



The
Dullinger
Relic 23

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1 May

As you can see, DR is now computerized. I suspect that some of you do not like dot-matrix printing, but in the words of the ancient sage, tough shit.

Well, no, I don't really mean that. But I have discovered since the last time I wrote in this zine that word processing is something that enables me to write a whole lot better.

You see, my greatest enemy as a writer has been laziness, and specifically a disinclination to write more than one draft. I never did learn to touch type, and so re-typing has always been a somewhat painful process to me. That meant that I would tend to write things out the first time in camera-ready form, and if I later decided that a stylistic change would be nice, but it would require re-typing, then I would wind up not doing it.

The last couple of days, I did a MINNEAPA zine. When a comment came to mind, I would type it up. If I later decided that there was a better way to say it, I could change what I had said, and the machine would do the re-typing. I could add information. For instance, Marty Helgesen and I were having a discussion of Hitler's alleged monorchidism. I remembered having read a claim by the Russians that they had found Hitler's body and verified the truth of the allegations in the "Colonel Bogey March," but couldn't give any documentation. Bernadette, however, knew the book where it was written up, and so I was able to add a reference in the final version.

And so, dot matrix. The bottom line in my writing/publishing has always been that the most important thing is verbal communication, and that the appearance of the zine, etc., would always take a back seat to that.

What else is new? As I indicated, I received MINNEAPA. There was much interesting discussion. One thing I had printed which received a number of OOK OOKs was Eric Raymond's suggestion for solving the Rubik's Cube--smash it with your Pet Rock.

Another thing is that I got my first software for the machine--the ELIZA and ADVENTURE programs which I had ordered from Software Toolworks. ELIZA is the program that does nondirective therapy. You talk to it, and it picks out key words from your conversation and makes remarks based on them. Perhaps the most interesting dialog that came up so far when I asked it to go take a flying fuck at a rolling

donut, and it replied "WHAT MAKES YOU THINK I DON'T TAKE A FLYING FUCK AT A ROLLING DONUT?"

I have given ADVENTURE one try, and I am not overly impressed with it. There seems to be major difficulty in simply getting the machine to understand what you are trying to tell it to do, and it seems to want commands of only 2 short words even if more would be called for.

2 May

Yesterday's mail brought all manner of interesting stuff, including a Discordian zine called CHANGELING TIMES <PO Box 24536 Denver, CO 80224>, which I enjoyed and which is available for \$1 or (presumably) the usual.

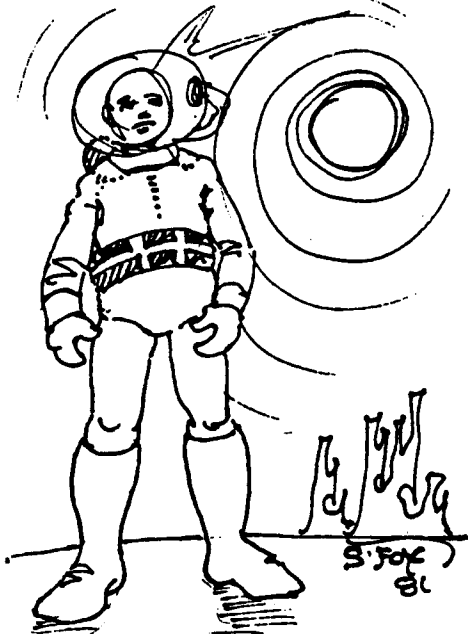
Bernadette & I went over to Chapel Hill yesterday to look at the Foundation, an sf bookstore. Afterwards, she suggested that we drop in unannounced on Dave & Jo Drake. Bernadette does not consider that sort of thing a breach of manners, and apparently neither do they. To be more precise, they consider that acceptable behavior from Bernadette, who is an old friend of the family. So we had a pleasant afternoon & evening, including conversation, one of Jo's excellent meals, and a few more FAULTY TOWERS episodes on their VCR. FT is really a situation comedy, as idiot-plotted as any American sitcom, but it's really well acted and a lot cleverer than American comedies.

After we returned home, we got a call from Eric Raymond. I mentioned here last time that the computer appears to believe that 2 to the 13th is 8192.01. Eric called to reassure me that the computer doesn't really think so, but merely says so--i.e., that the problem is really in the print-out, and the machine's internal workings know that the answer is 8192 and will operate on that basis. Thereupon we discussed the occult & other topics of mutual interest.

Today we got a phone call from the menagerie in White Plains, where reside Adrienne Fein, one Bear (Neil Belsky), one cat (Boris the Purrvert), 2 teddy bear hamsters (Avarra & Logan), and now a dog. Fortunately, only Adrienne & Bear wished to talk with us. We are looking forward to seeing them at Diclave.

3 May

Today's mail brought FreFanZine. It was somewhat interesting, but did not shake my resolve to drop out. Political discussions are not my favorite activity, and most of the interesting people in it are in other apae with me. Also heard from Rusty Burke, Leslie David, and a most interesting overseas person named Roelof Goudriaan. I got final copies of the reduced pages for DR 22 prepared, and Bernadette took them in to the copy center for printing.



5/5

This is my fifth fanniversary. Five years ago today, I took 12 pages in to the West Side Copy Center, paid them to print up 125 copies of them, and mailed out a few copies of the very first DIAGONAL RELATIONSHIP, doing it all very quickly before I could chicken out. I was scared to do it, scared to expose my words & ideas to a possibly hostile & uncaring world, but I could no longer stand not doing so. I'd been lonely for 5 years, and there was this bunch of people out there who looked as if they might be friendly. And sure enough, they were.

It saddens me to think that I may have been the last person to do that. Fandom is not as easy to enter as it was then. And I don't think that anyone has since followed in my footsteps, has come out of nowhere, done a fanzine, made friends, and lived happily ever after the way I did. And it's a shame. Postage rates, if nothing else, may keep it from ever happening again.

On this auspicious occasion, I received the latest issue of the first fanzine I ever saw. RIVERSIDE QUARTERLY lives! RQ is considered by some to be the most boring fanzine ever. That's unfair. I remember thinking that while the articles were often written in mind-numbing Academese, and/or devoted to stuff that did not deserve attention, the lettercol was always a delight. Now, alas, economics have forced editor Leland Sapiro to cut something, and--you guessed it!--the lettercol has been gone from the last couple of issues. I suggest that he should have cut the poetry, but that brings a loud dissent from Bernadette, who says that RQ's poetry is particularly good. In any event, RQ is not utterly hopeless, featuring a thoughtful intro to R. A. Lafferty by Sheryl Smith (what ever happened to her?) and an article on Lem by Stan Fogel (a hell of a nice guy and a Pynchon/Coover fan whom I met at the Conference on the Fantastic). RQ is \$5/4 issues from Leland Sapiro, Box 1763, Hartsville, SC 29550.

I also got a nice letter from Martha Beck, who is running a Worthy Cause--a fund to bring Earl Kemp, a well-known fannish figure, to ChiCon. I contributed, not because of Kemp's fannish endeavors, which were before my time, but because I consider him one of the last (I hope) victims of one of America's precivilized tribal tabus, as he served time in a federal penitentiary for the "crime" of "pornography," specifically (and ironically) for his role in the production & sale of an illustrated version of the President's Commission report on Pornography, the one that came to the shocking and unAmerican conclusion that porn should not be a crime. Those wishing to contribute should write to Martha Beck, 8024 W. 127th Ave., Cedar Lake, IN 46303.

I'm not the only one using Adam. Yesterday Bernadette used the word processing to write letters to her entire family. She had a bit of trouble with some of the technical stuff, but is learning quickly.

Dept. of No-I-Am-Not-Making-It-Up: THE NY TIMES BOOK REVIEW reports that Harlequin Romances' latest promotional scheme is giving away free copies of their books in boxes of garbage bags.

4 May

Bernadette has found a bit of archaic terminology that seems to me deserving of revival. In Ben Jonson's EPICDENE, a person who talks too much is called a "wind-fucker."

Bernadette has decided that she wants to teach a course on "the Self in Fantastic Literature." There'll be all manner of Serious Lit, and such sfnal searches for the Self as MORE THAN HUMAN, Brunner's THE WHOLE MAN, and one or another Phildickian study of the Quest for Identity. Any suggestions for reading matter, sent to Bernadette at this address, would be appreciated.

Today I picked up printed copies of DR 22 and of my first computerized fanzines. DR goes out as soon as I get it properly bundled for bulk mailing. The computerized stuff, both regular & condensed, looks so nice to me that I wonder if I'll ever do a plain old typed zine again.

7 May

Dear Abby:

I am a newspaper advice columnist. Since I say the same old shit all the time anyway, I figured nobody would notice if I reran a bunch of 15-year-old columns, but I got caught at it. Now what do I do?

Your sister,
ANN

Yesterday, I read I DESERVE LOVE, by Sondra Ray. That's a book based on the idea of "affirmations"--repeated positive statements one makes to accept living in a reality in which one is a better & happier person than one had thought. You can write the things out, or tape them, and play them over & over again. One idea is to watch the responses you make each time you repeat the affirmation. It occurred to me that this sort of thing could be done very easily on a computer, and indeed I wrote a simple Affirmations program in BASIC. I have not seen any book on using a home computer for self-improvement programs, and it occurs to me that there could be a market for such a thing.

Yesterday, Bernadette & I went to a hardcore porn movie at the drive-in. Seka learns to enjoy sex by watching a whole lot of it. Good stuff.

Which reminds me that the latest SCIENCE FICTION REVIEW arrived yesterday, and one of the more interesting things in it was an essay by an anonymous porn editor, in which he said that there will always be a market for the stuff because it satisfies needs that even dirty movies don't. There were also 2 things by Darrell Schweitzer that I agreed with (which is 2 more than usual)--a favorable review of THE BEST OF JOHN SLADEK and a reply to Geis' suggestion that writers should aim for the visually oriented market, pointing out that these people don't want to read, and will not read no matter how much the stuff is slanted to them. Less interesting things in this issue include Geis' views of political & economic matters--mixed gloomndoom and conspiracy. SFR is \$7/4 issues from PO Box 11408, Portland, OR 97211.

