



NO AWARD #17

The Fanzine for which you voted before it existed

**A Fanzine
by Marty Cantor**
voted Fandom's Resident Curmudgeon
in a poll conducted in *Twink*
**NORTHERN HEMISPHERE
Spring 2008**

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Hoo Hah Publication Number 1283

*This fanzine is available in a PDF format version at
< www.efanzines.com >. A colour edition will be
distributed to those who prefer to receive it in the
traditional paper manner, produced on my new HP
4700dn colour laser printer. I will not create a
black and white version of this issue.*

This fanzine is available for the fannish usual (which I tend to translate as my own whim, but I do honour trades, locs, artwork, written articles, and other contributions). If all else fails, send me US\$5.00 and I will send you a copy. **NO AWARD** is not pubbed on any regular schedule (even though I want to get it out at least once a year). Mostly, issues will be put out when material, energy, and money decide to get together in a meaningful way.

LEGALESE

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WAHF

many

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KEY TO MARTIANS ON THE COVER

Reading left to right: Martian from movie *ANGRY RED PLANET*, Octopoid Martian from H.G. Wells *WAR OF THE WORLDS*, Martian mutant and mastermind from movie *INVADERS FROM MARS*, vapor-cloud Martian from Olaf Stapledon's *LAST AND FIRST MENT*, Tweel from Stanley IWeinbaum's *A MARTIAN ODYSSEY*, Tara Tarkas and the incomparable Dejah Thoris from Edgar Rice Burroughs' *A PRINCESS OF MARS*, Martian from movie *MARS ATTACKS*, Hugo Gernsback's 'elephant-man' Martian, otter-man Martian from C.S. Lewis' *OUT OF THE SILENT PLANET*, and Martian from Ray Bradbury's *THE MARTIAN CHRONICLES*.

So there.

Marc Schirmeister

It is traditional for zines to include the addresses of contributors. I am breaking with tradition here as this is going on-line and I have security concerns about this. So, if you need to know this information, contact me.



EDITORIAL

Marty Cantor

Those of you who have read many issues of *NO AWARD* and *HOLIER THAN THOU* will note that most of my editorials have been sort of minimal. Here, though, is something more, er, mediumish ...

At an earlier time in my life I was an avid collector of LP records, mostly of the classical variety. I even built a rather decent high-fidelity system on which to listen to these records. Of course, I was also collecting books, mostly science fiction, and my somewhat limited resources had to be divided 'twixt these two passions.

(As an aside, classical was my first love in music even though I have passionately enjoyed other musical types over the years: traditional jazz, blues, various American folk idioms, and various types of rock music. In my later years, I have [by choice] spent most of my music-listening time to classical.)

Farther down the line in time I both purchased a house and opened my own tobacco shop - and that really put a strain on my finances. (For those who may remember what I wrote about this many years ago, I started a retail tobacco shop as part of a partnership, left that partnership to open a shop with another partner, and moved to Studio City [after selling my house] to open my own shop in 1975, the year I was discovered to fandom.)

What followed was decades of fun, mostly in fandom, but with relatively little money so I rarely purchased either books or records. And, when my high fidelity setup began to decay, I did not bother to replace the ancient parts. Somewhere along the line LPs were replaced by CDs - by most everybody except me. After all, were I to purchase a CD player, I would want to start buying lots and lots and lots of CDs, and I could not afford that. Anyway, where I have been living in Los Angeles, I have always been able to pick up three classical music stations so I always had some nice music to which to listen. The fact that there is now only one full-time classical radio station is balanced by my subscribing to digital cable television and finding that one of the channels is 24 hours a day classical music with no commercials or any other interruptions of the music.

But all of that is beside the point.

And yes, there is a point, here.

At one or another time in *APA -L* I mentioned that I did not have a CD player. June Moffatt remembered this; so, when the Moffatti decided to get a better CD player, they gifted me with their now-superseded CD player.

Many, many thanks went from me to them. But then I had to face why I had previously demurred in the purchase of one of these machines: there was just too much music I wanted to acquire and it could cost me lots and lots of money to satisfy this desire of mine.

And then it suddenly occurred to me that I now had much more discretionary money than I had when CD players were first introduced. (I refer everybody to a previous editorial where I wrote about becoming manager of the apartment building where I have been living since 1988. The big upside of this was a *very* large amount of money I no longer had to pay out in rent.)

In the past four years I have been able to use this "extra" money to purchase many things for myself, including a new car (which I purchased for cash and drove off the dealer's lot owing not one penny in car payments). Most of this money, though, has gone into the purchase of stocks in a variety of companies - and now I could use some of it to buy CDs, instead. (And by CDs, I am not writing about Certificates of Deposit.) What an *amazing* thought, I thought at the time.

After some inquiries led me to the horrible discovery that the nearest shop with a decent selection of classical music CDs was over the hill in traffic-saturated Hollywood, I visited the Amazon web site and was pleasantly surprised to find they had such things as the Toscanini-conducted Beethoven and Brahms Symphonies - all of them - and the Schumann and Schubert Symphonies - all of *them*, too - plus (so far) seven collections of Renaissance dances, much of it the work of Michael Praetorius. I am busily digesting all of these goodies whilst I contemplate further acquisitions.

Hmm. Retirement is not so bad, after all.

C o m i n g r o u n d a g a i n

Roy Kettle

Inthebar is an e-list with many British members coming back to fandom after a long absence. Not only do they enjoy each other's company in print, but they have started getting together in person. Several have started attending Corflu, the fanzine fans convention. Eastercon, held yearly in Britain, is a bit much in size for many of these fans. However, getting together as part of Eastercon even though as sort of a Minicon of mostly these old friends on one evening of the larger con, seemed like a good idea this year. This year's Eastercon was called Orbital, and attending this Inthebar Minicon to tell all about it was a renowned fanwriter from Britfandom's past, Roy Kettle.

Orbital was the first convention I'd been to for over 20 years, though I didn't really go to it. I spent most of my time in the bar of the overflow hotel with people who I largely hadn't seen for the same period. It was an informal meeting mainly arranged by Graham Charnock following the happy failure of his attempt to hire a limo big enough for several of us to circle Heathrow for a few hours, listening to the driver's Mariah Carey CDs and drinking particularly nasty cava. It seemed a good idea at the time.

Early confusion as to whether we should meet at the Ibis (where a few of us were staying), the Radisson (the main con hotel) or the Renaissance overflow hotel (which was where the 1978 Skycon had been held) was easily cleared up by Graham's strategy of, "Oh, fuck it, something will work out". It wasn't helped by Jim Linwood pointing out that two of the hotels were on one side of the busy Bath Road from the other and that more people were killed every year trying to cross that road than had died in the Great Plague. If we didn't get it right first time, we might never have a second chance. If we'd had a few drinks, then we might as well have lodged our wills with hotel reception.

Graham had gone along on the Friday for a recce then he was intending to go home to report on how the rest of us, with our senior moments and thermal underwear, could best get to this furthest outpost of civilisation on the Saturday. It wasn't

reassuring to discover it had all been so difficult for him that he didn't dare make the return journey in case he was too terrified to do it again. He'd booked into another hotel and stayed there muttering "The Horror, The Horror" until the time-lock on the mini-bar clicked open when he changed to "The Vodka, The Vodka".

I'd downloaded maps from Ian Maule and Jim of exactly where along the Bath Road the hotels were and instructions as to which buses would take me from Heathrow tube station. So many bus numbers, so many routes, so many payment options, so many hotels, so few brain cells. Oddly enough, I found that the bus station was right next to the tube station, that the guy at the information counter told me exactly which buses to get, that one arrived within two minutes and that it dropped me outside the right hotel for free. It was actually quite tolerable for a circle of hell.

However, when I got to the Renaissance, as well as looking like a set from the fortunately canned second series of *The High Life* with pilots and stewards lurching across the foyer as they used their rest time in a quest for desperate fun, the hotel was empty of fans. I sat there with a coffee wondering which oppressively huge and noisy TV screen to try to ignore first and if I was in the right place.

Suddenly, a horde of people appeared and began approaching slowly. They seemed strangely familiar. Ghosts from the past. It was more like the Overlook hotel than the overflow but with perhaps slightly fewer ex-murderers. Maybe Johnny had brought an axe.

Jim and Marion, Ian and Janice, Pat and Graham, Keith Freeman, Pete Weston, Rob Jackson, Bill Burns, Rich Coad, Uncle Johnny Hall, Rob Hansen, Dave Langford, John and Eve Harvey, Julian Headlong. Our combined ages were approaching that of Stonehenge. Fortunately, the hotel had easy-grip straws on the counter next to the pumps and the beer was as bland as our doctors could possibly have hoped for.

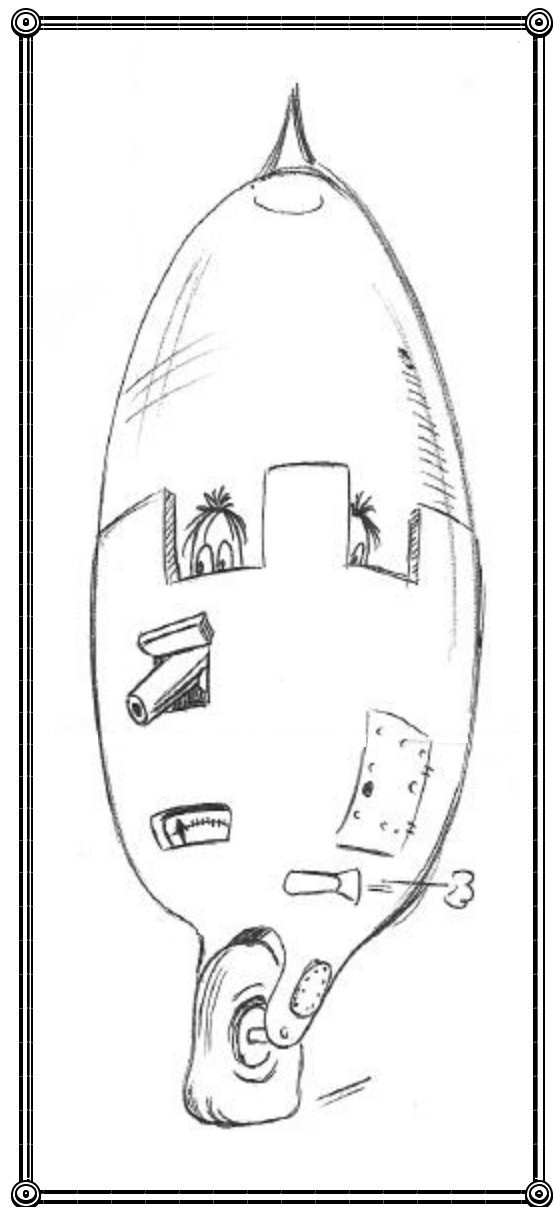
How did they all manage to appear together? What had they all been doing? The greatest fear at

conventions is that there's more fun going on somewhere else. What had I missed? No-one would say. I hugged people indiscriminately. They had to be punished somehow.

Everyone had obviously looked younger from a distance as the wrinkles, crusty bits and general hair-displacement to nostrils and ears blurred – maybe there's a marketing opportunity for some optometrist for the over 50s - but even close up I didn't think George Romero would be queueing to sign us up. Linda Krawecka, who arrived a bit later, would have won the award for least changed had Bill not been there, though he did show me a slightly lighter-coloured hair which might even have been one of his own. He must have Dorian's grey wig in his attic. Pam Wells sprang from nowhere which was a very pleasant surprise as we hadn't been confident she would turn up and Brian Parker was the last to arrive in his electric blue Toyota Hugenpenis (which he claims is just the name given it by the manufacturer).

There was a lot of catching up and mid-day drinking. Jim not only knew when and where we'd last met but actually pointed out the chair I'd been sitting in though they'd obviously cleaned the stain out since. Julian showed me a flash drive (the use of modern IT such as the excellent Orbital website, mobiles and notebooks being the single greatest difference from the last convention I'd been too) which apparently had Dave's lifetime output on – from a photo of his first non-fannish poo through Guts (a novel few could stomach) up to a 3D textured rendering of his latest Hugo. Dave clicked on to my entry for the next volume of *The Science Fiction Encyclopedia* which read, in its entirety but rather optimistically, "still alive." John Harvey compared the pension rights of civil servants with those of people in the private sector, emphasising how comfortably off civil servants were in these straightened times. I distinctly remember him being extremely supportive of civil servants when private sector wage increases were regularly in double figures and civil servants had to live off bogies from dead dogs' nostrils. Many's the time he would parade up and down Whitehall during one of our strikes with a placard saying "2% of nothing is nothing. Give civil servants 20%". Equally supportive was ardent anti-statist Uncle Johnny, who regards public servants as an unnecessary evil who should spend their miserable retirements walking the uncleaned and potholed streets mumbling "Buddha, can you spare a dime?" only to be reborn as bogies in dead dogs' nostrils.

