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## Art:

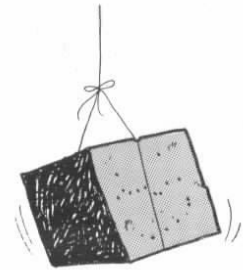
William Rotsler / thispage  
Alan White / masthead  
Sue Mason / backpage

This issue is dedicated:

To Ron Walotsky, who left us far too soon with too much yet to do.

To Donald Franson, who had a good long run, did much that was honorable, and knew when to hand the reins over to someone else. Member of First Fandom and N3F, among others.

Clear ether and hot jets, gentlemen.



ANXIETY

ANXIAL

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**peregrination**, n., A traveling, roaming, or wandering about; a journey. (The New Webster Encyclopedic Dictionary of the English Language, Avenel Books, New York: 1980).

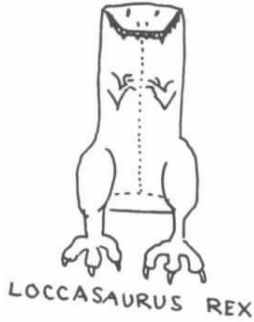
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Contributions are welcome in the form of LoCs, articles, reviews, art, etc. in e-mail to: [tropicsf@earthlink.net](mailto:tropicsf@earthlink.net) (please use Peregrine Nations in the subject) or via regular mail. **No attachments unless previously arranged.** Clearly scanned artwork is also welcome. Main articles should be around 800-1,200 words, reviews 200-500 words. Queries welcome.

**Next editorial deadline: Oct. 20, 2002.**

VOLUME TWO, NUMBER TWO / JULY 2002



## *Silent eLOCutions*

*Letters of Comment*

*William Breiding*

Sorry I haven't LOCced! My life has been one huge mass of confusion. Why don't you write about Big Pine Key? [*I may do so, but not sure when -- I'm happy pubbing mostly other people's articles instead, for now.*]

*David Langford*

Many thanks for the encouraging comments! Also for *Peregrine Nations*, to which I have shamefully failed to respond despite all the kindly reviews of *Ansible* .... I've recently been reading the second graphic-novel collection of Alan Moore's *Top 10* police-procedural superhero comic, which is wonderfully silly stuff with zillions of allusions and incidental jokes (some of them obvious enough for even me to get); the much-hassled police team includes a flying superheroine called Peregrine. [*Fitting, since peregrines are excellent hunters.*]

*dwain Kaiser*

I must say that I am impressed...each issue of *Peregrine Nations* gets better and better...with this third issue being the best of all, until the nextish of course.

Great cover by Marc Schirmeister. He's one of the most under-rated fan artists around. I was rather disappointed, once again, to notice the lack of his name on the list of fan artists for this year's Hugo. Sometimes I think that the "average" Hugo voter and I live in totally different universes, what they see and what I see each year seems to be completely at odds.

I do want to comment on the excellent use of color in this issue, you're showing a deft touch there. [*My closet artist thanks you.*]

I've never thought of Leslie Fish as a filker, she's gone far beyond that. I've often thought of her as one of fandom's treasures, a truly multi-talented folk singer whom we have been lucky enough to have as one of our own. Catching her at a concert is always one of the high points of any convention I attend. [*In my admittedly limited experience, I say the same about Heather Alexander.*]

Trinlay Khadro's comment was right on the mark, there is nothing scarier than a serious medical problem and no insurance coverage. I have in the past had a card for the County Hospital in L.A. County, but that was only for those emergencies that could be handled no other way. They do as good a job as they can, in many ways a very fine job, but they're so overloaded that it's far too easy for anyone to fall through the crack unless they're at death's door. I, personally, prefer to get my medical treatment in advance of being that ill. Of course one doesn't always have a choice; having been hauled away from my house via ambulance twice in the last couple of years, I certainly realize that.

Too bad I can't trade part of my blood pressure with Harry Warner's. Add my high blood pressure to his low, and we'd end up with normal pressure.

Interesting fanzine reviews. I've always thought it strange that the average LASFS meeting is far more interesting to read about than attend. [*Maybe they should try using color commentators.*] The difference wasn't as great back in the "ol' " days when I first joined (the 60s) as it is now...but I still enjoy attending once in a while. The major problem is that the club is so self-contained that it has little to do with fandom these days. [*That's odd; from recent De Profs, I got the impression that they get new members fairly regularly, Marty Cantor mentions fanzines every chance he gets to LASFS members in their zine, and they put on a con.*]

Thanks for another delightful read...I'm sorry about the lateness of this LOC, but then I suppose the egg of the boo bird is always worth getting no matter how late. [*Especially when it's full of nice words like yours. Thanks.*]

*Lyn McConchie*

PN wandered in yesterday afternoon and I have to admit some bewilderment at the time schedule for the competition. It says I have to have an answer in by June 20th. [*Blame editor headspace — I forgot to change the deadline before mailing it. New one was Aug. 20, 2002.*]

General comments: GREAT cover and a very good look all over. I find the corner stapling works for me at least with the usual PN page count. Might not work so well if it was much larger but as it is, it's fine. A number of interesting hooks which had me reaching for the word processor to reply, and that's good too. It keeps LOCs flowing in. [*Thanks!*]

And a few specific comments.

Re: Catherine's comment lastish on the Heinlein book where major criminals were heaved into a closed environment and left to their own devices...Eric Frank Russell did something a lot better and very much funnier with The Great Explosion. In this book a spaceship has been sent out to a number of human-settled worlds after four hundred years out of contact. The first is a prison planet and the "civilisation" which has developed there after so long without contact is both very funny and quite possible. (Planet two was settled by nudists, planet three long since dead, and four settled by anarchists. I recommend this book to anyone with a well-developed funny-bone.) In fact I recommend all of EFR's work. Wasp, Next of Kin, and the above book in particular. He had a wicked sense of humour, the sort which can also descend neatly into very readable pathos as well.

To Marty Cantor, I recall meeting you at the LASFs meeting last year and being gifted with the latest copy of *No Award* too. It's actually the second time I was there as I visited while I was in LA in 1995 as well. I DO get around. This year I attended three conventions. Our Natcon, the OZ Natcon, and a relaxacon run by Jean Weber and Eric Lindsay in Queensland. If I sell more books this or next year I'm considering Egypt, or possibly Canada, USA and UK for 2004/5. But I don't know that I should acquire merit for not sitting around doing nothing on a disability pension as a cripple. I'd have died of boredom. Running my farmllet gives my physical exercise to a reasonable limit of what I can manage. And writing gives me a constant trickle of satisfaction, frustration, pleasure, rage, involvement, rejection, and delight. No boredom!

I say running my farmllet keeps me fit, that can be an understatement at times. Right now it's lambing season. As of yesterday one ewe now has a nice single ram lamb, I on the other hand, have a sprained thumb. I wandered down to the back paddock to check on the ewes there. Apache was lambing at the bottom of the paddock right down a steep slope and in trouble, the lamb was stuck, it had the head out, the tongue out, was wedged in that position and was on the point of strangulation. I advanced, this needed to be sorted quickly before Apache had a dead lamb. My motives were pure, something unrecognised by my dear little sheep. She rolled over and fled. I followed, cornering her halfway up the steep hill. I made a grab, Apache dived downhill, and I, who'd had a grip on her was dragged almost off my feet. With the damaged leg I have, I can't catch my balance at such times and I was in for a long painful fall all the way down the steep hill if — I snatched at the fence. My hand clamped down on the top wire, slid along it and was stopped at the post. Jamming my hand very painfully. I said a number of things about stupid uncooperative brainless sheep, and went after Apache again. This time I managed to corner her, sort out the lamb, (which had one forefoot curled back holding it stuck,) and left Apache to deal with the bellowing result. She is fine, the lamb (a nice boy) is fine, but my thumb is twice normal size, half my hand is black bruising, and it'll be uncomfortable for a week. Still, I suppose I'll heal, you can't raise a lamb from the dead so easily. But it's at times like those I reel back inside wondering why on earth I ever wanted to be a farmer.

Re: the many comments on the skating scandals. I too watched the Winter Olympics. I was horrified at the ridiculous partisanship often shown by judges. If you judge then you must be neutral although I suspect in the case of some countries, to be seen by your leaders as TOO neutral might be damaging to your continued health on your return home... Any day now the Commonwealth Games begin and I'll be watching those eagerly, hoping the judges in this very "English atmosphere" are fairer and the competitors better sports.

Re: "Journey of the Neophan." I enjoyed this heartily but it reminded me, (in the last paragraphs) of just how miserable a large American con can be for one unaccustomed and unbefriended. I've been attending cons at this end of the world for 20 years. However, at this end of the world I know people. New Zealand Natcons run around 100-200 attendees, Oz Natcons about twice that. And at our conventions I probably know quite well at least a quarter of those attending, and another half by sight as they'll know me. Oz Natcons I'll know maybe 30-40 attendees quite well. New Zealand Natcons are often more like an extended family reunion than a convention. So when in 1995 I attended World Fantasy Con in Baltimore it was a very rude awakening.

750 attendees and I knew three by sight, none personally, and no one talked to me. My room was screwed up and I ended by paying more [for it] which cut into my food budget. It didn't help that the hotel had signs up all over about identifying who was at the door before you opened it, being careful about valuables, and not leaving your door open a second. I slunk nervously about the hotel trying to watch in all directions at once, feeling invisible to con-goers, and thoroughly lonely. A welcome wagon for a fan/writer who was new to America would have been a wonderful sight.

