



Well that may not look a whole lot like you up there with a bow - but those are the breaks... ah well —

This is the 17th and penultimate issue of *The Amor de Cosmos People's Memorial Escrevolutionary Susanzine*, a lettersubstitute from Susan Wood, 2236 Allison Rd., Vancouver, B.C. V6T 1T6. *Amor* is available at the whim of the editor, is Not Generally Available, and should be treated as a letter, please, NOT a "fanzine." (I am an ex-fan and tired, and I am More Gafia Than Thou, Terry Carr!) Artwork this issue is by Jay Kinney (p. 1), Bill Rotsler (pp. 2,4), Alexis Gilliland (pp. 5,6,7), Stu Shiffman (p. 9), Bill Gibson (p. 11) and George Barr (p. 12). Mimeograph assistance will be, I hope, by Eli Cohen, who's going to come home from Westercon to find me with a letter-sub to slipsheet; ah, fanac.

This issue is for Kathryn Susan Buchan Kimmerley, who is my god-daughter, and whom we finally got christened and all in May. I figure my contribution to her "moral upbringing" is to send her a lot of books; I already provided the teddy bear. But read after work, kid; when you grow up, learn to be a plumber.



October 31, 1978. Hallowe'en. Jawas and various wielders-of-facsimile-light-sabres at the door. I should be reading George Grant's political philosophy, with relation to its impact on contemporary Eastern Canadian nationalism and the poetry of Dennis Lee, for tomorrow night's graduate seminar on intellectual history; but it's hard to concentrate on the work of a man who casually tosses round words like "autochthonous" when one is also tossing peanuts to Wookies. Thus, the by-now-traditional October AMOR.

This is the last AMOR. This is also the first AMOR since December, 1977. Does the second fact explain the first?

AMOR used to be irregular but sort-of quarterly. After December, the schedule gave up all pretense of life. Some of the reasons appear herein: I've done a lot of travelling (*and a long, strange trip it's been*) since I last wrote. I've also been doing a lot of writing, little of it fannish. My main concern has been to produce anywhere up to 10,000 words an issue for the *Pacific Northwest Review of Books*, P.O. Box 21566, Seattle, WA 98111, USA: \$7.50 US a year, editor Loren MacGregor, editor emeritus John D. Berry -- a periodical and an occupation you will know about if you're a Vancouver or Seattle fan, or if you've read my swan-song gafia column in *Algol*. At the moment, PNRB is reviving itself after a four-month hiatus caused by terminal brokenness; I'm not sure whether it'll survive or not. I am sure that as writer/Vancouver editor (which means I contact the Canadian publishers, assign books for review and so on) I am thoroughly enjoying playing Literary Groupie; I am also going mildly distracted trying to work full-time and put in an average of about 15 hours a week on PNRB (that's down from c. 30 hours in the spring.)



Also, I haven't felt much like writing-- like doing the sort of writing I've done in AMOR, the open-letter, where-am-I-now sort. Lots of reasons... for one thing, the story I told in #16 had reversed its happy ending when I returned to Vancouver after Christmas. (. . . . I'm still not sure what the end will be; insert relevant comments on Life and Art.) I have been doing a lot of quasi-AMOR writing for PNRB... notably a report on a literature conference at Banff that was one of the most fannish (and intellectually stimulating) cons I've been to in years.

All sorts of Fascinating People (like the Dumptrucks, and Ken Mitchell, and Wallace Stegner, and three of my former editors, and Robert Kroetsch and Jack Hodgins) said nice things about PNRB, and My Stuff, to the point where Famous Canlit Person Eli Mandel, in his closing remarks, said that if people wanted to understand what the conference, on Canadian and American Western literature, was about... they should read my review of Ken's book HORIZON in PNRB. ((I was outside looking at the mountains at the moment of this historic utterance; I'm repeating what I remember of Sharon Barbour's paraphrase, modified by a strong sense of gosh-wow on my part.))(Oxford Press uses the 3-page article now to help sell the book...)

I've also been doing a lot of writing on the borderland between academic lit-crit and sercon fanwriting... that is, trying to talk intelligently but not pedantically about literature. Teacher-critic as mediator between text and reader.... I ran away to San Francisco this summer, stayed with Elizabeth A. Lynn, author of (among other things) A DIFFERENT LIGHT (which came out while I was there) and of THE WATCHTOWER (which she finished while I was there.) I got rid of my ulcer, showed off my favorite city to Mae Strelkov from Argentina, Joan Baker from Ohio and L.A., and David Emerson from Minneapolis (and Florida. "Look, David! Palm trees!" "So what?" "Ocean!" "So? I grew up by a.... eeyipe, that's cold!") David got to show his purple metallic toenail polish to Ursula Le Guin, but I think that part comes later. Mostly, I finished THE LANGUAGE OF THE NIGHT: ESSAYS ON SCIENCE FICTION AND FANTASY BY URSULA K. LE GUIN, edited with introductions by Susan Wood... which will be appearing from Berkley in, I hope, the spring, and, ta-da, in hardcover, as well as eventually in a Windhover paperback like JEWEL-HINGED JAW. They're good essays (especially the ones on modern fantasy; there is very little good material on modern fantasy); and I think/hope I did an appropriate job on the intros.

