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october, 1987

# torus

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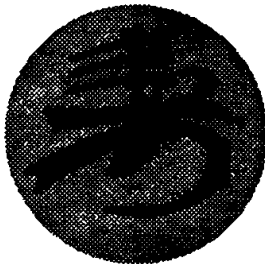
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### THE KAMIKAZE EDITORIAL COLLECTIVE

is  
 Keith Soltys - editorial content  
 Lloyd Penney - mailing list, lox  
 Michael Wallis - whatever.....  
 special guest - Michael Skeet

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# About This Issue...

We really didn't intend TORUS to be an annual....

But, sometimes even the best intentions go awry. Things like planning conventions get in the way.

So it took us a bit longer than we expected to get this issue out. It should be easier the next time -- really.

This issue has a different and, we hope, more professional look, thanks to Michael Skeet and his Macintosh. Most of these articles were uploaded from my PC to Michael Wallis' Bunch of Seven BBS (more about that elsewhere), downloaded to Mike's Mac, and run through Ready-Set-Go and an Apple Laserwriter. It's more roundabout this way but it does look good.

As for the content, once again it's a bit of a mixed bag. I guess that brings me to something that's come up in the letter column. What type of fanzine do we want TORUS to be?

I wish I knew.

There are four of us working on this and each of us see things differently.

For myself, I see TORUS as a fanzine with appeal to both fans and non-fans who are also readers of sf. In other words a genzine. We're not aiming TORUS at the fifty or so trufan publishers active these days, or at the 100,000 who read IASFM each month, but somewhere in that grey area in the middle -- at people who are fans but who haven't got so wrapped up in fandom that they don't have any interest in sf.

That's nebulous, I know, but it'll have to do for now.

As for future issues .... We will be trying to get TORUS out more often, at least twice a year, perhaps more often than that. We have some interesting interviews on hand but we could use more material. If you have something you think might fit send it in to us, or query us by letter or one of the electronic addresses we've listed elsewhere.

- KS

Who are the Kamikaze Editorial Collective?

In no particular order:

**Lloyd Penney** - Born in Toronto, June 2, 1959...a little early? OK..... I got my start in fandom in the late

months of 1977 in Victoria with a newly formed Star Trek group. I moved to Toronto in 1978 to attend Ryerson Polytechnical Institute, and discovered fandom there. Since then I've worked on 10 cons, attended about 20 more, incl. Worldcons, written for various apas in Toronto, Ottawa and Edmonton, published various newsletters for clubs, helped to run a club or two, and partied my brains out.

Mike Glycer will tell you I loc everything in sight. I should also say that I've worked on several Worldcons, too.

**Kelth Soltys** -- born in Sault Ste. Marie, Nov. 4, 1950, I've been a reader of sf ever since grade school where I found a copy of *Red Planet* and never looked back. I discovered fandom, and conventions, at Torcon 2 in 1973 and have been to one or two a year ever since. I've been a book reviewer for *SFR*, *New Canadian Fandom* and *Fantasy Review*, and CM of the apa, *The Final Frontier*, for the last two years.

In the mundane world I've somehow ended up as a bookkeeper for James Lorimer Publishers. So far I've been unable to persuade them to publish science fiction -- though I did get a Kelly Freas illo used as a cover.

**Michael Dennis Skeet** - born in Calgary, Alberta, in September 1955, and again in Edmonton 21 years after that. I'm a newcomer to fandom, having attended my first convention (NonCon 3, for those keeping track) in 1980 in a (successful) attempt to get laid. I quickly discovered that there was more to fandom than sex, although the opposite contention would make for an interesting piece of convention programming.

My first fanac was also my first fanzine work - a series of articles on the fantastic in music, written for a clubzine edited by Lorna Toolis, who later married me anyway. Since that time I have been president of the Edmonton sf club, written for several fanzines and contributed to three apas, and done my share of

convention work. Sometimes I wonder why I bother, but not often. I earn my money as a writer and broadcaster, and am currently dividing my time between a syndicated film review and clerical work for the Drama and Features department of the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation.

**Michael Wallis** - the Wallisbeast was born in 1956 in a small log cabin on one of the lesser moons of Argybargy, a planet of no significance whatever orbiting a star a half-block south of Vega, take the Bloor-Danforth line to Runnymede Station, run a couple of red lights and there you are. Michael has been in Toronto since anyone can remember, and, as everyone knows, everything that happens in the Centre of the Known Universe is Wallis' Fault, or should be. Michael owns a lot of computers and is always doing things with them, like trying to stay employed. His fanac is so lengthy as to be impossible to list, so we won't even bother, except to say that he's the guy you should blame for Ad Astra, the Toronto convention. He is rumoured to have a lot of money, so we're trying to get him to pick up all of the publishing and mailing expenses for TORUS and several other fanzines as well.



(C.J. Cherryh was Guest of Honour at Ad Astra 7/Convention 7. She was interviewed for TORUS on 12 June, 1987, by Keith Sotys.)

**TORUS:** You majored in the classics in university. Did you know then that you were going to be a science fiction writer?

**Cherryh:** Yes.

**TORUS:** Why did you pick that particular field of study?

**Cherryh:** That's an interesting question because usually people ask it the other way around. I picked the classics as a result of deciding to be a science fiction writer, not the other way around. It was the only subject that actually gave me a more or less full stretch in the things that I needed.

I was in school well toward graduation in 1957 when Sputnik went up. Following that the whole course of education in the United States changed abruptly. Math, from being a luxury was accounted important and science actually began to be offered in all high schools.

Unfortunately it was a little late for me. The only full length course of study that was available to me at the time was archaeology. I could go into classics because we had we had a good classics program in my high school. We did not have a very good science program. I knew I did not want to major in English because that would not fit me for what I wanted to do. I need technical information and the only place to get it was out of the only technical thing available for me. If physics had been available, if chemistry had been available, if, most of all, astronomy had been available, I would have gone a different course.

As it was I simply picked the most technical most demanding thing that was available. By the time I reached university I was so far launched on that particular course that it would not have been possible for me to have switched over. In the last part of my senior year I really began to come in contact with much more demanding hard sciences. I was strongly tempted to change major and to go into these fields. Unfortunately I have a math disability which operates, oddly enough, on an arithmetic level, not on an advanced conceptual level. It's a great nuisance. I have a great deal of difficulty with basic math, and at that time calculators weren't available the way they are now.

I think you could call it sort of an accident of time and place that I did exactly what I did. I had limited choices and chose to get an education. I figured that an education in anything, as long as it is a thorough education can fit you to write well.

But I was interested much more in the scientific aspects of classic studies than in the "software" aspects.

**TORUS:** So when did you know you wanted to be a science fiction writer?

**Cherryh:** When I was ten years old.

**TORUS:** So you had already being reading science fiction at an early age.

**Cherryh:** Yes. Reading it and seeing it on television. I wrote my first novel at ten. I wrote almost obsessively from then on with a brief hiatus for graduate studies when I didn't have time to write. The longest I guess I was ever away from my keyboard was one year when I was doing my Masters.

# C.J. CHERRYH

**TORUS:** How many tries did it take you to write something that was accepted and published?

**Cherryh:** Difficult to answer because at a certain point I wasn't trying for publication. I was trying to satisfy me. After I began trying for publication which was when I was 21, it took me probably between seven and twelve years before anybody paid any attention to anything that I sent in.

Very frequently this was due to my totally inept marketing method which consisted of mailing something off. If it was rejected one time back it went into the drawer because I would know that whatever I was working on was always much better than the one that had been rejected. So I would finish it and send it off and then take the one that had been rejected and totally rewrite it and send it off again.

**TORUS:** You were working on novels.

**Cherryh:** Yes. I wrote a novel a year. Then it turned out to be more than that if you count the revisions on the ones that were already coming back. So I began learning a lot about professional polish.

What I tell every young would-be writer is that there comes a point at which you'll almost give up, a point at which you have to decide how dedicated you are to writing professionally as opposed to writing for your own amusement. And that point is the point when you know darned well that what you are writing is as good as and better than the things on the stands. And they're published and you're not and you can't figure out why.

Sometimes when a writer reaches that point they give up because they've reached a plateau where they're doing the best they can. They see it as equal to what is out there and published and yet they're getting rejected. That causes the writer to doubt their own perception of what is good and what is bad. At that point if they haven't got the determination to continue, if they begin to allow that doubt to settle in, or if they take the other self defensive viewpoint, that it's a conspiracy and they quit, it's a guarantee they will never get published.

I would say that probably about two thirds of all publishable writers drop out at that point, not before, at that point when they conclude that their perception of good and bad is not valid or that there is some sort of an in group conspiracy preventing them from getting there.

The other third just says, "Damn the torpedoes and full speed ahead." and keeps trying and keeps trying and keeps trying until finally they get a manuscript into the right place at the right time. This is descriptive at least of the writer who is working without an agent not knowing marketing, not knowing anything about marketing and having to learn the business end of it which is arcane and very difficult.

**TORUS:** Which is the way that you did it.

**Cherryh:** Right. Sheer cussedness. What I was doing was publishable. It needed editing at that point. I finally reached the point where what I do does not need editing. That might be, at a given point, a philosophical disagreement between myself and an editor or between myself and a reader but in point of fact I turn in virtually perfect manuscripts. What you see on the stands is essentially what I write. There have been a couple of

times when copy editors have been able to slip over that shouldn't have been done and which, when the publisher found out about it, they went through the ceiling. But I guess that's one difference between somebody who had to do the entire course on their own versus somebody who found a helpful editor early on.

**TORUS:** You couldn't have known very much about the science fiction fan community.

**Cherryh:** I didn't know anything. The first time I ever met the science fiction fan community was when it was known that I had sold a book and the rumour had gotten out into the school system where I worked as a teacher. I got a call from a fan group in Norman, Oklahoma and I was quite bewildered. There had been no science fiction club at the university. I had never heard of any group of "science fiction fans" organizing.

