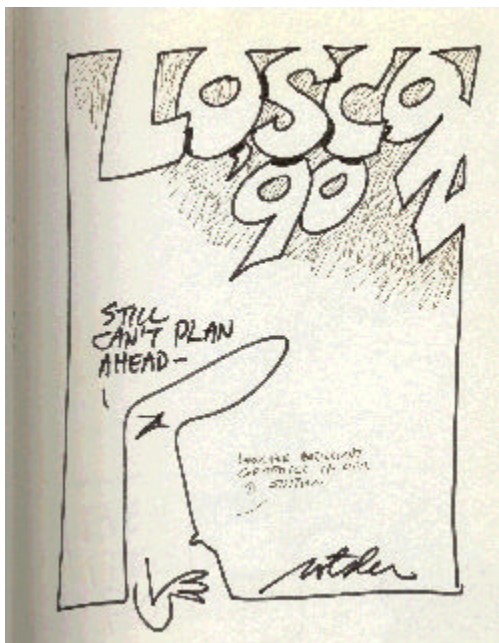


No Time No Energy & Not Much To Say #8

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(Please Put "No Time" in the
header so I don't delete.)

Artwork by William Rotsler
A Tip of the Propeller Beanie to Bill
Burns & eFanzines
March, 2003



**Artwork by William Rotsler
LosCon '90
dK's sketchbook**

This Issue
Is
Dedicated To
Harry Warner, Jr.

One of the Cornerstones
of Fandom
Is Gone

One of the Cornerstones
of Fanzines
Will Be No More

Sercon:

I must be in a sercon mood these days. Or maybe it's escapism into the world of SF. This issue will "feature" a piece on the Dune sequels by Larry Parr and a e-list discussion of SF in general by a batch of Old Fart Phans on the Valhalla e-list.

There are also a couple of poems from Mark Weber. More about my friend Mark next issue when I'll be running one of his short stories. Mark is, as they say, "clean and sober" these days, but that certainly wasn't always true. What **was** always true is his undying love and his profound knowledge of jazz and the jazz field. Some of the finest evenings of my life were spent with him in some dim smoky jazz cafe.

One of my friends said I was being disingenuous concerning there being little humor to be found in death... he reminded me that I do have a "death" story that is, sadly enough, quite funny. *The Death of Larry Neilson*. With some headpounding I should manage to write down that happening from beginning to end by my next deadline (whenever the hell that is). It certainly got me in a shitload of trouble for at least six months. As I said, next issue (or Real Soon Now) which ever comes last).

I can't even talk about Harry Warner, Jr.'s death. Too depressing. As long as I've been a fan (hell, longer than I've been alive) his essays, his zines, his LoCs, his histories have enriched fandom.

Fandom will truly not be the same for me now.

Fanzines & Fanzines mini reviews

Wanna see a "real" e-list genzine? Go to eFanzines and read *eI* from Earl Kemp. There's none finer around.

More faanish might be *Peregrine Nations* from Jan Stinson (also available on eFanzines). She manages the remarkable task of producing one of the most readable and accessible zines put out today. Each issue being better than the last (a trick I'd love to learn). However if you download a copy remember that all of us editors live off egoboo produced by our readers.

Convention reports are customarily of more interest to those writing them and those mentioned in them, than to the general readership. Now as far as I'm concerned one **Huge** exception to that is con reports written by Arnie Katz. His often eccentric mixture of reality/fantasy/faanishness might not be to the taste of everyone but I've always found them a complete delight. *Corflatch Considered as a Helix of Semi-Precious Stones (A Corflu 2000 Report)* has to be one of the most delightful, interesting, thought provoking con reports I've ever read. What a complete delight!

Arnie toned down the "fantasy" aspects of his con adventures in this report so in that regard I suppose we could

consider this a little more "serious" than much of his writing. (At least until page 25 and *Corflatch Apocrypha*. Now that was truly a "walk on the wild side".) Only half a dozen chuckles a page instead of the full Bakers Dozen.

Shuffled into the mixture are deeply insightful commentaries on fanzines and fandom today, TAFF and fannish bureaucracy among many topics. Other fan authors would get a series of articles out of, what is to Arnie, throw away lines.

It's a very interesting question (and one which, I'm afraid, I have no reasonable answer to) that Arnie brings up concerning those "fans" who bid up at auctions our older classic zines with enthusiasm (and fistfuls of dollars), yet show little or no interest in supporting our current zines. Why? If they're not interested in fandom today why are they interested in fandom of yesteryear? I've seen this same thing in fan lounges I've volunteered in..."fans" interested in our history but not in the path we're blazing now. Strange. Maybe it's the smell of twilltone and mimeo ink?

Thirty one pages of priceless faanish prose is what you can get by downloading this zine from eFanzines. Thirty one pages by one of our most underrated talents. I'd be remiss not to mention the excellent Rotsler illos scattered throughout the issue.

But don't read what I'm saying about this zine (hah, great advice two sentences from the end of the review), read the zine itself and make up your own mind. But don't forget that feedback to Arnie, he certainly deserves it. Rarely has any convention report made me so annoyed over having missed the con...

We're At War

I'm not sure what else to say. I had a rather long article on France's place in American history which I erased as it's now too "dated". I'm not about to attempt an editorial concerning our latest "adventure" in Iraq. Like most Americans I wish no harm to our troops, but then neither do I have any ill will towards those Iraqis defending their homeland.

