



UNDER THE OZONE HOLE VIII
July 20, 1994 -- 25th Anniversary of Apollo XI

STEPHANIE
JOHANSON

UNDER THE OZONE HOLE

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Karl Johanson
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(So there, nyah.)*

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Send us your club news and info, fan news, convention news & reports, reviews, cartoons, fillos, addresses etc. If we publish something you send us, we can't pay you, but you'll get something better than money: **mega supreme egoboo**.

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Didja hear about the guy who got kicked out of the
Legion Hall?
He had his thinking cap on!

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and The Unknown Fan.

Art

All art by Stephanie Ann Johanson, except:
Barb McLean: 3, 4, 8 & 25.

About The Cover

Dwight Lockhart sticks Robert's head on the entire-- oops,
sorry, sorry, that's *next* issue's cover!
This issue, we celebrate the 25th Anniversary of the *Apollo 11*
lunar landing. Stephanie Ann Johanson depicts a famous
astronaut on the surface of the moon.

An Editor's Opinion

by John Willcox Herbert

Some would say, "Confession is good for the soul." And while this confession isn't of the kind that's likely to get me excommunicated, it is something I am loath to admit: I don't remember watching the moon landing. Now, Mom says I did watch it: we had just come back from our cottage, and it was late at night, so I was probably tired (we were living in Montréal so the actual moon walk was around 11:30 at night, or something like that, well past a six-year-old's bedtime), but Mom says I stayed up and watched it all. Dad's like me — he doesn't remember it either.

Not all the space program is lost in history's haze. I remember other moonwalks. I remember the splashdowns (and the agonizing few moments of radio silence that preceded them). I remember phone calls from something called the Oval Office (my introduction to Tricky Dick). I remember worrying about *Apollo 13*. I remember the lunar rover. I remember the night launch of *Apollo 17* that gloriously lit up the night sky like a sun (even on a ten-inch b&w). I remember the three Cosmonauts who died on re-entry. I remember the launch of *Skylab* and the fear that it would never be made liveable. (I also remember the fall of *Skylab* — look out below!) I remember *Apollo-Soyuz*, and Deke Slayton, the last of the Original Seven to get into space. I remember *Mariner*, *Viking*, *Hubble* and *Voyager*. I fondly remember *Enterprise*. I was planning to skip school to watch the first launch of *Columbia*. It's a shame it got postponed; I ended up late to classes instead. I remember *Discovery*, *Atlantis* and *Endeavour*. I can't forget *Challenger*. *Mir* is easy to

forget about, because it's *always* there, like a piece of furniture.

But can I remember the Neil and Buzz show? Nooooo!

Above my desk are two posters; one is *Challenger* taking off, and the other is the full disk of the earth as photographed by the astronauts of *Apollo 17*. I've had occasion through the years to try and explain to people why going to space is worth it, despite the sometimes horrific cost, in lives as well as money. The very fact that I'm typing right now on a computer which is a zillion times as powerful as those which took humans to the moon is testament to the legacy of the space program. Sure, cheap computers would have come one day, but would they have come as fast without the impetus of going to the moon? This is but one small (and probably bad) example of the spin-off benefits.

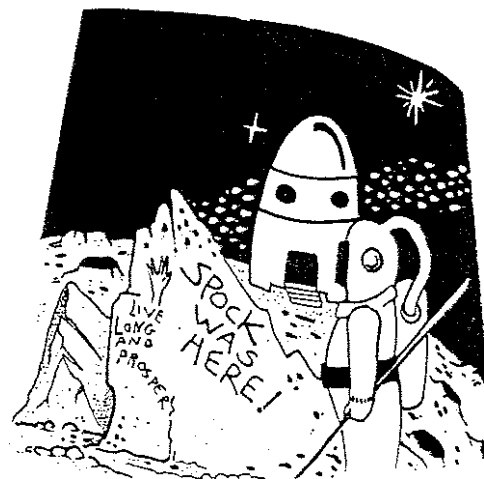
(A brief digression: I just watched a video on *Apollo 13* and seeing all those guys working the computers *and changing the tape reels* reminds me of Spock commenting, when trapped in the 1930s, that he would have to use "stone knives and bearskins" to fix his futuristic tricorder. Already, *Apollo* has nearly become as quaint as a Buster Crabbe serial.)

The poster of *Challenger* represents the trials, and the glories, of going into space, but the poster of Earth represents the *why*. The poster is that clichéd shot — you've all seen it: a blue disk, swirls of white, milky clouds, Antarctica at the bottom and Africa near the top, and to the left. The first thing you notice is what isn't there: red borders drawn everywhere. Nature

doesn't recognize them. What you see is a small blue globe. Home. And home is surrounded by a whole lotta nothing. If we mess up here, we can't just pack up and go to the next neighbourhood. We're not ready yet. But we have to learn how to be.

Next time you see that clichéd shot of the earth, don't just look at it, *look at it*. That's our home. We live there. That knowledge is the most important legacy of *Apollo*.

A recent episode of *Babylon 5* summed it up very nicely. If I may paraphrase: It may be a hundred years, or a thousand years, or a million years. Eventually our sun will grow cold and die. When that happens, it won't just take us, it will take Marilyn Monroe. And Einstein. And Buddy Holly. And Aristophanes, Bobby Orr, Stephen Hawking, Oreo Ice Cream, William Shakespeare, Mahatma Gandhi, The Beatles, Archbishop Desmond Tutu, Beethoven, Mickey Mouse, mood rings, Norman Bethune and Burmese kitty cats. All of us. All of this was for nothing *unless we go to the stars....*



"We came all this way to explore the Moon, but the most important thing we discovered was the Earth."

-- William Anders, *Apollo VIII*

Another Editor's Opinion

by Karl Johanson

Well, you've had a free ride long enough. It's time -- past time, actually -- that I write something in my editorial about work. To be fair, I won't talk about privatization (for one thing, our printing budget wouldn't handle it). Instead I'll mention a few of the more amusing events of the last eight years.

I make signs. Lots of signs. @\$% loads of signs. As a matter of fact every sign you spot on the B.C. highways (except for stuff like "slightly used car 4 sale") is supposed to be made by us. This makes me a bundle of laughs to drive around B.C. with: "Hey you guys, ya see that sign? We made that sign. Neat, huh?" On the way back from Context 91 Stephanie & Laura began pummeling me after my twentieth "Hey, we made that." (In this case it was on the ferry to Vancouver Island and we had made the Plexiglas front for a pop machine.) So, you ask, in a job where getting an order for "Abbey Road" or "Penny Lane" can be the highlight of the week, what events are worthy for publication in these humble pages?

A few months ago while Brian & I were trying to get a decent photocopy of Cecil's dog's bum, a customer came in through the door. Actually he didn't come in, he just sort of opened the door a crack, stuck his head in and looked around. As he started to back away I asked, "Can I help you?"

"You guys don't sell signs, do you?" he asked meekly, and started to back out of the door. He looked as if he thought I'd bite his head off just for asking. Is there something about me that's intimidating or are some people just afraid of sign shops? I held off answering with my usual, "Well, we do, but we're right out at the moment." Anyway, he finally told one of our sales people what signs he wanted. Then he added, "Oh, is it okay if I buy a 'construction ahead' as well?" I don't know. A customer who asks permission to buy your product; it doesn't get any better than that.

We received a fax from Courtenay

showing a picture of a stop sign labelled "Beeautiful British Columbia". The stop sign was covered in bees, completely covered. We were at a loss as to why bees would swarm onto our product & wondered if it weren't that that high intensity retro-reflective sheeting has a neat honeycomb pattern on it. Then the highway maintenance contractor who sent us the fax phoned us & told us that the bees had eaten all of the red of the stop sign. We all stood in stunned silence as our foreman relayed this story to us. "What? The @\$%ing bees ate the @\$%ing ink off the sign?" We were too flabbergasted to laugh. As I was wondering whether or not our seven year warranty included damage by marauding insects, the foreman finally broke the long silence with, "Yeah, this is even weirder than the porcupine story." There was another long pause.

"What porcupine story!?" I finally asked. My mind hadn't been in this state since the first time I saw the water melon scene in Buckaroo Banzai.

It turns out that in the B.C. interior, porcupines will climb up sign posts and eat the plywood road signs we make. Now if I were a porcupine living in a forest full of trees and I happened to feel like munching out on some wood, I really don't think a sign would be my first choice. I mean, what happened here? Were a bunch of porcupines just sitting around one day when one of them said, "Ya know, I'm really sick of wood-flavoured wood every day. Whaddaya say we walk out onto the side of the highway, climb up a six by six post and get us some paint, reflective sheeting & formaldehyde glue-flavoured wood?"

What a great concept for a story this is. Someone genetically engineers a life form, not to benefit mankind but to destroy a product that they have the exclusive rights to replace. Who'd suspect them? And by the way, the rumours about us breeding bees & porcupines at the shop are grossly exaggerated.

I thought I'd end the editorial there and save the stories of the other two other amusing things that have happened over the last eight years, but two weird things happened today. First, a guy phones up and orders two street names. Then he says, "And I need a stop sign, it's going to face east." Our salesman told him we could supply him with a sign & asked him why he mentioned that it would face east. The customer's voice took on an annoyed tone and he said, "If I get the wrong one it'll be upside down." Our man explained to him that that wouldn't be a problem. The customer then turned on his best 'I do so know what the @\$% I'm talking about voice' and said, "Well, I've had trouble with this before." So, if you're ever in B.C. and you see an upside-down stop sign you know it's because we accidentally sold someone a west facing stop sign by mistake.

Second, a man came in & asked to buy some magnetic sheeting. I snagged him a fiver's worth as he told me he was going to do an experiment. Some sort of hand painted experimental sign I figured. After paying for the material he told me, "Yep, what some people do is they make a pad out of this magnetic stuff." He held the sheeting over his thigh. "You do this for cancer. Now that it's been published the doctors are trying to ban it. They're just jealous of any treatments they didn't invent." I didn't know what to say. And I still don't.



"We came in peace for all mankind."

-- Neil Armstrong, *Apollo XI*

DISPELLING THE MYTHS OF THE SCIENCE FICTION FAN

by The Unknown Fan

{{Editors' Note:

The following is a report prepared for a sociology course. All names, including that of the author, have been changed.}}

"They are geeks."

"They play with computers all the time."

"They have no personal hygiene or girlfriends."

"They're all men, and young."

"They're focused on tv, not reality."

These are the responses of upper level university students to the questions, "What is your opinion of Star Trek fans? What are they like?" The stereotypical responses and comments are part of what drives the following study. It attempts to address the question: What are Star Trek fans really like? I gained an interest in this topic for three reasons: first, I was interested in science fiction generally and Star Trek specifically. Then, I met a Star Trek fan, and I became curious about what these people were really like, because I had stereotypical views similar to those expressed above. Finally, in a broader sense, I was interested in how stereotypical views in general reflect reality.

METHODS

The research took place over a period of ten weeks in the fall and winter of 1993. Three different Star Trek or science fiction fan clubs were studied, and a variety of weekly and special events attended. The research was conducted using several methods. The major method was participant observation, both covert and overt. The overt P.O. was done with the first Star Trek club I studied. This was the group which contained my gatekeeper. Because of the closed nature of this group (they were basically some friends who got together) they had to know about my research, or they would have questioned my presence. Also, I decided that I needed a reference group for information if I was going to study the other groups. I took on the role of observer as participant. For their help, I agreed to write an article in their fan magazine (fanzine, or zine). In both the *Pseudonym* Star Trek club and the University Science Fiction Club, I used covert P.O. Both of these groups were more open (and larger) than the first, therefore it was far easier to gain access. For the *Pseudonym*, access was gained through my gatekeeper who used to belong to the U.S.S.

Pseudonym. She gave me contacts, and with a little name-dropping I was able to get in. The University club was easy to enter because they had a newspaper advertisement requesting members. I simply went to their meetings. In both instances I took on the role of "convert." I acted as if I was keenly interested in the club and participated fully in all activities. In all instances of P.O. note taking took place after the fact. This was done to facilitate natural conversation in the first group, and so as not to "blow my cover" in the other groups. Content analysis was used to supplement my information. A book describing ideal types of fans was one of my guides to orient my thinking, and to learn about the annual events (conferences, or "cons") held for Star Trek and science fiction fans. Numerous zines were used to get an idea of the form of discourse between groups and the subjects discussed. An orienting interview with my gatekeeper/informant was used to gain an idea of where to begin the study and what was out there.

DATA

There are a surprising number and diversity of people involved in science fiction fandom. There are somewhat more males than females, and the vast majority of them are in their twenties and early thirties. Most are employed, in a variety of work settings, mostly in the service sector. They are usually lower middle to middle class. Many live in apartments, a few in houses, and a few with parents. Most are unmarried, and almost none have children. If they are married, often spouses are participants in the groups. In terms of appearance, science fiction fans are virtually indistinguishable from others in the wider population. Styles are often diverse, yet there are patterns. Women and men tend to wear casual clothing, e.g. jeans and T-shirts, or dress shirts. There are no distinguishing symbols on the clothing. Women are conventional in appearance in terms of their hairstyles, makeup, jewellery, the way they wear their clothes and personal hygiene. The main distinguishing feature of the men is that they tend to wear beards more than others in the wider population. Both men and women have a wide range of body types and athletic ability.

The clubs ranged widely in membership, yet were similar in level of structure

and formality. The membership ranged between four and more than forty. The smaller clubs had no formal hierarchy. The larger had some formal structure which seemed to be subsumed by an informal hierarchy. Intake of new members was also not a formal process. Although the numbers of people varied widely in each club, the demographic and physical characteristics of members stayed close to those described above. There was a formal hierarchy in the largest group studied. It consisted of the "bridge crew" and "officers" of a "starship," including Captain, First Officer, and so on, for eight people. The rest of the group were equals in the terms of the formal hierarchy. In the large group the hierarchy was only loosely in place and rarely discussed. All groups (except the group of four) had an informal hierarchy. This informal hierarchy actually subsumed the formal structure in the largest group. It also served as a means of social control. New members did not have to go through any special rituals for entering any of the groups. But they were the lowest in rank in terms of the informal hierarchy, and were expected to defer to the high status members of the group. The formal hierarchy in the large group seemed to have little bearing on how new members were to act.

The clubs met in a variety of both private and public settings. In all settings observed in this study the people appear as described above. The one exception is the "con," or conference. Every year, there are many such events where science fiction fans gather to meet each other, discuss their zines and the latest science fiction news, see the latest technology, participate in role-playing games and dress in costume. The cons are beyond the scope of this study, which will focus on settings of local groups which meet on a regular basis.

The private settings consisted entirely of living rooms in people's homes. They were selected as a regular meeting place by the first, most closely knit group studied. They were also selected for occasional gatherings of select members of the more open, public groups studied. These rooms were set up to convey informality and relaxation as most living rooms are. The structure and colouring of the rooms themselves were similar to those in many middle-class homes. The furnishings were also quite conventional: entertainment centre, plush couches and armchairs, coffee-table,

a small bookshelf, perhaps a fireplace. A distinguishing feature of these settings was the entertainment centres which were large and expensive. Furnishings were arranged to facilitate conversation and a view of the television. Pictures depicting country scenes, flowers, lakes, and rivers hung on the walls. Decorations consisted of antiques, knick knacks, plants and photographs of friends and family. The single element of science fiction in each living room was that instead of magazines like *People* or *Time* on the coffee table, there were a variety of fanzines.

Public settings consisted of restaurants, pubs and classrooms. Like the private settings they had a relaxed, informal atmosphere, and it was easy for me as a new member to enter the group without feeling intimidated and it was possible to bring companions without problems. The restaurants and pubs served food and drink which was in the middle price range. They were well lit and clean. These meeting places were usually quiet establishments, with light rock and roll music in the background. The clientele seemed to be quite similar to the fans in appearance and socio-economic status. Fans usually grouped around a series of tables. If the group were large enough tables would be moved together to include everyone and facilitate conversation. Not all fans would be there at all times, as there were no set arrival or departure times, and often small groups would leave to play darts or pool.

