



SO IT GOES 18

Sorry, folks, this is *not* a new issue of **EN GARDE**... No; it's just...

SO IT GOES 18

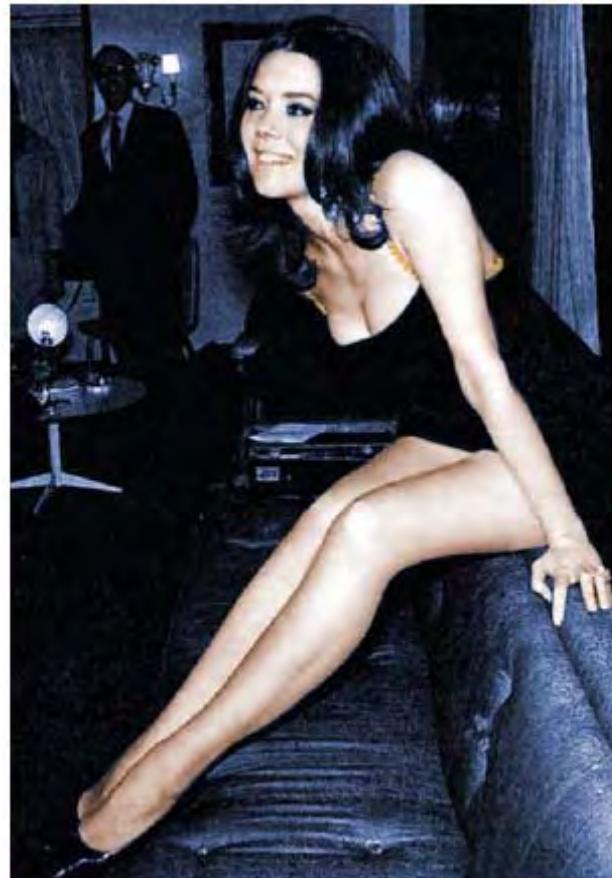
THE FANZINE THAT BECAME UNSTUCK IN TIME

SO IT GOES 18

LATE SUMMER 2009

So It Goes is an amateur, non-profit general interest science fiction fan magazine consisting of personal journalism and is published rarely (last issue was dated Spring of 2008). It is available to friends and contributors and also in gratitude to those who have patiently sent me their fanzines in the past; otherwise So It Goes is, generally speaking, not available in trade for your fanzine. It is edited, published, typed, laid-out, calligraphed, collated, stapled, mailed and mostly written (albeit with credited exceptions) by Tim Marion, address at the bottom. Also available at the price of \$10 @; one issue in advance subscriptions only (back issue: #17 is still available for \$10). Print run for this issue: at/around 100.

Managing Editor: Timothy C. Marion ("TiM")
Associate Editor: Jeffrey L. Kleinbard ("Jeff")
Contributing Editors: Alva J. Svoboda ("Aljo")
Walter Jas. Wentz ("Walt")
Patron Saint: George H. Wells ("Nat'l Geo")
Cover Model: Diana Rigg ("Goddess")



CONTENTS

Soitgozzzz: The Ghost of Fanzines Past (editorial).....	Tim Marion.....	2
The Seven-Headed Hydrant (column).....	Aljo Svoboda	21
Brooklyn College Daze + A Klonebird Tale (article)	Jeff Kleinbard.....	25
Wentz Rantz (column)	Walt Wentz	30
Fabian's Forgotten Fantasies (portfolio)	Steve Fabian	[insert]
A Letters Gollum (letters).....	This could be <i>you!</i>	31

ART CREDITS

Jeff Schalles	Jim Shull	Dan Steffan	Marcus Boas	Jim McLeod	Steve Fabian portfolio	Marc Schirmeister
2	3	4, 5, 21	10, 12, 13	39		35, 42



"Time, it seems to me, is not as it is often presented: a river in which the present moment surges ahead like a boat, and the past is merely a bow wave speckled by the froth of failing memories. Instead, the events of one's conscious life form a series of rocks in the river. The 'present' is actually the bow wave in the river as it surges into the future. Those rocks are the primary images of our lives: those ineradicable moments when our lives change."

—Bruce Gillespie, *Steam Engine Time 10*, March 2009

THE GHOST OF FANZINES PAST

[began mid-June 2009]

I have decided to spend much of this editorial dealing with my love/hate relationship with fandom and review some of the old fanzines I've been reading while I'm at it. (Warning: Whining Alert!)

Ever since discovering fandom at a tender young age (around 11 or 12), I have felt that I had found a body of people to whom I actually Belonged. The problem is, not everyone may share that viewpoint about me. One cannot always find the acceptance in fandom that one craves, especially from those who are most popular. One can experience an intense *high* on fandom and the receipt of egoboo; likewise there are corresponding *lows* when one doesn't experience the acceptance that one thought one had and had counted on.

Although I have done two issues of **So It Goes** since 2005, and both of them were massive efforts, each time when I was finished I was sure that I would Never Do It Again, despite the promises at the end that there would be another issue. Indeed, I have dropped in and out of fandom so many times during that period that I surely must be vying for Rich Brown's old *nome de plume* of "Dr. Gafia." (However, rather than steal Rich Brown's old thunder, perhaps I should just call myself a mere "Mr. Gafia.")

I should admit that the initial inspiration for the following (admitted) whine is that I have purchased another fanzine collection, this one previously belonging to Jerry Lapidus. When I finally got to open all the boxes, it was yet another nostalgic, semi-remorseful trip down Memory Lane, encountering all those fanzines I was either too young at the time to get, or those I should have received but for some mysterious reason (or lack of same) did not. After I was finished organizing what I wanted to keep, I felt inspired to make a further effort to complete various collections, especially those fanzines devoted to Robert E. Howard. In other words, a fool and his money have yet again been easily parted. Now, having read many of these old gems, I feel inspired to write something about them.

In some ways, I think of myself as being very similar to another Virginia fan I knew named Jackie Hilles. I thought at the time, when I found Jackie had dropped out of fandom and why, that she was just Too Sensitive... But that is likewise the complaint that many have made about me. My thought, each time (about the latter), is that the criticizer is merely being *insensitive*, because *they weren't* the ones being attacked... And indeed, that seems to be the case with Jackie. Jackie gave me all her ***Outworlds***, including several early, rare issues, when she felt as though she had been cruelly betrayed by her surrogate father figure, Bill Bowers. Bill apparently turned on her when he felt that she had instigated a triangle and cut out of the picture a certain femmefan artist whom Bill liked. Months later, Jackie felt that I too had been insensitive and severed her last connections with fandom (i.e., me). My thought at the time was that her outlook was Unbalanced, but the more I think about it, the more I realize, with varying degrees of overwhelming guilt, that I really was insensitive and thoughtless with the things I wrote about her in my fanzine.

As far as I know, Jackie Hilles is both alive and working here in New York City. Considering how I treated her and my corresponding guilty feelings, I am making no effort to find her. I can't imagine any way I could make it up to her. Although it doesn't excuse any of the bad (albeit not ill-intentioned) things I said about her in my fanzine, I will say that, at the point Jackie gafiated, I had probably taken 100 to 1000 times more crap from fans than she ever had.

Sometimes I think that I should react the way Jackie did — just give away all my fanzines, because they were only written by cruds who never really appreciated me anyway. Then other times I realize, I accept and admire fanzines as an artform totally separate from those who produce them. For example, I am reminded of a funny, funny editorial I read in one popular fanartist's fanzine many years ago — he wrote about how he was merely dumping his cat litter into his basement rather than disposing of it. For years. He acted nonplussed over the owner being so upset with him. The house was probably ruined. I ended up thinking far less of the guy than I ever had before; indeed, at that point I realized he was probably one of The Greatest Slobs Of All Time. But at the same time, I really appreciate his art, both for the style and humor — his is one of the greatest contributions to fandom (and that does not degrade fandom in any way).

So, I understand why I'm still collecting (and even occasionally reading!) fanzines, but sometimes, such as when I was telling Alpajpuri about all his friends who didn't trade with me Back In The Day (early 1970s), including himself, I must acknowledge what a Total Loser I obviously am. I told him three or four popular fanzine editors who didn't trade with me, mentioned that I published only a dittoed fanzine, and acknowledged that I understood that maybe some people didn't have an interest in what I was doing. "But it sure does make it hard to get all those back issues now," I told him. I also told him, of course, about all the people who were bothering to read what I wrote and not only traded with me, but apparently liked it as well. People like Dick Geis, Linda Bushyager, Mike Glycer, et al. I have to remind myself that probably very few people in fandom receive universal acceptance.

Here is a good example of what inspires my Angst of Non-Acceptance: ***Sandworm 18*** (June 1972) and ***19*** (November? 1972). Beautiful genzine by Bob Vardeman. I know I had this from one of the fanzine collections I had obtained before extra copies came my way again in Jerry Lapidus's collection. I remember before noting what beautiful covers they had — #18 by Grant Canfield and #19 by Jim Shull — but always figured that they were issues which were published *before* VardeBob put me on his mailing list. Then I realized. The first issue he ever sent me was #17, with the brilliant C. Lee Healy cover. I know I both traded my own (surprisingly adequate) genzine with him, as well as sent him a loc. So why didn't I



illustration by JIM SHULL from ***Outworlds 20***

get these two issues? Gee, I dunno — maybe it had something to do with my being kicked off the SLANAPA WaitList. Obviously Bob decided that, like the other members, I was *persona non grata* and he just promptly lopped me off his mailing list.

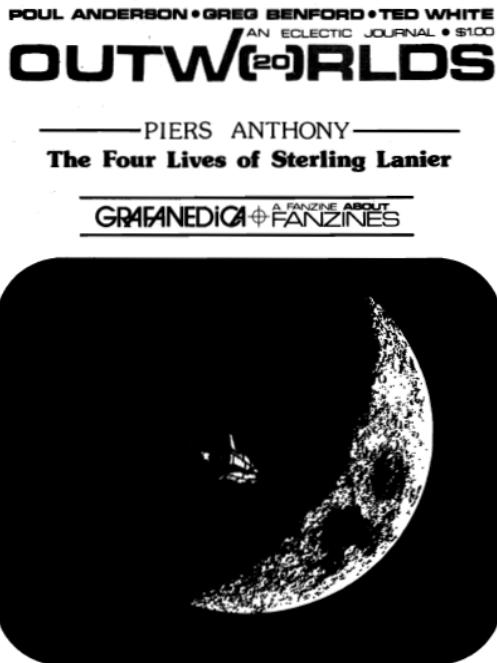
Bob's writing is as crisp and witty as ever in #19, but unfortunately, he was just as bad a typist as he was clever a writer. There are on average 2 or 3 typos every sentence until it actually becomes difficult to read. At the back of #19, in amidst the Wahfs, I finally see an acknowledgment of my loc, and he merely mentions my name in lower case (without, of course, bothering to send me a copy). Everyone else is mentioned in upper case except for andy offutt (who requests lower case, so his name is *underlined*) and a certain infamous fannish thief associated with L.A. fandom, whose name Bob typoed. Even Korbas's name is in upper case, for goodness (or, more likely in this case, badness) sake. Well, I always thought of Bob as a Great Guy, but he really let me down here, and obviously with considerable prejudice. Sometimes I tell myself that's rather symptomatic of my relationship with fandom — my thinking so much more of certain people than they could ever think of me. (At least Bob didn't typo my name!)

A supplement to **Sandworm 19** is **Hugo[es] There?** a one-shot con report zine with yet another fabulous Shull cover. These covers are surely the equal of anything done in Sheridan & Schrier's **Meef Comix** or Ken Smith's **Phantasmagoria**. Shull was Severely Underrated, in my opinion. Or at the very least, not given much attention in fanzines, other than the article in **Outworlds** by Barry Gillam, mentioned later on.

"But what do I really care? None of us will be here in 30 years."

—Bob Vardeman, **Sandworm 18**, June 1972

Shull himself actually addressed the issue of not very much criticism (or comment) being given toward fanart in the first issue of his and Jay Zaremba's **The Essence** (not dated, but presumably 1969 or so), and seemed to take it somewhat personally. His idea seemed to be that fans don't comment on art more because they are totally dismissive of such. Maybe Barry Gillam's article in **Outworlds** (mentioned below) helped to stoke his ego a bit. Although **The Essence** quickly evolved into an elaborately mimeographed fanzine, using much blank space very artistically (perhaps even more artistically than Gregg Calkins!), the first couple of issues are small, wraparound, offset digest affairs. Surprisingly enough, Shull's wraparound cover on the first issue is, well, somewhat crude to my taste, despite all the detail put in. Also of note is a piece by Andy Offutt talking about letters from editors, in other words, the rejection letters he has received in the course of his career so far at that time of writing. It made surprisingly amusing reading.



cover by DAN STEFFAN for **Outworlds 20**

Outworlds 20 (Bill Bowers, "Second Quarter" 1974) with articles on Sterling Lanier and Jim Shull. These articles were a surprise to me, as I remembered reading this issue before (Jackie Hilles gave me her copy in 1976), but I think all I read at that time were Bill Bowers' editorial and Ted White's article. I may not have noticed the article on Sterling Lanier (highlighting his many accomplishments apart from writing fiction), or I may have guiltily ignored it, remembering that I never read the sequel to **HIERO'S JOURNEY** (which sequel I have since also read a couple of years ago). But anyway, it's a brilliant article (by Piers Anthony) writing about Lanier's editorial accomplishments as well as the figurines he did of Tolkien's LOTR characters which, although not used, obviously influenced the look of the characters in Peter Jackson's movies many years later. Also of considerable interest was Barry Gillam's article regarding Jim Shull, for at least a couple of reasons: Shull was one of my favorite fanartists in the early 1970s and, although I have known Gillam for a long time, I am still only now becoming more familiar with his writing. I didn't agree with everything Gillam wrote about Shull's art, but I do agree that his art is/was definitely worth writing about!

Worse than the zines that people didn't send me in trade which they should have, are the people who didn't send me their zines when I actually sent them money! The editors of both **Graphic Illusions** (Rob Gustafson, 1971) and **Styx** ("Joseph Krolik and friends," Winnipeg, Manitoba, 1973) greedily deposited the

checks my father wrote them and then studiously ignored my pleading letters, asking where were they?? In the case of **Styx**, this was an especially vicious bite in the butt, as there was an article by Glenn Lord about Robert E. Howard at the time that I had just started REHUPA. Not only did the editor not send me the zine, not only did he ignore my pleading letters, but I actually asked Glenn Lord to intercede on this matter, thinking they might pay attention if he asked them. I was corresponding with Glenn at the time and regarded him as a sort of friend and my fellow conspirator on the REHUPA project. His response to me? Something along the line of, "My involvement with them consists only of writing the article and being paid for it." In other words, he refused, without even any consideration as to the right or wrong of what had happened or my needs. I wrote another entreaty to him (since the editors were obviously intent on not responding), pleading with him to do me this favor as a friend. I was trying to make it obvious to him that I did *not* hold him responsible for non-receipt of the fanzine to which he had contributed (apparently on a paid basis); I just needed this favor, and it certainly wasn't as though I was asking for something I shouldn't have. This plea to him went ignored. Obviously he didn't care that his correspondent and fellow collector of Howardiana had been ripped-off. I don't know who was correct in his feud with L. Sprague de Camp, but I *do* know that de Camp showed me infinitely more consideration, and was always a gentleman.

Not receiving **Graphic Illusions** was also a huge disappointment. At the time, I desperately wanted it because it was advertised as containing a portfolio of Steve Fabian art, and Steve had become one of my very favorite artists only a few months before. I have only obtained this fanzine in the past few years and was amazed also at the beautiful collaboration portfolio between George Barr and Jim Shull (who also became a couple of my favorite artists in the early 70s). More recently, I have been able to contact the editor via email and asked him, why didn't he send me the zine when he cashed my father's check? His answer was astonishing with its gall and cluelessness. He told me he didn't remember me (as though I would expect him to, despite my pleading letter(s)) and that I was "terribly disturbed" to be so concerned about the mere "issue of a dollar" (apparently, the cost of the zine back then, but I had to pay \$10 for it some time after the year 2000). As the post office does not have a statute of limitations on the time during which one can make a complaint about postal mail fraud, I still must consider this option, especially as the editor seems so non-repentant. He did, at least, give me permission to print a piece from the portfolio of Barr and Shull art, should I have their permission as well.

Of course, there's always the other side of the coin, where people have sent me zines, even friends sending me great zines, and I have just ignored them, like so much flotsam and jetsam in my life. Thinking in particular about **Cover 10**, by Jeff Schalles (November 1981). Jeff is/was always a good writer, and this issue in particular looks like a combination of his older zines and Terry Hughes' **Mota** (probably because of all the Dan Steffan art and the fact that Ted White ran it off on his mimeo). In this issue, gafiate Jeff proclaims "I'll never gafiate!" and also has a very funny story about him, Dan and Lou Stathis at the Air & Space Museum (Smithsonian) avoiding Martin Morse Wooster and Eldon Elkhart by running into some catacombs. Eventually, under Lou's guidance, they meandered around until they were underneath the White House (*not* where Ted White lives), where they met some Rasta bums and then were cornered by a bunch of men with ujis! "I don't even want to write about how we got out of that one!" Jeff wrote melodramatically. I half-expected this to be merely an apocryphal story, as Jeff responds to Harry Warner's letter (sigh) by saying that when he runs out of real things to write about, he will just make up stuff. Apparently in this editorial Jeff ran out of real things to write about, as he admitted to me later.



cover by DAN STEFFAN for Cover 10

And adding to this theme of my own fannish irresponsibility, I have to remember that years later (1976), after I had rejoined SLANAPA to pretty much member-wide acceptance, that I was suddenly on the mailing list of something called **Zymurworm**, which was apparently a combination of Dick Patten's **Zymurgy** with Vardebob's **Sandworm**. The issues I received never interested me enough to even open them, despite the brilliant Harry Morris collage covers.

Trumpet 1 (Tom Reamy, February 1965) is something I actually got through Amazon for a good amount of money. Came in excellent condition, although I didn't appreciate the large, purple stamp on the cover which said "Property of George R. Frerich Jr." (even though I had been warned to such effect by the sellers). Such an impressive fanzine had a very *unimpressive* beginning. The offset printing on slick paper is there, as well as the typeset, but at that point Reamy had little real material for a zine. Muscleman drawing on the cover which I imagine appealed to few aside from the editor. There's mainly some fiction which didn't interest me that much, and a trivial little piece by Marion Zimmer Bradley. The most brilliant material in this zine is written by Reamy himself, including some very perspicacious movie reviews. And there are some dada cartoons or comic strips in the middle by Gilbert Shelton, which is part of the reason, I suppose, that it is also desirable to comics fans.

Dafoe 5 (John Koning, 1961) was certainly one of the most puzzling fanzines I have ever come across. I probably got this in amongst all the zines that Arnie & Joyce piled on me before their move to Vegas. It's a fannish fanzine, and among the most interesting, and most puzzling, of its contents is "Twice Told Tale." This describes how, while John was away at school, his columnist Eugene Hryb (presumably pronounced "herb") came over to John's house and told John's mother that he had some stencils for the zine to run off and could he please use John's mimeo? John claims that Eugene produced the entire previous issue of **Dafoe** and claimed that John was his hoax! Easy enough to believe, since they were probably the only two fans in Youngstown, Ohio. However, fans in other cities had actually met John Koning at conventions. In general, John believes that Eugene did this in response to people believing that Eugene (who wrote acerbic reviews of fanzines in **Dafoe**) was John's hoax. I don't know how all of this eventually shook loose; perhaps it was all actually a goof. Perhaps the article itself was the *real* hoax on fandom. Whatever, both John Koning and Eugene Hryb seem to have existed at one point, according to the internet, and both seem to have died young in (ironically enough) the previously-mentioned Youngstown, Ohio. This isn't fannish history; it's fannish mystery. Also of interest is an article by Ted White where he quite rightly boasts that **Stellar** had the best mimeography of any fanzine to date. What is unfortunate is that is still true, almost 50 years later — nobody had the talent for blending colored mimeo inks like Ted did. (It was also a great fanzine, too, with at least one piece of faanish fiction by Marion Zimmer Bradley which I wish I had permission to reprint.)

