Ozannes arrived back in Australia last Sunday. Must have been a hard time for them, because 68 houses in this area had been destroyed by fire on the Friday & Saturday. The fires were almost totally out of control on Sunday and were burning over a 45-mile front. Naturally the road was blocked, out by dires in several places, as was the railway line, so there was no way they could get up here. The phones were also out, since several exchanges were working on battery power only, and what were running were needed for emergency services. It seems the fire service radios do not work all that well in hilly country, and the regular fire brigade equipment is not on the same sort of frequency as the volunteer bush fire brigades that are the only service based in these areas. And naturally the army and the airforce spotter planes were also on different frequencies.

It wasn't until Monday, when things were a bit easier (the fires were still raging, but almost everything burnable in this area was already a heap of charcoal and ashes) that I was able to get a message through to the Ozannes, who were at Keith Curtin's palatious book-filled novel.

They finally turned up here on Wednesday sometime, and when I mentioned that ten dollars you have for Ken from Rusty, Ken told me he had given it to Rusty to give you, as a subscription to Vandro. It appears Rusty forgot why he had it in the first place.

I'll carry on a bit longer about the fires here. Ron & Sue Clarke's place was okay, for the fire was a hundred yards and more away, with several rows of houses in
between. Despite which, some idiot was suggesting evacuating. Mine was only a good 50 to 75 yards away from the fire, and again some idiot from the city went down the street telling people to evacuate. I treated that suggestion with the contempt it deserved, but a lot of the people who hadn't been in the area long did rush away, (I agree it is a good idea to move children and elderly or infirm persons out of the area, if only to prevent smoke inhalation, but telling able-bodied people to go is stupid, since they can put out spot fires on houses and do mopping up after the professional fire crews leave to fight the main front). I was cut off from Ken's place for a while because of fires jumping the road in two places, blocking both ends of it, but there was a tanker & crew near there. His place was in more danger than the rest, with the burnt stuff ending within ten feet of the house in spots, and indeed some stuff in his shed caught fire, but must have gone out from lack of air -- really lucky, for the shed had a bunch of pulps in it, stored there when Ken left.

I was worried about my mother's place when the fires were heading there, and the 60 kph winds didn't help any. Sneaked past the police who were turning people back from the streets (I know the back ways, and it is easier to be sneaky than to convince them you should be there). She was prepared ok, had the place all wet, and all the door and window gaps sealed with wet material, and had a case of valuables ready in the event she did have to get out. The flames were about 20 feet or more high, came with a rush fanned by the wind, and we had to get back in a hurry; but there were a couple of fire tenders and a 4000 gallon petrol tanker full of water there (several gas companies had a drivers' strike at the time, so they lent their tankers -- there must have been dozens of them bringing water up from the river). It burnt within about 20 feet of the house, but didn't even scorch the paintwork, thanks to all the water about. A bit later, after the front had moved, we ran out of tap water and had to use buckets to get out all the little bits still burning.

It was lucky the biggest burn was on a Sunday, for I suspect that if it had happened during the week, when homeowners were away, and when the brushfire brigade people are at their jobs, there would have been many hundreds of homes lost. As it was, it has burnt up much of the national park. Most of the area looks like a wasteland. Blackened trees sticking out of the soil, which itself is uniformly covered in ash. Virtually all the low scrub is gone, leaving only dead twigs. It wasn't a crown fire in most areas, so some trees still have leaves, but they are scorched and brown instead of the usual green. Some will survive, but many will not. At least half the animal life is gone. Even the birds. Only one of the two possums that used to go to my mother's place are back, only four kookaburras, where there used to be a dozen, one bowerbird, where there were four. Normally timid birds are approaching houses to get water or food. Ants are out in droves in the unburnt areas and in houses. It is a sad sight.

[[You didn't say what Ken's address was, and I've mislaid it. So you'll get this copy along with yours, this round; pass it along. Your letter should sound familiar to Californians. Not many forest or brush fires in Indiana. Not much forest, for one thing, and too much moisture most of the time. Especially in this area. RSC]]

Robert E. Briney, 4 Forest Avenue, Salem MA 01970

Just saw an item in a newsletter from the United Postal Stationery Society concerning an impending change in postal regulations that I haven't seen
mentioned anywhere else. The item claims that as of April 15 1978 any postal item measuring less than 3 1/2 by 5 inches will be unmailable. This includes not only all small odd-sized envelopes (for thank-you notes, etc.), but all U.S. Postal cards issued since 1897 (except for the oversized Tourism cards of a few years ago). So don't hoard current or past postal cards if you expect to use them for the purpose for which they were issued. The Galveston Court House card is the first to be issued in the new 'acceptable' size. (I'll know by the end of this week whether the Salem or Boston P.O.'s will have the cards or whether I'll have to order them from Washington.)

I did manage to read THE SWORD OF SHANNARRA, and found it interesting enough to keep my going. The first half was far too slavishly imitative, but there were some good bits in the second half. But it is a good thing that what's-his-name didn't reveal the secret of the sword early in the book -- I would have stopped reading right then.

Tri'd to get into THE SEEKING SWORD, but the style turned me off. Perhaps I'll try it again when I'm in a different mood. As for LORD FOUL'S BANE (one of the world's worst titles), I found it too dull for words, and gave up in the middle of the hero's first conversation with what I gather was Lord Foul.