The classroom setting was more formal. There were set arrival times, and the door was closed after those times. The settings were more stark, with fluorescent lighting, blackboards, white walls, and a large meeting table in the centre. All the fans would cluster around one end of the table; there is no lecturer, no one at the "head" of the table, and all members appear equal. Everyone who will be there arrives on time. There is no music and no food. Most people bring things they have written or books they have read to talk about.

Aside from having a time and place, the meetings, like the settings and structures of the groups, were not formally organized. In all cases the meeting places were set specifically, though these could vary from meeting to meeting. All meetings took place in the evening. In all but one case arrival times were set specifically, yet not adhered to; a person could arrive or leave the meeting without sanction. There were no set agendas for the meetings, yet there was a pattern. First, fans ate together, and discussed science fiction related topics. Either before or after the meal, a movie or

TV program was watched. After the dinner, and the program, a discussion was held about what was just watched. After the discussion has worn out, topics may change, and the meeting slowly breaks up as people decide to go home. All of these events are included in most meetings, but they may come in different sequences.

Conversation is the most striking feature of fans. Both the subject of conversation and the language used are important. The conversations tend to focus on fictional stories. These dialogues are not necessarily *Star Trek* related. They may be about cartoons, such as Bugs Bunny; films, like *Robin Hood: Prince of Thieves* or *The Road Warrior*; or books, like *The Sword of Shannarah*. They also discuss related aspects, including authors, film making, actors, upcoming films, and (a favourite topic) special effects. In some circles, zines are discussed (e.g. zine production, contents of other zines). Science fiction fans have their own terminology. They take existing words and give them new meanings, such as the word "mundane." They call people who are not interested in science fiction or who do not participate in science fiction clubs "mundanes" because they lead boring lives. They also combine words to form new words; for example, "femme fan" is a female fan; "fan magazine" becomes "fanzine" or "zine"; or "convention" becomes "con." They also create new words, for example, a new fan is a "neo."

ANALYSIS

There are a number of things which a person must be aware of to pass convincingly as a science fiction fan. There are several characteristics which a fan should have. A fan shouldn't be more than thirty years old, nor have children, though one may be married. One should be of middle or lower middle class standing. Fans do not get dressed in costumes for meetings, but wear simple clothing such as T-shirt and jeans. They do not wear any special make-up, pins or accessories to identify themselves. It is also helpful to know something about clubs and meetings which take place. Fan clubs are very informal, there are no entry tests, and anyone may join. There is no formal structure to which members are obviously obliged to submit, although there are formal structures which exert control over new members. Meetings take place in the evening, and most setting are public so it is easy to gain access and feel at ease. Although fans are very open to new members, it is helpful to be able to 'drop names' of fans you know to facilitate acceptance. Until one is accepted by the group, or at

least knows a few of them, there will be no involvement with private settings. These settings do not differ in formality from the public settings, they are simply harder to gain access to because they are in private homes. The public settings usually consist of modestly priced restaurants and pubs. Meetings are not formally organized but there is a common pattern. Usually a meal is eaten, either purchased at the restaurant, or made by the host(ess) in a private home. Over dinner, the topics of conversation range from movies to financial matters. Next, a movie is watched, either on video or in the theatre. After that a discussion of the movie develops. Finally things wrap up late in the evening. To participate fully in these meetings, and to gain acceptance, one needs to have a good working knowledge of science fiction (both movies and books) and the film industry, including actors, writers, directors and special effects technology. One also needs to gain a grasp of the language used. Words such as "neo" and "mundane" are used in common discourse, and must be understood by all members. Because these words are unique to the science fiction fan, the only way to learn them is to participate in their conversation and ask questions.

New members are socialized through an informal reward/penalty system. New fans are expected to copy other members of the group in dress, knowledge and, most importantly, opinion. If they do, new members are rewarded with cordial acceptance and a chance to participate fully in group activities. Fans are surprisingly open about what people wear, and how they look. There are only sanctions for those who are showing off, with a flashy costume or dress. Usually, these people will be made fun of. Those who look 'normal' will not be sanctioned, nor will people who dress differently because they don't know how to dress another way - for example, a person who wears his coat done up to the neck, indoors. Fans are also open about the level of knowledge of new members; it is assumed that they have some knowledge of science fiction, yet a comprehensive knowledge is not necessary. New fans are encouraged to learn about fandom through reading the zines (especially the club zine), and participation in meetings. If fans don't learn about science fiction they are left out of the conversations and many in-jokes for lack of information. This is the most subtle form of social control in fan clubs. Fans are less open to different attitudes and opinions than to variations in appearance or level of knowledge. For example: in a case of blatant deviance, when a new member speaks

out against the informal leader (as opposed to the person at the top of the formal hierarchy), even if in defence of another member, his or her comments will be ignored by the group, including the one defended, on the cue of that leader. More mild deviant opinions expressed to an individual member (including those in the formal hierarchy) of the group which run against group ideals, will be met with a degree of anger and resentment from the fan towards the new fan. Sometimes the comments of the new fan may simply be ignored when they go against popular opinion.

CONCLUSIONS

This study has fulfilled its purpose. It answered the question: What are *Star Trek*

fans really like? In fact, it did more. It also described what their clubs, meetings, and meeting places are like. It has served to dispel the myths about *Star Trek* and science fiction fans. It proves that, at least in this case, stereotypical views of people hardly reflect reality. This may lead us to consider the study's broader implications in terms of prejudice. What came out of this study, more than anything else, was that these people are like anybody else. They are quite normal, they are not geeks, nor are they all men, nor are they disconnected from reality, or unsociable. The study shows that when we know little about a group, we will tend to typify them, whether that typification is realistic or not. That typification, or seeing different people as "others," is

what causes prejudice. With more studies of groups which are not well understood, such as this one, perhaps the amount of prejudice in the world will decrease as we gain a more in-depth study of each other.

Through this research I gained insight into a group I was curious about. I also learned the DIFFICULTY of making good field notes, and collecting accurate and relevant data. More importantly, it has made me see my own biases; even while gaining understanding of this group I still made judgements of them. This research has shown me that stereotypes are rarely accurate or valuable for REAL conceptions of the world. Finally, I try not to fit people into a "box," because they are probably more diverse and dynamic than I can imagine.

GHOST STORY

by Paula Johanson

excerpted from the manuscript *Modern Ritual*

The Guest of Honour had no voice to make a speech. He did so anyway, to a silent hall. The convention members who had whispered through his introduction held themselves still and silent when Sam Moskowitz took his turn at the microphone, notes in one hand and a small, buzzing machine in the other.

Moskowitz spoke in a whisper, since throat surgery had taken his voice box some months earlier; when he wanted to speak, he held a vibrating machine, smaller than an electric razor, against his throat. The mere dance of hand to throat was enough to capture the attention of most of his audience. It was probably the most attention any of them paid to any of the speakers at the convention.

For a convention of science fiction readers, the sight of science in action was enough to intrigue many people — at least, until the Japanimation film festival started. Actually listening to his commentary on writing science fiction, on the future and the lives of people Moskowitz had been associating with for forty years... well, that took more time and attention than many were willing to give.

But I at least was thrilled when invited to join the Guests of Honour for dinner. Moskowitz I knew by reputation, and had seen at panel discussions all weekend. But I didn't know the other Guest at all.

Alex Schomburg was an artist who had illustrated covers for several of the old popular pulp magazines with titles like Thrilling Science Stories. He was also a

Puerto Rican Jew, which seemed like a joke from a situation comedy, but it was true. He told stories of his childhood in Puerto Rico as our dinner party went to the restaurant.

We were a mixed party: half-a-dozen young men with glasses and pocket calculators, an older couple and a few younger women, all dressed up a little from the modern uniform of T-shirts and jeans. The guests in plain suits looked distinguished by contrast, though neither was wealthy, or looked it, they both had the contented air that comes from the flattery of talking all weekend about their work and their love for it — and being listened to.

Dinner was a buzz of conversation, several exchanges going on at once around the table, and yet a consistent habit developed at once, persisting throughout the meal. Whenever Moskowitz's left hand came up, bringing his voice machine to his throat, the conversation around the table would become much quieter. It soon became apparent that everyone was keeping one eye on Moskowitz, so as not to make him strain by speaking over their voices. We all learned that we didn't need to be silent in order for him to be heard, just quiet. It was easy to tell whether he was addressing his neighbour or the table at large. The grace with which he used his whisper and expressive gestures inspired the respect which we tried to show in the most practical of ways — we listened and we made the rest of the table's conversation fit naturally around his quiet talk.

Alex Schomburg was easy to contrast with Moskowitz: small where the other was tall and lean, with quiet and warm conversation instead of whispering bright observations. With a little coaxing Schomburg was willing to talk about his art and how he was re-painting the covers he had done for old pulp magazines, into great canvases that he was selling to provide his income now that he was semi-retired.

He was easier to talk with but harder to know than the other guest. Several times I caught him looking at the women around the table, looking with appreciation and pleasure that was in no way offensive. It wasn't his age; he was clearly vital and had drives. But none of us women took offence at being admired like a flower, or a painting.

He listened to Moskowitz's stories of the old science fiction magazines and the readers whose tangled associations he had written about. Schomburg discussed the pulps and the new writing, which neither of them had read thoroughly, but none of the rest of us could do so either — the genre had expanded beyond space adventure stories into cyberpunk, magic realism, interactive adventures, and a dozen other fiction forms. Some authors were a genre unto themselves, especially if they were as prolific as Stephen King.

Moskowitz had never written many books; he hadn't been inspired like King by something with the emotional impact of horror novels and ghost stories, he said. He'd mostly written about the world around

him, the science fiction readers and their lives.

"I can tell you a ghost story," said Schomburg. "It's a true story, too, for I saw it happen.

"When I was a young man, I lived in Puerto Rico. We were not wealthy, there was not always much to do when I was growing, but I had friends and we would go together and talk, have what fun we could. One night we began telling each other ghost stories, trying to see who was afraid of ghosts, and who wasn't, and trying to scare each other. We dared each other to prove who was braver, stronger, smarter, and it ended up with one of us taking the challenge to go to the cemetery that night. No one was brave enough to go to the cemetery at night! There were no street lights then, remember, no lights outside the houses," he added.

"But how would we know he had done it?" Schomburg asked, quiet and a little shy as he realized he had the interest of all of us around the table. "He could just go away from the rest of us in the dark for a while, then come back and say he had been in the cemetery. How would we know?

"We decided that he would have to drive a nail into the wooden cross in the centre of the cemetery. We could go there in the morning, when the sun was up, and see the proof that he really had won the bet, that he had been there in the middle of the night.

"There were no lights near the cemetery at all when we came there all in a group. We were whispering and laughing together, a group of young men — teenage boys really," Schomburg said, and for all that he was in his late sixties we could see something of the boy still in him, in the smile creasing his tan-olive skin.

"The entrance to the cemetery was by a sort of a short tunnel that ran under the road — the only road around. We were quiet going through there. Nobody liked it

in there. It was pitch black, not even the stars and moon could shine in there. We were all silent then, walking quietly, no more talking and joking.

"When we reached the cemetery, the boy who had taken the dare walked ahead into the dark without speaking. We could hear his footsteps moving out of the short tunnel, through the entrance and among the graves. He's really doing it, we thought, holding our breath quiet to hear him move.

"We heard him stop when he reached the centre of the graveyard, and the rustle of his coat. He'd brought a hammer and a great nail to spike into the wooden cross as had been agreed. We heard the clink as he set the hammer on the nail-head, and the strokes of the hammer as he drove the nail into the cross.

"A moment later the most awful scream came to us," Schomburg said, and we all started, though he hadn't raised his voice or moved to surprise us. "Every one of us took to our heels and ran away, out of that tunnel under the road. We didn't stop till we got back to town. We were frightened out of our wits."

Schomburg paused to drink from his glass, and we all waited for him to go on. "Eventually we stopped running and we counted heads. It wasn't until then that we realized that one of us was missing. The one who went into the cemetery wasn't with us. He had been left behind.

"A long time later we got the courage to go back and look for him. We brought lights," he said, smiling thinly this time, and I could well imagine that they had brought any and every light they could get their hands on at that time of night. "We went back, even more afraid than before, when we had been enjoying our fear of the stories and the bet. It was much later, but still pitch dark.

"We went back through the tunnel, into the cemetery, and saw the nail driven

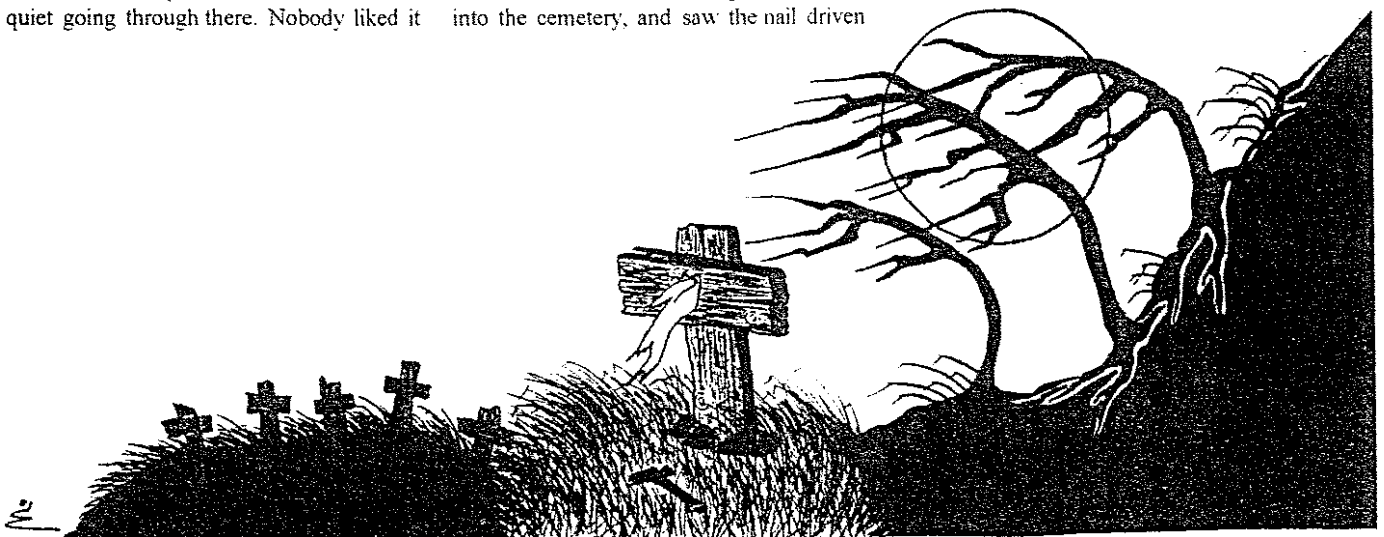
into the wooden cross in the centre of the graveyard. And we found our friend," Schomburg said, turning his water glass in his hand. "When he had taken the great nail from his coat pocket, the point had caught on his coat. He hadn't realized. We had heard him driving the nail into the cross with the hammer, but he was driving the nail through his coat." With a pencil, Schomburg mimed how the nail must have caught on the coat pocket as it was taken out.

I heard gasps around the table as Schomburg continued. "So it all went well until he turned to go, and found himself caught."

After a moment, he went on: "He hadn't screamed to frighten us. He was frightened beyond words. We found him still caught there. We found him dead of fright.

"Perhaps he had had a weak heart, and hadn't known until he took this great fright of being caught and stopped at a moment like that. Perhaps another of us wouldn't have died of the fear, but none of the rest of us had been brave enough to take the dare in the first place."

There was silence around the dinner table. Horror and sympathy showed in the faces of the listeners, who had no more questions or bright, witty comments for the first time in three days. Moskowitz was thoughtful; he who had never been inspired to tell a story as imaginative as that was watching us to see the effect it had had. And the three of us at the table who were trying to be writers ourselves felt sick for the useless death of Schomburg's young friend for the sake of pride — and sick at the knowledge that never in a hundred stories could we ever make up one with the thrill and the impact of the story he had told simply and from the heart.



