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December 9, 1993

First of all, thanks for the big, fat new ish of SE. And finally here's a deadline that even the laziest Corellian can meet -- February 1st. The cause of this is, of course, not so nice and, as I already mentioned in my Xmas card to you, I am sorry to hear about your personal trouble. Actually, my heart goes out to everybody who has recently had (or is -- hopefully not -- having some bad luck. My fingers are crossed for you all.

On to the brighter side of the Force...

I had a wonderful time in the U.S. again, riding a too-good-to-be-true horse, surviving (unscathed) a car wreck, and meeting with Leanne Wingo and Ming Wathne -- the highlights of my trip. By now I have seen *The Fugitive* twice (once in the US and once here in Germany in the dubbed version). *Great* movie. Did you see *Jurassic Park*, too? The music is another classic by the incomparable John Williams and the tricks are A1. But still I like the book better. Now I'm very impatiently waiting for the next Indy movie. Hey, girls ... anyone else "hot for the hat"?

And now the LoCs ... short and sweet (a) because I still suffer the after effects of a 10 day battle with the flu, and (b) because I'm missing my office 'puter for this garbage...

Debbie Kittle: You pay only \$45 for the Screaming Model of Han Solo? Here the model sells for DM 179.95 (about \$103)!!! Call that outrageous. Also, I envy you and anyone else able to receive the SFC and with it such goodies as Princess Leia Orgasm ... uh, sorry, Organa narrating the presentation of the trilogy. Arrgh! Why do I have to vegetate here on the outer rim while the bright center of the universe is having fun?

Z. P.: "Dirty Tricks..."

The day before... *Where was Han...*

According to the novelization of ANH, when Ben and Luke entered the cantina, Has was sitting with a humanoid (not human!) female on his lap -- let's just assume he did some "business" with her in an upstairs establishment before spending his last credits on booze in the cantina.

Plot... *What can go wrong with the Falcon...*

Everything. The old lady is coming apart at the seams anyhow.

If you have a story... *first person singular...*

My speciality.

...*can it be trimmed...*

Ask "Dear Ed."

...*pouring rain...*

A Tatooinian voice: Force, hear my prayer. Then I don't have to repair the vaporators anymore.

Ethnic habits... *Corellian funerals...*

Pirates are cremated, their ashes filled into hourglasses ... so that at least at the end of their miserable lives they will have to work.

...*Alderaani marriage rules...*

Do you, unlucky bridegroom of Her Highness, solemnly swear always to obey your wife's commands, warm her icy tootsies on cold Hoth nights, turn all your hard earned credits over to her and be happy and content with a monthly allowance of 10 credits, and will you satisfy her sexual needs whenever and wherever she wants you to? Answer with "no" and you receive a one-way ticket to Kessel.

...*Huttese style revenge...*

Hutts simply sit down on their adversary's lap.

...*Who are the Bothans?*

Idealistic, masochistic fools -- obviously.

...*Does Ackbar swim?*

Admirals do not have to swim themselves ... they have enough subordinates to do it for them.

...*Tatooine school system...*

I heard they have 4-H projects: the "Future Sandfarmers of Tatooine" raise sandfleas for the county fair.

...*Wookiee health care...*

Treatment for an overfilled stomach -- read the collected speeches of Grand Moff Tarkin or smell Corellian underwear ... the stomach will empty itself within seconds.

...*Mos Eisley work permits...*

Unnecessary ... since nobody in that wretched hive of scum and villainy works for a living.

...*Bespin city cleaners...*

The severed hand was -- like the rest of the garbage -- jettisoned via the long "waterslide tube" and plunked down to the surface of the gas planet.

Marti Schuller: Sorry, but... You do not like the idea that Beru and Luke's mom were sisters? Ben and Owen as brothers -- and that's enough. Hm, then just *how* is Luke related to Uncle Owen? Is he the child of Anakin Skywalker and Ben Kenobi? Not likely. So it's either: Luke's mom/Darthie's ball-and-chain was (a) a sister of Owen and Ben, (b) a daughter of Ben (that would make Owen Luke's grand-uncle), (c) a sister of Beru, or Anakin was (a) a

brother of Owen and Ben, (b) a brother of Beru, or (c) a son of Ben (that would make Owen Luke's granduncle). Anything else is impossible.

Nora Mayers: Agree 100% with you about Harrison's interviews. He's thorough and soft-spoken and often takes his time formulating his answers, but boring he's not. He has a very dry, sardonic sense of humor that kills me. He has a way of answering the often stupid, superficial questions of the media people with sarcastic answers like no other celeb near and far.

MaryJo Fox: So Wedge is the culprit. Congrats, daddy! Makes for a nice follow-up story. Any takers? No love scenes because of the kiddies? Hm, George probably had the children from his own generation in mind, who were not weaned on hardcore porn and splatter movies like today's kids.

Charyl Perry: Good to hear from you. Ah ... a victim for my warped sense of humor. You are hopefully aware that you pried open another one of Pandora's boxes with your call for comedy/slapstick. "They came from ... where?!" Just keep it up, old buddy. You are heading in the right direction. My, this gutter's getting crowded.

Barbara Anderson: Safari trophy, huh? Neat idea for an alternate ending story (hint, hint!). Agree with you about the character not being kept *in* character by inconsistent writing. Actually, I would love to see what ROTJ would look like had Irv Kershner directed it. Or would Spielberg have been a good choice? And about the writing: story by Alan Dean Foster, script by G. Katz/W. Huyck or Meno Meijes?

Tina Bentrup: Stahlriesenheld? Ya mean Grid-face? Old Doomsday? Black Beauty? Make-my-day Darthie? Well, Darth Vader is Darth Vader. No German translation for him. Remember, you can mangle the names of just about everybody in the universe, but you do not mess with the Man in Black! The cartoon is priceless.

Ming Wathne: Thanks for welcoming me to your house/SW shrine. It was fantastic. HM-WAH! (Smooch) I bet the guy at the "Marie Callender's" still is shaking his head, wondering what rubber room we two escaped from...

And about poor old Uncle Owen, you should hear him in the German version of ANH. He sounds like a crossbreed between a martinet and Grouchy of the 7 dwarfs.

Liz Sharpe: Love your self-description. And I certainly hope that this "alternate ending" was a preview of a 30+ page story you are concocting at the moment. Do not disappoint me...

Okay, that's it for the moment, folks. Hope that all of you out there have had great holidays and that 1994 will be a super year in every respect for everybody. Looking forward to read y'all in the next ish, I'm yours slaphappily...

Thankful

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November 22, 1993

As we approach the holiday of Thanksgiving, I find myself giving thanks for the many things I take for granted over the year. This year I've been reminded that I have a wonderful "extended family" in fandom, which is very important to me, since I have no parents or grandparents living, and the few amount of other relatives I have (brothers, cousins, aunts, uncles, neices and nephews) don't keep in touch. Fandom is my family and I love all of you. And I felt it was about time that I write to SE to express my feelings to those of you I know, but whom I don't reach through Forces of the Empire. I feel very lucky to have met a lot of you, or at least to be involved in the same fandom with you. Thanks to all of you for being there, and for all the wonderful contributions you have made to SW fandom. Many of you were there before me (Maggie Nowakowska, Joyce Yasner, Paula Truelove, and many others) and were the inspiration I needed to get involved myself.

Regarding #37, I found it great as usual. Thanks for the transcript of "The State of the Union" panel. It was a pleasure to read what went on at this panel, since I was unable to attend because of scheduling conflicts. It sounds like it was great! I liked the comments about us helping to support each other and am willing to trade ads with anyone who wants to send me one for our newsletter, *Bound by the Force*. I also noticed there were some comments about FOE, mostly wondering what we are all about... With Cheree's permission, I'd like to try to briefly explain us. Yes, we are a role-playing club. But we are also a writing club. Our stories are predominantly about our club personas, but many of them are well written and some plots are downright devious! Starting with *Tales from the Cantina* #2, we plan to include a

biography section in the rear, which will contain bios of the characters used in the stories, to help the reader keep track of who's who. I really don't see much difference between our stories and some you find in mainline fanzines where they introduce new characters who were not in the movies. We just also use ours to role-play with. The role-playing is a natural extension of that writing and is used in many cases just to act out scenes to get a more realistic feel to them. The main difference is that while most zine stories are written by one person, ours are sometimes written by many in an interactive style, something akin to the Thieves World books. We do have many members, though, to whom the role-playing is the main event, and we all do have fun with the role-playing.

We are planning to have an in-depth panel at MWC next May, open to all interested parties, where we will field questions about FOE and try to explain the club and the Blaster Battle, and where we feel we "fit in" to the SW universe.

Enough on that... I would also like to comment on the Editor's Page, "Real Life Strikes Back." This seems to be a time of trial for many of us. It seems like everyone I know is having some sort of difficulty. I, myself, am desperately seeking a decent job, which pays a decent salary and for now am barely able to make ends meet. It seems like everytime you get your head above water these days, the waters flood again. I think Cheree's done a fantastic job with SE and I, for one, would rather stand behind her and see a temporary hiatus while she gets things back on track. "Mundanity Burnout" can be impossible to cope with. I wish Cheree and Randy the best of luck, and hope to see SE back on schedule soon.

By the way, I enjoy the variety of newspaper clippings and cartoons you run. We don't run them in our newsletter much because our printers won't print them without written permission from the author/artist, and the editor of each piece. They were burned badly once on copyright infringement and now are overly cautious on what they'll print. (*Ed: I've had that question raised before but have never had any problem with it. I wish I could print all the clippings people send me, but it would add an additional 20 or so pages to each issue. Yeah, yeah, I know you all would LIKE an additional 20 pages, but let's get real here!*)

I know this is getting a bit long, but I would also like to make a few comments to some things others wrote last time.

Marti Schuller: I agree with you about *The Guyver*. I thought it was very cheap and poorly done. I was among the few fans who really liked *Slipstream*,

but I thought *The Guyver* was a definite step down. Oh, and regarding ROTJ bashing -- I had my problems with that movie, and can bash it with the best of them, *but* just because we rip something apart doesn't mean we hate it. There were things I'd like to have seen done differently, but I still loved the movie, and own more than one copy of it in my video collection.

