

XXX



LAN'S LANTERN





# From the Editor

## R.H.I.P. (D.A.D.)

by Lan

Several weeks ago in one of the magazines that accompany the Sunday paper, someone asked if Reagan had ever taken the responsibility for the Iran-Contra affair. The reply was that no one had; Reagan simply said that "mistakes were made."

For the past eight years the US has been under the "leadership" of this man, someone who only takes credit for whatever good has come from his office. At no time has he claimed responsibility for the high unemployment rate, the plight of the homeless, racial tensions (not only of Blacks but of Amerindians and other minorities), the increase in taxes, and so on. On these issues, he had either ignored them, or shoved the blame somewhere else. The leader of my country (though not my leader, since I didn't vote for him) had shirked his responsibilities. No wonder there are so many people shirking theirs. No wonder my students try to get away with as much as possible...until someone finds out what you've been doing. Anything you do is all right, unless you get caught.

Yeah, let's hear it for the New American Way!  
\*Puke\*

When I was a Boy Scout (some 25 years ago), there was a saying among the leaders: "R.H.I.P.", "Rank Has Its Privileges." While Senior Patrol Leader for my scout troop, I added, "D.A.D.", "Duties And Disappointments." Through experience I learned that while the privileges are nice, one has to earn them by taking responsibility, doing one's duty, and suffering disappointments. Responsibility to the troop took precedence over personal considerations. In this time of "me first" and "cover your ass" attitudes, this vital element of leadership seems to have been forgotten.

Taking responsibility for what you do right is the easy part; taking responsibility for what you do wrong is the true test of a leader. And not just taking the blame, but doing something to set right the wrong that had been done. What the young people of the nation see is someone who tries to get away with as much as possible, and when caught, tries to weasel out. There's no "I'm sorry," no "What can I do to repair the damage." What we hear is: "These were my orders," or "He made me do it." Finger pointing and "passing the buck" is the name of the game.

We now have very few leaders for the children of the nation, few role models who actually stand for good qualities. There seems to be no one decent in politics. Lawyers? Most seem to be concerned with making names for themselves, arguing whatever side of a case which will make them rich. Many sports

heros are crude and illiterate, and more are being brought up on drug charges. The Olympics scandals cost some athletes their medals and brought disgrace to their contries. Film and rock stars are no better. Teachers, church leaders, parents...who IS a good role model for the youth of the nation?

I have no real answer. I try to do what I can in my classes, but my responsibility is to teach math, and hopefully my attitudes and good qualities are some sort of example to my students. I hope that parents do their part in fostering strong ethics, though I see the attitude of "it's okay until you get caught" creeping in more and more.

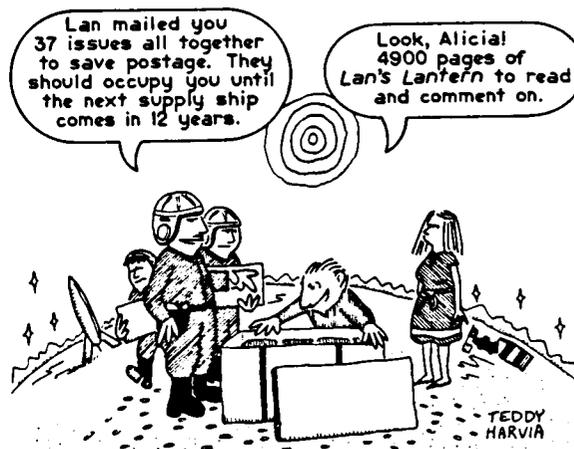
Only time will tell, but the future doesn't look very bright.

### IN THIS ISSUE

Again, there is a lot of variety in these pages. Lots of book and movie reviews, and a few articles and stories. What I had wanted to put in this issue of the Lantern were several trips to Egypt and East Africa. Aside from the usual travelogue from Mike Resnick, friend Ben Schilling went to Egypt, Italy, and Hawaii, and Mark and Evelyn Leeper traveled to Egypt, Kenya and Tanzania. When I finished putting together the zine up through the reviews, I ended on page 117. Looking at the trip reports to the extent of about 65+ pages, I decided against running them this time. Which then made room for letters (which I had decided to drop in favor of the trips, but in lieu of the length of the travelogues...).

Besides, I do have a limitation on how many pages I can staple together!

So the next issue (out soon after this one) will have some trip reports from around the world, with accompanying art from Diana Stein and others.



# GoH Speech from RoVaCON

by Susan Shwartz

I'm delighted to be here. I'm especially happy to have been invited to be the guest of honor at a convention that emphasizes education, especially within the context of the science fiction community. I'm very much impressed by the number of college scholarships that you offer and by the sense of community that I see here. This is the sense that I feel that SF as a whole shares, from the person encountering her first SF novel, to the neo-pro rejoicing in his first sale, to the very senior pros whose work I've read since I was a teenager, and who are kind enough to push younger writers out into the spotlight.

I should add: we don't take much pushing.

I want to speak more about that sense of community that I've always felt in the SF field; but, before I do, I want to remind all of us that this is a community based on a common interest: books. That means that ours is a community of defenders against a terrible affliction -- illiteracy. Listening to National Public Radio on my way to work just last week, I learned that right now 23 million adult Americans are unable to read. If you want to feel bad, you can compare that to the almost universal literacy rate in countries like Iceland, where they read more than one language. Granted, Iceland is exponentially smaller than the US; but if we are larger, how much greater are the risks we face when so large a percentage of our citizens cannot read?

It's part of a wider problem. The study of foreign languages has declined. Many students today cannot recognize common dates in history or identify places on a map. And then there's that growing population of illiterate people, who will be increasingly handicapped in an information-based age. And their problems will not die with them, but be passed on to their children, who may grow up into a permanent underclass of illiterates unable to fend for themselves.

The best weapon against such a danger is outreach, involvement through family, school, friends, and the wider community. As one literacy specialist said, "When a man comes in and says, 'I want to learn to read so I can help my kids,' you know you've got him."

What has this lecture about the danger of illiteracy to do with science fiction? Simple. In the group of editors, writers and readers of science fiction, especially when they meet at conventions such as these -- which they've been doing now for more than 50 years -- is precisely the type of community that can and must serve as an example and a strike force. After all, SF has written about incapacity, illiteracy, or hostility to things of the mind for years. Just think of works like "The Marching Morons," or A Canticle for Leibowitz, or Fahrenheit 451. You haven't read them? Then read them for the first time; and how I envy you that first contact!

Science fiction has always been a community, indeed a family affair, for me. Let me tell you about my science fiction community.

It started the year that Alan Shepard went into space and I found a copy of a book called Space Cadet on the shelves of my grade school's library. I brought it home, and -- you know how it is, when you're too quiet? your parents have to investigate what you're up to. Now, as a kid who read literally everything that I could get my hands on, my reading was carefully supervised. So my father held out his hand for this tempting new book with the picture of a rocket -- I realize now that it looked remarkably like a Hugo award -- on the cover.

"Heinlein," said my father. "Heinlein."

I started to protest that this was good stuff; see, it even had a rocket on the cover, and it was about hard-working students...but Dad was smiling.

"Are there any more of these books at school?" he asked.

Well yes, there were. There was something called Red Planet Mars that looked really good, and something else about robots by a man whose name I couldn't remember, but which Dad supplied. "You can go on reading this," he told me.

More than 20 years later, I realize that his funny tone of voice was his attempt to keep from cheering and scaring me off SF right then and there. But, more than 20 years later, I know that Dad grew up on what his family called "that crazy Buck Rogers stuff" -- Astounding (now Analog) and the late, lamented Planet Stories -- and he didn't want to make the same mistake with me.

A few years later he insisted that I sit and watch TV with him, "a new show," he told me and promised that I'd really like it. It was the episode "Charlie X" of Star Trek. Not much later, we watched another episode, "Balance of Terror," and discussed what it meant that a scriptwriter would use Roman history -- I was taking Latin at the time -- to create the Romulans. I was highly impressed; Dad could anticipate the battle tactics.

Not much later, I brought home a history of SF that mentioned a friend of his, a newspaperwoman named Esther Hamilton, the sister of the late, great worldwrecker Edmond Hamilton and the sister-in-law of Leigh Brackett Hamilton, who wrote the screenplay for The Empire Strikes Back. We visited Kinsman, Ohio, where the Hamiltons lived. It looked like just the sort of small Midwestern town that Ray Bradbury liked to transport to Mars or bring dark merry-go-rounds into, as in Something Wicked This Way Comes: a central park, statues on the green, a big old library, schools, and people who look like they've lived there since the Sphinx was a kitten.

It strikes me that the SF community is a lot like that small town, if you assume that the town disappears during the week, to reform every weekend and every place that there is a SF convention. Somewhere in the park are the musicians, and the artists are busy sketching. Judith Tarr and Anne McCaffrey and a lot of other people can tell you that there's a very good stables; and they don't take kindly to wisecracks that they actually ride unicorns. There are statues in the park to the pioneers. Most recently they've had to put up a couple more: to Clifford Simak, who ran the newspaper; and to the man that every small town has at least one of -- the old soldier who always fit into his World War I uniform and led the parades...Robert A. Heinlein. There are getting to be too many statues in that park.

In the library, there's a picture of the lady who founded it. Happily, Andre Norton is still with us, and is busy bringing up yet another generation of writers as she aided Harlan Ellison when he was a young man growing up in Ohio -- and she's bringing along people like Ann Crispin, P.M. Griffin, and a host of others. We have good schools in this town...Hal Clement seems to be superintendent of them. We have a pretty good university; it started out as an engineering school, but somewhere around the 1960s the humanities people settled in to stay. And a lot of people decided to live here after their military service. They spend a lot of time arguing politics with some of the rest of us. In fact, the whole town seems to spend a lot of time doing two things: arguing and, above all, reading. Reading not just fiction, but the history, science, technology, anthropology, religion, and languages that will help them do their own work better.

It's a very creative town. I've never met so many writers, artists, musicians, designers, yes, and audiences too. I definitely think that it's a talent to be a good audience; and in this particular crowd, it's a very valuable specialty indeed.

What's my role in this town? I started out as a private citizen, an audience, if you will, and a voracious one. Now I'm a writer. Contrary to popular belief, the SF writing contingent of this particular town is not a highly talkative version of a motorcycle gang that breezes in, demanding beer and black coffee and books to read. I like to think, instead, that we're what keeps the town running. And I know that it's a very well-thought-out process.

When I first started to write, people read my manuscripts with unbelievable patience (I can't read the things even now!) and told me how to make them better. They generously put up with my attempts to write in their universes, cheered my initial steps toward publication, and celebrated when, finally and thank God, I broke into print. Just this year, though, I noted I was seeing things from the opposite side of the fence. Younger writers were working in my universe, were sending me manuscripts, telling me of their hopes to become professional writers.

I remember the first time that a manuscript appeared in my mailbox. Someone I didn't know had written it; someone else I didn't know had sent it to me to critique.

"What are you going to do?" asked my mother.

That was easy enough. I was going to do what I had been asked to do. And I did.

That is the community, and it's a fine one. But it's much like any other small town in America. When they work well, they're great places to live. But if they simply keep themselves to themselves, they grow smug and a little stale. They have to remember that they're part of a larger world.

Our particular town is no exception. What made me think of that is the recent, successful mission of Discovery. I found myself calling several friends, one of them a former president of the Science Fiction Writers of America, to celebrate. I'd called them in January 1986 to mourn when Challenger fell to ask: "What are we going to do about this?" Not, you notice, "Should we do something?" nor "What should we do?" I assumed that we'd be doing something, and we were; and have been. The most immediate consequence was a full-page ad in The New York Times; longer-range consequences have been a renewal of space activism by the SF community.

That's one way that our community can be part of the outer world. Another way is by the way, basically, that we read. After puzzling through a physics book for a hard SF novel, or reading anthropology to help me create an alien race, or working through ninth century Chinese history, I know you

don't need advanced degrees in those fields to read up on them; any more than you have to have gone to the Cordon Bleu to whip up dinner. If you can think, you can learn. If you can read, you can read anything you've a mind to. If you've got that attitude, then you can learn any type of job you need to learn...a philosophy that's gotten me more than one job and that'll probably help me in whatever I do.

It is not, I've discovered, a philosophy that's particularly widespread outside. Therefore, from where I sit, it's a philosophy that we really ought to share. In other words, it's not enough to make our own community as good as we can. We have to share what makes it work with the outside world. And, at the same time, we have to ask them to join us. Actually, what it reminds me of is the Piedmont

Airlines magazine in which I saw the Roanoke/Salem area described as a way of luring companies to locate here. (Incidentally, RoVaCON was mentioned as a cultural attraction; we all must be doing something right.) The SF community too must be open to the world at large, or we'll stagnate; and they'll lose out on what we have to offer.

After spending most of my life as a reader, writer and editor in the field, I can tell you that that's a lot; others here, who have been in it longer, can tell you in more detail and with a whole lot more authority. When they do, call me. I want to listen to them, too.

But for now, I want to close with this: you have welcomed me to your community. I hope I've used this opportunity to welcome you to mine.

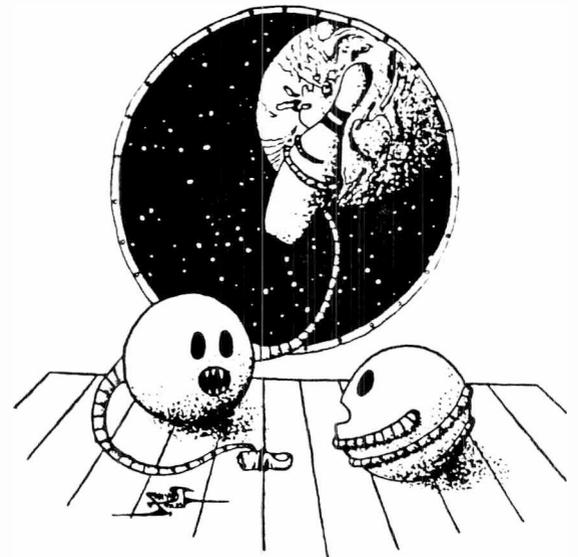
Thank you very much.]\*]



# DATA-BASE of ODDS & ENDS

by Alan David Laska

This column is for the readers of Lan's Lantern who have questions that have been probing and puzzling them since the time of the creation of Fandom. This column may become a regular feature. If you have a question of science fiction, fantasy, science or in the area of fandom, or would like to know how they do that scene in your favorite science fiction or fantasy movie or TV show, write to DATA-BASE Odds & ENDS, PO Box 832113, Richardson, Texas 75083, USA.



I recently saw the original Star Trek episode "Shore Leave" on television the other day and I saw that the World War II fighter that was attacking everyone at first looked like a US fighter instead of a Japanese fighter plane. Am I right?

Yes, you are right. This is a tricky question as well as a tough trivia question for Trek fans. When you watch the episode, you first hear a distant hum of an airplane engine; then you see an airplane in the distance. Although it is a bit out of focus, it is easy to see the dark colored plane (for a few seconds) which has easily recognized US markings on the wing. When the plane comes in for attacks on Lt. Rodriguez and Teller, and later on Captain Kirk and Mr. Spock, we see a closeup of the plane and it

is an off-white color with Japanese Air Force markings on it.

It seems that Paramount Studios did not have enough stock footage of one type of airplane and somebody in the post production stage did not think anyone would notice.

By the way, the US WW II fighter plane was a Vought F4U Corsair. It is easily recognizable because of the gull-wing design. It was a favorite used by the late Col. Pappy Boyington in the Pacific theatre during WW II and was manufactured until the early 1950s.



Where did the term "swamp gas" come from? It seems that UFOs are always explained as this. And what is it?

In March of 1966 in Michigan, there were dozens of strange and glowing objects seen in the evening sky by many people. The US Air Force, under their UFO investigation unit "Project Bluebook," sent out several investigators. One was the civilian scientific consultant and astronomer from Northwestern University, Dr. J. Allen Hynek (1910-1986), whom many people might remember being the technical advisor to Steven Spielberg's 1977 SF film Close Encounters of the Third Kind.

The press at the time was clamoring for an explanation to these strange UFO sightings by so many people and a press conference was set up by the USAF. Unfortunately, Dr. Hynek had not examined most of the cases of the alleged sightings in Michigan and was not really prepared for the press conference. Accordingly, the late Dr. Hynek tried to give some sort of explanation and it went something like: "In the case of the students who sighted a strange glowing object in a swampy section from their dormitory windows, they may have possibly seen a phenomenon called 'swamp gas'." He briefly went into an explanation of what swamp gas was.

Unfortunately, the press at the time did not pay attention to Dr. Hynek's use of the word "possibly" nor did they stay around to hear what else he had to say. He said the press left the room quickly, called their editors, and the front page of almost every paper or lead story read: "MICHIGAN UFOs IS SWAMP GAS." "I was referring to only one case as a possible explanation," said Dr. Hynek, "and I was misquoted very heavily by the news media."

As for what swamp gas is, it is a form of natural methane caused by decaying plants. During a thaw, like from winter to spring, it will somehow

ignite and glow for about a minute or two. It is also known as will-o'-the-wisp, corpse light, and foxfire. It is not exactly understood, and very little study has been done on it.

It should be noted that the UFOs seen in Michigan in 1966 and other UFO sightings since then are not swamp gas, but can be explained as other natural phenomena or misidentifications. Unfortunately, only about 90% can be explained while the other 10% every year has no logical explanation and remains unidentified.

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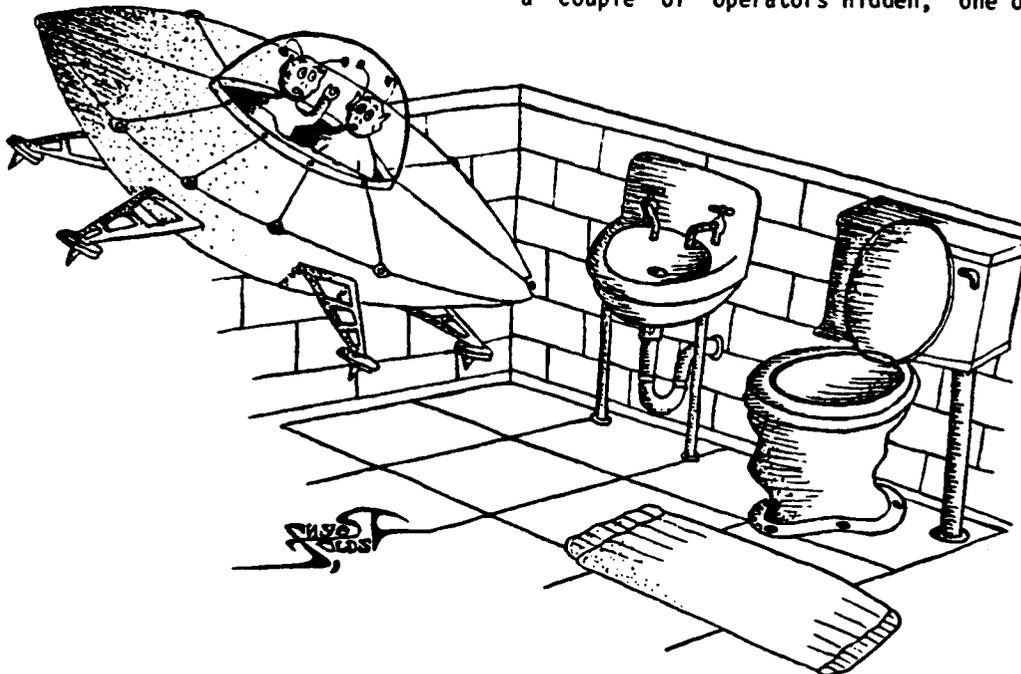
I heard on the syndicated radio show Dr. Demento the song "Fish Heads" sung by a group called Barnes & Barnes. The song has been repeated on the show from time to time. I was told by somebody that Bill Mummy who played Will Robinson on the series Lost in Space wrote it. Is this true?

Bill Mummy is one of the Barnes of Barnes & Barnes. He wrote the song with singer-keyboardist Robert Haime. "Fish Heads" is really out of this world (and out of mind as well).

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How do they make Alf walk and talk on the series Alf?

Simple. There are actually several Alf puppets and costumes used. In close-up scenes where Alf is talking, you will note that he is seen from the chest up or from behind a sofa or table. There are a couple of operators hidden, one operating his



hands, another making his mouth work. In the scenes where he is walking, it is simply a midget wearing an Alf costume. Since this is filmed, they film one scene of Alf making a wisecrack, and another of him walking away, then in postproduction the two scenes are edited to give the illusion of a real Alf.

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Could you settle a little dispute? I say that the movie 2001: A Space Odyssey was the most realistic science fiction drama of all time because of the highly elaborate special effects. A friend says it was the last Star Wars film Return of the Jedi. Another person says it was Aliens. Which one would you choose?

The most realistic SF drama, in my opinion, was not a highly budgeted film, or even a film, for that matter. In fact, not even a television show. It was radio. It was the October 30, 1938, Mercury Theatre presentation on CBS Radio called "War of the Worlds," written by Howard Koch and produced and read by Orson Welles, based on H.G. Wells' novel. It seems that a lot of people who were listening thought it was the real thing. Let's see John Dykstra and Douglas Trumbull out-top that.

\* \* \* \* \*

I heard that when the astronauts came back from the moon on the Apollo flights they had to go through customs. Is this true?

This only happened once after Apollo 11. When the crew got to Houston Space Center after their flight in the quarantine trailer, somebody at NASA jokingly asked if they had been through customs. The three said no, and later had asked to declare their cargo of lunar rocks and soil on a standard US Customs form. It was filled out and sent to their point of American entry at Honolulu, Hawaii. Some of the questions and answers on the custom form were:

FLIGHT NO: APOLLO 11

CARGO: MOON ROCKS AND DUST SAMPLES

ANY OTHER CONDITION ON BOARD WHICH MAY LEAD TO SPREAD OF DISEASE: TO BE DETERMINED

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What happened to the futuristic vehicles, taxi-cabs, etc., used in the movie Blade Runner?

According to articles written in Cinefantastique and Cinefex, most of the vehicles were destroyed for fear that the vehicles would be used in a "quick cheapo, get-it-done-before-ours-is-released" type production. Some of the other vehicles used were late 1950s/early 1960s which had a lot of pipes and tubes and hardware attached to them. One of the Police Spinners (flying cars) and Deckert's personal car survive, but both were auctioned off in California in the fall of 1986. It is not known where the cars are now, nor whether one person bought both cars, or they were split between two individuals.

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While watching the movie The Final Countdown with Kirk Douglas and Martin Sheen on TV the other night, I was wondering if the Japanese Zeros seen in the film with the US jets were actual Japanese Zeros?

The planes seen were converted and modified North American AT-6 Texans originally done for the movie Tora, Tora, Tora back in 1967, because there were none in flying condition 20 years after WW II. The planes are owned and operated by The Confederate Air Force, a non-profit organization keeping old aircraft in flying condition for historical purposes. They have supplied aircraft for many motion pictures and TV shows. For example:

--a B-29 (only one known flying) and a P-51 Mustang for The Right Stuff;

--Grumman TBF Avenger in Close Encounters of the Third Kind;

--a number of WW II fighter planes in the TV series Airwolf.

The organization has air shows throughout the year around the country which are worth seeing. For more information about air shows and the aircraft themselves, you can write: The Confederate Air Force, Rebel Field, Harlingen, Texas, 78550, USA, or phone (512) 425-1057.

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What is the make and model of that old automobile Bessie used by Jon Pertwee (the 3rd Doctor) in the Doctor Who show?

About a year ago, the Dr. Who exhibit came to Dallas, sponsored by the local PBS-TV station that showed the program. One of the props on display from the series was Bessie with the plate "WHO 1" on it. Several people were looking at it. One asked, "I wonder where the clutch is so they can shift gears?" Many inquired about its age. I noticed something about the body, so I tapped the

fender with my fist. The body was made of fiber-glass. The car wasn't that old (a '57 Chevy is older).

Bessie was apparently made for the series to look like a mid-1920s European old automobile. That explains why there was no clutch. Gettin an original old vehicle of that era would have cost too much, and the upkeep with hard-to-find parts (or custom-made ones) would not have been in the BBC budget, considering the shoe-string operation Dr. Who has always been.

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What ever happened to the chariot from the series Lost in Sppace?

It was auctioned off in the early 1970s (either 1972 or 1973). Several fans reported seeing it at a ski resort in northern California. Unfortunately, the upper frame with the glass panels was removed so skiers and tourists can get in and out easier. Apparently the ski resort bought it as a kind of bus and was not interested in keeping it like it was in the series. It is assumed that the chariot might have served its purpose and now is in some scrap yard somewhere.

\* \* \* \* \*

Did they film the Mission Control scenes in the movie Marooned at the Johnson Space Center?

No, they didn't. It was a reproduction at a Hollywood sound stage. This is usually one of the questions always asked of tour guides by people when they visit the Mission Control Center in Houston. However, they did film Futueworld there and in the vacuum chamber which was used as the launch pad in the same film.

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What is a parsec?

A Parsec is a unit of measure in astronomy. it is 3.26 light years, or the distance light travels in approximately three years and three months. In some science fiction novels, some writers have mistakenly used the term as a unit of time, like in Star Wars: A New Hope, when Han Solo explains how fast his spaceship is: "The Millennium Falcon can make the Kelso Run in five parsecs."

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What was the largest miniature set made for a science fiction film?

The largest miniature set is believed to be the one used in the 1930 film Just Imagine, released by 20th Century Fox. The set was built in an airship hanger for \$250,000, showing what New York City would be like in 1980. The cost would be close to \$5 or \$6 million in today's dollars (probably not more than \$10 million). It took up almost the entire hanger. The film was a flop. Scenes of the futuristic New York City later appeared as stock footage in other films like Buck Rogers in 1939.

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We see re-runs of Battlestar: Galactica, The Twilight Zone, Star Trek, and other science fiction shows on TV. How come the 1950 series Captain Video has not made it on the syndicated re-run circuit?

I myself would like to see this classic television series, but the sad truth is that many of the episodes had been put on film, and later were destroyed to get the silver in the film. At the time it was done, many people in the entertainment field did not think there was a market for old television programs. Only a handful of the Captain Video shows remain, not enough for syndication. I am told that one or two were released on video on an off-brand video label, but unfortunately no one has been able to supply me with the company's name. [\*]



# Many Waters

by Mark Bernstein

## MANY WATERS

by Madeleine L'Engle  
Dell, (1986) 1987, \$3.50

### A Review Couched in an Appreciation

You see, there were these seven science fiction fans and this crazy psychiatrist....

No, really, this is a true story.

A few years ago, due to circumstances that are irrelevant to this essay/review (and actually rather boring), a group gathered in my living room that consisted of myself and six of my friends, all of us being long-time fans, and my old friend Bill, who was indeed both a fully licensed MD-type psychiatrist and one of the craziest people I know. Since Bill has an intense curiosity about people and personalities, we ended up in an extended (read: most of the night) discussion of the "fan-nish" mind set. That discussion is directly responsible for this article.

As we talked, I became more intrigued with the differences among the fans in the room than with their similarities. In an effort to gain some perspective on the varying outlooks and philosophies I was hearing, I posed a number of questions. One of those questions was "Can you name the book or books that got you hooked on SF? I don't necessarily mean the first book in the genre you read. The book that made you say, 'Hey, I want to read more of this stuff!'"

Everyone named two, three, or four books. Not surprisingly, the authors most often named were Robert Heinlein and Andre Norton, but everyone mentioned a different title. In fact, with one exception, no single book by any author garnered more than one vote. One book, however, was named by four out of the seven fans in the room.

That book was A Wrinkle in Time by Madeleine L'Engle.

At this point I'd be willing to bet that some of you just did the mental equivalent of slapping yourself on the forehead and saying, "Oh! Her!". A pitifully small percentage of fandom recognizes L'Engle's name, but it seems that almost everyone who's read the story of Meg, Charles Wallace, Mrs. Whatsit, et al (or perhaps IT al would be more appropriate here) remembers it clearly and fondly.

My curiosity was roused that night. Like a lot of fans, I'd read A Wrinkle in Time and the two

other books in the series, A Wind in the Door and A Swiftly Tilting Planet, but had never even glanced at L'Engle's other books. I searched through the Young Adult racks in the bookstores and the card catalogues in the libraries, buying or borrowing every title I could find. I found that several of her books, including Dragons in the Waters, The Arm of the Starfish, and A Ring of Endless Light, have science fictional elements. I found numerous books that I had never known existed. Finally I came to the conclusion that Madeleine L'Engle is one of the finest writers I know of, and probably one of the most under-recognized and under-appreciated author in the SF and Fantasy fields. Granted, she's far from unknown, and in fact is probably more famous outside SF circles than within them, but in terms of the quality of her writing, the skill with which she communicates emotion and philosophy, and the impact she's had in attracting readers to the genre, she deserves to be ranked with Heinlein, Norton, Sturgeon, and any other author acknowledged as a major figure.

I mention Sturgeon, rather than Clarke or Asimov, because he and L'Engle belong together, somehow. It's been said that Theodore Sturgeon knew more about love, in all its myriad forms, than anyone else on this planet. I would add that Madeleine L'Engle knows far more about family, in all its myriad forms, than any other author I've ever encountered. While her characters are memorable, (I can see the six-year-old Charles Wallace seated in the kitchen on that dark and stormy night, his feet dangling above the floor as he discourses with a wisdom beyond his years), her true brilliance lies in the manner in which those characters relate and interact. I feel that I know the Murrys, or the O'Keefes, and would feel perfectly at home with them. These people, and their feelings for each other, matter to L'Engle, and that caring is communicated on every page. An indicator of this can be found in the endpapers of the hardcover edition of her newest book, Many Waters. While Heinlein's Future History books contain a timeline showing what stories happened when, and what the major "historical" events were, L'Engle has published a chart depicting the major families she has created, showing what books they appeared in and where they interacted. The chart, like Heinlein's timeline, plays no direct part in the book, but is an important step toward understanding the thought and feeling that has gone into the books.

Many Waters itself continues L'Engle's examination of Family, but with a somewhat different focus. It begins quickly, as Sandy and Denys, the Murry twins, carelessly play with their father's computer while an experiment is in progress and find themselves transported to the middle of a desert. Picked up by a desert tribe, they eventually discover that they've traveled in time as well as distance, and have arrived in a period that is literally antediluvian. They must then deal with a series of conflicts, including those surrounding the patriarch of one tribal family when God tells him to build an ark in the middle of the desert. The patriarch's name, of course, is Noah.

Those who regard the Judeo-Christian Old Testament as literal truth could easily accept L'Engle's setting as historically accurate. She pays close attention to precision of detail (Sandy and Denys, while only fifteen, tower over Noah and his family), the realities of desert life, and the casual acceptance of the fantastic by those who accept God (or, in this case, El) as a direct, daily presence in their lives. Being generally unfamiliar with the Bible, I was initially surprised by the presence of supernatural beings such as seraphim and nephilim as characters in the story, but a rereading of Genesis revealed that L'Engle, while she has considerably embellished the Biblical version of the events leading up to the Flood, has not contradicted or significantly departed from that version in any way.



I'll refrain from giving away any more of the plot. Suffice it to say it involves love, suffering, the confusion associated with adolescence, and a number of other common L'Engle themes. Many Waters is a bit different from the other three books in the Murry family series in that the conflicts lack the universe-spanning scope we've seen elsewhere, but it's no less powerful for that. I recommend it without reservation.

All told, I've read at least a dozen of L'Engle's books, most within the past few years. Every single one of them was well written, thoughtful, insightful, and suffused with a deep love for the human race. I found several of them to be profoundly moving. L'Engle's skill cuts across bookstore categories and genres, across subject matter and theme. In her recent juvenile, A House Like a Lotus, teenaged Polyhymnia O'Keefe (daughter of Calvin and Meg) faces a tangle of issues, including hero worship, lesbianism, alcoholism, her own sexuality, and the need to forgive. Aside from its protagonist and intended audience, there's nothing "juvenile" about it. The Other Side of the Sun, a historical novel, centers around a black uprising in a southern city in the early part of this century, but is really about one particular family, and how they deal with the stresses and eventual violence of the times. It manages to be simultaneously chilling and loving.

Her non-fiction is equally powerful. The three volumes known collectively as The Crosswicks Journal (the individual titles are A Circle of Quiet, The Summer of the Great-Grandmother, and The Irrational Season) have much of interest to say about the creative process, faith, and (as always) love and family.

That most fans know Madeleine L'Engle through only one, two, or three books is a damned shame. While A Wrinkle in Time deserves every plaudit it has ever received, she is anything but a "one book" or "one series" author. I urge all of you to pull away from the Science Fiction rack in your bookstore long enough to check the Young Adult and General Fiction sections for the books by this author. You may find a whole new family to love. [\*]

# Lois McMaster Bujold

## In Her Own Words

On November 8, 1988, I spent two and a half hours talking with Lois McMaster Bujold in her frame house on a quiet residential street in Marion, Ohio. As we talked, a black cat came to investigate me, but another orange one showed no interest. Lois and I were also joined briefly by her husband, John, before he left for his job as banquet chef at the Muirfield Country Club in Dublin. It turned out that John had been a student in a freshman English class I taught at Ohio State in 1970. However, I had given him an A, so he bore no grudges and let me stay and talk with Lois. Here is part of our conversation.

Lois McMaster Bujold recently won the Nebula Award for her novel Falling Free. The novel is also on the Hugo ballot this year.

--Bill Unger

I was born in Columbus in 1949, which makes me 39 this month, and I don't care. I grew up in Upper Arlington [an affluent Columbus suburb]. My father had Ph.D.s from Cal Tech in physics and electrical engineering. He went into metallurgy and became a world authority on nondestructive testing. He came to Columbus in 1946 to work for Battelle and around 1956 moved to Ohio State as a professor of welding engineering.

I always thought that the right thing to do was be an engineer. But having gotten sort of askew academically in high school, I gave up on actually being a scientist. It's apparent to me now that what I really wanted to do was to write science fiction, but I didn't grasp back then that this was something that was going to be possible. But I've always been an admirer of science. It seems to me that the twentieth century is going to be remembered the way the sixteenth century is remembered for its art: all the best minds are at work in science these days. It's our contribution to human history.

I read voraciously and started writing bits and pieces in about the eighth grade--things like 40 pages of imitation Heinlein adventure. They were parts of novels even then, but they were all very fragmentary. My writing was very much influenced by my reading. I ran across Lord of the Rings at 15 and became a fan. Sherlock Holmes was an old love, along with science fiction, and C.S. Forester --all

the Hornblower stories -- and H. Ryder Haggard. I used to read all these British boy's adventure stories, never realizing that they weren't addressed to me.

I read L. Sprague DeCamp and Fletcher Pratt's The Incomplete Enchanter and then went on to read Spenser's The Faery Queen twice in tenth grade, which impressed my English teacher no end. So my science fiction fed back into my mundane reading very often through my looking up the source. I got a lot of education from science fiction, not so much from reading the stories but from going back and tracing the origin of some particular thing, like reading The Faery Queen to see what they did with it and the changes they made. Having read Tolkein and The Faery Queen both that year, I think I wrote about 30 or 40 pages of Tolkeinesque saga, starting out in Spenserian verse, and then ran out of rhymes.

Besides my reading, probably the most important thing that happened to me in school was meeting Lillian Stewart--Lillian Stewart Carl now--in the 7th grade. Lillian and I saw Lawrence of Arabia seven times in junior high school, and we ended up reading all about Lawrence. We were in 11th grade when Star Trek hit. About six of us would meet every Thursday night and watch it together. My dad called it the prayer meeting. We were quite bananas about it, and Lillian and I did a Star Trek fanzine.

But it's interesting that our writing styles are apparent in the stuff that we were doing at 18. Stylistically, what I wrote then and what I'm writing now are not that far apart, except now I finish things and they're more coherent in terms of their underlying structure. We watched Star Trek, and we did the thing where you make up stories and then you start changing the names to give yourself more elbow room. By the time we were done, we had sort of gone off into a universe of our own that might have had its roots in Star Trek, but it was so long ago that nobody remembered by the time we were 14 generations down the line and had 160 named characters and their family trees. Lillian and I got together at a science fiction convention in Minneapolis a year or so ago. Of our high school days, we could remember maybe four or five people, but we could remember far more of the characters that we made up then.

In the last two years of high school, I sort of turned off. I hated being there and I retreated inward, but eventually I got old enough to graduate and they let me go. College went much better. It was more freedom. I started at Ohio State in January, 1968, and left finally in 1972.

I didn't finish college. I dropped in and out several times. My last round was with pharmacy. I was briefly an English major. I came in loving reading and hit somebody for whom every poem was about the writing of poetry. It became apparent to me that English wasn't writing, it was about writing--one step removed from the real thing. But I was writing. I wrote a science fiction story for the creative writing course and got an A, but it didn't go anywhere.

I did hook up with Lloyd Kropp, who was teaching at OSU, through the Central Ohio Science Fiction Society, and from this a great deal of the rest of my life has flowed. Lloyd took a splinter group from COSFS, including Lillian and me, and we'd meet at his house for a kind of writer's workshop. He'd try out things on us he was going to try on his writing students. Lloyd had us writing things and would give us critiques. And that led on in another way because at Marcon in 1969 I met John, and we got married in 1971.

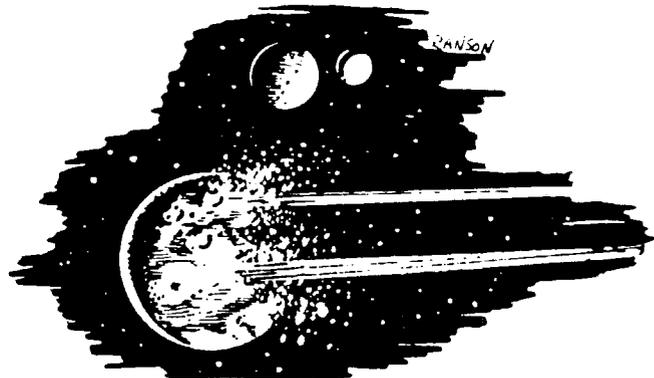
From 1972-78 I worked as a pharmacy technician at University Hospitals. In 1976, sort of out of nowhere, I wrote a 60-page Sherlock Holmes pastiche, which I finished. It had a beginning, middle and end and finally got all typed up. That was my out-of-the-middle-of-nowhere effort to break into becoming a writer, which got stopped for various reasons. The writing impulse was there--not necessarily science fiction, just to write at that point.

While I was working at the Hospital and gaining a lot of life experience that I would not otherwise

have encountered, I got a staff card admitting me to the OSU stacks, with its two million volumes, and all of a sudden my reading started exploding in every direction. I read everything by Francis Hodgson Burnett--I loved it. I read romance novels that hadn't been checked out since 1936 and strange fact accounts. It was just rummaging. I'd walk through, and if it looked strange and the title was at eye level, it fell to my hand. All this sort of thing, for about ten years, I gobbled up. I was reading Dorothy Sayers, whose character is into theology as a hobby, so I read St. Augustine's Confessions, and that took me off on a whole nother list of trailing things around and seeing where they led in my reading.

About this time Battlestar: Galactica came on, and the early episodes weren't so bad. Lillian, who was in Texas now, started doing fan stories and got a couple of them published. Finally she made her first short story sale, and she was off and running. I was stuck up here in Marion with my second kid just turning one year old. We were in the middle of the Reagan recession. I was unemployed and John was going in and out of being employed, because the company he worked at had gone under. I started writing to save my sanity and because Lillian had done it and sold some books and because any kind of job I could get in Marion wouldn't pay for the babysitting.

I did a novella, which I sent to Lillian and which Lillian, out of the kindness of her heart, sent off to Patricia Wrede in Minneapolis for a critique. And Pat, bless her heart, sent back a 14-page single-spaced letter of critique of this novella, which is more attention than I'd gotten from one human being in years. When I started the novel that became Shards of Honor, the ritual was to complete a chapter and make copies for Pat and Lillian, which would in a few weeks elicit letters in my mailbox that would break into my isolation up here. So my interim reward in the absence of a sale and money and all those things was that it won me friends, it brought people to me. They critiqued, and they helped and they kept me going.

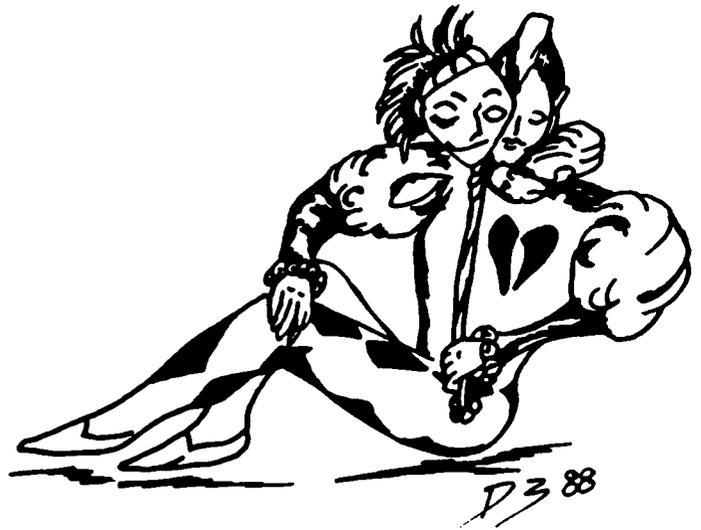


With Pat and Lillian holding my hands, I trudged forward in time: finished the first book and sent it off to an agent, who kept it six months, then sent it back. It then went to its first editor, who kept it six months and sent it back. We're a year down the road now, and I'm almost finished with Warrior's Apprentice, the second novel. Then I made my first short story sale, and that was the first light at the end of the tunnel, after I'd been at this two and a half years with no indication that I was going to reach the status of professional writer. But selling "Barter" was immensely encouraging to me, and on the ego kick I got from that, I went ahead and wrote Ethan of Athos. So I had written three novels before I sold any of them.

Pat and Lillian had both suggested Betsy Mitchell at Baen because they said she'll give Warrior's Apprentice a good read even if she doesn't buy it, and give you good advice, and she's a neat person. So I sent it to Baen, and they bought it and all the others and brought them out as the kind of series they were meant to be. They all came out in 1986, which leads people to believe that I write a book every four months, which is not true.

The story that became Shards of Honor started out as a Star Trek related story. The initial Aral Vorkorsigan was a Klingon. Since then, he'd accreted all sorts of other things into him as diverse as Ignatius Loyola and Winston Churchill, not to mention Athos the Musketeer. I had a scenario, just the story you make up to tell yourself while you're driving to work. You're bored, so you start running the television set in the back of your head and putting in the script and characters and special effects. I had one that I'd worked on for some time involving two people from opposite sides who are down on a planet and have to cooperate to get from here to there. A romance. I mean, this is an old story that's been done who knows how many times. So I followed these two characters out and eventually got them together, and I knew that they had a son who was militarily inclined but also physically crippled.

OK. Insert a six-year hiatus, right? I sit down and I say to myself, Lillian's written a story. I want to write a story. What am I going to write? And this old thing pops into my mind. Since then, I've done more reading, I've acquired more experiences, the Star Trek roots are overlain and buried in enough stuff so that nobody will ever spot them. So I started out with my characters, and I started making up more original versions of them. If we eliminate all these roots and make it more original, what do I come up with? What can I do to them that hasn't been done? How can I make them more my own? I did that number on them and started them off on their story. And that's where Shards of Honor came from.



I knew about Miles when I was writing Shards of Honor. He existed by then as a character. So his roots go back at least twelve years. Possibly I could get tired of Miles and his family eventually. I would like to do a lot of other things in addition to Miles. He's a very congenial character to work with--I like being inside his head. There's all kinds of things you can do with him because he's not narrow, he's not merely a military hero. I can tell all kinds of stories with him. The novella I wrote this summer was a murder mystery, with Miles as detective.

I had finished Warrior's Apprentice and was scratching around for an idea for a new book. I had sold "Barter" to Twilight Zone, and it was, yeah, I can be a writer, I'll do another one of these. First of all, there was the uterine replicator--it had come up in Shards of Honor as a part of the background technology-- which made an all-male planet possible. There were all those really bad Amazon planet stories that I read back in the fifties. There was an old Cordwainer Smith story, "The Crime and Glory of Commander Suzdal," somewhere in the back of my mind. I knew the idea wasn't new, somebody had done it before, but I wanted to do something different with it.

Miles started with a character and Shards of Honor started with the two characters, but Ethan of Athos is the first book I wrote that started with a concept. I had the idea of a planet without women, and everybody will be raised in vats, and it will be all boys, and we'll see how these guys get along. And what's the most quintessential Athosian you could have? Well, it would be a man who works in the reproduction center, the guy who's kind of symbolically pregnant for his planet. He's taking on the female role, but of course, being male, they do it in the most expensive technological way. It would be like an army or a monastery or any of these all-male organizations, so it would tend to be a very hierarchical society I felt. Everybody

who wants to cooperate with the central authorities is in the center and they have the monopoly on reproduction, so they're the future of the planet. And everybody who doesn't want to cooperate with the central authorities goes to the outback, and they don't have any children, so it's a one-generation problem. The planet is inherited by the ones who are cooperating, because they are in control of the means of reproduction. Just like the proletariat, only different.

The main character should be an obstetrician, because that's the Athosian role that's really different from anything else. OK, what kind of problem could this planet have that would be most proper to its setup? Obviously it would be the reproduction problem. Something is screwed up in their reproduction, and from that the whole thing flowed.

For the first three chapters, I didn't know what had happened to the shipment of ovarian cultures. All I knew was that we had the setup and we had the initial problem, and the story was originally going to be a quest. Ethan was going to go out and get his consciousness raised by traveling to different places and seeing different things. Then I got to Kline Station and realized I could carry it off much more succinctly by having everybody come to him. I also wanted to do more with Elli Quinn. She's obviously Ethan's opposite number, because she's the woman who's taken on the male role of soldiering, quite competently. They were destined for each other.

The reader may expect that Ethan will get converted to heterosexuality, but it doesn't happen, there's no reason why he should. This is sort of the nature/nurture thing. No woman has ever given Ethan chocolate chip cookies in his dimly remembered childhood. He has no programming to respond to women back there. This story also grew out of my experiences of raising my children, watching how people are actually put together. I felt that Ethan would be intrigued by Elli as something alien, but he would have no underlying positive response to her because he's never been nurtured by a woman. He wouldn't necessarily fall in love with her, and she wouldn't necessarily fall in love with him either, because she has all these other choices before her. I knew pretty much from the beginning that they were not going to be getting together, and yet they did, in a fundamental way, end up cooperating, because she gave him her ovary, which he then carried off to Athos. So those two are the ones who are going to be having children together, not Miles and Elli.

I'd finished Ethan just weeks before Jim Baen bought the book and had some telephone conversations with him that fall. "I'm between books, all ideas are equal, is there anything you particularly

want?" And he did something unexpected. Everybody says that publishers want the same thing over and over. Well, he asked for something different and sort of destroyed my preconceptions of what publishers really want.

I had been toying with the idea of taking a character--the Arde Mayhew jump pilot from Warrior's Apprentice--and following out one of his stories, how he'd finally get his jump ship. I had the notion that he would go on a quest to find this equipment he needed to complete his existence and that he would finally find an RG ship way out in the boonies somewhere where there was an asteroid belt and a bunch of people who were kind of like interstellar junk dealers who had been bioengineered to live and work in free fall, but like all the equipment they had become obsolete.

Jim Baen wasn't terribly interested in the jump pilot, but he seized on the idea of the people who lived out in the asteroid belt and thought that was rather intriguing, and could you do a story about their whole society, sort of like--and you could see the stars in his eyes even over the telephone--sort of like C.J. Cherryh? And I said, yes, that's an interesting idea. I wanted to do something that other people hadn't done. I didn't want to write the same science fiction novel over and over again. He said that the idea of the technologically obsolete, bioengineered people was new. So we can blame Falling Free initially on Jim Baen. I think he should get the credit for being the editor who asked his writer to do something different.

I decided that I would begin at the beginning, so instead of having this story set in Miles' time, I dropped back 150 years. Where did these people come from and how did they get there, and I reasoned back to my quaddies. Also, I thought that science fiction had been overrun with military themes lately, and I wanted to get away from a book with a military hero. Whatever happened to science fiction with scientists in it? I decided that my hero would be a welding and nondestructive testing engineer because I had all this background to draw on. I could have my dad critique the engineering bits and find out if they were OK.

This was going to be extremely convenient. It would be much easier than trying to learn all about a new science that I didn't know anything about. And about five chapters into it, my dad died. He had a heart attack in 1986. He'd been gradually getting more ill, so it wasn't a complete surprise, but it was still quite a shock for everybody.

Then Betsy Mitchell asked me to write a story for Free Lancers about space mercenaries. This was within a month of my dad's death, and it was very well timed, because it allowed me to get away from that book for a while and do something else. The Free Lancers story had been kicking around in my



head for about a year, but it was only a third of a novel, and I didn't see how I was going to expand it into a whole book yet. Betsy's request allowed me to do it just the right length for the story. It was also the first thing that I sold before I wrote it, so I got to do two experiments at once.

Having completed "The Borders of Infinity," I felt braver, and then I put Falling Free under contract with Baen when it was about a third complete. Baen does not include first serialization among the rights he buys in a contract. So I sent it to Stan Schmidt at Analog independently. This book has connections with Analog going way back. I started reading adult science fiction when I was nine because my dad brought home the magazines after buying them to read on the plane. Being an engineer, he always bought Analog when he could. And my first subscription was to Analog. For a long time Analog was science fiction to me. One of several things I wanted to do with Falling Free was make it a kind of tribute to the science fiction I read back then -- the good-old-fashioned-Analog-type-science-fiction-with-engineers-in-it story. So selling it back to Analog completed the circle.

My writing schedule has changed as the kids have grown. When I began, I'd write during their naps and after they went to bed. Then they stopped taking naps and started staying up later and that time got squeezed out. For a while I'd go to the library for two or three hours. I'd get a certain amount of stuff ready in my head to write, hire a babysitter and do some writing in that way. Or John would be home in the morning and I'd stick him with the babysitting. When my son started kindergarten, I thought I could stay home to write, but it hasn't worked out quite as smoothly as I'd hoped. We're still working out when all my writing times will be. I just have to stay flexible. Fortunately, you can do that with writing.

I started writing in longhand and transcribing and retranscribing on my old electric typewriter from college. I typed Shards of Honor about three times, the first time in my kitchen, in August, when it was 103, and the most I could do was recopy maybe 25 pages a day, and that was working 14 hours and ignoring everybody and creating all sorts of ill will. And then I had a scare about the top copy getting lost in the mail, so I got my dad to get me my first word processor.

I still write in longhand in my notebook. The electric typewriter, and even more the computer, is sitting there and using electricity, and this is costing pennies a minute while I'm trying to think of something to say. It's sort of daunting. The pencil will wait indefinitely while I figure out what the next sentence is going to be. Then I scribble it down, and we have another long pause while I figure out what the next sentence is going to be. The typing doesn't take that long, and then I get to look at it again in a different format, and I see things I didn't notice before in terms of editing.

I don't make too many changes between drafts, but I make some. So I'll probably keep doing it that way. It's a habit. It's horribly inefficient, but it's the way I work. I used to say I almost wrote final drafts, but when I looked at what I was doing, that wasn't quite true. I will start with a real vague outline of the story. It's like when an artist puts in the color washes of the water paint, then puts in all the details over the top. I will have a vague idea, like for The Warrior's Apprentice it would have been boy goes out and gets in deepshit trouble with mercenaries, in the pattern of The Sorcerer's Apprentice, who creates more power than he's able to handle. Things go to a certain point and then crash and then we have some sort of wrap.

Then I plunge into the book, and chapter by chapter I'll do more detailed outlines. I'll figure out my scenes and sort of fit them into place, like fitting in puzzle pieces. I'll have scene 1, scene 2, scene 3, and this will comprise my chapter, and the chapter will be the work unit, and then I'll do things like the script of the dialogue. If it's a scene with a lot of dialogue, I'll go through and jot M says thus and so, P says thus and so, and I'll have a kind of script in a personal shorthand so the scene doesn't wander off into channels that don't support the plot advancement, which, when you get two characters in the room talking to each other, is liable to happen.

I'll have these pieces and then I'll sit down and write the clean copy once again in a personal shorthand with all the he saids and she saids and the little bits of description put in. That I'll transcribe onto the computer. So which is the

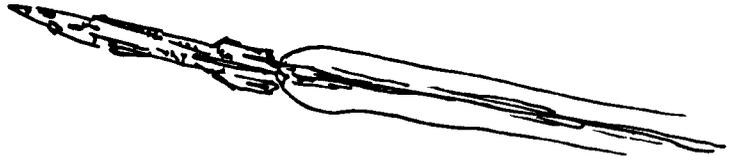
first draft is hard to say. It's been outlined in detail before it goes into the notebook, and then from the notebook to the computer there isn't a whole lot of change after that unless I throw a scene out completely or do small editing changes.

I think I've concentrated on novels because my primary interest is in character. My idea of a work of literary genius is to create a character like Sherlock Holmes who is so alive that he transcends his original material and goes out in the real world and starts taking over other minds to make him live. There's a power in that creativity that transcends ordinary literature. If I create characters so real that you find yourself talking to them in the shower, I have done what I want to do as an artist. If somebody wants to write fan literature set in my universe, I'll be delighted to read it and enormously flattered and terribly interested to see what happens after it hits their minds, what cracks they find to get into. At least that's the kind of thing I used to do. Once again, it completes the circle. But I don't see franchising my universe for money.

When people reread a book, it's not for the ideas, because once you've got the ideas in your head, they're there. You reread a book because you want to be in the company of your friends again, and there's no limit to how many times you want to do that. This is why I read Lord of the Rings ten times. It's not because I wanted to know what happened, it's because I wanted to be with those people once more. And you do this more in novels than in short stories.

I'm not interested in serving some nebulous, abstract artistic ideal. I'm interested in reaching people individually, because that's the only way people are made--everything else is an optical illusion. I suppose I'm on the populist side of literature. Stories should serve people, should serve their needs and their wants and entertain them. I happen to find moral dilemmas supremely entertaining, so when I speak of entertainment, I'm not just talking about sex and violence. I'm talking about the whole world of ideas.

I don't really see myself as part of any group or movement. I see myself as sort of a stray. Partly because of getting into the stacks at OSU, I more or less stopped reading science fiction in 1971. I feel like I was on a guided tour and wandered away from the bus at some point. I'm constantly being asked if I'm influenced by this SF writer or that SF writer or is such and such important to me, and I'll say, well, gee, I haven't read any of his stuff. I haven't read David Drake or Jerry Pournelle. As a matter of fact, Warrior's Apprentice started out almost to be a satire of that sort of fiction, except that I was a little too subtle.



One of the frustrations of my present lifestyle, with the family and the writing, is that so little time is left for reading. I admire the people who do seem able to keep up. What I mostly read are books that friends have written--because I know I'm going to meet them again and they'll ask how I liked their books--and oddball things that come in, so my reading doesn't follow any particular pattern at the moment, except that there's not enough of it. For feeding my head to pick up story ideas, I really prefer nonfiction. I like history and military history and anecdotes about people in bizarre situations. First of all, it's all public domain, because it's history, and anything you pull out and play rubber reality with and use isn't something you've taken from another writer, so you don't have this feeling that, Oh, God, I'm plagiarizing.

I'm far, far more conscious of structure now than I used to be when I was just a reader and read everybody uncritically. Now I notice things like paragraphing and scene structure, and it's had a horrible effect on my ability to read. One reason I'm reading less now is that I don't read anymore, I proofread, and it's not as much fun. It's things like being conscious of when the scene shifts and when the point of view changes. Oh, look, the point of view just changed! Well, then I've dropped the story and gotten away from reading it and am back to writing the story.

I take my humor very seriously. Humor is an important part of the real world, of what makes us human--a way of coping with pain. That's my fundamental definition of humor, which is of course not real funny when you think about it. My humor is almost never slapstick. It's always humor of situation, humor because it's the only way to deal with these grotesqueries that are being dumped on you as a character. Very often nobody in the scene is laughing but the reader, and that's not because of anything that is going on, it's because of the underlying patter of Miles looking at the situation and seeing the absurdities of it, which are often his.

I have mixed feelings about space opera as a tag. Yeah, the Miles stories are space opera, they are not cosmological studies of the human condition or any of these other things that science fiction can be. Falling Free was a bit of a reaction to that. I wanted to prove with Falling Free that, yes, I can write hard science fiction, I'm not

writing space opera because it's an inferior form and that's all I can do. I'm writing it because that's what I like and this proves it for all comers. I don't object to the space opera label. I think it's fair. It all depends on the tone of voice in which it's said.

Were there world enough and time, I would try everything. There happens to be this guy in New York who's willing to buy all the science fiction I can produce right now, and that's a real strong incentive to keep on that track. But much as I love science fiction, and much as I'm willing to defend it against all comers, yeah, I could see myself writing children's fiction, or an historical novel, or certainly a mystery or some other kind of writing. I don't feel that I'm limited to science fiction. I'm choosing it at the moment because it's fun and it's working.

I've got maybe ten novels in my head right now if I had the time to sit down and write them, and more will come before I get those written. I'm not short of ideas, but I don't know how good they are. You know, when you launch into a novel, it's sort of a risk that this feels like a novel idea, but what if I get half way out and it's not there? What am I going to do? So I write all my novels in a state of panic, chapter to chapter, wondering if I'm going to be able to finish and come up with the idea that will make the next chapter go. I don't have my ideas for a novel all at once. I'll have the vague idea for the novel, and then each chapter highlight will come one at a time, and the idea that's going to make chapter five a great chapter I won't have thought of when I'm still working on chapter two. They accrete over the course of a year.

So far, if you can write two books a year, you can make a living as a midlist writer, barely. I can't write two books a year. I've got to figure out a way to get the price up on the one book a year I do write so that it constitutes a living. The amount of time you have to spend priming the pump to get up to the point where there's money coming in is huge. The initial investment is at least equal to spending four years in college in terms of the time that goes into it and the money that you're not making because you're not working at some other job. Turning yourself into a writer is like taking a four-year baccalaureate degree. The money is good for a few people, and my next job is to figure out how to be one of them. !\*

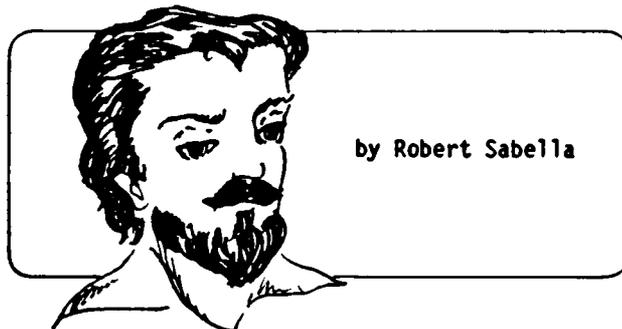
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THE WORKS OF LOIS MCMASTER BUJOLD

- "Barter," Twilight Zone Magazine (March-April, 1985).  
Shards of Honor (Baen, paper, 1986).  
The Warrior's Apprentice (Baen, paper, 1986).  
Ethan of Athos (Baen, paper, 1986).  
 "Aftermaths," Far Frontiers (Volume V, Spring, 1986).  
 "The Hole Truth," Twilight Zone Magazine (December, 1986).  
 "The Borders of Infinity," Free Lancers (Baen, paper, 1987).  
 "Garage Sale," American Fantasy (Spring, 1987).  
Falling Free (Analog serial, December, 1987-February, 1988).  
 \_\_\_\_\_ (Baen, paper, 1988).  
Brothers in Arms (Baen, paper, scheduled for January, 1989).  
 "The Mountains of Mourning," Analog (scheduled for May, 1989)  
 A three-novella collection, including "The Borders of Infinity" and "The Mountains of Mourning" (Baen, paper, scheduled for 1989).
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## TEN YEARS AGO IN SCIENCE FICTION



by Robert Sabella

Summer, 1978

Robert Silverberg ended his four-year retirement by selling hardcover rights to the unwritten Lord Valentine's Castle for a record \$127,000. Coincidentally, earlier in the year he wrote a new introduction for his reissued early novel Conquerors from the Darkness. In it he bemoaned the lack of fun, romantic science fiction adventures, stating, "They don't write 'em that way any more. At least, I don't. Too bad, maybe." The outline of Lord Valentine's Castle was certainly that of a fun romantic adventure. A direct result of that introduction perhaps?

Ben Bova quit as editor of Analog after seven years. He was replaced by Stanley Schmidt who he recommended as his successor. Bova then announced he was becoming fiction editor of Penthouse publisher Bob Guccione's new science/science fiction magazine Nova. However, PBS filed an injunction against the title since that was also the title of its weekly science program. Shortly thereafter Penthouse announced it was changing the name of its new magazine from Nova to Omni.

John J. Pierce quit as editor of Galaxy after one year. Amid reports of shoddy fiscal policies by publisher Arnold Abramson, Pierce wrote a public letter of apology to contributors who "had to wait far longer than either they or I anticipated to secure payment for their work." It was rumored that contributors were owed more than \$18,000 in payments.

Harlan Ellison and Ben Bova filed a lawsuit against Paramount Pictures and ABC-TV for stealing the idea of their short story "Brillo" for the TV series Robot Cop.

Frederik Pohl won the John W. Campbell's Memorial Award for Gateway as Best Science Fiction Novel of 1977.

This summer saw the publication of numerous top-quality science fiction novels: Anne McCaffrey's

The White Dragon, John Varley's eagerly awaited first collection The Persistence of Vision, Gregory Benford's The Stars in Shroud, Tom Reamy's only novel Blind Voices, Marion Zimmer Bradley's new Darkover novel Stormqueen!, Richard Lupoff's underrated Space War Blues and Elizabeth Lynn's critically-acclaimed debut novel A Different Light.

Fall, 1978

The game of musical science fiction editors, inadvertently invented by Hugo Gernsback when he created the position, continued unabated. David Hartwell left Berkeley Books to become science fiction editor of Pocket Books with total control of the program. Ted White quit as editor of Amazing and Fantastic after ten years to concentrate on his writing. Hank Stine was named editor of Galaxy. Immediately publisher Arnold Abramson reduced the payment rate from \$.03 to \$.01 per word. He announced his intent to use the additional \$.02 to pay off Galaxy's debt to contributors.

Some stability remained in science fiction: Judy-Lynn del Rey became vice-president of Ballantine Books while retaining her position as Editor-in-Chief of Del Rey Books.

The Hugo Awards for 1977 were announced: Best Novel was Gateway by Frederik Pohl; Best Novella was "Stardance" by Spider and Jeanne Robinson; Best Novelette was "Eyes of Amber" by Joan D. Vinge; Best Short Story was "Jefty is Five" by Harlan Ellison; Best Dramatic Presentation was George Lucas' Star Wars, beating out Steven Spielberg's Close Encounters of the Third Kind; Best Editor was George Scithers; Best Professional Artist was Rick Sternbach; Best Fanzine was Locus; Best Fan Writer was Richard E. Geis; Best fan artist was Phil Foglio. In a battle of future superstars, Orson Scott Card beat out Stephen R. Donaldson for the John W. Campbell Award as Best New Writer.



The World Fantasy Awards were given to Fritz Leiber's Our Lady of Darkness for Best Novel, and Ramsey Campbell's "The Chimney" for Best Short Fiction.

Important publications included Roger Zelazny's The Courts of Chaos, the fifth and concluding novel of the original Amber series, famed scientist Charles Sheffield's impressive debut novel Sight of Proteus, and Stephen King's science fiction/fantasy/horror extravaganza The Stand.

Winter-Spring, 1979

Walter Wangerin, Jr., sold publishing rights to The Book of the Dun Cow for a then-record advance for a fantasy novel of \$280,000. Shortly thereafter, Robert A. Heinlein auctioned the rights to Number of the Beast for a complicated package totalling approximately \$500,000!

Continuing the mass media's largess toward science fiction and fantasy, Dino DeLaurentis bought the movie rights to Dune for more than one million dollars, with Frank Herbert to write the screenplay himself.

Harlan Ellison resold the rights to the long-awaited The Last Dangerous Visions to Berkeley Books who promptly set their publication date for 1980. They were the third different company who hoped to actually publish the anthology.

The Nebula Award winners for works published in 1978 were: Dreamsnake by Yonda N. McIntyre as Best Novel; "The Persistence of Vision" by John Varley as Best Novella; "A Glow of Candles, A Unicorn's Eye" by Charles L. Grant (perhaps the least well-known Nebula winner ever) as Best Novelette; and "Stone" by Ed Bryant as Best Short Story.

This was a banner season for readers of science fiction with a plethora of major books being published:

Michael Bishop's Catacomb Years was published as a novel although it was really a mosaic of his "Domed Atlanta" stories. It included such critically-acclaimed stories as "Old Folks at Home," "Allegiances," and "The Samurai and the Willows";

Elizabeth Lynn's Watchtower, the first novel of her highly-regarded "Dancers of Arun" trilogy;

Two books by Isaac Asimov's: In Memory Yet Green, volume one of his autobiography, and The Great SF Stories 1 (1939) (with Martin Greenberg), the first volume of a long-running best-of-the-year series that has recently reached #19;

John Crowley's highly-underrated Engine Summer;

Anne McCaffrey's Dragondrums, the concluding volume in her "Harper Hall of Pern" young adult trilogy;

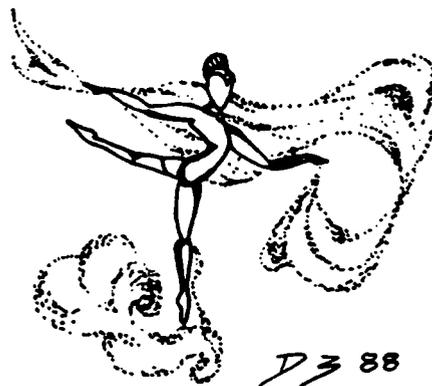
Orson Scott Card's first novel Hot Sleep: The Worthing Chronicles;

Frederik Pohl's Jem, one of four Hugo-nominated novels for Pohl in five years. The others were Man Plus, Gateway (which won the award) and Beyond the Blue Event Horizon;

Spider and Jeanne Robinson's Stardance, the first portion of which was a deserving Hugo and Nebula winner, although the concluding portion was a considerable disappointment;

John Varley's Titan, the first volume of his "Gaea" trilogy. It did not win the Hugo Award because Arthur C. Clarke mistakenly announced that The Fountains of Paradise would be his last science fiction novel;

Terry Carr's Universe 8, featuring John Varley's outstanding "Options." Varley was the hot writer of the Seventies, just as Heinlein was in the Forties, Zelazny in the Sixties, and Shepard has been in the Eighties. "Options" was a major step forward in Varley's development from a largely sense-of-wonder purveyor into a rich, complete writer. !