Life Before Death & Other Myths

by Laura Houghton

I have a theory about my supervisor. I believe he subscribes to the dog training school of management theory. In other words, if he perceives me to be lagging behind, running ahead, or just generally being a little too free-thinking, he jerks on my leash until he hears strangled noises issuing from my throat, while he simultaneously snarls, "Sit!"

I have another theory. This one is about the functionality of work in relation to the human psyche. I suggest to you that if we didn't work, we would require something even more time-consuming to keep us from going mad. It's all a replacement for the days when we used to have to fight off lions and tigers and bears (oh my!), and hence kept ourselves in a constant state of cerebral occupation. So if we don't work, we end up doing even worse things, like doing modern art, eating junk food, bearing children and editing fanzines.

So despite the occasional choked gasps of "You CENSORED BOWDLERIZED EXPURGATED DELETED!" issuing from my red-ringed throat, I don't mind working, since it keeps me from perceiving the dropping of sprogs as being a viable exercise of my cortex. Then, too, being at work allows me access

to a computer which allows me to write inflammatory fanzine articles which in their turn ensure that I will have enraged readers to fend off at great risk to life and limb, hence allowing me to revert to a caveperson mentality and to become considerably more mentally healthy as a result.

My third theory is that there is, in fact, life before death. I know, I know, some of you out there in readers' world are snorting derisively at this very second, but I maintain that you are not entitled to have an opinion on this until you move out of your parents' basement—once again allowing me to flood my body with adrenaline from time to time as yet another subterranean dweller comes running after me, waving a keyboard in menacing fashion.

Anyhow. Where was I? Oh yes, life before death. Well, the theory goes like this. When you die, you're dead—don't even bother arguing with me on this one: God is a personal friend of mine, who lives in Vancouver with his wife who is also a close personal friend of mine, and they are both computer programmers. So when I say that when you die, you die dead, I have every reason to believe that my information is more up to date than yours, so nyah.

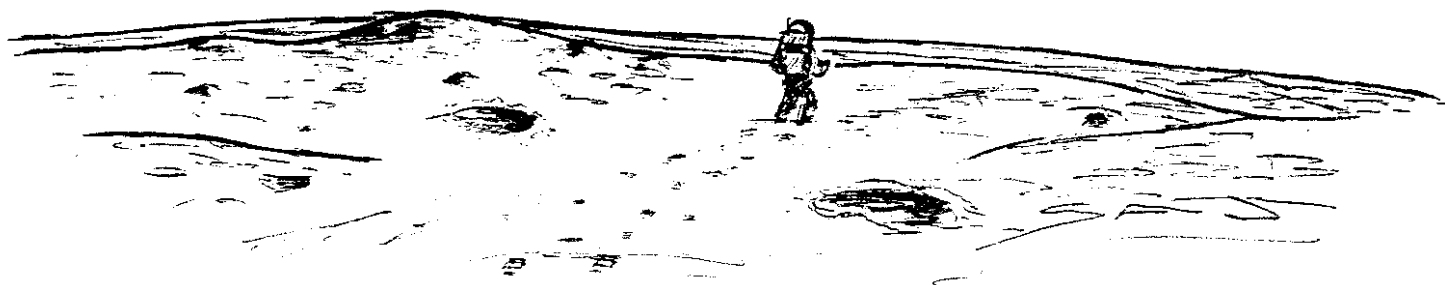
So. When you die, you're dead, and hence by extrapolation and dictionary definition you are no longer alive, since death is a cessation of life, don'tcha know. So life must be what you're doing right now. My question to those of you who want to argue with this extremely simple premise is, if you don't think that this is life, in all its panoplied bleached bimbo glory, have you thought about getting a job so you can write fanzine articles and appreciate what you have before you kick it?

Yes, I know this seems like an extreme solution just to cure a little ennui, but I can assure you, based on my personal experience . . . years of it . . . years and years and yet more years of drudgery and, . . . <cough, cough> . . . that it works wonders. I have a supervisor I will gladly loan free of charge, if you would like to try this out before taking so drastic a step. I will even buy you a leather, faux-jewelled leash.

{{Laura Houghton refuses to say where she works on the grounds that it may cost her many thousands of dollars in libel charges if she does.}}

"...magnificent desolation..."

--Buzz Aldrin, *Apollo XI*



CANADIAN NEWS

Writing about Murder

Some writers believe research is no substitute for real life experience, but when the subject is murder mysteries, most writers are more willing to take a walk to the library than take a walk on the wild side. Last weekend, Vancouver and Victoria mystery writers had a third choice. A conference titled *The Science of Murder* was held on March 19 in Vancouver, where writers and readers of mysteries could talk shop with professionals.

These weren't professionals in the crime of murder, but in the detection of murder. Two pathology professors from UBC, a coroner, a private investigator and a science fiction and horror film special effects expert gave a series of lectures on their specialties to an oddly attentive crowd of mystery fans. A banquet and murder mystery written for this event followed the lectures. Whether they were eager to learn details for their next stories, or plain curiosity had its hold, the listeners had questions for every speaker. Some of the convention attendees were clearly knowledgeable in this field; others were learning with every word and slide. "If you are really interested enough to come here," said Vancouver coroner Mary Lou Merner, "you can handle a few of these pictures." She spoke always of the persons who had died, and whose deaths were investigated by the coroner's office, instead of referring to bodies or rude epithets. The respect she showed for persons who had died was common to all the lecturers.

This respect was even clear in the special effects expert's film clips. Charlie Grant made a point of showing not only the models and animatronic puppets he used in science fiction and horror movies, but also excerpts from a safety film he had made. His sense of humour was somewhat macabre as he described what kind of injury can be imitated on-screen, but Grant pointed out his own failings too. After one scary monster was exploded, pieces of it swung and dangled from the wires which had operated the puppet. Sometimes the failure of a special effect is the fault of a writer, the listeners learned; after watching a model human figure plummet down a model elevator shaft in one tense scene, the tension was released in laughter when another actor said on-screen,

"Uh — he must have slipped."

The next speaker took the convention attendees from distant planets back to Earth, and from Great Britain to Canada, Australia and Africa. Dr. Rex Ferris, a forensic pathologist, has investigated cases which sparked great interest in the news media as well as in his listeners. Any writer looking for ideas for a new story came away with a notebook full, whether the story would be about how a person's body could be carried along in a sand dune, or disturbed by a bear in the Cypress Hills Ski Area.

The announcement by private investigator Bill Ferridge that he had planted listening devices in the meeting room before the conference was amusing. If he wanted to record a few of these imaginative writers and readers he was welcome to have his boring playback punctuated by such comments as "Hyoid bones are delicate, so bears apparently don't chew."

Ferridge chose instead to talk about the cameras and recording devices used by private investigators, and how the laws differ in Canada and the USA. Mystery writers often write about private investigators, but to hear Ferridge tell it, most of their work is not glamorous. His fiancée, when working as a "loss prevention officer," will change her appearance three times in two hours, investigating shoppers and store employees.

Dr. Anne Autor gave the final lecture, describing DNA typing of human tissues clearly and plainly. The use of DNA typing to establish whether or not a person is guilty of a crime sparked some interesting story ideas at the back of the room. Murmurs were heard, such as: "So, if mitochondrial DNA is inherited only from the mother, what if the hero is framed for the crime by a half-sibling he never knew about?" The fact that human DNA varies only by 1%, as Dr. Autor reports, is more significant when one is aware that chimpanzee DNA is only 3% different from human.

The banquet which followed was the scene for a murder mystery well suited to the crowd. Every table was declared an ambassadorial delegation from a different planet, with hidden allegiances and motives to foil this diplomatic conference by killing the host planet's ambassador. Participants put some unexpected twists on the prepared scenario. The

team who wrote the mystery may not have expected defections from starships to pastoral planets, or for one participant to assert that she was a "xeno-pathologist" qualified to examine the dead ambassador.

Murder mystery theatre events are increasingly popular these days. The play *Dead Slow*, written by Catherine Girezye and Tom Creighton of Vancouver, was a surprise hit at the Edmonton Fringe Theatre Festival last summer. And mysteries are the second most popular kind of fiction in North America, after romances. When writers choose to learn more about the science of writing a good murder mystery, they are connecting with the interests of a growing number of readers. And if the mystery is blended with a little speculation about technology or the future, as in Kate Wilhelm's *The House*, the crossover may interest science fiction readers as well.

—Paula Johanson

On Spec will increase its payment on August 1, from two cents a word to two-and-a-half cents.

Catherine Girezye has taken over as the host of *The Ether Patrol* as former host (and Aurora nominee) Adam Charlesworth has moved to Nelson. She writes, "Yes I am taking the mantle of Ether Patrol Host from the shoulders of its gregarious hilarious host Adam Charlesworth. Last week's Year's Best from Adam special had me paralytic with laughter. I can't promise paralytically funny, but I do promise lots of Neat Bits, News, Author Interviews and maybe even a little Radio Drama.... Producer Stu Royan will man the Big Desk (aka the Producer's seat) in the Control Room at CFRO 102.7FM Wednesday nights at 9:30pm. Stu's done a great job for the past NINE years (unbelievable) producing this show!"

The Tesseract imprint of Victoria's Beach Holme Press is for sale.

The CRTC rejected the proposal from CHUM/CITY for a Canadian sf channel, SPACE. Another group of new channels will be chosen in the next couple of years, and insiders predict that SPACE will be chosen then.

After five years on the air, TVOntario is saying goodbye to its landmark science series, Second Nature, hosted by legendary naturalist Enrico Gruen, B.Sc., Bot. Esq. Gruen, who gained notoriety in the 1960s with his controversial theories on butterfly droppings—

VERRIDE: CONNECTION
BROK...@#BI...///

—despondent,” said Gruen. “Every week our show was interrupted, or should I say pirat—

SIGNAL OVERRIDE: CHECK
FAX..4-2d**>>>

Greetings, Prisoners of Gravity. This is Commander Rick. I'm interrupting this signal with some good news and some bad news. The good news is I've managed to get my Camaro into reverse and freed it from this TV Relay Satellite where I've been marooned for the past 5 years! The bad news is that my computer Nan-Cy and I will no longer be overriding the airwaves to talk about speculative fiction and comic books. After 137 pirate broadcasts, and interviews with more than 500 of the most creative minds in alternative fiction and comics, I'm heading home.

Thanks to everyone who watched my broadcasts and to my secret friends in “Control” who kept my signal from being jammed. As for the future, well, Nan-Cy already has offers from the Fox Network to replace Arsenio, and I've always wanted to direct. So, so long from your “Guy in the Sky,” Commander Rick Green. BTW, Nan-Cy managed to hide a virus in the satellite relay circuits so keep watching for re-runs... B—)

VERRIDE: CONNECTION RE-
ACQUIRED...@#BI

—Mr. Gruen said, “I've always wanted to direct.”

(TVOntario)

Want to complain that Prisoners of Gravity was cancelled? Write to Don Duprey, Managing Director of English Programming, TVOntario, Box 200, Station Q, Toronto, ON, M4T 2T1.

William Gibson has sold his latest novel, Idoru, to Putnam for more money than we'll ever see in a lifetime. The manuscript is not due until 1995. And Johnny Mnemonic has wrapped principal photography. Expect a release (and a name change) in June, 1995. (But will Alan Dean Foster do the novelization....?)

The BC Science Fiction Association is holding a fundraising auction on Saturday, September 17. The auction will be at 3502 Cordiale Dr., Vancouver, B.C. at 7:00 PM. Items for sale include books, games, software, collectables and services (no comments on that one). For information on attending or donating neat stuff, contact Clint Budd at (604) 685-2197. Proceeds will go to help with the production of BCSFazine. (BCSFazine 253)

Our trade copy of Dale Speirs' Opuntia 19.1 arrived with the stamp uncanceled, so we get to use it over again! Ha ha ha ha, bwa ha ha ha. Don't tell anyone at Canada Post though, okay? We don't want to get in trouble.

Steve & Lynne Taylor Fahnestalk are carrying on the new tradition of elaborate COAs. Their COAs are in the form of a con announcement for their new house warming party, called Home Alone Con 1. The con is on July 9th and will feature 42 members and guests.

Benoit Girard received some socks from Australia. (The Frozen Frog #9)

A total of 109 nominating ballots were received for this year's Prix Aurora Awards. Three were filled in incorrectly, leaving a total of 106 valid ballots.

Following a disturbing trend, Victoria's daily newspaper, The Times-Colonist, has decided to discontinue running book reviews. Paula Johanson, whose reviews appeared in the Times-Colonist, was told that “people aren't interested in books

anymore.” The paper's editor will be receiving a letter and a subscription cancellation from Karl shortly.

The Last Dangerous Neology is still due out real soon now. And we at UTOH have almost started the Cheap Breakfast Cereal reviews we promised.

Writers Sally McBride and Dale Sproule are preparing to publish a science fiction / fantasy / horror magazine. They expect that the magazine, Transversions, will be digest size and will have 56 - 96 pages. Writers who wish to receive guidelines for submitting fiction, poetry, articles or reviews can write them at:

Transversions
1019 Colville Rd.,
Victoria, BC
V9A 4P5

Persons interested in purchasing copies when available can also use the above address, or keep their eyes peeled at WorldCon in Winnipeg.



EDITOR WANTED
A MOON PICTURE

“That may have been a small step for Neil, but it was a long one for *me*.”

--Pete Conrad, *Apollo XII*

CONVENTION LISTINGS

1994

CON-VERSIONS 11

July 22 - 24
Marlborough Inn
Calgary, Alberta
GoHs: Frederik Pohl, Marion Zimmer Bradley. CanGoH: Sean Russell.
Con-Version 11, Box 1088 Stn. M, Calgary, AB, T2P 2K9.

TORONTO TREK 8

July 22 - 24
Regal Constellation Hotel
Toronto, Ontario
GoHs: Nana Visitor, Majel Barrett, Garfield and Judith Reeves-Stevens.
TT8, Suite 0116, Box 187, 65 Front Street W., Toronto. ON, M5J 1E6

CONADIAN

52nd WORLD SF CONVENTION

September 1 - 5
Convention Centre
Winnipeg, Manitoba
GoH: Anne McCaffery. Artist GoH: George Barr. Fan GoH: Robert Runté.
Non-presupporting Attending Memberships: \$165 until July 15.
Conadian, Box 2430, Winnipeg, MB, R3C 4A7

CANVENTION 14

September 1 - 5
Convention Centre
Winnipeg, Manitoba
Held concurrently with **Conadian**
Info: Diane Walton. (403) 924-3540.

