The “Other” Writing
A Writer’s Guide to Fan Fiction

By Roxanne Longstreet Conrad

Fan fiction.

The thought sends shudders up the spines of those in the professional writing world. Editors and pro writers alike regularly turn up their noses at the idea—writing fan fiction is at best an embarrassing habit, at worst outright theft of intellectual property. And, these same experts will tell you, it’s terrible. Awful. Not worth the trees that died for it. Not that they’d actually read it in the first place.

Excuse me for calling the kettle black, but a lot of these same editors are offering work-for-hire jobs to authors to write the next Star Trek novel or movie tie-in, and a lot of those same writers are leaping for the big checks. The professional world hasn’t cornered the market on hypocrisy, but it’s certainly bought a few shares.

Are they right about fan fiction? Sometimes. But they’re working from a somewhat prejudiced point of view. Professionals in the publishing industry, after all, have a native aversion to the whole idea of fan writing. Why? Think about it. If you were a writer, your business would depend on coming up with original ideas, compelling characters, and—ergo—the proceeds of writing those compelling ideas and characters. Having amateurs threaten to take your characters away and do it for free is disconcerting at best.

I understand that feeling. Heck, I’ve had that feeling. But I took a deep breath, and stepped back, and looked at the big picture. How does an aspiring rock’n’roll guitarist learn to play those hot licks that land him with a band, an agent, and a recording contract (not to mention groupies)7? By sitting around badly imitating Jimi Hendrix and Stevie Ray Vaughn and the inimitable B.B. King. Are these wannabe guitarists infringing on the copyright of “Purple Haze”? Sure. They’re performing the music, often in public, without paying royalties. Heck, every time we sing “Happy Birthday” we owe somebody money. And while those rights are important—vital, even—to the health of the arts, everybody needs to start somewhere. Painters often start by copying the work of old masters, or tracing from existing works. They learn steadiness and control from those exercises. Okay, some of them learn to be master forgers, but most move on to forge their own styles, their own art.

So it is with writers. Some writers never fall into the fan fiction category. They start writing original work from

1999 Hugo Nominees

The World Science Fiction Society has announced the nominees for this year’s Hugo Awards, which are given annually for achievements in science fiction.

This year’s winners, determined by a vote of WSFS members, will be awarded at Auscon 3, the 1999 World Science Fiction Convention, which will be held in Melbourne, Australia, September 2-6. This year’s nominees include:

Novel: Children of God by Mary Doria Russell (Villard); Darwin by Robert Charles Wilson (Tor); Distraction by Bruce Sterling (Bantam Spectra); Factoring Humanity by Robert J. Sawyer (Tor); To Say Nothing of the Dog by Connie Willis (Bantam Spectra)

Novella: “Aurora in Four Voices” by Catherine Asaro (Analog Dec. 1998); “Get Me to the Church On Time” by Terry Bisson (Asimov’s May 1998); “Oceanic” by Greg Egan (Asimov’s Aug. 1998); “Story of Your Life” by Ted Chiang (Starlight 2); “The Summer Isles” by Ian R. MacLeod (Asimov’s Oct-Nov. 1998)

Novelette: “Divided by Infinity” by Robert Charles Wilson (Starlight 2); “Echid” by Kristine Kathryn Rusch (Asi-
Fanfic... from page 1

the very beginning— in essence, they don’t use “training wheels.” That’s an excellent way to build up your own individual style and voice, and I highly recommend it as the best way to learn to write. However, many people find it easier to strap on those life jackets before taking the deep dive, and listen to me carefully—there’s nothing wrong with it. It’s a perfectly good way to learn to use language effectively, as long as you constantly bear in mind that’s what you’re doing. You’re practicing. The rock musician discusses above doesn’t assume, after he masters “Purple Haze,” that he owns the song. He knows better. And as fan writers, so should we all.

The characters belong to the creators and owners of the show. Not to the actors, not even to the writers who write the episodes. And no matter how many X-Files stories I write, I will never, ever own Mulder and Scully. I am merely borrowing them, with all appropriate caution and reverence, to learn how to slide inside existing characters, to become the crocodile in the river and submerge myself in someone else’s vision. Building a car out of stolen parts doesn’t mean I own the finished product— even if it’s a sleek-looking Corvette and I hang my fuzzy dice from the mirror.

Is there bad fan writing? Absolutely! And when it’s bad, it’s usually really bad, and really long. Epic-length. There’s also bad pro writing, of course, and the mistakes below apply equally to those folks (and me).

That said, let’s get down to the nitty gritty about fan writing. Here are the ten biggest mistakes of fan writers (and I’ve made a few of ‘em myself, believe me) and some suggestions for how to head them off at the pass in your work:

1. Obey the rules. If you’re going to throw out all of the character development and events of the show, uh… I have to ask… why are you writing fan fiction? You can ignore the rules only if you know them and respect them first, and you shouldn’t ignore all the rules, just a carefully chosen one at a time. If you’re going to have a Mulder/Scully relationship story, fine. Make it inevitable that M/S fall into it. Make it necessary. And then figure out the real-world consequences of it and how to deal with it. Anything less is cheating yourself and your readers of the full learning experience.

2. Resist Mary Sue. If you’re writing about the show simply to place your own original character as the centerpiece of the story, you’re probably cheating again. If your character fills the role of a “guest star” on the show, fine— but if she’s replaced Dun-can MacLeod as the main focus of a Highlander story, you better tell a damn good story, because it’s not the Mary Sue show. And please—if you’re going to write in a female character who falls in love with the sturdy, sexy hero—at least make her (1) a full-fledged person, and (2) not the secret savior of the universe with more powers than the love child of Superman and Wonder Woman. Granted, the shows sometimes fall down on this principle too, but they’ve got the advantage of being The Show. Do better.