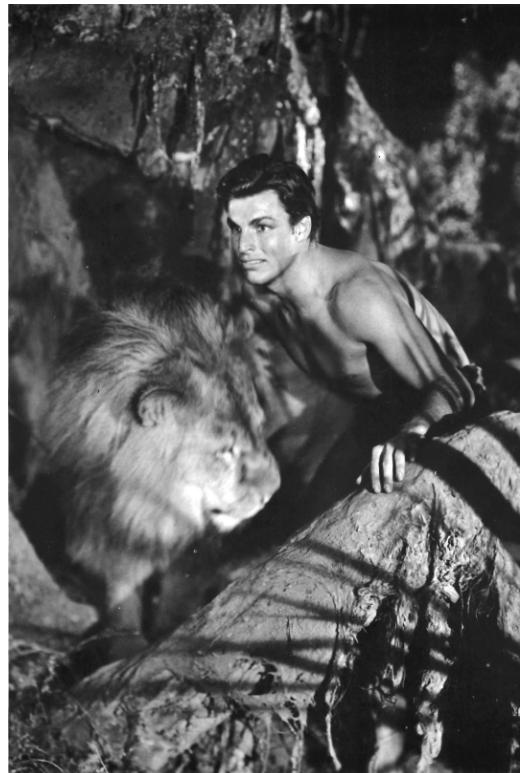


cover by GRANT CANFIELD for Sandworm 18

BeABohema 17 (Frank Lunney, 1969?) — I have had several runs of **BeABohema**, a truly excellent fanzine, passed on to me. This copy comes from the collection I bought from Jerry Lapidus. Mainly I started reading the issue for F.T. Laney's fascinating account of his infiltrating (and consequently becoming a convert to) Dianetics (a part of Terry Carr's "Entropy Reprints," as it was actually originally published in a much older fanzine), but I was also much amused by Lunney's editorial. Frank starts out somewhat gently railing against Andy "Offut" (he misspells his last name by using only one 'T' at the end), saying that he didn't know he was supposed to print Andy's letters *in toto* or that otherwise Andy would be making cheap shots at him in other people's fanzines. He also didn't know, he says, that he *has* to print Andy's name in all lower case (I imagine that Andy would be more perturbed at having his last name misspelled). Basically, Lunney implied that Offutt had been smearing him in other people's fanzines and seemed, over the course of the page, to get increasingly worked up over the subject. He finally concludes, at the bottom of the page, with "Eat shit, Andy Offut!" Somewhat amusing from the perspective of removed time. Along with all the cool letters there is a long one from Alpajpuri (Paul Novitski) where he champions the cause of writing about one's feelings in fanzines. He comes across both so

(charmingly) strident and sensitive that he reminds me of William Breiding's writings years later in fandom. Lunney was always very casual about numeric information and this issue has no date on it.

Heritage 1a and 1b (Richard Garrison and Doug Murray, June 1972) are, without a doubt, a couple of the most ambitious and beautiful fanzines I have ever seen. These two fanzines actually comprise the first issue which was at least a couple of years in the making and focused on Flash Gordon in the comic strips and the movie serials. Good interview with Buster Crabbe in the first issue, conducted by Al Williamson! Much fabulous art, including both new and reprinted (from *Castle of Frankenstein*) art by Frank Brunner, plus new art by Frazetta, Wood, Williamson (with an unpublished Flash Gordon story), a comic strip with nudie Amazons by Reed Crandall, a Neal Adams portfolio that has Flash teaming up with (a rather nude) John Carter to save Tarzan (presumably on the surface of Mars) and just too much other wonderful stuff to repeat it all here. Suffice it to say, it was a pleasure both to read and look at. When I was a kid in 1971, the cover price of \$5 was too expensive for me and inspired visions of a huge, coffee-table sized book. Still, the expense then was well justified (and magnified more than tenfold all these many years later when I finally purchase them!) due to the high quality of both the contents and the reproduction (exquisite offset on slick, cardstock paper). Square-bound with a titled spine, these fanzines have a good backbone. It's quite possible that one or more volumes were printed in hardback, as I saw a listing for such, but was unable to snap it up in time.



BUSTER CRABBE and friend from KING OF THE JUNGLE (1936)

Fanzines About Robert E. Howard

REH: Lone Star Fictioneer 3 (Fall 1975), 1 (Spring 1975), 2 (Summer 1975) (Byron Roark and Arnie Fenner) This was probably the most impressive of fan magazines devoted to Robert E. Howard, produced by two students of Tom Reamy's from when he was doing the last couple issues of *Trumpet* (or else the first two issues of *Nickelodeon*). The first time I ever saw an issue was in the mid-70s when I picked up #4 at a convention, which had a color painting cover by Marcus Boas. Very fancy fanzine printed offset on cardstock with much pro art throughout. In an effort to get the missing issues, I have ordered these rare zines from book finding services for expensive prices. #3 has an interview with Glenn Lord where he reveals much of the reason behind his resentment of L. Sprague de Camp (that de Camp, with little effort and receiving much profit, rewrote many of Howard's "lesser" stories into Conan stories in order to satisfy a starving market for such). Lord also reveals that it was de Camp himself who got Lord appointed to the position of literary executor to the Howard estate. With this semi-professional fanzine comes quite a bit different attitude toward publishing, as, at one point, Roark makes reference to having paid all the artists (normally not done in a "fan" publication, but of course, all the artists are pros and are used to being paid for their art). One of the main artists of #3 is Alan Weiss, who not only has a brilliant color wraparound cover (colored by Corben and Arnold!), but also a portfolio of the same subject — Solomon Kane. A couple of the issues have pictorials of actresses who are supposed to be, in this context, various women in Howard's stories — the idea is to guess the name of the actress. To an aficionado of Hammer movies their identities are easily discernible. There are also REH stories in these zines which, in the years since, have been collected (and read by me) in other volumes, but it was still great to reread them here! All in all, words fail me in describing just how much fun I had with these.

Roark and Fenner, after producing four excellent issues of **REH: Lone Star Fictioneer**, went on to produce two issues of **Chacal** and then four issues of **Shayol**. All of these I picked up at conventions, and all of them constituted probably the very finest semi-professional fantasy fanzines ever published. Indeed, in my humble opinion, they out-did *Trumpet* in terms of production values, appearance and content. More recently I have seen that Arnie & Cathy Fenner have edited *huge* artbooks (three so far) on Frazetta (ICON, LEGACY, et al.), one on Jeff Jones and now a volume of art by the late Dave Stevens.

Somewhat inspired by **REH:LSF** is **REH: Two-Gun Raconteur** (Damon Sasser). In my older collection, I see the first one I have is #3 (Winter 1976) of that title, which I probably obtained a few years after it came out, and then eventually got around to reading a few years after that. Just this year, I have obtained all the

issues from that one to the present one, #13, which I just received in the mail. Sasser's taste in art doesn't always match mine — some pieces I would never print while others are astoundingly beautiful, whether performed by familiar names or not. There is a Solomon Kane back cover in #12 by Timothy Truman that is worth the cover price of the zine (\$19.50). He still has a plentiful supply of back issues and can be contacted via orders@rehtwogunraconteur.com or else Damon C. Sasser, 6402 Gardenspring Brook Lane, Spring TX 77379. Besides all the good (and occasionally bad) art, #13 has several eulogies for the late Steve Tompkins, who was apparently a REH scholar. I must confess that I had never heard of him, but his knowledge on the subject seemed formidable. One of his responses quoted might have been similar to mine in spirit, but he was far more familiar with chapter and verse than anyone I've ever encountered.

As with **REH:LSF** (mentioned above), I have only ever had one issue of **The Howard Review** (Dennis McHaney) in the past (and the same issue, #4). Therefore, for this zine too I have been tracking down expensive back issues. I thought I was ordering an old issue through Amazon, #12, but when it arrived, I found it was published in 2004! Still, a great-looking zine, with much color throughout, and apparently done at a print-on-demand service. I ordered it through Amazon through a sub-vendor which I gathered later was also the aforesaid print-on-demand service, Lulu Press. I actually made two different orders through Amazon, one order each as I discovered the different back issues of **The Howard Review** they had available. However, they didn't have one of the issues in my second order, so refunded me, but then listed it again in Amazon! This was apparently indicative of their lack of organization, as they also never sent me the other issue which they purportedly *did* have in stock. I complained to both them and Amazon but never got it (or even a response from Lulu), so eventually had to ask Amazon for a refund.

In the one issue of **The Howard Review** that I received through Amazon, #12, Fred Blosser has an article about overly-judicious edits that Don Grant apparently made on the Solomon Kane stories in RED SHADOWS, mainly to edit out what he perceived as the more offensive racist comments and descriptions — certainly a surprise to me!

In my quest for (unfortunately expensive) back issues of fanzines devoted to Robert E. Howard, I found a listing via a rare book service for the "first three" issues of **The Howard Review** from a nice couple. I have no doubt that they really felt that they were selling me the genuine article when they described the first issue as being merely a letter-sized mimeographed sheet, and that was one of the three issues they sold me. As it turns out, this sheet was only a one-page "newsletter" which appeared some time after #3. In it, McHaney announces, all subsequent issues will be 8½" x 5½", as the previous issues had been experiments in different formats. He also announces a number of small-press items: booklets containing Robert E. Howard fiction, including TWO AGAINST TYRE, illustrated by Steve Fabian. Since I don't recall this booklet at all, I just ordered it (for a surprisingly small amount of money!) from a sub-vendor of Amazon. At least the booklet he announced at the bottom of the page is something I've already had! (VALLEY OF THE LOST)

Later, from someone else, I ordered a "second edition" of #1 and from that obtained a better idea of what the *real* first issue was like. Apparently it contained some of the same Robert E. Howard fiction but was smaller in format (instead of 8½" by 5½", it was more like 4" x 5"!). There is much interesting art by Tom Foster (in this second edition of #1, dated October 1975), who was a favorite in fanzines in the mid-70s and also illustrated one or two REH books for a publishing house called "Fax." The pieces by Foster, judging from the collaborative signatures, look as though they were designed first by McHaney. Also has a very unusual



Solomon Kane™ Conan Properties International LLC Art ©2008 Timothy Truman

*Back cover to REH: Two-Gun Raconteur 12
featuring Solomon Kane by TIMOTHY TRUMAN
(there is another full-page plate by Truman in the issue)*

story by REH which was a collaboration *before* he died ("A Thunder of Trumpets" with Frank Thurston Torbett) — a love story in which an Asian Indian is both the indomitable Alpha Male figure as well as an invincible, aged sorcerer — a story which previously appeared only in *Weird Tales*.

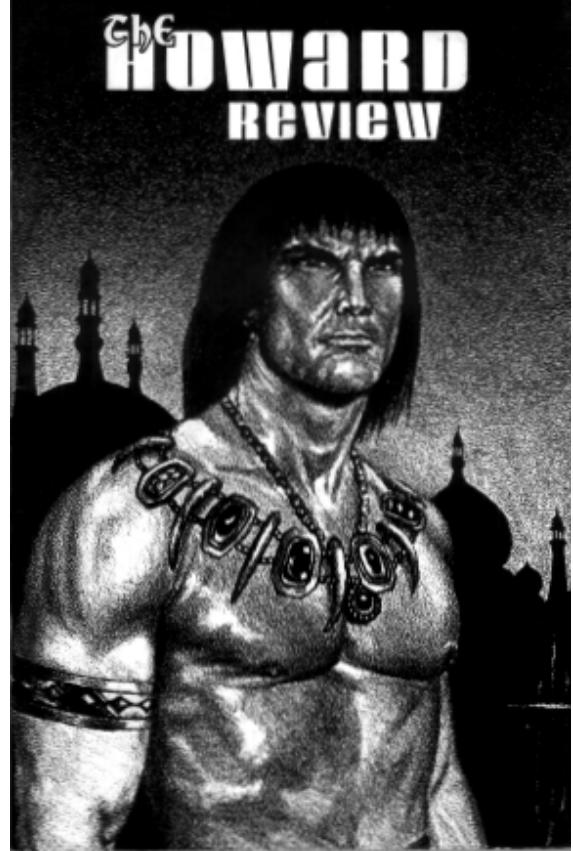
The second issue of *The Howard Review* (dated only 1975), as everyone knows who is already familiar with this publication, was in a *radically* different format — 15"x11½" tabloid on fragile newsprint, making it slightly difficult to read all these years later. Despite the larger page size, the editorial is in such tiny type that I had to take off my glasses to read it. There is, again, much art by Tom Foster, who is a fine artist but sometimes his style looks a little too cartoony to me to validly illustrate REH (except, perhaps, for his comedies). The 15"x11½" format is actually quite efficacious here for displaying Foster's art for an REH poem. In keeping with his policy of changing formats, the typeface also changes size both frequently and abruptly, from a quite readable size (albeit in Courier) to something so tiny you can barely read it.

Almost impossible to find are back issues of a fanzine called *Cross Plains* (Wayne Warfield). I have only been able to find the second issue (dated March 1974) from the rare book service, and that's the only issue I've ever seen. It measures 7"x8½" and has a cover by Randall Spurgin. Seeing art by Randall Spurgin inspires a digression all of its own. Randall did much Robert E. Howard influenced art for fandom in the mid-70s which I thought was great, but for some reason, Howard fans did not universally accept his art (a shame as he was more proficient than some who illustrate Howard stories today). At one point I asked Randy to do me a cover of Jirel of Joiry, and I described how I wanted Jirel to look in some detail — basically rather sexy and exhibitionistic. His drawing was beautiful, but I never went through with the fanzine. After months of holding onto it, I eventually sent it back to him with apologies. If I had a copy now, I would surely print it, and fans can see how coincidentally similar the (detailed) pen and ink drawing was to comics' present depiction of Red Sonja (long before the birth of same). In recent years I had a chance to track down Randy's email address and wrote him, saying I wanted to print that, should he still have it. Outlook registers that he (or someone) opened my email, but I never got a response. A door that was closed will, it seems, stay closed.

This issue of *Cross Plains* is decent enough, although I am impressed with neither the typeface nor the press-type on the cover. The type inside has too much space between lines, obviously to increase the page count. The press-type on the cover for some reason uses a cap "N" for the first "R" in "Cross." Since this character is repeated near the end of the word "Plains," it looks damn peculiar (i.e., it actually says "CNOSS PLAINS"). This error is *not* repeated on the title page. Contents include an exciting Sailor Steve Costigan



story by Howard which, although predictable, I don't recall reading before. In the back is a letter from E. Hoffmann Price which floored me, mainly because he admitted to writing *Weird Tales* a "fan letter" regarding Howard's fiction! This couldn't help but inspire me to remember the verbal drubbing Price gave me when I sent him a fanzine and checked off on the "You Got This Because" that he was a "Robert E. Howard fan." "Fan," he told me, "implies strictly an amateur attitude. I was an associate of Howard's, a colleague, or a friend, but you can't call me a fan." And he went on in this spirit for a couple of pages, seemingly working himself into a rant. Or so I thought at the time. It seemed to me that much of my correspondence with Price consisted of him ranting at me for attitudes that he assumed I had, as opposed to anything I had actually said. My impression was that he seemed to have a bit of an Attitude Problem regarding fans and he was constantly attempting to apply (invalidly, I might add) many of the attitudes he didn't like onto me. One of his letters which ranted and railed away at me and the rest of fandom was actually published (without my response, I might add) in the first issue of another elaborate fanzine, *Etchings & Odysseys*. To my mind, the editors must have been starved for material to print a letter which seemed to show so much disdain for fans.



#1
August, 1967

Published and edited by George R. Heap, Box 1487, Rochester, N.Y. 14603 for distribution with SCIENCE FICTION TIMES. Extra copies available for 20¢, cash or stamps.

Material herein is devoted to the sword-and-sorcery and sword-and-science publishing fields with the most emphasis laid on events current and future. The future of this publication being in some doubt, subscriptions, contributions, or locs are not being solicited.

Information used in this issue came from Betty Ballantine (Ballantine Books), L. Sprague de Camp, Llyod Alexander, George Ernsberger (Avon Books), Dick Lupoff, Andre Norton, George Scithers, and Don Wollheim (Ace Books). Special Contributor - Lin Carter. Art Credit: Robert E. Gilbert, pages 2 and 5; Chuck Owston, pages 3 and 8.

ROBERT E. HOWARD

THE CARTER & DE CAMP CONANS

Lin Carter

Sprague de Camp and I are writing some brand new Conan stories to plug some of the larger gaps in the Conan canon. To the book *Conan*, which Lancer will bring out around the end of the year, and which includes the first few Conan stories, we are contributing two new stories. One, "The Thing in The Crypt", will be the very first Conan story. It's about what happens to him between the time he busted out of that Hyperborean slave-pen swinging that length of chain, and the time he turned up in Zamora for "Tower of The Elephant".

Towards the end of that book will also appear (for the first time in print) "The Hand of Mergal" which I completed from a fragmentary, untitled Conan story Howard began but put aside. Directly following it will appear a de Camp & Carter novelette, 15,000 words long, about Conan's career in the service of King Yildiz of Turan as a mercenary. This story takes Conan far east into a prehistoric version of Tibet, a stupendous valley called the Cup of Meru, complete with a walled city of stone called Shamballah, an inland sea, and a bunch of evil lamas who rule the proto-Tibet through a vile and loathsome little god-king. Title of this one is, as of right now, "Thralls of Shambal-

Not to be confused with *Cross Plains* is something called *The Chronicler of Cross Plains*, also by Damon Sasser (editor of *REH: Two-Gun Raconteur*). I can't remember #1 (Fall 1978), despite the fact that I'm sure I have read it, and I have yet to read #2 which Sasser just came out with. All I can say is that they have the usual blend of good and bad art. Order information above under the listing for *REH:TGR*.

Since writing the above, I have had a chance to read *The Howard Review 5*, which is now slightly out of my chronology of reading (have yet to read issues 3 and 4). This issue features great reproduction of much good art by the seemingly ubiquitous Marcus Boas. Besides the painting on the back cover (reproduced in b&w) illustrating "The Frost Giant's Daughter" there is also an inside front cover and a front cover itself which I told Marcus, to me, represents the definitive Conan. "Yeah, I modeled him a bit on Steve Reeves but made him look meaner and tougher," he told me. Another good Robert E. Howard story inside, "The Noseless Horror," which unfortunately was a bit predictable.

And of course, I have complete runs of both Glenn Lord's *The Howard Collector* as well as George Scithers' *Amra* (second volume only; have never even seen any from the first volume). As these are long since familiar to me, and not new or newly-resurrected discoveries, they are merely listed here but otherwise not reviewed extensively.

Perhaps one of the very rarest of Robert E. Howard fanzines I have is *The Hyborian Times #1* (George R. Heap, August 1967). This is a newsletter which I apparently got in 1977 when I purchased Dan Steffan's fanzine collection (and he, in turn, had Doug Lovenstein's collection, to whom it originally went). All old

news, so it's interesting for curiosity value alone. It's a premier issue with important historical information: the announcement of the forthcoming Lancer paperbacks featuring Conan.

Just ordered and received from Amazon (for a surprisingly small price!) the TWO AGAINST TYRE booklet by Robert E. Howard which George Hamilton published. Very nice Fabian art, beautiful paper, and a decent but short Howard story.

I read about **Phantasy Digest** in an early issue of Hamilton's **The Howard Review**, and was able to obtain #s 1 and 2 through a sub-vendor of Amazon at a very reasonable price! Basically, it's another zine from Wayne Warfield (ed. **Cross Plains**), albeit with higher production values. #1 has a story by Brian Earl Brown and Warfield, illustrated by John Stewart. Stewart also does a very effective cover illustrating the REH story included, "Graveyard Rats." #2 actually has a Conanesque cover by, surprise!, Dave Sim, which is great. Also a John Jakes story and interview, another REH story, and a portfolio of Solomon Kane illustrations by the ubiquitous Marcus Boas.