FESTIVAL SCIENCE-FICTION II

September 24 - 25
Ramada Inn
Montréal, Québec
GoHs: Majel Barrett, Mark Goddard.
Festival Science Fiction, PO Box 311, Station B, Montréal. PQ, H3B 3J7

CONCINNITY

October 28 - 30
Journey's End
Kanata, Ontario
26076 - 72 Robertson Road. Nepean, ON, K2H 5YB

1995

CON-CEPT '95

March 31 - April 2
Holiday Inn Crown Plaza Metro Centre
Ottawa, Ontario
GoH: Spider Robinson.
Con-CEPT, PO Box 405, Station H, Montréal, PQ, H3G 2L1

CAN-CON 95

May 12 - 14
Talisman Hotel
Ottawa, Ontario
GoH: Dave Duncan.
Can-Con, PO Box 5752, Merivale, ON, K2C 3M1

KEYCON 95

May 19 - 21
Winnipeg, Manitoba
Hotel & Guests TBA
Keycon, PO Box 3178, Winnipeg, MB, R3C 4E6

AD ASTRA 15

June 9 - 11
Sheraton Toronto East
Toronto, Ontario
Ad Astra, PO Box 7276, Station A, Toronto, ON, M5W 1X9

INTERSECTION

53rd WORLD SF CONVENTION
August 24 - 28
Scottish Exhibition and Conference Centre
Glasgow, Scotland
GoHs: Samuel R. Delaney, Gerry Anderson.
Canadian Agents: Lloyd and Yvonne Penney, 412 - 4 Lisa Street, Brampton, ON, L6T 4B6
U.S. Address: Theresa Renner, Box 15430, Washington, DC, USA, 20003
U.K. Address: Bernie Evans, 121 Cape Hill, Smethwick, Warley, West Midlands, B66 4SH

PACIFICON '95

September 1 - 3
Holiday Inn
Victoria, B.C.
GoH: John de Lancie ("Q")
PacifiCon, #2 - 1325 Stanley Street, Victoria, BC, V8S 3S4
ue437@freenet.victoria.bc.ca

1996

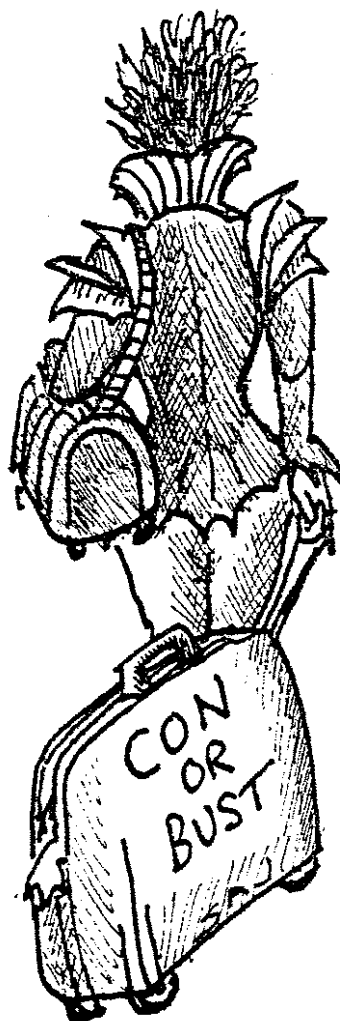
WOLFCON 7

May 17 - 20
Old Orchard Inn
Wolfville, Nova Scotia
Wolfcon, PO Box 796, Wolfville, NS, B0P 1X0

L.A. CON III

54th WORLD SF CONVENTION

August 29 - September 2
Convention Center, Hilton Hotel & Towers, Marriott Hotel, Anaheim, California
GoH: James White; Media GoH: Roger Corman; Fan GoH: Takumi and Sachiko Shibano; Special Guest: Elsie Wollheim; Toastmaster: Connie Willis.
L.A.Con III, c/o SCIFI, Box 8442, Van Nuys, CA, USA, 91409.



Andrew Murdoch
2563 Heron Street
Victoria, BC
V8R 5Z9
uq016@freenet.victoria.bc.ca

Dear John and Karl (enough of this "Bubba" sh*t),

First of all, enclosed is the article on my ridiculously scanty costume I promised you, so now you know what to do with those photographs (after which time, I will gladly pay your extortionist fee, so that I may burn them once and for all).

I'm glad that you guys, at least, spelled my name correctly when you announced the Aurora nominees. I realize that this sort of thing happens, but I personally feel misspelling a person's name [on the ballot] is a serious breach of etiquette, so I go to great lengths to avoid doing so.

So now on to your request for thoughts about the space program. I honestly can't say much about its past. I wasn't around when man first stepped onto the moon. To be honest, the one event in the space program's history that I distinctly remember is the explosion of *Challenger*. As for its present, it doesn't seem to have one. It's in a perpetual state of sitting on its collective thumbs doing nothing of particular note (or when it did, it failed miserably). I often think that we'd have a space station *Freedom* by now if they'd only stop demanding costly redesigns that are supposed to save money (an oxymoron of governmental proportions) and build the bloody thing. As for the future, I honestly hope a way is found to make space exploration profitable, such as creating jobs (and lots of them) for ordinary people (rather than exclusively for those who have multiple degrees or are the head of a large corporation) or by returning something in the bargain. Hopefully, in this manner, space technology will grow in leaps and bounds and NASA will again be able to do something "frivolous," like scientific missions.

Anyway, excellent issue once again, and by the way, if you're wondering what happened to ZX, it is not dead yet. I've gone to a rather irregular schedule, so that the stuff I write when I get the inspiration will hopefully be a little better than it has been these last couple of issues. Anything you guys want to contribute?

{{Don't feel so bad. For the last two

years, my middle name (the "Willcox" in "John Willcox Herbert") has not appeared on the ballot either, or on our Aurora trophy itself. And why do I care? Well you see, there's this Canadian playwright whose name is John Herbert, and he wrote an award-winning play many years ago about prison life called *Fortune in Men's Eyes*. And he ain't me. So if I were to manage to one day become a pro (ha ha), I couldn't use just "John Herbert." Somebody already beat me to it.

I remember hearing about the Challenger accident on the radio as I slept in on the morning of January 28, 1986. That was not a good day.

I don't think it's fair to blame the delays in the space station solely on the space program. It is, after all, the politicians that are forcing delays and changes to the station. I'm sure NASA would love nothing more than the government saying, "Here's \$X, go do it." And I'd hardly call the Hubble repair mission a case of "sitting on its collective thumbs"! That was a stunning success! I was glued to my tv every night watching!

The economic benefits from space program spin-offs more than paid for any outer space expenditures, and have changed the quality of life world-wide in the last two decades. A frivolous example: Karl sells freeze-dried ice cream - "The Kind The Astronauts Eat!"

—J.W.H.}}

Harry Cameron Andruschak
P.O. Box 5309
Torrance, CA
90510-5309
U.S.A.

Received Under the Ozone Hole #7 today.

As far as the Aurora Awards go, I have to admit the fact that I did not nominate. Perhaps the fact that I live in the USA and nobody sent me a ballot form may have had something to do with it. If I had been given a form, my nomination for Best Fanzine would have been *The Frozen Frog*.

I think I can top Karl's story [about the Bloc Québécois being sued]. Here in California, our state Governor has sued the United States in Federal Court, demanding that Congress pay California the costs of providing social services to illegal immi-

grants. I have doubts as to how this will fly, but you never can know what will happen when the lawyers get into their acts.

My own opinion, for what it is worth, is that nothing can be done. At least nothing realistic. Mexico has a problem with population growth. No matter how bad off a Mexican may be as far as job and money goes in the USA, he is probably far better off than if he stayed in Mexico. Until Mexico undergoes some sort of economic growth, the crushing poverty of the vast majority of the population insures a constant stream of illegal immigrants. Hopefully, the NAFTA may do something to help this needed economic growth in Mexico.

I am glad to see that *The Nightmare Before Christmas* did not do too badly in the money sweepstakes, because that is the film I nominated for the Best Dramatic Presentation Hugo. Yes, I do nominate and vote for the Hugos.

Come 20 July, you may be celebrating the 25th anniversary of the first moon landing. I will be celebrating the 18th anniversary of the landing on Mars of *Viking Lander One*. After all, I was working on that project almost from the day I signed on with JPL in October 1973.

Since I do not have a TV set, much of this zine is incomprehensible. Although from all the reviews I have been reading, if I did have a TV set, I would still find most of the sci-fi on TV to be incomprehensible.

I enclose a few apazines as a sort of trade. Pass them on to your co-editors and staff. Thank you.

{{We trade with *The Frozen Frog*, so Benoit Girard will see your kind words. For my thoughts on the zine please see the review section. We will celebrate the Viking project, and tip our hats to those of you behind the project.

—K.J.}}

{{That's right! I'd forgotten *Viking* landed on an Apollo 11 anniversary. And didn't Skylab come down on the 10th Anniversary of Apollo 11, or close to it anyway? And *Shoemaker-Levy 9* is taking aim at Jupiter at the same time this year!

—J.W.H.}}



Garth Spencer
P.O. Box 15335, V.M.P.O.
Vancouver, BC
Canada
V6B 5B1

Wow, a whole 'nuther Under The Ozone Hole! And this time you've got a whole *two pages* of Canadian News!! Great!!!

Amusing cover, that.

Last April somebody sent me a flyer with their zine, announcing a thing called **Fanhistoricon** right after **SMOFcon** ... in Harry Warner's hometown, yet ... in late May. We're talking a month's notice, okay?

I guess the Auroras aren't the only enterprise that isn't getting competent publicity. I'm sorry to say this, but I ... don't have a modem. I'm not on-line. I'm not even certain *how* you get on a BBS, or FreeNet, or however you say it. My name is Garth, and I'm out of it.

I'm beginning to realize I have to send you guys news four months before it's timely. Item: I gave up trying to get more Victoria fanhistory and had sent the manuscript to Dale Speirs by the time you announced that I was looking for material. Item: I received in *June* the **UTOH** that announces I was offering convention-listing wall calendars. Just think what this would imply for news that actually mattered!

Okay, here's something coming up ... I am already trying to get information on 1995 Northwest conventions. It ain't easy. ... I have pretty well completed my information for a guide to Northwest fandom ... and I have compiled SF, fantasy and horror market information in WordPerfect 5.1, covering US, UK and Canadian Markets, and I think it's 95% complete. Now I just have to assign prices and availability conditions on this stuff; what do you charge for ads?

Just heard you're handling the daily con zine at **ConAdian**, with Steve Jackson yet. Congratulations. (I think ...) I'll be interested to hear how the con went. For my records, that is.

{{First you get a phone, then a modem, then a computer. Pile them up inside a pentagram on the floor, light a bunch of candles, cover yourself with marshmallow sauce and dance about the room naked while listening to The Arrogant Worms. If that doesn't work, get your computer/software guru to set everything up for you (be prepared to shell out a few expensive dinners and several things of Haagen Daas. If you haven't got a computer/software guru then

you're @#\$%ed.

The implication for important news sent to us which gets published late is very tragic. In the Worldcon '89 at Myles' House newsletters we were late in pointing out what a twink Reagan was and sure enough he got elected (this in spite of his remarks on "tree pollution").

You won't be at Winnipeg? If money's a problem John & I can sneak you in the back door.

—K.J.}}

David Palter
Toronto, ON

Thanks for **UTOH #7**. It is now clear that my statement in the current **Frozen Frog** that "I'm almost gone" can be read as a piteous cry for help — certainly it has inspired several people (yourselves among them) to send me fanzines. Actually, I merely meant to state the current level of my fannish correspondence, not to solicit more. However, despite the fact that I have twice formally resigned from fandom (the full ceremony: burning a mimeo machine at midnight, etc.), I still feel that since you have sent me your fanzine, and it is a worthy effort, you deserve to receive my comments. (Obviously, I am finding it very hard to depart fanzine fandom.)

Regarding John's comparison of voter participation for the Prix Aurora Awards as compared to the Hugo, you are correct that the percentage of participation is higher for the Aurora — in fact, the difference is greater than what you calculate. It is not really true that potential voters for the Hugo consist of only 250 million Americans. It is a global award, which is voted upon by the fans of many countries, in addition to the U.S. The actual potential pool of voters for the Hugo is 5½ billion people. The actual rate of participation, 190 out of 5½ billion, is one out every 29 million. The Canadian rate, one out of 182,000, would then be about 159 times greater, as opposed to your calculation showing a rate merely twice as great. (None of which changes the fact that the Hugo is still a far more prestigious award. But clearly, the Aurora deserves to be better recognized, as you say.)

Regarding Karl's suggestion of *heteronym* as a new category of word, don't expect dictionaries to pay you royalties — come on, it's not *that* easy. You need to earn your royalties by publishing a book of heteronyms, giving the various words to which your listed words are heteronyms. (Could be a very large book.) In addition, you should consider a non-rhyming dictionary,

giving words that do not rhyme with other specific listed words (for example, I could not help but notice that your example of heteronyms, 'fish' and 'bicycle,' also do not rhyme! What a coincidence!) If you are ambitious, why not *Johanson's Non Quotables*, listing various statements that nobody ever said? Or *Johanson's Non-Almanac*, giving the very latest in false data, *Johanson's Book of Non-World Records*, or a non-cookbook, etc. The possibilities are limitless for non-reference books of all kinds.

The class action suit against the Bloc Québécois that Karl mentions does not seem to be on firm legal ground. The BQ may intend to destroy Canada, but certainly haven't done so yet. The claim of \$500 billion in damages seems to be a payment for damages that have not yet been inflicted. If you were to accuse the BQ of criminal intent, you might have a case, but not for a civil suit, only for a criminal case. Even then, the issue would be very tricky. Clearly, it would be easier to bring charges against the BQ when and if an actual secession of Québec from Canada does occur. And as to the prevention of such a secession (if that is the suit's real intent) it certainly won't be accomplished by accusing separatists of treason. Québec will remain part of Canada only if the electorate of Québec believe that their best interests are served by federalism (which indeed is the case, or so I believe). The issue of whether separatism is treason is, at best, a distraction of the real issues. Any revolution that succeeds ceases to be treason. Treasonous Canadians can be transformed, as if by magic, into patriotic Québécois once they become fully autonomous. Although we could then invade, and if our military power were to prevail, then we could accuse the secessionist leaders of treason, and hang them. But even then, don't expect \$500 billion in damages — they haven't got it anyway. So much for a quick solution to the debt.

Re SF News: it is clear to me why Alec Baldwin was cast as The Shadow. He actually does resemble the comic book version. He has The Shadow's nose. No mistaking it.

Lloyd Penney's letter suggests to me that perhaps you do not like to receive handwritten letters — in which case, perhaps you will not like my own letter. Do you have a policy on permissible submission media?

Regarding Harry Warner's concern about the depletion of petroleum reserves, this is technically solvable. For the chemicals industry, agricultural sources of oil exist (more expensive — but they won't run out). For energy, I believe solar power is the

most promising choice (but other options exist). Of course, the existence of theoretical solutions hardly means that the problem will be solved. The oil industry is just one part of the environmental problem which, I can safely predict, is going to present an increasing challenge in the decades to come. The only aspect that may not be solvable is getting enough people to act intelligently. That's the real trick.

You ask for comments on the space program. The problem of orbital debris is becoming increasingly serious (discussed very well in the book *Our Angry Earth*, by Asimov and Pohl), and I truly believe that all nations involved in space should co-operate to deal with this problem. The debris must be cleaned up. Failing that, I can foresee no future for humanity in space. So, global co-operation, which is crucial for addressing various environmental and political crises, also turns out to be necessary in space. And I don't see it happening. It may yet happen — but I don't expect it.

The *Apollo* program proved to be tremendously important for the U.S. The research and the spin-offs gave rise to a whole "high tech" body of technology upon which the U.S. economy depends (and which has made our world a lot more interesting). The actual landing on the moon was of primarily symbolic importance, but remains a shining example of how far we can go. However, this forward progress is bogging down in a world increasingly paralyzed by massive debt, ethnic strife, environmental disaster and the various other misfortunes of our troubled world. And space itself has presented some trickier problems than were expected in 1969, the accumulation of orbital debris being only one of them. As I noted earlier, theoretical solutions exist for all these problems, but the implementation of these solutions would require greater wisdom on the part of the world's population than we can reasonably expect. Hence, I do expect that civilization is headed not for even greater triumphs in space (or on Earth) but rather for collapse and ruin. With any luck the process will be slow enough that I will be able to enjoy perhaps a few more decades of life in civilized circumstances — we shall see. I would be happy to find my pessimism proven wrong.

Reading Willie Rimshot's analysis of the logical failures of one particular episode of *ST: TNG*, I am impressed by his reasoning, and also reminded of just how severely sloppy and implausible *Star Trek* has generally been, in all its assorted generations and versions. I believe that, in fact, *Star Trek* really cares only about being dramatic, and cares very little about being

plausible or logical in any way. The series' grand finale ("*All Good Things....*") is a perfect example of this. It is terrifically dramatic and utterly illogical — even more so than the episode that Willie dissects so expertly. I could perform a similar dissection of the final episode (or indeed, of almost any episode) but it hardly seems necessary. Isaac Asimov wrote an essay over 25 years ago for *T.V. Guide* observing several of the more blatantly unscientific and unbelievable elements of *Star Trek*, and since then there hasn't been any great need to prove the series is not well founded in science. It is still fun — obviously, I have been amused, or I would not have kept watching all these years — but it is also a trivialization of SF. Real SF exhibits a genuine respect for science and logic. *Star Trek* is based on pseudo-science and melodrama. Still, it's fun. We just can't take it too seriously.