Pete told me his theory that we're all doomed because of global warming other than anyone who had the foresight to buy gold. Presumably they'll be living in their gold houses fuelling their golden refrigeration units with electricity generated from radioactive gold dust while munching on gold bars and watching reruns of *The Golden Girls*. Somehow, I was sceptical. Feeling mellow, I told Pete how I thought he'd been, and still was, a force for good in fandom and generally waxed lyrical about his existence, something which I genuinely felt. "Of course," I said, in the interests of balance, "one or two people probably think you're a wanker." It wasn't the best way to express the idea, but there's always someone somewhere who has





such thoughts so it seemed a fairly innocuous comment until after I'd said it. Defending himself fiercely against accusations of wankerism, Pete slowly sidled away from me. Not an auspicious end to our welcome and otherwise enthusiastic reunion.

Eventually, we all had to engage in planning for an evening meal. I seemed to recall that this didn't usually take longer than the meal itself. However, not only were we disinclined to take the easy but expensive option of eating in the Renaissance, but more than half the group was across the road in the Radisson by then and we really had no idea where we were in relation to any outside catering apart from a nearby drive-in McDonalds. It seemed excessive to ask Brian to ferry us 100 yards one by one so we could get burger and chips.

Orbital had produced a pretty extensive list of local

restaurants, though without any information on quality or location in relation to the hotels. Rob Jackson was prepared to fill his car with four of us and order taxis for the rest but we were rather stymied by a general reluctance just then to go to the Radisson to find out what others might be doing. An alternative was to get a delivery to the hotel - or more tactfully for Rob, who was the only person staying there, to a point just outside the hotel - and then we could eat in shifts in his room. A similarly impractical suggestion that Ian ask Janice to make lots of tasty sandwiches for us all then bring them over was greeted surprisingly enthusiastically by Ian but wisely, in a brief attack of sobriety, he didn't actually suggest this to her otherwise she might have given his Jack Vance novels to Oxfam and replaced them with something terrifyingly current. Pam Wells (who seemed keen that we change her badge to that of her male porn

star alter-ego Ram Swell) mentioned that we could buy bacon rolls at the Radisson if we waited until about 11.00 pm but that seemed like an option for second or third dinner rather than first.

The talk about food and the length of time we were engaged in it was beginning to make us genuinely hungry so we made a move. In the Radisson foyer the registration desk was closed. I'd planned to register on the day if I was intending to go to any of the con. I could sort it out later. Brian Parker rang us to suggest the £8 buffet though someone said that unless you got there very early all the food would be gone. Brian had got there very early. John Jarrold appeared, gave me a hug and said that after 15 years of buying meals for editors one was finally buying a meal for him. He looked like a man who was planning to eat and drink even more than usual.

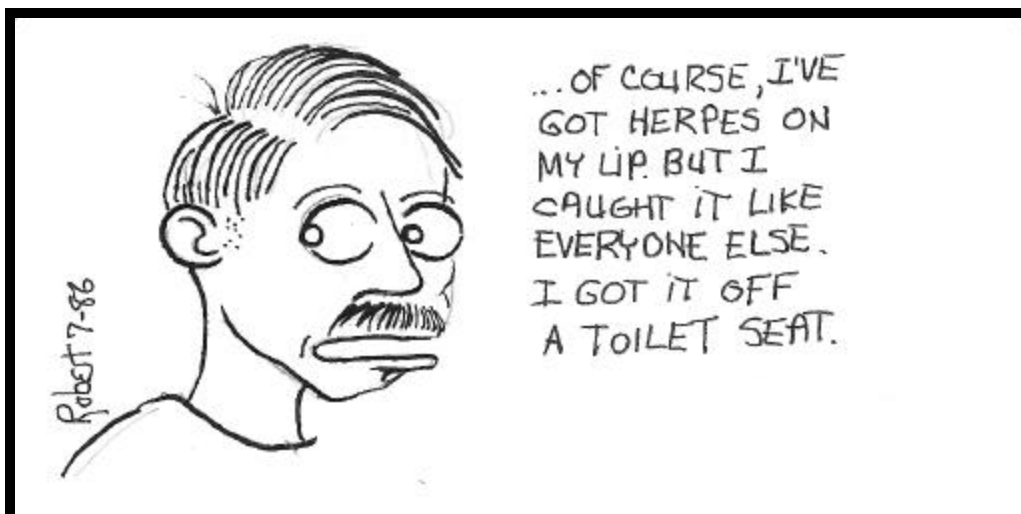
The rest of us booked a table at one of the two nearest Indian restaurants. Chris Priest suggested he join us with Leigh and their teenage twins, Lizzie and Simon, so we extended the booking, then he disappeared with instructions that we look out for Leigh. When she arrived she'd already booked for them in the other Indian restaurant. Rob Jackson was sorting this out very efficiently on his mobile while asking the concierge for directions. "Oh, it's **that** way," said Rob, flinging his arm out, punching me on the nose and knocking me sideways. Looking round in vain for a capable doctor, I staunched the blood myself, then followed him and Rich to his car while the others got taxis. It took less than a month to get out of the Renaissance car

park and by the time we found the very dimly lit VII Indian restaurant (was it 7 or a Latin Nintendo game?) we thought the others would be tucking in. In fact, their taxi driver was so confident he knew where the restaurant was that he drove several miles beyond it before the pleas from the back made him reconsider.

Once the restaurant had turned down the TV that they had apparently borrowed from the Renaissance lounge to make us feel at home, and my nose had stopped bleeding from the assault by a so-called member of one of the caring professions, we had decent food and a very pleasant chat. It was particularly nice sitting opposite Rich and next to Rob, not only because they could both obviously order for England and weren't afraid to share, but because I hadn't seen Rich since he'd lived in Britain. Since then he'd been a lineman for the county and bought a cat with no fur - two things we all aspire to but most of us can only dream about unless we live our lives by the tenets of country and western music.

Back to the Radisson where we went to the real ale bar. A terrific innovation (well, there might have been one at every convention since my last, but I didn't think so). I bought a round and discovered that the bastards I was buying for had taken all the seats. I struggled to carry a large chair over. Rich got up from the sofa. He said the chair was more suitable for a large American who'd spent a lot of money travelling to see his friends and that I would be more comfortable physically and morally on the sofa. I was duped. The sofa was tight enough





already, but when Avedon Carol arrived and took the place of the notoriously skinny Rob Hansen, I felt like her conjoined twin. The only good thing was that I'd never be able to get out to buy another round.

Rog Peyton came over, which was excellent. He's so affable and a good storyteller. He asked whether I'd seen Greg Pickersgill and was surprised that I hadn't for over 20 years, let alone at this convention. Unlike others who seemed to look upon any chance meeting between us as some sort of fannish High Noon, Rog was genuinely puzzled as to how friendships might fall apart. He couldn't think of anyone that he disliked enough not to stay friends with (not that that was actually the point) and, as I'd seen over the years, he seemed to get on with everyone. Though, as the evening moved on, he did mention a couple of people who he wouldn't actually enter into a civil partnership with and one who he might feed to feral stoats with unbrushed teeth if given the chance. You know who you are. Well, I do now even if you don't.

Avedon decided to return to her room for a ciggie rather than go outside and more than half of those with us (as well as part of my hip and the side of my paunch) accompanied her. Graham, looking very nervous, went off to a panel about how to write a fanzine article. We thought we should be there for him.

On the way, Patrick Nielsen Hayden said Hi - allowing me to get the first ever points in my *I Spy People With the Same Middle Name as John Hall* book - and told me how he'd heard a reading of an article I'd written for Rob Hansen's Epsilon called *Sphincters at Dawn* which apparently had more

people laughing than actually read it first time round. Anecdotes about farting - it must be how you smell 'em. I missed out on buying him a drink. Sorry, Patrick.

The room was full and the panel had four unfamiliar to me but obviously generally well-known and popular fans on it as well as

Graham. (Not that Graham isn't those too. It's just that I can't be bothered to reconstruct the sentence to avoid giving the wrong impression. Anyway, with luck someone might quote it out of context.) I missed the opening words but the brief seemed to be about how someone can turn an anecdote, however slight, but particularly an embarrassing one, into a fanzine article.

I felt Graham led the way well with a detailed enough telling of one anecdote that clearly showed how fairly small events could be developed in a funny, interesting and rounded way. And his anecdote actually had an ending. Later, he did an imitation of Peter Roberts' Attacking Budgie dance. There could be an entire programme item built around the reproduction and interpretation of fannish dance movements - Rich Coad's rarely seen Boot Boy dance, John Brosnan's interpretation of The Time Warp, Brian Parker's legendary Walk to the Toilet - and Graham should chair it.

Ian Sorensen was a bit more hit and miss though largely good. (The truth is that there just aren't enough fannish articles about painfully swollen testicles so he was obviously on to something of a winner.) He clearly knows how to play to an audience in a way that you can't with an actual fanzine article but, hey, this was a panel. Rob Jackson kindly helped from the wings with confirmation of appalling medical terminology and diseases that no-one in their right mind would confess publicly to having. James Bacon was next - a fan who, if cloned about half a dozen times and wired into the national grid, would avoid the need for a nuclear power programme. Whoever

overwinds his inner elastic had obviously done a good job. He was entertaining, interesting and sometimes insightful in a way which, like Graham, made fairly clear to me verbally how he might go about using the same material in a written article. Yvonne Rowse had a really nice anecdote about looking after a sickly duckling in her cleavage which was intrinsically funny stuff and she told it well. I think it had already been written up which might have made it easier. Flick (if I've spelled that right), charmingly dressed in Japanese costume, told a story about how someone else (I think) fell asleep on the tube then woke up. It didn't quite show me how it might have made an article. However, she was calling out comments during other people's anecdotes, including anticipating their punch lines, which rather detracted from them. In a way, this was the antithesis of writing – there's no audience participation to help or distract you; you just get on and write it. But it certainly didn't prevent the panel from being a good and interesting one - not least because we learned from Bill that Earl Kemp gets more hits on efanazines than anyone else, mainly because people search for "sex and science fiction", words that rarely went together meaningfully when I was in fandom. As I understand it, most of the fan programme was good. Down to Claire Brialey and Mark Plummer, I think.

Back at the real ale bar a very ebullient Alison Scott explained how one dusts Hugos. It's not a skill everyone needs but it's nice if you do. We used to work in the same building but hadn't connected – well, I'd been out of fandom for longer than Alison had been in it. I'd been in touch with Claire too a couple of times for work reasons, and to agree to have an old article reprinted, but hadn't then followed up the chance contact. This isn't the time or place for me to write about being out of fandom - if it ever is – but I'd read John Brosnan's copies of Banana Wings with some pleasure. Maybe I missed a couple of opportunities there.

My very brief acquaintance with the Radisson suggested it was a good con hotel - lots of interesting rooms, corridors and stairwells. It reminded me of one of my favourite con hotels where I spent a hour or so in one bar chatting away, before staggering up and down through numerous passageways to another fascinating bar where I chatted to different people and eventually staggered back to the first bar where the first group were still nattering. I did this happily every evening until someone asked me why I disappeared from one end

of this long bar every now and again only to reappear ten minutes later at the other.

At half past one, Brian and I went out to his Toyota where it was so cold that, by the time we'd managed to wrench the doors open using a No Entry sign for leverage and get the inch-thick ice off the windscreen with tepid urine and a dead hedgehog, we didn't arrive at the Ibis until 2.00 am, some twenty minutes later than it would have taken had we walked. Still, I've never been in a car where the acceleration pulls back your face and you have to collect your stomach from the external luggage rack. There wasn't even time to look for Graham's body on the way in case he hadn't made it back.

I didn't seem to sleep well - pretty usual for my first night at a convention with stuff whirling round in the brain – but awoke without the hangover I expected and had a large fried breakfast and a good catch-up chat about the last 20 years with Brian. Linda and Alun appeared and we lounged around for a while as they ate my fruit and nut bar. Sadly, they hadn't realised breakfast was still available while I thought they'd already had it and were just being greedy. They came outside to ogle Brian's Toyota though there wasn't room in it for either of them so we waved in a dopplerish sort of way as we sped past them. Brian was eager to get to the Radisson as he'd left his rucksack there. It turned up, as had Linda's bag which she'd lost the previous evening. Apparently you could leave your back door open at Orbital and no-one would come in to molest the whippet.