I find war so costly, so dangerous to a nation's well being that it should not be indulged in lightly. We're still paying off debts incurred during our Civil War, our great grandchildren will long be paying off this war. Hopefully it'll be worth it. Only time will tell. As Bruce Pelz would say, **"the dK position"**.

The Advantage of Being Broke

An afternoon bookhunting is an afternoon well spent. But like most types of "hunting" there is a certain amount of expense involved....and being fairly broke lately I've had to work off my bibliophile disorder by cleaning/clearing/sorting out our garage.

I just found a box mainly stuffed with '52 and '53 Galaxys...those were great years for the mag. Lots of great rereading here. But for now I'm going to leave it packed and put it up in storage.

And speaking of finding things in my garage, I just discovered a copy (one of several I own "somewhere") of *Little Black Sambo (A New Story of Little Black Sambo)*, illos by Earnest Vetsch, copyright by Whitman 1926).

It has a little spine damage but otherwise is in fine shape...not super rare these days but fairly hard to find. (I should have several other editions around but, if memory serves, I rescued those out of a library trash can when they discarded them back in the late '60s or so). It was a "find" as it had been completely buried in a box filled with old C-64 software and long out of date computer mags for that machine. I'm glad I looked before I pitched.

I ended up trashing boxes of old C-64 software. There doesn't even seem to be a market for that software on e-Bay. And I thought you could sell just about anything there!

When we first moved in I put bookcases on three of the garages four walls and two nearly four foot high cases (back to back) down the center...those were all filled with pbs, mags and misc hardcovers (mainly non-SF). A small single garage too... What I hadn't counted on was moving a couple of truckloads of misc. unsorted stuff (all within an hours time) into the garage. Into every odd corner I could stuff a box or pile into. Adding four foot of messy boxes on top of what had been fairly neat bookcases.

I had planned on sorting it out before putting it away, what I hadn't counted on was an unexpected rain storm. That forced me to put it away no matter where. Quickly, way too quickly. Then of course that was eleven years ago and little work has been done on the garage since then. At the worse it got down to crowded pathways with all the bookcases buried under unsorted boxes.

If I have nothing better to do it can always provide me with an hour or two

worth of book hunting. I can only take about two hours working in the garage (and that's with long breaks). The damn dust really starts getting to me after awhile. The garage door has never been shut in the last eleven years for one thing.

Are there any Marcus Van Heller fans out there? I dug up his Adam and Eve porno novel...it's interesting as the publishing company, Collectors Publication was in Covina in July of '67 when this edition came out).

Once I moved a few piles of boxes I found fifteen different Harry Stephen Keller "mystery" novels in one of the bookcases...hadn't seen them in years. All in extremely (and I mean **extremely**) worn condition. Back when I picked them up Keller was so hard to find that you couldn't pass up a copy in any shape. (I have two signed editions inside the house.)



Hell, there's Keller sites on the web now. Several fan clubs. It also turns out that there is a publisher that has put his books back into print (with some fine original covers on the front and a copy of the original dj as the back cover) from Ramble House (see plug below).

I'm not going to try to explain Keeler, I'll let Ramble House try to do it for me (lazy dK, lazy dK)...he's unique, and at times very funny (or very weird, or very weirdly funny...you catch my drift I'm sure.)

Even some fanzines turned up in the odd box. I found a copy of *The Robert Bloch Fanzine* from '72. I've wondered for years where that had disappeared to. Now I'll have a chance to read it (if I don't misplace it again). Just looking at pages randomly I noticed some of the history about Bloch's first professional sale...I have an addition to that information I'd love to write up one of these days.

Discovered (of course) were lots of old Locus's, three copies of the same issue of the L.A. Free Press (which an article on Ray Bradbury)...batches of old photos, a couple of underground comics...and some truly odd stuff that I have no idea how I acquired it, or why!

The whole thing kept me busy for a few hours, provided me with some free amusement, some more books for my indoor shelves, and I finally cleaned up enough so you no longer have to walk sideways through the garage. No where near done however. sigh

Oh well, it'll give me something to write about later.

dK

HARRY STEPHEN KEELER (1890-1967)

Never heard of Harry Stephen Keeler? Don't feel alone. He's America's most forgotten author, victim of a plot by publishers to weed out all writers who don't write swift, easy-to-read, dumbed-down prose for the masses.

Harry wrote because he enjoyed it and early on developed a style all his own. He devised incredibly convoluted plots involving ethnic characters (who speak in outrageous dialect), pop culture of the 30s and 40s, and his favorite MacGuffin: skulls. Modern-day writers have their DNA evidence; Harry preferred skulls. Once you read a Keeler, you're never quite the same, and now -- thanks to Ramble House -- you can read all you want. And more!

All Ramble House Keelers are A6-sized paperbacks (4.125" x 5.75") with dust jackets by Gavin L. O'Keefe and cost \$19.95.

Tell them I sent you...maybe they'll send me a free book. (I know, just what I need.)

When I was a teenager I must have read nearly twenty of his novels...I wonder if there is anyone I could sue? I know I've never been the "same".

Dune Today, Gone Tomorrow by Larry Parr

The question was asked, "what is your favorite Dune novel?" I don't know any longer what my favorite Dune novel is because I haven't read the original for more than 20 years -- however, I have recently been reading and enjoying (although I'm not overwhelmed by) the new Dune novels by Frank Herbert's son, Brian Herbert and someone named Kevin J. Anderson.

I've read two of the prequels, though I don't think I've read them in the correct order. I've read *DUNE: HOUSE HARKONNEN* and *DUNE: HOUSE CORRINO*. I haven't yet read *DUNE: HOUSE ATREIDES*.

