

# EMERALD CITY

Issue 45

May 1999

An occasional 'zine produced by Cheryl Morgan and available from her at [cmorgan@ceres.wallis.com](mailto:cmorgan@ceres.wallis.com) or on line at <http://www.emcit.com>

## Introduction

Hooray, back on schedule again. This issue should actually be out before the end of the month. See what a bit of California sunshine does for me?

Of course in a few days time I am off to Wisconsin which is not as well known for its weather (though it is rather pleasant in the spring). But I'm going for a good reason. Wiscon is one of my favourite conventions. It is small enough for me to know a lot of the people involved, open enough to have allowed me onto the program in the first year I was there, and literary enough to attract a bunch of really good writers and have programming that I actually want to go to. I'd been worried that I might have to miss it this year, so profuse thanks to Cynthia Gonsalves and Dave Gallaher for helping me to afford the trip.

Wiscon is not exactly a fanzine-centred convention, but I will probably find somewhere to dump a few copies. If you happen to pick up this zine there and are wondering what it is all about, please note that book reviews are the norm, not the exception. The only thing I have done different in this issue is to concentrate primarily on women writers, and I only did that because a couple of my favourites had new books out at a convenient time. If you want to know anything else, I'll be around the convention somewhere. Try the con suite.

---

---

## Light of Hand

First the good news. For those of you who would like to see a sequel to *Waking the Moon*, this is it. Not, of course, that it is an exact sequel. No sign of Oliver et al. But it does have Balthazar Warnick and the Benandanti and it does have the same marvelous invocation of raw, primal mythic energy. This is a book which springs, fully formed, from the forehead of Robert Graves. The White Goddess and her horned consort caper wildly through the text, streaked with blood as they re-enact their ancient but timeless rites.

And the person who wrote the cover blurb thinks it is just an allegory about adolescence. <sigh> Certainly that is an important element, but it isn't everything. Of course perhaps the book will sell to mainstream readers better if promoted that way. Certainly it deserves to sell. Hand is good enough, and if John Fowles can get away with obscure mysticism so can she.

There's more to it than that too, because Hand has her finger on the pulse of modern life and fills her work with references to pop culture. The lead character's parents are both famous TV actors. They, and the shows they star in, never existed, but Hand weaves them in so seamlessly with well known series that you start thinking that perhaps you do remember them after all.

The lead villain is a film director with, it appears, a fondness for Fellini. It is suggested that a significant element of the plot is based on a Fellini film (or rather that Fellini made a film about a particular historical incident involving the Benandanti). And the whole text is shot through with references to pop music. Early Seventies pop music at that, because that is when the book is set: David Bowie, Lou Reed, Iggy Pop, Marc Bolan. It is all captured perfectly (says she who was at school at the time and therefore remembers it all vividly), and it is kind of touching to know that, somewhere on the other side of the Atlantic, Liz Hand was listening to Slade too. The Blondie quote is, of course, a little anachronistic, but Jamie Casson was out of his skull on opium at the time so perhaps he was just having a prescient moment.

All of which gives you lot of colour but little form. For that we need to return to *Last Summer at Mars Hill*: the book, not the story. One of the other tales in that collection was a tale of sacrifice to the Horned God set in Kamensic village. In *Black Light* Hand takes that basic concept and turns it into a novel. Linette Davis and Aurora Dawn get a brief mention, but entirely new characters are used for the novel version of the story. The setting and the basic concept are really the only points of crossover.

Plot summary? Young Lit Moylan and her friends get dragged (almost literally) to Hell and back (in more than one world) at a Halloween party to die to avoid. As usual, it is gruesome stuff. Blood is spilt. Death happens. Though it isn't nearly as depressing as *Glimmering*.

Towards the end Hand seems to lose her way a little. There are long expositions of the history of the Benandanti and their rivals, the Malandanti. I'm not entirely sure what she is trying to do with this, other than restate the eternal battle between Law and Chaos familiar to Elric fans the world over. Of course her evocation of myth is rather better than that of Moorcock, but Mike never got bogged down like this.