I mailed off DR 22 today. Here, as in NY, mailing rules change depending on whom you talk to. Last time, the clerk filled out the official mailing form; this time I was supposed to do it. Both agree that they weigh the packages; in NY I was supposed to do that.

Speaking of different rules, down here they don't seem to know that the FDA banned belladonna alkaloids from CONTAC, and a local drugstore brand has them. So I bought a couple of boxes of the local kind. I personally think CONTAC worked better before the FDA decided that it was ineffective (not harmful) & made them get rid of the stuff they'd been making it with.

8 May

FILE 770 arrived yesterday with a grim, unstated message. It included an announcement of the Hugo nominees in the fan categories. As I mentioned last time, Geis, Glycer, Langford, & that other fellow were nominated as Best Fan Writer. SFR, LOCUS, SF CHRONICLE, & FILE 770 were the Best-Zine nominees. Alexis Gilliland (who also is up for the Campbell award & will get my vote there), Joan Hanke-Woods, Bill Rotsler, Victoria Poyser, & Stu Shiffman are the Fan Artist nominees. In other words, everybody nominated in the fan categories was on the ballot last year. Add to that the lack of new zines & writers I was discussing a while back, and you have a picture of stagnation. The other news is con reports. Balticon was apparently as bad as I predicted (hotel hostility); Boskone had the same problem. Both were overrun with medioids. And Fred Lerner asks why a con would bother to put on a con in the face of hotel problems & teenaged assholes in funny costumes. Why indeed? Put these together and you begin to wonder what's going to be left of fandom before long.

The Drakes visited us yesterday evening without calling first, but this was not their fault. Our phone had stopped functioning, as it occasionally does after we've used the extension in the living room. We're trying to figure that out now. It was a nice visit.

Today's mail brought LOCUS, with memorial tributes to Philip K. Dick, from Silverberg, Le Guin, Brunner, Aldiss, & people like that, as well as the latest news & rumors of giant conglomerate takeovers in the publishing biz.

I now know how to do underlining & **boldface**.

10 May

Since then, I've learned how to do a sort of slashout. Real ones (with /) are a bit trickier, but I think there is a way.

Apa-nu arrived today. Still in the doldrums. No new members. The high point is Mark Blackman's zine, which is full of things like FNORDS AND SORCERY and "I audited a course in Attic Greek but found it useless elsewhere in the house."

I think the gays have taken over the Post Office. First there was the LOVE stamp with the pansy on it (reported in DR 21) and now a stamp in honor of Horatio (as in "fellatio") Alger, who was kicked out of his home town in his early years because of a taste for small boys.

11 May

I often find the autobiographies of writers fascinating, and Graham Greene's WAYS OF ESCAPE (Pocket pb) is no exception. Greene writes of various adventures, gives some background for his novels, and hints at a busy career in the fields of sexndope. Among the more interesting things in the book (to me) are his (unfulfilled) plan to write a detective story in which the perpetrator is known, but the detective's identity is kept

secret until the end of the book (the detective could be some kind of secret agent); and his belief that THE HEART OF THE MATTER has been overrated because critics didn't realize what a fool Scobie was.

Learned a bunch of computer stuff today, including how to make a program in one of the books more interactive, and my first few graphics techniques. This lends support to my belief that a whole lot of this computer stuff is the sort of thing my brain was designed for. It is thoroughly annoying to me when things like spaces turn out to be crucial errors, but the discipline of it is good for me (I keep telling myself), and eventually I overcome.

13 May

Yesterday Bernadette & I went to see CHARIOTS OF FIRE. It's an excellent movie, about various forms of obsession. One of the many good effects Bernadette is having on me is that I may already have been to more movies this year than any year since I graduated from college.

Today's mail brought a variety of goodies. There was a nice letter from Janice Gelb, announcing that she is going to be moving to a different part of the LA area. The move is scheduled for 5/23. Janice insists that she is not a Discordian. Do you believe that?

Irvin Koch sends along the latest issue of his zine MAYBE, with a variety of interesting stuff in it, including a loc from pro Phyllis Ann Karr, Adrienne Fein's edition of "The Orc's Marching Song," and some replies to a questionnaire Irvin sent out a while back. In answer to "What would you like to see in fandom that is now absent?" Beth Lillian says, "More widespread use of deodorant." Linda Pickersgill's reply to a question on how one came to the notice of fandom is, "I believe others noticed me and responded to me as part of fandom when they saw I had tits." MAYBE is available for the usual (maybe) from Irvin Koch, c/o 835 Chattanooga Bank Building, Chattanooga, TN 37402.

I have finally figured out how to make the computer & the printer do graphics, and so for the rest of the page, I will amuse you (or not, as the case may be) with some of that.



15 May

I am now officially a member of the self-styled intellectual elite, having just been accepted into Mensa (I sent them my SAT score a few weeks ago). I filled out their lengthy questionnaire, including the survey of interests. There were a lot of possibilities, but I finally settled on panty sniffing Eastern religions, humor, sex freedom, home computers, semantics, and science fiction as the six I would list. Had they asked for more, I probably would have included logic, libertarianism, alternate lifestyles, and/or human rights. I wrote to the special interest groups in several of these areas and am looking forward to hearing from them. If you are interested in joining, write Mensa at 1701 W. 3d St., Brooklyn, NY 11223.

One activity this Mensa intellectual dabbles in is BLACK KNIGHT, which is the best pinball game I've ever seen. Supposedly, video games have killed pinball, but in this matter, I still prefer the old ways. I am not a connoisseur or a particularly skilled player. I like BLACK KNIGHT because it has lots of lights & bells & such. It's the first split-level pinball game I've ever seen. There are 2 sets of flippers, one on each level, both controlled by the same buttons. My reflexes are nowhere near fast enough to hit the flipper for the top level by the time the ball gets there, but I recently discovered that it is possible to hold the flipper in while shooting the ball, so that the ball stays up on the top level for a while. This sneaky play has improved my average score from a bit under 100,000 to a bit over 200,000. I play at a local donut shop which has a machine civilized enough to offer 5 balls for 25 cents.

Dave Drake called, informing us that DR 22 reached him in far-off Chapel Hill a mere week after I had mailed it. (Chapel Hill adjoins Durham.)

18 May

And what did the Mensa member and the future professor of literature spend most of yesterday doing? Cutting out rubber stamps from a page of them Bernadette bought and gluing them onto children's blocks. Fun.

Today brought a letter from Tony Parker & Judy Bemis, saying that they will be driving up to Disclave and would like to stay over here the night before the con and then drive us up there and back. That sounds like a good idea, and it'll be nice to see them again.

19 May

Today's mail included a large envelope containing HOLIER THAN THOU and LASFAPA. HTT is excellent, as ever. There is a continuation of the Old/New Wave discussion which is starting to make more sense now that Joe Nicholas is shutting up. Also putrid jokes, cartoons (Bernadette did a particularly vile one), etc., and perhaps the beginning of an interesting debate on what fanzines are for. HTT is available for \$1.50 or the usual from Marty Cantor, 5263 Riverton Ave., #1, North Hollywood, CA 91601.



The fantasy-wide
unicorn fad meets Lovecraft-dom

LASFAPA seems to be returning to former glories. Former members Carol Kennedy & Matthew Tepper have returned; Liz Schwarzin (who shares Jeff Copeland's membership but rarely does zines) is in this mailing; and Leslie David and Dennis Jarog have returned to the waitlist. The usual interesting people remain as well. Georges Giguere has franked a collection of genuine Polish jokes from Poland. One I particularly like is the Pole who was asked whom he would fight first if both the Germans and the Russians invaded Poland at the same time. "The Germans," he replied, and when asked why, he said, "Duty first, pleasure second."

The phone's been ringing. Rick Brown called. When last we heard from him, he had been hired as a prison librarian. He has now completed the first part of his training program and has moved to State College, PA, where he will be working. He likes both the job and his new home. Apparently, there are kindred souls at work. He says that one of the first things they told the new prison trainees was, "Welcome to one of the few growth industries in Pennsylvania."

Then someone else called up to report that he just read ILLUMINATUS! last week, and he's already started hanging out with witches and smoking hash. Some people are just fast learners.

Having mentioned Liz Schwarzin & phone calls in today's section, I got a phone call from Liz. (Mandatory smartass remark: So now mention sex & [fill in name].) We discussed computers, worldcon bids, & other interesting topics. She informs me that she received her copy of DR 22 today. We hope it meets a better fate than her copy of LINES OF OCCURRENCE 5. She left that on the floor, and one of her kittens left a bit of crude literary criticism on it. (Bernadette says that cats read with their asses, but this is ridiculous.)

20 May

The phone's still ringing. Dan Lieberman just called. The bad news is that his father died this week. The good news is that Dan has a new job, programing computers for the Federal Reserve Board. I always wanted our nation's money to fall into utter chaos.

5

Today's mail brought my first reply from a Mensa Special Interest Group. It's from the Mensa representative of a group called Keepers of the Flame, led by people named Mark & Elizabeth Prophet, and presenting the Wisdom of Ascended Masters like Jesus, El Morya, and Saint Germain (presumably not the one Chelsea Quinn Yarbro writes about). This Eternal Wisdom seems to cost a whole lot.

Today I did our grocery shopping (as I usually do), and I asked Bernadette if there was anything in particular I should pick up. She requested "boned chicken breasts." That struck me as an interesting term, since each of the words in it has a sexual connotation, but they don't quite go together.

North Carolina has a new Poet Laureate. Sam Ragan was sworn in today. I am not surprised that such an official position should exist (I suspect it goes back to some governor's brother-in-law who could actually write stuff that rhymed, but had no other discernible talents), but I must confess I am at a loss to guess what manner of Official Oath such a functionary would swear to. I asked Bernadette, but the only suggestion she could come up with was that the oath would be sworn not on a Bible, but on a Norton Anthology.