Worse still was the SFWA suite. I had been urged to visit that (the urger claiming that it would be great for me as a writer, that I'd be welcomed, and gathered in.) I did so at a time when the place was full of writers, eating, talking, and wandering around the large room. I collected a little food, waited hopefully for someone to approach and half an hour later was still waiting. I attempted then to join a couple of conversational groups, was stared at, frozen out, and miserably departed feeling that if that was the SFWA I had NO interest in joining them and never would. [*How dim they were. Their loss, certainly.*] I became a member several years later, not of my own volition, but because a friend insisted on buying my membership as a birthday present. I've stayed with them since, finding they have useful information and support services. But believe me, if it had been left up to me I'd never have joined after that evening in Baltimore.

Of course, at this end of the world cons are so small that a neophan tends to stand out. Here they'll be talked to, shown around, welcomed, and be hauled out to the best book shops — if they don't come from the host city. In consequence they usually come to more cons, and join special interest groups. I recommend the practise. Fandom often complains that they attract fewer new fen to fandom. It's likely that too many have had similar experiences to mine and decide they have no wish to return to such an unfriendly atmosphere.

But right now I must get outside once more. Haul in another stack of firewood -- it's FREEZING, and check the ewes in case anyone has lambing troubles again. I have also to move the calves' electric fence, bring in firewood, take hay to the cow, bring in firewood, feed the geese and hens, bring in firewood, bottle-feed Emily, the orphan lamb, and — oh, yes, bring in more firewood. After which and assured I won't freeze to death tonight and neither will my cats, I can retire with dinner, crocheting, and several books, to bed for the evening.

Look forward to the next PN, happy editing. [*And I look forward to more farmllet stories.*]

*Marisol Ramos-Lum*

Thanks for sending me issues 3 and 4 of *Peregrine Nations*, they both are beautiful, very interesting and full of good stuff. I feel really bad that I haven't sent yet a loc to either. My only excuse is that my life has been in the last 6 months and more very crazy and I am barely recovering from a bad bout of depression. [*Oh, dear. I know what that's like. May it never happen to you again.*] But I am happy to say that I am

feeling a lot better and I am locating a lot of the fanzines that I have received last year, and next week I will be going to Westerncon so I am slowly but sure getting back in track with my fanac. [*Wonderful!*]

Writing late locs is good and bad. The bad is that I have to re-read everything so I can write meaningful locs, but the good is that I have to re-read the zine and remember all the good things I have forgotten. I love the colophon with the peregrine falcon and the glittering title words of your fanzine. You are really lucky to have so many good artists sending you all these beautiful illos. As I told Dwain Kaiser I am a sucker for good illos, so any fanzines with them have my attention. But that is not enough of course, good content is as important as illos and your zine offers that and more. [*Stop, you're making me blush...*]

I really like the way you design your fanzine. Very honest and realistic of the first thing any fan does when getting his or her copy: Check the lettercol for our needed dose of egoboo

:-) All the letters that you have received are so interesting and I feel that I am stepping in the middle of a long and interesting conversation and trying to catch up without letting people know that I don't know that much :-). I feel the same when listening to the discussion at Memory Hole, indeed I wish I had either been born earlier or at least with access to the US SF environment instead of our colonial handout in Puerto Rico. We do read a lot but not science fiction, to my chagrin. I am hoping now that Borders has moved to PR more people will get into it. The other thing that I like about your zine is that you take the time to review other fanzines and even throw in a book review.

I think the best feature of your zine is the lettercol. You have great correspondents and by reading it I can more or less figure out what you have done in the past :-). For example, Catherine Mintz and Erika Maria Lacey started talking about C.J. Cherryh trilogies and with your permission, I want to add my 2 cents worth of thoughts :-). I really like Cherryh's works. I started reading her work with the Chanur series and right now I am reading the Foreigner series which I like a lot too. But the Morgaine series was a bore for me. So I have my good and bad experiences reading her stuff. [*This is common among her readers, so you're not alone.*] Your comment about why she is stuck with certain writing and not other is not surprising in these days. Piers Anthony, who I read quite a bit, also complained about being typecast/expected to write Xanth novels forever — regardless that he does enjoy writing it but he wants to write other stuff too like historical novels or some new SF which he hasn't done in ages — but without a contract it is hard for a writer to expend the time and the possibility of losing money when, after writing a novel, the publisher doesn't want it. A solution to this problem that Anthony has explored recently is to use one of the available electronic publishing companies right now that let you publish what you want for a fee. It is above vanity publishing since it doesn't cost that much and the quality is superior and they are really published while some of those vanity press outfits may run with your money. [*I think a lot of people still consider this vanity publishing, though. There are reputable online publishers who will pay the writer for a novel, and I have to recommend these first before using a service like iUniverse or Xlibris.*]

I have to agree with you and Erica about the problem of never-ending series and huge books or both together. Jordan's Wheel of Time series comes to mind. I read the first book and I did like it but I was not willing to expend time and money every year to get a new book that deals with the same characters with almost the same problems!! I mean is there is an end in sight for that series? I think he can say the same things with half the words. [*Thank you. Truer words were never spoken.*] I like the Eddings' Belgariad series because although it's a long series, the books were smaller and more fun too.

It is kind of weird revisiting both issues after almost a year of September 11. We have all changed after it for good or for evil. I have to say that this year has been very stressful for many people at my school — including myself — and I have been wondering if one of the contributing factors to our general sense of loss and pain is because we are still recovering from the deaths of so many innocent people just in the name of God or some BIG cause... [As for] Dubya and company [and their] way to handle world affairs... most of their words and actions smack of First World Chauvinism and I don't think it is helping any to bridge the many misunderstandings that most Arab and other Third World countries held as true facts. \*sigh\* I just hope that we don't end up like in those bad 1950s atomic-scare movies.

I admire you a lot to have the time and the insight to read and review fanzines. I barely have time to loc properly so seeing you writing your review column is inspiring to me. They are a great summary of great fanzines, some of them I get and some of them I need to get, but all in good time. [*Reviewing is part of what I do now as a writer, so it comes naturally to me.*]

Lyn McConchie's piece was really good and scary at the same time. To lose yourself so...into your writing that you forget hunger and pain, that is amazing. I do get in trances when I read and I don't feel cold, hunger, thirst, and especially mental pain as long as I am reading, but I don't know if I can ignore physical pain. It is amazing what the human mind can do to the body if we let it take control...

*Mark Plummer*

Many thanks for *Peregrine Nations* v2#1 which arrived here this morning. Marvellous Alan White cover.

A thought inspired by one of your comments in the fanzine review column. I'm sure Alan Stewart is perfectly capable of speaking for himself — and who am I to second guess his motives anyway? — but I suspect you're reading a little too much into his decision to send you a copy of *Thyme* with an enclosed Hugo nomination form. As far as I know, *Thyme* is available on the usual terms as well as for subscription, and I would guess that it's been sent to you as a trade. You say that, as with the copies of *Memphen* you received, there's no specific invitation to trade, but I know that when I send out on-spec trade copies to other fanzine editors I don't explicitly state this is my intent; I just assume it's implicit. Similarly, I assume that if somebody sends me a fanzine then it's an implicit request to trade with us. [*I had not considered that likelihood, and thank you for pointing it out. I will add the referenced editors to the PN mailing list and see what happens.*]

As for that Hugo ballot, many fan editors include, say, TAFF ballots when mailing fanzines simply because they can do so at no extra cost — assuming it doesn't push the whole thing through a postage band — and, more importantly, because it helps keep the issue in the public eye. The practice seems to me to be a little less prevalent than it was even five years ago, but I know that there have been some years when I've received half a dozen or more ballot forms, some from people specifically soliciting votes for favoured candidates and some from people who just want to support the institution. In most cases the senders know that the recipients will receive multiple copies but that each one will act as a reminder. And so it is with Hugo nomination forms: Anybody who's a Worldcon member will already have received one, but not everybody acts upon such things immediately, so a further copy acts as a reminder. Of course, many of the forms are effectively wasted because the recipients don't have voting rights, but then again most people don't respond to most adverts and that doesn't mean there's no point in advertising.

So my guess is that Alan is simply promoting the institution by reminding those people who have a vote to use it. (Sorry, if any of the above sounds patronising — that's not the intent.) [*No offence taken, as I've learned something I didn't already know, and that's always A Good Thing. I appreciate the information.*]

Oh, and another thought. I reckon that at 24 pages PN easily justifies a couple of staples. Go on, spoil yourself... [*If PN ever goes over 18 pages again, I might do that. PN 2.1 was a special annish, and even at 24 pages it didn't seem to need more than one staple. However, I have no desire to re-fight The Great Staple War here, so I'll keep my options open.*]

*Mike Rogers*

I had seen a couple of letters you wrote to *Challenger* and appreciated your willingness to stand up to Guy, who is a nice bloke but has his political blind spots. Since I have also been forced to vehemently disagree with him on issues such as the 2000 election, we may share some of our worldviews. [*I don't see it as standing up to anybody, I see it as my right to vent, the same right we all have if we can be civil about it.*] Guy brought some of his fanzine pile to Deep South Con a few weeks ago and I immediately grabbed your zine.