ORAC

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3. **Nail The Voices.** The toughest thing to master in fan fiction is exactly what’s toughest to master in scriptwriting for episodic television: nailing existing characters. If your Buffy doesn’t sound like the Buffy, if you can’t make Xander chatter on unreasonably, then get back to work and write it over. I once read a Pretender fanfic in which Sydney – yes, Sydney – sneered through the whole story and slapped Miss Parker around. Um ... okay. But that wasn’t Sydney. Didn’t sound like him, didn’t act like him. (Obviously, it wasn’t Miss Parker either, or Sydney would have been identifiable only from DNA.) You can stretch a character. Just pay attention to what makes them who they are, and leave that intact!

4. **Plot Something.** Oh, my, a nasty word ... fan fiction, just like any other kind of fiction written by people trying to learn their craft, is full of plot holes. Or blatant non-plots. I have no objection to a rip-roaring adult content story, but does it have to be only about the sex? Can’t we have a story weaving around it? A scene, no matter how good, is not a story, so if you get to the end and you haven’t created a story ... back to work. You ain’t done. Stopping early and failing to build a story is why most beginning writers never go on to be professionals.

**Trust me, you’ll never get more time, you’ll never get less stressed, and you’ll never be any readerier to start. Just write.**

5. **Stop Flinching.** If you’re hesitating and backing off from the conflict of the story, wade back in there. Writing a story is like landing at Omaha Beach, gun in hand, as the bullets whiz overhead. It’s scary. If you run away, you accomplish nothing. Find the painful true moment and write it. That’s the heart of your story, whether it’s Willow sobbing in the bathroom because Xander slept with Cordelia (hey, I got misty-eyed) or Buffy stabbing Angel through the heart to send him to Hell in the ultimate sacrifice. Pain is pain, and it’s the natural outcome of conflict, so learn not to flinch and turn away from it.

**Once you’ve done your best work, walk away – it’ll prevent a lot of things, not the least of which is worrying about who stole your best scene and used it in another fan story.**

6. **Give Up Ownership.** Remember what I said earlier about the guitarist and “Purple Haze?” When you finish that story you’re so extraordinarily proud of, remember – it’s not really yours. Even when you become professional and write your original works, it’s valuable to know how to distance yourself, because you have to look at it with a clear, cold detachment in order to judge its merits. Start now. Once you’ve done your best work, walk away – it’ll prevent a lot of things, not the least of which is worrying about who stole your best scene and used it in another fan story. A great line tools are words, and you must learn how to use them like a surgeon uses scalpels. There are literally thousands of poorly spelled, ungrammatically stories out there, and in a world of online spell check and grammar check, there shouldn’t be. Spend the time to make sure your story is technically correct at its most basic level.

8. **Sweat The Details.** Whether it’s pro or am ... sloppi-ness sucks. Take your work seriously. If you’re going to write a story science fiction, you’ve got to know some science. You don’t have to be an expert – most writers aren’t – but you absolutely must be able to drop in those telling details that convince your audience you are an expert. I recently saw a TV show that referred to the Internet as an “operating system”; I giggled and checked out. Conversely, I’ve read books that seemed convincing and compelling, but upon further research the information contained in them turned out to be wildly incorrect. As education, it failed, but as fiction, it sold because of detail. Ideally, you want to convey both information and a compelling story – but mostly a compelling story.

9. **Ask The Next Question.** You may have this fabulous idea for a story – say, “Mulder and Scully get trapped in a haunted house!” The first impulse is, of course, to start writing. But wait. Ask yourself the next question, “Okay, if they’re in a haunted house, what’s it haunted by?”

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From Tarriel Cell

April 1999 ◆ Page 3
mov's July 1998); "The Planck Dive" by Greg Egan (Asimov's Feb. 1998); "Steamship Soldier on the Information Front" by Nancy Kress (Future Histories; Asimov's April 1998); "Taklamakan" by Bruce Sterling (Asimov's Oct./Nov. 1998); "Time Gypsy" by Ellen Kages (Gendert the Landscape); "Zwarte Piet's Tale" by Allen Steele (Analog Dec. 1998)

Short Story: "Cosmic Corkscrew" by Michael A. Burstein (Analog June 1998); "Maneki Neko" by Bruce Sterling (F&SF May 1998); "Radiant Doors" by Michael Swanwick (Asimov's Sept. 1998); "The Very Pulse of the Machine" by Michael Swanwick (Asimov's Feb. 1998); "Whiptail" by Robert Reed (Asimov's Oct./Nov. 1998); "Wild Minds" by Michael Swanwick (Asimov's May 1998)


Dramatic Presentation: Sleeping in Light (Babyon 5); Dark City; Pleasantville; Star Trek: Incursion; The Truman Show

Professional Editor: Gardner Dozois; Scott Edelman; David G. Hartwell; Patrick Nielsen Hayden; Stanley Schmidt; Gordon Van Gelder

Professional Artist: Jim Burns; Bob Eggleton; Donato Giancola; Don Maitz; Nick Stathopoulos; Michael Whelan

Semiprozine: Interzone, David Pringle, ed.; Lucas, Charles N. Brown, ed.; The New Review of Science Fiction, Kathryn Cramer, Arieh Hameon, David G. Harwell & Kevin Maroney; Science Fiction Chronicle, Andrew L. Porter; Speculations, Kent Brewster

Fanzine: Ansible, Dave Langford; File 770, Mike Glier; Mimosa, Richard & Nikki Lynch; Plokta, Alison Scott & Steve Davies; Tangent, David A. Truesdale; Thyme, Alan Stewart

Fan Writer: Bob Deveny; Mike Glier; Dave Langford; Evelyn C. Leeper; Maureen Kincaid Speller

Fan Artist: Freddie Beek; Brad Foster; Ian Gunn; Teddy Havia; Joe Mayhow; D. West

John W. Campbell Award (Not a Hugo): Kage Baker*; Julie E. Czerneda*; Nalo Hopkinson*; Susan R. Matthews*; James Van Pelt*

Several categories have six or more nominees due to ties for fifth place.

