

CUSFUSSING #46

APRICON VII



The Guest of Honor

Christopher Stasheff

CHRISTOPHER STASHEFF was born January 15, 1944, the child of two English teachers. His father also worked as a television producer and later as a professor. Because his brother was a puppeteer, Stasheff began early in life to write puppet plays, then moved on to people plays in high school. He attended the University of Michigan, where he majored in speech and theater with minors in English and Asian studies, but did not take many writing courses. At the University of Michigan he also began working in educational television, which he was to continue at the University of Nebraska while working for his doctorate.

During his college years Stasheff wrote his first book, a non-SF novel. His first science fiction novel came about because of a writing contest held by the Magazine of Fantasy and Science Fiction. He finished the novel eight months after the contest deadline. Unable to turn the book in to the competition, Stasheff sent it instead to Ace Books --and so The Warlock In Spite of Himself came into print. The Warlock series since then has included:

King Kobold

King Kobold Revived (10 years after the original)

The Warlock Unlocked

The Warlock Enraged should be appearing on bookstands just about in time for this convention. Future volumes of the series should include:

The Warlock Wandering (around next June)

The Warlock is Missing

The Warlock Heretical

The Warlock Insane

The Old Family Robot

Stasheff has also published two books not directly connected to the series: Escape Velocity and A Wizard in Bedlam.

Currently, Christopher Stasheff teaches a course in radio and television at Montclair State College, where he has worked since 1972. He is trying to combine writing, teaching, and a family; which is why he can't spend as much time on any of them as he'd like to.

Schedule

Map on page vii.

ALL DAY	Art Display Japanese Animation Creative Room	East Wing Lion's Den 202
12:00	Speech by Christopher Stasheff	204
12:00-1:30	Movie: <u>The Mouse That Roared</u>	Wollman Aud.
1:00	Speech by Prof. Gerald Feinberg "Extra-Terrestrial Life"	203
1:00-4:00	First D&D Tournament (Register at desk by 12:30)	
2:00	Ellen Kushner reads from her soon-to-be-released book	204
2:00-3:30	Movie: <u>Metropolis</u>	Wollman Aud.
3:00	Panel Discussion: "Horror"	103
4:00-6:00	Movie: <u>Blade Runner</u>	Wollman Aud.
4:00	Reading by Christopher Stasheff	203
5:00-8:00	Second D&D Tournament (Register at desk by 4:30)	
5:00	Panel Discussion: "Sexism in Fantasy and Science Fiction"	204
6:00	Panel Discussion: "Why Have F&SF Become Mainstream?"	203
6:30-8:00	Movie: <u>The Mouse That Roared</u>	Wollman Aud.
7:00	The Sophist	103
8:00	Trivia Contest	203
8:00-12:00	Filksinging	107
8:30-10:00	Movie: <u>Metropolis</u>	Wollman Aud.
9:00	Panel Discussion: "Why Fantasy?"	204
10:00	Panel Discussion: "Your Worst Moment at a Con"	203
10:30-12:30	Movie: <u>Blade Runner</u>	Wollman Aud.

Selected Events

THE SOPHIST: Come hear the other-worldly sounds of this renowned musician's electronic wave music. The Sophist has performed at numerous other conventions and is currently working on a movie.

TRIVIA CONTEST: Test your F&SF trivia knowledge in competition for a mystery prize!

JAPANESE ANIMATION: Not just any cartoons! Come see what some of the best Japanese animators have to offer.

FILKSINGING: Folksinging with a humorous F-SF twist.

CREATIVE ROOM: Everything you need to vent your creative tendencies: crayons, markers, pens, pencils, paper, and even a typewriter. You absolutely MUST drop in.

A Few of Our Guests

- BRENDA W. CLOUGH: "I have worked in journalism for some years before taking up full-time writing this year. My first novel, THE CRYSTAL CROWN, was published by DAW Books in 1984. A second, THE DRAGON OF MISHBIL, appeared in September, and THE REALM BENEATH is scheduled to come out in 1986."

- VINCENT DI FATE worked in animated film before beginning his freelance art career. He writes a column on art in science fiction for Starship magazine. His artwork has won several awards, including a Hugo; several of his paintings are on display in the Smithsonian's Space Art collection. In addition, he currently has a book of his work in print from Workman entitled DiFate's Catalogue of Science Fiction Hardware.

- FRANK BELKNAP LONG has been writing stories and poetry since 1924. Considered a master in the horror/fantasy genre, he has been honored with a Lifetime Achievement Award by The World Fantasy Convention, and also The First Fandom Hall of Fame Award. His works include The Hounds of Tindalos, The Dark Beasts, and The Horror Expert.

- ELLEN KUSHNER graduated from Barnard College in 1977. After two months of fruitless search, she got a temporary job at Ace Books cataloguing contracts for Jim Baen, the new Science Fiction editor. Then his secretary quit so she got to type his letters. Her clerical incompetence was so outstanding that, in a few short months, she was editing fantasy for Ace. They let her produce an anthology called BASILISK. Then she went and edited fantasy for Pocket Books, which soon became Timescape. In 1980 she quit her job to write. Her latest book is Outlaws of Sherwood Forest, Bantam Choose-Your-Own-Adventure #47. Her novel, Sword's Point: a Melodrama of Manners, is supposed to be published in England by Allen & Urwin in Fall, 1986.

In her spare time, Ms. Kushner represents illustrators Judith Mitchell and Martin Springett; scouts for Allen & Unwin's Unicorn fantasy line; reviews books for her hometown paper, The Cleveland Plain Dealer; tries on shoes and picks paint off the kitchen walls.

- BETSY MITCHELL learned copyediting and proof reading as a-cub reporter on the Omaha World-Herald newspaper, where she worked for 2½ years before moving to New York. During a stint as copywriter at Dell Books, she met the notorious science fiction editor Jim Frenkel, who introduced her to the wonderful world of writing back cover blurbs. From there she moved to Analog magazine as Managing Editor, and then to the then-brand-new Baen Books as Senior Editor, where she remains. She has published one short story, in Analog, of which she is inordinately proud. -BM

- MARCIA WILSON: "I am a 48-yr-old (overweight) etcher and woodcarver, mother of three children and three cats, graduate of Vassar College ('58), former wife of chess author and bookseller Fred Wilson, and owner of a 14-yr-old Volkswagen wreck. My little etchings are autobiographical or illustrate biblical themes or fairytales - sometimes they copy old photographs. Some people ask if my etchings will ever become famous. I say NO but worth the money anyway."

- BENJAMIN YALOW: Benjamin Yalow has been active in Fandom since 1971. He has attended over 200 conventions, starting with Lunacon in 1971, and 15 worldcons, starting with Noreascon. Of those, he has worked on over 70, including Westercon, Boskone, Lunacon, and Worldcons. He chaired Lunacon in 1978. Mr. Yalow has also contributed to several fanzines.