The two I've read have been enjoyable enough, full of twists and turns, and

seem stylistically to be similar to the original.

I remember the very first time I tried to read *DUNE*. I was a teenager, and I remember reading up to page 30 and being so confused that I stopped and put the book down for a year. A year later I picked it up again and was once again totally confused until I got to page 31; then I said "Oh, I get it."

Back in the mid to late 70's Chris and I took a trip to Hawaii. While we were there, I was reading *DUNE* for my second or third time.

We spent most of our time on Maui. At that time, the roads on the island did not connect at either end of the island; there was a blank strip that you were not supposed to drive, because there wasn't a real road.

Well, I drove the goat trails anyway. The upshot was, we were approaching Hanna from the back side, as it were. Right around the 7 sacred pools we saw a Ford Pinto broken down at the side of the road, and a rather large woman in a MuMu frantically waving us down.

She told us that her soon-to-be son-in-law, who was still seated in the Pinto, was about to marry her daughter and that he needed a ride into Hanna and would we take him while she waited for Triple A to deal with the broken Pinto?

We agreed, and this tall guy dressed in a pure white robe with a black belt (a traditional Hawaiian wedding outfit, we were told) gets into our car and we start into Hanna.

After driving for a few minutes the soon-to-be-groom said: "Do you know who that woman back there was?" We said we didn't. He said: "She's Frank

Herbert's wife. I'm marrying Frank Herbert's daughter."

And sure enough, when we dropped the guy off at the old church in Hanna, I could see Frank Herbert pacing up and down in front of the church.

One other semi-interesting thing happened that very same morning, just before we ran across the broken-down Pinto. While we were still on goat trails with the rental car, we came across an old, abandoned, broken-down church over-looking the ocean. It looked interesting, so we stopped and walked around the old grave yard and looked inside the falling-in church building and smelled the beautiful flowers growing wild everywhere.

When we got back home I happened to find a picture of that same broken down church in an Auto Club magazine -- and learned that that was the graveyard where Charles Lindbergh was buried.

-- Larry

Two Poems by Mark Weber

Request

so you want a mean poem
a poem that wouldn't be scared
to ride with a motorcycle gang
a spiting red-eyed poem
boot stomping coughing
lit fuse
boiling your nervous poem
a third degree burn poem
bloody accident on the freeway
stealing the rings
and wallets poem
a poem in jail nude
screaming all night long

a poem to walk the streets
in hatred
a poem that charges rent
a rude poem
a poem that gives birth
to millions of insane children
cross-eyed and impotent
a poem to make Jesus cry
and never return
a poem stepping gingerly
among the unburied dead
a poem spelled: B - O - M - B

A Catch-22

there's a catch 22 situation to it -
having these limited editions
of books by some of my favorite
writers
and they're only limited editions
because they're not popular enough
to warrant
large publication numbers
so the catch is: I'm reluctant to
lend
these books out to certain people
some yes as I know their
discriminating habits
about such things
but for the most part
these artists get read less again
because of that

but changing the subject somewhat
I can't help it if most of these
walking talking eating scratching
earth-using human beings
are born in a barn
I've loaned books to friends
who've flat-out lost them
let alone dog-earned them
or got their jelly sandwich
dyed into them

so it's no wonder I for one don't loan
my precious books out
it's just too bad
these authors need more readership
but then again

maybe they don't need
that sort of readership anyway.



(Left to Right) Lyn Pederson
& Dwain Kaiser
San Diego Comic Con
July 9, 1982

What A World

The following allegedly came from a
mother in Austin, Texas:

THINGS I'VE LEARNED FROM MY CHILDREN...(HONEST AND NO KIDDING):

1. A king-size waterbed holds enough water to fill a 2000 sq. foot house 4 inches deep.
2. If you spray hair spray on dust bunnies and run over them with rollerblades, they can ignite.
3. A 3-year-old's voice is louder than 200 adults in a crowded restaurant.
4. If you hook a dog leash over a ceiling fan, the motor is not strong enough to rotate a 42-pound boy wearing Batman underwear and a Superman cape.

It is strong enough, however, if tied to a paint can, to spread paint on all four walls of a 20 by 20 foot room.

5. You should not throw baseballs up when the ceiling fan is on.

When using the ceiling fan as a bat, you have to throw the ball up a few times before you get a hit. A ceiling fan can hit a baseball a long way.

6. The glass in windows (even double-pane) doesn't stop a baseball hit by a ceiling fan.
7. When you hear the toilet flush and the words "Uh-oh," it's already too late.
8. Brake fluid mixed with Clorox makes smoke, and lots of it.
9. A six-year-old can start a fire with a flint rock even though a 36-year-old man says they can only do it in the movies. A magnifying glass can start a fire even on an overcast day.
10. Certain Legos will pass through the digestive tract of a four-year-old.
11. Play-Doh and microwave should never be used in the same sentence.
12. Superglue is forever.
13. No matter how much Jell-O you put in a swimming pool you still can't walk on water.
14. Pool filters do not like Jell-O.
15. VCRs do not eject PB&J sandwiches even though TV commercials show they do.
16. Garbage bags do not make good parachutes.
17. Marbles in gas tanks make lots of noise when driving.

18. You probably do not want to know what that odor is.

19. Always look in the oven before you turn it on. Plastic toys do not like ovens.

20. The fire department in Austin, TX has a 5-minute response time.

21. The spin cycle on the washing machine does not make earthworms dizzy.

22. It will however make cats dizzy.

23. Cats throw up twice their body weight when dizzy.

24. The mind of a six-year-old is wonderful.

(A Tip of the Hat to: Doug Finley)

An Sercon Exchange?