And meantime... I haven't been answering the mail, partly because Canada has had the latest round of our continuing mail strikes, but mostly because I don't seem to have time. I want to answer the mail, which is why I started this letter-sub in the first place. But I don't really want to do "fanwriting" any more. It's been fun; but I want to do a lot of other things. (If I change my mind, I'll reappear in your mailbox.) This issue appears mostly because I've sat for too long on contributors' work, especially the artwork. I apologize for the delay-- especially to Alexis Gilliland and Joe Pearson.

My life right now: I am teaching Canadian literature, including a quite wonderful graduate seminar of a dozen very bright, knowledgeable people... a wonderful, stimulating, exhausting 2½ hours. I'm teaching sf. I enjoy teaching sf. I get paid to say intelligent things about sf. I get academic credit whenever I finish those essays on Kate Wilhelm and John Varley I've been working on (the function of the critic is to provide intelligent praise... with accent on the intelligent, Herb, I promise; I don't gush in print if I can help it... and I won't say I like something unless I mean it, and can say why. . .) Yet as a corollary-- you realize I am assigning NOVA and "Aztecs" and "A Martian Odyssey" as homework? A sample of the response appears later on... this is your audience, oh my friends who write That Stuff. (Terry Carr and I evolved, and Lizzy Lynn and others are popularizing, the term "skiffy" to mean trashy-escapist-sf-and-fantasy-as-found-in-the-pulps-when-I-did-my-women in sf paper, and as-published-now-by-Ace/Doubleday/DAW/Dell etc-in-their-off-moments. Skiffy is the printed version of "sci-fi" which in turn is defined as "Godzilla-eats-Cleveland movies and the like." If you like peanut butter, you'll love new skiffy, etc.)

Skiffy-comment of the week, from a person taking my sf class without having read much sf (I think he thought it would be easy... I used the word "chthonic" today...) anyway: comment on NOVA: "It has too many words in it." Out of peanuts, out of small Darth Vaders, out of space, out of time-- back to George Grant and yoga exercises.



And we return you to your letter-sub, already in progress...

Hi. Hello. Um... I did say this was the last AMOR, didn't I? In fact, I said that very thing 2 pages and about 7½ months ago. Today is Saturday, July 7, 1979. Many of you are at Westercon. I am not at Westercon, obviously-- for a variety of good and bad reasons, but chiefly because Jerry Jacks, master of the single-entendre and chairpersonage of Westercon, did not manage to make the US July holiday coincide with the Canadian July holiday. There I stood, with my Westercon membership, looking at a calendar to book a flight to S.F.... and I realized that I would be flying home from Westercon, in the usual state in which one comes home from conventions (in my case, with a bad cold, inevitably) on Tuesday July 10, not July 3.... and leaving for England, for seven weeks, on Friday July 13. (Yes, I'll watch out for Skylab. At least the plane isn't a DC-10.) ~~What minimal sanity I possess, pre-vailed;~~ and I'm not at Westercon. Alas. Hope you had a good time.

And now let me slip into another typeface and continue with the narrative, much abbreviated. Has anyone but me noticed that I haven't done AMOR for a year and a half? My intervening time has been spent traveling, writing, and getting through a lot of dental surgery. Let me try to summarize.

Travel, first. Christmas 1977, I went to Ottawa. I arrived about 3 hours before a blizzard dumped very large amounts of pretty white stuff and shut down the city for about three days. I stayed inside, thought Christmassy thoughts, and appreciated Vancouver. I appreciated Vancouver even more when Rosemary Ulliyot and I got lost on a tertiary road, in the backwoods near Calabogie, in the dark, in a blinding snowstorm, on a road not big enough for one car and occupied primarily (it seemed) by drunken snowmobilers returning home in large trucks... an unploughed, iced-over road on which I was driving my brother's pickup, without the camper on the back so we had poor traction, and the gears were freezing up, and... -and hey, Rosemary, I'm sure Flower Station isn't on the road to Arnprior... I was not, you understand, worrying about getting killed, so much as I was worried about getting maimed by my brother if I let anything terrible happen to his truck. We all survived, though I decided that I would be quite happy never to drive in the winter again. Apart from that though... I had a good time, and an eerie time. Kept running into people I'd gone to school with, who didn't seem to have realized I'd left town 7½ years before. ("Hey, Susan, good to see ya. Say, didn't you got to Trawna, or somethin'?") I kept having flashes of an alternate universe: if one or two decisions, accidents, choices had been different, I knew where the Susan who came back to Ottawa would be living (down to the postal code), with whom, what job she'd have, what she'd do at 2 pm Sunday. She'd be happy, too-- but I think I'm happy in this version of the universe.