{{Re the BQ lawsuit: Also, couldn't damages be paid only if it were proven that the BQ operated with harmful intent? In other words, if they are promoting separatism solely to cause damage to the citizens of Canada? If they are sincere in their belief that secession is the best option for Québec and Canada (as M. Bouchard has said a number of times), then I don't think such a suit would win, anyway.}}

Actually, yours is the first hand-written letter (of such length) we have received. As far as permissible submission media go, e-mail is great, disk is good, too (I use Word for Windows).

Re Star Trek: your points are well taken. As good looking as TNG is, I think that the original Star Treks hang together as stories much better. TNG seems to be dramatic for the sake of being dramatic, and constructs plots solely to provide a "neat moment," however illogical or stupid the plot becomes. Troi wakes up disguised as a Romulan on a Romulan ship — great idea! Of course, how this feat was accomplished undermines the whole plot of the show. Or the episode Willie dissected last issue (which involved Crusher doing an illegal autopsy on a dead alien and getting suspended and nearly court-martialed) is made even more ludicrous by the fact that Crusher does another illegal autopsy on a dead alien in a different episode in the same season and... no one bats an eye! Good drama is one thing, a good story is another.

—J.W.H.}}

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Happy to see yet another fun-packed and information filled *Under the Ozone Hole* on my doorstep this month. I passed it on to my friends Val and Mike, as well as some members of the Comox Valley Science Fact and Fantasy Association (which I'm President of).

Running a small town SF club isn't a piece of cake. In my first month of office, three important members of the club have moved away. First the treasurer (to Québec), then the zine editor (to Nanaimo) and lastly our game master (to Victoria). On top of this, our Secretary works graveyard shift and finds it hard to get to meetings in the afternoon. Our Vice-President is in another club that meets on the same day at the same time, and I have to spend four hours riding ferries just to get to the meetings. (If anyone is interested in attending a CVSFAPA meeting, we usually meet on the 1st Saturday of the month, unless it's a convention or holiday weekend, then it's the 2nd Saturday. Check the bulletin boards at the Driftwood Mall, C.F.B. Comox, and at ABC Books & The Inner Sanctum in downtown Courtenay.)

We are planning a mall display for the first weekend in October, featuring a writer, an artist, a few fanzine editors, a NRC scientist and the Klingon Diplomatic Corps. We also plan to show videos of both classic and modern SF films and tv shows and of club activities.

And before I go, it's never too late to start planning for New Year's Eve. Once again, the Orion Consulate is having a New Year's Bash at the Commodore's residence in Nanaimo, BC. (HOT TUB) Again, our special guest is the one and only Murdock, cofounder of the Orion Consulate party group, the CVSFAPA, president of *Star Trek* Winnipeg and one hell of a nice guy. (HOT TUB) If he doesn't get one to this party, I don't know what will. (HOT TUB)

{{Thanks for the news on the club, Ray. For our readers who don't know, the Comox Valley is roughly half-way up Vancouver Island from Victoria.}}

—J.W.H.}}

We also heard from: Dave Panchyk, Robert Runté, Cath Jackel, Lloyd and Yvonne Penney, Laura Houghton and Bob Johnson. Howdy, y'all.

REVIEWS

THE COLUMN WITH NO NAME

by Brian D. Clarke

Have Katana. Will Travel

While many foreign films have been "adapted" for American audiences over the years, very few have proven as successful as The Magnificent Seven, the 1960 adaptation of Japanese director Akira Kurosawa's 1954 classic, Seven Samurai. At first glance, the surprising thing about The Magnificent Seven is how well the original story translates to the Western format; the content of Kurosawa's epic is hardly altered at all. The original is set in the sixteenth century during the chaos of Japan's civil wars. It was a century of nearly continuous warfare and anarchy, during which rival clans fought for supremacy over the land and the populace. Kurosawa tells the tale of a village of poverty-stricken farmers who are repeatedly terrorized by a gang of brigands. The villagers, at the brink of extinction, decide in desperation to hire samurai to defend themselves. While many samurai refuse, in the end the villagers obtain the services of seven *ronin* (masterless samurai) who instruct them in the arts of warfare. The samurai lead the villagers in battle against the brigands, and although four of the seven die (together with many villagers), in the end the brigands are destroyed and the farmers are able to live in peace.

While a great deal of the scenery is changed (the setting is changed to rural Mexico, the brigands become Mexican bandits and the samurai become American gunslingers), the content of Kurosawa's story is kept almost completely intact in The Magnificent Seven. Scenes, characters, dialogue, plot points and even one-liners are unaltered in the American film. However, while the content of Kurosawa's film is preserved almost entirely, the tone and the interpretation of the story is significantly changed.

There are two parallel threads running through Kurosawa's epic which are significantly altered in The Magnificent Seven. First, Seven Samurai is, in essence, a war story. While it is at times funny, bawdy and heroic, it is, in the end, a dark, grim story about the horrors of war. At the same time,

a strong undercurrent of class warfare runs through the film: the enemy is often not so much the brigands as the gulf which separates the samurai from the farmers. In translating the story to the Western form, those threads change. First, the tale becomes an adventure story: a story in which heroic individualism is emphasized, together with a type of social egalitarianism — it is the similarities between the gunmen and farmers which are emphasized, not the differences. At the same time, the film carries a strong moral undercurrent which is not class-based, but rather based on the use of violence. The main issue of the film is not what separates farmers from gunfighters, but rather what distinguishes one gunfighter from another: in this case, what separates the American mercenaries from the Mexican bandits, who also make their living by the gun. So, while the content of The Magnificent Seven and Seven Samurai is essentially the same, the interpretation of that content is quite different in the western version of the film, and this is reflected in virtually every aspect of the two films, whether it is connected with setting, characterization, or plot.

To begin with the setting, the first and most obvious alteration of Seven Samurai is the title. This isn't as trite as it might sound: there is a world of difference between "the magnificent seven" and, say, "seven gunmen." The American film is quite specifically about the magnificent seven gunmen: not just any seven gunmen, but a particular group of seven whom we are clearly expected to see as standing above all others. (This is a distinction that doesn't exist in Japanese — there is no definite article in the language.) They are also

"magnificent:" we are clearly expected to view them in legendary, even mythic terms. The gunslingers of The Magnificent Seven are thus elevated in our estimation from the beginning of the film in a way that Kurosawa's samurai are not. The focus of the story thus changes. Seven Samurai is a film which features seven samurai — The Magnificent Seven is about seven gunmen.

A second point about the setting has to be made. While the figure of the gunfighter and the figure of the samurai fill very similar roles in their respective national mythologies, and are in many ways comparable, there is an important difference between the two: in pre-Meiji restoration (pre-1860) Japan, society was organized along relatively rigid Confucian class lines. Being a peasant or a samurai was, in the vast majority of cases, a function of heredity, not individual choice. The peasants and samurai in Seven Samurai are thus segregated in ways in which the farmers and gunfighters of The Magnificent Seven are not. While Japanese farmers were, at this time, allowed to own weapons (after the civil war period, with the establishment of the Tokugawa Shogunate, the peasantry was systematically disarmed), the samurai were the only class allowed to carry swords in public. The samurai's *katana*, like the gunslinger's sidearm, was a visual status symbol, but the *katana* was a distinct symbol of rank, unlike the American West, where, as Chris wryly observes, "Everybody wears a gun. It's expected." The main difference between the gunfighter and the samurai is that the gunfighter chooses to be what he is: the samurai does not. The myth of the gunfighter is thus by nature a more individualistic one. The superior-inferior

The Seven Samurai

Kambei Shimada — Leader of the group. Old and tired of fighting.
Shichiroji — The Survivor. Kambei's old comrade-in-arms.
Gorobei Katayama — The Experienced Warrior. Second of the Seven.
Heihachi Hayashida — Samurai-turned-woodcutter. Blunt and forthright.
Kyuzo — The Expert Swordsman. Interested only in the perfection of skill.
Katsushiro — The Kid. Young samurai who wants to become Kambei's apprentice.
Kikuchiyo — The Farmer's Son. Rude and crude, trying to rise above his roots.

The Magnificent Seven

Chris — Leader of the Seven. Stoic, cigar-smoking Cajun. (Yul Brynner)
Vin — Chris's lieutenant. Talkative, wisecracking. (Steve McQueen)
Harry — The mercenary with a heart of gold. Second of the Seven. (Brad Dexter)
Riley — Killer-turned-woodcutter. Does well with children. (Charles Bronson)
Red — Expert with a gun or a knife, fights to perfect his skills. (James Coburn)
Lee — The deserter hiding out on a battlefield. (Robert Vaughn)
Chico — The Kid. Son of a farmer, looking to become a gunman. (Horst Bucholz)

relationship of the samurai and peasant is also entrenched, codified and sanctioned in ways the gunfighter/farmer relationship is not. There is a vast and (in Kurosawa's view) nearly unbridgeable gap between the samurai and peasant which extends much deeper than the Western's rather artificial division between people who know how to use guns and those who don't. While this division is, if anything, exaggerated in The Magnificent Seven (the seven, with the exception of Chico, are quite clearly all professional killers who make their living by the gun, while the farmers have all just as clearly never used guns in their lives), the film tries to downplay and soften this message. As Vin says to a farmer at one point, "It's just knowing how to use a gun — not such a big thing really." The difference between the farmers and gunfighters is continually downplayed: when a farmer, after the first skirmish, tells Vin how proud he feels to have helped drive off Calvera, and asks whether Vin has ever felt that way, he replies, "Not for a long time," implying that he just now remembers how it felt when he first stood up for himself. A sort of kinship develops between the gunfighters and the farmers. Chris and Vin find themselves wanting to settle down and renounce the gun. Riley befriends the villagers' children, and even reconciles himself to his Mexican roots. This kinship between the samurai and farmers remains throughout the film, and can be seen in the film's use of characterization.

The differing use of characterization can be seen in the way the seven samurai are characterized as opposed to the gunslingers of The Magnificent Seven. The magnificent seven have a prominence in their film that the seven samurai do not. They are also characterized to a degree of detail that the samurai are not. Each of the seven gunfighters has a clear motivation for going to Mexico, and they are made to stand out as individuals, but the samurai are not developed to nearly the same degree. In particular, Gorobei and Heihachi are barely developed at all, with very little in the way of individual characterization being done. Notably, the characters who are developed, Kikuchiyo and Katsushiro, are those who most exemplify the deep divisions between samurai and peasants.

While it was historically rare for peasants to rise above their station, it was not unheard of, and Kikuchiyo is presented in the film as one such figure. Kurosawa's portrait of the peasant swordsman is not an entirely flattering one. Kikuchiyo at first tries to pass himself off as a samurai by presenting a scroll identifying himself as

belonging to a noble house. Kambei then points out the scroll is most likely stolen, as the "Kikuchiyo" mentioned in the scroll is only thirteen years old. After that less than auspicious start, Kikuchiyo follows the samurai back to the farmers' village and gradually wins their acceptance through his bravery and maniacal determination. However, he is often ridiculed by the other samurai as unrefined, untrained and uncultured. He is portrayed as a crude, lusty individual, overly fond of both *sake* and women. His undisciplined and untrained nature is more often a menace than a benefit. In fact, his disregard for discipline leads to the death of Gorobei when he leaves his post to conduct a solo raid on the bandit camp. Nonetheless, he finally redeems himself and is accepted as an equal by the samurai, but only at the cost of his own life.

Katsushiro, on the other hand, is the kid of the seven samurai: an innocent, even naïve young man, who is by any standard both beautiful and refined, in the best tradition of samurai drama. (The figure of the "beautiful young man" is a common one in Japanese literature.) Katsushiro falls into a doomed romance with a peasant girl named Shino. The romance is doomed as much by their social status as by Shino's insanely overprotective father, Manzo. Manzo cuts Shino's hair to make her look like a boy before the samurai arrive, and then beats her when he discovers the night before the final battle that she and Katsushiro have slept together. Manzo is appalled to discover that his daughter has been "shamed," and even worse, "seduced" by a samurai. Kurosawa takes great pains to mitigate the incident by making it clear that most peasants don't condone Manzo's actions, that the young lovers are both virtually kids who are deeply in love, and terrified out of their minds that they might not live to see another dawn, but the incident ultimately serves to cast a pall of gloom over the coming battle.

Katsushiro and Kikuchiyo are combined in The Magnificent Seven in the figure of Chico, the young farmer's son, who, determined to become a gunfighter, follows Chris *et al.* to Mexico. Interestingly, Chico is very much a "boy next door" figure, who lacks both Kikuchiyo's vulgarity and Katsushiro's delicacy (which would be wildly inappropriate in a Western context...). While Chico is inexperienced, his manhood is never in question: he is quite capable of killing and is the first of the seven to kill someone, never displaying fear, revulsion, or even nervousness. (The Kid in Unforgiven is probably the closest approximation of a 'Katsushiro' the western

has produced.) Chico's romance with a farmer's daughter is anything but doomed, and is never even an issue, other than the daughter's lone remark, "My father says he will punish me later. He thinks I am being shameless. But I...don't care." In fact, the punishment never actually seems to catch up to Chico. While Chico's inexperience often shows, it never blows up in his face or costs the seven in the way that Kikuchiyo's does. Chico's solo raid on Calvera's camp is a wild success. Once again, it is individualism, not class, that is focused on.

However, Chico isn't uniquely characterized among the magnificent seven: all of the gunmen are given equal prominence and characterized in nearly equal detail. Each of them is held up as equally deserving of our admiration. They certainly receive nearly equal billing and screentime: every actor gets his unique moments to shine. In perhaps the most radical departure from the original, this egalitarianism is even carried into their deaths: none of the seven die until the final gunfight, and each of the deaths is given almost precisely even emphasis. In Seven Samurai, Heihachi and Gorobei die much earlier in the story, and fairly ignominiously to boot, as a result of the inexperience of their peasant allies.

Which is as good a cue as any to examine how farmers are characterized differently in The Magnificent Seven and Seven Samurai. While The Magnificent Seven gives a prominence to the gunfighters that is not present in Seven Samurai, the reverse is true in the case of farmers. In Seven Samurai the farmers are given much more individual characterization, and play a far more dynamic role in the action. Several peasants — Rikichi, Youhet, Shino, the village patriarch (the "old man" in The Magnificent Seven), and Manzo — are given nearly as much characterization (and sometimes more) as the samurai. Kikuchiyo is also quite explicitly a peasant, unlike Chico, whose humble origins are hidden until relatively late in the film. Their role in fighting the brigands is at all times at least as important as that of the samurai. The peasants' inexperience is often the key, and while it is a source of comedy in The Magnificent Seven, the implications are much grimmer here. Most of the incidents involve Kikuchiyo, but in their raid on the brigand camp, the samurai lose Heihachi to a musket shot when their peasant guide, Rikichi, becomes incensed when he sees his wife, who has evidently been a camp-follower of the brigands for some time. While Rikichi ultimately redeems himself, the inexperience of the peasants is a constant source of tension.

Note that the key word is "inexperience," and not "pacifism." While the Mexican farmers seem to divide themselves into two groups, one (led by Sotero, the tavernkeeper) favouring appeasement and pacifism while the other favours resistance, none of the Japanese farmers have any qualms about killing. In fact, while the Mexican farmers are continuously portrayed as good, hardworking people (dressed, you will note, in lily white), the Japanese peasants are not at all what they seem: halfway through the film, it is revealed that the peasants often hunt down, kill, and loot lone or wounded samurai fleeing through their village, and, in fact, have a cache of weapons taken from dead samurai. When the samurai become enraged (one of them even growling that he would like to kill every farmer in the village), Kikuchiyo silences them with an amazingly impassioned speech. Farmers are sly foxes, he tells them, and their poverty is a sham. They appear poor, but dig under the floor boards, look in the hills, and what will you find? Hidden stores of rice, wine, and even money. They loot battlefields, have hidden farms in the hills, and are untrustworthy. "But who made us this way?" he asks, on the verge of tears. "Samurai — samurai like you!" Kikuchiyo then goes on to list the crimes committed against peasants by samurai, and Kambei and company, ashamed, fall silent. The issue is then allowed to rest, but the atmosphere of mistrust remains. This is quite unlike The Magnificent Seven where, quite simply, there is never any confusion about who the enemy is.

