

Reviews

BLUE HARVEST

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This *Star Wars* fanzine is for heavy-duty *Star Wars* fans. That includes us. We buy all the new hardcover and paperback novels as they come out. We buy *Star Wars Insider* and *Star Wars Galaxy*. We have the special edition laserdisc boxed set. We've even talked about devoting an issue of *Spectrum* to *Star Wars*. Maybe we'll get around to it one of these days. So we were thrilled to learn about *Blue Harvest*, produced by a couple of David Lynch fans, to boot!

The publication gets off to a rough start, but by the fifth issue (actually, each issue is called an "episode" for some strange reason, so five "episodes" have been published to date) they're getting more and more in sync. Mary Jo Fox has an interesting series of columns on television and film projects influenced by *Star Wars* (*Battlestar Galactica*, *Battle Beyond the Stars*, etc.). The third issue contains a nice interview with Tony Akins, artist of one of Dark Horse's *Star Wars* comic book series. (Don't they seem to have about twenty such titles nowadays?) Also in the third issue is an enjoyable (but too short) re-evaluation by

SPECTRUM RATING SYSTEM

We're adapting our television rating system to use in our Review section. The donut rating comes from our love of the *Twin Peaks* television show (which is the subject of our other magazine, *Wrapped in Plastic*).

••••• - The best possible of its type. The pinnacle. A hot bath followed by a long back-rub. To borrow from Anselm, "that than which nothing greater could be conceived" in its category.

•••• - Pretty darn good. A long hot bath, but no back-rub.

••• - Enjoyable. A refreshing, but brief, shower.

•• - Barely passable. You stub your toe getting into the shower.

• - Forget it. Your water's been shut off because you forgot to pay the bill.

☹ - A meteor destroyed your mobile home. You don't know whether to laugh or cry.

We thought it would be fun to begin a *Spectrum* review section. We know, we know, every magazine does reviews. But these will be different because, uh, well, because they'll be our reviews!

Most of the material reviewed here will probably have fairly high ratings. It isn't that we indiscriminately like everything. It's just that it's more fun to write about material we're excited about. And since this section has no requirements—we can review or not review whatever we want—we've decided to have a good time with it!

Randal Yard of Marvel's *Star Wars* comic book series. In the fifth issue, Yard briefly maps out the four-thousand-year SW saga (including the films, novels, and comic books).

And reviews—lots and lots of reviews, from the new SW novels and related books (such as the amazing *Tomart's Price Guide to Worldwide Star Wars Collectibles*) to the older Topps trading cards and bizarre record album tie-ins (who could forget *Star Wars and Other Galactic Funk* from Maco records in 1977?).

The writing is generally competent and stakes out a middle ground—neither fawningly sycophantic nor boldly analytical and academic. Occasionally, an article misfires—for instance, Fox's strange article "Writing Hip Fanfic" that delineates how to improve one's *Star Wars* fan fiction ("Really long original character stories get old after a while," "Don't try to be too science-fictiony," "Avoid gimmicks," "Be original"—you get the idea), or Yvette Ghilan's essay on love in the SW saga. And we've made a solemn vow never to read fan poetry (and as little professional poetry as possible), so we admit to skipping a few items in the issues.

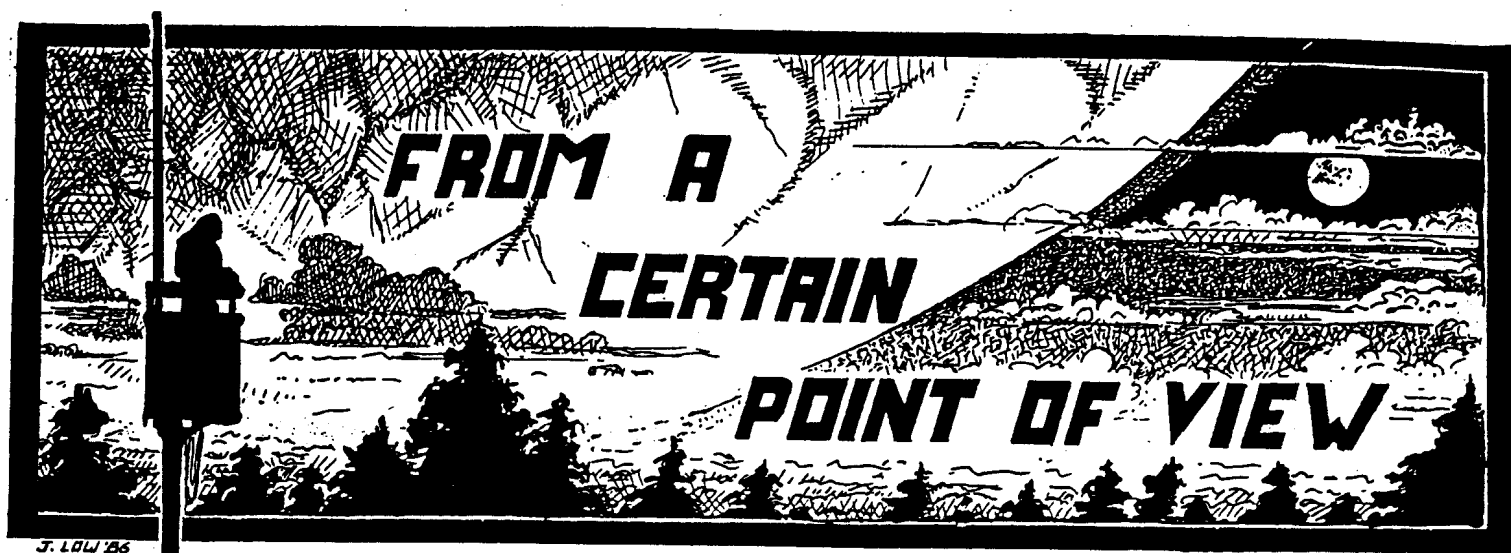
The design and production is good and getting better. At times there is too great a fascination with computer graphics tricks. For instance, in the news section, each item is printed in a different font, including some bizarre ones that are barely readable. Still, the overall look of the zine is improving dramatically, so the editors are clearly working out many of the kinks of the early issues.

As *Star Wars* fans look forward to 1997 (the proposed release date of a refurbished version of the original 1977 film) and 1998 (supposedly, the release date of the next new film in the series), *Blue Harvest* is one publication they might want to check out in the meantime.

RATING: ••••



Spectrum 35



THE LAST JEDI

Jacqueline Taero
Terra, Sol System

M. J. Mink: What a delicious can of worms you've opened up! And you're right. Most of the references to the Jedi do tend to reveal fear, derision or contempt. Interesting, isn't it? And another thing: If the Alliance was so pleased to have the Last Living Jedi (trainee division) in its midst, why not call attention to the fact? Why give Luke a generic military title instead of calling him, for example, Jedi Skywalker?

Come to think of it, there's little to indicate that the Alliance itself had much interest in Luke *as a Jedi*. They were glad enough to have another hot-shot pilot on the roster, and they were perfectly willing to be the beneficiaries of his skills, but did the Alliance even care that Luke had Jedi talents? When Luke was stranded in the snow, no one said, "Force help us, our Only Jedi is about to freeze to death out there and the cause will be lost without him." The only concern displayed was for Commander Skywalker, just another member of the Alliance, and he was saved by a friend for friendship's sake. A few people stood around wringing their hands and looking worried, but the Alliance did not mount an all-out search effort to retrieve its supposedly precious Last Living Jedi. Basically, they shrugged and decided to wait until morning. If having a Jedi around was as important to them as we've assumed, wouldn't they have been as determined as Han was to find him?

Gerald Crotty: Just when I think I've had an original idea, along you come and tell the whole world... It's not quite the stuff of Arthurian legend, but I have a lengthy poem in a forthcoming issue of *Tremor* which will explain

what *really* happened between Ben, Anakin, Anakin's wife, etc. And I can assure you that every word of it is true, because Darth dictated it to me himself.

Matthew Whitney: Your suggestion that there were no Jedi academies but instead a cell structure which secretly recruited and trained students ... hm, I don't know. If the Jedi were an underground organization, this would make sense. But we have been led to believe that the Jedi were a public institution. I don't think you can have it both ways. Besides, the Jedi seemed to be sitting ducks for betrayal — confident of their position, secure in the belief that they were the guardians of the galaxy, and probably unbearably smug. Setting up a cell-based organization implies paranoia, which is a concept diametrically opposed to the foregoing. If the Jedi had possessed a little healthy paranoia, they probably wouldn't have been wiped out so easily.

Maggie Nowakowska: You gave a very thoughtful, insightful presentation of some fascinating issues, particularly with regard to Han's criminal taint or lack thereof as perceived by persons of different ages.

I can understand why your friend found SW "quaint". The relatively clear-cut good vs. evil of SW must be as alien to today's youth as the unabashed, unquestioning patriotism of earlier generations seems to some of us who grew up with the Cold War, Vietnam and Watergate. I have dim memories of things I once believed in; your young friends have no such personal reference points to fall back on, only the brutal reality which surrounds them.

Which leads to an interesting thought — logically, there *should* have been as much of a reality gap between Luke Skywalker and Ben Kenobi as there is between your perception of Han's criminality and Yolanda's view of it. Ben Kenobi is talking about a misty past of which Luke has no personal knowledge. Kenobi waxes romantic about the lightsaber as "an elegant weapon" belonging to a better

era. (Elegant? That's a curious choice of words. The lightsaber maims and kills as effectively as "inelegant" weapons do.) Yet we see no evidence of any generational or cultural gap in Luke's reactions to what Kenobi is saying. Comments?

On a much lighter note: Han smuggling "intellectual property"? I like it. If we make the logical assumption that technology would be controlled in some way by the Empire (consider the encryption debate raging in the here-and-now), there's every reason to believe that a flourishing black market would exist in equipment not sanctioned by the Empire. Instant contraband and a profitable cargo for those willing to take the risk. "Spice" was probably the brand name of a computer chip Han was hauling, or perhaps the name of an illegal program used to hack Imperial networks.

Re the Emperor and Yoda: Palpatine has no reason to associate Luke with Yoda, whereas he probably knew that Luke was briefly under Kenobi's tutelage. If he ever knew of Yoda's existence, he probably assumed that the Little Green Critter was long since dead or senile. In any case, he has no reason to connect the two, so the fact that he didn't relate Luke's skill to Yoda's training is certainly suggestive but not conclusive proof.

Tina Inge Bentrup: Re your statement that we know Mrs. Skywalker was "beautiful, kind and sad". Do we? We know that's how Leia remembers her. We *don't* know whether or not it's true. We've been led astray before; who's to say that Mrs. Skywalker wasn't rotten to the core? In recent years, Mrs. Skywalker's pure-as-the-driven-snow goodness has become almost an article of faith in fandom — Mrs. Skywalker as seduced and abandoned maiden, Mrs. Skywalker as wronged wife, etc., etc. Why not Mrs. Skywalker as a treacherous viper who doublecrosses everyone in sight?

The answers to your TESB questions are as follows:

#1 — The reasons for using the Wampa are threefold. First, getting zapped by a probe droid probably would have killed Luke, which would have severely limited the action for the rest of the Saga. Secondly, getting zapped by a probe droid wouldn't have lent itself to that desperate levitation act which, one assumes, was intended to demonstrate Luke's fledgling mastery of the Force. Third, George likes creatures, the more the merrier.

#2 — Why did Vader follow the *Falcon*? A *Falcon* in the hand is worth two in the asteroid field. Vader had a long-range plan which we saw played out on Bespin. It didn't matter who was on the *Falcon* — if Luke was aboard, fine, and if he wasn't, those who were aboard could be used to lure Luke into the trap. Darth plans ahead.

#3 — How did Luke know where to find Dabogah? Kenobi's ghost implanted knowledge of Dagobah's location in Luke's mind during that little hypnosis session in the

snow; ergo, Luke simply "knew".

#4 — Why did Darth bother with the bounty hunters when he already knew where the *Millenium Falcon* was? He didn't know where it was — he knew where it had been. Anyway, the bounty hunters were already on the payroll, and using them helped create a smokescreen in case Old Prune Face was snooping around through the Force.

Anyone and Everyone: Did Yoda know that Obi-Wan was training Anakin? If not, why not? And if he did know, why didn't he put a stop to it? Did he have no inkling that Anakin would go bad? Or did Anakin's possible fall to Darkness fit into some larger plan? What did Yoda know and when did he know it?

What would the long-term psychological effects of Alderaan's destruction be, particularly on those who were children at the time of the event? To grow up with the absolute knowledge that your entire planet could be vaporized in an instant if some idiot pushed a button is not a concept designed to instill a sense of security. What would the psychological ramifications be and how would they be likely to manifest?

What were the political gains and losses for each side as a consequence of Alderaan? Did the Alliance lose the support of previously sympathetic worlds which feared meeting a similar fate? Were there expressions of moral outrage or was everyone too terrified to say anything? Did the Empire realize it had made a huge public relations mistake and try to cover up what really happened or did they announce it far and wide for intimidation purposes?

Did Grand Moff Tarkin have free rein in using the Death Star and choosing its targets, i.e., did he decide on his own to obliterate Alderaan or did he get the Emperor's approval first? What was the relationship between the Emperor and Tarkin, anyway? Nothing in the Saga really suggests that Tarkin was particularly important in the Imperial scheme of things, and yet Vader obeys his orders. Why? And how did Tarkin get to be in a position where the Emperor trusted him enough to put a tool as powerful as the Death Star under his control?