When we got together one of these questions was, "Are you going to Worldcon?", which at that year happened to be Mac and I said well "What is a Worldcon?" So I was indeed totally ignorant of the entire fan world. My first ever convention was a Worldcon, Kansas City.

**TORUS:** That's a hell of a way to get exposed. That happened to me. The first convention I ever went to was Torcon 2 in 1973 and it was overwhelming.

**Cherryh:** Mac was 2000 people and it was the last of the community oriented worldcons because after that *Star Wars* hit. As a matter of fact the *Star Wars* people were at the convention advertising for this new movie and people were saying this is very strange. And then of course the big science fiction craze hit and everybody and their dog decided they were going to attend science fiction conventions to the point now where I think Worldcons have gotten totally out of hand in terms of size.

**TORUS:** Would you like to talk a little bit about Cyteen, your newest project?

**Cherryh:** Well, it's something that I had wanted to do a long time ago, which was to go into the internal structure of Union, the other of the two powers in the Union/Alliance universe. The way I set up that universe, by the way, if you read *Downbelow Station*, of course Union are the absolutely despicable faceless enemy and Alliance are the good guys. If you go over to the other side you will discover that there are very nice people inside Union and that Union does not see itself as a villain. In other words it's like a lot of international situations. People on opposite sides of opposed borders very frequently hug their kids and love their family and treat their mothers nicely. It's just that politics and opposition of interest creates enemies by necessity.

This is about the years after that war. With Cyteen being the capitol of Union you get a look inside the Cyteenpower structure, who's in power and why.

**TORUS:** One thing I found interesting about a couple of your books, specifically *Angel With the Sword* and *40,000 in Gehenna* is that you seem to be writing about the devolution of societies as much as their evolution.

**Cherryh:** They happen in both directions, you see. The history of the human race is sort of like a stock market. You watch the points go up and the points go down but the overall trend is to increased technology and prosperity. However there are momentary falls in the

market, as it were. Merovingen represents a local decline, but having had the decline all the way to the bottom, to the point where they're literally living in caves waiting for the enemy attack to pass, everything after they come out is another climb towards civilization. So it's not like they're on a downward spiral. They have managed to resurrect the gasoline engine. They have refining. They're now having struggles within their culture between those who wish to go on advancing toward spaceflight and others who say, "No, no, this is terribly dangerous, we must not do this again." The head in the sand attitude versus the let's go try it again attitude. I think you can see that in the world around you. In the case of Cyteen it's not that all of Union culture has debault. It's that when you go on to a raw planet you can't take a space-based culture with you. To a certain extent you have to do things with your bare hands again. For a while. And these are people who have a pioneer mentality. They look at the terraforming of Cyteen as a challenge. They look at it as a place to live, a place to bring up children who they know are going to be very rich. Because one day when Cyteen is fully developed they will be the owners of the company that built the world. So they're looking at a bright future for themselves and for their children. And they're willing undergo a little bit of hardship to do that.

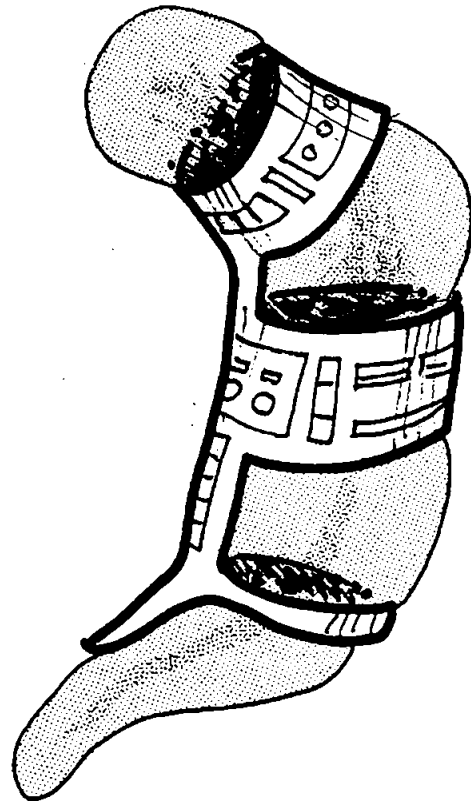
The founders of the culture were scientists who were primarily interested in research. But subsequent generations are not all scientists. Many of them want to do things like farming. Others are interested in freight, in shipping companies, in business, in trade, in very much less abstract things. The same sort of things that they'd be doing in space. It's just that they happened to be born on this planet, they happened to see an opportunity to raise their lifestyle instantly by accumulating the money for an off-world trip.

The economics of the situation being what it is, if you're born on a planet you just can't move to a space station and automatically acquire a share, you've got to buy in. Likewise with a ship. You can't just go and join a ship crew because the ship crews are as big as they need to be.

The same thing keeps people in cities where they know darned well that they can't get a job. They stay there because it's home. It offers them something and to move and to go someplace else is very imposing. They have at least the gut-deep sense to know that going off and joining the Merchant Marine would be very difficult for somebody who had no background there. If your parents had been attached to the Merchant Marine and you had grown up around ships and the sea and you suddenly decided you wanted to be a farmer again you'd be up against same problem.

So in human cultures, at least as far as it's worked up to this point, what your parents did imposes choices on you that they made by living where they did, by choosing what they chose. To a certain extent wherever you find yourself is wherever you've got to try to make a living, unless you suddenly decide you're not going to be here any more and you take certain specific steps to be somewhere else.

Certain people on Cyteen will but they're not



Certain people on Cyteen will but they're not necessarily rebuilt forever. They're on their way up again. And they are going to found an urban style culture on a planetary surface that will be very important in their own right. It's a particular kind of lifestyle that different from the Merchanter culture, very different.

**TORUS:** Are you planning on linking that particular series of stories more closely to the Chanur novels?

**Cherryh:** Actually the Chanur series merits a passing reference in Cyteen because one of the reasons that Cyteen politics is as crazy as it is at the time of the story is that Sol, Earth, is suddenly getting very friendly. They want to trade because they attempted to go in the other direction and they got their nose whopped good. They ran into an alien society on the other side of the sun that threw them out and now Sol is real nervous.

They would very much like to be friends with the Alliance and they would very much like to be friends with Union. And Union, at the time of the story, is thriving on trade. Union has a frontier style economy in that they have something that the rest of the universe wants, rejuve. And a lot of other things that they can produce.

They are trading for terrestrial luxuries. This frontier economy can pay for. So a lot of things that are freighted in from Earth that are total luxuries. Chocolate. Coffee. Other things that are very difficult for the spacer cultures to produce. They've got ersatz coffee, ersatz orange juice. But it isn't the same as the real thing.

So when this stuff gets freighted in it gets consumed by the rich at the equivalent of \$250 per half kilo. If you have a cup of coffee on Cyteen the coffee cup is about 1" x 2", very tiny. It's certainly not consumed in our kind of quantities. And it's a psychological thing because the ties of the Union to Old Earth are profound, even though the Union is very strange from the Terrestrial point of view.

Cyteen is about the change in human attitudes as a result of this culture which has gone the furthest of all the human cultures. It's the most alien. In some ways, and this is deliberate in the book, because they are so much like us, because they have airplanes and because they have subways and other things, they are very familiar to us. On the surface you would say this is the most Earth-like of all the cultures. But when you look at them up close they are absolutely the most alien.

Their mindset, their way of thinking, the way the Azi permeate the culture, the fact that they have developed a type of humanity that has a different logical processing system than the natural born human, almost human computers trained from birth, all this is very, very different than the mindset from somebody from Alliance or from Earth who would absolutely be horrified at some of the things which the people of Union consider homey and natural.

**TORUS:** To get back to the economic aspects. The \$250 per half kilo you quoted earlier is almost what it now costs to put something into low Earth orbit. You're postulating that that'll be the equivalent for interstellar travel. It'll still that be expensive?

**Cherryh:** Terrifically expensive. One of the reasons that coffee is even transportable and cheap is that it freezes very well. You don't have to provide a heated hold for

coffee and for a number of other commodities. Anything that stands zero-degree cold well can be transported. Anything that doesn't is very expensive to haul because of the enormous energy requirement for maintaining environment.

**TORUS:** What do you see as the near term future for the current space program?

**Cherryh:** I think that they are going to be experimenting with a number of technologies. I think that we are going to see much more multi-national involvement in the space program because it's an expensive proposition and it's very silly in one way to duplicate so much effort. We are one species trying to get off this planet. To have one planet have to build umpteen different space probes because of national interests is, I think, not the most sensible way to go about the problem.

Ultimately space is going to be of benefit to all nations. Those who have a foothold up there are going to do better than those who don't. I think that international cooperative ventures make much more sense. They're going to happen. Partly because, as has already happened because governments are seeking unified efforts. The other thing is that the multi-nationals, the companies which themselves cross international lines, are going to get involved in this. As this happens, as there is more economic development in space, then again the national boundaries will tend to blur and you may be going up there for Exxon or Johnson and Johnson or McDonnell Douglas or whatever have you.

Particularly, I think, the big oil companies. If they can survive the oil crisis themselves, the ups and downs of their own business, they are still a repository of enormous wealth. If their management is smart it will get them into the space business.

I see the next phase of the space program as being space business. There is an enormous amount of money to be made at this, let alone the scientific aspects, but just in manufacturing. A lot of the critics of the space program have said that no one has demonstrated the actual economics of how this works. Well, if you have had to do a cost benefit analysis of shipment between the Old World and the New World in wooden ships, the cost per kilo would have been rather costly in terms of their economy. The start of anything is daunting.

I have a cherished article in my possession somewhere which proves that electricity is not economical. It was published in Scientific American some 75 years ago. Space is economical. What the people who are doing the cost effective analysis don't reckon on is how many people are going to be living in space by say the year 2050.

**TORUS:** How many people will that be?

**Cherryh:** I would estimate that by that time there would probably be colonies of at least 20,000. At least 20,000. Granted if we sit on our hands for a long time we'll have to put that off by 20 years or so. But it will happen. Within the next 300 years I believe the number of human beings living off the planet is going to be extremely significant in terms of the total human population. And I'm talking about more than millions. I'm talking about at least a billion human beings living permanently off the planet.