In February, 1978, I was Fan GoH at the Wiscon in Madison, with Vonda McIntyre as pro GoH and a casts of hundreds, mostly people interested in feminist ideas as they relate to sf. And in ideas, in general. And in being Splendidly Silly. I had a wonderful time, decided Wiscons were addictive, and went back this year, too. (I flew to Madison, Wisconsin to go to a Grateful Dead concert? At -20°, yet?) This year, again, I had a fine time, mitigated only by the fact that I was in fairly bad pain from an infected root canal job-- and the combination of a 9-hour trip, with several plane changes and pressure changes from landings/takeoffs, plus the cold, aggravated the screaming little nerve-ends even more. Ah well; I'll see Marvellous Madison fandom (and crazy Mipple-Stipple fandom, and you too, Singer--) next February, if only so I can flaunt pictures of my cats at Jeanne Gomoll.

((Actually, the best part of the 1978 Madison trip was the end of it, when I was reunited with someone who means a lot to me, after about 3 years of no communication, or messed-up communication. Had a letter from Suzy Charnas about a year ago, in which she said, apropos of AMOR 16: "Considering the rate at which we go whooshing off into the unknown out of reach of each other's voices, I don't think you can say hello and greetings and well-wishings too often." Amen to that.))

In April, 1978, the university sent me to Banff, which I mentioned back there 7½ months ago. I want to go back to Banff. Mountains. I spent a lot of time talking with Jack Hodgins, a new Canadian writer you should all watch out for (especially if you like the sorts of books Lizzy Lynn calls "quirky"-- odd, challenging, lots of fantasy and myth, good characters, literary games being played: The Invention of the World is out in the US, as well as in paper here.) Anyway, as we were all waiting for the bus to take us to Calgary and our respective planes, a horde of very tired, talked-out, sensory-overloaded, idea-overloaded academics, just standing and staring and staring at the mountains, I turned to Jack and said: "You're a novelist. Are there any words for this?" He thought a minute, did a 360° turn, and said, very quietly: "No."

May 1978: I wrote a LOT of words for PNRB-- a lot of words, including a Banffcon report. Jerry Kaufman, if you ever do actually produce *The Incomplete Susan*, I want that piece of fanwriting in it, please... The Wood Hotel had its usual guest list. I was Fan GoH at the V-Con, where I did the women-in-sf paper yet again, with appropriate slides from Al Betz' collection of brass-bra pulp magazine covers; and delivered a chocolate cake instead of a banquet speech. A.E. Van Vogt liked my chocolate cake. How's that for a good name-dropping line? Suddenly it was June, and the Wood Hotel hosted my mother and Eric Lindsay at the same time. I spent much time being Literary Person at the Heritage Writers' Festival, across town at Simon Fraser University. Naturally, I wrote it all up for PNRB. //Something momentous also happened. Dennis Lee, Canadian poet, critic, helluvagood editor, mostly known as the "Alligator Pie" man, was one of the visiting writers. I went up to say hello after his reading, ndt even sure he'd recognize me after about 4 years. "Susan! Hello!" Hug. "When are you going to turn that thesis into a book? Why haven't you done it yet? Do it!"

((If and when I do finish the book, the dedication may well read: "For Dennis Lee, who nagged. Thank you."))

YOUR MAJESTY
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CHARMS...



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Suddenly June of '78 was ending, and I was on the road (remember last year, when one could buy gas, and drive all day?) to San Francisco. Had a wonderful time; I always do. At times, I am tempted to ask Charles N. Brown of the Vast LOCUS empire to hire me as his editorial assistant (iceback labour, down from Canada.) (The pay isn't so hot, but the chicken salad in the saaff cafeteria is superb.) I have to keep telling myself, though, that I'm about 13 years too late to run away to San Francisco... I drove from Portland to SF in one stretch, arriving in the city at the end of a long summer evening. I lugged suitcase, typer and box of manuscripts into Lizzy's house, said hello to her cats (Lizzy was at Westercon, and the cats were lonely), went next door for some bread and cheese and cheap vin du pays, sat on the front steps watching the light fade across the East Bay (Lizzy lives at the top of 18th, where it crosses Market; great view), watched one tiny, perfect pink cloud float by, watched the fog roll in, and felt entirely, blissfully, euphorically happy.

((And then there was the morning when the phone rang just as we were waking up. Lizzy answered. "Yes, she's here. Who's calling, please? You're WHO?" She knocked on my door, came in with the phone held at arm's length and a very... odd expression. "Whaa?" I said, brightly. "It's for you. It's the UBC bookstore. I don't believe this." I took the phone, said "Hello, Sharon, what's the problem?" and spent 15 minutes straightening out problems with the Can-lit survey book orders, suggesting alteratives for books out of print, and so on. Then I lay back and laughed and laughed. Lizzy shook her head, and unplugged the phone.))