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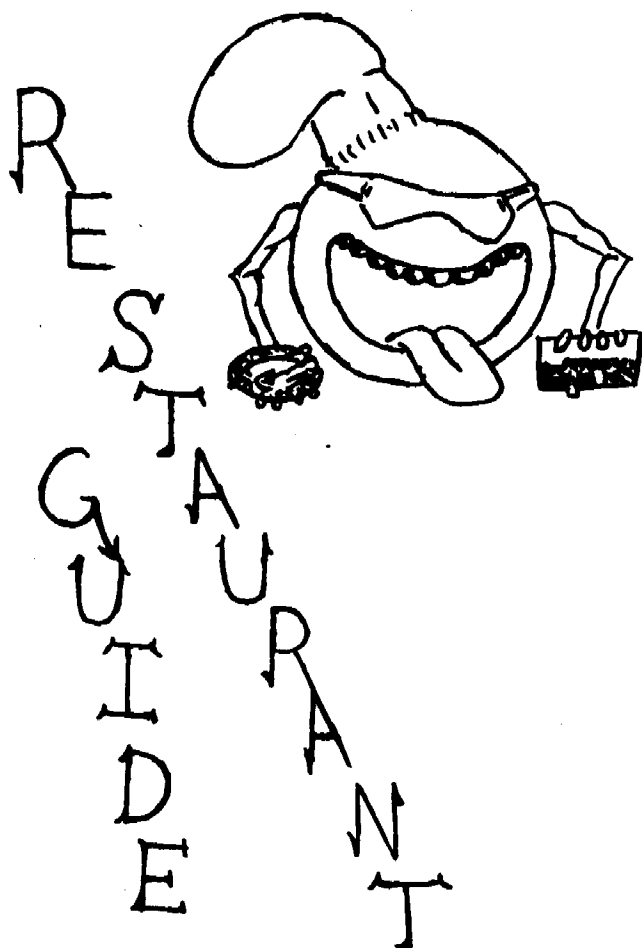
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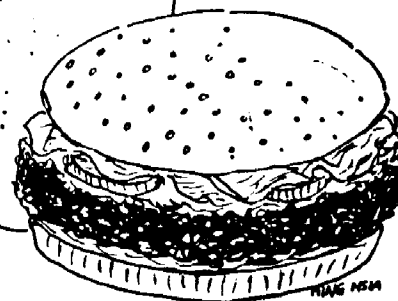
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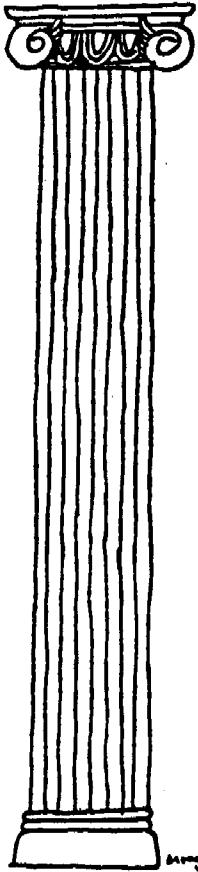
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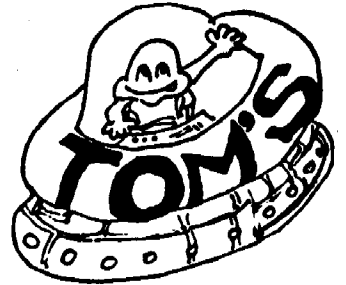
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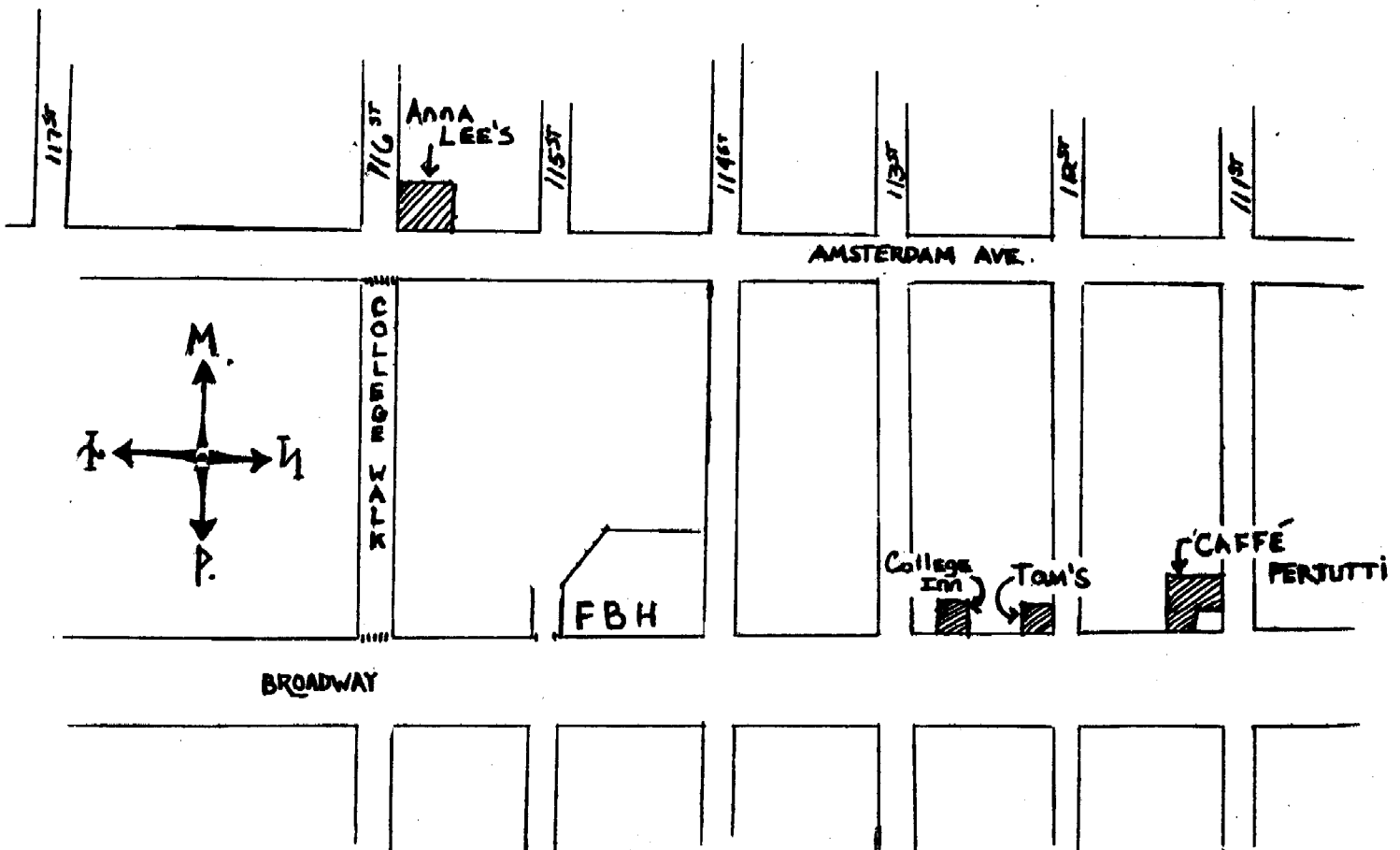
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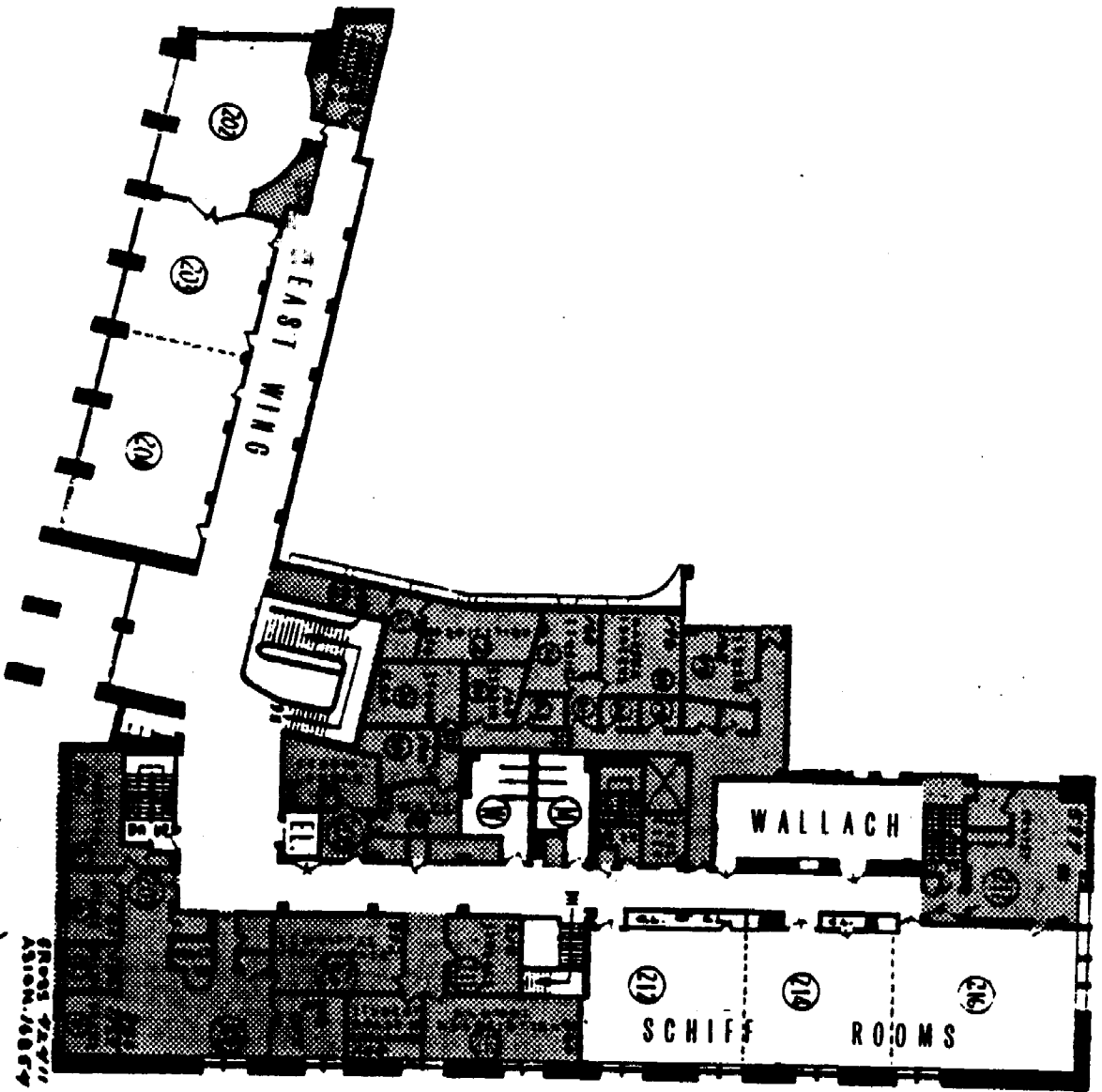
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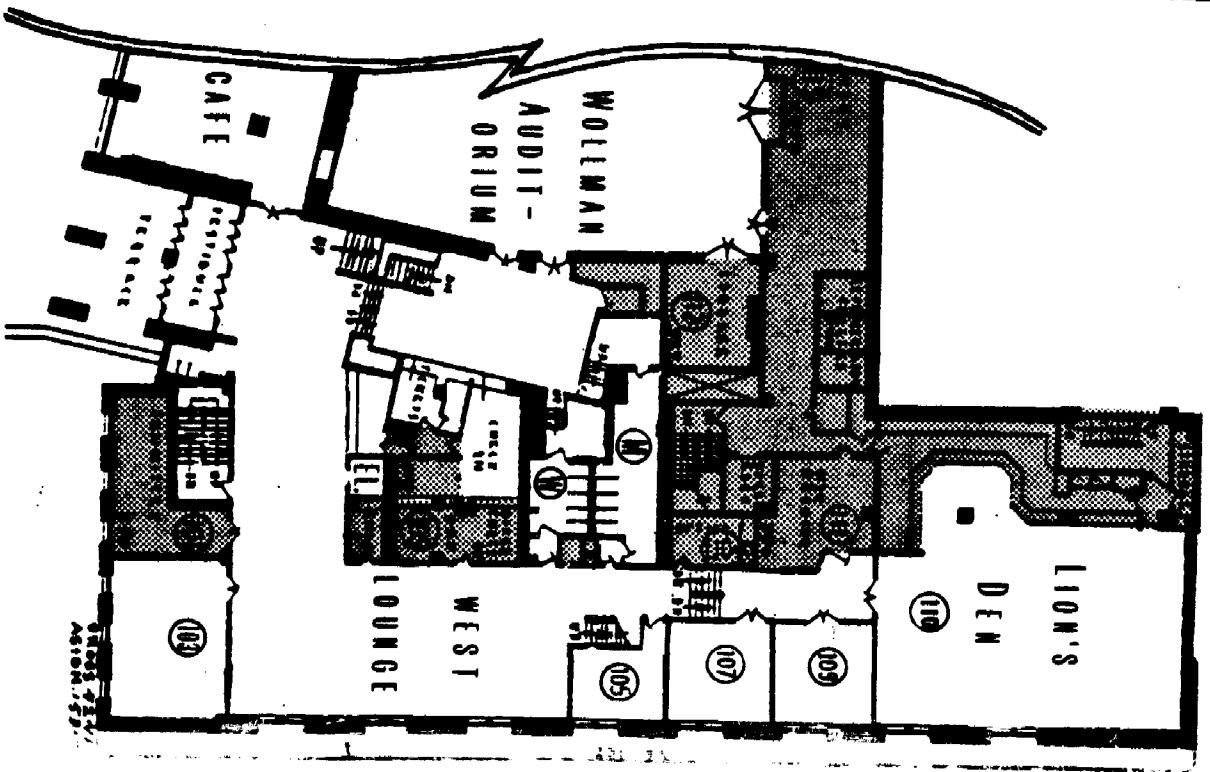


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CUSFUSSING #46



ISSUE NUMBER FORTY-SIX

November 9, 1985

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Ray's Rantings

Lorjan

As the saying goes, "The more things change, the more they remain the same." Another CUSFuSSing issue, another editor. But still the same headaches as always, I'm sure, especially running up to the deadline as we are now. . .

Allow me to informally introduce myself: Raymond Loy, engineer lost somewhere between frosh and senior years, latest person to be conned into being CUSFuSSing's editor (forgive the pun). I don't know why I was lucky enough to be chosen for this esteemed office, except maybe that I'm just too stupid to say "No" when I'm offered a Herculean task, regardless, and in keeping with the spirit that I should finish what I start, I do not intend this to be my first, last, and only issue. Famous last words. . .

Of course, the big event around here now is the con. (More headaches.) When you read this at the con or afterwards, just remember that Apricon VII has been two (?) years in the making- although I can only claim to have had a part in it for less than one- and that's been enough to give me nightmares already.

. . . Moving on to my first "serious" topic: fanzines reviewing other fanzines. There's absolutely nothing wrong with fair, constructive criticism- in fact, we could use more of it, both in the other 'zines' reviews and in our own LOCs. However, the key operative is fair. I personally do not think a one line review can be fair, and I've just seen one of those. . . It also disturbs me to see the majority of a 'zine devoted to reviewing other 'zines; leaving out so much other wonderful "stuff" defeats the purpose of being a 'zine. Maybe these 'zines just don't have anything else.

. . . Well, back to my efforts to make CUSFuSSing bigger on the inside than on the outside!

Raymond M. Loy
October 18, 1985

Susan L. Toker
80 Watchung Avenue
Upper Montclair, NJ 07043
September 1985

Dear BCSFS,

I've been enjoying getting issues of CUSFuSSing and it is now time to pay up so I'm sending you copies of three pieces of art (never published anywhere else!) for your use in CUSFuSSing.

I like the way you mix up fiction, reviews, and autobiographies. It is a nice blend and it makes the zine fun to read.

Good luck with 1985!

Yours,
Susan L. Toker

Phillip J. De Parto
701 Eighth Street
Lyndhurst, NJ 07071
September 21, 1985

Dear Jon:

A belated congratulations upon assuming the duties of editor. Although never a student at Columbia, I have been on your mailing list for several years as a result of friendships with several B/C alumni. Enclosed is a book review I've been meaning to mail to you for a couple of months. Feel free to edit it down if you feel it's too long.

I've always enjoyed receiving CUSFuSSing and especially enjoys Carolyn Sher's overview of the Star Trek novels last issue. Please encourage her and your other contributors to attempt similar articles.

I met Pauline Alama and E. Warwick Daw at a summer meeting of the Science Fiction Association of Bergen County, an sf group on the other side of the Hudson which I run. You are all welcome to attend.

I hope to be able to make it to Apricon and meet you there. Until then, good luck and best wishes.

Sincerely,
Phillip J. De Parto
Director, SFABC

(Jon? Close enough, your'e only one editor behind. Many thanks for the reviews and the invite.)

Setting President

Hi folks! I bet you all thought you were through seeing columns from me. Well, just because I'm president now doesn't mean I've been put out to pasture. It actually means I'm being even more overworked. Someone (I think it may have been me) had the bright idea of running this con without a conchair, so guess who gets to run it. That's right, me! From the preponderance of information about Apricon in this combined program book/CUSFuSSing, you might think that that is all we are doing. Well, it's not.

On September 22, we had a celebration of Bilbo and Frodo's birthday, followed by an expedition to the mines of Moria. On October 5 we had a pot luck dinner at Ray's suite (Ray is editor now, in case you haven't run across his column on the way to this one.) On November 1 we will have had a Halloween party (strange tense because Nov. 1 is not yet as I write this, but will have past by the time you read this). In addition, we are forming a Society for Creative Anachronism Chapter and we will be having a SCA event here on January 25th. That's all (for now) Folks!

E. Warwick Daw



1

This is CUSFuSSing #46. CUSFuSSing is the official magazine of the Barnard-Columbia Science Fiction Society, which is located in interesting uptown New York, and has its offices in 317 Ferris Booth Hall (directly beneath the billiards room). Meetings are Wednesdays, eightish. CUSFuSSing can be had for contributing to CUSFuSSing, typing your contribution, writing a LOC, doing the editor's Lit Hum paper, cleaning up the office, bribing an editorial board member, bringing munchies to a meeting, refraining from telling bad puns, helping type, helping with layout, helping collate, or making the editor's life easier in any other way.

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Jan Howard Finder
164 Williamsburg Court
Albany, NY 12203
June 22, 1985

Dear CUSFUSSING,

Much thanks for your latest issue. I hope that the recent power struggle and purges have not sapped the vitality of your club and zine, which looks quite well done. (better than half-baked zines, let me tell you.)

I found 2010 to be a rather decent flick. It wasn't as mystical as 2001, but then it wasn't meant to be. Except for a few lapses, it was truly an SF film. I liked the fact that most of the film was in Russian, but that you don't realize it.

On some more films: STARMAN - not a bad film. I have some qualms, but on the whole it was pulled off well. The love story, which is what it was, is handled well. It is worth a look.