I can't remember any other fan editor putting the letter column at the front, but it makes a great deal of sense. I remember putting the mailing comments for an apazine at the front at least once or twice...

One can tell you have professional experience with words. The writing is more polished than in some fanzines, the word choices more felicitous. It's surprising you would rather work freelance than have a steady income. On the other hand, you have an editor who will buy your work. Guess that makes it easier. [*I work freelance because I have no guarantee that my present remission from Meniere's disease is permanent. At any potential job interview, I would feel obligated to tell the employer that I have Meniere's, and while that didn't stop the Keynoter editor from keeping me on as copy editor until January, there's no guarantee that other prospective employers would treat me the same. A more lucrative job may be out there for me, but what I do now contents me and brings in some extra money, so I'll stick with it for a while longer.*]

Never heard the term QSL for a radio station reception card. "Air check" is more common in the States. Growing up, I would spend some evenings looking for faraway radio signals. Nowadays, all you will get is another copy of the five radio formats that dominate American airwaves. Maybe it was not such a smart move to deregulate radio station ownership.

Speaking of C.J. Cherryh's need for a contract, I have heard an author cannot sell a novel without an outline for the next two books in the series. Probably not true in every case, but close enough for atom bombs. [*Indeed. Although it's probably specific to individual publishers and not the industry as a whole.*]

Were there witnesses to the tall blond telling Harlan, "Hello, little f\*ck"? It sounds too polished to be true, as if some comedy writer came up with it. But I laughed out loud at that one. [*It could be fannish apocrypha by now, but why spoil the fun?*]

Hertz makes a very good point about lack of time not being an excuse. Here's another possibility. It's a combination of time and energy that we must find to do outside activities. Time is easy to find, since there is no wife or family to worry about. The energy is the problem. For years now, I have tended to collapse after coming home from work and eating supper. This leaves weekends to consider doing hobby work. But even a loner has some things to do on the weekends. Washing clothes can burn up most of a day. Who said that youth is wasted on the young...G.B. Shaw? [*If you handwash the clothes, it certainly does take time. Automatic machines, however, allow for more leisure. Care to cough up another excuse? <g>*]

The Charlie Williams who appears in *Challenger* lives in Knoxville, TN. He's been around since the early 80's. Better known as an artist, but now writing some.

One reason I have time and energy to write this LoC is that I'm going through an employment situation a little bit like yours, though mine should truly be temporary and I should not lose any pay over it. You may have heard that the state of Tennessee does not have a budget as of the fiscal year beginning 2002-03 (as of 7/1/2002). Due to years of buck-passing and dithering, the state is about \$1 billion short of a balanced budget. The state Senate will only pass plans with a sales-tax increase, while the House will only pass plans that implement a state income tax. ...I sometimes wonder when the statues of Lenin will show up outside the state Capitol. I have plenty of vacation time piled up, but there's always the small chance they will renege and tell us we won't get paid at all.

Enough for now. Just one quick plug — the Southern Fandom Confederation now has a Web site edited by YHS. The URL is [www.southernfandom.com](http://www.southernfandom.com). In the weeks to come I'll be adding more features to the site.

*Steve Green*

*Peregrine Nations* #2.1 landed this morning: Florida to Solihull in four days is rather impressive (I've had mail to Birmingham take that long, and it's only seven miles away).

Sadly, Will Allan Hogarth's assertion that only the United States treats comics "as strictly entertainment for low-brow children" is ill-founded. Despite the heavy UK bias in his roster of graphic novelists (which totalled 10, incidentally, rather than the "Dynamic Dozen" promised by the heading) [*oops — Jan Can't Count!*], no one this side of the Pond has yet succeeded in launching a commercially viable adult comic

(by "adult" I mean intelligent scripts and quality artwork, rather than four-letter dialogue and explicit sex/violence).

We've got close on a couple of occasions, the short-lived *Revolver* among them, but *2000AD* (home of Judge Dredd and training ground for many of the writers Will names) remains unique in its popularity; if only it had a more adult-oriented stablemate for teenagers to switch to once the appeal of *Mega-City One* begins to wane.

A few additional names for consideration: Bryan Talbot (his Luther Arkwright mini-series is well-known, but do track down the single volume *The Tale of One Bad Rat* — it's probably Ann's favourite graphic novel), Eddie Campbell (Alan Moore's partner on *From Hell*, but an excellent writer in his own right), Pat Mills (co-creator with Kevin O'Neill of *Marshall Law*), Ed Hillyer (*The End of the Century Club*), Al Davidson (his autobiographical *The Spiral Cage* is quite extraordinary), Gary Spencer Millidge (*Strangehaven*), and Pete Sickman-Garner (*Hey, Mister*). Most surprising in their absence were Will Eisner and Art Spiegelman, the latter in particular having crossed over into mainstream fame.

*Erika Maria Lacey*

Thank you for another enjoyable issue. Nice front cover indeed, and all in colour! I'm glad that you opted to keep the full colour. It'd have been a pity to see it otherwise.

Just laughing at Lyn McConchie's story about her comeback to the teenager calling out to her from the car. I wish I had something like that a few years ago...

Leaders duelling ... that puts me into mind of a "Blake's 7" episode I saw not too long ago where two planetary systems were at war, but instead of fighting in an actual war...they had a duel between two mercenaries, and the country of the one [whose representative died] would end up being the loser. If they do the same, only with the leaders of the countries in question — I'm sure it'd be a lot cleaner and simpler until people decided that it wasn't fair after all, that something was wrong, things were rigged — and poof! Big explosion of war over that as well as the original thing.

The picture of the rodent was classic. It took me a couple of readings to get the caption, but it made me laugh when it did.

Maybe Cherry Wilder wasn't very well known overseas, but her name wasn't too unknown over here in Australia; she was immediately adopted as a local although if I remember right she was born elsewhere and lived here for a number of years before taking off again. She wrote a number of children's books, so I was first introduced to her that way. I hadn't heard that she'd died until I read it in your zine, so thanks for the obit.

The thing about comics and any kind of graphic novel is although when I get my hands on them I adore the things to death, they're also so expensive I'd need to mortgage myself out to get anything on a regular basis. I've been deliberately staying away from them because I know myself — as soon as I get hooked onto something I go completely bonkers and obsessed-like (probably quite scary) and all energies are devoted to it. Anyone who ever reads my online journal gets to see the trends in my obsessions and probably have a good laugh while they're at it. If there were a particular comic series, for example, which I started reading a way into where it started

nothing would do except for me to track down every previous issue and then! Debt for me. So it's something for when I'm much older with more resources behind me to burn away. At the moment I'm finding books expensive enough to keep up with, but this'll be a good primer for when I do start up. Ta.

Not to sound crabby, but the very small font of John Teehan's piece strained my eyes to read, so I kind of skimmed it. [*It was a long report and I wanted to get as much in as possible. I'm not likely to repeat that feat.*] I liked it where I wasn't skimming over all the names; I would have preferred to read more about his reactions to things than who was at the convention, actually. It was good that he had a nice time as a neo at it.

How very scary that you personally know (knew?) someone accused of murder, and rather nasty sounding ones at that. I wonder, too, what would drive someone to do something like that; it's rather a



sick step to take ... and then there's the whole societal protect-the-children thing going that makes it even more baffling that someone would kill children.

*Joseph T. Major*

I don't know from west coast fandom, but I do know that Bruce Pelz made it possible for Guy Lillian to publish the latest issue of *Challenger*. So he was more than of his area, which makes the loss one of All Fandom. [*Indeed it does, but I hadn't realized until later that he'd done this for Guy.*]

A[A] pool of fan-writing@: wasn't Sam Moskowitz=s Manuscript Bureau (back around 1940) supposed to be like that? But SaM used it for his own ends.

I wish I had had the nerve to do what I hear some people do in college; if it looks like the professor doesn't know about the book, make up the plot. [*Those folk will get their turn on the wheel; their lack of effort will come back and bite them on the ass.*] One example I heard had a student making up a plot for a Russian novel. All the character names were those of Russian pro wrestlers.

The Erne Eagle sounds like one of those birds that spent a lot of time flying, because it had immense trouble taking off. Seeing albatrosses take off, for example, is said to be extremely amusing. [*What's even funnier is watching them land.*]

AIn what place did the Con Khan a stately pleasure dome decree?@ Well, it sure wasn't the Days Inn Airport in Nashville! Whether it was the disintegrating towel rack, the ever-running hot water in the con suite bathroom, the fight the guest had with the maintenance man, . . . Kubla Khan (in Nashville) will definitely have to move next year! Nevertheless I suspect this is not even remotely the answer you are looking for. [*Nope.*]

Well, it looks as if Earl Kemp=s item on Doc Smith is less likely to be as controversial as his item on Heinlein. (The Heinlein fans on the Net dismissed it as worthless but never bothered to communicate this to Marty Cantor (who published it), as *No Award* contained locs of agreement.) [*Ya seen one fanatic, ya seen 'em all.*]

Going to a Worldcon as one=s first convention? And then writing a long report afterwards? I admire John Teehan=s courage.

You have heard the story that Yma Sumac was actually named AAmy Camus@? [*Um, no, but if you hum a few bars...*]

*Joy V. Smith*

I love the beautiful cover; the artwork and the colors are lovely. Interesting cartoon on the back cover, and I love the illos. I don't know how you got that soft effect, but it's nifty.