23 May

I've been busy for a while, with a Golden APA collation. As ever, we mobilized the entire household. Bernadette stapled. Adam printed up 35 ToCs. (As ever, he created a file to print them from, and a backup file, called TOC.BAK. I'm afraid I was not able to resist saying, "Yakety yak. Don't TOC.BAK") Ruby & Thompson begged off on the usual flimsy grounds that one cannot collate without opposable thumbs.

It is the best of times and the worst of times for Golden APA. It's a big mailing, with lots of interesting discussions. On the other hand, there are a couple of deep personal disagreements. In one I am resolutely maintaining neutrality. In the other, that was not an option.

I got a letter from Robert Anton Wilson. He reports that he will have 2 nonfiction books coming out this year, and a major historical novel next year. Needless to say, I am looking forward to all of these. He also sent along a variety of miscellaneous clippings & such, including a report from SCIENCE 82 magazine which says that there is now a theory that human beings are related to soybeans.

Two more Mensa groups have been heard from. The sex group is not intended to be a mail-order swingers' group, but is apparently running into the same sort of problems those have, and the Aquarian Conspiracy group seems to be well-intentioned, but not getting anywhere, which *alas* seems to be the norm for such groups, in or out of Mensa. On the other hand, I got the local Mensa group's newsletter, with an announcement of a Mensa party to be held here in Durham in two weeks, between Disclave & DSC. I'm going.

A Tasteless Meditation

When is Hunter Thompson going to die? I mean, let's face it, the man has done enough dangerous (not friendly) drugs. In fact, if he doesn't snuff it fairly soon, some of us are going to start getting suspicious. Is it all a put-on, a publicity shuck?

I really & truly don't want to see ol' Uncle Duke join Relushi in the Big Opium Den in the Sky, but let's face it: Don't we all kind of expect that?

When I was a kid, I was a baseball fan. In those days there were some players--Ellis Kinder & Bobo Newsom come to mind--who were lovable drunks, and there were all these funny, heart-warming stories about their boozing. Eventually they retired from baseball. And died before they were 50.

I read an article by Joyce Carol Oates a few years ago. She was talking about famous literary suicides like Sylvia Plath and John Berryman, and she pointed out how they were applauded for the way they talked honestly & openly about their desire to off themselves, and when they finally went & actually did it, they may have felt that they were living up to the critical theories about them. I think she's got a point there. And the people (and I'm one) who applaud Thompson's discussions of how he took horse doctor's doses of various harmful substances--aren't we doing the same thing?

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And now for something completely different: Robert Sacks writes: "Please enroll me in the Society of the Unbroken Name. Sorry to hear you've joined Mensa. I didn't think you needed the reassurance."

Actually, discovering that I qualify (by a wide margin) was the reassurance. Joining was a matter of elitism and cronyism.

25 May

Ellen Willig writes, "Thanks for DR 21. (My mother insists that I say "thank you" when I'm given something, no matter how small it is, so you'd better get used to it.)" An interesting comment, especially when you consider what the title of this zine comes from.

I just saw a cardinal outside the window. Well, maybe it was an archbishop some other kind of pretty bird. It bothers me a bit that my friends and allies Thompson & Ruby would consider these attractive little creatures prey. But that's purely an esthetic judgment. I don't care how many ugly birds they kill & eat.

I got a letter from CIRCLE yesterday, asking that I renew my membership in their networking group, the Pagan Spirit Alliance. After a bit of thought, I did so.

CIRCLE may be the most controversial group in paganism today. The rap on them is that they are commercial: they advertise; they buy mailing lists; they accept money for spiritual services (a no-no in some pagan traditions);

their ads are tacky; they're not selective about who joins PSA (if I were to mention the names of two of the half-dozen or so fans in PSA, that statement would get a lot of agreement); etc.

Much of the debate is principled, of course, but some reminds me of the fannish resistance to Trek and other media fen--a matter of snobbery, a feeling that Our Thing is no longer We Happy Few, but now just anyone can get in.

And of course, these people are not entirely mistaken. Some of the nicest people I know in fandom joined from the media, but that change has meant that fandom is no longer a group defined by literacy, but now includes a bunch of teenage boys who run around at cons like assholes, pretending to be characters from LOGAN'S RUNS or CATTLECAR EXLAXICA. Do the pagans want a similar decline in property values?

Jerry Springer, candidate for the Democratic nomination for governor of Ohio, has admitted that nine years ago he patronized a prostitute. He made this admission on television to answer what he insists are malicious & false rumors about the incident, including one that he paid for it with a bad check.

I have read what appears to be Philip K. Dick's last sf book--THE DIVINE INVASION. I am most impressed. The book is a typically Dickian counterpoint of alternate realities, with a mixture of Gnostic & cabalistic imagery, as well as autobiographical elements (the record store employee infatuated with a new singing talent named Linda). The ending is inspiring. The only bad thing about this book as far as I am concerned is the feeling of what has been taken from us.

I seem to have missed a book by one of my heroes. Richard Condon, the Elder Paranoid of American letters, wrote THE ENTWINING, and it was published 2 years ago. Condon's characters are often obsessed by sex, food, and/or conspiracy. In this book, there are all three, and he puts them together in as satisfyingly bizarre a way as he has done since WINTER KILLS. Feminism has been added to the mix this time, and it works with the other elements. I recommend the book.

Yr humble, socially inept narrator is finally beginning to meet his neighbors. As I may or may not have mentioned, Bernadette & I share half a duplex. The other half is inhabited by one Gene Buckingham. We'd heard that he worked in the Admissions Dept. at Duke and noticed that he was Black. The other day, Bernadette encountered him in our common driveway, and we had a chat, and he seems pleasant enough. Then yesterday, a UPS person brought over a package for someone living in the house next door. It seems that no one was home there, so he left the package with me & left a note for the person next door. She came over to pick it up later. She & her 2 housemates (female) are all med students at Duke. She seems nice too.

7

26 May

"You've gotta treat her gentle, boy. You can't expect her to respond to a crude, hasty approach. Start slow, sweet-talk her a bit, do it easy, and she'll turn over and take you anywhere you want to go."

The woman/car analogy probably goes back at least to the time when Henry Ford had a better idea, but his wife wasn't interested, so he designed a car instead. Some might say that the above paragraph is dehumanizing to women. To me it seems to be overly humanizing to cars.

The reason why a man attempting to persuade a woman to have sex with him should start slow, look for feedback, etc., is not simply a matter of technique, but the fact that he is dealing with an actual human being, with real and legitimate interests of her own. To say that a woman should respond instantaneously to a man's desires is precisely to dehumanize her, to treat her as a machine with no feelings or interests of her own.

Conversely, to say that a machine is like a person (sex is no longer relevant to this discussion) is precisely to say that it is failing as a machine, because the purpose of a machine is to respond to the will of its human owner. What I like about this object that I am typing on is precisely that it is a nonhuman machine, with no interests of its own, that I do not have to feel that I am oppressing a sentient being when I make it do all the work of retyping. (That was the oppression of slaves, that it was assumed that their interests counted for nothing, that any amount of work done by a slave represented less human suffering than a tiny bit of work done by a master.) I would call it human only insofar as it appeared to have a will of its own, and insofar as it did, it would be failing as a machine.

I can see one sort of exception to that approach. I battled the Black Knight again this morning. I deliberately use anthropomorphic terminology because its job is to act as clever as if it were a human adversary. Responding to its apparently human behavior is a sport, and the more I perceive it that way, the more I am aware of every little detail of its behavior & reactions, the more I enjoy the game, and the better I am at it. That is the sports-car approach, where the car is seen as a sentient thing, an ally, rather than a tool. I have some understanding of this approach, although I do not share it.

The local post office has done me a bit of a favor, sending out the overseas DR 22s by air mail. This was nice of them, as I certainly did not pay for any such service. Last week I got a reply from Ian Covell in England (in which he mentioned a line he had read somewhere--sudden prayers make God jump), and today I heard from Jean Weber in Australia. The catch is that neither of them has yet received DR 21 (sent out 2 months earlier). The Lord giveth, and the Lord taketh away. Indian giver be the name of the Lord.

I am now a card-carrying member of Mensa. My card arrived in the mail today. In addition, I received THE ATROCITY, the newsletter of Mensa's Absurd SIG. Much of the material it reprints shows respect for the elderly, but one line I hadn't heard is "Why do farts stink?" "So the deaf can enjoy them, too." THE ATROCITY is available for 6 for \$4 from Henry Roll, 2419 Greensburg Pike, Pittsburgh, PA 15221.

31 May

We have just returned from a delightful weekend at Disclave. The weekend began early for us, as Tony Parker & Judy Bemis, who were nice enough to put us up/put up with us at Tropicon, drove up on Thursday & stayed over here. Then Friday morning the four of us drove up to Virginia. (Actually, Tony & Judy did all the driving, as their car has a stick shift, and neither Bernadette's real-world competence nor mine extends to operating such a machine. The former fact may surprise you, as it does me.) Despite threatening skies we found our way to the Sheraton National by late afternoon, and had no trouble registering.

The visit and the ride reminded me of yet another reason why I am glad to be living with Bernadette & enjoy spending large amounts of time with her: She makes conversation with others more enjoyable. She brings up enough interesting topics to allow others to show the best parts of their personalities & knowledge.

Somewhat before the scheduled 9 PM start of the Discordian Business Meeting, Eric Raymond dropped in. He had not had the pleasure of meeting Bernadette before, but they enjoyed each other's company in person as they had over the phone. As the three of us chatted, the fire bell rang outside. We looked out of the room, saw someone who said that he didn't believe it was a real fire or even a real fire drill, and so went back to our discussion. A minute or 2 later, Bernadette noticed something that sounded like sirens. I looked out the window, and sure enough, there were fire engines outside. We decided to take the fire drill somewhat more seriously. Outside, we saw fire in the sky, as there was a thunderstorm, and firemen milling around a bit. Soon, the All Clear sounded, and we returned to the room.