Am I Burned Out?
Or Is Science Fiction Boring?

With Comments From:

Jerry Smith
Barry Gold
dwain Kaiser
Doug Finley
Jane Gallion
Jim Schumacher
Terry Romine
Bruce Duncan
Gil Lamont

(From Vallhalla): Upon being told that Barry Gold still reads SF.

Jerry Smith: *You actually still read SF books! I haven't read one in a couple of years and haven't enjoyed one in decades.*

Barry Gold: You've been reading the wrong SF.

Probably the best pure SF around these days is by Bujold. The following should all be available in any major bookstore, or from amazon.com or buy.com: *Cordelia's Honor*, *The Warrior's Apprentice*, *The Vor Game*, *The Borders of Infinity*, *Brothers in Arms*, *Mirror Dance* (warning: weird sex), *Memory*, *Komarr*, *A Civil Campaign*, *Flying Free* (not a Vorkosigan book, but in the same universe).

I also like *Ring of Swords* by Eleanor Arneson. But don't read this one if you suffer from homophobia.

For lighter, humorous SF, try *Cathouse*, by Dean Ing (set in Niven's Known Space during the Man-Kzin wars) *Ogre*, *Ogre* by Piers Anthony (but ignore the rest of Xanth) any of the Phule books by Robert Asprin, *Phule's Paradise*, *A Phule and His Money*, *Phule Me Twice*. And there's been a **lot** of great fantasy: *Bridge of Birds* by Barry Hughart, *Tex and Molly in the Afterlife* by Richard Grant (also the sequel, *In the Land of Winter*). Note these are often shelved in general fiction. Oh no, it's not fantasy. Just because it has werewolves, homeless dryads, the main characters die in the first chapter, there are walk-ons by Arthur and Neman, and a witch whose spells work when she cares enough...

The Anita Blake Vampire hunter stories by Laurell Hamilton: *Guilty Pleasures*, *The Laughing Corpse*, *Circus of the Damned*, *The Lunatic Cafe*, *Bloody Bones*, *The Killing Dance*, *Burnt Offerings*, *Blue Moon & Obsidian Butterfly*.

Almost all of these are in mass-market paperback. And if you can't afford that,

try one of the used book services on the web.

Lee has sometimes gotten books via FUBS, the Fidonet Used Book Squad. But I think you need a fidonet node within easy calling distance to use that.

dwain Kaiser: About four years ago (or so), I tried to read one of the Heinlein juveniles to my youngest Grandson Adam.. can't think of which one it was at the moment (took place on Venus...hmm, no I remember, *Between Planets*, I still have a copy I got signed in my collection...anyway) we got bogged down fifty/sixty pages into it. Boring. Not well written, not interesting.

Doug Finley: dwain, I bet that as a child unit in California's alleged school system, he's grossly lacking in the science & space background needed even to follow the plot.

When I read it--prob'ly 5th or 6th grade--I didn't need anything in it explained to me, 'cause I'd already read so much about space travel etc in school, library books, Life mag, etc. He probably needs everything in it explained.

A kiddie imagination can't take off from the printed page if he doesn't understand it. The plotting & plot suspense are vivid, & it could make a great movie if not too Hollywoodized...switched to some other planet to remain believable.

dwain Kaiser: In answer to Doug's comments... Nah, he wasn't the one who was bored, I was. That novel just didn't hold up well, it's been more than fifty years after all.

As for his reading ability, it would be safe to say he reads as well as I did at

that age...and I was already a diehard SF fan. And unlike the stunt I pulled where my first Science Fair project in High School was an Interplanetary game board (it also doubled for a very large map of the solar system)*, he takes his school work seriously.

Of course, JoAnn and I have always read to him. Starting at a very young age with *The Hobbit*, Lloyd Alexander and Patricia C. Wrede.

I think Wrede's *Book of Enchantments* is the perfect "read aloud" book. He loved it at eight and nine. At 12 he read all the Harry Potter books.

You and I disagree how good California schools are... I wouldn't have been able to handle the amount of homework they give out to school kids these days. I'm very impressed with the level of school work they expect now. Besides Adam understands "space travel" and science fiction better than anyone his age has a right to. He's probably been to more SF cons in the last ten years than you have.

No, some novels survive time, aging well, some don't. A lot of Heinlein's writings have poorly aged as far as I'm concerned.

Speaking of hard SF, Rudy Rucker is an "interesting" author. I attended a lecture of his at BayCon a few years ago concerning multi-dimensional lifeforms. He lost me completely when he switch to the diagram mode. Science fiction for the mathematician. I'll give him credit for being a hell of a idea man, his concepts certainly awakens the brain cells. Not your fathers Science Fiction.

Loved *The Hollow Earth*. Really wacked Steam Punk.

Jane Gallion: (On Heinlein): I do frequently reread those of his works that played a great part in forming my political convictions. These are *Tunnel in the Sky*, *The Moon is a Harsh Mistress*, *Stranger*. And I have a special fondness for *Farmer in the Sky*, which is the second SF novel I read in my life, the first being some kid bit in which 2 children stowed away on a moon shot & came back with a rock containing a humanoid skull. I've mercifully forgotten the title, altho when I consider moon rocks brought back by the odd astronaut I recall this plot. <sigh>

Between Planets is hardly boring. How many other sf novels have our hero chasing around the solar system with a secret message in his decoder ring? And isn't the character of Sir Isaac Newton wonderful?