Nora Mayers: It's always great to find another Ian Malcolm fan (*Jurassic Park*), and I also feel Jeff Goldblum did a great job. (I have to admit I saw the movie before I read the book.)

Mary Jo Fox and Yvette Ghilan: Sorry, I have to disagree that ST:TNG and ST:DS9 copied the strong woman from SW. First of all, keep in mind that the original "Number One" in the classic Trek pilot episode of "The Cage" was played as a very strong female. The network didn't like it and shot her down, but the stage was set for the future. I think the current tendency for stronger female characters is more an evolution of society than a copying of what came before. The 60's just weren't ready yet. The late '70's were more ready, but you have to admit that even with Leia as strong as she was, she was the only strong female role in the entire trilogy! Oh, sure, there was Mon Mothma, but I really feel she was a bit two-dimensional to count as a strong role. They just didn't take the time to do much with that character. Much more has been done in fan fiction about her. But, now, the time is right and the public is not only ready for the stronger female roles, it demands them. And I know I'm probably going to get a bunch of hate mail on this, but I don't really see Leia as being *that* strong of a character. I feel she did too much whining and complaining, and was used by the Alliance as much for a figurehead to draw people together, as she was used for her strength. Don't get me wrong. I like Leia. And yes, she was strong. I just don't see her as the ultimate role model of the modern female image.

Louise Turner: You can rest assured that if our reminiscences about MWC tend to turn those of you who can't make it a bit green with envy, that there are those of us who are equally envious of those of you in other countries! I dream of someday being able to travel to Scotland -- land of my ancestral roots (well, some of them, anyway -- the ones I identify the most with) -- and I am equally sure I'll never be able to afford it. MWC is fun, though, and I really hope you will someday get to experience it in person!

I also want to comment that I enjoyed your comparison of the social structure of SW to that of the Soviet Union. I find it a very apt comparison, and very well thought out. Next time I write a post-ROTJ

story, I will have to keep that in mind.

And *thank you!* for being another fan who is not enchanted with the Zahn books! While I found a few elements of interest in the first book (key word: few), I was never able to finish it, and so never bothered with the other two. And I also agree that C. J. Cherryh would have done a much better job. My main gripe with Zahn is that overall, I felt he was trying too hard to turn it into his own universe, rather than simply expand on an already established one. And I found his writing so bogged down in unpronounceable names and technicalise, that it lost the romance and fantasy of the movies. SW -- the trilogy -- was a fantasy. Mr. Zahn writes science fiction. There is a difference.

Cheree: I want to end this by saying I *really* enjoy SE, and hope the hiatus doesn't last long. Let me know if I can help out in any way!

Two Cents' Worth

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As always, I was happy to receive my copy of SE#37, but saddened to learn of your troubles, Cheree. I sincerely hope by now that your life has smoothed out somewhat and I wish Randy every success in finding fulfilling employment -- if he hasn't already. As for SE, I for one found the extended deadline of February 1 most welcome. With the usual round of joyful, but chaotic, activity accompanying the holiday season, having a bit longer to compose a coherent response for SE was rather nice. I imagine I'm not alone in this feeling either. Of course, I trust in the Force that things will work out and SE will continue for many years to come. However, should you be compelled to suspend (notice I *did not* say cease) publication for a time, I have no doubt your readers will overcome their disappointment and continue their support of you. I know I will.

Now, on to the letters.

Mary Jo Fox: You've never met a Jedi collector?! ME!! And I'm 100% certain I'm not alone. Granted, there seems to have been more products made for Dark Siders, robot lovers or entire cast fans, but whenever I find just about anything with my fav. Jedi on it, I race for my monetary units.

Charyl Perry: Hello again and welcome to the

exciting world of SE participation! Also best of luck with your electronic zine. It sounds interesting. Please keep us low/no-tech fans apprised of the hard copy edition. I'll also look forward to that MWC '94 demo, even though I probably won't understand an iota of it.

Tammy Olsen: First, to explain MU. Cheree was correct that it stands for Missouri University. It's *the* university among the many in my state. Sorry I confused you.

Secondly, put down your lightsaber. Having sterilized Luke in "The Emperor's Revenge", why should I ever need do so again? (smile) Seriously, you say you "couldn't believe a Luke fan could do that." As I've said before, I didn't make him impotent, only unable to father children. He has enough to do without the demands of parenthood and, trust me, there *are* plenty of demands.

Maggie Nowakowska: Thank you for the lovely compliment. I've never been called "articulate" before, but it's most flattering. I will be very interested to see if, as you surmise, using sterility as a plot device is strictly a female ploy. I'll have to ask some of my non-fan, writing male friends for their input on this as well. Of course, for Luke, it really was my best option since, as you agreed, he would hardly be the type to abandon a family or child.

Yvette Ghilan: I wasn't going to respond to your letter, but having read it several times now I feel I must put in my two cents' worth. Not everyone in fandom shares your ideas on what constitutes a "demolition job" of a story. Personally, I've found few alternate fictions to my taste, but I would never presume to suggest they be excluded from a mainstream zine. One person's "smut" is another's art. What you find offensive, I might find satirical or just outright funny. If you want homogenized fandom, brother, you are in the wrong set. Try Disney. Otherwise, accept that zines will contain stories you won't care for, comment on them in an LoC if you're that upset, and go on enjoying the stories you find to your personal tastes. Or start your own G-rated zine. It's a big playground. There's room for us all and I honestly hope we're adult enough to avoid name-calling and shoving matches. You're entitled to your opinions, as are we all, but don't presume so many others share yours and are just too timid to speak out. I haven't met too many timid SW fans. Outspoken, yes. Opinionated, yes. But also willing to give that other person their say, too. As for me, I'll resort to that stale, but oh-so-true expression, "To each his own." Or, if you prefer, "Live and let live."

Jennifer Moore: I enjoyed your parallel between Owen and Han. I confess it's not one I'd considered before, but your reasoning is sound. Nice point.

Debbie Kittle: I hope you're getting the winter you crave, though from the newscasts recently, I gather you are. As for me, I believe I could happily live in a domed city where it only rains between 2 and 4 a.m. I'd make occasional jaunts outside to see "real" weather, I suppose, but the whole idea appeals to me immensely. Snow is lovely and does hide a lot of ugliness -- at least momentarily. I enjoy sitting in my warm house, with my loved ones safely near, and watching a good snowfall, but driving on slippery roadways is not a pastime I relish!

Louise Turner: Worldcon in Glasgow in '95? Wouldn't I just love to be there! Now, where'd I put that winning lottery ticket?

Gerald Crotty: Where did you see an extended version of *The Abyss*? A whole 28 minutes of added scenes? Where? Were they at the end, in the middle, scattered? Tell, tell -- please. I loved that movie and really want to know more about this.

Jacqueline Taero: I'd like to applaud you for finally saying what I've felt all along re the three films and personal taste.

As for why Lucas may have opted to make Luke and Leia twins instead of just siblings, I suspect he felt as twins they would share that mysterious bond so frequently reported among twins. Such a bond would enhance their Force connection and also avoid neatly the question of who's eldest. I have fraternal twin brothers-in-law and, though their link is seldom manifested, it has occurred enough to convince me of its authenticity.

Tim Blaes: I like that mental image of Vader carrying the unconscious princess back to her cell after Alderaan's wanton destruction. I'm sure I'll "see" it everytime I view the film now. I know Veronica will love it.

One last word before I go. Though I was not able to purchase the newest SW plate collection, having seen the flyer for the ROTJ issue courtesy of a friend, I'm glad I didn't get started with them. While I'm a diehard Luke fan, to omit Han *and* Vader from this final plate is unbelievable! Does everyone else feel the same?

Well, to Catriona, Veronica, and everyone else I didn't directly comment to this time, I hope you all have a wonderful spring. I'm looking forward eagerly to meeting many of you again at MWC. May 1994 be better -- in every way -- for us all! Peace.

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January 10, 1994

Happy Holidays and a Happy New Year to one and all. Hope everyone's Holidays were wonderful. Mine was great. I got a white Christmas! Only an inch but I will take whatever I can get! It was very nice and to top off the year just right, we had 3 more inches 3 days later. I couldn't ask for a nicer ending of the year than that. Of course, having it snow for the New Year...

Lots of new SW stuff to mention: The new book, *Truce at Bakura*, is out and has been devoured in record time. Great book, so much better than Zahn's group, these are the characters as we know them. How does everyone else feel?

The new SW bend 'ems are out. There are 9 of them -- OWK, Luke, Leia, Chewie, R2, 3PO, DV, Yoda and Stormtrooper. There is also a 4 pack that has DV, Trooper and the droids. The 8 pack is the best. It has 2 new ones that won't be available separately as far as I know. There is an Emperor and Wicket. There is no OWK, no Yoda and no Chewie in the pack. All can be found at Toys R Us except the 8 pack. That's at K Mart.

I just got the first 2 pieces to the SW pewter chess set. I got an Ewok pawn that has a removable spear and the King for the Alliance. It's Ben and Yoda together. They are so beautiful. I am expecting the chessboard any day now. I will be bringing the set with me to MW as I should have 6 pieces by then. Will be happy to show it off to anyone who wants to see.

Mark Hamill was on QVC again in October. Some nice new pieces available and Mark was great as usual. I picked up the pewter *Falcon* made by Rawcliffe. The radar dish and both upper and lower gun turrets swivel. It is so very beautiful.

George was on *Entertainment Tonight* a few months ago. He talked about SW. The new movies will take place about 40 years prior to ANH and be "much more about betrayals and those kinds of issues." One thing that irked me was his laugh as he mentions there will be OWK, Anakin and Mrs. Skywalker. Does he not know her name yet or is he just toying with us?? Anyway, screenplay is set to be started in 6 months from November. Let's hope so!

There is also new Suncoast figures: Leia, Chewie, Luke as a Jedi, R2, 3PO. The droids are really good.