In the end there is only one possible resolution and I for one saw it a mile off. It is also where the allegory thing comes from. *Black Light* is hardly about escape from childhood. Lit already knows more about sex and drugs than I ever found out at her age. But then maybe that is normal for America these days. What it is about is taking responsibility.

---

*"My mother used to laugh and say that the only thing my father wouldn't do for Axel Kern was promise him his only child. Of course she was wrong about that."*

---

Ah, but unlike Iphigenia, Lit has a choice in the matter. She has a mind of her own. At some point you have to stop doing what your parents want of you, take control of your actions, and accept responsibility for them. That is what growing up is really all about.

This review originally appeared in *Butterbur's Woodshed*, the APA of the Mythopoeic Society.

*Black Light* - Elizabeth Hand - Harper Prism - hardcover

---

---

## The Chronicles of Sheri's Covenants

These days a Sheri Tepper novel has a lot in common with an episode of Star Trek. The characters are familiar, though Sheri insists on keeping giving them different names, the plot is predictable, and there the moralising which becomes increasingly trite as each new episode is produced. There are even the comic asides which, since *Gibbon's Decline and Fall*, have transformed Sheri's work from strident and depressing to comfortably entertaining. But, like one of my mother's cakes, each one turns out just as perfectly crafted, and just the same, as the last.

---

---

*Their belief system was called Hestonism, a homocentric faith with a god who looked and acted like the best among them, fair minded and honourable and masculine in his approach to problems. If asked, any Aresian would have said that God was an honourable competitor, a good shot, and comfortable on the playing field... Aresians felt that there was no challenge that could not be met by well-toned muscle augmented by superior fire power under the approving eye of a deity who kept His omniscient eye on the target and His omnipresent hand on the trigger.*

---

---

*Singer from the Sea* is, so her interview in SF Chronicle tells us, the book that Sheri was writing during the last Wiscon. At the time it was called *The Covenants of Haven*, Haven being the planet on which it is set, and said Covenants being the latest set of rules by which Sheri's heroines are oppressed by a bunch of wicked, selfish and exploitative old men. Naturally the bad guys are overthrown. As expected, loads of people, many of them apparently fairly innocent, die in the process. Sheri still believes that mankind's crimes are a collective responsibility, but these days she is at least prepared to allow a few of the better of us of us to survive.

What was fresh about the previous book, *Six Moon Dance*, was that Sheri started playing with gender and began to be prepared to admit that, shock, horror, Not All Men Are Evil. *Singer* tries to continue in the same vein, but does so half-heartedly. The heroine is, for once, allowed a handsome, competent and caring lover, though he is required to make an idiot of himself at the end to show that all men, no matter how good they might seem, fall apart in a crisis.

For most of the rest of the good men Sheri relies upon the gay community but can't bring herself to write about them. A transvestite character is introduced but never used, the heroine is helped by a presumably gay and dreadfully clichéd dressmaker. Later in the book the heroine has to make a long journey without feminine company to the dressmaker finds her a "womanly" man who loves babies to help tend her child. Again this character, although around for quite a while, does not speak, and doesn't even rate a name.

None of which is to say that the book wasn't enjoyable. It reads easily enough and I romped through it very quickly. But it doesn't look like any effort was put into it (an impression which is augmented by a particularly sloppy job by the publishers). To anyone picking up a Tepper book for the first time it will probably come as a very nasty shock, but for the rest of us it is the same, predictable and increasingly tired formula. This was a hack job, Sheri. You can do better.

## **Redwood Dreams**

Finding some clients in the Bay Area was, of course, a very good thing. Unfortunately offices of the consultancy I am working with is only a short walk from one of the area's best bookshops, and that is a very bad thing for my purse. Keplers is one of those fine, old independent bookstores that really cares about books. And, as such shops should, it encourages its staff to make recommendations. As might be expected (I suspect that quite a few of the part time staff are at nearby Stanford University), the SF section is particular well served by staff recommendation notices, and it was through one of these that I discovered Jean Hegland.