The Discordian Business Meeting--the first Bernadette has attended--was a delight. Neil & Adrienne showed up, and I was glad to see them, even though they brought along their hundred-pound canine companion, Moey. Someone suggested that they disguise the beast as a Trekkie, but it was thought that the intelligent look in his eyes would give him away. [Actually, there seemed to be relatively few medioids at the con, and those present seemed less offensive, perhaps because of a tough anti-weapons policy. A few protested this policy by carrying sword-shaped balloons. If they need their phallic symbols enough to settle for floppy inflated ones, let them have the things, say I.]



But getting back to the human guests, there were many other interesting ones. Two I had known only in the pages of MINNEAPA, Marty Hiller and Jon Singer, were there, though alas I did not have much chance to speak with them. I will chicken out of listing the many guests I enjoyed seeing again, as I always leave out a few I wish I'd included.

Martin Morse Wooster showed up, and gave me a copy of his new perzine, LIFE IN THE WEST. One feature of interest to me was a comment on Dan Steffan's BOONFARK 6, which I haven't seen yet. (Here we go again!) Apparently Dan, like his publishing partner Ted White, likes the kind of fandom that is about nothing but fandom itself and preferably Sixth Fandom. Martin & I prefer somewhat broader horizons, and apparently Dan had some negative things to say about us. Anyway, Martin also talks about his own writing career and divides sf writers up into first through fourth rank. I enjoyed the zine. It's 50 cents or the usual from Martin at PO Box 8093, Silver Spring, MD 20907.

It may have been at the Business Meeting that Bernadette came up with what I considered the best line of the weekend: "Who needs dope? I'm stupid on life."

The next morning, there was a knock at the door. Thinking it was the maid, I said, "Come back later," but it turned out to be Mary Frey, and we agreed to meet for lunch. Mary is a Darkover fan who has written many filks & stories set in that particular secondary creation, and she's also a very interesting person I hadn't seen in a couple of years, as she hadn't been able to attend cons. Bernadette & I spent a good deal of time talking with her, and enjoyed it.

In the afternoon, Adrienne & Bear were hosting an APA-69 party. It started late, as they were out getting supplies. So a bunch of us gathered in the hall in front of their room. Just before they arrived, a couple of newlyweds, he in Naval dress whites, she in a bridal gown took the room opposite them. I wonder what sort of omen that is. The party, once started, was quite pleasant.

After the party, Bernadette & I went to dinner. We wound up eating all our meals Saturday and Sunday at the hotel coffee shop, and while the food was excellent, they managed the remarkable feat of running a buffet restaurant where the service is intolerable. They were invariably understaffed and usually undersupplied. One had to wait for a table & thus the chance to take advantage of the courteous, efficient self-service.

At around this point, I ran into Jim Gilpatrick, formerly editor of ANVIL and still interesting person. Jim is on the original Atlanta in '86 bid committee. We talked about the lamentable fact of the existence of two Atlanta committees, and how we hoped there would be a rapprochement. With people like Jim, Cliff Biggers, and the Friersons on the original committee, I certainly hope so.

[This may or may not be the time to mention a line Jean Rossner told me. It was her father's definition of the word committee: "the plural of schmuck." Sorry, irresistible impulse.]

In the evening, Bernadette & I went down to the lobby to see what parties were listed for that night. We wound up spending a couple of hours there, talking with Leslie David, Mark Blackman, cochair Eva Chalker Whitley, and others. Finally, we went up to the con suite, where we had a long & pleasant talk with Robert Whitaker, whose delightfully sick illos have appeared in these pages. By this time, it was late and we were tired, so we didn't get to any other parties.

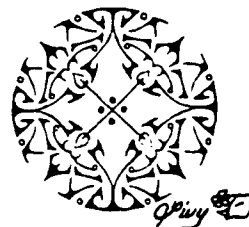
Sunday we toured the huckster room, and just as true fans are supposed to, spent more than we could afford. Bernadette bought a beautiful and obviously well crafted wolf ring from Victor Martine. I got myself a badge which said EVIL CLERIC (sometime during the weekend the phrase "chaotic amoral magic user in the great FRP game of life" had come up), and a bunch of stickers:

**ALL THINGS CONSIDERED,  
INSANITY MAY BE THE ONLY REASONABLE  
ALTERNATIVE...**

Then to dinner. Adrienne, Bear, Bernadette, & I were joined by Rhoda Katerinsky and Kurt Cockrum (who alas is soon moving away from these parts). We were going to drive to a Chinese restaurant, but there was hail falling outside (the weather all weekend was wretched), and so we returned to the good old coffee shop. This time not only was the service awful (they were short on help, and there was no buffet), but they were out of most of the things on the menu. The waiter attempted to explain, and Kurt said, "The problem is that your manager's fucked up." The waiter agreed.

In the evening, we went to the con suite party, where Alexis & Doll Gilliland invited us to a private party that was even more fun. We went from there to a filksing, where I had the pleasure & honor of hearing one of my own filks, but I was getting tired, and so went to bed. But then Nancy Lebovitz knocked on the door to talk with us, and the well-known con phenomenon of second wind took over, and we talked most of the night.

Monday we had to get up early, as Tony & Judy had a 24-hour drive ahead of them, but we got back OK.





1 June

The mail has piled up in my absence. When I got back, there were 2 apas--FAPA & Minneapa--and a whole bunch of zines & letters. A lively discussion in FAPA is sometimes considered a contradiction in terms, but there could be some, largely due to the arrival in the apa of Patrick & Teresa Nielsen Hayden. In Minneapa, Matthew Tepper said, "When I say please, I do not mean it in a menacing fashion. Please remember that, if you wish to live."

I think I've made the big time. I have received a copy of HARLOT, Avedon Carol & Anne Laurie Logan's zine, and it includes an article by Kevin Smith, parodying my INTRAVIEW. It's an amusing & apparently good-natured bit. Kevin is known for his parody of Joseph Nicholas, but I trust that the readers don't believe in guilt by association.

Vicki Rosenzweig writes to ask inclusion in the Society of the Unbroken Name. Her name is Vicki, and not Victoria.

Timescape Books sends a few review copies, including a new edition of Norman Spinrad's THE IRON DREAM. I will not describe the cover, except to say it's one of the best I've seen in a long time. (Interestingly enough, the cover is by Rowena Morrill, who is alleged to do too many women-in-bondage covers. I've never particularly noticed that, and I particularly liked the cover she did for Phyllis Eisenstein's IN THE HANDS OF GLORY [Timescape], which is sexy, but not that sort of thing at all.) As many of you know, THE IRON DREAM is this Universe's edition of LORD OF THE SWASTIKA, a novel written in another universe by one Adolf Hitler, who there became an sf writer instead of a statesman. The conjunction of Hitler's *Weltanschauung* with the themes & ideas of swords and sorcery requires little change in the latter, which of course is Spinrad's point. The catch to the book, and I don't see how it could have been avoided, is that for Spinrad's book to make its point, Hitler's must be bombastic, verbose, gynophobic, and generally offensive & ill-written. (The one previous effort in this line was Nathanael West's A COOL MILLION, to which Spinrad may be paying homage in the name of Homer Whipple. West cheated, in my view, by making his work of Fascist hagiography more amusing than one should expect of the genre.)



THE NY TIMES BOOK REVIEW features some smart-ass quotes from Lawrence Sanders, such as

Mayor Jimmy Walker once said that no girl was ever ruined by reading a book. If I believed that, I'd throw away my typewriter.

If D. H. Lawrence were alive today, he'd be writing Silhouette Romances.

Novelists who go to psychiatrists are paying for what they should be paid for.

2 June

Yesterday I got my annual haircut, just barely long enough to part, as usual. You would be surprised at how effective this particular form of disguising myself as a normal person can be. Roy Tackett just mentioned in FAPA that he met me at Worldcon last year & didn't notice anything weird about my appearance. Of course a couple of days of worldcon may have raised his threshold of weirdness.

3 June

Today's paper reports that the Supreme Court was judging an obscenity case, and as ever, they had to look at the alleged smut in question. On this particular one, they decided to return the case to the lower court, but when they had to send back the evidence, no one could find it. It would be easy for me to go for a cheap laugh by suggesting that one of the justices in our nation's highest court kept the dirty books for his or her own private enjoyment, but I'm not going to stoop to that. Rehnquist probably got stoned and lost the stuff.

#### BLACK KNIGHT UPDATE

I continue to battle the Black Knight every morning. I find myself frequently getting scores as high as 300,000, sometimes 500,000. The scores are largely a matter of a gimmick. There's a particular hole which the ball stays in if it hits there, and you get another one. If a second ball goes in, both come out and the scoring goes wild. I usually get at least one of these per game. But the score becomes less important to me. I find myself enjoying the altered state of consciousness, the concentration, what the Buddhists call "one-pointedness." (By the way, I've learned that if I fire the ball left-handed, I can use the flipper on the top area, rather than holding it in at the beginning. That feels better, more like "playing the game." I've also begun to fool around with the other two pinball machines at Aunt Sue's, and I enjoy those too.

I did a cover for APA-69. It occurred to me that there is one obvious omission from Jove's "No-Frills" books, and so I have supplied it:

#### SMUT

including orgies, group gropes, French, Greek, massive members, throbbing orifices, S & M, B & D, B & B, incest, whips, chains, leather, and one pony.

5 June

David Rosenbaum writes:

It is my understanding that the Wiccan Threefold (or sevenfold, or twelvefold, or whatever) Law is a genuine aspect of observable reality, as a result of our living in a universe that, ultimately, is a closed system (at least on the local level). Here's how it works:

Say, for example, you mug some guy and steal his wallet. This physical act has gained you \$77.54, but what has it cost you?