FED UP WITH JEDI CHILDREN

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May 5, 1995

First on a personal note. Reading my way through the latest issue of SE, I was stopped by a photo showing the very sympathetic face of an elderly gentleman. Wondering who he was, I began reading and only then realized that I was actually reading about your father. I was very saddened to learn about his suffering and death. My father, age 71 and still his old optimistic self, has been diagnosed with an inoperable lung cancer (how fast it will consume him ... nobody knows), and two of my closest friends just lost their father and mother, respectively, due to severe illnesses. So I know what you and your loved ones have gone and are still going through. The worst part is always seeing a beloved person suffer and being unable to do more than hold hands and grope for comforting words, and realizing that the end is inevitably drawing near. It was the right decision to let your father go, Cheree, and I only hope that when I will have to face this problem, I will find the inner strength to do so, too. My thoughts are with you and your family. ((*Ed: Thank you so much for your kind words. I grieve for you, too, knowing what you will be facing. The best thing about our fannish community is that you can take comfort in knowing so many people care about you. Best wishes to you.*))

It is difficult to go on to happier things now, like the LoCs after this sit-downer. So where do I start? Maybe by telling you that it's almost summer here, with lots of sunshine, temperatures of about 80°F and all the trees in bloom (to the hayfeverish side of the Force, "Gesundheit").

By now all of you have heard the cowbells ring in the old hayloft about Lucasfilm planning a *big* event in Orlando in 1997. Good Force willing and the Rebels don't rise, I will be attending. Who else? Let's just hope King George, the Nontalkative One, will inform us early enough about dates, events, locations, etc., so we can make the necessary arrangements. Uh, we don't have to come in full fighting regalia, do we? (Where are those darn English riding boots of mine? Anyone seen my black pants?)

Some of you fellow LoCers (or is that "Locos"?) have asked about Mark Hamill's appearance on the Howard "I'm even great with my pants on" Stern show. I got this bit of information from a fan in the US who claims to have seen the show, so I referred to what she wrote me in a letter. According to her, it was quite gross. Not having

seen the show myself (and not too eager to do so) I can only imagine what it may have been like, but it seems hard to understand why MH (or anyone else for that matter) would do something that tasteless — especially while having wife and kids around.

On the subject of kids... Is there anyone else out there just as fed up with all this Jedi children garbage as I am? Can't stand to hear or read one more line about the oh-so-happy-and-Force-gifted Solo family or Luke the teacher. Is it just my unpresuming impression or are the pro- and antagonists of the original SW taking a back seat now to all kinds of "new and improved" characters that lead us farther and farther away from what the canon was all about? Instead of Han, Leia, Luke, Fett, Antilles and all the other beloved characters, we get Zip, Zap and Zilch, the Boomerang Fisheries who of course are all Force sensitive and clearly disguised clones of Palpatine, Vader and Hillary Clinton! Blah! And if we do get "our heroes", what do we get? A wimpy, whining Han. A weak, taking-the-easy-way-out Leia. Threepio as babysitter... And what's more, this is not to be considered simply a spoof or "alternative universe". No, those folks out there in pro writers' land actually mean what they say. Gimme your hat, Piett... I wanna puke in it!

I keep my hopes up, though, that GL will come up with something fresh and surprising when continuing the saga (in either direction ... before ANH or after ROTJ) and not simply bless the pro fiction we are now receiving as "canon". If that sounds awfully harsh, okay. Some of the professional work is okay and worth the money (the *Technical Journal — Tatooine* had some nice rare pictures of the sandfarm and *Truce* was entertaining). But a lot of people these days concocting officially sanctioned stories seem to lack that certain SW feeling. Maybe they should watch the trilogy before starting to write!?!

Okay, now that I've made myself a bunch of enemies (Germans are very good at this. Can't beat experience, folks!), on with the show.

Tim Blaes: If ever you find a copy of that "classic tome of Corellian cuisine" — get it for me. I want to serve Han in every way possible!

Matthew Whitney: Re: Jedi training by Yoda. So far, so good. But that would work only if Yoda's training was infallible. Should Yoda fail and one of his own pupils turn to evil, then what would happen to those "pockets of Light Siders"?

Re: Language in SF/F stories — very, very good point.

Susan Zahn: Ob es mit MediaWest klappt??? Das weiss ich leider noch nicht. Ich hoffe aber weiter. Enough of that. How come everyone is speaking German these days?

Re: Jedi and the New Republic. I had never really thought about this, but you are 100% right. The new government had better not wait for the Jedi to reassemble

when said Jedi were not able to save the galaxy the first time around.

Jacqueline Taero: Re: time discrepancy, Luke and Leia and different times on different planets. You do have a point there, lady, although one would think that there would be (maybe aside from the actual, local planet time) a galaxy-wide synchronized standard time to make military operations, civilian transports and general communication between planets or orbiting ships a bit easier. It's already troublesome enough here on earth to calculate what time it is where when you want to give someone in a foreign country a call. Imagine a galaxy full of populated planets, moons and spaceships all on their very own time (planets even with several time zones!)... Someone get me an aspirin!

Re: Beru and Darthie as lovers. It certainly would make plain why Owen is so darn touchy about the subject and does not allow any talks about Vader in his household.

M. J. Mink: Welcome, "Thigh Master." So, Darthie's face would have sprung back into shape given a few more minutes? Hm, then would you share the sentiment that Uncle Palpie would have regained his firm, smooth skin if only someone had hooked him up to a hose and filled him with pressurized air? ("Watch me unfold. I'm full of hot air!")

Maggie Nowakowska: Re: "fragile" Luke vs. seemingly unemotional Luke in ANH. Could it have been the overwhelming shock of finding his home and foster parents burnt beyond recognition that made the boy react in such a stone-faced, emotionless, Spock-like way? From what I know, there is some sort of self-protective mechanism in the human brain, kicking in whenever we are confronted with something so horrible that doing some clear thinking about it would literally blow our minds. So Luke might have been numbed by what he saw. (By the way, listening to the radio drama of ANH, Luke seems to be much more emotional about the deal.) Luke did take the sacrifice of Obi-Wan, the death of Yoda and of Daddy Anakin not nearly as "easy" as the killings of his uncle and aunt. And just think about Luke's almost violently emotional reaction to foreseeing Han and Leia's suffering in Cloud City ("...they were in pain. Will they die, Yoda?") Luke's casual attitude towards killing... The first time we see Luke fire at someone is when he and his mates are trying to escape from the first Death Star. Here Luke is under great stress, trying to defend himself and Leia, for whom he has warm, but rather unbrotherly feelings at the time. After that, most all of Luke's "killings" take place in battle, when there is actually very little time to stop and think about what he is really doing (=killing people!). The only cold-blooded, unemotional killings I witnessed in the trilogy (and this is just my very personal POV) are those committed by "You will experience respiratory problems

soon" Darthie and "Over my dead body" Solo (the Greedo barbeque). Other than that, killings are usually "emergency killings" or battle casualties.

Gerald Crotty: Re: Threepio... Wonderful if everyone spoke like him? How would you enjoy it if everyone acted/reacted like him, huh? Not possible? Think again, buster. We have a female translator here at our office and she is exactly like ol' Goldenrod — cumbersome, slow, nitpicky, humorless, stiff as a board, whiny, self-pity in person ... and she has a knack for getting on everyone's nerves. (And, yes, I did nickname her "Threepio"!)

Jennifer Moore: Re: "real zines" vs. fanzines. It may also largely depend on what quality the first fanzine a person gets his/her hands on is. A very well made one (*Wookiee Commode*, *Tremor* and so on) can be a real attention getter. A mediocre or even a bad one can be a major turn off. Trouble is that for instance the leading (only?) German SW fanzine contains almost no stories, but just fanclub news about club meetings and musings on what Lucas will do next. The few and far between "stories" are tiny affairs written in such an awful style that one feels reminded of 3rd grade school compositions or the attempts of very young girls to fantasize about their fave Rock/Pop music stars (how she meets him "accidentally" and how he falls immediately in love with her ... the works!). Now, such a fanzine will certainly not get new fans interested in fanlit. And then there are those who do not read fanfic because (I'm quoting a German H. Ford fan): "It would destroy my personal fantasies about the man!" Oh, well...

Tina Bentrup: Re: your various questions...

1. The Wampa was necessary because Luke/Hamill's newly arranged facial features (scars, splayed schnozzle) had to somehow be explained. A direct facial laser zap by the probe droid would have killed the poor baby on the spot. So they brought in the fuzzy one. (Uh, I remember reading somewhere that the Wampa was originally intended to sink his claws into Luke's rump and shoulder [Ouch!] but after shortstuff took this ill-famed "shortcut" off the highway ramp they rewrote the scene, making the Wampa go for Skywalker's mug.)

2. Maybe Darthie mistook Leia's presence for Luke's and therefore followed the *Falcon*? Maybe he knew all along that Luke wasn't on it but planned even then to get the princess and her nerfherder to use them as bait for Junior?

3. Maybe he was on some sort of "tractor beam" — however faint or disguised — and was inevitably pulled toward Dagobah? Or maybe Ben kept whispering directions in Luke's ears? Even R2 might have found an old programming of the route to Dagobah somewhere in his rusty innards ... who knows?

4. He didn't know where the *Falcon* was (clinging

to the hull of the *Executor* at the time). Remember that when the garbage was jettisoned before the fleet went hyper, and the *Falcon* drifted off with the garbage, it was Fett who noticed this and went after the Corellian ship.

For over two weeks we have had the most gorgeous weather here, without any rain. It really doesn't feel like Germany/Dagobah anymore. But lo and behold! clouds are drifting in and for the coming week, cold temperatures and rain have been predicted. Just so we here do not feel spoiled!

Louise Turner: Re: *The Annals of Imperial Rome*. I read that Georgie did actually pattern his saga after *The Rise and Fall of the Roman Empire*. Looks like he took the history of old Rome, threw in the Knights Templar, then blended this with generous amounts of Asian religion and social structures (Samarai — motif in Darth Vader), and finally spiced it with tiny bits of Third Reich Germany/WWII Japan (Imperial uniforms), and all fairy tales he could get his grimy little hands on. Interesting concoction, one must admit.

And finally (happy sigh from dear Ed here): I love the Eclecticon Attendees photo. First I thought, "Oh, another still from inside Jabba's palace." But then I discovered that I actually knew one face — and not from ROTJ. Hmm, must be my poor eyesight. Sorry, people...!

Read you all next time around. Until then, let the Force flow through you — always!

THANK YOU!

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Before I begin my LoC, please indulge me as I have some personal matters I need to cover. Cheree, you know, I hope, that you have my sincerest condolences on the passing of your father. Perhaps better than most, I understand and empathize with the emotions running rampant in your heart. (For those of you who may not have known, my father died on Nov. 11, 1994 and my mother passed away less than six months later on May 1, 1995.) This past year has been the most difficult of my life and, frankly, without the love, friendship and support of you all — my SW second family — I'm not certain I could have managed. Cheree, I'm sure you know what I mean. I'd also like to give a great big THANK YOU to all who voted for "Lord Vader's Ordeal". Winning the STAR aWARDs medal at MWC meant and means more this year than I can ever adequately express. Somewhere, somehow, I know Mom and Dad are celebrating with me.

And speaking of MWC, I literally arrived there in a pit

of despair and depression, but on the shoulders of my friends I was lifted above it. Nowhere else nor with any other group of people could such warmth, generosity and caring exist. I love you all. My healing has truly begun and you are all to credit. If there's ever *anything* I can do for any of you, never hesitate to ask.

Now, on to SE.

Congratulations, Cheree, on your FanQ [for "Mercy Mission" in *Tremor* #8]! So generous a spirit as yours — not many repeat winners would withdraw from competition in the STAR aWARDs — deserves recognition. It was a super story and I know what the award(s) mean to you. Bravo!

Belea T. Keeney: Re your comment that for those who've been reading and writing SW fanfic for a long time some plot ideas get repetitive. Personally, I don't have this problem. Every writer brings a new idea or puts a new spin on even the most written of scenes, be it Ord Mantell or the Ewok hut wedding night. As someone wiser once said, everything that can be written has been written. That doesn't mean we're all going to stop trying. I take each story individually. So, write that story about a woman sold into an Imperial-arranged marriage. Never let another story prevent the flow of your own creation!

Tim Blaes: All I can say is that your willingness to even consider childbearing is in direct opposition to most men I know. My husband and both sons are openly grateful not to be in a position to be asked.

Matthew Whitney: I really like your interesting idea that when Vader looks into Luke's mind the Dark Lord momentarily sees through his son's eyes. However, I firmly believe that Vader is well aware of the evil the Empire has become long before he is even aware of Luke's existence and is just biding his time before he can take over and set things "right".

Jacqueline Taero: My personal opinions on the questions you posed to Z. P. are so strong that I feel compelled to reply. I have always felt that Palpatine was born evil and not turned as was Vader. I can't see him as Yoda's fallen student. Instead, I prefer to think of him as having been instructed by the Sith — who in my galaxy are technologically advanced sorcerers. I then see him turning on them, using Vader to annihilate his mentors and bestowing the title of Dark Lord of the Sith on his own pupil as sort of a cruel personal joke. This is probably far removed from Lucas' ideas, but it works for my writing.