Also just out are the Galoob Micro Machines. A set of 3 ships from each movie. These are really neat. The *Falcon*, Star Destroyer and X-Wing in SW; AT-AT (with moveable head), Snowspeeder and TIE Fighter in ESB; and AT-ST, Sail Barge and B-Wing Fighter in ROTJ. I think 1994 will bring us some great stuff...

Marti: What can I say? I'm different. I love snow and look forward to this season. On Xmas night during the 1 inch fall, I went out and played a bit. I had just taken a shower and had wet hair. Do I love snow or what??!!

Blood on the floor of the dungeon? A good possibility.

Body Bags was a great movie! Bloody and disgusting! Just the way I like my films. I think Mark did a decent job in it especially when he stuck the gardening shears through his eye.

Nora: Good to spend time with you at our Trilogy party. Hope we can get together more in the future.

Agree wholeheartedly with you about Han.

Ming comes to a doll and toy show the weekend after MW in the area. We'll work on getting together with you.

Mary Jo: It was great to meet you finally and spend time with you at the Trilogy party also. Hope to do it again soon. Great job done on *Blue Harvest*!

Charyl: Yes, LFL newsletter is Lucasfilm's publication.

I see droids being mass produced to some extent and being bought by well off or comfortable-income peoples and businesses. Of course, the Empire would need their share for work as well as the Alliance. I could see the Alliance raiding these droid factories to get what they need & extend that to Imp. outposts. The latter would provide them with more info. The reverse could be true as well that the Empire would gain much from Rebel droids.

A.G.: Loved your reference to Shatner and the white cane and knocking over furniture.

I guess I should have put "thing" in quotes. I guess I could've used "body" instead. I'll watch my words from now on.

Elsa is Luke's mother! A tabloid heading?!

Carolyn Cooper: Hi. Glad to see your return. Haven't heard any rumors about Mark and he certainly didn't mention returning to the new SW movies on QVC.

Tammy: I've picked up both ties -- one of the DS trench and the one of all the characters. Both are great. Love the T-shirts and have them all as well. I thought all Suncoasts would be getting the dolls in. If

you want any, drop me a line. Yes, the DE Sourcebook is very nice. The cover is a great pic of Luke.

Yvette: What a way to see the Trilogy. Three years is a long time between movies, long enough to vegetate and stew about what should be, what we want to see. That certainly could contribute.

Love your defense of Han. Nicely put.

I, myself, am interested in the smutzone. I'm curious mostly. It's been discussed at MW and in SE for years, mostly as a joke and now it's coming to life. As long as it's tastefully done and I trust Z. P. to do that. I am looking forward to it.

I'll be wishing some snow for you.

Barbara: A very interesting mental picture you have of me. (Z. P., don't you dare pick up that pen!!). I certainly try to let everyone know everything-some of us live in isolated areas. I know I'd feel let down/left out if a new item came out and everyone but me knew about it.

I'd certainly be willing to help anyone get any of the new items. Living close to the DC area, I'm pretty lucky to see most everything, unlike Ming. She lives in one of the largest states and in a town I feel would have a good supply of stores. However, she has a poor excuse for a bookstore near her. I'd die without a well-stocked bookstore!

In response to your question you posed to Mary Jo about the Ewoks gathering all those logs and stuff, seemingly overnight. That struck me as odd, too. Then I realized the Empire had to have been on Endor for awhile, probably months. The Ewoks had plenty of time to prepare things and take back their home.

I don't think the Imps cared about them or what they did so long as it didn't interfere with the Empire and its work. If the Imps did care, the Ewoks would've been enslaved or worse, wiped out. I know a few people who would've liked that.

I, too, admit going to Creation Cons. I go to get my "con fix", see my friends and see some great guests. I saw Patrick Stewart over Labor Day and it was great to see him recite "Julius Caesar" on stage. Next week is the *Imzadi Tour* and we are looking forward to that.

Catherine: That wall was also one of my favorite scenes from the doll show. Perhaps in a few years we can do the Endor revelation scene. Z. P. gets credit for all those boards. They were great!

Tina: That's great that you got to see ANH on the big screen. I missed that film when it first came out so am looking forward to hopefully seeing it on a big screen near me this year as I believe the films will be

rereleased each year until 1997 when the new one will open.

I have that poster you got at the theater. It's available from LucasArts for \$4.95. Call 1-800-STAR WARS to get another.

Glad you were able to meet other people there. Hope it works out and you can spend time with them.

In regards to your comments to Ming, re Owen telling Luke in private that his name is Skywalker and never to repeat it, doesn't fit. I can't picture Owen doing this. He wanted Luke to be kept as far away as possible from any references to a past life.

Jennifer: Howdy! Glad you were able to make it to the Trilogy Party as well. Had a great time. (Some of the Eastern Chapter of SE -- Cheryl Pryor, Lin Ward, Nora Mayers, Mary Jo Fox, Jennifer and myself. We hope to continue the tradition). (*Ed: You guys should officially begin calling yourselves the "Eastern Enclave". Jeanine Hennig was the one who coined the term "Southern Enclave" to describe the Dallas area fan group way back about 1983. She stole that term from Maggie Nowakowska, who I think was calling the Seattle group the "First Terran Enclave." I liked the sound of it so much that, when I started this newsletter, I stole it from her!*)

I like your Han/Owen comparison. I think it certainly got Luke to accept Han in the period of time from Tatooine to Alderaan to the Death Star.

The Alliance would keep Luke's parentage closely guarded. I'm sure some races feel the progeny of the guilty must pay for the sins of the Father. Much like the Klingons, I guess. They'd wait until things settled down, perhaps in a few centuries...

Ming: I'll take my banishment to Hoth with a heartfelt THANKS!

Gerald: In all the YJIC episodes, we never know who he married. Now that Lucas & Spielberg are working on IJ4, supposedly set later than the 1st 3, let's hope he tells us who the lucky lady was. I hope it's Marion.

Treena: Certainly something I never considered re Luke not even being on record.

Can't wait to read "May The Force Be With Q"! Great title.

Fiorenzo: "Ode to the Overwhelming Qualities of Mara Jade"? How many pages is the piece??!

Cheree: Re your comments about Zahn's TLC and his writing of Leia's contractions and not telling the difference: I've seen some talk shows where women, first off, don't even know they are pregnant and second, thought labor was indigestion. They'd go into the bathroom and boom, they give birth. But do

agree that it could've been done much better.

Tim: The doll exhibit for MW '94 is the medical hospital and Hoth. The cantina scene would be a great idea especially since Cheryl Pryor and her hubby have been working with sculpture and have a few of those aliens already made. Perhaps in a year or 2.

Carrie might do some wonders for the SW literary field.

SFC is running B&B starting this week.

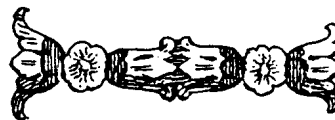
Liz: I'm delighted, too, that there is a large Eastern contingent especially around the DC area. I'll have sent off a letter to you (probably several) and I'm sure we'll be getting together especially since we live rather close together.

I'm glad the *Falcon* survived. In ST3, when Kirk blows up the *Enterprise*, I cried in the theater. It happens everytime I watch that movie and see the same scene. I'm not sure I could stand watching ROTJ if the *Falcon* were destroyed. Considering the numbers of times I've seen ROTJ compared to ST3, I'd be investing in Kleenex stock.

I think that's everything. But I did want to plug a zine story called "A Slight Misunderstanding" by Marcia Brin. It's in *Warped Space* #49. I think Marcia did a great job of putting words to Han and Leia's feeling in ROTJ. It felt right and helped put the awkwardness of the movie into place.

I hope everyone's dreams and hopes come true this year. I know mine have. They are calling for some measurable snowfall in just a few days... Ahh, winter! Fly Casually In The Force Of A Winter Storm.

A P.S. to add -- Seems *Starlog* #199 had an interview with Kevin Anderson who is doing the next trilogy of paperback books. Great article as it gives us an insight into the things that are coming out. *Jedi Search* by Kevin is due out in March, followed by #2 in June and his 3rd in September. He's helping do *The Dark Lords of the Sith* comic starting in June and it's a 12 issue set. He's doing a coffee table book of Ralph McQuarrie's art with some never before seen sketches due Christmas of 1995. He's also editing a trilogy of anthologies. The 1st is *Tales from the SW Cantina* about the aliens in the bar. The next is *Tales from Jabba's Palace* and the 3rd about the bounty hunters Vader hired in ESB. We are going to busy reading over the next few years. Also, *Starlog* says there's 15 not 12 books due to be released. I hope Ed McMahan calls me this month...



Jeannie Webster
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January 18, 1994

It's been a *long* time since I've sat down and done a LOC for SE. I was one of the dinosaurs who was with it from the beginning, but a few years ago lapsed for a couple of years. I didn't realize how much I missed the fandom until I got reinvolved about 2 years ago. It's been nice seeing a number of the old familiar names -- and nice getting to meet (on paper) all the people who have just recently discovered SW fandom! I've let too many issues go by, wanting to comment on certain things, wanting to do a LOC, but somehow never getting to it.

First, something about me. I've been involved in Trek fandom since the 70's, and have been in SW fandom just about since it started. In 1988, when I semi-gafiated from SW fandom, I became involved in *Blake's 7* fandom, and with a now-science fiction media club called The Prydonians of Prynceton. The club has been in existence for over 10 years, started as a *Dr. Who* club, has a membership of about 600 and I have been its treasurer for the last year and a half. I also write fanfic and am the editor of an Indiana Jones letterzine called *Keeping Up With the Joneses*. In the mundane world, I work in the accounting department of an international travel company.

A few leftover comments from issue #36....