That name is probably not familiar to you. She has, after all, only written one book, but for a first novel it is very impressive. The setting is fairly familiar: Western society, for all the usual suspected reasons, is falling apart. There is no food in the shops, power outages are frequent, the phones don't work, factories are closing down. Two teenage girls live in the backwoods north of San Francisco with their father. Nell is studying for her entrance exams to Harvard, Eva is hoping to join the San Francisco ballet. But those dreams are unlike to come true in the terrifying new world that is taking shape around them.

In part the book is a condemnation of the waste of Californian society. When they could shop, the girls seldom thought about just how much they consumed. When they have nothing but the forest to sustain them they learn just how rich they had been. In addition the book takes a hefty swipe at modern "knowledge". Nell has a massive encyclopaedia which purports to tell her everything there is about the world, but it doesn't tell her how to do anything, not did she learn anything practical at school.

That much is still standard stuff, and to be honest the politics is a bit naïve and simplistic. What sets the book apart, however, is the intensity with which Hegland describes the emotions of Nell, her narrator, as her world slowly collapses around her and she learns to cope with her new life. It is, I should point out, very much a women's book. Men won't understand a word of it, but I heartily recommend it to any women with a love for the wild. It cuts straight to the core.

*Into the Forest* - Jean Hegland - Bantam - hardcover

---

## **Bio-feedback**

Being so close to Keplers might cause me to buy new books that I would not otherwise have seen, but it also means I can find old ones with ease. I had searched all over Britain for the third book in Nancy Kress's "Beggars" trilogy. There was no such trouble back here in California.

So, *Beggars Ride*. Is this the triumph of the proletariat? I think the jury is out on that one. What I can tell you is that it is a disaster of a book. Oh, Kress's writing continues to improve: I think this is the best paced and most engaging of the three books, though she does have a tendency to have otherwise dumb characters become suddenly insightful and profound when she feels the need to pontificate. But really, the plot has so many holes it could make a Swiss cheese anorexic with envy. What an appalling end to what had been a potentially fascinating political investigation.

To start with, Kress has come to the conclusion that the second book, *Beggars and Choosers*, was an aberration. "We made a mistake", says Miranda Sharifi, "an enormous mistake". Thus the author condemns her solution from the previous book to the scrap heap. I wonder if this was perhaps the result of feedback from readers? I guess it is honest, but it doesn't bode well, especially as the main cause of things going wrong is one of the largest plot holes.

Then there is the question of all those super-beings? What resolution is she going to find for the Sleepless and Super-Sleepless? I'll give you a clue. Does the term "garbage disposal" suggest anything to you? Flush them down the sink through one of those plot holes. That's another problem out of the way.

So are we going to have any resolution at all? Why of course. Is it going to be something cleverly political, a new application of bio-science? No, what we get is a heap of New Age pseudo-scientific claptrap.

And by the way, I am getting sick to death of Kress's condescending portrayal of the American working class. Her deeply cynical view of the US political process probably has a lot of truth to it, but her characterisation of the (literally) unwashed masses is downright insulting. If Ms. Kress really thinks that all working class people are that repugnant she should perhaps stay in a nice comfortable condo where all she has to look down her nose at is a presumptuous little Chardonnay.

There is a term for books like this. It is "cop-out". I guess I would not be so angry with Kress had the questions she posed not been so interesting. But so it goes. If you set out to climb Everest and come back with a photo of yourself proudly planting a flag on the top of a baseball pitcher's mound you must expect people to scoff.

*Beggars' Ride* - Nancy Kress - Tor - softcover

---

## Viriconium Lives

OK, what is a book by a man doing here? Well, I was short of something to read waiting for the Sheri Tepper to turn up, and I'd picked up this old M. John Harrison at Silicon last year, and he is the finest writer working in SF in Britain today, so I decided to remind myself how he started out.