We do agree, however, on Yoda. He is very much the antithesis of the Emperor and his own master. I see neither Palpatine nor Yoda as including their "lessers" in their thoughts, plans or hopes. And double YES!!! to your astute observations re R2D2.

M. J. Mink: It was terrific meeting you at MWC and getting to know you. I look forward to our rooming

together next year. Welcome, also, to the wonderful world of SE.

"Jedi ThighMaster" — groan, giggle. You are wicked, woman.

Enjoyed your pov re Vader's rejection of evil. True, the definition of that word certainly varies vastly person to person, but I do believe Vader had come to accept that the Emperor *was* evil. I will grant, however, that your point about Vader choosing to save his son was stronger than his turning against Palpatine. Valid argument.

As for the references to the Jedi being "words of fear, not respect", I'm inclined to believe they are more words of derision. Presumably, the Jedi were never large in number, affording few in the galaxy actual contact with them. Disbelief in their skills must surely have been rampant, therefore, even in their heyday. I also feel that the reason the Alliance didn't "cherish" Luke was disbelief. After all, this is a kid from a backspace little planet. I doubt any of us would have given much credence to his seemingly grandiose claims without further proof ourselves. Meanwhile, skilled pilots and fighters were sorely needed.

Likewise, you're correct that no one voices any sorrow over the extinction of the Jedi, but again, supposedly that event took place prior to Luke's birth. Time marches on and people tend to either forget or cease dwelling on what cannot be changed. Do any here still mourn the innocent victims of Jonestown, for example? I'm sure many in the films long for the days prior to the Empire too, but neither is that spoken of openly. Yet, I'm equally certain the desire for older, "better" days remains alive in their hearts — else why such fervor against their enemy?

I do agree that the disappearance of the Jedi probably did cause relief in many outside of those who follow the Dark, but not for the same reasons you stated. It seems to be universal that what we do not know or understand we fear. Certainly, the Jedi were subject to this same ignorant bigotry.

Z. P. Florian: How's it going, Yoda? I *loved* your door replies at MWC. You have a naughty sense of humor, lady.

I'm not sure I agree that Luke had a greater gift of foresight than the others. I think Ben had just closed his mind to even the remotest possibility of Vader's redemption and didn't want Luke to get killed for what Obi-Wan perceived as Luke's naivete. Yoda may have realized that Luke was the *only* one who stood a chance of turning Vader back to the Light and that if such a miracle could be achieved, then Vader would be the only one strong enough to defeat the Emperor. However, he could scarcely undermine Luke's self-confidence by telling him so. Palpatine was too self-absorbed and egomaniacal to believe in less than his total indestructibility and Vader had given up on himself no less thoroughly than Obi-Wan.

Therefore, Luke, with all his sincere and heartfelt beliefs intact was the only real hope for them all.

Maggie Nowakowska: Re your statement that the Luke in ANH was "not devastated" by the sight of Owen's and Beru's skeletal remains, I believe such a sight caused him to go into momentary shock, feeling not violence but horror and revulsion. Later, his memory of that scene set within him the burning desire and determination to avenge their deaths. Though Han and Leia may have seen more violence and killing among sentient beings than Luke, remember his homeworld and its harshness. Certainly most of his life Luke has had to witness and come to accept the realities of birth and death and the often monumental struggle required just to survive from day to day.

I have never seen Luke as "fragile", even in the simplest of writings. Rather I choose to believe he is one of those rare individuals who is truly in touch with his emotions and accepts the need to evince them now and again. The greatest reason I am attracted more to his character than to the others is because Luke is not only a survivor, but a survivor who comes through with his sense of humanity (for lack of a better word) intact. Han is a survivor also, but prior to running into Luke, Leia and company he has been hardened by his experiences, becoming cynical and distrustful. Leia, likewise, is a survivor, but one who seals her heart by pouring all her energy into her cause. Only Luke seems to remain true to himself throughout. Because a man cries now and then does not make him "fragile" but stronger and wiser than one who does not, in my book.

Your point on the differences between pro and fan writing was excellent. One reason I loved writing SW early on was the idea that I could concentrate more on plot, dialogue, etc. since everyone more-or-less knew the characters already. Granted, most SW writers later began to delve more deeply or expand on those characters, but not having to create them initially was a great draw for me as a neo.

I agree also that no one needs ever learn of Luke and Leia's paternity or relationship to one another. I do believe they might choose to confide in a select few, but otherwise I feel they would elect to keep the knowledge to themselves — if for no other reason than the difficulties that would arise for Luke should the information become public.

I also agree wholeheartedly with your superior assessment of Obi-Wan's "truths" speech. Since you stated your case so eloquently, I'll not comment further except to say "Hear. Hear."

Gerald Crotty: Everyone speaking like 3PO?! Please!!! I hear enough whining and "poor me" remarks as it is. No more!

Jennifer Moore: Loved visiting with you at MWC and

congrats on your honorable mention. I told you that you had real talent. Next, the medal.

You're absolutely correct that nearly every SW writer I know has been influenced by others, myself perhaps more than others. Not only have I found my thoughts, ideas and style changing as a direct result of reading so many excellent stories, but the spirited discussions I've had with other fans — writers and non-writers alike — here in SE and especially at MWC has altered my views frequently or at least made me more aware of what I believe and why.

Weren't the Cadfael mysteries on PBS terrific!

Tina Bentrup: Missed you at the con this year. Hope to see you there in '96.

I enjoyed reading your list of questions and look forward to reading the responses. Personally, I haven't a clue. I doubt Vader felt Leia aboard the *Falcon* and mistook her for Luke. As to how Luke found Dagobah, perhaps when Obi-Wan appeared with the instruction that Luke must go there his spirit somehow transferred the knowledge into Luke's fevered brain. (I know it's lame, but I'm tired.)

Cheryl Pryor: Great to meet you at the con. Maybe next year we can find more time to visit and discuss father and son. Loved your door decoration!

Perhaps it was simply the interest Vader felt in Luke that made Luke believe there was hope of redeeming his father. He might have deliberately chosen to ignore the darker aspects — recruitment to the Dark, use of him in overthrowing Palpatine, etc. — that Vader had in mind for him and concentrated instead on the hope that if Vader truly was totally evil he'd have no desire for his son. It might have been only Luke's fondest dream, but we can all be self-deluded if the need is longstanding and/or great enough, as Luke's was.

Michelle Malkin: Thank you! At last someone else who feels as I do about that Endor Luke/Leia scene. Leia would, should, have had much more of a reaction to Luke's revelation.

I also agree with your remarks re Han and 3PO. Well stated.

Well, I know I've missed plenty of others I meant to comment to, but this is getting long and I'm still recovering from my glorious visit to Lansing. To all the FanQ and STAR aWARDs winners, a huge congratulations and to Judy, who gave us such an incredibly wonderful award and ceremony, a heartfelt hug and "THANKS!!!!". I'll try to catch up with the rest of you better next time. Until then, have a wonderful, safe summer and keep the Force always.

FLOGGING A DEAD TAUNTAUN

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By now Media West would've come and gone. Hopefully, it was fun for all of you that went. I wasn't able to go because I was graduating that weekend. 1996 remains a possibility.

Now that *Snowfire* #1 is all done, I'll start plugging for a second issue! This time, I want to do a zine-within-a-zine highlighting Leia's relationship with Han, but with a twist: I would like stories told from her viewpoint. This is a Leia zine, after all. Nearly every story I've come across about our favorite galactic lovebirds focuses almost exclusively on what *Han's* feeling, thinking, etc. Well, what about Leia? And can she feel anything besides apprehension? This is my challenge for #2. Of course, material on any and all other facets of Leia's life are wanted as well. I have finished one about events during her adolescence.

I don't wish to flog a dead tauntaun, but I have a couple more comments on the pro-fiction ballyhoo. At this point, those who don't like the novels for whatever reason probably won't change their minds. The same goes for those who are enjoying them. I'm just tired of the whole "they're not real fans because they're pros" litany. Making that kind of judgment call just because you didn't like a particular book or comic is unfair. I'm even more bothered though, by the implication that the people who do like this stuff and want to set their stories within that continuity framework aren't "real fans" either, and that their stories will certainly be bad. What a great way to make new writers feel welcome. If a story is bad, it's due to lack of experience, lack of writing skills, an idea that really didn't work, and sometimes, editors who don't care enough to ask their contributors to revise/improve their stories before publication. It's not because somebody decided to include Mara Jade.

That's all I have to say on that, thank you.

Fellow Bothans: Sorry I couldn't make the big shindig at Planet Hollywood. Blame it on Commercial Transactions. From what I understand, the staff is starting to become familiar with you guys. Someday I'll actually make it to one of these things.

Sue: I think jealousy does play a big part in why some fans resent Leia. Unfortunately, jealousy is pervasive in our society, so you have this lady hating that one because she's prettier, or she's skinnier, or she's smarter. Some women who work outside the home envy the ones who can afford to stay home with the kids, while some stay-home

moms envy the ones who are out in the "real" world. And if a woman has a good-looking or rich mate, she often finds herself with few friends. I'm not saying it's true about everybody, but it exists. Even so, it really blows my mind how anybody can envy a *fictional* character that much. It's just so weird.

Z. P.: That's quite a SW shrine you've got! A whole room! What are you going to do when Kenner starts putting out new figures and ships?! Where will you put them all? I really would hate to see what happens to your 12" Luke and Han dolls when you're scheming up a new agonizing adventure for them. That injured Han you showed us looked pretty miserable. At least Carolyn bandaged hers up!

Carolyn: Speaking of which ... how nice to finally have met you! Thanks for your kind comments about "It's Not My Fault." Wait until you see "Luke-A-Palooza" in *Tremor* #9 — I think it's even funnier. Congratulations on the upcoming publication of your story in the *SW Adventure Journal*. I'm looking forward to it. I'll bet it was neat touring West End Games headquarters. You're so lucky!

Maggie: You forgot to mention the totally whacko anti-Luke rants that appeared in the final issue of *Jundland Wastes*. (Thanks to Jennifer Moore, I did read most of the issues). Those were almost beyond description. One letter was so bizarre, I actually fell over laughing. It's unbelievable folks would invest so much into their pet theories and beliefs in a *movie* (of all things), they'd go ballistic when it doesn't turn out they way they wanted it to. It kind of reminds me of *Misery*. The moral of the story? It's real important to keep an open mind on what the future (or past?) holds in the SW universe. I really hope JW isn't an indication of what will happen when Episode One rolls this way around.

Matthew: Hey, welcome back!

Debbie and Cheryl: Too bad I couldn't see all of the doll display. The wedding pictures were cute. I think you guys (time permitting) should've done "wedding invitations," but hindsight is always 20/20. Cheryl, maybe I'll get to see that Vader boudoir next year. He ought to have a picture of you on his nightstand.

Judy: Thanks for helping to peddle my zines at MWC for me. I know there have been a few grumbles about the fairness of the Star Awards from some quarters. To some, it might seem like the same people and zines win every time, and that newer writers or lesser-known zines don't have a snowball's chance on Tatooine of ever winning any recognition. To a degree, this may be true. However, as an editor of two "little zines" and a writer who has been in this game only three years, I really think that you've made the whole voting process as fair as anyone could reasonably expect to make it.

If there is a bias, it's on the part of the people who are doing the voting. Let's face it, the democratic process is at least partially a popularity contest. This is true of the Oscars, presidential elections, class president elections, etc. It's human nature to want to vote for (if not yourself) the zines and writers one is more familiar with and more comfortable with, and there's really no fair way to change that. One can't force those who only want to read stuff about Han to buy and like all the Luke zines, and you can't require those who have been in fandom a long time to read what's-her-face's new zine. (And, I might add, it's not as if the Star Award winners are doing crummy work, either).

If anyone out there wants to make the Star Awards more "fair," then you've got to vote. If you don't vote, then you've got no one else to blame but yourself if that darned zine won for the zillionth year in a row. I heard only 50 people voted for the recent awards. I voted within the first year I started reading this stuff, so being new isn't an excuse.

Sorry, I'll give the bullhorn back to you now, Judy.

Cheree: That was a nice tribute to your dad. You have my sincerest condolences.

TWO SETS OF STANDARDS

Debbie Kittle
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June 8, 1995

Where do I start? So much to say and so little space to say it in. Well, we've had a couple of SW QVC specials since last issue. Some nice stuff there. And some great news: a budget of \$50-\$70 million per film and George may be directing one of them.

The new SW widevision cards are gorgeous beyond words. The new books *Ambush* and *Children* were both great reads for me. Just got *Assault* and it looks to be a great read as well.

Congrats to all the Star Awards winners. It was nice to see a few more people voted than last year. MW was great fun and the doll exhibit came together better than hoped for and can't wait 'til those pics come out. Any comments/criticisms are welcome.

Our Planet Hollywood/Dead Bothan clan gathering was such wonderful fun. Ten of us descended upon the place and I know they'll never be the same again.

Maggie's last installment of our golden age was very well done. I had gotten that issue of JW a few years ago and was absolutely shocked by the remarks in it. I still

think most of those people saw a completely different movie than I did.

Marti: Good to see you at MW again. I hope you had a good time especially in the boudoir with "them".

Thanks for your honesty re: my question. I still feel it's one-sided (us vs. them) but hope that changes.

I wanted to let everyone know that the male wolf cub I helped raise has been chosen by Disney to star in the movie *White Fang 3*! I have to go and watch my child and see what he looks like.