Fanfic... from page 3

And the next. "What if it's haunted by everyone they've lost?" Each question will lead to another one. When you come to a fork in the road, hunt up the one least traveled, not the first option that looks good, because I guarantee you another writer's already been down there and left his beer cans. Find the most compelling story you can possibly tell. Now, I'm not big on outlining — I hate it, personally, and I refuse to do it for anything less than a novel. But it's still good, as you're writing the story, to continue to search for those hidden opportunities to tell a really cool and different story.

10. Read. Sounds simple, but you'd be surprised how many writers have a phobia about reading. Some beginning (or even established) professionals say they don't want to read other people's fiction because it might poison their creative well... in other words, contaminate them with new ideas. Uh... okay. I thought we were in the business of ideas. You know that question people ask writers all the time, "Where do you get your ideas?" The answer is... from observation. We're synthesizers. We take things we read, see, hear, touch, smell, say, and dream and form them into something else. My personal feeling is that you may be a good writer if you don't read, but you'll never be a great writer, because great writers are tapped into what's happening in the world around them. So read everything you can get your hands on - fan, pro, research, the cereal box, whatever. Trust me. It'll improve your writing.

Oh, yeah, one more rule: write. I already know your objections. Trust me, you'll never get more time, you'll never get less stressed, and you'll never be any reader to start. Just write. And don't let anybody tell you that you're wasting your time, whether you're working on the next great novel or a fanfic for Sentinel.

It's time well spent.
All guest appearances are subject to professional commitments.
+ indicates the convention has a web site linked to ORAC's home page.
Don't forget to enclose a SASE when writing for information.

May 1999

28-31 MediaWest*Con 1999
Location: Lansing, Michigan. Memberships:
$40, $10 supporting. 200 E. Thomas St.,
Lansing MI 48906

28-30 Thundercon 8
Location: Clarion Hotel and Convention Center, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma. 405-528-2741. Memberships:
Guests: Armin Shimerman, John Levene, more.
P.O. Box 892545, Oklahoma City OK 73189

July 1999

9-11 Gateway Media Con
Location: Henry VIII Hotel, St. Louis, Missouri. Rates $69/74, 314-731-3040. Memberships:
$45 until 1/16/99, $50 until 5/16/99, $60 thereafter.
Guests: Andreas Katsulas, Chase Masterson, Joshua Cox, Jerry Rector, Gerard Christopher, Laurell K. Hamilton, more.
P.O. Box 3064, Florissant MO 63032

August 1999

26-29 Conucopia (NASFIC)
Location: Anaheim Marriott, Anaheim, California. Memberships:
$85 until 1/1/99, $100 thereafter; supporting $20.
Guests: Jerry Pournelle, Ellen Datlow, Richard and Nicki Lynch. S.C.I.F.I. Inc., P.O. Box 8442, Van Nuys CA 91409

September 1999

2-6 Aussiecon III (57th WorldCon) *
Guests: Gregory Benford, Bruce Gillespie. GPO Box 1212K, Melbourne, 3001, Australia or PO Box 266, Prospect Heights, IL 60070-0266

August 2000

31-9/4 Chicon 2000 (58th WorldCon)
Guests: Ben Bova, Bob Eggleton, Jim Baen, Bob and Anne Passevoy, Harry Turtledove. P.O. Box 642057, Chicago IL 60664

August 2001

30-9/3 The Millennium Philcon (59th WorldCon)

Flight Log

will be back next issue.

Tarriell Cell

Moving?

Please be sure to let ORAC know when you change your address. We cannot resend newsletters returned to us by the Post Office.
Peripherals

Don't forget to enclose a self-addressed stamped envelope when writing for information.

**Legend**
The gray change bar indicates entries new or updated since the last issue. Unless otherwise stated, prices are stated for delivery to U.S. addresses. Those living in other countries should send a self-addressed envelope with two IRC's for price information. Postage is not included unless stated otherwise. It indicates a club or newsletter with which we exchange newsletters. These can be read at ORAC meetings.

**Member Ads**
For sale, one highly accurate copy of Avon's 3rd season outfit, the one with the white pigtails collar, studded short-sleeved overcoat with black "leather" (vinyl) top and oversize knit. He lost the pants at Gause Prime. Has won half costume awards at several cons. Not because of the missing pants, he said. Size 34-36 for men. Might fit a 38 in a pinch. Bustin must provide own attention. $30.00 U.S., postage included in price. R.N. B. 1426, 4800 Kilpatrick Ave., Fort Worth TX 76116

**Fanzines: Available**
Badlands, Multimedia. SASE for information. Ann Boureau, 304-314 Broadway Ave., Winnipeg MB R3C 0G9

Calhoun: A Delicate Balance, $15/bk/$7.50 each. If ordered together, $27/bk/$29.50. Kathleen Resch, PO Box 1766, Tempe, AZ 85280

Best of Spacefall 2, $2.00 ea/$3.00/10 air. (Checks to "Horizon, the B7 Appreciation Society") Ann Steele, 66 Sherwood Park Rd., Sutton, Surrey SM1 2SG

Bizarro Coloring Album. $1.50. Also Bizarro Tine. Issues 1-4-$1.50 each. Linda M. Cooper (see separate listing)

Blake's Doubles 1-4, B7 novels (2 per issue), $1.50 US/$15.00 elsewhere. #1 $17.50 US/$22 elsewhere. #2 $15 US/$18 elsewhere. #3 $15 US/$12 elsewhere. #4 $20 US/$24 elsewhere. Linda M. Cooper (see separate listing)