Veronica Wilson: You made a good point, in the discussion of the debate on Leia's virginity. The aristocracy did, throughout history, have their own code of behavior toward such things. This did occur in most societies; the one I'm most familiar with is Victorian British society, where one code of behavior was endorsed as the societal norm, whereas the aristocracy often behaved in quite the opposite fashion. I recently finished a biography of Winston Churchill, which discussed in great lengths the behavior of his mother, Jennie (well known for her many lovers) and how it fit into the norms for her social class. It was also quite frank about methods of protection commonly used during the period. Then again, one oddity of the period is that this freedom enjoyed by women of that class was only exercised (Ahem!) after marriage. A similar code on Alderaan may explain the princess' "skittishness" toward Solo in TESB. She may in fact be a virgin, but one who expects a marriage of convenience, after which she may take lovers. (I vaguely remember zine stories

which had problems develop when Han learns that his position in Leia's life would be that of "kept man" during such a marriage.)

MaggieNo: Loved the illo on the historical basis of Leia's ANH hairdo! Aside from that and Japan, a variation of that hairstyle was also popular over here in the 1920's.

Barbara Anderson: Many sympathies on the decision you had to make regarding your mother-in-law. I had to go through a similar process with my grandmother some 10 years ago. I know how hard it can be!

Had a bit of *deja vu* while rereading this issue -- and your descriptions of last year's blizzard. I am writing this from the midst of the blizzard/ice/freezing rain deluge of 1994! Two weeks of this weather so far. And I'm nursing a sprained knee obtained when I slipped and tried *not* to fall in the *first* of the storms! *I HATE SNOW AND ICE!!!!!!!!!!!!*

As I'd been out of the fandom for the most part for a couple of years, Sharon Saye's guide was a great help. For lack of knowledge, I've only been buying the zines I knew. This is an excellent way of telling, amongst the sea of new zine and editor names, which zines are worth spending my limited resources on.

On to the current issue. Got a giggle out of Z.P.'s "Confessions of a Writeholic". Very useful for people who have a bit of an idea, and are stuck. As well as those being chased by a Mutant Ninja Editor, and are dry on ideas or inspiration. (Hi, Agel!) Speaking of which, as the editor of an Indy letterzine I'd really *love* to get some articles as good as this (wink, wink, nudge, nudge!) Back to the serious side (of the Force?), I also must add what a lovely meaty read SE has grown into. It was always big -- but now it's *huge*! (I know, Cheree -- don't remind you!) ((Ed: *Oh, my aching fingers! And thanks from an ever-grateful editor to you lovely, lovely people who either send your LoCs on diskettes or e-mail them to me via GENie! See my editorial this issue for even more ways to get them to me!*))

Nora Mayers: Hi, buddy! Nice to see you in hard copy (as opposed to GENie reality)! I would have to agree with your comment to Tim Blaes elaborating on your statement about fans knowing the characters better than their creators. Some of it also is, I believe, the fact that keeping a character in character is a secondary consideration in a movie or TV series. The character in that case is only a tool used to tell a story. Consistency is then not important if it impedes their ability to tell a story. I would cite *The Young Indiana Jones Chronicles* as a good example of

this. The internal chronology is inconsistent (and this is only taking episodes into account, with no reference to the movies). This is because the primary function of each episode is to highlight a historical event, and show it through the eyes of Young Indy. For instance, he should not be able to be in college in 1920 if he is only leaving Europe in May 1919. There is no time for him to have prepared for, much less taken the entrance exam he would have to pass (especially given his lack of a high school diploma). But, were the screenwriters to go strictly on the basis of chronology, they would be unable to tell a story with an important historical lesson -- the *raison d'être* of the whole show.

Jennifer Moore: Excellent analogy about the similarities between Uncle Owen and Han. I'd never considered that before, but you're absolutely right. And Luke may not consciously realize that that is why he is accepting Han, but probably slipped into the relationship because it felt right.

Liz Sharpe: Nice to see another "old timer" make their way back to the fold. As to your explanation of Han being brainburned in ROTJWHAP!!!!!! Bad Liz!! Down Liz!!! And you can't blame it all on B7 either. We know better.

A few miscellaneous notes: Saw *Bodybags* on Showtime. Yes, Mark did look dark and bruised. I think you must have come in near the end. Toward the beginning there are a few scenes dear to the heart of any Luke Luster. Partial nudity, simulated intercourse ... and no, my tape did not come out! Got to try again when it's rebroadcast.

Have heard from a number of reliable sources that preproduction has begun on the 1st trilogy. Interesting recent report from the online service GENie -- Lucasfilm has just purchased 6 Cray supercomputers. (If I remember right, these computers used to cost over a million dollars each). Rumor has it that these are for use in the new movies, but who knows?

Well, that's about all for now. Will probably think of something else after I upload this to Cheree on GENie. (Everyone with computers, please listen to Nora & Cheree -- the SW and fanfic discussions are great!). Take care everyone -- and be careful in this rotten weather. And best of luck to all in Southern California after this horrible earthquake.



Liz Sharpe
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January 12, 1994

Greetings to all and sundry, and best wishes for ever-increasing happiness, health and wealth in 1994!

Cheree Cargill: Extra special wishes that things in your life improve quickly! Don't feel guilty if you are forced to neglect your fannish publication schedule. After all your hard work these many years, you'd be entitled to some slack even without intervention from the powers of economic recession (or whatever). Just hang in there, and keep in touch now and then! I'll miss your work; but I'd rather know you have food on the table and shelter from the elements. Do what ya gotta. I'll be rooting for you!

Some of these comments are an issue or two behind, due to my recent re-subscription. Please pardon my time lag.

Zinelegging: Cheree, thanks for printing *both sides* of the recent exchange. No amount of rumor and second hand reporting can substitute for letting the contenders speak for themselves. ((Ed: "Zinelegging"!! *What a great term!!*))

Zine editing: IMO, the fundamental rules of editing (and being edited) are simple, but application varies according to the type of publication and the type of material. Original stories are not the same as letterzine contributions; non-fiction analytical pieces are not the same as personal statements; poems are not the same as con reports. Hate mail isn't the same as anything. (Fortunately, recipients are excused from editing this last category at all.)

In an ideal world, the universal basic standard would be that all contributors would be punctual in meeting submissions deadlines (and would provide a sufficiency of SASE's), while all editors would be equally prompt in reviewing and marking up copy. Any editorial changes other than spelling/obvious text dropouts would be quickly returned to contributor, allowing plenty of time for the contributor to approve proposed changes, perform a (prompt) rewrite, or else to courteously withdraw the submission. *Ideally*, this would still leave plenty of time for the approved copy to be contemplated and suitably enhanced by an artist, if so desired.

Too bad the world isn't ideal, eh?

Here's a rule of thumb for editors in this non-ideal world to keep in mind: the shorter the material, the greater the effect of *any* change. In a poem, espe-

cially, even minor deviations can greatly change the author's intent. In a vignette, better make sure any minor adjustments don't accidentally scramble the lead-up to the "punch line." A novel leaves more room for error (both of omission and commission) and resolution for editors and writers alike. Editors of fannish material don't have professional publishing-house quality reputations to uphold. (Apparently, neither do most printing houses these days, but that's a different aspect of modern social malaise...) Therefore, if you're in doubt and time's short, it's probably just as well to let the author take the rap for any uncertainties. (Of course, if it's glory, share...)

There are a few things an editor should always feel free to correct. Spelling, continuity problems (changing the heroine's eyes from blue to brown in mid-stream without explanation -- though you'd do well to check with the author anyway), text absences (say, the alternate pages between 15-25 seem to be missing), fundamental (unintentional) grammar problems ("and he was dumber as a rock") are relatively clear-cut targets. (There *are* writers who for instance, *insist* on using false cognates. Shrug -- and let them take the rap...) Tinkering with "style" (generally, some mannerism(s) pervasive throughout the material) is tempting, but problematic. If you really want to try to change part of an author's style, and you have time, try to discuss it with the contributor, over the phone if possible. If the writer doesn't accept your suggestions, it's time to decide whether to publish the piece as is, or politely send it back.

Never publish stylistic revisions without the author's consent. If you do, word will get around, and nobody who gives a fake pfennig for their work (whether it's any good or not) will send you any submissions ever again. The no-changes-without-consent rule can be bent somewhat, depending on the circumstances and the judgment of the parties involved. Extra special care should be exercised when publishing personal (non-fiction) statements. No editor has the right to *add, substitute, or paraphrase* any language in a personal statement without the author's consent. Attributing your own words to other people is dishonest, and can be legally actionable. When in doubt, if discussion with the author isn't possible, dubious material should be sent back (via SASE), or just plain not printed. If the writer responds with confused and inaccurate complaints about "suppression of freedom of speech," offer them a copy of your mailing list. Encourage them to make full use of their completely unimpeded freedom to go into the business of circulating their pristine opinions

themselves.

However, apart from intentionally changing the spin of other folks' opinions, an editor *does* have the right to set his/her own policies. This is the aspect of editing that *writers* should keep in mind. Most editors are (and all should be) very up-front about their policies and methods, and writers should take these policies into account when submitting contributions. If (for instance) an editor has an ongoing policy reserving the right to make block deletions (sometimes fundamentally necessary for legal and/or financial reasons), writers who object should submit elsewhere, exercise restraint, or resign themselves to the chance of appearing in abbreviated form. My strong personal preference is that editors should use * * * to indicate where deletions occur, if only to show that the omissions are not accidental. But I'm not going to pitch a tizzy for lack of an ellipsis.

This doesn't mean that editors shouldn't have views of their own. (They should!) Or that editors shouldn't express their views. (They'd better!) Brief interjections in a letter or statement (like Cheree's, which are clearly and obviously identified) are fine and often entertaining -- as long as it's clear whose words originated where. For eloquence of greater length, there's always the formal editorial appearance.

At one time or another, I have sinned against most of these precepts myself, both as a contributor and as an occasional publisher, which is how I come to have strong feelings about the dialectics of the editorial process. Sorry to run on; it seemed like such a nice little morph in the beginning...

"NIMGA" is great acronym. I employ the short version, "IMGA" ("It's *my* galaxy, [aardvaark]!") for when people try to tell me why *their* version of *my* universe would work so much better...