First person up put the coffee on and unplugged the phone. Lizzy and I made ritual polite noises, and then ignored each other. She finished *Watchtower*, the first of the Chronicles of Tornor trilogy. It's good, but *Dancers of Arun*, which arrived last week-- ah, *Dancers* is a lovely, lovely, lovely book. Ya did good, Lizzy. I finished *The Language of the Night*. *Language* is now out, real, getting good reviews (which don't mention me, as is right and proper; if I succeeded as an editor with that book, it was by keeping myself out of it as much as possible.) The book also shipped most of its press run within about 3 weeks of release. A rave review in *Atlantic* didn't hurt. I am pleased to have been associated with that book. Whee.

Anyway: I brought the Wood Hotel to Lizzy's place, but she bore that remarkably well. We both wrote. We socialized. We finished writing. CGppésoff

Copies of Lizzy's first novel, *A Different Light*, arrived in the mail. Lizzy bought about \$80 worth of records (including Zevon's *Excitable Boy*; I introduced --oops-- a segment of Bay Area skiffydom to said record, driving in the fog across the Bay Bridge, on the night of the full moon, after a LOCUS collation that was even crazier than usual ("Frank Robinson is nicer than you are...") and for awhile, Aroo! became a standard mode of greeting. I bought food. We threw a "Happy Gays/WPSFA" party. Suddenly, July was ending. I packed typer, manuscript, David Emerson and my box of tapes into the car, and we set off up the coast road. Fog in the redwoods. A crystal mountain stream in Oregon. A heatwave in Portland. "Hey," said David, "We have enough tapes-- we can drive anywhere!"



WE WILL HAVE
THE REPORT ON
YOUR NATIONAL
BEAUTY RANKING
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60 BLAH BLAH
ETC.

We stopped in Vancouver, though; and David, Eli, John Berry, various friends and associates, and about 17,000 very happy people spent three days in 1967 at the Folk Music Festival, which starts this year, dammit, the day I leave for England. Good music. Sunshine (though the first night was rained upon.) Stanley park, with mountains and water and trees for the backdrop, and a flock of geese soaring over the people dancing to a celtic band. Three days of nonstop, good music and general joy. Walking out of the park at 2 am, with thousands of people singing softly. Seeing David and Karen Pearlston a couple of weeks later at Iguanacon, yelling "Dairy products" and watching them both crack up. Magic; pure magic.

Suddenly, I was at Iguanacon, surprising myself by having a great time. Never again, though, will I try to run umpty panels AND run something like WomenSpace, with too little help and too little sleep. Bless you, Jo McBride, who room-sat; and all the other people who did help. I meant to do a write-up for JANUS-- about the experience, what went wrong (mostly the lack of publicity at the con) and what went right.... haven't had time. There were problems, but I think the space answered the perceived need of the people who donated money, time, and support; and I think that it filled its function of being self-destructing... that the time is coming (at least in the case of Jerry's Westercon) when that sort of space will not be needed. I hope so. (And there's always Wiscon. What a wonderful thing the Wiscon is, to be sure.)

Suddenly, I was on a plane again for one of my 9-hour, multi-stop trips back to Vancouver and UBC. (Phoenix at 5 am is really nice, and almost comfortable...) School.... well, you've heard about that. Preff, I think, when he was here, asked me if I enjoy what I do, because I seem to complain about illiteracy, bureaucracy, pressure and such a lot. Yes. I enjoy teaching. I don't enjoy administration, but I'm good at it. I am not wildly thrilled by committee work, but it has to be done, and I have discovered unusual skills as a diplomat. (Surprises me, too...) I actually like academic writing, when it goes well (no, make that: I enjoy having written-- making the connections, and getting the words to express them.) I especially enjoy making the connections in class, and having lightbulbs click on in people's eyes. I gather I'm considered a good teacher; the teaching reports our students do on us, which we see once the grades are in, say things like "I'd take anything at all she's teaching," and "I didn't expect to enjoy the material, but I did"-- this from the techwriting class. But: but sometimes I get a little tired. I spent the fall and winter doing hatha yoga, and using the gorgeous new UBC pool, which helped me stay a little saner than I might... And after months of marking and committees, I went to San Francisco for Wintercon, was hostessed by the inimitable Marta Randall in her gorgeous new house, unwound, climbed Mt. Diablo with Sid Coleman, danced all night at the Carrs' party, came home, and marked a whole lot more.