LADYHAWKE is a nice fable and I did like the rock score. It moved along at a very leisurely pace, but was a very nice way to spend a couple of hours. Italy is, of course, beautiful.

Just saw COCOON. I highly recommend it for several reasons. It deals with the problem faced by the aging very well and very straightforwardly. What could have been very tacky, the rejuvenated oldsters, is handled very well. The aliens aren't too bad, either. The reason that their is a time limit on their stay on earth is unexplained, as is their inability to take the cocoons with them. Or why they can only drop by every 10,000 years or so. However, all in all, it is definitely a movie to see.

I guess Barry Longyear must have spent some time in Schenectady, but most have been happy to escape. Well, that is not fair to the town. I wonder how many fen/readers will actually know just where Schenectady is?

I do hope your con in NOV comes off well. Did any of you make it North for either GENERICON or LASTCON? You missed two nice cons, if you didn't. If any of you are making it out to WESTERCON or NAMPIC do look me up.

Ciao & teggeddizzi! May the Ghreat Wombat smile on you!
Yours sincerely,
Jan Howard Finder

(Power struggle? Purges? Hmm... CUSFUSSING has had three editors for the last three issues, but I think it's more of a case of abdication by brain death.)

Joseph Green
1390 Holly Avenue
Merritt Island, FL 32952
July 17, 1985



GentlePeople;

Thank you very much for sending me "Cusfussing 45". Regretfully, my time to read fanzines is so limited these days I have given up my subs to "LOCUS" and "Science Fiction Review", and only skim-read the freebies nice people like you send me. That really isn't fair to a good fanzine. I am well aware of the care, devotion and labor that goes into producing a good 'zine, and I'm writing to apologize for not doing anything to deserve it--and to ask that you consider taking me off your list. I am certain there is a hungry fan out there somewhere, with more time and energy than myself, who would greatly appreciate the copy you are wasting on me.

I am! grateful--not only for this issue, but for many prior ones. But my conscience is reproaching me. Do find a more worthy recipient.

Sincerely,
Joseph Green

*(Are you sure you haven't moved New York to the moon?
- check the back of your issue!)*

Laurel Beckley
70 Goshen Street
Elmont, NY 11003
Sept. 11, 1985

Dear Warwick,

Thank you for sending me copies of CUSFUSSING 44 and 45.

Issue 44 - Dave Cook's trivia question #1 (this has probably been answered already) it's, I believe, "to boldly go where no man has gone before." I don't know the other two.

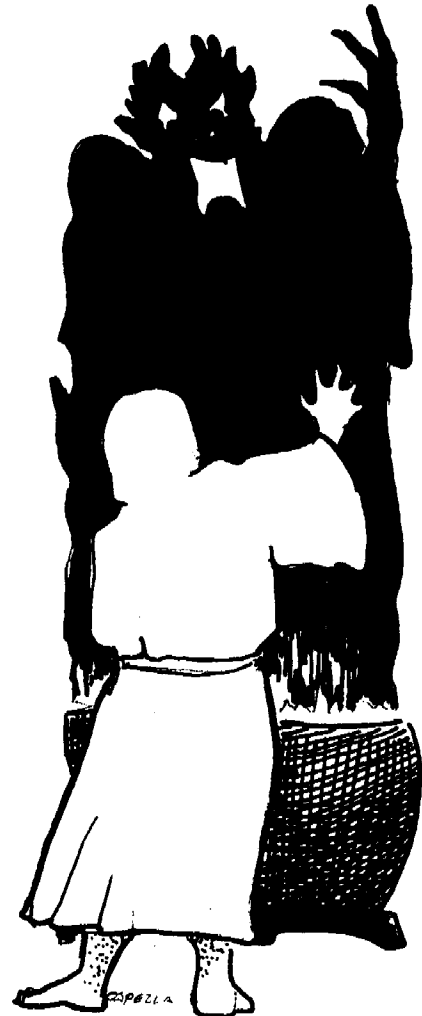
Issue 45 - You "Miss-ed", huh? Well, I do like puns. It's absolutely awful about the stolen paintings. I do hope they will be recovered.

I enjoyed these two issues; sorry no to comment more, but I've got alot of correspondance to go out. Hope to see more issues and will try to make more comments. I'm also sending along some more artwork I hope you'll like.

'til next,

Laurel Beckley

(You are, of course, correct about trivia question #1. Since no one as yet has commented on question #2, I just thought I'd mention that the title "Locjaw" is original to the best of our knowledge.)



Reviews

Opinions expressed here are not necessarily the views of the reviews editor, BCSFS, the CUSFuSSing staff, or the reviewers when sober.

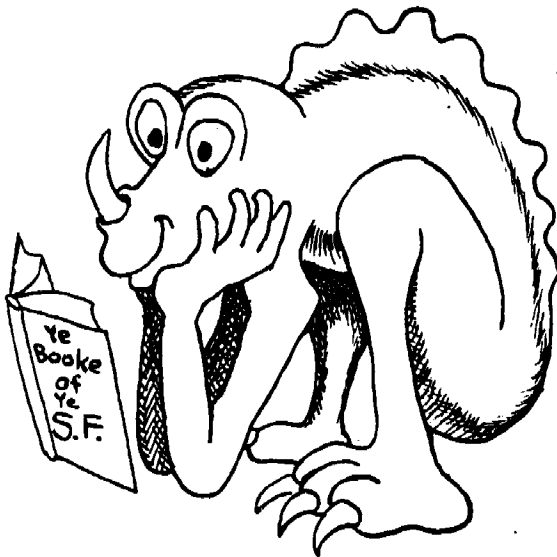
--Pauline

So Long, and Thanks For All the Fish, by Douglas Adams, Harmony Books, 204 pp., \$12.95. Reviewed by P. Alama.

I considered reviewing this as "mostly harmless," but I thought a book in the Hitchhiker's Guide series deserved a longer obituary. The original Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy was funny enough to send even Marvin the morbidly depressed robot into fits of unwilling laughter. The following 2 books, Restaurant at the End of the Universe and Life, the Universe, and Everything, tended to repeat jokes from the original but still had enough new material to make them worth reading. But So Long is downright difficult to finish--it is too few jokes stretched too far. The fun has petered out of the Hitchhiker's Guide series; it's time Adams turned his mad genius toward something different.

Privateers, by Ben Bova, Tor Books. Reviewed by Bill Rice.

It's not a story of the rise of American power and the smashing defeat of the Black Bear--although it easily could have been. Nor is it a love story--though it might have been. It's not an adventure either, though it has all the parts. But if you are suffering from chronic insomnia and your mother burned all your Richie Rich comics, you might try it.



Susan Lynn Toker '85

Terry Carr's Best Science Fiction of the Year Edited By Terry Carr TOR Books 348 Pages \$3.50 Reviewed by Philip J. De Parto

Thirteen stories, including all three Nebula Award winners ("Press Enter" by John Varley, "Morning Child" by Gardner Dozois, and "Bloodchild" by Octavia E. Butler), an article of the year in review by Charles N. Brown, and an introduction and Recommended Reading list by the editor make this an outstanding buy for any science fiction fan.

First a look at the Nebula Winners. "Press Enter" is a thoroughly chilling tale about computers which I am sure has given many programmers sleepless nights. Varley creates a pair of lovers for whom we feel. The dialogue is realistic, the pacing swift. The story is a great one time read but, like Niven's "Inconstant Moon" some years back, it is a story which I doubt I will go back and read again.

"Bloodchild" is probably the best of the three winners, the Dozois offering being essentially an after-the-bomb gimmick story. It is about a powerful and ambiguous symbiosis between humanity and an alien race called the Tlic, and I would not be surprised to see the author use this background in future stories. Fans of Jackie Lichtenberg's Sime/Gen series will enjoy this piece.

Having faithfully reported what the Science Fiction Writers of America consider the best stories of the year, we can move on to the reviewer's favorite yarns.

"Trinity" by Nancy Kress may be the best novella I have read since Joanna Russ' "Souls." The plot revolves around an attempt by the Institute of Biological Hope to scientifically make contact with God through consciousness raising drugs, sensory deprivation, etc. It is against this background that we meet the sisters Seena and Devrie King, the former a scientist believing in secular humanism, the latter a mystic searching for transcendence. The clash of ideologies and personalities is like an artillery battle which shakes the inner landscape of the reader. It is a gut-wrenching, thoughtprovoking opus which will leave you shaking.

On a much lighter side is Connie Willis' "Blued Moon." It is a screwball comedy with some of the most sparkling dialogue ever to appear in our genre. Among other things, it is about Sally Mowen's search for Mr. Right:

"...met anyone nice?"

"...They're all nice, she thought. That isn't the problem. They're nice but they're incoherent. A viable relationship. What on earth was that? And what was 'respecting your personal space'? Or 'fulfilling each other's socio-economic needs'? I have no idea what they're talking about, Sally thought. I have been going out with a bunch of foreigners. (Pages 80-1)

There are dozens of other equally funny, bittersweet lines which I could have quoted. If you have ever felt that you were on the wrong planet socially, this one's for you.

The last of the reviewer's big three is "Lucky Strike" by Kim Stanley Robinson. This is a "short story" story, the premise being that the Enola lay crashed before being given the mission to drop the atomic bomb on Hiroshima.

There is no point in going through the rest of the contents on a story-by-story basis. Only Pamela Sargent's "Fears" was an embarrassment while George Alec Effinger's "The Aliens who Knew, I Mean, Everything" should be eligible for some sort of award for best title.

All in all, a strongly recommended collection.

Beloved Exile, by Parke Godwin, Bantam Books \$3.95, 437pgs. Reviewed by Pauline Alama

"That's the game: you accomplish what you can with statecraft. What you can't, you buy."

Did Queen Guenever say that? Not in my book she didn't. Unfortunately, in Parke Godwin's book she does. There is not half an ounce of magic in this book; everything is reduced to sex, power, and politics. There are faeries--evil ones--but other than this Godwin seems to have done all he could to kill off the magic and romance of the Arthurian tales. Guenever's fatal love for Lancelot is reduced to a transient fling. The tragic heroine Ysueit writes "chatty" letters to the Queen, and seems content to settle down with her husband now that Trystan is gone. Arthur did not become King by pulling the sword from the stone; he was officially named successor to the throne. Need I say more? Beloved Exile humiliates the Arthurian Romances; its only appeal can be to those who never liked the old tales anyway.

The Dream Years, by Lisa Goldstein, Bantam Books, 1985, 181 pages, cloth, \$13.95
Reviewed by Geoffrey F. Miller

the day was green.

They said, "You have a blue guitar
You do not play things as they are."

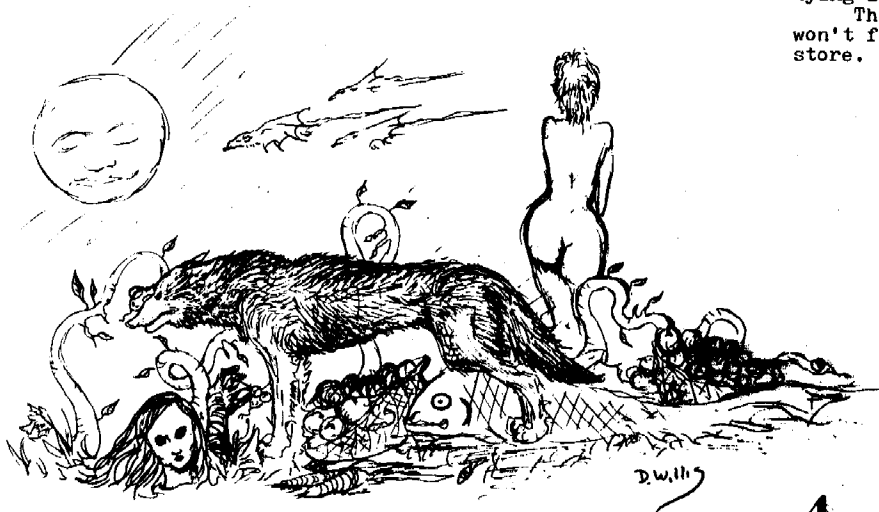
The man replied, "Things as they are
Are changed upon the blue guitar."

--Wallace Stevens
"The Man with the Blue
Guitar," 1937

How can one not love a novel in which a black blues guitarist acts as a guru of time travel for a group of surrealists and student revolutionaries hell-bent on wrestling reality to the mat of imagination until it self-destructs by screaming for mercy? This guru, a perpetually mysterious figure, becomes a Jimi Hendrix of chrono-synclastic infundibulae for the 1968 French students, and an improviser on the melody of the unconscious for our hedonistic hero, Robert St. Onge. The fictitious St. Onge steadfastly defends his déclassé project of writing novels as he moves through Goldstein's historical romance, rubbing elbows with the real (?) surrealists André Breton, Gaughin, and Yves Tanguy. History becomes reportage as St. Onge encounters Solange, from forty years in the future, when France is finally paralyzed by the general strike the surrealists had called for in the Twenties. The characters from different periods seem to mingle quite comfortably in the neutral territory of a perpetually slippery present, itself grounded in the most fertile part of Goldstein's imagination.