1) Retaliation by due process of law. While the chances of "justice" prevailing may indeed be slim, the possibility that it might will be in your mind indefinitely; this worry makes your reality view that much darker.

2) The act has also negated a positive aspect of the future (i.e., any mutually beneficial relationship you might have had with the person you mugged). By limiting the positive possibilities of your reality, you are hurting yourself.

3) The act has the result of harming your self-image. What was once a famous fan writer is now a heartless criminal. You might not consciously think of this, but subconsciously, you KNOW.

Summarized, then, the Threefold Law is something like:

1) Cause & effect; 2) negative feedback; 3) self-destructive aspect. Naturally, these three are connected, which makes their reformulation into differing interpretations (the "times" you get it back) possible. And then there's always the chance that the Gods *will* zap you for doing a nasty.

I think you have a point there, David. I agree that any acts we commit to restrict others or interfere with them on their paths will eventually harm us. (I like Christmas Humphreys's Buddhist formulation of that idea --we are punished not for our sins, but by our sins.) As you point out, the number of "folds" is somewhat arbitrary, and phrasing it in terms of such a specific amount seems to me to encourage thinking of punishment as something arbitrarily laid on us by an external power.

6/6

Bernadette & I attended not one, but two, local social events yesterday. First was a potluck supper at the Drakes', with a bunch of other Chapel Hill writers, including Manly Wade Wellman, Karl Edward Wagner, Bruce Hunter, and Allan Wold. Then we went to the local Mensa party. As promised, they had a hot tub, which just proves that you do not have to live in Marin county to have one of those. This was my first experience in such a thing, and it tempted me to agree with Tim Leary's belief that California's civilization is further evolved than any other. Bernadette enjoyed it, too. Both parties featured a number of interesting people whom I hope to see again.

One interesting theory I heard was that Procter & Gamble hates tall people because the first big executives there were short people, and as a result, it has reached the

stage where almost everybody in power at P & G is under 5 feet tall. So if you get a memo from THE MGT., you have no idea who it's from.

8 June

Many times I have repeated the old line about a great potential being a heavy burden. I think that shrewd old pro Robert Heinlein has managed to reverse that approach. A loyal hard corps of followers (including me) has been conditioned to read every word the man writes, to groan over the wretched excesses of TIME ENOUGH FOR LOVE or THE NUMBER OF THE BEAST, perhaps to make a smartass remark from time to time about the Master's progress from Juveniles to Seniles, but to keep coming back for more.

And now the word is going around that our patience is at last being rewarded, that the Master is back. Well, in a manner of speaking, he is. FRIDAY, the new book, is a return to the Good Old Days. Comparisons vary--perhaps to the juveniles, for those who are particularly fond of them, perhaps to DOUBLE STAR or the Future History or to THE MOON IS A HARSH MISTRESS. This is a return to Heinlein at his best, and it is an occasion for rejoicing.

And yet I wonder how much of the good feeling about the book is relief. There is a point fairly early in the book when Friday herself is trapped with 3 other characters--two male, one female, all competent, self-assured, lustful, and smartassed. At this point a frisson went through me. What I feared was not that these people would be tortured, killed, etc., but that they would alternate petty squabbles and emetic endearments for a hundred pages as did the characters in THE NUMBER OF THE BEAST. They did not. The wretched excesses of the previous few books are all but gone.

And there seems to be progress even over Heinlein's best in one respect. If the pre-1960 books ignored sex--as did virtually all the sf of the time--and the later ones could speak of nothing else, this one has taken the third step. Friday fornicates cheerfully & guiltlessly, but rarely proclaims what a marvelously liberated person she is for so doing. And Friday at least tries to be somewhat feminist & succeeds much of the time, except for the usual Heinleinian fascination with fecundity & casual attitude about rape.

But beyond my relief that Heinlein has recovered from the worst of his recent books, I find a jaded disappointment that he has not surpassed his best. FRIDAY is, shall we say, DOUBLE STAR, or STARMAN JONES, or "Gulf" (its prequel) with sex. I want more.

But that's greedy. Heinlein was not merely in many ways the best of Campbell-age "modern" science fiction. In a very real sense, he invented it. Much of what seems obvious today, like dropping background information in without speechifying, was his invention. It's good to have him back.

## MENSA REPORT

The Eastern Religion and Human Potential SIGs seem interesting, if not inspiring, and I have joined them. Today I heard from the Mythopoeic/Tolkien SIG. I sent them a copy of LINES OF OCCURRENCE 5 & offered to trade for their publication. I got my first copy of their zine, and found that they interpreted the dedication of the zine to Judy Bemis & Tony Parker as meaning that Judy & Tony had written the article. Not only that, but they had C. S. Lewis saying that one could "become enthused" about reading. I assume Lewis didn't say that, and I know I didn't.

I want to correct one thing I said in an earlier Mensa report--a smart-ass remark that the Saint Germain the Keepers of the Flame claim as one of their Ascended Masters was presumably not the vampire Chelsea Quinn Yarbro wrote about. Adrienne Fein informs me that Yarbro based her fictional character on the historical Saint Germain, as presumably the Keepers of the Flame did too. Whether the real Saint-Germain is turning over in his grave at being described as a vampire, or a religious guru, or both, is a matter I am not competent to discuss.

9 June

One of the heroes of my youth is gone. Satchel Paige, pitcher & folk philosopher (best known for saying, "Don't look back; something might be gaining on you"), died yesterday. In the 1930s Satch might well have been the best pitcher in baseball, but he was not allowed in the Big Leagues on account of his color. So he pitched exhibition games against the likes of Babe Ruth & generally did quite well against them. In 1948 when he was somewhere between 35 and 50 years of age, and baseball was finally giving up segregation, Bill Veeck brought him to the majors. It was called a publicity stunt, and it may have been, but Satch won 5 and lost only 1. He was around for a few more years. About 10 years ago Baseball decided to open a section of the Hall of Fame to the Blacks who were confined to the "Negro Leagues" by the customs of their time, and of course Satch was the first chosen for it. He hadn't been heard from much in the last few years, and yesterday something caught up with him.

Allard Lowenstein was not one of the heroes of my youth. In fact for a while I held an irrational grudge against him because he went to my prep school (reason enough), and when he returned to lecture on South Africa, I had to stay after school to listen to him as part of some sort of voluntary program. He was a left-liberal political organizer, not a group from which I generally recruit idols. In 1968 he Worked Within The System, and no doubt deserved a piece of the credit for getting LBJ to step down from the presidency. He parlayed it into a seat in the House of Representatives, but 2 years later lost the battle for reelection. Time seemed to have passed him by. In 1980 a former follower of his, Dennis Sweeney, who had apparently become quite deranged and had attached Lowenstein to some of his classically paranoid-schizophrenic

visions, shot him to death, thereby winding up in an insane asylum.

Sweeney's sad tale drew attention. A report in the NY TIMES magazine traced his working-class origins, his discovery of the Movement at Stanford and his loyalty to Lowenstein, and then failure & madness. Last year, there appeared an article suggesting another piece in the puzzle--an alleged homosexual advance by Lowenstein to Sweeney. Some squeamish Leftists thought this should have been buried with Lowenstein.

The additional datum might not have explained everything, and certainly wouldn't have excused anything, but if Sweeney had found his hero so lacking by the standards Sweeney lived by (stupid as those standards are), that may well have preyed upon his mind when its balance was disturbed.

Now David Harris, a noted draft resister at that time and a follower of Lowenstein's himself, has written a book about the case (DREAMS DIE HARD), and Joe Klein reviews it in the current NY TIMES BOOK REVIEW. Harris says that Lowenstein did indeed make advances --to him as well as to Sweeney. He puts a new perspective on it by saying that Lowenstein seemed interested not in genital pleasure, but in someone to hold him, and be held by him. I find that quite plausible.

It's interesting to compare this desire to be held with sexual desire. They are not, of course, the same thing (though it's very nice to satisfy both desires with the same person). They are both damned near universal. I'm sure people are born without one or both, but I don't think it's terribly common. There are groups where both are accepted, where both are tabu, and where either is accepted and the other tabu. I myself have had an easier time coming to terms with my sexual desires, but now I'm comfortable with both.

Lowenstein had the desire for contact. Maybe he confused it with sexual desire and maybe he didn't, but he had trouble expressing it. He expressed it to Sweeney. Sweeney probably felt that one or more of these potentially beautiful & fulfilling desires was dirty. In the end, Sweeney killed Lowenstein. It lacks the grandeur of tragedy, but damn! it's sad.

SABBATICAL, by John Barth, which I mentioned hearing a reading from, is starting to appear in the bookstores. Now the Quality Paperback Book Club is offering it in pb for \$7.95, and I'm ordering it. It's their Monthly Selection, but for some reason, they have paired it with SOUNDING, by Hank Searls, which they describe as "a tense adventure story that will keep you on the edge of your chair," and whose protagonist is a whale. I am not at all sure why they have joined these 2 books together, except that both of them have ships in them.

A brief plug: If you like math or want to learn about it, try THE MATHEMATICAL EXPERIENCE, by Philip J. Davis & Reuben Hersh.

14 June  
 WARNING: WHAT FOLLOWS IS A CON REPORT. 80% OF THOSE READING THIS WILL SAY, "SO WHAT?" BUT THOSE UNFAMILIAR WITH SF FANDOM MAY FIND SOME OF THE TERMINOLOGY A BIT CONFUSING. DO NOT ADJUST YOUR SET.

I had a good time at DeepSouthCon. The bad news was that Bernadette was unable to attend, as she has to learn all about 3 centuries of English Lit in 3 months (for her preliminary PhD exam), and thus will probably not be attending cons until that particular ordeal is over. But she drove me to the airport to take one of those cheapo-cheapo Piedmont hopscotch flights.