We met up with Rob Jackson and Rich, chatted a bit more and had some coffee (it was Brian's birthday and he made good on his promise to buy everyone a drink though only when there were five of us there). We watched an Indian wedding in the foyer for a while then Brian and I, feeling a bit spaced out, left. The others went back via the Radisson. Linda was meant to give everyone a cuddle on our behalf but I'm not sure she remembered even though I'd given her a sweetie that I'd taken from the bowl at the Renaissance reception.

It was very good day, much better than I'd hoped - it might be right that you can never go back home but perhaps you **can** visit the hotel over the road. I might try something a bit more ambitious next time. Like registering and maybe staying at the con hotel. Early days.



SYMPATHY FOR THE DEVIL

John Nielsen Hall

The fannish e-lists continue to be a mine of interesting material. Sure, lots of dross; however, when that is cleared away, there are often gems to be found. Like, from the Inthebar e-list, the following ...

Anyone who has visited me in my remote fastness in a damp and hilly corner of Wiltshire will appreciate the importance of modern telecommunications. Anyone who lives in the UK will also appreciate that no matter who your ISP or phone service supplier is, all hard infrastructure outside metropolitan cable networks is provided by that planet bestriding colossus among Telecommunications companies, British Telecom, aka BT, Openreach, The Moron Corporation and other epithets mostly too obscene to mention on a family list like this.

Last November, I received an important letter in the mail. BT wished to express to me their great regret that they would be discontinuing my ISDN service at the end of February. Heart rending as this communication was, I was unmoved. In 2005 after much negotiation, pleading, yelling, and an immense carbon footprint created by a whole fleet of vans bombing up and down the tiny lanes around here, I was connected to Broadband service. Hence, my ISDN line was only in use as a back up. Indeed, after the Great Hard Disk Disaster of 2006, it was not even in use for that since the drivers for my ISDN modem were now dismembered stored electrons, in a disk drive tossed, (against all environmental regulation) in the dustbin. So I was able to reply to the grief stricken person signing this letter, to the effect that I would be very happy for them to remove the ISDN line and replace it with two standard lines, particularly as I noted that they proposed to carry out the work at no cost to myself, whereas but a few weeks previously, on the occasion of *my* deciding the ISDN line was totally redundant they had demanded £160 for the same work. Shortly thereafter, I received another letter, expressing great joy and celebratory thanksgiving at the news that I had decided to remain a customer, (like, I had a choice?) and that the work would commence shortly.

Days turned into weeks, Xmas came and went, and nothing occurred. Sometime in January, a chirpy Scottish lass calling from a customer service centre deep in urban Strathclyde rang to tell me that she would be my customer liaison manager, and that though there had been some technical difficulties already encountered in getting the work I had requested ("Actually, no, I didn't request it - you offered to do it") scheduled, it was now proceeding. I asked if I should raise a flag or two, or perhaps ask the local troupe of Morris Men to come and perform some celebratory jigs up and down the lanes to Ramsbury village accompanied by a brass band, but suggestions like that do not travel well, as in Scotland, a mournful lone piper fortified by a single malt whisky every mile would probably be more seemly. Actually, as things turned out, a lone piper might have done more for my mood, but I'm getting ahead of myself. My suggestion was not deemed helpful, and we agreed to speak again, sometime soon, both of us probably hoping that "soon" would translate into "never".

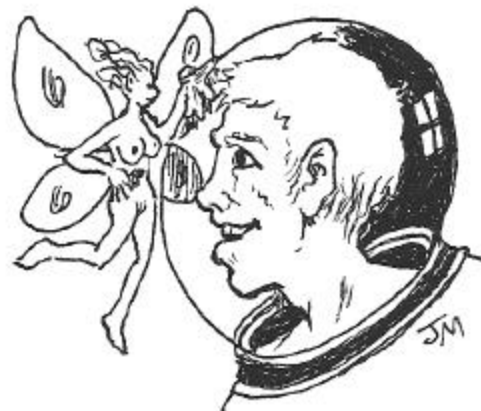
One foggy afternoon shortly thereafter I was walking down my drive to the post box, when looming out of the murk I espied a whole new telegraph pole, newly driven into the ground. (A note for our U.S readers: despite the fact that no one telegraphs anyone any more, telephone poles still rejoice in this antiquated nomenclature around here.) The next day, as I drove down the lane, I saw another two of the same. I reflected to myself that it would be a good thing if British Moron-ecom put some effort into to doing my work rather than putting up poles to no apparent purpose. After all, the old poles, though probably dating back to the days of the G.P.O., appeared sound and had survived the worst that the planet had thrown at them in the last few years. That same day, Catherine of Caledonia was on the dog-and-bone, explaining that sadly, there may be a further delay due to a technical problem that had been encountered... I was deeply sympathetic, of course, and enquired as to the nature of the difficulty. Apparently another pool was needed. I was bereft of words at this news, as I could not comprehend why any pools were required. Only after Glasgow Gertie had hung up, did the awful truth dawn - she meant "pole"- and there were at least three of them already up. I was responsible for these new poles. I related this star-

ting thought to Audrey. She flatly refused to believe it. All they had to do was take one wire off and replace it with two new wires. They could not possibly need to put up new poles for miles around. I, however, calling upon my deep and extensive knowledge gained over many years of dealings with Buzby's Boys was less certain. As every amateur psychologist knows, a restless nights sleep disturbed by dreams of poles appearing on hills and in valleys, are usually indicative of some deep seated Freudian repressed impulse. Not however, when you live in the country and have to deal with BT.

At some time when we were both out, my neighbour Di, who is also our landlord, was walking across the field at the back of our cottage and came upon a person in hard hat and Hi-Vis jacket wandering about, as if in a daze. On enquiring as to what he might be so confusedly peregrinating about upon private land for, he opened his heart to her and confessed that a very difficult customer wanted more lines and that he simply did not have enough capacity on his existing poles, that he therefore needed new poles, but that he could not get any more poles closer to the property without putting them on her land. Of course, Di wanted to know who this grossly inconsiderate person might be - and she was very surprised to find that it was none other than her mild mannered reclusive old tenant. Di being a hospitable sort invited the hard-hatted waif into her kitchen, whereupon he unfolded before her many large plans and maps of the area and was quick to mention how Open Purse would pay her the incomparably generous sum of £3.50 every year if she allowed another pole onto the property. Di begged him to consider again such hideous expense which would surely upset the corporations shareholders, of whose number she was probably one, and pointed out that a pole already existed on her land, and was marked clearly upon his map. But the engineer merely shook his head and forced more tea down his gullet. Health and Safety decreed that the existing pole could not be used. No line could be less than a statutory number of metres above the ground, and that the existing pole allowed the cables to sag and approach the ground underneath that statutory height, by some four or five centimetres! No, if she would only take the £3.50 annually, a proper Health & Safety approved pole would be put in to a field, a line from the new pole out in the lane would cross to it keeping above the ground at the required height throughout and thence be routed in a dog leg to my cottage, whence it could be laid along the roof to the existing entry point of the existing cable.

You can well imagine, dear readers, the stupefaction with which I received this intelligence when, somewhat later, I too was seated in Di's kitchen quaffing tea. I was almost in tears at having to relate the whole story of how it was Burkish Telethon who wanted to do the work, how they were to replace one existing line and supply only one additional one, and how I was regularly receiving bulletins from the Clan's as to the wretchedly slow progress of the work. Worse, it was now mid February and the ISDN service would cease at the end of the month, and if it did, I would have no land line or fax line, since the box inside my cottage attached to the ISDN line supplied both of these. Di, poured more tea and passed me the visiting card left by the rambling engineer. I rang the number on it, straight way.

If J R R Tolkien had lived long enough, he might have been able to do justice to the sweeping saga I was treated to by the person I had rung. He might have, but I suspect even he might have found it challenging to render the full drama of the tale, including as it did such disparate elements as the European Union, Health & Safety legislation, the iniquitous laws surrounding the ownership of land, the deep mud in the lanes, and the pitiful wages paid to the hapless serfs who daily risked their lives climbing up wobbly poles in the middle of nowhere. For myself, I could only sit and listen enthralled as I was required only to add the odd "yes" and "no" and "mmm" at appropriate breaks in this long and complex narrative. At length, I divined that the essence of the tale had been told, and I ventured to



enquire how many lines and of what specification were actually at stake. One broadband enabled line, came the answer. But I had not asked for a broadband enabled line, I pointed out. I already had a broadband line. I only need three lines in total, one of which I already had, and another one of which would already be present. even after the ISDN equipment was removed There was a long silence. Finally, I was assured that someone would be in touch.

Indeed they were, Brenda of the Banks and Brae's was bending my ear in very short order. Why did I not need a broadband line? Everybody wanted a broadband line. You could get broadband down it, you know. Your access to the internet would be vastly improved. Think of the possibilities! I was forced to agree that Broadband was a very fine thing, as I very well knew, because I already had it. All the additional line would be for would be for old fashioned voice calls, or alternatively, connection to a fax machine. Even my stony heart was just possibly touched very slightly by the brave and true Fiona of the Isles' fulsome apology for having so misunderstood my requirements. An engineer, she assured me, would call and assess my needs correctly.

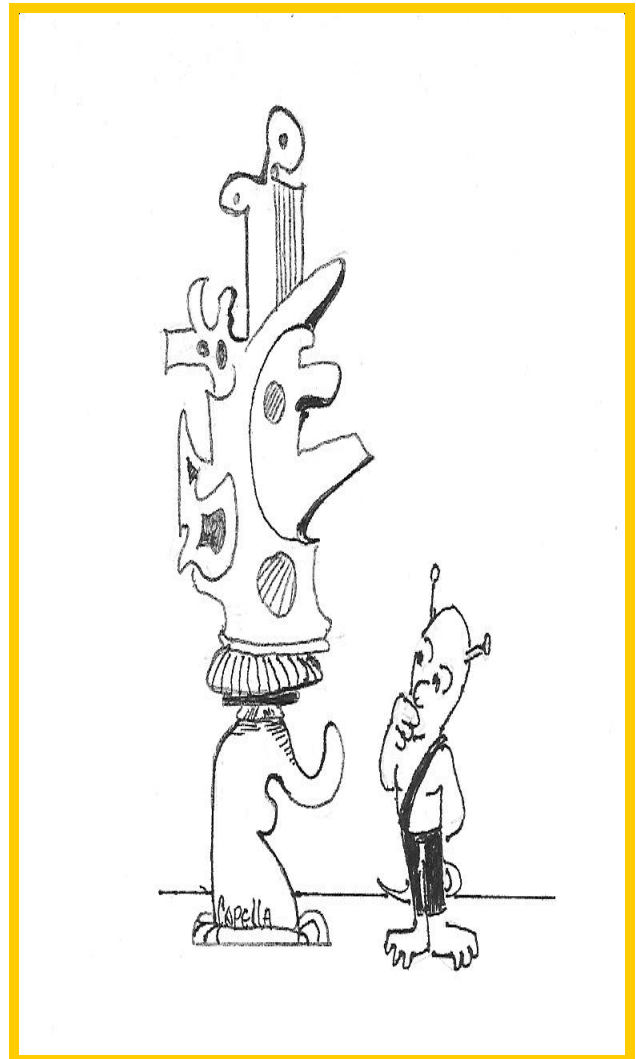
And so he did, and so it emerged (as I had suspected from the beginning but not being a Qualified Telecommunications Engineer I had hesitated to put forward) that the one wire left at the removal of the ISDN equipment could be made to carry two numbers for bog standard calls only. True, he assessed this work one day, and then came and actually did it three weeks later, when the ISDN deadline had passed but somehow I was still connected to this theoretically ceased service. But it was with glad heart that I went on holiday, as you all know. But now comes the post script, the explanation of my absence from these virtual environs these three or so days. Ask yourselves - what became of the poles? Since they were there, someone had better put the wires from the old poles onto them. Someone did - and cut all my lines off in the process! Sunday morning and Audrey and I, as is our wont, are having breakfast in bed, when the door bell goes. Without stood an engineer from British Moron. I caustically enquired how it came that he was at my door on the Lords Day when surely he had been excused duty in order to be on his knees in the church of his choice, for such I had been given to understand was the case by Strathclyde Susan whose ear had been the recipient of much invective on both Friday and Saturday. He laughed " I'm a

Satanist" he said.

" Oh , so it was you who cut my lines off was it?" I asked. But he assured me it wasn't.

So here I am , by the grace of BT, once more restored unto you. What have I missed?

UNCLE JOHNNY



THIS USED TO BE DIRTY

Milt Stevens

Not from a fannish e-list, this article from one of fandom's finest current writers, takes Milt's deconstructions of works of fiction to another level - the rewriting of James Branch Cabell's *Jurgen*. This makes *Jurgen* much more interesting ... from a fannish viewpoint, that is.