# Fanzines

Reviews and Comments

by Ian

Since August of 1988, when I last put this column together, I tried to keep the stack of fanzines that arrived in a single pile. Well, it worked for a while, but the pile became unbalanced so I split it into two. When school became hectic in October and November, I wasn't as consistent about where I put everything. We also did some moving and rearranging of furniture. In the end, when I tried to collect them all, I had a stack about 13 inches tall. After I took out many of the book lists and duplicate mail-order catalogues, it dropped to 10 inches. I knew there had to be more than that, so I scurried and rooted around until I got this present 12 inch stack. Then it took me a few months to get around to making comments, and the stack grew even as I wrote up short reviews. I don't know what the final size of the stack turned out to be, but I have a few pages of reviews now. Don't expect much. I am very busy doing about ten things at once, but I'll do what I can. All are available for the usual unless mentioned otherwise. Please make checks out to the editor, not the name of the zine. Sally Syrjala also sent some fanzine reviews; she is credited as such at the beginning of the review.

A & A #113/114-119. Frances Valery, 11 rue des Vignerones, 33800 BORDEAUX, FRANCE. This is a publication of l'ACADEMIE DE L'ESPACE; 100 francs for 8 issues. A very nice looking fanzine from France. The covers and interior art (when there is any) is very nice. #113/114 is a double issue with lots of reviews, and a focus on the Aelita, the highest award for SF in Russia, and Russian SF. #115 is done up as an "Ace Double," similar to my Pohl/DeCamp issue in 1987. #116 concentrates on the 15th National SF Convention in Paris. The rest are filled with reviews. #119 has a short guide to SF video cassettes.

Airglow #4-6. Terry L. Bohman, Box 14, East Thetford, Vermont 05043 USA. \$1/2 issues. Terry's personalzine continues to be one of the more interesting ones that have come my way. I grab a coke, sit and read about Terry's experiences. Excellent writing.

Andruschak-zines. Harry Andruschak, PO Box 5309, Torrance, CA 90510-5309 USA. Harry sends three zines, Pro-Space Zines and two Fanzine Reviews, in trade this time. (He did send an interesting loc.) These give an account of things personal in his life, as well as his reviews of some of the same zines I review here.

Aniara #6. Bud Webster, 8047 W. Broad St., Richmond, VA 23229. Phone (804) 648-3460. A revival of a zine that Bud has not worked on for several months. He got the bug and now he's back. Lots of personal stuff, but fun reading.

Anvil #47 & #48. ANVIL, Charlotte Proctor, 8325 7th Avenue So., Birmingham, AL 35206. The usual or \$6 per year. The usual pleasant issue of writing by

Buck Coulson, Bruno Ogorelec, Charlotte herself, and a host of others. A hefty and active letter column.

Ben's Beat 11. Ben Indick, 428 Sagamorer Avenue, Teaneck, NY 07666 USA. This is Ben's FAPazine which includes his Theatre Beat and another interesting article about "Cities of tomorrow, which is reprinted in this issue of LL. Good and interesting stuff.

Black Hole #27. Mark Nelson, ed., c/o Luu SF Society, Leeds University Union, PO Box 157, LEEDS LS1 1UH, UNITED KINGDOM. The usual or 40p a copy. It has been a while since I've seen a copy of Black Hole. This lack is something the editor laments in his editorial. This issue has a mixture of articles, reviews and fiction, uneven in quality. I hope that people begin to support it again.

Bogus #1. Harry Bond, 6 Elizabeth Avenue, Bagshot, Surrey, GU19 5NX, UNITED KINGDOM. A personalzine in which Harry waxes eloquent about fandom in general and fanzine fandom in particular, and his treatment therein.

Book of Gold, The #1. Jeremy Crampton, 302 Walker Building, University Park, PA 16802 USA. 50¢ in check, cash or stamps, or the usual. This zine is subtitled "A Newsletter on Gene Wolfe and his Works." Rather interesting -- not extremely scholarly, but well done and well written.

Bruzzfuzzel News #56-58. Baton Rouge Science Fiction League, PO Box 14238, Baton Rouge, LA 70898-4238, USA. Typical clubzine with occasionally exceptional reviews, some good art, locs,

and sometimes an "extra." The December/January issue had a cut-out christmas ornament.

BSFAN 17. Elaine Styles, 8631 Lucerne Rd., Randallstown, MD 21133 USA. "An Organ of the Baltimore Science Fiction Society." I was happy to receive this zine, put it aside to read and maybe send off a loc, then lost track of it for a few months, until it surfaced again in my school-briefcase/fanzine-carrier. Elaine talks about lack of time and lots of the things I worry about not being able to do as a result. The article by rich brown on "Whatever Happened to Faaanfiction?" deserves comment. The CONSPIRACY report by Steve Stiles brought back some pleasant memories of our trip to England.

Caprician #3, The. Lilian Edwards (1 Braehead Rd., Thornton Hall, Glasgow, G74 5AQ UNITED KINGDOM) and Christina Lake (47 Wessex Avenue, Horfield, Bristol, BS7 0DE). Personal comments and con reports, nice letter column. Lilian and Christina were the Taff winners of 1988; I met both at NO-LACON, but talked for any length with Christina. Marvelous people, as is their fanzine.

The Centaur Gatherum Newsletter #13-15. Ed Pegg, Jr., POB 10216, Colorado Springs, CO 80932, USA. A fanzine/newsletter about centaurs -- art, stories, et al.

Chris Drumm, Books, Book catalogues #26-30. PO Box 445, Polk City, IA 50226, USA. Catalogues, obviously; Chris also puts out his own line of little books which are well worth looking at. (And I still have three backed up for reading, I'm ashamed to admit. I WILL get to them soon! Others are reviewed this issue.)

Circular Janus, The. There is a new editor, but I can't find the name nor the address. Anyway, the Circle of Janus Newsletter, with the usual for a clubzine.

Con News #1. Claude N. Warren, Jr., 7735 Osceola Street, Westminster, CO 80030. \$12/year. Put together as a newspaper, Claude and his staff hope to get submissions and ads about SF and related conventions, and establish Con News as the newszine of the convention world. Looks good, and the articles/ads are informative. Don C. Thompson has an article in this called "Now, Is That Any Way to Treat a GoH?" Humorous and informative.

Convention Log #51 & 52. R Laurraine Tutihasi, Katnip Manor, 5876 Bowcroft Street #4, Los Angeles, CA 90016, USA. Whim. Laurraine's diary/person-



alzine; has some reviews and conreports, locs; summarizes her life and feelings. Issue #52 has her Worldcon report.

Darkfawn. Diana Harlan Stein, 1325 Key West, Troy, MI 48083. Whim only. "This is a collection of stories and art based on the Darkfawn Campaign," as Diana writes in the introduction. Diana runs a gaming group and this is the results of some of the group writing stories based on the characters -- not the adventures they have had during a game -- in the group. Some very interesting stuff here.

Dave's Secular Lens #9. Dave D'Amassa, 323 Dodge St., East Providence, RI 02914, USA. \$1.50/issue. Dave continues to do an interesting personalzine. His comments and observations on life and his experiences remind me a lot of Garrison Keillor's Lake Wobegon reports. Good reading.

De Profundis #199-206. Los Angeles Science Fiction Society, 11513 Burbank Blvd., North Hollywood, CA 91601. The official newsletter of LASFS, filled with con and fan information, reviews, minutes, etc.

Deadly Toxin, The, #2. Glen E. Cox, 1003 Justin Lane #1018, Austin, TX 78757. Likes stamps, money, locs, etc. No poetry. A rather nicely produced zine; many comments pulled off of Fido-Net.

Delineator #6. Alan White, 455 E. 7th St. #4, San Jacinto, CA 92383. Usual, or \$5 in cash, stamps, or check made payable to Alan White. Reviews, a hefty lettercolumn, art, as special portfolio of Terry Jeeves' art, and various articles. Alan continues his personal fan history.

Desert Sun #5. Craig Chrissinger, 915 Idlewilde Lane SE, Albuquerque, NM 87108, USA. A zinee filled with poetry, art (some excellent),

articles, reviews, cartoons, etc. Pleasant reading, and Craig would love contributions.

Don-o-Saur #52, 53, 54. Don C. Thompson, 3735 W. 81st place, Westminster, CO 80030. By whim, and the usual, not for money. Back publishing Don-o-Saur after a hiatus of 10 years, Don shows he has not lost the touch of putting together a good fanzine. He's kept in practice by editing DASFAX (Denver Area SF Association clubzine) and participating in 4 apas. #52 has a lot of "catch-up" stuff, and includes Don's wonderful MILEHICON XX Fan GoH speech, and 10-year-old locs. In #53 Don writes a long essay entitled "Anger and Angst." In #54 he has a long essay about writers writing about places they know (and sometimes even describe accurately). Well worth reading.

8-1/2 X 11 zine, #5. David Thayer, 7209 DeVille Dr., North Richland Hills, TX 76180-8257. A wonderfully funny/serious zine from David. His account of his summer vacations in 1970 (Vietnam) and 1988 (Texas Gulf Coast) are fun reading. Good art and layout.

Eldritch Science #3. Deorge Phillies, 87-6 Park Avenue, Worcester, MA 01605 US. \$10/4 issues. George is looking for fiction, prose and poetry, with science fictional and science fantasy themes. Ideal prose length is 7-15,000 words. Avoid cliches. There are some very interesting pieces in this issue.

Erg Quarterly, #104, 105. Terry Jeeves, 56 Red Scar Drive, Scarborough YO12 5RQ, E. Yorkshire UNITED KINGDOM. LOC, \$5/6 issues in US bills (not check -- costs too much to process). Terry celebrated his 66th birthday on October 1 of last year. He continues to produce these zines which are extremely interesting. They are filled with his personal life and thoughts, evocative essays, short book reviews, and his wonderful art. I must force myself to write a loc to Terry. Highly recommended

Eyeballs in the Sky, #5. Tony Berry, 7 Causway Mews, Robin Hood Way, Nottongham NG2 1PT, UNITED KINGDOM. This issue of Tony's infrequent zine has a theme of addictions and obsessions. Various fans write about obsessions with shoes, gaming, and other sorts of things, but I think the most moving piece is Martin Tudor's essay on his trying to quit drinking.

FILE:770, #77-8. Mike Glycer, 5828 Woodman Ave., #2, Van Nuys, CA 91401, USA. 5/\$5 The premiere fan-nish newsletter. #77 has Mike's long Worldcon report in which he tells about the good and bad points of NOLACON II.

Flip of a Coin, #12. Paula Truelove and Jenny McAdams, 502 McKeithan Street, #4A, Tallahassee, FL 32304. \$19 First Class Mail. Reviewed by Sally A. Syrjala.

There is nothing so pretty to look upon as a top quality mediazine. Flip is one of these. It has received the Fan Q award for best fanzine and authors whose work has appeared within its covers have also been the proud recipients of that prized honor given out each Memorial Day Weekend in East Lansing, Michigan.

Flip is a fanzine whose contents are devoted to featuring fan fiction based on the films of Harrison Ford. Flip 12 has material based on Heroes, The Frisco Kid, Witness, Frantic, Blade Runner, Mosquito Coast, Hanover Street, Star Wars -- Raiders of the Lost Ark, and Temple of Doom. It also has a short loc section spotlighting letters received in response to previous issues.

The artwork is nothing short of stupendous. Dianne Smith's renderings of Indy and Halloran are nothing less than excellent. Cherie Fontyn's work graces the front cover with a sketch of Harrison and this is one beautiful cover.

One thing about media fanzines is the beauty of their layout. Flip is no exception. All of the art is top quality, complementing the stories very well with the artist's interpretation of the events taking place within the text.

The stories themselves are also very good. One has come to expect a certain degree of excellence within the pages of this zine and this issue is in keeping with the high quality Paula and Jenny have established for this zine. Typos are non-existent. Much time and effort go into this zine from the editing down to the proofreading, and the finished product speaks well of media fanzines in general and this one in particular.

Wanda Lybarger has the second part of a story that began in Flip 11. It deals with Tommy, the character from The Frisco Kid, and chronicles an adventure he has after he reaches the San Francisco area.

Sherry Mage has captured the character of Kenny Boyd from Heroes remarkably well. She has a story that deals with his childhood, as well as one dealing with his tour of duty in Vietnam.

Cypher has united the characters of John Book and Martin Riggs -- the character Mel Gibson played in Lethal Weapon -- in a story in Flip 11. The chemistry went so well that they are back for a return engagement in Flip 12. An excellent story this is as well.

Carolyn Gollidge who is well known for her fine stories has "Poetic Justice" in this issue. This story deals with a different telling of The Empire Strikes Back with Han not being given over to the bounty hunter as he was in the film. A very interesting alternate history type of piece.

Irina Ozernoy has done a very good job with "Fool's Gold," a story about Indiana Jones and a trek he makes to the Soviet Union. It manages to capture the type of adventure that Dr. Jones would embark upon and is very fine reading.

In fact, every story within this zine is very entertaining and well done.

If you are looking for one of the very best fanzines in media fandom, Flip of a Coin is one to try.

Fosfax #130-138. Fosfa, PO Box 37281, Louisville, KY 40233-7281, USA. A fairly large, consistently produced monthly clubzine filled with reviews, commentary and locs. The lettercolumn is lively with many authors participating. Does the editor, Tim Lane, ever sleep? Recommended.

Fringeward #4. Anthony D. Blokzyl, PO Box 14338, Minneapolis, MN 55414 USA. \$6/year (4 issues), irregular. A pleasant fanzine which describes itself as "The Zine of Ignored Space." It contains SF commentary and fanfiction from various aspects of fandom in general.

Full Circle, #3. Joseph G. Colgan, 4618 Mia Circle, San Jose, CA 95136. A comics fanzine that critiques the superhero comic books. Joe is asking for contributions.

Gegenschein #55. Eric Lindsey, 6 Hillcrest Avenue, Faulconbridge, NSW 2776, AUSTRALIA. Some book reviews, a con report, a few letters, and an essay on driver's license -- or non-license, as he titles it. A modest proposal on how to reduce the necessity of having a driver's license. Eric's stuff is always interesting to read.

Generic Fandom News #12, 13, 13.5, 14, 15. Brian Youmans, 27R Albion St., Somerville, MA 02143, USA. This is filled with all the sorts of things: fannish news, reviews, conreports, and Brian's personal journal. Quite interesting. #13 has a Worldcon (Nolacon) report. #13.5 has interviews with David Hartwell and Paul Park.

Hardwired Hinterland, #5 and #6. R. Allen Jervis, PO Box 743, Notre Dame, IN 46556, USA. Lots of reviews and interactions with readers. Much of the material is taken from Bitnet and GENie. Nicely produced, lots of nice art. #6 is especially beautiful--lovely art, a comic strip, reviews by the Leepers, a Worldcon report by Laurie Mann, and other things. Getting better all the time!

Harpings #16 & #17. The Filk Foundation, 34 Barbara Drive, Little Rock AR 72204. USA. Available to Filk Foundation members, contribution of news,

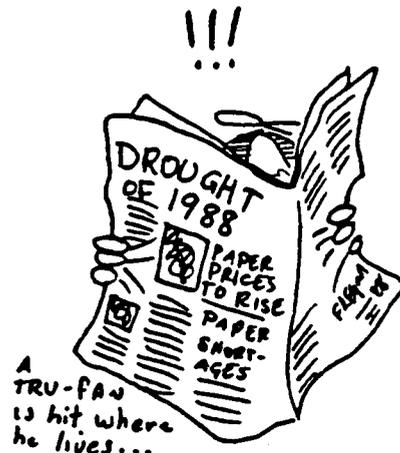
and editorial whim. Contains news of interest to filkers and those who enjoy filking and conreports of the recent Filkcons held around the country.

Hi-Tech Terror #35-42. Craig Ledbetter, Box 5367, Kingwood, TX 77325, USA. Craig continues his excellent coverage of Grade-B horror films and home videos, with guest reviews as well as his own. In #39, Craig says he wants to concentrate on foreign horror films, a special interest of his, and thus is asking for such material. In #41 & 42, Craig considers some name suggestions for when #50 rolls around.

Hickman Scrapbook #4. Lynn Hickman, 413 Ottokee St., Wauseon, OH 43657. A catch-all zine for apas and trade. It contains some reprints of articles from past fanzines (like "When Fans Collide" by Richard Ellsberry, reprinted from TLMA #3, from 1952, which chronicles several fans meeting Lee Hoffman for the first time).

Holier Than Thou, #27. Marty Cantor, 11825 Gilmore #105, N. Hollywood, CA 91606, USA. I received this soon after I finished the fanzine review column in LL #27, wherein I asked if Marty had ceased publishing. Marty is indeed leaving fanpubbing for a while, citing a number of reasons. Indeed, HTT will be missed -- but I plan to keep him on the LL mailing list.

Insufficient #3.5. Larry Tucker, 3358 Chelsea Circle, Ann Arbor, MI 48108. A personalzine which used to be called Insufficient Funds when co-edited with Leah Zeldes. Larry covers what has happened in his life since 1981, culminating in his being the GoH at CONFUSION in 1988. Very interesting since I've known Larry almost as long as I've been in fandom, and the people he mentions in his reminiscences.



It Goes on the Shelf, #5. Ned Brooks, Sign of the Purple Mouth, 713 Paul Street, Newport News, VA 23605. Interesting reviewzine with lettercolumn. Requests strong line art that will xerox/thermo-fax well.

Jane's Fighting Smofs, #12. Jane & Scott Dennis, 347 West Second Street, Paris, KY 40361 USA. \$3/issue. A zine about running conventions, with concentrations on the bidding cons. A nice article about the Worldcon rotation is in this issue.

Katmandu Visions #1. Jim and Deirdre Rittenhouse, Katmandu Publications, 2125 West Juneae, Milwaukee, WI 53233, USA. \$1.50/issue. A new quarterly fanzine which invites comments on fandom, music and records, and a variety of topics.

Light in the Bushel #6. Richard Brandt, 4740 Mesa #111, El Paso, TX 79912, USA. A late production from the mind of Richard Brandt. He covers the Phoenix NASFiC CACTUSCON, through his stint as chairman of AMIGOCON, and ending up with a report on WESTERCON. Richard is one of the best loc editors around.

LOOP GAROU #3. Garner Johnson, 303 E. 8th #10, Bloomington, IN 47401. A fanzine that contains stories in a shared world established by the Science Fiction Loop, a SF club in Bloomington. This is the last issue for only shared-world stories; they want to expand to other fiction and sf criticism. Thus they solicit contributions.

MLR #7. Sign of the Drunken Dragon, 217 Beverly St. #2, Toronto, Ontario, M5T 1Z4, CANADA. Michael Dennis Skeet, editor. Canadian fannish newszine, usually concentrating on Toronto fandom, but this has Canadian-wide news on conventions.

The Mad Engineer #10. Mary Hagen, THE MAD ENGINEER, c/o Mosier, 4550 Flake Road, Martinsville, IN 46151, USA. \$.75/issue, \$3.00/year. A late issue, but an interesting collection of articles reviews, and a couple of fiction pieces.

Paul Maita: SF & Fantasy Books. List #38. 1539 Colorado, Elk Grove Village, IL 60007, USA. Paul runs a mail-order bookstore, and his lists come regularly. Many prices are very good.

Matalan Rave, The, #15 & 16. Michael Hailstone, 204 Station Street, Box Hill, Victoria 3128, AUSTRALIA. Some reviews, articles (written with a sharp edge to evoke comments), some personal stuff, locs, etc.

Meanwhile... #2. Nick Shears, 27 Chiltern Rd., Wendover, Aylesbury, Bucks, HP22 6DA, UNITED KINGDOM. Another "stop-gap" zine produced by Nick shears until he can put together the next Entropian. He still asks for contributions for his 10th issue -- which will revolve around the number "ten."

Mentor, The, #62 (January 1989). Ron Clarke, 6 Bellevue Road, Faulconbridge, NSW 2776, AUSTRALIA. A mixture of articles, locs and fiction. Good, pleasant reading, with a variety of articles (one by Buck Coulson), reviews, a short story, poetry and locs. Some excellent art, very well re-produced. Ron's wife Susan has a chronicle of her trip to the United States and the Worldcon in New Orleans. I found out she was at the con on Sunday night, too late to get in touch with her.

Mimosa #5. Dick & Nicki Lynch, PO Box 1270, Germantown, MD 20874 USA. An excellent genzine, with lots of different articles to appeal to mosts tastes. I was surprised to see one by Carolyn Doyle who dropped out of fannish sight more than 7 years ago.

NASFA Shuttle (Vol 8, #8-12, Vol. 9, #1-4 (April 89)). NASFA, PO Box 4857, Huntsville, AL 3581-54857, USA. Current Editor: Nelda Kathleen Kennedy, 7907 Charlotte Drive SW, Huntsville, AL 35802 USA. The newsletter of the North Alabama Science Fiction Association. Locs, reviews, meeting & club news, etc. It continues to be interesting, and downright frustrating because it comes out monthly on schedule (like FOSFAX). Keep up the good work, Nelda!

National Fantasy Fan, The (TNFF), Vol 48, #2, Vol 49, #1. Donald Franson, 6543 Babcock Ave., N. Hollywood, CA 91606 USA. Comes with membership in N3F. The official newsletter of the National Fantasy Fan Federation (N3F).

Neology Vol. 13 #3, #4. T. Phinney, ESFACAS Box 4071 PSSE, Edmonton, Alberta T6E 4S8. \$12/year, quarterly. The Edmonton Science Fiction And Comic Arts Society clubzine. Some good articles and reviews, active loccol, and club news. The new editor has gone to either photocopy or off-set, with masters done on a laser printer. The change in clarity is remarkable. The artwork, some of which in the past has been excellent, is vastly improved with the new printing.

The New Canadian Fandom Guide to Canadian Science Fiction and Fandom, 3rd edition. Robert Runte, PO Box 4655, Postal Stn. South Edmonton,

Edmonton, Alberta, CANADA T6E 5G5. \$2.00. This is a complete guide to Canadian SF authors and fandom, Canadian SF awards and fandom in general, including a fanspeak glossary.

Niekas #37. Edmund R. Meskys, RFD 2, Box 63, Center Harbor, NH 03226-9729 USA. A nicely put together fanzine full of excellent commentary and reviews. Hugo winner in 1967; nominated again for this year.

9-Innings, #5. Andrew P. Hooper, Shandwick Hall, 315 N. Ingersoll St., Madison, WI 53703. A fanzine about baseball. I hope Andrew sees the baseball book reviews by Sally Syrjala (and Sally finds out about 9-Innings).

Notes from Oblivion #21. Jay Harbor, 626 Paddock Lane, Libertyville, IL 60048. An odd little zine that is mostly hand-printed. Joy would like to correspond with people and talk about serious things. Because of his poor eyesight, he needs letters to be typed or printed with large letters.

Nova Express, Vol. I, #4; Vol. II, #1. Michael Sombera, ed., 301 East 35th St., Austin, TX 78705 USA. \$8/year inside USA, other rates apply. Nice layout and production values abound in this fanzine. These issues have some good articles. The highlight (for me) in I.4 is a critical overview of "The Splatterpunks." The long interview with George R.R. Martin is the highlight of II.1. Both have plenty of book reviews.

Nowhere Fast #4. Harry Bond, 6 Elizabeth Avenue, Bagshot, Surrey, GU19 5NX, ENGLAND. The usual or \$1. Cheap for the number of pages. There is a lot more improvement over his first three, and has managed to get some decent art, though he could use more. Still, it's an enjoyable read.

Other Worlds #2. Edited by Gary Lovisi, Gryphon Publications, Box 209, Brooklyn, NY 11228-0209, USA. A small press publication of new stories in the tradition of the original Other Worlds edited by Ray Palmer. The first issue tended a little towards fantasy, but this has more sf. He is soliciting submissions; payment is in 2 copies of the issue in which the story appears.

OtheRealms #22 & 23. Chuq Von Rospach, 35111-F Newark Blvd., Suite 255, Newark, CA 94560, USA. Still one of the best reviewzines around, with an active lettercol. #23 is smaller; Chuq had to cut costs somewhere so is using a slightly smaller typeface and made some tough decisions about



content and features. He is on the Hugo ballot twice -- for fanzine and fan writer. Good luck, Chuq! Highly recommended.

Outworlds #58 & 59. Bill Bowers, 4651 Glenway Ave, Cincinnati, OH 45238. Whim, \$2.50/issue, \$10/5 issues. A very personal personalzine. #58 has mostly letters of comment and a few articles. #59 notes Bill's change of address.

Penguin Dip #22. Stephen H. Dorneman, 94 Eastern Ave #1, Malden MA 02148 USA. \$15/year (10 issues). Various articles about SF, zine reviews, comics, and gaming. Nice writing by Lawrence Watt-Evans on EC Comics.

Pirate Jenny #2. Pat Mueller, 618 Westridge, Duncanville, TX 75116, USA. \$3/issue. Another nice issue, though the cover could have been better. It contains a nice article about Lionel Fanthorpe by Richard Brandt (similar to the one Dennis Fischer wrote for me in LL #27).

Poutnik. (Pilgrim). Egon Cierny, Matechova 14, 140 00 Praha 4, CSSR (Czechoslovakia). "Bulletin of the Jules Verne Club, Prague." This is written in English and has articles, fiction, a history of Czech fandom, a description of the club and its members, and some good art. The club wants contact with fans from around the world.

Pulsar #10, 11, & 12 A. E. Ubelhor, 2425 Highway 41 North, Suite 134, Evansville, IN 47711-4063, USA. \$9/year (6 issues). A clubzine, magazine size, filled with reviews, locs, articles, club news, and fiction. #10 includes an interview with Octavia Butler and the second of a two part article about Star Trek: The Next Generation. #11 has an interview with Mike Resnick, an artist profile of Teddy Harvia (with lots of his art scattered



throughout), a worldcon report "from the fanzine lounge" by PL Caruthers-Montgomery, and "An APA-Hack Primer" by Nicki Lynch. #12 has a good overview of Walt Disney's "Man into Space" series.

Quinapolis #7. M. K. Digre, 4629 Columbus Ave., Minneapolis, MN 55407 USA. A strange little fanzine with a wonderful article by Skel, nicely illustrated by Kathy Marschall.

Reluctant Famulus, The #1, #2 & #3. Tom Sadler, 422 W. Maple Ave., Adrian, MI 49221. Bimonthly. A new fanzine with some reviews, but mostly personal observations on SF, fandom and conventions. Very pleasant reading. Tom is looking for submissions of art, articles and reviews.

The Rivendell Review. Renee (Arwen) Alper, 730F Northland Rd., Forest Park, OH 45240 USA. Phone: (513) 742-4384. Quarterly; \$5/year. Renee gave me a number of different issues of this newsletter and I found them quite interesting. The Rivendell Review is the newsletter of The American Hobbit Association. The newsletter contains news (obviously), poems, stories, and other items of interest to Tolkien and fantasy fans.

Robots and RoadRunners, Vol. 3, #2-4. R. Slate, 5502 Timber Jack, San Antonio, TX 78250 USA. \$1.50/issue, bimonthly. The clubzine/newszine of Ursa Major (formerly the San Antonio SF Association). Some enlightening articles about Australian & Yugoslavian fandom, good reviews, and even an interesting piece of fiction or two.

Rune #78 & 79. Jeanne Mealy and David Romm, MNSTff, PO Box 8297 Lake Street Station, Minneapolis, MN 55408 USA. The fanzine continues to look very good, and the articles are interesting, and the covers of these two issues are by two of my favorite artists: Teddy Harvia (#78) and Kathy Marschall (#79). I've missed seeing Kathy's art. In #79, John Purcell has a nice article about the current fanzine production from Minnstf members, And Jeanne's "Drawing My Own Caonfusions" rambles on about her life and things that affect her (something that could easily get boring, but she manages to keep it very interesting). Lots of letters and fanzine reviews are included.

Sadie Mae Glutz, #1 & 2. Barnaby Rapoport, PO Box 565, Storrs, CT 06268 USA. A very small zine which talks seriously about SF. Of interest to readers.

Samizdat #14 & 15. Philippe Gauthier, 197 Du Bearn, Saint-Lambert, Quebec J4S 1L2 CANADA, and Claude J. Pelletier, 20 Chemin du Mistral, Iles Laval, Laval, Quebec H7Y 1S1. \$3/issue. A genzine for French-Canadian fans, written in French. It has cartoons, pro and fan reviews, interviews, locs, etc.

Scavenger's Newsletter, #54. Janet Fox, 519 Ellinwood, Osage City, KS 66523-1329. Monthly, \$9/year (\$12.50 1st class); other rates available. "A marketing co-op for the sf/fantasy/horror writer/artist interested in the small press. Listings of markets, and a lively letter column. If you are at all interested in writing for the small, independent press, get this.

Science Fiction & Fantasy Forum, Vol 1, No 1. John Eric Colton, PO Box 138, Woodbury, NY 11797-0138. \$3/year (6 issues). A new zine filled with reviews, articles and interviews. John is trying to build up a large subscription base to fulfill his ambitious beginnings. He has an impressive line-up of writers -- Jacqueline Lichtenberg, Par Killough, Orson Scott Card, and Raymond Z. Gallun just to name a few. Looks very good to me.

Science Fiction Randomly, #5. PO Box 12705, Gainesville, FL 32604 USA. Some articles, fiction and comic strips; some interviews and ads.

SFSFS Shuttle, #46. PO Box 70143, Ft. Lauderdale, FL 33307 USA. "Official Newszine of the South Florida SF Society." Typical clubzine.

SKUG, #6a, #7, #8, #9. Gary Mattingly, 7501 Honey Court, Dublin, CA 94568 USA. Whim. A personalzine about the life and times of Gary Mattingly and

his wife Patti Peters. #7 has a conreport of DITTO 1 in Toronto. #9 has lots of letters.

Solaris #80 - 82. Luc Pomerleau, Case Postale 25, Succursale A, Hull, Quebec, J8Y 6M7 CANADA. \$3.50/issue. This is the semiprozine of French-speaking Canada. This is a nicely produced zine with reviews, stories, interviews, and lavish illustrations. Since it is written in French, I have trouble reading it, but Maia can make some of it out and says it's nicely done. The French teachers at school continue to marvel at its quality. #81 is a special issue devoted to horror and the fantastic. #82 has a long interview with George R.R. Martin.

Some Like It Chilled #4. Dennis K. Fischer, 366 N Spaulding Ave., Los Angeles, CA 90036, USA. \$10/4 issues. A collection of articles about horror films. Dennis is changing the name to The Terror-nauts with the next issue.

Southern Enclave -- Issue 20. A Star Wars Letterzine. Cheree Cargill, 457 Meadowhill Drive, Garland, TX 75043. \$4/issue, or \$12/3 issues, or \$16/year. Reviewed by Sally A. Syrjala.

One of the things to which I look forward is the latest issue of Southern Enclave to once more make its way to the mailbox. It has been in existence since 1984 when it was created to take up the void Jundland Wastes had created when it left this plane of being.

SE is always filled with a mixture of ideas. Issue 20 carries on this tradition with a lead-off article on the book created as a result of Joseph Campbell's interviews with Bill Moyers on PBS -- The Power of Myth.

One of the central issues of discussion in SW fandom is SW as a myth and its interpretation as such. Joseph Campbell specifically goes into this area in his discussions. Some of the areas that are covered include how Vader is a symbolic representation of the state as machine, how his unmasking at the ending of RotJ represented the stripping off of his state/machine state of being to show the man underneath, the man who had yet been able to make his way into individuality, but was hampered by the monster mask of the state.

The book further goes into the saga. When speaking of Vader, he speaks of our interactions with the state. "How do you relate to the system so that you are not compulsively serving it? as a human being."

There is a listing of the winners of 1988's Fan Q awards presented as MEDIAWEST CON this past Memorial Day weekend. There are photographs of fans who attended the con. There are newspaper clippings relevant to LucasFilm and Star Wars. These

cover such things as the third Indiana Jones film, Tucker, Willow, the debate about the expansion of Skywalker ranch and how it is viewed in its surrounding community, as well as information on Joseph Campbell. There is also an interesting clipping on doublespeak and its winners for the past year, one of these being "capital punishment is our society's recognition of the sanctity of human life."

And then there is the substance of the zine: its letter. The comments in these encompass such topics as the need of spirituality in a relationship, back to Obi-Wan's lies to Luke. It is a zine I find very intriguing and one whose subscription I fully intended on keeping current. If you are at all interested in Star Wars and want to join in on a lively discussion of its meaning, mythos, mania or simply want to engage in some good conversation, it is a good zine to try.

Southern Fandom Confederation Bulletin, The, #4. SFC, P. L. Caruthers-Montgomery, 2629 Norwood Avenue, Anniston, AL 36201-2871, USA. A well laid-out zine filled with news, convention listings, club roster, fanzine guide and some nice art from Southern fans. PLCM's calligraphy adds to the issue.

Spectra #36. David Griffin, Mulbarsstigen 7, 196 31 Kungsängen, SWEDEN. Lars-Arne Karlson, Ekas Gällared, 310 60 Ullared. A reviewzine from Sweden, beautifully printed with wonderful artwork. Lars-Arne included a nice personal letter to me with the issue.

TAFFiles #5. Jeanne Gomoll, Box 1443, Madison, WI 53701-1443 USA. Jeanne's zine for reports about TAFF, since she was the Trans-Atlantic Fan Fund winner for 1987. Donate \$\$, and get copies. Jeanne announced the candidates for the 1989 NA to UK race. Voting was on January 15, 1989.

Tales of the Unanticipated #4 & #5. Eric Heideman, PO Box 8036, Lake Street Station, Minneapolis, MN 55407. A magazine of the Minnesota SF Society that publishes articles, fiction and poetry which are augmented by artwork. There is some good reading between the covers of these issues, especially #5, which is dedicated to Clifford Simak who died last year.

Texas SF Inquirer #25, #26. Scott Merritt, 5812 Woodsetter Ln., Arlington, TX 78766 USA. News magazine of Central Texas. Nice production; #26 focuses on the Worldcon in New Orleans.

Thrust - Science Fiction and Fantasy Review, #31, 32, 33. D. Douglas Fratz, editor. Thrust Publi-

cations, 8217 Langport Terrace, Gaithersburg, MD 20877, USA. Quarterly, \$8/year. An excellent semi-prozine with reviews, interviews, articles and locs. The high point of #32 was the interview with Mike Resnick, and for #33 the conversation/visit with Robert Heinlein.

Tightbeam #155, 156, 157. Current editor is Lynne Holdom, 3808 Macalaster Dr. NE #25, St. Anthony, MN 55421, USA. The letter-zine of the National Fantasy Fan Federation (N3F), and it also contains some reviews and some very nice art.

Torch #45, 50. Dwight Decker, PO Box 2217, Northlake, IL 60164 USA. Apazines for CAPAAAlpha, with some interesting articles. In #45 Dwight describes how he became interested in the ship Titanic, and his adventures attending a "Titanic Convention." #50 describes Dwight's attendance at a "Skeptical Inquirer Convention.

Torus #4. Lloyd Penney, Keith Soltys, Michael Dennis Skeet & Michael Wallis. PO Box 186, Sataion M, Toronto, Ontario M6S 4T3 CANADA. A good fourth issue; highlights include an Orson Scott Card interview.

Trapdoor, #8. Robert Lichtman, PO Box 30, Glen Allen, CA 95442. \$3/issue (no subscriptions), or editorial whim. Robert's opening essay talks about two things: "Write more about the farm," his readers cried, and so he does; and about the sense that fanzine fandom is losing its cohesiveness, particularly in the US. Robert points out that Trapdoor is late for two reasons: lack of money and contributions. He wants to publish Trapdoor as a fannish fanzine, and is asking for all who receive it to contribute. My mind is beginning to sift through ideas already. Along with Erg Quarterly and Airglow, its one of the best fanzines around.

Wail Songs, Fall 1988 Catalogue. Wail Songs, PO Box 29888, Oakland, CA 94604, USA. A catalogue for filk tapes produced by Wail Songs. Prices for tapes range from \$8-\$11 and filk books are also available.

Weber Woman's Wrevenge, Vol 5, #8-11. Jean Weber, 6 Hillcrest Avenue, Faulconbridge, NSW 2776, Australia. Wonderfully written, feminist oriented (though not exclusively) fanzine. I enjoy it immensely. The issue concentrate on reader interaction and therefore consist of mostly letters.

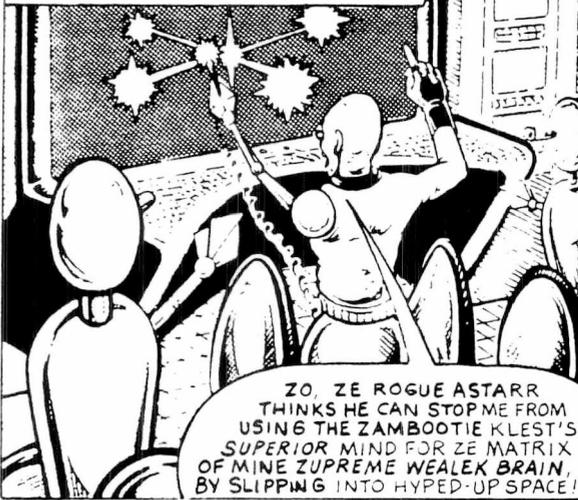
Xeno-File, #2-3. Chris Stroup, editor. PO Box 1088 Station M, Calgary, Alberta T2P 2K9, CANADA.

These two issues of this fanzine show that Chris Stroup and company have been learning and using what experience they've gained in fanzine production. The cover artists, Dory Rikkonen (#2) and Richard Bartrop (#3) are excellent. The interior art is greatly improve from one issue to the next. Dave Hall's reviews are very good.

YHOS #44-46. Art Widner, 231 Courtney Lane, Orinda, CA 94563, USA. As Art's FAPAazine, he does a remarkable fanzine. The articles are interesting and thoughtful, and not just by him. Skel's "Typing in Talkos" in #44 is fun reading. The articles on fannish geography ("Fandom in the Frozen Northeast" (Boston) in #45 by Andi Shechter, and "Fandom in the USSR by Boris Zavgorodny) also make for interesting reading. !\*



THE SINISTER DR. FERRIS WEAL WITNESSES THE NARROW ESCAPE OF THE SPACERS RUEL ASTARR AND LEOAN KLEST FROM THE GALACTIC UNION MALITIA PRISON ON THE PLANET RYGELLOS.



ZO, ZE ROGUE ASTARR THINKS HE CAN STOP ME FROM USING THE ZAMBOOTIE KLEST'S SUPERIOR MIND FOR ZE MATRIX OF MINE ZUPREME WEALEK BRAIN. BY SLIPPING INTO HYPED-UP SPACE!!

MY ARMY OF WARRIOR WEALEKS VILL TRACK ZEM TO THE END OF ZE GALAXY IF ZEY HAVE TO !!



KLEST'S BRAIN VILL BE MINE!!

\* FOR DETAILS OF THE EVENTS WHICH HAVE CAUSED DR WEAL'S DURESS, SEND FOR THE SF COMIC ZINE SPACED OUTLAWS #1, BY MAILING TWO 25¢ STAMPS TO: GREG LITCHFIELD, 44 RAYCROFT AVE., WEYMOUTH, MA 02158

# RUEL ASTARR AND LEOAN KLEST

# THE LOST RESORT

WRITER - DEAN FREDETTE < CO-PLOTTERS > GREG LITCHFIELD - ARTIST © 1988

LIGHT YEARS AWAY FROM RYGELLOS, THE ESCAPEES TRAVEL TO ONE OF THE GALAXY'S MANY LUXURY PLANETS.



RELAX LEOAN! WE LEFT THOSE GUMBALLS EATING SPACE DUST! WE'LL BE HITTING MEDRUBA IN NO TIME!

ONE HOPES YOU MEAN PHRASE 'HITTING' IN FIGURATIVE SENSE, RUEL.



CALM DOWN, I KNOW WHAT I'M DOING.

HOW IS ONE SUPPOSED TO RELAX IN HYPED-UP SPACE?!

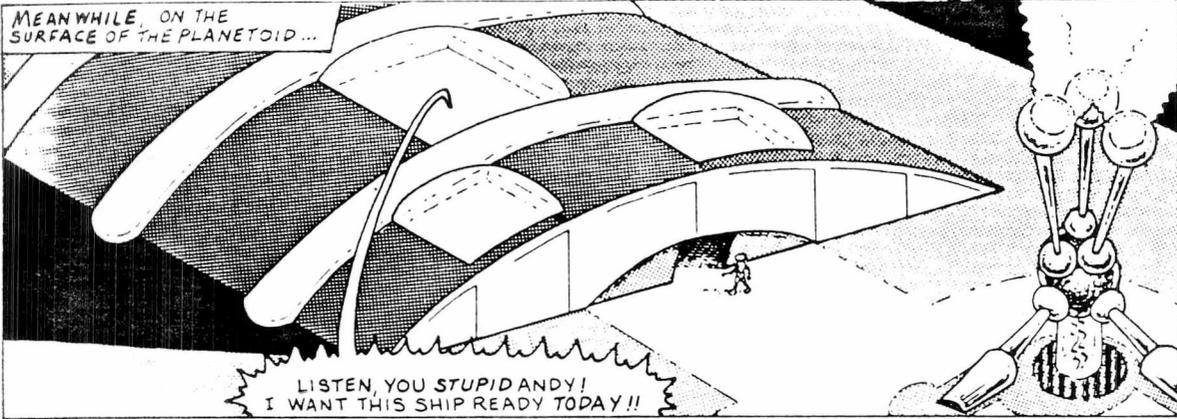


WELL, ahn... WE'RE OUT OF IT NOW, AND um... ON COURSE.

ONE HESITATES TO DIFFER, FRIEND RUEL, BUT THE PLANET ONE VIEWS RESEMBLES NOT THE MEDRUBA FEATURED IN ONE'S TOURIST BROCHURES!



SYNC IN, LEOAN! WE'RE CAUGHT IN A MEGA-POWERFUL TRACTION BEAM!





WHAT A DEPRESSING SCENE ... physics mumble jumble indeed ... WHAT SENSE IS THERE IN BEING A MULTI-PERSONALITY PROGRAMMABLE ANDROID WITH BRAINS THE SIZE OF A SOLAR SYSTEM WHEN NOBODY EVER BOTHERS TO LISTEN TO ME?



SOMEONE ON THIS MISERABLE PLANET IS GOING TO PAY FOR THIS, LEON! =hurf=

ONE CAN'T IMAGINE RECEIVING A SETTLEMENT REGARDING STOLEN MILITARY SHIP. =purt=



GREETINGS, GENTLEBEINGS. THE MANAGER OF THE RESORT PLANETOID MEGASPIEL BIDS ME TO WELCOME YOU TO ONE OF THE HOTTEST NEW LUX-'TOIDS THIS SIDE OF THE CRAB NEBULA.

That's NOT what I meant, Leon!

YO, ROBOT! TAKE US TO YOUR SOON-TO-BE-DECEASED LEADER!



DAVE STEWARD THANKS YOU FOR CHOOSING TO SPEND YOUR LEISURE TIME ON MEGASPIEL AND COORDIALLY INVITES YOU TOPARTAKE OF THE RESORT'S REC-FACILITIES, INCLUDING THE LATEST IN ZERO-G LASER SCRAG ARENAS.

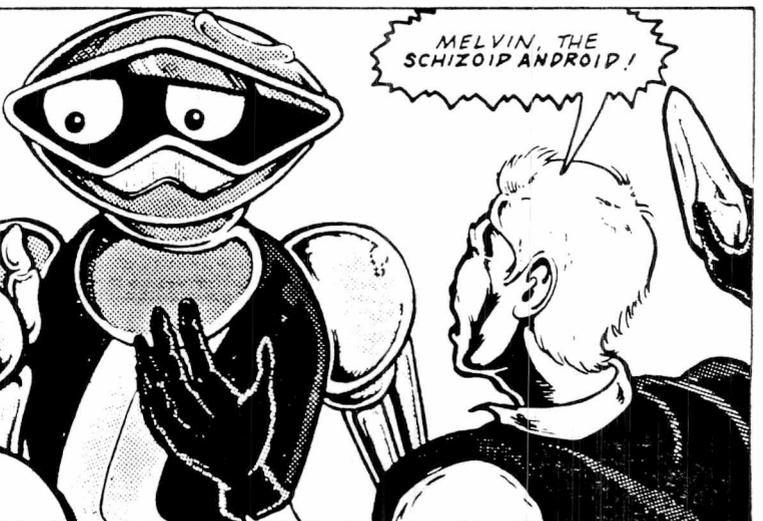


ANDROID FRIEND, YOU ARE IN PERIL OF INTENSE PROPERTY DAMAGE! THE MAN BEFORE YOU IS NONE OTHER THAN ... ..RUEL ASTARR !!

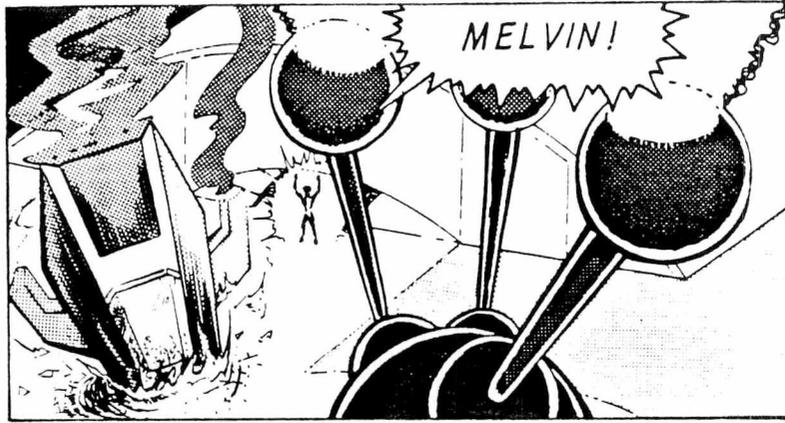
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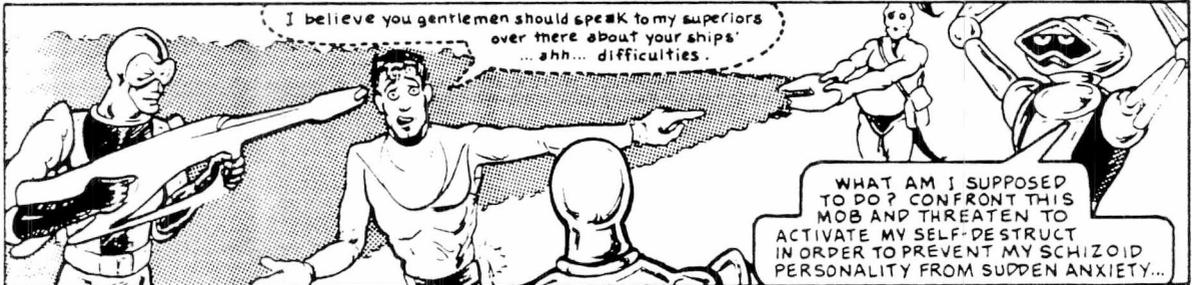
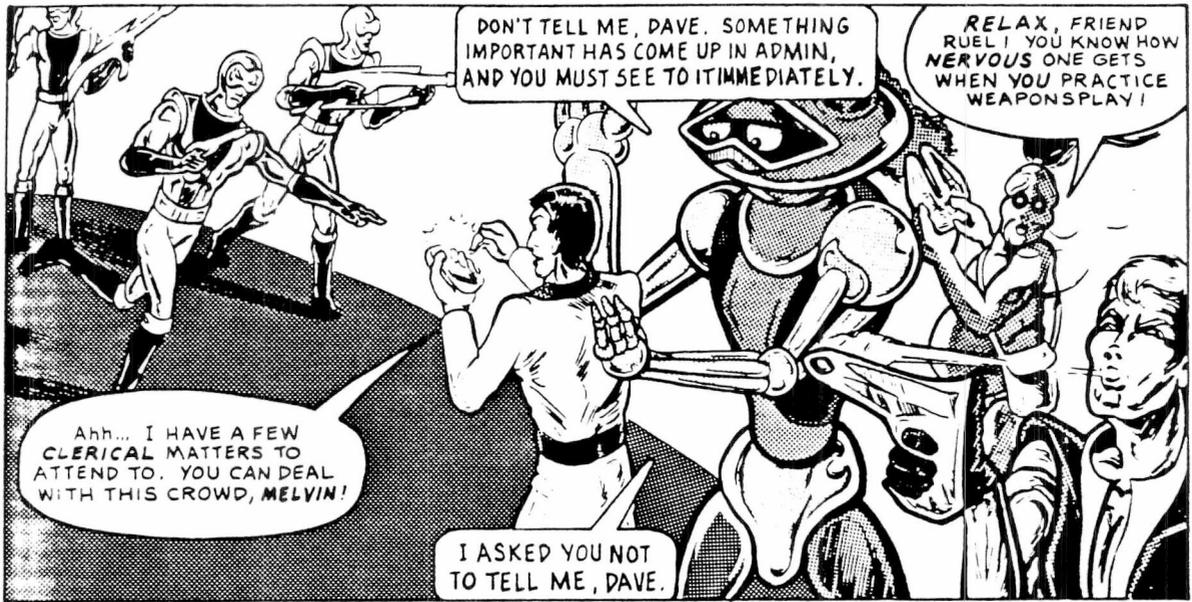


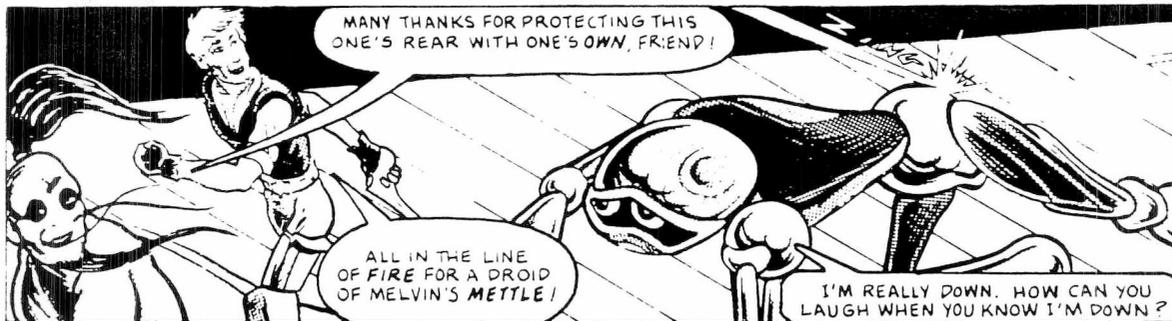
OF COURSE HE'S RUEL ASTARR ... I NEVER FORGET A FACE. DID I MENTION I HAVE BRAINS THE SIZE OF A SOLAR SYSTEM AND AN EXCEPTIONALLY GOOD MEMORY?



MELVIN, THE SCHIZOID ANDROID!







# TIME TO

# ERAPS



"Now explain again what happens when I make a deposit," Rak Laghr asked of the Vice President once more. The young lady behind the desk sighed and pointed to the brochure. "It's all right here Mr. Laghr. When you have some extra time, you can either come in here, or use your mobile unit to relay your wish to us here, and from fifteen minutes to twenty four hours can be stored away for future use. As long as you relinquish all rights to the extra time that they create while they are in the time fold."

"That's what I don't understand. How do take my time and put it in this 'time fold'. Also what's this about extra time?"

"The machine is very complicated. It warps time around you. When the fold is empty, you jump forward. Our machine can let you keep adding time, or remove time from the fold. When time is in this fold it multiplies and grows. This expanding time is the service charge that we get.

by COLIN LAMB

"You may, if you want, take out a loan. We then take time from the growing pile that we collect as the interest, and apply it to your account. At the moment we charge 5% interest per year. Most of our loans so far have been paid off within a month. We do not let any loan last more than the year. Now Mr. Laghr do you have any further questions?" Laghr thought about what the teller had told him. It still made no sense, but he did see the benefits if it worked. He smiled and shook his head. His signature looked like a scribble at the bottom of the five page document. what a hassle he thought.

"I would like to open my account with two hours. It's now 2:15 and I have an important meeting at 5:30. That should leave me with enough time to get there."

"Fine Mr. Laghr. Just walk out the doors, and straight to your appointment." Well if she was lying this would prove it. He looked at his watch as he left the door. The old fashioned time piece showed 5:16. Laghr was so stunned that he almost walked into a wall. It really worked!

\* \* \* \* \*

"Well Fahar, It's been a pleasure doing business with you. I hope that we can make this merger work out." Laghr stood up and offered his hand to Fahar Paknar, who stood and took the offered hand.

"To success, Rak. If we can pull this off we'll be rich." Laghr laughed and walked out to his waiting car.

\* \* \* \* \*

Laghr paced in front of his fireplace. He had to present his ideas for the merger tomorrow. If the board didn't go for it, then he would be back at square one. No he would be dead. All the money he had borrowed from Krand was due in five days. No excuses. He couldn't get any sleep like this. Seven hours and he would be either rich and having fun, or dead and not enjoying it. This waiting was driving him crazy. Laghr looked at the black credit card. Mobile unit the lady had called it. Why not?

He reached over and picked up the card. It had a small button and a speaker. He touched the button. "Yes, Mr. Laghr, How may I help you?" came a computerized voice from the tiny speaker.

"Uh. I would like to deposit six hours to my account." Laghr waited, listening for a sound back from the card. He was disappointed. when the card remained silent he threw it on the desk in disgust. He would have to complain tomorrow about that. He noticed that it was lighter in the room now. It couldn't be! Laghr threw open the heavy drapes. The morning sun hit him full in the face blinding him for a second. It was 8:15.

\* \* \* \* \*

At 9:00 Laghr was sitting at the giant table of the board meeting. He was tired. The guy next to him was reading some boring report of riots in the mines and factories. Big deal, that happened often enough.

\* \* \* \* \*

"Mr. Laghr." came a voice out of the void "Mr. Laghr!" this jolted Laghr out of his fitful sleep. His head jerked up, and he half stood with surprise. "Welcome back Mr. Laghr." the chairman said "I'm so glad you could join us. Now that we have your full attention, could we please hear your report?" This was not going very well. Not at all. Rubbing the sleep from his eyes, Laghr stood to make his presentation.

\* \* \* \* \*

"What do you mean they didn't go for it!" Fahar screamed at Laghr "Krand will have our heads. This deal was fool proof! How could you mess it up!" Fahar stormed on at the slumped form of Rak Laghr. Since he had fallen asleep at the meeting the chairman wouldn't trust any deal he had to offer. And to make matters worse he had been fired. Krand would kill them before the day was out. If he had gotten some sleep he could have stayed awake, and he would now be rich. "What do plan to do now!" Fahar was still screaming. Laghr looked at his watch. Only noon he would go take out a loan, and then find a way to beg, borrow, or steal the money to save his skin. "Where do think you're going?" Fahar screamed at the back of the retreating Laghr.

\* \* \* \* \*

"Mr. Krand. It wasn't my fault! Rak took the money and ran! I just found out!" Torth Krand sat at the head of the table.

"Dispose of him. Then bring me Rak Laghr's head." He waved for their dismissal, and ignored the screams of Fahar.

\* \* \* \* \*

"Yes, I would like to take out a loan." Laghr looked at the lady across the desk from him.

"And how much time would you like to take out?"

"About two weeks please." She shook her head.

"I'm sorry Mr. Laghr, but due to how new your account is, you can only take out two days. Full payment would be due in one week on a loan that small." That wouldn't be enough time, but every minute counted, and he could always leave the country. The north pole was nice this time of year.

"Fine, I'll take it." He signed the form and left the office.

\* \* \* \* \*

Back at his house Laghr packed his cloths. He had gone out and bought warm cloths and a ticket to Greenland, all that could be easily traced and followed up on. He left the packed bag by the door and left the house with only a small duffle bag with some clothes and some money that would last for a while in South America.

\* \* \* \* \*

At the airport Laghr stood in the shadow of a utility stair. He heard footsteps as someone came down the stairs. When he was on the ground level, Laghr killed him with an injection. When the corpse was dressed in Laghr's cloths, he was put in a wheel chair.

At the boarding dock, Laghr wheeled his effigy to the desk. "This is Mr. Laghr. He's waiting for his flight to Greenland. Is it ready?" The stewardess looked at her terminal.

"Yes, it's just boarding now. If you want I'll take him aboard now." The stewardess grabs for the chair.

"No!" Laghr says, moving the chair. "I'll take him aboard. I'm responsible for his safety."

Laghr wheels his fake aboard the plane. With some comments about drinking too heavily earlier, Laghr positioned the corpse in the seat. He hurries out of the plane as the engines are started.

\* \* \* \* \*

Laghr watches the plane as it taxis down the runway. As the plane leaves the ground, an earth shattering explosion rips the air. In a flash of light the plane is no more. Laghr sees two of Krand's goons walk away from the window only feet away from him. Laghr picked up his suitcase and walked out of the airport.

"I want to buy passage to Tahiti, tonight," Laghr says to the captain. The old boat rocks and creaks with the waves.

"I'm willing to pay good money." After a minute of silence, "Will ten thousand do?" The old man raises four fingers.

"Twenty thousand!" Laghr counters. The captain keeps the four fingers raised.

"Thirty is as high as I can go!" Laghr pleads. He mops the sweat running down his neck. The old man nods his head in agreement.

"Great we leave now."

The old man shakes his head. "No. Money now!" Laghr grumbles, but counts out the money onto

the table .

"Now get this death trap out to sea. Now!" Laghr roars at the old man.

\* \* \* \* \*

Laghr sees land off in the distance. He turns to see if the old man is in sight. He sees no one.

"Is that Tahiti?" He calls out.

"Yes," calls out the captain from below deck. Laghr reaches down to his duffle bag to get the pistol he carries in it. His hand feels only clothes. A shot splinters the board only inches from his feet.

"Looking for this, Mr. Laghr?"

Laghr turns slowly to see one of Krand's goons. The captain comes up from behind the head goon. He whispers into the thugs ear. The goon spins and shoots the old captain with his rifle.

As the body hits the deck, Laghr dives behind the transom. Bullets split the planks all around the deck and transom as Laghr quietly slips into the water. With bullets still destroying the boat, Laghr swims to the front of the boat. Slowly he pulls out a pistol from his leg holster, and tries to climb a stray piece of rope. A stray bullet hits the gas lines, and the whole boat is engulfed in flame. Laghr is thrown back and into the water, which extinguishes his singed hair.

Laghr gropes for something to grab onto in the water. By chance he grabs his suitcase, which holds all of his money. He takes a deep breath from the foul smoke filled air. He looks around, but can see nothing in the smoke cloud. Paddling in a random direction he escapes from the cloud and can see the island not far off. He starts kicking towards shore.

\* \* \* \* \*

Rak Laghr slowly takes a sip from a tall glass. Laying back in his chair, he slowly tries to get a tan. Things are going good, and he has time to spare for little luxuries. His drug running business is going great, and Krand thinks him dead.

"Sir." Laghr rolls off the chair, and brings a pistol in line with the head of Raoul, his Butler.

"This package just arrived for you, Sir." Raoul sets down a plain brown box on the table, and walks away not once flinching.

Laghr looks at the package. No return address, but it was sent from the States. He grabs the package and quickly throws it into the pool. After a few minutes, he picks it out with a net, and places the soaked package on a table. Carefully he unwraps it. A small black credit card falls to the table.

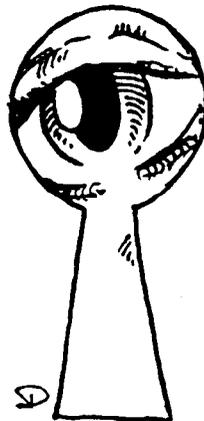
"Greetings, Mr. Laghr. You are late on paying your loan."

Laghr stares at the black card on the table in disbelief.

"Your loan was for two days. With 50% interest that was two thousand one hundred sixty minutes. Then with 75% late fees it was three thousand seven hundred eighty minutes. It took twenty-six days to locate you. So at 50% interest compounded daily, your total comes to one hundred forty-three million one hundred seventy-four thousand one hundred twenty-four minutes, or two hundred seventy-two years payable now!"

\* \* \* \* \*

An old and withered form of Rak Laghr hits the ground lifeless. [!]



# BOSKONE 25

by Laurie Mann

## FROM THE INSIDE OUT

This article is a personal look at Boskone. The opinions are my own, and may not match those of my co-chair, NESFA or the Boskone committee. This article appeared in a shorter form in the February, 1988 APA:NESFA.

### Terminology

**Boskone:** a large, East Coast regional which traditionally takes place in Boston over President's Day Weekend

**BOSKONE Committee:** the people who run the con. Most belong to NESFA, but some do not.

**NESFA:** New England Science Fiction Association, a large, sercon group based in Boston. NESFA runs BOSKONE, publishes BOSKONE and Worldcon books, owns a club house, and houses a very large SF library.

**Noreascon:** The name of a series of Worldcons which have been held in Boston since 1971. Noreascon III will be held in Boston in 1989.

### BOSKONE BACKGROUND

My husband Jim and I were named to be co-chairs of the 1988 BOSKONE in October of 1986. We had been attending BOSKONE on and off since 1975, and steadily since moving to Massachusetts in 1982. We really enjoyed BOSKONE in the mid-70s very much. The Program (including a varied film schedule) was always huge and interesting. The Art Show was out-

standing. And the Huckster Room alone was always worth the trip.

During the early '80s, we were very troubled by the "invasion" of BOSKONE by people, many of whom were young, unchaperoned, and disinterested in written SF. BOSKONE in 1986 had grown to be something like 3700 attendees. Jim and I felt that BOSKONE ought to be a big convention for people who liked to read, enjoyed art, wanted a varied pro-

gram, and wanted to meet new people. We didn't believe that BOSKONE had to be all things to all people how attended it--that the BOSKONE committee had every right to target a specific audience and design the convention accordingly. When we discussed our appointment with NESFA president Joe Rico, we mentioned that we'd like to try to narrow BOSKONE's focus a little.

#### BOSKONE 25 PLANNING, FALL '86

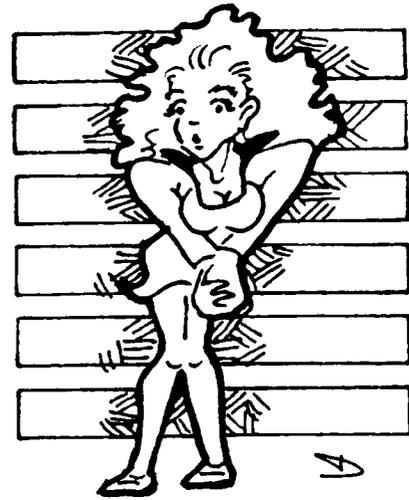
I always knew co-chairing a BOSKONE would be a lot of work. The pre-con planning part turned out to be much harder than I'd anticipated. One immediate problem was evaluating how to fit BOSKONE into the Sheraton. During the mid-eighties, the Hynes Auditorium was being completely rebuilt, so the Sheraton Boston turned some of its parking garages into exhibit halls. The first exhibit halls in the Hynes were due to open in early 1988, just before BOSKONE 25, and the Sheraton would immediately re-convert their exhibit space back to garages. BOSKONE had grown so big during the mid-eighties that we were using all the Sheraton exhibit space. Did we, a regional convention, really want to rent space in a convention center?

This question was only the beginning. For more than ten years, BOSKONE had run over President's Day weekend. In the fall of '86, the Sheraton abruptly "depenciled" BOSKONE from President's Weekend, 1988 in favor of a larger convention. This launched a series of "Wither BOSKONE" meetings on BOSKONE 25 as far back as October 1986.

The consensus of these meetings was that BOSKONE could try to refocusing its activities a little, but we should plan on renting out at least one exhibit hall in the Hynes. For BOSKONE 24, Jim and I put together a flyer that said BOSKONE 25 would have less emphasis on films and con suite, and would omit "peripheral" SF events, like computer games and video.

#### BOSKONE 24, FEBRUARY 1987

Then, BOSKONE 24 happened. Over 4200 people attended, making BOSKONE 24 one of the largest regional conventions ever. BOSKONE 24 and the Sheraton had many problems. The Sheraton's fire alarm system went off periodically throughout the weekend and this made the hotel very tense. BOSKONE Services established that only two of the fourteen alarms were caused deliberately by con members, and all the remaining alarms were caused by other factors. We didn't pay enough attention to security, so we had lots of crashers. At one point, I went into the con suite and the first 8 people I saw didn't have badges. Parties literally ran 24-hours a day,



and some of the posters advertising those parties were lewd, sexist, and just plain in bad taste. We heard second-hand reports after the con about what a great "drug con" BOSKONE had been and we were particularly disturbed by that.

Between real world work and co-running Program, I went to the convention tired and left it totally exhausted and feeling more than a little battle-scarred. I was pleased by the way Program turned out year (I'd co-run it with my friend Priscilla Olson), but was really upset by the type of crowds we had attracted. Many were teenagers who spent the weekend racing up and down the halls acting up. They didn't seem to know who C.J. Cherryh, our pro GoH, was. Jim says walking through the halls of the Sheraton during BOSKONE was like a trip to Shayol. I felt very strongly that we were wasting our time by working so hard on a big, varied convention when so many of the attendees didn't seem to give a damn. At the BOSKONE 25 "pre-gripe" session we ran at BOSKONE 24, many of the attendees blamed the bad behavior on the open parties which had become so common. When we asked the audience what they thought we should do about this trend, about half said we should ban parties, and the other half said we should do nothing. Likewise, about half the audience later said BOSKONE had to be "all things to all people" while the other half believed we could shape BOSKONE any way we (the committee) wanted to.

Because BOSKONE 24 had been such a zoo, the Sheraton-Boston said it no longer wanted to host BOSKONEs. When I heard that we'd lost the Sheraton, I looked at it more as an opportunity than something bad (at least for BOSKONE---the Sheraton had also kicked out Noreascon, which was quite a different matter. It took months of legal wrangling to bring Noreascon 3 back to the Sheraton). We spent the next few weeks talking to lots of people, writing proposals, reading over lots of hotel information, and starting to visit hotels. While the attendance restrictions that we wrote and NESFA

passed were an overreaction to what had been happening to BOSKONE, they were necessary. We needed to "lose" well over half of the 4200 people who attended BOSKONE 24. There wasn't a facility outside of Boston that could hold a convention of anywhere near that size. So, we sent a letter to all people who had a BOSKONE 24 membership, detailing BOSKONE 24's hotel problems, and explaining why and how BOSKONE 25 would be different. But the new rules (including making BOSKONE semi-invitational, making it hard for "unchaperoned" teenagers to attend, and restricting open parties) generated controversy, an awful lot of mail, some boycotting, etc.

#### BOSKONE 25 PLANNING, 1987

After reviewing a lot of hotel information, it was clear that we could only run a 2000 person BOSKONE in Springfield (2 hours due west of Boston) or Hartford, CT (2 hours southwest of Boston). Both cities sounded interested, so we took a day off from work and drove out to Springfield and Hartford for the day. Springfield got into the spirit of things by having a science-fictional lunch, with a couple of people from the library dressed in costumes (in fact, I saw more costumes at that lunch than I saw at the con). The visit was capped off by a hard-hat visit to the not-yet-finished Tara. The ride in the open elevator was fun, and somewhat reminiscent of the glassed-in elevators in Atlanta. The fact that the hotels were right across the street from one another was a real plus, and the plans for the Tara looked promising. Hartford also had some good points, including some room sizes that I thought would be a little better for our functions. But the hotels in Hartford were almost two blocks apart. While I was initially unbiased about the two cities, I started leaning towards Springfield after the visit, and was glad when the club decided that Springfield was place to go.