The flight stopped at Charlotte. I should mention that the Charlotte airport now has indoor walkways to the planes. To me this is no more remarkable than indoor toilets, but I guess in the South neither is to be taken for granted. From there, I flew to Atlanta and had to take a bus to a place where the hotel limo would pick me up. By this time it was about 7 o'clock Friday evening. I had no trouble registering for my room, but con registration was closed.

I soon found Ned Brooks, and he informed me that opening ceremonies were about to get under way. There were impromptu speeches by GoHs Karl Edward Wagner & Lon Atkins. As I've mentioned before, Karl is something of a neighbor. I have the pleasure of being in a couple of apae with Lon, and I introduced myself to him after his speech.

This was my first Southern con (Disclave doesn't count), and so with a few exceptions (Ned, the Wagners, Dave Drake, Tony & Judy, a few more), the people there whose names were known to me were either people I'd never met, or people I'd met briefly at Noreascon. One in the latter category was Linda Pickersgill, back in the States for a visit with her husband Greg. I knew she planned to be there, and guessed that it was her, and said hello. We were glad to see each other again.

Another in that category was Guy Lillian, whom I saw in the con suite after the ceremonies. He introduced me to his wife Beth. Guy's penchant for hyperbole is well known, but I do believe all that good stuff he says about her is true. There too was Nicki Lynch, who offered to take me down the hall to meet the Knoxville delegation. That was something I very much wanted to do, and sure enough, I got to talk with Deb Hammer Johnson, Charlie Williams, and Rusty Burke.

I also met a New Person. Pat Morell had read ILLUMINATUS!, and as promised, it had affected her in ways that were not immediately obvious. Having heard that another fan had discussed similar experiences, she wanted to meet me. I think we each decided that the other had turned into our sort of person.

Saturday morning I ran into Brad Linaweaver, who was doing phone interviews, as he frequently does at cons. The printed program

included a typically self-conscious What Southern Fandom Is All About statement which stated that Southern cons pay little attention to programing, but are more interested in parties. (Maybe that's why the program didn't mention any panelists or interview subjects.) This is hardly a unique property of Southern fandom, and in fact I think I spent more time at programing here than at most cons I have attended. But when the programing includes things like an interview with George Alec Effinger, long a favorite writer of mine, I will attend, no matter how unfannish that makes me seem.

In any event, I had breakfast with Brad, Deb, and a delightful woman named Connie, who is changing last names (divorce) & had two on her badge. Perhaps for that reason I don't remember either.

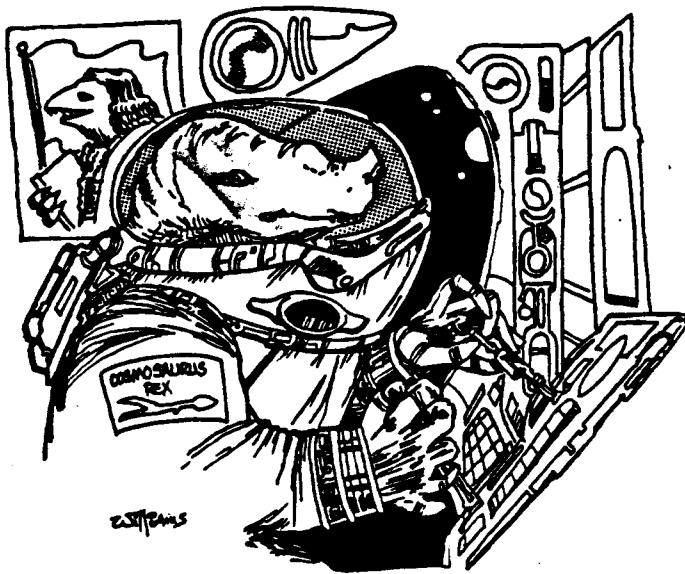
The phone interviews turned out very good. Brad first talked with Elinor Mavor, former editor of AMAZING, and then with Effinger, who discussed some interesting background material about his fiction. His writing tends to be (among other things) metafiction--fiction about the writing of fiction, with occasional reminders that what one is reading is not a transparent account of events, but a written work, a thing in itself. One thing Effinger mentioned was that his latest book, THE WOLVES OF MEMORY, is in 14 chapters, to resemble the 14 Stations of the Cross. This device has been used at least once before, in Bert Blechman's STATIONS, whose protagonist gives blow jobs in fourteen New York subway stations.

After the interviews, I went to lunch with Tony & Judy and returned to look for the Fan Room, which promised gatherings of fanzine types, facilities to publish oneshots & a daily zine, etc. I couldn't find it. I was later to discover that no one else could either. It just never got set up properly. That would appear to be the one major flaw in the con.

Wandering further, I was down at con registration chatting with Iris Brown when a woman came up to register. I did a doubletake when she said her name was Janis Johnson. Janis is someone I've known from apae for a while, and I wanted to meet her, but I knew that she was a Latin teacher. I guess I had a stereotype of what a Latin teacher should look like, and she did not resemble it. (In fact, she resembled it even less than CJ Cherryh.) I should make it clear that I was not disappointed.

I visited the huckster room. There were a variety of interesting things on sale there, but all I picked up was a CTHULHU SAVES button for Bernadette. (What Cthulhu does with those He saves is another question.)

I went over to the art show, where there were a bunch of excellent Charlie Williams illos, and Charlie Williams. I told him that I feel guilty about not buying art at cons, but I rationalized by pointing out that I do publicize his work by printing it in my



zines. (In fact, I just did it again.) He said that was OK, but I still felt guilty, so I decided that I would point out that people can get bigger and better Williams drawings, not reduced as they are in my zines, by buying them at art shows, and so I'm doing that too.

In the evening I recidivistically attended a program item. This was the Awards ceremony. First came the Southpaw Awards, for apa work. There is a rule that one cannot win a Southpaw Award in the same category two years in a row. Guy Lillian, last year's OE winner, was chosen Best Writer. Lon Atkins, last year's Best Writer, was chosen Funniest Writer. Last year's Funniest Writer, Allan Hutchinson, was voted Best Artist. The only nonrepeaters were Charlie Williams, last year's Best Artist, and Nicki Lynch, this year's Best OE. Then Kelly Freas presented the Rebel Award to Lon Atkins, and Lon Atkins presented the Phoenix Award to Kelly Freas. It was possible to get the impression from these ceremonies that Southern Fandom consists of not more than a dozen people. (One problem was that the Southpaw Awards were supposed to be for apa work in general, but poor distribution turned them into the SFPA Egoboo Poll. David Schlosser was there, and he informed me that he had begged in vain for Southpaw ballots to distribute thru LASFAPA, of which he is OE.)

The awards ceremony was followed by a rock band and dancing. I can remember when rock bands that played at 10 decibels above the threshold of pain were still something of a novelty. I cannot understand why people attending a con, with all the opportunities for personal interactions, would want to waste their time on dancing, but then I've always considered dancing to be an activity that uses up as much energy as fucking, but doesn't feel anywhere near as good. (In fact, while I'm at it, I might as well utterly ruin my reputation in Southern fandom & admit that I can't imagine myself spending valuable con time on Hearts or any other card game.)

One thing I do at cons is smoke funny cigarets, and I had a chance to do that, so the rest of the report may not make quite as much linear sense as I would like it to.

Also after the awards ceremony, I met con chair Mike Weber, who'd heard I was doing a con report, and wanted to know what I'd say. I told him it was a wonderful, brilliantly run con it was. Oh, the check didn't arrive yet? I told him what a disaster it was. (Sorry, irresistable impulse.)

Karl Wagner had brought his giant Nazi dog Kelly and was walking her, and someone said, "I don't know who your friend is, Karl, but that's a great costume." There was a masquerade that evening. I saw a lot of interesting costumes, though I did not attend the actual masquerade. Joe Celko, for instance, was dressed as either a penguin or a headwaiter.

Joe was giving a party, and there were two oneshots or one twoshot being done--one handwrot and one word-processed. Joe also has an Osborne, and he had brought it along. I contributed to the word-processed one, libeling Guy Lillian.

One other thing was that I finally met an old friend I'd known from phone & postal contacts and then had lost touch with. It was nice to meet Nancy Collins at long last, but we didn't have enough chance to talk.

I partied a bit more, but it was late, and the complicated (but cheap) flight back required that I get up early in the morning to make the necessary travel connections, so I have nothing much else to report about the con.

MIDSOUTHCON II  
Aug 20-22, 1982

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FAN GoH: ME  
PRO GoH: Wilson Tucker  
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15 June  
Yesterday Martin Morse Wooster called up. He was passing through Durham and asked if he might drop in. We invited him over, and had a lengthy & pleasant chat including gossip and/or information on the fannish & libertarian scenes.

Today's mail brought a most cheering message. For the first time I will be appearing on the program at Worldcon. Michael Grossberg writes to say that there will be a Libertarian Futurist panel at Chicon, and he would like me to appear on it. I have told him I'd be happy to. I plan to talk on an idea I've mentioned before--how fanzine fandom can and cannot serve as a model for a future decentralized, anarchistic, computerized communications system.

16 June  
One drawback to living down here is that I am now allegedly represented in the Senate by Jesse Helms, a coprolite in human form whose attitude towards women has led me to hope that he will be reincarnated as one, and repeatedly raped & impregnated. Down here, we hear a lot more of his adventures, including his current appeal to all you nostalgia fans out there, a fillibuster against a civil rights bill. But ol' Jesse's all heart. He's just announced that he will resist by whatever means possible any effort to send American troops to the Falkland Islands. (No, I'm not making it up. Reminds me of "Reelect Nixon. He Kept Our Boys Out of Northern Ireland," except that the people who said that knew it was a joke.)

By the way, as I write these words, it looks as though England has beaten Argentina. As INQUIRY magazine said, Argentina is so simultaneously cruel & inept that if they were a baseball team, they'd be owned by George Steinbrenner.