That enemy is, of course, Calvera and his bandits. What The Magnificent Seven does that Seven Samurai does not, is to lend characterization to the bandits. While at times the brigands fade into the background of Seven Samurai like some malevolent force of nature, we never forget that the Mexican bandits are characters, too — or perhaps "character" is a better word, since the comically vicious Calvera (played with gusto by Eli Wallach) quickly comes to personify the bandits. While Seven Samurai focuses on the differences between the samurai and peasants, The Magnificent Seven plays up the possibility of similarities — real or imagined — between Calvera's men and Chris. It is this comparison around which the entire plot revolves, the comparison between what motivates Calvera's bandits and what, ultimately, motivates the magnificent seven.

The Magnificent Seven handles the final battle much differently. It begins with the village being betrayed to Calvera by the tavernkeeper, Sotero. While the seven are out looking to drive away Calvera's horses

(in a raid similar to the samurai's initial attack on the bandit's stronghold), Sotero "lets Calvera in." How he does that in a village with no gate or hidden entrance is a mystery, but in any case he somehow manages to let Calvera slip undetected into the village. This is quite clearly never a possibility in Seven Samurai: the struggle is a fight to the finish from the outset, with surrender never being an option. Similarly, in The Magnificent Seven, when Chris is first hired, he quite clearly makes the point that "once you start this, you'd better be prepared to finish it." However, there is at least some suggestion (the script seems a little unclear on this point) that the gunfighters were hired only to "drive off" Calvera, rather than engage him in a fight to the finish. In any case, the seven return to the village to discover Calvera firmly in control, with the villagers disarmed. Calvera has the seven surrender their weapons, and, having the upper hand, orders them to leave, telling them to go rob banks in Texas. Calvera's logic is simple; these gunfighters, being men of violence ("thieves") like himself, will do what he would do and leave without coming back. He contemptuously dismisses the farmers: "If God had not wanted them to be shorn, he would not have made them sheep." The seven are escorted out of town and, once they are a safe distance away, thrown their guns. Chico then lashes out at the cowardice of the farmers, giving Kikuchiyo's "Who made us this way?" speech, ending with the accusation, "Men like Calvera — and men like you." That seems to be the decisive argument. Calvera's miscalculation, of course, was in assuming that these are, at heart, "like him," ready to turn tail and run in the face of superior force. There may be wolves and there may be sheep — but there are also hunters.

The film thus goes to considerable length to set up the super-heroic finale, where the roles are suddenly reversed. The seven are no longer leading a small mob of armed Mexican farmers in defending a well-fortified village, with the advantage of numbers and terrain: suddenly, it is the seven (initially six) who are cast in the role of attackers, attacking a fortified position occupied by a much larger force — and waiting until broad daylight, no less. Their action is thus set up in the most heroic terms possible: they are no longer merely defenders of the oppressed, but liberators, attacking against incredible odds, when they have no "real" reason to do so, other than it being the "right" thing to do. The seven (minus Harry) thus launch their attack on the village.

Naturally, they succeed in freeing the village, but four of the seven are killed in the

assault. However, the whole course of the assault is shown fairly strangely, particularly in regards to the deaths of the gunslingers. The deaths, which in Seven Samurai were needless and horrid (and implicitly a commentary on the grim, unheroic nature of war) are here presented in a strangely schizophrenic way, simultaneously heroic and pointless, even arbitrary. The whole sequence seems designed to let every character in the film redeem themselves at once. For starters, just as the assault begins, Chris gets pinned down in a crossfire and Harry (the fellow who would have us believe that his only motivation is money) comes charging into town *à la* The Light Brigade, shouting "Hang on, Chris, I'll get you out of there!" However, before Harry can even get a shot off, he is mowed down by gunfire, and Chris (suddenly no longer pinned down) has to drag him into a nearby building for his death scene. His death is very heroic, to be sure, but also stagey. The viewer gets the sneaking suspicion that the real cause of death is a hidden screenwriter, rather than actually getting shot. Vin (Steve McQueen in the best Alan Ladd masochistic tradition) moves through town shooting the place up and acquiring a series of increasingly serious wounds (which all vanish by the time he rides out of town). Nonetheless, he keeps on fighting against hopeless odds. Lee, meanwhile, in an elaborate scene, regains his self-respect and redeems himself by first holstering his gun, then bursting into a room of bandits and outdrawing them all. The militant farmers being held hostage in that room then charge into the battle, turning the tide against Calvera. Having proven his heroism, the script then demands that Lee die, and in a truly bizarre moment. Lee walks outside, looking satisfied and relaxed — and nearly instantly gets shot, seemingly having forgotten that a gunfight was going on.

After this point, the pacifist farmers, realizing that it's now a question of fighting or dying, join the fight and seal the outcome of the battle. Chris kills Calvera, who asks what is clearly the central moral question of the film: "Why did you come back? Why?" This in itself isn't so strange, except that as Calvera asks this, the village has fallen silent, and the battle is clearly over — there are no gunshots of any kind for several minutes. It is *after* this point that Red and Riley are shot! Their deaths, unlike those of Kyuzo and Kikuchiyo (which are clearly intended to be parallel) are not merely pointless, but seem to be out and out contrived: the battle is quite clearly over, we never see their assailants and we never hear any other shots. All Red manages to do is throw his knife into a wall in a final defiant

gesture, and Riley's death scene reaffirms his new-found kinship with the farmers. He says, "What's my name?" and when the kid says, "Bernardo," Riley replies, "Damn right," and dies. All we see after Riley's death is a shot of Chris, who walks over to where Red's body lies and (in a classic example of minimalist gunfighter stoicism) picks up Red's knife and folds it. Overall, the contrast with the agonized aftermath of the battle in *Seven Samurai* could not be greater. Clearly, while the outcomes of the two finales are roughly similar, events are arranged in *The Magnificent Seven* in such a way to maximize the theme of heroic individualism, albeit sometimes at the expense of plausibility.

The other major change is in the final scene of the film, following immediately after the battle. Again, the content is nearly exactly the same (with one significant difference) but played to radically different effect. At the end of *Seven Samurai*, very little is said. The peasants are shown planting their crops and singing a traditional planting song, with the surviving samurai watching the planting from the foot of the hill where their fellows lie buried. As Katsushiro watches, a train of women goes by them to the fields, and among them is Shino. Shino stops, and she and Katsushiro exchange a look before Shino goes on to the field to begin planting, and as Shino begins singing we understand quite clearly that this is where it ends for them. Shino can do nothing but try and forget her lost love. So too with Katsushiro, who is shown looking longingly after her, unable to do anything but look on. The peasants' chanting dies down as Kambei, looking at his apprentice, turns to Shichiroji and says, in a grim voice, with loss and bitterness, "Again we couldn't win." To Shichiroji's surprised "Huh?" he answers, "The winners were the farmers. [Pause] Not us." And the camera, accompanied by solemn, sombre music, pans upward and comes to rest on a shot of four graves, each marked by a samurai sword, fading out as the grim final chords swell.

The contrast with the end of *The Magnificent Seven* is like night and day. Chris, Vin and Chico are preparing to ride out of town as the Old Man (who, unlike his Japanese counterpart, survives the battle) says, "You could stay, you know. They wouldn't be sorry to see you stay." However, it seems that everyone knows the answer to that as Chris replies, "They wouldn't be sorry to see us go, either, Old Man." The Old Man sighs as if he knew that was what Chris would say, then waxes poetic in an almost Japanese style (and underscored with uplifting guitar chords):

Old Man

The fighting is over; your work is done.
For them, each season has its tasks.
If there were a season for gratitude, they
would show it more.

Vin

[*seemingly uncomfortable with the
praise*]

We didn't get any more than we expected,
Old Man.

Old Man

[*smiles, nods, and says*]

Only the farmers have won; they remain
forever.

You have rid them of Calvera

The way a strong wind rids them of locusts.

You are like the wind blowing over the land

And passing on.

Vaya Con dios!

The music swells, and the three gunfighters ride out of town, stopping on the first hill. On the way, Chico passes his sweetheart. They look at each other longingly, then she goes to work husking corn. Chico looks at the other two, and Chris waves him back. Chico smiles, waves farewell, and *without looking back* rides back into town, dismounts, *takes his gunbelt off and sets it aside*, then sits down to help with the corn. Chris, watching all this, says in a satisfied tone, "The Old Man was right. Only the farmers won. We lost. We always lose." As the camera shows a shot of the children placing flowers on Riley's grave, the chords burst into the main theme to *The Magnificent Seven*, and Chris and Vin turn away and ride into the distance, the music soaring triumphantly.

Why does this ending, while so similar to that of *Seven Samurai*, work so well in an uplifting way? Three things are at work here: first, unlike the division between samurai and peasant, a gunbelt is something which you can take off, providing, of course, you are still young and innocent enough to do so. So the romantic resolution is possible here in a way that would be inconceivable in *Seven Samurai*. Also, Chico is quite definitely one of "the farmers" that Chris is referring to. While the end of *Seven Samurai* draws its grimness from the fact that the gap between the classes cannot be bridged in this life, here the joy comes from the fact that it can; second, while Kikuchiyo's finally attaining samurai status in death is no source of comfort, the children putting flowers on Riley's grave suggests that there is something touching, almost redemptive, about

the fact that the gunfighters — particularly Riley, who was himself caught between two worlds in life — are finally at rest, having found a sense of love and belonging in death that they never could in life. (As Harry says with his final breath, "Well. I'll be damned," to which Chris replies, "Maybe you won't be.") They have, after all, died fighting for a greater good, a sacrifice which will never be forgotten as long as the village stands; finally, of course, the ending is a textbook example of the mitigating effect of the "*Shane* paradox:" Chris and Vin cannot join the community they have founded, but we never really expect them to, and they don't seem to expect to be able to, either. While Chris' final "We lost. We always lose," is by no means happy, it carries with it a strong sense of self-sacrifice, and of ultimately putting the community before the individual. This sacrifice, it seems, is the ultimate heroic act: the gunfighter *must* always lose, and Chris seems to know it. He isn't entirely happy about it, but he accepts the responsibility. It is that responsibility, it seems, which ultimately separates the magnificent seven from men like Calvera.

The Magnificent Seven, then, takes Kurosawa's story and garbs it in the moral clothing of the western, changing it from a grim drama about the horrors of war and the injustices of class struggle into an uplifting adventure story that muses about the use and abuse of violence while celebrating the heroism of seven individuals who sacrifice themselves for the greater good. The story is essentially the same, but the message is radically changed. Both *The Magnificent Seven* and *Seven Samurai* are deeply satisfying movies each in their own particular genre. One final thought about *The Magnificent Seven* does occur, though: in a very limited way, by virtue of its Mexican setting, the film gains a racial subtext which is completely lacking in the original. Even without using the traditional view of Mexico as a metaphor for Asia, it's difficult to see the film as anything but an endorsement of US interventionism, in particular intervention to protect "defenceless freedom-loving peoples" from their more aggressive countrymen. All in all, it seems more than a little bit reminiscent of American policy in Asia, c. 1960....

{[Brian D. Clarke has temporarily stopped work on his fifth book, *Cooking With Bleach: A Bachelor's Survival Guide*, as he is just far too depressed about not having Dick Nixon to kick around anymore.]}

WILLIE'S WORLD

reviews 'n' stuff by Willie Rimshot

The last, the very final, the ultimate, that's it, no more until the movie episode of ST: TNG, entitled "All Good Things...", opens with Picard becoming terribly confused when he finds himself travelling between the past, present and future. (An alternate name for this episode could have been "Slaughterhouse NCC-1701-D." Makes you wonder who on staff reads Vonnegut. Or, worse yet, who on staff *doesn't* read Vonnegut.) In the present, Picard convinces his crew of what is happening, but in the past (at the time he first took command of the *Enterprise*) they just think he's nuts, while 25 years in the future all his old Starfleet buddies think he's gone senile. To further complicate matters, a space/time disturbance has appeared in all three times which results in a quantum dilemma that could only be solved by the likes of Stephen Hawking or Mr. Science. (Gee, it might even be beyond Hawking!) And who is responsible for all this? Why, Q (gesundheit)!

Considering how TNG has coasted through a terrible final season, it's nice to see them end with a fairly solid, if haphazard, effort. Once again, Patrick Stewart does

marvels as Picard during three different times in the captain's life. Some great effects, too, as Paramount spared no cost to make the last episode memorable. It's a shame no one bothered to find the obvious fatal flaw in the script. The aforementioned space/time disturbance is caused by an out-break of "anti-time" (bear with me here, okay?) which is caused by the *Enterprise* firing a techo-babble ray, er, an inverse tachyon pulse (I know it's hard, but stay with me) in all three times. Because we're dealing with anti-time, the anomaly propagates *backwards* through time, starting in the future, growing bigger in the present, bigger still in the past, until it's so big that it prevents the formation of life on earth (in France, as it happens). In other words, Picard's order to fire the inverse tachyon pulse (in each of the three different times) eventually results in the destruction of man. Ignoring the obvious time travel paradox (if Picard does something in the future that destroys humanity in the past, then humanity (and thus Picard) didn't exist, therefore

Picard couldn't have destroyed humanity, and so humanity (and thus Picard) will exist after all, and so on), there's one gaping flaw in the story. The future Picard (knowing that the present Picard and past Picard have each found this space/time disturbance) is surprised when he doesn't find it where it should be. Still, he orders the inverse tachyon pulse fired, but there is still no sign of the anomaly. Some time later, they return to the spot and find the anomaly. Since the whole plot hinges on Picard realizing that the space/time disturbance is actually spreading *backwards* in time, and that Picard is the cause of it, you'd think the writers would have tried to get this right. If the anomaly travels *backwards* in time, shouldn't Picard find it *before* it is created by the tachyon pulse? (Picard sees it in the present and the past times; why isn't it there in the *immediate* past before its creation?) It should disappear when the pulse is fired. It certainly shouldn't be there *afterward*! Yet it is, and showing signs of expansion.

It's fitting, I guess, that this final episode would be typical of most ST: TNG episodes: well acted, looks great, neat ideas, but scripting is weak and slipshod. One fears for the film, *Star Trek: Generations*, because the same writers who wrote this episode also wrote the movie.

ZINE REVIEWS

BCSFazine # 254

This *Apollo* Anniversary issue features a cover showing a moonscape complete with an astronaut, a LM and a few assorted SF spacecraft. Great stuff. It covers the usual club news but is primarily devoted to articles by the editor about the entire Apollo program. If you haven't got this, grab a copy and read it.

— KJ.

Habakkuk Chapter 3 Verse 3

Bill Donaho
626 58th St.
Oakland, CA
94609

Available for the usual or US\$3.00

One of those interesting "about a whole bunch of stuff" zines, with locs from a whole bunch of people and a whole bunch of neat cartoon fillos. Of note is Leigh

Edmond's article "Fanzine Fandom and Oral Traditions" and the rubber stamped envelope.

— KJ.

World Highways

19/21 High Street
Sutton, Surrey SM1 1DJ
UK

Slick glossy cover of a guy driving a formula one. Inside are articles on bridge repair, plastic waterfilled centre line barriers, management of traffic flow during construction, Nebraskan runways, general road safety.... Hey, this isn't a fanzine. How the @\$% did this get mixed up with my fanzines? I thought I left this at work with my pile of "hey Mr Carl Jonhansen, did you know you are eligdable for a corporate VISA card you can go broke with" letters. Sorry. @\$%.

— KJ.

Victoria Freenet

Okay, so it aint a zine, it's one of them computer things you modern to. I dives into this freenet thing and there's a @\$% load of stuff to read. It's rather like a big letter column without any fillos. Fortunately it's all sorta (with a heavy emphasis on the word "sorta") categorized, so you don't have to sift through gigabytes of stuff you'd just as soon pass on. I'm supposed to be able to get on Internet or use gophers with this thing, but a constant supply of overtime at work has kept me from having time to figure that bit out. E-mail has already slightly cut into my postage budget and taken a serious wack off of my long distance budget. As soon as I think of anything really worth while to e-mail it'll be even better.