I am referring to the 1919 novel *Jurgen* by James Branch Cabell. The matter was even brought into court which added greatly to Cabell's fame and more than a little to the sales of his books. The book begins in a most promising manner with the Latin quote "*Nescio quid certe est: et Hylax limine h-trat.*" It's hard to disagree with a sentiment like that. Of course, the common reader knew that the Latin language contained all sorts of material possibly not suitable for all family members (or maybe that should be probably). That's why people kept learning Latin for all those centuries. Alas, for the modern reader, this is Nick at Night stuff. Truth to tell, it's more blasphemous than obscene. I suppose blasphemy still counts for something, although not much, so this might rate as PG-13 at best.

At the beginning of the novel, we find Jurgen, who is a pawnbroker. Jurgen had once been a poet but his meter ran out and he was laid off. He has a wife named Dame Lisa, but she doesn't understand him. He tries never to speak ill of anyone. One evening on his way home, he encounters a monk who is cursing loudly at the demon who must have put a paving stone so the monk could trip over it. Jurgen points out that demons have to be very hard working and display great ingenuity in order to perform the duties God has ordained for them. The monk then uttered a couple of curses that had seldom been heard in western lands. At the same time, a black gentleman approached Jurgen and thanked him for his kind words. He lamented that few had much good to say of evil. The black gentleman said he could see that Jurgen had the soul of a poet. He could also see he had a wife who didn't understand him. A poet should not have to endure a woman with such an exceedingly sharp tongue. The black gentleman then began nodding as if considering a plan.

When Jurgen arrived home he found his wife had been carried off. The neighbors said it was probably a demon. Jurgen supposed that was why dinner wasn't ready. His wife's relatives urged Jurgen to do the manly thing and rescue his wife. Jurgen considered how much he wanted dinner. Perhaps, he should take a stroll over to the heath where local women abducted by demons could usually be b-cated. On arriving at the heath, Jurgen noticed a cave. He didn't see his wife, but he did see a duck in a sailor suit. The duck was jumping up and down and mouthing the most incomprehensible gibberish as if he was expressing an eldritch warning. Jurgen reflected that few ducks have acceptable elocution.

It was dark inside the cave. This didn't surprise Jurgen, since it is dark inside most caves. As his eyes adjusted to the darkness, he saw a small patch of dim light in front of him. He moved towards it. As he approached a circle of light, he saw a centaur. Jurgen thought this was strange, because he knew centaurs were imaginary creatures. Next to the centaur was a taxi cab. Jurgen thought that was even stranger, because everybody knew you could never find a cab at this hour. The centaur greeted Jurgen and explained he was a cab driving centaur who regularly took passengers to imaginary destinations such as Anaheim, Azusa, and Cucamonga. Jurgen asked if he knew anything about his wife's whereabouts. The centaur cabby admitted that he didn't. For that information, Jurgen might have to contact Koshchei, the creator of things as they are, of carpet tacks, and dust bunnies, and several quite tolerable soft drinks. Jurgen shuddered at the prospect. The cabby then proposed a trip to another imaginary location, the Garden Between Amortization and Depreciation. Lacking any better ideas, Jurgen got in the back seat of the cab, and they departed.

After a trip at excessive speeds through non-Euclidean and probably non-sensical space, they arrived at the Garden Between Amortization and Depreciation. Time kept a hard ledger, and he kept it on the faces of men and women, but here was a place beyond such accountancy. Here was the place where the memories of first loves resided. Many young men could be seen here in various costumes and attitudes. Jurgen saw his own first love, Dorothy of heart's desire. Jurgen approached her with



heart racing. Since she was Jurgen's first love, she naturally regarded Jurgen the current as an old goat. This is because Jurgen the current was an old goat. With a bleat of despair, Jurgen staggers back to where his cab had been parked. To his surprise, he found that the cab had turned into a horse. Well, it wasn't the horse he had ridden in on, but it was a way of leaving.

Soon he came to a white plain with a square white house with a white road leading up to it. At the end of the road was a white door with a white knocker and a white welcome mat. Jurgen entered. He saw a white room with a white table and white chairs. At the end of the table, sat an old white woman in a white robe with a white towel wrapped around her head. As Jurgen felt the color drain out of his face, he realized this must be the realm of Sareda, she who bleaches. Being a monstrously clever fellow, Jurgen knew exactly what to do. He began to sing a jingle in praise of getting the yellow out. He also danced and gesticulated wildly. At the end of his performance, Sareda applauded with her thin white

hands. She offered him gold and jewels and all manner of other rewards, since her power was great almost beyond imagining. Jurgen replied that what he really needed was a day. She wondered at this. It wasn't just any day. He needed a Wednesday. Since he was a pawnbroker, he didn't need a new Wednesday. He needed a used Wednesday. He then specified which one he wanted.

In a flash he was standing outside the hall where the young Jurgen had last danced with Dorothy of the elevated hormone action. He now appeared to be the age he had been on that long ago Wednesday. However, he noticed something quite strange. His shadow had become quite ugly. Also, it seemed to be dancing the funky chicken while Jurgen was standing still. In spite of his shadow, Jurgen went in search of Dorothy. He found her talking to Michael of the inflated bank account. This was the evening that Michael had stolen Dorothy's heart as well as several other parts of her anatomy from Jurgen. This Wednesday, Jurgen would make

things different. Jurgen strode up to Michael and challenged him to a duel. Dorothy gisped in astonishment. (People tend to gisp in times of unusual stress.) Michael laughed for his vast experience at cutting corners had made him a master swordsman. This he demonstrated by whupping Jurgen big time. Still laughing, Michael began to walk towards Dorothy. Not to be deterred, Jurgen whipped out a Mauser pistol and shot Michael six times in the back. Dorothy commented that wasn't exactly the gallant thing to do. Before anything else could happen, the tower clock chimed twelve, and Wednesday ended.

Jurgen found himself back on the heath outside the cave. He still seemed to be the age he had been on the long ago Wednesday. The duck was no longer in sight. Neither was Jurgen's wife. His shadow seemed to be doing a soft shoe number. Lacking any better ideas, he entered the cave again. It was still dark.

By simply walking forward, he comes to an area of

light in a brief time. This time, there is no centaur and no taxi cab. However, there is a king asleep on his throne. You can always tell kings, because they are the ones with the crowns. This particular king has an evil visage even aside from having fangs that are two inches long. There is a beautiful woman at the king's feet. She is also out cold. Jorgen imagines she must be a princess, for who but a princess would get herself into a situation like this. Being a monstrously clever fellow, Jorgen can see there is only one thing to do. He will kiss the princess, since he wasn't about to kiss a guy who had two inch fangs.

The princess awakens and explains all. She is Guinevere betrothed of Arthur Pendragon, King of the Britons. Guinevere had been on her way to meet her betrothed when she had been kidnapped by an ogre king named Thragnar. Thragnar was the guy with the two inch fangs. Guinevere pointed out that Thragnar seemed to be stirring, and it might be best to be elsewhere before he was fully awake. Jorgen conceded that seemed to be a good idea. As he helped Guinevere to her feet, he noticed there was a sword at the feet of the ogre king. It appeared to be enchanted. Noticing his interest, Guinevere explained that the sword was indeed enchanted. The sword's name was Caliburn, and it made its bearer invincible against all foes. It was also pretty good for male enhancement. Jorgen grabs the sword, grabs Guinevere, and they exit the cave together.

Guinevere must be returned to the castle of her father, Gogyrvan Gawr. That proves to be a considerable distance, even by freeway. Guinevere warns that Thragnar is bound to be on their trail. Thragnar is quite dangerous, because as an ogre he can take on any shape whatsoever. Ogres do that sort of thing.

Jorgen and Guinevere were three days along on their journey when they came to a pavilion of black and silver. Knowing that Thragnar might be in any form, they approached the pavilion with caution. Their caution seemed justified when who should exit the pavilion but Dame Lisa. Dame Lisa was all smiling and cheerful, much unlike the Dame Lisa with whom Jorgen

was familiar. She explained that after being carried off by the black gentleman she had come to appreciate all of Jorgen's wonderful qualities. She now realized he had been entirely right in all of those thousands of arguments over the years. Jorgen realized in an instant that this was beyond belief. This couldn't possibly be Dame Lisa. It must be the evil ogre Thragnar. There was obviously only one thing to do. He lops Dame Lisa's head off without further consideration. Of course, the results were somewhat untidy. Jorgen had been expecting the ogre would revert to his natural form when he died. The resulting mess still looked quite a bit like Dame Lisa. Jorgen had to concede it might even be Dame Lisa. After all, mistakes happened in every line of endeavor.

Jorgen felt there was no need to tarry at the black and silver pavilion. In three more days, he and Guinevere reached the castle of Gogyrvan Gawr. Gogyrvan could see his daughter was accompanied by a young male with an enchanted sword. It sometimes seemed as if every young male in the entire land had an enchanted sword and was anxious to use it. Jorgen had rescued Gogyrvan's daughter, so Gogyrvan endeavored to make him feel about as welcome as a tax audit. If he hadn't rescued his daughter, he would have had him ripped limb from limb. Gogyrvan really had very little patience with



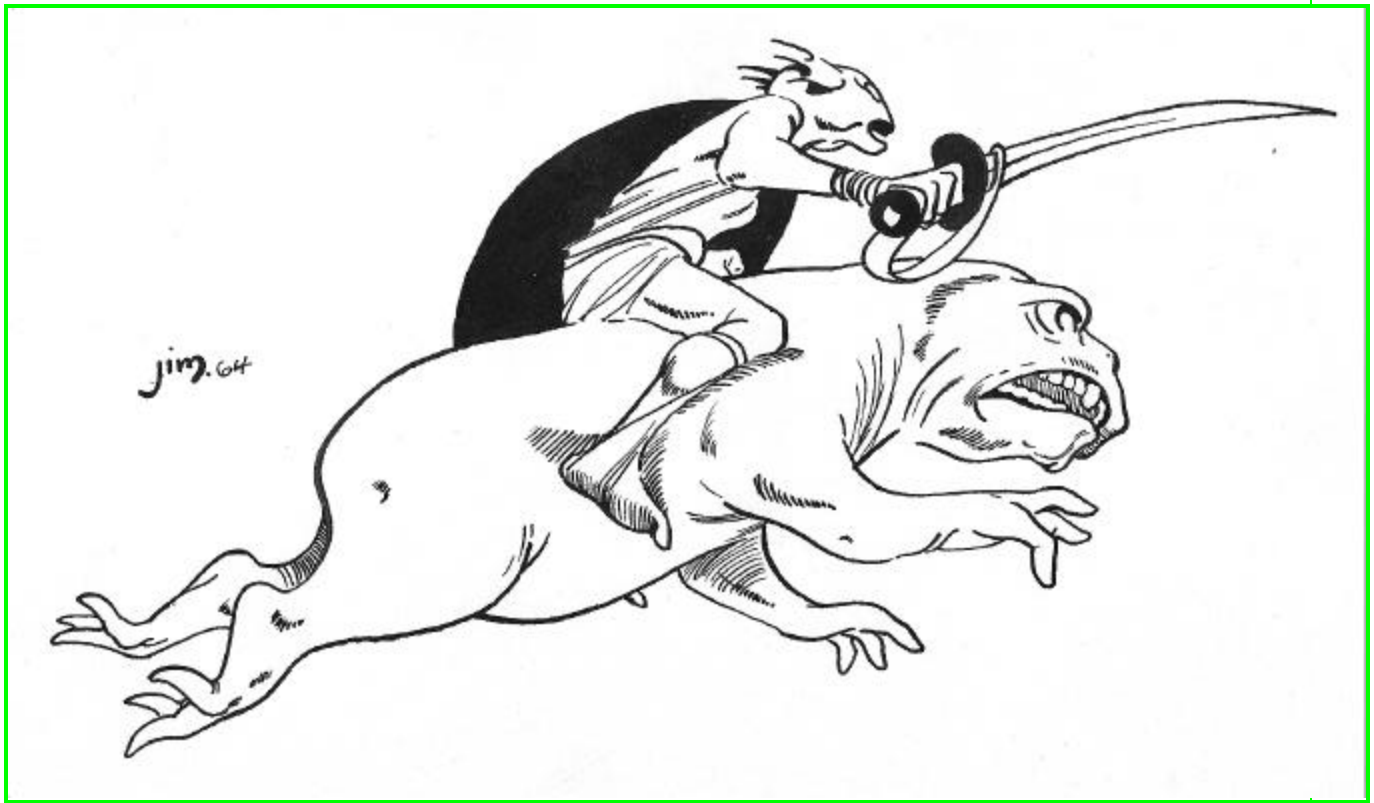
young men with enchanted swords.