I always like your dedications. Offhand I can't think of any other fanzine that does this. It's such a great opportunity to remember and honor people. [*I stole the idea from Twink, actually.*]

The LOCs are full of assorted tidbits of information; and printing Lloyd Penney's and Sheryl Birkhead's LOCs the way you did was a great idea. [*I'd hope Lloyd would think so, too, if it had been his letter and not Marty Cantor's that got printed. Imagine a large grin here. Thanks, still.*]

Interesting article, "Skylarks of Cyberspace." I appreciated the note about E.E. Smith's Galaxy Primes, which is in my library. Nice selection of zines in "Pub Crawl," a number of which I've never heard of; and I was glad to see SFSFS *Shuttle* listed, which I haven't seen around lately. [*New editors, new energy, hopefully on schedule for a while.*]

Thanks to Will Allan Hogarth for his look at comics and graphic novels, with comparisons, places to start, etc. Very well done. Great Millenium Philcon report by John Teehan. I really enjoyed that.

Your freelance work and upcoming articles sound very interesting, btw. I've enjoyed your pieces in *Inscriptions*. Re: Yma Sumac. I have at least two of her albums. She's a great singer. "Virgenes de Sol" is one of my favorite songs of hers.

*Earl Kemp*

I opened your envelope eagerly and pulled out the copy of *Peregrine Nations* for April 2002. The cover struck me right away as being something special. I looked at it quite a bit...and looked at it some more. It is one of those pictures where you can keep finding more and better things, concept-wise, the more you look at it. I do not know the work of Alan White, but I will start watching out for him. [*Won't be difficult, lately he's been all over fanzinedom.*] I was doubly pleased to discover that you felt the cover was enough Skylarkian to identify it with my piece in the issue because I agree with you...it matches perfectly almost as if it had been done with that in mind. And, sticking with Alan White for a moment, I really liked the things he did for my article.

Generally, I like your format quite a bit. Each page is made up rather nicely and your use of illustrations compliments it just right.

I find myself in an odd position: I haven't reexamined "Skylarks of Cyberspace" since you and I settled on *Peregrine Nations* for it and, seeing it in print made it look entirely different to me. I almost never see any of my stuff in print these days, because it goes to electronic mediums. It looks really formal and official this way, all nicely laid out and illustrated far beyond my expectations. So, naturally, I had to reread it.

This is where the odd position part comes in: I like it. In fact, I like it so much I wonder who I was when I wrote it. It is exactly the way I would have wanted to say it and the major points came out right on the button. I couldn't have possibly done it any better myself. (How's that for ego?) I know it was a successful piece because, as I had done when whoever it was that was me when I wrote it, when I reread it I cried.

I have never been so good to me before ever that I could evoke such tears of joy and gasps of satisfaction. Thank you, Jan, for making it happen. [*All I did was provide the vehicle, the words are what matter most. You're welcome.*]

I also note throughout the issue occasional references to me, and to eI, and I want to thank you for keeping me in mind. By the way, eI4 that is dated October 2002 is stacking up to be something pleasing...keep it in mind when the time comes to check efanazines. [*Always!*]

Then I get right down to the bottom of page 23 when I discover that we have yet another special thing in common...the voice of Yma Sumac. I was a particular fan of hers, during her peak, and touted her to everyone who would listen. I would play her recordings over and over. She was also in a movie or two, playing a Peruvian princess.

She may have been one of the factors driving me to visit Peru, though antiquity really took command of my reasoning. I liked the nation, the geography, the ruins, unbelievably but have never seen people more repressed, more afraid of their own shadows. City life, particularly, was unbearable but out in the sticks, away from politicians and eyes, the natives were delightful.

*Catherine Mintz*

I was interested by Lloyd Penney's observation that many writers are Shy Persons. It's obvious when you think about it, and I would have said so myself, but it was not until I had to organize a series of events that it really leapt to the forefront of my thinking.

I had always assumed that professionals who were willing to read or make public appearances were okay about it. No, many are not. Now I have to keep a list of who can go reliably, especially in front of an audience they do not know. I usually warm up the audience, meaning [I make sure they] are generally friendly, settled, and anticipating the main event, so initial lack of response is not the problem.

Of course, another experience of mine may have blinded me to the truth. I once commented to a group of people I was rather shy — and they fell about laughing. I thought about this. I guess, on the scale of all authors, I probably do rate in the more outgoing third or so, but mostly I feel I had better make it worthwhile for people to see me as opposed to stay home and read my book or whatever themselves.

Really nice issue except for all the people who have left us.  
[Thanks muchly, and I agree about the latter.]

*Lloyd Penney*

An Alan White cover [for PN 2.1], as always, breathtaking. Congratulations on your first annish! (When was the last time I saw any faned announce that any particular issue was an annish?)

A lot of luminaries have left us. Yvonne always had a hug for Bruce Pelz whenever we met at Worldcons. I recall R.A. Lafferty slowly walking through the chaos of a typical Worldcon, smiling at nothing in particular, and I met Dr. Asimov twice, in NYC and Baltimore, and cherish both meetings.

So many of us with journalistic connections...I did some reportage in high school for the local daily newspaper, and started high school coverage in the local weekly, and of course, went to J-school, but try as I might, nothing ever came of it. I'd had to use what I learned in other jobs, and it has come in handy.

I've had my own streak of article-writing...one for Earl Kemp and one for Steven Silver. Why so wordy all of a sudden? They served as assignment editors. Earl asked me to write about a non-American's perspective of post-9/11, and Steven asked me to write about fan awards...

The Kamikaze Editorial Kollektive was a good idea to gather our contacts (and wallets) together to produce a zine. Some of us put mere words into the group; others wrote and spent to get it done. We produced 8 issues of *Torus*, and an Australian fanzine (*Secant*, I think it was) used *Torus* as an example of how to put a fanzine together. Egoboo for all.

I still don't have the job across the street, but I still seem to be in the running for it. More than seven months after first

faxing in my resume, the woman who interviewed me called me, asking for more references, which I happily gave to her. It does make me wonder, though...how much longer are they going to wait? Does it take close to a year to fill a job? I was told in interviews that I'm Number One of their want list, which is great, but I must wonder if being top of the list is all that good.

I guess when I said I was looking for more publications from LASFS and NESFA, I was hoping for *De Profundis* and *Instant Message*. I'm nosy; I like to know what's happening.

I guess I'm the opposite of Sheryl Birkhead. One reason I go to Worldcon is because of the people. I want to see them, become immersed in the heart and soul of SF, be a part of the Big Annual Con. I want to see friends I see only at Worldcon...I am immersed, and I feel that I'm at the heart of things, and I am in my element. I'm a hit and run hugger, and a semi-erudite chatterer. I meet the people I've always wanted to meet, and people who I know only by name. I will miss being at ConJose, but I will just love it at Torcon 3 when I'll be able to welcome ... people to my home city.

In your review of *Whistlestar*, you mention there's something about being on Memoryhole. Yup, for all those who are on there who did pub their ish years ago, our positive feedback is enough to egg them on to revive that flagging fanpubbing career. For some, the good ol' paper zine is a nostalgia trip. For others, producing it and .pdfing it does fine. At least they are publishing, and joining in again. Bless 'em; keeps me busy responding.

John Teehan's MilPhil report...guaranteed, John, I was one of those people with a loud shirt on. That's all I wore the time I was there. We also made it to the CFG suite a few times. Had a good time, but still felt like the kids invading the parents' party.

*Henry Welch*

Thanks for the latest *Peregrine Nations*. Just for the record it is OK to print my snail mail and e-mail addresses in your LOCCol since not everyone knows to look in the zine listings. [Sorry I left your address off the list last time.]

The figure skating scandal continues to reach new lows as the Russian conspirator who tried to set-up the judging fiasco has been indicted on this and other charges. I have long felt the judging was suspect and had hoped that the skating federation would police itself without the need of a major scandal.

I must have crossed paths with John Teehan in Philadelphia, probably in the CFG suites, but I don't recall meeting him. I also find it interesting that he feels that iMacs are ugly when they are clearly more pleasing to the eye than most every PC on the market.

**WAHF:** Sheryl Birkhead, John Hertz, E.B. Frohvet.

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## Will the Real Swamp Thing Please Stand Up? editorial

I only met the man twice, but Ron Walotsky had a connection to my adolescence that few others ever did. He was the one who drew those amazing posters of Hendrix and Morrison that I and my high-school buddies thought were so cool. To be reading a weekly e-mail message intended to be funny and find an article that said the man was gone.....it completely floored me. It felt as though someone had told me one of my high-school friends was dead. I still can't believe it. His family's sorrow is obviously far greater than mine. There is no feeling more helpless than that of someone trying to make a grieving stranger feel better. I know, because I tried to do that when I left a message for his family at his Web site. But..... damn, he wasn't even 60! I guess I'm just one of those people who's destined to treat death as an affront. So be it.

Please think good and healing thoughts, say prayers, offer sacrifice, whatever you think will help for Charles Sheffield, SF writer and husband of another SF writer, Nancy Kress. Mr. Sheffield has been diagnosed with a brain tumor, according to Dave Langford's August *Ansible* report. Neither of them will attend ConJose since treatment started right away. And this is good, that word treatment. I wish my aunt and uncle and the husband of a longtime friend of mine had gotten such heartening news.