The only down side to Freenetting I've noticed (other than that our lawn was recently mistaken by Claoquot protestors for pristine old growth) is that it's too easy to just bloork some comment into a public forum. It's not like when I write a loc, then look at it the next day and actually look up

my source material to discover whether or not my points are reasonably valid. No, now I can make a public fool of myself just as fast as my fingers can type. (And I never thought there was an advantage to typing a slow as I

do.) It's so embarrassing, too, because everyone else obviously carefully considers everything they write, and they *never* post unsupported or unreferenced opinions. What I

need is a program which periodically flashes on the screen: "A closed mouth gathers no feet."

—K.J.

BOOKS, MOVIES, TV (AND OTHER STUFF) REVIEWS

From the Big Bang to Planet X: The 50 Most-asked Questions About the Universe... And Their Answers

by Terence Dickinson

Camden House Publishing

(7 Queen Victoria Rd, Camden East, ON K0K 1J0, dist. by Firefly)

Looking up into the night sky, there are lots of questions to answer. Heck, looking up into the daytime sky, there are questions too, like why is the moon sometimes out in the daytime? Or what was that annular eclipse people were watching Back East in May?

Terence Dickinson has been finding the answers to his own and other people's questions about the stars for years. As a columnist for Harrowsmith magazine and as an astronomer setting up telescopes for public "star parties", Dickinson has been asked the same questions over and over again. He has assembled fifty of these into a book that answers in plain language the astronomy questions that seem to be on everyone's mind.

Dickinson sorts each question into topics such as The Universe, Stars, Planets, The Sun and The Moon, Stargazing, Aliens and More. There is a short appendix of amazing facts, any one of which will wow small children pestering to have the Big Dipper pointed out. ("A thimbleful of pulsar material would weigh as much as all the water in Lake Erie.") For many of the questions, there are suggestions for further reading. The detailed index and table of contents make this a handy reference for people learning about astronomy.

Dickinson explains some theories of the origin of the universe. As he puts it, the Big Bang "was not an explosion into space; rather it was a simultaneous creation and expansion of space." If this is too many big words for your six-year-old, don't panic — this book is not aimed at young children. It's more for teenagers and adults trying to answer their own questions as well as the kids'. If your eyes glaze over when reading "slight variations in the temperature of the background radiation" — skip it

and go on to where Dickinson says "If we could look far enough, we might be able to see all the way back to the beginning of time."

—Paula Johanson

Hot Blooded Dinosaur Movies

by James Van Hise

Pioneer Books, Inc. (5715 N. Balsam Rd, Las Vegas, NV 89130 USA)

US\$14.95 (trade paperback)

Hot Blooded Dinosaur Movies sounds like a matinee at the cinema, with all the monster movies you can handle. The title works, because anyone interested enough to pick up this book will probably get hooked on the photos and narrative.

James Van Hise has written a book on what he loves best: dinosaur movies. Not just the ones with iguanas and alligators dressed up, or men in rubber suits, but the model work that captured his imagination in *King Kong* and built up his hopes for *Jurassic Park*. Over the years, dinosaur model work has frequently involved the best movie technology available, and sometimes artists and writers among the best in the world.

"From the earliest days of the moving picture, the fascination with bringing prehistoric creatures to life on film has existed. Like anything else, this has also gone through cycles, and with the releases of *Jurassic Park* and *Carnosaur* we seem to be entering the latest cycle." Van Hise writes for the dinosaur movie fan, whether dedicated or a dabbler. The names of movie directors and animators are on every page: Willis O'Brien, Irwin Allen, Ray Harryhausen and scores of others. There are even quotes from Fay Wray, who was promised that she would play opposite the tallest, darkest leading man in Hollywood in *King Kong*. This large trade paperback, profusely illustrated with photos of models and scenes from movies, is not aimed at a general audience.

Hot Blooded Dinosaur Movies will be of most interest to "died-in-the-wool

animation fans", to use an expression of Van Hise's. Since my own nine-year-old son is a monster movie fan, we pored over this book together and had a couple of rip-roaring good afternoons. We just love to get together and watch *Godzilla* rip apart Tokyo — and apparently so does James Van Hise. Collectors will enjoy his commentary on the modelling and animating techniques, and the movie storylines.

—Paula Johanson

Nightmare, With Angel

by Stephen Gallagher

376 pp., Ballantine Books/Random House; \$19.50 (hardcover)

Among books where suspense has come to mean murder, mystery has come to mean crime, and both are accompanied by a great deal of violence, Stephen Gallagher's new thriller is curiously sensitive to the real causes of our fears and concerns. *Nightmare, With Angel* has more realism and immediacy than a TV rescue show, and the tension builds like a rising tide.

Eleven year old Marianne Cadogan lives with her distracted and often absent father in a big, empty house by the sea in England. She misses Germany and her mother, whom they never speak of any more, and she remembers being loved as if it were in someone else's life. Wandering on the beach, she is trapped by the rising tide. The stranger who rescues her becomes the focus of her lonely mind.

He warns her to leave him alone, but she won't listen to this outcast, Ryan; and when they go missing together Marianne's father is sure she's been kidnapped. The police have reason to believe it of Ryan, and begin their search. "We've been working on the assumption that Ryan's lying to Marianne about helping to find her mother," says the detective when her investigation takes a new turn. "But perhaps we ought to start worrying about what might happen if he isn't."

The past is shadowing their heels: Ryan's dangerous past, Marianne's childhood and her mother who has disappeared with no word of explanation from her father. The fear her father feels, fear of who she is with and where she is running to, as well as his shame for why she is gone, brings him closer on the trail than the detective's methodical search. There is

much to be afraid and ashamed of, among the people the detective and the father investigate, who do unspeakable things.

All the penance in the world couldn't wipe out the deed, Ryan knows, as he attempts to keep this child safe. No one understands anyone in this complex series of events, not Marianne and the outcast Ryan, not either of her parents, nor even the detective who tries to trace them all through the unfamiliar crowds of Germany.

But there is still something of reality in Ryan's madness, some firm intention to protect Marianne, first by pushing her away, then by taking her to her mother, and lastly by defending her from the people they have come among. The mad are not always dangerous for the reasons we assume.

Stephen Gallagher has written a thriller for people who are jaded with jewel heists and bored with business. Readers whose first loyalties are to home and family will know the desperate search of Marianne's father, and agree with his realization: "if there was anything else in his life that mattered to him right then, he wasn't even going to try to think what it might be."

—Paula Johanson

Powers That Be

by Anne McCaffrey and Elizabeth Ann Scarborough
311 pp; Del Rey; \$26.00 hardcover, now in paperback also

Powers That Be is Anne McCaffrey's latest collaboration, this time with fellow award-winning fantasy author Elizabeth Ann Scarborough. This book will appeal to their loyal readers.

Major Yanaba Maddock is ostensibly retired with a medical disability to the undeveloped, glacial planet Petaybee. Yana's lungs were badly scarred by poison gas during a terrorist attack; she seems an unlikely candidate either for colonist or covert Company operative. In her late middle years, Yana is as strong and proud as any character McCaffrey or Scarborough has ever created to walk the surface of a fantasy world. "Do sit down and tell me how, sir," she snaps at a pushy officer, "I'm supposed to contact you with no radio, no computer, no transportation, no contact person, not even a bloody goddamn pen, sir, or a fraggin' piece of fraggin' bloody paper, sir."

This world, Petaybee, has a motley charm. Ten-month-long winters make the Iditarod Dog Sled Race seem like a picnic. The food is good and fresh or fresh-frozen, but Major Maddock has to learn to cook, something she never picked up in the Company.

Her neighbours, of Inuit and North Irish stock, bring her fish and quilts and cough syrup. She is given help as a newcomer — "someone they want to like. A hero," says Dr. Sean Shongali, genetic scientist specializing in the animals adapted for life on Petaybee. The hot springs Sean shows her, and the clean, cold air, bring a sense of returning health Yana never thought to feel after the poison gas at Bremport.

When they invite her to their "latchkey", a combination of ceilidh and potlatch, Yana is finally able to give to her neighbours in return. What they prize most is her memory of the terrorist attack on Bremport, where many of their own sons and daughters working for the Company died with the starving rebels.

"Having only air for food,
They gave us poison to breathe
Even those who had never harmed
them....

I was sent here to die, too, here where
the snows live.

The waters live, the animals and the
trees live,

And you."

The Company officers expect Yana to uncover the colonists' secrets about disappearing mineral deposits. With loyalties to friends and the Company, Yana is swept into a series of world-changing events which can be suggested by one pilot's cry of "Holy cow, sir, where did that volcano come from?" Dialogue like that hasn't been seen since *Buck Rogers*, but this new SF novel has little of old sci-fi space opera. *Powers That Be* showcases two popular writers telling an imaginative, good-natured story.

—Paula Johanson

Rod Serling: The Dreams and Nightmares of Life in The Twilight Zone

by Joel Engel

1989; Contemporary Books

Gene Roddenberry: The Myth and the Man Behind Star Trek

by Joel Engel

1994; Hyperion Books

Star Trek Creator: The Authorized Biography of Gene Roddenberry

by David Alexander

1994; Penguin/Roc

A number of sf biographies have crossed my path recently. Joel Engel's *Rod Serling: The Dreams and Nightmares of Life in The Twilight Zone* is an engrossing account of how the legendary Serling built that legend and then became trapped in it. It depicts Serling as a hungry young writer determined to succeed, cranking out scripts that live television of the 50s swallowed like

crazy. But Serling, in sharp contrast to his on-screen persona as the near-omniscient host of *The Twilight Zone*, was, in fact, terribly insecure, and would accept any job offer because he was never sure if another would follow. Consequently, while becoming a master of the tv teleplay, he was never able to give the time to novel writing or screenplays that those forms required, and much of his work fell below what he was capable of, further perpetuating his self-fulfilling prophecy. Serling was capable of great work. He won five Emmys for, among others, *Requiem for a Heavyweight* and *The Twilight Zone*, but after *Zone* ended he found himself trapped by his own legend. Indeed, with his best work already behind him, Serling, as Engel points out, probably found himself in a situation akin to a *Twilight Zone* episode: a person who craves critical acclaim and yet whose remarkable talent can no longer garner it. Engel depicts Serling sympathetically as an insecure genius, as troubled by his eventual success as by his quest for it.

Engel's latest book, *Gene Roddenberry: The Myth and the Man Behind Star Trek*, has set some tongues wagging in *Star Trek* fandom. Engel again describes a man who gets caught up by his own legend, but unlike Serling, Roddenberry is depicted as a man who took credit for others' ideas, elevated office politics to new heights (or depths), and abused fellow writers and producers to no end. There is no doubt, of course, that Roddenberry created *Star Trek*, but Roddenberry would eventually come to insist (and believe) that he was responsible for *all* things *Star Trek*. Roddenberry is depicted as at times vindictive and spiteful, and in later years a victim of alcohol and drug abuse. Publicly, he was able to bask in fannish glory and be the benevolent philosopher that Trekkies expected, while privately he manipulated his co-workers and carried on affairs incessantly. Engel's book is well-sourced and researched, and an illuminating, if sobering, look behind the scenes of *Star Trek*.

In contrast is *Star Trek Creator: The Authorized Biography of Gene Roddenberry*, by David Alexander. This work, written with the full co-operation of Gene Roddenberry and Majel Barrett, does its best to paint Roddenberry in a sympathetic light. To be fair, Alexander's book is not entirely a puff piece. He does open the closet door on a few skeletons, but by no means takes them out for a walk. And while others have accused Engel of writing with an agenda, it can readily be argued that it is Alexander who is doing so. Engel's sources are many and varied, while Alexander relies

to a large extent only on Roddenberry's letters, hardly an unbiased source. Alexander also seems to skip over facts that may present Roddenberry in a negative light. After reading Alexander's book, one has the impression that Roddenberry wrote the script for *Star Trek: The Motion Picture* by himself, when in reality he never even received a screen credit. Harold Livingston, the writer who received the screenplay credit, is mentioned but once in the entire book, and only in a quote from another book. In point of fact, Livingston and Alan Dean Foster (who received story credit) went to the Screenwriters' Guild for arbitration when Roddenberry tried to add his name to the script (as recounted in Engel's book and elsewhere). Also glossed over are the myriad improprieties that haunted the writers and producers of *ST: TNG* during its first couple of seasons, like Roddenberry's lawyer doing script re-writes. As the old saying goes, there are three sides to every to every story: yours, mine, and the truth. One suspects that in this case the truth is somewhere in the middle but leaning strongly towards Engel's version.

—J.W.H.

Sideshow

by Sherri S. Tepper
Bantam Books; \$26.50

Once again, Sheri Tepper's talents coax the reader, with simple stories, to consider great moral questions. *Sideshow* can be read as an independent book, but it has references to Tepper's earlier works, *Grass* and *Raising the Stones*. It hits the same tone of discussing mundanities and everyday life with the cumulative effect of some very unusual results in the long run.

Are we who we choose to be — masculine, feminine, high-status, beggars, security or threat? When people understand each other and live in peace, is that the work of God? What is free will? What is the proper response to an evil action?

By starting with family life and daily work, Tepper leads her characters to face great moral questions. She does not have the writing styles of Alice Sheldon or Theodore Sturgeon, but she is alive and writing today on topics no other writer dares touch.

—Paula Johanson

The Tamuli: Domes of Fire

by David Eddings
1993 471 pp.; Del Rey; \$6.99 (paperback)
The Tamuli: The Shining Ones
1993 470 pp. Del Rey; \$29.00 (hardcover)

Books hold appeal for different people, and clichés aside, sometimes a book is judged by its cover. The illustrated covers for David Eddings' new series of novels, painted by Darrell Sweet, positively shout Fantasy Adventure and Sword and Sorcery. This can be good news. However, the covers also feature the author's name printed in larger letters than the title. This signals Popular Genre — but I think Eddings has not fallen into the formula fiction trap with *Domes of Fire* and *The Shining Ones*.

This new series, *The Tamuli*, is a sequel to Eddings' earlier trilogy *The Elenium*. There are enough pitched battles and magic powers to delight many fantasy readers. The mythology and theology are a pleasantly complex plot element, with more of a Hindu tone than Greek/Roman or the currently popular European Pagan. There is a mundane quest as well as a more spiritual goal, plus a little artful thieving.

Ah, but the characters! When one of the brave knights comments that he can't keep their associates' names straight, I don't mind admitting that I can't either. And when the Queen comments half-way through the second novel "I feel as if I've lived through all of this before" I have to agree with her, because I have — in the previous novel! But later there are appearances by the Troll God of Kill, the God of Eat and the God of ... Lust. (Did I mention the PG rating these books deserve?)

These books are a cheerful romp and I am looking forward to the next in the series, *The Hidden City*. I expect more brave knights in battle, crafty thieves loyal to the Queen, magic users driven by love and ethics ... and if the Queen's loving seven-foot-tall bodyguard doesn't take out a few more bad guys with her daggers and a sharpened spoon, I'll be disappointed.

—Paula Johanson

The Vampire Companion: the Official Guide to Anne Rice's The Vampire Chronicles

by Katherine Ramsland
Ballantine Books/Random House of Canada
508 pp. Canada \$38.95 (hardcover)

The Vampire Companion is an enjoyable reference book for the loyal readers of Anne Rice's *The Vampire Chronicles*. The four books Rice has written about vampires (*Interview with the Vampire*, *The Vampire Lestat*, *The Queen of the Damned*, and *The Tale of the Body Thief*) are a best-selling series detailing the lives and loves of a dynasty of vampires. In thousands of pages the legends have grown with the telling of details which give these books their singular attraction for fans.

Katherine Ramsland has researched Ann Rice's *Vampire Chronicles* thoroughly to produce a definitive guide to these writings. References to key events in the novels are filed in an alphabetical listing along with metaphors and plot developments such as "Estrangement." (See also *Intimacy*, *Isolation*, *Relationships*, *Veil of Silence*.) These entries are followed by a Time Line, a Vampire Atlas and a Bibliography. The result is an unusually interesting commentary on Rice's novels, with a surprising number of references to classic literature, the Bible and mythology. Ramsland quotes Rice as saying that she thinks "people are hungry for imagery and for the deeper truths that fantasy and myth give them." Readers who are hungry will find a collection of images here which will encourage them to return to Rice's novels with a new appetite.