Read THE BEST OF LEIGH BRACKETT cover to cover, and loved every minute of it. Have also read a couple of recent biographies of Arthur Conan Doyle, both of which spent far too much time chastising Doyle for his gullibility in believing in spiritualism and his insensitivity in not showing a 1970s-level consciousness in his social attitudes. Also THE YELLOW SCARF by Sir Francis Tuker, an account of the battle against Thuggee in 19th Century India (actually a biography of 'Thuggee' Sleeman, the principal British officer responsible for suppressing the practice). And I came close to drooling over the color plates by Fabian in Hodgson's THE DREAM OF X, and couldn't help but feel that Hodgson was on the right track in attempting to condense THE NIGHT LAND down to 20,000 words. I forged all the way through the full-length version about twenty years ago, but couldn't repeat the feat today.

[[Per my information in MEMO TO MAILERS, the odd-sized envelopes won't be "unmailable" but will require a "surcharge". However, the chart that came with it (it's not just small envelopes that are affected, but any envelope with an "unfavorable aspect ratio") referred to "letter-sized mail," which would seem to except postcards. First-class mail may also not be more than 1/4" thick. But the deadline for this has already been postponed once (to late 1978) and may well be postponed another time or two -- or indefinitely. I'm using up my odd-sized envelopes, though.]]

Ed Cagle, Star Rt So, Box 80, Locust Grove OK 74352

One result of concrete tent platforms for staff was that 75 percent of the tent floors were carpeted in one manner or another. Our staff comes from hard-pressed families. During one rain I was tickled to note that the sudden fall of rainwater resulted in a lot of wet carpeting, and justified to learn that poor care afterward resulted in most of the stuff being ruined. Staff members live like swine. Just like most teenagers away from mom and dad.

Summer camp was only marginally successful this year. The opening night of camp, someone beat to death three little girls in the girl scout camp half a mile off our western boundary. It cast a pall, understandably, and almost immediately a manhunt was begun for a convicted rapist escapee who has lived in these woods for the
past four years. Then someone allegedly spotted the guy, and the shit hit the fan. Local law, the OK Highway Patrol, the OK Bureau of Investigation, and eventually the FBI brought in their tough guys and created a circus. Then the media, both local and national, added their own peculiar influence to the mess. After a few days the FBI came here and -- with council permission and individual permission -- finger-printed everyone in camp over the age of 16. It created a bad mood in camp, and scared hell out of the younger campers. We set up night patrols, and kept at it all season. Wearisome, and aside from making a few adults feel better, pointless.

Now, nothing has developed, and the various law enforcement agencies involved are engaged in their own little political wars. The conflicts resulted in mass confusion on all fronts, bar none. Odd season.

To find a Kate Wilhelm book that pleased me would not only surprise, it would astonish. I'll take your word for it. Her short work put me off her, that and arguing with Delap about her work...

You mentioned craftwork. Scouts no longer turn out the excellent leather and beadwork, etc., they once did. Lazy. Now they build baskets, from a kit, for a merit badge.

We hosted an Israeli boy (scout) this year. He was a refreshing change from American boys, but he drove the scoutcraft staff up the wall with his projects. He also told the cook she-cooked all the wrong things, the wrong way, and too much. Tickled me. There were a couple of good arguments with scoutmasters about religion, too. I tried to get Haim to visit Ben Indick when he went east, but his schedule was too tight (had to get home and go into the Army).

Locke will be here in two weeks. We plan a fanzine, among other things. I'm presently mulling my part, to have it written before he arrives. The way we operate it is difficult to write while producing the zine. Too much bullshit over drinks.

I seem to recall you mentioning once having broken a rib coughing. I've joined the club. I was on my side on the couch, doubled up, half asleep, dead tired, and got choked. Felt it snap, and I'm definitely still feeling the results.

[[(That was in July, and we haven't seen any results of Locke's visit yet. (Or at least, not of Locke's visit to Cagle.) The girl scout murders were on the news here, but I didn't know they were that close to you.// As an ex Boy Scout, I've been moderately appalled at Ed's description of today's Scouts. RSC]]

Sandra Miesel, 6744 N. Pennsylvania St., Indianapolis IN 46240

I have another hurry-up assignment from Ace to do an afterword to HOME FROM THE SHORE. Unfortunately, Gordy hasn't finished writing it yet. (But will send me a rough draft and notes.) They, too, are doing a line of large illustrated trade books. This is in addition to a short article about Gordy and a Saberhagen afterword. Jim Baen is coming to Minicon. We'll have to show him what proper Midwestern fannish hospitality is. He doesn't know about such things.

That Zelazny parody certainly hits Roger's principal mannerisms. I hope Stewart isn't shaved by a mob of irate Amber freaks. The piece bears more than a passing resemblance to "A Knight for Mertha" that ran in the old fanzine KALLIKANZAROS because Roger wasn't able to sell it.

Must get that book on the Dowager Empress Bob Briney mentioned, something for Chirp when she's a bit older. A while back the museum here had a fine display of Manchu costumes and included photographs of Tau-Hei. The girls were horrified to hear me identify her as a wicked empress. They couldn't imagine such a thing existing because they imagined all female rulers to be cut on the lines of Elizabeth I. I hadn't the heart to try and explain the Empress Wu to them either.

Here's another story about invulnerable criminals. One of my friends who lives in the inner city had her car stolen for the second time this year, by the same kid. The police apprehended him after a high-speed chase and let him go because he's under age and they knew they couldn't make a case against him. He's well-known to them,
though, since he steals a car for joyriding or the average of once a day with no legal penalties whatever. Presumably when he turns 16 he's going to get stomped, but somehow I doubt it.