Let's talk about something nice now.

In the July 29th edition of the Hugo-nominated Web site *Strange Horizons*, my double review of Steven Barnes' alternate-history novel Lion's Blood and the CD **Insh'Allah** by Heather Alexander was published. It was a labor of love more than anything else. I truly did enjoy the book, and the music is

stunning. Ms. Alexander has outdone herself, which is no easy trick. Barnes and Alexander each seeded the other's mind with ideas for their respective works-in-progress. If anyone knows of a similar project that was brought to fruition, I'd like to hear about it.

And now, for more good news:

## Free Book Deal Contest #1 Winners

On page 7 of PN 2.1, April 2002, the inaugural contest question asked "In what place did The Con Khan a stately pleasure dome decree?" The correct answer was Xanadu. Those who answered correctly may now pat themselves on the back.

The names of those who answered correctly were written onto slips of paper, with "Online" or "Mail" marked on the reverse side according to their method of response. My 10-year-old son drew the winners' names out of an N3F baseball-style cap.

The winner of the mail respondent prize (Support Your Local Wizard by Diane Duane) is ... drum roll, please ... E.B. Frohvet!

The winner of the online respondent prize (A King of Infinite Space by Allen Steele) is ...another drum roll, please ... Joy Smith!

Loud applause from fannish homes the world over ensues.

Congratulations to the winners. You may, if you wish, swap prizes; I leave that to you.

For those who weren't selected, there are more contests ahead. See below for details. Thanks to all who entered (all six of you).

## Free Book Deal Contest #2

Since I'm short of space this (wanting to get it out closer to its actual publication date), this issue's contest presentation will be less elaborate.

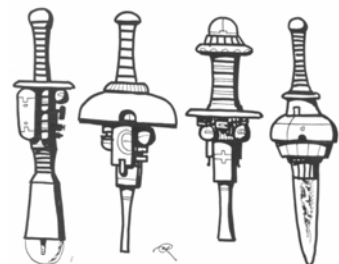
**To be eligible to win Contest #2, entrants must correctly answer the following:** In the four-line poem that begins "Gully Foyle is my name" what's the third line?

Entrants may consult whatever references they wish.

The prizes for this contest are Lilith's Brood by Octavia Butler (a Warner Aspect omnibus containing Dawn, Adulthood Rites and Imago) for the online winner, and The Iron Dragon's Daughter by Michael Swanwick for the regular-mail winner.

Rules are the same as last time. All answers will be collected until the next editorial deadline, which is **Oct. 20, 2002**. All correct answers will then be divided by the online or mail category, and a blind drawing from each group will be held to determine each group's winner. The winners will be announced in the next ish of PN, and I'll mail them their books as soon after they've won as I can, but no later than 30 days after Oct. 20, 2002. Paper replies can be on potsacrdcs or in letters, doesn't matter, as long as they're legible (so PRINT NEATLY) **and contain the entrant's name and regular-mail address.**

Good luck to all the participants.



# State of the Art: More Graphic Novel Writers

by Will Allan Hogarth

## Jim Starlin

Until Starlin showed up in the mid-70s, you really couldn't feel that pulp fiction heroes actually lived in a *Universe*. Starlin was the first "master" of the Cosmic Scale Story. He lives to feed his two pet thematic hobgoblins. On his left is Death, and on his right is the Lust for Power. Starlin's writing always seem to have an angst — and a majesty — that all previous comic writers lacked. Many have since tried to mimic his horrifying vastness and no one (save Grant Morrison, and maybe Chris Claremont) can match it. The best example of Starlin's genius is in the ferocity of his villains. Thanos wasn't merely a madman bent on taking over the universe ... he was something more viscerally terrifying. A madman who loved Death...**literally**...and would do **anything** to please her.

*Best Place to Start:* **Thanos Quest** and **The Infinity Gauntlet** (in that order) are some of his finest "Cosmic" action stories, but his most interesting work might be the more human scale story **Batman: the Cult**.

*Save This For Last:* **Dreadstar** is fun, despite being shamelessly derivative. **Warlock and the Infinity Watch** rocked for the first dozen issues. (You have to read **Thanos Quest** and **The Infinity Gauntlet** first or **W&TIW** won't make any sense.)

*Pros:* Skillfully generates genuine tension despite the abstract hugeness of the story.

*Cons:* Has trouble NOT turning every story into a BIG story. **Batman: The Cult** was a rare example of keeping things on a vaguely human scale.

## Chris Claremont

Claremont took one of Marvel's most stagnant "franchises" and built it into its greatest mainstream superhero book. Yes, without Chris Claremont, **The Uncanny X-men** would've faded into oblivion, and we would all be that much poorer. And how did he do it? Claremont's a master of character building and dialogue. He also brings a human warmth and a believability to even the silliest characters. Example: The Dire Wraiths were dull-as-dishwater monsters when they first debuted in the cruddy **Rom** series; but when these creatures became the focus of a story arc in **X-men**, they were portrayed in a truly menacing light and became much more interesting.

*Best Place to Start:* **X-men: The Dark Phoenix Saga**; **X-men: From the Ashes** (in that order); also, **X-men: The Asgardian War** is great, if slightly confusing, fun. But any issue from #97 through #200 makes for good readin' (or any of the back issues of **Classic X-men** which contain some enlightening back-up stories).

*Save This For Last:* **X-men: Days of Future Present** is a fine story even though it caused a lot of problems later on. The issues of the **New Mutants** he co-created with artist Bill Sienkewicz still stand as stark masterpieces of minimalist genius. The trade paperbacks **New Mutants: Demon Bear Saga** and **New Mutants: Legion** collect most of those issues.

*Avoid:* **Sovereign Seven** feebly retreads work from his **X-men** Days. It's an embarrassingly bad piece of work from such a perfectionist.

*Pros:* His portrayal of his characters strikes me as having a much better understanding of human nature. His characters change over time in a believable and realistic fashion.

*Cons:* Three complaints.

1) His long run on **X-men** leaves plot elements dangling for a unusually long time. Example: He cameo'ed a character called Forge in issue 170. Forge didn't become important to any major storyline until issues 180-185. And it wasn't until issue 230 that all of Claremont's mysterious "hints" about him came to fruition.

2) Claremont detractors often complain that he is too verbose. I provisionally disagree. Yes, he is very wordy sometimes, but he also has succeeded in doing stories with *no dialogue whatsoever*.

3) Although his dialogue is above comicdom's usually atrocious average, he does repeat certain key catch-phrases a bit too often. Storm has used the infamous "You have sown the wind...now reap the Whirlwind" line at least four times in the last 20 years. That's at least two times too many. And don't even get me started on "I'm the best at what I do...but what I do isn't very nice."

#### Marv Wolfman

DC eventually got a Claremont of their own. Marv Wolfman made his name by taking a hopelessly crummy "Sidekick book" and turning it into something special. **Teen Titans** boasts many of the good points of **The Uncanny X-men**, and not as many of its bad points. And when it came time for DC to clean house with the biggest storyline in the history of their cosmology...who did they hire to rebuild their universe? Riiiggghhhhtttt.

*Best Place to Start:* **Teen Titans: The Judas Contract** remains the apex of that series.

*Save This For Last:* Once you've gotten used to his style (and are ready for a story on a VERY big scale) pick up **Crisis on Infinite Earths** where Wolfman helps remove a lot of cruft from the DC continuity/cosmology and put the entire company back on the map.

*Pro:* He's not as wordy as Claremont and his plotlines are not as convoluted.

*Con:* His dialogue sometimes makes me wince.

#### Scott Lobdell

Scott Lobdell exploded onto the scene when he took over **The Uncanny X-men** after a disgruntled Claremont left the series after a "coup" at Marvel. Lobdell impressed even the jaded with his exciting and ambitious plotlines.

*Where to Start:* Trade paperbacks are available for the early part of his run on X-men (**X-men: Mutant Genesis** is the title I remember.)

*Save This for Last:* Anything else he's written.

*Pro:* At first, he seemed like a perfect successor for Claremont. He has all of Claremont's skills.

*Con:* Aspiring to the complexity of Claremont and the ambition of Starlin might at first seem to be a great combination...but as each of Lobdell's mini-story arcs grew into maxi-story arc, the "crossovers" got too hard to follow. (Example: The mega-story **The Phalanx Covenant** grew so huge and unwieldy it had to be split into THREE separate mega-story arcs [**Phalanx Covenant: Generation Next**, **Phalanx Covenant: Lifesigns** and **Phalanx Covenant: Final Sanction**]. Sure, it was a cool story, but it was a nightmare to keep track of. And don't even get me started on **The Age of Apocalypse**.)

#### Bryan Talbot

Another imported genius. Talbot started out as an artist, but he truly shines as a writer. Blessed with a keen, analytical mind and clenched-jawed, propulsive writing, he occasionally pops up from nowhere and publishes nifty, shiny stories, full of blood and chrome.

*Where to Start First:* **The Adventures of Luther Arkwright** (and its sequel **Heart of the Empire**) boggle the mind. It'll rock your afterlife!

*Save This for Last:* **The Nazz** plays with many of the same ideas posited in **TAoLA**, but isn't as stunningly brilliant.

*Pro:* The precision of his artwork matches the precision of his writing.