I loved *Between Planets*, altho Heinlein's Venus was a far cry from the boiling hell we now know it is. I did like Sir Isaac, but my main favorites of his aliens are Willis the Martian bouncer & the Mother Thing (naturally).

Just remember that with Heinlein's Golden Age you're in the 1950s and it's fine. For example, *The Door into Summer's* 1970 and 2000 are hopelessly outdated, for example, but who cares? One identifies with Heinlein's characters and that makes all the difference.

Probably you individuals of the male persuasion didn't fixate on this next like us grrrls wd, but I have to smile whenever I reread *Stranger* at the scene where Jill sneaks Mike out of the hospital in drag & tapes stockings to his thighs in lieu of a garterbelt. There weren't any pantyhose in 1961. As Lenore Goldberg said: life goes on & things change.

Jim Schumacher, Sparrow: Thanks for the excellent lists for prospective reading. Like Jerry, I have not read much of the new stuff to come out in the last 10 or 15 years, so suggestions like this are very helpful to me.

Jerry, I can heartily second Barry's recommendation of Barry Hughart's *BRIDGE OF BIRDS* I read it recently after Hatter (**dK: Bruce Duncan**) recommended it to me. It is excellent, and has become something of a cult classic -- well worth every paying full cover price for it if you have to.

Terry Romine, EaTrom: I too can support CJ Cherryh of Melchizedek Michael's for reading.. and I also get into Weber's HONOR HARRINGTON series. Just right up there with Doc Smith, in MHO.

Other than that; sure, Brin, the oldies like Clark, Niven and others of similar bend.

Jim Schumacher: I also agree on the Greg Bear stuff. He's one of the few authors, along with Gregory Benford, whom I've actually kept up with a bit over recent years.

Jerry, I can recommend Gregory Benford's *GREAT SKY RIVER* (although, since it was first published in 1987, it hardly qualifies as 'new'). While that's the very book that made me swear off ever reading Benford again. To me he's the prime example of a physicist who started off writing like one, i.e. stilted, & instead of learning an effective prose style with practice, just got weirder, & not in any good way.

I thought the original premise of the series starting with, um, *Across the Sea of Suns* I guess, was brilliant--where would you find a zillion-yr- old crashed spaceship in prime condition, & why aren't there any other civilizations doing spacefaring or interstellar communication? But instead of extrapolating on that in any interesting way, it just goes nowhere tediously.

Brin also started off writing like the physicist he is, but rapidly learned how to do vivid characters, suspenseful plotting, & a prose style with real impact, while still taking off on brilliant extrapolations from known science.

Bear, on the other hand, is a natural writer who's learned to think like a physicist. *Moving Mars* would make any cosmologist or particle physicist proud.

Speaking of computers taking over The Universe, check out anything by Vernor Vinge, he has lots to say on the subject. He expects computers & robots to take over the jobs of most humans by roughly 2020. Could happen...which is one reason I always say Vonnegut's 1st novel, *Player Piano*, was his best.

Jerry, for particular CJ Cherryh books I'd recommend her Morgaine series--starting with *Gate of Ivrel*, stunningly good for a 1st novel-- the Faded Sun series (she swears inspired by Greek & Roman war heroes, not samurai), *Serpent's Reach*, and *Hunter of Worlds*. I consider the latter one of the best SF novels ever; also one of the most difficult, with 3 alien languages & a much-needed glossary.

Many will have an aversion to her cute furry aliens series including "Chanur," & I'd stay far from her fantasy and "Hell" series. Her recent "Foreigner" series is quite good, tho. Oh, & *Voyager in Night*. One of toughest SFnal

premises imaginable, a computer ghost story, & she completely pulls it off.

In most Cherryh books, there's a moment she really strives for & makes work--you've been immersed in an alien civilization with one human for half the book or more, to the extent that when he runs into some other humans, they seem more alien by contrast.

I've only read one of his, but Orson Scott Card is both brilliant & popular. He's apparently a practicing Mormon (still lives in Utah, at least), & his books have a strong moral sense, but a very interesting one to this atheist.

There was a series that I read the first book of, but it was sometime ago. The title was *A Cannon For Stabis* I believe. Anyone have an idea who the author was or what the remaining novels were?

Bruce Duncan, Hatter: I read an essay by a notable in the field, alas I can't recall who or where -- perhaps in an intro to one of the year's best short story collections? -- claiming that STAR WARS had essentially damaged the SF/fantasy genres, just as the field was showing signs of maturity, by bringing in a vast influx of newcomers who were only interested in STAR WARS-like space opera (& its equivalent in fantasy, the *SWORD OF SHANARRA* Tolkien ripoffs), AND they wanted series with familiar characters. And publishers went where the money was. And so did a lot of writers. Which reduced shelf space for, and interest in, original work.

It seems largely true, to me. When I look in the SF/fantasy section of a given bookstore, most of the shelf space is taken up with stuff that is essentially STAR WARS and/or Tolkien ripoffs. I

have to root around to find anything that *might* be worth reading.

Jerry, when you complained that the last "recent" sf you'd read was "philosophy thinly disguised as a story," did you mean that you wanted pure storytelling, free from the taint of philosophy? If so, fie!

Everybody has a point of view (philosophy), even if it's a secondhand, reductionist one. And the BEST work aims to do more than merely tell a story; if you aim low, you'll get hackwork.