Surely you heard some of the bleeding-heart commentaries on the NYC looters being driven to their deeds by advertising and American conspicuous consumption. Guess all those ghetto folks who didn't loot are simply behind the times. Wait till East Coast radical groups start bombing power stations to set off such messes deliberately.

To solve the dilemma of moving versus new home advantages, once LUST IN THE DUST et al. profits are in, you could buy your present place, jack it up and reconstruct from the basement up piece by piece without every actually moving those mountains of books.

On the other hand, if left undisturbed indefinitely, the books, magazines, and fanzines might turn to coal or even fossilize, to be prized by gemcutters millennia hence as "Indians printed rock", a material that only the most skillful workers could bring to perfection, skinning off layer by precious layer so the ancient messages could be read. Not that we'd want you to be the cause of a new Shaver-type mystery...

[[Considering that the "printed rock" would have some of the original Shaver Mystery included...]]

Mark Sharpe, BWU #2, N.A.B., Little Creek VA 23521
Just got done reading CHARLES FORT NEVER MENTIONED WOMBATS and enjoyed it quite a bit, especially the cover. The Walden's people, where I ordered the book, talked with me for five minutes just discussing the cover, which they thought was "very interesting"; and they went even further to say they would have read the book had it not been a special order, based solely on the attraction of the cover. I learned more than I ever wanted to know about the sex lives of bamboo. I can just see Tucker waiting years with this introduction in mind, hoping somebody would let him use it. Very strange! Somehow, I don't picture Maydene Crosby as a Mary Worth, but I'll bet she got a few snickers out of your Tuckerism.

[[Actually, Mrs. Carlin first appeared in THE INVISIBILITY AFFAIR, but she wasn't on a first-name basis with Solo and Kuryakin, so we never gave her one. This time we needed one, and "Maydene" seemed appropriate. RSC]]

Gene Wolfe, Box 69 Barrington IL 60010
When Lou Tabakow was here, he went to spend the night with a mysterious friend who lived on North Hampden Court. I think he must have been sworn to secrecy, and certainly he kept the secret well. Welcome back, Jackie Causgrove.

Henry Gross, 69-31 108th St., Forest Hills NY 11375
Thank you very much for your rapid reply, as well as for the issue of Vandro. It doesn't seem to have changed all that much since 1971, although the green paper came as something of a shock. The editorials by yourself and Juanita project the same personalities that they did throughout the five years I read Vandro (and that is all to the good, as far as I'm concerned). I don't at all mind the large number of book reviews you are now using; I always had a pretty good idea of what your taste in literature was in relation to mine, and consequently I was able to use your reviews as sort of a Consumer's Report guide to sf. If you liked or disliked a given book, I could generally tell, with reasonable accuracy, what my own opinion of the book was likely to be, and whether or not I should bother to buy it.

The most important thing about the magazine, that I can only describe as its "tone," seems unchanged in the last five years. From your editorials all the way...
down to the letters in the letter column, everyone seems to be going about things with the same air of good natured humor that I remember from years back. And although I have seen only one recent issue, I must assume that this holds true for all of the others as well.

[Yandro is a rock of stability -- or perhaps just a fossil?]

Eric Lindsay, address above
Re "Things That Go Bump in the mailbox", do you have to label it "humor"? Or do you expect that your readers will be unable to determine that for themselves?
Not sure I like the idea of walking 4 miles in the snow; it would be cold, especially with a wind, or so I would imagine. Of course, I do walk about 2 miles each way to the railway station every day, but I'm used to that now, and it isn't a bother. Amazing how one is, when young, unwilling to admit to mistakes. And I guess the same goes when one is old (except for you, Buck; I assume you don't make mistakes).

[I certainly try not to admit mistakes. One never knows about our readers. Dewees was startled to find his article on Tom Swifties labelled "helpful". RSC]

Robert Bloch, 2111 Sunset Crest Drive, Los Angeles CA 90046
This is a facsimile of a card I mailed on 7/24 -- apparently in a daze, because I forgot to put a stamp on it, and it was returned yesterday. Sorry about that, because I was in a haste to congratulate you both on your dirty pro-ductivity. I wish you every success but hope it never leads to a house-purchase. Nobody can really own a home nowadays -- it belongs to the mortgage company, the board of tax assessors, the painters', plumbers', and electricians' unions. All you possess is the endless responsibility involved as you go through life -- or bankruptcy -- with this architectural albatross around your neck. True, you may have more privacy, but this only means it will take longer before your bodies are discovered. Guess what I'm trying to tell you is to take your millions in profits from writing and put them into something worthwhile, like more issues of Yandro.

[I can put up with a lot of responsibility for the right to design my own library and enlarge as needed. In our years of marriage we've moved up from a minuscule 3-room apartment to a huge 8-room farmhouse, and what do we do now that it's getting overcrowded? Either buy something we can remodel or rent a warehouse. (But we won't sink to the depths of ownership for some time yet; lack of cash.) RSC]

Florence Stevenson, 227 E. 57th Street, New York NY 10022
Time seems to have drifted by since you were kind enough to send me OPHELIA and THE FEAST -- and you must think me madly ungrateful. The whole bit is that I am still inundated with work -- which was why I phoned instead of writing. I have a moment now, and shall explain that I am still doing some corrections on the manuscript that sold to Lippincott -- tentative title CALL ME COUNSELOR. As I explained, it was written for and about Sara Halbert, a lady lawyer -- of great capabilities and considerable gusto, as well as guts.
Currently, I am involved in writing a movie with a friend, and working on my next book, a historical (hysterical) about a put-upon heroine of the seventies, who finds true love twice. I am also involved in another historical -- I wish I could write a humorous novel, but nobody seems to want it. However, DARK ENCOUNTER is coming out in June, and it's about a vampire who prefers gourmet cooking to the food he
compelled to ingest because of nourishment requirements.