The late, talented and much-missed Sarah Campbell's original phrase for Antilles fen was "Right Thinking People Who Are For Wedge." If you try to pronounce this as an acronym, people will say "geschundheit" and offer you kleenex. My recollection is that the phrase "Church of Ford" was coined first (largely from exasperation), about the same time most *Jundland Wastes/SE* readers realized the general heated discussion was turning into militant factionalism for some participants. Other phrases, like "Cathedral of Luke" and "Temple of the Bitch Goddess" (for *Leia*) arose later and from a conscious urge to retaliate/ridicule. The "Right Thinking People" monicker was deliberately intended to poke fun at all parties who were getting too extreme.

Of course, it's inarguably true that Wedge is the

one true "other," and anybody who thinks different is irredeemably bound on a one-way voyage into the outer darkness and uncongenial points beyond... See ya at the Oracle of the Other Other, Mickey! (I like that one!)

Nora Mayers: I've worked for big law firms in downtown D.C. for about 10 years now. (A field of employment having all the moral indecency of smuggling, without the illicit glamor of being against the law.) What unsuspecting edifice of the establishment have you currently infiltrated? Maybe we can get together sometime.

The puddle under Jabba's palace: Ok, maybe it isn't water at all. Mechanical by-products, Wookiee by-products... What an inventive lot we are! But if it is "just" water... H'mmm. Tatooine doesn't seem to be *quite* as arid as the planet Arrakis in *Dune*, but perhaps there's a tendency in that direction, (acute water shortage leading to a water-oriented socio-economic system). Perhaps Jabba's crime business got started with an illegal but highly profitable secret subterranean "water mine" (Han Solo smuggles... Perrier? Naaa...) and like other irresponsible criminal types, Jabba flaunts/wastes what he's got, regardless of other folks' needs. A soggy basement/dungeon could be *really* cruelly oppressive to prisoners raised with Tatooine water conservation practices.

In fact, along the lines of Tatooine environmental attitudes... I've always wondered whether Dagobah's outward physical manifestation wasn't completely subjective to Luke's perceptions. (I incline to the theory that, like the traditional "hollow hills," Dagobah isn't physically accessible from the "normal" universe without magical/Forceful intervention.) If our proto-Jedi had been raised in a tropical rainforest, would he have been tested not only by Yoda's bad grammar, obnoxious sense of humor, and gruelling aerobics program (you've got the video -- now all you need is some nice, well-anchored liana vines...), but also by having to learn his lessons amid the distractions of an alien, say, arctic wasteland? (And would Yoda have manifested himself with a different appearance if Luke had been somebody else?) Equatorial-type deserts (Tatooine style) are relatively open, clean and sterile. I find occasional hints in Mark Hamill's acting that Dagobah gives Luke a *bad* case of barely-restrained-slinky-slimy-creeping-crawlies-yuck-get-it-off-me-right-now-there's-no-room-in-here-ackgh. Or maybe Mark just felt that way. It looked like a bodaciously claustrophobic and messy set, never mind the *live* critters...

Tabloid lines: Love struck perverse Corellian urges partner to "laugh it up fuzball." Actually, A.G.

Steyn's line from last issue should be a contender: "wrong shaft, wrong time, dearie."

Maggie Novakowska: I hope lots of people will take you up on your challenge to define "strong woman." I think my own definition of a strong woman is somebody who is so well occupied with (a) thinking about what she's doing (including some reflection on whether it's the right thing), and (b) getting it done, that she doesn't have time to worry about whether she *seems* like a strong woman (or a virgin, or a Bitch Goddess, or whatever). Too much preoccupation with the consistency of one's labels/appearances can definitely have a weakening effect, be you female or otherwise. Unless (let's be difficult) you're forced to work within the context of a label-happy organization, such as a uniformed military service ... the kind of place which traditionally (so far, in our mundane American culture) is a bastion of "strong men" and not women at all, come to think on it...

Barbara Anderson: More Ewok jokes: How do you like Ewoks? Love 'em! Can't eat a whole one at one sitting, but...

Perhaps someone would care to revive Dead Bothan jokes? They were good while they lasted...

Catherine Churko: Hi ho, hi ho, portfolio to go...! Good luck with your wonderful artworkings.

Far Realms Sex, Far Realms Sux, and JediStarDark FalconKnight... I think I've got copies. Plus an original submission for the final "Sux" volume which never saw print. How 'bout it, Cheree? How much will you pay me *not* to make that stuff available again? Sealed bids only, preferably for large quantities of small portable units of duty-free universally negotiable commodities, bidders' anonymity guaranteed... ((Ed: Hey, Liz, I've thought now and again about smuggling that trash back into print myself! Or, worse, doing yet another volume!))

As for bad stories: I committed a doozie once, sort of kind of on purpose. It was meant as a "Mary Sue" satire: three "clone character" Mary Sues ("original" characters deliberately based on bad characterizations of Leia, Luke and Han) plus an "alter ego" Mary Sue (deliberately based on authorial Corellian wanna-be) set off to rescue the Leia clone's fiancé, who is being held hostage by an embittered renegade Alderanian nobleman, who just happened to be the Leia clone's childhood sweetheart. The satire part was OK at the beginning, though a bit labored. Unfortunately, I got so interested in the character, circumstances, and development of the renegade Alderaanian nobleman (not to mention certain Sith-related political side developments) that

the story turned serious on me. Argh. So I ended up with about a quarter of a silly satire and about two-thirds of a fairly original tragic romance, inextricably entwined. Fittingly, at the end, the poor Baron blew himself up (taking lots of baddies with him, resolving the romantic triangle, and incidentally protecting the retreat of the Mary Sues) and the unscathed Mary Sues made good their retreat (except for the authorial alter-ego Mary Sue who hit her head on the deck of her own ship during emergency liftoff and spent most of the action-packed getaway in a most characteristic state of obliviousness) despite hot pursuit and vows of eternal perseverance by an Imperial ship commanded by -- uh -- Mary Sue (the Imperial clone spin-off)... That was a very messed up story by the time I stopped tormenting it!

The Zahn Things: I own copies of his first two SW books. I remember picking up the first book and trying to read it. I remember putting it down. A year or so went by. Then I remember picking it up again, and stubbornly wading all the way through. I can't remember more than about six unrelated details about the entire book, and even less about the plot... Mechanically speaking, all the parts were there (as I think back) but I found it utterly lacking in dramatic energy, or human interest, or whatever it is that makes the whole frog functional *before* it gets dissected. Pat Nussman's observation that none of the "canon" characters undergoes significant growth or change is right on target. In addition, though, I think there is also a failure of basic storytelling style. (Somewhat similar to my complaint regarding ROTJ, though the movie has only a mild case.)

Various successful professional writers have pointed out over the years that there are only a few basic plots. (Some say, as few as five.) These basic elements can be combined in various degrees, numbers and orders -- but all the rest is STYLE (pacing, delivery, rhythm, cadence, timing, etc). From what I can remember, both the plot development and the prose (of the Zahn book which I did read) was monotonous: it varied from "bleah bleah bleah" to "see Spot run" and back again. You know: something happened. Then something happened. Then something else happened. Then they dropped the bomb. And it went off. Something happened. And then something happened. And something else happened... You get the idea... Absent help from ominous background music, dramatic lighting, makeup and special effects, Zahn's book doesn't provide important emotional clues as to when (if ever) the characters are undergoing a crisis. A novelist's tools for marking

dramatic emphasis are more limited than a movie director's; I would expect a professional writer to have dealt with this (familiar!) obstacle more adroitly.

I guess it's just a boring book. Not damnable; not a bad book; maybe a little clumsy. But I became a SW fan because SW is *exciting* material...

Naming stuff: What does Han Solo smuggle, anyway? Possibly, "spice" is just a slang term (based on a real commodity, per "spice mines of Kessel") just as we have many names for illegal recreational chemicals here and now. You dig "weed?" "Spice" could serve as a generic reference for contraband cargo. As for domestic appliances and communications and the like: I prefer to keep specific references to machinery down, for the simple reason that they're apt to sidetrack the unfolding of the plot, much like any other bit of technical exposition. Han doesn't have to grab a "beer" out of the "refrigerator." He can just punch up a drink (or a brew) (both terms connoting alcoholic beverages) from the dispenser. (Though sometimes use of an obvious invented "brand name" can convey a nice sense of authentic, idiomatic acquaintance with the author's world: like Luke's complaint to Ben in ANH about the drop in the resale value of his 'speeder.) Manufactured terms can be colorful, but most should be something immediately obvious ("fresher" instead of "bath", "keeper" over "fridge"). Like any other bit of stage business, such color should enhance the story, not slow it down.

The same goes with "really" alien terms: make them obvious and recognizable; keep the polysyllables down (unless you're making a point about polysyllables). If you want something "alien" to strike the *reader* as exotic, follow the same guidelines you would use for any other dramatic effect: show, don't tell. Have one character use an unfamiliar term casually, and another character *not understand*. Carefully restrict your narrative point of view to the things your character actually observes and understands: On her way to a rendezvous, Mary Sue gets a brief glimpse of Three Ugly Entities grouped around an upholstered pit in one corner of an otherwise mostly humanoid-style bar; there is a ripple of attentive movement among the group as a serving droid approaches bearing a number of opaque, gently fuming bowls. Mary Sue looks down to step over something's prehensile appendage on the floor, careful not to bump the sheaf of stolen data chips making her jacket pocket bulky, and spots her contact (who's late) at last. I don't know if the Ugly Entities are sitting, standing or lounging; whether they're friendly; what they call themselves (as a race or individuals); whether

what's in the bowls is hot or cold, something edible, or the equivalent of cosmetic mudpack -- and neither does my character. But that won't prevent her from getting splattered with fuming mystery goo (and landing a desperate kick on something's hairy whasis) when she falls into the pit during the nice little barfight that's about to ensue... And she may still have to try to get the damn goo (whatever it is -- how does it smell? Feel oily or gluey?) out of her hair and clothes, next time she's got a moment (be it safe on her ship or after the guards have hurled her into a waiting detention cell)...

It's the little things that count.

Whatever they are.

Y'all play nice. Read you next time around!