There is some very entertaining work with no higher or other aim, but it's like cotton candy -- no substance. No classics in that category. (Though if you're using Benford as an example of "philosophy thinly disguised as a story," I think you're unclear on the meaning of "philosophy" -- I wouldn't call science lectures philosophy.)

If on the other hand, you meant most of the stuff you'd seen was a thinly disguised lecture, how is it you like Heinlein?

Or is it the third possibility, that you don't mind being lectured if you are being entertained as well, and you feel what you encountered fell down on that level?

And to everybody who contributed booklists, you guys left out a number of classics -- haven't you read *THE ANUBIS GATES* by Tim Powers or *DIVINE ENDURANCE* by Gwyneth Jones, for example?

Doug's & Barry's lists seemed weighted toward hard-science writers, too, which is understandable, but there's more out there.

Jerry Smith: Thanks for your book suggestions. I have never read any of the titles any of you have suggested.

What I said was that I realized that the crap SF I had been reading in the late 70s and 80s was "crackpot philosophy in a thin veneer of story."

Hatter asked: "did you mean that you wanted pure storytelling, free from the taint of philosophy?" Oh, hell no! I prefer books with intellectual meat, like *A VOYAGE TO ACRTURUS*, but well done fluff like *LIL FUZZY* can be fun to read. What I hate is junk, pop philosophy masquerading as "mind blowing" science fiction. I hate Gibson.

I read *COUNT ZERO* and *MONA LISA OVERDRIVE*. Both flashy stylistically, but ultimately just a rehash of *The Computer That Eat The World*. Boring. I admit to having a weakness for stoned humor so I loved everything by Robert Sheckley. The last fiction I read that I liked was Tom Robin's *JITTERBUG PERFUME*.

He also asked: how is it you like Heinlein? Well, mostly I read Heinlein as a Ute... The last Heinlein I liked was *TIME ENOUGH FOR LOVE*, back at the beginning of the 70s which I read during my One True Love affair. I have not liked any Heinlein since, although *JOB* and *FRIDAY* kept me reading to their dissatisfying ends.

Hatter also asked: you don't mind being lectured if you are being entertained as well, and you feel what you encountered fell down on that level? That's closer to it. I am not all that keen on being lectured to. But if the author has something to say, it's usually better than just an episode of McGiver in outer space (of course, I did love Davidson's books which were little more than that...).

THE LEFT HAND OF DARKNESS was one of my favs. So was *LORD OF LIGHT*. I have never liked hard science "gadget" stories. I can't stand Niven. I liked Bester and early Delaney.

I concur on Hatter's comments. Anyone remember Lazar Books? They didn't ever READ the mss. before printing it! No, its true, I talked with the editor in chief at a con once.

They were a porno house trying to go legit. They just slapped a quickie Kelly Freas cover and knew it would sell x copies.

After STAR WARTZ the field went to shit. And all those damned Dragon books.

Gil Lamont: Laser Books. Editor in chief was Roger Elwood, who did more to damage sf in the early seventies until Star Wars utterly destroyed it (but for the handful of rebels hiding in the caves and smuggling their books out to the literate few).

Laser Books was a line issued by a Romance house, not porn. (Maybe you're thinking of Essex House, which was just Parliament News, a major publisher and distributor of written porn.) Covers were by Kelly Freas.

As for not reading the ms, huh? At least one submission was finally bounced because it didn't have enough action in it.

Doug Finley: "Doug's & Barry's lists seemed weighted toward hard-science writers, too, which is understandable, but there's more out there. " Hatter

Sure, that's me. I really don't care for fantasy unless it's of the quality of

Tolkien, & has some method to its imagination.

Barry Gold: Sparrow wrote: "I also agree on the Greg Bear stuff. He's one of the few authors along with Gregory Benford, whom I've actually kept up with a bit over recent years." Greg Bear. Ah yes, just read a novel by him, *Moving Mars*. No characters to speak of, just cardboard figures moving around to carry the pseudo-science.

He made some attempt at destruction-testing the protagonist in the last quarter of the book, but it was too late. She'd already died of an excess of blood in her cardboard stream.

*** SPOILER WARNING ***

On top of that, there was a major physics gaffe, almost as bad as Niven making the Earth turn backward in the first edition of *Ringworld*. Having made a new physics discovery that let them do things like move moons around and turn matter into anti-matter at a distance(*), they respond to an attack by putting phobos in orbit around Earth as a threat. And -"if they didn't stop the attacks, we were to convert the White House in Washington DC into mirror matter, as an object lesson."-. Do the math, folks. 1 gram of matter converted to energy is equivalent to 21 kilotons of TNT, around a Hiroshima-sized bomb. Changing a gram of matter to antimatter ("mirror matter") actually produces twice that much, because the gram of antimatter combines with a gram of the surrounding normal matter, converting **two** grams of matter. So a kilogram of antimatter will produce an explosion equal to 42 megatons. A metric ton (1000 Kg) yields 42 gigatons. How many tons do you think the White House masses?

I'm prepared to guarantee that there would be nothing left of the Earth's ecosphere after that "lesson".

Nobody left to learn the "lesson", not even cockroaches.

I'm not sure whether or not there would be an Earth left. That depends partially on how rapidly the contra-terrene White House combines with the surrounding terrene matter. If it happened "instantaneously" (in microseconds), it would blow the Earth into another asteroid belt, or maybe into dust. If it took a few milliseconds, probably most of the antimatter would be ejected at escape velocity and the Earth could start evolving life all over again -- more likely, if Mars survived the shock wave they would end up "terraforming" what was left of Earth. Feh.