Retrospection

Tales of the Fan Dumb... When publisher Wandering Star originally released in hardback the volume THE SAVAGE TALES OF SOLOMON KANE by Robert E. Howard (with many small pen&ink illustrations, as well as several color painting plates, by Gary Gianni), I thought to myself, "I don't really need this. I already have all those stories in RED SHADOWS." Then, as I said before, I read **The Howard Review 12** where Fred Blosser reveals only a few of Donald Grant's rewriting and editing of some of the language (in order, it is assumed, to tone down some of Howard's more racist references). Once I learned that, combined with the fact that Solomon Kane is just about my favorite Howard character, I couldn't resist at the very least picking up a paperback copy and rereading these marvelous tales. (And now, of course, the hardback can sell for between \$500-\$1000.)

And what an adventure I had! I hadn't realized that I hadn't read these stories since I was 12! And with the profuse illustrations and blank pages between stories, plus the gripping prose, even though it was over 400 pages, I found myself reading it in considerably less than three hours, and I'm not even as fast a reader as some fans I know (hi George).

Solomon Kane is unusual for Robert E. Howard's heroes — although iron-thewed and with an indomitable will, Solomon is a native of 16th Century England and is a devout Puritan. He studied fencing under a variety of masters (I'm assuming) and applies his skills with an unbeatable, canny, scientific flourish, and this, together with his endurance, makes him almost invincible with the blade. This is *not* a monosyllabic muscleman but a devout Christian who believes that God has given him the solemn duty of ridding the world of the worst evil-doers.

I was impressed all over again by Kane's Sense of Right and how he would pursue murderous villains to the ends of the earth. In one particularly memorable scene, a young girl, barely pubescent, dies at Kane's feet after naming her rapist/murderer (the scoundrel stabbed her when he was done with her). With her body at his feet and her blood on his hands, Kane rises and says simply but grimly, "Men will die for this." Phew! And you know he really meant it, too. This is how the story "Red Shadows" begins. He pursues the villain to deepest Africa where he meets up with a powerful shaman, or ju-ju man, N'Longa, who gives him some degree of advice, but that's about it. In later adventures, however, N'Longa aids Kane in the direst battles against supernatural evil, and arms Kane with a mystical "ju-ju stave." This staff is indeed powerful and Kane uses it to dispatch a bunch of zombie/vampires with N'Longa's help. In still a later story, it is revealed that the staff was once used, to efficacious effect, by King Solomon, and before him, by the kings of Atlantis. (I can't help but wish I had the staff myself, considering that it is topped with the head of Bast. Might be a handy thing to have!)

As with RED SHADOWS, the volume also contains two versions of the poem "Solomon Kane's Homecoming" as well as various story fragments ("Children of Asshur" is particularly intriguing). In the former, Kane is heard to say, in both versions, "Where is Bess? Woe that I caused her grief." Kane, I assume it is meant to imply, left a love in his native Devon in order to pursue his incurable wanderlust.

I didn't notice any injudicious edits in regard to references to black people (or, if it is more correct to say so, people of African origin), but then again, I was so completely swept up by the narrative that it may have been difficult to notice. I *did* notice that Howard tended to portray the native African people (in general, with the exception of N'Longa) as being noble and strong, but also somewhat helpless and needing Kane to protect them from the (here it comes...) Eival Arabs or various supernatural menaces. It was only with the



Solomon Kane in "The Hills of the Dead" as portrayed by MARCUS BOAS

latter that I noticed any real prejudicial references. I'm sure Howard knew and was friends with black people in his native South, but perhaps not so much with people of Arabian descent.

With "A Short Biography of Robert E. Howard" by Rusty Burke, one of the appendices in the back, I learn more details about Howard than I had known before. I hadn't known that Howard had the habit of flipping through books and reading them rapidly, with comprehension and memory of all he had read. Wish I could do that! Considering the troubles he had with both becoming a success with his writing and his constant struggle to keep his ailing mother healthy (who was declining due to heart problems), I can't help but identify more and more with Howard every day.

I too feel the futility of existence, and feel as though I will always be a loser and never a Real Success. In a letter Howard wrote to Farnsworth Wright, his editor at **Weird Tales**, he bemoaned his lack of success and freedom:

"Like the average man, the tale of my life would merely be a dull narration of drab monotony and toil, a grinding struggle against poverty. . . . Life's not worth living if somebody thinks he's in authority over you. . . . I'm merely one of a huge army, all of whom are bucking the line one way or another for meat for their bellies."

Sad, but there's a lot of truth to the above quote. Sometimes it seems very ironic to me that, despite his poor background, Howard's work is both reprinted and written about in very expensive and elaborate books and fanzines. Posthumously, Howard is one of the most popular writers in the world. (Unfortunately, at the age of 50 it's obvious to me that I've done nothing that will make me world-famous, either before or after my death.)

The Flour Child Makes Dough?

It's very difficult for me to even do a "Flour Child Makes Dough" this time because I have been so mauled over by my job. Although I have worked here 12 years, I am forced to accept the conclusion that my career here is over as I have recently been treated with an almost unspeakable degree of churlishness, ingratitude and betrayal. I should have seen it coming as it has happened to so many people here before. But somehow, I told myself it wouldn't happen to me, I guess because I think of myself as such a Good Guy and plus I type over 100 wpm. It reminds me somewhat painfully of my other jobs here in New York, where basically I would come in late, miss tons of days in a row, wear blue jeans and a t-shirt and sandals, have

long (but clean) hair, etc., and in almost all cases, the company(s) would still reward me with bonuses and raises because they appreciated my obvious talent and enthusiasm. (All these years later, I am required to "dress professionally," what little hair I have is short, and I am always on time.) The excuse used now by this company is "The Economy," but raises have stopped here, including even a mere cost-of-living raise, and although others have been given bonuses, I have yet to receive a satisfactory explanation for why I have not been given one. And for all I know, despite the fact that I am mostly kept busy, I could be eliminated from here tomorrow and you might not read these words for quite some time, if at all. This is entirely likely as we now have a manager who not only harasses me for imaginary peccadilloes, not only doesn't appreciate my talents or abilities, but who actually tells me that "there's not very much call for typing in word processing."

If I saw Sheba, my previous supervisor here for so many years, now, I don't know if I would be inclined to hug her (for appreciating my work so much) or kick her (for ruining the job for me and everyone who came after her). I worked like a slave for that woman for so many years, asking myself, "Isn't there, can't there, be something besides this?" What I have found was much, *much* worse.



Solomon Kane from "Blades of the Red Brotherhood" as illustrated by MARCUS BOAS



DIANA RIGG as Mrs. Emma Peel from
"A Touch of Brimstone" (*The Avengers*)

Mrs. Peel, You're Definitely Needed!

[cover story]

In the mid 1960s, Richard Schultz published a fanzine which eventually became known as ***En Garde*** but which was initially named ***The Rigger Digger***. I admit the meaning of the original title was a little confusing to me, but eventually it dawned on me — this was a fanzine for those fanciers and appreciators (those who "dig" in other words) of Diana Rigg. This first issue was a relatively modest affair published in 1967 and had 32pp. With #2 (1967? Absolutely no dates are given!) (52pp), the name changed to ***En Garde***. The new title allowed for the broader subject, the TV show ***The Avengers***. The first cover of ***The Rigger Digger*** was a somewhat crude drawing showing Diana Rigg delivering a karate kick to some assailant; later covers were better (in my opinion) in that they were black-and-white photos from the show.

Besides Schultz himself, one of the main contributors was Hank Davis, who is one of the fans I have known both the best and the longest during my time in fandom. Listed as Schultz's co-editor was Gary Crowdus of New York City, whom I had never heard of before or since. Another prominent contributor was my erstwhile roommate, Drew Simels.

I first encountered ***En Garde*** at a convention in the mid-70s. There, I found issues 5 (1968, 86pp) and 6 (1969, 110pp) only, and found them both to be fascinating reads. #6, appropriately enough, had an article on ***The Prisoner*** by Drew Simels while Hank Davis had an article hypothesizing a "Relationship" between the two shows. These were the last two issues, and for an obvious reason — the zine was suffering from what I call the "BeABehemoth Syndrome," named after Frank Lunney's zine ***BeABohema***. Basically, the more successful the zine, the more fans respond, the bigger the zine becomes, until it explodes collapses under its own weight. I paid a few bucks each for these issues at the convention, but only a year or two later Michael Dobson gave me his fanzine collection which contained another set of those very same issues (and possibly the others I have as well). Once I had a duplicate of those two issues, it was my great pleasure to introduce the zine to Galen Peoples, a fan I had encountered while a member of the invitationonly apa Stobcler and whom, judging by his writing there, would very greatly appreciate them. Not only was he suitably thrilled at these discoveries, but he actually sent me an LP he knew I wanted — **THE KING OF ELFLAND'S DAUGHTER** by Bob Johnson and Peter Knight (of Steeleye Span).

"Me, I like nudity in the movies...it gives me a chance to see who has the best parts..."

—Bob Vardeman, ***Sandworm 18***, June 1972

I actually thought I had a complete run of this excellent zine, but I see I am actually missing #3. **CAN ANYONE HELP ME OUT THERE??!** (I should do a list of all my fanzine wants at the end of this...)

#4 was published in 1968 (maybe; again, absolutely no dates are given, so I'm guessing from the dates on the artists' signatures) and had 60pp. To belabor the point, you can see the progression here: #1—32pp; #2— 52pp; #4—60pp; #5—86pp and #6—110pp. Definitely a classic example of the BeABehemoth Syndrome.

Besides the excellent fanzines, I should mention that Richard Schultz was a prominent fanzine fan at the time and a member of FAPA, where he did a more than adequate zine.

Also worth excavating and mentioning for the purpose of this article is the first issue of a proposed "quarterly," ***The Huntress***, published Summer 1981 by Hank Davis's brother, Richard Davis. This is a very lavish, fancy fanzine printed offset on slick paper. Richard Davis is nowhere near as proficient a writer as his brother, unfortunately, and the small typeset goes from margin to margin without break, making it a chore

to read. Its saving grace is beautiful reproduction of the many full-page b&w photographs throughout from *The Show*.

With Jerry Lapidus's collection, I have acquired yet another set of issues 5 and 6, which I included in a large group of fanzines I sold to Doug Fratz.

It's easy to understand the appeal of Diana Rigg as Mrs. Peel. Although when *The Avengers* first debuted on American TV my young mind was still captured by *Batman*, it didn't take me too awfully much longer to notice the invincibly winsome Mrs. Peel. Unfortunately, by that time the show was probably already into the color episodes. It wasn't until 10-15 years later that I was able to catch some of the b&w episodes in syndication aired on late-night TV, or else showed to me through the kindness of Hank Davis, who introduced me to my new hobby at the time (VHS recording and viewing). Although I began to conceive irresistible sexual fantasies every time I saw Diana Rigg wearing a dress above the knees, with some of the black-and-white episodes it seemed as though she was wearing the tiniest of hot pants before such even became popular (albeit as a part of her costume each time). When I saw "A Touch of Brimstone," where Mrs. Peel's mind was obviously glazed over by some potent concoction and she was dressed up as "The Queen of Sin" at the Hellfire Club (no doubt inspiring some of Chris Claremont's graphic stories of the X-Men), I nearly dropped my jaw and my pants at the same time. (Steed's expression of amazement and overwhelmed titillation probably mirrored my own.) The lead bad guy unveils her and introduces her to his gang of thugs (the aforementioned Hellfire Club) and says, "She is yours, to do with as you will!" (Making the viewer fervently wish he was there.) Mrs. Peel resurfaces later, apparently none the worse for wear, but is threatened by a savate expert and a whip-wielding henchman before she earns her freedom. She was attired as a hot pants-wearing distaff Robin Hood in "A Sense of History," making my attention wonder far from the story every time she turned around, sigh.

"I always wanted to be a comedian but everyone laughed at me."

—Bob Vardeman, *Sandworm 18*, June 1972

But of course the appeal of the show isn't just what Diana Rigg was wearing or not wearing. One of the more amazing episodes (and another one of my favorites) has a triffid-like seed which fell from outer space. At first it takes over the minds of the local botanists in the greenhouse, then people start disappearing for a mile-wide radius. "The Maneater of Surrey Green" had already grown and spread its tendrils that far out of the greenhouse. Steed and Peel learn that its mind control is broadcasted on a particular radio frequency, so apply ear-jammers to disrupt the signal. Unfortunately, at one point Mrs. Peel loses one of her jammers and comes under the control of the plant. Since Steed is carrying the plant killer (weed poison or whatever), Peel and Steed get into a knock-down, drag-out fight. The surprising thing here shouldn't be that surprising — we have witnessed in previous episodes how formidable they both are. Here they (or at the very least, their stunt doubles) seem to be very evenly matched as they end up rolling around on the floor. Finally Steed manages to get *just one drop* of the weed killer onto a tendril and the entire plant comes crashing down around them, destroying the greenhouse (but fortunately not harming our heroes).

Many episodes were very psychedelic, mysterious and psychological, done with very little dialogue. I can recall an episode where Steed and Peel go to an army base for a reunion for Steed, but they have a car wreck and Peel ends up missing, along with an hour of time, and the deserted army base is suddenly full of Steed's friends who assure him he arrived alone. In another episode, "The House That Jack Built," Mrs. Peel is lured to a mysterious house where every room leads her back to the same room with a giant, revolving spiral in the middle with flashing black and white lights. This was some of the very best, most involving, enigmatic British film-making, and I deeply regret that Dame Rigg seems to recall her professional origins with such disdain.

Comics Memorandum

At the age of 50, I find it very difficult to continue collecting comic books. Not just because I have so many still unread, not just because I'm running out of room and money, but because they are frequently so uninteresting. Every couple of months, one of the Big Guys (either Marvel or DC) starts a "world shattering" event that involves all their heroes — after a while, it just becomes a great bore. Most of these are illustrated by new up-and-coming artists, not artists with whom I am familiar or, with rare exceptions, even artists who display a daringly brilliant or beautiful style. Of the "new" artists to comics, the only ones who impress me are Ethan Van Sciver and Simone Bianchi.

But it's more than that: I have become disenchanted with the entire medium. These are slender little 32-page pamphlets which *may* have 17 or 19 pages of story. I literally have to flip through the book trying to find the story! Not only that, but the advertisements in comics these days are no longer vitally intriguing, like they were when I was a child; instead they are terribly offensive and support offensive mythologies. Many of

JUST SAY "NO!" TO MILK!

the ads are anti-cannabis ads, propounding the stereotype of the potsmoker who does nothing more than watch TV (or, presumably, read comic books), instead of being a valid, functioning part of society. And then, what I find even more offensive is seeing my favorite superheroes (or even TV heroes!) with a garish, disgusting band of white paste pus over their upper lip (in other words, a "milk moustache") with the slogan, "Got milk?" This propounds the mythology that milk is an important part of even an adult's diet, which is nonsense. It also ignores the fact that milk is basically an unhealthy substance since most factory-generated, homogenized and pasteurized milk these days comes from cows who are being given Bovine Growth Hormone, which swells the size of their udders and causes infection (so they are subsequently given massive amounts of antibiotics as well, which also goes into the milk). If it didn't deface my comic books, I would have a big, black stamp made up that says, "JUST SAY **"NO!"** TO MILK!" and stamp it across each and every one of their faces. As they used to say in *Animaniacs*, "DIS-gusting!"

I find myself more and more just waiting until comics I want are collected into a hardback edition. It's just not as satisfactory for me if they are collected in paperback — it *has* to be hardback, both for the durability and the *feel* of it.

Why A Duck?

I've been reading quite a bit about Howard the Duck (not to be confused with "Robert E. Howard the Duck") lately, I suppose due to the untimely death of Steve Gerber earlier last year. I was very surprised when I came across *The Wonderful World of Marvel 1* in the midst of another filing project...only this time, I was filing all my magazines rather than my fanzines. I filed this 15½" x 11½" tabloid newspaper with the Marvel magazines, as it was the only issue I have. Coincidentally, in the midst of communication with Doug Fratz over purchasing fanzines, I suddenly discovered that this publication (dated simply "Summer" but lower down it says, "Some characters copyright 1976 Marvel Comics Group") was edited by the aforesaid Doug Fratz! And more-or-less around the time that I knew him, too, only I didn't know he was doing this. The issue includes a standard magazine-size cover by Brunner of Howard the Duck that is his usual "barbaric" pose (i.e., he parodies Conan by having a broadsword in his hand and wearing a horned helmet), but more importantly (and hysterically), features a "Warduck" cover by Steve Leialoha (who once inked Jim Starlin on the *Warlock* feature, which this cover parodies). Doug provides an introduction to himself (very useful) as well as an amusing interview with The Duck Himself.

Considering how much I have just read about how Howard the Duck came to be, I almost find myself reluctant to "explain" the character to anyone not familiar with what I'm talking about. Basically, Steve Gerber, a very satirical writer, was scripting the comic *Man-Thing*, and inserted a wise-cracking, cigar-smoking anthropomorphic duck into his story (at a point where dimensional barriers were fragile between our world and his). This duck displayed a lot of moxy and pluck as well as an outraged, sarcastic outlook on the events occurring around him. Although quickly ordered to kill the character off, that it was inappropriate for a "serious" book, the character gained such a (almost literally) rabid following that the Marvel editors were forced to re-examine their thinking on the subject. The first issue, illustrated by Frank Brunner, became overnight one of the rarest comics ever published as dealers descended on distributors and bought up all their copies. I guess I should consider myself blessed that I ever saw it for sale in my local bookstore.

It's not too difficult to understand the appeal of the character. Although initially resembling Donald Duck, Howard quickly proved that he had *cojones* far beyond that of his Disney inspiration. As a satirical character parodying everything from the world at large to the Marvel Comics universe, his voice became *our* voice —



STEVE LEIALOHA boldly portrays Warduck vs. the UCC Symbol

he said the things that we really wanted to say when confronted with an absurd world. For him, of course, being a duck, our world seemed even more absurd, which was obviously the whole point of seeing the world through his eyes.

Another timely find was THE HOWARD THE DUCK OMNIBUS, which contains every single **Howard the Duck** comic ever published. Unfortunately, it does not include the letter columns as the volume is already over 800 pages, and reprints many interviews and mini-biogs in the back. As I didn't keep all my issues, this made a valuable compendium and is worth getting just for the minor bit of Frank Brunner art and the major bit of Gene Colan art.

Of immense value is the magazine **Back Issue**, a \$6.95 publication from TwoMorrows Publishing, 10407 Bedfordtown Drive, Raleigh NC 27614 (or TwoMorrows.com). Like **The Comic Journal** and others, these are *not* fanzines but full-blown trade magazines with long, scholarly articles and interviews. Each issue is over 100 pages and printed on mando (white paper which is a good grade above newsprint). In particular, I just finished with #19, the December 2006 issue which had an interview with Steve Gerber and Gene Colan in regards to Howard the Duck. Also of interest was an article commemorating Marvel editor Mark Gruenwald (whom my deceased alter ego, Jonny Fantom, met last issue when he attended "A Worldcon in Brownsville"). Gruenwald has been dead for ten years now, but he was a revolutionary editor who put together vast encyclopedias of all the Marvel characters (**The Handbook of the Marvel Universe**) — a bibliographer's wetdream, and the inspiration for DC and Image to later imitate them.