*Con:* Dense, dense, dense. Sometimes being super-detailed can be a bit off-putting. With Talbot you drown in details, visually and intellectually. His work is both exhilarating and mentally taxing.

#### Brian Michael Bendis

This screenwriter turned comic-book Alpha Male is a joy to read. Never have I gotten a more intense feeling of "eavesdropping" on the lives of real people as I have while reading **Powers**.

*Best Place to Start:* His work on *Elektra* and *Alias* get great press, but I still think the best place to start is with *Powers: Who Killed Retro Girl?* (or even better, *Torso*).

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**Deena:** "What is it with You? Ever hear of **procedure**?! **We're** Primary! Us! It's **our** Case. Why are you so far up my uterus?"

**Kutter:** "I -- I was trying to lend a hand."

**Walker:** "Nobody asked you! In fact -- the captain emphatically told you to back off completely!"

**Kutter:** "You need help."

**Walker:** "Not from you."

**Kutter:** "Really? Whadaya got so far, hotshot?"

**Walker:** "You're compromising the investigation."

**Kutter:** "Really? How so? **Huh**!? What investigation? Why don't you be honest with your partner for once."

**Walker:** "How **dare** You!"

**Deena:** "What's he talking about?"

**Captain:** "**That's enough!!**"

**Kutter:** "Go ahead, Hero Cop...tell her."

**Deena:** "What's going on?"

**Captain:** "Kutter, you're this close to losing your badge. **This close**. Walk away, both of you."

**Kutter:** "But I--"

**Captain:** "**WALK AWAY!!**"

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*Pro:* As you can see from the above, he writes great dialogue!

*Con:* He sometimes has a bit of the Pottymouth Problem.

Part Three of this series appears in the next...*Peregrine Nations!* .....

## ***Blowout in the 1990s: How book size expanded*** by Lyn McConchie

For some time now reader friends have been commenting to me how irritating they find the increased size of books in many genres. It isn't that they mind getting more for their money, so much as the feeling that, in fact, they aren't and somehow they're being cheated! I too had vaguely noticed that books seemed to have got fatter in the last decade or so but I hadn't put the various points together until Christmas last year, when having finished much of my latest book, not wanting to start the new one yet, and having got most other writing work up to date, I settled to re-read a lot of my library.

It was then I found I too was noticing the sudden quite abrupt change. It came in a number of ways. I'd begun by reading some of my mystery series. If I like a series I tend to have them all, and since many began in the 1980s, and some a lot earlier, the disparity in size shows up very clearly just on the shelf. In two of the mystery series I was reading, the transition was simple. Both authors were suddenly producing books which were about a third to a half as long again. This showed up in both series in 1992. It was unlikely such unanimity had been the idea of the authors. I found that interesting.

Interesting enough for me to turn to two other favourite long-time mystery series and discover their sizes had blown out in 1991 and 1993 respectively. At that point I went looking further. I hadn't realised this sudden rise in word count was so widely spread. Was it only the mystery genre or had it crossed over? I turned to the shelves where my SF/F books reside and did some checking there.



Here it wasn't always so obvious but the signs were there too. Over the first 3-4 years of the 1990s, most SF/F series also gained in size, very substantially in some series. Sometimes this wasn't what it appeared. I found a number of books I remembered reading. I'd gone through them faster than I expected and I wondered. I know just how fast I read a certain number of pages.

So I ran a rough word count and found that some publishers are cunning. It might have been a desire not to push authors into padding their works. Or protests by authors who didn't want to do that. But those books had been artfully printed. A little more white space, slightly larger type, pages which finished with only a few lines at the end of the chapter and began the next half-way down the page.

And a LOT of books which now added a chapter from the next in the series, or a chapter by another author from the same company. That bulked the book up nicely without the author having to write more. It was good advertising as well I daresay. It all added up to books which were now a lot larger than they had been — which was what reader friends were complaining about. Too many of them were developing sore wrists.

So why had a large number of publishers apparently all decided fatter books were a good thing, and around the same time? I went back to look at results of another thought which had occurred in that connection. The results backed up what I recalled. About around 1990-1991, prices for books, both hardcover and paperback, had jumped here and in the U.S.

The book series prices confirmed that. Paperbacks had gone up over that period around \$1-2 while hardcover (USA and UK as well) had gone up \$2-5. The big question was, which came first, the chicken or the egg? I rang a publisher friend and asked. They had no hesitation in placing blame. Prices rose first. Not because publishers had thought to make more money, but because around 1989 the cost of many materials went up. Publishers were paying more for paper, ink, setting up costs, labour, and other essentials.

So the cost of producing books rose and readers were having to pay more. In response to that publishers began producing fatter books. They believed that readers would be less reluctant to pay the higher amounts if they felt they were still getting value with a larger book which doesn't cost more than extra pennies to produce in the fatter size.

There's a fallacy there though, one the publishers have never seen. Larger books are often larger because they're padded. They don't have a better story-line, just a longer one, and with that increased length comes a higher chance of portions of the story which sag. How often have you read one of the new "blockbuster" length books and felt the editor should have edited...downwards?

Increasingly we are seeing books which should have been written around the 80,000-100,000 word level but which have been padded up to half as long again or even twice as long. They don't hold up well particularly to re-reading. And readers are turning off many of these. They find the story-line sags, the description goes on for pages, lectures abound instead of the facts coming out in the plot and their involvement in the characters and story slows right down. For slow readers this latter event is a major turn-off. They don't see which way around this happened.

What they see is that they are being offered longer, more boring books for an increased price. They'd rather have thinner books which grip them, and pay a bit less. I have now had several reader friends tell me if they are only buying one book this week, and they have two they'd like equally, they are often taking the thinner one. They know it will involve them more and they'll enjoy re-reading it.

The interesting thing is this hasn't happened with children's books including the assorted series which are so popular. Most of them have remained at the much lower word count - and the much lower prices. The same with the basic M & B line. If those publishers can still make a good profit producing books at the lower size and price, why can't the other publishers producing adult SF/F/H and mystery manage to do so? The answer has to be that they should be able to do it.

Which in turn means they chose not to. Why? Maybe because their initial reaction WAS to bump size and they now feel they can't let it fall again without readers rejecting their books? All of which means we're trapped in a catch 22 cycle. Publishers don't dare publish thinner books, they demand fatter books

from their authors who produce them because that way they get the contracts. Readers get fatter books because that's all there is.

Maybe if readers start writing to publishers to say some of those things, we might see a change. It would give the publishers feedback and perhaps the courage to edit books down again. Now where did I put my pen?

## **Ron Walotsky: 1943—2002**

by J.G. Stinson (from a report by Star Roberts)

Ron Walotsky, 58, one of science fiction's most talented and most under-rated artists, died in Flagler Beach, Fl. near midnight on July 29 of kidney failure. A week after returning from a trip to Africa in June, he'd been hospitalized.

He was the Artist Guest of Honor for World Fantasy in Chicago, Ill. in 1996, Boskone in Boston, Mass. in February 1997, Oasis in Orlando, Fla. in 1997, and Tropicon in Hollywood, Fla. in 2000.

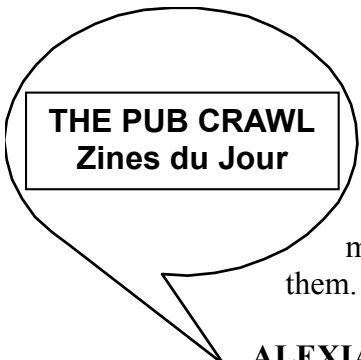
Walotsky, a New York native, started his career painting images of Jimi Hendrix and Jim Morrison which were sold as posters. Much of his work has appeared on book covers, magazines and album covers, including editions of Queen of the Damned by Anne Rice and Carrie by Stephen King. Walotsky was also frequently the cover artist for *The Magazine of Fantasy and Science Fiction*, where he did over 50 covers from 1967 through 2002.

Walotsky's fine-art paintings and science-fiction works have been exhibited widely throughout the U.S., including the Museum of Modern Art in New York and the U.S. Embassy in Paris. His "Ancient Warriors" series, featuring masks based on horseshoe crab shells, contains both canvas paintings and painted crab-shell masks.

"Inner Visions: the Art of Ron Walotsky", an anthology of his work, was published in 2000 by Paper Tiger in the U.K.

More recently, he taught art at Sullivan County Community College of Teaching and Daytona Community College in Dayton, Florida.

A memorial was placed on the Ron Walotsky Web site at <http://walotsky.com/>. It allows for fans and admirers of Walotsky's work to express their condolences to his family.



### **THE PUB CRAWL Zines du Jour**

Zines reviewed here are less than six issues old, or new to me. All others received since lastish are listed at the end, sometimes with comments. New zines are reviewed through their sixth issue, then move to the received list. Zines new to me but past their sixth issue will be reviewed once, then listed.

I sure got a mountain of new zines this time round. I may have to go soak my poor fingers in warm water after going through this lot and keying notes on them.

**ALEXIAD** Vol. 1 Nos. 2 (April) and 3 (June), from Lisa and Joseph Major, 1409 Christy Ave., Louisville, KY 40204-2040. Apparent schedule is 6 times a year. Available for The Usual (letter of comment, trade, contribution); samples available on request. Back issues \$1, subscription \$6/year. // "Why this fanzine?" queries co-editor Lisa Major, then answers in brief but cogent form (the hiatus of FOSFAX is but one reason). Book reviews follow.