The Cost of the Cheeseboard. A sequel to The Totally Imaginary Cheeseboard and The Other Side of the Coin. $12.00 Canada, $20 elsewhere. Beth Friedman, 4242 Minnehaha Ave. S., Minneapolis, MN 55406

Deadlier Than The Male (BT). $20 US, $22 Canada, $24 Europe, $26 Pacific. John McCos, 2580 1/2 N. Pueblo CO 81005-9014

Defector is a fourth-season Blake's 7 tape. $15.00 in UK, $20.00 in Europe, $25.00 in U.S.A., $30.00 in Canada, $35.00 in Australia, $40.00 in New Zealand. Judith Proctor, 28 Diorpe Rd., Cofle Mullen, Wimborne, Dorset BH21 3QY, England

Destiny is (as Morgan & O'Callihan's anthology of BT stories. $15 US/$22 elsewhere. Linda M. Cooper (see separate listing)

DSV: Issue 2 out. Also seeking submissions for issue 3. Celeste Hoffman-Lyons, 28 Chestnut St., Everett MA 02149

The Epic, $15.00 US/$20.00 air. (Checks to "Horizon, the B7 Appreciation Society") Ann Steele, 66 Sherwood Park Rd., Sutton, Surrey SM1 2SG

**Fifth Season (BT).** Classic anthologies are being reprinted. SASE for pricing information. Linda M. Cooper (see separate listing)

Gambit (BT). Jean Graham's anthology is now available again after a year out of print. 

#1, 2, 4 $15 US/$22 elsewhere. #3, 5 $19 US/$23 elsewhere. #6, 13 $20 US/$24 elsewhere. #14 $26 US/$32 elsewhere. Linda M. Cooper (see separate listing)

Gateway to Time (DW/T). Citizen of the St. Louis Office. 1986. $15.00. Issue 6. $12.00. 1026 13 St., St. Louis MO 63108

Ghost, an event in the story. In four parts. Part 1, $16, parts 2-4 $8 each. payable in cash or add $5 for checks. Judith Seaman, 3 Birnfield Gardens, Chattafon, Derby DE7 1DP

Horizon, Clubmen of Horizon. Issues 8, 11, 12, 13, 14, 16, 17 $13.25/ea/$64/6 air. Each issue. Issues 1, 9, 10 $13.10 each/$67.55 total. Linda M. Cooper (see separate listing)

The Horizon Blake's 7 Colouring Book, 26 pages of illustrations. 90p/ea/$1.75 air. (Checks to "Horizon, the B7 Appreciation Society") Ann Steele, 66 Sherwood Park Rd., Sutton, Surrey SM1 2SG

The Horizon Blake's 7 Technical Manual. Parts 1 and 3 each $5.50/ea/$16.50 total. Part 2 $6.50 se/$12.50 air. (Checks to "Horizon, the B7 Appreciation Society") Ann Steele, 66 Sherwood Park Rd., Sutton, Surrey SM1 2SG

The Horizon Interviews. £4.00 se/£5.00 air. (Checks to "Horizon, the B7 Appreciation Society") Ann Steele, 66 Sherwood Park Rd., Sutton, Surrey SM1 2SG

Jarboewowly 1-4 is the entire gen saga by Sheila Paulson, available in 4 parts sold separately. Parts 1-4: $26; Parts 5-8: $20; Parts 9-13: $22; Part 14: $12. (Prices US$ cash from Proctor directly.) Judith Proctor, 28 Diorpe Rd., Coflle Mullen, Wimborne, Dorset BH21 3QY, England Linda M. Cooper (see separate listing)


Linda M. Cooper: agents many fannies from many fandoms. SASE for current flyer and price list. Linda M. Cooper, KnightWriter Press, 652 Oak Cir., Sumas, WA 98295-8222. Visa/MC accepted. Checks payable to Linda M. Cooper. All orders carry flat $2 handling fee per order.

Limitations: Single story, any genre of a group of writers including Kathryn Anderson, Jean Graham, Michelle Moyer, Judith Proctor, David Sanderson, and Susan Smentik. Second season, all characters, but a better role for Gan than he normally gets. UK £2.00, Europe £2.70, USA $2 or $5 cash. AU $3.00, Judith Proctor, 28 Diorpe Rd., Coıle Mullen, Wimborne, Dorset BH21 3QY, England

The Nachleibl Factor by Lillian Shipman is a Blake's 7 genome. £11.50 UK, £13.50 US, £14.50 Eu. Linda M. Cooper (see separate listing)

The Stormchaser Factor by Lillian Shipman is a Blake's 7 genome. £11.50 UK, £13.50 US, £14.50 Eu. Linda M. Cooper (see separate listing)

Terror (multimedia). Citizen of the Whooser Network. Issue 3 $3.00, 304 Bluff St., Crawfordville FL 32327

Veritable Expatriate (DM) is devoted to the Doctor's companion Ace. $30.00. Jim Zerkel, 12840 W. Playday Dr., Crestwood IL 60445

Questions of the Past (BT) is a collection of unpublished Linda M. Cooper stories. $10 US/$22 elsewhere. Linda M. Cooper (see separate listing)


Roads Not Taken features stories which spring from turning points in a television show and take the story in a different direction. $22 ppd. Lorna Brisham, 3700 Sutherland Ave. F6-5, Knoxville TN 37716


Serenaded Seven (BT) is Ashton Press' hortcomet anthology. When you want to see your heroes ache... $23 US/$27 elsewhere.

Linda M. Cooper (see separate listing)

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The Seven Live On. SASE for information on issues 1-10; issue #11 due soon, #12 in 1998. K. Rae Turner. Beverly Skouras. SASE for prices, 24 Cynthia Road, Sewickley, PA 2771.