Currently, I am reading yet another back issue of **Back Issue**, #31 (December 2008), which is a "Steve Gerber Tribute Issue." Almost everybody has something good to say about the man, and there are also articles about Gerber's other writing. Frank Brunner contributes two pages about how the cover to **Howard the Duck** 1 came about, also there is a new color Brunner painting cover which is worth the price of the issue alone. The only criticism I could possibly strain to make about these magazines is that, despite the abundance of art reproduced, there is no interior color. This is especially unfortunate when they attempt to display the difference between a finished page before color is added and afterwards. Still, considering the number of pages and words and the amount of topics covered, **Back Issue** is both indispensable and a bargain. This issue also has numerous samples of the newspaper comic strip version of **Howard the Duck** which Gerber & Colan did also. These reprints are particularly valuable as I don't think they have ever been collected.

Although the HOWARD THE DUCK OMNIBUS (mentioned above) reprints all the *color* comics, it is very unfortunate it doesn't include the several issues of the black-and-white magazine. I don't even have all of them myself, but these usually included a primary story illustrated by Gene Colan...although it is almost difficult to discern Colan's style underneath such heavy inks. In particular, I just stumbled across #9 and realized that I haven't read it yet.

It occurs to me that I have Jim Bodie to thank for introducing me both to Jim Starlin's **Warlock** as well as Steve Gerber's **Howard the Duck** during a time in which I was sure I had sworn off comics in order to spend more time on science fiction fandom. I am presently rereading Starlin's **Warlock** stories in Marvel Masterworks version; the first issues of which Jim Bodie loaned me while I was in the hospital to uh, get my nose straightened (and I wrote enough about that sordid story last issue).

Obituaries

I know last issue I bemoaned the fact that "Obituaries" is becoming a progressively important part of each issue, due to the inevitable passing of the oldest and original science fiction fans and professionals, however someone recently reminded me, by sending me an extra copy he had of **So It Goes** 3 (September 1973), that "Obituaries" has always been a regular feature. In that issue I said goodbye to **Verne F. O'Brien**, who was a very nice fellow and a fanzine fan. In my callowness (or callousness?) I even said that, although I regretted that Verne had passed, at least he let me profit from his death (a letter I sent him containing money was returned). It's quite possible I offended some with that remark; indeed, even reading it now it seems mildly offensive to me.

Recently, I was saddened when I learned of the death of **George MacDonald Fraser**, but of course I accept that we all have to depart sometime anyway. And he certainly left a wealth of highly-readable literature behind him! I have Frank Frazetta to thank for my interest in the Harry Flashman Papers. When I was ten years old in the late 1960s, I quickly learned that any paperback book which had a cover by that fabulous fellow Frazetta would surely be worth reading. This was how I discovered Conan and much other literature. And four years later, I discovered Harry Flashman this way.



[detail from] FRANK FRAZETTA'S cover to
FLASH FOR FREEDOM by George MacDonald Fraser

He blazes a long and colorful path in his comical, ribald adventures. George MacDonald Fraser has made an indelible mark upon literature, and has been a great influence on fans. The Flashman novels almost read like the most candid of fan diaries...but no fan ever had such wild adventures against a backdrop of turbulent history as these. May we remember both George MacDonald Fraser, and his creation, Harry Flashman, for a long time to come.

And bizarrely enough, I have only just now Woken Up and realized that someone I admired for a long time died in 1994! One of the reasons comic books seem less interesting to me nowadays is that they no longer have thought-provoking, meaty lettercolumns — these, like fandom, seem to be a victim of the electronic age and have been replaced with shallow, less thoughtful emails. I used to *love* reading letters from someone who was called "**T.M. Maple**" — his letters were erudite, intellectual, and always kind and reasonable — never angry or "kill the fucker." His letters got to be so plentiful that they became practically ubiquitous. It got to the point that every good comic book I picked up had at least one, *if not more than one!*, letter inside from T.M. Maple, whose real name was **Jim Burke**. Obviously the editors (and perhaps many other readers) were just as impressed with Burke as I was. Burke is purported to have written over 3000 published letters to comic books between 1977 and 1994. DC Comics, I am informed by Wikipedia, had a memorial for him in their letters pages which I also missed. There are probably comic collectors who collect comics for his letters.

"T.M. MAPLE" WAS THE HARRY WARNER JR. OF COMIC BOOKS! Considering Harry was a friend and I never knew Jim, I can't miss him as much, but, well, almost.



DAVID CARRADINE
as "Kwai Chang Caine" from *Kung Fu*

Frazetta did two covers to Signet paperback editions of the Flashman novels — FLASH FOR FREEDOM and FLASHMAN AT THE CHARGE. On a whim, I started reading FLASH FOR FREEDOM. I may have been told that the novels were popular with other fans. To say the least, I enjoyed it and was addicted. I only found out a little after this that a New Orleans fan, Doug Wirth, was claiming that Frazetta based his paintings on him. Quite an honor, I would think, to be the model, knowingly or otherwise, for Frazetta!

Although I certainly have not read all of the Flashman books, they still remain in my list of Top Favorite Things. And although his death is probably not the most appropriate time for this, I think I will not make the time to read any of the books which I have not read... And since it's been so long since I've read the first few books, I may as well reread those while I'm at it.

For those who are unfamiliar with the character, Harry Flashman Jr. is the grown-up version of the bully in TOM BROWN'S SCHOOL DAYS. Being a coward and scoundrel, naturally he joins the military in his youth where he somehow miraculously excels despite (or because of?) his cowardly and conniving ways.

(I was so impressed with Burke that I actually sent him a copy of **Stoned Immaculate 2**, a fanzine Jeff and I did in the early 80s. Apparently he didn't have much interest in it, as he didn't reply. Indeed, most who received it said it was the best fanzine they had received that year, but we only got two letters: one each from Norm Hollyn and Darrell Schweitzer.)

Many believe that Jim Burke is the basis for "Jeff Albertson," the so-called "Comic Book Guy" on **The Simpsons**. While a comparison could perhaps be made, Groening says the character is modeled after no one in particular. Apparently the character is intended to be an amalgam of a stereotype of the nerdy, overweight, intellectual comic book reader.

And of course, there's been the usual almost interminable number of deaths of celebrities, both relating to science fiction and not, since the last issue. I was very saddened and surprised, of course, to hear that **David Carradine** may have suffered a death very similar to that Vaughn Bodé experienced

in 1976. I had always admired Carradine's performance in the original (only) **Kung Fu** TV series, where he played Kwai Chang Caine. The character's martial arts prowess, as well as his gentle, philosophical ways, were a strong influence on me in the early 70s as was in evidence in my fanzines at the time. Carradine also performed a variety of other science fiction or fantasy heroic roles, such as the renegade warrior-priest "Kane" (what an original name!) in the sword-and-sorcery movie THE WARRIOR & THE SORCERESS, "Frankenstein" in DEATHRACE 2000, 4 different roles (including the Monkey King) in CIRCLE OF IRON, the macho cop in Q, and too many more to list here.

And there have been so *many* deaths among the comic art professionals: **Dave Stevens, Mike Turner, Steve Gerber**, and others... Definitely makes a difference. It especially makes a difference that I will never again be able to buy/read/be in awe of another comic book illustrated by **Gil Kane**, who has been one of my favorite artists almost all my life.

Of great surprise to me was the passing of **Tom Lytle**, a comics fan and also the editor of **Psychedelic Monographs & Essays**. Tom, knowing of my interest in comics, was very generous in his contribution to my comic art collection. He will be missed by his friends and associates for his considerable contributions to the literature of psychedelic research.

And I would certainly be remiss if I didn't mention at least two of the famous fans who have passed. **Forest Ackerman**, the erstwhile editor of **Famous Monsters**, was one of the most famous fans ever. And again I once more have one less copy of **So It Goes** to mail out, as long-time friend and correspondent **Chester D. Cuthbert** has passed. I first encountered Chester back in the **Title** days, and he has always been a regular loccer and supporter of my fanzines. He was even kind enough to donate a little bit of money in the past. He and his son have donated their vast collections to a local university library. Chester is another who will be Very Much Missed by me.

Only while writing the above paragraph did I suddenly discover that my old friend and fellow convention partier, **Ken Moore**, had passed on. That, believe it or not, considering the times I've spent with Ken, is the most devastating passing mentioned in this column. There is something very impersonal and overwhelming about reading of the death of a friend in a newszine.

Although I regret the passing of many of these famous people, a part of me tells myself that they are The Lucky Ones...

It's the End of the World as We Know It

May as well do as many issues as I can while I still have a job and before the Winter Solstice 2012. If so many different religions throughout history (The Book of Revelations, the I-Ching, the Mayan calendar, the Hindu) pinpoint that specific winter solstice as the End Time, there could, perhaps, be something to it. I certainly don't go along with those who try to tell me, when I point out the end of the Mayan calendar, that the Mayans were a "peaceful" race who merely indicated with their calendar the end of a cycle, no more propitious than the ending of a year or month. To those people I say, the Mayans sacrificed thousands of young people in a row (I thought Steve Gerber's comic **Void Indigo** was a fantastical exaggeration, but it was not) in order to stave off their own Day Of Judgment, when their civilization would fall. The more scientific of the Mayans, led by a very long-lived prophet (Pacal Votan), seemed to have disappeared around the time of the Spanish Conquest, leaving only the more normal members of their society. Perhaps the scientists were beamed up by Kirk and Spock or whomever the Hopi Indians are expecting (white men aliens who are not apart of the white man race that oppresses them). Obviously, considering the Mayan's pinpoint precise astronomical calculations and their ability (perhaps enhanced by psilocybin) to view distant celestial bodies, they saw something occurring to the Earth that we are just not able to observe yet. Perhaps they saw "Planet X" (what the ancient Sumerians referred to as "Nibiru"), a planet that last came near us 3600 years ago. (Maybe Ming the Merciless is directing that Mongo.) I doubt that they could have predicted manmade foolishness such as the "Hadron Collider", which is obviously being made by a bunch of people too smart for their own good with nothing else to do.

Whatever, I know in the latter half of December 2012 I will *not* be working. I will be staying home and hugging my cats and praying for Divine Guidance. If nothing happens, I will publish another issue (maybe) and we'll all have a good laugh. In the meantime, I'm not going to Give Up but will try to make the most of



This is either your editor
or else the Unabomber!

whatever time I have left. And really, we all should, without anxiety, live life every day as though that day will be our last.

I've been ranting to my friends this way quite a bit on the web. Here is an observation from D. Gary Grady:
"...even if [the Mayans'] eyes achieved absolute optical perfection, they could have no more acuity than a tiny telescope. The diameter of the objective lens places an absolute upper limit on resolving power of eyes, cameras, and telescopes, and on the amount of light that can be gathered. The latter can be particularly critical. Seen from Earth, the Andromeda galaxy is five times as wide as the full moon, and it would be spectacular if we had bigger eyes able to gather in the dim light, but alas we don't."

The Opposite of Obituaries or Corrections on the Last Issue

After writing and publishing "A Worldcon in Brownsville" last issue, I have come to find out that both John Bangsund and Robert Madle are still alive, and thus should not have been seen by my (deceased) alter ego, Jonny Fantom. Sorry if I alarmed anyone unnecessarily. All I can say in my defense is that at least *three* Big Name Fanzine Fans read the "report" a year prior to publication and did not make this observation. Perhaps apologies could be conveyed to these two individuals? Or better yet, don't even mention it at all...

In the lettercolumn last issue, it was suggested by one writer that Patia von Sternberg had passed on. Her daughter Cassandra apparently wrote to Robert Whitaker Sirignano to assure him that her mother was still alive and is operating a store in Florida.

And of course, there were the usual number of typos, some of them so bad that it makes me wonder if my proofreaders weren't drunk or stoned or both. And then I wonder why I didn't see such errors (prior to publication) and I consequently wonder the same about myself. And then I say, "Why do I see these things only *after* the zine is printed?" Some corollary of Murphy's Law, no doubt. "Murphy's Law of Fanzine Publishing," let's call it.

Acknowledgments

Thanks to Steve Fabian for giving me permission to reprint these small booklet covers; I felt they deserved more (and larger) exposure. For inspiration, I must thank Michael Waite, Richard Schultz, Hank Davis, Jim Bodie, Frank Frazetta, Robert E. Howard, Steve Gerber and Diana Rigg. For cleaning up the picture below, I thank Ditmar (Dick Jenssen). Thanks to one and all. [Finished 1 August 2009]

BIG cat makes big splash with pal

Meet two of the coolest cats in the world. When Kevin Richardson decided to cool off in the sweltering South African heat this week, he invited his pal Meg, a 408-pound lioness, to join him.

Richardson, an animal trainer at a local preserve, said Meg enjoys a swim as much as he does.

"That's one of the reasons I believe my animals are so relaxed," he said. "Those who like it go for swims, others go for walks, others just prefer to go and chill."

Meg, 7, and her sister, Amy, live in The Kingdom of the White Lion, a 1,600-acre park near Johannesburg.

"People are always amazed that she doesn't rip me to pieces with her claws," said Richardson of his big kitty.

"She goes like an excited dog going for a ride in a car. She takes no coaxing to get her to swim. You get in and start swimming, and the next thing you know, there's a full-grown lioness beside you doing the doggie — um, I mean — lion paddle." Post Wire Services

9 New York Post, Friday, March 13, 2009 nypost.com

Future Pictures

the SEVEN HEADED HYDRANT

BY ALJO SVOBODA



I try so hard to convince myself I'm a Superior Writer, and somehow it just doesn't come off. In itself, that's some comfort, since it's a proven fact that all really good Superior Writers have an inferiority complex. So in the morning I look at myself in the mirror and say, "You're a Superior Writer. The few pieces of crud you produce in these formative years—" (I always sound a bit like a Wonder Bread commercial early in the morning) "—will be forgotten by everyone but Harry Warner against the background of your incredibly prolific future." I tell myself I'll use what I'm writing now to keep me in fandom until I write something worthy of a gafiating fan. (I recall that even Charles Burbee started out writing crud, and left fandom when he got too good.) I comfort myself at such times, but the inspiration isn't there. I brush my teeth instead.

What Darrell Schweitzer said worsened the situation, of course. Fans such as he believe implicitly that the only way to become a writer is to write; desire alone is not enough. The theory is quite common too, even among Writers, who should know better. So everyone else had rejected my claims. Who could I turn to? Obviously, only mundania was left. And mundania comforted me. In the eyes of mundania I am a writer, and that's all that counts.

For several years now, teachers of mine, most of them English teachers, have been encouraging me, telling me I had talent and would be a famous writer one day. Hardly proof of my Superiority — they say that to anyone who gets an A. A school librarian was always saying, "I'll be able to say I knew you when." My mother, after reading a report of mine, begins to wonder if I really might become a writer for the first time, and says so. Are these facts unconnected, or do they point to an aura that surrounds me and proclaims me to be a Writer? I think the latter is true. There is certainly some kind of aura around me... Why else would dogs chase me without any provocation? Why else do children wave to me, and con men know me for a mark? Less tangible is the type of aura that it is, but that too was dramatically evidenced only three months ago, when a slight acquaintance, with no knowledge at all of my ambition, said to me, "You should be a writer." When I asked her why, she became vague, and the only explanation she could provide was that I, somehow, *looked* like a writer. I was astounded, and it took me a while to realize the truth in her statement, and the conclusion that, even if I never wrote another word, I would still be a Superior Writer!!

Finally, about a month ago, my brother provided one more piece of proof. As I was falling asleep one night, he suddenly said, "I think you're going to be a science fiction writer, really."

Pleased at his ability to discern my talent, I said, "Oh, really?"

"Yes. Just like that science fiction writer on TV."

I was amazed that he would compare me with what was obviously one of the greats. "Do you mean Isaac Asimov or Ray Bradbury?" Who else would he be familiar with?

"No, none of them. You know, the one who's always logical."

I sensed what was coming, but I tried to stave it off. "Who do you mean? Does he write for a TV show?"

"No, the one on that show...you know...Dr. ..."

"Oh, no."

"Oh yeah, Dr. Spock! He writes science fiction, doesn't he?"

You might say I fainted from damn praise. Still, he knew I would be a writer, and one out of two isn't bad. Why, that's almost half.

I enjoyed seeing my name occasionally mentioned in the lettercolumn; it was the first time I'd seen tangible effects from a piece of my writing. Seeing your name in print isn't bad, but seeing your name mentioned by someone else in print is much more satisfying. When I mention "Aljo Svoboda" myself, it seems like... well, like cheating.

Of course, it's different when somebody else mentions me. My pleasure is then completely justified. Just like I said.

Darrell Schweitzer is, of course, completely right. I am not an unusual phenomenon, and there are certainly others. In pointing out my age, I was actually doing two things, which apparently very few people picked up. Let me explain: I was asking for tolerance, in the first place. Obviously not every fifteen-year-old fart has the heavy responsibilities that I do, fandom-wise. And these responsibilities cannot be undertaken to perfection. I am not perfect. I was asking you only to see my imperfections for what they are: the imperfections of imperfect youth.

At the same time, I was trying to subtly alert you to the insidious menace fans under seventeen years of age are to fandom. Obviously, none of you caught this, though Ned Brooks came closest when he spoke of us not as the Fans of the Future, but as the fans of today. We are the fans of today, you see, and we are reading today's fanzines and attending today's conventions. And, though we ourselves are perfectly reasonable people, others, looking from the outside in, could misconstrue the polluting of our minds by fandom as actual mind pollution of young, impressionable kids! Fredric Wertham is no menace to fandom, and it is not of Fredric Wertham that I speak. But can you imagine the delight some parents would get out of busting you all? Can you imagine what the law might do to you, if it discovered your activities among the young and impressionable? (Actually, of course, we are neither young nor impressionable — but you can see how easily the situation could be misconstrued.) Do something about it before it's too late! I speak out of patriotic duty.

Thank you, and good night.

—Aljo Svoboda
FEBRUARY 19, 1973

Editor's Note: In early 1972, there were only two barely-teenaged fanzine and apa fans — "Aljo" Svoboda, age 14; and Tim Marion, age 13. Aljo quickly proved himself very popular in faannish circles with his quirky, clever, tongue-in-cheek writing style which was almost ineffably faannish. It was my honor to publish a column by him in my first genzine, **Celestial Shadows**, which was eventually continued over into my personalzine, **So IT GOES** (but not until the 14th issue). Unfortunately, it seems as though I have a habit of planning to do a subsequent issue and then not going through with it, so that Aljo has written me at least two of these columns which were never published. Owing to the tradition of **So IT GOES** as being "the fanzine unstuck in time," and in consideration of Aljo's clever writing both then and now, I have decided to finally go ahead and print these. The date of writing will be at the end. In this first installment (above), he responds to some of the kind comments and egoboo he received from the previous issue.

A couple of nights ago, driving from Isla Vista to Simi Valley and hearing a single frog croak through a partly open window, my father told me about an older boy he had known when he was a very young boy in Holland. When he was about six years old, this older boy was a teenager already, but always good friends with younger children. One time he took my father out in a boat on a lake. They were supposed to be fishing, but they didn't actually catch any fish. There were a lot of frogs out on the lake also, croaking, or as my father put it, squawking. This older boy was able to somehow exactly imitate the croaking or squawking for my father, who was amazed then and still amazed when he told me about this skill. The boy told my father he could understand what the frogs were saying, and talk back to them, and they would talk back to him. He would tell my father what the frogs were saying, and he would carry on conversations with particular frogs. My father couldn't remember what the older boy had told him the frogs were saying. The boy could also talk to crickets.

The boy couldn't speak any human language well that my father knew, partly because he was Frisian. It old my father good butter and bad cheese is good English and good Fries, and that this rhyme is spelled the same and pronounced the same, exactly, in both languages. But my father said this wasn't so. Anyway, the boy spoke very broken Dutch. But some time later, when the part of Amsterdam my father lived in was occupied by Germans, the boy was able to organize a group of young children, including my father, to deliver newspapers for the underground. Each child would carry only two or three newspapers, no more. Except that my father said he found later that they were delivering more important things than the newspapers, without being aware of it. The children had a meeting place in the swamps just south of Amsterdam. The older boy was killed during the war. He was shot in retribution by the Germans on the Dam, near to the queen's palace, in Amsterdam.