I guess you could say that it was the time of the Afternoon Cultures of fantasy: a time when men still believed in the possibility of greatness, of colossi like Conan striding across ancient battlefields, bloodied sword in hand. But it was 1971, and already the dream was beginning to

fade. Elric of Melnibone, for all his martial and sorcerous prowess, for all the might of his soul-drinking sword, was no Conan. And neither, for that matter, was tegus-Cromis.

---

*Tegus-Cromis, sometime soldier and sophisticate of Viriconium, who now dwelt quite alone in a tower by the sea and imagined himself a better poet than swordsman, stood at early morning on the sand-dunes that lay between his tall home and the gray lines of the surf.*

---

Ah, Viriconium, *The Pastel City*, shining light amidst the ruins of the Afternoon Cultures, breakwater against the teeming barbarian tides. Do you feel now for your creator as he too strives, and yes succeeds, to create something meaningful, beautiful and lasting amidst the twin tidal waves of media tie-ins and Tol-clone fantasy? Do you think he appreciates the irony?

No, he probably cringes at the eminently predictable sword and sorcery setting, the telegraphed plot and the encroachment of the inevitable buddy theme despite his attempts at creating an anti-hero. But the use of words - ah! If only young writers today had half his sense of rhythm and style. This was a book written by a young man who was going somewhere. And, thank goodness, he got there. Here's hoping he has found the culmination of his quest more satisfying than his hero did.

---

*He threw himself into the command-bridge. Green light swarmed around him, and the dead Northmen stared blindly at him as he turned on the power. He did not choose a direction, it chose him. Under full acceleration he fled out into the empty sky.*

---

*The Pastel City* - M. John Harrison - Timescape - softcover

---

---

## Fan Scene

It is long past the time that I should have talked about some other fanzines. This is, after all, a community, and how should I expect to get people to review *Emerald City* if I don't mention their zines? So, without further ado, here's some recommendations. I've given postal addresses for contacts, but if anyone wants email just ask.

---

### Plokta

A well deserved Hugo nomination this year for this slick and entertaining British offering. Sadly the latest issue, Vol. 4, #1, is not up to the usual high standards. But then it must be hard to sustain such quality biting satire. My favourite article from that issue was the one about the Wombles, especially because of the sly and playful attempt to confuse American fans. I doubt that many people, even in literal-minded America, will be taken in by the suggestions that BBC

children's program included a character called "Maidenhead the brothel keeper", but you never know.

Of course, the whole game was given away by the fact that the article was attributed to "Alison Scott". As British fans well know, this by line is a popular communal pseudonym used by zine editors who wish to be unspeakably rude to someone but don't want to accept responsibility. Use of this tactic has been raised to an art form by the Plokta Cabal, but it has a long and distinguished history. Blame for starting the craze is usually laid at the door of Greg Pickersgill. Anyone wishing to know more about this charming British habit should seek out Paul Kincaid's excellent fanthology, *Beam me up, Scotty*. This fine publication includes a variety of "Alison Scott" articles by such luminaries as Dave Langford, D. West, Ian Sorensen and Christina Lake, as well as guest articles by famous overseas fans such as Marc Ortlieb, Victor Gonzales and E.B. Frovhet.

Plokta - Steve Davies, 52 Westbourne Terrace, Reading, Berks. RG30 2RP, UK  
<http://www.plokta.com/>

---

### **Banana Wings**

For all that I feel sorry for *Plokta* for always being the bridesmaid in the UK, I have to say that *Banana Wings* is a very impressive tome. Unlike *Plokta*, it has a very generalist attitude. There's Maureen Kincaid Speller on SF, Paul Kincaid on fanzines, Mark Plummer proving comic relief, and Claire Brialey on the traditional fannish topic of anything that happens to take her fancy. Not to mention a bunch of guest articles. It is all very good reading.