One entry is as follows: "Sensuality: a trait vampires possess. Their heightened senses empower them to exploit, with finely tuned skill, the mechanisms of arousal. To victims (and sometimes to each other) they are seductive, charming, and irresistible, and move with feline grace. Some vampires exhibit the behaviour of obsessive lovers, making the victim feel highly desired. Armand develops his own sensuality into an art as he blends together the carnal and the spiritual. See also Armand, *Intimacy*, *Rapture*, *Seduction*, *Sex*, *Vampire*, *Victims*."

Katherine Ramsland states in her Introduction her intention that *The Vampire Companion* will offer readers "a means for exploring how Rice's supernatural fiction addresses human concerns. Rice's intent as a novelist is to provide a way to look at life from a unique angle, and my hope for this *Companion* is to help readers probe the works more deeply."

This massive hardcover at \$38.95 is not an affordable introduction to the supernatural fiction of Anne Rice (still available in paperback). It is, however, a thought-provoking commentary for the reader who returns time and again to these novels; and it may help to explain the interest and attraction that vampire stories have for so many people.

—Paula Johanson

"One Small Step..." But A Lot Of Books To Read

Below is a sampling of some of the books available on the space program. No doubt others will be published during this anniversary year. This should not in any way be considered a complete list.

Appointment on the Moon

by Richard S. Lewis; Ballantine; 1969.
An account of the American space program from *Explorer* to *Apollo*.

Apollo: The Race to the Moon

by Charles Murray & Catherine Bly Cox; Simon & Schuster; 1989.

A wonderful book that covers the *Apollo* program from start to finish. Well worth searching out. (Incidentally, the book starts with a section about some of the Canadian engineers who were laid off when the *Avro Arrow* was cancelled and headed down to NASA looking for work.)

Carrying the Fire

by Michael Collins; Farrar, Straus & Giroux; 1974.

The *Apollo 11* command module pilot's own story of his space career. Probably the best of any books by the astronauts. Look for this one.

Challenger: A Major Malfunction

by Malcom McConnell; Doubleday; 1987.
McConnell (who has also written some sf) was at Cape Canaveral covering the *Challenger* on its fateful flight. His book looks back on the history of the shuttle program and behind the scenes at the decision making process that led to tragedy.

Deke!

by Donald K. "Deke" Slayton with Michael Cassutt; Forge; 1994.

The memoirs of the late astronaut make for good reading. The best of the latest crop of space books.

Diary of a Cosmonaut: 211 Days in Space

by Valentin Lebedev; Bantam; 1990.
The story of Lebedev and his fellow cosmonaut Anatoly Berezovoy and their seven months aboard *Solyut-7*. A fascinating look at the other space program.

For All Mankind

by Harry Hurt III; Atlantic Monthly Press; 1988.

An absorbing account of the *Apollo* program, whose narrative is bolstered by interviews with all 24 astronauts who went to the moon. An excellent book.

The Home Planet

edited by Kevin W. Kelly; Addison Wesley, Mir Publishers; 1988

Arguably the most important book in this list. A large, lavish collection of photographs of earth taken from space, interspersed with comments from astronauts and cosmonauts representing every nation that has sent people to space. Breathtaking, spell-binding and intensely moving, this is the closest thing to being there. Horrifically expensive, and worth ten times its price. You cannot finish this book without feeling awe at the amazing beauty of our home, and fear for its fragility.

A House in Space

by Henry S. F. Cooper, Jr.; Bantam; 1978.
The story of the *Skylab* missions. Lots of pictures.

Life In Space

Time-Life Books; 1983.

A huge, info-packed "coffee-table" book loaded with the sort of breathtaking pictures we've come to expect from *Life*. Covers the years from *Mercury* to the first flight of *Challenger*.

Liftoff: The Story of America's Adventure in Space

by Michael Collins; Grove Press; 1988.

The *Apollo 11* astronaut recounts the history of American spaceflight from Chuck Yeager to *Challenger*.

A Man on the Moon

by Andrew Chakin; Viking; 1994.

This just came out so I haven't read it yet. It does look good, though, and it's thick.

Men From Earth

by Buzz Aldrin and Malcom McConnell; Bantam; 1989.

Return to Earth

Colonel Edwin E. "Buzz" Aldrin, Jr. with Wayne Warga; Random House, 1973.

Men From Earth is a solid account of Aldrin's astronaut career, while *Return to Earth* deals with Aldrin's struggles and inability to cope with instant fame and becoming, truly, an overnight legend. Both are good reads. (The paperback of *Men From Earth* features a cover painted by *Apollo 12* moon-walker Al Bean.)

Moon Shot

by Alan Shepard and Deke Slayton with Jay Barbree and Howard Benedict; Turner; 1994.
The companion volume to the TBS special of the same name, is a nice, easy, light read. Worth a look.

Of a Fire on the Moon

by Norman Mailer; Little Brown; 1969.

Mailer's account of the epic journey of *Apollo 11*. Fascinating, complex and, well, Mailer.

Prescription for Disaster

by Joseph J. Trento; Harrap; 1987.

"From the glory of *Apollo* to the betrayal of the shuttle" reads the tag line for this book as author Trento traces what went wrong with the space program.

The Right Stuff

by Tome Wolfe; Bantam; 1980

Wolfe's account of test pilots, and the Original Seven, is superb. A rich, wonderful book, and darn fun, too. The movie's great, as well.

We Reach the Moon

by John Noble Wilford; Bantam; 1969.

An "instant" book, a nuts and bolts account of the race to the moon. Includes a great 64-page colour photo insert.

-- J.W.H.

"Houston, we've had a problem."

-- James Lovell, *Apollo XIII*

Author Profile: Margaret Dymant

by Paula Johanson

When people were glued to the television, watching the hockey playoffs, not all the streets in Victoria were quiet. On Oak Bay Avenue, outside Ivy's Bookstore, a small crowd gathered, waiting for the chance to meet author Margaret Dymant at the launch of her book, *Drawing the Spaces*. They lined up forty minutes early, and lingered half an hour after the launch was supposed to be over. Victoria's book lovers know who they like, and Dymant is definitely gaining their attention.

"The one thing I hadn't considered was that my children would be proud when my book came out," Dymant says when interviewed in her Fairfield home. She's getting used to being recognized in Victoria's literary scene, but being the object of so much interest is still surprising to her.

"I admire writers who can move around in a lot of genres," Dymant says. "I think of myself as a fiction writer. I've had a lot more success in poetry, which I write while I'm supposed to be writing fiction." Dymant is a journalist as well, writing reviews, profiles, a column for the *Victoria Times-Colonist* and articles for *Boulevard* magazine. The stories in *Drawing the Spaces* are a little like the writing of Robert Kroetsch or Jane Rule: clear descriptions of life with a occasional speculative element. Dymant has a imaginative Canadian literary voice.

Since the 1970s in Ontario, Margaret Dymant has been writing articles and Quaker pamphlets, and a collection of poetry. Above all else, this experience taught her how to pull good writing out of a person. "I edited a couple of friends' manuscripts and realized this was something I could charge for," she admits. "I started to do manuscript evaluations." Six years ago she began teaching courses, first for Carleton University's extension program, then freelancing her own course at an arts centre.

"When I came to Victoria four years ago — three thousand miles from Ottawa — I had to overcome the barrier of putting out a pamphlet about my courses and evaluations." Dymant looks sheepish for a moment as she explains, "The pamphlet needed a lot of information about me." She put in a lot of miles on her bicycle learning the town. "Word of mouth helped promote my courses. I still have to do brochures, but people do go on from my courses to publish." That's the best advertising of all.

"One person started specifically because she wanted to write better letters to her grandchildren. Then she got totally submerged in poetry and hasn't come out yet." Dymant laughs easily. Many students get totally submerged in imaginative and realist writing. "A big contribution to the culture of the country is people writing their own memoirs and letters. I never say forget it, you're not a writer. That's an internal decision. Some people would rather dance or paint. What I'm good at is creating an ambience where people feel comfortable, and that lets them decide not to censor themselves too much.

"I do insist they give each other constructive comments. Some teachers get results by being confrontational but I'm a lot more accepting. I see the walking wounded. A lot of people's writing spirit goes into hiding when they're viciously criticized." She's not conducting therapy sessions, though — what her students come for is writers' workshops. For herself, Margaret Dymant admits to needing deadlines as well as the challenge and support of her husband Paul.

Her works in print now include *Drawing the Spaces*, a collection of short fiction from Orca Books, *Tracing A Line*, a poetry collection from Ekstasis Editions, and a poetry chapbook titled *I Didn't Get Used To It*. For the future, Orca Books has first refusal rights on her next work of fiction, and Dymant is working on another novel. She'll keep up the editing and the courses, though — next to writing she loves teaching best.



Red's Dwarf

1994 Bram Stoker Awards

Novel—*The Throat*, by Peter Straub;
 First Novel—*The Thread That Binds the Bones*, by Nina Kiriki Hoffman;
 Novella—"The Night We Buried Road Dog," by Jack Cady;
 Novelette—"Death in Bangkok," by Dan Simmons;
 Short Story—"I Hear the Mermaids Singing," by Nancy Holder;
 Collection—*Alone with the Horrors*, by Ramsey Campbell;
 Non-Fiction—*Once Around the Bloch*, by Robert Bloch;
 Other Media—Jonah Hex: "Two Gun Mojo," by Joe R. Lansdale;
 Special Trustee's Award: Vincent Price;
 Lifetime Achievement: Joyce Carol Oates.

Fandom's first high-tech ultrasound horse, Amadeus, was born May 9, 1994, at approx. 1:00 AM. Weighing in at around 100 pounds and standing three and a half feet high at the shoulder, the little guy was up on his feet within an hour. Then he was on everyone else's feet. In contrast to the high-tech pregnancy, it was a low-tech birth with only the mother, Red, present. No intercoms, closed-circuit tv monitors or pressure-sensitive surcingles were used; consequently, Red timed it so that Grandma Monica arrived on the scene some 20 minutes after the birth. Despite some post-partum traumatic stress, Monica is reported to be doing fine.

SCIENCE FICTION NEWS

George Lucas says the next *Star Wars* movie will open in 1997. He might even direct.... *seaQuest DSV* will be back next season. Look for cast changes, as Stephanie Beacham and of most the cast is leaving, and a greater emphasis will be placed on sf. (The reason that they blew up the *seaQuest* in the last episode of this season is that the production is moving to Florida and it's cheaper to build new sets than move the old ones.).... Joining *seaQuest DSV* on Sunday nights will be another series from Steven Spielberg's Amblin Productions. *Earth 2* will be about survivors of a spaceship crash and stars Clancy Brown (*Highlander*, *Buckaroo Banzai*).... Amblin is also continuing negotiations about a new *Doctor Who* series, and one name being tossed about as a possible candidate to star as the new Doctor is Eric Idle.... *Babylon 5* is picked up for a second season. Michael O'Hare will no longer be a regular. The new commander is Bruce Boxleitner.... Also returning this fall are *Lois & Clark*, *Highlander* and *The X-Files*. *M.A.N.T.I.S.* will be a series this fall on Fox, and CTV has picked up *TekWar*.... *The Puppet Masters*, based on the Heinlein classic and starring Donald Sutherland, opens this fall.... *Batman Forever* begins filming is September. Val Kilmer stars as Batman, joined by Chris O'Donnell as Robin, Tommy Lee Jones as Two-Face, and Jim Carrey as the Riddler.... Ron Howard will direct Tom Hanks as astronaut James Lovell in a film based on Lovell's soon-to-be-released book about *Apollo 13*.... The new James Bond movie is called *Goldeneye*. The new James Bond is Pierce Brosnan.... *Star Trek: Voyager* will premiere on the new Paramount network in January, 1995. No cast announced yet.... Meanwhile, *Star Trek: Generations* will open in theatres in late November. It features all the *TNG* regulars, plus Malcolm McDowell as Soran, and appearances by original Trekkers James "Scotty" Doohan, Walter "Chekov" Koenig, and William Shatner as you-know-who. The worst kept secret of the film? Kirk dies. The best kept secret? So does the *Enterprise*.

Dell Books will publish at least four *Babylon 5* novelizations next year.... K.W. Jeter has sold two sequels to *Blade Runner* to Bantam.... *Star Trek: Federation*, a hardcover by Judith and Garfield Reeves-Stevens, will feature a cross-over between all the original and *TNG* characters.

Obituaries

George Peppard

George Peppard made his film debut in *The Strange One* in 1957, but his big break came in 1961 opposite Audrey Hepburn in *Breakfast at Tiffany's*. As his film career waned, he turned to television, starring in *Banacek*, *Doctor's Hospital* and as Hannibal Smith, the cigar-chomping leader of *The A-Team*. Genre fans will recall his work in *Battle Beyond the Stars* and *Damnation Alley*. Once a two-pack-a-day smoker, Peppard had cancer surgery in 1992, and died of pneumonia on May 8, 1994. He was 65.

Richard Nixon

"Ding! Dong! The Dick is dead!
Which old Dick?
The Tricky Dick!
Ding! Dong! The Tricky Dick is dead!
He's gone where the unwanted go
Below, below, below
The trashcan of history
There is no mystery
So Sing!
Ding! Dong! The Dick is dead...."
(with no apologies to anyone...)

I heard last night that Richard Milhouse Nixon died five days after his heart attack. Singing might be a little crass, but I certainly am not going to pretend to feeling any sorrow that the co-author (with unconvicted war criminal Henry Kissinger) of the war in Cambodia has finally shuffled off this mortal coil. It's at times like this that I get religion just long enough to hope that such a person meets god, and that god turns out not to believe that "just following orders" is an excuse.

Most people remember Nixon for Watergate, remembering a sitting American president hounded from office by the mad dogs of the press. Very few remember the extent of Nixon's veniality and the breadth of his criminality. And make no mistake, Nixon violated so many laws and principles that it's a miracle he wasn't busted for public zoophilia for humping Checkers on national tv in an effort to gain votes. Nor is it fair to say that he was hounded from office by a bunch of mad dogs. Pursued by a pack of yapping puppies, perhaps....

Nixon's gone and I am glad. I'm only sorry that I've had to put up with twenty years of his trying to appeal to the court of

history and now I'll have to put up with twenty years of reappraisal of his career. From Alger Hiss to the Checkers speech, the Kennedy debate to Watergate, we are going to have to put up with everyone and his dog trying to put a positive spin on his life, to put the sanctified glow of a Dead President around him. I am already tired of hearing about his historic trip to China—he put in place the policies still followed by his successors; right up to allowing China to maintain "most favoured nation" trading status after killing possibly four to six thousand in Tiananmen Square (see: *The Iron House*).

The tendrils of the Dick spread deep and wide; from his advances in manipulating the White House press corps in the era of television to the efforts of the Republicans to gain revenge by pursuing Whitewater (another case of the unspeakable in pursuit of the inedible?). The Dick is the exposed savage shadow of American politics, imperial and ugly. Gods, when the Dick was running Washington, the blood on the floor was so deep you needed golf shoes to get around (to quote Dr. Thompson). Let us not rehabilitate Richard Milhouse Nixon, let us remember him exactly as he was; Amerikkka personified. Let us never forget.

— E.B. Klassen

Robert Gunderson

Robert Gunderson was born in a large green net in Belknapville, Monongalia, Spenn

STOP THE PHOTOCOPIER!

Victoria's Beach Holme Publish-ed
ing has sold its Tesseract sf line to a group of writers and editors. The group consists of Candace Jane Dorsey, se. Elisabeth Vonarburg, Gerry Truscott, Michael Skeet, Lorna Toolis, Timothy Anderson and Robert Runté. The sale includes all of the Tesseract backlist, and the five books already in the works. In *Locus*, Dorsey said, "Tesseract Books is the only dedicated line of speculative fiction in Canada, and the fact that it has been purchased by people very committed to continuing and perhaps expanding that line is very important." The new-look Tesseract will be launched at PP. ConAdrian with a special project. The new address is 10022 103rd Street, 3rd Floor, Edmonton, AB, T5J 0X2. Good luck from UTOH!

and several butchers' aprons.