Shortest Letter Sweepstakes

Jacqueline Taero
State of Confusion
U.S.A., Planet Earth

Regarding collapsing empires: Someone once asked me why, in one of my stories, I included ex-Imperials in a post-Rebellion government. My question is, how do you keep them out?

If you hold free elections, you have no choice but to allow all and sundry to participate and then accept the results of the vote. And, if you don't hold free elections, you will be accused of continuing your predecessors' bad habits. Consider the recent Russian elections and the results thereof -- isn't it likely, or even inevitable, that something similar would happen in the SW galaxy?

PS: Cheree, this is my entry in the "Shortest Letter Ever Written to SE Sweepstakes". Did I win? ((Ed: Hmm, not sure without going back over all the back issues. There have been some shorties in there, but you're definitely a contender. And this isn't an invitation for everyone to see if they can top Jacqueline!))



Tim Blaes
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Well, I must have been a good boy this year because, when I finally got my three boxes of SW Galaxy cards and sorted them all out, I ended up with five complete sets, assorted extras and *all six chase cards!!!* SW Galaxy II may be out before the next MediaWest.

We all suffer a great loss with the death of River Phoenix. I first encountered him in the movie *Explorers*. Most of you probably don't remember the film (it wasn't mentioned in the article you reprinted) but it was one of those special movies that seemed to be made just for me and my dreams. River's character was an important part of why the film meant so much to me. Dying on the pavement from a drug overdose is not the end he deserved.

Nora Mayers: Granted, "concept erosion" has struck many a TV show. But I still think we're on shaky ground when we say we know the characters better than the creators. We are on much firmer ground when we tell the creators they're not giving us what we want. The chapter on B&B in *Textual Poachers* underscores this point.

I see no problem with an Ian Malcolm story. Perhaps Scully and Mulder might need to consult a chaotician for one of their X-files.

Mary Jo Fox: I suppose "Jedi" collectors would be prone to art and literature rather than "action figures" and plastic light sabers. "Corellian" collectors probably go for things like commemorative plates and limited-edition whatever's; anything that's likely to increase in value.

Charyl Perry: Seems not too long ago that I bounced out the idea of doing a zine on disk, and it was met with disinterest and a little skepticism. Having not just the idea but the skill to make it reality, *Technological Terror* may break new ground.

A. G. Steyn: What you describe is more commonly known as "Rick Hunter Syndrome"; and it most commonly afflicts the hair of Japanese animation characters. From the Videolog review of the *Star Wars Trilogy: The Definitive Collection* in *Starlog* #198: "If you were hoping that this 'definitive edition' would include the legendary pre-release outtakes as part of the supplement, forget it. There's still not chance of seeing the early *Star Wars* scenes with Luke and his friends in Anchorhead or Jabba the Hutt at Mos Eisley, or any other outtakes from *Empire* or *Jedi*."

Maggie Nowakowska: George was influenced by a

lot of Japanese anime and movies, and in turn, the Japanese have been strongly influenced by SW. There is a *lot* of interesting Japanese anime and more and more of it's being dubbed or subtitled. Any SW fan would do well to investigate this stuff.

Re the "Female point of view" of Luke's alleged sterility; yeah, I think you've just about hit it right on the head. Cultural influences aside, men and women have different views of reproduction hardwired into their DNA. I could imagine a situation out of the song by Heart, "All I Want to Do is Make Love to You"; Luke is going hot 'n heavy with some woman, pausing just long enough to bring up the subject of contraception. She says she has that covered. Luke senses in some level of the Force that she's lying, but the question of what her nipples taste like overrides that intuition. Years later he finds out about the little Skywalker and is disturbed to find his offspring heading into the Dark. Of course, this scenario might be moot, if Jedi are able to practice "immaculate contraception."

Yvette Ghilan: Because zine editors don't profit from their zines, and because they sink so much money into them, zine piracy damages the editor's ability to break even and potentially prevents him/her from producing the next issue. How would you feel if you saw a very bad copy of your zine being sold for twice or three times the original price by a dealer with no altruistic intentions, while you still haven't sold the bulk of your own print run and the zine only came out three months ago! It happens. I've seen it.

It must have been intense, seeing all three movies cold in the space of two weeks! Try to imagine most of us, left with only the first movie to analyze and ponder upon for three years, only to then be left with the TESB's cliffhanger for *another* three years.

Michelle Malkin: I had assumed that the x-ray effect on Vader was the result of the Emperor's Force-blasts.

Granted, an excess of slash isn't much of a problem for me; plenty of ST, SW and Science Fiction/Fantasy zines to suit my taste. But next door over in the Buddy Cop/Detective fandom it *has* gotten out of hand. I've heard complaints from some of the fans of these shows that they would like to write non-slash stories but the only zines they could find for their shows were exclusively slash. And don't go tellin' me they could just go and do their own zine. Not every one has the skill, the money, connections and the more-guts-than-brains mentality required to be an editor.

Current anthropological studies indicate that while

men were out hunting and gathering, women were inventing things like pottery, cooking with fire, weaving and agriculture; in effect, inventing most of the skills needed for civilization. So it could be said that women really did take that first bite of fruit from the tree of knowledge.

Barbara Anderson: I think most of us here realize that 90% or more of sex is in the mind, and inserting Tab A into Slot B is only the surface. TV commercials try to use sex all the time, but the only one that worked to my way of thinking was the one for Chanel #5 perfume -- and all the sex in that ad was on a symbolic level which I don't completely understand. I bring this up to point out that it's possible to scorch someone's socks off without an X rating. It's a lot harder, but it's possible.

Those battering rams and log traps may *not* have been built overnight. The Ewoks may have been expecting a confrontation for as long as the Empire had their stupid base in the forest. It's the hang gliders that don't make sense to me.

Tina Bentrup: R2-D2, the Supreme Intellect? Only if George Lucas has been hiding inside the little droid. Somebody remember where this "Supreme Intellect" business started? I'm not sure there is one, or what it means if there is.

Brian Harris: Yeah, Princess Irulan was a dish, all right. I think it was over a year ago that I saw a book listed in Previews titled *Great Babes of the Galaxy*; a pictorial history of women in SF&F movies and television -- politically incorrect and proud of it. It had Leia on the cover. I asked the comics shop to order me a copy, but if it was ever published I didn't get one.

Pat Nussman: What do you mean, Leia acts skittish around men? Her relationship with Luke seems close and warm. She saw right through Lando and handled his flirtations quite smoothly. She didn't seem skittish around Dodonna or Rieekan. Han is the only one who's been able to get under her skin. Have I missed anyone?

Han Solo, a paper smuggler? That has possibilities. The paper might even be more dangerous if it had already been printed on. Perhaps at one time he smuggled "bibles" ... or fanzines?

Ming Wathne: I've wondered why Brian Daley's Corporate Sector Authority was never metabolized into fanfiction. They were a different kind of threat than the Imperials. Anyway, I've always felt that if you want to understand the mind of an enemy, find out their virtues. ((Ed: *Martie Benedict often used the CSA in her Han fiction.*))

What if Jabba lied to Han about his cargo?

Debbie Kittle: If Vader didn't learn that he had a son from surveillance tapes of Leia's cell, where and when *did* he learn?

Louise Turner: Glad to hear that you had a wonderful summer. Argyll and Glencoe sound quite interesting. What I wish I could do is camp out in the middle of Stonehenge for a night, although I know they'd never permit it.

After entering just about any fandom I tend to focus on the supporting cast. They seem so much more interesting because we don't know that much about them. I mean, how much more can be done with Spock and Kirk? But Uhura, Sulu and the rest of the supporting cast have enormous untapped potential. So there was perhaps a little irony in my comments about Wedge. I once half-seriously suggested that someone do an all-Wedge zine (hey -- I'd buy it!) but the only response I got was a suggestion to switch to decaf.

Wasn't the scene where Hobbie did a kamikaze into an AT-AT cut from the American print? He supposedly took out Veers but the General showed up again in ROTJ.

Ya know, I looked for the female rebel pilot but I never saw her. I don't remember a pregnant woman either. My powers of observation must be dimming with age.

I didn't see an ad for *Tydirium* listed in the back. How much is it?

Gerald Crotty: By now you probably know that *The Art of Star Wars Galaxy* book for the most part simply printed the original art commissioned for the card set. It's a shame because the "lost art" was the most interesting. I think the book could have had a better layout as well.

Molten lava is slow and people rarely die from it. But picture this; Anakin and Obi-Wan dueling on a precipice, then Anakin falls or is pushed off into a stream of lava below. That could work.

Catriona Campbell: One of my favorite ST pro novels is Janet Kagan's *Uhura's Song*. When I first started reading it I thought one of the characters was a rampant Mary Sue; she could outfence Sulu, had a private skiff that had Scotty drooling, could speak unpronounceable alien names perfectly, Spock was fascinated by her and Kirk was almost always off-balance around her. I didn't mind this because the rest of the novel was so wonderful. But halfway through I thought "this isn't a Mary Sue -- this is *the* Mary Sue." Later I wrote Kagan and asked her if the character was the inside joke I thought it was. She

said she didn't know what the inside joke was supposed to be, but that the character was based on her mother.

So David Lynch almost directed ROTJ. I hope he gets another crack at it. "The Ewoks are not what they seem" ...

Jacqueline Taero: You're not the only one who wishes Luke and Leia weren't twins. It really does complicate things, and we won't find out until the first Trilogy if that complication is worth it.

Cheree: If Yoda were human his condition might not be the result of a bad Force spell. "When nine hundred years you reach, look as good you will not."

A few years ago an extremely obese woman gave birth to the first of a set of twins while sitting on the toilet. She didn't know she was pregnant when it happened. Still, Zahn should have done a little research on pregnancy. I still haven't read any of Zahn's books. I suppose I should -- he'll be at a convention near me in March.

Veronica Wilson: I once toyed with this idea; sometime after *A New Hope*, Mon Mothma stumbles onto an auction at a rebel base, attended almost completely by women. Well, if it's one thing Mon enjoys it's a good auction, so she lets herself get caught up in bidding fever. It isn't until she wins that Mon learns she was bidding on first crack at Luke Skywalker, virgin hero of the Rebellion. Luke made the mistake of telling his fellow pilots this little fact about himself and it all culminated in this auction. But frankly, there are too many holes in the scenario and I don't think I could pull it off.