Spent May in Ottawa, hiding out in the National Library, seeing what I could do about dissertation-into-book (with a UBC grant.) Came home with a 300-page manuscript which is awful on a good day, unsalvageable on a bad one. Went to SF again; I was tired, and very depressed, and thanks for being patient, Marta. Last week, I officially handed over English 202, the 800-student course I've



I HAVE READ YOUR MAJESTY'S "NOVELLA", AND IF YOU INSIST ON APPEARING IN ANALOG, I SUGGEST YOU SEND YOUR HUNTSMEN TO SEIZE BEN BOVA; THREATEN HIM WITH PAINFUL AND PERMANENT DEATH, AND MAKE HIM SWEAR ON THE BONES OF JOHN W. CAMPBELL JR. TO PUBLISH THE DAMNED THING.



YOU THINK HE'LL WANT TO MAKE ANY CUTS?



been in charge of for 3 years, over to the new co-ordinator. Next year I'm only on two committees instead of 4. I may even write some letters. (I can't even say "And if you've heard from me, it's because you're my mother" because I owe Mum a letter, this week.)

Oh yes: back east I dug up Mum's garden, spent some time digging the garden at Tatty Hill, the communal farm owned by Labonté et al. (where I met the NDP campaign manager I'd just been reading about as a bright young whiz kid, two days before in Saturday Night, and also met a woman who said "Richard says you know Mike Glicksohn. What's he doing? I was in grade 4 with him." At the Folk Music festival, I met someone I went to high school with; when I last saw him, he wanted to be a corporation lawyer; now he's a professional jazz player. Eli swears there are only 500 people in Canada, and either Labonté or I know them all. Half of them went to Lisgar Collegiate. Hi there, Angus.) I also went to Montréal, where John Berry and I had a fine time touring bookshops with Will

Straw (thank you Will and Katka, who also went to Lisgar...) Spent a lot of money on Québec novels, some of them agrarian. marvelled at how anyone can be a fan in Québec, given the high cost of imported French sf paperbacks. I passed up such gems as Le canal Ophite, par John Varley, "traduit de l'americain," for only \$13.95 paperback; or Dune in a fancy gold paperback edition... for \$24.00

Travelling. Samantha welcomed me home from Ottawa by pissing on the wall about 5 cm. away from the only copies of *Energumen* I possess. I think she was trying to tell me something. I cannot repeat what I told her, in a family publication... Maybe I should stay home with the cats more? (And on Friday I'm going to England and Scotland for seven weeks, and coming home to UBC registration and...)

Travelling. Writing. PNRB did not revive, but before I accepted this fact I'd done about another 10,000 words, and bought a camera (Olympus OM-1, mostly on the advice of Marta and Carol Carr, who both own them, with some help from Dena Benatan and Ctein.) Took lots of photos of Canadian writers... Took, with my first roll of colour film, a quite unbelievable shot of a UFO cloud over Mt. Ranier, when John Berry and I took Ro and Darroll Pardée sightseeing. My friends have taken to shuddering and ignoring me as I focus and mutter (having one far-sighted eye and one near-sighted eye has given me problems composing shots), and John has told me sternly to "experience life directly, not through a viewfinder." Susan Wood, girl photojournalist! (Move over, Maggie Trudeau.) Charles N. Brown, bless him, printed some fairly awful photos I'd done, and I've sold some dustjacket shots to Doubleday, so the camera's now a tax-deduction. And I'm having fun. (One more expensive hobby. Great.)

Also in the fall, I got a call from the editor of the book section of the Vancouver Sun. In PNRB, I'd criticized Vancouver papers' lack of concern with local and Canadian work. OK; did I want to do something about it? Uh... Did I want 4¢ a word. Yes. Did a long review article on Canadian children's books. Delivered it. Two days later, the paper went on strike. For eight months.

I have just made a decision. This AMOR is getting immense already. I have two articles to reprint, and a Joe Pearson art portfolio, and lots of art... how about, when I get home, I do ONE MORE AMOR, full of Other People's Stuff? Be patient, oh my contributors. I value you, and I will get your stuff in print. (And Terry Carr'll do *Innuendo*, too.)

Writing. In the fall, I^{also} did a long Canlit review article, scholarly variety; and 3,000 or so words trashing most of the year's fantasy, for Terry Carr's *Year's Finest Fantasy* #0. 2. That just came; I now have two books on the ego-shelf with dragons on their covers, and my name inside them. Nice. (*Language* also has a wizard, a hobbit, an exotic bird, and just about every other fantasy element you can think of.) Since January, I just realized, I have written *five* academic papers, the shortest about 5-6,000 words, and the longest a 43-page opus on Kate Wilhelm, for the Gregg Press reissue of *The Mile-Long Spaceship*. It was a joy to sit down and read all of Kate's work, in order, and watch her get better and better (I even got the new book, *Juniper Time*, in galleys.) Still, I admit 43 pages was excessive. Most recently-- like, about four days ago-- I finished a paper on "Poet as Archeologist: The Presence of the Past in Contemporary Canadian Literature," in which, in about 7,000 words, I manage to deal with just about every contemporary poet going (in English Canada) from Atwood and barbour to Waddington and Zieroth. This is my ticket to the MLA conference in, where else, San Francisco at Christmas (no, I won't read the whole paper there; I wrote the publishable version, with a separate shorter version for delivery. I'd been badly writer's-blocked, and depressed about that. On Tuesday, I put paper into typer, threw away an unsatisfactory written draft, started typing... and by Thursday about 1 am, had a final typescript. I even know what I think I can do to salvage the Canadian literature book. (But do I want to? 19th century Canadian agrarian fiction, which I've been working on for eleven years? Actually, yes, I think I want to, just to get it off my back.)