I have attempted several versions of this column already, either partly on paper or entirely in my head, and abandoned them. So this installment is not nearly as spontaneously written as were the past two. It's what comes of being named Contributing Editor, and of having to handle egoboo of an absurdly inflated sort, such as was Bill Breiding's gift to me last issue. I love you, Bill, but I think your evaluation of me and my work was very unrealistic. I would be more concerned about being the object of your almost religiously fervent tone, but I know you're "grounded" (from the times I've talked to you) and able to make your way in the world. While I hear from TiM that he and others disagree, I consider your ethical position to be one of integrity. To me, ethics is most important, and show most clearly, in my relationships with unattractive strangers and "enemies," and in that arena you seem to directly confront the kind of situation that wrenches my guts but leaves me helpless. As for my creative works, however, I conceive them to be spun mainly out of my dreams, and any illumination they provide is purely incidental to the confused states they depict and inspire. As guides to the real world or real people they're pretty worthless, unless you happen somehow to be an independent agent in one of my dreams, one of these nights. The "pretty" in "pretty worthless" is of course a necessary concession to my self-respect.

Actually, one of the ideas I had for "the Hydrant" this time around, by a good distance the most pretentious, was to write in very abstract terms about my views on my writing and art in general, a kind of self-propelled manifesto although I also thought of the planned column as a response to Susan Wood's wonderful, impassioned defense of the humanities in an issue of her *Amor* a few months back, a defense from a slightly different perspective. At the moment, I've forgotten what that eccentric perspective was. The only actual statement to emerge from my tortured attempts to produce this masterful synthesis of my ethics and aesthetics was a slightly bleak epigram I thought of just yesterday (last week as I type this), on a walk:

On any map of the senses
I mistrust the coherence
Because they are indulgences
Of the so-called free will.

I'll admit it's cute. But that's as far as I'll go. As far as I can.

Something about my father telling me that story made it a parable, and that's why I've written it down here. And although I haven't said anything yet, I conclude with another epigram, much truer than the first but not mine. It's by John Ashbery, from a beautiful poem called "Blue Sonata":

We have, we understand, gained or been gained
By what was passing through, bright with the sheen
Of things recently forgotten and revived.
Each image fits into place, with the calm
Of not having too many, of having just enough.
We lie in the sigh of our present.

—Aljo Svoboda
MAY 7, 1978

Well, I never did become a Science Fiction Writer. I never quite stopped imagining myself in that role, but became more and more secretive about it. My plan became that I would work on my book entirely in secret, publish it under a pseudonym perhaps, and only after it had been acknowledged as a masterwork reveal myself to a stupefied world... The great thing about working on a book of any sort in secret is that the process is much less clearly defined than the normal sort of writing that gets most books done. (The best thing I've ever read about this process is Joseph Mitchell's great essay on Joe Gould, the "seagull professor" in New York City long ago.)

Tim Marion has done me a great service by presenting to me two ancient selves preserved in a kind of time-binding amber. What he sent to me were scans of the actual typed manuscripts I had sent to him in 1973 and 1978, both done on the large green manual that my father had given me, probably on Christmas of the year immediately before the first submission... The writing itself is so raw, especially on the one I did at fifteen, so full of preening indiscretion and the desire to be something, that in spite of itself it brings the character of young Aljo Svoboda quite back to life for me, though doubtless not for you the common reader.

From this current vantage of 2009, writing a new rendition of my column at 3:30 in the morning before heading to work at PG&E, my fourteen-month-old second daughter Charla wailing occasionally in the background – we're working on not bringing her to her mother's bed whenever she cries at night, which entails a lot of crying – that young Aljo is like one of my own children.

It's obvious to me that I was trying to be "funny" throughout the first column, just as I was trying to be "serious" throughout the second. Is it obvious to you, oh common reader? I grant you that the funny isn't really funny, especially not the paragraph at the end about the corruption of youth, which is intended to sound like a mock blackmail threat and does in fact sound a lot like... a blackmail threat – but I am recovering, like a repressed memory, that sense of a kind of theatrical stage which occupied me when I wrote then. It was as if I were a stand-up comedian doing my best to entertain an audience mostly in the shadows, but certainly out there, being heckled occasionally, welcoming the hecklers because they let me know someone was paying attention, trying over and over to say the line that would bring the house down...

Between 1973 and 1979 I had gone to high school and dropped out of college and even spent three weeks in jail, and moved from the city of Orange to Simi Valley to Redlands to Seattle to Santa Barbara. My working life experience as a "data entry operator" in Santa Barbara, just at the time of this writing, would soon convince me to go back to school and finish a math degree, which allowed me to get into the Peace Corps in Swaziland for two years, which helped get me into graduate school in Operations Research at Cal Berkeley, which ultimately got me my job at PG&E – and there I work still, having gradually taken on the trappings of a real life.

But in 1979, I didn't have the trappings and sort of had the feeling I was never going to get them, and I hear that, and a need to truly take my own measure, in the seeming self-deprecation that it is the flip side, in the second column, of the first column's (adorably, for myself as Aljo's only remaining parental guardian) pompous self-promotion. It also seems clear that I wanted to write about real and serious things, but was more comfortable describing the concrete details of things my father said to me about his own past, an extraordinary past to me, than describing my own real life at the time.

The "I love you but" parts addressed to William Breiding (who has indeed been one of my true friends over the ensuing years, though we don't see each other for years at a stretch) make me cringe a little, but there seems a kind of anger directed at myself expressed there that I find interesting – because I don't know where it went. Was it a literary construction? Was "calming down" all that was required?

I remember fandom as a hand freely extended in friendship, fanzines as marvelous tokens of that friendship and messages from other worlds more compelling than science-fiction's. My response to that offer of friendship, like my response to so many other offers of friendship since, seems cavalier to me now, if not biting the hand (as it were, and mixing two good-sized metaphors in one uncertain stew). I regret my cavalierness, but more clearly than you, oh common reader, I see the child in these manuscripts (still a child in 1979 even, really) and find him beautiful.

And now, off to work. Got to keep the lights on.

—Aljo Svoboda
JULY 28, 2009

BOOKS COLLEGE DARE

+

A Klonelbird Tale

by Jeff Kleinbard

TREK MINUS ONE

or how I held the first Star Trek Convention (and didn't even make any money from it)

Mea Culpa

I won't deny it. I'm the one who did it. I pulled the trigger. I'm the one who pressed the button which started the Star Trek revival that uncontrollably expanded into movies, TV productions, thousands of fan clubs, countless websites and a multi-million dollar industry of models, games, DVDs and every possible configuration of memorabilia. Yes, I was the prime mover or perhaps...just perhaps, I was just an unwitting surfer who caught the edge of a monster wave.

Conspirators Three

Larry and I were partners, producing films and dances on the Brooklyn College campus between 1970 and 1973. Sometimes we collaborated with Damon Franklin, the school's projectionist. Aside from a couple of undistinguished dances, I fondly remember our movie nights — a dollar a head — in the giant Whitman Auditorium which dwarfed most movie houses. Damon, an audiophile, had tricked it out with a massive array of speakers creating a (mixed metaphors warning — up ahead) multi-chromatic, sonic bath, which he called "Enthraphonic Sound." At that point, Damon's head was crowned with golden ringlets (since thinned) which made him look something like Roger Daltrey. He was the first of a valuable and unique species of hippy-geeks who were graced with a favorable left-right brain balance that made them both hip and technically astute. (Stuart Brand, creator of the **Whole Earth Catalog** — access to tools — was another.)

We showed Fantasia and created such double bills as "YELLOW SUBMARINE and NIGHT OF THE LIVING DEAD — Something to Sing About, Something to Scream About" & "WOMEN IN LOVE and SUNDAY, BLOODY SUNDAY — Bring Your Boyfriend, Bring Your Girlfriend, Bring them both" (this was prior to David Bowie's ascent and mid-70's bisexual chic). The promotional bills were bright yellow mini-posters done in glorious presstype and letaset (desktop publishing was just an appleseed in Steve Jobs's and Steve Wozniak's eyes at the time).

Fun at Last

It was senior year and all important required courses had been taken, collegiate victories savored (few) and bitter dregs of defeat (many) sloshed down the gullet. We made big bucks as small time movie and dance producers (a couple of hundred per film — wow). I recall Larry driving me back to the Lower East Side where we pulled out the cash box — all crinkly one dollar bills and the occasional fiver and ten. "Money, money, money, money" as Joel Grey sings in Cabaret. It seemed like an awful lot back then. Facing the last year of college we were over the hump and just wanted to have some fun.

Twas in A Dream

Somewhere in some no place just west of the pineal gland and east of the thousand petal lotus chakra, in darkest deep Stage IV sleep, in a twitch of a shadow of a wormhole of an infundibulum of no space and no time, one of the Elder Gods dribbled a glistening bead of dakini come onto the sub-molecular, vibratory, quantum matrix of my sleeping brain.

Somewhere in the yet unparsed multiverse, Klingons were fighting mouse-eared imperial storm troopers with jelly bean slingshots. Kirk and Spock were making hot love. A horta was hiding behind the folds of the red queen's dress while a seven year old Khan was being scolded by his mom for "putting things in the other children's ears." The morning sun winkled through the window and I shook the Tholian web of sleep from my brow, and fitfully roused with the single thought, "We must have a Star Trek revival!"

Steam Engine Time

I have noticed that when something big and juicy needs to happen, the doors open, people appear (as if out of the woodwork), and the requisite enthusiasm is mustered. This was one of those times. A Brooklynite — Alan (last name escapes me, perhaps "Asherman") — was the first uber-Trekkie I met. His small apartment felt like a treasure chamber as he unveiled his own copies of the Bloopers, Where No Man has Gone Before, one of Spock's ears, and an actual tribble.

Alan's bone structure made him look proto-Vulcan and when he unveiled Spock's ear I felt like I was in the presence of a fragment of the one true cross. Actually it was only a latex elf-tip which fit over Leonard Nimoy's ear. (I since learned that they were manufactured and discarded by the hundreds during the series.) Nevertheless, it had a palpably numinous aura and I can now imagine it in some finely carved and jewel inlaid reliquary box, set in the niche of some yet unbuilt temple.

Alan bestowed a holy tribble on me and I dutifully installed it in a hamster cage which I set in a display window of the student union building, along with a sign, "Please don't feed the tribble."

I happily posted hand-lettered signs for a "Star Trek Revival" on the campus gates and bulletin boards. A small theater space in the basement of Gershwin Auditorium (the performing arts building) was secured. At that moment in time **Star Trek** was dead. The body in sickbay showed no signs of life: no plans for a new series, no movie, no cartoons, no reruns. Nothing. We expected a small, appreciative gathering of true believers warming their hands over the still smoldering coals of beloved memories.

Magic Bus

The program was to consist of two showings of the Bloopers and "Where No Man Has Gone Before." We knew we were in trouble when this 500 seat theater filled up well before start time. The screen had a kind of apron which smoothly descended to the first row of seats. People just sprawled out on the floor atop this apron and still more people were clambering in the hallways trying to grab a spot. Larry and I surveyed the scene and then turned to each other and sighed — "If only we charged a nickel a head, we'd be rich."

True belly laughs are rare but any one who has seen the Bloopers knows that it comes up a cropper of true abdominal — richter 6 — ribaldry. Somehow the content has all vanished from my memory save the episode where Kirk is poisoned by the one-horned, albino ape and subjected to the buxom ministrations of a witch/healer woman. The Bloopers outtake has Spock skulking in the bushes with a bow and arrow, like an oversized cupid, who twangs Kirk right between the gonads. The captain is then ceremonially carried by a group of giggling pall bearers to the witch woman. I forgot whether a healing takes place.



"Where No Man has Gone Before," with velour-draped Sally Kellerman, was a revelation in lush color, wider screen, and decent sound. Great TV science fiction had escaped the confines of the little tube and was now comfortably sprawled in large scale accommodations more suitable to its glory. It was like entering the promised land.

The Scratch

The mood was celebratory. Many stayed for a second screening, as for a favorite childhood story, told over and over and never tired from. The Bloopers completed their encore and we were re-starting "Where No Man has Gone Before" when Alan noticed "the scratch."

The snake had entered our garden and Alan accused Frank's projector of actually scratching his sacred relic. He called for an immediate stop. The screen went blank and the lights came up. An emergency cord had been pulled and the magic bus screeched to a halt, tumbling passengers to the cold asphalt.

We faced the revelers and explained why the show must end. A disappointed and sullen crowd emerged from the Gershwin basement and we shame-facedly apologized to Alan for betraying such a heavy trust.

A few weeks later the first official Star Trek convention was held in New York City's Statler Hilton Hotel, opposite Madison Square Garden. The planners were first surprised and then clogged by the massive attendance. I was there and recognized the same giddiness first glimpsed in Gershwin's basement. It was the official start of a fannish tsunami — but I was there first.

SHABBOS NIGHT'S ALRIGHT FOR A FIGHT

The beginning of a riot is like a sudden storm or a good laugh. All the requisite ingredients are there and yet the first raindrop refuses to fall or the joke falls flat. However, a sudden gust or a tickling in the gut and suddenly all nature explodes with teeming fury or your milk and cookies come spurting out of your nose, and you are gasping for air between orgasmic laughs.



I was in the middle of one such riot. The back story is that in the early 70's there was a popular song about coming to Israel — popular if you grew up in orthodox, Jewish circles. The basement of our student union building had a jukebox where a 45 record of this song lived. The jukebox corner also happened to be a black and Latino, bad-boy hangout. Some of them took exception to this happy hora melody contaminating their sullen vibes and so one of them opened the jukebox and smashed the record after it had been played one too many times.

On the day of the riot, Rabbi Meir Kahane and his Jewish Defense League were visiting campus. Kahane (who was assassinated 20 years later) did not believe in turning the other cheek. He trained mild-mannered, Jewish yeshiva boys to defend their turf with karate and a then-novel martial arts weapon — the nunchuk.

Someone must have tugged on Kahane's sleeve after his scheduled talk and explained that the delinquents had smashed the holy record.

Kahane's response was to lead a platoon of his followers down to the basement and vigorously sing and dance the offending song into the ears and faces of the bad boys. This was meant not only to reclaim Jewish turf but to humiliate the perpetrators. The delinquent crew maintained a stony silence and then to a man, broke rank and left the cafeteria to the cheers of Kahane's contingent. However, the victory was short-lived and the storm was about to break.

Next door was the ping pong and pool room. This room also housed one of the first video games — a console version of pong. For the delinquents, it was an armory and they grabbed pool cues and balls and returned swinging and throwing.

It all happened so fast and seemed so dream-like that I never thought that I was in physical danger. Kahane's crew came prepared to rumble and were out of their seats, shoving teeth protectors into their mouths, and whipping nunchucks from their jackets. It was like watching an army of nerdy, Woody Allen yeshiva boys transforming into kung-fu fighting machines. Tables were upturned and chairs went flying through the air. (It never occurred to me that they were not balsa wood, break-away chairs and could have inflicted serious damage.)

One member of the Brooklyn College science fiction club (Ira Donowitz, by name), who was doing work-study in a nearby coat-check style booth, merely rolled down the metal shutter and read SF for the duration of the hostilities, later emerging to admire the pool ball dents in the metal shutter.

I slowly moved up the stairs and onto the street where I discovered — like metal filings in a magnetic field — nearly all the black and Latino students had moved to one side of the street and nearly all the whites to the other. (I was on the wrong side.) Most of the street crowd had not been at the core of the riot.

Nevertheless, they instinctively polarized along racial lines. Like brush fires, there were scattered incidents of mayhem that broke out all around the campus. I spotted my next door neighbor — Randi — crying and confused by sudden and apparently senseless violence. The campus was closed for many days.

RORRIM, RORRIM

I returned from California in the fall of 1977. I had been living at Genterra, a 10 person commune, situated in the Redwoods of Boulder Creek. I arrived with communes Cecelia and Leanne and we were preparing to make a daring leap across the big puddle, to visit Stonehenge, take in the stage version of THE ROCKY HORROR SHOW and possibly travel overland to India (but that is another story). What I want to talk about now is my doppelganger, the second Jeff Kleinbard.

My uncle Isidore sent me a clipping from **New York Magazine** (July 25, 1977; "Best Bets" section) which featured some guy running a military memorabilia shop — uniforms, swords, antique toy soldiers — called "The Grenadier Guard." What was unusual was that this fellow was named "Jeff Kleinbardt" (with a "t"). What was uncanny is that he looked remarkably like me. The resemblance was so striking that uncle Issy was honestly puzzled and wanted to know if I was the proprietor. Perhaps we weren't identical twins but we could have easily passed for fraternal twins or brothers.



The inestimable KLEINBARD, the author of this piece

I went up to the Grenadier Guard and was received by one of Jeff's buddies. Jeff was in the back. Jeff came forward and I extended my hand saying, "Allow me to introduce myself. My name is Jeff Kleinbard." His mouth dropped and he took me to the rear and we settled down for some serious genealogical talk.

Try as we may, we could not discover a common lineage. His family came from Germany while mine was from Poland and Russia. I was Jewish while he was Christian (though that wouldn't mean much if his family converted).

There was also the odd asymmetry (or complementarity) of our appearance. Although we were about the same age, he was neatly shorn and nattily dressed with tie and vest while I was exfoliated in maximum hippy garb with shoulder-length hair. Perhaps it was merely coincidence or perhaps we were at the intersection of two parallel worlds — close cropped, soldier-obsessed Jeff face-to-face with long-haired, pacifist Jeff.

I never did find out if we were related but sequelae of the Grenadier Guard persisted in my life in the form of creditors. It seems that my doppelganger closed the shop owing money. The creditors searched the NYC phonebook and invariably found me. I dutifully explained that while I looked like the guy and had nearly the same name that I was Jeff Kleinbard (without the "t"), dammit. These people actually believed me and left me alone. In retrospect they seemed awfully trusting or naive.

P.S. — Now that the statute of limitations has expired I can safely admit that the whole "trip to California" story was a cover. Cecelia and Leanne were hired from an escort service to provide verisimilitude. I actually spent my time secretly traveling the continent, attending auctions, and visiting old castles — building up my inventory. When the shop went belly-up I manufactured "Jeff Kleinbard" to shake the creditors off my tail. It worked (the fools!).



*THE KLONEBARD (Jeffrey Kleinbardt)
at The Grenadier Guard*

WENTZ RANZ

by Walt Wentz



The 40th anniversary of the Moon landing actually caught me by surprise. How quickly people have forgotten one of the greatest events in history... the first time human beings left their wet, cramped little planet to actually walk on another world, the Moon... and how many millennia had we, and our monkey ancestors before us, gazed up at the Moon and wondered what it was—and why we couldn't eat it? How many ages have we used the Moon's waxing and waning light for calculation, inspiration, fornication and occasional burglary? How much music would be missing from the world's repertoire if the words spoon, June and croon didn't rhyme with moon?

Face it, without the influence of the Moon on ocean tides, we might never even have evolved past the stage of flatworms, much less cornball balladeers.

So we accomplish the greatest feat in the history of human technology, we actually send people to the Moon, and bring them back alive and with pieces of the nighttime mystery we have wondered about for uncounted ages... And then what? Pfffft, we walk away from it... we forget it... And even the conspiracy wingnuts begin claiming we were never there...

And why? Turns out the Moon is physically a rather dull place. It has rocks... it has dust... it's gray... So no matter how many incredible discoveries or opportunities it holds in store, people just lost interest.