Speaking of our neighbors to the South, I just read that a few months ago Guatemalan terrorists blew up a McDonald's. I suppose if they have to pick on some Symbol Of American Imperialism....

17 June  
The Late Great English Language: Rev. Jimmy Draper, who was just elected president of the Southern Baptist Convention, after announcing that he wouldn't hire anyone who didn't believe that Adam & Eve were real people, said that "science, not evolution, should be taught in the public schools." And the newspaper which reported that ran an ad from a state legislature candidate whose slogan is "Take politics out of government employee benefits."

20 June  
The other day Bernadette & I went to see E.T. We both enjoyed it very much. It is an excellent movie, in turn funny & sad. I picked up the novelization, by William Kotzwinkle, and found it even more enjoyable than the film. Kotzwinkle adds looks into the minds of the characters, one after another. I know

that this sort of multiple auctorial telepathy is generally considered poor form, but Kotzwinkle makes it work. E.T. himself is an old exobotanist, who can get messages from the plants of this strange & wonderful planet, and who discovers that the natives have created a Food of the Gods--M & Ms; Mary, the mother of the children who find E.T., comes to life as an interesting person with troubles of her own; and even the dog is interestingly motivated. This is one novelization that adds greatly to the film. (Alan Dean Foster, hang down your head in shame.)

21 June  
Bernadette is on the phone with Guy Lillian. It looks as if we will finally have a social get-together with our nearest fannish neighbors. Meanwhile the two of them are engaged in a discussion of Comparative Film Geeking--POLTERGEIST, DAWN OF THE DEAD, etc. They can have that stuff. Me, I find reality sufficiently horrifying.

The social gathering has not been scheduled, but Bernadette & I are jointly joining the SFFA waitlist. The waitlist is somewhat lengthy, and I believe that the turnover is such that we will be admitted to full membership shortly after Hell freezes over, but in the meantime we can belong to Shadow-SFFA, which I am told is fun.

There was a report in the local paper the other day of three men who staggered into the County Jail and demanded Breathalyzer tests to determine which of them was the drunkest. The officer on duty declined, but offered to put them up for the night. They accepted and, after having a water fight with the contents of a couple of toilets, went peacefully to sleep. The next morning they were sent home without charges.

Two Cultures report: The movement of the printing element on the Epson MX-80FT is boustrophedonic.

22 June  
Hinckley has been found "not guilty by reason of insanity." This needless to say will lead to all manner of foaming at the mouth about "judicial permissiveness," etc., and may well hasten the end of the insanity plea in criminal courts. If I were a very cynical psychiatrist, I would consider that a consummation devoutly to be wished, on the ground that the obvious inability of the profession to agree on just about anything in these trials gives the game away to the marks.

I mentioned somewhat earlier having heard that I had been reviewed in Dan Steffan's BOONFARK. Yog-Xipkode has finally disgorged my copy, wherein I learn that my comment a while back on Walt Willis is still bothering people. All I meant to say was that Willis, a competent humorist by any reasonable professional standards, is not The Funniest Writer Who Ever Lived, and that those who say he is come off looking like severe Fan Chauvinists. Basically, Dan's comments are intelligent & thoughtful.

I have received a note from Miriam Rogow. I'd sent her a copy of an old zine of mine in which I mentioned the Tim Leary-Robert Anton Wilson theory that the only people who like Frank Sinatra's singing are those who became sexually imprinted on him because they underwent puberty back in the days when he was a sex idol. Miriam protests that she likes Sinatra, and she would appear to be a convincing counterexample, as she was born in 1964.

Explaining away someone's musical tastes in terms of undiagnosed sexual motives is the sort of thing that I loathe when it's done to me, so it embarrasses me when I get caught (& catch myself) doing it, so I thought a bit about my motivations.

There's a bit of imprinting there. When I was undergoing puberty, I listened to rock & roll, and I still think that 50s rock & roll is the best music there is. And when I was being imprinted with the music, I had the feeling that the Enemy Music, the music of the Adult Pig Oppressors who would shut down my music if given half a chance, was the "big band" music of Tony Bennett, the Dorsey Brothers, and--most of all--Frank Sinatra. I was not entirely mistaken in this belief. Indeed these were, and still are, two warring sides. About a year ago there was an article in THE SUNDAY TIMES MAGAZINE about how big band music was coming back, and even granted that I am highly sensitive, I think that its author went to great pains to rub the noses of rock & rollers in the victory of his side.

My mistake lay in assuming that Sinatra was somehow objectively Adult Pig Oppressor Music, to the point where the only conceivable reason anyone could actually like it, as opposed to wanting to impose it on the young for sinister & piggish reasons, would have to be pathology or unconscious sexual motivations or something of that sort. There's really nothing objectively wrong with Sinatra's music. And besides, I'm sure that there's no truth to the rumor that Sinatra has so many Mafia connections that he's going to be the next Secretary of Labor. (Sorry, irresistible impulse.) And it probably is no longer true that big band music is the music of the Adult Oppressor Pigs, and Rock & Roll the music of the rebellious and oppressed teenagers. In fact, enough time may have passed for it to be the other way around by now.

When I met Miriam, she informed me that some considered her religious beliefs to be Nothing But rebellion against parental and other Authority Figures, but I have no reason to doubt that she is sincere about being a Christian.

Miriam's letter also overturns a fannish stereotype, as she reports that she attended and enjoyed her Senior Prom. So much for the belief that fans were always kept out of such things by unattractiveness and/or social ineptitude, and concluded either that they were failures or that Senior Proms were hollow shams. I believed both in turn, as I recall.

#### RECENT READING

IS THERE A TEXT IN THIS CLASS?, by Stanley Fish (Harvard pb). A subtle & clever literary thinker looks at the question of whether there is such a thing as A Text which can be interpreted. In so doing, he comes to the conclusion that the text is something the reader produces in his own mind, indicating that anything which can be presented as an obviously wrong interpretation can in fact be justified, given sufficient ingenuity on the part of the interpreter. He then works his way out of all the traps (\*fnord\* subjectivity, \*fnord\* relativism, etc.) that this position leads him to. A somewhat technical, but very skillful & thoughtful, work.

PEEKERS AND OTHER TRUE FACTS, edited by John Bendel (National Lampoon pb). Another selection from NATLAMP's True Facts section, once again indicating that fact can be more putrid than fiction.

FORBIDDEN SANCTUARY, by Richard Bowker (Del Rey pb). Aliens land on Earth, and one of them secretly belongs to a persecuted minority religion. Catholicism's answer to "The World Well Lost." An enjoyable work of human- (and alien-) interest sf.

THE JAMES JOYCE MURDER, by Amanda Cross (Ballantine pb). Reprint of an early Kate Fansler mystery. As usual with Cross, the people are fascinating and the mystery itself implausible and poorly handled.

LOST HIGHWAY, by Peter Guralnick (Vintage pb). Biographies of country & blues singers. Very well done. Tells, for instance, how Waylon Jennings went from singing about outlaws to singing about singing about outlaws to singing about how he used to sing about outlaws.





BEYOND GREED, by Stephen Fay (Viking hc). A nonfiction melodrama about the Hunt Brothers' plot to rule the world by cornering the market in silver. The illuminati who couldn't scheme straight.

DREAM TEAM, by Lewis Cole. As I've said before, I never watch basketball, but sometimes I enjoy reading books about basketball (when they get into the human elements of the sport). This account of the fortunes of the late-60s Knicks (yet another literary offspring of THE BOYS OF SUMMER) is a good example of that type of book, though Cole does take the opportunity to tell us at least as much as we want to know about himself.

ARE THE KIDS ALL RIGHT?, by John G. Fuller (Times hc). Warns that a generation of young Americans is being hopelessly mindwarped by the sinister messages and hypnotic methods of rocknroll music.

HOLY TERROR, by Flo Conway & Jim Seigelman (Doubleday hc). Warns that a generation of young Americans is being hopelessly mindwarped by the sinister messages and hypnotic methods of fundamentalist Christianity.

THE ENGINES OF THE NIGHT, by Barry Malzberg (Doubleday hc). One of the most interesting & idiosyncratic of the 70s sf writers tells what happened to sf and what happened to him, relating both stories at once because he appears to have trouble telling them apart. The true message of sf, he tells us, is, "Our machines will destroy us." Technological progress, going into space, meeting aliens, or anything else that sf has dealt with, will turn us into quivering, sexually panicky, miserable paranoids, who will suicide if they have the energy to, or else will turn into vegetables. This theme is not unfamiliar to those who have read Malzberg's fiction, as indeed virtually all of his novels end that way. And yet, putting aside the book with a cheap shot like that is unfair & inadequate. Malzberg's understanding of sf is real, if incomplete (I suspect that his greatest fictional contributions will turn out to be metafictional like BEYOND APOLLO, HEROVI'S WORLD, and GALAXIES, and indeed he shows an appreciation for Silverberg's "The Science Fiction Hall of Fame" and "Schwartz between the Galaxies" as similar endeavors); he is correct to point to the elements similar to his own in writers like Kuttner & Kornbluth; and some of his insights, like the relationship between portion-and-outline contracts and the badness of so many novels, seem dead on target.

FROM BAUHAUS TO OUR HOUSE, by Tom Wolfe (Farrar hc). Wolfe describes how architects began believing their own theories, until their work became hopelessly sterile and self-referential. Wolfe has made essentially the same case against contemporary art (THE PAINTED WORD) and fiction (intro to THE NEW JOURNALISM), and has been somewhat convincing every time. There's a lot of that sort of thing going around. (See Waylon Jennings anecdote above.)