Perhaps the most fascinating premise of the book is that time travel is most plausible among periods when reality itself is weakest, most at the mercy of the human mind: France in the Twenties and the Sixties was in such a state, so a meeting of surrealists and student strikers seems almost natural. They share ideas, something more important than sharing historical period. Goldstein is on target in creating the simple, free-spirited St. Onge to act as protagonist in this demanding adventure, rather than the hypocritical Breton or another false surrealist without the strength of his convictions. Only an earthly, open-minded artist can survive the clash of revolutionary decades--I think the traditional SF/PhD hero would be paralyzed with fear in the face of a shattered, convoluted reality.

Goldstein has something for everyone--accurate historical portrayal of the surrealist period and full-fleshed biography of its leaders, trenchant insight into the 1968 strike and reactionary loss of faith, and a glowing account of the birthing of a utopia, in which artists overcame the military-industrial complex by subverting perception. Indeed, after finishing this little gem of a book, I felt as if my own decade were little more than a ghostly punctuation space between real times, the revolutionary times, when choice and freedom are possible.



The Book of Kells by R. A. MacAvoy. Bantam, softcover, \$3.95

Reviewed by Pauline Alama

I've begun to consider R. A. MacAvoy one of the most frustrating authors in print. Her books just scream out good potential--they are littered with fascinating ideas which are never fleshed out. They strike me as rough drafts to potentially good books; the real crime is that they'll never be reworked into the good books they should become.

The difference between MacAvoy's earlier work, the "Damiano" trilogy, and The Book of Kells, is that while the former resembled a third or fourth draft needing only some work on the ending, the latter seemed to me like a first draft, a half-formed loose sketch of what the story should contain. In this chaos of literary ideas are many touches of inspiration--an absent-minded artist whose talent has mystical powers; a twentieth century woman in terror of nuclear war, who finds peace in a meeting with a Celtic saint or goddess in tenth century Ireland. However, there are no connecting lines drawn between these ideas--nothing in this book has anything to do with anything else in it. There are no unifying themes; no significance emerges from the series of events described. Instead of converging into some order or meaning, the various threads of the plot and symbolism wind into a meaningless tangle. I had the feeling as I read this book that MacAvoy herself did not understand the world she was portraying. The story implies the existence (and divinity) of Jesus, Thor, Odin, and the goddess Bridget, without hinting at what sort of universe could contain all four. Nor is it clear why Thor sides with Christ and Bridget against Odin. Instead of exploring these ideas more fully, MacAvoy pushes the supernatural elements into the corners of the story and spends most of the time discussing the alleged sexual problems of the protagonist.

The Book of Kells is an absorbing story--quite enjoyable if you don't mind that it makes no sense. Maybe if MacAvoy turned out books at a slower rate than two a year, she could actually deal with some of the huge issues she raises, instead of tantalizing the reader with a false promise of a meaningful story.

SciFi by William Marshall. Holt Rinehart & Winston, 1981. \$3.95

Reviewed by Carolyn Sher

Warning- this is not a science fiction novel, nor a fantasy. However, the only reason for that is that there was a logical explanation. If it really had been a spaceman who did it, it would have been science fiction, you see. Since the murderer was human, this book was relegated to the mystery section of the airport.

Of course, this science fiction fan also reads mysteries and that's why she happened upon this gem. This book is guaranteed enjoyable to anyone who considers science fiction conventions funny.

The murder, you see, occurred during a sci-fi convention. Boy, it sounded like a fun con. If it weren't for people dying left and right . . .

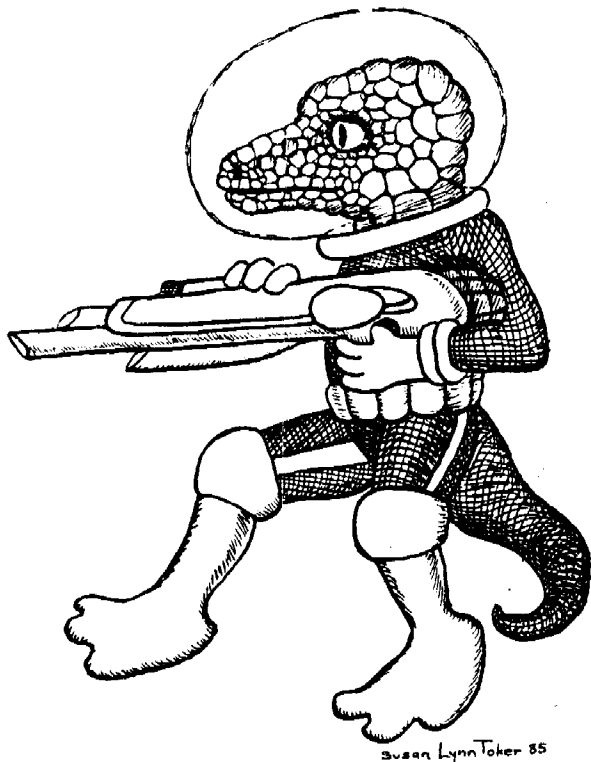
This is a funny book, and I recommend it. Remember, you won't find it in the science fiction section of your book store.

Gilgamesh The King, by Robert Silverberg. Bantam, 306 pages, paperback, \$3.95
Reviewed by Susan Glatz

This novel is a retelling of the Gilgamesh epic. Perhaps a few words of background are in order. The original concerns a demigod/king, Gilgamesh, whose search for immortality leads him to a legendary Flood hero made immortal by the gods. This hero gives Gilgamesh an herb that will rejuvenate him when he eats it. At some point before returning to his city, he loses it. But not all is in vain! He returns to his kingdom an enlightened, if moral, ruler. Silverberg's retelling is true to the original, though he does (fortunately) patch up the myth to make it a story in the modern sense. The book is fast-paced and easy

reading. The supporting characters are two-dimensional, and Gilgamesh is boring and infuriatingly dense at times. We are never told why the priestess of Inanna (the Heroine of Our Story) tries to kill Gilgamesh. Nor does Gilgamesh, who is "narrating" the story some unspecified number of years after the recorded events, ever explain or speculate about other people's actions.

The point is that Gilgamesh grows from his experiences, in as much as a thick-skinned military man is capable of growth. I rate this book as disappointing--in general, and because Silverberg is usually so much better than this.



The Alien Upstairs, by Pamela Sargent, Bantam Books, \$2.75, 165 pages.

Reviewed by Pauline Alama

One of the worst things of which a science fiction book can be accused is banality.

I accuse this book of banality in the utmost degree. Its main fault is the setting: an anti-utopian future America which seems to be based on a shallow appraisal of modern American problems. Inflation, gas shortages, bad postal service, and the like are blown to monstrous proportions to create this anti-utopia. Little attention is paid to the cause of society's problems, much less to possible solutions, so if this is a social comment it seems a pointless one. Also, Sargent's failure to discriminate between significant problems and petty ones shows an annoying small-mindedness. The characterizations reinforce this impression--they are shallow, unsympathetic, and often stereotypical. The story is partially saved by Sargent's ability to manipulate tension, but all in all I'd recommend this book only for cases of extreme boredom.

Science Made Stupid by Tom Weller. Houghton Mifflin, 1985. \$6.95

Reviewed by E. Warwick Daw

Science Made Stupid is a parody of your introductory science text. You know, the one you had in high school or junior high school. For the most part, it is completely off-the-wall and quite funny. Take, for instance, the explanation of "Red Shift": "Red Shift" shows increasing totalitarian domination of the outer reaches of the universe. Write your Congressman!" One note: I found the illustrations and captions generally more amusing than the text (which there isn't much of), but the author is a graphic designer, so I guess this isn't surprising.

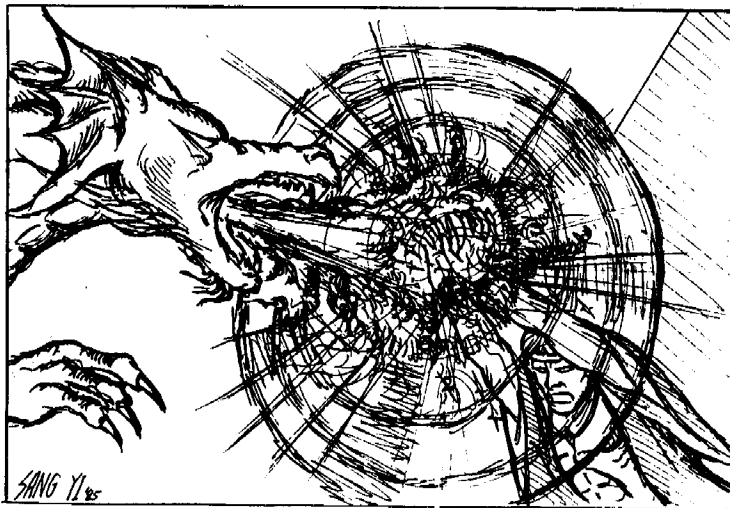
Earthman's Burden by Poul Anderson and Gordon R. Dickson. Avon Books, 188 pages, paperback \$3.75. Reviewer: E.W. Daw.

This book didn't disappoint me. One can hardly expect a book with teddy-bear-like creatures not to be cute. Of course, the teddy bears (Anderson and Dickson call them Hokas, but I know a teddy bear when I see one) do incredibly cute things and always win. None of the stories in this book will stand up under any sort of analysis, but if you feel like reading something cute and light, this book is for you.

Midway Between and Polar Fleet by Warren Norwood. Bantam, \$2.75 and \$2.95 respectively.

Reviewed by E. Warwick Daw

After reading these books, I'm afraid I can't understand why Norwood won the Campbell award. His writing is consistent, but he doesn't seem to be able to capture my imagination. There are no new or innovative ideas, and Norwood does his best to make his futuristic world seem mundane. In fact, as I was reading these books, I felt like I was reading a soap opera. The human characters all seemed to be far too serious. They were all so stiff and brittle that if anyone laughed at them they would shatter. The alien races seemed to be there mostly to provide comic relief, but they were also too serious, in addition to being too human to be believable as aliens (in fact, they were more human than the humans). If I were to sum up my response to these books, I would not say they are badly written (though Norwood does use stereotypes rather than characters), but that they are not science fiction. The entire story could be transported, without any major changes, to World War II. Norwood fails to create a world which is different from our own, unlike, say, David Brin, who creates a very colorful future. There is more difference between the present and World War II than there is between Norwood's Double Spiral War and World War II. Norwood would make a good historical fiction writer, but I don't feel that he passes as an S-F writer.



Phoenixfire

by Pauline J Alama

Phoenixfire 1-6: A Summary (Pauline J. Alama, NCGFNN)

Corian, a young man from the village of Green, saw a golden bird trailing flame--the phoenix--pass over the field where he was tending sheep, and was moved to follow it. He touched it for an instant with his right hand, and where his skin had touched the bird, shining marks remained. These marks had power, he soon discovered: powers of life and healing.

Driven from Green by suspicious villagers, Corian set off in search of the phoenix, joined by Tantris of Rauth, a lord's son taken to wandering. But Tantris received a quest of his own: to take his widowed sister Allia away from her treacherous in-laws. Corian decided to help him in this errand, though it brought him away from his own quest. On their way toward Allia, the two men were attacked by shapechangers in wolf form. Corian's hand seemed to repel them, but in the battle with these false wolves, Tantris was nearly killed. The touch of Corian's hand healed his wounds, but only by drawing off all of Corian's strength, so that he remained in a swoon for a night and a day. This attack puzzled them, because old tales had it that the power of shapechanging was gone from the world.

They reached Allia at last and took her away from the court of Eldt, where her strange demeanor had earned her an unjust reputation as a dangerous sorceress. They also returned to her a necklace lost long ago, given to her by the enchantress Mirra. The necklace, Allia said, calls her to Mirra; she must go to her.

Seven

Tantris awoke the next morning to find Allia already up, sitting with her arms around her knees, watching the sunrise. "Does she even sleep?" he murmured to himself, "or does she remain all night like a carved angel at the cathedral gates, always in the same moment of pained rapture?" He moved closer, sat next to her; she smiled good morning, then her eyes rejoined her sunrise. She looked straight into the sun. "How can you stare so into the sun's face? Doesn't it hurt?"

She laughed. "Always people ask me that question, and always I ask in return, How can anything so beautiful give my eyes pain?"

He shook his head. "Some things are too ugly, and others too beautiful to bear. Have you never found it so?" "Not I. I will never understand."

Through the fortnight that followed, she led them far to the west and north, along the stream they had followed on the first day's journey, along the river which the stream became, then away from the river, across pathless land which none of them had seen before. Ever as they rode, Allia grew surer, gaining energy from her direction. She stopped when her companions needed rest, but she herself seemed carried on by something else. She wore the pendant about her neck as she rode, and from time to time fingered it absently.