It really pains me that FEAST OF EGGSHELLS is shelved these last six years or more; it didn't do well in its first incarnation (and now everybody is into reine carnation and ominous toots with omen problems). I am trying to get my publisher to re-read it and reissue it. But they keep putting me off. I suppose I ought to find a message in that, but I keep at it.

[[Publishers don't know what to do with humorous novels. Now that slave novels are popular again I suppose Gene and I will make the rounds with ours; but the last time all the editors enjoyed it and nobody bought it.

I don't see why a parody slave novel wouldn't sell, but nobody is taking a chance. RSC]]

Giovanni Scognamillo, Postacila Sok. 13/13, Beykozlu, Istanbul TURKEY

Volume First of my HISTORY OF THE TURKISH CINEMA has already been delivered, and volume two is in the making and I hope to finish it around end of August. Of course delivery dates have changed as other things: no translation from Eric From, since the book had been already translated two years before (and my publisher skipped the fact). Volume Two of Spengler has also been postponed, since Volume One will be on sale not before October and we'll wait and see for the results. So, just to keep busy, I have agreed to translate a whole bunch (nearly 100 titles) of "Classic Illustrated" from Spanish to Turkish. A rather easy and a steady source of income, provided to furnish at least from 6 to 8 issues monthly. So I'm working one day on the book and one day on the comics. And so it goes. Meantime, no Board of Censors. We're just waiting for the result of the current elections. Sigh.

The language problem and international sf: you may not be able to read a German, Swedish, or Japanese fanzine (and neither can I), but you know for sure that you can correspond with the people who publish those fanzines and have from them all sorts of useful info on how things are going in their hemispheres. Provided that you're interested in sf abroad. If, as you say and as I've constantly noted, sf is for the US and British fans a way of getting together with like-minded people and having fun, few will be interested in what's going on elsewhere. I may sound academic, but I consider that if one is interested in something it is necessary to broaden the subject and thus have some more...fun!

As usual, "Golden Minutes" is my favorite. Nice to learn a lot about a lot of books I'll never be able to read nor lay my hands on. Well, well, well, so many fantasies! Does it sell more than straight sf? Except for a couple of CONNMs, a single Lin Carter, and a Norton that I was unable to finish I'm a poor fantasy reader. And as far as fantasy is concerned I prefer C.A. Smith.

By the way, are you still receiving X-Bliinnmeyen? It has now changed to prozine, backed by an sf club. I wrote some few things in the beginning, when it was just a fanzine, but now I don't have much time. Well, a pro can always write for pure pleasure in a fanzine; but to do the same for a prozine is against the rules.

[[I'm not sure about sales of fantasy versus science fiction. Equal? Howard and Tolkien do very well, of course -- but better than Heinlein, Herbert, and Norton? Seems doubtful. And for run-of-the-mill writers, I couldn't say -- but there is a publishing fad for fantasy now, so it must sell. Facts, anyone? RSC]]

Ethel Lindsay, 6 Langley Avenue, Surbiton, Surrey KT6 6QL UK

On your reply to George Ferguson about the use of "men and women" being changed to "men and persons": I think I agree with you that once attitudes are changed the words won't matter. I cor-
tainly loathe that "Ms" -- what a horrid word. I'm not a Ms. I try to avoid using anything at all but then I find that correspondents (particularly in the mystery field) won't be content till they find out if I am Miss or Mrs. Oddly enough, when guessing, they always plump for Mrs. Once I worked beside a Highland doctor who called every woman "Mistress" -- it sounded lovely, but then he had that Highland accent. It is soft as butter and almost lulls you to sleep.

I have been packing books -- ha! How would you like to move? I don't move until next July but thought I ought to find out the size of the problem early. So without blinking an eyelash I filled a large trunk and four large boxes. These are the books I cannot live without (a weird mixture) and of course there is also the three bookcases that will travel filled. Maybe I should have collected stamps.

I was interested in Chris Walker's comments on the large number of books in second-hand shops you would not want to buy, having noticed the same phenomenon myself. Among the paperback sections ever here there must be literally thousands of the James Bond books. Among the hardcovers there are so many that are book club editions -- which is no use when you are peering after first editions. Not that I can sympathise with the first edition collectors myself. Not a hang up of mine. I'd agree with Chris's listing, but the works of Sabatini are becoming sought after again. Probably part of the fantasy fashion.

I was fascinated to see Bill Danner in Y -- the first time I have seen him outside his own STEF. This is so good I think he should write more in his own zine.

I too have seen STAR WARS. I got invited to a special showing; it is not on general release till December. Like you, I had the most fun since I can't remember when. I mean to go to see it again, and hope to take Ella there for Xmas. Which should be a good Xmas present for such an sf devotee!

You do not say when WOMBATS will be published over here. I'd like to help with the publicity idea.

As usual I enjoyed your book reviews; I read 'em all even when I know I'll never get to see them all. That is because I enjoy your acerbic remarks -- loved your dismissal of Aldiss. Of course you also help me to weed out the impossibles; and I'll take a look at the Starsky & Hutch books now that you recommend them. I had been passing them by thinking they would not be worth much.