I'm coming up for tenure this year. About six people on the mailing list will understand the full implications of that. (Joanna, you are being very supportive, and I am grateful.) Recently, I had to make 3 photocopies of all my major pieces-- not the reviews and such-- I've done since being hired at UBC. (We don't get free copying. My bill was about \$50.) I was supposed to deposit "a file" of material with the department head. I didn't give him a file. I gave him a full cardboard carton. Words, words, words. I can't be a full-time teacher, a part-time hotel keeper (from people from New York, and Liverpool, and Amsterdam, and San Francisco, and exotic Dawson Creek-- the Wood Hotel will go on while I'm in England, as it does when I'm in Ottawa or SF, with Eli as assistant manager), an almost full-time writer and a human being too. (But I can try...)

Finally: this past winter I had round after round after round of painful dental surgery-- root canals that got infected, and the like. Infection would spread through my system, and I'd wonder why I felt so tired and depressed; then finally my jaw would swell, and I'd call the dentist up, and see him once a week for another month. (This even happened while Freff was visiting. Sorry, Freff; poor timing-- but I still managed to do the Shannon Falls run, and show you The Crab, and generally take the Hotel Tour.) I coped with school by coming home, sleeping for a couple of hours, working, getting up at 6 am to do the work I'd left the night before, going swimming, coming home exhausted... and feeling very depressed. Yes, I think I'm ok, now. Thank you, people. You know who you are. I know who you are. Especially the one-in-the-morning persons. Thanks.

I am looking forward to meeting some of you nice folks for the first time, and re-meeting others, before and during Seacon. And there will be another AMOR. And it won't take a year and a half to appear. At least, I hope not....

At least my dentist doesn't want to see me for another six months!

And now the promised AMOR special, dedicated, I guess, to any California sf writer who voted for tax cuts, thus voting for larger classes, fewer remedial classes, and more people like this as YOUR audience. My sf class is optional-- no-one not interested is forced to take it. It is a senior class, which means that students are SUPPOSED to have had a full year of English 100 (lit. and comp., with emphasis heavily on composition) plus a full year of second year English. This was the second essay submitted by this student, who got a D on the first paper--I was generous-- and F on this one. I can't remember what the topic was supposed to be. Student tended to talk through class, and certainly didn't pay attention-- asked when we were going to do "Asteos" by one Vernon McIntyre, to which I said "That's Vonda, and we did it yesterday-- and you were here." Oh. Student on final exam identified John W. Campbell as "the hero of NOVA by Lester Del Rey." There is an alternate universe in which that is true, of course. Anyway: yes, I love teaching. But. The original was handwritten. I have changed neither spelling nor punctuation.

CAVEAT LECTOR: I am, of course, printing this gem without permission or proper authorization. I would ask you all to remember that AMOR is a letter-substitute, with the emphasis on letter. That is: keep it private. Please and thank you.

Flower's For Algerenon

In the beginning there was an idea. Then there was man. With this idea man created society, and society needed tools, many tools were needed for the many ideas. Soon society became so large that man had ideas for ideas, and not long after that he had too many ideas. Instead of stopping his ideas he collected them together in the form of a book. Soon society became so complicated men were thinking of ideas soely for the purpose of putting them in a book. Man being as diverse and imaginative as he is has come up with many new ideas for books; some are entertainment others for the purpose of teaching and one is science fiction.

Science-fiction was created when a man became so intreged with ideas of the future that he decided to write them all down on paper. Knowing that the future would not be as he saw it; but merely a part of his imagination the development of a new type of story was created, known today as futuristic science-fiction. Man was not only concerned with the future he was also concerned with things that would or should or might be. Hence the story Flower's For Algerenon.

In the story the author tells us of an operation that will increase intelligence. In actuality he wishes to tell us what it is like to be given a gift that changes your life and then to have that gift taken away. To enable the reader to see this as it realy is the author has Charlie Gordon tell us. Charlie knows what it is like, he has first hand knowledge.