I remember where I was during the Moon landing... in the Ollalie Mountain Lookout, a tiny, glass-walled, decrepit little shack perched on a peak in the middle of the Willamette National Forest, five miles from the nearest gravel road. By the light of a single Coleman lamp, I was straining to hear a little crystal radio jammed in my ear, and working up to a higher and higher pitch of excitement... finally doing an exultant little war-dance around the cramped cabin when the scratchy words, "Houston, the Eagle has landed" came over the air. Next morning I scratched the words "Moon Day" and the date on a scrap of aluminum and used it to patch the hole where the pipe supporting to Osborne Firefinder came up through the floor, providing easy access to cold drafts and mice... I imagine it's still there.

Humble and obscure it may be, perhaps, but still one of the amazingly few public memorials to an unparalleled event.



A Letters Gollum

All right, you lot! WAKE UP!!!
(with apologies to John Foyster)

Letters intended for publication should be:

1. Typed
2. Have your first and last name on them
3. Have your address and the date

You might think that goes without saying, but you'd be surprised at how these simple things seem to elude so many. Come on, people!
And of course, I'm very grateful to everyone who wrote.

And, this normally goes without saying, but just to make it certain —
I edit letters as much as possible in order to give everyone a chance to say something.
Any letter will be considered eligible for print unless I am told otherwise.

Editor's comments are in bold-italic with brackets surrounding text.

MICHAEL T. SHOEMAKER
8322 Rolling Road
Manassas VA 20110
9 August 2008

I can't compete with 27 years of procrastination on So It Goes, but my almost-a-year procrastination on this letter is notable for its intensity. That is, not a day has passed since last summer—I swear—in which I haven't thought about and vowed again to get this letter done. The first six weeks were not entirely my fault, however. My father, now 80 and still in fairly good health, still resides at 2123 North Early, and I typically visit him every other Sunday. Last summer, however, for some reason now forgotten, six weeks passed before I could visit and pick up *SIG 16*. I was quite moved to be remembered and resolved to respond, because it came at an opportune time in one sense: for the last few years I have renewed my interest in reading SF and have toyed with the idea of getting back in touch with some of my old friends in fandom.

Then the procrastination set in. I have reached that stage in life — late middle age — where it is difficult to break out of the comfortable routine. Cabell expounded on this beautifully in a couple

of his books — I think in his novel SOMETHING ABOUT EVE and in his essay collection STRAWS AND PRAYERBOOKS — detailing how deadly it is for any creative work. I come home from work exhausted and then, when I finally have some free time in the latter part of the evening, I like nothing better than to read. It is an immense struggle to pull myself away from this precious reading time. Weekends are no better, because most are spent mowing, clipping, and taking down trees (three this summer, alas), or making repairs on the house — it is endless and beyond exhausting, but it is necessary and, oddly, part of the comfortable routine! *[Easy to understand. This is how I, and perhaps many other fans, have so easily gafated.]*

At this point, I should probably backfill my biography a little. In the late 70s, SF became increasingly tiresome to me, and my fan activity fell off as I began to try to earn a living. After 1980, almost all my fanzine activity was in FLAP, which I finally dropped out of in the late 80s. My last convention was either the 1983 or 1984 DisClave. Between 81 and 83, I made a serious attempt to break into SF professionally, selling one quasi-SF story, one horror story, and two mainstream stories out of about 40 that I wrote. Terry Carr, who had written me a very encouraging letter on a submission when I was 17 (a story that, by the way, anticipated THE MATRIX), continued to

encourage me and almost bought one of my later stories (trouble was, he had just bought a similar one). I still mourn his premature death and feel like I let him down in not making it in SF. *[No, you only let yourself down. Maybe. But if you're happy with what you're doing now, then you haven't really let anyone down.]*

From the mid-80s on, I began hiking more extensively, took an interest in geology and rock hunting, and started actively researching and writing on a variety of Fortean subjects. This resulted in two editions of a hiking guidebook, four editions of one of the official Appalachian Trail guidebooks, and many published articles in *Fate*, *Fortean Times*, *Strange Magazine*, and others. Also, a friend took me on as a collaborator on what I think I can honestly claim is the definitive book of West Virginia ghost stories — we field-researched it exhaustively, traveling 7000 miles over two years — great fun, which pretty much makes up for being robbed on the royalties.

I stopped being a vagabond in 1987, when I went to work for *Biblical Archaeology Review*, the world's largest circulation archeology magazine (we hit a high of 220,000 during the Dead Sea Scroll controversy). That was a very interesting job, where I got to work with some of the world's top Near Eastern scholars, but because it was interesting it paid badly.

In 1996 my mother died of a brain tumor, an awful, slow death that was a terrible blow. She was always in great health, and we thought she'd live to be 100. Then, in 1998, I almost died of antibiotic resistant, strep pneumonia, which I think I contracted from an old mountaineer I interviewed in West Virginia while writing the ghost book. While in hospital — brace yourself — I gave myself to Jesus, as they say. This was something that was really a long time in the making. I had an intellectual belief in God almost since college, but never *felt* it; it took a precipice event to break down that human hubris that gets in the way of faith.

In 1999 I married a sweet gal, a fellow editor at the place where I still work as the editor of an academic journal. After a year and a half in a Reston apartment, we bought a house in Manassas. In 2003, we had a girl.

So, as you can see, I have pretty much lived my life backwards, which is not something I would recommend to anyone. Serves me right, I suppose.

The years have been rich with incident and interest, and yet my days in fandom, nicely recreated in *SIG 16*, still seem recent. In many ways my mind is still stuck back in the 80s and it gets jolted back to reality with each death — most recently Budrys and Disch, both of whom I liked a great deal.

I started reading SF regularly again in 2002 through the avenue of Harry Turtledove. This is ironic because after reading 11 of his novels and one collection, I concluded that I pretty much don't like Turtledove as a writer or his brand of alternate history. In 2003 my reading accelerated due to the great amount of time I had to spend minding my daughter or rocking her to sleep, etc. Although my reading was very extensive in the old days, I have been astonished to find enormous gaps that needed filling in. My great, personal finds of the last five years have been Walter M. Miller, Jr. (who I think was probably the greatest SF writer of all time), Chad Oliver, Daniel F. Galouye, Arthur Sellings, and John Brunner (whose potboilers are really extremely good). Most surprising, perhaps, I've become a big fan of Stanislaw Lem (I can just hear Bruce Gillespie saying, "I told you so"). As it happens, I also like the cyberpunk movement, which I missed during my hiatus, though I think Gibson and Sterling are the only ones who are much good.

The urge to reconnect with fandom emerged a couple [of] years ago, and I looked up a few names on the Internet. As I feared, Donn Brazier had died, in 2003 I think it was. I really feel bad about this because I had an especially close connection with him for a number of years. When he visited in 1974 we spent most of the weekend together and I took him out to see Harry Warner. Harry is another one — it is very hard for me to conceive of fandom without Harry Warner! *[It's still hard for me too.]* The list goes on — as you

probably know better than me — Mae Strelkov, Jackie Causgrove, Buck Coulson — I can hardly stand to think about it.

I've actually thought about starting a blog as an outlet to talk about SF (I was always sercon, you may remember). *[I don't know; I thought Oxytocic was fannish enough, on occasion.]* (Don't you hate it, how everyone thinks the blog concept is so original, when all it is is an electronic personalzine, which goes back to NAPA in the 1980s.) I don't believe I'll ever do another fanzine, and it was somewhat surprising to find that fanzines are still surviving. I suppose fandom has splintered again, with lots of fans active only on the Internet. I'm not really a big fan of the Internet, however; don't ever email me, as I look at my email only about once every 3 or 4 weeks.

DisClave 79. What a great weekend that was. I believe I was the one whom Grady was talking to in the wee hours. *[Here Michael is referring to the infamous "Syzygy in 1982" story which Gary Grady and I always remember (and tell) differently.]* Seeing ALIEN as a group is one of my fondest fannish memories. Do you remember when we came out of the movie, we went down the long line telling people, "The cat did it." And some of them actually started getting mad: "Don't tell us!" We all cracked up over that. *[I don't remember that at all!]* But the BIBLE story is the best. I never thought that Grady had set Phil up on that, but looking back, I suppose it may be so. A guy wrote a wonderful book about practical jokes in the 90s (his name escapes me, and I'm too lazy to look in my files). He solicited stories for a future book, and I sent him an account of that whole incident. He wrote back thanking me, but I don't know whether he ever published his sequel. By the way, do you know whatever happened to Phil Paine? He was one of my favorite people in fandom, but he disappeared even before I dropped out.

Mike Wood, another one I miss.

I know about the SWAT Team incident at the Howard Johnson's in Crystal City (Grady and I got back to the hotel from lunch just a few minutes after the SWAT team struck). That sullied DisClave's reputation, but I've never heard the details about the later event that destroyed DisClave.

Please write. *[I did and Michael lost his ambition to write back, I guess.]* Your persistence in sending me *SIG 17* after the non-response to 16 was greatly appreciated. *[As was the effort of this letter. This letter exemplifies perfectly why I'm doing So It Goes again.]*



ELAINE COCHRANE

5 Howard Street
Greensborough, Victoria 3088
Australia
4 June 2008

The production is excellent, as usual, but it proved very difficult to read with one hand. I could be very crude and say that is

why Beyoncé is on the cover, but you might be offended, so I won't. Instead I read my science magazine and reserved *So It Goes* for the train home.

When you emailed me about the death of Trina Schart Hyman I didn't recognize the name, but I certainly do recognize the artwork from *SNOW WHITE* that you have reproduced. Lovely, lovely. I don't have children, but I bought a number of children's books because of the exquisite artwork, and work like that would grace any collection.

Your hospital experience was horrific. Makes you wonder why people so uncaring would go into the so-called caring professions, if not so they can practice their sadism. Nurses everywhere are overworked and underpaid. Perhaps yours were also under-skilled, but they were also cruel.

All the writing in this issue is good, but another piece I particularly enjoyed was "Stuck in LaBrea Tarpits." I'm glad Walt made it out alive and hope he does some more writing in places where I'm likely to see it. Much of "The Celtic Kabbalist" went over my head because I am not familiar with the folk songs/tales. A friend of many years ago was interested in the Tarot and my hazy recollections tie in with what Jeff was writing. I loved "My Trip to Orlando Disney World" as an illustration of the monomyth. I have never visited Disney World in any of its manifestations, but from all accounts it is definitely not of this world, and Jeff's account is only slightly more surreal than others I have heard.



photo of three of the cats who guard the abode of
ELAINE COCHRANE & BRUCE GILLESPIE

BRAD FOSTER
PO Box 165246
Irving TX 75016
1 September 2008

I was much surprised to read that Trina Schart Hyman had left us. I too enjoyed her work very much. She and Mercer Mayer had similar stylistic books, and were the first two children's book illustrators whose names I recall being aware of. Went on line to do some research, and great to see she has left such a huge body of work behind.

The Rotsler portfolio was great! These days I'm seeing too much of art being used that are pieces that he just tossed off, that we've all seen a dozen times before in slight variations. He was certainly well known for being able to hand over a few dozen little fillos at the drop of a request from any fanned, but I don't think that is really doing right to his memory to be seeing so much of that these days. People who were not around at the peak of his major work don't know what the big deal is about with "this Rotsler guy," who, going by what has been printed since he died, just seemed to do some scribbles. The full range of his work is getting lost, so thanks for pubbing these more involved and thought-out examples. The rostler.com site was a good idea, but never got beyond putting up a few of the little doodle pieces, and when I last looked, didn't seem to be around any longer.

Very nifty idea by Ditmar for the back cover. I had just written an email half joking about trying my hand at some 3-D stuff for online, when this showed up. I'm always a step behind the great minds of fandom, it seems! But, still want to try my hand at doing some 3-D stuff myself with some of my little toons, just for heck of it!

KEN GAMMAGE
1234 Upas Street
San Diego CA 92103
21 May 2008

TiM, thank you so much for sending *So It Goes* 17 with the amazing 3-D back cover by Dick Jenssen! What a great zine — I've enjoyed it so much. Yes, we are in the digital age, but I'm sure the vast majority of your readers still read books and magazines printed on paper — so why not a good old-fashioned genzine!

That was a horrible, frightening story about the sadistic doctors and nurses, and the lack of sympathy you got telling the story! I feel for you, brother. Sickening!

I wanted to start out by praising "A Worldcon in Brownsville" — congratulations to you and Jeff for this — I really found it moving as I poured over it. So many names — and a few faces to go with them! It started with a double-take: those famous, famous names at a Worldcon last year! But it didn't take long before I caught on to what you were doing — this is a literary farewell to old fandom of the first water! Vaughn Bodé! I knew him from Cheech Wizard in *National Lampoon* back in the 70s; I'm not even sure I knew he was fannish! [In the late 1960s Vaughn asked Ned Brooks for names & addresses of fanned to whom he could send art, which he soon did in abundance.] "Horrible Old Roy Tackett" brought a smile to my face. Donn Brazier! His zine *Title* was one of my favorites! Great illos from Taral.

Steeleye Span opened for Jethro Tull at the San Diego Sports Arena in 1973, my first rock concert. I loved them! I still have and play my vinyl LPs and was just listening to STORM FORCE TEN the other night. I think I will pick up some Fairport Convention CDs on your recommendation. I know Sandy Denny's voice from "The Battle of Evermore." [Ken is referring to the fact that Sandy Denny sang back-up vocals on Led Zeppelin's "The Battle of Evermore." Maddy Prior, lead singer of Steeleye Span, actually sang back-up vocals on Jethro Tull's "Too Old to Rock and Roll, Too Young To Die," but she is barely audible through the mix. The story is that Ian Anderson (lead singer of Jethro Tull) dropped Steeleye Span as their opening act as they were getting more applause and more standing ovations than Jethro Tull was getting!]

The Rotsler portfolio was much appreciated!

And then we get to the "Letters Gollum" — so interesting! None of the extensive discussion of ROCKY HORROR mentioned the great, enduring songs, particularly "Let's Do the Time Warp Again!" I recently danced to that at a wedding or bar mitzvah — it rocks. I was a little embarrassed by my own letter — it sounded like I was bragging about how many friends I had in college! (Hey, any excuse to gafiate, right?) Please say hi to Sheryl Birkhead!

[Do it yourself. Well, all riiiigght...
Sheryl, Ken says "hi"!]

SHERYL BIRKHEAD
25509 Jonnie Court
Gaithersburg MD 20882
9-11 August 2008

Interesting back cover and attendant 3-D glasses with which to enjoy it. Thank you. Um, in a different category, the front cover is also...interesting. Very photogenic model! Every now and then I found reading on the lime green paper a bit difficult, but not onerously so. It does make SIG unique in appearance.

Ah, a flash from the past — art from Jim McLeod!

So many names, the tale of those gone ahead yet, as you say, with you in spirit at the con. Taral did a nice job with the portraiture.

Aha, so now I know what "happened" to Victoria Vayne — a name I have not seen in quite a few years. For all the changes that have taken place in her life, it sounds as if she is much further along than most of us in attaining the simple goal of being happy — whatever that means to each of us.

And there is Franz Miklis. He made a large appearance in fandom and then sort of disappeared — hope everything is going well with him and his.

It seems that Rotsler is still with us. So acutely did I feel his loss and so relieved to see his work continuing to show up in zines that it feels as if his prodigious production continues beyond the grave. Thank you for running a showcase — in case a new fan generation really does not know his work.

WALT WENTZ
1817 17th Avenue
Forest Grove OR 97116
16 May 2008

Wow! What's next for *So It Goes 17*, embossed platinum covers and hand-illuminated vellum pages? *[Aw shucks, who told you?]* Seriously, however, this was a class production, from Amazon-with-trident cover to 3-D Space-Bimbo cover.

As to your meditations about the deserved demise of dead-tree publishing... Yes, it is unconscionable to sacrifice the lives of young trees — clean-living, idealistic young tree who might otherwise have grown up to make something of themselves, such as a five-piece bedroom set — for the selfish purposes of sustaining one's ego and communicating with others. And yet...

This week I am helping with the annual Library Book Sale here in little old Forest Grove, a really big do that recycles books donated by the public, discarded by our own and other libraries, and left over from other sales. Quite a large room is filled with long tables packed with books, cartons packed with books beneath and yet more unopened cartons stacked in closets and the foyer, waiting to be opened and displayed as space becomes available. It's a wildly heterogeneous selection... From ancient history to the latest trashy bodice-rippers, foreign-language to rap tapes, astronomy to zoology. Of course there are many hundreds of massive "current novels" of the Robert Ludlum and Danielle Steel genres — thick and ponderous potboilers that might best be used as ship's ballast or steam-plant fuel — yet one can also find the distillation of many lives' work and accumulated knowledge in such fields as huckleberry farming, woodcarving, the history of the German Democratic Republic, the warring philosophies of the ancient Greeks, and How to Satisfy a Woman Every Time. And all of this concentrated human knowledge and experience, packed into one room for anybody to carry away is, of course, only made possible by the deaths of trees.

Is the computer, then, going to monopolize the preservation of human thought and creativity, empty that room of books and save the lives of countless grateful trees? Not bloody likely. Computer program manuals — massive, intimidating, unreadable, and obsolete even as they roll off the presses — make up two entire tables of the display, so thickly packed and densely weighted with arcane meaning that one suspects they actually distort the space-time continuum in that corner of the room. No, until that happy day when computer manufacturers begin building a hunk-of-iron, unmodifiable, dependable Model-T of a machine, and limiting it to a fixed repertoire of intuitive and perfected programs, we will continue gobbling up forests of inoffensive young trees to crank out thick, impenetrable blocks of the most frustrating and essentially useless and transient and perishable reading matter known to man — the computer manual. Not, of course, that I am just an embittered and exasperated old veteran of typewriter days. Of course not.

Taral Wayne, with whom I have corresponded for years (but never actually met), is a perfect example of one who has a lifetime of experience (and several lifetimes of imagination) to convey on paper. Fooey on jPegs and monitor screensavers... They are as forgettable as yesterday's coffee, and quickly become as banal and invisible as highway billboards. For real, tactile, tangible art, you need paper. How deeply can you enjoy Taral's art if you can't hold it in your hands?

Conventions, fan personalities, the grubby but soul-satisfying work of cranking out Mimeo as art — how many of us (saving yourself

have experienced all this, and can write about it so clearly and amusingly? I must say that I am probably the least involved and least knowledgeable and sociable of all fans, yet I can read your little fantasy and get a feel for the fan-things I will never experience first-hand.

Then, there is the matter of the solitary brainstorm — the odd little ideas like Kleinbard's "Celtic Kabbalah." A quirky, interesting, totally off-the-main-highways idea like this could be dropped into the ocean of the Blogosphere and vanish without a ripple, never to be seen again except by someone with a good search engine and a fortunate choice of search terms — and time to actually lean back and read, which many computer addicts do not seem to have.

Shall we continue to sacrifice trees? Well, regrettably, yes. We must balance that we are sacrificing with what we are preserving. Living fiber for living thoughts. Most of what we print is rightfully destined for recycling, both in younger minds and in the paper-pulping mills. But for the residue we choose to preserve, whether for vanity or necessity or to honor the human experience, we need paper... not transient photons.

TARAL WAYNE
245 Dunn Av #2111
Toronto, Ontario m6k 1s6
Canada
29 May 2008

I think the problem with killings trees for books tell us nothing about the wastefulness of books. We face similar problems with almost everything today, even commodities we never expected to have shortages of — like cement grade sand. Or the particular kind of salt whose large crystals are needed for pretzels. The other side of the coin is that after we use our dwindling supply of materials we have problems disposing of the waste. No matter we do, however efficient, whatever options we pursue, whatever substitutes we devise, we only run into a new set of problems and shortages.

Remember fifty years ago when Arthur C. Clarke predicted we would feed the world's poor from the sea? We've just about emptied the seas trying, but there are still hungry people. Remember when it was expected that alcohol from naturally grown sources would replace petrochemicals in everyday use? Paper products, plastics, animal feed, and even fuel would be produced by vast tree farms. But now we're deforesting the Earth, and the price of basic foods has been driven up by the increased production of biofuels to levels the Third World can't afford. Not even nature is green anymore. No matter where we turn, we're screwed.