As to the nurse comments of Ira Thornhill, as he is married to a nurse I guess it is no surprise that he has seen behind the 'angel' facade. I have myself known some real tartars. The first Sister I encountered was six feet tall, had a face like a horse, and even galloped about like a horse. She taught us young girls bandaging, bed-making, cleaning nity heads, and gave us a religious text to memorize every week. I really exasperated her as I was the brightest pupil but the least impressed by her weird notions of life. She was a typical example of the nurse who treats her patients like a regiment. I couldn't say that I am an expert on "getting" patients, but I would say (modestly) that I know how to "handle" the majority of them. We get a lot of patients, however, who would soften even the sternest of hearts. Yesterday it was a young mother of 31 being advised to come in immediately for an operation to save her vision. She had to leave a 3 year old child sick with whooping cough and another 2 year old child, and didn't know what to worry about most -- her children or her vision. Really what she needed was a helpful grandmother near at hand, but they are a bit of a dying breed. No, where I find it hard not to be rude is with the relatives who do not care what happens to some elderly patient who lives alone with diminishing sight. If handy grandmothers are dying out, so are children who care. It is, of course, not always possible to take them into their own homes, but I feel they should then try to help in some other way instead of leaving it all to social workers.

I did see one good example of our NHS recently, though. I was on holiday with Doreen and Phil Rogers -- a canal boat holiday, and Doreen broke her leg jumping off the boat. We took her into the nearest Casualty Department where she was X-rayed and then had her leg plastered from ankle to knee. I borrowed a folding wheel chair so that we could continue the holiday. We met with nothing but helpful kindness there
and of course not a penny to pay. They didn't even ask for a deposit on the wheel chair, which cost about $75!

["Ms" is extremely convenient when writing to women I don't know -- editors, publicity directors, and the like. Safer to be neutral than to make a mistake. Stf fandom, of course, is all first names, and marital status is neither important nor interesting (If I was young and single, it might be different.) I don't know when WOMBATS is to be published in England, but you're supposed to get a review copy when it is. RSC]]

Bob Tucker, 34 Greenbriar Drive, Jacksonville IL 62650

Your review of CRIME PAYS on page 41 inspired the following:

I'm one of those dry characters who enjoys reading the dry annual reports of cities and towns...among all the other dry debris I read. I like to learn who used what money for what arcane purpose, and what kind of lies the bureaucrats are telling one another these days.

The Jacksonville police department reported that X number of crimes were committed in the town during 1977 and that they had solved 30 percent of them. The crimes ranged from drunks bangning into parked cars to murder. The report was worded in turgid bureaucratic manner and required close attention to obtain sense of it, but the end result was that the police had no more than a 30 percent "solve" rate.

A few days later the nearby Springfield government issued their report, and the result was nearly identical. Springfield is the state capitol, crimes are much more numerous, but the same 30 percent "solve" rate prevailed.

I think I'll going into a life of crime. It does pay 70 percent of the time, which is considerably better than my SF sales record.

Join me. With my brains and your weapons we'll soon be rich.

[When one considers the stupid things done by the average criminal who gets caught because of them, it does seem that applying a little intelligence is all that's necessary. RSC]]

George Flynn, 27 Sommsett Ave., Warren RI 02885

Before it gets any later, I'd better correct that gorgeous typo in my loc in Y240. The production cost of Homebrew was of course $4, not $47, per book. (All right, so what I typed was $4&4book" next time I'll draw in a caret.) It was THE MOON IS A HARSH MISTRESS that appeared on the Hugo ballot two years running (the serialization extended over both years), but the rules were later changed to keep that from happening again. In recent years the rules that can be objectively enforced have been pretty well observed (i.e., publication date and story length); I checked out these things this year, and have no complaints on that score. The trouble's been with such things as "amateur", for which everybody has a different definition. At SunCon my amendment passed to replace "Amateur Magazine" by "Fanzine" and let democracy reign in what people think is a fanzine (for better or worse).

After that remark of mine on how our tastes differ, naturally I find not that much difference in our Hugo recommendations. I agreed with you in 7 out of 12 categories (swelled by your alternate recommendations, of course), but only 4 1/2 of my choices matched the actual winners. Oh well. Another thing we agreed on was THE CLEWISTON TEST, though I thought it was just barely SF (you could replace the "science" by something within the present limits of knowledge without hurting the story, which was superb). But on the other hand I'm one of the people who loved THE PRINCESS BRIDE; oh, well...

Speaking of gorgeous typos, "The Chronic Arguments" by H.G. Wells? I have a lovely horror story about CONAN OF AQUILONIA (I didn't expect any more of it than you did, but I'm enough of a completist too). I bought a copy, took it
home, looked through it, and found it was defective (one signature replaced by a duplicate of another). So I took it back to the bookstore, showed what was wrong with it, and got permission to take another. The first four I looked at had the same flaw, and I wound up carrying half the copies in the store to the desk: "These are all defective," It does make you wonder about publishers.

I not only wasn't a fan till I was an adult, I was over 30. Ah, all those years I missed. (Though more likely, if I had been a fan when young, I'd have gaffed under the pressure of college and not come back.)