Joseph Major leads off No. 2 with a description of his own "fannish career" in "Reviewer's Notes," follows it with "Random Jottings" (a wide-ranging overview of events and books final and otherwise), then dives into his preferred milieu of reviews (six books, three movies). This ends with an elegantly constructed pastiche? homage-by-way-of-parody? combining JTM's thots on fantasy princes and kingdoms after the style of Machiavelli. Amusing and thought-provoking. This may have appeared in lieu of locs, which by this hadn't materialized.

However, locs practically glut No. 3 and the page count increases by 10 from No. 2. LM starts with a memoriam of racing great Seattle Slew (having mentioned the Triple Crown race dates in the previous ish), then ruminates on "The Black Stallion" later on. JTM reviews seven books, the Majors offer a joint conrep on Kubla Khan XXX, note fanzines received, and JTM and Johnny Carruthers list their Hugo recommendations.

I don't like pigeonholing things, so I'll recommend this to readers who like *Twink* and *Steam Engine Time*, among others, and say this is a well written, wry-humored zine and a welcome addition to the actively-pubbing current crowd. Long may it wail. And I'll return the Majors to PN's mailing list, now that we trade. Huzzah!

**ARGENTUS 2**, from Steven Silver, 707 Sapling Lane, Deerfield, IL 60015-3969 USA. Available for \$5 or The Usual. Also linked online at [www.efanzines.com](http://www.efanzines.com). Annual. // This is still an annual, though Silver pubbed it in June to beat the postal rate hike. Fannishly stellar line-up of contributors (Mike Glyer, Bart Kemper, Fred Lerner, Erik V. Olson, Lloyd Penney, Steven Pitluk, Bill Roper, David Truesdale, Rich Horton, Guy Lillian III, Cheryl Morgan, Marc Ortlieb, Joyce Scrivner, Sheryl Birkhead [great cover!], Kurrt Erichsen, Brad Foster, Teddy Harvia, Sue Mason and Stu Shiffman) on a hefty variety of topics. Worth just about any fanzine fan's time, so go read it.

**BANANA WINGS 17**, from Claire Brialey (26 Northampton Rd., Croydon, Surrey CR0 6Je, UK) and Mark Plummer (14 Northway Rd., Croydon, Surrey, CR0 6JE, UK). Available for "the fannish usual" (in this case letter of comment, written or artistic contribution, fanzine trade, unused UK postage stamps). No stated schedule. // At long, long last, a BW!!! I have heard this zine chatted up in *Twink* a lot and have been waiting to see it. Glad to report that it was worth the wait, too — Brialey and Plummer have produced a 52-page chunk of highly readable stuph here. Plummer explains the gap between 16 and 17 as a surfeit of anticipation, and I know exactly what he means. David Redd, Fred Smith, Dave Clements, Nic Farey, Tony Keen, Dave Langford, Kim Huett and both editors display wide-ranging interests and unique writing styles, which is what makes this a great zine. Just wish they'd pub a little more often. (Pressure! Can't stand the pressure!)

**brg 32** -- A fanzine for ANZAPA, from Bruce Gillespie, 59 Keele Street, Collingwood, VIC 3066, Australia. Available if the requestor has sent funny folded green stuff to BG and he has some room in an envelope which will also contain the latest *Steam Engine Time* (that's how I got mine, anyway), or to other ANZAPA members. Frequency: per ANZAPA. // Bruce Gillespie is one of the most generous people in the world. I love getting gifties, and he keeps sending them to me. And they're high-quality gifties, too. Just one question: How do I get a Ditmar cover for PN???? Gillespie lavishes words on his beloved cats, reviews books, and talks music. Eminently readable.

**DEROGATORY REFERENCE 99**, from Arthur D. Hlavaty, via e-mail (write and ask me for the e-mail address and I'll pass it to ADH). Irregular. // "In a frighteningly unprecedented display of both sociability and travel, I took part in three sf gatherings in three different states...this March," writes Hlavaty, then proceeds to tell all (most?) about it. He conreps Lunacon, ICFA and Minicon with his signature wit and verve, and adds his personal news and recent book recommendations to complete this eight-page zine-by-electron. More, please.

**e.I Vol. 1 No. 2**, from Earl Kemp, available online only via [efanzines.com](http://efanzines.com) in HTML or printable PDF. Intended as a memoir excerpt made available for additions and/or correction by readers with such information. // Disclaimer: I guess everyone has some kind of chip on their shoulder, sizes will vary, and not everyone's chip is liked by everyone else. I will fully support Kemp's right to write what he likes, even if I don't like it.

Kemp starts off this ish with a very heartfelt tribute to the late Martha Beck, then sours it with an editorial screed about politicians, jingoistic patriotism and police-state tactics, all of which he claims exist in the U.S. If I'd had Earl's life, I might feel as he does now about cops of all types. But I didn't, and I don't. His kind of generalizing is unfair, and his inserted comments (to the tune of "your mileage may vary") get crushed under the weight of his invective.

The bulk of this centers on Kemp's admittedly past fascination with bullfighting, and features some amusingly tacky book covers to accompany his article on 1960s porn publishing's connection to several SF writers of note. No locs are included, since this is a work-in-progress, but there are plentiful photos — some of which are revealing in ways not all readers may find palatable. But you always have the choice of not reading it — just like changing the TV channel.

No. 3 is a paean to Kemp's previous abode in Mexico and the various activities conducted there. I haven't read all of it, yet, but I will — just to unearth the gems.

**FOR THE CLERISY** Vol. 9 No. 45, from Brant Kresovich, PO Box 404, Getzville, NY 14068-0404 USA. Available for the usual (letter of comment, zine trade, \$2). Publishes "seasonally." // This arrived, according to editor Kresovich, as a result of his having seen "a review of PN in *Twink*." Thanks, E.B. This brings book and movie reviews, locs and a fanzines-received list (with some comments), all worth a look.

**THE GREAT COSMIC DONUT OF LIFE** 32 and 33 (for the Acnestis apa), from Bruce Gillespie, 59 Keele Street, Collingwood, VIC 3066, Australia. Available to other Acnestis members or those on the *Steam Engine Time* mailing list who have extra folding green stuff to share. Schedule not noted. // More lovely gifties from Mr. G, here. 32 is "The John Wyndham Issue" and makes me wish I'd read more of Wyndham's work, because the late Owen Webster's article is so thorough. Gillespie writes lovingly about one of his cat's passing in 32 (Theodore was an absolute doll, and very photogenic) and several other items in 33. Sigh. I want a Ditmar, I want a Ditmar...cover, that is. Then again, a Ditmar clone would be as welcome as long as it had commensurate talent. Do I detect a faunch?...

**THE LEIGHTON LOOK** 5 and 6, "not a fanzine," from Rodney Leighton, R.R. #3, Tatamagouche, Nova Scotia B0K 1V0 Canada. Available in response to letters, zine samples, polite pesterings, or whatever else hits Leighton's mailing bone. Irregular. // I started getting this when Leighton wrote to ask for a complete run of PN vol. 1 for review in *The Knarley Knews*. Not one to resist potential egoboo, I sent the requested material, plus a bit extra for his delectation (pro wrestling stuff). I find his outlook on life, hermit-centric (just for you, RL) though it is, refreshingly frank. He has opinions and will tell them to you whether you want to read them or not; after all, one always has the option of sending a potsacrd and asking him to cease and desist sending TLL. I'm not ready to send that card just yet, though. His exploration of zines of all flavors intrigues me.

**PLOKTA/A** Bijou Ploktette, for Ploktacon, from Steve Davies, Alison Scott, Mike Scott. Steve Davies, 52 Westbourne Terrace, Reading, Berks., RG30 2RP UNITED KINGDOM. // Yet another con I wish I could have attended. Drat it all.

**QUASIQUOTE** 4, from Sandra Bond, 7 Granville Rd., London N13 4RR UNITED KINGDOM. Available for 2 quid, 5 bucks or The Usual. Irregular. // Number 4 does not disappoint. I love Bond's attitude (there's **lots** of it) and her contributor's list is nothing at which to sneeze. Ghod stuph.

**SFFF** 3, from Mike McInerney, 83 Shakespeare St., Daly City, CA 94014-1053 USA. Available for letters of comment, zines in trade or The Usual. Irregular. // Writer of Westerns and fannish legend Lee Hoffman takes "Dance With Wolves" for a critical twirl in this. Steve Stiles waxes profuse on Chicon III (and illustrates same with wonderful sketches), and the locs feature Walt Willis' last letter to editor McInerney, embellished with a clever little piece of Ian Gunn artwork. 1962 photos of Fannish Faces You May Know (Of) finish things off. One hopes McInerney can pub more often.

**SLEIGHT OF HAND** 1, from John Teehan, 499 Douglas Ave., Providence, RI 02908 USA. Available for \$2 per ish (\$3 outside the US), or The Usual. Scheduled for 2-3 times a year. // Sigh. These new people, they're so tiresome. Heh heh. Good on you, John, for such a fine first ish. rich brown, Dave Langford, Mike Resnick and — surprise! — Janis Ian appear here (yes, the "Society's Child" Janis Ian). A must-have for Ms. Ian's appearance alone.