We will no longer have, as Clarke said, all our eggs in one basket.

I look for a lot of scientific benefit from it. For instance, things we can learn attempting to set up small habitats on Mars can teach us a lot about the ecological structures of Earth, just as what we would learn about the ecological structures of Earth would help us do that. Science does operate in this circular fashion -- that you must have a system that is different from the system you are working with before certain ideas become apparent to you.

**TORUS:** We were talking about this the other night in connection with superconductivity research. It seems what's being discovered now could have happened twenty years ago - but nobody thought to look at the new materials because they didn't think they could be superconductors.

**Cherryh:** Right. The analysts have trouble taking into account exactly that kind of factor. Something can lie undiscovered right under your feet for a long time before somebody looks at it. Once a particular technology accelerates it drags everything else with it. Advances in one field tend to lead to sudden advances in a dozen related fields because they've been waiting on the one new ability.

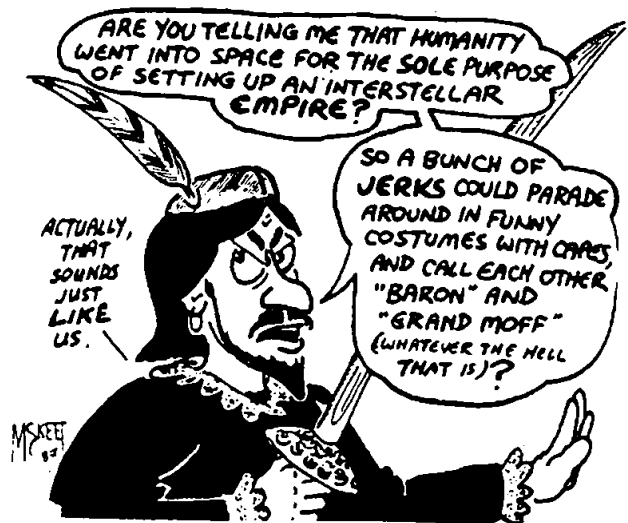
There've been a number of articles recently in Science News and other places recently on fractal math. All the mathematicians have been muddling about with fractals for years and calling them the monsters because nobody could do anything with them. Then somebody invented a new graphics and all the natural sciences people said "My Lord, it perfectly describes all these systems we've been trying to work with."

**TORUS:** You couldn't have done that without high-powered computing.

**Cherryh:** Connections and connections. And that's why I'm willing to say something as extravagant as 20,000 people living in orbit by 2050. Because look at where we were in the 1850's. We had just gotten the steam engine under way and developing into a major technology. Steam and iron. And all of a sudden by 50 years after that we're flying. 50 years after that we're on the moon or close to it.

Right now we are pushing at doing what we started to do when we designed the shuttle in the first place, which is to provide a powered vehicle -- the so called Spaceplane. Now personally I think that the United States economy would be well served if they declared a national emergency and did a World War II style focusing of the entire national budget toward this problem. I think that the economic benefits would be extreme in terms of jobs, industrial discoveries, breakthroughs and new technology. But right now I don't think we have a leader who is capable of making this kind of a leap of faith, as it were.

If a nation begins to become far more concerned for caring for the social debt than it does in making forward progress it actually does not serve the people who are the recipients of the welfare programs as well as it does if there's an acceleration in growth and jobs. Any time that a nation begins to allow expense towards R&D to shrink and shift towards social programs pretty soon you've got





real trouble. That's what happened to Rome, and a number of other societies.

What you get is a group of people who are on social welfare as a result of extreme acceleration of technology. What they told would happen has happened. Jobs have been replaced by machines and people have been displaced. The answer to it is not to then stop building machines and rush over and support all these people -- it is to go through the initial setup phase as rapidly as possible, so that once having stripped out certain jobs more jobs are created

**TORUS:** If you don't continually expand your frontiers you stagnate.

**Cherryh:** You have no place for these people to go. What is needed is education of the young but this is not what is being done. It's a Catch 22.

**TORUS:** Once you lose your frontiers it's not just an economic problem -- it's a psychological problem.

**Cherryh:** Yes it is.

**TORUS:** It feels like the United States, and to some extent Canada and the other Western countries who are in this situation, are acting like cornered bullies who just lash out rather than trying to resolve the problem in a sensible manner.

**Cherryh:** They have over-regulated now. In the United States it would be perfectly possible on government land to literally start up a town and give the land at a very low cost to anyone who wants to move in and build. The government will help with getting water in here and the rest is their problem. And you would have great economic growth out of people who would not otherwise be able to do it.

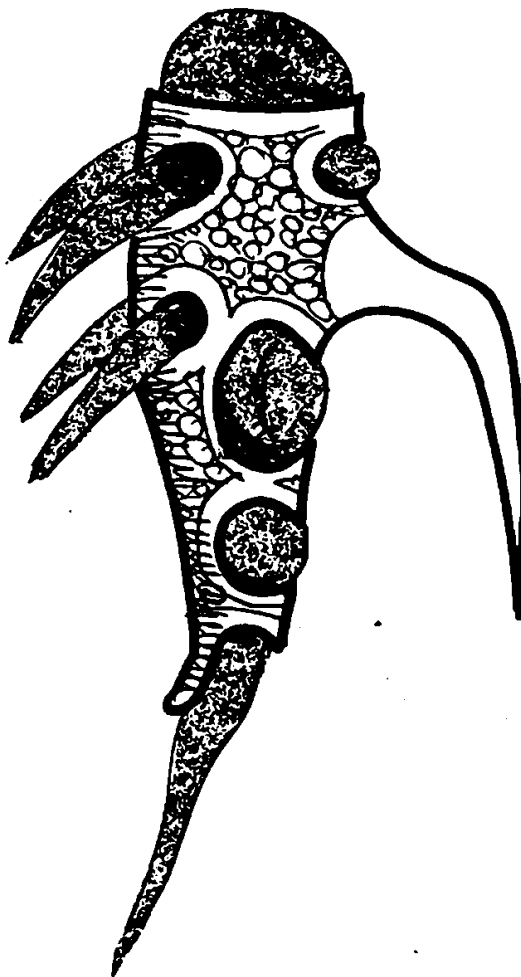
But right now you've got this system of regulations that says that you've got to be of this particular union to repair a house. All of these rules had their purpose at one time, but once a government gets old enough to have dinosaurs in its regulations you've got troubles. It takes a powerful, foresighted leader to say, "This regulation is not serving us well at this point. This needs to go out."

They've done it at the wrong end. They've taken the massive public support systems like the phone system, the trucking system, the airline system, deregulated those, when what they've should have been deregulating was the jobs at the lower end of the economy where there is the opportunity for somebody to haul themselves out of an economic situation by their own personal effort. They have deregulated on a massive company level when it should have been happening on the other end of the scale. Individual restrictions on entrepreneurship and individual initiative should have been taken away.

They should say that union rules do not apply automatically in any area that is a declared a depressed area so that local people can be paid local money for making local repairs. There are ways to do it so that it doesn't harm the union and it doesn't harm the local people. People working on their own things, people working on their neighbours things, people working on a community, bring the whole community up. Right now there's an enormous system of regulations preventing this very type of self help.

So these are areas where people get so busy living their daily lives that they forget to think about the whole system is structured. They forget to take the overview, to look at what is going on. Your average person doesn't worry about it.

This is the advantage that I see in forms of literature like science fiction. You can take situations and examine them in overview to see what makes them work and how you can improve them.



The big moment of excitement for the evening came in that panicky moment when the water level in the toilet began racing to the top and I realized that we didn't have a plunger. We've only been in the apartment three months. Why should we have a plunger? I was watching why.

Let me start again. Keith told me earlier this evening that he'd still had no contributions in for the next issue of his world-famous, multiple Hugo-winning (well, not really) fanzine. He'd suggested some time ago that I do an expanded version of a piece he'd seen from me elsewhere on the culture-shocking differences between American and Canadian restaurants; alas, while I could see possibilities in the idea, I hadn't been able to manage quite the right inspiration to get the job done. So tonight, he mentions that he still doesn't have any articles. Ten minutes later I'm watching the toilet overflow. I don't need no instant karma to knock me on the head.

While walking to the nearest supermarket to purchase my plunger, I tried to think of how I could possibly handle an article about the cultural differences I've noticed since moving to the USA -- Berkeley, to be precise. As I passed a short, stubby woman who was alternately screaming and mumbling to herself, I began to realize that form might as well not matter, since Keith had already abdicated responsibility for content by asking for the article in the first place -- I mean, how many of you are reading an sf fanzine to find out what I think of living in Berkeley? Really, let's see a show of hands. Yeah, that's what I thought.

Well, anyway, I passed by the troll-like screechy woman, and decided that street people would be a good place to start. Canada doesn't have the same quality street people. Sure, there are plenty of "Say, you got a dollar so I can make a phone call?" rubbies, and grubby looking transients, and even the occasional full fledged lunatic (I remember one guy who left posters all over Edmonton announcing that his upstairs neighbour was Josef Mengele) but winter tends to keep them off the street and in summer they're extras in The Beachcombers or something. (I'm almost positive I've given Bruno Gerrussi change a couple of times.) (*Derek obviously hasn't been to Toronto in a few years -- Keith*)

Anyway, it's not that Berkeley has more crazy people or

anything, it's just that more of them live on the street. Legislation in the '70s made it illegal to hospitalize people against their will, and the result was a lot of people walking from mental hospitals without any real place to go.

Of course, not all street people are insane. We get them in all shapes and sizes here. The population on the street swells every time the Grateful Dead plays Berkeley, and their Deadhead camp followers come along for the ride. This curious mixture of geriatric hippies and flower children too young to remember Watergate, let alone Woodstock, regularly lines certain parts of Telegraph avenue (one of their favoured spots seems to be outside Comics and Comix) and people People's Park. I recently saw a Dead-head asking for spare change so he could make the \$69 it would take him to get to the Dead's next tour stop. This is not unusual.