I could go into detail on the whole procedure of appointments, room allocations, and other such decisions. Like any another chairs, we made many good ones and some bad ones. But it did get very stressful from time to time. I don't like mediating conflicts, and found myself in the middle of more con-



flicts than I anticipated. After signing the contracts, the hotels sometimes seemed a little skittish about things. And then we had fewer preregistrations than we thought, so we worried about money a lot. And we had lots of hotel confirmation problems, particularly with the Tara, a brand new hotel. So I hoped that BOSKONE 25 was experiencing its crises pre-con rather than at-con...

THURSDAY, JANUARY 28, 1988

Jim and I drove to Boston early Thursday morning, January 28, 1988, to drive Greg, Astrid, and Erik Bear out to Springfield. They'd gotten in several days before, and had spent a few days recovering from the flu and visiting a few tourist spots. It was a real pleasure to spend some time with them. Both are two of the nicest, most interesting folks around. Once in Springfield, the Bears went to lunch and we went to the Marriott to attend the hotel meeting.

The Marriott hotel meeting was very big. There were about 15 different people from the hotel, including the General Manager. Ben Yalow, Theresa Renner, Jane Wagner, Jim, and I represented BOSKONE. The meeting was very upbeat and we went over the resume in great detail. Ben, our hotel liaison, had worked closely with the Marriott to develop a BOSKONE hotel resume written in "hotelese." Before the meeting, we didn't believe that one hotel meeting could last for over 2 hours, but we were wrong.

After a quick sandwich in the adjacent mall, we went to the Tara. The Tara meeting was smaller, and hotel people wandered in and out of it. The Tara had reduced our resume to about three very general pages. We found out (for the first time) that the pool wasn't ready yet. We talked a little about some of the hotel registration difficulties, and we found that they were willing to accept a rooming list on-line, which should help future BOSKONES.

By the time the Tara meeting was over, some of the fourth floor rooms were turned over to us. We quickly checked in and toured the space. The function rooms in the Tara were very nicely appointed --a wet bar and bathroom in each function room was a real plus. We spent the early part of the evening getting a dinner expedition together and spending some time with Joel Rosenberg. We wandered around a bit, and saw that con move-in was going very smoothly.

We pulled together whoever had the time and about 15 of us went down to the Upper Crust. The food was good, a trifle expensive, and the service was painfully slow. 3 1/2 hours after entering the restaurant I had finally gotten the bill settled. However, the company, including the Bears and Joel and some of the concom, was very pleasant. Leslie

(our 7 year old daughter) arrived while I was settling the bill, so Jim, Leslie and I met outside the restaurant and discussed her trip out to Springfield with the Insingas.

We put Leslie to bed, then went to see how the move in was progressing. It was already done. The Art Show was well on its way to being set up. David Mattingly, Artist GoH, and his art arrived safely. The only "crisis" of the evening had happened in the afternoon when an accident in Weston effectively closed down the west-bound lanes of the Mass Pike. Oh, I almost forgot about the broken door in the Tara garage which made move-in somewhat trickier than it might have been. I went to bed early, after collapsing on the nice king bed in the Den for a while first.

#### FRIDAY, JANUARY 29, 1988

Friday morning we were up fairly early and went outside the hotel for breakfast. By the time we got back, Services was open. I was in Services when Rick Ricci, our Tara contact, came in to tell us about the problem with the King Suites -- the wrong one had been set for a day-long meeting which had already started. Since Registration needed to set up in the early afternoon I decided it would be best to just switch the rooms for the weekend. This turned out to be a little trickier than just swapping rooms for the weekend, but it was probably easier than swapping rooms for Friday only and making Registration pack up and move early Saturday morning so they'd wind up in the "right room." I told Ben what had happened and sent in a new sign order to the Sign Shop. Rick had the Tara redo their own signs. When I looked at the internal signs, I noticed that all the "Time starting" times were set-up times, as opposed to when the activity would actually start. I mentioned this to Ben and Rick, but I don't think it was ever fixed.

BOSKONE got most of the rooms earlier than the resume specified. This was helpful, and gave some groups a little more time to get in and set up. Only People Mover and Huckster Room lagged a bit, leaving a few gophers and hucksters confused about where to go and what to do. Art Show set-up continued to progress well.

One "surprise" of the weekend was that I barely saw Jim during the convention. We seemed to go off in opposite directions for most of the con. I joked some about "planned crises" but there didn't seem to be too many as set-up continued and people started showing up to attend the con. Actually, the only real mystery of Friday was when the babysitting crew would show up. I'd told them their suite would be available early Friday, but they didn't show up until late Friday afternoon. Fortunately, they were able to open by dinner on Friday.

Another minor problem Friday afternoon was bringing Ellen Asher, our Special Speaker and the Senior Editor from the SFBC, from the train station to the con, a distance of about 1/2 mile. I found someone to get her, he made the trip over only to learn the train was delayed by an hour because of a train derailment earlier in the day in Pennsylvania (and, yes, there were some fans on that train). So Ellen arrived just as the "Welcome to BOSKONE" panel was winding up in the Marriott. By the time I got back to the Tara, my sister Carrie, who'd come to help us out with Leslie, arrived, and we got her settled in the room.

The hotels deserve a lot of credit for their responsiveness to our convention. Much of this is due to the attention to detail that Ben paid to the resume, and to all the incarnations of the hotel sales people. I was particularly concerned about the Marriott check-in since the lobby was tiny and the hotel registration area wasn't too big either. But they were really on the ball. I only heard one person complain that it took longer than 5 minutes to check in, which may be some sort of record. While it got busy in the hotel lobbies early Friday evening, there weren't any major back-ups and the lines kept moving.

The convention Registration lines also moved very well. We had a new badge design for BOSKONE 25; it was our first experience with the big, laminated badge. The badge was designed so you could read the name from way off. It made finding people a little easier.

The Meet-the-VIPs party over the last few years had deteriorated into a noisy mish-mash of a costume and program event. It had become neither a place to meet people nor a place to see costumes. I liked the feel of this year's Meet-the-VIPs, I liked the lack of loud music blaring in the background, and I liked the fact that once people got there they didn't tend to leave immediately. I spent some time talking to Robert Osband and Vickie Winslow. We'd corresponded a bit pre-con. I'd provided Vickie, a blind fan with an IBM PC, a disk with the Progress Report. I also spent some time with Brenda Clough (my college roommate), and a number of other people I don't see very often.

I went up to the con suite for a while, and since it was about the only party on Friday night it was pretty busy. Then I was on my first "real" program item, called "Sex and Death." I've been on a few fannish and con-running panels at different cons over the last few years, and had really wanted to be on a panel or two that talked about SF. This panel consisted of Ellen Kushner, Ginger Buchanan, Esther Friesner, and me. I had a good time, and the audience really got into the discussion.

Once the panel was over, I suddenly remembered the Art Show reception, went over to the Tara and found I was very late. But the Art Show was still

open to committee and artists. The show was absolutely terrific. One thing the BOSKONE committee really wanted to preserve about BOSKONE was the excellence of the Art Show, and we really succeeded! Dave and Claire Anderson, who will be running the Art Show at Noreascon 3, did a superb job. I found it really hard to give just one "Co-Chair's Choice" ribbon. There were about 10 pieces that I wanted to give an award to. Then I saw Dawn Wilson's "Queen of the Snows." I tend to like art that uses strong color, yet one of the things that caught me about Dawn's piece was her subtle use of color. The detailing of the jewelry in the piece was remarkable. I was happy to see that it later won a jury award too. Don Maitz also had a phenomenal display.

In general, things were extremely quiet on Friday. The fears of lots of non-fans crashing the con evaporated. The fans who were here were very well-behaved. At 12:45, I went to Registration, and found a few committee people still sitting around, waiting for people to show up. When they said they hadn't registered anyone in almost an hour, I told them to close up.

I went to the Den for a minute, and was mildly dismayed to find it populated by nerdish "Friends of the Committee." In general, I don't mind some non-committee people in the Den, but it put me off just then. I should have said something to them, but I didn't and went to Services for a bit. Again, I went to bed relatively early.

#### SATURDAY, JANUARY 30, 1988

Early Saturday, I ran into a few fans sitting on the third floor of the Tara. Some of them had been up all night, just talking on the Mezzanene. One of them was Craig McDonough, a fan I'd met years ago who was just returning from a long gaffiation. When I went to breakfast, Dave Cantor, Debbie King (BOSKONE Treasurer), and Craig joined me for the Tara breakfast buffet. Other than the croissants, the food was pretty good.

Again, things on Saturday went smoothly. The Marriott forgot to reset the ballroom for an 11am panel, so some Marriott managers and a number of BOSKONE committee and attendees quickly reset the room. The panel only started 5 minutes late. Leslie spent most of the day in Dragonslair (Children's Activities)---she liked it so much that she refused to leave for lunch!

My mother arrived Saturday morning, and I walked around the con with my mother and sister, Carrie for a good part of Saturday. They were very impressed. Even my brother Terry dropped by for a while Saturday afternoon. Mom liked it so much that she asked me to find a room for her, which the Marriott was able to supply (BOSKONE had a higher than normal hotel no-show rate this year).

BOSKONE had a very strong Program, particularly when you consider we had about 7 tracks of programming/workshops/discussion groups and under 1300 attendees. We had a large number of pros, including David Hartwell, David Cherry, Susan Schwartz, Hal Clement, Joe Haldeman, Ben Bova, Marvin Minsky, Brian Thomsen, Joan D. Vinge, Bob Eggleton, A.C. Farley, Jim Frenkel, David Drake, and Michael Kube-McDowell. Priscilla Olson, co-head of Program for Noreascon 3, did a fine job pulling it all together.

The Huckster Rooms were a little strange. Due to the size of the function rooms, and because we felt strongly that we wanted to make the Tara and Marriott joint con hotels, we ran a Huckster Room of about equal size in both hotels. As a result, some of the hucksters in the Tara thought the Marriott had the better room, and some of the hucksters in the Marriott thought the Tara had the better room! Each room had a good mix, emphasizing books, but with some media items, prints, and jewelry.

BOSKONE had nice "mingling" space. Since the last few BOSKONEs had been crowded, it was tough to stop and chat with people. This BOSKONE had lots of couches and chairs on the Mezzanene of the Tara, and in the Assembly area of the Marriott. As a result, you could casually run into people, find a seat, and carry on a conversation with the person without having a lout with a zap gun trip over you. That gave the con a much friendlier feeling.

Saturday afternoon continued to be quiet, with just about everything running smoothly. Some of us proceeded to get silly. After over a year of worrying about the con, things were going REAL well. Anyway, we started exchanging name badges. While this made a few committee members angry with us swappers, there are times when spontaneous silliness is a good thing. The convention turned out to be loose enough that "breaking the rules" shouldn't have been an issue. If the convention had been the typical "pressure cooker" BOSKONE of the last few years, such activity wouldn't have been appropriate -- and beside, no one would have had the time or been in the mood to! I don't care that some people felt it was inappropriate, but a few people practically threw hysterics over it, both at the con and the next week at the con debriefing, and I felt that was inappropriate. Once we got started, I asked that people try to get their regular badges back in time for the Banquet, which virtually everyone did. In the meantime, it was fun to be Larry Gelfand and Davey Snyder and a number of other people for a little while.

At one point in the afternoon, I went to the Den to relax for a few minutes and use my heating pad (I have a bad back, and have found the best thing for it is using heat and putting my feet up). J.K. Klein was there, taking up a chair that a committee member wanted. I told him to leave this time, and

though he protested some, he left.

I was glad to see that a number of committee people got involved with the Program this year. In general, adding fans to panels is a good thing. I heard some very positive things about the Sherlock Holmes and H. Beam Piper panels from random fans. Another extremely popular item was David Mattingly's walk-through of the Art Show. Later Saturday, I was the on a censorship panel, as the "token" reader and First Amendment advocate. This panel was an excellent mix, and it included David Mattingly (artist), Bruce Coville (YA writer), Gary Farber (editor), and Chris Claremont (comics).

I was nearly late for the Banquet, because the Babysitting folks went out to dinner and didn't return until almost 7:15. When I finally got downstairs, the ballroom was over 2/3rds full. Other than the fact that the food seemed to be served late, I thought the Banquet went off very well. It was BOSKONE's first banquet in many years, and nearly 20% of the convention attended. The food was good, and the conversation was amusing. Greg gave a super after-dinner speech.

After dinner, I got Leslie, and we went up to the Boxboro party for a while. It was getting crowded. They broke open a bottle of champagne for me which I appreciated. After Leslie kept attacking the chocolate, I felt it was time to go. I put Leslie to bed, then picked up Carrie and my mother and showed them a few parties. Mom was a little upset by the noise in her hallway -- her room was across the hall from the "End of Civilization" party and she'd heard 2 hours worth of anti-BOSKONE ranting. While we dropped by a few parties Saturday night, I couldn't quite get in the swing of things -- I think having my mother with me had something to do with that. My mother went to bed, and Carrie joined me in the Den for some unwinding before going to bed.

SUNDAY, JANUARY 31, 1988

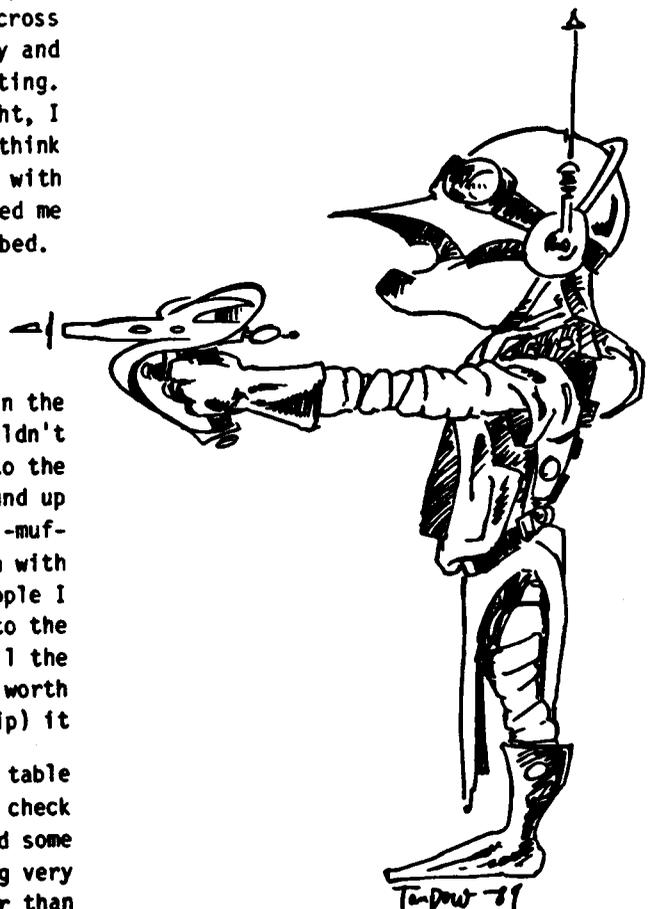
Leslie and I went to the breakfast buffet in the Tara. I was a little disappointed that I couldn't just buy a bagel (I was planning on going to the BIG BRUNCH later in the morning), but I wound up paying the breakfast buffet price for 2 mini-muffins and some bacon. I talked up having brunch with the guests to the committee, but most people I talked to said they had prior commitments to the Art Show. About ten committee people and all the guests attended the BIG BRUNCH, which was worth every penny of the \$21 (including tax and tip) it cost.

At noon I went to work at the NESFA sales table for an hour. After that, I helped my sister check out (my mother had left by then), and watched some of Art Show sales. Again, things were going very smoothly. I went to the Gripe Session. Other than

the tendency for some people to pontificate, and the near violence that erupted between Tony Lewis and the afore-mentioned ranter, there weren't any surprises there.

By the time the Gripe Session was over, the committee had moved most stuff out of the Marriott (including the Huckster Room), and had made significant steps in tearing down the Art Show. Many people went out to dinner, or went to watch the Super Bowl. Leslie and I stuck around the Den and relaxed with some sandwiches. Later, I brought out a torte that Fred Isaacs had made and shared it with the committee. YUM! The Bears stopped by to chat and finish the torte. Both Ellen Asher and David Mattingly had left earlier on Sunday, and since David's departure was unexpected (he needed to rush home to finish some work), we used his suite as a secondary den on Sunday night. When Ben and I went to get the key to David's room, we discovered that the Tara crew had already removed chairs from the room where Punday was to take place later in the evening. I got some committee people to help reset the room, so that the Tara workers were soon able to return to watching the Super Bowl.

Jim, Leslie, and I helped with the con suite moveout Sunday night. Leslie started getting cranky so Jim put her to bed, but I stuck around until most of it was done. I wandered parties for a bit,



spending over an hour playing poker with Seth Breidbart, Linda Bushyager, Joel Rosenberg, Harry Leonard and Paula Lieberman. It was the first time in years I'd played poker at a con! I was down \$8, but won the last pot so I only lost about \$2.50.

The secondary Den was crowded with committee who sat and reviewed the con questionnaires. I did that for a bit, then went next door where Mark Olson (N3 Chair), Leslie Turek (N2 Chair) and Tony Lewis (N1 Chair) were talking -- no, this does not mean I intend to chair N4! Much to my surprise, I wound up staying up until almost 3:30 before going to bed, my latest night of the weekend.

MONDAY, FEBRUARY 1, 1988

I spent Monday morning cleaning the secondary Den and helping get organized for moveout. I dropped Jim and Leslie off at home, then went to the clubhouse. I got there just before the Logistics truck did. Rich Ferree and I went off to get pizza, and Chip Hitchcock went to get ice cream. The workers pigged out. After some of the soda and juice was sold, I took all the leftover Den supplies and some of the leftover chips to the Pine Street Inn, a big homeless shelter. The next person who tells you about Massachusetts economic "miracle" hasn't been to that part of South Boston recently.

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 2, 1988

Before the con, I planned to take Tuesday off. I'm usually incredibly drained after BOSKONEs, and frequently get sick after the con as well. However, I felt great on Tuesday, and only took the day off because I'd promised the Bears that I'd drive them back to Boston. So, early Tuesday I drove out to Jane Yolen's house (she lives near Springfield and the Bears had spent Monday night there). I drove the Bears back to Northborough, we all had lunch, and Jim gave them a house tour, with particular emphasis on the library. We dropped Jim off at work, and got to the airport with about a half hour to spare. It was a really yucky day to be driving so much. It was rainy and/or foggy the whole time I was driving. The unexpected news that Heather O'Rorke had died in surgery that day gave my trip back to Northborough an eerie feeling. I went home, collapsed briefly on the couch, picked up Leslie and Jim, and we celebrated my 31st birthday that night by going out to Uncle Chueng's, my favorite Chinese restaurant.

All in all, co-chairing a con was an educational experience. I didn't like the pre-con hassles. But at the con, things went much, much better than I could have hoped. We had about 1250 warm, happy bodies, no security hassles, and Springfield hotels pleased enough with us to sign contracts for '89 and '90 shortly after the con. The folks on the committee ran the con very well! I am very proud of the work everyone did. IMHO, we did have run the best mid-sized convention this year! |\*|



## The Most Forgettable Character I Have Ever Known

by Terry Jeeves

The most forgettable character I have ever known was definitely my father. As I recall his fabulous life, I never cease to wonder at the insuperable odds which he overcame.

Born in a derelict bus depot on the East Side of the tracks in downslum Chicago, drama very soon entered his sheltered life when as an unwanted child he was dumped in three steps of the YMCA and, equally unwanted by them, he was promptly returned to his parents. During the vicious winter of '97, his father died of lead poisoning during a gang battle, leaving my three-year-old father to support his widowed mother and eleven younger sisters.

That he managed to do so is an incredible saga of success against daunting odds. Only the day after the funeral, he first peeled ten pounds of onions to make a meager soup for the family, then toddled to the curbside, placed his upturned cap beside him, and cried his eyes out. In less than two hours, the cap was full to the brim with water. Father emptied it out and found money (and a few less pleasant items) dropped in by passers-by. Wiping these dry, my father was elated to discover enough cash to treat all the family to a meal. He invested the remainder in 10¢ plugs of tobacco. These he cut carefully in half, rewrapped in paper from a public toilet, and sold to dock workers at 6¢ apiece thus making a 2¢ profit on each deal.

Since horses and their byproducts were plentiful, he soon conceived the idea of mixing 10% of this freely available and wholly natural additive into his own product. Very quickly, the young entrepreneur, now four years old, had cornered the Chicago market for the sale of a plug tobacco which everyone agreed had an aroma all its own. His sisters were pressed into service first, to help sell his wares -- and then within a few years they were able to sell their own.

Father branched out by buying boxes of matches, subtracting a tithe from each box, and using these to fill empty boxes reclaimed from trash cans. His riches grew until at the age of seven he conceived the idea which was to form the basis of his financial empire. By collecting cigarette ends, splitting them open, mixing in some of his special additive and re-rolling the results into new cigarettes, he was able to market his own cheap and fast-selling brand -- aptly named "Curbstone."

Next, he added a re-processed chewing gum to his line and this was followed by a new drink produced by collecting bottle dregs from the city's garbage dumps. His mother was given new clothes, beauty treatments, cosmetics and her own apartment. Her eight year old offspring refused to allow her to work in any of his enterprises, only asking that she be nice to the strange men he would sometimes bring 'round at nights, and who were always thoughtful enough to leave \$100 behind when they left a few hours later. Time passed, and a larger house allowed his sisters to have rooms of their own for entertaining. My father continued to prosper.

When barely fifteen, my father met a priest whose advice was to change father's whole life when he took as his family motto the words, "Do unto others as they would do unto you." Naturally, he added the words, "before they have the chance to do it to you first."

A wave of poor-box heists erupted throughout the city and baffled the police. Blind men complained of discrepancies in their collection cups. Charity

wishing wells in the public parks showed a marked fall in takings. Father was expanding.

Despite all this he lived a simple life. Provided he had the best of everything, he was happy. His favorite pastime was to go down and toss coppers into the river. He gave up this amusement when ten of them got together and tossed him in. He loved wine (and beer and spirits) and after an evening's sampling of such delights, would submit his prowess as a great songster -- this despite his total inability to carry a tune in a bucket.

But whatever else he was, he was never a womanizer. In all his life, probably because of a plethora of sisters around him, he never showed any interest in women. He remained totally celibate to the day of his death -- which is why I suppose I never got to be born.

Something I have always regretted.

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Something I have always regretted. [\*]

## SACRIFICE

by Thomas A. Easton

That tree, uplifting sword,  
Threatening the maiden  
Who adorns the table  
That serves as our altar,  
Is powerless to act.

I have within my tent,  
Waiting, a sharp scalpel,  
That will calm her temper  
And feed our aging king,  
Wracked mournfully by life,  
The food that he must have,  
The heartfelt map of time.

The sword of tyranny  
Drips bloody signs of crime,  
A crime that summons now  
A hero, mighty thewed,  
To save the maiden's hand.

# SEARCHING FOR THE Classics of SF

by James Wallace Harris

What are the great books of science fiction? What makes a book a classic? Do the critics know which books are best or do the science fiction fans know better? And what qualities do classics possess? All these questions began haunting me when a friend asked me what were the classics of science fiction. He knew I had read hundreds, if not thousands of SF books, and figured I would gladly state my opinion. However, I decided that I wanted something more concrete, more quantitative, more authoritative to give him. So I went searching for the classics of SF.

First, I looked up a number of "recommended" or "best of" lists to see what other people had to say. I eventually collected nine lists. From these nine, I "assembled" a new list by selecting any book that had been on at least three of the nine lists. If I had used two out of nine, it would have produced a list of over a hundred titles, too many I think. Using four out of nine would have shortened it to 41, cutting out a lot of favorite titles. This final list I call "The Reader-Critic List of SF Classics." By combining the critical opinions and popular tastes represented in these nine lists, I expected the resulting selective titles to be books that would stand out as the classics of SF. However, anyone reading this article can tighten the criteria by looking at the list codes and making their own rules, such as five out of nine, which would give 25 titles.

Four of these lists come from "critics." I use this term lightly, and only to imply that it means views from individuals, as opposed to reader polls. These lists come from four books: Anatomy of Wonder, edited by Neil Barron, a very comprehensive reference book; The Road to Science Fiction edited by James Gunn, a four volume anthology with commentary; Age of Wonder by David G. Hartwell, an overview of science fiction and fandom; and Science Fiction: The 100 Best Novels by David Pringle, essays about one man's favorite one hundred SF books. Anyone interested in SF would find these books worthwhile. Anatomy of Wonder is an excellent reference book, and worth the \$40 it costs.

I used the second and third editions of Barron, and combined the "recommended to purchase" titles for the modern period. Hartwell also had two lists

which I combined, one long general "best of" list, and another similar list for "... literary talents, highly developed personal styles, character, thematic complexity ... in every work."

For reader polls I used Maxim Jakubowski and Malcolm Edward's The SF Book of Lists, which had reader polls from Astounding in 1952 and 1956, Analog in 1966 and Locus in 1975. I also found a newer Locus poll in the August, 1987 issue. This represents 35 years of fan opinion.

The resulting "Reader-Critic List" contains sixty-nine titles, mostly novels, a few collections and one anthology. Can these books be called the real classics of SF? The "Reader-Critic List" represents SF books loved by both critics and fans, but does that mean they are classics? And what exactly is a "classic?" In collecting, comparing and analyzing these lists, I have come to ask: why do certain books become great? My focus here is on SF, but the same general questions and answers could apply to all types of literature. This search brought up many questions, and made me think about why and how I select books. Why read any old book, when you can read a great one?

Can one person know enough about an area of literature to be able to select it's best books? Is a survey of readers, no matter how large, an appropriate way to assemble a list of the best books? Are there any objective ways to determine if a book is a classic? For example, if a book is still read and kept in print one hundred years after it was first published, does that make it a classic? SF is a rather young genre. Many have said it started in the twenties with the publication of Amazing Stories. It can be argued that SF isn't old enough to have "classics" in the way an English Professor would use the word. One hundred years from now, SF may turn out to be just a footnote in literary history.

## Popularity and Classics

On computer bulletin boards, which I call regularly, there are lots of message sections dealing with SF, and when people, especially young people, list their favorite SF books, most of the time, they list books I haven't heard of, and are not on

the "Reader-Critic List" or even the lists from which it was assembled. Their favorites are recently published books -- the ninth book in a Piers Anthony series. And to them, their list of books may be the absolute best books they have ever read. Of course, it might be the only ones too.

Which brings up the question: should new SF readers be encouraged to read the classics of SF? Many people who first discover SF, especially while young, find it to be a neural rush. SF fans refer to SF as having "a sense of wonder." A case could be made that it doesn't matter what specific book a neophyte chooses to read, because it's the genre itself that has the impact, and individual classics are irrelevant. However, I think that certain SF books have more "sense of wonder" than others. Regarding the "Reader-Critic List," I would say these books are not necessary the absolute best books in

the genre, but they are a group that has statistically wonderized more people than any other sixty-nine SF books.

There are many books and authors not on this list, that I rate higher. And before someone writes or says, "but what about this book, you idiot, it's better than all the ones on your list combined!" -- please remember I didn't select these titles, but assembled them. If I was making my own list, it would have been different. Sure, I can say a certain hundred novels are great, because of their impact on me, but I personally can't pretend to judge their value for other people.

Of the 69 books on the "Reader-Critic List" it can be seen that a good degree of consistency exists between critics, fans and prizes. The "Reader-Critic List" can be broken down into the following information:

List Origin	Total of Origin List	Total on Reader-Critic	Hit Rate	Percent on Reader-Critic
Barron	207	59	28.5%	86%
Hartwell	124	54	43.5%	78%
Pringle	100	39	39%	57%
Gunn	68	35	51.5%	51%
<u>Locus</u> 1987	45	33	73%	48%
Hugo and Nebula		25		36%
<u>Locus</u> 1975	26	23	88%	33%
<u>Analog</u> 1966	27	21	78%	30%
<u>Astounding</u> 1956	26	19	73%	26%
<u>Astounding</u> 1952	28	12	43%	17%

The critics made more recommendations and had a greater percentage of their choices on the "Reader-Critic List." Barron was the most successful, in that 59 out of the 69 books on the Reader-Critic list were books he recommended. Of course he suggested 207 books. Fan polls were smaller in size, and had fewer books on the "Reader-Critic List," but had a higher hit rate. The Analog readers of 1966 did the best by having 23 of their favorite 26 books ending up on the Reader-Critic list. I conclude that both, individual experience and popularity polls, result in fair methods for selecting favorite books.

All four critics agreed on these 16 books:

The Long Afternoon of Earth, Brian Aldiss  
Tau Zero, Poul Anderson  
The Foundation Trilogy, Isaac Asimov  
The Crystal World, J.G. Ballard  
The Demolished Man, Alfred Bester  
A Case of Conscience, James Blish  
The Martian Chronicles, Ray Bradbury  
Stand on Zanzibar, John Brunner  
Childhood's End, Arthur C. Clarke

The Man in the High Castle, Philip K. Dick  
Dune, Frank Herbert  
Flowers for Algernon, Daniel Keyes  
The Left Hand of Darkness, Ursula K. LeGuin  
A Canticle for Leibowitz, Walter Miller  
The Space Merchants, Frederik Pohl and C.M. Kornbluth  
More than Human, Theodore Sturgeon

In essence, must these books be the best of the best? Surprisingly, five of these books were never on any of the reader polls. Three of the four critics agreed on a total of 32 books, which indicates there was a good deal of agreement among the critics. It was harder to judge the agreement among reader polls, because many books were published after the different polls were taken. However, 33 books, almost half of the Reader-Critic List, was on the Locus, 1987 poll, implying that the fans were still in love these books. Interestingly, 24 of these 69 books were never on any of the reader polls. These books impressed the critics, but evidently, not the fans. But to counteract this problem, it should be pointed out that the critics got to select more books, which in the future may show

up on the fan polls. Neuromancer, a very influential work, did not make the list, because it had only been selected by two critics.

Recent scholarly interest aside, I believe that SF is a branch of literature which has mass appeal, but for the most part, the general SF reader is someone who consumes SF books rather than studies them. This is why publishers market so many of them, and depend on "brand names" and good cover art. Over time, most hardcore SF readers will develop an overview of the field and come to recognize some SF books as "classics."

#### Can Books Be Judged?

There are a lot of ways to select a good book, and even more ways to judge a book. Judging books is open to a lot of disagreement. For example, many books first read by fans in their adolescent years, like the kids on the bulletin boards, have an impact, but if reread ten years later, might not make the same impression. This suggests that there should be two types of great books: youth classics and adult classics. (This idea is worth a separate essay itself.) When we are older, it may turn out, we will like a different type of book all together, a type we can't foresee now. Then again, we might regress as we get older, and start rereading our youth classics. So one factor in judging a book is the age of the reader, thus making judgment relative.

Another factor in judging books, is how well read is the reader. Someone who has read thousands of books will draw up a different list of classics than a person who has read ten SF books. I feel that because of the nature of the genre, most people's first ten SF books will all be mind blowers, and fondly remembered. This problem is solved by having large number of people vote in a fan poll.

Because there are no absolutes in judging a book, I feel my approach has produced a reasonably good list of titles. Sure, people will argue over these titles because of varying tastes, but on the whole, I think most people will find some merit in each of these books.

#### The Age of the Book

Most books "die" with the passing of time. How many books published before the 20th century have survived until the present compared to total published? I have no idea. Barron reviews 108 SF books from last century and early this one, but try and find them. Some people say classics are those books that survive the test of time. Many books that were on the Astounding polls from the fifties never made it to the Reader-Critic List. It takes a while for a book to get famous. Then it takes while for it to be forgotten. If we wait ten years and add another

Locus poll and add another critical list, and then make the criteria to be on four lists, I would guess even more of the older "classics" might drop off. The number of books written or published by decades show this trend:

1890's - 2  
1930's - 2  
1940's - 8  
1950's - 19  
1960's - 22  
1970's - 13  
1980's - 3

Just because a book is influential doesn't mean it will be remembered. It might affect literary evolution, and yet become extinct itself. Look at the lists of Nobel and Pulitzer book awards. Most books on those lists are long forgotten and out of print.

#### Are Classics Written Only By Prolific Authors?

Another factor in understanding how a book becomes a classic is how prolific is the author. Heinlein has the most books on this list, but because he has so many good books, none of them stand out using my system. Even more were on the nine combined lists. Are his most popular books his best? Most of my favorite Heinlein books didn't make it to the Reader-Critic list. It may be like the Australian ballot, the ones selected are the ones with the most second and third vote positions added in. In the 1987 Locus poll, Heinlein had votes for 30 books, out of a possible 50+ published books. (An interesting article could be written about what are Heinlein least popular books.)

Many of the books on Reader-Critic list are by writers who have written a great number of books, and have had long careers as writers. When we think of classics of mainstream literature, we often think of Dickens, Twain, Poe, Hugo, Tolstoy and writers like them. Does being a prolific author imply a factor in whether some of their books will be remembered? In other words: do writers with dynamic personal reputations, and who write a flood of books, have statistically a better chance of being remembered?

#### Classics Are Those Books We Remember

Ultimately, I think a classic is a book that is remembered. Dicken's A Christmas Carol has a plot that is memorable, often imitated, and might even become a future myth. Mark Twain stories have become part of the American mind. Not only are Dicken's and Twain's plots remembered, but their characters are remembered by name. Sometimes I think it's the memory of the characters that make a book

a real classic. Sherlock Holmes, Tarzan and Mr. Spock are very widely known characters, known even to people who don't know their origins. It also helps to name a book after the lead character, for example, David Copperfield or Huckleberry Finn. Try and make a list of names of characters from all those famous SF novels you remember. It's hard. SF is a literature of ideas. SF readers remember plots better than characters. How often have you heard a fan say, "I read this far out story...", and then went on to tell you the plot?

So many of these SF classics are books with great ideas. Looking down the list, I personally find it difficult to remember the character's names, but I can always remember the stories.

#### Classics Represent Shared Culture

Classics are those books a person should be familiar with, and be capable of discussing and relating to in a general conversation. For example, anyone in the SF field should be familiar with The Foundation Trilogy, The Demolished Man, The Martian Chronicles, Childhood's End and More than Human not just because all of these books were on at least eight of the nine lists, but because they are part of the foundation of the SF world. These are the giants of the field, and if you are into SF you should be familiar with them. Because without that knowledge you don't have any sense of the history and heritage of SF. Culture represents shared heritage. And even in a small subculture like SF, a member of the community needs to know some history and have knowledge of the cultural background.

#### Classics Are Reprinted Often and Stay in Print

Most of the books on the Reader-Critic list are easy to acquire. Most of them will be regularly reprinted and offered for sale on the new book-racks. With a little effort all could be bought rather quickly in used bookstores. A few on this list are reprinted only every few years, which could be an indication they will be eventually forgotten. How many people have read Bring the Jubilee or Pavane? These two deserve a better life, but the mass market appeal may not support their future existence.

#### Classics Are Taught in School

Most people think of classics as the books they must read in school. In recent years, some SF books

have snuck into the schools, especially in colleges and universities. I discovered Heinlein back in the sixties because my eighth grade teacher made us read five books during each six-week grading term. She had an approved list, and Heinlein was on it. If in the future, a SF book is regularly studied in the schools, then many people will consider that a "real" endorsement that the book has become a classic.

#### Time Will Eventually Tell

In a hundred years will any of these books still be read? Time can only answer that question. There is no one hundred year old book on this list. Jules Verne didn't make it. Wells did, but will his books reach their hundredth birthday? Probably so.

SF is primarily a literature of ideas, but are the ideas in these books ones which will still be fresh and interesting to the people of the future? How many science fictional ideas have died in the light of scientific reality, or even made dull and common by movies and TV? Some books have premises that are obviously outdated, but still people read and enjoy them. Why? I believe a good story is the answer.

For those people who are not yet born, to pick up one of these books next century, will require that he or she be able to identify and feel for the characters. Because ultimately, classics are those books that send messages across time, they are the real time machines.

#### Conclusion

I hope this list will be helpful in finding those classic SF novels that deserve your attention. I plan to read the couple books I haven't yet read, and reread most of the others on this list and evaluate them carefully.

And finally, let me say, that although I have used a systematic method in selecting the titles for the Reader-Critic list, it is still arbitrary. I could have chosen other polls and critics. I could have manipulated the lists I did choose differently. In fact, anyone going over my methods will discover I had to make little decisions along the way to make things fit. So when I give this list to my friend, I won't tell him these are the absolute best books in SF, but I will tell him a lot of people agree that these are the best of the best.

Authors	Titles	Date	List Codes
Aldiss, Brian	<u>The Long Afternoon of Earth*</u>	1962	B-G-H-P
Anderson, Poul	<u>Tau Zero</u>	1970	B-G-H-P

Asimov, Isaac	<u>I, Robot</u>	1950	B-A52-A56-A66
	<u>The Foundation Trilogy*</u>	1951	B-G-H-P-A52-A56-A66-L75-L87
Ballard, J. G.	<u>The Crystal World</u>	1966	B-G-H-P
Benford, Gregory	<u>Timescape*</u>	1980	B-H-P-L87
Bester, Alfred	<u>The Demolished Man*</u>	1953	B-G-H-P-A56-A66-L75-L87
	<u>The Stars My Destination</u>	1957	B-H-P-A66-L75-L87
Bishop, Michael	<u>No Enemy But Time*</u>	1982	B-H-P
Blish, James	<u>A Case of Conscience*</u>	1958	B-G-H-P
Brackett, Leigh	<u>The Long Tomorrow</u>	1955	B-H-P
Bradbury, Ray	<u>Fahrenheit 451</u>	1953	B-H-P-A56-L87
	<u>The Illustrated Man</u>	1951	B-A52-A56
	<u>The Martian Chronicles</u>	1950	B-G-H-P-A52-A56-A66-L75-A87
Brunner, John	<u>Stand on Zanzibar*</u>	1968	B-G-H-P-L75-L87
Budrys, Algis	<u>Rogue Moon</u>	1960	B-H-P
Burgess, Anthony	<u>A Clockwork Orange</u>	1962	B-H-P
Campbell, John W.	<u>Who Goes There?</u>	1948	H-A52-A56
Clarke, Arthur C.	<u>Childhood's End</u>	1953	B-G-H-P-A56-A66-L75-L87
	<u>Rendezvous with Rama*</u>	1973	B-L75-L87
	<u>The City and the Stars</u>	1956	H-P-A56-A66-L75-L87
Clement, Hal	<u>Mission of Gravity</u>	1954	B-G-P-A56-A66-L75-L87
De Camp, L. Sprague	<u>Lest Darkness Falls</u>	1941	B-G-H-A52-A56
Delany, Samuel R.	<u>Dhalgren</u>	1975	B-H-L87
	<u>Nova</u>	1968	B-H-P
Dick, Philip K.	<u>The Man in the High Castle*</u>	1962	B-G-H-P-L75-L87
	<u>Ubik</u>	1969	B-H-L87
Disch, Thomas	<u>334</u>	1972	B-H-P
	<u>Camp Concentration</u>	1968	B-H-P
Farmer, Philip Jose	<u>To Your Scattered Bodies Go*</u>	1971	B-G-H-L75-L87
Haldeman, Joe	<u>The Forever War*</u>	1975	B-G-H-L87
Healy & McComas ed.	<u>Adventures in Time and Space</u>	1946	G-A52-A56-A66
Heinlein, Robert A.	<u>Starship Troopers*</u>	1959	B-A66-L75-L87
	<u>Stranger in a Strange Land*</u>	1961	B-H-A66-L75-L87
	<u>The Man Who Sold the Moon</u>	1950	A52-A56-A66
	<u>The Moon is a Harsh Mistress*</u>	1966	B-L75-L87
	<u>The Past Through Tomorrow</u>	1967	B-G-H
Herbert, Frank	<u>Dune*</u>	1965	B-G-H-P-A66-L75-L87
Huxley, Aldous	<u>Brave New World</u>	1932	B-G-A52-A56
Keyes, Daniel	<u>Flowers for Algernon*</u>	1966	B-G-H-P
Kornbluth, C. M.	<u>The Best of C. M. Kornbluth</u>	1976	B-G-H
Le Guin, Ursula K.	<u>The Dispossessed*</u>	1974	B-H-P-L75-L87
	<u>The Left Hand of Darkness*</u>	1969	B-G-H-P-L75-L87
Lewis, C. S.	<u>Out of the Silent Planet</u>	1938	B-G-H
Miller, Walter M.	<u>A Canticle for Leibowitz*</u>	1960	B-G-H-P-A66-L75-L87
Moorcock, Michael	<u>The Final Programme</u>	1968	B-H-P
Moore, Ward	<u>Bring the Jubilee</u>	1953	G-H-P
Niven, Larry	<u>Ringworld*</u>	1970	B-G-L75-L87
Orwell, George	<u>1984</u>	1948	B-G-P-A52-A56-L87
Panshin, Alexei	<u>Rite of Passage*</u>	1968	B-G-H
Pohl & Kornbluth	<u>The Space Merchants</u>	1953	B-G-H-P-A56-A66-L75
Pohl, Frederik	<u>Gateway*</u>	1977	B-H-L87
Roberts, Keith	<u>Pavane</u>	1968	B-H-P
Russ, Joanna	<u>The Female Man</u>	1975	B-H-P
Silverberg, Robert	<u>Dying Inside</u>	1972	B-G-H-L75-L87
Simak, Clifford	<u>City</u>	1952	B-G-H-A56-A66-L87
	<u>Way Station</u>	1963	B-H-P-A66-L87
Stewart, George R.	<u>Earth Abides</u>	1949	B-G-P-L87
Sturgeon, Theodore	<u>More Than Human</u>	1953	B-G-H-P-A56-A66-L75-L87
Van Vogt, A. E.	<u>Slan</u>	1946	B-H-A52-A56-A66
	<u>The World of Null A</u>	1948	G-H-A52-A56-A66

Vonnegut, Kurt	<u>The Sirens of Titan</u>	1959	G-H-P
Wells, H. G.	<u>Seven Famous Novels</u>		A52-A56-A66
	<u>The War of the Worlds</u>	1898	G-L75-L87
Williamson, Jack	<u>The Humanoids</u>	1949	G-H-A52-A56
Wolfe, Gene	<u>The Book of the New Sun*</u>	1980	B-H-P
	<u>The Fifth Head of Cerberus</u>	1972	B-H-P
Zelazny, Roger	<u>Lord of Light*</u>	1967	B-G-L87
	<u>The Dream Master*</u>	1966	B-H-P

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# CONREPORTS and RAMBLINGS

by Lan

## BURN-OUT

I had mentally been on vacation since Spring Break started back in March. It was difficult for me to sit down and do much in the way of school work. However, I was obligated to do so, and I managed to make productive use of the month of May. The "Senior Skip Day" (my feelings were described in detail in LL #27) showed me that I was concerned about by students, in spite of the burnout I felt.

Aside from my desired activities of getting the garden ready for planting and collating LL for the big mailing at the end of the month, I also readied classes and gave quizzes, quests and tests as before. Because of the new text used in Geometry this year, I did not have enough time at the end of the year to give my students a good introduction to trigonometry. I spent about a week and a half on the topic, using the first five sections of the booklet I had put together last year. In addition, I wrote and put together the Algebra IIB Exam, review sheets for both Algebra and Geometry classes, and prepared the last page I affixed to my Geometry final (the rest of the exam was the same for all other geometry classes--each teacher added his/her own last page).

The weekend after CONTRAPTION, Maia had some work to do in Lansing, and she stayed overnight there. I worked in the garden. On Sunday we went over to my parents' house to celebrate Mother's Day, then to Ann Arbor for a concert at The Ark. Marty Burke and Jimmy Perkins were performing. I was not familiar with Jimmy Perkins, but he is a superb guitar-picker, and the two of them complemented each others' styles.

Wednesday evening Maia and I attended our first meeting of the Galactic Cartographers' Society. This is a new SF club organized at the nearby Farmington Hills Public Library by Marshall Muller and his fiancée Jean Jambas. There was a short talk by a man who did claymation and stop-action animation. It was very interesting. The young boy who intro-

duced him was Dylan Perkins, and I found out afterwards that Dylan's father is the same Jimmy Perkins we had heard the previous Sunday. It's a small world.

The following weekend, Maia went to Cedar Point Amusement Park in Sandusky Ohio with a group of friends; I had emergency driving that weekend so I stayed home and worked in the garden and on the aforementioned review sheets and tests.

The fourth weekend in May was taken up again by the garden, but we also went up to East Lansing for the Arts and Crafts fair. Maia and I had a wonderful time wandering around overpriced "art" pieces with Gwen Zak, Michael Kube-McDowell and Mary Kay Jackson. We stopped in "The Curious Bookstore" where I picked up some books I had been looking for. I was also accosted by a couple of former students; one was an atypical Kingswood student from whom Maia rescued me--she was very good at talking in non-sequiturs. The other was one whom I remembered fondly; Katie was very smart and a wonderful student. I told her that she should stop by to see her former advisor who still taught at the school.

In the afternoon we went to see Willow. Although panned by almost all the critics, I thought it was a good movie. We had fun seeing it; it didn't have a deep message, but it had lots of laughs. I'd like to see it again.

That last week to Memorial Weekend was a quick one. I had final quizzes in all my classes, and handed out the review sheets. Everything was finished --quizzes graded and all-- by the time Friday rolled around. The car was back from the repair shop, and ready for travel.

## MIKECON

Four days and three nights in Toronto. It was a very relaxing weekend, one that I really needed. I did drink a little too much Friday and Saturday evenings, but I had a good time. There were people from faraway places as Louisville Kentucky (Joel

Zakem), Virginia (Bruce Schneier), Chicago (Sue and Ed Bennett), Minneapolis (Mike Harper, who is in the process of moving back to Toronto), Michigan (ourselves and Vicky Eaves), Ohio (Karol Brown and her two children, and Al and Lynn Currey), and the wandering couple Brad Westervelt and Wendy Council. Many local friends also showed up to celebrate Mike Glicksohn's and Mike Harper's birthdays: Juane Michaud, Tanya Huff, Lorna Toomey & Mike Skeet, Peter Roberts & Heather Ashby, and many others. Doris Bercarich was acting hostess for the party; she and Mike Glicksohn are amicably parting ways. I wish they could have worked out their differences.

Saturday Maia and I got up earlier than most others, headed for Bakka (Toronto's SF Bookstore), and then walked to the CN Tower to take the "Tour of the Universe." We had a nice flight around Jupiter and a near miss with Almathea before being brought back to Toronto Spaceport. It was fun.

Sunday was the big picnic, and I helped Mike and Mike grill the hamburgers and chicken. At one point Al Currey brought out his guitar and serenaded us with some Irish folk songs.

On Monday morning Maia and I left for home. We got back fairly early, but very tired. I did some more work in the garden (it's still not ready for all the planting I want to do), and in the evening I continued to stuff envelopes with the Lantern so that I could mail it out on Tuesday. By 10 PM we were both exhausted, so we made it an early night.

#### FROM REVIEW "WEEK" TO GRADUATION

"Review Week" was the three days after Memorial Day. On that Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday I reviewed the second semester material with my students. A lot of them did take time to prepare questions, work out some problems and did try to study the things on which they had done poorly during the semester. Many, however, decided to take it easy and not worry about studying, figuring that they could cram the night before. Most of those students were caught short when I made it known that I would NOT be around the weekend, and specifically the day, before the math exam. If they wasted their review days, it would be up to them to work things out for themselves.

There were two reasons why I would not have a special review session. First, in the past at most a half dozen people would show up for them, and most of those people were ones who really did not

need it. Second, The "Review Week" classes have turned out to be a waste of time for me--I knew the material; it was up to the students to ask questions on topics on which THEY needed help. "Look over your old tests, quests and quizzes," I told them. "These review sheets I am handing out do not cover everything that will be on the exam!" There were a few students who listened to me and did ask questions from their old tests. Most other students just sat and maybe took some notes.

I was truly disconcerted when a student, on the last day of review, asked, "You keep throwing around these terms like 'complex number system'. Are we supposed to know what you're talking about?" We started complex numbers at the beginning of the second semester, and I had been using the term since then. I just shook my head; some students laughed. I wished him and everyone else luck on the exam.

The first of the exams was on Friday afternoon. I went in at my usual time and began cleaning my classroom. I also went to Vic Tanny to swim. It had been several months since I last went, and I could tell quickly that I was out of shape.

On Saturday we had two parties to go to. In the afternoon Larry Dyer had his 15th Annual Graduation Party. We had been invited to it for several years, but something else always came up to interfere with our attendance at this annual bash. This year we decided to make a special effort to attend. We knew quite a few people we knew who were there: Bob Lugowski and his friend Elizabeth, Doug Housman and Anna O'Connell, Ben James, folk singer Marty Burke and his wife Lisa, and Chris and Pat Beck. I talked to a couple of Larry's relatives who were also at the party. They were readers of SF, though they had not attended any conventions. I urged them to go -- and told them that Larry was on the mailing list for the local ones.

About 5 PM or so the roast pig was taken off the spit and we chowed down to a delicious meal of pork and several different kinds of salads. We all ate beyond our normal capacity, and relaxed the rest of the afternoon and evening. About 7:30 Maia and I left and headed for Ann Arbor to our second party at Mike and Myra's house.

There were lots of people we knew at this one, and a few we didn't know. There is a Bulletin Board called M-Net which Maia has signed on, and most of the people at this party were regulars on that BBS. Again, we had been invited to a few of Mike and Myra's parties before but have had trouble making them, either through conflicting commitments or mere laziness/tiredness. This one was also fun. In addition to the local people (Steve and Ruth Simmons and kids, Chris Clayton and Becky Price, Margaret Bumbry, Denise Anderson, Mark Bernstein, Cliff Flynt, Marcus, Mary Ellen Wessels and Iain Sedge-



man, Greg Cronau and Mike McClary), there were some out-of-town friends like Mike Kube-McDowell, Gwen Zak and Mary Kay Jackson, and two surprise guests: Barb Riedall and Carol Poore, filkers from Milwaukee, Wisconsin. They were visiting Clif Flynt. One very nice feature was the hot tub.

On Sunday we went to Dan and Kay Jarrell's party. Some people we knew, some we didn't, but it was an interesting mix. The conversations ranged from work to play, from personal lives and happenings to lectures on weather, plate tectonics and electrical engineering. Kay barbequed chicken and vegetable shishkabobs and once again we ate much more than necessary. Good food and good conversaton.

Monday evening Maia and I went out for a dinner to celebrate the end of the school year, though I still had more than a week to go. From there we went to the Waldo meeting and saw a lot of the same people who were at the parties on the weekend. I talked to one of the "regulars" with whom I had not spoken before. I had seen Dale at a number of the bar meetings but knew little else about him than his name. He is a computer engineer working on contract for Cadillac. Dale is originally from Indiana and knows many of the Indiana fans. His con attendance had been limited to INCONJUNCTION until he moved up here to work. He has attended CONCLAVE, CONFUSION and CONTRAPTION.

Tuesday was exam day for Math. I gave exams during both the morning and afternoon sessions, and I was also on Dorm duty that evening. I managed to get all the exams scored and graded by the end of duty that night. The seniors all passed for the year. The most of the ones who had stopped working, who participated in the skip-day, failed the exam. I was prepared to fail any of them for the year. I hoped that this would not happen next year.

When I got home from duty, I took a shower and then relaxed by watching a couple of Avengers episodes on the VCR. Wednesday I was pretty much free to pursue gardening, finish cleaning up my class-

room, do some swimming and attend the Galactic Cartographers Society meeting in the evening.

Thursday, there was a meeting of the faculty to approve graduation for all seniors. Everyone passed everything in the final quarter and semester, so there was little discussion and those in attendance universally agreed to confer diplomas on all the seniors.

We had graduation rehearsal in the afternoon. It went pretty smoothly, and were dismissed from Christ Church in about an hour. That evening was the Awards Ceremony and I saw a number of students get well-deserved recognition for their efforts throughout the year.

Friday was graduation. I had considered skipping so we could leave for AD ASTRA earlier but I decided that there were some students who I really did want to see graduate. Gwen Almond, of course, was one of them, and a few other students I had gotten to know quite well during their four year stay at Cranbrook Kingswood.

Another reason, though, why we couldn't leave earlier was that we had arranged to travel with Mark Bernstein, and he couldn't get off work until 4:30. We were also using his car, since our Alliance was having problems with the air conditioner (and a few other things -- by the end of June we spent about \$1200 on car repairs between the Alliance and the Datsun) and we didn't want to travel without A/C in 80-90 degree heat.

#### AD ASTRA

The drive to the convention was pleasant. We listened to tapes, talked, dozed (except Mark who was driving), and arrived in fairly good condition. We got our room, took our luggage to the 11th floor and settled down for a good con. Since we took food with us, we didn't HAVE to travel out of the hotel to eat, though we did go out for a good Chinese meal on Saturday evening.





As soon as we had entered the hotel, however, we ran into people we knew. By the time we got back to register, there were more, and I started handing out copies of LL #26 to those I had not mailed it to because I knew they were going to be at this con. I looked at the autograph lines for Roberta McAvoy and Orson Scott Card -- the two Professional Guests of Honor, and decided to let Maia have them autograph our books when she interviewed them on Saturday. However, I did talk to Lois McMaster Bujold, Ben and Barbara Bova and Tanya Huff, who were all in the room with other authors for the big autographing party. Maia gushed over Charles de Lint. I conversed with Mary and Chris Meredith (Chris keeps promising to write something for the Lantern), Denise Anderson, David and Diana Stein, Ann Cecil, Charlie Terry and Kevin, and bunches of other people.

Before I left to take some books back to the room, I spent a few minutes talking to Betsy Mitchell. I told her that her copy of the latest LL was on the way to her, and that she was mentioned in my England trip report. She was also interested in my review of Cobra Bargain; I reiterated what I said in the review -- that Tim Zahn has a lot more going on in that universe that he should expand upon, and I hope he does. Betsy was enthusiastic about Tim's latest novel, Dead Man Switch; she thinks that it's his best so far. I'm looking forward to reading the whole thing (Tim read the first three chapters at WINDYCON).

By the time I got to the consuite they were out of all beverages. They still had hot dogs (chicken

weiners), but nothing to wash them down with (except water). They restocked about midnight or so, but this became a problem throughout the con: the consuite would run out of beverages every three or four hours. This is a far cry from the wonderful consuite that Peter Roberts, Heather Ashby, and Doris Bercarich ran last year.

The rest of the con was a hit-or-miss connection with people and conversations. The art show was also nice, and I spent a little money in the hucksters room. On Saturday evening Maia and I went out to dinner with Mark Bernstein, Steve Simmons, Marshall Muller and Jean Jambas. Marshall and Jean knew of a good Chinese restaurant near downtown Toronto and that's where we went. Parking was a bit of a problem, but we managed between the two cars. Since I rode with Marshall and Jean, I got to know them much better.

We left about 1 PM on Sunday; Mark had to get back to catch a plane out of Detroit Metro Airport that evening. All in all I had a good time.

#### SUMMER VACATION

There were three days of meetings after AD ASTRA and before vacation actually began. They went rather quickly, and in between I managed to get a little gardening done, some exercise, and a bit of work on LL #27. It was hot but not very humid, and we were wondering if it was going to rain. It did, for a few minutes on the afternoon before the end-of-the-school-year picnic, though the skies had cleared before the "cocktail hour" started.

Days began to pass rather quickly, since they were filled with things to do. Maia and I went to see the Chanille Sisters in Ann Arbor, a cousin's wedding, and a day with the family for "Father's Day". We missed MIDWESTCON, but went to the "June Birthday Party" for friends whose birthdays are in June, which Sandy Schreiber and Pam Spurlock had on what turned out to be the hottest day of the year (104 degrees). The days on either side of that Saturday had high temperatures in the 70s. A group of fans also got together to see Who Framed Roger Rabbit? We had a great time, and everyone wanted to see it again. Several fans would like to get it on videotape and watch the background for all the other extra little things that were put into the film that they didn't catch the first time.

Although there was no rain since the middle of May (except for those few minutes of sprinkles in June) in our area, my garden continued to thrive. I watered every other day, harvested peas and strawberries, and did a lot of weeding. I eventually pulled up radishes and garlic, cut broccoli, and dug potatoes. We had lots of tomatoes, too.

Because of the drought conditions, for our flower garden, we filled up a large bucket when we ran



water for our showers and used that water. We did not water our lawn, though some neighbors did. We figured that the grass would return when it started raining regularly again.

#### INCONJUNCTION VIII

As in the past, I had a good time at INCONJUNCTION. I was on programming; I interviewed Stanley Schmidt and Octavia Butler (the two professional GoHs) and Stan and I (with Maia who was brought up on stage) reviewed the Hugo nominees. If you looked at the ballot, you'd see that a lot of stories from IASFM appear there. Some of them were actually decent stories; and some were even SF. However, I feared that this is going to give Gardner Dozois a false impression that he's doing a good job. Considering that the circulation of IASFM had dropped, and that he has NOT published a new, first-time writer since taking over as editor, Dozois is not doing everything right. Anyway, Maia and I waxed eloquent about the faults of IASFM while Stan stayed judiciously silent. But we both agreed, as did several people in the audience, that Stan was the best editor on the ballot.

The premiere of Mike (Moonwolf) Longcor's tape was made at this convention. Inside of four hours Bill Roper sold out of of the 30 copies he picked up at the airport on Saturday morning (they were flown in special from California for the con). It does sound pretty good, in spite of Off Centaur's meddling with the backups.

We were happy to see Lynn Margosian again. She was a neo more than a year ago when I met her at her first convention--MILLENNICON in March of 1987 --and she went to INCON last year. We spent time talking and catching up on our various activities.

I met a new author, Marti Steussy, whose book I had not read at the point. I did have her autograph my copy, though, and was delightfully surprised at how well it was written, and her descriptions of an alien race/culture.

Filking was in great evidence, especially considering that Bill Sutton was the fan GoH. His wife Brenda Craven Sutton got more exposure here in the midwest. Many of the midwest filk fans don't know how popular and respected Brenda is on the West Coast, and they are beginning to find out how talented she is. The Filksings both Friday and Saturday nights were marvelous. And I helped make the decision for the 1989 fan GoH for CHAMBANACON -- chairman Mike Brim asked Naomi Pardue to accept the honor, which she did. That made a lot of us very happy. Renee Alper had written a couple of new songs, the funnier being "Wheelchair in High Gear", a parody of "Starship in High Gear" which is a parody of "Starship and Haiku". Renee is in a wheelchair because of severe arthritis. She plays piano and sings. We had a brief but interesting discussion on Sunday afternoon just before Maia and I left for home.

There were lots of parties, lots of munchies in the consuite, and there was a nice, well-stocked green room for the panel participants. Mick Hamblen did a good job on that. I'm looking forward to next year's con.

#### JULY

The month of July had weekends filled with a mixture of things. One weekend Mike Kube-McDowell came down with Gwen Zak and we visited the Cranbrook Science Institute, went swimming, had barbecued steak, danced in the drought-breaking rain, talked in the dark when the power went out, and watched "A Touch of Brimstone," the Avengers episode that was not shown when the series was originally aired in 1966.

The Sunday after that Maia and I went boating with David and Diana Stein. D & D borrowed Diana's parents' boat and we went cruising along the shores of Lake St. Clair. We swam and ate lunch while anchored off the Strawberry Islands, and returned about mid-afternoon. I foolishly did not cover my legs with sun screen, so they burned. My face, back and arms were "acclimated" to the sun from gardening, but I always wore long pants when I gardened. It took about a week and a half before I could walk without cringing--that is, walk like a normal person, and not like I was recovering from two broken legs.

The next weekend Maia went to Starwood. I stayed behind and worked on the Lantern, and the garden. I completely finished the review section, which was my goal, and did about half of what I wanted in the garden. On Sunday I went to my sister Janice's place to celebrate my niece Sarah's birthday.

Maia's Birthday and our Anniversary are close together. Maia asked for a malacite necklace made by Sylvus Tarn. I ordered it and it came on Monday -- two days after our anniversary and three days be-

fore her birthday. I had also picked up a gold bracelet which she got earlier.

Maia had asked me what I wanted for our wedding anniversary. The question came at a good time. For our engagement anniversary she gave me tapes of The Phantom of the Opera, the original London cast recording. I had listened to them several times while working on and/or collating the Lantern. And the day before she put the question to me I was in B. Dalton's and spotted George Perry's The Complete PHANTOM OF THE OPERA. I must have spent 20 minutes paging through the book before putting it back on the stand -- I couldn't afford to get it just then. Considering Maia's question, I didn't have to buy it for myself either. I feigned surprise when Maia gave it to me. Included, though, was another book: A copy of Gaston Leroux's original novel, The Phantom of the Opera, with original color plates. A nice bonus. (I reviewed the Perry book in LL #27.)

Then we went to Cedar Point. Since Maia had gone with a group in May and reported what a good time she had, we decided to go together. We got up early on her birthday, drove to the park (stopping for breakfast along the way), and had a wonderful time. I do want to go again, and next actually try the Corkscrew and the Demon Drop. If anyone goes, the mild rides are just as much fun -- try the Riverboat Excursion for an experience in bad puns.

#### AUGUST

This was almost a repeat of July--something going on almost every weekend. One weekend I helped my father level off the inside of the foundation of the retirement home my parents are building. The contractor would have charged extra to put the sand in and level it, so my dad ordered the sand for a lot less, and my brother Gary, brother-in-law Tim, and I helped him put the sand in and level it off. Before that, however, we had to remove some of the dirt that was inside already, so that there would be a large enough crawl space inside the foundation between the ground and flooring. My back was aching when we got done, and I was the one in shape. I felt sorry for the rest of the family who were not in as good a physical condition. And we kept having to tell my dad to stop and rest quite often --he'll be 69 next month, is overweight, and has knee problems. Now we wait for the next step in the process of getting the home built.

At some point I went to the Hall Party in Rochester New York. John and Joanne Hall put on a party every year for their friends, and I decided to go. Maia stayed home, and I made the six hour trip to Rochester. I had a good time; good conversation with Rene Gobein, Eleanor Stephenson, Heather Brunton, Jo Anselm, our host and hostess John and Joann, and many others. Someone had given John a copy of Casablanca, and most of the party stopped on

Saturday night to watch it. The movie then sparked a long discussion of history and education.

During the second week of August I tried to finish the Lantern. I finished the final paste-ups on Saturday afternoon, and ran off some copies to take with me to a party in Lansing (about a 90 minute drive from home). Mary Kay Jackson, Mike Kube-McDowell and Gwen Zak had a party for west coast filker Jordin Kare (who also was part owner of Off Centaur Publications). A group of fans got together and filked, talked, ate and generally had a good time. Mark Bernstein sang (a capella -- one of the few filkers who is good at it) "Always Set the Cat on Fire", Iggy's parody of Frank Hayes' song "Never Set the Cat on Fire," which was published in LL #27. It received a round of applause, and Mary Ellen Wessels commented, "That's sick. I like it!"

Another weekend saw Maia and me attending a wedding shower for Tom Barber and Tara Edwards, and entertaining friends Marshall Muller and Jean Jambas. The last weekend of the month Maia and I entertained Maia's sister Joy, and took her to a party with friends and neighbors from school at their cabin on a private lake. Since it was not far from where my parents were building their retirement home, we stopped there first.

#### The Weight Scene

Since school let out in the middle of June (the teachers' meetings ended on the 15th) I went to Vic Tanny fairly regularly (at least 4 times a week, usually 5) and swimming about a mile every time. It varied somewhat depending on the amount of time I have and if the Aquarobics class was meeting that day. In June, Maia bought a new electronic scale, and I weighed in at 198, way too much for my five foot seven and a half inch height. In August I was 182. I had lost 16 pounds since I started, but those heavy parties with lots of junk food did not make it any easier to lose. I hoped that it would stay off.

#### Worldcon

I suppose I should say something about Worldcon. The convention was terribly run, but I still had a good time. I talked to a number of people that I had hoped would be there, met several fans who are on my mailing list, and had fun walking through the Garden District and French Quarter of New Orleans with Maia. The hotel was overbooked -- there was another convention going on when we arrived, and some of those people were staying over another day. We finally did get a room, especially after Maia talked to the manager and informed her that our roommates also needed a double bed; Dr. Harding was 6 months pregnant and a rollaway would not do. About the SNAFUS at the con: probably the less

said the better. Although I had heard that "things were not going well" for the concom, I seemed to be getting my material on time, though Maia's last two progress reports never showed up. Problems in scheduling, moving times of panels without informing people, lack of advertisements for major events (like the GoH Speeches), and general confusion resulted in a very poor con for a lot of people who do want to go to programming. I had to run around to cancel previously-made plans when a panel I was

on was moved two hours -- and to a different room. When I had shown up for the original time, another fan, Julie Washington, was in the same predicament. Although only attending the panel (and not on it), she had a previous engagement at the time the panel was going to be. So we talked for almost an hour about fanzines, clubs and writing.

I spent more time in the filks this year than I have at other Worldcons. I talked at length to Chris Thorsen, Tera Mitchell, Kathy Mar, TJ Burn-



Frame-Gray '89



side, and the head of DAG tapes (I forget his name right now). I enjoyed the one set of filk concerts I attended (Windbourne is better in person than on their first tape). Barb Riedel and I had a long conversation about singing. She and her partner Carol Poore have been taking voice lessons. I also found out that several other filkers are taking voice and/or instrument lessons. This made me realize that many filkers are becoming increasingly serious about their singing. I applaud their determination to develop their talents.

I spent more time with Mark and Evelyn Leeper than I have at all the Worldcons we've been at combined. They attended a small room party we had. We also had breakfast one morning (to replace the dinner plans I had to abort when my panel was moved), along with our roommates Halina Harding and Jamie McQuinn, and talked about the Leepers coming Gohship at CONTRAPTION. Mark and Evelyn were planning a trip to Africa in the fall (see the trip report this issue), and wondered about getting a panel together with the Resnicks about the continent. Maia, Jamie, Halina and I also had a breakfast with Mike and Carol Resnick. Mike was to be the Pro Goh at the next CONTRAPTION. It should be an interesting convention.

I had a long talk (though not long enough) with Lynn Margosian about lots of things. We kept missing each other, but managed to get a two hour lunch together. Lynn is a good person to know, easy to talk to, and has some good insights on things. She opened my eyes to a couple of things after the Hugo ceremonies when I was feeling disappointed over not winning the Fanzine Hugo. (Yes, I was disappointed, but not upset; Pat Mueller deserved to win.) I look forward to seeing her and talking with her at any con we happened to attend.