Amanda: Glad to see you made it to MW. Now start early for next year! Glad I could pick up that pin for you. Deb's Buying Service at your service!

Mary Jo: Agree with your comments to Nora and Judy re: the novels. Congrats on the birth of *Snowfire*!

Carolyn: Congrats on going pro! It was good to spend the weekend before MW showing you all the DB haunts and taking the trip over to Z. P.'s. Hope your trip home was a safe one.

Belea: As you've read in the last few issues of SE, there is a strong debate over the pro vs. fan writing. There is a lot of high quality fan work out there that leaves the novels in the dust but I look at the pro novels as "zine" stories. There have been some fan stories that took me forever to plow through but felt I need to in order to vote honestly.

I don't know if you'll be disappointed by the next 3 movies. I won't be. This is Father George's vision and I look forward to where it will take me.

Congrats on getting the laser-disc version. I want that, too.

Tim: I'd hope that pro writers would want comments. When I wrote Vonda to tell her about her book, she sent me a lovely letter back. I don't know about the others but I'd hope they appreciate the comments.

There are 2 sets of standards. Lucas has blessed the pro-stuff and it's written for a broader based audience. Agree that our reasons for writing/goals in reading are different. Well put.

I could see Leia writing kids' stories.

I'd be interested, too, in what Zahn's detractors would say to him, face-to-face.

Yeah, they did a great job with the EB/SW commercial. Loved it!

Matthew: Welcome back. Loved your comments on pro vs. fanfic. We are more lenient of fanfic — we're friends with most of the people. I don't mind but I hate a double standard.

Agree about the CD set: wonderful.

I have been enjoying *Voyager* but think they have been running too many repeats!

Sue: Howdy. Minutes from the last meeting? They're dead and buried along with the JPark dinosaur.

Always good to have you along on our biweekly shopping trips (yes, I am an expensive date!). I can see us being dead broke Bothans.

It's true the Republic will have to move on with its life while the Jedi rebuild. I would think that before the Purge, there were tens of thousands (or more) Jedi to help. To rebuild their numbers would probably take decades. Perhaps the new government would use the Jedi in a different/expanded role?

Minky: Good to meet/room with you at MW. Hope you had a good time. Interesting remarks you had about the Jedi.

A.G.: I saw that Patrick Stewart interview and I was in stitches the whole time.

Your office was 50 degrees??!! Let's switch jobs. You can work in 80-90 degrees at my work. Especially during the summer with the 3 or more cage dryers going at one time, the temps reach there easily and it's a living hell! The only good thing about my job prior to the vet's (fast food restaurant) was their walk in freezer. I could have lived there!

I had 2 really nice snowfalls this winter. Better than ice but still a disappointment in the whole winter. I was able to take the stuffed tauntauns with Han and Luke in the 8 inches of snow and take my Hoth pics. That was really cool.

Z.P.: Hello. The doll exhibit came out really well this year.

Brian: 72 degrees? That's a heat wave! Did you make it to MW?

Maggie: I agree with your comments about the pro/fan writers. Well put.

Re: your comments about Han's bad/good behavior and fans' attitude towards it — I see it happen all the time on daytime TV. I watch soap operas and it's a prime example of it. New guy/girl comes to town who's bad or at least questionable. S/he commits a crime or 2 and later ends up falling in love with good girl/guy (after the producers are flooded with calls/letters from fans wanting this character to stay) and redeeming her/himself or at least, just sweeping said crimes under the carpet. Later, the truth may come out if it makes good suspense/trouble for the show to get those sweeps.

We, the fans, love these anti-heroes/bad guys turned good. Maybe part of it is the excitement, living on the edge, abusing/ignoring authority. We live out part of ourselves through them. Happened 20 years ago and happen now. Perhaps we believe everyone is good but due to circumstances, they were led astray. But now due to new/different circumstances, their real character traits can come through.

Gerald: That SW con sounds great. It seems we in the USA are going to have our own con as well but in 1997 in

Florida at Disney. For once, it's on my side of the country!

Jennifer: Hello. Guess what??!! They're changing the card holder size again. First, came the regular size, then the widevision, now it'll be a whole page! Lucky us!

I think we made the first 1/2 of 1995 a real winner. Planet Hollywood, TRU, card shows, AU, Suncoast and now the ST cons coming up!

Pat N.: Like and agree with your golfing analogy.

Tina: Missed you at MW this year. :(Hope all is ok with you and Dan. Did you get my letter I sent a few months ago? Sorry to hear about Sebastian Shaw.

Re: Your ESB questions: (1) it was supposed to explain Hamill's facial changes due to the accident, (2) maybe Vader knew that he couldn't catch Luke without a few hostages, (3) good question, and (4) as a back up in case the *Falcon* escaped?

Cheryl P.: Hair-brained schemes?!!??? You will die a slow and painful death (again). Remember in my neck of the woods, I drive and you know I take corners on 2 wheels. I know you did it. Don't blame Cheree. Revenge... P.S. — welcome back.

Mickey: I liked Mark on *SeaQuest*, too as well as the season finale.

Hey, you're on the East Coast so it's automatic to be a Dead Bothan. You are now part of the tribe...

Sounds like you had a great trip.

Louise: Hey, you are more than welcome to traverse the Great Dead Bothan Sea and visit/live in our neck of the woods. We'd love to have you and Squire over. The more, the deader!

'Til next issue, Fly Casually in the Force.

AN EPIPHANY

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June 12, 1995

Gack ... down to the wire, but I didn't want to miss another issue. Missed the last two issues because of major construction (and destruction) on my house. Walls torn out, ceilings going up, windows going in, rugs going down. At one point, my living room strongly resembled an ILM SPFX test shot! I've also been recently promoted to Assistant Director of Nurses at the nursing home where I work (with all the respect that that implies) A.K.A. lots more responsibility, more hours per week, less time at home. I used to be able to sneak some fannish writing at the nurses' station, but that stolen time is now taken up by new duties. "Look at me, *management*. Who would have

thought that, huh?"

I made it to MediaWest Con, though. That's as sure as vacuum in space. As usual, it was a fantastic, awesome fun time with the most incredibly talented and creative people in the galaxy. I experienced something of a *Star Wars* epiphany during the convention. Amidst all the fun I was having (dressing in SW clothes/costumes all weekend [it's amazing how wearing a blaster on one's right leg transforms one's attitude and personality] role-playing as imagined and real characters in the SW universe, discussing SW stories in rooms full of writers and artists, salivating over all the new SW zines), I had the sudden realization (was sort of like a lightsaber activation) that for *me*, the *Star Wars* experience had lost all its "boundaries", the dividing lines that fans impose upon themselves.

Hmm-mm, this will be difficult to explain. We make a conscious choice of what or whom to dislike/exclude in SW, be it one of the three films, the West End books, fan fiction, the characters, music, the novelizations, *whatever*. We place those restrictions upon ourselves. In previous issues of SE, I myself, have gleefully trashed several of the aforementioned (film, books and character) pointing out all the things that IMO, were "wrong." ("I'm not really interested in your opinion, Threepio.") But, at MediaWest — and *this* will sound tritely maudlin — I was surrounded by the real, true spirit of SW Fandom. It didn't matter who was a Luke fan, a Han fan, who liked Vader, who liked this movie better, or didn't like that book at all. We were all *SW* fans, all with our own unique, individual interpretation of the story, yet, still *ONE*. It was a special moment, bringing with it a profound sense of unity and belonging. I realized there was no "wrong."

Star Wars, I've decided, is like pizza ... even when it's bad, it's pretty good and bad is still better than none at all. There was a time when SW fandom had nothing but its own stubborn perseverance and love for the story to keep it alive. Now, we're positively inundated with "stuff". New music, toys, collectibles and *GASP*, even new movie footage! Who ever thought that miracle would happen? Yet, at one point, I was guilty of actually griping about the paucity and choice of the scenes to be added, instead of reveling in the opportunity to see them at all! So, okay, some parts of some of the novelizations should be used to line the bottoms of mynock cages, but there are good parts as well. Scenes, characterizations and lines of dialogue that I could see and hear as vividly as the films. This goes for anything with the SW name on it. Fan fiction, Ewok cartoons, the infamous SW Christmas special, etc. Point is (at *last*, I hear you say), I'll take *any* SW, anyway I can get it, and thank the Maker that it's out there, no matter if it comes from Wolverton, from the fans or from Lucas himself.

And there is a *lot* out there, especially the All SW

Convention in the works for 1997. I sent in the SW convention questionnaire that appeared in both Lucasfilm's *SW Insider* and Topp's new SW magazine, making the suggestion that the full scale *Millenium Falcon* used in the films be taken out of hermetic storage as a truly awesome exhibit with a walkway for overhead viewing as well as on ground level. I also suggested a contest perhaps, with the winner(s) allowed the privilege of going inside. I know I'd sell *my* family into slavery for the opportunity!

Want to thank the Dead Bothan Society for the recent Planet Hollywood in D.C. invite. Rebecca Carey and I were honored and delighted to be included. Lots of creative energy, fun and silliness (picture ten or so SW fans singing Vader's March (*dumdumdum, dumdeedum, dumdeedum*) as we walked through a cavernous subway station that resembled (to us, anyway) an Alliance flight bay. Good food and great company. Hope to see all at Eclecticon. Ready for another Starlog Kessel Run? The mall is presently undergoing major expansion so parking and traffic will be a horror beyond imagination. Would hiring a small bus/van be a workable idea? (We'll skip the nano-jump to Anderson's attic as Becky and I plan to stay at the hotel this year.

Will end this with both congratulations to all the Star Awards winners. (The Awards are becoming classier and glitzier every year. Before you know it, we'll need an opening production number and a comic monologue and sincere wishes of sympathy and comfort to those who have recently lost loved ones. It's during these times, life's high and low moments, that one discovers how special the fandom "Family" really is. We may argue, criticize, bristle, dig in our heels for a fight, sigh in frustration, but in my experience, there's no other group of people more willing to empathize, more ready to support and encourage or with as much capacity for caring as fans. When it's time to celebrate, when a shoulder is needed to cry on, when the credits are down on the table, fans are there for each other. May the Force Be with Each and every one of us.

NO DESIRE TO GO PRO

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June 14, 1995

Well, I suppose it would be best to just mention MediaWest*Con now and get it out of my system. The Con this year nearly defies description. Fantastic? Perfect

precision? Long-deserved? Try all of the above. Between winning the STAR aWARD, the Cantina/F.O.E. Dance, the constant communal brainstorming, and various other nifty perks (no editorial comments from the Peanut Gallery, please), I was on a roll! About the only thing missing for me this year was my neglecting to buy a lottery ticket — I just know I would've won! Many thanks to all my friends, new and old (you all know who you are). You made this particular vacation the very best I've had yet. On top of that, Life was also kind enough to wait an entire week following the Con, before brutally jerking me back into reality. But God knows I needed that week of nirvana! (Ahem, the polaroids are in my other coat, Barbara A.)

[I have to mention a special thanks here to my totally mundane but nevertheless totally cool Mom & Dad. They made it possible for me to attend MediaWest this year, after Fate and the local auto repair shop did their darnedest to keep me from making the trip. (And to think that I'd actually *saved up money* for this year — it still fell through!) Anyway, all these years they've held onto the hope that I'd someday forget about fandom, but I think they're beginning to realize how important the pilgrimage to Lansing is. I love and miss you both!]

Congratulations to everyone who received STAR aWARDs this year. It's always a special thrill, to receive such a nod of approval from your friends and peers. Thank you, Judy Yuenger, for allowing us to show our appreciation.

Carolyn G. & Liz S.: It was a treat to spend a day with you two, even before we began the annual migration to Lansing, MI. It was a perfect day to sit, soak up some sun, and yammer on about SW. Thanks for reading over my story — much appreciated. Hope we can do that again sometime. Oh, and you may be happy to hear that I'm almost finished with yet another scene — much shorter, thank the Maker!! (Oops, can I say that?)

Speaking of which, I hate to disappoint you, Carolyn, but after much consideration, I've decided not to attempt to write for West End Games — though I'm flattered that you considered me (I'm ignoring the fact that you've pretty much asked *everyone* in fandom:). As much as I enjoy a challenge when I write (filling a gap properly — i.e. revealing some new tidbit of info or twisting a perspective, without changing future events — isn't easy), I find the guidelines for West End Games far too restrictive — even suffocating. I mean, what a way to kill creativity. I don't want to write color-by-number stories. Besides, my inspirational urge is rare and fickle — if I spent what little time and energy I have on producing something in which I have little invested interest, I'll have none left for fanzines. I'm probably alone in feeling this way, but I have no intention nor desire to eventually "go Pro". Sure, \$600 would be nice, but then I start thinking "That means

I'll have to *buy* that new SW zine!" I know, with \$600 I could buy at least 30 zines, but that's not the point. I like seeing my work illustrated in fanzines. I also get direct, often instant feedback, and that's something I know I'd lose by going Pro. I enjoy writing about elements in the SW saga that intrigue and inspired me (namely the romance, an element that Lucas, *et al*, would just as soon ignore), in my own admittedly unique way. SW is the only thing in my life so far that has ever touched me to the point that I had to *create* something. Since then I've *tried* writing regular fiction/poetry, and none of it has ever come close to the quality of my fannish work — and that's saying a lot. So let me ask you this? Which would *you* rather I write?