Standard by Several. Literature of Several United. Issue 27. $5.50 pd. Issue 3 $10 pd. Issue 4 $11.50 pd. Also seeking submissions for future issues. Several United, RO Box 1760, Belleair Beach 7402.

Star One and Star Two. UK £3.50. Europe £4.50. USA £5 or US $8 cash, AUS/NZ £5.50. 50p or $1 discount when purchased together. Also Star Three. UK £12. Europe £13, USA £15 or $24 cash. AUS/NZ £16. Also accepting submissions for future issues. (No US checks.) Judith Proctor, 28 Dposé Road, Dorfe Mallon, Wimbere, Dorset BH21 2RD.

Strangers Among Us (BT/ST). £2.70 50p. (Checks to Ho’rizon, the B7 Appreciation Society.) Ann Steele. 66 Sirwood Park Rd, Sutton, Sun-MI 25G.


Threads Through Infinity. $18 pd. Also seeking submissions for future issues. Sherri Fillingham, RO Box 686, Washington Grove MD 20880-0686.


Trust Like the Soul. $6 pd. Empire Books, RO Box 625, Murray KY 40271.

The Void Aftalm, Like a Bonfire. $8 pd. Sharon Monroe, 8173 Claymore Ave, Inver Grove Hts MN 55076.

The Web. Issue 1 13.25 sea/£4.60 air. Issue 2 £2.70 sea/£3.50 air. (Checks to Ho’rizon, the B7 Appreciation Society.) Diane Gis. 18 Holt Rd., North Weimberley, Mid-dlesex HA0 3PS.

What on Earth Happened to You? It is an all-Roy Blake zine dealing mainly with what happened to him after Star One until Gaida prime and beyond. 18 Delta Dome Press, c/o Nicole Petry. 3140 Tina Lane, Marietta GA 30066-4312.

World Turned Upside Down (BT). Mative BT 7 novel. (552 pp.) printed as two volumes but sold together. $34 US/$39 elsewhere. Linda Knights (see separate listing).

Audio and Video

Anglic offers sets of videos of their first four conventions. $25 per set in US. RO Box 758356, Seattle WA 98125.

Doctor Who Video Fanzine. Compilation of sets, spoofs, interviews, music videos, etc. $12 pd. Other videos available; SASE for 25%.

flyer, Panda Productions, RO Box 51552, Indianapolis IN 46251.

Travis: The Final Act is a no-budget play which attempts to analyze the character of Travis, also includes interviews. £8 pdp. (Checks to Horizon, the B7 Appreciation Society.) Diane Gis. 18 Holt Rd., North Weimberley, Middlesex HA0 3PS.

Together Again is a series of interview tapes featuring members of the Blake's 7 Cast. Tape 1, "Blake's 7" features Gareth Thomas and Paul Darrow. Tape 2, "Liberalized" also Michael Keating, and tape 3 "Action" also Steven Greif. Tape 4, "Kingmaker", features Gareth Thomas, Paul Darrow and Peter Tuddenham with the series' first producer, David Maloney. Tape 5, "Elements" features Thomas, Darrow, Maloney and Supreme Commander Jacqueline Pearce. Tapes 4 and 5 from a two-part celebration of the series' 20th anniversary. £15 each. Sheelagh Wells, 20A New Road, Brenchford, Midas, TW8 3NX.

Your Personal Adventure Theatre of the Mind is a set of three audio tapes. Tape 1: A 3rd season Blake's 7 story. Fairy tales, Comedy, and tales to scare you. Various authors. Tape 2: Two adventures by C.R. Smith. The first is about the Trolls of the Turtle that we find out why perhaps, we should let sleeping dragons lie. The second is a timeless love story. The Promise. Tape 3: The Spooky Tape; Romance and a European vampire Count. Mason style horror. behaviour. Suspense, poems and an all American vampire. Various authors. £7.50 each tape. Alice Yount, RO Box 31725, St. Louis MO 63117-0117.

Books

ISBN numbers are included for convenience in ordering books from your favorite retailers.


Merchandise

Bookmarks. A set of seven bookmarks featuring the original Blake's 7 crew. $11 pd. Also available: Seraphim bookmark $3.

Sheelagh J. Wells, 20A New Road, Brenchford, Midas, TW8 3NX, England.

Bumper Sticker: two designs, 1' x 7' and "My Other Car is a Scorpio" £2 each, £3.50 for both. (Checks to Ho’rizon, the B7 Appreciation Society.) Kathy Sierry. 8 Watercock Mews. Westlea, Swindon, Wilts SN5 7AS.

Calendar. 12-month Blake's 7 photo calendar. Available starting any month you wish. Each month has a color telepic. Photos from first season. £16.95/$20 elsewhere. Linda Knights (see separate listing).

Coffee Mugs: featuring Horizon logo and blue roster, silver artwork on black background. £7.25 pd. (Checks to Horizon, the B7 Appreciation Society.) Gili Dunn, 38 Arden Rd, Timperley, Altrincham, Cheshire WA15 6HU.

Note Pads: Five separate designs, 50 sheets per A5-size pad. £1.75 sea/£2.30 air per pad, set of all five £6.50 sea/£8.15 air. (Checks to Ho’rizon, the B7 Appreciation Society.) Gili Dunn, 38 Arden Rd, Timperley, Altrincham, Cheshire WA15 6HU.


Photos. Photo disk available with fall first-episode Blake's 7 photo telepic. Focus is on Blake, Avon and Vila with some Jerko, Gan, Cally. JPEG format, 320x240, for Windows. £10 US/$14 other. Linda Knights (see separate listing).

Prints & Lithographed print of Blake's 7 available soon. £11 pd. Sheelagh J. Wells, 20A New Road, Brenchford, Midas, TW8 ONX, England.