George Fergus's letter is fascinating, as I've been saying about nearly everything of his I've read lately. Let's see, the third Mack Reynolds African story was "Black Sheep Astray" in the Astounding anthology, right? Speaking of euphemisms, remember Sturgeon's "Granny Won't Knit", with "flower shop" replacing "toilet" and so forth? (It was in about the third proseine I ever bought.) On new pronoun s, the people who use them seem to have standardized on "heesh" nominative, "hiser" possessive, "himer" objective; I don't think they'll catch on, though. Ah, yes, and "sci-fi": you should have heard the massed boos at SunCon when the producer of STAR WARS proudly announced that there'd be a lot more "sci-fi" films. (He was understandably crogelled, having just gotten a standing ovation.)

In contrast to Roy Tackett, I found the "physics" in THE DISPOSSESSED quite effective. Obviously any invention of not-yet-existent science has to be largely doubletalk, but the flavor was right; it was just the sort of philosophical rambling that people like Einstein or Heisenberg went in for in their more popular writings. But these things are pretty murky, anyway; a thermodynamicist I know recently wrote, "When given a problem, we all make the same calculations, but give completely different explanations of the rationale for what we're doing." And oh, is it true I have a semi-metric quote for you: During the heat wave I mentioned some time back, the Boston Globe had an article explaining air conditioners and how they're rated, including the lovely definition of a BTU as "the amount of energy needed to raise the temperature of one centimeter [sic] of water by one degree centigrade". I guess some people are too ready for metric conversion.

[Sorry about the Wells typo. Couldn't have been Chronic Arguments; fandom didn't exist in Wells's day.] Of course want an easier chance for paperbacks to win Hugos because mostly I don't read the hardcover originals. (Fandom may be more affluent these days, but I'm not; not that much more, anyway.) // I think we're stuck with "sci-fi". And use of it does help sort out newcomers and outsiders. RSC]]

Marty Helgesen, 11 Lawrence Avenue, Malverne NY 11565
I have found various comment hooks in recent issues of Y, but inertia kept me from writing, and now they're outdated. (I have problems with procrastination, but more about that later, as Greg Ketner said recently in MINNEAPA). However, I think I shall argue about something even though I don't really believe what I'm saying.

I do not own a gun, I have never owned a gun, and I have no intention of acquiring a gun in the foreseeable future. I work in upper Manhattan and ride thesubways frequently, which makes me more of a potential victim of a gun toting criminal than many people in safer environments are. In light of all this, I should be an ardent supporter of gun control, but I'm not. I have never been able to buy the arguments for gun control; at least not all of them. So, just for fun, I shall argue in favor of gun control. Maybe I'll convince myself. Maybe I'll convince you.

It is traditional to begin such an argument with some horror stories, and I am not one to flout traditions lightly. Here are two examples selected at random in that I saw them in the news in the last few weeks. Recently a 13-year-old boy was shot and killed in his apartment in Brooklyn. The fatal bullet came through the window while he was in the kitchen getting a glass of water for his mother, who is partially paralyzed from a stroke. (That last sentence sounds like it was made up, but
it's true.) At first police thought the killer was a sniper, but the last I heard, they think that the boy was killed by a wild shot from someone engaging in target practice on a nearby rooftop. In California on August 2 a 16-year-old boy killed his sister and two of her friends with a semi-automatic .22 caliber rifle after arguing with his brother about a yo-yo.

The people killed senselessly (I couldn't leave that word out) in these incidents, and in countless similar incidents before and since, would probably be alive today if guns were not so widely available in the United States. Outlawing all guns, except under the strictest controls, would save many lives. (I am aware of the situation in Switzerland, but their social conditions are obviously different. They don't need gun control. We do.)

The justifications offered for permitting private citizens to own guns are collecting, target shooting, hunting, and self defense. Collectors could keep their guns if they were altered to make them inoperable. Those collectors who like whatever they collect to be in mint condition would be unhappy with this, but the savings in lives should outweigh their displeasure. (An exception might be made for antique muzzle loaders and similar special items.) Those collectors who plan to use, not just display and admire their guns, would come under the following categories.

Target shooters could keep their guns locked in a safe place at the range, or possibly at police headquarters or some other suitable place. Hunters, too, could keep their weapons locked up at police headquarters, etc. An exception could be made for people living in rural areas, where the land on which they might be hunting is closer than the police station, but only for weapons suitable for hunting in that area.

The final justification for permitting citizens to own guns is self defense, and I do not deny that some people have used guns to defend their homes successfully against intruders. However, people have killed members of their own families who were up for a midnight snack, etc., under the mistaken impression that they were burglars. Also, people have shot at burglars and have been shot and killed by the burglars. It is not clear that the number of innocent lives saved by guns used for self defense is greater than the number of innocent lives lost in these ways. Indeed, the number of lives lost may be greater.

Furthermore, a gun kept in the house, for self defense, or any other reason, can be stolen and used by criminals in committing other crimes. Despite the publicity about the cheap "Saturday Night Special" criminals seem to prefer better quality guns which have been stolen. Also, many people are killed or wounded by guns that go off accidentally. Even without the following point the disadvantages of guns for self defense seem to outweigh the advantages.

The final point is that a gun kept in the house can be used to murder a family member, neighbor, etc. in the heat of an argument. The standard reply to this (gun nuts have their traditions too) is that a man can use a carving knife or a hammer to murder his wife, neighbor, etc. This is true, but irrelevant. It is not claimed that gun control will eliminate all murders, just decrease their number significantly. Also, a person attacked by someone with a knife or club has a better chance of fighting back successfully than if attacked by someone with a gun. He may still be killed, but his chances are better. And if he is not cornered he has a much better chance of running away successfully. And 16-year-old boy in the California case mentioned above might have gotten one of the three 15-year-old girls with a knife, but I doubt if he would have gotten all three.