**STEAM ENGINE TIME** 2 and 3, from Bruce Gillespie, 59 Keele Street, Collingwood, VIC 3066, Australia. Available for The Usual or some nice folding green stuff. Irregular. // Fab Ditmar covers (where have I heard that name before?... ) grace both these ishes. Must be nice to have Ditmar as the house artist.



Ish 2 (ishtoo?) contains works of fannish and readerly interest from Claire Brialey, co-editors Maureen Kincaid Speller and Paul Kincaid, Ron Drummond, David Longhorn, Ron Bennett, Steve Jeffery and the editor himself. A nice plump loc section finishes off thish.

Ish 3 hosts a debate between Gregory Benford (yes, *that* Benford) and Russell Blackford on whether SF needs a Shakespeare, more from PK (on Keith Roberts), Christopher Priest (his Novacon GoH speech from 2000), Dave Langford (turning scholarly for a review of a 1908 novel by Alfred Kubin), BG (on M.J. Engh) and Kev McVeigh (on John Wyndham). Whew! Send Gillespie some goodies now if you don't want to be left out of all this amazing verbiage.

**TOBES STOLE MY BRAIN!**, a "promotional fanzine in support of Tobes [Valois] for TAFF," from Claire Brialey (26 Northampton Rd., Croydon, Surrey CR0 6Je, UK) and Mark Plummer (14 Northway Rd., Croydon, Surrey, CR0 6JE, UK). One-shot publication, but might be had for *The Usual* (ask the editors). // I laughed so hard while reading this I nearly injured myself. And here I thot Langford was the only laff factory of the Isles. This is definitely a publication for those who prefer "the British sensahumor," and I count myself in that group. It is, as it states, a "Tobes for TAFF" propaganda tool. I hope he enjoys himself at ConJose. Anyone who writes like this and can get others to speak in his favor can't be alcoholically insensate *all* the time. Can they?

**TRIAL AND AIR**, for FAPA Mailing 258, from Michael Waite, 105 West Ainsworth, Ypsilanti, MI 48197-5336 USA. Available for zine trades (according to editorial whim, apparently) or to FAPA members. Inquire for other possibilities. // Yep, that red X on the mailing label sure works wonders. Waite coughs up a fanzine that's miles away from a hairball, using pairs of old *Le Zombie* and *Canadian Fandom* fanzine covers for the cover of thish.

"Fanzines Observed" peers at nine fanzines, including PN, about which Waite sez very nice things (thanks, Michael). Book reviews are also here, plus an interesting collaboration between Waite and Dick Jenssen (there's that Ditmar fellow again!) on "When Worlds Collide" and Adrian Berry's *The Giant Leap: Mankind Heads for the Stars*. Then he reprints the TOCs from the four fanzines he used as his cover, and caps it with his comments on the FAPA #257 mailing. And it's all wrapped in a snazzy layout design with lush color illos. Gurjuss.

**VISIONS OF PARADISE 91** (*The Passing Scene*, *Wondrous Stories*, *Halcyon Days*), from Robert Sabella, 24 Cedar Manor Court, Budd Lake, NJ 07828-1023 USA. Available for *The Usual* and/or editorial whim, as well as someone else's nudging. Quarterly. // Who the hell is Tom Sadler and why is he sending my address to strangers?!?!? Just kidding, Mr. S — I recognize the name from *Twink's* fanzines-received column. I've never received anything from Sadler, and he's not on the PN mailing list, but I appreciate his efforts because I was about to inquire of Mr. Sabella if I might trade PN for his zine. Mr. Sadler has saved me the trouble. I believe he deserves an ish for that.

*The Passing Scene's* journal entries provide a peek into another person's life which is, like most people's lives, composed of ups and downs and in-betweens. *Wondrous Stories* (how I do so like that title, being the Yesphreak that I am, but he probably got it elsewhere) brings back Sabella's long-dormant column "The Lost Worlds of Science Fiction." He continues "The Science Fiction Season," reviews seven books, comments on zines received in "The In-Box" and provides humor (familiar from e-mail forwards) in "On the Lighter Side." *Halcyon Days* is the letter portion of this fanzine triptych (25 pages worth). This is certainly worth another look, and provides another address to add to the PN mailing list.

#### ZINES RECEIVED:

**ANSIBLE** (Jan.-Apr. 2002) / Dave Langford, 94 London Road, Reading, Berkshire, RG1 5AU UNITED KINGDOM. Monthly. Can be had for an SAE via paper mail or for the asking in e-mail to [Majordomo@imi.gla.ac.uk](mailto:Majordomo@imi.gla.ac.uk) with subscribe ansible in the body (and naught else), subject line "irrelevant." // Langford give Michael Moorcock's Tolkien-torturing comments space, babbles nearly incoherently in

thanks for receiving NESFA's Skylark Award (and whacks Martin Hoare in print, again), prints a Thognote from Sir Arthur C. himself, keeps tabs on the Andromeda Bookstore's future, tempts fate by mentioning the Ellison foofaraw, and continues to report on fannish news from both sides of the puddle in his humorously engaging style. I think the reason Langford keeps pubbing *Ansible* is that he likes doing it, and when the like stops, so will the zine. But I hope he continues for a while yet; my monthly yukfest would suffer, else.

**CHALLENGER 16** / from Guy H. Lillian III, P.O. Box 53092, New Orleans, LA 70153-3092. Irregular. Available for \$6 or the usual. // A stunnin' Dell Harris cover opens this 100+ page ish in fine style, for which Lillian chooses the contributions of the late R.A. Lafferty as his center. Lots of photos and locs, too.

**COVERT COMMUNICATIONS FROM ZETA CORVI** Number 9, April 2001 / Andrew C. Murdoch, 508 - 6800 Westminster Highway, Richmond, B.C., V7C 1C5 CANADA. Also via [www.efanzines.com](http://www.efanzines.com).

**DE PROFUNDIS 352-354**/ the Los Angeles Science Fantasy Society (LASFS), edited by Marty Cantor. Contact Cantor at LASFS, 11513 Burbank Blvd., North Hollywood, CA 91601 USA. // The club members' tributes to the late Bruce Pelz in 354 sound heartfelt and honest. Cantor deserves praise for consistency and reliability.

**FANZINE FANATIQUE** Winter 2001 / from Keith and Rosemary Walker, 6 Vine St., Lancaster LA1 4UF, England; [KWalker777@aol.com](mailto:KWalker777@aol.com). Available for the usual. Intended quarterly.

**THE KNARLEY KNEWS 93 & 94**/ Henry and Letha Welch, 1525 16th Ave., Grafton, WI 53024-2017 USA. // Love the giraffe on 93, and there's a super Alan White cover for 94. Strangely, in 94 the TOC lists Gene Stewart under "A Feast of Jackals," yet mine own byline is on the actual article. Nudge, nudge. Sorry, Henry, noticing these things is a professional hazard for me.

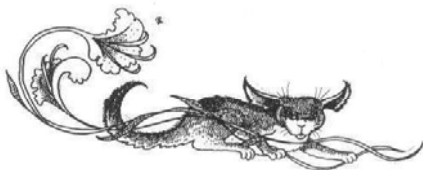
**THE SFSFS SHUTTLE 147 & 148** / South Florida Science Fiction Society, P.O. Box 70143, Fort Lauderdale, FL 33307-0143. // More of the same, but more frequently, from new editors Cynthia and Karen Warmuth 147 includes club news, Hugo noms list, and a plea for new blood to re-prime the International Association for the Fantastic in the Arts (IAFA) and keep its annual event, the International Conference on the Fantastic in the Arts (ICFA), in Fort Lauderdale, its home for several years. Stay tuned. 148 has club news, awards announcements, con dates, a movie review by Adam-Troy Castro, and a sadly misinformed fanzines-received article by Karen Warmuth. Article in reply has been sent...

**SOUTHERN FANDOM CONFEDERATION BULLETIN** Vo. 7 Nos. 12 and 13, edited by Julie Wall; write to Southern Fandom Confederation, c/o J. Wall, 470 Ridge Rd., Birmingham, AL 35206-2816.

**TWINK 25 & 26** / E.B. Frohvet, 4716 Dorsey Hall Dr., #506, Ellicott City, MD 21042 USA. Available for The Usual. Quarterly. // Okay, everybody, please do like Sheryl Birkhead and Dale Speirs and send photo-copy-ready, format-compliant printouts to EBF. I'm sure he'll appreciate it. Great covers — Stiles for 25 and a Schirm for 26. 25's special Tolkien section was interesting, and 26 has a great Lyn McConchie article on how her one-shot child's book turned into an industry.

**VANAMONDE 453-467**/ from John Hertz, 236 S. Coronado St., No. 409, Los Angeles, CA 90057. Available for the usual (and maybe even for the asking). A weekly apazine for APA-L (and sometimes Minneapa). // If a Zen koan is supposed to make a person reflect, this weekly fanzine ought to be subtitled "Fandom's Weekly Koan." Discussion?

**XENOLITH 46 & 47** / from Bill Bowers, 4651 Glenway Ave., Cincinnati, OH 45238-4503. A FAPA zine also available at [efanzines.com](http://efanzines.com) via PDF (printable).



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For the October ish of PN, I'd like to see articles on encounters with the weird, strange, difficult to explain, or inexplicable — send me your scary stories!

RED X EQUALS LAST ISH — **CONTRIBUTE AND SURVIVE!**  
(ON THE MAILING LIST, THAT IS)