I also had nice conversations with Teddy Harvia, Tom Jackson, Colleen Doran, and many others who were there. T Jackson King and I had made arrangements to meet and do an interview. We talked for well over an hour. He is interesting and has some wonderful ideas that I can't wait to see in print.

## SCHOOL STARTS

Faculty meetings for school started while we were in New Orleans (\*sob\*), so when we got back I immediately went to work on the dorm faculty schedule, preparing classes and my classroom (which still had not been fully cleaned from my work on the Lantern from the summer). Eventually classes started, and matters were only OK -- nothing spectacular and only two real low points.

Some of the resident faculty complained about the schedule for Dorm Duty, but gently. In my cover letter for the schedule I stated that they can direct complaints to me, but to be careful because I may decide not to do it next year and one of them would be stuck doing it. Still, I had to change the dorm duty schedule because an administrator pulled a power-play (unfortunately successfully, which is why I had to try to cover for that person by re-doing the schedule). Although I do agree with the reason that both the husband and wife should have to do dorm duty, After school started was NOT the time to have this corrected. That was the first low point.

Most of my students were pretty good, but there are the occasional bad apples. I had the super-slow Algebra II students, and many of them were bored because the material was a repeat of last year. But a third of them earned D or lower on the second test of the year, and there was only one A. One of my Geometry classes was very quiet and there seemed to be no sense of the unity that the other two Geometry classes had. But the year was young, and that might change.

Second low point: Rosh Hashonah and Yom Kippur were close to the beginning of the school year this time. We were told to be sensitive to the needs of the Jewish students for the holidays. Okay. I had scheduled a Geometry quiz to be taken a day after Rosh Hashonah which was on material that we went over before the Jewish students had their day off to attend services, and I insisted all students take it. A week later (on Wednesday) was Yom Kippur, and I scheduled a test for my all my Geometry classes on that day, and told the Jewish students that they could take the make-up on Friday.

Monday night I got a call from Arlyce, the Head of the Upper school who told me to postpone the test. A parent of one of the students called her and said that I was discriminating against her son by scheduling a test on Yom Kippur. I was then to see Arlyce about this situation which would take too long to discuss over the phone.

I was upset. I was angry. I was being told how to run my classes, being accused of committing an anti-Semitic act (though the parent later said she did NOT call me anti-Semitic, the implication was there), and I had to figure out what to do with my classes.

The kids took the postponement quite well, although they weren't too pleased that we started new material that would not be on the test. A couple said that it was stupid to delay things so long.

The meeting with Arlyce went all right; the parents of the boy were extremely religious and he was to attend all the services with them. The mother in particular felt that he would need time to prepare for the test. I could not understand the objection to the test on Wednesday since I had made arrangements for all the Jewish students to take the make-up on Friday (the day EVERYONE was now taking it). A couple of days later I got another message from Arlyce that the mother said I owed her son an apology. I censored my thoughts about the mother.

Okay, I already had the boy in class that day, so I would talk to him the next day after class, but he left before I could grab him. Likewise the next day. Then Arlyce saw me pass by her office window and came out to talk to me, saying that she had another frenzied call from the mother who said I STILL hadn't talked to her son about the incident. A parent who is a teacher herself was not calling ME to complain about this situation, but calling my boss to relay messages to me -- I have trouble with that. Again I censored my thoughts.

Finally, the next morning, I told the boy to stay after class. Usually when I have done this, the student gets up-tight because they think they did something wrong and I'm going to yell at them. At this point I didn't care. I wanted that mother off my back. I told the boy that I was sorry for the trouble he had studying for the Yom Kippur test and apologized for whatever stress he had over it. I also explained that I couldn't understand what the trouble was because I had made arrangements for him and the other Jewish students.

He pointed out that it wasn't the Yom Kippur test that was the problem, it was the Rosh Hashonah quiz.

The quiz! The damn !\$\$%&\* quiz that he got 17 out of 22 points on, and he and his mother are complaining about me being anti-Semitic. If the MOTHER had called ME to talk about it, none of this run-around would have happened. My thoughts about the MOTHER were definitely censored.

That was a shame, since the boy was a good student, and pleasant in class. A Jewish friend of mine said not to be hard on the child. He had a mother like that as he was growing up. My friend turned out all right. I hope my student will.

It was a lousy start to the school year, and it wasn't going to get much better.

#### A WEDDING AND PARTIES

Tom Barber and Tara Edwards got married on September 24. The wedding was quite lovely. I was surprised to have received an invitation, but consid-

ering that Maia was asked to be the manager, I should not have been surprised. I've known Tom for almost as long as I have been in fandom, but did not presume that I would be invited. Tom has known other people for a lot longer than me, and especially since the couple are not financially solvent, I would gladly have given up a place so the pair could have invited others.

The next day (September 25) my family descended (or rather ascended, since we're on the second floor) upon our humble and crowded abode to celebrate my parents' 47th wedding anniversary, my father's 69th birthday, and my 40th. Most people have trouble figuring out my age since I definitely do not look 40, and if I shave my beard I definitely look 10-15 years younger. (Hmmm, I wonder if I should shave again, just to shake people up. That happened the last time I shaved.)

I spent a lot more time than I thought I would watching the Olympics. The swimming was fascinating, and the diving turned exciting as the US Medalists won in the final dives. Janet Evans and Matt Biondi are superb swimming athletes. Hmm, maybe if I start working out hard.....

#### CONTRADICTION

Midst all this Maia and I went to CONTRADICTION in Niagara Falls, New York. Not too much was happening at the convention, so we did touristy things -- like walking along the Niagara River to the Falls, taking a ride on The Maid of the Mist boat where we got to see the Falls up close (well, we saw as much as we could while being surrounded by spray from the falls), and generally had a nice walk and enjoyed the good weather. It rained Sunday, so we couldn't go back to take pictures.

Fred Pohl, Ben Bova, Timothy Zahn and Tanya Huff were the main guests at the con. I managed to talk to all of them, at length with Tanya and Tim. Other good friends/fans were there as well, so the evening wasn't too bad. By the time the filk got really rolling on Saturday night, I was ready for bed.

The drive home wasn't too bad, despite the rain. Because of a celebration at the Bluewater Bridge (connecting Port Huron and Sarnia), we took the longer route through Windsor, across the Ambassador Bridge, to Detroit. There were long lines through customs, but they went through pretty fast. We were happy to get home and relax before the day of work on Monday.

#### OCTOBER

I got my VISA statement and found that I was charged twice for the room in New Orleans. What a bummer! I called and they said to write. I wrote, and they said they would investigate. We found out that Jamie and Halina did not get charged at all.

What a way to run a Sheraton! Jamie and Halina said they would give us a check to cover their part of the balance, and Maia called the VISA offices and told them that we figured out what happened. This same hotel chain double booked a CONCLAVE a few years ago, and in six months would do the same for DORSAI THING, and cut out the function space and room blocks from under the Washington DC Worldcon bid. I don't want to stay in a Sheraton any more.

My insurance premium payment came, and I prepared to pay it with the coming paycheck. The day before payday I got another notice of payment for my former policy. This was ridiculous. That earlier policy was supposed to have paid for the first 3-4 years of this new policy; since a loan was taken against that old policy, I thought I had to keep it "active" with payments until I took over the payments on the new one. When I finally got in touch with my agent, he informed me that I should not have had to make payments on that old policy at all. He took care of it.

I had lost about 20 pounds over the summer, putting me at 178. Because of my class schedule, I didn't have a nice block of time during which I could run to Vic Tanny and work out (swim mostly; the other routines are fine, but I burn up more calories by swimming). I did have the time from 12 Noon to 1:35 open, but the place is so crowded that it's not worth trying to go there then. I knew I had to start exercising or changing my diet a little more than I had already; I was starting to put some weight back on. And stress from three classes in particular was not helping.

#### CONCLAVE

There were some problems behind the scenes, but up front everything seemed to come off well. One of the more preventable problems was programming -- I was not sure what I was supposed to be on until a few days before the con. Gordon Dickson, the Pro GoH should have been more accessible to the fans who attended the convention -- mainly to see him. Long term health problems tire him out easily, so he stayed in his room a good deal of the time. Although he looked a lot better than when I saw him in New Orleans, his health was questionable enough last year when he was chosen as GoH that he should not have been considered. At least the Dorsai spent time with him, even though a lot of his other fans could not.

On the other hand, T.J. Burnside was the fan GoH, and she was marvelous. Although she was told that she didn't have to make a speech, she was required to do so anyway. It came off well; TJ is very good at extemporizing. In lieu of a speech she offered to give an individual concert, which she did. She carried all of us down her personal memory

lane in songwriting. I know Tim Ryan got it all on tape.

I didn't see much of Todd Hamilton, but Kelly Freas and his (new) wife were quite visible. Linda Melnick and Sheila Willis, the other 2/3 of Technical Difficulties, also showed up and the concert they gave was wonderful. The set they did alternated between humorous and serious songs. Jean Jambas and Marshall Muller sat next to me during the concert, and we cried together during "Cranes over Hiroshima" (based on a story that Jean reads to children at the library, and says she can't finish without crying). When Technical Difficulties sang Stan Rogers' "Lies" I got caught up with the words and music and sentiment, a mood which was quickly shattered when a few people in the audience started singing along. This was a concert, and I wanted to hear TD, not the audience; had the audience been invited to join in, that would have been all right. But they weren't, and I lost the feeling that TJ, Linda and Sheila had engendered in me.

The new Technical Difficulties tape was not ready for CONCLAVE but the group was armed with 3 x 5 cards, pens and wallets for money to take orders. (We still have not received our copy.)

The rest of the con was all right. TJ and I were on a Sunday morning panel with Buck Coulson about fanzines. I found out how deep a background TJ has in fandom, and how talented she is. I didn't get a chance to say a decent goodbye to her, Linda or Sheila -- we just waved at each other as they left to go to the airport.

We went home and rested a bit, had dinner at the dorm, then returned for the Dead Dog--which mostly consisted of watching people redistribute economic resources through the application of psychology and statistics. Most of the concom and the guests never made an appearance. We didn't stay too long.

#### TO THE END OF THE QUARTER

School chugged along for the rest of October. I managed to have one weekend off and spent it relaxing -- sort of. I did work on my classes, and even did a couple of things for the fanzine. I survived Parents' Weekend, and dorm duty the same weekend. That made three weekend duties out of the way. Two more and I'd be done for the year.

After the wonderful time I had last year at the OHIO VALLEY FILK FEST, I did want to go again. However, The school calendar committee moved things so Parents' Weekend fell on the last weekend of October, conflicting with OVFF. (They also made the first quarter one and a half weeks longer than the other three, but they didn't seem to care about that.) Of the parents I saw, only one of the problem students' father showed up. He said he would speak to his daughter. The parents of the Jewish student who gave me all the grief at the beginning

of the year did not show up; Shabbis is on Saturday.

The end of the quarter came on a relatively nice day -- Wednesday November 2. I handed back tests to all my classes. I computed grades and posted them on Thursday, and began writing comments (due on all students by Monday the 7th). Maia's niece Jennifer came up to spend time with us that "Comment Week-end," and even though I took Friday night "off" from writing to see Who Framed Roger Rabbit? with Maia and Jennifer, I was finished with comments before noon on Saturday (it helps that I get up early on weekends as well!). Jennifer apparently had a wonderful time. Maia took her to see "A Comedy of Errors" which was being put on at Oakland University. We may have her visit again next year.

Maia also picked up full time employment. That made us both happy. She always said that she was going to school so that she could make more money than I did, and I welcomed that. With this job as a technical editor for Electronic Data Systems, she effectively more than doubled our household income. Yes, she makes more than me, but just barely.

#### WINDYCON

We had originally decided to cut this convention since we had to do some cutting of expenses. We wanted to start saving money for the Worldcons in Boston and Holland, and we were going to need a new car. I still had three more payments on the Alliance, and somehow the Datsun realized this and decided to start stalling at lights whenever I took my foot off the accelerator, and finally the alternator went dead.

But, after seeing some special people at Worldcon, and finding out that the next close convention they would be attending was WINDYCON, we decided to go. It also helped that the programming people offered us memberships to be on panels. One problem was getting there -- Maia didn't care for the 6 hour drive and she wasn't sure about what her work schedule might be. So we flew. And found a nice American Airlines flight for \$43 round-trip each. And the guest liaisons, Candis Gibbard and David Schafer offered us rides from and to O'Hare Airport. How could we refuse?



*a very tasty  
con report?*

So we had a good time. I saw and talked with Jim Gunn, whom I had expected to see at Worldcon but who didn't make it. Jack Williamson, Fred Pohl, Barry Longyear, Tim and Anna Zahn, Orson Scott Card, and several other authors were there, with whom I talked and whose company I enjoyed. Kathy Nerat was one person we had wanted to see. Lynn Margosian was another, and I set aside a large chunk of time to talk to her. She is a good listener, and she let me freely complain about some of the trouble I had the first two months of school. And I listened to her high and low points since we last talked at Worldcon. I looked forward to seeing her again in March at MINICON.

I also set time aside to have dinner with Polly Peterson, Maryann Hageman, Eric Heideman and Dolsa Sciaky. Dolsa was a former student from Kingswood and we seem to be meeting annually at this convention. Polly, Maryann and Eric are on the MINICON committee and we wanted to get together to talk about programming for that Easter weekend convention. Since I was to be the fan GoH, they were interested in putting me on panels that I would like to do. It Happened that some of my suggestions were close to things that they had already been considering. One item I am looking forward to doing is a Memorial Panel on Clifford Simak.

Breakfast with Tim and Anna Zahn was very enjoyable, but Tim picked up the check. Again. It was supposed to have been our treat, but he grabbed it first.

I moderated a panel on editing. I was the only fan editor there; Lou Aronica, Will Shetterly, Beth Meacham, Veronica Chapman, Beth Fleisher, Susan Shapiro, and Richard Pini were all professional editors representing six different publishing houses. It was a little daunting to be on that panel, let alone moderate it, but I got them talking and they sort of played off each other. When things slowed down I asked another question, or had someone in the audience ask one.

Mercedes Lackey, Juanita Coulson, Maia and myself were on a Filk Panel entitled "Why we Filk!" It turned out to be a very good one, even though neither Maia nor I are filkers -- we're listeners and reviewers of filking.

The list of other people we talked to goes on and on -- Carol Seigling, Ida Fincannon, David and Diana Stein, Joe Sanders, Phyllis Eisenstein (with a new book out), Ann Cecil, Alice Bently, Roxanne Meida, Julius Schwartz, Kurt & Melissa Klemmer, Naomi and Randy Pardue (we'd be seeing more of them at CHAMBANACON), and many others.

#### CONTEXT

The weekend after WINDYCON we drove to Columbus Ohio for CONTEXT. C. J. Cherryh was the Guest of Honor, with extra-special guests Lois McMaster Bu-

Jold and Hal Clement, and special guests Maia and myself, Tom Smith as Filk GoH, and a host of other speakers that included Tom Clareson, Geoff Landis, Nick Pollatta, Jim Overmeyer, Jay Sullivan, Martha Bartter and many others. This was a serious SF con with panels revolving around serious literary topics in Science Fiction a la SERCON and READERCON. I had a wonderful time talking to the people who had shown up. The panels that I sat on were all very interesting, especially the one where several of us talked about our recently departed SF authors. I extolled Simak and Sturgeon, and mentioned a few things about Heinlein and E. Hoffman Price.

The filking was marvelous on Saturday night/Sunday morning. Tom Smith's voice has improved a whole lot as has Robin Nakkula's and Kathleen Sloan. Maia even sang "Plastic Odin". I very considerably kept my mouth shut and voice quiet -no one need hear my "singing" voice.

Although I had met and talked to Sherriann Lea at other cons, we talked at length during the early morning hours on Sunday. As a senior at Columbus School for Girls, she was doing interviews for a directed studies paper, and we talked about the social aspects of fandom. Of course, we got sidetracked onto other topics, but it was fun.

We also went out for lunch with Maia's sister Joy and niece Jennifer (who had spent a weekend with us earlier in the month). It was a pleasant break from the convention.

#### THANKSGIVING VACATION

The nicest thing about coming home from CONTEXT was that I did not have to prepare for classes. One of the "rewards" for starting classes as early as we did was the week off for Thanksgiving Vacation. I was very behind in several things and spent time catching up. I began working on the two special issues of LL, met Maia for lunch one day, and read. I should have baked bread, but I just felt like being lazy.

On Wednesday afternoon, our downstairs neighbor had a seizure. Her daughter was away for the holiday, and Nancy had called a fellow teacher, but sounded incoherent on the phone. Georgiale became very concerned, and came over. When she and a couple other people (including the school nurse) got into Nancy's apartment they found her unconscious in the bedroom. An ambulance was called immediately, and Nancy was taken to the emergency room at a nearby hospital. It turned out she had a brain tumor, which set off the seizure. There would be an operation and radiation treatments, but Nancy would recover.

As usual, on Thanksgiving Day we went over to my sister's and met with the family for a traditional dinner. We were all lazy that day, but it was nice

to see the family again. Maia and I left early so we could prepare for our trip to Champagne-Urbana, Illinois.

#### CHAMBANACON

We had a good time at CHAMBANACON. The filking was incredible, and I'm glad that someone (Tim Ryan and others) managed to get a lot of it on tape. On Saturday night while the art auction was going on and before the regular filk started up, there was a warm-up session with lots of people joining in on new songs, and putting together new arrangements. Barry and Sally Childs-Helton were there, and Sally had an electronic drum that she was trying out. Jack was there with his electric bass, and people brought several different instruments--other than guitars. The arrangements and harmonies were enough to blow the ears off the listeners.

Brenda Sutton was at that session, and I was delighted to hear that her voice has improved -- gotten louder and stronger -- since Worldcon. She still has some trouble at the shift from alto to soprano (as do a number of filkers). She had a new song that needed other people. The chorus starts out with "One voice singing...", then some instruments join in, the basses and baritones, and finally the altos and sopranos together singing in one voice (it's all described in the song). It's a marvelous piece, except the soprano who joined in was off-key --a lot-- and dragged other people off with her. Otherwise the song was an experience to hear. (Other nice things happened that evening too, but I had to leave to life-guard the pool from 11 PM to 1 AM.)

We also had a good time with the Zahn's and our annual lasagna dinner. Kelly Cornell joined us,



and we had a pleasant evening of food and conversation. I felt bad about not doing any baking; the Zahns like my cinnamon bread (so do most people who have had it), so I let them down. But the next time we get together, I plan to have some loaves for them.

I spent time talking to different people--Paula Robinson (we tried to read "The Eye of Aragorn" and failed), Fran and Steve Sherer, Buck and Juanita Coulson, Barb Riedell's husband (who surprised everyone by showing up--although he said he was only rented for the weekend), Glen Cook, Alice Bentley (whose book store, The Stars Our Destination, is breaking even after only a few months in operation), Barry and Sally, Renee Alper, Tim Ryan, Mike Brim, Naomi and Randy Pardue, Kelly Cornell, and many others.

#### DECEMBER and VACATION

There were 14 days of classes between Thanksgiving break and Christmas break. I wasn't ready to go back to school, and neither were most of the students. But we managed to muddle through, and we even got some work done. Most of the students managed to "come together" as a class. There was still one class which had not become a single unit; three students are preventing this from happening, and in the midquarter comments that went home on these three people, my carefully and lightly worded warnings of the previous comment were emphasized with a calculated consequence of their actions. I dislike kicking people out of the class for anything, but their rudeness (mainly talking when I'm talking, and thereby disturbing others) made the tone and atmosphere of that class very negative, and I informed their parents that this was going to happen if their behavior continued. My hope was that these kids would clean up their acts, and I won't have to follow through on the threat. We'll see what will happen after vacation.

When the vacation time hit, I was prepared and more than ready for it. I had several projects lined up. The quizzes and hand-in assignments I had due on that last Friday would be corrected, shopping and baking for the holidays would be finished, work on the fanzine would hopefully be completed, and a good portion of the review sheets for my classes would be done (semester exams happen two weeks after we get back). Most got done, but a few things were left to finish after the break.

Then there were the parties and visits. David and Diana Stein had their annual Christmas party, and we saw a lot of people there whom we hadn't seen for a long time. Greg Cronau and his friend Sandy had a lovely party too--the next evening--and there was filking, talking, and lots of food. (I won't talk about the uninvited guests who showed

up.) There was the party at the bar with all the Waldo people; I handed out copies of the "Equations Test" which I had given to my geometry classes to do on the last Friday of classes. As more and more people started looking at it, and thought about it, the more they became frustrated in working on it.

[[ Examples: 26 L. of the A. is "26 Letters of the Alphabet"; 54 C. in a D. (with the J.) becomes "54 Cards in a Deck (with the Jokers). This was a revised test with 50 "equations"; the previous one had 30 on it. These are called "equations" because they are sometimes written: 26 = L. of the A.; 54 = C. in a D. (with the J.). These are a lot of fun, but the trick is mostly to use things that CAN be figured out from a common cultural base, and avoid too many special-knowledge ones like: 88 C. in the S. (88 Constellations in the Sky).]]

Christmas Eve was spent with Mitch and Joann Radelt and their daughter Morgan. There were a few other people who dropped by (Don Wentzel and Kathleen and Joe Conat, Mitch's parents, Joann's father and his wife), and we talked and played a game we got last year: By Jove!. Christmas day was at my parents' house -- the last time for us all to be together there. The new house, on Lake Tyrone near Fenton, Michigan, will be done this winter, and they'll be moving there sometime in February.

Aside from the tickets to see Phantom of the Opera in February of 1990, Maia got me Patrick MacNee's autobiography Blind in One Ear, some audio tapes (Chanille Sisters and Abbot & Costello), a carry-on bag to replace the one I've been using that has an irreparable tear along one seam, a book about NASA, and a beautiful painting by Sandy Schreiber of The Phantom of the Opera. We told her that we would display the painting at CONFUSION -- Not For Sale, of course. I got Maia 11 videotapes, two pieces of jewelry, and some books.

On the Monday after Christmas, we left for Columbus to visit with Maia's family and drop off gifts. On Tuesday we left for Pittsburgh to visit with Charlie Terry, Kevin Riley, Sasha Textor and Ann Cecil. Charlie showed us her engagement ring which Kevin had given her the previous Friday. Maia will be standing up to her wedding as the Matron of Honor. We were thrilled with the news, and will be making plans to attend the wedding. The visit was extremely enjoyable and we were reluctant to leave, but Maia had to return to work on Thursday.

#### THE NEW YEAR: 1989

We went to a small party, a gathering of friends to bring in the New Year, 1989. I looked back and tried to balance the good and the bad, and I guess things fell on the good side. I had Maia, my health (still with a cold but reasonably healthy), a job, debts and lots of friends. I had problems with my

students, with parents, and long days. The days are still 24 hours long and I will still try to pack as much in them as possible.

I was almost prepared for classes to begin, but by the time review rolled around, I had my review packets ready for the students, and the exams written. On Wednesday, two days before the quarter/semester ended on Friday 13th, I had all my exams copied, collated and stapled, and ready for the exam days on January 16 and 17. That cleared my time to concentrate on Lan's Lantern. Both the Clarke issue and the del Rey/Temple issue were finished, by the time CONFUSION rolled around, and I started handing them out at the convention.

### CONFUSION

CONFUSION wasn't a bad convention, but I didn't have as good a time as usual. I went to little programming -- my own panels and the last half of Mark Bernstein's concert. I did have several good conversations with people, particularly with Sherriann Lea, Marshall Muller and Jean Jambas, Pam Spurlock, and Rusty Hevelin. I wish I could have spent more time with certain people -- like those mentioned above, and including Bruce Schneier, Roxanne Meida, Mike Glicksohn and David and Diana Stein. I passed out 131 copies of the double Lantern, stuffing the pair of zines in an envelope for easier distribution. I did find another William F. Temple story in a magazine on Rusty's table, but am holding off on reading it until I can relax and enjoy it -- like the long weekend in February. Cy Chauvin surprised me with a first American edition of Shoot at the Moon by Bill Temple. I appreciated the gift, his generosity, and the thought.

Sherriann and I had breakfast together and we talked about a lot of things. She described a story that she was writing, and I volunteered to read it when she finished. She also joined Maia and me for dinner along with Mark Bernstein, Marshall and Jean. Sherriann tried to convince Jean and Marshall to come to MARCON and help with the young fan programming. Since Jean is a librarian and storyteller, she would be of great help in children's programming.

I started judging the pun contest, but it went longer than the hour allotted, and I had to run to another panel. Among the punsters was Christopher Stasheff's father (who lives in Ann Arbor). By far he was the best of the ones there. Unfortunately, he lost in the last pun to Tom Smith. He wants a rematch at CONCLAVE, where his son Chris is to be the GoH. The concomm said, "No problem!"

In spite of all I did, it was only a so-so convention. Maybe I've been to too many cons. Maybe I didn't have that particular "event" which characterizes a con and makes it important (though I remember and enjoyed many of the conversations I had



with various people). Maybe I miss the pool, though that doesn't seem to be a factor for MILLENNICON (which was my next convention -- in March). We'll see what happened then.

### FEBRUARY and MARCH

On February 10, Carol Lynn and Dick Green hosted a Beatles party. Since it was the 25th anniversary of their first appearance on Ed Sullivan, Dick and Carol wanted to throw a party. They had "make-your-own-pizzas", lots of munchies and softdrinks, lots of people (some of whom I had not seen in years), and we reminisced a lot. I wonder if I and my friends are approaching middle age....

Maia and I did get out to see Dangerous Liaisons, an interesting film about relationships in the French 16th century. Marvelous acting. We also went to the Detroit Institute of Arts to see the Cleopatra exhibit. There were some wonderful artifacts on display, and the taped tour (Maia and I each got a tape recorder and earphone) filled in a lot of gaps. The same afternoon we toured the Dragon exhibit--porcelain art from China. A few pieces bordered on being gaudy, but there were some truly magnificent pieces on display.

School continued to be there. I didn't have much enthusiasm for teaching. With the cold snap and some gloomy days, the kids were depressed and very few wanted to work. I looked forward to the end of the school day and to weekends more than I ever had before. I gained the weight back that I had lost over the summer, and it was obvious I was depressed too. Thus burnout continued to take its toll.

This was very strange. My first and last periods of the day turned out to be my favorite classes. The students worked hard, and we had fun. So starting and ending the day was a real pleasure. But the three classes in the middle of the day varied between good and horrendous. Little things bothered

me that before I just passed off as too troublesome to deal with. I came close to kicking kids out of class, and seriously considered grading them on behavior. I would come home in the afternoon and veg-etate. I wanted to work on the fanzine, on planning my class lessons, but felt too tired to do so --yet I couldn't sleep. Maia finally suggested that I get a complete physical, and maybe see a counselor.

I knew I had to make some sort of effort, some change short of just getting out of teaching, which was preying on my mind more and more. So I did as Maia suggested: made an appointment to get a physical, and while there, asked for a recommendation to see a counselor.

The check-up was very encouraging. My blood pressure was better than normal (110/72) and my

cholesterol count was a little high (201). I did have too much of the "bad" cholesterol and thus was recommended to watch what I ate and exercise more. I also had to go for pulmonary testing which was scheduled for Spring Break. And my appointment with the counselor was for after Spring Break.

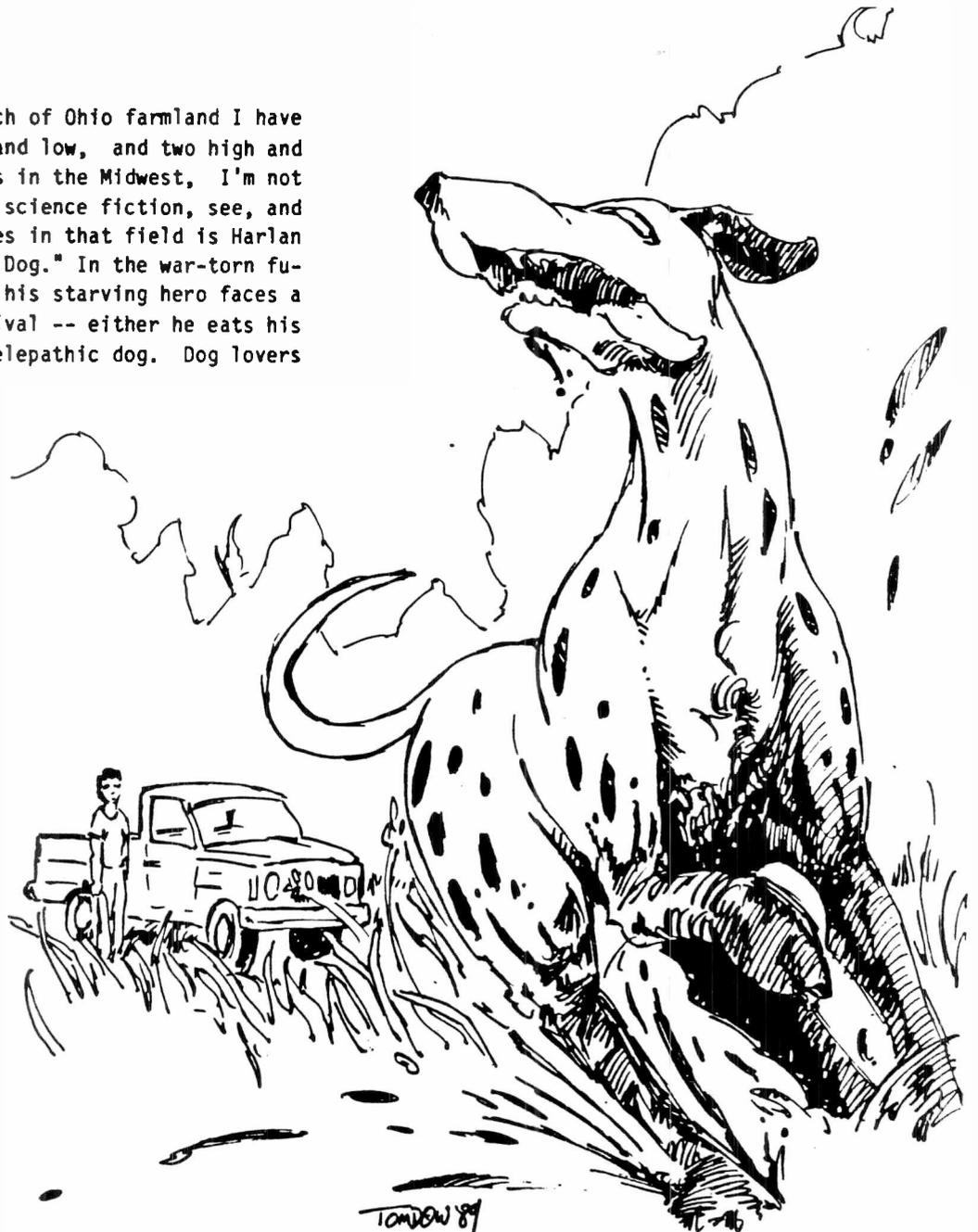
So, I felt a little better, but it was going to be an uphill battle. I hoped that I could relax enough over Spring Break--not do any school work and get away for a few days. Actually that was going to be somewhat easy. I was intending to go to MILLEN-NICON on the first weekend, and I was fan GoH at MINICON the weekend after that.

So when March 17th rolled around, I was more ready to get away than I have ever been before! [[Continued next issue.]] [\*]

On my sun-baked patch of Ohio farmland I have three dogs, one long and low, and two high and lean. Even when it rains in the Midwest, I'm not much of a farmer. I write science fiction, see, and one of the classic stories in that field is Harlan Ellison's "A Boy and His Dog." In the war-torn future of Harlan's story, his starving hero faces a terrible choice for survival -- either he eats his new girlfriend or his telepathic dog. Dog lovers

## A Man and His Dog

by Dean R. Lanbe



know how the story ends. But I'm no longer so sure. Did Harlan Ellison ever actually own a large, hunting-type dog? Probably not, for anyone who is so blessed would suffer no angst at the choice: keep the girl, Harlan, eat the damn hound!

My wife Julie is never around for these doggie disasters. No sooner did she head for the airport that fateful morning, and her rendezvous with delegate destiny at the Democratic National Convention, when Boris bit off more than he could chew. Actually, something chewed Boris more than a little. I returned from my Saturday morning Post Office ritual, still shy of breakfast, to find Boris the Beast, he of the male Dalmation persuasion, bloody for half a spotted body. Boris was also not his usual self about the greet, pat, and tick-check routine. When I finally got close enough, I could see bright arterial blood from a fair to middlin' slash through his upper lip and cheek. A quick stroke of his sister Natasha proved that her new stains were his, that only he had lost the argument with the raccoon.

Like cops, veterinarians are never around when you need them (though, in fairness, they are much easier to find than M.D.s). A breathless phone call establishes that the vet will probably be back in his clinic within two hours, so I hunt up an old sheet to contain Boris and his vital fluids in my still-shiny pickup truck. Meanwhile, the two hounds take off for the woods beyond the west pasture --no doubt to resume matters raccoonish.

At this point, dog rescue becomes challenging, and I have reason to curse the previous owners (of both farm and dogs) for never breaking this small roaming pack to collar or leash. Then there is the little matter of the Department of Transportation's idiotic, hot as hell catalytic converter, the converter which lives underneath the truck, the truck which must pursue said dogs into three-foot high orchard grass, the grass which is drought-ripened into fine prairie-fire tinder. And finally, there is the new record high, official 101.5 degrees in the shade, noontime temperature, to cover my sunglasses with a sticky salty film. Mere details, right?

So I sneak the truck onto the thinnest patch of dry grass in the west pasture and whistle for the mighty hunters. This behavior I have taught them, with all appropriate libations to the Great Guru Professor Skinner. One black and white, one black and white and red form charge up the hill, through the seedy reedy grass. Natasha, tongue out, agree to a pat. Boris, tongue and blood still dripping, refuses contact. I coax and wheedle. I mention cheese and dog yummys. I promise virgin raccoon sacrifice. Finally, Boris gets close enough to be sheeted. He objects. I try again. This time I get

all 65 pounds of him, sheet entangled feet, swamp breath and bloody cheek, into the bed of the truck. He leaps free. Repeat above. I try for the passenger seat inside the truck. He leaps out the open window on the driver's side. Who left the window all the way down? Don't ask. How red-spotted is the interior? Don't ask. Repeat above. Boris and Natasha disappear together into the grasslands.

I drive back to the house. Both dogs, now coated with swamp muck from their pass through the drought-lowered pond, are waiting beside the barn. Boris is still bleeding. This time I ready a rope, as well as the old sheet. Boris finally looms within range and I pounce. Ever watch a rodeo? Ever wonder how much fun the calf-roper is having, down there in the dust, doing his hog-tying thing? Don't wonder. Three horses step out of the barn to check on the commotion. The mares flick their tails in disgust at amateur bull-dogging.

Miserable and muddy, beaten and bloody, we both are now inside the truck. To the best of my knowledge, Boris has never been in a moving vehicle before. Natasha survived a trip last year for heart worm treatment (see that stain in the passenger seat, no, never mind, fresh stains have covered it now), but Boris has never left the farm. I shift bloody dog head and fumble for the gear lever. As we roll down the driveway, Natasha goes into her suddenly-solo truck pacing routine. I wonder if, this time, she will stop at the bottom of the farm road, or will continue to pursue her soul and litter mate into traffic. It's not a happy thought.

Boris actually settles down once moving, save for his persistent attempts to stick his bloody head behind my seat. Fortunately, the wound coagulates temporarily. After 28 hot and messy miles, we arrive at the Colonial Animal Hospital. I've never asked the dogs whether they prefer French Provincial. The Doctor is in.

As I drag Boris inside, the wound begins to bleed profusely, and a trail of Spot's spots runs from the truck through waiting room to exam room. Mrs. Doctor blizzards the scene with paper towels, while Boris gets the needle. As the anesthetic takes effect, Boris thoughtfully empties his stomach of about a gallon and a half of bloody pond water--all over Doctor. Mrs. Doctor is not pleased, as she mutters "mop and bucket."

Boris will spend the weekend in air-conditioned comfort, with a jug of plasma for dessert. I don't want to see this bill. As I return to the farm, where a lonely Natasha fortunately remains, I also don't want to see the mess inside the truck. Even less do I want to see the mess outside of me. My new cotton polo shirt is clearly scrub rag city. Tuulikki, the house Dachshund, complains that she hasn't had breakfast yet either. I tell her to shut up. I'm not in the mood for canine conversations.

!\*

# Pulp & Celluloid

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## Book Reviews by *Dean R. Lambe*

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### CALIBAN LANDING

by Steven Popkes

Congdon & Weed, 1987, \$16.95

Something in the Boston air lately seems to produce impressive world building. Popkes' first novel treats us to an alien species every bit as ecologically sound as D. Alexander Smith's Marathon Cygnans, and as caught in biologically determined tragedy as the similar "piggies" in Card's Speaker for the Dead.

When four of the five crewpeople of the starship Shenandoah land on newly-discovered Caliban, they expect a normal survey of a previously-cleared, uninhabited planet. To their horror, the exploration buggy driven by Antonia Brobeck and Sato Sperling runs over a bipedal sentient, a Calibii male named Traverse. With the death of Traverse, Thalia, his intended mate among the female-dominant aliens, begins her study of these demons from the sky, while

Traverse is placed with the roots of the Ancestor Trees for the traditional ghostly life extension of the Calibii. Thalia's study of the invaders is hampered by her species' lack of sensitivity to the human visible spectrum, for the Calibii "see" only through radio frequencies emitted by trees and plants.

Meanwhile, the four aboard the Shenandoah's lander initiate their own study, for only through successful communication and absolution by the Calibii will the humans be able to return to Earth and claim a legitimate finder's fee for their discovery. Without the aliens' forgiveness of their trespass and killing, each of the crew would lose what he values most. While much of the burden of communication falls on Antonia, who is psychically sensitive, past memories and present crises combine for all four crewmembers. Captain Sze fears loss of her hardwired symbiosis with the ship computer; Engineer Ranft is tortured by the loss of love; and Navigator Sperling tries to bury his true emotions

in his attachment to Brobeck. For human and alien alike, psychotherapeutic catharsis must precede communication, and true contact may come too late for survival.

Although the novel is plagued by irritating inconsistencies--a thorough muddle of the electromagnetic spectrum, a "kitchen" aboard an otherwise nautical ship and crew, a denial of radioastronomy, and King crabs in Puget Sound--it marks Popkes as a writer worth watching, and reading, in his future efforts.

#### SIN OF ORIGIN

by John Barnes

Congdon & Weed, 1988, \$15.95

The short-lived "Isaac Asimov Presents" series includes an extraordinary number of original works by new writers. In Sin of Origin, Barnes gives us inter- and intraspecies war and religious fervor in the 30th Century, and he sneaks in the first truly new science fiction idea that I've seen in over a decade.

Brother Hauskyld Gomez, a xenist monk in the Catholic Order of Mbwe, has more than a little difficulty doing his job on Randall, a desert planet that orbits the star Menkent. A xenist studies aliens species, and three distinct but intertwined intelligent species inhabit Randall. Unfortunately, all three, as bound "triples" of humanoid, multiarmed Randallans, flying griffin-like wing-people, and telepathic handsnakes, are doing their primitive best to destroy the Christian Commonwealth missionary efforts on Randall. It seems that the Pope's faith encourages the shameful xhu'ghawi, single individuals on this triplex world, and more Knights Templar under Andros Kane-gawa may have to be shipped through the next scheduled space-time Gate, to destroy the planet in order to save it.

Along with Templar soldiers, however, the Gate brings a stowaway in the seductive form of Dr. Clio Yeremenko, a xenist from Mars, from the League of Communist Worlds. Dr. Yeremenko, the only human female on the planet, has her own research project in mind for this strange world, a brilliant extension of the Hoyle-Wickramasinghe hypothesis, but she needs a "name" scholar to verify it. Father Sherman, the surviving Church leader in the besieged Randall fort, thinks to eliminate two temptations with one order, as he sends the two xenists out on a spying mission. Very quickly, Hauskyld and Clio are first prisoners, then lovers, and finally true scientists amidst a fascinating mass of data.

While the abrupt break between parts one and two, and the rushed feeling of the ending, detract

a bit from the marvelous fabric of Barnes' second novel, it is a work not to be missed. Credible aliens are hard to do; a handful of credible species, moving human characterizations, and a very novel idea make this one well worth the price of hardcover.

#### WHEEL OF THE WINDS

by M. J. Engh

Tor Books, 1988, \$18.95.

Twelve years between novels--even brilliant novels--does not a fannish following make. As one of the few who discovered Engh in 1976 when her extraordinary Arslan first appeared, I've awaited her next work with eagerness and curiosity. Unfortunately, Arslan, a near future epic of world conquest and pragmatic evil, set a very high benchmark indeed. Thus Engh's second SF novel, although very much in the fine tradition of Vance's Big Planet, Niven's Ringworld, and Farmer's Riverworld writ small, with a nod to every trek, quest, and odyssey saga from that blind poet we call Homer on upwards, this second effort is merely excellent.

Wheel of the Winds is a simple tale, an unintentional voyage of discovery by three humanoid beings--two of whom are native to the odd planet with a permanent day side and a side of permanent dark. For ship's captain Repnomar, and her faithful dog Broz, coastal trading is what they know best. No sooner does her long-time friend and frequent passenger, Warden Lethgro of Sollet Castle, tell the captain of the stranger he has named Exile, however, then that same escaped little man appears on Repnomar's ship in Beng harbor. For reasons even she cannot explain, the captain and a reluctant Lethgro defy the Council of Beng and sail off across the uncharted Soll. The incredible adventure endured by the three and the crew of the Mouse, the discovery of new lands, new peoples, even new sapient species, as Repnomar and Lethgro find that their world is indeed round, is matched by the emerging oddity of the Exile's story of why Terrans have come to this strange planet. Finely-drawn personalities mesh and clash as primitive raw courage intertwines with advanced technology to ensure mutual survival under the harshest of conditions.

The greatest challenge to writers of an odyssey is suspension of disbelief. Too easily, an "out of the frying pan" saga can fall into melodrama best suited for Steven Spielberg and Saturday morning cartoons. Engh escapes that trap, but only just, for her world building astrophysics places a strain on credulity as well. For those not bothered by questions of how life might evolve on a planet always in danger of meteorological doom, the novel

delivers solid, sense of wonder entertainment. For those who would ask the more of this complex novel that its author doubtlessly intended be asked, ample brain food lies within. It's not Arslan, but it's still one of the best books you'll read this year.

### THE SEEKERS

by David Dvorkin  
Franklin Watts, 1988, \$16.95.

Second time at bat, and Dvorkin pops one across the foul line into the stands. Budspy, his first effort, was a solid hit, despite the shopworn nature of its "what if the Nazis won?" plot. The invention and characterization that carried the first novel are absent from The Seekers, however.

Two thousand years after the fall of the first galactic empire (hohum), Planetary Administrator Melkorn Ayerst of the backwater planet Davner (yawn) confronts the militaristic new religion, The Church of the Quest, which seeks to take over his world (zzz). Ayerst and his daughter Rikki are further troubled when it turns out that the commandant of the Questor base is none other than Ayerst's ex-wife, Ellis Davner (surprise!), who abandoned kin, clan, and kid ten years back when she got religion. Ellis kidnaps her daughter and Rikki's nerdy fiancée, and tries to kill her exhusband. Just in time, Ayerst is rescued by the legendary killers of Davner, the thunderbeasts. Of course, the mighty forest beasts turn out to be atheistic, telepathic brontosaurus lookalikes, who wouldn't bruise a butterfly (giggle). Together with his pet human, Ayerst, Thor the thunderbeast hijacks a Questor ship to the ruling planet, Lark, where Ayerst gets laid and political deals get made. And the girl gets the boy at the end, as darkness falls on daffy Davner (sigh).

You have better things to do with your beer money than wade through this sophomoric set of "Is there a God?" arguments. Let's hope Dvorkin gets back in center field with his next one.

### MEN LIKE RATS

by Rob Chilson  
Popular Library Questar, 1989, \$3.95

Philip Klass, who the SF world knows as "William Tenn" for his wonderfully zany, satirical stories from the late '40s to the early '60s, retired from college teaching recently. This, please note, is not the same Philip Klass who writes about aerospace issues and debunks UFO nonsense. We can but hope that William Tenn will return to writing fiction.

Why mention Tenn in a Chilson review? Only because Rob's rat tale is much the same Klass act that was so memorable as "The Men in the Walls" when it originally appeared in 1963 as a GALAXY serial. Chilson gives no indication that he was ever aware of the Tenn classic, but the similarities are striking in plot and theme. In both works, giant aliens have all but extinguished human life and have remodeled Earth to their needs, yet a few primitive bands of humanity survive, like rats in the walls of an extraterrestrial warehouse.

The Chilson novel concentrates on one lone outcast, Rick, and his young friend, Loy, as they scurry through the vast alien transport system, raiding huge Cans, Bales, and Boxes in a technology that--true to Clarke's Law--is so advanced as to be indistinguishable from magic. Rick and Loy make an odyssey from High to Low, Freeplace to Outside, in a constant attempt to avoid capture by rival human groups or death from the alien's increasingly sophisticated people eating machines. Throughout, Rick seeks a simple haven with reliable food and a few cooperative females, true heaven for any rat.

While the Tenn original and the Chilson version differ enough that I can recommend both, Men Like Rats has a number of niggling problems. In attempting to show the ET constructs as truly alien, Chilson often falls into murky confusion. Perhaps much of the difficulty comes from "cut to fit" copyediting. And the "prochronism" problem--my term for the opposite of "anachronism," the use of contemporary terms inappropriately projected into the future--gives us cedar trees and philosophy that are hard to swallow. Still, this novel deserves your attention, especially if it inspires another look at an old master like Klass.

### CHILDREN OF THE THUNDER

by John Brunner  
Del Rey Books, 1988, \$4.50.

Time was when the author of Stand on Zanzibar and The Sheep Look Up would make a major splash in the SF pond with each new novel. But it ain't the 60's no more, man. Like wow, the angry realization that humans are one of the few species to foul its own nest consistently--and the only one capable of destroying it completely--just doesn't ring chimes or sell books anymore.

With his latest, Brunner pursues his favorite theme--man mucking with nature. This time, it's via a dozen strange children who seem able, in England, the U.S., and Italy, to get away with murder. The story opens with David Shay, just post puberty and well into the designer drug business, as David talks his "parents" into a return to England from California. Meanwhile, science writer and TV re-

porter Peter Levin discovers that controversial sociobiologist Dr. Claudia Morris has arrived in England as well. Morris fears that her previous work on the breakdown of the nuclear family is wrong, that in fact, genetic factors are behind a small group of bizarre child crimes.

Against a background of an England, an entire world, collapsing into economic chaos, young David tries to find others of his kind. Reporter Levin and Dr. Morris strive for the same information without realization of what they truly seek. Although a tragic midair plane collision brings Levin's genius daughter on scene to help with the adults' work, Levin, Morris, and their newspaper editor are continually frustrated. The rise to power of General Sir Hampton Thrower, a homegrown English Hitler, only adds to the fears of children and adults alike that their world is doomed.

Perhaps this well has been visited too often. Perhaps the thoroughly British orientation is off-putting. Certainly the background research in genetics, artificial insemination, and computer databases is thin and dated, and the well-telegraphed ending disappoints. Wait for Brunner's next one.

#### TWISTOR

by John Cramer  
William Morrow, 1989, \$18.95

Professor John Cramer of the University of Washington Physics Department believes in the adage "write what you know." With his debut novel, Cramer gives us a varied bunch of UW physicists, a lesson

in how science is done, and a painfully accurate tour of Seattle.

When young postdoc David Harrison and comely grad student Vickie Gordon stumble upon six other universes while researching the implications of superstring theory, their senior professor, Allan Saxon, sees only dollar signs. Saxon, who finds himself more than a pawn for the unscrupulous Martin Pierce of the Megalith Corporation, seeks to exploit the "twistor effect" for personal fame and power. Pierce has an even more nefarious agenda, however, and orders Saxon kidnapped and tortured.

Almost too late, as Pierce's armed henchmen arrive to steal the twistor apparatus, Harrison twists himself and the equipment into a giant tree on an alternate Earth. Unfortunately, Melissa and Jeff Ernst, children of a physics department colleague, are carried along to the multi-dimensional tree house, and the police and FBI join the search. With a handy tool kit and a convenient supply of batteries, Harrison builds a tiny twistor on his new world while Vickie Gordon and her hacker brother, "Flash," plunder the Megalith computer files. Forces of good and evil race to a breakneck finish, one of the most creative alien birds in SF history craps out, and a typical academic department chairman falls behind the world's largest eight-ball.

OK, so the work has a few first novel faults, some almost as large as the big hole in the middle of Seattle that Cramer forgot to mention. It's still a lot of fun, a whole lot of valid scientific speculation, and well worth your time. New hard SF writers are rare; encourage this one with your beer money. [!]

## Book Reviews by *Dennis K Fischer*

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#### SURFING SAMURAI ROBOTS

by Mel Gilden  
Lynx Books, 198?, \$3.95

I've known Mel Gilden for a number of years here in L.A., particularly after he had me on the local science fiction radio show, Hour 25, to discuss the science fiction, horror and fantasy films of the previous year. (We did a round-up, tallying what the listeners' favorites were.) Mel left the show and has gone on to write The Return of Captain Conquer (a very hard-to-find children's book), and three other books featuring a monster club.

So when Mel wrote an adult science fiction novel, I thought I ought to pick it up, even though it carried the unpromising title of Surfing Samurai

Robots. Mel is into silliness you see -- on the radio he'd frequently make jokes about broadcasting in the nude or doing unspeakable things with sheep -- but fortunately this is often inspired silliness.

The book was written for Byron Preiss, of Weird Heroes and The Illustrated Ellison fame, and was written around its goofy cover. The cover has a golden robot with "rippling muscles," a banzai head band and carrying a surfboard next to a robotic duck, a shapely woman in purple, apparently sprayed -on bathing suit, and a short figure with a huge nose who appears to be decked out Don Johnson style.

Gilden decided to make the large-nosed character the main character of the book, an alien who dubs himself "Zoot Marlowe" after picking up radio

broadcasts of The Adventures of Philip Marlowe, somehow deciphering English from them, and becoming a fan of the show. He leaves his native planet to try his luck as a private detective on Earth.

The result is a loving send-up of popular culture items, beginning with the Chandler-inspired aliens and continuing with caricatures of the surf enthusiasts of Malibu, the motorcycle gangs of the William Asher beach movies (all with terrible monikers derived from Wagner's Ring Cycle) and assorted stock characters, as Zoot has to puzzle out two intertwined mysteries.

As a mystery, the book is a bit of a let-down, but that's not the reason to read this book. Mostly it's cute, lively, and shows an amusingly twisted view of the California Southland as a surfing robot competition will decide if some bad guys get the secret recipe for the highly addictive substance yoyogurt while some mysterious person or group has removed all available surfing robots off the market.

Gilden seemingly loves coming up with so-called snappy patter to add a chuckle or two, as an homage to Chandler. However, the patter reminds me more of Robert Parker's Spenser than the Philip Marlowe of books or radio. Gilden's Zoot is understandably befuddled by some of the oddities he encounters here, but he quickly adjusts to the lingo and cultural artifacts, showing a surprising knowledge of things like the Three Stooges, for an alien from another planet. Gilden gets some good humor out of the standard "stranger in a strange land" or "fish out of water" bit, though it might have made things funnier if Zoot had occasionally tried his hand at using the slang he would have picked up from those long ago radio shows.

Still, if you are looking for a silly, light read, Surfing Samurai Robots fills the bill nicely, and Mel has even started work on a follow-up book concerning the further misadventures of the lovable and quick-witted Zoot. 'Way to go, dude, a totally gnarly piece o' work!

#### REPLAY

by Ken Grimwood  
Berkeley, 1988 (1986), \$3.95

Occasionally one comes across a terrific concept for a story that a writer just doesn't have the imagination or willingness to fully exploit. An example of this might be Francis Ford Coppola's fantasy film Peggy Sue Got Married, in which a woman is able to relive her life while remembering what had happened before. The movie was a pleasant diversion and used the plot device to crack wise and make a few jokes exploring how styles and sexual mores

have changed between the 80s and the 60s, but in general the film lacked nerve.

Replay takes the same basic plot and does a far more thorough and (need I add?) far more entertaining job of exploring what might happen if a person could relive his life with knowledge of events upcoming. This marvelous story begins simply enough with protagonist Jeff Winston dying of a heart attack at the age of 40 and suddenly finding himself back in college again. Knowing the outcome of certain events ahead of time, he decides to become a gambler with the proverbial sure thing and amuses himself with acquiring a large fortune and all the material possessions he was unable to afford in his previous incarnation, but he discovers that he still isn't satisfied and is surprised to find himself succumbing again at age 40 and starting over again.

Author Grimwood, having taken care of the obvious, then proceeds to explore fully the permutations of the idea by having Winston take a different approach his third go-'round. He raises good questions: Why is this happening? Is it happening to anyone else? Could history be significantly changed? What kinds of things might be done with this foreknowledge? What limitations might there be? What if one went into the film business, knowing which people are going to be hot? What if one went into the prediction business?

H.G. Wells once stated that good science fiction simply takes ordinary society and adds a marvelous conceit (fantastic idea) and seriously explores the ripples that idea makes in the social pond. Grimwood has done that marvelously with a genuine gift for page-turning storytelling besides. Since much of the story depends on the surprising and satisfying revelations Grimwood makes along the way, I don't want to give too much away, except to say that this is a very enjoyable, intelligently worked out piece of fiction that contains many delights. Its cover is not labelled fantasy or science fiction, so the SF fan may have to look for it in the mainstream section of his local bookshop, but this delightful novel is well worth the trip.

#### ON STRANGER TIDES

by Tim Powers  
Ace, 1987, \$3.95

Ever since I was a kid, I've always been a sucker for pirate stories and swashbucklers. I remember catching late-night showings of The Sea Hawks and Captain Blood on the early show. Apparently Tim Powers has a similar love for the genre, now much fallen into disuse and disrepute.

However, Powers makes a fascinating change on

the old formulae. Now that The Serpent and the Rainbow, Wade Davis' fascinating book on voodoo and zombies, has come out, Powers uses it and other sources to add a bit of mystical and powerful magick to the mix, making the Southern Seas even more exotic, and giving this book an appeal to followers of the once lucrative horror market.

For those who remember Anubis Gates, Powers' Philip K. Dick Award-winning novel set in the England of Lord Byron, they can recall the fascinating way Powers used his research to make the period vivid, and then added amélange of magic to create a layer of dread and decay over the story. Powerful, little-understood forces always seem to be lurking below the surface in Powers' work, and the same may be said of On Stranger Tides (the title is derived from the non-existent romantic poet William Ash-bless that Powers and James Blaylock co-invented and have made a fixture in their work).

The novel indeed is a heady mixture. The hero, John Chandagnac or Jack Shandy, is a puppeteer who seeks revenge on his uncle for cheating his father who has recently died penniless while the Uncle stole his estates and lived in great wealth in the Caribbean. Shandy is a typical, sword-and-sorcery type stalwart hero, though not quite so stalwart as the type that George MacDonald Fraser made fun of in his delightful pastiche Pirates.

On his voyage west, Shandy meets and falls in love with a beautiful girl, Beth Hurwood, whose father is on some mysterious mystical mission. It becomes quickly apparent that Hurwood senior has conspired with pirates to have their vessel attacked, and Shandy wins the respect of the pirates when he attacks their captain Davies in defense of the ship. However, the pirates have magick aiding them, and Shandy ends up being offered the choice of joining them or death.

Powers likes to add sinister evil fat men to his stories, perhaps as symbols of decadance, and the archetypical Powers villain in this novel proves to be a doozy -- Leo Friend, companion of Hurwood, who has his own designs on pretty Beth. Friend is a figure out of traditional horror fiction, the malignant, cunning source of evil.

As if things weren't colorful enough, Powers throws in Ed Thatchm better known as Blackbeard the Pirate, and the Fountain of Youth of Ponce de Leon, and bocors and their voodoo magick. The result is a splendidly exciting and colorful romp through the exotic West Indies where one must always expect the unexpected. There are magickal duels and sword fights and betrayals and complicated relationships, all those incidents that added a sense of wonder and excitement to boys' adventure tales, strung together with some authentic detail and marvelous conjecture. Naturally, this is all meant to be taken seriously, and the book is all the better for

it, as Powers made the fantastic credible by tying it down with earthly details.

This tour de force demonstrates that no genre, however moribund, should be counted as deceased. On Stranger Tides holds its own against the best swashbucklers ever written with an intoxicating magical flavor all its own.

UNKNOWN

Edited by Stanley Schmidt  
Baen, 1988, \$3.50

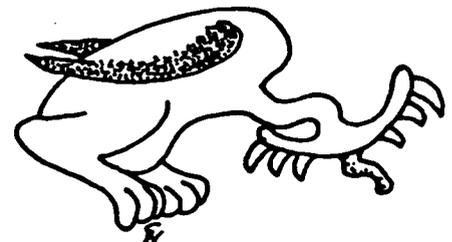
Unbeknownst to me, when I was growing up and first began to read fantasy and science fiction, I was inadvertently spoiled by discovering writers like Henry Kuttner and Theodore Sturgeon. I noticed that these writers consistently insisted that the marvelous elements on their stories also had to have an internal logic to them. When I read de Camp's Lest Darkness Fall and The Compleat Enchanter, I noticed that these fine books also followed these unspoken rules.

Then as I grew older I learned that these and other fine stories emanated from one very fine magazine, Unknown (aka Unknown Worlds), edited by John W. Campbell. D.R. Benson paid tribute to the magazine in two fine, out-of-print collections, The Unknown and The Unknown 5, which helped cement my love for the magazine and the type of fiction it had presented before it was given the axe during the paper shortages of World War II.

I was spoiled because, later, post-Tolkien fantasy has often seen fit to dispense with the carefully crafted, logically built up tale that had so delighted me in my youth. The result was a good deal of work which, by my light, was sloppy and not very well put together. Happily Stanley Schmidt has seen fit to go back and dig out some additional nuggets from the Unknown mine.

Without overlapping either of the Benson collections, Schmidt comes up with none more delightful tales that demonstrate why the magazine became a legend. There's Anthony Boucher's classic story about a professor that turns into a werewolf; Lester del Rey's copperworking elf stuck in a smog-filled modern age; Theodore Sturgeon's mischievous "God in a Garden," Kuttner delivering a fresh twist to a dealing with a demon story, plus more. This is the type of work that not only deserves a "Bravo!" but also a cry of "Encore! Encore!" Ignore the typically ugly cover and explore these Unknown delights!

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# Film & Book Reviews by Sally A Syrjala

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## A NOVENA FOR MURDER (A Sister Mary Helen Mystery)

by Sister Carol Anne O'Maire  
Dell, 1988, \$3.50

Mysteries are something I enjoy reading. They are, for the most part, logical and are something of a prose crossword puzzle. They also neatly divide up right and wrong, good and evil, and the standard fare will have right winning out in the end with the solving of the "crime" and having all put back as it should be with the world at large.

With this type of outline, it is only fitting to have a mystery with a 75-year-old retired nun as the sleuth. After all, who better to help serve the cause of the angels in setting the ledger of the soul to rights?

I like Sister Mary Helen. Admittedly, she is something of a meddler, but someone who takes off to solve a crime/mystery on their own must have some of this character trait within them or else they would never deviate out of the blinder course of life in the first place.

The story starts out with Sister Mary Helen having been newly retired to Mount St. Francis College for Women in San Francisco. You know that one of the first things that will visit her upon her arrival in the city will be an earthquake, and along with it, murder.

The murder in this case involves a "fatally bludgeoned history professor." With only mortal homicide investigators looking into the crime, they naturally err in their choice of suspect. Sister Mary Helen is there to help set the issue straight.

She has some help from another nun who invokes the help of Saint Dismas, who is the one to call upon for help in solving such crimes as murder.

This is a fun book and one that is very enjoyable reading. I look forward to reading more in this series.

## FIRE ON THE MOUNTAIN

by Terry Bisson  
Arbor House, 1988, \$16.95

One of the reasons I read books is because of a hunger for the ideas contained within them. Terry Bisson presented a fine feast for the mind in the first book of his that I read, Talking Man. His

current book, Fire on the Mountain, keeps up the good work and keeps the mind satisfied and its hunger cravings temporarily brought to bay.

Alternate histories are not my cup of tea. I usually lose interest in them after only a few pages. However, Fire on the Mountain is an alternate history that I find compelling in its telling.

It has John Brown's raid on Harper's Ferry as its turning point. The question is raised as to what would have happened had that raid been successful. What would have transpired if it had been carried out on schedule in July with Harriet Tubman's help, instead of being delayed for three months and going on without Tubman's assistance due to her illness. The next question to be asked is what would have happened if the slaves had joined in the uprising to win them a true freedom.

The novel even presents a mirror image of its own. It has someone having written an alternate history in which a Civil War was fought for the supposed freedom of the slaves. Only they call it an Imperialist war because it freed slaves in name only, but kept them subservient to the system and "in their place."

The story is told through the papers of someone who lived through the time, as well as through the life of his great grand daughter one hundred years after the raid took place. The great grand daughter is portrayed as being a widow who is afraid to look at the stars at night. Her husband had been an astronaut who lost his life while outside of a space vehicle trying to find the cause of its problem. Each time she looks to the night sky, she thinks that one of the stars could be her husband. How she comes to terms with this tragedy is part of the story.

The novel has John Brown's body eventually being buried on the top of a mountain that only a few know the whereabouts. This way people could look to the tops of all mountains and see the light. I particularly liked the ending of the book which tells us about letting go of the past and building a future. It uses some very nice metaphors. The fire on the mountain was the fire that John Brown's men built so that all could see that they were challenging things as they were.

The story is filled with hope and thoughts of better days when all can live in equality with each other. I enjoyed the novel very much and can recommend it to all who look for an elusive mythic quality to the books they read. The heroic adventure of self-discovery is within these pages and I am most satisfied with its telling.

## A THIEF OF TIME

by Tony Hillerman  
Harper & Row, 1988, \$15.95

As I have stated before, One of the criteria I use for choosing the books to be read is to read books by authors whose previous works I have enjoyed. Tony Hillerman is one of these authors. His books are supposedly technically within the mystery genre, yet they manage to appeal to a wide audience beyond that field as well.

Two of Tony Hillerman's best characters are Jim Chee and Joe Leaphorn, both of the Navajo Tribal Police. Chee is my favorite character. He is an intelligent, educated young man who is learning to become a singer and heal in the ancient mystical ways of his people. Chee is also a policeman with the Navajo Tribal Police. He has had the opportunity to join the FBI, but has decided that his place is with his people and that their's are the ways he must follow. He has come to the conclusion that he possesses the intelligence to know he cannot be happy unless he follows the course his soul has charted for him, whether others may agree with that course or deem it "logical" or not.

Lieutenant Joe Leaphorn is an older man who is going through his own identity crisis in this book. He has been through some personal difficulties and must decide whether or not to continue with the Tribal Police.

Hillerman manages to craft his stories so that events dovetail with each other and to tie up all of his threads into one garment.

This particular novel involves an anthropologist who is researching pots at an Anasazi site. The tale goes into pot stealing and assorted murders and jealousy among rival professionals and even manages to bring up a case that Lt. Leaphorn was involved with years before. It has Leaphorn and Chee working from different ends of the thread to converge at the same site and reach the same conclusions.

I enjoy reading these books very much. I like following the personal adventures of Leaphorn and Chee. Hillerman has even managed to toss continuing tragedies of the heart into the books for both of these characters, though Leaphorn is the more severely affected.

Tony Hillerman also conveys much Navajo tradition and mythology within his books. His mysteries are superb and the novels truly walk in harmony on the paths of beauty. If you have not yet discovered this fine author, it is time to scout out a few of his books and see if the landscape presented doesn't cause you to stake out a claim on Hillerman territory.

ADVENT OF DYING  
(A Sister Mary Helen Mystery)

by Sister Carol Anne O'Maire  
Dell, 1987, \$3.50

This is the second in the series of Sister Mary Helen mysteries. The setting is the same as it was in her first case. We also have the same accompanying characters in the form of Sister Mary Helen's oldest friend, Sister Eileen, who loves to bring up sayings to fit the occasion. Sister Anne is also part of the group once more. She is of the younger generation, more a part of the "New Age" scheme of events. The two homicide investigators introduced in the first book are again in the scene of the crime as well.

Just as one should never get too close to Jessica Fletcher on Murder She Wrote, one gets the feeling that Sister Mary Helen is beginning to carry the same sort of aura about her as well. This time it is her secretary who is murdered. The crime seems to have no suspects and to be unsolvable until Sister decides that matters must be put to rest.

I will admit to being slightly irked by the propaganda given to woman's "proper place" and the notion that all naturally long for home and family without outside pressures. Too, there seems to be somewhat of an error made in how the pill works upon the body. Aside from this, it is a fun book that this time brings a more sinister type of killer into the picture.

These books are easy reading and great escapist fare for when the mind needs some sanctuary from the normal daily routine.

## ALIEN NATION

A film review by Sally A. Syrjala

Title can be most interesting. Sometimes they can be more interesting than the films which they accompany. Alien Nation is a nice twist of irony. How would a nation of aliens who have put the natives of the land into an ever-contracting ring of reservations react to a slave ship full of other worldly beings?

These new entries to the melting pot land of California go into quarantine camps for a few years. At the end of that time they are released and attempt to merge into the landscape along with the rest of the emigres.

This film does not need aliens from a different planet as the focus of the script. It is mostly a detective yarn concerning itself with illegal drug manufacture and the respectable members of the com-

munity who make their money from the victims of this product.

Naturally there is a detective of the LAPD who becomes the partnet of the first of these aliens promoted to detective on the Force. Also, naturally, they are at first not exactly the best of friends. Sykes, the human emigre descendent, takes on Sam Francisco, the humanoid emigre, as his partner to gain access to the newly landed alien community to find the people who killed his former partner.

Also, quite naturally, there forms a friendship between the two and Sam Francisco, who is dubbed George by Sykes, risks life and limb to save his partner, thus forming an alliance, no longer an alienation.

I found Red Heat to be a much better film of this type. I couldn't see how these aliens were any different from any other type of aliens who have come to this continent. No user was made of their origin. There wasn't any type of real interest or action or involvement of the alien culture with the film. It was not a terrible film, but not one to draw an audience back for multiple viewings, nor one to stay long in the memory.

#### HEARTBREAK HOTEL A Rock and Roll Fantasy

Seldom is a film able to capture a myth on the screen and make it a reality. Heartbreak Hotel is one of those few.

This film is set in 1972 and concerns itself with a woman and her two children on whom fate has not exactly shone. She has a run-down hotel called "Flaming Star." Her husband left her years ago and she and her 17-year-old son and little girl live in the hotel thinking someday someone might actually rent a room.