Another standard argument against gun control is that it hasn't worked in New York. It hasn't worked for two reasons. One, guns are legally available in other states and can be imported easily. There's no customs inspection at the Holland Tunnel or the George Washington Bridge. Also, plan bargaining, soft judges, etc., have reduced the penalties considerably on a de facto basis. This problem affects the enforcement of all laws, and should not be used as an argument against one specific
Okay, Buck, take a shot at that.

Juanita, some people may refer to mature women as "girls" in a condescending way, but I don't think it is common. Many women in their 40s and 50s and older refer to themselves as girls. I hear it all the time at work among women on the Administrative Staff (the word "clerk" is Not Used). They are mostly in their 40s and 50s yet they frequently say such things as "Where are the girls going to eat today?" or "the rest of the girls left already." Since you mentioned the use of the word "boy" by whites to put down adult male Blacks I will mention that back when he was in high school a single male teacher brought a single female teacher to a school dance. Some of the students were teasing him about it, and when Joe said, "My Healey brought a girl to the dance," she thanked him for the compliment. While "boy" may connote immaturity, "girl" connotes youth. They're just not the same.

[[Okay; arguments point by point. Since target shooting on rooftops in Brooklyn is already illegal, I don't see that passing another law is going to help much. I'm in favor of licenses for gun owners -- not of registration of guns -- and pounding home a little safety information into the nerds before they can own a gun. Similar to driver's licenses -- and probably equally effective, unfortunately.// The weapons of gun collectors don't get involved in crime or accidents, except in the rare incidents when they're stolen. (Lots of guns are stolen, but very seldom from gun collectors; they take more precautions, as any collector does.}// A book titled ON THE TRACK OF MURDER (about police work in New York City) mentions casually that in 1973 there were "638 gun killings and 553 knife killings." Even with guns available, large numbers of people are using knives successfully. Eliminate guns and knife killings will go up.

There will be a decrease in the total? Maybe. Maybe not. And there is a vast difference between banning handguns and eliminating them. The Thompson submachine gun is a large, unwieldy weapon; it was banned for private use in 1936, and there are still thousands of illegal tommy guns floating around the country, according to the FBI; probably a goodly percentage of the total ever sold. Handguns are much more easily concealed, and there are more of them.// I skipped the one about keeping target and hunting weapons in central areas -- where criminals could get a good haul for the time they spend breaking into the place. Police stations get robbed regularly as it is. So do military armories.// It's not clear that innocent lives saved by guns used in self defense are greater than the lives lost by use of such guns -- but it's not clear that they're less, either. It's not clear, period. RSC] [ [The fact that many women in my age group habitually refer to themselves as "girls" does not remove the condescending connotations accompanying that same usage all too frequently when men refer to the same age group of women. The condensation is there, Marty. Too often it comes with an undercurrent and tone of "don't bother your empty little head". And the fact that women during your high school days and even now politely react to the terminology as a compliment may be genuine, a result of years of being subtly assured the term is a compliment -- or it may be the result of swallowing a sigh and smiling sweetly and thanking the alleged complimenter, because that, too, society has taught you to do. It depends on the individual, which was the point I made in a reply to another letter of that issue. Unless a woman makes an issue of it, men -- both the sensitive ones and the condescending ones -- are unlikely to know when and if the term hurts. That, too, is conditioning which I hope will change; maybe the next generation will grow up without the societal pressure that insists polite females do not make issues or create unpleasant scenes. One must be ladylike and smile and thank the speaker, and sigh inwardly. JWC]]
STRANGE FRUIT

Been awhile since the last appearance of this column, and the ground rules have changed slightly in the interim. Basically, my fanzine ratings run from 0 (no redeeming value) to 10 (the perfect fanzine). Previously, I reviewed everything that came in (except those conspicuously marked "not for review". However, I no longer have the time, energy, or patience for that. From now on, I review a couple of pages worth per issue, of the best (or at least, the most entertaining) fanzines that have arrived in the time between issues - so anything that would get below a "5" rating probably won't be mentioned. Special interest fanzines may be mentioned but probably won't be rated. Same for personalzines (since there is really no objective rating for a personalzine; either one likes the personality or one doesn't.) I will also not review the same title several issues in succession, no matter how good it is, because that gets boring and this job is boring enough as it is. So, on to the buyer's guide or checklist or whatever.

XENOPHILE #35, 36 (P.O. Box 9660, St. Louis, MO 63122 - monthly, $6.00 per year) A thick mag (88 and 76 pp, respectively). Some issues have up to 1/3 covered by articles on stf or on pulp collecting (#36 is a Bradbury Issue); others are all ads. You can find out anything for sale here, from the latest limited edition hardcovers to a copy of the first issue of BASKETBALL STORIES to Arkham House books to old paperbacks. A fanzine designed strictly for the collector, and fulfilling its purpose quite well.

NIGHTSHADE #4 (Ken Amos, 7005 Bedford Lane, Louisville, KY 40222 - irregular - $1.75) Aimed at the fantasy fan. Not just swords and sorcery or weird/horror or Tolkien, but all types of fantasy. Serious in tone. Well printed. Artwork varies; I don't think much of Klein, but the rest are good. This issue contains material on Ambrose Bierce, George MacDonald, and the Japanese movie Kwaidan, plus letters, poetry, etc.