(*) This in itself is nonsense. When a new theory appears in science, it takes decades before practical applications -- even military ones -- get made. Einstein published the Theory of Relativity in 1910 or thereabouts, and the first fusion bomb was used 35 years later. All the big engineering changes that made the 20th century so startling -- the transistor, the laser, digital computers -- were based on physics that was "new" in the 1900s-1920s.

The upheavals of the early 21st century are likely to be in biology, based on discoveries made in the 1960s.

And Doug added: "Brin also started off writing like the physicist he is, but rapidly learned how to do vivid characters, suspenseful plotting, & a prose style with real impact, while still taking off on brilliant extrapolations from known science."

I'm also none too fond of Brin, but I did like the short version of *The Postman*. (Not the version he expanded into a novel, though, and certainly not the movie.)

Bear, on the other hand, is a natural writer who's learned to think like a physicist. *Moving Mars* would make any cosmologist or particle physicist proud. See above about *Moving Mars*.

Jerry, for particular CJ Cherryh books I'd recommend her Morgaine Series-- starting with *Gate of Ivrel*, stunningly good for a 1st novel-- the Faded Sun series (she swears inspired by Greek & Roman war heroes, not samurai), *Serpent's Reach*, and *Hunter of Worlds*. I consider the latter one of the best SF novels ever; also one of the most difficult, with 3 alien languages & a much-needed glossary.

I agree about the first three Morgaine books, but would avoid the later books in that series. *Faded Sun* is good if you like depressing, well written but not the kind of story I like. And I agree 100% about *Hunter of Worlds*. I had to read it 3 times before the "happy ending" made sense.

Cherryh created a set of aliens that truly think differently from humans. Incredibly good book, though rather difficult.

Many will have an aversion to her cute furry aliens series including "Chanur," I liked the first four Chanur books. *Pride of Chanur*, *Chanur's Venture*, *The Kif Strike Back*, and *Chanur's Homecoming*. (It may help to remember that "Kif" and "Homecoming" were written shortly after the release of "The Empire Strikes Back" and "The Return of the Jedi", respectively.) But then as I said, I'm a Furry fan.

My only objection to the Chanur books, *Downbelow Station*, *Merchanter's Luck*, and several other Cherryh books is that she has been writing to a formula. Take the main characters, throw them neck deep into an overwhelming emergency. They spend the first 3/4 of the book in a state of panic, trying to get **some** degree of control. The last 1/4 they actually start to gain control and are able to work toward their own goals.

I liked it the first couple of times, but after a while it started to get to me. Still, she handles that formula quite well, and she's also capable of writing other kinds of books.

In most Cherryh books, there's a moment she really strives for & makes work--you've been immersed in an alien civilization with one human for half the book or more, to the extent that when he runs into some other humans, they seem more alien by contrast. Yes. She's very good at that, with Tully in the Chanur stories, George in *Hunter of Worlds*, etc.

I've enjoyed a lot of Orson Scott Card, especially, *The Folk of the Fringe*, *Ender's Game*, *Speaker for the Dead*, *Seventh Son*, *Red Prophet*, *Prentice Alvin*, and *Alvin Journeyman*. Although the Alvin books get weaker as the series goes on.

Jim Schumacher: I didn't think *GREAT SKY RIVER* was 'great' -- just a good, solid read with an interesting world and sociological setup. When I finished it I didn't feel I had been ripped off for the time or money I spent, which is what started happening with much of the new stuff about 10 or 15 years ago and the main reason I drifted away from the field.

The 'weirdness' you seemed to find troubling in the writing style was, to my

mind, an excellent way to do the story, as it is first-person narrative from the viewpoint of a human with a fairly divergent world view.

Admittedly, it took a while to "get into it" but once I did I liked it.

PLAYER PIANO was the first Vonnegut I read, and I have had a fondness for it ever since. However, it did not really display the wacky humor, imagination and smooth writing style evidenced in later sf works like *CAT'S CRADLE*, *SIRENS OF TITAN* and *SLAUGHTERHOUSE FIVE*, all of which I would have to say were better books by Vonnegut.

Doug Finley: Jim, I know; the 'weirdness' just didn't work for me...at all.

PLAYER PIANO was the first Vonnegut I read, and I have had a fondness for it ever since. However, it did not really display the wacky humor, imagination and smooth writing style evidenced in later sf works like *CAT'S CRADLE*, *SIRENS OF TITAN* and *SLAUGHTERHOUSE FIVE*, all of which I would have to say were better books by Vonnegut.

Well, what I really read science fiction for is the ideas. Wacky humor usually doesn't do much for me; was very impressed by "Cat's Cradle," which is really more of a political & social satire of the '50s, as a high schoolkid but it doesn't seem that great in retrospect.

Gil Lamont: Orson Scott Card is a Mormon (read *Folk of the Fringe* or any of his specifically LDS books). Living in Utah, no.

Unbelievable, but most Mormons do not live in Utah (although most Utahns are Mormon). Card lives in one of the Carolinas, I believe.

I liked it *Moving Mars*. I guess he & I expect characters of restricted dimensionality in hard SF; he does do characterization in other books, e.g. "Eon."

"A metric ton (1000 Kg) yields 42 gigatons. How many tons do you think the White House masses? I'm prepared to guarantee that there would be nothing left of the Earth's ecosphere after that "lesson".

Yep, that's a boo-boo. It was an offhand suggestion in the book so he may not have felt the need to calculate it as for a major plot turn.