What particularly caught my eye in the latest issue (#13) was a bizarre little spat between Paul and one rich brown (and that's not a typo, he insists on having his name un-capitalised). Now Paul, as I have probably said before, is not one to shy away from letting people know what he thinks is right and proper for a fanzine. Claire and Mark would not have him writing a fanzine review column otherwise. He is not, however, devoid of common sense. On discovering, in his previous set of reviews, a zine called *crifanac* (more of this pretentious lack of capitals) declaiming that neither *Ansible* nor *File 770* was part of fanzine fandom, Paul decided to take the editors to task for being exclusionary. As a result he found himself being laid into at great length by the aforementioned mr. brown.

It wasn't the length or tedium of brown's response that caught my eye, but the sheer, breathtaking arrogance of the nonsense he was spouting. Remember here that we are dealing with two fanzines which are not only Hugo winners in their own right, but whose editors are winners of the Best Fanwriter Hugo. And yet here we have *crifanac* denying them a place in the fanzine community and brown bringing every ounce of sophistry he has to bear on proving that this is the case.

It isn't a complicated argument, though brown manages to spend four pages, primarily casting aspersions on Paul's intelligence, in making it. The substance is thus: both *Ansible* and *File 770* contain material which is not proper to a fanzine. (In the former case, news of professional writers, in the latter, news of conventions). As a result, brown claims, both editors have voluntarily excluded themselves from fanzine fandom, and thus cannot claim to have been excluded by *crifanac*.

Well dear oh my, now we know. The Holy Commandments detailing what is Right and Proper for fanzines have been inscribed in letters of fire by a couple of divinely inspired faneds from Las Vegas. And if any shall doubt these Immutable Laws the Archangel richbrown shall descend upon them with venom smothered pen and Smite them Mightily.

I'd be annoyed if this sort of thing wasn't so pathetic or, indeed, so common. The same issue of *Banana Wings* contains a lengthy rant by one Sandra Bond which, whilst making some valid points about the paucity of some of the *Ansible* clones handed out each month at the Tun, contains further prescriptions about the nature of a True and therefore Good and Valuable fanzine. What is it about these people that makes them so terrified of diversity and desperate to impose their own vision on the rest of the world? I suspect it is that at heart they are afraid that what they are doing does indeed have no intrinsic value and that they must therefore invent some imposing taxonomy with which to give their scribblings an air of profundity.

Whatever, I find myself once again in the position of having to say, "I am not a fanzine fan, and I'm proud of it."

*Banana Wings* - Claire Brialey - 26 Northampton Road, Croydon, Surrey, CR0 7HA, UK

---

### **Kerles**

It seems entirely appropriate that I should follow all that with mention of a fanzine dedicated to reviewing fanzines. Don't expect anything more balanced, however, because *Kerles* comes from Tommy Ferguson who, you may remember from last issue, thinks that anything distributed electronically is worthless. Tommy is nothing if not opinionated. However, he makes up for this by being both more succinct and more entertaining than rich brown. Furthermore, #1 was enlivened by a splendid piece of drink-sodden, gonzo reviewing from Mark McCann.

*Kerles* is the sort of fanzine that fandom desperately needs, and it could quite easily become an important part of the establishment were it not for the fact that Tommy is likely to be utterly appalled by that prospect. Whilst it is there, however, it can introduce you to fanzines that you have never heard of before. And if Mr. McCann can be prevailed upon to remain sober long enough to put fingers to keyboard every so often so much the better.

*Kerles* - Tommy Ferguson - Flat 4, 10 Arundel Street, Nottingham, NG7 1NL, UK

---

### **File 770**

And talking of parts of the establishment, Mike Glycer's fine newszine, *File 770*, continues on its merry and effective way, the latest issue being #130. That is impressive longevity by anyone's standards. There isn't really a lot to say about it in general terms, expect that if you want to know what is going on in fandom (particularly US fandom) this is the place to look. Mike is an excellent journalist and whilst it is occasionally disturbing to find oneself on the sharp end of his incisive dirt-digging, you have to admire his style.