The son, Johnny, dreams of seeing his rock and roll band play before an audience. Yet each year his high school talent show manages to find some reason to exclude rock and roll from its talent list.

After Johnny's mother is hospitalized because her boyfriend was drinking and got them into an auto accident, Johnny notices the bruise on his mother's face caused when Steve, the boyfriend, hit her. Johnny thinks something drastic must be done to turn their lives about, something that can give his mother a chance at happiness and give her something other than a heartbreak hotel in which to live.

His plan is simple: kidnap Elvis Presley, whom his mother adores, and get him to take her on a date.



"WONDER IF THEY HAVE  
McCAFFRY ON TOAST?"

The help of the three other members of his band is enlisted, as well as the unknowing help of a town's person who just happens to look remarkably like Elvis' late mother. The stage is set and each plays their part. Elvis ends up in Taylor, Ohio, and is understandably upset by all this.

Johnny is really a younger Elvis who manages to reach out to the older Elvis to convince him to spend just one night in his small town, getting back to his roots and seeing how real people live once more.

There is much to this film. It speaks of dreams we all have and the power of those dreams to redeem us. It speaks of how we can let go of that which is our true self and allow ourselves to become packaged.

Perhaps this is the true tragedy of Elvis' life: the packaging his life underwent: how, when he was poor and had nothing, he could afford to risk everything and be himself, but once he became a millionaire, he could afford to risk nothing. He had to be an image and his real self got lost in the shuffle.

This film shows how the original Elvis had that special something that could reach out to speak to the rebel in all of us. It told how Elvis in his later years played to audiences that would have been scared to death of the Elvis who first emerged on stage with fire in his performance and a challenge to the system.

The film showed how when you get away from that which makes you special and individual you can lose yourself and become much less than what you could be. It shows how you can lose yourself and be dead to the world long before the body recognizes that the soul has gone. It shows how that special grail which is unique and individual to each and every one of us must remain our quest; how we cannot allow ourselves to be molded by a system that produces perfect clones to take away our dreams and make us as bland as the rest of the background scenes.

This film was special. It was able to allow us to touch the dream that is within each of us and to bring a piece of that dream back with us. It was also poignant in its ability to let us see what could have been and contrast it to what was.

There are very few films that can break through and speak to our inner selves. This is one of those few that surpass entertaining to become enlightening, yet do not lose their ability to amuse at the same time.

This was an excellent film and is one that will stay within the mind for quite some time to come.

#### VETERANS PARK

by Don J. Snyder  
Ivy Books, 1988, \$3.95

This novel is set in the early spring and summer of 1969. The placement is Waterboro, Maine. This happens to be the location of a minor baseball park known as Veterans Park. As with good books about baseball, it concerns dreams. The hermetically sealed baseball diamond is the geometric figure around which the expectations of life revolve.

There is Page Mullens. He is a man in his sixties whose wife has left him and who spends what time he can in a field trying to learn how to throw a curve ball. His daughter, Bobbi Ann, grew up thinking "Take Me Out to the Ball Game" was a lullaby and now sings the same tune to her own daughter who was fathered by a baseball player who left Bobbi without ever having seen his child.

Into this scene steps Brad Schaffer. He is the son of a wealthy lawyer who wanted his son to enter his firm. Brad had other ideas and wanted to live his own life and make his own dreams become reality, and not simply be an "actor" in his father's life.

The book uses baseball as a metaphor for life and does a very good job of it. It speaks of the "near misses in a life that fill your heart full of holes." It mentions the brutally simplistic truths in the game that speak of the same truths in our lives.

We are introduced to the various characters who play for the local team and are shown the desire they have to make it to the Big Leagues and how not only talent, but luck and ambition, play their roles in who is chosen and who is not chosen. It shows how the pitching game is mostly controlled with the mind and how once the harmony of the mental attitude is tossed out of kilter, the ability to pitch is also thrown off track.

This is a very gentle book about people and their every day lives and how those every day lives can be filled with honor and dignity and love for their fellow beings.

It is a book that I thoroughly enjoyed and look forward to rereading during another summer season when I want to be reminded of the meaning of humanity.

#### BLOODTHIRST (A Star Trek Novel)

by J. M. Dillard  
Pocket Books, 1987, \$3.95

It seems as if there are getting to be a steady stream of good Star Trek professional novels out in the world. Time Trap by David Dvorkin (reviewed in LL #27) was a good enough book to cause me to want to sample another of the genre. Luck was with me when Bloodthirst was the next book chosen for reading.

This is a very good book. It could easily stand on its own as a non-ST book. The characterizations were good, the action was logical and the plot good enough to keep you interested in what was going to happen next.

The Enterprise is forever having to answer distress calls in the midst of boring mapping duty. Bloodthirst causes this scenario to happen once more. The mysterious medical/laboratory facility that has issued this signal has two murdered researchers and one very ill survivor.

It seems that research was going on in the field of biological warfare which is something outlawed by the federation. It also seems that high ranking Starfleet personnel may be involved with this illegal project. James Kirk gets himself involved with some top-level intrigue when he tries to put the pieces together.

To make life even more interesting, the Enterprise now has an accidentally infected researcher roving about the ship looking for some nice warm blood to keep him satisfied.

This is a very good book to curl up with and spend an afternoon/evening reading.

#### TORNADO WATCH #211

by John G. Fuller  
William Morrow and Company, Inc, 1987, \$15.95

Weather phenomena are something that intrigue me. Weather, as the old axiom goes, is something about which we are always talking, but about which we can do nothing. Maybe its allure lies in the challenge it gives us and maybe its interest also lies in trying to understand and live with it instead of trying to fight it every step of the way.

We do tend to ignore weather in the every-day routine of our lives. We hear warnings and have heard how devastating storms can be, but that is in other portions of the country. Such things can, of course, never happen here.

Tornadoes are something which could be referred to as the sneak attack fighters of the sky. Hurricanes are much more of the class of heavy bombers

that are more noticeable and from which you have more time to seek shelter. I grew up with hurricanes and know and respect them with a much greater understanding than I do tornadoes.

When Ike and I were first married, we lived in Kansas City for a brief time. When we were shown the duplex we would come to rent, a feature that was pointed out was a heavy desk in the proper corner of the basement under which we could seek shelter during a tornado warning. Somehow the thought had never entered my mind until that moment. Then I wondered how in creation we had ever traversed into Dorothy's twister land.

It was rather eerie to hear the siren go off when a tornado warning was called. These are only called when there has been an actual spotting of a tornado making contact with the ground. Back then in KC, the weather people would come on the radio and you would be told where the tornadoes had been spotted and their probable path.

Kansas City took this all very seriously as a few years before a housing development and school had been wiped out with a heavy loss of life. The warnings and the information helped people to know when to take shelter and told them how close they were to the danger.

Hurricanes may be larger and more prolonged, but somehow I prefer being back here in hurricane land rather than out there in twister land. Here you are given ample warning. If you have not been stupid enough to have built in a flood zone, you can stay in your own house and hopefully weather things out. Of course, you will still expect wind and rain damage, but the fury of the ocean is the worst. If you are a few miles away from the ocean, you are much safer than being next to a tornado.

I've watched mature willows uprooted in the winds of hurricanes while standing at the kitchen window, but I didn't feel in actual danger. I was inside a dwelling that could withstand the winds and rain that were beating down and I was not close enough to the ocean that the wave action would put me in danger.

In addition to being intrigued with tornadoes and hurricanes, the so-called greenhouse effect and the sea level rise scenario have fascinated me for quite some time. What I find lacking in most of the public reports and studies about this is what will happen to the weather.

To my mind, such a disturbance of wind patterns and air disturbances must ultimately yield a higher and more intense storm pattern. Damage of great magnitude can be done by the sea level rise and the temperature changes alone, but more frequent and more powerful hurricanes could have a very devastating effect on the coastline. Tornadoes could suck the last vestiges of life from a drought stricken parched land.



John Fuller is a writer who could easily turn his pen to the fiction line. He manages to write about a weather incident in such a manner that you are intrigued and can't stop turning the pages. Tornado Watch #211 focuses on the killer tornadoes that wrecked havoc in the Eastern Ohio and Western Pennsylvania portions of the country on May 31, 1985. It tells of the clashes between the hot tropical air to the south and the cold polar mass to the north. It shows how this combat led to the spawning of tornadoes up to the maximum recorded level of F5 -- those with winds over 300 mph. It tells of the apathy that exists when people hear of "severe thunderstorm watches" and how little the public really knows of the damage and death that can come so suddenly from the skies.

This is a fascinating book to read. It is filled with suspense and heroism and grief. Let us hope it is not a tale of the not-too-distant future.

#### STEAM BIRD

by Hilbert Schenck  
Tor Books, 1988, \$3.50

Steam Bird is a tale to be read as a delightful farce. Of course, such a word does bring up the three letters "S.D.I." In the author's note is a lovely allusion to the story's inspiration. It says:

The supercritical-water, steam-turbine-drivers fan-jet "Steam Bird" happened to be the weapons system on which I worked as a just-

graduated mechanical engineer at Pratt and Whitney, specifically in the condenser design group. And though we got the big baby flying inside the computers, the whole thing was dropped...luckily for the country...in 1958 when the flight of Sputnik showed that inter-continental mass murder does not require slow, vulnerable and crash-prone battlewagons of the sky.

Even the dedication of the book is of the satirical route, "Let a smile be your S.D.I." In fact, any book that contains a remark alluding to the infamous Checkers speech made by Richard Nixon and saying it proves that to the public there is no bottom cannot be all bad.

It is a very interesting book. You can take it from a Joseph Campbell mythological stand point and see how the mythological hero is always the one who challenges the status quo. How the hero is always the one who is part of the becoming age. The hero is the one who is of the explorer group and dares to be different.

The president is even well portrayed. He is one who by "lucky accident, happens to have some intelligence." It was nice to see he was a democrat.

The book is very nice. It has the extinct Steam Bird, naturally referring to its steam driven capacity and bearing no weapons, but whose nuclear reactor is a bomb in and of itself, somehow being given the order to fly. The military are beyond themselves with joy. Now they have this turkey of a bird up in the air and there is nowhere it can be brought down with the exception of this little island of ice that they would like to have annexed as part of the good ole US of A so that a newer, but still flawed weapons system might be housed there. But the island happens to fall in international territory.

How the advocates of steam power manage to turn the flight into a good will trip of transpolar navigation and how the president manages to get an upper hand over the scheming brass is an extremely entertaining reading experience.

There is the added attraction tacked onto the end of the book, a story called "Hurricane Claude." This one gets back to the theme that originally attracted me to Schenck's books, that of the primal energy forces within the hurricane. It concerns itself with a group of people who are out to do some hurricane busting and those who would not like to see this happen. This was not truly a great story, but one that was enjoyable reading.

However, the real lure to Steam Bird is the primary story of the same name. It was nice to see "real people" win out for a change, if only in fiction. It is also interesting to see the parallel positions of two groups of fanatics: those who believe in the steam powered ethic and get enormous

satisfaction from "playing" with their steam engines to those big-wigs in the Pentagon who get the same satisfaction playing with their S.D.I. toys -- only that is done with tax money and at the risk of the tax payers' lives and property.

It is definitely a fun book to read.

## THE BLOB

A film review by Sally A Syrjala

It was a hot and steamy night. An airconditioned theater with a mindless creation was sought. The Blob seemed to be a natural.

This is the remake of the classic Blob of a generation ago. A good many remakes are much worse than the original and have no redeeming social value of their own. This film is different. It is a fairly good movie, made with a certain amount of style and humor, as well as having some nice suspense tossed in.

A Star Wars letterzine recently appeared in the mailbox and it, of course, had references to Joseph Campbell within its covers. Now with this on the mind, The Blob was sought out. Now you get to see how The Blob went to the classic adventure lines as did Star Wars.

Okay, The Blob has this punk who wears a black leather jacket and rides a motorcycle and is generally misunderstood and looked upon as "trouble." There is a homecoming queen type involved as well. Of course, these two are going to be attracted to one another.

The heroine gets to speak a pure Leia Organa line. She tells the leather-jacket type that what he is best at is taking care of himself. This happens naturally when he is getting ready to leave the scene of a battle and get out while the getting is good.

Also, quite naturally, you know that he won't be gone for good or for long. The kid who is distrustful of authority figures that the creature that is eating up the town folks was disgorged by a sort of Death Star sphere which bears the insignia of the United States government. The source of the danger is a mutated microbe. The government forces, dressed in the symbolic masked suits of the Evil Empire in Star Wars take the position of the faceless corporation in Alien. They want the creature back at the expense of any innocent human life it might take. They think the potential value of the creature for "defense" work is worth more than the people they are supposed to be defending. Zealots often fail to see the overall picture or to grasp onto intangibles such as ethics or morality, but...

There is a sewer scene in the film that is rather mindful of the trash compactor scene in SW:ANH. The walls are not closing in on our heroine and her

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 THE CRYSTAL WORLD

by J.G. Ballard

Farrar, Strauss &amp; Geroux, 1987 (1966), \$7.95

two young charges, but there is a creature under water who is trying to devour them. Of course, the leather jacket type returns at this point to save her from the jaws of the creature.

Next follows a scene that could be paralleled with the asteroid belt scene in SW:TESB. The two escaping leads are on a motorcycle running through tunnels of the town's sewer system. They are trapped when the types from the Evil Empire seal off all exit routes from the sewer. So our hero does a daring deed on his motorcycle by jumping over the creature and just miss being grasped by its gaping jaws.

While still in the sewer system, they find a manhole cover that leads to the surface. Only problem is the leader of the team from the Evil Empire shuts it in their faces and drives a truck over it to prevent them from escaping. Now this makes our hero rather angry. One of the men from the government was found to be expendable as well and is trapped down there with them. Only he has a weapon that can be fired. Our hero takes it and blasts the manhole cover and the truck and the surrounding environment off their escape route and makes it out of the mythological whale's stomach.

Now that their passage through the saga of Jonah and-the-Whale is complete, they are still beset with the problem of this rampaging creature from the void of space who wants to do some serious gobbling.

There are some rather good scenes of a movie theater showing a Friday the 13th type of film being exposed to this creature. The film is able to laugh at itself and take itself lightly and manages to entertain quite nicely.

The ending is a nice open-ended one that shows a different zealot from those of the Evil Empire, but one who still shows an equal disdain for the human race and an equal absence of compassion for his fellow man. He, too, has had his face turned into a sort of mask, the mask symbolizing -- if you are into Joseph Campbell's theories -- the faceless monster. This is the non-formed individual, the one who has had society and outside edicts shape him into what he is; one who has not been able to have his own individual identity take shape; the true modern monster of the assimilated pod people type that fails to see the need of the human and its state of diversity and individual growth and development.

Indeed, this is a fitting revival of a film of the 50s which continues to show the danger evident then and now from a society akin to the blob wanting to devour all that is unique into the single organism.

A film that was much more entertaining than I thought it would be.

It is good that good literature does not go out of print forever. The Crystal World which bears a copyright date of 1966 is a case in point. It has now been re-released in the refined clothing of honored and revered literature, not "merely" a work of SF. This work does transcend genres and is something which grows into the fissures of the surrounding areas.

Summertime is an interesting time to read a novel such as The Crystal World. The mind frame of those seeking union with the crystal forest becomes much like the angle the mind takes when the heat and humidity of the summer turn it back into itself. The summer makes you indolent. It makes the outside world look remote and alien. There is a barrier present or perhaps removed which makes the state of being take on a new perspective.

The Crystal World is ripe with imagery and symbols. It speaks of an immortality to be achieved, again through the archetypical death of mortality. This immortality has the motion of time stopped to create a unity of space and time. In a way it is a very Zen concept, the concept of all things flowing into one and of all things existing only in the present moment.

This book is a mood as well as a story. Just as Françoise Sagan's Bon Jour Trieste was a book more to be felt than intellectualized, so, too, is this more of an experience of being than something to be theorized to death.

The light of the world is in this book. At the end there is a suggestion that the sun itself -- however those words might be interpreted -- might become part of the phenomenon that is transfiguring the world into a shining star of crystalline beauty within which all radiate with their own inner light.

Opposites are discussed in the novel. It begins with the equally divided time of year known as the equinox when the halves of light and dark share identical pieces of the whole. The light and shadow image continues to be presented as the novel takes hold. Then there is the merging of light that transfigures.

Leprosy also plays its symbolic role within the novel. The hardening of the scales of the lepers becomes almost one with the crystalline prisms that form on those exposed to the air of "contagion."

This is a fascinating venture upon which to traverse. It creates a landscape of the mind that keeps turning on itself in an intriguing kaleidoscope of poetic images. Indeed, a book very much worth the investment of the time needed to take it into your being.

## THE DEAD POOL

A film review by Sally A. Syrjala

Harry Callahan is the film medium's interpretation of the crime-fighting dark knight. Harry carries on his crusade to keep Gotham safe from those who would threaten its citizens. He tries to create order from the chaos which is surrounding him. Yet could you classify Harry as a knight in the medieval meaning of the term? or is he simply a crusader?

The five main virtues of the medieval knight are temperance, courage, love, loyalty and courtesy. It is interesting to see how our current society has created a hero that is lacking in so many of these qualities.

Where is the temperance? There is no moderation practiced in the pursuit of the appetit of Harry Callahan: that of taking on the veneer of his opponents and killing just as quickly and remorselessly as they do.

Courage does exist in his character. Yet is this a true courage or is it merely a form of despair which belies the meaning of courage as an overcoming of despair? Harry seems jaded and tarnished by the society in which he lives. He appears to have taken on the dark side of its patina. How is he different from those he hunts?

Love is something which Harry's character seems to lack. This is not love in terms of either Eros or Agape. This is love in the terms of amor. Amor recognizes the individuality of another person. It is a seeing into their spirit so that the hearts of two different identities can become as one. Harry's affiliation with the news anchor person is the closest this film comes to this feeling. Yet, even here, the distance is maintained. There is not true commitment above all else to the other person. It is merely a background dalliance. It could even be looked to as an arranged type of meeting. The department wanted good media relations and this seemed an expedient manner in which to attain them. This interest could therefore be looked to as a politically correct thing and not something springing from one individual to another.

Then there is loyalty. Harry does not appear to have an overwhelming loyalty to the department for which he works. He seems very mechanical in his workings. My interpretation of his character is more of that representing the monolithic, machine image. There is coldness in his demeanor. He is more of steel than he is of flesh.

The concept of courtesy then comes up. Courtesy is labeled in medieval times as having to do with respect for the society in which you dwell. I can see nothing of this virtue in Harry Callahan. In Medieval times when knights duelled to the death, they still maintained certain rules when they dealt

with each other. Harry goes by his own set of rules and cares not of those of society in general.

The main question of the so-called "Dirty Harry" films might not be so much what they have to say about the character they portray as what they have to say about those who revere that character.

This was not a film that impressed me, nor can I say that it was a film that entertained me. It grasped no unique concept, nor did it transcend its setting to make it into an archetypical statement. Harry could be made into a mythic hero type of character, yet he does not possess the inner qualities needed for this role. He is simply the Papal Crusader out to eradicate sin as seen by the established order as that which threatens the "haves." In short, his character is very ordinary, as was this film.

## THE THREE-MINUTE UNIVERSE

by Barbara Paul  
Pocket Books, 1988, \$3.95

It seems that I am indeed in need of a ST fanzine fix. The novelizations of the series keep drawing me to them.

Barbara is an author whose previous works I have enjoyed and I am very happy to see her among the fine talents who are producing the ST professional novels that are on the market now. There is a big difference between these writings and what happened with the novels just a few years ago. These are ever so much better with so much more of the "feel" for the myth that has become Star Trek.

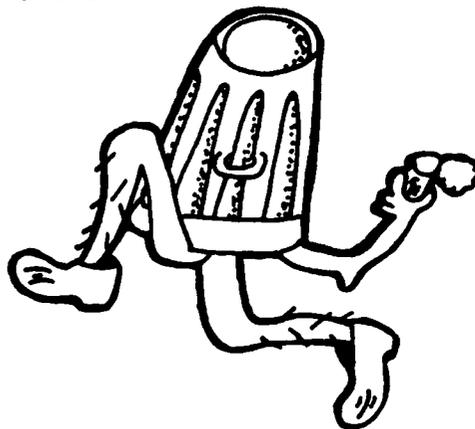
This particular novel has the creation of a new universe at the heart of its test to our stalwart heroes. A device has been invented that will allow access to another universe. As with all such devices, the wrong hands and ambitions have taken control of this newly implemented weapon. It has let a new universe into our existing one and the new universe is one which is just beginning life. It is therefore very hot and devouring planets and the life on them as it spreads throughout Federation space. This stolen fire must be brought under control and the rent in the universe must be sealed. Naturally, our galactic wayfarers are close by the scene.

They get to meet a new race -- the Sackers. This race is generally held in ill regard by the other members of the Federation. Their appearance and their smell is something which the humans find utterly repulsive. In fact humans tend to become violently ill when they meet up with these beings. The sackers have just murdered an entire race as we meet them in the beginning of the novel. At least you know who the villains are supposed to be!

The only way to get the universe back to normal

lies in the Sacker ship that the *Enterprise* encounters. If the ship is destroyed, so will be the weapon that is the only hope of salvation for the universe as we know it. In the meanwhile, Captain Kirk, Scotty, Uhura and Chekov have managed to get themselves held in captivity onboard the Sacker ship.

This is a plausible story. The action is well handled, the characterizations and their interactions are also handled well. There is humor and the book is fun and entertaining. This is another ST series novelization which I can recommend as being an enjoyable reading experience.



## Film & Book Reviews by Evelyn C Leeper

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### DOVER BEACH

by Richard Bowker  
Bantam Spectra, 1987, \$3.95

Richard Bowker has written that unusual combination, a science fiction mystery. What's more, he's been successful at it. He manages to avoid many of the problems in this endeavor (how to give your readers enough information to make sense of the book) by setting his work in the far future with whiz-bang technology, but in the "day after tomorrow," where tomorrow just happens to be World War III. Though only a "limited" nuclear war, World War III has fixed technology at something approximating our current level, so you don't discover that the murder was committed with some new, just discovered weapon, or by the murderer teleporzting in from Venus, which the detective realizes because he found traces of fluxon in the teleportation chamber and fluxon occurs only on Venus.

The result, I think, will appeal to both science fiction and mysterry fans. Science fiction fans will appreciate the care taken in the post-holocaust setting, including several science fiction in-jokes and the interesting use of England as the new utopia to which Americans try to travel, rather than the usual vice-versa. Mystery fans get a new hard-boiled detective story inspired by classic hard-boiled detective stories (said inspiration applying to both Bowker and Wally Sands, the protagonist who is patterning his new career after the great private eyes), and the science involved (there is more than just the postholocaust setting) is not of so esotric a nature that the non-scientific reader would not be able to follow it. As to where in the store you'll find it, that's anyone's guess. It's

labeled "novel" on the spine, so it could be in the science fiction section, the mystery section, or even the "fiction" section (don't booksellers realize that science fiction and mysteries are fiction?). But make the effort to look for it -- it's worth it.

### THE TIDES OF GOD

by Ted Reynolds  
Ace, 1989, \$3.50

"Terry Carr's Ace Science Fiction Specials" are back, albeit edited by Damon Knight now that Terry Carr is gone. (It is a somewhat sobering realization that it was never "Terry Carr's Ace Science Fiction Specials" when Carr was alive, just "Ace Science Fiction Specials.") The Tides of God is the tenth in this series (the third so called "Ace Science Fiction Specials") and continues its high level of quality.

The premise of The Tides of God is that in the 33rd Century humanity, which had been the beneficiaries of Kroc technology for many centuries, but only under Kroc tutelage, has finally been given a spaceship of its own, with one condition--its first mission must be to seek out the Enemy and destroy him. This enemy is a being which sends out some sort of beams or radiation that causes religious fervor and irrationality in all who are within its range. This is the cause of the "Dark Years" from the 4th to 14th and the 22nd to 29th Centuries -- these were the periods when this being passed close to Earth. (It's strange that the dates are all given in the current calendar, though Reynolds does use the designation "C.E." rather than "A.D.") Any-

way, as the ship approaches the Enemy, people on the ship are gradually taken over (brain-washed, as it were) and those who are the most susceptible turn against those who are still trying to complete their mission.

In many ways, this is old-fashioned science fiction: a spaceship out to destroy a powerful enemy. The attempt to give a scientific explanation for religious fervor is laudable, but fails on a couple of counts. First, it fails to explain where religious feelings come from when the being is elsewhere in the universe. And second, giving this being as the cause of the religious fanaticism in Europe during the 4th through 14th Centuries conveniently avoids asking what was going on in the rest of the world. Were there witch-hunts in North America? Inquisitions in China? Crusades in Africa? I don't think so, and this apparent ethnocentrism is a major stumbling block to my acceptance of the book's premise.

The other flaw is that this book fairly screams "Sequel coming!" at the end. Perhaps it represents the author's wish to avoid offending anyone, but at the very end, the book fails to resolve the issues it has raised. All the speculation about the nature of God is left as speculation, which is fine in a philosophy book, but dissatisfying in a novel which has implicitly promised to answer all its questions, and then fails to do so. It's like reading a murder mystery and being told at the end, "Well, we're still not sure who did it." Yes, it's true, there are a lot of clues and readers can draw their own conclusions, but that's not what I expect from a novel.

#### TO THE RESURRECTION STATION

by Eleanor Arnason  
Avon, 1986, \$3.50

I was at BOSKONE in the Dealer's Room and one of the dealers recognized me (well, recognized my name on my badge, actually) and started talking to me. One thing led to another and she said I really should read To the Resurrection Station and review it. I fabled a bit -- recommendations from perfect strangers are iffy things -- but I figured she knew something of what I liked from my reviews, so I gave it a try.

I'm not sure why she recommended it.

Arnason has an interesting premise -- Belinda Smith returns to her old home (which sounds like a direct descendent of the House of Usher or any of the castles found in old Hammer or Corman films) to discover that she isn't a human after all, but half-human, half-native. Because she is half-native she must marry another native (Claud), which she

doesn't want to do, so she, Claud, and a robot who may or may not be her great-great-great-grandfather (give or take a great) flee the planet in a life-boat and head for Earth. Belinda seems to generate an improbability field around her. Well, yes, many characters in bad novels seem to do that, but here it's explicitly stated (sort of like Niven's Teela Brown, who is luckier than most people because she was bred for luck). Earth has been devastated, but some people survive, as well as giant intelligent rats, etc., etc. You get the idea.

Unfortunately Arnason doesn't do anything with all this. The characters wander through the various situations without ever being affected by them or affecting them. Eventually they drift off without ever achieving any resolution, but since there didn't seem to be much conflict to begin with, this probably shouldn't surprise me. In many ways this seemed like a "young adult" novel -- the age of the character, the writing level -- but given one or two (relatively) explicit sex scenes, it seems unlikely that that was the market either. In short, this could have been a good book, but it fizzled out.

#### ALTERNITIES

by Michael P. Kube-McDowell  
Ace, 1988, \$3.95

Kube-McDowell is a good author, and that makes this all the more disappointing. This parallel worlds story is muddled and confusing. Few of the characters make any sense or seem to have much consistent motivation. The thread with Senator Endicott is particularly meaningless and I figure was put in purely to add a sex-and-violence aspect to the novel. It seems to have nothing to do with the rest of the book. The ending is confusing and a *deus ex machina* to boot. It was interesting to follow the sidebars and see just where the split in worlds occurred, but that did not suffice to sustain my interest in almost 400 pages. (What did? I suppose the feeling that it must all tie together eventually. It didn't.) I had such hopes for this novel, but it did not live up to any of them.

#### REMEMBER GETTYSBURG!

by Kevin Randle and Robert Cornett  
Charter, 1988, \$3.50

This book seems to be aimed at 1) those who like war stories packaged as science fiction, and 2) Civil War buffs. This book consist mostly of long detailed descriptions of Civil War battles (which

may or may not be accurate). There is an alternate history frame, disposed of in a couple of paragraphs and brought back only to provide additional suspense. The characters are not well developed: apparently the authors assume the reader will have read their first book, Remember the Alamo! And at the end comes the now all too familiar twist that ... there will be a sequel. Blech!

#### WILD CARDS V: Down and Dirty

Edited by George R.R. Martin  
Bantam, 1988, \$4.50

Well, much as I hate to say it, the "Wild Cards" series is wearing thin. There was so much I found dissatisfying about this book -- none of it devastating, but added together, it makes me wonder if I'll buy the next one. And that is one of the problems. This book, more than any of the previous books in the series, screams out, "A SEQUEL IS COMING!" Yeah, after each of the other you realized there was more to tell, but in this case, it's a lot of what this book is about that remains unresolved. Add to this that (at least in my opinion) there is a lot more graphic violence in this book than previously. And I get a vague feeling that perhaps the "Wild Cards" series has reached the end of its inventiveness -- there doesn't seem to be anything really original or fresh here. The technical details of the mosaic novel are well-handled, but technical proficiency does not a great novel make.

#### THE FALLING WOMAN

by Pat Murphy  
Tor, 1987 (1986), \$3.95

This book won the 1988 Nebula and deservedly so. It is a fantasy, but not one of those Tolkienesque elves-or-what-have-you-on-a-quest-to-save-the-world-from-the-ultimate-evil sort of novel. (No slur toward Tolkien -- he did it early and he did it better. But, oh the imitators he spawned!) The Falling Woman is about an archeologist who is very involved with her work, so much so that she communicates with the spirits of those who lived and died where she is digging. Her work takes her to Dzibilchaltun in the Yucatan where she is visited by the spirit of a long-dead priestess. How she deals with this is the meat of the novel. There is not a lot of action, but there is a lot of thoughtful character development and a good use of the Mayan setting. As a well-written, literate fantasy, this is hard to beat.

(Side-note: Why don't more fantasy authors write

in less over-used mythologies? Tiptree also wrote Mayan-based material, but I can't think of anyone else. LeGuin is doing some work in Native American legends, and one or two other authors have also done so, but again I can't think of too many. Milton and Brust did the Christian Heaven; Dante and Niven and Pournelle did Hell. And then there are a wealth of Asian mythologies that are almost entirely ignored....)

#### EXTRA(ORDINARY) PEOPLE

by Joanna Russ  
The Women's Press, 1985 (1984), L1.95 (\$3.95)

This collection of five short pieces by Russ includes the novella "Souls" which won the Hugo for 1982 and was nominated for the Nebula, and the novella "The Mystery of the Young Gentleman," also nominated for the Nebula for 1982. The frame of the collection is that these are stories told by a tutor to a "schoolkid" about how the world was (or wasn't) saved. "Souls" tells of an abbey invaded by Vikings and of the abbess who protects it as best she can. "The Mystery of the Young Gentleman" is the story of a pair of travelers in Edwardian (?) times who aren't quite what they seem. "Bodies" is about a future utopia; "What Did You Do during the Revolution, Grandma?" is a story of parallel worlds where cause and effect are not always in force. (It seemed vaguely reminiscent of The Princess Bride, at least in the naming of the characters.) "Everyday Depressions" is on the surface the story of an Eighteenth (or is it Nineteenth?) Century female author and her problems, but seems to be more the telling of Russ' view of the plight of females and female authors in any age.

All the stories are well-written and worth collecting. It is unfortunate that no American publisher seems to want to publish Russ -- the only books by her that most bookstores stock are her earlier novels. That the only way to get these stories is from a British publisher is a pity.

(I didn't notice until after I bought the book that it was published by "The Women's Press," which has printed, as Mark pointed out, a rather sexist charter in the front of the book. So it's not entirely clear whether Russ prefers that her works be published by The Women's Press rather than Ace or New American Library or whether the choice was made by the publishers.)

#### THE RAINBOW CADENZA

by J. Neil Schulman  
Avon, 1986 (1983) \$3.50

The Rainbow Cadenza won the Prometheus Award in 1984 for best libertarian science fiction novel of the year. That may be so, but considered just as science fiction, it doesn't succeed as well. The premise is that much of humanity lives in various space habitats. Those who remain on Earth have eliminated war by drafting all women into government brothels. Schulman has some speechifying by characters to explain why this works--it's not very convincing. Certainly the question of why the habitats which don't have this rule aren't constantly at war is never addressed. In case you can't figure out what the book is trying to say, Schulman provides sixty pages of afterword of his and other people's comments about the book and the libertarian philosophy.

This would all be marginally acceptable were it not for the amount of explicit sex Schulman puts in The Rainbow Cadenza. (Brief pause here while half my readers run out to buy this book. :- ) Were the sex being described here the sex in the brothels, at best Schulman could claim it was to portray the inhumanity of such a draft. But it is the sex during the hunts of the Touchables or other occasions that is being described, and so Schulman appears to be pandering to his readership to boost his sales through titillation rather than to remain faithful to his story.

I will admit that if I had a better knowledge of music and music theory this book might have been more interesting or enjoyable, since much of it deals with the characters' writing of "musical" pieces using lights (as in a laser light show) rather than sounds. However, since I don't have this musical expertise, that part did nothing for me either.

It may be that libertarian proselytizing does not make good science fiction. (Certainly the film about space habitats shown at a recent World Science Fiction Convention produced by the Libertarian Party was extremely dull and preachy.) But then it takes a great author -- on the level of Swift or Orwell perhaps -- to write a novel that entertains and preaches at the same time.

### SHY PEOPLE

As you watch Shy People, you're sure you know what it's about. Don't be so sure. At the end, it makes a right turn in another direction entirely. This is not bad, just unexpected.

Jill Clayburgh is a writer for Cosmopolitan who decides to visit her distant relatives in Louisiana as research for a series on family roots that she is doing. She drags her teenage daughter along to get her away from the daughter's 45-year-old boyfriend and they head off into the swamp. There she finds her cousin, played by Barabra Hersey. Hersey

rules her family with an iron hand, and a somewhat odd family it is. One son has left the swamp and is treated as dead by Hersey, one son is kept locked in the shed, one son is "missing a button," and one son is trying to trap enough crayfish to keep the family fed. Clayburgh and her daughter have difficulty understanding the life their cousins lead; for their part, Hersey and her sons look askance at Clayburgh and city people in general. (They keep saying Clayburgh comes from Baltimore, even though she repeatedly tells them she is from New York, probably to soften the blow of having "Yankee" city relatives.)

Some of the subplots seem unnecessary, but they all fit together in the end. Only Hersey's character is fully developed. Clayburgh doesn't seem to know how to play her character and remains unconvincing (or perhaps vague is a better term) through most of the film. Hersey's sons and Clayburgh's daughter seem more like types than characters, but the wonderful acting job by Hersey manages to overcome these flaws and make the film worth watching.

### JULIA AND JULIA

When we first see Julia (played by Kathleen Turner), she's happily married--just married. Her happiness lasts but a few hours, though, before her husband Paolo (played by Gabriel Byrne) is killed in a car accident.

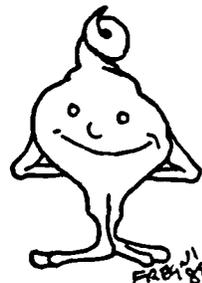
We then jump forward seven years and see Julia going through the daily routine of her life in a state not unlike that of a zombie. Then suddenly she finds herself in another world, one in which her husband didn't die, one in which she is still married and has a young son. But this world isn't all sweetness and light either -- Julia in this world is cheating on her husband and being blackmailed by her lover to continue their relationship. Like a pendulum, she finds herself swinging back and forth between the two worlds, first trying to understand what is happening and then trying to create the world she wants. This is made even more confusing by the fact that the person who in world

two is her lover (played by Sting) also exists in world one as someone Julia meets in the course of the film.

Alternate histories are not common in film or television: Quest for Love, "City on the Edge of Forever" (Star Trek), "Stay Tuned, We'll Be Right Back" (Darkroom), An Englishman's Castle, and a few others. Why are they not common? Well, maybe it's because alternate worlds are a mental concept rather than an action concept (like car chases). Julia and Julia demands a mental effort on the part of the viewer to keep track of who's where. The film

itself is slow-moving and has a cold and distant feel.

Julia and Julia was shot on video, giving it a made-for-TV look. The Italian setting (it was made by RAI) is well used but tends to distance the story and make both worlds unfamiliar, adding to the distant feel. Recommended for the more intellectually oriented viewer.



## Reviews by David M Shea

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### ORPHAN OF CREATION

by Roger MacBride Allen  
Baen, 1988, \$3.50

On a holiday visit to her family's old Mississippi home, anthropologist Dr. Barbara Marchano finds an old journal written by her great-great-grandfather. A curious reference catches her eye concerning the importation around 1850 of strange subhuman "creatures." She becomes fascinated with the notion of proving that the original plantation owners tried to use gorillas or chimpanzees as slave labor. Following clues from the journal, in short order she and a cousin are methodically excavating a site in the back yard, looking for primate remains. Imagine her surprise when she digs up a recognizably australopithecine skull of a species deemed extinct for millions of years!

In my review of Mr. Allen's last novel Rogue Powers (Lan's Lantern #22), I praised the author's writing ability while questioning his choice of material. It is a great pleasure to report that in Orphan of Creation, Mr. Allen has found an idea worthy of his talent. It is in fact an idea that one kicks oneself for not having thought of first: what if one of the homonid "pre-human" races survived into historical times? It is clear the author has done his homework concerning the minutiae of anthropological technique; the book has that unmistakably correct "feel" of authenticity. More to the point, Mr. Allen has clearly thought the consequences of his idea, and has had the courage to follow where it leads, into some controversial territory. That he has an axe to grind is apparent long before one reaches the "author's note" in the back of the book; but, although there are moments when the dialectic (not to mention the dialect) seems a trifle stilted, this does not seriously detract from a very readable as well as thoughtful story.

Bravo to Mr. Allen for writing this risky book,

and bravo to Jim Baen for publishing it. Read it. Then pass it on to your mundane friends. With any luck, it'll drive them crazy.

### THE BREEDS OF MAN

by F. M. Busby  
Bantam/Spectra, 1988, \$3.95

Genetic mutation, natural or deliberate, divides the human race into two or more groups whose basic need and/or goals are essentially incompatible. The result is concealment, pogrom, or race war. Sound familiar? No shit. H. G. Wells' The Time Machine; A. E. Van Vogt's Slan and The Silkie; Robert Heinlein's Methuselah's Children; John Wyndham's Re-Birth and The Midwich Cuckoos; Sharon Webb's Earth Child; Jacqueline Lichtenberg's entire Time/Gen universe. In this case, the cure to one disease (one you've heard of, as it happens) creates a second problem, and the cure to that inadvertently creates a whole new human race.

If this is intended to be, as some have called it, the author's "breakthrough" novel -- the one which separates him from his "space opera" reputation and gains him respect from the "literary" SF community -- then it fails. Mr. Busby has in the past taken his trademark pattern of excellent characterization, adequate plotting, and prosaic prose, and applied it to one old idea (space war). Here he takes precisely the same pattern and applies it to another old idea--mutation. People don't read this author for wild originality, opaque stream-of-consciousness style, or exercise in literary mirror-gazing. If we want those things, they are to be found elsewhere in the genre. People read Busby for good old-fashioned escapist adventure stories. The world is full of people devoting themselves with otherwise admirable enthusiasms to areas in which they have no demonstrable talent. That, due to the

vagaries of popular taste, some of them even make money at it (*viz.*, Madonna) does not render it any less sad. Mr. Busby, at least, has demonstrated that he does one thing well. Perhaps he should be satisfied with that.

(Footnote: The author insists throughout on using the long-obsolete, and therefore irritating, acronym "HEW." If he doesn't know that department of the US Government was retitled "Health and Human Services" in the Carter administration, someone should tell him. One might also suggest that such bizarre similes as "punchy as a peach-orchard boar" -- whatever that means -- do not really enhance Mr. Busby's level of writing.)

SO YOU WANT TO BE A WIZARD  
Dell, 1979, \$2.75

DEEP WIZARDRY  
Dell, 1985, \$3.25

by Diane Duane

Thirteen-year-old Long Island resident Nita Calhahan discovers a wizardry handbook in the public library. The book teaches her the True Speech, the only language which accurately describes the universe (gee, and here I thought that was mathematics); and in short order she is conversing happily with trees and practicing the easier spells. Then Nita discovers that schoolmate Kit Rodriguez has likewise found his way into the practice of wizardry, and the two youngsters join forces. In the first volume, an apparently simple magical excursion into the city lands them in a grim alternate Manhattan inhabited by carnivorous automobiles, and they are forced into a confrontation with the force at the heart of darkness. In the second volume, Nita and Kit become allied with some whale wizards to perform a solemn and dangerous rite in the depths of the North Atlantic.

These "juvenile" books very much resemble Duane's "adult" fantasy. The sex and violence which are merely soft-pedalled in, say, The Door into Fire, are here almost totally sublimated, but the underlying theme is the same: it is everyone's responsibility to fight to the best of his/her ability against the onslaught of darkness/death/entropy. Actually, this simplistic notion works pretty well in a "juvenile" book. These stories are well written and do not patronize the young reader for whom they are intended. Ms. Duane has a knack for plausible characterization and a touch of humor, and hits no more of the cliches of magical fantasy than are inherent in the premise. My only hesitation in recommending these books is this: is it really desirable to teach children, in defiance of all reason and experience, that "wishing will make it so?"

## NIGHT OF THE COMET

The primary difference between television and motion pictures is not financing or creativity, but simple market demographics. Commercial television is generally geared to an audience of women age 20 to 40 who want to see "glamour," sex, and women triumphing. Motion pictures are (with some few exceptions) made for an audience of boys age 12 to 17 who want to see violence, sex, and teenagers triumphing. A textbook illustration may be found in Night of the Comet, a film so derivative -- and nearly as manipulative -- as Willow, but nonetheless able to offer ninety-five minutes of mindless entertainment to the viewer capable of shutting down his cerebral cortex for that period.

H. G. Wells lifted this basic plot out of popular panic during the 1910 flyby of Halley's Comet (In the Days of the Comet), and people have been making a living ever since by plagiarizing him, *viz.*, John Wyndham's The Day of the Triffids (1952), and many others. (Do you see a pattern here about titles?) In this 1984 movie, Earth passes through the tail of a comet, and all the people, including the nasty stepmother of Los Angeles teen sisters Regina and Stephanie, go whiff, leaving piles of empty clothing and red dust all over the streets. By an improbable coincidence, the two sisters are essentially the only survivors, except for a few people in whom the "disease" process is not complete, turning them into murderous zombies. The girls go on a mad shopping spree in a deserted store, play around with some automatic weapons, and eventually engineer the defeat of the obligatory mad scientists. None of this makes even rudimentary sense, but it's done with sufficient style -- and occasional humor -- that one would have to be positively mean-spirited to point out how stupid it all is.

The movie manages to pull itself down to a PG-13 rating by judicious violence, using the F-word once, and once briefly getting young Kelli Maroney down to her undies, but I strongly doubt if anyone could be greatly offended by this innocuous little film. If you don't have anything better to do for the next ninety-five minutes, click off your mind and enjoy.

## SOLARBABIES

The human animal is endlessly fascinating. Imagine approaching a Dispenser of Big Bucks as follows: "Gimme ten million dollars. I wanna make a teen age crystal ball sci-fi roller skating movie." Imagine the DoBB being sufficiently stupid as to agree. Imagine further (I know we're stretching this "suspension of disbelief" thing to the breaking point here, but bear with me) that having the

ten million bucks in hand, one would not, like a sensible person, skip to Rio and buy a condo overlooking Copacabana Beach; rather one pours all that perfectly good money down a rathole by actually making a teen age crystal ball sci-fi roller skating movie!

Solarbabies is a film so innocent, so ineffably dumb, that it croggles the mind. Our heroes, five dorky teenagers (one girl, one black, one bespectacled nerd) plus and eight-year-old so insufferably cute one wants to throttle him, escape from an orphanage/prison by walking out the door; roller skate endlessly through the wilderness; encounter various bizarre groups who seem to spring up out of the rocks; and eventually liberate the world's water by invading and destroying, barehanded save for what appear to be lacrosse sticks, a top secret, highly protected military research establishment. The directing, acting and editing throughout are on a par with the screenplay, which gives you an idea of the overall quality of the piece. Fortunately, everyone involved with this misbegotten botch is a thirddrate hack, so no one is seriously embarrassed, with the possible exception of veteran actor Charles Durning, who ought to have known better.

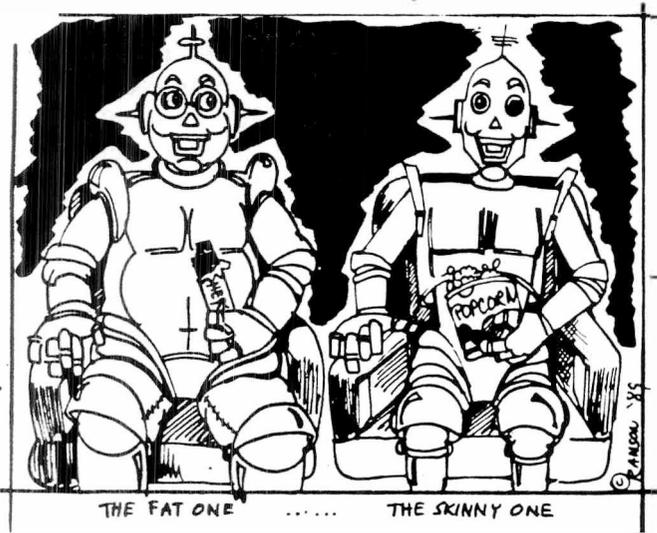
Here is a classic illustration of why the public misperceives science fiction as "that trash." Watching Solarbabies is slightly preferable to root

canal without anesthetic, but only just. Avoid this turkey if humanly possible.

#### CAVEGIRL

Cavegirl is a film which falls almost exactly midway between Solarbabies and Night of the Comet on both the entertainment scale and the stupidity scale. The plot is hackneyed up to its eyebrows (nerdy college student accidentally gets timewarped back 25,000 years, falls in love with pretty cavegirl). But in execution, the film has at least the modest virtue of not overreaching itself; it proceeds, with a certain stolid grace, to hit --two or three times each-- every cliché of every Stone Age movie you've ever seen.

Cindy Ann Thompson, with her perfect blonde coiffure, perfect Colgate smile, and perfect 38-D bosom, is desperately miscast as anyone's idea of Cro-Magnon; Daniel Roebuck is appropriately nerdy as the hero. There is some pallid amusement to be found in his inept attempts to seduce her, and there is actually some quite good acting (more precisely, some quite good mime) by the other cave people. This is sort of a soap bubble of a movie, familiar, mildly pretty, forgotten as soon as it passes from view.



MYSTIC PIZZA

**CAPSULE REVIEW:** The lives of two sisters and a friend, pizza parlor waitresses, is not original and the individual stories are predictable, but as a whole it is a satisfying slice-of-life film and worth seeing. Rating: low +2.

Mystic Pizza is a sort of a "The Best of Everything" for the 80s. I guess that in itself is something of a surprise: that someone is making a "The

## Film Reviews by *Mark R Leeper*

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"Best of Everything" in the 80s. It is not a film with much flash. It is just a quiet (dare I say it?) soap opera about three young women who waitress together in a pizza parlor and share each other's lives. There are the two sisters Kat and Daisy and their friend Jojo. Kat is the serious sort. She is holding down several jobs to try to earn enough to take advantage of a scholarship to Yale. Her sister Daisy is affable, attractive, and shoots a mean game of pool. She is looking to have a little bit of fun and to live a little. Jojo wants to be like Daisy. Having canceled out on her wedding day, she wants sex with her boyfriend but no commitments. Mystic Pizza is really three stories, one for each woman, braided together into a single story.

Of the three stories, the film concentrates mostly on the sisters' stories. Neither is particularly original. Kat babysits for the daughter of a handsome young architect who happens to be a Yale

graduate and whose wife is off in Europe. You can plot this one yourself. Daisy has a relationship with a rich law student with a checkered past and a bigoted family. Perhaps you cannot plot this one yourself, but it is unlikely that you will be very surprised either.

So the individual stories are not much to see the film for. But this is one of those films where the whole is considerably more than the sum of its parts. For one thing, there are few enough films that show women who are friends and how their friendship works, and at times does not work.

Mystic Pizza is not one of the year's best films --though I think at least one critic was claiming that it was--but at a time when so many films look alike it is a surprisingly satisfying film to watch and enjoy and hopefully is a sign of more adult films (no, I mean literally adult films) being made. Rate it a low +2 on the -4 to +4 scale.

(A Side Note: New York City restaurants offered a dinner to go with viewing Babette's Feast, but it was about \$100 a plate. After seeing Tampopo I could not find a Japanese noodle house nearby. For those of you who want to coordinate a movie and dinner, this is the film!)

#### THEY LIVE

CAPSULE REVIEW: Science fiction films catch up to some of the lighter stuff being written in the 1960s. John Carpenter's adaptation of a famous story drags a lot, even at 93 minutes. This is due to Carpenter using spare time to add action rather than to expand on the original plot. Still, there is a story there and one that is not like other action films being made right now and Carpenter gets points for that. Rating: +2.

These days you have two kinds of filmmakers. You have your original filmmakers who tell new stories and make new films. Then you have filmmakers who recombine elements of successful movies. This kind sprinkles science fiction ideas into a police action film and gets something like Alien Nation or Deep Space. One filmmaker you can usually depend on being most original is John Carpenter. He may add some prefabricated filler but at least his films are stories you have not seen on film before. This time around Carpenter has adapted a comic book version of the popular science fiction story "Eight O'Clock in the Morning" by Ray Nelson, beefed up its political message, added a lot of not very imaginative padding, and turned a fast-paced story into a snail's-paced 93-minute movie.

The story is that of John Nada (called George Nada in the short story), who gets a pair of sunglasses that allows him to see what is really going on. (In the short story Nada is awakened too far

from an hypnotic state.) And what's going on? We are all being shepherded by aliens who to most people pass for human. All out literature and advertising and television gives us nothing but subliminal messages like "Buy," "Obey," "Stay asleep," "No imagination," "Marry and reproduce," and "No independent thought." With the sunglasses the world is black and white but you can see what is really going on. (Hmmm! Could this be a comment on colorization?)

The real problem with They Live is that Carpenter has taken his five-page story and added little to it but padding. Most of the padding is action scenes which undiscerning audiences have come to accept as a substitute for plot. If the filmmaker has people shooting each other, breaking windows, having fist fights, and in general keeping images flicking on the screen, audiences do not care that the story is stopped stock still and not advancing one whit. This film is packed with very long stretches of mindless action, including a seemingly endless fist fight. And mindlessness in the media is very apropos for the plot of They Live, though at one point in the film Carpenter explicitly lists himself and George Romero as being part of the solution rather than the problem.

In spite of the fact that there was only about 30 minutes worth of story here, it is a good story and for its sake I would rate this a +2.

Sources of "Eight O'Clock in the Morning" by Ray Nelson:

F&SF, November, 1963

The Best of F&SF #13, edited by Avram Davidson

The Others, edited by Terry Carr

Tales of Terror from Outer Space, edited by R.

Chetwynd-Hayes

Year's Best Science Fiction #9, edited by Judith Merril

#### THE WAGES OF FEAR

CAPSULE REVIEW: A classic of tension and suspense that lives up to its reputation. This tale of trucking nitroglycerine over dirt roads had members of the audience leaning forward in their seats and gasping at what they saw on the screen. Rating: +3.

In Central America four men carry nitroglycerine over bumpy roads and pray that nothing sets off their cargo. The Wages of Fear (1953) is one of those films I had wanted to see for years but I really did not expect to like it a lot. First of all, I had seen Clouzot's Diabolique and was not greatly impressed even though it is considered a sort of semi-classic. I'd seen too many similar films, mostly from Hammer Films. Now, I had seen Sorcerer, William Friedkin's remake of The Wages of Fear, and thought it was an okay exercise in sus-

pense. In some ways it was a better approach, telling more of the history of the four drivers, though it suffered from an overblown budget that got used on things like car chases unnecessary to the plot. I had also seen a similar film --I've forgotten the title-- about trucking rocket fuel. So I knew that seeing the original, robbed of its novelty, could be a disappointment. Au contraire. The Wages of Fear is a white-knuckle sort of suspense.

Somewhere in Central America there is a town, probably one of many, that is a slow death trap. To leave takes money -- a lot of money. But no job in town pays well enough to earn that kind of money, at least no job left. Those who cannot get jobs with the big American oil company are doomed by poverty to stay in the little town until they work themselves to death. But suddenly there is work. Four truck drivers are needed to haul nitroglycerine to a burning oil well and the oil company will pay \$2000 for a day's work for anyone crazy enough to go on what might be a suicide mission. By carrying nitro, every twist in the road, every pothole, every unforeseen bump, every mudhole becomes a death trap. This is film noir with a vengeance; every yard of unpaved road becomes an enemy trying to find one unwary moment to go for the kill. (If that sounds overdramatic, see the film.) Each man reacts differently to the pressure: one is coldly efficient; one is sloppy and foolhardy, taking foolish risks; one is heroic; and one crumbles under the weight of fear.

Admittedly, there are some problems with The Wages of Fear. It takes a little too long for the plot to get underway. The final moments of the film are hackneyed. There are scenes so absurd as to be humorous. For example, an oil company foreman demonstrates the power of nitro by throwing some on the floor of his office. But it is a film that works, and works well enough to get audible gasps from the audience. The Wages of Fear is a classic that deserves to be. Rate it a +3.

#### THE NAKED GUN

CAPSULE REVIEW: The Zucker brothers and Jim Abrahams, who together made Airplane!, are back with a film version of their cult TV show Police Squad!. It provides a few laughs but is actually of a very different style from the TV show and it is a misstep. Rating: 0.

You are going to have to stick with the old arm-chair historian on this one. The Naked Gun has a long history. In 1974 a film was made that was sort of a radical experiment in comedy films. The Groove Tube was a sort of satire on television that was not a single story but a set of black-out sketches lampooning all aspects of television. It spawned a

host of imitators, one of the best being Kentucky Fried Movie, which was written in large part by three men: Jim Abrahams, David Zucker and Jerry Zucker. Like The Groove Tube, Kentucky Fried Movie was mostly made up of very short sketches but it included "A Fistful of Yen," a very extended satire on the Bruce Lee film Enter the Dragon. It was clear that someone felt the same madcap style could be applied to longer satires.

Meanwhile, in another part of the forest a production company called Quinn-Martin was making a set of popular television series including The FBI, The Fugitive, Run for Your Life, The Invaders, and a police show or two, all using the same style of story-telling, making them an easy target for satire. But television was not yet ready for the Abrahams/Zucker/Zucker style of comedy. What made all the difference was when the Abrahams/Zucker/Zucker team took a mediocre but popular television movie Terror in the Sky (which was in itself a remake of Zero Hour) and remade it using the same three-joke-a-minut style they had used in "A Fistful of Yen." The result was Airplane! It proved to the networks that there was a viable market for satire -- or at least the Abraham/Zucker/Zucker brand of satire. But could the Abraham/Zucker/Zucker style of humor be applied to a regular television series, and could it garner an audience big enough to sustain it?

In a word: no.

While Police Squad! was certainly one of the most inventive comedy programs ever on network television, outside of a loyal core of fans (my wife among them), people saw it once or twice and then felt they had seen it. By the time it was on, there were fewer Quinn-Martin productions on television anyway so perhaps fewer people even remembered the Quinn-Martin cliches like the dramatic voice reading the title of the episode. After one season of six shows the series was apparently no longer profitable enough to continue and was relegated to the ranks of cult television. Abrahams/Zucker/Zucker have since made three more theatrical films: Airplane II, Top Secret, and now the Police Squad! movie, The Naked Gun.

While Police Lieutenant Drebbin (played by Leslie Nielsen) is off in Lebanon beating up every anti-American world leader and warning them to keep out of America, one of his own undercover agents is shot, left for dead, and framed for heroin running. Drebbin investigates and finds at the heart of the matter a drug kingpin (played by Ricardo Montalban, in his second film adaptation of a cult television show) with a plan to kill Queen Elizabeth. I will not spend a lot of time on the plot since it is clear the filmmakers did not either. I will say that notably missing are some of the best running gags like the omniscient shoeshine boy and the frozen-scene end titles.

The real problem with the Police Squad! movie is that it is not really a Police Squad! movie. While it has a touch of the old style of three-jokes-a-minute, it sequesters into the Inspector Clouseau style in which the jokes are as funny, probably, but each one lasts longer, and there are fewer. Clouseau humor relied on the personality that Peter Sellers was able to put into the character while the original Police Squad!'s jokes were a steady barrage from all directions. Leslie Nielsen's Drebbin does not have the personal appeal that Sellers gave Clouseau. As a lampoon of police shows Police Squad! took every cliché it could find and turned each one on its head. It took place in a uniformly insane world. The Naked Gun, like the Clouseau films, takes place in a sane world with one insane man. This leads to a different character of film altogether. It is slower and less interesting. I would think it would be unlikely people would want to see Nielsen reprise his role again and again the way Sellers was able to.

In spite of a number of funny moments, quite a number in fact, The Naked Gun is a misfire and will probably be a one-shot. Rate it a 0.

#### DEAD RINGER

CAPSULE REVIEW: David Cronenberg's latest is an adaptation of the novel Twins by Wood and Geasland with Jeremy Irons playing twin brothers. The acting and the technical work are good but the storyline is slow, muddled, confusing, and self-contradictory. Rating: 0.

Every two or three films, David Cronenberg takes another few steps up the ladder of recognition. His Stereo and Crimes of the Future are experiments that went wrong. I did not find them worth watching. Then came Shivers (aka The Parasite Murders, aka They Came From Within), Rabid, and The Brood. These are diverting for horror film buffs, but not actually good films. Scanners and Videodrome were actually good and earned him a respectable following in his own genre. With The Dead Zone, The Fly, and Dead Ringers, he is building respect from general audiences. In fact, until very near the end, Dead Ringers is not really a horror film at all. It is something else; perhaps "surreal" comes the closest to describing it. In other ways it is unlike other Cronenberg. Of all Cronenberg's major films only The Dead Zone has less blood and less observable deformity. Note that the deformity does not fit into the plot, but seems sort of plastered on and, unlike in most Cronenberg films, is limited solely to dialogue and some absurd renderings of medical instruments. One wonders if the mutation plot was even in the source of the story (Twins by Bari Wood and Jack Geasland).

The story is about identical twin gynecologists, Beverly Mantle (played by Jeremy Irons) and his brother Elliot (played by Jeremy Irons). These twins are so identical that even people who know them well cannot tell them apart (partially due to the fact that they even have facial marks in the same places). (Of the two actors, Irons is probably the more charismatic and often shamelessly steals scenes from Irons.) From childhood Beverly and Elliot have shared interests, classes, experiences, even lovers. They imitate each other so well that they can hand lovers back and forth without the lovers suspecting. Then a new lover comes along, film star Clare Niveau (played by Genevieve Bujold) who discovers she has been handed off. She chooses one of the twins over the other and that asymmetry opens a Pandora's box in the brothers' relationship.

Dead Ringers is a spotty affair that sometimes makes sense and sometimes not. Irons does as good a job of split-screen acting as has ever been done. And make no mistake, that is difficult acting. Nobody nominated for an acting Oscar this year will have worked harder than Irons, yet the chances are virtually non-existent that Irons will get industry recognition for his part in Dead Ringers. But the plot if the film is plodding and ponderous. Some things that happen are never very well explained. In some scenes it is unclear which brother we are seeing. The final scene of the film is flatly impossible given what has led up to it. Because of the flaws, this gets a low 0.

#### GORILLAS IN THE MIST

CAPSULE REVIEW: A substantial and provocative film, Gorillas in the Mist tells the story of Dian Fossey who made herself one of the leading experts on mountain gorillas and who fought for their preservation. Rating: +2.

Gorillas in the Mist is the biography of Dian Fossey, a physical therapist who dropped her entire life and went to live in central Africa to study gorillas. It is the story of a passage from being a naive and selfish young dilettante to being a lion of a woman, fighting for the survival of the mountain gorillas of Rwanda.

As the film opens, there is little admirable about Dian Fossey (played by Sigourney Weaver). She rudely arrives in the middle of a lecture by the famous Dr. Louis Leakey (played by Ian Cuthbertson). She even borrows a pencil for notes and apparently does not return it. She doggedly follows Leakey, however, to persuade him to hire her to use her therapy skills to take a gorilla census. After a series of misadventures, she discovers the skills to approach gorillas and even to make unprecedented

physical contact with them. This minor victory and a new-found instinct to protect the gorilla family she comes to know transforms her from a shallow amateur to a woman with a cause. Almost immediately she recognizes the dangers that others of her species pose to her new-found family, and she finds clever and crafty ways to outsmart the poachers who prey on the gorillas.

For a while Fossey considers a relationship with a National Geographic photographer who has come to do a story on her work. And there is where the film makes its biggest mistake. At this point the film decides to concentrate on the mating habits of humans. Director Michael Apted wastes the unique locale and the characters to tell a rather dull love story that goes on entirely too long. Luckily it does not become the major thrust of Gorillas in the Mist.

After this rather annoying diversion the film returns to the main storyline. Gorillas in the Mist is at its best when it shows how Fossey learned about the gorillas or how she fought the poachers to help preserve the species, not when it concentrates on the love life.

Gorillas in the Mist is something of a departure for director Michael Apted, whose best known film is the remarkable 18 Up, the documentary that interviews the same group at ages 7, 14, 21 and 28. Yet both films show an interest in how apes and men inherit what they are and what they will become. Interestingly the film's associate producer and the source of its special effects is Rick Baker, a superb creator of makeup specializing in realistic portrayals of apes. Almost undoubtedly he also acted in the film though his name is not listed among the "mimes" in the credits. (He proves once more that the shoddy ape work he did in the title role of the 1976 King King was forced on him and below his standards.)

At its worst, Gorillas in the Mist is no worse than mediocre and it does achieve moments of magnificence. Rate it a +2.

#### ALIEN NATION

**CAPSULE REVIEW:** The biggest science fiction film of the year! (What a feeble year!) There is not a whole lot of science fiction in this reread of the mismatched-partners police film. There is not even much in the way of new twists from the science fiction premise. Lots of overly familiar mindless action to fill out the length of a feature film. Rating: -1.

These days Hollywood science fiction films really need a high budget. And they need imagination. Science fiction films need a budget because the cost of automobile parts has soared. Car chases are not exciting unless lots of cars get smashed up,

lots of shattered windshields get sprinkled over the street, and lots of great makeup effects of people smashed up in the cars. That costs money. Then filmmakers need imagination to design new kinds of guns that the audience has not seen before. Gunfights with the same old sorts of guns get boring. Hollywood has come to see that science fiction fans want to see new guns in science fiction film gunfights. Alien Nation is a science fiction film that has the car crashes and the new guns that fans demand. And I hope they are happy with what they got. I suspect that they will be because Alien Nation's basic story usually does very well whenever it shows up in a film, 4 or 5 times a year.

As the film starts, the "Newcomers" have been on Earth for three years. Newcomers are aliens who arrived on Earth and were accepted much like, and to the same degree as, many other ethnic groups. In fact, the film glosses almost totally over how much more different an alien species would be from us than a new and unfamiliar human ethnic group would be. There are references to a very different physiology but they sure look a lot like humans over 95% of their bodies. In fact, the camera lingers lovingly over the very human-like breasts of the women. Now, nobody really knows why human women have globular breasts that even our closest primate relatives do not. And compared to these Newcomers, even daffodils are close relatives, yet the Newcomers' female breasts are similar enough that our main character gets a thrill fondling them. Well, it is just that kind of film.

But I am digressing. The aliens live in very human-like ghettos and have very human-like sorts of problems. Towards the end of the film we learn a few more differences, but for most of the film you could easily substitute "Chinese" for "alien" and you could tell the same story. And undoubtedly someone has since it is a story that has been done so frequently in the past. This story is the "mismatched police partners." You have seen it before. It may not have been called 48 Hours, Red Heat, or Lethal Weapon. There are enough of them to turn listing examples into a party game. Yes, there is initial friction between the partners; yes, they come to like each other. It is all there, complete with big gunfights and car chases.

James Caan does a reasonable job as Matthew Sykes, whose old partner is killed by insidious aliens. Mandy Patinkin is enjoyable to watch as Sam Francisco--named that by an insensitive immigration official. But then it cannot be really hard for them to play parts that have been done so many times before. The film also features in cameo roles lots of products you can buy in your local grocery store. The alien makeup is all right if scientifically unlikely, and all other visual effects of the film have tires and fenders or bullets.

What was purported to be the year's biggest sci-

ence fiction film is a huge disappointment. Rate it a -1.

### THE FLY II

**CAPSULE REVIEW:** Bleak sequel to David Cronenberg's bleak remake of The Fly. A few good ideas mixed in with a lot of absurdity. Aimed very much at a teenage market. Rating: -1.

In 1958 Twentieth Century Fox released The Fly, based on the story of the same name that had appeared the year before in Playboy. As they would later do with Star Wars, they assumed that The Fly would be a quick summer film for the kids and would soon be forgotten. Instead it was their moneymaker for the year. Later they made the first of two sequels, Return of the Fly, about the son of the tragic hero of the first film also being transformed. Three years ago, Mel Brooks' Brooksfilm production company and Fox made a non-remake remake of The Fly, directed by David Cronenberg. It was successful so with the inevitability of history repeating itself, Brooksfilm and Fox have made a sequel about a son following in all six of his father's footsteps. Since Return of the Fly was already used and Pupa of the Fly is hard to say, they have called it The Fly II.

Technically this is not a teenage sequel since Martin Brundle (played by Eric Stoltz wearing more make-up than he did in Mask) grows up very quickly and only looks, sounds, and acts like a teenager. He is really only five years old, but a very mature five years old. In fact, he is not only mature enough to have a sophisticated adult relationship, including sex, with a woman who cannot tell she is making love to a five-year-old (Beth Logan, played by Daphne Zuniga), little Brundle has also become a computer hacker and genetic scientist par excellence. This prodigious brilliance is apparently the result of a skillful blending of the genes of a brilliant scientist, a science magazine writer, and a horsefly. He also seems to have inherited a love of dogs from his insect parentage. (Dogs are very nice to flies and often make them dinner.) Now suddenly, after five years of at least looking normal, Martin is being taken over by the fly genes he inherited. Of course, his genes seem to be all he was allowed to inherit as he is unknowingly kept prisoner by Bartok Industries which in Martin's father's day seemed to have a very nice "hands off" policy on their workers' efforts but which, in the intervening five years has become Cruelty, Incorporated, performing vicious experiments on animals and ignoring the human rights of their employees. Yes, we have a genuine teenage sequel with sensitive, smart teens (one of them is only five years old) and nasty, vicious, stupid adults.