By the way, that doesn't mean I'm not happy that you've got a foot in the door, so to speak. You've got my full support (and that goes for anybody else who makes the cross-over), and I hope you get to teach them a thing or two along the way about SW fandom.

Ming W.: Oh, interesting idea on whether or not royal titles can be bought in the SW universe. *Baron* Lando Calrissian? I mean, *really*.

Jacqueline T. & Pat G.: As far as the age difference between Luke & Leia, I had a little trouble swallowing that one as well, but I've sort of come to accept it now — it's in the films, and that's all that counts for me, however misguided or contrived Lucas' solution may have been. And you have to admit, no one's true age is actually mentioned in the films (except maybe Yoda, and I think he was being modest). Frankly, it's easier for me to believe they're 20 year old twins at the time of ANH, than to believe that Leia was a senator at 16.

Brian H.: What happened? I thought you were going to be at MediaWest this year? Change of plans?

Tina (& Dan) B.: I'm sure I speak for everyone who attended the Con when I say "We missed you!!" Hope things are OK. Wir haben so viele Deutsch zu sprechen!

Michelle M.: Thanks for the offer re: Carrie Fisher hosting the saga. Luckily, I now have SciFi Channel myself, and I taped the letterboxed versions w/Carrie. (All of you out there with The History Channel, AMC and Comedy Central, but no SciFi — eat your little green hearts out!)

I also wanted to say how happy I am to see your name in these pages. I still rank the *Kessel Run* series as some of the best SW zines ever produced. You did good, and your effort is still appreciated.

But I *do* remember "Looky, Looky, a Darkside Wookiee". Call it the price of fame.

Louise T.: I agree totally with your comments regarding the selling of SW nowadays. The brutal truth is that the movies were created not only to tell a story, but to make money. Fine, I've no problem with that. However, I don't remember seeing Luke holding a Pepsi can, or

Chewie wearing Nikes, or Leia eating Haagen-Dazs whenever she got moody. I know now that *that's* one of the reasons I enjoyed the movies so much — it was set in an *entirely* different universe, right down to a lack of product endorsements (Ewoks may be a glaring exception, but they were selling SW paraphernalia). As much as I laughed at the Energizer Bunny vs. Vader commercial, it nearly gave me whiplash because it didn't *feel* right.

Oh, and believe it or not, they've begun advertising SW toys on TV again, during Saturday morning. They're not connecting in any way to the pro-novels, which I find somewhat of a relief. They were for the MicroToy collections, all of them based purely on the setting in the films — nothing necessarily new, creative-wise.

I've got to stop now if I want to beat the deadline. Hola! to everybody I didn't get to address directly this time 'round. Catch you later!

LUST

Michelle Malkin
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June 11, 1995

My friend Judy managed to get us two tickets to the musical comedy "Lust" starring Denis Lawson which is just finishing its run here in Philadelphia at the Walnut Street Theater! This show was delightful and I hope that it eventually makes it to Broadway. I heard that if it was successful it might. It certainly was a success in Philly playing to packed houses filled with delighted audiences. The show was taken from the William Wycherly play "The Country Wife" and takes place at the beginning of the English Restoration when everyone is happily out from under the rules of decency enforced by Oliver Cromwell. The main character Horner (played by Denis) is ... horny! His only goal in life is to seduce all the women — married or not — in his social circle. He manages to do this through trickery, chicanery and the help of his friend the undertaker. By the end of the show, all the husbands are totally fooled, the wives have found out about each other and Horner is well on the way to an early death through exhaustion. There is also a side story about a young man who is in love with a young woman who is engaged to a fop who only wants her for the money he can get out of the deal. All works out hysterically well by the end. The music was done in the style of the day, except for one number that had the audience laughing almost as hard as they did with Denis' naked tush scene. In this number, Horner starts singing to audience and three of the women form a girl

group in the background. Before you know it, they're doing a '60's style rock number. The place fell apart, people were laughing so hard. In the other scene, just before the woman's husband comes crashing through the door, a woman is lying on Horner's bed with him standing over her. Suddenly, she reaches up and pulls his pants down. Lovely view of Denis' backside and, Denis, cheeky boy that he is, didn't help matters any by turning his head back to the audience and smirking. If it's possible to die from laughter, half the audience croaked right there. Aside from other personal attributes, Denis has a very strong singing voice and great comedy timing. This was a terrific show and I hope that it does make it to Broadway. I wouldn't mind seeing it again. I'd also like the album from it, if there is one.

Tim Blaes: It seems rather snobbish of A. C. Crispin to knock fanzines if she's appeared in them herself. I'd rather hear about pro writers like Marion Zimmer Bradley who not only encourages fanzine writers but helps them to become pro by having them write stories in her Darkover universe that she publishes professionally.

I *love* the Darth Vader-Energizer Bunny ad! Unfortunately, I've seen several letters over the Net in which people consider this ad to be little short of blasphemy. Lucas had to okay the ad, so *he* must like it. My comment to the people who don't like it is that they are entitled to their opinion but, if they can't have a sense of humor about the things they love, they must not have a sense of humor. It must get tiresome being so bloody serious all the time.

Susan Zahn: Male/female writing pairs? Right off hand, I can think of Mercedes Lackey and Piers Anthony or her husband Larry Dixon and C. L. Moore and her husband Henry Kuttner. I know there are others. I hope that other people mention them.

Maggie Nowakowska: About Luke's lack of reaction to his aunt and uncle's deaths. I think he was already having an initial reaction through his Force sensitivity (whether he knew it consciously or not) when he first realized that they might be in danger and he ran off to see them against Ben's wishes. By the time he got there and saw their burnt skeletons, he was probably already numb from finding what he already expected. Plus, after years of being put down by the other kids (except for Biggs) and not being raised in a very emotional household, he probably didn't even have to think about holding in his emotions.

Maggie, this was a fascinating letter filled with several heavy thoughts. The one that affected me the most was the one about how we are all capable of evil and must learn to accept this and work with it, rather than refuse to accept it and run away from it, making yourself more vulnerable to it. That is something for all of us to realize, not just Luke.

In the end, no matter what religion or philosophy of life you follow, you have to make that choice (between good and evil) yourself. No one can make it for you.

Matthew Whitney: I'm glad that you decided not to gaffiate. You write interesting letters and sound like a nice person. I went through a really bad patch a couple years ago and, aside from some good friends, kept my sanity through fandom and reading and music. I hope that your complications work out and that you keep on writing to SE.

Cheryl Pryor: Suppose that Luke and Leia *are* the product of rape or eugenics? What if their mother *was* a dummy? They are still Luke and Leia, aren't they? They've still done all the things that we know and like them for. Are they responsible for their parentage? Why should any of this affect how you feel about the trilogy so far if you love it already?

Cheree: Did I spell Wimseycat with an 'h'? It shouldn't be there. The cats were named after Dorothy Sayers books about Lord Peter Wimsey. ((Ed: *Whoops — my fault!*))

That's it for now. Three's the charm. Fly free!

TANDOM FIRST

Matthew Whitney
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May 15, 1995

My sincere condolences on the passing away of your father, Cheree. Your tribute to him was beautiful, and I find myself wondering who was the luckier, you, for having such a wonderful dad, or he, for having such a caring daughter.

Tim: Thanks for the "please come home" message! I have indeed missed LOCing and the interchange of ideas with the best bunch of SW fans on the planet. I'll try not to let the real world get in the way as much, and keep a priority of "Fandom First!"

IRYC (in re your comment) of holding a "grudge" against A. C. Crispin for her comments about fanfic stunting an author's growth, let me add that she's not very high on my list of respected authors. At the '89 WorldCon (Boston) she was on a panel with Carmen Carter and Jean Lorrah. Of the three, only one author tactlessly stood recently published books of hers before her on the table, and spent most of her panel discussion time advertising which of her novels the fans could buy, where to find them, suggested retail price ... I exaggerate, but not by much. Carmen and Jean were delightful speakers, and I felt a real bond with these fan authors who "made it" into the pro ranks. Crispin's hard sell of her own books turned

me off so much I've never bought another of her books (and she was among a handful of my favored ST novelists at the time).

Marti: Re Lucas' creation of Chewbacca. According to *Skywalking*, wasn't the inspiration his dog Indiana seated in the front passenger seat of their car next to his (then) wife Marcia?

Has anyone seen the new publication *From SW to Indiana Jones: the Art of Lucasfilm Ltd Archives*? It's a gorgeous, thick trade paperback. I've not read the text yet, but the illos will blow you away. For anyone who loves the props, this is a must. The selling point for me was the shots of the breakapart Vader mask from ROTJ.

Minky: (Greetings newbie, from a SW dinosaur), IRYC "Why is it: in the trilogy, no one mourns [the Jedi's] disappearance except other Jedi." To a degree, I think there is a mourning, but not a whining/begging for them to rise up out of thin air. Many rebels still invoke the protection/blessing of the Force. In ANH, Dodonna ends his briefing with "MTFBWY." Han wishes Luke good luck with the same expression. In ROTJ, Ackbar utters that famous phrase. They don't expressly ask for a Jedi Academy to be established and for trained knights to hit the front lines, but I do think calling on the power of the Force to be with them is virtually the same. It's a belief in the power behind the defenders of the Old Republic. Using a religious analogy, it is clearly a prayer. More than just a motivator and rallying cry, it is a prayer to bring special blessing upon their struggle I compare it to Shakespeare's Henry V calling on his troops to "Cry, 'God for Harry, England, and St. George!'" It's a prayer to bring a power beyond the soldiers' mere physical bodies onto their side of battle.

That no one expressly comments on Luke's Jedi-in-training status is important, but more in regards to the future of the Jedi post-ROTJ rather than anything directed specifically toward Luke. In ANH, he was an unknown farm boy. The more experienced pilots probably thought they were throwing away a perfectly good X-Wing on this kid who got lucky aboard the Death Star rescuing Leia. In TESB, he'd spent the last couple of years without any guidance, exploring the Force totally on his own, at least IMO (in my opinion). A general question: Was Obi-Wan's appearance to Luke on Hoth his first since ANH? I think so, but there's room for debate.

If we do assume Luke was stumbling through his own training, then I don't see anyone banging on his door asking him to come out and perform Jedi tricks. He'd be seen as a talented fighter with an extra edge thanks to his natural Force talent, but no Jedi. So, we jump to ROTJ, probably only six-months after TESB. That film starts with Luke, Leia, and the others detached from the Alliance while saving Han. What happened in those six months?

Who did Luke inform about his training on Dagobah? Should the rank and file members of the Alliance expect anything special from him? It's an interesting topic you raised, Minky. The re-establishment of the Jedi should not be looked on as a given.

Z. P.: IRYC that Kenobi never sensed Leia aboard the Death Star. You're right! I don't think I ever gave that a thought. Maybe because at the time we didn't know she was Luke's sister and Anakin's daughter. With that fact now accepted, why didn't he sense her? Could he have "shut down" some of his Force talent in the face of the overwhelming waves of emotion caused by the deaths on Alderaan? Did he assume she'd been killed by the Empire, and couldn't pick her aura out from the "background noise?" How easy is it to sense any one person? Darth recognized neither Luke nor Leia upon their encounters in ANH (or maybe he did?). Could Leia have been Force "blocked" so that her particular aura would not be identified — masking her from both Darth and OWK? Did OWK sense her aboard the DS, but planned to get R2 and his info to safety before trying to rescue Leia?

That last scenario presents a fascinating "What if?" What if Leia had not been rescued from the first Death Star? Assuming the others escaped with R2's info, who would they deliver it to? Perhaps Han could put them in contact with a rebel unit, and a way would be found to destroy the first DS, but it'd be an entirely different story from there on.

Brian: I mostly agree with you on hard copies and the joy of a good book. Ahh, the serendipitous joy of kicking back with a treasured volume (possibly a signed edition!). Pure heaven! But, I believe we're on the doorstep of a new era. It seems reasonable to guess that affordable laptop computers with CD-ROM, or reader/player versions without the full computer capabilities, will be here within a decade or so. Instead of "books," we'll be buying/renting CD-ROMs from our favorite authors. While that seems cold, less "romantic" than *books*, think of the forests it'll save. And those CD-ROM players could double as news sources via the internet (or whatever). Think of the savings in newspaper! It'll take a bit of time before the system will feel right, but I look forward to it.

As for music on vinyl LPs, you'll hate me for saying it, but I say good riddance. The *only* thing I miss about vinyl is the cover art. Those snap-crackle-pops we learned to love on favorite albums may have had their charm, but I for one never looked forward to skips on new albums. Sure, they grew on me for the repeatedly played favorites, but I prefer the clean sound of CDs.

A general comment about "newbie" fans growing in fandom thinking of the pro novels as "canon:" Now I think I know how those first generation Trekkers felt when a second generation came along. How will we in SW

fandom deal with this? Remember the ST slogans such as "Who needs a next generation?" Is "Who needs a next trilogy?" far behind? ST is now more widely watched than when Kirk was the sole holder of the center seat, largely thanks to the films and especially TNG, but how many saw *Generations* and haven't seen all 79 classic episodes? Battle lines were drawn over whether ST could exist without Kirk & Co., and many hard-liners refused to give TNG a fair shot. If a next trilogy is ever filmed, I hope we don't start arming camps or any such nonsense.