Teddy Bears: 11-12-inch Derna Starn, 12-inch Berr Avon, 13-inch Roy Bear-Lake, more, all fully movable (jointed) and dressed. SASE for photo. Marian Mendez, 3J50 E. Ninth Lane, Hialeah FL 33013-3120.

Adzines

Adzine is "an information service for media fandom." £3 per issue. Janet Ellicott, 43 Brookbank House, Retreat Place, Morley, Lane, Hackney, London E5 9RJ

Factsheet Five is "the definitive guide to the zine revolution," advertising lines of all kinds: arts, music, etc. $20 per year bulk rate, $40 first class. RO Box 170999, San Francisco CA 94117-0990

Generic Ad Zinc (CAZ) features alphabetical listings of fanzines by fandom. Star Trek and SF+TV listed in a separate volume. Pub-
lished quarterly. Main volume $13 per year; Trek supplement $6.50 per year, both $18 per year. Caneadea P.O. Box 980744, Houston TX 77098-0744

Media Monitor is a semiannual azzone. $6 per issue. Plastic Cow Productions, PO. Box 3081, Danville CA 94526-8081

APAA’s Letterzines

Altazone is a Blake’s 6 letterzine. Minimum $5 or $10 covers one to two issues, depending on page count. In U.K. Neil Faulknor, Wednesday 6 Place Avenue, Cittoville, Margate, Kent. CT3 2LG, in USA: Judith Proctor, 28 Diprose Rd, Cofre Mullen, Wirburne, Dorset. BH21 3QY

Con-Tempex is a monthly convention listing. One year $30 in U.S. $39 elsewhere. Pegasus Publishing, 2501 W. Sublette Rd. #890, Arlington TX 76017-3461

Hotlilla 13 is a multimedia writer’s and artists net for profit group. Dues are $12 a year and submissions to the bimonthly NL are required for membership. We also use genuine type material. SASE for current information. Alice Yount, PO. Box 31715. St. Louis MO 63131

Rallying Call is a quarterly APA devoted to Blake. SASE for info. Sue Jercic. 131 Baldwin Ave., Bowling Green, OH 43402

Clubs

Friends of Doctor Who is the United States’ largest active Doctor Who fan organization. Quarterly newsletter. Dues $7.50, PO. Box 47111. P.O. Box 14421, Reading PA 19612

Horizon, the B7 Appreciation Society, is the original and largest Blake’s 6 fan group. Publish Horizon newsletter, other books and merchandise. Dues for four newsletters (about two years): US/Canada $11, air/$12.50 sea; UK £10; Europe £12.50; Aus/NZ £19.75 air/£12.50 sea. Please send SASE ($1 bill for complete price info and zine list. Kathy Sturny, 8 Watertown Mews, Westison, Wilts. SN5 7AS


The Pharo Project is based in Toronto and follows British science fiction TV. Quarterly club magazine Singularity. Annual dues $10. c/o Andrew Gurudata, 1021-2659 Battleford Rd., Mississauga ON L5Y 3R9

P.I.N. Ehod Fun Club follows the author of The Vampires Files series. Quarterly newsletter, autographed button, discounts. Dues $10 in US, $12 elsewhere. PO. Box 100362, Ft. Worth TX 76185

Pythodians of Pyynecot is one of America’s largest fan-run science fiction media clubs. Monthly newsletter Pythodian Renegade. Dues $12. RO. Box 3194, Princeton NJ 08543-3194

St. Louis CIA is the St. Louis area Doctor Who fan club. Bimonthly newsletter Time Lord Times, zone Gateway to Time. Dues $12. PO. Box 733, St. Louis MO 63188

Serenity is a Doctor Who/Blake’s 7 club working to renew the two programs to the airwaves in Oklahoma. Monthly newsletter Sooner Time and Space Traveller. No dues, but send $1 for newsletter. Carol Myers, 800 SW 134th. Box 27, Oklahoma City OK 73170

Several Unlimited is the Houston area

“Peripherals” is your column! If you have any new or updated items to include in “Peripherals”, please send them to:

“Peripherals” ORAC P.O. Box 566123 Dallas TX 75356-6123 USA

Blake’s 7 and other media fan group. Bimonthly newsletter Notes from the Underground, zone Starmazed by Sevrel. Dues $12. Box 1766, Bellevue WA 77742

U.S. Branch of UNIT is a Doctor Who, science fiction and British media fan club. Monthly newsletter Trap One Report, Dues $5 checks to UNIT. Paul Scott Alford, 22 West Duid Hill Ave., Randolph MA 02366-5111

Wheeler Network follows Doctor Who and other British shows throughout India. Monthly newsletter Indian Gazette, zone Neutron Flux, Dues $10. 304 Bluff St., Crawfordsville IN 47933-1232

Where To Write

Glynis Barber, c/o Susan Shaper Assoc., 1748 N. Gower St., London NW1 2NB

Jan Chappell, c/o Diane Gary, 18 Holt Rd., Nuneaton Westm, Midlands, HAM 3PS

Brian Crougher, c/o CCA Personnel, 7 St. George’s Square, London SW1V 2HD

Paul Darrow and Janet Lees Price, c/o Ann Board, Avon Fan Club, 76 Blythe Ave., Old Basing, Basingstoke, Hants, RG24 0HR

Stephen Greif, c/o Roger Carey Assoc., 31 Kensington Church St., London W8 1AA

Mat Irvine, c/o BBC Visual Effects Dept., 250 Western Ave., North Acton, London W3 0QJ

David Jackson, c/o Joseph & Wagg Personal Mgt., 2 Tunstall Road, London SW8 9PN

Michael Keating, c/o Narrow Road Co., 21 Roland St., London W1V 3DE

Steve Perry, c/o Barry Battertt Org., Grafton House, 2 Golden Square, London W1

Joseph Smon, c/o Markham and Friggitt Ltc., 3 Winmill St., London W1

Gareth Thomas, c/o Julian Beilage Assoc., 46 Allermuir St., London W1X 4PP

Peter Tudjman, c/o BBC TV Centre, Wood Lane, London W12 9QT

Sheela Welti, c/o 20A New Road, Brentford, Middx, TW8 9NW

Back Issues

Many back issues of Tarriel Cell are still available at $2 ppd. each. We are sold out of August, October and December 1985; April, June and December 1989; and February and April 1993 issues. Write ORAC for more information.