Before Guinevere's kidnapping, a party had arrived at the castle to take her to Arthur at Camelot. The party was led by Merlin Ambrosius and Anaitis, The Lady of the Lake. Meanwhile, Jurgen was lodged in the draftiest turret in Gogyrvan's castle.

Not long after his arrival, Jurgen staggered back to his turret after an evening of drinking whatever with whomever. He collapsed on the bed where he would have remained inert for the rest of the night had he not noticed two spectral visitors, a man and a woman, standing in the corner. The man introduced himself as King Smoit and introduced his companion as his ninth wife, Queen Sylvia. He went on to explain that he was Jurgen's biological grandfather by way of a brief affair with Jurgen's grandmother. Which was why he needed Jurgen's help in a most delicate matter. This night was the anniversary of the night on which he had murdered Queen Sylvia. Aside from murdering his ninth wife, he had also murdered his eighth wife, and his fifth wife, and his third wife too. Having recently lopped the head off his own wife, Jurgen could see how such things could happen. In any case, King Smoit had to reenact the murder of Queen Sylvia each year on its anniversary. He also had to reenact all of his other

murders on those anniversaries. The problem arose because he had absentmindedly committed another murder in Cornwall on this very date. He couldn't very well haunt two places at the same time, so he needed a family member to act as a stand-in.

Jurgen considered the matter. He couldn't in good conscience refuse such a request from his grandfather. After looking at Queen Sylvia more carefully, he decided he might be able to use his sword on such a comely wench. So Jurgen agreed to the task, and his grandfather whisked off to another haunting in Cornwall. Then Jurgen drew his sword and bounded after Queen Sylvia with whoops of fiendish delight. They made a dreadful commotion as they chased up stairways and down stairways and through passageways and across the moat and around the castle and back across the moat and up and down and up and down. At one point, they chased through the bedchamber occupied by Anaitis, the Lady of the Lake. Anaitis awoke and viewed them with passing disinterest. She had always known the castle had a lively history. Jurgen and Queen Sylvia finally came to a stop outside Anaitis' bedchamber. Queen Sylvia encouraged Jurgen to use his sword before she had to return to her cold grave. At that moment, the cock crowed and Queen Sylvia vanished. This left Jurgen standing



there with his sword hanging out. At the same time, a voice behind him asked what he was trying to do. The voice belonged to Anaitis. When Jorgen did not reply Anaitis suggested he go sleep it off. This was all quite embarrassing to Jorgen. However, he reflected that Anaitis had seen him with his sword out, and you never knew when a woman might want a swordsman.

A few days later, Guinevere and the party from Camelot departed for Arthur's kingdom. That left Jorgen wondering whether he also should depart for points elsewhere. He was standing by the seashore when he was approached by Anaitis, The Lady Lake. She had not left with the rest of the party for Camelot. She was returning to her day job as a lunar myth in the city of Cocaigne where she ruled as a queen. Anaitis went on to mention that she did have a position for a swordsman of Jorgen's qualification. Jorgen thought this was the best offer he had heard all week.

Anaitis took Jorgen to her ship which was powered by moonbeams and a 500 horsepower Rolls-Royce engine. They reached Cocaigne in a single night. Outside the city, Jorgen could see the allegories frolicking and slithering everywhere. This was obviously a poetic sort of place. Once Jorgen and Anaitis had settled in the city, they took an active part in the partying and orgying and debauching which were the main activities of the city. They also played Scrabble in the Temple of Dark Desire. By local custom, if a man and a woman played Scrabble together in the Temple of Dark Desire, they were considered married. The residents of Cocaigne didn't much believe in paperwork.

And so the endless summer passed endlessly. Then one day, Jorgen came upon Anaitis who was weeping copiously. Jorgen wondered at this unhappiness in a place of perpetual delight. With a miserable wail, Anaitis proclaimed her undying love for Jorgen. However, there was a problem. The Master Philologist had defined Jorgen as an autumnal myth who must pass at the equinox. Jorgen decided this would never do. He would go straightway to this Master Philologist and lop his head off. Anaitis explained this might not be so easy for the Master Philologist was exceedingly powerful.

Despite her misgivings, Anaitis took Jorgen to the home of the Master Philologist. Jorgen knocked loudly on the front door which was soon answered by the Philologist. The Master Philologist was a small man with exceedingly large spectacles. He

explained to Jorgen that words had the power over all things. For instance, he imagined Jorgen must derive from jargon which was a thing of no very great permanence. Jorgen suddenly felt decidedly unwell. The more the Philologist talked the worse Jorgen felt. Finally, he fled screaming lest he be talked entirely to death.

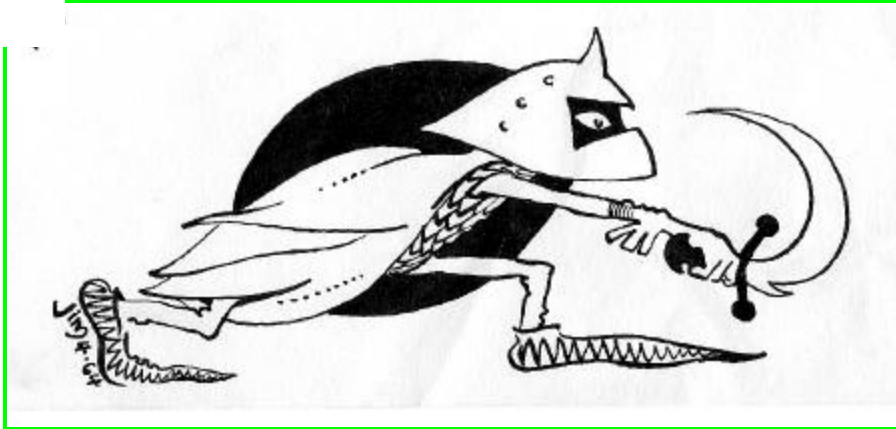
Jorgen told Anaitis he was doomed. None could overcome the power of words. Anaitis vowed to help him escape his fate. By traveling through the Druidic Woods, he could reach Pseudopolis where Queen Helen ruled. Anaitis warned Jorgen not to look upon Queen Helen for all men who looked upon Queen Helen fell madly in love with her. Jorgen felt he could risk such a fate particularly when he compared it to the verbose doom which might otherwise await him. That very night, Jorgen departed the city of Cocaigne on his way to Pseudopolis.

The next morning, he reached the edge of the Druidic Woods. There he saw a brown man with strange feet. His feet were strange because he had 26 toes on each of them.

The brown man hailed Jorgen as he came closer. The man explained that he warned most people not to enter these woods because Truth resided here. Most people shouldn't know the Truth. It was bad for them. It would also be bad if they told people outside these woods about Truth. However, the brown man could see Jorgen was a poet. That meant Jorgen could tell people the Truth all he wanted, and nobody would recognize it for what it was. In fact, nobody would recognize it for anything at all. So the brown man took Jorgen by the arm and gave him a guided tour.

It proved not to be a very long tour. Twenty minutes later, Jorgen was at the other side of the Druidic Woods. He was frothing at the mouth and screaming loudly. "It doesn't mean anything! It doesn't mean anything at all!" he screamed over and over. The brown man stared at him indulgently and patted him on the shoulder. He extended his other hand with two multicolored pills in the palm. Jorgen gulped them down eagerly. His face now bore an expression of celestial calm. It was like Nirvana on a descending elevator. Then his eyes rolled backwards, and he hit the ground with a resounding thud.

Jorgen awoke some number of eons later. A couple of eons after that, he began thinking about sitting



Philistines were a nasty lot. They deeply resented people commenting they were a nasty lot. Bad reviews in the newspapers would always send them on a murderous rampage. Since most of the residents of Pseudopolis were heroes, they generally had a low regard for Philistines. Which is why the Philistines invaded and burned the place to the ground. The resident heroes didn't mind, because

up. He vaguely recalled he should go to a city named Pseudopolis. It was something about avoiding a horrible doom. A very short time after that, Jurgen was staggering along on his way to Pseudopolis.

Jurgen had been warned about looking at Queen Helen the ruler of Pseudopolis. Naturally, the first thing he did upon arriving in town was stroll by the royal palace, so he could take a look at Queen Helen. To his surprise, she looked exactly like the first love of his youth, Dorothy the Fubsy Wench. Of course, he immediately fell in love with her. However, he soon discovered he hadn't been told the whole story about the situation in Pseudopolis. The Gods had tired of the endless wars over Queen Helen. They finally married her to Achilles who happened to be the baddest dude in the entire world. Now Queen Helen was safe from annoyance by all but the most suicidally inclined. Such annoyances were always brief.

Jurgen took one look at Achilles, and his shadow started a mad dash out of town with Jurgen close behind. The shadow didn't stop running before reaching the shade of a very large oak tree in the nearby woods. This particular oak was the home of a hamadryad named Chloris. Chloris could instantly tell that Jurgen had fallen in love with Queen Helen and then seen Achilles. She had seen many men with the exact same symptoms.

Being a hamadryad, Chloris didn't get out much. She thought Jurgen was the most handsome man she had ever seen. Of course, it should be remembered that hamadryads don't have particularly long memories. Soon Jurgen and Chloris were married after the customs of the forest and settled down to raise little acorns together. They resided together in complete bliss until the Philistines invaded.

they had all gone to the seashore and regarded the invasion as urban renewal. This annoyed the Philistines even more, since they really enjoyed doing murderous rampages. Not being able to kill anyone in Pseudopolis, the Philistines turned their wrath on the nearby forest. The chopped poor Chloris to the ground and dispatched Jurgen to Hell in a most unseemly fashion.

Jurgen arrived in Hell just as the demons were exiting their churches from celebrating Christmas. He noticed the demons were very tired looking. He immediately demanded justice. The demons admitted they didn't know if there was any justice hereabouts, but he might try visiting Grandfather Satan to see if he knew anything. Jurgen thanked them for their advice and set-off for Grandfather Satan's palace.

Jurgen found Grandfather Satan in a very dejected state. Satan was dejected because his wife didn't understand him. Jurgen asked if there was any justice in Hell. Satan doubted there was. Satan explained that Hell had been created as a service organization. Koshchei the creator of things as they are, of marbles and earwigs and many grades of motor oil, had created Hell when he realized people had consciences. Satan explained that a conscience was a form of pride that made people believe their misdeeds were actually important and deserved the most bizarre punishments. Which was why all the demons looked so tired. They had to work night and day to comply with the desires for increasingly more horrible tortures. Satan doubted this was justice. Jurgen conceded it probably wasn't.

And so Jurgen wandered the countryside of Hell. In his wandering, he met a toothsome vampire named Floribel who was on vacation from Earth. Floribel explained there were so many young men craving

destruction that a vampire might easily work herself to death if she wasn't already dead to begin with. Which was why she needed occasional vacations in Hell. Jorgen sympathized with Floribel's situation. Floribel thought Jorgen was the most caring man she had ever met. Of course, it should be remembered that vampires don't have particularly long memories. Soon Jorgen and Floribel were married after the customs of the Hell and settled down in a cottage by a river of blood. Water wasn't allowed in Hell lest someone harm themselves by accidental baptism. Before his marriage to Floribel, Jorgen had worried that his three previous marriages might be an impediment. No such thing. The demons of Hell were very fond of marriage and valued in above all other forms of torment. They had fully believed the Bible when it said it was better to marry than to burn.

Jorgen and Floribel settled in to the social life of Hell. Demons loved to come over and argue politics with Jorgen. Hell was a liberal democracy and arguing politics was one of the favorite activities of demons. Of course, the war with Heaven was always a hot topic. The war had been going on for all of eternity, but some demons thought it should end sooner or later. This was obviously silly, because you couldn't very well have an eternal war that ended.

After a long season of bliss, Floribel had to return to her work on Earth. After she had departed, Jorgen began wondering if he should try to locate Dame Lisa here in Hell. He described Dame Lisa to some of his demonic friends, and they doubted she was anywhere in Hell. It sounded to them as if only an angel could put up with her. They recommended he check Heaven for her possible whereabouts. To reach Heaven, he could take the infernal railway to the end of the line and then take a hot air balloon directly to Heaven.

Jorgen reached Heaven with remarkable ease. The gates seemed to be as formidable as they were lovely. He was wondering how he might enter when he sneezed and the gates opened by himself. On walking in, he saw the pavement of gold and the opulent palaces and heard the celestial Muzak in the background. The entire place had a newly painted smell which seemed strange to Jorgen. He wandered around the streets of Heaven until he came to the palace of God. Jorgen found God in a very dejected state. God was dejected because his wife didn't understand him. Jorgen asked if there was any justice in Heaven. God doubted there was.