This is the crux of the story. Charlie tells us what it is like to be dumb. Daniel Keyes uses charlie to elaborate and develope this feeling. The plot is negledgeable. The author's is neither right-wing or left, he has no overwhelming biases. There is also a lack of the use of images and symbolism. What the story lacks in each of these areas it makes up for in the characterization, namely Charlie. The other characters are also very life-like, they will be discussed later.

Who is Charlie Gordon?-

Charlie Gordeon is presented to us not in a few discriptive paragraphs and not as others see him. The character of Charlie is not dealt with in any of the usual ways. Instead he is presented to us by his own writings, progressions of himself. The first thing the reader sees is charlie's first progress report, which looks like it had been written by an illiterate, indirectly the reader is shown the inner workings of Charlie Gordon.

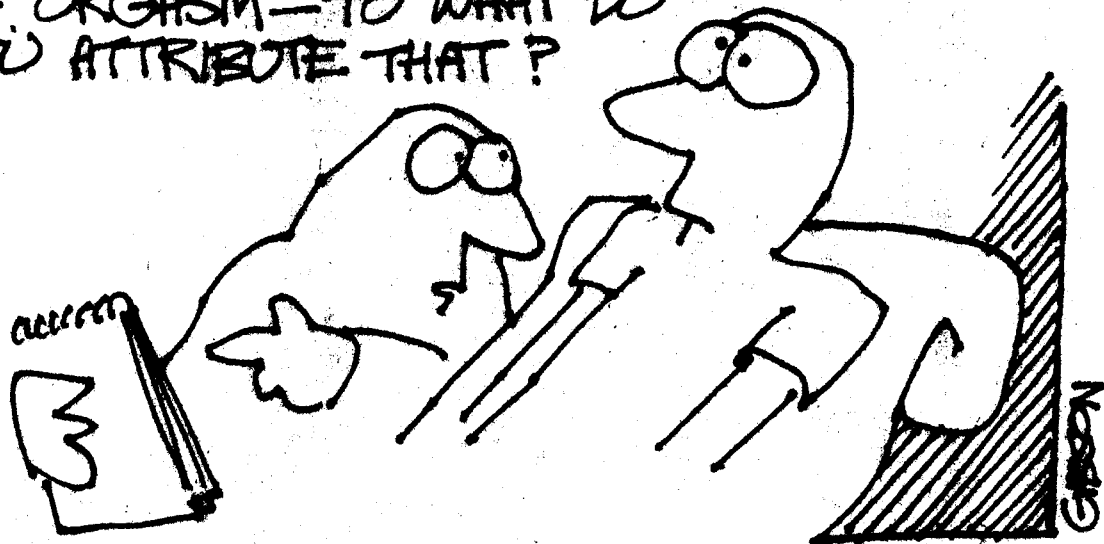
As we delve further into the story the reader sees only the progress reports written by Charlie. Gradually we see the changes the charlie goes bhrough. As the new charlie takes over the old, we can then better realize what the old charlie was like. As charlie's intelligence increases other things become aware to charlie and us.

One of the things is Daniel Keyes devotion to character development. We are appealed by Charlie's growing need of knowledge. As Charlie gets smarter he analyzes those around him discriminating them in his reports. This way we are aware of the other characters also. We are never told of the background or future of Charlie. And conspicuously lacking is the "expository lump." It is missing mainly because Keyes does not want to divert attention from his idea.

Getting back to the idea of the story, the idea of being able to artificially increase intelligence. As we see in the story the author has purposely sacrificed plot, style and imagery to promote the main idea. We see that in this case Science-Fiction is a literature of an idea. Looking closer we see what the implications are of this. With the beginning and growth of Science-Fiction we can extrapolate, and we see that as S-F grows, its ideas will enlarge, become more numerous and develop into schools of thought. As science races to catch S-F, new ideas will flood the world. These ideas will be an asset to philosophers, scientists, doctors, and many more professions.

Science-Fiction, more than any other type of story, is a pool of new ideas; it is like a job jar, reach in and grab an idea. People will be able to look to S-F, grab an idea and expand it into something plausible. These are the implications of a literature of ideas.

AND THIS COMPULSION OF YOURS, TO SHOUT
'BEAM ME UP, SCOTTY' AT THE MOMENT
OF ORGASM—TO WHAT DO
YOU ATTRIBUTE THAT?



Well, I hope you folks all enjoyed that. Don't think I made too many changes, though it was hard to type. The following is from the Coach House Press newsletter, under the heading "Something From Typesetting to Fill Up the Last Page."

"I do not belong to those who think with the wet pen in hand; and still less to those who yield themselves entirely to their passions before the open ink bottle, sitting on their chair and staring at the paper. I am always vexed and abashed by writing; writing is a necessity for me; even to speak of it in a simile is disagreeable."