This particular issue is notable for the presence of a long guest article by Chris Barkley which lays into a "Sci-Fi Top 100" produced by *Entertainment Weekly* magazine. The presence of the dreaded "Sci-Fi" word should be enough to alert anyone to what was coming - the focus of the



list compilers was very much on SF in popular culture - and I was actually very impressed to find *Frankenstein*, *War of the Worlds* and *Metropolis* amongst the top ten. Chris, however, was enraged, and went on to compile his own lists, rather sensibly separated into categories.

Personally I am already sick to death of the millennial fashion for list-making. I'm also convinced that such things are so deeply subjective as to be meaningless. Chris neatly proves the point by producing a top 25 novels that doesn't contain a single work by Philip K. Dick and a comic top 10 with no reference to *Sandman*. But, as an intellectual exercise, such things can be quite good fun. If nothing else it gets you thinking about all that good stuff you have seen and read.

*File 770* - Mike Glyer - 705 Valley View Avenue, Monrovia, CA 91016, USA

---

## **Zighn**

Next up, a fanzine which has made a conscious attempt to fit into the mould expected of it by the fanzine community. It seems a bit of a waste to me, because the vignette of a story in the second issue proved conclusively that Jae Leslie Adams is a far better writer than most of us amateur scribblers. Hopefully once she has found her feet she will feel more confident in publishing more of what she is good at and less of what she thinks she ought to produce.

In the meantime the zine provides a good example of just how the system works. There is a philosophy of zine production that the product should feel like "a letter to my friends". I think Jae was a little too self-consciously arty in starting the first issue with a transcript of a letter to her mother about an SF convention, but it drew a response which was presumably the objective. Personally I found much of what Jae wrote not very interesting, but others took the time to put fingers to keyboard and for the second issue there was a whole ten pages of letter column. Most of that was also not very interesting, but it is probably just what Jae wanted, and just what most of her readers expected. If nothing else it certainly fills up the zine.

What got me sitting up and taking interest was when Jae started speculating on why this form of fanzine is popular. There is little doubt that, as she says, the feedback loop generated by a letter column helps create a "sense of living within a web of meaningful social interaction-communication". My only niggle is to wonder just how meaningful most of it is. Jae contrasts the fanzine world with people who write for small time literary journals which are probably read by no one other than the contributors and which never generate feedback. She says that such people are living in a fantasy world, and by implication suggests that writing is worthless unless it generates a response.

I disagree. Firstly I think that much of the social interaction which takes place in the fanzine world is little more than conversations on paper. It says nothing, and is often poorly written. Some of it, as Lillian Edwards once famously said, is ephemera fit only for use as toilet paper. Getting a LoC does not somehow bestow an air of profundity upon your writing. All too often it just means that someone else wants to see their writing in print. And it is part of the culture of fanzine fandom that you are supposed to write a letter each issue as payment for the zine, whether you have anything worth saying or not.

Me, I write because I want to write. I know I'm no bloody good at it, but I keep trying because I want to get better. It is always nice to get letters from people, but I would rather one letter thanking me for recommending a good book, or taking issue with something I've said, than a

hundred telling me what the writer has just had for breakfast. I spend most of my life writing consultancy reports. Hundreds of pages of them, and all that happens is that a couple of people read the executive summary and then it gets put on a shelf until the next office move when it gets binned. I'd go crazy if I felt I needed responses to that. But I still try to do it well, and I do the same with *Emerald City*. Personal satisfaction with what I have written is important to me. Peer approval, particularly from people who think they have the right to tell me what to write, is not.

None of which, I hope, will dissuade you from checking out Jae's work. She is clearly talented, knows a lot about literature, and could produce some very interesting work.