Deadheads are easy to take and can blend into society fairly easily. My buddy Rare is another matter entirely. Rare is a big guy -- not tall, but built solidly, with an excess of musculature. His hobbies include climbing trees and bending signposts, but he's best known for walking up to store-fronts on the Telegraph side of Berkeley and yelling, "Rare!" Hence the name. "How do you like your meat?" "Rare!" is a familiar echo on summer nights in Berkeley. Harold, the security guard at the record store where I used to work, told me that the first thing he did when he got his job was make friends with Rare. "I don't want no trouble with him," quoth Harold, "but if there is trouble, I want him to know I'm a friend." Rare does have a volatile temper (I once saw him almost assault a clerk who had touched him), but he is, for the most part, sweet-natured. One night, while I was working the late shift at the cash register, he came in, grinning ear to ear, and presented me with an Instamatic picture that someone had taken of him. He pointed happily at the Mr. Olympia pose in the picture and said, "That's me. That's a picture of me. You should put that on the wall. That's me." It pays to be agreeable, so I agreed that it was him

# The California Art of Tea

by Derek McCulloch

Of Toilets, Street People, Tea and Bulletproof Glass  
A Rationalisation in Action



and agreed to put it on the wall. For the rest of the night, he dragged his friends in to show them his picture on the wall.

My favourite street person, though, has to be a guy of what looks to be about fifty years old who wanders around wearing women's underwear over his clothes and oftentimes, skirts. For one thing he's got to be the most unselfconscious garbage-picker I've ever seen. For another, he seems to be the street person with the keenest sense of irony about himself; he really seems to feel like he's playing a joke on mainstream society.

I don't know, maybe I'm imagining it, but that's the way it seems to me. Here, you decide. Two examples:

One. There are lots of street musicians in this city, and a lot of them make fairly lucrative livings. A lot of them are as crazy as any street person, but I'll get to that later.

Anyway, one day, I was doing some business or other in town when I passed by a fairly hot blues band playing outside a popular pizza place. On closer examination I realized that our friend the transvestite was sitting in with them, banging a spoon on a can. The musicians didn't seem to mind; his noise couldn't really be heard over the amplified instruments. Every now and then the crowd would applaud, and Our Guy would nod appreciatively along with the other musicians. Everyone sort of took it for granted that he was part of the show.

Two. Even more ubiquitous than street musicians are people paid by the many pizza places to hand out flyers to passersby. Even more ubiquitous than the people handing out flyers are the crumpled-up flyers lying on the sidewalk a few paces away in each direction. One day (not the same day as when the transvestite was jamming with the musicians), I happened to see Our Guy picking up some of the crumpled leaflets and start handing them out to passersby, mimicking the hard-sell patter of the realeaflet people.

It was then what I figured out what he was doing -- or what I thought he was doing, anyway -- this man is the all-in-one

street theatre, and I'll be damned if he doesn't know it. He's the only street person I've seen yet who has enough perspective on street conventions to parody them. This man should be Secretary-General of the United Nations, at least.

OK -- I promised to talk about crazy street musicians. There are a few contenders for this title -- there's the guy with the buckteeth who banter with an audience who isn't there, and the guitar player whose only fan is a burnt-out groupie with a flower tattooed on her face -- but my favourite has got to be Rick Starr, star of the Rick Starr Show. Rick Starr first came to my attention almost a year ago when I heard him singing "My Way" off-key on a streetcorner. I watched, fascinated, as he proceeded to mangle "New York, New York", "Black Magic" and a dozen other Sinatra tunes. Rick sings without accompaniment (it wouldn't help), keeps up his stage patter by acknowledging the audience in the middle of the song (But more -- hey, how ya doing? -- much more than that, I did it -- thank you, thank you -- myyyy waaaaaay!) and has one "move" -- he holds his hand out, palm up and makes little, rhythmic circles in the air. Actually, he can do it with either hand, so I guess it's two moves.

Anyway, the really eerie thing about Rick Starr (whom I'd at first dubbed "Frankie", due to his choice of material) is listening to him talk about his "art" and how he knows his diligence is going to pay off soon. The big time, after all, is just one break away. More than once I've seen Rick spout that line to an onlooker after one of his "shows". Every time, Rick will excuse himself and leave, and the person will laugh about it with their friends behind his back. Rick really doesn't seem to notice. I hope if I ever become (or already am) such a blatant public joke, someone will be kind enough to point it out to me.

I've never been very good at transitions, so here's a tenuous one: after watching the Rick Starr show, I often repair to a nearby restaurant for a cup of tea, and you know what? Tea's in sad shape down here.

What it all boils down to are the little tags on the teabags. Even Red Rose tea (only in Canada? Haht!) that's sold down here carries those little tags. And you realize what those tags signify, don't you? Of course you do.

They mean that you're only intended to have one cup. See, the idea is, you don't brew it in the pot, you brew it in the cup, and then just yank the tea bag out by the string. But what our benighted American cousins so obviously don't recognize is that tea is not a beverage meant to be drunk by the cup, in isolation. No, tea is a drink of conviviality, of shared moments with friends. You brew up an industrial-strength pot of tea, pour out the cups and sit around, drinking tea and telling great stories about the war and complaining about your bursitis.

Americans, of course, realize none of this. They haven't had a firm grasp of tea since they started dressing up as Indians and tossing the stuff into the harbour (a silly fad, I've always thought). No, coffee is assumed to be the only friendly, non-alcoholic beverage here. Coffee snobbery is not just rampant, it's organized. For example, say you and a friend are sitting in a restaurant, you with

your tea, your friend with his coffee. Your friend takes two sips of coffee when all of a sudden the server appears to refill his cup. You say "Excuse me," and point to your bone-dry teapot, but the server is already gone. There are worse scenarios, of course. Often instead of disappearing, the server will fill my friend's cup with steaming coffee and turn to me and say, "Would you like a refill?" gesturing with the coffee pot.

"Sure," I say sourly, "just put it in my teapot, here."

That, of course, is not the worst of it.

I don't know, maybe it's just Berkeley. Maybe it's just these "Hey, I got accepted into a University so that must mean I'm an intellectual," hoity-toity, pretentious circles in which I move, but it seems like the only tea anyone here keeps at home is herbal tea. Now, my good friend and fellow Canadian, Ron Turner does this, but he's an artist so he's supposed to be pretentious. I mean, look at this selection -- we've got tea that tastes like cinammon, tea that tastes like raspberries, tea that tastes like "a refreshing blend of peppermint and spearmint." I've even seen Mocha-for-God's-Sake! flavoured tea. Who the hell decided that tea should taste should taste like anything but tea? I like tea! If I want raspberries, I'll torment and belittle children until they spit at me. And, as many people have pointed out to me, the stuff isn't even really tea! Why call it tea when it isn't tea?

And what is this with restaurants that ask you if you mean "iced tea or hot tea?" "Hot tea?" You have to specify "hot" if you want tea? If I want iced tea I'll ask for it. If I want tea I'll say "tea" and I won't mean any of that wimpy raspberry shit!

Sorry, excuse me, getting plebeian there. I'll change the subject.

Okay, my most profound moment of culture shock since moving down here took place when I walked into the Kentucky Fried Chicken a few blocks from my apartment. No, culture shock wasn't finding out that they don't call "Snack Packs" "Snack Packs" here. ("Two piece dinner." "Three piece dinner." Rather uninspiring, if you ask me.) No, it was the bulletproof glass.

You know you have entered a high crime district when you walk into the Kentucky Fried Chicken and find that the counterperson is separated from you by a six-inch thick wall of glass. It's enough to make a body uneasy. But you know what's worse than bulletproof glass in the Kentucky Fried Chicken? Give up? Bulletproof glass in the Post Office. I kid you not.

See, here's the hard part. I knew I wasn't going to be able to figure out a good way to tie all this stuff together. I mean, "Life here is different" may be true, but it's not much of a thesis. But now that I look at it, there is a common thread.

Isolation. I (and most of you) come from a country with a population density a fraction of the country I live in now. Yet all the differences I've noted in this article deal with isolation of one form or another -- street people who refuse or are unable to deal with mainstream society, tea by the single cup rather than the pot, walls of glass separating one person from another. These are not sign of friendliness and goodfellowship. These are symptoms of creeping urban paranoia that come from living in a

country that's just too damn big.

I wish I had answers and solutions. I wish I could make some sense of my surroundings. Bu most of all I wish I could just find somebody to drink tea with.

"Just be glad you live here in America  
Just relax and be yourself  
'Cause if you don't live here in America  
You'd probably live somewhere else."