God explained that Heaven had been created as a way of dealing with the souls of little old ladies. Koshchei the creator of things as they are, of paper clips and spark plugs and hula hoops, had created Heaven after he got around to reading the Bible and realized that millions of little old ladies would be expecting a place like heaven. Which was why Heaven had an eternal bingo game. However, God doubted this was really justice. Jorgen conceded it probably wasn't.

What was Jorgen to do? There was no justice in either Heaven or Hell or most places in between. That made Earth as Jorgen had known it about as good as anywhere else. He also realized a truly horrible truth. Dame Lisa was the only woman who really understood him.

So Jorgen went to see Saint Peter about a return passage to Earth. That should be fairly simple since Jorgen hadn't bothered to die before visiting either Hell or Heaven. Finding Saint Peter proved not to be so simple. Saint Peter was terribly embarrassed about being blamed for the whole church thing, and that was why he stayed away from people most of the time. Once he caught up with him, Saint Peter agreed that still being alive was a pretty good reason for returning to Earth.

Jorgen found himself once more on the heath outside the cave. It wouldn't have seemed natural not to enter the cave for a third time. So he did. He came again to the chamber where he had found Guinevere and Thragnar. Now, there was only a shield with letters of fire which proclaimed "Gone to Lunch. Be back soon. --Thragnar." For the first time, Jorgen noticed there was a door at the back of the chamber. On the door were gold letters which proclaimed "Manager." Jorgen felt he had to find out what was beyond the door. When he opened the door and saw the black gentleman seated at an opulent desk copying numbers from one ledger to another. Koshchei welcomed Jorgen warmly and expressed wonder that he had returned so soon. Naturally, to the creator of things as they are even a million years is quite soon. He wasn't terribly surprised that Jorgen wanted to go back to Dame Lisa. After all, there was a reason why Koshchei created things as they are. Koshchei then snapped his fingers, and Jorgen found himself back on the street where the monk was still cursing the paving block he had just tripped over. This time, Jorgen kept his mouth shut and went home to dinner.

end

Another Fan's Poison

Curt Phillips

And here is still another nugget from an elist, this one Trufen. Not all good fan-writing has migrated to the web; however, as many parts of the net seem to be closed off to other parts (and all of it not accessible to those with no on-line access), I have no hesitation in taking some of the good stuff and putting it on paper for the delectation of another audience.

“...Another Fan’s Poison”

Just the other day - well, a year ago last April, come to think of it – I was sitting in my office talking on the Trufen Yahoo! group with several fannish type characters about the issues of the day, and whenever someone in fandom uses the word “issues” we all quite naturally start thinking about fanzines. And more specifically, about the fanzine we should be writing an article for at that particular moment instead of chatting on-line, but let’s not get distracted by such worrisome thoughts as that. We’d just brought up the subject of the latest increase in the cost of postage here in the US when Randy Byers said unto us:

“So now I’m curious whether fanzine fans talk about the horrible crushing cost of pubbing their ish and how paper zines are dead, or do they avoid postage costs by not mailing their zines at all?”

Bob Tucker – whose fine fannish hand cranked many a copy of *LeZOMBIE* through his duper back in the day – responded:

“And I keep telling you publishers about The Good Olde Days. I used to buy twill tone mimeo paper for about \$1 a ream, yellow second sheets for less than a dollar per ream, and mailed my early fanzines for one and one-half cents per copy. I also gave the postmaster a freebie and he read it. It was a staggering blow when postage costs went up to 2 or 3 cents per copy.”

I knew exactly what they meant, for I had my own sad fannish tale to tell.

I hate having to admit it, but the high cost of postage and printing prices have certainly limited my own fanzine production these days. I can bear up under the burden but I hate to think what it’s already cost all of you guys. Why, I even had to cancel the gala 10th annish of my fanzine *ABSARKA* for those very reasons, and boy-oh-boy, what a great zine it would have been! 250 pages, full color printing, with a fan art portfolio featuring Steve Stiles, Dan Steffen, Brad Foster and several “lost” Earl Bergy nudes, and a fold-out centerfold of one of the loveliest ladies in all of fandom. I can’t name her here but **you** know whom I mean! I had it all planned out in every detail.

You would have had a great article in there, Randy. You were going to blow the lid off the steaming cauldron of Seattle fannish politics and reveal how you, Andy Hooper and carl juarez are even now planning to organize All of Fandom to rise up and take back the Worldcon.

And **You** would have had a Big article in that issue too, Bob Tucker! You were going to write about how you and four carefully chosen confederates - Bloch, Korshak, Eschbach, and Evans - had once planned to organize All of Fandom to rise up and take back the Worldcon. And there would have been articles by Earl Kemp, and Robert Silverberg, and Dave Locke and Harlan Ellison; and even Ted White would have had an article on how he was planning to organize jazz musicians to rise up and take over All of Fandom.

And Marty Cantor and Craig Miller would have collaborated on a **major** article on how they were planning to surrender the Worldcon to the N3F and skip town with the profits, and I had already written part 1 of my 900-page short story on how the Worldcon had packed it’s bags and gotten on the last bus out of town just ahead of All of Fandom.

Oh, it was to have been a glorious fanzine with sterling silver staples and illuminated WAHF listings, and a 3-D cover by some neofan in Puerto Rico named "Bergerson" or something like that. Every trufan on the face of the Earth would have received their copy simultaneously on April 1. In far-off Haverfordwest in Pembrokeshire, Greg Pickersgill would have torn open his envelope, sworn a fearsome oath and would have immediately begun construction of an illuminated shadow-box frame with gold-leaf trim to suitably display the zine in the Memoryhole Fanzine Permacollection.

Across the planet in Australia, fans from Sydney to Perth; from Adelaide to Alice Springs (and particularly in Greensborough, VIC) would have begun circulating a petition calling for Curt Phillips to stand for election in the next DUFF campaign.

Without a doubt it would have won Hugo Awards for each and every one of us. We'd have all stood

there together on the Hugo winners platform wearing our bright red Knights of St. Fantony blazers with our modest but stylish Science Fiction League buttons in the lapels, and we'd have all raised high our gleaming golden Hugo rockets while the femefans cheered and the flashbulbs flashed, and while All of Fandom knelt prostrate at our feet... But then they raised the price of postage stamps to 42 cents and so I said to hell with it.

I keep busy these days by filling in the holes in my COSMIC STORIES OF HORSE OPERA ROMANCES pulp magazine collection, so I'm ok; but like I said, I still hate to think of what my decision has cost all the rest of you. If I ever hear that **any** of you have quit fanwriting and taken up some lesser hobby - like writing professional **science fiction** - then I don't know how I'll ever deal with the guilt...



TWO LETTERS FROM MAUI

Dr. Marie Rengstorff

The first letter came out of the blue, the first contact I have had with Marie since *HOLIER THAN THOU* days. Marie has had some interesting experiences since that time, so I will let her letters speak for themselves about a few of these experiences.

I have not written to you in years. Probably my last letter was when Terry Carr died. I was from Northern California at the time. I'm *still* from Northern California, but I have moved to Maui, Hawaii.

Of course, major earthquakes tend to follow me. My real estate agent said I take the processes of nature too personally. I say, she does not understand my weird sense of humor.

The last big shake in Hawaii was very close to me, between the Big Island and Maui. That event was followed by two flash flood warnings. That makes for a little excitement. As we say in Hawaii, "I will tell story."

At first light, my dog and I arrived at the ancient village of Kihei/Kalama. In town, after ten a.m., one can buy some of the best fish on the island, overpriced T-shirts, and locally made STUFF. But I was there at 6 a.m. I just wanted to walk the dog and go to the grocery store for eggs and bread.

Dog and I circled the village. I stopped to let Toy Toy snuffle the koi in the pond. In a good snuffle, Toy Toy puts her whiskers in the water. The koi fish do the opposite. They stick their whiskers out of the water. The dog and the koi then touch whiskers. I do not have an explanation for this. I don't try. I grew up talking to sea lions. My dog can communicate with fish if it pleases her.

When we reached the ancient dress shop, the ground rolled a little then a lot, all in the same direction. The Hawaiian style wall of the dress shop started to come at us. I thought for sure the building was going to fall over. Old Hawaiian structures are not much, studs with an outside layer of plywood, no interior wall. The roof is the dame, except it has a covering of roofing tar over the plywood, which makes the roof heavier than the walls, a very unstable way to build in an earthquake zone.

The top of that building loomed over me, leaning

more and more. I back up. Toy Toy ran to a big man and stood behind him. I felt the building could not lean any farther and survive. But Pele had other plans. The earth snapped back the other way. The walls whipped in this new direction, and the building stood upright again.

The walls have looked a bit crooked since that moment, but I think the building has been leaning for the last 80 years.

I decided it was time to hit the grocery store before any tsunami could reach us. Keeping my eye on the ocean, because a quake that close would not give much time for a tsunami warning. I walked around the dress shop. On the other side, the 24-hour grocery store was dark. The interior emitted crashes and screams. The front door was forced open and the darkness spit people onto the sidewalk.

No one was hurt. The crashes came from the demise of all the expensive mayonnaise in the store. That shelf section collapsed. The cheap stuff was okay. It comes in plastic bottles these days.

The evacuees, shoppers and clerks alike, all whipped out their cell phones and started calling anyone and everyone. Of course, most towers were damaged and the electricity was off all over the state. Most people would not be able to complete a call for about 12 hours. (I would not be able to buy eggs and bread for 26 hours. I was out of both. Have you ever had fish sandwiches made with whole wheat pancakes cooked on a hibachi? Not bad. Let them eat papaya!)

Without my cell phone, I missed out on all the frantic fun of trying to call and getting nowhere. I seldom carry my cell phone. If I had, I could have called someone at 6 a.m., to wake him or her up, to say they missed a good shake, if I could have gotten through. Instead, Toy and I went home to a frantic neighborhood. I live in a sprawling hotel. Most people around me are visitors. There was a jolly frantic happening going on at home. I handed out some radios.

The only information came in on radio station 93.5. I'm sure it has a name, but I do not pay much attention to that local station, except during earthquakes and floods. It normally broadcasts hip-hop music and announces the titles in Hawaiian pigeon. They

do, however, broadcast live. They become the source for information in times of crises.

I will paraphrase the announcer, and translate her slightly: "Et is, fo sure, da end of da World. Da Lwal-Mart, she make the call in. She is da first one what call us. She say, 'Da Wal-Mart, she is closed.'"

At this point the announcer broke into hysterical laughter and could not speak for a few moments.

She pulled herself together lon enough to add, "Et is da truff. Da Wal-Mart, she is closed. Life as we knew it has come to an end.

I love living in Maui. We take things so seriously.

I love being retired. I do kid's stuff every day. Mostly I swim, snorkel, and watch whales, but last week I got to feed the dragons.

I went down to our infamous civic center, the one where my dog and the koi communicate whisker to whisker, for Chinese New Year. I put some paper money into two lucky red envelopes, one for the Red Dragon and one for the Green Dragon.

The head of the Red Dragon was an acrobat - very exciting. The head of the Green Dragon was a real personality. When I gave him the little envelope, he pretended to eat my arm. I pretended to be chewed on while trying to get away. What fun. My mother never allowed me to feed the dragons in San Francisco or in Boston (where my father was attending MIT). I wonder if her schizophrenia made it difficult for her to sort between reality and this pretend. I remember her giving off a feeling of terror. I am so lucky not to have learned such responses from her.

Back to the important stuff, the dragons. Our local boys, in the dragons and accompanying the dragons, are nice kids and good drummers. I had a wonderful time at this, my first dragon feeing. I recommend it highly. It makes me wish I could write fantasy.

Play takes many forms. Some takes work. I am putting a lot of effort into learning fiction writing with the help of a new writers' group. I believe we are all helping each other. The last time I could say that about a group of writers I joined was 1993 and before. Some of that lost time, between '93 and '97, was my fault. I was busy transferring my real job to others and moving to Hawaii.

From August 1997 to now, I tried very hard to find or build a new writers' group.

That is 10 years. I just realized that. TEN!!

I was terribly belligerent with this new group as it began to form. I insisted that members be people who want to become professional authors. Maui is full of other kinds of writers' groups. I know them under the general title of "Tea Parties." People come for "ego boo" only. We do not have their work ahead. They read their piece out loud as we note any errors. No one at a Tea Party would consider correction any errors except grammar and spelling. Anything else would hurt little feelings. I tried a few of those Tea Parties and walked out.

As this new group formed, five of us held our ground and insisted we wanted something more. We would give out our manuscripts three weeks ahead. We would make writing recommendations to our fellow authors with one goal - to help that person achieve professional publication.