Like The Fly I, The Fly II is a somber dark film, literally and figuratively. Like The Fly I, it has one or two ideas mixed in with liberal doses of balderdash. You can also see more of anything that went over big in the first film. There are lots of gore effects. Little Fly seem to have his father's habit of shattering his way straight through panes of glass. And in the grand tradition of sequels, the main continuing character was one of the least interesting characters in the original. In this case it is Stethis, the publisher, played by John Getz. Admittedly we do get flashes of Martin's two human parents. (The actor who played the fly parent tragically died before the sequel was made, if I know my entomology.) A Gina-Davis-non-lookalike we see scream on an operating table and die. We do actually see a tape of Jeff Goldblum as Seth Brundle, claiming he designed the transporter/reconstructor to be "creative" in the way it rebuilds things. "Creative." That was the word he used. Right! Oh, and there is an in-joke. One of the characters is reading The Shape of Rage, a study of the films of David Cronenberg, the director of The Fly I.

This is one of those films you can tell is in trouble just by reading the credits. Four people worked on the script -- always a bad sign, and even worse since two have the same last name. Then there is the fact that the special effects were created and designed by Chris Walas, Inc. Why does that sound bad? Because the film was directed by Chris Walas, that's why.

The science of The Fly II could have been interesting, combining aspects of modern genetics and computer science. The plot involves both gene splicing and the first reference I have seen on the screen to computer worms. But the science is bad and uses dramatic license rather than any knowledge of the field. The science is tailored to the plot and the special effects rather than the reverse. The creature that Martin mutates into has little to do with a human or a fly. And then the idea that the fly genes would save all their disfiguring effects until Martin is grown up seems absurd, and the idea that the fly DNA and the human DNA would combine for a viable (living) creature is a little hard to believe.

All told, this is a disappointing sequel to Cronenberg's The Fly. Rate it a -1.

### LAWRENCE OF ARABIA -- Restored Edition

While it is an old film, and a well-known one, I probably should say something about the restored version of Lawrence of Arabia since its release is one of the big events of the year. ("What? More words?" as Jack Hawkins asks early in the film.) And it's true, there has been a lot of media cover-

age. As a labor of love, Robert Harris has organized the restoration of a classic film, many people's favorite film of all time, and certainly one that deserves a +4 rating from me. The time spent on the restoration was longer than was spent on the original film (19 months on the restoration, 18 on the original film).

I think it is now film history what Harris and his people went through to restore the film. First Harris got Steven Spielberg and Martin Scorsese to tell Columbia that if the restoration did not get funded there would be no more Columbia films by either director. Harris's team scoured the world for prints that might have some footage that may have been cut from more commonly available editions. They found footage for which they had no sound and in some cases no script. They hired lip-readers to tell them what the actors were saying. Then they rehired Peter O'Toole, Alec Guinness, and several of the other actors to recreate their voices for 1962 and to redub the scenes, then they had to recut the new pieces in, artificially add hiss so the transition would not be so noticeable, and so forth. It was a remarkable piece of work. Further they had to remove the scratches for the pieces they had. Surprisingly, that is possible. The scratches are only on the surface and there is a process by which, if you put the film in fluid, it fills up the cracks and you can transfer a scratchless image as long as you do so in the fluid.

So it was a giant piece of work, though I am told not incredibly expensive as new films go, and at the Ziegfeld in New York they did have lines wrapped around the block. I stood for 90 minutes in the cold to get in, and would probably do so again, though I have to say I was less than pleased with the Ziegfeld's presentation of the restoration, at least of the sound. The music was painfully loud and I would say it sounded distorted. It is rare that you see a 70mm print that is not a blown-up 35mm print. This was filmed on 70mm film and you can see a difference, not a tremendous difference, but it is noticeable. The "mystical" experience of seeing the desert in all the glory of the original film eluded me. Yes, it is very good photography and seeing it in this really wide-screen version reminds you how good the photography is. It is a very good cinematic experience seeing the restoration, not much more.

Now here comes one of those pieces of heresy that I get my ears pinned back for occasionally. The people who cut down the film from 223 minutes to 187, they diminished the film. They did not butcher it. That 187 minute film that I got off of cable--that was a +4 film. The restored version seen on the wide screen is a better film, but not that much better. Given that the film was going to be cut, the "butchers" made pretty much the right cuts. There is one notable exception, the sequence

of Lawrence massacring a group of Turks toward the end of the film. The cut version was incoherent; the full version was bloodier and made Lawrence less sympathetic, probably the reason for the bad cut. With the exception of that sequence and what it says about Lawrence, I find that what I like the film for was never cut out of it. (Speaking of what it says about Lawrence, I recommend an hour-long program they run on PBS that tells you more about the real Lawrence than the film does.) I do not approve of the cuts that were made, but the result was still a very good film.

#### THE ADVENTURES OF BARON MUNCHAUSEN

CAPSULE REVIEW: Once again the ever-so-lightly exaggerated adventures of the great Baron are told. Terry Gilliam brings many of the great images of the Munchausen stories to the screen but the story that ties them together has problems. Rating: High +1.

The Adventures of Baron Munchausen is purported to be the final installment of a "trilogy" of films directed by Terry Gilliam, the animator for the "Monty Python" television series. AND while the first two, Time Bandits and Brazil, were based on original screenplays, Baron Munchausen is an adaptation of the famous adventures which are for Europe sort of what the Oz stories are for the United States. The earliest Munchausen stories were first published in 1785. Since then the tall tales have taken many forms. Many Americans first became aware of the Baron through NBC's 1933 radio program The Jack Pearl Show, in which Pearl played the Baron. There have been at least two previous film versions, one from Germany in 1943 with Hans Albers as the Baron and one from Chechoskovakia in 1961 with Milos Kopecky. The latter used to show up on New York television and did some very imaginative combining of live actors and animation. Terry Gilliam's version is the latest version, and like the 1961 and probably the 1943 versions, visually is owes very much to one of the great book illustrators of all time, Gustave Dore.

The story of Gilliam's film is not taken from the book but rather is a tying together of the more imaginative scenes that Dore illustrated, but what is at times a more rapid-fire pace. And only "at times," because the pacing of Baron Munchausen is extremely uneven. As in Time Bandits, Gilliam has little idea of which of his sequences are really entertaining and which are simply dull. More than once the viewer feels like telling Gilliam that he has made his point, is wasting precious screen time on an idea that has no more to offer and should get on with things. Then as often as not the next scene is a gem.

The story has a small theatre company putting on their production of "The Adventures of Baron Munchausen" in a city besieged by the Ottoman Turks. As the pallid play proceeds, who should arrive but the Baron himself to give his own account of his adventures. The story is difficult to relate from there, not because it is hard to tell what is fantasy and what is reality, but because the script actually contradicts itself as to what is its actual story line versus story-within-story. Hence the story line does not bear close examination. Somewhere in all this is the Baron's bet with a sultan and a trip to the moon with Robin Williams playing a very strange moon man. There is a visit to Vulcan's forge, and another to the belly of a huge fish. Finally there is a stupendous battle between the

Ottoman Turks and the Baron's friends, who amount to virtual super-heroes.

Like the 1961 version, this film is a treat more for the eye than for the mind. Scenes of the city under seige are done with tremendous historical realism. Some scenes of fantasy are done with great imagination. Then just when the proper mood is established, Gilliam will throw in an anachronistic reference and get a chuckle from the audience at the expense of the mood.

The Adventures of Baron Munchausen is a film that when it is good is very, very good, and when it is bad, it can be quite bad. It is a tough film to rate verall, but probably deserves a high +1 -- better than Time Bandits, not as good as Brazil.

## Book Reviews by *Laura Todd*

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### SIDESHOW

by W. R. Thompson  
Baen Books, 1988, \$3.50

There must be something about the "persecuted telepath" scenario that resonates within the human psyche. Why else would the theme keep cropping up so often? This theme was my intro to SF back in the Sixties, when I was a persecuted adolescent (though alas, not a telepath). Anyway, in Sideshow telepaths once again appear as the noble scapegoats who only want to help, while the rest of the populace believes they are demons, witches and subversives who want to take over the country.

The book is set in the early 21st century in an America beset with paranoia, terrorism and economic depression. Telepaths, who appeared as a result of a virus-induced mutation, are viewed as mentally ill and declared wards of the Mental Health Institute. As such they are legal unpersons. They cannot own property and must wear a degrading orange wristband, and they are ostracized and attacked on the streets. Worse still, a fascist group called the Iron Guard is rapidly gaining popularity with the citizenry. This group regards telepaths about the way Hitler regarded Jews.

The main plot line follows the trials of Julian Forrest, a prominent telepath who is believed to head the "witches' conspiracy," and his girlfriend Birche. There is, of course, no conspiracy. Forrest and his ragtag friends are the archetypal telepathic saints. Even as they huddle in abandoned slums, hiding from terrorists and vigilantes, they retain their belief in the basic goodness of humanity. They can't bear to kill, or even harm their persecutors.

Other plot strands follow a sleazy reporter who tries to advance his career by playing up to the fascist demagogue, and a bureaucrat who heads the Counter Terrorist Organization. Political double dealing and battles with a radical anarchist group also liven the action.

Though I found this book entertaining, I wouldn't class it with such greats as Zenna Henderson's Pilgrimage. Why? The biggest problem in this book is the split focus. I was absorbed in the telepathic characters and the special interactions, vulnerabilities and insights which their gift afforded them. This psychological dimension is what makes telepaths more interesting as protagonists than, say, mercenaries. The chapters written from their viewpoint had great potential. But I was much less interested in the chapters written from the viewpoint of the reporter and the bureaucrat, dealing with their cat-and-mouse game with the Iron Guard. These chapters read like something out of a mediocre spy novel, and were merely a distraction to me. I wish the author had left them out, and instead used the space to develop the protagonists to the level they deserved. Then this might have been a memorable book rather than just an "almost."

### WATERSONG

by Mary Caraker  
Questar, 1987, \$2.95

Ocean ecology seems to be an "in" topic in SF these days. That's understandable, considering the problems we Earthlings are having keeping our oceans clean. Recently there have been several good books set on aquatic worlds. I therefore read Na-

tersong with great interest, as it deals with the effects of a changing environment on a semi-aquatic species.

This unnamed species of humanoids begins its life as ocean-going swimmers. When washed up on land, the younglings are mature enough to forage for themselves. As "landlings," they live an idyllic life, foraging, mating and relaxing as they please.

The trouble starts when the smaller of their binary suns begins to fade and the ocean temperature drops. Swimmers start coming ashore before they are fully developed. Fewer and fewer survive each time, until the race is in danger of extinction.

A landling named Rintu is driven to an unorthodox action: he helps an immature swimmer survive. This female, Embri, grows up to be a rebel with even more radical ideas: when her time comes to breed, she seals her offspring in a sheltered pool and nurtures them. The rest of the tribe is scandalized, as nurturing the young is something only "animals" do. But Embri's offspring are the only ones who survive, and it's at this point that the reader will realize that this book is only superficially "about" the ecology of a strange planet.

The first section of this novel appeared as the story "Out of the Cradle" in *F&SF* (July, 1987). A reader in *Lan's Lantern #27* complained that the story was "disguised mammalian chauvinism," putting forth the notion that Motherhood is best. And indeed, once Embri's innovation is shown to be the way to survive, the rest of the females begin to see things her way. They are forced to relinquish their easy-going lives to become child-raisers, and other all-too-familiar patterns evolve: female dependence, permanent male-female bonding, and families.

I was not sure how to take this book: was it feminist, anti-feminist, or just another "aboriginal culture makes good" yarn? In the course of the book, the tribe develops pottery, stone houses, and incipient agriculture. In fact, while I found the first section quite absorbing, the book became less interesting as it went along. It degenerated into the day-to-day tribal politics and romantic struggles of the protagonists, who by this time were practically indistinguishable from humans.

The ending is what saved the book, though, because the unexpected happened: the small sun reappeared and the environment began changing back to what it was in the first place. Sheltered offspring begin to die. Females who have grown used to raising and nurturing their young will be forced to abandon them to the ocean, or watch them die. The reader is led to imagine a culture "re-adapting" to its natural state, something which we as humans have never experienced. I thus conclude about adaptation to a changing environment and how it affects



a culture. Though parts of this book were slow, I would still recommend it for the interesting ideas it presented.

#### CHERNOBYL

by Frederik Pohl  
Bantam, 1988, \$4.50

Chernobyl is not SF, although it resembles some SF novels in that it deals with the deadly combination of high technology and human frailty, and shows how this combination affects human lives.

This book is written in a novelistic style, with imaginary characters, but it deals with a real event -- the 1986 explosion at the Chernobyl nuclear power plant. Like many a disaster novel, it begins with the mundane lives of ordinary people and then shows us how an awful event changes those lives. Here are some of the characters we meet: the deputy director of the power plant, who was off duty when the explosion occurred but is forced to take the blame; the engineer who stays in the burning power plant to help the injured; the fireman who runs the other way when the reactor blows up and is thereafter branded a coward.

With stark, straightforward prose, Pohl portrays the widening effects of the disaster: as radioactive debris rains down over the area, bewildered citizens wait for authorities to tell them what to do. Ill-equipped fire fighters work night and day

to quell the blaze. The town of Pripyat is evacuated; its citizens loaded aboard buses to unknown destinations without knowing if they will ever return. Young army recruits are shipped in to do decontamination duty in the ghostly, deserted town. And eventually several of the power plant workers are hospitalized with radiation sickness. They face their suffering with varying degrees of humor, forbearance and courage. Some recover; others do not.

Though this book is written in a spare, objective style, the characters are portrayed in convin-

cing detail. Their plight could not fail to move me. After all, these are not fantasy characters but people much like ourselves. In addition, Pohl helps us understand the disaster by including expository sections explaining how the reactor worked and what went wrong. There are also scenes that reveal the politics and the daily problems of life in the Soviet Union.

Altogether I found this to be an informative, absorbing book which hit harder than many an SF novel about imaginary mega-disaster. After all, this really did happen.

## Film & Book Reviews by *Ben Schilling*

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### The Healer's War

by Elizabeth Scarborough  
Doubleday, 1988, \$17.95

This is only slightly fantasy. It is certainly not the sort of light fantasy that we have come to expect from Ms Scarborough. The main character is an Army nurse at China Beach, Vietnam in the middle of the war. Kitty McCulley is an all-American girl from Kansas City who finds herself in the general Hell of an Army hospital in the war zone. She is trying to do the impossible with severely limited resources. Her daily life is filled with the ups and downs of military life and the added problem of being one of the very few Western women in the area.

The fantasy element comes in when an old Vietnamese man gives her a magic healing amulet. It allows her to see the real condition of a patient and also lets her heal them out of her own life energy. Unfortunately the Army sends the hospital a new doctor who will not treat the Vietnamese. She attempts to get a young Vietnamese boy to a safer place and finds herself lost in the jungle. She manages to return to "safety" and is sent home with a medal.

The book does manage to end on a bit of an upbeat, but it is fairly graphic and depressing. If you expect one of Ms Scarborough's light fantasies, you will be disappointed. Read the book anyway. It is worth the trouble.

### THEY LIVE

Very much a science fictional movie with a conspiracy theory theme. There are aliens living among

us. They have managed to put subliminal messages on everything. Billboards really read "CONFORM", "CONSUME", "NO INDEPENDENT THOUGHT", or other similar messages. The aliens look like humans, provided that you're not wearing these special sunglasses. It's a very scary sort of movie, tending towards horror, but without all the slasher scenes that most horror movies these days seem to require. There is a rather long and intense fight scene in the middle of the show, and the body count is rather high, but it's more like Hitchcock than Friday the Thirteenth, Part N. I'm giving this one serious consideration for a Hugo nomination.

### WHO CENSORED ROGER RABBIT?

by Gary Wolf  
Ballantine, 1981, \$3.50

I found this in the mystery section of a bookstore. Some of the ideas and situations involved in the movie Who Framed Roger Rabbit? are also in the book, but it isn't nearly as "nice" as the movie is. We do have Eddie Valiant, Roger and Jessica Rabbit, and Roger is accused of murder. That's about as close as the book and the movie get.

In the book a 'Toon's ability to take all that punishment is due to their ability to generate a short lived doppelganger. Jessica has moved out off Roger's place and is getting a divorce. 'Toons, unless they can suppress them, generate caption balloons, just like on the funny pages. Roger's last words are found (in a caption balloon), and they implicate Jessica. Roger had generated a fairly long term doppelganger shortly before he was murdered; which (who?) is attempting to help Eddie clear Jessica and/or Roger. The book is missing

most of what I thought were the best parts of the movie.

### THE STORY OF THE STONE

by Barry Hughart  
Doubleday, 1988, (SFBC)

This is the second of the Master Li novels, following up on the success of The Bridge of Birds. Master Li is the greatest scholar in all of China, however he has a slight flaw in his character. (He is only violent and unscrupulous when he needs to be...) This mystery involves Number 10 Ox, Moon Boy the greatest living expert on two things, both starting with "S"; one is "SOUND", Grief of Dawn, a prostitute who is the only person capable of keeping Moon Boy in line, a (supposedly) long dead mon-

ster known as the Laughing Prince, and the Laughing Prince's successor as ruler of the Valley of Sorrows.

There has been a murder and a theft at an abbey in the Valley of Sorrows and all signs point to the Laughing Prince and his followers, the Monks of Mirth. The Laughing Prince has been dead for about seven hundred fifty years. Of course, in Hughart's China a little thing like death never stood in villain's way, so it may well be the Laughing Prince. Of course, by the end of the book, Master Li and Ox have been to Hell and back (sort of) and everything is set right, except Master Li's slight character flaw, of course.

It's fanciful, a bit less endearing than The Bridge of Birds, and a little more frantic, if that's possible. Still, it's a pretty good read and well worth looking for.

## Book Reviews by Sion Ingle

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### TEN LITTLE WIZARDS

by Michael Kurland  
Ace, 1988, \$2.95

What if -- there were further adventures for Randall Garrett's Lord Darcy?

The last time the reading public heard anything from Lord Darcy was in Garrett's Napoli Express in 1979. Nearly ten years after that, Darcy and Master Sorcerer Sean O Lochlainn are once more posed with a magic/murder/political intrigue puzzle in one of the more famous alternate histories.

For those who have never read Garrett's original stories and novels, in Lord Darcy's history Richard the Lion Hearted didn't die in 1199. Instead he reigned for a further ten years and was followed on the Angevin throne by his nephew, Arthur of Brittany. The plantagenets still rule the Angevin and the Holy Roman Empires and both the Americas. Their arch-rivals are the Kings of the Polish Hegemony. Ah, yes, in this world magic works.

In the environs of Castel Cristobel in Normandy, sorcerers are getting murdered. This would be bad enough if it were not for the fact that Prince Gwilliam is also at Castel Cristobel for his elevation to Prince of Gaul. There are Polish agents in the region, and there is intelligence that they intend to kill the Prince. Are these murders part of the Polish plot?

I won't spoil the story for you. The book is good Darcy, but it just isn't great Darcy. Kurland had ten years of alternate history to explain away,

and he does. He also, as did Garrett, drops into occasional historical explications, but I fear that Garrett did it with more skill than Kurland does in Ten Little Wizards.

The problem with the book is that Kurland is following Garrett and has a lot to live up to. It is not easy to know that people are going to compare you mystery against Too Many Magicians, and keeping that in mind I will admit to having liked the book. I recognize every flaw in the writing: stiff dialogue, too much explanation at the wrong places, and a bit of "My, aren't I cute." Still, it was not as bad as some people have made out, and for my part I hope that Kurland will try another Lord Darcy mystery. With the first one under his belt the next one has to be easier.

### DRUID'S BLOOD

by Esther M. Friesner  
NAL, 1988, \$3.50

What if -- the Roman invasion hadn't happened? The Britons still rule Britain in the old Celtic ways, and there is magic.

Interesting proposition, no? I had been advised before I bought Druid's Blood that the book would not live up to my expectations, but I bought it anyway. The initial review was correct.

The plot is simple. Dr. John H. Weston (pseudo-Watson) meets with Queen Victoria at the Queen's Beltane fire. They strike up a relationship, and when she is threatened (i.e., forced toward a mar-

riage with the evil Lord Kitchner), Weston enlists the aid of his friend Brihtric Donne (pseudo-Holmes). There ensue various adventures, various encounters, and tons of in-jokes.

The weaknesses of Druid's Blood lie for the most part in the fact that the point of diversion of this alternate history is so far in the past that the derivation of what is, with a few exceptions, the Victorian/Holmesian London with which we are familiar, is implausible. Friesner made a valiant attempt to reconcile the inconsistencies, but ultimately she failed.

Take the names, for example. Britain is Celtic pagan. Ok, why is Weston's name John? That is a Hebrew name. Why does he have a first name and a last name? That is a late Middle Ages invention; Celts tended to use a patronymic system. And why is Victoria named Victoria? Nice Latin name, that. The rest of the book suffers from similar problems, startling inconsistencies which are not properly explained.

Some of the in-jokes (and there are a lot) are good, especially if you appreciate Victorian popular literature, but I felt that at times the plot was suspended for no other purpose than the introduction of an in-joke (Arthur Elric Boyle, MD? Give me a break!). Taken as a whole the novel fails to shine, and for a novel that had such a delightful premise I find that sad.

#### SORCERY AND CECELIA

by Patricia C. Wrede and Caroline Stevermer  
Ace, 1988, \$2.95

What if -- magic worked? How would the English Regency have fared?

Wrede and Stevermer's novel is the result of a Letter Game. Two cooperative writers go into persona and exchange letters, each telling a story in the process. In the case of Sorcery and Cecelia the result was a short, fun novel.

Cecelia and Kate are cousins. They reside in Essex, but this year Kate has gone to London for the Season. In the course of the novel, each comes across her own separate (yet strangely connected) sorcerous threat and after various adventures ends up, as in all good Regency romances, as a bride-to-be to her perfect match.

You don't have to attend Georgette Heyer Teas at Worldcon to enjoy this book, although if you do you will have a head start on some of the jokes. Even without that, Sorcery and Cecelia is a fun read.

Not that we are without amusement in Essex; quite the contrary! Aunt Elizabeth and I called at the Vicarage yesterday and spent a stimulating afternoon listening to the Rev.

Fitzwilliam discoursing on the Vanities of Society and the Emptiness of Worldly Pleasures. Aunt Elizabeth hung on every word, and we are to return to take tea on Thursday. I am determined to have a headache Thursday, even if I have to hit myself with a rock to do so.

The novel does not deal with the centers of power in this alternate history, as did Druid's Blood and Ten Little Wizards, but then it does not think it has to. This makes it a better book. The world is different only in the respect that magic works; the rest is the English Regency familiar to readers of that genre. This just goes to show that one does not need to make drastic alterations to come up with a good alternate history.

In case you could not tell, I loved Sorcery and Cecelia.

#### THE ARMOR OF LIGHT

by Melissa Scott and Lisa A. Barnett  
Baen, 1988, \$3.95

What if -- magic worked, Philip Sidney didn't die in 1586, and Christopher Marlowe didn't die in 1593.

Where Druid's Blood fails, Ten Little Wizards needs work, and Sorcery and Cecelia charms, The Armor of Light triumphs! It is, quite simply, the best alternate historical to come out in 1988.

There is a plot against James VI of Scotland, and to help bring this potential heir to the English throne through this adversity, Elizabeth sends her champion, Sir Philip Sidney, north to Scotland. There, with his trusted (to various degrees) household, he wards off the magical attacks of the Wizard Earl of Bothwell on the King.

I wish that a simple plot synopsis could do the book justice. Scott and Barnett chose some very simple points of diversion for their alternate history. All the rest is our familiar Elizabethan England, and for me this was the strength of the novel. Not only was the setting familiar, but the authors' research and their presentation of the Elizabethan world, and especially of the various characters, was exceptional.

Everything fits. (Well, almost everything, but I don't expect everybody to know what dances they were doing in the Scottish court in the 1590s.) This book should be given to anyone intending to write alternate historicals as a basic text and shining example! Even if you do not normally read alternate historicals, give this one a try. It is not a fast read -- do not get that impression -- but it is well worth the time it takes.

SPOCK'S WORLD  
A Star Trek Novel

by Diane Duane  
Pocket Books, 1988, \$16.95

Stop moaning! I know what you are going to say. Review a Star Trek novel? Why? They are all trash!

Often I would agree. I only read Star Trek novels by six authors: Carey, Duane, Ford, Hambly, McIntyre and Snodgrass; but these authors I read religiously because they write well first and Star Trek second.

Spock's World revolves around a Vulcan referendum on secession from the federation. In what has become Duane's style, alternate chapters deal with either the ongoing secession debate or drop back into Vulcan history and present a story of a particular era. As the historical tales come closer and closer to the "present," it becomes clear that there is more to the secession vote than anyone imagined, and the crew of the Enterprise, to save the Federation as we now know it, is forced to boldly stick their noses in where no one has stuck a nose before.

Obviously I expected to read a good novel when I picked up the book, and I was not disappointed. The main story was properly paced, and the speech each character gave before the Vulcan electorate was a very good vehicle to explore the character and his/her motivations. The historical tales provide for a coherent history for the planet, and although some of them had resemblances to the basic premises of certain Darkover stories, the stories in Spock's World were better written.

If you cannot bring yourself to buy a Star Trek novel in hardback, wait for the paperback and buy it then. If you cannot even do that -- borrow it. It is worth the read.

THE SCHOLARS OF NIGHT

by John M. Ford  
Tor, 1988, \$16.95

Readers have come to expect witty, involved SF stories and novels from John M. Ford, and in The Scholars of Night readers have a witty, involved spy thriller.

Thomas Hansard is a college professor who moonlights, working for a strange man named Rapheal and the "White Group," a Washington based consulting agency. Hansard uses his historical knowledge to clear up historical mysteries. His current assignment is to authenticate the Skene manuscript, a play alleged to have been written by Christopher Marlowe. Safe assignment? Not likely.

In England, a spy meets an untimely end, and the management of a plot against NATO forces falls into the very capable hands of his mistress. The spy happened to be a friend of Hansard, and when he arrives in England to begin the authentication process, the plot and counterplots mesh and come to a head.

This book is believably combines the historical detective story and the spy thriller story, and weaves in parts of an Elizabethan thriller which provides the basis for the first two. Reading a Ford novel, I know at the onset that I am going to miss at least 25% of the references -- Ford is an ambulatory encyclopedia -- but even with that knowledge I read his novels and then re-read them. There may not be a better drafter of fiction on the market today, and one of his books is not to be missed.

DRAGONSDAWN

by Anne McCaffrey  
Del Rey, 1988, \$18.95

Oh Anne! You have done it to us again.

Dragonsdawn concerns the initial colonization of Pern, and for a while I harboured great hopes for the book. The interstellar federation McCaffrey paints sounded interesting, but for the heroes and villains of the story a life of pastoral squalor on a backwater planet seemed preferable.

In the first part of the book, the colonists land on Pern, establish a colony and almost immediately impress fire lizards -- oops, I'm sorry, we don't call them fire lizards until the second part of the book.

Eight years later, in that second part, Thread falls. The colony is devastated and mobilizes what little remains of their technology to defend the planet. Eventually they decide they have to breed dragons. They do not say that in quite those words, but that is what they decide to do.

Now, we all know how one flies Between, but how does one do it for the first time? The last part of the book consists of the Dragonriders learning how to ride dragons.

A gripe: Why was this story not published in two or three separate novels? It naturally divides between the second and third parts, but they were forced together, like square pegs in round holes or like the two novellas that were forced together to make Dragonflight. This is not an indication of good writing.

Further gripe: the book feels like it was written to tie down loose ends. Why, ten years after colonization, everyone is speaking Standard Pernese, just like they will be several centuries lat-

er. Isn't that convenient? And, unless the Red Star is a very recent addition to the Rukbat System, how can there be any carbon-based life on Pern? This is not an indication of a well thoughtout story.

Accordingly, I cannot recommend this book. I own it -- let us not quibble about that -- but I am so unsatisfied with the story, with the way that it is presented, and with the annoying inconsistencies that I cannot in good conscience recommend that someone spend the money on it.

#### FOR LOVE OF EVIL

by Piers Anthony  
Morrow, 1988, \$17.95

For Love of Evil is the sixth entry in the Incarnations of Immortality series and deals with everybody's favorite Incarnation, Satan.

It would seem that Satan began his existence as Parry, an apprentice sorcerer, in Provence around the end of the Twelfth Century. He enters holy or-

ders and helps to found the Inquisition. Eventually Lucifer takes note of him and sends him a demoness to corrupt him. In a confrontation with Lucifer, Parry triumphs and assumes the Office of Evil.

The rest of the book follows Satan as he bit-by-bit homes in on his inevitable liaison with Orb Kaftan, destined to be the Incarnation of Nature, and there is my gripe.

The firsts half of the book deals with the way that Parry comes to the Office of Evil and with the way he consolidates his Office. It is interesting. The second half glosses -- and I am afraid that is the best word for it -- over the events in On a Pale Horse, With a Tangled Skein, Wielding a Red Sword, and Being a Green Mother. It is sort of the Satan's-eye-view of it all. It is interesting, but disappointing. It is filling in, not storytelling.

There is going to be a seventh book in the series. I hesitate to say final, since that is what I thought Green Mother was supposed to be. It sounds like that in the seventh book everybody is going to gang up on God. Hmm, such a concept.

## Theatre Beat with

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### BEN INDICK

Because of the endlessly hot summer, Janet and I certainly have been disinclined to be quite as adventurous with our theatre, where small offBroadway and off-off-Broadway "theatres" are often little more than fairly large spaces with or without air conditioning. Even when they do have AC they usually turn it off as the play commences because the noise is distracting. This applies as well to Broadway houses for the same reason, although they usually manage a level of comfort anyway. We have seen more films than usual, but, without being elitist, we simply prefer live theatre. I can only hope that my reviews, aside from interesting anyone as much in love with Theatre as we are, will inspire a few to see the shows when you are in New York City or when the shows travel to your area.

We have had some clinkers, but, oh, have we had some goodies. I shall mix them up, and I will tell you now that I will conclude with The Phantom of the Opera. But for starters, and its equal (but on a smaller scale) is The Coconuts, which we saw at the Arena Stage in Washington DC. It is a very successful revival of the great Marx Brothers success, as a play in 1925 and as one of the first sound movie musicals in 1929. About three years ago the Arena staged "the boys'" Animal Crackers, which we also saw and loved. The new revival had terrific

reviews, and our expectations were high. We were not disappointed. It was, simply, altogether wonderful. Unlike the superb Lincoln Center Theater revival of Cole Porter's Anything Goes, in which the book has been rather rewritten and many great Porter songs interpolated, The Coconuts is the original script and the Irving Berlin score is the original (none of its songs are memorable, but each is a delight within the show).

In the manner of old musicals, it takes a little while to get the exposition over with and also for the boys to gel as more than a replication of their illustrious models. However, by the second act, the are Groucho, Chico and Harpo (and if you do not like the Marxes, well, that is your loss!). Every line, however corny or punny, brings the house down in helpless and hysterical laughter. Tap-dancing, pretty girls, a simple yet beautiful setting, a fine expansive wise-cracking Groucho, a Chico who could not quite capturing the twinkling roguish quality of the original but at the piano finally achieved his essence in an extended Chicoesque tour de force, and Harpo...well, no one will ever be that beloved imp, and I have seen a number of actors try (Priscilla Lopez, in the Broadway Day in Hollywood, Night in the Ukraine, came very close!) but Charles Janasz was very good. No Marx Brothers

show can be complete without a harp solo. Three years ago Harpo appeared on a platform coming up from beneath stage center, playing a make-believe harp, of which the bow was a girl in glitter; he pursued and danced with her as harp music played, and then she resumed her position and they slipped down again. It was enchanting. In The Coconuts, the big Miami moon on the backdrop slid back to reveal Harpo in silhouette at his harp; it was so poignant that the audience burst into applause. All of it brought me back many years to that little boy who loved nothing better than seeing his favorite clowns in the movies on a Saturday afternoon. Truly, the stuff that dreams are made on. How beautiful to know the Boys are still and will always be alive!

One of the finest playwrights today in the realist tradition is August Wilson, the prize-winning writer of Ma Rainey's Black Bottom and Fences. Joe Turner's Come and Gone did not have a star presence like James Earl Jones of Fences, and was not a commercial success; it was, however, a very fine and moving story of simple and itinerant black people in a Chicago boarding house of which the owners at least are an upward striving middle class within their own limited stratum in 1911. (Ma Rainey, about a very successful jazz personality, is set in the 1930s and Fences, whose characters are factory workers, of whom Jones is bitter because his early baseball abilities could not be realized within white baseball leagues, in the early 60s.) Wilson is not beating the drums of protest, although the racism his people confront is always at the corner and at times the center. His characters are real and not posters. My favorite of the three was Ma Rainey, and I think I prefer Joe Turner to Fences, which tended to be episodic, but each has been mounted with love and care and superbly acted. (Broadway)

Last year we were very moved by The Boys Next Door by Tom Griffin, about a group of mentally retarded or disturbed men living by themselves in a normal city environment. The author had worked in that field and was knowledgeable. Now we saw a try-out of a new work, Pasta. The hero is pursued by a hood intent on getting a large sum of money the boy has gambled away with a local crook. While some of the dialogue is engaging, it would appear the author is struggling for a new theme. He has not found it yet. (Off-off-Broadway)

Morocco interested me only because the actress Gordana Rashovich was in it, and she had been very striking while plain as a survivor of the Holocaust in A Shayna Maydel last year. She manages to be glamorous in this mishmash of Casablanca and Alfred

Hitchcock, which is more than the script does. (Off-off-Broadway)

Big Time: Scenes from a Service Economy was snappy and punchy. A series of staccato episodes, none particularly new insight-wise about the yuppie generation, but funny and acute. The title is nearly as long as the play, but while 70 minutes doth not a theatre evening make, it was, within its needs, long enough. After the show I noted a very excited young man, knew he was the playwright, Keith Reddin, and congratulated him for a darned good show. Unfortunately, few of the critics did. Maybe another half hour would have helped. (Off-off-Broadway)

One of Jerry Herman's few failures was, about 1979, The Grand Tour, a story of a little Jewish man in France, 1940, trying to escape from the Nazis, and getting bound against the latter's will with a thick-skulled anti-semitic Polish Army Colonel trying to get to the Free Polish forces in England. It goes without saying they will become friends. An unlikely theme for a musical perhaps. It was revived by the Jewish Repertory Theatre on a much smaller scale than the Broadway show, somewhat revised and cut down, and proved charming, funny and melodious. It does not have the powerhouse of hits that Herman fashioned for Hello Dolly or Cage aux Folles, but several tunes pleasantly reverberate in the memory, and the story is silly and touching. It is still not for Broadway but it can be done easily and well by any ambitious local company. Herman's music is simply irresistible. (Off-off-Broadway)

A couple of Irish shows, and I am completely helpless before the beauty of Irish theatre writing. Juno and the Paycock by Sean O'Casey is an acknowledged classic and although we had to contend with some heavy brogues, we were privileged to see the Gate Theatre of Dublin in a performance which hung over me for days, growing more powerful as I reviewed it over and over. The acting was a dream to see, the equal of the Royal Shakespeare at its strongest. The play, more than half a century old, was a smash hit with critics and audience, but the actors, scheduled for a very brief run as part of a world tour refused to extend it. (Broadway)

No less exciting was a one-man show based on the novels of, but not actually a play by, Samuel Beckett. Last year we saw a well-done but abstract and difficult play by the great Irishman (actually living in France and writing in French for most of his lifetime). I'll Go On starred and was adapted by Barry McGovern, also of the Gate Theatre, and he was superb, nothing less, never missing a single nuance, never missing a word. For you Beckett devo-

tees (?) the novels excerpted were Molloy, Malone Dies and The Unnameable; the philosophy was standard Beckett, but the prose was also standard in that it was precise, chisel-sharp and beautiful. Quite to her surprise, Janet enjoyed it as much as I did. (Off-off-Broadway)

And a pair of "road" shows.

Athol Fugard is the best-known South African playwright, a white man whose plays of the black situation have played the world around. His The Road to Mecca is a success but the racial aspect is an indirect minor chord in this play of an aging woman whose neighbors want her to be taken from her home and rather idiosyncratic ways to a nursing home. The first act was very slow, as a friend, a young woman with troubles of her own, visits her. Fugard, acting, writing and directing, makes only a belated, head-on appearance at the end of the act. The second act is, however, very powerful as we get to know the characters of the two women and even Fugard, a preacher, once silently in love with the now slightly kooky old lady. "Mecca" refers to a collection of sculptures the old lady makes, with which she fills her yard, in the nature of the untrained artists who make large constructions of their inner minds, and which annoy her philistine townspeople. Yvonne Braceland, long associated with Fugard's work, is stunning as the old lady, and the play (to me) is worthy, if not as strong as, of comparison to the writer's Master Harold...and the Boys. It is perhaps unfair, but one gets to expect from a writer so associated with specific themes, even more on them. (Off-off-Broadway)

Road is a first play by a young British writer, Jim Cartwright, who had the idea of actually constructing a section of a road, with the houses around it, and the many characters (acted by seven industrious actors) who live and have their troubles there. It is the lower class life he is exploring and, for me, an area I have already seen explored many times. (I think I shall opt for nobility for a change.) It was acted on the floor of a large rectangular space as well as some side platforms and even the balcony. Audience members on the floor milled around with actors looking over their shoulders and occasionally being pulled into the action. The story was entirely in vignettes, at times moving, most of the time banal and obvious. The set was so well done, downtown in the energetic La Mama, so well lit, that I could not help but wish the show had been a true play, with beginning, middle and end, using such a set. I was reminded of the old film Street Scene with Sylvia Sydney, with neighbors hanging out of windows as the sad doomed little romance played its unimportant but touching way to its end. (Off-off Broadway)

Our summer vacation tour would up with an even-

ing in Las Vegas, glitz capital of the universe, and aside from losing a snappy five bucks to the slots (we were ahead \$2.70 but did not know when to quit), we took in a show. The Tropicana featured their version of Follies Bergere, which we had seen 34 years ago where it belongs, in Paris. So, okay, the girls were not Parisian, and while indubitably athletic few will reach Broadway; also, admitted, the klutzy opening scenes had me figuring a long night lay ahead. However, the show dropped its Parisian pretence and went modern, commencing with a great magician, then--more costume and set changes than Phantom, Busby Berkeley stuff, lasers, adagio dancers (a bit shaky), a very funny, suave Irish comic, and a seemingly endless line of gorgeous and statuesque ladies wearing little more than very ornate G-strings and headdresses which had required the tailfeathers of a forest of birds. Cornball, sure, but fun. (Far off-off-Broadway)

Last September (1987), after the very first advertisement, I wrote for four seats to Andrew Lloyd Webber's sensational London smash, The Phantom of the Opera. I specified carefully, too carefully, what I desired and got something much else. Much later, after many phone calls and certified letters returning tickets (\$50 per seat!), I had to settle still for what I had not requested but would accept. Instead of seats before July, I had to take them August 9, and arrange my summer to satisfy that date! Well, at least they were dead center, about 15 rows back and withal excellent seats --for what must be the most costly play I have ever seen. Well, make that MAYBE second most costly, next to Time, a spectacle beyond belief and a bore beyond sitting through. Phantom is spectacle, yes, but it is a LOVE of a show, a feast for the eyes, a tickle to the funny-bone, an aural pleasure (the songs are often just serviceable, never truly great, but they work wonderfully well within the show's needs). I may yet do an essay on all the versions of this corny old story, from the novel through the three films and a variant, plus the show, but for now I shall say it followed, for the first act, very closely to the book, and like Leroux's hoary old masterpiece had more red herrings than your local fish market. It varied in the second act, with a more romantic atmosphere (in the full meaning of that word). Some scenes were so beautiful the audience literally gasped aloud.

Before movies it was not uncommon for theatres to have great special effects. Indeed, they are part of theatrical history, with at times most intricate stage machinery. The films made such efforts seem paltry in comparison, and theatre hewed to a more realistic or naturalistic path. In this show, I figure the effects, sets and costumes were the costliest part of a very expensive production and simply maintaining and staging them costs a

small fortune regularly. However, audiences still love it, and that is one reason they flock to see it. It is sold out for a year to come and scalpers probably (I cannot swear to this for I did not see any, but one reads of it) get up to \$200 a seat from tourists unwilling to leave NY without seeing the season's smash -- and buying piles of souvenirs within.

At the curtain, Michael Crawford received an immediate and roaring standing ovation, altogether deserved, although the entire cast was tops. We had

originally intended to see the show as a birthday gift for Janet (in March); it turned out to be for my 65th birthday (two days later) and to make it an evening to remember we had an early dinner at The Four Seasons, in Meis's great Seagram Building on Park Avenue. All in all, a New York state of mind, as the song says, and for even just once, I wish it to each of you. Once may well be enough for some, but, ah! that once! The Four Seasons and The Phantom of the Opera -- Wilderness be Paradise enow!

## Tape & Book Reviews by Lan

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### VENGEANCE OF ORION

by Ben Bova  
Tor, 1988, \$17.95

For many SF authors the distant past is as fascinating as the distant future. This is true for Ben Bova, as he readily admits in the "Author's Afterward" in this book. Realizing that the Trojan War and the Battle of Jericho could have occurred within months of each other was enough grist for Bova's mill to put them together. Using the grand theme of love, and his recurring hero of Orion from his previous novel, Orion, Bova weaves a fascinating story of SF by retelling these ancient narrations. Orion is pivotal in engineering the downfall of both Troy and Jericho. Helen's beauty, that launched a thousand Achaian ships, was not enough to diminish Orion's love of Anya, the goddess Athene in this novel. Still he took her to Egypt, pursued by Menalao and other Greeks.

At first glance this seems more like a fantasy novel, but Bova keeps the reader attuned to the idea that the "gods and goddesses" are merely humans who are from a future time, and tantalize

their ancient ancestors with Clarke's third law: "Any sufficiently advanced technology is indistinguishable from magic." Orion has tremendous mental control over his body, and can teleport. To these ancient peoples he is a great warrior, a hero verging on godhood.

The book is interesting, entertaining, and both fun and serious. I marveled at the retelling of these old tales; the classics major in me read with glee how Bova explained some of the ancient mysteries involved. And Bova says there will be more!

I recommend Vengeance of Orion wholeheartedly.

### STROKES

Essays and Reviews: 1966-1986

by John Clute  
Serconia Press, 1988, \$16.95 HC, \$8.95 PB

John Clute wrote reviews and criticism for various SF magazines, mostly for F&SF. His writing is full of wry wit and insightful comment. This is the first collection of Clute's commentaries, and they cover a wide range of authors and books. Many of the earlier essays are interesting reading with the hindsight of what has actually happened to the writers and their stories since.

Interesting reading, and a good addition to the growing collection of GOOD SF criticism. Serconia Press is to be applauded for their choice here.

### FOR FEAR OF THE NIGHT

by Charles L. Grant  
Tor, 1987, \$17.95

Very few horror authors try to set stories where the horrific elements occur in daylight. Most use the natural abhorrence humans have for darkness to achieve this response. Charlie Grant uses the heat



of the summer here, and contrasting day and night with very good effect.

As the summer draws to a close in Oceantide, New Jersey, people pack in at the amusement park before schools start, and the official fall businesses begin. A pall hangs over the beaches since a large amusement park was burned less than two weeks earlier, and one of the local girls, Julie Etlar, died in the blaze. Devin Graham took pictures of the fire, and unknowingly caught Julie's death on film. Now Julie wants her soul released and is calling Devin on the phone for the picture.

Tony, Kelly and Mike are three teens who have just graduated from high school. All will be going away to college after this last rush at the beaches, yet they hesitate to leave. Is Julie's ghost haunting them? Or is it something else?

Charlie Grant weaves a complex story of teen turmoil amid a more mature relationship between photographer Devin and Gayle Cross (and even they tend to act like teenagers). The August heat, the ghost, and the reluctance of leaving the security of the place, all add to a frightening climactic end to the Summer. Charlie writes a powerful story with good characters.

#### LAND'S END

by Frederik Pohl and Jack Williamson  
Tor, 1988, \$18.95

In the not-so-near future, the world is divided into two major areas of living: land and undersea. There is mutual tolerance and distrust between the two. The surface lands are run like fiefdoms, and more and more the surface dwellers are becoming dependent on the products from the oceans. The ocean dwellers know that they are dependent on surface technology, and tolerate the arrangement. Two things happen to change this uneasy balance.

A comet on a collision course with Earth is shattered by missiles, but the remnants still enter the atmosphere (a la the light show in Day of the Triffids) and burn off the ozone layer. This marks the end of most of civilization on land.

In the ocean depths, an alien presence, called "The Eternal," from eons gone by is awakened and controls any conscious animal form that comes in contact with it. The overriding command is to build a ship to take it home.

Ron Tregarth and Graciela Navarro live in one of the ocean cities and are separated near the beginning of the disasters. Each suffers, endures, and emerges triumphant at the end, when they once again find each other. No they don't become the "Adam" and "Eve" of a new Earth, but they do hold forth hope for the human race.

The novel is not as good as some I've read by either author, but I was not disappointed. Both get better as they get older, so I do not hesitate to buy any book that is published by either man.

#### RETREAD SHOP

by T. Jackson King  
Questar, 1988, \$3.50

The Retread Shop is an alien-owned orbiting complex in which all sorts of intelligent races use for trading. My impression is that it's sort of a galactic shopping mall and junkyard. In it is one human, Billy McGuire, whose parents died, and who survives by stealing. Eventually he is taken into service by an alien plant who puts him on the path to becoming a Merchant.

My impression at reading the description of the novel was that the old technologies would be explored, and discoveries of that nature would be the focus. Instead, that plays in the background. The focus is Billy and his step-by-step advancement to becoming a Merchant -- which happens just in time to meet a human ship approaching the Retread Shop.

King projects a fascinating universe which has gone through cycles (called Florescences), and some technology passes from one life-cycle to the next. It's an intriguing premise, but he does little with it presently.

The writing does harken back to some of the first SF I read in the late 50s/early 60s, which was his intent. King wanted to write a story that hooked him when he first started reading SF. He has written more books in this series, and is working on others. He has a nice start in his career, with a promise of better times ahead. He is one to watch.

#### THE FOREVER MAN

by Gordon R. Dickson  
Ace, 1986, \$16.95

When an ancient fighter-starship appears in the middle of enemy territory, the pilot Raoul Penard broadcasting loud and clear to his Earth compatriots, Jim Wander and his other pilots take off to rescue it and escort him back to safe territory. They quickly find out that Penard had been dead for over a century, but his mind mysteriously merged with his ship. Eventually the phenomenon is duplicated, and Jim merges with his starfighter, and he takes off through enemy Laagi territory with Mary Gallagher to find out what happened on the other side of Laagi territory, and possibly come up with

a solution to end the conflict between the two races.

It idea is not fully original, though its execution has plenty of original thought in it. The explorations of the Laagi race, and the energy beings they meet in "Paradise," are very well done, and shows Gordie's creative powers. The characters of Jim Wander and Mary Gallegher are well done, but the relationship that develops between them on this long voyage does not dictate the results that Gordie has in the book. The sniping that ensued between the two characters got a bit boring after a while, but overall, I enjoyed the reading.

Like Land's End above, it's not the author at his best, but a good and enjoyable novel.

#### A SILVERLOCK COMPANION

The Life and Works of John Myers Myers

by Fred Lerner, editor

Niekas Publications, 1988, \$7.95

This paperback publication is presented as a special tribute to John Myers Myers and his works, especially his novel Silverlock. It is a very complete summary of the works of Myers, and has appreciations by Ed Meskys and James Crane, as well as a contribution by Myers himself. The bibliography includes a complete listing of his novels, essays, poetry and unpublished writings. This is definitely a must for the fan of Myers' writings. Send to Niekas Publications, RFD #2 Box 63, Center Harbor, NH 03226-0729.

#### SCIENCE FICTION AND FANTASY BOOK REVIEW INDEX Volume 16, 1985

Compiled by Hal W. Hall

The Borgo Press, 1988, \$8.50

(PO Box 2845, San Bernadino, CA 92406)

This index is a fairly complete listing of the reviews of books in 1985, with some updates from previous years. There is a limitation -- in that Hal Hall must know of the reviews to include them. There are references to reviews that have appeared in Lan's Lantern, though information about LL is lacking in the magazine listing. However, this has been corrected for later issues. The main portion is indexed by author with a cross reference by title. This is a good index for school libraries, particularly if SF and fantasy is assigned for regular reading and criticism.

#### FIRST MAITZ

Selected Works by Don Maitz

by Don Maitz

Ursus Imprints, 1988, \$??.??

Many fine books of Science Fiction and Fantasy art have appeared in the past few years, and it looks as if the trend will continue. I hope so. The cover art on some books is truly amazing, but not usually scrutinized unless it is pointed out to the reader/observer. These art books do just that. They call attention to specific works, usually with commentary and some background, and assists the reader in appreciation of the art.

First Maitz flows in this tradition, and many of the paintings selected for this collection are ones I had not noticed before, or had not looked closely enough at. The brilliant colors under complete control of Don's brush coalesce into shapes and forms that are wondrous to behold. The detail is exquisite.

Don includes a section on his techniques and preparations, written in a fairly serious vein, but accompanied by humorous illustrations. This book is worthy of consideration for the Hugo Award.

#### THE PEOPLE OF PERN

by Robin Wood

Donning, 1988, \$19.95

The dragons of Pern, the culture and people of the planet, have attracted hordes of followers. Anne McCaffrey's stories have also sparked clubs, networks of newsletters, amateur writings based in the Pern universe, and art. Artists, amateur and professional, have used their imaginations and McCaffrey's descriptions to draw, paint and sculpt the characters that have become famous in the Pern saga. Now there is a set of paintings that defines the looks of the characters of Pern. Robin Wood, working closely with Anne McCaffrey, has finalized the portraits of the people of Pern.

Anne McCaffrey has written a monograph for each of the characters depicted in the book. Together with the portraits, the reader can get a sense of the background of the world and its people. For those who know the series well, and those who have only a vague idea of the stories, this is a treasure book. It's a good addition to any collection.



## NOT FOR GLORY

by Joel Rosenberg  
NAL/SFBC, 1988, \$15.95/\$4.95

In the future the Jews/Israelis have moved from Earth to a barren world called Metzada. Having little in the way of resources, the Metzadans traded for what they needed, using their military skills and numbers as mercenaries. Not for Glory chronicles the adventures of Inspector General Tetsuo and his uncle Shimon Bar-El as they fight for others, gaining prominence and credit for Metzada.

The novel is not action-oriented. There are a few battle scenes, but most of the action is off-stage. In the foreground is the political dealing and planning for the battles and wars they fight. Also included is a heavy tract of Jewish religious philosophy, easily understood by anyone familiar with Judaism, but a little overdone. Still, given the context and background of the story, it fits well.

The idea of a planet of mercenaries is not new. Gordie Dickson has a strong following with his Dor-sai series; Timothy Zahn has a unique soldier with his Cobras. The main difference is approach--Rosenberg gives his soldiers a definite religious coloring which the others don't.

## ALTERNITIES

by Michael P. Kube-McDowell  
Ace, 1988, \$3.95

Good alternate history novels are difficult to write. If an author changes the outcome of a major historical event, few of them are skilled enough to follow through sufficiently with the results. Pavane is an example of a good alternate history (although Keith Roberts cops out at the end by making the story a future earth after a holocaust).

Mike has several alternate paths of history in Alternities. The Home Alternity in which the main character Rayne Wallace lives is a repressive America, a second rate power. From this alternity the others are found though a maze in some sort of interdimensional bubble. President Robinson of the Home Alternity is prepared to start a third world war to put the United States back on top, knowing he could escape to another alternity, Alternity Blue, if things go awry. Wallace is in love with a duplicate from his past in the Home Alternity who lives in Alternity Blue.

Mike manages to keep the different alternities separate and characterized with headings and odd passages from letters, newspaper and magazine articles, legal documents, and so on. Read in one, two or three sittings, the book works very well and

each alternity and the characters are easy to keep separate. Unfortunately I was unable to read it this way; I finished the novel in bits and pieces over four weeks, which destroyed a lot of the continuity.

The characters are well done, but not likeable. Each has sufficient motivation for his or her actions, but overall there is little redeeming quality in any of them. Rayne Wallace, however, faced with a difficult choice at the end of the novel, pushes his "likeability" up several notches with the decision he makes.

It's a difficult novel to read -- the way I read it, anyway. It has an impact, though, one which stays with me still, and which prompts me to tender it as a nominee for the Hugos this year.

## TO THE VANISHING POINT

by Alan Dean Foster  
Warner Books, 1988, \$15.95

Frank Sonderberg and his family (wife Alicia, teenage daughter Wendy, and ten-year-old Steven) are on a vacation trip when they suddenly start jumping realities. The hitchhiker, Mouse, whom they pick up is a singer and healer who is desperate to get to the Vanishing Point and heal the Spinner, the entity who controls the fabric of the universe. Of course, there is Chaos who would like all of the fabric of reality to unravel, and thus thwarts the attempts of the Sonderbergs, Mouse and Navajo mystic named Burnfingers, to save reality.

The story is Alan's first novel of horror, and he succeeds quite well. The horror is not the "wet" variety of Clive Barker, nor is it the "mood" variety of Charles Grant. Alan weaves a chilling aura of feeling that makes your spine tingle. Each stop that the heroes make warps them onto another thread of reality -- looking somewhat like home, but slightly different, and that difference makes the heroes and the reader very uneasy.

I enjoyed the novel, and I hope that Alan will continue to write more in this style. He has a good flair for writing some chilling stuff.

## NIGHTEYES

by Garfield Reeves-Stevens  
Doubleday/Foundation, 1989, \$18.95

I seldom read the publicity write-ups on books. If the cover or title attracts me, or I am familiar with the author, I read the book. When the review copy of Nighteyes arrived, I glanced through the publicity write-up -- noting that several of the people who read the novel did so in one or two sittings -- and figured that it was a horror novel. It

started as such with some very good imagery and haunting feelings. I soon discovered that it was a UFO abduction story, and so well-done that I too read it in a matter of four or five days (fast for me).

It turned out that as I worked toward the end, the UFO abduction wasn't quite that. Reeves-Stevens added more than one twist to turn Nighteyes into a good, solid SF novel which includes time-travel and the end of the world. Along the way, the reader finds a lot of interesting speculation and some philosophical musings that were as intriguing as the story itself.

I recommend the novel as an unusual blend of UFO abduction, conspiratorial intrigue and science fiction, much in the vein as Joe Haldeman's Tool of the Trade. It kept me reading; it'll probably do the same for you.

#### THE DRIVE-IN

(A B-Movie with Blood and Popcorn,  
Made in Texas)

by Joe R. Lansdale  
Bantam/Spectra, 1988, \$3.50

When I found out that Lansdale had another novel out, I looked forward to reading it. I was favorably impressed with The Nightrunners, and was expecting the same sort of exciting story in The Drive-In. In short, I was disappointed. It was a poor story, and had little creativity.

The Orbit is a huge drive-in complex with six screens, and Friday nights the manager shows six different horror movies. That night a comet passes by and sweeps the complex into -- someplace else. Those who try to leave are dissolved in the black, goopy, acidic nothingness that surrounds the drive-in. No one knows how long everyone is trapped before they are released into a world that isn't quite like the one they left.

What happens to thee people during their exile has little to recommend it. Gang war, religious revival, cannibalism, freaky transformations -- it's all there. But it's nothing new, so skip this one. Maybe Lansdale's next one will be better.

#### PLUS CA CHANGE

by Kathy Mar  
Thor Records, 1988, \$10.00  
(PO Box 40312, Downey, CA 90241)

I can't praise this cassette tape enough. I heard parts of it at NOLACON last September during a party for Thor Records, but did not have a chance to give it a close listen until I got home from the

Worldcon. Various songs have haunted me ever since. I find my mind drifting to the harmonies in "Ivory Rose" and "Drink Up the River," the mystical and ethereal backgrounds of "World Inside the Crystal" and "Crystal Singer," the lyricism of "Velveteen" and "Little Green Eyes," and the stories told in all of the songs. The arrangement of "Grendel" as a Big Band production (with the Android Sisters) is something one must hear to believe.

The arrangements and quality of production are among the best I've heard on filk tapes. Some solo passages -- both vocal and instrumental (Michael Kube-McDowell has a couple of viola solos) -- are creative and haunting.

Lest I get too carried away, yes, there are some flaws. I found the kazoo passage in "Grendel" distracting, and a couple of the songs were only average. But given the quality of everything else on the tape, I give it an unqualified mark of excellence. Buy this tape!

#### STATION BREAK

by Technical Difficulties  
(T.J. Burnside, Linda Melnick, Sheila Willis)  
Fesarius Publications, 1988, \$9.00  
(74 Madison Avenue, Wakefield, MA 01880)

When I first heard Technical Difficulties, I was charmed by all three of the parties involved. I got to know Linda and TJ at OHIO VALLEY FILK FEST III in 1987, learned more about them at NOLACON, and spent more time talking to Sheila, Linda and especially TJ at CONCLAVE. They sing, harmonize, vocalize and accompany each other. Their sound is quite unique. Any of them could sing lead and the other two harmonize. They blend well together; it's too bad that they get so little chance to practice. Linda lives in Baltimore, Sheila in Pittsburgh, and TJ in Boston-soon-to-be-Los Angeles, so practicing presents certain, uh, technical difficulties.

This their second tape is the better of the two. Production quality, balanced harmonies and backgrounds have been improved, and it sounds terrific. I heard a rough cut of "Arafel's Song" at OVFF III, and here is sounds magnificent (and includes a guest appearance by Julia Ecklarr). Other songs include "Star Sisters" (about the various ships that have been named Enterprise), "Ladyhawke!" (I prefer Julia Ecklar's version, though), "Go Traveller," "Dairy Queen" (a parody of "Come Ye Knights"), "Robin Hood" (written by TJ when she was 13), "Wolf and Hawk" (beautiful counterpoint between Sheila and Linda), "Challenge" (nott bad harmony, but I think a solo voice is better for this particular song), "Wishful Thinking" (a child's belief "in the little green bug-eyed monster" that will keep us from blowing the Earth to pieces), "Jaq's Song,"

"Dreamer's Lament" (how growing up has changed one woman's imagination), and "Technical Difficulties, Part III" (to the tune of Pachelbel's Canon -- more trouble for the TD crew).

This is a good tape with some of the best harmonizing female voices in fandom. Highly recommended.

### LESLIE FISH...LIVE!

by Leslie Fish

Firebird Arts & Music, 1988, \$11.00  
(PO Box 453, El Cerrito, CA 94530)

For those who were unable to procure copies of Leslie Fish's tapes prior to the Off Centaur dissolution, this tape comes as a welcome collection. Some of Leslie's better-known songs are recorded here, including "Susan B.," "Pride of Chanur," "Carmen Miranda's Ghost," "Toast for Unknown Heroes," and "Hope Eyrie."

The production is clearer than other filk tapes I have, but the balance between the accompaniment and vocals is close. At times the guitar nearly drowns out the words, but Leslie's strong voice carries through. A major distraction is the number of poor voices who join in to sing along. Given that this is a "recorded live" tape, one expects that, but it makes for troubled listening. Also, Leslie flubs a couple of lines herself, something that would not happen on a "studio" tape. I hope that Firebird will soon begin producing such tapes.

To get the songs and lyrics of these special songs of Leslie Fish is worth the price. If you already have the songs, there's no need to get this tape.

### ECHOES ON THE WIND

by Windbourne

Crystal Rose Productions, 1988, \$10.00  
(PO Box 982, La Mesa, CA 92041)

I heard Windbourne live at NOLACON last year and was very impressed with their presence on stage and the harmonies. I expected a highly polished tape from them, but was disappointed. This recording is good, but not great. Balances are off, and in some spots the vocals are strained. Their rendition of "Spirit" pales beside John Denver's original. Technical Difficulties does Stan Roger's "Lies" better, and many others have done better versions of "Richter Scale." On the other hand, they've done some marvelous work with "Mists of Time," "Baby Vampire Boogie (Fly by Night)," "Free in the Harbor Again," "Rose," and "When the Wind Blows." I've said this many times before in reviews: the ear is forgiving

in live performances (even taped-live recordings), but in the cold reproduction of magnetic tape, there should be no mistakes. This studio recording should be better, and I hope that Windbourne's next tape will be better.

### NARABEDLA LTD.

by Frederik Pohl

DelRey/Ballantine, 1988, \$17.95

Narabedla Ltd. is a company that books solos and group acts. Strangely enough, soon after someone signs on with the company they die. Nolly Stennis was going to work for them when a bout with the mumps took away his marvelous baritone voice (and made him impotent). So he became an accountant to musicians, and when his cellist friend is approached by Narabedla Ltd., he asks Nolly to investigate it. But Woody is killed and Nolly suddenly finds himself dragged into events he never dreamed of. Narabedla Ltd. is much more than a patron of the arts -- it contracts for acts to tour the galaxy. And Nolly has no way to return to Earth to warn people about this. Nolly is won over to the company and his future holds many surprises.

The plot is not new, but it has some nice twists. The galactic structure is complex, as it probably would be, and how free the company is to move acts around and entertain patrons depends on the political climate. Pohl complicates the plot with this intrigue as well as personal interactions of the humans in this small operatic group and their relationships with the aliens.

The novel is interesting, although not up to the author's best work. It is worthy of the three hours it takes to read it.

### DEADMAN SWITCH

by Timothy Zahn

Baen, 1988, \$3.95

Solitaire is a unique ring of heavy metal planets protected by an "effect sphere." No ship was able to penetrate it until the pilot of an exploratory ship died at the helm, then took over to guide the ship through the sphere. Now it became common practice for transport vessels to carry two felons who are each executed on the inbound and outbound trips.

Gilead is a member of the religious sect Bendar whose people are raised from birth in methods of detecting the truth or falsity of people's statements. They themselves are nearly incapable of lying, and are helpful in contract talks. The talent is really a study in psychology and body language,

though many believe they read minds. Thus, Benedars are persecuted. On this particular trip to the Ring Mines, Gilead finds out that the Outzombie is a Benedar, and he is convinced that she is innocent. He sets out to prove this, and in the process solves the mystery of the effect sphere.

The writing has a heavy religious tract to it, being writing in the first-person point of view of Gilead. There are some boring passages, particularly when they are searching for pirating vessels on Spall (in order to find someone to take Callandra's place as an Outzombie -- Tim says that searching a planetary desert IS boring, and wanted to convey that, which he did). The twists to the plot, and characterization, and the plausible science background are all nicely done, as is characteristic of a Zahn novel.

As a contribution to the Polly Freas Memorial fund (an emergency fund created to help Kelly pay off the medical costs Polly incurred while in the hospital), Tim said he would kill off a person by name in this novel. A group of Bob Trembley's friends bought his death, and this occurs in the second chapter. An additional bonus was that the names of those who contributed to the large amount of money donated for his death were incorporated as bit players throughout the novel. I even got a mention -- alas a non-speaking part.

The novel is enjoyable, but I think not up to some of his others. Still, his "mediocre" writings is much better than the average SF put out today. Tim is trying new ideas, and I did rush through it in the reading. Maybe a second read-through will be better. I think it deserves it.

THE KID FROM OZONE PARK  
and other stories

by Richard Wilson

Chris Drumm Books, 1987, \$3.50  
(PO Box 445, Polk City, IA 50226)

Before the shelves in bookstores were laden with the weak humor of Piers Anthony, there were a few SF/Fantasy authors who wrote true humorous stories. The Harold Shea stories of Sprague deCamp and Fletcher Pratt are classic. Lester del Rey had a flare for some funny stories, and Henry Kuttner displayed his wry wit in the Gallagher stories and others.

And there was Richard Wilson.

I remember chuckling through the pages of And Then the Town Took Off and The Girls from Planet Five. With this little collection of Dick Wilson's short stories (unpublished until now), Chris Drumm has reminded me -- and I hope others -- that there are some authors in the past we should not neglect. Wilson is original in his writing, and his work worthy of attention.

The Planet Builders

by Robyn Tallis

MOUNTAIN OF STOLEN DREAMS  
Ivy Books, 1988, \$2.95

NIGHT OF GHOSTS AND LIGHTNING  
Ivy Books, 1989, \$2.95

REBEL FROM ALPHORION  
Ivy Books, 1989, \$2.95

This is a Young Adult series about a group of teenagers who have moved with their families to Gaugin, a newly-settled planet in the Planetary League. Each of the six main characters has his or her own problems, but these teens are linked telepathically in the first novel, something that becomes both an aid and hindrance to their relationship.

After a series of earthquakes in The Mountain of Stolen Dreams, Clea, Sean, Will, Phillipa, Arkady and Zack get grouped together with four others in an expedition to set up a series of "Fault Finders" to help monitor the quakes on this new world. These six get separated, and in their work to finished planting the last few "Finders", they are "called to bear witness" by some unknown intelligence. The native theskies and quufers and other fauna have been determined to be non-intelligent, although the theskies have a talent for mimicking human speech. The group finds a spot where some of the other planetary life forms are apparently being poached. They also are led to a plateau where they experience a mechanically induced vision about the former inhabitants of the planet, and the last days before their civilization was destroyed. This is what links the six together. As the vision ends, a mass-



five earthquake destroyed the "machine" and all remnants of the poaching. But the teens remember, and occasionally they get messages to "bear witness" again.

In Night of Ghosts and Lightning, the silanna used in building begins to break down because of the high ionization content of the atmosphere. The six "see" visions of their homes crumbling and during a lightning storm help rescue new colonists. Sean and Zack are also called to the scene of another poaching incident, but the storms erase a good part of the evidence needed to convince the adult community that there is poaching going on. We learn more about some of the teens, especially Phillipa's dark secret, which the group learns about in Rebel from Alphonion.

I picked up the first book since I have an interest in Young Adult SF, but got the other two before I sat down to actually read them. I am waiting anxiously for the fourth, and however many more there are. Robyn Tallis has set up a world that is Earth-like, but with significant differences. Twin moons cause greater tidal effects, and thus more tectonic activity. The flora and fauna are familiar but different enough; the theskies behave like a cross between pet birds (with the speech mimicking) and cats. The quufers are akin to dogs.

The continuing story about the mental link, calling to "bear witness" and poaching, and the relationship among the six, provides a good background to draw a person from one book to the next. Each novel has its own story about the problems in adapting to a new environment, and working out personal conflicts. The details are consistent, and add to the overall feeling of Gaugin being a real place. Tallis keeps throwing out hints of other things that the main characters are not aware of, which makes the continuing story more interesting. Are the theskies really intelligent? Or is there something else controlling them. What about the poaching? Will Sean Matthews, whose father is the governor of the planet, be moving on again, just as he is making new friends? How will Will survive the planet, having grown up on a world whose gravity is one-third that of Gaugin? The planet is largely unexplored, so there is a lot of open areas for surprises and adventures.

I am impressed by the series, and hope the next few books come out soon.

NEARLY FATAL ATTRACTION  
(A Ghostbusters Novella)

by Pam Spurlock

Illustrated by Sandy Schreiber

Otter Limits Press, 1988, \$15.50 (\$13.00 in person)  
(Pam Spurlock, 510 Troywood, Troy, MI 48083)

Since Pam and Sandy are friends, I approached

this novella with trepidation. I wanted to read it, but was afraid that I might have to pan it. So much fan fiction is bad, and I would have hated to say that to two really terrific ladies. As I started reading, I was drawn into the world of the Ghostbusters, and things came alive. My only contact with the characters was the film, and this seemed just an extension of that movie. And it was good!