-- Camper Van Beethoven



# Hunting the Wild Woods Lobster

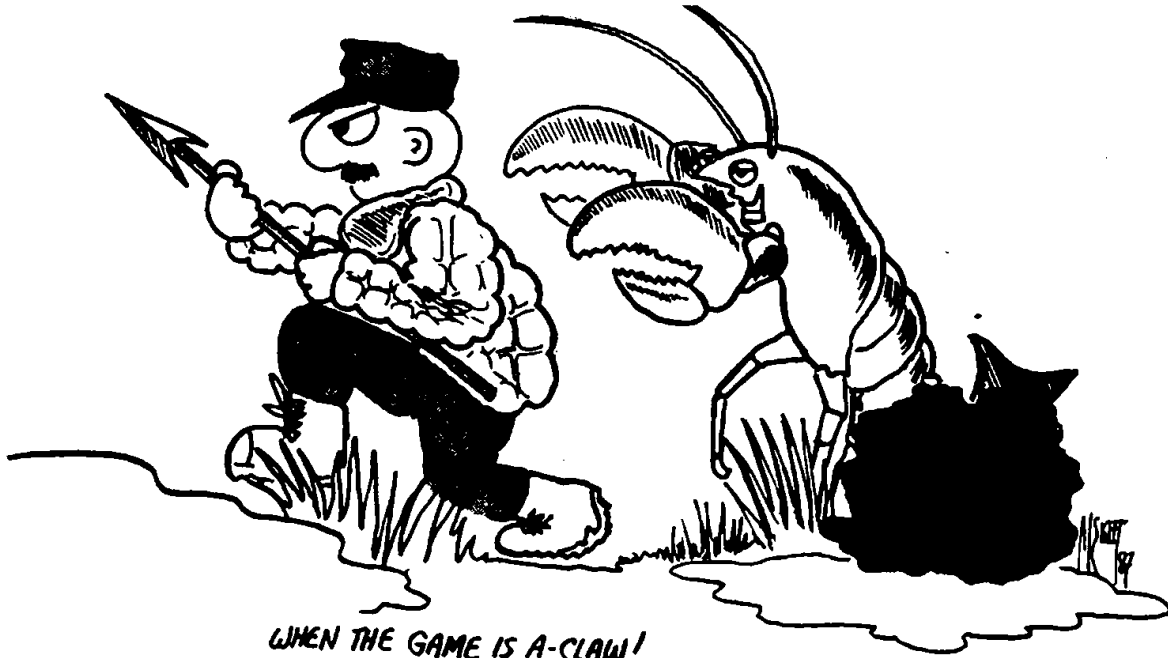
by Heather Ashby

Those who are devoted to the the neurotic search for a unique Canadian identity may rest at last. In conversations with many American and Canadian hunters I have discovered the definitive difference between Canadians and Americans. The wild woods lobster is not hunted by Americans. Only the Canadian hunter sallies forth in the late fall in eager pursuit of this unusual and delicious crustacean. Whether this points to greater courage in the Canadian hunter or a greater sense of self-preservation in the American hunter I really cannot say. It may even point only to the greater lack of public knowledge about *Homarus terrestrialis fesus*, a lack which the present article may go some way to relieving.

The legal season for the woods lobster lasts from mid-September to the end of November in southern Ontario. I cannot vouch for seasons in Manitoba, Quebec, the Maritimes or any of those states in which the hunting of the lobster is regulated. Most states, indeed, have no regulations regarding such hunting, as it is never done. The peak of the season here is in October and early November, when the wild woods lobster is at its plumpest and most succulent. The icy cold of late November is poor for hunting this beast. Although it must be admitted that it is easier to track them in a light snowfall (providing that the temperature has not sent them into total

hibernation) the truly sporting refrain. Not only are the prey starting to lose all that juicy flesh due to poor hunting but also their semi-torpor removes any vestige of sportsmanship from the chase. This is something Peter and I have never done in some six years of hunting lobster together. I hope this article convinces those who have never hunted this savage crustacean that nothing equals the excitement felt when the game is a-claw!

The wilds woods lobster or *Homarus terrestrialis fesus* structurally resembles the American or Northern lobster, *Homarus Americanus*, with the obvious exception of the vastly more powerful rear legs. Like its marine cousin, it reaches lengths of up to three metres, but it is slimmer and weighs only up to 25 pounds at the most. These are the deep woods monsters, rarely seen and even more rarely killed. The preferred habitat is mixed deciduous/coniferous woodland. The favoured prey consists of small birds such as finches, sparrows, warblers, and thrushes, with the occasional squirrel or chipmunk. These it captures by skillfully concealing itself on tree trunks and branches and snatching up such unfortunate victims as happen innocently to approach it. To facilitate this impersonation of harmless vegetation, the wild lobster's rough shell is coloured in mottled greens, greys and browns, with the dominant colour varying widely between individuals. Tinbergen's study of pattern, colour



*WHEN THE GAME IS A-CLAW!*

and their effect on courtship among the wild woods lobsters (1959) is a fascinating foray into crustacean psychology for those who might be interested.

When not out hunting, the wild lobster rests in its burrow, digesting its prey in warm, dark safety. This is also where it hibernates, during the deep of winter. When caught outside during extreme and unexpected cold snaps, the exposed lobster becomes temporarily dormant. The claws dig so firmly into the bark of the tree that sometimes both bark and lobster drop to the ground. Such lobsters fall easy prey to skunks, raccoons, foxes and unprincipled hunters. But usually the canny wild woods lobster, forewarned by its instincts, seeks the shelter of its burrow for protection from the inclement weather.

As it is practically impossible to spot the wild woods lobster while it is hunting, due to its excellent camouflage, the only real hope of bagging one of these elusive creatures is either to catch it on the trip from burrow to hunting ground or to track it to its burrow and lie in ambush, set traps at the entrance or dig down to the sleeping chamber late at night or very early in the morning.

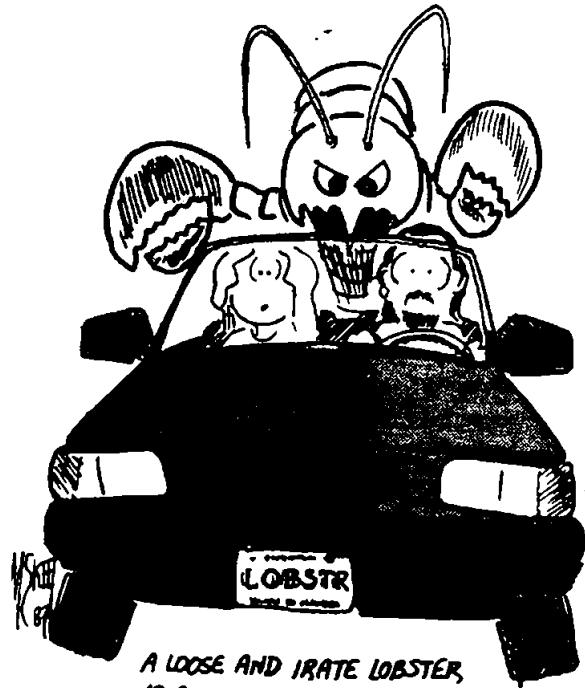
The dangers of hunting them by day and of ambushing them at dawn or dusk cannot be emphasized too strongly.

Although *Homarus terrestrialis ferus* is not a big game animal, it is fully as dangerous to hunt as a tiger, due to its ferocity and claws. One of the most horrifying memories of wild lobster hunting that we have is of stumbling across the body of a fellow hunter, stark and cold, his mouth frozen open in an unheard scream, his hands clasped in agony around the wild lobster embedded deep in his chest. His lobster hunting spear, stuck in a nearby tree, told the tragic tale. He had missed his cast, and the wild woods lobster, reckless in its fury, had leapt at its tormentor with razor sharp claws, and pierced the heart. The strong hind legs of the wild lobster can project him at incredible and dangerous velocities. Even ignoring such admittedly freakish mishaps, spear hunting this savage crustacean on his home grounds frequently leads to lacerated ankles and nose or ear loss due to tree level attacks. If the lobster must be hunted under such conditions, due to a lack of time or traps, it is suggested that the hunter abandon the spear and take up the bow. While the wild woods lobster's flesh is sweet, it is by no means worth life or limb.

The old Indian practice of tickling the lobster holds much in common with trout tickling, except that it is far more dangerous and not recommended by us or by any lobster hunter of our acquaintance.

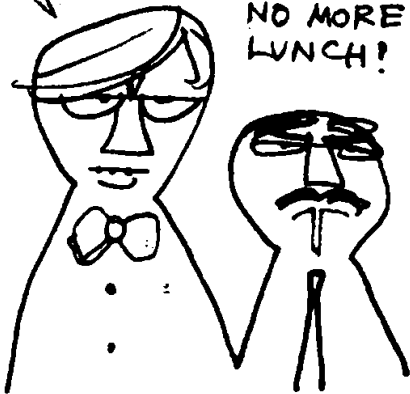
Tracking the wild woods lobster to its lair admittedly takes more time and equipment than stalking the woods but it is

infinitely safer. If the hunter has the time, it is suggested that he or she track the lobster the day before the actual hunt, whether alone or with the assistance of dogs trained to follow only old trails. Using dogs is, again, faster, but the dogs must be well-controlled. Almost any type of dog can be trained to track wild lobster, provided it is nimble enough to dodge the attack of an accidentally disturbed lobster. Should your dogs find one, call them off



*A LOOSE AND IRATE LOBSTER,  
IS A GREAT HAZARD IN A  
MOVING VEHICLE ...*

WE GOTTA SHIFT THE  
SUPPORT OF FARM INCOME  
FROM TAXPAYERS TO CONSUMERS.



NO MORE FREE  
LUNCH!

lobster is likely to tear his way to freedom, and possibly, revenge.

The practice of digging down to the sleeping chamber, while legal, is greatly to be deplored on two counts. It can only be practiced once winter has really set in and the lobsters have begun hibernating. There is little sport in spearing a snoring crustacean. This method also, if no tidying up is done, results in great damage to tree roots and in unsightly and dangerous cavities in the forest floor.

At any rate, whether caught in a trap or exposed in the burrow, the lobster should be speared immediately through the head. No time should be wasted in this manoeuvre. Even if it appears dormant, the wild woods lobster may suddenly awake and attack. Be doubly certain that the lobster is dead before you enter your car to return home with your prize. A loose and irate lobster is a great hazard in a moving vehicle, not only to hunters but also to those who share the roads with them.

Unlike its marine cousin, the wild woods lobster is best cooked after an aging period. There is no boiling or broiling alive. This is quite comforting to those of us squeamish about committing what Alice B. Toklas titles "Murder in the Kitchen" in her excellent cookbook. The wild woods lobster should be kept chilled for a minimum of one day and a maximum of four days before cooking. It should be roasted at 325 F for twenty minutes per pound. It may then be eaten as is, plain, or with a variety of sauces (sweet and sour, curry and lemon-butter are but a few of our favourites) or it may be shredded and added to a number of rice dishes or cold salads. Treat it much like chicken and you can't go far wrong.

One of the first dishes I ever cooked for Peter was Homard Sauvage a la Chinoise. It was his first introduction to this delicacy, and he was so enthusiastic that two weeks later we were off on a hunt. While we caught only one lobster on that trip, we will never forget those silent stalks through the colourful autumn forests, watching for the lines of scuffled leaves left behind by these ferocious beasts.