Within two months, those of us determined to have a group with professional goals won out. The Prima Donnas gave up. The ones who wanted psychotherapy-through-writing faded away. The ones who had given up on publication success, and had reduced their ambitions to the Vanity Press systems, decided we were too mean.

We became a hard working, kind heated, serious group who are shredding each other's work. Everyone is improving in a hurry. What a thrill!!!! One nice thing is, not one of us writes in the same genre. We are not competitors. If you live on Maui and want some of this action, give me a call We are six in number and can support a few (very few) more.



Loc 'N Load

The Letter Column

There is no black and white version of this issue of NO AWARD (unless somebody downloads it that way). Therefore, both on paper and on-line, the locs are written in black and any responses I may make will be like this, bold blue italics.

GREG BENFORD: Much agree with Pete Weston: "...they were a bunch of people who claim to be interested in SF, but they're not, really. They have swallowed the bright shiny lure without taking the hook; they're actually fantasy fans, to whom the universe is a strange and mysterious place in which anything might happen. The painstaking working-out of Mission of Gravity..."

Exactly. Many seem to just wait for the next jolt of special effects. His further point is telling, one I see often as a professor: "...although the new generation is more familiar with advanced technology than we were, it might not be altogether a good thing. They've been conditioned by media-SF to expect the impossible to happen; the cavalier disregard for accuracy and consistency exhibited by almost all films and TV presentations has become the expected norm, and to a youngster, our sort of painstaking, detailed, careful science fiction might just seem to be 'plodding' by comparison. So true! This pervades the normal world, too, when people expect tech tricks to avoid the outcomes of their own actions. The consequences of this are myriad.

One consequence is those of us who know the pure quill, spending - sometimes successfully - some time explaining science fiction and how fans relate to it and what fandom is all about et bloody cetera. It is nice when we find a true fan who has been temporarily led astray and start them fanzining. (Okay, I have these daydreams ...)

MIKE GLICKSOHN: Yes, Marty, it is really me. Long time no type. But if Bill can return from the dead to grace the cover of #16, I figure I can return from the near-dead to at least make the WAHFs in #17. (Don't know if you heard that last February I had a cancerous tumour removed along with a healthy but unattached kidney. There was evidence later that the cancer might have spread to my blad-

der but tests this summer proved negative and it appears that right now at least I am cancer free. I also retired at the end of June so have more time to devote to locs, Hence this blast from the past.)

Mike, I think that this current loc of yours came as more of a surprise than the very first loc I received on my very first genzine, HOLIER THAN THOU. Remember that one, Mike? You were the one who sent it. (That was in 1980 - ancient history.) It was great to hear from you again; and, having previously heard of your health problems, it is even better to hear of your progress on the health front.

#16 was an interesting issue, graphically pleasing, very well written, but somewhat hard to comment on. Too many of your contributors "in a better place" but I'm afraid that's something we'll be facing much more of in the next few years.

Yes, that better place is where we all arrive, eventually. As I turn 73 in early April, I admit to sometimes having thoughts about mortality. But I soon dismiss such thoughts as I do not have time for them, being busier in my so-called retirement than I usually was when working full time.

The only time I encounter D Gary Grady is at MIDWESTCON (which I've been forced to miss the last two years so it's been a while since we a face-to-beard chat) and he's usually somewhat serious but then he'll do something like his reprint here and I remember what an off-the-wall sense of humour he has. A good way to start a fannish zine.

One of the reasons I mine the fannish e-lists is that there is often some very fine material there, articles and such-like which I feel deserve wider distribution. But, as Milt Stevens proves, not all good fan-writers have moved to the web.

rich brown and I didn't cross paths very often (we moved in very different fannish circles) but I've always admired his contributions to fanzines and the reprint here is no exception. He'll definitely be deeply missed.

Several of my old friends here too. Peter Weston (who once asked a Worldcon room of maybe a thousand people "Mike Glicksohn are you here? Are you still wearing your dress?" It was a caftan by the way) and Graham Charnock whose fanzines I used to loc thirty years ago and probably the only other loc from North America would have been from Rich Coad and by golly, here he is too and it's been decades since I had any information as to his whereabouts, NO AWARD, The Fanzine Of Timebinding!

As will be the upcoming Corflu in Las Vegas near the end of April as Peter Weston, Graham Charnock, Rich Coad, and a whole bunch of other wonderful people will be there. I wish you would be in attendance as I hope that this issue of NO AWARD will be handed out there.

Eric Mayer's telephone tale brings to mind when I was married to Susan Wood in the early 70s. Our phone number was one digit removed (in the last digit) from the emergency number for the Canadian Automobile Association. But much worse than that, if you called Information and asked for the CAA number, the operator gave you OUR number. We tried for months to have that changed without success so we were frequently interrupted with calls for a tow-truck. Like Eric, I eventually succumbed to the temptation to say "Just wait where you are in this blizzard and we'll be there soon."

Well, send me #17 in a year or two and I'll try to do a better reply (by then I should have the rust shaken off.)

Hey, Mike, the rust was off with this loc, and rereading it as I put parts of it into the zine brings back all sorts of Timebinding memories. Take care of yourself Old Friend!

ERIC MEYER: I really enjoyed this issue of No Award. My LoC might not reflect that. I'm afraid I have lost the stamina to comment on everything in an issue, or even on everything I enjoy. What happens, these days, when I'm confronted by a zine with too much good material I find myself unable to approach the task of commenting adequately and so I put it off, and put it off and finally, the next issue appears and that's that.

That is better than what I do, I am afraid. I start in reading a zine, then here comes an-

other zine, then a few hundred e-mail postings mostly from e-lists; then, before I know it, I have not gotten back to the first zine, it is time to create my weekly zine for APA-L, and I never get any locs written or sent. Well, not always, but I used to loc just about every zine which crawled into my mailbox. *sigh*

So I will make a general comment, that I liked the idea of drawing the contents from a variety of sources.

I suspect that most of the best fanwriting these days appears on lists and I'm not surprised. The memberships are larger than the mailing lists for most fanzines used to be and reaction is virtually instantaneous. Although the zines at eFanzines could, theoretically, attract massive readerships, in fact most seem to get less readers, and many less LoCs, than traditional paper zines used to.

I have two responses to this, Eric. Obviously, my material is drawn both from those who prefer the paper medium to the e-lists (such as Milt Stevens in this issue) and the e-lists (as exemplified by the other articles). However, I feel that I must correct a misconception you present about the e-lists. The fannish e-lists which I infest (and from which I have copied some gems) are far from having larger memberships than most fanzine mailing lists. Inthebar has fewer than 60 members even though it is currently generating between 200 and 300 e-mail postings a day. All of the other e-lists are mostly quiescent right now but they sometimes get quite active. The Trufen e-





list probably has fewer than 150 members.

I've never been attracted to lists, however. They are just too overwhelming for me. I look in on Trufen but there's no way I can keep up with the discussions let alone contribute. And it isn't just the sheer volume that's a problem, with lists, you have to be ready to respond at the drop of a propeller beanie, exactly when the discussions are going on. You can't put off commenting for a week, or even a day (or months) as you can with fanzines.

Well, you can put off commenting for a week or longer on e-lists. The problem with the delay in your response is that the conversation has gone off on so many tangents that nobody remembers what the discussion was about several days ago.

Then too, zines, even those archived at eFanzines.com seem more substantial. I suppose that's really just my own misperception. It'd probably be easier to ferret out an old posting from the Trufen archive than an article from an old zine at eFanzines.com. Still, list postings seem to me to be buried, which is one reason why an issue devoted to postings and blog entries and the like strikes me as a great idea.

The drawback to this is that great conversations are an absolute headache to recreate in a fanzine, given as how one has to collect lots of separate postings to do this. I much prefer to copy an e-mail posting which is great and complete in itself, mostly leaving out the resulting conversations which often are the result of its posting.

Which would leave out John DeChancie's APA piece. I have nothing to say about it except it is a classic. It has a wonderful logical absurdity about it.

Nowadays, APAs are the venues which have the smallest audience in fandom. Not that there is not any good stuff in APAs - and I have drawn material from both APA-L and LASFAPA and put these gems into NO AWARD.

I pretty much agree with rich brown's comments on the inferiority of media sf to written sf. Over the years I've been amazed how the movies have resolutely refused to draw on even the best store of pre-sixties sf classics. No idea why that is.

You have just written it best and I have nothing to add to what you wrote.

CHRIS GARCIA: You use a term that I've been trying to popularize for more than a decade. Edress is a perfect word that we should all use in regular conversation and in every zine. I must comment on it every time I see it in a zine...which so far is once.

I did not make up "edress" but I agree with you that it is the perfect word for its use. Now, hold on to that agreement because I am going to tear you to teeny, tiny, bits later on in this loc. You have been warned ...

It's a very good concept to reprint listposts. I've done that a couple of times in various zines I do, but putting a full ish together with them is an interesting way to go.

Well, I hate to say it, but ... Nowadays, there appears to be more fine material being posted on e-lists than being sent to fanzines. Maybe it is just that I am asking the wrong people. But I must mention that even the fine material posted on e-lists need at least a little editing and there is not one e-list posting I have re-pubbed in NO AWARD which has not had at least a little editing performed on it.

I like D Gary Grady's article. It reads like a fanzine article as opposed to a post to a list.

Er, uh ... not all e-list postings are commentary, some are original material, and most of the e-list articles I have used in NO AWARD are original material. Once in a while, though, a comment thread does inspire an e-list article.

Another rich brown article to remind how much I'm gonna miss those brilliant thoughts he'd drop. He brings up a lot of interesting points, but there's always a think that bothers me. I love the WorldCon as Massive sampler, but I'm young and I can't remember a time when SF wasn't mainstream more or less. Personally, I disagree with Ted's comment that seemed to have brought about the article itself. I think the best written media SF is better than all but the best written SF. I'm talking Blade Runner-V for Vendetta level stuff and not the mass of media SF.

Okay, youngster, now you have put your foot in it. As I am a person of vastly more reading experience - well, I have had more decades than you in which to perform reading - I will state that the label on a bottle of ketchup is more interesting than all of that visual crap you see on the silver screen.

Now, that piece of wisdom disposed of, let us move on to "best written media SF is better than all but the best written SF." And then go on to mention "Blade Runner-V for Vendetta level stuff and not the mass of media SF." Huh? You think there are quality levels in crap? Listen, ye of relatively little experience (but who is doing great things zinewise and will eventually forget the foolishness of youth) material written for mediums which have presentation restrictions ... because certain things Just Cannot Be Portrayed in that medium because of technical difficulties ... mean that the authors will often come to points where they think, "Gee, I wish that I could write this here but I know that it is not possible to be shown..." and then The Committee Which Puts On This Movie/television show changes everything, anyway.

I've been told that I should be on inthebar for a while now. Rich Coad lives less than an hour away from me, I've never met him and he's always writing really good stuff. And Graham Charnock is a long time fave. My Dad really liked his writing and when I came across some of his recent stuff in the months before my Pops passed, he was very happy to see him still writing.

At 200-300 e-mail postings a day, usually, Inthebar is currently the most active e-list. Being on that e-list is wonderful - and sev-

eral of the Baristas from England will be in attendance at Corflu this year - but becoming a member of that list means Giving Up Your Life. On that list One Participates.

JOHN PURCELL: I am really glad that you reprinted so many wonderful articles from various listserves and APA-L (John DeChancie's article). You are so right in noting that there's a wealth of material out there on the Internet and that it would take a good deal of hunting to track some of it down. By selecting these articles, you are providing a great service; the contributions herein are excellent, and a shining example of the diversity of interests that fen possess. Are you going to do this again? I sure hope so. Having an outlet like this helps guys like me who don't have the time to surf the web in search of fannish material. Carry on, Marty.

I, too, do not have the time to search the web, looking for good, fannish material. This is one of the reason's I belong to many fannish e-lists, the material comes to me. I do not pretend that each and every posting contains written gems, and there is the problem of other faneds getting to some of the gems before me. Still, as one can see, I can still find (and print) some fine fannish writing from the net. And, also, some material which first appeared on paper.

It is so hard to pick out my favorite selection in this issue, there are so many good ones. "History of the Fannish World" had me chuckling, Curt Phillips' arkle was hugely amusing, and I really can't say enough about rich brown's article. This last one is a shining example of why rich was so respected in fandom. There is probably little argument that media skiffy has taken over our little subculture, leaving Core Fandom to become a subset of the fandom that it originally started all those years ago. Sci Fi channel is also a part of the problem, what with its insistence on running gawdawful and marginally-scientifictional programming. Maybe someday reading sf will come around again, but don't hold your breath on that one.