THRUST #9 (P.O. Box 746, Adelphi, MD 20783 - biennial - $1.50) Serious, general type, working hard to be controversial. Material by and about Norman Spinrad, Ted White (who doesn't "want to dwell on the unpleasantness which surrounded this column's exit from its former residence" but of course does anyway), pro and con reviews of "Star Wars", article on Dean Koontz's mainstream writing (about which I know nothing and care less, but probably someone out there is interested), a plea for Harlan to come back to the field (by some naive neo who still thinks Harlan means his farewell speeches) and so on. Lots of letters. Excellent reproduction; rather poor art. Well-written articles; lots of things to comment on.

NOUMENON #15, 16/17, 18 (Brian Thurogood, Wilma Road, Ostend, Waiheke Island, Hauraki Gulf, New Zealand - more or less monthly - $6.50 per year) Or $11 if you want it by airmail. Primarily news and reviews. 24 to 30 pages (#36 in the double issue). Much of the news is British or Anzac, but there is a fair amount from the U.S. Excellent reproduction, generally good art. The most entertaining newsletter that I get, these days.

THE SPANG BLAH #15 (Jan Howard Pinder, P.O. Box 2038, Ft. Riley, KS 66442 - quarterly? - 75¢) Certainly the most thorough newszine being published; items from 8 foreign countries plus several pages of US news. Plus short articles, a lovely verse by R. A. Lafferty, good art, etc. A bit infrequent for the fan who must have his rumors hot off the grille, but considering that my other source of US news requires that the news make a round trip to New Zealand, a bit of infrequency doesn't bother me. (The
tiny print does give me a few bad moments, though).

SIMULACRUM #7 (Victoria Vayne, P.O. Box 156, Station D, Toronto, Ont. M6P 3J8, Canada - irregular - $2.50) Big price, but you get 26 pages for it. Most of the contents are letters, which may confuse new subscribers but doesn’t bother us regulars. (But then, we don’t pay the $2.50, either; we trade and/or contribute.) All sorts of controversies, from sexism to authoritarianism to mythology to what have you. Excellent reproduction and art and layout. Personally, I enjoy it immensely, though it might be a bit much for serious neofans. (8)

STEFANTASY #81 (William M. Danner, R.D. 1, Kennerdell, PA 16374 - irregular - 300 dinars) And when Danner says "dinars", that’s what he means; the equivalent value in US money won’t get you a thing. Basically, it’s a means of limiting circulation; either prove to Bill that you’re worth having on the mailing list, or have enough ingenuity to come up with the foreign currency. This is one of the fanzines that is older than YANDRO (and it has survived this long because Bill goes to some effort to limit circulation). Primarily devoted to humor and the oddities of human behavior. Digest size, letter-press printed. Excellent if you can wangle a copy. (9)

EPSILON ERIDANI EXPRESS #2 (Neville J. Angove, 13/5 Maxim St., West Ryde NSW 2114, Australia - irregular - $1.50) I think I’d better review this one fast, while it’s still around; the editor is writing about paying contributors, advertising, and the issue costing more to produce than the cover price brings in. (Either the attitude will go, or the fanzine will, because the problems won’t.) Offset, good art, a serious concern with science fiction coupled with a rather jaundiced view of fandom. Interesting; the text isn’t actually good yet, but it shows promise, if the editor sticks it out long enough. (9)

TESSERACT (134 Windward Drive, Schaumburg, IL 60194 - 75¢) A fiction fanzine with designs on turning professional. So why am I bothering with it? Mainly because I had a huckster table at Windycon next to one of the editors (I don’t know which one) and I enjoyed his determined and full-throated huckstering enough to actually pay money for a copy. (No, I don’t ever want to do that again, but once was amusing and I rather liked whoever it was.) Digest size, professionally printed, fair color cover and poor interiors. Fiction is fairly typical fanstuff; interesting ideas sometimes - particularly E. Michael Blake’s - not very well handled, though Blake is a cut above the average. If you like fan fiction..... (4)

SCIENTIFRICATION #9 (Mike Glyn, 14974 Osceola St., Sylmar, CA 91342 - irregular - $1) Next time print your complete address, Glyn; I don’t care what your damned phone number is. A wide variety of serious material and humor and fannishness (with 65 pages, he has room for variety). Good reproduction, excellent art. Material varies, but there should be something of interest to almost everyone. (7)

What this country needs is a good 25¢ fanzine.

AMRA #67 (Box 8243, Philadelphia, PA 19101 - irregular - 75¢) The only swords and sorcery fanzine that I can manage to read. There is less humor and more serious consideration of a field which can’t stand much of that sort of thing in this issue than is usual, but some items were enjoyable. (And anyone who fondly recalls PLANET STORIES can’t be all bad.) Large digest size, offset, excellent reproduction and outstanding art. (7)

DARKOVER NEWSLETTER #7 (Friends of Darkover, Box 72, Berkeley, CA 94701- bimonthly? - 50¢) Small newsletter, strictly for Darkover fans. This issue is largely concerned with angry reactions to a Dick Lupoff comment that characterized Darkover fans as "a fat 13 year old in a cape". (I do have this photo of Lupoff in a cape - and the Captain Marvel outfit to go with it. I wonder if the editor would be interested in publishing it?) Seems to be largely for the Darkovan equivalent of Trekkies, from the letters, but perhaps I’m jaundiced. I like Marion and I like Darkover, but a fanzine devoted to such a small facet of the field seems so limiting... Still, if anyone deserves it, Marion does.