But the most exciting moment we ever shared in pursuit of *Homarus terrestrialis ferus* was when, just as I launched an arrow at a lobster some thirty paces away, a second lobster sprang at me from a nearby tree. Had it not been for Peter's quick reflexes and skill with a spear, I would have spent the next few weeks in the hospital. And it was over the carcasses of those same two lobsters that Peter proposed to me. So the savage and unusual crustaceans naturally top our list of favourite game. And all of you are cordially invited to join us next fall in the great woods, in hunting the wild woods lobster.

immediately. One enraged lobster can easily handle three or even four dogs. Once the burrow entrance has been found, a trap may be set in the night. This should be done either very late at night after the lobster has retired (they are strictly diurnal) or before dawn, when they head out to hunt. Either a net or a modified marine lobster trap may be used. If the latter, remember to narrow the trap to fit the woods lobster's shape. Care must be taken to empty the trap quickly after the capture, or the wild woods



# CANCON

Canadian sf  
reviewed by  
Keith Soltys

(Author's note: The first three reviews in this column were originally written for Robert Runte's *New Canadian Fandom*. Since NCF is in limbo at the moment I'm running them here instead. They're a bit dated but the books deserve mention anyway.)

*Tesseract*s, edited by Judith Merrill, Press Porcepic, 235-560 Johnson St., Victoria, B.C., V8W 3C3, 1985, 292 pages, \$9.95

*Daughters of Earth*, by Judith Merrill, McClelland and Stewart Toronto, 1985, 383 pages, \$5.95

*Count Zero*, by William Gibson, Ace Books, New York, 1986, 246 pages, \$3.95

*A Hidden Place*, by Robert Charles Wilson, Bantam/Spectra, New York, 1986, 212 pages, \$3.50

There have been other anthologies of Canadian sf but *Tesseract*s is the most ambitious and the first with a national scope to concentrate on contemporary writers. It's a measure of the growth of Canadian science fiction that an anthology like this should not only be possible but is a commercial success. (Press Porcepic will be publishing a sequel in October 1987).

It's only fitting that Judy Merrill's first anthology in seventeen years should be an anthology of Canadian SF. Merrill moved to Canada in the mid-sixties, helped to found Toronto's Spaced Out Library, and has been a prominent figure in Canadian literary and science fiction circles ever since.

*Tesseract*s is a handsome book, a quality trade paperback with a striking cover, containing stories and poems by 31 writers. Merrill has selected from a wide range of sources. The commercial mainstream of science fiction is represented by reprinted stories by Spider Robinson, William Gibson, Michael Coney and Phyllis Gottlieb. Many of the stories and poems come from the literary "little" magazines. About half of the contributions are published here for the first time and several were translated from the French.

Readers expecting an anthology of commercial mainstream sf are going to be in for a surprise, though anyone familiar with Merrill's anthologies from the 1960's will feel right at home here. There is a wide variety of styles, themes and ideas and more than a few stories that would have been called experimental a decade or two ago.

In her afterword Merrill relates a conversation with her daughter who said, about science fiction, "It's the only place where you can do any useful thinking about the idea that there might not be a future". Merrill goes on to say, "And of course that's what most of this book is about: the children finding ways to grow up, the parents trying to help them. I didn't plan it that way; it's just that those were the stories that seemed to work."

Two of the book's strongest stories fit this theme. Elisabeth Vonarburg's "Home From the Sea" and Terence M. Green's "The Woman Who Is the Midnight Wind" feature strong portrayals of parent/

child relationships in a difficult world.

Other writers rely on humour or pointed satire. Benjamin Freedman's "On the Planet Grafool" and Robert Zend's "An Adventure in Miracle Land" turn common ideas on their heads, with pointed effect. Susan Swan's "The Man Doll" is a wickedly funny look at the relationship between the sexes.

It's unfortunate that the best known Canadian sf writers are represented by reprints, though Merrill has selected strong stories. William Gibson's "Hinterlands", Spider Robinson's "God is an Iron" and Phyllis Gottlieb's "Tauf Aleph" are all representative of the authors' best work.

*Tesseract*s should get high marks as a literary event. The book was launched at Harbourfront's prestigious International Festival of Authors and has received a good deal of media attention. It will no doubt become a staple of Canadian sf and Canlit courses. Yet, I found it something of a disappointment as a reading experience. Too many of the stories seemed to bog down in self-conscious stylistic devices that tended to alienate from the story they were trying to tell.

Still, *Tesseract*s gives good value for the dollar. It's an important book that deserves to be widely read.

Merrill's skill as an anthologist has tended to over-shadow her reputation as a writer. As well, she hasn't been prolific in recent years. She has written some stories that truly deserve to be called classics and now her best work has been



collected in a volume called *Daughters of Earth*.

In the title story, and in stories like "That Only a Mother", "The Shrine of Temptation" and "Peeping Tom", Merrill shows an empathy and skill with characterization that few writers in the genre can match. This is a valuable and long overdue collection.

William Gibson gained a lot of attention last year when his first novel, *Neuromancer*, won the Hugo, Nebula and Philip K. Dick awards. It was almost certainly the best first sf novel since Joe Haldeman's *The Forever War*. Now he's followed it up with a strong second novel, *Count Zero*, which had the distinction of being the first novel to be serialized by *Isaac Asimov's Science Fiction Magazine*.

*Count Zero* isn't really a direct sequel to *Neuromancer*, though it takes place in the same setting a few years later. Once again Gibson explores the strange world of the 'cowboys', computer hackers who explore the Net, the consensual hallucinatory experience of mind linkage with the world's linked databases.

Gibson expands his scope somewhat here, telling the story from the point of view of three different characters. Turner is a corporate mercenary recovering from a near-fatal attack when he is summoned to assist in the corporate defection of a computer scientist who has developed the first successful bio-chips. Meanwhile, Bobby Newmark, a young cowboy, almost dies on his first journey into the Net but is rescued by a mysterious, virginal figure. In Brussels, Mary Krushkova, the former owner of a Parisian art gallery, is summoned by Josef Virek, one of the world's wealthiest men, who wants her to discover the source of a strange, haunting, art work. All three main characters become linked through the mystery of just what saved Bobby from death on his trip into the Net.

Like *Neuromancer*, *Count Zero* is fast paced, and told in a style that mixes elements of Hemmingway, William Burroughs and Dashiell Hammett. Gibson has Heinlein's knack for building up a convincing

picture of a world from a few well chosen details. The novel's opening paragraph provides a good example:

"They set a slambang on Turner's trail in New Delhi, slotted it to his pheromones and the colour of his hair. It caught up with him on a street named Chandni Chauk and came scrambling for his rented BMW through a forest of bare brown legs and pedicab tires. Its core was a kilogram of recrystallized hexogene and flaked TNT."

I didn't get the same kind of rush from reading *Count Zero* that I did from *Neuromancer*, though that's probably due to the familiarity of the style and setting. I did read it through in one sitting -- it's a compulsively readable novel. It doesn't break new ground but it does show a growth in Gibson's skill as a writer and bodes well for his future.

Toronto author Robert Charles Wilson's first novel, *A Hidden Place*, was published to wide critical acclaim and I'm going to add to that. It's a wonderful book and deserves to be widely read.


The story is set in the midwest United States during the depression.

Travis, a young man, is sent to board with relatives in a small town after the death of his mother. Travis

is immediately infatuated with one of the boarders, Anna, a strange, ethereal woman. His involvement with her leads to a bizarre otherworldly confrontation at the end of the novel.

Wilson's setting is sharply etched and his characters are drawn with a rare skill. He has the knack of being able to sum up a scene with a sentence or two so apt that it's like a bomb going off in your head. He's been compared (justly) to Theodore Sturgeon, but with his small town setting and compassion for its inhabitants, he reminds me more of the late Margaret Laurence -- and he's very nearly as good a writer.

Read this book. You're missing something very special if you don't.



FOR YEARS, I  
STRUGGLED IN  
ANONYMOUS POVERTY,  
TRYING TO BECOME  
FAMOUS AS A WRITER.  
THEN, ONE DAY, I AWOKE  
TO THE REALISATION  
THAT, FOR A  
CANADIAN WRITER, FAME MEANS  
A GUEST SHOT ON "FRONT PAGE  
CHALLENGE" AND A SHORTER  
WAIT FOR CANADA COUNCIL  
GRANTS.

NOW, I SELL  
COMPUTER SOFTWARE...  
DOING NICELY, TOO.

... SAY, WHAT KIND OF  
MACHINE ARE YOU USING,  
ANYWAY?

**Mike Glicksohn**  
Toronto

Since I have the honour of being TORUS' first contributor I thought it appropriate that I try to also be its first loccer.

I say I have the honour to be your first (outside) contributor but that's based on the assumption that you started off the issue with my article because you wanted to make a strong first impression. In which case I applaud your editorial acumen and congratulate you on an excellent concept for your fanzine. If, on the other hand, you started with my piece because you wanted to get it out of the way quickly so you could built towards the strongest material then I castigate your lack of critical faculties and condemn your worthless piece of trash. (That's part of Chapter Two, of course; what loccking several thousand fanzines has taught me, flexibility subsection.)

Actually, whatever the editorial motivation behind the placement of my contribution I'm quite pleased to be in the first issue (and to grace the first cover) of this quite impressive new Canadian fanzine. The printing is mostly clear and sharp (albeit a tad too fearsomely black in spots for my taste), the design is a cut above most beginning fanzines (although there's a tendency to start new material in the middle of a page that doesn't appeal to me) and you've kept the typos and glitches to an acceptable level (but there's always room for improve- ment). All in all a decidedly better- than-average fanzine that bodes well for future issues. I especially like your plans to showcase local talent as much as possible and I wish you every success in making TORUS a frequent, high-quality fanzine of the sort that will put Canadian fandom back on the fannish map. I'll do what I can to be a part of it!