Pat Grant: In re the trend to "Earth-ize SW." As you might infer from my LOC, I'm on the opposite side of this issue. When reading/watching a piece of SF/F, few things annoy me more than unexplained alien jargon inserted merely for local color. I want to be included in the story, not befuddled by the author's private encyclopedia of fantastic terminology. If explanations of these terms (which are necessary, I'm not advocating a ban) are part of the story, fine. Footnoting is something I'd really avoid. If an author coins a term for something, say a "zork," then what a zork is should be integral to the plot. If it's of such little importance that the explanation can be relegated to the bottom of the page, I'd rethink creating that term.

Exotic terms are useful in creating an alien/fantastic atmosphere, but I think they can too easily be over-used. My reasoning stems from the fact that we are writing in an Earth language to begin with. Before loading up a tale with alien vocabulary, authors should think of how much English (or whatever) they already are employing. If one isn't going to create an entire language for each species in a story, why must the tale be complicated with translating alien-isms? For e.g., "Han grabbed for a zork." From that sentence, a zork could be anything. Before justifying using "zork", shouldn't an author also justify the verb "grabbing?"

My bias here is probably influenced by my utter lack of talent for languages. I struggled through the two-year requirement in high school, and normally have enough trouble expressing myself in English, never mind creating an new vocabulary. I'm reminded of Tolkien, who was more interested in the languages of his characters than the plot about the Ring, but that stemmed from his linguistic background. His work is the best blend of atmosphere and plot that I can think of, proving you must create some new terms to successfully invent an alien culture, but IMO this is an extremely difficult task, best approached very cautiously.

As for Leia being 18 Alderaani years while Luke is 20 by Tatooine's calendar, that opens a *huge* can of worms. If so, how far is a lightyear? Is it the distance light travels in the time it takes Alderaan or Tatooine or Bespin or ... to orbit their primary star one full circuit? And that is just one example of the complexity that would be unleashed.

I'm not trying to crush creativity, but do feel that we should approach the language and references used as having been grounded in some standard.

How did Lucas & Co. fare in their scripts? Only looking at the films, where the risk is less due to the visual nature of the medium, I'd rate them very successful. E.g., Luke looking at a pair of shaggy elephantine creatures, saying, "There are two banthas..." It's obvious what a bantha is. How about his mention of womprats? We never see one, but I'd bet most focus on "rat" and conjure an image of a large desert rodent. Similar with "droid," where the term is used more broadly than we might. IMO the term was chosen to include the viewer with a widely used colloquial term for any sort of robot. Using a nickname made robots common, everyday devices, rather than the cutting edge of futuristic technology they are in our culture. Plus, it's a fun sounding term. The same with "parsec." (How many knew what a parsec was before seeing ANH? Not me, but I was "a mere child" when I first saw the film.)

I've probably beat the point of this discussion into the dust, so I'll drop it here. My intent is to preach caution in adding "local color" to a story. Overdoing it, I feel distracts the reader from the plot, while avoiding it completely leaves the tale too dry.

Time to give Cheree's tired fingers a rest and wrap this LoC up with a hearty MTFBWY!

JEDI BUSINESS

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June 15, 1995

Boy, this year I was all geared up for writing. Was going to finish two Lando/MMothma stories, and try to finish the new TW, post-*Counterpoint* story. Had the energy, had the interest, had Susan gone at class (i.e., away from the computer <g>) each Saturday in winter quarter...) If only I had had the time! Overtime has been a killer this year, often two and three straight weeks and weekends in a row. Today's one day off in what looks like another 3/4 week stretch. Feh. In fact, double Feh.

However, too much OT and not enough energy for *serious* reading has allowed me to catch up on some of the pro stuff. As I expected, I enjoyed Vonda McIntyre and Barbara Hambly very much as writers (especially, *Children of the Jedi*), even when I disagree with this particular

alternate universe. It's a shame that the pro books came out so fast, with so many of them written in pretty much the same time period. Hambly's book presents such reasonable characterization that I can't help but think that it would have positively affected the other books had they been written after hers had been digested.

My general complaints with this AU are that the adult characters aren't aging consistently; that the presentation of Han and Leia is terribly mundane; that they've boxed Luke into such a super-duperman corner that all they can do to create suspense is to throw bricks at him and track how long it takes him to heal himself (a good subtitle for the way they present Luke could be "There Is No Joy In Jediville." Of course, fanzinedom had to work a Morose Luke out of its system, too); and — worst of all by my lights — Lando deserves millions better than the way they've presented him. I don't recognize their childish loser at all.

As for the continuing disagreement over the pro books, I'd like to throw out a challenge to all the English and Lit majors out there: how about an article which is analysis of pro and fan lit with an eye to what makes the focus/themes/delivery different between the two? A pro romance writer recently complained that "literary criticism doesn't have the tools to analyze popular literature." Maybe it's up to us after all to describe the standards in language that can be used by others. We're the only ones who can truly say what sets our literature apart from other SW-based pieces stylistically, subject-wise, expectations-wise, etc. I know I'd like to read a reasoned assessment from a writing/goals/audience point of view.

(My fannish opinion is that pro writing is mundane fan writing and that the difference is the same as that which makes active fans different from mundanes: a cock-eyed view of reality which most people don't get — or want to get. In the end, we remain "outies," "weird," "wonks," etc. And isn't it interesting that we've gotten to the point when there are indeed "mundane fans" as well as those of us who have been "in the trade" all along. But that's another subject...)

(BTW, reading on in SE 41, I see that Tim Blaes has already started a good analysis!)

(Addendum: I am reading the *Courtship* book now, not terribly enjoying the characterizations, but I really like the idea of the *Falcon* have three droid brains that "bicker" which is one reason why Han has trouble keeping all systems up and running. A person could really run with this idea. I think it would be a good subject for a multi-writer short story challenge.)

Marti Schuller: The loneliness of the neo-con-goers is one of the reasons I always like the idea of first night, come-ye-all parties where people could meet folks before they joined up with established groups of friends. Of

course, the cons were smaller back then ... but I do remember a number of great Thursday/Friday night, everyone invited, parties that got things moving quickly. (Especially I remember Bev Clark, Susan and I ganging up on people with various NW delicacies at our party — you know, the old "it's the hostess offering this to me and I gotta eat it..." ploy. I think that was the con when the boys mounted a Corellian streaking party — in trunks with fine upstanding Corelli shields on the front ... I think there was some closet activity with the boys that evening, too ... ah, memories.

As for the possibility of a Soupy Sales connection: I believe Lucas was born in the mid 40s (he's 50 or 51 now, right?); wouldn't Soupy be a little late for him? I remember Sales coming on after Pinky Lee and I was 5 already, making Lucas 9 or 10. An awful lot of folks I know who lived out in the boonies out west (and Sacramento is still the boonies, she said editorially) didn't even have TV until the mid 50s. I might be misremembering; I disliked Sales as a kid.

Debbie Kittle: You're certainly right about the improvement of manners in LoCs since the old days.

Rather than manners, though, I think what I meant about "hesitation" in fans since those controversies erupted was this: a reluctance of fans to bring up subjects — however legitimate — that they suspected would upset others. I remember an awful lot of people saying, either in letters or in person, that they would have loved to talk about A or B, but feared the feedback or "starting another feud." For a while there, the discussions became amazingly bland. Ideas had come to be seen as totally personal preferences, and you can't discuss preferences the same way you can ideas.

I suppose it's the old pendulum swing reaction, from one extreme action to its opposite extreme. I wouldn't natter on about this but for a couple reactions to the current debate over Pro SW fiction. In her LoC, Pat Nussman says she's more than willing to shut up about her disappointment in/criticism of pro fiction if the debate causes too much controversy. What a loss that would be! Pat is an excellent writer and a responsible critic; whether a reader agrees with Pat or not, the reader is certain to acquire new information on the subject for having read Pat's opinions.

Let's all engage hesitancy when we're tempted to be judgmental, certainly, but never when simply presenting ideas that might be controversial. I firmly believe that we can disagree with each other 100% (okay, 98% since we all like SW enough to LoC) without slipping into the *ad hominum* attacks, or insults and exclusionary behavior, of the old days.

Belea Keeney: Arg! I'm consumed by jealousy! I would *love* to have the laser disk set! I'd love to simply have a laser disk. Double arg! Re: the extent of Vader's

cybernetics, in the film it appears that both his head and chest region are corporal, with the rest mechanical. Is it so on disc?

Welcome back to Matthew Whitney: I missed your well-thought out letters.

Susan Zahn: I'm glad you were able to get a set of *Jundland Wastes* on the cheap! And I'd love to read a "review" from your nonparticipant PoV. By the by, this is strictly an unofficial comment, but I was told by SW Fanclub folks long ago that *Slow Boat To Bespin* simply got caught up in the troubles because it came out at the same time as the stories that really fried the LF lawyers. My contact expressed regret because, as you noted, the stories weren't really challenging, even by early 80s standards.

RE: reestablishing the Old Republic. I agree that the new government is going to be different. Circumstances change and needs differ with time. I've always had problems, though, with the inclination that says, because it fell, the Republic *ipso facto* "failed."

Yes, the inability to withstand attack/overthrow/aggression can be the result of something going wrong. But, the tendency to equate success with virtue or worthiness can be considered culturally specific. It's very Calvinistic, very Jansenist, but not an automatic equation in human thought.

Please indulge me in this analogy: If I let my iron skillet get crusty and then scrub it with soap and let it air-dry, it's not going to perform as it ought the next time I try to use it. The food will stick and burn. My neglect will lead to a failure. That the pan will not cook properly does not mean I have to toss the skillet out and buy a different sort of utensil. If I do the work and take the time needed to reseason the skillet, it will cook correctly again.

With people, as with design, structures are appropriate or inappropriate, applicable or not applicable. Democracy (of free males) worked in ancient Athens. And then it "failed." The Roman Republic worked for a couple hundred years, and then it "failed." If we judge backwards to these examples, who would attempt a democracy or republic again? The German Republic before Hitler was a fragile construct, operating under impossible conditions after WWI. Germany as we know it today had existed for only, what, 75 or so years? Ms. Sten, any comments?

The galactic Republic existed in some form for 10 to 25 thousand years, depending on interpretation. Not even the Roman model applies timewise then, although it works better, considering the limitations of human memory.

I read something recently that struck me as a variation on Yoda's DO/DO NOT phrase: *There is no such thing failure. There are only results.* The author went on to explain that successful people don't believe in failure. If they try something and it doesn't work out, they simply

consider it a learning experience; they take what they've learned and try some other way to their goal.

That's how I suspect the Alliance people look at the Republic: the previous way of going about it wasn't effective, but the goal was still sound.

For me, I'm more inclined to look at the Republic from a Chaos perspective, one which defines certain parameters of action, but allows a wide, and unpredictable, range of expressions within those parameters. That is, the Republic was the outer structure, the stadium, let's say, within which many different games were played, some with wildly different rules, but all subscribing to limitations that allowed play within that stadium's parameters. One millenium it might have been a commonwealth; another millenium, an autocracy; and so forth.

If the Republic lasted 1,000 generations, I tend to think that it's safe to say it was a pretty flexible structure. I can easily imagine that the structure of government within the Republic as interpreted by varying generations differed greatly, sometimes swinging to the very edge of Republican parameters. It's possible that Palpatine was able to succeed because he lived during one of the more extreme swings (autocratic, I would guess by the Pro books interpretation).

In such a very old galactic civilization, I suspect people will remember that extremes aren't the norm. They would be interested in patching the hole the swing punched in the parameters and hoping to guide its developments along a more stable path.

Of course, that will take at least as many generations as grew up under the deviant government, and then a few more I imagine, and that's why all the post-JEDI stories can't be as "heroic" as the battle times. But they sure will be interesting on a personal survival level!

M. J. Mink: Ah yes, Adam Cartwright. The only man on TV, before John Drake, who expected people to use their intelligence. (Hokay, maybe Paladin, too. Had I known about cross-universes when I was a kid, I would have written one up for them.)

I've got to admit, I never thought of Adam as bad, merely unsocial because he didn't fit in with local, miner/cowboy expectations of a Real Man. As the local, Cleveland 11-year-old book nerd, I desperately wanted to grow up to be someone Adam would approve of and have as a friend. (I liked Paladin for many of the same reasons.) I can't say that my first fannish stories were about Adam — Roy Rogers many years earlier wins that medal — but they were the first I wrote down. And, boy, did I get him off the Ponderosa and over to Europe and Russia and ... oh, sorry, wrong fandom.

Moving right along (and quickly!), I think I would argue against the idea that the Alliance's reaction to Luke reflects a general disregard for the Jedi. We hear four

opinions on the Jedi in the movies: (1) from Owen Lars, who has personal reasons not to speak favorably about them to impressionable young minds; (2) Grand Moff Tarkin, who as the opposition has every reason to pigeon-hole them as something insignificant (just another ivory tower liberal...); (3) the Jedi, Yoda and Kenobi, who have every reason to talk up the idea; and (4) the Alliance, which acts as if the Jedi never disappeared.

My argument would be that the last is the truest measure. The Jedi, in the form of Luke, are not deified. (If Luke wants to fight, they let him go to it, all the better to have a Jedi involved.) Neither are they dismissed. (Luke is not nailed by the MPs for AWOL, no matter how many times he disappears.) Luke is simply accepted and left to go about his Jedi business.

That, I propose, is a very positive attitude toward the Jedi and reflects an every-day, "oh, it's just the Jedi; let them be about their business" kind of attitude.