The problem is clearly not the undersupply of cod, salt, ores, commercial grade trees, corn, arable land, or even oil. There are just too many people! Whatever is available, we turn into a wave of human flesh that is growing rapidly and gaining speed, under which we are surely going to be drowned much sooner than later. Things you would imagine would be little problems, such as eating too many hamburgers (ground from cows who eat grain grown on land cleared of rain forests) could simply be ignored if there were fewer people to eat at McBurger King to start with. If there were fewer of us we could indulge ourselves all we want. We could drive giant SUVs at 200 mph through the Sierra wilderness and toss empty Bud cans out the window without a thought. No one need feel guilt because they used disposable diapers instead of washing them, which turns out to be no solution anyway because detergent also destroys the environment and hot water uses up scarce energy. We could even eat whales if our numbers were fewer! *[Yes, but would we want to? Would we consider it ethical?]*

Were there only a billion people in the world, or perhaps two, we would not be facing so many problems that seem to have no solution other than returning to an 18th century lifestyle of doing without and hard work. We would certainly not be talking rubbish about whether or not the human race can afford to have books any more! *[It could be argued that there presently exists sufficient*

resources to Feed The World, however the money in the world is not equitably distributed. That is what causes the division between the Haves and the Have-nots.]

DAVE ROWE

8288 W Shelby State Road 44
Franklin IN 46131
1 September 2008

So It Goes 17 was a blast. It would have brought a smile to Bill Bowers' face had he still been around. *[That's one of the nicest compliments I've gotten yet!]*

Compliments to Taral for "Ghost Writing From the Glades of Gafia," which deserves to go into a Year's Best collection. "She talked about it for months, night after night, street after dark lonely street, but was too cowed to blemish a stencil with her self-conscious writing." It was a great article and so well written.

Only knew Victoria for a few days but it's still great to know after all the years gone that she's happy or at least content. She was so very intelligent but so very self-conscious, worrying about small, inconsequential problems that were better left ignored. And yet, she was open about getting sterilized while she was still a virgin which is the sort of forward-thinking and action that most people would only contemplate in science fiction, not real life, let alone their own.

After Piers Anthony's biographical piece (on Sterling Lanier) appeared in *Outworlds* in the mid-70s, some fans have been asking how such a whisky-loving bohemian could be offered a U.S. Ambassadorship. The simple answer is you had to meet the man. Tall, distinguished, pencil-thin mustache, he looked very much like Walter Pidgeon. Knowledgeable, he could keep up a conversation on almost any subject. One little known fact is that just as STAR WARS was released, Sterling had sold the film rights for HIERO'S JOURNEY and the director was trying to get it into production, so Sterling had high hopes that it would be a great success. That too never came to fruition but there is a fond memory of standing with him outside London's Dominion Cinema (where S.W. opened in Britain) listening to the audience's comments as they left.

Milt Stevens' writing that "I worked in Hollywood for over ten years, but I don't like being in Hollywood after sundown. The place makes me feel like I want to sprout an extra pair of eyes in the back of my head." Strikes as all too true. Visited Laurence Austin's Silent Cinema back in '94. Parked in the school yard opposite, took one look at the area and wondered if we'd have a car to come back to. Certainly it was good not to have to walk any real distance in that area. Twenty-six months later Laurence was gunned to death in his foyer. A contract killing made to look like a robbery.

NED BROOKS

4817 Dean Lane
Lilburn GA 30047
10 May 2008

Excellent account of the career of Victoria Vayne. I enjoyed her zines and met her once or twice at cons. Taral certainly knew her much better — but I don't remember her being quite as plain as his picture of her!

Kleinbard's explication of Kabala is an entertaining Mulligan Stew of assorted nonsense. I don't see how he missed the Abraham Etteson "decoding" of Lewis Carroll's THROUGH THE LOOKING GLASS (Philosophical Library, 1966) by means of the teachings of the Baal Shem Tov. It reminds me of Humpty Dumpty's insistence that a word mean just what he wants it to mean. Etteson notes that Humpty Dumpty *pays* the words to do his will, and on Saturday night, after the Sabbath is over.

I put on the magic spectacles and looked at the 3-D back cover. The system worked properly in that I did see a single image instead of the double image seen without the glasses — this single image was blue here and red there, but not (to my eyes)

3-dimensional. This is the result of my faulty vision I expect — I do not have true "binocular vision," the eye-brain circuit that gives instantaneous depth perception. If anyone throws me something, it generally winds up on the floor. I was born farsighted in one eye and nearsighted in the other, and this was "corrected" by an operation around 1941 so that I am nearsighted in both eyes — and have no depth perception. It makes little difference other than that I could never do sports that involved knowing where a ball flying through the air was. For other purposes the brain compensates.



SCHIRM -09



an artist's fanciful version of Saber-toothed Tigers

[I found Ned's lack of binary visual perception to be quite fascinating, and told him so. I told him that I had never noticed his eyes having an eccentric orbit. It was easy to imagine Ned's brain being eccentric, but his eyes...? Ned responds...]

It's more subtle than that. I don't think there's anything abnormal that can be seen [by] looking at my eyes. But I was born nearsighted in one and farsighted in the other, and not operated on until I was 3. And that was too late for some part of the eye-brain circuit. An infant spends a great deal of time learning to see — that is, creating the programming of the visual cortex — and this can only be done in infancy. My eyes track together fairly well, but the circuit that can instantaneously "know" how far off something is (by the slight difference in the angle of the image in each eye) was never created, because only one eye could focus on the object. After the operation I was nearsighted in both eyes, but it was too late. The nearsightedness got worse with time, and only stabilized around 20/600 when I was an adult.

DAVE SZUREK

505 North F #829
Aberdeen WA 98520
23 September 2008

CARNIVAL OF SOULS is one of the my favorite horror movies and I liked JACOB'S LADDER but not nearly as much. When THE SIXTH SENSE used the same "surprise ending" it was claimed by some critics that the finale was completely original; had never been used before. Had they totally forgotten about CARNIVAL OF SOULS, JACOB'S LADDER and at least a couple of *Twilight Zone* episodes?

Does a certain passage in "A Worldcon in Brownsville" mean Adrienne Fein is dead? I had been pretty much gafiated from science fiction fandom for a spell. I'd imagine that it happened then. We did not have much of a friendship, met at one con ages ago, resided in the same apa at one point in the distant past and exchanged a couple of letters but that was it. Still makes me feel funny, though.

Lester Boutillier's loc is a mind-blower and in the end, kinda laugh-provoking. Most of what he denies requires no great intelligence to see. Most is Common Knowledge. One can't help but wonder if he kept his tongue so firmly in cheek that no one could see it, while going out of his way to push a few buttons. Awfully peculiar.

ROBERT LICHTMAN

11037 Broadway Terrace
Oakland CA 94611
31 October 2008

I'm appreciative of the wonderful 3-D back cover by Dick Jenssen and that you included a set of viewing glasses with the issue so I could see it immediately. (I have another pair around here somewhere, but it might involve hours of digging around to find them.)

Ditmar really outdid himself with this piece of artwork, although it does raise the question of why that woman's nipples aren't more erect in the cold of outer space.

It was interesting reading about your fanzine's peripatetic publishing schedule, especially the 27 years between the issue before last and the one before that. But I'll take your 27-year gap and raise you seven, because it was 34 years between the ninth and tenth issues of my first genzine, *Psi-Phi*. I published the first seven issues between December 1958 (although the first issue is dated January 1959, aping the way prozines date issues for the month they go off sale) and December 1960. I revived it for two more issues as a FAPAzine for the February and November 1963 mailings, and then didn't publish another issue until the summer of 1997. That revival issue was a special publication for distribution mostly through the 60th anniversary FAPA mailing and 50th anniversary SAPS mailing, which were a month apart, and consisted of reprints of my own early apa writing from 1959 through 1968. I continue to hold out the possibility of another issue as a more general all-reprint fanzine, but now I have the possibility of beating my own record by instead reviving *Frap*. That fanzine had an even shorter run than *Psi-Phi* with six issues in the year ending August 1964, so if I brought it back this year it would have been 44 years between issues. (I have other possibilities too, but they're all obscure apazines I did back in the day.)

As you'll recall, I wasn't too keen on "A Worldcon in Brownsville" when you sent me the manuscript last year. But upon rereading it in this published form I enjoyed it much more, and it certainly didn't hurt to have all those terrific Taral cartoons decorating the pages. It was a good touch to follow it with Taral's "Ghost Writing from the Glades of Gafia," which to me had the same ethereal quality as your piece. This was enhanced for me by the fact that John Berry's "Bob and the Typewriter," which both Victoria Vayne and Gregg Calkins say first appeared in *Hyphen 12*, wasn't in fact published there. I paged through a number of other issues in hopes of finding it, but eventually gave up. I'm perfectly ready to be gobsmacked when someone else with keener eyes and more patience locates it, but I'm beginning to think Gregg was joshing when he wrote that in *Oops! 22*.

Walt Wentz is certainly right that "It is impossible to get anywhere in L.A. without wasting an inordinate amount of gas," and he was right to restrict his tourism to what he called the "central core" of the city. I enjoyed his account of visiting LaBrea tar pits, a place I first went to myself as a child and well before *any* of the more elaborate buildings (the museum, etc.) he describes had been constructed. In those days, as I hazily recall, there was a small structure of concrete blocks in which a fairly simple display explaining the history of the tar pits took just minutes to grok in fullness. My younger brother and I occupied ourselves poking at small (and some not so small) outcroppings of tar that punctuated the grassy fields of the park, fantasizing that perhaps if we dug at one of them a little we might turn up a fossilized dinosaur or woolly mammoth bone. We never did, but the simplicity and easy access of the park's main feature — the tar — made it a wonderful playground for us.

I definitely enjoyed having a look at the artwork in Rotsler's *Voyage 3*. Considering the scarcity of the original editions of these fanzines — most of Bill's publications that didn't go through FAPA were in editions of fifty or less — and the particular eclecticism of this particular style of his, it was definitely a Good Thing for you to reprint the entire issue.

MILT STEVENS

6325 Keystone Street
Simi Valley CA 93063
18 June 2008

So It Goes 17 is quite fancy. I've come to expect that from your fanzines. I was about to comment I've never seen a fanzine that included 3-D glasses before, but then something started scratching at the back of my brain. While I can't quite get to the specific memory,

something keeps telling me that someone, somewhere has used 3-D in a fanzine before. After reading a few thousand issues of fanzines, your brain starts to deteriorate. It's scary.

I've never paid much attention to the letter columns in comics, but I have paid attention to them in SF prozines. Up to the mid-fifties, letterhacking to prozines was a major form of fanac. When I first met Rick Sneary I told him I remembered him from the letter columns in *Startling Stories* and *Thrilling Stories*. He winced horribly. I recall the letter columns commonly contained letters complaining about what a waste of space letter columns were. I sometimes had the urge to write to some of these people years later to tell them about the historical interest of old letter columns. However, I never got around to doing it.

I never seem to have much to say about alternate worldcon stories. I wonder if that microgenre is an offshoot of the idea of the Great Worldcon in the Sky. I've never had a clear conception of heaven. The idea of hanging around in nightshirts and signing hymns forever seems pretty silly if not downright awful. *[Amen to that, brother!]* My amendment to the Great Worldcon idea would be to have the door to your hotel room to lead back to your regular home so you could get a couple of days rest. When you went through the door, the worldcon would freeze in time, so you wouldn't miss anything while you were getting some rest.

RICH COAD
2132 Berkeley Drive
Santa Rosa CA 95401
27 June 2008

After communicating with some people who have collected fanzines for much longer than I have, it seems quite possible that this is the first time a 3-D cover has ever appeared in a fanzine. Ted White recalled that Bhob Stewart used to experiment with 3-D and thought that he might have used some of the work in comics fanzines. If he did, this still seems to be the first use in an honest SF fanzine.

"A Worldcon in Brownsville" really didn't require any knowledge of Singer's story nor your own explications. It stands on its own and brings too close to home the large number of fannish contemporaries, or those only a few years older, who are no longer with us. Taral's illustrations for the piece were excellent. I keep tending to think of Taral as always drawing furry fantasies and I forgot how well he can capture the expressions of people with a few sharp lines.

Speaking of Taral, his written contribution on Victoria Vayne was excellent if a bit bittersweet. Taral is the sweet part, which leaves Victoria as... I never really knew Victoria Vayne, although I exchanged fanzines with her. We crossed paths at one or maybe two conventions back in the distant past and my main impression of her was that she was disapproving. Not of me, specifically, but apparently of almost everything in general. Taral's characterization seems to support this fairly hastily drawn conclusion although if Taral is still paying visits after so many years there must be something else there besides disapproval and waiting for civilization to collapse.

Now that he's started, perhaps Taral would write a full-blown history of the Derelicts. Toronto definitely had one of the more interesting North American fan groups in the early-mid 70s. Tales of Phil Paine could probably fill volumes on their own.

Walt Wentz captures the good and bad of passenger rail travel quite succinctly. I've ridden the Coast Starlight to Seattle a couple of times and there are long stretches in the mountains where one can easily get off the train and walk along side. There are compensations, though, like seeing the sun rise over Mount Shasta if, that is, the train is running on schedule. This rarely happens. The first time I rode the train to Seattle it left Oakland 8 hours late. Instead of arriving in the early evening we showed up in Seattle at 3 in the morning.

Just to prove to myself that Amtrak hadn't improved remarkably in 25 years (and to see the country a bit more closely (and those "train-track" sides of towns — lotsa sewage treatment plants!))

[I suspect that's the reason H.L. Mencken disliked Newport News, Virginia — from the train was probably the only way he ever saw it], my wife and I took the train from Oakland to New York City back in 2003. The train was an hour late leaving Oakland and continued to lose time. According to the schedule, we had a three-hour layover in Chicago before the train for NYC departed. Of course we arrived in Chicago four hours late. But, astounding, Amtrak had held the train! But they didn't want to hold it long. So I started running for the departure platform while Stacy (who has arthritis and cannot run) hitched a ride with an Amtrak cart who proceeded to get detoured by having a definitely mentally disabled passenger thrust on with no caregiver or anyone who knew where this poor guy was supposed to go. Meanwhile I, knowing nothing of this, am holding the door of the NYC train open and peering down the platform for Stacy, while yelling back at the conductor yelling at me that it'll just be a minute anytime now... I've had the same rush through O'Hare, though, and there they didn't get my luggage on the connecting flight. And the Amtrak ride was definitely worth it, especially the last 150 miles or so as the train rode alongside the Hudson River and on into Manhattan.



ALEXIS GILLILAND
4030 8th Street South
Arlington VA 22204
16 May 2008

Thank you for So It Goes 17, an impressively produced and very strange fanzine. The Taral Wayne & Victoria Vayne piece was an excellent bit of character description and Taral's 1976 drawing of [Victoria] shades into portraiture. Back in the day I had met [Victoria] at various cons, and she had always truck me as someone who was uncomfortable in her skin, perhaps because she was trying to win the approval of people she didn't respect. [*Apropos of this and the editorial, I told Alexis that this could apply to me as well.*] The failure of *Simulacrum* to go where she wanted suggests that her contributors were seeing her as essentially sercon and responding with [what] they thought to be appropriate material, even though it wasn't what she was looking for, offers more evidence of her internal conflicts. Finally, to agonize over real or imagined slights in the fan press says more about those internal conflicts than it does about the amateur literary criticism in question, which just naturally follows Sturgeon's Law. However, I am pleased to learn that her return to the mundane world is working well for her.

"[A] Worldcon in Brownsville" was flat-out weird. I knew all the guest list, and more than half of the rest. Could it be that the trouble with Fandom Present is that the class acts are dying off without being replaced? Or am I merely a dinosaur, living long past my allotted span? Or maybe both? Going to the obituaries was no help, since out of the 11 names mentioned I knew six. Then we have Rotsler's art portfolio, with Bill eleven years dead already.



Elasmotherium, the prehistoric Unicorn

BEN P. INDICK
428 Sagamore Avenue
Teaneck NJ 07666
13 May 2008

I presume your list of prominent SF people obits did not include Sir Arthur C. Clarke because you had published before it happened. He was a great writer and a delightful man who kept remarkably busy through his ninety years. Since I am now 84 (85 in August if I make it), you can add my name to the list of names for checking but you will have to look hard, and success is unlikely.

I regret that Sheba made Life tough for you but hopefully her successor is better. I too was canned. My editor at *Publisher's Weekly* was my friend Peter Cannon. Either he or some bigwig decided that he did not know enough about SF, horror and weird and transferred him to Mysteries, where he had adequate readers. His old job was given to a woman who does not care shit for me. She had plenty of non-staff help like me anyway, and so I found myself out in the cold.

Your art is impressive, all that terrific stuff by Taral and Bill Rotsler. And the fanciful article about the Brownsville Con, a special

poignancy in the real subsequent loss of some of the chief members. Included now are both Sam Moskowitz and his wife Christine.

I still love that bacover in three glorious dimensions!! Good luck, and thanks for a zine worth keeping!

JERRY KAUFMAN
3522 NE 123rd Street
Seattle WA 98125
8 June 2008

So what movie did the cover photo of Beyoncé come from? Or was she just posing in barbarian warrior princess duds for a photo shoot? [*I told her it would be a turn-on... No, seriously, this was from a long Pepsi commercial which was aired during a Superbowl halftime. Other gladiatrices included Pink and Jessica Simpson, all of whom sang Queen's "We Will Rock You!"*]

As we get older and find our friends and heroes falling by the way, our fanzines and thoughts fill more with death and loss, don't they? Bo Diddley just got added to the list. It's only slightly comforting to say he'd lived a full life; and that doesn't even begin to comfort us for the people who died with what should have been half their lives still ahead of them.

These musings lead right to "A Worldcon in Brownsville." I enjoyed this quite a bit, and thanks to you and Jeff for writing it. I wondered if Taral's drawings were meant to be any specific people — one bears a strong resemblance to Don Wollheim, and another looks like a youngish Heinlein, but beyond that I couldn't put any names to faces.

I also enjoyed Jeff's "The Celtic Kabalist," though at first I thought he was going to follow a completely parodic path. Since the article gathered a number of different strands in a relatively straightforward examination of the links between Kabala and British balladry, I enjoyed it more than I would have liked a parody. He touched on many of my interests that have waxed and waned over the years: mysticism, hermeticism, British Isles folk, Yiddish.

I'll note that in another version of "Tam Lin" the queen doesn't wish she'd turned Tam Lin into a tree, but that she'd replaced his eyes with wooden ones. It keeps the "wood" connection but presumably she'd retain his physical being and soul.

I found the other material interesting, too. I'll just mention to Walter Wentz that I see the Coast Starlighter every day at about 5:15 pm, as I wait for my bus home. I travel by ferry daily from Edmonds, Washington, to Kingston, Washington, in the morning, and back again in the afternoon. The ferry terminal is only a hundred yards from the Edmonds train station. The train I see stops there on its way north to Vancouver, B.C. So to me it seems as though passenger trains are alive and well, despite all knowledge to the contrary. Thus is the power of anecdotal evidence.

ALVA J. SVOBODA
4112 Norton Avenue
Oakland CA 94602
9 April 2009

Every time you've sent one of your painstakingly assembled fanzines (which are really works of art — I think of you as the Andy Warhol of fannish fandom at times, though I don't [know] whether you'll take that as the intended compliment it is) [*I guess that's better than thinking of myself as the "Hunger S. Thompson" of fandom!*] I've meant for months to write back. Now that you've given me your email address I can do so more easily. I'm just fine — just got back from a four-day vacation at a resort in San Diego with wife Jenny and daughters Elena (3 years) and Charla (10 months); not really non-stop relaxation as you might guess but at least I did get to sleep as late as I wanted, more or less.

I'd be happy to have old mouldering writings resurrected if you think it'd be amusing. I've been meditating on the idea of a novelized

memoir of fandom — not that I'll have the time to attempt such a work this year, but maybe next...