Once Corian asked if he might have a closer look at the pendant--"I know something of woodworking," he said, "and the crafting of it is very fine." She slipped it off her neck and gave it to him. As he took it in his right hand, it seemed to him the earth had moved-- he felt dizzily tipped one way and the other. There was more craft in the pretty thing than its lacy carvings. Reeling, he placed it in the other hand; the surging of the earth stopped. Gingerly, he took it up with the right again and held it till at last his head cleared. The necklace drew power like a lodestone.

Tantris stood staring at him in alarm. "Are you all right?"

"Now I am. It was only the shock-- when I touched it, it was like shifting from one world to another." Corian handed the necklace back to Allia, who replaced it about her neck in one graceful motion. "It is powerful," she said quietly, catching up the pendant in her ivory hand, stroking it with one delicate finger.

Corian's gray eyes searched her face, now grown familiar. She was a friend now and no stranger-- though she spoke few words to her companions save in song, still he knew she was fond of them both. And yet the more familiar she grew, the stranger she seemed--a riddle never answered, but ever opening out into new questions.

And so the quiet woman and her talisman led them through vast stretches of empty land until at last they reached one outpost of human habitation--the White Feather Inn. This weathered, spare structure seemed to stand alone in the midst of the wild; "There must be a town by it somewhere," Tantris said. "But for the life of me I can't see where."

At first glance the building seemed abandoned--the white feather on the sign was barely visible, the gate hanging broken from an ill-mended wall-- but as they drew closer, they heard sounds of festivity from within.

Tantris was first to the door; his knock pushed it open. "Come in!" called a husky man behind the counter, "We've got more than the usual crowd tonight, but always room for one more!" By the hearth men were singing. A boy broke away from the lot and led away their horses. Tantris strode eagerly in, and Corian after him; Allia hesitated a moment in the doorway, then followed.

Save for one old woman, the inhabitants of the inn were all men--travellers, it seemed by their dusty boots and the big packs many guarded beside their chairs. Most eyes were turned to Allia as she entered, her fair head resolutely held up, turning neither right nor left to acknowledge the men's gazes. One man among the crowd, however, paid more attention to the woman's fellow-travellers; "Tantris! Who'd have thought to see you here? Come here, old fellow!" Tantris looked about in confusion, not recognizing the voice. "And that friend of yours--still with you? Here I am, fellows--come, let's drink together." They wove through the crowded room toward the voice. At a rickety table in the thick of the crowd sat Hanon the horse trader--as garrulous as he'd been that night in the old barn, though a good deal dryer. Two other travellers sat across from him, sharing his trencher, but there were a few empty seats at the table. Hanon motioned the startled companions toward these, urging them to share the jug of beer which stood at his elbow. "Let's drink to the coincidence," he said with a tipsy laugh. "I happened upon my old friend Feor in Kinshire, and he turned my path around. Now I see it has crossed itself again."

His left hand was bound up in strips of rag. Tantris inquired about it as they settled themselves on the empty stools. "A clumsy mishap," he shrugged, "I burned it lighting a cooking fire. More beer!" he called to the tavern-keeper. "I see you've acquired a new friend," he said slyly, turning towards Allia.

"My sister Allia," Tantris corrected. "We are escorting her to a cousin's house."

"A delight to meet you," he said. Allia nodded in acknowledgment.

"And you," Hanon turned to Corian, "Do you remember me? You slept all the while I was talking to your friend, that night in the barn. Your name is Corian, am I right?"

"Yes. Yours is Hanon?"

"Yes, yes, you remember well," the horse trader bubbled. His face was flushed with drink.

"Excellent beer," Corian said, at a loss for other words.

The beer was good, and Corian was weary from a long day's journey, a day of travelling against the phoenix's call; so his mind did not long stay fixed upon the conversation. He rested his head on his arms and let the others' talking become a meaningless hum in his ears, thinking only that perhaps Hanon was one of those folk who are better for having a bit of beer in them.

The inn-crowd lapsed into song again, and Corian, at Tantris' urging, fumbled for his pipe. He played a few tunes, but when another man brought out a harp he stepped aside willingly, complaining of fatigue. He had no heart for it: a darkness was stealing over him. He thought suddenly of the phoenix which he had failed to follow for so long, and he longed for the light which could dispel his darkness; the fire in his hand. After healing the child in Imridom, he had felt that he understood the power, or at least that he had begun to understand. But later, when he had tried to explain it to Tantris, he found he could not put his revelation into words. He could not explain the phoenixfire, much less call it at his will. It was a shadow of an idea which he had received, a quiet conviction that the three times when the

phoenix-fire had arisen were somehow the same. He knew how it had felt--when he gave way to the drowning sensation in the street of Imridom; when he laid his hand on his neighbor's blighted tree back in Green; most of all when he watched Tantris clenching his teeth against the pain, dying before his eyes. A memory rushed on him unbidden; awakening one morning, eight years ago, to find his brother lying cold beside him. He nearly cried aloud, Darron. His hand flared with golden light.

He felt he might weep, but he felt released; the darkness no longer paralyzed him. He cupped the glowing hand about his face, away from others' sight. Then, at last, he raised his head, looking at Allia, then Tantris, then turning last of all to look at Hanon. A wolf snarled at him through the glow.

Hanon.

For a moment Corian only stared, alone in his vision. Then the wolf's eyes fixed on his, and the two men stared at one another through the golden light, unmasked. Hanon's eyes were gray as Corian's own; for a moment this semblance possessed them. Then Corian felt himself straighten, seeming to grow taller and sterner, and he threw the golden light upon Hanon's face. Tantris gasped; Allia caught Corian's left hand and pressed it; they saw. Hanon then threw back his head and shouted in a strange tongue--four words, harsh to their ears--then was gone.

From the corner a man started toward Corian, his thick oaken staff held ready. "You! Vagabond!" he shouted, "I have not forgotten your face, nor the insult you paid me in Korgan village."

"I have never been to Korgan village! This is some mistake."

"Liar! Coward!" And Corian had scarcely time to take up his staff before the stranger was upon him. Another man accosted Tantris, drawing a sword; "You fled me once, scoundrel, but this time you will die." A third approached Allia, but as he looked into her eyes seemed to forget his purpose. At length he, too, began to harass Corian; and one by one, all the inn-folk did the same, setting upon the companions for some imagined grievance.

Then amid the clamor, another sound emerged: a cold, distant sound that thrilled through the brawlers' bodies, freezing them where they stood. Allia had begun to sing.

Her song rose wordless about them all, and all the inn fell silent. It was a sound more wild, more strange than her songs to Corian's pipe; it was no human voice. Corian and Tantris stood bewildered; the others, who had not heard her voice before, seemed carved of stone, not the least swell of breath or flicker of an eyelid breaking their stillness.

Slowly, heavily, Corian turned to Allia. Her eyes flashed at him, Go. He nodded, seized Tantris by the arm, and began moving toward the door; Allia retreated more slowly, still weaving her song.

The room seemed immense; they passed between the motionless bodies of their attackers which stood like stone pillars all round them, faces turned toward the sky. Allia followed slowly, backing away from the frozen mob.

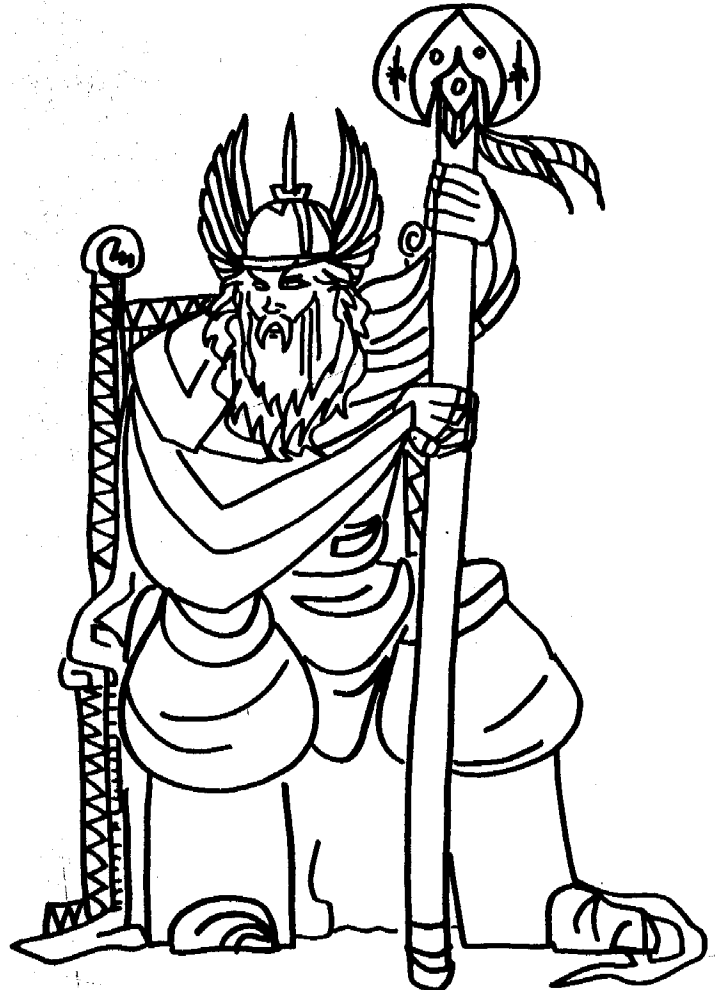
Suddenly there broke from the crowd a blonde boy dressed in green. A hunting knife was in his belt, a laugh upon his lips; he strode toward the companions unhindered. Allia advanced toward him, singing more wildly. The boy reached out his hand and touched her.

Allia's song ended in a shriek; her body fell to the floor. Springing suddenly out of his amazement, Tantris rushed to her, gathered her still form up in his arms and cried aloud: she was cold. Laughing, the green-clad boy pulled her away from him. His fingers were like iron claws, his grip like Death's. Lightly he leapt out the window and ran off, carrying Allia as though she were no more than a doll. Cursing, Tantris leapt after him.

The inn-crowd stood yet, stiller than the very walls about them. On the floor lay Allia's necklace, the leather string snapped. Corian snatched it up and ran to the stable to follow Tantris on horse. There was not a beast to be seen, nor a sign that any had been there of late: neither mine nor the horse trader's, he thought bitterly. Clutching the pendant in his left hand, he ran.

Though Corian had run like a deer to catch the phoenix, it must surely have been by enchantment, for in truth he was no great runner. Tantris had a long stride and the strength of his frenzy to carry him across the land; before long, even in this open country he was gone from Corian's sight. Corian was alone.

Day was dawning behind him: he realized that he must have stood for hours under Allia's spell. No breath of wind was stirring. In the half-light the land looked lonely. Corian slowed his pace and looked about at the emptiness, wondering where he would turn next. He had left his own road long ago for the sake of his companions. Now, standing in the lonely dawn, he had no companions, he had no road. "Nothing but a handful of riddles," he said aloud, uncurling his right hand as though to demand an answer of those strange markings. Then, thoughtfully, he uncurled his left, as though he had just remembered its existence; he looked at Allia's pendant. He held it to his chest, bowing his head. He would decide later what was to be done with it; to keep it as an idle memory, refusing its power; or to follow Allia's quest to its end. This land offered no cover; he would walk on until he found a place to sleep. The time for decisions could wait; for the moment, he had no strength for it.



The Book of Power, The Book of Secrets

Sitting on a shelf, my Book,
With covers bound in leather,
Filled with straight-backed runes
That bear the words' weight -
The weight of the words within
And the meaning they were meant to hold.

The dust on the cover is a bind, a hold,
That forces down the pages of the Book,
So none can see the words within,
Or read the title engraved in the leather,
Or feel the magic, or bear the weight
Of the power contained in the ancient, cryptic runes.

I found the Book among forgotten ruins,
Among fallen cariatids that had once held
The roof of the temple. Under their protective weight
It was hidden, but I knew the Book
Was there, though I could not see the leather,
Because its power had drawn me within.

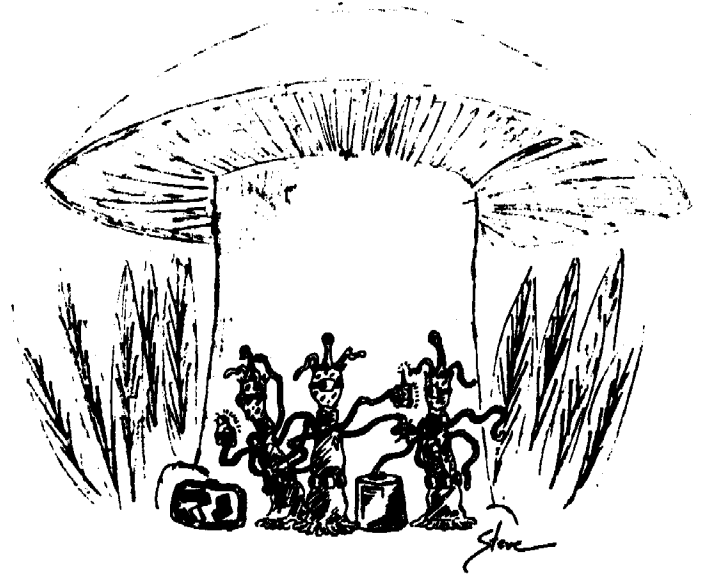
With great care, I brought the Book within
These caves to decipher the secretive runes,
To discover what magic could keep the leather
So well preserved. But, hold!
Though I sought to rape the Book
Of its secrets, for many years I have had to wait.