The characters we developed more than the film and the plot was a good mystery. Details about the operation, the places that were visited, especially Penderton, New Hampshire, added a good dimension of reality to the story. Pam shows a remarkable talent for writing; Sandy is a terrific artist to begin with, and her illustrations here bear this out.

Peter Venkman falls madly in love with Joris VanMounen, the head of DataCorp which is being harassed by floating arms-and-fists. Everyone else on the team is convinced that she is using Peter, but no one can persuade him of that. Eventually, after digging into her past, and it seems that something fishy is happening in Penderton, NH, that links Joris with the supernatural. That is where the final showdown takes place in a rather spectacular display of wit and proton fire-power.

I don't know if Pam and Sandy are thinking about doing another one, but if they do, I won't be fearful to read it. Pam has shown herself to be good with plotting, background detail, and characterization. Maybe she'll try something original. That I would like to read!

BROTHERS IN ARMS

by Lois McMaster Bujold  
Baen Books, 1989, \$3.95

Brothers in Arms is another in Lois' continuing saga of Miles Vorkosigan/Admiral Naismith. In this novel the Admiral takes his Dendarii Mercenaries to Earth where much-needed repairs are performed on the fleet's ships, and the mercenaries are able to get some much-needed R&R. Miles takes up his identity as Lieutenant Lord Vorkosigan of Barrayar and tries to get payment for his Admiral's forces, but the money is not forthcoming -- somewhere along the communications route his request has been cancelled. Moreover, some conflict has developed between the two parts of his dual identity, and his cover story of the Admiral being a Clone works--for a while, until a real duplicate of him shows up.

Complication piles upon complication within the story. Attempts are made on Miles' life, but which persona is being attacked? Captain Galeni of the Barrayar embassy is kidnapped, as is Miles himself -- for what purpose? And is there something more than friendship between Miles and Elli, his personal bodyguard? The resolution is neatly and admirably done.

I got the impression that the Dendarii Mercenaries are the "Mission: Impossible" team of the Bar-rayarian government, even to the point of "... if any of your forces be caught or killed, the Secretary will disavow any knowledge of your actions..." This is not a bad thing. It adds to the tension of the stories. One of the things that makes this unique is Lois' approach to the mercenary business: the men and women need to be paid. Repairs cost money. The economics of being a mercenary band never crossed MY mind, but Lois takes practical matters as these and uses them to build a different viewpoint of mercenary operations. Her approach with Miles, the comic relief, the interaction of characters, the effective use of setting and background, all work to make this a fun and rewarding adventure. It's space opera with a practical viewpoint, fine characters, and much more believable action than many who write in this form.

I look forward to many more novels from this talented woman!

#### THE ARTHURIAN ENCYCLOPEDIA

Norris J. Lacey, editor  
Garland Publishing, 1986, \$60.00  
SFBC, \$17.50

I picked this up from the Science Fiction Book Club because it sounded interesting. For anyone interested in the Arthurian legend in literature and film, this is the book to get. It is arranged alphabetically (as any encyclopedia) with cross-references to titles, authors, subject, names, etc. It is well put together, and everything I could think of that I had read about King Arthur was there with one exception -- there are no references to any comic book (like Camelot 3000) or comic strip (like Prince Valiant) that dealt with the Arthurian legend. Otherwise, for all lovers of stories of King Arthur and the Knights of the Round Table, this book is a must.

#### THE ONCE AND FUTURE ARTHUR (Niekas #38)

Edmund R. Meskys, editor  
Niekas Publications, 1989, \$5.95  
(RFD #2 Box 63, Center Harbor, NH 03226-0729)

This arrived from Niekas Publications a week after I received The Arthurian Encyclopedia, and this collection of essays on Arthur and the legend is a fine addition and companion book. The writers are both fans and professional authors in the SF/Fantasy field. This special issue was five years in the making, according to editor Ed Meskys. The accom-

panying art ranges from fair to excellent and the layout, as always with Niekas, is very well done. The articles themselves range from very good and interesting to seemingly unrelated to the Arthurian theme (like Fred Lerner's "Across the River" which is about cryonics). Overall I am impressed with the issue. And again, for those interested in the Arthurian legend, send away for a copy. You won't be disappointed.

Since this is part of the Niekas set of semi-prozines, it also includes book reviews and a letter column.

#### DREAMS OF DAWN

by Marti Steussy  
Del Rey, 1988, \$3.95

Marti Steussy is slowly building a reputation for herself of building fine alien cultures. In her first novel, The Forest of the Night, she introduced the "First Inners," the multi-alien group of intelligences who land and make firstcontact with the intelligent species on the planet. In Forest, an intelligent species is overlooked, and the story revolves around establishing the species as intelligent, and working out a way of letting the humans and aliens co-exist.

In Dreams of Dawn, the aliens of Karg have allowed humans to settle on their planet, stating that their ancestors had destroyed themselves by not co-existing peacefully. However, human food is slowly destroying the Kargans, and they ask for help from Circle Dawn, the first-inners on the planet. Either a solution must be found, or the human colony removed. Obstacles block the paths of both solutions, but Circle Dawn's first priority is the indiginous alien culture, which increases the fears of the human colonists.

The ecology of the planet, the life cycle of the Kargans, the daily life of the human Frilandit colony, are all meticulously worked out. Not all details are mentioned, but one can feel the depth of background lingering in the presentation. The novel is fascinating reading, one well worth experiencing. Marti Steussy is an author to watch.

#### TANGERINE

by Linda Crockett Gray  
Tor Horror, 1988, \$4.95

An old player piano has been through the depression, several speakeasies, and involved with at least one murder. When April Mitchell buys it, she becomes sporadically possessed by the spirit of one who had played its keyboard just before she was

killed. And William "Williwhat" Watson, the person who had killed this woman, Tangerine, is now a successful businessman, who has not quite given up his shady past. His secret empire of prostitution and pornographic materials has given him a strong financial base for his legal operations. And the spirit of Tangerine cries for revenge.

April is a computer security expert. Her involvement with Tangerine, neighbor Tony with whom she begins a loving relationship, and her reactions to William Watson, moves her in directions of exacting revenge for Tangerine. April's profession enables her to get some evidence, though not damning or conclusive enough, and the possession of her body provides the possible instrument of permanent retaliation.

The novel is moody, detailed, wonderfully spooky in its presentation. Several seemingly unrelated events are tied together to make a mosaic of Watson's legal and illegal operations. Downing, another programmer of April's clique, is used to launder Watson's money, but no real confrontation between the two is used--just some nip-and-tuck skirmishes.

I thought Linda Crockett Gray missed out on making this a truly stupendous novel with a couple of points. The battle between Paril and Downing would have been a good one. Additionally, if Tangerine/April, both keyboardists in different ways, had destroyed Watson in both ways, it would have made the parallels of justice so sweet. Instead, Downing carefully topples Watson's financial empire (as well as several other people's reputations), while Tangerine/April takes care of Watson in person. Thus the novel is only great, but not spectacular. Still, this is good reading for horror fans.

BEWARE!

by Richard Laymon  
Paperjacks Horror, 1987, \$3.95

Richard Laymon's horror novels have always been fast reading. He sets up the scenario and then runs with it, pulling the reader along at a breakneck pace. I don't mind this at all.

Beware! is concerned with an invisible rapist/murderer. Reporter Lacey Allen finds dismembered bodies in the market of the town where she grew up. Lacey herself is attacked and raped, but allowed to live. As she tries to uncover the mystery of her invisible rapist, she is drawn into a world of carnage and voodoo. She finds that the invisible killer is a former classmate who was kicked out of school for raping a teacher. A secret organization made Samuel Hoffman invisible for the purpose of assassinating anyone whose investigations come to close to the truth. But Hoffman takes off on his own, so the organization wants him back. And all

traces of him and those who know about him destroyed. Thus, Lacey knows she is doomed unless she can kill them first.

This is a good read if you like action and wet horror.

PARADISE

by Mike Resnick  
Tor, 1989, \$?.??

Paradise, or Peponi, was a backwater planet, a place to hunt exotic game. The natives were very primitive, and few had ambitions of education for several decades. Eventually a few became educated and roused their fellow Pepons to fight for independence from the Dominion of Man. Paradise is the story of the history of this planet, and its fight for freedom.

The story is told as a series of vignettes by people who lived and worked on Peponi -- gamehunters, guides, settlers, and some of the natives, particularly Buko Pepon, who was the leader of the revolt. Tying these stories together is Matthew Breen, a writer who makes a study of the history of Paradise/Peponi, and whose books about the planet are best-sellers.

Resnick wrote this novel as an allegory of Kenya's history and fight for independence. If you know Africa (as Mike surely does) and the history of Kenya, you can easily see the parallels with the major characters. As I read, I could not help but see the aliens as blacks, and the countryside as Africa. When I mentioned this to Mike, he said, "That's what an allegory is all about."

The novel is good Resnick, but not great Resnick. It's still a fascinating read. I don't think Mike could write a bad book if he tried.

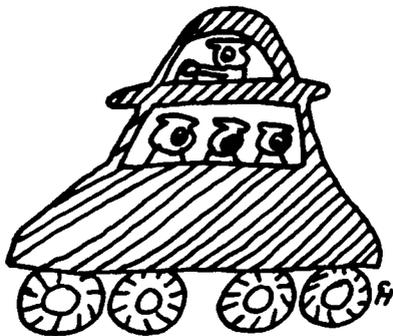
THE SECRET OF DOMINION

A science fiction adventure in 13 episodes

by Susan Bayer & Richard Teneau  
(from an original concept by Steven Walter Dudley)  
Cygnus III Productions, Ltd., 1987, \$19.95/11.95  
(PO Box 220096, St. Louis, MO 63122)

The Dominion conquered Earth and most of its colonies. But not everyone is content under Dominion rule. The rebels fight to throw off the yoke of tyranny.

Steven Richards was a Captain of the Dominion forces was accused and found guilty of being a traitor. He discovers that his parents were leading scientists of the rebellion, and thus when he defects to the rebels, they welcome him. Together with the rebel forces, Richards fights to find the



secret of Dominion, and Emerald Tree, the project his parents were working on when they were killed by Dominion forces.

The dramatization is good. I had fun listening to all 13 episodes. There are logic glitches, and at times I thought to myself, "A real rebel force wouldn't act like that!" However, I enjoyed it.

The first of the two prices is for the cassettes in a vinyl case; the second is for the cassettes alone. I have the case. It looks nice.

## More Film & Book Reviews

### ETERNITY

by Greg Bear  
Tor, 1988, \$3.95

A book review by Dale L. Skran  
Copyright (c) 1988 by Dale L. Skran

Mr. Bear has produced an entertaining and imaginative sequel to Eon. Eternity isn't quite new enough or thought-provoking enough to be Hugo material, but your time will be well spent. (I thought Eon would have a shot at the Hugo, but apparently it didn't find its audience.) Mr. Bear's vision of the contrasts between people who have access to extremely powerful cybernetic and other technologies is very convincing to me.

Eternity improves on the characterizations in Eon, and things fit together better. There is less of the "well, time for sex" interjection that was found in Eon. The alternate Earth part is the weakest since nothing that happens there affects events very much. I found the final explanation of the Jart mentality and motivation fairly consistent.

### THE MIDNIGHT RUN

A film review by Beridar Rujuh

When I saw The Midnight Run, I enjoyed it very much. Robert de Niro, in one of his best roles, plays an ex-cop, a detective screwed over by corrupt colleagues. He became a bounty hunter who has been catching bad guys not only for justice's sake, for people who pay him. In this film he has a very short time to escort a rare bird from New York to Los Angeles -- a gang's ex-bookkeeper who has stolen millions of dollars from the Mafia and gave it away to charity. He couldn't have bumped into a better guy, played by Charles Grodin. For most of their journey they are inseparably "connected" with handcuffs, like the Sidney Potier and Tony Curtis film.

Martin Brest, the producer, has shown (in Beverly Hills Cop) to be a master of comical and "fad" movies. He does a good job here as well.

### CYTEEN

by C. J. Cherryh  
Warner, 1988, \$18.95

A book review by Clifton Amsbury

Carolyn Cherryh seems so calmly and capably in relaxed control of every situation. Most of her stories are written around a level of panic. Panic is very low on the emotional scale. Panic is the emotional scale of dictatorships and military aristocracies. The people are scared because they are ruled by terror or by ethnocentric propaganda (that is, by allegations of need to be protected from outside threats). The rulers are at the edge of panic because if anyone tried to rule them the way they rule their subjects, they would revolt. They think. But Cherryh often provides an out or a counterbalance, or, as in this book, a possibility.

Most of her books are primarily action books with enough personal psychology and local culture-base to give the action reason and direction. The book Cyteen overwhelmingly fits the panic pattern, on the other level it's another story. Cyteen is for the most part a set of psychological studies with action to give them direction and to carry them on their courses. As usual, she braids two or more stories at a time into an eventually seamless whole.

If you have read Downbelow Station, you know about the universe of Earth, colonial Union and Merchants' Alliance. If you have read Forty Thousand in Gehenna you know about Born Men and azi and teaching tape and Good Tape and Bad Tape. I recommend both of these books unreservedly and suggest them as prologues to Cyteen even though they are not essential.

Cyteen itself is the most populated planet of Union, which is primarily a federation of space stations, but also some worlds. The most prominent genetics-and-birthing labs are those of Ressune whose undisputed boss, Ariane Correy, is murdered. Her chief of security -- a cousin -- steps into her place and blackmails the other most brilliant members into obscurity.

The deceased's geneset is reborn and the rest of the books is essentially the tale of young Ari--but with embellishments.

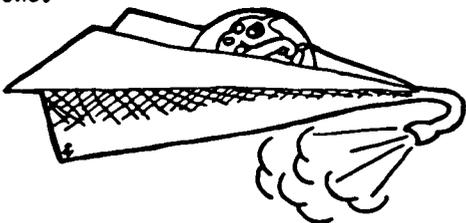
I have been told, "If you want to know what a person thinks of themselves, listen carefully to what they say about others." Reading here the occasional analyses of the thought-processes and psychology of born-humans, I often was led to wonder if that is what C. J. Cherryh thinks of her own ways, or simply what she really thinks of the rest of us.

The story is well worked out and it is often difficult to tell the line between science-fiction double-talk and actual deep insights. As one example, she has one protagonist cogitate on the relation between power and what we often see referred to as territoriality. True; rather than territoriality, what we are referring to is something somewhere between power-base and econiche. She relates it to the old Greek idea of moire. But moire is not one's fate, but more like dharma, not lot but one's "way." Way, not in the sense of path, but style or methodology, a body of techniques, of "ways."

The structure within which Cyteen occurs is not, like Hienlein's and some others', a future history in which stories are placed or planned. It is a universe in which they develop. While much of the background for Cyteen must have been in place before Forty Thousand in Gehenna could have been written, the last scene in FTIG obviously refers to much later, and to questions concerned with the Chanur-Kif situation, which is itself alluded to in Cyteen, but does not yet involve Union and Alliance.

Anyway, it's a great book; a fascinating universe; the kind of supervisory system that would be the best to use on born-people. I recommend it as highly as the others in that universe. And, come to think of it, I also recommend most of her other stories, though some of them rather overdo the torture-and-cruelty aspects.

But be warned, this is an E-tape, but there's a worm in it, and where better to hide a worm than in an Entertainment. This worm is: You'll have to read the next one.



## THE STAINLESS STEEL RAT

by Harry Harrison

A book review by Ravi Chopra

In the nearly crime-free society of the future, James Bolivar diGriz, alias "Slippery Jim" diGriz, alias the Stainless Steel Rat, is a con man, a master thief, and is very good at what he does, that is, steal. In this future universe, crime has been virtually wiped out; the only bit still left is committed by an elite few with the brains, guts, and know-how to pull these crimes off and get away scott-free -- people like Slippery Jim.

Within the first few pages of the book, Jim is captured by a super-secret organization known as the Special Corps, a government organization run by captured criminals set to the task of capturing others of their ilk. Naturally, Jim signs on to avoid a lengthy prison sentence. The rest of the book, as well as the rest of the books in the series (The Stainless Steel Rat's Revenge, The Stainless Steel Rat Saves the World, The Stainless Steel Rat Wants You, and The Stainless Steel Rat for President) all describe his many adventures under the Special Corps' employ.

The first couple of books are entertaining, being fresh and new. The stories are pretty good, and are easy, casual reading. Unfortunately, beyond the second book, they begin to resemble bad James Bond films. Harrison drops little necessary gadgets into Jim's hands as he needs them without any previous mention of their existence. James also begins to resemble more of a bit of a G.I. Joe member than a master thief, jumping into wars with both feet, rifle in hand. To further ruin what began as a fairly good, humorous series, Jim marries and has a family -- twins -- both of whom are/become thieves just like him. The closest comparison I can think of would be a criminal Brady Bunch.

The Stainless Steel Rat and Revenge are both worth reading; the other, only if you are curious, or are very bored.

## SCUDDER'S GAME

by D. G. Compton  
Kerosina, 1988, L12.95

A book review by Steve Green

The constant theme throughout Compton's career has been the human subtext to scientific and social change, the moral perspective on Toffler's shock-wave. His latest work is not only no exception to this trend, but is its virtual epitome.

Compton visualizes a future where global overpopulation has been defused through a combination contraceptive sex aid, offering the perfect orgasm with one hand whilst wiping out the resulting spermatozoa with the other. Quite how the device works, or how it thwarts the passage of diseases like AIDS, is left unexplained. Compton is concerned with moralities, not mechanics.

This safe-sex technology is soon revealed as a metaphor for the impotent society it has spawned. The nuclear family has exploded, depersonalized coitus has superseded emotional intercourse, the Wall Street carnival is now open to all via third-wave technology and a framework of business "games."

But technician Scudder shuns these diversions, choosing to devise a scenario of his own, social revolution his goal. That his insurrection is itself the centre of a larger game, making Scudder's impotence total, only renews the metaphor.

Like much of Compton's work, this latest book ends up on a downbeat note. Scudder's son is bequeathed an insight into the deep flaws within their society, but appears resigned to his race's entropic demise. Unfortunately, this feeling of resignation pervades the latter half of the novel, but it's to Compton's credit that the clarity of his characterization preserves the momentum.

#### THE FIRE WORM

by Ian Watson  
Gollanz, 1988, L10.95

A book review by Ann Green

This is the worst piece of puerile, pretentious drivel I've had the misfortune to read for a long, long time.

Basically, The Fire Worm is all about sex -- or rather, copulation -- in its nastiest, sickest, most guilt-inducing form, full of pathetically tired and overused symbolism (i.e., worms, caves, male pregnancy(?)). Watson waffles on about the 80s phenomenon "AIDS dread," but has nothing new or interesting to say about this social bombshell.

Anyone out there present at the British Fantasy-con in Birmingham last year? If so, you'll recognise the "Fantasy Fayre" referred to in the double-columnized, quasi-conrep in chapter three. This is so out of place, awful and incomprehensible, it sets the tone for the rest of this crap perfectly.

Pure, unadulterated bullshit: AVOID!



#### THE DARK LADY

by Mike Resnick  
Legend, 1988, L2.99  
Tor, 1987, \$3.50

A book review by Steve Green

Resnick's dubbed this transgalactic cherchez la femme a "Romance of the Far Future," no doubt keeping in mind that phrase's original connotations out of medieval knights upon holy quests. The quest in this case is for the mysterious femme fatale whose enigmatic features have inspired artists across the galaxy for millenia, but the reverence exhibited by the alien art critic Leonardo is no less all-consuming than that of Arthur's legendary court.

My real complaint is the novel's abrupt conclusion, but even that fails to detract from one of the more enjoyable SF mysteries of recent years. Recommended.

A book review by Carl C. Fields

The Dark Lady is the story, told from the viewpoint of an alien, of a mysterious woman (the title character) who appears in portraits painted over a several thousand year period. The mystery of the woman (who appears on-stage briefly) isn't resolved very clearly -- in fact, I'd like anyone who understands the ending to write me and explain it. However, except for that the novel was excellent. The two central characters, Leonardo (the alien), a Bjornn art critic (who reminded me of ST:TNG's Commander Data), and Valentine Heath, probably the most charming rogue in recent SF, are outstanding. Several minor characters are also sharply drawn. Resnick was the toastmaster at NOLACON II. I probably would not have purchased the book had I not seen him there.

#### BIMBOS OF THE DEATH SUN

by Sharyn McCrumb  
Windwalker Books, 1987, \$2.95

A book review by Carl C. Fields

Bimbos of the Death Sun is a comedy-murder mystery set at a science fiction convention. The mystery isn't very challenging, but the SF con satire is excellent. There are also some interesting descriptions ("characterizations" isn't quite the right word) of SF fans and how we got to be that way. The book's publisher is apparently a subsidiary of TSR, Inc., the D&D roleplaying game publisher. The cover blurbs stress the tie-in to D&D more than to SF. They must market it in conjunction with their games.

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 FARSIDE CANNON

by Roger McBride Allen  
Baen Books, 1988, \$3.95

A book review by Carl C. Fields

Farside Cannon is "hard SF" about the political intrigue between an industrial firm that is attempting to move an asteroid into low Earth orbit and those who oppose it. After a prelude that is effectively an essay on how to capture an asteroid, most of the story takes place on Iceland and the moon. The major characters are pretty standard, but a few of the minor characters are nicely done -- among these is Neruda, the governor of the lunar colony, who is a minor villain. The story moves along nicely and the technical, political, and social details of Allen's lunar society are fascinating. The book reminded me of the better parts of Heinlein's The Moon Is a Harsh Mistress. I believe that this is Allen's fourth book. He keeps getting better.

## RANDOM WALK

by Lawrence Block  
Tor, 1988, \$17.95

A book review by Mark Bernstein

It's been a while since I reviewed anything for these pages. I've been content to leave such tasks to others with more desire, and, in many cases, more flair for the job. Sometimes, though, a book comes along that deserves wider recognition, recognition that may be denied due to circumstances beyond the control of the author.

I think Lawrence Block's Random Walk may fall into this category. Block is primarily known among writers for his regular column on fiction in Writer's Digest magazine, and among readers for his work in the mystery/suspense genre. He's written a number of series -- the Bernie Rhodenbarr Burglar books, the Matthew Scudder mysteries, the Evan Tanner spy spoofs -- that range in quality from good to very good. His latest is a radical departure from his past accomplishments, and has fallen prey to a publishing mentality that doesn't seem to know how to deal with anything that doesn't fit into neat categories. The publisher has chosen to subtitle the book "A Novel for a New Age," and make a drawing of a glowing blue crystal the only cover illustration. As a result, less than half the bookstores I've visited have placed it in the general fiction section, and only one has placed it on the SF shelves. (This last despite the fact that the back cover contains glowing quotes from Ellison and Zelazny.) The other stores have consigned it to be-

ing the only work of fiction (or rather, the only work explicitly labeled as fiction) in the New Age section, in with the works of Shirley McLaine and books on channeling.

This is a shame, as Random Walk happens to be a quiet contemporary fantasy of surprising power. It could be said to portray a "New Age" attitude, as it focuses on themes such as acceptance of seeming "intuition," responsibility for one's actions, and the utility of controlled breathing exercises (in truth he's talking about meditation, but he never calls it that). Still, aside from one aquamarine pendant that plays an extremely peripheral role, and a brief mention of the possibility of reincarnation, there are no elements in the book that would make the "New Age" pigeonhole apt or suitable.

Plotwise, there's very little to Random Walk. A west coast resident named Guthrie Wagner decides, with no apparent motivation, to abandon his bartending job and almost all his possessions and starts walking. With only the clothes he's wearing, a small backpack, and whatever cash he's managed to scrape together, he walks, covering twenty or more miles every day. He has no clear plan of where he's going or what to do when he gets there. After a few days he notices some odd things. He can sleep outside in 40-degree weather and not feel cold. The walking never seems to make him tired or give him blisters. Gradually, other people start to join him, none of them having any clearer idea of the "why?" behind their actions than he does. Still, it becomes clear that something unusual is going on, as undeniable miracles begin to occur, mostly as healings. In the most extreme example, an elderly woman with crippling arthritis joins the walk, and is able to discard her walker within a couple of hours.

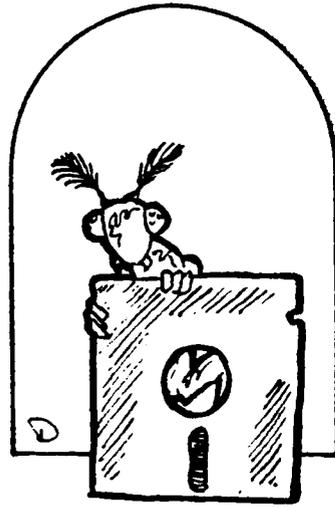
In parallel to this, the book follows the travels of Mark, a successful real estate investor with a bad habit -- he likes to murder women. Women he doesn't know for no better reason than that it gives him an emotional/sexual thrill. The climax of the book, which, to be honest, may be unsatisfying to some, details what happens after Mark joins the group of walkers.

Random Walk may be one of those "If you like this kind of book, this is the kind of book you'll like" books. Block has described it, in his Writer's Digest column, in ways that make it clear that this is the most personally meaningful thing he's ever written. It has a clearly discernable viewpoint and attitude, though it rarely preaches, and your enjoyment may be tied to how much you agree with it and are willing to accept its premises. Still, it affected me enough to write this review, and that's a pretty good indication of the power it can have. If what I've written here intrigues you at all, give Block's newest a try. [\*]

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# Post Scriptings

[[ This issue, because of space and time, I have edited the letters severly, WAHFing people who might normally have gotten some comments published in favor of those who said the same thing a little bit better. You may also notice that I did not cut them letters apart, but am running them whole. As it is, the lettercolumn looks to be around 25 pages. // Many, many thanks to Maia who entered a number of letters for me. // As usual, my comments are in the double square brackets. Lan ]]



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If responding to reviews is a fool's game (and everyone tells me that it is), then responding to a comment on a review must be at least an order of magnitude more foolish. Nevertheless, Taras Wolansky's shaky memory (or shaky reading) of Emprey so misrepresents the book that I can't let his comment in #27's lettercol stand uncontested.

The last shall be first: Lord and Lady help us if the only possible model for strong women is the Kirkpatrick/Thatcher overdosed-on-testosterone better-man-than-you-are-Gunga-Din variety. No doubt Wolansky found Pat Schroeder's withdrawal from the Democratic nomination "weepy and womanish in the pejorative sense." I found it refreshingly human. Emotions are not a "weakness," and if we perceive a male-female dichotomy on that issue, it largely because we have taught men to hide their joy and pain both (so much so that the only emotion many men can express is anger). Janell Sujata comes from a matri-focal culture quite different from the culture that seems to have biased Wolansky's perceptions; to judge her behavior, public or private, by contemporary Western male-dominated standards is an unfortunate exercise in narrow-minded cultural arrogance. The crucial differences in her background and worldview are dealt with in some detail, not left to the reader's imagination; likewise, the fact that she achieves her position as a compromise candidate whom both power blocs believe they can control is clearly spelled out (perhaps too exhaustively, in retrospect) in the narrative.

As to Harmack Wells' decision to confront the Mizari, I would note first of all that the wisdom and necessity of that decision is a major source of conflict in the story. There is strong support for clearing away this "impediment" to the continued expansion of the Unified Worlds; there are emotional factors (vengeance and arrogance); there are new technologies in hand which give him strong reason

to anticipate success, and tactical considerations which weigh against further efforts to gather intelligence. You may quarrel with Wells' decision, as I do -but please do not tell me that he could not or would not make the decision he did. (Argentina should have known better than to try to take back the Falklands, but it went ahead and tried, anyway.) And that Wells could hold his position while en route to the Ursa Major cluster should not be so surprising; his society has been dealing with relativistic travel for hundreds of years. Organizational structures adapt.

Lastly, I do not believe -- nor do I say -- that you can build a starship out of the contents of your kitchen freezer. At least nine different forms of ice are known, the properties of which vary. Moreover, the (speculative) metastable Ice X of which the Weichsel ships were largely composed was primarily reaction mass -- and using ice as reaction mass is hardly a wild speculation, since the next twenty years will likely see heavylift freighters lifted to orbit by lasers using just that principle (and ordinary Ice I).

Emprey is a not a perfect book -- I haven't written such a creature yet (indeed, few if any exist). Nor is it the best of the "Trigon books," though, paradoxically, I think it contains some of the best writing and one of my best characters. But I am confident (and I'm joined in this by Orson Scott Card, among others) that it's worthy and worthwhile. I welcome constructive, knowledgeable discussion of any book's weak moments -- but offhand, inaccurate critiques serve no good purpose.

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Perhaps I should explain that I am responding to both your observations on my comments about Michael Kube-McDowell's "Trigon Disunity," as well as to Kube-McDowell's reaction. (He was thoughtful enough to sent me a copy.)

If you "don't recall the earlier civilization on Earth making ships out of ice", [punctuation sic] I refer you the [sic] second book of the trilogy, Enigma, chapter 14. In this chapter researchers recognize that a peculiar artifact is actually "a winged reentry vehicle...the skeleton of a goddamn transonic spaceplane." One protests that there is nothing there but a framework: "what happened to the structural material? The control surfaces, the spars, the stringers, the skin? Evidently those parts had been melted off by a lava flow. And what had they been made of: "'Oxygen and hydrogen...arranged in a long-chain tetrahedral (sic) crystal'... 'That's ice, goddamnit all.' 'That's what I'm trying to tell you.'" They try to put it into perspective: "What if the FC civilization existed not during an interglacial stade [sic], but during one of the glaciations? Couldn't an inventive culture deprived of what we consider the crucial metals develop an entire technology based on what was available to them (sic)?" "A technology of ice?" one asks with justifiable incredulity.

As I was reading Mr. Kube-McDowell's letter, I was irresistibly reminded of the classic Monty Python episode about cannibalism in the Royal Navy, in which a Royal Navy spokesman protests, "We've got the problem relatively under control."

He chickens a bit on the issue of "Ice-X": We are now told it was primarily reaction mass". [punctuation sic] However, it is clear from the passages I've quoted that what is described in ENIGMA is a space shuttle, with Ice-X playing the role of the famous heat-resistant tiles!

I still think an Ice Age civilization making spaceships out of ice is a pretty funny idea; though I sympathize with the plight of the modern SF writer, who, like the latecomer to the gold fields, finds all the promising territory worked out.

I'm desperately trying to find a way to respond to Mr. K.McD.'s other two points without re-reading [sic] Empery, as I almost had to re-read [sic] Enigma to find the material extracted above. I still think Janell Sujata is implausibly weak, but one could argue that just this weakness is what brings about the mutiny of her "defense minister", [punctuation sic] Harmack Wells; so I'll let it slide. (Her keeping her position over a fifty-year interstellar voyage, on the other hand, is indefensible.) Nor will I bring up any other troublesome points about these books.

(A brief digression on Pat Schroeder: I just saw her unleash an astonishing array of tics and twitches while debating foreign policy with Jack Kemp, apparently in the attempt to keep her incontinent tear ducts under control. It's not even that she was particularly losing the debate; it's just her reaction to stress. Still, it was a riot to watch!)

One problem with the trilogy I feel I must examine. As K.McD. says, "Harmack Wells' decision to confront the Mizari...is a major source of conflict within the story." Given that this decision drives most of the action in the third book, the author should have taken pains to make it plausible and understandable. The fact is, when Wells orders his attack he knows nothing of the nature of the Mizari, he knows nothing of their motives and their military capabilities save that 20,000 years ago they wiped out human civilization. He knows in a general way what star systems they inhabit, but not where they are in those star systems: if he ever got there, he would not know whom or what to attack.

Wells actually orders the attack following the destruction of a stolen spaceship that intruded into the outskirts of a Mizari star system: "Triad One is now in the high craze to Alphecca with instruction to locate and destroy the Mizari nest." (p. 258) [punctuation sic] Not long afterward Wells is confronted by his nominal superior, Janell Sujata, who tells him all the (painfully obvious) reasons why the attack is entirely unjustified and absurdly dangerous. (The dialogue is too long to quote here, but see pp. 280-283.) She sums up her indisputable position during her trial (p. 297): "Your strategic advisers...find it impossible to credit the Mizari with powers on any level other than our own. You impose our limitations on them WITHOUT KNOWING ANYTHING MORE ABOUT THEM THAN THAT THEY EXIST." (Emphasis mine.)

Harmack Wells plays the same role in Empery as the lunatic general in Dr. Strangelove who orders a nuclear attack on the Soviet Union because communists [sic] are polluting his "precious bodily fluids". [punctuation sic] The difference is (sic) 1) that Wells is not portrayed as a raving loonie; 2) that Empery is not intended as a farce; and 3) that the loonie general has a lot more reason to expect his attack to succeed.

Harmack Wells is not a loonie, but rather a much less interesting type of literary character: a STRAW MAN. As such [lack of punctuation sic] he fulfills the useful function in the story of being "a major source of conflict" because his actions are so obviously wrong. His second function is to make KubeMcDowell's heroine look good, whether she deserves to or not. Consider one of the things she says during the long argument I mentioned above: "The concept of war is predicated on the belief that there are worse things than being dead. Nothing is worse than being dead." Now the reader might ordinarily have said "Bull!" to that, because both statements are wrong, but instead he is forced to root for Janell Sujata whatever she says, as she tries to keep Harmack Wells from bringing about the extinction of human race.

Another function of Harmack Wells is to make the

story come out "right". [punctuation sic] After all, given the threat represented by the Mizari, it would appear that the only rational course is to pour money into appear that the only rational course is to pour money into weapons and weapons research; in other words to try to prevent the ruination of human civilization and the death of billions that would follow another successful Mizari attack. Kube-McDowell's problem was: it is axiomatic that the military be the bad guys. (If you ask why is it axiomatic, you're clearly one of the benighted.) So how could he make the military the villains: [punctuation sic] trot out the old rabid general shtick [sp?]

So I guess I have two objections to the way Harmack Wells is used in Emprey. One is a matter of craftsmanship: if you want to make a general your heavy, you can do it -- if you expend the necessary skull sweat on the plot. The other is a matter both more serious and more difficult: to understand and fairly represent the views of a character who represents an ideology alien to your own. It can be done. (See, for example, J. Neil Schulman's The Rainbow Cadenza, in which the atheist and libertarian author puts the best possible arguments he can find for the existence of God and the power of the State, respectively [punctuation and modifier position sic] into the mouth of a priest and a politician.) But Kube-McDowell fails completely on this point. Harmack Wells remains a hand-puppet from first to last.

[Typist's note: The occasional (sic), with parentheses, is transcribed from Mr. Wolansky's original letter. The variations on [sic], with brackets, are added as a not-too-subtle reminder that people who live in glass houses shouldn't criticize OTHER people's dirty windows, particularly when they may be the landlord's responsibility and not the resident's. (Or in the case of errors in books, the publisher's, not the writer's.)

[As one who has read the Trigon Disunity and the rest of Michael Kube-McDowell's published works, I disagree with Mr. Wolansky's assessment of the characters and of Michael's writing skill; I found the characterizations believable and consistent with the demands of GOOD plotting. As a professional editor, and a sometime book reviewer whose reviews have received far more praise than criticism or disagreement, I believe my opinion of the characters is at least as valid as Mr. Wolansky's. Specifically, in response to his contention that "the reader" would consider Janell Sujata's assessment of war to be "Bull!" I refer him to the warning in Michael's letter, about "narrowminded cultural arrogance." Whether Sujata's assessment is CORRECT is irrelevant; it VERY likely that someone of her cultural background would make such statement in full confidence that it is true. And

if Harmack Wells' went charging into a war with insufficient knowledge and an unrealistic expectation of victory, well, he's obviously modelled after any number of reallife historical military figures (e.g. Armstrong Custer, and more recently the Americans in Vietnam or the Soviets in Afghanistan).

[As the possessor of a degree in Communication Arts, and as one who has studied formal logic, I deplore Mr. Wolansky's substitution of ad hominem arguments for reasoned reconsideration of his own position: his slurs on Michael's writing ability, his gratuitous aside about Congresswoman Schroeder (though admittedly Michael brought this one on himself; still, she's one of the more outspoken members of the House of Representatives, with a record that can hardly suggest she handles stress badly!), his apparently irrelevant reference to Monty Python, and his insinuation that Michael developed the idea of Ice-X out of desperation because all the good ideas were already taken; just to name a few.

[I admit I risk serious error in applying the masculine title and pronoun to Taras Wolansky (including changing "her" to "his" in Michael's letter), since the name is not clearly male or female. I base my conclusion on Mr. Wolansky's statements here and elsewhere about women and gender issues, and my own experience; though I have met a number of misogynistic women, they are usually not so public about their self-hatred, and they are, without exception, not fans. QED. If I have concluded wrong, I hope Mr. (or Miss, or Mrs.) Wolansky will enlighten us. --Maia Cowan]

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Re: Taras Wolansky's Review of Sheepfarmer's Daughter: What gets me about this is not the review itself, which is favorable, but the attitude behind the review. Specifically: "a medieval fantasy about the exploits of a woman warrior--the first of a series...just the kind of book I ordinarily do my best to avoid." Ok, I see what he means there, and I don't much care for femlib sword & sorcery myself. And I can well understand how the bit about the Marines would draw in the curious. I've been in at the kill with this one; it was sent to me for comment by Baen Books and by Elizabeth Moon herself, and Jim Baen has told me his tale of the famous rejection and retraction (which says a great deal for Jim, in that he can and will change his mind upon adequate persuasion: how many other people would go that far?).

Sheepfarmer and its sequels are definitely fantasy novels. They are not medieval fantasy novels. They are, to be precise, Tolkienesque preindustrial, and owe a great deal to the condottieri of the Italian Renaissance. Unfortunately, there is a tendency among readers--and writers--of fantasy to la-

bel anything and everything medieval, as long as its technology is preindustrial, its weaponry pre-gunpowder, and its political system more or less feudal. That any or all of these elements can describe any culture, of any period, from the Paleolithic to the Hundred Years' War, never seems to enter into consideration. My own Avaryan Rising books have been called medieval when in fact they are, respectively, Assyro-Hittite, Persian, and Greco-Macedonian, and despite the fact that the technology is explicitly described as late Bronze Age. But, I'm told, I talk about kings, castles, knights, and squires. Kings are as old as government--Gilgamesh was King of Uruk. A castle is a fortified dwelling. The Romans built castles. So did the ancient Persians and the Chinese, not to mention the Japanese. Knights, as armed and mounted warriors, go back as far as the invention of cavalry, and the knights of the Middle Ages were modeled originally on the Roman equites. As for squires, Alexander the Great had them -- read your Mary Renault.

So why not just use "medieval" as an easy catch-all phrase? First of all, because it's usually pejorative. Second, because the detractors are often defenders of science fiction, which prides itself in its rigorous adherence to the ideals of science, one of which is precision of terminology. I would not think of referring to a planetary system as a galaxy, or to a parsec as a unit of time. It is a frequent pastime of Analog readers, of whom Mr. Wolansky is evidently one, to hunt for minute errors in the science or math of individual stories. Why should I sit still for an equal lack of precision when these people enter my own field? I am a medievalist. I hold a doctorate in Medieval Studies. The Middle Ages, as I have studied them, are not some vague and distant period when superstition was rampant, the scientific method was not yet invented, and nobody knew about the repeating rifle. Nor, except for the very earliest period immediately after the fall of Rome to the Visigoths, can they be regarded as any sort of Dark Ages. They are defined generally by medievalists as the period in Western Europe between AD 500 and 1500 -- roughly from the fall of Rome to the discovery in the West of the printing press (actually, its importation from China). Byzantium, or the Eastern Roman Empire, which fell to the Turks in 1453, is often included; likewise the Islamic states of the Near and Middle East. In these two latter realms, there were no Dark Ages; the high culture of Rome and Greece continued through to its "rediscovery" in the West of the Italian Renaissance (which is generally seen as extending from the late thirteenth century to the end of the sixteenth, and into the seventeenth if one includes the English Renaissance as well). And no, it's not "the Renaissance." There were many before the Italians got a monopoly on the term,

starting with Charlemagne and going on up.

So what do we call that vaguely feudal fantasy with its kings and princes and swords and sorcery? Most of it has nothing to do with the Middle Ages; it's based on fairy tales and on Victorian medievalists, I'd call it fairy-tale fantasy, or swords and sorcery, or medievalist fantasy, depending on the individual piece.

I'd also stop before I labeled something fantasy simply because it was set in the Middle Ages. Susan Shwartz makes rude noises when I say this, but my Hound and the Falcon books are not fantasy. They are science fiction set in the real Middle Ages and using terms of the times to describe mutated humans. Ergo, fantasy. There's nothing anywhere in there that hasn't appeared in any number of books happily and lucratively labeled science fiction.

Frankly, I don't care what you call it, as long as you get your terms straight and stop attacking it unread. And when you say medieval, you'd better mean medieval!

Re: All the correspondance on trilogies and series, specifically in this case, in response to Eric Bentcliffe's "Cosmic Cowpats":

As long as I'm into precision of terminology this week, it seems to me that nobody knows what a trilogy really is. It's not a mega-epic cut up into three (or four, or five) roughly equal chunks and sold for lots and lots of bucks. That's the fault of JRR Tolkien's publishers, who believed that nobody would buy a 1500-page novel, and made him chop The Lord of the Rings into thirds--which he did, but by no means willingly or happily. Later, publishers started getting cute, and doing what DAW did with Cherryh's Chanur books and what Tor is doing with Card's Alvin Maker books: Chopping complete novels into smaller and smaller pieces, with bigger and bigger type, and selling each chunkoid as a whole novel. It makes money, but it ain't art.

A trilogy in the classical sense, in fact, is a series of three complete and individual novels, each of which should be able to stand on its own, but which contains characters and events which are reflected in, and illuminated by, those of the other two. Both of my so-called trilogies are trilogies in this sense. I wrote Isle of Glass as a singleton, my agent asked for a sequel, my publisher wanted a third to round them off. My Avaryan books are individuals, and there will most probably be more than three by the time I'm done. It's not an endless series with constant cliffhangers a la Dumarest of Terra; it's an exploration of a world and its people, and of a number of themes, that I feel need more than a single book to do justice to.

The trouble is, almost no one out there--writer, reader, or publisher--seems to feel the same way. I don't buy or read trilogies or series, either, unless I have it on good authority that one volume is going to stand on its own, simply because I don't

like being jerked around by my pocketbook. But publishers love it, because an awful lot of people keep on buying trilogies, and authors are safe and easy as long as they're locked into multi-book contracts (you know exactly what you're getting), and booksellers can be persuaded to keep books on the stands longer than the statutory two to six weeks if they know there are other volumes coming. Meanwhile the readers keep coming back because they're dying to know what comes next. It all comes down to the bottom line. If you don't like it, the only way to vote is with your feet. Stop buying the worst offenders; stop feeding the monster.

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I see you liked Dean Koontz's The Vision. I like it too; in fact, I stayed up late and read it in a single sitting. But you may be disappointed, as I was, by his later novels. They are just too long. As ingenious and chilling as it was, I never finished Phantoms. It could have been killer stuff at two hundred pages. At four hundred it was over-extended. Koontz's craftsmanlike writing, marvelously brisk and clear at shorer lengths, becomes contrived and shrill, and the coldness puts me off. This kind of fantasy horror works better at shorter lengths. Notice how Stephen King, who is length down when he wrote The Mist, a story in the same vein as Phantoms. Lovecraft never wrote anything longer than At the Mountains of Madness and The Case of Charles Dexter Ward.

I agree with Mark Leeper that Star Wars is far superior to its sequels. However, I think the reasons he gives are actually effects of the real reason: Star Wars is the product of a single individual's imagination. The details Mark admires are there because SW was, for Lucas, a hands-on film, and not an executive producer gig. The merely adequate assembly-line special effects blew away audiences because of how they were used directorally -- the dramatic motion, the high-impact compositions and the exciting editing.

SW also deserves credit for the way it used quotes from other genres like westerns, war movies, and swashbucklers to make unfamiliar situations make unfamiliar instantly comprehensible to audiences, solving the old SF problem of expository in-

formation. Lucas shouldn't be blamed for sleazy movies like Outland and Ice Pirates that treated this risky and limited device as an end in it self.

After Empire, an overproduced wrong turn, and the rancid, limp, Jedi, I had written off the series when I discovered SW on videocassette. It's a classic work of California pop, flashing with Lucas' gallery-grade eye for graphics and design, and the flair for motion and speed embodied by the custom cars and jet cars in American Graffiti and THX-1138. It's as visionary but humbly accessible as only great pop can be.

It's funny -- I think SW is better on videocassette than it is on the big screen. When people argue that the VCR can't do justice to movies, the examples they always use are the big spectaculars. These have the most to lose from scanning -- the trimming of the rectangular movie image to fit the TV screen--and shrinkage, or so it seems. Actually, movies that depend on what's in front of the camera for their visual impact aren't that much affected. It's the smaller movies--the "intimate" films normally thought best suited for TV--that are hurt, because they depend on photography for their visual impact, and that is what's changed. THX-1138 is a depressing example. I really noticed this when I saw Robert Altman's Brewster McCloud on VCR. I remembered it as a visually attractive movie, but it looked ugly and amorphous...except during the opening credits. These were breadboarded--the full, unscanned images set in a movie screen-shaped frame --preserving the dynamic compositions. I couldn't believe the difference it made.

Now that videocassettes are such a big percentage of film profits, I wonder if filmmakers are anticipating the scanning by using blocky, dead-center compositions that will look the same on TV. It certainly looks that way. Look at how end-titles are now scrunched in the middle of the screen.

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Thanks for printing Mike Resnick's story. I thought it was quite funny --- and very surprised to see it in a fanzine. The piece is a bit too broad for my taset, but Resnick does have a nice gift for humor. (I thought publishing Shaggy B.E.M. Stories was the best action the NOLACON II committee did.)

FANOMENON

DIANA STEIN



I strongly disagree with R. Allen Jervis's notion that it is somehow "unfannish" to sightsee in various cities. I can think of plenty of things I've done during Worldcons, for example, that have excited my sense of wonder, from going to a footy match in Melbourne to visiting one of the oldest circuses in Brighton. Fans, after all, should do something more with their lives than reading and going to cons; I'd hate to have a life largely spent in hotel rooms.

Sally Syrjala's review of The Further Adventures of Slugger McBatt is the first review I've seen. Kinsella is a marvelous wwriter; Shoeless Joe is one of the finest fantasies I've ever read, and The Iowa Baseball Confederacy, while not as worthwhile (IBC is terminally cute, and Kinsella is too much in love with his own voice) is nonetheless worth reading. It should be noted, though, that even though he writes about "the all-American game," Kinsella is Canadian.

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Science fiction on television is an area of interest to me and Alan David Laska's article naturally drew my

attention. The best and worst picks are very good. Indeed, Galactica: 1980 belongs in the same realm of non-being as does Star Trek: The Motion Picture. Most of the other worst picks were shown as a time Ike and I did not possess a television set. The only reason we have one now is because of the Red Sox. When they made the play-offs a couple of years back, I had to replace the broken set with a small portable so that I could watch the games. Televised Red Sox games are rather like SF and fantasy, though. They can be quite unbelievable and out of this world. They make you feel as if you are floating through another dimension, one of anguish and feelings of JUST missing the brass ring because some gremlin decided to get in the midst of things.

The best picks were all ones that I would most certainly include on my list, though I might expand my list by one and include The Avengers. We spied a copy of "False Witness" with Linda Thorson in the video department of one of Bradlee's department stores. Watching it brought back fond memories. It was fresh and intelligent. Made one think that the only fresh television lately has been Max Headroom.

### FANOMENON



It seems the list of the best of television comes about when it breaks free of its accepted norm and dares to venture into space no person has yet over-used to its hackneyed conclusion.

Thanks for including "The Perils and Pleasures of Publishing a Fanzine." Sometimes I think fanzine editors have to be into an absurd delight of self-torture. However, no reward is worth its salt without the sweat that is cast to the heavens. Right??

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Women's SF: I suggest Dream-Rider (soon to be reissued under the title Shaman) by Sandra Miesel, which has a

strong female lead. It's also set in the Midwest, if that's of any importance -- in Champaign, in fact.

I enjoyed Mike Resnick's tale(s) again. But I couldn't help thinking that he should have started Chapter One with the phrase "Call me Fishmeal."

O, my name is Kimble Kennison.  
At my store on Salem Street  
That's where you'll find your coats and vests  
In Lensman grey so neat.  
I've second-handed rocketships  
And everything else that's fine,  
And E.E. Smith\*, who writes of me,  
On page 149, says:

CHORUS: O Kennison Kimble,  
Kimble, tra-la-la-la  
Poor Kennison, Kimble,  
Tralalalalala, tralalalalala (d.c.)

\*(or "M. Resnick")

Who remembers the original of that parody? Or its companion piece?

Nice artwork; many chuckleworthy cartoons.

Duane Elms  
91 Waverly Rd.  
Huntington, CT 06484

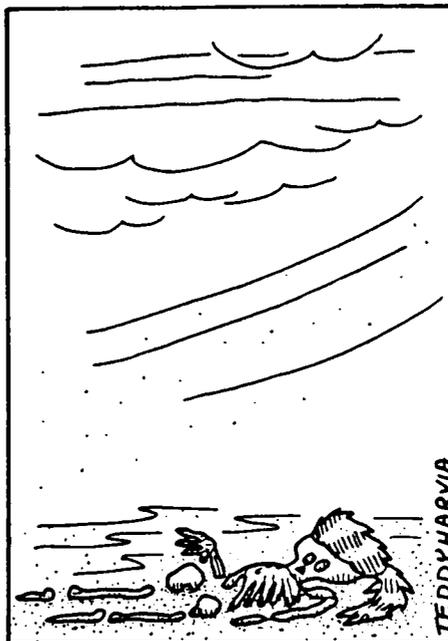
Lan, are you trying to tell me something? In LL #26 Mr. Shea explains why I am a geek and in LL #27 Mr. Jervis im-

plies that if I don't understand him then I am a pseudo-fan. Actually, I'm not really worried about being a pseudo-fan geek. What concerns me about "Points of No Return" is the glorification of fan

DIANA STEIN



LAN IN NUCLEAR  
WINTER



LAN IN GREENHOUSE-EFFECT  
SUMMER

isolation from the rest of the world. I think that is a dangerous and short-sighted view, on both a group and personal level. In spite of the opportunity to commune with other fen on a fairly regular basis, most of us must still live the majority of our life in a non-fannish world. We can make this easier or harder on ourselves by how we approach this world. Personally, I prefer to make it easier. I also prefer to take the good from both worlds. There are both quality people and quality experiences outside fandom and an isolationist point of view minimizes the opportunity to encounter either.

I'm afraid I have to disagree with Sally Syrjala's review of Greg Bear's book Psyclone. I found very little to recommend the book, indeed I found myself wondering why I hadn't just put it down about a hundred pages earlier. Unfortunately, the review itself doesn't tell you anything about the book. Psyclone was actually written in the late 70s and published in 1979 with a different title. Although the new version is supposedly rewritten, the actual writing was done early in Bear's career and it shows. The story starts out not as a routine disaster novel, but as a routine horror novel. There are apparently several unrelated instances of human slaughter and supernatural possession. The story relates investigators' attempts to relate them and provide an explanation. Unfortunately very little is satisfactorily resolved, including the causes of some of the events. Bear appears to subscribe to the "character assassination" method of resolving sub-plots. Got these folks cluttering up your ending? Kill 'em off. Yes, Bear makes the point that having a nuclear bomb explode near you can ruin your whole day, but this isn't something I had lost of doubts about. I found Psyclone poorly

written, inconclusive and incomplete and recommend you find something else.

You might call this "Cosmic Cowpats Revisited." There seem to be a lot of people who are irritated at the continuing trend to multiple book stories (trilogies, decologies, sesquicentologies, whatever). ME TOO! I suppose one of the reasons we get these things is that they sell books. Another reason may be that the effort to develop a consistent universe, planet, stage setting, whatever, is substantial and an author would like to get as much mileage out of it as possible. If this is the case and if there are authors out there reading this, let me state that it has been demonstrated that it is not necessary to leave a story unfinished in order to reuse a universe, planet, stage setting, whatever. Some of the people who have demonstrated this include David Brin (Sundiver, Startide Rising, The Uplift War), Larry Niven (Known Space series), James White (Sector General), Keith Laumer (Retief), Mike Resnick (Velet Comet series, Santiago, etc.), and on and on and on. I mention Brin specifically because one of the books is set several hundred years before the other two, which overlap in time, and because two of the three have won the Hugo. Look, folks, it's not that hard to do and you can do it with style and quality (and a lot less irritation to the readers).

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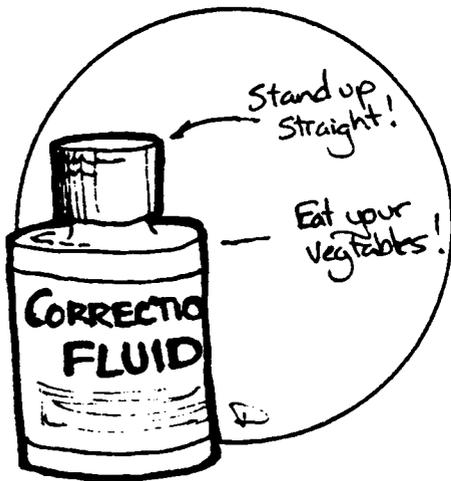
In regard to Clifton Amsbury's letter in LL #27, he states that the German word for Slavs is the same word as for "slaves," leaving the reader to ponder the Dire Implications and What It Says About The German Mentality. May I beg to differ? Slavs are Slawen,

slaves are Sklaven. Germans don't automatically assume Slawe = Sklave any more than we automatically assume Slav = Slave.

It's true that the word Sklave came out of the name for Slav -- but where does he think we got our word "slave"? According to my copy of the Kleines Etymologisches Wörterbuch der Deutschen Sprache (an East German etymological dictionary), the word Sklave can be traced back to Slavic prisoners of war held by the Greeks, giving rise to Middle Greek Sklabos and Middle Latin Sclavus. Contemporary cognates include Italian schiaivo, French esclave, and English slave.

I was about to suggest that people who don't know the language shouldn't make sweeping assumptions about a people or a culture from chance correspondences of the few words they do know, but then I remembered that a while back I had to beat a fluent German speaker over the head with an etymological dictionary. He had realized that the German word for "bad" (schlecht) and the word for "sex" (Geschlecht) are similar, and he was inspired to speculate at absurd length on what that meant. It turns out the two words have entirely separate origins and evolutionary histories, and are no more related than the English "sex" and "sexton."

All I can say about Amsbury's other remarks is that if the country really is run by the Evil Big Business Conspiracy, the Evil Big Business Conspiracy is doing a rather incompetent job of it.



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I read with pleasure your FGoH speech on publishing a fanzine. Of course you have different problems than I do, although money seems to be a constant problem with every fanpubber.

In my case I have a problem with supplies. I don't know how bad the situation is for the mimeo gang, but it may be that the reason I am the last of the spirit-duplicators is the problem of finding good supplies. Back in the 1970s, it was possible to get good quality CODO brand long-run ditto masters. By God, I was actually able to get 300 copies

of one-sided printing, or 200 of 2-sided. Really. Ok, the last few copies were a bit faint, but they were still readable. Nowadays, even the CODO brand of quality has gone downhill. I sometimes use HEYER brand instead. But in any case, about 100 2-sided copies is the best I can get if I want the copies to be readable.

Paper? Well, only white is now available if I want to use made-for-the-purpose spirit duplicating paper. In fact, at the Self-Help/Kelley Paper Company, a ream of white CASCADE paper is \$3/ream. Quite a good buy for 1989. But only in white. And not as good in quality as the paper in the 1970s, another reason I am down to 100 2-sided copies.

As for colored ditto paper, forget it. And forget color ditto masters; they are no longer made -- just purple masters. CASCADE produces a line labelled OD/XEROX, which is supposed to be suitable for spirit-duplicated uses. It isn't. The bleed-through is horrible.

Oh yes, getting repairs and spare parts for a ditto machine can be quite a hassle. I was unable to print for 4 months last summer while my ditto machine was in the repair shop and the technician hunted for spare parts.

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My major criticism of Star Trek: The Next Generation is the characters' names. What kind of handle is Deanna Troi? All well and good to give a Klingon an unwordly name as "Worf" (although that particular name sounds like it should belong to a muppet), but through what circumstances would it become fashionable in Earth's future to lumber our kids with names like "Tasha Yar?" And another thing: would you feel comfortable being treated by a doctor named Crusher?

[[ If the doctor looked like Gates McFadden, who cares what her name is: "Treat me, treat me!" ]]

We like painful jokes and painful laughter around here. A week feels incomplete for me if it does not include at least one episode of thrashing about on the carpet, vomiting great gushes of screaming giggles fit to tear the lining out of my lungs. Thank you, Mike Resnick, for supplying me with this week's fix. "His Award Winning Science Fiction Story" was a treat, and a must for the 1988 Fanthology (Mike Glycer take notice).

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What David M. Shea basically says is that fandom has grown and encompassed more

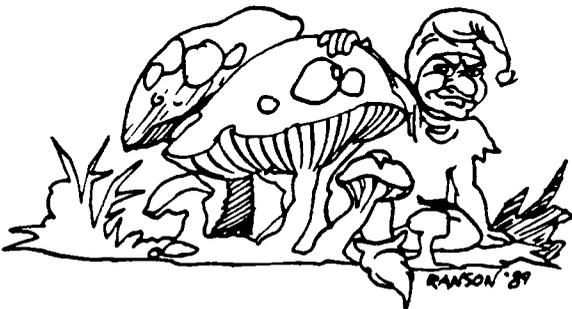
subgroups and cults as the science fiction and fantasy commercial market has expanded. Science fiction is big business, and any convention committee worth its salt needs to address the needs of these

other groups -- though they may be barely related to SF fandom -- in order to not only provide a good time for all convention members, but also a nifty little profit for the hosting organization. What we are dealing with here is a strict business matter: make a profit. A good experienced committee can make it work, but that requires a lot of people working on the concon. Thus, to many people, such as Mr. Shea, it just isn't the same critter any more.

You have a choice, as we all do in this regard: 1) leave (I've tried this a few times and come back to be with my friends in fandom); 2) try to make some changes on the concon -- if that's possible; depends on the people involved; 3) concentrate on only one subgroup you enjoy the most. Face it, fandom is too frigging large for any one person to handle.

Kurt Erichsen is without question one of fandom's funnier cartoonists. I absolutely howled over his series "The Genetic Engineer's Bestiary." My personal favorite was the cat-hair fur coat. Get more!

Terry Jeeves also wins kudos from me for "G-8 and His Bottle Aces Meet the Cucumber of Death." I enjoyed this, especially the gigantic, floating, magnetic cucumber. That is inspired lunacy. On the other hand, this is also super-science at its finest. Mr. Jeeves has created some of the most mind-croggling science fiction I have encountered during these past few years. Wonderful fun and definitely fannish material.



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I'd like to comment on the book reviewers -- not the reviews themselves as much as the reviewers. Nobody seems

to critique the critics in Lan's Lantern, if anywhere. So while I do not consider myself the exemplar for book reviewers, somebody should give the critics the same deserving criticism as the writers of your other columns and articles.

As I see it, the purpose of a book review is to help the reader decide if they should buy a particular book or not. Accepting that, there are certain elements I consider essential to a good review. There must be some description of the book's plot and theme as well as some discussion of the book's failures and successes. Not just a general,

"This book is enjoyable" or "It doesn't work for me" because unless the reader is totally familiar with the reviewer's tastes and prejudices (which is almost impossible since there are 17 reviewers in LL26 alone!), that is generally a useless comment.

Accepting those criteria, Lan's Lantern's best reviewers are Evelyn Leeper and Maia.

Evelyn Leeper is good and solid, giving lots of facts the readers can base their judgements on. Her review of The Tommyknockers is a good example of her strengths. She begins by stating exactly why she does not like the book: "It's a pity the ideas aren't fresher, or weren't buried by the volume of prose." Then she gives a brief plot summary and discusses the over-familiarity of many of the ideas in the book. Next comes her specific gripes with the book: King's overuse of foreshadowing and her disbelief of the "tommyknockers." She closes with a paragraph admitting her recent disillusionment with King, an important factor to consider since readers less disillusioned with King might not be as offended by The Tommyknockers' weaknesses as Leeper was.

Maia is equally good for basically the same reasons. Consider the following excerpt from her review of Cyteen: "For all the complications and political undercurrents, I could fairly easily keep track of the who, what, and sometimes even why, thanks to Cherryh's painstakingly detailed background and the individuality of the different voices." That told me a lot about what to expect from the novel. So did the statements: "It's a dense book," and "This is not, let me emphasize, light reading." There's more, all equally enlightening, leaving me with a good idea of what to expect from Cyteen. A good job, Maia.

Sally Syrjala writes as well, if not better, than all your reviewers. Unfortunately, she gets lost in her writing frequently, often never getting to the point of her review. That not only confuses the reader but ultimately loses them. Consider her review of Lincoln's Dreams. The first five paragraphs, while beautifully written, say virtually nothing about the novel (with the exception of paragraph 4 and that is so general as to be little help in aiding the reader). Paragraph 6 and 7 describe the plot but vaguely with few worthwhile details. Paragraph 8 is a philosophical discussion about life. I was not even sure if that was Syrjala speaking in the book. Since I don't know, it is useless as part of the review. Finally there is a paragraph about how much she likes Connie Willis' writing. Fine, but what has that got to do with Lincoln's Dreams?

Don't get me wrong: Sally Syrjala writes beautiful prose. But she must think out her reviews better if they are going to be anything more than exercises in good writing.

Dennis Fischer writes very interesting reviews, almost as solid and to-the-point as Maia and Evelyn

Leeper. But I was a sucker for his fascinating tangents. They enthralled me without distracting from the reviews themselves. Of course, I admit a prejudice here: I particularly enjoy writing review/essays myself, so maybe I like Dennis Fischer's reviews because I see reflections of my own in them.

Chuq Von Rospach was a very annoying reviewer. Many of his statements obviously arose from personal prejudices unrelated to the reviews he was doing. Consider his review of Science Fiction: The Hundred Best Novels. He mentioned repeatedly in the first four paragraphs that this is a survey book, ripe for nitpicking, but that he won't bother disputing Pringle's choices merely because they disagreed with his. Then he spent the rest of the review doing exactly that! He even made some rather dubious statements in the process. He lambasted Pringle for excluding Harlan Ellison completely from the list. But what major science fiction novel has Ellison ever written? He complains about his selecting "Norman Spinrad's hossible Bug Jack Barron." But it was a Nebula nominee, so some knowledgeable people must have thought it worthwhile. But why go on? Von Rospach did not review the book, he argued choices after repeatedly claiming he would not. That's poor reviewing.

Dean Lambe is a potentially-good reviewer who spends too much time discussing plot and barely any on the whys and why-nots of the books' successes and failures. Most of his reviews are 75% plot and 25% critique.

But that's not his biggest flaw. He also had a habit of making statements that have no place in a review, snide comments that were often opinion, frequently untrue, and occasionally libelous. In discussing Narabedla Ltd. he made the snide comment, "Sooner or later...everybody...tips a few in a bar scene...like those George Lucas thought he invented." Whether you like George Lucas or not, his career has shown him to be an astute student of science fiction. Obviously he realizes that he borrowed his bar scene from countless science fiction works. Why hint to hundreds of readers that Lucas is either stupid or arrogant? Far worse than this, though, was his description of Barking Dogs as the kind of novel Philip K. Dick would have written if he "hadn't been crazy." That crack is totally un-

called for. Lambe must stop being cute and offensive if his reviews are to be taken seriously.

Mark Leeper is your most frustrating reviewer. At times he is very good, ranking with Evelyn and Maia. At times he is very good, ranking with Evelyn and Maia. Empire of the Sun is such an example. At other times he seems to forget what he's doing entirely and tells nothing at all useful about a movie or book. Sammy and Rosie Get Laid was such a review. It contained one long paragraph on the movie, one long paragraph of plot, and four lines of criticism. The Forge of God was another weak review. It is in such a nonlinear form that it is hard to follow. A second reading revealed little about the strengths or weaknesses of the book. If he would put as much effort into all his reviews as he does with his best ones, he could be on the top of the pack of Lan's Lantern's reviewers.

Do I dare evaluate you, Lan? Whatthehell, throw caution to the wind! You're not a reviewer, Lan, you're a plot summarizer. Consider your review of Cobra Bargain. 5 paragraphs of plot description is much more than necessary for a reader to decide if it looks interesting. The single paragraph of criticism told me that the characterization was better than Zahn's previous novels while the plotting was as good. But I never read any of his former novels so such comparisons were useless to me. Apparently the only people who got anything useful out of the review are former Zahn readers. What about the rest of us?

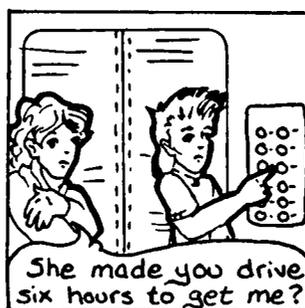
I hope these comments are somewhat useful and not particularly infuriating. They were certainly not intended to offend anybody or to make myself seem a better reviewer by comparison. Everybody needs criticism, myself included, and the better writers/reviewers improve by taking it positively.

All hate mail should be sent directly to George Laskowski, of course!

[[ On LL #27...]]

Your editorial was moving with its comments about Clifford D. Simak. I too will miss him more than any other deceased science fiction writer. His stories in Galaxy in 1963 such as Way Station and "Day of Truce" were the main reason I fell in love

## FANOMENON



## DIANA STEIN



with science fiction. His stories were invariably moving and gentle as well as wondrous and exciting.

He was also one of the few SF writers I met (at NOREASCON in 1971). I found myself sitting next to him at a party given for Simak by Drew Whyte (whom I believe is also deceased). I had so much I wanted to say to the great man but was too tongue-tied to do more than listen to his conversations with others. I've forgotten what he said but not the modesty and genuine warmth of the man. I wish I could have known him better. At least we have all his great fiction to remember him by!

Mike Resnick's "Award-Winning Science Fiction Story" was as entertaining as his Africalogues. The only book of his that I've read (Santiago) was totally serious. Does his whacky sense of humor show up in many of his non-fan fiction?

[[ His book Adventures is a hilarious romp through Africa, drawing on the plots of all the B-movies that were made about the continent. The Branch has some humorous moments, and occasionally Mike puts humor in his novels. ]]

Dennis Fischer's article "The World's Worst Science Fiction Writer" was fascinating reading. My only question is how did such a poor writer as Robert Lionel Fanthorpe manage to publish so much? I wondered briefly if the readers of Lan's Lantern, myself included, might be the victims of a practical joke, that perhaps no such person as Robert Lionel Fanthorpe actually exists. But I checked The Science Fiction Encyclopedia and, sure enough, there is the entry! Amazing.