*(Finding the local talent to showcase could turn out to be a problem. A com- mon complaint among Canadian fnz eds is a lack of writers combining those two necessities, interest and talent. There is hope for the future, though. A fanzine panel at NonCon 10 resulted in promises by the faneds present to share any and*

*all "new" Canadian fanwriters they discover - MS)*

I've never really understood this fanaticism for regional fandoms that consumes some people. As far as I'm concerned, I'm not a Canadian fan. I'm a fan who happens to live in Canada but the fandom I'm a part of is global in scope, albeit North American in its focus. It's never bothered me that there's no central organization for Canadian fans to belong to and while I applaud the efforts of Garth Spencer to carve out some sort of Canadian identity to fandom above the 49th I have my doubts as to whether or not such efforts are either necessary, possible or laudable. I did my bit for fandom in Canada but the majority of my efforts have been aimed at a wider audience and that's the route I'd recommend to young fans just putting their toes into the pond for the first time. Why settle for a backwater when there's a whole lake out there to be a big fish in?

I imagine most fans can empathize with the tribulations of moving a fannish household, whether it be across the country or just across the street. Like Lorna I could never trust my book collection to a bunch of mere movers and since that makes up the largest part of what I have to move it seems I'm doomed to do my own moving whenever I hit the road. (Doris and I thought this four bedroom house would probably be our last move for quite a while but already it doesn't seem big enough for the two of us so we're looking for somewhere with an extra storey and a finished basement so we can have the space two normal fans need to be comfortable!)

Since I'd never heard of Strawberry Jam Comics I was interested in reading of its genesis. I'm not much into the current comic scene but it's good to know that some independent locals are apparently making a go of it. Mike Bannon's artwork seems strongly reminiscent of Brad Foster's fanart to me and since I like Brad's stuff that's a compliment.

Karen's piece was also intriguing and helped reinforce my happiness that I have no desire to Be A Writer.

Too much like hard work when you have no talent for it and I avoid hard work even in areas where I do have some ability.-

**Walt Willis**  
32 Warren Road  
Donaghdee, N. Ireland  
BT21 OPD, 150EC86

Many thanks for TORUS. First issues have certainly come on since my days. I've known fans who would have been happy to climax their careers with an issue as good as this.

I liked the Skeet/Toolis removal saga with its unexpected blend of the familiar and the exotic (can you insure against infestation by pink flamingoes?) but I thought Karen Wehrstein's article was marvellous in more ways than one. -It was compulsively interesting, it was original, it was sensible and sincere and useful, and it was written with fluency, wit and warmth. It reminded me of Theodore Sturgeon at his best. Yes, on the whole I liked it.

Incidentally the remark about not being able to upload a hug reminds me of my old suggestion of a firm called Interfauna for just that sort ofthing. But the only developments have been in areas like pie delivery, which seems a pity.

*(You're comparing Karen with Ted Sturgeon? That's very kind of you, but I may have to physically prevent her from seeing this, or we might well never hear the end of it - MS)*

**Robert Runte**  
P.O. Box 4655 PSS E  
Edmonton, Alberta T6E 5G5

My Old Grannie used to tell me that if you couldn't think of anything nice to say, you shouldn't loc. On the other hand, it is a lot easier to find the motivation to write if you are pissed off about something. I find I am fairly annoyed by Heather Ashby's "Modest Proposal."

It is not just that it is pretty much a throw-away piece: the punchline was obvious in the second paragraph, and the humour was sophomoric. But then, so is a lot of stuff in fanzines, and no harm done. For all I know Ms Ashby is a sophomore and "dildo" humour is appropriate for her. I recall with fond nostalgia when I first read the Hugo/dildo joke in a fanzine in 1968; and the first time I saw a dildo award presented at a con in 1975; or when Derek McCullough first introduced the joke to Keith Soltys at NonCon 5. Just because I'm a little bored with it doesn't mean the concept is not still new and fresh to others.

I do, however, object to her characterizing the Canadian Science Fiction and Fantasy Award as "tasteless self-gratification." It does annoy me to read yet another attack on the concept of a Canadian SF award.

Look, there are lots of sacred cows in fandom that need deflating, but I don't think the CASPERS qualify. The poor award has been struggling against ignorance, bigotry, and a national inferiority complex since day one, and is a long way from being safely established. This is the first year that it hasn't been plagued by controversy over definitions of eligibility, the first year that Torontofans (one of our major centres) could be bothered to get involved, and maybe the second year that the numbers of both nominees and voters make it a truly exciting event. For the first time it's starting to look like the CASPERS might actually make a go of it.

But no. Instead we have to contend with the continuing series of cheap shots and self-fulfilling doom sayers. Rather than giving the CASPERS a chance, it seems like people want to kick it when it's down.

Let's tell ourselves over and over that there are no Canadian SF writers, and that it is egoist to have our own award, and that we are just diddling ourselves. If we say it often enough and loud enough and funny enough, maybe we can kill off the CASPERS once and for all.

Just once I'd like to read a humour piece where somebody made fun of the Canadian fans who can't name three out of the hundred or so Canadian SF authors. Just once I'd like to read somebody make fun of the SF readers who think the future is male American engineers making the universe safe for capitalism. Just once I'd like to see a humour piece lampoon people who complain that there wasn't enough action in Margaret McBride's "Totem," or that David Kirkpatrick's "The Effect of Terminal Cancer on Potential Astronauts" didn't have any spaceships. Just once I'd like to see someone make fun of the fans who didn't read *Tesseracts* because nothing Canadian could be any good. Just once I'd like to see someone make fun of the CASPERS because we were the last country to establish our own award, years after Britain, Australia, Germany, France, Spain, Poland, Yugoslavia, etc., etc. Just once I'd like to see something original and supportive, something that attacked the cliches rather than perpetuated them.

*(In all seriousness, Robert, you're on: I for one would love to see such a piece with your name on it. I think you're almost uniquely qualified to write it - and you're right: it's high time something like it was done - MS)*

Since the CASPERS were founded, we've seen the first national Conventions, the first Canadian Fan Fund, the first national newsletter; we've gone from ignorance of Quebec fandom to partnership and the first translations of French Canadian SF; we've established a national writers' workshop; we've had the first volume of *Tesseracts* and the second is on the way; most importantly, we've gone from half a dozen authors to over a hundred. I'm not trying to

claim that the CASPERS were responsible for all that growth, but I do think they (and perhaps the controversy they generated) were part of, and contributed to, an SF renaissance in this country.

I believe the SF scene in Canada is about to take off and make a splash the likes of which hasn't been seen since the British "New Wave" hit the genre 20 years ago. But of course statements like that simply bring loud gawhaffs from the average Canadian fan who knows in his heart of hearts that we're a second rate nation turning out second rate literature.

So you will excuse me if I don't think that Heather's article was very funny. I don't think we should be laughing at our authors, at least not until we've given them a chance. If fans are looking for a cheap sophomoric laugh, then let them join me in telling Ms Ashby exactly where she can put her suggested trophy.

P.S. Where do you and Garth get off saying (Page 8) that *New Canadian Fandom* has folded? What do you guys think you have been trading with? Where do you think your article submissions have been going? Are you guys on drugs or what?

*[I have come to the conclusion that a fanzine shouldn't be declared folded until its editor is dead. We humbly await NCF's next issue - MS]*

**Brian Earl Brown**  
11675 Beaconsfield  
Detroit, MI USA 48224

I was struck by your editorial comment "...no, we will not apologize for not using mimeo," since I don't recall anyone ever making an issue over whether a fanzine was printed by mimeo, photocopy or carved potato heads. Well, OK, Ted White was pretty embarrassed to be photocopying early issues of *Pong*, but that's it. I've been reading and publishing fanzines for over 12 years and you know, the only people to make an issue over what method of repro is used are the people (and only some at that) who opt not to use mimeo. Those of us who use mimeo do generally for reasons other than

fannish mythos or smof peer pressure. Reasons like its cheapness. So don't apologize for photocopying TORUS.

*(The comment was made because a number of people - no names here - have been, to say the least, condescending about non-mimeo fanzines, implying that an otherwise fine piece of work had been spoilt by photo-repro. It may seem a bit defensive, but that's how we felt at the time - MS)*

Using a dot-matrix printer is another matter...

This is the first zine I've seen where the chief complaint might be that the print is too big! Usually fans complain about excessively reduced text. I had to hold this issue at arm's length to where I could read the words easily. Harry Warner, of course, will love you for giving his poor eyes a rest.

For awhile I was afraid Mike Glicksohn was going to spend his whole article complaining about having to write this article, but he settled down after first page to actually doing what was required of him. I've seen few articles from Mr. Glicksohn, and they all seem to be devoted to ways of avoiding doing the article. Much of what Mike says is pretty conventional wisdom (if you'll pardon the pun). The one thing he says that sticks out in my mind is his comment that there are no bad conventions, only bad committees. Those are true words. The fans who go to conventions make their own fun no matter how much the concom helps or gets in the way.

I'm astonished to learn that anyone can buy a 407-122 if they want to. Or that they're sold at any Consumer's Distributing outlet. I was under the impression that things like 407-122 had to be mail-ordered from places with names like Stamford Hygenic or Mel's Pleasure Chest. Is Canada that much more liberated than the U.S.?

*(Depends who you talk to. A good many Canadians - fans included - would just as soon not know that These Things Exist - MS)*

Christopher Coggon's spiel on the "Phoenix" spaceplane sounds a lot like the spiel originally given for the space shuttle - cheap, highly reusable, simple to operate etc. The shuttle turned out to be none of these things and sadly - because I would like to see a cheap spaceplane - I suggest Coggon's description of the "Phoenix" is just as divorced from reality.

**Eric Lindsay/Jean Webber  
6 Hillcrest Ave.  
Faulconbridge, NSW 2276  
Australia**

TORUS sure is an attractively produced fanzine, but I must admit that considering some of the other fine zines to emerge from Toronto, I didn't expect less.

I'd have to agree that Mike Glicksohn would know better than to agree to doing vast numbers of articles; shows the problems of indulging in the demon booze while at cons, or at least shows you shouldn't let fanzine editors into parties. However, Mike covers that when he mentions that enjoyment of cons comes from within... so the idea is to dodge faster when an editor approaches.