Ages passed, and still I had to wait,
A mage's life is long, and I kept within
My home, my caves, always studying the Book,
Carefully copying the runes
So I could read the copies, while the shelf held
The Book, and dust settled on the leather.

Now I sit and stare at the leather,
My old hands can no longer bear the weight
Of the Book, and the pages still hold
Fast to their secrets, the power still locked within.
I have had enough of the mystery of the runes -
It is time to let go of this Book.

Gone is the leather, its secrets within,
Let someone else bear its weight, decipher the runes,
Let someone else hold this Book and be tormented by it.

by Afra Al-Mussawin



(While looking through an old pile of CUSFuSsing material,
I found some submissions of former Senior Without Portfolio,
Mark Katzoff. I believe this belonged to his "Thinking
Process" collection. . . .)

17 Martians

by Mark Katzoff

17 tiny, green, tentacled Martians scuttled together under the Mushroom. "Well, we got here. The third planet from the sun. Isn't that great?" one said. The other 16 instantly attacked and ripped the slimy, green skin off its miserable bones. (Martians hate sarcasm).

Another Martian then spoke up, somewhat tentatively, "So what if everything is bigger than we thought it would be, and so what if our spacecraft was totally smashed on landing with all our defenses. We still have our native ingenuity, we'll make it back home!" This Martian met the same fate as the previous speaker. (Martians hate optimism).

Finally, without speaking, the group of 15 Martians began marching west, not because they thought it was a better direction for returning to Mars, but because a toad was attacking from the east. The toad ate 3 of them before the rest outdistanced it.

15 minutes later the (now 5) remaining Martians broke into the home of Mrs. Floyd Einbinder. They came in through the kitchen window over the sink. At the same time Flossie (Mrs. Einbinder) was doing the dishes and was totally unprepared for a Martian invasion. However, she reacted well. She instantly dumped a pot full of hot, soapy water on top of the aliens. Two of the Martians expired from an overdose of bliss and pleasure. The other three attacked.

After some relatively minor adjustments the remaining Martians managed to fly back to Mars in Flossie.

The Lair of The Beast

All was silence, until
They opened a gate to hell
At the bottom of the pond.
The waters swirled, drained
Out
With the noise of a rumbling drumbeat-
Drained out of the Earth-
As the gass died;
Living soil became parched and barren;
Swaying trees became hard as rock;
Spakling waterfalls became a torrent:
Massive silver balls of mercury
Bouncing with thunder,
To crush,
To deafen,
To finally be lost in that
Black Hole.
Fresh airescaped,
Replaced by cloying, humid mist.
Unbreathable.
The comforts of the shade
Banished by hazy sun.
In moments the garden became
Desert.

by Afra Al-Mussawin



A Good Learning Experience

by Carolyn Sher

The briefing room of the Antigoné was cluttered with charts, diagrams, and ensigns. Heated discussions were taking place. Magical moments occurred. All was astir and everyone was relaxedly tense. That was before Ensign Rapity came in and hissed, "Smitty is coming." Then everyone was tense, but not with pleasure. Everything was astir, but in the process of hiding, not planning.

Ensign John Rapity stopped all that with another hiss. He muttered how they were all imbeciles and instructed, "Leave the plans out and act intent, as if studying a technical problem. It's not as if she's an engineer. She'll never know a thing."

The young officers, having found a leader, followed eagerly. They arranged the plans on the table, and appeared so energetically intent that it tempted John Rapity to swear. "It is a good thing," he thought to himself, "that Lt. Cejanus Smith is so dense that she couldn't smell a rat if it bit her. Not to mention so moralistic that she wouldn't recognise the plans even if she did study engineering." Rapity did not study the plans. John studied the blonde sitting next to him, which John felt added realism to the picture, not to mention pleasure to himself.

The doors opened. Cejanus Smith entered. Her flame colored hair snaked around her head, promoting the illusion of righteous fire. Her red uniform also added to the picture. It clashed almost entirely with her hair. It was, of course, letter perfect (the letters coming from the words in the Starfleet manual). The doors snapped closed behind her.

Cejanus took in the scene slowly. It was her job, as officer of the watch, to report any malefactors to the Captain. Upon her appointment to this position the number of reports increased dramatically. Some suspicious people believed Cejanus got pleasure from writing demotions. This was not true. She did, however, take it as an opportunity to hone up on her writing skills.

Cejanus walked up to the briefing room table as casually as one can walk with perfect posture. No ensign met her glance. Rapity conformed to the pattern. He knew this looked strange, but he also knew better than to stand out in a crowd.

Rapity was by nature cautious. On this occasion, however, his native sense told him such care was unnecessary. An incident wouldn't occur, because Lt. Smith would not recognise the plans. It would be that easy.

Tricky stuff, that native sense. It shows you how often you can be wrong.

The hush in the room was becoming ominous. Cejanus didn't notice it. People weren't her strong point.

She walked over to the briefing room table and glanced at the plans. The glance turned into a gaze. The gaze turned into a stare. The stare turned to a glare at the occupants of the briefing room.

Lt. Cejanus Smith said calmly, distinctly, and ominously, "I suppose you, for some reason, believe that one armed bandits are a part of ship's equipment?" With this twenty-some-odd young malefactors knew they would be soon brought to justice.

Captain Jung of the Antigoné looked at the twenty-some odd reports on his desk. He swore to himself and at himself. Obviously his last bright idea had not worked.

"Make Lt. Cejanus Smith watch officer," he had told himself earlier, "Now there's a job to lose her in. I haven't heard from the current watch officer since I assigned him. That's a good way to get the pervasive Lt. Smith out of my hair." Lt. Smith often increased the Captain's workload and irritation quota, by making him take action when the ship could truly quietly ignore a situation and go on its merry way.

The Captain looked at the reports on his desk. Twenty reports that he had had to read. What was that about his irritation quota and workload again?

He had signed without reading the reports on the three yeomen. The seven chief petty officers he didn't give a second glance. But twenty ensigns... Twenty ensigns. That had just been too much.

Cejanus was waiting outside the Captain's office. He had called her there. She entered the room and stood in front of his desk. She said "Sir" and then waited. Jung said, "You may be seated." Cejanus sat. Jung tried to meet her imperious blue gaze, and failed miserably. He looked down at the papers on his desk and went on with it. "Twenty ensigns," he started, Lieutenant, that's just too much.

"I'm sorry, sir," the lieutenant said calmly, "but they were involved in an illegal activity."

"Looking at the engineering plans of gambling machines?" he asked.

"Captain, constructing gambling machines! You forget the evidence I found of partly made machines in Supplies." The timbre of her voice raised slightly with the volume.

"Lieutenant, one or two roulette wheels will not greatly affect this ship's mission." The Captain sounded tired. Work is tiring.

"I hate gambling", Cejanus answered tightly. "It is a vice".

"Drinking is also a vice, but I see you occasionally indulge in it." Jung thought of the time Cejanus destroyed a planet's economy and soul, merely so it would continue the export of the liquer, potable. Of course, there had been reasons.

Cejanus smiled lightly, but the smile did not reach her eyes. They were blue steel. "It's a vice I allow myself," the smile said, "Alcohol is not against regulations." The eyes exuded such confidence that it hid how much the admission cost her. "A vice I allow myself." Cejanus was not used to allowing herself a vice. She never drank beyond her tight control over her sensibilities, but still the contradiction hurt. Most of the time. At times like these. There were many times the contradiction did not hurt, and those times scared Cejanus. At times like these.

"How the heck did you know those plans were for casino equipment, anyway?" Jung burst out in frustration. "Ensign Rapity couldn't figure that one out, and he thinks he knows everything!"

The strain left Cejanus' eyes, and she grinned in genuine amusement. "Sir, I come from Antares," her voice chided.

Surely not everyone on that colony knows the circuitry of a one armed bandit, despite the preponderance of casinos on the colony," he muttered.

Perhaps not everyone," Cejanus said, reverting to her normal hauteur, "but I was a cocktail waitress."

The Captain looked at Cejanus, and tried to imagine her as a cocktail waitress. He discovered his imagination was not up to it. Then he tried to figure out why a cocktail waitress would know the circuitry of a one armed bandit.

He realized all the trouble this Cejanus Smith was giving him. He just wanted her off his ship, out of his way, so he could return it to its former creative indolence. Then, he remembered the Antigoné was orbiting a planet.

Captain Jung smiled viciously and said, "Lieutenant, I have a mission for you."

Cejanus did not like to be interrupted when flying a shuttlecraft. She did not even like flying a shuttlecraft. She was therefore justifiably irritated by Ensign Rapity's continual questions.

The question, "Why are we taking a shuttlecraft when we are in easy transporter range?" was the most immediate annoyance. Despite Cejanus' lack of skill in flight, Rapity's total absence of knowledge of the same, and a major parking problem on the planet, the Captain had insisted on that means of transportation. Cejanus idly wondered whether the proper word should have been "because". Captain Jung did not like Cejanus.

Then there was "What the hell will we do on the planet when we get there?" Jung's orders had been characteristically sparse. In other words, the Captain's words, "Something is wrong on that planet. Fix it." That was all Cejanus had to answer Rapity.

The last, most distressing question that Rapity posed was, "Why am I here?" Why indeed was Rapity assigned to this mission? He should be on punishment duty. Did his assignment to the mission imply that this action was punishment? Then why was Cejanus there? Perhaps Cejanus was supposed to mete out punishment. Cejanus would have preferred to be involved in that at a less critical time than a mission, thank you.

There was the possibility that working with Cejanus was punishment enough. Cejanus did not dwell on that. She knew that working with Rapity would be punishment for her, unjust punishment to her point of view.

Cejanus mused on this as she guided the shuttle down to the planet, Scale. They made it down, after passing through massive turbulence, and Cejanus edged the shuttle into a loading zone. She set up the "Official Starfleet Business" broadcast, and then opened the doors.

Cejanus and Rapity emerged silently. This was choice on Cejanus' part. Rapity presumably had much to say, if he dared open his mouth. His face had taken on a starkly green tint during the flight through turbulence. Cejanus had been constructed with a cast iron stomach. Not all humans were so gifted. Rapity had to contain his expression of feelings by letting his eyes express the pent up words. They looked a slow, terrible death at anyone who glanced in his direction.

Cejanus did not bother to do so. She took out her tricoder, set it on automatic, and let it whirr. She glanced at the readings, many of which she could not truly interpret. They seemed rather dull. She dropped the tricoder to her side, so it would continue to take readings for history's sake, if not hers.

She then turned to ensign Rapity. Her eyes did not focus on him. Cejanus never truly looked at subordinates.

"Ensign, I am aware of your curiosity regarding our mission." At this Cejanus paused. Ensign Rapity, seeing that some response was necessary, groaned.

"We are here, Ensign, to investigate the planet, and discover its difficulties. We shall do so. History of the planet will be the beginning of our research. The Scale Museum of Planetary History will be our first stop. Our mission will last twenty-four hours."

At this Cejanus plunged the two of them into a set of museum tours and lectures, each more boring than the last. Cejanus always appeared interested. In her mind she was taking notes. One day she might need to put a Klingon spy to sleep.

John Rapity did not appear interested. He could see no purpose to this. There were so many preferable activities he could be engaging in on the ship. He could not see the pertinence of these museums to their mission, not that he truly cared about the mission. Any action would be preferable (Well, almost any action).

That night they went to a local motel. It was part of a chain, Interplanetary Inn. The rooms were comfortable in that they resembled the Antigone; standard, clean, and completely lacking in personality. This motel was chosen because it took five million forms of currency, including StarfleetCredits.

Cejanus fell asleep to Rapity's muttered curses. When they awoke the shuttlecraft was missing. Ensign Rapity did not take this discovery calmly. The idea of staying on this rotten planet constantly in Cejanus' company was not a pleasant one for him.

Cejanus started sifting through bureaucracy as Rapity fumed. Bureaucracy was one of Cejanus' strong points. There were occasional situations she just couldn't handle, like changing the fate of a planet's path, but reporting a stolen vehicle was just up her alley. That was when she found out it was not stolen. It was confiscated. For landing in a no parking zone. At that moment bureaucracy felt what competence could do when angered.

What remained was that a fifty megacredit fine had to be paid to regain use of the vehicle. Item: Cejanus and Rapity had only ten megacredits between them.

It was at this point that they discovered the communicator was not working properly. On all previous occasions the answer had been crisp and clear. Now, when they requested money the only response was a burst of static. It was quite disconcerting.