Oh, can't forget #5, Han's opinion. Frankly, even if the Jedi were deified, I have to admit that I would expect a part of the population to call it all hogwash, especially those who could very well expect to end up on the wrong side of a light saber, and especially after 20 years. And, if you accept Han as a disbarred Imperial officer cadet, you've got someone who was specifically taught to adhere to opinions within Tarkin's range.

In fact, the "magician/sorcerer" tag by whoever doesn't bother me either since I would expect that most people, who have no awareness of Forceful powers in themselves, for whatever reason, would tend to think of them this way. Maybe my tolerance for this comes from growing up Catholic amidst many Protestants back in the days when jokes about transubstantiation were more common. Heck, even the Catholics would joke about it at times. Also, I've made my living as an artist, and some of the comments people make about such "talent/gifts" reflect much of the same scepticism and worship and dismissal as the Force.

I guess what I'm saying is that to the people involved with Jedi, their opinions would be practical, based on their interests; to everyone else, who only hear about the Jedi, they'd be magical, or "something spacers are involved with," or something just not very interesting/important.

It's not as dramatic to view the Jedi this way, but for me, it's a lot more realistic. I really don't think most of the population cared about any of it until all the "spacer troubles" started to affect local, planetary issues.

Z.P.: Now, now, we don't know that Kenobi didn't feel Vader or Leia on the DS. The information may simply have seemed irrelevant to him: "Oh, by the way, boys, the Lord of the Sith is on that station — just in case you aren't already totally terrified — and, you know, I'm not really comfortable with bringing the twins together just now but that's life and forget I said anything. Hey, let's all go hide

in the smuggling bins and hope for the best."

(Reminds me of my negotiating-to-Win/Win training which discusses the question of when honesty — something they support — is relevant (or appropriate) to the problem at hand. As in, it may be honest to tell someone that you feel his position is stupidly stubborn, but such honesty isn't really relevant to the problem of working everyone into a happy settlement. But I digress, again.)

As for Yoda, I have always wondered what the story is about him *vis á vis* the Emperor. I think someone could write a real juicy story of lost opportunities, misjudgments, or simply the frustration of knowing that — perhaps — Yoda *can't* do anything for some reason. (Could be a good springboard for a discussion of what Jedi can and cannot do.)

Can you imagine knowing that Something Is Going To Happen, spending 800 years working toward it and all the time knowing that it's going to be a Bad Scene because ... that's just the way Bad Scenes go. Knowing that all he can do is his best with what he's got and that what anyone "gets" in Bad Scenes is enough to drive a Mushroom to peaty tears?

Brian Harris: Good point about whether the nascent USA had the "right to survive." Somewhere along the line, we seem to have gotten the idea that winning a battle solves all problems and grants instant perfection in (and to) the resultant society. Maybe because we don't really teach history anymore? Or because so many (white) Americans around today are descendents of immigrants who came over in this century and don't have any emotional connection to the Civil War Between the States and its repercussions?

Yes, it's going to be messy for a long while in the galaxy; it was messy for a looong while after setting up America and we still had to fight that civil war over State vs. Federal rights (looks like we'll be fighting it again soon, too). Even in a country that didn't get trashed in WW2, that came home the Holy Vindicated Victor, it took a few years to get up to speed again. But then, do we teach kids about the housing shortages and labor problems after WW2 right here in the USofA? No, we teach them about Happily Ever After. And then we wonder why they get discouraged or feel they've been lied to.

Gad, all I'm doing is digressing...

Tina Benstrup: Hi and welcome back. As much as I'm a Great Fan of Alec Guinness, I wouldn't mind a new young actor playing the young OWK at all. The changes Kenobi must have gone through should make the job of following in Great Footsteps a little easier; and, if Lucas chooses an English actor, I suspect that the lucky — and highly challenged — man will strive mightily to live up to the role. Of course, I'm one who wants all new actors.

That nice young actor, Sean Pertwee (of recent Cadfael

mystery appearance), seems to me to be someone who might be able to carry it off...

Michelle Malkin: Thanks for all the background info on the events so lightly gone over in the JW overview. I was hoping people would write in with their memories of such things.

BTW, I hear from Joan Verba that she has written a history of fanzines, with emphasis on *Trek* since that's her area of interest, has had the ms. vetted by Debra Langsam and Paula Smith, and has sent it to Dell. Let's hope for the best! Joan was always one of the level-headed ones.

There is a new book out covering *Trek* and *Dr. Who* fandom, *Science Fiction Audiences: Watching Dr. Who and Star Trek*, by John Tullock and Henry Jenkins (Routledge, London & New York, 1995; ISBN 0-415-06141-5 (pbk). Various fandoms, including SW are discussed (and positively from my quick scan — I just bought the book last night), and in general it looks like an interesting trek through fandom.

Ack — trying to cover the *Scoundrel* run might tax my stress levels beyond recovery. I think I was too emotionally involved in that round of letters to be able to resist Heavy Editorializing. Please, anyone else want to tackle the subject? I've got a complete set to send out, so long as you promise to send them back when done. But, thanks for the joggle on *JW, Too*; I've got to e-mail Pat O'Neill and re-ask about the issue I'm missing the last half of.

Ah, I still read commentary that states that SW will never last because it isn't dense enough to be more than a temporary thrill. Sigh.

Mickey, I suspect there'd be a long wait for much talk from the fan-turned-pro. I still hear reports of very strong prejudice against fanwriting from the pro market. Some people advise that you never admit to writing fanlit if you want to write pro. Some just say that cutting your ties is sufficient. Seems a leftover from SFzine days when there was indeed a market for anyone's writing and therefore those who only published in fanzine were perceived as those who couldn't write good enough for pro. Of course, in media fandom there wasn't a legitimate market for years, but the old prejudice of "fanlit = bad writing" seems to persist. Some have made the break, but the reports I've gotten have been hard to hear. Sure, a few pros have shown up in zines (Diane Duane, for one), but I remember a lot of trepidation over those appearances, especially before people became established in their pro careers

Louise Turner (and everyone who think they're just rehashing old debates): Honest, your ideas will always add to the debate, not simply replicate it. If for no other reason than that it is 20 years after the movies first started to come out. No one will ever be able to replicate the way adults saw the films when first released — and it was those adults who got SW fanzinedom going — but if a story is to live

past its initial presentation, it has to speak to peoples over time and across situations.

Although I am definitely one who believes in taking the contemporary situation into account when analyzing a movie or book, I value the PoV of those who come at it differently than I do. My friends who were the children for which SW was written and produced have insights that are invaluable to judging the impact of the movie. Fans who came late to the films, when all they had to see were VCR screen versions of the movies, offer yet another way to access the myth. When, eventually, the "original fans" are all gone, witnessing SW through other media will be the accepted norm. This is a changing saga and I firmly believe in the need to document the changes, through articles or LoCs, whatever.

Spoken like a true CML, eh?

Better stop while I'm under 8 full pages. (Okay, I cheat and use .75-in margins...) Everyone have a fine harvest and plenty of time to nestle in before winter!

TAKING A HIKE

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June, 1995

Hi. Something rather monumental happened to me a few weeks ago. I suddenly realised that I was watching the best science-fiction media presentation I'd ever actually been fortunate enough to see. It was, of all things, *Babylon 5*. Wow! It's like watching a CJ Cherryh novel on the small screen! So I'm afraid I think I'm taking a hike out of the official SW universe and heading off to become an avid consumer of B5 instead. I found it kind of bizarre. I was standing in a book shop, surrounded by SW books — none of which I'd read — metaphorically tearing my hair out because there were no B5 novels left in stock and they were temporarily out of print at the publishers. But, in case you're sitting there thinking, "Phew, that's got rid of *her* at long last!", then let me please assure you otherwise. I don't know, I can't get any satisfaction out of "proper" SW any more, and yet at the same time I just can't make the break from the universe itself! And, more specifically, I don't think I want to leave the fandom. So tough luck, darlings, looks like you're stuck with me a while longer.

I hope you all had a good time at MediaWest. One day, maybe, I'll win the National Lottery, and then I'll treat

myself to a trip to Lansing. Or maybe I'll manage to save enough money to pay for my plane fare.

Actually, I have a confession to make. I have started reading *Ambush at Corellia*, and am really enjoying it so far. There's people I've talked to who didn't think it was too brilliant, and yet I felt that it just seemed to get the atmosphere right. The only thing I couldn't cope with was the "Human League". I kept expecting Phil Oakey and Susan Tully to come skipping out singing "I was sitting in a bunker down in Coruscant, that much is true", and so on. If you're not well-versed in 1980's UK synth-pop bands then this joke will be lost on you, I'm afraid ...

Dead Bothan Debbie: You were very lucky to have your wolf experience. I lived through something like that this January, when a young humpback whale strayed into a local estuary for a few weeks. I ended up making a pilgrimage several times to see it, and was rewarded by having the animal surface only 15-20 feet away when I stood on a pier. That was breathtaking!

And I loved those wide-screen cards! I bought a box, and opened each packet in a state of feverish excitement. I was on one hell of an adrenalin-high! I suddenly realised just what those movies must mean to me!

Amanda Palumbo: Heh, heh. Just you wait until you get *Ormand II*! You thought the first part was enough to have Wedge hanging out the *Tantive* airlock? Well, Volume II's enough to make him jump out of his own accord, and I think Luke's going to be leaping out close behind him! I'll probably wind up getting a reputation as a Luke-basher! But all's well that end's well — eventually. Read it and see! I liked your idea of the deep-frozen Rieekan, too. I'm sure Pat Nussman could think of some way of thawing him out and restoring him to normality (and, Pat, I truly believe that the loss of Rieekan was one of the Alliance's saddest days in "my" universe. He was a nice bloke...).

Mary Jo Fox: I'm intrigued, really intrigued, because your description of "Star Wars: The Next Generation" applies to me, too. I spent years in virtual isolation, and wanted anything about SW! Consequently, I loved the first couple of publications from West End Games. What different circumstances transformed me into a stationary dinosaur who could not adapt to the "new" universe, I honestly don't know, because we all seem to have had exactly the same background. Maybe it's because I was writing feverishly during the hiatus period, and, because I'd been driven more into my own personal universe by the lack of official material, I'd already moved too far to accept the new stuff. It isn't that much fun feeling this way, though, because I feel kind of sad that I can't get the same things out of SW that I used to. (*Babylon 5*, oh *Babylon 5*. Wherefore art thou, *Babylon 5*?) This new Wedge emphasis that's coming out of Dark Horse, or whatever, is

a case in point. I spent *years* wishing so fervently that they'd produce something like that. I used to whizz through my Marvel comic every week, searching for just one tiny mention of Wedge. To no avail, mostly. Now, the whole world seems to be suffering "a colossal space-Wedgie" (hi, Amanda!), and I can't welcome it with any enthusiasm at all.

Carolyn Golledge: See these professional SW writers... They can't re-create the SW Universe for toffee... And that Golledge, well, she must be just as bad if she's been accepted for publication :-). No, seriously, Carolyn, well done! My most heartfelt congratulations!!! Even though we've talked about it together in the mail before now, let me just add my best wishes here. It's great to be able to share in your good fortune, and, well, I don't think it could have happened to a nicer person. I'll just keep my fingers crossed that your writing can go on from strength to strength.

Um, yes, I'm of Welsh descent — sometimes! Not at the moment, though. Since I'm of Welsh parentage but born in Scotland I can claim dual-nationality, and that rather depends on who does better in the rugby union! At the moment, I think I'm a Scot ...

Now to Susan Zahn (N.R.T.T.), Carolyn, and everyone else who addressed the problems of Imps/Rebels in a neutral setting... I'm afraid I'm going to maintain my difference, and swim against the tide of opinion here. I just don't see there being any kind of "neutral" situation here. Okay, I accept your points about the Germans and the British in the second World War, and all that, but I'd like to claim that there is one fundamental difference here which makes the situation quite different. Our heroes in the Rebellion are fighting a Civil War, and Civil Wars are very nasty. It's brother against brother, friend against friend, and all that. So there'll be a lot of Imperial conscripts who probably don't like what's going on? Yes, I can accept that, too, but if you can't trust your comrades to share your sentiments then showing any kind of tolerance of the opposing side is going to be difficult. I think the Rebels would be more reasonable in that kind of situation, but since the Empire is probably ruled by fear, then its soldiers could not afford to be so generous. That's just my opinion, and if you can quote me any examples of the Unionists and the Confederates sitting down in a bar after a battle and having a quick drink, then I'll certainly give it another thought. So if anyone's prepared to give me an abridged US history lesson, then I'd be delighted — you're the ones who at least have a Civil War in your recent history. But considering the scores of hideous civil wars in progress at the present, then I find any kind of neutrality hard to believe, because the potential loss of political and economic power seems to be something which can create resentment and enmity which lasts for

generations...

Belea Keeney: I thought I saw the female Imp in the guard of honor scene, where Vader and Palpatine stroll up the line of troops. Though it may have been the scene with Jejerrod at the beginning... Unfortunately, I was half-asleep at the time. I'd just travelled down on an overnight bus and I felt miserable — I even fell asleep during the middle of the *Empire Strikes Back*. Sacrilege! So I was probably hallucinating it. He/she/it was near the far end of the line of troops. And that's all I can tell you.