Now Mark Leeper's "A Taste for Survival" must be tongue-in-cheek, no? I mean a preference for cold water a survival trait? And consider the ramifications of his theory that the human race is evolving to where healthy foods will taste better than unhealthy ones. Considering how polluted our water and food supplies are becoming, very shortly there will be no healthy foods left at all. Combine that fact with Leeper's theory and you reach the inescapable conclusion conclusion that the most important survival trait in the foreseeable future will be not eating at all!

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I wish I had known about the de Camp/Pohl issue so I could have sent you a couple of my recollections of Sprague de Camp. So

I'll mention them briefly anyway.

My first con was the 13th World Fantasy Convention in Nashville in October of 1987. It was there I first met L. Sprague and Catherine de Camp -- and actually got to speak to him. What a thrill for a neo-fan, which is what I was at the time. I'd heard him talk on one of the panels and thought he was really great and fun to listen to. Afterward, I got

his autograph. Then on Sunday morning, while my wife and I were having breakfast, I saw him and Catherine and some friends or family, dining in the same hotel restaurant. When we finished our meal, I noticed the de Camps were still at their table so decided to stop and in as few words as possible, tell him how much I enjoyed his fiction over the years.

That really was my only intention because I didn't want him to think I was one of those pushy, obnoxious fans who intrude on a pro's time. He was very kind and gracious and polite to the stranger--me-- who stopped at his table, and we talked for at least ten minutes. Those were among the best ten minutes I spent at the con and I couldn't believe I was actually talking with a writer of his stature. We talked about Robert Heinlein and various other topics, and I was thoroughly fascinated by him. He was and is everything people said about him in your special issue: intelligent, witty, charming, erudite, and a delight to listen to.

At some other time during the con I found out about another one to be held the following March and at which he and Mrs. de Camp were to appear as the guests. Right then I decided I had to go to that con, especially when I found out there would be a banquet the night before for the invited guests and to which any interested parties could come. For a few dollars extra for the meal, my wife and I and two other couples got to sit at the same table as the de Camps. Those two hours or so transcended the few minutes spent with them in Nashville. Both Sprague and Catherine de Camp have my respect. They really are two of the nicest people one could hope to meet, and I even managed to get a picture of them with me.

I hope I get to meet them again sometime and say hello.

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I never knew E Hoffman Price although I published him in my fanzine) and I never really met Heinlein but the impression I always got was that while Heinlein was undoubtedly one of the most important figures in the history of the field he wasn't someone I could like on a personal level. Undoubtedly my reaction was biased by the way he was shuffled around Big Mac by the Dorsai and treated as a God who was unapproachable unless you were On The Inside and it wasn't improved any when he refused, through his wife, to participate in assisting fannish charities by signing some copies of a Joe Haldeman introduction of one of his novels but I never gained the impression that Heinlein cared about any of his fans or about fandom in general. Naturally I regret he's dead because I too owe a large part of my being a fan to his early books but I won't miss his fiction of the last decade or more and I won't miss

him personally. Cliff, on the other hand, always seemed to be honestly interested in fandom, fans and what his readers were thinking and I rate his loss the greater of the two. He may not have had the impact on the field that Heinlein did but he was a much nicer person.

Lots of fun in the Resnick story (congratulations: you got me to read fiction in a fanzine which hundreds of other fanzine editors have failed to do but you cheated by having it written by Mike who is the best story-teller currently writing in the field) but I'd be interested in knowing just how it came about. Did you bug Mike to write something for LL or did he surprise you with a contribution of a rather unusual nature?

[[ Mike contacted me and said he had this story he wrote for the fun of it, knew he would not be able to place anywhere else, and asked if I would want it. Of course I agreed. ]]

Somehow the leap from a bad box of candy to the problems of a shortsighted view of education/the future/business seems a little forced (I once bought six little bottles of diet cola that obviously had been made with non-existent syrup and tasted like dark brown soda water but I didn't decide that some Machiavellian middle manager had been trying to goose the company's profits) but Mark Leeper's basic concern is still a valid one. Considering how important the education of America's youth is to the continued existence of America as a super power it's always struck me as odd that you don't pay your teachers enough to make teaching competitive on an income-earning basis. A few of the best people (naming no names, you understand) go into teaching anyway, but if you want to attract top people you have to make it worth their while. If you pay rotten wages, by and large you'll get mediocre people and the results, long term, will be as disastrous as Mark suggests.

If Mark's ruminations on taste being a survival characteristic are in fact based on truth rather than fancy I'm left wondering why scotch seems to me to be the tastiest substance known to man? (Let me verify that from the glass I happen to have here by the typewriter... Yup, it's still true.) According to Mark this means that somewhere in the days of my ancestors there was a tribe of short hairy beings who liked whisky and a tribe of others who didn't and ~~the~~ the first tribe survived while the rest were being wiped off the evolutionary slate. Possibly the short hairy whisky lovers were so snookered they didn't even notice there was an ice age taking place, merely developed a fondness for drinking their whisky chilled (that would explain why I keep my scotch in the fridge, wouldn't it) and thus survived and eventually produced me. Well, it's my theory and I'm sticking to it and you aber-



rant water drinkers will just have to accept that when the next global catastrophe arrives you guys are history.

The mind boiggles at 1200 stuffed animals in one residence. There can't be room for any real furniture so I assume they sleep on a mass of stuffed critters, covered by other larger ones, and eat from trays balanced on stuffed things, and generally use stuffed animals for all their daily needs. (It must be a bit ugly in the toilet but you have to make sacrifices when you're obsessed, right?)

The Andrews Feghoot was well-enough written that I was hoping for a better punchline. Oh well, you can't please all of the readers all of the time. Not even if you print poetry. (Sorry, it's those nasty Neanderthal notions slipping out again: better get more whisky.)

A guy has to be a fanatic to want to collect the Tara King episodes of The Avengers. I still think Honor Blackman was the sexiest of Steed's partners but Emma Peel was certainly the most interesting. (Or should that be Cathy Gale was the sexiest and Diana Rigg the most interesting?)

I can empathize with your problems with grading senior students who've already been accepted at college. We run into the same problem up here. We also have to allow students to be absent from classes once a year for a "family vacation" which can be a major nuisance since they invariably try to make their absence coincide with the exam period. At least my administration is apparently more willing to back me up than yours is which makes my job a little bit easier to bear. It would be nice, though, if more parents understood the values we're trying to inculcate in their little darlings and didn't undercut the entire process all the time.

[[ You mean the values that the parents SHOULD have instilled in their children as they were growing up and didn't... Yes, it is a problem, and we who try to compensate for the parents' lack of control over their kids get caught in the middle and end up taking the flack.]]

Skel's interesting extrapolation on the nature of gafia runs afoul of the very obvious fact that issues of LL do not appear at a slower and slower rate. The very reverse is true: before one has

even had the chance to drink enough good homebrew to develop the necessary courage to actually start reading the most recently arrived issue, THUNK, another world-destroying volume thuds into existence sending mailpeople all over the world screaming into the void. Obviously time actually passes more quickly for the rest of us than it does in the Laniverse (which is a scary thought since it feels like I've been writing this loc forever) and since invariably these anomalies tend to accelerate we can probably expect to receive copies of LL even more frequently in the future. What I thought was the paper being delivered a few minutes ago was probably the arrival of #28 and the next knock at the door won't be local politicians trying to get my vote for the upcoming election or the JWs hoping to save my soul but temporal adjusters delivering issues #29 through #35! Tomorrow will probably bring the special issue marking Steve Leigh's fifty years of writing science fiction!! Then again, maybe Harper put turpentine in my whisky...

Some of your readers might be interested in an update on your publication of my piece about The Last Deadloss Visions. When I wrote the article and sent it to you I also sent copies -- out of friendship and courtesy -- to Priest and Ellison. When it reached California, Ellison left several messages on my answering machine demanding I call him. I did, and spent some 83 minutes discussing the matter with him. Ellison tried to convince me not to publish the review. I tried to convince him that TLDV was of sufficient interest/importance in the SF field that Priest's opinions on the subject were deserving of being seen. After much discussion Ellison left it as, "I'd prefer you didn't publish this but do what you feel you have to." And the piece appeared in LL. Quite some time later I got another call from Ellison. The gist of it was that while we'd been friends for 19 years he was upset that I'd reviewed Priest's fanzine and was terminating our friendship. My respect for Ellison's talents and contributions remains immense; my respects for Ellison have diminished severely. I hope one day to hold a copy of The Last Dangerous Visions in my hand. I also hope one day to walk upon a body of the solar system other than Earth. I figure the odds are about the same.

[[ I too hope to see The Last Dangerous Visions in print. When I talked to Ellison, he intimated that actual publication was only a couple of years down the road. ]]

Those who thought the CONSPIRACY program was either anti-US or anti-fandom just don't understand the British mentality. Britfans love nothing more than a rousing argument after which all participants can head to the bar and share drinks and casual conversation. North Americans seem to take

things far more seriously than do the Brits and this difference in attitudes may have led to some misunderstandings in Brighton.

Gee, why do I get the impression you published the Shea article in order to stir up reaction among the readers? You machiavellian mixer, you!

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I've been following the "What's wrong with fandom controversy with great interest. A couple of "big" fans I know advocate banning hall costumes at cons. According to them, people who wear hall costumes are rowdy, illiterate nobodies who have nothing upstairs and don't belong at a con.

I find this attitude irksome. Granted I don't always share the interests of those who walk around dressed like Darth Vader...but at the few cons I have attended, I enjoyed the "ambience" of seeing people dressed differently than they would be at the office. Isn't this part of what we like about SF -- the fun, the release of the imagination, the (let's use that dirty word) escapism from dull, regimented reality? Of course rowdy behavior should not be tolerated, but making generalizations based on appearance is only one step away from judging people by their skin color. This is certainly not an attitude one would expect from fans of the imaginative arts.

And while we're categorizing fans, sometimes it seems these are the same people who spend more time talking about Fandom (with a capital F) than about SF, and puffing up their egos about belonging to this little In Group that's superior to everyone else.

Harry Andruschak laments the lack of interest in space exploration among fans. I'd like to offer my own feelings on this. I love this Earth too much to ever want to leave it. And while at one time I was



inspired by the idea of exploring the universe, I now realize that humanity is faced with a challenge far more urgent: keeping our own planet liveable! I believe that the funds and efforts spent on space exploration could be put to much better use developing clean energy sources for the future, and developing alternatives to polluting our planet. It's a shame our government has not put former space scientists to work on these problems, rather than letting their talents go to waste.

Is there a "Pro-Earth Society" among fans?

[[ I don't want to see money for the space cut but increased, and money taken out of the defense budget put to more practical uses. // As far as I know there is no "Pro-Earth Society" among fans. ]]

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Dave Langford has a right to be baffled by PED XING. It is a common street sign here in the Southwest U.S.A. where I live. As a child I often wondered what the name of a Chinese philosopher was doing on a street sign. I think a little bit of Americana will die with the international equivalent for the pedestrian crossing. Those little block figures they use have no personality.

Terry Jeeves' confusion over the bug zapper on the cover of #25 may be more a factor of geography than culture. America has an abundance of airborne pests. I encountered my first bug zapper in Florida in 1961. I watched in rapt fascination as it crackled every few seconds when another mosquito hit its grill. I now own one myself, but I've hung it in the garage to keep down the noise at night. Its charm is that it zaps the insects that are attracted by the lights in the garage anyway.

Kurt Erichsen's genetic humor was again entertaining. To prove to my son several years ago that jokes did not appear out of thin air, I thought up one just for him. Do you know what you get when you cross an owl with an anteater? Who nose. If you groaned, you're not alone.

I too noticed the children's book Maia: A Dinosaur Grows Up. The name choice is intriguing. The author no doubt chose a mythical name since dinosaurs have a mythical quality about them. It reminds me that few species have common names, much less individuals. Can you imagine a "giant black-backed evergreen eater" named "Bob"?

A female SF author not mentioned in your last issue is Octavia Butler. I recently acquired one of her new novels. The blurb on the cover was alluring enough that Mary Jane, not normally an SF reader, said she wanted to read it first.

Kara Dalkey is a female fantasy writer whose work I've enjoyed most of late. Her The Curse of the Sagamore was a great first novel. Her main

character was male, but the many female characters were most entertaining, enlightening, and believable.

Lost in Space was one of my favorite television shows when I was growing up. The characters were outrageous. The plots were unbelievable. But it was entertaining. I could hardly wait to see what was going to happen next. It didn't demand the thought, seriousness, or intelligence required of watching The Twilight Zone or The Outer Limits.

I too am a fan of fannish hugging, but I rarely use it as a greeting for fans I don't know. I plan on practicing the practice at NOLACON where I'll be meeting a number of fans I've corresponded with for years, but whom I've never met in person. Hugging will prove that I am more than a two-dimensional character that arrives periodically in an envelope.

Kathleen Gallagher's article on children at SF conventions is interesting in the light of NOLACON's cancellation of childcare for lack of interest. At MINICON 22 I visited with one of my fannish friends in her hotel room with her two children. They were sequestered not because the convention was not up to having children in its midsts. The children were not up to being surrounded by adults acting like children.

You were too kind in your review of B.Ware's coloring book. It was hideous. He's such an accomplished airbrush artist, I hate seeing him wasting his time in his junior high school fantasies. His adult fantasies are much more appealing. [[Oh???]]

Phil Tortorici's centaur was highly amusing. I have only limited experience with the equine, and none with centaurs in particular, but the raised tail indicates to me that the beast is preparing to unload. How appropriate for the header of the letter column!

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I can think of some potential additions to Alan David Laska's list of best/worst science fiction TV shows. One of the earliest TV efforts was an adult anthology series called Tales of Tomorrow. On the script level, the series was on a level with Twilight Zone or Outer Limits. It was a good try even though the production values of 1951-52 were quite primitive by current standards. There was almost no adult science fiction on TV between Tales of Tomorrow and Twilight Zone. The only exceptions I can recall were two Playhouse 90 efforts: "Murder and the Android" (Alfred Bester, I think) and "The Sound of Different Drummers" (Robert Allen Arthur). During the 50s, I'd watch anything that purported to be science fiction. That's the only way I can explain having watched Science Fiction Theatre. Despite the title, the series never did anything radical like include any science fiction elements. The show was an absolute nothing.



I got a call from the Battlestar: Galactica people when they were trying to run their letter-writing campaign. When the show was about to appear for the first time I had contacted them about a possible presentation for a local convention. They wouldn't give me the time of day. Had they cooperated with my programming effort, I might have mentioned their letter-writing campaign at LASFS. Since they hadn't cooperated, and I thought their show was pretty bad, I didn't feel any motivation to help them out.

After reading Marc Ortlieb's article, I did some thinking about my pro-mammalian sentiments. I admit to having a built-in prejudice in favor of mammals. I suppose marsupials and avians could also develop a civilization, since they also raise their young. The nuclear family isn't exclusively a human phenomenon, and it isn't even as strong in humans as it seems to be in some other species. However, it's obviously a workable system and it has a long track record. It has the advantage of minimizing conflict among males in a group. The system where each male fights every other male for all the females in sight isn't too good for organizational purposes. So the line of development in "Out of the Cradle" isn't a bad one, even if it isn't likely to have happened in one generation.

Marc Ortlieb also doesn't seem to like the idea of mating instinct overcoming rational thought. As far as I can observe, the mating instinct still seems to be able to overcome rational thought on a regular basis.

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Mark R. Leeper's article, "A Taste for Survival," should create massive correspondence because of its adaptability

to numerous scenarios. A recent survey showed that the #1 fear among Americans is the fear of public speaking. I'm wondering how that bit of information would fit into Mark's "survival characteristic in our ancestors"?

Genetic messages have always intrigued me. They are (in my humble opinion) our chief link with the

past. Personally, I would like to believe in reincarnation but genetic messages make more sense. I do not remember a previous life (my apologies to Shirley MacLaine) but I have experienced "deja vu" which I rationalize as genetic messages from our forefathers.

I've been programming my genes for over 50 years and now it's time to follow the biblical admonition: "Be fruitful and multiply, and replenish the earth" -- and don't forget to genetically code thyself with creative and worthwhile experiences. Genesis 1:28+.

Ain't life wonderful?

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I haven't seen Into the Woods, so can't very well debate Mark Leeper's opinion that it's a mediocre musical. But I do have a CD of the songs, and I don't think he did justice to the quality of the music and lyrics. Whether it's as powerful or as grabbing as Sweeney Todd -- well, I can't compare them, as I don't have a recording of Sweeney Todd. (Tried to watch it on TV a couple of times and didn't like it, which may have more to do with the difficulties of filming a play and airing it on a small screen than with the play itself.) Of course, for people who are interested in fantasy, Into the Woods has a good deal of interest in any case -- there aren't that many musicals based on Grimms' Fairy Tales.

You mentioned the pleasures of VCR taping and wanting to get the Jeremy Brett "Sherlock Holmes" shows when they are re-broadcast -- I think you can get at least some (all?) of them on commercially released tapes. It's more expensive than doing your own, but better quality (and frees one from worrying about the ethics of copyright). I think all of The Prisoner episodes are available commercially as well. A few Doctor Who episodes are available, but probably not the ones of interest to fans. According to an article I saw a while back in the English DW Magazine, the episodes chosen for release are ones that are most "self-contained," and the ones I suspect most fans find of most interest are the ones that deal most with background. My own two favorites are the two set on the Doctor's home planet Gallifrey: "The Invasion of Time" and "The Deadly Assassin." But as these are two of the least "self-contained" episodes, I suspect they won't be released.

A curious problem of continuity which might also discourage producers from releasing them is the fact that they both contain as a major character a Time Lord named Borusa, a leading Gallifreyan politician, and formerly the Doctor's mathematics teacher--but played by two different actors. Borusa appeared twice more in two other episodes, played by yet another two different actors. I suppose by

then it was a little joke with the producers to have a different Borusa each time, and leave it to the viewers' imagination to work out explanations for why he happened to have regenerated into a new body even more often than the Doctor was doing.

And kudos  
for her African  
animal art!



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Great cover by R'ykandar Korra'ti! The only quibble I have is that the shading on the "L" wipes out the word "Lan's". With this color paper I won't soon misplace the issue.

[[ Actually I was not too distraught over the "Lan's" blending into the "L". It's one of those things that if you see it, it adds to the art.]]

Mike Resnick's "Award-Winning Story" kept me in stitches for most of its length. (And no, I haven't had an unseemly accident that provided me with the stitches already.) Diana Stein's illos have once again saved Mike's reputation for creativity -- uh, I mean, added much to the story.

I'd rather not have seen the Mosquito + Hungry Bacteria illo. You see, we're nearing one of Minnesota's infamous times of the year: Mosquito Season (which occurs simultaneously with Road Construction Season, Tornado Season, Flood-Potential Season, and Frying-Eggs-On-The-Sidewalk Season). Time to keep the cats and kids indoors: these winged pests don't shoo easily.

Arlan Andrews' feghoot ("No arrest for the wicked") coundle hold a candle to... well I can't say it's GOOD, can I? That word doesn't go in the same sentence with a feghoot! "Worth reading and inflicting on other people" -- there, I can say that.

"Conreports and Ramblings" were full of more travels than I'll probably ever do. \*Sigh\* At least I can read about them -- and when I get to where I CAN afford to travel, I may use these reports to see which cons I'd be interested in attending.

Wow, you're really dedicated to The Avengers to put up with such a weird sleeping schedule to tape the episodes. Yea, more Night Court fans! It's on two channels at 6:30 PM here, as well as the new weekly episodes. I understand the conflict between filking and talking: My ideal situation is to have the music as background while talking with someone. It's frustrating when filking shuts out everything else at a Mn-Stf meeting (same thing at an apa colation, when people are glued to their zines). It's possible to adapt, of course. When people want to

I attended  
51 conventions  
last year.

Sounds like  
a lost weekend  
to me.



engage in filking or reading, it's nigh impossible to entice them away.

Bill and Brenda's wedding ceremony was cute and amusing (the best lady sang "This Man is Crazy," Buck closed with "You arre now free to unleash your passions!", and the couple lept over a guitar). I'm sure they'll make plenty of beautiful music together. I LIKE stylish moments.

"Hugging: A Short Demo" -- researched (!) by Jet Thomas -- was both constructive and hilarious at times. I wonder if it's been performed at any cons? [[Not that I know of.]] Really, I'm serious. Humor might reach the socially inept who'd assume that the advice is for someone less swaway than they. I haven't heard of too many males who have female huggers they want to discourage, but anything's possible. Yes, distracting those you don't want near you is a good technique, especially at a con full of distractions. I find that "LOOK! There's Halley's Comet!" works well, too (unless the unwelcome hugger is attracted to what he perceives as heavenly bodies). "There are no rules. We do whatever seems the most fun." I wanna see that on posters and t-shirts! (Being a cautious soul, I'd tend to put an asterisk after it with suggestions continued in small print elsewhere -- like on the back of the shirt.)

"SF Fandom: The Next Generation." Hoo boy, is there a need for THIS article. Child care AND child guidance are necessary at cons these days. Kathleen has excellent suggestions for what's needed. Children's programming seems new to cons, but maybe I haven't noticed. Great idea, and recommended for older fans who might like to discover what kids find interesting. I personally don't care for being blocked by stroller patrols, or having to duck the shenanigans of hyperactive, unsupervised kids. Get the youngest ones into a nursery, and give the older roamers things to do AND some ideas on con etiquette. Here is where peer persuasion can help too: if anyone of any age is being unsafely rowdy or rude, let 'em know it's not accepted and could even get them kicked out. A good Harvia illo, with the kids and their boring-looking model airplane looking enviously at the alien with its model Enterprise.

Gawsh, thanks for the nice review of Rune. Heck YES, we're looking for good prose and art from Mn-Stf or The Outside. As for resisting insularity, we need a lot of it because our winters get real cold and it helps to have plenty of... Wait a sec. Never mind, that's insulation. While I'd like to continue some fine fannish foolishness and especially that of the Minnesota/Mn-Stf variety, I am pleased to see th avid response Dave and I have received. Any zine depends on the kindness of strangers--and yes, some are stranger than others--than heavens there's a lot of talented folks who help us make Rune a fun place to gather and share fannishness.

I was amused by Skel's plaintive complaint about your zine arriving in torn envelopes (there are some super-strong ones available, but I don't know about cost. [[VERY expensive!]]) And then he spins off into how immensely heavy the zines are getting, and how you're going to create a "Black Fanzine" one of these days which will consume all fannish materials submitted. Wow. I'm sure his theory of how time appears to stop to fans within their huge book and zine collections, but doesn't for those of us outside, will be quite popular for those about to publish RSN. Sort of a "Slow Glass" look at just why those zines don't come out as often as expected.

Diana Stein's "Fanomenon" strip is amusing. And very striking art by Diane Coltrain on the back cover.

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Marc Ortlieb's reading of "Out of the Cradle" by Mary Caraker, as a story designed to illustrate the evolutionary inevitability of the

nuclear family in the classical human pattern, is not the only way of reading it, and may very well be contrary to the author's actual intention.

The nuclear family has been a successful evolutionary strategy for the human race, and quite plausibly could be a useful or even necessary strategy for some other hypothetical species in specific circumstances such as those imagined by Mary Caraker. This in no way compels us to conclude that all intelligent species in all environmental conditions will be forced to adopt this strategy. It remains possible to speculate that Mary Caraker's fictitious species will, at some future date, be forced by changing conditions to alter their child-rearing strategy once again, giving up the formerly successful nuclear family -just as the human race, today, is showing signs of becoming less committed to a nuclear family strategy than it once was, and could quite possibly give up the practice in some future civilization (many such speculations exist in SF).

What then could be the point of this story? I took it to be a lok at an evolutionary process, de-

signed to evoke the poignancy of individuals faced with problems that their species has no established strategy for handling, and groping their way, amid horrendous difficulties, toward a workable solution. On the whole I found the story (and others of its type, of which there are many) to be a bit too sentimental for my taste, however I do not see any sinister ideological bent, cunningly buried in the plot where it can corrupt the minds of impressionable readers. Of course, only Mary Caraker can tell us precisely what she intended in writing this story. We can only guess.

In your conreports and ramblings I was particularly struck by your emotional reaction to the seniors in your math classes who are failing, and did not even come in to take the test you had specifically arranged to help them, causing you to feel personally hurt. In a way this is an appropriate or even laudable reaction on your part because it results from your professional commitment to teaching, and also from your concern about these individual students -- you are a teacher who cares, even when your students do not.

On the other hand, your concern in some cases may be unnecessary. Some of your students, I am certain, have never had any actual interest in math or in anything that requires math. Whether they get high grades or low, they will never again, upon graduation from high school, attempt any form of mathematics more complex than simple arithmetic (which they will do with pocket calculators only, and even then will make mistakes), and whose profession will make no mathematical demands on them.

I would think that if you did your best to help students who are actually trying to learn the subject, and simply allowed those who are not interested to accidentally absorb whatever infinitesimal knowledge they will happen to acquire and to otherwise passthrough the course untroubled by mental exertion, you are doing all that can reasonably be expected.

[[ That's what would be expected in a public school. In this private school, 99% of the students go on to college, and because of the price parents are paying for their kids to go here, the demands for high grades are always there. Even if the little darlings are doing nothing to earn them. This year, the students are getting what they earn. I'm too tired to fight with those who don't want to put forth the appropriate effort, so I am using what energies I have to help those who want to learn. ]]

My hackles are slightly raise by this comment by Jean Weber: "Her themes include homosexuality, incest, sadism, slavery, and drug addiction... I was intorduced to several new points of view on these unsavory topics." Homosexuality is not inherently

less savory than heterosexuality, even though it is subject to more prevalent and extreme prejudice and misunderstandings. Furthermore, the author being discussed in this quote, Elizabeth Lynn, has shown herself to have exceptional ability to deal with this subject in a way that is far from unsavory. Even the incest in The Sardonyx Net is not really unsavory, although admittedly the sadism, slavery and drug addiction are.

Several issues ago you published a reminiscence, "Ten Years a Fan." I commented that when I had been in fandom for ten years, I might similarly reminisce. Well, my tenth anniversary has passed. In retrospect, my fannish career has led to the most successful friendships I have, as well as a continuing stream of varied intellectual stimulation. While fandom is not my way of life, (since most of my life still has no direct connection to fandom) it is true that the parts of my life that I most value are derived from fandom. I want to meet you too, Lan. Someday.

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Wolansky's critique of Draka history in S. M. Stirling's Marching Through Georgia fails on at least two points: (1) the nature of Tories, and (2) the military epititudes of Africans. Wolansky reports Stirling as having the Dutch settlement in South Africa overwhelmed not merely by British conquest, but by American Tories' colonization. (Presumably instead of settling in Ontario.) Tories were not "traditionalists," they were imperialists. Not the modern kind of transnational economic imperialists, but the old kind of merchant militarist settler imperialists. Furthermore, the 1780 American Tories had been fighting the war alongside Indians and often in integrated units, and understood "bush" fighting as well as formation maneuvers, many were married to Indians. A fusion with the military culture of Southern African Blacks does not seem outrageous against what I know of the early history of that area. On the African military capabilities: what enabled European colonial conquest were firepower (eventually artillery and Gatling guns) and the recruiting of warriors of some tribes against others.

Since I have not yet read the book, I cannot say I accept its premises. I merely reject Wolansky's argument. About page 51 I'll make but one comment. "Hitler never even came close to matching Stalin's body count" is a misstatement even if you take the most inflated charges against Stalin and the worst understatement of the Nazi atrocities. Hitler intended to wipe out whole peoples and religions and ideologies. Stalin just intended not to be wiped out.

Harry Andruschak on p. 105 asks, "When Did It Change?" Well, it seems every category which grows also tends to diversify. However, the change he re-

fers to has an additional set of dimensions. One is the changes taking place in the mundane world and overwhelming science fiction and especially convention fandom. Another most important one is the swamping of the field by fantasy. The old Weird Tales printed science fiction and hard SF Astounding spawned Unknown, and F&SF had both; increasingly in the last 20 years books of fantasy have swamped the field and to a great degree, the cons. And fantasists have no interest in the fantastic dreams of Space.

Paula Robinson's comments on the "Cosmic Cowpats" reminded me what a local columnist (Steve Rubenstein in the San Francisco Chronicle) had written, "After all, I'm not at all at odds with the majority of people, only with the majority of editors, and they hardly qualify." And Lloyd Penney's remarks underline what I said about fantasy and science fiction/convention fandom. On the other hand, personally I like maps, but the places on the map and those mentioned in the story should have more than 10% overlap.

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All the mentions of cons in this issue whet my appetite. It was just a long time since I was at a con, and even longer since I was at a sunstantiasl con. There should have been one about a month ago here in Uppsala, just north of Stockholm, Bob Shaw was going to be GOH, but unfortunately the "hotel" was double booked and we got the wrong end of the stick. Luckily we were told well in advance and so could cancel the rest of the arrangements, and instead there was a small relaxacon in the student residence. I didn't go in the end, but I think around 50 people turned up and it was probably almost without programming.

"Huckster" always sounds so delightful, I think. At a Swedish con either Mikael or Jorgen turns up with around 100 books (usually Jorgen, as he is the one with a car) selected from the shelves of Sweden's one and only SF bookshop (a so called non-profit making" establishment, mainly because of the small number of customers) and sit there, behind the table waiting to see if anyone buys anything. Usually it's the same people who would buy from the bookshop anyway. Rare books or magazines, there's no trace of! However, an auction can be good place for picking up apparently unread books for a pit-tance (it's a buyer's market).

But I was going to talk about your fanzine! I was a bit disappointed with Robert Teague's "The Periodic Table of Fannish Elements." The potential of the idea is tremendous, but unfortunately Robert did not exploit it sufficiently --apart from the fanaticide series and the conventicide series, the relationships were missing. Where were the Noble (or Inert) fans? Which are the unstable elements

and what do they decay into? Should not SF be element 1? However, I DO look forward to some chemistry lessons in future issues.... for example, what is the compound formed by adding Bh to F? Presumably, it would be F(2) Bh(3). On the other hand, V and Bh would not react.

I was interested to read the interview with Judith Moffett having read her "Surviving" a couple of times (it was one of the stories given to me to review for our Nebula fanzine SPEKTRA AFTER THE KIPPLE). I'm looking forward to the paperback edition of PENNTERRA, plus of course future short stories. It's one of the reasons I read the SF mags, the best new names usually appear there first and it's a great kick to read a story by a totally new (to me) author and find that the story is excellent. I shall never forget first reading Michael Bishop's "Blooded on Arachne" in IF. Interesting also is Judith Moffett's Swedish connection.

"SF Books on Cassette" has also inspired me to ask at the local library if they have any such things. Next time I go there I shall inquire. I have seen some (non SF) for sale but the prices are a little offputting. To pay 3-4 times the cost of a hardcover for a cassette version seems a little expensive, though the cost of producing and distributing the material is presumably higher. Maybe the price will come down if they become more popular. A "reader's guide," or at least regular reviews, are a necessity--perhaps you can get Jamie to review on a regular basis. It's always useful to have something to listen to in the bar, but can you imagine a fan out jogging with a freestyle and listening to Card's latest novel....

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Can't resist at this late stage throwing in my own fleeting remembrance of L. Sprague de Camp.

When I was holding down the press room at the '85 NASFiC, he and Catherine wandered in between panels, sat down and chatted pleasantly for the better part of an hour. Sprague had just accompanied an archaeological dig in the wilds of Pennsylvania, and was pleased to have made a few minor finds. He was describing the plotline of his next book in entertaining fashion when a reporter wandered in looking for a replacement pocket program, and he graciously consented to an on the spot interview. "Gracious" seems to be a key word in all these paeans to de Camp...in any event, it was a most memorable hour.

Iain Banks' The Wasp Factory (which was available in the US in paperback well before Conspiracy, 'cause I got it from the library, so there) really impressed me by having such a supremely logical reason for the brother's mad behavior. Unlike other books where the author declares, "This character is a loon," so he can move characters around to no purpose except to advance his plotting.

In a letter in #25, R'ykandar Korra'ti seems to remember reading Wyndham's RE BIRTH in a collection of short stories. He appears to be recalling the two volume TREASURY OF GREAT SCIENCE FICTION, edited by Anthony Boucher, which was the premium offered for joining the Science Fiction Book Club 10, these many years ago. Each volume contained a selection of short stories sandwiched between two novels, and RE BIRTH was indeed one of the novels. (THE STARS MY DESTINATION was another. I still have my copy.)

Mike Glicksohn on Libraries fails to mention one reason I still get much of my reading material there: Books may be to own, smell, pick up, etc., but in that case, they're also to spend money on! Also, if I get a book from the library, I'm pretty sure I can coerce myself into reading it by the due date; if I buy a book and stick it on the shelf, chances are it will languish there until buried under further purchases. I'm also blessed with the kind of library where I'm likely to find all the nominees for the Best Novel Hugo before the year's voting deadline. (A fan used to work there; maybe she instituted their SF acquisition policy.)

#26: My favorite part of the issue is Robert Teague's Periodic Table of Fannish Elements. It evidences great wit and expertise, especially in some of the conjunctions of elements with their atomic weights. Even if he did give two different elements the symbol Fi, but he admits there's room for improvement. He doesn't mention "Gopher," but I suppose that's more an elemental particle holding the nucleus of a convention together...

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In Lanten #27, p. 101, Mr. Penney says that I am "involved with SCA." I regret to say that he is misin-

formed; my involvement has never gone beyond watching members whale away at one another in tourneys. I almost decided to attend one festival as Saladin, since I own a good 17th century scimitar and several kaffiyas, obtained during my Arabic travels 20 to 30 years ago. But Catherine had to leave for a family funeral, and I didn't feel up to rustling up the jellab, burnoose, &c., on my own.

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I enjoyed the article by Jean Weber. I am familiar with nearly all the authors mentioned, and look forward to Weber's article on women fantasy authors. Other

SF women writers of interest to me include Lois McMaster Bujold, Marti Steussy, Melissa Scott, and Rebecca Ore, while I am slightly surprised at the omission of Andre Norton and C. L. Moore from the list unless Weber considers them fantasy writers). Salmonson's article considered writers that I'd never heard of before, and thus was helpful to me

in that respect.

Mike Resnick's story is reminiscent of the story in the Nolacon II Program Book. Obviously written with tongue stapled in cheek, it evidently pokes fun at a number of SF conventions. The literary ones, anyway. I understand BIMBOS OF THE DEATH SUN by McCrumb took care of the others.)

As for the reviews: The only flaw I found in NA-TIVE TONGUE was its tendency to play, "Let's torture Nazareth." And I loved the way Micaela did in her rat husband (what this says about me I'd rather not go into, ok?). At least it sounds like THE SHEEPFARMER'S DAUGHTER is not another "The Little Match Girl Joins the Free Amazons" book (not that I have anything against them, since I've read so many of them, but let's just say I've seen that plot before). As far as Sally Syrjala is concerned (Hi, Sally!), I must recommend CAN'T MISS by Michael Bowen, a much better tale of the first woman in the major leagues than SHE'S ON FIRST. There's a lot more baseball, for one thing, plus one of the grossest jokes involving Women Who Count (which will have one either enraged or rolling on the floor, depending) I have \*ever heard. As a person who also believes that baseball is a higher art form and a good reason for living, I have also enjoyed THE UNIVERSAL BASEBALL ASSOCIATION by Robert Coover, which I think is far superior to his other works.

I second the recommendation of THE FOREST OF THE NIGHT by Steussy. Excellent.

More on David Shea's article: You get out of fandom what you put in. I try to keep up and develop old interests and new--including my introduction to Blake's 7, staying in contact with Trekfen and Darkoverdom, reading the gaming columns, making up filks, and hanging around costumers. Thus, as it turns out, when I was at NOLACon II it appeared that I could find some common around with just about anyone I ran into. If David Shea can't, I feel sorry for him. As for the L 5 geeks--well, we all had fun watching DISCOVERY'S launch and landing, and have been known to do some lobbying. And we may yet have a space station (politics willing and the creek don't rise). So there!

Artwork: Excellent, especially Diana Stein's cartoons. And it's always nice to see Teddy Harvia, Brad Foster, Phil Tortorici and Maia Cowan's work. (I liked you others, too!)

## FANOMENON



## DIANA STEIN

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Re "ST:TNG Alternate View:"  
While I can see the faults the show has, they don't really detract from my enjoyment of the show. You can

not create perfect characters because they don't exist in real life, and shouldn't in fiction. Even if you could, the interpretation by the actor presenting the character would change it from the original idea the character's creator had in mind. Some have complained that the basic premise of this show, to explore, is wimpish. I think those critics have read too many Baen-type novels with star destroyers, bristling with super weaponry. The peaceful exploration mission is entirely plausible, as is the idea of bringing families along, plus the trimmings of civilization; that's why the starship can separate, sending the families and trimmings in the saucer off to safety, while the remaining part of the ship remains, light, fast, extremely maneuverable and powerful. If indeed there are some characters that people don't like (what an understatement), they can take heart that new characters are coming in to the ensemble. What Whoopi Goldberg is going to do for the show is another thing. I'm willing to watch and make judgments then.

Re "World's Worst Science Fiction Writer:" Lan, contact Michael Skeet; he's also done some articles on Fanthorpe. I also believe that Edmonton fan Stuart Cooper is this country's resident Fanthorpe expert. I had no idea, though, that Fanthorpe wrote under the name Pel Torro. If Fanthorpe is the king of bad SF, then his prose is indeed Royal Purple...

Re Gerri's "Stuffed Animals:" I saw some of you guys at the Mpls. in '73 party in Atlanta. While we don't have nearly 1,200, we do have enough of them to cover several shelves. Some of them are hand puppets, and while some in the crowd may wonder what part of the animal's anatomy we're shoving our hands into, those puppets keep bratty kids and crying infants occupied and quiet. Unfortunately, stuffed animals tend to multiply as their owners give in to massive stuffed animal displays in toy stores, and they take up a lot of space. Before leaving TAPA (the Toronto APA), Gerri told us about her and Herman looking for larger accommodations to fit their ever expanding collection--or should that be family?



Re "Best and Worst SF Shows:" I'll certainly agree with the first three choices for best show. Star Trek, Twilight Zone, and, I believe, Outer Limits episodes are being sold in video cassette. Doctor Who is a little iffy, what with the special effects suited for Plan Nine from Outer Space, but a definite yes for The Prisoner. Perhaps for numbers six onwards, Battlestar: Galactica might be in there. That series held special interest for my wife Yvonne because the series itself is based, to some extent, on the Book of Mormon. I enjoyed Project: UFO, actually....

Re "Fandom: TNG:" Kathy's right; conventions will have to start looking at daycare, and not just for the concom, either. We were in our teens and early 20s not long ago, pulling all-nighters and partying like finks. We're now in our late 20s and early 30s (some of us later than that), and we start getting drowsy around 10 p.m. We can't party like we used to because our kids are with us, and they have to get to sleep early, too. To provide daycare, though, there has to be some sort of investigation into what staffing is needed...are professional daycare workers required, or will volunteers do? Because it's children you're caring for, will additional insurance be needed to cover possible injury to the children? Daycare has to be handled, but it has to be done right to make sure that everyone is protected, including the conventions.

That cartoon on page 105...the Alfquest doll... words fail me. That's truly horrific.

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At the 1937 Convention was my favourite author, Eric Frank Russell, and I cannot resist giving some fannish odds and sods about him. In a letter on logic and paradoxes to Astounding in 1955, EFR asked that if a box 3 feet long with a 2 inch diameter hole at each end contained a skunk and the skunk stuck its head first through one hole and then ran and stuck its head through the other hole, and the skunk doubled its speed each time, how many trips must the skunk make before it stuck its head through both holes at the same time.

EFR was so concerned about the ethics of permit-

ting anthologised stories to be reanthologised that he refused fees to do this and circulated a letter asking for comments on the practices. His comment was, "I know of no reason why the STF game should not be played straight."

His response to Damon Knight's In Search of Wonder (an anthology of reviews) was the article, "In Search of Justice," in Hyphen. EFR said he did not like to criticise without knowing and making allowances for the creator's circumstances. Such as a painting he first thought reasonable only and then reassessed then he found it was painted by an armless veteran. Or his friend Maurice C. Hugi who wrote rubbish but was the only child of semi invalid parents whom he looked after; he was also under sentence of death as a chronic diabetic, kept alive in those days by frequent doses of insulin.

EFR used the pseudonym Obadiah Bip on two occasions in Hyphen. He was also a great fan of Atom in Hyphen and declared him everlastingly above criticism. He also contributed some pressured moments to SLANT, 1951/52, one of which was:

Scene: The White Horse, London -- Young fan, enthusiastically waving a lurid copy of Amazing Stories, "What I like about SF is that it TEACHES you so much."

EFR, coarsely: "Yes. Learn to mount birds as if you didn't know."

Walter Gillings, choking over his beer, "I always thought that was taxidermy."

John Beynon Harris, surveying Gillings with pity, "Well, some funny things have happened in taxis."

Finally, one of EFR's memories of a trip to America was that Wollheim shouted all the time.

I hope the above has some entertainment value. If anyone wants more details on the Russell bits, I would be pleased to help. In return, if anyone has spare copies or can photocopy any of my following EFR wants, I would be very grateful.

Short stories: "By a Thread" / "Egyptian Episode" / "Poor Dead Fool"

Books: The Rabble Rousers

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I don't know who Wendy Council is, but she was certainly more than kind in her remarks about the Judy Moffett piece. Did the old ego good. Really though, at least in that mode, I don't consider myself an interviewer. I like a good interview (such as in Omni or in Playboy when I used to read it) in which the interviewer knows the work of the interviewee (whatever that work might be) inside and out and can ask probing, insightful questions that elicit clear and interesting answers. A good interview like that is an art form, and the person asking the questions (or at least the questions being asked) rightly belongs in the finished product along with the person answer-

ing them (or the answers).

What I was attempting to do with Judy --and will again with Lois [McMaster Bujold, see p. 11]-- is probably much simpler: just get her started and keep her talking by asking a few simple and very general questions, get it on tape, and then edit the results so what a picture of the author appears in her own words and her own speech cadences. I think that as readers we are interested in the authors we read and want to know about where they came from and how they got to where they are today. Also about where they get their ideas, a topic that comes out more in the Lois piece. Or conversely --and I hope this is true-- as we meet an author in this way, which may be the only way we'll ever meet her, we'll be inspired to go out and get her books and read them.

I won't deny that a lot of work is involved in rearranging and editing the material down to a manageable length and deciding what to leave in and leave out. But, as I said, my questions were essentially quite dull, and it's really pretty easy to get people talking about themselves as that relates to the work they are doing. So there truly isn't any place in the resulting profile (which is, I think, a more accurate word than interview) for the person holding the recorder. Or maybe these pieces are more like oral histories. I probably stole all this from Studs Terkel except, I'm ashamed to say, I've read hardly any Studs Terkel.

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Mike Resnick points out a plain truth. Once you're dead, nobody gives a shit. There's this guy leaves what is acknowledged to be the finest collection of Africana

extant to found a library in Nairobi, and everybody says "Thankyouverymuch," and snatches his dead hand off. He also asks to be buried on top of this mountain, and they all look up dribbling from their new collection and mutter, "Yeah, OK, fine...unless it's any bother." What you have to remember is that when you're dead it's difficult taking people to court for breach of contract. What you have to do is leave somebody behind to do it for you.

Here's how you go about it. You want to be buried under the LASFS clubhouse, right, and have them erect a monument to you? So what you say in your will is, "I leave my collection and estate worth about 17 million bucks to the LASFS provided they bury me under the clubhouse and build a 100 foot monument to me out in the front yard. Otherwise I leave everything to Ralph Nader." Now if Sir Northrup MacMillan had done this, do you think he'd have ended up shovelled into a convenient arroyo at the base of the mountain whose summit he intended for his final resting place? No way. Of course, if you don't have a lot of faith in the legal system,

or if you've recently read Dickens' Bleak House, you could always give yourself extra insurance by naming the PLO as alternate beneficiaries.

If the mountain was only 6,000 feet, then a helicopter could have dropped the body off at the summit, everybody else could have strolled up after their Sunday lunch, done a bit of digging, Our Father We Commend This Soul, etc., and strolled back down again. One thing's for sure, the MacMillan library isn't going to be offered my almost complete set of Fanzine Fanatique, not with its track record.

I am puzzled, nay gobsmacked, by this strange view of fandom covered by Judith Moffett's remarks and those attributed by David M. Shea to Marty Cantor (whose hairstyle and sense of humour are equally suspect). On the one hand, we have a view of fandom, or some element of it, as obligatory ("Will I have to hit the con trail? I'm willing to if I have to.") Surely only Br'er Fox would believe that people had to be made to attend a convention? Sign this contract, Ms. Moffett, assigning us all rights to your next book, for only three dollars and forty five cents or...we will make you attend convention. "No, no, not ~~the/cony/chaif~~ Boskone. Anything but that. I'll sign, I'll sign."

On the other hand, we are supposed to see SF as being irrelevant to fandom. Yes, it's true that for some people SF is irrelevant to what they currently get out of fandom, but these people are a minority. SF will always remain the one most common element, that enables most of us to interact with others in this Science Fiction Fandom of ours. Like Eric Bentcliffe, we may read less of it than we used to, but it remains the most likely topic when you glance across a convention hall and think, "I've got something to say to that guy over there." It may not be essential, but it certainly isn't irrelevant. It's like the main trunk of the tree. You can sprout off into a little cluster of twigs that don't have hardly anything to do with SF, but to get to any other cluster you have to go back down the branch, maybe as far as the main trunk, to find your common ground.

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It takes guts to defend the writings of R.L. Fanthorpe, but there are extenuating circumstances. First, he

was not on a normal writing schedule; only a few pulp writers churned out stuff as fast as he did. He gave an hilariously funny talk at the 1979 Worldcon about his career, and one thing he mentioned was that he'd often get a call from the publisher on Monday for a book to be produced by Friday. Nobody checked his material for inconsistencies, much less style: "not just the color of eyes changing, but sometimes a character who was killed in chapter 4 would be alive again in chapter 8."

Everything was dictated, and transcribed not by friends but by students of his mother's secretarial school. He mentioned that this caused loud objections from some students, because he'd start out talking at a normal rate and as the deadline neared he'd speed up, so there was much more dictation to take from some discs than there was from others. Also, of course, one novel would be transcribed by several different people, so even if the students had cared about anything but their grades, there was no way to check for inconsistencies. The publisher wasn't interested; "he always checked the wordage, but never bothered about the content." (All quasi-quotes are from my fallible memory, but are reasonably accurate.) Fanthorpe himself saw his writing as a method of paying his way through school. He wasn't interested in doing the best job possible but in collecting enough money to live on in the shortest possible time, to allow more time for university work. His stuff was bad and he knew it and didn't give a faint damn about it, as long as it paid his way. Probably the worst thing you can say about his writing is that he did take his time on The Black Lion -- at the time of the con he hadn't finished this novel, and talked about how he was finally trying to do it right. And it's only marginally better than his other stuff, though it is better. On my recommendation, a short lived US promag named Fantasy Empire asked Fanthorpe for an article about his writing, and he did one which was amusing but not nearly as funny as his Worldcon talk.

A note on Lloyd Penney's comment to Shea; Bjo Trimble did not "invent the art show." Seth Johnson invented the art show; what Bjo did was to take the invention and make it practical. Seth would have let it be talked to death in the N3F; Bjo acted.

Steven Fox had some good points mixed in with a few errors. If people don't want to read, that's their business, and if they don't have time to read much, I can quite understand it. Some of my best friends are in the same situation. But lack of money is a cop-out as long as public libraries exist. Rudeness and interruptions and loud talk about nothing of interest to the listener are indeed on the upswing. The obvious reaction for the average fan is to either walk away or tell off the person being rude. As a huckster, I can't do the first; I have to stay with the table. I can ignore interruptions if I'm busy, and it's easier to just quit listening than to tell someone to fuck off. In general, however, the conversations I get into are very entertaining.

As for calling non fans "mundanes," that's just being human. Name a group that doesn't consider itself superior to everyone else. Problems don't arise from a feeling of superiority but from an attempt to act on that assumption. As for calling down someone who butted in to a conversation Steven



was having with his girl, how does he know that it wasn't David Shea trying to strike up a conversation? Maybe his reaction is what started all this. As for his girl's list -- washing clothing and self now and then is fine, though except for one person I generally get worse smells from fans who overdose on cologne and perfume than I do from dirt. Style of hair and clothing is none of her business; if she doesn't like the appearance she doesn't have to talk to the person.

C'mon Misty, not all of us are hurt because the real world doesn't understand us. Some of us don't give a damn. (Of course, I'm not sure I've ever written you a letter, either....)

Books can't really be labeled as "science fiction" or "fantasy" for the convenience of readers because there's no place to draw the line. Is time travel science fiction? Usually so regarded, but not by everyone; Tony Boucher's comment about there being more evidence for werewolves than for time travel, springs to mind. Faster than light spaceship drives? Not unless Einstein is superseded. (And remember that if Newtonian physics is still valid for this planetary system, Einsteinian physics would still remain valid for this universe; the new theory would probably show a larger area in which it was no longer true.) Besides, every reader has his own ideas as to the exact difference between fantasy and science fiction. I have seen in a fanzine the statement that the author considered THE LORD OF THE RINGS to be science fiction, because he liked it and he didn't like fantasy. (An extreme viewpoint, but it's shared to a lesser extent by a lot of people.) Labelling for David Palter's convenience would be just that; it would not necessarily simplify matters for even one other person. If it could be done, it would be helpful, but I doubt that it can be. (Of course, my view of the differences between the genres is the correct one--and I personally accept both time travel and FTL as a science fiction -- but unfortunately I'm not in a position to straighten but the stupid publishers/blurb writers/authors/reviewers.)

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Congratulations on completing your Avengers collection. (But does this mean you have all the Honor Blackman episodes?

[[ No, I only have one Honor Blackman episode, "The Death of a Great Dane," commercially released on VHS video. ]]

I'm surprised the plot of Promises, Promises wasn't more familiar to you--after all, it's based on the Billy Wilder film The Apartment, which, if you haven't seen, you certainly should. (With Jack Lemmon as the archetypal schnook, Shirley MacLain as Fran Kubelik, and Fred MacMurray as Sheldrake!) I caught a road show production years ago with Will MacKenzie in the lead (and Alan North of Police Squad as the doctor). It's certainly an enjoyable show, but it adds little to the original, which probably explains why it's never been filmed, in spite of the recurring vogue for Neil Simon and Bacharach/David projects.

I have to thank Sally Syrjala for turning me on to the books by W.P. Kinsella. (I'm developing a Trivial Pursuit project, you know, and those Sports and Liesure questions are murder.)

Alan David Laska is asking for trouble by invoking the memory of Project: UFO without addressing the slant that particular show took toward its subject. I happened to tune in, with great interest, to an episode recalling a case with which I happened to be familiar. I had come across an article in an anthology of UFO studies by an investigator who had left Project Blue Book over one particular case. This was the instance of a scout leader who was driving his troop back from an expedition when they all saw a bright light originating from the woods. The man parked the car, told the kids to stay put, and went to investigate. The scouts said shortly their leader came running out of the woods, when there was a blinding flash of light from behind him, and he fell to the ground.

The leader recovered all right, but investigators found every area of exposed skin suffer a mild first degree burn, while the ends of all his body hair had been singed. He told a story of seeing a brightly glowing object in a clearing in the woods. The Blue Book team didn't find anything curious at first, until they examined some grass and soil samples taken at the site. Seems the tops of the blades of grass were okay, but their roots were burnt.

In the end, despite any compelling evidence either way, the incident was classed as a hoax. Why? Well, one of the investigators determined that you could hold a lit match close enough to your skin to singe the hairs and sedden the skin, without causing excruciating pain. Ergo, hypothetically the subject could have done so to every inch of exposed skin. This left unresolved a number of questions,

not the least of which was the motivation of an entire scout troop to lie to back up this man's story. (Ergo, the eventual resignation of the investigator in question.)

It was instructive to see how Jack Webb handled this episode. First of all, they gave the scout leader a medical record which included a stay in the laughing academy, establishing a history of mental instability. Second, they introduced a subplot regarding a reclusive mountaineer who was reticent and uncooperative with the field team. What develops, of course, is that he was maintaining a still in the general area of the sighting.

The show's methodology then becomes clear. The sighting is never absolutely proven to be false (which would be plenty confusing, since the special effects department always recreated each sighting exactly as described). However, they took two approaches to plant doubts in the viewers' minds: (a) Discredit the witnesses, and (b) Establish an alternate explanation -- in this case that what was witnessed was the mountaineer's still blowing itself to smithereens.

Goodness, after ten years that show still irks me! I suppose it's because I don't have to be a great believer in alien visitations to wish the investigation had been a little more fair-minded.



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Re Steve Green's comments on my review of Appel's Time after Time: I put my comment re other "Time after Time" books in the last paragraph, intending it as just a minor observation, but Lan moved it to the beginning, making it seem a more major thing than I intended. (And apparently turning you off from the review in general. Sorry.) Be that as it may, my hardcover edition of Alexander's Time after Time gives no indication of being a novelization, and other than saying it is based on "a story idea by Karl Alexander and Steve Hayes," so I (foolishly) assumed it was the original. I can't believe I flubbed the Matheson source for Somewhere in Time since I have had this discussion before and observed how many people are confused and think the film was based on the Finney book -- I can only plead temporary amnesia. I still say there's a shocking shortage of time travel titles!

[[I should take partial blame; I moved the paragraph because it read better first.]]

Re Dennis Fischer's comments on Mark's review of The Phantom of the Opera: To me and my untrained ear it also seemed that the pseudo-opera presented in The Phantom of the Opera was not in the operatic style \*of the period\* -- it seemed far too modern for the period in which the story took place. I want to make it clear that my musical knowledge is minor, and this is just a feeling which I probably cannot explain well enough to defend.

Mark and I have seen both The Climax and El Fantasma de la Opereta, though my Spanish may not have done the latter justice. On the other hand, maybe it did. The Climax (and presumably other such films as Charlie Chan at the Opera) were inspired by the success of Phantom of the Opera in that (as Mark puts it) filmmakers saw that combining opera (or music in general) and horror made money. But they were not "remakes" in my opinion. We also saw a 48-minute animated version of Phantom of the Opera made in 1987 which was very faithful to the novel.

We did see excerpts from the music video of "Music of the Night," so it does exist.

[[The "Don Juan" opera written by the Phantom is definitely not in the style of the period that the other operas were written. It is written in a twelve-tone scale, making it very modern, and indicates the musical genius of the Phantom (and also, therefore, of Andrew Lloyd Webber). My thought when I first heard it was that it was just awful; after a few listenings, it isn't that bad -- as music; the lyrics are still typical of the period. // I have read elsewhere that the music video is around...somewhere.]]

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I liked Thomas Easton's poems "Youth Misspent" and "Iron Dreams." Also among the shorter items, I was tickled by the Robert Teague "Fannish Periodical Table."

Reminds me sort of sideways of Tom Lehrer's Gilbert and Sullivan catalogue of the elements.

Bill Unger's interview with Judith Moffett interested me, because I was much impressed by a short story of hers in IASFM's recently, "The Hob," which seems to be a fantasy based on close study of Yorkshire folklore, but turns out to be a science fiction story about aliens who've made a close study of Yorkshire folklore. I was surprised to realize that the author was American, as it made so much use of the locale. The statement in the interview that she lived in London for a year is some explanation -- but, then, Yorkshire isn't London, either. Haven't read any of her other things yet, but am looking forward to doing so.

Jim Mann argues in "Del Rey Books" that JudyLynn del Rey wasn't as good an editor toward the end as she had been before. That may be, but she was still doing some very interesting things then. The decision to reprint L. Frank Baum's Oz books and offer them for the adult SF market and, more interestingly, to reprint the Oz books by Ruth Plumly Thompson (which had been out of print and unavailable in any form for many years) was certainly an innovation. Thompson's Oz books are often neglected, since she didn't originate the series, but her humor, especially in creating small-scale, family-like monarchies, gives them a charm of their own. At her best, she's pretty close to being as good as Baum.

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Sometimes I wonder about the desire to pigeonhole things even further. It seems bad enough that

some science fiction fans want to distance the field from the rest of literature, but then to focus the field on only its female contributors...why should people be interested in authors of one sex or another? However, conversely, these itemizations sometimes prove useful when they serve to introduce readers to otherwise overlooked but talented authors. On Jean Weber's list, I wasn't really familiar with Suzette Haden Elgin, Mary Gentle, Sandi Hall, or Marge Piercy, so perhaps I'll check those writers out sometime in the near future. I was disappointed that Weber left off Octavia Butler, as far as I know the only black female science fiction writer and author of a number of good works, but then a writer should only write about what they know. By-the-by, don't men also write feminist science fiction?

Having reread LeGuin's The Dispossessed recent-



ly, I can't go along with Weber's assertion that Anarres is "anarchic." Far from it. There seems by the end of the book a definite form of government which opposes Shevek and his plans. The way I read the book, Anarres is meant to represent a communist utopia, but LeGuin is shrewd enough to demonstrate that the political philosophy behind Anarres would also impose limitations on a genuinely dynamic individual like Shevek as he begins to feel constrained by collectivism. Urras, with all its many faults, does provide a rich life-style for its many inhabitants that even the Earthman envy. LeGuin makes the point that life on Anarres isn't necessarily better, but it is freer for the average person who isn't weighed down by concepts of property, though she amply demonstrates throughout the book that people will continue to tend to be possessive or protective about some things that are important to them and will continue to assert their egos. Anarres clearly represents a peaceful society but not an "anarchistic" one as Weber contends.

I respect the opinions of Jessica Amanda Salmonson, but I wish she had made her piece longer. As it is, I don't get enough information about the writers she mentions or why they are worthy of my attention to get particularly interested or excited about any of these writers.

The basic problem with Star Trek: The Next Generation, a well-intentioned SF series, is that the people behind it just don't know how to tell a story. Week after week they are meeting God as an Alien or Problems That Solve Themselves. To have a truly interesting dramatic conflict, the characters should face a problem, work toward a solution, and have a hand in the problem's resolution -- which happened on the old show, but not on the new one. Also, each 41-minute episode has the same annoying pace: three lisurely acts setting up a problem (actually usually there's an A plot and a B plot) and then a sudden rush to have it resolved because time is running out and nobody has really done anything yet.

Roddenberry has taken the criticism on the original show that Star Trek represented a brighter future and presented hope to heart. On The Next Generation he has fashioned a future where all Enterprise crewmembers are too perfect for words and so remain relatively characterless. In his future, no one discriminates because of age, so even a youngster like Wesley (Roddenberry's middle name and the same age as Rodenberry's son) are not denied an equal role.

Somehow Roddenberry never anticipated the resentment that character would produce -- who, argue many fans, should Wesley seemingly be promoted over so many who have worked long and hard to be where he is. This is a teenage kid with no identity problems, no sexual hang-ups, immaculately clean and polite -- this is not a troubled teen but someone

too cute to live.

Interesting characters are always flawed characters -- flaws are what make them human and people we can identify with. The Next Generation has teflon characters -- nothing sticks to them. We end up knowing hardly anything about any of them. Worf remains one of the most popular possibly because, like the aliens in Niven's books (e.g., the Puppeteers, the Kzinti), Worf the Klingon is very predictable but often fallible in his decisions ("Sir, I say we should attack," thereby giving Picard a chance to explain why they are not being aggressive that week). The character has potential, but it has barely been tapped.

Also, why is it that all the black characters on the show fall into stereotypes? We've got a talented blind man, in Whoopi Goldberg a black bartender, and a gladiatorial/athlete/warrior Klingon? Also, while Riker, Picard, Troi and even Data are intimated to have sex, none of the black characters are ever presented as sexual beings. But then Roddenberry also nixed David Gerrold's hint of two male officers being homosexual by referring to themselves as being together ever since their days at the academy. Roddenberry is into nudity and made embarrassing sexual references in the early shows, but he can't seem to get beyond the image of randy males ravishing willing women.

The show suffers from a lack of nerve and a failure of imagination. What is especially frustrating is that it will bring up good topics (e.g., ethical problems of dealing with terrorists, dealing with another society's very different conception of justice, with drug-dealing planets, with arms race lunacy) and then not dealing with those problems directly in the stories. The potential is there, but it's been wasted time and again.

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It was interesting (but not surprising) to see the article by David Shea on "What's Wrong with Fandom" lambasted as "red neck," that your readers "feel sorry" for him, and misconstrue his essay as hatred for anyone "not like you."

But if you remember a convention that was once very book oriented, from top to bottom, and nowadays sells wargames and movie stills in a huckster room without even one bookman; if you remember when the costume ball was limited to a few hours of a certain day with the majority of costumes being taken from books, and see now that costuming is an everyday hallway event devoid of reference to books; if you remember a convention where drunkards were rare but which is no longer welcome in its old hotel because drunken adolescents trashed rooms and set fire fo beds; if you remember a convention that used to attract two or three hundred professionals who mixed liberally with five hundred fans, and see

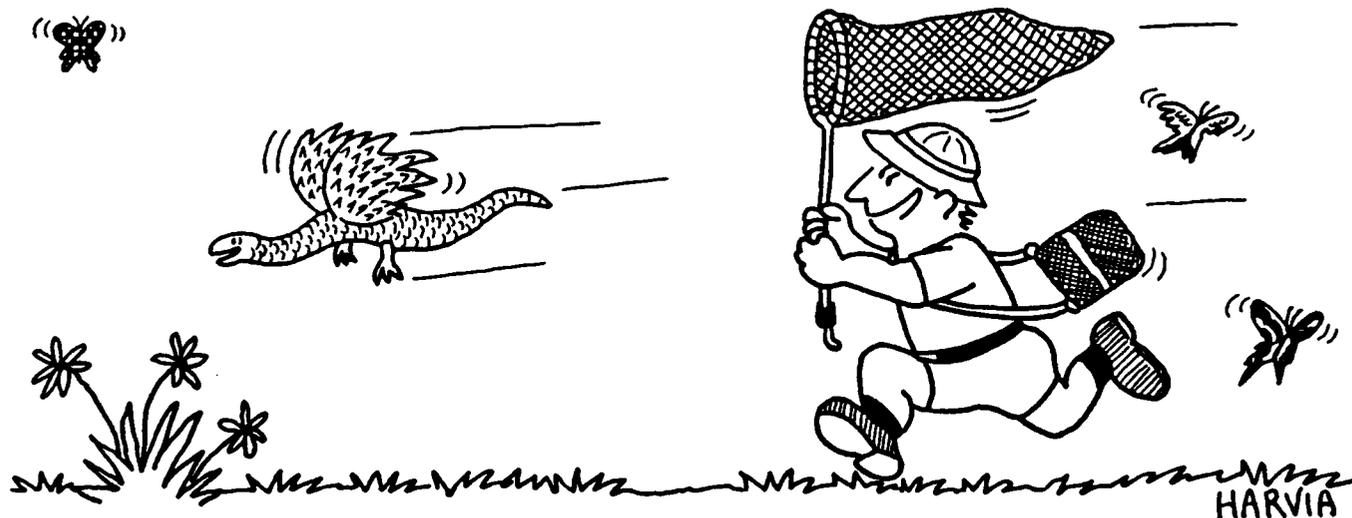
that same convention now justifiably shunned by book-reading fans and by two-thirds of the previous regulars from prodom . . . well, if you've seen all this, then you'll have to have some agreement with David Shea, not call him everything but a Nazi, and not view an inability to appreciate rampant sophomorisms as merely a broad spectrum of interests and creativity.

However, the fact that cons have less and less to do with books has created an environment for successful alternative conventions. There is SERCON, WORLD FANTASY CON, The Conference of the Fantastic in Florida, small intimate READERCON. In the future we may see more conventions for booklovers. The rest of fandom may soon find itself unable to attract anyone with the knowledge of books, or who writes them. That's not necessarily bad. The costumers, filkers, mediafreaks, gamers, and L-5 nerds won't miss us. Sure, we're a stuffier lot. But we've every right to lament the days when most conventions retained as their central raison d'etre the richness and variety of fantastic literature. Now we're such a minority that the average con has more jewelry sellers than book sellers, more episodes of Dr. Who than hardcover books, and more readers staying home or forming intimate old-fashioned cons elsewhere for booklovers. Sure, I watch some television (at friends' houses; I don't have one personally). Sure, I'm a movie freak (but any asshole can have an opinion on a film; to have an opinion on a book, one has to have done more than sat passively in the dark). And sure, I sit around sometimes with my guitar making u[ silly-ass songs (or putting classic Bohemian lyric poems to music). These are the kinds of endeavors we talk to anyone about without needing to go to a convention. It's

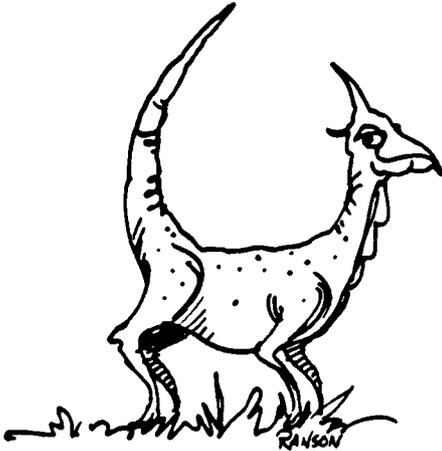
harder to find a big group of people who also read fantasy, horror, or scifi. It used to be a sure-thing to meet them at conventions. It no longer is. It's a tragedy for booklovers. I'm prejudiced enough to believe it is a tragedy to anyone who is intelligent.

One of your commentators says "The story's the thing; how it's told is secondary." This is assinine. A good story line --the plot-- is not sufficient for a work of art. If all one wants is a solid plot, then certainly a lot of TV shows will do, the worst comic book, or any old piece of drivel published in a pulp magazine. But take any of the same strong storylines and put them in the hands of a genius, and what you discover is that it is the style that is paramount. Indeed, some writers are such stylish writers they don't need a real storyline as such. A bad stylist is apt to use a plot as a crutch. For my taste it's nice to have both a fine style and a strong plot, but if I had to get by without one of the other, it would be without the plot. Else comics would indeed be all I needed.

I would footnote one quibble with David Shea, and some of the few who agree with all his sentiments: that fat people shouldn't wear skimpy costumes. Unless someone is so massively overweight that they're obviously going to die of related health problems, I see nothing wrong with them either clothed, unclothed, or costumed. They're no more silly-ass than the very rare costumer who looks pretty good if you go in for such shit. Certainly "I don't approve of you because you're FAT" is a shittier attitude than "I'd rather be at a convention where there are more readers than costumers for a change."



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I also heard from the following people -- at cons, over the phone, quick notes and postcards, letters not published, etc. And I've probably missed a few people too. My apologies.

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