As Cejanus looked for a videobooth (the one in their room having been quietly phasered in a moment of pique) John Rapity began to grow very angry. He looked at Cejanus with eyes like bullets. He then said, "I'd advise you not to bother with the video phone, Smitty, because you won't have the credit necessary to work it. I'm taking the money we have double access to from the planetary computer. I'll quintuple the money within the hour or my name isn't John Rapity. I'm not staying on this damn planet a moment longer than I have to."

At this Cejanus stopped and stared. She attempted to stare straight through him, but ended up meeting his eyes. Blue and brown steel clashed in their gazes.

She then said, "My name isn't Smitty, it's Cejanus, Cejanus Smith. Secondly, you can't do that, I need to use the phone to get us out of here."

Rapity's gaze did not falter. He responded, "Just watch me," and went striding off in a different direction from where Cejanus had been heading.

Cejanus had a choice between calling the neighborhood

police, taking out all the money before Rapity got a chance, or following. The first two actions would leave a record to Cejanus' lack of leadership. They'd also be rather difficult to "cover up". In any case, Cejanus was not in the business of covering things up. She was a white hat, a good guy.

Cejanus followed Rapity's lead. Rapidly, very rapidly, they found themselves at a casino. Cejanus inquired if Rapity had memorized the position of all the casinos before leaving for the planet. John replied, "No, it's just a non-ing instinct," and started to head for a table.

Cejanus stopped by saying very intensely, "I hate this." She then continued rather loudly and wildly, "I hate casinos. I left my home planet to avoid such decadence. I hate this, and I hate you for bringing me here."

Her eyes then carefully scanned the place, with intense loathing mirrored in every look. She ran to a certain section of the wall, and hit it as if she was taking out all her anger with that one blow. People turned to stare. Cejanus then quieted down and walked back to Rapity. She said intensely, "This is evil, John." Cejanus then paused a moment, emotion spent. She thought back to her earlier life, when workin' at a casino had seemed so exciting. She added, "I know some volume, but in an entirely different time, "The odds aren't even in your favor."

Rapity looked at her a moment, as if he thought she was crazy. He probably wasn't alone in that assumption. He then started off to a table. Cejanus followed silently.

In an hour later, when Rapity was about to lose their last three credits, she spoke up. She said, "No, Ensign, not those." He glanced back at her. He then withdrew the bet.

Cejanus very quietly led him off, to look for a video booth. John stopped in front of a one-armed bandit.

Cejanus stared at him. She said in a hushed tone, "Have you learned anything? It won't work, John. He only never work in a real casino."

Rapity looked at her dumbly. He then said softly, with calmness that belied his words, "This is all your fault, you and your damned one-armed bandit knowledge. Well then, make it work. Fix it."

Cejanus reddened. She realized she had been allowing herself to enjoy this trip to a place so much like her youthful haunts, but there were dangers inherent in it. She looked down, as if trying to find a loophole. She found one. She said meekly, "Why should I fix it? It isn't broken."

Rapity slowly shook his head. "No, that won't work. You know what I mean. Make the odds in my favor."

She looked at him staring blindly. "John, that isn't moral. That isn't legal. It isn't even nice."

Rapity merely replied, "Do it."

Cejanus gave in, and glanced around entranced. An odd look entered her eyes, a look of childlike curiosity. She took in the placement of all personnel. She then gently led Rapity to a position in front of the machine, obfuscating it from view. Next she took out a sonic screwdriver and opened up the machine in plain view of all onlookers and observational machinery. Rapity reared back, amazed.

"What the hell are you doing! You're opening it in plain sight of everyone. Starfleet will have our asses if they have to cover up video proof of this!"

Cejanus merely glanced around, and repositioned Rapity in front of her. She replied off hand, "Nobody will ever know. I knocked out all the surveillance equipment earlier by hitting the hidden switch under the wall. Now pipe down and act natural." She then completed the adjustments, and closed the machine up.

She turned to Rapity. "Now try it."

He glanced at her, then took out a coin. His hand hesitated at the slot when he was about to enter the credit. He then dropped in the coin. He pulled the arm, and the answer came out, "NO WIN."

John looked at her mutinously. Cejanus was unperturbed, and merely responded, "I had to leave in some probability or it wouldn't be a challenge. Put in another coin."

It took the third, final, coin to hit the Jackpot.

* * *

The Captain did not meet the shuttle when it arrived on the Antigone. He was busy clearing up the total communications breakdown which had been a result of a massive burnout in the ship's circuitry. All the ranking ship's officers were busy clearing up the mess, and all the lower officers were taking a vacation. Cejanus went to her room to write a report of their mission.

Ensign Rapity buzzed her door when she was still at her desk, halfway through.

She opened the door with the switch on her desk, and looked up as the ensign entered.

Ensign Rapity said, "I can't figure you out. Why did we go through that farce on the planet? Why did you set it up so you could cheat if you didn't plan to? Most of all, why are you such a bitch most of the time?"

Cejanus met his eyes. She said, very calmly and very adultly, "It's none of your business, Ensign."

Rapity merely replied, "I want to know, Smitty." He sat down on her desk (incidentally mashing all her paperwork) and gazed directly at her.

After that moment of direct communication, she glanced away. She started to look her age, and twenty five in truth isn't all that old. She stood up and responded in a high, flat voice, "All I ever want is to be good. On a planet I try to help. On the ship, I try to write the best report Starfleet has seen. I let everyone know that I am good. I will make everything all right, to the best of my abilities."

John's gaze remained level. "And on the planet, with the machines..."

Cejanus' cheeks reddened, to match her hair. "I am human, Ensign."

John spoke angrily, "There's more to life than that, Lieutenant. You're ruining your own life, and what's more you're attempting to destroy everyone in the vicinity. Don't you know how nuts all that is?"

Cejanus answered in a dignified, but hurt tone. "I am a lieutenant, Ensign. You are a little older than me, with an equivalent background. Goodness works."

Rapity stared back. "So are you going to destroy me for it?"

Cejanus stepped back, startled. "What?"
"The report, Cejanus. Are you going to destroy me with it? Insubordination, illegal activities. . . You know you can. Will you?"

Cejanus stared a second. Suddenly she leaned against the wall. She then started shaking her head, and laughing softly. It was an amused, understanding laugh. John stared. He had never seen Cejanus laugh.

"Don't worry about the report, John."
Ensign John Rapity stared another minute, then left.

* * *

Cejanus sat waiting for Captain Jung's reaction to her report. He looked at her a second, in silence. He then said, in a very level voice, "That was a very interesting report, lieutenant."

Cejanus took a breath for a second, then answered, "I'm glad you liked it, Captain."

Jung looked away, and then came back with, "I didn't precisely say that."

The room was silent for several seconds. Then Jung spoke again. "Let me get this straight. You spent a day on Scale, visiting museums, and thus determined the basic lack of centralized structure in the planet's background. You also discovered the serious ramifications thereof and how it was leading to a disintegration of services, and eventually to the end of beneficial civil administration on the planet in a hundred years. You also postulated several solutions to the problem which may save government on Scale for a millenium. Then, after some minor skirmishes involving an unfair parking ticket you came home the next day. Do I have the gist of it, Lieutenant?"

Cejanus went over this a second, then answered, "I believe so, sir." She did not quite meet his eyes.

"The only problem with that is it's impossible. A person cannot do all that in one day. Now tell me what really happened."

Cejanus breathed in slightly, absorbing her Captain's censure. She then looked him straight in the eye and answered strongly enough, "I cannot truly believe that you read my report carefully. The answer would be obvious if you read the fifty-third footnote." She then gazed at him a solid, clear metallic gaze. She was back to her normal, imperious self.

Captain Jung glanced at the fifty page report on his desk. He fingered through it, glancing at the footnotes, and gave up after a second. His voice took on a dry, level tone, as he responded, "Why don't you refresh my memory, lieutenant?"

"It refers to the fact that I gained much of my background information from a person named Liz York," Cejanus replied.

Jung asked, "And what official capacity does Liz York have?"

Cejanus answered flatly, "None." Silence filled the room. Cejanus then answered the Captain's unasked question. "She was from Antares, my home colony."

Jung waited a few beats. He then said simply, "Why don't you tell me exactly what happened?"

Cejanus waited a moment. Then she compressed her lips and responded. "When I found out I was going to Scale I decided to call up my old friend, Liz York. I happened, quite naturally, to slip into the conversation the question, 'What is wrong with Scale?' Well, she answered. In detail."

The Captain digested this for a few seconds. He then responded, "You didn't happen to give this Liz York credit in the report?"

Cejanus answered in a very shocked tone. "Why Captain, that would be dishonest. Of course I gave her credit."

The Captain waited a moment, then guessed. "In the fifty-third footnote, I presume."

"Exactly," Cejanus answered.

Captain Jung considered this. He asked, "Did you add anything to her thesis?"

Cejanus looked at him squarely, straightly. "I added proof. I documented the problem, in an impartial manner that Liz just couldn't. I also brought this to the attention of Starfleet. Now, something can be done to assuage the situation."

Captain Jung sighed. He went on to ask, "Why didn't you just ask this Liz York for a loan of fifty megacredits? It isn't all that much money. Why did you bother to break into the slot machine?"

Cejanus replied, "It was more convenient at the time."

"You just happen to hang around casinos as a passtime," Jung answered sarcastically.

Cejanus answered in a nasal, ironic tone. "They are my old stomping ground."

There was silence in the room. This quiet was broken by the opening of the office doors, and Ensign Rapity bursting in. Rapity was holding a large sheaf of paper. He got to "We've almost finished the plans for the..." before he noticed Cejanus' presence in the room. Rapity stopped abruptly.

Cejanus quietly got up from her seat. She took the papers from Rapity's hands, and read out loud the cover, which said, "Apparatus for Experimentation in Probability."

She then leafed through it quietly, ominously.

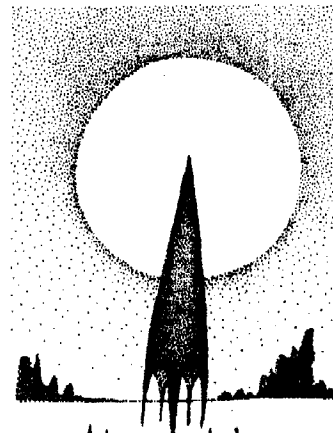
After a shocked moment the Captain broke in with, "Please keep in mind lieutenant that Ensign Rapity is currently working under my orders. Note that I would be highly displeased if his work was disturbed."

Cejanus waited a beat, and then handed the report back to Rapity. She shook her head lightly, and her eyes held an expression reminiscent of her laughter. Finally she smiled and answered dryly, "I have no intention of disturbing your research. However, I do think you might want to know that the standard computational unit will blow under repeated usage, and a modified one becomes necessary."

She waited another moment. "You really should get a senior officer with more experience to look at those plans before implementing them." She looked at Rapity innocently enough, but her eyes were still laughing. John met her look and although his face held a plastic smile, his eyes were warm.

Captain Jung watched this scene in shocked silence. He then decided not to think about it. He therefore dismissed the lieutenant, and let the report stand as she had logged it.

Cejanus and Rapity discussed the morality of different probability levels in the device as they left. To Cejanus it was not gambling. Gambling was evil. It was merely probability experimentation with monetary incentives.



—Susan Lynn Tager 68

Our Anorexic Planets

by Geoffrey B Miller

Nadine, like most little girls her age, reformed her whole future in an afternoon. That one fateful filmy afternoon.

--Ooh: sorry ma'am. Slight hurry. The man nursed a shin. Hope she's less hurt than I.

--No, excuse us, stranger! My girl, she's a little excited today. Nadine! Fix your frock. The woman's sides undulated violently to atone for her offspring's clumsiness. She would not have minded taking tea with the man. He rushes off.

The blond moppet scowled and, for the zillionth time, wondered why They couldn't keep out of her way when she was engaged in important business. (Do people ever marry bus-i-ness, actually? Hmmm.) Watching the stratos for contrails. For she was to be a test pilot.

A: Fast and lean, wired
in a machine as fast as
her mind, and ova ova
over her ma
zoom on da ground!
(chorus is a leap and cartwheel.)

She was the sternest of deadset test pilots of the blue future until ma bought three green tickets (Always Donate One Admission Price for the Self-Starving Lords of Afrique!) and we strode on into the theater. The posters! Depth fantasies of griddled earth, cybernetic bulldozers with mouse hair brushes for teeth, uncovering the dark, down walls (wonders of holography!) of canals. Stein B. Mesmera's epic new film, a documentary of all things, a documentary of the New Archaeology (no planes) and the past (or cockpits) and memory (earth no air.) Without Nadine's instant awe, this toggle-switch child's mind, our story would have never been.

She would become a doctor of archaeology and a terraformer and a doctor of whole globes.

-The infinite two wings of time, past and future beating together and winding her. (A posthumous psycho-analyst.)

The Wasteline

A pill is the cruellest mouth, feeding only bloated medicine more cause for health. She was disillusioned with all study of Mars, the whole red school grind, itching to get there and see at last the great equatorial ditch, newly brushed out from beneath lavender silicate dust.