Tim Blaes and all those who commented on my Ideal Romantic Hero: Well, I think that type of hero is rather sexy, but, hey, I'm a sensible kid really. I wouldn't give them houserom! My ideal man would probably be completely different. He'd have a sense of humor, for one thing... Like Garibaldi, without the loo-brush hairstyle, thank you!

Maggie Nowakowska: Fascinating illumination about the American concept of the Romantic Hero. Perhaps "Romantic" as a term should apply more to the "Romantic" period, for that's when such heroes were probably developed with Rochester and Heathcliffe. Using the idea of the Tragic or Flawed Hero as Romantic Hero may just be a natural continuation of this tradition. I personally feel that sanitized heroes are too boring for words... As are sanitized fairy tales. Actually, I have to confess that I grew up as a boring ole Disney kid. It took me a while to stop seeing the world in rose-tinted wonder. I found the "real thing" as written by Hans Christian Anderson, etc., fascinating, but a little too discomfoting. Now I just can't tolerate anything which is presented in an over-simplified, over-didactic manner. I like to see my world in shades of grey.

Pat Nussman: Um, yes, I am (or was) an Avon fan. Your sins will find you out, I suppose. While I grew up liking Disney (!), I also grew up liking *Blake's 7*. And the Man in Black was my heart-throb. Oh, that classic line, "Inside that cold exterior, there beats a heart of pure stone". I'm glad I haven't read any fiction which attempts to sanitize poor old Avon. That would be severe character-assassination.

Minky: I'll leave you to the blonds, dear. Just give me confused, lost, sensitive dark-haired X-wing pilots... But can Rutger Hauer ever be described as "confused, lost and sensitive"? He's too big and macho for that kind of role, surely! But he sure makes a real nice wolf. Welcome to SE, by the way. Join the party! The more the merrier, I say.

A. G. Steyn and Pat Grant: Of dogs and ducks, and all that jazz... I have no problems with the dogs and the ducks. I mean, if human beings have managed to evolve in a virtually identical form, then why shouldn't dogs and ducks have evolved, too? And, if dogs and ducks have evolved,

why shouldn't they have been carried around the Galaxy along with the first "pioneers", much as domestic animals were in our own history? And, if there are dogs and ducks, why shouldn't there be cows, and squirrels, and aardvarks? Anyway, we all *know* that there are chickens and horses and ferrets in the SW universe — since they appeared in "Caravan of Courage" then it's concrete evidence!

Maggie, again: Great finish to the JW thing. I'm relieved to have missed out on all that — how on earth could people be so reactionary and dictatorial? Ah, that's humanity, I suppose. As for cut-and-paste fanzines, well, I think I'm of the opinion that once you've started doing your DTP'ing on a PC, then returning to the Bad Old Days becomes unthinkable. My first zine was set up on an Amstrad, and now I find it embarrassing! And you haven't seen my cut-and-paste jobs! Talk about "Drunk in Charge of a Letraset..." ((Ed: Oh, geez, Louise... My first zines were done on an old Royal electric with a broken space bar that my mom bought for \$10 in a garage sale! And I still have piles of Letraset and Formaline tape cluttering up my desk drawers! If I never have to rub down lettering again, it'll be too soon!))

I find the concept of Wedge as Jedi most intriguing. It's something which a number of writers seem to postulate (Wedge in the *Catalyst* series, and the *Sanctuary* series) and it's something which I find quite alien to the concept of Wedge as he appears in the canon material, because he really does seem too potentially aggressive. A case of potential Sith-Lord, if you ask me. I see him as being quite receptive to the Force, but when he's shooting TIE's down it's the Dark Side that's talking! It'll be great to see your new Mon Mothma stories — certainly I enjoy the political undercurrents that your works carry with them. They are eagerly awaited on this side of the Atlantic!

Matthew Whitney: I conveyed your desolate summons from the last issue to Catriona. I was going to reply that I feared she might never return, but I'm "workin' on it", okay?

Gerald Crotty: What are you saying about my accent??! At least I don't come from Burrming-GHUM!! (Ha, beat that one!).

Susan Zahn (N.R.T.T.): Um, I can't write that Bail Organa story. Catriona has an even better idea, which she will, I hope, be working on eventually. So, alas, I'll be leaving it a few years, before I tackle such a subject.

Michelle Malkin: WHAT?? They're going to rope off Avebury? You just ruined my day! One of my tutors ranted on and on about what they'd done to Stonehenge by stopping access to it, and I think he was right, too. You see it from the distance, and it just looks like a heap of stones. Getting right next to monuments like Avebury and West Kennet gives you a sense of scale, at least. You really have to experience those sites at close quarters to appreciate

them fully. This year, a bunch of New Age travellers stormed Stonehenge and had a picnic inside it. They didn't exactly knock the monument over, so I don't know why people made such a fuss about it. It's not as if it hasn't been excavated about half-a-dozen times, or whatever. Maybe if the powers-that-be find it that great a problem, then some day they'll create a virtual Stonehenge for people to view. That's another gimmick for the tacky tourist center, isn't it?

Well, I think I'd better shut up and shut down now, or I'll wind up writing yet another monumental letter. ("NO!!!" I hear you cry! "Not that! Anything but that!!") Last minute "hellos" to Ming and Gail and Barbara Anderson (thank you for the info on the Wedge comic!)

SINCERE THANKS

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June 13, 1995

Wanted to get in at least a short LoC for SE, though I know I'm going to miss the deadline. Please pass on my sincere thanks to all those who voted for me in the Fan Fund. I had the absolutely best time of my life! Liz Sharpe and I were able to stop by and visit the crew at West End Games who treated us like royalty. Peter Scweighofer is a *big* SW fan as are they all and they were very happy to have recently been given permission by Lucasfilm to allow one of their writers to use Luke as a main character in her story. (There's even an illo of him kissing the girl!) So I can highly recommend the latest issue of *The SW Adventure Journal*.

I'm also more than pleased to say my first *Journal* story titled "Firepower" will be printed in the November issue (number 8). I'm hoping to have the sequel completed soon!

Will conclude by saying "thanks, guys" to all those who participated in the MWC Blaster Battle. For the first time in my life, I was able to run (well sort of shuffle) through the hallways in search of Imperial scum! I made a lot of credits as a mercenary allied to the Alliance — the only one, in fact! The Imperial mercs asked me why I was working for the Rebels and I replied that they had the cutest leaders! So you see there is more to us mercenaries than money — there's hormones, too! Anyway, I had a blast (groan). Apologies again to the Imperial Admiral I "wounded" when he tried to escape. I hope the scar has

healed by now! These things happen when you run around with a Major Calamity!

Highlight of the Con for me was seeing Marti Schuller win a Star Award. And also the *long* overdue Fan Q won by our esteemed editor for her wonderfully enjoyable story "Mercy Mission". It was a treat too to see fellow Dead Bothan Jennifer Moore's astonished reaction when she won for best poem. Then there was Wanda's win for "Mirrors"...

Oh, I haven't even mentioned the *fantastic* SW dance on Friday night. Or Debbie Kittle and Z. P. Florian's great wedding day doll exhibit. (That baby Ewok looked very, ummm, satisfied!) Then there was the gathering in the Cantina after the Blaster Battle on Sunday night. That was one fun "poker game" ... thanks to everyone being in character ... including Cypher's incredibly entertaining creation, The Corellian Nerd! Watch for this character in upcoming stories! I for one can't wait to read them. Aside from all these highlights of the con, there were some great new SW zines to enjoy ... thanks to Judy Yuenger and Marti Schuller (*I Don't Care What You Smell!*), and Z. P.'s *The Rest of the Garbage*. Great artwork! Another solid read provided by Ming's *Bright Center*. Well done, all! and to everyone who couldn't make it to MediaWest*Con this year ... plan on it next year! I guarantee you'll be transported to a galaxy far, far away!

TIMEBLINK

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June 23, 1995

FOEs, Rebels, everyfen. I come to bury Bothans, not to raise them... Fellow life force-disadvantaged ones, I know we have 101 uses. But let's keep the in-jokes in SE down to an occasional whisper. Like proliferating on-line acronyms, such asides can be distracting to those lacking a score card...

Important things first: If I'd managed to get a submission in to SE in the last (two?) issues, I would have said this long ago (and I rejoice that others have been more punctual than yours truly): three cheers to Maggie Nowakowska for her painstakingly researched and documented history of emerging SW fandom, as seen through the early letterzines. I have enjoyed this opus immensely, and I admire the scholarly integrity Maggie has invested in the project, not to mention her candor in marking places where her own personal involvement in events might, perhaps, color her observations. Myself, I've

found Maggie's reporting to be extremely accurate, according to my own recollections of those turbulent and fascinating times. Terrific job, Maggie; very well done. I hope there will be more to look forward to. Soon!

MediaWestCon festivities were even more elaborately fascinating this year than usual. This partly has to do with the fact that our very own superbly ineffable Carolyn Golledge came to stay with me for a few days before the con. I highly recommend this Golledge person as a houseguest. Not only is she an accomplished (now pro!) writer, an amiable traveling companion, and an engaging conversationalist; she also cleans floors, weeds gardens, and is a gifted pet-sitter. Carolyn, it would be such a terrible waste if you were merely a normal human being!

Carolyn and I took a roundabout route to Michigan, stopping first at West End Games (which turned out to be located in a most unassuming little warehouse in a remote northeastern corner of Pennsylvania). This was partly so that Carolyn could deliver her revised story to her editor in person. Of course, it also provided Carolyn and her American chauffeur (that's me!) with a first-class opportunity to schmooze shamelessly around the premises... Peter Schweighofer (boss editor) gave us a very warm welcome and showed us around personally. During our tour, we got to poke our heads into all the departments and meet everyone from editors to sales to the hard-working folks in the art department. The people who produce the *Star Wars Role Playing Journal* (and associated publications) are very friendly and generous, and the whole place had a happily "fannish" atmosphere. I don't think we boggled loudly enough to actually deafen anyone; but we had cause. The resources West End Games has to draw on are enough to make any collector truly envious. They have whole bins of still photos (for example) from all the Lucasfilm projects casually stored in boxes on bookshelves, right out in the open where any sticky-fingered, drooling visitor could so very very easily glom right on... But (despite the temptations on every side) we behaved ourselves (at least, this time) all the way through to genial farewell handshakes in the parking lot. (The rest of our voyage to Michigan is a blur in my memory; the buzz was potent and long-lasting.)

MediaWest whisked past in the usual blur of cheerful excitement. This year I scoped out the FOE Cantina properly. It is *definitely* the place to be for truly stellar/interstellar ambience; check in any time of day and wait a little — something interesting *will* occur. The Friday night cantina dance/costume party was a high point of the con (for me), and a heckuva fine way to get into the SW/convention spirit. Dancing to "Tequila!" will never be quite the same again, after taking an unstable if energetic place in a weaving cha-cha line which included Imperials, Rebels, mercenaries, Jedi, miscellaneous fellow-travelers,

a number of exotic non-humans, and even a blissfully enthusiastic mundane or two... I pass along this warning for what it's worth: do *not* have more than one of the beverages with the gummi-things in the bottom in quick succession, unless you are truly prepared to howl. Ahem. (This was confided to me at a dark corner table, between sets, by a former Bug who shall remain otherwise anonymous...)

Alas, I missed Rebel breakfast this year. Oops. Well, all I have to say in my defense is that I mis-spent my time productively: I was noshing down with Ye Noble Editor of this-here Esteemed Letterzine. Even dead people can have their diplomatic moments. Sometimes. ((Ed: *And an enjoyable nosh it was, too, although I don't normally eat with Dead people. Oh, I understand I'm honorarily Dead, too, so I suppose it doesn't matter. Anyway, things were lively enough and got even livelier when Sucky Zine Editor Annie Wortham and her Loyal Sidekick and Faithful Companion Leah Rosenthal joined us for breakfast!*))

The 2-hour SW artists/writers panel was well worth attending. (Thank you to whichever thoughtful person it was who snapped me out of a timeblink and aimed me in the right direction at the proper hour.) Personally, I greatly enjoyed the initial round of introductions, even if we did have to move all those chairs around so we could form a ring. I'm glad that I'll now be able to match a face with many a name of long-standing familiarity. Also, I note that people from all eras, old and new, of SW fandom attended and actively participated. Overall, the comments made were unusually constructive for *any* convention panel, and the validity of the observations made was in no way limited to SW topics. Tim Blaes' reading of the hallucinatory scene from his story hit me square on the black-humor funnybone; I apologize to anyone who may have been offended by my giggling. ("Bye!" and "See ya!" will never be the same to me again...) Breaking the big group up into smaller circles toward the end was also very productive. I sampled the discussions in several groups, and I wanted to stay with *all* of them. I hope this panel/discussion will be held again next year.

Shucks and other imprecations: I missed the SE party on Saturday night, even though it was in the room where I was (occasionally) sleeping, and even though I'd gone forth hunting and gathering with my own hands in order to obtain munchies for this event. (Sorry I forgot the cups, Cheree...) Eek. Um. Er. Most embarrassing. It's not that I *forgot* y/see. Have y'all ever noticed the "timeblink" phenomenon at cons, particularly, at MediaWest? Where you sit down to chat for five minutes, and get up, and somehow it's three... *hours* later? GAAAAAAHHHHH...! I had timeblink worse than ever this year. I swear, it could not *possibly* have been a minute later than 10:00pm when I tore myself away from that after-dinner conversation...