27 June

Yesterday Bernadette & I attended Raleighcon, a small local one-day con which her friend Russ Garwood has a lot to do with running. It's sort of a mixed-media con, primarily #fnord\* comics, but also sf & fantasy. This year there was a sizeable Dr. Who contingent, watching videotapes of their hero, and setting up a lifesize model of the privy police call box that the doctor uses to travel thru time and space. I figured a long time ago that I'd never make it as a Dr. Who fan because I'd keep tripping over the scarf, so this would all have been irrelevant to me, except that it forced itself on my attention. There were a couple of panels at the con, featuring the con's four celebrities or approximations thereof--pro writers David Drake and Bruce Hunter; Prof. Walter Meyers, the author of a book on sf and linguistics; and cartoonist G. A. Dees. Bernadette and I, and a couple of concom members, attended the panels, thus making sure that the audience was larger than the panel. The panels were enjoyable, except that they had no microphones or other sound devices, and thus tended to be drowned out by the Dr. Who shows. I imagine that Dees said some interesting things; but although I was in the first row of the audience, I was at the opposite end of the table they sat at and thus heard very few of his remarks.

Nonetheless, the con was enjoyable. After the panels, Bernadette and I went into Raleigh and saw BLADE RUNNER. It's essentially a 40s hardboiled-detective movie (Bernadette pointed out some of the similarities I had missed) with a lot of futuristic scenery and special effects. These latter are very well done, and do much to make the movie worth seeing. One nice touch is that at the very end of the credits, there is an announcement that the movie is dedicated to the memory of Philip K. Dick.

After the movie, we went over to Russ's place for a cookout with the concom and some of the guests, and that was most enjoyable.

Today we had a whole bunch of interactions. Adrienne & Bear called up and informed us that APA-69 had been delayed, but was in the mail. Then I called Rick Brown to find out what had happened to Pagan APA. It seems that Rick suffered a mild concussion, a cut requiring four stitches, and assorted bruises in a bicycle accident, and thus had not gotten around to collating Pagan APA yet, but will do so tomorrow, *deis volentibus*. Other than that, Rick's life is going quite well. He is enjoying his job in jail especially some of the new restraints they taught him, and generally seems quite happy.

In the afternoon, Bernadette's colleagues Bob & Ken dropped in with a friend of theirs (George) who works for the Rhine Institute. We had a most pleasant & informative chat about the latest endeavors to quantify the occult, and it is not impossible that Bernadette and I will wind up participating in an official Rhine Institute experiment.

28 June

"No lion in his right mind would condemn the predator's way of life. Nor would any bee, even for a moment, experience guilt about its exploitation of flowers. There isn't a philodendron around that would consider abandoning its usurpation of solar energy. There is only one species now living that not only would consider condemning those activities necessary for its survival but has condemned them, quite consistently, for thousands of years. That species is our own, and the activities it has condemned are sexual expression and independent thought."

One of the books I have thought that I would write someday was one to be called THE LAST DIRTY BOOK, a study of the (to me) obvious fact that humanity's increasing ability to separate fucking from reproduction was changing our attitudes towards both, and towards the relations between the sexes, proper sex roles (if any), marriage, and the concept that the sexual, per se, could be "dirty," whence came the proposed title.

In a way, that has now been done for me. Lynn S. Baker, M.D., has written THE FERTILITY FALLACY (Saunders hc), a book which looks at the question I was discussing & comes to many of the same conclusions.

Baker writes well, as the sample which begins this page indicates. She begins by pointing out that humanity has always controlled fertility, but we have done it behaviorally. Now we are learning to do it biologically, and so the choice is not whether to control fertility, but how. She goes on to point out that as long as fertility can be controlled only behaviorally, the differences between men and women are socially crucial, but when people control their own fertility, there is the possibility of true equality for women. She makes a point that I had not thought of (as it does not particularly interest me) that technological ways of making people fertile who were not so can be socially important as well as can liberating people from their fertility. She makes some very interesting technical points about how neither genes nor hormones can be the basis for an absolute two-valued male/female distinction and adds, "Nature did not make opposite sexes. We did. Nature made apposite sexes. Apposites go together, connect, complement."

But I am not in total agreement with Baker, as she seems to me to be a drug puritan. Just as the sex puritans she & I despise revel in the connections between sex and disease, unwanted pregnancy, etc., so she revels in the side effects of drugs. In a chapter on the Pill, DES, etc., she points out the harm done by these attempts to control fertility biologically. She recognizes the paradox that while the feminist movement rightly condemns the Pill as dangerous to women and as having been tested on them by a callous male medical establishment, it was the Pill that brought about the paradigm shift which made feminism (and her book) possible. She says that she believes that future attempts to control fertility biologically will be safer & more effective, but she seems not quite happy

about the whole idea. In that same chapter, she goes off on something of a tangent about drugs, in which she implies that anyone who tries to improve his condition the easy way through drugs, especially psychoactive ones, instead of the hard but presumably ennobling way, is going to Get Caught and have nasty side effects. Not unlike the more traditional puritans warning of "Jesus, contagious diseases, and the bother of bearing a child." If they are overcome, I wonder if she'll find other reasons to preach against the drugs.

But that's a minor gripe. Basically this is a fascinating and important book which I recommend to one and all.

On a somewhat related topic, the nation's feminists have bowed to the inevitable defeat of the ERA. I have mixed feelings about this news, as I did about the amendment itself. That our nation has refused to commit itself to the idea that equality of rights shall not be abridged on the basis of sex is, as one of Max Shulman's characters put it, "a scandal and a disgrace and a puke." On the other hand, that our nation's Guideline Gurus and Quota Questers have one less means to attempt to enforce equality upon all of us is something I for one can regard with equanimity. If I am called upon to see a silver lining in the cloud, it is that the largest, healthiest, and most articulate minority movement in America has been turned away from seeking its goals through State action.

Speaking of equality enforcers, the Brookings Institute has just announced that the Army has disproportionate numbers of Blacks in the lower echelons. No shit, Sherlock. This of course means that we must reinstitute Selective Slavery so we can have the right quotas. It doesn't of course mean we should do something about a system where the best (if not only) way for a Black to get off the bottom is to join the Army.



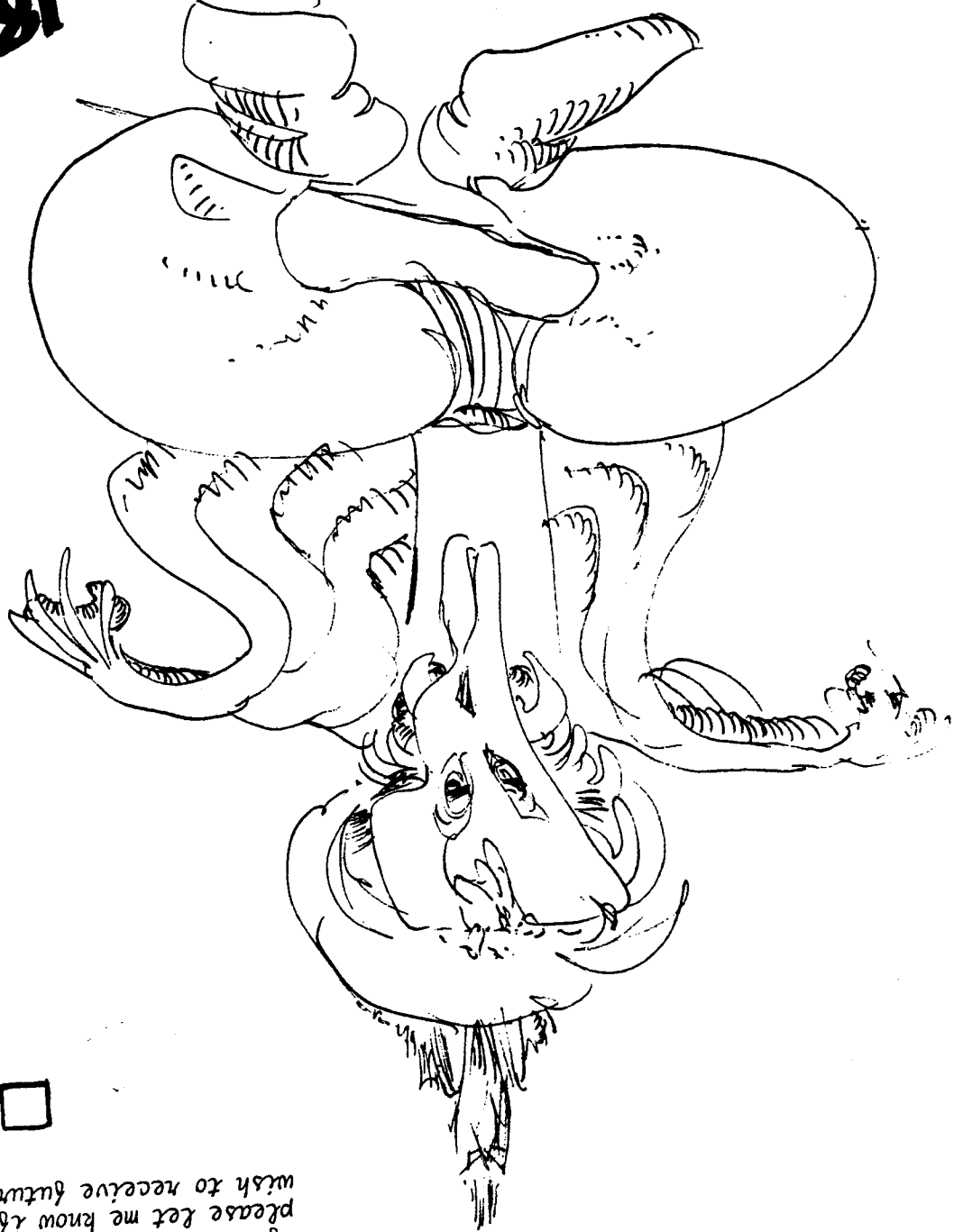
I LIKE READING SF BECAUSE IT TEACHES ABOUT EQUALITY AND TOLERANCE.

I ALSO ENJOY STORIES ABOUT FUNNY-LOOKING ALIENS.

FANNISH NERDS #4

18

W. Fraser...



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This has been the Dillinger Relic 23; W.A.S.T.E. Paper #353. Art Index:  
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