Guide to Submissions

Send a copy of your flyer or pertinent information for your entry to Peripherals, ORAC, P.O. Box 566123, Dallas TX 75356. Enclose a SASE if you would like a reply. Listings are free, and are accepted on a space-available basis.

To have your flyers sent in our bimonthly newsletter mailing, send 200 flyers and a check for $5 to help defray our added postal expense) to the above address.

Unless precluded by an early deadline, items will be listed for at least three consecutive issues.

Inclusion in this column does not necessarily imply endorsement by ORAC.
Ernie Wise, 1925-1999

British comedian was 'king of straight men'

Ernie Wise, who with Eric Morecambe formed one of the most popular and enduring television comedy partnerships, died March 21 aged 73.

He died at 7am in Nuffield Hospital, Westham Park, near Slough, Berks, where he had been cared for since his return from Florida. The entertainer had fallen ill at his holiday home in Boca Raton, on Florida's east coast, days after his 73rd birthday on Nov 27. He suffered two heart attacks and underwent a six-hour triple bypass operation in Fort Lauderdale.

His widow, Doreen, 68, said: "I have known him since I was 15 years old... I don't remember anything other than my life with Ernie. I knew this morning when I woke up and it was raining that the sunshine had gone out of my life. The doctors in America were amazing and I want to thank them for everything they did. Most had been trained in England and I had complete faith in them."

The tributes were led by Glenda Jackson, now a transport minister, but also an Oscar-winning actress whose guest appearances on the show provided some of the most memorable moments in the series. "I am very sorry that he has gone, he was a lovely man and a great performer. In a way I'm glad he was home. I'm sure his family are, too," she said.

Des O'Connor, a friend of Morecambe and Wise and occasionally the butt of their humour, said: "At least now they are reunited. And knowing Eric, he will say, 'you're late again.'"

He added that Wise's contribution as a straight man to the often anarchic Morecambe was underrated. "Eric was the wit, he was capable of firing off a one-liner at you, but Ernie was the strength, he was the anchor. If Eric got lost, it was Ernie pulling him back, and righting the boat. This was their secret, why they were a great team."

Wise's contribution was also praised by Brian Highley, a director of the British Comedy Society. "I don't think people realise how difficult it is to be a straight man, and he was the absolute best."

Bill Cotton, the former controller of BBC1, desribed the Morecambe and Wise partnership - which at its peak attracted 28 million viewers - as one of equals. "They were both as good as each other and had an equal part to play in one of the best and funniest double acts that has ever graced the entertainment business in this country."

In its heyday, Morecambe and Wise was a national institution. Dinner invitations were declined as the nation stayed indoors to watch the show that was one of the highlights of the week.

Perhaps unfairly, because Morecambe had most of the good lines, Wise was regarded as little more than a foil. But his contribution to the partnership, which originated in 1941, was far greater than that of a mere foil. The act could not have worked without Wise's own stage persona - a mixture of raging avarice and blind vanity.

With his pretensions as a playwright (his plays, he said, were "better than anything by Oscar and Wilde"), his propensity for high-sounding rubbish ("What are we but empty shells, that once were men"), his struggles to correct his partner's philistinism, and his optimism that always seemed to be riding for a fall, Wise made up an essential half of the act.

In fact, the essence of both Morecambe's and Wise's humour was that each believed the other to be a complete idiot, and tried to convince the audience of the fact.

The act's music hall origins were clear. Wise was an eager, if thwarted, song-and-dance man, and at the end of their programmes he and Morecambe would slip away to the strains of Bring Me Sunshine.

Tarriell Cell

April 1999 ♦ Page 9
‘Buffy’ Book Series Starts Strong

Review by Roxanne Longstreet Conrad

The highest compliment I can pay a book is to say that it’s compulsively readable – a “face-hugger” of a story. For the first 200 pages of Out Of Madness I was white-knuckled, stealing spare moments between phone calls and meetings to read paragraphs or even sentences. I dug it out while waiting for the elevator. At stoplights.

In my opinion, any book that manages to do that is a Damn Fine Book.

Hodier and Golden have a fine ear for the Buffy characters, who back into running and fighting. There were some lovely moments – I liked Oz, Angel and Buffy road-tripping through Europe in a van, worrying about sunlight, credit cards and the phases of the moon – but on the whole I was disappointed at the enormous number of missed opportunities for character development. Having, for instance, Joyce (Buffy’s mom) move into Giles’ house for protection offers rich possibilities between the two characters – hey, get your minds out of the gutter – but somehow the writers manage to avoid the necessary interaction. The relationship that is created by this intense situation is, at best, passive – and at worst, bloodless.

It feels to me like Ghost Roads has simply too many ideas in it – so many that the characters seem to get lost in the maze. Too many villains, too many fights, too many complications. And no space to catch your breath and absorb the impact of what’s occurring. At the book’s climax (which I won’t give away) a harrowing, shocking event occurs – at least, should have been harrowing and shocking. I felt more moved by the idea than the execution of it. It should have left me on the brink of tears, aching for the next installment, and instead, I put the book down and noted vaguely that I still needed to buy the third one.