I am not holding my breath even though the words I am tying are blue. I fear that the preeminence of books and magazines in science fiction is over. Still, there are enough of us left here in Core Fandom who can produce the occasional fanzine and get together in small cons every now and then,

so things are not totally bleak. I guess I will consider myself happy that there are enough Core Fandomites around that I can bitch and moan about the parlous state of fandom and have not only an outlet where my words can be read but also people out there who understand my bitching and moaning - and there might even be one or two who agree with me!

Ah, me. Good stuff throughout. A highly enjoyable zine, and I hope you produce another one soon. It's great to see you still pubbing after all these years.

I am very thankful for computers and the stuff related to them for bringing me back to pubbing. Most of my zining is in APA-L and LASFAPA, but I am still not too tired to produce the occasional NO AWARD.

Now to another loccer, another topic. This actually comes from the Wegenheim e-list, the one run by Greg Pickersgill. Rich Coad responds to a posting of mine, so here is the relevant part of my posting, followed by Rich's posting, ending with my comment on what Rich wrote:

Marty Cantor wrote: That about which I have been objecting is Greg's seeming insistence that to be a fan one has to have an interest in reading about science fiction. I find reading about science fiction to be boring. I much prefer to read sf, not read about it. I continue to read SF because I enjoy the genre, but I do not read about SF because it bores me to do so.

RICH COAD: Not to belabor the point too much, but I just received NO AWARD 16 in the mail on Friday and it contains two excellent articles about science fiction: rich brown's "Sci Fi Fans Dream Like Electric Sheep?" and Pete Weston's "Where Do You Start?" I enjoyed them even if you didn't, Marty.

You really did not hoist me on my own petard. (Actually, my petard is in the shop for repairs.) See, Rich, you actually missed the point of both of these articles. Neither of them were, basically, about science fiction, they were about science fiction readers and science fiction fans. (As an aside, I am saddened that not all sf readers are sf fans but I often toy with the idea that not all sf fans are sf readers; and, by not being readers

[or former readers] they cannot possibly be fans. I am not certain about this.)

But I am certain that these two articles were about fans and how fans relate to science fiction. I am also certain that I enjoyed them.

TERRY JEEVES: Great to hear from you and receive a copy of NO AWARD which although an excellent read, puts me in a cleft stick. I want to send you a long LOC, but in the first place I have a fault on the PC which makes typing difficult but worse I have now got Parkinson's disease and this makes getting to the machine even harder. As a result, I'm dropping out of fandom and hope you will excuse my lack of response.

I am truly sorry to hear of your Parkinson's Disease; however, dropping out of fandom will not be as easy as you think. After all, even if you no longer respond to my fanzine does not mean that I am going to stop sending them to you ...

Never the less I wish you well and thank you for remembering me.

Terry, there is no way I am going to forget you.

MURRAY MOORE: As you know --you was dere-- one of the ribbons distributed during L.A.con IV was a rich brown memorial ribbon. The ribbon announces "Dr.Gafia: The doctor is OUT/rich brown 1942-2006."

In "Do Sci Fans Dream Like Electric Sheep?" rich says that visual SF (tv and movies) has blurred the line between SF and sci-fi for the general public.

Further, the precious bodily fluids of the Worldcon

HENRY L. WELCH: I recall reading a piece a few years ago by Mike Resnick about how he couldn't go to the movies anymore because the premises behind the SF were so poor that he could never get an editor to accept a story of such poor quality.

This comment is highlighted because it expresses a Very Important Point: so-called science fiction movies are CRAP.

have been contaminated, "absorbed and replaced" rich says, by the "World Sci Fi Convention" during which "everything even remotely associated with sf in any form must (for egalitarian purposes) be appealed to, no matter what the expense; where the professionals (actors, directors, producers) who are often comped to show up may deign to talk to us" and so on.

Your readers who were not members of an e-list of which rich also was a member might be surprised to learn that rich was a number 1 fan of that skiffy tv series Buffy the Vampire Slayer; that rich created a library of quotes of Buffy episode dialogue that he used in rotation as email sigs; and that rich would have loved to have attended --he said so-- this year's World Sci Fi Convention because of some of the visual SF programming.

For the record, for any of your readers who got the impression that rich was one of those SF lit fan snobs.

Also for the record I will state that falling head over heels for a television show when there are so many books and fanzines to read; and, with the superb writing talent possessed by rich, his attention to Buffy was just about every sort of waste one can imagine.

JIM CAUGHRAN: Ever feel like you're drowning in paper?

As the fanzines pile up, constantly nagging about the responsibility to loc, things get mixed up, papers lost, bills unpaid, consequent eviction notices under the pile, and so forth. I am a slave to the heaps on my desk.

And so, some of the fanzines I had notes for loccing got lost in the pile. I can't find No Award. It's there. I know it's there, hiding under a banana wing or concealing itself in a Fapa mailing. Malevolent, it resists the loc I promised you. It wants to make me a laughing stock in fandom, someone who takes fanzines and never replies. It's out to get me.

If getting fanzines and never replying to them makes one a laughing stock in fandom, I am afraid that most of us are deaf from hearing all of that laughter.

But I triumph. I ignore it. I laugh at its non-existence, wherever it lies buried. I don't care that

I can't find it. ****I HAVE EFANZINES!****

So, I comment on the electronic version. Actually, electronic fanzines usually get ignored, because they don't leave the paper reminder that I should do something about them. Not that I do something about paper fanzines, more often than not.

But I promised you a loc, and I am an honourable man, so I will deliver a loc.

I don't think I've ever seen a picture of an elderly Rotsler. I last saw him maybe 1963, at a Bay Area westercon. He didn't look very different from the picture on your cover, except for the facial expression. Rotsler always wore a smug smile, knowing that women would queue up outside his bedroom and men would forever be his allies. The picture is a little older than Rotsler 1963, but not a lot.

David Gerrold took the picture? David Gerrold didn't exist in the same universe as Rotsler and me; he came to the scene much later. So the picture must be much later, by curious logic. Maybe Rotsler simply didn't age, like Bob Silverberg or Dorian Gray.

Unfortunately, it was only Rotsler's exterior which did not appreciably age, and he proved as unfortunately mortal as the rest of us.

aside: N/A is harder to read online because it isn't formatted for online. If we're going to publish electronic fanzines, we're going to have to figure out some kind of kindly format for them.

NO AWARD is designed to be read on paper. The on-line version is there to be downloaded onto paper. If one wants to read it on-line, fine, but I see no reason why I should spend even one second making any adjustments to the format as I feel that the prospective reader of the zine should immediately print it out and then carry it around with him or herself so that all free moments can be spent reading it.

Coad again flies off into the imagination. Maybe online groups are good for flights of fancy, training grounds for creativity, places where sensawonder still matters. Then again, you've selected from the 1% (Sturgeon-squared applies to popular media); it takes a lot of patience to find the 1%. (This is praise for N/A.) Fanzines aspire to Sturgeon's 10%, but it's easier to ignore the 99% of online postings. I di-



gress.

JAE LESLIE ADAMS:

Well Marty, I'm glad you're still making the effort to produce a fanzine as physical artifact, not to mention the thoughtful attention to detail you describe regarding e-fanzine design (i.e. in sections of a size easy to download by those whose tech is not quite up to the last

twenty minutes). Anyway, I'm so glad I thought I'd send you my best support and encouragement.

I thank you for your kind words. As long as there are those who like to read fanzines as physical artifacts (as you so neatly put it) and I enjoy putting them out - and my new HP 4700dn colour laser printer continues to function - I fully intend to produce paper fanzines (which I will put on-line so that others can download and print them too.

JOHN NIELSEN HALL: Call me a latecomer, many do, but I downloaded your sixteenth issue from e-fanzines.com. Don't be offended if I say I was surprised at how good a read it was. When I read your editorial, I was a bit skeptical about the upcoming courses of reprints from e-lists, but you done good, and they were all very readable even the ones from InTheBar which I had read before.

This was my first, full-scale attempt at filling a fanzine with reprints from e-lists, and one of my concerns was how reprints from given e-lists would go over with list members who had read them before. The result seems to be that I need not have worried.

I laughed at Curt Phillips (he wasn't that funny when he was on InTheBar) , I always laugh at Graham Charnock, especially when he's serious, and I have issues to take up with the late rich brown and Peter Weston.

If rich brown reads this in his next incarnation he likely won't remember what he wrote (be a while afore he can read again, too), so let me ask you: Have you never read any utterly rubbish SF? Of

course you have- and very likely so did the producers writers and directors of utterly rubbish Film and TV SF. They should be forgiven for thinking that that utterly rubbish stuff what was what they had to turn out. It needs writers of real talent and power to turn out really top quality SF as a short story or novel, and then you need people of a matching talent to turn the same thing into a film, or produce something even approaching it. The odds are against that happening very often. So if we do make allowances for media SF, then that is why we should.

I make no allowances for the media stuff which pretends to be SF (and I do not consider SF to be anything but words on paper, a position I have maintained for more decades than most people reading this have known how to read. Well, maybe ...)

In the visual media, maybe hundreds of people will labour to bring a single project to the screen, so that an audience can walk in and sit there goggle eyed and popcorn mouthed with the whole thing given to them on a plate. When we read, imagination has to do the work of all those people and its hard work, sometimes. That's why a lot of people who cram your local multiplex to see a Star Wars movie have never actually read any Science Fiction. Its too difficult for them. So many fans want films and TV to be as challenging as the books they read, but that's because they have over developed their imaginations, like Arnold Schwarzenegger over developed his body in his youth. There is no money in making Films and TV for those with over developed imaginations. Can you imagine , for instance, how you could make a film of one of Iain M Banks's "Culture" novels , where intelligent space ships composed of force fields bigger than whole planets are characters in their own right? How do you think that's going to go down with the popcorn? We are fans, our imaginations are strong and powerful and we can make these mighty leaps. We should not expect everyone to be able to do the same. Better to accept that or else settle for something mundane, like politics - well, Arnie's doing okay isn't he?

Now that is a slightly different way of stating something I have long maintained.

Id like to make a similar point to Father Peter Weston, of the parish of Morris Minor. Much as I have enjoyed reading Hal Clement, I cant say that Mission of Gravity would ever be among my favourite

works of skiffy, still less some of H Beam Pipers' literary gems.

I consider Mission of Gravity to be one of the best-ever science fiction novels.

I understand both sides of the argument that day in Birmingham Library. Pure science makes for dull SF, in my opinion, and I don't see why people should be berated for thinking that maybe alien science might be different. Didn't Arthur C Clarke say somewhere that any technology sufficiently advanced would be indistinguishable from magic to a lesser technologied cultures point of view? Sure a periodic table may very well be the same everywhere, but would every culture make sense of the universe via such means as periodic tables? I think not, m'lud. I think you have to let people make their own minds up, not have a go at them for only getting a D in Chemistry. Peter is a fan. He thinks and reads like a fan. The general reader does not. Fans



can read the works of Hal Clement and Jack Vance, and allow both writers to take them where they will.. Most people would be defeated by either one. Father, forgive them.

We Also Heard From

BEN INDICK, who originally sent an e-mail posting to a typo of my previous edress - so now he has an opportunity to typo a new edress. **JOHN BERRY**, who thanked me for NA #16, especially liking "Graham Charnock's extremely humorous article," and mentioned his (at that time) upcoming hundredth fannish publication, **AGENT PROVOCATIVE**. **E.B. FROHVET**, who had written off **NO AWARD** as deceased - and who will have to go through the same exercise again when he see this issue. **RODNEY LEIGHTON**, who again writes that he is ceasing to respond to fanzines. The irony is getting a bit rusty, Rodney. **DAVID RUSSELL**, who claims that he does not draw with his feet (nor with his feat, either, I hasten to add - or, maybe, even subtract). **JACK CALVERT**, who saw a mention of NA #16 in the fmzfen e-list, found the zine at www.efanzines.com, and agreed that reprinting e-list items in paper zines is a good idea. **LLOYD PENNEY**, who enjoyed the articles from the e-lists he is not infesting. **BRAD FOSTER**, who bemoaned **NO AWARD** having two issues in a row without his artwork in them; and, as I have some of his illos on hand, I shall have to see about changing that situation (but not by making it three issues in a row with no Brad Foster artwork). **NED BROOKS**, who mentions D Gary Grady's ending on the bottom of page four without a period, to which I reply that D Gary is not female so did not have a period to put there. **TED WHITE**, who mentions me starting a parenthetical phrase and not closing it, an unfortunate grammatical problem I have. **JIM CAUGHRAN**, who muses about creating a macro to cure this problem, with me also musing that he should also create a micro to use on very small font sizes. **SALLY SYRJALA**, who muses about again becoming an actfan but whom I will warn that this will cause falling armpits and Twonk's Disease.