I tried following Mike's advice on keeping hold of everything from your con experience as a means of reconstructing the past. It doesn't work. If you keep it all, you can't locate the things that you want. And eventually you reach household saturation point. I don't understand how Mike managed to keep his keepsakes under the bed when he was renting; I can't find space for mine, despite having a whole house, and I haven't attended a fraction of the cons Mike has. Indeed, Jean was just mentioning to me the other day that the only way I could pack more stuff in was to throw out something old. So I've started by throwing out my 1975 loc files ...so I can start doing more locs in 1987...12 years isn't too long.

I wonder why the Garth Spencer Canadian fandom article reminded me so forcibly of Australian fandom? On the other hand, Heather Ashby's proposal on the nature of the

CASPER award does make a lot of sense.

I also wonder how practical the Phoenix that Christopher Coggon writes about so charmingly will prove to be. The history of space flight so far has been one of great promise, but very little has been produced at or even near budget. Why think that Phoenix would be different? (Don't misunderstand me; I'd be delighted to be wrong... but I'm pessimistic, and realistically so based on past efforts in the field.)

**Harry Andruschak  
P.O. Box 1422  
Arcadia, CA, USA 91006  
(note COA)**

I no longer work at JPL, having been laid off after working there 13 years on the planetary exploration program. I have finally found a new job... I am not enthusiastic about it, for the pay is low and there are no retirement benefits. Still, it is a job and will get some money on the table. Not too many companies willing to hire the over-40 nowadays.

So I guess I'll have to be grateful. Grudgingly grateful.

Of course I was interested in Garth Spencer's comment on CANADAPA, since I was a member mumble-mumble years ago, and I was wondering if it was still around. Sorry to hear that it faded away. Perhaps he might contribute an article, in TORUS 2, about what apas and fanzines are around. At least try to document some of Canadian fannish history, so to speak.

*[Garth created such a list for the final ish of Maple Leaf Rag, his Canadian newszine.]*

Having been laid off from JPL as a direct result of the *Challenger* disaster and the resulting collapse of the U.S. Space Program, I have my doubts if any of Christopher Coggon's narrative will ever come true. Aside from the finance and the engineering (which I think Chris, like NASA, constantly underestimates), there is the question of getting an OK from Washington. At the moment our president is Ronald Reagan, a scientific illiterate who believes there is something in ESP and astrology,

wants creationism taught in U.S. schools and has no real idea what to do about space except put a lot of weapons into orbit via SDI. NASA, as much as anything else, has no real leadership. Our current administrator is the same incompetent who in the 1970s got NASA into this mess in the first place.

*(It's hard not to disagree with you. The biggest single difference these days between the U.S. and Soviet space programs [aside from the fact that only one of them seems to be working] is that the Soviets have a strong sense of what their long-range goals are. "Aimless is about the kindest way of describing current U.S. space policy. I've given up; my money's on the Japanese - MS)*

**Steve George**  
642 Ingersoll St.  
Winnipeg, MB R3G 2J4

I liked Garth Spencer's article on Canadian fandom, a subject on which he is the acknowledged expert, because while it is brief and superficial, it does manage to get across the feeling of what fandom is like in Canada. We are widely separated, aren't we? Fanzines, it seems to me, are the only method we have of maintaining regular communication; cons are too far apart and too expensive to be much good in that respect, especially for those of us who like to stay where we are.

Heather Ashby's "modest proposal" wasn't very well thought out, and can be applied to any awards given by any group to its members for achievement in their own field. The amusing thing is Heather's apparently intimate knowledge of the 407-122 personal vibrator. I assume the analogy between use of the device and the presentation of the CASPERS seemed so original to Heather that she found herself quite unable to resist the cheap shot that is her "modest proposal" rather than offering an honest commentary on the awards. That, I'd say, is a perfect example of, as Heather might put it, "tasteless self-gratification."

I can appreciate Karen Wehrstein's

thoughts about small writers' groups.

Such groups, I believe, do help the writer to polish his talent. The only contact with such a group that I have is the small group formed by my father, mother, middle brother and I. All of us are hopeful writers, and all of us read each other's anything. Only my mother, however, has so far sold anything. Zebra books just purchased her first novel, have requested to see her second, and she is happily plugging away at her third. Meanwhile, the rest of us plod on, and on... For myself, I wish I had a slightly larger group to deal with. A group not so close, one that would be willing to be more critical. You can't always get what you want, but...

**Jessica Amanda Salmonson**  
P.O. Box 20610  
Seattle, WA, USA 98102

TORUS is a lovely fanzine. I hope you'll be able to get issues of this quality out into the world at fairly regular intervals, as the way to have an impact is to appear often enough that a sense of reliability and ongoing "existence" is created in the minds of fans. It's been quite a while since a reliable genzine has gone out to fandom on anything resembling a regular basis. It's a good environment in which to make a real impact as the competition is slight.

With the advent of desk-top publishing programs for word processors, the genzine may in fact make a comeback in the next couple of years (and TORUS could be at the fore-front of this if it comes out at close enough intervals not to be forgotten between-times). It's also interesting to think that the future of the fanzine may be represented here: cheapo computer graphics and fuzzy dot matrix, as opposed to the old standard of equally fuzzy mimeograph on high-acid twill-tone paper. Photocopy paper will last longer than the traditional mimeo paper, by the way.

*(Instead of cheapo computer graphics and dot-matrix, substitute laser print and I agree with you. The cost of laser printers is dropping, and you can already rent them cheaply*

*enough to justify their use. I see a future where, if they wish, anybody can produce a high-quality small magazine - MS)*

I met Judith Merrill only once. I'm sure she wouldn't remember me, but she was very impressive, very cool, so it isn't likely I'd fail to remember her! Her clear-sightedness about the promise and the usual banality of science fiction is the sort of critical approach not often heard enough today. The most influential critic at this moment is apt to be Orson Scott Card whose essays and reviews have had the highest visibility and appeared the most often in a variety of places. He's a nice chap whose ideas seem to suggest that sf should continue to look boldly forward to the year 1955. This wouldn't be so obnoxious if the more intellectual end of the spectrum was equally visible in critical essays, if Merrill for a superior example were actively involved in an ongoing manner as a critic, commentator, anthologist, or whatever. I gather her visibility in Canada is somewhat felt. But here in the lower 48, I'm afraid she's a virtual unknown to younger fans, and rather expatriated from the minds of older fans and professionals as well. The field is frankly reactionary both politically and in its response to literary fantasy. The politics are conservative, the genre fiction is banal and formula-ridden, and too few people want the situation mucked with. I'm afraid the rebels of the field either get burned out, or they get bored, while ass-kissers and back-biters trundle along promoting, reading, or writing the Same Old Crap.

The tendency for us 48-ers to underestimate Canadian impact on sf is perhaps reflected in the lack of internal understanding that Bill Gibson is Canadian. He's generally thought of as a Northwesterner, British Columbia being more a part of Washington and Oregon than it is of Canada! The idea of a leading and internationally admired sf writer from Canada is outside the capacity for abstract thought in America. Even Robertson Davies said, in one of his ghost stories, that Canadian authors,

when they die, come back as higher beings: American authors. Bill has done it without dying first.

*(sf in the U.S. is still strongly influenced by its pulp origins. Canadian sf, by contrast, has its origins in the fantastic literature of the 18th and 19th centuries. It is much more self-consciously literary because it has to compete directly with all literary styles. At the same time, the genre influence from the U.S. is strong enough that both genre and literary sf are being written today. I'd venture to say, though, that the literary outweighs the genre stuff both in quality and quantity - MS)*

**Tony Davis**  
P.O. Box 79179  
Senderwood 2145 South Africa

I see from "Last Words" that TORUS is/could be a biannual event, but what number is the one I'm feverishly clutching and what's the date of publication?

*(If there's no number, you should assume it's the first example of the zine; it's sort of pretentious to number something as "first" until you're sure there'll be a "second." As for publication data, it's embarrassing that there's no masthead on Number One. But FYI the ish was printed in October '86 - MS)*

Liked Mike Glicksohn's piece on fandom - how about a Canadian follow-up to Pohl's "The Way the Future Was," Mike? Generally, TORUS was a bit parochial at times but I suppose that is to be expected. I've tended to find *Maple Leaf Rag* to be a good all-round Canadian sf fanzine. TORUS seems to be grasping for an identity: voice of Toronto sf scene, general "all things to all people," not quite a clubzine, fanzine or whatever, but a good read nonetheless. Enjoyed seeing very readable, clean copy - very professional in that sense.

**Brad Foster**  
4109 Pleasant Run  
Irving, TX, USA 75038

Always fascinating to see a new zine show up in the mailbox. I know people have brought this up before, but I'd love to see a list of all the fanzines that have come out in just the last few decades; probably be as thick as the New York City phone book!

Was surprised to see the huge number of Rotsler illos until I read "About This Issue;" Geiss acts as sort of a clip-art service with those things!

I particularly enjoyed Glicksohn's article on his views of conventions; nice to get a more positive outlook to it all than most of the complaining articles that usually show up. Especially his position that it was the people at a convention that make or break one. Of course, when you don't have anyone interesting to talk to, and a lousy con, then it's time to write an article com-plainin'!

Stockton's article on Strawberry Jam Comics interesting. I've seen some this

ads for *To Be Announced*, and a few nice reviews, but have yet to lay my hands on a copy. Way too big a glut of new comics suddenly flooding the market, and the local comic shop can only afford to handle a portion of it. But I'll keep looking around for it; sounds wonderful. Even those three little bits of art you ran here show the promise of an entertaining full book. You need to run an address where interested folks could contact them. HEY! Tell 'em I want a copy and ask 'em to let me know how to go about getting one! See, a result from free publicity! Hot damn!

We Also Heard From: Tara!; Ben Bova; Mandy Slater; Jean Lamb; Ben Schilling; David Bates; Ben Indic; René Gagnon; and Michelle Muijsert, Mark Loney and Julian Warner of *The Space Wastrel* ("It's rather amazing how many three-editor productions there are around at the moment. We constantly receive locs predicting doom using this method ....")