Still, the incredibly strong beginning of the series compels me. I’ll be back for Book Three in April … and I’ll look forward to re-entering the Buffyverse for another ride.

The authors bring fascinating depths to the characters, taking the great opportunity to give them interior lives as well as the funny, smart exteriors we’re familiar with. My favorites in Book One, I think, are Oz and Cordelia, two characters who greatly benefit from this treatment; Oz emerges the best of all, I think, as a truly fascinating guy. This is what good media novels should do. This quality of discovery, of the novel characters being richer and more fascinating than the screen characters, has only been achieved for me twice before: The Abyss by Orson Scott Card and Children of the Jedi by Barrabara Hambly. Hodier and Golden achieve, for the first part of the first novel, that same status.

If only I could say that they held on to it, I’d be giving these books unreserved, unconditional praise. However, I felt the premise of the books, once they split the characters into groups and moved their focus to larger worldshaking events, lost its finely-honed edge. Great moments are still scattered through the second half of the first book – Oz, and later Oz and Angel, walking the “ghost road” being among my favorites – but all in all I have to confess that the battles (there were a lot) seemed repetitive. And then I bought Book Two, Ghost Roads. Unfortunately, the sense of breathless anticipation that opened Book One was entirely missing – I was plunged into running and fighting. There were some lovely moments – I liked Oz, Angel and Buffy road-tripping through Europe in a van, worrying about sunlight, credit cards and the phases of the moon – but on the whole I was disappointed at the enormous number of missed opportunities for character development. Having, for instance, Joyce (Buffy’s mom) move into Giles’ house for protection offers rich possibilities between the two characters – hey, get your minds out of the gutter – but somehow the writers manage to avoid the necessary interaction. The relationship that is created by this intense situation is, at best, passive – and at worst, bloodless.

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Buffy The Vampire Slayer, Out Of Madness and Ghost Roads by Christopher Golden and Nancy Holder (Books 1 and 2 of the Gatekeeper Trilogy)
April 1999

10 Monthly Meeting
Meet at 2 p.m. at Roxanne and Cat Conrad's house, 402 Plantation Drive in Arlington. RSVP to 817-784-8062. See map 1.

May 1999

1 Monthly Meeting
Are you going to Scarborough Faire? If so, meet at 9:30 a.m. at Louann and Russ Miller's house, 1023 Woodridge Road outside Waxahachie. If not, we'll have the monthly meeting around 4 p.m. RSVP to 972-938-8058. See map 2.

25 Tarriel Cell Deadline
Exercise your submissive tendencies! Send your newsletter contributions to Tarriel Cell, P.O. Box 566123, Dallas TX 75356.

June 1999

12 Monthly Meeting
Meet at 2 p.m. at Sue Aycoc's house, 952 Meadow Oaks in Arlington. RSVP to 817-460-2748. See map 3.

July 1999

4 Monthly Meeting
This is a Sunday! Celebrate Independence Day at 2 p.m. at Tim and Mary Miller's house, 6528 Crockett Ct. in Plano. RSVP to 972-527-7068. Bring stuff to grill. Fireworks later, courtesy of the City of Plano!

The Forward Scan Calendar is on the next page.
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<td>ORAC meeting and trip to Scarborooh farm at 9:30 a.m. at farm and Louann Miller's in Watermccr, 872-936-3058.</td>
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Latest ORAC information on the Internet: http://rampages.onramp.net/~jisham/orac.htm
Read any good zines lately?
Let your fellow members know...

Submissions of zine and con reviews are always welcomed.

Send your newsletter submissions to:
Tarriel Cell
ORAC
P.O. Box 566123
Dallas TX 75356
E-mail: orac@fan.com

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<td>Enclosed is my one-year membership at $12 (US), $13 (Canada), or $18 (elsewhere).</td>
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<td>Check if renewal. (Outside US, please pay by postal money order.)</td>
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<td>If not picking up in person, add shipping for T-shirt $4 each</td>
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<td>I'd like to order these back issues of Tarriel Cell (please specify). (Prices are listed in the Peripherals section.)</td>
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<td>I'd like to send a gift membership to a friend. Enclosed is $12 for memberships in the US, $13 in Canada, and $18 elsewhere. (Please enclose the recipient's name and address with this form.)</td>
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<td>□ I'm moving. Enclosed is my new address.</td>
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Please make checks/money orders payable to ORAC in U.S. funds.
Mail to ORAC, P.O. Box 566123, Dallas TX 75356-6123 USA.
Please allow six to eight weeks for delivery.
Coming Next Week...

Compiled by Lee Whiteside

Star Trek: Voyager

(KTXA 21 Wednesday 8 p.m.,
repeat Sunday 9 p.m.)

April 10: Infinite Regress (R)
April 11: Counterpoint (R)
April 18: Three of a Kind
April 25: The Unnatural
May 2: Field Trip
May 16: Biogenesis (season finale)

Star Trek: DS9

(KTXA 21 Wednesday 9 p.m.,
repeat Sunday 9 p.m.)

April 10: The Haunting
April 11: The Haunting
April 18: The Haunting
April 25: The Haunting
May 2: The Haunting
May 16: The Haunting


The X-Files

(KDFTV 4 Sunday 8 p.m.)

April 10: Dune (R)
April 11: Tavor
April 18: Miapora
April 25: Three of a Kind
May 2: Field Trip
May 16: Biogenesis (season finale)

Buffy the Vampire Slayer

(KDFTV 49 WGN Tuesday 7 p.m.)

April 10: Phases (R)
April 11: The Reckoning (R)
April 18: The Reckoning (R)
April 25: The Reckoning (R)
May 2: The Reckoning (R)
May 16: The Reckoning (R)

Tarriel Cell

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of the month shown on your mailing label.