Q: "But why then, dear sir, do you write?" A: "Well, to tell you in confidence, I have hitherto found no other means of getting rid of my thoughts." Q: "And why do you

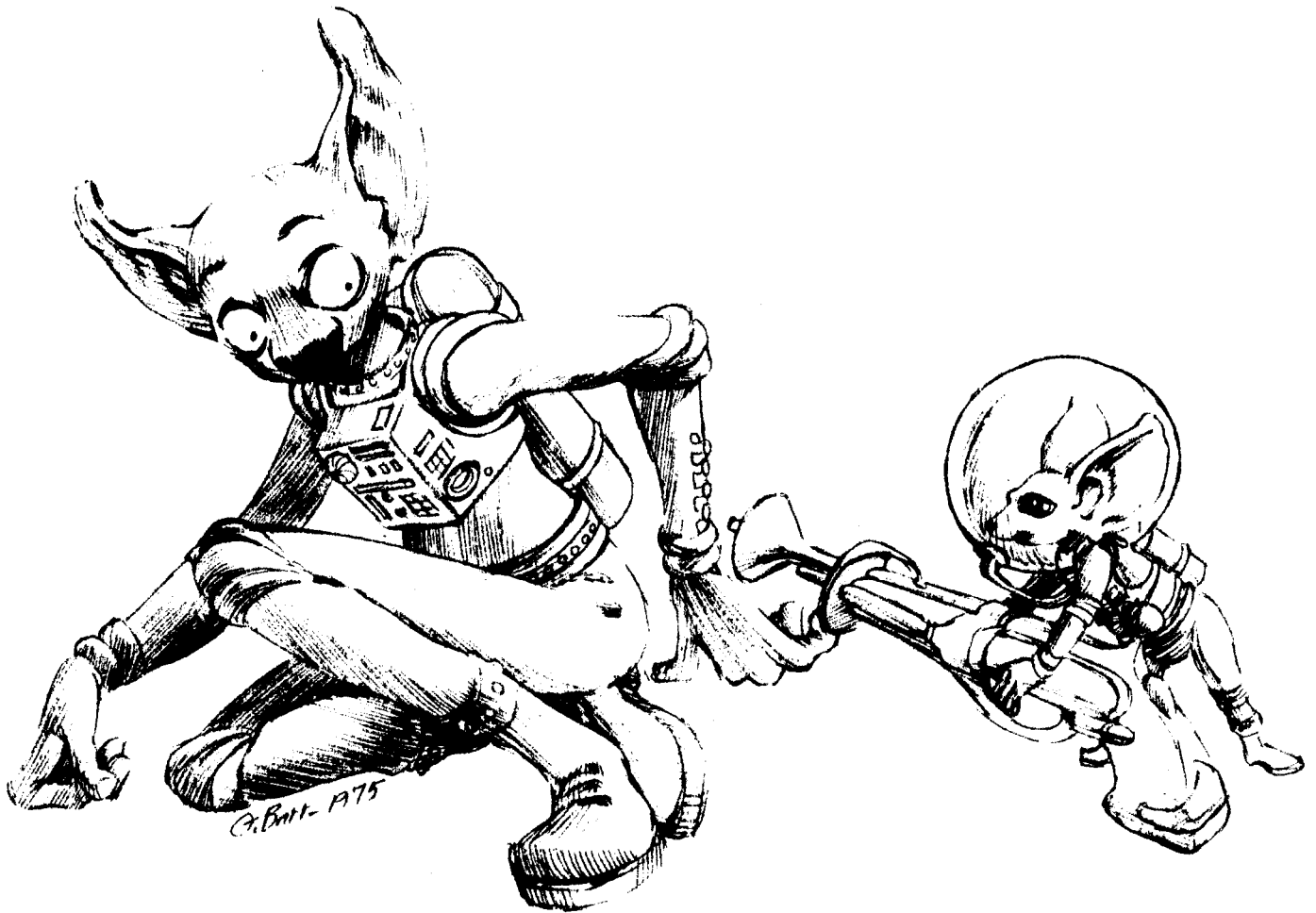
wish to get rid of them?" A: "Why do I wish? Do I really wish? I must."
--F.W. Nietzsche--

and a couple more appropriate quotations... (and I must learn that a self-correcting Selectric does NOT work on stencils. Yes, Eli, yes Howard, I know that a word-processing system with a text editor would eliminate the need for correction fluid...)

"Writing a book is like doing a jigsaw for which there is no cover picture."--
Merle Shain (author of Some Men are more Perfect than Others)

"...no matter what environment you are in, you are learning to write if you really care deeply about writing. I cannot think of an uninteresting environment....
.... I don't at all agree with you about frivolity. I should not try to learn to write without learning first to be frivolous." E.B. White, from the Letters of E.B. White

And a frivolous summer to you all. I just had a call from the local Mountie post. "Mrs. Wood? We've found your son, Michael; will you come and get him?" Uhhhh; that's another alternate universe, folks. I think I'll stick to this one, and go to bed.



Love, Susan