Metaphors be with you...

Strong Women

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January 14, 1994

Que pasa? How's everyone? Hope your winter is going well. (Yes, Debbie, you can have this weather!) Just 4-1/2 months to MWC! Until then, let me join in the SE fray...

Mary Jo and Yvette: Liked your comments on strong women in SW, ST and DS9. I agree that the concept of Leia opened up a lot of doors for strong

female roles. But let's take this topic a little further. Am I crazy, or am I the only one to see the similarities between SW and DS9? The same elements that attracted me to SW are in DS9; such as the strong characterizations; seeing both sides of intergalactic lifestyles, and volatile planetary/galaxy-wide politics. I have to laugh -- in both places, I see equipment jury-rigged and breaking down; and characters bickering yet adapting and surviving in tough circumstances. Meanwhile, there's war and the threat of war hanging over everything. Most of all, both SW and DS9 are so well written and believable. Agree, ladies?

Nora: I agree with you about pro writers having trouble with writing Han's character. Even though I loved Kathy Tyers' *Treaty* book, I still felt Han got short-changed somewhat. He's too much in the background.

Maggie: I enjoyed your chat about MM and politics (and Cheree's answer, too). How can we use Terran examples to define Palpie's Empire? Besides using European politics, Asian politics is another great mother lode of examples; especially when you want to combine different cultures under one leadership. For example, how do the Chinese justify capitalism under a communistic regime? Or even more basic, how does Beijing maintain such a vast control over such a large and different population? When Deng Xipeng dies, oh, boy, the changes that will take place! Another fascinating place is the rest of Asia -- how will those diverse cultures be able to trade with and deal with each other economically? The possibilities are endless just like SW. What do you think? Comments?

Barbara, Yvette, Mary Jo, and Carolyn: I like your opinions on ROTJ. Now I'll throw in my credit's worth. Overall, ROTJ wasn't a bad film, despite the Ewoks. It moved quick enough so any viewer would stay interested. I mean, who can deny that the speeder bike chase, the sabre duel, and the space battles were great scenes? The characterizations were okay. I think Han was there as the comic relief. I thought most lines he said were funny! And the branch scene was a riot! Even the Ewoks were funny at times. So, overall, ROTJ wasn't as bad as everyone says, but it's not as strong as SW and TESB either.

Lin, Cheryl, Mary Jo, Nora, Debbie, and Liz: It was great getting together with you folks! DC-VA-MD SW fandom rules! Let's hope we can recruit more members!

Catriona: It's nice meeting you! I have a word of advice -- if you ever make it to the USA, don't touch the Ho Ho's! They are the nastiest concoctions for desserts ever devised! (Sorry, Mary Jo.) They're

chocolate, I think. I rate them right up there with Bantha chips marking the trail.

I agree about the Ewoks! They were too cute and didn't belong in the film. (But they had some humor, at least.) ((Ed: *Re the Ewoks, does anyone remember the two TV Ewoks specials that Lucasfilm did? The live action ones, not the cartoons. How does everyone think that integrated into the SW universe and when were they supposed to be set? Pre-ROTJ or post-ROTJ? They seemed to be aimed at kids and, indeed, my daughter loves them. Comments?*))

Well, this letter is too huge so I'll sign off. Take care, everyone. Hope to see you at MWC!

Outside World Perspectives

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January 23, 1994

Z.P.: Good article on writing ideas! I'd like to add another category, one sort of related to Plot: Outside World Implications. There's a war going on, major cultural/social shifts, all sorts of Outside World Events that our heroes have no control over. How do they affect the lives and life choices of our characters? What happens to Leia's position/ambitions if Mon Mothma is assassinated; and by whom, Ours or Theirs? New perspectives on characters can be found in the reactions of people not emotionally involved with the heroes, who have duties/goals that interfere, conflict or simply are different than Han's or Luke's.

Oh gohd, reading panel transcripts certainly humbles a person. Just call me the non-sequiter queen. And that picture of me! Gad, what was I pontificating on just then?

Laura Bolling: I would love to see your friend's teaching notes on the comparative religions section covering SW!

Marti Schuller: I suspect that the endless it's good/it's bad debates would fade a little if people watched their language and didn't make sweeping statements like "everyone knows that..." and "I don't know anyone who likes (take your pick) Ewoks/ROTJ/Vader/Han/Luke/Lando/etc". There's bound to be a few people who disagree, who write in about their disagreement and we're off once again on an unresolvable tit-for-tat argument.

As for the fluid in Chewie's cell, I tend to agree with those who protest that bladders eventually win out over decorum and lack of tidy toilet facilities.

Related to the issue: Cheree's got a good point about Han recognizing Chewie by his odor. Living beings smell, no matter the efforts of the deodorant industry to eliminate them; even my very proper, elegant and elderly aunt has a distinctive signature scent that labels her possessions as unmistakably hers. It's entirely possible that Han, even with his limited human nasal apparatus, could detect Chewie immediately upon coming within a few feet of him. *Especially* if the sanitation was minimal. These two guys do share a ship's close quarters after all.

Yvette Ghilan: Actually, people did dump on Han for charging the stormtroopers in ANH ... and then a number of ex-military fans weighed in with their observations that what Han did, under those circumstances, was quite logical from a military/aggressive point of view. Unexpected behavior on the part of the pursued can be disorienting to the aggressor and can indeed gain time/scatter forces/alter the odds.

Tina Bentrup: I would love to sit in on a participative, Rocky Horror-type showing of SW!

Pat Nussman: Here's a thought: what if there was no Republican Star Fleet? What if Palpatine presided over the first gathering of a galactic fleet during the Clone Wars and then just "kept it" for his own use? It's always bothered me that the Empire was able to so completely dominate star fleet in such a short time. Maybe the reason the Jedi were peacekeepers was that they were the only pan-galactic group available and able to transcend the parochial interests of local planetary/system fleets. Maybe the reason the Alliance fleet is such a rag-tag group, that it has such a strange chain of command, is that it has no universal fleet structure to fall back on. Instead, it is a gathering of those planetary/system fleets (or what's left of them), which must work together without the Jedi structure that once upon a time provided a neutral communication/negotiation pressure valve. Maybe the Republic was a group of voting trade "states". If those states were slowly evolving into a galactic culture, it's possible that someone like Palpatine took advantage of a Bad Situation like the Clone Wars to consolidate that evolution under his influence.

Ming Wathne: Good point about Yoda and Owen treating Luke in similar ways with dissimilar judgments made upon them. Maybe it's just too easy to identify with Luke as a kid "like me," arguing with the folks. Personifying a character/situation can so

easily cloud judgment. I remember the MWC after ROTJ came out, with lots of folk dumping on OWK, and one person (no, not me) standing up to say that they sounded like kids who have just discovered, to their horror and disillusionment and anger, that Dad isn't perfect.

Louise Turner: Interesting comments on your disappointment over the West End Games interpretation of SW. I can empathize. There is a lot of professional SW material out there that I simply am not interested in. And my disinterest startled me at first, even annoyed me. *This isn't my SW!* I would think. *Why are they wasting money on this?* Ah, but, so many people are thrilled with these developments. I can't condemn them or their interests, and -- in a way -- I guess I have to give Lucas credit for finally letting people run with the ideas. No, this isn't my SW, or my perception of "canon" SW, but Force-knows that even in SW fanzine fandom we disagree violently at times over what SW truly "is." All the new stuff out this past year has really forced me to think through the situation and decide that I don't really have to be compulsive about SW and I don't have to collect everything and therefore I don't have to like/agree with everything out there. It's hard for an "eo-fan" like me to let go of anything labeled SW, but I think I'm getting there!

Catriona Campbell: I like the idea that Owen was anxious because Luke's paperwork was faked or even nonexistent!

Naw, not Celtic bashing (I live with a woman of fanatic Welsh descent), just a little protest for equal time!

That's all for now -- here's hoping everyone enjoys a warm and bright spring!

Finding Time to Write

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January 26, 1994

I hope everyone had a great holiday season and that the new year brings peace and joy for all.

Mary Jo: Thanks much for your comments about "Where Is Thy Sting?", "The Interrogation" and "Unlikely Allies." It was very sweet of you to say that.

As for writing more Vader stories, I'm doing my best, but of course my SW muse only knocks loudest at my mental doors when I'm trying to write for impending academic deadlines!

Louise: Re the point mentioned above, and what you said about finding it difficult to concentrate on school projects at times -- I also have learned to my chagrin that history haunts me when I'm doing SW stuff. Instead of thinking I just have a deliberately perverse personality, I prefer to assume that my SW and history obsessions are linked in some real and probably subconscious ways, just as I am sure your archaeology and fiction are tied in some respects. For instance, in my 20th century American class right now, we are discussing U.S. ventures into cultural and economic imperialism, and whether this automatically means that the republic our founders wished for has been betrayed and subverted. Depressing stuff to ponder for long, but very thought-provoking, too. I find that my class notes contain story ideas as well as germane historical info; I sort of jot them down at random, and the results would probably confuse anyone else who tried to decipher them! Your fighter pilot/hangar crew culture ideas sound fascinating. I would love to see more stories about popular culture and the working class in SW fiction. Is there art, music, fiction, etc. that has resonance not only across planets but across major portions of the galaxy as well? Do regular soldiers share stories, songs and jokes that create a sort of esprit de corps that might give them more in common with each other than with their leaders? Is it conceivable that, say, Alliance and Imp fighter pilots might, in a neutral setting, prefer one another's company to that of their own superiors? Class issues, in fact, are usually neglected in SW fiction. Are there ethnic and religious conflicts within socioeconomic classes? These are issues I would like to explore when all my already-percolating ideas are set on paper.

Charyl: I still plan on sending you something for TT. Did you pursue the playing cards idea? As soon as I've got something suitable completed, I'll let you know!