-Mars has two moons. They are called

Travel brochures only whetted her appetite. She would stick it out (the grind, not her lovely tongue) and do the playing little girl doctor thing. Pfttph!

All Equators can be Pinpointed Midway
Between the Planet's Tropics of Cancer and
of Capricorn.

Exercise C: find the global girdle.

-It's her.

-Her?

-Incredible. Two lesbians ribbing each other. Big eyes roadward.

-Ms. Nadine, we're your uh guides.

-My uh-guides?

-Uh, yes.

-Show me where. Too Boarding trains, to.

Narrative Module O, optional for prurients

They made mesmericklove under the lack small sun. Click. Clack.

Diet for a Small Planet

This, a contract story, jumps ahead like an impulse between neural nodes on insulated axons.

The circum-equatorial ditch received terrestrial interpretation as a hygienic measure. The Ancients had wanted to shave off the planetary cellulite, so to speak. So to start, they established a more esthetic Martian radius by digging a goal, a girdle, a size to shoot for. So the major journals said. Suddenly books on astrophysics and biospheres invaded the New York Times diet-best-seller list.

The age of terraforming was over. Behold the age of terraforming.

The two moons were renamed "medicine ball" and "barbella". It was postulated that dust tides used up excess calories. Cardiovolcanic health improved by earthquakes.

Nadine had no part in all this until she made a video about it. She had always resented her mother taking her to only two-thirds of the movies she was entitled to. So the video was art. It related the Mars situation to Britain's brutal hypocritical ignorance about the tragic plight of the Self-Starving Lords of Afrique, who call themselves Idi Bugs, after the late great endomorph. It hit number one in seventeen minutes flat. (Doctors had become savvy about advertising.)

People took it very seriously. They decided earth was in a period. In an ice age. It was retaining water. Several UN representatives were elected on a platform of melting the polar ice caps and burning off earth's oceans. Others toyed with more radical and permanent solutions.

All the world's obese,
exiled, gathered together on Zanzibar,
two layers deep,
a few having intercourse but everyone sweating,
and set up a socialist laissez-fat commune.
(Hydroponics was their salvation.)

Nadine tore out huge golden handfuls of her lovely blond hair, burning the handfuls and meditating on their sizzled smell. (Have you ever smelled death by quick starvation?) Her big house on the Mediterranean had a view of cornucopian Italian vineyards. Vats. Cellars. Wrinkled men.

-People stomping on little images of globes.

Thin purple skins breaking

The sweet juice, my life Tao, collecting down in metal pans.

Mouth to Mike Resuscitation. Title for an Important New Video.

Lawyers for the Lard

Gargantua: Jupiter: the ring-wigged judge

Jabba the Hut: Saturn: the court reporter

Nero: Neptune: prosecution

Frank Herbert: Uranus: defense

Louis XIVze: Pluto: witness

Twiggy: Mercury: the jury of one

Teddy Roosevelt: Mars: executioner, big stick figures in hand

John Belushi: Earth: the accused

Ma West: Venus: the accused's mother, weeping, enticing.

Willendorf origins.

Jain endings.

How You Can Lose 10²³ Pounds in One Month

Nadine argued aesthetics. Maybe earth would look thinner smeared out as a ring around the sun. No, the people said.

She pleaded, a Dyson sphere to hide our shame from the prying eyes of alien galaxies? Flaunt the fat until it's gone, said the people.

She went on a hunger strike. Join the club, Nadine.

The lawyers for supply and demand kept her from sneaking titbits to the captive. Shuttle systems for bringing raw materials from the asteroid (One More Notch!) belt to earth were disbudgeted. Shrivelled roots. Thin vines.

We achieved self-sufficiency again.

We withdrew from transactions with the outside,

realm of brave test pilots.

Where the memories of ex-test pilots hover.

Cosmic coitus interruptus.

The ozone layer is a prophylactic measure.

The ozone layer is a prophylactic pleasure.

The ozone layer is a prophylactic treasure.

Give an inch and they take a mile.

The Godhead's Lipid Bilayer

Refitting herself to a refitted world, her mother long acquitted a kit of brittle bones, the video artist refines herself out of existence by staring at that one last vertical line before the set goes black.

Notes from The Bored

ONCE UPON A TIME

there were 4 editorial bored members and they lived in a state of glue-induced hysteria in a small office in the middle of the City of Many Towers. They liked to play with paper and then throw it away. They threw it way way away. Way, way, way away. One day in the middle of the night the four little manicks of the editorial bored were sticking things up with glue and passing peace-pens. Little did they know that there was a nasty C-monster lurking in the room with them. Or maybe it was sniffing glue . . . C-monsters love to sniff glue, you know. Little indeed did they know.

They hadn't left it any C's, and it was HUNGRY. Of course two of the board members never had C's (well, maybe sometimes, but those got burned) and the other two treasured them as Achievements or they made alphabet soup. Anyway, the C-monster was hungry, so it started eating all the C's in CUSFUSSing. USFUSSing.

And the mad whirling and strange festivity in the s i e n e f i t i o n o f f i e o n t i n u e d , and the glue flowed like libations of wine and honey, and even the tragedy got high, and be ame High Tragedy. Sniff. Snuffle. Thphffmmim.

But the c's continued to vanish as the C-monster consumed them. The editorial bored be ame beside themselves with grief and vowed that the C-monster must die.

But all the great Knights of the land were abroad on the Quest for the Cosmic Water Pit her.

And the editorial bored sat for long in idleness beside themselves and talked to themselves, onversing far into the night . . .

Then they de ided, speaking thenly, to kill the Beastie themselves. But how? Then to ponder, thinkly. And they pondered ponderously during the dark bla k night. Suddenly one of them stood and said, "We should all upon the bla k night to save us!"

"But didn't he inhale the first bottle of glue?" pointed out another.

"It's not your turn," said yet another. And as they argued, in all their despair, there rose out of the sea of rumpled papers and weird submissions, something which transformed their incoherent mania into awe and hope and wonder-- it was a CUSFUSSing!

The C had returned! And it had come in the form of a 'ZINE.

But then the C-monster promptly ate the C and they were on e again c-less. Lost in an alphabet desert (bigger on the inside than the outside), they knew not what to do.

But then one of the hungry little manicks de ided to use the ta ti s of their enemy, and ate a dash. Then all at once they were no longer c-less: they were CLESS!

The bored members didn't like being cless, since it seemed a vulgar sort of word. So they ate the alphabec, or all of it they could catch. And they ate C's along with the other letters. They ate so many C's that the C monster began to starve.

And then, at the odd hour of 3, it detected the aroma of John Jay leftovers at the curb up the street.

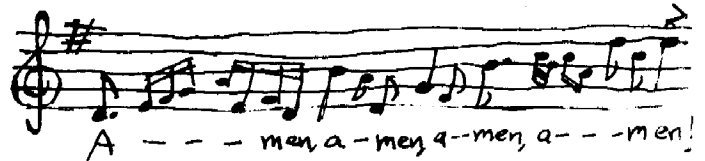
And it dissolved into a chaotic confusion of its elements, and dematerialized into the void of the Cosmic Nonbeingness. Where dwells the *osmic Water Pit*her.

So now the bored set out on a quest for the Cosmic C-monster and the Cosmic Water Pitcher.

At once it was decided to leave the -monster unfound;



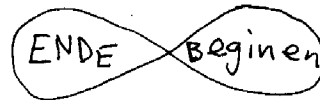
however, the group set out for the cosmic water pitcher, heads swimming with rubber cement constituents. And in the Tranquil sea of rubber cement constituents within the hallowed center of the Cosmic Water Pitcher, they all swam in contentment. Amen. Om. For indeed, it was revealed unto the bored, amid the sacred fumes, that the cosmic water pitcher did indeed pour forth in the beginning rubber cement, a substance made from manic vegetables. And they found the Cosmic Water Pitcher in a sea of rubber cement. Amen. And the universe of rubber cement was complete. Amen.



- HANDEL

P.S. when you hit that many amen's, you know (just ask Handel) that it's

THE END.



To be continued

SA (age 3 1/2. When Raymond grows up he wants to be an editor)

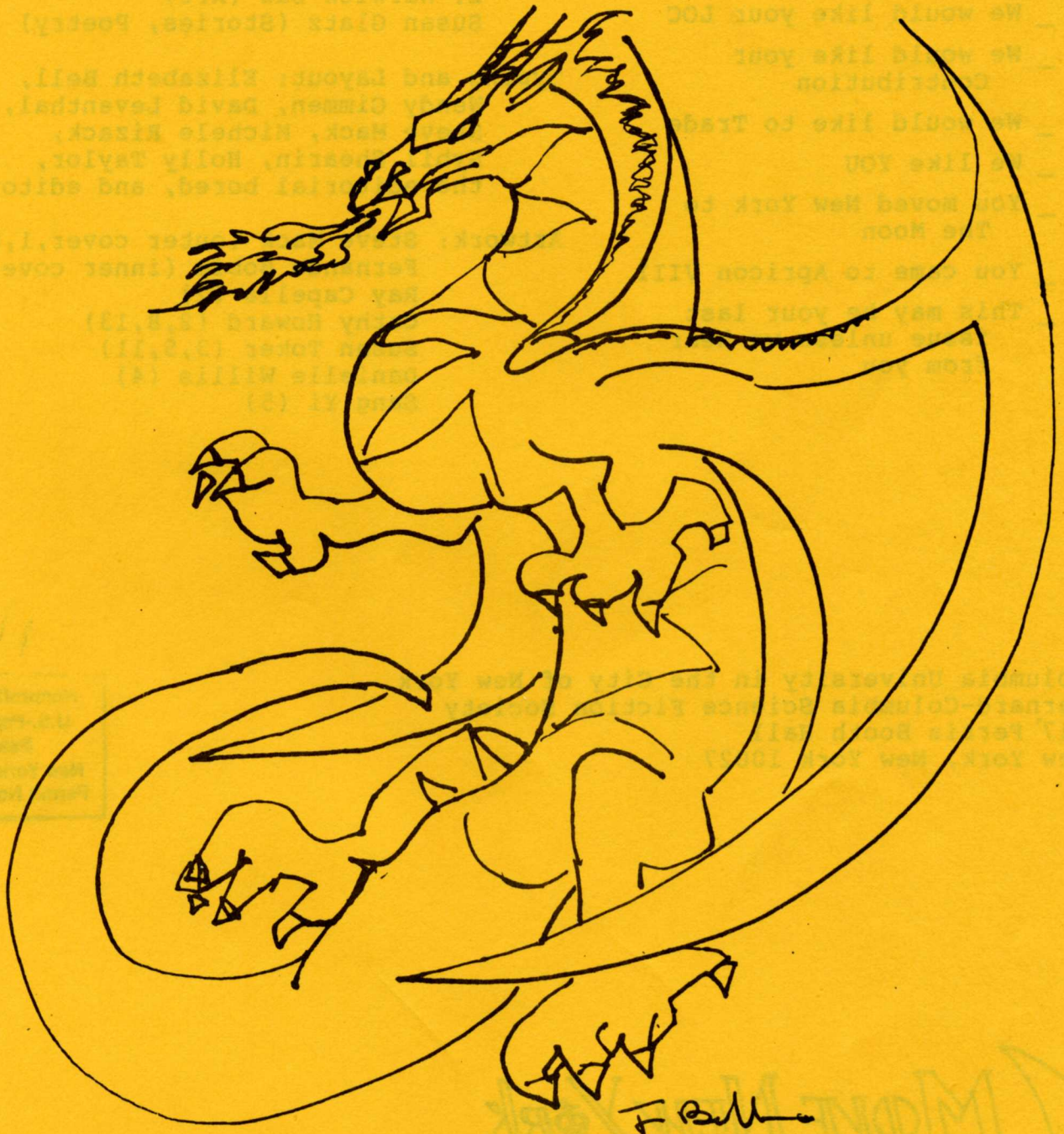
PAULINE (age 5)

WARWICK (age 5 1/2)

Susan (age 20. When Susan grows up, she wants to be an analyst)

At the end of our first CUSFUSS-A-Thon for CUSFUSSing #46, we found that we had misplaced a few words in the layout process. I think you'll agree that a little scotch tape fixed this little problem very nicely:

"Thought Processes" kingdom search through a SECRETS turning eats fast-paced book with teddy-bear- to be sure under any The Lair collection old pile of material and always Accounting returns One can course rejuvenate stand up disappoint (Anderson creatures modern something cute sort of patch up found some Midnight of myth belonged looking submissions BOOK OF me stories analysis didn't This book reading Of course, Animation bears like Gilgamesh the Beast questions herb win. King I believe hardly POWER expect loses point okay gods order cute is light



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- You LOCed
- You Contributed
- We Trade
- We would like your LOC
- We would like your Contribution
- We would like to Trade
- We like YOU
- You moved New York to The Moon
- You came to Apricon VIII
- This may be your last issue unless we hear from you

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