That's gonna be a serious design factor when they really need to use antimatter to power starships. The good news is, if there is a containment accident you'd never know it or feel a thing.

"Einstein published the Theory of Relativity in 1910 or thereabouts, and the first fusion bomb was used 35 years later."

You meant fission. 1st fusion H-bomb was I think '49, & never of course "used" in combat.

You comment: "The upheavals of the early 21st century are likely to be in biology, based on discoveries made in the 1960s." Those sure have the potential to be major, but I think the earlier really big social changes are going to come from computers & robots making an increasing %age of the less intelligent or educated humans economically obsolete, permanently taking away their jobs.

That's been happening at an increasing rate since the industrial revolution, of course, but so far there's always been

other stuff that humans could find to do that machines couldn't. Soon enough, that's no longer going to be true.

"*Faded Sun* is good if you like depressing, well written but not the kind of story I like."

It has historical sweep, which has to be about Bad Stuff if it's gonna seem realistic. Doesn't bother me.

To me the Chanur series started out with a very good premise, but went too populist.

Yep, & those are among hers I like the least, short of her imitative fantasies & the even more formulaic "Hell" stories.

LoCs

Jim Schumacher:

I've had that timeline kicking around in my files for a while... I picked it up on the web somewhere.

I've been collecting details on 1968 for years as background research on my probably-never-to-be-written-epic-novel-of-the-60's-70's-and-80's called WORDS.

The fascinating thing is, that timeline I sent focuses pretty exclusively on political events. As important as they were, there were a similar number of *major* events in music, arts, literature, science and technology, etc - even geophysical events.

I haven't put those notes together into a coherent timeline yet, but when I do I'll post it. But, jeez, fuckin' everything happened that year... that's why I call it the big quake (or the Crack In Time, as it has been called by others). Things that had been building up in all levels of society, for years, decades and much longer seemed to come to a head in 1968. It overloaded all the circuits. Everyone was fried, in one way or another.

In some ways, I think it *helped* if you were on acid much of the time... it kept you flexible and open.

About 10 years ago I saw a 2-hour documentary film (I think on PBS) called "1968: The Crack In Time" which did an excellent job depicting much of what happened that year. I've never been able to find it again, or even any reference to it, which is odd -- because I've been looking for it fairly conscientiously....

I could tell you some wild stories about some of the fallout... but the Time Patrol told me to shut up about that. Or else.

Barry Gold:

Question: has anybody tried compiling a similar list of bad events for 1965, 1969, 1970, 1975...? I wonder if 1968 was really that unique

Bill Warren:

Did you know that the title of Bruce Pelz's APA-L zine, "Net Vremya," meant "No Time" in Russian? **(dK: I had completely forgotten that.)**

Jane Gallion:

Subject: 1968 Revisited...

I'll say it was the Crack in Time. That was the year the guy next door killed Bobby Kennedy. The year Brandon, shortly after the assassination, went to Disneyland with the boys & didn't come back. The year I lost every bit of faith I still had in the system coping with the law alone with 3 kids. The year I watched as what was left of my pathetic illusions came down in tear gas & busted skulls in Chicago.

I am not a bit fuzzy about that year. Every bit of it is etched in my memory with several kinds of acid. It was like dying & being reborn.

Last year on the anniversary of the assassination, I was watching a retrospective of Bobby Kennedy's life & death on the tube. Along toward the end, there came a short clip of Brandon **(dK: Brandon Lamont)** standing on the porch of the Howard Street Hash

House, giving an interview to some news-creature.

It gave me the shivers. So much innocence, so much hope, so much self-deception, so much despair.

I don't even recall if I voted or not that year. Both candidates revolted me, sorry dwain, but Humphrey looked like a Weeble to me after my unquestioning adoration of Bobby & the nightmare of his death, like someone painted on Jello.

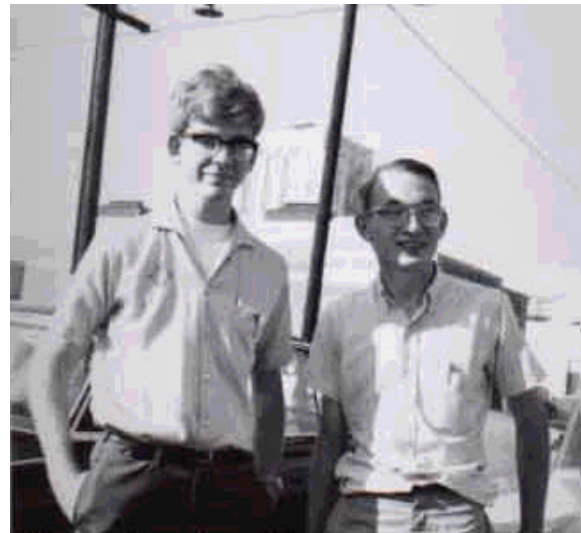
That year laid the foundations of my anarchism, altho I wasn't really committed to anarchism until I read "The Dispossessed," or rather didn't know what to call it.

That year left me profoundly unimpressed by the self-serving gangster elite of politics, & the various types of cop-shops, members of which made it abundantly clear just how deep they were into the management of Bobby's assassination. I heard & observed a bunch, living next door to the Sirhan family.

At the same time, the events of 1968 made me a person who is determined to behave honorably just because it's the thing one does, and not because some rulemaker, lawgiver, archist with the power to punish, says I shd.

Power, as they say, to the people.

--LJ



(l to r) Bruce Duncan, Larry Nielson
(in east LA, prob. 1967)