Tammy: Your poor mom at MWC last year! Hey, if you're unchaperoned, does this mean that you can get into trouble with me if we figure out a way to do it? (Just kidding!) School is going well -- I'm on my last semester of classes now and then next year I begin teaching (my own apprentices!) and preparing for comprehensive exams -- eek!

Maggie: I agree with you that I am actually less bothered by SW fic women in "traditional" roles than

I am with how women in those roles are portrayed. We need stories about working women wishing they had more time to have a family or time to spend with the family they already have, for example. But if we do that, we should also have tales about men who feel the same way and about women who have fulfilling careers or who enjoy being homemakers. We should also remember that there are careers besides government service and Force-training! I like what you said about using one's Darkside tendencies in a positive fashion rather than ignoring them at one's own peril. And what you said about committees and consensus rings true to me -- I've had history seminars in which some students feel threatened whenever the class cannot reach a consensus about a particular topic or book we've discussed. This actually makes me feel more threatened than dissension sometimes does, for a few strong personalities in our class have actually ignored alternative opinions and interpretations and then stated out loud that we have reached an agreement. This not only shuts down the marketplace of ideas, but also stifles people who don't want to stress their disagreement and thus seem difficult or "alien" to the rest of the group. It's frightening to see that happen in an environment in which all opinions are supposed to be tolerated. It makes *me* want to use Darkside traits to protect those who are silenced by supposedly good (and false) consensus. So I sometimes play devil's advocate. One more comment: you asked whether writers should put themselves into stories and risk artistic myopia. I believe that relatively few characters are direct representations of the author, or deliberate alter egos. Rather, I think most writers have some elements of themselves (even negative traits) in every character they portray -- how else could we write at all?

Yvette: I too know how it is to find particular zine stories disturbing or even offensive. However, one being's ambrosia is another's poison, and I would not want arbitrary decisions about which stories are acceptable and which ones should be ghettoized to outside the "mainstream" (whatever the mainstream is defined to be). Each editor has to make difficult decisions about what to accept or reject as it is, and if we disagree with those policies, we should move on to another story or no longer patronize those zines, just as if there is something offensive on TV or radio, we should turn it off or select another channel. If a story bothers you, quit reading it. You could even write it as you would like to see it done.

Also, where do authors, readers and editors draw the line between "acceptable" and "dangerous"? We

are all subjective creatures, and therefore no opinion is worth more than any other. I personally believe we need more, not less, fiction in which beings of all genders can openly express love and tenderness toward each other regardless of gender, for I would like to think that some beings in the SW galaxy are wiser and more tolerant than us frail and too-often short-sighted humans. I also think excessive violence is problematic, depending on the message of the story -- is rape, torture or murder being romanticized or actually deplored? But these are *my* concerns, my views. The point is that the moment we start trying to make clear distinctions and definitions, everything falls apart and we differ about what is and what is not acceptable. Few of us would delight in reading detailed descriptions of disembowelment, for example, yet it can be easy for us to forget the fact that people die horribly in the SW films. After all, the two Death Star explosions and Alderaan's destruction are examples of mass murder -- but we don't have to ponder that since we don't see the actual suffering and pain. It's just too complex an issue for anyone to try to apply tight classificatory standards. That is why editors should be able to print what they choose, and the rest of us should deal with it accordingly. If we don't agree with their policies, we should do our own stricter or more permissive publications or simply learn that we should tolerate others' opinions even if we don't necessarily agree with them.

The only thing that makes me "risk losing my lunch" is the prospect of a SW fandom that stifles creativity, diversity and freedom of thought and speech. As I stated in Maggie's comments above, such a coercive consensus can only be detrimental. Therefore, I welcome stories that might make me grimace, for I believe in having my opinions, even my morals, challenged from time to time. Accordingly, I also welcome any criticisms you would like to point out about the opinions I have just expressed or any flaw you see in my reasoning. A U.S. Chief Justice once said that he couldn't define obscenity but "knew it when he saw it." Another one stated that he might deplore what someone said, but would defend to the death his or her right to say it. Those two statements seem to express the true issues involved in this admittedly thorny topic.

Z. P.: Thanks for the story plug! I'll also refer to your article last issue whenever I get writer's block from now on. How have you been surviving the rotten East Coast weather -- does DC even know what snow scrapers are? That blizzard must have been a nightmare!

Tina: Thanks for the support! No, I've not read that Yasner story. What happens? As for that Kenobi line that Owen thought Anakin should have stayed on Tatooine and not gotten involved -- are we to take that as "truth" or just as a rhetorical move designed to cover for Owen's obvious disapproval of Luke's father and to perpetuate a "safe" myth of Anakin Skywalker, a myth that would inspire Luke to the "proper" goals and opinions?

Brian: Hi! Keep those letters coming! As for writing about characters' sex lives in SE or in fiction, of course no one has to do that. But if we want to, we should be able to, right? Are you saying there's something wrong with prurient interest? (smile)

Pat: I understand how Leia's reaction to Han in TESB might be one of inexperience. However, one can have had sex in the past and still be taken aback or flustered by someone else's romantic move. I think we all feel a little awkward when kissing a particular individual for the very first time -- it's always a new experience when it's a new person. I think this would be true in Leia's situation since she'd obviously assumed until that point that a relationship with Han was just not possible, or at least not something she should actively pursue. She could be afraid of the circumstances, afraid of his reputation, afraid of feeling too much when she's lost so much already, afraid of getting into a romance when in the middle of a war, afraid of becoming too close to someone who runs against all her expectations of who a "proper" princess' and diplomat's mate should be. She might be fearing her own emotions rather than reacting out of inexperience. Perhaps she fears the vulnerability involved in expressing her love. It can be easier to be romantic with someone who has little emotional power over us, especially if we think the relationship will have to end because of life's demands or because of basic personality conflicts. Leia values her ability to control situations, and if she realizes she has strong feelings for Han, his romantic move might terrify her whether or not she is still a virgin.

Catriona: Thanks for the compliment on "Sting". I value your comments on Obi-Wan, for I sometimes fear that I forget how frightened he must have been for so long, and how wounded he was by the past. (All our favorite characters, you realize, are in serious need of therapy, preferably group counseling, although that might have had dire consequences indeed, since that would involve all of them being in the same room at the same time -- smile). Seriously, though, I don't want to fall into the trap of understanding some characters' shortcomings and then condemning others'.

As for Ho Ho's, I personally rank them high on my favorite corporate-packaged junk food list -- just above Twinkies and right below Hostess cupcakes. It's hard to find that fine balance between decadent sugar and delicious preservative plastic! Sometime I'll send you some; Force knows there's no danger of them rotting in the mail! No, sir, no one will need to embalm me when I die... What's this "Daddy turning back toward the closed door" thing you mentioned to Fiorenzo? Sounds like it's something I should obsess over...

Fiorenzo: See above. What's Catriona talking about? These tiny moments are great to think about, to base whole philosophies upon... As for philosophies about enigmatic characters, thank you for explaining your views on Vader and Palpie's twisted relationship a bit more. It sounds fascinating, and I do wish you'd write those stories down, because I can't get into your mind, you see. (Probably a good thing for both of us!)

Marti: Last but not least. Feel consoled that the weather here is horrible, too. At least I don't need to be home; I can get ice storms and blizzards right here! Obviously, since I'm talking about the weather, we've spoken recently on the phone. I hope we can get into some juicy debates on these pages sometime soon! (Or do we know each other too well for that now?)

Bye!

Whacking Womp Rats

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January 29, 1994

Hi, all!

I cannot believe all the new merchandise out there or on the way! I picked up the Micro Machines right after Christmas and they are adorable. Sure hope they come up with play sets to go with them.

Some thoughtful relative got me the Super Nintendo games for SW and TESB -- wow! The graphics are amazing. I'm not much of a video game fanatic, but these are fun. So far, I've whacked about a million womp rats, nailed dozens of pesky Jawas but I haven't rescued R2 yet, or piloted down the Death Star trench -- wish me luck.

I'm still searching for the audio collection.

Richmond apparently is a one audio collection town. Clerk at Peaches, "Yeah, we got one of those in but we sold it." I did manage to get both radio show collections and they are lovely. Thanks to Lin Ward, I'd had the tapes to sustain me during the "dark times". The CD's have movie scenes etched on each one and fun little promos.

I'm really excited by the line of stand ups coming out. My friends and I have already made plans for a private photo session when our life-size friends arrive! So far, they've scheduled Luke, Han, Leia, Darthie, both droids and a stormtrooper. The photographic possibilities (including in costume and -- ahem -- out) are endless.

I loved Z. P.'s article on writing tips. So, what's Z. P.'s favorite expression? "That's another story."

Awfully sorry to hear about Randy's layoff. I guess they don't call it that anymore, though, do they? They call it "de-selection" or use some other politically correct euphamism. ((Ed: We call it "bullshit.") Be assured our best thoughts are with you. Glad to hear SE will still be running -- always remember that some of us get the shakes without our SW fix.

Marti Schuller: Yvette thinks L&L were born on Tatooine. You have them on Alderaan. I always assumed they were born on Dagobah. I think it was Luke's line about everything looking familiar. And I get a kick out of picturing Yoda as the midwife! "Push you must!"

Nora Mayers: Glad you could make it to the Pre-MWC Trilogy party. Let's make it an annual event! I love your idea of a Raiders trilogy -- let's do it real soon (drool slurp).

Can't wait to read the promised novel. It'll be fun to read more about Wedge -- definitely an underlooked cutie.

Mary Jo Fox: Ditto on the trilogy party. So, you write during class? You *bad* girl. I can think of a few stories I wish I'd written, though.

I thought Winter was the spy too in the Zahn books. Hoped fervently she was so that she'd die in some particularly gruesome way that would wipe the smug ... oh, sorry. Winter wasn't my favorite ... uh ... character seems like too strong a word.

Oooh... Love your idea about Death (from the Sandman comics for the uninitiated) and Darthie. They both like killing puny humans, both have a marked preference for black apparel, both have pale white skin. Hmm, wonder what the kids would look like?

Charyl Perry: CherylCon was great this year, wasn't it?