Anyway, it's really good to hear from you. I hope you are well. You bind time in your fanzines...

BILL WRIGHT
Unit 4, 1 Park Street
St. Kilda, West Victoria 3182
Australia
17 June 2008

So It Goes is a feast of goodies with no less than three highlights. First is the gallery of Rotsler drawings titled *Voyage*. I'll be using some of it my fanzine, *Interstellar Ramjet Scoop* (which btw is now online via efanzines.com).

Only marginally behind the Rotsler cavalcade is your back cover featuring Ditmar's three dimensional homage to Bergy's Babes. The 3-D viewing spectacles accompanying the zine were much appreciated. Bergy's Babes adorn the covers of my treasured copies of *Startling Stories* and *Thrilling Wonder Stories* that were the glory of fandom in the 1930s. Ditmar tells me that the most famous Bergy of all was on [Fredric] Brown's WHAT MAD UNIVERSE in which Bergy Babes existed.

The third highlight is, of course, Jonny Fantom's "A Worldcon in Brownsville," a magnificent tribute to past fans who have gone to the Great Worldcon in the Sky. All the brightest lights in the fannish firmament were mentioned. I'm sure I am not the only one who drifted into reverie when reading this piece. My most vivid memory was of Jack Chalker at the Melbourne Zoo after the first AussieCon in 1975, where he came between a goose and her chicks in an open range bird sanctuary. Aussiefen evinced proper concern, but Americans in the party went into paroxysms of laughter at the sight of Jack defending himself against attacks from the outraged bird. Taral Wayne's illustrations were much appreciated. They helped me to follow the often obscure fannish references in this very readable tribute.

LARRY BRYANT
3518 Martha Custis Drive
Alexandria VA 22302
4 December 2008

I do owe you a thank you for sending me a copy of your fanzine no. 17, of which I've been reading portions during the past few days. It lends itself to being read from back to front, from middle to end, from artwork to text, etc. I especially liked the letters-to-editor with your bold-lettered replies interspersed therein. The obits section reflects your sensitivity and devotion to craft. And that little sidebar telling us which style of type font you've used (by illustrating each line with the actual type) — priceless.

I suppose I never told you of one of my former jobs: as a compositor's apprentice at the Franklin Printing Company on 25th Street, across from the old *Daily Press* headquarters in Newport Lose, Vagina. It lasted only several months before I could get hired on as a clerk typist (age 20) in 1958 at Fort Manure, Va. Interesting, no? How a little item like that sidebar can resonate with a reader.

Another piece of nostalgia/irony/synchronicity: both you and I can attribute most of our career success to a single, productive skill: TYPING. My treasured Royal standard t/w sits here right next to my 10-year-old little iMAC — serving as a monument, at least 10 years older than you, to my having been one of the few male students in my 11th grade typing class at Warwick High School, where I eagerly sat amidst the front row of desks, almost mesmerized by this gateway to success. Are you surprised that I have a collection of several manual typewriters (one belonging to the late 1930s-40s soft-porn novelist Jack Woodford, who died in 1971 at Eastern State Hospital)? *[Not at all, actually. But the next time you're in Lilburn, Georgia, you might want to check The Antique Typewriter Museum, also]*

known as Ned Brooks' house. I'm sure he has at least one room devoted to the things.]

[Larry originally contacted me in 1970 because he was impressed that a mere 12-year-old had serious aspirations (ha) to become a Writer. He actually wrote an article on me for the local Sunday supplement which they almost certainly casually tossed out. However, Larry, knowing of my interest in science fiction, told me of Ned Brooks, to whom I later introduced myself. Larry has a lot to answer for, according to Ned...]



JEFF SCHALLES
749 36th Avenue NE
Minneapolis MN 55418
5 June 2009

Thanks for sending me So It Goes 17; I do appreciate it when you occasionally send me a fanzine. I really like the reprint of *Voyage 3*. I personally see nothing wrong with reprinting fine old Rotsler art; there's lots of people around these days who've never seen this stuff. I thought in my next issue of *Cover* that I'd reprint some of my favorite Rotslers from a million years or so ago. *[Do I take it correctly, then, that there will indeed be another Cover? As much as I enjoyed reading #10 (reviewed in this issue), I certainly hope so!]*

Taral's R.I.P. for Victoria Vayne was quite interesting, as was your letter column. Makes me feel a bit like George Tirebiter at times. And I really enjoyed reading "A Worldcon in Brownsville," that worked very well for me even if it wasn't run off on a mimeo.

All-in-all, TIM, a truly fabulous Tour-de-Force the like of which is seldom seen in these days of flash, speed and wonder. And PDFs.

Great 3-D cover, by the way. That rocks!

P.S. — I like receiving the occasional fanzine, but you may take me off your mailing list if you like. I'm not quite gafiated, but I'm not really feeling that fiery glow from the deep burning heart of fandom that I once felt so strongly. So it goes...

LLOYD PENNEY
1706-24 Eva Road
Etobicoke, Ontario m9c 2b2
Canada
27 July 2008

I wish it wasn't so difficult to find a good job and a good supervisor. I just got myself a second part-time job; seeing full-time work now seems impossible to get. More than three years ago now, I got myself an evening job with *The Globe and Mail*/newspaper, entering promotion announcements onto their website, and I thought this would do me until full-time was obtained. Unfortunately, no... Just a couple of weeks ago now, I got myself a daytime part-time job with the Royal Astronomical Society of Canada, and I am training to be their Membership and Publication Clerk. With luck, I can learn this second job and have the equivalent of a decent full-time wage. It takes my entire day to do both jobs, and it will make me appreciate my weekend that much more.

A couple of years ago now, I had an operation myself. Somehow, I had detached the retina in my right eye, and the optometrist who spotted it (we were in an exam so we could get new glasses) urged us to get to a hospital stat. After dealing with two apathetic emergency wards, a third got me to an ophthalmologist who confirmed the diagnosis and got me connected with a hospital downtown. The only nasty folks I had to deal with were a smart-mouthed admission clerk and the anesthesiologist who waited until I was on the operating table to lecture and berate me about my weight. *[Tacky timing on his part.]* I mouthed back at the clerk, but how do you tell of the doctor who will be monitoring your progress? In fact, I did wake up on the table, with the instruments...well, you can guess. My first thought was, "Cool." *[I doubt that would have been my first thought!]* I said hello, the doctors were surprised and said hello back, and I asked them to turn up the anesthesia, it hurt a little. They complied, and next I woke, I was in recovery. I spent the next two weeks off work and looking down to allow my eye to heal and refill with vitreous humor. I since found out that only 40% of all retinal reattachments are successful, so I know I am very lucky.

Another fine Rotsler collection. If anyone who didn't know better picked up the zine, they'd probably swear that this Rotsler guy was quite prolific; how do I get some of his work? It's hard to believe he's been gone for just over 10 years. His work is everywhere, and there's still plenty to use in future fanzines.

My loc, well... We were a little bitter after the mess that was TorCon 3, and understandably, but we did not swear off WorldCons. At least, not yet. We did some serious saving, and we did go to LACon IV, did the touristy thing by going to the California Science Centre and the gift shop at the L.A. County Coroner's Department. (No lie. It exists, and I have several coroners' shirts, among other things.) And this WorldCon was great; Milt Stevens had a marvelous fanzine lounge, and I ran into new friends and old. *Then* we swore off WorldCons, and *then* Montreal won the 2009 WorldCon. It took some talking with each other, but we eventually did buy memberships and we are now on the committee. We wanted to help out as best we could, and we also felt we had the chance to do for Anticipation what we couldn't do for TorCon 3.

WARREN BUFF
2144 B Ravenglass Place
Raleigh NC 27612
7 July 2008

Thank you for a simply amazing zine. When it came in the mail, I wondered who you might be, and noted the hard backing on the envelope, and wondered if maybe you were sending me a comic book or an old 45 single, neither of which I had any cause to expect. Much to my surprise, you had sent a fanzine. And what a fanzine. I immediately noticed the full-color cover and protective bag, then marveled at that image gracing the cover. This was a fanzine after my

attention! And then I flipped over the package to find that you had included a pair of 3-D glasses for viewing your bacover. I was impressed. And this was while it was still in the plastic bag.

Upon holding it in my hands, I was amazed to find that this zine, among the thicker ones I've received thus far in my rank neohood, was protected by clear plastic sheets over each cover.

And then I saw the title.

My tastes in fiction running more to the literary (I've read and understood and enjoyed works by the likes of Proust and Joyce, and long for a little more High Literature in my SF) than the gosh-wow (although I've enjoyed both, mind you), I was glad to see a fellow Vonnegut fan had sent me a zine. Between the high production values, literary character, and gorgeous cover, I was ready to love this zine before I even opened it.

I took my time reading it, pacing myself over a week or two, going from cover to cover. From the very beginning of the editorial, I was picking up on a theme: Death and Gafia. You spent a long time musing about your period of gafia, and the odd gap it caused in your production, and followed up fast with a string of memorials. There's no way to adequately cover all the deaths SF has seen in the past two years, even if we were only to consider the professionals (and wouldn't that be folly?), but "A Worldcon in Brownsville" made a valiant attempt.

There was only one name that was noticeably missing to me: Hank Reinhardt. The Wolford was a monumental figure here in the South, and while I only got to meet him once, I was deeply impressed. He was gracious, well-spoken, and cheerful, despite the reputation he cultivated in his SFPA days. He welcomed me to the Hearts table, where he and the Chattanooga crew soundly trounced me, but also made sure I came long with them to dinner, where I got to hear all kinds of fanhistory (oh, for a tape recorder back then!), and took great pleasure in discussing weapons and armor. I had hoped to see him again at that year's DeepSouthCon, but by then he had already taken ill, and it would barely be a month after his noted absence before the black news came over the email lists. I noticed his absence from the story all the more because of a similar tale told by Jerry Page at his memorial service, of a consuite somewhere, with all the luminaries of fandom swapping tales and zines, and Hank right there in the midst of them. It was a tale cut from the same cloth as the Brownsville piece, with an important reminder that fandom is inclusive. And that was something that, even on the first meeting, Hank could convey.

[I never really knew Hank, so did not think to include him. You certainly paint a different picture of him than what I had imagined, judging by what few letters of his in fanzines that I have read. I am, however, familiar with his reputation with being a weapons-master (if not fetishist), and if I had thought of him, would have included him in "A Worldcon in Brownsville" in the very last scene where a large man dressed in anachronistic regalia is carrying a huge axe — I think now in retrospect that it would have been funnier if I had made that man Hank Reinhardt rather than Poul Anderson (who was one of the founders of the SCA).]

Taral's fanhistory piece on Victoria Vayne drives home the theme of gafia, and hot on the heels of the Brownsville faanfiction. Taral, and even Victoria herself, seem to see gafia as a kind of death. *[While I see death as a kind of gafia.]* Would that it would never come to me.

Granted, the Moonchild and LaBrea pieces had little to do with the theme I'd noticed, but they were worthwhile reading. "The Celtic Kabalist" was similarly remarkable while not doing much for the theme. It was right up my alley, though, combining various esoteric interests to harp on the Renaissance theme that "Everything is like everything." Oh, and I want a magel.

The Rotsler portfolio brings us right back to the theme of death, and I'm glad you ran it. A neo like me doesn't get to see so much at by a Great Old One all in a run like that very often.

The letters intrigued me as well, with two major strains running through them: critiques of ROCKY HORROR (of which I've never been terribly fond, although that was more on account of the folks who watched it, and worse still, the ones who just went to hang around outside the theater), and amazement at the contents of the letters from your last issue. With Phil Foglio's name coming up so prominently, it will be interesting to see if he gets the Professional Artist Hugo this year.

Here's hoping that my letter proves interesting enough to join the ranks of your letter column. I've not yet written many locs, but I have gotten into the habit of writing mailing comments in SFPA and figure that the two practices are similar enough to require the same skills. I'll be including your zine in the bag I plan to carry from convention to convention, hoping to find some member of my generation who has yet to learn of fanzines who might be interested enough to read one and write a loc and maybe even go looking for more. I'll be handing off copies of the *SFC Bulletin* as well, so perhaps with two zines to start on, a neo will have what he needs to find more. Thanks to you for putting this on efanzines.com as well, so I don't have to worry about losing the information in it when I pass along the physical zine. *[But of course, you will be losing that fabulous 3-D back cover by Ditmar, which isn't on that website!]*

MARGARET CUBBERLY

115 Marine Circle
Grafton VA 23692
10 May 2008

Thanks for sending me *So It Goes*. Fanzines may be passé, but you did a damn good with a dying genre.

I can't add much more praise this time than I did three years ago, except for kudos for the artwork. I was fun to put on the glasses for a 3-D treat!

A few observations: Lester Boutillier is plainly delusional, showing the mindset that elected Bush for eight disastrous years. I don't envy Obama (my choice) with the chore of cleaning up the Aegean stables. *[Funny.]*

When I lived in Coconut Grove, Florida, in the 70s, we had a street fair that included figurines by Sterling Lanier. We saw all the LOTR sculptures which, of course, we couldn't buy. However, we did get "Colonel Rat," one of our treasures.

R-LAURRAINE TUTIHASI

2173 East Rio Vistoso Lane
Oro Valley AZ 85755
4 June 2008

"A Worldcon in Brownsville" was a nice tribute to bygone fans and also well-crafted. "Ghost Writing from the Glades of Gafia" told me a lot about two fans I've never met and knew little about. Your artwork pages on Bill Rotsler were very nice.

Alan Hunter seems to have difficulty believing that the chicken pox virus lurks in someone's body waiting for the chance to break out again as shingles, but that's exactly what happens. It's not the only virus to do that. I think singles breaks out when one's body is at some weak point, such as being under a lot of stress. There is now a vaccine available, and I highly recommend it. Unfortunately, I didn't take advantage of the vaccine, because I didn't realize I could get singles from the chicken pox vaccine. I've never had chicken pox. I got tested before spending money on the vaccine. On the other hand, a case of shingles from the vaccine tends to be relatively mild. Mike (my husband), who has had chicken pox, received the vaccine for shingles this year. *[Oh no, something new to worry about. I don't know if I should get the vaccine (since I had chicken pox as a small boy) or if I might get sick from the vaccine.]*

I see that there is still a lot of discussion about THE ROCKY HORROR PICTURE SHOW. I never had the chance to see it done on

stage; I think it would have been interesting. The movie is one of my favorite movies of all time. Like you, I think Tim Curry is a great actor.

CY CHAUVIN

14248 Wilfred
Detroit MI 48213
13 April 2009

I think there is something special about fanzines, whether physical or electronic, that you don't find elsewhere, a sort of connection by the editor's personality. I find I will read stuff by people I don't know, and perhaps stuff I wouldn't be inclined to read otherwise, simply because it's in someone's fanzine. I do sort of miss those golden days back when I used to read and loc fanzines in my basement all the time; now it's more occasional. I am going to write you a "hard" letter from home. Not only will I be able to write you more, but the cover of your fanzine might cause comments from people at work.

JIM BODIE

3721 Shoreline Drive
Tallahassee FL 32305
late 2008

It was such a pleasure to receive *So It Goes* 17. I loved the comic book stamps and the zine came with its own plastic protector bag. It took me a moment to see the 3-D cover. That is so cool. In a way, your cover reminds me of Kelly Freas' formula for SF cover art, the three Bs. But you only have two Bs, so where are the bug-eyed monsters? Having Kelly Freas present his slide show presentation of his cover artwork at those Virginia Beach comic cons and elsewhere was such a treasure.

Having spent the last dozen years as a postal employee in the Deep South, I have had a lot of black women in supervisory roles above me. The one generalization that I have come away with is that I would rather work for an ex-marine than a graduate of business school. The marine already knows how to run an operation and just needs to learn the details of a different service. Also, she doesn't need to prove anything. That's already been done, so she can dispense with a lot of bullshit. Under such a system, your ability to complete difficult assignments would answer the question, "What have you done for me lately?" to your favor. I sure wouldn't refer to these women as Sheba. I'm sure you mean it as a compliment to a fantasy goddess, but it's also sure to be misunderstood. *[Either I'm not understanding you or you're not understanding me. I called Sheba "Sheba" because that was her name; not an insult. I also called her "She Who Must Be Obeyed" not as a literary reference to H. Rider Haggard, but to the series of books about "Rumpole of the Bailey" who refers to his wife this way. Obviously he does so not because he sees her as an Ursula Andress figure, but because he knows he would be on the receiving end of a non-ending tumult of vitriolic verbal abuse should he show even the slightest bit of resistance to anything she wants to do. I never regarded Sheba as a "fantasy figure." Far more of a nightmare than a wetdream, really.]*

I'm not rising to Lester Boutillier's bait. I took one look at his address and the date of the letter and forgot all about the politics. The street was familiar and when I looked it up it turned out to be the name of the street I was looking for. Castiglione runs through the heart of Little Genoa on the wrong side of the fairgrounds. My favorite bro' bought a house back in there and I hang out just a block or two from Lester's door. I'm gonna have to meet Mr. Lester. My extended family lived on Crete Street near Grand Route St. John back in the 80s. Indeed, we were the krewe of cretins. I still have these dreams where I am living again in New Orleans, and if that ever became a reality, Lester's neighborhood would be my destination.

GEORGE BEAHM
30 Priorslee Lane
Williamsburg VA 23185
29 May 2008

The stamps on your mailing envelope (reproductions of Marvel Comics' books) brought back a lot of old memories. I was living in Japan at the time and was buying them for 12 cents each (cover price) and had a collection of almost a thousand Silver Age Marvels, some DCs (mostly Batman), and some titles from other publishers. Alas, when we moved stateside, my father threw out all the comics, on the grounds that they were "rubbish" and "unfit for human consumption." I think George Lucas and Steven Spielberg and a host of others would vehemently disagree, but I lost a small fortune in the process. So now I've bought the full-color hardback reprints, but it doesn't really make up for the loss. (I had an entire run of *Spider-Man, Fantastic Four*, all the #1 issues, etc.) I was thirteen years old at the time, but young as I was, I knew Marvel had accomplished something rare and wonderful with those pulpy, colorful comics.

I ALSO HEARD FROM:

Dick Jenssen: "As always, your So It Goes is a SUPERB production — and an attestation to your liking of beautiful babes. In that regard, I was EXTREMELY flattered to see my 3-D image of a buxom faux-Bergey babe on the back cover. Bill Wright, I know, was bowled over

by it, and is thinking (apparently seriously) of having a 3-D imagine on HIS *Interstellar Ramjet Scoop*."

George H. Wells, who is kind enough to send not a little bit, but a *lot* of money contributing to So It Goes! I guess *somebody* just earned himself a lifetime subscription! He says he has seen HELLBOY 2 and says that I "might like" it, but then says that, "The singing sounds like Ned Brooks at a convention." (Brerrr...) Despite that, I *did* see the movie later and enjoyed it very much, and don't remember any singing that sounded like the last dying gasp of a bull moose... (Did I just say that?)

Hope Leibowitz, who, despite my carefully worded colophon last time (saying that it's okay to send a letter to my email address, if you happen to have it), insists that she has to send me a post card, and that only when she's in the U.S., due to the expense of postage. (Sigh) Nonetheless, she also says, "Beautiful fanzine as always. At a fanzine panel, Guy Lillian III held it up and praised it highly."

Laurine White, who also sends \$10! Bless you, Laurine! Hope you like the Steve Fabian portfolio this time.

Vicki Ogden sends a note on elaborate lavender Kate Dawidziak notecard stationery. "The quality of your zines always blows me away! I really miss you in FAPA. Your zines are incredible!" I regret that I didn't stay in FAPA long enough to get to know Vicki and Steve, who were joining as I left.



THE SYBARITE AND THE SCHOLAR, or "Kiss me, you stiff!"

Drawn by Schizam. Inked by Megan.