*Zighn* - Jae Leslie Adams - 621 Spruce Street, Madison, Wisconsin 53715, USA

---

### **Mimezine Flashback**

One of the reasons I find traditional fanzines so uninteresting is that the editors feel obliged to spend most of their time talking about themselves. Personally I have no great desire to have the details of my private life filling every issue, especially as this zine is published on the Web where anyone can read it. But in addition I think that actually my life is exceptionally boring most of the time and I can't imagine that anyone would want to read about it.

Terry Frost is different. Terry, it seems, is convinced that he is living inside a Brat Pack movie with his own starring role being taken by Frank Sinatra. Well, he writes about it that away anyway. The point being that he manages to make it entertaining, which is what good writing is all about.

This is not to say that Terry is a conformist to fanzine norms. Far from it. Much of his page space is taken up with writing about movies, in particular old movies. It is a subject about which he knows an awful lot, so here the writing is informative as well as elegant.

Of course he does have his moments. The reason that certain Americans (or even certain persons dwelling in America) are whingeing about having trouble reformatting your work for silly US paper sizes, Terry you ungrateful louse, is that I'm trying to get you a well deserved Hugo nomination. Besides, I hate having to read 2-column text on a small screen, and you wouldn't want me to miss out on your peerless prose, would you, dear?

See, you just gotta yell back at him. Sooner or later he will say something nice. In the latest issue, for example, he reveals to a shocked world that he has in fact not slept with every woman he has met. Much relief in this small corner of the world. Of course I knew it wasn't true, but I wasn't about to say anything in case people thought I was the only one who hadn't. What would people have thought of me then, huh?

*Mimezine Flashback* - Terry Frost - 4/8 Walker Street, West Brunswick, Victoria 3055, Australia  
<http://www.netspace.net.au/~hlector>

---

### **Counterclock**

Hmm, three Brits, two Americans, one Australian, what next, I wonder? How about a German living in Sweden?

If any of you have been wondering why there haven't been any convention reviews from Wolf von Witting for a while, one of the reasons is that he now has his own zine. It was originally called *Counterclockwise*, but Wolf decided that he'd give it a few issues before making any claim to wisdom, and so *Counterclock* was born. It is now up to three issues and getting better each time.

First point: don't worry about language. Wolf's command of English isn't perfect, but it is remarkably good. I did very little editing to the articles he write for me, and I'm pretty fussy. You will have no difficulty understanding what Wolf is saying, and being entertained by it.

Second point: don't believe all this rubbish about Germans not having a sense of humour. (Becks are using it in commercials over here at the moment, Wolf. I find it bizarre that Americans could imagine anyone with less sense of humour than themselves.) The article about 42 in #3 is a case in point. If it were not for the various references to Germany and German fans anyone reading it would assume it was written by a Brit.

And finally, if you have any interest at all in fan history in Europe, this is probably the best place to go. Wolf has been in fandom since at least 1977. He has seen a lot, done a lot, and seems to know where most of the bodies are buried. Read and enjoy.

*Counterclock* - Wolf von Witting - Lakegatan 8, 133 41 Saltsjöbaden, Sweden  
US agent: Dave Weingart, 17 Chapin Road, Farmingdale, NY 11735, USA

---

Oh, dear, there were lots more 'zine that I wanted to mention, but if I want to get this issue out in time for Wiscon they will have to wait until next time. Profuse apologies in particular to Brenda Daverin and Emily McLeay.

---

## Footnote

One piece of good news to start with: I have heard back from the guys at the Faros SF club in Serbia. They say that the town where they live is some 80 miles east of Belgrade and out of the bombing area. Given the level of ineptitude that NATO has been showing of late I guess nowhere is safe, but it is nice to know that my taxes are not being spent on dropping bombs on my friends.

So much for that one. Next issue will be published in time for Westercon. You can expect a report on Wiscon, and the book reviews will concentrate for a change on some serious SF. I have lined up books by Neal Stephenson, Vernor Vinge, Robert Charles Wilson and, if I can find it in time, George Turner. See you next month,

Ciao,

Love 'n' hugs,

Cheryl

